

When telephoning, please ask for: Helen Tambini
Direct dial 0115 914 8320
Email democraticservices@rushcliffe.gov.uk

Our reference:
Your reference:
Date: Monday, 4 May 2020

To all Members of the Cabinet

Dear Councillor

A Virtual Meeting of the Cabinet will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, 12 May 2020 at 2.00 pm to consider the following items of business.

The meeting will be live streamed via YouTube for the public to listen and view via the link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/RushcliffeBC>

Note: 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



Sanjit Sull
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 March 2020 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Opposition Group Leaders' Questions
To answer questions submitted by Opposition Group Leaders on items on the agenda.
5. Citizens' Questions
To answer questions submitted by citizens on the Council or its services.



Rushcliffe
Borough Council

Rushcliffe Borough
Council Customer
Service Centre

Fountain Court
Gordon Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 5LN

Email:
customerservices
@rushcliffe.gov.uk

Telephone:
0115 981 9911

www.rushcliffe.gov.uk

Opening hours:
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
8.30am - 5pm
Wednesday
9.30am - 5pm
Friday
8.30am - 4.30pm

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



KEY DECISIONS

6. Delegated Decisions for for Covid-19 (Pages 7 - 24)

The report of the Chief Executive is attached.

7. Budget Update (Pages 25 - 36)

The report of the Executive Manager Finance and Corporate Services is attached.

NON-KEY DECISION

8. Draft Character Appraisal and Proposed Conservation Area for Cropwell Bishop (Pages 37 - 74)

The report of the Executive Manager – Communities is attached

Membership

Chairman: Councillor S J Robinson

Vice-Chairman: Councillor D Mason

Councillors: A Edyvean, R Inglis, G Moore and R Upton

Meeting Guidance

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



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET

TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020

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

PRESENT:

Councillors S J Robinson (Chairman), D Mason (Vice-Chairman), A Edyvean,
R Inglis, G Moore and R Upton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors B Gray, R Jones, R Mallender, S Mallender and C Thomas

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

K Marriott	Chief Executive
L Ashmore	Executive Manager - Transformation
D Banks	Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods
P Linfield	Executive Manager - Finance and Corporate Services
S Sull	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies

50 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Inglis declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 10 Leisure Contracts and advised that he would leave the room during the debate on this item.

51 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 February 2020.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 11 February 2020 were declared a true record and signed by the Chairman.

52 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

There were no questions.

53 Citizens' Questions

There were no questions.

54 Lutterell Hall

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation presented the report of the Executive Manager – Transformation outlining the options for future

ownership and management of Lutterell Hall.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation advised that the report proposed the best way forward to manage the Hall. In recent years both usage of the Hall and income had fallen, there were significant maintenance costs associated with the building and Nottinghamshire Police had put its adjacent Police station up for sale. All of those factors had led the Council to consider future options for the site and in June 2019, Cabinet had resolved to invite expressions of interest from third parties. Following an extensive process of information gathering and public consultation, officers had undertaken an assessment of those expressions of interest and had concluded that retaining ownership and entering into a lease agreement with a community organisation would best achieve the Council's objectives. Since the agenda had been published, one of the three shortlisted community groups had withdrawn its interest as it had secured a new lease with its existing premises provider. The Scout group was thanked for its interest. The Friends of Lutterell Hall were advised that although its document had been submitted after the closing date for expressions of interest, the document had been read thoroughly and the Group would have the opportunity, if it wished to be involved in the future use of the Hall. On balance, the proposed recommendation was the best option as it scored the highest on the option appraisal matrix.

Councillor Edyvean proposed the recommendation, subject to an amendment to change the number of community groups from three to two.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Mason reiterated the comments made by Councillor Edyvean and advised that the Hall was one of many Council assets that had to be regularly reviewed to ensure that it was properly managed and was providing services as cost effectively as possible.

Councillor Robinson acknowledged and thanked the Scout group for its interest and wished the group well in the future. He reiterated the importance of considering all options to ensure the most appropriate use of the Hall that provided best value for money for local residents, as the council did with all its assets. The building was a Listed Building and it was important to retain it in good condition structurally. The Council had listened and acted upon feedback and the proposal was prudent.

It was RESOLVED that

- a) subject to agreement of detailed lease terms and due diligence, entering into a lease agreement with a community organisation to manage Lutterell Hall be approved, with either:
 - a. one of the shortlisted community groups who submitted an Expression of Interest, or
 - b. a combination of the two via an appropriate management company;
- b) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation, be granted delegated authority to determine the most suitable community organisation or combination and negotiate and complete the terms of the lease, including wider community use that will continue to be provided.

55 **Carbon Management Plan**

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Sustainability presented the report of the Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods providing an update on the Council's Carbon Management Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Sustainability referred to the motion passed by the Council in March 2019, requesting a review of the Council's Carbon Management Plan by a relevant scrutiny group before being brought to Cabinet by no later than March 2020. The Communities Scrutiny Group was thanked for its hard work and its recommendation to set a target date for the Council to be carbon neutral by 2030. The target date was both aspirational and challenging, changes had to be made; however, that would also come at a financial cost and to offset that, a climate change action reserve of £1m had been agreed by Council as part of the Budget and Financial Strategy 2020/21. The Council would be at the forefront of change, working collaboratively and the Plan had been developed to integrate with the overarching D2N2 Energy Strategy to support cross boundary initiatives.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Upton referred to the considerable work required to develop a new Carbon Management Plan in less than a year and thanked officers for their hard work and excellent report. The target date was challenging; however, the detailed Action Plan provided realistic, achievable targets and the £1m would be invaluable to support it. This Council had made a significant financial commitment, unlike the majority of other Councils.

Councillor Moore stated the importance of carbon management in all projects, and referred to the increased cost of £300k that had been agreed for additional carbon reduction measures for the new Bingham Leisure Centre development. This was an example of another large project in Rushcliffe and how committed the Council was to becoming carbon neutral.

Councillor Robinson referred to the main source of emissions from the Council's own operations being from leisure centres and fleet vehicles at 67% and 25% respectively. A programme of replacement vehicles would be extremely costly and was only one measure, and the £1m had been approved to ensure that the Council was focused on making a tangible and measurable difference to its operations.

It was RESOLVED that

- a) a target date for the Council's direct operations to become carbon neutral by 2030 be approved;
- b) the Carbon Management Action Plan be noted; and
- c) the Communities Scrutiny Group be granted delegated authority to annually scrutinise the delivery and update of the Plan.

56 **Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2019/20 - Quarter 3**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Contracts presented the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services outlining the budget position for revenue and capital at 30 December 2019 as part of the Financial Update for Quarter 3.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Contracts confirmed that the Corporate Overview Group at its meeting on 25 February 2020 had considered the report and it had forwarded no observations to Cabinet. The financial position for the year remained positive, with an overall revenue efficiency position of £906k. The financial position to date reflected a number of positive variances; including additional income from business rates, planning applications, treasury investment income and staffing efficiencies. It was hoped that following the Budget, the uncertainty over the future of business rates would be addressed. The considerable uncertainty regarding the Coronavirus and its impact on business and finance had to be considered and the Council would continue to monitor the situation. Looking to the future, it was anticipated that there would be a carry forward of £100k to support the work of the Development Corporation, with an earmarked reserve being created. The Members Community Grants scheme would be underspent by £17k and that had would be made available to support a new initiative being launched by Councillor Robinson, to combat loneliness in the Borough. In respect of Capital Monitoring, the crematorium and the new units at Cotgrave had been subject to short planning delays. Overall, whilst external financial pressures remained, the financial position remained positive thanks to prudent management by the Council.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis referred to the importance of maintaining due diligence and welcomed the continuing positive financial outlook for the Council.

Councillor Robinson referred to the uncertainty regarding the coronavirus and the implications it could have. He thanked the Executive Manager for Finance and Corporate Services and his team, and looked forward to delivering the ambitious capital community projects outlined and noted that such projects were only possible due to careful, prudent financial planning.

It was RESOLVED that

- a) the projected revenue position for the year with £0.906m budget efficiencies be noted; and
- b) the capital underspend of £17.807m as a result of projects no longer proceeding and planned programme slippage be noted; and
- c) the Special Expenses Quarter 3 financial position be noted.

57 Asset Management Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation presented the report of the Executive Manager – Transformation providing an update on the Council's Asset Management Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation stated the importance of

ensuring that the Council maintained an extensive and diverse range of assets. The Asset Management Strategy sought to align the asset portfolio with the requirements of the organisation, for the benefit of the community. The Governance Scrutiny Group had considered the Asset Management Strategy at its meeting in December 2019, and it would be submitted to Council in July for approval.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Moore referred to the importance of managing and protecting assets on behalf of the community and thanked the Executive Manager – Transformation and her team for the report.

Councillor Robinson noted the diversity of the Council's assets and the challenges faced to maintain them. It was vital that the Council's assets were fit for purpose and delivered value for money. The Council's sound financial planning allowed for investment in both newly acquired assets and the Council's own assets.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet supports the Asset Management Strategy and recommends it to Council for approval.

Exclusion of Public

It was resolved that under Regulation 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

58 Leisure Contracts

It was RESOLVED that the Chief Executive be authorised to agree a variation and extension to the Parkwood Leisure Contract to 2027. The variation to include a new leisure facility in Bingham and amendments to the existing Edwalton Golf Course Contract in line with the best and final offer.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

CHAIRMAN

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Cabinet

12 May 2020

Update on Covid-19 Urgency Decisions

Report of the Chief Executive

Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough Wide Leadership Councillor S J Robinson

1. Purpose of report

This report provides an update on the Council's activities to deal with the impacts of Covid-19. Since the last Cabinet meeting in March, the Chief Executive has had occasion to make several urgent decisions through delegated authority, in collaboration with the Leader and the relevant Portfolio Holders.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) endorses the decisions made under delegated urgency provisions as set out in paragraph 4.3 and agrees that these should be exempted from call in on the grounds of urgency at the time the decision was made, and not subsequently
- b) agrees that a variation to the Parkwood/Lex leisure contract is negotiated, to cover the period when leisure centres have to remain closed due to Covid-19 and delegates authority to the Section 151 Officer (consulting with the Monitoring Officer) to agree the contract variation
- c) receives a future report with recommendations on the future contractual arrangements and the variation with Parkwood/Lex Leisure
- d) agrees the Council Tax Support grant policy paper as per Appendix 1 to be endorsed by Full Council (as part of a revised Covid-19 Budget later in the year)
- e) Note the potential Discretionary Business Rates Grant Fund broad parameters (Appendix 3) and that once final guidance is received from central government approve the delegation of completing Rushcliffe's final discretionary scheme to the portfolio holders for Finance and Business and Transformation; and the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services.

3. Reasons for recommendation

Following the outbreak of Covid-19 and the implementation firstly, of social distancing and subsequently, of the national lockdown, several urgent decisions had to be taken by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the relevant Portfolio Holder. This has been an unprecedented international situation. Legislative powers under the Coronavirus Act and ICT solutions have now been put in place in order to enable the holding of virtual Cabinet meetings and it is not anticipated that the circumstances which necessitated urgent delegated decision making will continue in the same way.

4. Decisions taken

4.1. Over the last few weeks, the Council has had to adapt to the changing circumstances of dealing with the outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) and implement several government directives. Much of the work has been at an operational level and redirecting and redeploying staffing resources falls within the Chief Executive's powers as the Head of Paid Service.

4.2. Other urgent decisions have been taken as per the constitution which allows that the Chief Executive, "in consultation with the Leader and the appropriate Cabinet member with responsibility for the service area concerned, to authorise the taking or carrying out of action, notwithstanding anything in the Council's Standing Orders or Financial Regulations, where he/she considers that circumstances exist that make it expedient or necessary for action to be taken prior to the time when such action could be approved through normal Council procedures. A report on such action, and the circumstances justifying the exercise of the delegated powers, shall be made to the next meeting of the Cabinet or the Council as appropriate." The next meeting to report these actions to is this Cabinet meeting.

4.3. The following table details the decisions taken in chronological order, with the details of whether they are operational or taken as a delegated decision due to urgency powers as referenced in paragraph 4.2:

Date	Decision	Reasons for Decision	Operational or Urgency
March 16	Suspension of Council meetings including Scrutiny until July, Cabinet and Planning to be kept under review	Social distancing guidance and the need for some councillors to isolate	Urgency
w/c March 16	Close remote contact points	Social distancing but also request from library and health colleagues to close	Operational
w/c March 16	Close all community halls and sports pavilions	Government guidance	Operational
March 17 onwards	Redeploy some council staff into frontline or other services	To ensure resources best deployed – eg particular support for refuse collection, business grant support, humanitarian aid work	Operational

Date	Decision	Reasons for Decision	Operational or Urgency
March 17	Cancel all community events to end July	Government guidance on gatherings	Operational
March 19	Postponement of Colston Bassett Neighbourhood Plan referendum	Social distancing guidance and the need for some electors to isolate	Operational for CEX as the Counting Officer
March 23	Close all play areas	Government guidance	Operational
March 24	Suspension of car parking fees on a month by month basis	No enforcement available and as a gesture of goodwill. Subsequently supported by government	Urgency
March 24	Consider rental payment holidays for tenants who are struggling	This is usual practice for tenants in difficult financial situations. Current situation has exacerbated cash flow issues for some tenants. NB this is a holiday, not a discount.	Operational
March 24	Close Fountain Court contact centre	Social distancing guidance	Operational
March 24	All Bingham and West Bridgford Markets to be cancelled	Difficult to control social gathering – promoting home delivery as alternative with market manager leading	Operational
March 25	Close Bridgford Park toilets	previously managed by Al Fresco – now closed	Operational
March	Distribution of Rushcliffe Reports cancelled	Content now out of date due to the Coronavirus outbreak.	Operational
26 March	Decision taken by Asset Investment Group (AIG) to withdraw from one purchase	Market uncertainty and budget considerations	Within terms of reference for AIG
w/c 30 March	Council tax hardship fund – allocation of some of £500k of government funding allocated in the Government Budget of 11 March 2020	Recommended at this initial early stage that an award of up to £150 is given to all working-age claimant in receipt of CTR as at 1 April 2020. If the net liability as at this date is less than £150 the award granted will reduce the balance to zero (in line with Government guidance). This is to take effect from 1 April 2020 so we apply this award as quickly as possible. The decision will allow the initial funding to be allocated to those most in need in the simplest and quickest method of delivery. There will be funding remaining and further policy work and decisions will be required.	Urgency
31 March	Introduction of temporary process for the determination of planning applications during coronavirus pandemic.	To enable the planning process to continue in line with Government guidance.	Urgency
6 April	Decision taken to agree to Parkwood payment for one month at a time for 3 months	All leisure centres closed on 20 March following government directive. Parkwood leisure furloughed all but 3	Urgency

