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Our reference:
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Date: 17 July 2024

To all Members of the Communities Scrutiny Group

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Group will be held on Thursday, 25 July 2024 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
[Link to further information in the Council's Constitution](#)
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2024 (Pages 1 - 10)
4. Use of Community Facilities and Managed Spaces (Pages 11 - 24)
Report of the Director for Neighbourhoods
5. Work Programme (Pages 25 - 26)
Report of the Director for Finance and Corporate Services

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9.30am - 5pm
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8.30am - 4.30pm

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Membership

Chair: Councillor G Williams

Vice-Chair: Councillor L Plant

Councillors: M Barney, J Billin, S Ellis, G Fletcher, R Mallender, H Parekh and A Phillips

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2024

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West
Bridgford
and live streamed on [Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel](#)

PRESENT:

Councillors G Williams (Chair), L Plant (Vice-Chair), M Barney, J Billin,
G Fletcher, R Mallender, P Matthews, H Parekh and T Wells

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Burch	Service Manager - Neighbourhoods
L Colaluca	Streetwise Manager
D Hayden	Community Development Manager
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors S Ellis and A Phillips

16 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Barney declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Nottinghamshire County Council Councillor who had supported funding for Nottingham Energy Partnership and as an employee of Geopura who work with hydrogen.

17 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 January 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2024 were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

18 Carbon Management Plan Update

The Community Development Manager presented an update on the Carbon Management Plan. He explained that carbon emission information was separated into the three categories, being Scope, 1 (direct emissions from the Council's activity), Scope 2 (indirect emissions, for example from electricity) and Scope 3 (indirect emissions from supply chains and services).

The Community Development Manager explained that the Council had developed a roadmap towards achieving net zero as a business, but that emissions had increased slightly recently due to a variety of factors, including a return to business as usual following the pandemic, the in-sourcing of the Streetwise company and the opening of Rushcliffe Oaks crematorium.

The Community Development Manager said that the Council had also made a

commitment, in line with national and international governments, to be Net Zero as a Local authority Area by 2050. He noted that public sector emissions contributed 9% and towards the overall carbon output for the Borough, with the largest contributor being transport at 33%.

The Group was updated on the successful completion of a number of projects, including heat decarbonisation for all non-leisure stock estate, a Swimming Pool Support Fund Award at Cotgrave Leisure Centre, completion of energy mapping work for assets and that the Council was hoping to replace the gas boilers at Sir Julian Cahn pavilion and Gamston community centre with air source heat pumps.

The Group was updated that the Council was mapping its transport and emissions, taking into consideration current technologies and the rural nature of the Borough to inform its vehicle replacement programme. The Community Development Manager said that the Council was also looking at working with Zest Energy regarding installation of EV charge points across the Borough.

In relation to contracts and procurement, the Community Development Manager said that the Council had written policies into its procurement strategy and was considering its supply chains and had employed a new biodiversity net gain (BNG) assistant to support introduction of the new legislation.

In relation to policy and regulation, the Community Development Manager said that the Council was currently reviewing its Review of Air Quality Strategy, had set up a Big Business Carbon Club and had been commended by a recent Peer Review for the work that it had completed to date.

In relation to the waste and recycling, the Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that the Council was looking at how it collected waste, in line with expected changes to national guidance, with it likely that weekly food collections would be introduced later in 2027 and kerbside glass collection by 2026 as part of the Smarter Recycling initiative. He said that the Council was collectively working with local authorities across the County to take a whole system approach as much as possible.

The Community Development Manager said that the Council was looking at its data centre emissions, staff travel and had moved to procure its electricity from renewable sources. He said that the Council was also working with RCAN and parish and town councils supporting them with their asset energy audits.

In relation to offsetting, the Group was informed that a carbon sequestration report had been completed for the Borough, which had identified that approximately 46 hectares of tree planting would be required to achieve neutrality by 2030.

The Community Development Manager referred to the carbon neutral 2050 target and said that projects involving Local Authority Delivery Scheme and Home Upgrade Grant funding had been delivered by the Council focusing on improving home insulation and home heating systems and he shared information on two specific projects that had been completed. He added that the Council was also working with Thames Valley Metropolitan Housing

(TVMH) regarding decarbonising their housing stock and was looking to develop a county wide solar electric bulk purchase scheme with the County Council and Midlands Net Zero Hub.

The Community Development Manager confirmed that the Council would continue to do outreach with parish councils, supporting carbon reduction innovation and investment and promote the Big Business Carbon Club. He noted that the British Geological Survey were currently digging bore holes into the ground to provide geothermal energy, with potential for this to become a future district heating network within the Borough and to be an exemplar site.

Councillor Parekh asked whether land had been identified for the required 46 hectares of planting and the Community Development Manager said that a report would shortly be presented to Cabinet setting out how the Council could approach acquiring suitable sites, possibly through purchase or long term lease and maximising open spaces. He said that Council had mapped areas of the Borough and was also mindful of the need for trees to become sufficiently mature to absorb carbon

Councillor Barney supported moving towards introducing HVO powered refuse vehicles but cautioned the need to monitor where the HVO was sourced from and the Community Development Manager confirmed that the Council was mindful of this factor and said that HVO was only a step in the Council's transition away from diesel.

