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Our reference:
Your reference:
Date: Wednesday, 15 July 2026

Rushcliffe Borough Council

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To all Members of the Communities Scrutiny Group

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Group will be held on Thursday, 23 July 2026 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area B, 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

Ifty Ali
Monitoring Officer (Interim)

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 2 April 2026 (Pages 1 - 8)

4. Council Tax Policy Changes (Second homes premium and relief for terminally ill residents and Foster Carers) (Pages 9 - 30)

5. Article 4 (Pages 31 - 44)

6. Work Programme (Pages 45 - 46)

   Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services

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Nottingham
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Membership

Chair: Councillor A Brown
Vice-Chair: Councillor L Plant
Councillors: M Barney, J Billin, C Grocock, D Mason, P Matthews, H Parekh and A Phillips

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MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP
THURSDAY, 2 APRIL 2026
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, D Mason, P Matthews and A Phillips

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:
Councillors J Wheeler – Portfolio Holder

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Burch	Assistant Director of Environment and Communities
D Hayden	Communities Manager
Leddy-Owen	Team Manager for Environment
E Palmer	Communications and Customer Services Manager
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

14 **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

15 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Barney declared that he worked for a company involved in zero-emission fuels and carbon technologies operating in Rushcliffe and Nottinghamshire but which had no involvement with Rushcliffe Borough Council.

16 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 January 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 22 January 2026 were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

17 **Carbon Management Plan Update**

The Communities Manager introduced the Carbon Management Plan Update report and said that this was the fifth year of presenting an update to Scrutiny. He noted that the report covered activity between 2024 and April 2025 due to when national data was released.

The Team Manager for Environment gave a detailed presentation to the Group and said that significant progress had been made towards the Council's 2030 net-zero target and the Government's 2050 UK target. He highlighted a number of key projects that the Council had achieved, being:

- Rushcliffe Arena Solar Project
- Cotgrave Leisure Centre, Sir Julien Cahn and Gamston Community Hall decarbonation Projects
- 90% reduction in fleet emissions
- Offsetting - £860k of Grants from Trees for Carbon fund granted for planting and managing trees cover at Wolds Wood and Rushcliffe Woods
- Warm Homes: Local Grant and Energy Company Obligation 4 across East Leake and Borough wide.
- EV Charge Points at Nursery and Bridgford Road Carparks
- Home Energy Advice Team 2
- Facilitating Ethical Solar Loans at Railway Heritage Centre Ruddington

The Team Manager for Environment explained that the Council had achieved a reduction in carbon emissions equivalent to removing five Cotgrave Leisure Centres, or 124 properties from the national grid.

The Communities Manager provided an update in relation to the Council's offsetting strategy. He explained that following review of the Council's land holdings, which were limited, and open spaces and also consideration of working with partner agencies, Cabinet had agreed to proceed with acquisition of land within the Borough, of grade 3 agricultural land value or below. He explained that suitable land had been identified and purchased at Rushcliffe Wood (Upper Broughton) which had a brook running through it and Wolds Woods (near Kinoulton) which was formerly a woodland. He said that these two sites would provide 123% against the Council's identified sequestration offset requirement and so provided some flexibility for the Council. He said that deer and rabbit fencing would be installed to help protect the planting initially and added that the Council had secured £860k of grant funding which covered the cost of all the tree planting and 15 years of maintenance for both sites.

The Team Manager for Environment informed the Group about the Council's key projects for 2026-27, being:

- Gresham Sports Pavillion - install solar PV and improved water management system
- Edwalton Golf Course Refurbishment – including energy measures and adding solar PV to roof
- Streetwise Solar – solar electric scheme on the roof to supplement EV charge bays installed last year
- Hound Lodge Energy Efficiency – development of implementation of insulation programme
- Develop a Scope 3 (supply chain emissions) monitoring and reporting mechanism for all RBC operations to support mapping and maximising efficiencies.

The Team Manager for Environment also highlighted the Council's future pipeline project to decarbonise the whole of Rushcliffe Arena and said that the Council would explore future funding schemes to decarbonise heating as the current gas boilers/combined heating powerplant came to the end of their life.

The Team Manager for Environment said that the Council was also supporting community decarbonisation schemes, such as the Warm Homes Local Grant scheme and the Affordable Warmth Solutions Innovation Fund (in collaboration with Nottingham Energy Partnership) and also installation of EV charging points at Bridgford Road and Nursery Road. He added that it had also contributed to the production of a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) which would provide a comprehensive energy map across the local area showing where energy was being used most, where it was being wasted, where was fuel poor and where the biggest businesses were through colour coded 3D digital modelling. He said that the LAEP for the Rushcliffe, Broxtowe and Gedling cohort was due to be published at the end of April.

Councillor Barney and asked how the Council would ensure that the woodlands were protected in future years and about long term removal of plastic tree guards. The Communities Manager confirmed that the Council owned the two sites, with clauses within those sales for uplift if there was any future change in usage and was also looking at potential local nature reserve classification to provide greater protections. He said that there was extensive deer netting and rabbit protections on both sites which reduced the need for plastic guards. He added that the tree contractors would replace any trees that died within the first three years.

Cllr Phillips asked about Rushcliffe Arena solar panels and whether they would fully power the site. The Team Manager for Environment said that they would power circa 50% to 60% of the energy requirements of the site, that the panels were 400-500kw each and that there would be 1038 of them and that they had been fully funded through EMCCA grant funding. The panels would also sit flat on the roof so would benefit from all day sun and would cover the whole roof and it was anticipated would save the Council circa £2m over their lifecycle.

Cllr Matthews asked about future maintenance costs and liabilities for all of the Council’s solar projects and also about financial implications for the EV charging points. The Communities Manager said that income generation from the solar panels would cover costs for lifecycle maintenance and confirmed that the panels had a lifecycle of around 20 years. He said that the Council’s capital programme also had provision built in for future cost and noted that the Council was putting in place low energy measures such as LED lighting at its sites to minimise energy consumption also. In relation to EV charging point installations, he confirmed that this was being undertaken by an external company who were financing installation of the necessary infrastructure and who would then receive the payments from the EV chargers usage. He noted that as the bays were in car parks, parking tickets would be required for people using the EV chargers and that their installation provided a social value for the community.

Councillor Grocock asked for information about financial savings and economic benefit to the Council and the local area. He also referred to the low DEFRA scoring for Rushcliffe for wildlife diversity but thought that the woodland creation work would help address this. The Communities Manager explained that the Council had produced a Nature Recovery Strategy which fed into the Nottinghamshire Nature Recover Strategy and said that the Council was creating a meadow and a lake and wet habitats in the new woodlands. He explained that in part the Borough’s low score was due to it having much productive agricultural land. The Assistant Director of Environment and Communities said that the output economic information could be included as part of the next annual update to the Group.

Cllr Mason referred to LGR and asked how the Council's climate commitments would be protected through the reorganisation process. The Communities Manager said that whilst the new authority would set its own climate targets the Councill was focussed on delivering and achieving as much as possible up to that point and noted that the 2050 borough wide carbon neutral target was a legally binding Government target. The Team Manager for Environment added that the need to retrofit net zero interventions in properties would remain and hoped that the work to address this would continue.

Councillor Plant asked how the Home Energy Advice Team initiative was publicised for borough-wide uptake and the Team Manager for Environment said that the Council worked with the Local Energy Partnership to promote it including through social media platforms and had found that most support required was around how to go through the process. He confirmed that 40% of carbon emissions came from housing but that 98% of the housing stock was within the able to pay market and as such, support was needed in encouraging those households to part fund/take out a loan to finance those improvements.

Cllr Billin asked about solar panels on carparks and also scope 3 emissions from the HVO supply chain. The Team Manager for Environment said that the Council's HVO procurement was certified to only come from waste oil and Government conversion statistics put it at 90%, factoring in processing and diesel transportation. In relation to solar panels over car parks, he said the current methodology and costs of installation made it unfeasible but confirmed that the Council was continuing to monitor.

