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Our reference:
Your reference:
Date: Monday, 1 February 2021

To all Members of the Cabinet

Dear Councillor

A Virtual Meeting of the Cabinet will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, 9 February 2021 at 7.00 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 12 January 2021 (Pages 1 - 4)
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.

KEY DECISIONS

6. Car Parking County Partnership (Pages 5 - 14)



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The report of the Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods is attached.

NON-KEY DECISIONS

7. 2021/22 Budget and Financial Strategy (Pages 15 - 122)

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

8. Crematorium Update (Pages 123 - 130)

The report of the Executive Manager – Transformation is attached.

9. Covid 19 Update Report (Pages 131 - 138)

The report of the Chief Executive is attached.

10. Electoral Review of Rushcliffe (Pages 139 - 186)

The report of the Chief Executive is attached.

11. Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy (Pages 187 - 244)

The report of the Executive Manager – Communities is attached.

Membership

Chairman: Councillor S J Robinson

Vice-Chairman: Councillor A Edyvean

Councillors: A Brennan, 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.

Recording at Meetings

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allows filming and recording by anyone attending a meeting. This is not within the Council's control.

Rushcliffe Borough Council is committed to being open and transparent in its decision making. As such, the Council will undertake audio recording of meetings which are open to the public, except where it is resolved that the public be excluded, as the information being discussed is confidential or otherwise exempt.



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET

TUESDAY, 12 JANUARY 2021

Held virtually at 7.00 pm and livestreamed on the
Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors B Gray and J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies

33 Declarations of Interest

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

34 Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 December 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 8 December 2020, were declared a true record and signed by the Chairman.

35 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

There were no questions.

36 Citizens' Questions

There were no questions.

37 Rushcliffe Enterprises Ltd

The Leader presented the report of the Chief Executive, outlining the current

governance structure for Council-owned companies, and suggested measures to simplify and streamline the structure, to ensure Council oversight of its companies.

The Leader gave a brief overview of the governance structure that had been in place since 2017, and stated that it was proposed to have a more simplified structure, to ensure best practice, particularly in light of the recommendations that have been made following the review of the management of Robin Hood Energy by Nottingham City Council. Reference was made to the review undertaken in February 2018, and the adoption of a revised structure, which had allowed additional companies to be set up under the holding company, Rushcliffe Enterprises Ltd. Following that review, a Limited Liability Company (LLP) with a Public Sector Partnerships Limited (PSP) had been established. The LLP had undertaken various feasibility studies into a number of projects, which were highlighted in the report. Cabinet noted that none of the projects had progressed beyond the feasibility stage as none had made a strong enough business case to be taken forward.

The Leader confirmed that going forward it was proposed to simplify the structure and that PSP had submitted a Notice of Dissolution to the Council. Cabinet noted both the existing company structure in place, together with the proposed new company structure, details of which were highlighted in the report. As part of the new structure, the Leader advised that a Streetwise Oversight Board would be established to receive operational updates from the Streetwise Board. In conjunction with this, to ensure a robust and transparent scrutiny process, the Governance Scrutiny Group would take a key monitoring role. The Leader concluded by stating that the new arrangements would provide appropriate governance and scrutiny arrangements, and allow the Council to add companies in the future, if deemed appropriate.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Edyvean referred to the work undertaken by PSP to ensure that the Council made appropriate use of its assets, to ensure value for money for residents. The importance of reviewing the Council's assets as part of that process was reiterated, and it was possible that some of the highlighted schemes would be revisited in the future. It was noted that Streetwise would be monitored by both the Oversight Board and the Governance Scrutiny Group.

Councillor Upton referred to the importance of regularly reviewing governance arrangements and stated that the timing of this review was appropriate.

The Leader advised that it was good practice for the Council to review its assets and it would continue to do so. Having a partner to look at those assets had been very helpful, with a number of projects tested against a sound business case, risks and opportunities. Projects including the Bingham Hub and the Abbey Road development were progressing and the Council would continue to provide facilities and services to local residents, whilst ensuring the best value for money.

It was RESOLVED that

- a) PSP Rushcliffe LLP be wound up and any outstanding accounts settled within existing budgets;

- b) Rushcliffe Enterprises Limited be made dormant and retained in name only to allow the Council to use the company in the future if it wishes;
- c) the revised company and governance structure set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report be adopted to provide proportionate oversight and governance of Streetwise Environmental Ltd and Streetwise Environmental Trading Ltd; and
- d) the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer be requested to make the necessary changes to existing company models and articles before the end of the municipal year.

38 **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.

39 **Parkwood Leisure Ltd Contract Variation**

The Portfolio Holder for Communities presented the report of the Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods providing an update on the options to amend the Council's contract with Parkwood Leisure Ltd.

It was RESOLVED that the Chief Executive be authorised to agree a variation and extension to the Parkwood Leisure Contract to include a new leisure facility in Bingham and amendments to the existing Edwalton Golf Courses contract to 2027.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

CHAIRMAN

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Cabinet

Tuesday, 9 February 2021

Car Parking County Partnership

Report of the Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Councillor Rob Inglis.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present recommendations for how Rushcliffe Borough Council manages its off-street car parks, and the on-street car parking provision on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council, while delivering a cost-effective, high quality service that plans for the future.
- 1.2 The report seeks approval for the Council to withdraw from the car parking district partnership ('the partnership'), from using the procured County services for enforcement officers and cash collection, and from managing Nottinghamshire County Council's on-street enforcement.
- 1.3 The report further seeks approval to employ enforcement officers, developing them into a team of Community Wardens managed by Broxtowe Borough Council's parking team, and to use Broxtowe Borough Council's cash collection service, whilst continuing to use Nottinghamshire County Council's processing unit for managing the Council's penalty notices under a separate agreement.
- 1.4 The recommendations propose a cost efficiency saving of £41,000 per annum whilst expanding the enforcement officer role to Community Wardens.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) Approves the withdrawal from the Car Parking District Partnership which includes withdrawal from using the procured County services for enforcement officers and cash collection, withdrawal from managing Nottinghamshire County Council's on-street enforcement and responsibility for deficit liability;
- b) Approves the employment of enforcement officers;
- c) Approves the use of Broxtowe Borough Council's cash collection service; and
- d) Delegates to the Executive Manager for Neighbourhoods to negotiate an agreement for the continued use of the processing unit of Nottinghamshire County Council for managing the Council's penalty notices.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 In order to fulfil its statutory obligations the Council must ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to operationally manage its car parking functions. However, such arrangements must also be efficient and cost effective and following a review the Council has identified that cost efficiencies (of up to 17%) can be achieved by withdrawing from the partnership and employing relevant staff directly who would also have an expanded community remit to maximise the Council's impact on place management. In addition, even greater cost efficiencies of up to 40% can be achieved by changing from the current partnership cash collection arrangements.
- 3.2 Withdrawal from the partnership will also help to protect the Council from any future financial liability for on-street parking deficit and remove the additional annual £20k from the street management fee.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Council has 27 off-street car parks, of which six are pay and display and 12 are enforced. Net surplus (income from pay and display against overall running costs) in 2019/20 was £455,437. Appendix 1 lists the Council's off-street car parks.
- 4.2 The Council has been part of the District Partnership Agreement since 2008, which includes six other Nottinghamshire authorities, covering both on and off-street car parking. The partnership includes provision for enforcement officers, cash collection and penalty notice processing and has been a positive initiative over the last 12 years. Since 2008, Broxtowe Borough Council's parking team has managed the day-to-day, operational parking services for Rushcliffe under a service level agreement.
- 4.3 In 2014, under the partnership agreement, Rushcliffe Borough Council became responsible for managing the County's on-street parking in the Borough. It was agreed that any surpluses should be re-invested in the service and, therefore, not passed to the Council; however, the Council would still be liable for any deficits. Deficits may arise when the income generated from enforcement is insufficient to cover the running costs. Until now, it was thought to be unlikely that the service would fall into a deficit position. That deficit risk has now changed because of pressure on the County Council's on-street surplus due to:
- a) Fixed income from maximum fines, which are set by the Government, has not increased since 2008 in Nottinghamshire, offset against.
 - b) Higher costs by the contracted provider for enforcement officers and services.
- 4.4 In addition, Nottinghamshire County Council has covered Broxtowe's costs for running Rushcliffe's on-street parking which is due to cease at the end of this financial year. As such, the cost of Broxtowe managing Rushcliffe's on-street parking, will be passed directly to Rushcliffe Borough Council at an additional charge of £20,000 per annum; this will double the current service management fee from £21,000 to £41,000 per annum. At present, the County Council has taken back management of on-street car parking due to the pandemic, but it is

not clear how long this will continue and as soon as they stop, the additional service cost will start. To offset this, Rushcliffe are discussing options with the County based on the Council's pending withdrawal from the partnership.

- 4.5 The County Council has asked councils in the partnership, which services they would like to continue with under the next round of their procurement. Feedback from other councils in the partnership includes:
- Two other council partners are giving on-street enforcement back to County.
 - One of these councils already employs its own enforcement officers and cash collection service at a significantly lower cost and is withdrawing from the partnership.
 - One other council has arranged a different relationship with County having them manage both their on- and off-street parking.
- 4.6 Given this overall picture, the Council has undertaken a review of the service in-line with the Council's governance practice for *best value for money*. In addition to the identified cost savings above, the Council would also be able to reduce the cost of enforcement officers by between £7 to £13k per annum by employing officers directly. A further saving of £11,158 per annum is achievable for cash collections by using Broxtowe Borough Council's contractor. The Council has also been included in Broxtowe's procurement exercise for cash collection in case this is required in the future.
- 4.7 In addition to these cost efficiencies, the Council could plan for developing the enforcement role into a wider Community Warden function: localised, on-the-ground, hi-vis guardians, acting as Council ambassadors. For example:
- 'Street wardens', helping to make people feel safer, responding to residents' queries, directing to local activities and services.
 - General car park maintenance work, e.g., cutting shrubs back to keep parking signs clear, litter picking, reporting street issues.
 - Reviewing the Police Community Safety accreditation scheme, that gives wardens additional powers to deal with issues that are important to the community.
 - Linking up with the WISE enviro crime pilot if this became permanent in the future.
- 4.8 The cost efficiencies generated through these recommendations, also means that the Council could develop the service further by utilising some of the savings, e.g., cover additional costs for expanding warden responsibilities and explore apprenticeship options.

- 4.9 Withdrawal from the partnership requires 24 months’ notice. However, as the procured service provision contract has been extended beyond its term due to Covid-19, the County Council and Rushcliffe have agreed that a natural breakpoint for Rushcliffe’s withdrawal would be at the changeover under County’s new procurement on or before June 2022.
- 4.10 A key point to note is that TUPE would apply to any change so the Council would seek to TUPE transfer a small staff contingency, i.e., 1.6 to 2.1 FTE, from NSL onto the Council’s payroll. The specific number of hours for TUPE within this range will be agreed once the formal process starts. The employment terms and conditions will protect people’s existing terms and conditions, in accordance with TUPE legislation. The development of the enforcement role into Community Wardens would be progressive and managed alongside the legal requirement for protection of terms and conditions under TUPE.
- 4.11 The Council proposes to retain use of County’s Central Processing Unit under a separate agreement with County, who have provisionally agreed to this arrangement. The Central Processing Unit processes Rushcliffe’s penalty notices. The service runs well and is cost effective.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

Summary of alternative options and reasons for rejection:

Alternatives	Reasons for Rejection
a) Status quo – do nothing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher enforcement and cash service costs. • Financial deficit payments for on-street enforcement and reduced surplus. • Extra service costs for managing County on-street parking. • More limited enforcement officer role under current procured services.
b) Withdraw from using the cash collection service only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher enforcement costs. • Financial deficit payments for on-street enforcement and reduced surplus. • Extra service costs for managing County on-street parking. • More limited Enforcement Officer role under current procured services.
c) Remain in the partnership, hand back management of County on-street only and financial liability, drawing officer time from the new service framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current partnership terms requires acceptance of on-street financial liability. • Higher enforcement and cash service costs for councils drawing off services who are outside the contracted framework.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

Appendix 2 details the advantages, risks and mitigating actions.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

7.1.1 An overall surplus of £455k was achieved across the Council's car parks in 2019/20 this included £32k surplus from car parking enforcement. Covid-19 has caused a dramatic reduction in income during 2020/21 and we are currently forecasting a £45k overall deficit from the service.

7.1.2 Based on the recommendations in this report, the estimated savings (compared to 2019/20 actuals) total £41k including:

- Enforcement Officers - £10k
- Cash Collection - £11k
- Future on-street management costs - £20k.

7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 There are TUPE implications arising out of the transfer of staff. The Council will consult with the affected workforce and protect terms and conditions of employment in compliance with this legislation.

7.2.2 The service agreement for use of the County Central Processing Unit and with Broxtowe Borough Council's Car Parking Team will be subject to legal review.

7.2.3 The inclusion of the Council as part of Broxtowe Borough Council's cash collection service procurement has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

7.3 Equalities Implications

7.3.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from the transfer of employees.

7.3.2 The consultation and transfer of employees would take place in accordance with equality legislation and considerations.

7.3.3 There will be no change to the current support, access and parking provision for people with different abilities using the car parks under the new employment provision.

7.4 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

The current service provision, which contributes to community safety will be kept and expanded on, including: monitoring car parks, reporting car parking defects, alerting and responding to health and safety issues, responding to residents' queries and checking that the lighting and equipment in the car park is working and in good order.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	It supports people having access to safe car parking to engage in social and community activities to enhance their quality of life.
Efficient Services	It will provide cost efficiency savings while growing the range and quality of services being provided.
Sustainable Growth	It supports local economies by providing safe, monitored car parks and engaging community officers, supporting people coming to local businesses.
The Environment	The Enforcement Officers' role will be developed to include supporting electric vehicle charging and zero emission advice and support for local residents. It is the intention that the Council vehicle used to support the enforcement role will be electric.

9. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) Approves the withdrawal from the Car Parking District Partnership which includes withdrawal from using the procured County services for enforcement officers and cash collection, withdrawal from managing Nottinghamshire County Council's on-street enforcement and responsibility for deficit liability;
- b) Approves the employment of enforcement officers;
- c) Approves the use of Broxtowe Borough Council's cash collection service; and
- d) Delegates to the Executive Manager for Neighbourhoods to negotiate an agreement for the continued use of the processing unit of Nottinghamshire County Council for managing the Council's penalty notices.

For more information contact:	Dave Banks Executive Manager Neighbourhoods Deputy Chief Executive 0115 914 8438 dbanks@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	Nil
List of appendices:	Appendix 1. Rushcliffe Off-Street Car Parks Appendix 2. Advantages, Risks and Mitigating Actions

Appendix 2. Advantages, Risks and Mitigating Actions


Advantages	Risks	Mitigations
Removes on-street deficit liability.	Different enforcement officers for on- and off-street parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The officers will be TUPEd over from NSL and as such, will have knowledge of both Rushcliffe's on- and off-street parking. • County on-street officers can continue to use the Bridgford Road portacabin which supports sharing of information across on- and off-street officers. • Broxtowe, who will be managing the Rushcliffe-employed enforcement officers, have a joint model in place with both County on-street officers and Broxtowe off-street officers, which works very well.
<p>£7k to £13k potential saving per annum on enforcement costs.</p> <p>£11,158 per annum saving on cash collection costs.</p>	<p>Risks associated with TUPE: compliance timeframes are tight, liabilities fully disclosed essential, staff resign during TUPE process, new staff cannot start on agreed date due to e.g., sickness, accident, transferred staff do not turn up on the transfer date and TUPE staff resign shortly after starting at Rushcliffe.</p> <p>Impact of the above and also standard in-house staff sickness, holidays, leaving/hiring could reduce staff capacity to monitor and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal have advised on the contractual agreements and will be involved in TUPE. • HR have been advised of TUPE and will support the process. • External expert support can also be provided. • Back-up process 1 in place: County re-tendering the services under a framework and if the Council needed more time for the transition, Rushcliffe could call off a year's enforcement provision. • Back-up process 2 in place: Broxtowe can source agency enforcement officers to cover TUPE difficulties, while Rushcliffe goes to direct recruitment (approximately 3 months). Agency costs are not higher than current provider costs. • Back-up process 3 being explored: Short-term call off from other direct award frameworks experienced at providing enforcement officers, e.g., NHS Framework. • Back-up process 4 to be explored: link in staff capacity and resiliency with the WISE pilot (if the pilot becomes permanent).

	enforce off-street parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broxtowe have substantial of experience in recruiting and training CEOs. • Initial discussions with NSL are planned for Quarter 1 2021 so general TUPE issues can be discussed well in advance.
Continue to use County processing unit under a separate agreement.	County increase the service costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate a service agreement which mitigates the risks. • Broxtowe have confirmed that they would be able to set up a processing unit and offer the service to Rushcliffe at a comparable fee within six months. This would provide a back-up option.
Remove on-street management fee; a saving of £20,000 per annum.	No risk.	No mitigating actions required.
Broxtowe Borough Councils cash collection service procurement has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.	Contractor staff capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contractor has demonstrated capacity during the procurement process for the additional Rushcliffe services. • The contractor will be given a minimum of three months advance notice allowing time for staff capacity adjustments. • Staff TUPEd actually completed the cash collections across Rushcliffe and can be used as a back-up.
Enforcement Officers with an extended role supporting the community at no additional cost.	No risk.	No mitigating actions required.
No additional management fee for Broxtowe's operational control of enforcement officers.	No risk.	No mitigating actions required.

Appendix 1. Rushcliffe Borough Council Off-Street Car Parks

	Car park	Location	Notes
1	Bridgford Rd	West Bridgford	Pay & Display
2	Gordon Road	West Bridgford	Pay & Display
3	Albert Road/Nursery	West Bridgford	Pay & Display
4	Rushcliffe Arena	West Bridgford	
5	Alford Road Playing Fields	West Bridgford	
6	Gresham Pavilion	West Bridgford	
7	West Park	West Bridgford	
8	Collington Common	West Bridgford	
9	Edwalton Avenue	West Bridgford	
10	Lutterell Hall	West Bridgford	New community provider from April 2021.
11	Gamston Community Centre	Gamston	
12	Holme Grove	Lady Bay	
13	The Hook	Lady Bay	
14	Edwalton Golf Course	Edwalton	
15	Rushcliffe Country Park	Ruddington	Pay & Display
16	Church Drive	Keyworth	
17	Bunny Lane	Keyworth	Free Voucher + Pay & Display
18	Newgate Street	Bingham	
19	Needham Street	Bingham	Free Voucher + Pay & Display
20	Market Place	Bingham	
21	Walker's Yard	Radcliffe on Trent	
22	Health Centre	Radcliffe on Trent	
23	Shopping Precinct	Cotgrave	Comprises 3 separate spaces for parking in and around the new Cotgrave town centre development.
24	Cotgrave Hub	Cotgrave	
25	Business Hub	Cotgrave	
26	Cotgrave Leisure Centre	Cotgrave	
27	Gotham Road	East Leake	Leased to East Leake Parish Council

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 <p>Rushcliffe Borough Council</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Tuesday, 9 February 2021</p> <p>2021/22 Budget and Financial Strategy</p>
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Report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor G S Moore

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report presents the detail of the 2021/22 budget, the five-year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) from 2021/22 to 2025/26, which includes the revenue budget, the proposed Capital Programme, the Transformation Strategy and the Capital and Investment Strategy (with associated prudential indicators).
- 1.2 It should be noted that this report, is based upon the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (the final settlement is due later in February 2021). Whilst no significant changes are expected in the final settlement, if anything is deemed significant it will be covered in the final report to Full Council.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet RECOMMENDS to Council that it:

- a) adopts the budget setting report and associated financial strategies 2021/22 to 2025/26 (attached **Annex**) including the Transformation Strategy and Efficiency Plan (**Appendix 3**) to deliver efficiencies over the five-year period;
- b) adopts the Capital Programme as set out in **Appendix 4**;
- c) adopts the Capital and Investment Strategy at **Appendix 5**;
- d) sets Rushcliffe's 2021/22 Council Tax for a Band D property at £147.36 (increase from 2020/21 of £4.62 or 3.24%);
- e) sets the Special Expenses for West Bridgford, Ruddington and Keyworth, **Appendix 1**, resulting in the following Band D Council Tax levels for the Special Expense Areas:
 - i) West Bridgford £49.65 (£48.51 in 2020/21);
 - ii) Keyworth £3.41 (£3.76 in 2020/21);
 - iii) Ruddington £4.00 (£4.12 in 2020/21);

- f) adopts the Pay Policy Statement at **Appendix 7**; and
- g) agrees the proposal that the Year 1 funding for the Development Corporation is approved prior to receiving formal Government approval and financial support for the scheme (capped at £0.17m along with the conditions at paragraph 4.2 (l)).

3. **Reasons for Recommendation**

To comply with the Local Government Finance Act (1972) and ensuring the budget enables corporate objectives to be achieved. The Council is required to set a balanced budget and that it has adequate funds and reserves to address its risks. The impact of Covid on Council budgets makes it even more important that the Council is prudent, ensures that it can support short-term deficits and has adequate reserves going forward.

4. **Supporting Information**

The Budget and Associated Strategies

4.1 The attached report and appendices detail the following:

- a. The anticipated changes in funding over the five-year period;
- b. The financial settlement for 2021/22 and the significant budget pressures the Council must address over the Medium Term including the impact of Covid;
- c. The budget assumptions that have been used in developing the 2021/22 budget and MTFS;
- d. The detailed budget proposals for 2021/22 including the Transformation Strategy (and associated programme) to deliver the anticipated efficiency and savings requirement;
- e. The recommended levels of Council Tax for Band D properties for the Council and its special expense areas of West Bridgford, Ruddington and Keyworth;
- f. The projected position with the Council's reserves over the medium term;
- g. Risks associated with the budget and the MTFS;
- h. The proposed Capital Programme;
- i. The proposed Capital and Investment Strategy; and
- j. The proposed Pay Policy Statement.

4.2 The salient points within the MTFS are as follows (MTFS report (**Annex**) references in parenthesis):

- a. It is proposed that Council Tax for 2021/22 will increase by £4.62 (less than 9p per week) to £147.36 (3.24%). This still means that Rushcliffe's

Council Tax remains the lowest in Nottinghamshire and amongst the lowest in the country (Section 3.4);

- b. Special expenses increasing slightly £733k (£712k 2020/21), this results in Band D charges for West Bridgford increasing by £1.14 (just over 2p per week) from 2020/21 (£49.65 from £48.51), Keyworth decreasing from £3.76 to £3.41 and Ruddington decreasing from £4.12 to £4.00 (Section 3.5);
- c. Business Rates (Section 3.3) are still subject to significant uncertainty given the potential longer term impact of Covid, the Government's deferral of the review of the Business Rates system to 2022/23 (delayed from 2021/22) and risk surrounding the de-commissioning of Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station in 2025, all making forecasting the likely levels of Business Rates difficult. The Council has prudently budgeted at Safety Net plus renewable energy receipts and is anticipating £2.820m in retained Business Rates in 2021/22 and a reduction thereafter to reflect the anticipated changes to the Business Rates system in 2022/23;
- d. The Council no longer receives Revenue Support grant (reduced to zero in 2019/20) and represents a reduction of £3.25m from 2013/14 (Section 3.6). Importantly the Council has mitigated the loss of income through its Transformation Strategy;
- e. The budget for 2021/22 and 2022/23 includes anticipated effects of Covid on the income receipts (estimated at 20% and 10% respectively) with Government grant support anticipated to be £0.8m. There is an anticipated budget deficit of approximately £1.5m over the next two years (funded by reserves) moving to a surplus position in 2023/24, when reserves will be replenished. There is minimal growth included in the budget proposals with a zero pay award in 2021/22 and 2022/23. Financing costs of anticipated borrowing for two large projects (Bingham Leisure Hub and the Crematorium) are reflected in the estimates;
- f. It is proposed not to increase car parking charges, this will assist in the economic recovery following the pandemic and ensures the continuing support of the Council to the retail sector (Section 3.8);
- g. Taking into account resource predictions, spending plans and savings already identified there is a Transformation Programme requirement of around £0.253m in 2021/22 rising to £1.691m by 2024/25. (Section 7);
- h. The Transformation Strategy continues to roll forward with an updated programme to ensure the savings required can be achieved (Appendix 3);
- i. Due to the Government's recent announcement regarding restrictions in accessing PWLB borrowing, the Council has revised its Asset Investment Plans, ceasing its Asset Investment Programme and returning the uncommitted balance of the Asset Investment Strategy. The Council's existing investments continue to play a crucial part in balancing the budget and ensuring the Council is largely self-sufficient. The Council has recently procured two new units at Edwalton Business

Park and along with existing investments will contribute £2.302m over the period of the MTFs accounting for 24.6% of fees and charges income. This is continually managed and proportionate given the risks and opportunities associated with such investments (Appendix 5, Table 13);

- j. The Council has a number of earmarked reserves (excluding NHB reserve), their balance rising over five years from £6.3m to £7.3m (Section 6). Retaining sufficient reserves is essential given the volatile financial environment we currently operate in (see risks highlighted below) along with the need to effectively deliver significant projects such as the Bingham Leisure Hub and the Crematorium;
- k. Two new reserves were created in 2020/21: Development Corporation Reserve (funded from both 2019/20 in year efficiencies and £0.2m from the Climate Change Action Reserve) and the Climate Change Action Reserve (from last year's budget). Despite the pressures caused by Covid in 2020/21, both reserves have been retained with respective values of £0.5m and £0.8m, focusing on key objectives of both economic growth and supporting the environment. Planned utilisation of the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve will be replenished in the final three years of the MTFs as the budget moves into a surplus position. Any in-year surpluses the Council may generate, for example as a result of a more favourable position on Business Rates, will be used to smooth the impact on the reserves sooner than planned;
- l. Regarding the Development Corporation Reserve, the Council agreed that payments were conditional on the Government confirming their support and financial commitment to the project. Given there is still work ongoing and funding is needed, we propose to contribute a maximum of £0.17m next year. This is subject to understanding the cash flow position; and the NCC and LCC contribute proportionately as per their current overall commitment (ie at least £0.5m each) and the other districts are in agreement with these principles and will equally commit £0.17m;
- m. Key risks to the MTFs are highlighted, including Covid, the Fair Funding Review, New Homes Bonus, the volatility caused by the aforementioned various Business Rates issues and the impact of climate change on revenue and capital costs (Section 8); and
- n. The Capital Programme demonstrates the Council's commitment to deliver more efficient services, improve its leisure facilities, and to facilitate both economic development and housing growth. Spend over the five years is estimated at £38.885m. It is planned to use all available Capital Receipts by 2022/23 to fund the programme and to minimise external borrowing which is planned at £7.5m over 2021/22 and 2022/23 (to fund the Bingham Leisure Hub and the Crematorium). Capital resources are then projected to increase over the five-year period as a result of the expected Capital Receipts in relation to sale of land at Cotgrave and the overage agreement in place for development at Sharpill. By 2025/26, such resources are estimated to be at £4.9m

(Section 9). The timing of receipts will inform any borrowing requirements.

- 4.3 The MTFs has been developed at a time of significant financial challenge both nationally and locally and Council services have been under immense pressure as a result of Covid. Despite these pressures officers have been through a rigorous process and have identified efficiency savings that mitigate the anticipated legacy issues arising from Covid whilst still maintaining core services. The Transformation Strategy (and associated programme includes two significant projects, the aforementioned Bingham Leisure Hub and Crematorium).
- 4.4 Whilst the Council faces financial constraints, exacerbated by Covid, both the revenue and capital budgets delicately balance the need for efficiency and economy with the desire for growth; and the aim of encouraging economic development in the Borough, with the Council aiming to meet its corporate priorities.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

There are other options in terms of increasing Council Tax by a lesser amount but this would put severe pressure on already stretched Council resources (see Section 11 of Annex B). Given the projected deficit position in 2021/22 and 2022/23 a reduction in Council Tax would result in increased demand on resources needed to balance the budget. For example comparing the difference from no increase to a £4.95 (£4.62 in 2021/22) increase in Council Tax, in 2025/26 the Council Tax income foregone is £1.170m and over the five-year period amounts to £3.389m.

6 Risk and Uncertainties

- 6.1 Section 8 of the Annex covers key risks that may impact upon the MTFs. There is a risk that the Council will not achieve Council Tax and Business Rates receipts as a result of Covid, in addition to risks surrounding the Fair Funding review, reform of the Business Rates system and consultation on the future of NHB all of which have been postponed for a further year. Upside risk is that Business Rates are not as significantly impacted and therefore the need for the use of the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve will diminish.
- 6.2 Expenditure pressures include the legacy of Covid and the continuing climate change and carbon reduction agenda. The Climate Change Action Reserve will assist in alleviating some of the pressure. All of these factors make longer term forecasting subject to even more uncertainty.

7 Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

These are detailed in the attached budget report (Annex). The Council is required to set a balanced budget for the 2021/22 financial year and the proposals present a balanced budget. In the opinion of the S151 Officer, a positive assurance is given that the budget is balanced, robust and affordable. The Capital Programme is achievable, realistic and resourced, with funds and

reserves including the General Fund, adequate to address the risks within the budget.

7.2 Legal Implications

The report complies with the Local Government Finance Act 1972.

7.3 Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications.

7.4 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no S17 implications.

8 Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Ensuring services that residents value are maintained and enhanced
Efficient Services	Ensuring efficient use of resources and maximising returns
Sustainable Growth	No direct impact
The Environment	Allocating resources to invest in projects that support the Council's environmental objectives.

9. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet RECOMMENDS to Council that it:

- a) adopts the budget setting report and associated financial strategies 2021/22 to 2025/26 (attached **Annex**) including the Transformation Strategy and Efficiency Statement (**Appendix 3**) to deliver efficiencies over the five-year period;
- b) adopts the Capital Programme as set out in **Appendix 4**;
- c) adopts the Capital and Investment Strategy at **Appendix 5**;
- d) sets Rushcliffe's 2021/22 Council Tax for a Band D property at £147.36 (increase from 2020/21 of £4.62 or 3.24%);
- e) sets the Special Expenses for West Bridgford, Ruddington and Keyworth, **Appendix 1**, resulting in the following Band D Council Tax levels for the Special Expense Areas:
 - i) West Bridgford £49.65 (£48.51 in 2020/21);
 - ii) Keyworth £3.41 (£3.76 in 2020/21);
 - iii) Ruddington £4.00 (£4.12 in 2020/21);
- f) adopts the Pay Policy Statement at **Appendix 7**; and

- g) agrees the proposal that the Year 1 funding for the Development Corporation is approved prior to receiving formal Government approval and financial support for the scheme (capped at £0.17m along with the conditions at paragraph 4.2 (l)).

For more information contact:	Peter Linfield Executive Manager - Finance and Corporate Services 0115 914 8439 email plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers Available for Inspection:	Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) website, 2021/22 Financial settlement papers
List of Annexes and Appendices (if any):	Annex to the Budget Report Appendix 1 Special Expenses Appendix 2 Revenue Budget Service Summary Appendix 3 Transformation Strategy and Efficiency Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26 Appendix 4 Capital Programme 2021/22 – 2025/26 (including appraisals) Appendix 5 Capital and Investment Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26 Appendix 6 Use of Earmarked Reserves 2021/22 Appendix 7 Pay Policy Statement 2021/22

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RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**BUDGET SETTING REPORT
AND ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL STRATEGIES
2021/22-2025/26**

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1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

2020/21 has had unprecedented challenges therefore the 2021/22 budget seeks firstly, to ensure that the Council remains financially resilient and able to deliver the services it must by law; secondly to initiate the process of redressing the imbalances created by the Covid-19 pandemic, by appropriately focussing on economic recovery and growth and prosperity within the Borough and supporting the most vulnerable in our community; thirdly to ensure that health and wellbeing remains a high priority; and finally to remain committed to carbon reduction and supporting the environment. Thus, ensuring the Council continues to deliver its Corporate Strategy objectives.

The Council welcomes additional financial support from central government in relation to Covid-19 (around £0.8m) in relation to loss of fees and charges income, additional expenditure costs and support for homelessness and rough sleeping. This has mitigated some of the anticipated pressures although in terms of longer term Covid-19 legacy, the sooner the socio-economic environment returns to something like normality then the full financial impact of Covid-19 will be evident.

2021/22 is the year in which we were anticipating the now delayed comprehensive spending review and Business Rates and Fair Funding reviews would come into play, however this is not the case. We have for 2021/22 assumed a 'cliff edge' for a reduction in business rates linked to the impact of Covid on businesses (currently at least partially insulated by business rates relief in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors). Whilst we have budgeted for Business Rates at a 'safety net' position at £2.8m it is entirely possible the 'central case' materialises with business rates received being £4.3m or more (Section 3.3). This would therefore negate the need for the use of the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve as currently projected. A more localised business rates risk concerns the Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station, due to close in 2025.

Fundamentally there remains much risk with the budget going forward in terms of both Covid, Business Rates and Fairer Funding (reviews possibly to take effect from 2022/23). Being prudent remains the most sensible course of action with reserves (excluding New Homes Bonus) to remain at £6m to £7m over the term of the MTFS at a period when the potential for adverse financial risk has never been greater. Any scope to increase reserves for both opportunities to deliver the Council's corporate priorities, and to mitigate against adverse future financial risk, will be taken.

Estimates for 2021/22 have made assumptions about both loss of income and any increase in expenditure as a result of Covid. The net deficit position is £1.5m over the next 2 years, this is a manageable risk and business rates uplift may well ensure there is no recourse to use reserves. The Council continues to invest significant capital within the Borough (£38.8m to 2025/26) with projects

such as the Bingham Leisure Hub and the crematorium demonstrating the Council's commitment to economic growth, meeting challenging housing targets, improving leisure facilities and the environment. Such projects are major components of the Council's Transformation Programme to ensure there are sufficient resources to deliver core services.

Whilst we understand our financial challenges the budget looks to the future. The Climate Change Action reserve focuses on improving the environment. The Development Corporation reserve demonstrates the Council's commitment to regenerating the Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station site with the creation of employment, improvement in transport connectivity and maximising carbon neutral ambitions.

In line with the Government's referendum principles, the budget for 2021/22 proposes an increase in Council Tax of 3.24% to £147.36 (the Council has the option of increasing Council Tax by up to £5, or 2%, whichever is the higher, with the recommended increase being £4.62). This will give an average band D Council Tax increase of less than 9p per week, ensuring Rushcliffe's Council Tax remains amongst the lowest in the country (and the lowest in Nottinghamshire). This enables the best possible services to continue to be delivered to Rushcliffe residents, that resources remain sufficient to meet both current and future needs and importantly projected funding levels and reserves are sufficient to protect the Council. This is essential given the risks and uncertainty that prevails in the current financial environment, with the full impact of Covid-19 yet to be determined and the impact on both businesses and the community.

This budget and its uncertainty remains challenging. The associated financial strategies continue the progress made in recent years to ensure that the Council's financial plans are robust, affordable and deliverable despite Covid-19 and the pressures it has created. This budget is designed to ensure we maintain high quality services for current and future generations, a budget that is both financially and environmentally sustainable.

1.2 *Executive Summary*

This report outlines the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) through to 2025/26 including the revenue and capital budgets, supported by a number of key associated financial policies alongside details of changes to fees and charges. Some of the key figures are as follows:

	2020/21	2021/22
RBC Precept	£6.279m	£6.522m
Council Tax Band D	£142.74	£147.36
Council Tax Increase	3.59%	3.24%
Retained Business Rates	£3.984m	£2.820m
New Homes Bonus	£2.311m	£1.633m
Reserves (at 31 March)	£14.510m	£15.175m
Capital Programme	£18.936m	£28.158m

Special Expenses	2020/21	2021/22	Increase/ (Decrease) £	Increase/ (Decrease) %
Total Special Expense Precept	£711,900	£732,900	21,000	2.95
West Bridgford	£48.51	£49.65	1.14	2.35
Keyworth	£3.76	£3.41	(0.35)	(9.31)
Ruddington	£4.12	£4.00	(0.12)	(2.91)

The Local Government Act 2003 introduced a requirement that the Chief Financial Officer reports on the robustness of the budget. The estimates have been prepared in a prudent manner, although it should be recognised that there are a number of elements outside of the Council's control. A number of risks have been identified in Section 8 of this report and these will be mitigated through the budget monitoring and risk management processes of the Council.

2. BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

2.1 Table 1 - Statistical assumptions which influence the five-year financial strategy

Assumption	Note	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Budgeted inflation	a	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Pay costs increase		2%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Employer's pension contribution rate	b	17.60%	17.60%	17.60%	17.60%	17.60%	17.60%
Return on cash investments	c	1.87%	0.10%	0.25%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%
Tax base increase	d	1.87%	0.62%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%

Notes to Assumptions

- a) Whilst inflation does impact on services, the Council's managers are expected to deliver services within cash limited budgets which require them to absorb the cost of inflation. As such, the net effect of inflation is reduced to zero within the estimates which is the equivalent of an estimated £105k saving in the 2021/22 budget. Adjustments are made for contract inflation and areas of higher risk such as utilities.
- b) The next triennial valuation of the pension fund is due in 2022 and will cover the period 2023/24 to 2025/26. For the budget, we have assumed the same employer's contribution rate of 17.6% and annual deficit payment of £918k. The Council pre-paid the deficit in both 2017/18 and 2020/21 and will consider this option again at the next valuation subject to an assessment of potential savings.
- c) Cash investment returns are based on projections consistent with the Council's Capital and Investment Strategy and much reduced due to expectations on low base rates of interest and other rates for investment likely to be available.
- d) Tax base increases have been reset for 2021/22 to reflect the delay in housing developments as a result of Covid. Later years reflect normal anticipated growth in housing within the Borough.

3. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

3.1 The proposals for Local Government funding (i.e. Fairer Funding and Business Rates) have now been further delayed by the impact of Covid. It is anticipated that the review will now take place in 2021/22 with implementation in 2022/23. It has not been confirmed by Government that the reforms will take place next year. Government however did confirm that consultation on the future of New Homes Bonus will take place in 2021, following an announcement that an additional year of funding will be included in 2021/22 only. The delays to the reforms will add further uncertainty over funding within the period of this MTFS with only one year of funding currently certain.

3.2 This section of the report outlines the resources available to the Council: Business Rates, Council Tax (RBC and Special Expenses), Revenue Support Grant, New Homes Bonus, Fees, Charges and Rents, and Other Income.

3.3 Business Rates

The legacy of Covid on Business Rates for 2021/22 has provided much uncertainty over the expected receipts. The Council would ordinarily make assumptions reflecting experience to date with regard to the award of additional reliefs, successful ratings appeals and government policy changes. The Government's proposals for 75% Business Rates retention and a new funding system have now been postponed for a second time due to Covid. The Council has taken a prudent approach and for 2021/22 has budgeted at safety net (the minimum that the Council would receive in Business Rates receipts) plus retained receipts from Renewable Energy properties. The forecasts for 2022/23 onwards allow for a full reset of Business Rates and the loss of receipts from Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station which is expected to cease production in 2025. The power station makes up a reasonable proportion of the tax base at 7.8% (£5.74m) with the Council's exposure around £3m.

In March 2020 the Government announced that the retail discount relief would be extended to include most customer facing businesses and childcare providers due to the impact of Covid. As has been in the past with previous changes, the Council has been fully compensated by S31 grant payment (specific grant from central government). However, the payments made out of the collection fund to the preceptors (including Rushcliffe) are set at 31st January in the preceding year and cannot be changed. This causes a timing difference as grant received to compensate for the additional reliefs have been received in the current year but the deficit created as a result of payments out of the collection fund will not materialise in the budget until 2021/22. The surplus cash from the S31 grants is therefore to be appropriated to the Organisation Stabilisation reserve and released in 2021/22 to mitigate the budgeted deficit, this amounts to £4.0m.

A further risk is that UK businesses could receive a rebate of £481m from appeals under a Material Change of Circumstances (MCC) due to Covid. As yet, no decisions have been taken on reductions to rateable values as a result of the pandemic. Losses incurred under the potential appeals may be covered by the Government's 75% reimbursement scheme (see below).

Government have announced that there will be a freeze on the Business Rates multiplier in 2021/22 (remaining at 49.9p) however CPI (normally used to set the multiplier) was 0.55% in September 2020. The Council will be compensated for the lost yield in relation to this freeze which will be paid in the form of S31 Grant. This is included in the 2021/22 Retained Business Rates budget of £2.8m.

It has also been announced that 75% of business rate losses will be reimbursed and this will be measured by comparing the NNDR1 with the NNDR3 outturn. Compensation will be paid based on the reduction in non-domestic rating income in 2020/21. At the time of budgeting, it is not anticipated that there will be a deficit on Business Rates (excluding the deficit caused by the additional reliefs referred to above as this has been compensated by S31 grant) and as such there is no reimbursement anticipated.

The Business Rates tax base is volatile given the impact of a small number of businesses on the tax base overall e.g. the power station as mentioned above and risks regarding outstanding appeals still remain. The changes that the Government is making (now delayed to 2022/23 at the earliest) regarding resetting the system means that the amount of Business Rates the Council can retain after 2022/23 is assumed to change significantly. The Organisation Stabilisation Reserve helps mitigate against risks including Business Rates uncertainty.

The impact in 2021/22 from the pooling of Business Rates within Nottinghamshire will be calculated once forecasts from the relevant authorities have been produced and assimilated into the pooling model. From 2022/23 onwards, if a new system of Business Rates is in place, a new pooling agreement is likely to be required to determine, for example, the relevant tier split between districts and Nottinghamshire County Council. We currently show no surplus from the Nottinghamshire Business Rates Pool as a prudent assumption.

The forecast position on Business Rates is shown below.

Table 2 Business Rates

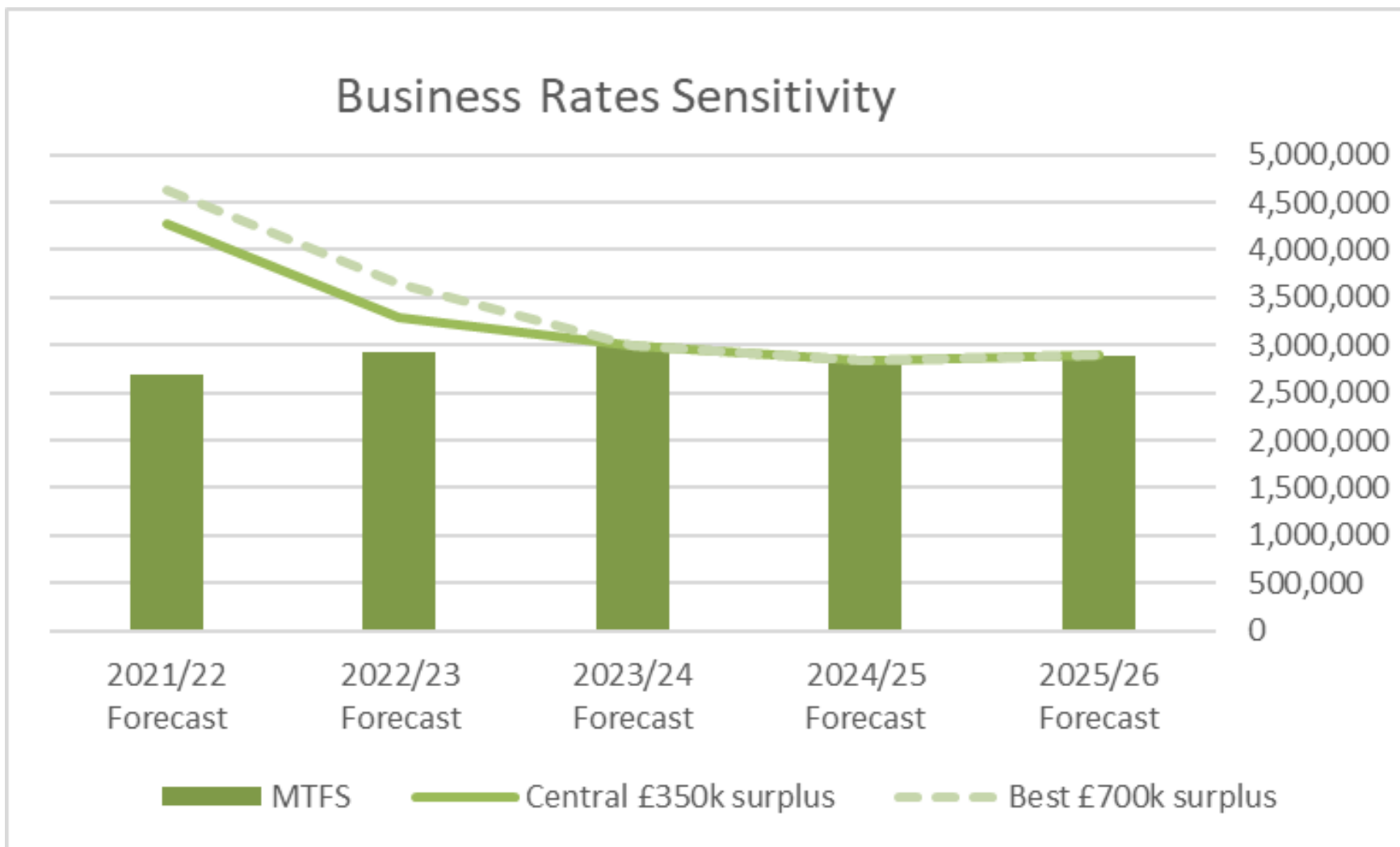
£'000	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Retained Business Rates	3,984	2,820	2,928	2,978	2,836	2,893
Increase/ (reduction)	217	(1,164)	108	50	(142)	57
Increase/ (reduction)	6%	(29%)	4%	2%	(5%)	2%
Forecast Business Rates (Surplus)/deficit and central pool surplus	(542)	4,000	0	0	0	0

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Sensitivity Analysis

There is uncertainty surrounding Business Rates from 2022/23 and the budget assumes the minimum the Council can expect to receive in 2021/22 (safety net plus Renewable Energy receipts) and that there will be a full reset removing Business Rates growth from 2022/23. However there is an upside risk that receipts will continue at similar levels to 2020/21 and the Council will continue to benefit from existing growth with the amount we can budget for ranging from £2.7m to £4.6m. From 2023/24 there is uncertainty surrounding reforms coupled with the closure of Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station and the Council has therefore assumed for all scenarios that a full reset is likely for the remainder of the MTFS. The graph below shows the potential variations in receipts over the MTFS with the uncertainty from 2023/24 to 2025/26 reflected in budgeted assumptions remaining equal for all scenarios.

It is possible that Government may extend the current retail, hospitality and leisure relief scheme for 2021/22 or that business rates retains more resilience, which would mean the Council is unlikely to go into safety net position. If this materialises the Council is unlikely to have recourse to use the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve to support the budget (for 2021/22 £0.8m)



3.4 Council Tax

The Council no longer receives any Revenue Support Grant and is anticipating other income streams such as New Homes Bonus to reduce to zero by 2023/24. The Government has assumed in future funding projections that Councils will take up the offer of increasing their Council Tax by the higher of 2% or £5 for a Council Tax Band D. The overriding Rushcliffe principle is that the Council aims to stay in the lower quartile for Council Tax. The Council has assumed an increase in Council Tax of £4.62 (3.24%) and thereafter £4.95 each year for the duration of this MTFS. Setting Council Tax at a 2% increase rather than £4.95 would reduce Council Tax income by £78,100 in 2021/22. A Council Tax freeze would result in a reduction of £204,500. The Council's referendum limit calculation also includes Special Expenses, the combination of Rushcliffe's Band D Council Tax and Special Expense equates to £5.

The 2021/22 tax base has been set at 44,259.6 (an increase of 0.62%). The projections for 2021/22 have been based upon the current Council Tax base, including both additional Local Council Tax Support claims resulting from Covid (as these reduce the overall tax base) and reduced growth in 2020/21 against original expectations. Anticipated growth during 2021/22 has been calculated and included in the projections and thereafter we have assumed a 2% increase per annum. This will be reviewed as the Council looks to deliver its housing growth targets.

The Government has announced that due to potentially significant deficits in collection funds across the Country as a result of Covid-related reduced receipts, Billing Authorities will be required (by legislation) to 'spread' any deficits occurring in 2020/21. This is a departure from the normal process of collecting deficits in the following year and is intended to help smooth the cash flow for the precepting bodies. Only the deficit occurring in the current financial year is required to be spread in this way with prior year surpluses or deficits adjusted in the year following as normal. The anticipated deficit for Council Tax (occurring in the year) is approximately £1.4m with the County Council taking the majority share. The Council's exposure is approximately £0.15m which will be spread over the three years 2021/22 to 2023/24 (£51k per annum). There is a small surplus relating to previous years which is adjusted in 2021/22 reducing the deficit to £45k.

As with Business Rates above, 75% of Council Tax losses in 2020/21 will also be compensated for by way of S31 grant. Council tax losses will be calculated by comparing the budgeted Council Tax requirement (CTR1) with the outturn position. This will be accrued into the reserves in 2020/21 to be released to offset the budgeted deficit of £51k in each of the following 3 years. For budgeting purposes this figure has been estimated at £70k and therefore £23k per annum (net impact £28k per annum).

