

# RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026



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# 01.

## INTRODUCTORY PAGE

### Foreword

“2025 was a year of major progress for the Council, and I am proud to be sharing our achievements in this report. Working cross-party we have focused on delivering for residents and local communities across a range of areas. Going forward, thanks to sound financial management, we are able to invest over £3m in projects that will see real benefits in neighbourhoods across the Borough; from upgrades to local parks to grants for local sports clubs and village halls.”

#### **Cllr Michael Moran**

Leader of the Council



“Our Town Centre has experienced major reinvestment as a result of grants we have secured this year, and I am extremely proud of the progress we have made. Across the Council, we have worked hard to improve the services our residents rely on, cutting waiting times and reducing call volumes so vulnerable residents get the help they need more quickly. By modernising and improving these services, we are building a council fit for the future.”

#### **Cllr Jerry Roodhouse**

Chair of the Town Centre Working Group



# 01.

INTRODUCTORY  
PAGE CONTINUED

## Foreword

# “Continuous improvement remains at the heart of how we deliver for Rugby Borough.”

This year has been one of delivery, bringing stability, steady progress and focusing on the priorities that matter most for Rugby.

We have kept our attention on what matters most to residents and businesses:

- + improving housing
- + supporting our town centre
- + investing in green spaces
- + strengthening the customer journey and resident engagement
- + making sure the Council itself remains financially stable and well-run

We have continued delivering on our priorities for a Thriving, Greener, Fairer and Healthier Rugby. At the same time, we’ve worked hard behind the scenes to strengthen how we operate as an organisation. That includes improving how we measure performance, stronger financial planning, and improved governance ensuring we remain resilient in a challenging national environment.

We know there is more to do. Some of the improvements we are making, particularly around long-term financial sustainability and organisational development, take time and sustained focus, but we’re clear about where we’re heading, and we’re confident in the direction we’re taking.

As a Council, we are aware that change is on the horizon. Local Government Reorganisation will shape how services are delivered across the region, and we will advocate for the best outcomes for Rugby’s residents and businesses to ensure they remain at the heart of that process.

This report explains what we’ve achieved during 2025–2026, what that’s meant for residents, and what we’ll be focusing on next.

**Dan Green**  
Chief Executive



# 02.

YEAR IN REVIEW

## 2025 – 2026 TIMELINE

### SUMMER 2025

- + First phase of 100 new council homes at Navigation Way handed over
- + Nature in Focus biodiversity event hosted at The Benn Hall
- + Warm Homes engagement completed across 251 properties
- + Love Rugby Festival delivered with 39 local partners
- + South-West Rugby Design Code SPD adopted
- + £273,000 UK Shared Prosperity Fund secured from Warwickshire County Council, supporting delivery of priority public realm projects within the town centre.

### WINTER 2025

- + Medium-Term Financial Plan updated and balanced for 2026–2027
- + Risk Management Framework strengthened
- + Audit partnership with Central Midlands Audit Partnership in place
- + New Council Tax Reduction Scheme approved with up to 100% relief for eligible residents

### SPRING 2025

- + New Corporate Strategy (2025–2030) embedded, setting clear priorities for a Thriving, Greener, Fairer and Healthier Rugby
- + Community Safety Partnership Plan 2025–2029 adopted
- + Housing Strategy 2025–2035 approved
- + Economic strategy 2025–2035 adopted
- + Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation progressed

### THROUGHOUT 2025

- + Active Travel routes improved, including resurfacing and accessibility upgrades
- + 262 new trees planted across the borough with 8 new wildflower verge locations created
- + £10.7 million Warm Homes funding secured, match-funded to create £21 million total funding
- + 40% reduction in inbound customer service calls through improved online access
- + Continued preparation for potential Local Government Reorganisation
- + Woodland Wanderers environmental education programme launched in 4 local primary schools
- + 10 Climate Champion workshops delivered in partnership with Garden Organic
- + 99.9% of bins collected throughout the borough in 2025

