

# Public Document Pack

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**Our reference:**  
**Your reference:**  
**Date:** Wednesday, 15 January 2025

To all Members of the Communities Scrutiny Group

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Group will be held on Thursday, 23 January 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>  
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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 25 July 2024 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 October 2024 (Pages 7 - 14)
5. Residents Survey (Pages 15 - 26)  
Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services
6. Work Programme (Pages 27 - 28)  
Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services



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## Membership

Chair: Councillor G Williams

Vice-Chair: Councillor L Plant

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

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## **Recording at Meetings**

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## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP THURSDAY, 25 JULY 2024**

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

and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors G Williams (Chair), L Plant (Vice-Chair), M Barney, J Billin, S Ellis,  
G Fletcher, R Mallender, H Parekh and A Phillips

### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

D Burch

Service Manager - Neighbourhoods

T Coop

Democratic Services Officer

### **APOLOGIES:**

Councillor M Barney arrived at 7.29pm

### **1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

The Service Manager – Neighbourhoods reminded the Group of the Actions from the previous meeting and informed them of the officers responses.

### **3 Use of Community Facilities and Managed Spaces**

The Group were provided with additional handouts for context in relation to the marketing approach for the Council's community facilities and open spaces.

The Community Development Manager delivered a presentation to provide the Group with an update on current facilities operated by the Council, including management arrangements, their present occupancy and income generated.

For the purpose of reporting to this Group, the community facilities were split into two distinctive service areas:

- Community Venues
- Playing Fields, Parks and Open Spaces

### **Community Venues**

The Community Development Manager advise the Group that the Council's venues at; Rushcliffe Arena, Sir Julian Cahn Pavilion, West Park Sports Pavilion, Gamston Community Hall and Rushcliffe Country Park Education Centre and Conference Room are all managed using a Switch Digital Management Booking System, a bespoke booking system provided by a local business in Ruddington since 2022. The Community Development Manager explained the system uses data intelligence to triage the user to the best venue that fits the need of their enquiry and provides data and performance information providing the Council with a better understanding of how the system is being used.

The Community Development Manager referred to Table 1 in the report which showed the income targets for each community venue from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and the comparison targets for 2024/25. The table highlighted the venues that had not achieved their income targets and the Community development Manager explained this was due to challenges around Covid recovery and refurbishment of some of the venues to improve their carbon emissions and AV technology provision.

### **Playing Fields, Parks and Open Spaces**

The Community Development Manager informed the Group that pitch bookings at Gresham, Alford Road and West Park could be booked online using a pitch booking system separate from the switch system used for booking venues. The Pitch booking system allows users to book and pay online in advance of their booking. The Group were advised of the major booking organisations including West Bridgford Colts.

The Community Development Manager referred to table 2 in the report and explained that there had been some challenges with pitch flooding at Alford Road resulting in the pitches not meeting their target. This was also the case with Rushcliffe Country Park not meeting its target due to technological issues with the conferencing system, staff training and marketing.

The Group noted that in respect of parks and open spaces these areas include the Croquet Lawn, Bridgfield and Bridgford Park which were all bookable via a telephone/email enquiry to the Community and Development team.

The Community Development Officer advised the Group of some of the service activities including the Touch Rugby World Cup, a Police knife crime weekend at Gresham Sports Park and a planning consent to improve the cricket net facility at West Park. The Group were also informed of the Council's capital improvement programme for the Community venues at Gamston (new green technology heating), Sir Julian Cahn (complete internal refurbishment) and the planning consent for a new Community building as part of the housing development at Edwalton.

The Group were also informed of some of the Capital improvements the Council has invested in at the Country Park including green technologies, the refurbishment of the playground and a new accessible Changing Places facility.

In concluding, the Group were presented with some of the promotional and marketing videos prepared by the media team for the Council's website and social media platforms.

The Group thanked officers for a comprehensive review of the Council's community venues, playing fields, parks and open spaces and were impressed with the Council's extensive offer of community venues and playing fields for hire. In addition, the Group all thought the Switch Booking system was an excellent addition and would hopefully enhance and improve bookings going forward.

Members of the Group asked specific questions relating to concession rates for some users and what the criteria was for offering a concession rate and at what percentage rate were concessions applied, they also asked if the Council was comparable with other similar local authorities. The Community Development Manager explained that since installing the new booking system the Council have implemented and updated all its fees and charges within a robust policy and confirmed there were very few users on a concession rate. With regards to calculating concessions the Service Manager – Neighbourhoods advised that concessions were usually around 5% or 10% and rarely above 20%. Members asked for further information on the Council's fees and charges and the comparable of other local authorities. The Group also suggested that they are published on the Council's website.

Councillor Phillips commented on Gresham and highlighting how use here had exceeded its target and asked if there was any spare capacity to offer more. The Community Development Manager advised that the facility and pitches were fully booked in the evening between 5-10pm, at weekends and during the school holidays, however, there was capacity during weekdays between 8-4pm and that officers were actively looking for a suitable user that might fill the gap.

