

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP
THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2024**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West
Bridgford
and live streamed on [Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel](#)

PRESENT:

Councillors G Williams (Chair), L Plant (Vice-Chair), M Barney, J Billin,
G Fletcher, R Mallender, P Matthews, H Parekh and T Wells

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Burch	Service Manager - Neighbourhoods
L Colaluca	Streetwise Manager
D Hayden	Community Development Manager
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors S Ellis and A Phillips

16 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Barney declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Nottinghamshire County Council Councillor who had supported funding for Nottingham Energy Partnership and as an employee of Geopura who work with hydrogen.

17 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 January 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2024 were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

18 Carbon Management Plan Update

The Community Development Manager presented an update on the Carbon Management Plan. He explained that carbon emission information was separated into the three categories, being Scope, 1 (direct emissions from the Council's activity), Scope 2 (indirect emissions, for example from electricity) and Scope 3 (indirect emissions from supply chains and services).

The Community Development Manager explained that the Council had developed a roadmap towards achieving net zero as a business, but that emissions had increased slightly recently due to a variety of factors, including a return to business as usual following the pandemic, the in-sourcing of the Streetwise company and the opening of Rushcliffe Oaks crematorium.

The Community Development Manager said that the Council had also made a

commitment, in line with national and international governments, to be Net Zero as a Local authority Area by 2050. He noted that public sector emissions contributed 9% and towards the overall carbon output for the Borough, with the largest contributor being transport at 33%.

The Group was updated on the successful completion of a number of projects, including heat decarbonisation for all non-leisure stock estate, a Swimming Pool Support Fund Award at Cotgrave Leisure Centre, completion of energy mapping work for assets and that the Council was hoping to replace the gas boilers at Sir Julian Cahn pavilion and Gamston community centre with air source heat pumps.

The Group was updated that the Council was mapping its transport and emissions, taking into consideration current technologies and the rural nature of the Borough to inform its vehicle replacement programme. The Community Development Manager said that the Council was also looking at working with Zest Energy regarding installation of EV charge points across the Borough.

In relation to contracts and procurement, the Community Development Manager said that the Council had written policies into its procurement strategy and was considering its supply chains and had employed a new biodiversity net gain (BNG) assistant to support introduction of the new legislation.

In relation to policy and regulation, the Community Development Manager said that the Council was currently reviewing its Review of Air Quality Strategy, had set up a Big Business Carbon Club and had been commended by a recent Peer Review for the work that it had completed to date.

In relation to the waste and recycling, the Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that the Council was looking at how it collected waste, in line with expected changes to national guidance, with it likely that weekly food collections would be introduced later in 2027 and kerbside glass collection by 2026 as part of the Smarter Recycling initiative. He said that the Council was collectively working with local authorities across the County to take a whole system approach as much as possible.

The Community Development Manager said that the Council was looking at its data centre emissions, staff travel and had moved to procure its electricity from renewable sources. He said that the Council was also working with RCAN and parish and town councils supporting them with their asset energy audits.

In relation to offsetting, the Group was informed that a carbon sequestration report had been completed for the Borough, which had identified that approximately 46 hectares of tree planting would be required to achieve neutrality by 2030.

The Community Development Manager referred to the carbon neutral 2050 target and said that projects involving Local Authority Delivery Scheme and Home Upgrade Grant funding had been delivered by the Council focusing on improving home insulation and home heating systems and he shared information on two specific projects that had been completed. He added that the Council was also working with Thames Valley Metropolitan Housing

(TVMH) regarding decarbonising their housing stock and was looking to develop a county wide solar electric bulk purchase scheme with the County Council and Midlands Net Zero Hub.

The Community Development Manager confirmed that the Council would continue to do outreach with parish councils, supporting carbon reduction innovation and investment and promote the Big Business Carbon Club. He noted that the British Geological Survey were currently digging bore holes into the ground to provide geothermal energy, with potential for this to become a future district heating network within the Borough and to be an exemplar site.

