

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

23rd January 2025

A meeting of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday, 23rd January 2025 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall Nuneaton.

Present

Councillor B. Hughes (Chair)

Councillors: E. Amaechi, M. Bird, T. Cooper, B. Pandher, S. Markham (substitute for Councillor M. Etienne) W. Markham, C. Smith (substitute for Councillor S. Dhillon) and T. Venson.

Apologies: Councillor M. Etienne (Vice-Chair) S. Dhillon

PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS

HC19 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing and Communities OSP held on 26th September 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

HC20 **Declarations of Interest**

RESOLVED that the declarations of interest are as set out in the Schedule attached to these minutes with the addition of Councillor S. Markham and C. Smith as substitute.

HC21 **Questions to Cabinet**

The portfolio holder for Housing (Councillor C. Watkins) was in attendance to answer questions from the Panel.

No questions were asked by the Panel.

HC22 **Integrated Performance Report – Second Quarter 2024-25**

A report of the Risk Management and Performance Officer. The Panel were presented with a report which seeks to provide appropriate performance measures, budget information and risk data for service areas within the scope of the Panel. The report has been adapted to reduce the volume of data (as previously reported under the former scrutiny panel arrangements), whilst still providing the Panel with sufficient information to monitor results to address issues arising.

SPEAKER: Mr Peter Smith

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

HC23 **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)**

A report of the Private Sector Housing Manager submitted a report to provide the Panel with information on Houses in Multiple Occupation and the legislation and licensing surrounding them.

SPEAKER: Mr Peter Smith

The panel discussed the following points:

- Clarity surrounding whether gas checks were completed in HMO's, this was confirmed by the Private Sector Housing Manager that those checks were taking place.
- Mandatory licences are held for five years and not transferred. A question was raised regarding how many licenses have been reissued? It was confirmed that approximately 1-2 HMO properties have been sold and changed use i.e they are no longer HMO's. Generally, licenses are varied due to a change of landlord rather than reissued.
- The most enquiries for HMO's are surrounding whether a property is an HMO.
- HMO's that do not need to be licensed are where we have most issues. The licensed HMO's are monitored and have to be checked to hold a license.
- Licensable HMO's – the fee is taken first then a date for inspection is arranged, if upon inspection the council are not satisfied then a schedule of works is organised. If complaints are received, then the council inspect every 6 months. Officers cannot inspect more regularly because of staffing limitations.
- Un-licensed HMO's are not inspected until complaints are received.
- Mandatory licensed landlords are Disclosure and Barring Checked for criminal record.
- Vulnerable people due to affordability are more likely to take on these tenancies. Does the council take details of the people living in the HMO properties? The officer responded that the landlord should provide a tenancy agreement but there is no legal requirement for the council to take details of the tenants living within an HMO.
- The Council do not own or let any HMO properties.
- The Council has a good relationship with HMO landlords in the borough and we are very strict before issuing a license, the council encourage all landlords to attend the Landlord Forum event held by the council.
- In respect of planning – residents are concerned with the number of HMO's appearing which, is putting pressure on local communities. It was advised that it would be useful to know which HMO properties the residents are concerned about to ensure there is no illegal activity taking place.
- There are no limits to the amount of HMO's in the borough.
- Residents seem to fear HMO's perhaps the council could look at ways to remove the stigma surrounding HMO's.

RESOLVED that

- a) the report be noted;
- b) HMO's remain on the work programme for the next municipal year;
- c) a working party be created to examine the licensing surrounding HMO's including looking at other local authorities and bring in potential landlords in the borough to get their views; and

- d) the working party consist of the following members: Councillors E. Amaechi, C. Smith, M. Bird, B. Hughes and T. Venson.

HC24 **Housing Performance – Quarter two (2024/25)**

The Assistant Director – Social Housing and Community Safety submitted a report to provide the Panel with the performance figures for the second quarter 2024/25.

The follow points were raised:

- Pest control orders – the report shows six rat orders (only measure pest control orders in relation to council properties), the panel requested that treatment orders be included.
- A question was raised regarding the outstanding damp and mould cases, some being over 6months since being reported. The Assistant Director (AD) advised that each case is risk assessed giving a low or high priority rating and regular advice is given to tenants on avoiding damp and mould. In some cases scaffolding is required which means this can extend the time a case takes to complete. The AD also advised that there is a dedicated damp and mould liaison officer for tenants.
- The panel asked if a tenant is in rent arrears and evicted, is the rent received or written off. The AD advised that the arrears are actively recovered even if the tenancy ends

RESOLVED that the report be noted with amendments made to typing errors.

