

**MINUTES**  
**OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP**  
**WEDNESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2021**

Held at 7.00 pm in the

**PRESENT:**

Councillors R Butler (Vice-Chairman), M Barney, J Cottee, G Dickman, P Gowland, L Howitt, A Phillips and L Way

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

C Evans	Service Manager - Economic Growth and Property
A Pegram	Service Manager - Planning
M Sawyer	Planning Contributions Officer
C Saxton	Economic Growth Officer
P Marshall	Principal Policy Planner
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors N Clarke and J Murray

**6 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**7 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 July 2021**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Vice Chairman.

**8 CIL Update - 13 October 2021**

The Planning Contributions Officer delivered a presentation to update members on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) adopted by the Council on 7 October 2019 and reminded members that the levy is a charge applied to certain types of development to help fund infrastructure across the Borough, as set out in the Council's published Infrastructure List.

The Planning Contributions Officer provided a recap and explained the levy is intended to address the cumulative effect of development across the Borough. CIL is a fixed-rate charge based on floor space and is charged on retail and residential developments at rates set out in the published Charging Schedule. The adoption of CIL was supported by infrastructure evidence, financial viability evidence alongside Local Plan Part 2.

The Planning Contributions Officer provided a CIL funding overview, explaining that a consultation had been undertaken with key providers of infrastructure

types to determine CIL spend priorities, the next step being for officers to assess the identified projects against a Framework Appraisal document and report back to Cabinet to agree a spending programme. Members were advised that the CIL collected to date amounts to £1.1m.

The infrastructure list is as follows:

- **Secondary school places** across the Borough through new provision or extension to existing provision
- **Park and Ride** along the A52 corridor and bus priority measures in West Bridgford
- **Indoor leisure** provision or improvements to existing provision
- **Health facilities** across the Borough through new provision or extension to existing provision
- **Playing pitches and ancillary facilities** provision or improvements

The Planning Contributions Officer highlighted the main criteria and considerations of the Framework Appraisal document including:

- **Justification** – why the project is required, demonstrating need, suitability and due regard to alternatives
- **Strategic Benefits** – links to existing and emerging plans/strategies and Corporate objectives
- **Funding** – Amount of CIL required/requested, cost of project, other available funding sources
- **Deliverability** – approvals/consents required, timescales and potential impediments to delivery

The Planning Contributions Officer continued to explain the Neighbourhood proportions of CIL funds informing members that under the CIL regulation 59A, the Borough Council has to pass a proportion of levy receipts to the Town and Parish Councils, at 15% capped, or 25% where covered by a Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Planning Contributions Officer added that there is a desire to make an additional proportion of the strategic CIL available to areas with no neighbourhood Plan, to provide a consistent level of local funding across the Borough. Members noted that the Neighbourhood proportion is not limited to items within the Infrastructure list and can be spent on a wider range of projects, provided they address the demands that a new development places on that area.

The Planning Contributions Officer advised members of the legislative restrictions and that the Borough Council will be directly responsible for the allocation of Strategic CIL that is made available to Town and Parish Council's. Town and Parish Council's will be required to submit bids for any additional funding through a formal process and such requests need to fall within the narrower definition of infrastructure, and be towards items on the Borough Council's Infrastructure List. In addition, members were advised that any change to the Infrastructure List would need to be carefully considered in how it might impact on strategic delivery.

The Chairman asked a specific question relating to the charging structure for collecting CIL funds and whether any of the CIL collected had been spent. The

Planning Contributions Officer explained that the levies are set in zones highest zone £100 per m<sup>2</sup> lowest £0 and are determined by the viability of the sites to deliver, any funding gaps and how much we can collect through CIL. The Principal Policy Planner added, that when CIL was introduced a viability exercise was completed which looked at the local plan infrastructure delivery plan and standard assumptions using local information, such as affordable housing, legal fees, house sales and land values, these were then examined by an independent examiner before being adopted by Council 2 years ago.

