

Rushcliffe Borough Council

Recovery Plan

October 2020

1. Introduction

The past six months have presented unprecedented challenges for us all, to support our key workers on the frontline and the most vulnerable in our communities we have had to completely change our way of life. National lockdown forced many businesses to close (either temporarily or permanently) and many of us to work from home where we could.

As we face further local lockdowns in the run up to Christmas the Borough Council continue to work closely with all our partners to ensure the right support is provided to those who need it most. We will continue to review our plans in response to any change in alert levels to support the recovery of Rushcliffe over the coming months, ensuring we remain effective and responsive. We want to continue to work and engage with as many people as possible so please do get in touch with us so that we are in the best position to support everyone as best we can.

It is important too, to consider the opportunity that this has created. A chance to review the way we work and live and consider how we might adopt some of these new ways of working on a more permanent basis. This will bring positive impacts to not only our environment but also potentially our mental health and well being and our work/life balance. It is important we do not lose sight of this opportunity as we try to overcome the current challenges we are facing but we must, at least in the short term, focus our efforts on the recovery of our local communities and businesses.

This Recovery Plan sets out how Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) and partners (parish and town councils, business partnerships and local trading groups) are working together to support local businesses and the local community.

Cllr Simon Robinson
Leader, Rushcliffe Borough Council

2. The impact on Rushcliffe

Like other areas of the country we are yet to see the full economic impact of Covid-19 in Rushcliffe. Our high streets and town centres are now fully reopened and so far there has been limited visible impact with only a few additional vacant units. We know however that we cannot be complacent and with the increasing cases, the winter months and local lockdown measures we need to remain, as ever, flexible and responsive to provide support to our local businesses and communities.

An analytical group led by the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership has produced some projections of the impact on Rushcliffe of Covid-19:

- Gross Value Added (GVA) – a measure of productivity across D2N2 is expected to fall by 37.5%, this is greater than the UK national average of 35.1%. This is primarily due to the reliance on manufacturing, wholesale and retail, education and construction in the region which are sectors suffering some of the worst impacts.
- Teleworkability is the percentage of jobs feasible to be done via remote working. Rushcliffe has the highest percentage in D2N2 with 51% of jobs teleworkable.

- The unemployment rate of Rushcliffe was 2.5% in Dec 2019 and is projected to be approx. 6.8% in Quarter 2 of 2020.
- 11,600 furloughed employees in Rushcliffe as of 31 May, this number is relatively low compared to other areas however there is a concern, like for other areas, for the long-term sustainability of these jobs once the furlough scheme ends at the end of October.
- 4,900 people in Rushcliffe are eligible for Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and 3,700 claims have been made totalling £10.9m paid, with an average grant of £3,000
- In response to a business survey created by the D2N2 Growth Hub (data at D2N2 level) which received over 800 responses businesses:
 - 97% stated that Covid-19 was having an impact on their business, for the vast majority this is in a negative way
 - 13% were making redundancies
 - 52% reported a more than 50% decline in sales
 - Their top concerns going forward were; decreasing consumer confidence and sales, financial impact on operations and a global or UK recession.

We continue to monitor the data received to ensure that our plans are responsive.

3. What we have done so far

When the Prime Minister announced strict lockdown measures in March the Borough Council, like many other organisations, had to change the way that we worked to ensure that we continued to deliver an excellent service to our local communities and businesses. This has meant adapting very quickly to shift our priorities and focus to the areas where support is most needed

Government have introduced various measures to support residents and businesses and we have been responsible for administering some of the initiatives at a local level. In addition we have worked with our local partners and across departments within the Council to implement local support packages.

You can see from the following information that a lot has been delivered already to support our communities:

Business rates discounts and grants¹

We have paid out:

- 1226 grants total £12,260,000 under the Small Businesses Grant Fund
- 357 grants total £6,015,000 under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant
- 82 grants total £972,460 under the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund

In addition, we have given business rates:

- Expanded retail discount 553 cases total £10,603,011
- Nursery discount 37 cases total £313,671.

Council Tax support

¹ Some properties have had a discount and a grant therefore would appear in both sets of data.

- Council Tax Support Hardship fund has reduced a total of 2600 bills totalling £441,523.

Developed dedicated Covid-19 business web pages:

- Business support page - 13,134 visits
- Business finance page – 833 visits
- Business resources page – 460 visits
- Access to 'Grant Finder' tool – 500+ visits.