Councillor Phillips also raised concerns regarding parking around Gresham and asked if there was anything the Council can actively do to alleviate the problem such as sharing pedestrian and cycle paths with users and also suggested approaching the nearby school for help with parking. The Community Development Manager explained that parking remains a challenge and it is being monitored with traffic wardens regularly patrolling the area. With regards to the school, it was noted that they have been approached for support, however, the school is regularly used by Nottingham Forest for match day parking and that they too hire out their own school halls.

The Chairman asked, when were the pinch points in respect of traffic and parking and was there anything that could be done to stagger kick off times. The Community Development Manager explained that during football league tournaments the grass pitches are completely booked out and parking becomes increasingly more challenging, as the matches are influenced by football league standards unfortunately requesting a staggered start time would not be an option. However, it was noted that there is extra police presence during busier match days.

Councillor Mallender suggested adding an 'about' section/tab on the booking system and Council website to inform users how to get to each venue, by

public transport or cycle and pedestrian routes to promote sustainable travel.

Councillor Fletcher asked whether the Borough would consider working more closely with Parish Council's to assist with local sports clubs needing a suitable venue, giving padel tennis and indoor cricket as examples. The Community Development Manager explained that there had been an increased demand for indoor facilities and stated that should the demand be there it may be possible to adapt some existing facilities. The Community Development Manager informed the Group that the Playing Pitch Strategy is reviewed annually following guidance from National Governing Bodies within sport.

Councillor Plant stated that overall West Bridgford was served well with good community facilities and suggested that the social value of a facility was just as important to a community as well as the sport offering and was pleased to see that Sir Julian Cahn pavilion was having an upgrade.

Councillor Plant also commented on the pitch provision at Alford Road and the flooding that occurred there earlier in the year and was pleased to see improvements were being considered in the Council's Capital Programme. The Community Development Manager explained that there had been some challenges engaging with Severn Trent Water (STW), but there had been a recent change in the local representative for STW and they have been carrying out some exploratory groundwork to investigate the issue with flooding.

Councillor Parekh asked a number of questions relating to individual venues. Firstly, regarding the upgrades at Gamson Hall has there been any consideration in providing a bar to enhance its use as a party/wedding venue. Secondly in relation to the development of new Community Hall at Edwalton, is there likely to be scope for community engagement and involvement in the development of the hall. Finally, Councillor Parekh asked for additional information in relation to Lutterell Hall and the agreed arrangement that the Rock Church have in managing the hall. The Community Development Manager explained that a bar used to be a fixture at Gamston, however, over the years community groups have not wanted it and therefore it was taken away. In response to the new Community Hall at Edwalton, the Community Development Manager advised that its main function is a village hall for small community groups such as toddler groups or fitness classes, adding that the hall would not be built as a sports venue. The Community Development Manager advised the group that he did not have the information to hand with regards to Lutterell Hall and this would be circulated to members after the meeting.

The regards to venue hire the Community Development Manager informed the group that there had been an increase in enquiries for meeting spaces that provide additional technology, such as Wifi and AV systems, which the Council aims to provide across all its bookable venues.

Councillor Parekh asked a specific question in relation to hiring some of the Council's open spaces and whether it would be feasible to offer Bridgford Park or Rushcliffe Country Park as a festival venue for Diwali or Eid and how would such groups approach the Council to make an enquiry. The Community Development Manager explained that such requests would be managed by the

Community Events Team and would be subject to some kind of tolerance or impact testing by way of how such an event might affect the local community, light pollution and noise and the ecology of an open space.

Councillor Parekh asked about spaces exclusively for women and girls sport and whether the Council had seen an increase in demand. The Community Development Manager advised the Group there had been a residents survey done recently which had showed an increased interest in exclusivity sports and spaces for teenagers.

Councillor Barney praised officers for their support with the recent International Touch Rugby event held at Nottingham University which Rushcliffe had a hand in supporting and attracting the New Zealand team to the Borough and providing training pitches at Gresham. Councillor Barney then asked whether smaller organisations or clubs within village communities could reach out to the Council for support. The Community Development Manager advised that the Sports Development Officers do support many clubs if the demand is there, especially with government and sport associated funding and S106 and CIL funding.

The Group asked about the marketing and promotional approach the Council is doing to increase its bookings where there are shortfalls and the Chairman suggested open days to showcase what the Council has to offer by way of bookable venues and spaces, and this was particularly relevant to the Sir Julian Cahn pavilion once the refurbishment is complete. The Group also suggested offering concession rates for local community groups and not for profit organisations.

The Community Development Manager informed the Group that the facilities function had changed considerably from a traditional caretaking role and the team have had to up-skill to support and compliment what the Council has to offer to local community groups and businesses and the growing demand for meeting spaces. With regards to concessions this might be something to explore particularly during times when bookings are low.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Communities Scrutiny Group considered the report and presentation and provided comments on the provision of community facilities operated by the Council.