HC25 **Armed Forces Covenant Update**

A report of the Assistant Director – Social Housing and Community Safety was submitted to the panel informing them of the Council’s achievement in sustaining the Gold Standard.

RESOLVED that

- a) the report be noted; and
- b) thanks be expressed to all staff involved for their hard work and commitment in continuing to achieve the Gold Standard status

HC26 **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan showing the key decisions that will be made in the four months commencing 1st February 2025, was provided to the Panel for information.

RESOLVED: that the Forward Plan be noted.

HC27 **Work Programme**

The Panel were presented with the Work Programme for the municipal year 2024-2025.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted with the recommendation as above in retaining Houses of Multiple Occupation on the work programme

HC28 Any Other Items
None

Chair

**Housing and Communities OSP –
Schedule of Declarations of Interests – 2024/2025**

	Name of Councillor	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Other Personal Interest	Dispensation
	General dispensations granted to all members under s.33 of the Localism Act 2011			Granted to all members of the Council in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing matters - Statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 - An allowance, payment given to members - An indemnity given to members - Any ceremonial honour given to members - Setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 - Planning and Licensing matters - Allotments - Local Enterprise Partnership
	E. Amaechi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employed NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) - Ricky Global Consultants Ltd - Purple Dove Events Ltd - Director – Techealth Ltd 	The Labour Party (sponsorship) - Foundation Governor - Our Lady and St. Joseph Academy, Nuneaton. - Member of: - British Computer Society. - Igbo Community Coventry. - Mbaise Community, Coventry. Representative on the following Outside Bodies: - Committee of Management of Hartshill and Nuneaton Recreation Ground - EQuIP: Equality and Inclusion Partnership - West Midlands Combined Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee - Pride in Camp Hill (PinCH)	
	M. Bird		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life Member of National Association of British Market Authorities. - Member of the Stockingford Allotment association and Pavillion Club. 	
	T. Cooper	None		
	S. Dhillon	Employed by UHCW NHS Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Member (Rep) at Unison – UHCW Trust -Representative on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warwickshire Adult Social Care and Health 	

	Name of Councillor	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Other Personal Interest	Dispensation
			<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Hill Urban Village: Pride in Camp Hill Board • Committee of Management of Hartshill and Nuneaton Recreation Ground • George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust – Public/User Board • West Midlands Combined Authority Wellbeing Board 	
	M. Etienne	Employed by Network Rail	<p>- Member of The Conservative Party and Nuneaton Conservative Association</p> <p>- RMT Member</p>	
	B. Hughes	Full Time Carer	<p>Member of the Labour Party. Member of the National Trust. Member of the Caravan and Motorhome Club Member of CAMRA</p> <p>Representative on the following Outside Bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - George Elliot Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Governors - Governor of Stockingford Maintained Nursery School 	
	W. Markham		<p>Governor at Ash Green School for SEND</p> <p>Member of the following bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unite Union - Free Speech Union - Exhall Multicultural Group 	
	B. Pandher		<p>Member of:</p> <p>Warwickshire County Council. Conservative Party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President & Trustee of Nanaksar Gurdwara Gursikh Temple Coventry; - Coordinator of Council of Sikh Temples in Coventry; - Secretary of Coventry Indian Community; - Trustee of Sikh Monument Trust - Vice Chair Exhall Multicultural Group 	
	T. Venson	Employed by Freightliner Heavy Haul	<p>ASIEF Trade Union The Labour Party</p> <p>Representative on the following Outside Bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building Control Partnership Steering Group - Warwickshire Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee 	

	Name of Councillor	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Other Personal Interest	Dispensation
	S. Markham (substitute)	County Councillor – WCC (Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services)	Member of the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hammersley, Smith and Orton Charities • Trustee of Abbey Theatre • Bedworth Board • Free Speech Union Exhall Multicultural Group	
	C. Smith (substitute)	Software Engineer – Prophet PLC	- Member of Labour Party and Unite - Safeguarding – Manor Park RFC Representative on the following Outside Bodies: Astley Charity	