

Rushcliffe Borough Council – Scrutiny Request

Councillor Request for Scrutiny	
Councillors Thomas, Brown, Way, Billin, and RWalker	
Proposed topic of scrutiny ...	Shared ownership and other types of affordable housing
I would like to explore ... <p>It is helpful to include why you feel this topic requires scrutiny, what concerns you, what concerns are being raised with you, and how scrutiny will lead to better outcomes or services to residents.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the different types of affordable housing – (as defined by national policies etc)? 2. What numbers of each type are currently allocated in newer estates in the various Rushcliffe settlements? 3. How is the proportion of each type decided for each new estate? 4. How does Rushcliffe influence this decision to ensure the proportion relates to need and is in the best interest of residents rather than driven by profit for the developers and providers? 5. How are ward members involved in this decision at the planning stage? 6. Is any additional support available/needed for existing residents in shared ownership schemes? 7. Does anything need to be fed back to Government? <p>It is suggested that this topic is dealt with by a scrutiny meeting to explore points 3-7 preceded by a briefing note covering points 1 and 2 to reduce the presentation time.</p> <p>It is appreciated that social rent has been covered by recent scrutiny items – this item is primarily about the other types of “affordable” homes.</p> <p>Background</p> <p>There have been recent items in the press highlighting difficulties with shared ownership, e.g. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyz8m8jj4mo</p> <p>We are aware of the percentages of affordable housing that Rushcliffe requires. However, there are different types of housing classed under “affordable” – social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership, rent to</p>

	<p>buy, first homes scheme, rural exception sites and other government schemes to help people onto the housing ladder. These are some areas that could be covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the differences between different schemes, and the advantages and disadvantages of each type for the occupier? • What are the experiences of Rushcliffe residents occupying new homes under these schemes? • Should Rushcliffe seek to exert more influence on the type delivered through the planning process, in order to best satisfy need? • How are the providers chosen? Is it purely commercially driven? • How are the purchasers/tenants selected or allocated? • Do occupiers pay estate management fees like freeholders? • What are the routes for occupiers to buy these homes? How many have been purchased to date? • How do they change occupier? Do they remain “affordable”? • How does the co-owner change hands? • What protections for tenants apply to the rental part? • Are there any additional protections that Rushcliffe could/should be providing? 	
I think this topic should be scrutinised because ... (please tick)		Poor Performance Identified
	*	Change in Legislation or Local Policy
	*	Resident Concern or Interest
		Cabinet Recommendation
		Links to the Corporate Strategy
		Other (please state reason) Risk assessment and preparation
What outcomes are you seeking from this scrutiny?	Greater understanding. Possibly changes to policy and processes, greater protection for Rushcliffe residents, and an affordable housing offer that better matches need.	

Collaboration

Matrix developed in conjunction with officers?

No

Appendix

Rushcliffe Borough Council – Scrutiny Request

Officer Request for Scrutiny

Dave Banks, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods

Proposed topic of scrutiny ...

Shared ownership and other types of affordable housing

I would like to explore ...

It is helpful to include why you feel this topic requires scrutiny, what concerns you, what concerns are being raised with you, and how scrutiny will lead to better outcomes or services to residents.

1. What are the different types of affordable housing – (as defined by national policies etc)?
2. What numbers of each type are currently allocated in newer estates in the various Rushcliffe settlements?
3. How is the proportion of each type decided for each new estate?
4. How does Rushcliffe influence this decision to ensure the proportion relates to need and is in the best interest of residents rather than driven by profit for the developers and providers?
5. How are ward members involved in this decision at the planning stage?
6. Is any additional support available/needed for existing residents in shared ownership schemes?
7. Does anything need to be fed back to Government?

It is suggested that this topic is dealt with by a briefing note covering points 1 – 6 issued in advance of the meeting with the opportunity of further reviewing the Council's relevant policies e.g. the Local Plan and the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning documents at the scrutiny meeting whilst also reflecting on point 7 above.

It is appreciated that social rent has been covered by recent scrutiny items – this item is primarily about the other types of “affordable” homes.

Background

There have been recent items in the press highlighting difficulties with shared ownership, e.g. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyz8m8jj4mo>

We are aware of the percentages of affordable housing that Rushcliffe requires. However, there are different types of housing classed under “affordable” – social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership, rent to buy, first homes scheme, rural exception sites and other government schemes to help people onto the housing ladder. These are some areas that could be covered:

- What are the differences between different schemes, and the advantages and disadvantages of each type for the occupier? (will include in the briefing)
- What are the experiences of Rushcliffe residents occupying new homes under these schemes? (position will be covered in the briefing)
- Should Rushcliffe seek to exert more influence on the type delivered through the planning process, in order to best satisfy need?
- How are the providers chosen? Is it purely commercially driven? (will be included in the briefing)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the purchasers/tenants selected or allocated? (this is according to national criteria and will be set out in the report) • What are the routes for occupiers to buy these homes? How many have been purchased to date? (information available on government portals, mortgage brokers or housing advisors) • How do they change occupier? Do they remain “affordable”? (will be covered in the report) 	
I think this topic should be scrutinised because ... (please tick)		Poor Performance Identified
	X	Change in Legislation or Local Policy
	X	Resident Concern or Interest
		Cabinet Recommendation
		Links to the Corporate Strategy
		Other (please state reason)
What outcomes are you seeking from this scrutiny?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater understanding. • Possible changes to policy and processes • Greater protection for Rushcliffe residents • An affordable housing offer that better matches need. 	

Rushcliffe Borough Council – Scrutiny Request

Councillor Request for Scrutiny

Councillor A Phillips

Proposed topic of scrutiny ...

Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation and to include HMOs

I would like to explore ...

