



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP
THURSDAY, 24 JULY 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 H Parekh (Chair), L Plant (Vice-Chair), M Barney, J Billin, R Butler,
C Grocock, R Mallender, D Soloman and G Williams (as a substitute)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor R Upton – Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for Planning and
Housing

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Burch	Head of Environment and Communities
G Carpenter	Head of Public Protection
D Dwyer	Strategic Housing Manager
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors P Matthews

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 April 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2025 were agreed as a true record
and were signed by the Chair.

The Head of Environment and Communities provided a verbal update in
relation to the actions raised at the Communities Scrutiny Group meeting on 3
April 2025.

3 Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing

The Strategic Housing Manager welcomed the Scrutiny Request that had been
submitted by Councillor Upton, Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for
Planning and Housing and the recent feedback from Councillors that had
highlighted some of the concerns raised by residents in respect of the service
and performance provided by Metropolitan Trent Valley Housing.

The Strategic Housing Manager explained that representatives from
Metropolitan Trent Valley Housing (MTVH) had been invited this evening to

address some of the concerns that have been raised and to provide members with a greater understanding of the services MTVH provide within Rushcliffe.

Mr Andrew Reston – Director for MTVH Midlands Supported Housing introduced the Rushcliffe Local Team and highlighted their wealth of experience working within the affordable housing sector as follows:

- Ms Kelly Fox – Head of Housing – Midlands Housing Team,
- Ms Nichola Raffell – Head of Home Ownership Operations – Midlands Home Ownership Team

Mr Reston and his Team delivered a presentation and an overview of MTVH in relation to Rushcliffe.

Mr Reston advised the Group that MTVH is a national organisation with approximately 57,000 properties across London and the Midlands, with c4,000 properties within Rushcliffe.

The Group noted the recent feedback from the Regulator of Social Housing inspection that awarded MTVH V2 for Financial Viability, C2 for Consumer and G2 for Governance (1 being the highest award and 3 the lowest).

Mr Reston explained that feedback from the inspection had been valuable and MTVH had already taken action to continue to improve its business performance and operational efficiency. The Group were asked to note MTVH's most recent end of year financial position, including a total revenue increase to £454m compared to the previous year of £423m, residents being £3.4m better off due to MTVH money advice service and 544 new homes being built.

Councillor Soloman asked where, in relation to Rushcliffe were the new affordable houses being built. Ms Raffell advised that these were located in East Leake, Edwalton and Cotgrave. However, Ms Raffell highlighted that S106 development had stalled in recent times which is a challenge for all affordable housing providers.

Councillor Grocock and Councillor Barney asked whether it would be helpful for Councillors to know where the stock of social housing is within the Borough and whether more detail on the demographics of properties by ward could be provided.

Ms Fox highlighted MTVH's customer satisfaction in respect of Rushcliffe residents and explained to the Group that this was a snapshot and clearly shows that residents are generally happy with the services and support MTVH offer compared to other areas. With regards to complaints these were broken down into themes for the Group to consider, including anti-social behaviour, service delivery, missed appointments and incomplete work.

With regards to community safety and anti-social behaviour, Ms Fox explained that MTVH have adopted a joint agency approach with Police, Social and Mental Health Care or a more formal route, thus providing early intervention, support and mediation.

With regards to repairs and property repairs for 2024/25 Ms Raffel advised the Group that MTVH have two repair officers and are looking to recruit a surveyor to specialise in the management of damp and mould complaints, supporting and educating residents and managing contractors.

Mr Reston highlighted some of the development and investment in Rushcliffe homes over the last decade including decarbonisation, investment in community-based programmes and referrals for support through MTVH's financial and tenancy sustainment assistance in goods, services and vouchers and support with rent related issues.