#### 4 Work Programme

The Chair advised the Group that there had been little change to the Work Programme since the last meeting in March.

He reminded the Group that the next meeting on the 17 October would be a joint Scrutiny meeting with Growth and Development Scrutiny Group which will cover the topic of Accessible Housing.

The Group were reminded to submit items for future scrutiny discussion.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Communities Scrutiny Group approved the Work Programme as set out below:

17 October 2024

- Accessible Housing Briefing
- Work Programme

23 January 2025

- Carbon Management Plan (TBC)
- Work Programme

3 April 2025

- Work Programme

#### Actions from the Meeting

Minute No	Action	Officer Responsible
3	Members of the scrutiny group requested further information on the fees and charges for booking venues and pitches and how these compare with other similar authorities	Community Development Manager
3	Cllr Parekh requested further information on the management of Lutterell Hall and how much the Rock Church was being charged for the venue	Community Development Manager
3	Members asked for detail on concession rates and what clubs/groups were offered a discounted rate and why	Community Development Manager

The meeting closed at 8.53 pm.

CHAIR





**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
JOINT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP AND  
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP  
THURSDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2024**

Held at 6.30 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 Plant (Vice Chair), M Barney, J Billin, R Butler, K Chewings, S Dellar, G Fletcher, C Grocock, R Mallender, D Mason, H Parekh, A Phillips, D Soloman, R Walker, G Williams, L Way

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

D Banks	Director of Neighbourhoods
C Evans	Head of Economic Growth and Property
D Burch	Head of Neighbourhoods
D Dwyer	Strategic Housing Manager
R Mapletoft	Planning Policy Manager
C Ratcliffe	Housing Strategy & Development Team Leader
G Whitton	Housing Solutions Team Leader
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillor S Ellis

**5 Appointment of Chair**

Councillor Williams nominated Councillor Matthews for the position Chair and this was seconded by Councillor Way.

**6 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

Councillor Williams nominated Councillor Plant for the position Vice Chair and this was seconded by Councillor Way.

**7 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**8 Accessible Housing**

Councillor Thomas presented her scrutiny request and explained the reasons for submitting it. She said that there were two main arms to the submission, one related to adapting existing housing and one related to adaptations in new

homes being built. She noted that the Council was no longer going to top up the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) which would lead to increased waiting times for access to adapted housing. She said that key questions for the Council were whether it would consider reinstating topping up the DFG in the next budget and whether there was opportunity to look at the funding pot and allocation locally. She added that it was also important to consider new housing being built and supported the Nottinghamshire Strategic Plan suggestion that that all new houses be built to the adaptable standard.

The Strategic Housing Manager and the Planning Policy Manager presented the Report of the Director for Neighbourhoods and provided a presentation overview of key features to the Group, which covered the following aspects:

- What is accessible housing?
- Understanding disabilities
- Housing needs
- Building new accessible homes
- Adaptation of existing homes
- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Rehousing as an alternative option
- Barriers to accessible housing
- Future options for change

Members of the Group thanked Officers for providing a comprehensive explanation of the different aspects of accessible housing.

Members of the Group asked a range of questions, in relation to: registered providers making financial contribution to adaptations in their properties and whether there was any reason or law or regulation to make them contribute; whether the Council received Safe and Secure grant allocation from Government; viability considerations in relation to the Greater Nottinghamshire Strategic Plan; more information about local land charges; more information about Nottinghamshire County Council top up budget; why the Council's Accessible Housing allocation was the lowest locally even though it delivered a high number of adaptations, was this due to a local of Government formula.

The Strategic Housing Manager explained that there were no regulations prohibiting registered providers from financially contributing to adaptations in their properties and that they had an equality duty to provide accessible homes where required for their tenants, which supported the argument for them to make contributions. In relation to the Nottinghamshire County Council top up budget, she advised that referrals were considered on a case by case basis at a Board meeting. In relation to accessible housing funding, she said that this was set through a 2011 national formula and that the County Council's role was to passport the allocation to the local district councils accordingly, and that to change the allocation amounts would require agreement by all the district authorities. In relation to land charges, she said that the Council had previously used £500k of capital receipts from stock transfer but had no further receipts to continue this practice.

In relation to local land charges, the Planning Policy Manager said that this was where a charge was affixed to the adapted house with whomever buying it

having to pay that cost. In relation to viability requirements on developments as part of the Local Plan Policy, he explained that adding costs for adaptations could lead to a development no longer being viable to deliver and as such it was a balance between added costs and viability, with costs based on typical scenarios from which assumptions were made for each development depending on its size and number of houses.