Councillor Barney also noted that technology was changing rapidly and bringing economies of scale and that it was important to be open to future developments and transparent about the costs involved. The Community Development Manager referred to Appendix 2 of the report which provided a breakdown of expenditure.

Councillor Mallender asked about the PFI agreement with Veolia and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that this would likely end around 2029 and said that there was Nottinghamshire wide group which was looking to take a County wide approach to waste and recycling collection, which was currently being discussed at County level.

Councillor Mallender asked about education around waste reduction as well as waste management. The Community Development Manager agreed that waste reduction was an important factor of the waste management strategy and that once plans were confirmed the Council would look to hold roadshows and promote communications to towns and parishes and the community.

Councillor Wells asked how many homes had received solid wall insulation and the Community Development Manager said that he would report back to Group with information on the number and age of the properties.

Councillor Plant referred to domestic housing accounting for 24% of carbon emissions for Borough and thought that funding was required to enable households to make modifications to increase the energy efficiency of their homes. The Community Development Manager said that a big challenge was retrofit of older housing and that work was taking place looking at promoting

schemes and bulk buying to bring in economies of scale.

Councillor Fletcher asked about communications with town and parish councils and the Community Development Manager said that they would be welcome to contact the Team Manager for Environment directly and that he would share his contact information with the Group.

The Chair asked whether the hand tools used by Streetwise were electric and the Community Development Manager said that the Council was learning from the Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park who were currently using electric tools for their smaller scale works. The Streetwise Manager said that the Team were using a mixture of petrol and electric machines depending on how long they needed to be used for and that Streetwise had bought additional batteries to facilitate electric tools being used for longer works where possible.

The Chair referred to EV charging points in car parks and asked whether it would be possible to expand installation. The Community Development Manager said that the Council had provided EV charging points through the Pulse scheme at all sites that qualified through that scheme, which were usually near trunk roads. He said that the Council was now working with Zest to look at other possible sites, although this was challenging in more rural locations. It was noted that whilst East Leake had qualified as a site initially it had ultimately not been deemed suitable due to impacting factors, which could include power supply. The Group was informed that the Council was also reviewing options for domestic on-street charging for homes without drives.

The Chair asked about housing developments and biodiversity net gain offset and whether it would be possible for the Council to condition for elements, such as tree planting, to be made at the outset of the development. The Community Development Manager said that he would report back to the Group with information about delivery and triggers for when developers could be made to deliver biodiversity net gain measures.

Members of the Group asked about social housing providers in the Borough and their carbon management plans. The Community Development Manager confirmed that the Council was working with its housing providers regarding their decarbonisation plans and said that he would report back to the Group with a list of all housing providers in the Borough and any known information about decarbonisation.

Councillor Parekh asked how many swimming pools there were within the Borough and how many had gas boilers and the Community Development Manager said that there were five Leisure Centres and that Cotgrave was the first to receive a new air source heat pump and that Bingham Leisure Centre's gas boiler was 82% more efficient than traditional gas boilers.

In relation to education, Councillor Parekh asked whether the Council had plans to work with secondary schools. The Community Development Manager said that the Council was keen to work with partners and had found climate change engagement well embedded within the young generation.

Councillor Matthews asked about EV charging points and returns on investment from those in the Borough. The Community Development Manager explained that installation had been in partnership with Pulse and through grant funding. The Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that the Council was a host site and did not receive income from them.

The Chair confirmed that an update on the Carbon Management Plan would be reported to Scrutiny annually and the Community Development Manager said that the Team would be happy to respond to questions from Members throughout the year.

It was RESOLVED that the Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) considered the progress to date of the adopted carbon management action plan; and
- b) contributed towards the emerging carbon management actions for 2024/25.

19 **Streetwise Update**

The Service Manager Neighbourhoods introduced the Streetwise Report which provided a high level overview of the insourcing of Streetwise, future focus and performance information. He introduced the Streetwise Manager appointed a year ago who presented an update to the Group

The Streetwise Manager said that initial tasks of the Council had been to review various operations of Streetwise, including the management structure, the existing business including asking customers for feedback, scheduling of works, forward planning of works, the consistency and quality of work and the embracing of technology to improve and streamline operations.

The Streetwise Manager explained that a focus for the Council was Health and Safety due to the number of high risk works carried out by the Teams and as such it had created eight golden rules, which included new floor markings to segregate vehicles and pedestrians, a new induction and onboarding process, refreshed Toolbox Talks and regular staff briefing sessions, updated risk assessments and working practises, creating a competency matrix for different departments, investment in training, investment in machinery and equipment servicing and implementation of electronic driver checks to monitor compliance.

