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Our reference:
Your reference:
Date: Tuesday, 18 March 2025

To all Members of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group will be held on Wednesday, 26 March 2025 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 29 January 2025 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Management of Open Spaces on New Developments (Pages 7 - 24)
Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth
5. Work Programme (Pages 25 - 26)
Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services



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Membership

Chair: Councillor P Matthews

Vice-Chair: Councillor L Way

Councillors: K Chewings, S Dellar, C Grocock, D Mason, H Parekh, D Soloman and R Walker

Meeting Room Guidance

Fire Alarm Evacuation: in the event of an alarm sounding please evacuate the building using the nearest fire exit, normally through the Council Chamber. You should assemble at the far side of the plaza outside the main entrance to the building.

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

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

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP WEDNESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2025

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 P Matthews (Chair), L Way (Vice-Chair), K Chewings, D Mason,
H Parekh, D Soloman, R Butler and S Calvert

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Evans	Head of Economic Growth and Property
Ryder	Economic Growth and Corporate Projects Officer
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors S Dellar, C Grocock and R Walker
Councillor Soloman arrived at 7.20pm

10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

11 Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 July 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

There had been some officer actions around S106 agreements, guidance on CIL and Deeds of Variation in relation to Town and Parish support, and the officer's response had been provided as a briefing note prior to this meeting. It was also noted these would be included for discussion on the next Town and Parish Forum scheduled for April 2025. In addition, the further information and guidance would be circulated to Town and Parish Council's.

12 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

13 The Health of our Town and Village Centres

The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property delivered a

presentation on the health of the Boroughs town and village centres, highlighting comments submitted by Councillor Williams via a Scrutiny Matrix approved by the Corporate Overview Group.

The report circulated with the agenda provided the Group with an overview of a recent retail review commissioned for each of the Boroughs 7 larger town and village centres. It included current challenges and opportunities and sets out recommendations identified in the review, for areas the Council can focus on in the short, medium and long term.

The report also identified the priorities and actions from the recently published Economic Growth Strategy that have been selected to help support and enhance the offer in the Boroughs town and village centres.

The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property informed the Group of the high street business support the Council has provided to date, via a combination of Covid19 government support, high street grants and more recently via the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF).

The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property also shared some of the data from the 2023 Retail Reviews commissioned for the Boroughs 7 main town centres at; Bingham, Cotgrave, East Leake, Keyworth, Radcliffe on Trent, Ruddington and West Bridgford, highlighting that overall, it was a positive picture, with low vacancy and a high proportion of independents. It was reported that vulnerability is low to moderate in all town centres excluding West Bridgford where it is reported to be moderate to high.

The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property explained that as high streets evolve, the vulnerability of some high street businesses e.g. product retail to things like online is greater than others. The reviews assessed the range of businesses in the town centre and gave an overall score for vulnerability.

The Group were asked to consider the recommendations from the retail reviews, including targeted business support, feasibility studies for possible future uses of long-term empty units, establishing formal trader's groups, incubator/pop up space to support start-up businesses and working closely with stakeholder Groups such as landlords to proactively influence the future of our town or village centres.

The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property referred to the Council's Economic Growth Strategy and Plan and highlighted some of the work being progressed by the Economic Growth Team.

These include:

- Masterplan/vision for West Bridgford and other town and village centres
- Progressing feasibility plans for pedestrianisation of West Bridgford following public realm work
- Establishment of town centre groups including learning from best practice from groups already established in the Borough
- Establishment of landlord forums

- Meeting/workshops/networking with visitor economy businesses, including the hospitality sector and accessibility and training to support this
- Tourism brochure(s) to promote the offer in our town and village centres
- Responding to emerging challenges such as bank closures

The Group were advised that the Council is waiting to hear how much and if any, UKSPF it will receive in 2025/26. The Government have confirmed that the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) will receive £25,170,819 and EMCCA have indicated that Borough Council's will receive an allocation of this and have suggested that Districts and Boroughs work on the basis of receiving 60% of the allocation received in 2023/24. It was noted that for Rushcliffe this would be around £980,400 and confirmation of this is expected to be announced at the EMCCA Board meeting on 10 February 2025.

Councillor Butler asked a specific question relating to the UKSPF allocation and whether the Council needs to bid for any funding. The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property confirmed that the understanding at the moment is that, if any funding is provided, there would not be a bidding process, and that the Council would receive a fixed allocation.