### AUTUMN 2025

- + Public Realm Masterplan adopted for Rugby town centre
- + Town Centre branding programme completed and ready to launch
- + Rugby River Champions launched to monitor local waterways
- + Landlord Forum established to strengthen standards and communication.
- + Established the Data, Insights and Automation team to modernise how we work

### EARLY 2026

- + Proposed Submission Local Plan approved by Council with public consultation concluding in spring 2026
- + Initiated 7 AI pilot project fund to support the usage of AI across the Council.
- + Launched Local Government Reorganisation survey to engage with residents with over 200 responses
- + Began promoting food waste service with borough-wide engagement ahead of launch in March 2026

# 03.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

# How we improved life for our residents and businesses.

### THRIVING RUGBY

- + Public Realm Masterplan adopted
- + Town Centre branding commission complete
- + Calendar of Town Centre events published
- + Local Plan Regulation 18 and 19 in process
- + Economic Strategy adopted
- + Rugby Central SPD consultation
- + South-West Rugby Design Code adopted

### GREENER RUGBY

- + Climate Adaptation Plan delivered
- + Active Travel Park Connector improvements
- + Biodiversity programme and Nature in Focus event
- + Wildflower planting expansion programme
- + 5,451 Free Trees for Farmers, ready to be planted
- + River Champions launched
- + Fleet decarbonisation study complete
- + Queens Diamond Jubilee Leisure Centre awarded Midlands Energy Efficiency Award

### FAIRER RUGBY

- + £10.7m Warm Homes funding secured to bring total investment to £21 million
- + 100 new council homes at Navigation Way
- + Housing Strategy 2025–2035 adopted
- + Landlord forum established
- + Community Safety Plan 2025–2029 adopted
- + Rugby Disability Forum re-established

# 03.

KEY  
ACHIEVEMENTS  
CONTINUED

## How we improved life for our residents and businesses.

### HEALTHIER RUGBY

- + Love Rugby Festival (39 partners, 502 runners in 5k)
- + Mental health mentoring across 5 secondary schools
- + Patient Participation Group network supported
- + 3 new Community Growing Hubs added, expanding community growing initiatives
- + Enhanced inclusive play and recreational spaces
- + Continued investment in sports and active infrastructure

### OPERATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

- + Working with third-party provider to implement a new Risk Management Framework
- + Extended our CMAP Audit Partnership to improve resilience
- + Waste depot transformation underway to improve health and safety
- + 40% reduction in call demand
- + Data, Insights and Automation function established

# 04.

CORPORATE STRATEGY



+ **WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE**

+ **WHAT WE DELIVERED**

+ **WHAT DIFFERENCE IT MADE**

# 4.1

## THRIVING RUGBY

A thriving borough needs a strong town centre, a clear plan to manage growth, and a vibrant local economy.

### FOCUS AREAS:

- + Town Centre Regeneration
- + Public realm improvements
- + Local Plan progress
- + Economic Strategy delivery

**19,500+**  
**Ben Hall**  
**visitors**

**£200,000**  
**additional**  
**investment in**  
**town centre**  
**events**

**Managed**  
**growth and**  
**infrastructure**  
**planning**

# 4.1

CONTINUED

## REGENERATING OUR TOWN CENTRE

This year, the Public Realm Masterplan was adopted, providing a clear vision for improving the look, feel and functionality of our town centre. Priority projects have now progressed to detailed design (RIBA Stage 3), and smaller improvements, including new benches, living pillars, upgrades to the taxi shelter and public amenities, have been approved and commissioned. We are also working with partners to invest in key assets in the town centre including the areas around St Andrews Church and Brotherhood House.

Further preparatory work to deliver real change to the town centre and derelict sites is ongoing including the Supplementary Planning Document for Rugby Central which provides a vision for the future of this site to guide its redevelopment.

We launched a refreshed place branding programme to promote Rugby Borough as a place to visit, live, invest and do business. A coordinated calendar of town centre events is now in place, supported by additional investment of £200,000 to activate the town centre and support footfall.

