



Corporate Overview Group

Tuesday, 24 February 2026

Mid-point Review of the Corporate Strategy

Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. Council approved the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy in December 2023. The Strategy maintained the Council's four key priorities of Quality of Life, Efficient Services, Sustainable Growth and The Environment, whilst setting out twelve strategic tasks it proposed to undertake during the Strategy period.
- 1.2. An update on progress against these tasks was provided to Corporate Overview Group (COG) in June 2025 and highlighted that two tasks had already been completed. These were moved to operational monitoring and a new task, 'Participate in the county-wide reorganisation of Local Government in response to the English Devolution White Paper', was included in recognition of new Government legislation and an emerging requirement to participate in Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- 1.3. The Council is now two-years through the delivery of the four-year Corporate Strategy, and it is therefore considered prudent to review the progress made to date and whether the objectives set by the Council in December 2023 remain relevant, achievable and desirable against the backdrop of LGR.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Corporate Overview Group:

- a) considers the information provided outlining the Council's progress towards delivering the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy
- b) discusses whether the remaining Strategic Tasks in the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy continue to be relevant, achievable and desirable to deliver
- c) highlights any additional Strategic Tasks that it would be prudent to include in the Corporate Strategy for its remaining two years
- d) extend the life of the Corporate Strategy by an additional year to lead the authority through to Vesting Day under LGR.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The Corporate Strategy highlights the Council's corporate priorities and the strategic actions it is planning to undertake to implement change in those priority areas.
- 3.2. It is important that Councillors take the opportunity, at the mid-point of the delivery of the Corporate Strategy, to reflect on the progress made and consider whether changes need to be made to the priorities of the Council or the Strategic Tasks it intends to carry out.
- 3.3. It is also considered necessary to reflect on the environment the Council is now working within, in light of LGR, and assess whether the Strategic Tasks remain deliverable or desirable or whether other priorities should now take precedence.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. Council approved the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy in December 2023. An update on progress against the twelve strategic tasks was provided to COG in June 2025 and highlighted that two tasks had already been completed. A new task, 'Participate in the county-wide reorganisation of Local Government in response to the English Devolution White Paper', was included in recognition of new Government legislation and an emerging requirement to participate in LGR.
- 4.2. The Council is now two-years through the delivery of the four-year Corporate Strategy, and it is therefore considered prudent to review the progress made to date and whether the objectives set by the Council in December 2023 remain relevant, achievable and desirable against the backdrop of LGR.
- 4.3. COG is also asked to consider extending the current Corporate Strategy by a further 12-month period to March 2028 leading to Vesting Day of the new authority. Given the nature of the strategic tasks in the Corporate Strategy currently some of these will extend into 2027/2028 and it is inevitable that the main focus at that time will be forming the new authority and preparing for Vesting Day. The new authority will be responsible for developing its own Corporate Strategy once it has been established. It is anticipated that Rushcliffe will develop a specific LGR plan once the path ahead becomes clear.
- 4.4. Delivery of the Corporate Strategy is monitored through COG with quarterly reports on Finance and Performance and an annual update on the delivery of Strategic Tasks. These reports are supported by more regular monitoring undertaken internally by officers.
- 4.5. The environment in which the Corporate Strategy is being delivered is somewhat different to that in which it was launched at the start of 2024. Delivery of the strategic tasks demonstrates that despite LGR, and the

significant amount of resource that it has already taken, the Council continues to deliver for the residents of Rushcliffe.

- 4.6. The 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy covered the Council's financial position, key achievements through the life of the previous strategy, and twelve strategic tasks designed to move the Council forward in its key priority areas. Progress in each of these areas is outlined below to demonstrate the action taken by the Council in the last two years, and key community outcomes where these have already been realised.