Members of the Group commented on the Retail Reviews from 2023, stating that the data provided in these reports were out of date and felt that figures needed to be updated in order of providing a more realistic view of the Borough's towns and villages and any economic changes that may have occurred.

Councillor Calvert questioned the public realm improvements on Central Avenue and whether a public consultation had taken place and if there was public support. He also asked about the report referencing pedestrianisation and what consultation there had been on that. The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property explained that there had been a joint accessibility study commissioned by the Nottinghamshire County Council and the Borough Council, to inform this study extensive consultation had been carried out, including with local ward members, and the planned work was identified in the study. The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property added that it was the ambition of Cabinet to progress the pedestrianisation of Central Avenue, however the initial stage of work would be feasibility studies as and when relevant consultation would be carried out. Funding has been set aside in the Capital programme in 2026/27 to support this ambition. In addition, the Chair raised concerns that this was a significant challenge and a huge cost to the Council and asked whether the decision would be Cabinets alone or would a report be brought back to scrutiny for approval. The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property explained pedestrianisation work was included in the Council's Economic Growth Strategy and that extensive consultation would apply if any changes were to be made.

Councillor Calvert commented on a Masterplan for West Bridgford and whether this would focus on the current town centre or a wider area to incorporate the proposed new development at Gamston/Tollerton, adding that as West Bridgford did not have a Town Council would there be opportunities for local Councillors to be consulted. The Head of Economic Growth and Property confirmed it would include the wider area and would involve consultation.

Councillor Chewings raised concerns that there were no assessments or comments around bank closures and the lack of banking services in the Boroughs towns and village centres and asked if this was considered to be a missed opportunity. This was echoed by Councillor Soloman and Councillor Butler who also raised their concerns around bank closures and recent publicity regarding Post Office closures too. Members of the Group asked whether there was any feasibility in the Council exploring additional mobile banking or a banking hub. It was noted that Nat West Bank in West Bridgford had given notice of its closure and Councillor Soloman advised that Barclays Bank after its recent closure in West Bridgford was providing a basic counter service from the Library in West Bridgford and suggested that other banks may be interested in doing something similar if contacted.

Councillor Chewings commented on the retail review recommendations and actions that the Council could take to support town and village centres and asked whether there were checks and timeframes in place to see any of the support and incentives the Council has provided has proven successful for business growth. The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property explained that these were recommendations from the reviews and so part of the work would be considering the feasibility of some including considering if any external funding is available. The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property added that she would share a Dashboard that includes quarterly and yearly stats on the local economy which she advised will also be fed into the Council's Strategic Growth Boards.

The Chair asked how business grants are measured and whether these have been successful by way of improving and enhancing our town centres. The Group were advised that the application is designed so that a business needs to provide substantive information and data including outputs and outcomes for officers to check before the grant can be awarded.

Councillor Parekh commented on the use of social media to promote the West Bridgford Way and suggested posts need to be kept up to date and refreshed to keep up momentum and public interest. The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property explained that the team had hoped that local businesses would take ownership of social media streams and that the team would take a look at this area to see if further support is required.

Councillor Mason asked a specific question relating to the Rushcliffe Business Partnership Group (RBP) and whether this was still running, adding that she had been a regular attendee of this Group in the past and found it a helpful networking arena. The Head of Service for Economic Growth and Property advised that this Group does still meet monthly in West Bridgford and Ruddington and has around 40 plus businesses who attend. It was noted that the RBP had tried networking in other towns across the Borough, but this had not been successful. However, the quarterly events are held in venues across the Borough.

Members of the Group wished to see outcomes of any additional areas of work, including feasibility studies around the Public Realm work and banking hubs. The Group also requested that the data be updated to reflect any current

economic changes or trends. Some members of the Group highlighted that much of the funding support appeared to be centred around West Bridgford and felt that smaller towns and villages could benefit from extra funding support opportunities.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Growth and development Scrutiny Group

- a) Review the information and data provided on the town and village centres across the Borough
- b) Considered and identified priorities and initial actions from the Economic Growth Strategy and suggested actions to be prioritised
- c) Prioritise the closure of Banks within the Boroughs town and village centres and research opportunities for mobile banking and/or banking hubs.

