

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SIMPLIFICATION PATHFINDER BOARD

27 SEPTEMBER 2024

A meeting of the Simplification Pathfinder Board was held on Friday 27 September 2024. The meeting was held in the first-floor ball room, The Saints, Newdegate Street, Nuneaton, CV11 4ED.

Present: Sean Farnell (CWLEP) - Chair, Marion Plant (NWSLC), Alison Thompson (WCAVA), Lindsey Randle (MIRA), Les Ratcliffe (CWC), Steven Hay (Councillor), Jodie Gosling (MP), Tracy Vernon (Councillor), Nicky King (Councillor), Baxter Payne (Councillor - on behalf of Jan Matecki), Jet Jones (Together for Change), Rachel Taylor (MP)

Officers in attendance: Jo Pierson (Mins), Jonathan White (NBBC), Sandy Johal (NBBC), Mark Farmer (NBBC)

Apologies: Jenni Northcote (NHS), Leo Pollak (WMCA), Maria Bailey (NBBC), Stuart Noss (KEGS), Gary Palmer (WCC)

SPB12 Chair's welcome and announcements

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

SPB13 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2024, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

SPB14 Declarations of Interests

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

Any updates or amendments, send to Jo Pierson.

SPB15 Saints Project Update

Project update was given by Jo Pierson, key points:

- Together for Change completed renovations of the ground floor January 2020.

- Late 2020, NBBC were successful in getting Towns Deal funding from the Government. Some of the funding was allocated to Saints Project to refurb first floor ballroom into a space for dance, drama, music, art and digital media.
- NBBC purchased the freehold of the building (which also includes 4 flats and a restaurant next door) on 31 March 2023 with part of the funding.
- Long term lease to Together for Change almost complete.
- Remainder of Government funding, plus some funding Together for change have been successful in gaining, to be used to refurb the first floor former ball room.
- Currently in PCSA stage with contractor Mayway
- Schedule of works and costs being finalised, JCT design and build 2016 nearly complete, works to start mid-October, and completed March 2025.
- Together for Change has also been successful in gaining funding to be used to refurb the first-floor kitchen, works will be undertaken at the same time as the ball room works.
- Together for Change are in the process of obtaining funding for a platform lift which will go from the basement to the first floor, and also funding for a new heating system.
- KEGS are very keen to use the former ball room for their students.

The following questions were raised:

NK - will the first-floor ball room be available for hire?

JJ confirmed that is the intention

JG - broad range of need, how going to address needs, where will the facility fit in?

JJ - focus as a charity is to support children / families on poverty line or below, including everyone else who needs support. Signpost other agencies.

TV - what is the state of the flats at moment?

JJ - one is ready to rent out, one is currently being rented, two need refurb, which have recently been cleared by NBBC.

SF - What will be the main use of hall?

JJ - function space, weddings, creative arts, dance, drama, photo, etc.
KEGS are interested in using the space for creative arts, as a theatre room. The floor is an old traditional sprung dance floor. Also talking to Abbey Theatre.

TV - when was the hall last used? JJ over 20 years ago.

TV- what about the electrics? JJ - They were redone by the previous owner.

AT - relating to Arts and culture, WCAVA are the proposed lead organisation to apply to Arts Council for the 3 year programme 2026-29. Looking at best bits of Creative Explorers programme. Excellent links to assets already got. Application for the borough.

NK - how many floors are there?

JJ - 4 - basement which Together for Change are renovating into a woodworking, pottery space etc calling it the "Workshop". Ground floor - Cafe - which is a training cafe, helping people get back into long term employment, trained over 25 people through the programme.

First floor - Hall - for creative arts, etc and one of the flats.

Second floor - flats,

Restaurant next door.

JG - is there a plan for the flats to contribute to the community/youngsters?

JJ - did explore, would be open to provide accommodation to those that are needed via recommendations. But not able to provide emergency accommodation for most vulnerable due to nature of children/young people coming in. As a charity we also need to rely on the income from the flats. Very open to provide assistance if come with very good recommendations.

SPB16 Simplification Pathfinder – update from SJ

Update circulated 28/8/2024 via email regarding the movement of funds. Grayson place Phase 1 - hotel is open and operational. Phase 2 - a deep dive review carried out and some shortfall in budget. Due to time constraints and risk with BAM on site, had conversations with DLUHC stating no change to outputs/outcomes. As we are part of the Pathfinder, we can move funding between projects under the threshold of £5M. Discussed proposal to move funding with DLUHC, and this Pathfinder board via email, also agreed internally to move £3.57M from Bridge to Living to Grayson Place Phase 2. Diggers are on site, letter of intent issued to allow BAM on site working, contract particulars almost there.