Financial position

- 4.7. The Council continues to face significant pressures from growing demand and rising costs. Through the Transformation and Efficiency Plan (TEP), Councillors and Officers are identifying savings that help protect service quality, sustain investment, and support a balanced budget. At quarter three, a projected revenue efficiency of £1.304m has been achieved, strengthening the Council's position to meet future challenges.
- 4.8. Rushcliffe is up to date with the publication of the annual statement of accounts and audit signed off well ahead of the deadline. This is excellent news as the backbone of any strong organisation is to have reliable accounts that underpin its budget. The internal auditors, BDO, issued a substantial audit opinion for 2024/25 which is the highest level of assurance that can be awarded. It is the fourth consecutive year that the Council has received a substantial opinion, and it is a significant achievement to maintain this level of assurance.
- 4.9. The Council remains financially sustainable across the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The final local government finance settlement has had a significant adverse impact on the Council due to late changes to transitional funding linked to the methodology for calculating Business Rates pool surpluses. These adjustments have reduced the funding the Council will receive over the three years of the settlement, although the impact in 2026/27 is offset by a grant. Overall, the Council faces a £1.2m loss in funding across the three-year period and is among the worst affected nationally, with a 2.25% reduction in core spending power. Despite this, its strong financial position allows the recommendation to freeze Council Tax for 2026/27 recognising the cost-of-living challenges that face Rushcliffe residents.
- 4.10. At the same time, significant cost pressures are emerging. The implementation of Simpler Recycling introduces a growing budget challenge, with a funding shortfall expected as food waste collections are introduced. A reserve has been established to smooth these pressures but may require further reinforcement. LGR adds further uncertainty, creating operational and financial demands, including staffing pressures and earmarked reserve requirements.
- 4.11. Despite these challenges, the Council maintains a debt-free position and holds healthy reserves rising from £24.3m to £24.9m by 2030/31, though

much of this is committed for specific purposes, particularly LGR. Capital resources, however, are steadily depleting, expected to fall to £9.5m by 2030/31. The Council remains committed to investing in its assets and services, with a £24.2m capital programme over the next 5 years. So, Rushcliffe remains a great place to live, with great lifestyle and great sport.

- 4.12. Overall, while the Council can deliver a balanced budget with a 2026/27 Council Tax freeze, the long-term outlook remains challenging, particularly now with a reduced 3-year settlement, and is dependent on containing emerging pressures. It's sound financial position and levels of reserves gives the Council the necessary insulation to manage its risks and opportunities going forward as it heads towards LGR.

Key achievements under each priority so far

- 4.13. The Environment:

- Air quality improvements leading to the revocation of our last two air quality management areas
- Successful implementation of a kerbside glass collection service across the whole Borough as part of the Simpler Recycling Programme
- Keyworth Leisure Centre refurbishment
- Cotgrave Leisure Centre upgrade, including decarbonisation
- Sir Julien Cahn refurbishments and an agreement in principle with Notts County Cricket Club for a West Park Community Cricket lease and Partnership
- Implementation of the £2.5m Warm Homes Local authority scheme to improve the thermal efficiency of homes across the Borough
- Delivery of the Gamston Community Hall decarbonisation project
- Edwalton Golf Course flood management project
- Purchase of land to create a new Rushcliffe Woods and Wolds Wood for carbon offsetting towards Council carbon neutral target of 2030
- Continued expansion of the use of HVO as a fuel for the Council's fleet and further purchases of small electric vans and handheld tools
- Green Flag Awards for Rushcliffe Country Park, Hook Nature Reserve and Sharphill Wood.

- 4.14. Quality of Life

- Review and renewal of both our PSPOs for anti-social behaviour and dog control
- Successful completion of the Home Alarm Digital Replacement Programme
- Positive evaluation of the car parking changes made in Bingham to improve short stay car parking availability
- West Bridgford Teen park play area and multi-use games area refurbishment
- Rushcliffe Country Park play area improvements
- Commencing the build of a new Sharphill Community Hall in the Edwalton estate.

4.15. Sustainable Growth

- Submission of Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan to the Secretary of State for examination
- Adopted Borough-wide Design Code
- Publication of the Draft Gamston Supplementary Planning Document for consultation
- Adopted Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document
- Adopted Colston Bassett and Screveton Conservation Area Appraisals
- Development of an Economic Growth Strategy for the Borough
- Successful delivery of UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds, supporting residents, community groups and business across the Borough.