In 2020/21 the Council is due a share of a £670m new grant and its purpose is to compensate authorities for the expected additional cost of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) schemes in 2021/22. The Council's allocation is £0.1m. The grant is un-ringfenced and is in recognition of the increased costs of providing local Council Tax support following the pandemic and wider support for reduced Council Tax income to the Council.

The movement in Council Tax, the tax base, precept and the Council Tax Collection Fund deficit are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Council Tax

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Council Tax Base (a)	43,987.70	44,259.60	45,144.79	46,047.69	46,968.64	47,908.01
Council Tax £:p (b)	£142.74	£147.36	£152.31	£157.26	£162.21	£167.16
£ Annual Increase	£4.95	£4.62	£4.95	£4.95	£4.95	£4.95
% increase	3.59%	3.24%	3.36%	3.25%	3.15%	3.05%
Gross Council Tax collected (a x b)	£6,278,801	£6,522,095	£6,876,003	£7,241,459	£7,618,783	£8,008,304
Increase in Precept	£329,236	£243,294	£353,909	£365,456	£377,324	£389,520
Council Tax(Surplus)/Deficit	£97,500	£45,000	£51,000	£51,000	0	0

3.5 Special Expenses

The Council sets a special expense to cover any expenditure it incurs in a part of the Borough which elsewhere is undertaken by a town or parish council. These costs are then levied on the taxpayers of that area. As with 2020/21, special expenses will be levied in West Bridgford, Ruddington and Keyworth.

Appendix 1, summarised in Table 4, details the Band D element of the precepts for the special expense areas. Special expense Band D tax amounts have decreased in Ruddington and Keyworth due to an increase in tax base whilst costs have remained broadly

the same. The Band D amount for Keyworth has decreased by £0.35 (-9.31%) and Ruddington £0.12 (-2.91%). Expenditure in West Bridgford has increased due to events and activities held in West Bridgford. This is partially offset by a reduction in costs associated with Lutterell Hall (now run by a management company), resulting in an overall net increase to West Bridgford of £22k and an increase in the Band D charge of £1.14 (2.35%).

The budget for the Special Expenses areas have been discussed at the West Bridgford and Special Expenses and Community Infrastructure Levy group.

Table 4 Special Expenses

	2020/21		2021/22		
	Cost	Band D	Cost	Band D	% change
	£	£	£	£	
West Bridgford	690,500	48.51	712,600	49.65	2.35
Keyworth	10,100	3.76	9,200	3.41	-9.31
Ruddington	11,300	4.12	11,100	4.00	-2.91
Total	711,900		732,900		

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3.6 Revenue Support Grant (RSG)

The Council no longer receives any RSG and this equates to £3.25m in lost income. The Council has mitigated the impact of this loss largely through its Transformation Strategy and Efficiency plan.

3.7 New Homes Bonus

The New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme was intended to give clear incentive to local authorities to encourage housing growth in their areas. The Government intends to cease the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme in 2023/24. It was announced during the settlement that due to Covid pressures there would be an additional one-off payment made to Local Authorities in 2021/22 due to delays in

consulting on the closure of the existing scheme. This will not form part of any remaining legacy payments. Government also confirmed that it would be consulting on the potential future replacement of the NHB scheme in 2021. The table below depicts both the reduced funding and cessation of the scheme by 2023/24.

Table 5 – New Homes Bonus

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000
New Homes Bonus Received in Year	(2,311)	(1,633)	(653)	0	0	0

3.8 Fees, Charges and Rental Income

The Council is dependent on direct payment for many of its services. The income, from various fees, charges and rents, is a key element in recovering the costs of providing services which, in turn, assists in keeping the Council Tax at its current low level. Covid has had a significant impact on the fees and charges receipts during 2020/21 and it is anticipated that the effects of the virus will continue into 2021/22 and 2022/23 as the rollout of the vaccines will take time to take effect therefore extending the period of social distancing. The budget assumes anticipated reductions in fees and charges of approximately 20% in 2021/22 and 10% in 2022/23. The Government has announced that Local Authorities will be reimbursed for 75% of lost Sales Fees and Charges income for the first quarter of 2021/22 only. The methodology of the reimbursement calculation has not yet been agreed and therefore we have currently assumed £0.17m based expected reductions in receipts for the first quarter of 2021/22. This is included in the other grant income line in table 8 below.

The Fees, Charges and Rental Income budget is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 – Fees, Charges and Rental Income

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000
Car Parks	(858)	(683)	(771)	(858)	(858)	(858)
Licences	(303)	(308)	(308)	(308)	(308)	(308)
Non Sporting Facility Hire	(188)	(138)	(140)	(142)	(142)	(142)
Other Fees & Charges	(605)	(529)	(810)	(894)	(954)	(1,016)
Planning Fees	(1,138)	(958)	(1,063)	(1,167)	(1,167)	(1,167)
Rents	(1,724)	(1,796)	(1,913)	(2,017)	(2,037)	(2,037)
Green waste income	(1,324)	(1,400)	(1,400)	(1,587)	(1,587)	(1,587)
Service Charges	(301)	(302)	(303)	(305)	(305)	(305)
Total	(6,441)	(6,114)	(6,708)	(7,278)	(7,358)	(7,420)

Income assumptions are determined by a number of factors including current performance, decisions already taken and known risks and opportunities.

The budget for Other Fees and Charges sees an increase from 2022/23 onwards due to the Crematorium which is expected to open in 2022. Garden Waste is increased on a cyclical basis every 3 years. The charge was last increased in 2020/21 and the next planned increase is due in 2023/24. This takes account of future inflation and potential pressures linked to the environmental agenda which is likely to further increase costs such as vehicle purchases. Future increases will need to be considered and agreed by Members.

There has been no increase assumed for car parking charges due to the expected position in the economy with only a gradual recovery expected and highly dependent on the success of the vaccine. Encouraging consumers back into the high streets will be a key part in the recovery of the economy.

Except where current or previous decisions will affect future income yields, the MTFS does not make any provision for future inflationary increases in fees and charges which is consistent with the treatment of expenditure. Anticipated income from commercial property investment forms part of the Council's Transformation Strategy and Efficiency Plan.

3.9 Other income

In addition to fees and charges the Council also receives a range of other forms of income, the majority of which relates to Housing Benefit Subsidy (£13.8m) which is used to meet the costs of the national housing benefit scheme. Other Income is shown in Table 7. Interest on investments reflect assumptions based on balances available to invest and expected interest rates (see Appendix 5). Other Income line shows an increase year on year which reflects the planned receipts from the Leisure Contract to include Bingham Hub which is scheduled to open in June 2022. The Homelessness funding was expected to cease in 2021/22 reflected in a reduction in the Other Government Grants line on the table below. It has recently been announced that there will be an additional grant for Homelessness paid in 2021/22 and this is shown on the Other Grant Income line on table 8. Costs recovered relate mostly to Council Tax Court Costs.

Table 7 – Other Income

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Costs recovered*	(188)	(156)	(172)	(188)	(188)	(188)
Council Tax/ Housing Benefit Admin Grants	(230)	(214)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
Interest on Investments	(377)	(462)	(504)	(557)	(552)	(546)
OLAs Contribution	(95)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)
Other Income	(368)	(337)	(530)	(732)	(800)	(850)
Recycling Credits	(160)	(180)	(180)	(180)	(180)	(180)
Other Government Grants	(245)	(120)	(120)	(120)	(120)	(120)
Sub Total	(1,663)	(1,555)	(1,792)	(2,063)	(2,126)	(2,170)
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(14,264)	(13,759)	(13,759)	(13,759)	(13,759)	(13,759)
Total Other Income	(15,927)	(15,314)	(15,551)	(15,822)	(15,885)	(15,929)

3.10. SummaryTable 8 – All sources of income

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000
Retained Business Rates	(3,984)	(2,820)	(2,928)	(2,978)	(2,836)	(2,893)
Other Grant Income*	(18)	(1,130)	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(2,311)	(1,633)	(653)	0	0	0
Council Tax (RBC)	(6,279)	(6,522)	(6,876)	(7,242)	(7,619)	(8,008)
Council Tax (Special Expenses)	(712)	(733)	(733)	(733)	(733)	(733)
Collection Fund (Surplus)/deficit	(445)	4,045	51	51	0	0
Fees, Charges and Rental Income	(6,441)	(6,114)	(6,708)	(7,278)	(7,358)	(7,420)
Other income	(15,927)	(15,314)	(15,551)	(15,822)	(15,885)	(15,929)
Transfers from Reserves**	0	(3,034)	(197)	(1,111)	(530)	(355)
Total Income	(36,117)	(33,255)	(33,595)	(35,113)	(34,961)	(35,338)

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*The table below summarises the grants allocated to the Council in 2021/22. Covid Support Tranche 5 is expected to be paid in April 2021 and follows four earlier tranches of grant paid during 2020/21. As referred to in section 3.8 above the Government will be reimbursing Local Government for lost sales, fees and charges for the first quarter of 2021/22 and it is anticipated that this will be based on losses against the 2020/21 budget. The Lower Tier Grant is a new grant with the purpose of supporting services such as homelessness, planning, recycling and refuse collection and leisure services and looks to partially rebalance the impact of the loss of New Homes Bonus (the other grants are Covid linked). Government have extended the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping funding for a further year and the Council's allocation is £163k. Section 4 details the expenditure that this grant will be used to fund. The Council will also be receiving £100k under the Local Council Tax Support funding to mitigate the impact of a reduced tax base.

Grant Awarded	Description
£397,000	Covid support (Tranche 5)
£170,000	Fees and Charges reimbursement (estimated)
£300,000	Lower Tier Grant
£163,000	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
£100,000	Local Council Tax Support
£1,130,000	Total

** The transfer from reserves in 2021/22 includes the mitigation of the budgeted deficit in Business Rates referred to in section 3.3 above. 2023/24 increases as there are no NHB receipts being transferred to reserves therefore increasing the net transfer from reserves. Note this relates mainly to the £1m per annum payment for the Arena and there is sufficient NHB in reserve to make future payments. The transfer from reserve decreases from 2024/25 as contributions are made from investment property income to the sinking fund reserve. The position on reserves is shown in Section 6.

4. 2021/22 SPENDING PLANS

4.1 The Council's spending plans for the next five years are shown in Table 9 and take into account the assumptions in Section 2. As Transformation Programme Savings/Growth projects are delivered (e.g. Bingham Hub and the Crematorium) the spending profile will change.

Table 9 – Spending Plans

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Employees	10,586	10,637	10,566	10,732	10,748	10,842
Premises	1,072	1,008	1,026	1,010	1,010	1,010
Transport	864	926	932	941	938	938
Supplies & Services	3,580	3,763	3,852	3,994	3,910	3,934
Transfer Payments	14,297	13,744	13,754	13,764	13,764	13,764
Third Party	2,636	2,811	2,874	2,937	3,003	3,070
Depreciation/Impairment	2,131	1,768	1,768	1,768	1,768	1,768
Capital Financing	76	45	111	132	129	127
Gross Service Expenditure	35,242	34,702	34,883	35,278	35,270	35,453
Reversal of Capital Charges	(2,131)	(1,768)	(1,768)	(1,768)	(1,768)	(1,768)
Net Contribution to Reserves	1,859	0	0	0	0	
Minimum Revenue Provision	1,000	1,074	1,274	1,274	1,000	1,250
Revenue Contribution to Capital	147					
Overall Expenditure	36,117	34,008	34,389	34,784	34,502	34,935

4.2 Explanations for some of the main variances above are:

- Employee costs reflect a zero-pay award in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and 1% thereafter. 2023/24 also reflects pay costs associated with the upcoming Borough elections (£76k);
- Supplies and services increase due to Streetwise costs of £35k, Tanker Services up by £34k due to increased disposal costs and contingency by £32.5k to cover potential increases to National Living Wage. The cost of Borough Elections included in 2023/24 is £116k and there is a contribution from reserves to mitigate the impact.
- Capital Financing costs increase reflecting the borrowing costs arising from the estimated £7.5m borrowing in relation to the capital programme (referred to in paragraph 9.4);
- There is no longer a net contribution to reserves due to the reduction in NHB receipts being transferred to reserves; and
- The revenue contribution to capital is now included within the net transfer from reserves shown in table 8 above.

4.3 The Council will receive £163k in 2021/22 in Homeless and Rough Sleeping funding. This grant will continue to fund two posts supporting housing options and homelessness prevention and provides a prevention fund to assist with rent deposits or advances to secure private rented accommodation for those at risk. It also includes provision for Street Outreach initiative to assist rough sleepers and grants to support homelessness provision, education and advice.

5 BUDGET REQUIREMENT

- 5.1 The budget requirement is formed by combining the resource prediction and spending plans. **Appendix 2** gives further detail on the Council's five-year Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Table 10 – Budget Requirement

	2020/21 Estimate £'000	2021/22 Estimate £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000
Total Income	(36,117)	(33,255)	(33,595)	(35,113)	(34,961)	(35,338)
Gross Expenditure	36,117	34,008	34,389	34,784	34,502	34,935
Net Budget Position (Surplus)/Deficit	0	753	794	(329)	(459)	(403)
Revised Transfer From Reserves	0	(3,787)	(991)	(782)	(71)	48

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- 5.2 The above shows a deficit position of £753k in 2021/22 and £794k in 2022/23 mostly relating to the anticipated impact of Covid on income streams and additional expenditure. It is anticipated that from 2023/24 the budget will move into a surplus position which will then be used to replenish the reserve, the total for the period being deficit £357k. Due to the current uncertainty surrounding Business Rates the budget does not include any surplus from the Nottinghamshire Pool. Any surplus arising will be transferred to the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve to further mitigate the risks going forward on Business Rates from reforms and the loss of the Power Station.
- 5.3 Section 7 covers the Transformation Programme - including the use of reserves, balancing the budget for 2021/22 and future financial pressures.

6. RESERVES

- 6.1 In order to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, a review has been undertaken of the Council's reserves, taking into account current and future risks. This has included an assessment of risk registers, pressures upon services, inflation and interest rates. In previous budgets, the Council has supported the controlled release of reserves to support service delivery. It is anticipated that at the end of 2020/21 £5.165m will be transferred to the Organisation Stabilisation reserve. Of this sum, £3.769m arises from the Business Rates S31 grants allocated in 2020/21 to compensate for additional reliefs given to the retail sector. This will be required to be released back to revenue in 2021/22 to meet the Collection Fund deficit arising from these additional reliefs. £673k arises as a result of additional grant funding received in the year. This will be used to support the budget and uncertainty of the impact of Covid on future years. The balance of £523k comprises £723k surplus from the Nottinghamshire Business Rates Pool less £200k which has been moved to the Development Corporation (DevCo) Reserve. It is expected around £0.17m of the DevCo Reserve will be utilised in 2021/22. Reserves will continue to be used to help manage the impact of Covid, reduced government funding, future changes to the Business Rates Retention scheme and ensuring ongoing service stability.
- 6.2 In 2020/21 the balance on the Organisation Stabilisation reserve (OSR) is expected to be £7.176m. This is a higher level than previously estimated because it contains the temporary transfer of S31 grants surplus (£4.0m needs to be released in 2021/22). Future projections indicate the reserve will have a balance of £2.748m by 2025/26 subject to the ongoing impact of Covid. Covid has clearly demonstrated the benefit of having this reserve to support Council services at a time of significant crisis. Going forward not only due to Covid but also the prevailing uncertainty in relation to both large Council projects and future funding means that this reserve is necessary.
- 6.3 Table 11 details the estimated balances on each of the Council's specific reserves over the 5 year MTFS. This also shows the General Fund Balance. Total Specific Reserves reduce from £22m to £14.5m (20/21 – 25/26). **Appendix 6** details the movement in reserves for 2021/22 which also includes capital commitments. This shows a reduction from £19.5m to 15.175m primarily reflecting the aforementioned release of £4.0m to meet S31 grant commitments in 2021/22. In addition, the sum of £0.753m is required to be released to support the revenue budget deficit. It is important that the level of reserves is regularly reviewed to manage future risks. The projections are based on current understanding regarding New Homes Bonus receipts. All of the reserves have specifically identified uses including some of which are held primarily for capital purposes namely the Council Assets and Service Delivery, Invest to Save, and Regeneration and Community Projects Reserve (to meet special expense capital commitments). The release of reserves will be constantly reviewed in order to balance funding requirements and the potential need to externally borrow to support the Capital Programme.

- 6.4 Whilst part of the annual allocations of New Homes Bonus (NHB) will be used to offset the MRP requirements arising from internal borrowing, the remaining NHB reserve may still be called upon in future years as major infrastructure projects come to bear and the potential for investment in economic development through arrangements such as the 'Growth Deal'. The projections reflect the allocation of at least £1m per annum from the NHB reserve to offset the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge to the revenue budget comprising of a statutory and a voluntary amount arising from internal borrowing (primarily for the Arena). As there is more spend on capital the requirement to fund MRP and utilise reserves will increase, or funding will be required from the revenue budget. Year-on-year additions to the NHB reserve increase are predicated on the assumptions made on NHB in Section 3.7.

The MTFs presented to Council last year supported the creation of the Climate Change Action Reserve and despite the pressures of Covid this reserve remains. The reserve will support projects that contribute to the Council's ambitions to protect and enhance the environment including reduction of its carbon footprint. A balance of £0.8m is available and will be allocated as projects get approved with £30k provisionally earmarked for a contribution to an electric car charging canopy at Gamston (note from the £1m reserve £0.2m has been transferred to the Development Corporation Reserve). As presented to Full Council in December 2020 the East Midlands Development Corporation will support partnership working to deliver transformational infrastructure and economic development projects, with the reserve to be utilised over the next 3 years. A further £0.2m is being transferred from the Nottinghamshire Business Rates Pool surplus for 2020/21 and combined with the existing £0.1m in the revenue budget this will support expenditure of up to £0.5m.

- 6.5 It should be noted that in the professional opinion of the Council's Section 151 Officer, the General Fund Reserve position of £2.6m is adequate given the financial and operational challenges (and opportunities) the Council faces.

Table 11 – Specific Reserves

	Balance 31.03.20 £'000	Balance 31.03.21 £'000	Balance 31.03.22 £'000	Balance 31.03.23 £'000	Balance 31.03.24 £'000	Balance 31.03.25 £'000	Balance 31.03.26 £'000
<i>Investment Reserves:</i>							
Regeneration and Community Projects	1,794	1,721	1,859	2,016	2,176	2,343	2,515
Sinking Fund - Investments	166	179	0	0	50	100	150
<i>Corporate Reserves:</i>							
Organisation Stabilisation	2,402	7,176	2,399	1,581	1,886	2,345	2,748
Climate Change Action	1,000	800	800	800	800	800	800
Development Corporation	100	400	400	400	400	400	400
Risk and Insurance	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Planning Appeals	350	350	350	350	350	350	350
Elections	50	100	150	200	50	100	150
<i>Operating Reserves:</i>							
Planning	209	209	131	45	45	45	45
Leisure Centre Maintenance	116	7	7	7	7	7	7
Total Excluding NHB Reserve	6,287	11,042	6,196	5,499	5,864	6,590	7,265
New Homes Bonus	7,186	8,420	8,979	8,385	7,138	5,891	4,644
Total Earmarked Reserves	13,473	19,462	15,175	13,884	13,002	12,481	11,909
<i>General Fund Balance</i>	2,604	2,604	2,604	2,604	2,604	2,604	2,604
TOTAL	16,077	22,066	17,779	16,488	15,606	15,085	14,513

7. THE TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY AND EFFICIENCY STRATEGY

7.1 For the past 6 years the Council has successfully implemented a Transformation Strategy and supporting Transformation Programme (this is also the Council's efficiency strategy). This drives change and efficiency activity and is a vehicle to deal with the scale of the financial challenges the Council faces. An updated Transformation Strategy and Programme are provided in **Appendix 3**, this also includes an Appendix on the Council's approach to commercialism. Alongside this work the Executive Management Team has undertaken a review of all Council budgets resulting in savings which have been fed into the MTFS. The Transformation Strategy focuses on the following themes:

- (a) Service efficiencies and management challenge as an on-going quality assurance process;
- (b) Areas of review arising from Member challenge; and
- (c) Longer term reviews with further work being required and particularly impacting upon the Council's asset base.

7.2 This Programme will form the basis of how the Council meets the financial challenge summarised at Table 12.

Table 12 – Savings targets

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gross Budget Deficit excluding Transformation Plan	3,932	5,191	5,946	5,345	5,008	5,140
Cumulative Savings in Transformation Plan	(3,932)	4,185	4,668	5,171	5,319	5,431
Gross Budget Deficit/(Surplus)	0	1,006	1,278	174	(311)	(291)
Additional Transformation Plan savings	(192)	(253)	(483)	(503)	(148)	(112)
Net budget Deficit/(Surplus)	0	753	795	(329)	(459)	(403)
Cumulative Transformation Target (Appendix 3)	(192)	(445)	(928)	(1,431)	(1,579)	(1,691)

- 7.3 In order to deliver a balanced budget for 2021/22 amidst increasing funding pressures from the legacy of Covid, the Council has looked to constrain Council spend and increase income. The Council continues to review how it delivers its services, to identify innovative ways of delivering its services more economically, efficiently and effectively, however the impact of Covid has made this a challenging year and as such this budget proposes a substantial use of reserves in 2021/22 and 2022/23. There are several significant asset investment projects, particularly the development of a Crematorium and the Bingham Leisure Hub which will deliver both socio-economic and financial benefits. These are also subject to their own project risks.
- 7.4 Moving forward, this momentum must continue, and the Council's key transformation projects need to be reviewed on an on-going annual basis. While the Council has identified a range of projects that can be used to deliver the anticipated savings required, this will still be a challenging exercise. As can be seen at Table 12 over the five-year period £1.691m of expected efficiencies have been identified. The current transformation projects which will be worked upon for delivery from 2021/22 are given at **Appendix 3**.
- 7.5 The Council has added to their asset portfolio with two brand new units at Edwalton Business Park. The income generated from these assets contribute approximately £0.25m per annum to the Transformation Programme.
- 7.6 Included in the programme for 2021/22 are staffing efficiencies arising from natural wastage (i.e. not replacing staff when they leave). In total this contributes £0.135m per annum to the transformation plan savings.

8. RISK AND SENSITIVITY

8.1 The following table shows the key risks and how we intend to treat them through our risk management practices. Further commentary on the higher-level risks is given below the table.

Table 13 - Key Risks

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Action
The Council is unable to balance its budget and the budget is not sustainable in the longer term as a result of Covid.	Low	High	Going concern report presented to Governance Group to confirm that the Council has sufficient reserves to withstand the short-term financial shock as a result of Covid.
Fluctuation in Business Rates linked to the impact of Covid, business appeals and in particular the power station and a decline in the retail sector	High	Medium	Growth plans and accurate monitoring, lobbying central government, potential alternative use of the power station site, increase in S31 grants to offset additional Business Rate reliefs. Playing an active role supporting the Development Corporation with a £0.5m reserve created and the potential for a Freeport. Growth Boards will also help support the business community. Budget at safety net position and we achieve our central case predictions this will reduce the need to utilise reserves.
Central Government policy changes e.g. Fairer Funding, changes to NHB and 75% Business Rates transfer to local government leading to reduced revenue. Environmental policy changes with regards to waste will create future financial pressures	High	Medium	Engagement in consultation in policy creation and communicating to senior management and members the financial impact of changes via the MTFS. Budget at safety net position.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Action
The Council does not achieve Council Tax income levels as projected in the MTFS and linked to Government referendum limits. Covid impacts upon levels of Council tax collected	Medium	High	Continue to monitor government policy and lobbying. Budget workshops for members so they are clearly informed regarding the impact of alternative decisions. Spread Council Tax losses over 3 years as per statutory instrument.
Inadequate capital resources	Medium	Medium	Proportionate spending and sale of surplus assets and ongoing review of assets, maximising pooled funding opportunities e.g. DFGs, external funding such as LEP funding, managing the impact of reducing NHB and reporting of new schemes that may come to fruition. The need to revisit the Council Tax strategy to meet the cost of capital, along with cost efficiencies and raising income. Borrowing when necessary.
Fee income volatility linked to Covid, for example number and size of planning applications, the impact on leisure provision.	High	Medium	Engagement in consultation in policy creation. Ensure future changes are built into the MTFS. Additional grant funding from Government for quarter 1 in 2021/22
Inflationary pressures, particularly pay and utility costs. Pay rises are linked to the outcome of national negotiations and whether they are adopted locally.	Medium	low	Budget reporting processes and use of budget efficiencies and reserves
Pensions triennial revaluation and the potential increase to pension contributions	High	Medium	To be aware of actuary's report and implications. Risks affected by local demographics and the impact on interest rates and share prices of international economic conditions. The Covid impact to be assessed at the next valuation. Also the ability to influence central government policy on the Local Government scheme. Budget impact reflected in the MTFS

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Action
Variable demand for services given the potential impact of Covid on housing and businesses in the Borough	Medium	Medium	A robust performance management framework
Failure to deliver the required Transformation Strategy and in particular projected savings/costs from larger projects such as the Crematorium and Bingham Leisure Hub.	Low	High	Effective programme and project management
The impact of wider economic conditions (particularly Covid and BREXIT) on interest rates, the property market, impacting on investments and any future borrowing	High	Medium	Advice from the Council's treasury advisors, and more investment diversification with a wider range of institutions and property investment diversification. Monitoring borrowing rates. Prudent assumptions in the MTFS.
The impact of changes to accounting standards upon leases	High	Low	Monitor the impact of IFRS16 on Council budgets and CFR based on the reclassification of Leases. Implementation deferred to 1 April 2022. Assess and monitor.
Environmental Agenda Impact on both revenue and capital budgets	High	Medium	Creation of Climate Change Action Reserve (£1m less £0.2m transferred to Development Corporation Reserve), ongoing review of significant projects and outcome of scrutiny review.

- 8.2 The Covid pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented impact on health, wellbeing and the economy both nationally and locally. This is highlighted in the risks above and the resultant impact on the Council's budget from anticipated reductions in income, impact on leisure costs and use of the Council's Organisation Stabilisation Reserve.
- 8.3 The changing environment of local authority finance means that the Council is facing increasing risks and uncertainty in respect of available resources. While predicting and controlling the level of external funding resources remains a challenge, wherever possible the Council uses its budget management processes, reserves and general balances to mitigate these risks. Such pressures will also be mitigated through changes in service delivery and the use of assets. For example, our commercial property acquisitions not only

deliver a rental income in excess of that available to the Council through treasury management investments, but also we aim for appreciating asset values and generating economic growth. The Council has increased the number of property investments by diversifying, in terms of geographical location and asset use. A combination of capital demands and risks surrounding the property market means the Council's direction has changed with a focus on projects in the Borough. Due to recent changes in PWLB loan criteria, the Council's capital programme does not include any investments that are purely for financial return.

8.4 The MTF5 presents a deficit position for 2021/22 and 2022/23 funded by the use of Organisation Stabilisation Reserve. The budget then moves into a surplus position when the reserves will be replenished. Reserves are necessary to protect the Council from risks in relation to uncertainty concerning government funding and the Business Rates system and delivering the Council's Transformation Programme. There is a current climate of an unprecedented level of funding uncertainty (notwithstanding those related to Covid). In this regard it should be noted that particular risks exist with regards to:

- Benefits from Business Rates repatriation to local government (i.e. 75% to local government) is unknown. For example, we do not know what the tier split is between the County and district councils and whether the Nottinghamshire Pool will continue.
- Business Rates - has a number of significant risks and is a highly volatile tax base. The planned de-commissioning of the power station in 2025, given it accounts for around a tenth of Business Rate income, potentially undermines any benefits the Council may gain in Business Rates from business growth. Furthermore, the Government remains committed to supporting the retail sector and in the future, this is likely to lead to changes to the whole Business Rates system
- Businesses were revalued in 2017 with a further revaluation now planned for 2022. There may also be further reliefs announced in 2021/22 for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors as the impact of Covid is expected to continue
- There is also upside Business Rates risk dependent on the resilience of local businesses and if business rates income achieves the central case then this will significantly reduce the need for the use of reserves
- New Homes Bonus - as identified at 3.7, the Government intends to cease the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme in 2023/24. There may be a replacement scheme which gives an opportunity for further funding. The Council will continue to lobby Government to ensure it is rewarded for growth and that there is funding in relation to the consequences of growth.

9. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 9.1 Officers submit schemes to be included in a draft Capital Programme, which also includes on-going provisions to support Disabled Facilities Grants, investment in Social Housing, and Partnership Grants. This draft programme is discussed by EMT along with supporting information and business cases where appropriate with the big projects and the overall financial impact reported to Councillors in Budget update sessions. The draft Capital Programme continues to be further refined and supported by detailed appraisals as set out in the Council's Financial Regulations. These detailed appraisals are included at **Appendix 4** along with the proposed five-year capital programme which is summarised below. This is an ambitious programme totalling £38.9m for 5 years (slippage of £18.4m has been approved from the 2020/21 programme and is included in this figure).

Table 14 – Five-year capital programme, funding and resource implications

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 – 2025/26

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	5 Year
	Current Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	TOTAL
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
EXPENDITURE SUMMARY							
Transformation	6,471	23,730	250	105	400	820	25,305
Neighbourhoods	2,281	2,828	1,988	1,918	1,868	993	9,595
Communities	2,087	1020	75	125	115	100	1,435
Finance and Corporate	5,239	580	480	480	530	480	2,550
Total	16,078	28,158	2,793	2,628	2,913	2,393	38,885
FUNDED BY							
Usable Capital Receipts	(7,829)	(15,199)	(1,880)	(1,915)	(1,850)	(1,160)	(22,004)
Government Grants	(726)	(613)	(613)	(613)	(613)	(613)	(3,065)
Use of Reserves	(452)	(500)	(300)	(100)	(450)	(620)	(1,970)
Grants and Contributions	(586)	(2,572)	0	0	0	0	(2,572)
Section 106 Monies	(1,258)	(2,818)	0	0	0	0	(2,818)
Internal Borrowing and Borrowing	(5,227)	(6,456)	0	0	0	0	(6,456)
Total	(16,078)	(28,158)	(2,793)	(2,628)	(2,913)	(2,393)	(38,885)
RESOURCES MOVEMENT							
Opening Balances:	5,834	2,155	2,125	4,228	5,098	5,930	
Projected Receipts:	7,172	21,672	4,896	3,498	3,745	1,574	
Use of Resources:	(10,851)	(21,702)	(2,793)	(2,628)	(2,913)	(2,393)	
Balance Carried Forward:	2,155	2,125	4,228	5,098	5,930	5,111	

9.2 The Council's five-year capital programme shows the Council's commitment to deliver more efficient services, improve its leisure facilities and enable economic development. Against a background of financial challenge as a result of Covid, the strength of the Council's financial position is such that it continues to support economic growth and recovery in the Borough. The Programme is approved for the five-year period and allows flexibility of investment to enhance service delivery, provide widened economic development to maximise business and employment opportunities and for investment to go between years as long as the value of the five-year programme is not exceeded for each scheme. The programme is reviewed by Full Council as part of the budget setting process. A major focus of the Capital Programme is to improve services, be transformative and generate revenue income streams in order to help balance the Council's MTFS. Significant projects in the Capital Programme include:

- a) A provision of £16m for the continued development of Bingham Hub for 2021/22 (this figure includes £11m approved brought forward from 2020/21). This will ensure there are new leisure facilities (including a Community Hall) to replace the existing Bingham Leisure Centre and new office units to expand business and employment opportunities. A contractor has been appointed and it is planned that the centre will open in 2022. The overall investment total is estimated to be no more than £20m.
- b) £6.5m to provide a new Crematorium in the Borough. Of this, £4.5m has been brought forward from 2020/21 plus £2m to meet revised expected costs. This gives a total provision for the scheme of £8.5m.
- c) £1.745m over the 5 years for investment in the upgrade of facilities at leisure centres. There are: planned refurbishments to changing villages; roof enhancements; and upgrades for plant and lighting. Schemes are considered in the light of the Leisure Strategy and are aimed at maintaining excellent standards of leisure provision.
- d) £0.29m in 2021/22 for development of facilities at Rushcliffe Country Park for an enhanced Visitor Centre.
- e) Information Systems Strategy (£0.33m plus a four-year rolling programme to give a total of £1.3m) will ensure that the Council keeps pace with new technologies and maintains digital integrity;
- f) On-going vehicle replacement programme (£3.61m over the next five years).
- g) Support for Registered Housing Providers £1m to continue to facilitate the provision of affordable homes across the Borough.
- h) Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) provision of £0.515m has been provided each year but there has been further funding announced and this is subject to change when the formal Better Care Funding (BCF) allocations are approved. Other schemes in the programme supported by BCF include discretionary DFGs, Assistive Technology (Home Alarms), and Warmer Homes on Prescription.
- i) Ongoing provisions of £0.15m per annum to provide market loan facilities for Streetwise Environmental Ltd to support their vehicle replacement programme.
- j) Smaller sums have been included to enhance our land and buildings and investment property portfolios.

- k) A Contingency sum of £0.1m has been included each year to give flexibility to the delivery of the programme and to cover unforeseen circumstances.
- l) Expected total borrowing, including 2020/21, totals £11.7m. It is anticipated that up to £7.5m of this may need to be externally borrowed rather than the utilisation of Council cash balances (internally borrowed). The timing and incidence of actual external borrowing will be affected by any slippage in the capital programme or unexpected capital funding (e.g. capital receipts) and this is reflected in the capital financing requirement shown at table 2 of the Capital and Investment Strategy (Appendix 5).

9.3 The Council has previously allocated £20m to the Asset Investment Strategy within its Capital Programme. Just over £16m of this has been utilised for investment opportunities, asset acquisitions, and development of office/industrial/retail units which will secure strong future income streams to support the revenue budget. The remaining balance of £3.8m is to be taken out of the programme.

9.4 The Council's capital resources are slowly being replenished as potential receipts from the Sharphill Overage Agreement are recognised. Sums have been received in the current year and are expected each year until 2024/25. It is predicted that capital resources will be in the region of £4.9m at the end of the five-year life of the Programme. This comprises: £2.5m Capital Receipts; £2.3m Earmarked Capital Reserves; and £0.1m minor capital contributions. It is likely that all of the Council's Usable Capital Receipts will be exhausted by the end of 2021/22 to support the Capital Programme but will slowly build back up from 2022/23 to 2024/25 as income from Sharphill is received. The balance dips again in 2025/26 to £2.5m.

9.5 Projected capital receipts over the course of the MTFS include:

- A further £11m from the Sharphill Overage Agreement (£8.1m already received);
- Over £0.988m in repaid loan principal from Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club and Streetwise;
- Disposal of the old Depot Site, approximately £4.8m; and
- Sale of land in Cotgrave: approximately £7m.

9.6 The capital resources position should be viewed in the context of funding the completed redevelopment of the Arena. This scheme was part funded by use of the Council's reserves and the remainder through internal borrowing. It is planned to repay this 'internal debt' from the future income stream provided by New Homes Bonus, subject to the risks highlighted in Sections 3.7 and 8.4.

9.7 The projected borrowing of £7.5m is likely to be achieved through loans from the Public Works Loan Board benefitting from a certainty rate of interest. Consideration will also be given to borrowing over shorter terms from other Local Authorities to mitigate any

long-term indebtedness and give flexibility to required financing. In addition to external borrowing, the Council anticipates up to £3m internal borrowing for the Crematorium. Formal funding decisions are taken at the end of each financial year when the level of capital expenditure is assessed in line with the capital resources and usable reserves available.

- 9.8 The following significant capital grants and contributions will be used to support the funding of the proposed capital programme:
- £0.75m of Growth Development Fund grant from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and £1.65m Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) funding to support the development of new offices in Bingham. £0.174m has also been approved from the LEP to support the Community Hall element of Bingham Leisure Hub;
 - The potential to release up to £2.8m from developer contributions to support works associated with the Bingham Leisure Hub and the activation of the Leisure Strategy; and
 - An estimated £0.613m per annum from the Better Care Fund to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants, Discretionary Top-up Grants, and Assistive Technology (Home Alarms);

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 Attached at **Appendix 5** is the Capital and Investment Strategy (CIS) which integrates capital investment decisions with cash flow information and revenue budgets. The key assumptions in the CIS are summarised in the following table:

Table 15 – Treasury Assumptions

	2021/22 Estimate	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
Anticipated Interest Rate (%)	0.1	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5
Expected interest from investments (£)	(373,000)	(422,500)	(484,900)	(488,400)	(486,700)
Other interest (£)	(89,000)	(81,000)	(72,000)	(64,000)	(59,000)
Total Interest (£)	(462,000)	(503,500)	(556,900)	(552,400)	(545,700)

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- 10.2 The CIPFA Treasury Code has been updated to include assets held for financial returns. The CIS covers the Council's approach and risk management with regards to such assets. It documents the spreading of risk across the size of individual investments and diversification in totality across different sectors. The Council's Asset Investment Strategy (which governs the Council's approach to Asset Investment) is also appended to the CIS and is reviewed by the Governance Scrutiny Group.
- 10.3 Government recently undertook a consultation into Local Authority borrowing as a result of a small number of Local Authorities borrowing disproportionate amounts to fund commercial investments. Following the outcome of this it has been announced that borrowing from PWLB will not be permitted if there is any investment included in the Capital Programme that is primarily for commercial gain. The Council does not currently have any investments in the Capital Programme that meet this definition and therefore should not be restricted in future borrowing from the PWLB.

11. OPTIONS

- 11.1 As part of its consideration of the budget, the Council is encouraged to consider the strategic aims contained within the Corporate Strategy and, in this context, to what extent they wish to maintain existing services, how services will be prioritised, and how future budget shortfalls will be addressed.
- 11.2 Instead of increasing its Council Tax by the higher of 2% or up to £5 the Council could freeze its Council Tax. Table 16 provides details of the impact on budgets of the recommended option of a £4.62 increase in 2021/22 and thereafter a £4.95 increase against the 2 scenarios of a tax freeze or a 2% increase. If the Council chose to freeze its Council Tax, the income foregone in 2025/26 is £1.17m and over the 5-year period £3.389m.

Table 16: Alternate Council Tax Levels

£'000	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Band D £147.36 in 2021/22						
Increase at £4.62 in 2021/22 and £4.95 each year thereafter – Recommended Option						
Total Council Tax Income	(6,279)	(6,522)	(6,876)	(7,241)	(7,619)	(8,008)

Total for Freeze (Band D £142.74)		(6,318)	(6,444)	(6,573)	(6,704)	(6,838)
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Total for 2% each year (Band D £145.59)		(6,444)	(6,704)	(6,975)	(7,257)	(7,550)
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Difference (£'000)	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Freeze vs £4.95	(204)	(432)	(669)	(914)	(1,170)	(3,389)
2% vs £4.95	(78)	(172)	(266)	(362)	(458)	(1,336)

- 11.3 Other than the above options for Council Tax increases there are no alternate proposals concerning the Budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy or Transformation Strategy.

Funding Analysis for Special Expense Areas

	2020/21	2021/22	% Change
	(£)	(£)	
West Bridgford			
Parks and Playing Fields	404,400	398,900	
West Bridgford Town Centre	55,900	91,400	
Community Halls	68,700	56,900	
Contingency	14,700	14,700	
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	50,000	50,000	
Annuity Charges	76,800	80,700	
Sinking Fund	20,000	20,000	
Total	690,500	712,600	
Tax Base	14,233.5	14,353.8	
Special Expense Tax	48.51	49.65	2.35%
Keyworth			
Cemetery & Annuity Charges	8,800	7,900	
Annuity	1,300	1,300	
Total	10,100	9,200	
Tax Base	2,689.7	2,700.60	
Special Expense Tax	3.76	3.41	-9.31%
Ruddington			
Cemetery & Annuity Charges	11,300	11,100	
Total	11,300	11,100	
Tax Base	2,743.9	2,777.5	
Special Expense Tax	4.12	4.00	-2.91%
TOTAL SPECIAL EXPENSES	711,900	732,900	

REVENUE BUDGET SERVICE SUMMARY**Appendix 2**

	2020/21 £	2021/22 ESTIMATE £	2022/23 ESTIMATE £	2023/24 ESTIMATE £	2024/25 ESTIMATE £	2025/26 ESTIMATE £
Communities	2,907,200	3,458,900	3,387,900	3,246,400	3,264,700	3,270,600
Finance and Corporate Services	3,442,800	3,244,200	3,305,900	3,527,200	3,392,000	3,459,500
Neighbourhoods	6,520,700	6,749,500	6,195,000	5,746,600	5,714,400	5,699,900
Transformation	2,000	(179,800)	(265,300)	(343,000)	(344,600)	(326,100)
Net Service Expenditure	12,872,700	13,272,800	12,623,500	12,177,200	12,026,500	12,103,900
Capital Accounting Adjustments	(2,130,600)	(1,767,600)	(1,767,600)	(1,767,600)	(1,767,600)	(1,767,600)
Minimum Revenue Provision	1,000,000	1,074,000	1,274,000	1,274,000	1,000,000	1,250,000
Revenue Contribution to Capital	146,800	0	0	0	0	
Transfer to/(from) Reserves	1,859,200	(3,034,000)	(197,000)	(1,111,000)	(530,000)	(355,000)
Total Net Service Expenditure	13,748,100	9,545,200	11,932,900	10,572,600	10,728,900	11,231,300
Funding						
Other Grant Income	(17,500)	(1,129,700)	0	0	0	0
Localised Business Rates, includes SBR	(3,984,300)	(2,819,600)	(2,927,500)	(2,978,000)	(2,835,900)	(2,892,600)
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	(444,500)	4,045,000	51,000	51,000	0	0
Council Tax Income						
- Rushcliffe	(6,278,800)	(6,522,100)	(6,876,000)	(7,241,500)	(7,618,800)	(8,008,300)
- Special Expenses Areas	(711,900)	(732,900)	(732,900)	(732,900)	(732,900)	(732,900)
New Homes Bonus	(2,311,100)	(1,632,900)	(653,100)	0	0	0
Total Funding	(13,748,100)	(8,792,200)	(11,138,500)	(10,901,400)	(11,187,600)	(11,633,800)
Net Budget (Surplus)/Deficit	0	753,000	794,400	(328,800)	(458,700)	(402,500)

Rushcliffe Borough CouncilTransformation Strategy and Efficiency Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26**Introduction**

The Council has consistently embraced a Transformation agenda and Efficiency Plan. In 2010, the Council adopted an original 4 Year Plan which set out a measured approach to meeting the emerging financial challenges. The plan was written to identify cost efficiencies, increase income opportunities and develop transformational alternatives for the future delivery of services. The adopted approach aimed to reduce overall expenditure by £2.8m over the original life of the Plan. This approach was reinforced in 2012 with the publication of our Corporate Strategy subtitled 'Proactively Preparing for the Future'.

The Transformation Programme since its inception and going forward aims to support the delivery of over £5.4m in efficiencies. In making our savings, services to residents in some cases have been changed from universally free services towards chargeable choice-based services. Other services have been streamlined, to be even more efficient and leaner. Costs have been reduced through rationalisation of assets and staff, with the sharing of both posts and key services. The Council also absorbs inflation increases across many areas except where there is contractual inflation or areas of higher risk. For 2021/22 this is estimated at £105k. Concurrently, we have made it easier for customers to transact their business with us at a time and in a way that suits them. We have done all of this without significantly impacting on service quality or resident satisfaction. Our latest resident polling data shows us that 83% of residents are satisfied with Rushcliffe as a place to live and 63% of residents are satisfied with the way the Council runs its services. (2018).

This revised Transformation Strategy sets out the Council's approach to making further savings between now and 2025/26. It also explains our approach to identifying and working with partners, recognising and maximising opportunities, and leading the way in delivering high quality services that match the needs of residents. It is clear that as the organisation becomes leaner, it will become increasingly challenging to find further savings. Achieving the increased targets requires a bolder and more strategically focussed way of thinking.

Addressing the funding gap

Whilst the Council has achieved significant savings, further savings are required to address the estimated funding gap particularly in the wake of Covid. It has been a challenging year and as such the balanced budget proposed relies substantially on the utilisation of reserves. Going forward identifying potential savings will be both more important and challenging. This revised Transformation Programme will form the basis of how the Council meets the financial challenge summarised in the table below.

Savings targets

	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000
Gross Budget Deficit excluding Transformation Plan	5,191	5,946	5,345	5,008	5,140
Cumulative Savings in Transformation Plan	4,185	4,668	5,171	5,319	5,431
Gross Budget Deficit/(Surplus)	1,006	1,278	174	(311)	(291)
Additional Transformation Plan savings	(253)	(483)	(503)	(148)	(112)
Net budget Deficit/(Surplus)	753	795	(329)	(459)	(403)

In order to deliver a balanced budget for 2021/22 the Council has looked to constrain Council spend and increase income. The Council have also procured two brand new business units at Edwalton Business Park which will generate revenue in the form of rental receipts. The Council continues to review how it delivers its services and meet the funding gap. Other arrangements exist with neighbouring authorities such as the Building Control partnership with South Kesteven and Newark & Sherwood, and creating companies, such as Streetwise and looking to expand its company base through Rushcliffe Enterprises Ltd. The Council continues to identify innovative ways of delivering its services more economically, efficiently and effectively, including collaboration where a business case supports such an initiative.

Moving forward, this momentum must continue, and the Council's key transformation projects need to be reviewed on an on-going annual basis. While the Council has identified a range of projects that can be used to deliver the anticipated savings required, this remains a challenging exercise. The current transformation projects which will be worked upon for delivery from 2021/22 are given at [Appendix B](#). Some of the more significant projects include:

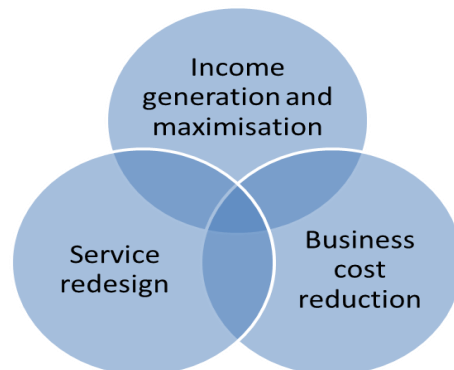
- Income streams from investments made through the Asset Investment Strategy (e.g. Edwalton Business Park units as mentioned above);
- The development of a crematorium;

- The continued activation of the Leisure Strategy focusing on the options for leisure provision in Bingham and surrounding area;
- Commercialisation: maximising asset usage, sponsorship and Leisure Community Interest Company; and
- Cyclical reviews of all service areas including staff savings from natural wastage

It should be noted there is guidance on the capitalisation of transformation costs where an income stream is generated. It relates to set-up and implementation costs not on-going savings. These should be reported through this document. This Strategy can be revised at any time by Full Council and as part of our Treasury Management Strategy reporting we must show the impact on our prudential indicators.

Rushcliffe's core operating principles

Rushcliffe has three core principles which underpin its approach to transformation – income generation and maximisation, business cost reduction and service redesign. Transformation has been achieved to date by focusing on a 'one' Council approach and great teamwork between Members and officers to limit the impact upon residents. However, we recognise to be successful in bridging the remaining funding gap it will be necessary to consider and implement large scale transformational change which can generate a large fiscal impact.



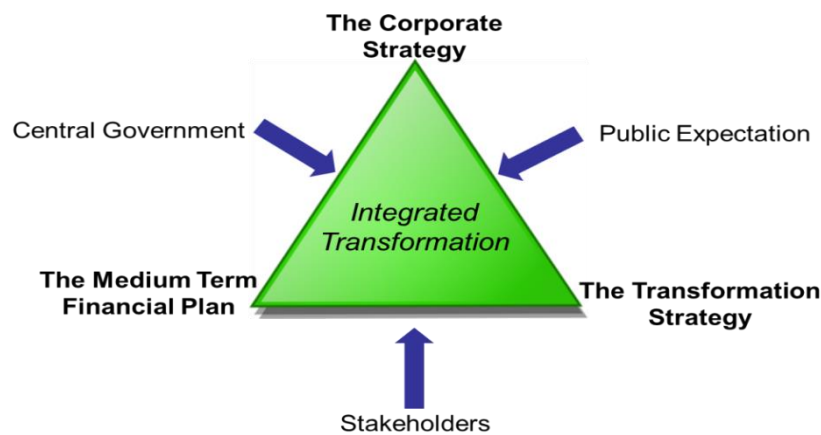
The Transformation Strategy is an evolving document and although it essentially covers the next five years it should not be bound by time or scope. To this end and within the emerging complex environment, three partnership models have been identified to provide a framework to generate further efficiencies. These are covered in more detail in [Appendix A](#).

An Integrated Approach to Transformation

This Strategy formalises the Council's integrated approach to transformation. It highlights the work that has been, and continues to be, done in the last seven years to deliver over £5.4m in efficiencies and formalises the Council's principles of

partnership working (detailed at [Appendix A](#)). At a strategic level it highlights the important relationship between:

- The Council's Corporate Strategy – which provides the overall direction of the Council, its core values and its four key priorities,
- The Medium-Term Financial Plan – a defined plan of how the authority will work towards a balanced budget and maintain viability,
- The Transformation Strategy – a document providing direction in respect of the strategically focussed streams of work to meet the financial targets whilst fulfilling the Council's corporate priorities. As the Transformation Strategy evolves Commercialism is emerging as cross cutting strategy, detailed in [Appendix C](#), to support the sustained delivery of the financial targets.



