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**Our reference:**  
**Your reference:**  
**Date:** Monday, 30 September 2024

To all Members of the Cabinet

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Cabinet will be held on Tuesday, 8 October 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



Sara Pregon  
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 10 September 2024 (Pages 1 - 4)
4. Citizens' Questions  
To answer questions submitted by citizens on the Council or its services.
5. Opposition Group Leaders' Questions  
To answer questions submitted by Opposition Group Leaders on items on the agenda.

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NG2 7YG

## NON-KEY DECISIONS

6. Economic Growth Strategy (Pages 5 - 52)

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

7. The Future of the East Midlands Development Corporation Programme (Pages 53 - 60)

The report of the Chief Executive is attached.

### Membership

Chair: Councillor N Clarke

Vice-Chair: Councillor A Brennan

Councillors: R Inglis, R Upton, D Viridi and J Wheeler

<b>Meeting Room Guidance</b>
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<b>Recording at Meetings</b>
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The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allows filming and recording by anyone attending a meeting. This is not within the Council's control.

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



## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 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 N Clarke (Chair), A Brennan (Vice-Chair), R Inglis, R Upton, D Viridi and J Wheeler

### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors R Mallender and J Walker

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
R Clack	Legal Services Manager
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
K Marriott	Chief Executive
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

### **8 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **9 Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 July 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 9 July 2024 were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

### **10 Citizens' Questions**

There were no citizens' questions.

### **11 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions**

There were no questions from Opposition Group Leaders.

### **12 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Financial Update Quarter 1**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance, Transformation and Governance, Councillor Viridi, presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, which set out the budget position for revenue and capital as at 30 June 2024.

In introducing the report, Councillor Viridi confirmed that the report was positive in relation to the general public finances but said that given some of the

challenges that had been discussed at recent Cabinet and Council meetings, the Council could not be complacent.

Councillor Virdi provided Cabinet with a breakdown of the report highlights. He noted that the Council had an overall predicted net revenue efficiency of £1.106m, with details of the variances provided in Appendix B. He referred to paragraph 4.4 of the report which set out the main efficiencies arising from investment income, for example interest on income of £250k from Treasury activities and savings on leisure and depot contracts.

In relation to underspends, Councillor Virdi referred to Table 2 of the report which set out where some of the underspends could be used to meet pressures in the budget and support opportunities for economic growth in the Borough. In particular, he noted an allocation towards a proposal to create a West Bridgford Town Centre reserve, which would be taken to Full Council with the intention for it to lever in funding from other avenues. He also noted the Treasury Depreciate Reserve which was to protect against market fluctuations.

In relation to Special Expenses, Councillor Virdi referred to Appendix B which set out a minor overspend.

In relation to the Capital Programme 2024/25, Councillor Virdi referred to Appendix C and D which set out the overall position and noted that the Council had an underspend of £5.968m, of which £3.756 would be rephased to 2025/26, as summarised in Table 3. He said that this left a £2.212m underspend which had in the main arisen from the £1m travellers site reserve which was yet to be allocated and from Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium and Bingham Arena budget allocations for post opening enhancement works and potential VAT liability.

In conclusion, whilst noting the Council's healthy financial position, Councillor Virdi said that things could change and there were longer term challenges and as such, the Council was ensuring that it had reserves available to mitigate ongoing risks.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor J Wheeler said that the report showed how the Council was constantly looking for ways to be as efficient as possible to be able to reinvest money to achieve other priorities. He said that the Council was constantly looking at not just generating income but also in efficiently delivering services. He referred in particular to work carried out in relation to management of contracts for the Leisure Centres and the work of the Communities Teams in improving bookings to make best use of the Council's facilities. In relation to Edwalton Golf Course, he noted the loss but said that due to bad weather they had experienced flooding but that much hard work had taken place to get the course open as soon as possible and that work was taking place looking at possible mitigation and alleviation measures for the future. He noted also the positive work that had taken place at the course and the Club House to increase income and was confident that it could excel going forward. He summarised that the Council was in a positive position overall.

The Leader thanked Officers for their hard work in looking after the finances of the Council.

**It was RESOLVED that** the report be approved and the following be noted:

- a) the expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £1.106m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures given at Paragraph 4.5 and Table 2 to the report be incorporated into the 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy for Full Council;
- b) the projected capital budget efficiencies of £5.968m including the reprofiling of provisions totalling £3.756m at Paragraph 4.8 and Table 3 to the report; and
- c) the expected balanced outturn position for special expenses at Paragraph 4.6 of the report.

### 13 **Tollerton Neighbourhood Plan**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor Upton, presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, which detailed the Tollerton Neighbourhood Plan.

In introducing the report, Councillor Upton explained that this Neighbourhood Plan had followed a different process to some others, in that not all of the Examiner's recommended Modifications were being proposed for approval and therefore further consultation was required before another report would come back to Cabinet concerning a referendum. He confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan had been produced by Tollerton Parish Council in conjunction with the local community and had been assessed by an independent examiner whose report was published in January 2024. He said that there had been much discussion around the Examiner's recommended Modifications 5, 6 and 20 which the Parish and Borough Councils had agreed not to include these relatively minor modifications. He confirmed that to comply with statutory requirements, a further six week public consultation was to take place before the Plan could proceed to referendum, as set out at paragraph 4.6 of the report.

In conclusion, Councillor Upton advised that the Tollerton Neighbourhood Plan draft decision statement had been prepared and was detailed at Appendix 3 which provided comment on each of the Examiner's recommendations and also whether other Modifications were considered necessary.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis said that he fully supported villages having the desire, aspiration and commitment from local people to produce a neighbourhood plan for their area and appreciated the hard work involved. He confirmed, however, that they did need to meet the objectives of the Parish Council, fulfil the statutory requirements of the Borough Council and comply with the legalities of the Examiner. He noted the three parts of the Neighbourhood Plan, at 5, 6 and 20 of the Examiners Modifications referred to by Councillor Upton and considered these to be valid reasons that needed to be addressed in order to protect the Council's legal obligations.

Councillor J Wheeler thanked the Parish Council and the local community for their work in putting together the Neighbourhood Plan and said that it was important to take the time to make sure that the Plan was right for the community and whilst these Modifications may seem minor, it was important that the time was taken to make sure that the community was aware of what was going into their Neighbourhood Plan and that it was right for them.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- a) all of the Examiner's recommended modifications to the Tollerton Neighbourhood Plan with the exception of Modifications 5, 6 and 20 be accepted;
- b) the Tollerton Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement and its publication be approved;
- c) it be agreed that six weeks consultation should be undertaken on the proposed decision not to accept Modifications 5, 6 and 20; and
- d) it be agreed not to proceed to referendum on the Tollerton Neighbourhood Plan at this time, pending a further report to Cabinet once the consultation has been completed.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

CHAIR



**Cabinet**

**Tuesday 8 October 2024**

**Economic Growth Strategy**

## **Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth**

### **Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor A Brennan**

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

- 1.1. Rushcliffe Borough Council's Corporate Strategy was adopted by Council in January 2024. One of the strategic tasks in the Corporate Strategy was for the Council to produce an Economic Growth Strategy.
- 1.2. With the changing local government landscape and the establishment of the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA), it was identified that it was more important than ever that the Council has clear priorities and a plan to support economic growth.
- 1.3. Consultation on the proposed priorities and then the executive summary document has been carried out in April and August 2024. The responses received have informed development of the Strategy and an overview is included in this report. Endorsement of the Strategy and Action Plan is now sought from Cabinet to enable delivery.

#### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet endorses the Economic Growth Strategy for publication.

#### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

It is important for the Council to have an ambitious plan for the economy of the Borough to ensure it remains a thriving place to live, work and visit. By adopting this Economic Growth Strategy, the Council is setting out its vision for the Borough and how it will work with partners to achieve this. The supporting Action Plan will ensure focus and momentum are maintained and the Strategy delivers for the residents and businesses in Rushcliffe.

#### **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1. Rushcliffe Borough Council's Corporate Strategy was adopted by Council in January 2024, and a strategic task included within that was the creation of an Economic Growth Strategy. This report seeks Cabinet's approval of the draft Strategy and Plan.

4.2. To inform the development of the Strategy a number of steps have been taken including:

- Two presentations and discussion at the Rushcliffe Strategic Growth Board.
- Presentation and discussion at the Rushcliffe Business Partnership Steering Group.
- Workshop with a number of colleagues from Nottinghamshire County Council.
- Two public consultation on the proposed priorities (March/April 2024) and the Executive Summary document (July/August 2024), which went out to local businesses, residents, stakeholders and Councillors.
- One to one discussion with the Countryside and Land Association (CLA).
- One to one discussion with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).
- One to one discussion with East Midlands Chamber (EMC).
- One to one discussions with some of the Borough's big businesses.
- Commissioning of data gathering and analysis report.
- Review of the Nottinghamshire Observatory to provide further data insights.

4.3. As already outlined, consultation has taken place twice to help inform the development of the Strategy; in March/April on the proposed priorities and then again in July/August on the Executive Summary document. The response rate across the two consultations was 116 and the results provided some good insights, including:

- When respondents were asked what they thought of the key opportunities over the next five to 10 years to drive economic growth, the top three answers were:
  - Good location and transport links;
  - Attractive town and village centres;
  - Quality of life on offer.
- When asked about the biggest challenges facing the Borough, the top three responses were:
  - Cost of living pressures – for residents and businesses;
  - Lack of funding to support regeneration and other projects;
  - Good public transport links.
- When asked what the focus of the Council should be to support economic growth, the top three responses were:
  - Improvements to our town and village centres and support for businesses located there;
  - Infrastructure needs including transport and broadband;
  - Attracting new investment through more promotion of the Borough as a place to do business.
- A question specifically for people who live in the Borough was to rank in order of priority things that are important to them for the place that they live, the top three responses were:
  - Access to good quality services including schools, doctors, libraries etc;
  - Access to green space;
  - Good town/village centres with a good mix of local businesses.



- 4.4. The consultation exercise in August/September focussed on the draft Action Plan/Executive Summary document and asked respondents to consider if they felt the document contained the right priorities and actions, whether it aligned with their own strategies and plans and anything that was missing. Feedback included:
- The need for consideration of free town centre parking.
  - More skills support.
  - More of a focus on environment/sustainability.
  - Partnership working with Nottinghamshire County Council to create the Commercial Developer Forum.
  - Ensuring work in West Bridgford does not only focus on Central Avenue.
  - The need to focus on innovation as a priority for the future growth and prosperity of Rushcliffe.
- 4.5. As outlined, data analysis was commissioned to help inform the development of the Strategy. A detailed update on that can be found in the Strategy document, for reference some key highlights include:
- Rushcliffe is home to 5,225 businesses, 90.7% of which are micro and only 0.4% (20) are large.
  - The number of business start-ups in Rushcliffe is lower than the UK average; however, closure rates are also lower and a higher proportion of businesses in Rushcliffe survive for five years.
  - Many residents are highly skilled with 34% having a Level 4 qualification or higher, there are also though 17% of residents who have no qualifications.
  - When comparing the key stage 4 results in English and Maths, young people in Rushcliffe rank 1st in Nottinghamshire.
  - In terms of employment in the area, according to Nomis, between July 2021 and June 2023 there has been an increase of approx. 9% in economic inactivity in Rushcliffe population aged 50 – 64. These figures are comparable with National levels of early retirement increase.
  - Economic inactivity amongst those aged 16+ has decreased by 0.6% when comparing 2022 to 2023. 15.6% of residents have a long term physical or mental health issue, which is preventing them from working.
  - In 2017 there were 49,000 vacancies in the area compared to 51,000 in 2021. Most areas have seen a rise in vacancies.
  - Analysis of the travel to work area for Rushcliffe residents shows that the majority of residents travel to Nottingham for work (27%), closely followed by those who work in Rushcliffe (25.6%) and residents who mainly work from home (13.5%).
- 4.6. The Borough Council's vision for Economic Growth is to promote sustainable economic growth and regional opportunities to deliver a prosperous and thriving local economy, place to live, work and visit, which retains the unique local heritage and character of the Borough.

- 4.7. This vision is underpinned by three priority themes:
- Place and Experience; what it is like to live, work and visit Rushcliffe including our town centre and high streets, housing growth and our culture and heritage.
  - Investment and Infrastructure; attracting new businesses to the Borough and securing the right transport and other infrastructure to support any growth.
  - Business Support, Growth and Skills; providing the right support to our existing businesses and understanding our current and future skills needs.
- 4.8. The Strategy (Appendix A) sets out the challenges and opportunities associated with each of these priorities and identifies nine ambitions to support delivery of the vision. These ambitions have associated actions, which are set out in the Action Plan. The Economic Growth Strategy and Action Plan at Appendix A will be designed to match the style of the Executive Summary document previously consulted on (Appendix B) before it is published.
- 4.9. The intention has been to keep the Strategy relatively short and focus on the Action Plan as the live document that will be regularly reviewed and refreshed in response to emerging challenges and opportunities. The Strategic Growth Board will have oversight of the delivery of the Action Plan and identify performance measures.