The Streetwise Manager said that the Council had invested in depot improvements, such as creating an open plan office to help with communication, closer working and sharing of best practice. This was also well used as a central base for recent flooding responses. He said that Streetwise also had a new website which allowed it to streamlined enquiries through the Customer Contact Centre and create a resource for all Streetwise related information. He said that it also provided facility to report problems online which then came directly to the Team.

In relation to the works programme, the Streetwise Manager said that Streetwise were carrying out splitter cleansing removing weeds from roads and

were about to apply for funding to support chewing gum cleansing which would be focused on town centres within the Borough.

In relation to high speed road cleansing, the Streetwise Manager said that the Team were working in partnership with agencies such as Highways England to close roads overnight to allow work to take place as much as possible. He said that Streetwise were supporting litter picking through the Rushcliffe Litter Champions providing equipment to community groups and school volunteers. He said that Streetwise had also purchased five 2 Minute litter picking stations which provided litter picking tools for residents to use, which were currently being trialled in Ruddington, Radcliffe on Trent and Bingham.

The Streetwise Manager informed the Group about successful grounds maintenance work and noted that there 30 no mow areas across the Borough and that the Teams managed the grounds for the new Rushcliffe Oaks crematorium and Bingham Arena. He said that the Tree Team had reduced to one team of four which had allowed it to focus on Rushcliffe work. He also noted the successful unscheduled and more reactive work carried out by the Teams, such as delivering sand bags or dealing with paint spills and fly tipping.

In relation to staff and performance management, the Group were informed that recent staff survey results had found that 100% of staff thought it was a good place to work and 95% were content in the management of the service area. Streetwise had received much positive thanks from members of the public and a recent Peer Review had reported that Rushcliffe was the cleanest Borough that they had visited.

Looking to the future, the Streetwise Manager said that the focus would continue to be on the Borough, to build relationships with key partners and build its sales and marketing Strategy to better sell services, to look at cost reduction and explore apprenticeship options in addition to their current business support apprentice. Streetwise were expecting to shortly take receipt of two new road sweepers which would enable a review of the sweeper schedule.

The Chair asked whether parish councils had been informed that the most direct and efficient way to contact Streetwise was through their new website where possible and the Streetwise Manager said that presentations had been given at the parish conference and he wanted to continue to be available to support them.

The Chair referred to litter picking and communications as he thought that many residents wouldn't be aware of the litter picking stations and activities. The Streetwise Manager confirmed that communications were taking place and that the Team was linking in with the Great British Spring Clean currently. He said that a member of the Team had visited a school in Ruddington last week to talk about littering and the benefits of recycling. He said that there would also be benefit in talking to schools about graffiti and the costs to remove it. The Streetwise Manager said that he would share a list of litter picking groups with the Group.

The Chair asked whether the current wet weather had impacted on pitch

management and the Streetwise Manager confirmed that it had and that it was currently impacting on grass cutting.

Councillor Matthews referred to scheduling of works and suggested that it would improve public confidence if Councillors and the public were able to view a timetable of planned works. The Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that the Team would be keen to provide this but clarified that Streetwise was not responsible for drainage emptying which was carried out by the County Council.

Councillor Parekh asked about plans for future locations for litter picking boards, particularly on new housing developments and the Streetwise Manager said that the scheme was being trialled at the moment, with plans to rotate the boards around hotspots in the Borough.

Councillor Parekh asked whether Streetwise had contracts with housing development management companies and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods confirmed that it did not currently work on behalf of any management companies.

Councillor Fletcher commended Streetwise operatives for their work getting out sandbags so efficiently during the recent flooding and asked whether it would be possible to store them locally. The Streetwise Manager confirmed that there were plans to work more closely with community stores to facilitate speedy access as Streetwise vehicle access could sometimes also be impacted by flooding. The Teams also worked with the local parish council flood resilience groups to enable residents to be take proactive action in preparing themselves by buying their own sandbags in advance.

In relation to grounds maintenance and cutting and no mow areas, Councillor Billin said that various agencies appeared to be responsible for various pieces of work and asked whether it would be possible to have a unified programme of work, to enable a parish council to take over some of the work. The Streetwise Manager said that he would take this away to review options.

Councillor Billin asked about education materials that could be shared with schools and parishes and the Streetwise Manager said that the Team wanted to be visible and would be happy to attend ward surgeries and attend parish meetings. He thought that much school communication was now electronic and he would look to at what information could be shared with the Group.

Councillor Plant referred to the £100k savings and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods explained that this had been achieved in part through increasing Streetwise's buying power, a reduction of wastage and not filling tree team vacancies.

Councillor Plant asked about performance indicators, in particular the 100% for dog fouling and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that these were measured by the Council to an industry national standard. He explained that the Borough was divided into various transects which would be walked to assess litter and dog fouling and that Officers were not finding significant dog fouling in areas. He said that the Council rarely received complaints about dog

fouling but would take action if it became aware of any.

Councillor Wells asked whether it would be possible for the Council to provide information about anti-flooding products and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that the Council had provided grants to residents who had been regularly affected by flooding to help with flood defences. Whilst it would not be appropriate for the Council to sell products it could look at further education about measures that residents could take themselves.