Members of the Group thanked Officers for their hard work and were pleased and encouraged to see the significant work being carried out by the Council.

Councillor Billin suggested that next year's update report be presented to the July 2027 meeting to allow officers time to include the latest national emissions data.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Communities Scrutiny Group noted the progress to date of the adopted carbon management action plan and priority projects for the forthcoming financial year 2026/27.

18 **West Bridgford Contact Point**

The Communications and Customer Services Manager presented the West Bridgford Customer Contact Point report to the Group and thanked Members who had attended the site visit earlier in the week.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager explained that the Council had moved to Fountain Court in 2020, a few weeks before the pandemic began, at a time when it was experiencing around 10,000 customer visits per year to its customer service site in West Bridgford. He said, however, that the pandemic had changed behaviours and interactions and visits subsequently dropped to around 3780 in 2023. In light of this, the Council had reviewed its customer access provision at all its sites, including at Cotgrave situated in the HUB, at Bingham situated in the Medical Centre and East Leake in their Library, to ensure that they were fit for purpose, met customer needs and were accessible. The Council had identified that moving the West Bridgford centre to the Library would both improve service and provide financial savings. He updated the Group with information about opening times and dates, currently Monday, Thursday and Friday which had been identified as the busiest times of the week and confirmed that if any changes in need were identified, these timings would be reviewed. He said that being situated in the Library had made the customer centre easier to find and more accessible.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager said that the Council continued to monitor how people chose to interact with customer services and confirmed that most contact was via the telephone, followed by emails and then webform contact and then site visits, with a total of 6000 visits over the year in total to its contact points.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager outlined the main types of service enquiries that it received, being in relation to Council Tax, waste collection, garden waste, benefits and environmental health.

In relation to provision for holding private conversations, the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that the Council had noticed that post pandemic, most private enquiries were coming through via telephone or digital communications. He said that customers had requested a private room at West Bridgford Library on two occasions over the past year and that a library meeting room had been utilised for these on both occasions. He added that should a room be unavailable, a private appointment could be held in a meeting room at Rushcliffe Arena on the same day, if needed. Councillor Plant expressed concern should there be occasion where there were many people wishing to hold private conversations at the same time and the Communications and Customer Services Manager confirmed that the Council was monitoring demand and would look at additional options should there be need.

For comparison, the Group were provided with information about face-to-face customer service provision across the County.

Councillor Phillips asked whether the Library would be able to cope if customer visits returned to pre pandemic levels and the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that the Council continued to monitor provision and would look to adapt should it experience a change in demand, with the Library being a flexible partner in this.

In response to questions regarding LGR, the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that the Council was working with other local authorities as the process progressed and was working to put the Borough in the best position for the future and would champion for this to continue. He thought that AI may bring changes to service provision in the future.

Councillor Billin asked whether staff moved around the different customer contact sites and the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that this varied and that the Council tried to base staff where was convenient for them. In addition, some staff would work in contact centres close to where they lived and this helped to provide further reassurance to visitors to the contact points through local ownership and knowledge of local issues

Councillor Plant asked how information about customer service contact points was communicated and the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that this information was printed on the back page of all Rushcliffe Reports newsletter but that it would look at how to increase prominence of this information.

Councillor Grocock asked about queries regarding matters that the Council was not responsible for and the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that Officers would always try to signpost to the appropriate agencies and people.

Members of the Group thanked the customer service staff for their hard work, wide level of knowledge and sensitivity to customers. Councillor Wheeler, as Portfolio Holder was pleased to note the positive comments from members following the visit to the library and would ensure that these were passed on to the staff concerned. In his view the move had been a sensible decision to make at the time and that the joint arrangements in the library worked well with a more central location, next to the largest car park in the town centre, allowing greater accessibility for residents to visit.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Communities Scrutiny Group considered the content of the report (and presentation from officers) and identified any follow up actions required.

19 **Work Programme**

The Assistant Director of Environment and Communities presented the Work Programme and outlined the upcoming scrutiny items.

The Chair suggested that the next meeting in July start earlier, at 6pm, to allow time for discussions of the two items, and this was agreed.

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

xx July 2026

- Council Tax Policy Changes (2nd homes premium and discounts for terminally ill residents and foster carers)
- Article 4
- Work Programme

xx October 2026

- Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing

- Work Programme

xx January 2027

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

xx April 2027

- Work Programme

Actions:

Minute No.	Action	Officer Responsible/ Update
17	The Group asked for information about financial savings and economic benefit to the Council and local area to be included in the next update report	Communities Manager
17	The Group asked that the next update report be scheduled for the July 2027 meeting to allow Officers time to include the latest emissions data and that the work programme reflect this change	Communities Manager
18	The group asked that the positive comments made following their visits to the contact centre were passed onto the staff involved	Assistant Director Environment and Communities

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

CHAIR

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Communities Scrutiny Group

Thursday, 23 July 2026

Council Tax Policy Changes (Second homes premium and relief for terminally ill residents and Foster Carers)

Report of the Director for Finance and Corporate Services

1. Purpose of report

1.1. To provide the Communities Scrutiny Group with an overview of the Council's current Second Homes Premium policy to consider continued application or revocation (Appendix A).

1.2. To discuss and make recommendations to Cabinet for the introduction of a discretionary Council Tax relief scheme in relation to terminally ill residents (Appendix B); and households providing foster care support (Appendix C).

1.3. The discussion will assist the Group in making recommendations to Cabinet for the continued application or revocation of the Second Homes Council Tax Premium; and the proposed introduction of discretionary Council Tax relief schemes for defined groups.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group considers and provides feedback to Cabinet on:

a) Second Homes Council Tax Premium:
The proposal to revoke the Second Homes Premium or any amendments that the Group consider appropriate;

b) Council Tax relief for households with a terminally ill resident:
The proposed Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme to support households who live with a terminally ill family member, as set out at Appendix B to the report, including eligibility criteria; affordability, prudence and sustainability within the Medium Term Financial Strategy ("MTFS");

c) Foster Carer Council Tax Relief:
The proposed Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme as set out in Appendix C to the report, including eligibility criteria and level of support and its Affordability, prudence and sustainability within the MTFS.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1. In response to evidence that terminal illness can place households under significant financial pressure, the Council proposes a discretionary Council Tax relief scheme for residents with a terminal illness be awarded under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The scheme would support households receiving Council Tax Support, with all costs funded by the Council.

3.2. The Second Homes Council Tax Premium, introduced in April 2025, applies a 100% premium to eligible second homes to encourage their return to residential use. While early evidence suggests it has influenced owner behaviour and generated £576,000 in additional income, recent national exemptions and the policy's short lifespan mean its overall effectiveness remains unclear and is now subject to Scrutiny review.

3.3. Rushcliffe Borough Council recognises the valuable contribution of foster carers and the additional financial pressures they may face. The proposed Council Tax support scheme, has been developed to support recruitment and retention and would be delivered using the Council’s discretionary powers under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

4. Supporting Information

Second Homes Premium (Appendix A)

4.1. The Second Homes Council Tax Premium Policy was formally approved by Council in March 2024 and subsequently implemented with effect from 1 April 2025. The policy applies a 100% Council Tax premium to properties defined as second homes that have not been occupied as a main residence for more than 12 months. This is one of ‘the tools’ the Council is using to bring homes back into use for occupation by residents.

4.2. Since its introduction, a total of 175 properties have been subject to the premium at some stage and 121 properties remain liable for the charge (arguably the policy may have had some effect on reducing the number of second homes). Over its first two years of operation, the premium has generated additional Council Tax income of £576,000, although this is not an objective of this policy but is a residual consequence of it.

4.3. The data shows the policy has influenced property owner behaviour and is applied by some neighbouring authorities, and generally the majority of Councils across England. Not unexpectedly those councils that are tourist destinations have a higher number of properties that are subject to second home premiums.

4.4. From 1 April 2026, mandatory national exclusions require billing authorities to remove the 100% Second Home Premium in specified cases, including properties marketed for sale or rent, subject to probate, needed for employment, forming part of an annexe, restricted to holiday use, or occupied by armed forces personnel.