## **5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection**

The Council does not need to have an Economic Growth Strategy and therefore an alternative is to not produce one. It was identified, however, that given the changing local government landscape, the need to attract additional investment into the Borough and prioritise resources, that an Economic Growth Strategy was required to support delivery of the ambitious growth plans for the Borough.

## **6. Risks and Uncertainties**

- 6.1. As there is a limited amount that the Borough Council will be responsible for the direct delivery of, there is a risk that, with a lack of buy in, a limited amount will be delivered. However, to inform the production of the Strategy, extensive consultation has been carried out with stakeholders to secure buy in to the identified priorities and areas of work. In addition, there are many actions within the Plan which are aspirational and may take a number of years to deliver and will be subject to securing external investment.
- 6.2. There is a risk that Rushcliffe has fewer opportunities to apply for and secure external funding than other areas in the County. With the Strategy in place, it is intended that it can be used to highlight the need for external support for Rushcliffe residents and businesses to unlock significant growth opportunities for the region.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1. Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The internal staffing resource to deliver the Strategy is already in place and involves the Economic Growth Team as well as other teams in the Council including Property, Planning, Community Development and Communications.

### **7.2. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

### **7.3. Equalities Implications**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Strategy (Appendix C).

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

There are no crime and disorder act impacts associated with this report.

### **7.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications**

There are no biodiversity net gain implications associated with this report.

## **8. Link to Corporate Priorities**

The Environment	A key focus for the Economic Growth Strategy is promoting and supporting sustainable growth, ensuring it is delivered in the right places with the required infrastructure.
Quality of Life	A thriving local economy impacts on all aspects of our residents quality of life including; the provision of good work, successful town/village centres and good growth that respects the unique character of the Borough.
Efficient Services	There is no link to this corporate priority.
Sustainable Growth	This is a key focus for the Economic Growth Strategy ensuring new homes and commercial development are delivered in the right places, to high standards and with the required infrastructure.

## **9. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet endorses the Economic Growth Strategy for publication.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Catherine Evans Service Manager Economic Growth and Property 0115 914 8552 <a href="mailto:cevens@rushcliffe.gov.uk">cevens@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	N/A
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix A – draft Economic Growth Strategy and Action Plan Appendix B – Designed Executive Summary document Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment Form

# Economic Growth Strategy and Plan

Promoting sustainable economic growth and regional opportunities to deliver a prosperous local economy creating a thriving place to live, work and visit which retains the unique local heritage and character of the Borough.



# Introduction

Rushcliffe lies immediately south of the City of Nottingham and the River Trent and extends across towards Newark in the Northeast and Loughborough in the Southwest. Rushcliffe covers 157 square miles. Although the Borough borders a number of other areas including Nottingham City, Loughborough and Newark it has a strong identity of its own. The main centre of population is West Bridgford, where around 41,000 of the Borough's 119,400 population (census 2021 and increase of 7.2% compared to census 2011) live. The remainder of the district is largely rural with centres of population split between towns and smaller villages, each with a strong character of their own.

Rushcliffe has a strong local economy that is performing well, despite recent challenges at a national and global level, with low unemployment, high skills, strong business survival rate and low high street vacancy rates. However, the Council knows it cannot be complacent and ensuring the local economy continues to thrive, for the benefit of all, will take a collaborative effort that focuses on some key priority areas to achieve the greatest impact. The Council cannot deliver this vision on its own, as is reflected in many of the actions outlined below, the Council need to work with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders to achieve results.

## THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S VISION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IS:

**“Promote sustainable economic growth and regional opportunities to deliver a prosperous local economy creating a thriving place to live, work and visit which retains the unique local heritage and character of the Borough”**



## THIS VISION IS UNDERPINNED BY THREE PRIORITY THEMES:



**Place and Experience:** what it is like to live, work and visit Rushcliffe including our town centre and high streets, housing growth and our culture and heritage.



**Investment and Infrastructure:** attracting new businesses to the Borough and securing the right transport and other infrastructure to support any growth.



**Business Support, Growth and Skills:** providing the right support to our existing businesses and understanding our current and future skills needs.

This vision, priorities and supporting ambitions are set out in more detail in the subsequent pages. Some initial actions have been developed setting out how the Council will work with partners to achieve this. The intention is that an action plan is created and continually reviewed and updated ensuring it responds to the changing needs of Rushcliffe's economy. This document is an executive summary of the Strategy and action plan to provide an overview of the Council's priorities for delivering growth but also what is needed to further enhance the economic prosperity of the Borough.

The Strategy sits alongside others at a local, regional and national level recognising that economic growth is impacted by many factors. It is about the state of local and national economy and the private sectors willingness and ability to invest in the borough. The council's role is to intervene when this is failing, capitalise on opportunities and also to convene partners to enhance growth where we can. However it is not just about the economy itself, it impacts on all aspects of a place and it is important that this is reflected and acknowledged. The Council is striving for economic prosperity that reflects the breadth of the impact of economic growth and how it links with other factors impacting on quality of life.

The Strategy comes at a time of change in the East Midlands which has the opportunity to have a significant impact on the regional and local economy; the establishment of the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA). The EMCCA's focus is on regional ambitions for growth with funding to support delivery. It is hoped that with the establishment of the EMCCA the region will be better able to speak with one voice, it will raise the profile of the region, and so the areas within it, and enable opportunities for increased investment. The priorities outlined in this Economic Growth Plan will be used to focus our ambition for Rushcliffe within the devolution process and leverage potential investment to deliver.



# Place and Experience



This priority is all about building on Rushcliffe's already strong offer, creating a thriving place where people want to and can live, work and visit.

## AMBITION 1:

**Support the growth of Rushcliffe ensuring development enhances and integrates with existing communities and creates a great place to live, work and visit.**

The Borough is growing rapidly with the delivery of 13,150 new homes before 2028 as set out in the Borough's Local Plan. This growth provides an opportunity but also inevitably presents challenges. Creating places people want to live and work does not happen by accident, and we want to ensure we are working with our partners to deliver good growth that respects the unique character of the Borough, is sustainable and provides the right infrastructure to support the new and existing communities to continue to enjoy a good quality of life.

## ACTIONS:

- » Development and Community Boards at Bingham, Fairham, Newton, Sharphill and Gamston
- » Exploring opportunities for working more closely with a range of partners to facilitate growth including EMCCA, Homes England, local universities and private sector
- » Engaging with our Parish Councils to understand local priorities and support where possible
- » Engage with neighbouring local authorities to explore opportunities for collaboration, sharing best practise etc.
- » Working with partners to enable the release of S106 and CIL funding to provide the infrastructure to support development
- » Identifying funding (public and private) to accelerate delivery of housing and employment land.

## AMBITION 2:

**Support our town and village centres to continue to thrive now and create a collective vision for their future.**

Town and village centres are an integral part of local communities, their offer impacting on a person's decision to live and visit a place. Whilst their role in communities may be changing becoming places that are as much about leisure and experience as shopping they remain a critical part of our local infrastructure.

## ACTIONS:

- » Deliver appropriate recommendations contained within the 7 district centre retail reviews
- » Public realm improvements on Central Avenue in West Bridgford
- » Creation of vision documents for each of our 7 largest town and village centres, starting with West Bridgford because of the significant plans for the area over the coming years including: new pedestrian and cycle bridge and the relocation of County Council away from County Hall and new and future housing growth in the area.



### AMBITION 3:

#### **Enhance and showcase all the Borough has to offer as a place to live and visit.**

The Borough is home to some notable attractions that draw people into the area including the City Ground, Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, Nottingham Rugby Club and Holme Pierrepont watersports centre. These along with access to green space, attractive town and village centres and local museums and heritage assets make Rushcliffe a great place to live and visit. As well as these attractions the Borough has a strong events programme throughout the year which includes Lark in the Park, Rushcliffe Food Festival, Sunday Cinema and Christmas lights attracting thousands of people into Rushcliffe.

### ACTIONS:

- » Engage and inform the development of the Nottinghamshire Destination Management Plan
- » Consider opportunity for creating a Rushcliffe Destination Management Plan/Tourism Strategy
- » More promotion of the tourism offer in Rushcliffe, working with partners e.g. City and County Councils as required.
- » Review of markets in the Borough, exploring opportunities to do things differently to bring greater benefit to our town and village centres.



# Investment and Infrastructure



This priority is all about attracting new businesses to the Borough and working with our partners in securing the right infrastructure to support growth.

## AMBITION 4:

### **Support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station, a key site for the region, a gateway into the Borough.**

Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station is due to be decommissioned in September 2024, this is a historic moment for the Country as it signals the end of coal fired power generation in the UK. The 270ha site is iconic for residents and visitors alike, with its cooling towers visible from many areas of the Borough, and beyond. The vision for the site to be transformed into a centre for energy production and storage, advanced manufacturing and industry. It will deliver the technology and industry required to help move towards a net-zero carbon future.

## ACTIONS:

- » Work with partners to support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station
- » Continue to proactively engage with local stakeholders including parish councils within Rushcliffe and just across the border in North West Leicestershire.
- » Work with key stakeholders, particularly the site owners, to bring forward the right development that aligns with the vision for moving to a net-zero future.
- » Work with partners to explore the wider opportunities that ROS can bring including though supply chain, development of other sites and promotion of the Borough.



### AMBITION 5:

#### **Realising the opportunity the Borough presents, attracting new businesses and investment into the Borough.**

In addition to Ratcliffe on Soar, around 70 ha of employment land has been allocated across the Borough. These sites are located next to housing sites and are owned by private developers or landowners. Whilst housing development is progressing well on most of the 6 strategic sites the employment land is often slower to be developed. This is for a number of reasons including the cost of land in the Borough, the unwillingness of private developers to build speculatively and the availability of Government funding.

### ACTIONS:

- » Establish commercial developer forums to facilitate discussions to support unlocking development of allocated employment sites
- » Promotion of the Borough as a place to do business to support inward investment opportunities working with our partners including EMCCA, IIN and NCC
- » Review existing employment space available and identify gaps in provision for investment
- » Proactively engage with new businesses in the Borough to understand skills needs now and in the future
- » Lobby Government to increase requirements for energy efficiency of new buildings
- » Showcase exemplar low carbon commercial developments to highlight what can be achieved.

### AMBITION 6:

#### **Working with our partners to ensure the delivery of required infrastructure to support economic growth.**

Having the right infrastructure in place underpins the ability to deliver good growth. It covers many things from roads to schools to sewers and the challenges of delivering infrastructure in a timely manner are well understood and articulated. Delivery of infrastructure is the responsibility of a number of different agencies who need to work together to deliver identified requirements.

### ACTIONS:

- » Proactively engage with the Stations Growth Strategy
- » Continue to engage with the development of Project Wider Integrated Strategy for Energy Rail and Road (WISERR) to identify required infrastructure to support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar, ensuring the impact on local roads is included and mitigation measures put in place
- » Continue to participate in Poacher Line Group meetings to support increased capacity along the route
- » Work with Nottinghamshire County Council to explore innovative ways to deliver public transport in rural areas and pilot this in Rushcliffe
- » Engage with the County Council on further upgrades/roll outs of Broadband ensuring messages are communicated to residents and businesses and areas with poor coverage are highlighted.

# Business, Support Growth and Skills



The business support landscape has changed and will continue to change over the coming years with the changes to funding streams - loss of European Structural Investment Fund, introduction of UKSPF and more recently the establishment of the EMCCA. This priority is about ensuring we continue to provide our businesses the support they need.

## AMBITION 7:

**Ensuring the provision of the right support for our businesses that promotes their growth, productivity and move to becoming more sustainable.**

Providing businesses with the environment they need to thrive and grow is how we need to see business support. This does not consist of one thing in isolation it is about a number of complementary factors all working together, whilst this is challenging to create the Council is committed to working with our partners to collectively provide what our businesses need.

## ACTIONS:

- » Work with EMCCA and partners to shape the future business support landscape ensuring this is right for Rushcliffe
- » Review Rushcliffe Business Partnership and consider opportunities for its growth and development in the future
- » Support our businesses to operate more sustainably through the provision of advice and support and, where available, funding.



#### AMBITION 8:

##### **Ensuring our businesses can access the people they need with the right skills to enable them to grow.**

The most important part of any business is its people, being able to attract and retain the right talent is critical for all businesses. Having a local workforce with the right skills for local businesses makes an area attractive for investment and supports the growth of existing businesses. In addition, there are well established links between the right work and the positive impact this can have on an individual's physical and mental health. The Council will work with partners including; County Council, EMCCA, Further and Higher Education to support our residents into or back into work.

#### ACTIONS:

- » Work with EMCCA and partners to minimise the skills gap and ensure there are the skills available to support the growth of our existing and new businesses
- » Work with partners to develop the supporting infrastructure to ensure that those that need it have support to help them access training and employment
- » Promote inclusive recruitment across sectors, highlighting the opportunity this can create for businesses and the economy
- » Work with universities and partners to address the issue of graduate retention, showcasing the range of opportunities in the area
- » Work with businesses to seek ways to encourage early retirees, those with caring responsibility into/back into the workforce through more flexible recruitment
- » Work with schools to enable a better understanding of future skills needs and the opportunities for young people
- » Establish a South Nottinghamshire Providers Forum and Employment and Skills Board.