The Chair thanked Streetwise for their hard work in making Rushcliffe such a clean Borough.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Communities Scrutiny Group considered the information provided and provided feedback on the overall performance of Streetwise.

20 **Work Programme**

The Chair explained that the Accessible Housing item scheduled for October had been discussed at the last Corporate Overview Group as falling within both the Communities and the Growth and Development Scrutiny Groups remit and as such consideration was being given as to how to best facilitate a joint review.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group agreed the work programme for next year 2023 – 2024 as set out below:

xx July 2024

- Use of Community Facilities
- Annual Report on Scrutiny
- Work Programme

xx October 2024

- Accessible Housing [TBC]
- Work Programme

xx January 2025

- Work Programme

xx April 2025

- Work Programme


Actions – 21 March 2024

Minute No	Action	Officer Responsible/ Update
19	Provide information on how many homes and the age of properties that had received solid wall insulation	26 properties circa 1946
19	Provide contact details for the Team Manager for Environment so that town and parish councils could contact him	Ed Leddy-Owen eleddy-owen@rushcliffe.gov.uk
19	Provide information as to whether the Council could make housing developers introduce BNG measures at the outset of development and information about triggers for when developers could be made to deliver BNG measures	BNG is now in law for both large (12/03/2024) and small (02/04/2024) developments. A trigger is any development outside of a small extension
19	Provide a list of all housing providers in the Borough and any known information about their decarbonisation plans	There are 21 Registered Providers operating in RBC with MPTV being the largest. The Team Manager – Environment is working closely with the Housing Strategy Team to identify all of their policies on Climate Change. It is worth noting that MPTV have a net 0 target of 2050 and are installing 90 EWI (external wall insulation) systems in East Leake
20	Provide a list of litter picking groups for Councillors to help them join and link in with them.	A link will be sent to Councillors via Councillor Connections
20	Assess the feasibility of providing an overview of the various agencies responsible for various pieces of land across the Borough	This is a longer term aspirational aim should it be possible to achieve
20	Streetwise educational information to be shared with the Group	Information will be sent to Councillors via Councillor Connections

The meeting closed at 9.09 pm.

CHAIR

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 <p data-bbox="193 398 405 468">Rushcliffe Borough Council</p>	<p data-bbox="456 230 903 264">Communities Scrutiny Group</p> <p data-bbox="456 304 807 338">Thursday, 25 July 2024</p> <p data-bbox="456 378 1222 412">Use of Community Facilities and Managed Spaces</p>
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Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The Community Facilities service co-ordinates the operation and public use of Rushcliffe Borough Council owned and managed community buildings, sports pitches and amenity open spaces. These facilities provide space for a range of activities including meetings and events, physical activities and parties.
- 1.2. This service was last reviewed by the Community Facilities Member Group in January 2020. Subsequent to that review, an options appraisal was carried out in 2020 on the management of Lutterell Hall, formerly known as West Bridgford Community Hall. This resulted in The Rock Church taking over operational management of Lutterell Hall in 2021. The management of Lutterell Hall will therefore not form a part of this scrutiny.
- 1.3. This report and officer presentation will give the Group an update on current facilities operated by the Council, including management arrangements, their present occupancy and income generated. This will enable Councillors to scrutinise this information and make comment on their operation.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group considers the contents of the report and presentation and makes comments on the provision of community facilities operated by the Council.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. As the Council continues to face financial pressures, it is important to review all services to ensure that they are delivering efficient, value for money services balanced against delivering community benefits and social value.
- 3.2. This report will enable Councillors to scrutinise the current performance and consider making recommendations on the future operation of these facilities.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. For the purposes of this report, the Community Facilities in the scope of this scrutiny have been split into two distinct service areas - community venues for hire, and playing fields, parks and open spaces owned and managed by the Borough council.

- 4.2. Community venues and managed spaces fall within the scope of the Council Leisure Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy. The Council recognises the critical role such facilities can play to inspire residents to come together in their local area to further their social wellbeing and take part in sport, physical and wellbeing activities. This in turn links directly to the Council's Corporate Strategy "quality of life" priority for the significant social value they provide to their users.

Community venues for hire

- 4.3. The community venues which are available for public hire are as follows:
- Rushcliffe Arena
 - Sir Julian Cahn Pavilion
 - West Park Sports Pavilion meeting room
 - Gamston Community Hall
 - Rushcliffe Country Park Education Centre conference room.
- 4.4. These venues are managed by using the Switch Digital Management Booking System.

Playing fields

- 4.5. The Council has three bookable areas for outdoor sports. These are: Gresham Sports Park which includes the playing fields, two artificial turf pitches and ancillary pavilion; Alford Road including playing fields and ancillary pavilion; and West Park cricket pitch provision.
- 4.6. These playing fields and ancillary buildings are managed by the Pitchbooking Digital Management Booking System.

