

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

29th April, 2026

A Council meeting of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council was held on Wednesday, 29th April 2026.

Present

The Mayor (Councillor B. Saru)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor T. Sheppard)

Councillors E. Amaechi, M. Bird, J. Bonner, D. Brown, A. Bull, J. Clarke, J. Collett, T. Cooper, S. Croft, L. Cvetkovic, S. Dhillon, M. Etienne, J. Gutteridge, W. Hancox, J. Hartshorn, S. Hey, P. Hickling, B. Hughes, T. Jenkins, A. Khangura, N. King, M. Kondakor, S. Markham, W. Markham, B. Pandher, C. Phillips, K. Price, R. Roze, J. Sheppard, C. Smith, R. Smith, T. Venson, M. Walsh, C. Watkins K. Wilson and M. Wright.

No apologies received.

CL75 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that

- a) the minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 25th February 2026 were confirmed and signed by the Mayor; and
- b) the minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 18th March 2026 were confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

CL76 **Declarations of Interests**

RESOLVED that the Declarations of Interests for this meeting are as set out in the schedule published on the Council website be approved;

CL77 **Announcements**

The Mayor made the following announcement:

- Congratulations to Coventry City FC on moving back into the Premier League and Nuneaton Borough FC for winning their group this year.

Councillor Steve Hey, Leader of the Council, expressed his thanks to all members of the council for their service in the last couple of years and for making meetings respectful and conducted with professionalism and good grace. In addition, he wished to thank the Mayor Cllr Bhim Saru, Councillor Bill Hancox and their wives for their excellent service as Mayors. Lastly to place on record his thanks to the members who are standing down this year and for their many years of service to the residents of the Borough, these included Councillors:

Christian Smith	–	2 years' service
Ann-Marie Bull	–	2 years' service
Richard Smith	–	9 years' service
Mark Etienne	–	2 years' service
Tim Jenkins	–	2 years' service
Jonathan Collett	–	2 years' service
Samuel Croft	–	8 years' service
Amrit Khangura	–	2 years' service
Jill Sheppard	–	20 years' service
Julian Gutteridge	–	14 years' service

Councillor Kris Wilson, Leader of the Opposition, also placed on record his thanks and happy retirement to those members standing down and good luck to all those members re-standing in the election.

Councillor Jill Sheppard announced that she would be standing down after first being elected in 1996. She has been Mayor of the Borough and Mayoress when her husband Bill Sheppard served as Mayor and has worked with many directors over the years. She hoped that the residents of Wembrook and St Mary have been happy with her as their councillor, she has thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity.

CL78 **Public Participation**

Question 1 – County Councillor Keith Kondakor asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Business and Regeneration:

At the Business, regeneration and planning OSC meeting on 8th December 2022 I stated that “I am absolutely horrified that we are paying to build a cinema A Cinema operator can come in and if they are just leasing it can go broke within a year... to actually have the council owning a cinema, taking 100% of the risk of the cost of building it, is an absolutely suicidal thing to do.”

At the 14th December 2022 full council meeting I asked;-
“Given the significant risks the building of a cinema carries, will the leader of the council confirm that the project has an updated robust business case; that it will

require no long term subsidy and that the tax-payer has some protection should the operator fail.”

The written response from the Conservative leader of the council at that time failed to address these issues.

I spent three years warning the council about the viability of the cinema and chosen operator, the Really Local Group. All five of the operators’ cinemas have failed spectacularly and along with the holding company gone into liquidation. Sutton council alone have spent almost £3million on their failed cinema project with RLG.

I have just had a partial response to a Freedom of Information from this council, which shows not taking my advice has directly cost the taxpayer £230,962. I am going to keep chasing this.

Can the cabinet member explain why the rest of my request to provide the Contracts and Correspondence with failed firm has not happened given that there is no need to protect the commercial interest of this failed firm?