Councillor Parekh asked whether land had been identified for the required 46 hectares of planting and the Community Development Manager said that a report would shortly be presented to Cabinet setting out how the Council could approach acquiring suitable sites, possibly through purchase or long term lease and maximising open spaces. He said that Council had mapped areas of the Borough and was also mindful of the need for trees to become sufficiently mature to absorb carbon

Councillor Barney supported moving towards introducing HVO powered refuse vehicles but cautioned the need to monitor where the HVO was sourced from and the Community Development Manager confirmed that the Council was mindful of this factor and said that HVO was only a step in the Council's transition away from diesel.

Councillor Barney also noted that technology was changing rapidly and bringing economies of scale and that it was important to be open to future developments and transparent about the costs involved. The Community Development Manager referred to Appendix 2 of the report which provided a breakdown of expenditure.

Councillor Mallender asked about the PFI agreement with Veolia and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that this would likely end around 2029 and said that there was Nottinghamshire wide group which was looking to take a County wide approach to waste and recycling collection, which was currently being discussed at County level.

Councillor Mallender asked about education around waste reduction as well as waste management. The Community Development Manager agreed that waste reduction was an important factor of the waste management strategy and that once plans were confirmed the Council would look to hold roadshows and promote communications to towns and parishes and the community.

Councillor Wells asked how many homes had received solid wall insulation and the Community Development Manager said that he would report back to Group with information on the number and age of the properties.

Councillor Plant referred to domestic housing accounting for 24% of carbon emissions for Borough and thought that funding was required to enable households to make modifications to increase the energy efficiency of their homes. The Community Development Manager said that a big challenge was retrofit of older housing and that work was taking place looking at promoting

schemes and bulk buying to bring in economies of scale.

Councillor Fletcher asked about communications with town and parish councils and the Community Development Manager said that they would be welcome to contact the Team Manager for Environment directly and that he would share his contact information with the Group.

The Chair asked whether the hand tools used by Streetwise were electric and the Community Development Manager said that the Council was learning from the Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park who were currently using electric tools for their smaller scale works. The Streetwise Manager said that the Team were using a mixture of petrol and electric machines depending on how long they needed to be used for and that Streetwise had bought additional batteries to facilitate electric tools being used for longer works where possible.

The Chair referred to EV charging points in car parks and asked whether it would be possible to expand installation. The Community Development Manager said that the Council had provided EV charging points through the Pulse scheme at all sites that qualified through that scheme, which were usually near trunk roads. He said that the Council was now working with Zest to look at other possible sites, although this was challenging in more rural locations. It was noted that whilst East Leake had qualified as a site initially it had ultimately not been deemed suitable due to impacting factors, which could include power supply. The Group was informed that the Council was also reviewing options for domestic on-street charging for homes without drives.

The Chair asked about housing developments and biodiversity net gain offset and whether it would be possible for the Council to condition for elements, such as tree planting, to be made at the outset of the development. The Community Development Manager said that he would report back to the Group with information about delivery and triggers for when developers could be made to deliver biodiversity net gain measures.

Members of the Group asked about social housing providers in the Borough and their carbon management plans. The Community Development Manager confirmed that the Council was working with its housing providers regarding their decarbonisation plans and said that he would report back to the Group with a list of all housing providers in the Borough and any known information about decarbonisation.

Councillor Parekh asked how many swimming pools there were within the Borough and how many had gas boilers and the Community Development Manager said that there were five Leisure Centres and that Cotgrave was the first to receive a new air source heat pump and that Bingham Leisure Centre's gas boiler was 82% more efficient than traditional gas boilers.

In relation to education, Councillor Parekh asked whether the Council had plans to work with secondary schools. The Community Development Manager said that the Council was keen to work with partners and had found climate change engagement well embedded within the young generation.

Councillor Matthews asked about EV charging points and returns on investment from those in the Borough. The Community Development Manager explained that installation had been in partnership with Pulse and through grant funding. The Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that the Council was a host site and did not receive income from them.

The Chair confirmed that an update on the Carbon Management Plan would be reported to Scrutiny annually and the Community Development Manager said that the Team would be happy to respond to questions from Members throughout the year.

It was RESOLVED that the Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) considered the progress to date of the adopted carbon management action plan; and
- b) contributed towards the emerging carbon management actions for 2024/25.

