

# Public Document Pack

When telephoning, please ask for: Tracey Coop  
Direct dial 0115 914 8481  
Email [democraticservices@rushcliffe.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@rushcliffe.gov.uk)

Our reference:  
Your reference:  
Date: Monday 9 March 2020



To all Members of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group will be held on Tuesday, 17 March 2020 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area B, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford to consider the following items of business.

Yours sincerely

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

Sanjit Sull  
Monitoring Officer

## AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 January 2020 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Open Spaces (Pages 7 - 12)  
The report of the Executive Manager – Communities is attached
5. Customer Services and Digital Transformation (Pages 13 - 20)  
The report of the Executive Manager – Transformation is attached.
6. Work Programme (Pages 21 - 22)  
The report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services is attached.

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](http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk)

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



## Membership

Chairman: Councillor N Clarke

Vice-Chairman: Councillor A Brennan

Councillors: N Begum, J Cottee, L Howitt, A Phillips, J Stockwood, D Viridi and L Way

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**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP  
TUESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2020**

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

**PRESENT:**

Councillors N Clarke (Chairman), A Brennan (Vice-Chairman), N Begum,  
J Cottee, L Howitt, A Phillips, J Stockwood, D Viridi and L Way

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

L Ashmore	Executive Manager - Transformation
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer
C Evans	Economic Growth Manager
D Mitchell	Executive Manager - Communities
C Saxton	Economic Growth Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors

**6 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies to report.

**7 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations to report.

**8 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2019 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**9 Business Support Offer**

Catherine Evans – Service Manager for Transformation and Caroline Saxton – Economic Growth Officer delivered a presentation that updated the Group on the work completed by the Economic Growth Team which focused on Business Support within Rushcliffe.

The Service Manger highlighted the Council's priorities in respect of Growth and Development including driving growth and regeneration, infrastructure, business support, employment and skills and proactively managing growth to ensure the Council creates great places to live and work. The Service Manager – Transformation informed the Group that five Growth Boards have been

established to work with key partners to support our main towns and to capitalise on the opportunities presented by growth.

The Economic Growth Officer provided the Group with information on the successful regeneration completed in Cotgrave, the delivery and completion of housing at Hollygate Park and improvements to the town centre to support the housing growth. The regeneration in the town centre provided new shops and offices, a multi-service centre and public realm improvements including additional car parking. The Economic Growth Officer explained that the Council had worked with the developers to deliver employment and skills in the area during the construction phase of the development. An employment partnership has been established which includes, working with local schools and colleges, businesses etc. to support the delivery of this work.

The Service Manager presented a summary of the Economic data and commercial property within the Borough, which highlighted information contained in the appendices attached to the report. The Service Manager informed the Group that the majority of businesses within the Borough, (76.4%), are small and we have 15 businesses with 250+ employees. The 5 year survival rate for businesses is 45.75% compared to 44.8% for Nottinghamshire as a whole and the top 3 business sectors in Nottinghamshire are Health, Manufacturing and Retail. In addition, the Service Manager provided information on privately owned commercial property and commercial property owned by the Council. Council owned property is currently made up of:

- 49 industrial units ranging in size from 750 to 5000 sq ft.
- 11 retail units located in Cotgrave and Radcliffe on Trent
- 20 Offices in Cotgrave and West Bridgford

The Service Manager advised that there are also plans to build additional retail units at Cotgrave to complete the regeneration of the shopping centre. In addition, as part of the proposals for a new leisure centre in Bingham, a new 10,000 sq ft office building is included, which will potentially provide 6 individual offices (ground floor) and a serviced office (first floor) subject to planning permission. There are also plans to purchase 11 industrial units in Bingham which will range in size from 1000 to 1500 sq ft.