Councillor N. King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Regeneration responded as follows:

After taking control in 2024, we realised that the whole of Grayson's Place, phase 2-3, needed urgent attention. Part of this was to review the cinema proposal, which we decided to stop and reconsider the use of the leisure box. The reason I won't be providing contracting correspondence with any of our companies is because it's a robust legal agreement and is commercial sensitivity, which I'm sure Councillor Kondakor, being a County Councillor, you would totally understand this.

Question 2 – Jill Dagnan asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health:

Re - land at Park Lane

I am the current manager of Nuneaton and North Warwickshire Equestrian Centre, and we have not received a formal consultation regarding the proposal from the council.

From my understanding the land we currently lease is proposed for a cemetery. As previously stated, we are unaware of this proposal. On behalf of the charity and the hundreds of people both locally and within the wider community who use

the services we need to understand what effect this proposal would have on the future of the charity and the licence for grazing etc

I would like to understand what is happening

Councillor B. Hughes, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health responded as follows:

I understand that there is a lease in place with yourselves and the council and therefore nothing is going to happen at this time. This council, like many others across the country, have a shortage of burial ground, which has not been addressed historically. This is, as I'm sure you're aware, is an extremely emotive subject.

This administration is committed to address this, therefore undertook many site visits and a report went to the overview and scrutiny panel for consideration.

Our first proposal is to look at current cemeteries, and we have identified budget to rectify a short to medium term problem.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommendation for the longer term was to address other NBBC land such as Haunchwood Recreation Ground and the Attleborough Recreation Ground. We cannot afford to use valuable recreation ground. Another proposal is for the use of the land opposite.

It is at this stage only a proposal with no budget identified. And a full feasibility study would be required. And if it were to be done, full consultation would be taken into account with yourselves. Thank you.

Councillor K. Wilson proposed that the due to the proposals agreed by Cabinet were different to the recommendations from OSP, he moved the question and answer be referred to the relevant OSP for further consideration given the significant public concern.

Councillor S. Markham seconded the procedural motion

A vote was taken

RESOLVED that Jill Dagnan question and Councillor B. Hughes answer be referred to the relevant OSP for further consideration.

CL79 **Questions by Members**

Question 1 – Councillor Michele Kondakor submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Housing:

Recently I have been contacted by residents, concerned that they have seen flats that are empty for long periods. Obviously, when council properties are vacated, there are often remedial works that need to be carried out before the property can be re-let. How many Council homes are currently empty, and what is the length of the average void time, currently? With so many people on the waiting lists for properties, what action is being taken to reduce any delays?

Councillor C. Watkins, Portfolio Holder for Housing, responded as follows:

The Council has 153 void properties. The average letting time, measured from the date keys are returned to the point the property is re-let, is currently 94 days.

Analysis of performance data over the last 18 months indicates a material increase in the number of properties becoming void. A growing proportion of these voids are non-standard or complex, requiring extensive remedial works and higher levels of investment to achieve a lettable standard. These properties have had a disproportionate impact on overall void turnaround times. When properties assessed as difficult-to-let are excluded, the average void turnaround time reduces to 78 days, evidencing a clear performance differential linked to property condition and complexity rather than process inefficiency alone.

A Service Manager – Responsive Repairs and Maintenance was appointed on 1 April 2026, with a specific remit to improve void performance. Key priorities include:

- Reviewing the voids letting standard to ensure it remains proportionate, deliverable and aligned with regulatory and customer expectations;
- Streamlining end-to-end void processes to remove duplication and unnecessary delays;
- Improving coordination between housing management, repairs, procurement and contractors to reduce time lost between void stages;
- Strengthening performance management and data quality to better distinguish between standard and complex voids.

Question 2 – Councillor Lubs Cvetkovic asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Business and Regeneration:

At the previous Full Council meeting I asked Cllr King to provide information regarding the criteria for the Pride in Place funding. Other Councillors also requested this information following on from my question and supplementary question. Is there any reason why this information has not shared with all Councillors?

Councillor Nicky King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Regeneration, responded as follows:

I can only apologise for the oversight of them not being circulated, but I do believe now that everybody has them. So, I can only apologise for that oversight.