In concluding, Mr Reston presented MTVH's future investment programme which summarised their key areas for improvement and service delivery such as:

- Communication and Transparency
- Responsive Service Delivery
- Collaboration
- Accountability and Ownership

The Chair advised the Group that a number of questions from Councillor Plant and Councillor Butler had been received prior to the scrutiny meeting which she asked representatives of MTVH to answer in turn.

Councillor Plant asked the following questions in advance of the meeting:

If a MTVH tenant needs their house adapted and made accessible to their needs, how is that funded?

Mr Reston explained adaptations to a property are usually based on an occupational health referral and funded by the local authority through their Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). The referral is then assessed by MTVH to see what work is required. It was noted in some cases MTVH may offer additional contributions.

Rushcliffe borough has an ageing demographic- what percentage of MTVH housing stock is M4(2) or M4 (3) compliant?

Mr Reston explained that he did not have the answer to this as MTVH are not aware whether properties are compliant until they become vacant. However, MTVH have started a process of doing home visits to establish a better understanding of what properties have been adapted and admitted there was a gap in the information supplied by MTVH. Members were surprised by this and the Chair asked when the work is likely be completed, which MTVH were not able to clarify.

Councillor Butler asked the following questions in advance of the meeting.

When members submit a query, usually on behalf of residents, what timescale is expected to get not just a holding response, but also a detailed/relevant answer which will, depending on what the query is, lead to action/resolution?

Would it be possible to have a dedicated contact for councillors to send their case load queries to in the first instance (as opposed to if there has been no response or resolution in the first place) and even have some sort of "priority response"?

Mr Reston advised Councillors to use specific email addresses which he would share after the meeting. He also advised residents and Councillors to use the 'Service Improvement' email address which is tracked and recorded by MTVH. An acknowledgement is generally received within 5 days and a further response within 10 advising the enquiry/complaint has been dealt with. It was noted that if Councillors do not receive a response in the 10 days this may be escalated to senior colleagues.

The Strategic Housing Manager added that information and emails for MTVH is regularly shared on the Councillor Portal of the Council's intranet.

Can members be kept regularly informed/updated so that we know what progress is being made on queries?

Ms Fox explained that MTVH value the need for Councillors to be kept informed of the progress of queries and added that residents should be encouraged to log any complaints via the MTVH website where the complaint can be tracked and MTVH colleagues can reach out directly with the resident.

Some queries are as a result of effects of Metropolitan/their tenants are having on private neighbours. How do you respond and deal with such cases and do you allow for the fact that third parties (neighbours etc) need to know what is happening/that their complaints or queries are being treated as fairly as perhaps ones by Metropolitan tenants?

Ms Fox expressed that MTVH do understand the detrimental effect of antisocial behaviour on private residents and emphasised why it is important for private residents to report any issues via the MTVH website in order for such cases to be investigated and tracked. Ms Fox highlighted that not all cases are categorised as anti-social and as such MTVH as the landlord will work to support tenants so they can live in a safe home.

Mr Reston added that support is provided from a whole host of partnerships including the police, medical and mental health care which is why details of such cases cannot be shared widely due to personal and data protection. Mr Reston offered to share some case studies to provide a better understanding of the complexity of some tenants needs.

The Head of Service for Public Protection advised that the Council has a duty of care and a statutory responsibility to ensure the safety of all its residents.

The Chair opened the discussion to the rest of the Group and invited Councillors to ask further questions.

Councillor Grocock asked a specific question relating to MTVH's legacy assets around garages sites and land which has been left unused and derelict and whether MTVH had a policy to dispose of them. Councillor Grocock added

that he had been approached by a Parish Council and residents in one of his wards who might be interested in purchasing a site for private or community use. Mr Reston advised that the garage sites that were left could not be developed for residential use and therefore could potentially be disposed of for private/community use and that he would take this way from the meeting and find out what options are available.

The Strategic Housing Manager added that there is a garage redevelopment programme and grants available to develop sites for additional affordable homes, however, progress depends on MTVH identifying suitable sites through their garage asset review.