The Economic Growth Officer provided the Group with information on the range of business support that the Council and its partners provide. This includes:

- The D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which is a partnership between local government and businesses to drive economic growth in the area. It covers Derby, Derbyshire (D2) and Nottingham, Nottinghamshire (N2).
- The Growth Hub, established by the D2N2 LEP using European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) matched with local funding is aimed to be a 'one stop shop' for business support. The Hub provides a range of support including funding, events and workshops.
- The Rushcliffe Business Partnership is a not for profit partnership funded by

the Council through an annual service level agreement and also provides officer support in organising and promoting networking events and activities. The Partnership hosts monthly networking events in West Bridgford, Ruddington and Keyworth and quarterly events, which have included training on upskilling workforce and physical and mental wellbeing, which Rushcliffe has hosted at the Arena.

In addition, the Economic Growth Officer advised that other events organised by the Economic Growth team include a Developer Forum and 'Big Business' events. A Recruiting Future Talent event is being planned for April 2020 and another 'Big Business' event is being planned for spring 2020 with the theme of clean growth and sustainability.

The Group asked specific questions in respect of businesses 'churn' and whether the Council has the commercial property available within the Borough to retain successful businesses wishing to expand. In addition the Group asked if the larger developments of employment land in Rushcliffe were Council owned or under private ownership. The Executive Manager – Communities advised that the larger developments are generally privately owned. In addition, the Service Manager advised the Group that there are no comparisons with other areas in respect of the 'churn' rate of businesses and explained that support is provided for businesses wishing to expand or reduce the size of premises. The Council does look to retain businesses within the Borough, although this may mean looking at alternative provision in the private sector.

The Group asked whether the Council could adopt a strategic approach to the supply and demand for business units and is there any market intelligence on the profile of tenancy of businesses to ensure that what the Council build/purchase in future is fully occupied. In addition, Councillors questioned the lack of creative or third sector businesses in the Borough, advising that this is a growing market. The Executive Manager – Transformation explained that local research is commissioned or completed by officers to understand the market in the area before any investment decisions are made. This requirement for a commercial return is balanced against the priority of supporting business.

The Group finally asked if further information and data could be provided from the business support partnerships and how their outcomes and achievements are measured. The Group suggested that D2N2 Growth Hub are invited to a future meeting of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group to explain their approach for business support.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The report provided by the Economic Growth and Property teams be noted, and the outcome welcomed in delivering a successful business support offer for businesses and employment in Rushcliffe.
- b) The Group provide future items for scrutiny as recorded in the Scrutiny Work Programme

## 10 Supporting and Promoting Economic Vibrancy in Towns and Villages

Catherine Evans, Service Manager for Transformation and Caroline Saxton, Economic Growth Officer delivered a presentation to accompany the appendices provided with the report. The report and presentation sets out data relating to the health of our high streets in Rushcliffe and the support the Council is providing to ensure they continue to thrive.

The Service Manager provided the Group with some background information on what the Council was doing to support local towns and villages, explaining the function of the growth boards in West Bridgford, Bingham and Radcliffe on Trent and more recently East Leake and Fairham. In addition, the Service Manager informed the Group of the success of the Council's Shop Front Improvement Grant scheme, a match funding facility available to all high street businesses across Rushcliffe.

The Economic Growth Officer explained some of the work completed by the Economic Growth team within the towns and villages, and how the team support the growth boards as well as non-growth board areas, providing examples: Melton Road Christmas lights and the West Bridgford Way. Further support is being developed, including a communication plan, digital growth and further work with the growth boards to support town and village events to increase their local footfall.

The Economic Growth Officer provided the key findings from a 2016 Kerching retail review and explained that town and village centres in Rushcliffe are performing well despite the challenging environment. The Kerching report highlighted the following:

- Low vacancy rates
- Provision of services e.g. Hairdressers, estate agents is higher than the national average
- Comparison shopping (non-essential items) is lower than the national average
- Leakage rates for Rushcliffe is high, the main causes of this being the lack of comparison shopping, as well as proximity to Nottingham and larger towns.

