



Rushcliffe
Borough Council

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Annual report on the delivery of the strategic tasks



RUSHCLIFFE - GREAT PLACE - GREAT LIFESTYLE - GREAT SPORT

The Council adopted its current Corporate Strategy in December 2023. The Corporate Strategy sets the overall direction the Council is planning to take over the next four years.

To help focus attention and resources, the Council has identified four priorities.

They are:

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

Twelve strategic tasks are contained within the Corporate Strategy under these four priorities. Each year, progress in the delivery of these tasks will be reviewed and reported to the Corporate Overview Group. This enables the Group to track progress and evaluate the impact of strategic tasks as far as is possible. It also provides an opportunity for tasks that have been completed to be removed from the Corporate Strategy Action Plan and any new strategic tasks to be included.

This keeps the Council's Corporate Strategy live, relevant and reactive, making it easier for the Council to adapt to change, take advantage of opportunities and respond nimbly in an ever-evolving environment.

Alongside this annual report on progress towards delivering the strategic tasks, Corporate Overview Group receives a quarterly report on the Council's performance and Cabinet receives a quarterly report on the Council's budget and expenditure. These three reports triangulate to provide a comprehensive picture of how the Council is delivering on its published Corporate Strategy.

This document follows the Council's four priorities and provides a narrative description of the progress made over the last 12 months in the delivery of the strategic tasks laid out in the Corporate Strategy Action Plan.

Where possible (and helpful) this information is supported with performance figures or infographics to demonstrate progress towards our goals or the scale of our operations.

The final section of this report considers which tasks have been completed and should drop into more operational delivery and monitoring regimes, and where significant projects or tasks have emerged since the publication of the current Corporate Strategy but should now be included as new strategic tasks.

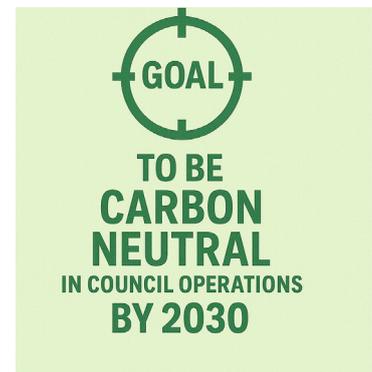
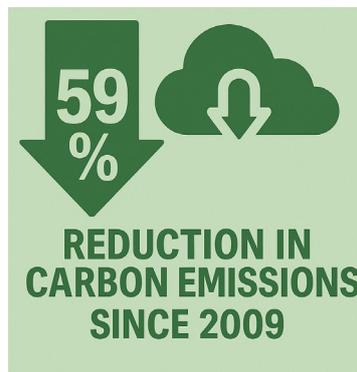


The Environment

The Council knows that the natural environment is precious and not something anyone can afford to take for granted. The Council is fully committed to playing its part in protecting the environment today and enhancing it for future generations.

The Council has already taken steps to ensure that, where it can, it is making changes to operate in a more environmentally responsible way. This has led to a 59% reduction in carbon emissions since 2008/09. Since 2014/15, the Council has seen a 71% reduction in carbon emissions as it takes on more assets through building new low carbon leisure centres. This is a fantastic achievement so far, with more work to be done to ensure the Council achieves its target of being net-zero in its own operations by 2030.

Being a green Borough is not just about carbon reduction and energy efficiency activity, it is also about preserving the green and rural nature of the Borough. The Council is committed to nature conservation, working to strike the right balance between facilitating necessary development without sacrificing the Borough's rural identity that the Council and so many residents value. Nature conservation is also vital for wildlife in the Borough as well as for its role in mitigating the effects of climate change.



Deliver Rushcliffe's Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030

The Council has set a target of being carbon neutral in its own operations by 2030. It recognises that the environment is of great importance to residents in Rushcliffe and that the Council must work collectively with residents and businesses to make the greatest possible impact for the Borough now, and for future generations.

The Climate Change Strategy focuses on reducing the emissions associated with the Council's buildings and activities, supporting residents and business to reduce their emissions, and protecting and increasing green spaces for residents to enjoy, for wildlife to thrive and to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Delivery of the Climate Change Strategy mainly falls within the Council's Carbon Management Plan which is scrutinised annually by the Communities Scrutiny Group. The most recent report features projects and data from the first year of this Corporate Strategy.

Key achievements from 2023/24 include:

- Switching to Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil instead of diesel in our heavy fleet (bin lorries), the introduction of three electric vehicles for facilities management, Streetwise and environmental health, and two electric buggies at Rushcliffe Country Park as part of our vehicle replacement programme decarbonisation.
- Decarbonisation activities at Cotgrave Leisure Centre including a complete interior refurbishment, fabric upgrades, LED lighting, replacing the gas-fuelled heating systems with air-source heat pumps, a large solar panel array removing dependency on fossil fuels.
- Distribution of grants for residents in older properties that are deemed 'hard-to-heat' for insulation, low carbon heating solutions, and solar electric.
- Contributed to the Nottinghamshire County Council Local Nature Recovery Strategy which will feed into the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy revision later this year.

In terms of the coming year, efforts will be focused on:

- Decarbonisation activities at Keyworth Leisure Centre, Sir Jullien Cahn Pavillion and Gamston Community Hall.
- Investigations into solar PV arrays on Rushcliffe Arena, electric vehicle charging points in Bridgford Road car park, and decarbonisation of Gresham Sports Park.
- Land acquisition to offset the Council residual carbon emissions, known as Carbon Sequestration by biological sequestration.