Work has commenced on reviewing and enhancing the Rugby Town website to support the new branding approach. This forms part of a wider visitor focused approach, promoting Rugby's heritage, strengthening its identity as the birthplace of the game, and using coordinated place marketing and storytelling to attract visitors, businesses and investment.

Alongside town centre regeneration, we are strengthening Rugby's cultural and events offer, encouraging investment in hospitality and venues, and championing active travel routes that make it easier for visitors to explore the town, waterways, green spaces and trails. The Benn Hall is a great showcase of this, welcoming more than 19,500 visitors across 55 ticketed events, reinforcing its role as a key cultural venue in the heart of Rugby in 2025.

## PLANNING FOR MANAGED GROWTH

We have advanced the new Local Plan through Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages, ensuring that future housing and employment growth is planned in a coordinated way that is supported by appropriate infrastructure and environmental safeguards.

Our Proposed Submission Local Plan was approved by Council in January 2026, with public consultation concluding in spring 2026

A new Economic Development Team was established in January 2025 to drive delivery of the Economic Strategy and Delivery Plan. This sets out how we will support business growth, employment opportunities and long-term economic resilience.

Taken together, this work supports balanced growth across the whole borough – tackling inequalities across communities, planning development in both urban and rural areas, and ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with new housing and employment. It also strengthens support for businesses of all sizes and locations, while working with partners to expand access to education, skills and health provision borough wide.

# 4.2

## GREENER RUGBY

Protecting our environment and responding to climate change remains central to our ambitions.

### FOCUS AREAS:

- + Climate Adaptation Plan
- + Biodiversity programme and tree planting
- + Active Travel improvements
- + River Champions and citizen science
- + Fleet decarbonisation study

**Long-term  
environmental  
resilience**

**Cleaner  
waterways**

**Lower  
Carbon  
footprint**

# 4.2

CONTINUED

## CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION

In partnership with Sustainability West Midlands, we produced a Climate Change Adaptation Plan to ensure Rugby Borough can thrive in a changing climate. This plan sets out how we will protect residents, businesses and infrastructure from climate risks. We completed a Fleet Decarbonisation study and are now incorporating its findings into our future fleet replacement strategy. The next phase will be brought forward in a report to Council, led by the newly appointed Transport Manager.

To support preparedness and begin delivering against the objective set out in the Climate Change Adaptation Plan, the Community Resilience Project was established. This provides support to parish councils and community groups for the creation of an Emergency Response Plan and offers £500 worth of equipment to implement the plan.

The Queens Diamond Jubilee Leisure Centre was awarded a West Midlands Energy Efficiency Award in 2026. Rugby Borough Council received £185,000 in funding to reduce the overall energy consumption of its facilities. As part of the upgraded installed with the awarded funds, 378 solar panels were installed which has already generated 29,728 tonnes of CO2 savings.

## BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN SPACES

We delivered Nature in Focus: Rugby with over 100 attendees and launched initiatives including:

- + 5,451 native trees supplied as part of the Free Trees for Farmers project
- + 262 new trees planted across Rugby Borough
- + 8 new wildflower verge locations

We also launched Rugby River Champions in partnership with the University of Birmingham, empowering residents to monitor local river health. Active Travel improvements have enhanced accessibility and connectivity, including resurfacing and widening a 1.4km stretch between Brownsover's Crowthorns and Clifton Bridge, alongside upgrades to Great Central Way South.

The Play Ranger team launched a new "Woodland Wanderers" programme, delivering environmental education activities in four primary schools, supported by Climate Emergency Working Group funding.

A Climate Champion network was established in partnership with Garden Organic, delivering 10 workshops and launching a Community Champion training programme.

The emerging Local Plan identifies two new country parks to enhance biodiversity and access to quality green space.

# 4.3

## FAIRER RUGBY

We want Rugby Borough to be a place where everyone has access to safe, affordable housing and strong community support.