The Economic Growth Officer added that for the first time ever in any of Kerching's reports, there was not a single business in any of the villages reviewed which were rated as red according to their traffic light system. The only shops rated red were vacant shops. Kerching described the lack of red coded businesses as unprecedented.

The Service Manager presented the key features of a town centre using a model for future high streets and how Rushcliffe compares, more detailed information was provided in the Grimsey review as an appendix to the report.

The key features include:

- Accessibility including wifi, parking, cycle storage and public transport links
- A mixed offer of shops, services, cafes and public work space

- Regular activities and events to attract people to the area
- The provision of community services e.g. library, doctors, Council contact point

In addition, the Service Manager reported that Rushcliffe town centres all have a high street retailer e.g. Co-op, Boots, all have parking provision, all areas are delivering some events, mainly seasonal e.g. summer fairs or Christmas light switch on and all areas have social media presence. However, only two of the seven towns and villages have a bank or building society.

The Group asked specific questions in relation to leakage and what the Council is doing to ensure the vibrancy of our towns and villages continues and whether there are triggers that could alert any detrimental changes in the future. The Group provided examples of bank closures and lack of ATM machines as having a negative effect, particularly on the older population or retailers that rely on cash transactions. The Executive Manager – Communities explained that leakage is difficult to influence as spending habits are changing in response to technology, retail spending is moving more online or to larger towns and cities, this also applies to banking facilities too, the success of smaller towns is to keep residents in the area.

The Group suggested whether the Council's planning policy could have an influence on landlords, so that A1 retail remains sustainable. The Executive Manager – Communities explained that mechanisms are in place within the planning policy and Neighbourhood Plans to defend things that towns don't want.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The Group note the report provided by the Economic Growth and Planning Policy teams, and welcome the successful vibrancy of Rushcliffe communities, defying the downward trend in many other communities, highlighting the need to monitor trends and ensure continued success.
- The Group provide items for future scrutiny as outlined in the Work Programme.

## 11 **Work Programme**

The Group considered its work Programme and provided suggestions for potential items for the Groups Work Programme, these included:

- Engagement with the D2N2 LEP to outline their support within Rushcliffe.
- How are the six strategic employment sites being developed, and how is the Council engaged with the stakeholders.
- Supporting Town Centres – to bring this item back at a later date with an update and progress report.
- The availability of banks and cashpoints declining significantly across the Borough.

The Executive Manager – Communities suggested that Councillors complete a Scrutiny Matrix for items they wish to consider at future meetings, explaining that items they wish to consider would need to be approved by the Corporate Overview Group of which the Chairman and Vice Chairman attend.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Work Programme, as detailed below be approved.

**17 March 2020**

- Abbey Road Development – Meet the Developer
- Customer Service and Digital Transformation
- Work Programme

**Action Sheet – 7 January 2020**

Minute No	Action	Officer Responsible
9	The Group requested that more information be provided on retention of businesses and how many businesses move and to where	Service Manager - Transformation
9	The Group requested further information on the creative/third business sector	Service Manager - Transformation
10	The Group requested that a copy or web link of the Grimsey report be provided for Group members.	Service Manager - Transformation
10	The Group requested that a copy of the retail reports be circulated to members of the Group on request and suggested the reports are updated to illustrate change in the 3 to 4 year period from when they were last commissioned	Service Manager - Transformation

The meeting closed at 8.51 pm.

CHAIRMAN





## Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Tuesday, 17 March 2020

### Open Spaces

#### Report of the Executive Manager – Communities

##### 1. Purpose of report

1.1. This item has been raised for consideration by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group following concerns regarding the lack of consistency for Management Companies fees from development to development (even within the same village). More specifically the concerns raised include:

- The lack of an overall cap on fees,
- “Hidden” fees for residents who come to sell their property or re-mortgage,
- The lack of ability for residents to redress any dissatisfactions or shortcomings with Management Companies,
- The fact that residents don’t understand the full extent of the costs they are agreeing to pay when they purchase the properties and
- The resident’s misconception that the areas they are paying for are for their sole use creating friction with other local residents lawfully using the areas.