Date	Decision	Reasons for Decision	Operational or Urgency
		staff and following negotiations, a payment plan for 3 months was agreed to support the company. This is £106k per month	
6 April	Streetwise - agreed a revised work programme to scale up Streetwise work and to continue to pay full contract fee.	To ensure that contract services are maintained at some level.	Operational
9 April	Following request from Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, agreed deferment of loan repayment (principal only)	NCCC cashflow issues	Operational
14 April	Proposal to vary the terms of the Councillor's community grant scheme agreed by Leader in consultation with group leaders	To relax the criteria on a temporary basis to allow allocations to support local community groups assisting with the coronavirus response	Operational
20 April	To furlough a small number of council staff who cannot easily be redeployed and whose roles are based on facilities or event management	RBC has significant cashflow challenges due to reduced income. The government furlough scheme is relevant to a small number of staff (20) where income has fallen and they have not been redeployed. The Government is reticent about local authorities furloughing staff.	Operational
30 April	Allow a small number of food stalls to recommence standing at Bingham market	Social distancing guidelines in place.	Operational

5. Leisure centres

- 5.1. On 20 March the Government issued instructions that all leisure centres should be closed. Until that point, the Council had kept its leisure centres open, in line with government advice. However over the weeks running up to the closures it was clear that usage numbers had started to fall.
- 5.2. Four of the council's five leisure centres are operated by Lex/Parkwood Leisure. They also operate Edwalton Golf Course. The Council was quickly advised by Parkwood that due to the nature of the leisure business (ie it being largely a pay for service by the public), and the low profit margins in the industry, that some financial assistance would be requested to support the leisure trust to weather the Covid-19 shut down period.
- 5.3. Parkwood furloughed the majority of staff and have retained only three members of staff locally to check the buildings and keep them maintained and operational ready for reopening. In addition there are ongoing costs around insurance, repairs and renewals, ICT, contracts etc as well as accountancy charges that cannot be reduced (and the majority of which would also exist should the Council operate leisure as an in-house service). Following negotiation and challenge to reduce these costs as much as possible, it was agreed that the Council would pay a sum of £106,599 per month to Parkwood

for the months of April, May and June 2020. It should be noted the budgetary impact is £357,000 for the 3 months as the Council was expecting to receive a payment from Parkwood of £12,000 per month. It is extremely unlikely that this will be the only financial impact on the Council linked to the leisure closure. There was a detrimental financial impact on leisure facilities in March, and reopening leisure facilities will be a challenging operation with elements of social distancing likely to be in place for the foreseeable future.

- 5.4. At March Cabinet, the previous negotiations for a variation to the Parkwood contract were reported and agreed. It is clear that the assumptions that informed the previous negotiations will need revisiting and will need to be reported back to Cabinet for a future decision once the economic situation post Covid-19 becomes clearer. It is unlikely that the terms of the contract will be fit for purpose and the contract is likely to require a wholesale review.
- 5.5. It remains the Council's intention to be able to reopen and support a comprehensive leisure offer in the future, to support residents' health and wellbeing and also support the many community sports clubs.

6. Council Tax Support Grant and Business Rates Discretionary Grant Fund

- 6.1. The Council's allocation from the £500m hardship fund announced at the Budget to deliver relief to council tax payers in their area is £515,389, which is based on our working-age caseload as at quarter 3 of 2019/20.
- 6.2. Under urgency powers it was agreed with the Leader and Cabinet Holder for Finance that an award of up to £150 would be given to all working-age claimant in receipt of CTR as at 1 April 2020. If the net liability as at this date was less than £150 the award granted would reduce the balance to zero (in line with Government guidance). This took effect from 30 March 2020 and was applied as quickly as possible.
- 6.3. The decision allowed the initial funding to be allocated to those most in need in the simplest and quickest method of delivery. There is funding remaining and further policy work and decisions are required. It was modelled that up to half of the fund would be allocated in this way.
- 6.4. Appendix 1 sets out the proposed policy for the review and allocation of remaining funding over the next few months. It is proposed that when a revised Covid-19 budget is presented to Full Council (aiming for September) the policy and its progress will be appended to the Budget report.
- 6.5. The Government has announced that a Business Rates Discretionary Grant Fund will be available. Full details are yet to be provided as to the parameters surrounding the operation of this fund. Appendix 3 details what we believe are the key criteria which will determine its application, gleaned from information received to date. Decisions still need to be made, for example what level of payment should be made for different types and size of business that meet the criteria.

6.6. It is proposed finalisation of the policy, once final government guidance has been produced, is delegated to the Portfolio holders for both Finance and Business and Transformation; and to the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services. The overall aim will be to have an equitable scheme which balances accountability, minimises any risk of fraud and ensures businesses receive funding as quickly as possible.

7. The Coronavirus Act and Council meetings

7.1. Under regulations made following the adoption of the Coronavirus Act 2020, Councils are now able to hold meetings with attendees in virtual attendance rather than councillors having to attend in person. These conditions are in place until May 2021.

7.2. The Council's constitution will be updated with revisions to this effect at the July Council meeting. Interim arrangements have been put in place for Planning Committees from April to June with a reduced membership (see Appendix 2). It is planned to revert to the full attendance and previous meeting time from July with members able to attend remotely via technology or in person at the Arena, with appropriate social distancing measures in place.

7.3. It is planned that all scrutiny meetings that were postponed will be added to the calendar from July onwards and that from July onwards, meetings will take place with attendance options available either via remote access or in person at the Arena, with appropriate social distancing measures in place.

7.4. It is planned that virtual meetings will be broadcast to the public live via the Council's You Tube channel.

8. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

8.1. The Chief Executive could have chosen not to take any decisions under urgency powers in consultation with the Leader and relevant portfolio holders. However she did not consider that to be the best course of action during the period of uncertainty relating to the onset of lockdown. Decisive action was required to give some certainty and protection to the leisure operator and to enable government grant (eg the CT hardship fund) to be distributed in a timely manner. Actions taken to protect the health and wellbeing of councillors and residents also needed to be taken (eg the postponement of Scrutiny meetings).

8.2. The urgency provisions in the constitution should not, and were not undertaken lightly. However the provisions are in existence for emergency situations and the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lock down and economic and societal upheaval certainly classes as an emergency situation.

8.3. The Council's constitution confirms that the Call-In procedure does not apply where the decision is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the Call-In process would prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The Cabinet must decide that no Call-In may be made on the grounds of urgency at the time the decision is made, and not subsequently. This will be

indicated at a set point on the agenda. If there is an urgent item, which it would not be practicable to Call-In, then the Cabinet decision can be implemented by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the relevant Cabinet member and the Chairman of the relevant scrutiny committee.

- 8.4. It is certainly hoped that from now onwards, especially as ICT arrangements are in place for the safe holding of virtual public meetings, there should be opportunity for the vast majority of substantive Council decisions to be taken by Cabinet and Council as is standard practice, without the need to implement the urgency provisions. However we remain in uncertain times, and there are occasions when rapid decision making has to be available. As always, this would be reported to the next available meeting.

9. Risks and uncertainties

- 9.1. Without agreeing a support package to Parkwood/Lex Leisure, the Council would be in serious danger of its leisure operator not being able to survive the current economic situation.
- 9.2. This would result in the Council having to close, or take back in-house the running of its leisure provision and then undertake a costly procurement exercise in an uncertain market.
- 9.3. Without agreeing to the Council Tax hardship fund provisions, the money allocated by government to support those in most need would not be allocated in a timely way which would not only disadvantage those in need more, but would also reflect extremely negatively on the running of the Council.

10. Implications

10.1. Financial Implications

A separate paper sets out the financial implications of the Covid-19 situation.

10.2. Legal Implications

There is provision within the Council's constitution for the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and relevant portfolio holder, to take urgent decisions in emergency situations.

All decisions have been taken in accordance with Government Guidance and the Coronavirus Act 2020 and subsequent Regulations.

10.3. Equalities Implications

There are no Equalities implications from this report

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

There are no Section 17 implications from this report

11. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The nature of the decisions in this report impact upon all the Corporate Priorities
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	
The Environment	

12. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) endorses the decisions made under delegated urgency provisions as set out in paragraph 3.3 and agrees that these should be exempted from call in on the grounds of urgency at the time the decision was made, and not subsequently
- b) agrees that a variation to the Parkwood/Lex leisure contract is negotiated, to cover the period when leisure centres have to remain closed due to Covid-19 and delegates authority to the Section 151 Officer (consulting with the Monitoring Officer) to agree the contract variation
- c) receives a future report with recommendations on the future contractual arrangements and the variation with Parkwood/Lex Leisure
- d) agrees the Council Tax Support grant policy paper as per Appendix 1 to be endorsed by Full Council (as part of a revised Covid-19 Budget later in the year).
- e) Note the potential Discretionary Business Rates Grant Fund broad parameters (Appendix 3) and that once final guidance is received from central government approve the delegation of completing Rushcliffe's final discretionary scheme to the portfolio holders for Finance and Business and Transformation; and the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services.

For more information contact:	Katherine Marriott Chief Executive 0115 914 8349 kmarriott@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices:	Appendix 1: Council Tax Support Scheme Appendix 2: Protocol for Planning Meetings April – June 2020

Council Tax

COVID-19 Hardship Fund Policy 2020-21

Introduction

As part of its response to COVID-19, the Government announced in the Budget on 11 March that it would provide local authorities in England with £500m of new grant funding to support economically vulnerable people and households in their local area. The allocation for Rushcliffe is £515,389. The expectation is that most of the hardship fund will be used to provide council tax relief, alongside existing local council tax support schemes.

Underpinning principles

The Government has recognised that COVID-19 is likely to cause fluctuations in household incomes and recognises that, as a result, some individuals may struggle to meet council tax payments. The Council have already established our local council tax support schemes for 2020-21. The Government therefore expects that billing authorities will primarily use their grant allocation to reduce the council tax liability of individuals in their area, using discretionary powers under s13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Council tax reductions should be applied as soon as possible from the beginning of the 2020-21 financial year, and billing authorities should rebill council taxpayers as quickly as practical. The Council will maintain a record of grant expenditure under this scheme, both through the council tax system and their own local support mechanisms. It is the Government's intention that any assistance provided from the council tax hardship fund will not affect the eligibility of recipients for other benefits.

Local Council Tax Support Hardship Scheme

The scheme will initially award up to a maximum of £150 in addition to a claimant's council tax support entitlement. Where an additional £150 exceeds a claimant's liability for Council Tax, then it will be capped at this level. This scheme will be an automated award with no requirement to make an application from the claimant. The scheme will be open to all claimants who are working age and in receipt of council tax support.

Examples of the scheme

Example 1

Council Tax Liability per annum	=	£1,500
Council Tax Support entitlement per annum	=	£1,500
Local Council Tax Support Hardship award	=	£0

Example 2

Council Tax Liability per annum	=	£1,500
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Council Tax Support entitlement per annum = £1,350
 Local Council Tax Support Hardship award = £150

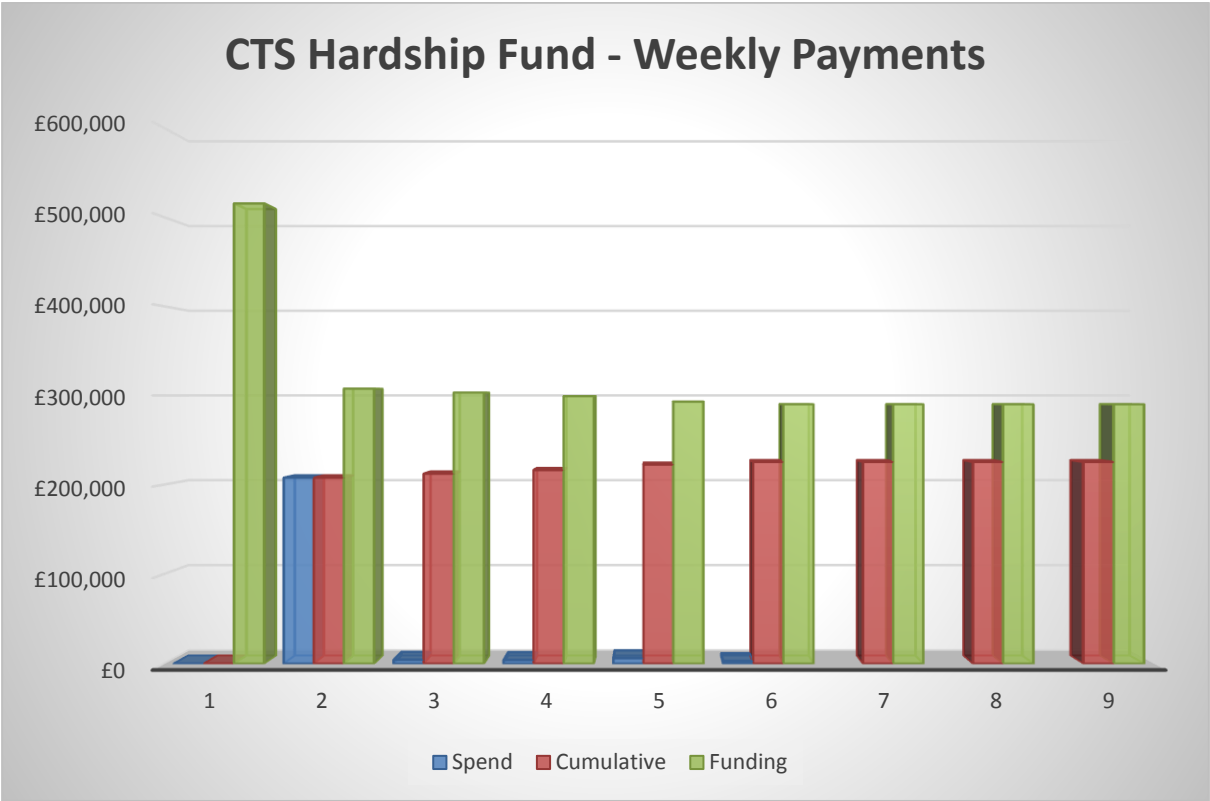
Example 3

Council Tax Liability per annum = £1,500
 Council Tax Support entitlement per annum = £1,420
 Local Council Tax Support Hardship award = £80

All working age claimants with a live claim as at 1 April 2020 were granted their CTS Hardship payment on 28 March 2020. This allocated £207,716.26. Since this date there have been many new claims and changes in circumstances where these awards needed to be made. These have been awarded on a weekly basis (position against the funding and progress is depicted in the graph below):

- Week 1 - £207,716.26
- Week 2 - £4,401.74
- Week 3 - £4,095.29

This policy will allow these awards to continue up to the maximum of £150 until the end of quarter 1 (30 June 2020). This means that all new claimants receive the same award as those with CTR entitlement on 1 April 2020, and any claimant who has a change in their circumstances (who hasn't already received £150) receives an additional award until they reach the maximum of £150.