#### AMBITION 9:

##### **Developing stronger relationships with the big businesses in our Borough to identify opportunities to work together and champion the Borough as a place to do business**

The Borough is home to 20 big businesses (those with 250+ employees), 0.4% of the total businesses in the Borough. This includes Uniper, British Gypsum, British Geological Survey, Midland HR, John Deere and Vision Express. This diversity of type and sector of businesses reflects the wider business community and the opportunity there is for promotion of the Borough as a place to do business.

#### ACTIONS:

- » Review and build on what has been done previously by RBC and others and reinvigorate the big business forum for Rushcliffe
- » Explore opportunities for businesses to act as champions of the Borough, promoting Rushcliffe as a place to do business.

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# **Rushcliffe Borough Council's Economic Growth Strategy and Plan**

Promoting sustainable economic growth and regional opportunities to deliver a prosperous and thriving local economy, place to live, work and visit which retains the unique local heritage and character of the Borough

## **Foreword – Cllr Brennan**

I am very pleased to present Rushcliffe Borough Council's first Economic Growth Strategy, it is an ambitious plan to promote the sustainable growth of our Borough. We cannot achieve this on our own and we are committed to working proactively with our partners to deliver outcomes for Rushcliffe.

We have undertaken extensive consultation to inform the development of our Strategy, thank you to all of those who have engaged with this and we hope that you will see your comments and feedback reflected in this document.

Economic Growth, to us, means many things, but fundamentally is about place shaping. Understanding what makes Rushcliffe a great place to live, work and visit and what we can do to protect and enhance that. Despite significant economic challenges over recent years Rushcliffe's economy continues to perform well, our diverse business base has been largely resilient thanks to their foresight, innovative approach and adaptability. However, we know that we cannot be complacent we need to be proactive. Without intervention we risk Rushcliffe falling behind other areas in the County which have seen significant Government investment.

This strategy sets out the significant opportunity that Rushcliffe presents. With the right support and investment a lot can be achieved that will deliver benefits well beyond the Borough's boundary. We are committed to working collaboratively with our partners and neighbours to achieve our vision to

**Promote sustainable economic growth and regional opportunities to deliver a prosperous and thriving local economy, place to live, work and visit and which retains the unique local heritage and character of the Borough**

## **Introduction**

Rushcliffe lies immediately south of the City of Nottingham and the River Trent and extends towards Newark in the Northeast and Loughborough in the Southwest. Rushcliffe covers 157 square miles. The main centre of population is West Bridgford, where around 41,000 of the Borough's 119,400 population live. The remainder of the district is largely rural, with the centres of population split between towns and smaller villages, each with a strong character of their own.

Rushcliffe has a thriving local economy that is performing well, despite recent challenges at a national and global level, with low unemployment, high skills, strong business survival rates and low high street vacancy rates. However, the Council knows it cannot be complacent and ensuring the local economy continues to thrive, for the benefit of all, will take a collaborative effort that focuses on some key priority areas to achieve the greatest impact.

The Borough Councils vision for Economic Growth is:

**Promote sustainable economic growth and regional opportunities to deliver a prosperous and thriving local economy, place to live, work and visit and which retains the unique local heritage and character of the Borough**

This vision is underpinned by three priority themes:

- **Place and Experience;** what it is like to live, work and visit Rushcliffe including our town centres and high streets, housing growth and our culture and heritage.

- **Investment and Infrastructure;** attracting new businesses to the Borough and securing the right transport and other infrastructure to support any growth.
- **Business Support, Growth and Skills;** providing the right support to our existing businesses and understanding our current and future skills needs.

This vision, priorities and supporting ambitions are set out in more detail in the subsequent chapters. An action plan has been developed setting out how the Council will work with partners to achieve this. The intention is that the action plan is continually reviewed and updated ensuring it responds to the changing needs of Rushcliffe’s economy.

This Strategy sits alongside others at a local, regional and national level, including:

- EMCCA’s emerging inclusive growth strategy and local growth plan
- The Nottinghamshire Plan and supporting framework documents and action plans
- Rushcliffe Borough Council’s Corporate Strategy
- Rushcliffe Borough Council’s Local Plan

Economic Growth is about the state of the local and national economy and the private sectors willingness and ability to invest in the borough. The council’s role is to intervene when this is failing, capitalise on opportunities and also to convene partners to enhance growth where we can. However, it is not just about the economy itself, it impacts on all aspects of a place, and it is important that this is reflected and acknowledged. The Council is striving for economic prosperity that reflects the breadth of the impact of economic growth and how it links with other factors which affect quality of life.

The ambitions of the Economic Growth Strategy align with the Council’s Corporate priorities:

<b>RBC Corporate priority</b>	<b>Economic Growth ambition</b>
<p><b>Quality of life</b></p> <p>Maintain and enhance our residents quality of life</p>	<p>AMBITION 1 Support the growth of Rushcliffe ensuring development enhances and integrates with existing communities and creates a great place to live, work and visit</p> <p>AMBITION 2 Support our town and village centres to continue to thrive now and create a collective vision for their future</p> <p>AMBITION 3 Enhance and showcase all the Borough has to offer as a place to live and visit.</p>
<p><b>Efficient services</b></p> <p>Open to innovation and transformation to deliver efficient, high quality services.</p>	<p>Throughout the Strategy reference is made to the need to work with a range of partners to deliver the Council’s ambitions. By doing this the Council will ensure we are reducing duplication, delivering value for money and focussing resources where they will add the most value.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable growth</b></p> <p>Deliver economic growth to ensure a sustainable, prosperous and thriving local economy</p>	<p>AMBITION 4 – support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar PowerStation, a key site for the region, a gateway into the Borough.</p>

	<p>AMBITION 5 realising the opportunity the Borough presents, attracting new businesses and investment into the Borough</p> <p>AMBITION 6 working with our partners to ensure the delivery of required infrastructure to support economic growth</p> <p>AMBITION 7 ensuring the provision of the right support for our businesses that promotes their growth, productivity and move to becoming more sustainable</p> <p>AMBITION 8 ensuring our businesses can access the people they need with the right skills to enable them to grow</p> <p>AMBITION 9 developing stronger relationships with the larger businesses in our Borough to identify opportunities to work together and champion the Borough as a place to do business</p>
<p><b>The environment</b></p> <p>Protecting the environment and enhancing it for future generations</p>	<p>Core to the vision is sustainable growth and this is a cross cutting theme underpinning all priorities and ambitions. This Council proactively uses its place shaping role to support and influence others to ensure the delivery of growth that is right for Rushcliffe.</p>

### Regional context

This Strategy comes at a time of political change in the East Midlands which has the opportunity to have a significant impact on the regional and local economy; the establishment of the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA). The six key priority areas for the EMCCA are:

- Housing
- Skills and adult education
- Transport
- Net zero
- Economic Development
- Visitor Economy

The EMCCA's focus is on regional ambitions for growth with funding to support delivery. It is hoped that with the establishment of the EMCCA the region will be better able to speak with one voice, it will raise the profile of the region, and so the areas within it, and enable opportunities for increased investment.

The Council will work closely with EMCCA and understand their role is to enhance and add value as well as creating opportunities to deliver ambitious regional opportunities that unlocks economic growth across the region. The priorities outlined in this Economic Growth Strategy will be used to focus our ambition for Rushcliffe within the devolution process and leverage potential investment to deliver outcomes for the Borough.

## Approach

To inform the development of the strategy a number of steps have been taken to consult and engage with a wide variety of stakeholders including:

- Two presentations and discussion at the Rushcliffe Strategic Growth Board
- Presentation and discussion at the Rushcliffe Business Partnership Steering Group
- Workshop with a number of colleagues from Nottinghamshire County Council
- Two consultation surveys on the proposed priorities and draft action plan document which went out to local businesses, residents, stakeholders and Councillors.
- One to one discussion with the Countryside and Land Association (CLA)
- One to one discussion with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- One to one discussion with East Midlands Chamber (EMC)
- One to one discussion with some of the Boroughs big businesses
- Data gathering and analysis - the results of which are set out in the next section of this document

This engagement activity has provided good insight and a strong foundation of understanding of the Borough to develop the strategy on. The information picked up through discussions with stakeholders is reflected throughout the strategy.

Public consultation exercises were carried out in March/April and then again in August/September to understand what local residents, businesses and stakeholders thought of the challenges, opportunities, proposed priorities and action plan for the Strategy. The surveys received 116 responses some highlights from the consultation that took place in March/April includes:

- Key opportunities identified were good location and transport links; attractive town and village centres and the quality of life on offer
- Respondents felt the biggest challenges for the Borough are cost of living pressures, a lack of funding to support projects and good public transport links
- Identified areas of focus for the Council were; improvements to town centres and support for businesses located there; infrastructure needs and promoting the Borough as a place to do business
- A question specifically for people who live in the Borough was to rank in order of priority things that are important to them for the place that they live, the top 3 responses were:
  1. Access to good quality services including schools, doctors, libraries etc
  2. Access to green space
  3. Good town/village centres with a good mix of local businesses

The consultation exercise in August/September focussed on the draft action plan/executive summary document and asked respondents to consider if they felt the document contained the right priorities and actions, whether it aligned with their own strategies and plans and anything that was missing. Feedback included:

- The need for consideration of free town centre parking
- More skills support
- More of a focus on environment/sustainability

- Partnership working with Nottinghamshire County Council to create the commercial developer forum
- Ensuring work in West Bridgford does not only focus on Central Avenue
- The need to focus on innovation as a priority for the future growth and prosperity of Rushcliffe

The overall results of the surveys align well with the identified priorities set out in this strategy and further emphasise the need to work with a number of partners to deliver the strategy. Much of what is highlighted as important is not within the direct control of the Borough Council, however we have an important role to play in facilitating and influencing as well as delivering to achieve these priorities. In addition it highlights the cross cutting nature of growth and the significant role it plays in creating great places.

### **Rushcliffe's economy**

Data from Nottinghamshire County Councils Nottinghamshire Observatory has been accessed to inform this section of the Strategy. It is intended that this data will be reviewed throughout the life of the Strategy to measure impact and be responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Rushcliffe is home to 5,225 businesses, 90.7% of which are micro and 0.4% (20) are large. With so many small businesses in the Borough there is a diverse range of businesses operating in a wide variety of sectors. In terms of sector of business there is a mix across Rushcliffe;

<b>Sectors with the highest number of businesses operating in the Borough</b>	<b>Sectors that employ the most people in the Borough</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional, scientific and technical</li> <li>• construction</li> <li>• retail</li> <li>• information and communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health</li> <li>• education</li> <li>• Professional, scientific and technical</li> <li>• business admin and support services</li> </ul>

The difference in these 2 lists highlights the need to be open and flexible in our approach to business support and attracting new investment.

The number of business start ups in Rushcliffe is lower than the UK average however closure rates are also lower and a higher proportion of businesses survive for 5 years+. This indicates a relatively stable economic environment for many and an opportunity to focus on supporting business growth with more of a focus on start ups to encourage new entrepreneurs. With such a diverse range of businesses it is important that the Borough provides the right infrastructure to enable growth including key aspects such as innovation, business planning and access to finance e.g. grants. This is covered in more detail later in the strategy.

We know that many of our residents are highly skilled with 34% of residents having a level 4 qualification or higher, there are also though 17% of residents who have no qualifications. It is important that investment we attract offers a range of opportunities for all our residents reflecting the diversity of the skills available locally.

A highly skilled workforce presents an opportunity to attract investment, and this is something that, together with our partners, we can capitalise on for the benefit of all. In addition, from 2022 Department for Education statistics, we know that young people in Rushcliffe perform well in education. When comparing the key stage 4 results in English and Maths, Rushcliffe ranks 1st in

Nottinghamshire, well performing schools further adds to the attractive investment proposition of Rushcliffe.

We know that there are 'cold spots' for educational attainment as well and particular areas where these are not at the national average. These can be correlated to the most deprived areas of Rushcliffe including those with higher rates of child poverty (12.6% of children in Rushcliffe are considered to be living in poverty). When comparing Rushcliffe to other areas of Nottinghamshire the area performs well on economic prosperity indicators, this has meant that it is challenging to make the case for funding from Government. This approach is understood when resources are limited however, neglecting to invest in Rushcliffe will limit the opportunity that exists and fails to recognise the challenges that Rushcliffe faces. We need to think differently about how we support our businesses, showcase the Borough and work together to achieve our ambitions.

In terms of employment in the area according to Nomis between Jul 2021 and Jun 2023 there has been an increase of approx. 9% in economic inactivity in the Rushcliffe population aged 50 – 64. These figures are comparable with National levels of early retirement increase. More broadly economic inactivity amongst those aged 16+ has decreased by 0.6% when comparing 2022 to 2023. 15.6% of residents have a long term physical or mental health issue which are preventing them from working.