Members of the Group asked for clarification in relation to requirement to provide 1% adaptable housing per 100 dwellings, noting that eleven had been built in the Borough since 2019, and asked whether the target could be increased. Members of the Group also referred to the cap set at £30k as per the Government mandate from 2008 and noted that the recommendation from a White Paper in 2011 to increase it had not happened. The Group expressed disappointment that the £20k grant had been cut in Rushcliffe and asked how this compared to other local district councils.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the 1% was not a target set through policy and said that the 1% only applied to sites over 100 dwellings and only from October 2019, which was after most large developments in the Borough had been approved. He said that a review of the percentage could be conducted as part of the Local Plan review process. The Strategic Housing Manager said that the other local authorities still offered the discretionary grant and that some did not spend all of their grant allocation and that one had introduced a waiting list.

Members of the Group asked for clarity in relation to the application process and delivery of works for adaptations. The Strategic Housing Manager said that the Council was working closely with Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) who were the largest housing provider in the Borough to review what DFG work had taken place historically and the cost of those works, to look at what MTVH could do to assist the Council with the shortfall in funding and to assist in bringing outstanding works forward. The Council was also considering whether it may be possible to make costs savings by using MTVH internal contractors to deliver the works rather than external contractors.

The Housing Strategy & Development Team Leader explained that applications for adaptations were usually made by tenants and that the tenants chose the independent contractors to carry out the works.

Members of the Group asked how the Council could influence standards of adaptations and the Planning Policy Manager said that this would be through the Local Plan Policy process.

The Strategic Housing Manager said that the Council had a capital programme which could be used to support registered providers and that the Council informed new housing site developers that this could be used to support their delivery of accessible housing.

Members of the Group asked about the locations of adaptable dwellings and the Planning Policy Manager said that they were located across the Borough, in Ruddington, Radcliffe on Trent, Cotgrave and East Leake. He said that there was potential future provision at the Gamston site.

Members of the Group asked about the local funding agreement, differences in expenditure by different councils and whether the allocation amounts could be changed. The Group asked whether it would be impacted by the introduction of the Combined Authority. The Strategic Housing Manager explained there was a Strategic Oversight Group locally with representatives from the County Council and the District Councils sitting on it. She said that a report had gone to the respective Chief Executives setting out the difficulties with the funding, following which a more detailed review of the system had been requested. She said that a workshop had been held to review the process locally and that the Council had lobbied Government regarding the national allocation. She said that she would take the questions about differences in expenditure across the various District Councils to the Strategic Oversight Group and seek further analysis.

The Head of Economic Growth and Property said that the Combined Authority was not currently looking at DFG.

Members of the Group referred to community awareness and understanding of the process and how this could be improved, particularly for people who had learning difficulties and were not IT literate. The Strategic Housing Manager explained that there was currently a split between County Council and Borough responsibilities, with the Borough Council having a mandatory duty for DFG and the County Council having a mandatory duty for disabled people and children, which led to a split in processes. She noted that some counties had combined these processes. She thought it important that local authorities continued to look at ways of simplifying the process.

Members of the Group suggested that Councillors could raise awareness of DFG with their residents and the Strategic Housing Manager confirmed that there was an information sheet available on the County Council website for applicants (<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adult-social-care/social-care-publications/disabled-facilities-grant>) which provided simplified information about the process. She confirmed that a person's Occupational Therapist was the first point of contact for any adult or child DFG application and noted that there was currently an eleven month waiting list.

Members of the Group asked about costs, how they were assessed and why there were differences in delivery between developers and whether there was anything that the Council could do to increase the percentage of M4(2) adaptations.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the cost figures had not been set by the Council but were secondary detail standard costs, with real costs often greater or lower depending on the development. He said that it may be possible to revise the percentage of adaptable housing in the future as part of the Local Plan process. He said that M4(1) adaptations were mandatory for all new housing but that making M4(2) the national standard would mean that this higher level of adaptation did not need to be applied at a local level. He suggested that the Council could write to Government asking for M4(2) to be the mandatory level for adaptation for all new housing.

Members of the Group asked whether any other local District Councils were topping up their DFG and whether they were able to carry forward their underspend. The Strategic Housing Manager said she was not aware of any other local councils topping up their DFG and said that there was no requirement for funding allocations to be paid back or redistributed. She confirmed that it would require the agreement of all local authorities for the allocation and redistribution process to be changed. The Housing Strategy & Development Team Leader said that councils with council housing stock funded their council housing through the Housing Revenue Account and so were not using their DFG budget to fund those adaptations.

Members of the Group asked about the discretionary allowance and for information about people with complex needs who could not afford to cover any costs above the grant allocation. The Strategic Housing Manager said that DFG was mandatory and that local authorities had a statutory duty to provide it and therefore the only way to manage provision when there was insufficient funding was to introduce a waiting list, as such the Council had an eleven month waiting list. The Housing Strategy & Development Team Leader confirmed that the waiting list was for all referrals and said that for works that cost more than the £30k DFG allocation, residents could look at whether there were any alternative forms of funding available to them to cover those costs.