Further reviews

A review will be undertaken at the end of quarter 1 with regards to the remaining balance of the fund. Assuming there are enough funds available, a further award of up to £150 will be made to all working age claimants using the same underlying principles as the first award, therefore giving a maximum of up to £300. Once the fund is exhausted no more awards will be granted. Based on the current demand the increase to £300 would result in £307,000 of the fund being utilised.

This allows time for all residents affected by COVID-19 to have made their claims for Universal Credit (there is a time delay of 5-6 weeks for Universal Credit awards from the date of claim), to help with their council tax and for their awards to have been calculated. It allows time for anyone who has been furloughed for their wages to settle down at the new lower level (and make claims for CTS if required) and for HMRC to make their Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) payments from the beginning of June. It is therefore expected that spend as per the graph above will increase week on week.

It also allows time for MHCLG to issue any further guidance, and for software companies to fully develop the software necessary to allow these payments to be automated. There is an issue with accounts that go into credit following an award due to changes in their liability, and what happens to this credit. Further information is need from MHCLG regarding this matter.

The policy will allow awards to be made to those council tax payers who are the most economically vulnerable in Rushcliffe, since the current council tax support scheme already provides help to those most in need due to their financial circumstances. Other measures are already in place for those who might not be entitled to support, including delaying the start of their instalments, spreading instalments over 12 months, and delaying recovery action for the time being.

Further reviews will then be undertaken at the end of quarters 2, 3 and 4 with regards to any remaining balance of the fund. It may be possible to make a further award at each review, and the amount will be subject to the remaining balance and any surplus credits on accounts following previous awards.

Increased demand

For information: during 2019/20 we averaged 19 claims per week for either housing benefit and/or council tax support. In the four weeks since 16 March there have been 228 claims made. With regards to Universal Credit notifications received from the DWP, for 2019/20 prior to 16 March 2020 we averaged 25 per day. Since 16 March 2020 to 15 April 2020 we have averaged 51 per day.

Many of these new claims are still pending their UC awards, and until then we are not able to award any help with their council tax. Instalments have been moved to a later date and/or spread over a longer period to assist in the short-term.

CTS – technical issue

As part of the Government's support for benefit claimants due to COVID-19 the standard allowance in Universal Credit (UC) and the basic element in Working Tax Credit (WTC)

have been increased by up to £20pw. However, this extra income will result in claimants losing up to £4pw in their CTS entitlement (£208pa). Legislation dictates that the CTS scheme cannot be amended after 11 March unless there are changes to Regulations by MHCLG. To reflect the £4 loss the current scheme would have to be amended.

It is therefore proposed to make up this loss in support to benefit claimants via the CTS Discretionary Hardship Fund or any other COVID-19 funding that could be appropriated. The estimated initial cost would be £40,000 for 2020/21.

The other option would be to apply the increase as per normal changes in income thus penalising claimants by up to £204 a year in CTS. The same claimants may have already received up to £150 from the hardship fund. We do not believe that this is the intention of the Government's proposals which are designed to support the most economically vulnerable individuals impacted by Covid19.

The Chief Executive and Executive Manager (Finance and Corporate Services) will raise the issue of the unintended funding shortfall that Government policy has created with the MHCLG.

Delegation

At this stage it is a manual process to apply these awards, and they are currently being made by the Benefits Manager or the Benefits Team Leader. This delegated authority is proposed to continue for 2020/21 and updates on the success of the scheme will be reported as part of the Council's current governance arrangements concerning Finance and Performance reporting to both Corporate Overview Group and Cabinet.

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Determination of Applications during Coronavirus Pandemic

Introduction of Additional Delegated Powers and Committee Procedures

April - July 2020

Delegated Powers

It is proposed that the emergency provisions in the constitution be applied to introduce additional delegated powers for a period of four months (to be kept under review during and at the end of this period) for certain applications that would in normal circumstances be referred to committee in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

The additional powers would enable applications to be determined by the Executive Manager for Communities in consultation with Cllr Butler as Chairman of the Planning Committee. Where the application involves a site within Cllr Butler's ward, the determination will involve consultation with the Vice Chairman of Planning Committee, Cllr Mrs Stockwood.

The applications to be determined under these arrangements will be determined on a case by case basis but are likely to include, but not limited to, the following situations:

- Non-contentious applications
- Applications where the Ward Councillor(s) have declared a personal (non-pecuniary) interest
- Applications submitted by the Council or involving a member of staff or Councillor where the comments of the Ward Councillor(s) do not conflict with the officer recommendation
- Applications where the Ward Councillor has not commented

Applications which cannot be delegated under normal provisions or the additional powers will be referred to planning committee by agreement between Executive Manager for Communities in consultation with Cllr Butler as Chairman of the Planning Committee. Examples of applications which may be referred to planning committee include applications which are contentious and/or have attracted significant level of public interest, and those of a scale where the provisions of the constitution would normally be referred to Planning Committee and which, in the opinion of the Executive Manager for Communities in consultation with Cllr Butler as Chairman of the Planning Committee still need to be referred to the Committee for consideration.

Committee Procedures

The 1972 Local Government Act requires councillors to be physically present to decide applications, and there is no provision for remote participation or voting. The Coronavirus Act 2020 includes provisions for the making of regulations to give greater flexibility for the holding of council meetings, in particular, provision for persons to attend, speak at, vote in, or otherwise participate in, local authority meetings without all of the persons, or without any of the persons, being together in the same place.

In light of the Government guidance on social distancing and the provision in the Coronavirus Act 2020, it is proposed to introduce the following procedures for the Planning Committee to consider planning applications, initially for a period of 4 months but to be kept under review as necessary.

- Meetings of the Planning Committee to be convened 'virtually' (subject to publication of necessary secondary legislation) using appropriate technology, e.g conferencing calling (most appropriate technology to be determined) or potentially in Council Chamber observing social distancing guidelines
- Meetings be brought forward to commence at 2pm
- Reduce number of Councillors on the Committee to six Councillors
- Maintain proportional representation, membership of six with four Conservative Councillors and two from opposition groups
- Suspend public speaking but invite interested parties to submit a written statement, limited to word count of 300 words, to be circulated to Councillors day before committee with any late representations. (Statements limited to one from each interest group, i.e. applicant, objector and Ward Councillor)
- Agendas to be published in accordance with current timescales, i.e. published 1 week before the meeting of the Planning Committee
- Officer presentation to be prepared and made available online (YouTube) day before Planning Committee
- Members of the Planning Committee to be encouraged to forward questions to Andrew Pegram, to be received no later than noon on day before committee – questions and responses to be publicised (on Planning Online and on the Agendas and Meetings pages, where the agenda is also available)
- During 'virtual' meeting presenting officer will introduce application, giving brief overview of photographs and plans
- In the case of virtual meetings or Councillors taking part from a remote location, Chairman to name Councillors in turn inviting any comments or further questions
- Public to be excluded from the Planning Committee but meetings to be recorded and made available online (YouTube) in accordance with current procedure

Discretionary funding for businesses – the expected scheme

Businesses which missed out in first round of the Business Rates Grants may be eligible for a new Discretionary Grant Fund. Local authorities are being provided with additional funding to target small businesses with high fixed property-related costs' but which have not been eligible for the current grant scheme. The scheme still applies for Businesses whose rateable value is below £51,000 and therefore those in excess of £51,000 remain 'out of scope' for consideration of any discretionary grant award.

The current estimated level of grant is the projected underspend and potentially a further 5% on top of the existing allocation. Our understanding is that the maximum amount we will be able to pay out will be capped at 5% therefore £0.987m is expected.

The grants are capped at £25,000 with other grants of £10,000 or under available at the discretion of Local Authorities. The £25,000 applies had they been eligible under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure scheme, e.g. that the fixed costs are commensurate with those borne by a business with a property rateable value of over £15,000 and below £51,000.

Payments of £10,000 should be made where the Local Authority judges that the business would have received a payment of £10,000 had they been eligible under the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme e.g. that the fixed costs are commensurate with those borne by a business with a property rateable value up to £15,000

Local Authorities have discretion to make payments of any amount under £10,000. It will be for Local Authorities to adapt this approach to local circumstances, such as providing support for micro-businesses with fixed costs or support for businesses that are crucial for their local economies. Local Authorities will exercise their local knowledge and discretion to determine which businesses to support.

The Government has suggested the following businesses should be given priority:

1. Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible work spaces e.g: industrial parks, science parks, incubators which do not have their own business rates assessments
2. Regular market traders who do not have their own business rates assessments
3. B and Bs (Bed and Breakfasts) which pay Council Tax instead of business rates

4. Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief

Thereafter any other business similar in nature at the discretion of the Local Authority.

Consideration should be given to working across local economic areas.

National criteria to qualify for grants from this Fund include:

1. Businesses with ongoing fixed building-related costs
2. Business which can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to Covid 19
3. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees
4. Businesses that were trading before 11 March 2020

Businesses which are eligible for the existing grant scheme of Self-employed Income Support scheme **are ineligible**. As the fund is discretionary the local authority may wish to introduce an application system which will slow the process down but they are expected to make every effort to be effective and quick in their decision making.

More information is expected to be made available from the Government over the next few days. Further guidance will follow shortly on how to apply for this 'discretionary' business grant.

Will these grant schemes be subject to tax and State Aid?

Grant income received by a business is taxable therefore the Small Business Grants, and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants will be subject to tax.

Only businesses which make an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.

State Aid rules also apply so de minimis limits should not be breached (will apply to larger/national businesses) and considered low risk for this scheme.



Cabinet

12 May 2020

Budget Update – Covid-19 implications

Report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance – Councillor Gordon Moore

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To provide an update on the budget position as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Some of the issues raised relate to the Delegated Decisions already reported by the Chief Executive.
- 1.2. The report highlights the significant impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances both immediately and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). For this financial year, the budget gap is expected to be at least £2.5m and current government funding of £1.23m amounts to 49.3% of the anticipated budget gap. In a worst case scenario, the budget gap could be as much as £4.5m and the Government support currently would meet 27.3% of the funding required if this scenario materialised.
- 1.3. The main issues highlighted include the costs of maintaining the leisure centres with no income streams, loss of income in relation to car parking and other areas such as planning; and a devaluation of some of the Council's investments.
- 1.4. There will not be a short-term fix to the issues Covid-19 has created hence the need for a review of the Council's MTFS so the budget remains sustainable and can continue to deliver Council objectives for the benefit of both businesses and the wider community.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) Notes the financial impact of Covid-19 on the Council's MTFS and supports that a revised budget is taken to Full Council once there is more certainty regarding the impact of lockdown and in particular the likely use of Reserves and Balances to meet the projected budget gap;
- b) Notes the position on both Council investments and the likelihood of a change in the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) calculation which will

be reported to the Governance Group in the Annual Capital and Investment Report; and

- c) Supports the Leader and Chief Executive in making representations to Government and other interest groups to unlock further funding for the benefit of Rushcliffe's community and its businesses.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. To ensure that the potential financial implications from a range of scenarios are considered and the Council is in a position to respond quickly to the changing environment emerging from the effects of Covid-19.

4. Supporting Information

4.1. Revenue

- 4.1.1 The Council approved its 2020/21 balanced budget at Council in March 2020. Due to the impact of Covid-19, and the subsequent 'lockdown', the Council has since incurred additional service costs and suffered significant losses of income, which has significantly changed the forecasted position. The length of the lockdown is currently uncertain and, therefore, there are a number of scenarios that could materialise; from the anticipated 3-month position at £1.8m to a worse case scenario of £4.55m for the full year. The potential scenarios and estimated financial impact are shown Appendix A.
- 4.1.2 The main pressure that the Council faces is the loss of fees and charges, and commercial income, estimated at over £2.8m for the full year. In some cases, the income has ceased in its entirety such as Car Parking income, which would result in a loss of £0.7m if the lockdown continued for the full year. Other significant potential losses are Development Control (£0.44m), Investment interest (£0.25m) and loss of rental income from commercial property (£0.28m) as tenants struggle to meet monthly rental commitments.
- 4.1.3 In addition to loss of income, the Council is incurring additional costs estimated at £1.77m for the full year. The majority of this (£1.4m) results from support to Parkwood Leisure to ensure the leisure centres are in a position to resume services once able to do so. Other costs have been incurred on additional accommodation for the homeless and agency costs for Waste Collection. The Council has received a share of £3.2 billion in central government support, a first tranche of £0.04m and, pleasingly a much larger second tranche of, £1.19m bringing the total to £1.23m. The Leader and Chief Executive will continue to lobby the Government to ensure further funding is secured.
- 4.1.4 Officers have reviewed the budgets in light of the lockdown and have identified a number of potential savings from services that the Council is unable to provide during this period. These savings, however, are small (£0.17m) in comparison to the potential additional pressures. Appendix B summarises the significant pressures and savings on each service area. Government generally is

unsupportive of local authorities furloughing staff (and prefers them to be redeployed to support the community at this difficult time). The Council has limited furloughing to those areas where income has fallen such as Community Facilities.

- 4.1.5 The range of scenarios as shown in Appendix A will be impacted by the speed of recovery from lockdown and local decisions taken by the Council. For example, when will car parking charges be reinstated which, whilst generating income, are likely to have a direct impact on the recovery of the high street and the financial viability of businesses in the Borough. Fees and charges, and regulatory income, would be unlikely to return to the levels set in the budget as consumers and businesses will be cautious about returning to previous spending habits.
- 4.1.6 There is likely to be a financial impact on the Council's Transformation Programme in this, and subsequent years, due to a potential delay in the delivery of schemes such as Bingham Hub and the Crematorium (see paragraph 4.2.2) and the viability of asset investment opportunities due to the deteriorating economic environment. The Council has taken the decision not to proceed with one planned acquisition of commercial property. Rental income of £0.07m per annum is included in the Transformation Programme and this will now not be realised.

4.2. Capital Programme

- 4.2.1 The 2019/20 Capital Programme is showing an underspend of £19m, primarily all of which is required to be carried forward. £7m of the carry forward request is for the Asset Investment Strategy and, of this, £4.5m is earmarked for acquisitions in 2020/21. Several schemes planned to commence in March on investment properties and operational buildings have been affected by Covid-19 impact causing slippage, some of which could be significant: Cotgrave Phase II and Industrial Units at Moorbridge.
- 4.2.2 Design work and surveys for Bingham Hub are still progressing well: £0.5m spent of £20m project, the intention remains to tender in mid-July assuming Cabinet approve the June report. We have acquired land for the Crematorium £1.3m spent of £6.5m project. The other large scheme in the 2020/21 programme is the creation of an additional artificial grass pitch at Gresham at a cost of around £1m. This scheme is subject to a grant application and will be fully funded by S106 monies and external grant. The works are not due to start until spring 2021.
- 4.2.3 The main impact of Covid-19 will be slippage of capital outlay meaning that cash will stay in RBC's bank account longer. The impact on interest will be minimal as the interest rates are so low. There is also material uncertainty surrounding the construction market and industry prices. The impact could be rising prices and contractor availability.
- 4.2.4 It is anticipated that £20m of capital receipts will be generated in 20/21. £8m of this is due in the first quarter of the year from the Overage Agreement for

Sharphill. A further £12m is due from the disposal of surplus operational and investment property. Any short-term delays to receipts of these sums will adversely affect any interest we can earn but, as stated before, rates are very low. There is material uncertainty with regard to the timing of our future receipts. Any significant delay or collapse of sale agreements will cause a funding pressure for delivery of the capital programme. This will give recourse to borrow, either externally or internally, sooner than planned.