4.5. Due to the recent introduction of the exclusions, and the timespan over which the policy has been active, the available data provides only an early indication of impact.

4.6. The budget report (March 2026) proposed that Scrutiny review the effectiveness of the policy and make recommendations to Cabinet on its continued application or revocation.

Relief for Terminally Ill (Appendix B)

4.7. In 2024, Marie Curie, the UK's leading end of life charity, published a report that explored poverty and fuel poverty at the end of life in the UK. The report identified that in 2023, over 100,000 people died in poverty, approximately one in six of all deaths registered in England, Scotland and Wales.

4.8. Households experiencing terminal illness often face significant emotional, physical, and financial pressures. These include:

- Loss of income;
- Increased care and living costs; and
- Reduced ability to manage financial commitments.

4.9. National welfare policy recognises this vulnerability through fast tracked end of life rules. Locally, councils have discretion to provide additional support through Council Tax reductions.

4.10. The proposed Council Tax relief for households with a terminally ill resident has been developed in response to national evidence of poverty at the end of life and emerging practice in other councils, including Newark and Sherwood District Council and Broxtowe Borough Council. The proposal is intended as a supportive measure.

4.11. Council Tax exemptions and discounts are prescribed in legislation and cannot be amended locally. There is no statutory exemption or relief for residents living with a terminal illness, although an existing exemption may apply where a property is left empty because the resident has moved into a care or nursing home.

4.12. At full Council (budget item) on 5 March 2026, it was proposed that the Council explore the introduction of a policy for Council Tax relief for households with a terminal illness, subject to Scrutiny before any recommendation to Cabinet.

4.13. The relief would be awarded under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which gives councils discretion to reduce Council Tax liability, including to nil, in exceptional cases or for defined classes of taxpayer.

4.14. All costs associated with the scheme would be borne directly by Rushcliffe Borough Council. The working assumptions for the proposed scheme are that:

- the household must be liable for Council Tax in Rushcliffe;

- one household member must be terminally ill, evidenced by a completed SR1 form from a medical professional confirming life expectancy of less than 12 months; and
- the household must be in receipt of Council Tax Support.

Foster Carer Relief (Appendix C)

4.15. Rushcliffe Borough Council recognises the important role foster carers play in providing stable and supportive homes for children and young people who cannot live with their birth families.

4.16. Foster carers often incur additional financial pressures associated with supporting children in their care. While support is available through fostering arrangements, there is no consistent national approach to Council Tax relief, and local authorities may use discretionary powers to provide support.

4.17. The proposed scheme as set out in Appendix C has been developed to recognise the contribution of foster carers and to support recruitment and retention, aligning with wider local and county priorities to increase placement capacity.

4.18. The scheme would be delivered using the Council's discretionary powers under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Scrutiny of the proposed amendments

4.19. Scrutiny should consider:

Across all schemes:

- the proportionality and fairness of using discretionary powers to support defined groups;
- affordability and sustainability within the MTFS;
- whether clear review arrangements should be built into each scheme;
- how financial risks associated with uncertain demand will be monitored and reported;
- consistency of application across all Nottinghamshire authorities (i.e. with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on the horizon is it better to apply the proposed policy changes when part of a larger authority to support the wider financial implications if such schemes are changed or introduced post LGR?).

Second Homes Premium:

- whether the premium provides sufficient policy benefit to justify its continued application.

Terminal Illness Relief:

- whether the scheme appropriately targets financial hardship at end of life;
- the financial risk associated with unknown eligibility levels.

Foster Carer Relief:

- whether the scheme appropriately recognises the contribution of foster carers, will it deliver value for money and lead to better retention of Foster Carers or attract new carers?;
- what should the level of relief be? (e.g. 50%, 75%, 100%) and whether this is proportionate;
- the potential impact on demand and cost if numbers of foster carers increase;
- opportunities for joint funding with Nottinghamshire County Council.

4.20. The Second Homes Premium, the proposed Council Tax relief for both terminally ill residents and Foster Carers represent distinct policy choices with different objectives and financial impacts. Scrutiny is invited to consider the proportionality, affordability and fairness of each measure in advance of Cabinet decision making.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

5.1. There is a risk that withdrawing the Second Homes Premium could reduce the incentive for property owners to bring properties back into occupation.

5.2. There is a risk that the introduction of a Council Tax relief scheme may lead to further requests for the development of similar schemes for other groups.

5.3. There is a risk that relief for terminally ill residents may extend beyond a 12-month timeframe. Enforcing a strict cut-off is likely to carry a reputational risk, particularly where the household continues to experience financial hardship or where the recipient lives beyond the 12 month period.

5.4. There is acknowledged uncertainty in estimating the number of eligible households (for the terminally ill scheme), relief awarded and length of relief and this presents a risk of unknown and variable financial costs. If the proposed scheme is supported, the potential financial risk will be monitored through current financial governance procedures (e.g. budget reports).

5.5. For the foster carer scheme, there is a risk that costs will increase over time as the number of foster carers grows (this is considered an upside risk and what the policy is intended to do).

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

6.1.1. If the Second Homes Premium were revoked Rushcliffe's income would reduce by approximately £20k per annum, equating to around £100k across the MTFS period. This reduction would be reflected through future tax base adjustments and this impact can be managed within normal Council Tax base volatility.

6.1.2. The Council Tax Relief scheme will be delivered through a Section 13A(1)(c) discretionary reduction, meaning the award is not part of the statutory Council Tax Support scheme and the cost is fully borne by Rushcliffe Borough Council as the billing authority.

6.1.3. Annual costs of the terminally ill Council Tax Relief scheme could range between £30k and £150k. A prudent assumption of £40k per annum (including contingency) has been modelled and over five years this would reduce the MTFS surplus by approximately £0.2m.

6.1.4. The foster carer scheme is estimated to cost approximately £25k per annum based on current numbers, but costs may increase depending on uptake and therefore the level of relief awarded in the future.

6.1.5. Both relief schemes could be applied retrospectively from 1 April 2026 and would be subject to review after 12 months. The cost of the 3 measures would potentially be around £85k per annum or a further budget pressure of £0.425m over 5 years.

6.2. **Legal Implications**

6.2.1. Section 13A(1c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides Councils with discretion to reduce the Council Tax Liability including to nil for individuals and defined classes of taxpayer.

6.2.2. When considering the recommendations in this report the Group must bear in mind Members' fiduciary duty to Council Tax-payers. The report and accompanying Appendices set out the relevant considerations for the Group to consider during their deliberations and Members are reminded of the need to ignore irrelevant considerations. The Group has a duty to ensure that the Council acts lawfully and must not come to a decision which no reasonable authority could come to.

6.2.3. The Group is also reminded that, under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, Members who are two months or more in arrears with their Council Tax at the date of the meeting must declare this to the meeting and must not vote on any matters affecting the level of Council Tax or the arrangements for administering it as to do otherwise can be a criminal offence. Members are not barred from speaking, provided the appropriate declaration is given.

6.3. **Equalities Implications**

Equality Impact Assessments have been completed for the policy proposals.

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

There are no Section 17 implications as a result of the recommendations in this report as any impact on residents is primarily financial/supportive, not related to crime and disorder outcomes.

6.5. **Biodiversity Net Gain Implications**

There are no Biodiversity Net Gain implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6.6. **Local Government Reorganisation Implications**

As with all other relevant Council Tax related local policies and decisions, any approved scheme relating to Council Tax relief will be reconsidered by March 2028 by the new unitary authority if the scheme is to continue beyond April 2028.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	None identified.
Quality of Life	The proposed Council Tax relief could improve the financial position of households with a vulnerability, including a terminal diagnosis or foster carer, helping to reduce financial hardship.
Efficient Services	The foster carer scheme may lead to greater local placement and reduce reliance on alternative childcare arrangements.
Sustainable Growth	None identified.

8. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group considers and provides feedback to Cabinet on:

a) Second Homes Council Tax Premium:
The proposal to revoke the Second Homes Premium or any amendments that the Group consider appropriate;

b) Council Tax Relief for households with a terminally ill resident:
The proposed Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme to support households who live with a terminally ill family member, as set out at Appendix B to the report, including eligibility criteria; affordability, prudence and sustainability within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (“MTFS”);

c) Foster Carer Council Tax Relief:
The proposed Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme as set out in Appendix C to the report, including eligibility criteria and level of support and its Affordability, prudence and sustainability within the MTFS.

For more information contact:	Peter Linfield Director of Finance and Corporate Services Tel: 0115 9148439 plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk

Background papers available for Inspection:	Full Council Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27
List of appendices:	Second Homes Premium - Appendix A Council Tax Relief for Terminally Ill - Appendix B Foster Carer Relief - Appendix C

Appendix A

Second Home Premium Background Paper

1. Summary

This report provides a comprehensive review of the implementation and impact of the Second Home Premium, which was formally approved by Council in March 2024 and subsequently implemented with effect from 1 April 2025.

The policy applies a 100% Council Tax premium to properties classified as second homes.

Since its introduction, a total of 175 properties have been subject to the premium at some stage. At the present time, 121 properties remain liable for the charge, while 72 properties have been continuously classified as second homes for the full duration of the policy. Over its first two years of operation, the premium has generated additional Council Tax income of £576,000.

The available data demonstrates that the policy has created a dynamic and responsive tax base, with clear evidence of behavioural change among property owners. The premium has also been implemented consistently across neighbouring authorities, including Broxtowe, Newark and Sherwood, Gedling, and Nottingham City, which supports a coordinated sub-regional approach.

2. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present an evaluation of the Second Home Premium following its introduction, to assess the extent to which it is achieving its intended objectives, and to provide an informed analysis of its financial, operational, and behavioural impacts.

3. Background and Definition of a Second Home

The introduction of the Second Home Premium followed a formal resolution of the Council in March 2024, made possible through powers granted under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. The authority resolved to apply the premium at the maximum permitted level of 100%, effectively doubling the standard Council Tax charge for qualifying properties.

For the purposes of Council Tax administration, a second home is defined as a dwelling which is substantially furnished but not used as the sole or main residence of any individual

A property is considered substantially furnished where it contains sufficient furniture, fixtures, and fittings to enable normal day-to-day occupation. The second element of the definition relates to the absence of a sole or main residence. Determining whether a property is a person's sole or main residence is not based on any single factor but instead relies on a holistic assessment of the individual's circumstances.

A property will generally be regarded as a second home where it is not occupied as a primary residence but is retained for intermittent or occasional use. This may include properties used for weekends, holidays, or other temporary stays, as well as properties held for personal, family, or recreational purposes. It may also be available for rental on a furnished basis. This is distinct from Long Term Empty Premiums as these are properties that would not support overnight accommodation as they did not contain furniture, not connected to utilities or not suitable for living in.

Scope for review

The definition of a second home and the length of time a property has been unoccupied are set in legislation and we are unable to make a distinction between the reasons why properties are second homes when applying the premium. For example we cannot make a distinction for properties where the liable party uses it to support working in the area.

The areas that can be considered are whether to charge the premium, after what period a premium should be charged and if the premium should only apply to certain parts of the Borough.

4. Policy Developments – Introduction of Premium Exclusions (April 2026)

From 1 April 2025, the legislative framework governing the Second Home Premium was refined through the introduction of a series of mandatory exclusion categories, which require billing authorities to disapply the 100% Council Tax premium in specific and defined circumstances. These exclusions form part of a nationally prescribed approach and must be applied where qualifying criteria are met.

- Dwellings actively marketed for sale or rent
  Properties may qualify where there is clear evidence that they are being genuinely marketed on the open market at a realistic price are excluded for one year.
- Inherited properties (probate cases)
  Properties that have recently transferred ownership following the death of the previous owner may qualify for an exclusion of one year.
- Job-related dwellings
  An exclusion applies where a second property is required as a result of employment circumstances. This includes situations where an individual must maintain accommodation for work purposes or is required to live in employer-provided housing.
- Annexes forming part of a main dwelling
  Annexes or subsidiary dwellings that are ancillary to a primary residence may be excluded where they are not occupied as independent second homes. These properties are typically used in connection with the main dwelling, for example by family members, and do not represent separate second home ownership.

5. Policy Objectives

The policy aims to increase housing availability, support sustainable communities and generate income.

6. Performance, Impact and Comparatives

The Second Home Premium has generated £576,000 in additional Council Tax income over its first two years of operation. The number of chargeable properties has reduced over time, with 121 properties currently liable compared to 175 identified overall. Only 72 properties have remained continuously within the premium, whilst 54 have had the premium removed since April 2025.

Currently authorities in Nottinghamshire that apply a second homes premium are Nottingham City, Broxtowe, Gedling and Newark & Sherwood along with Rushcliffe. With LGR on the horizon is now the right time to change the policy? when the new unitary authorities are formed harmonisation will be sought on Council Tax and associated premiums and discounts and further changes will follow. This applies to any of the premiums and discounts in this paper.

As you would expect the scheme generally impacts more authorities in tourism areas such as the coast. Attached at Appendix 1 is a graph depicting authorities that do apply the premium based on current data. Rushcliffe sits towards the end of ‘the tail’. There is therefore an argument to say that this policy is only going to be marginally effective given the small number of properties involved. That said the policy has been adopted by 210 out of 296 English authorities in 2025 (equivalent to 70.9% of Council’s that can apply the policy).

7. Limitations of the Review

This review provides an assessment of the Second Home Premium based on available data from its first two years of operation. While it offers a useful indication of early performance, a number of limitations should be recognised when interpreting the findings.

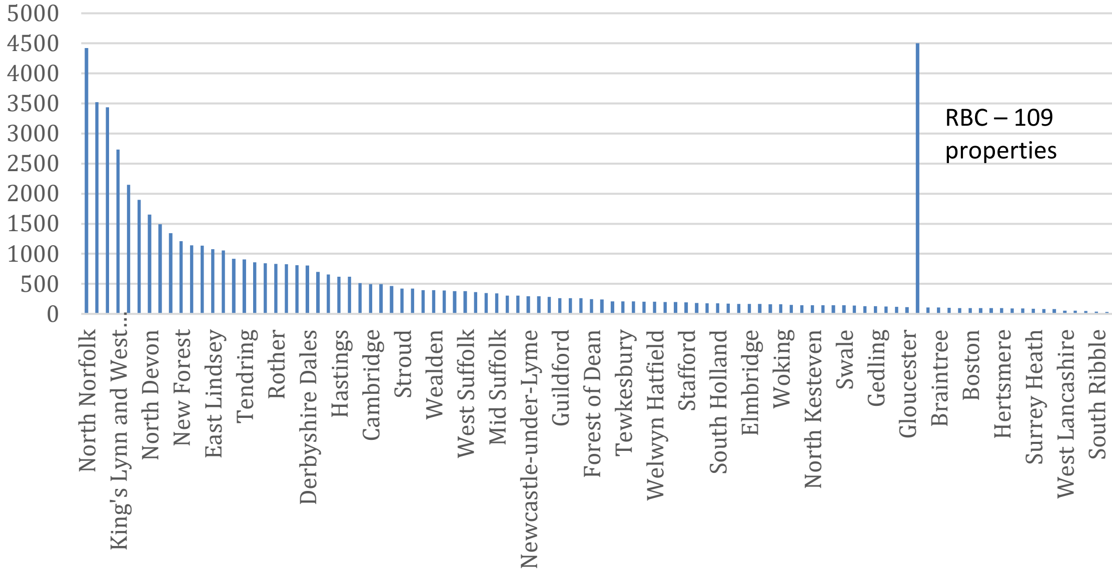
Firstly, the relatively short duration of the policy means that long-term trends cannot yet be reliably established. Changes observed to date reflect early behavioural responses and may not be sustained over time. The full impact on housing availability, community sustainability, and revenue stability will only become clearer over a longer period.

