NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, CORPORATE RESOURCES AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL **22nd October 2026**

A meeting of the Communities, Corporate Resources and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday, 22nd October 2026 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall Nuneaton.

Present

Councillor D. Brown (Chair)

Councillors: T. Cooper (Vice-Chair), S. Finch, M. Kondakor, B. Saru, P. Smith, C. Watkins, A. Brassington (substitute for R. Brill), P. Hickling (substitute for C. Phillips) and Mrs D. Ross.

Apologies: Councillors R. Brill and C. Phillips.

PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS

CCH12 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Communities, Corporate Resources and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 25th June 2026 be approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

CCH13 **Declarations of Interest**

RESOLVED that the declarations of interests are as set out in the Schedule which can be viewed on the Council website (Councillor Declarations of Interests).

CCH14 **Questions to Cabinet**

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Internal Affairs (Councillor M. Bannister) and the Portfolio Holder for Housing (Councillor J. Bartlett) were in attendance at the meeting.

Councillor M. Kondakor asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing:
In housing, we've got former tenants arrears showing at nearly 1.7 million pounds. I have no idea over what period that's accrued, but at what point is some or part of it written off? Because it's increasing every time there's a report. So something needs to be done because otherwise it's just a number that gets bigger and bigger. And, you know, obviously some things just aren't going to be, areas aren't going to be got.
My second question is, what are the future plans for Eaton House? So I've seen that that's on the forward plan, as far as I was aware, you know, it's for the homeless and people who are struggling with housing. So are there plans other than to continue as it is? Thank you.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing responded:
Thank you, Councillor Kondakor. So in terms of the housing arrears, I fully agree with you. It's certainly a concern that we're seeing that much money not coming into the Council through the housing properties. In terms of timescales where that's written off, I'll certainly find out for you. I don't have that information now. But yes, I'll make sure that question's asked and I'll come back to you with that information.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Internal Affairs responded:
Thank you. The position with Eaton House is fairly simple. We were heading into Local Government Reorganisation with two unitaries decided by the Labour Government, that would have been a northern and a southern unitary. We wanted Nuneaton to be at the heart of that unitary authority. It's the largest of the boroughs and towns within the northern slice, and Nuneaton would have benefited greatly from that. For that, we would have been bringing in large numbers of staff with the split from Shire Hall. There are 5000 staff, approximately 2000 plus would have to come to the south and we wanted accommodation befitting being the centre of a northern unitary. We need the space, we need additional office space and Eaton House which was originally the Council House when it was built to accommodate staff, that would be the centrepiece of the northern authority. Obviously, plans would have to be made to what we do with its current occupation, which is some 37 beds for emergency accommodation. So there are issues there, but at this particular moment in time, I can give you the latest update, and that is given that the Labour Party have once again delayed Local Government Reform, the earliest that's going to come in now will be something like 2029-30. Therefore, that's a little bit gone on the back burner until we actually find out what the Government, if they ever decide will do about Local Government Reform. Thank you.

Councillor M. Kondakor asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Internal Affairs:
Currently there are seventeen jobs advertised on the WM jobs site for the Council, and the figures in the paperwork show there's been increases since at least from quarter one, which are the only figures we've got in there in terms of the amount of turnover and what have you. So would it be not counterproductive to try and get more staff to be in the office because actually flexible working is one of the things that does actually attract people, particularly if they've got children and things.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Internal Affairs responded:
Thank you Councillor, you raise an interesting point. Since lockdown and the pandemic when we had everyone in the office, we've reverted to this system of agile working, as it's so-called. It may have its place, but it needs to show to the ratepayer, to the people who pay the wages, it works for them.
What we're actually looking at the moment, and this is something that will come up in the near future, is to review how we deal with agile working to ensure that we provide the services when they're needed to the people who need them, to pay the money for us to run the Borough Council, thank you.

CCH15 **Integrated Performance Report – First Quarter 2026/27**

A summary report of the Risk Management and Performance Officer provided Panel Members with appropriate performance measures, budget information and risk data for service areas within the scope of the Panel.