1.2 Open spaces can be required on small, medium and large scale residential developments within the Borough. Under the Local Plan, the Council has identified six strategic sites within the Core Strategy and twenty five additional residential sites under Local Plan Part 2. These developments range from 45 to 4,000 dwellings in size.

1.3 A background investigation has been undertaken to explore the challenges associated with the delivery of open space managed by Management Companies on housing developments, looking at who could be responsible for the management and maintenance of outdoor community spaces on them in the future.

1.4 This initial report and presentation will give Councillors an update on the current arrangements to enable Councillors to scrutinise this information and make recommendations on the options for their future investigation and operation.

1.5 This issue has not currently been considered by any other committee.

1.6 A presentation will be given to the Group to expand on the issues contained within this report.

## **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group considers the contents of the report and presentation, and identifies any areas for further investigation.

## **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. Prior to 2000, the Council adopted any open space on housing developments with no cost to developer or residents of that development.
- 3.2. Between the years of 2000 and 2011, the Council continued to adopt all open space on new housing developments but sought a commuted sum from the developer that covered the first 15 years of the costs associated with the maintenance and management of the open space. After 15 years the responsibility became a financial implication for the Council. Issues were, however, experienced whereby some developers failed to pay the commuted sum and, therefore, residents experienced issues of open spaces not being maintained.
- 3.3. In 2011, the Council changed its position regarding taking ownership of Open Space land, including the risk of on-going maintenance liability deciding it was no longer in a position to accept ownership of any open space land. Developers are now required to submit an Open Space Scheme which, amongst other things requires the method for securing the management and maintenance of the open space by an 'appropriate organisation' and that management and maintenance of the open space should be through a 'management company or by transfer to some other appropriate organisation', with suitable provision for funding the future management and maintenance. This process is now common practice amongst Local Authorities.
- 3.4. Since 2011, all new open space, constructed as part of new housing developments, has been the sole financial and physical responsibility of the developer to provide, and then inspect and maintain post development. However, most developers seek to pass that maintenance responsibility onto a Management Company with the financial burden for paying the Management Company passed on to the residents of the new developments with monies collected via a monthly charge on each dwelling secured at the time each dwelling is sold/re-sold.
- 3.5. In the case of the strategic housing allocations (500+ dwellings), the facilities are likely to prove attractive and, therefore, be used by significant number of people from within the settlement within which they are located, and some facilities even serve as an attractor to visitors from outside the settlement. However, the costs of funding the maintenance of the facilities are only paid for by the residents of the development within which the facility is situated. In other words, the facilities may be used by significantly more people than are contributing towards the maintenance and up keep them.

- 3.6. The Ward Councillor who raised the initial key line of enquiry that has resulted in this item states that their constituents have raised issues: that different Management Companies within the same village are charging differing amounts; that there is no cap on the fees that residents are charged; and that the residents have little or no control over the quality and frequency of the work that they are paying for.
- 3.7. This is an issue not only for the Larger Strategic developments, but also on the smaller developments such as those allocated within Local Plan Part 2. Furthermore, with community facilities, such as country parks on strategic allocations, the costs could be significant as they are likely to serve as an attractor to high levels of footfall from further afield which could accelerate the maintenance requirements for the facility, and therefore, increase in the initial costs placed upon those limited number of residents to pay for.