Analysis of the travel to work area for Rushcliffe residents shows that the majority of residents travel to Nottingham for work (27%), closely followed by those who work in Rushcliffe (25.6%) and residents who mainly work from home (13.5%).

To consider future growth and opportunities the Council commissioned some data analysis based on the Midlands Economic Forecasting Model, the model provides baseline data and scenario modelling covering a range of themes including; population, migration, employees, net commuting, unemployment, GVA, earnings, consumer spending and carbon dioxide emissions. Highlights for Rushcliffe include:

- GVA growth to 2050 is higher for Rushcliffe than for Nottinghamshire and D2N2
- Employment growth to 2050 is higher than UK, Nottinghamshire and D2N2
- Labour productivity growth (GVA/Job) trend to 2050 lags behind the UK, D2N2 and Nottinghamshire due to relatively higher employment growth.
- Disposable income growth to 2050 is greater than UK, D2N2 and Nottinghamshire
- Greenhouse gas emissions (kt CO<sub>2</sub>e) per head is decreasing; down from 9.8 in 2005 to 7.1 in 2021 however this is higher than the UK (6.0).

These projections show the strong economic proposition Rushcliffe presents, not only for the Borough itself but for the wider region. It does also identify challenges particularly for productivity and greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Priorities**

To deliver on our vision for a prosperous and thriving local area for the benefit of all we need to ensure that we focus our collective efforts on areas where we can have the greatest impact. To assist with that we have identified 3 priority themes:

- Place and experience
- Investment and infrastructure
- Business support, growth and skills

These 3 priority themes and the supporting ambitions are set out in more detail below, identifying what we think are the key challenges and opportunities in each of these areas. The action plan identifies specific activity that will underpin the delivery of our ambitions.

### **Place and experience**

This priority is about creating an accessible, thriving place where people want to and can live, work and visit and Rushcliffe already boasts a strong offer.

Our ambitions to support delivery of this priority are:

#### **AMBITION 1 Support the growth of Rushcliffe ensuring development enhances and integrates with existing communities and creates a great place to live, work and visit**

The Borough is growing rapidly with the delivery of 13,150 new homes before 2028 as set out in the Borough's Local Plan. This growth provides an opportunity but also inevitably presents challenges. Creating places people want to live and work does not happen by accident, and we want to ensure we are working with our partners to deliver good growth that respects the unique character of the Borough, is sustainable and provides the right infrastructure to support the new and existing communities to continue to enjoy a good quality of life.

- **Working with our partners**

We need to consider the wider impacts of growth on our town centres, our businesses and employment opportunities for our residents. Focussing on one aspect of growth alone will not deliver the place we want Rushcliffe to be in 10 years, we need to consider this holistically and work better together. To do this the Borough Council has a Strategic Growth Board as well as Development and Community Boards focussed on some of the larger development sites in the Borough:

- Fairham
- Bingham
- Newton
- Sharphill
- An additional Board will be created for Gamston when the site is at the right stage

This enables us to work more closely with developers, landowners, town/parish councils and the County Council to ensure development is being delivered as planned; maintaining a focus on integration, sustainability and quality. The Strategic Growth Board focusses on the strategic growth opportunities and challenges for the Borough and will be responsible for the delivery and monitoring of the Economic Growth Action Plan.

We will work more closely with a wide range of partners to facilitate growth, this includes EMCCA, Homes England, Department for Business and Trade, University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University as well as partners in the private sector.

- **Engaging and communicating effectively**

To build cohesive communities in the future we know that we need to understand our communities now. We do a lot already to listen to our communities, but we know there is more to be done. Our Town and Parish Councils are closest to our communities and are a key partner in helping us to



understand the issues impacting on peoples lives. The Council work proactively with our town and parish councils including through:

- Town and Parish Forum
- Meetings with the 6 larger parishes twice a year
- Ratcliffe on Soar Parish Meeting
- Development and Community Boards where parishes have a seat at the table

Coordinating this work to provide a fuller picture of the needs of our communities is a key priority. Highlighting opportunities for working better together and engaging more effectively will bring benefits for all.

Due to the housing development taking place across the Borough many of our existing communities are growing significantly and, in some cases, new communities are being created. There is a key role for the Borough to integrate and establish these new communities. We will work with developers on this, alongside town and parish councils, learning from what others have done to create a sense of community, enhancing quality of life and pride in place.

- **Effective use of funding both public and private**

Delivery of infrastructure to support new developments is critical but can often be challenging. Many developments in the Borough require S106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments which are there to contribute to the costs of required infrastructure associated with that development for example education, health, public transport etc. We will work proactively with our partners to secure the release of funding in a timely manner to support the delivery of infrastructure.

A barrier to development can often be the scale of infrastructure costs or the upfront costs required ahead of any return being made from the development. We have been successful on previous projects in intervening to secure funding to accelerate the delivery of development, ensuring the infrastructure is in place to support the development. For employment sites specifically the Council has secured funding to deliver industrial and office space, this can often be the catalyst to trigger other development on a site. Examples of this can be seen at Cotgrave where 11 small industrial units were constructed using funding from the Local Growth Fund of £1.8m as well as Bingham Business Centre where £3m of ERDF and Local Growth funding contributed to the costs of new offices. Both developments are fully let and demonstrate the Council's ability to deliver what is right for our businesses with relatively small investments.

The Council will continue to work with public sector partners, landowners and developers to identify sites that are not being progressed and look for solutions.

## **AMBITION 2 Support our town and village centres to continue to thrive now and create a collective vision for their future**

Town and village centres are an integral part of local communities, their offer impacting on a person's decision to live and visit a place. Whilst their role within communities may be changing, becoming places that are as much about leisure and experience as shopping they will remain a critical part of our local infrastructure.

Despite recent challenges including covid and cost of living pressures, town and village centres across Rushcliffe continue to thrive, due to the size of most centres they have been largely shielded from the closure of some of the larger chain stores that have been seen over recent times. This

means there are not large vacant spaces on the high streets that can be seen in other areas of the country, particularly in cities. We know however that as a growing Borough and with the changing role of the high street we, now more than ever, need to be working with our partners to support our town and village centres.

- **Retail reviews to understand the health of our high streets**

Rushcliffe has 7 main town centres with some other smaller village centres across the area. The centres are all performing well with low vacancy rates (figures from April 2023):

Centre	Footfall (average per month)	Vacant units	% of independents
Bingham	466,000	5	70%
Cotgrave	213,000	0	73%
East Leake	206,000	3	65%
Keyworth	86,000	3	70%
Radcliffe on Trent	263,000	3	73%
Ruddington	314,000	4	82%
West Bridgford	1,300,000	13	46%

Some recently commissioned retail reviews highlighted some recommendations for action to further enhance the offer in our town centres. Having this number of town centres, each with a unique identity of its own creates a resource challenge for us. In addition the Borough Council does not have much direct control with no land holdings in most of our town centres therefore we need to work with our partners in public and private sector to deliver on our ambitions.

The recommendations in the reviews included initiatives that could be delivered across all the town centres including engagement with key stakeholder groups for example landlords and business owners; collaborating with local institutions to organise activities and events and provide targeted support for high street businesses.

Some of this work has already begun, particularly the business support as UKSPF has been used to provide targeted business support as well grants targeted at high street businesses to improve shop fronts, develop their online presence or introduce sustainability measures. The Council will focus on bringing together key stakeholders in town centres to explore opportunities to work together in specific areas or on priorities.

- **A vision for our town and village centres**

As the footfall figures in the table above show the main town centre is West Bridgford with a good mix of high street businesses including many hospitality venues, access to Bridgford Park and location of 2 high profile sports grounds it has fared very well in the face of recent challenges. However, we know maintaining this strong position will not happen without intervention and ongoing support and investment.

One such intervention is the pedestrianisation of Central Avenue in West Bridgford which is an ambition of the Council. Pedestrianising Central Avenue will bring significant economic benefits, creating a more accessible and attractive place that encourages people to stay, it will create space for businesses to have more outside seating and provide a safer more family friendly environment. This project is challenging for a number of reasons not least of which is the lack of funding to deliver. However, we will continue to work with our partners, particularly the County Council, to explore this

opportunity further. We will explore ways to attract investment to support West Bridgford, to ensure the town centre remains vibrant and can respond to the increasing demands that will come with the growth in the area.

Pedestrianisation is not the only intervention though and, if appropriate, it needs to be part of a wider vision for West Bridgford that considers the growth happening in the area including at Sharp Hill as well as Gamston; its proximity and links with the City and developments in the area. We will work closely with our partners such as Nottinghamshire County Council to influence any plans that will impact on our economy. The recent consultation on the future of County Hall is an example of this, located in West Bridgford this is a key site in the Borough. Ensuring the site is developed in the right way, with complementary uses that will enhance the local economy will have a big impact at this gateway into the Borough.

We know that our town and village centres are not the same, each with their own unique challenges as well as opportunities. We have worked with businesses and key stakeholders across all of our town and village centres for many years and this strong relationship provides an excellent foundation to build upon. We will develop a vision, where one does not already exist, for the other 6 main town and village centres, alongside the parish and town councils. These will take time to create and should be seen as long-term plans for the future of our towns, they will be ambitious but realistic with some short- and medium-term steps to take.

The Council has demonstrated its ability to deliver large scale regeneration projects with the redevelopment of Cotgrave. This included:

- Demolition of existing buildings including housing, medical centre and library
- Development of a new multiservice centre now home to the medical centre, library, police and Rushcliffe Community Voluntary Service
- Refurbishment of existing retail units
- Creation of new office space

This significant project took a number of years and involved a large number of partners led by the Council. Thanks to the innovative approach of the Council external funding to deliver this was minimal. The result is a thriving town centre with increased footfall, a strong mix of retail, service and hospitality businesses and currently no empty units.

### **AMBITION 3 Enhance and showcase all the Borough has to offer as a place to live and visit.**

The Borough is home to some notable attractions that draw people into the area including the City Ground, Trent Bridge and Holme Pierrepont. These along with access to green space, attractive town and village centres and local museums and heritage assets make Rushcliffe a great place to live and visit. As well as these attractions the Borough has a strong events programme throughout the year which includes Lark in the Park, Rushcliffe Food Festival, Sunday Cinema and Christmas lights attracting thousands of people into Rushcliffe.

- **Visitor economy**

We recognise that we need to do more to promote Rushcliffe, celebrating our assets to showcase what the Borough offers. The Council will work with partners to maximise the impact that the visitor economy can have, data from across the County and City shows:

- Value of tourism is £2.05bn
- Volume of visits is 32.9m (3.6m overnight stays)

- Tourism support 22,522 jobs
- Economic impact of each day visit is £43.58
- Economic impact of overnight stays is £226.19
- Average length of stay for those staying visits is 2.8 days

In Rushcliffe sport plays a key role in attracting large numbers of visitors to the area (figures from 2023/24 season):

- 558,326 spectators at Nottingham Forest, Premier League home matches for men's first team
- Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club – 10,000 on average

This is a unique opportunity for Rushcliffe and the Council will work with the sports clubs including Nottingham Forest and Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club as well as Nottingham Rugby and Holme Pierrepont; to better communicate the wider offer across the Borough. Visitors to matches and events at these locations, which extends beyond sport as most offer conference facilities, already bring significant economic benefit to the Borough but by working more proactively together this could be built upon. Rushcliffe is the home of sport and the Council will work hard to promote and maximise that.

Proposed redevelopment of key sites along the River Trent provide an opportunity to enhance the offer in Rushcliffe. This includes Holme Pierrepont where there are plans for redevelopment including increased overnight accommodation and increasing visitor numbers. In addition the redevelopment of County Hall, a key site and gateway to the Borough, will have a big impact on Rushcliffe and particularly West Bridgford. The Borough Council will continue to work closely with colleagues at the County to bring forward these and other developments in the right way in the Borough.

The impact and value that having attractive and thriving town centres play has been covered elsewhere in the Strategy, but they are critical here too. Promotion of the Borough will include our town/village centres and rural businesses alongside the tourist attractions and activities. The Council has been successful in West Bridgford with this through 'West Bridgford Way' a place branding initiative that includes a website and social media channels to promote the offer. There is an opportunity to consider the future of this and how that can be developed, creating stronger links with businesses as well as considering the wider opportunity for other town and village centres in the Borough.

The East Midlands County Combined Authority has identified the visitor economy as one of their priorities and want to work with local authorities and other stakeholders to promote the area, develop the offer and realise the value of the sector. In addition Visit Nottinghamshire have recently gained Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status. Visit Nottinghamshire will work with partners, including Rushcliffe Borough Council, to develop a Destination Management Plan (DMP). The Council will proactively engage in these plans and partnerships as they develop and ensure any activity in Rushcliffe is complementary to that at a County and regional level. The Council will also consider developing a DMP for Rushcliffe to enable it to focus on what the Borough has to offer.