Secondly, the analysis is based primarily on Council Tax and administrative data, which does not capture wider housing market dynamics. As a result, it is not possible to fully assess how far observed changes are attributable to the premium itself.

In addition, the authority has not undertaken analysis of the motivations for second home ownership, as this is not required for administering the premium.

Appendix 1

<u>Graph showing numbers of properties applies a second home premium in shire districts in October 2025</u>



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Appendix B

Terminally Ill Council Tax Relief

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for the introduction of a discretionary Council Tax relief scheme to support households within Rushcliffe Borough where a resident is living with a terminal illness, by removing Council Tax liability and reducing financial hardship at end-of-life.

2. Background and Context

Households experiencing terminal illness often face significant emotional, physical, and financial pressures. These include:

- Loss of income
- Increased care and living costs
- Reduced ability to manage financial commitments

National welfare policy recognises this vulnerability through fast-tracked "end-of-life" rules. Locally, councils have discretion to provide additional support through Council Tax reductions.

This proposal is similar to other schemes adopted locally by Broxtowe Newark and Sherwood Councils.

3. Proposal Overview

It is proposed that Rushcliffe Borough Council introduce a discretionary Council Tax relief scheme which will:

- Provide **up to 100% Council Tax relief** for eligible households;
- Apply where the liable person, their partner, or a member of their household is terminally ill;
- Be delivered using the Council's discretionary powers under **Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**.

This approach ensures that eligible households will have **no remaining Council Tax liability** during the end-of-life period.

4. Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for support under the scheme, applicants must:

- Be in receipt of **Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)**; and
- Provide a valid **SR1 form**, completed by an appropriate medical professional, confirming:
  - A progressive disease; and
  - A clinical expectation that the individual may have **12 months or less to live**.

The relief will apply whether the terminal illness affects the liable person, their partner, or another member of the household.

5. Level and Duration of Support

- Eligible households will receive up to 100% Council Tax reduction.
- Relief will commence from the date of the SR1 (or an appropriate administrative start date).
- The award will continue until the end of the financial year in which the individual passes away.
- Where the individual survives beyond 12 months, relief will continue without reassessment or penalty.

6. Financial Implications

The scheme will be delivered through a Section 13A(1)(c) discretionary reduction, meaning:

- The award is not part of the statutory Council Tax Support scheme
- The cost is fully borne by Rushcliffe Borough Council as the billing authority

Estimated costings

Assumptions:

- 1,400 households within RBC contain a terminally ill resident
- This equates to 2.6% of all occupied properties within Rushcliffe (assuming one person per household)
- There are currently 1,430 live LCTS claims where people have to pay something towards their Council Tax – the reminder already receive full LCTS

- This means (assuming an even spread of terminal cases) there are potentially 36 properties that would be eligible for this relief.

Of the people receiving LCTS that have to pay towards their Council Tax, the following are the amounts:

Average	£14.44 per week
Median	£34.02 per week
Maximum	£68.04 per week

Scheme A – award relief to households in receipt of LCTS

Assume direct split between households

£14.44 per week x 36 cases x 52 weeks = £27k

Scheme B – award relief to all households

£2,277 per annum x 1,400 cases = £3.2m

Potential risks to estimated costings

- Scheme would be administered as a S13a local discount, so all costs of the scheme would be bourne by Rushcliffe Borough Council. This cost may vary between £30k and £150k per year
- Number of households increase, which would significantly increase the cost
- The split between LCTS and non LCTS households is not even, leading to more eligible households
- The average cost is not representative, as some cases may cost up to £68 per week (taking total cost over £120k)
- Potential negative publicity if disagreements or if people live past the 12 month cut off
- More demand leading to more LCTS claims, or even widening of the scheme

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This proposal introduces a **targeted, compassionate and financially controlled discretionary relief scheme** for households affected by terminal illness.

The scheme:

- Is **fully funded and controlled by Rushcliffe Borough Council**
- Uses established **Section 13A powers**

- Focuses support on the **most vulnerable residents**

It is recommended that:

1. Scheme A is approved (awarding relief to households in receipt of LCTS)
2. Relief be awarded in accordance with the criteria set out

Appendix C

Foster Carer Council Tax Relief

1. Summary

To seek approval for the introduction of a discretionary Council Tax relief scheme to support households within Rushcliffe Borough where the residents provide fostering support for children by removing Council Tax liability.

2. Background and Context

Rushcliffe Borough Council recognises the valuable contribution that foster carers make in providing safe, stable and supportive homes for children and young people who cannot live with their birth families.

The purpose of this policy is to define the class of case in which a Council Tax discretionary reduction may be awarded to foster carers, to explain how the reduction will be applied, and to set out the process for administration, review and appeal.

3. Proposal Overview

It is proposed that Rushcliffe Borough Council introduce a discretionary Council Tax relief scheme which will:

- Provide up to 100% Council Tax relief for eligible households;
- Apply where the liable person, their partner, or a member of their household is an approved foster carer;
- Be delivered using the Council's discretionary powers under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

4. Eligibility criteria

To qualify for support under the scheme, applicants must:

- Eligible households will receive up to 100% Council Tax reduction.
- Relief will commence from the date of the acceptance as a registered Foster Carer (or 01/04/2026 whichever is the later).
- The award will continue until the end of the financial year in which the individual continues to be registered as a Foster Carer.

Decisions under this policy will be made by officers authorised under the Council's scheme of delegation. The Council may review, amend, suspend or withdraw this policy at any time.

5. Financial Implications

The scheme will be delivered through a Section 13A(1)(c) discretionary reduction, meaning:

- The award is not part of the statutory Council Tax Support scheme
- The cost is fully borne by Rushcliffe Borough Council as the billing authority

Estimated costings

- As at 01/04/2026 there were 12 households in RBC providing Foster Carer services.
- Projected cost = 12 x £2,077.48 = £25k

Note this figure can be altered if we award 50%, 75% or 100% relief.

Potential risks to estimated costings

- Scheme would be administered as a S13a local discount, so all costs of the scheme would be bourne by Rushcliffe Borough Council. Growth in the numbers of households will significantly increase the costs.

6. Joint funding potential

The option considered below is an apportionment based upon the district council % of Council Tax paid versus the County Council element. The numbers are not material on their own but when combined with other reliefs such as Care Leavers and Terminally ill Relief the costs become more significant. Experience from Care Leavers tells us, in terms of risk, is that the figures are likely to increase both as Council Tax rises annually and numbers increase, assuming the policy of attracting more Foster Carers is successful.

a) 100% Option – NCC would pay £284k, Districts £30k

Council	No of Carers	NCC split	District split	Band D @100% (NCC)	Band D @100% (District)
Ashfield	22	90.1%	9.9%	41,679.88	4,556.86
Bassetlaw	38	90.2%	9.8%	71,992.52	7,824.20
Broxtowe	3	90.7%	9.3%	5,683.62	580.98
Gedling	15	90.7%	9.3%	28,418.10	2,917.50
Mansfield	26	90.3%	9.7%	49,258.04	5,265.52
Newark and Sherwood	34	90.5%	9.5%	64,414.36	6,752.40
Rushcliffe	12	91.2%	8.8%	22,734.48	2,195.28
Total				**284,181.00**	**30,092.74**

b) 75% Option – NCC would pay £213k, Districts c£23k

Council	No of Carers	NCC split	District split	Band D @75% (NCC)	Band D @ 75% (District)
Ashfield	22	90.1%	9.9%	31,259.91	3,417.65
Bassetlaw	38	90.2%	9.8%	53,994.39	5,868.15
Broxtowe	3	90.7%	9.3%	4,262.72	435.74
Gedling	15	90.7%	9.3%	21,313.58	2,188.13
Mansfield	26	90.3%	9.7%	36,943.53	3,949.14
Newark and Sherwood	34	90.5%	9.5%	48,310.77	5,064.30
Rushcliffe	12	91.2%	8.8%	17,050.86	1,646.46
Total				**213,135.75**	**22,569.56**

c) 50% Option – NCC would pay £142k, Districts £15k

Council	No of Carers	NCC split	District split	Band D @ 50% (NCC)	Band D @ 50% (District)
Ashfield	22	90.1%	9.9%	20,839.94	2,278.43
Bassetlaw	38	90.2%	9.8%	35,996.26	3,912.10
Broxtowe	3	90.7%	9.3%	2,841.81	290.49
Gedling	15	90.7%	9.3%	14,209.05	1,458.75
Mansfield	26	90.3%	9.7%	24,629.02	2,632.76
Newark and Sherwood	34	90.5%	9.5%	32,207.18	3,376.20
Rushcliffe	12	91.2%	8.8%	11,367.24	1,097.64
Total				**142,090.50**	**15,046.37**

7. Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, the proposed discretionary Council Tax relief scheme would provide targeted support to foster carers in Rushcliffe Borough in recognition of the important role they play in providing stable homes for children and young people.