4.16. Efficient Services

- Maintaining a balanced budget, keeping Council Tax levels relatively low and continued to deliver excellent services, despite reducing government funding
- A clean set of up-to-date audited financial accounts as well as a positive value for money conclusion
- Maintained high collection rates for both Council Tax and business rates (the 6th highest in the country)
- Development of Digital, Technological and Customer Access Strategy
- Implementation of a wide range of digital technologies in Streetwise to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the teams
- Continued roll out of tablets and software to support mobile working and updating of back-office systems in real time
- Review of Facilities Management and software for community buildings
- Review and renewal of our contract with WISE for environmental enforcement.

Strategic Tasks by priority and next steps

4.17. There are currently eleven tasks in the Corporate Strategy Action Plan. Below is a summary of progress since June 2025 and what is expected to happen in the next 12 months.

The Environment

Deliver Rushcliffe's Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030

Progress to date	Next Steps
Solar panels have been installed at Cotgrave Leisure Centre. The Centre will now mainly use the onsite generated electricity as opposed to drawing down from the grid reducing reliance on fossil fuels.	Further implementation of the Council's Carbon Management Action plan will see solar PV panels installed at Rushcliffe Arena, electric vehicle charging points installed at Bridgford Road carpark in West Bridgford, and tree planting at Rushcliffe Country Park and our new

<p>Old gas boilers have been removed and new air source heat pumps have been installed at both Sir Julian Cahn and Gamston Community Hall.</p> <p>Three new fully electric vehicles have been deployed as part of the Council's vehicle replacement programme and all large fleet vehicles have converted from carbon intensive diesel to hydrogenated vegetable oil alternatives. These actions have delivered a 95% reduction in carbon emissions.</p> <p>A new Nature Conservation Strategy for 2026-2030 was adopted by Cabinet in December 2025.</p> <p>Two large land acquisitions have been approved by Cabinet in the last twelve months. 52 acres of land in Kinoulton and 54 acres in Upper Broughton will both be planted up to create new woodlands together achieving 123% of the total tree sequestration requirement under the Carbon Management Plan.</p>	<p>woodland sites. Continued delivery of the Warm Homes scheme will target homes that are hard to heat across the Borough.</p>
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Implement the Environment Act commitments	
Progress to date	Next Steps
<p>The first major change under the Simpler Recycling Programme has seen a 180l purple-lidded wheeled bin delivered to every household in the Borough for the kerbside collection of glass (a small number have opted out of the scheme). The first round of collections in December 2025 collected 452 tonnes of glass compared to 250 tonnes in December 2024. A review of community glass collection points following the roll-out of kerbside glass collections identified a number of bring sites that have now closed leaving a number of larger bring sites in key locations across the Borough.</p>	<p>The next phase of the Simpler Recycling Programme is the collection of additional items in the existing blue bin including food punnets, plastic food trays and tetra packs from April 2026.</p> <p>The team is also planning ahead for the collection of food waste from the kerbside which is expected to launch in October 2027. Further planning is also taking place to understand the likely impact of the national Deposit Return Scheme also planned to launch in October 2027.</p>

Quality of Life

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

Progress to date	Next Steps
<p>The East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) was established in 2024. The Authority is now fully operational with an elected Mayor and governance structure in place. The Council has a good working relationship with the Authority and recently hosted a tour of the Borough by the East Midlands Mayor to promote key infrastructure projects and local resident concerns.</p> <p>This task is considered to have met its objectives and was reported as complete in October 2025.</p>	<p>We will continue to engage with EMCCA to align strategic priorities, explore collaborative opportunities, and identify potential funding streams.</p>

Deliver Rushcliffe's Leisure Strategy 2021-2027

Progress to date	Next Steps
<p>Refurbishment of Cotgrave Leisure Centre is complete. This included the installation of an air source heat pump and solar PV array, internal decoration and repairs, and the installation of a Changing Places toilet.</p> <p>Repairs to the roof and an internal refurbishment at Keyworth Leisure Centre have also been completed.</p> <p>The Council has received Green Flags for Rushcliffe Country Park, the Hook and Sharphill Woods.</p> <p>Flood mitigation works at Edwalton Golf Courses have been undertaken which also unlock funding for renovations and repairs to the Club House.</p> <p>The Sir Julian Cahn Pavilion and facilities at West Park have also been upgraded.</p>	<p>The Council's Leisure Contract has been renegotiated and significant work is now underway to incorporate East Leake Leisure Centre when the PFI contract expires later in 2027 along with Edwalton Golf Courses bringing the entirety of the Council's leisure provision under one contract for the first time since 2007.</p> <p>The Council will continue with its programme of capital replacement and renewal of playgrounds and sport pitches ensuring that local residents have access to high quality and inclusive play facilities</p> <p>April 2026 should see the commencement of a new lease of West Park by Notts County Cricket Club which will become the home of community and women's cricket in the region</p> <p>Work on Sharphill Community Hall in Edwalton has commenced and is due to</p>