- **Events and markets**

A range of markets operate across the Borough including at Bingham, East Leake, West Bridgford and Ruddington. All, excluding the Thursday Market in Bingham, are operated privately or by groups of volunteers. Delivering successful markets is challenging and resource intensive and therefore it is

important to fully understand the impact they have and, where they are supported by the local authority, that they provide good value for money and positively contribute to the town centre. This also needs to consider the role of the market and the audience it attracts and supports.

We will review the impact that events and markets have in Rushcliffe, identifying where we have the opportunity to do more but also where we may need to review what we are doing. For example the relationship between high street businesses and market traders can often be challenging and whilst it is inevitable that a market will create competition this needs to be managed in the right way to have a positive impact in towns. Events and markets should add value and draw people in, we need to ensure these objectives are being met and develop the offer to meet the aspirations of the Borough.

### **Investment and infrastructure**

This priority is all about attracting new businesses to the Borough and working with our partners in securing the right infrastructure to support growth.

Our ambitions to support delivery of this priority are:

#### **AMBITION 4 – support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar PowerStation, a key site for the region, a gateway into the Borough.**

Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station was decommissioned at the end of September 2024, this is a historic moment for the Country as it signalled the end of coal fired power generation in the UK. The 270 ha site is iconic for residents and visitors alike, with its cooling towers visible from many areas of the Borough, and beyond. It is important that this landmark site gets redeveloped to enable it to continue to play an integral part in Rushcliffe's, the wider region and country's economy.

The site is part of the East Midlands Freeport (EMF), announced by Government in March 2021. It is the UK's only inland Freeport, it will drive economic regeneration across the East Midlands. The Borough Council are one of the partners involved in EMF focussing on the vision to create tens of thousands of jobs; boosting skills and accelerating the regions commitment to decarbonisation and Net Zero through low carbon energy investment. The Borough Council have adopted a Local Development Order (LDO) for the site which sets out some parameters for future development and is intended accelerate delivery to maximise the opportunity of the incentives provided by EMF.

The LDO includes ambitions for the future of the site which will be transformed into a centre for energy production and storage, advanced manufacturing and industry. It will deliver the technology and industry required to help move towards a net-zero carbon future.

The Site will become a centre for:

- Advanced manufacturing, including technology needed to transition to net-zero.
- Green and low-carbon energy generation, and energy storage for more efficient energy use.

The Council will continue to play an active role in the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar including through EMF. We will convene partners to coordinate and progress discussions and delivery, ensuring alignment and working together to achieve the significant ambitions for the site.

#### **AMBITION 5 realising the opportunity the Borough presents, attracting new businesses and investment into the Borough**

In addition to Ratcliffe on Soar there is around 70 ha of allocated employment land in the Borough. These sites are located next to housing sites and are owned by private developers or landowners. Whilst housing development is progressing well on most of the 6 strategic sites the employment land is often slower to be developed.

- **Development of employment land**

There are exceptions to this of course and Fairham located on the A453 is one of those. Interest in the employment land is strong and already businesses are moving onto the site, ahead of any residents. This high-quality development can provide a blueprint for the expectation of other sites in the Borough. The Borough Council will work closely with the developers and new businesses at Fairham to capitalise on this opportunity for the wider benefit of attracting investment across the Borough as well as further promoting the site itself.

Having this amount of land allocated, much of which is ready now, creates a huge opportunity for Rushcliffe and the wider region. A better understanding of why sites have stalled and what we can do together to unlock these is needed. Inevitably one element of this is funding and viability and we need to raise the profile of the Borough to attract the required investment to bring forward this growth.

We will use our influencing role to ensure, where we can, that the right development is coming forward that creates a range of jobs for the benefit of our local communities. We already require that house builders provide an employment and skills plan for housing developments which commits them to delivering employment and training opportunities during the construction phase. We will explore this option for employment sites too but focus also on opportunities when the business is operational. To facilitate this we will work with key local stakeholders including the Universities to highlight the skills available locally and the support there is to upskill and reskill as required to meet the needs of the business.

- **Attracting investment**

The EMCCA will play a key role in the future delivery of inward investment activity, whilst no detailed plans have been developed yet it is hoped this will complement the existing offer from other partners including local authorities. We need to ensure that any new investors understand the offer in the region but also in each place and that the narrative on this is consistent. In addition, that the point of contact for enquiries is clear and that this is then coordinated with all relevant partners. Rushcliffe will work closely with the EMCCA to ensure there is an understanding of the opportunity that Rushcliffe presents and to ensure this can be achieved.

The Council has a strong track record of investing in and securing funding for the development of employment space for businesses, the Council's property portfolio performs well with close to 100% occupation most of the time. We understand the local market and the demand through this direct delivery role as well as our wider relationship with businesses. We will maintain our focus on supporting this type of investment and be innovative in our approach to delivery where there is opportunity for us to do this. We understand that EMCCA's focus is likely to be on securing the larger scale investment and we can complement this with a more local focus that provides a different offer and collectively support businesses of different sizes.

Whilst it is important to attract a range of businesses offering different opportunities for residents with varying skills the allocated land available for business growth, coupled with the location of Ratcliffe on Soar provides an opportunity to see emerging high-value sectors locating in the Borough

accessing the research and development opportunity within our local universities. Creating a clustering effect that provides highly skilled jobs, meeting the skills level of local residents and providing and acting as a catalyst for further investment.

- **The right space for existing and new businesses**

The larger sites are likely to attract medium to big businesses but as the data shows, most Rushcliffe businesses are micro to small. It is therefore important to support these businesses with the space they need, in Rushcliffe, to facilitate their growth. The Council would like to see a range of accommodation in the Borough to cater to the needs of different businesses from large offices and industrial space to incubators. Mapping done by the County Council shows the provision of different employment space across the County. This shows that there is a lack of incubator and managed workspace in the Borough.

The Council will play an active role to facilitate the delivery of the right new employment space, considering where the best places for development or repurposing may be based on an understanding of the overall offer and therefore what the gaps and opportunities are. We are committed to promoting diversified employment across a range sectors.

- **Sustainable growth**

The Council has a target to be Net Zero by 2030 in its own operations, it also has an important role to play in being a leader of place and influencing others to achieve the same including residents and businesses. There are sites that have been allocated for employment growth and these will be the focus for securing investment into the Borough.

From managing our own commercial assets, we know that businesses are demanding more on sustainability and considering the energy efficiency of a building before moving in. At Fairham the developers are building to BREEM excellent standard because that is what they need to do to attract businesses to the site. The Council will identify and highlight exemplar developments, like this, across the Borough to showcase what we are trying to achieve.

Ratcliffe on Soar provides an incredible opportunity to put Rushcliffe on the map as a place leading the way towards a zero carbon future with the development of new technology and green energy generation. The redevelopment of the site will have a significant impact on the Borough and creates the opportunity to attract significant additional investment and sustainable growth.

### **AMBITION 6 working with our partners to ensure the delivery of required infrastructure to support economic growth**

Having the right infrastructure in place is what underpins the ability to deliver good growth. It covers a large number of things from roads to schools to sewers and the challenges of delivering infrastructure in a timely manner are well understood and articulated. Delivery of infrastructure is the responsibility of a number of different agencies who need to work together to deliver what is required.

- **Strategic infrastructure**

There is a lot of work happening to understand and plan for the impact of growth in the Borough, this is particularly focussed on the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar. Significant investment is required to ensure that existing transport links can accommodate the growth created by the

redevelopment of the Powerstation. This work must consider the cumulative impact of the development and other neighbouring developments including East Midlands Airport. Whilst we are not the highways authority, we continue to be actively engaged in discussions to ensure that this work considers and mitigates against wider impacts including on local roads.

A Stations Growth Strategy has been commissioned by Government and is now being developed by EMCCA. This will include East Midlands Parkway (EMP) which is next to, although currently not directly accessible from, Ratcliffe on Soar. This work will produce a high-level business case for the EMP and what new investment could unlock in that area to make greater use of the station.

One key aspect of the potential development of EMP is to make it more accessible, creating a multi-modal hub that links to key sites within and outside the Borough including East Midlands Airport and the City of Nottingham. One option for this is the extension the tram from the Clifton Park and Ride to EMP. There is a protected route through the Fairham development to facilitate this however this is only a very small proportion of the journey. The delivery of this is subject to a business case and significant investment from the public and private sector but the creation of EMCCA provides the opportunity for this to be something that could become a reality.

- **Public transport and rural challenges**

Being a predominantly rural area creates additional challenges for infrastructure particularly public transport. This was raised by the CLA as a key concern for their members as businesses located in rural areas struggle to attract employees as they cannot get there. This is reflected in data as 43% of people who live in Rushcliffe use a car or van to get to work, this is compared to 3.3% who use public transport.<sup>1</sup> This of course also linked to the travel to work area as many people travel outside the Borough for work, 23.1% travel between 5km and 20km to work. In addition 43.4% work mainly from home, this is compared to 27.1% across Nottinghamshire.

The provision of public transport in rural areas can often be a problem of viability for the operators, with longer journeys and fewer customers. We understand this challenge but are keen to think differently about the solutions for how people can access services and employment from areas across the Borough. Nottinghamshire County Council, as transport authority, are doing some work on this including 'on demand' bus services. We will work with the County Council to explore options to support existing and new businesses across the Borough. This will be a balance of trialling new initiatives in the short to medium term to identifying investment to make the required strategic infrastructure improvements. EMCCA will play an integral role in these discussions and plans and provide the opportunity to secure the required investment to deliver.

In addition to public transport the Council are keen to encourage active travel to facilitate growth. Working with partners to improve foot and cycle ways within and between key existing and new settlements, businesses and attractions. The Council has an existing plan to support active travel in place and the role that, that can play in supporting economic growth will be developed.

- **Broadband**

The vast majority of Rushcliffe is well served for Broadband connectivity, supporting the delivery of the roll out of broadband connectivity is the responsibility of Nottinghamshire County Council who provided the following information:

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<sup>1</sup> Census 2021



- Rushcliffe received 16,099 broadband connections through the Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire programme, of which 1,624 were full-fibre connections
- 98.62% of Rushcliffe premises are able to access at least 30Mbps broadband service (superfast speeds). This is 0.13% behind the county as a whole
- 80.96% of Rushcliffe premises are able to access gigabit-capable broadband service.
- 53.17% of Rushcliffe premises are able to access full-fibre broadband service.

This is very positive however there are still gaps in provision and technology is changing all the time. There is a lot of further work happening including Project Gigabit which is a national £5bn broadband delivery programme. There are 20,000 premises across Nottinghamshire that have been identified as potentially benefitting from this and approx. 3412 in Rushcliffe. These figures are all subject to detailed design and survey work being undertaken.

In addition to this there is the GigaHubs project which is set to provide gigabit-capable broadband connectivity to eligible public sector buildings, identified by their rural location. Rushcliffe has 4 sites selected for delivery:

- Bingham Library
- Cotgrave Library
- Keyworth Library
- Radcliffe-on-Trent Library

The sites may change subject again to design and survey work but for those that can be connected it is anticipated this will be done by March 2026.

The Borough Council will continue to work with our colleagues at the County Council to understand and help communicate plans across the Borough as well as highlight any areas where poor connectivity is impacting on our residents and businesses.

### **Business support, growth and skills**

The business support landscape has changed and will continue to change over the coming years with the loss of European Structural Investment Fund, introduction of UKSPF and more recently the establishment of the EMCCA. This priority is about ensuring we continue to provide our businesses the support they need.

Our ambitions to support delivery of this priority are:

#### **AMBITION 7 ensuring the provision of the right support for our businesses that promotes their growth, innovation, productivity and move to becoming more sustainable**

Providing businesses with the environment they need to thrive and grow is how we need to see business support. This does not consist of one thing in isolation it is about several complementary factors all working together, whilst this is challenging to create the Council is committed to working with our partners to begin to create this, it includes:

- People with the right skills
- Infrastructure to provide easy access for customers, suppliers and employees
- The provision of the right space for different sectors of business, of different sizes and at different stages of their growth journeys
- Provision of business support including networking, one to one, peer networks, workshops and training

- Access to finance including from the public and private sector to support growth
- Openness to exploring collaboration between the public and private sector to drive innovation particularly through universities.

This list is not exhaustive but highlights some key aspect of a strong business support environment, much of the above has already been picked up in the strategy. The ambition is more directly about the provision of business support, acknowledging that this needs to be delivered alongside these other elements.

- **The business support landscape**

In 2022 the Government announced the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). UKSPF and REPF were allocated directly to local authorities and had 3 themes; Communities and Place, Business Support and People and Skills. Since the funding was awarded in 2022 the Council have established and commissioned various initiatives, some with other districts across Nottinghamshire, to support businesses and residents. This has created a shift in the business support and skills landscapes with a more tailored local offer however this of course leads to more of a 'postcode lottery' of support that is available. Whilst delivering jointly commissioned initiatives has been challenging it is important that the learning from this is not lost and is used to help shape future business support provision that it is anticipated will be commissioned by EMCCA.