In addition, we have set up a dedicated page on the Rushcliffe Business Partnership website which has been visited 4545 times since it was created at the start of lockdown.

Reach Rushcliffe

- 'Reach Rushcliffe' funding to support local initiatives that aim to tackle loneliness and social isolation There have been 16 applications, 14 approved and two rejected, a total allocation to date of £14,800.88
- 41 food parcels delivered year to date.

Social media campaigns and business promotion

- Shop Local Shop Safe – 23 businesses featured so far
- Governments Eat Out to Help Out – 21 business featured
- Reminders about face coverings – one business featured
- 'We're Open' – 114 businesses featured
- Additional press releases and campaigns including NHS Test and Trace and outdoor seating licences – three businesses featured.

Visits from Environmental Health

- 86 formal actions with businesses (complaints/ requests for advice)
- More than 350 visits providing advice on being Covid compliant
- Seven Fixed Penalty Notices issued and four prohibition notices
- 428 Covid compliance complaints received and dealt with
- Creation of new protocols and frameworks, for example events framework for use by other teams in the Council and our partners
- 1500+ calls to businesses supported by colleagues from other departments
- Effectively responding to hundreds of changes to regulations and guidance to ensure we are supporting businesses and providing the right advice in a timely manner.

Webinars and virtual networking

- Rushcliffe Business Partnership have hosted 12 virtual networking sessions held so far, which in total 109 businesses have attended.
- Rushcliffe Business Partnership have held 10 Ask the Expert webinars held on various topics including HR, managing cash flow and holding online events. 68 businesses attended.
- Business support webinars and one to one support aimed at High Street businesses (funded by Reopening High Streets Safely Fund) 47 businesses have attended eight webinars so far and 10 have attended one-to-one sessions. A further four have one-to-one sessions booked in for the coming weeks.
- D2N2 Growth Hub have delivered 188 webinars, attended by 225 Rushcliffe delegates.

Support for Traders

- Assisted markets to reopen safely, providing guidance and rent-free periods

- Supported community groups / trading groups to run ad hoc markets and food fayres
- Rent holidays available to tenants in our industrial units
- Temporarily suspended parking charges
- Highways adaptations to High Streets.

Collection of waste

As well as shifting our focus in many areas we have also continued to deliver our vital services, some of which have seen an increased demand. This is especially true for our waste and recycling teams who have seen an increase in the waste collected due to most of us being at home much more than ever before:

- Glass recycling tonnage collected average is around 250 tonnes per month but is now at 300 tonnes
- Tonnages in grey and blue bins increased by around 10%, this had started to return to more normal levels but that may again change with the new government guidance to work from home if you can.

We understand there is still much to do and this document sets out more detail on the plans we have for the future of our Borough.

4. Committed focus on recovery

To deliver the recovery work in Rushcliffe and to support the safe reopening of our local economy and community's RBC have set up an External Recovery Group made up of officers from across the Council. The objectives of that group are:

- Focus on the economic recovery of Rushcliffe, ensuring the right support for businesses aligned to the work of the D2N2 LEP Response Board
- Support businesses to re-open in line with Government guidelines – advice to open and trade safely
- Explore opportunities to lead and support a green economic recovery, working with business to understand how their working practices have changed and how this can be maintained in the long term
- Support our residents/community and identify ways to harness the community engagement/empowerment
- Regular and consistent communication on all aspects of recovery work to the local community and businesses.

The group meets fortnightly and have developed an Action Plan which is reviewed regularly and is included at Appendix 1.

The Borough Council also works with other partners and organisations including:

- Regular meetings with officers across Nottinghamshire to share best practice and explore joint initiatives to support the economy and our residents.
- Focus on employment and skills to ensure that our residents get the support they need to get back into or into work and businesses are supported with their recruitment needs. We work in partnership with the Trent Bridge Community Trust (TBCT) the Ready4Work Clubs in Rushcliffe which support residents to find employment.
- In addition, the TBCT delivers the YouNG programme supporting young people to find opportunities for work experience, to improve their skills or for employment. This is a crucial service at the moment ensuring young people are given the confidence they need to realise their ambitions when faced with a very uncertain job market.

This plan for Rushcliffe is complementary to plans and activities of the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership and Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum. The Borough Council are an active participant in these wider plans to support their delivery and to ensure there is no duplication and resources are targeted in the right way.

