

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL



Economic Growth Strategy and Plan

Promoting sustainable economic growth and regional opportunities to deliver a prosperous local economy creating a thriving place to live, work and visit which retains the unique local heritage and character of the Borough.



Introduction

Rushcliffe lies immediately south of the City of Nottingham and the River Trent and extends across towards Newark in the Northeast and Loughborough in the Southwest. Rushcliffe covers 157 square miles. Although the Borough borders a number of other areas including Nottingham City, Loughborough and Newark it has a strong identity of its own. The main centre of population is West Bridgford, where around 41,000 of the Borough's 119,400 population (census 2021 and increase of 7.2% compared to census 2011) live. The remainder of the district is largely rural with centres of population split between towns and smaller villages, each with a strong character of their own.

Rushcliffe has a strong local economy that is performing well, despite recent challenges at a national and global level, with low unemployment, high skills, strong business survival rate and low high street vacancy rates. However, the Council knows it cannot be complacent and ensuring the local economy continues to thrive, for the benefit of all, will take a collaborative effort that focuses on some key priority areas to achieve the greatest impact. The Council cannot deliver this vision on its own, as is reflected in many of the actions outlined below, the Council need to work with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders to achieve results.

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S VISION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IS:

“Promote sustainable economic growth and regional opportunities to deliver a prosperous local economy creating a thriving place to live, work and visit which retains the unique local heritage and character of the Borough”



THIS VISION IS UNDERPINNED BY THREE PRIORITY THEMES:



Place and Experience: what it is like to live, work and visit Rushcliffe including our town centre and high streets, housing growth and our culture and heritage.



Investment and Infrastructure: attracting new businesses to the Borough and securing the right transport and other infrastructure to support any growth.



Business Support, Growth and Skills: providing the right support to our existing businesses and understanding our current and future skills needs.

This vision, priorities and supporting ambitions are set out in more detail in the subsequent pages. Some initial actions have been developed setting out how the Council will work with partners to achieve this. The intention is that an action plan is created and continually reviewed and updated ensuring it responds to the changing needs of Rushcliffe's economy. This document is an executive summary of the Strategy and action plan to provide an overview of the Council's priorities for delivering growth but also what is needed to further enhance the economic prosperity of the Borough.

The Strategy sits alongside others at a local, regional and national level recognising that economic growth is impacted by many factors. It is about the state of local and national economy and the private sectors willingness and ability to invest in the borough. The council's role is to intervene when this is failing, capitalise on opportunities and also to convene partners to enhance growth where we can. However it is not just about the economy itself, it impacts on all aspects of a place and it is important that this is reflected and acknowledged. The Council is striving for economic prosperity that reflects the breadth of the impact of economic growth and how it links with other factors impacting on quality of life.

The Strategy comes at a time of change in the East Midlands which has the opportunity to have a significant impact on the regional and local economy; the establishment of the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA). The EMCCA's focus is on regional ambitions for growth with funding to support delivery. It is hoped that with the establishment of the EMCCA the region will be better able to speak with one voice, it will raise the profile of the region, and so the areas within it, and enable opportunities for increased investment. The priorities outlined in this Economic Growth Plan will be used to focus our ambition for Rushcliffe within the devolution process and leverage potential investment to deliver.



Place and Experience



This priority is all about building on Rushcliffe's already strong offer, creating a thriving place where people want to and can live, work and visit.

AMBITION 1:

Support the growth of Rushcliffe ensuring development enhances and integrates with existing communities and creates a great place to live, work and visit.

The Borough is growing rapidly with the delivery of 13,150 new homes before 2028 as set out in the Borough's Local Plan. This growth provides an opportunity but also inevitably presents challenges. Creating places people want to live and work does not happen by accident, and we want to ensure we are working with our partners to deliver good growth that respects the unique character of the Borough, is sustainable and provides the right infrastructure to support the new and existing communities to continue to enjoy a good quality of life.

