

Proposal: Protecting Radcliffe-on-Trent from Housing Expansion and Preparing for Town Council Status

1. Background

Radcliffe-on-Trent is currently a **civil parish** within Rushcliffe Borough. Its historic edges are defined by landscape features including the **former Cotgrave Colliery railway** and the **Stragglethorpe Road corridor**. These physical features, while historically rural, now influence planning perceptions: under new **Green & Grey Belt guidance** (Gedling Council and NPPF 2024), some land previously considered Green Belt may be classified as **Grey Belt**, creating potential pressure for infill or housing development.

The recent **Avant Homes approval** on Shelford Road demonstrates this risk: land that was previously open countryside is now considered “logical infill” due to infrastructure and existing settlement patterns. Planned improvements to Stragglethorpe Road may create additional pressure for development along Radcliffe’s edges, as new transport infrastructure can be perceived by planners as establishing “defensible boundaries” for future expansion.

2. Current Policy Context

- **NPPF 2024 / Grey Belt:** Introduces the concept of Grey Belt — areas of Green Belt that make a limited contribution to the five purposes of Green Belt. Some development on these areas may be permissible if it does not fundamentally undermine openness or the remaining Green Belt.
 - **Gedling Grey Belt Consultation 2025:** Defines towns and settlement edges to guide how land is assessed. While it encourages limiting sprawl, it does not categorically prevent development around towns.
 - **Neighbourhood Plan & Conservation Area:** Radcliffe’s Neighbourhood Plan and potential Conservation Area designation provide additional locally-led policy tools to preserve village character and settlement boundaries.
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3. Legal and Civic Status: Parish vs Town Council

Radcliffe-on-Trent **remains a civil parish legally** under the **Local Government Act 1972**.

- **Town Council Status:** The council may adopt the title “**Town Council**” for civic and community purposes. This change:
 - Does **not** alter legal powers or responsibilities.
 - Does **not** change the council’s official legal name, which remains **Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council**.
 - Can enhance civic profile and visibility in strategic planning discussions.
 - **Communications and Branding:**
 - Official documents, minutes, agendas, financial statements, and legal correspondence should use **Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council**.
 - Community-facing materials (website, newsletters, signage) may incorporate “Town Council” for engagement purposes.
 - **Evidence sources:**
 - Local Government Act 1972
 - [Nottinghamshire Parish Council Guidance](#)
 - [NPPF 2024](#)
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4. Risks

1. **Grey Belt Reclassification:** Infrastructure changes may lead planners to consider eastern and southern edges as suitable for infill.
 2. **Incremental Housing Expansion:** Once a portion of land is considered Grey Belt, piecemeal development may follow.
 3. **Infrastructure-Led Pressure:** Road improvements (e.g., Stragglethorpe Road) could unintentionally create “logical” development boundaries.
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5. Objectives

- Preserve Radcliffe-on-Trent's **openness and rural character**.
 - Protect settlement boundaries from inappropriate development.
 - Ensure the community is **well-represented** in Grey Belt consultations and strategic planning.
 - Consider the adoption of **Town Council status** to raise civic profile and engagement, without compromising legal clarity.
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6. Proposed Next Steps

a. Green & Grey Belt Protection

1. **Gather Evidence:** Landscape character, historic maps, biodiversity corridors, visual amenity, heritage assets.
2. **Consultation Response:** Submit evidence showing that eastern and southern edges meet Green Belt purposes; argue that road/rail features should not be interpreted as settlement edges.
3. **Neighbourhood Plan Review:** Update settlement boundaries and add policies for edge protection and design guidance.
4. **Conservation Area Designation:** Progress proposals to strengthen protection.

b. Civic / Town Council Transition

1. **Decision to Adopt “Town Council” Status:** Discuss timing and community communication.
2. **Branding Approach:**
 - Keep **Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council** for legal purposes.
 - Use “Town Council” in community engagement, newsletters, and events.
3. **Update Materials:** Consider future email addresses, signage, and website sections, ensuring legal compliance.
4. **Community Communication:** Explain the change as a **civic identity enhancement**, not a change in powers.

c. Monitoring

- Track infrastructure projects (Stragglethorpe Road improvements) for potential impact on settlement perception.
 - Monitor new housing applications and planning proposals affecting Grey Belt / village edge.
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7. Summary / Vision

By combining **evidence-led planning input**, **Neighbourhood Plan reinforcement**, **heritage protection**, and strategic **civic branding**, Radcliffe-on-Trent can:

- Preserve its rural character and open spaces.
- Maintain influence in strategic planning and infrastructure decisions.
- Strengthen community identity and visibility as a town, while remaining legally a parish council.