14 **Work Programme**

The Chair clarified that the item 'Management of Open Spaces and New Developments' would be discussed at the next Growth and Development Scrutiny Group meeting on 26 March 2025.

The Chair advised the Group that there had been no further proposals for future scrutiny topics and reminded the Group these need to be submitted via a scrutiny matrix and then agreed at the Corporate Overview Group.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group agreed the work programme as set out below.

26 March 2025

- Management of Open Spaces and New Developments
- Work Programme

Meeting dates for 2025-2026 are to be confirmed at Annual Council on 22 May 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm.

CHAIR

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Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Wednesday 26 March 2025

Management of Open Spaces

Report of the Director Development and Economic Growth

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report sets out the Council's position with regard to the management of open spaces on new developments within the Borough, following a report to Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in January 2024 and a report to Cabinet in May 2024.
- 1.2. This report provides an update on the actions set out at the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in January 2024 (Appendix A).
- 1.3. This report presents a draft Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces (Appendix B), which sets out our expectations in respect of the service Rushcliffe residents will receive from developers and management companies in any arrangements for the maintenance of public open spaces.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) endorses the Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces and forwards it to Cabinet for consideration; and
- b) requests that the Leader continues to lobby Government to regulate the governance of management companies to ensure transparency and remove charges unrelated to the management of open spaces.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. In May 2024, Cabinet reaffirmed its position not to adopt open spaces on new developments due to the significant financial burden this entails. However, Cabinet did support proposals for the Council to take a more active role working with developers and management companies to encourage good practice. Officers have developed a draft Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces in response to this.
- 3.2. While the Council accepts its role in encouraging good practice within the industry, it is clear there remains a significant role for Government to play in establishing much clearer consumer protections and introducing regulation of management companies.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. Since 2011, in consideration of the financial burden to the Council, all new open space constructed as part of new housing developments has been the sole responsibility of the developer to provide and then inspect and maintain post development. Most developers pass that maintenance responsibility onto a management company with the financial responsibility for paying the management company resting with the residents of the new developments.
- 4.2. Concerns have been reported in recent years by residents and Councillors about management company arrangements. Concerns can be broadly categorised under the themes of 'transparency and fairness', 'quality of maintenance' and 'customer service and rights of redress'. These concerns are echoed across the country and have been considered by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in their [Market Study](#) published in February 2024. In [response to the study](#), in October 2024, Government stated their intention to "consult publicly on the best way to bring the injustice of 'fleecehold' private estates and unfair costs to an end, gathering evidence to supplement the CMA report".
- 4.3. In July 2024, Leader of the Council, Councillor Neil Clarke hosted a round table meeting with residents, cross-party Councillors and representatives from housing developers and estate management companies. This was an opportunity to hear first-hand from a variety of key stakeholders. All parties agreed that Government must take a greater role in establishing much clearer consumer protections and introducing regulation of management companies. Councillor Clarke wrote directly to Angela Rayner MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to raise concerns and to urge officials investigate this matter further (Appendix C). A follow up meeting with Baroness Taylor, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, is being arranged.
- 4.4. It was also agreed at the round table meeting that the Council has a role to play in encouraging best practice in the industry, which supported the idea of the development of a Good Practice Guide, a concept which was supported by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in January 2024 and Cabinet in May 2024.

Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces

- 4.5. A draft Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces has been developed (Appendix B). The guide sets out the Council's expectation that developers and management companies consistently provide good levels of service. The core principles of service, fairness, transparency and community underpin the Council's expectations in respect of the service Rushcliffe residents will receive from developers and management companies in any arrangements for the maintenance of public open spaces.
- 4.6. The guide is closely aligned with the [New Homes Quality Code](#) and is designed to represent a reasonable and achievable commitment from developers and management companies, in the interest of achieving the best quality service for

residents. Ultimately, the Council's ask is that developers and management companies within Rushcliffe commit to operating within the framework set out in the Good Practice Guide.