Question 3 – Councillor Mike Wright submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement:

Could the responsible cabinet member clarify what the survival rates are for trees planted by the borough in recent years; and what measures are being taken to ensure that this rate is kept as high as possible, that tree-planting is never reduced to a tokenistic gesture, and that we are always getting the maximum biodiversity for our buck?

Councillor B. Hughes, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health responded as follows:

I'll answer your question with each specific section. The first on the survival rates of the trees planted, it's the current survival rate is not currently available. However, trees do get planted to BS 8545 and Warwickshire County Council standards, which are designed by professionals

to promote high survival rates. In addition to natural failure, vandalism does remain a significant issue in impacting survival. Detailed assessments of tree vitality and formative pruning requirements will be conducted this year with a focus on practical monitoring during the summer as winter reviews are less effective. The need for replanting will be assessed in light of the possibility of repeated vandalism, though this does not imply long-term overlooking of sites in terms of tree stocking.

In terms of measure to ensure high survival rates, trees are planted with experienced contractors with careful species selection and additional support such as mulch and irrigation bags to aid establishment. Best practises and

guidelines are consistently followed to ensure the best possible chance of success.

Tree planting is guided by strategic approach, ensuring trees are planted in suitable locations with adequate space to promote long-term health and ecological value. The Parks First ethos ensures that tree planting is not merely symbolic or number driven, but truly impactful. This approach also takes into account the amenity value of trees, ensuring they meet aesthetic and functional requirements of the park. Non-tree planting considered negative space is also seen a positive park contribution. In terms of maximising biodiversity,

This is enhanced by avoiding monoculture planting schemes, considering the phase succession of stock. We prioritise planting trees in locations that avoid conflicts, such as meadows, and focus on creating and maintaining appropriate continuous canopy cover where feasible. In our recently adopted tree strategy, the aim is a considered approach to tree planting and replacement and our goal is to ensure that all new tree planting is sustainable, context driven and enhances the character and function of our green spaces, avoiding the creation of future conflicts, which goes to the centre of our ethos right tree, right place, right reason. As part of this strategy, we have an action plan and one of the high priority aims is to develop a formal planting and replacement policy.

However, I have just had it confirmed this week from a reform councillor that the Warwickshire Sustainability Partnership has had support axed. We have to be mindful if reform are the future of this council, there will be no priority for the reduction of carbon emissions and sustainability.

CL80 **Special Urgency Decisions**
None taken

CL81 **Cabinet**
The Leader of the Council submitted the Leaders report on behalf of Cabinet. The report highlighted matters considered at the Cabinet meetings held on 25th February 2026 and 4th March 2026 and details of reports from the West Midlands Combined Authority Board (WMCAB), which has a direct impact on NBBC.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CL82 **Annual Overview and Scrutiny Panel Reports**
The Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels presented their annual reports to Council detailing the work undertaken by the panels in 2025/26

Councillor J. Sheppard moved the report for noting.

Councillor M. Walsh seconded the recommendation.

Councillor K. Wilson moved an amendment that the Monitoring Officer be requested to take a report to the Constitution Review Working Party to consider providing an annual report on the work of the Shareholder Committee.

Councillor S. Hey seconded the amendment

A vote was taken.

The amendment was carried.

A vote was taken on the substantive motion

RESOLVED that

a) the report be noted; and

b) the Monitoring Officer be requested to produce an Annual Report on the work of the Shareholder Committee

CL83 Preparations for the Local Elections 7th May 2026 – Progress Report

A report from the Chief Executive was taken to Council providing an update on the progress of the election preparation and to outline the personal liability taken on by the Chief Executive, in their capacity as Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

Councillor S. Hey moved the recommendations in the report.