Members of the Group asked how adapted houses were available to the people who needed them. The Planning Policy Manager said that the Council did not have any control over private sector houses and hence it tried to secure adapted properties through accessible housing provision on development sites to give the Council more control over them. He added that if M4(2) was applied to all properties all would have potential for future adaptation. The Strategic Housing Manager said that in terms of the Council's housing register, the Council had nomination rights to adapted properties and if made aware of a resident's needs and adapted properties becoming available, it would try to match them up wherever possible.

Members of the Group referred to national policy regarding DFGs and the Director for Neighbourhoods said that the Levelling Up Housing and Communities Committee had released a report in May 2024 about disabled people in the housing sector, which the Council had contributed to, which set out a number of recommendations. He said that he would share the document with the Group (please see the link here: [Disabled people in the housing sector \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk)) and hoped that it would inform future Government policy. He confirmed that the Council was working with County and District colleagues to coordinate a change locally.

The Group discussed the Council bringing back council housing stock in the Borough, in part as this would allow it to access the Housing Revenue Account. Members of the Group noted that this matter had been discussed at a recent Full Council meeting and had been rejected. The Director for Neighbourhoods said that it was not a Council policy position currently but that Members of the Group could raise it separately with the Portfolio Holder.

The Chair confirmed that the presentation slides from this meeting would be shared with Councillors.

The Chair took the Group through the Recommendations and also the four suggestions made as part of the presentation, to:

- Increase the supply of accessible and adapted homes, including wheelchair user dwellings
- Advocate for an increase in funding relative to local need to address the current funding disparities
- Review of the customer pathway and exploration of joined up systems to create efficiencies and risk sharing
- Cross sector investment (health & social care) to reduce demand on health care systems and enable people to remain independent at home

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the Communities Scrutiny Group & Growth and Development Scrutiny Group scrutinised the information provided by officers to enhance the provision of accessible housing; and
- b) explored actions that the Council can take to meet the housing needs of residents with disabilities

**Actions Table: 17 October 2024**

No.	Action	Who Responsible/Update
8.	Share the presentation from the meeting with Councillors	Democratic Services have emailed a copy of the presentation to all Councillors
8.	Increase the supply of accessible and adapted homes, including wheelchair user dwellings	Officers to take forward suggestions for future versions of the Local Plan to look at increasing the number of properties adapted to M4(2) and M4(3) - Ongoing
8.	Advocate for an increase in funding relative to local need to address the current funding disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers to request additional data and analysis about differences in expenditure across local councils – Update information has been emailed to members of the Joint Committee</li> <li>• Portfolio Holder to write to Government regarding the funding formula - The Portfolio Holder has written to the Deputy Prime Minister, Angela</li> </ul>

		Raynor – please find information here: <a href="#">RBC calls on Deputy Prime Minister to end postcode lottery for Disabled Facilities Grants - Rushcliffe Borough Council</a>
8.	Review of the customer pathway and exploration of joined up systems to create efficiencies and risk sharing	Comms Team to help advertise the DFG to ensure residents are aware that they can apply for it - Information has been publicised about an increased £200k of DFG funding: <a href="#">COG reviewing the £200k increased funding</a> . Information will be shared more widely in 2025.

The meeting closed at 9.01 pm.

CHAIR

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**Communities Scrutiny Group**

**Thursday, 23 January 2025**

**Residents Survey Feedback**

## **Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services**

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

- 1.1 To present the results of the Residents' Survey that took place in Summer 2024 and facilitate a Group discussion about the feedback provided by residents through the survey. The Residents' Survey is conducted every three years and seeks feedback from residents on key Council services and suggestions for making the Borough an even better place to live and work.
- 1.2 To identify where the Council can take action leading to improvements in resident satisfaction in the future.

### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) Discuss the results and identify if any further actions should be taken as a result of the survey findings
- b) Agree for the Council to include relevant follow up actions in its Communications and Engagement and Customer Access Strategies 2025-2028 relating to ways in which residents can contact engage and feedback on services.

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

- 3.1. It is important that the Council takes a proactive approach to listening to residents' views on its services and quality of life where they live so they feel wider support from the authority and its partners can address the key topics they raise.
- 3.2. Identifying possible improvements where the Council can take action directly or tailor existing actions to be more impactful in line with the survey feedback. This enables the Council to further shape services in line with resident needs and ensure engagement is effective.

## **4. Supporting Information**

### **Background Information**

- 4.1. The Council conducted a residents' survey in June, July and August 2024 which has provided insight into what residents think about the Council and how satisfied they are with the services provided.
- 4.2. The structure, format and questions are all based on previous surveys conducted by the Council and allow it to track satisfaction over a number of years.
- 4.3. The survey was promoted digitally and contained within the summer edition of the residents' magazine Rushcliffe Reports and heavily publicised across the Council's website and other digital channels.
- 4.4. 1,338 residents completed the survey, an increase on the 1,147 who completed the last survey in 2021 and 547 who submitted their views in 2018. Whilst feedback is important in terms of context this relates to only 1-2% of the local population who access Council services. There also has to be a realism in what the Council can do given the financial constraints it operates within.
- 4.5. A table of results is at Appendix A including comparisons to data collected in 2021, the last large scale residents' survey undertaken.

