



## **Communities Scrutiny Group**

**Thursday, 16 March 2023**

## **Rushcliffe Borough Council Environment Policy 2023-2028**

### **Report of the Director - Neighbourhoods**

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

- 1.1. This report presents a draft updated Environment Policy for the Borough Council for the period 2023-2028.
- 1.2. An opinion of the Scrutiny Group is sought whether the updated Policy meets the needs of the Council, any suggestions the Group may have and whether the Council should adopt this updated Policy.

#### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) reviews the draft updated Environment Policy
- b) makes suggestions to officers where the draft Policy does not yet meet the needs of the Council
- c) recommends that Council adopts the updated Environment Policy.

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

- 3.1. The Council has a legal duty and a moral responsibility to protect the environment. The Environment Policy sets out how the Council will undertake these duties and responsibilities.
- 3.2. The current Environment Policy ran to the end of 2022 and needs updating for its policies to continue.

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

- 4.1. The Council has had an Environment Policy since the 1990s, this was reviewed and updated in 2002, 2006, 2017 and is due to be updated again.
- 4.2. The Environment Policy sets out the overarching aims of the Council in relation to the environment and guides all other policies, strategies and activities of the Council.
- 4.3. The Environment Policy also demonstrates to our residents, partners and stakeholders that the Council takes its environmental responsibilities seriously.

4.4. Key updates to the updated policy include:

- the Council's recognition the world is facing both a climate crisis and biodiversity emergency
- a statement about reducing the use of chemicals, herbicides and pesticides
- a statement about the natural environment
- a statement about climate change.

4.5. This Policy covers the following:

- environmental improvement
- legislation
- energy and water
- waste management and recycling
- environmental protection
- use of materials
- planning and transportation
- natural environment
- climate change.

## **5. Risks and Uncertainties**

- 5.1. Not adopting the Policy could result in the Council's position on the use of chemicals, protection of the natural environment and climate change being inadequately considered during the activities of the Council.
- 5.2. Not adopting the Policy could result in the Council's position on the use of chemicals, protection of the natural environment and climate change not being recognised by external partners and stakeholders.

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1. Finance Implications**

- 6.1.1. The costs of supporting this Policy will be contained within existing budgets.
- 6.1.2. The Council's Climate Change Action Reserve (current balance £0.970m) can be used to support projects that contribute to the Councils Environmental priorities.

### **6.2. Legal Implications**

- 6.2.1. The Policy supports the duties of the Council in fulfilling its planning, environmental health, land management and waste collection obligations. The policy also supports the Council's role as a community leader.
- 6.2.2 The Policy supports the duty of the Council in exercising its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity, imposed by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environment Act 2021.

### 6.3. Equalities Implications

6.3.1. Failure to consider environmental impacts can lead to inequality, environmental issues often impact more severely on the disadvantaged in society. This policy will support action to address this issue.

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

6.4.1. This Policy is unlikely to impact on community safety.

### 6.5. 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 the climate, ecosystems, biodiversity, or even more extreme consequences such as natural disasters
Efficient Services	The environment needs to be considered within all aspects of the council's activities and operations, this needs to be addressed upfront to enable the services to be provide in an efficient manner and not tagged on at a later date, potentially disrupting the delivery of services
Sustainable Growth	It is critically important the significant growth projected in the Borough is sustainable and takes into consideration environmental issues including Climate Change and Biodiversity
The Environment	The report supports all aspects of the Environment theme of the Corporate Strategy

## 7. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) reviews the draft updated Environment Policy
- b) makes suggestions to officers where the draft Policy does not yet meet the needs of the Council
- c) recommends that Council adopts the updated Environment Policy.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	David Banks Director - Neighbourhoods Tel: 0115 9148438 dbanks@rushcliffe.gov.uk
<b>Background papers available for inspection:</b>	Rushcliffe Borough Council Environment Policy 2017-2022 (online at <a href="https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/media/1rushcliffe/media/document/s/pdf/environmentandwaste/environment/Environment%20Policy%202017.pdf">https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/media/1rushcliffe/media/document/s/pdf/environmentandwaste/environment/Environment%20Policy%202017.pdf</a> )

<b>List of appendices:</b>	Rushcliffe Borough Council Environment Policy 2023-2028
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