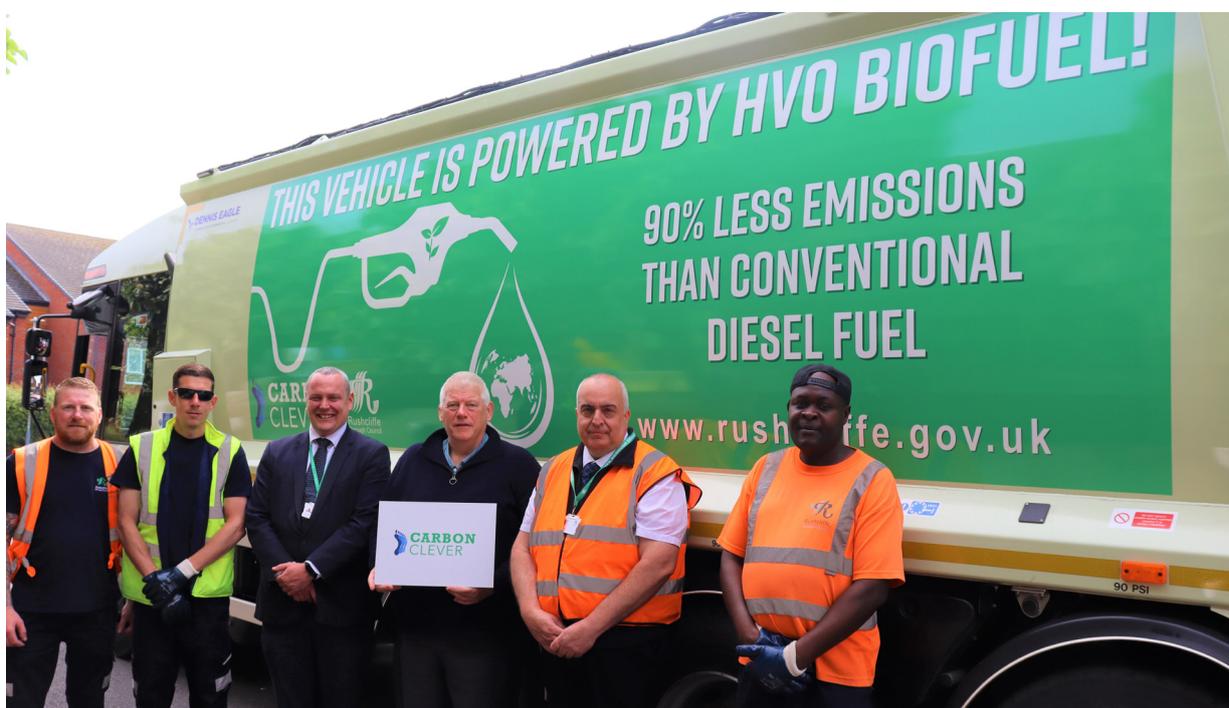
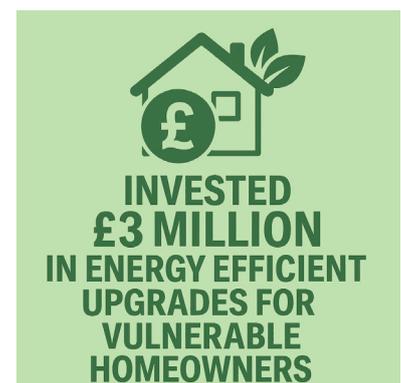
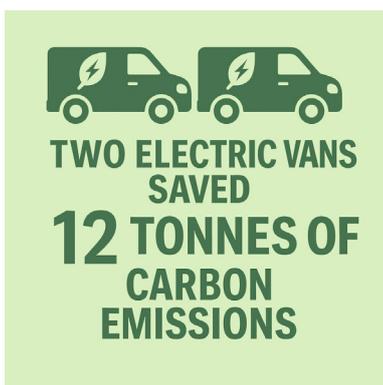
Deliver Rushcliffe's Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030

Senior Responsible Officer: Dave Banks – Director Neighbourhoods

Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Upton – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

Success Measures:

- Carbon Neutral in Council operations by 2030. Report on % achieved each year
- Progress against actions within Carbon Management Plan – Report on % 'completed' and 'in progress' each year
- Reduction in Co2 emissions from Diesel/fuel consumption - 60% by September 2024
- Percentage of available Rushcliffe Biodiversity Support Grant allocated each year – target 100%
- No of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Target = No net loss of LWS sites
- Percentage of Tree canopy cover in Rushcliffe. Target = increase up to 20% from a base of 11.1%



Implement the Environment Act commitments

After a number of delays and complications, the Environment Act finally achieved Royal Assent in November 2021. However, the necessary secondary legislation detailing how the main tenants of the Act were to be delivered was not published until early 2024.

Whilst the Council had been busy making plans, alongside colleagues in other authorities across Nottinghamshire, the majority of decisions were delayed until the secondary legislation was released.

Since the publication of the secondary legislation, work has been undertaken to introduce kerbside glass collections to households across the Borough from December 2025, collect a wider diversity of dry recyclables in the blue bins from April 2026, and to introduce a completely new food waste service also from October 2027. Work has also been undertaken on potential Smoke Control Areas in the Borough and on projects to increase bio-diversity in the Borough.

Autumn 2025 will see grey 180 litre wheeled bins with purple lids delivered to all households in the Borough in preparation for the kerbside collection of glass. This new service will be launched on 1 December 2025 and will see the new bins collected on a six-weekly basis on the same day as the existing grey (residual waste) bin. The service will require the purchase of two additional refuse vehicles and four new members of staff.

An extensive communications campaign has been launched to ensure residents are aware of the changes to glass collection across the Borough. The introduction of a new kerbside glass recycling service will be combined with a review of existing bring sites with a reduction in these facilities as residents benefit from being able to recycle their glass at home.



Implement the Environment Act commitments

From April 2026, residents will be able to recycle a greater range of materials in the blue (dry recycling) bin including fruit punnets, plastic food trays and tetrapak containers. The Council will be participating in a wide-ranging communications campaign to increase resident awareness of this change but is not expecting to need to undertake much work behind the scenes to deliver this extension to an existing service.