### **Cautionary Notes**

- 4.6. There is a small downward trend in some areas of the levels of satisfaction indicated by residents in a number of areas, anticipated in line with The Local Government Association's similar resident surveys in 2024. Many factors may be responsible for public confidence in some public services and could overshadow some responses and have an impact on how people feel about the Council and other public service providers.
- 4.7. As above, this is not a local finding. The Local Government Association has reported that councils who surveyed this year are seeing a drop of 4-6% or greater on previous results – due to wider public confidence in the sector.
- 4.8. The Group is also asked to bear in mind that in local government resident surveys tend to group all public service providers together and it is often not clear whether views are directed specifically to the Borough Council or other parts of the public sector.
- 4.9. Results may also have been influenced by the continuing transition to residents' lives in a post COVID pandemic environment and cost of living increases with expectations of service delivery changing. It is possible this can effect the perceptions or realities of accessibility to public sector services.

### General Questions – high levels of satisfaction

- 4.10. The survey contained 30 general questions which residents had the opportunity to express a view on. The Council has parameters for what it considers to be good levels of satisfaction and areas of satisfaction that are lower than desired – these are over 80% or under 60% respectively.
- 4.11. Of the questions surveyed, three are above 85% and eleven are below 60% in line with the Council's long-standing thresholds for resident satisfaction.

### General Questions – levels of satisfaction above 80% threshold

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who have overall satisfaction with their local area as a place to live	81%	84%	-3%
Percentage of people who feel safe when outside in their local area during the day	90%	91%	-1%
Percentage of people aware of the Council's events programme	86%	83%	+3%

### General Questions – levels of satisfaction between 80% and 60% threshold

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who are satisfied with the refuse and recycling service	78%	81%	-3%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with street cleanliness	64%	67%	-3%
Percentage of people satisfied with the way the Council runs things	61%	59%	+2%
Percentage of people who agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	61%	57%	+4%

### General Questions – levels of satisfaction lower than 60% threshold

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who agree that the Council provides good value for money	43%	42%	+1%
Percentage of people who will speak positively about the	45%	44%	+1%

Council			
Percentage of people who think the Council acts on the concerns of local residents	45%	44%	+1%
Percentage of people who trust the Council	56%	55%	+1%
Percentage of people who agree that they can influence decisions that affect their local area	26%	26%	-%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with Rushcliffe Reports	41%	50%	-9%
Percentage of people satisfied with the variety of ways they can contact the Council	53%	59%	-6%

- 4.12. Of the questions with the higher percentage decreases, subsequent proposed actions will be discussed later in the report.

#### **Satisfactions increases and declines**

- 4.13. Satisfaction in six areas has improved, one area has remained the same and in twelve areas has declined – in five areas, this decline has been more than 5% as shown in the table below:

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who think the Council keeps them well informed	55%	64%	-9%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with Rushcliffe Reports	41%	50%	-9%
Percentage of people who agree that they can influence decisions that affect their local area	26%	31%	-5%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with the variety of ways they can contact the Council	53%	59%	-6%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with a Council event they have attended	78%	84%	-6%

- 4.14. Given the ongoing transition of how, when and where residents expect services to be delivered in a transitional time for many public sector services, some drop in satisfaction levels as outlined above was expected and, therefore, these decreases will be areas focussed on later in this report.

- 4.15. The Council appreciates it can be difficult for residents to distinguish between the work of the Borough Council and the County Council or, in some cases, other public service providers.
- 4.16. Open comments at the end of the survey cover feedback to a range of different providers and, therefore it is consistent that the numerical questions also express some dissatisfaction with other partners' services.
- 4.17. This is then considered in line with the topics residents have raised in the next section.

### **More service specific questions**

- 4.18. The survey also contains questions specifically related to the events service asked if they have used the service and, if they have, how satisfied they were.

### **Events**

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who are aware of the Council's events programme	86%	83%	+3%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with a Council event they have attended	78%	84%	-6%

- 4.19. Very slight decreases could be linked to events took place after the survey It is very clear that the events programme is still valued by residents and showcased by consistent and in some cases increased visitor numbers such as at Proms in the Park and Lark in the Park events in 2024.

### **Streets, parks and refuse and recycling**

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who are satisfied with street cleanliness	64%	67%	-3%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with parks and open spaces cleanliness	69%	71%	-2%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with the refuse and recycling service	78%	81%	-3%

- 4.20. Residents were asked about their views on satisfaction on streets, park and refuse and recycling. All received marginal decreases and possible actions will be discussed later in order for residents to communicate specific feedback on the services.

## Communications

- 4.21. Residents were asked about how they would prefer to receive Council information and were able to choose multiple methods.

