MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP
THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 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, R Butler, C Grocock, R Mallender and P Matthews

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor N Regan
Dr J Wells - Principal Officer Flood Risk Management, Nottinghamshire County Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Banks	Director of Neighbourhoods
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors J Billin

5 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

6 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2025 were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

7 **Flood Risk Update**

The Director of Neighbourhoods introduced the Flood Risk Update report which provided an update since the last report to the Group in 2020, including information about flood risk, agency activity and local flood preparation work.

Mr Wells gave a presentation to the Group and outlined the role of Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). He said that NCC coordinated flood risk management related to ordinary watercourses, surface water and ground water flooding. He explained that main river flooding was manged by the Environment Agency, sewers were managed by Severn Trent Water and some land areas by the Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board.

Mr Wells said that NCC delivered the capital and revenue flood risk

management schemes, published Section 19 reports and were a statutory consultee for surface water to Local and County planning authorities. He said that NCC maintained a register of assets having critical impact on local flooding and published the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan (LFRMS) and worked with communities to learn about local knowledge on flood risk and impact.

Mr Wells explained that NCC managed the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) which assessed the current level of risk in the County, by area, and which provided an overview of areas at risk and assisted in determining where to direct funding. The current PFRA was published in July 2023.

In relation to the planning process, Mr Wells said that NCC was a statutory consultee for all planning authorities in the County for surface water in major developments, but not river or sewer flooding, and that they aimed to ensure that any development offered a betterment downstream and put in place flood mitigation measures such as ponds and attenuation tanks, with a preference for above group features.

In relation to the flood risk for Rushcliffe, Mr Wells said that this was difficult to assess but noted that Rushcliffe had a mix of flooding from surface, fluvial (watercourse) and sewer sources and had experienced two extreme events (three in the County) since 2023. He said that how flood risk was managed had changed and a more holistic approach was being taken using a range of different measures such as flood walls, natural flood management measures such as ponds and planting trees in watercourses along with more traditional property measures such as flood doors and self-closing air bricks. He said that improving local community resilience and knowledge was also a key aspect.

Mr Wells presented information about the flood impacts from recent storms, storm Babet in October 2023 and storm Henk in January 2024 and also the flooding which occurred in January 2025 where record levels were recorded on the River Soar and he confirmed that there were a number of communities within the Borough that experienced repeated flooding.

Mr Wells informed the Group about flood mitigation works undertaken by NCC across the Borough. At Costock he said that a natural flood management project had been installed in 2024 with three earth bunds, two swales and an attenuation pond put in place. NCC were also working with partners and private land owners to undertake land drainage works. In relation to Cropwell Butler, he said that NCC had successfully been awarded £148k funding from the Environment Agency to install measures such as leaky barriers, storage ponds, wetlands and earth bunds and were also working with local landowners on measures to slow and attenuate the flow of waters downstream and with the local parish council in providing local knowledge. In relation to Tollerton, Mr Wells said that flood resilience measures had been installed on at risk properties and that the number of reported internally flooded properties had reduced in the recent floods in January 2025. He confirmed that a community meeting had been held to review the situation with the works being driven by the community. In East Leake, he said that following the January 2025 flooding a meeting had been held with residents to discuss impacts and a multi-agency meeting held to coordinate watercourse clearing and installation of flood

property resilience measures.

Mr Wells referred to the Property Flood Resilience Programme (PFR) which delivered flood resilience measures to at risk properties, fully funded by NCC and no cost to the homeowner, such as flood doors, air brick seals and boundary protection walls and gates. He said that over 100 properties had had bespoke solutions installed. He confirmed that boundary measures would require all properties within the flood area to agree to the measures, otherwise individual property measures would be required.

In relation to the Community Flood Signage Scheme (CFSS), the Group were informed that this allowed for trained members of the community to close roads during flood events, which could help reduce the impact from bow waves and increase road safety. The scheme improved community resilience, being locally led, but administered by NCC and financed by NCC. He said that there were over 650 registered volunteers across the County, with 46 active schemes, of which 14 were in Rushcliffe.

The Director of Neighbourhoods confirmed that CFSS linked in with the Councils own flood resilience store grant which supported local communities and parishes in purchasing storage buildings to enable them to store sand bags, road closure equipment and flood signage locally.