Perhaps the biggest change for residents, and for the service, is the introduction of weekly food waste collections from October 2027. As this will be a completely new service, officers are already working on resourcing and logistics, and this work is being progressed via existing arrangements such as through the Nottinghamshire Waste Officers Group and the Councillor-led Nottinghamshire Joint Waste Management Committee.

At this stage, the new service is expected to need up to 10 extra vehicles, 20 extra staff, and an internal food caddy and an external food caddy for each property in the Borough. October 2027 will also see a further change to what can be recycled in the blue (recycling) bin with soft plastics, such as carrier bags, being accepted from that date although the exact collection method has yet to be confirmed.

Communities Scrutiny Group discussed the introduction of Smoke Control Areas in October 2023. It was decided not to extend any smoke control areas at this time although this may be reviewed. Whilst not part of the 2021 Environment Act, the Council has recently (Cabinet February 2025) revoked its two Air Quality Management Areas having improved air quality at two significant road junctions in the Borough.



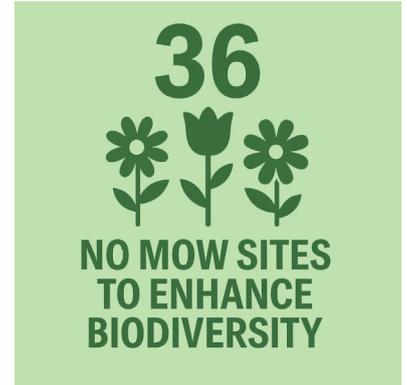
Implement the Environment Act commitments

Senior Responsible Officer: Dave Banks – Director Neighbourhoods

Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Inglis – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety

Success Measures:

- Increase Bio-Diversity within the Borough by 10%
- Increase in percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.
- A reduction in residual waste collected per household, in kilos.
- Annual mean concentration of PM2.5 concentrations of 12 micrograms per metre cubed ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) or below by January 2028
- Reduce average population exposure to PM2.5 concentrations by 22% by January 2028 when compared to 2018 baseline data.





Residents' quality of life will always be a priority for the Council. Quality of life is all about how residents feel about living in the Borough, its environment, and the community facilities they can access.

The Council knows from the 2021 residents' survey that 84% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This is fantastic, but not something the Council takes for granted. It is important for the Council to continue to work hard to ensure that the Borough remains a great place to live, work and socialise.

**RESIDENT SURVEY
SHOWED
84%
SATISFIED LIVING
IN THEIR LOCAL AREA**



**SUPPORTING
17 SPORTS VENUES
TO IMPROVE
DEFIBRILLATOR ACCESS**



£ 

**INVESTING OVER
£1 MILLION
IN OUR PARKS
AND GREEN SPACES**

Be an active partner in the delivery of the East Midlands Devolution Deal

The East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) was established in 2024 and is expected to bring an extra £38m to the East Midlands annually. EMCCA, the output of the Government's Devolution Deal, has been devolved some national powers and has an elected Mayor for the East Midlands.

The Council is engaging proactively with EMCCA to help ensure the significant benefits the new authority can bring deliver benefits for Rushcliffe. Both the Leader and Deputy Leader sit on boards that feed into EMCCA representing the Council as a whole and the views of local residents and businesses. The majority of the work to date has involved building relationships with the new authority, its officers and the East Midlands Mayor, Claire Ward.

A document outlining the Borough's priorities has been discussed with EMCCA with the purpose of seeking support for large scale projects to deliver significant outcomes for the Borough. These projects include:

- Infrastructure improvements to support the redevelopment of ROS including J24, local roads, public transport and grid connection
- Attracting investment to our allocated employment sites creating space for new businesses as well as employment opportunities for our residents
- Promoting the Borough to attract more visitors to support our town centres and local businesses to continue to thrive.

Senior Responsible Officer: Adam Hill – Chief Executive

Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Clarke – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership

Success Measures

- Investment in infrastructure within the Borough which is a direct result of the funding provided as part of this deal from Central Government.





The Council's excellent leisure facilities are one of the many reasons why the Borough is such a fantastic and well-regarded place to live. Over the life of this Corporate Strategy the successful delivery of the Leisure Strategy will include refurbishment of Cotgrave Leisure Centre and Keyworth Leisure Centre, working in partnership with local health services to support 'the inactive' into regular activity, maintaining the existing local standards for provision of open spaces, children's' play areas and allotments, and creating more outdoor wellbeing opportunities including walking and cycling throughout the Borough.

During 2024/25, extensive work has taken place at Cotgrave Leisure Centre including the installation of an air source heat pump and solar PV array; an upgrade to the youth centre; spin and fitness studio conversions; the complete refurbishment of the wet-side changing village; improvements to the dry-side facilities and exterior; redevelopment of the Sports Hall; and the installation of a Changing Places toilet. The Leisure Centre has seen a large increase in the number of users, especially for the new spin and fitness studios. Keyworth Leisure Centre is the focus of 2025/26 with repairs to the roof and a complete internal refurbishment. Both projects are expected to cost approximately £5.5m. Opportunities for grant funded decarbonisation projects are being sought for Keyworth Leisure Centre.

Significant progress has also been made towards Sharphill Community Centre in Edwalton. The land has been purchased and planning permission for a community hall, large and small meeting rooms, external public toilets, and external storage for the Friends of Sharphill Wood Group. The Community Centre is expected to open in the spring of 2026.

In January 2025, Cabinet approved a variation to the existing leisure contract with Parkwood Leisure to encompass Edwalton Golf Course and East Leake Leisure Centre at the expiration of their existing contracts in July 2027 providing stability and security for residents in the Borough in terms of the Council's leisure provision.

