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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, 16 July 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Pregon'.

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 26 March 2025 (Pages 1 - 8)
4. East Midlands Freeport (Pages 9 - 14)
Report of the Director for Development and Economic Growth
5. Work Programme (Pages 15 - 16)
Report of the Director for Finance and Corporate Services

Postal address

Rushcliffe Borough
Council
Rushcliffe Arena
Rugby Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7YG



Membership

Chair: Councillor T Combellack

Vice-Chair: Councillor L Way

Councillors: A Brown, S Calvert, J Chaplain, S Ellis, E Georgiou, D Mason 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.

Mobile Phones: For the benefit of others please ensure that your mobile phone is switched off whilst you are in the meeting.

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.

Recording at Meetings

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP WEDNESDAY, 26 MARCH 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, C Grocock,
D Mason, H Parekh, D Soloman and A Edyvean (as a substitute)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Cabinet Members N Clarke (Leader) and R Upton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
H Knott	Head of Planning
B Ryder	Business Support and Communications Officer
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors S Dellar and R Walker

15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16 Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 January 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

It was noted the Group had been provided with an update on banking services that were available across the Borough, which had been circulated to members. Councillor Way raised her concerns at the lack of banking opportunities and requested further information on Post Office services and ATM machines. The Economic Growth and Corporate Project Officer advised that more research is being done which will be reported to the Group at a future meeting.

The Leader of the Council added that he had written letters to both the Local Government Association (LGA) and District Council's Network (DCN) requesting their engagement with this matter.

17 Management of Open Spaces on New Developments

The Director – Development and Economic Growth provided an overview of the scrutiny objective and its progress since it was last discussed at the meeting of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in January 2024. The Group were reminded of the Cabinet decision in May 2024 which reaffirmed the position of the Council not to adopt open spaces, but to support a Good Practice Guide, support the work of the Scrutiny Group and to continue lobbying Government.

The Director – Development and Economic Growth referred to the action plan at Appendix A of the report which provided an update on work completed and work in progress over the last twelve months. The Director – Development and Economic Growth highlighted the following actions:

- **Developer Contribution Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** – a draft SPD to be presented to the Local Development Framework Group in April
- **Good Practice Guide** – outlining the Council's expectations of service on behalf of residents
- **Community Development Boards** – Management Companies to be invited to join Developments Boards – examples of this happening at Fairham and Newton
- The Council to act as **convener between stakeholders** where there are significant disputes
- **Liaise with other agencies** regarding their role – for example Flood and Water management Act 2010 - not yet implemented
- **Lobbied Government** – three letters sent to Government by the Leader with the aim to provide legislation to an area that is currently unregulated.

The Head of Service - Planning advised the Group that a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been drafted for Developer Contributions, including a section on Management of Open Spaces that will cover landscaping schemes and management plans for the maintenance of open spaces. The SPD would also reference the Good Practice guide and the Borough Council's expectations, but it cannot be a mandatory requirement. The Group noted that the Developer Contributions SPD would be considered by the Local Development Framework Group on the 22 April.

The Director – Development and Economic Growth continued and presented the Group with the draft Good Practice Guide and advised the Group that the guide is closely aligned with the New Homes Quality Code and is designed to represent a reasonable achievable commitment from developers and management companies, in the interest of achieving the best quality service for residents. However, she emphasised this was only a guide to encourage developers to provide good practice, but it was not mandatory or enforceable in any way.

The Group were informed that the Leader of the Council, Councillor Neil Clarke held a roundtable meeting in July 2024 which brought together cross-party Councillors, developers, management companies and residents to have conversations around the four Good Practice themes:

- Service
- Fairness
- Transparency
- Community

The Group noted that the guide closely aligned with existing practices outlined in the New Homes Quality Code (NHQC) and outlines the Council's expectations of management companies.

The Director – Development and Economic Growth in concluding informed the Group that whilst the Good Practice guide was not mandatory the overwhelming response from developers and managements companies was that this area should be regulated. The Group were advised that the draft guide had been circulated with developers and management companies and that they were comfortable with what the Council had designed.

