

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**BUSINESS, REGENERATION AND PLANNING
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

8th February 2024

A meeting of the Business, Regeneration and Planning Overview & Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday, 8th February 2024 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall Nuneaton. This meeting was recorded for later publication on the Council's website.

Present

Councillor M. Walsh (Chair)

Councillors: C. Cape, J. Coventry-Moreton, J. Hartshorn, G. Moreton, M. Wright and D. Brown (substitute for Councillor J. Clarke).

Apologies: Councillors J. Clarke, M Green and N. Phillips.

The following Councillors were also present from the Housing, Environment and Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel, to take part in joint agenda item BRP 30: Councillors K. Kondakor and S. Harbison.

PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS

BRP 27 **Election of Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor M. Walsh be elected as Chair for this meeting.

BRP 28 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Business, Regeneration and Planning Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 7th December 2024 be approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

BRP 29 **Declarations of Interest**

As Councillor D. Brown was a substitute Councillor for this meeting, his declarations were not detailed in the Schedule attached to the agenda.

As Councillors S. Harbison and K. Kondakor were present from the Housing, Environment and Health OSP, their declarations were not detailed in the schedule attached to the agenda.

RESOLVED that the declarations of interest are as set out in the Schedule attached to these minutes, with the addition of the Declarations of Interest for Councillor D. Brown as a substitute for the meeting, and the Declarations of Interests for the Members of the Housing, Environment and Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel for agenda item BRP 30.

BRP 30 **Questions to Cabinet**

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Regeneration (Councillor K. Wilson) and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation (Councillor R. Smith) were in attendance to answer the following questions put forward by the panel members.

Councillor M. Wright asked the following question for the attention of the Portfolio Holder for Business and Regeneration:

Please can we have an update as to the status of the former Woolworth's Site, thank you.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Regeneration replied:

The lease was actually signed over to Wilko prior to their insolvency just at the latter end of last year, and it is still with the Administrators to decide what they do with the lease. It is something that I have been pushing on with the team, because obviously that does lose us an income, because of the estimated rate, but we are legally tied into that lease. So at the earliest opportunity we can escape the lease, or they will surrender the lease, we will do so and put it up on the market to try and get it occupied as soon as possible. But it is sadly right out of our hands, we are tied at the moment. As much as I would love to be able to do more with the site, because we were looking forward to Wilko going in, and at the time we didn't foresee their collapse.

BRP 31 Biodiversity Offsetting Monies within S.106 Legal Agreements

A report of the Assistant Director – Planning provided an opportunity for the Panel to scrutinise the effectiveness and monitoring arrangements of the Council's use of monies for environment offsetting and mitigation included in planning application S.106 contributions.

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- The allocation of monies, timescales and putting it to use as soon as possible.
- Requirements for builders, holding them to account and ensuring they fulfil their commitments (developers do not always aim to deliver what they propose).
- Ensure there are follow ups when required to ensure agreements and commitments are carried out.
- Lessons to be/that have been learned – making changes and improvements to the process when and where required.
- Monitoring and enforcement of biodiversity issues, and Parks and Open Spaces. Looking into the delivery and working with developers.
- Recent recruitment to Planning Enforcement Officer position – to look at wider issues across Planning and Parks, and biodiversity will be a big part of their role in the future.
- The organisation needs a robust synergy across Committees and Panels. The restructure (Parks and Planning are now within the same Directorate) means they are using resources more effectively.
- Concerns that adoption of open spaces is slow. Sites that are pre-Borough Plan approved do not have much biodiversity offsetting on their open spaces, but they provide land where the Council can plant trees/meadows.
- Ponds and wetlands are valuable. Flower and meadowlands are only one part of the ecosystem. It is hoped the Biodiversity Officer looks to provide a mixture of habitats, including wetlands and woods.
- Grounds Maintenance – such as 'no mow May'. Managing residents expectations alongside not cutting where/when not required. The Grounds Maintenance contract dictates locations and regularity of grass cutting, and the terms and conditions are looked at when the contract is up for renewal.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

BRP 32 Nuneaton Business Improvement District (BID)

The Assistant Director – Economy and Regeneration presented a report which included the Business Plan for the proposed Nuneaton BID which will be going to ballot on the 20th February 2024.

Public Speaker: Councillor K. Kondakor

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- A business led group, run by local businesses to deliver improvements.
- NBBC have businesses who could benefit.
- Bid areas – the tax of businesses within the ring road. NBBC paying big part with hotel etc. on the way.
- Boundaries are drawn by BID team, not NBBC.
- Bedworth can also be looked at if businesses are interested. It is business led in Nuneaton, and Bedworth can have the opportunity if they wish.
- There will be a seat on the Board for the Council.
- It will be a fluid document as businesses join and leave.
- Any businesses outside the area can give voluntary contributions.

RESOLVED that the development of Nuneaton Business Improvement District and BID Business Plan be supported.

BRP 33 Integrated Performance Report – Second Quarter 2023-24

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.

Public Speaker: Councillor K. Kondakor

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- Planning application time frames, the backlog of undetermined applications, and the impact long/difficult applications have on the figures.
- The figures in the report will be amended and corrected to be consistent throughout.
- Footfall in towns – profile figures are pre-pandemic. Shops are still feeling the impact of the pandemic.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

BRP 34 Business, Regeneration and Planning Overview and Scrutiny Panel Annual Report 2023-24

The Panel were presented with an annual report, which set out the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel in 2023-24.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

BRP 35 **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan showing the key decisions that will be made in the four months commencing 1st February 2024, was provided to the Panel for information.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

BRP 36 **Work Programme 2023-2024**

The Panel were presented with the Work Programme for the municipal year 2023-2024.

RESOLVED that the 2023-2024 work programme be noted.

Chair

Business, Regeneration and Planning Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Schedule of Declarations of Interests – 2023/2024

	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
	C. Cape	Director of Capability Coaching and Consultancy Ltd.	Member of the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armed Forces Covenant Meeting 	
	J. Clarke	Employed by Marcus Jones MP	County Councillor W.C.C. Nuneaton Conservative Association; Deputy Chairman Officer of the Abbey Preceptory No.541 - Nuneaton	
	J. Coventry-Moreton	School Receptionist – St Nicholas Chamberlain School, Bedworth	Share in rental dwelling at Sealand Drive, Bedworth and Tresilian Road, Bedworth.	
	M. Green	Employed by Horiba Mira – Engineering Technician	Chair of Education Standards Committee – St Thomas More School. School Appeals Panel Member Our Lady of the Angels Church. President – St Vincent De Paul Society Nuneaton. Director – Holy Spirit Catholic Multi Academy Company. Member of the George Eliot Fellowship Member of Other Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship Project for Children. • Nuneaton Education Strategy Group 	
	J. Hartshorn	Employed by Asda	Member of Nuneaton	

	Name of Councillor	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Other Personal Interest	Dispensation
		Nuneaton	Conservatives	
	G. Moreton	Member of School Appeals Panels at Warwickshire County Council	Share in rental dwellings at Sealand Drive, Bedworth and Tresillian Road, Exhall. Member on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedworth Neighbourhood Watch Committee 	
	N. Phillips (Vice-Chair)	Employee of DWP	Member of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuneaton Labour CLP • The Fabian Society • The George Eliot Society • The PCS Union • Central Credit Union • Stockingford Sports and Allotment Club • Haunchwood Sports and Social Club 	
	M. Walsh (Chair)	Employed by MacInnes Tooling Ltd. – UK Sales Manager		
	M. Wright			