Grant funding of £163,000 has been received from the England and Wales Cricket Board for five cricket practice nets at West Park, and the local football facility plan has been refreshed with assistance from Notts FA. A flood mitigation report and accompanying action plan for remedial works at Edwalton Golf Courses has been completed. These works will be undertaken in October following which £100,000 will be spent refurbishing the club house. 2024/25 was the first year the Council received three separate Green Flags for parks and green spaces in the Borough. The Council is hoping to achieve a fourth, for Bridgford Park, in 2025/26.

Senior Responsible Officer: Dave Banks – Director Neighbourhoods

Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Wheeler – Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing, ICT and Member Development

Success Measures:

- 55,000kwh solar power generated at Cotgrave Leisure Centre in year by March 2025
- £25,000 p/a reduction in utility costs at Cotgrave Leisure by March 2026
- 3% increase in usage of Cotgrave and Keyworth Leisure Centres by March 2027
- Improved levels of activity in the Rushcliffe Borough as recorded by the Sport England Active Lives data tables



**COTGRAVE
SWIMMING POOL
300 TONNES
OF CARBON
EMISSIONS
YEARLY**



**ACHIEVED 3
GREEN FLAG
AWARDS IN OUR
PARKS AND
GREEN SPACES**



**£163,000
GRANT FUNDING
FOR FIVE NEW
CRICKET NETS AT
WEST PARK**

Rushcliffe is determined to play its part in shaping the future of the Borough ensuring the needs and aspirations of Rushcliffe residents are met in all future developments.

This involves a significant amount of partnership working as delivering upon the commitments outlined below will require the participation of a number of different stakeholders. The Council accepts that sometimes it will be leading and sometimes supporting others to deliver what communities need to grow in a sustainable way.

As part of the Council's commitment to sustainable growth, it wants to make certain that it is supporting the growth of communities, not just the building of new homes. This means ensuring that new developments have the community infrastructure they need including green spaces, parks, play areas and community spaces, as well as working on linking new developments to existing settlements with established communities.

The Council is equally committed to ensuring that residents have access to a great mix of job opportunities within the Borough and that local businesses have the support they need to thrive, providing employment in communities as well as an important variety of retail and leisure options for residents.



**ECONOMIC
GROWTH STRATEGY
LAUNCHED**



**PROJECTED ACHIEVEMENT
OF OVER 50%
REDUCTION
IN CO₂ EMISSIONS AT
ABBEY CENTRAL
DEVELOPMENT**



**INVESTED OVER
£420,000
IN BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENTS
THROUGH UKSPF**



Provide community leadership in the redevelopment of the Ratcliffe on Soar site, during and post decommissioning of the power station

Ratcliffe-on-Soar was the UK's last coal-fired power station. It closed in September 2024 in line with Government policy bringing an end to the country's reliance on fossil fuels for power generation, the site is currently being decommissioned. A Local Development Order (LDO) is in place for the whole site to help streamline the planning process and support redevelopment; leveraging international investment to pioneer zero-carbon technology, sustainable and low-carbon energy production, and creating thousands of high-skilled, well-paid jobs within the Borough.

The site is now one of the three sites which make up East Midlands Freeport, the country's only inland freeport, the Council is working proactively with the Freeport, Uniper and other key stakeholders to support delivery of the redevelopment of the site. Both officers and Councillors are engaged with the Freeport Board and other advisory groups of the Freeport, representing the views of local residents and businesses and ensuring that development progresses at pace bringing the identified benefits to the Borough.

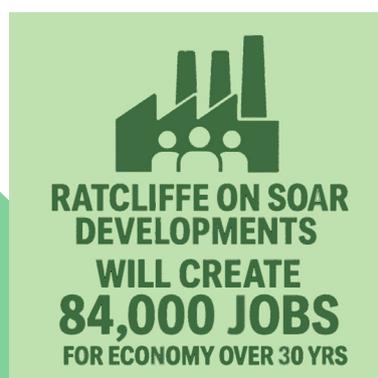
To support communication and community engagement the Council hosts a forum bringing together parish councils from the surrounding area, including into North West Leicestershire which borders the site, enabling the site owners, Uniper, East Midlands Freeport and the Council to provide updates and facilitate discussion about the site.

Senior Responsible Officer: Adam Hill – Chief Executive

Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Clarke – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership

Success Measures:

- Numbers of jobs created onsite.
- Number of planning permissions granted/ percentage of developable area.
- Percentage of former power station demolished.



Implement Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill commitments

The Council has a legal obligation to comply with relevant legislation. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act achieved Royal Assent in October 2023.

The Act outlines legislation which changes the way powers are devolved to local authorities and introduces reforms to the planning system in England.

Some areas of the new legislation can be implemented immediately. So far, the Council has adopted a new Corporate Enforcement Policy which reflects new enforcement powers for councils under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act.

These include the serving of Temporary Stop Notices in respect of works affecting a listed building without the benefit of consent or in breach of condition, and an extension to the immunity for operational development or change of use of a building from four years to ten years for automatic planning consent.

The Council has also drafted a Design Code which will provide a set of design criteria against which planning proposals will be assessed in the determination of planning applications. It will also provide greater certainty for applicants with respect to what the Council expects from design quality.

The Council expects to adopt the Design Code in Summer 2025. The Council has also started to explore how Artificial Intelligence, and other advanced technological solutions, can help drive efficiency and improve quality within the service.

Other areas of the new Act require secondary legislation and, as a consequence, the Council is unable to take action in these areas until the changes are more fully defined. The most significant of these will be the move to a 30-month target period for the development of new Local Plans.

The Government has identified that the average time across the country to develop a Local Plan is seven years, with around only one third of local planning authorities having adopted a Local Plan in the last five years.

Implement Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill commitments

The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan will include an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will identify the necessary infrastructure needed to support the development proposed over the plan period. This can then be further reviewed to identify specific projects which CIL can contribute towards. This work is currently ongoing.