The Director – Development and Economic Growth added that going forward developers and management companies would continue to be invited to the Council's community development boards and the Council would continue to lobby Government in respect of improved regulations for management companies.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Clarke was invited to speak. The Leader advised the Group that the roundtable discussions had been constructive, and he had been encouraged by the management company's intentions to co-operate with the process. He explained he had been lobbying the Government for over a year and had recently met with Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, Under- Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government at the District Council's Network conference and was waiting further details of a meeting.

The Leader complimented officers for developing the Good Practice Guide emphasising that Rushcliffe were more advanced in this area than other local authorities across the country and how important it was to keep up the pressure.

Councillor Parekh thanked officers for the update and was pleased with the guidance but was concerned that it was not mandatory and asked whether there are further roundtable discussions being planned to ensure developers and management companies are aware of the guidance. The Leader explained this was an evolving situation and how important it is for the Council to keep up the momentum and to encourage developers and management companies to sign up to the Council's guidance and to self-regulate.

The Chair asked if all developers and management companies had agreed in principle to the guidance. The Director – Development and Economic Growth advised that the conversations had only been had with a number of developers and management companies and the next step was to get in touch with a wider

community of companies.

Councillor Grocock expressed how good it was to see Rushcliffe pushing ahead with the roundtable discussions and was encouraged by the process so far. He asked whether the Council could put forward its preferences for which management companies are used during discussions at the development stage, perhaps providing a list of approved suppliers for example. The Head of Service - Planning explained that providing a list of suppliers is not recommended, the guidance would be accessed via the Council's website with a list of developers who have signed up to it including a link to the Council's expectations. In addition, during the planning process developers will be encouraged to follow the Good Practice Guidance and the Council's expectations from developers and management companies.

Councillor Grocock referred to Town and Parish Council's that may wish to adopt and maintain open spaces and/or if residents want to lead on the management company and whether a preference for them to have a first refusal approach could be considered. The Head of Service - Planning explained that if the Town/Parish Council are interested in the open space and taking this on then they would need to make this clear and it could be included as an option in the Section 106 but cannot be mandated. In regard to a resident led entity, this may work but will not necessarily be suitable for all developments.

Councillor Chewings asked a specific question relating to the Council's decision to remove the financial burden of adopting open spaces and reasons why the Council opted for a manage company approach instead. The Leader of the Council explained how much it costs the Council to cut grass on developments that have historically been adopted by the Council and if multiplied by the many developments that have been built since post adoption, the Council would have a massive financial burden which would ultimately lead to increases in Council Tax. The decision taken to no longer adopt open spaces meant that those who bought on a housing development would pay through a management charge thus mitigating the financial burden. The Head of Service - Planning added, this was not unique to Rushcliffe and is an issue across the housing development sector.

Councillor Chewings expressed his frustration and the need for alternative solutions or Government legislation, adding that transferring the financial burden for the residents on new developments to pick up the maintenance costs was unfair and that all residents should have the same access to open spaces. The Director – Development and Economic Growth explained that a Council Tax cannot cover the costs for the maintenance of open spaces and there is no legislation in place for developers to sell the land to local authorities, adding that developers will hold on to land as they cannot afford to pay the commuted sums and some schemes would mean that affordable housing gets compromised. The Director – Development and Economic Growth advised that the consequences around the maintenance of open space is far more complex now with the introduction of SUD's, play parks and landscaping. By producing a Good Practice Guide the Council aims to provide a workable solution.

Councillor Way highlighted the unfairness of the management company model

for those residents living on new housing developments who are having to pay for the maintenance of the open spaces, yet these spaces are used by all, adding that in some instances this has created resentment amongst communities

It was largely accepted by Members that going back to the Borough adopting open spaces would not work. However, they felt there were so many elements of unfairness with some of the management companies escalating charges and fees which need to be questioned.

In relation to play parks, Councillor Grocock suggested that a Town or Parish Council should be allowed the option of first refusal on the land or at least have some input or conversations around the future equipment and maintenance of a play park in their area. The Director – Development and Economic Growth advised the Group that a Play Strategy is being drafted and play parks will be a topic that will be covered within the strategy.