- 4.7. A draft of the Good Practice Guide was shared with attendees of the round table meeting for feedback, to ensure it serves its intended purpose of achieving the best quality service for our residents while being a document that partners can sign up to. Where possible, feedback has been incorporated into the draft attached (Appendix B).
- 4.8. A commitment from a developer or management company to operate in line with the principles set out in the guide will not represent a legal or enforceable commitment. The requirements of the Good Practice Guide go beyond the controls that can be put in place by Planning through either conditions or a Section 106. The maintenance of the open space in terms of replanting and ensuring the landscaping scheme is protected for at least 5 years are currently secured through Planning, either through a Section 106 or planning conditions. However, the details of the company who maintain the open space and their arrangements, costs and complaints procedures etc would sit outside the remit of Planning, therefore difficult to require or enforce. However, it will be a positive statement of intent and an acknowledgement of the importance of fair and transparent operating practices.
- 4.9. In addition to the development of a Good Practice Guide, Growth and Development Scrutiny Group also requested that Officers progress a number of additional actions. These can be viewed in full in Appendix A, with progress updates presented below.

Develop a Supplementary Planning Document

- 4.10. A Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions is currently being developed. This document includes guidance regarding management of open spaces and will be presented to the Local Development Framework group in April 2025.

Management Companies to be invited to join Growth and Development Boards

- 4.11. The relevant management companies have been invited to join the Growth and Development Boards for the Fairham and Bingham developments.
- 4.12. Relevant management companies will be invited to join their respective Boards moving forward. Where Growth and Development Boards are not yet in place, officers will engage with management companies at the earliest opportunity to build positive relationships and establish expectations.

The Council to make contact with Management Companies on behalf of Resident Groups

- 4.13. The Council is unable to act as an advocate for residents on an individual case by case basis, however, it can, where requested, act as convener with management companies and residents' groups where there are wider issues are raised.

The Council to work collaboratively with external agencies

- 4.14. There is a role for other agencies and authorities to be working collaboratively with the Council to advocate for best practice in the management and maintenance of relevant infrastructure. This is particularly the case with regards to sustainable drainage systems on new developments.
- 4.15. Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 provides a framework for the widespread adoption of SuDS and could give Nottinghamshire Council (NCC) the role of sustainable drainage approval body (SAB), with responsibility for checking compliance and approving their use on new housing development. This schedule has not yet been implemented, but the Council is in touch with NCC to understand what implications this could have.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

The risk to the Council of promoting the Good Practice Guide is raising expectations that the Council has power to act, which it does not. However, it is considered the benefits of the Guide, when promoted clearly, will outweigh this risk.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report

6.2. Legal Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report

6.3. Equalities Implications

The recommendation aims to improve the experience of new homeowners in relation to management companies.

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

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

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

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

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	Well-managed open spaces on new developments have a positive impact on the environment, increasing the amount of green space in the Borough and improving biodiversity.
Quality of Life	The improvement in management company practices will have a significant positive impact of the quality of life of Rushcliffe residents living on new estates
Efficient Services	Were the Council to adopt open spaces, this would have a significant impact on the Council's ability to deliver efficient services. By taking a more active role in working with developers and management companies, the Council will work to improve the experience for our residents without impacting on existing Council services.
Sustainable Growth	Ensuring the management companies operate fairly and transparently on new development is key to our commitment to sustainable growth.

8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group;

- a) endorses the Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces and forwards it to Cabinet for consideration; and
- b) requests that the Leader continues to lobby Government to regulate the governance of management companies to ensure transparency and remove charges unrelated to the management of open spaces.

For more information contact:	Leanne Ashmore Director of Development and Economic Growth lashmore@rushcliffe.gov.uk 0115 914 8578
Background papers available for Inspection:	Growth and Development Scrutiny Group - Jan 2021 - Management of Open Spaces in New Developments Cabinet - March 2021 - Management of Open Spaces in New Developments
List of appendices:	Appendix A – Actions from Growth and Development Scrutiny Group (January 2024) Appendix B – Open Spaces Good Practice Guide

	Appendix C – Letter from the Leader to Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
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Appendix A – Management of Open Spaces, 2024/2025 Actions