The Chair thanked Mr Wells for his presentation and guided the Group to focus on strategic level flooding matters.

Councillor Mathews asked about costs for NCC and charges to the home owner including if flooding was due to a lack of maintenance. Mr Wells said that measures were fully funded by NCC with no recharge to the property owner and to be eligible a property needed to be recorded on the list of previously flooded properties. He said that NCC had topped up and gone further than the DEFRA grant and that cases were assessed on a case by case basis. He said that if an asset failed and was not repaired then NCC would monitor the situation.

Councillor R Mallender asked about future weather impacts and flood risk and where best to plant trees. Mr Wells said that it was hard to predict future flooding or where a storm would come from and therefore what its impact would be, but that surface water and flood zone mapping fed into risk assessments and also that NCC kept a record of where houses had flooded since 2007. He added that some opportunity mapping had been carried out as part of the natural flood management and that NCC looked at upstream factors for areas that were at risk of flooding. He thought that tree planting would be beneficial in a wide range of areas, particularly upstream of areas that flooded.

Councillor R Mallender asked about measures such as putting meanders back into rivers that had been straightened and Mr Wells said that NCC had carried out such works elsewhere in the County, such as in Woodborough and Trowell.

The Director of Neighbourhoods referred the Group to the Environment Agency surface flood mapping (https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map) which showed areas prone to flooding and which would enable local

communities to be better informed and prepared.

Councillor Grocock asked whether there was any facility for funding of preventative measures before flooding had occurred. Mr Wells said that measures were reactive in the main, with communities at risk being prioritised, but that there were proactive projects taking place. The Director of Neighbourhoods referred to proactive work being done by the Internal Drainage Board in excavating ditches and watercourses, clearing of drainage and working with landowners. He also referred to the NCC Lengthsman scheme which helped to keep highway ditches clear.

Councillor Grocock acknowledged the good work carried out by the Internal Drainage Board but noted the difficulty in communicating and engaging with them at a local level. The Director of Neighbourhoods said that they were strong and active partners of the local Flood Board at a strategic level.

Councillor Regan asked about NCC enforcement powers and Mr Wells said that their powers were based on the Land Drainage Act of 1991 which allowed them to enforce maintenance of ditches with the power to recharge if work had not been completed.

Councillor Regan asked about property development on flood plains and whether there was any evidence of it causing flood problems and whether it would be possible to conduct analysis about impact. Mr Wells replied that polices regarding flooding were stricter than they used to be and noted that newer developments did not experience flooding in the way that older developments did. He said that any analysis would be a wide ranging undertaking which would not be possible currently. The Director of Neighbourhoods noted that the Council rarely had to deliver sand bags to new development estates as they had flood mitigation measures in place but that it would be important to ensure that the mitigation measures were maintained so as to remain effective in the future.

Councillor Butler asked about communication with landowners for mitigation measures on their land and whether there was any resistance. Mr Wells said that resistance was a significant barrier as often measures would take private land out of production. He noted that it was a national problem but that there currently was no national guidance and no compensation for the landowners. He said that NCC paid landowners an upfront payment to maintain the measures for ten years and that they inspected the maintenance every year. He said that much was done on goodwill with landowners wanting to make a positive impact downstream and put in natural habitats.

Councillor Plant referred to building community resilience in local areas and asked what NCC did to encourage local involvement. Mr Wells said that word of mouth and working with local Councillors was a key method of building awareness and recruiting volunteers.

Councillor Barney asked about future management of areas which suffered repeated flooding, particularly with climate change and where there may not be more that could be put in place. Mr Wells thought that national policy may be required and that for some properties, where flooding was not preventable,

measures could focus on recoverability, such as waterproof kitchens, stone flooring and raising of electrics.

The Chair asked about performance measurement across the risk management authorities and whether there was a mechanism to hold partners accountable when actions were delayed. Mr Wells said that monitoring took place through attendance at council scrutiny meetings and scrutiny processes but that there were no powers of enforcement. The Director of Neighbourhood said that the S19 process and reports identified the roles of the different agencies and their responsiveness and Mr Wells confirmed that these were published on NCC's website. He added that communities were also kept updated about activity through drop in and community engagement events and that information was shared with parish councils and through flood wardens.