Senior Responsible Officer: Leanne Ashmore, Director – Development and Economic Growth

Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Upton – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

Success Measures:

- Compliance with national legislation and implementation of any changes to the work processes of the Planning Service.
- Enhancement of the service by improvements to website and more digitally enhanced infrastructure to support the service, such as GIS facilities on the website for members of the public and other stakeholders to have access to and more clarity and openness of data.
- Publication of a Local Design Code (2025)
- Implementation of digital improvements – Enterprise, GIS tools, AI, Website Enhancements
- Development of Infrastructure Delivery Strategy.



Adopt a Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan

The Council, in partnership with Broxtowe Borough and Nottingham City councils, has drafted the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP) which replaces the Council's Part 1 Aligned Core Strategy. The Plan will play a large part in determining what Rushcliffe looks and feels like in 2041. The GNSP is important as it fundamentally shapes the development that takes place in Rushcliffe (including type, scale and design quality), where and what infrastructure is required to support that development. Once adopted, any planning application which is considered by the Council will need to demonstrate it is in line with GNSP if it is to receive planning permission.

The GNSP is the Council's preferred approach in respect of housing and employment land provision. The draft Plan was approved by Council in March 2025, and a formal six-week consultation period has closed. Work is ongoing to prepare the documents ready for submission for public examination by a government appointed planning inspector. The GNSP is currently scheduled for formal adoption in September 2026.

The Local Plan is central to the planning system with a legal requirement that planning decisions must be taken in line with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The GNSP, once adopted, will replace the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (which was adopted in December 2014) and the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies (which was adopted in October 2019).

Senior Responsible Officer: Leanne Ashmore, Director – Development and Economic Growth

Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Upton – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

Success Measures:

- Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan adopted by June 2026
- Implementation of Policies within the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan
- Delivery of housing and employment land against targets.

Develop and deliver an Economic Growth Strategy for the Borough

The Council is keen to ensure that the local economy remains productive, innovative and sustainable. A thriving local economy benefits residents economically, socially and environmentally. It means access to quality jobs within the Borough and to a diverse range of places to shop, socialise and access services.

To assess the economic position of the Borough and set out a vision for the future, an Economic Growth Strategy was developed and adopted by Cabinet in October 2024. The Strategy covers three priority themes – place and experience, investment and infrastructure, and business support, growth and skills and these themes are underpinned by nine ambitions and a rolling action plan.

The Strategy is aligned to the UKSPF programme of funding for 2025/26 and updates on projects are reported to the Strategic Growth Board. Over the forthcoming year the focus will be on tourism, town centres, inward investment and business support. Some notable projects to be delivered include ‘welcome to Rushcliffe’ signage being installed on key routes into the Borough, working with partners to further develop and promote the Borough as a place to visit and [invest](#), creating the West Bridgford Masterplan and vision, attendance at UKREiF to promote Rushcliffe as a place to do business and assisting Rushcliffe Business Partnership to develop a sustainable model to ensure support to our businesses continues.

Senior Responsible Officer: Leanne Ashmore, Director – Development and Economic Growth

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Abby Brennan – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth

Success Measures: To be populated following adoption of action plan

Through UKSPF and REPF, the Council has...



**26 GRANTS
AWARDED
TO COMMUNITY GROUPS
TOTALLING
£510,000**



**4
RUSHCLIFFE
BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP
EVENTS
DELIVERED
ATTRACTING 400
LOCAL BUSINESSES**



**SOUTH
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
EMPLOYMENT AND
SKILLS WEBSITE
LAUNCH**



**DELIVERED OVER
50 TRAINING COURSES
FOR LOCAL
RESIDENTS AND
BUSINESS OWNERS**



**350
BUSINESSES
SUPPORTED
THROUGH RUSHCLIFFE
ACCELERATOR**



**AWARDED OVER
40
SMALL BUSINESS
GRANTS**

Support the delivery of the new employment sites and new homes, including meeting affordable housing targets, at key sites including Fairham, Gamston, RAF Newton and Bingham

Rushcliffe is a desirable place to live and work with a good mix of urban and rural areas, quality community infrastructure, and ambition for the future. The Council has a key role in facilitating the delivery of new residential homes and employment sites across the Borough even if it is not responsible for the bricks and mortar needed. It also has a role in ensuring these new communities have the facilities they need to thrive, including shops, schools and play areas, as well as the support to create a new community identity. The Council also safeguards against unwanted developments where commercial goals do not align with the Council's vision for the Borough.

The Council sees its role in the development of these key sites includes:

- Facilitating and supporting co-operation and delivery on larger development sites.
- Ensuring there are appropriate developer contributions for infrastructure on these key sites.
- Receiving and determining planning applications on these key sites and engaging with key stakeholders.
- Working with relevant developers and agents to explore opportunities for accelerating delivery of employment land allocations through economic growth initiatives.
- Promoting community cohesion between new and existing conurbations.

The Council has a responsibility to maintain a 5-year housing supply ensuring sufficient availability of a mix of housing to meet demands from existing local residents and those wishing to relocate to the Borough. In March 2024 the Council had an 8.3-year housing supply which essentially means that there was enough allocated land for housing development to meet the targets set by central Government. Unfortunately, Government has since increased the local housing targets, and the Council housing supply has reduced to a 5.2-year period.



Support the delivery of the new employment sites and new homes, including meeting affordable housing targets, at key sites including Fairham, Gamston, RAF Newton and Bingham



The Council has been working enthusiastically towards the adoption of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan which contains lower housing targets for the Borough and supersedes the centrally set targets. This more localised plan gives the Council much more control over growth in the Borough making sure that adequate infrastructure is in place to support new communities, new and existing communities are blended harmoniously, and that new areas of housing are given the time to grow organically leading to more sustainable communities in the future.