4.3. Treasury Issues

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

4.3.1 MRP is the means by which capital expenditure is financed by borrowing (including internal borrowing), paid for by Council Tax payers. Significant slippage in the capital expenditure could potentially mitigate the impact on our need to borrow and therefore temporarily lift any pressure to make additional MRP payments. However, this could be offset if there is a significant delay to the receipt of capital income sums due.

4.3.2 The Council currently make an MRP charge of £1m per annum to fast track repayment of the internal borrowing for the Arena. This is primarily made up of £250k to repay the Arena internal borrowing (according to our MRP Policy over the life of the asset - 40 years) plus a voluntary repayment sum of £750k p.a. to support the commitment made by Cabinet in 2014 to repay the borrowing early. The MRP charge is fully offset by a release from New Homes Bonus so that there is no in-year impact to the tax payer.

4.3.3 Cabinet report 13 May 2014 cites: 'It is intended that this borrowing will be repaid over ten years from New Homes Bonus receipt.' The Cabinet report did, however, provide an option for a future change to the early repayment and said: 'Should new homes bonus reduce in future then the Council would be able to extend the length of time over which this borrowing would be repaid, or to replace it with an external loan from the PWLB.'

4.3.4 This gives us the option of reducing the MRP to the policy figure which will significantly reduce the burden on the budget. The reduced MRP could still be offset by a release from the NHB reserve. Crucially this potentially releases New Homes Bonus to help meet the budget gap. Potential changes will be reported to the Governance Group as part of the Annual Capital and Investment Report with a view to these being incorporated in a revised budget.

Treasury Investments

4.3.5 The Council's Treasury Investments have been directly affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic in two areas: investment value and interest receipts.

4.3.6 The value of the Council's investments in multi-asset and diversified funds have reduced by £1.2m as at 31 March 2020 (Appendix C). This is as a direct result the pandemic on the economic outlook affecting price expectations. This reduction in value although significant, is expected to recover. However, how

soon this occurs will depend on the speed at which the economy recovers. The movement in value of the asset must, in accordance with regulation, be charged to revenue in the year. This means that any surplus/deficit at outturn will include this loss, reducing the projected underspend that had been reported up to quarter 3. Although this loss does affect the revenue outturn position, movements are reversed through reserves to mitigate the impact to the taxpayer so the bottom-line revenue position is not affected.

- 4.3.7 The Bank of England has reduced its base rate from 0.75% to 0.10% in response to the economic situation. This has consequences for the interest rates that the Council is able to achieve from its treasury investments.
- 4.3.8 In addition to the reduction in interest rates, the Council also has reduced cash balances owing to the reduction in fees and charges and commercial income (referred to at paragraph 4.1.1) and the uncertainty surrounding Business Rates and Council Tax collection rates (see paragraph 4.6.2). This means that the Council is holding its remaining balances in the lower-earning Money Market Funds to enable liquidity of cash and, therefore, limits the interest that can be earned. From April to June, the impact is estimated at £63k.
- 4.3.9 A principal loan repayment of £54k due at 31 March 2020 from Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club has been deferred as a direct impact of Covid-19. This deferral has been agreed in response to a request from the cricket club given the significant losses in income it is also facing. This demonstrates the Council's commitment to both leisure and business. This will either be repaid at the end of the existing term of this loan facility or earlier if possible.
- 4.3.10 The aforementioned Treasury issues will be reported to the Governance Group as part of the Annual Capital and Investment Report and the outcome reported in a revised budget for Full Council.

4.4. Business Rates and Council Tax

- 4.4.1 The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) implemented new criteria for Business Rates reliefs in response to the economic situation effectively widening the scope of the retail relief issued for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors for 2020/21. As a direct result there was an immediate reduction in number and value of businesses that are liable and, consequently, a reduction in payments due to the Council of approximately £9m. The majority of business ratepayers pay by monthly instalments and so this reduction in cashflow will be spread over the year. MHCLG have made a commitment to compensate Billing Authorities although it is not yet clear if this will be in corresponding monthly instalments or a one-off payment. The latter would be favourable as this would give the Council the benefit of the additional cash up-front.
- 4.4.2 It is too soon to quantify the impact on collection rates for both Business Rates and Council Tax, however it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in payments as businesses and residents struggle with the effects of the lockdown

on household and business income. In accordance with statute, the Council and all preceptors will still be paid their precepts as notified in January thus potentially creating a cash flow deficit if collection of payments is insufficient to cover the agreed precept payments.

- 4.4.3 There is likely to be a negative impact on the Business Rates and Council Tax budget in 2021/22 and 2022/23 as the fund looks to recover any shortfall with a likely Collection Fund Deficit impacting on future budgets.
- 4.4.4 It would be remiss not to mention the excellent work of officers at the Council to ensure Business Grants have been paid in a timely manner to ensure businesses get much needed financial resources so they can continue to exist. At the time of writing 1239 businesses have been paid (76% of 1625 businesses) totalling £14.055m of an expected total due to pay of £19.145m.
- 4.4.5 MHCLG has confirmed that the Fair Funding Review (FFR) and reform of the business rates system will be delayed for a further year. The changes were planned for 2021-22 but the impact of Covid-19 made it clear that the Government would not be in a position to implement any of these changes.
- 4.4.6 In all likelihood, neither the FFR nor business rate reform is possible until we know more about the effect that the coronavirus outbreak will have on council tax and business rates. It is impossible to reset the business rates baselines or equalise council tax until both taxation streams have settled down again and this is not really likely to happen until 2022/23 – which might lead to a further delay in the implementation of any changes.

4.5 **Conclusion**

- 4.5.1 A combination of increased service pressures, reduced income and uncertain cashflow is expected to put the Council in financial difficulty if central government grants are not forthcoming. The length of time, and latent impact, of the lockdown measures in reality is likely to leave the Council with at least a £2.5m budget gap. The £1.23m received from Central Government is welcome but there will still remain a funding gap in the short and medium term. The longer-term impact for the MTFS will need to be assessed and revisiting the viability of projects such as the Bingham Hub will be considered. Importantly, going forward, the Council has a vital role to assist in the economic regeneration of the Borough helping it recover from this unprecedented situation.
- 4.5.2 Options the Council will have to consider going forward are: revisiting its Transformation Programme (looking at further budget efficiencies), utilising Reserves (particularly the Organisation Stabilisation and Climate Change Reserves), the General Fund Balance; and changes in MRP which potentially unlocks New Homes Bonus to support the budget.
- 4.5.3 The timing and value of capital receipts is now uncertain, as is the progress on the capital programme owing to potential difficulty in commissioning work along with potential variations in costs, which may inhibit scheme progress. The timing of borrowing is likely to be sooner rather than later.

4.5.4 The Council has managed its resources well and, as a consequence, has, in the past, held a healthy level of reserves. This enables it to, at least in the short term, deal with this pan-economic crisis, but the financial resilience of the Council going forward is now severely tested and will require a revised MTFS to deliver its corporate objectives.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

5.1. Options to meet the budget gap will be presented to Full Council, on production of a revised budget, when there is more certainty regarding the timing of lockdown and its continuing phases.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

6.1. Risk that a balanced budget position is not achieved if mitigating action is not agreed by Full Council when a revised budget is presented.

6.2. Risk that the Council may have to issue a Section 114 notice if the Council is unable to replenish lost income or make additional savings and a balanced budget is not achievable.

6.3. Further delays to the Business Rates System and Fair Funding Reviews adds even more uncertainty to the Council's MTFS going forward.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

Financial Implications are covered in the body of the report

7.2. Legal Implications

The Council is required to have a balanced budget. The additional pressures on expenditure and on lost income puts at risk the 2020/21 balanced budget position and puts the Council at risk of issuing a S114 notice. As a prudent authority, a review of the MTFS is appropriate at this time.

7.3. Equalities Implications

There are no direct equalities implications.

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

There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The budget resources the Corporate Strategy and, therefore, resources all corporate objectives.
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	
The Environment	

9. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- (a) Notes the financial impact of Covid-19 on the Council's MTFs and supports that a revised budget is taken to Full Council once there is more certainty regarding the impact of lockdown and in particular the likely use of Reserves and Balances to meet the projected budget gap;
- (b) Notes the position on both Council investments and the likelihood of a change in the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) calculation which will be reported to the Governance Group in the Annual Capital and Investment Report; and
- (c) Supports the Leader and Chief Executive in making representations to Government and other interest groups to unlock further funding for the benefit of Rushcliffe's community and its businesses.

For more information contact:	Peter Linfield Executive Manager Finance and Corporate 0115 914 8439 plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	Report to Full Council - March 5 2020: 2020/21 Budget and Financial Strategy
List of appendices:	Appendix A – Budget Impact of Covid19 – Sensitivity Analysis Appendix B – 3 Month Impact of Covid19 on the Revenue Budget Appendix C – Impact on Council Investments

Budget Impact of Covid-19 – Sensitivity Analysis

Service Area	2020/21 Budget	Revised Budget			
		3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	Full Year
Communities	2,907,200	3,128,195	3,459,750	3,686,025	3,913,740
Finance	3,442,800	3,509,175	3,568,800	3,631,800	3,694,800
Neighbourhoods	6,520,700	7,564,535	8,351,760	9,138,985	9,740,910
Transformation	2000	134,450	222,500	297,750	378,000
Corporate Savings		-74,690	-149,380	-224,070	-298,760
Net Service Expenditure	12,872,700	14,261,665	15,453,430	16,530,490	17,428,690
Variance		1,388,965	2,580,730	3,657,790	4,555,990

3 Month Impact of Covid-19 on the Revenue Budget

		3 Months				
	Income Loss	Notes	Additional Expenditure	Notes	Savings	Notes
Communities	301,275	Planning, Land Charges, Building control. Loss of income from facility hire	0		-80,280	Positive future/Young reduced payments, some savings on arts and events not going ahead
Finance	63,000	Investment income down due to interest rates and reduced balances	10,000	Rebilling and overtime on Revs and Bens	-6,625	Photocopiers/ Member training/hospitality, mayors vehicle
Neighbourhoods	600,835	Car Parking Income, Licensing, bulky waste collections, pest control	443,000	Parkwood additional costs, agency on waste collection, housing accommodation	0	
Transformation	145,250	Reduced commercial property rental income	0		-12,800	Corporate Training (assumed none for 3 months)

	3 Months					
	Income Loss	Notes	Additional Expenditure	Notes	Savings	Notes
Utilities					-4,640	Assumed 5% across closed facilities
Car all/Public Trans/Conferences					-13,050	Assumed none for 3 months on those not expected to be travelling
Furloughing of staff					-57,000	Based on 9 weeks saving
TOTAL	1,110,360		453,000		-174,395	
NET Total	1,388,965					

Impact on Council Investments

Fund	Value Invested	Historical	2019/20
	£000	Increase/(Decrease)	Increase/(Decrease)
CCLA Property	2,000	147	-77
CCLA Diversified	2,000	-5	-215
Royal London	1,000	3	-11
Kames	4,000	0	-642
Investec	4,000	0	-293
TOTAL	13,000	145	-1,238



Cabinet

12 May 2020

**Draft Character Appraisal and Proposed Conservation Area
for Cropwell Bishop**

Report of the Executive Manager - Communities

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing Councillor Roger Upton

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (*the 1990 Act*) imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any 'areas of special architectural or historical interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.
- 1.2. Upon the request of local residents and Cllr Moore as Ward Councillor, Cropwell Bishop has been considered in regard of its architectural and historic interest and is considered to fulfil the definition within Section 69.
- 1.3. This report seeks approval to commence formal public engagement for the purposes of designating a new Conservation Area for the village of Cropwell Bishop.
- 1.4. Cabinet is asked to agree to the principle of a conservation area for the village of Cropwell Bishop and to approve a draft character appraisal, containing a proposed conservation area boundary and a description of the special architectural and historic character and appearance of that area, for the purposes of public consultation.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that

- a) Cabinet agree that the village of Cropwell Bishop would appear to possess qualities of special architectural and historic interest which would warrant its designation as a conservation area under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- b) The Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal and proposed conservation area boundary is approved for the purposes of public consultation, to last a period of 21 days and to include a public consultation event held in the village (timing of consultation and event will be influenced by any restrictions arising from the Coronavirus Pandemic).

- c) That cabinet will receive a subsequent report following public consultation which may include a recommendation for the formal adoption of a revised conservation area character appraisal and for the designation of a conservation area for Cropwell Bishop.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. Cropwell Bishop has been investigated and assessed and is considered to be a place which has a special architectural and historic interest the character and appearance of which it would be desirable to preserve or enhance.
- 3.2. After local residents, the Local History Group and the Parish Council requested that Cropwell Bishop be considered for a conservation area, meetings were undertaken with the Local History Group, who have led on the work for the production of the draft appraisal, supported by the Council's Conservation Officer.
- 3.3. Preparation of a draft appraisal allows for the special architectural character and appearance of the area to be understood and defined and for a proposed conservation area boundary to be drawn.
- 3.4. The next stage is to obtain consent from Cabinet to take this draft document to public consultation.
- 3.5. Following public consultation comments and responses will be considered, and any changes to the draft document and proposed boundary made before returning to Cabinet for the formal adoption of a finalised appraisal. If significant changes need to be made as a result of the consultation process it may be necessary to seek approval for a second round of consultation.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. A copy of the draft conservation area character appraisal is appended to this report and is the document for which consent is sought to consult the public. The document was produced prior to the adoption of the Local Plan Part 2 and it is suggested that any amendments to the document following consultation includes an update of the planning policy section. The policies in the Local Plan Part 2 are reflective of the National Planning Policies and regulations on the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and it is not considered that there has been a fundamental change in policy since the preparation of the draft Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 4.2. Within the document is a plan showing the proposed boundary of a conservation area for Cropwell Bishop which is considered to represent a boundary appropriate in context of the requirement within paragraph 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states:
- 4.3. "When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its

special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1. The only alternative option would be to decline to consider the creation of a conservation area for Cropwell Bishop. This option is not recommended as it has been demonstrated through the preparation of the draft appraisal that the area within Cropwell Bishop to be designated as a Conservation Area possesses the architectural and historic interest which justifies the designation.