Parks and open spaces

- 4.7. The various parks and open spaces are predominately managed by the Switch digital management booking system except for the Council's tennis provision which is managed by a third-party provider called Active Ace. Bridge field, the Croquet Lawn and Rushcliffe Country Park are the primary open spaces which the council hire to external users. We have the ability to hire other open spaces but review each request on a case-by-case basis to ensure the appropriateness of the request and don't adversely affect the ecology of the site or impact on residents.

Financial performance against financial targets

- 4.8. Table one shows the income against target for each community venue for hire for a 12-month period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The red text indicates if the venue has not achieved its income target and the green text indicates it has achieved or surpassed its target.

Table 1

Location	Target 23/24	Actual 23/24	Target 24/25
Gamston	£56,100	£34,742	£46,400
SJCP	£38,000	£28,718	£43,300
West Park	£15,500	£9,507	£16,000
RCP	£5,500	£4,624	£5,800
Gresham	£13,100	£3,398	£13,500
Arena	£16,500	£20,653	£17,000
Total Income	£144,700	£101,642	£142,000

- 4.9. Table two shows the income against target for playing pitches, parks and open spaces for a 12-month period 1 April 2023 to March 2024. The red text indicates if the venue has not achieved its income target and the green text indicates it has achieved or surpassed its target.

Table 2

Location	Target 23/24	Actual 23/24	Target 24/25
Gresham Sports Park pitches and AGP	£108,300	£167,612	£108,300
West Park Sports pitches	£8,000	£9,166	£8,000
Alford Road	£6,700	£4,386	£6,700
Rushcliffe Country park	£70,800	£66,689	£72,200
Bridgford Park	£27,100	£27,327	£27,900
Total	£220,900	£275,180	£223,100

- 4.10. Fees and charges for community facilities are benchmarked against equivalent local facilities and increase annually typically in line with inflation. Whilst every effort is made to provide comparable fees to other providers, the individual offering at each venue is unique and not comparable to all community venues. This exercise is easier for sports pitches as the sizes of pitches are standardised and therefore directly comparable. The current list of fees and charges can be viewed online at <https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/about-us/about-the-council/fees-and-charges/>.
- 4.11. The Team Manager for Communities in conjunction with the Communities Manager and Senior Finance Business Partner have commenced a series of fees and charges reviews. This work has aimed to consolidate and simplify the fees and charges offered to customers. Due to the Gresham

redevelopment, this work initially focussed on playing pitches to remove a number of price points, and peak and off-peak options, to simplify the customer experience and improve service delivery. The community venue fees and charges are currently being reviewed to simplify the range of fees and charges available, removing variable rates at weekends to ensure that the fees are easily understood, and work consistently with our digital platforms but at the same time not adversely impacting existing bookings or income recovery.

- 4.12. In the financial year 2023/24, fees and charges for the Community Venues and managed spaces rose by 10% as inflation was predicted to be at this level as the Council aimed to achieve cost recovery for delivering the service. This also came at a time when venue operators were struggling to return to post Covid user numbers and associated cost of living crisis. As a result, the Council lost approximately 13 regular bookings from venues with some retiring, closing their businesses or finding alternative venues. Table three below provides a summary of these booking cancellations.

Table 3

Venue	Booking
Sir Julien Cahn	Dramatots
Gresham	First Class Learning
Sir Julien Cahn	Jo Jingles
Sir Julien Cahn	Slimming World
West Park Sports Pavilion	Stretchfit Pilates
Gamston Community Hall	Mini Athletics
Gamston Community Hall	Total PH fitness
Gamston Community Hall	Zumba
Gresham	Pro-Direct/SCL
Gresham	Yoga
Sir Julien Cahn Pavilion	Lullababy
West Park Sports Pavilion	FTM Dance
Sir Julien Cahn Pavilion	Dance Equation

- 4.13. In the financial year 2023/24, the Communities Manager, in consultation with the Senior Finance Business Partner, also commenced an audit review of the community venues and managed spaces income undertaking a significant reconciliation process and seeking to address historical discounts to ensure that booking aligned with published fees and charges. The audit made several recommendations which have been implemented to ensure that there are robust policies in place to deal with discount requests moving forward.

Occupancy of community venues

- 4.14. The calculation of occupancy levels was traditionally based upon facilities being available for hire for 13 hours per day from 9.00am to 10.00pm for seven days a week. There is a reduction of two hours per day, which equates to 15% availability, when the venue is not available for hire to reflect the

changeover of bookings, cleaning and set-up. This is now calculated by the digital booking platform and provides a rich form of data to better understand down time, create efficiencies and improve productivity on how venue occupancy and income can be optimised.

- 4.15. The average weekly percentage occupancy for each individual facility is calculated. These are added together for the month to provide an average occupancy figure per facility which is then used to calculate an average occupancy percentage across all facilities. Monthly occupancy averages are used to calculate a rolling cumulative figure.