Action	2025 comments
<p>Officers to develop a Supplementary Planning Document, which will include guidance on open space provision, management and maintenance.</p>	<p>A Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions is currently being developed. This document includes guidance regarding management of open spaces linked to the Good Practice Guide and will be presented to the Local Development Framework group in April 2025.</p>
<p>Officers to look into developing a 'Good Practice Code', which developers could be asked to sign up to. This would set out the Council's expectations around the developer's appointment of an appropriate management company.</p>	<p>As detailed in the report, a draft Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces has been developed (Appendix B). The guide sets out the Council's expectation that developers and management companies consistently provide good levels of service. The core principles of service, fairness, transparency and community underpin the Council's expectations in respect of the service Rushcliffe residents will receive from developers and management companies in any arrangements for the maintenance of public open spaces</p>
<p>Management Companies to be invited to join Growth/Development Boards.</p>	<p>The relevant management companies have been invited to join the Growth and Development Boards for the Fairham and Bingham developments.</p> <p>Relevant management companies will be invited to join the respective Boards moving forward. Where Growth and Development Boards are not yet in place, officers will engage with management companies at the earliest opportunity to build positive relationships and establish expectations.</p>
<p>The Council to make contact with management companies on behalf of existing residents' groups with concerns or disputes, and where appropriate convene a meeting with a view to achieving positive resolution.</p>	<p>The Council is unable to act as an advocate for residents on an individual case by case basis, however, it can, where requested, act as convener with management companies and residents' groups where wider issues are raised.</p>

Appendix A – Management of Open Spaces, 2024/2025 Actions

<p>The Council to make contact with other agencies e.g. Nottinghamshire County Council in their role as Highways and Local Flood Authority</p>	<p>There is a role for other agencies and authorities to be working collaboratively with the Council to advocate for best practice in the management and maintenance of relevant infrastructure. This is particularly the case with regards to sustainable drainage systems on new developments.</p> <p>Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 provides a framework for the widespread adoption of SuDS and could give Nottinghamshire Council (NCC) the role of sustainable drainage approval body (SAB), with responsibility for checking compliance and approving their use on new housing development. This schedule has not yet been implemented, but the Council is in touch with NCC to understand what implications this could have.</p>
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Management of Open Spaces

Good Practice Guide



Service



Fairness



Transparency



Community

Overview



Rushcliffe's Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces has been designed to support housing developers and appointed management companies to provide the best quality service to Rushcliffe residents.

Rushcliffe Borough Council asks that developers and management companies consistently provide good levels of service in line with this Good Practice Guide.

The core principles of service, fairness, transparency and community underpin our expectations in respect of the service Rushcliffe residents will receive from developers and management companies in any arrangements for the maintenance of public open spaces.

Core Principles

The Rushcliffe Good Practice Guide is based on four core principles which aim to offer a supportive framework to residents, prospective buyers, developers and management companies.

Service

Provide a good quality service which adheres to development service level agreements, as well as fair, accessible and effective processes for dealing with complaints.

Fairness

Residents will be given clear and complete information about the open space management agreement on that development from their first enquiry. Residents will also be given reasonable notice of annual service charge increases.

Transparency

Residents will be provided with free access and clear signposting to the Written Statement of Services and Site Plan, including a breakdown of all fees and services.

Community

Developers and management companies will provide a trained and qualified Community Liaison representative who can act as the central reference point for concerns, issues and complaints.

Service



Provide a good quality service to all residents which adheres to development service level agreements as well as fair, accessible and effective processes for dealing with complaints.

It is expected that residents will receive consistently good levels of service, ensuring that:

- Open spaces are maintained in line with service level agreements.
- Residents have access to a Community Liaison representative for any queries, concerns or complaints.
- Residents will also have access to a dedicated Customer Care Team to handle queries.
- Any complaints are acknowledged and handled in line with the responsible organisation's complaints policy.
- Residents have access to flexible payment plans in the event of a bill increase.

Fairness



From house sale to moving in, residents will be given clear and complete information about the open space management agreement on that development.

Residents will also be given reasonable notice of any price rises.

It is expected that all aspects of open space management remain fair for residents and prospective buyers:

- Residents will receive appropriate notice of any increase in billing.
- Service level agreements will be freely available to residents within the relevant development.
- Prospective buyers will be informed about the open space management agreements when first enquiring about the purchase of a new home.
- Charges relating to changes and/or additions to their homes are not permissible.
- Extra charges for handling residents complaints are not permissible.
- All housing will be charged at the same rate, including affordable housing.

Transparency

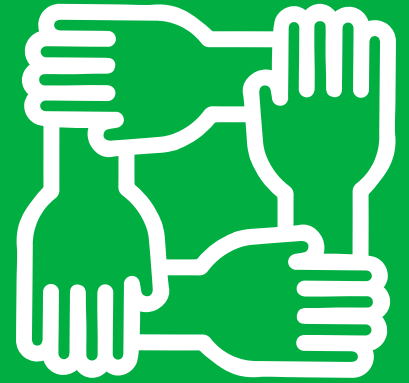


Residents will have free access and clear signposting to the Written Statement of Services and Site Plan, breaking down the services and fees for open space management on their development.