Public Speaker: Councillor K. Kondakor

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- HEART have completed 23 adaptations in the first quarter compared to 45 last year in the same period. It would be useful to know how many they need to do – such as the waiting list of how many need to

be delivered. It was noted the reduction from last year may not be reflective of the number of allocations.
- Members feel it useful when they can pick up on trends.
- Member Enquiry Forms (MEF's) – it was requested that these be split up if repairs or allocations, and if repeat MEF's of if MEF's have not been answered.
- Queries were raised about whether a percentage of homes have to be disability friendly, and due to new buildings meeting requirements if this may be the reason for the drop off in adaptations.

RESOLVED that
a) the contents of the report be considered and noted; and
b) Member Enquiry Form information to be split as requested.

CCH16 **Managing Attendance of the Council's Workforce**

A report of the People Services Manager gave Members the opportunity to consider sickness absence, statistical and trend data, and the initiatives utilised by the Council.

Public Speaker: Councillor K. Kondakor

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:
- An improvement of absence targets from last year was noted.
- It was recognised that the workforce who work outside have to work in bad weather conditions, and sickness may increase over winter.
- Members noted that employees who have more contact with the public may have more sickness, and there are a greater number of males employed in the more manual roles – which could lead to work place related absence.
- The Panel requested that it would be useful to have the departments specified on the report so they can try and identify trends and reasons for some figures.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CCH17 **Fire Safety Policy and Housing Fire Safety Management Plan**

The Assistant Director for Assets and Compliance presented the Council's proposed Fire Safety Policy and Housing Fire Safety Management Plan, and sought the Panel's comments prior to implementation and final sign off at Cabinet.

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- Engagement with residents in relation to the policies – information went to the Tenant Engagement Panel, put on the website, letters were sent out and tenants can sign up to get information. The Health and Safety email and phone number is promoted across all platforms.
- Reports were made about fire doors needing replacing (example Park Road) and the budget for this, and the need for designated places for bins (example Abbey Arcade) - with a request for bin placement to be included the policy.
- Updates were requested on fire hydrants use and training, and it was noted that the first priorities are leaving the building if there is a fire and raising the alarm.

- It was explained that the policy needed to be in place in order for performance to be monitored against the policy. Without the policy in place it is more difficult for Officers and they are keen to start implementing the policy – which Members can then ask questions and queries against. A policy is required in order to be compliant.
- The inspection process was discussed, including the checklist that is followed, and the fact there are regular operational meetings to highlight priorities. Fire Risk Assessments are different and are carried out by externally qualified personnel.
- A query about whether alarms are audible and visible was raised, and although it was confirmed that fire alarms are all compliant, it was agreed it will be checked if they flash as well as make a noise. It was noted that vibrating alarms are available for the hard of hearing and there is close liaison with the Fire Service in relation to all vulnerable tenants (including those with oxygen tanks) so the Fire Service is aware.
- At point 13.1 it was suggested and agreed that the first sentence referring to lighting form the moonlight or streetlighting be removed.
- It was suggested that Cllr Watkins submit his list of concerns, including those relating to specific properties to Officers - and for an update to come to the next meeting.
- Responsibilities as a landlord for communal areas, and working with shops to ensure they are compliant. There will be a dedicated Compliance Officer to ensure the relevant work is done. New commercial tenants will have clear instructions of their requirements and duties.

RESOLVED that this item be deferred to the next meeting of this Scrutiny Panel, with the comments and requests made during the discussion being taken into account and actioned where required.

CCH18 **Repairs and Maintenance Policy 2029**

A report of the Assistant Director for Assets and Compliance presented the draft Repairs and Maintenance Policy 2026-2029 to the Panel for consideration and comment prior to submission to Cabinet for approval. The Policy establishes the Council's approach to the delivery of responsive repairs, planned maintenance, compliance activities and tenant responsibilities across the Housing Revenue Account housing stock

Public Speaker: Cllr K. Kondakor

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- The workforce required to deal with the backlog, and the timescales involved with the work. Data analysis is being carried out on the backlog, and this includes looking at the workforce.
- Reporting repairs – a reference number for residents and those reporting issues, so things can be followed up.
- It was noted the phone number in the report was incorrect.
- A stand alone compliance system with a better way of logging repairs would improve things.
- The policy is what the Council strives to do – and to make it clear what the Council should be achieving. Priorities need to be set.