SPB17 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 has had a good response, launch date was 19 September, occupancy at 97%.

Phase 2 - close to signing contract, letter of intent acts as a form of contract, works for college building commenced.

SF queried if it was still scheduled for completion Q1 25/26. SJ confirmed yes, but there are risks, any that arise the board will be notified of.

SF stated that the College will be looking to recruit students for 2025/26 any delay in that delivery will impact that.

SJ - we have a good working relationship with the college board, there have been some staff changes, Queensbury have also had some staffing changes, arranging a meeting to update everyone.

MP confirmed Darren has changed roles, but is still involved, no other changes. College has seen an uptrend into recruitment of economy and hospitality, all positive.

DS&IC - Lease still outstanding, will be finalised as Grayson Place Phase 2 go hand in hand.

E-mobility - EV charging points - part of Grayson Place project. Reviewing with Oxford DPS regarding installation. Cabling is in place.

RT queried if any EV points would be for larger vehicles?

NBBC have height restriction barriers on car parks, points would need to be outside of the car park. EV points being installed are 22kwh, so not super chargers.

Bridge to Living - Moved £3.75M funding to Grayson Place as above. Project has changed in terms of viability. Originally mixed use, then revised to residential only. All projects were reviewed again due to cost increases due to inflation etc. NBBC are committed to vacating the units, progressing with demolition and de-risking the site. We need to have a viable business plan as do not want an empty site. Options being looked at such as an interim surface level car park. Regen team at capacity only 2 people, advertising for additional staff at the moment.

Discussion took place regarding Bridge to Living, suggestions included: Useful for Warks CC to use for storage whilst carrying out Vicarage Street project.

A skate park would be a good idea, these have worked in other areas.

The funding needs to be committed by March 2026 which limits options: Don't demolish and bring back into some sort of use – costly and timely
Demolish – leave as a development site, with temporary surface parking.
Can't demolish without having a plan in place on what to do moving forward.

Discussions are taking place with Warwickshire Property Group to get their input and see if viable, while waiting for quotes to come back for demolition.

Vicarage Street (WCC lead project) - works have started, residential element will be last in a few years' time.

JG raised there is a lot of demolition happening around that end of town, how mitigate it, travel plan expectation - what will it look like?

SJ – Vicarage Street - WCC are going to share management plan with us, where construction traffic will travel from, how dealing with it, etc. Bridge to Living - construction management plan will be put in place to work alongside Vicarage Street. We are working closely with WCC to ensure it is as seamless as possible. A risk plan will be put in place. The Board will be kept updated.

A local business meeting hosted by WCC recently took place at The Saints, with a really good turn-out. Local businesses were anxious about building works. Apparently footfall is down 50% on last year. Car parking was highlighted as a main issue. An action plan is being pulled together and contact with local businesses will continue.

JW - Grayson Place - Phase 2 - we have asked for provision of car parking to be brought forward to release 60-80 spaces, hopefully prior to Christmas. Waiting for phase confirmation.

George Eliot Visitor Centre - Planning submitted 9 Feb, going to planning committee date TBC.

Parks Revival - Working through design aspects - cost element. Going well.

BPAH - milestone achieved, Wednesday photo opportunity, diggers on site.
RT - what will happen with fireworks as they are normally at that site.
Accommodating may be in Collycroft - quite important to Bedwroth residents.
Open up some of the other spaces for other events, funfair etc.

Red, amber, yellow green rating on highlight report:

| | Project Status | Financial Status |
|--------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Red | 50% or less on target | > 2% above budget |
| Amber | 51% to 64% on target | < 1.9% above budget |
| Yellow | 65 to 79% on target | < 1% above budget |
| Green | 80% or more on target | Within budget |

SPB18 Any Other Business

a) Future meeting dates:

Friday 28 March 2025

Friday 13 June 2025

Friday 26 September 2025

Friday 19 December 2025

Agreed to change start time from 12.00 noon to 12.30 pm

b) Membership of board:

Reviewing board member is an ongoing process to ensure it stays relevant.

Felt it would be good to have a member from Bedworth on the Board.

RT - BPAH is one of the projects that falls under this board, however there are no Bedworth Councillors on the board. SJ under AOB to refresh membership and get updated.

AT made an observation – the board is advisory and a non-political forum, need to ensure get the right balance.

SF doesn't want board to get too big.

SPD19 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, 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

SPB20 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.

Staffing resilience - currently advertising for a Project Officer, have several responses. Hoping to get some more vacant posts filled, will need to be signed off by Management Team first.

Chair of the Board