6. Risk and Uncertainties

- 6.1. The only risk associated with the proposal is abortive costs and time should there be significant local opposition to the adoption of a conservation area which leads members to decline to formally adopt a conservation area for Cropwell Bishop.
- 6.2. Legislation makes clear that for areas which fulfil the criteria of having “special architectural and historic interest” that the local authority has a duty to designate them as Conservation Areas.
- 6.3. Whilst there is no provision in law for deciding not to designate as a result of local opinion, best practise acknowledges that conservation areas are most effective where the local community embraces the designation. If there is no desire to have a conservation area, then there may be little benefit in simply imposing one.

7. Implications

7.1. Finance

The costs of adoption of a conservation area character appraisal consist mostly of officer time. In this instance, much of the investigation and preparatory work has been undertaken by the Local History Society, supported by the Conservation Officer. It is considered that both the consultation, and any amendments necessary to the draft documentation as a result of that consultation process would be accommodated within the existing capacity of the Conservation Officer.

Beyond officer time the consultation would require notices to be displayed in the Nottingham Post and site notices advertising the consultation.

The eventual formal adoption of a conservation area also requires a notice published in the London Gazette, the cost of which is based upon the length of the notice but would be expected to be around £100.00.

7.2. **Legal**

Adoption of conservation areas where 'areas of special architectural or historical interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' have been identified is a statutory duty placed upon the Borough Council within section 69(1) of the 1990 Act.

The Act requires the identification and designation of conservation areas. Whilst the legislation does not contain any requirement for public consultation, the undertaking of public consultation is considered to represent best practise. As such there is no minimum requirement for public consultation.

7.3 **Equalities Implications**

There are considered to be no particular equality implications that need addressing from matters arising from this report.

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

There are no direct community safety implications arising from matters covered in this report.

8 **Corporate Priorities**

Efficient Services - Support and provide guidance to internal and external customers regarding development in Conservation Areas, tree preservation and high hedge legislation.

Quality of Life – Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, when dealing with planning applications for development within Conservation Areas, 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'. This is a statutory duty and would ensure that the special appearance and character of the area is preserved or enhanced, thereby protecting the character of the area and quality of life of residents.

Sustainable Growth – Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework directs that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. It is considered that the making of the Conservation Area and the Statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 will ensure that relevant consideration is given to development proposals within the area and should ensure that the objectives are achieved, particularly the environmental objective by protecting or enhancing the historic environment.

The Environment – The statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 will ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced, thereby protecting the environment within the area. Whilst the

statutory duty does not apply to development outside but adjacent to the Conservation Area, the Borough Council would be required to give regard to the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that

- a) Cabinet agree that the village of Cropwell Bishop would appear to possess qualities of special architectural and historic interest which would warrant its designation as a conservation area under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- b) The Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal and proposed conservation area boundary is approved for the purposes of public consultation, to last a period of 21 days and to include a public consultation event held in the village (timing of consultation and event will be influenced by any restrictions arising from the Coronavirus Pandemic).
- c) That cabinet will receive a subsequent report following public consultation which may include a recommendation for the formal adoption of a revised conservation area character appraisal and for the designation of a conservation area for Cropwell Bishop.

For more information contact:	Sera Baker Conservation Officer 0115 914 8243 sbaker@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers Available for Inspection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 • Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management
List of appendices (if any):	Appendix 1 - Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal: Cropwell Bishop

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**Draft Character Appraisal &
Management Plan: Proposed
Cropwell Bishop Conservation Area
October 2018**



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

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1.1 Background

Conservation Areas are designated by local planning authorities under the Planning Acts. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a Conservation Area as:

'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Rushcliffe Borough Council, as the local planning authority, has a duty to designate parts of the District it sees appropriate as Conservation Areas.

From 2016 Rushcliffe Borough Council has been engaged in a project, along with local residents and the local Ward Councillor, to investigate the potential for a conservation area in Cropwell Bishop.

Carrying out a Conservation Area Character Appraisal is an important method for identifying the qualities and characteristics that such an area possesses and to provide a basic summary of the elements, which collectively contribute towards the special character and appearance of the conservation area. A clear and comprehensive appraisal of the Cropwell Bishop Conservation Area provides a basis from which to propose a suitable conservation area boundary and upon adoption would also provide a sound basis for development control decision-making, and assists the Borough Council in defending such decisions that are subject to appeal. Generally the character and appearance of a Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced through:

- Providing controls and regulating development through the planning system.
- Applying the extra controls that designation provides over demolition, minor development and the protection of trees.
- Environmental enhancement schemes and possibly providing financial assistance for the repair and restoration of specific buildings.
- Encouraging public bodies such as the local highways authority or utility companies to take opportunities to improve the street scene through the appropriate design and sensitive siting of street furniture (and retention of historic features of interest), or the removal of eyesores and street features that have a negative impact such as overhead wires.

The purpose of this character appraisal is to:

- Analyse the character of the area, identify an area suitable for designation as a Conservation Area, and identify the components and features of its special interest.
- To outline the planning policies and controls that apply to a Conservation Area.
- To identify opportunities for the future enhancement of the proposed Conservation Area.

It should be noted that the omission of any particular building, structure, tree, wall or any other feature from being highlighted within this character appraisal does not imply that it is not of special interest, nor is there an implication in such an omission that it does not make a positive contribution, or conversely a negative contribution, to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Also the map is unable to identify accurately every tree of significance and value to the Conservation Area.

2.1 Key Characteristics

- Cropwell Bishop is located in the east of the Borough, on the edge of the Vale of Belvoir approximately 1 mile east of the A46 Fosse Way.
- The village is of a nuclear form, with its core dominated by the church and churchyard. Cropwell Bishop is situated in shallow depression surrounded by open countryside and overlooked by Hoe Hill to the North West.
- Brick built cottages, farmhouses and traditional agricultural buildings give a strong sense of consistency and character to the village.
- The scattered farmhouses and farmyards, the majority redundant, form a core part of the character of the village and demonstrate the agricultural basis upon which the settlement was founded and thrived.
- Much of the village was owned from the 10th Century onwards by two non-resident Prebendaries of the collegiate church at Southwell, and traditionally leased often to independent farmers whose families farmed in the area for generations.
- The village was an 'open' village leading to further development and independent trades and industry, which contribute to its historic character.



Cropwell Bishop is one of only 6 locations where Stilton Cheese is made today, the dairy also has a retail shop on Main Street.

2.3 Key Issues

Development Pressures

The character of the historic centre of Cropwell Bishop has survived despite the addition of much modern housing to the North and West of the village in the 1970s. Despite this and infill developments, many of the buildings shown in the first series Ordnance Survey maps of 1886 still exist. In particular the historic views down Church Street, Fern Road and Nottingham Road back towards the church at the village centre still survive, with any modern development set back from the historic street scene.

Alterations to Listed and key unlisted properties –

The proportion of listed buildings within the village has helped to maintain the traditional character, and the unlisted buildings have also experienced relatively little alteration. However, there are changes which have occurred to erode the quality and architectural treatment of many buildings. As well as replacement of windows, buildings have been extended or rendered in sometimes unsympathetic ways.

Boundary treatments –

Some older properties front the pavement edge, and others have red brick boundary walls fronting the property which often have brick copings and stone pier caps. Those without walls are less common but estate fencing with associated planting including hedging also appear. Stone retaining walls of rough grey marl are also characteristic, often incorporating stone footings from earlier buildings or walls. These stone or part stone walls are a feature found more commonly in Cropwell Bishop than elsewhere in the borough.



A widespread feature seen around the village are boundary walls featuring stone plinths or footings, commonly either in blue lias or grey marl. Whilst walls entirely built of stone do exist they are less common.

Agriculture –

Although many of the former farm houses together with their yards and former agricultural buildings (to provide appendix) have long since been assimilated into housing, quite a number

remain and add particular character to the village. There are also some working farms in the village including Home Farm adjacent to the Church.

Industry

Historic industrial sites lie mainly outside the historic centre of the village, but the expansion in Gypsum mining, lime kilns and brick making led to characteristic development of further housing after the mid19th Century. These are most noticeable as terraced cottages often built at right angles to the main streets set on narrow historic plots or closes.

Highways and Transportation -

The village is located 1 mile east of the Fosse Way (A46). Bus services serving the Vale of Belvoir villages to the East are limited, and commuting traffic uses the route through the village towards Nottingham particularly in the morning and evening. Most residents also rely upon cars which has led to further 'on road' parking which can come into conflict with traffic flows. Some industrial and public service vehicles use the shorter route through the village to reach Langar. Increasingly large agricultural vehicles also use the routes through the village representing a perennial problem in rural areas.

Public Realm –

Although relatively recent, the telephone kiosk and the traditional post box outside the former Post Office opposite the church on Church Street contribute to the character of the village, as for many typical villages throughout England.

Street surfaces are largely standardised tarmac with which they were resurfaced in the modern times. Elsewhere off the main street such as Mill Lane, narrow grass verges are characteristic with no formal pedestrian pavements and these add to the rural feel of the village.

Trees also contribute to the village character. Particularly historic trees which surround the Church, and those also at the rear car park opposite the Wheatsheaf. Also a large characteristic Yew tree in front of former Farmhouse called 'The Yews'. There has also been recent tree planting near the historic Pinfold on Church Street.

Buildings at risk –

There are a number of buildings around the village which could be considered to be at risk. See attached appendix of possible properties to consider.

3.1 Potential for a Cropwell Bishop Conservation Area

Cropwell Bishop was suggested for a Conservation area in 2016. This followed increasing pressure for new development in the village which raised concerns that these may lead to proposals which might detract from the historical form and layout of the village.

After discussion involving the Parish Council and District Councillor, as well as the Village Heritage Group and Rushcliffe Borough Council Conservation Officer, agreement was reached to prepare a proposal for consideration also involving the wider residents of the Area.

It is clear that the local residents and landowners value the nature of the place they call home, and this attitude together with the lack of any single or overriding resident land owner has helped the village develop a particular rural character and charm.

3.2 The Purpose of a Conservation Area Appraisal

Local Planning Authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

A conservation area designation is not designed to preserve a place in aspic, instead the processes of change which allow places to grow and evolve are recognised as being unavoidable, and it is also recognised that change can be a positive and desirable force. The designation instead allows greater scrutiny and control to manage change to positive effect and to ensure that any changes which require planning permission do not harm, and ideally serve to actively enhance, the existing character of the place.

In 2005, Rushcliffe Borough Council followed government advice by looking more closely at the architectural and historic features within each of its adopted conservation areas and how their special character could be preserved or enhanced. This work resulted in the production of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. Best practise suggests that all new conservation area designations must be supported by Character Appraisals and Management Plans to define their special interest and the ways in which their preservation and enhancement will be supported.

This document represents a draft Character Appraisal and recommends a proposed boundary for a Cropwell Bishop Conservation Area based upon research and initial public engagement. The document also identifies buildings and spaces which could represent opportunities to enhance the existing character of the village, largely on sites currently occupied by 20th Century agricultural buildings and vacant older properties which could be targets for renovation and re-occupation.

This document should be used by residents and professionals both as a source of information and as a guide to any future planning proposals.

3.3 The Planning Policy Context

This appraisal provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the proposed Cropwell Bishop Conservation Area would be assessed. It should be read alongside the wider development plan policy framework produced by Rushcliffe Borough Council and other National Planning Policy Guidance documents. The relevant documents include:

- Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy, with specific focus upon:
- Policy 10 (Design and Enhancing Local Identity) [in part]
- Policy 11 (Historic Environment)
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Revised - 2018)
- The National Planning Practice Guidance (2015 - Subject to Continual Review)
- By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice (2000)
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Rushcliffe Borough Non-Statutory Replacement Local Plan, or policies within the as yet un-adopted part 2 of the Rushcliffe Local Plan.

4.1 Location and Landscape Setting

Cropwell Bishop stands in a shallow saddle like depression around one mile east of the Fosse Way. It lies in open countryside between Cropwell Butler, one mile to the North, and Colston Bassett, 2 miles to the South East. Overlooking the village is a small round wooded hill called Hoe Hill to the North West, and the dry Grantham Canal passes near to the West of the village.



Stone buildings, particularly stone agricultural buildings, are rarities in Rushcliffe but this prominent example can be seen on Main Street at the west end of The Wheatsheaf.

4.2 Location and Activities

Rushcliffe Borough forms the Southern tip of Nottinghamshire near its border with Leicestershire to the south. It is predominantly a rural Borough that contains a mixture of city suburbs, market towns and villages. Rushcliffe is located about 0.5 mile South of Nottingham City Centre, with the River Trent forming the majority of its Northern boundary and the River Soar defining its Western Boundary.

The A46, a distinctive Roman Road, runs through the centre of the Borough and leads to Newark in the North and Leicester in the South. In the Northern half of the Borough, the A52 forms Nottingham's primary transport link to Grantham and the East of England. Junction 24 of the M1 and East Midlands Airport are located about 1 mile from the Western border. Cropwell

Bishop enjoys a rural setting in open countryside one mile to the East of the A46. Cropwell Bishop has a long history as an agricultural settlement and farms still operate from the village, and the character of the village is still heavily influenced by its farms and former agricultural buildings.

A number of industries have also framed the development of Cropwell Bishop. Mining has a particularly long history, Lias Limestone taken from Cropwell Bishop was used as a flux in smelting iron by the Romans at Margidunum. Later extraction of Gypsum unusually available near the surface represented a significant industry in this part of south Nottinghamshire. The nearby canal also supported increasing brick and tile manufacture as well as that of, lime and cement in the 19th and into the 20th Centuries.

Cropwell Bishop today is notable as one of only six places still producing Stilton Cheese from the dairy within the village. The village also has a butcher, two hairdressers, the cheese shop, and a sandwich shop in addition to a Co-op which now includes the Post Office. It also has a medical centre, a modern Primary school and two village pubs.

The village Church stands very prominently in the historic centre of the village. Built around 1215 with later additions completed with the stone tower in the 16th Century. There is also an active Methodist Church built in 1842 further along Nottingham Road. As well as a Memorial Hall with Playing Fields, built by villagers who returned from the First World War, the Parish Council were also able to purchase the Old School building near the Church. Both are valued and are extensively used for the many thriving village clubs and social events.

The village is therefore well served and self-contained, with a notably diverse and strong sense of community. Increasingly, the village also provides services to support other nearby villages in the area.

4.3 Topography and Geology

The particular geology of Cropwell Bishop has contributed greatly to village life over many centuries.

The village is settled into a saddle like depression formed in a low Jurassic limestone escarpment. It is suggested that this was formed by a preglacial route for the Trent to enter the Vale of Belvoir and flow on further towards the East and North by a different route to the sea. (British Geological Survey Technical Report WA/90/1 - Nottingham: A geological background for planning and development).

A small, heavily weathered hand axe, oval in shape was found near the village believed to date from the Lower Palaeolithic period, which in Britain is from around 700,000 years ago until around 150,000 years ago. A lot of finds from this period will be from river gravel deposits and may have been moved from the location of their use by glaciation, rather than indicating a site of occupation.