	be completed in spring 2026.
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Participate in the county-wide reorganisation of Local Government in response to the English Devolution White Paper – Renamed Be an active partner in the delivery of Local Government Reorganisation

Progress to date	Next Steps
<p>Strategic Task added to the Corporate Strategy Action Plan in June 2025.</p> <p>Worked with Nottinghamshire County Council to develop the 1b proposal which was submitted to central Government in November 2025.</p>	<p>Officers are now working on the MHCLG LGR Preparation Checklist.</p> <p>A Government-led consultation with key stakeholders was launched in early February. RBC is a consultee.</p> <p>A decision about which proposal the Government favours for Nottinghamshire is expected in July 2026.</p> <p>Recruitment of a Programme and Project Manager for LGR to deliver a programme of transformation and transition workstreams to meet the LGR timeline and beyond.</p>

Sustainable Growth

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

Progress to date	Next Steps
<p>The Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station closed in September 2024. The site was one of the country’s last coal fuelled power stations and has been closed to reduce the country’s reliance on fossil fuels.</p> <p>The Council has been involved in planning for the future of the site including approving an LDO for the area, and hosting a parish forum for local parishes (including those from the district of North West Leicestershire).</p> <p>Ratcliffe on Soar is one of three sites that make up the East Midlands Freeport, the country’s only inland freeport.</p>	<p>Consultation on the proposed revisions to the LDO closed on 6 January. The consultation comments are now being considered further. A report is scheduled to be taken to Cabinet, to decide whether to approve the proposed revisions. A three-year review is due mid-2026 and a masterplan has commenced. Discussions are ongoing with all parties to reach an aligned position.</p>

Implement Levelling-up and Regeneration Act

Progress to date	Next Steps
<p>Following delays in primary legislation from central Government progress has been slower than anticipated in the delivery of this strategic task. Primary legislation is now in place, but we are still awaiting secondary legislation in several areas.</p> <p>The Council has adopted a new corporate enforcement policy reflecting new enforcement powers within the act, and a new design code for the Borough.</p>	<p>Secondary legislation is still awaited, including the new Infrastructure Levy and National Development Management Policies.</p>

Adopt a Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan

Progress to date	Next Steps
<p>The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan was submitted for examination in December 2025. Inspectors have been appointed to conduct the examination which is expected to start this Spring.</p>	<p>A date for the Examination Hearings is awaited, expected to be mid-2026, with the Inspector's final report due towards the end of 2026.</p> <p>At this time, the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan is on schedule to be adopted in December 2026.</p>

Develop and deliver an Economic Growth Strategy for the Borough

Progress to date	Next Steps
<p>Considered complete in June 2025 and removed from the Corporate Strategy Action Plan.</p>	<p>Developing two retail centre masterplan visions for West Bridgford and Radcliffe on Trent, and any other areas coming forward.</p> <p>Working with external partners to assess the feasibility, design requirements, and potential funding opportunities for an accessible bridge over Bingham railway station.</p> <p>Developing a tourism campaign to showcase all the Borough has to offer as a place to live and visit.</p>

	<p>Embedding our Rushcliffe: Together in Sport Charter, collaborating with the major sporting stakeholders and aligning with EMCCA's Sporting Cluster work.</p>
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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

