



Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Tuesday, 7 January 2020

Business Support Offer

Report of the Executive Manager – Transformation

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The report and appendices provide an overview of the current business support offer in Rushcliffe.
- 1.2. It includes the commercial property available in the Borough, both that owned by the Council and those sites which are in private ownership, as well as workshops and training that businesses can access.
- 1.3. This is intended to be an initial report that sets out the current business support offer for the Group to consider and to identify future items for further scrutiny.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) Reviews the data and information provided by the Economic Growth and Property teams.
- b) Considers future items for further scrutiny.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. This is intended to be an initial report that sets out the existing business support offer, and the recommendations are reflective of this. To better inform future planning, it is important that the Group is aware of the current landscape to have a role in shaping the future provision.
- 3.2. The report covers support provided directly by the Borough Council and that which is delivered in partnership. It is therefore important for Councillors to be aware of the current arrangements and resources when making recommendations on future delivery.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The Economic Growth Team has reported to scrutiny annually since the team was established in 2015. These reports have covered the broad work programme of the team which includes:
- Driving growth and regeneration – a focus on our key strategic sites
 - Infrastructure – working with developers/land owners and Government Departments, securing funding and lobbying Government
 - Business support, engagement and growth – through the D2N2 Growth Hub, Rushcliffe Business Partnership and the Digital Growth Programme.
 - Employment and skills – supporting our residents to access opportunities to gain new skills and/or employment.
 - Proactively managing the impact of growth to ensure we create great places – establishment of five Growth Boards to work with our key partners to support our main towns to capitalise on the opportunities presented by growth.
- 4.2. As requested, this report is specifically focusing on one area of the team's work. In addition, the report includes details of the commercial property portfolio which is managed by the Council's Property Services Team.

Commercial Property – Rushcliffe Borough Council owned (appendix 2)

- 4.3. As set out in Appendix 2, there are 80 units owned by Rushcliffe Borough Council in the Borough. The Council does own other properties which have been acquired as part of the Asset Investment Strategy. These are not included in this report, as they were purchased for a commercial return to support the wider service delivery of the Council.
- 4.4. The 80 units are made up of:
- 49 industrial units ranging in size from 750 to 5000 sq ft
 - 11 retail units located in Cotgrave and Radcliffe on Trent
 - 20 offices in Cotgrave and West Bridgford
- 4.5. There are also plans to build additional retail units at Cotgrave to complete the regeneration of the shopping centre. This includes 4 retail units, one large unit for a food retailer and 3 smaller units which are currently being marketed. Planning permission is being sought for this development and more details can be found at [19/02209/FUL](#).
- 4.6. In addition, as part of the proposals for a new leisure centre located at Chapel Lane in Bingham, a new 10,000 sq ft office building is included, providing six individual offices on the ground floor and serviced offices on the first floor. A planning application has been submitted.
- 4.7. There are also plans to purchase 11 industrial units at Moorbridge Road, Bingham which will range in size from 1000 sq ft to 1500 sq ft.

- 4.8. The occupancy rates for the property portfolio is a key performance indicator monitored monthly. For the last 6 months, performance has been at 99.8% or above. This performance is reflective of the last few years; Council owned units are a popular option for small and medium businesses due to the flexibility provided. Rents are in line with the market; however, more flexibility is given on the length of tenancies which helps support smaller businesses.
- 4.9. The turnover rate for properties over the last 5 years has also been analysed. It shows that there is a healthy level of turnover in the property portfolio, with some businesses expanding in to larger premises creating space for new businesses. Over the last 5 years:
- 8 of the 30 units at Moorbridge have changed hands – 26%
 - 6 of the 19 units at Colliers have changed hands – 31%
 - 3 of the 9 office units at the Point have changed hands – 33%
- 4.10. In addition to this, new units have been built at Cotgrave Business Hub which has provided office accommodation for 8 businesses (1 business occupies 2 units). The refurbished shops at Cotgrave are also all fully let to existing businesses located in the area, supporting our existing businesses in new and improved premises.
- 4.11. Information from agents and commercial developers is that the market will not bring forward smaller industrial units. This is because the businesses which locate in these are smaller and, therefore, do not have a strong covenant¹ and the payback period (return on investment) for these units is longer. This is therefore where the public sector has had to intervene in the market and, in some instances, funding has been provided for this from Government.
- 4.12. To date, in 2019, the Property Services Team has received seven enquiries for business space in the Borough. This has been predominantly for industrial units ranging in size from 500 to 1,500 sq ft.