Venue	Monthly Occupancy 22/23	Monthly Occupancy 23/24	Monthly Occupancy Qtr 1 24/25
Gamston Community Hall	35%	33%	23% *
Sir Julien Cahn Pavilion	48%	38%	29%*
West Park Sports Pavilion	32%	29%	33%
RCP Meeting Room	40% (from October 2022 onwards)	43%	41%
Rushcliffe Arena	29%	42%	66%
Council Chamber A	26%	34%	48%
Council Chamber B	24%	29%	56%
CR 1	12%	29%	53%
CR 2	22%	21%	55%
CR 3			
Cumulative	29.4%	33.1%	45.3%

*Reduced occupancy Qtr 1 due to school holiday periods in April and May and reduced usage by children’s activity providers.

- 4.16. The Council’s community venues have a target usage rate of **50%**. This target has not been achieved since pre-Covid. The outturn for April 2023 to March 2024 was 33.1%. The comparable outturn from April 2022 to March 2023 was 29.4%. Covid-19 recovery has been further impaired by the cost-of-living crisis and loss of several regular hirers due to financial pressures upon small businesses.

Changing trends and customer expectations

- 4.17. The locations with the highest usage in 2023/24 were the Council Chamber at Rushcliffe Arena and the RCP Meeting Room with 42% and 43% usage respectively. Both locations offer AV services and WIFI connections thereby attracting daytime business usage as well as community usage at evenings and weekends. It is anticipated that the Sir Julien Cahn Pavilion’s capital

refurbishment in early 2025 will see growth in daytime business usage as there has been a trend of moving away from wedding and adult parties at our community spaces to more meeting and group activities. In addition, weekend related parking issues at West Park associated with mini football have impacted on Sir Julian Cahn bookings and plans are in place to address this below.

Occupancy of playing fields (sport pitches for hire)

- 4.18. From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 3,414 bookings via the Pitch Bookings digital platform with a value of £181,164 were received. There are 383 registered users of Pitchbooking. 589 grass pitch match bookings were hosted, of which 331 were for West Bridgford Colts/ Score.

Gresham Sports Park

- 4.19. The primary site for sports pitches is Gresham Sports Park which offers two full size artificial football pitches, with 15 different pitch combinations, and four full size grass pitches and one mini grass pitch. The installation of the second artificial turf pitch at Gresham Sports Park in 2022 supported a strong financial outturn in 2023/24. Year to date summer usage, with touch rugby and holiday activity football camps, is seeing significant growth on site. The Council is also delighted to host the East Midlands Pan Disability League every month with requests for additional hours being considered.
- 4.20. Peak demand for pitches at Gresham is at evenings and weekends, and there are opportunities for growth of weekday daytime usage which is currently being discussed with a higher-level education provider. The Council has also been successful with a grant application to the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) for the installation of a non turf cricket wicket which will enable cricket matches to be played on site.

Alford Road Playing Fields

- 4.21. Alford Road playing fields, currently offering three adult football pitches, one adult rugby pitch and two mini 5v5 pitches, have been significantly impacted by surface water flooding and Severn Trent related attenuation tank issue following construction in 2019/20. This resulted in 1/3 of bookings requiring weather related cancellation in the 2023/24 football season. Using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, a programme of pitch improvement works is currently underway at Alford Road over the summer to mitigate the climate related surface water flooding issues. In addition, an investigation has been opened with Severn Trent to understand what is causing the attenuation tanks to overtop and flood the playing fields and road beyond.
- 4.22. The pitch improvement works will also reconfigure the pitches to provide two adult pitches, two overmarked 9v9 junior pitches, five 5v5 mini pitches, relocated from West Park, and one adult rugby pitch. It is, therefore, imperative that the pitch improvement is successful to cater for the increased

demand for pitches across all our sites. It is anticipated that this will also address the under recovery of income due to pitches needing to be called off.

West Park Sports Playing Field

- 4.23. A series of pitch improvements have taken place at West Park since April 2023 to improve the pitch quality with the strategic ambition of becoming a dedicated cricket facility to reflect the history of the site but also to meet the increased demand for cricket facilities. This work has included grass pitch treatments and a grant from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) for the replacement of the Non-Turf Wicket.
- 4.24. Officers have been in discussions for several months with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club (NCCC) to explore opportunities regarding a deeper collaboration with a focus on women's and girls, and to support Nottinghamshire's Cricket vision from community all the way up to elite level.
- 4.25. To support this transition and to mitigate the impact of mini football over the winter months on the cricket pitch, mini football at West Park has now ceased and will transfer to Alford Road in September to enable West Park to become a dedicated cricket ground for the 2025 season. This will also mitigate the impact of parking at the weekends and is hoped to have a positive impact usage of the Sir Julian Cahn Pavilion. For the 2024 season, cricket usage is currently at 90%.