Rushcliffe's Integrated Approach to Transformation

The diagram above also shows how this trio of documents can be influenced by external factors such as central government, public expectation and other stakeholders.

The Transformation Strategy

This document details the different areas of work officers and Members will focus upon to meet the stretching financial targets set whilst continuing to fulfil our corporate priorities. The diagram below highlights the different work streams and shows how they fit together over the next five years. Underpinning the work streams is our approach to Commercialism as documented at [Appendix C](#).



Management Responsibility with Member Challenge

Each year, officers undertake an internal programme of investigations looking specifically at improving efficiency through different ways of working. We also challenge our budgets every year to drive out further savings whilst minimising the impact of front-line services. We have a strong leadership focused on corporate priorities using regular performance clinics to manage performance and budgets. We also ensure that every large-scale project (where there is deemed to be a significant impact on residents, staff or budgets) has its own project board and governance structure. Activities are challenged through Leader and Portfolio Holder briefings and constituted and established processes such as Member Groups. Reports on policy changes are passed through the Cabinet, and our Corporate Overview Group and other scrutiny groups regularly scrutinise review findings. Additional Member Groups are created by Cabinet where required. For example, the Bingham Member working group which allows for Member involvement in key decisions regarding the development of Bingham Hub.

Service Efficiencies

The culture at Rushcliffe has been to ensure different services are reviewed regularly to make sure they are as focused upon the customer and as streamlined as possible, any identified inefficiency removed from the system and where appropriate services are moved online. The way the service is delivered is also investigated and consideration is given to potential partnership opportunities or alternative methods of

delivery to protect the services that residents value without a pre-determined view. Headline efficiency targets have been identified for each area of the Council and these are illustrated at [Appendix B](#).

Management Challenge

The Service Efficiencies are strengthened by on-going management of the services through regular performance clinics and a management challenge as part of the annual budget setting process – each Executive Manager is charged with scrutinising their budget to identify any additional savings or remove unused budget. Again, top level targets have been identified where appropriate and these are illustrated in the table at [Appendix B](#).

Members and Officers Working Together

The upper area of the diagram above focuses on activities where Members and officers work together to identify further savings and different ways of working. These aspects of the Strategy have been arrived at through our budget proposals which have continued to be radical and challenging as we look at ways of bridging the financial gap by 2025/26. Budget workshops (both this year and in the past), incorporating Members from all political groups, have looked at what has been achieved so far, policy changes that can be made immediately to save money in the coming year, different ways of delivering services in the future, and more long-term 'Thinking Big' options that could significantly change the face of the Council and the services it delivers.

Immediate savings

Each year, Members are presented with a number of policy changes which hit one or more of our core principles of income generation and maximisation, business cost reduction or service redesign. These operational changes form part of the budget setting process each year and generally result in savings or additional income for the following year(s).

Member Involvement and Budget Workshops

As part of the budget setting process for 2021/22, Members discussed the impact of Covid 19 on the budget, options for Council tax increases and the impact on both capital and transformation programmes of significant capital projects namely the Crematorium and the Bingham Leisure Hub. These 'Thinking Big' ideas have the potential to contribute significantly to bridging the funding gap we are experiencing without reducing frontline services, but they are not decisions to be taken lightly which is why robust investigations are undertaken. Over the past few years there have been several "Thinking Big" initiatives including moving to the Arena, focusing on Fairham Pastures and the development of housing and employment land and the development of the Abbey Road Depot site. These are also subject to a combination of involvement of Growth Boards, Scrutiny work or Member Development Groups. The Asset Investment Strategy has paid dividends although the Council's focus is now on maximising value for money from its existing assets.

Transformational Projects 2021-2026

As has already been mentioned above, this Strategy is a continuation of the Council's original Transformation Programme and as a consequence a number of key projects which influence service delivery and finances over the next few years are already in progress. Good progress has been made with new Transformational Projects as mentioned above.

Going forwards, two major Transformational projects are:

- redevelopment of Chapel Lane Site with the creation of a new leisure centre, community hall, and separate provision of office units; and
- Provision of a Crematorium in Stragglethorpe.

Both of these schemes are embedded in the Corporate Strategy and fully embrace the Council's four priorities:

- Quality of Life
- Efficient Services
- Sustainable Growth
- The Environment.

The leisure centre by providing high quality leisure and community facilities, as well as employment opportunities, to the growing population in the east of the Borough. The Crematorium will provide much needed community infrastructure and quality service delivery for Rushcliffe and the residents of neighbouring districts.

Leisure Strategy Activation

Since 2006, the Council's Leisure Strategy highlighted the authority's ambition to rationalise leisure facilities in West Bridgford to one site – Rushcliffe Arena and to consider the options for built leisure provision in the Bingham area. The new Arena leisure centre and Rushcliffe Borough Council's new offices successfully opened in January 2017. The next phase of the Leisure Strategy focuses on the Bingham Hub. It is planned that Bingham Hub will be operational from 2022/23. The Council have secured funding from European Regional Development Funding Sustainable Urban Development (ERDF SUD) and D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to the value of £2.4m to support the development of Bingham Hub including a leisure centre, community hall and office building giving even more added value for the taxpayer.

Summary of the Transformation Strategy Work Programme

The diagram below summarises the Transformation Strategy Work Programme for the next five years and provides a framework within which the required efficiencies will be delivered.



Governance

The original version of this strategy (2013) established a framework and timeframe for the individual projects within the programme. While in general these have been achieved, arrangements have been flexible to allow for unforeseen circumstances and to redirect resources to maximise opportunities as they have arisen. It is anticipated that these same principles of agile working will apply to the 2021-2026 rolling Transformation Programme.

Each project within the programme has appropriate governance arrangements depending on the size, complexity and risk. Overall, monitoring of the Strategy will take place quarterly by the Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team. Where it is required by individual projects, consultation and engagement with members of the public will take place.

The following risks have been identified and will be monitored accordingly.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation
Reviews do not achieve anticipated savings	Probable	>£250k	Individual reviews where there is underachievement may be offset by others with higher savings.
Programme slippage	Possible	>£250k	Monitoring of programme and taking early corrective action
Insufficient capacity	Possible	>£250k	Procure extra resources – i.e.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation
to undertake the programme			consultancy
Insufficient interest from alternative providers	Possible	Negative	Find appropriate savings from direct service provision by quality reduction (probably)
Delay in anticipated savings or a reduction or removal of current savings due to Covid	Possible	>£250k	Accurate profiling of efficiencies. Close monitoring of the environment (e.g. rising prices) that may affect the feasibility of projects and regular reviews on the commercial market (e.g. rental demand) in order to assess likelihood of income falling.

Conclusion

The above sets out Rushcliffe's plans over the next five years and the Council's commitment towards delivering these plans. This plan supports the Council's MTFS and is the vehicle upon which the Council will achieve a balanced budget.

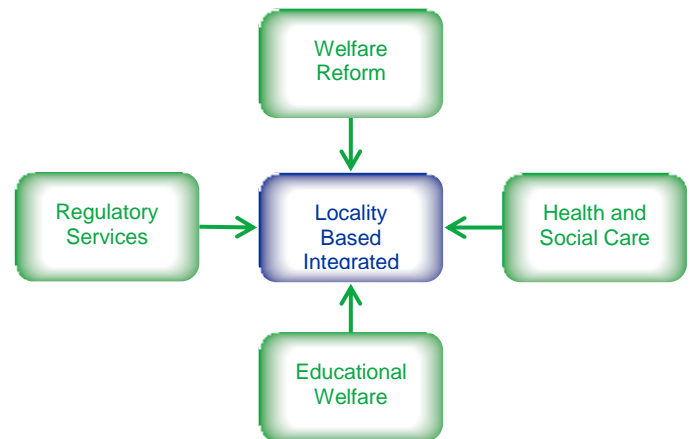
Rushcliffe's Accepted Models of Partnership Working

1. Localised Integrated Working Partnerships

These types of integrated delivery partnerships involve working with other agencies and organisations whose services are delivered to Rushcliffe Borough residents. These partnerships are aimed at improving the connectivity of public services, public regulation, reducing the need to cross-refer people and issues.

The Government has recognised and begun to embrace the value of partnerships of scope and is increasingly looking to realise both financial and customer benefits from these. Central Government policies around community safety, health outcomes, welfare reform and community budget pilots, all demonstrate recognition of the importance of different agencies working together in a single locality to benefit their residents.

Rushcliffe is a pioneer in this area. The successful development of the Rushcliffe Community Contact Centre which originally brought together joint customer services for the Police, Job Centre plus, voluntary sector, South Nottinghamshire College and other services has been recognised nationally. The transfer to a new location in West Bridgford now facilitates signposting support services to these partners. This approach has been supported by our ability to work in other locations on a remote access basis.



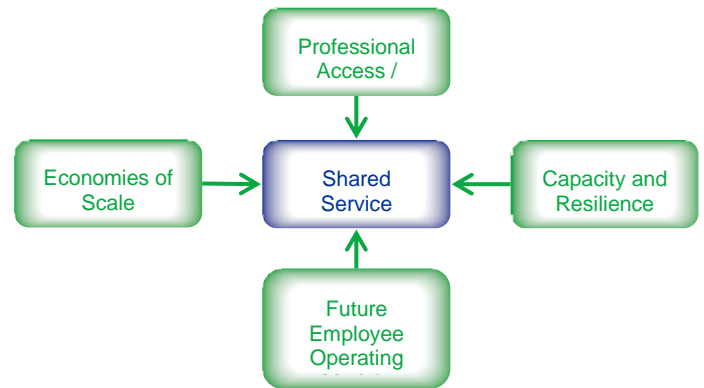
The service was expanded into Bingham where an integrated delivery service model has been deployed and is being delivered from the new Health Centre. This has been further rolled out to Cotgrave and East Leake where the contact points are located in libraries, supporting extended opening times of libraries and increased remote access to the Customer Services Team.

There are also a range of projects underway involving our locality partners, which embed these principles and take services out into the community, including Positive Futures, Sunday Funday, Lark in the Park and Business Partnership events.

2. Partnerships of Scale

This term describes two or more organisations joining together largely to benefit from economies of scale. These partnerships can, like localised integrated working partnerships, drive efficiencies but they may not, in themselves, directly improve the way in which the service is delivered to Rushcliffe Borough residents. Opportunities exist in this area to share back office services, such as payroll, reducing costs and removing duplication whilst maintaining and improving capacity and resilience

If scale partnerships are to be successful, previous experience has shown that there is a greater chance for success if they cover a broad range of services but are focussed and aligned on a small number of culturally similar and willing partners. It is possible to develop these partnerships organically – that is, as opportunities arise.



As mentioned above, to date partnerships of scale have developed organically – the Council has been successful in developing a number of such partnerships, of which the following, mostly back office services, have come to fruition: payroll services (Gedling), ICT (Broxtowe, Newark & Sherwood), building control (South Kesteven, Newark & Sherwood), procurement (Welland)), homelessness (Gedling) and emergency planning (Nottinghamshire County Council).

Following continued encouragement from Central Government, there has been an increased willingness and determination from the Leaders within Nottinghamshire to forge closer partnerships of scale – agreement with Nottingham City Council to relocate Depot Services to operate out of Eastcroft. Further opportunities will be assessed as opportunities arise.

3. Partnerships for Governance

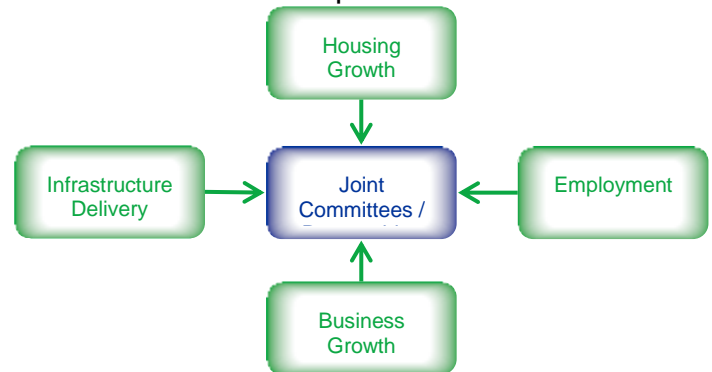
There has been a growth of place-based and themed partnership arrangements. These have largely been designed to implement and administer arrangements within defined areas focussed upon common objectives including: The Joint Planning and Advisory Board (Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire County Council, Broxtowe BC, Gedling BC, Erewash DC and Rushcliffe BC).

A recent and exciting development in Partnerships for Governance is the agreement by the Council to support the creation of an interim vehicle for the establishment of the East Midlands Development Corporation. This will entail commitment of a financial contribution from other affected local authorities and Government in a match funding arrangement. To this end, a Development Corporation Reserve of £500k has been created.

If the interim vehicle is established and supported with the required resources and expertise, the Development Corporation would attract nationally and internationally

significant investment and development into the East Midlands and more specifically in to the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site. It is believed that this type of investment is not something that Rushcliffe, or the owners of the power station, could attract on their own. Concurrently the Council is also looking at the power station site having a significant role as part of a 'freeport' along with East Midlands Airport.

The emergence and growth of other forums has restricted the representation and influencing role of individual districts. The Health and Wellbeing Boards and Local Enterprise Partnerships are prime examples where representation is restricted to one district or borough council. However Officers ensure that regular updates are received and sent between district and borough councils to keep colleagues informed and good relationships are maintained with these organisations so we remain aware of opportunities as they arise. However, to further combat this, other supporting arrangements are in place. For example the Council has created Growth Boards to either facilitate local economic growth or deal with the challenges growth creates. There is also the City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee to drive future investment in growth and jobs in the City and County. At a regional level there is a Development Corporation Board which focuses on, for example agreeing joint objectives, allocating resources and monitoring outcomes which will impact regionally.



As these develop, there will be an increasing reliance upon forging relationships which can influence outcomes for Rushcliffe residents; for example, agreeing key infrastructure requirements which benefit not only Rushcliffe but neighbouring boroughs and districts. These models of partnership working provide a framework within which officers can be swift to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. They build upon our existing core principles model highlighted above and provide a clear map for the future.

Savings (£'000)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Transformation Savings to date						
Service Efficiencies	1,767					
Thematic Reviews	1,111					
Additional income	725					
Additional Savings	329					
Overall Total	3,932					
Transformation Targets						
Additional Green Bin Income		76		187		
Transformation employee efficiencies		113				
Finance employee efficiencies		22				
Car Parking Partnership		16				
Projects*		26	483	316	148	112
Total		253	483	503	148	112
Cumulative Transformation savings	3,932	4,185	4,668	5,171	5,319	5,431

* Includes Bingham Leisure Hub, Crematorium and new units at Edwalton Business Park

Commercialisation of Rushcliffe - A balanced investment in our future

With reduction in and eventual removal of Government grants to Local Authorities there is a need for Rushcliffe Borough Council, like other authorities, to consider new opportunities to help ensure the sustainability of the services delivered. Merely cutting costs will, in the long term, not be sufficient to fill the funding black hole. Local Authorities need to explore options to operate in a more commercial manner than would be traditionally expected of them.

This does not mean taking unnecessary risks with public money. It means, in these challenging financial times, the opportunity to continue to deliver the excellent services that our residents depend upon and expect.

Commercialisation for Rushcliffe informs and is integral to the Transformation Plan and Efficiency Strategy. This document should be viewed alongside:

- Corporate Strategy
- Asset Investment Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Plan

Core principles

Commercialisation contributes towards the aims of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the following strategic goals, contained with the Council's Corporate Strategy 2019-2023, improving:

1. Quality of Life
2. Efficient Services
3. Sustainable Growth
4. The Environment

All decisions are considered against and aligned with these strategic goals as well as some core principles to ensure the Council is protecting the interests of our communities. Rushcliffe's core principles for commercialisation are:

- **Values** – commercial opportunities will align with the Council's values and enable the Borough Council to continue to deliver the vital services our communities rely on.
- **Broad/mixed approach** - It is not solely focused on income generation. It also focuses on deployment of resources and doing things differently.
- **Responsive** - be bold and opportunistic and prepared to think outside our comfort zone. This includes an acceptance that not all schemes will succeed but it is the value of the commercial programme as a whole that is critical.
- **Culture** – a strong organisational culture supported by a clear vision and good communication. Rushcliffe ensures that staff have the skills to deliver and where this is not possible external professional advice is sought.
- **Risk** - understand risk, this includes reputational risk, and be risk aware not risk adverse; the risk of doing nothing can sometimes be greater.

The Rushcliffe approach

Rushcliffe has embraced opportunities to operate in more commercial ways and has developed a strong programme of work across 5 key areas of commercialisation:



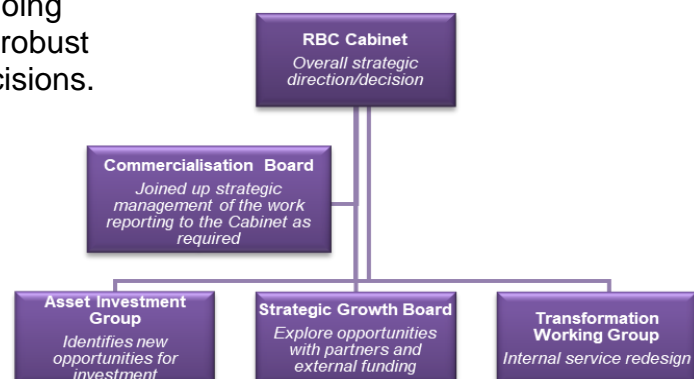
What we have already achieved

- Extending our property portfolio with the construction of 15 new industrial units in Cotgrave.
- Purchase of the Point office complex in the main town centre in the Borough
- Purchase of commercial land for development – Chapel Lane and Moorbridge Road. The land at Moorbridge was subsequently sold to facilitate the development of Industrial Units.
- Office move to the Arena which has meant the development of new more flexible ways of working and a digital transformation, with the council being a more responsive and leaner organisation.
- Acquisition of commercial property in the East Midlands region.
- Loan to Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club to secure the future of big sporting events including the Ashes in the Borough.
- Significant reviews of a range of services including collaboration in areas like Building Control and the creation of Streetwise Trading Company.
- Significant income generation for example through green waste.
- Acquisition of two new build Business Units in West Bridgford under the Asset Investment Strategy and supporting the Commercialism Agenda.

Governance and monitoring

To ensure transparency, accountability and ongoing monitoring and management the Council has a robust structure in place to oversee all commercial decisions.

This work is led by the Commercialisation Board (Executive Management Team) to provide strategic leadership to the commercialisation agenda:



CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

Appendix 4

Ref	Scheme	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
		Latest Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Transformation						
	Cotgrave Regeneration PH II	1,819	570	0	0	0	0
1	Crematorium	667	6,500	0	0	0	0
2	The Point Enhancements	15	150	250	50	250	500
	New Depot	340	0	0	0	0	0
	Cotgrave Business Hub	0	0	0	0	0	70
	Manvers Business Park - Roof Refurbishment	0	200	0	0	0	0
	Bingham Leisure Hub (£20m)	3,408	16,000	0	0	0	0
	Compton Acres Water Course	0	210	0	0	0	0
	Manvers Business Park - Roller Shutters	0	100	0	0	0	0
	Manvers Business Park - Car Park Surface/Drainage	42	0	0	0	0	0
	Colliers BP - Car Park Surface/Drainage	46	0	0	0	0	0
	Bridgford Pk Toilets Refurbishment	25	0	0	0	0	0
	Bridgford Hall Enhancements	20	0	0	0	0	0
	Bingham Mkt Place Enhancements	89	0	0	0	0	0
	Park Cottage Fabric Upgrade	0	0	0	0	90	0
	Walkers Yard 1a/b	0	0	0	0	60	0
	Abbey Circus WB fencing open space	0	0	0	35	0	0
	Highways Verges: Cotgrave/Bingham/CB	0	0	0	0	0	250
	Keyworth Cemetery	0	0	0	20	0	0
	Sub total	6,471	23,730	250	105	400	820

Ref	Scheme	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
		Latest Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate
3	Neighbourhoods						
	Vehicle Replacement	282	730	490	930	1055	405
	Support for Registered Housing Providers	612	500	500	0	0	0
	Hound Lodge - Access Control System	25	0	0	0	0	0
	Hound Lodge - Annexe Patio Doors	35	0	0	0	0	0
	Hound Lodge - roof refurbishment/rewire	0	0	150	0	75	0
	Hound Lodge - external wall thermal upgrade	0	0	75	0	0	0
	Assistive Technology	17	16	16	16	16	16
	Discretionary Top Ups	57	57	57	57	57	57
	Disabled Facilities Grants	627	515	515	515	515	515
	Arena Reception and Corridor Floor Upgrade	0	75	0	0	0	0
	Bowls Hall Replacement Furniture	0	15	0	0	0	0
	BLC Improvements	109	0	0	0	0	0
	CLC Pool and Plant Enhancements	0	0	15	200	150	0
	CLC - Changing Village Refurb	12	300	0	0	0	0
	CLC - Pool Lining	25	0	0	0	0	0
	CLC - Refurb Roofs to Sports Hall and Pool Hall	0	150	0	0	0	0
	CLC - Sports Hall Floor Replacement	0	0	0	100	0	0
	CLC - Dry Change Refurbishment	0	0	0	100	0	0
	KLC - Plant and Lighting Enhancements	0	0	170	0	0	0
	KLC - Refurb Pool Hall and Changing Village	0	250	0	0	0	0
	KLC - Refurb Pitched/Flat Roof Areas	0	220	0	0	0	0
	Arena Enhancements	115	0	0	0	0	0
	Car Park Resurfacing	215	0	0	0	0	0
	Car Park Improvements - Lighting Other	102	0	0	0	0	0
	Car Park Improvements - Lighting West Bridgford	48	0	0	0	0	0
		Sub total	2,281	2,828	1,988	1,918	1,868

Ref	Scheme	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
		Latest Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate	Indicative Estimate
	Communities						
	Capital Grant Funding	59	0	0	0	0	0
	VE 75th Commemoration	20	0	0	0	0	0
4	Play Areas W.B. - Special Expense	150	50	50	50	50	50
	West Park Fencing and Drainage Special Expense	25	0	0	0	0	0
	West Park Car Park Lighting Special Expense	25	0	0	0	0	0
	West Park Public Toilet Upgrade Special Expense	20	0	0	0	0	0
	West Park Julien Cahn Pavilion Special Expense	0	115	0	0	0	0
5	Gresham Sports Pitches/Pavilion	1,295	125	0	0	0	0
	Rushcliffe CP - Buildings Enhancements	10	0	0	0	0	0
	Rushcliffe CP - Vehicle Access Controls	0	15	0	0	0	0
	Rushcliffe CP - Footpath Imps	0	15	0	0	0	25
	Rushcliffe CP - Skatepark	218	0	0	0	0	0
	Rushcliffe CP - Visitor Centre	0	285	0	0	0	0
	Lutterell Hall Special Expense	50	225	0	0	0	0
	Skateboard Parks	190	0	0	0	0	0
	Gamston Community Hall Special Expense	0	115	0	50	40	0
	Extnl Door/Window Upgrades Various Sites	0	50	0	0	0	0
	Warm Homes on Prescription	25	25	25	25	25	25
	Sub total	2,087	1,020	75	125	115	100
	Finance and Corporate Services						
6	Information Systems Strategy	385	330	230	230	280	230
7	Streetwise Loan	150	150	150	150	150	150
	Asset Investment Strategy	4,554	0	0	0	0	0
	Contingency	150	100	100	100	100	100
	Sub total	5,239	580	480	480	530	480
PROGRAMME TOTAL		16,078	28,158	2,793	2,628	2,913	2,393

PROJECT APPRAISAL FORM

Project Name: The Crematorium	Cost Centre: 0684	Ref: 1
<p>Detailed Description: In November 2018, Cabinet approved the principle of providing a new crematorium on a site at Stragglethorpe to provide much needed additional community infrastructure to serve Rushcliffe residents.</p> <p>In December 2019 Cabinet approved purchase of a site and design and procurement of the crematorium. The land was purchased and procurement is estimated to take up to 9 months with a further 12 month build period resulting in the new facility opening late 2021 or early 2022.</p> <p>The Cabinet report July 2020 authorised the Chief Executive to appoint the successful multi-disciplinary design team to develop detailed designs and perform contract administration and management duties for the construction contract. The in-house operating model was supported as that which provides the best return for the Council. New technologies continue to be explored to enable delivery of a greener crematorium for the Borough within the project budget. The design team has been appointed.</p>		
Location: Stragglethorpe	Executive Manager: Transformation	
<p>Contribution to the Council's aims and objectives:</p> <p>Corporate Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Life - Sensitive after-life care and bereavement services are an essential part of the quality of life for residents, their friends and family members. This scheme will provide timely services in a peaceful location with modern and flexibly sized accommodation • Efficient Services - This is an opportunity for the Council to invest its capital in new services for its residents which will be run in an efficient manner with high levels of care and customer service for the bereaved as the priority. • Sustainable Growth - The level of housing growth in the Borough is 13,150 during the life of the Local Plan. This will lead to an additional population growth and the crematorium is an example of the community infrastructure that is needed to support population growth • The Environment - The designs for the crematorium will include carbon offsetting and energy efficiency measures as far as is practicable in line with the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral <p>Strategic Commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide high quality community facilities which meet the needs of our residents and contribute towards the financial independence of the Council. • Responsible income generation and prudent borrowing where deemed appropriate, to facilitate the delivery of services. • Ongoing appraisal and alignment of resources linked to growth aspirations. • Bringing new business to the Borough. • Reviewing our policies and ways of working to protect natural resources, and to implement environmentally beneficial infrastructure changes. 		
<p>Community Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide additional community infrastructure resulting in additional capacity in the Borough alongside the existing Crematorium at Wilford Hill. • Ensuring we are maximising our property holdings and aligning them with the needs of residents. Properties may be held for operational purposes, for community use, or for investment purposes. • The designs for the crematorium will include carbon offsetting and energy efficiency measures as far as is practicable in line with the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral. 		
Other Options Rejected and Why:		

<p>The Council could leave the delivery of a new crematorium in the Borough to the wider market. This option would not provide a revenue return to the Council which could be used to contribute to other community infrastructure projects and would reduce Council influence on the design and operation of the facility. Feedback from local residents and businesses following the granting of planning permission has been that they would prefer this to be a Council run facility.</p> <p>The in-house operating model was supported as that which provides the best return for the Council.</p>			
Start Date: 29/06/21 (start on site)		Completion Date: 16/05/22	
Capital Cost (Total) :	Previous Years	Year 1: 21/22	Year 2: 22/23
£8,500,000	£2,000,000	£6,500,000	
Capital Cost (Breakdown) £: 8,500,000: Land £1.333m in 19/20; £667k design fees and surveys in 20/21; split of remainder to be determined			
Works	Equipment	Other £1.333m land acquired 19/20	Fees £667k
Additional Revenue cost/(saving)per annum:	Year 1: 21/22 £35,000	Year 2: 22/23 (£257,000)	
Year 3: 23/24 (£316,000)	Year 4: 24/25 (£376,000)	Year 5: 25/26 (£438,000)	
Proposed Funding			
External: £2,950,000 Borrowing – internal or external		Internal: £5,550,000 Capital Receipts	

Useful Economic Life (years): 50 years	New/Replacement: New
Depreciation per annum: £170,000	Capital Financing Costs: Principal and interest on borrowing of £2,950,000 is £100,000 p.a. Opportunity Cost in the form of lost interest on the use of Capital Receipts £13,875p.a.
Residual Value: N/A	Category of Asset: Operational Land and Buildings

PROJECT APPRAISAL FORM

Project Name: The Point Balcony Waterproofing and Passenger Lifts upgrade		Cost Centre: 0360	Ref: 2
Detailed Description: £20k provision for the Car Park Security Gate has been slipped from 2020/21 The waterproof coating to the 2 nd floor front balcony is blistering and in poor condition; wholesale replacement is required to maintain the integrity of the structure and prevent water ingress to offices below. £50k The passenger lifts are approx. 15 years old and reaching the end of their service life; substantial upgrade is proposed to ensure that customers can continue to be transported safely and reliably. £80k. These works will not be commissioned until late 2021/22 so may slip to 2022/23.			
Location: The Point		Executive Manager: Transformation	
Contribution to the Council's aims and objectives: Corporate Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient Services • Sustainable Growth • The Environment • Strategic Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible income generation and prudent borrowing where deemed appropriate, to facilitate the delivery of services. • Ongoing appraisal and alignment of resources linked to growth aspirations. • Bringing new business to the Borough and nurturing our existing businesses, helping them to grow and succeed. • Working to achieve a carbon neutral status for the Council's operations. • 			
Community Outcomes: Upgrade works will enhance the efficiency of the facility, improving comfort for users and help to maximise use of resources.			
Other Options Rejected and Why: Do not carry out upgrade works – this would put at risk operational certainty for the facility, negatively impact customer comfort and safety and fail to minimise operational costs.			
Start Date:		Completion Date:	
Capital Cost (Total) :	Year 1: 21/22	Year 2: 22/23	
£150,000	£150,000		
Capital Cost (Breakdown) £:			
Works £45,000	Equip £95,000	Other	Fees £10,000
Revenue cost per annum:	Year 1: 21/22 Not quantifiable at this stage, but should see revenue spend on repairs reduce	Year 2: 22/23 As for 21/22	
Year 3: 23/24 As for 21/22	Year 4: 24/25 As for 21/22	Year 5: 25/26 As for 21/22	
Proposed Funding			

External:	Internal: £150,000 from Investment Properties Reserve
Useful Economic Life (years): 15 -20 years	New/Replacement: New
Depreciation per annum: N/A	Capital Financing Costs: £375 p.a. as opportunity cost of lost interest.
Residual Value: N/A	Category of Asset: Investment Property

PROJECT APPRAISAL FORM

Project Name: Vehicle Replacement	Cost Centre: 0680	Ref: 3
<p>Detailed Description: The authority owns vehicles ranging from large refuse freighters to small vans and items of mechanical plant. As these vehicles and plant age and become uneconomic to maintain and run, they are replaced on a new for old basis. Although there is a programme for replacements for the next ten years, each vehicle or machine is assessed annually and the programme continually adjusted to take into account actual performance. This provision will be used to acquire new vehicles and plant, undertake refurbishments to extend vehicle life and value and to purchase second hand vehicles and plant as and when appropriate. There is beginning to be a concentration of focussing on newer cleaner technology as we replace existing fleet vehicles in line with the Council's Carbon management agenda, exploring alternatives such as electric and hydrogen cell technology to look at cutting down on emissions whilst ensuring the vehicles remain operationally viable and offer value for money</p>		
Location: Eastcroft Depot	Executive Manager: Neighbourhoods	
<p>Contribution to the Council's aims and objectives: Corporate Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Life • Efficient Services • The Environment <p>Strategic Commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with our partners to create great, safe, and clean communities to live and work in. • Ongoing appraisal and alignment of resources linked to growth aspirations. • Reviewing our policies and ways of working to protect natural resources, and to implement environmentally beneficial infrastructure changes. To reduce waste and increasingly reuse and recycle to protect the environment for the future. • Respond to any proposals from the new Environment Bill due to become legislation later in 2021 which may have a significant effect of what wastes should be collected and how. • Delivering a high quality waste and recycling collection service. • A commitment to look at cleaner vehicles in line with our commitment to protect the environment, in particularly alternative fuel vehicles <p>The replacement of vehicles is critical to the performance of the front line services. Regular vehicle and plant replacement with new updated engines helps to meet climate change and national indicator targets for emissions and helps maintain a cleaner air quality within the Borough.</p>		
<p>Community Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address climate change and the need to reduce carbon emissions. The introduction of new euro standard engines will lower emissions. The new vehicles will also reduce maintenance costs on the vehicles they replace however it should be noted that the remainder of the fleet ages and therefore the fleet profile and maintenance costs overall remain stable. 		
<p>Other Options Rejected and Why: An historic review was undertaken to consider the leasing and hiring in of vehicles. Due to the level of capital resources, it was concluded that it was uneconomical to do either of these two options but as resources reduce these options may need to be revisited again. However, there are also distinct advantages in direct purchase:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The authority has control over the maintenance of the vehicles. b) It is difficult to change the terms and conditions of a lease. c) High performing vehicles can have their lifespan lengthened. d) Poor performing vehicles can have their lifespan shortened. <p>Not being tied in to lengthy lease/hire contracts means the service can react and adapt to change</p>		

quickly.			
The Council now actively looks at the possible purchase of 2 nd hand vehicles and will refurbish vehicles to extend their life and value.			
Start Date: Ongoing		Completion Date:	
Capital Cost (Total) :	Year 1: 21/22	Year 2: 22/23	
£1,220,000 (2 years)	£730,000	£490,000	
Capital Cost (Breakdown)			
Works £0	Equipment £1,220,000	Other £0	Fees £0
Additional Revenue cost/ (saving) per annum:	Year 1: 21/22 £0		Year 2: 22/23 £0
Year 3: 23/24 £0	Year 4: 24/25 £0		Year 5: 25/26 £0
As each vehicle replaces an existing vehicle, there is no increase in the overall revenue costs. Whilst newer vehicles can lead to less expenditure on breakdown and repair, older vehicles will cost more. The overall fleet profile remains relatively constant and therefore service budgets remain the same. However with property growth there is the likelihood moving forward that additional revenue expenditure may be incurred and this will be need to be considered for the budget year 2022/23.			
Proposed Funding:			
External: N/A		Internal: Capital Receipts	
Useful Economic Life (years): Various		New/Replacements: New and Replacements	
Depreciation per annum: Various		Capital Financing Costs: £1,825 year 1	
Residual Value: Various		Category of Asset: Vehicle and Plant	

PROJECT APPRAISAL FORM

Project Name: Play Areas W.B. (Special Expense)		Cost Centre: 0664	Ref: 4
Detailed Description: The priority project for 2021/22 will be Alford Road Play area looking at upgrade work to structure and equipment. Projects for 2022/23 will be assessed and prioritised.			
Location: West Bridgford		Executive Manager: Communities	
Contribution to the Council's aims and objectives: Corporate Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of Life Efficient Services Strategic Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting our residents' health and facilitating healthier lifestyle choices. Provide high quality community facilities which meet the needs of our residents and contribute towards the financial independence of the Council. Creating opportunities for young people to realise their potential. Delivering a scheme refurbishment identified within the Rushcliffe Play Strategy 			
Community Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the provision of high quality community facilities which meet community need. To protect our residents' health and facilitate healthier lifestyle choice. To provide a facility to engage with young people who may otherwise not take part in formal sports or physical activity. 			
Other Options Rejected and Why: Doing nothing – this would result in increased maintenance costs for ageing equipment, reduced appeal of the play areas leading to lower levels of use and be inconsistent with the vision of high quality parks and leisure facilities. A lack of replacement programme would over time lead to an increased health and safety risk.			
Start Date: April 2021		Completion Date: March 2022	
Capital Cost (Total) :	Year 1: 21/22	Year 2: 22/23	
£100,000	£50,000	£50,000	
Capital Cost (Breakdown) £: split of equipment costs to be determined			
Works £95,000	Equipment	Other	Fees £5,000
Additional Revenue cost/ (saving) per annum:	Year 1: 21/22	Year 2: 22/23	
Year 3: 23/24	Year 4: 24/25	Year 5: 25/26	
Proposed Funding			
External:		Internal: Regeneration and Community Projects Reserve (Special Expense)	
Useful Economic Life (years): 15		New/Replacement: Replacement	
Depreciation per annum: £3,300		Capital Financing Costs: £125 p.a.	

PROJECT APPRAISAL FORM

Project Name: Gresham Sports Pavilion Changing room refurb		Cost Centre: 0347	Ref: 5
Detailed Description: The changing areas are in excess of 10 years old and as well as looking visually tired they are also increasingly difficult to maintain in a clean and safe condition. Use of the facility is set to increase with the addition of a further 3G pitch later this year; these refurb works are intended to tie-in with the launch of the new facilities. Refurb will generally include floor, wall and selected ceiling finishes and upgrade to some plant services including lighting to LED.			
Location: Gresham Sports Pavilion		Executive Manager: Communities	
Contribution to the Council's aims and objectives: Corporate Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Life • Efficient Services Strategic Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting our residents' health and facilitating healthier lifestyle choices • Providing high quality community facilities which meet the needs of our residents. • Creating opportunities for young people to realise their potential. • Ongoing appraisal and alignment of resources linked to growth aspirations. 			
Community Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of leisure users • Satisfaction of leisure users • Participation in sport figures • Quality of facility 			
Other Options Rejected and Why: Do not upgrade the refurbishment works– this would potentially put at risk operational performance of the facility, increase maintenance costs, reduce customer perception/satisfaction and miss an opportunity to reduce year on year revenue running costs.			
Start Date:		Completion Date:	
Capital Cost (Total) :	Year 1:21/22	Year 2: 22/23	
£125,000	£125,000		
Capital Cost (Breakdown) £:			
Works £120,000	Equipment	Other	Fees £5,000
Additional Revenue cost/ (saving) per annum:	Year 1: 21/22	Year 2: 22/23 Not quantifiable at this stage, but should see revenue spend on repair work reduce.	
Year 3: 23/24 As 22/23	Year 4: 24/25 As 22/23	Year 5: 25/26 As 22/23	
Proposed Funding			
External:		Internal: Capital Receipts	
Useful Economic Life (years): 15		New/Replacement: Replacement	
Depreciation per annum: £8,300		Capital Financing Costs: £312 p.a.	
Residual Value: N/A		Category of Asset: Operational Land and Buildings	

PROJECT APPRAISAL FORM

Project Name: Information Systems Strategy	Cost Centre: 0596	Ref: 6
Detailed Description: The ICT Strategy 2017 to 2021 agreed on 12 th September 2017 is an emerging ICT Strategy. While the strategy contains broad strategic objectives along with the rationale behind those objectives, including the benefits and deliverables that will be achieved it does not set out to provide a strict formula or action plan dictating the approach. An emerging strategy will therefore exist enabling an agile approach to operational delivery, taking advantage of new proven developments and partnership opportunities. The ICT Technical Delivery Plan details all technical projects, and the schedule for implementation, during the lifetime of the ICT Strategy.		
Location: Rushcliffe Arena	Executive Manager: Finance and Corporate	
Contribution to the Council's aims and objectives: Corporate Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient Services • The Environment Strategic Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing appraisal and alignment of resources linked to growth aspirations. • Include digital principles in our communications and ways of undertaking business 		
Community Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that we make best use of digital development where appropriate to deliver better services and operate more efficiently. • To enable residents to do business with us in a digital way if that is their preference. <p>The ICT Strategy is closely aligned to the Council's "Four Year Plan" reviews and ICT will be instrumental in delivering the outcomes identified during these reviews. The Strategy will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling Efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using Digital by Design principles to enabling the Council to redesign processes/services to be more accessible and efficient, producing better, quicker and more consistent outcomes for customers. • Responding flexibly and with agility to customer needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To facilitate channel shift where appropriate by creating digital service that our customers view as their access channel of choice moving transactions away from face to face and telephony towards self-service facilities via Internet, automated telephony and kiosk technologies. • Increase our ability to work in effective partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To continue the work to facilitate common policies, standards, systems and infrastructure to drive out cost and create opportunities for greater resilience, efficiencies and savings. • Modern architecture supporting efficient and agile working culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enabling the greater flexibility and agility of both employees and members through the deployment of appropriate technology including effective collaboration systems and tools. • Robust arrangements for business continuity, information management and governance and security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safeguarding the Council's data by ensuring compliance with all relevant legislative, financial and central government security standards. Improving maturity of the management and governance of information assets and delivering appropriate arrangements to ensure compliance with such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). 		
Other Options Rejected and Why: Every project is the subject of a business case to be presented to, and approved by, the Executive Management Team (EMT) in order to ensure that the most appropriate IT solution is chosen, having due		

regard to the alignment of technologies across the partnership, value for money and resilience. The option of not doing so would lead to out dated or incompatible technology which would result in lower performance, higher maintenance costs and hinder the drive for greater efficiencies.			
Start Date: On-going		Completion Date: On-going	
Capital Cost (Total) :	Year 1:21/22	Year 2: 22/23	
£560,000 (2 years)	£330,000	£230,000	
Capital Cost (Breakdown): To be determined			
Works	Equipment	Other	Fees
Additional Revenue cost/ (saving) per annum:	Year 1: 21/22	Year 2: 22/23	
Year 3: 23/24	Year 4: 24/25		Year 6: 25/26
Proposed Funding			
External: N/A		Internal: Capital Receipts	
Useful Economic Life (years): 3		New/Replacement: New and Replacement	
Depreciation per annum: £110,000 year 1		Capital Financing Costs: £825 year 1	
Residual Value: Nil		Category of Asset: Intangible Assets and Equipment	

PROJECT APPRAISAL FORM

Project Name: Streetwise Loan		Cost Centre: 0656	Ref: 7
Detailed Description: This provision to facilitate a loan to Streetwise Environmental Ltd to assist with the purchase of new and replacement vehicles. The loans will be repayable over 4 years, quarterly intervals at a market rate of interest to be agreed by the S151 Officer.			
Location: Unit 10 Moorbridge - Streetwise premises		Executive Manager: Finance and Corporate	
Contribution to the Council's aims and objectives: Corporate Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient Services • Sustainable Growth Strategic Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing appraisal and alignment of resources lined to growth aspirations • Reviewing service delivery models to ensure that residents are receiving consistently excellent services either delivered directly by the Council, or by our arm's length companies, or by private and public sector partners. • Bringing new business to the borough and nurturing our existing businesses, helping them to grow and succeed. 			
Community Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that we have an integrated and strategic approach to how we provide our services. 			
Other Options Rejected and Why: Offering the loan from ourselves maintains the strong working partnership between RBC and Streetwise Environmental Ltd. The loans will be repaid in full and thereby sums returned to the capital receipts pot. RBC revenue budget will be supported by the interest earned on the loans.			
Start Date: On-going		Completion Date:	
Capital Cost (Total) :	Year 1:21/22	Year 2: 22/23	
£300,000 (2 years)	£150,000	£150,000	
Capital Cost (Breakdown) £:			
Works	Equipment	Other £300,000 - loan	Fees
Additional Revenue cost/(saving)per annum:	Year 1: 21/22 (£2,330)	Year 2: 22/23 (£3,910)	
Year 3: 23/24 (£2,420)	Year 4: 24/25 (£1,820)	Year 5: 25/26 (£)	
Proposed Funding			
External:		Internal: Capital Receipts	
Useful Economic Life (years): N/A		New/Replacement: N/A	
Depreciation per annum: N/A		Capital Financing Costs: Net nil as loan repaid	
Residual Value: N/A		Category of Asset: Long/Short Term Debtor	

CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021/22 – 2025/26

Introduction

1. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities when carrying out capital and treasury management activities.
2. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) issued revised Guidance on Local Authority Investments that requires the Council to approve an investment strategy before the start of each financial year.
3. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the MHCLG Guidance.

The Capital Strategy

4. The Council's capital expenditure plans are summarised below and forms the first of the prudential indicators. Capital expenditure needs to have regard to:
 - Corporate objectives (e.g. strategic planning);
 - Stewardship of assets (e.g. asset management planning);
 - Value for money (e.g. option appraisal);
 - Prudence and sustainability (e.g. implications for external borrowing and whole life costing);
 - Affordability (e.g. implications for council tax); and
 - Practicability (e.g. the achievability of the Corporate Strategy)
5. Each year the Council will produce a Capital Programme to be approved by Full Council in March as part of the Council Tax setting.
6. Each scheme is supported by a detailed appraisal (which may also be a Cabinet Report), as set out in the Council's Financial Regulations. The capital appraisals will address the following:
 - a) A detailed description of the project;
 - b) How the project contributes to the Council's aims and objectives;
 - c) Anticipated outcomes;
 - d) A consideration of alternative solutions;
 - e) An estimate of the capital costs and sources of funding;
 - f) An estimate of the revenue implications, including any savings and/or future income generation potential;
 - g) Any other aspects relevant to the appraisal of the scheme as the S151 Officer may determine.

The appraisal requirement applies to all schemes except where there is regular grant support and if commercial negotiations are due to take place and further reporting to Cabinet or Full Council is therefore required.

7. From time to time unforeseen opportunities may arise, or new priorities may emerge, which will require swift action and inclusion in the Capital Programme. These schemes are still subject to the appraisal process and the Capital Programme will contain a contingency sum to allow such schemes to progress without disrupting other planned capital activity.

Capital Prudential Indicators

a) Capital Expenditure Estimates

8. Capital expenditure can be financed immediately through the application of capital resources, for example, capital receipts, capital grants or revenue resources. However, if these resources are insufficient or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need. Table 1 summarises the capital expenditure projections and anticipated financing.

Table1: Projected Capital Expenditure and Financing

	2020/21 Original £'000	2020/21 Revised £'000	2021/22 Estimate £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000
Capital Expenditure	18,936	16,078	28,158	2,793	2,628	2,913	2,393
Less Financed by:							
Capital Receipts	14,922	7,829	15,199	1,880	1,915	1,850	1,160
Capital Grants/ Contributions	2,428	2,570	6,003	613	613	613	613
Reserves	70	452	500	300	100	450	620
Total Financing	17,420	10,851	21,702	2,793	2,628	2,913	2,393
Underlying need to Borrow	1,516	5,227	6,456	-	-	-	-

9. The key risks to the capital expenditure plans are that the level of grants estimated is subject to change, anticipated capital receipts are not realised or are more than expected in the medium term; and the future of New Homes Bonus (NHB). Government intend to cease the NHB scheme in 2023/24 which impacts on the level of capital grants received.

b) The Council's Underlying Need to Borrow and Investment position

10. The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) represents the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure. This underlying need to borrow will increase the CFR (i.e. the use of internal borrowing, which reduces our investment balance). This increase is offset by Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and any additional voluntary contributions (VRP) raised through Council Tax, as a result of financing requirements in relation to the

Arena development, Cotgrave redevelopment and in later years Bingham Leisure Hub and the Crematorium.

11. The Council also holds usable reserves and working capital which represent the underlying resources available for investment. The Council's current strategy is to use these resources, by way of internal borrowing, to avoid the commitment to external debt.
12. The table below summarises the overall position with regard to borrowing and available investments and shows an increase in CFR reflecting the capital commitment on projects such as the crematorium and Bingham Leisure Hub

Table 2: CFR and Investment Resources

	2019/20 Projected £'000	2020/21 Forecast £'000	2021/22 Forecast £'000	2022/23 Forecast £'000	2023/24 Forecast £'000	2024/25 Forecast £'000	2025/26 Forecast £'000
Opening CFR	8,300	7,300	11,527	16,909	15,635	14,361	13,361
CFR in year	-	5,227	6,456	-	-	-	-
Less: MRP etc	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,074)	(1,274)	(1,274)	(1,000)	(1,250)
Closing CFR	7,300	11,527	16,909	15,635	14,361	13,361	12,111
Less: External Borrowing	-		(4,957)	(7,348)	(7,216)	(7,082)	(6,945)
Internal Borrowing	7,300	11,527	11,952	8,287	7,145	6,279	5,166
Less:							
Usable Reserves	(19,835)	(22,314)	(18,039)	(18,694)	(18,522)	(18,666)	(17,103)
Working Capital	(18,757)	(15,670)	(14,665)	(15,579)	(15,579)	(15,579)	(15,579)
Available for Investment(-)	(31,292)	(26,457)	(20,752)	(25,986)	(26,956)	(27,966)	(27,516)

13. The Council is currently debt free although there is an underlying assumption in the capital expenditure plans that the Council may need to externally borrow £5 million in 2021-22 and a further £2.5 million in 2022-23. Available resources (usable reserves and working capital) remain steady over the medium term, with usable reserves being used to finance both capital and revenue expenditure over time.
14. The total amount borrowed will not exceed the authorised borrowing limit of £25m. The Authority is not required to link particular loans with particular items of expenditure.
15. CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommends that the Authority's gross external debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 2 shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation.
16. The new accounting standard IFRS16 has been delayed a further year and comes into force on 1st April 2022. IFRS 16 affects how leases are measured, recognised and

presented in the accounts and essentially means that some leases may have to be classified as capital expenditure. The full impact of this change is still yet to be determined and this is likely to impact on the CFR. As we currently have no external borrowing this is unlikely to affect the Authorised Limit.

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

17. Revised MHCLG Regulations have been issued which require the Governance Scrutiny Group to consider a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement in advance of each year. Further commentary regarding financing of the debt is provided in paragraphs 30-34. A variety of options are provided to Councils, so long as there is prudent provision. The Council has chosen the Asset Life Method (Option 3 within the Guidance) with the following recommended MRP Statement:

- *MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets, in accordance with Option 3 of the regulations. Estimated life periods within this limit will be determined under delegated powers, subject to any statutory override. (DCLG revised guidance states maximum asset lives of 40 and 50 years for property and land respectively)*

As some types of capital expenditure incurred by the Council are not capable of being related to an individual asset, asset lives will be assessed on a basis which most reasonably reflects the anticipated period of benefit that arises from the expenditure. Also, whatever type of expenditure is involved, it will be grouped together in a manner which reflects the nature of the main component of expenditure and will only be divided up in cases where there are two or more major components with substantially different useful economic lives.