Councillor Billin asked whether information could be provided on garage sites in the Borough that had been developed for residential use.

Councillor Butler as an observation suggested if garage sites were not suitable for housing development could they be considered for residential parking.

Councillor Soloman expressed her concerns around the issues of damp and mould and the potential of severe health consequences if not dealt with quickly and effectively. She referenced the 119 ongoing cases MTVH currently have with tenants and asked what the timeframe is for solving these issues. Ms Fox advised that MTVH work with tenants immediately and where health and safety is concerned tenants will be moved to alternative accommodation. Ms Fox added that some cases can be more complex and more about educating tenants in the way they live. Mr Reston added that the organisation as a whole was reshaping how it works, including property team training and a new building surveyor to join the growing team to support and educate residents around the problems of damp and mould.

The Head of Service for Public Health advised that over the last couple of years there had been an increase in disrepair complaints. However, the Head of Service for Public Health reported that more recently numbers and resolutions of complaints have improved and relationships with the Council's Environmental Health Officers and MTVH has also greatly improved.

Councillor Billin commented on damp and mould and had lessons been learnt around the decarbonisation of properties in East Leake and how close are MTVH to completing the work. Mr Rosten advised that MTVH are applying for further grants to continue the work programme for those properties in East Leake.

Councillor Barney complimented the MTVH website and felt it was easy for residents to navigate. Councillor Barney asked a specific question around accommodation for over 55 year-olds stating there appeared to be an acute need of properties for older people. Mr Reston advised that MTVH are seeing a different type of older person wanting something different from their accommodation, however it was noted that MTVH are struggling to fill some of the existing property stock.

Councillor Williams asked a question relating to the repairs process and how repairs are signed off as completed, he provided an example in his ward where

a repair was reported but a number of services were required to fix it and each time a tradesman came out the job was signed off when it had not been fully completed and the resident would have to log a further call out. Councillor Williams asked how MTVH would address such issues. Mr Reston explained MTVH operate a satisfaction survey for each repair, unfortunately some may slip through the process depending on the nature of the repair and whether the work is completed by MTVH or an external contractor. In most instances a surveyor would return to the property to check the quality of work. Mr Reston advised that MTVH have a call centre in Beeston where multiple tradesmen can be contacted quickly making their maintenance and repair services more efficient. Mr Reston invited the Group to see the call centre operation to give them a better idea of the type of calls they receive and how they are handled.

Councillor Williams asked a question relating to the additional £3.4m MTVH offer to tenants and how this is distributed and what support can it provide. Ms Fox explained this funding is used to support many initiatives that might help residents, for example 'Pocket Power' a money advisory service that tenants can access to help manage their finances, there is also a 'Tenant Welfare Fund' which can provide shopping vouchers for school uniform, beds, bedding as examples. Ms Fox explained that tenants are assessed on their particular needs and requirements providing a more tailored approach.

Councillor Billin commented on new builds and residents/tenants having to provide new furnishings, carpets, curtains etc and whether there is access to funding for such items. Mr Reston explained that developers only have to provide the essential fixtures such as bathrooms and kitchens, any extra support could be provided by MTVH if the resident meets the assessment criteria.

Councillor Williams asked a specific question relating to compliance around M4(2) and M4(3) and could the Group be provided information from other social housing providers operating in the Borough. The Strategic Housing Manager explained that there are 20+ registered housing providers within the Borough. However, the Council does not have direct access to their details and offered to contact each provider via email to request their willingness to share this information.

Councillor Upton informed the Group that he had been a ward Councillor in Radcliffe on Trent for over 10 years and had built an excellent relationship with local MTVH officers and find contacting the relevant support officer to be the best route in resolving residents complaints adding that his dealings with MTVH have been positive.