Overall, the Borough is gaining over 1,000 new homes every year. These are the highlights on strategic sites from the last 18-months:

- Development on the former Cotgrave Colliery site has been completed with 463 new homes completed, 137 of which were affordable homes, and occupied by new residents.
- Land was allocated for development in Edwalton in Local Plan Part 1. Initially, around 1,500 dwellings were planned but permission has been granted for a total of 1,793 homes with 500 of these being affordable dwellings. To the end of March 2024, 1,422 homes (371 affordable) have been completed and occupied. Work is taking place in the next twelve months to build a new community hall on this development.
- The existing Bingham community has been extended across the railway lines in recent years. Detailed planning permission for 1,050 new homes was originally granted in 2013 with an updated application in 2017 (200 of these are to be affordable homes) and 586 (March 2024 figure) have already been delivered, of which 93 were affordable homes.
- Development is also progressing at the former RAF Newton site with detailed planning permission granted for 528 homes, including 26 affordable dwellings, in 2014 with an updated application in 2020. So far, 153 dwellings (March 2024 figure) have been completed on site, including 10 affordable homes.

Support the delivery of the new employment sites and new homes, including meeting affordable housing targets, at key sites including Fairham, Gamston, RAF Newton and Bingham

- The Council is creating a brand-new community on land between Ruddington and Barton-in-Fabis near the A453. The site has been named Fairham and outline planning permission has been granted for around 3,000 new homes with community facilities such as a health centre, school, shops and recreational spaces including a nature reserve. Work has already begun on site with the construction of main access roads and the first homes following the approval of detailed planning permission for the initial 428 dwellings.
- Land has been allocated in the Local Plan at Gamston for around 4,000 homes. The Council is working with a number of regional and national partners, and the developers for the site, to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will outline the infrastructure requirements of the site and include a masterplan, design code and further elaboration of details from the Local Plan. It is anticipated that this SPD will be consulted upon later this year. Two planning applications are currently under consideration by the Council for a significant part of the allocation. It has been agreed that these applications will not be determined until the SPD has been adopted.

Facilitating the development of new homes is only part of the picture. The new residents of Rushcliffe also need places to work and over the last eighteen months the Council has facilitated the creation of 24,096 sqm of office space and 15.55 hectares of more industrial employment land.

Senior Responsible Officer: Leanne Ashmore, Director – Development and Economic Growth

Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Upton – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

Success Measures:

- Completion of new homes in the Borough as set out in the Local Plan to 2028 and as per the government's standard method of housing need
- Delivery of 67,900 sqm office space and a minimum supply of 20 ha new industrial and warehouse employment (gross)

78



OCCUPANTS AT
FAIRHAM
DEVELOPMENT

15.5
HECTARES



OF
EMPLOYMENT LAND
IN NORTH
BINGHAM



6.5 HECTARES
OF ADDITIONAL
EMPLOYMENT LAND
AT FORMER
RAF NEWTON



As an organisation it is always the Council's intention to deliver the best services for residents in the most efficient way possible.

In the coming years, the Council will continue embracing new ways of working and be open to innovation and transformation.

As much as the Council takes pride in delivering exciting new projects and activities, it never loses sight of its core purpose to provide high quality services for residents every day. That is why a focus on efficient services remains a priority for the Council over the next four years.



**UNDERTOOK
CORPORATE
PEER CHALLENGE
IN 2024**



**COUNCIL TAX
FOR BAND D PROPERTY
£161.77
IN 2025/26**



**LOWEST
COUNCIL TAX
CHARGE
IN THE COUNTY**

Deliver good value for money in Council operations for residents

Achieving good value for money on behalf of our residents is exceptionally important. The Council is continually seeking to obtain the best combination of cost and quality alongside other factors such as environmental impact so that it can continue to deliver the high-quality services our residents expect whilst keeping Council Tax as low as we can.

Rushcliffe is one of only a handful of financially self-sufficient councils. With reductions in central government funding, high levels of inflation and the ongoing impact of the pandemic, it has been increasingly difficult but also very important to protect and preserve this financial independence.

In each year of this Corporate Strategy, the Council will:

- Deliver a balanced budget and accompanying Productivity Plan (Transformation Programme).
- Adequately resource the Council's Capital Programme commitments, which must be affordable, sustainable and prudent.
- Receive a positive value for money conclusion from the Council's external auditor.
- Increase the percentage of residents believing the Council delivers value for money from the 2024 figure.
- Apply for external funding for specific projects wherever possible to supplement the budget
- Ensure Internal Audit ratings on 'Internal Control' are either Moderate or Substantial.



Deliver good value for money in Council operations for residents

The financial outturn position for 2024/25 will be reported to Cabinet in July 2025. The report highlighted a £1.958m revenue underspend mainly in relation to returns on income invested and business rates growth being higher than anticipated. The Council also received additional grant funding such as Homes for Ukraine scheme which was carried forward into the following year and other underspends were either carried forward for additional ongoing pressures (such as increased Housing Benefit costs in relation to supported housing) and supporting Council priorities for example Carbon offsetting.

Remaining balances were transferred into the Council's reserves to either mitigate future risks or support the Council to embrace opportunities. Reserves stood at £21m in March 2024.

A balanced budget for the year 2024/25 was approved by Council in March 2024. In-year monitoring shows underspends in similar areas to 2023/24; most notably reprofiling on capital projects (mostly due to accommodating UKSPF and REPF which needed to be spent by 31 March 2024), higher than anticipated income from investments and grant subsidies. It is anticipated that a new fund will be created from this underspend to cover the transition to unitary authority status under Local Government Reorganisation. The financial outturn position for 2024/25 is expected to be reported to Cabinet in July 2025.

The statutory Productivity Plan was approved by Council in March 2024, although at Rushcliffe this is called the Transformation Strategy and Efficiency Plan (TEP). The Council's early focus on transformation activities (since 2010) has already led to savings of £5.8m and is expected to reach £7.6m in savings by end of 2029/30. The TEP is published annually as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. Expenditure against the Capital Programme for 2023/24 was reported to Cabinet in July 2024. The Programme was £5.7m underspent at the end of the year due to significant savings on large projects such as the Crematorium and Bingham Arena, and limited claims from Registered Housing Providers for Affordable Housing development.