This option provides for a reduction in the borrowing need over approximately the asset's life.

18. As well as the need to pay off an element of the accumulated General Fund borrowing requirement used to fund capital expenditure each year (the capital financing requirement - CFR) through a revenue charge (the MRP) it is also allowed to make additional voluntary contributions (voluntary revenue provision – VRP). In times of financial crisis the Council has the flexibility to reduce voluntary contributions.

Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26

19. The CIPFA Treasury Management Code defines treasury management activities as:

“The management of the local authority’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

The code also covers non-cash investments which are covered at paragraph 66 below.

20. The CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services (the “CIPFA Treasury Management Code”) and the CIPFA Prudential Code require local authorities to produce a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on an annual basis.
21. This Strategy Statement includes those indicators that relate to the treasury management functions and help ensure that the Council’s capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable, while giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

The Current Economic Climate and Prospects for Interest Rates.

22. **The UK faces a long road to economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.** The furlough scheme was set to end October but has now been extended to the end of March 2021 due to the fear that its withdrawal will lead to many job losses. Consumers will also probably remain cautious in spending and this will dampen growth. While the UK has been gripped by the long running saga of whether or not a deal would be made by 31.12.20, the final agreement on 24.12.20, followed by ratification by Parliament and all 27 EU countries in the following week, has eliminated a significant downside risk for the UK economy. The initial agreement only covers trade so there is further work to be done on the services sector where temporary equivalence has been granted in both directions between the UK and EU; that now needs to be formalised on a permanent basis. Economic recovery is expected to be only gradual and, therefore, prolonged. The trajectory will be dependent on factors such as the success of the Coronavirus vaccine.
23. The November lockdown in England is expected to see economic growth fall again in Q4. As a result, output in 2020 as a whole will contract by 11.3%. A partial recovery in 2021 could see growth of 5.5% next year but it is not anticipated that output will reach pre-Covid levels before Q2 2022.
24. The extension of the furlough scheme in November has potentially forestalled a sharp increase in unemployment in the final quarter of 2020. The rate of unemployment is now expected to peak at 7.5% around May next year before gradually subsiding, reaching 4.4% by the end of 2024.

25. The current Bank of England base rate is 0.1%. The Bank of England took emergency action in March to cut the Bank Rate to first 0.25% and then to 0.1%. It has remained unchanged, but some forecasters are suggesting that a cut into negative territory could happen. The Bank of England suggest such a move would do more damage than good. Link (the Council's Treasury Advisors) are forecasting no change within the forecast horizon ending on 31 March 2023.
26. Inflation levels are expected to increase to 2% in 2021 and 2.1% in 2022 and 2023.
27. The table below shows the assumed average interest (which reflects a prudent approach) that will be made over the next five years for budget setting purposes.

Table 3: Budgetary Impact of Assumed Interest Rate Going Forward

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Anticipated Interest Rate (%)	0.10	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50
Expected interest from investments (£)	373,100	422,500	484,900	488,400	486,700
Other interest (£)	89,000	81,000	72,000	64,000	59,000
Total Interest (£)	462,100	503,500	556,900	552,400	545,700
Sensitivity:	£	£	£	£	£
- 0.25% Interest Rate	(14,500)	(12,500)	(19,500)	(21,300)	(21,300)
+ 0.25% Interest Rate	14,500	12,500	19,500	21,300	21,300

28. In the event that a bank suffers a loss, the Council could be subject to bail-in to assist with the recovery process. The impact of a bail-in depends on the size of the loss incurred by the bank or building society, the amount of equity capital and junior bonds that can be absorbed first and the proportion of insured deposits, covered bonds and other liabilities that are exempt from bail-in.
29. The Council has managed bail-in risk by both reducing the amount that can be invested with each institution to £10 million and by investment diversification between creditworthy counterparties.

Borrowing Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26

Prudential Indicators for External Debt

30. Table 2 above identifies that the Council may need to externally borrow over the MTFS if it is not possible to internally borrow. This would result in borrowing costs. Anticipated levels of external borrowing are reflected in the figures.
31. The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:
- Internal borrowing
 - Municipal Bond Agency
 - Public Works Loan Board (or the body that will replace the PWLB in the future)
 - Local authorities

- UK public and private sector pension funds
- Commercial banks
- Building Societies in the UK
- Money markets
- Leasing
- Capital market bond investors
- Special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issue

Following the recent consultation PWLB have published new lending terms effective from 26th November and now General Fund Borrowing is in line with HRA at Gilts +80bps (certainty rate). There is also now the need to categorise the capital programme into 5 categories including service, housing, regeneration etc. If any Authority has assets that are being purchased 'primarily for yield' anywhere in their capital programme they will not be able to access PWLB funding.

a) Authorised Limit for External Debt

32. The authorised limit is the "affordable borrowing limit" required by section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003 and represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited. It shows the maximum amount the Council could afford to borrow in the short term to maximise treasury management opportunities and either cover temporary cash flow shortfalls or use for longer term capital investment.

Table 4: The Authorised Limit

	2020/21 Estimate £'000	2021/22 Estimate £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000
Authorised Limit	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000

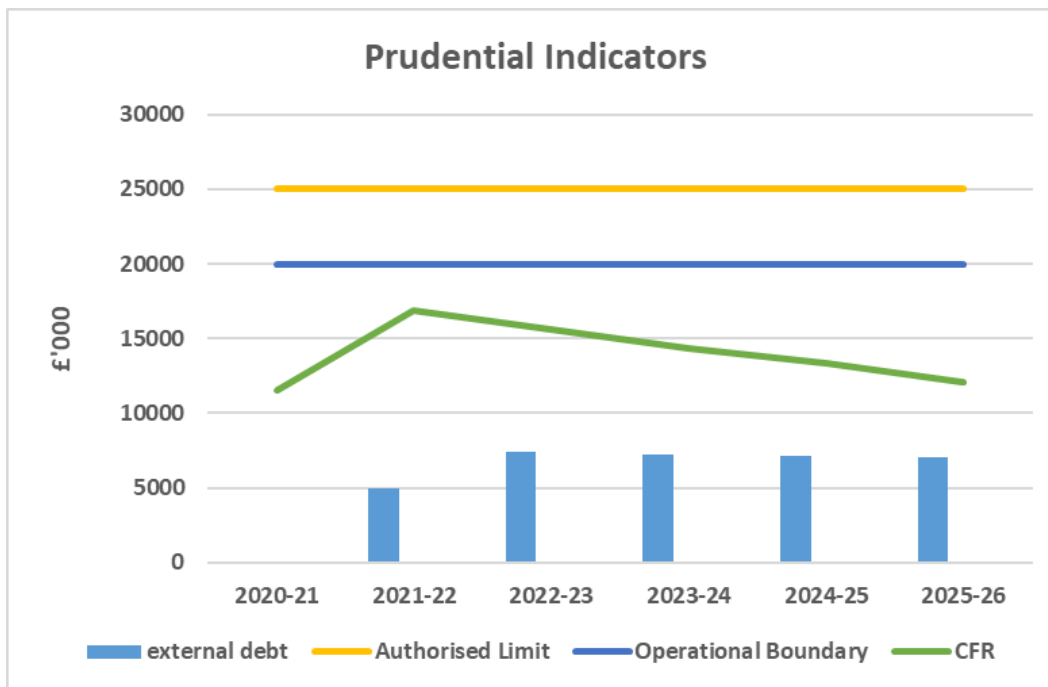
b) Operational Boundary for External Debt

33. The operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the course of the year. The operational boundary is not a limit and actual borrowing can be either below or above the boundary subject to the authorised limit not being breached. The Operational Limit has been set at £20m as the Council is expected to borrow over the period of the MTFS.

Table 5: The Operational Boundary

	2020/21 Estimate £'000	2021/22 Estimate £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000
Operational Boundary	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000

34. The Prudential indicators for debt discussed are shown graphically below.



Prudential Indicators for Affordability

35. Affordability indicators provide details of the impact of capital investment plans on the Council's overall finances.

a) Actual and estimates of the ratio of net financing costs to net revenue stream

36. This indicator identifies the trend in net financing costs (borrowing costs less investment income) against net revenue income. The purpose of the indicator is to show how the proportion of net income used to pay for financing costs (a credit indicates interest earned rather than cost) is changing over time. The trend below reflects the decision to temporarily remove the voluntary element of the amount charged to revenue in 2022/23 and 2023/24, to set aside a provision for repaying external borrowing. Treasury investments will benefit in the interim years despite non-treasury capital commitments in the Crematorium and Bingham Hub.

Table 6: Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

	2020/21 Estimate	2021/22 Estimate	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
General Fund	5.88%	5.45%	7.53%	7.54%	4.99%	6.99%

Investment Strategy 2020/21 to 2025/26

36. The movement in investments are due to increases in capital receipts related to Sharphill and S106 receipts as shown below.

Table 7: Investment Projections

	2020/21 Estimate	2021/22 Estimate	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
Investments at 31 March	26,457	20,752	25,986	26,956	27,966	27,516

37. Both the CIPFA Code and the MHCLG Guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitable low investment income. Accordingly, the Council ensures that robust due diligence procedures cover all external investments.
38. The Council will not knowingly invest directly in businesses whose activities and practices pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the Council's Corporate Objectives and values. This would include avoiding direct investment in institutions with material links to:
- Human rights abuse (e.g. child labour, political oppression);
 - Environmentally harmful activities (e.g. pollutants, destruction of habitat, fossil fuels); and
 - Socially harmful activities (e.g. tobacco, gambling).
39. The Council will keep under review the sensitivity of its treasury assets and liabilities to inflation and will seek to manage the risk accordingly in the context of the whole of the Council's inflation exposures.
40. The Council will invest its surplus funds with approved counterparties. Where appropriate, the Council is registered as a professional client (under "MIFID II") with the counterparty limits shown below in Table 8 and counterparties included at Appendix (i):

Table 8: Counterparty Details

Credit Rating	Banks* Unsecured	Banks* Secured	Government	Corporates	Registered Providers
UK Govt	n/a	n/a	£ Unlimited 20 Years	n/a	n/a
AAA	£3.0m 3 years	£10.0m 10 years	£10.0m 20 years	£3.0m 10 years	£5.0m 10 years
AA+	£3.0m 2 years	£10.0m 10 years	£10.0m 5 years	£3.0m 4 years	£5.0m 4 years
AA	£3.0m 1 year	£10.0m 4 years	£10.0m 3 years	£3.0m 2 years	£5.0m 4 years
AA-	£3.0m 1 year	£10.0m 2 years			£5.0m 4 years
A+	£3.0m 6 months	£10.0m 2 years			£5.0m 2 years
A	£3.0m 6 months	£10.0m 1 year			£5.0m 2 years
A-	£3.0m 3 months	£10.0m 6 months			£5.0m 2 years
Pooled Funds**	£10m per fund				

*Banks includes Banks and Building Societies.

**Pooled funds do not have a defined maturity date. Monies in Money Market Funds can be withdrawn on the same date; monies in other pooled funds can be withdrawn giving the requisite notice, generally between 1 and 7 days.

Monies in the CCLA Property Fund can be withdrawn on each monthly redemption date, if required; it is the Council's intention to hold its investment over a reasonable time frame for property investments, which is 5 years, subject to cash flow requirements.

41. Although the above table details the counterparties that the Council could invest funds with, it would not invest funds with counterparties against the advice of Link (our TM Advisors) even if they met the criteria above.
42. Changes to any of the above can be authorised by the Section 151 Officer or the Financial Services Manager and thereafter will be reported to the Governance Scrutiny Group. This is to cover exceptional circumstances so that instant decisions can be made in an environment which is both fluid and subject to high risk.
43. The Authority may incur operational exposures, for example though current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore

be kept below £2,000,000 per bank. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Authority maintaining operational continuity.

44. Credit rating information is provided by Link on all active counterparties that comply with the criteria above. A counterparty list will be maintained from this information and any counterparty not meeting the criteria will be removed from the list.
45. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:
 - no new investments will be made,
 - any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
 - full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.
46. Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as “rating watch negative” or “credit watch negative”) so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn [on the next working day] will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

Credit Risk

47. The CIPFA Treasury Management Code recommends that organisations should clearly specify the minimum acceptable credit quality of its counterparties; however they should not rely on credit ratings alone and should recognise their limitations. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations, in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantial doubts about its credit quality, even though it may meet the credit rating criteria.
48. When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2011, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Authority’s cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, via the Debt Management Office or invested in government treasury bills for example, or with other local authorities. This will cause a reduction in the level of investment income earned but will protect the principal sum invested.

Current investments

49. The Council uses its own processes to monitor cash flow and determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Council being forced to borrow on unfavourable

terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium term financial strategy and cash flow forecast.

50. Surplus funds are invested based on the most up to date forecasts of interest rates and in accordance with the Council's cash flow requirements in order to gain the maximum benefit from the Council's cash position throughout the year. Funds are separated between specified and non-specified investments as detailed below.

Specified investments

51. The MHCLG guidance defines specified investments as those:

- Denominated in pound sterling,
- Due to be repaid within 12 months of arrangements,
- Not defined as capital expenditure by legislation, and
- Invested with one of:
 - The UK Government
 - A UK local authority, parish council, or community council, or
 - A body or investment scheme of "high credit quality"

52. The Council now defines "high credit quality" organisations as those having a credit rating of A- and above.

Non-specified investments

53. Any investment not meeting the definition of a specified investment is classed as non-specified. The Council does not intend to make any investments denominated in foreign currencies, nor any that are defined as capital expenditure by legislation, such as company shares. Non-specified investments will therefore be limited to long-term investments, i.e. those that are due to mature 12 months or longer from the date of arrangement, and investments with bodies and scheme not meeting the definition on high credit quality. Limits on non-specified investments are shown in the following table:

Table 9: Non-specified Investment Limits

	Cash Limit
Total long-term investments	£15m
Total investments without credit ratings or rated below A- (except UK Government and local authorities)	£5m
Total investments (except pooled funds) with institutions domiciled in foreign countries rated below AA+	£3m
Total non-specified investments	£15m

Investment Limits

54. The Authority's revenue reserves available to cover investment losses in a worst-case scenario are forecast to be £18.7 million on 31st March 2021. The maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £10.0 million. This figure is constantly under review to assess risk in the case of a single default. A group of banks under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits will also be placed on fund managers, investments in brokers' nominee accounts, foreign countries and industry sectors as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

Table 10: Investment limits

	Cash limit
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£10m each
UK Central Government	Unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£10m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£10m per manager
Negotiable instruments held in a broker's nominee account	£10m per broker
Foreign countries	£3m per country
Registered providers	£5m in total
Unsecured investments with any building society	£3m in total
Loans across unrated corporates	£5m in total
Money Market Funds	£30m in total

Treasury Management limits on activity

55. The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

a) Interest Rate Exposures

56. This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on fixed and variable rate interest rate exposures, expressed as the amount of net interest payable will be:

Table 11: Interest Rate Exposure

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Upper Limit on fixed interest rate exposure	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Upper Limit on variable interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

57. Fixed rate investments and borrowings are those where the rate of interest is fixed for at least 12 months, measured from the start of the financial year or the transaction date if later. All other instruments are classed as variable rate.

Principal Sums Invested over 1 year

58. This limit is intended to contain exposure to the possibility of any loss that may arise as a result of the Council having to seek early repayment of any investments made. The limits on the long-term principle sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end are set at 50% of the sum available for investment (to the nearest £100k), as follows:

Table 12: Principal Sums Invested over 1 year

	2020/21 Estimate £'000	2021/22 Estimate £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000
Limit on Principal invested over 1 year	13,200	10,400	13,000	13,500	14,000	13,800

Policy on the use of financial derivatives

59. Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

60. The Council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Authority is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining

the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

61. Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria. The current value of any amount due from a derivative counterparty will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

Treasury Management Advisors

62. Link Asset Services will act as the Council's treasury management advisors until 31st October 2022. The company provides a range of services which include:
- Technical support on treasury matters and capital finance issues
 - Economic and interest rate analysis
 - Generic investment advice on interest rates, timing and investment instruments; and
 - Credit ratings/market information service comprising the three main credit rating agencies.
63. Whilst the treasury management advisors provide support to the internal treasury function, the current market rules and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code confirms that the final decision on treasury management matters rests with the Council. The service provided by the Council's treasury management advisors is subject to regular review.

Member and Officer Training

64. The increased member consideration of treasury management matters and the need to ensure that officers dealing with treasury management are trained and kept up to date requires a suitable training process for members and officers. In general, members training needs are reported through the Member Development Group, however, the Council will also specifically address this important issue by:
- Periodically facilitating workshops for members on finance issues;
 - Interim reporting and advising members of Treasury issues via GSG;

With regards to officers:

- Attendance at training events, seminars and workshops; and
- Support from the Council's treasury management advisors.
- Identifying officer training needs on treasury management related issues through the Performance Development and Review appraisal process

Other Options Considered

65. The MHCLG Guidance and the CIPFA Code do not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services, having consulted the Cabinet Member for Finance, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller

Commercial Investments

66. The definition of investments in CIPFA's definition of treasury management activities above (paragraph 18) covers all financial assets of the organisation as well as other non-financial assets which the organisation holds primarily for financial returns, such as investment property portfolios. This may therefore include investments which are not managed as part of normal treasury management or under treasury management delegations. All investments require an appropriate investment management and risk management framework, which is outlined below.
67. The Council is committed to becoming self-sustainable as Central Government funding reduces. This previously included ensuring that the Council maximised any income from existing assets and, where there was a business case, investing in assets where there was a commercial return. PWLB will no longer allow Local Authorities to borrow if they invest 'primarily for yield'. The Council has historically held significant capital funding resources but these have been committed to major schemes and, going forward, it may need to undertake external borrowing. Current resources are invested with various financial institutions in line with the Treasury Management Strategy.
68. In recent years, the Council identified specific sums for its Asset Investment Strategy within the Capital Programme which totalled £20m. This included commercial investment in areas such as property and subsidiaries, or loans that supported service outcomes. Of the £8.382m balance at the start of the year, £4.554m was committed to two acquisitions of Business Units in West Bridgford. The purchase of Unit 1 Edwalton Business Park was completed 9 July for £2.083m and Unit 3 Edwalton Business Park was completed 13

October for £2.449m. These were reported to Governance Scrutiny Group in November 2020. The balance £3.828m will be referred to Council for removal from the Programme and will not require funding.

69. The Council will maintain a summary of current material investments, subsidiaries, joint ventures and liabilities, including financial guarantees (ie Streetwise) and the organisation's risk exposure. The current summary is included at Appendix (ii).
70. Individual commercial investment proposals included within the Asset Investment Strategy are subject to specific business appraisals. The governance surrounding such decisions is included in the AIS. As well as considering the Net Present Value, Internal Rate of Return and impact on the General Fund of any commercial investment proposals, the decision to invest also takes into account the following assessment matrix:

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Excellent / very good	Good	Satisfactory	Marginal	Uncertain
Tenancy strength	Multiple tenants with strong financial covenant	Single tenant with strong financial covenant	Single or multiple tenants with good financial covenant	Tenants with average financial covenant	Tenants with poor financial covenant strength
Lease length and break (for main tenants/income)	>15 years	11 - 15 years	10 - 8 years (10 year lease)	7 - 5 years (5 year break)	<5 years or vacant (break Dec 2021 &)
Rate of Return - % rent against capital	>8%	7%-8%	5%-7%	3%-5%	<3%
Portfolio mix (asset type is balanced in portfolio - no more than x% of)	<50%	50%-60%	>60%-70%	70%-80%	>80% of portfolio
Property Sector & Risk	Industrial (lower risk)	Office (lower-mid risk)	Warehouse Retail (med risk)	Retail, Leisure (higher risk)	Residential (not part of investment strategy)
Void (after Lease end including marketing, fit out and rent free)	0-9 months	9-12 months	12-18 months	18-24 months	>24 months
Location	Prime	Not prime but in established location	Secondary	Remote from other developments	Isolated, undeveloped area, limited infrastructure links
Tenure	Freehold	Lease >200 years	Lease 100 - 199 years	Lease 75 - 99 years	Lease <75 years
Repairing terms links to Building quality	Full repairing & insuring	Internal repairing 100% recoverable	Internal repairing partially recoverable	Internal repairing non recoverable	Landlord
Building Quality/Age	<10 years	10-20 years	21-30	31-35	>35
Rental Growth	within 1 year	within 2-5 years	within 5-7 years	within 7-10 years	>10 years
Purchase Price	<£2m	Between £2m and £3m	Between £3m and £4m	Between £4m and £7m	>£7m
Proximity to Borough	within Borough	within Nottinghamshire	within East Midlands	within the Midlands	National
Energy Rating (2018 legislation can't let with F/G assessment)	A/B	C	D	E	F/G

71. To be considered for investment 50% of the criteria above must be excellent, good or satisfactory.
72. The matrix above is supplemented by additional contextual information covering resale opportunities (liquidity), location, risks, benefits and economic conditions.
73. The Government has issued revised guidance on Local Government Investments, effective from April 2018. This guidance introduces additional disclosure requirements some of which are specific to investments of a commercial nature. These disclosures and indicators cover items included in the Council's Asset Investment Strategy, as well as pre-existing commercial investments and are detailed below:

a. **Dependence on commercial income and contribution non-core investments make towards core functions**

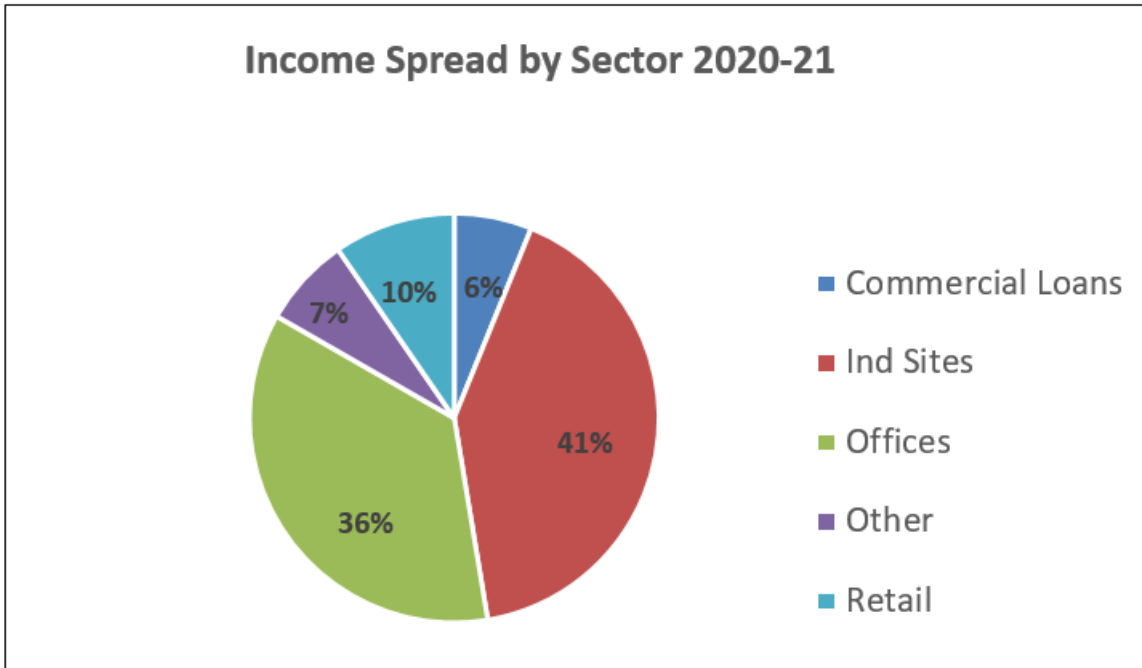
74. The expected contributions from commercial investments included in the Asset Investment Strategy are shown in Table 13. In order to manage the risk to the Council's budget, income from commercial investments should not be a significant proportion of the Council's income. Our objective is that this ratio should not exceed 30%, subject to annual review (as demonstrated below).

Table 13: Commercial Investment income and costs

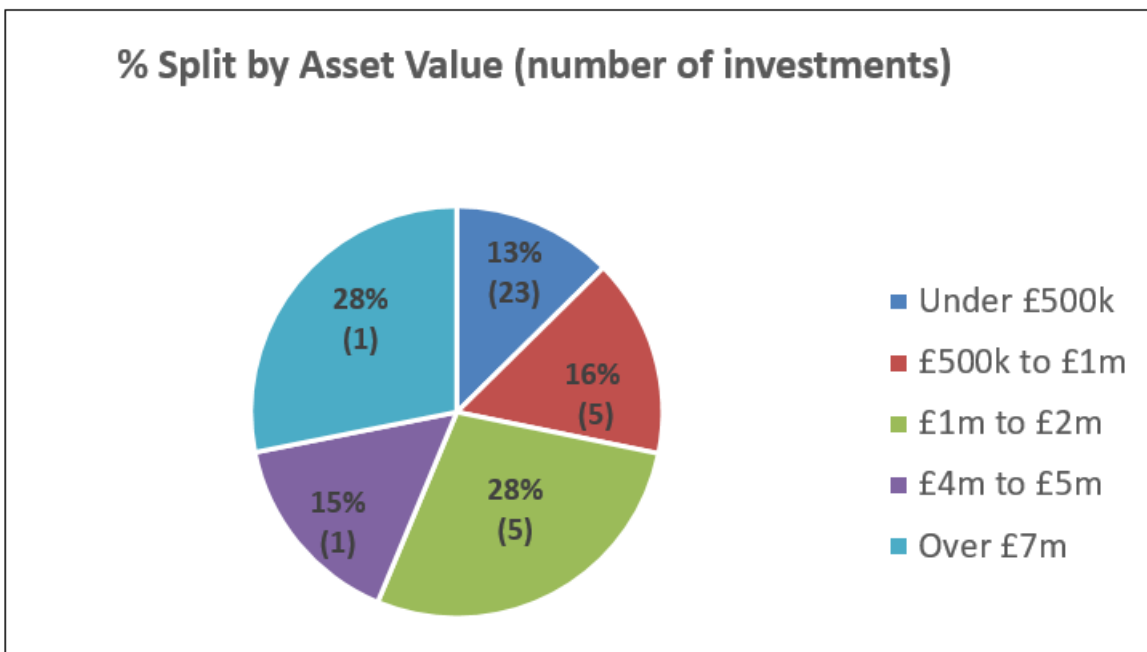
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Commercial Property Income	(1,557)	(1,660)	(2,015)	(2,160)	(2,240)	(2,302)
Running Costs	618	516	517	517	517	517
Net Contribution to core functions	<u>(939)</u>	<u>(1,144)</u>	<u>(1,499)</u>	<u>(1,644)</u>	<u>(1,724)</u>	<u>(1,786)</u>
Interest from Commercial Loans	(83)	(89)	(80)	(72)	(63)	(60)
Total Contribution	<u>(1,022)</u>	<u>(1,233)</u>	<u>(1,579)</u>	<u>(1,716)</u>	<u>(1,787)</u>	<u>(1,846)</u>
Sensitivity:						
+/- 10% Commercial Property Income	156	166	202	216	224	230
Indicator:						
Investment Income as a % of total Council Income	20.0%	22.8%	24.7%	23.9%	24.3%	24.6%
Total Income	8,209	7,669	8,500	9,341	9,485	9,590

b) Risk Exposure Indicators

75. The Council can minimise its exposure to risk by spreading investments across sectors and by avoiding single large-scale investments. Generally there is a spread of investment across sectors. The Council’s commitment to economic regeneration (not purely financial return) has meant that many of its investments have been in industrial units, which have been very successful.



c) Security and Liquidity



76. Commercial investments are held for longer term asset appreciation as well as yield. Investments or sales decisions will normally be planned as part of the consideration of the 5-year capital strategy to maximise the potential return. Nevertheless, the local and national markets are monitored to ensure any gains are maximised or losses minimised.
77. To help ensure asset values are maintained the assets are given quarterly inspections, together with a condition survey every 3 years. Any works required to maintain the value of the property will then form part of Council's spending plans.
78. The liquidity of the assets is also dependent on the condition of the property, the strength of the tenants and the remaining lease lengths. The Council keeps these items under review with a view to maximising the potential liquidity and value of the property wherever possible.
79. The liquidity considerations for commercial investments are intrinsically linked to the level of cash and short-term investments, which help manage and mitigate the Council's liquidity risk.
80. The investments are subject to ongoing review with regards to their financial viability or indeed whether they are surplus to requirement.

Counterparty Registrations under MIFID II

The Council is registered with the following regulated financial services organisations who may arrange investments with other counterparties with whom they have themselves registered:

- BGC Brokers LP
- Royal London Asset Management
- Tradition Uk Ltd
- King & Shaxson
- Aberdeen Asset Management
- Aviva
- Institutional Cash Distributors Ltd
- Federated Investors (UK) LLP
- NEX Treasury
- Invesco Asset Management Ltd
- CCLA
- Goldman Sachs Asset Management
- Black Rock
- HSBC Asset Management
- Imperial Treasury Services

	Current Book Value £000	Previous Book Value £000
The Point Office Accommodation	4.017	3.200
Hollygate Lane, Cotgrave Industrial Units	2.709	2.435
Bardon Single Industrial Unit	1.800	1.800
Trent Boulevard	1.407	1.400
Colliers Business Park Phase 2	1.315	1.250
Bridgford Hall Aparthotel and Registry Office	1.214	1.220
Finch Close	0.959	0.925
Boundary Court	0.816	0.805
Unit 10 Chapel Lane	0.677	0.670
Colliers Business Park Phase 1	0.721	0.610
New Offices Cotgrave	0.452	0.345
Mobile Home Park	0.476	0.330
Cotgrave Precinct Shops	0.500	0.450
TOTAL INVESTMENT PROPERTY*	17.063	15.440
Notts County Cricket Club Loan	1.775	1.775
TOTAL	18.838	17.215

* Note values are as at 31st March 2019 and 2020

Glossary of Terms

CCLA Property Fund - this a local authority property investment fund. The property fund is designed to achieve long term capital growth and a rising income from investments in the commercial property sector.

Covered Bonds – these investments are secured on the bank’s assets, which limits the potential losses in the unlikely event of insolvency, and means they are exempt from bail-in.

Financial Derivatives – A financial contract that derives its value from the performance of an underlying asset

LIBID – London Inter Bank Bid Rate. The rate at which banks are willing to borrow from other banks

Money Market Funds – these funds are pooled investment vehicles consisting of money market deposits and similar instruments. They have the advantage of providing wide diversification of investment risks.

Pooled Funds – shares in diversified investment vehicles consisting of different investment types including banks, equity shares and property, these funds have the advantage of providing wide diversification of investment risks

Use of Earmarked Reserves in 2021/22**Appendix 6**

	Projected Opening Balance	Projected Income	Projected Expenditure	Net Change in Year	REF	Projected Closing Balance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000
Investment Reserves						
Regeneration and Community Projects	1,721	188	(50)	138	1	1,859
Sinking Fund - Investments	179	271	(450)	(179)	2	0
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	8,420	1,633	(1,074)	559	3	8,979
Corporate Reserves						
Organisation Stabilisation	7,176	0	(4,777)	(4,777)	4	2,399
Climate Change Action	800	0	0	0		800
Development Corporation	400	0	0	0		400
Risk and Insurance	100	0	0	0		100
Planning Appeals	350	0	0	0		350
Elections	100	50	0	50	5	150
Operating Reserves						
Planning	209	0	(78)	(78)	6	131
Leisure Centre Maintenance	7	0	0	0		7
TOTAL	19,462	2,142	(6,429)	(4,287)		15,175

Notes:

1. Net £138k being the movement on this reserve to support Special Expenses capital schemes
2. £271k from Investment Property income to support future capital expenditure. £450k used for enhancement works at The Point and Manvers Business Park
3. £1.633m Receipts; MRP release: Arena £1.012m and Cotgrave Redevelopment £62k.
4. £4m release of S31 Grant Surplus needed in 21/22; £753k to meet the in-year budget deficit and £24k release of Council Tax reimbursement payment.
5. £50k to replenish the Elections Reserve
6. £78k release for Local Plan Examinations

Rushcliffe Borough Council Pay Policy Statement 2021-22

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement sets out the Council's policies in relation to the pay of its workforce, particularly its Senior Officers, in line with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. The Statement is approved by full Council each year and published on the Council's website demonstrating an open and transparent approach to pay policy.
- 1.2 This Statement draws together the Council's policies relating to the payment of the workforce particularly:
- Senior Officers
 - Its lowest paid employees; and
 - The relationship between the pay of Senior Officers and the pay of other employees
- 1.3 For the purposes of this statement 'pay' includes basic salary, pension and all other allowances arising from employment.

2. Objectives of this Statement

- 2.1 This Statement sets out the Council's key policy principles in relation to pay evidencing a transparent and open process. It does not supersede the responsibilities and duties placed on the Council in its role as an employer and under employment law. These responsibilities and duties have been considered when formulating the Statement.
- 2.2 This Statement aims to ensure the Council's approach to pay attracts and retains a high performing workforce whilst ensuring value for money. It sits alongside the information on pay that the Council already publishes as part of its responsibilities under the Code of Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency. Further details of this information can be found on the Council's website at the following address:

<http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy/aboutthecouncil/seniorofficers/roleandremuneration/> -

3. Senior Officers

3.1 The Localism Act sets out a definition of Senior Officers for the purposes of pay policy statements. Applying that definition to roles at Rushcliffe Borough Council, the following 10 posts from an overall current establishment of 259, would be included: -

- Chief Executive
- Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)
- Executive Manager - Transformation
- Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods
- Executive Manager - Communities
- Service Manager – Finance and Commercial
- Service Manager – Transformation
- Service Manager – Neighbourhoods
- Service Manager – Communities
- Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

4 The Policies

4.1 The Council consults when setting pay for all employees. The Council will meet or reimburse authorised travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for attendance at approved business meetings and training events. The Council does not regard such costs as remuneration but as non-pay operational costs.

5. Pay of the Council's Lowest Paid Employees

5.1 The Council has defined its lowest paid employees as those on the lowest pay point of the Council's pay and grading structure, excluding apprentices. On this basis the lowest paid full-time equivalent employee of the Council earns £17,841. The hourly rate of this salary, at £9.25 is above the National Living Wage which is currently £7.83 per hour for employees aged 25 or over and exceeds the National Minimum Wage maximum of £8.20 for employees aged 21-24. From 1st April 2021, these statutory rates will be increasing to £8.91 and £8.36 per hour respectively.

5.2 The Council does not explicitly set the pay of any individual or group of posts by reference to a pay multiple. The Council feels that pay multiples cannot capture the complexity of a dynamic and highly varied workforce in terms of job content, skills and experience required. In simple terms, the Council sets different levels of basic pay to reflect differences in levels of responsibility.

5.3 The Head of Paid Service, or her delegated representative, will give due regard to the published Pay Policy Statement before the appointment of any Officers. Full Council will have the opportunity to discuss any appointment exceeding £100,000 before an offer of appointment is made, in line with the Council's Officer Employment procedure rules within Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

6. Additional Payments Made to Chief Officers – Election Duties

6.1 The Chief Executive is nominated as the Returning Officer. In accordance with the national agreement, the Chief Executive is entitled to receive and retain the personal

fees arising from performing the duties of Returning Officer, Acting Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer or Deputy Acting Returning Officer and similar positions which he or she performs subject to the payment of pension contributions thereon, where appropriate.

- 6.2 The role of Deputy Returning Officer may be applied to any other post and payment may not be made simply because of this designation. Payments to the Returning Officer are governed as follows:
- for national elections, fees are prescribed by legislation;
 - for local elections, fees are determined within a local framework used by other district councils within the county. This framework is applied consistently and is reviewed periodically by lead Electoral Services Officers within Nottinghamshire. This includes proposals on fees for all staff employed in connection with elections. These fees are available for perusal on the Council's website.
- 6.3 As these fees are related to performance and delivery of specific elections duties, they are distinct from the process for the determination of pay for Senior Officers.

Appendix to the Pay Policy Policies on other aspects of pay

Process for setting the pay of Senior Officers

The pay of the Chief Executive is based on an agreed pay scale which is agreed by Council prior to appointment. Changes to this are determined by the Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Opposition, who are advised by an agreed external professional and the Council's Strategic Human Resources Adviser. This pay scale is subject to pay awards which are negotiated nationally by the JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities.

The pay of all Officers including Senior Officers is determined by levels of responsibility, job content and the skills and experience required. Consideration is also given to benchmarking against other similar roles, market forces and the challenges facing the authority at that time and to maximise efficiency. The pay of these posts is determined through the Chief Executive, or her nominated representative, in consultation with the Council's Strategic Human Resources Adviser and in line with the Council's pay scales and its agreed scheme of delegation.

The Council moved away from the national conditions of service in 1990 and pay scales are set locally.

As with all employees, the Council would look to appoint on the best possible terms to secure the best candidate for the job. However, there are factors that could influence the rate offered to an individual, including the relevant experience of the candidate, their current rate of pay and market forces.

All Senior Officers are expected to devote the whole of their service to the Authority and are excluded from taking up additional business, ad hoc services or additional appointments without consent as set out in the Council's code of conduct.

Terms and Conditions – All Employees

All employees are governed by the local terms and conditions as set out in the Employee handbook.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Every employee is automatically enrolled into the Local Government Pension Scheme. Employer and employee contributions are based on pensionable pay, which is salary plus, for example, shift allowances, bonuses, contractual overtime, statutory sick pay and maternity pay as relevant.

For more comprehensive details of the local government pension scheme see: www.lgps.org.uk and www.nottspf.org.uk

Neither the scheme nor the Council adopt different policies with regard to benefits for any category of employee and the same terms apply to all staff. It is not normal Council policy to enhance retirement benefits but there is flexibility contained within the policy for enhancement of benefits and the Council will consider each case on its merits.

Car Allowances

The Council pays mileage rates at HMRC recommended rates.

Pay Increments

Where applicable pay increments for all employees are paid on an annual basis until the maximum of the scale is reached. The Chief Executive, or her nominated representative, has the discretion to award and remove increments of officers' dependant on satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance.

Relocation Allowance

Where it is necessary for a newly appointed employee to relocate to take up appointment, the Council may make a contribution towards relocation expenses. The same policy applies to Senior Officers and other employees. Payment will be made against a range of allowable costs for items necessarily incurred in selling and buying a property and moving into the area. The costs include estate agents' fees, legal fees, stamp duty, storage and removal costs, carpeting and curtains, short term rental etc. The Council will pay 80% of some costs and 100% of others or make a fixed sum available. If an employee leaves within two years of first employment, they may be required to reimburse a proportion of any relocation expenses.

Professional fees

The Council currently meets the cost of professional fees and subscriptions for employees where it is a requirement of their employment or their contract.

Returning Officer Payments

In accordance with the national agreement the Chief Executive is entitled to receive and retain the personal fees arising from performing the duties of returning officer, acting returning officer, deputy returning officer or deputy acting return officer and similar positions which he or she performs subject to the payment of pension contributions thereon, where appropriate.

Fees for returning officer and other electoral duties are identified and paid separately for local government elections, elections to the UK Parliament and EU Parliament and other electoral processes such as referenda. As these relate to performance and delivery of specific elections duties, they are distinct from the process for the determination of pay for Senior Officers.

Managing Organisational Change Policy

The original Managing Organisation Change Policy was agreed by Council in March 2007 (revised 2010). The Council's policy on the payment of redundancy payments is set out in this policy. The redundancy payment is based on the length of continuous local government service which is used to determine a multiplier which is then applied to actual pay.

The policy provides discretion to enhance the redundancy and pension contribution of the individual and each case would be considered taking into account individual circumstances. Copies of the policy are available on the Council's website.

The policy is subject to review to ensure it is compliant with any new legislation and regulations which affect redundancy payments.

Payments on termination

The Council does not provide any further payment to employees leaving the Council's employment other than in respect of accrued leave which by agreement is untaken at the date of leaving or payments that are agreed or negotiated in line with current employment law practices.

Publication of information relating to remuneration of Senior Officers

The Pay Policy Statement will be published annually on the Council's website following its approval by full Council each year.

Gender Pay gap reporting

The Council publishes its Gender Pay Gap information annually on the Council's website and on the Governments website.

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Cabinet

Tuesday, 9 February 2021

Crematorium Update

Report of the Executive Manager – Transformation

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation – Councillor A Edyvean

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy Action Plan (2019-2023) identifies the development of a crematorium in the Borough by 2022 as a priority: to deliver this important community infrastructure in order to offer additional capacity for cremations in Rushcliffe.
- 1.2. In July 2020, Cabinet authorised the Chief Executive to appoint a multi-disciplinary design team to develop detailed designs for the crematorium and provide a pre-tender build estimate. The Council appointed Ridge and Partners who have been working with a team of specialists and the Council to design a high quality, efficient and fit for purpose facility. The estimated cost plan is greater than the budget previously agreed by Cabinet and this report provides further details outlining the reasons why; the impact on the business case; and requests approval for a further allocation in the Council's capital programme.
- 1.3. Cabinet also requested the Chief Executive to continue investigations into new technologies to enable the delivery of a greener crematorium for the Borough. Further information about the outcome of these investigations is included in this report.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet supports the allocation of an additional £2m in the 2021/22 capital programme for the delivery of a new crematorium, to be included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. There is demand within the Borough for a modern and efficient crematorium, the development of the proposed crematorium will meet this demand and investment in the facility makes sound economic sense for the Council.
- 3.2. The crematorium will provide a modern, accessible, community facility for the residents of Rushcliffe, a Borough which has been tasked by Government with delivering a large increase in housing (an additional 13,150 homes with the

adoption of the Local Plan), and will therefore see a corresponding growth in population and services required.

- 3.3. The project costs have increased for three specific reasons, as outlined in section 4 below. Costs have been scrutinised and challenged and a benchmark exercise has been undertaken which demonstrates the pre-tender estimate is within an acceptable range.
- 3.4. Based on a project cost of £8.5m (including land), it is expected that the crematorium will provide the council with an estimated revenue cash return of £68m over the next 40 years with the in-house operating model. This represents an internal rate of return of 9%.

4. Supporting Information

4.1. Background

- 4.1.1. In 2018, Cabinet approved the principle of providing a new crematorium in Stragglethorpe to provide much needed additional community infrastructure to serve Rushcliffe residents. £6.5m was included in the Council's capital programme to purchase the site and develop a crematorium.
- 4.1.2. In July 2020, Cabinet authorised the Chief Executive to undertake a procurement exercise to appoint a multi-disciplinary design team to develop detailed designs for the crematorium and perform contract administration and management duties for the construction contract. Following a procurement exercise, in September 2020, Ridge and Partners was appointed having demonstrated a clear understanding of the unique design requirements of a crematorium and an innovative approach and commitment to environmental credentials.
- 4.1.3. Officers have been working with Ridge to develop designs for the crematorium and ensure that the facility will provide the best possible experience for our residents and contribute to our carbon neutral ambitions.
- 4.1.4. After a substantial amount of collaborative work with a keen focus on value engineering, Ridge has prepared a pre-tender estimate for the project, which exceeds the allocated budget.
- 4.1.5. There are three main factors impacting the pre-tender estimate: the VAT position of the project; the cost of landscaping the site; and the cost of an electric cremator.
- 4.1.6. External advice has been sought on the VAT position of this project. Building the crematorium will result in the Council breaching its de minimus limit in 2021-22, incurring unrecoverable exempt VAT in each of these years. This position requires an additional 20% allocation onto the cost of the project, excluding land purchase.

- 4.1.7. The original capital allocation was based on cost estimates provided to the Council by an external party in 2018. As work commenced with Ridge, and an early cost appraisal was carried out, it became apparent that the cost of landscaping the site had been substantially underestimated. The Council has worked closely with Ridge on the landscaping scheme to ensure it remains a high quality scheme while achieving cost savings where possible. This has been a successful process and costs have been substantially reduced over the course of this exercise. However, the pre-tender estimate remains in excess of the original allocation. Further options will continue to be explored to achieve additional savings on the landscaping scheme where possible.
- 4.1.8. At the inception of this project, it was the intention for the crematorium to have a gas cremator as is standard in the UK. In line with the Council’s environmental and carbon management ambitions, considerable research was undertaken into more carbon friendly means of cremation. Electric cremators are being manufactured in Holland and Germany and have been installed across Europe. They are designed to be highly efficient, reaching and maintaining a temperature, which minimises energy consumption. Electric cremators release around 90% less carbon than a conventional gas cremator and release an estimated half the NOx emissions of a gas cremator. For these reasons, it is proposed to install an electric cremator in this facility. Whilst electric cremators are more efficient, cheaper to run in the long term with lower maintenance costs, there is a greater upfront cost.
- 4.1.9. Officers have carried out a benchmarking exercise to establish the capital costs of comparable schemes, which have been built in the past 18 months or are forthcoming. The capital costs of four schemes are outlined below. The Council’s proposed capital expenditure of £8.5m including land purchase, benchmarks reasonably against the estimated costs of forthcoming schemes by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

Local Authority	Capital Cost
West Lindsey (opened in January 2020)	£6m (including land purchase) Landscaping was reduced quite significantly during value engineering of the initial project to bring down overall costs. In January 2021, Members approved an additional undisclosed capital investment budget and subsequent expenditure in order to deliver a new landscape scheme for the site.
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (expected)	£6.9m (excluding land purchase)

to be operational by August 2021)	
East Riding of Yorkshire Council (expected to be operational by Autumn 2022)	£8.5m (excluding land purchase)
Bradford Metropolitan District Council (expected to be operational by end of 2022)	£9.1m (including land purchase)

4.1.10. The business case for the crematorium has been revised to assess the potential impact of an additional £2m project cost, as shown in the table below.

	Internal Borrowing	PWLB Loan @ 3.03%	Total Project Cost	IRR	NPV	Payback Period (years)	Year 1 Cost per cremation
Original Budget	£3.5m	£3m	£6.5	10.86%	£21,733,362	13.8	£820
Plus £2m	£3.5m	£5m	£8.5	9.19%	£19,688,500	15.9	£874

4.1.11. In 2020, the average cost of cremation locally was £843. The table illustrates how the cost of additional borrowing could be absorbed by a small increase in the cremation fee to £874 in the opening year. It would ordinarily be expected to see a 3% increase in charges year on year, which would increase the local average to £894 when the facility opens in 2022, making the fee for the Rushcliffe crematorium fall below the average locally.

4.1.12. The business case includes an amount for interest on the PWLB loan, these are subject to change and the Council has taken a prudent approach in assuming a higher rate of interest (as was the case when the business case was first modelled) than is currently available. The business model will change based on the interest rate at the time of borrowing.

4.2. Environmental Considerations

4.2.1. Rushcliffe's carbon neutral target will be embedded in all aspects of the project, not just in respect of the cremator equipment but also in terms of building design and materials.

4.2.2. The design team has focused on a 'fabric first' approach: ensuring airtightness, correct orientation of the building and high levels of

insulation as being the most effective methods to having an efficient building and low carbon building. In addition, other equipment is being considered, such as electrically powered air source heat pumps for heating and hot water as an environmentally friendly alternative to a traditional gas boiler. Solar panels (PV) are also being considered, to allow some of the electricity demand in the building to be met with renewable on-site generation, providing further contributions to the sustainability of the building.

4.2.3. The electric cremator, as detailed above, will also provide considerable reductions in emissions and be significantly more efficient to operate.

4.2.4. The landscaping offers the opportunity to maximise the biodiversity on site to encourage a range of species to find a habitat here. Existing trees and hedges will be preserved and complemented with additional extensive tree, hedge and shrub planting, along with an open wet attenuation pond, grassed and wildflower areas.

4.3. In-house Operating Model

4.3.1. In July 2020, Cabinet agreed that an in-house operating model provides the best solution for the Council and should be developed by working alongside the wider bereavement sector.

4.3.2. Details of this in-house operating model are being developed, with an emphasis on providing the highest quality service to our residents, whilst working with the wider bereavement sector and local Funeral Directors to develop the service.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

Rather than proceeding with the development, the Council could sell the site with the benefit of planning permission and leave the delivery of a new crematorium in the Borough to the wider market. The planning status of the site would likely generate private development interest resulting in the delivery of this much needed community infrastructure. This option would not allow the Council to influence the design and operation of the facility or provide a revenue return, which could be used to contribute to other community infrastructure projects. Therefore, this option is not recommended.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

6.1. If the Council decides not to invest in a new crematorium and chooses to leave provision to the wider market, there is no guarantee that this much needed community infrastructure would be delivered in a timely manner or even at all.

6.2. The financial case is predicated on certain assumptions including number of cremations undertaken, running costs, staffing and borrowing costs. Whilst these estimates are based on well-reasoned assumptions, they are estimates and not certain.

