

**NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH OVERVIEW  
AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**18<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

A meeting of the Housing, Environment and Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall Nuneaton, the meeting was recorded for publication on the Council's website.

**Present**

Councillor K. Evans (Chair)

Councillors: E. Shiers (Vice-Chair), C. Cape, T. Cooper, K. Kondakor, B. Pandher and J. Singh.

Apologies: Councillor S. Harbison.

**PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS**

HEH44 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair.

HEH45 **Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED** that the declarations of interest are as set out in the Schedule attached to these Minutes.

HEH46 **Questions to Cabinet**

The portfolio holder for Health and Environment (Councillor J. Gutteridge) was in attendance to answer questions from the Panel, and the portfolio holder for Housing and Communities (Councillor C. Golby) arrived later in the meeting to answer questions from the Panel.

**Councillor Kondakor asked the Portfolio Holder for Health and Environment:**

First question I wanted to ask was about the trees, because obviously every year we have a winter tree planting season, and we've lost a lot in Bedworth with the War Memorial Park and the Miners Welfare Park sorry, having the bits taken down for where the Leisure Centre might be. Can we have an update on how good your tree planting was this year, and if we're also looking at the trees on the adopted sites, because obviously we're about to take them over and it's useful to make sure that they are both in good health and we can plant some more on these sites, which will get adopted. Thank you Chair.

**The Portfolio Holder for Health and Environment replied:**

Thank you Councillor Kondakor, I welcome your question. We'll start with the Physical Activity Hub at Bedworth. Yes we did remove trees, but we are planting over, I think the last count was there'll be 140 trees planted in place of the 30 trees we took down. This year I think we have planted 232 I think, if I was correct. So we planted over 600 trees in the last few years.

**Councillor Kondakor followed up with:**

To come back on your answer last night about the balancing ponds on the newest estates. I totally understand that the Water Safety Policy doesn't require us to have fencing added around the ponds, but I wasn't quite sure whether it prohibited there being any fencing, so if you could just clarify. You kept waving the document saying 'what policy, what policy'. I get it that it's not a requirement, but is it a

prohibition or is there something we could actually have a look at, doing some planting or something just to ease the resident concerns. Because I'm not expecting a bulletproof fence and laser guard around these ponds, because they are ponds, but I think just on the corner nearest the climbing frame it would be nice if we did allow the residents to have a bit of hedging or kick rail.

**The Portfolio Holder for Health and Environment replied:**

Councillor Kondakor, do you want me to read my answer to your question last Night? Well I'll read it again. The adoption of public open space on the three developments at the top of Weddington Road are progressing, but are at different stages. The furthest along is the Davidsons Church Field site. The fencing was removed about the SUDS, Sustainable Urban Drainage System feature, as it was not on the approved plans. I repeat it again, not on the approved plans and contrary to Council adopted Water Safety Policy. The Council is currently preparing for the adoption of this site which should be completed later this year. Parks adopt it first and it then goes on to Legal, and it should be noted that the balancing feature is no closer to the play facilities than they are the river Anker itself, and that our water safety policy will be applied in determining the future management arrangements of this site. I believe also you've spoken to Offices about this, and you've put a Member inquiry in, so hopefully you will understand that when we adopt it, we will look at it. It's not ours at the moment. So when we adopt it, we will evaluate it. I hope this puts the question to bed once and for all.

**Councillor K. Kondakor asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities:**

I'd like an update please with what is going on different with Eaton House, and why we're so far out of track on our budget thank you.

**The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities replied:**

I will get a written response to you and Panel Members

**Councillor K. Kondakor followed up with:**

On page 40 it talks about longer times to get the voids back into use and it talks about the holidays etc. but as it's comparison between the same period in two years there was a Christmas this year and there was a Christmas year before. Are we on track to get more staff and get the void time down? Thank you Chair.

**The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities replied:**

We are in the process of reorganising staff. There is a lot of work to be done, obviously keeping on top of everything, so it is what it is. When the new structures bed in properly that will be when we will see an improvement.

**HEH47 George Eliot Hospital Update**

The Director of Strategy, Service Improvement & Partnerships presented a report which provided Members with an update on the current effect of winter and coronavirus on the hospitals operational position and predicted return to normal operating conditions. An update on the provision of additional hospice beds was also provided.

**Public Speaker: Mr P. Smith**

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- The new Community Diagnostics Centre – led to improvements relating to diagnostics and is a real asset with benefits being seen.

- Lack of beds and staff in A&E. Everyone is working hard, and more work may need to be looked at in relation to discharge processes.
- Extra beds are being placed in wards – but safe staffing levels will be maintained.
- Temporary staffing levels which were high and costly have been improved.
- The financial position is challenging, and a lot of work is being done to reduce wait times.
- Frailty requires a multi-disciplinary approach, including home support.
- Feedback is encouraged.
- Town Centre Board/transforming Nuneaton – the possibility of having an outpatients clinic within the Town Centre.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation and report be noted.