<b>How would you prefer to receive Council information.</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Rushcliffe Reports	59%	67%	-8%
The Council's website	40%	33%	+7%
The Council's social media channels	37%	25%	+12%
Via local press	14%	14%	-%
Other	7%	6%	+1%

- 4.22. Of note here are the results indicating the wish for increased digital communication on the website and social media. Whilst Rushcliffe Reports remains a way to inform residents, a movement towards other communication channels is increasingly desired. The action points later will consider including an audit of communications channels including Rushcliffe Reports as part of the Communications and Engagement Strategy to identify possible new methods to engage audiences further.

### Resident feedback on specific issues

- 4.23. The next set of questions are phrased differently to the rest of the survey and ask whether respondents feel a number of factors are a problem in their local area rather than asking how satisfied respondents are. They are mainly connected to feelings of safety and anti-social behaviour. In the main, there are very low percentages of people reporting that these factors are an issue in their area. Highlighted below are the five areas where there has been an decrease in issues according to those who responded and one increase since the last survey in 2021:

<b>Percentage of people who feel that the following factors are a problem in their local area:</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Rubbish or litter lying around	32%	42%	-10%
People using or dealing drugs	23%	25%	-2%
Dog fouling	47%	49%	-2%
Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage	19%	18%	+1%
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	10%	11%	-1%
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	9%	10%	-1%
Teenagers hanging around the streets	22%	22%	-%

- 4.24. 32% of respondents felt that rubbish and litter lying around and 47% of respondents felt that dog fouling were problems in their areas, both better than in 2021.
- 4.25. Whilst residents may be concerned any of the above issues are a problem in their area, performance data collected by the Council and partners would suggest otherwise. This is not to say that residents are incorrect, but that reality and perception do not always agree. The Council is always mindful that environmental concerns are a key priority for residents and continually seeks to promote the work the Council and its partners do to target action to address these issues.

### **New questions**

- 4.26. A section of the survey asked respondents on three new questions.

	2024
Percentage of people who agree that the Council takes action on the views residents have expressed or explained why it is not possible to do so	15%
Percentage of people who feel they are asked for their thoughts on topics and services that matter to them	22%
Percentage of people who agrees the Council listens to their views	17%

- 4.27. The follow up actions will address how the Council could look to increase these figures and listen, respond, explain and inform how and why services are shaped and delivered.

### **Open feedback provided by residents**

- 4.28. The final section of the survey asked respondents if there was anything else they wished to inform the Council about. Kindly, over 40 people left compliments about the Council and its services including many comments on the Council's waste services.
- 4.29. The largest proportion of less positive comments related to services run by the County Council – 205 out of the 907 total comments overall related to road and pavement maintenance and a further 29 on the potential relocation of West Bridgford Recycling Centre.
- 4.30. These comments will be passed on to our partners to raise their awareness of the concerns expressed by residents. The fact that so many residents left feedback that relates to other organisations suggests a couple of things. That there is still an ongoing lack of understanding of which organisation does what

and so feedback relating to levels of satisfaction may also be influenced positively or negatively by residents' perceptions of services that we do not provide or that they are aware and wish to complain in any case.

- 4.31. 78 comments left by respondents to the survey related to kerbside glass recycling, set to be addressed by the forthcoming simpler recycling scheme from the Environment Bill in line with national changes in the coming years and an extensive budget commitment (see the January Cabinet Report on this subject).
- 4.32. There were 74 individual comments relating to the wider growth of communities and some planning matters. In the main, residents expressed concerns about the number of houses being built around the Borough and the perception that there is not sufficient corresponding infrastructure.
- 4.33. 550 other comments related to Council services as a whole. These included 68 comments related to the environment including litter on pavements and in open spaces, and a lack of bins, dog fouling, street sweeping, weeds and fly-tipping. 42 were on Planning matters and 21 on Council Tax. Others were received about anti-social behaviour, bring banks, a current planning application that covers Tollerton Airport and services and events being perceived as too West Bridgford-centric.
- 4.34. Residents kindly gave favourable feedback too on the Council's frontline waste and Customer Services teams with over 20 compliments.

### **Proposed Actions**

- 4.35. Draft the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028 to include to further ways for residents to be engaged and ask questions on services so both the Council and the residents can be ever more informed. The could include an audit of communications channels including Rushcliffe Reports to identify possible new methods to engage audiences further. A budget proposal could see the magazine printed twice instead of three times a year as other channels are reviewed to inform residents even more effectively.
- 4.36. Consider more regular formal consultation, linked to the Council's performance framework replacing the triennial survey, to receive more up to date data to shape services. One of the challenges will be whether response rates will be maintained with regular consultation.
- 4.37. Focus the Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028 to increase ways residents can feedback on in particular frontline services such as streetscene, parks and refuse and recycling even more easily whether digitally or in person at Customer Contact points. There will always be limitations when service delivery is framed by legislation, such as the new Simpler Recycling requirements.