### FOCUS AREAS:

- + Warm Homes decarbonisation programme
- + Social Housing Decarbonisation award recognition
- + 100 new council homes
- + Housing Strategy 2025–2035
- + Community Safety priorities
- + Landlord Forum
- + Disability Forum relaunch

**Lower  
energy bills  
for tenants**

**Safer  
communities**

**More  
inclusive  
engagement**

**Stronger  
housing  
standards**

# 4.3

CONTINUED

## WARMER, GREENER HOMES

We secured £10.7 million in Warm Homes funding, match-funded by the Council with total funding exceeding £21 million, to deliver a three-year programme improving the energy efficiency of council housing. Initial engagement exceeded target, covering 251 properties in Year 1. Our Social Housing Decarbonisation scheme received regional award recognition in 2025.

## NEW COUNCIL HOMES

The first 50 of 100 new council homes at Navigation Way were handed over in September 2025, with the remainder to be completed by the end of March 2026. These homes are EPC A and B rated, meaning lower energy costs for tenants.

Stock condition survey data has informed a 30-year council housing investment plan, helping us target spending where it will make the biggest difference for tenants.

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES

We adopted a new Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2025–2029, focusing on serious violence, domestic abuse, business crime and hate crime. Priorities also include Personal Robbery, alongside cross-cutting themes of substance misuse and reducing reoffending. These priorities reflect current data trends while continuing wider work to address anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood concerns.

We re-established the Rugby Disability Forum to strengthen engagement with residents on disability issues.

A new Landlord Forum has also been established, supporting improved standards and communication within the private rented sector. The first forum was attended by around 70 landlords and agents, with further engagement planned including publication of an updated Charter.

Stock condition survey data has informed a 30-year council housing investment plan, helping us target spending where it will make the biggest difference for tenants.

# 4.4

## HEALTHIER RUGBY

Healthier communities are stronger communities.

### FOCUS AREAS:

- + Community sports seed funding
- + Mental health mentoring and wellbeing walks
- + Patient Participation Group network support
- + Partnership with Garden Organic to enhance community food awareness

**Increased  
physical  
activity**

**Early  
intervention  
in youth  
Mental health**

**Stronger  
long-term  
community  
health and  
wellbeing**

**Developing  
a stronger  
community**

# 4.4

CONTINUED

## SUPPORTING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

This year, we have worked in partnership with Garden Organic to support a healthier town and borough and strengthening connections between residents and sustainable living. Three organisations joined the Community Growing Hubs network, which increases local visibility of food growing and composting initiatives. Volunteers contributed 64 hours of community support and engaged with 244 residents through conversations, events and the ten Climate Champion workshops we delivered. By promoting access to green spaces and encouraging community participation, the programme helps to foster wellbeing, environmental awareness and social connection throughout the borough.

Since January 2025, continued investment in play, sport and active infrastructure has further supported healthier lifestyles for all residents. Improvements made across the last year include new equipment for Cawston Green Gym, completed tennis court renovations and a full bowls green rebuild at Caldecott Park, alongside the installation of a wheelchair-accessible swing and regeneration of the toddler play area.

In the longer-term, we are working with Birmingham Football Association and Leicester City Football Club Turf Academy on a five-year improvement programme to better conditions of local football pitches.

## LOVE RUGBY FESTIVAL

The inaugural Love Rugby Festival brought together 39 community partners and supported cultural, sporting and health-focused events across the borough. £12,000 in festival grant funding supported sport, health and cultural activity across the borough. The town centre 5k saw 502 runners take part, promoting physical activity and the NHS Couch to 5k programme.

## STRENGTHENING RESIDENT VOICE

We supported the coordination of the Patient Participation Group network, ensuring residents have a clear, accessible platform to shape local health services, amplify community voices and influence decision-making that affects their care.

Through the Mental Health Collaborative Funding, one-to-one mentoring has supported up to 34 young people per week across five secondary schools, helping build resilience and confidence. The Council holds monthly Wellbeing Walks through Caldecott Park providing residents with opportunities to improve mental health, reduce isolation and connect with nature in a supportive group setting.