**NET OPERATING
EXPENDITURE
2024/25
£12.8
MILLION**



**OPERATING
BUDGET
£14.91 MILLION
IN 2025/26**



**INVESTING
£27 MILLION
IN SERVICES
OVER NEXT
5 YEARS**

Deliver good value for money in Council operations for residents

The 2024/25 Capital Programme budget was set by Council in March 2024. In total, £11m has been made available to spend on 24 projects across the Council including support for Registered Housing Providers for Affordable Housing development, Cotgrave and Keyworth Leisure Centre improvements, Disabled Facilities Grants, and householder retro-fit grants as part of our Carbon Clever initiatives. In-year adjustments increased the overall budget for 2024/25 to £12.5m and a £4.4m underspend is predicted mainly due to reprofiling Cotgrave and Keyworth Leisure Centres into the first quarter of 2025/26.

Each year the Council's external auditor, Mazars, decides if the Council is providing value for money to its residents. This annual audit letter was presented to Governance Scrutiny Group in September 2024 reflecting back on the financial year 2023/24. The external auditor reported they had found no significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements for delivering Value for Money.

In the summer of 2024, the Council conducted its tri-annual residents' satisfaction survey. 42% of those residents responding to the survey were very or fairly satisfied that the Council provided Value for Money. This figure will be used as a benchmark moving forward and the aspiration is to increase this figure by 5% in the summer 2027 survey.

The Council has received over £3.3m in external grants over the last 12 months from UKSPF and REPF, HUG2, Salix, EV Vehicles, the National Lottery, the Football Foundation and the English Cricket Board.



£5.2 MILLION
INVESTMENT FOR
COTGRAVE AND
KEYWORTH
LEISURE CENTRES



**OVERALL NET
DEFICIT
OVER 5 YEARS
£172,000**



**ACCOUNTS
SIGNED OFF
WITH
UNQUALIFIED
OPINION**



Deliver good value for money in Council operations for residents

Ten internal audits were completed in 2023/24, and the Internal Auditor issued an overall opinion of Substantial Assurance as reported to Governance Scrutiny Group in May 2024. This is a rating very few councils receive. The auditor reported:

“We have reached an overall opinion of Substantial Assurance, which is the highest level of assurance that we can provide. This is consistent with the opinion provided in 2022-23. The Council had a sound system of internal control and controls were regularly applied.”

The programme of internal audits for 2024/25 was agreed at Governance Scrutiny Group in February 2024 and contained nine audits for this year. The programme has now been completed and will be reported to Governance Scrutiny Group in June 2025. The annual internal audit report confirms that the Council has retained its Substantial assurance for the 2024/25 financial year.

In March 2024, Council Tax was increased by £3.93 (for a Band D property) for the 12 months from April 2024 or 2.55%. Historically, Rushcliffe has high collection rates in terms of both Council Tax and NNDR. 2024/25 has been no exception and the Council has collected 99.1% of the chargeable Council Tax and 98.8% of the collectable NNDR. These funds contribute towards the Council's financial stability and enable it to continue providing the high-quality services residents of Rushcliffe expect.

Senior Responsible Officer: Peter Linfield, Director – Finance and Corporate Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor D Viridi – Portfolio Holder for Finance, Transformation and Governance



**ACHIEVED
SUBSTANTIAL
ASSURANCE
IN AUDITS**



**£1.78 MILLION
TRANSFORMATION
TARGET OVER
5 YEARS**

**OPERATING
RESERVES AT**



**£8 MILLION
BY 2029/30**

Deliver good value for money in Council operations for residents

Success Measures:

- Deliver a balanced budget by 31 March each year.
- Ensure the quarterly monitoring remains within budget.
- Council Tax increases are set under £5 or 3% whichever is the higher to accord with referendum limits and not to be exceeded.
- Maintain Internal Audit positive opinions.
- Receive an unqualified opinion from External Audit on the accounts and VFM within 8 weeks after accounts sign-off.
- Maintain collection rates for Council Tax and NNDR above 99%
- Increase the percentage of residents believing the Council delivers value for money by 5%
- Percentage of Council Tax collected in year.
- Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected in year.
- Revenue expenditure within budget .
- Capital programme on target.
- Favourable investment income against industry standards.
- Return on commercial investments above long-term investment in the bank.
- Transformation and Efficiency Plan on target.



Participate in an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and implement recommendations

Rushcliffe Borough Council has always strived for continuous improvement and invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge in early 2024. The Peer Challenge team included both Councillors and Senior Officers from similar authorities in other parts of the country as well as representatives from the LGA. The team spent three and a half days on site meeting with Councillors, Officers and Partners to build up a comprehensive picture of what the Council does well, and areas in which it could improve. The outcome of the Challenge was a list of recommended focus areas which the team felt could lead to improvements. These were reported to Cabinet in April 2024 with an action plan to address those areas of concern. It is customary for the Peer Challenge team to revisit within the year to check up on the progress being made to implement improvements. This took place in November 2024 and the team's progress report was accepted at Cabinet in December 2024.

The Peer Challenge Team concluded following their initial visit in January 2024 that "The borough of Rushcliffe is a great place to live, and Rushcliffe Borough Council's varied, dedicated work is a clear contributing factor". As well as a range of documents sent in advance of the visit, the team spoke to over 100 people through more than 50 meetings and interviews to build up a comprehensive picture. Key points were checked with other interviewees or data sources to ensure independence and validity. During their visit the Challenge Team focused on the following themes: local priorities and outcomes, organisational and place leadership, governance and culture, financial planning and management, capacity for improvement, and the environment. Nine key recommendations were made as a result of the Corporate Peer Challenge and the report also included a number of additional observations for consideration by the Council.