Capital improvements since 2020 and current capital programme

- 4.26. There have been several capital enhancements since 2020 to the community venues including, the installation of a second artificial turf pitch, refurbishment of the existing artificial turf pitch, floodlight replacement, grass pitch improvements, EV charger installation, Changing Places toilet and changing pavilion internal refurbishment at Gresham Sports Park. The complete masterplan refurbishment of the RCP Education Centre, creation of a dedicated workshop and creation of a Café kiosk, dining shelter, toilet improvements, Changing Places Toilet and EV charger installation. Gamston Community Centre has benefited from a post Covid internal refurbishment throughout and creation of a solar EV charging station. A light touch painting refurbishment of West Park Sports Pavilion and Sir Julian Cahn Pavilion has taken place in addition to the grass pitch improvements previously mentioned. The tennis provision at both Bridgford Park and West Park has been cleaned and repainted and added to a regular maintenance schedule.
- 4.27. The West Bridgford play areas improvement programme continued with complete refurbishments taking place at Alford Road play area, Abbey Park play area, Adbolton Lane play area, Boundary Road bike track replacement, Boundary Road play area refurbishment, Greythorn Drive play area refurbishment and Rushcliffe Country Park play area refurbishment.
- 4.28. The current capital programme for the financial year 2024/25 will focus on the decarbonisation of Gamston Community Hall with the replacement of the gas

boiler with air source heat pump alternative and the complete refurbishment of the Sir Julian Cahn pavilion including an air source heat pump alternative, installation of modern technology and WIFI which is a key customer requirement. Both projects have been successful in receiving £132,000 Salix funding to support this decarbonisation work.

- 4.29. Bridgford Park play area and Bridge Field teen provision have been identified as the play schemes to be improved in this financial year and improvements will be informed by the refreshing of the Council's Play Strategy with a focus around inclusion and making space for girls.
- 4.30. The team is also working with the England and Wales Cricket Board on a grant for the installation of five cricket nets at West Park to support the further development of cricket on site which is subject to a live planning application.
- 4.31. A further and significant capital project that the team are leading on is the creation of a new community building to serve the Edwalton/Sharphill development. Work on the construction of this building is scheduled to commence in the autumn when the topsoil clearance on site has taken place.

Venue marketing and data intelligence

- 4.32. A programme of work has been undertaken to improve venue marketing and identify opportunities for growth by better utilising customer data. This includes publicity of videos and other content regularly on social media and other media channels to ensure there is a constant focus on the venues and the ease with which they can be booked. The content is reviewed as much as possible to capture material that can showcase their multi-use advantages and how they can be adapted to host many different types of occasion.

Activities include:

- Creation of a Facilities Marketing Action Plan with monthly thematic priorities for communications activity
- Production of promotional video content for social media for all venues
- Improvements to facilities promotional assets: updated photography for each location, and in-venue signage and branding
- Dedicated website landing page which leads to the booking platform
- Review of the Council's online presence for facilities, search engine optimisation and social media reach
- Collecting data from digital platforms for current and past bookings to undertake targeted marketing particularly for customers who may have made enquiries but not progressed with the booking for whatever reason.

Service improvements

- 4.33. Since the last scrutiny, a series of community facilities service improvements have taken place. The below bullets are not an exhaustive list and will be covered in more detail in the presentation on the evening, but key changes are as follows:

- Initiation of online booking platforms – Switch and Pitchbooking, with the ability for customers to view, book and pay online
- Use of Stripe for payment processing
- Improvement financial reconciliation and reduced arrears
- Improved online presence – dedicated web presence
- Ability to take damage deposits and make refunds for cancellations
- Improvement in management oversight and performance monitoring with formalised processes and protocols and new training packages
- Investment at venues – AV/ Wi-Fi and hybrid tech at Arena, Gresham second ATP, pitch improvements at Alford Road, Gamston refurbishment etc
- Staff development and competency framework for individual staff members
- Seeking opportunities for commercial growth – new tournaments and events pricing system, Big Parking contract, potential education partnership at Gresham, faith groups and public sector partners at our community venues.

4.34. Looking ahead, to the future of our community venues and managed spaces, each venue and space needs to be reviewed to ensure that income generation and social value factors are balanced. The Council is seeing an increased demand for high quality sports pitches and community venues with modern technology as standard. The traditional demand for bars in venues has decreased in the same way it has done across the leisure estate. There is also a growing awareness, and expectation, that are community venues have green technology and are decarbonised, and that our green spaces have more trees, more wildflower meadows and no-mow areas as standard which contrasts with the more formal public park maintenance regimes of the past.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

- 5.1. There is a risk that the use of facilities in the current economic environment could see income reduce and therefore place additional pressure on Council budgets. To mitigate this risk, the Council will continue to respond to changing customer demands.
- 5.2. As part of the financial audit, the number of hirers on outdated preferential or discount rates was reduced. There is a risk, therefore, that there will be a period where income and usage will decrease. This lost business will need to be replaced with customers aligning with the published fees and charges. The new booking system monitoring will be used to ensure new arrangements are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, and corrective action is taken as necessary.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

Costs associated with running community venues and income generated from their use are included in existing budgets. Paragraphs 4.8 and 4.10 show the

income for the 2023/24 financial year against target. The expectation is that income from community building, and managed spaces, should cover the costs to run them, and this should be carefully monitored. Should any alternative options be considered, the financial implications of these will need to be understood.

