

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**INTERNAL OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

25th September, 2018

A continuation meeting of the Internal Overview and Scrutiny Panel was held at the Town Hall, Nuneaton on Tuesday, 25th September, 2018 to follow on from the meeting on the 13th September 2018.

Present

Councillor J. Glass, Chair

Councillors J. Beaumont, S. Croft, P. Elliott, S. Gran, J. Gutteridge, B. Pandher, G. Pomfrett, M. Rudkin (Substitute for Councillor J. Tandy) A. Sargeant (Vice-Chair), T. Sheppard, H. Walmsley, C. Watkins (Substitute for Councillor W.J. Hancox), K.D. Wilson and Mrs L. Price and Mrs D. Ross.

Apologies: Councillors W.J. Hancox and J. Tandy

PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS

128 **Declarations of Interest**

The declarations of interest for this meeting are as set out in the Schedule attached to these minutes.

Councillor B. Pandher declared an interest as Vice Chair of Exhall Multi-cultural Group and asked for the Schedule to be updated.

129 **Housing - Void Properties**

The Director- Housing, Communities and Economic Development submitted a report to the panel following a recommendation from Cabinet on 13th June, 2018. The report detailed the different types of void properties and the difficulties they are facing in letting some of the Independent Living properties.

The Panel considered the following:

- The possibility of offering a leasehold on the properties and re-investing monies into the current stock
- The issue of the undesirability of the Independent Living Complex properties in terms of size and layout.
- Consideration for the demographics of the tenants who live there and their lifestyle.
- The possibility of the panel having an organised visit to some of the properties to help aid awareness of the issues
- The change in expectations for what is considered acceptable in terms of accommodation.
- The void properties being used as temporary accommodation

- Feedback to be attained from previous or prospective tenants who refuse the offered property to help inform current and future housing stock conversions.

The Panel requested the following information:

- A list of where the void properties are.
- How many are 1st floor properties?
- Photographs (to be supplied by Councillor Watkins) of the properties be sent to the Chair for distribution to the panel.

RESOLVED that the information be noted with consideration given to the comments made.

Speaker: Councillor K. Kondakor

130 **Impact of Welfare Reform on Housing**

The report of the Head of Revenues and Benefits was submitted to the panel for consideration on the impact of welfare reforms on council tenants. The report provided an update on the specific impact of Universal Credit following the UC Full Service going live in our area on 25th October 2017 and outlined some of the measures that the Council has taken, and continues to take to minimise the impact of the reforms and UC.

The Panel raised the following points:

- Useful to see the breakdown between UC and Non UC
- There are other sources of support that offer help to residents who are struggling with their finances or debt advice such as Personal Support Unit which operates in Coventry and P3 in town.
- Ensure we are referring people to the duty solicitor before going to court for repossession cases as some could receive legal aid
- The role of the support officers to help and support customers in difficult financial situations. Orbit Housing also offer financial help.
- Migration plans in relation to claimants being fully moved over to UC are to be available in January 2019 but no information at the moment as to where we fit in.
- The issue of employment and getting people back into work to try and give residents extra security for their families.

The panel asked for the following information:

- Facts and figures if possible in relation to the tenants who are repeatedly in arrears

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted and consideration be made for extra signposting.

Speakers: Councillor K. Kondakor

131 **Town Centre Development and Project Update**

The Head of Estates and Emergency Planning submitted a report to provide the Panel with information regarding the current position relating to the Vicarage Street and Abbey Street Redevelopment projects

The Panel raised the importance of having a member briefing as the financial decisions made for this project could have an impact on the town.

The Panel also noted that there doesn't appear to be town centre accommodation being considered in the report, if people live in the town centre this could encourage economic progress.

RESOLVED that

- a) the report be noted; and
- b) an all Member Briefing or an exempt report be provided giving specific details on the redevelopment of town centres which is unable to be shared publically due to commercial sensitivity.

Speakers: Mrs M. Kondakor,
Councillor K. Kondakor

132 **Air Quality Management**

The Principal Officer (Environmental Protection) submitted a report detailing the air quality management undertaken by the Council.

The panel raised the following points:

- The monitoring equipment for air quality should remain till the Borough Plan is complete
- A letter be written to Warwickshire County Council voicing the panels concerns regarding the air quality and congestion of the roads especially with the developments proposed in the Borough Plan.
- The possibility of adding a condition on planning applications that they must provide air quality figures when they submit a planning application to Planning Committee.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

Speakers: Councillor K. Kondakor
Mrs M Kondakor

I33 **Gresham Road Project Update**

The Principal Building Surveyor submitted a report to provide the Panel with an update of the current situation in regards to the Gresham Road depot and the environmental permit process.

The Panel considered that the new depot was needed but the figures were not correct and this reflects poorly on the Council's ability to keep to a budget. The new depot may have allowed service improvements but not value for money.

The Panel advised that contingencies should have been put in place so that the delay in being granted a waste permit would have been minimised.

RESOLVED that

- a) a lessons learnt report be provided to the Panel to include feedback on how we dealt with it, what went wrong and how can we ensure this does not happen again; and
- b) the council continues to support the relocation from St Mary's Road to Gresham Road

Speakers: Mrs M. Kondakor
Councillor K. Kondakor

I34 **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan was provided for Members' information and to assist with the formulation of the work programme for 2018/19.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted

I35 **Work Programme**

RESOLVED that

- a) the work programme be approved as amended;
- b) Volunteers be requested to set up a working party for the Council Owned Land and Leases
- c) the Griff Arm Canal restoration be removed from the Work Programme; and

- d) a letter be sent to thank Mr A. Baxter for the Work Programme item suggestion but that at this moment in time the Griff Arm Canal Restoration is not feasible within the Council's budget but should circumstances change the Panel would reconsider this item.

Chair

Internal Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Schedule of Declarations of Interests

	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"> - Housing matters - Statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 - An allowance, payment given to members - An indemnity given to members - Any ceremonial honour given to members - Setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 - Allotments
	S. Croft	Holland and Barrett Retail Ltd		
	P. Elliott	Personal Tutor at King Edward College		
	S. Gran		Member of Warwickshire County Council	
	J. Gutteridge	Startin Tractors		To speak and vote on any matters involving the Borough Plan related to land at Leyland Road Bulkington
	W.J. Hancox		Hammersley, Smith & Orton	
	B. Pandher	Manager of the Indian Community Centre Association, Coventry	Member of Warwickshire County Council; Treasurer & Trustee of Nanaksar Gurdwara Gursikh Temple; Coordinator of Council of Sikh Temples in Coventry; Secretary of Coventry Indian Community; Trustee of Sikh Monument Trust	

	Name of Councillor	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Other Personal Interest	Dispensation
	A Sargeant		Member of Warwickshire County Council	
	T. Sheppard	Employee of Dairy Crest		
	J. Tandy		Partnership member of the Hill Top and Caldwell Big Local.	
	H. Walmsley	Chief of Staff to Julian Knight MP Self-employed Public Relations Consultant	Chartered Institute of Public Relations	
	K.D. Wilson	Employee of the courts service	Non Executive Director with Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Enterprises Limited	To speak and vote on any matters related to the Courts Service or related bodies unless the matter directly affects the contract of employment of the Councillor and matters involving Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Enterprises Limited (NABCEL)