- 6.3. Interest rates are subject to change and the Council has taken a prudent approach in assuming a higher rate of interest (as was the case when the business case was first modelled) than is currently available. The business model will change based on the interest rates at the time of borrowing. Borrowing will be on the basis of a fixed interest rate.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

- 7.1.1. Within the Council's capital programme, £6.5m was allocated to the design and build of a crematorium, inclusive of land purchase.
- 7.1.2. An additional £2m is now requested due to build and landscaping estimates being higher than originally anticipated, bringing the total estimated cost of the project to £8.5m.
- 7.1.3. To offset and mitigate the potential additional borrowing, which may be required, the cost per cremation to customers has been increased within the business model (see paragraph 4.1.10).
- 7.1.4. The revenue returns are outlined in paragraph 3.4 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy will be updated accordingly, with the Transformation Programme being revised as necessary. This will be reinvested back into both the facility and other areas in line with the Council's corporate objectives.

7.2. Legal Implications

- 7.2.1. The procurement of the construction contract will be completed in accordance with Procurement Law.
- 7.2.2. The terms of the contract(s) will be subject to legal review.

7.3. Equalities Implications

- 7.3.1. The crematorium will be a secular facility although services may be religious in content. Some religions do not undertake cremations and residents from these religions, as well as other residents whose preference is burial, will continue to be buried after death rather than cremated. However, at present cremations account for 79% of funerals in England and Wales and this project seeks to meet this particular need. There are also several burial grounds, both religious and secular, in the Borough.
- 7.3.2. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the next phase of the design work on the project.

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

Any new build that the Council is involved in will look to design out crime and ensure security and safety of the site.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Sensitive after-life care and bereavement services are an essential part of the quality of life for residents, their friends and family members. This scheme will provide timely services in a peaceful location with modern and flexibly sized accommodation.
Efficient Services	This is an opportunity for the Council to invest its capital in new services for its residents, which will be run in an efficient manner with high levels of care and customer service for the bereaved as the priority.
Sustainable Growth	The level of housing growth in the Borough for 13,150 new homes during the life of the Local Plan will lead to population growth and the crematorium is an example of the community infrastructure that is needed to support it.
The Environment	The designs for the crematorium will include carbon offsetting and energy efficiency measures as far as is practicable in line with the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral.

9. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet supports the allocation of an additional £2m in the 2021/22 capital programme for the delivery of a new crematorium, to be included in the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

For more information contact:	Leanne Ashmore lashmore@rushcliffe.gov.uk 0115 9148578
Background papers available for Inspection:	Report to Cabinet 13 November 2019 'Strategic Land Acquisition for Potential Crematorium' Report to Cabinet 9 December 2019 'Crematorium' Report to Cabinet 14 July 2020 'Crematorium Update'
List of appendices:	

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Cabinet

Tuesday, 9 February 2021

Covid 19: Update Report

Report of the Chief Executive

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

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. Following the report of the Chief Executive to Cabinet on 8 December 2020, this report is to update the Cabinet on the work completed as part of the Council's continued response to Covid 19.
- 1.2. The report is not intended to provide an update on the financial impact of Covid 19 on the Council; this has been provided in other reports to Councillors in September and November 2020, and a further update will be given to Cabinet in March 2021.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet notes the work of officers of the Council and partners in responding to and supporting the recovery from Covid 19.

3. Reasons for recommendation

- 3.1. This report provides an update on the current impact of Covid 19 and how this has changed since the report in December 2020. It sets out the response of the Council and partners to the pandemic.
- 3.2. The report is correct at the time of writing but as we have experienced, the situation can change quickly. It is important, therefore, that we remain flexible and responsive to these new challenges and the report reflects the need to do this.

4. Supporting information

- 4.1. Since the report in December 2020, there have been a number of changes to the levels of restrictions imposed locally and nationally. As the country came out of the national lock down in place in November 2020, all areas were then put into a new tier system, the tiers were consistent across the country to avoid confusion for the public and business owners.

- 4.2. Nottinghamshire was placed into tier 3 in December 2020. However, in the run up to Christmas, cases, particularly in London and the South East, increased rapidly. It is thought this is due to an identified new variant of the Covid 19 virus, which is more transmissible; therefore, more people are becoming infected.
- 4.3. The increasing trend in cases started to be seen in areas outside of London, as it appeared the new variant was spreading across the country. Nottinghamshire, like many other areas, moved to tier 4 between Christmas and New Year in response to rising cases and hospital admissions.
- 4.4. The table below sets out a timeline of these changes and an overview of the restrictions at each stage on both residents and businesses:

Lockdown restrictions since November 2020	
5 November	National Lockdown, for four weeks overriding the Tier 3 measures
Midnight on 2 December	The country comes out of national lockdown and Nottinghamshire enters new tier 3 : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal care services closed • All hospitality venues to close except for takeaway (including alcohol) • Non-essential retail remains open • No meeting indoors or outdoors (in private garden or public venue e.g. pub) with people from outside your household (unless in your support bubble) • Can meet with groups of six in outdoor public places • Leisure and sporting facilities e.g. gyms can reopen.
Midnight on 30 December	Tier 4 restrictions introduced and so changes to the above include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-essential retail must close • Leisure and sporting facilities e.g. gyms must close. • Can only meet one other member of a different household in an outdoor public space.
Midnight on 4 January	National Lockdown and so in addition to the above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government issues stay at home message • All schools close. • Hospitality venues – except for takeaway of food and non-alcoholic drinks only (alcohol can only be provided as part of a delivery)

- 4.5. In response to the announcement on 29 December 2020, that Nottinghamshire was moving into tier 4 staff took a number of immediate actions including:
- Contacted Parkwood and Mitie to ensure they had the arrangements in place for closing the centres and were informing customers;
 - Made arrangements with the Bingham Market Manager to switch the market (due to take place on 31 December 2020) to essential stall holders only;
 - Updated the High Street Ambassadors who were on patrol over the New Year period about the new restrictions and ensured their patrols were targeted to the right places in light of the new restrictions; and
 - Communications messages to residents about the new restrictions in place.

- 4.6. The closure of leisure centres for another extended period is a concern for the Council, as it will have a further impact on budgets. In addition, it is a concern for the health (physical and mental) and wellbeing of residents. Officers from the Council are in regular dialogue with Parkwood and Mitie to provide support where required. A funding application has been submitted to The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as part of the National Leisure Recovery Fund, to provide much needed financial support to our leisure centres. The National Leisure Recovery Fund seeks to support eligible public sector leisure centres to reopen to the public, giving the sport and physical activity sector the best chance of recovery to a position of sustainable operation over the medium term. The £100 million worth of funding is being managed and administered on behalf of DCMS by Sport England. An application was submitted on 8 January 2021, and the Council is currently awaiting the outcome of this bid.
- 4.7. The national lockdown, which began at midnight on 4 January 2021, meant some further restrictions on businesses but as we were already in tier 4 this was not as significant a change as was experienced in other areas. The main change was that businesses offering takeaways could no longer offer takeaway alcohol, this can now only be provided as part of a delivery. It is hoped this would stop any congregation of people in town centres.
- 4.8. The Council continues to provide support to local businesses and residents in the Borough in the response to Covid 19. A detailed update on this support was provided to the Cabinet in December 2020. Since then the Council has carried out some additional work including:
- A how to guide and video on click and collect to support local high street businesses to set this up;
 - Enforcement action where required by the Environmental Health Team;
 - Continued support for the Rushcliffe Business Partnership fortnightly networking; and
 - Temporarily moving West Bridgford Farmers Market to Bridgford Road car park to enable them to continue to operate.
- 4.9. In addition, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provided funding to Nottinghamshire County Council to assist vulnerable families with children and other vulnerable households, particularly affected by the pandemic. 80% of funding has been allocated to households with children and administered via schools, early years and further education setting.
- 4.10. The remaining 20% (£450k) was intended for households with no children and vulnerable individuals/couples who have been identified as being in urgent need. The Nottinghamshire allocation has been apportioned to each district.
- 4.11. Rushcliffe received £23,800 on 18 December 2020, which was passported out to established community groups and organisations who were able to assist with food parcels and other essentials supplies over the winter months. All funding must be used by 31 March 2021.

- 4.12. Following consultation with the programme manager at Nottinghamshire County Council, RBC Executive Management Team, partner organisations and relevant community groups funds were allocated on 21 December 2020, to those listed in the table below:

Community Group	Location	Amount
The Friary	West Bridgford	£2500
Meet, Greet & Eat	West Bridgford	£2500
Cotgrave Community Kitchen	Cotgrave	£2500
Bingham Helping Hands	Bingham	£2500
East Leake Parish Council	East Leake	£2500
	Total	£12,500

- 4.13. Demand will be evaluated at the end of January 2021, to allocate the remaining funding up until the end of the financial year. If funding is not allocated, it will need to be given back but it is intended that all funding will be allocated by the end of March 2021.
- 4.14. The Council's revenues and finance teams continue to be very busy processing and paying grants for businesses. This has included paying different grants for periods in tier 3, tier 4 and now the national lockdown and specific grants for 'wet pubs'. Since November 2020 lockdown, the Council has paid out £7.2m in grants (65% of funding) equating to 3,143 in grants paid.
- 4.15. Details of the grants available for the national lockdown both mandatory and discretionary schemes are available on the Council's website.
- 4.16. Patrols by the High Street Ambassadors are targeted based on discussions with Nottinghamshire Police and local intelligence received. For the last few weeks, their focus has been on parks and open spaces particularly Rushcliffe Country Park, which is particularly busy at weekends. Other areas of focus have been farmers markets (West Bridgford and Bingham), Radcliffe on Trent Skate Park and West Bridgford town centre.
- 4.17. Business compliance with the guideline has been high with a few exceptions. Where there have been issues identified, the Council has worked closely with Nottinghamshire Police to take the appropriate action quickly.
- 4.18. The Council continues to maintain a high level of service delivery since the start of the pandemic, shifting resources where required. To date, the direct impact of Covid 19 on the Council in terms of staff sickness or those self-isolating has been, of the approximately 260 employees:
- 15 staff have tested positive for Covid; and
 - 74 staff have self-isolated to date (this includes those that isolated and continued to work and those who did not work as their role did not enable them to work from home).

This is an increase since the report in December 2020, of six staff who have tested positive and 18 staff who have had to self-isolate.

Track and trace and vaccination centres

- 4.19. Since the last report in December 2020, the mass vaccinations programme has begun across the country. This is predominantly being delivered at doctors' surgeries and hospitals. There are, however, some mass vaccination sites (none located in Rushcliffe) and some smaller community based sites. One of those is Gamston Community Hall, which is now a local vaccination centre. Whilst the NHS runs the facility, the Council was involved in the initial set up.
- 4.20. In addition, as well as the testing sites (one is sited at Rushcliffe Arena) work is ongoing with partners to identify possible lateral flow testing sites.
- 4.21. The Council continue to help support individuals who are self-isolating, who are on low incomes and cannot work from home, with £500 payments from government funding. The funding is until 31 January 2021, and at the time of writing 260 applications received, 93 payments have been made, amounting to £46,500 (from funding of £56,500).

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

This is an update report on the work done since December 2020, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. For the different areas of work, officers and Councillors considered different options as required. The response and recovery will continue to be flexible to be able to respond to changes in regulations.

6. Risks and uncertainties

Covid 19 in itself creates much risk for the Council both in its ability to deliver its Corporate Priorities and the impact on the Council's budget.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

The financial impact of Covid is being reported through the Council's normal financial and performance reporting processes with a further update due to both Corporate Overview Group and Cabinet in February and March 2021, respectively.

7.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report; decisions have been taken in accordance with the Constitution.

7.3. Equalities Implications

The pandemic has had a disproportionate economic impact on some people including young people. This impact is being considered in the recovery work, with activity being targeted across Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire and the wider D2N2 area as required.

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

While the pandemic has had an impact on crime and disorder, most notably an increase in reports of domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour in some parks/open spaces, there are no crime and disorder implications associated with the contents of this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The response and recovery from Covid 19 is in place to ensure we maintain the quality of life for our residents.
Efficient Services	In response to Covid 19, staff have had to be redeployed to ensure essential services for our residents could be maintained. The pandemic has had a significant impact on Council budgets and, therefore, a review will be required of service delivery across the whole Council to support further efficiencies.
Sustainable Growth	The pandemic has had a significant impact on our businesses and, therefore, a package of support (from national and local government) has been put in place to support those businesses who have been impacted the most. We will continue to work with our partners to support our businesses to survive the pandemic and grow as the economy recovers.
The Environment	The focus of recovery is supporting a green economic recovery. This includes for the Council adapting the way it works, e.g. continued working from home, but also supporting our businesses to change the way they work too.

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet notes the work of officers of the Council and partners in responding to and supporting the recovery from Covid 19.

For more information contact:	Katherine Marriott Chief Executive 0115 914 8291 kmarriott@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	Report to Cabinet May 2020 Report to Cabinet November 2020 Report to Cabinet December 2020
List of appendices:	

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Cabinet

Tuesday, 9 February 2021

Electoral Review of Rushcliffe

Report of the Chief Executive

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

1. Purpose of report

The Council has participated in a Review of Council Size as requested by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). This report presents the Review for discussion before being presented to Council in March and submitted to the LGBCE.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) endorses the Review of Council Size which proposes an increase in the number of councillors for Rushcliffe Borough Council to 46 councillors subject to Full Council approval in March 2021; and
- b) requests that the Chief Executive make arrangements for the Review to be sent to the Commission as the Council's draft submission subject to Full Council approval in March 2021.

3. Reasons for recommendation

- 3.1. The Review of Council Size required the Council to consider how many councillors are needed to effectively represent the electorate and govern the authority.
- 3.2. The Borough is anticipating growth of 18% over the review period of 2020-2027. This increases the average number of electors per councillor from 2,058 to 2,509 based on the current number of councillors.
- 3.3. However, this growth is not evenly spread across the Borough. When considered at a ward level there are much greater variances between wards. Therefore, the Council is recommending an increase of two councillor positions bringing the overall number of councillors for Rushcliffe to 46. This increase in the number of councillors brings the average number of electors per councillor to 2,400.

- 3.4. The increase has been recommended to meet the substantial growth in two particular areas of the Borough (the Fairham development and the Gamston / Tollerton development). Numbers of electors in these two areas are predicted to be between 3,500 and 4,000 in 2027 (with further growth continuing after that date) making these areas comparable in size to those which already have two ward councillors. Further details are provided in the submission.
- 3.5. This recommended increase is also in response to feedback from councillors who have already experienced significant growth within their ward and have reported the increased workload involved in dealing with new developments, new residents and the existing community.
- 3.6. The Council welcomes the second stage of the Review process which looks at the boundaries between wards to equalise (as far as is possible) the number of electors per councillor.

4. Supporting information

- 4.1. In September 2020, Council received a briefing from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England outlining the Review of the Council Size process and background to the review. The review process requires the Council to make a submission setting out its proposals for council size evidencing the reasoning and rationale for this. This report presents the draft Review of Council Size for consideration before it is forwarded to Council for approval in March 2021.
- 4.2. The Review document, based on a template provided by the Commission, covers:
 - The context in which the Council operates.
 - Strategic Leadership including its governance model, portfolios, and delegated responsibilities.
 - Accountability including internal scrutiny, statutory functions, and external partnerships.
 - Community Involvement including both community leadership and casework.
- 4.3. As well as an analysis of Council meetings (demonstrating how much time councillors spend representing the Borough in the decision-making process), a councillor workload survey has been undertaken. Amongst other findings detailed in the report, the survey responses from councillors suggested that their current workload was about right and that they felt the Borough Council had the right number of councillors for its current electorate.
- 4.4. The Review of Council Size document recommends that the number of councillors at Rushcliffe Borough Council is increased to 46. Consideration has been given to the affect of reducing the number of councillors (as has been done in the last two reviews) and increasing the number of councillors on the Council's ability to self-govern.

- 4.5. At present the number of electors represented by each councillor is 2,058 on average. There are five wards in which this differs by more than 10% (which is the Commission's trigger for a Review).
- 4.6. The Borough is anticipating growth of 18% over the review period of 2020-2027. This increases the average number of electors per councillor to 2,509 – an additional 451 electors per councillor. Whilst the Council is confident of its ability to continue to self-govern effectively despite this level of growth, Rushcliffe's councillors take their community leadership role very seriously. Therefore, the submission recommends an increase of two councillors taking the total number of councillors for Rushcliffe to 46. This increase in the number of councillors brings the average number of electors per councillor to 2,400.
- 4.7. The increase has been recommended to meet the substantial growth in two particular areas of the Borough (the Fairham development and the Gamston / Tollerton development). Numbers of electors in these two areas are predicted to be between 3,500 and 4,000 in 2027 (with further growth continuing after that date) making these areas comparable in size to those which already have two ward councillors. Further details are provided in the submission.
- 4.8. This recommended increase is also in response to feedback from councillors who have already experienced significant growth within their ward and have reported the increased workload involved in dealing with new developments, new residents and the existing community.
- 4.9. The Council appreciates that this growth is not evenly spread across the Borough. When considered at a ward level there are much greater variances between wards and a variance of more than 10% can be seen in twelve wards across the borough.
- 4.10. Therefore, the Council welcomes the second stage of the Review process which looks at the boundaries between wards to minimise the variance in the number of electors per councillor. This second stage of the process will take place over the summer of 2021 with any new ward boundaries being in place for the next Borough Council elections in May 2023.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1. The Review of Council Size has been triggered by current electoral inequalities in five wards. Growth within the Borough is likely to increase this to twelve wards. The attached Council Size submission considers a number of different sources of evidence to support the view that the number of councillors at Rushcliffe is increased to 46.
- 5.2. No action is not an option in this case.

6. Risks and uncertainties

- 6.1. Failure to ensure electoral representation is fair and equitable restricts the Council's ability to deliver services reflective of local need, demand and choice.

Disproportionate electorate to councillor numbers reduces capacity to ensure understanding of local representation and ensure it properly reflects community identity.

- 6.2. Five of the Council’s 25 wards currently show an electoral variance of 10% from the average. This is likely to increase to twelve wards by 2027 as a result of growth in certain areas of the Borough. Therefore, it is essential that a reasoned and justified submission on Council size is made by the authority at this formative stage. This will enable the Council to influence and inform the review process ensuring its proposals will provide sufficient councillors for effective and convenient governance and community leadership.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

An increase of two councillors would incur additional costs of approximately £11k per annum in Basic Allowances. Potentially there could also be an increase in transport and training costs. If approved this would be included within the revenue budget from 2023/24.

7.2. Legal implications

If approved by the commission, the electoral arrangements for Rushcliffe will be laid by draft order before Parliament in summer 2022. If made the order will come into force in 2023. Until such date, the existing ward boundaries and councillor numbers will continue in their current format.

7.3. Equalities implications

Adequate representation of the electorate is one of the primary drivers behind this review. The Council is satisfied that an increase of two councillors will address the anticipated growth in the Borough ensuring that electors are represented fairly and equitably.

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

There are no Section 17 implications to this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Fair, equitable, and responsive democratic representation is a key element of quality of life for our residents.
Efficient Services	By ensuring that each councillor represents a fairly equal number of electors, each councillor will have the best opportunity to deliver efficient and effective representation for their ward.
Sustainable Growth	Whilst the borough is expanding it is important to maintain fair, equitable, and responsive democratic representation
The Environment	

9. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) endorses the Review of Council Size which proposes an increase in the number of councillors for Rushcliffe Borough Council to 46 councillors subject to Full Council approval in March 2021; and
- b) requests that the Chief Executive make arrangements for the Review to be sent to the Commission as the Council's draft submission subject to Full Council approval in March 2021.

For more information contact:	Charlotte Caven-Atack Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services 0115 914 8278 ccaven-atack@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	
List of appendices:	Appendix One – Review of Council Size submission document

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Council Size Submission

Rushcliffe Borough Council – February 2021

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How to Make a Submission

1. It is recommended that submissions on council size follow the format provided below. Submissions should focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal and why you have discounted them.
2. The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

About You

3. The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, or an individual.

This draft Council Size Submission has been drawn up by Rushcliffe Borough Council with cross party consultation via the Group Leaders, and will be presented at the Council meeting on 4 March 2021 for approval.

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

4. Please explain the authority's reasons for requesting this electoral review; it is useful for the Commission to have context. *NB/ If the Commission has identified the authority for review under one of its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*

This Review has been triggered by perceived electoral inequalities highlighted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and was not requested by the Council. However, the Council has welcomed the opportunity to review its local arrangements in light of the substantial population growth the Borough is expecting over the coming years, to meet the requirements of its Local Plan housing allocation numbers, and ensure it continues to represent its residents fairly and equitably.

Local Authority Profile

5. Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description may cover all, or some of the following:
 - Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
 - Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
 - Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?

- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Rushcliffe Borough Council is a non-metropolitan district council operating as part of a 2-tier administrative structure, with Nottinghamshire County Council responsible for social services, education and highways.

Rushcliffe is located in the East Midlands region and is situated immediately to the south of the city of Nottingham. It covers an area of approximately 400 square kilometres. The borough is also in close proximity to Loughborough to the south and Newark on Trent to the north east. Although a large proportion of the Borough's residents work in these larger towns and Nottingham, the Borough is also home to a number of established employers, including the British Geological Survey, British Gypsum and Experian. East Midlands Airport lies just outside the borough boundary in neighbouring North West Leicestershire. A small part of the HS2 line will pass through the borough near to the Ratcliffe on Soar power station, itself scheduled for decommissioning in 2025.

Rushcliffe has a population of around 119,200 people¹. Currently, 20.6% are aged 0-17, (compared to 21.4% nationally), 58.2% aged 18-64 (compared to 60.2% nationally) and 21.1% aged 65+ (compared to 18.4% nationally). The 2018 based population projections² indicate a rise of 20.6% in Rushcliffe's population over the 25 years from 2018 to 2043.

According to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Rushcliffe is one of the least deprived local authority areas in England. Based on the overall IMD score, Rushcliffe is ranked as the fourth least deprived in the country³. There are, however, pockets of relative deprivation within the borough.

Economic activity rates compare favourably to the East Midlands and national averages. In October 2018, 84.1% of residents aged 16-64 were economically active in Rushcliffe, compared to 79.4% for the East Midlands and 78.9% for Great Britain.

Around one third of the borough's population live in West Bridgford which is a large suburb of the Nottingham conurbation area. The remainder of the Borough is largely rural⁴, with the population divided between six larger rural settlements of Bingham, Cotgrave, East Leake, Keyworth,

¹ Mid year estimate 2019 (ONS)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

² 2018 based subnational population projections (ONS)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

⁴ [The Rural and Urban Area Classification \(2011\) classifies Rushcliffe as "largely rural \(rural including hub towns 50-79%\)"](#)

Radcliffe on Trent and Ruddington (which range in population from around 6,800 to 10,200) and a number of smaller rural settlements. A large part of the borough (around 40%) falls within the Nottingham / Derby Green Belt that encircles Greater Nottingham.

The council's Local Plan sets out that the borough will deliver 13,150 additional homes between 2011 and 2028 (this equates to a 27% increase in the number of homes in the borough from the 2011 base). To date around 4,000 of these have been built. It is estimated that a further 6,360 homes will be built over the next five years. The new houses will be spread across the borough; however, the majority are planned for the area adjacent to the main built up area of West Bridgford on several large strategic sites (Fairham Pastures, Land east of Gamston/north of Tollerton and Melton Road, Edwalton), on a large extension to the north of Bingham, on a former RAF base at Newton, and on a number of other allocated sites adjacent to some of our key villages.

Rushcliffe currently has 44 borough councillors across 25 wards comprising 11 single councillor wards, nine wards with two councillors, and five wards with three councillors. All councillors are elected for a four-year term. The main centre of population is the urban area of West Bridgford with the remaining area of the borough being 59 parishes, 41 of which elect parish councillors.

The Borough electorate as at 1 December 2020 is 90,558. This has grown 5.1% since 2010 (86,169 electors).

The Borough has a high level of electoral turnout as follows:

2016 – PCC Elections 27.47%; EU Referendum 81.56% (national turnout 72.2%)

2017 – County Council 43.03%; Parliamentary 77.16% (national turnout 68.8%)

2019 – Borough Council 42.36%; European 44.95% (national turnout 51%); Parliamentary 78.85% (national turnout 67.3%).

A Periodic Electoral Review of the borough was undertaken by the Local Government Commission for England in 1999/2000. This review reduced the number of councillors from 54 to 50 across 28 wards. A further review was undertaken in 2012 by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. This review reduced the number of borough councillors further to 44 over 25 wards. In both of its previous electoral reviews, Rushcliffe has seen its councillor numbers reduced despite growth in population and electorate within the Borough.

The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 years. The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

- When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?
- To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?
- Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?
- What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

Current size and effectiveness

Following a Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Review in 2012, Rushcliffe Borough Council has 44 councillors across 15 wards serving an electorate of 90,558.

A councillor workload survey for this Review demonstrates that 89% of councillors responding thought that Rushcliffe had the right number of councillors at the moment to effectively self-govern. A similar proportion of those responding to the survey reported that they felt their workload was about right.

The borough surveys residents every three years to ensure the council is meeting their needs. The last residents' survey was conducted in 2018 and highlighted that 63% of residents responding were happy with the way the borough council is run (compared to 61% nationally). Additionally, 50% believed the council provided good value for money (compared to 45% nationally). Overall, satisfaction with specific services such as bin collections, events and street cleansing was very high.

The council is high performing with a stable financial position. In 2019, the council reported, during its annual budget setting process, that it was financially self sufficient and no longer reliant on the central government award of the revenue support grant (which is being removed). The council has done this through a series of measures designed to capitalise on its assets (making its money work harder), operate in a more business-like fashion (setting up a grounds maintenance company to deliver council services where more can be done outside of the parameters of a local authority), and investing in the borough (building or buying property when others were closely safeguarding what they currently had). In recent years, the borough has won the MJ Management Team of the Year award 2016, the LGC Entrepreneurial Council of the Year award in 2018, the

MJ Commercial Council of the Year award in 2018 and been shortlisted for the MJ Council of the Year award in 2019. Whilst proud of its achievements, the council is not complacent opening its doors to an LGA corporate peer challenge, an LGA planning peer challenge, a CFGS scrutiny review and an LGA communications health check over the last five years.

Rushcliffe believes in continuous improvement and its approach to governance is no different. Rushcliffe has responded to the reduction in overall councillor numbers at the last review by reducing the number of committee seats available and the number of outside bodies the council is represented on to ensure that councillors are not overstretched in dealing with Council business and can still dedicate much of their available time to their community leadership role.

As part of this Review, the council has considered the effect of a potential increase or decrease in councillor numbers on its ability to self-govern and can see no evidence to suggest either move is necessary. However, how the council is run is only one factor under consideration when deciding whether the council has sufficient councillors to represent the community and make decisions on behalf of the electorate. The borough is expecting 18% growth in the electorate between 2020 and 2027. Meeting the Government target of 13,150 new homes in the borough over the life of the current local plan is challenging, both to deliver but also in terms of managing local concerns and expectations. Ward councillors in areas that have already seen a large proportion of growth report a significant difference in the number and complexity of issues raised by new residents in emerging developments than from those in established residential areas; and this is in addition the increased demand on local councillors from existing residents whilst the new development is under construction. It is primarily for this reason that this submission is recommending an increase of 2 councillors from 44 to 46 for Rushcliffe Borough Council. This review document presents evidence to support this recommendation.

Comparison against neighbouring authorities

As part of the evidence gathering to inform this submission, the council has compiled a list of neighbouring authorities highlighting their electoral ratio and how this compares to the electoral ratio in the borough of Rushcliffe. This evidence can be found at appendix one. In summary, within Nottinghamshire, Bassetlaw District Council has the lowest number of electors per councillor with 1,836 electors per councillor (48 councillors for an electorate of 88,146) and Ashfield District Council has the highest number of electors per councillor with 2,686 electors per councillor (35 councillors for 94,024 electors). Out of the seven councils in this group, Rushcliffe is ranked 3rd when ordered on electoral ratio from lowest to highest. In terms of numbers of councillors, Ashfield District Council has the lowest number of councillors at 35, with Bassetlaw District Council having the highest at 48. Taking this evidence into account, it is not felt that Rushcliffe residents are significantly over or under represented by their councillors at the present time.

Comparison against similar authorities

As well as comparing the electoral ratios in neighbouring authorities as part of the evidence gathering for this review, work was also undertaken to establish the electoral ratios in a list of similar authorities to Rushcliffe (roughly based on a previous CIPFA grouping). This evidence can be found

at appendix two. In summary, Ribble Valley Borough Council has the lowest number of electors per councillor with 1,201 electors per councillor (40 councillors for an electorate of 46,792) and Stafford Borough Council has the highest number of electors per councillor with 2,600 electors per councillor (40 councillors for 104,000 electors); closely followed by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council at 2,594 electors per councillor (34 councillors per 88,196 electors). Out of the 15 councils in this group, Rushcliffe is ranked 7th when ordered on electoral ratio from lowest to highest again falling in the middle of this grouping. In terms of numbers of councillors, Maldon District Council has the lowest number of councillors at 31 with Stroud District Council having the highest at 51. This evidence supports the view that Rushcliffe has the appropriate number of councillors for its current electorate.

Electoral Ratios at the Ward Level

This review has been triggered by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as a result of the number of electors represented by councillors in one or more of Rushcliffe’s wards varying by more than 10% from the average for the borough. In fact, data analysed for this review shows that a variance of + or – 10% from the Borough average occurs in five different wards:

+10%	-10%
East Bridgford (+13.2%)	Sutton Bonington (-29.1%)
Leake (+12.4%)	Musters (-13.6%)
	Bingham West (-10.4%)

The average number of electors per councillor for within Rushcliffe is 2,058. As demonstrated above, through comparison with other local authorities, this figure overall is not dissimilar to others. However, the electoral inequality can be more clearly seen at a ward level. A full list of the electoral variances by ward can be found at appendix three.

The highest electoral ratio per councillor occurs in the East Bridgford ward at 2,330 electors per councillor (a variance of +13.2%), whilst the lowest electoral ratio per councillor can be seen in Sutton Bonington at 1,459 electors per councillor (a variance of -29.1%). These current variances can be explained as follows:

East Bridgford (variance +13.2%) currently has too many electors per councillor compared to the borough average (2,330 compared to 2,058). This is as a result of growth in the ward (over 380 new electors) that was not predicted at the time of the last electoral review. Further growth of around 700 new homes in this area is expected before 2027.

Leake (variance +12.4%) currently has too many electors per councillor compared to the borough average (2,314 compared to 2,058). This is a result of unplanned growth in the area since the last review in 2016 – 1,250 new electors with a further 550 new homes expected by 2027 (for information, Leake ward is outside the greenbelt and, as a consequence, this ward has been particularly affected by unplanned development, often permitted on appeal).

Bingham West (variance -10.4%) currently has too few electors per councillor compared to the borough average (1,843 compared to 2,058). Growth in this ward has been fairly static in the last six years resulting in an increased variance as it has not kept pace with growth in other areas of the borough. However, an additional 800 new homes are due to be built in this ward by 2027 which brings it back within 10% of the average number of electors per councillor without any additional action being taken.

Musters (variance -13.6%) currently has too few electors per councillor compared to the borough average (1,777 compared to 2,058). This variance is primarily due to the changes in the way in which electors register to vote under Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in comparison to the previous methodology. This ward has a large student population and the council now has limited powers to register students, many remain registered at their family home or simply do not register to vote. As a built-up urban suburb there is limited scope in this ward for growth which would counter the electoral variance in this area.

Sutton Bonington (variance -29.1%) currently has too few electors per councillor compared to the borough average (1,459 compared to 2,058). This ward suffers even more than the Musters ward as a result of a large student population. Less than 100 new homes are expected to be built in this ward by 2027 and the variance is unlikely to resolve itself.

The councillor workload survey conducted as part of this review, highlighted that the majority of councillors responding to the survey estimated that between 20-40% of their time was spent on community leadership activities including representing their residents, resolving issues on their behalf, and attending community events. This equates to a third of their time spent on 'being a councillor' and clearly indicates how importantly Rushcliffe's councillors take their community leadership role.

Growth within Rushcliffe and the impact on electoral equality

Rushcliffe is anticipating electorate growth of 18% in the next seven years – the equivalent of 19,829 additional electors across the borough. This takes the number of electors per councillor to an average of 2,509 (an increase of 451 per councillor). This, in itself, is not considered to be problematic as these figures remain similar to other authorities.

There is, however, no getting away from the fact that housing growth between now and 2027 is not uniform across the borough and that whilst some areas of current electoral inequality will be naturally remedied, variance in other areas increases dramatically. If the predicted electoral growth by 2027 is considered at ward level significant variances can be seen:

+10%	-10%
Gotham (+66.7%)	Sutton Bonington (-32.8%)
East Bridgford (+47.2%)	Musters (-25.6%)
Tollerton (+41.8%)	Lady Bay (-19.3%)

Edwalton (+21.4%)	Gamston North (-18.8%)
Radcliffe-On-Trent (+13.4%)	Gamston South (-17.6%)
	Cramner (-14.9%)
	Lutterell (-11.6%)

The council considers that two additional councillors are required to enable greater electoral equality to be achieved across the borough by 2027 and, in particular, to ensure adequate representation in two areas of considerable growth – Gotham and Tollerton. By 2027, it is expected that there will be 4,148 electors in the Gotham ward – this is comparable to Compton Acres where there are currently 4,242 electors and two councillors; as well as Lady Bay (3,913 electors and two councillors), Abbey (4,252 electors and 2 councillors), and Lutterell (4,292 electors and two councillors). This is expected to rise again in the years following 2027 to around 8,946 by 2034. In addition, by 2027, there will be 3,557 electors in the Tollerton ward – this is comparable to Musters where there are currently 3,553 electors and 2 councillors; as well as Bingham East (3,867 electors and two councillors), and Bingham West (3,687 electors and two councillors). This is expected to rise again in the years following 2027 to around 9,254 by 2034. Given the growth anticipated across the borough and, in particular, in Gotham and Tollerton, an increase of two councillors for the borough not considered to be unreasonable.

It is clear to councillors at Rushcliffe that adjustments to boundaries will have to be made at stage two of the Review process. A full explanation of the changes within the borough leading to the variances outlined in the table above are presented at appendix four.

Views of councillors regarding their workload

It is recognised that conducting council business only forms part of the councillor role. Therefore, a survey of all councillors was conducted to inform this submission and provide a more complete picture. The survey was conducted electronically in October 2020. 27 of the 44 councillors responded to the survey providing a response rate of 61%. A full copy of the results is provided at appendix five. In summary:

- Councillors were asked whether they felt the number of councillors representing their ward was correct. Of those responding to the survey 19 felt that the correct number of councillors represented their ward and 6 did not.
- Councillors were asked whether they felt that the number of councillors Rushcliffe had was too many, about right or too few. 4% (one councillor) of councillors felt that the council had too many councillors, 89% of councillors felt that the number was about right, whilst 7% (two councillors) felt that the council had too few councillors.
- Councillors were also asked about their views on their councillor workload and whether it was too big, about right, or too small. 89% of councillors felt that their current workload was about right; 7% (two councillors) felt that it was too big and 4% (one councillor) felt that they could manage a larger workload.

Impact of increasing or decreasing councillor numbers on committee positions and as a consequence the ability of the council to self-govern

The 2012 LGBCE Electoral Review reduced the number of councillors at Rushcliffe from 50 to 44 to address electoral inequality in nine wards. As a result of this change, and to ensure councillors can be effective in their roles, a number of internal changes to the way Rushcliffe is governed have been made. These changes streamline the work that councillors do as part of the council allowing them to focus more on community leadership, as well as ensuring councillors find their roles stimulating and satisfying.

These changes include:

- A review of planning which resulted in changes to the planning committee, reducing the number of seats on planning committee by four, and introducing new speaking rights for councillors not on the committee.
- A review of scrutiny, reducing the number of seats available on scrutiny groups by two, refocusing the terms of reference for each scrutiny group, and changing the way the work programmes are created to allow groups to be more focused and responsive to community needs.
- Removing duplication in licensing by removing the need for a separate alcohol and entertainments licensing committee instead sending all business to one over-arching licensing committee – a reduction in five seats.
- A reduction in the number of outside bodies councillors are nominated to each year from 63 to 25 seats.

The council believes it has acted to match workload and resources to the governance of the council. This is supported by the evidence provided in the councillors' workload survey undertaken as part of this review and summarised above.

Consultation and discussion regarding proposals

Between September and December 2020, Rushcliffe Borough Council reviewed its council size, namely how many councillors it needed to effectively carry out the business of the council. This review has been prompted by a current electoral variance of more than 10% from the borough average in five of the borough's 25 wards, and it is expected that 12 wards will hold a variance of more than 10% from the borough average in 2027 if changes are not made to address these variances. The average number of electors represented by each borough councillor will be 2,558 in 2027 if the number of councillors remains at 44, and drops to 2,400 if two additional councillors are elected. It is considered that electoral equality is essential in a democracy and as far as possible each representative elected for an area should represent the same number of voters, meaning that each vote is equal. There is also an optimal number of voters represented by a single councillor, this differs at each level of government.

During this review, the council has considered:

- Strategic leadership including how the Council is governed currently and whether any change is expected in this area that would require the council to alter its governance model; the make-up of the Council and its Cabinet including the portfolios held by members of the cabinet; and how decisions are made and the council's scheme of delegation.
- Accountability including the construction, operation and effectiveness of internal scrutiny, the council's statutory committees and the council's partnership arrangements.
- Community involvement including how councillors engage with the people they represent and deal with casework.

Councillors have been consulted electronically about their workload and invited to submit their views about the number of councillors the council has by email. A short presentation was given to the Cabinet and all Group Leaders presenting the initial findings of the review and seeking views on the effect of increase and decreasing the number of councillors the council has on its ability to self-govern effectively. This full review document was debated at Cabinet in February 2021 and at Council in March 2021.

Council Size

6. The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership. Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

7. Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified.

Topic		
Governance Model	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?</i> ➤ <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i> ➤ <i>If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority.</i> ➤ <i>By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What particular demands will this make of them?</i>

		<p>➤ <i>Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.</i></p>
	Analysis	<p>The council currently has 44 Councillors, elected every four years. The council's previous review of council size was undertaken in 2011-2013 and came into effect at the May 2015 election. In this review, the number of councillors was reduced from 50 to 44. The council has not significantly changed in the last five years in terms of demographics or the way the council is governed, and it is for these reasons that the council is recommending the number of councillors remains appropriate to provide strong strategic leadership and accountability.</p> <p>All councillors are members of full council which is responsible for appointing the Leader, the committees of the council (excluding cabinet), and for setting its budget and policy framework on the recommendation of the cabinet.</p> <p>The council has five scheduled meetings per year including annual council (though 2019/20 had an additional meeting) and these are generally well attended by councillors.</p> <p>An analysis of the meetings of council covering the period May 2018 to April 2020 shows that the average length of a council meeting is one hour 38 minutes, with the longest one lasting just under three hours. Each meeting considered between 1 and 8 substantive reports. Outside of the annual council meeting, at which motions are not encouraged, most, but not all, meetings contain at least one motion; there is also the ability to present amended motions which can substantially increase the time and complexity of the debate. At council, there is the opportunity for councillors to ask questions, and a follow-up supplementary question – these number between 1 per meeting and 8 per meeting in the time frame analysed. Additionally, the council also permits citizens' questions at council – these are infrequent and rarely number more than two in a single meeting – and petitions may be presented.</p> <p>The councillor workload survey conducted as part of this review, highlighted that the majority of councillors responding to the survey estimated that between 20-40% of their time was spent preparing for, or attending, official Council meetings. This equates to a third of their time spent on 'being a councillor'.</p> <p>The council operates a Leader and cabinet model. The cabinet comprises the Leader, who is elected by the council for a term of four years, following the local elections, and five other councillors, appointed by the</p>

Leader. The constitution provides for the cabinet to consist of up to 10 councillors (including the Leader and Deputy Leader). From May 2011, the council has operated the 'Strong Leader Model' in line with the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and to ensure more efficiency and accountability in decision-making.

All cabinet decisions are taken collectively in cabinet meetings which occur monthly. Between May 2018 and April 2020, the cabinet met 16 times (meetings may be cancelled if there are no items to consider). The average length of a cabinet meeting is 25 minutes (with the longest meeting in this time frame taking 35 minutes). Meetings of the cabinet generally consider between two and five substantive reports. There is also the opportunity for citizens to ask questions (there were six questions asked in this time frame) and for opposition leaders to ask questions at cabinet (there have been nine in this time frame).

Individual members of the cabinet have an allocated portfolio (see below) and each Portfolio Holder has regular briefing meetings with the most appropriate Executive Manager. The Leader and Chief Executive meet on a weekly basis.

At this time, the council is not aware of any further major change in legislation that would give the cabinet greater or fewer responsibilities and would justify the need for a review in the size of the cabinet. Given the experience of running a cabinet of six members, it is felt that this number and the division of portfolio responsibilities enables effective and convenient leadership of the authority.

The cabinet can also commission working groups to undertake specific task and finish work when necessary. These groups usually comprise nine members, chaired by a cabinet member and their composition is politically representative. It is important to recognise that the number, frequency and purpose of cabinet-led working groups are determined by cabinet. As such, the number of councillors required to deliver these groups is clearly within the control of cabinet.

An analysis of the working groups commissioned by cabinet covering the period May 2018 to April 2020 shows that only one group was commissioned by cabinet in this time – it has met six times.

All councillors are provided with the Forward Plan which details the proposed decisions to be taken by the cabinet and council. This is circulated to all councillors each month and published on the council's website.

Following each meeting of cabinet, details of the decisions taken are circulated to all councillors the following day and published on the council's website. Key decisions of the cabinet come into effect seven working days (not including the day of the meeting) after the meeting, unless five councillors give notice in writing to the Chief Executive requesting a 'call-in'. If no notice requesting a call-in is received within the seven working day period, the decision will come into effect. No call-ins have been received in the past two years.

Membership on all other council committees and groups (outside of council and cabinet) is determined once a year at annual council. In advance of the meeting, nominations are sought from political groups based on the number of seats awarded to each political group following the last borough council election. These nominations are then approved at annual council and any competition for seats voted upon. An annual schedule of meetings is also approved at the same meeting so that councillors are aware of the commitments placed on their time at the beginning of the year.

Most public meetings of the council are held in the evening, at 7pm, as it is recognised that daytime meetings can limit the availability of councillors and the active participation of residents. Exceptions to this include the planning committee, which starts at 6.30pm to accommodate longer agendas and more complex discussions than other meetings (this decision was based upon investigation and analysis as part of an LGA Planning Review in 2018). On occasion, meetings of member groups or panels such as the civic hospitality panel take place at alternative times in consultation with members.

At the present time, due to Covid-19, all council meetings are taking place virtually to ensure the safety of councillors, officers and members of the public who would like to attend the meeting. This was a significant change for all involved as, prior to March 2020, the council did not even webcast its meetings except on rare occasions eg the adoption of the local plan (though audio recordings were being published). Meetings are held via Zoom or MS Teams and live streamed to You Tube. Over the summer period, the council invested significantly in static video cameras for the council chamber and hope to begin holding hybrid meetings at some point during 2021 as the Covid-19 situation improves. This will enable councillors to join the meeting in person, in the council chamber, or to dial in via MS Teams and be present in the meeting virtually. Whether present in the building or attending remotely, councillors will be able to fully participate in the debate and decision-making process, and the whole meeting will be live streamed to You Tube.

The number and proportionality of committee places per political party is calculated following a borough council election (and reviewed if needed, such as following a by-election for example). This exercise was last undertaken in May 2019.

Currently, Rushcliffe has 44 councillors. If you remove seats on cabinet and those prescribed in the constitution as being held by a member of cabinet (usually the Leader), as well as the chairman of the Civic Hospitality Panel, a position taken up by the Mayor regardless of political party, then 116 seats are available on committees for non-executive councillors (May 2019 data). This results in an average of three committee positions per non-executive councillor (an increase on 2.44 committee positions for each non-executive councillor at the time of the last review).

As part of this review, an increase or decrease in the number of councillors Rushcliffe has was taken into account in terms of the allocation of committee positions. It can be seen that varying the number of councillors by two or four in either direction has very little effect on the number of seats available per councillor.

- Increase by two councillors to 46 (39 non-executive / mayoral positions) = 2.9 committee positions per councillor
- Increase by four councillors to 48 (41 non-executive / mayoral positions) = 2.8 committee positions per councillor
- Decrease by two councillors to 42 (35 non-executive / mayoral positions) = 3 committee positions per councillor (same as current model)
- Decrease by four councillors to 40 (33 non-executive / mayoral positions) = 3.5 committee positions per councillor

Therefore, the council feels that increasing or decreasing the number of councillors the council has will have very little effect, positive or negative, on the workload of councillors attributed to preparing for and attending committee meetings. Since the last review, in order to create additional capacity and make the most effective use of councillor time, the council has made changes to the number and size of its committees and this is now felt to be reflective of the councillor resource available. The council's effectiveness in terms of governance is not affected by either retaining 44 councillors or increasing that number to 46 as is being

		recommended; however, the benefits of increasing the number of councillors by two would be felt in terms of community leadership and representation as explained elsewhere in this submission.
Portfolios	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i> ➤ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i> ➤ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i> ➤ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The current number and remit of portfolio holders was last reviewed in 2019. There are six portfolios each held by a member of Cabinet. They are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and Borough Wide Leadership • Community and The Environment • Finance • Business and Economic Growth • Housing and Planning • Neighbourhoods <p>The constitution contains an outline of what each of these roles covers and what individual portfolio holders are responsible for. The Leader of the Council interviews and appoints his Cabinet members and each of these is allocated a portfolio. The exact nature of the portfolios and what they consist of is kept under review to ensure alignment with Council structures. The number of portfolios is considered appropriate at this time.</p> <p>Executive powers have not been granted to individual members of the Cabinet, with the exception of the Portfolio Holder for Resources who has been given delegated authority to approve capital grants in accordance with the approved policy.</p> <p>The constitution also contains a full scheme of delegation laying out in detail who is responsible for which decisions the council takes. The council publishes details of all decisions delegated to senior managers and taken in line with the council's constitution on its website in line with The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. These can be viewed: Delegated Decisions - Rushcliffe Borough Council.</p>
Delegated Responsibilities	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i>

	Analysis	<p>Delegations to Portfolio Holders and senior managers are discussed above.</p> <p>The Council has a well-developed and comprehensive Scheme of Delegation to officers which sets out where the responsibility and extent of delegation lies. This Scheme of Delegation was last reviewed in July 2019 as part of the overall annual review of the constitution. The council feels that the scheme accurately reflects the way the council delivers its services and its management structure. The council's monitoring officer has delegated authority to revise the scheme of delegation to comply with legislation when needed. The constitution contains delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to take decisions on an urgent basis. These provisions were used to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. These urgent decisions were later reported to Cabinet for transparency and understanding.</p>
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Accountability

8. Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role.

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i> ➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i> ➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i> ➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i> ➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i> ➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i>
Analysis	<p>The council currently has 44 councillors, six of these form the council's cabinet and are exempt from serving on the council's scrutiny groups; it is also generally accepted that the Mayor does not serve on a scrutiny group. Therefore, 37 councillors are available to sit on scrutiny groups. All scrutiny groups are politically balanced to comply with proportionality and are appointed at annual council on the basis of nominations received from political groups prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Following a review of scrutiny in 2018-19, the council now has an overarching corporate overview group (comprised of seven positions), and three themed scrutiny groups (comprised of nine members each). Therefore, 34 seats on scrutiny groups exist. The council does not feel that an increase of councillors is needed to enable the council to fulfil its scrutiny requirements. In addition, a reduction of councillors would put added pressure on all non-executive councillors who have to attend both scrutiny and regulatory duties.</p> <p>Prior to the review of scrutiny in 2018-19 (which altered the structure, focus and names of our scrutiny groups as well as reducing the overall number of seats by two), the council had four scrutiny groups of nine councillors each. Three scrutiny groups met four times a year, but the corporate governance group had two additional meetings to cover a broader remit. The average meeting lasted one hour and 43 minutes, attendance was generally high with most meetings having all nine members (or their substitutes).</p>

From May 2019 to April 2020, the council's scrutiny structure was slightly different. There are still four scrutiny groups, but the corporate overview group manages the workload for the other three groups. The corporate overview group has an independent chairman, and the rest of its membership consists of the individual chairmen and vice chairmen of the other three scrutiny groups. During 2019/20, the corporate overview group met four times for a total of six hours and 36 minutes (one hour and 39 minutes per meeting on average) and considered 21 items. The governance scrutiny group met four times for a total of four hours and 42 minutes (one hour and 11 minutes per meeting on average) and considered 20 items. Unfortunately, due to the beginning of the Covid19 pandemic, both the communities scrutiny group and the growth and development scrutiny group had meetings postponed from the time period under analysis. As a result, both groups only met twice considering nine items each. The average length of a communities scrutiny group meeting was one hour and 57 minutes and the average length of a growth and development scrutiny group meeting was slightly shorter at one hour and 54 minutes. An average scrutiny meeting during the year 2019/20 lasted one hour and forty minutes, 13 minutes less than the average scrutiny meeting the previous year. Since July 2020, all scrutiny groups have been able to meet virtually and so they will be able to meet the usual number of times each year moving forward.