The scheme can be delivered lawfully through the Council's discretionary powers under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and any cost of the reduction would fall to RBC.

The scheme needs consistently applying across Nottinghamshire and as part of this what level of reliefshould be given. For example, it could be 100% relief but thereafter how much does Rushcliffe contribute and how much does the County Council (for example it could be 50% each). Another option is to do nothing and await LGR for a consistent approach across a much larger authority geography.

The Officer view is that the County should pay at least 50% of any relief. It will be difficult to demonstrate how successful the scheme is ie as opposed to the impact of other benefits foster carers may receive.

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Communities Scrutiny Group

Thursday, 23 July 2026

Article 4 Direction – Houses of Multiple Occupation

Rushcliffe
Borough Council

Report of the Director – Neighbourhoods

1. Purpose of report

1.1. On 10 February 2026, a report was considered by Cabinet setting out the evidence base collected to inform a possible Article 4 Direction across Rushcliffe Borough, with the aim to remove permitted development rights for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO), introducing a new requirement for submission of a planning application to the Local Planning Authority for permission to change from Use Class C3 Dwellinghouse to a Use Class C4.

1.2. Cabinet resolved that there was insufficient evidence to justify the implementation of an Article 4 Direction and recommended the continuing monitoring of HMOs and that the matter be referred to Communities Scrutiny Group with set key lines of enquiry.

1.3. This report updates the evidence presented to Cabinet on 10 February 2026 and sets out the likely intended and unintended consequences impacts of introducing an Article 4 Direction and concluding responses to the key lines of enquiry.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED the Communities Scrutiny Group scrutinise the contents of the report and the conclusions as set out in paragraphs 4.27 to 4.30.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1. As set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (NPG), an LPA should only make an Article 4 Direction where it can justify both its purpose and extent. Use of Article 4 Directions should be limited to the smallest geographical area possible and situations where it is necessary to protect the local amenity or wellbeing of the area. LPAs must clearly identify the potential harm the Direction is intended to address.

3.2. Following further investigative work, there is currently insufficient evidence to support the implementation of an Article 4 Direction covering the entire Borough, given the known numbers and distribution of HMOs (Appendix 1).

3.3. West Bridgford has a greater number of HMO properties than any other settlement within Rushcliffe Borough (Appendix 2). However, there is limited data to evidence amenity impact directly resulting from HMOs.

3.4. Since 2024, service requests relating to HMO's have been received by the Council from 14 complainants. One complainant made 271 complaints regarding one property, which were investigated, and found to be unsubstantiated.

3.5. NCC has indicated that there are insignificant numbers of service requests relating to parking which are directly attributed to HMOs within Rushcliffe Borough. A significant number of service area requests relating to parking received by NCC within the West Bridgford area are due to sporting events.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 On 10 February 2026, a report was considered by Cabinet setting out the evidence base collected to inform a possible introduction of an Article 4 Direction across Rushcliffe Borough, with the aim to remove permitted development rights for Houses of Multiple Occupation.

4.2 The introduction of an Article 4 Direction triggers the requirement of a planning application to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for permission to change from Use Class C3 Dwellinghouse to a Use Class C4.

4.3 It was resolved that Cabinet:

a) confirms that there is insufficient evidence to meet the legal threshold to justify an Article 4 Direction to remove or restrict permitted development rights for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the Borough;

b) requests that the number of HMOs and complaints received continues to be monitored; and

c) requests that the matter is referred to Communities Scrutiny Group at the July 2026 meeting to scrutinise the following key lines of enquiry:

- Is there a robust evidence base demonstrating harm or risk of harm?

- What are the likely impacts - intended and unintended – of introducing an Article 4 Direction to remove or restrict permitted development rights for HMOs?

- Is making an Article 4 Direction proportionate, enforceable and aligned with local and national planning policy?

Houses of Multiple Occupation

4.4 A HMO is a rental property, which houses at least three people from different households who share facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms. HMOs are an important part of the rental market, providing housing for young professionals, students and those on a lower income.

Licensing

4.5 The legal threshold for licensing a HMO is at an occupancy of five or more people from different households. Licenses cannot be sought for HMOs of 3 or 4 person occupancy.

Planning

4.6 Planning permission for HMOs is required in the following circumstances:

- To create a large HMO (7+ occupants); or

- If a property falls within an Article 4 area, planning permission is required for 3 to 6 person occupancy.

Article 4 Direction

4.7 An Article 4 Direction is a legislative tool used to remove or restrict certain permitted development rights, including change of use, from an area or specific property in certain limited situations where it is necessary to protect local amenity or the wellbeing of an area.

4.8 In removing specific permitted development rights, an Article 4 Direction does not prevent the type of development specified but instead requires an application for planning permission to be made prior to any development within that Use Class taking place. As per the Town and Country Planning (Compensation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 explanatory notes: in making an Article 4 Direction, an LPA can be liable to pay compensation to those whose development rights have been withdrawn or restricted by the Direction. The amount of compensation that a Local Authority may be liable to pay is unknown.

4.9 As set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (NPG), an LPA should only make an Article 4 Direction where it can justify both its purpose and extent. Use of Article 4 Directions should be limited to situations where it is necessary to protect the local amenity or wellbeing of the area and the LPA has clearly identified the potential harm the Direction is intended to address.

4.10 An LPA should only make an Article 4 Direction where it can justify both its purpose and extent. Use of Article 4 Directions should be limited to situations where it is necessary to protect the local amenity or wellbeing of the area, and the LPA has clearly identified the potential harm the Direction is intended to address. In all cases, Article 4 Directions must be based on robust evidence, and apply to the smallest geographical area possible.

4.11 The making of an Article 4 Direction without clear justification and robust evidence as specified in the NPPF could result in the order being challenged in the courts. There is also a risk that the Secretary of State intervenes to withdraw or modify the Direction.

HMOs within Rushcliffe Borough

4.12 There are currently 188 licensed HMOs within Rushcliffe of 5 + person occupancy:

- 185 in West Bridgford
- 2 in Sutton Bonnington
- 1 in Radcliffe on Trent

4.13 This is based on a threshold of 5+ occupancy needing a licence. However, the number of 3-4 person occupancy HMOs can only be estimated.

4.14 On average, since 2014, the Council has permitted 1 HMO of 7+ occupants per year. Since 1 January 2026, 1 planning application was permitted for the creation of an HMO, in West Bridgford. Furthermore, 2 planning applications have been permitted for the conversion of 2 HMOs to apartments, within West Bridgford.

4.15 Data supplied by an independent company called Price Hubble indicates a further 175 properties which rank as likely to be HMOs within a 3-4 person occupancy range. 91 properties are within West Bridgford.

4.16 There are 47,400 residential properties within Rushcliffe Borough; HMOs represent 0.39% of the housing stock of the Borough.

4.17 Most HMOs in NG2 (Rushcliffe Borough) can be found on the main roads and in the centre of West Bridgford. The 1 newly licensed HMO (since the publication of 10 February Cabinet report) is located in Radcliffe on Trent.

4.18 Most of the licensed HMOs in West Bridgford are located along its main access roads with clustering on specific streets, including Rushworth Avenue, Rosebury Avenue and North Road.