Councillor Parekh commented on the unfair and often undisclosed charges and fees management companies were imposing on residents and asked whether companies will be expected to be more transparent about their fees and charges and will they be expected to provide a breakdown of them when signing up to the guide. The Head of Service - Planning explained the guide will encourage them to be more transparent. However, the Council cannot control what management companies charge for, we can ask about the management of planted trees and landscaping and how this will be maintained, but we can't delve into the details of the company's business. The Group felt that more should be done to support residents as it's often not clear what they are being charged for, which can vary a great deal across the industry.

Councillor Upton referred to the supporting information within the report around the themes of 'transparency and fairness', 'quality and maintenance' and 'customer service and rights of redress' and how these were being echoed across the country. In addition, he commented on the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) study, published in February 2024 and the Government's response, stating their intention to consult publicly on the best way to bring the injustice of private estates and unfair costs to an end.

Councillor Soloman suggested some additional guidance around the older housing developments where the developers have held on to the land and haven't put a management company in place and whether in these instances the land could be transferred to the Town or Parish Council in the first instance. The Director – Development and Economic Growth explained this was an historic legacy and that more recently the trend is moving to a management company model. However, she could see no harm in adding something to the SPD Guide.

Councillor Chewings stated that the document has come about by the way residents on housing developments where management companies operate have been treated unfairly. He asked whether residents' views had been taken into consideration when drafting the guidance and expressed his concerns regarding the guide being of only a voluntary value and not mandatory. In addition, Councillor Chewings felt the language used in the guide was weak

and that management companies should be made more accountable.

Councillor Solomen also felt the guidance lacked any substance and relied on the goodwill of developers and management companies.

The Leader explained that the main ambition of the guidance is to encourage developers and management companies to come to an agreement voluntarily and understood Councillors frustrations with the process. In addition, he highlighted the Council have struck a good relationship with developers as we strive to provide vibrant and sustainable communities.

Councillor Chewings still felt the document lacked weight and fails to meet resident's expectations. He believed the document should provide minimum standards and public accountability and if companies are not willing to sign up to the Good Practice Guide, we should revoke their endorsement.

The Head of Service for Planning explained the difficulties around creating such a document and being mindful of managing resident's expectations, the document has no measures in it and cannot be enforced. The Director – Development and Economic Growth agreed that it would be more difficult to include measures as we don't want to discourage developers and management companies and proposed to amend some of the text to include principles rather than metric based.

Councillor Mason gave her approval of the documents content, highlighting it can only be used as a guide and is not legally binding. She hoped developers and management companies would be encouraged to do the right thing and praised officers for leading the way forward on what appears to be a difficult situation.

The Chair highlighted an error in the report at 6.2 Legal Implications, which stated 'there are no financial implications associated with this report', which should read 'there are no legal implications associated with this report.'

The Chair thanked Councillors for their constructive comments and asked officers to progress the amendments around some of the wording and principles which had been highlighted during the discussions.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group;

- a) endorsed the Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces and the additional changes recommended by the Group and forwards it on to Cabinet for consideration;
- b) requested that the Leader continues to lobby Government to regulate the governance of management companies to ensure transparency and to remove charges unrelated to the management of open spaces;
- c) examine the deployment of the document and continue to investigate any measurable outcomes and requested a second roundtable meeting at an appropriate time in the future and report any findings back to Growth and Development Scrutiny Group.

18 **Work Programme**

The Chair advised the Group that no further scrutiny items had been submitted for consideration by the Corporate Overview Group and reminded Councillors of the process.

The Chair thanked officers for their continued support in the scrutiny process and for the leadership and commitment they provide in making Rushcliffe an exemplary Borough Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group agree a work Programme for 2025-2026.

The meeting closed at 8.27 pm.

CHAIR

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Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Wednesday, 16 July 2025

East Midlands Freeport

Report of the Director Growth and Economic Development

1. Purpose of report

1.1. East Midlands Freeport (EMF) was established in March 2023. It was selected following Government's call for bids for new freeports in 2022. The East Midlands Freeport is the only inland freeport in the country and is made up of 3 sites:

- East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) in Leicestershire
- East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP) in Derbyshire
- Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site in Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire

1.2. As Ratcliffe on Soar is one of the 3 sites in Rushcliffe, it is important that Councillors are aware of the role of EMF, the work being done and plans for the site. The Council's Leader is a member of the EMF Board.