With the introduction of the tiers of alert level by Government we will continue to review our plans to enable us to move quickly in response to any change in alert level. This new approach enables us to better prepare for what may happen and the action we need to take should the need arise. We are working closely with our partners across the County and the City to work together and support each other on these plans.

5. The future

As a Council we continue to proactively plan for the future of our Borough, whilst this may look a little different than it did six months ago, we are still committed to delivering our ambitions. Some of these have and will continue to change over the coming months but our priorities remain the same:

- **Quality of life** - our residents' quality of life is our first priority. When we say 'quality of life' we mean how our residents feel about living in the Borough, its environment, and the community facilities they can access.
- **Efficient services** - as an organisation it is always our intention to deliver the best services for our residents, in the most efficient way possible. In the coming years, we know this will mean embracing new ways of working and being open to innovation and transformation. Although there is no certainty around what the next four years will bring, there is certainty in how we will approach whatever arises.
- **Sustainable growth** - Rushcliffe is determined to play its part in shaping the future of the Borough ensuring the needs and aspirations of Rushcliffe residents are met in all future developments. This involves a significant amount of partnership working, we accept that sometimes we will be leading and sometimes supporting others to deliver what our community needs to grow.
- **The Environment** - at Rushcliffe, we know that the natural environment is precious and not something we can afford to take for granted. We are fully committed to playing our part in protecting the environment today and enhancing it for future generations.

Our plans for the future include:

- **Chapel Lane, Bingham**

The Council purchased a derelict piece of land in Bingham in 2017 from Tesco. The land sits in between the existing town and the new development of 1000 homes currently under construction to the north of the town. The development of this land is therefore important to create a link between the new development and the existing town.

The plan for Chapel Lane is the construction of a new leisure centre to replace the leisure centre currently located at Toothill School. The centre will include:

- An up to date swimming facility for Bingham and the surrounding area. In addition to the day to day recreation and fitness use, the main pool is designated to provide for local swimming competitions, with the requisite design standards and provision of spectator seating.
- A second pool is provided for learning, providing for maximum utilisation by local schools and swimming groups.

The leisure centre will incorporate a community hall with a stage and kitchen facilities.

In addition to the leisure centre we are planning to build a new office building which will house up to 12 new self-contained office suites. The commercial property market has clearly changed significantly over the last six months and so we continue to review this opportunity to ensure we are delivering space that is needed by our local businesses.

- **Cotgrave town centre development**

Work continues on the completion of the Town Centre redevelopment. Construction started in July 2020 on a food retail outlet (pre let secured) and three smaller retail units, target date for completion is February 2021.

- **Abbey Road**

In 2018 the Council achieved its long-held ambition to relocate the depot to a more suitable site and bring the Abbey Road site forward for housing. Recycling2go has relocated to Eastcroft and Streetwise to Bingham, freeing the land for redevelopment.

An architect was appointed to prepare a housing scheme with a focus on high quality design, including 30% affordable housing. They designed a scheme which include 76 dwellings and a Masterplan with Design Code were prepared, which included specific design standards, such as:

- Minimum house sizes
- Building For Life standards
- Off road parking and cycle storage
- Roof top gardens
- Level access
- Central open space
- Non-standard house type, using different elevation styles and palette of materials.

Outline planning permission was granted for the scheme in June 2019.

A procurement exercise was carried out to identify a developer to deliver the scheme and this included a list of requirements for the developer to meet to ensure an energy efficient and sustainable development. This included a requirement to meet the following standards:

- A 19% reduction in carbon efficiency rate of Building Regulations
- No gas or solid fuel
- Combination of electric and renewable energy
- Efficient use of water
- Efficiencies during construction
- 30% of construction costs (ie labour and materials) to be sourced locally
- Electric car charging for each dwelling.

Final legal agreements are currently being negotiated and it is anticipated work will start on site in Spring 2021.

- **Delivery of strategic housing and employment sites**

We continue to work closely with our partners in the public and private sector to support and where required accelerate the delivery of our strategic housing and employment sites across the borough. This includes:

- Fairham (Land south of Clifton) – located on the A453 next to Clifton (Nottingham City) this development will comprise 3000 new homes and 20 ha of employment land
- Gamston – located on the A52 next to Tollerton this development will include 4000 new homes and 20 ha of employment land
- RAF Newton – located on the A46 close to Bingham this development will include 550 new homes and 6.5ha of employment land.