#### **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1. There are three scales of development that attract the requirement to provide some form of open space; smaller developments (less than 50 dwellings), such as the 5 dwellings on the redevelopment of Chestnut Farm, Willoughby On The Wolds, medium sized (10 plus to circa 150 dwellings), such as the 74 dwellings approved at Abbey Lane, Aslockton, and large developments, (Strategic Allocations of between 550 and 4,000 dwellings).
- 4.2. The requirements for the smaller developments are less likely to require any significant community open space with the maintenance requirements (mowing, pruning trees etc.) more likely to be undertaken by the residents.
- 4.3. Medium sized developments are likely to hit the threshold whereby the developer is required to provide some form of communal open play provision, ideally on site, but possibly as a contribution to improve an existing facility off-site in close proximity to the development. This could be a mixture of formalised (equipped) play areas and informal (unequipped) areas of open space that have a requirement to be maintained and inspected. However, development of this scale is less likely to result in the provision of a community facility whereby the new open space would be a major attraction to draw in people from a significantly wider area to use the space. Nevertheless, the provision of open space on developments of this scale would (currently) result in the requirement for an open space scheme and an appropriate funding mechanism through a S106 agreement.
- 4.4. Due to their scale, the larger scale strategic developments in the Local Plan (strategic allocations being between 550 and 4,000 dwellings, but also some of the larger Local Plan Part 2 sites between 100 and 400 dwellings), will result in the level of provision that could attract users from further afield than just the occupants of the new development to use facilities such as playing fields, large equipped play areas, country parks etc. Again these would require the provision of open space and the requirement for an open space scheme and an appropriate funding mechanism through a S106 agreement.

- 4.5. The recently approved Strategic Housing Allocation at Bingham (Policy 21 of the Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy) includes, amongst other things, 1,050 new dwellings, a new primary school, retail opportunities and community hall, 15.5ha of employment land, two equipped play areas, incidental (unequipped) play areas, a trim trail and a community park on the edge of the development (and, indeed, on the edge of Bingham) centred around a reservoir with a country park feel. Similarly approved strategic allocations at Edwalton, Cotgrave and Clifton also have large community parks within or alongside them and Clifton will also provide a range of sports pitches within the development. Furthermore, the, as yet unapproved, development at Gamston would also include a range of communal open spaces, play areas (equipped and unequipped) and potentially a country park area. There is also the consideration of the 25 allocated residential developments within Local Plan Part 2, most of which will require an element of on-site open space and the requirement for an open space scheme and an appropriate funding mechanism through a S106 agreement.

## **5. Risks and Uncertainties**

- 5.1. As this report does not propose any detailed options for consideration there is little risk other than that under the current situation the Council could be required to take action in the case where a management company fails in its duties to maintain open space areas, but this would be dependent on the circumstances of any such failures.

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1. Financial Implications**

There are currently no financial implications associated with this report. If the Council chose to change its policy and adopt areas of open space this could have a significant impact on Council budgets.

### **6.2. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

### **6.3. Equalities Implications**

There are no equality implications associated with this report.

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

There are no Section 17 Crime and Disorder implications associated with this report

## 7. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Open space areas on new developments provide a real benefit to the quality of life for residents
Efficient Services	The management of Open Spaces by management companies ensures that no financial implications fall on the Borough Council
Sustainable Growth	The provision of open space on new housing developments ensures high quality growth
The Environment	Open spaces with new housing developments provide a positive impact on the Environment

## 8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group considers the contents of the report and presentation, and identifies any areas for further investigation

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Dave Mitchell Executive Manager - Communities Tel: 0115 9148267 dmitchell@rushcliffe.gov.uk
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	None

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**Growth and Development Scrutiny Group**

**Tuesday, 17 March 2020**

**Customer Services and Digital Transformation**

## **Report of the Executive Manager – Transformation**

### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. This report and appendices provide an overview of the Council's current customer service offer in Rushcliffe. It includes information on the channels available for residents to contact the Council, as well as the existing partnerships that support the offer.
- 1.2. This is intended to be an initial report that sets out the current offer for the Group to consider and to identify any future items for further scrutiny.

### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) Notes the information detailed in this report; and
- b) Considers future items for further scrutiny.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. The report covers support provided directly by the Council's Customer Service Team and that which is delivered in partnership with other agencies. It is important for Councillors to understand the current arrangements and resources when considering service delivery.
- 3.2. The report provides an update on the development of the Customer Service Centre and offer since 2010 when it was last scrutinised.