The terms of reference for the four scrutiny committees are set out in the council's constitution. There is also a job description for the role of scrutiny group chairman which is used by the Leader of the council in appointing the chairmen. This was last done after the May 2019 local elections. Members of the governance scrutiny group must attend a number of mandatory training courses before serving on the group.

The scrutiny groups can commission member panels to undertake in-depth scrutiny of particular service area or topic. These member panels usually consist of nine councillors and are politically balanced. Membership is drawn from all non-executive councillors. Over the period under analysis for this review, no member panels have been convened and the new scrutiny structure means that the need for such panels is expected to remain low. The corporate overview group now has the ability to programme items for the communities, and growth and development scrutiny groups that enable much more in-depth investigation and discussion to take place, sometimes spanning a number of meetings. The council has retained the ability to establish member panels for additional flexibility in terms of scrutiny but does not currently see the need to use this function of the constitution.

	<p>The council's constitution makes provision for the call-in of key decisions made by cabinet. If a call-in is made, and determined to be valid, it is considered by the most appropriate scrutiny group; this meeting is usually additional to the scheduled meetings for the year. No call-ins have been received by the council in the two-year period analysed as part of this review.</p>
<p>Statutory Function</p>	<p>This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?</p>
<p>page 165</p> <p>Planning</p>	<p>Key lines of explanation</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i> <p>Membership of the planning committee is drawn from the 38 non-executive councillors, excluding the Mayor. The committee is politically balanced and appointed at the annual council meeting in May each year.</p> <p>The committee usually meets once a month to determine planning applications; it also occasionally considers tree preservation orders and appeal outcomes. The committee comprises 11 members after a reduction in the number of seats on this committee from 15 in 2017 following an LGA Planning Review. All members of the planning committee (and any substitutes) have to undertake compulsory training prior to sitting on the committee.</p> <p>Between May 2018 and April 2020, the planning committee sat 21 times and considered a total of 93 applications. The majority of meetings were attended by all 11 committee members (or their substitutes). The average meeting lasted two hours and 46 minutes and considered between two and six items.</p> <p>Significant applications (such as those for large scale developments) are scheduled for meetings organised outside of the usual monthly meetings and are considered as single item agendas. Although this adds to the number of meetings overall, it does help to keep agendas focused and meetings running smoothly.</p> <p>At the time of the previous review, development control committees (as they were then known) lasted an average of two hours. The increase in meeting length is primarily down to the introduction of public speaking</p>

		<p>(in 2017) for applicants, agents, objectors and ward councillors. The number of items considered at each meeting has dropped slightly and a larger proportion of applications are decided under delegated powers.</p> <p>The scheme of delegation to council officers means that the majority of planning applications are determined without the need for consideration by the committee. Over the last two years, 2,447 applications have been determined by the council, with only 4% of these going before the planning committee (down from 7% at the time of the last review).</p> <p>There is no denying the time commitment for councillors with regard to planning is considerable. This does not just apply to members of the planning committee as all councillors are consulted on every application within their ward.</p> <p>The Council feels that the membership and size of the planning committee is now commensurate with the decisions needing to be taken by the Planning Committee. Despite the anticipated growth within the borough, the council does not anticipate a significant growth in the business needing to be taken before the planning committee and, therefore, does not believe the committee needs to increase (or decrease) in size at this time.</p>
Licensing	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i> ➤ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The council currently has one overarching licensing committee which is politically representative and appointed each year at annual council. Members of the committee have to undertake specific licensing training prior to their first meeting.</p> <p>Between May 2018 and April 2019, the council had an alcohol and entertainments licensing committee and a licensing committee. The alcohol and entertainments licensing committee, which comprises of 15 members, met once to consider one item. This meeting lasted two hours and 50 minutes. In the same time frame, no meetings of the licensing committee were held. In May 2019, the council took the opportunity to scale down its licensing scrutiny and only appointed to one overarching licensing committee at annual council. The committee comprises of 15 councillors and met once in 2019/20 to consider two items.</p>

<p>Other Regulatory Bodies</p>	<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i> ➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Standards Committee</p> <p>There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2000 for each authority to have a Standards Committee. Membership is drawn from a body of 38 non-executive councillors, excluding the Mayor. The Committee is politically balanced and is appointed at Annual Council each year. The Standards Committee comprises nine members (six councillors and three co-opted independent members) and has three meetings scheduled each year. Between May 2018 and April 2020, seven meetings of the Standards Committee were held considering a total of 19 items (between two and four items at each meeting). The average Standards Committee meetings lasts 54 minutes. The demands of this group are not considered to be material to the number of councillors Rushcliffe Borough Council has.</p> <p>Other Committees and Member Groups (regulatory and non-regulatory)</p> <p>In addition to the committees and groups detailed above, Rushcliffe has a number of other groups appointed at Annual Council. On the basis that these too have a pull on the time of councillors and contribute to the overall workload of councillors they are felt to be worth taking into account. These Committees do not have set work programmes and scheduled meeting patterns. A brief appraisal of each group is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Appeals Committee This Committee comprises of five members (including the Leader and Deputy Leader) and is appointed at Annual Council. It is politically representative. It hears and determines appeals in accordance with the Council's procedures in respect of dismissal arising from misconduct and capability only. There were no meetings of this committee between May 2018 and April 2020. • Interviewing Committee This Committee comprises of five members (including the Leader and Deputy Leader) and is appointed at Annual Council. It is politically representative. It makes recommendations for appointment to the post of Chief Executive subject to Council approving the appointment and Executive Managers. The Committee met twice between May 2018 and April 2020.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Development Framework Group This Group comprises of 15 members and is appointed at Annual Council. It is politically representative. This Group deals with progression of the Core Strategy and it meets as required. It is chaired by the Cabinet Member with the Portfolio for Housing and Planning and the vice chairman is also the Chairman of the Planning Committee. There were two meetings of the Group between May 2019 and April 2020. They considered five items over those two meetings each of which lasted around two hours. It is accepted that in the lead up to the publication of a new Local Plan more meetings of this Group will be required. • Member Development Group This Group comprises nine members and is appointed at Annual Council. It is politically representative. The Group is primarily responsible for the development and delivery of the Councillor Induction Programme (every four years following local elections) and the councillors' Annual Training Plan. Both of these programmes are designed with the specific aim of ensuring that councillors have the information and skills they need to undertake their roles. Both programmes are divided between compulsory and discretionary sessions and delivered through a variety of means. It is generally accepted that the demands of the induction programme on councillors' time is high, but this is limited to the first few months after election. The forward-looking training programme also draws upon councillors' time, but officers try to limit events to two or three per month to ensure councillors have time to attend despite other commitments. • Civic Hospitality Panel This Panel comprises of six members and is appointed at Annual Council. It is chaired by the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor is the Vice Chairman. The Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader are also Panel members. The Panel is politically representative. The Panel meets once a year to consider the forthcoming civic arrangements for the mayoral year. • Growth Boards The Council has a Strategic Growth Board and five subsidiary Growth Boards in our larger towns and villages. Each of these Boards is chaired by a member of Cabinet and each meets between two and four times a year depending on demand and workload. They involve both local councillors, business owners, town or parish council representatives and local schools and colleges.
External Partnerships	Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.	

<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council? ➤ How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders? ➤ What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Partnership Arrangements</p> <p>The majority of the Council’s partnership arrangements are connected to economic growth and the future of the borough. The Leader is currently the Nottinghamshire District Councils’ representative on the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership. On this group the Leader is acting on behalf of all district councils in the county. The Leader is also the shareholder representative for the Council for the Interim Vehicle (Company Limited by Guarantee) for the proposed East Midlands Development Corporation where he is representing the interests of the borough as one of the owners of the company and local planning authority and business rates authority for the Ratcliffe on Soar power station site which is within the Development Corporation redline. The Leader is also a member of the N2 Economic Prosperity Committee where he represents the council.</p> <p>Outside Bodies</p> <p>At the time of the last Electoral Review in 2012, Rushcliffe appointed to 63 seats on officially recognised outside bodies. Whilst outside the remit of council meetings and community leadership, membership of an outside body is part of a councillor’s role and can have a significant draw on their time. However, since that time two reviews of appointments to outside bodies have taken place. Immediately prior to the most recent review in 2018, 38 seats on outside bodies were available. In 2019 and 2020, appointments were made to 25 seats on outside bodies including eight seats on the West Bridgford Local Area Forum (one per ward in the West Bridgford urban area which does not have a parish council). The frequency with which these outside bodies meet, and the time commitment required from their members, is diverse. 50% of the available seats on outside bodies are reserved for the Leader of the Council or a member of his Cabinet; thus, the impact of this activity on the time of all councillors is minimised. The Council believes that it has already acted to match the demands placed upon councillors with the time they have available for this kind of activity and no further adjustments are necessary.</p>

Community Involvement

9. The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties?

Topic		Description
page 170 Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i> ➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i> ➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i> ➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i> ➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i> ➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i>
	Analysis	<p>For many of Rushcliffe's councillors, serving their community is the main reason they become a councillor. Councillors employ a variety of means to make themselves available to electors; the council does not prescribe how councillors should represent their community.</p> <p>The council's website provides a list of all councillors making it clear to all electors who their councillor is and how to contact them. The council also publishes a Know Your Councillor poster in its residents' magazine following a borough council election. This contains a photo of the councillor, their ward and key contact details. The council makes councillor business cards, and posters advertising ward surgeries or contact details, available on request.</p> <p>Most councillors are active in their local communities, including with the relevant parish councils; they are often stopped in the street or local shop, and many also write for their local community newsletter. Some councillors hold regular surgeries, and some are active on social media. The majority of councillors are contacted by residents via email or on the telephone. If councillors are unable to resolve the query directly then they are able</p>

to contact a link officer at the council or key people in other agencies (the council provides a list of key contacts within partner agencies).

Outside of West Bridgford, Rushcliffe is parished; with 59 parishes (42 elect parish councillors, 17 are parish meetings and do not hold elections). 11 borough councillors are also parish councillors and the majority of borough councillors attend meetings of parish councils in their wards even though they are not parish councillors. Seven councillors are county councillors in addition to being a borough councillor; two borough councillors serve on their local parish council and represent their division at county level.

Within West Bridgford, there are a number of very active community groups which are well attended by ward councillors serving the West Bridgford area. In the absence of a parish council for this area, councillors also provide the only link between the community and the council – the direct demand this places on councillors in this area tends to be underestimated.

To inform this review the council undertook a councillor workload survey. The full results are at appendix five.

Councillors were asked about how they spent their time each month. 61.6% of councillors who responded to the survey spent between 0-5 hours per month meeting with residents; 2 councillors spent between 11-15 hours per month meeting with residents. 53.8% of councillors spent more than 6 hours per week communicating with residents via email or on the phone. 51.8% of councillors spent more than 6 hours per week communicating with the Council or other agencies on behalf of residents.

Councillors were also asked how their time spent on council activities was spent. The majority of councillors indicated that they spend between 20-40% of their time on community leadership activities including representing their residents, resolving issues on their behalf, and attending community events. A similar proportion of councillors reported spending between 20-40% of their time preparing for, or attending, official Council meetings.

Outside of the workload survey, councillors have fed back that there is a significant difference between being a ward councillor for an established community and that of an emerging community. This includes the management of local feeling and concern from existing residents during the planning stages of development, to very practical concerns about the development as it proceeds, and those of the new residents when they are

		<p>able to move to their new homes and need to establish new links with the council and other local amenities, the natural place to turn for assistance is their local councillor.</p> <p>The substantial growth the council is anticipating in some areas of the borough is equal to the creation of entire new villages over the next 10-15 years. This will substantially impact on the local ward representative which in the two areas expecting the largest developments is just one councillor currently. It is for this reason that the council is recommending that the overall councillor numbers for Rushcliffe are increased by two at the next election.</p>
<p>page 172</p> <p>Casework</p>	<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</i> ➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i> ➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i> ➤ <i>In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</i>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The council does not have a formal casework management system. As mentioned above, if councillors are unable to resolve the query directly then they are able to contact a link officer at the council or key people in other agencies (the council provides a list of key contracts within partner agencies).</p>

Other Issues

10. Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

The council has been able to highlight its proposal above.

Summary

11. In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future. Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate any other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

The Council is recommending an increase of two councillors taking the overall number of councillors for Rushcliffe to 46. The council feels that 46 councillors provides the optimal solution for Rushcliffe in terms of Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and, primarily, Community Leadership.

The council is not aware of any changes in the near future that would affect the way the council self-governs. The obvious caveat to this is Local Government Reform but there are no stable plans in the county at present and the agenda would appear to be on hold at least until the Government publishes its Devolution White Paper in 2021.

In undertaking this Review, the council has undertaken a councillor workload survey to establish councillor opinions on council size. It has also considered the effect of increasing and decreasing the number of councillors by two and four on councillor workload and the ability of the council to self-govern.

The council recognises that the electorate of the borough is expected to grow 18% between 2020 and 2027 in line with the council's Local Plan. This takes the average number of electors per councillor from 2,058 to 2,558 in 2027. The majority of this growth is focused in two or three areas where developments are essentially the creation of entire new villages. The council feels that to provide effective representation and community leadership in these areas, as well as giving the council scope to review ward boundaries to address the recognised electoral variances, two additional councillors should be elected in May 2023.

The council accepts that five of its 25 wards are currently showing an electoral ratio which differs by more than 10% from the borough average. Electoral projections based on housing growth in the borough have been examined. Variances of more than 10% are expected to occur in twelve of the council's wards by 2027 if boundaries are kept the same and growth occurs at the predicted rate. Further growth will occur in two key areas after 2027 until the end of the life of the current Local Plan. These are Barton-in-Fabis where there are an estimated further 1400 properties to be built between 2028-2034, this would see the electorate increase by a further predicted 2631 to 4764; and Tollerton where there is also an estimated further 1400 properties to be built between 2028-2034 seeing the electorate increase by a further predicted 2631 to 5697. Whilst we appreciate these figures cannot be taken into account during this exercise, we feel that the further increases in these two areas are worth noting at this stage. The council suggests that changes to ward boundaries will resolve the variations between wards and actively looks forward to the next part of the Review process.

Neighbouring Authorities – Electoral Ratio

Authority	Electorate	Number of councillors	Electoral ratio (number of electors per councillor)
Ashfield District Council	94,024	35	2686
Bassetlaw District Council	88,146	48	1836
Broxtowe Borough Council	86,509	44	1966
Gedling Borough Council	90,463	41	2206
Mansfield District Council	81,738	36	2271
Newark and Sherwood District Council	92,008	39	2359
Rushcliffe Borough Council	90,496	44	2057

Lowest number of electors per councillor – Bassetlaw with 1,836 electors per councillor (48 councillors for an electorate of 88,146)

Highest number of electors per councillor – Ashfield with 2,686 electors per councillor (35 councillors for 94,024 electors)

Ashfield has the lowest number of councillors at 35 with Bassetlaw having the highest at 48

Out of the 7 councils in this group, Rushcliffe is ranked 3rd when ordered on electoral ratio from lowest to highest

All data correct as of 9 November 2020.

Similar Authorities – Electoral Ratio

	Electorate	Number of district / borough councillors	Electoral ratio (number of electors per councillor)
Babergh District Council	70,131	32	2191
Blaby District Council	77,262	39	1981
East Hampshire District Council	96,952	43	2294
Harborough District Council	71,249	34	2190
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	88,196	34	2594
Lichfield District Council	82,905	47	1763
Maldon District Council	51,682	31	1667
Ribble Valley Borough Council	46,792	40	1201
Rushcliffe Borough Council	90,496	44	2056
Cherwell and South Northamptonshire District Council	106,254	48	2214
South Ribble Borough Council	86,659	50	1733
Stafford Borough Council	104,000	40	2600
Stroud District Council	96,445	51	1891
Test Valley Borough Council	94,399	43	2195
Wychavon District Council	101,202	45	2249

Lowest number of electors per councillor – Ribble Valley with 1,201 electors per councillor (40 councillors for an electorate of 46,792)

Highest number of electors per councillor – Stafford with 2,600 electors per councillor (40 councillors for 104,000 electors); closely followed by Hinckley and Bosworth at 2,594 electors per councillor (34 councillors per 88, 196 electors)

Maldon has the lowest number of councillors at 31 with Stroud having the highest at 51

Out of the 15 councils in this group, Rushcliffe is ranked 7th when ordered on electoral ratio from lowest to highest

All data correct as of 9 November 2020.

Rushcliffe Borough Council – Councillors per ward / electorate per ward councillor 2020

Ward	Number of Cllrs	Electorate as at 1 December 2020	Electorate per Councillor	Variance from the Average (2,058)
Abbey	2	4252	2126	+3.3%
Bingham East	2	3867	1933	-6.0%
Bingham West	2	3687	1843	-10.4%
Bunny	1	2012	2012	-2.2%
Compton Acres	2	4242	2121	+3.1%
Cotgrave	3	6252	2084	+1.3%
Cranmer	1	2026	2026	-1.6%
Cropwell	1	2063	2063	0%
East Bridgford	1	2330	2330	+13.2%
Edwalton	2	3958	1979	-3.8%
Gamston North	1	1936	1936	-5.9%
Gamston South	1	1963	1963	-4.6%
Gotham	1	2022	2022	-1.7%
Keyworth & Wolds	3	6569	2189	+6.4%
Lady Bay	2	3913	1956	-4.9%
Leake	3	6944	2314	+12.4%
Lutterell	2	4292	2146	+4.3%
Musters	2	3553	1777	-13.6%
Nevile & Langar	1	2245	2245	+9.1%
Radcliffe on Trent	3	6524	2175	+5.6%
Ruddington	3	5848	1949	-5.2%
Sutton Bonington	1	1459	1459	-29.1%
Thoroton	1	2105	2105	+2.3%
Tollerton	1	2024	2024	-1.7%
Trent Bridge	2	4472	2236	+8.6%

Highest electoral ratio per councillor – East Bridgford at +13.2% (2,330 electors per councillor)

Lowest Electoral ratio per councillor – Sutton Bonington at -29.1% (1,459 electors per councillor)

Average ratio of electors per councillor for Rushcliffe Borough Council – 2,058

There are five wards where the variance from the average is +/- 10% (the LG BCE trigger for an electoral review)

+10%	-10%
East Bridgford (+13.2%)	Sutton Bonington (-29.1%)
Leake (+12.4%)	Musters (-13.6%)
	Bingham West (-10.4%)

*Figures correct at 1 December 2020

Rushcliffe Borough Council – Councillors per ward / electorate per ward councillor 2027

Ward	Number of Cllrs	Predicted Electorate at 1 December 2027	Electorate per Councillor	Variance from the Average (2509)
Abbey	2	4610	2305	-8.1%
Bingham East	2	4529	2265	-9.7%
Bingham West	2	5087	2544	+1.4%
Bunny	1	2312	2312	-7.9%
Compton Acres	2	4835	2418	-3.6%
Cotgrave	3	7049	2350	-6.3%
Cranmer	1	2136	2136	-14.9%
Cropwell	1	2313	2313	-7.8%
East Bridgford	1	3693	3693	+47.2%
Edwalton	2	6091	3046	+21.4%
Gamston North	1	2037	2037	-18.8%
Gamston South	1	2067	2067	-17.6%
Gotham	1	4182	4182	+66.7%
Keyworth & Wolds	3	8088	2696	+7.5%
Lady Bay	2	4048	2024	-19.3%
Leake	3	8,142	2714	+8.2%
Lutterell	2	4,438	2219	-11.6%
Musters	2	3732	1866	-25.6%
Nevile & Langar	1	2386	2386	-4.9%
Radcliffe on Trent	3	8537	2846	+13.4%
Ruddington	3	7143	2381	-5.1%
Sutton Bonington	1	1685	1685	-32.8%
Thoroton	1	2421	2421	-3.5%
Tollerton	1	3577	3557	+41.8%
Trent Bridge	2	5249	2625	+4.6

Highest electoral ratio per councillor – Gotham at 66.7% (4,182 electors per councillor)

Lowest Electoral ratio per councillor – Sutton Bonington at -32.8% (1,685 electors per councillor)

Average ratio of electors per councillor for Rushcliffe Borough Council – 2,509

There are twelve wards where the variance from the average is +/- 10% (the LGBCE trigger for an electoral review)

+10%	-10%
Gotham (+66.7%)	Sutton Bonington (-32.8%)
East Bridgford (+47.2%)	Musters (-25.6%)
Tollerton (+41.8%)	Lady Bay (-19.3%)
Edwalton (+21.4%)	Gamston North (-18.8%)
Radcliffe-On-Trent (+13.4%)	Gamston South (-17.6%)
	Cramner (-14.9%)
	Lutterell (-11.6%)

* Estimated figures

In the following seven wards, growth is below the Borough average leading to too few electors per councillor if ward boundaries remain the same.

Cranmer

Electorate only expected to grow by 110 electors between 2020 and 2027 leading to an electoral variance of 14.9%.

Gamston North

Electorate only expected to grow by 101 electors between 2020 and 2027 leading to an electoral variance of 18.8%.

Gamston South

Electorate only expected to grow by 131 electors between 2020 and 2027 leading to an electoral variance of 14.9%.

Lady Bay

Electorate only expected to grow by 135 electors between 2020 and 2027 leading to an electoral variance of 19.3%.

Lutterell

Electorate only expected to grow by 146 electors between 2020 and 2027 leading to an electoral variance of 11.6%.

Musters

Electorate only expected to grow by 180 electors between 2020 and 2027 leading to an electoral variance of 25.6%.

Sutton Bonington

Electorate only expected to grow by 226 electors between 2020 and 2027 leading to an electoral variance of 32.8%.

In the following five wards, growth is above the Borough average leading to too many electors per councillor if ward boundaries remain the same.

East Bridgford

The East Bridgford ward (2330 electors in 2020) is expected to grow to around 3690 electors by 2027 due to the building of 680 new homes in this ward. This is expected to lead to an electoral variance of 47.2%.

Edwalton

The Edwalton ward (3958 electors in 2020) is expected to grow to around 6090 electors by 2027 due to the building of 1100 new homes in this ward. This is expected to lead to an electoral variance of 21.4%.

Gotham

The Gotham ward (2022 electors in 2020) is expected to grow to around 4180 electors by 2027 due to the building of 1100 new homes in this ward. This is expected to lead to an electoral variance of 66.7%.

Radcliffe on Trent

The Radcliffe on Trent ward (6524 electors in 2020) is expected to grow to around 8537 electors by 2027 due to the building of 940 new homes in this ward. This is expected to lead to an electoral variance of 13.4%.

Tollerton

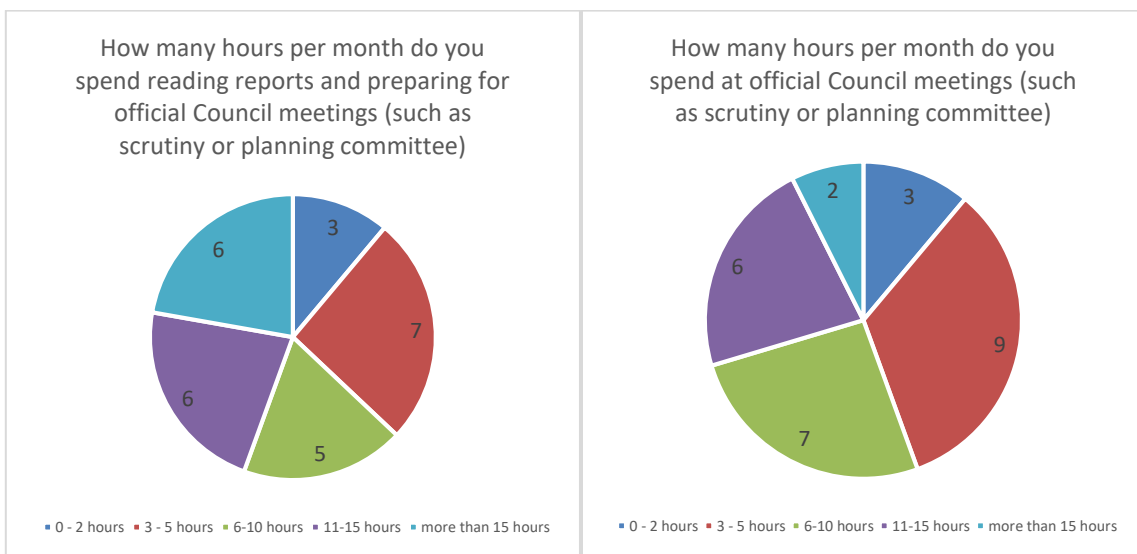
The Tollerton ward (2024 electors in 2020) is expected to grow to around 3577 electors by 2027 due to the building of 750 new homes in this ward. This is expected to lead to an electoral variance of 41.8%.

Councillors Survey regarding workload – October 2020

It is recognised that conducting council business only form part of the councillor role. Therefore, a survey of all 44 councillors was conducted to inform this submission and provide a more complete picture. The survey was conducted electronically in October 2020. 27 of the 44 councillors responded to the survey providing a response rate of 61%. The below follows the structure of the survey and presents the findings along with feedback from councillors where this was provided.

Membership

The first group of questions focused on the committee places held by councillors. There are 119 seats on recognised Council committees and groups outside of Full Council and Cabinet. The average number of committee positions held per councillor is three. Councillors were asked how long they spent reading reports and preparing for meetings of the Council. Most councillors spent between 3-5 hours per month preparing for meetings, but 6 councillors spent more than 15 hours per month preparing for meetings. Councillors were also asked how long they spent attending meetings of the Council. Most councillors spent between 3-5 hours per month attending meetings, but 2 councillors spent more than 15 hours per month attending meetings.



Wards

The second set of questions focused on councillor’s wards; asking councillor views on whether there were sufficient councillors to adequately represent their ward as well as enquiring about how they spent their time each month. 61.6% of councillors who responded to the survey spent between 0-5 hours per month meeting with residents; 2 councillors spent between 11-15 hours per month meeting with residents. 53.8% of councillors spent more than 6 hours per week communicating with residents via email or on the phone. 51.8% of councillors spent more than 6 hours per week communicating with the Council or other agencies on behalf of residents.

Rushcliffe has 44 councillors representing 25 wards; 11 are single member wards, nine wards have two members, and the Council has five wards with three members. Councillors were asked whether they felt the number of councillors representing their ward was correct. Of those responding to the survey 19 felt that the correct number of councillors represented their ward and 6 did not. One councillor commented that the expected population growth in their area may warrant an increase from 3 to 4 ward members. Another commented that their ward should be combined with another with one ward member only. One councillor from a very rural area pointed out that if they were to attend all parish council or parish meetings in their ward each year, they would attend a minimum of 54 additional meetings – in some areas the geographical make up of the area should be taken into account as well as the number of electors.

Additional Duties

Councillors were also asked about what other positions they held in addition to being a borough councillor. The results indicated that:

- 26% of respondents were also Parish or Town Councillors (7 of 27 – the actual figure is closer to 11)
- 78% of respondents participated in other Community Groups (21 of 27 respondents)
- 15% of respondents were also County Councillors (4 of 27 – the actual figure is 7)

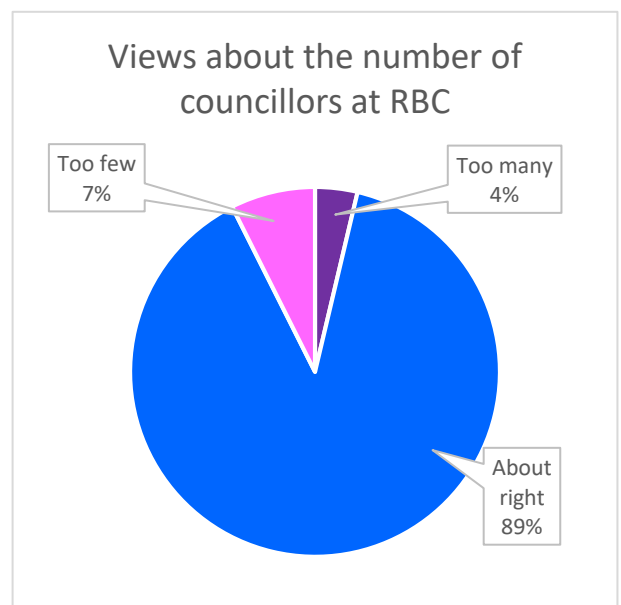
Rushcliffe’s councillors are very active within their communities in addition to their roles as borough councillors. Whilst there is likely to be overlap between activities, this clearly has an impact on their time.

Of the seven borough councillors who were also parish councillors, four spent less than five hours a month on parish council business and three spent over five hours per month. Of the four borough councillors responding to the survey reporting that they were also county councillors, all reported spending over five hours per month on county council business. The majority of borough councillors also participating in other community groups spent less than five hours per week on community group business.

General Views

Councillors were asked whether they felt that the number of councillors Rushcliffe had was too many, about right or too few. The answers were as follows:

A number of very clear views were expressed by councillors. A small number are presented below for illustrative purposes:



- A single councillor could represent a larger proportion of the local population without facing a large increase in representative workload
- The current workload is not too large to attract and retain councillors who also work full-time – fewer councillors would increase the individual workload and prevent those who work full-time from also being councillors
- Reducing the number of councillors would also reduce accountability and discourage residents from engaging in local democracy
- Some wards have increased in population over the last decade, these would benefit from consideration for more representation
- There was a reduction in the number of councillors a few years ago but the Borough's population is growing
- More councillors could reduce the Council's ability to be swift and effective in terms of decision making and fewer councillors would make it difficult to represent the residents
- At present, with the scrutiny and cabinet system, the workload is distributed fairly
- There are 2 considerations: skills and experience brought and optimum ward size. Having a wide range of councillors of working age, as well as retirement age, and with a broad range of life experiences is important. 44 for this council seems to achieve this. If population growth means a slight increase above 44 then that is appropriate. To be accessible and to know your patch, and to produce information leaflets if necessary, a ward size of around 2,000 properties is the optimum in my view
- It should be recognised that ward members in the very rural wards have numerous parish councils and parish meetings to cover over a large geographical area. The total electorate numbers can be similar to suburban wards where the population is much more condensed. The more controversial planning applications tend to fall into our rural areas and can involve a lot of additional correspondence and attendance at public meetings

Councillors were also asked about their views on their councillor workload and whether it was too big, about right, or too small. 89% of councillors felt that their current workload was about right; 7% (two councillors) felt that it was too big and 4% (one councillor) felt that they could manage a larger workload. The following feedback was received from councillors completing the survey:

- A good councillor will always be busy and engage in both ward and council activities. Within wards with multiple councillors the work load can be shared
- Councillor workload is entirely dependent on how much effort individual councillors are willing to make on behalf of those they represent
- Given the population growth expected in the borough, workload will increase but this is likely to be incrementally so may be absorbed within impacting on the ability of councillors to carry out their roles
- Personal circumstances are a big factor in determining whether the workload is balanced or not. For those with no other commitments, such as employment or a young family, several committees might prove more manageable. I have found the workload since I was elected to be greater than

I had anticipated and there are pinch points where several committees are meeting in a given week or month

- It all depends on how much work you are willing to put in. Given the amount I do, I feel the ward is possibly too big
- I feel I am able to represent my community adequately without being overloaded
- It keeps me occupied but is not too onerous. I'm not sure I could cope well with the workload if I wasn't retired though, so it might be difficult for people with full time jobs / families / caring responsibilities to get involved
- As someone who works full time, I probably don't do as much as others who have more free time, but it is manageable for me
- It will vary month on month - but also, with the current situation (Covid-19) there are more questions being asked by residents and local businesses and these take up more time. Pre-pandemic, I wasn't receiving as many questions via email or on social media
- The work is manageable, bearing in mind this is not a full-time job. I am on the Cabinet and some months I am extremely busy, but others are a little quieter

Councillors were also asked how their time spent on council activities was spent. The majority of councillors indicated that they spend between 20-40% of their time on community leadership activities including representing their residents, resolving issues on their behalf, and attending community events. A similar proportion of councillors reported spending between 20-40% of their time preparing for, or attending, official Council meetings.

A smaller number of respondents reported spending time working as part of the Council Executive (working closely with senior managers of the Council, at portfolio briefings, and on outside bodies) which is to be expected. Between 10-30% of councillor time was reported as being spent preparing for, or attending, Group meetings and events. This data illustrates that Rushcliffe's councillors split their time roughly equally between their role as a community leader, working within and for their community, and that of a borough councillor, working together to benefit the whole borough.

Personal details

Councillors were asked to indicate which age bracket they fell into:

- 0% of respondents were under 30
- 11% of respondents were aged 31 - 40
- 15% of respondents were aged 41 - 50
- 22% of respondents were aged 51 - 60
- 15% of respondents were aged 61 - 70
- 37% of respondents were aged over 70

Respondents were also asked to indicate their employment status:

- 44% were retired or not working (a decrease of 15% on the last time this question was asked)

- 7% worked part time
- 37% worked full time (an increase of 15% on the last time this question was asked)

Final comments from councillors completing the survey included:

- If the area boundaries are too large, then service levels will fall away. A heavily populated concise ward is often easier to manage, and issues are usually more generic, than a ward that covers multiple villages which have different needs and servicing is much more difficult
- Any redrawing of ward boundaries should try to follow local features such as roads, rivers, etc.....
- I think there are too many councillors for the borough of Rushcliffe
- In looking at the amount of work councillors undertake, any local government reorganisation should be taken into account. It would appear likely there might be a considerable increase in councillor work in the future if the structure of local government is altered by a reorganisation
- Populations in each ward are changing, particularly where there are substantial new developments, and this needs to be taken into consideration when planning for future boundaries and number of councillors
- Perhaps attention should be focused on the number of residents rather than a geographical area
- Parish councils in some rural areas find it difficult to attract a sufficient number of councillors who are able to actively contribute to the work of the parish council, the real workload can fall to just 2 or 3 people. Parish clerks tend to clerk for more than one parish, the average clerk is in the older age group. There needs to be a concerted effort to recruit more parish clerks
- As a "dual hatter", I find a lot of my work crosses over between the different councils anyway. It is unusual that my (smaller) borough ward, is multi member, whereas my county ward (much larger and with more roles and responsibilities), is single member and works OK as a single member county division
- It works well currently. Obviously, there can be unforeseen circumstances, however we should ensure we take a pragmatic approach here
- Sooner than sticking rigidly to population numbers, it would be more sensible to include communities in full rather than splitting them for the wrong reasons.

From the results of the survey it is difficult to establish if an increase or reduction in the number of councillors would increase or decrease councillor workloads. This is because some of the differences in workload and time spent on activities could be related to a councillor's particular role, issues within their ward or the taking on of a new committee position. However, the survey data makes it clear that there is very little to drive a reduction or increase in councillor numbers from councillors themselves. Inevitably, some are busier than others – much of this is down to personal circumstances and their role within the council, as well as their personal investment in representing and working on behalf of their ward. But no councillor has

reported in response to the survey that they are overwhelmed by the workload expected of them.

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Cabinet

Tuesday, 9 February 2021

Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021 – 2025

Report of the Executive Manager – Communities

Portfolio Holder for Community and the Environment, Councillor A Brennan

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report presents the new Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy developed by the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) on which the Council is represented.
- 1.2. Related to the Strategy, Council resolved, on 5 March 2015, that Cabinet investigate the possibility of a Trees and Woodlands Policy, in consultation with the Community Development Group. On 16 July 2020, Council resolved that scrutiny should review the feasibility of sowing native wildflower seeds along the grassland areas that it manages and put forward recommendations to Cabinet.
- 1.3. A draft Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021 - 2025 was presented to the Community Scrutiny Group on 7 October 2020. This incorporated the tree and woodland policies in a dedicated section and as a recurring theme throughout the document. It also covers the promotion of wildflower rich grasslands including on roadsides. The Group considered the draft Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy, and resolved that the Strategy be considered, funding for the Free Tree Scheme be extended for the Strategy period, and Biodiversity Net Gain be developed. The Group also suggested that the Strategy should specifically refer to the Grantham Canal and to its continued maintenance.
- 1.4. Cabinet is requested to consider the Strategy, confirm whether it meets the needs of the Council, and if the Council should adopt it.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that:

- a) the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021 – 2025 be adopted;
- b) the funding for the Free Tree Scheme be extended to include funding of £50,000 over 2021 – 2025 within the Strategy to cover planting of trees and to support the introduction of wildflowers seed distribution in line with the Strategy lifecycle; and

- c) that the Council should work with neighbouring local planning authorities and partner organisations to introduce biodiversity net gain policies that complement the Nature Conservation Strategy's objectives.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To meet the resolutions of Council of 5 March 2015 and 16 July 2020, and the recommendation the Community Scrutiny Group on 7 October 2020.
- 3.2 The current adopted Nature Conservation Strategy ran to the end of 2020, an updated Strategy is therefore recommended for its work to continue to meet the Council's environmental aspirations.
- 3.3 The recommendations would support a target of planting 2000 trees and 500 square metres of wildflower grassland creation per annum.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. A community developed Nature Conservation Strategy was first produced in 2003, and then updated in 2010 and 2015; these were adopted by the Council.
- 4.2. In January 2020, the Government reintroduced the Environment Bill, which is currently making its way through Parliament. The draft provisions indicate the Government's current intentions to introduce "mandatory biodiversity net gain".

Biodiversity net gain follows on from the Government's aim in its 25 Year Environment Plan to "leave the environment in a better state than we found it". Broadly, "biodiversity net gain", as set out in the Environment Bill, requires development to deliver at least a 10 per cent improvement in "biodiversity value".

- 4.3. This Strategy has been developed by a partnership organisation, the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG), led by Rushcliffe Borough Council and the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, with members from nature conservation groups, community groups, parish councils and other interested bodies.
- 4.4. The Strategy aims to protect and enhance nature conservation in Rushcliffe, help mitigate the effects of climate change on wildlife and provide ready access to wildlife rich green spaces. There will be a particular emphasis on species-rich grassland, wetland, trees and woodland habitats, and species characteristic of the Borough such as grizzled skipper butterflies, great crested newts and brown hare. This will be achieved through forming effective partnerships, brought together through the RNCSIG.

4.5. This Strategy covers the following:

- Overview of Rushcliffe's Wildlife;
- Successes of the 2016 – 2020 Strategy;
- Principal Habitats Found in Rushcliffe;
- Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP);
- Designated Wildlife Sites and Nature Reserves;
- Rushcliffe's Landscapes;
- Green Infrastructure;
- Climate Change;
- Community Involvement;
- Planning Policies and the Protection of Wildlife and Habitats;
- Nature Conservation Aims and Objectives; and
- Key Target Indicators.

4.6. The section on Principle Habitats sets out the importance of the main habitats found in Rushcliffe, including wildflower grasslands and woodland and trees and what policies partners should take to protect and enhance these habitats.

This includes a commitment to:

- Protect, enhance and expand appropriate tree and woodland cover in Rushcliffe working towards achieving the national targets for woodland and urban tree cover and woodland access;
- Support programmes to benefit national priority species and habitats and Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species and habitats (especially neutral and calcareous grasslands, native woodlands and wetlands) as appropriate;
- Support the development of the holistic Nature Recovery Network concept and plans for Rushcliffe and the county in order to make our wildlife sites better, bigger and more connected; and
- Support projects that benefit our freshwater environment (rivers, ditches, ponds, lakes, canals and reservoirs), tackling water quality issues and benefiting aquatic habitats and species.

4.7. Achievements of the 2016 – 2020 Strategy are listed on page 8-9 of the new Strategy.

4.8. Targets for new management and creation of habitats in the 2021 – 2025 Strategy are 20 hectares of woodland, 30 hectares of grassland and 10 hectares of wetland.

4.9. Other targets of the 2021 – 2025 Strategy are listed on page 30 of the Strategy detailed in the Appendix.

4.10. The Strategy was publicly consulted on in December 2020 and January 2021.

- 4.11. The Strategy provides an evidence-based approach to biodiversity management, which supports a balanced approach to development, and natural land management throughout the Borough.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1 The Council could choose not to continue to participate in the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group partnership.
- 5.2 The Council could choose to develop its Nature Conservation Strategy in house; however this would require increased resources.

6. Risks and uncertainties

Not adopting the Strategy could result in nature conservation being inadequately considered during major new developments and beneficial management not being undertaken.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

7.1.1. The costs of supporting this Strategy are partially met within existing budgets. This includes a Service Level Agreement with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust for £16,500 per annum and a 'Biodiversity Support Grant' with a budget of £6,000 per annum.

7.1.2. A £50,000 grant scheme over a four-year period would support tree protection and promotion, and wildflower planting in Rushcliffe and will enable the continued delivery of the Rushcliffe Free Tree Scheme and Community Tree Scheme. A budget of £12,500 per annum from 2021/22 to 2024/25 would be needed to support this.

7.2. Legal Implications

The Strategy supports the Council in exercising its duty to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

7.3. Equalities Implications

Provision of high-quality nature conservation resources across the Borough supports all residents and can help address health inequalities.

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

Section 17 highlights that local authorities, when carrying out their core activities, can significantly contribute to reducing crime and improving the quality of life in their area. It is therefore important to give due consideration to

community safety issues in the development of nature conservation strategies.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Although the environment is usually discussed within the context of sustainability, it is equally important for an individual's quality of life. Indeed, environmental conditions not only affect human health and well-being directly, but also indirectly, as they may have adverse effects on ecosystems, biodiversity, or even more extreme consequences such as natural disasters
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	It is critically important that the significant growth projected in the Borough is sustainable and takes into consideration nature conservation and the bio-diversity net gain targets from developments as required by the emergent Environment Bill
The Environment	The report supports all aspects of the Environment theme of the Corporate Strategy

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that:

- a) the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021 – 2025 be adopted;
- b) the funding for the Free Tree Scheme be extended to include funding of £50,000 over 2021 – 2025 within the Strategy to cover planting of trees and to support the introduction of wildflowers seed distribution in line with the Strategy lifecycle; and
- c) that the Council should work with neighbouring local planning authorities and partner organisations to introduce biodiversity net gain policies that complement the Nature Conservation Strategy's objectives.

For more information contact:	Dave Mitchell Executive Manager – Communities 0115 9148267 dmitchell@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2016 – 2020 • The Nature of Rushcliffe 2018 Annual Report – published August 2019 • Minutes of Cabinet, 9 January 2018 – Options for Tree Protection and Promotion in Rushcliffe • Minutes of Council, 16 July 2020 (Item 20b.) Notices of Motion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes of Communities Scrutiny Group, Wednesday, 7th October 2020 (Item 26.) Rushcliffe Nature Strategy
List of appendices:	Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021-2025

Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021 – 2025

FOREWORD

On 28 September 2020, Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister of the UK, signed the Leaders Pledge for Nature, at the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity along with 64 other countries, seeking to reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030. The pledge states: “We are in a state of planetary emergency: the interdependent crises of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and climate change”.

The Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) states “that the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis are inextricably linked and must be addressed together. Restoring biodiversity has the potential to ... mitigate against the effects of climate change, through enhancing carbon-storing habitats”. CIEEM called for “action ... through nature-based solutions”.

The community have a great deal of interest in the natural environment of Rushcliffe, when residents are aware that sensitive wildlife sites are threatened, they are quick to show their concern. Public interest must be translated from words to action. Everyone has a responsibility to do their bit and this strategy outlines actions that statutory and voluntary organisations, businesses and individuals working together can implement.

This strategy not only sets out to try to safeguard existing known sites of interest, but also to encourage the creation of new sites, while seeking to address the Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Crisis. The strategy also seeks to preserve the existing links between wildlife sites and to establish new links to allow the spread of wild native plants and animals.

The objective of the strategy is not only to benefit wildlife; visitors and residents will also benefit through the opportunities to observe and enjoy nature. A wildlife-rich environment has been shown to provide health benefits and economic benefits. Properly pursued, the strategy will benefit not only those who live and work in Rushcliffe now, but also future generations.

This strategy replaces previous strategies produced in 2003, 2010 and 2015. The strategy has been developed by the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNC SIG), which brings together statutory agencies and voluntary bodies, with the Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust playing leading roles, in partnership with a wide group of groups, organisations and individuals. This strategy supports the work of the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, implementing the county Biodiversity Action Plan at the borough level.

Changes in government guidance on sustainable development, biodiversity and planning, climate change and changes in legislation all emphasise the importance of avoiding harm and providing environmental gain, meeting the aims of sustainable development, and the need to provide a high-quality environment in which people can live and work.

The major organisations shown below commend this strategy. We will do our bit, please also do yours.

Rushcliffe Borough Council



Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust



Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group



Nottinghamshire County Council



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN DOCUMENT

BG	British Gypsum
BSI	British Standards Institute
BTC	Bingham Town Council
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
BuC	Butterfly Conservation
CE	Crown Estate
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
CIRIA	Construction Industry Research and Information Association
CLA	Country Land & Business Association
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England
CRT	Canal & River Trust (Previously British Waterways)
CTC	Cotgrave Town Council
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
ESO	Environmental Sustainability Officer
FC	Forestry Commission
FoG's	Friends of Groups
FoRCP	Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park
FWAC	Forestry and Woodlands Advisory Committees
GBI	Green Blue Infrastructure
GCP	Grantham Canal Partnership
GNPP	Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership
GPC	Gotham Parish Council
HE	Highways England
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IWA	Inland Waterways Association
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
KPC	Keyworth Parish Council
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site (Previously: Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation)
MFDS	Manor Farm Donkey Sanctuary
MHCLG	The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's
NBAG	Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group
NBGRC	Nottinghamshire Biological & Geological Records Centre
NBW	Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers
NCC	Nottinghamshire County Council
NE	Natural England
NFU	National Farmers Union
NFaW	Nottinghamshire Farming and Wildlife
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NRN	Nature Recovery Network
NRV	Notified Road Verges
NU	University of Nottingham
NWT	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

PCs	Parish/Town Councils
RBC	Rushcliffe Borough Council
RCAN	Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire
RNCSIG	Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RuBOP	Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project (A project of Notts Birders)
SBPC	Sutton Bonington Parish Council
SNG	South Notts Group (of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust)
SNRG	South Notts Ringing Group
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
STW	Severn Trent Water
TCV	The Conservation Volunteers (Previously BTCV)
TVIDB	Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board
Vol's	Volunteers
WT	Woodland Trust
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this strategy is to protect and enhance nature conservation in Rushcliffe, help mitigate the effects of climate change on wildlife and provide ready access to wildlife rich green spaces. There will be a particular emphasis on species-rich grassland, wetland, trees and woodland habitats, and species characteristic of the Borough such as grizzled skipper butterflies, great crested newts and brown hare. This will be achieved through forming effective partnerships, brought together through the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG).

The strategy identifies a wide range of issues that affect Rushcliffe's wildlife. It identifies that Rushcliffe's most important wildlife is found in a scattered network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Rushcliffe is important for some species: Black poplar, barn owls, water voles and great crested newts are found in Rushcliffe but are scarce in certain areas of Nottinghamshire.

The strategy considers the importance of the wider countryside (not just nature reserves) and urban areas in supporting our wildlife. It examines the variety of habitats and species and seeks opportunities for community involvement. The role of the planning system in conserving our natural heritage is considered. There is scope for enhancing the Borough for wildlife with appropriate long-term funding, and whether it is the creation and management of a nature reserve or the construction of a garden pond, every action has a value in enhancing Rushcliffe's wildlife resource.

Over recent decades, progress has been made on developing nature conservation projects in a co-ordinated way. Land management constraints, plus the small size and isolation of the wildlife sites, are major factors limiting wildlife in Rushcliffe. The aim of this strategy is to develop an approach to nature conservation that targets specific areas, habitats and species, to gain maximum benefit.

The strategy proposes action to promote good management of sites, habitat creation and improved green infrastructure. Such projects are not only beneficial for wildlife but provide an impetus for greater community involvement in nature conservation and improved quality of life.

Ongoing monitoring of wildlife is very important and in recent years the Phase 1 ecological survey data for Rushcliffe has been updated and digitised, however we cannot effectively protect what we do not know about, therefore continuing to survey and monitor the borough's wildlife is vital.

The principal objectives for this strategy are to:

- ✿ Promote 'Landscape Scale Conservation' to create a more resilient natural environment.
- ✿ Promote the maintenance and enhancement of nature reserves.
- ✿ Promote sympathetic land management for wildlife in rural and urban areas.
- ✿ Support monitoring of Rushcliffe's biodiversity.
- ✿ Raise awareness of nature conservation issues.
- ✿ Seek to ensure positive impact (Biodiversity Net Gain) of development on wildlife and biodiversity whilst eliminating negative impact.
- ✿ Support and develop Nature Conservation in Rushcliffe.

The role of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) is to ensure that the strategy becomes more than a list of good intentions; it produces an annual report on the progress made towards improving nature conservation in Rushcliffe. Progress requires the co-operation of a variety of organisations, groups and individuals.

2) OVERVIEW OF RUSHCLIFFE'S WILDLIFE

The Borough of Rushcliffe is largely rural, with a diverse landscape. The rivers Devon, Trent, Soar and Smite form much of the Borough's boundaries, with the Leicestershire Wolds and the Vale of Belvoir running along the southern edge of the Borough. Alluvial soils, with significant sand and gravel deposits, as at Holme Pierrepont, characterise the areas of flood plain, whilst sand and gravel deposited by glaciers lie around East Leake. Much of the soils in Rushcliffe are the slightly calcareous clays of the Mercia Mudstones; but a thin band of hydraulic limestone outcrops along the escarpment from Gotham to Bunny; with heavy boulder clay in the south-west of the Borough, whilst more calcareous Lias clays typify the extreme south-east of the borough.