# 05.

## OPERATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Behind every service improvement is a strong organisational foundation.

## GOVERNANCE & RISK

- + Strengthened scrutiny and governance
- + Risk management framework refresh
- + Audit partnership with CMAP

## DIGITAL & COMMUNICATIONS

- + Data, Insights and Automation function established
- + Pilot AI chatbot to support staff and improve efficiency
- + Reduced call volumes through improved online access
- + Improved communications around strategic projects and deliverables

## WASTE & INFRASTRUCTURE

- + Waste depot upgrade
- + Digitalisation of the fleet maintenance and management service
- + Food waste service preparation for launch in July 2026



# 05.

## OPERATIONAL FOUNDATIONS CONTINUED

### GOVERNANCE AND RISK

We implemented a new Risk Management Framework and strengthened audit arrangements through partnership with Central Midlands Audit Partnership.

In addition, a strategic risk partnership with RSM was established, including review of risk appetite, risk training for officers and Members, and clearer oversight and stronger management of key organisational risks.

### DIGITAL AND COMMUNICATIONS

A new Data, Insights and Automation function has been established to modernise operations improve efficiency across the Council. A pilot AI chatbot has been introduced to support staff in accessing key information more quickly and streamline internal processes. Improvements to online services have made it easier for residents to access services digitally which has reduced inbound calls by up to 40% in key areas.

Alongside this, we have strengthened our communications around major projects and strategic priorities to ensure residents and stakeholders are better informed about work being delivered throughout the borough.

### WASTE & INFRASTRUCTURE

Our upgraded depot will include designated vehicle bays, a one-way traffic system and a new fuelling station, to make the waste collection service more efficient. In July 2026, we are launching a new food waste service in line with the Simpler Recycling programme, initiated in 2021.

The rollout will start with borough-wide promotional materials in March, delivery of the food caddies from May, and the launch of the service in July, supported throughout by community engagement and leveraging relationships with key stakeholders.

# 06.

## FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

**Delivering better services also means managing your money carefully.**

This year, we've focused on balancing investment in what matters most to residents while keeping the Council financially stable for the future.



## 2026-2027 OVERVIEW

**£6.044m**

new service investment

**£3.101m**

targeted to priority areas

**£2.99%**

(£6.61 Band D)  
Council Tax increase

Balanced  
2026-2027  
position

# 06.

## FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS CONTINUED

For 2026–2027, we are in a stable position and able to set a balanced budget. This allows us to continue investing in key priorities such as healthy lifestyles, liveable neighbourhoods, and town centre support and transformation.

We are also being clear about the longer-term picture. Beyond 2026–2027, further savings and service modernisation will be needed to ensure we remain financially sustainable. That means continuing to improve efficiency, modernise services, and make smart decisions about how we use our resources.

Behind the scenes, we have strengthened risk management, enhanced audit oversight, and invested in digital and automation tools to improve how we operate. While these improvements may not always be visible, they are essential to protecting frontline services and maintaining the Council's resilience.

Our approach is simple: invest where it makes a difference, plan responsibly for the future, and ensure every pound delivers value for residents.

# 07.

WHERE NEXT?

## PLANS FOR 2026

In the year ahead, we will:

- + Continue delivering the Warm Homes programme
- + Launch new weekly Food waste collection service
- + Progress town centre regeneration project
- + Carry out public realm improvements including rain gardens and living pillars, to increase green space in the Borough
- + Resuming the Garden Organic project into year two
- + Implement the Housing Allocation Policy and Choice Based Lettings changes
- + Continue strengthening financial resilience and performance maturity
- + Publish updated Landlord Charter
- + £5m investment for major projects and policies to improve the public realm
- + Support the development of proposals for local plan sites, including new strategic green spaces.

Our focus remains clear:

**Sustained improvement, responsible financial management, and visible impact for residents.**



**Delivering a  
Thriving, Greener, Fairer and Healthier  
Rugby Borough.**