- There is a need to look at the backlog and the demand coming through, to see if current demand can be met – and this will be monitored to also establish the demand for different repairs and trades.
- Part of the requirement of the Regulator is to provide proof of reporting updates to the relevant OSP on a regular basis, and this will include performance data.

RESOLVED that

a) the content of the draft Repairs and Maintenance Policy 2026-2029 be noted;
b) it be noted that the Policy has been subject to consultation with the Tenant Engagement Panel and forms part of the Council's wider housing improvement programme; and
c) **IT BE RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the Policy be approved

CCH19 **HMO Working Group**

Members discussed if they felt a Working Group needed to be reformed, but felt that it was no longer required.

Public Speaker: Cllr K. Kondakor

RESOLVED that

a) an HMO Working Group not be formed; and
b) an HMO report come to a future meeting of this OSP, as per the work programme.

CCH20 **Regulator of Social Housing Inspection**

A report of the Assistant Directors for Assets and Compliance and Housing Services provided the Panel with an overview of the outcome of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) inspection, undertaken in June 2026.

Public Speaker: Cllr K. Kondakor

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- It was confirmed that regular reports would be brought to this OSP, and to evidence what has been done.
- The Regulator led improvement plan is evolving, and all points within the inspection plan are worked on.
- Officers will soon have a meeting with the Regulator to discuss their expectations. The Regulator is keen for authorities to identify where failings are and what actions should be taken. Ideas will be given where to focus on.
- A briefing note/update can be given to Panel Members following the meeting with the Regulator.

RESOLVED that the information provided within the report be noted.

CCH21 **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan showing the key decisions that will be made in the four months commencing 1st November 2026, was provided to the Panel for information.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

CCH22 **Work Programme 2026-2027**

The Panel were presented with the Work Programme for the municipal year 2026-2027.

RESOLVED that the 2026-2027 work programme be noted.

CCH23 **Work Programme Suggestion Forms**

The Panel discussed three work programme suggestion forms which had been received.

a) NBBC Garage Repatriation

The following points were raised and discussed:

- Garages are a good resource for the Council.
- Letting and inspecting garages is the responsibility of an Officer. There have been some capacity issues.
- Members felt it would be useful to have a future agenda item which would include the number of garages (including void), what Ward they are in and which garages are value for money.

RESOLVED that the work programme suggestion form be approved and the item added to the work programme for a future meeting.

b) Council House Building Strategy

The following points were raised and discussed:

- There is a large amount of HRA land and it was suggested that NBBC build on own land rather than buying other land, but due to capacity, resources and funding/finances, this is not possible.

RESOLVED that the work programme suggestion form be approved and the item added to the work programme for a future meeting.

c) Housing Repairs Strategy

The following points were raised and discussed:

- As seen by the Regulator, need to look at repairs and what is in place to reduce the amount of repairs.
- It was noted that this could be incorporated into the report coming to the OSP in part of the wider regulatory report rather than having a duplicate report which would involve greater Officer time, and will be a repeated report as NBBC needs to do this as part of the response to the Regulator. There were concerns about Officer Capacity as the work will be duplicated.
- Members felt they needed to know that what they are doing as a Council is right and going in the right direction, and seeing progress.

RESOLVED that the work programme suggestion form be approved and the item added to the work programme for a future meeting.

CCH24 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

RESOLVED that under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be 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 paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

PART 2 – EXEMPT BUSINESS

CCH25 **Priory Street and HMOs Resident Meeting Notes**

At the last meeting of this OSP on 25th June, it was highlighted that it had been agreed at the Housing and Communities OSP held on 22nd January 2026 that these minutes would be shared for information only.

Public Speaker: Cllr K. Kondakor

RESOLVED that the meeting notes be noted.

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Chair