

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SIMPLIFICATION PATHFINDER BOARD

17 JANUARY 2025

A meeting of the Simplification Pathfinder Board was held on Friday 17 January 2025. The meeting was held in Committee Room A, Town Hall, Coton Road, Nuneaton.

- Present:** Sean Farnell (CWLEP) - Chair, Alison Thompson (WCAVA), Marion Plant (NWSLC), Lindsey Randle (Horiba-Mira), Nicky King (Councillor), Steve Hey (Councillor), Garry Palmer (WCC), Jodie Gosling (MP), Dr Elinor Parsons
- Officers in attendance:** Maria Bailey (NBBC), Sandy Johal (NBBC), Joanne Pierson (NBBC), Salewa A-Ogunleye (NBBC) - Mins
- Apologies:** Mark Farmer (NBBC), Jan Matecki (Councillor), Jenni Northcote (NHS), Jet Jones (Together for Change), Richard Baxter- Payne, Stuart Noss (KEGS), Rachel Taylor (MP), Les Ratcliffe (CWC)

SPB21 Site visit to Grayson Place to see progress of Phase 2.

SPB22 Chair's welcome and announcements

The Chair welcomed Board members to the meeting and introductions took place.

SPB23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2024, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

SPB24 Declarations of Interests

Board members' interests for the meeting were as set out in a Schedule of Declarations of Interests, attached to the agenda.

SPB25 Highlight Report

The Regeneration Programme Manager (NBBC) submitted a Highlight Report (which had been circulated prior to the meeting) to update Board members on the status of the Simplification Pathfinder programme and individual projects. The report detailed the overall Simplification Pathfinder programme financial status, the key risks and upcoming activities.

- Grayson Place – Phase 1 – hotel up and running. Phase 2 – formal signing of contract took place on 20 December 2024. Food hall building almost complete. Steels in place for college.

- George Eliot Visitors Centre - Planning application – some objections were received (Victorian Society), it should be going to committee in February.
- Saints – JP informed the project is on track, with work starting on site in September 2024. Prior to a site visit yesterday, they were a couple of weeks ahead of the original deadline, however due to a delay in receiving cubicles for the gent's toilets. they are now a week over original deadline. JP reassured the Board that they are still on track to meet the revised deadline around 22 March. The grand opening is scheduled for 7 April. The Board's next meeting will take place at the Saints, to allow the Board to see the completed project before the grand opening.
- Parks Revival - moving ahead with RIBA stage 3. Anticipate appointing a consultant team by March. Concept has been agreed with the Leader.
- E-mobility - waiting to appoint Oxford DPS, small project, no concerns regarding meeting the deadlines.
- Bedworth Physical Activity Hub – progressing nicely, steel frames have now been installed, and on target. Upcoming PR event called the "Bolt out" which will be the next stage of works and will look to celebrate the progress on the project. Operating assessments need to be taken by the Council, but they are expected to get an early outcome for summer, which is again on target for this project.
- Bridge to Living –one tenant still in the unit, still negotiating with them to find a suitable alternative unit. In the process of going through procurement to demolish site. The Leader has requested the site is demolished at the same time as County carry out demolition of Vicarage Street (currently April 2025). Following demolition, will be looking at an options analysis of what to do with the site. JG asked about the purpose and potential use of the Bridge to Living site while assessments are being made.
MB responded that they are looking at the options in terms of what to do with the site, acknowledging it is very much the gateway to George Eliot Gardens and Riversley Park. As part of the demolition, there will be some preparatory work, it won't be hoarded off and left. The team is exploring options to potentially make the cleared site into a usable open space in the interim.

SPB26

Any Other Business

- a) Marketing - MP raised concerns about marketing Nuneaton's transformation and the need for a clear communication strategy. She expressed fear that the town could have a wonderful new town centre, but struggle to get people to come and enjoy it if the changes are not effectively communicated.

A discussion took place on this. SJ confirmed starting to look at refreshing the communications strategy. She acknowledged that the current approach feels a bit outdated, and with new people joining the team, it is a good time to work with the internal communications team to develop a more effective plan.

MB added that they have started making connections with Destination Coventry and colleagues across Warwickshire to align marketing efforts. She also mentioned the ongoing marketing for the new hotel, which is helping promote Nuneaton as a destination.

SF suggested, and it was agreed, to make communications a standing item on future agendas to keep this front and centre and ensure the team is consistently singing the praises of what has been achieved and what is to come.

LR suggested creating a slide deck with photos, bullet points, and updates that could be shared with the 40+ companies located on the local tech park, on the tech park's app, so those businesses and people can stay informed and engaged with the progress.

SJ responded, indicating that some good visual presentation materials would be brilliant to help push the messaging around the town's transformation.

LR noted that they are already successfully pushing the marketing for the new hotel, which has resulted in attracting visitors.

- b) Arts/Culture – JG queried how we can get our thriving arts / heritage / history communities and social clubs into our town centres, representing that rich history and whether opportunities to build that in and safety features, designing a crime free town centre. Rewrite narrative of ASB in town centre. SF agreed, but it's not necessarily the remit of this Board whose task it is to get the projects on their way and completed, but if there is anything the Board can do to help, then it will.

MB stated that “public space protection order – ASB Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres” was presented at Cabinet this week (15/01/2025) and approved.

SJ Informed the Board that there is a project called Creative Explorers that is focused on culture and heritage in the town.

- c) AT stated WCAVA are leading on the Arts Council Creative People and Place. The bid was submitted yesterday, if successful will get £1M funding. The bid leant heavily into the transformation agenda, referenced the TIP and My Town feedback. The project will be called “Rooted” and it's about heritage. Working with NBBC colleagues Kevin Hollis and Katie Memetovic-Bye
- d) Gyrotory Scheme –County scheme for Wheat Street was in the press yesterday.
- e) All schemes – SF felt it would be useful to have a plan of where all the schemes are including art, County, etc. JG requested a summary of

the projects and the ends dates. GP will bring an update of the County Schemes, although they are not part of the Board, to the next meeting.

SPD27 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 9172, the public and press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items, it being likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information on the description specified in paragraph (iii) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

SPB28 Risk register

The Programme Manager (NBBC) submitted an updated Programme Risk Register. The Board considered the specific risks raised by the updated register.

Distributed prior to the meeting. No significant changes.

Chair of the Board