19 **Streetwise Update**

The Service Manager Neighbourhoods introduced the Streetwise Report which provided a high level overview of the insourcing of Streetwise, future focus and performance information. He introduced the Streetwise Manager appointed a year ago who presented an update to the Group

The Streetwise Manager said that initial tasks of the Council had been to review various operations of Streetwise, including the management structure, the existing business including asking customers for feedback, scheduling of works, forward planning of works, the consistency and quality of work and the embracing of technology to improve and streamline operations.

The Streetwise Manager explained that a focus for the Council was Health and Safety due to the number of high risk works carried out by the Teams and as such it had created eight golden rules, which included new floor markings to segregate vehicles and pedestrians, a new induction and onboarding process, refreshed Toolbox Talks and regular staff briefing sessions, updated risk assessments and working practises, creating a competency matrix for different departments, investment in training, investment in machinery and equipment servicing and implementation of electronic driver checks to monitor compliance.

The Streetwise Manager said that the Council had invested in depot improvements, such as creating an open plan office to help with communication, closer working and sharing of best practice. This was also well used as a central base for recent flooding responses. He said that Streetwise also had a new website which allowed it to streamlined enquiries through the Customer Contact Centre and create a resource for all Streetwise related information. He said that it also provided facility to report problems online which then came directly to the Team.

In relation to the works programme, the Streetwise Manager said that Streetwise were carrying out splitter cleansing removing weeds from roads and

were about to apply for funding to support chewing gum cleansing which would be focused on town centres within the Borough.

In relation to high speed road cleansing, the Streetwise Manager said that the Team were working in partnership with agencies such as Highways England to close roads overnight to allow work to take place as much as possible. He said that Streetwise were supporting litter picking through the Rushcliffe Litter Champions providing equipment to community groups and school volunteers. He said that Streetwise had also purchased five 2 Minute litter picking stations which provided litter picking tools for residents to use, which were currently being trialled in Ruddington, Radcliffe on Trent and Bingham.

The Streetwise Manager informed the Group about successful grounds maintenance work and noted that there 30 no mow areas across the Borough and that the Teams managed the grounds for the new Rushcliffe Oaks crematorium and Bingham Arena. He said that the Tree Team had reduced to one team of four which had allowed it to focus on Rushcliffe work. He also noted the successful unscheduled and more reactive work carried out by the Teams, such as delivering sand bags or dealing with paint spills and fly tipping.

In relation to staff and performance management, the Group were informed that recent staff survey results had found that 100% of staff thought it was a good place to work and 95% were content in the management of the service area. Streetwise had received much positive thanks from members of the public and a recent Peer Review had reported that Rushcliffe was the cleanest Borough that they had visited.

Looking to the future, the Streetwise Manager said that the focus would continue to be on the Borough, to build relationships with key partners and build its sales and marketing Strategy to better sell services, to look at cost reduction and explore apprenticeship options in addition to their current business support apprentice. Streetwise were expecting to shortly take receipt of two new road sweepers which would enable a review of the sweeper schedule.

The Chair asked whether parish councils had been informed that the most direct and efficient way to contact Streetwise was through their new website where possible and the Streetwise Manager said that presentations had been given at the parish conference and he wanted to continue to be available to support them.

The Chair referred to litter picking and communications as he thought that many residents wouldn't be aware of the litter picking stations and activities. The Streetwise Manager confirmed that communications were taking place and that the Team was linking in with the Great British Spring Clean currently. He said that a member of the Team had visited a school in Ruddington last week to talk about littering and the benefits of recycling. He said that there would also be benefit in talking to schools about graffiti and the costs to remove it. The Streetwise Manager said that he would share a list of litter picking groups with the Group.

The Chair asked whether the current wet weather had impacted on pitch

management and the Streetwise Manager confirmed that it had and that it was currently impacting on grass cutting.

Councillor Matthews referred to scheduling of works and suggested that it would improve public confidence if Councillors and the public were able to view a timetable of planned works. The Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that the Team would be keen to provide this but clarified that Streetwise was not responsible for drainage emptying which was carried out by the County Council.