ACTIONS:

- » Development and Community Boards at Bingham, Fairham, Newton, Sharpill and Gamston
- » Exploring opportunities for working more closely with a range of partners to facilitate growth including EMCCA, Homes England, local universities and private sector
- » Engaging with our Parish Councils to understand local priorities and support where possible
- » Engage with neighbouring local authorities to explore opportunities for collaboration, sharing best practise etc.
- » Working with partners to enable the release of S106 and CIL funding to provide the infrastructure to support development
- » Identifying funding (public and private) to accelerate delivery of housing and employment land.

AMBITION 2:

Support our town and village centres to continue to thrive now and create a collective vision for their future.

Town and village centres are an integral part of local communities, their offer impacting on a person's decision to live and visit a place. Whilst their role in communities may be changing becoming places that are as much about leisure and experience as shopping they remain a critical part of our local infrastructure.

ACTIONS:

- » Deliver appropriate recommendations contained within the 7 district centre retail reviews
- » Public realm improvements on Central Avenue in West Bridgford
- » Creation of vision documents for each of our 7 largest town and village centres, starting with West Bridgford because of the significant plans for the area over the coming years including: new pedestrian and cycle bridge and the relocation of County Council away from County Hall and new and future housing growth in the area.

AMBITION 3:

Enhance and showcase all the Borough has to offer as a place to live and visit.

The Borough is home to some notable attractions that draw people into the area including the City Ground, Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, Nottingham Rugby Club and Holme Pierrepont watersports centre. These along with access to green space, attractive town and village centres and local museums and heritage assets make Rushcliffe a great place to live and visit. As well as these attractions the Borough has a strong events programme throughout the year which includes Lark in the Park, Rushcliffe Food Festival, Sunday Cinema and Christmas lights attracting thousands of people into Rushcliffe.

ACTIONS:

- » Engage and inform the development of the Nottinghamshire Destination Management Plan
- » Consider opportunity for creating a Rushcliffe Destination Management Plan/Tourism Strategy
- » More promotion of the tourism offer in Rushcliffe, working with partners e.g. City and County Councils as required.
- » Review of markets in the Borough, exploring opportunities to do things differently to bring greater benefit to our town and village centres.



Investment and Infrastructure



This priority is all about attracting new businesses to the Borough and working with our partners in securing the right infrastructure to support growth.

AMBITION 4:

Support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station, a key site for the region, a gateway into the Borough.

Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station is due to be decommissioned in September 2024, this is a historic moment for the Country as it signals the end of coal fired power generation in the UK. The 270ha site is iconic for residents and visitors alike, with its cooling towers visible from many areas of the Borough, and beyond. The vision for the site to be transformed into a centre for energy production and storage, advanced manufacturing and industry. It will deliver the technology and industry required to help move towards a net-zero carbon future.

ACTIONS:

- » Work with partners to support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station
- » Continue to proactively engage with local stakeholders including parish councils within Rushcliffe and just across the border in North West Leicestershire.
- » Work with key stakeholders, particularly the site owners, to bring forward the right development that aligns with the vision for moving to a net-zero future.
- » Work with partners to explore the wider opportunities that ROS can bring including though supply chain, development of other sites and promotion of the Borough.



AMBITION 5:

Realising the opportunity the Borough presents, attracting new businesses and investment into the Borough.

In addition to Ratcliffe on Soar, around 70 ha of employment land has been allocated across the Borough. These sites are located next to housing sites and are owned by private developers or landowners. Whilst housing development is progressing well on most of the 6 strategic sites the employment land is often slower to be developed. This is for a number of reasons including the cost of land in the Borough, the unwillingness of private developers to build speculatively and the availability of Government funding.

ACTIONS:

- » Establish commercial developer forums to facilitate discussions to support unlocking development of allocated employment sites
- » Promotion of the Borough as a place to do business to support inward investment opportunities working with our partners including EMCCA, IIN and NCC
- » Review existing employment space available and identify gaps in provision for investment
- » Proactively engage with new businesses in the Borough to understand skills needs now and in the future
- » Lobby Government to increase requirements for energy efficiency of new buildings
- » Showcase exemplar low carbon commercial developments to highlight what can be achieved.