It is expected that there is transparency in operations, service levels and billings:

- Itemisation of costs associated with all bills.
- Increases in billings will be explained and/or itemised at the point of notice of increase.
- Residents will have access to work history upon request (for the relevant development) and free access to service level agreements for their development.
- Prospective buyers will be given a description of any management services (and providers) which they will be committed to.
- Prospective buyers will be given an affordability schedule, with a reasonable indication of the costs that are likely to be directly associated with the tenure and management of the new home over the next five years, also including any increase in service or sinking fund charges.

Community



Developers and management companies will provide a community liaison representative who is trained and qualified to handle concerns, issues and complaints regarding a development's open space management.

It is expected that positive relationships are developed with residents in the community:

- Residents will have access to a Community Liaison representative and Customer Care Team for queries, concerns and complaints.
- The Liaison representative will be available in person or online and will take an active role in communicating and engaging with resident groups.
- Residents will receive support from the management company to establish a forum to provide their feedback and suggestions.
- Where there are residents groups, the management company will provide an in person contact at annual AGMs.

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The Right Honourable Angela Rayner MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Private management of open spaces and infrastructure on new housing estates

I hope you are well.

As you will be aware, in February 2024, the Competition and Markets Authority published its housebuilding market study. It found “substantial concerns about estate management charges”. I would echo these concerns.

On 22 July 2024 I hosted a ‘round table’ discussion on this topic. I was pleased to be joined by residents, cross-party Councillors and representatives from housing developers and estate management companies. This was an opportunity to hear first hand from a variety of key stakeholders. Many different perspectives were shared, but one thing all parties agreed upon was the positive role that Government should play in establishing much clearer consumer protections and introducing regulation of management companies.

I heard first hand concerning reports about the charges being imposed on homeowners, many not related to the maintenance of communal open space. I see no reason why charges should be in place for anything other than maintenance of open space. I also heard examples of the poor quality of service being received, the disproportionate sanctions faced for non-payment and the fear many residents have about the potential for future uncapped fee rises.

I am working closely with developers and management companies active in Rushcliffe to identify what role the Local Authority can have in encouraging best practice in the industry. However, it is clear that Government have the most significant role to play in this regard.

Regulations must be introduced to:

- Improve transparency in respect of charges, at point of sale and once a property has been purchased;
- Improve rights of redress for residents where the service received is not as contracted;
- Limit the ability for developers/management companies to put onerous charges on homes through the TP1, resulting in the threat of a forced sale to recover estate charges;
- Achieve security for homeowners, by providing protections against unexpected price hikes and charges;
- Establish the remit of management companies and what they can/cannot charge for e.g. it should not be possible for management companies to charge a homeowner when they are making alterations to their own property, seeking a remortgage, or selling the property;

- Provide options for homeowners to vote for a resident management company or private management company;
- Ensure that in the event of a management company going bankrupt, open space land reverts to the developer, not the Crown Estate.

I am writing to urge that your officials investigate this matter further and urgently establish regulatory controls within the sector. I look forward to hearing your response.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Cllr Neil Clarke
Leader



Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Wednesday, 26 March 2025

Work Programme

Report of the Director for Finance and Corporate Services

1. Summary

- 1.1. The work programme is a standing item for discussion at each meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Group. In determining the proposed work programme due regard is given to matters usually reported to the Group and the timing of issues to ensure best fit within the Council's decision making process.
- 1.2. The work programme does not take into account any items that need to be considered by the Group as special items. These may occur, for example, through changes required to the Constitution or financial regulations, which have an impact on the internal controls of the Council.
- 1.3. The future work programme was updated and agreed at the meeting of the Corporate Overview Group on 25 February 2025, including any items raised via the scrutiny matrix.

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

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

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Group agrees a work programme for 2025-2026.

July 2025 - Date TBC

October 2025 - Date TBC

January 2026 - Date TBC

March 2026 - Date TBC

3. Reason for Recommendation

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

For more information contact:

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Background papers Available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices (if any):	None.

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