Members questioned why the government were encouraging Towns and Parishes to produce Neighbourhood Plans and what impact this may have on major projects on the Infrastructure List, such as health. The Planning Contributions Officer explained that it was important to take into consideration the framework process and the extra element of CIL made accessible to non-Neighbourhood Plan parishes and that CIL is not to be the sole reason for developing a Neighbourhood Plan, adding that producing a Neighbourhood Plan can be costly.

Members asked specific questions relating to how much income from CIL funding can the Council expect to receive over the next 5 years and whether the funding will cover the strategic programme. The Planning Contributions Officer explained that CIL funding was difficult to predict and cannot be guaranteed until developments have commenced, adding that the spend programme priorities initially looks at short term projects, as there is no appetite to realistically commit to the medium to long projects at the current time. In addition, the Service Manager – Planning explained that it is important to recognise that CIL will not pay for all projects 100%, CIL is to be used as a top up where there are funding gaps.

The Chairman highlighted the changes to parish boundaries and whether this would have any effect or changes to the CIL charging structure. The Principal Policy Planner explained that the charges are set based on the original ward boundaries and that the charging structure does not necessarily link to parish boundaries and is applied at the point when it is collected. The Planning Contribution Officer added, that there maybe a desire to review the charging at some point in the future and in particular if the demographics of an area changes.

Members questioned the arrangements for West Bridgford as this has neither a Town or Parish Council or a Neighbourhood Plan. The Service Manager – Planning advised that West Bridgford is covered by a different element of CIL and the process is different and controlled by the Borough Council with consideration by members through the Special Expenses Group.

The Chairman expressed his concerns about the complexity of the framework document and in particular regarding Parish Council's and Parish Meetings. The Planning Contributions Officer advised that a guidance document will be made available for Parishes in the next month, when the next round of CIL payments are due. Members suggested that an additional recommendation be added to take into consideration Parish Council's and Parish meetings given the complexity of the framework.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) Support the referral of the CIL allocation and spend process to Cabinet;
- b) Support a recommendation to cabinet to make additional amount of Strategic CIL available to areas without a Neighbourhood Plan, and;
- c) Recommend the production of a guidance document for Parish Council's and Parish Meetings to assist in understanding the CIL procedure, and;
- d) Recommend the process to help inform the production of the framework document.

## 9 **Covid-19 Business Recovery Update**

The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property delivered a presentation to update members on the Covid 19 Business Recovery, providing members with data across the D2N2 authorities, including Furlough and self-employment claims, unemployment claims, job vacancies and business closures, as reported in June 2021.

The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property explained that Furlough and self-employment claims have been decreasing since January 2021 and unemployment has also maintained a steady decline. The latest job vacancy figures showed a 40% growth compared to the same time last year, these were mainly in the health and social care sectors as well as business, technology and administration. In respect of the impact of Covid 19 on businesses predictions state that the economy is not expected to recover to pre-pandemic levels before 2022. The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property advised that the data will continue to be monitored to look for trends and any ongoing impact of the pandemic.

The Economic Growth Officer continued the presentation providing members with information relating to the health of the Borough's High Streets, including Bingham, Cotgrave, East Leake, Keyworth, Radcliffe on Trent, Ruddington and West Bridgford. It was reported that as of the end of August 2021, there were 10 vacant premises and 5 businesses either being developed or the business being for sale but still operating within the 7 main towns and villages across the Borough. Footfall was also measured 3 times in a day and from the same location in each town/village during January, April and August 2021. The Economic Growth Officer reported that footfall had increased since the lockdown restrictions were lifted earlier in the year, and then again most saw an increase between April and August with the exception of East Leake and Radcliffe on Trent, who showed a reduction.