Councillor C. Watkins seconded the recommendations

A vote was taken

RESOLVED that

a) the continuing preparations for the election that is taking place on 7 May 2026 as outlined in the report be endorsed;

b) in the event of such insurance carrying an 'excess' clause by which an initial portion of risk is not insured, the Council, through its internal insurance fund or otherwise, will fully indemnify the Returning Officer and any appointed Deputy Returning Officer(s) appointed by the Returning

Officer up to the value of such excess and/or where not covered by Insurance

- c) the Indemnity Resolution set out in Appendix A of the report be approved; and
- d) further to c) above, an amendment to the Constitution at section 5F.6 – Indemnity and Insurance to include this Indemnity Resolution for ease of reference in future be approved.

CL84 **Recommendations from Cabinet and Other Committees**

i) Bedworth Physical Activity Hub Update

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 4th March 2026 a report by Assistant Director – Recreation and Culture was submitted and recommendations put forward for Council approval.

Councillor B. Hughes moved the recommendations for council approval.

Councillor C. Watkins seconded the recommendations.

A vote was taken.

RESOLVED that

- a) the Strategic Director - Public Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Health be given delegated authority to progress the additional works required in Appendix A of the report;
- b) an additional contingency fund of £100k from the BPAH Section 106, to be used if required, to support demolition of the existing Bedworth Leisure Centre site and amend the budget accordingly; and
- c) the BPAH budget be amended to £31.2m, using the funds collected from the S.106 agreements further to a) and b) above and any unspent budget be used to support the original financial strategy in repaying the prudential borrowing element.

ii) Capital Monitoring Quarter 3

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 4th March 2026, a report by the Assistant Director – Finance was submitted and a recommendation put forward for Council approval.

Councillor S. Hey moved the recommendation for Council approval.

Councillor C. Watkins seconded the recommendation

A vote was taken

RESOLVED that an update to the budget for S106 projects and Disabled Facilities Grant – HEART as detailed in section 5 of the report be approved.

iii) Constitution Update – Report from the Constitution Review Working Party

At the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on the 17th March 2026 a report by Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance (Monitoring Officer) was submitted and recommendations put forward for Council approval.

Councillor J. Bonner moved the recommendations for council approval.

Councillor C. Smith seconded the recommendations.

A vote was taken:

RESOLVED that the constitution be updated as follows:

- a) the Scheme of Delegation for the Assistant Director - Planning be updated to align with Section 5D.7 (as per 4.2.7 of the report); and
- b) amendments to Section 5D.7 of the constitution (as per 4.3.3 of the report) be endorsed and approved.

iv) Anti Money Laundering Framework and Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Strategy

At the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on the 17th March 2026 a report by the Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance was submitted and recommendations put forward for Council approval.

Councillor J. Bonner moved the recommendation for Council approval.

Councillor C. Smith seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken

RESOLVED that

- a) the revised Anti Money Laundering Framework be approved and adopted, and the Constitution be updated accordingly; and
- b) the revised Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Strategy be approved and adopted, and the Constitution be updated accordingly.

v) Local Code of Corporate Governance

At the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on the 17th March 2026 a report by the Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance was submitted and a recommendation put forward for Council approval.

Councillor J. Bonner moved the recommendation for council approval.

Councillor C. Smith seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken.

RESOLVED that the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance be approved and adopted.

vi) Constitution Update – Report from Constitution Review Working Party – Chairmanship of OSP's and Political Balance

At the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on the 14th April 2026 a report by the Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance (Monitoring Officer) was submitted and recommendations put forward for Council approval

Councillor J. Bonner moved the recommendations for Council approval.

Councillor C. Smith seconded the recommendations

Councillor K. Wilson moved an amendment that the item be deferred to be considered at Annual Council.

Councillor S. Markham seconded the amendment.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment as follows:

FOR: Councillors, M. Bird, D. Brown, J. Clarke, J. Collett, S. Croft, L. Cvetkovic, M. Etienne, J. Hartshorn, A. Khangura, S. Markham, B. Pandher, R. Smith, M. Walsh, and K. Wilson (18)

AGAINST: Councillors E. Amaechi J. Bonner A. Bull S. Dhillon W. Hancox S. Hey, P. Hickling, B. Hughes, T. Jenkins, N. King, M. Kondakor, C. Phillips, K. Price, R. Roze, B. Saru, C. Smith T. Venson C. Watkins and M. Wright (18)

ABSTENTIONS: Councillors J. Sheppard, and T. Sheppard (2)

The vote was tied, in this event the Mayor as Chair of the meeting is given the casting vote, the Mayor Councillor B. Saru voted against the amendment.

