MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP
WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 2026

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford
and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors T Combellack (Chair), J Billin (Vice-Chair), R Butler (Substitute), S Calvert, J Chaplain, S Ellis, D Mason, A Phillips (Substitute) and R Walker.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Dwyer	Strategic Housing Manager
P Marshall	Principal Policy Planner
C Prendergast	Assistant Director Growth, Property and Projects
S Soar	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors R Bird and A Brown

9 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

10 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 January 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 28 January 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11 **Shared Ownership and Other Affordable Housing**

The Chair, Councillor Combellack, introduced the item as the Group's main scrutiny topic and explained that the discussion should focus on whether the current approach to shared ownership and other affordable housing products was achieving the best outcomes for residents and whether there were opportunities to improve delivery.

The Strategic Housing Manager presented the report, providing an overview of the affordable housing products delivered in Rushcliffe, how they were secured and monitored, and the evidence base informing the Council's approach. Members were advised that the 2024 Housing Needs Assessment identified a need for 507 affordable homes per year, comprising 477 rented and 30 affordable home ownership properties. Delivery had increased in recent years, and rented homes remained most closely aligned to evidenced need. Shared ownership delivery had grown substantially, while First Homes and discounted market sale products remained limited, although discounted market sale had recently supported progress on a stalled site.

The Strategic Housing Manager emphasised the Council’s main influence through planning policy, Section 106 negotiations and compliance, and monitoring. Matters such as marketing, allocation, service charges and resale arrangements for home ownership products sat with developers and Registered Providers. Policy 8 of the Local Plan, the Affordable Housing SPD and the Housing Needs Assessment shaped the Council’s negotiating position, with a clear preference for rented homes where viable. Officers noted that viability and Registered Provider capacity could constrain what was deliverable, necessitating alternative tenures in some cases.

Councillor Calvert referred to the tables comparing identified need and actual delivery and asked how the two related. Officers explained that the Needs Assessment formed the evidence base for negotiation, while delivery figures reflected what had been secured on individual sites, influenced by viability, site-specific issues, Registered Provider interest and site phasing. It was acknowledged that the Council could not meet the full level of assessed need through new supply alone.

Councillor Calvert also queried whether the Council was able to secure sufficient social and affordable rented homes, as need appeared strongly weighted towards rented provision. Officers advised that the Council’s starting point was always to negotiate rented units, but that viability pressures, constraints or the need to unlock stalled sites could lead to changes in tenure mix. Rented homes were typically the most difficult and costly to deliver.

He further referenced the Council’s previous decision not to pursue direct council house building, noting that this left the authority reliant on Section 106 delivery and Registered Providers. Officers confirmed that this had been a political decision supported by an independent review and highlighted the resource implications for a stock-transfer authority with a small team.

Councillor Chaplain queried the apparent mismatch between the relatively low need for affordable home ownership and the higher proportion of shared ownership in recent delivery, particularly in 2024/25. Officers stressed that need and delivery did not correlate directly year-by-year, as delivery reflected historic permissions, earlier policy assumptions and phasing. A more detailed breakdown of recent figures could be provided.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the adopted Core Strategy, based on older evidence, set out a tenure mix with a higher proportion of intermediate products, and many currently delivering sites were permitted under that framework. Councillor Combellack noted the difficulty of comparing differing frameworks and requested a note clarifying when newer evidence would be more visible in delivery. Councillor Billin echoed this and queried whether the recent uplift in delivery reflected phased progress following earlier delays.

Officers advised that increased completions stemmed largely from progressing Local Plan allocations, with some uplift due to Covid-related delays. Delivery might reduce over coming years as smaller sites were completed, making outcomes more dependent on major sites such as Clifton and East Gamston. Projections were maintained but were indicative.

Councillor Walker sought clarity on the Council's current aim of securing 75% rented / 25% affordable home ownership, noting that delivery trends seemed lower for rented homes. Officers advised that negotiations had followed the 2024 Needs Assessment since its publication, but that many current completions were based on older policy positions. This explanation was accepted by Councillor Walker.

Councillor Ellis observed that some mismatch between need and delivery was unavoidable and not unique to Rushcliffe. Officers agreed and noted that Rushcliffe's affordability pressures and high waiting list meant that Section 106 delivery alone could not meet annual need. Officers continued to seek full policy compliance unless viability evidence dictated otherwise.

Councillor Butler asked how viability was assessed and whether some developers were more cooperative. The Strategic Housing Manager outlined the Council's robust process, involving open-book assessments and independent valuation based on residual land values. Where a reduced level of affordable housing was evidenced, officers still aimed to prioritise rented units. Variations across developers were described as structural, linked to Registered Provider capacity and regulatory or financial pressures.

Councillor Walker then asked how officers made decisions on tenure when viability constrained delivery. The Strategic Housing Manager confirmed that rented provision was prioritised due to acute need and homelessness pressures, although final decisions had to take account of community balance and deliverability.

Councillor Combellack asked whether the limited affordability of affordable home ownership products for those on the waiting list called their appropriateness into question. Officers noted that such products met the needs of a different cohort—households not eligible for rented housing but unable to access full market ownership.

Councillor Mason asked about the operation of First Homes and how buyers accessed them. Officers explained that developers and Registered Providers handled marketing and allocation; the Council secured numbers and types through planning. Shared ownership tended to be more viable than First Homes in a high-value area. The Council held nomination rights only for rented products.

Councillor Chaplain asked about accessible housing. Officers confirmed that policy required accessible homes on larger sites and that the Council sought to include these within affordable housing where possible. Given DFG pressures, the Council sometimes used its own funds to support accessibility features. Figures could be provided to the Group.

Councillor Phillips raised several questions on shared ownership, including pricing and resale. Officers confirmed that Registered Providers set prices and rents, and that shared ownership served households unable to access full ownership. Registered Providers usually had the first option to buy back shares; otherwise, homes were sold on the shared ownership market. Staircasing to 100% removed the unit from the affordable stock, although receipts might be recycled depending on funding conditions. Officers noted that Homes England funding required recycling into further provision.

Councillor Billin asked about discounted sale homes in rural areas and the risks of losing affordability over time. Officers explained that discounted market sale discounts were secured in perpetuity.

Councillor Combellack noted two outstanding elements of the scrutiny request: ward member involvement in planning and support for shared ownership residents. Officers would seek clarification on ward member involvement. They advised that the Council did not manage shared ownership homes; issues were handled through Registered Provider complaints processes, the Housing Ombudsman and, for systemic concerns, the Regulator of Social Housing. Councillor Walker noted the unique position of shared owners; officers acknowledged this but highlighted the limits of Council control.

Councillor Butler asked about estate management fees; officers advised that planning colleagues would need to comment. Councillor Combellack queried whether Registered Providers should be subject to good practice expectations similar to those developed for open space management. Officers explained that the guide related to different issues and that Registered Providers were already regulated.

At the end of discussion, Councillor Combellack invited Councillors Billin and Walker to comment on the scrutiny request. Councillor Billin felt it had been addressed as far as possible and noted the complexity of the subject. Both Members were satisfied, subject to follow-up information.

Following a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

a) noted the range of affordable housing products in Rushcliffe and their benefits and limitations;
b) considered the importance of continued collaboration with developers and Registered Providers to support delivery; and
c) acknowledged the Council’s limited role in the allocation and management of affordable home ownership products and supported continued monitoring of

Section 106 compliance and delivery through policy and partnerships.

12 **Work Programme**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Group agree a work programme for 2026-2027.

It was agreed the group will have update from the East Midlands Freeport in July. The specific date is to be finalised.

The meeting closed at 8.38 pm.

CHAIR