HEH48 **Healthwatch**

A presentation of the Chief Executive & Company Secretary (Healthwatch) provided the Panel with information including the objectives, feedback received and the priorities of Healthwatch.

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- People contact Healthwatch when they have issues and things are not going well.
- The biggest areas of concern for residents were discussed, which include G.P's and hospitals. Pharmacy and Dentistry are being more of a concern. Communication seems to be an issue.
- The Veterans health care study – until end May.
- The emerging priorities include communication, transport, delays and pharmacy.
- The impact of the cost of living.
- The new NHS app and the use of Artificial Intelligence to try and reduce wait times. Technology can exclude certain members of the population.
- The challenges of getting men to talk.
- People under-medicating as they can't afford prescriptions.
- G.P working hours and access – including recruitment and retention.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted.

HEH49 **Armed Forces Covenant**

A report of the Strategic Director - Housing and Community Safety gave Members the opportunity to note and feedback on the work being carried out in respect of the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Panel asked a number of questions and discussed a variety of issues including:

- The ways support can be given and the need for partnership/holistic working.
- Ways to engage and encourage – including sessions where veterans know they can get information and advice.
- NBBC and North Warwickshire both rated highly by veterans organisations, especially in relation to housing.
- Veterans contact point received the King Charles award for charity.
- Resources and increasing the profile of support, including encouraging feedback.

- The general feeling is the current system is working well, but needs to be monitored and looking to improve on areas such as engagement and making people feel valued and recognised.

HEH50 **Integrated Performance Report – Third 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.

The Panel asked a number of questions and discussed a variety of issues including:

- Having the Housing HRA similar to the general fund to make it easier to scrutinise.
- Increased number of complaints recently down to refuse collection changes,

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted.

HEH51 **Forward Plan**

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

**RESOLVED:** that the Forward Plan be noted.

HEH52 **Work Programme**

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

**RESOLVED** that the Work Programme be noted

HEH53 **Any Other Items**

The Briefing Update Report relating to 'Addressing Teen Conception in Nuneaton and Bedworth' which was emailed to Panel Members on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 be noted.

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Chair

## Housing, Environment and Health 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"> <li>- Housing matters</li> <li>- Statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992</li> <li>- An allowance, payment given to members</li> <li>- An indemnity given to members</li> <li>- Any ceremonial honour given to members</li> <li>- Setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992</li> <li>- Planning and Licensing matters</li> <li>- Allotments</li> <li>- Local Enterprise Partnership</li> </ul>
	B. Beetham	Senior PowerBi Lead at Wye Valley Hospital Trust; Warwickshire County Council – Camp Hill	Member of the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camp Hill Urban Village: Pride in Camp Hill Board</li> <li>• Committee of Management of Hartshill and Nuneaton Recreation Ground</li> </ul>	
	C. Cape	Director of Capability Coaching and Consultancy Ltd.	Member of the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed Forces Covenant Meeting</li> </ul>	
	T. Cooper	None	Member on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camp Hill Urban Village: Pride in Camp Hill Board</li> <li>• Committee of Management of Hartshill and Nuneaton Recreation Ground</li> </ul>	
	K. Evans (Chair)	Employed the Local Government Association	Sponsorship: Election Expenses – North Warwickshire Conservative Association  Membership of Other Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substitute Member of the West Midlands Combined Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee</li> </ul>	

	Name of Councillor	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Other Personal Interest	Dispensation
			Member of the Bedworth Conservative Club Member of the Conservative Party.	
	S. Harbison	Self-employed	Member of Conservative and Unionist Party. Member on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Astley Charity</li> </ul>	
	K.A. Kondakor	Electronic and Embedded Software Design Engineer (self-employed)	Unpaid Director of 100% Renewables UK Ltd  Green Party (E&W)	
	B. Pandher		Member of Warwickshire County Council  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  Member of the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foleshill Charity</li> <li>• Trustee – Proffitt's Charity</li> <li>• Conservative Party</li> </ul>	
	E. Shiers (Vice-Chair)	Employed by and Director of Cannon Enterprise Ltd. Director of The Fresh Dessert Company	The Labour Party Coventry East Credit Union Member of the Pride in Camp Hill Board. Member of the governing board for Camp Hill Primary School. Member of the Board of Trustees of Camp Hill Community Association Volunteer for the Coventry and Warwickshire district RSPCA Director Community Interest Company Chill (alternative education provision for young people)	
	J. Singh	Self-employed at Sedgie's News Agents.		