AMBITION 6:

Working with our partners to ensure the delivery of required infrastructure to support economic growth.

Having the right infrastructure in place underpins the ability to deliver good growth. It covers many things from roads to schools to sewers and the challenges of delivering infrastructure in a timely manner are well understood and articulated. Delivery of infrastructure is the responsibility of a number of different agencies who need to work together to deliver identified requirements.

ACTIONS:

- » Proactively engage with the Stations Growth Strategy
- » Continue to engage with the development of Project Wider Integrated Strategy for Energy Rail and Road (WISERR) to identify required infrastructure to support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar, ensuring the impact on local roads is included and mitigation measures put in place
- » Continue to participate in Poacher Line Group meetings to support increased capacity along the route
- » Work with Nottinghamshire County Council to explore innovative ways to deliver public transport in rural areas and pilot this in Rushcliffe
- » Engage with the County Council on further upgrades/roll outs of Broadband ensuring messages are communicated to residents and businesses and areas with poor coverage are highlighted.

Business, Support Growth and Skills



The business support landscape has changed and will continue to change over the coming years with the changes to funding streams - loss of European Structural Investment Fund, introduction of UKSPF and more recently the establishment of the EMCCA. This priority is about ensuring we continue to provide our businesses the support they need.

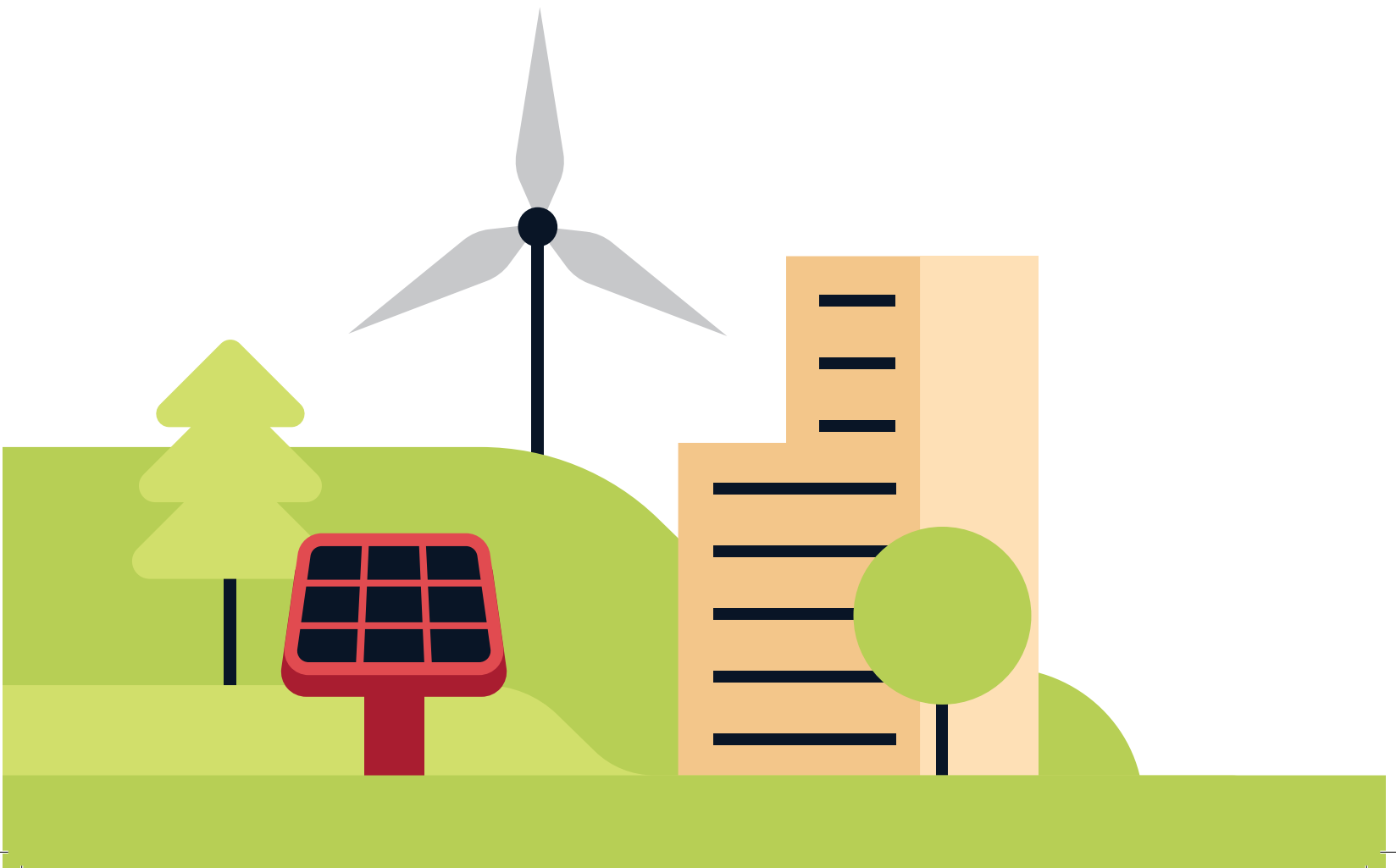
AMBITION 7:

Ensuring the provision of the right support for our businesses that promotes their growth, productivity and move to becoming more sustainable.

Providing businesses with the environment they need to thrive and grow is how we need to see business support. This does not consist of one thing in isolation it is about a number of complementary factors all working together, whilst this is challenging to create the Council is committed to working with our partners to collectively provide what our businesses need.

ACTIONS:

- » Work with EMCCA and partners to shape the future business support landscape ensuring this is right for Rushcliffe
- » Review Rushcliffe Business Partnership and consider opportunities for its growth and development in the future
- » Support our businesses to operate more sustainably through the provision of advice and support and, where available, funding.



AMBITION 8:

Ensuring our businesses can access the people they need with the right skills to enable them to grow.

The most important part of any business is its people, being able to attract and retain the right talent is critical for all businesses. Having a local workforce with the right skills for local businesses makes an area attractive for investment and supports the growth of existing businesses. In addition, there are well established links between the right work and the positive impact this can have on an individual's physical and mental health. The Council will work with partners including; County Council, EMCCA, Further and Higher Education to support our residents into or back into work.

ACTIONS:

- » Work with EMCCA and partners to minimise the skills gap and ensure there are the skills available to support the growth of our existing and new businesses
- » Work with partners to develop the supporting infrastructure to ensure that those that need it have support to help them access training and employment
- » Promote inclusive recruitment across sectors, highlighting the opportunity this can create for businesses and the economy
- » Work with universities and partners to address the issue of graduate retention, showcasing the range of opportunities in the area
- » Work with businesses to seek ways to encourage early retirees, those with caring responsibility into/back into the workforce through more flexible recruitment
- » Work with schools to enable a better understanding of future skills needs and the opportunities for young people
- » Establish a South Nottinghamshire Providers Forum and Employment and Skills Board.

AMBITION 9:

Developing stronger relationships with the big businesses in our Borough to identify opportunities to work together and champion the Borough as a place to do business

The Borough is home to 20 big businesses (those with 250+ employees), 0.4% of the total businesses in the Borough. This includes Uniper, British Gypsum, British Geological Survey, Midland HR, John Deere and Vision Express. This diversity of type and sector of businesses reflects the wider business community and the opportunity there is for promotion of the Borough as a place to do business.

ACTIONS:

- » Review and build on what has been done previously by RBC and others and reinvigorate the big business forum for Rushcliffe
- » Explore opportunities for businesses to act as champions of the Borough, promoting Rushcliffe as a place to do business.

For further information please contact:

 Rushcliffe Arena
Rugby Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7YG

 0115 981 9911

 econdev@rushcliffe.gov.uk

 rushcliffe.gov.uk