Members of the Group referred to engagement with agencies and recent difficulty in getting Severn Trent Water to attend a scrutiny meeting. The Director advised that Severn Trent Water were in the process of recruiting a number of community officers who would hopefully provide more local liaison and contact in the future.

The Chair suggested that a letter be sent to Severn Trent Water to communicate the difficulty and frustration experienced by Councillors in contacting them and that the Council would welcome them to attend a Council scrutiny meeting. The Director of Neighbourhoods confirmed that a letter outlining the issues would be sent.

Councillor Grocock said that there was a lack of communication at a community and resident level and suggested that having a centralised local flood communications team could help address this. This was duly noted but the Director for Neighbourhoods confirmed that this would be beyond the remit of the Council.

Councillor Butler referred to information about preparedness for future storms and flooding and the Director for Neighbourhoods confirmed that an article about flooding had been circulated to Councillors today and that there was significant information about flooding available on the Council's website. He encouraged Councillors to inform their communities about the Environment Agency postcode checker for flood risk and the benefit of signing up to it.

Councillor Plant asked about S19 reports and their purpose and Mr Wells said that they were a statutory responsibility and were to document what had happened, that they informed improvements to flood risk management and planning and fed into the funding process but did not critique activity.

Members of the Group raised the issue of communication with agencies at a Councillor level, the difficulty experienced with the process and the lack of responsiveness and engagement and that Councillors may have to write to their MP to receive a response. The Group discussed writing to local MPs to ask them to ensure that the agencies be brought to the table. The Group suggested that having contact details for the main agencies involved would be helpful to Councillors to help them report their local concerns. The Director for Neighbourhood said that he would provide agency contact information.

The Chair asked about modelling used to understand how climate change would increase flood risk over the next ten to twenty years. Mr Wells replied that surface water modelling for surface water flood risk had been completed up to 2026 which had climate change built into it and that it was considered and built in as part of looking at flood resilience and attenuation schemes and that it was driven at a national level by the Environment Agency.

The Chair asked about the local flood risk strategy and when it was due to be updated. Mr Wells said that the FRMS was updated on a 6 yearly basis and that its update would include a review of climate change data and flooding that had occurred since it was last written. He said that the Strategy would be updated in 2027 and the Action Plan in 2029. The Director for Neighbourhoods said that the Council had an emergency response Flood Plan which was an operational plan that it followed during times of flooding. He added that the Environment Agency were continually updating their flood risk and information which was published on their website

The Chair referred to the shared Emergency Planning Officer and asked whether this provision was adequate and asked about contingency plans if more than one flood event occurred in a year. The Director for Neighbourhoods confirmed that the Borough shared an Emergency Planning Officer with NCC and that this arrangement had been in place for a number of years and that it worked well and provided sufficient resource. He highlighted that the Borough had one of the largest stores of sandbags across the County and even through it had been impacted by multiple floods it was well prepared and had been able to respond to events.

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

a) scrutinised the contents of the report and presentation; and

b) provided feedback to the Lead Local Flood Authority on the latest flood risk profile for the Borough.

8 **Work Programme**

The Director of Neighbourhoods presented the Work Programme and outlined the upcoming scrutiny items. In relation to the Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation including HMO's report, he said that representatives from Serco and the Home Office would be invited to attend.

In relation to any further review of MTVH, the Chair confirmed that a new scrutiny request form requesting a future review was required which would then be submitted for review at Corporate Overview Group.

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

22 January 2026

- Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation including HMO's

- Work Programme

2 April 2026

- Carbon Management Plan Update
- West Bridgford Contact Point
- Work Programme

xx October 2026

- Review of debt collection agents by RBC in line with the outcome of the Government's consultation on Council Tax and Enforcement
- Work Programme

Actions – 16 October 2025

Minute No.	**Action**	**Officer Responsible/Update**
7.	The Group asked for a letter to be sent to Severn Trent Water regarding the difficulty and frustration experienced by Councillors in contacting them	The Director of Neighbourhoods has written to Severn Trent Water about their responsiveness
7.	The Group asked for contact information for the key flood agencies to be shared with the Councillor group	Information has been circulated to the Councillor Group

The meeting closed at 20:43.

CHAIR