### **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1. The essential principles of customer service remain unchanged but with the development of new technology expectations have been raised. Rushcliffe has to ensure it is keeping up with these changing expectations and delivering an effective, efficient and high quality service to all.

4.2. Since 2010 there have been several key factors that have changed the way residents are able to contact the council:

- Increased digital methods (web/email/My Account/social media)
- Working with partner agencies
- Increased access to services at Contact Points around Rushcliffe (Bingham, Cotgrave and East Leake).

4.3. Customers can also still contact the Council on the phone. There is the ambition, wherever possible, to resolve all calls at the first point of contact and so the Team are highly trained to deal with many different enquiries that come through. This improves the service customers receive but means that calls can take longer to resolve, impacting on call answering times.

	Average enq Duration Sept 2017	Number Of Enquiries	Average enq Duration Sept 2019	Number Of Enquiries
Home Alarms	1 min 17 sec	80	12 mins 58 sec	108
Strategic Housing	6 mins 45 sec	470	11 mins 36 sec	356
Pest Control	2 mins 26 sec	370	11 mins 2 sec	218
Licensing	4 mins 40 sec	404	10 mins 29 sec	296

### Digital Transformation

4.4. The introduction of more electronic methods of accessing Council services has provided residents with more choice. The table below shows the change in the way that customers are choosing to contact the Council comparing data from 2013/14 with 2018/19.

Access channels	2013/14	2018/19
Telephones	117,531	98,647
Face to Face (inc Contact Points)	27,469	18,413
Emails to Customer Services	3,842	10,457
Web reports	3,101	5,126
<b>Total enquiries</b>	<b>151,943</b>	<b>132,643</b>

4.5. It shows a clear drop in contact via the more traditional methods of contact (telephone and face to face), however, these are both still the most popular ways to contact the Council. Contact via email has seen the largest increase of 6,615 (172%). Web reports have seen a smaller increase of 2,025 (65%) but with the introduction of MyAccount it is anticipated that this will increase further over the coming years. When customers register for the MyAccount portal it enables them to access all council services from one place.



- 4.6. The development of further electronic methods is continuous to ensure that Rushcliffe keeps pace with changing customer demands; however, there will always be a requirement for mediated support for residents unable or unwilling to use these channels.
- 4.7. Digital by Design Project (Customer Services)

SCANSTATION (awaiting implementation)	There are a number of instances when customers could benefit from self - scanning solutions located at the Customer Service Centre and contact points. Providing a scanning solution to scan documents for benefit claims directly onto their account for example. The scanning solution keeps documents secure and negates the need for customers to photocopy documents.	Efficient, simple and secure method for customers to self-serve.  Frees up advisor time for dealing with other customers
Conduct Focus Groups with residents on existing services	Setup focus groups with residents, and contact via telephone for feedback on Council services.	Identify what services customers want to access digitally and identify ways to improve our digital footprint.

- 4.8. This data does not take account of enquiries received from customers through engagement on social media, this is generally dealt with by the Communications Team and other relevant teams.

### Partners

- 4.9. **Nottinghamshire Police:** In 2011 the Council's Customer Service Centre relocated from the Civic Centre to West Bridgford Police Station. Rushcliffe and Police staff became multi skilled to enable them to deliver the services of both organisations. Over time, the number of face to face enquiries for the police service declined, as more people now use mobile phones to call the control room directly, and in the last year an upgrade to police technology reduced access to their systems to police employees only. This significantly reduced the number of enquiries the RBC team could resolve. In 2020, the police will be launching a new on-line service for all enquiries and, therefore, when the sale of the police station was announced it was also made clear a face-to-face service would not be required moving forwards. However, the Council's new Customer Service Centre at Fountain Court in the centre of West Bridgford continues to provide access to police services via 101, 999 and the police website.