Progress to date	Next Steps
<p>The Council's 5-year housing supply stands at 5.2 years.</p> <p>The following are last year's highlights on strategic sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotgrave Colliery – complete with 463 new homes • Edwalton – permission for 1781 homes with 1485 complete to date • Bingham – permission for 1050 homes 694 built to date • Newton – permission for 528 homes with 153 to date • Fairham – permission for 3000 new homes with 130 built to date. • Gamston – a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will outline the infrastructure requirements of the site and include a masterplan and design code was submitted to Cabinet in January 2026. Cabinet decided to pause the approval of the Document for further consideration, and it is expected to return to Cabinet in March 2026. <p>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 first twelve months of the Strategic Plan period the Council has facilitated the creation of 5,932 sqm of office space and 2.98</p>	<p>5-year housing land supply expected to be finalised imminently.</p> <p>Housing and employment land completions on Strategic Sites to be continually monitored.</p> <p>Cabinet to consider the Gamston SPD for adoption in March 2026.</p>

hectares of more industrial employment land.

Efficient Services

Deliver good value for money in Council operations for residents

Progress to date

Quarter three revenue position £1.304m efficiency mostly from investment income, and new waste rounds not yet commenced, increased income on car parks and Edwalton Golf Course. Additional grants have been received to cover new burdens.

Transformation savings to end of 2025/26 £6.7m with a further £2m proposed in the MTFS. £117k year over achievement against target.

Capital programme budget for 2025/26 is £14.607m with projected spend of £12.564m. 5 Year budget in the MTFS for 2026/27 to 2029/30 is £24m.

Earmarked reserves are £24.3m and expected to be £26.3m by March 31; this may increase with quarter 3 underspends. However, these reserves include a number of specific reserves where spend has not yet been profiled and are expected to decline.

External auditors issued opinion on the Councils VFM with no indicators of significant weakness.

Internal auditors BDO issued Substantial overall rating for the 4th consecutive year – the highest level of assurance.

Council Tax increase £3.89 (2.46%) for 2025/26 (RBC element) and proposed freeze for 2026/27.

Council remains debt free and not projecting external borrowing in the next

Next Steps

Budget to be approved March 2026.

Impact of recent Business Rates reform to be assessed and included in the MTFS going forward.

Ongoing audit reporting (a) with regards to internal audit and assurance over the Council's internal control environment and (b) external audit who provide and annual Value For Money Conclusion.

5 years.

Participate in an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and implement recommendations

Progress to date

Considered complete in June 2025 and removed from the Corporate Strategy Action Plan

Next Steps

No next steps. Follow up visit took place in November 2024, with positive findings on progress and the resulting report was accepted by Cabinet in December 2024.

Conduct a review of the Council's asset base

Progress to date

The Council's operational estate has been reviewed and reported to Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in January 2026. This review ensures that the Council's assets (properties, land, equipment and vehicles) are working for the benefit of the Borough's residents and businesses.

Next Steps

Project to explore renovations to Gresham Pavillion to address operational challenges.

Sale of assets as identified through the asset review, as reported to and approved by the Asset Investment Group and Cabinet.

Report on Commercial Assets performance planned for June Governance Scrutiny Group.

4.18. COG is asked to consider whether:

- progress of the strategic tasks is in line with expectations
- the remaining tasks remain relevant, achievable and desirable to deliver
- any new tasks need to be added to the Corporate Strategy Action Plan
- whether the Corporate Strategy lifespan should be effectively extended by an additional 12 months until Vesting Day of the new authority with current monitoring and management arrangements remaining in place.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

5.1. There are no risks and uncertainties directly tied to the content of this report. The Council could choose not to review progress towards its strategic actions, but this is not good practice and could lead to resources being spent without corresponding positive community impacts.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications connected to the content of this report.

6.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications connected to the content of this report.

6.3. Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications connected to the content of this report.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no crime and disorder implications connected to the content of this report.

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no biodiversity net gain implications connected to the content of this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	The delivery of the strategic tasks contained within the action plan to the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 support all of the Council's identified Corporate Priorities.
Quality of Life	
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	

8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Corporate Overview Group:

- a) considers the information provided outlining the Council's progress towards delivering the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy
- b) discusses whether the remaining Strategic Tasks in the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy continue to be relevant, achievable and desirable to deliver
- c) highlights any additional Strategic Tasks that it would be prudent to include in the Corporate Strategy for its remaining two years
- d) extend the life of the Corporate Strategy by an additional year to lead the authority through to Vesting Day under LGR.

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Background papers available for Inspection:	Council – December 2023
List of appendices:	