

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SIMPLIFICATION PATHFINDER BOARD

18 September 2026

A meeting of the Simplification Pathfinder Board was held on Friday 18 September 2026. The meeting was held in Committee Room A, Town Hall, Coton Road, Nuneaton, CV11 5AA.

Present: Sean Farnell (Chair), Jodie Gosling (MP), Garry palmer, Councillor Mike Bannister (WCC), Lynsey Smith

Officers in attendance: Jonathan White (NBBC), Dawn Dawson (NBBC), Salewa A-Ogunleye (NBBC) – Minutes

Apologies: Alison Thompson (WCAVA), Les Ratcliffe, Marion Plant (NWSLC), Jennifer Warren (WCC)

SPB29 Chair's welcome and announcements

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

SPB30 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2026 were confirmed as an accurate record and approved.

SPB31 Declarations of Interests

Board members' interests for the meeting were as set out in the Schedule of Declarations of Interests attached to the agenda. No additional declarations were made.

SPB32 Highlight Report

NBBC presented the Highlight Report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and updated Board members on the Simplification Pathfinder programme and individual projects. The Board discussed progress, delivery timescales, planning, funding and the remaining programme risks.

- **Digital Skills & Innovation Centre** – The college lease has now been completed. Familiarisation activity is taking place and the building is being prepared for staff and students. Access to the site is open, with final set-up activity continuing.
- **Grayson Place** – Phase 2 planning work remains the key issue. A full planning application has been submitted covering the separation of the food court units, padel courts and extension of the car park. Further information is required before the application can be validated, and

officers are working with planning consultants to resolve the outstanding matters. The Board noted that changes to the scheme and planning requirements have affected delivery timescales. It was agreed that future reporting should provide clear best-case and worst-case delivery scenarios, including Phase 2 completion and Phase 3 milestones, together with costs and visuals where available.

- **George Eliot Visitor Centre** – The power supply remains the main issue. Discussions may be required with the new owners of the adjoining pub, while the alternative option is a direct mains connection, for which additional funding is being sought. No updated fundraising position or revised completion timescale was available at the meeting. JW agreed to seek a detailed update, including fundraising, power supply options and revised timescales, and to continue efforts to secure attendance from the George Eliot team at the next meeting.
- **Parks Revival** – The project is in the procurement standstill period. The period has been extended following a query from one of the tenderers. Responses have been issued and the project is expected to progress once the extended standstill period has concluded.
- **E-mobility** – The contractor has been approved, and the charging equipment is ready to be installed. The remaining dependency is securing the external electricity supply for the hotel and Grayson Place areas through ESP. The concession arrangement is expected to be delivered without capital cost to the Council and may generate a small revenue share.
- **Bedworth Physical Activity Hub** – The main facility is open, and attendance and activity figures show encouraging increases. External CCTV works remain to be completed to cover the courts, car parks and surrounding areas. The Board requested that future reporting include the original baseline figures so that current performance can be compared against the agreed outputs. SAO to confirm the baseline figures. JW also agreed to confirm the timescale for completion of the remaining demolition and car park works.
- **Bridge to Living** – The demolition and car park proposals continue to be progressed, while condition reports are also being considered to assess whether some existing buildings could be retained and refurbished. Officers have requested a meeting with MHCLG to discuss whether funding can be moved between projects, the implications for agreed outputs, and whether the spending period could be extended beyond 31 March 2028. The meeting with MHCLG was scheduled for the following Thursday. It was requested that the relevant Portfolio Holder receive an urgent briefing before that meeting. The Board noted that any pause or change in approach would need to take account of existing contractual commitments, costs and Pathfinder funding requirements.

The Board requested a consolidated update for the next meeting covering all projects, including delivery timescales, best-case and worst-case scenarios where appropriate, outcomes achieved, remaining opportunities and project manager updates.

SPB33 Communication Updates

NBBC presented communications material supplied for the meeting. The slides mainly contained project photographs and did not provide sufficient information on the communications already issued or the forward communications programme.

The Board requested a dated communications timeline setting out what has already been published, where it was published, and the communications planned going forward. The Board reiterated the importance of keeping residents informed about progress and explaining the reasons for disruption associated with ongoing town centre construction works.

It was also requested that a representative from the Communications Team attend the next meeting to provide a substantive update. A concern was raised regarding the need to keep the programme website up to date.

SPB34 Any Other Business

No additional substantive business was raised in the open session. The Chair confirmed that the programme risk register would be considered in private session, in line with board usual arrangement.

SPB35 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 item, it being likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph (iii) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

SPB36 Risk Register

NBBC submitted an updated Programme Risk Register. The Board considered the specific risks raised by the updated register.

Chair of the Board

SPB37 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 11 December 2026. Location to be confirmed.