Rushcliffe Business Partnership has been established for 25 years and is a partnership between the Council and local businesses, a steering group informs and coordinates the work of the Partnership. Over 1000 local businesses are members of the partnership and have access to networking opportunities and events. The Partnership is very successful in providing support to micro and small businesses and facilitating connections. The Partnership has explored options for doing more to support businesses across the Borough but with extensive support available for free from other providers the focus has remained on the networking and events. There is an opportunity now with the changing landscape to consider again what could be delivered and review the Partnerships offer.

- **Driving innovation across sectors**

A fundamental, cross cutting priority for future growth and prosperity is innovation. This is not just about the latest product to market, it is about how businesses across sectors can develop and grow. Innovation can:

- Improve productivity through efficiency gains and possible automation
- Create new markets and transform industries
- Increased competitiveness in the market but also to ensure survival and growth
- Job creation and skills development
- Sustainability and resource management
- Improve economic resilience

Driving innovation is not just about business support but this will be a key aspect to ensure businesses get the support they need and understand the opportunity for their business. Like with other business support it is important we get the communication right on this; ensuring businesses understand the opportunity and how it can be applied in their business. This needs the input of advisors with the right skills to tailor advice across sector and size of business. The Universities in the area will be a key partner in the development of this support.

- **Business support that is right for Rushcliffe**

In the consultation exercise we asked what sort of business support was needed. The top 3 responses were:

1. Access to finance
2. Sustainability
3. Business planning

This is support that is currently on offer through the Rushcliffe Accelerator, which was commissioned by the Council using UKSPF and is being delivered by East Midlands Chamber. We work hard, with our partners, to promote this offer to businesses, we understand that the business landscape can often be overwhelming and confusing, and it is the Council's role to assist businesses with navigating that. This is something that has been a challenge for some time with a range of providers offering support, much of which is free to access. Business Support Advisors should help businesses to identify the support that is right for them however a fundamental review of the business support landscape, with the introduction of EMCCA is required. Considering what is available, who is delivering, how is it funded and how much take up there is. There will be opportunities for streamlining the offer and better tailoring what is available to different businesses.

As already outlined Rushcliffe has a large number of micro and small businesses operating across a range of sectors. Many strategies choose to focus on a particular sector and explore opportunities to enhance growth of that sector. That is not the intention for this strategy because of the diversity of our current business base. We see opportunities though for clustering of some industries particularly around areas like Ratcliffe on Soar linked to research, development and innovation in our local universities. Business support in these areas does need to be tailored and this will be developed as the site in that area and others are progressed.

We see that a broader focus for Rushcliffe is the right approach with the support to enable businesses to grow, be more productive and sustainable. We also need to retain the ability to be flexible and responsive to the changing business base in the Borough. Creating a business support environment that caters to a range of sectors and sizes of business therefore needs to be the priority.

- **Supporting our businesses to operate more sustainably**

The Council have committed to net zero by 2030 in its own operation however there is also a role for us to play as leaders of place to influence and support others to work towards the same. This includes businesses of all sizes that operate across the Borough. It can be daunting for a business, particularly a small one, to understand where to start and we therefore need to ensure that support available is right for the businesses but also that the offer is communicated in a way that is easy to understand and access.

Using its allocation of UKSPF the Council has commissioned business support with a focus on sustainability. This is being delivered via workshops and one to one and is being well received. There is an opportunity to review this programme and identify what is working well and what else is required, this insight, along with that from other programmes being delivered should shape future provision delivered by the EMCCA.

**AMBITION 8 ensuring our businesses can access the people they need with the right skills to enable them to grow**

The most important part of any business is its people, being able to attract and retain the right talent is critical for all businesses. Having a local workforce with the right skills for local businesses makes an area attractive for investment and supports the growth of existing businesses. In addition, there are well established links between the right work and the positive impact this can have on an individual's physical and mental health.

- **Skills mismatch**

The challenge of matching skills provision in an area with the skills needs of businesses is not new or unique to Rushcliffe. There is a need to better understand current and future skills needs in the region and work with colleges, universities and training providers on delivery of relevant courses. This can be challenging as there may be low take up for some courses, making them less viable however it is important that collectively we develop the skills offer to meet future demand. This should not just be aimed at those currently out of work but needs to include reskilling and upskilling particularly for high growth areas with some targeting of individuals with existing relevant qualifications and experience.

This is a challenge that has the attention of EMCCA and with the devolution of skills budgets including the Adult Skills Fund (formally Adult Education Budget) there is an opportunity to have an impact on this for the benefit of all.

- **Recruitment challenges**

There are recruitment challenges that exist in many sectors across the Country, being able to address these challenges is key to supporting businesses to survive and grow. As highlighted by the responses from the public consultation there is training that is required that is more about fundamental skills for future employment rather than things that are specific to a sector. As well as considering how we, working with our partners, can reduce the skills mismatch as highlighted above there needs to be a focus on these more immediate skills challenges. The Council will work with our partners to understand these in more detail and look for opportunities to address them. There is the opportunity now with the EMCCA having responsibility for the Adult Skills Fund (formally the Adult Education budget) for the Council to shape this. The Council have delivered a package of skills support through UKSPF funded training courses; providing a mix of specific training as well as the opportunity for funding for a course to upskill and reskill individuals and employees within businesses across Rushcliffe.

There are people in our communities who want to work but face barriers to accessing employment. Work is required to unlock these barriers including considering more inclusive recruitment where possible. Like with other things this also requires a supporting infrastructure to enable businesses to do this and support those people that need it to access and retain the right employment for them. The Council will work with partners, including those in health, to develop this supporting infrastructure.

- **Retaining talent**

Across Nottinghamshire there is a challenge with graduate retention, with a number of universities on our doorstep including the University of Nottingham as well as Nottingham Trent University there is significant potential for cultivating and retaining the right talent locally to fulfil skills needs. However, many graduates tend to leave the area to access opportunities elsewhere, work needs to be done to better link up universities with the opportunities available in Nottinghamshire and of course Rushcliffe. More proactive work with the Universities is required and the Council will develop

these relationships, with our district, county and city colleagues to make Rushcliffe more attractive to young professionals.

In addition to a challenge of retaining graduates there has been an increase of approx. 9.1% in economic inactivity in Rushcliffe population aged 50 – 64. This is reflective of national increases in early retirement figures, which has seen an increase since Covid. This is a significant loss of experience across the workforce and the opportunity to attract some of these early retirees back should be considered. This includes through flexible recruitment enabling employees to establish a better work life balance and bring experience and expertise back into the workforce. As well as early retirees this flexible working would open opportunities for individuals with caring or other responsibilities which can make working traditional hours difficult.

Engaging these groups in entrepreneurship activities could assist with retaining and developing talent in the area. In addition, this could drive up start up rates in Rushcliffe and innovation across sectors.

- **Supporting residents to access skills and employment**

To enable our businesses to access the right people with the right skills we also need to ensure our residents are supported to gain these skills.

In March 2024 there were 1,410 people in Rushcliffe claiming out of work benefits, this equates to 1.9% of the population, lower than Nottinghamshire (3.2%) and England (3.9%). This of course does not represent the full picture as some residents who are out of work may not be claiming benefits for various reasons including support from family. Another measure is economic inactivity<sup>2</sup>, of those that fall into that category in Rushcliffe the reasons for this are:

- Retired – 33.2%
- Long term sick – 25.6%
- Student 16.2%
- Family – 11%
- Other – 14%

Due to the relative low numbers of people who are unemployed or economically inactive Rushcliffe has not been a priority area for employment and skill support when this is commissioned across a wider geography. We have had the opportunity in 2024/25 to directly commission some skills support using our allocation of UKSPF. This has proven to be very popular and demonstrates what the Council can deliver when it has the resources to do so. It is anticipated that such support will be commissioned at EMCCA level in the future and it is important that the experience that has been gained from the allocation of UKSPF is not lost but used as a foundation to be built upon. The Council will work with our partners to ensure that, whilst it may not need the same level of support as other areas, our residents who need the support do not miss out. A targeted approach within communities can be more expensive to deliver however it delivers results.

As well as engaging with EMCCA to inform the future employment and skills provision we will work with our partners across the area to support residents. This includes voluntary and community organisations that may be providing support to residents for different reasons e.g. community groups, this provides the relationship to build upon to ensure the people who really need it are aware of and can access the required support.

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<sup>2</sup> People not in employment who have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks (source ONS)

- **South Nottinghamshire Employment and Skills Board**

The Council have been working with Broxtowe and Gedling Borough Councils to explore the opportunity to establish a South Nottinghamshire Employment and Skills Providers Forum as well as an Employment and Skills Board. This already exists in north Nottinghamshire, creating a coherent voice on skills priorities and challenges. The development of this governance structure in South Nottinghamshire is included in the action plan, it will be reliant on the support and engagement of businesses and providers but if successful will enable a more coherent offer and 'ask' for South Nottinghamshire.

**AMBITION 9 developing stronger relationships with the big businesses in our Borough to identify opportunities to work together and champion the Borough as a place to do business**

The Borough is home to 20 big businesses (those with 250+ employees), 0.4% of the total businesses in the Borough. This includes Uniper, British Gypsum, British Geological Survey, Midland HR, John Deere and Vision Express. This diversity of type and sector of businesses reflects the wider business community and the opportunity there is for promotion of the Borough as a place to do business.

Despite the relatively small number of big businesses, the impact they have on the Borough is significant. It is important therefore that they are engaged to be collaborative and proactive partners in supporting the prosperity of the Borough. The Council already has good working relationships with many of these but there is the opportunity to build on this through more engagement with the Council as well as with each other.

This work has already started through the Low Carbon Big Business Club which has been successful in bringing together these businesses to discuss the work they have been doing on sustainability. It has been identified however that the focus for this group needs to be widened to enable other important topics to be discussed. The Borough Council will review the Low Carbon Big Business Club and work with the businesses to establish a Big Business Forum.

One of the objectives for the Forum and the relationship with these businesses is the role that they can play in championing the Borough. These global businesses have influence beyond that of the Council and other public bodies to promote Rushcliffe. As the businesses sit across a variety of sectors this further extends this opportunity for each of them to be a leading voice within their sector for other big businesses but also the wider supply chain.

This influencing role can go beyond the opportunity for investment in the Borough though it is also about promoting and, where relevant, acting collectively on other priorities. This includes:

- Sustainability
- Addressing skills needs and inclusive recruitment
- The opportunity of digital/AI
- Peer networking and support

**Governance and next steps**

Delivery of the Economic Growth Strategy action plan will be monitored by the Rushcliffe Strategic Growth Board and the Council.

The Growth Board is made up of key local stakeholders including; Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham Trent University, University of Nottingham, Homes England, and Borough Council Councillors and senior officers. They will be responsible for reviewing activity against actions within the plan and recommending further steps to be taken.

The purpose of having a supporting action plan is to ensure that it can be updated to remain relevant for the people and businesses of Rushcliffe. As identified throughout the strategy there are areas where the Borough Council will seek to understand more through engagement and research and develop further associated plans. The action plan can be responsive to change according to these new emerging findings and plans.

The Council, working with the Board, will identify performance measures to help with monitoring progress of the plan. Ensuring these are relevant to the activity within the plan and can be measured.

We are committed to supporting the economy of Rushcliffe to deliver good growth that is resilient and inclusive. We will work hard with a wide range of partners and to ensure transparency will regularly communicate with our communities on what has been achieved and what more we have planned.