- 4.38. Capture data on the demographics of who is responding to surveys to ensure the Council is receiving a fair representation of views from across its communities to further inform service and engage with hard to reach groups.
- 4.39. Closely monitor and to respond accordingly to resident questions on local government reorgansiation and devolution.

**5. Risks and Uncertainties**

If no action is taken as a result of the feedback identified in the survey this may result in disengagement in local democracy and/or reputational issues with residents. Failure to listen to residents may also have an adverse effect on the quality of life in the Borough in direct contradiction of the Council’s key priorities.

**6. Implications**

**6.1. Financial Implications**

Possible third-party co-ordination of the focus group, employing an engagement provider to assess and deliver the format, met from existing budgets.

**6.2. Legal Implications**

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

**6.3. Equalities Implications**

There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

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

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

**7. Link to Corporate Priorities**

The Environment	It is important to ask residents of the Borough how they feel about living and working in the Borough so that this information can be used to inform decision making.
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	
Quality of Life	

## 8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Communities Scrutiny Group:


- a) Discuss the results and identify if any further actions should be taken as a result of the survey findings
- b) Agree for the Council to include relevant follow up actions in its Communications and Engagement and Customer Access Strategies 2025-2028 relating to ways in which residents can contact engage and feedback on services.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Pete Linfield Deputy Chief Executive and Director – Finance and Corporate Services <a href="mailto:plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk">plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a> 0115 9148 439
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	None.
<b>List of appendices:</b>	1

## Residents' 2024 comparison with 2021 survey

Question	2024 result	2021 result
How well did you and do you continue to feel informed and connected with the latest information on COVID-19 in your local area?	N/A	64%
Percentage of people who have overall satisfaction with their local area as a place to live	81%	84%
Percentage of people satisfied with the way the Council runs things	61%	59%
Percentage of people who agree that the Council provides good value for money	43%	42%
Percentage of people who will speak positively about the Council.	45%	44%
Percentage of people who think the Council acts on the concerns of local residents	45%	44%
Percentage of people who feel they belong to their local area	76%	79%
Percentage of people who feel safe when outside in their local area after dark	70%	73%
Percentage of people who feel safe when outside in their local area during the day	90%	91%
Percentage of people who think the Council keeps them well informed.	55%	64%
Percentage of people who trust the Council	56%	55%
Percentage of people who agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	61%	57%
Percentage of people who agree that they can influence decisions that affect their local area	26%	26%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with Rushcliffe Reports	41%	50%
Percentage of people satisfied with the variety of ways they can contact the Council	53%	59%
Percentage of people who feel they are asked for their thoughts on topics and services that matter to them	22%	N/A
Percentage of people who agree that the council listens to their views	17%	N/A
Percentage of people who agree that the council takes action on the views residents have expressed or explained why it is not possible to do so	15%	N/A
How would you prefer to receive Council information?		
Through Rushcliffe Reports	59%	67%

Through the Council's website rushcliffe.gov.uk	40%	33%
Through the Council's social media channels	37%	25%
Via local press	14%	14%
Other	7%	6%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with street cleanliness	64%	67%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with parks and open space cleanliness	69%	71%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with the refuse and recycling service	78%	81%
Percentage of people who feel that the following factors are a problem in their local area:		
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	9%	10%
Teenagers hanging around the streets	22%	22%
Rubbish or litter lying around	32%	42%
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	19%	18%
People using or dealing drugs	23%	25%
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	10%	11%
Abandoned or burnt out cars	2%	2%
Dog fouling	47%	49%
Percentage of people who are aware of the Council's events programme	86%	83%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with a Council event they have attended	78%	84%

 <p><b>Rushcliffe</b> Borough Council</p>	<p><b>Communities Scrutiny Group</b></p> <p><b>Thursday, 23 January 2025</b></p> <p><b>Work Programme</b></p>
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## Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The work programmes for all Scrutiny Groups are created and managed by the Corporate Overview Group. This Group accepts and considers Scrutiny Matrices from both officers and councillors which propose items for scrutiny. If those items are accepted following discussion at the Corporate Overview Group, they are placed on the work programme for one of the Council's Scrutiny Groups.
- 1.2. The work programme is also a standing item for discussion at each meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Group. In determining the proposed work programme due regard has been given to matters usually reported to the Group and the timing of issues to ensure best fit within the Council's decision-making process.
- 1.3. The work programme is detailed in this report for information only so that the Group is aware of the proposed agenda for the next meeting. The work programme does not take into account any items that need to be considered by the Group as special items. These may occur, for example, through changes required to the Constitution or financial regulations, which have an impact on the internal controls of the Council.
- 1.4. The future work programme was updated and agreed at the meeting of the Corporate Overview Group on 4 June 2024, including any items raised via the scrutiny matrix.

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

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

### 2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Group agrees the work programme as set out below:

**3 April 2025**

- Carbon Management Action Plan Review
- Nottinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Work Programme

**3. Reason for Recommendation**

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

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