The Economic Growth Officer provided the Group with information on the progress of ongoing work being carried out by the Economic Growth team and the collaborative work with Rushcliffe Business Partnership, including virtual networking sessions and the first in person event at Trent Bridge Cricket Club on 24 September 2021. In addition, the Group were reminded that a dedicated Covid-19 business support webpage had been created which so far has

attracted around 40,000 views, providing assistance with business rate grants totalling over £35.3 million between April 2020 to May 2021.

The Economic Growth Officer advised that after the initial lockdown and using Reopening High Streets Safely Funding (RHSSF), officers delivered a number of initiatives including successful communication campaigns targeting local businesses, these included the Eat Out to Help Out, a Government led initiative, We Are Open and more recently Shop Local Shop Safe. Two consultants funded by RHSSF were employed to provide expert advice and support by way of webinars and one to one business support. In addition, the Council appointed High Street Ambassadors to support the reopening of the Boroughs high streets providing a visible presence to reassure the public and in November/December 2020 the Council developed a Rushcliffe gift voucher for residents to spend in participating businesses across the Borough. Other initiatives included, the safe reopening of outdoor markets, temporary free parking and free after 3pm in Council owned car parks and a digital grant for up to £1000 to provide high street businesses with financial support to develop their online presence.

The Economic Growth Officer advised the Group that an enhanced events programme in West Bridgford had been very successful, with the return of Taste of Rushcliffe, Proms in the Park, outdoor theatre and cinema and family fun days.

The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property in concluding informed the Group that the Officers will continue to support our town and parish councils, with spending their £10k allocation, ongoing communication campaigns, exploring opportunities to increase digital awareness and improvements to the visual appearance of town centres and promoting town centre events and retail forums. In addition, officers will continue to engage and build on relationships with local businesses and Rushcliffe Business Partnership (RBP), adding that a consultant post had been created to liaise with local businesses and parishes to develop new initiatives to support our high streets going forward.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their continuous work in supporting local communities and confirmed that he had met with the newly appointed consultant and welcomed her enthusiasm in supporting local businesses.

Members commented on the footfall figures provided in the presentation and asked how these were collated and measured, and whether they provided a true picture of how the high streets were fairing. The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property explained that footfall was measured using guidance supplied by the Welcome Back Funding (WBF) formally called the Reopening High Streets Safely Funding and was done on the same day and same time at each location and the information provided was only a snapshot.

Members asked specific question relating to the footfall in Council owned leisure centres and how these compare with privately owned ones, and whether our centres were beginning to bounce back after the restrictions. It was noted that there had been some increase in swimming activities and that the Council's leisure provider had reported that around 70% of users had

returned to the centre. However, the Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property explained that for the purpose of this report was more focused on business and high street support, the information about leisure centre was included in the updates to Cabinet, the last one of which had been in July 2021.

The Chairman asked a specific question in relation to the £35m paid out in government grants and how the Borough compared with other similar authorities in the speed in which these were paid and the amounts paid out. The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property explained that she did not have these figures to hand and would provide the group with further information in a separate update after the meeting.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation on what officers had achieved highlighting the positive list of collaborative community support and initiatives within the report, adding that the Council and officers should be proud of their efforts thus far.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Growth Scrutiny Group:

- a) welcome the work carried out so far to support businesses in responding to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic
- b) endorse the proposed future activity
- c) consider alternative opportunities to support businesses in Rushcliffe for future exploration by officers

## 10 Work Programme

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group consider its Work Programme and that the following items for scrutiny were agreed.

### 19 January 2022

- Tree Conservation
- Work Programme

### 20 April 2022

- Planning Communications
- Cycling Networks in the Borough – Part 2
- Work Programme

### ACTIONS – 13 October 2021

Minute No	Action	Officer Responsible
9	Members requested information on the Council's leisure centre footfall and whether it was back to pre-Covid status	Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property
9	The Chairman requested a	Service Manager –

	comparison table so that members could see how the Borough compared with other authorities in respect of distributing the government grants	Economic Growth and Property
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The meeting closed at 8.42 pm.

CHAIRMAN

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