**Economic Growth Strategy Action Plan for Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC)  
2024/25**

**Place and Experience**

Ambitions	Actions	Lead
<p><b>AMBITION 1 Support the growth of Rushcliffe ensuring development enhances and integrates with existing communities and creates a great place to live, work and visit</b></p> <p>The Borough is growing rapidly with the delivery of 13,150 new homes before 2028 as set out in the Borough’s Local Plan. This growth provides an opportunity but also inevitably presents challenges. Creating places people want to live and work does not happen by accident, and we want to ensure we are working with our partners to deliver good growth that respects the unique character of the Borough, is sustainable and provides the right infrastructure to support the new and existing communities to continue to enjoy a good quality of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and Community Boards at:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bingham</li> <li>○ Fairham</li> <li>○ Newton</li> <li>○ Sharphill</li> <li>○ Gamston – when applicable</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring opportunities for working more closely with a range of partners to facilitate growth including East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) Homes England (HE), local universities and private sector</li> <li>• Engage with neighbouring local authorities to explore opportunities for collaboration, sharing best practise etc.</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging with our Town and Parish Councils to understand local priorities and support where possible               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bingham</li> <li>○ Cotgrave</li> <li>○ East Leake</li> <li>○ Keyworth</li> <li>○ Radcliffe on Trent</li> <li>○ Ruddington</li> <li>○ West Bridgford Local Area Forum</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work with partners to identify ways to integrate new residents into existing communities and establish new communities where required e.g. Fairham</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with partners to enable the release of S106 and CIL funding to provide the infrastructure to support development</li> </ul>	Planning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying funding (public and private) to accelerate delivery of housing and employment land</li> </ul>	All
<p><b>AMBITION 2 Support our town and village centres to continue to thrive now and create a collective vision for their future</b></p> <p>Town and village centres are an integral part of local communities, their offer impacting on a person’s decision to live and visit a place. Whilst their role within communities may be changing, becoming places that are as much about leisure and experience as shopping they will remain a critical part of our local infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver appropriate recommendations contained within the 7 district centre retail reviews               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Landlord/agents forums</li> <li>○ Retail groups/forums – including bringing together different areas to share best practise etc.</li> <li>○ Review of empty space and opportunity to work with landlords to promote</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public realm improvements on Central Avenue in West Bridgford working towards the opportunity for pedestrianisation</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of vision documents for each of our 7 largest town and village centres, starting with West Bridgford because of the significant plans for the area over the coming years including: new pedestrian and cycle bridge and the relocation of County Council away from County Hall and new and future housing growth in the area.</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
<p><b>AMBITION 3 Enhance and showcase all the Borough has to offer as a place to live and visit.</b></p> <p>The Borough is home to some notable attractions that draw people into the area including the City Ground, Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, Nottingham Rugby Club and Holme Pierrepont watersports centre. These along with access to green space, attractive town and village centres and local museums and heritage assets make Rushcliffe a great place to live and visit. As well as these attractions the Borough has a strong events programme throughout the year which includes Lark in the Park, Rushcliffe Food Festival, Sunday Cinema and Christmas lights attracting thousands of people into the area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage and inform the development of the Nottinghamshire Destination Management Plan which is currently being created by Visit Nottinghamshire</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Rushcliffe Destination Management Plan/Tourism Strategy to inform local activity and priorities</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More promotion of the tourism offer in Rushcliffe, working with partners e.g. City and County Councils as required.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tourism brochure/s</li> <li>○ Roundtable discussions with sports clubs and ongoing dialogue</li> <li>○ Meeting/workshop/networking with visitor economy businesses</li> <li>○ ‘Welcome to Rushcliffe’ signage</li> <li>○ Review of West Bridgford Way and exploring opportunities for its future</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of markets in the Borough, exploring opportunities to bring greater benefit to our town and village centres               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vision/strategy for markets in the Borough</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Economic Growth



## Investment and infrastructure

Ambitions	Actions	Lead
<p><b>AMBITION 4 – support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station, a key site for the region, a gateway into the Borough.</b></p> <p>Ratcliffe on Soar (ROS) Power Station is due to be decommissioned in September 2024, this is a historic moment for the Country as it signals the end of coal fired power generation in the UK. The 270ha site is iconic for residents and visitors alike, with its cooling towers visible from many areas of the Borough, and beyond. The vision for the site to be transformed into a centre for energy production and storage, advanced manufacturing and industry. It will deliver the technology and industry required to help move towards a net-zero carbon future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to proactively engage with local stakeholders including parish councils within Rushcliffe and just across the border in North West Leicestershire.</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with key stakeholders, particularly the site owners, to bring forward the right development that aligns with the vision for moving to a net-zero future.</li> </ul>	Economic Growth and Planning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to explore the wider opportunities that ROS can bring including though supply chain, development of other sites and promotion of the Borough.</li> </ul>	RBC
<p><b>AMBITION 5 realising the opportunity the Borough presents, attracting new businesses and investment into the Borough</b></p> <p>In addition to Ratcliffe on Soar there is around 70 ha of allocated employment land in the Borough. These sites are located next to housing sites and are owned by private developers or landowners. Whilst housing development is progressing well on most of the 6 strategic sites the employment land is often slower to be developed. This is for a number of reasons including the cost of land in the Borough, the unwillingness of private developers to build speculatively and the availability of Government funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish commercial developer forums to facilitate discussions to support unlocking development of allocated employment sites               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engagement with commercial developers</li> <li>○ Engagement with commercial agents</li> <li>○ Discussion with DBT, DIT etc</li> <li>○ Site specific meetings/discussions and links with other stakeholders e.g. education</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of the Borough as a place to do business to support inward investment opportunities working with our partners including EMCCA, Invest In Notts (IIN) and Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing employment space available and identify gaps in provision for investment               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Map existing provision</li> <li>○ Understand demand/market</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively engage with new businesses in the Borough to understand skills needs now and in the future               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on new / start up businesses</li> <li>○ Links with Rushcliffe Business Partnership</li> <li>○ Follow on from landlord / agents forums (high street and employment land)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobby Government to increase requirements for energy efficiency of new buildings</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase exemplar low carbon commercial developments to highlight what can be achieved.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fairham – commercial is BREEAM excellent and Countryside doing Modern Methods of Construction</li> <li>○ Bingham employment land</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Economic Growth
<p><b>AMBITION 6 working with our partners to ensure the delivery of required infrastructure to support economic growth</b></p> <p>Having the right infrastructure in place is what underpins the ability to deliver good growth. It covers many things from roads to schools to sewers and the challenges of delivering infrastructure in a timely manner are well understood and articulated. Delivery of infrastructure is the responsibility of a number of different agencies who need to work together to deliver what is required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively engage with the Stations Growth Strategy, which includes East Mids Parkway, being developed by EMCCA</li> </ul>	Economic Growth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to engage with the development of infrastructure plans to support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar, ensuring the impact on local roads is included in assessments and mitigation measures put in place.</li> </ul>	RBC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Nottinghamshire County Council to explore innovative ways to deliver public transport in rural areas and pilot this in Rushcliffe</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to promote active travel across the Borough</li> </ul>	RBC and NCC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with the County Council on further upgrades/roll outs of Broadband ensuring messages are communicated to residents and businesses and areas with poor coverage are highlighted</li> </ul>	NCC

**Business support growth and skills**

Ambitions	Actions	Lead
<p><b>AMBITION 7 ensuring the provision of the right support for our businesses that promotes their growth, productivity and move to becoming more sustainable</b></p> <p>Providing businesses with the environment they need to thrive and grow is how we need to see business support. This does not consist of one thing in isolation it is about a number of complementary factors all working together, whilst this is challenging to create the Council is committed to working with our partners to collectively provide what our businesses need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with EMCCA and partners to shape the future business support landscape ensuring this is right for Rushcliffe</li> <li>• Review Rushcliffe Business Partnership and consider opportunities for its growth and development in the future</li> <li>• Support our businesses to operate more sustainably through the provision of advice and support and, where available, funding.</li> <li>• Work with new/growing businesses to deliver sustainability measures for new buildings in the Borough</li> </ul>	<p>Economic Growth</p> <p>Economic Growth</p> <p>Economic Growth</p>
<p><b>AMBITION 8 ensuring our businesses can access the people they need with the right skills to enable them to grow</b></p> <p>The most important part of any business is its people, being able to attract and retain the right talent is critical for all businesses. Having a local workforce with the right skills for local businesses makes an area attractive for investment and supports the growth of existing businesses. In addition, there are well established links between the right work and the positive impact this can have on an individual's physical and mental health. The Council will work with partners including; County Council, EMCCA, Further and Higher Education to support our residents into or back into work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with EMCCA and partners to minimise the skills gap and ensure there are the skills available to support the growth of our existing and new businesses</li> <li>• Work with partners to develop the supporting infrastructure to ensure that those that need have support to help them access training and employment</li> <li>• Promote inclusive recruitment across sectors, highlighting the opportunity this can create for businesses and the economy</li> <li>• Work with universities and partners to address the issue of graduate retention, showcasing the range of opportunities in the area</li> <li>• Work with businesses to seek ways to encourage early retirees, those with caring responsibility into/back into the workforce through more flexible recruitment</li> <li>• Work with schools to enable a better understanding of future skills needs and the opportunities for young people</li> <li>• Establish a South Nottinghamshire Providers Forum and Employment and Skills Board working with Gedling and Broxtowe Borough Councils</li> <li>• Work with developers on Employment &amp; Skills plans for new developments – including commercial development and the job opportunities created</li> </ul>	<p>Economic Growth</p> <p>Economic Growth</p> <p>Economic Growth</p> <p>Economic Growth</p> <p>Economic Growth</p> <p>Economic Growth</p> <p>Economic Growth</p>
<p><b>AMBITION 9 developing stronger relationships with the big businesses in our Borough to identify opportunities to work together and champion the Borough as a place to do business</b></p> <p>The Borough is home to 20 big businesses (those with 250+ employees), 0.4% of the total businesses in the Borough. This includes Uniper, British Gypsum, British Geological Survey, Midland HR, John Deere and Vision Express. This diversity of type and sector of businesses reflects the wider business community and the opportunity there is for promotion of the Borough as a place to do business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and build on what has been done previously by RBC and others and look at options for engaging with big businesses in the Borough</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for businesses to act as champions of the Borough, promoting Rushcliffe as a place to do business</li> </ul>	<p>Economic Growth</p> <p>Economic Growth</p>



## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name and brief description of proposal/project / policy / service being assessed:

The Economic Growth Strategy has been developed to promote sustainable growth in our Borough that is resilient and inclusive.

Information used to analyse the effects of equality:

Extensive consultation has been undertaken in the development of the strategy including:

- Discussion at the Rushcliffe Strategic Growth Board
  - Discussion at the Rushcliffe Business Partnership Steering Group
  - Workshop with a number of colleagues from Nottinghamshire County Council
  - Public consultation on the proposed priorities which went out to local businesses, residents, stakeholders and Councillors.
  - One to one discussion with the Countryside and Land Association (CLA)
  - One to one discussion with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
  - One to one discussion with East Midlands Chamber (EMC)
  - One to one discussion with some of the Boroughs big businesses
- Data gathering and analysis  
Review of the Nottinghamshire Observatory to provide further data insights

First stage assessment:

*As specified in the guidance note you need to answer the following questions to identify a full assessment is required.*

1. Could the policy affect one or more groups in a different way to others? No
2. Could different groups have different needs in relation to the policy? No
3. Does the policy actually or potentially hinder equality of opportunity? No
4. Does the policy actually or potentially contribute to equality of opportunity? Yes
5. Does the policy offer opportunities to promote equality? Yes
6. Does the policy offer opportunities to promote positive relations? Yes

If a full application is not required please send this form to [hr@rushcliffe.gov.uk](mailto:hr@rushcliffe.gov.uk)

	Could particularly benefit (X)	May adversely impact (X)	How different groups could be affected: Summary of impacts	Details of actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact (or why action not possible)
People from different ethnic groups				
Men, women (including maternity/pregnancy impact), transgender people				
Disabled people or carers				
People from different faith groups				
LGBTQIA + e.g. heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transgender.				
Older or younger people				
Other (marriage/civil partnership, looked after children, care leavers, cohesion/good relations, vulnerable children/adults, veteran of the armed forces)				

**OUTCOME(S) OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:** *(delete as appropriate)*

No major change need

**Arrangements for future monitoring of equality impact of this policy/proposal/project:**  
*Note when assessment will be reviewed (e.g. review assessment in 6 months or annual review).*

Annual review	
<b>Names of officers who conducted EIA and date</b> Caroline Saxton 22 Aug 2024	
<b>Approved by:</b> <i>(manager signature)</i>	<b>Date:</b>

Once the form is signed off by the Manager please send to [hr@rushcliffe.gov.uk](mailto:hr@rushcliffe.gov.uk) for discussion by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group.

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**Cabinet**

**Tuesday, 8 October 2024**

**The Future of the East Midlands Development Corporation Programme**

## **Report of the Chief Executive**

**Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership,  
Councillor N Clarke**

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

- 1.1. To update Cabinet on the recent work of EM DevCo Limited and set out the future recommendation in the context of a changing economic development landscape in the region.
- 1.2. Cabinet is asked to support the voluntary dissolution of the company.

### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) supports the necessary steps being taken by the Board of Directors to bring forward the voluntary dissolution of EM DevCo Limited; and
- b) delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer to consent and sign the resolutions to enable the dissolution of EM DevCo Limited.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

In 2024 East Midlands Freeport will complete its processes to become a formally incorporated body and will launch as such. Its area of designation covers the majority of the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site. In addition, in 2024 the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) was set up and a new Mayor for the East Midlands elected. It is recommended that in this context, there is no longer a requirement for a separate organisation such as EM DevCo Limited to continue to operate.

### **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1. In February 2019, the Government approved funding for a two-year programme to explore the business case for a locally led development delivery vehicle for the East Midlands and asked the Midlands Engine to lead the work. The Midlands Engine was asked to consider three locations in the East Midlands:

specifically, Toton and Chetwynd Barracks and Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site (both in Nottinghamshire), and the East Midlands Airport Area (in Leicestershire). The programme also explored how a Development Corporation might have wider application across the East Midlands as a whole.