The developments will include the delivery of required supporting infrastructure including necessary improvements to the highways network, education, health centres and parks/open space.

Other large developments in the Borough that are complete or are currently being delivered include Hollygate Park Cotgrave, Bingham and Edwalton.

- **East Midlands Development Corporation**

In October 2018 the Government announced funding of up to £2m to explore the business case for a locally led development delivery vehicle for the East Midlands. This would cover three geographical sites in the East Midlands: Ratcliffe on Soar power station, Toton and Chetwynd Barracks, and East Midlands Airport. In June 2019 Nottinghamshire County Council, on behalf of the Midlands Engine, commissioned the preparation of an outline business case for a Development Corporation.

As one of the three proposed sites for the Development Corporation is located in Rushcliffe (Ratcliffe on Soar PowerStation) the Borough Council are an active participant in the proposals as they progress. Ratcliffe on Soar is due to be decommissioned in 2025 and therefore our focus is on ensuring the delivery of a high quality, sustainable development of the site which brings benefits for local residents and businesses.

Over the coming months the intention is to establish an interim vehicle for the Development Corporation (to enable work to continue while the necessary legislation is passed for the establishment of the formal Development Corporation), which it is hoped will be launched from early 2021.

- **Environmental Strategy Working Group**

An environmental strategy working group has been established, led by Rushcliffe Borough Council, which meets every six weeks, it is attended by all local authorities throughout the County and including the City and some voluntary sector and non-profit organisations. The areas of focus include:

- Solar PV panels on leisure centres. Feasibility studies have been completed;
- Low carbon retro fitting of social housing continues with further funding identified;
- A low carbon check list for Planners has been developed with support to help Planners and Developers, including training events for sustainable new build properties. Also, a County wide low carbon Supplementary Planning Framework draft document has been developed. However, further refinement is needed now that Central Government is due to respond to future homes standards consultations;
- A bid has been submitted for Local Government Association 'Design In The Public Sector' grant funding to develop a communications platform to ensure consistent messages are issued across the county;
- Three sites potential sites have initially been identification for low energy and low carbon vehicle depot sites within the wider East Midlands region;
- Reviews are being undertaken for the decarbonisation of Council owned fleet vehicles and the options for electrification of local authority Depots, including changing fuel sources;

- Work continues to connect with larger business to lead on carbon neutral mentoring with smaller business and encouraging 'Shop Local Shop Safe' to support the local economy and lower fuel usage;
- Re-evaluation is taking place on the approach to home working which will lower organisational carbon footprints and travel costs. This will also provide opportunities to use Council buildings more creatively in future.
- **Growth Boards**

The Rushcliffe Growth Boards were established in 2015 following endorsement from Rushcliffe Borough Council's Cabinet. There are currently five local growth boards covering:

- Bingham
- East Leake
- Radcliffe on Trent
- West Bridgford
- Fairham

The Boards are made up of public sector partners and local representatives of the community and business sectors. Their aim is to work in partnership to help support and develop the towns and implement a long-term vision for the future, meeting the needs of existing and future residents and businesses. The progress of these Boards is overseen by the Strategic Growth Board which meets quarterly.

These Boards have continued to meet over the last few months holding additional meetings to understand the impact of Covid-19 in each of these places and for the organisations in attendance. This process has enabled action plans for each Board to be reviewed and updated to ensure the focus of the Boards is right to meet the challenges presented by Covid-19.

- **Town centre forums**

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our high street and town centre businesses, whilst the vast majority have managed to reopen the future is still very uncertain for many with the threat of further lock downs and the lack of consumer confidence.

As a Council we are working hard to support our high street businesses and over the last few months have enhanced our relationship with many creating lines of communication that previously did not exist. We intend to build on this and develop, where they do not already exist, town centre forums for local businesses. This will be a place where high street businesses can come together and support each other as well as creating a direct dialogue with the Council.

We will continue to develop the digital presence of our high streets through initiatives such as West Bridgford Way and the Shop Local Shop Safe communications campaign.

- **Rushcliffe Business Partnership**

We will continue to work with Rushcliffe Business Partnership to deliver networking sessions and webinars/training events as required. This ensures that the support we provide is in response to the needs of our local businesses as it is led by the private sector led Steering Group of the Business Partnership.