As a result of this varied geology and topography, overlaid by the heavy influence of mankind over millennia, Rushcliffe contains a rich diversity of wildlife. Recording in Rushcliffe has identified 843 species of flora (Pinder, 2020), however Rushcliffe lacks many of the plants adapted to the acidic and sandy soils, found further north in the county; 261 species of birds have been recorded in Rushcliffe and 33 mammals. Otters are recolonising Rushcliffe's watercourses; brown hare are found and badgers are widespread.

Agriculture has shaped much of Rushcliffe and fragments of semi-natural habitats within the farmed landscape support plants such as cowslip and orchids. There are large woodland areas on the hills above Gotham and West Leake, but most of the semi-natural woodland habitat is contained within small copses scattered across the Borough, with trees also retained in countryside hedgerows and urban streets.

Small pockets of species-rich grassland are dotted around Rushcliffe, often on post-industrial sites or the limestone hill tops between Gotham and Bunny. Road verges provide a useful supplement, particularly in the south of Rushcliffe.

There are no natural lakes in Rushcliffe, but excavation and gravel extraction has provided several large water features and the Grantham Canal corridor is, in wildlife terms, currently a series of narrow lakes and ponds, with marginal/reed fringe, unimproved grassland and hedgerow - made accessible by its towpath. Wildlife has also readily colonised mineral workings and disused railway lines, whilst a wealth of native species are also found in urban areas.

Many species have suffered due to modern lifestyles. Special efforts to conserve species, such as the Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project and The Grizzled Skipper Project, along with government funded agri-environment schemes which support farmers, are working to reduce these losses. Wider influences, such as climate change, will add to the pressure on our local wildlife. The principle of good stewardship demands that we must protect our natural heritage, for the sake of ourselves, our children and for the generations to come.

Whilst wildlife is found throughout Rushcliffe's 41,000 hectares, the network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) covering 62 hectares and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), with an area of just under 2,000 hectares, represents Rushcliffe's wildlife capital. It is notable that whilst approximately 8% of Britain is designated as SSSI, only 0.15% of Rushcliffe is similarly designated and the coverage of LWS is around 5%, making conservation effort all the more important.

A more in depth look at species found in Rushcliffe is available online at <https://rushcliffewildlife.co.uk/>

3) SUCCESSES OF THE STRATEGY 2016 - 2020

The 2016 – 2020 strategy built on the previous strategies, leading to advances in the protection and enhancement of Rushcliffe's wildlife resources. The Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) was set up as a partnership in 2003 to implement the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy and consists of a range of organisations and groups with an interest in Rushcliffe's wildlife. The Group continues to be active and will help progress the aims outlined in the updated 2021-2025 strategy

Delivering the Nature Conservation Strategy has seen:

- ✿ The total of number of sites across the borough managed predominantly as nature reserves, increase from twenty-two in 2004 to thirty-three in 2019, these cover 458.04 hectares of habitat, which is still only a very small proportion of the Boroughs total area. These include sites in the ownership of public bodies, charities and private ownership and are managed in a variety of ways including a significant number of Friends of Groups.
- ✿ Volunteer practical nature conservation work across the borough has increased to an estimated 12,591 hours in 2018 (up from 8,378 hours in 2014 and 3,138 hours in 2004). The estimated value for this work is £233,980 (based on Volunteering England guidance 2014, equating to £18.69 per hour). However, this does not include all the wildlife survey work, guided walks, children's groups, publicity & promotion and basic administration that also goes into supporting a thriving volunteer wildlife engagement community in the Borough.

Successful activities carried out over the period of the last strategy include the following:

- ✿ Cotgrave Forest Focal Area was identified in the Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping project led by Nottinghamshire BAG as an opportunity to make things Better, Bigger and More Connected. The strategy group has worked within the Cotgrave Forest Focal Area due to changes in ownership in Cotgrave Forest and the presence of the rare Purple Emperor butterfly. Ecological Research has been undertaken and training provided for land owners. We are seeking to encourage woodland friendly management and improve woodland connectivity by working with local farmers and landowners and to work with the Highways Agency on habitat improvements on the A46 corridor.
- ✿ Costock Pond, Dewberry Hill and Lily Ponds are now managed as nature reserves through the local parish councils, supported by the partnership.
- ✿ The Grizzled Skipper Project (Notts BAG) has worked to enhance habitats for one of the most northerly populations of this important butterfly. The project has successfully attracted large volunteer groups and engaged organisations like the Great Central Railway (Nottingham). Grizzled Skipper, records have increased from 148 sightings in 2015 to 198 in 2019, the project has also enhanced areas of habitats for other species.
- ✿ Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Skylarks nature reserve has been enhanced with the lake habitat being made more varied (islands, shallows, reed beds) and the introduction of grassland management. An enhanced visitor experience (including archeologically activities) is provided and is also the base site for the Rushcliffe Rangers, a young people's wildlife group.
- ✿ Rushcliffe Borough Council have promoted tree protection and enhancement, Tree Wardens have been recruited across rural Rushcliffe to promote and protect tree issues in their parishes.

Additionally, by 2019, 5329 free trees have been given to the public and 363 trees to parishes and communities, further trees are to be provided in 2020.

- ✿ A Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme run by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has been running since 2015 in the Cropwell Bishop dairy/cheese making area. Partly funded by DEFRA it aims to vaccinate the majority of the Badger population in the area, against TB, to the benefit of the badgers, the dairy farms and the local cheese industry. At least 222 badgers have been vaccinated to date, with the highest level of landowner engagement of any NWT project, plus a great deal of support from volunteers prepared to go out tracking and tracing.
- ✿ Grassland sites across the borough have been supported with scrub control, provided through the provision of a remote-controlled flail mower hire.
- ✿ 40 projects between 2015 and 2020 have been supported with RBC grants, providing £16,459.11
- ✿ Barn Owls populations are an indicator of the ecological health of the borough. Barn Owls can only survive where there are plenty of places for them to roost and plenty of wild habitats for them to hunt their prey, and with plenty of prey living in those habitats. The exact number of Barn owls, within the borough is not known, but the number of owls using artificial Barn Owl boxes, can be used as a proxy measure, this is monitored by The Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers. Barn Owl chicks ringed in Rushcliffe in 2019 totalled 126 chicks (4 in 2000 and 47 in 2015).

Most of these activities will continue into the 2021 - 25 period. The range of wildlife related projects, both big and small, has extended considerably since 2003. We need to ensure that existing activities are maintained and that new initiatives are encouraged. This must encompass both the practical nature conservation management, wildlife recording and the support of educational activities, in its broadest sense, for both adults and children. Actions of this type contribute in some way to all the Strategic Objectives.

Further details of our achievements are available in the annual reports published by RNCSIG and published online at www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation

4) PRINCIPAL HABITATS FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE

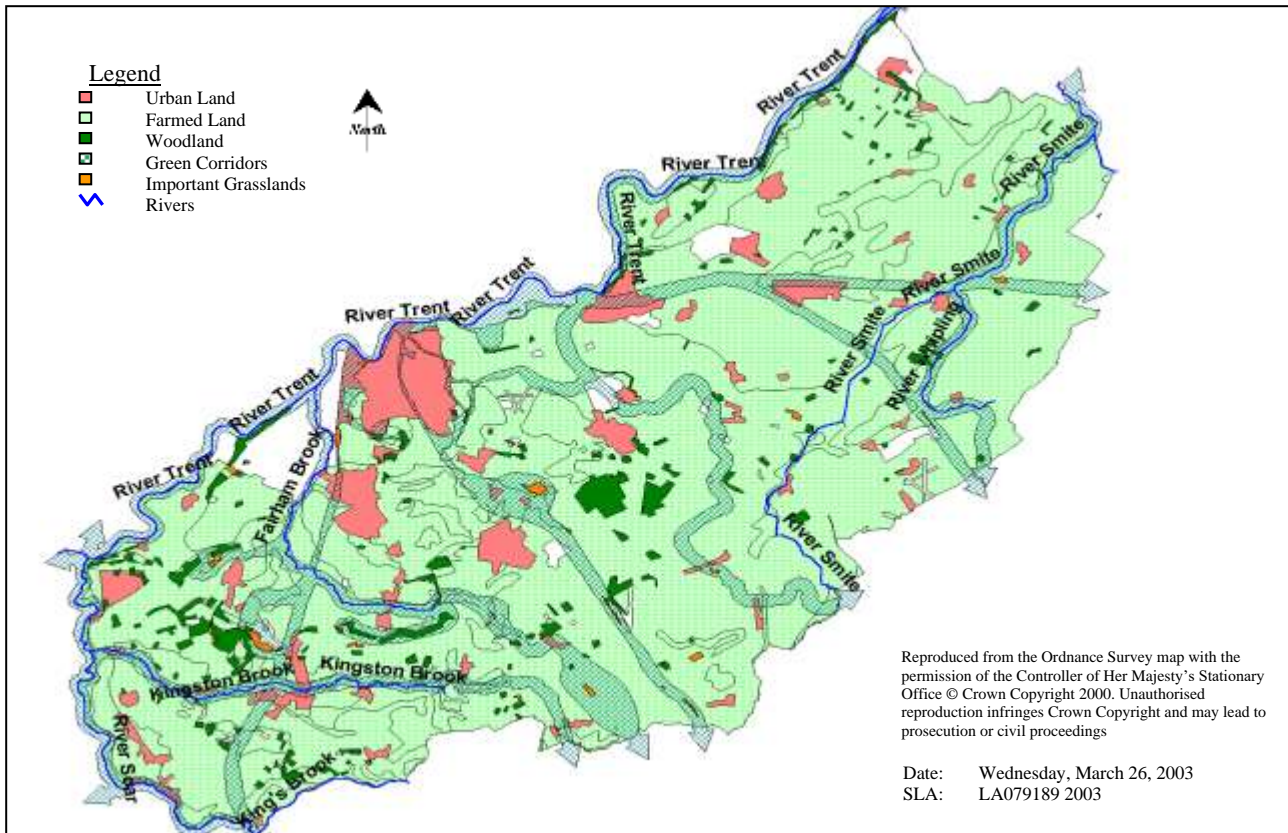


Figure 1: Main Habitats in Rushcliffe

4.1) Farmland

Farming is the principal land use in Rushcliffe, covering 31,412 ha (MHCLG, 2020) or 77% of Rushcliffe's total area. Arable farming is the main farm type, however grazing pastures are found near streams and rivers, on the gypsum ridges and in the Stilton Cheese producing area around Colston Bassett and Cropwell Bishop. Farmland can have a high wildlife value when managed sympathetically. The government funded Agri-environment schemes help farmers and land managers deliver against a wide range of environmental commitments, including water quality and biodiversity.

We will seek to: Encourage farmers and other landowners to develop sympathetic management practices and increase the take up of schemes that support this. Protect and develop farm ponds, ditches, the edges of arable farm fields and other habitat enhancements. Encourage farmers to retain traditional pasture, meadows and autumn arable stubble. Support the National Pollinator Strategy. Reduce agricultural pollution.

4.2) Woodland and trees

Woodland covers 2212 ha or 5.4% of Rushcliffe (MHCLG, 2020). We have eight (64ha) ancient woodlands (woodlands that have existed since at least 1600 AD and are irreplaceable) and one plantation on ancient woodlands (3.2ha) (Natural England, 2020) and (Pinder, 2020). Woodland has a big visual impact and supports a wide variety of wildlife. Woods require long-term management to maintain and enhance their wildlife interest.

Total tree cover in Rushcliffe (which includes Street trees, garden trees, highways trees, field and hedge trees and parkland trees in addition to woodlands) covers 11.1% of Rushcliffe or 3728ha, this



Figure 2: Bunny Wood

varies across the borough from 4.8% tree cover in the Cropwell Ward, up to 18.8% tree cover in Edwalton in 2020 (RBC, 2020).

Trees and woodland provide many ecosystem services, including supporting wildlife, visual benefit, providing benefits for recreation and mental health; counteracting climate change and absorbing carbon, alleviating flooding and trapping pollutants (having a positive impact on asthma sufferers). They prevent soil erosion and produce fuel and wood products, supporting the rural economy.

Veteran or mature and dead trees in woods, hedges, gardens, fields, and along watercourses are particularly important for wildlife.

The UK government has set a target for increasing the area of woodland in England to 12% of land by 2060 (Forestry Commission, 2020). The Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network (FWAC, 2018) recommends a minimum target is set locally for urban tree canopy cover of 20% tree cover.

The Woodland Trust - Woodland Access Standard recommends that everyone should live within 500m of an accessible woodland of at least 2ha and within 4km of an accessible 20ha wood (WT, 2015).

See Appendices 3-7 for additional guidance and the policies in the Rushcliffe Local Plan.

🌿 We will seek to: Work forwards achieving the national targets for woodland and urban tree cover and woodland access. Promote appropriate new woodland planting and / or regeneration, particularly linked to existing woods. Ensure planning policies on trees and woodland are implemented and work toward national targets. Develop schemes to establish new trees, carbon offset and community orchards. Promote sympathetic woodland management. Use tree preservation orders for threatened valuable amenity trees. Enable Rushcliffe tree wardens to protect and enhance trees. Achieve at least 20 hectares of new woodland cover (approx. 20,000 trees) within this plan period. Encourage use of locally sourced and locally native trees. Protect veteran trees.

4.3) Urban

Gardens collectively cover a large area and are important, supporting many birds and butterflies; larger urban wildlife sites also support lots of wildlife. Buildings support wildlife such as bats and birds (including house martins, swifts and swallows). Temporary sites and derelict industrial sites often contain rare important wildlife habitats.

To find out more about encouraging wildlife in gardens, visit the Wild About Gardens website, at www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk

🐦 We will seek to: Raise awareness of urban wildlife, protected species and invasive non-native species. Protect and enhance urban wildlife sites, including valuable 'brown-field' sites. Encourage recreational use where appropriate. Encourage wildlife-friendly gardening and try to enhance the potential of both new and existing buildings for use by wildlife.




Figure 3: Green Line, West Bridgford

4.4) Species Rich Grassland

Traditional flower-rich meadows are rare, almost 99% having been lost in the UK in the last 100 years, however, some remain along with old pastures. In Rushcliffe designated Local Wildlife Sites containing grasslands, cover 466 hectares, a further 26 ha are designated for their meadow community, providing a total of 492 ha of designated sites containing important grassland (NBGRC, 2019).

Roadside verges are another refuge for grassland species especially the wide verges of the old drove roads. There are four 'Notified Road Verges' (NRV), in Rushcliffe and these receive special management. Sensitive managed graveyards are also important. Lime-rich habitats exist where there are old gypsum works and around hill tops in the Nottinghamshire Wolds. Grasslands support fauna including butterflies, common lizards, grass snakes, harvest mice and badgers.

 **We will seek to: Protect and manage remaining fragments of species-rich grassland. Encourage sympathetic management of other grassland and examine options to create/extend species rich grassland. Work proactively with land owners / managers in the borough to develop and implement wildlife sensitive management plans. Encourage the public to develop wildflower grasslands through provision of appropriate wildflower seed. Support the enhanced management and extension of the County Notified Road Verge scheme and other important roadside verges. Ensure road verges receive appropriate mowing regimes and are protected from excessive winter salting. Raise awareness of the need to use local species / sub species seed, especially in rural areas and on sensitive wildlife sites.**

4.5) Rivers, Standing Water and Marsh

Wetlands feature strongly in Rushcliffe, of the 225 Local Wildlife sites in Rushcliffe 70 contain wetland features (NBGRC, 2019); including the River Trent, River Soar, its tributaries, catchments and floodplains; however most of the rivers are classed as in poor or moderate ecological condition due to the impact of pollutants from sewage, agriculture or industrial processes; the Grantham Canal and farm ponds also provide wetland habitat, however these are at risk due to drying out and lack of use. Wetland can help store water, reducing flooding.

Invasive species such as Himalayan balsam and mink, present difficulties. Wetlands support endangered species such as otter, water voles and great crested newts. They are also important for dragonflies, grass snakes, wading birds and kingfishers.


 **We will seek to: Protect the remaining marshland fragments and encourage the development and management of wetland sites. Carefully consider and liaise over the future redevelopment of the Grantham Canal and its surroundings. 'Work with the CRT, riparian authorities, landowners and local groups to address water loss and improve the ecology along the Grantham Canal. Promote farm and garden pond creation and management. Work to stop the decline of water voles and to support the return of the otter. Control invasive, non-native species. Achieve 'good ecological status' of our rivers, streams and waterbodies. Encourage riparian owners to slow water ingress to water courses by use of Natural Flood Management techniques where appropriate.**



Figure 4: Wilwell Cutting

4.6) Hedgerows



Figure 5: Meadow Park, East Leake

Hedgerows both provide useful habitat and link wildlife sites. Many of the hedges in Rushcliffe date back to the Enclosure Acts of the 18th century and consist of predominantly hawthorn and elder. Older hedges exist along ancient lanes and parish boundaries, these are usually more diverse. Hedgerows can be at risk from removal or neglect; protection for important hedgerows is provided by the Hedgerow Regulations.



We will seek to: Promote conservation, replanting and appropriate management of hedgerows. Use the Hedgerow Regulations as appropriate

4.7) Amenity grassland

There are significant areas of parks, recreation grounds and public and school playing fields in Rushcliffe, including the 85 ha Rushcliffe Country Park, with 26.5ha of amenity grassland, but also 18.6ha of wildflower meadow. These sites may include habitats mentioned above, but often contain large areas of close mown grass, managed as a virtual monoculture, with use of fertilisers, herbicides, and mowing

regimes that deter diversity.

Appropriate management can support a range of grassland plants along with trees, shrubs and hedgerows, these may be restricted to the edges of the sites for example on playing fields, as well as invertebrates, small mammals, foxes and birds of prey. Forestry research advocates that grasslands offer a very versatile and practical means of expanding the social and economic benefits offered by greenspace, including increased biodiversity (Forestry Commission, 2020)

The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust "Blue Butterfly Scheme" promotes better management of grassland, to local authorities, private landowners and businesses to manage, restore and create wildflower meadows.



We will seek to: Ensure grasslands owned by public authorities are managed as wildflower rich grasslands wherever appropriate. Ensure all amenity land is sympathetically managed. Develop 'Blue Butterfly' sites.

5) NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (LBAP)



Biodiversity includes the variety of plants and animals around us and the places in which they live. The Rio Earth Summit in 1992 was the first international agreement to protect the planet's biodiversity. 'Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group Report' (JNCC, 1995) and 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' (DEFRA, 2011) set clear objectives for the conservation of biodiversity to which Local Authorities and their partners are encouraged to subscribe.

In 1998 the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, a partnership of over 50 organisations working to protect and enhance biodiversity across Nottinghamshire, launched their local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). The plan identifies rare, important and threatened habitats and species in Nottinghamshire and provides action plans for their conservation. Several of these habitats and species occur in Rushcliffe. Rushcliffe Borough Council is a signatory to the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan and an active partner organisation within the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG).

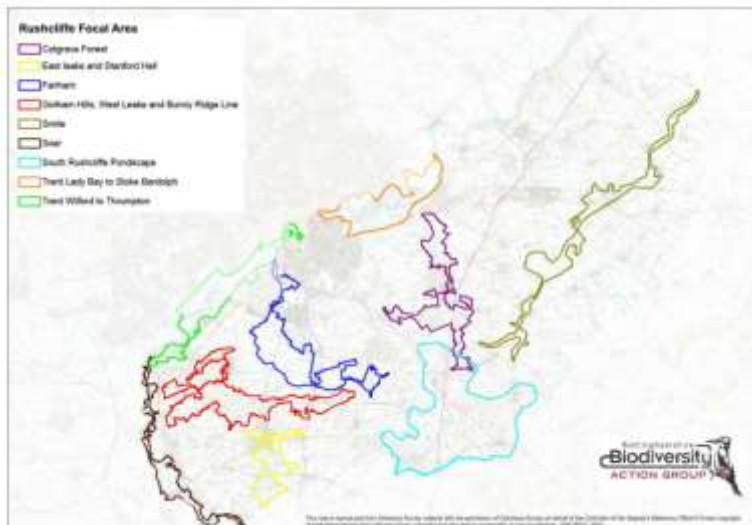


Figure 6: Rushcliffe Biodiversity Opportunity Focal Areas, 2015

In 2013, work was undertaken to identify and map the best opportunities to enhance areas of existing biodiversity value within Rushcliffe. This was part of a county wide project being delivered by the BAG. This Biodiversity Opportunity Map (BOM), used existing biodiversity data alongside local amateur and professional ecological knowledge to identify locations where opportunities existed in Rushcliffe to enhance biodiversity. These enhancements included improvements to existing sites, creating buffers around these sites, creating links between these sites and creating new sites. Where a concentration of biodiversity opportunities existed, these were identified as Biodiversity Focal areas. This work

will guide where future work is focused, guide planning policy, assist in the development of new projects and grant applications; it was used in preparing this nature conservation strategy.

The full Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping report is available from the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group website www.nottsbag.org.uk

IMPORTANT LBAP SPECIES FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE

Atlantic Salmon	Green Hairstreak
Autumn Crocus	Grass Snake
Barn Owl	Great Crested Newt
Bats	Harvest Mouse
Black Poplar	Hedgehog
Corn Bunting	Otter
Deptford Pink	Slow Worm
Dingy & Grizzled Skippers	Water Vole

NB. This list includes many LBAP species found in Rushcliffe for which there is a Species Action Plan. It is not a comprehensive list of UK BAP or LBAP species found in the borough.

LBAP HABITATS FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE

LBAP habitat	Example Sites
Arable field margins	Many sites
Canals	Grantham Canal
Ditches	Many sites
Eutrophic & mesotrophic standing waters (including ponds)	Wilford Claypits, Skylarks Nature Reserve, Kinoulton Marsh, Gresham Marsh, Barnstone Pits, Holme Pierrepont
Hedgerows	Many Sites
Lowland calcareous grassland	Gotham Hills Pastures
Lowland fen	Kinoulton Marsh
Lowland neutral grassland	Wilwell Cutting, Wilford Claypits, Gresham Marsh, Keyworth Meadow, Normanton Pastures, Bingham Linear Walk
Lowland wet grassland	Wilwell Cutting
Marsh and Swamp	Gresham Marsh, Kinoulton Marsh
Mixed ash-dominated woodland	Bunny Wood, Sharphill Wood, Meadow Covert, Wilford Hill Wood, West Leake Hills, Cotgrave Wood
Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land	Cotgrave Colliery
Reedbed	Skylarks Nature Reserve
Rivers & streams	Trent, Soar, Smite, Devon, Fairham Brook, Kingston Brook
Traditional orchards	Many sites
Urban habitats	many parks and open spaces
Wet woodland	Skylarks Nature Reserve
Wood pasture and parkland	Flintham Hall, Stanford Hall

For more details of Local Biodiversity Action Plan targets visit the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group website at www.nottsbag.org.uk.

For more details on DEFRA's biodiversity work visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services

We will seek to: Identify and promote projects that contribute to the Nottinghamshire LBAP and increase awareness of the LBAP in the Borough. Monitor LBAP related works and report back to the Biodiversity Action Group. Promote LBAP species found in Rushcliffe and the habitats in which they live. Ensure that due weight is given to the importance of LBAP species and habitats through the development control system. Encourage the use of local provenance planting. Continue to audit the Borough's natural capital and look to develop the Biodiversity Opportunity Map and its opportunities and focal areas.

6) DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES AND NATURE RESERVES

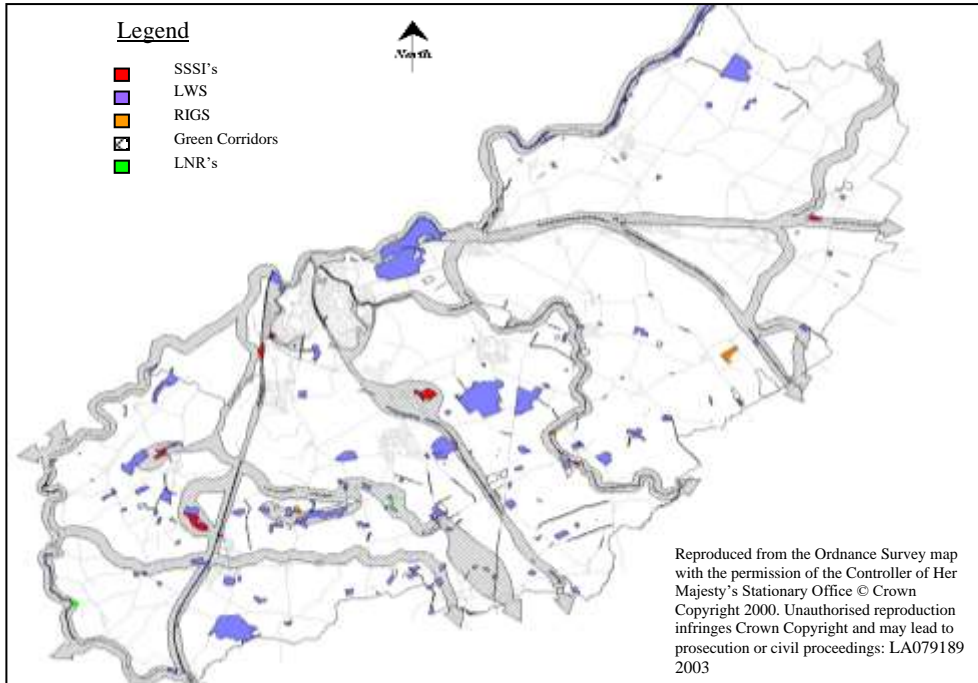


Figure 7: Protected sites in Rushcliffe

In Rushcliffe (in 2020) there are 8 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), 225 countywide important Local Wildlife Sites (LWS – previously called SINCs), mostly privately owned and eight locally designated Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

LWS are usually not designated as nature reserves.

These are important sites that could not easily be restored once lost.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 imposes a duty

for public authorities to show regard for conserving biodiversity in all their actions including the conservation and enhancement of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). National Planning Policy Framework (2019) - Part 15 – 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' makes specific reference to the need to safeguard 'locally designated sites', which includes Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) In Rushcliffe (Oct 2019)		
Total	225 sites	1903 ha
Type of Habitat (sites may contain more than one habitat)	Number of Sites in which the habitat is found	
Grassland	98	
Woodland	37	
Ponds & Lakes	41	
Streams, Rivers, Canals & ditches	18	
Ex Industrial, including quarries and railways	17	
Fen & Marshland	7	
Hedgerow	2	
Ruderal	1	

SSSI's in Rushcliffe
Barnstone Railway Cutting - geology
Gotham Hill Pastures - grassland
Kinoulton Marsh – marsh
Normanton Pastures - grassland
Orston Plaster Pits - grassland
Rushcliffe Golf Course - grassland
Wilford Claypits - marsh / grassland
Wilwell Cutting – marsh / grassland

Designated Local Nature Reserves	Bingham Linear Park LNR
	Keyworth Meadow LNR
	Meadow Covert LNR
	Rushcliffe Country Park LNR
	Sharphill Wood LNR
	Sutton Bonnington Spinney & Meadows LNR
	The Hook LNR
	Wilwell Cutting LNR

All of these sites are important and need protecting. Targeting the areas with the greatest numbers of important sites can help to protect them, ensuring their long-term survival and development.

There are around 40 sites (in 2020) in Rushcliffe that are being managed as nature reserves with wildlife as a primary use. These sites cover an area of over 450 hectares, the majority, but not all are designated as LWS or SSSIs and around two thirds have some form of community involvement, whether this is wardening, reserve work parties or Friends of Groups. Ownership and management are very varied – some are privately owned; others are owned by companies, Parish Councils, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and Rushcliffe Borough Council - in some case sites are owned by one organisation and managed by another.

Nature reserves should be actively managed to preserve and where possible improve their wildlife value. Fundamental to good management is the existence of an up to date management plan, to guide the work on the site and resolve contradictions between various requirements. Most of these sites have recent management plans. However, a management plan is only as good as the resources available to make it happen and such resources are often thinly stretched. Some of these resources are provided by professional staff (NWT, RBC), but much of the work (and site management) is carried out by volunteers – although they are supported by help and advice from professional staff.

Because many reserves are set up to be reasonably accessible, they are also particularly useful in giving people formal (guided walks, or species-specific studies) and informal access to wildlife. A leaflet showing many publicly accessible nature reserves can be downloaded from www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/greenspaces

Finance can also be an issue; obtaining grant funding can be difficult and time consuming. Rushcliffe Borough Council provides grants to provide small amounts of money, simply.

Comparing the area managed as nature reserves with the total coverage of LWS (1,900 hectares) or of Rushcliffe (41,000 hectares), shows that management of nature reserves, whilst important, cannot be regarded in isolation – wider management of sites and networks linking reserves, LWS and SSSIs are essential.

Some sites are publicly owned, and some are privately owned, nature conservation may be a secondary purpose or in some cases of little interest to the owners.

Nature Recovery Network (NRN)

The concept of Nature Recovery Networks advocates making more space for nature in both our rural and urban environments, with nature being accessible wherever people live. Whilst Nature Reserves,

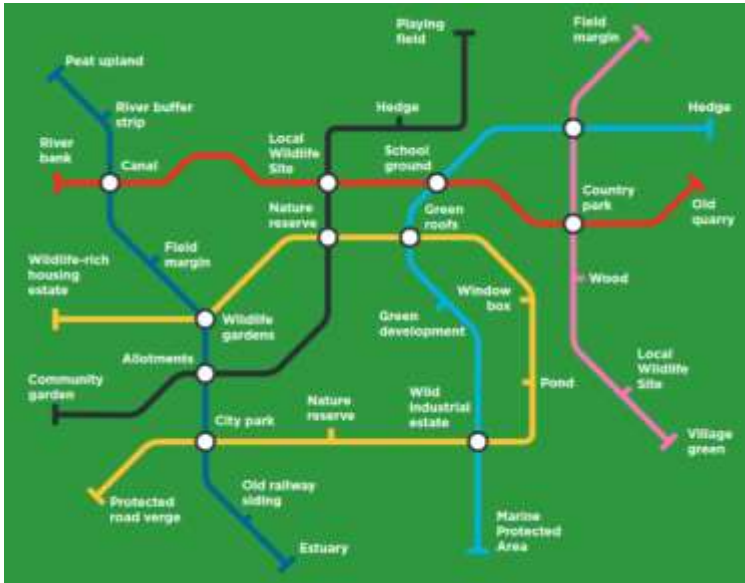


Figure 8: Components of a Nature Recovery Network (The Wildlife Trusts, 2018)

create NRN's across England. This "will be a national network of wildlife-rich places" connected "across our towns, cities and countryside" (DEFRA, 2020).

The NRN is a major commitment in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan and part of the Environment Bill (see Appendix 9), which proposes that NRN Plans must be developed for every area of England.

We will seek to: Ensure protected sites and reserves are well managed; with management agreements and plans, advice and grants. Identify and designate new sites. Extend existing sites to provide buffer zones and reduce isolation. Monitor sites to prevent degradation, using regulations where necessary. Support the development of Nature Recovery Networks and Nature Recovery Network Plans. Review the green corridor network. Ensure sufficient resources are available (both financial and volunteer) to support implementation of plans. Seek to build the capacity of the nature conservation sector in Rushcliffe (both professional and voluntary). Develop large (landscape scale) sites and reserves in Rushcliffe.

Local Wildlife Sites and Wildlife Corridors are central to the NRN philosophy, the linkages (hedgerows, road verges and stepping stone habitats) allowing wildlife to move and filter into urban areas are crucial. Much of this has been implicit in the thinking behind the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy for the last 20 years. But the scale envisaged for NRN's are ambitious and delivery will be a key issue.

The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust report 'Wilder Nottinghamshire' (NWT, 2019) demonstrates this approach at a county level and Fig 7 above demonstrates the basic building blocks for the NRN in Rushcliffe.

Defra and Natural England are bringing together partners, legislation and funding, to

7) RUSHCLIFFE'S LANDSCAPES

Landscape Ecology

Landscape affects species viability, of particular concern is the ability of species to move through the landscape and the size of wildlife sites and habitat within the particular landscape.

Landscape ecology suggests the greatest value for wildlife can be gained by developing further similar habitats to those already present. Woodland planting is best concentrated into areas of existing woodland; in Rushcliffe, this would be the Nottinghamshire Wolds and in the Cotgrave area. In the South Nottinghamshire Farmland and the Vale of Belvoir it would be more important to improve farmland habitats by for example developing wildflower rich grasslands, native farm hedgerows, hedgerow trees and field corner plantations, field margins, beetle banks, overwinter stubble, lapwing lawns, barn owl boxes and farm ponds.

Areas that allow wildlife to move through the Borough are known as green corridors (shown in Figure 6). Green corridor maps help to focus efforts to reduce fragmentation (see also Green Infrastructure).

We will seek to: Update and maintain the Green Corridor map, clearly defining important corridors. Protect existing green corridors. Seek appropriate farmland enhancement. Pursue opportunities to enhance the corridor network and encourage land managers to improve connections between habitat sites. Identify clusters of wildlife sites and seek to improve connection and reduce fragmentation and isolation of sites.

Mature Landscapes

Areas with landscape features that have been long established tend to be better for wildlife. Nottinghamshire County Council's Mature Landscape Survey, reviewed in 1997, identifies landscapes considered to be amongst the most precious and relatively unchanged since the mid-19th century.

We will seek to: Protect mature landscape areas as far as possible from adverse development.

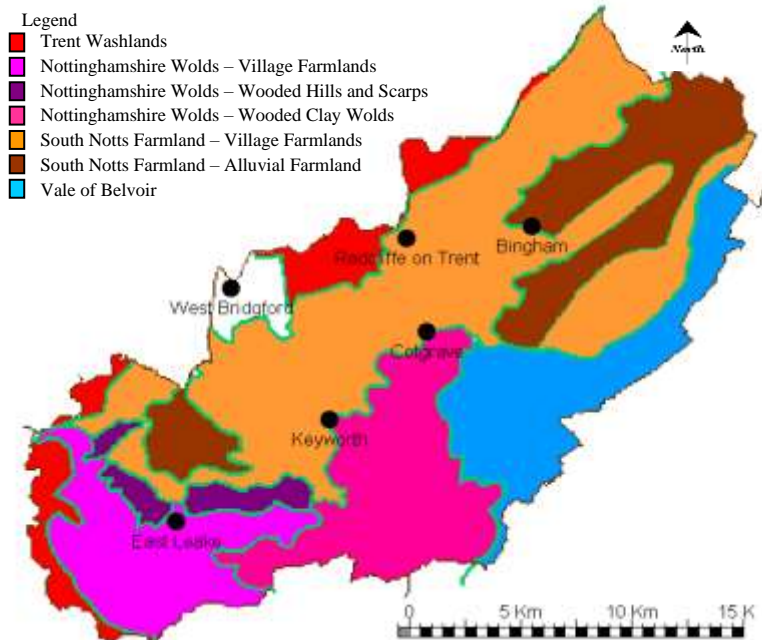


Figure 8: Simplified Regional Character of Rushcliffe's, after Notts CC, 2009

Landscape Character

Nottinghamshire County Council produced landscape character assessments of Nottinghamshire in 1997 and updated them in 2009. These appraisals can be used to identify the key parts of our countryside and to identify the priority for nature conservation work in each area. The Borough has been divided into character areas based on its geology, topography and land use. For each area we can identify key actions.

Wildlife including tree species varies accordingly and use of the most appropriate species for planting schemes in the area should be used wherever possible. Suggested tree planting species are provided in Appendix 3.

See <http://cms.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/landimprovements/landscapecharacter.htm> for more details about the landscape character assessment.

Trent Washlands

These are the valleys formed by the River Trent and River Soar, it is an area of pebbles overlain with soils deposited by the river (alluvium). These are rich soils and have supported farming for a long time. Hedgerows and riverside willow pollards are important features. Some pasture and meadows have survived, but arable farming has replaced the grasslands in many places. Woodlands are not common except around Kingston Hall and on the steep outcrops or bluffs on the edge of the Trent.

We will seek to: Encourage the protection and restoration of mixed hedgerows and field margins, hedgerow and riparian habitats and trees including willow pollards. Protect pastures and meadows where they survive. Consider recreating grassland (especially wet pasture) and marsh. Protect the parkland landscape around Kingston Hall. Maintain and develop woodlands on steep bluffs and create small wet woodlands within the river valleys.

Nottinghamshire Wolds

– Village Farmlands

This is an area of good farmland, with frequent large villages. Gypsum extraction has heavily influenced this area. There are low amounts of woodland except around Stanford Hall. Strong field systems exist with improved grassland and arable farming. Kingston Brook is an important feature. Country lanes with good verges and hedgerows are noteworthy.

We will seek to: Encourage field hedgerows and trees. Develop grasslands on gypsum. Protect woodland and veteran trees in the parkland landscape at Stanford Hall. Encourage riparian habitats and trees (especially willow pollards) and shrubs along with grassland along the Kingston Brook corridor and discourage arable farming to the brook edge. Install natural flood defences and livestock control measures on stream headlands.

– Wooded Hills and Farms

Woodlands, pastures and rough grass define this area. Calcareous grassland is important in areas of gypsum. Ancient Woodlands are found to the south and west of Gotham and Bunny. Hedgerows are important around fields.

We will seek to: Maintain alternating pattern of pasture and woodland. Protect and develop pasture and rough grassland. Maintain and extend ancient woodlands, Create new native woodlands on hilltops and escarpments.

– Wooded Clay Wolds

Traditionally an area of enclosed grassland with hedgerows and trees, now often converted to arable farmland. Lanes are prominent features. Small broadleaved woodlands are common and large conifer plantations exist at Cotgrave Forest and Borders Wood. Ridge and furrow grasslands are found around Willoughby on the Wolds and Wysall.

We will seek to: Increase broadleaved woodland cover especially on hilltops using field patterns as a guide. Look to diversify the woodland around Cotgrave. Encourage hedgerow management. Protect remaining grasslands especially ridge and furrow.

South Nottinghamshire Farmland

– Alluvial Farmland

This is the area near the rivers Smite and Devon and the area of Ruddington Moor (once an extensive area of grass moorland). This is mainly an arable area where the field structure has largely broken down, forming large expanses perhaps reminiscent of the pre-enclosure moorlands. Trees are contained in occasional copse and riparian corridors. The River Smite has been partly canalised.

We will seek to: Seek improvements to the River Smite (re-profiling and encouraging aquatic and emergent vegetation). Improve riparian structure along the rivers Smite and Devon. Consider enlarging copse and repairing remaining hedgerows. Consider the creation of wet grassland especially within Ruddington Moor. Encourage the creation of beetle banks, game cover strips, headlands and maintenance of winter stubble on arable farmland. Encourage pond creation and management to help support wetland species. Install natural flood defences and livestock control measures on stream headlands.

– Village Farmland

A strong, largely arable, agricultural landscape dominated by hedgerows. The Grantham Canal and disused railways in this area form important habitats. Parklands are found at Whatton Manor, Flintham, Tollerton, Bunny and Ruddington.

We will seek to: Protect and develop hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Encourage the creation of beetle banks, game cover strips, headlands and winter stubble on arable farmland. Encourage ponds creation and management. Protect and enhance parkland habitats. Protect and enhance the Grantham Canal and disused railway habitats.

Vale of Belvoir

An area of mixed farming, hedgerows and lanes. The Hickling area is rich in unimproved pasture, ridge and furrow and species-rich hedgerows with trees. Wooded parkland is found at Colston Bassett and Staunton. The Rivers Smite and Whipling have important riverside habitats with good trees.

We will seek to: Promote pasture and hay meadows especially along the river edges, grass headlands, hedgerows, hedgerow trees, riparian buffer strips and trees. Encourage wood planting on escarpments. Seek improvements to the River Smite (re-profiling and encouraging aquatic and emergent vegetation). Install natural flood defences and livestock control measures on stream headlands. Protect and enhance parkland habitats.

8) GREEN-BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Green-Blue Infrastructure (GBI) is used to describe the land around us which has not been built on or cultivated. This may be recreational, landscape and ecological in nature, but in the same way as roads and electricity wires are called infrastructure because they benefit people, these areas can also provide a range of benefits. This includes aquatic or blue infrastructure features.

Natural England defines Green Infrastructure as “a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high-quality green spaces and other environmental features”. It identifies key benefits as “able to deliver multiple environmental functions, and to play a key part in adapting to and mitigating climate change” and “support healthier lifestyles by providing green routes for walking and cycling, and green spaces for exercise and play” (Natural England, 2009).

Green and Blue Infrastructure covers a wide variety of open spaces, including water and wetland environments. There is a clear overlap between GBI and ecological networks which seek to prevent the ecological isolation of sites through the creation of wildlife corridors and stepping stones. These provide habitats for species and enable their migration.

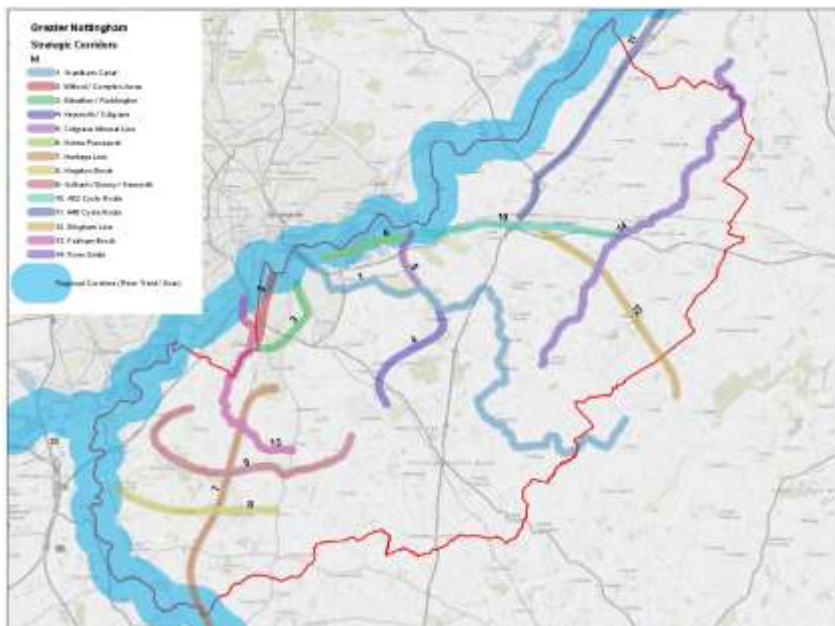


Figure 9 - Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure in Rushcliffe

Green-Blue infrastructure can range from small green spaces, such as domestic gardens and street tree avenues, to playing pitches and recreation grounds, river corridors, canals and lakes, cycle routes, local nature reserves and woodlands.

Multi-functionality is a key element of Green and Blue Infrastructure... providing accessible sport and recreational opportunities, wildlife habitats and an ecological corridor, reduces local temperatures, and offers non-motorised transport opportunities... provide flood water storage during periods of heavy rainfall, reducing risks of flooding. (GNPP, 2020)

By looking at the Green-Blue Infrastructure we already have, it is possible to identify what needs to be maintained and enhanced, as well as identify where there are gaps and opportunities to improve our GBI. A coherent GBI strategy would help reduce biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation. The pressure for new housing developments in Rushcliffe highlights the importance of planning our GBI.

See <http://www.gnplan.org.uk/evidence-base/> for the Greater Nottingham Green Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2020

We will seek to: Maintain an inventory of our Green-Blue Infrastructure. Implement a strategy on managing and enhancing this resource and develop projects to improve the Green-Blue Infrastructure of Rushcliffe. Work with the planning authorities and developers to avoid development that destroys or damages GI and to ensure wildlife friendly Green-Blue Infrastructure is included in all new strategies and developments.

9) CLIMATE CHANGE

The climate of our world is changing due to man's activities and this will impact on both our society and the natural world. For example, in the UK oak trees are opening their leaves up to a fortnight earlier than 50 years ago, species that are dependent on oak trees which cannot adapt to this change will struggle to survive. Similarly, it has been shown that "Britain's climate zones are moving northwards by up to five kilometres a year due to climate heating" ... "according to the IPCC, carnivorous mammals can disperse at 6km/year (median estimate), while split-hoofed mammals (like deer) can shift their ranges at 9 km/year. Rodents are less mobile, however, generally shifting at less than 1km/year... butterflies in North America and the UK have shifted at 2-4 km per year" (Rewilding Britain, 2020) .

We all have a responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment, but we must also help our wildlife to adapt to the changing climate. This means there needs to be a range of good quality and varied habitats for species to live in, supported by good linkages to allow movement where required – a coherent GI strategy. "Enhancing the scale, quality and connectedness of our native habitats would enable more species and communities to adapt and adjust their ranges as climate zones shift, by the creation of core rewilding areas across at least 5% of Britain and the establishment of 'natural dispersal corridors' across at least 25% of Britain. This could save... Britain's species from climate-driven habitat loss, species decline or even extinction (Rewilding Britain, 2020)".

We must also seek to minimise the stresses on wildlife which when added to climate change could lead at the very least to local extinctions or worse. But we must also be prepared for new species to become part of Rushcliffe's biodiversity.

Mitigation of climate change needs to take place in the built environment in existing and new developments to achieve net zero emissions. Climate change mitigation in buildings includes very high standards of insulation, micro and community renewable energy and infrastructure to encourage walking, cycling and the use of low carbon public transport.

It is likely however that carbon emissions will still be produced, ecosystems can absorb carbon, known as carbon sinks, allowing emissions to reach net zero. Carbon sinks include trees and woodlands, hedgerows, long term diverse grasslands and some wetlands, rewilding is one method for increasing these habitats.

Rewilding

"**Rewilding** is the large-scale restoration of ecosystems to a point where nature can take care of itself. It seeks to reinstate natural processes and, where appropriate, missing species – allowing them to shape the landscape and the habitats within... rewilding can provide a cost-effective solution for the mitigation of climate heating with its ability to draw down millions of tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere"

CIEEM states rewilding is part of a wider 'conservation toolkit' that can be used alongside traditional management techniques (CIEEM, 2020). Opportunities are limited in Rushcliffe due to the intensity of land use, but agricultural land and riversides may provide possibilities.

We will seek to: maintain as diverse an environment as we can to support the widest opportunities for our biodiversity to survive. Find opportunities to create rewilding areas. Increase linkages between habitats to allow movement of species. Be prepared to adapt our efforts as the climate changes. Support efforts to mitigate climate change, by all partners, including the use of wildlife to act as carbon 'sinks', for example by tree planting and rewilding. Support the aim to meet Net Zero emissions before 2050 as a borough.

10) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Public bodies and various community organisations carry out valuable nature conservation work in the Borough, but individuals (especially landowners) also carry out large scale work which benefits wildlife in the wider countryside. It is vital to include farmers in nature conservation as they manage most of the land and there are many examples of good stewardship in Rushcliffe.

Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Records Centre (NBGRC) maintain records of survey work and undertakes much survey work. The NBGRC is responsible for holding, interpreting and updating all data associated with the LWS system. Charities like Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation are also active in the area, along with Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group.

Access to nature conservation sites and the wider countryside develops awareness of our natural heritage, while also providing other ecosystem service benefits, appropriate access should be encouraged and managed, without putting too much pressure on these sites. Natural England advocates 'Access to Natural Greenspace Standards' (ANGSt) (Natural England, 2003) so that that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace.

Education, both formally (where taught) and informally (for example using information panels on nature reserves, walks and talks), helps to raise awareness of nature conservation issues. It is important to educate as widely as possible, addressing both adults and young people and by publicising conservation issues and activities locally.

Community involvement in nature is important; nature conservation work improves our natural heritage, our social wellbeing, health and economy. Public involvement is limited by the availability of organisers (voluntary and professional) and funding. Although there is already much community involvement in Rushcliffe, there is potential for engaging with new individuals and groups. Examples of such engagement include Friends of Groups, South Notts Local Group, Forest Schools, Rushcliffe Wildlife WATCH and Rushcliffe Rangers.

Friends of Groups are valuable community groups that care for particular sites and carry out a large range of activities, from practical habitat management, survey and monitoring, educational activities, fundraising, through to leading guided walks and encouraging new members of the community to become involved with activities on these sites. In addition, groups such as Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project (part of Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers) and the South Notts Ringing Group carry out more specialized activities.

The widest possible variety of media and communications methods, including social media platforms helps to reach as many residents as possible. Appendix 8 provides the communications plan for the strategy group.

The nature strategy has contributed to a steady growth of local community action by committed groups and individuals over the years and we must continue to support existing local action, as well as the development of additional initiatives, both big and small. We will also continue promoting volunteer involvement in county based and national projects that will benefit our local wildlife. Actions in this area particularly contribute to Strategic Objectives 2, 4, 5.

We will seek to: Support community involvement in nature conservation in Rushcliffe, through voluntary conservation work, wildlife surveying and awareness raising, this requires funding to be sought; training and interpretative material to be provided and activities to attract the public. Support existing 'friends of groups' and seek to develop new groups. Provide access to wildlife sites and support initiatives that care for the environment. Implement Natural England's ANGSt standards. Take care that activity is carried out on sites across the whole Borough, not just popular areas.