- 4.2. Between 2019 and 2021, Rushcliffe Borough Council was involved in this regional conversation facilitated by Midlands Engine. It culminated in a case being made for a new type of Development Corporation that would require legislative change. This was to provide for the creation of what is known as a Locally Led Urban Development Corporation (LLUDC). This work led to the creation of EM DevCo Ltd by five authorities, including Rushcliffe, in May 2021, as a company limited by guarantee. The company was to operate as an interim vehicle prior, paving the way for the proposed new type of statutory Development Corporation (LLUDC).
- 4.3. The five member local authorities of EM DevCo also include Nottinghamshire County Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council, and North West Leicestershire District Council. The governance arrangements for the company were designed to mirror those originally envisaged for the LLUDC model. The day-to-day running of the company rests with an independent skills based Board of Directors chaired by Sir Chris Haworth with six independent private sector Non-Executive Directors, alongside nominated local authority directors. The Chief Executive is the Director for Rushcliffe Borough Council. The work reports into an Oversight Authority meeting of elected members from the five local authority owners of the company. The Leader represents Rushcliffe Borough Council on the Oversight Authority.
- 4.4. When the five councils established EM DevCo it was agreed that Nottinghamshire County Council would host the company and each council approved funding contributions to EM DevCo. Rushcliffe Borough Council agreed a contribution of £500k to be paid over three years. In actual fact, the Council paid c£400k over the three years in instalments of £166k, £166k and £66k. In 2023/4 it became apparent that EMCCA and the Freeport were gaining traction and that the future of EM DevCo would need to be reviewed. Therefore the decision was taken to cap the contribution at £66k that year.

## **5. Context**

- 5.1. Development Corporations are recognised by Government as “important tools for delivering large scale development” which “bring a number of advantages to complex projects” including a singular and dedicated focus that can provide certainty and confidence to public and private sector investors. Development Corporations have statutory status with a range of powers including planning, land assembly and fund raising. They are distinct from Freeports and Investment Zones in looking across sectors including homes and wider place making with a view to proactively bringing forward sites and infrastructure comprehensively.
- 5.2. Development Corporations are intended to supercharge a new era of regenerative and inclusive growth. When EM DevCo was established as an



interim vehicle, the context included planned investment in HS2 in addition to the Freeport designation and recognition of the region's status as a major trade and logistics gateway. The initiative was also an opportunity to plan strategically in a way that built on the region's environmental, place, people and business assets, including in research and development and industrial innovation. A comprehensive and integrated approach to development facilitates a more cohesive plan for infrastructure investment.

- 5.3. There are a number of changed circumstances that have directly impacted on the programme, and these also have a strong influence on the future direction. EM DevCo has needed to adapt and pivot its activities during this time but has continued to build momentum and secure support from partners on a number of related workstreams.
- 5.4. In the three years since the creation of EM DevCo Ltd significant progress has been made, despite very challenging circumstances. The next section of the report highlights some of the achievements, although beforehand it is important to highlight some of the changing circumstances that have shaped the programme and the next steps.
- 5.5. Since EM DevCo's inception the plans for the expansion of high-speed rail through HS2 have fundamentally changed on two separate occasions. The initial plan for HS2, when the DevCo was created in 2021, envisaged a new East Midlands Hub Station serving the region from Toton, Nottinghamshire. The subsequent publication of an 'Integrated Rail Plan' in November 2021 shifted the focus onto a more distributed model with the proposal for HS2 services to stop at East Midlands Parkway en-route to Nottingham, Derby and Chesterfield and then northwards. However, in October 2023, proposals for new HS2 lines beyond the West Midlands were abandoned by the Government and as it stands the region is not due to receive HS2 services.
- 5.6. These significant changes have had implications for site masterplanning and the proposed growth assumptions. However, each of the sites remains well located and of a sufficient scale to present significant growth and infrastructure opportunities in their own right. The significance of these opportunities led the Department for Transport to ask EM DevCo to lead on overseeing and co-ordinating an East Midlands Stations Growth Strategy review on behalf of the region with £1.75m of funding over two years. This funding is granted to Nottinghamshire CC with staff at EM DevCo (now with EMCCA) supporting the delivery. This work focusses on the four stations that were originally intended to see HS2 stopping services i.e. East Midlands Parkway (EMP), Nottingham, Derby and Chesterfield. This work is demonstrating the significant opportunities for growth and place-making alongside infrastructure investment proposals and the findings are due to be considered through the East Midlands Stations Growth Board and expected to be published early in 2025.
- 5.7. The emergence of West Burton Power Station in Bassetlaw, Nottinghamshire, as the preferred home of STEP Fusion is another significant development that will have national and international significance. EM DevCo has been invited by Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw District Council and the UK Atomic

Energy Authority to support a visioning exercise to consider the potential around the three former coal fired power stations of West Burton, Cottam and High Marnham with STEP being a key catalyst.

- 5.8. East Midlands Freeport has continued to develop and four of the EM DevCo member local authorities are also part of the Freeport i.e. Leicestershire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council. This particularly relates to parts of the East Midlands Airport area and Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station.
- 5.9. Provision for LLUDCs, based on the original EM DevCo model, formed part of the Regeneration and Levelling Up Act, 2023. However, the establishment of the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) provides for additional regional devolution with an elected Mayor. Given the origins of the DevCo as part of a regional conversation about large scale development and infrastructure, this is particularly significant. The creation of EMCCA also brings with it alternative options for creating a Development Corporation if the need and appetite emerges i.e. a Mayoral Development Corporation. Given this, together with the fact that the company's work has gravitated towards working with local authorities within the EMCCA geography, including through the Stations Growth Strategy, the member local authorities have encouraged closer working with the newly formed County Combined Authority.
- 5.10. In this context and given the company was originally established for an interim period of three years, the Board of EM DevCo Ltd, has been reviewing the future of the company.

## **6. Achievements**

- 6.1. During the three years, the company's work has highlighted the scale of opportunity presented both in the three initial sites in focus but also setting these in the context of wider regional opportunities including through the Stations Growth work. In 2021/22, following a competitive process, the company appointed a commercial partner, Areli Developments Ltd, to act in an advisory capacity.
- 6.2. Areli are the team responsible for the regeneration of Battersea Power Station and the Northern Line extension in London amongst other projects. They concluded their work on a potential vision for the sites in scope in 2023, advancing the case for integrated and co-ordinated planning at scale. In terms of next steps, the DevCo has worked with Areli to develop a plan to engage key stakeholders in future visioning for the sites, and this will be something the team will be discussing further with the EMCCA.
- 6.3. In addition to Areli and their wider team, the DevCo has provided access to expert advice with an independent skills-based board of Non-Executive Directors bringing together some of the UK's leading experts in the development and commercial real-estate sector.

- 6.4. As mentioned above, EM DevCo has secured significant funding contributions through various Government departments linked to the procurement of a commercial partner (Areli), work on the East Midlands Stations Growth Strategy and as one of 25 design code pathfinders. The latter process involved public consultation and provided a clear focus on place making and the importance of designing for nature-based regeneration and zero carbon innovation amongst other key design considerations.
- 6.5. The DevCo continues to oversee and co-ordinate work on the East Midlands Stations Growth Strategy work. The outputs of the first year successfully made the case for the release of the second tranche of funding from the Department for Transport (£750,000). Accountability for this work is provided through the East Midlands Stations Growth Board, which brings together local authority leaders from across the region. This will culminate in a Growth Strategy with a focus on the development and infrastructure potential relating to the four stations in scope, as mentioned earlier in this report. This work is crucial to considering the potential for growth and local infrastructure linked to East Midlands Parkway, as it will help set growth here in context of other key stations in the region to ensure complementary development and infrastructure investment. The work will continue, and the findings will be reported later in the year through the East Midlands Stations Growth Board, with the support of EMCCA and our local, regional and national partners, will help to shape plans and thinking with the key statutory agencies.
- 6.6. Together, these various initiatives are shaping a vision for a destination and public transport interchange at East Midlands Parkway/Ratcliffe, with measures to reduce the need to travel and other net zero carbon solutions working closely with our universities and industry.
- 6.7. More recently, EM DevCo, with Areli, is undertaking work on STEP Fusion & Megawatt Valley visioning, funded by NCC, Bassetlaw and UKAEA. This is looking to develop a regional scale of ambition around the three former power station sites in North Nottinghamshire at West Burton, Cottam and High Marnham. This work is reporting into a Strategic Collaboration Group of key stakeholders. This should enable a sharing of good practice that links well to the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station.
- 6.8. Generally, the programme summarised in this report, has provided the region with Development Corporation expertise, which successfully led to the inclusion of provisions for locally led urban Development Corporations (LLUDC) in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act of October 2023. As mentioned earlier the LLUDC model was developed through the East Midlands programme and provided profile within Government.
- 6.9. Throughout the three-year period, the DevCo has developed important and strong relationships with a wide range of key stakeholders, including Government agencies, together with national, regional and local stakeholders and partners, helping to put the region on the map, More recently, this includes close working with the EMCCA.

- 6.10. In relation to Toton and Chetwynd, the DevCo commissioned much of the work underpinning the Toton and Chetwynd Barracks Strategic Masterplan SPD, Design Code Pathfinder, and Erewash Riverside Study, which provide a basis for the next stages of planning and delivery.
- 6.11. In the above context the opportunities presented at the three initial sites, which include Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station continue to be well positioned for investment.
- 6.12. In July 2023, Rushcliffe Borough Council adopted a Local Development Order for the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site, which had been developed alongside the site owner/operator Uniper. This is the primary planning document and policy for the site, and links in with the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan. Work continues on the transport planning required for the site with major studies being commissioned by Midlands Connect. This work is primarily linked to the East Midlands Freeport and the Mayor is closely sighted on it as it develops.

## **7. Moving forwards**

- 7.1. At the turn of the calendar year, the Board of Directors with the support of the Oversight Authority, embarked on a review of the future of the company. This was in recognition that the initial three-year duration of the interim vehicle ran to the end of March 2024. It was also in the context of the changing circumstances highlighted in this report. The Board recognised that the governance landscape is crowded, and the DevCo's areas of interest spanning Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire potentially added to the confusion. In this context it was agreed that the DevCo should explore the scope for closer alignment with EMCCA. Concurrently to enable this, the duration of the company's initial three-year interim period was extended to enable these discussions.
- 7.2. The outcome of the review is that, in the circumstances outlined above, the Board of Directors consider the time is right for the local authority members to take the necessary steps to close EM DevCo Ltd. This would be with a view to materials and activities created by, and on behalf of, DevCo being transferred to EMCCA as well as being available to the member authorities. The on-going use and management of information held will be subject to a 'statement of principles' to be established between the parties i.e. the five member local authorities and EMCCA.
- 7.3. In summary, the work of EM Dev Co has naturally come to an end and a voluntary dissolution of the company is now considered to be in the best interests of the company and the respective member authorities.

## **8. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection**

The consideration of options would be dependent on additional sources of funding being available to sustain the company. There is no clear source of additional funding and the existing local authority members have made clear

their desire to seek alignment with EMCCA. Given the wider context outlined in this report, the Board has not advocated an alternative funding solution and no viable alternative option been identified.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The company has no future funding streams identified. It would therefore be a risk to continue to operate.

## **10. Implications**

### **10.1. Financial Implications**

10.1.1. There are no financial implications for the financial year 2024/25 as the company is operating within its reserves and previous years contributions. The company's cashflow is being carefully managed by the Board of Directors to ensure it remains a going concern and that it can meet its commitments and liabilities, including filing annual accounts. Any surplus held upon dissolution will be shared in accordance with the members' Agreement.

10.1.2. The Council has an allocation of £100k in the budget carried over from 2023/4. This money will be returned to reserves on the winding up of the EM DevCo.

### **10.2. Legal Implications**

10.2.1. EM DevCo is solvent, and the Board is satisfied that it is in the best interests of the Company that it is dissolved, given the natural conclusion of its activities and the creation of EMCCA.

10.2.2. The process to dissolve a company is a voluntary strike-off. Once the Company has been struck-off the Register of Companies it will cease to exist. The voluntary strike-off procedure is relatively quick and simple and is provided for under sections 1003 to 1011 of the Companies Act 2006. The Board is satisfied that it has undertaken all necessary due diligence, and that the application can be submitted and will be accepted by Companies House.

10.2.3. The decision to dissolve the Company is a matter to be ultimately determined by the Members, of which this Council is one. This report seeks confirmation that consent can be given at the appropriate time to sign the consent and resolutions necessary to dissolve EM Dev Co.

### **10.3. Equalities Implications**

There are no implications.

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

There are no implications.

#### 10.5. **Biodiversity Net Gain Implications**

There are no implications.

### 11. **Link to Corporate Priorities**

As this report relates to the winding up of a company that does not directly deliver council services or corporate priorities there are no direct implications here. Future development plans for Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station will be delivered by Uniper and the Freeport in line with agreed planning policy and the Council's commitment to economic growth.

### 12. **Recommendations**

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) supports the necessary steps being taken by the Board of Directors to bring forward the voluntary dissolution of EM DevCo Limited; and
- b) delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer to consent and sign the resolutions to enable the dissolution of EM DevCo Limited.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Katherine Marriott Chief Executive 0115 914 8349 kmarriott@rushcliffe.gov.uk
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	N/A
<b>List of appendices:</b>	N/A