**Our Values**

- **We show commitment**
- **We work in collaboration**
- **We strive for excellence**
- **We embrace inclusivity**
- **We act with integrity**

Participate in an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and implement recommendations

In November 2024 a one-day progress review was conducted by representatives from the original Challenge Team. They commended the Council for progress against the nine recommendations made in a relatively short time and against a backdrop of significant local and regional change. They concluded that “Of the CPC’s main recommendations, the Council’s RAG rated action plan reports that 100 per cent of actions are completed/progressed”.

Highlights include:

- The creation of a corporate Project Management Team including the recruitment of appropriately qualified officers, a review of the Corporate Project Management Protocol, and updated training for all involved in project management across the organisation. The new Project Management team have also undertaken an exercise to register and assess projects across the organisation identifying those which meet the criteria for a corporate project and allowing them to target their support accordingly.
- The adoption of an Economic Growth Strategy for the Borough including a focus on drawing new business into the Borough by providing state of the art premises to rent or buy, a focus on high-street regeneration, and the creation of an internal capital projects group to oversee development and investment.
- An increased focus on training for officers and councillors including the delivery of political awareness training providing both perspectives with the aim of creating a more harmonious and effective working relationship. In addition, Councillor training for the year hit 50% attendance and all Councillors have now undertaken training modules and courses classified as mandatory within the Councillors’ Learning and Development Policy.
- A review of the Council’s core values was undertaken by the internal employee liaison group and a reduction in these from eleven to five has been approved. The Council’s five core values are much easier to remember and articulate, and significant promotion has been undertaken internally to embed these values with staff.



The Council considers its objectives for this task, maintaining its position as well-respected local authority within the sector and identifying opportunities for improvement to ensure the Council continues to deliver the best quality services for residents, to have been achieved. However, the Council never rests on its laurels and work is still being undertaken to improve in key areas aligned to the priorities outlined in the Corporate Strategy.

Senior Responsible Officer: Adam Hill – Chief Executive

Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Clarke – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership

Success Measures:

- Peer Challenge report published – Achieved April 2024
- Action Plan delivered – Achieved November 2024, though the Council accepts that work will always be ongoing in some of the identified areas.

Conduct a review of the Council's asset base

The Council has a duty to ensure the assets it owns are fulfilling their purpose and providing value for money. Assets can be properties, land, equipment and vehicles. An exercise to review the Council's assets over the four years of the Corporate Strategy will ensure they are working for the benefit of the Borough's residents and businesses in delivery of services and establish:

- The suitability of the asset – still serving their intended purpose
- Operational efficiency – in the right place and meeting its service objectives
- Condition of the asset
- Current and future cost of holding the asset
- New opportunities for income generation or savings to be realised
- Disposal, alternative uses and/or enhancement or investment.

The Council reviews its commercial assets every two years to assess how individual assets are performing and if any alternative uses may be more beneficial to the Council. This exercise was undertaken in 2023 and reported to Governance Scrutiny Group in February 2024. No significant changes were recommended.

UKSPF funding was used to conduct energy audits on eleven operational sites to identify work required to decarbonise them. As appropriate, these works are now being programmed into the coming years for delivery.



Conduct a review of the Council's asset base

An internal working group chaired by the Council's Section 151 Officer has been set up to oversee a review of the operational assets. A review of these was conducted during 2024/25; assessing each asset against a framework considering things such as future costs and current use as well as potential options for its future. This process ensures the Council continues to provide communities with local amenities they value as well as achieving a good financial rate of return. From work done to date no significant changes are proposed. As required, future recommendations would be reported to the Asset Investment Group and Cabinet.



Senior Responsible Officer: Peter Linfield – Director Finance and Corporate Services (S151)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor D Viridi – Portfolio Holder for Finance, Transformation and Governance

Success Measures:

- Property Asset Review to Governance Scrutiny Group (to inform review of investment land and properties): February 2024.
- Heat Decarbonisation Plans prepared for key RBC operational assets (to inform review of operational land and properties): Jan 2024.
- Review of operational land and buildings: June 2024 to June 2025.
- Review of investment land and properties: February 2026.

Never let it be said that life in Local Government is dull. Things are always changing and the 18-months since the Council's Corporate Strategy was adopted have been no exception.

Two of the twelve tasks contained in the Corporate Strategy Action Plan have been completed and impact monitoring will be absorbed into the Council's service level monitoring arrangements.

These are:

- Develop and deliver an Economic Growth Strategy for the Borough
- Participate in an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and implement recommendations.

Looking forward, the Council is facing one of its biggest ever challenges and as a result will be adding a new strategic task to the Corporate Strategy Action Plan.

In December 2024, the Government published the English Devolution White Paper setting out a timetable for the dissolution of the two-tier system of local government in favour of unitary authorities. This triggered a significant amount of work across Nottinghamshire to meet the initial deadline of March 2025 to outline the possibilities within the county. The seven Nottinghamshire districts, City and County Councils are working together to determine how local government in the future looks within the existing county boundaries from a geographical, and financial point of view, as well as what makes sense to local communities. Current proposals suggest a single unitary authority, and a number of different splits (geographically) into two or three unitaries. These initial proposals have been submitted to central Government for consideration and feedback is expected imminently.

The coming year will see public engagement exercises and a significant amount of financial and operational analysis with the intent of settling on one optimal model for local government in the county before the November 2025 submission deadline. Following what is expected to be a short period on consideration, work will start on creating a new authority covering Rushcliffe and other (as yet to be determined) local areas. The current timescale for this new authority to be operational is April 2028. Between now and then a significant amount of work is needed to ensure our current residents continue to benefit from high quality services, low levels of taxation, and that the Borough continues to be a great place to live, work and play.





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