It is helpful to include why you feel this topic requires scrutiny, what concerns you, what concerns are being raised with you, and how scrutiny will lead to better outcomes or services to residents.

We need to scrutinise the Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation used in Rushcliffe and to include HMOs so that the system is used appropriately and not misused. SERCO should be invited to present to the group how the system works and its appropriateness when housing asylum seekers. We need to understand why the system is geared only around the safety of asylum seekers and not our vulnerable residents. We need to scrutinise our planning system around HMOs to see if and how it can be tightened up to give RBC some control of its own destiny. Without scrutiny this is an issue that is only going to grow arms and legs and become a bigger issue as time goes by. As councillors we need to understand the system fully and be able to scrutinise it properly in an open and transparent forum. Residents are raising concerns about the HMOs in certain areas and the ASB that comes with them. We need to be in a position of knowledge in order to deal with this.

I think this topic should be scrutinised because ... (please tick)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor Performance Identified
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in Legislation or Local Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resident Concern or Interest
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cabinet Recommendation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Links to the Corporate Strategy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state reason) Risk assessment and preparation

What outcomes are you seeking from this scrutiny?

To be better equipped to understand and deal with Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation (including HMOs) in our Wards.

Collaboration

Matrix developed in conjunction with officers?

Yes

Rushcliffe Borough Council – Scrutiny Request

Councillor Request for Scrutiny		
Councillor J Chaplain		
Proposed topic of scrutiny ...	Review of debt collection agents by RBC in line with the outcome of the Government's consultation on Council Tax and Enforcement.	
I would like to explore ... It is helpful to include why you feel this topic requires scrutiny, what concerns you, what concerns are being raised with you, and how scrutiny will lead to better outcomes or services to residents.	<p>The Government is currently reviewing the arrangements for Council Tax billing and collection. Particularly relevant questions to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question 30: Do you believe the current enforcement is or is not proportionate in the context of council tax collection? Why/why not? • Question 31: What are your views on ways enforcement could better reflect the needs of those in financial or other hardship? • Question 32: What are your suggestions on alternative or additional measures to ensure council tax is paid? • Question 33: What are your views on the current methods available to councils to collect council tax? <p>Upon the outcome of the review, we would like to understand the Council's current recovery processes and particularly the use of Enforcement Agents (EA), including inviting an EA to the meeting for their perspective. In addition, and linked to the outcome of the Government's Review, whether any changes should be proposed with regard to the Council's Recovery Enforcement Policy.</p> <p>Consider, as part of the scrutiny review, the use of EAs, alternative approaches, comparison with other authorities and what the impact of a change in policy would be.</p> <p>Review other areas of good practice as outcomes from the Government review.</p> <p>The scope can also include understanding related data on Council Tax collection and performance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the Standard Financial Statement (SFS) developed by the Money and Pensions Service adopted? • Does the Council use the Citizens Advice and Local Government Association's Council tax protocol? 	
I think this topic should be		Poor Performance Identified
	*	Change in Legislation or Local Policy

scrutinised because ... (please tick)	*	Resident Concern or Interest
		Cabinet Recommendation
		Links to the Corporate Strategy
		Other (please state reason)
What outcomes are you seeking from this scrutiny?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the impact of the Government's consultation exercise and its outcomes with any potential changes to the Council's Recovery Enforcement Policy • Understand the Council's current processes with regards to Council Tax Debt Collection and particularly the role of Enforcement Agents • Understand any other outcomes which may impact on Council Tax Debt Collection. 	

Collaboration

Matrix developed in conjunction with officers?

Yes

Rushcliffe Borough Council – Scrutiny Request

Councillor Request for Scrutiny	
Councillor Julie Chaplain	
Proposed topic of scrutiny ...	West Bridgford Customer Contact Point
I would like to explore ... It is helpful to include why you feel this topic requires scrutiny, what concerns you, what concerns are being raised with you, and how scrutiny will lead to better outcomes or services to residents.	<p>I would like to explore the impact, on customers and services, of moving the West Bridgford Contact Point from Fountain Court to West Bridgford Library.</p> <p>Following the Cabinet decision in February 2024 to close the office in West Bridgford to save money, it is important that the Council scrutinises the outcome of that decision by investigating the impact that it has had on residents seeking advice, and the services provided.</p> <p>Residents have raised concerns about the of lack of privacy in the library, conversations have been overheard, including phone conversations, which people have felt should be conducted in private.</p> <p>We feel there is value in scrutinising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The background and rationale for the move and how it was achieved • The nature and volume of customer contact before and after the move • The breadth of services offered before and after the move and whether any changes were made to services at this time • The cost of providing a face-to-face presence in West Bridgford both before and after the move • The benefits of moving the Contact Point from Fountain Court to West Bridgford Library to the Council, other organisations (namely Nottinghamshire County Council), or the local area • Any feedback about the Contact Point – positive or negative – from customers • An understanding of the wider context – how does a face-to-face provision in West Bridgford sit within the Council's wider Customer

	<p>Service offering including data and trend analysis across different sites and methods of contact.</p> <p>If possible, we feel it would be valuable for the Scrutiny Group to visit the site prior to the item being scrutinised.</p>	
<p>I think this topic should be scrutinised because ... (please tick)</p>		Poor Performance Identified
	X	<p>Change in Legislation or Local Policy</p> <p>Change from having a dedicated office space to using a part of the library</p>
	X	Resident Concern or Interest
		Cabinet Recommendation
		Links to the Corporate Strategy
		Other (please state reason)
	<p>What outcomes are you seeking from this scrutiny?</p> <p>Understanding of the effect of moving the contact point and, if this has been detrimental, an action plan to improve services.</p>	

Collaboration	
Matrix developed in conjunction with officers?	Yes