The Grantham Canal completed in 1796 also used this depression to reach the Vale of Belvoir, which it crosses in a single 20 mile level 'pound' above the Cropwell Locks.

The position of the village in its dip, not visible from the nearby Fosse, may have provided protection from any marauding tribes travelling along this route. It also provided water by way of a spring where Stockwell lane now meets Church Street, as well as nearby springs under Mill Hill behind the village to the east.

The land in front of the limestone scarp, on which the village is built, is highly gypsiferous leading to an extensive local industry exploiting this in the 19th and 20th Centuries. This band, called the Cropwell Bishop Formation, also extends many miles to the North East and South

West with further important mining of Gypsum towards Newark and Gotham in the other direction.

Limestone in the form of a blue or grey marl was collected and used for building, particularly in retaining walls such as at the Church and providing substantial footings to many of the older buildings. It was also burned in the lime kilns near the former Lime Kiln Inn, to the South of the village.

4.4 Relationship of the Conservation Area to its Surroundings

The proposed conservation area boundary would include much of the central historic area of the village. This is highlighted in the large scale 1900 Ordnance Survey of the village, and includes parts of Fern Road, Church Street and Nottingham Road which meet in front of the Church. Also Stockwell lane, which loops behind the Church, and Mill Lane.

Much modern housing was built particularly to the North and West of the historic village in the 1970s. The modern Hoe View Road connects Nottingham Road and Cropwell Butler Road, in a loop to the North West. And roads leading off St Giles Way, which runs from Church Street almost opposite the Chequers Inn. There has also been some further development to the North East including Springfield Close, behinds the Co-op and on the site of the former Netherhall Manor Farm, called Old Hall Farm, which stood there until earlier in the 20th Century.

Nevertheless the views along the main historic streets in the village centre which meet in front of the Church remain surprisingly unchanged, with most of the older 19th Century buildings remaining and more modern infill being characteristically set back from the historic buildings.

There has been almost no development to the immediate South of the historic village, which allows the footpaths from the village centre, to still open immediately off Nottingham Road and Field Road onto fields and attractive open countryside. Each of these represents an ancient historic route by foot to nearby villages, and are widely used by walkers to this day. Manor Farm and Home Farm still operate from the village in this area to the South.

The Grantham Canal crosses Nottingham Road to the West of the village. This disused canal runs from the River Trent near Lady Bay Bridge through to Grantham. Most of the canal has had the towpath restored and can be walked or cycled along, and many parts are recognised as important for a wide range of wildlife.

To the North West of the village are extensive and notable views of Hoe Hill, which is said to give the village its name. This is extensively wooded sitting in particular contrast to the surrounding arable fields. Fox hunting was once widespread in the area and it is said Hoe Hill was planted with trees originally as a fox covert in the 18th Century.

5.1 History

Cropwell Bishop is an ancient village whose history has been largely moulded by its position and geology, together with its long ownership by the Church.

'Crophille' was part of lands originally given to the Archbishop of York by the King in 956. Exceptionally, this ownership survived the Norman Conquest. The lands were later divided into 16 Prebends, each held by a Prebendary or Canon of the collegiate church at Southwell. Each Prebendary was also Lord of the Manor of the Prebend allocated to them as a stipend.

Two Prebends known as Oxton I and Oxton II, or Oxton Netherhall and Oxton Overhall respectively, owned most of the land of Cropwell Bishop Parish. Oxton Netherhall land lay broadly to the East side of the village, with Oxton Overhall land to the West. The names of the large pre enclosure fields and pastures are recorded in the 1804 Act of Enclosure, together with their post enclosure ownership.

Prebend land was usually leased for a period of 'three lives'. However leases were often surrendered for a new lease upon any death, so that the land could pass down generations who often came to regard themselves as owners. Canons did not visit their Prebends, so that unlike the manors of nearby villages, landholders and farmers had more freedom and more involvement in the running the village. The distinction reflected what became known as an 'Open' parish, where land ownership and use was divided amongst a number of controlling interests. As opposed to a 'Closed' parish, where a single land owner might dictate how all land was used.



The Parish Church of St Giles (Grade I Listed) occupies a prominent position at the corner of Nottingham Road, Fern Road and Church Street and is the oldest building within the village, with the oldest standing elements dating to the 13th Century,

As a result of the control on housing, 'closed' parishes might have smaller populations and needed services and labour from nearby 'open' parishes. In Cropwell Bishop as an 'open' parish, housing and labour would have been more available, and people might even travel to work on foot in the lands of nearby closed parishes. The 'closed' parishes were almost entirely agricultural, whilst 'open' parishes often developed to include a wider range of trades and services.

This distinction may reflect some of the village's particular character and sense of place, which differs subtly from others nearby. Cropwell Bishop has changed and adapted over the many years it has existed, in ways that other villages may have avoided. But when some villages may have lost local and independent trades and services provided by shops and local workers, of a school or even a local doctor, Cropwell Bishop has managed to retain many even into the 21st Century.

The other substantial influence on the village is related to its position and particular geology which led to significant industry and employment in the 19th and 20th Centuries. As discussed previously, Cropwell Bishop is situated in a low saddle like depression in front of a low Jurassic limestone escarpment. Beyond the escarpment to the south and east lies the Vale of Belvoir. The nearby canal also provided employment and allowed transport to markets in Nottingham.



Terraces within the village tend to be arranged running back from the road with a gabled end fronting the roadside, the access and small frontage plots allow raking views along the rows.

Up until the 19th Century, the highly gypsiferous ground in front of the escarpment was extensively mined near the surface immediately to the South and West of the village. The 'Cropwell Bishop Formation', was also mined more deeply in the 20th Century further to the West of the village and beyond the canal. A survey by the British Geological Survey published in 1990 highlighted the extent of mining, and that all development in these areas will require very careful geological investigations to ascertain whether there is any risk of subsidence.

The mining clay and manufacture of bricks in the 18th Century and earlier at a number of nearby sites gave the village its predominant red brick and pantiles. Local clay was also used for clay drainage pipes which by the 19th Century were all manufactured in large brick kilns near to the canal.

Above the low scarp to the South and near to the former Lime Kiln Inn, limestone extracted from small adjacent quarries (now filled in) was burnt in Lime Kilns during the 18th and 19th Centuries. Lime-ash residue found at the bottom of wood-fired lime kilns, consisted of waste lime and wood ash. This was widely used in an economic form of floor construction for upper floors which is particularly characteristic of the area.

Earlier and certainly before the 1804 Enclosure Act the economy of the village was based mainly as in other nearby villages, on agriculture. This was mainly arable, but after enclosure included dairy farms later in the 19th Century.

Increasing local land ownership after Enclosure, with access to the canal, also enabled expansion in the mining, brick, lime and cement manufacture which became extensive. This had a strong social influence on the village in the 19th Century at a time when employment on the land was declining, as well as providing many of the locally characteristic building materials.

5.2 Plan Form and Layout

Cropwell Bishop is a nucleated village, with the village church and churchyard at its centre, where Fern Road, Nottingham Road and Church Street meet at a point historically known as 'The Turn'. Stockwell Lane loops around to the rear of the Church, from Fern Road to Church Street at 'The Pin Fold'. An important historical site, at which the ancient village spring fed a pond existing from the earliest times, and later also serving as the village animal pound and site of the village stocks until comparatively recently.

In the earliest times even before Doomsday, the area enclosed by Stockwell Lane and parts of Church Street and Fern Road may have formed a defensive area or ring, in which the village would have lived or at least retreated together with their valuable animals in case of any external threats.

Along these original village roads, whilst the land is divided in a somewhat irregular pattern, many plots can be measured back to multiples of the ancient measurement of 5 ½ yards or one Rod, Pole or Perch. There are some wider plots, often identified with historic farms together with their characteristic yards and barns. So, in Fern Road we see Home Farm near the Church, which was the Overhall Manor Farm, and further out Manor Farm. On Nottingham Road, the Barlow's Farm was beside the Wheatsheaf Inn, 'The Yews' Farm, and further out the later Lenton House and farm. On Church Street, Fillingham Farm was almost opposite the Church, Squires Farm opposite the present Co-op, and the whole area north of Stockwell Lane was Netherhall Manor Farm, or Old Hall Farm.

In between and amongst these, there were as referred to in the Enclosure Act a number of 'Ancient Homesteads'. Some of these plots or 'closes' were developed with cottages across the frontage in the conventional sense. Others plots were particularly narrow. These are interesting, because they contribute the characteristic terraced cottages which feature end on to the main village streets in a number of places.



Whilst the majority of buildings within the village are brick built there are exceptions including some properties which feature visible elements of timber framing such as White Cottage (grade II listed)

As these narrow plots were successively developed, buildings typically developed just along one side boundary, the other being left clear for access. Originally with a simple home perhaps of mud towards the front of the plot. Later developed in successive stages, with a substantial brick house or business premises to the front, with stables, barn and so on behind. A closer examination of these later buildings suggest they often reused earlier limestone or stone Marl footings or foundations, from the earlier building. A particular surviving example is the old 'Mace' shop on Church Street. These historical plots may have come with rights to grow crops and graze animals on the surrounding Common Lands. This largely came to an end following the Enclosure Act in 1804, when many of these small holdings would have lost these rights.

Subsequently, quite a few plots or closes were eventually developed into complete terraces of cottages in the mid 19th Century, reflecting the growing employment from the Canal, mining, brick making etc. Several of these terraces still remain such as Mill Cottages on Mill Lane, and Simpsons Terrace on Church Street. A particular and notable feature was that none originally had windows opening onto their rear face, and it can be seen how these have been added subsequently.

Mill Lane was renamed after the steam mill and cottages built on that close in around 1850. However, in the 1804 Enclosures Act it is referred to Hallam's Lane which may originally have been a 'back lane' leading to 'ancient homesteads' behind Church Street. At the top of Mill Lane now are Orchard Farm and cottages which are mainly Victorian but replaced earlier buildings including mud cottages on the site.

5.3 Open Spaces, Trees and Landscape

Cropwell Bishop has only a limited number of significant trees and open spaces in the historic centre of the village.

Dominating the village centre is the church yard and surrounding ancient trees. The view from along Nottingham Road towards the church is probably the most characteristic and often photographed view in the village. These can often be roughly dated by the varying height of the tree to the right of the church tower.

The land in the foreground was a paddock in front of The Wheatsheaf Inn, which together with the paddock belonging to the Chequers Inn was historically used for an Annual Fair. Visiting Showmen brought roundabouts, swing boats, coconut shies, hoopla's and an organ all powered by a steam engine. Photographs still exist of the fair which began each year on the first Sunday after the 12th of September.

The paddocks were also used by the South Notts Hunt when gathering near the public houses, and later becoming their car parks. The remaining grass areas and mature trees still make a valuable contribution to the street scene. In 2009 a new terrace named Kerr's Close was built at the eastern end of the Chequers car park, which although modern reflects the existing street scene making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Beside the Wheelwrights' Cottage in front of the Church at the start of Fern Road, is a particular example of the several ancient public footpaths which led to nearby villages. This opens immediately onto attractive open fields towards Colston Bassett. On Nottingham Road, in front of 'The Yews' there is a large and ancient Yew tree after which the former farm was named.



There are examples of sensitively designed new buildings within the conservation area

5.4 Public Realm

Cropwell Bishop's roads and pavements are mostly surfaced with asphalt with few kerbstones in natural stone. This reflects that raised footpaths existed only in the main street of the historic centre of the village, with the majority created comparatively recently as motor vehicles became common. On Nottingham Road, only the footpath on the North side existed nearer to the Church until the 1950s.

Boundary treatments in the village are mainly red brick or earlier grey marl stone, usually with some form of coping in stone or brick. Copings in Staffordshire blue brick widely remain and typically represent replacements of earlier red brick copings. Brick piers at gateways are capped with stone, a common form is shown. There are also some estate fences often used with

planting including hedges. For example along Little Lane to the rear of the Wheatsheaf car park and in front of the former Squire's Farmhouse opposite the present Co-op.

There is evidence that a number of cottages were rebuilt after 1850, and evidence for this can also be found in boundary walls which remain or include sections of earlier narrow bricks, such as on the corner of Mill Lane and Little Lane beside Ebenezer House.

The rear wall of Ebenezer house shows three stages of construction. Two of narrow bricks, suggesting that the roof was raised to eliminate former dormers. This also suggests that the rear of the former Fillingham Farmhouse was retained when it was again rebuilt as Ebenezer House, explaining the unusual double gabled roof.

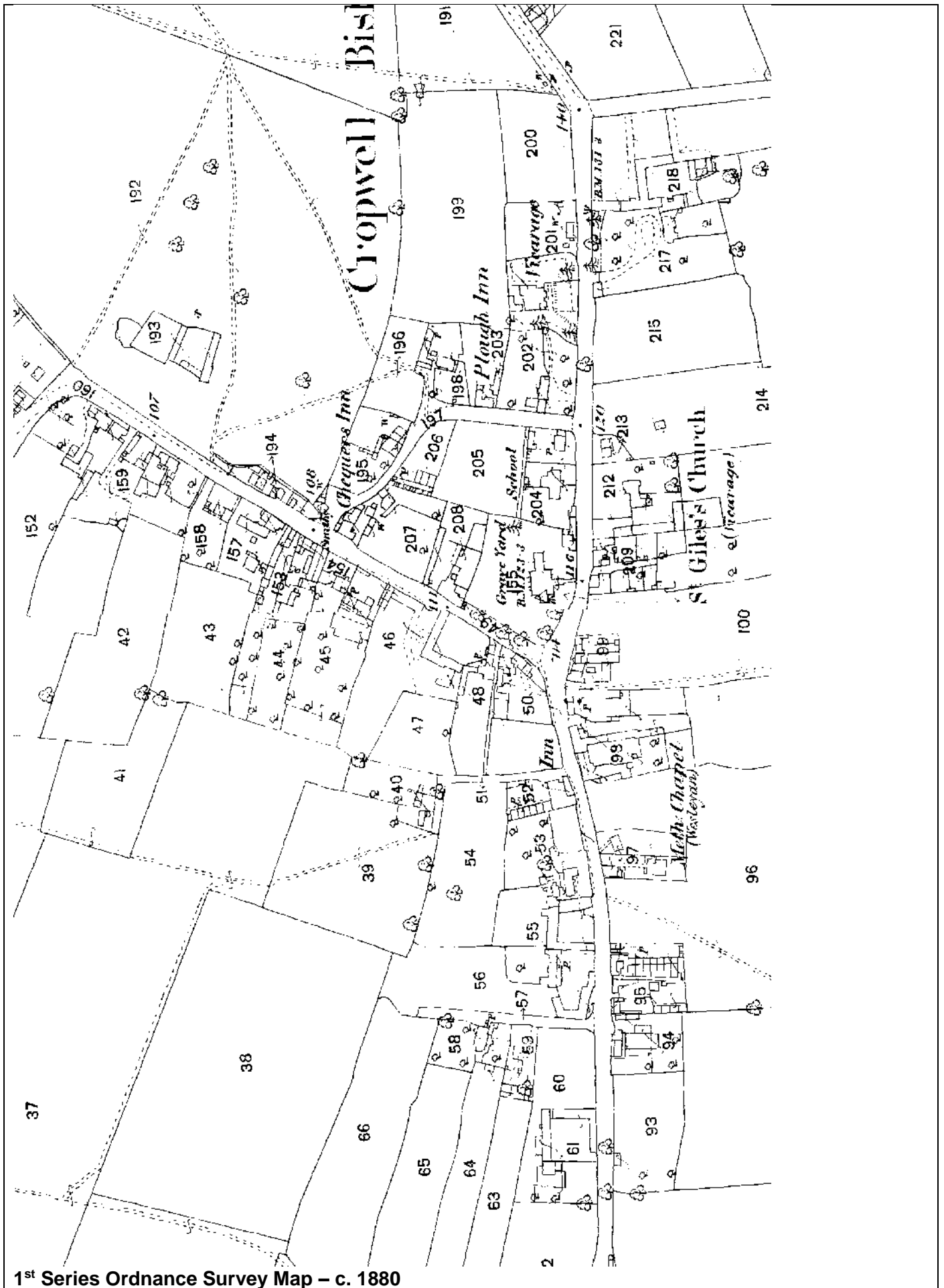
Several cottages show similar evidence that their ridge was raised. This reflects that early cottages were usually built with dormered windows to save on expensive bricks. Less altered examples are 16 and 20 Fern Road as well as those at the Creamery, which are Listed Buildings.

