

Community Development Group

Chairman's Foreword

I am pleased to write this foreword to this year's annual report of the Community Development Group. This year our work has been interesting, challenging and rewarding. We have covered many significant topics in order to ensure Rushcliffe communities thrive and prosper.

Thanks must go to the many staff who gave us presentations throughout the year, with particular thanks to those who have supported this Scrutiny Group.

We have scrutinised many topics ranging from the Review and Future of YouNG, Options for Tree Protection and Promotion in Rushcliffe, the Delivery of Rural Broadband in Rushcliffe, Rural Public Transport Update, Tackling the use of Single use Plastics and the Draft Off-Street Car Parking Strategy 2018 - 2022.

I would like to thank all Members for their very active involvement, support and professionalism during the meetings and particularly my Vice Chairman, Councillor John Thurman.

Councillor Tina Combellack
Chairman



Councillor T Combellack
Chairman



Councillor J E Thurman
Vice Chairman

What we are responsible for?

The Community Development Group's remit is to scrutinise:

- Community priorities and proposed solutions
- Engaging and identifying needs of key groups
- Building relationships to ensure that policies empower communities
- Reputation management gained via communications and promotion
- Town and Parish Councils shared working (identifying opportunities whilst establishing priorities)

A major element of the Group's role is to understand the key issues for residents, and encourage them to give their views about matters of importance. The Group also ensures the Council maintains its excellent reputation via effective communications.

Our work this year

During this year the Group considered many service areas and issues within its scrutiny role, particularly:

- Review and Future of YouNG
- Tree Protection and Promotion in Rushcliffe
- The Delivery of Rural Broadband in Rushcliffe
- Rural Public Transport in Rushcliffe
- Tackling the use of Single use Plastics
- Off Street Car Parking Strategy 2018 – 2022

Review of and Future Delivery of YouNG

The members of the Community Development Group were tasked by the Council's Cabinet to examine the future delivery option for YouNG following the receipt of an independent report on the initiative. In June 2017 the Group received a presentation from the Chief Executive which provided an overview of YouNG, its achievements to date as well as a range of potential options for its future delivery. The Group also received a presentation from the Principal Community Development Officer who outlined the findings of the independent Report. Finally NGi delivered a presentation that examined how the YouNG initiative was able to help young people succeed in a global environment.

Members of the Group, while being supportive of the broad objectives of the YouNG initiative felt that in order for them to be able to fully evaluate the initiative potential future delivery options, further information was required and agreed that a further report be presented to the Group detailing the future plans for the development and continuation of YouNG.

At its meeting in September, the Group received a presentation from the Executive Manager – Communities who advised the Group that it was being investigated if a collaboration between Positive Futures and the Council could potentially be developed in order for the YouNG initiative to continue. Members of the Group agreed that current employees of YouNG should be given the opportunity to continue their employment at Rushcliffe Borough Council where possible and that YouNG should be promoted to businesses from across the Borough.

The Group felt that moving forward the YouNG project needed to be more focused, concentrating on fewer elements, with its main focus being on increasing business and employability skills for the young people on the programme, supported by an adequate staff resource.

At its meeting in November, the Group received a presentation from the Trent Bridge Community Trust who provided information on a service delivery model for a potential delivery partnership arrangement between YouNG and the Trust. The Group were advised that this partnership would be able to maximise the positive outcomes for the young people on the programme and utilise the funding available to YouNG by utilising the expertise and contacts of the Trent Bridge Community Trust. Members of the Group were supportive of the Trust's proposals to increase YouNG's engagement with local businesses in order to enable greater access to work experience placements and were reassured that the YouNG Ambassadors would continue to promote the opportunities of YouNG in all secondary schools to ensure universal provision throughout the Borough. Members of the Group also supported the proposal that the Council would no longer employ the interns and the ambassadors directly, but would continue to provide overall governance for YouNG.

Members of the Group expressed their support the proposed delivery model, on condition that the Trent Bridge Community Trust could commit to work predominantly with Rushcliffe businesses. Members also requested that the Trent Bridge Community Trust provided quantitative information on the number of work experience placements provided and on the number of young people involved with the project. The Group also agreed that it was essential that the Council provide transitional support to the Trent Bridge Community Trust whilst they establish their delivery of the YouNG Project.

The Council's Cabinet considered a report on the future of YouNG, containing the recommendations made by the Community Development Group on 9 January, 2018 where the Group's recommendations were approved for implementation.

Tree Protection and Promotion in Rushcliffe

The members of the Community Development Group reviewed how the Council protected and promoted trees within the Borough. Members considered various options for addressing the challenge of protecting and promoting trees in the Borough where woodland coverage currently stands at 575 hectares or 1% of the Borough, with this relatively low figure being largely due much of the land in the Borough having been mainly used for arable farming.