All the Council's built estate will be included in a planned Corporate Asset Review and the work undertaken above will inform this review to ensure that venues are fit for purpose, value for money and continue to meet the needs of the community.

6.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

6.3. Equalities Implications

Equality Impact Assessments are carried out when alterations are made to sites. This has resulted in improvements with PAN, Changing Places toilet provision, Inclusive Play provision, and hard to reach groups on Friday nights at Gresham with Notts County Foundation

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

The provision of community facilities and managed spaces often provide and facilitate a range of diversionary activities which help to reduce the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour.

The team has undertaken a series of targeted hardening measures particularly in relation to our car parks and open spaces to reduce and mitigate the risks of illegal encampments and anti-social behaviour (ASB). This work has included new height restriction barriers, knee rail barriers and strategic planting of trees in some encampment and ASB hotspot areas. New security cameras and alarms were installed as part of the RCP development, and a business case for the installation of security cameras at Gresham Sports Park is currently being worked on.

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

Several biodiversity net gain projects have taken place on the Council's managed parks and open spaces including additional tree planting, and swale improvement at Gresham Sports Park. No-mow sites across the estate, and the creation of wildflower meadows to increase the ecology and biodiversity, have all been introduced whilst still providing a balance with the need for amenity opens spaces for wellbeing activities.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	The Environment priority is a core element of service delivery of community venues and managed spaces, from
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	decarbonisation of our community venues, increasing the ecology and biodiversity opportunities on parks and open spaces and by exploring projects to transfer vehicles to EV alternatives the environment touches all aspects of service delivery.
Quality of Life	Delivering high quality community facilities that support community events and gatherings at affordable prices will have a positive impact on residents' quality of life.
Efficient Services	This review is intended to ensure that the Council is getting the best value for money from community facilities by managing them efficiently and effectively.
Sustainable Growth	The management of community venues and managed open spaces need to meet the growing population in the borough and ensure that adequate community infrastructure is in place to meet this demand

8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group considers the contents of the report and presentation and makes comments on the provision of community facilities operated by the Council.


For more information contact:	Dave Banks Director of Neighbourhoods Tel: 0115 9148438 dbanks@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	NIL
List of appendices:	Scrutiny Matrix

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Rushcliffe Borough Council – Scrutiny Matrix

Councillor Request for Scrutiny			
Darryl Burch – Service Manager Neighbourhoods			
Proposed topic of scrutiny ...	Use of Community Facilities		
I would like to understand ... (key lines of enquiry)	<p>Quarter Four performance data for LINS72 Income generated from Community Buildings / Parks, Pitches and Open Spaces raised concern at the June 2023 meeting of the Corporate Overview Group. The Group would like to schedule scrutiny to find out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the financial and performance targets set are realistic • what user expectations are • how other authorities are doing – benchmarking – and what they are charging • how things have changed since Covid • what marketing has been done and whether more is needed • if there are new ideas for usage which would increase income • why income is lower than target and what is being done to improve the situation • what difference the new booking system is making. 		
I think this topic should be scrutinised because ... (please tick)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor Performance Identified	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in Legislation or Local Policy	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resident Concern or Interest	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cabinet Recommendation	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Links to the Corporate Strategy	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)	
Officer Consideration of Request for Scrutiny			
Officer Feedback (please tick)			
- Issue already being addressed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Issue of a complaint investigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Issue has already been considered in the last 2 years?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Issue is a staffing matter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- Issue is a legal matter	x	There is an alternative way of dealing with the issue	x
Is there sufficient capacity ...			
- Scrutiny Work Programme?	✓		
- Officer Resources?	✓		
Recommendation	Schedule for Scrutiny		
Consideration of Request for Scrutiny at COG			
Public Involvement / engagement?			
Expert witnesses?			
Portfolio holder?			
Lead Officer?	Derek Hayden		
Proposed Timescale for Scrutiny and Scrutiny Group	June 2024 for Communities Scrutiny Group		

 <p>Rushcliffe Borough Council</p>	<p>Communities Scrutiny Group</p> <p>Thursday, 25 July 2024</p> <p>Work Programme</p>
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Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

1. Summary

- 1.1. The work programmes for all Scrutiny Groups are created and managed by the Corporate Overview Group. This Group accepts and considers Scrutiny Matrices from both officers and councillors which propose items for scrutiny. If those items are accepted following discussion at the Corporate Overview Group, they are placed on the work programme for one of the Council's Scrutiny Groups.
- 1.2. The work programme is also 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.
- 1.3. The work programme is detailed in this report for information only so that the Group is aware of the proposed agenda for the next meeting. The work programme 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.
- 1.4. The future work programme was updated and agreed at the meeting of the Corporate Overview Group on 4 June 2024, 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 below:

17 October 2024 (Joint Scrutiny Group)

- Accessible Housing Briefing
- Work Programme

23 January 2025

- Work Programme

3 April 2025

- 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.