Commercial Property – privately owned (appendix 3)

- 4.13. The table included at Appendix 3 includes a detailed breakdown of the privately-owned business premises in the Borough. This information is taken from the business rates database and, therefore, will not include all businesses located in the Borough e.g. those working from home.
- 4.14. The largest concentration of premises is in West Bridgford, Ruddington, Bingham and Cotgrave. Most of the units across the area are classed as workshop and premises, warehouse and premises and store and premises. Data shows that around 5% of privately-owned premises are vacant, which is higher than the percentage of Rushcliffe owned premises, but occupancy rates are still high.

¹ A landlord will want to make an assessment of the covenant strength of a potential tenant before agreeing terms to rent out a commercial property. In other words, the landlord will want to assess the financial stability and profitability by looking at accounts and taking up references.

4.15. Included in the Rushcliffe Core Strategy are six large strategic housing sites; these also include an allocation of land for employment uses. The table included at Appendix 2 gives a breakdown of this. The sites with the largest allocations are Land North of Bingham, Fairham (land south of Clifton) and Gamston.

Business workshops, training, networking and other related support (Appendix 4)

4.16. There is a range of business support provided in Rushcliffe which includes free to access support, as well as that which the market provides. The information in this report and in Appendix 4 only includes the free to access support provided directly by Rushcliffe Borough Council or in partnership.

4.17. The D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a locally owned partnership between local government and businesses to drive economic growth in the area. It covers Derby, Derbyshire (D2), Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (N2). There are 38 LEPs across the country. Using European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) matched with local funding the LEP has established a growth hub. This is aimed to be a 'one stop shop' for business support.

4.18. The Growth Hub provides a range of support including one to one, funding and events and workshops. Rushcliffe Arena is used to host a number of events and one to one advice sessions. The offer is promoted on Rushcliffe's website and relevant social media channels to encourage attendance from as many Rushcliffe businesses as possible.

4.19. In addition to the Growth Hub, there is the Rushcliffe Business Partnership. This is a 'not for profit' partnership which formed in 1999, it receives the majority of its funding from the Borough Council through an annual service level agreement. The Economic Growth and Community Development Team also provide officer support to the Partnership in organising and promoting events and activities of the partnership. Details of this can be found at Appendix 4.

4.20. The Rushcliffe Borough Council website includes pages for businesses which includes information on events, support and relevant regulations. The team also produce a quarterly business newsletter which goes out to approx. 150 businesses. They also manage the LinkedIn page for the Council and the Facebook, Twitter accounts for the Business Partnership to provide updates for businesses via social media.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

5.1. This is an initial report intended to inform members and therefore there are no risks and uncertainties associated with this report.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

6.1.1 The report includes details of existing provision which are provided directly by the Council or in partnership. All activity is currently fully funded; however, some of it is time limited e.g. the Growth Hub which relies on European funding. There are no current financial implications associated with this report.

6.2. Legal Implications

6.2.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

6.3. Equalities Implications

6.3.1 All business support detailed is open to all small and medium enterprises operating in Rushcliffe and the wider area. There are, therefore, no equalities implications of this report.

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

6.4.1. There are no crime and disorder implication associated with this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Providing support to businesses in the Borough is an essential element of providing good quality of life for our residents ensuring they have places to work and conduct their personal business in the local vicinity.
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	To deliver sustainable growth the right business support landscape needs to be in place. This report sets out the existing offer for further consideration and scrutiny.
The Environment	Providing employment space across the area enables people to live closer to where they work, reducing the need to travel to work by car.

8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) Reviews the data and information provided by the Economic Growth and Property teams.
- b) Consider future items for further scrutiny.

For more information contact:	Leanne Ashmore Executive Manager - Transformation lashmore@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Economic data Appendix 2 – RBC owned business premises Appendix 3 – Privately owned commercial premises Appendix 4 – Business support