The amendment was lost.

A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion as follows:

FOR: Councillors E. Amaechi, J. Bonner, A. Bull, S. Dhillon, S. Hey, P. Hickling, B. Hughes, T. Jenkins, N. King, M. Kondakor, C. Phillips, K. Price, B. Saru, C. Smith T. Venson C. Watkins and M. Wright (17)

AGAINST: Councillors M. Bird, D. Brown, J. Clarke, J. Collett, S. Croft, L. Cvetkovic, M. Etienne, J. Hartshorn, A. Khangura, S. Markham, B. Pandher, R. Roze, R. Smith, M. Walsh, and K. Wilson (18)

ABSTENTIONS: Councillors W. Hancox, J. Sheppard, and T. Sheppard (3)

RESOLVED that the recommendation to Council to update the constitution be not approved.

vii) Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 22nd April 2026, a report by the People Services Manager was submitted and a recommendation put forward for Council approval.

Councillor S. Hey moved the recommendation for Council approval.

Councillor C. Watkins seconded the recommendation

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement for 2026-2027 and for previous years 2024/25 and 2025/26 be ratified and published as required by Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011

viii) Adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 22nd April 2026, a report by the Assistant Director – Planning was submitted and a recommendation put forward for Council approval.

Councillor T. Venson moved the recommendation for Council approval.

Councillor S. Hey seconded the recommendation

A vote was taken.

RESOLVED that the Affordable Housing SPD (2026), Health Impact Assessment SPD (2026), Heritage SPD (2026), Creating a Healthier Food Environment- Hot Food Takeaways SPD (2026), Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2026) and Transport Demand Management Matters– Parking Standards SPD (2026) be adopted.

ix) Culture Update

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 22nd April 2026, a report by the Assistant Director – Recreation and Culture was submitted and recommendations put forward for Council approval.

Councillor B. Hughes moved the recommendations for Council approval.

Councillor S. Hey seconded the recommendations

A vote was taken

RESOLVED that

- a) the 2026/2027 General Fund Revenue budget be amended to include the grant funding of £750,000; and
- b) delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director– Recreation and Culture to enter a contract with Artichoke Trust to deliver the programme

x) Development Management Funding and Local Plan Implement Funding awarded by Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 22nd April 2026, a report by the Assistant Director – Planning was submitted and recommendations put forward for Council approval.

Councillor T. Venson moved the recommendations for Council approval.

Councillor S. Hey seconded the recommendation

A vote was taken.

RESOLVED that

- a) the 2026/27 General Fund Planning Budget be updated to account for:
 - The Development Management Grant Funding of £92,340.78, and

- The Local Plan Implementation Grant Funding of £108,474.57.

b) delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director for Public Services and the Assistant Director for Planning to spend the funding in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement.

xi) Bedworth Regeneration and Investment Plan

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 22nd April 2026, a report by the Assistant Director – Economy and Regeneration was submitted and recommendations put forward for Council approval.

Councillor N. King moved the recommendation for Council approval.

Councillor B. Hughes seconded the recommendation

A vote was taken

RESOLVED that an increase to the Bedworth Market refurbishment budget of £25k, as detailed at section 6 of the report be approved

xii) Regeneration Projects Update

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 22nd April 2026, a report by the Strategic Director – Communities and Place and Strategic Director – Culture and Environment was submitted and a recommendation put forward for Council approval.

Councillor N. King moved the recommendation for Council approval.

Councillor S. Hey seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken

RESOLVED that the changes to the budget as detailed at Section 8 of the report be approved.

Mayor