Appendix 1

External recovery

Action	Officer	Progress update
Town centres		
Support for businesses to reopen	Catherine Evans and Caroline Saxton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits from Environmental Health and Economic Development staff to support reopening of non-essential retail and hospitality. • Promotion of support available from consultants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retail support – webinars ○ Digital support – webinars and one to one support
Public realm work	Catherine Evans and Caroline Saxton	<p>West Bridgford Town Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Mon – Sat traffic restrictions on Central Avenue extended to cover Sunday also. <p>Bingham Marketplace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roads to the north and east of Bingham marketplace made one-way. • Introduction of an advisory 20mph speed limit in the town centre. <p>Radcliffe on Trent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20mph speed limit. <p>Ruddington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20mph speed limit.
Dealing with issue of nuisance/ASB on Bridgford Park/Bridgfield	Derek Hayden, Geoff Carpenter and Ed Palmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security patrols implemented over the summer to deal with this issue, especially in West Bridgford. • These issues have now decreased significantly with the reopening of the hospitality sector but will continue to be monitored.
Re-introduction of Bingham and West Bridgford Markets	Catherine Evans and Caroline Saxton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both markets successfully reopened for essential traders with correct procedures in place. • Work with Market manager to increase traders at West Bridgford Farmers Market via communications campaign. • First full Bingham Market went well apart from minor dispute between two traders. • Outside seating on Market Place throughout August to benefit local businesses to increase their seating capacity. • Local café/restaurant now has outside seating on the market place on a permanent basis via a licence agreement with the Council for use of the space.

Action	Officer	Progress update
Identification of empty properties and work with landlords	Economic Growth Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of all current empty properties and recording details of landlords/agents. • Possible future option to install vinyls etc to improve appearance also pop up shops depending on appetite of landlords.
Business support		
Payment of small business; retail and hospitality and discretionary grants	Dave Zepernick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process now completed and latest figures included in plan.
Rushcliffe Business Partnership fortnightly ask the expert sessions and fortnightly networking	Jacob Hopgood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fortnightly networking attracts around 25 to 35 local businesses and is hosted by local business owner. Presence from Council Portfolio Holder and Officers. • Ask the expert sessions on things such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managing your cash flow ○ Website content.
Regular promotion of D2N2 Growth Hub webinars	Jacob Hopgood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of Growth Hub survey to local businesses to gather data on the impact of Covid-19 to help guide future support • Regular social media updates of support and webinars available.
Parks and open spaces		
Supporting the public to safely social distance in Rushcliffe Country Park	Derek Hayden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banners and posters gone up in the park to remind residents about social distancing • Risk assessment/protocol for the park developed.
Additional security measures required at Gresham due to a number of break ins	Derek Hayden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Police patrols • Removal of nets and goals to remove attraction of area • Site now reopened and currently no issues being reported.
Organised sport starting again on open spaces	Derek Hayden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter gone out to all regular users to find out plans for returning to facilities.
Outdoor playgrounds can reopen from 4 July	Derek Hayden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned successful reopening of park on 4 July which included comms and signage about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wash hand before ○ Use hand sanitiser ○ Wash hands after ○ Stay in family groups.

Action	Officer	Progress update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared this advice with Parish councils for them to open play areas if can do.
Community support		
Supporting the local community and voluntary groups	Derek Hayden and Shirley Woltman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of activity required for any local lock down or second peak/local lockdown.
Reach Rushcliffe		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check in chat service being delivered by officers from RBC to support lonely and vulnerable residents. Reach Rushcliffe grants fully committed to support community groups.
Diversionary activities for young people due to extended time of school and some issues of ASB		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derek speaking to Positive Futures and Youth Services about summer holiday activities programme NCC looking at joint bid for Youth Futures Funding.
Communications		
Promotion of work being delivered by RBC staff, for example case studies from Reach Rushcliffe or BR grants	Ed Palmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing promotion of activity of RBC Teams in the community
Assurance campaign for businesses and residents for going back into our town centres	Ed Palmer and Catherine Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of work done in Bingham to provide space on the market place for businesses to extend seating areas to support reopening Pictures taken and promoted with businesses and 'we are open' signs – sharing on social media channels Eat Out to Help Out scheme promoted to local businesses and residents Public reassurance - Shop Local Shop Safe campaign launched