Councillor Parekh asked about plans for future locations for litter picking boards, particularly on new housing developments and the Streetwise Manager said that the scheme was being trialled at the moment, with plans to rotate the boards around hotspots in the Borough.

Councillor Parekh asked whether Streetwise had contracts with housing development management companies and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods confirmed that it did not currently work on behalf of any management companies.

Councillor Fletcher commended Streetwise operatives for their work getting out sandbags so efficiently during the recent flooding and asked whether it would be possible to store them locally. The Streetwise Manager confirmed that there were plans to work more closely with community stores to facilitate speedy access as Streetwise vehicle access could sometimes also be impacted by flooding. The Teams also worked with the local parish council flood resilience groups to enable residents to be take proactive action in preparing themselves by buying their own sandbags in advance.

In relation to grounds maintenance and cutting and no mow areas, Councillor Billin said that various agencies appeared to be responsible for various pieces of work and asked whether it would be possible to have a unified programme of work, to enable a parish council to take over some of the work. The Streetwise Manager said that he would take this away to review options.

Councillor Billin asked about education materials that could be shared with schools and parishes and the Streetwise Manager said that the Team wanted to be visible and would be happy to attend ward surgeries and attend parish meetings. He thought that much school communication was now electronic and he would look to at what information could be shared with the Group.

Councillor Plant referred to the £100k savings and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods explained that this had been achieved in part through increasing Streetwise's buying power, a reduction of wastage and not filling tree team vacancies.

Councillor Plant asked about performance indicators, in particular the 100% for dog fouling and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that these were measured by the Council to an industry national standard. He explained that the Borough was divided into various transects which would be walked to assess litter and dog fouling and that Officers were not finding significant dog fouling in areas. He said that the Council rarely received complaints about dog

fouling but would take action if it became aware of any.

Councillor Wells asked whether it would be possible for the Council to provide information about anti-flooding products and the Service Manager Neighbourhoods said that the Council had provided grants to residents who had been regularly affected by flooding to help with flood defences. Whilst it would not be appropriate for the Council to sell products it could look at further education about measures that residents could take themselves.

The Chair thanked Streetwise for their hard work in making Rushcliffe such a clean Borough.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Communities Scrutiny Group considered the information provided and provided feedback on the overall performance of Streetwise.

20 **Work Programme**

The Chair explained that the Accessible Housing item scheduled for October had been discussed at the last Corporate Overview Group as falling within both the Communities and the Growth and Development Scrutiny Groups remit and as such consideration was being given as to how to best facilitate a joint review.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group agreed the work programme for next year 2023 – 2024 as set out below:

xx July 2024

- Use of Community Facilities
- Annual Report on Scrutiny
- Work Programme

xx October 2024

- Accessible Housing [TBC]
- Work Programme

xx January 2025

- Work Programme

xx April 2025

- Work Programme

Actions – 21 March 2024

Minute No	Action	Officer Responsible/ Update
19	Provide information on how many homes and the age of properties that had received solid wall insulation	26 properties circa 1946
19	Provide contact details for the Team Manager for Environment so that town and parish councils could contact him	Ed Leddy-Owen eleddy-owen@rushcliffe.gov.uk
19	Provide information as to whether the Council could make housing developers introduce BNG measures at the outset of development and information about triggers for when developers could be made to deliver BNG measures	BNG is now in law for both large (12/03/2024) and small (02/04/2024) developments. A trigger is any development outside of a small extension
19	Provide a list of all housing providers in the Borough and any known information about their decarbonisation plans	There are 21 Registered Providers operating in RBC with MPTV being the largest. The Team Manager – Environment is working closely with the Housing Strategy Team to identify all of their policies on Climate Change. It is worth noting that MPTV have a net 0 target of 2050 and are installing 90 EWI (external wall insulation) systems in East Leake
20	Provide a list of litter picking groups for Councillors to help them join and link in with them.	A link will be sent to Councillors via Councillor Connections
20	Assess the feasibility of providing an overview of the various agencies responsible for various pieces of land across the Borough	This is a longer term aspirational aim should it be possible to achieve
20	Streetwise educational information to be shared with the Group	Information will be sent to Councillors via Councillor Connections

The meeting closed at 9.09 pm.

CHAIR