Many cottages and other building in the village dating from the 18th Century show an interesting and characterful array of brickwork 'dentil' coursing and decorated gables. These features are typical throughout Nottinghamshire, although Cropwell Bishop does have a wide variety. Some of the work is so distinctive that it remains possible to identify the characteristic brickwork of individual builders. As an example, the Cart shed in front of the of the Fillingham Farm stack yard on Church Street built by David Salvin, shows remarkable consistency in bricks and craftsmanship to the adjacent Parish Rooms as well as other village properties.

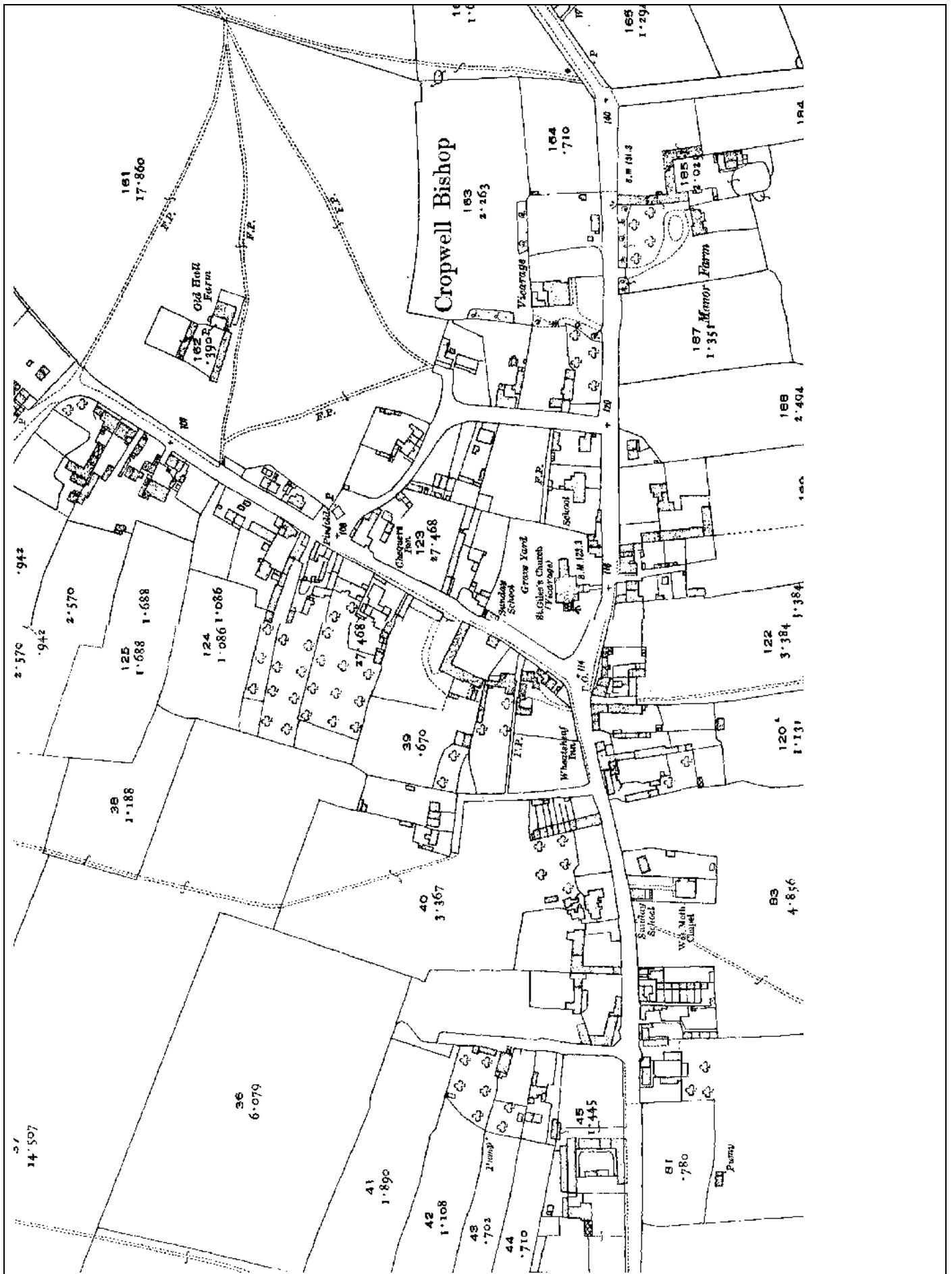
Decoration with dentil courses is a particular feature of many village cottages, with rainwater gutters supported by 'rise and fall' gutter brackets without soffit boards. Later in the 19th Century it is notable how much of this decorative brick work increasingly used 'special' bricks and in particular 'Cants' which have one end finished at 45 degrees to the length of the brick. An example is Lenton House which retains fine brickwork including the original chimneys and contemporary pots.

The public realm also features items of historic infrastructure including a K6 public telephone kiosk and traditional post box on Church Street outside the former post office.

5.5 Historic Mapping



1st Series Ordnance Survey Map - c. 1880



2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map c. 1915

6.1 Buildings of the Conservation Area

The oldest building in the village is of course the Church. Originally built around 1215 with the support of the Prebendary, with successive additions until the stone tower in the 16th Century. It is a substantial church for the village, and serves as a major focal point situated at the heart of the village. The view to the front from Nottingham Road is one of the most published and numerous photographs and post cards exist. These date back to around 1880 and also show the original farmhouse at Overhall before it was pulled down. The church is surrounded by a retaining wall in grey marl of early 19th Century date. In front of the Church is 'The Turn', where it was possible to turn carts without backing. To the right 'The Turn Cottages' beside Wheelwrights Cottage.

Along Church Street, the view back towards the church from 'Farnies Corner' (the sharp turn at the furthest end of Church Street which would have been adjacent to Old Hall Farm), is surprisingly intact. Although a number of the buildings have suffered later adaptations. (Refer appendix buildings appraisal).

Along Nottingham Road, again looking back into the village towards the Church, the view is similarly intact. The barn to the left was part of the yard associated with Lenton House just out of shot to the left. Part remains but the further portion was demolished to give access to Hoe View Road. The buildings in the distance still remain (Refer appendix buildings appraisal).

On Fern Road, looking back towards the Church we see the former School House and Old School beyond dating from 1878. The tiny cottages to the centre were built on 'waste' land beside the church, originally to house the Poor. Later ownership appears to have become unclear leading to their dereliction and eventual demolition. The Parish Council planted a Millennium Garden on this site in 2000. Just out of shot to the left is The White Cottage opposite the entrance to Stockwell Lane on the right and beyond are a pair of listed cottages. Other than the demolished cottages in front of the church, the buildings in the distance still remain (Refer appendix buildings appraisal).



The former village school was built in 1878 and has the typical 'gothic' design influences of civic buildings of the high Victorian period.

As previously discussed the Old Manor Farm of Netherhall (behind the Co-op) and the original farmhouse of Overhall (now Home Farm) were pulled down at the beginning of the 20th Century and late in the 19th respectively, although a range of old farm buildings still remain at Home Farm.

Other than the Church, there are a number of listed buildings in the village along Nottingham Road and Fern Road. 'The White Cottage' on Fern Road is the oldest house in the village. This dates to the 17th Century and is of timber framed construction. There are also the pair of cottages nearby on Fern Road adjacent to Home Farm dating to the mid 18th Century. These show the characteristic high pitched roof with red brick gables and unaltered dormer windows of earlier cottages. The Wheatsheaf Inn on Nottingham Road is believed to be early 18th Century. The Wesleyan Chapel dated 1842, also on Nottingham Road. Quixhill cottage further along on Nottingham Road believed to be of 18th Century construction, which is opposite the dairy. And in the dairy, a range of former cottages of late 17th of early 18th Century.

In addition, there are a number of notable historic buildings mainly from the 19th Century often adapted and rebuilt from earlier buildings and foundations. 'The Yews' farmhouse on Nottingham Road from earlier in the 19th Century. The White House and adjoining Mill Cottages facing Mill lane from the mid 19th Century. The White House formerly comprised Mill House together with the adjoining Steam Mill until this exploded in 1904, later rebuilt as a single house.

6.2 Listed Buildings

Buildings on the Government's List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest are called "Listed" buildings and are protected by law. Consent is required from Rushcliffe Borough Council before any works of alteration, extension, or demolition can be carried out. Further information can be found in Rushcliffe Borough Council's publication Listed Buildings in Rushcliffe, which is also available online at:

<http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/conservation/listedbuildings/>

A complete list of Listed Buildings and structures in Cropwell Bishop is provided in Appendix 1. All Listed Buildings are shown on the Townscape Appraisal plan, but some of the smaller structures such as gravestones may not be shown.

The official list is maintained by Historic England and is available online as a continually updated register via the National Heritage List for England at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

6.3 The Contribution of Unlisted Buildings

Although the historic centre of Cropwell Bishop contains a number of listed buildings a strong contribution to the established character of the place also comes from buildings around the village which are not recognised via listing. Examples include The Old School, Lenton House, 49 Nottingham Road, The Yews Farmhouse, The White House and Mill Cottages. More recent buildings such as Kerr's Close Cottages have also made a positive contribution to the character of the village, being of similar scale, style and materials to many of the older properties within the village.

7.1 What's Next?

This draft document is now available for public consultation. We welcome comments about how we can improve the content of this appraisal, whether you know of additional information we can add so as to better define the special architectural and historic character of the area, or whether you know of anything within the draft document which we have gotten wrong.

The appraisal seeks to identify and define what the special “architectural and historic character” of Cropwell Bishop is, however it is not intended to be a complete history of the village and in the interests of keeping the appraisal manageable and relevant to its function within the planning system it will never be possible to expand the ‘history’ chapter to cover every interesting tale of the history of the village.

Following the consultation period Rushcliffe Borough Council will take the time to consider all comments received and make any amendments to the draft document. If these amendments are considered to significantly alter what was proposed during the consultation period then there may be a second round of public consultation, if not the appraisal and the proposed conservation area would then be presented to ** committee of the Borough Council for formal adoption.

All residents would be informed if and when a conservation area becomes formally adopted.

In addition to the appraisal element of the document, which is broadly speaking a descriptive statement of the character of the village as it exists there is also a ‘Management Plan’ which gives details of how the Borough Council will endeavour to apply planning policies and principles so as to ‘preserve and enhance’ what makes the historic centre of Cropwell Bishop an architecturally and historically special place.

Appendix 3 provides our generic management plan which is attached to most conservation area appraisals adopted by Rushcliffe Borough Council. If you have any specific concerns or issues which you feel are not addressed within the generic management plan then please also mention these when providing your feedback on this consultation to enable us to tailor the generic management plan to better suit the needs of Cropwell Bishop. It should be noted that the management plan can direct the implementation and interpretation of policy as applied to Cropwell Bishop but it cannot re-write or override local and national planning policies.





Appendix 1 – Listed Buildings Within the Proposed Conservation Area

Listed Building	Listing Grade
Parish Church – St Giles	I
11 Headstones west of tower of parish church	II
32 Headstones south of parish church	II
7 Headstones east of chancel of parish church	II
7 Headstones north of chancel of parish church	II
Churchyard wall at St Giles	II
47 Nottingham Road	II
Former Cottages at Cropwell Bishop Creamery (12 Nottingham Road)	II
Methodist Chapel, Nottingham Road	II
The Wheatsheaf Inn, Nottingham Road	II
16 & 20 Fern Road	II
White Cottage, 24 Fern Road	II