1.3. A representative from EMF will attend the Growth and Development Scrutiny Committee to deliver a presentation responding to the key lines of enquiry identified in the scrutiny request, as well answering any questions Councillors have.

2. Recommendation

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Growth and Development Scrutiny Group members consider the update provided by EMF at the Committee meeting and identify any further opportunities to be explored or developed.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1. EMF is a key stakeholder in the delivery of the redevelopment of the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station. This is a gateway site to the Borough with the potential to deliver significant benefits to local residents. It is important therefore that Councillors understand the role of EMF in the delivery of the site and have the opportunity to be engaged.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. A scrutiny request was completed which identified the following areas which Councillors asked for more information on:
- Overview of Freeports and their role and incentives for businesses
 - EMF vision for Freeport sites as a whole and then specifically the ROS site
 - Identified plan for the delivery of the vision and timeline to achieve this
 - How EMF are working with partners e.g. EMCCA, Uniper to support delivery of the vision
 - How EMF are and plan to engage local communities
 - How RBC can support to ensure we maximise the benefits of the site for the local community e.g. jobs and skills.
 - Risks and issues
- 4.2. A representative from EMF will attend the Scrutiny meeting and deliver a presentation covering the above points. Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1. This report and supporting presentation is intended to provide an update to Councillors on EMF. The alternative option is not to have an update however, given the site is the largest commercial development site in the Borough and of regional and national significance it is important Councillors have oversight and understand the work being done.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

- 6.1. There are no risks associated with the content of this report. One area of focus for the presentation from EMF will be risks and issues associated with the delivery of the ROS site. This will be covered at the Scrutiny meeting.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

The financial implications of EMF have been covered in other reports. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report, it is intended to be an update of EMF activity.

7.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications of this report.

7.3. Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications of this report.

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

There are no crime and disorder act implications of this report.

7.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no direct BNG implications associated with this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The Freeport has the potential to benefit local residents' quality of life through the provision of new jobs, open space, and green infrastructure
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	The development of Ratcliffe on Soar power station through the Freeport could attract a significant number of new businesses and jobs.
The Environment	The transformation of Ratcliffe on Soar power station from the production of coal-fired energy to other more sustainable forms of energy including Research and Development into clean energy will help the region's plans to become carbon neutral and then net zero.

9. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Growth and Development Scrutiny Group members consider the update provided by EMF at the Committee meeting and identify any further opportunities to be explored or developed.

For more information contact:	Catherine Evans Head of Economic Growth and Property cevens@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	None
List of appendices:	Scrutiny Request

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Rushcliffe Borough Council – Scrutiny Request

Officer Request for Scrutiny		
Catherine Evans, Head of Economic Growth and Property		
Proposed topic of scrutiny ...	East Midlands Freeport (EMF)	
I would like to explore ... It is helpful to include why you feel this topic requires scrutiny, what concerns you, what concerns are being raised with you, and how scrutiny will lead to better outcomes or services to residents.	EMF has been established since March 2023, it incorporates 3 sites one of which is Ratcliffe on Soar Powerstation. Councillors would like to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Freeports and their role and incentives etc for businesses • EMF vision for Freeport sites as a whole and then specifically the ROS site • Identified plan for the delivery of the vision and timeline to achieve this • How EMF are working with partners e.g. EMCCA, Uniper to support delivery of the vision • How EMF are and plan to engage local communities • How RBC can support to ensure we maximise the benefits of the site for the local community e.g. jobs and skills. • Risks and issues 	
I think this topic should be scrutinised because ... (please tick)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor Performance Identified
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in Legislation or Local Policy
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resident Concern or Interest
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cabinet Recommendation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Links to the Corporate Strategy
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state reason) Risk assessment and preparation

What outcomes are you seeking from this scrutiny?	Greater understanding of the Freeport and its governance structure, impact of the development locally and timescales.
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Collaboration	
Matrix developed in conjunction with officers?	Yes

APPENDIX



Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Wednesday, 16 July 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.

22 October 2025

28 January 2026

25 March 2026

3. Reason for Recommendation

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

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