- 4.10. **Libraries (Inspire):** The Cotgrave Hub opened in 2018 as a contact point providing Council Customer Services from within the library area of the building. This partnership provides more local access for residents to Council services and also extends the opening hours of the library, as Rushcliffe staff provide that service when the library staff are not there. This delivery model has been replicated in East Leake Library, from February 2020, with an increased presence from 4 hours to 37 hours per week.
- 4.11. **Metropolitan Housing Trust (MHT):** In 2009, the Council and MHT entered an arrangement whereby RBC advisors could access MHT IT systems and support customers with low level enquiries regarding their MHT tenancy. However, access to their IT systems is no longer available and while MHT continue to provide funds, work is ongoing to see how further support can be provided in particular with access to interview rooms at Fountain Court.
- 4.12. **Nottinghamshire County Council:** In 2013, the Council began to provide access to some Nottinghamshire County Council services via supported self-serve or provision of forms for completion. This delivery model is replicated across all Nottinghamshire authorities and is funded by NCC.

### Contact Points

- 4.13. RBC contact points are located within Bingham Health Centre, Cotgrave Library and East Leake Library offering residents local access to Council services. Since it opened in 2009, the Bingham contact point has provided a service 5-day a week. In Cotgrave it was previously half a day per week (based in the Police Station) but this increased to 5-days a week when the Multi Service Centre opened, which is where the members of staff are based. The same is true of East Leake where it was previously half a day per week in the Parish Council Offices but from February 2020 this has increased to 5-days per week.
- 4.14. The table below shows the increase in customers accessing the contact points comparing 2013/14 with 2018/19.

Year	Bingham	Cotgrave
2013/14	806	0
2018/19	1962	1176

- 4.15. As it shows there has been an increase of 1,156 (143%) enquiries at Bingham and 1176 at Cotgrave. Figures for East Leake have not been provided as the contact point only opened in the library for five days a week in February 2020 and so data is not comparable.
- 4.16. At contact points, residents can complete forms, hand in supporting documents, find information and make payments (not cash). The advisors work at the Centre and contact points on a rota basis, and therefore, the service delivered is consistent irrespective of where the resident chooses to access the service.

- 4.17. This increase is very positive and highlights the need for delivering the service in this way; however, it puts pressure on the service as well. Allocating two members of staff to each of these contact points takes advisors off the phones, although they do still answer telephone enquiries when they do not have face to face customers. This is, however, impacting on call waiting times and, therefore, it has prompted the Team to work with colleagues in Property Services to create screening at Cotgrave, so one advisor is answering calls while the other deals with customers coming in to the contact point.
- 4.18. The opening hours at all the customer service sites changed on 10 February 2020. The hours are now:

Monday	08:30 – 17:00
Tuesday	08:30 – 17:00
Wednesday	09:30 – 17:00
Thursday	08:30 – 17:00
Friday	08:30 – 16:30

Opening slightly later each Wednesday morning allows the team to receive training and attend team meetings which was previously unachievable. The earlier closing time each Friday provides time for staff to ensure all customer documentation is scanned to accounts before the close of business for the weekend and, where applicable, for staff from Contact Points to return to the West Bridgford Centre with any sensitive or confidential documents that have been handed in by customers during the day.

- 4.19. Outside of opening hours, telephone calls automatically divert to an out of hours provider who conduct a triage of the call and refer to on call officers where appropriate, or take details and pass to RBC customer service via email if non urgent.
- 4.20. This change was widely publicised and was in response to the changing demands of customers and the times at which customers are accessing services in this way. This new arrangement brings Rushcliffe more in line with other councils in Nottinghamshire. To date, no complaints have been received about this.