Rushcliffe Borough Council Service Requests

4.19 14 complainants have made service requests to the Council since 2024 regarding issues with HMOs. The majority of service requests relate to noise, with a small proportion relating to anti-social behaviour. Wider ward-level analysis shows a similar trend, with noise forming the majority of recorded complaints. The service area requests are not clustered to a specific street.

Nottinghamshire County Council – Parking Service Requests and Parking Schemes

4.20 NCC has indicated that there are insignificant numbers of service requests relating to parking which can be directly attributed to HMOs within Rushcliffe Borough. A high number of NCC service area requests relating to parking within the West Bridgford area are due to sporting events, as a number of national sporting venues are located in and around the West Bridgford area.

4.21 NCC's parking guidelines require the allocation of 1 parking space per HMO bedroom. HMOs therefore have the potential to negatively impact parking availability on streets with parking schemes which are nearing/at/over-capacity. However, people living in HMOs generally have a lower income and may be less likely to own private vehicles.

4.22 NCC does not currently have the evidence to indicate that HMOs are directly affecting parking availability on streets with parking schemes. Other parameters to consider, as identified by NCC, include:

- Rise in car ownership generally
- Home working
- Multiple car family homes

4.23 The Council will continue to liaise with NCC on the analysis of resident parking schemes and service requests/complaints relating to parking within West Bridgford.

Potential Benefits and Impacts of Introducing an Article 4 Direction

4.24 Cabinet on 10th February 2026 requested that Communities Scrutiny Group scrutinise likely impacts - intended and unintended – of introducing an Article 4 Direction to remove or restrict permitted development rights for HMOs. Potential benefits and impacts of introducing an Article 4 Direction are considered below.

4.25 Potential Benefits of Introducing an Article 4 Direction include:

- Greater planning control: enables the Council to assess location, scale and constraints before approval, enabling case-by-case decisions rather than automatic conversions.

- Protection of local amenity: helps manage potential amenity issues through planning controls, where clear harm can be demonstrated.

- Managing HMO clustering: can limit impact by assessing cumulative impacts, preserving neighbourhood character.

- Preservation of family housing stock: may reduce gradual loss of single-family homes to HMOs. Supports more balanced and stable communities.

- Increased transparency and community involvement: planning applications become publicly visible, allowing resident input.

4.26 Potential Impacts of Introducing an Article 4 Direction include:

- Reduction in affordable housing supply: HMOs often provide lower-cost accommodation for key groups such as students and young professionals. Restrictions could reduce availability and increase pressure elsewhere.

- Displacement effects ("spillover"): HMOs may shift to nearby unrestricted areas rather than reduce overall numbers. This could redistribute and potentially worsen impacts in other locations.

- Limited effectiveness: Article 4 does not stop HMOs; it subjects HMOs to planning control.

- False expectations among residents: some residents may expect control over who occupies HMO's, which planning cannot provide. This may lead to dissatisfaction.

- Increased administrative and resource burden: more applications will increase officer workload and processing times, putting additional pressure on planning and enforcement teams.

- Risk of compensation liability: immediate implementation of Article 4 could trigger compensation claims. This creates potential financial risk if not carefully managed. The amount of claim and financial risk which the Council may be liable for is unknown.

- Reliance shift from existing tools: Article 4 may overlap with existing enforcement mechanisms like licensing and environmental legislation. This risks diverting focus from more targeted approaches.

- Delayed development/ uncertainty for landlords: adds time, complexity, and risk to property conversions. This may deter investment and reduce responsiveness in the rental market

<u>Conclusion</u>

4.27 In relation to the key lines of enquiry set by Cabinet on 10 February 2026 the following conclusions have been made based on the evidence gathered and reference to local and national planning legislation and guidance.

Is there a robust evidence base demonstrating harm or risk of harm?

4.28 The evidence set out in this report does not demonstrate, at this time, that HMOs are causing harm to local amenity or wellbeing at a level sufficient to justify the introduction of an Article 4 Direction, either Borough wide or specifically within West Bridgford. 1 new HMO has been licensed since

Cabinet on 10 February 2026, and the number of service area requests received by RBC and NCC directly relating to HMOs do not demonstrate significant harm or risk of harm.

What are the likely impacts - intended and unintended – of introducing an Article 4 Direction to remove or restrict permitted development rights for HMOs?

4.29 While an Article 4 Direction could provide greater planning control and increased community transparency, it would also carry risks including additional administrative burden due to likely increase in planning applications, possible displacement effects, reduced availability of lower-cost accommodation, legal challenge and potential compensation liability if not supported by a robust and proportionate evidence base.

Is making an Article 4 Direction proportionate, enforceable and aligned with local and national planning policy?

4.30 Article 4 Directions must be informed by robust, up-to-date and locally specific evidence. Due to there currently being insufficient evidence to demonstrate the requirement of an Article 4 Direction, it is not considered that an Article 4 Direction would be proportionate, enforceable or aligned with policy. The Council will continue to monitor HMO numbers, service requests and parking-related evidence, including through liaison with Nottinghamshire County Council.

5 Risks and Uncertainties

5.1 The proposed action not to implement an Article 4 Direction may lead to resident concern about the Council's approach to the increasing number of HMOs across the Borough. However, as discussed above, there is insufficient evidence base to robustly justify such action across any geographical area. Taking Article 4 action without a solid case would not be in accordance with the NPPF and associated PPG and could open the Council up to legal challenge and compensation claims from a range of sources, including landlords and developers.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from the report's conclusions. At current complaint levels, staff resources associated with ongoing monitoring can be contained within existing budgets.

6.2 Legal Implications

The conclusions of this report do not result in the implication of an Article 4 Direction. There are no legal implications or resource requirements for the ongoing monitoring that is recommended by this report.

6.3 **Equalities Implications**

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) are required for new policies. The recommendations do not result in the implementation of new policies and consequently, an EIA is not required. Should the decision be taken to implement an Article 4 in the future, an EIA would be required.

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

The Council actively responds to reports of antisocial behaviour; however, where ongoing, the Council will continue to monitor and respond, particularly in relation to licensed properties.

It should be noted that the vast majority of HMOs in Rushcliffe do not give rise to any complaints and there is insufficient evidence to suggest a link between HMOs and increased anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance or safety concerns at this time.

6.5 **Biodiversity Net Gain Implications**

There are no known Biodiversity Net Gain Implications.

6.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications**

There are no direct LGR implications arising from the recommendations of this report at this time.

7 Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	There are no identified links to the 'Environment' Corporate Priority.
Quality of Life	Article 4 Directions must be robustly reasoned, including 'to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area'. The low volume of complaints indicate that the local amenity and wellbeing of the area is not being significantly impacted by HMOs within the Borough, as such this report concludes that there is insufficient evidence to meet the legal threshold to justify an HMO Article 4 Direction, and that complaints should be continually monitored.
Efficient Services	The preparation and implementation of an Article 4 Direction is often resource heavy and could result in legal challenge and an increase in planning applications. Due to insufficient evidence, the recommendation of this report concludes that an Article 4 Direction cannot at this time be justified.
Sustainable Growth	Article 4 Directions remove permitted development rights which, if not justified, can stifle sustainable growth. Introducing an HMO Article 4 Direction would restrict the delivery of HMOs which serve a useful purpose of housing those with a lower income, students and young professionals.

8 Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED the Communities Scrutiny Group scrutinise the contents of the report and the conclusions as set out in paragraphs 4.27 to 4.30.