With regards to damp and mould Councillor Upton explained this was a national topic and often down to lifestyle, how people live and old prefabricated properties and the logistics of managing mould and damp is challenging and there is no easy fix. Councillor Upton was pleased to see that MTVH were recruiting a specialist surveyor to address the problem.

Councillor Mallender agreed with Councillor Upton that there is a wide variety of social housing stock and asked whether MTVH were considering a decarbonisation and insulation programme for all of their properties. Mr Reston

explained that there are a number of specialist teams and levels of investment and improvements going forward and offered to share the company policy around investment and the businesses action plan.

Councillor Plant continued to express her concerns in respect of resident's complaints and the time it takes for work to be completed and explained that she appreciates the improvements that have been made to the complaints system, but Councillors need to be able to contact MTVH and receive a timely response. Councillor Plant was also surprised that it had been 7 years since the topic of social housing had come to scrutiny which may explain why Councillors have had so many questions. Councillor Plant asked whether a bi-annual report from MTVH should come to Communities Scrutiny Group as a way of an update on their level of service. Mr Reston informed the Group that MTVH issue a twice-yearly newsletter with information around the services they provide. He also offered Councillors to attend the MTVH call centre in Beeston to help them understand the operational side of the call handling and the type of calls they receive and how they are dealt with.

Councillor Plant commented on the availability of sheltered accommodation for residents who require extra care and support and how can this be best provided. Mr Reston explained mental health is an increasing problem, MTVH look at the suitability of properties and put in place a housing support scheme at the start of tenancy to work through any issues and develop a support network. He added this can often be challenging on an individual and the community with mental health problems and drug abuse.

Councillor Plant still felt that social housing was a topic that required regular scrutiny and asked if the item could be looked at by way of an update bi-annually. The Head of Environment and Communities suggested a further scrutiny request be submitted to the Corporate Overview Group requesting an annual review from Metropolitan Trent Valley Housing in line with the current process. Going forward the Strategic Housing Manager offered to circulate the MTVH newsletter to all Councillors.

The Group requested that more detailed information on the number of social housing properties within their wards would be helpful, including other social/affordable housing providers other than MTVH. They also asked if properties could be broken down their type for example sheltered housing. The Strategic Housing Manager advised there was not a live stock list or system available but would look to finding out as much information as possible for a future update. It was noted that there is some sensitivity around social housing data and the protection of individuals privacy.

In relation to earlier requests for property details from MTVH, the Head of Environment and Communities suggested that these be by numbers in wards rather than individual addresses.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) considered the information provided in the report and the presentation by MTVH and provided feedback to support future working relationships

- b) the Chair to raise a further scrutiny request at the next meeting of the Corporate Overview Group for MTVH to provide the Group with a further update on performance in 12 months time.

4 **Work Programme**

The Chair advised the Group that the work programme was light of items to be scrutinised and encouraged members to submit new items via the Council's Scrutiny Request form.

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

16 October 2025

- Flood Risk Update
- Work Programme

22 January 2026

- Work Programme

2 April 2026

- Carbon Management Plan Update
- Work Programme

Actions – 24 July 2025

Minute No.	Action	Officer Responsible/update
3	Officers to provide further detail of the number of social housing properties by all social housing providers	Strategic Housing Manager to contact all providers
3	MTVH to share some case studies to provide members of the Group with a greater understanding of the complexity of some of the complaints/cases MTVH receive	Strategic Housing Manager – MTVH officers
3	Councillor Grocock requested information from MTVH around garage sites in their ownership and the possibility of private residents or Parish Council's purchasing the sites	Strategic Housing Manager – MTVH officers
3	Councillor Mallender requested information around MTVH's plans to decarbonise their properties and how and when this is likely to be completed. MTVH offered to share their Investment Policy and	Strategic Housing Manager - MTVH officers

	Business Action Plan	
3	The Group requested Social Housing be scrutinised annually as a review or update	The Chair of Communities scrutiny Group to submit a Scrutiny request to Corporate Overview Group

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

CHAIR