### **Performance**

- 4.21. Customer satisfaction remains consistently high at 98%. Where customers are dissatisfied, it is generally where they are unhappy with the answer provided rather than the service they received.
- 4.22. There are periods of high demand for the Team, some of which can be planned for as it is anticipated e.g. green waste scheme renewals, council tax billing period and elections. However, there can be an increase in demand that is unexpected e.g. extreme weather conditions, snap election. The Team's ability

to answer calls within target times can prove challenging during these peaks in demand. However, this has not yet impacted on customer satisfaction levels and very few complaints are received. Last year further technology was introduced to the telephony system whereby at busy times callers are now advised of their position in the queue.

- 4.23. To provide resilience some of the Council’s Business Support Unit team are trained to handle non-complex telephone enquiries, and, as such, are an additional resource at peak times.

**5. Risks and Uncertainties**

- 5.1. This is an initial report intended to inform Councillors and, therefore, there are no risks and uncertainties associated with this report.

**6. Implications**

**6.1. Financial Implications**

The report includes details of existing provision which is provided directly by the Council or in partnership. All activity is currently fully funded. There are no current financial implications associated with this report.

**6.2. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**6.3. Equalities Implications**

There are numerous ways customers can contact the Council and all are available to all residents in Rushcliffe and, therefore, there are no equalities implications of this report. Hearing loops are available at all sites, translation services are provided by way of a tablet and documents can be requested in braille and larger print.

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

There are no crime and disorder implication associated with this report.

**7. Link to Corporate Priorities**

Quality of Life	Broad access to Customer Services provides the best and easiest access for individual residents at a time and in a way that suits them
Efficient Services	Ensuring that residents have access to council service at times, and places, convenient to them with speedy resolution to enquiries.
Sustainable Growth	Not applicable

The Environment	Not applicable
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## 8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) Reviews the information provided by the Customer Service Team; and
- b) Consider future items for further scrutiny.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Leanne Ashmore Executive Manager - Transformation lashmore@rushcliffe.gov.uk
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	None.
<b>List of appendices:</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> – Digital by Design

## Appendix 1

### Digital by Design

Increase in online transactions	In 2015 there were 216,330 on line transactions with 365,668 in 2017. An increase of over 149,000 online transactions since, an overall increase of 69% in three years.
Understand Resident's Needs	Identify through analysing statistical data collection on customer contact (face to face, telephone and web) across all service areas. Use resident trends, feedback, and data to influence design of new services.
Accessibility for Everyone	All digital services design will be secure, ease of access and navigation, inclusive, legible and readable as possible. Accessibility is key to keeping residents engaged and actively using digital services.
Building Digital Services	To build Digital platforms such as 'My Account' portals, and 'Self-Serve' facilities for residents to gain quicker and easier access to council services, or their own personal information from one place.
Robotics and Artificial Intelligence	Increase efficiencies to residents with instant responses to online requests. Continue to automate existing back office processes, integration between back office systems will increase automated responses to complex requests, and explore the possibility of using Artificial Intelligence technology as this area develops.

	2013	2017
Enquiries via website	2,916	4,282
Emails to Customer Services	3,842	8,616

	2015	2017
Online Transactions	216,330	365,668



## Growth and Development Scrutiny

17 March 2020

### Work Programme

## Report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services

### 1. Summary

Members are asked to propose future topics to be considered by the Group, in line with the Council's priorities which are:

- Delivering economic growth to ensure a sustainable, prosperous and thriving local economy
- Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life
- Transforming the Council to enable the delivery of efficient high quality services.

### 2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Group agrees the work programme as set out in the table below.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

#### July 2020 (Date TBC)

- Abbey Road Developer Presentation
- Planning Enforcement Policy – Part One

#### October 2020 (Date TBC)

- Management of Open Spaces in New Developments – Part Two

#### January 2021(Date TBC)

- Town Centres Update

#### April 2021 (Date TBC)

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Pete Linfield Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services 0115 914 8349 <a href="mailto:plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk">plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers Available for Inspection:</b>	None.
<b>List of appendices (if any):</b>	None.