For more information contact:	Shaza Brannon Assistant Director of Planning Tel: 0115 914 8410 sbrannon@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	Report to Cabinet on 10 February – Article 4 Direction Houses of Multiple Occupation Report to Communities Scrutiny Group on 22 January 2026 – Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation including HMOs
List of appendices:	Appendix 1: Indicative diagram of licensed HMO distribution within Rushcliffe Borough Appendix 2: Licensed HMOs within the West Bridgford Area

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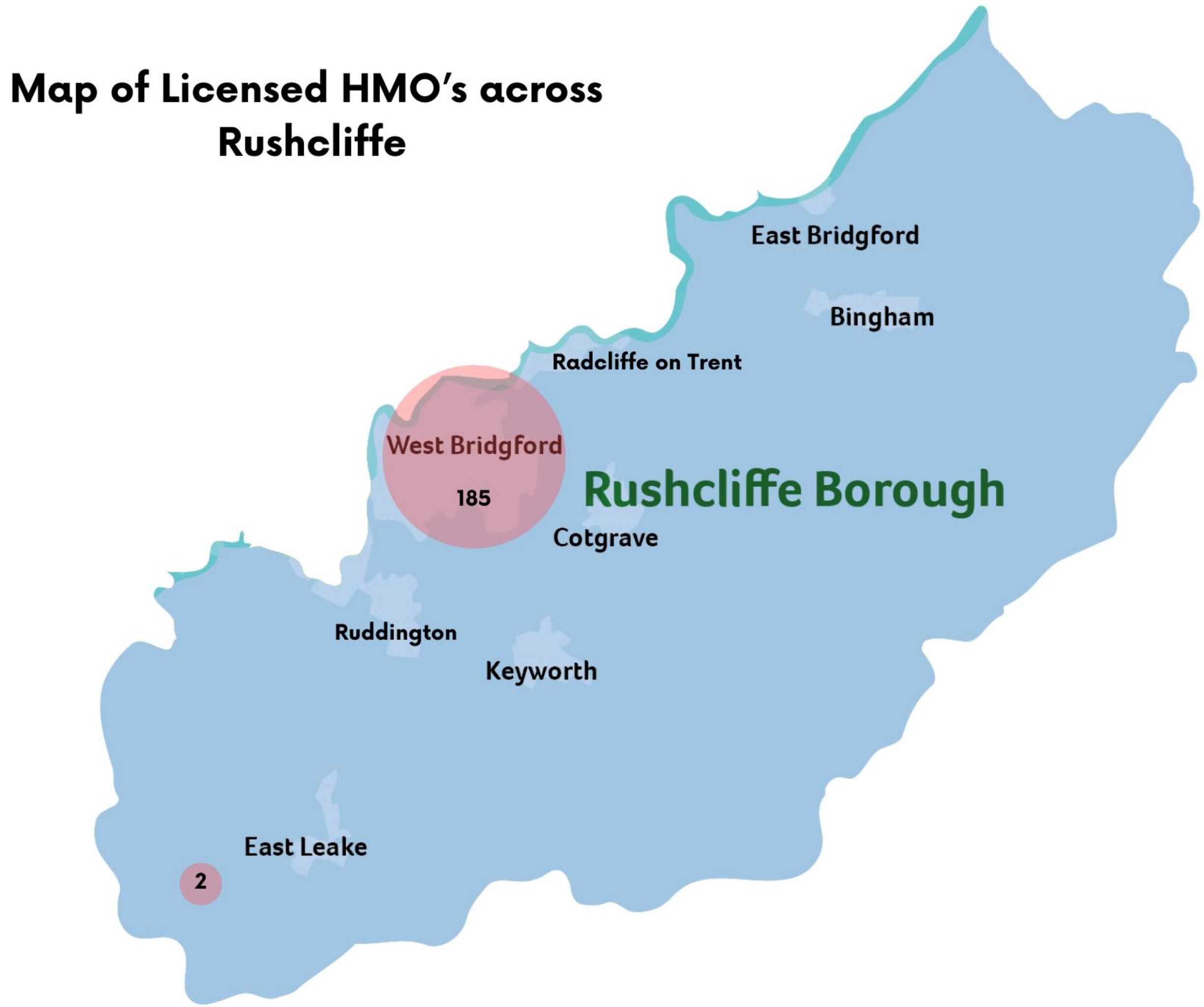
Appendix 1: Indicative Map of Licensed HMOs across Rushcliffe Borough



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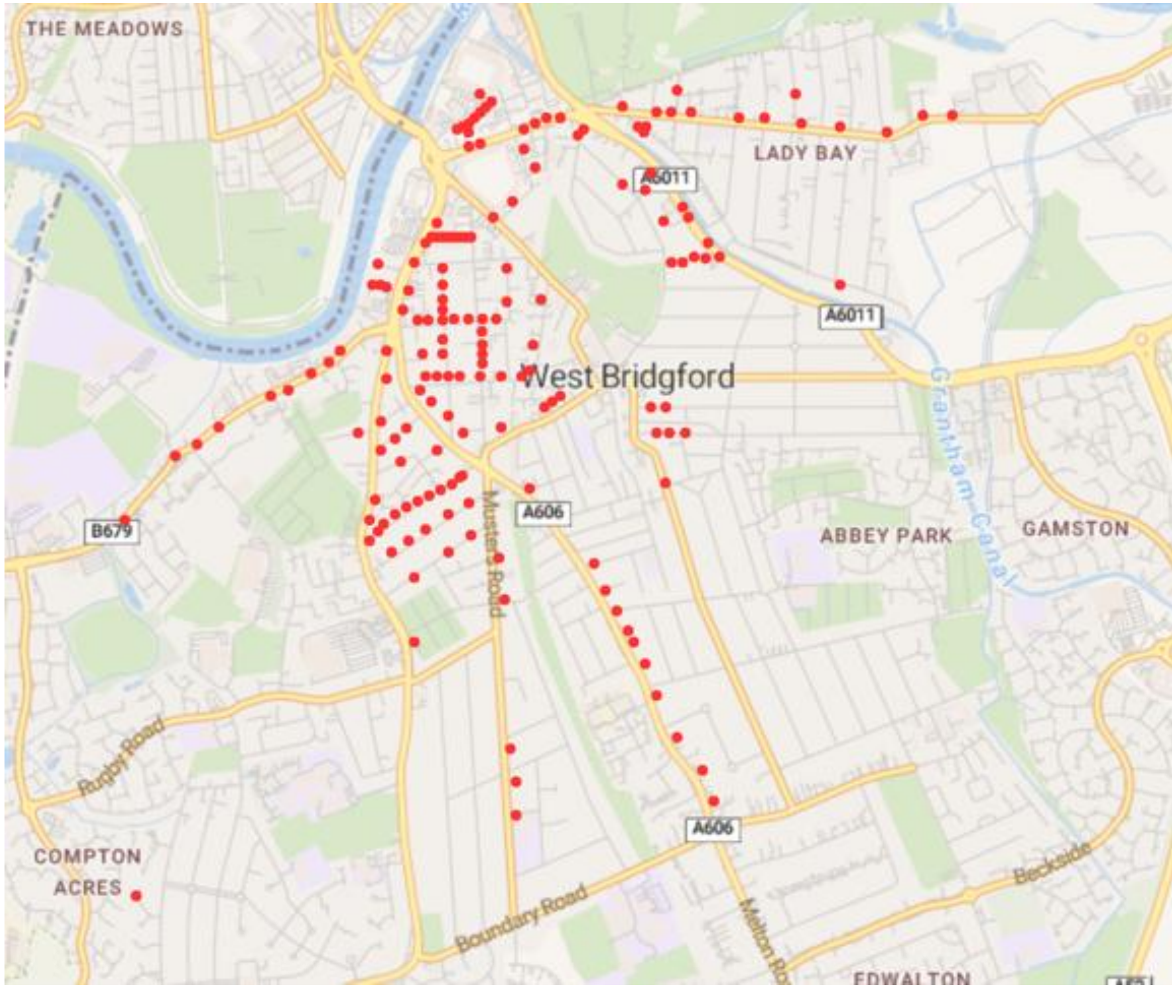
Appendix 2: Map of Licensed HMOs within West Bridgford



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Agenda Item 6

Communities Scrutiny Group

Thursday, 23 July 2026

Work Programme

Rushcliffe Borough Council

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 16 June 2026, 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:

xx October 2026

- Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing
- Work Programme

xx January 2027

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

xx April 2027

- Work Programme

xx July 2027

- Carbon Management Plan Update
- Work Programme

1. 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
Background papers Available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices (if any):	None.