At its meeting in August the Group received a report and presentation from the Environment and Sustainability Officer on potential solutions for increasing tree promotion in the Borough, which were then considered by members of the Group. As a result of these considerations a further report was brought to the Group at its November meeting where a range of detailed solutions on tree promotion and protection measures that could be implemented were considered. Members of the Group were particularly in favour of the Tree Warden Scheme, co-ordinated by The Tree Council, which was a national initiative to enable people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woods. Members of the Group were also supportive of the 'free tree scheme', which was currently operating in North West Leicestershire where residents were supplied with trees to plant.

A report detailing the recommendations made by the Community Development Group was considered by the Council's Cabinet on 9 January, 2018 where the Group's recommendations were approved for implementation along with a £50,000 revenue budget over three years to support the initiatives.

The Delivery of Rural Broadband in Rushcliffe

At the February meeting of the Community Development Group members received a progress report on the on the delivery of Nottinghamshire County Council's programme to provide 98% of Nottinghamshire with a fibre broadband network, capable of delivering superfast broadband by 2018. Members of the Group were concerned that between 1800 and 1900 properties in Rushcliffe which did not have access to a high speed network, but were reassured that steps were being taken by Nottinghamshire County Council with their partnership with BT to provide access for these properties to high speed internet access.

The Group will be looking again at rural broadband provision next year to monitor and assess how access to high speed broadband in rural areas is progressing.

Rural Public Transport in Rushcliffe

At the February meeting of the Community Development Group members received a report from the Development and Partnerships Manager at Nottinghamshire County Council on the provision of rural public transport in Rushcliffe. Members of the Group were advised that due to budgetary pressures that County wide that the budget for local bus support was £3.95 million per year, which had been reduced from £7.5 million over the past seven years. Members were concerned there could be changes in how the 11 supported rural bus services in Rushcliffe were provided, but welcomed the assurance that any changes to services would only be made after a full consultation with councillors and service users.

Members of the Group agreed that rural bus services should be more actively promoted to increase usage and that Nottinghamshire County Council should work with the Council's Planning department in order to enable public transport provision in new developments such as Sharphill and Fairham Pastures.

The Group will continue looking at rural public transport provision next year and will be widening their considerations to include rail service provision.

Tackling the use of Single Use Plastics

As a result of the resolution made at Council on 7 December 2017 the Community Development Group were requested to consider the following:

"Rushcliffe Borough Council resolves that in response to environmental concerns about single use plastics, and harm to farmers' livestock, wildlife and the local environment by Chinese lanterns and helium balloons, an item be placed on the community development group scrutiny work programme for 2018 to consider and advise on the following objectives.

- a) Assess the current use and feasibility of reducing single use plastic in relation to Council activities

- b) Consider the mechanisms to ban the use of Chinese lanterns and helium balloons on Rushcliffe Borough Council land and open spaces.
- c) Consider the provision of Council advice and information on single use plastic, Chinese lanterns and helium balloons for local residents, Parish/Town Councils and businesses
- d) Make any recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.”

At the February meeting of the Community Development Group members were provided with information on the corporate working group that had been established to develop actions to be taken by the Council to enable it to deliver a reduction in the use of single use plastics.

The action plan covered four theme areas that were:

- an audit of the single use plastic currently used across the Council in normal council activities
- identifying ways of seeking support from key partners and contractors to encourage them to commit to support similar actions
- running relevant communications and campaigns to influence and change behaviour of residents and businesses in the borough on these issues
- identifying how the Council could prohibit the use of Chinese lanterns and helium balloons at Rushcliffe Borough Council assets and parks and following good practice examples from other agencies such as Nottinghamshire County Council.

Members of the Group welcomed the actions that had been taken and suggested that china cups should be made available instead of plastic cups for the Councillors to use at Rushcliffe Arena. This action was implemented following the meeting. The Group also suggested that more communications material should be produced to inform residents of the different types of plastics that could and could not be recycled.

The Group will be continue to look at the Council's work to reduce its use of single-use plastics next year and look forward to receiving a progress report regarding the activities included in the action plan in September 2018.

Off-Street Car Parking Strategy 2018 – 2022

At the February meeting of the Community Development Group members were presented with the Draft Off Street Car Parking Strategy 2018 – 2022 for their consideration in advance of the strategy being submitted to Cabinet.

Members of Group supported action taken by the Council in the recent installation of new ticket machines which would be more accurate and reliable in the Council's West Bridgford car parks. The Group also supported a proposed review of the evening tariff arrangements that residents had reported as finding confusing.

The Group expressed concern about the limited number of car parking spaces for those who lived in newly built houses that led to residents parking on the road. The Group were reassured that The Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods agreed to would discuss with the Executive Manager – Communities to explore if and how a

new requirement of two parking spaces per new build could be introduced for newly built properties.

A report on the draft Off Street Car Parking Strategy which included the comments and suggestions made by the Community Development Group was considered by the Council's Cabinet on 15 May, 2018 where the Draft Off Street Car Parking Strategy was approved for implementation.

Member Panels

The Group did not establish any Member Panels this year.

Call-ins

The Group did not discuss any call-ins this year.

Looking forward to the year ahead

The Group will continue to help review and shape policy, ensuring improvements are implemented. This will be done by developing a challenging work programme linked to the Council's transformation strategy.