11) PLANNING POLICIES AND THE PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND HABITATS

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** was first published on 27 March 2012 and updated on 24 July 2018 and 19 February 2019 (MHCLG, 2019a). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. A principle set out in the NPPF is that "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment" which includes "minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures". (MHCLG, 2019b)

There is major pressure at a national and regional level for significant housing development to occur, In order to meet the housing needs of Nottingham and outlying settlements, it is likely that pressure for significant development within Rushcliffe will continue including 13,150 homes to be sited across Rushcliffe by 2028, thus Rushcliffe's wildlife sites in both urban and rural areas will come under pressure from development in the coming years. A degree of protection is provided by national and local planning policies. National regulations also require additional environmental assessments for those developments likely to have a significant environmental impact. The local planning policy documents created by the local planning authority set out where and how development will be allowed, they also identify areas where certain developments are restricted, legally protected species and important trees, woodlands and hedgerows. These documents also include policies relating to planting schemes that emphasise appropriate local species. In accordance with national policy, the Local Plan also identifies important ecological networks (based on Biodiversity Opportunity Maps). Within these areas developments must ensure the network of habitats is maintained and enhanced.

The Rushcliffe Local Plan (<https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/planningpolicy/localplan/>) forms the statutory development plan for the Borough, Part 1 covers the core strategy (RBC, 2014). and Part 2 - Land and Planning Policies (LAPP), including details of identified sites. The Part 2 document also states, "Policies in this Local Plan Part 2 regarding nature conservation should be read alongside ... Rushcliffe's Nature Conservation Strategy". (RBC, 2019)

The concept of **Biodiversity NET Gain** is a key part of both NPPF and Rushcliffe Local Plan policy documents, which commit to "Protecting and improving natural Assets" including ensuring an increase in biodiversity, enhancing and developing the network of green spaces, protecting ancient and veteran trees and replacing any lost trees". The documents set out where and how development will be allowed, identify protected areas, legally protected species and important trees, woodlands and hedgerows. These documents also include policies relating to planting schemes that emphasise appropriate local species. New developments are expected to contribute to green infrastructure networks and open space provision.

It is important to ensure that where development is permitted, in addition to Biodiversity Net Gain, valuable sites (SSSI, LWS and LNR) and other hard to replace sites, habitats (including ancient woodland and traditional meadows) and species are protected from direct development and the a 'mitigation hierarchy' is followed, that seeks to avoid ecological harm, and where necessary mitigates or compensates for losses (Section 175, NPPF).

Biodiversity Net Gain is development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. Biodiversity net gain complements and works with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy set out in NPPF paragraph 175. It does not override the protection for designated sites, protected or priority species and irreplaceable or priority habitats set out in the NPPF. Local planning authorities need to ensure that habitat improvement will be a genuine additional benefit and go further than measures already required to implement a compensation strategy.

CIEEM, CIRIA and IEMA have jointly published guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain for UK construction and developments, which should be followed (online at <https://cieem.net/biodiversity-net-gain-guidance-published/>), additionally the BSI is developing a new British Standard - BS 8683 A process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain (BSI, 2020), which developers should be encouraged to comply with.

In addition to habitat gains, it is expected that developments should usually include built enhancements including artificial bird nests (including for swifts and swallows and house sparrows and where appropriate barn owls) and bat roosts; these should be permanent or long-life enhancements, either built into the fabric of the development or of a woodcrete type fabric. Hedgehog gates should be included in fences and hibernacula created where appropriate for reptiles and amphibians. Insect boxes / hotels are also recommended. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment> paragraph 23 and section T2.10 of the Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development (online at <https://cieem.net/biodiversity-net-gain-guidance-published/>)

Local Sites should be buffered from developments Green Infrastructure should be included in developments reducing the threat of isolation and bringing wildlife into new developments. Sustainable Urban Drainage schemes (SUDs) where required should be designed to provide ecological benefit.

Care is required in determining the importance of habitats. Brownfield sites can in some cases be valuable wildlife habitats (i.e. disused railways and pitheads). Green field sites may be intensively managed arable and pasture with limited current wildlife value, however they may also have an important visual landscape role and considerable potential for wildlife habitat creation.

The government attaches great importance to **Green Belts**. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence (MHCLG, 2019c). A large part of the Borough (40%) falls within the defined Nottingham-Derby Green Belt that encircles Greater Nottingham. Greenbelt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances and make as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land, except where this would cause harm to designated sites of importance for biodiversity. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries and removal of further land from the greenbelt, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development, including explicit consideration of the factors outlined in paragraph 137.

Local communities are encouraged to consider producing a **Neighbourhood Plan** for villages that don't yet have one. Once finalised these are material planning considerations and allow local insights into the biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and local, ecologically valuable sites, they can also highlight appropriate sites for development. National guidance (MHCLG, 2020) sets out what Neighbourhood Planning is and what it can do. Rushcliffe Borough Council publishes Neighbourhood Plans on its website at <https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/planningpolicy/neighbourhoodplanning/>

Developers should be encouraged to meet the highest standards of development for nature conservation, for example British Standard 42020, *Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development* (BSI, 2013) or the Building with Nature standards and accreditation scheme. (Building with Nature, 2020).

Developers should always provide an ecological construction method statement incorporating reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs)

The use of external lighting (during construction and post construction) should be appropriate to avoid adverse impacts on bat populations, see <https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2018/09/new-guidance-on-bats-and-lighting> for advice and a wildlife sensitive lighting scheme should be developed and implemented.

It is recommended that developers check their sites using the free online tool (<https://www.biodiversityinplanning.org/wildlife-assessment-check/>) for **householders** and **small to medium-scale developers** to check whether they will need expert ecological advice *before* submitting a planning application, the report produced by this tool can be used to support the planning application. (This tool is *not* intended for large development projects where formal Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) are required according to EIA regulations).

See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment> for national guidance on planning and environmental issues.

Where levels of pollution (including light and noise pollution) may be detrimental to wildlife, sources should be traced and if possible reduced to acceptable levels. Various organisations have specific roles in controlling levels of environmental pollution, principally the Environment Agency and Rushcliffe Borough Council.

We will seek to: Ensure wildlife issues in planning policies are updated as required and implemented, with appropriate guidance and supplementary documents. Support the use of biodiversity opportunity maps to guide planning policies to improve biodiversity in the borough. Ensure planning approvals meet wildlife protection regulations and policies. Follow good practice on planning and biodiversity, particularly following the 'mitigation hierarchy' where compensation for habitat loss should be a last resort. Include measurable Biodiversity Net Gain in all new developments. Minimise the need to use important nature conservation sites for development. Keep nature conservation on the agenda at county, regional, national and international levels. Work with Parish and Town Councils to promote the inclusion of wildlife friendly policies with Neighbourhood Plans and support their implementation. Encourage developers to use the highest nature conservation standards. Enforce pollution regulations and support policies to reduce environmental pollution, including seeking to achieve "good ecological status" for waterbodies. Encourage individuals and companies to adopt safe and sustainable working practices to avoid harm to wildlife.

12) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC AIM: To protect and enhance nature conservation in Rushcliffe, help mitigate the effects of climate change on wildlife and provide ready access to wildlife rich green spaces. There will be a particular emphasis on species-rich grassland, wetland and woodland habitats, and species characteristic of the Borough such as grizzled skipper butterflies, great crested newts and brown hare. This will be achieved through forming effective partnerships, brought together through the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG).

OBJECTIVES:

1) Promote Landscape Scale Conservation to create a more resilient natural environment, by:

a.	Continue using the Focal Areas identified in the Biodiversity Opportunity Matching Mapping exercise to target action for landscape scale nature conservation projects. (Partners: RNCSIG, NWT, RBC)
b.	Seeking opportunities for delivery of aspirational large-scale projects, with particular emphasis on improving connectivity across the landscape or catchments. (Partners: RNCSIG, NWT, RBC, PCs)
c.	Provide advice and support to organisations whose land holdings or interests have a significant role in nature conservation in Rushcliffe. These might be private landowners, businesses, parish councils, Friends groups and other organisations. (Partners: NWT, RNCSIG, RBC, NCC, CRT, NBAG, TVIDB)
d.	Support the development of the holistic Nature Recovery Network concept and plans for Rushcliffe and the county in order to make our wildlife sites better, bigger and more connected. Partners: NWT, NCC, RBC, RNCSIG, Friends Groups)

2) Promote the maintenance and enhancement of nature reserves, by:

a.	Seeking to ensure that all nature reserves have a current Management Plan. (Partners: NWT, RBC, PCs, Friends Groups)
b.	Seeking to ensure that all nature reserves have sufficient resources available to deliver the management plan and assist with provision of resources wherever possible. (Partners: NWT, RBC, PCs, Friends Groups)
c.	Encouraging local community involvement in the management of nature reserves. (Partners: NWT, RBC, Friends Groups, PCs, TCV, SNG)

3) Promote sympathetic land management for wildlife in rural and urban areas, by:

a.	The sympathetic protection and management of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) through provision of advice and/or signposting to useful resources. (Partners: NWT, NFaW, NFU, DEFRA, NBW, CLA, NE)
b.	Encouraging farmers to develop sympathetic management practices and increase the take up of agri-environment schemes through provision of advice or signposting to useful resources. (Partners: NFaW, NWT, NFU, RuBOP/NBW, CLA, NE)
c.	Encouraging wildlife friendly management of buildings, corporate landscaping, public open space, school grounds and private gardens by provision of advice or signposting. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, CRT, EA)
d.	Supporting programmes to benefit national priority species and habitats and Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species and habitats (especially neutral and calcareous grasslands, native woodlands and wetlands) as appropriate. (Partners: NWT, NBW, RBC, EA, NBAG, TVIDB)
e.	Promoting the management of the existing Notified Road Verges and work with partners to maintain existing habitat and create additional habitats alongside our transport corridors. (Partners: NCC, Via East Mids, Highways England, Network Rail, RBC, NWT, CRT, TRT)
f.	Protect enhance and expand appropriate tree and woodland cover in Rushcliffe working towards achieving the national targets for woodland and urban tree cover and woodland access. (Partners: RBC, NWT, Tree Wardens, PCs, Friends Groups, EA and Landowners)
g.	Supporting projects that benefit our freshwater environment (rivers, ditches, ponds, lakes, canals and reservoirs), tackling water quality issues and benefiting aquatic habitats and species. This will involve

working on a catchment level, engaging with relevant catchment partnerships (Partners: RBC, EA, CRT, GCS, STW, NCC, NWT, TRT, PCs, Friends Groups and Landowners)

4) Support monitoring of Rushcliffe's biodiversity, by:

a.	Liaising with and working in closer partnership with NBGRC in relation to species monitoring and the Local Wildlife Site network. (Partners: NWT, RBC, NCC, NBGRC, Friends groups)
b.	Promoting participation in species survey programmes, as well as encouraging local initiatives to record wildlife, ensuring that records are submitted to the relevant recorders or groups. (Partners: NBGRC, NWT, RBC, specialist wildlife groups)
c.	Supporting the work of the Notts Biodiversity Action Group by promoting BAG activities and reporting against LBAP targets. (Partners: NWT, RBC, SNG, NCC, NBAG)

5) Raise awareness of nature conservation issues by:

a.	Publicising the work of partners and local nature conservation groups, as well as wildlife related issues through news releases and social media posts. (Partners: NWT, RBC, RCC, NBW, NCC, TCV, Friends Groups)
b.	Extending wildlife education opportunities by supporting youth wildlife groups and enhancing wildlife education programmes in schools, colleges, universities and Adult Education. (Partners: NWT, RBC, NCC, educational providers, uniformed groups)
c.	Promoting contacts, exchange of knowledge and resource sharing amongst groups and organisations associated with nature conservation locally by running events such as the Conservation Volunteer's Forum. (Partners: RBC, NWT, SNG, NBAG, Friends Groups)
d.	Promoting access to wildlife and countryside, specifically promoting disabled access where appropriate by circulating promotional materials and maintaining relevant websites. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, SNG)

6) Seek to ensure positive impact (Biodiversity Net Gain) of development on wildlife and biodiversity whilst eliminating negative impact, by:

a.	Ensuring that local planning policies relating to biodiversity and environmental issues are based on the principles set out in the National Policy Planning Framework and national best practice both in terms of protection and mitigation. (Partners: RBC, NWT, CPRE, PCs, NCC, NBAG, EA)
b.	Ensuring that opportunities are taken to benefit people and wildlife through the design of buildings and green blue infrastructure and seek to implement Natural England's ANGSt standards and national best practice. (Partners: RBC, NCC, CPRE, CLA, NFU, NE)
c.	Using Hedgerow Regulations and Tree Preservation Orders to help protect important features. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, CPRE)
d.	Implementing policies to reduce levels of environmental pollution; seek to achieve good ecological status for rivers; and to mitigate and adapt to climate change. (Partners: RBC, Catchment partners, NCC, EA, CPRE, NWT, TVIDB)
e.	Seeking to influence Regional, National and International decision making to promote wildlife friendly policies by commenting on relevant consultations. (Partners: NCC, RBC, NE, NWT, CPRE, EA, NDLNP, TRT)
f.	Promoting the use of native local provenance planting by signposting to current best practice guidelines (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT)

7) Supporting the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy, by:

a.	Continued support for the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) in helping deliver the strategy's objectives. (Partners: RBC, NWT, NBAG, Friends Groups)
b.	Producing an annual report on what has been achieved to progress nature conservation in Rushcliffe and the deficiencies that need to be addressed. (Partners: RNCSIG)

c. Reviewing the strategy during 2025, or sooner if appropriate. (Partners: RNCSIG)

13) KEY TARGET INDICATORS



The following criteria are indicators of progress made in the various sections of the Aims and Objectives and are intended to be measurable and achievable,

1. Percentage of nature reserves (as listed in our 'Nature of Rushcliffe Annual Reports') with current management plans. Target = 100% sites (Obj 2).
2. Hours of practical work carried out on nature reserves by volunteers. Target = Maintain or increase year on year across the Borough (Obj 2).
3. Increased proportion of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) managed in an appropriate manner. Target = Increase year on year towards 100% from a base of 23% at March 2018/19 (Obj 2/3.)
4. Number of schools in Rushcliffe engaged in NWT related education activities. Target = 6 schools each year (Objective 5).
5. Number of barn owl boxes installed and available for use and number of barn owl chicks raised in boxes. Target = maintain number of boxes available for use and sustain the number of barn owl chicks raised (Obj 3/6).
6. Percentage of nature reserves with wildlife related public events (at least one per year). Target = 70% of sites with at least one event per year (Obj 5).
7. Percentage of Parishes / WB Wards with publicly accessible natural green spaces (from a base of 48% in 2018). Target = 3 more parishes/wards with at least one accessible natural green space by 2025. (Obj 6)
8. Number of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Target = No net loss of Local Wildlife Sites (Obj 1/2/3/4/6).
9. Percentage of Tree cover in Rushcliffe. Target = increase up to 20% from a base of 11.1% in 2020 (Obj 3).
10. Area of BAP habitat created, restored or bought under active conservation management in order to link or buffer existing wildlife habitat. Target = 30 ha`'s grassland, 10 ha`'s woodland, 10 ha`'s wetland between 2020 and 2025 (Obj 1/2/3/4).
11. Management of SSSI units to achieve a favourable condition according to Natural England assessment. Target = 95% of SSSI`s managed to a favourable or recovering condition. (Obj 2/3).
12. Percentage of available Rushcliffe Biodiversity Support Grant allocated each year. Target = 100% of grant (Obj 1/2).

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 <p>Rushcliffe Borough Council</p>	 <p>Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust</p>
<p>The Borough Council first published a Nature Conservation Strategy in 1995 and published an updated strategy in 2003 and 2010. This strategy seeks to further protect and enhance our natural environment, building on the work that has already been done. The borough council is committed to working towards the objectives in this strategy.</p> <p>The Borough is a significant landowner of public open spaces in the area. This includes several wildlife sites (including Wilwell Cutting, Wilford Claypits, Meadow Covert, Sharphill Wood and Rushcliffe Country Park). The Borough is also the Planning Authority for the area.</p>	<p>Part of a national network of county-based Wildlife Trusts, NWT exists to protect the biodiversity of the county. It is a charity with a professional staff and a lot of voluntary effort from its 11,000 members. It manages over 2,200 hectares of habitat and is a key player in many nature conservation activities across the county.</p> <p>In Rushcliffe, the Trust owns or manages 5 nature reserves. The South Notts local members group, whose activities are purely voluntary, drives much of the activity in the area. Local members manage nature reserves, organise walks and talks, monitor planning applications and are involved in a wide range of projects.</p>
<p>Rushcliffe Borough Council Rushcliffe Arena Rugby Road West Bridgford NOTTINGHAM NG2 7YG</p> <p>(0115) 981 9911 environmentalissues@rushcliffe.gov.uk www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation</p>	<p>Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust The Old Ragged School Brook Street NOTTINGHAM NG1 1EA</p> <p>(0115) 958 8242 info@nottswt.co.uk www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org</p>
<p>Contact: Environmental Sustainability Officer</p>	<p>Local group website: www.southnottswildlife.org.uk</p>



Published on behalf of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (www.facebook.com/RNCSIG)

Please see www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation for our 'Nature of Rushcliffe' Annual Reports, which includes current nature reserves, current projects, achievements and key indicator monitoring.

APPENDIX 1 - RUSHCLIFFE SITES REGARDED AS NATURE RESERVES 2020

For the purposes of the strategy nature reserves are described as sites with a reasonable wildlife value that are managed with nature conservation as a major priority and generally with some degree of public or education access.

Reserves deliver Obj 2 + Obj 5 of the Strategies Aims & Objectives

Site	Ownership (Management)	Area Ha`s	Desig.	Habitats	Mngmt Plan (last update)	Public Access	
1	Bingham Linear Walk	Bingham Town Council (Friends Group)	12	LWS LNR	Grass Wood	Yes	Yes
2	Bridgford Street Wildflower Meadow, East Bridgford	East Bridgford Parish Council (East Bridgford Wildlife and Biodiversity Group)	0.5		Grass	Yes	Yes
3	Bridgford Street Copse, East Bridgford	Southwell Diocese of the Cof E (East Bridgford Wildlife and Biodiversity Group)	0.5		Wood	Yes	Yes
4	Bunny Old Wood	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust	16	LWS	Wood	Yes (2019)	Yes
5	Collington Common, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	1.4		Grass	Yes	Yes
6	Costock Pond	Costock Parish Council	0.8		Pond Grass	Yes	Yes
7	Cotgrave Country Park	Nottinghamshire County Council (Friends Group)	60	LWS	Grass Pond Lake Wood Reedbed	Yes	Yes
8	Dewberry Hill, Radcliffe-on-Trent	Nottinghamshire County Council (Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council / (Radcliffe on Trent Conservation Group))	8.6	LWS	Grass Wood	Yes	Yes
9	Gotham Railway Path	Gotham Parish Council	0.9		Wood Grass	?	Yes
10	Gotham Sandbanks Nature Reserve	British Gypsum (Gotham Nature Reserve Trust)	1.05	SSSI, LWS	Grass, Wood	Yes	Yes
11	Grantham Canal	Canal & River Trust	25	SSSI/ LWS	Pond Marsh Reedbed	Yes	Yes
12	Green Line, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	1.4	LWS	Grass Wood	Yes	Yes
13	Gresham Marsh, West Bridgford	Environment Agency	8.8	LWS	Grass Marsh Reedbed	Yes	Yes
14	Greythorne Dyke Open Space, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	2.67		Grass Marsh Wood Reedbed	In prep.	Yes

15	Holme Pierrepont Country Park	Nottinghamshire County Council (Holme Pierrepont Leisure Trust /Serco)	109	(part LWS)	Grass Wood Pond	?	Yes
16	Keyworth Burial Ground	Keyworth PC	1.05		Grass	Yes	Yes
17	Keyworth Meadows	Keyworth PC (Friends Group)	1.25	LWS, LNR	Grass Pond	Yes	Yes
18	Langar Community Wood	Naturescape	4.7		Wood	Yes	Yes
19	Langar Village Pond	Langar Parish Council	0.02		Pond	?	Yes
20	Lily Ponds, Radcliffe-on-Trent	Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council (Radcliffe on Trent Conservation Group)	4.7	Part LWS	Grass Pond	Yes	Yes
21	Meadow Covert Wood, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	2	LNR	Wood	Yes	No
22	Meadow Park, East Leake	Rushcliffe Borough Council (ELPC / Friends Group)	18		Grass Stream	Yes	Yes
23	Orston Millennium Green	Orston PC	1		Grass Pond	Yes	Yes
24	Orston Plaster Pits	Girl Guides	4.72	SSSI	Pond Grass Woodland	Yes	Guides
25	Queens Wood	Aslockton PC	0.3		Woodland	Yes	Yes
26	Rushcliffe Country Park, Ruddington	Rushcliffe Borough Council	36	LWS, LNR	Grass Wood Lake Pond Reedbed	Yes	Yes
27	Sharphill Wood, Edwalton	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Friends Group).	9.6	LWS, LNR	Wood	Yes	Yes
28	Sheldon Field, Cropwell Butler	National Playing Field Association (Sheldon Field Management Committee)	10.4		Grass	Yes	Yes
29	Skylarks, Holme Pierrepont	Notts Wildlife Trust	47	LWS	Grass Lake Wood Reedbed	Yes (2026)	Yes
30	Springdale Wood, East Bridgford.	Woodland Trust (Friends Group)	1.4		Wood	Yes	Yes
31	Stone Pit Wood, Gotham	Rushcliffe Scout District	3.1	LWS	Wood Grass	Yes	Scouts
32	Sutton Bonnington Diamond Wood	Nottingham University / Woodland Trust	19		Wood	In Prep.	Yes
33	Sutton Bonnington Diamond Wood	Nottingham University / Woodland Trust	10		Wood	In Prep.	Yes
34	Sutton Bonnington Spinney and Meadow	Sutton Bonnington Parish Council	2.5	LNR	Grass Wood	Yes	Yes
35	The Hook, Lady Bay	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Friends Group)	15	LNR	Grass Stream	Yes	Yes
36	Upper Saxondale Community Nature Reserve	Upper Saxondale Resident Association	3.2		Grass Wood	Yes	Yes

37	Wilford Claypits, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Notts Wildlife Trust)	4.3	SSSI/ LWS	Pond Marsh Grass Wood Reedbed	Yes (2013)	Yes
38	Willoughby Wood, Willoughby on the Wolds	Woodland Trust	2.5		Wood	Yes	Yes
39	Wilwell Farm Cutting, Ruddington	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Notts Wildlife Trust)	7.5	SSSI, LNR	Grass Marsh Wood Reedbed	Yes (2013)	Yes
		Total Area in hectares	458.04				

APPENDIX 2 - NATURE CONSERVATION PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES 2020

(items underlined pre date start of NCS in 2003)

(Obj relate activities to the Strategic Aims & Objectives)

Area Based Conservation (Obj 1, Obj 3, Obj 4, Obj 5)

- Cotgrave Forest Focal Area (RNCSIG)
- Trent Valley Living Landscape (NWT, RSPB)
- Trent Gateway (EA)
- East Bridgford Wildlife Project (EBWG)

Strategic Wildlife Friendly Sites (Obj 3)

- Silver Seal Mine, Bunny - 2.6 ha`s (St Gobain)
- Holy Cross Convent grounds, Costock - 10 ha`s (Convent)
- Stanford Hall Parkland - circa 80 ha`s of grassland, woodland and lake
- Wheatcroft (Rosebush) Plantation, Radcliffe - 58 ha`s of woodland (privately owned)
- Owthorpe Fishpond - 4 ha`s woodland and ponds - LWS (private)
- Wilford Hill Wood - 7.8 ha`s woodland - LWS (private)
- Logans Trail, Gotham - 4 ha`s woodland
- Gypsum Way road verge - 0.3 ha`s grassland
- Notified Road Verges (Notts CC):
 - Station Road, Widmerpool (LWS) - 0.9 ha`s grassland
 - Bridegate Lane, Hickling LWS) - 1.3 ha`s grassland
 - Hose Lane, Colston Bassett (LWS) - 3.2 ha`s grassland
 - Langar Lane, Colston Bassett LWS) - 0.2 ha`s grassland

New Major Sites from Planning Gain (example of sites which have received planning permission, which contain significant GBI, many other sites will also provide GBI) (Obj 2, Obj 6)

- Fairham Pasture Housing development - creation of 21 ha`s of wildlife habitat, including grassland and wetland + 83 ha`s of park & open space (developer)
- Ruddington, Wilford Road, 12.5 ha open space including 9.8ha`s of grassland (developer).
- Lings Farm Gravel Pit, East Leake – 31 ha`s of lake and grassland (CEMEX)
- Sharpill Community Park – approx. 10 ha`s of grassland and woodland
- Newton Airfield – approx. 20 ha's of grassland and woodland habitats, including 7.5ha of woodland(developer)
- Bingham, Chapel lane – approx. 31ha of public open space, including 10.8ha of lake and grassland (developer)

Habitats & Species (Obj 3 + Obj 4)

- Blue Butterfly Scheme (NWT)
- Bird Bed & Breakfast Scheme (NWT)
- Grizzled Skipper Project (NCC / Butterfly Conservation / NBAG)
- Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme (BEVS) (NWT)
- Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project (Notts Birders)
- Promoting Grassland and Road Verge Management (RNCSIG)
- Rushcliffe Tree Scheme (RBC)
- Monitoring Local Wildlife Sites (NGBRC)

Species Recording (Obj 4)

- South Notts Ringing Group
- Butterfly Transects (Butterfly Conservation)

- Moth Recording (vols)
- Bird Recording (Notts Birders)
- Bat Recording (Notts Bat Group)
- Wildflowers (vols)

Invasive Species Control (Obj 3)

- Grantham Canal Azolla Control - RCT / NBAG / NE
- River Soar floating pennywort removal – EA
- Himalayan Balsam pulling The Hook & Trentside (NBAG/EA/NCC/RBC)

Wildlife Educational Activities (Obj 5)

- Rushcliffe Wildlife Watch Group – Vols/NWT
- Forest Schools at
 - Sharphill Wood,
 - Manor Farm Park, East Leake
 - Meadow Park, East Leake
 - Meadow Covert, Edwalton
 - Gotham Woods
 - Cotgrave Forest
- School Wildlife Education Visits – NWT
- South Notts Local Group (Walks, talks, summer fetes, web site etc) – Vols/NWT
- U3A Wildlife Sections
 - Soar Valley - Nature & Bird Groups (Vols),
 - West Bridgford - Bird Group (Vols),
 - Cotgrave - Nature Group (Vols),
 - Keyworth - Wildlife & Conservation Group (Vols)

Miscellaneous

- Rushcliffe Tree Warden Scheme (RBC/Vols) **(Obj 3)**
- Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Service Level Agreement (RBC/NWT) **(Obj 2, Obj 3, Obj 5)**
- Rushcliffe Biodiversity Support Grant **(RBC) (Obj 2)**
- Celebrating Rushcliffe Awards – environment category (RBC) **(Obj 5)**
- 'Rushcliffe Wildlife' Web Site (<https://rushcliffewildlife.co.uk/>) – (Vols) **(Obj4 + Obj5)**
- Rushcliffe Volunteer Forum & Training Days (NWT/RBC) **(Obj2 + Obj 5)**
- Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) **(Obj 1, Obj 2, Obj 3, Obj 4, Obj 5, Obj 6)**

APPENDIX 3 - RECOMMENDED TREES AND SHRUBS FOR PLANTING IN RUSHCLIFFE.

The trees should be, as far as is reasonably possible locally sourced and of appropriate local provenance (preferably grown from locally collected seed or as defined by Forestry Commission Practice Note [1999] Using Local Stock for Planting Native Trees and Shrubs) [Local Provenance Regions 402 or 403].

Nottinghamshire Wolds

A sparsely settled and remote rural region, characterised by rolling clay Wolds, mixed farming, small red brick villages and narrow country lanes.

Trees

Trees suitable for planting in the Nottinghamshire Wolds are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Oak – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls]**
- Black Poplar (*Populus nigra* subsp. *Betulifolia*) – Particularly suitable for wet areas
- Common Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) – Medium size tree, tolerant of many conditions
- Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Large size and fast growing
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) - Useful small hedgerow tree
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.) - Generally, only found in woodlands
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Ash
- Small leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*) - Generally only found in woodlands
- White Willow (*Salix alba*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Medium size and fast growing
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Medium size tree
- Wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) – Woodlands on clay and lime-based soils
- Yew (*Taxus baccata*) - Generally only found in woodlands.

Consider - Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) on wet soils

Hedgerows

Hedge species suitable for planting in the Nottinghamshire Wolds are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*) - Useful in wet areas
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge
- Purging Blackthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Treat as hedge
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

Consider - Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) on wet soils

South Nottinghamshire Farmlands

A prosperous lowland agricultural region with a simple rural character of large arable fields, village settlements and broad alluvial levels.

Trees

Trees suitable for planting in the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) - Suitable for woodlands and wet areas
- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Oak – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Common Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) – Medium size tree, tolerant of many conditions
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) - Useful small hedgerow tree
- Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Large size and fast growing
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.) - Generally only found in woodlands
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Ash
- Small leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*) - Generally only found in woodlands
- White Willow (*Salix alba*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Medium size and fast growing
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Medium size tree.
- Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*)

Hedgerows

Hedge species suitable for planting in the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) - Useful in wet areas
- Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*) - Useful in wet areas
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge
- Osier (*Salix viminalis*) - Useful in wet areas
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Treat as hedge
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

Trent Washlands

A varied low-lying region characterised by sparsely settled carrlands, levels and rolling sandlands with village settlements.

Trees

Trees suitable for planting in the Trent Washlands are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)-suitable for wet sites
- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Oak – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Black Poplar (*Populus nigra* subsp. *Betulifolia*) – Particularly suitable for wet areas
- Common Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) – Medium size tree, tolerant of many conditions
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) - Useful small hedgerow tree
- Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Large size and fast growing
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) - Useful small hedgerow tree
- Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Ash
- White Willow (*Salix alba*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Medium size and fast growing.

Consider - Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) on wet soils

Hedgerows

Hedge species suitable for planting in the Trent Washlands are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*)
- Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus oxycanthoides*)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge
- Purging Blackthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

Consider - Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) on wet soils

Vale of Belvoir

A low-lying clay vale with a strong tradition of dairying characterised by large hedged fields, small rural villages and wide views to rising ground.

Trees

Trees suitable for planting in the Vale of Belvoir are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Oak – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Aspen (*Populus tremula*) - Plant in close groups
- Common Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) – Medium size tree, tolerant of many conditions

- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) - Small hedgerow tree
- Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Large size and fast growing
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) - Small hedgerow tree
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.) - Usually only in woodlands
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Ash
- White Willow (*Salix alba*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Medium size and fast growing
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Medium size tree.
- Wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) – Woodlands on clay and lime-based soils

Hedgerows

Hedgerows suitable for planting in the Vale of Belvoir are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge
- Purging Blackthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

APPENDIX 4 - GOOD PRACTICE FOR MANAGEMENT OF NEW TREES

The trees should be, as far as is reasonably possible, be of variety as shown in Appendix 3 (also at <https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/conservation/treeshedgesandlandscaping/landscapingandtreeplanting/plantingguide/#d.en.5678>) and locally sourced and of appropriate local provenance (locally collected seed (preferably) or as defined by Forestry Commission Practice Note [1999] Using Local Stock for Planting Native Trees and Shrubs) [Local Provenance Regions 402 or 403].

Tree stakes should be used to support newly planted whips, boarded by bio-degradable tree guards to protect during establishment where there is a potential for predation (or strimming). Where possible natural mulch materials should be used around the base of trees.

Trees should be watered during the growing season during prolonged dry periods, saturating the ground, if practicable - it is unlikely to be possible for large planting schemes. They should not be watered unnecessarily as this can promote shallow rooting.

Formative prune during winter where necessary establishes a strong central leader on trees. Trees should be assessed annually during years 3 –5 removing and reducing problematic side shoots. This work should be ongoing until the tree is considered to be established (see table below).

Any dead or dying plants should be removed and replaced during the next available planting season

Thinning and coppicing will allow trees and shrubs to develop diversity of form and different types of nesting, feeding and foraging habitat and extend the potential life of individual plants and should be considered later.

Management Prescriptions	Timing of works	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Newly planted trees and specimen shrubs / hedgerow											
Check guards and tree supports until established	Unrestricted	✓	✓	✓							
Remove stakes and tree guards and non-decomposable mulch mats	Unrestricted			✓							
Weed by hand as required to maintain a 1.2m diameter vegetation free area	Apr/May		✓	✓							
Water in prolonged dry periods. Monthly or fortnightly as required.	Mar - Sept	✓	✓								
Formative prune where necessary	Prior to growing season			✓		✓					
Safety checks and tree condition assessment (5 yearly on rotation)	Unrestricted					✓					✓
Prune shrubs to a bud or node, by no more than 30%, to encourage thickening where necessary	Nov –Feb			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Replace any dead or dying plants	Nov - Mar		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

See <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/care/> for more information

APPENDIX 5 – PROTECTED TREES

Correct at time of publication, for the latest information please see the webpage:

<https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/conservation/treeshedgesandlandscaping/protectedtreesandhedges/>

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

Councils can make Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) for individual trees, groups of trees, areas containing trees, or woodland.

For trees to be made protected they must make a significant visual contribution to their local surroundings. This means that they should be important when seen from public places or a significant number of private premises. Other factors include the extent of any threat to the trees and their condition. Owners and third parties can make representations at the time an Order is made.

If you know of trees which need protecting in Rushcliffe contact Rushcliffe Borough Council, giving the precise location and the reason why a preservation order is necessary. If you would like to check if a tree in Rushcliffe is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, please contact Rushcliffe Borough Council.

The need for consent

You must apply to the Council for consent to prune or fell protected trees. Details of what does or does not need consent may vary according to the precise wording of each order. Consent may be granted with or without conditions or refused. There is a right of appeal against conditions or refusal. It is an offence to carry out work to a protected tree without first obtaining consent unless special circumstances apply. These include:

- removing dead branches from a living tree
- cutting down or pruning a tree:
 - which presents an urgent and serious safety risk – you must tell the Council (by letter or email) of the proposed work as soon as practicable after the work becomes necessary
 - which is dead – you must notify the Council (by letter or email) at least five working days before the proposed work
 - which is directly in the way of development that is about to start for which detailed planning permission has been granted
 - in a commercial orchard, or pruning fruit trees in accordance with good horticultural practice
 - to prevent or control a legal nuisance (you may find it helpful to check first with a solicitor about the interpretation of legal nuisance)
 - in line with an obligation under an Act of Parliament
 - by or at the request of certain organisations listed in the regulations.
- cutting down trees in accordance with one of the Forestry Commission's grant schemes, or where the Commission has granted a felling licence (see below).

Trimming of hedges does not require consent, though work to a protected tree in a hedgerow does. Some statutory bodies such as the highway authority and organisations like utility operators also have exemptions. The work should however be done in accordance with an agreed code of practice.

If you think a tree may be causing a legal nuisance it may be helpful to check first with a solicitor. If it is dead, dying or dangerous please tell us before doing any work. You must prove that the tree meets one of the above exemptions.

Penalties

Anyone who cuts down or destroys a tree and breaks a TPO is guilty of an offence and could be liable to an unlimited fine, depending on the financial benefit which could result from the removal of the tree. Unauthorised lopping can incur a fine of up to £2,500.

Trees in conservation areas

Conservation areas are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Trees often make an important contribution to the special character of such areas.

Notification

Trees in conservation areas may be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) but where they are not, there is a duty to give the Local Planning Authority six weeks' notice in writing before carrying out any work.

This is not an application for consent and the Council cannot refuse or impose conditions on the work. The purpose of notification is to give the opportunity to consider whether a TPO should be made. If no order is made within six weeks the work can proceed. We will normally respond in writing within six weeks even if we do not propose to make an order.

The Council has a standard notification form, but there is no obligation to use it and we will accept any written notification as long as it clearly specifies the trees involved and the extent of the proposed work, this should include a simple sketch plan identifying the location of the tree.

Exemptions

Notification is not necessary for trees having a stem diameter less than 75mm, measured at 1.5m above ground level, or 100mm for thinning operations to benefit the growth of other trees. Other exemptions from the need to notify are similar to those which apply to works to trees protected by a TPO which may be carried out without consent. There is an obligation to replant a tree which is removed in these circumstances.

Penalties

Penalties for non-compliance are similar to those which apply to TPOs.

Wildlife

When planning any work to trees or hedgerows it should be remembered that they often support wildlife, particularly birds and bats, which are protected by law especially when they are breeding or raising young. Further advice is available from [Natural England](#).

Felling Licence

To help protect Britain's trees and woodland, a felling licence from the Forestry Commission is required to fell most trees. It's an offence to fell trees without a licence if an exemption does not apply.

Everyone involved in the felling of trees (the owner, agent and timber merchant or contractor) must ensure that a licence has been issued before any felling is carried out, unless they are certain that one of the exemptions apply. If there's no licence or other valid permission, or if the wrong trees are felled, anyone involved can be prosecuted.

For more details please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-felling-licence-when-you-need-to-apply>

APPENDIX 6 – IVY ON TREES

It is a common misconception that ivy "damages" trees.

Ivy provides a valuable habitat for small mammals (including bats), birds and insects (bees, hoverflies and butterflies). It's woody structure and evergreen nature provides safety, roosting, hibernation and nesting opportunities all year round. Whilst it's berries provide an important food source for birds during winter, and it's long flowering season is an important source of late season nectar for bees and other invertebrates. It can also provide all year-round ground cover and reduces the effect of frost hardening the ground in winter months, which means animals can continue to forage in the leaf litter during extreme cold weather (WT, 2020).

The Woodland Trust's states "Ivy uses trees and walls for support, allowing it to reach upwards to better levels of sunlight. It is not a parasitic plant and has a separate root system in the soil and so absorbs its own nutrients and water as needed. Ivy does not damage trees and its presence doesn't indicate that a tree is unhealthy, and it doesn't create a tree-safety issue." (WT, 2020).

Another misconception is that ivy blocks the tree from photosynthesising. An already weakened or dying tree might appear to be failing because of the ivy; the ivy being more obvious than any fungal, bacterial or viral infections that may be blighting the tree.

Ivy may help create a sort of sail effect in some trees, if it is old, declining or a disease weakened tree that is vulnerable to structural damage in strong winds. The ivy is only marginally increasing that effect.

Action to remove ivy from trees would negatively impact on a valuable wildlife resource, without meaningfully reducing any risk of tree damage; Indeed, there have been instances locally where poorly executed ivy removal has actively damaged trees.

Where there is a tree safety management issue an assessment should be made if the tree is safe. If it represents a risk, the tree should then be dealt with appropriately and whilst the presence of ivy might marginally increase the risk, it is the health of the tree and its core structure that is the problem.

RNCSIG would recommend that tree condition be monitored by land owners and farmers to prevent damage, loss or danger irrespective of the presence of ivy. Removal of ivy is unlikely to represent a solution. Where there is concern for tree safety, remedial advice should be sought.

APPENDIX 7 – DEAD WOOD

Dead wood is a valuable part of healthy woodland and parkland habitats. Standing dead wood provides valuable habitat for some of our rarest invertebrates and a source of food for birds such as woodpeckers. Fallen dead wood is also a valuable habitat and should be retained in situ where possible. Arisings from tree work may be formed into habitat piles.

"Given the high ecological value of deadwood, the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) makes recommendations for deadwood management as part of its certification standards for sustainable woodland, namely:

- The owner/manager shall plan and take action to accumulate a diversity of both standing and fallen deadwood over time in all wooded parts of the woodland management unit, including felled areas.
- The owners/managers shall identify areas where deadwood is likely to be of the greatest nature-conservation benefit and shall plan and take action to accumulate large dimension standing and fallen deadwood and deadwood in living trees in those areas". (WT, 2019)

Where possible, and where health and safety constraints permit, standing dead wood and lying dead wood should be retained to maximise biodiversity. It may be necessary to reduce the canopy of standing dead wood, too reduce the weight and reduce the risk of failure.

Dead wood habitat can be created by ring barking trees and by cutting branches and leaving jagged ends – a practice known as veteranisation. A specialist contractor should be used for this work.

APPENDIX 8 - RUSHCLIFFE NATURE CONSERVATION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (RNCSIG) COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



Introduction

This plan seeks to enhance communication within the group and to external key audiences. The plan is for partners and officers.

The plan recognises the limited resources available to the RNCSIG group and seeks to improve existing working practices and prioritise methods of communication whilst minimising funding needs. The annual key action points help to direct communications requirements over the year.

Background

The Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021-2025 seeks to raise awareness of Nature Conservation in Rushcliffe and highlights the importance of working with partners and the community of Rushcliffe. This requires good communication, education, awareness raising and encouragement.

Objectives

Raise awareness of nature conservation issues by:

- a. Publicising the work of partners and local nature conservation groups, as well as wildlife related issues through news releases and social media posts. (Partners: NWT, RBC, RCC, NBW, NCC, TCV, Friends Groups)
- b. Extending wildlife education opportunities by supporting youth wildlife groups and enhancing wildlife education programmes in schools, colleges, universities and Adult Education. (Partners: NWT, RBC, NCC, educational providers, uniformed groups)
- c. Promoting contacts, exchange of knowledge and resource sharing amongst groups and organisations associated with nature conservation locally by running events such as the Conservation Volunteer's Forum. (Partners: RBC, NWT, SNG, NBAG, Friends Groups)
- d. Promoting access to wildlife and countryside, specifically promoting disabled access where appropriate by circulating promotional materials and maintaining relevant websites. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, SNG)

Additional objectives include:

- Promote 'Landscape Scale Conservation' to create a more resilient natural environment.
- Promote the maintenance and enhancement of nature reserves.
- Promote sympathetic land management for wildlife in rural and urban areas.
- Support monitoring of Rushcliffe's biodiversity.
- Seek to positively influence the impact of development on wildlife and biodiversity
- Support and develop Nature Conservation in Rushcliffe

This communications plan seeks:

- To encourage the ongoing commitment and support from partners of the RNCSIG to implementing the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy.
- To improve communication of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy to the wide variety of stakeholders taking action for nature in Rushcliffe (who may or may not be partners).
- To seek to engage with new audiences that currently may be undertaking work for nature conservation within the borough but are not currently engaged with the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy process.
- To publicise and promote the work of the group to the wider public who may currently be unaware of or not involved in the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy process.

- Support community involvement in nature conservation in Rushcliffe, through voluntary conservation work, wildlife surveying and awareness raising, this requires funding to be sought and training and interpretative material to be provided and activities to attract the public.

Public marketing messages should be worded/created according to the intended audience, avoid jargon and abbreviations. For further information see: http://staging.futerra.co.uk.php53-17.dfw1-2.websitetestlink.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Branding_Biodiversity.pdf

Action Plan

	Actions	Who By	When
Internet presence / social media	Develop and maintain an internet presence to demonstrate RNCSIG and partner action in Rushcliffe and encourage further action by partners and the wider community. Ensure this is kept up to date publications, news, and how others can get involved. Provide links to and from partner websites and links to other relevant websites.	Env Sust Officer (ESO)	Ongoing
Document Store	Provide a store for the group documents accessible by partners and the community	ESO	Ongoing
Partners websites	Partners to provide links and statement of support for the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy on their website	Partners	Ongoing
Partner publications	Use partner publications including Rushcliffe Reports and 'Nottinghamshire Wildlife' magazine to promote action in Rushcliffe and encourage readers to take action	Partners	Ongoing
RNCSIG Meetings	Ensure minutes of steering group and other meetings are distributed to relevant members and uploaded to the Document Store.	RNCSIG Chair / ESO	Ongoing
Annual Report	A summary of the group's activities, successes and monitoring to be published annually	ESO	March annually
Annual Forum Event	The RNCSIG annual showcase event. We will seek to develop this event to provide, learning and networking opportunities for partners.	RNCSIG Chair	Autumn annually
Other Events	We will look to host and support other events were appropriate (for example Bioblitz and training workshops), to engage with partners and the wider public and to increase our knowledge of biodiversity in the Borough.	Partners	As required
News and Information updates	We will seek to keep partners up to date with news and information, updates may be provided as emails, social media bulletins or as e-newsletters as appropriate. Partners are requested to share newsworthy items and encouraged to share news via the group.	ESO / RNCSIG Chair	Ongoing
Talks and presentations	Partners are encouraged to offer to provide talks and requested to promote the work of RNCSIG within their own talks and presentations.	Partners	As required
Wildlife Surveys	We will use public surveys of wildlife as appropriate, guided by the Steering Group, to encouraging more widespread participation in nature conservation; increase the general public's knowledge about wildlife issues and to increase our understanding of biodiversity in the borough. We will publish results where appropriate for our surveys and share with the biological records office.	ESO, NWT, NBAG and Partners	As required
Leaflets and Publications	Leaflets and publications are produced for a range of audiences (e.g. gardening leaflets, site leaflet etc.), to share knowledge, encourage participation and promote the group. Further documents will be developed as appropriate. Documents will be made available at RNCSIG and partners events and published electronically for use on the RNCSIG and partner websites	ESO	As required
Press releases and other media	Press releases will be issued where appropriate e.g. for the Annual Forum and other events. RNCSIG partner press releases should refer to 'work contributing towards the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy and Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets.	ESO and Partners	Ongoing

APPENDIX 9 - OTHER POLICY DRIVERS

In 2006 the **NERC Act (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act)** came into force. Part of the act (Section 40), known as the biodiversity duty states that 'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. The duty should make biodiversity a natural and integral part of policy and decision making for all public bodies.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/section/40>

'**Making space for nature**' (the Lawton Review) was published by DEFRA in 2010, this reviewed England's wildlife sites and the connections between them, with recommendations to help achieve a healthy natural environment that will allow our plants and animals to thrive.

It recommends establishing a strong and connected natural environment:

- That we better protect and manage our designated wildlife sites;
- That we establish new Ecological Restoration Zones;
- That we better protect our non-designated wildlife sites;

These recommendations are often summarised as ensuring our wildlife sites are bigger, better and more connected.

The paper recognised society's need to maintain water-quality, manage inland flooding, deal with coastal erosion and enhance carbon storage and help deliver a more effective ecological network.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-today>.

Natural Environment White Paper - recognised that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the EU and internationally. It set out 92 specific commitments for action.

Including a Biodiversity Strategy update, a review of planning, a review of agri-environment schemes, establishing a voluntary Biodiversity Offsetting scheme, river and marine protection, support for the green economy and action on people and nature - health and education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-environment-white-paper-implementation-updates>

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) - was adopted and came into force in December 2000. The purpose of the Directive is to protect inland surface waters (rivers and lakes), transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters and groundwater. It was to ensure that all aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands meet 'good status' by 2015. It required establishing river basin districts and for each of these to have a river basin management plan.

The status of waters in Rushcliffe can be found at <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody> and <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk>

The **Birds Directive** provides a framework for the conservation and management of, and human interactions with, wild birds in Europe. It sets broad objectives for a wide range of activities; in the UK this is delivered through several different statutes. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1373>.

The **Habitats Directive** was adopted in 1992. The main aim of the Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those habitats and species of European importance. In applying these measures Member States are required to take account of economic, social and cultural requirements, as well as regional and local characteristics; in the UK this is delivered through several different statutes. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1374>.

The Invasive Non-native Species Framework Strategy, launched on 28th May 2008 seeks to meet the challenge posed by invasive non-native species in Great Britain.

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm>

In January 2018 the government published '**A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment**'. This drew together many existing governmental environmental targets as well as extending ambition in some areas. Alongside the plan, the government has published technical annexes and an outcome indicator framework.

The plan seeks to achieve ten overarching environmental goals; including Thriving plants and wildlife; Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently; Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment and Mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Defra has published its first progress report covering January 2018 to March 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (as amended) (the "**Withdrawal Act**")". The aim of the Withdrawal Act is to preserve, as far as possible, the domestic effect of EU legislation as it applied to the UK immediately before the 31 December 2020, following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU).

Under the Withdrawal Act, EU-derived domestic legislation (such as existing environmental regulations that implement EU Directives, including those listed above) and Direct EU legislation (such as EU regulations and decisions) which were in force immediately prior to the end of the transition period will continue to form part of UK domestic law after 31 December 2020.

Going forward after 31 December 2020, however, Parliament will be at liberty to introduce future changes to the existing legislation since, after 31 December 2020, the UK will no longer be bound by EU legislation.

The **Agriculture Act 2020** makes provision about payments for agricultural and rural development including Agri-Environment schemes and setting standards and requirement in agriculture and food production and supply following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-21/agriculture.html>

The Environment Bill 2019-21, makes provision for targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment; for monitoring environmental protection; establishing an Office for Environmental Protection; improving waste and resource efficiency and air and water quality; and regulation of chemicals. The bill proposes strengthening duties of Local Authorities to establish nature recovery plans and networks; enables conservation covenants and introduces a mandatory requirement for built developments to achieve biodiversity net gain.

It is expected this bill will become law during the life of this strategy.

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-21/environment.html>