Appendix 2 – Proposed Conservation Area Boundary Map

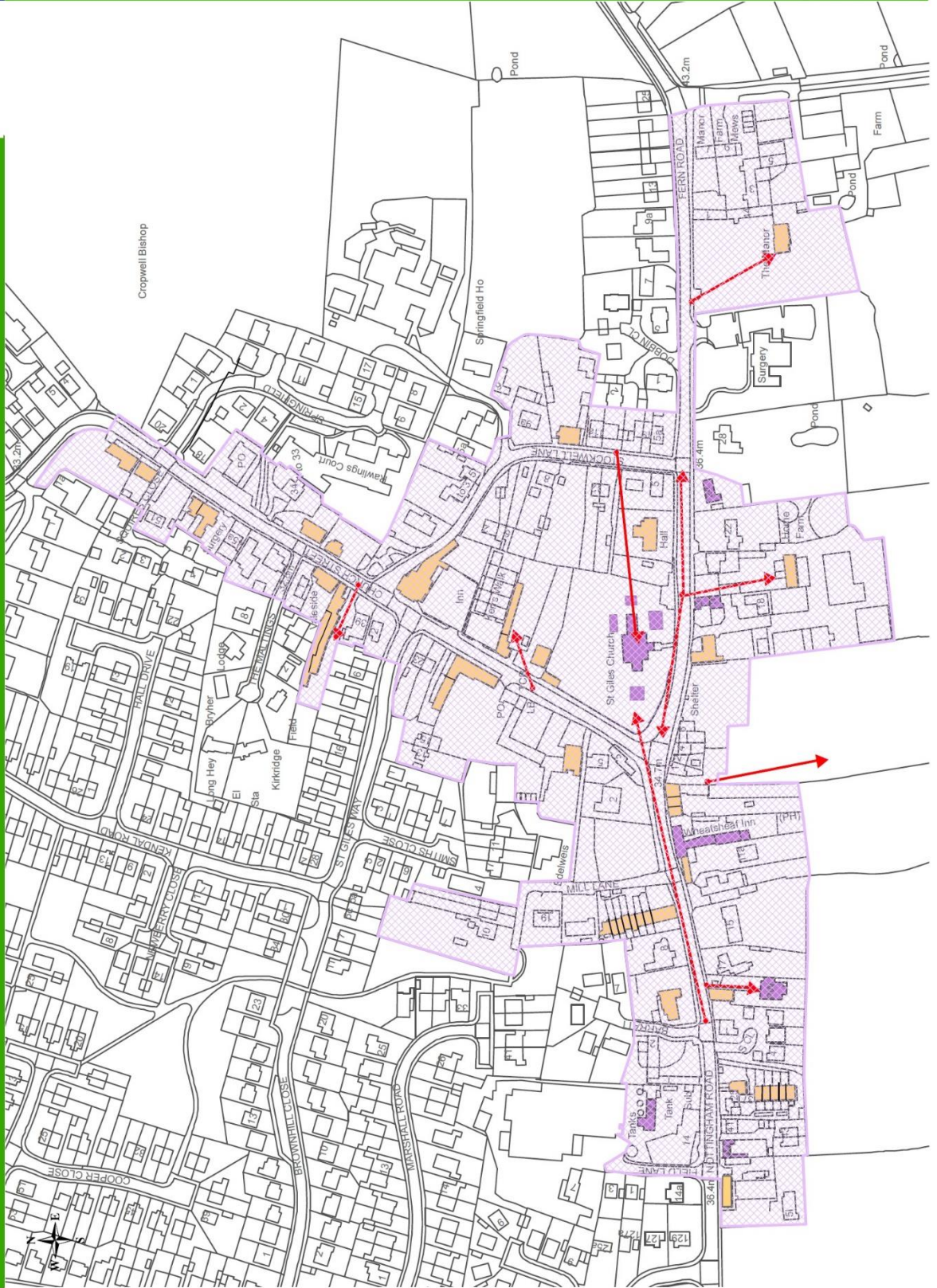
Cropwell Bishop

KEY

-  Conservation Area
-  Listed Buildings
-  Key Unlisted Buildings
-  Key View

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Conservation Area Boundary



Appendix 3 – Generic Conservation Area Management Plan

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The quality and interest of the whole area, rather than individual buildings, gives a Conservation Area its special character. This includes factors such as historic street layout, use of local building materials, scale and detailing of buildings, boundary treatments, shop fronts, street furniture, vistas along streets or between buildings as well as trees and shrub planting.

1.2 In carrying out its planning functions, the Borough Council is required in law to give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Conservation Area Appraisals identify the special character of each Conservation Area and the Borough Council has a programme for preparing or reviewing these.

1.3 There is also a duty to formulate and publish management plans setting out policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. Many of these policies and proposals are common to all Conservation Areas and these are set out in this document. Supplementary documents may be issued for individual Conservation Areas where specific policies or proposals are needed.

2.0 Aims and Objectives of this Management Plan

- To set out clear management proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas.
- To guide residents and professionals on:
 - features of value, worthy of preservation;
 - characteristics worthy of preservation;
 - opportunities for enhancement.
 - development proposals which preserve and enhance the special character of the area
- To foster community commitment to conservation principles

The Borough Council will follow these objectives in its own activities and will encourage other public bodies, including the Highway Authority to do the same.

3.0 National and Local Policies and Guidance

3.1 Central Government guidance applies to all Conservation Areas. This can be found in the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework, or 'NPPF' (Particularly, but not exclusively Chapter 16: "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment")
- The National Planning Practise Guidance or 'NPPG'
- Historic England "Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management"

3.2 Rushcliffe Borough Council adopted part 1 of its new local plan in December 2014. This includes the high level strategic historic environment policy for the Borough:

Policy 11 – HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

1. Proposals and initiatives will be supported where the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings are conserved and/or enhanced in line with their interest and significance. Planning decisions will have regard to the contribution heritage assets can make to the delivery of wider social, cultural, economic and environmental objectives.
2. The elements of Rushcliffe's historic environment which contribute towards the unique identity of areas and help create a sense of place will be conserved and, where possible, enhanced with further detail set out in later Local Development Documents. Elements of particular importance include:
 - a) industrial and commercial heritage such as the textile heritage and the Grantham Canal;
 - b) Registered Parks and Gardens including the grounds of Flintham Hall, Holme Pierrepont Hall, Kingston Hall and Stanford Hall; and
 - c) prominent listed buildings.
3. A variety of approaches will be used to assist in the protection and enjoyment of the historic environment including:
 - a) the use of appraisals and management plans of existing and potential conservation areas;
 - b) considering the use of Article 4 directions;
 - c) working with partners, owners and developers to identify ways to manage and make better use of historic assets;
 - d) considering improvements to the public realm and the setting of heritage assets within it;
 - e) ensuring that information about the significance of the historic environment is publicly available. Where there is to be a loss in whole or in part to the significance of an identified historic asset then evidence should first be recorded in order to fully understand its importance; and
 - f) considering the need for the preparation of local evidence or plans.
4. Particular attention will be given to heritage assets at risk of harm or loss of significance, or where a number of heritage assets have significance as a group or give context to a wider area.

3.3 The adopted Rushcliffe Local Plan was replaced in 2006 by the Non Statutory Replacement Local Plan for Development Control purposes and the following policies from that plan will be used for guidance in Conservation Areas. Until the adoption of part 2 of the local plan it contains the most recent development management policies relating to the historic environment for the Borough:

EN2 – CONSERVATION AREAS

Planning permission for development including changes of use and alterations or extensions to existing buildings within a designated Conservation Area, or outside of but affecting its setting, or views into or out of the Conservation Area will only be granted where:

- a) the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area by virtue of its use, design, scale, siting and materials;

b) there will be no adverse impact upon the form of the Conservation Area, including its open spaces (including gardens), the position of existing buildings and notable features such as groups of trees, walls and other structures; and
there will be no loss of part or all of an open space which contributes to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

EN3 – DEMOLITION IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Where planning permission is required for development which includes the demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas it will only be granted where the proposal does not detrimentally affect the character or appearance of the area, and any permission may be conditional on redevelopment proposals for the site being approved, and contracts for them accepted, before demolition is begun.

3.4 Village Design Statements

Village Design Statements exist or are being prepared for several villages in the Borough, some of which are also Conservation Areas. Although these offer no statutory protection they identify the qualities that are valued by the local community and the character that should be preserved.

4.0 Development in Conservation Areas

4.1 Article 4 Directions

Article 4 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 allows planning authorities to restrict specified permitted development rights in particular areas. Many councils use these to assist with the preservation of the special character of Conservation Areas although there are currently none in Rushcliffe.

Many buildings still possess original or traditional architectural details which contribute to the special character. These include windows, doors, porches, door hoods, pilasters and fanlights, chimneys, brick detailing and roofing materials as well as walls, gates and railings. However, the increased use of upvc windows, plastic barge boards, inappropriate roofing materials, high spiked metal railing and electric gates is eroding the character of many of our Conservation Areas. The use of Article 4 Directions will be considered where appropriate.

4.2 Building Design

Extensions to buildings in Conservation Areas should respect:

- The key characteristics of the original building including scale, mass, materials and proportions
- The contextual setting and character of the Conservation Area

This does not mean slavishly copying the original, which can devalue it and destroy the ability to “read” historic change and dilutes our historic heritage. In some cases this is impossible. For example Flemish Bond brickwork cannot be replicated in cavity walls and narrow lime mortar joints cannot be replicated in modern metric brickwork.

4.2.1 Good contemporary design will be encouraged where it respects the scale and character of its context. This must be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement submitted with any planning application.

4.2.2 In particularly sensitive locations, such as uniform terraces, exact replication may be necessary to maintain compositional unity. In that case, attention to details, choice of materials and high quality workmanship are the keynotes.

4.2.3 Where new building is appropriate, on infill sites or where an existing building detracts from the character of the area, the opportunity should be taken to re-establish the streetscape, reinforce enclosure, open up distant vistas or views of landmarks or hide unsightly views.

4.2.4 As with extensions, good contemporary design which respects local character and the context of the site will be encouraged.

“New and old buildings can coexist happily without disguising one as the other, if the design of the new is a response to urban design objectives”.

(DETR - „By Design“, p19)

4.2.5 Pastiche designs, incorporating poor imitations of other styles will be resisted, particularly where they incorporate details which are not locally appropriate. Careful high quality replication may be required in a few very sensitive locations.

4.2.6 All new buildings should respond appropriately to the existing frontage and normally follow the established building line. Development or redevelopment will normally be resisted if:

“it blocks important views identified in the individual appraisals uses important open spaces identified in the appraisals adversely affects the setting of any Listed or key buildings fails to maintain or re-establish the streetscape where appropriate dominates its Conservation Area background fails to recognize the context of the site destroys important features identified in the individual appraisals such as boundary walls, fences, hedgerows or trees”

4.2.7 New development that stands out from the background of buildings may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances if it contributes positively as a landmark to enhance the street scene, to highlight a corner or to signal a visual change of direction such as along a curving vista.

4.2.8 Any external lighting should be carefully designed and sited to minimise light pollution.

4.2.9 Energy producing or saving devices are generally welcomed by the Council, but careful consideration is required when these are to be located in a Conservation Area and some may require planning permission. In particular they should be sited to minimise their impact on the building and on the local amenity.

4.3 Materials

Rushcliffe’s older buildings are predominantly brick, some incorporating earlier timber framed structures. (There were many small local brickyards, some of which only worked for a few years and produced bricks in various shades of orangey red.) There are a small number of buildings built of local stone, mainly a soft grey lias, and higher status buildings in stone imported from Lincolnshire and elsewhere. Roofs are mainly plain tiles or pantiles, with some Swithland slate and Welsh slate from the mid 19c onwards. A few original thatched roofs remain.

Most of these materials are no longer available second hand, except in very limited quantities. National guidance is to use high quality new materials for extensions to existing buildings. However, it is preferable to use reclaimed materials where:

- Small quantities are needed to exactly match the materials of the existing building
- The materials are of high quality, the correct dimensions and colour
- The materials are sourced locally e.g. the approved demolition of an existing structure on site or in the immediate vicinity
- It can be demonstrated that the sourced materials have not resulted in the loss of a heritage asset elsewhere

4.4 Boundary Treatment

Boundaries, such as walls, fences or hedges, separate private spaces from the public realm of roads and pavements, physically and visually. They are as important in determining the character of a Conservation Area as the buildings behind them.

4.4.1 High brick walls and buildings on the back of pavements create a hard, urban feel to the Conservation Area whilst hedges, verges and trees produce a more rural character. In some Conservation Areas one or the other predominates whilst some have a mix of these features.

4.4.2 Where the character definition is strong, it is important to retain and promote a continuation of the theme. A high brick wall in a predominantly "green" lane will impact adversely on its character and the introduction of a hedge in an urban scene may be equally inappropriate. Where there is a variety in the type of boundary there will be more flexibility.

4.4.3 Local materials and design play a vital role in successful boundary treatments which maintain or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. Brick walls which match or complement the local architecture or locally native hedgerows and trees invariably have the greatest conservation benefits.

4.4.4 Any boundary detail should be in keeping with the street scene and be complementary to the building to which it is the boundary. It should reflect the status of the property and not attempt to create a sense of grandeur where unwarranted.

4.5 Landscaping

4.5.1 Trees can be a key factor in the special character of Conservation Areas.

4.5.2 In Conservation Areas there is a requirement to give the local planning authority six weeks notice of any proposed work to a tree. This period allows the local authority to assess the trees and decide whether a tree preservation order is desirable.

4.5.3 In many instances, the planting of new trees or groups of trees, would enhance the character of the Conservation Area. The Council is keen to promote this, where new planting contributes to the public realm, and has worked with Parish Councils to carry out small scale planting and other landscape schemes in their areas previously.

5.0 Buildings at risk and sites which detract from the character of the area

5.1 A number of important buildings in our various Conservation Areas are currently vacant or not in regular use, with some being „at risk“ of neglect or decay. There is a presumption against demolition of buildings which contribute to the character of the area unless there are exceptional circumstances. It would therefore benefit both the physical form and the function of the Conservation Area if these buildings were repaired, maintained and brought back into use.

5.2 The Council will encourage owners of key properties in Conservation Areas which are in need of renovation or repair to carry out the basic maintenance work necessary to make sure the building is structurally sound and weather tight. The Council will encourage and advise on renovation and repair work that is sensitive to the original or traditional historic character of the building and retains original features.

5.3 The Council may take formal action if the condition of any building (listed or unlisted) which makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area is considered to be at risk.

5.4 Where the poor condition of a building or structure is as a result of neglect and lack of maintenance by its owner there is no requirement for the Borough Council to take its deteriorated condition into account when deciding whether demolition is appropriate. This is to avoid rewarding the deliberate neglect of buildings by representing such action as a way to obtain planning permission for demolition and redevelopment.

6.0 Management of Public Realm

6.1 Management of highways and footpaths is the responsibility of the Highway Authority, Nottinghamshire County Council. The Council will use its influence to ensure that the principles of good street and public realm design, such as those set out in

“Streets for All: East Midlands” (English Heritage, 2005), “By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice” (DETR/CABE, 2000) “Manual for Streets” (DfT, 2007),

are applied within Conservation Areas.

6.2 Grass verges can also be lost during road or pavement improvement schemes and kerbstones may be added. They can also come under threat from property owners seeking to create hard-standings for off-street parking. The loss of grass verges, and the cumulative effect that this has over time, can result in the gradual deterioration of the special character of a Conservation Area. Such works will be resisted.

6.3 The quality and design of street surfaces and street furniture can also have a major impact on the character of the Conservation Area. Where historic or traditional street surfaces and street furniture have survived, these should be preserved and maintained. Any streets or public spaces in poor condition can have a negative impact on the Conservation Area and may need to be improved. Materials should be carefully selected to ensure that they complement and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

6.4 Any surfaces, whether public or privately owned, that are in a severe state of disrepair and/or have a negative impact on the Conservation Area should be a priority for improvement works.

6.5 The public footpaths and other rights of way within and adjacent to the Conservation Area play a vital role in allowing people to enjoy and experience the area. It is important that these paths are well maintained, clearly marked and made accessible.

7.0 Monitoring

7.1 This Management Plan will be reviewed in accordance with a programme to be agreed in the light of the emerging Local Development Framework and government policy and best practice guidance at the time.

7.2 This review could involve residents and/or members of a residents' conservation group or conservation advisory committee under the guidance of the Borough Council. By this means, the local community would become more involved in the process, thus raising public awareness of and commitment to conservation issues.

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