Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the ECONOMIC SCRUTINY PANEL will be held in Committee Room 'A', Town Hall, Nuneaton on Monday, 1st March, 2010 at **5.00 p.m.**

Public Consultation will commence at 5.00 p.m.

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTINE KERR

Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I - PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. EVACUATION PROCEDURE

2. APOLOGIES - To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. MINUTES - To confirm the minutes of the joint meeting of the Economic, Environment and Social Scrutiny Panels held on 15th December, 2009 (Page 5) and the meetings of this Panel on 20th January, 2010 (Page 7) and 2nd February, 2010 (Page 10).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP - To receive declarations of personal/prejudicial interests in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct and of the Party Whip in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 4E, Paragraph 16(b).

Note (1): Following the adoption of the new Code of Conduct, members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their personal interests at the commencement of the relevant item (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a prejudicial interest members are still permitted to participate unless the interest is of a financial nature, they are scrutinising a decision which they were a party to making or the Committee is making a decision.

Note (2): Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 4E, Paragraph 16(b) states "when considering any matter in respect of which a Member must declare the existence of the whip, and the nature of it before the commencement of the OSP's deliberations on the matter".

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION - Members of the public will be given the opportunity to speak on specific agenda items if notice has been received.

6. MANAGING DEBT RECOVERY – report of the Head of Recovery Services – Finance and Procurement (Page 12)

7. THE COUNCIL'S ROLE IN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE - report of the Head of Communities and Communication (Page 15)

8. TOWN CENTRES MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES - report of the Assistant Director – Asset Management and Strategic Development (Page 17)

9. CABINET RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS – Response form on Third Sector Funding and Contributions attached (Page 43)

10. WORK PROGRAMME - verbal update by the Principal Democratic Services Officer (Overview and Scrutiny).
11. **ANY OTHER ITEMS** which in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting should be considered as a **matter of urgency** because of special circumstances (which must be specified).
CORPORATE PLAN AIMS AND PRIORITIES

Aim 1
- To improve the quality of life and social justice for residents so it is much closer to that enjoyed by the rest of Warwickshire.

Priority 1
- To provide a choice of housing to meet the needs of the residents of the Borough.

Priority 2
- To create a healthy, diverse and robust economy which provides employment opportunities for local people.

Priority 3
- To work in partnership to improve health and reduce health inequalities for residents in the Borough.

Priority 4
- To develop a confident, cohesive and diverse community.

Aim 2
- To work in partnership to reduce the level of crime and disorder so that the community is and feels safer.

Priority 1
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour by working in partnership and provide diversionary activities to engage with youngsters.

Priority 2
- Environmental improvements and support for selective CCTV to reduce fear of crime.

Priority 3
- Use of the Council's enforcement powers to support community safety initiatives.

Aim 3
- To provide a pleasant environment for those living, working and visiting the Borough.

Priority 1
- To create a greener and cleaner environment.

Priority 2
- To lead in environmental issues addressing climate change and protection of the environment.

Aim 4
- To provide quality services which represent value for money.

Priority 1
- To continue to improve the performance and quality of key services.

Priority 2
- To improve access arrangements for all Council services and the way that those who use them are treated.

Priority 3
- To use value for money procedures to test the way all services are delivered.
A joint meeting of the Economic, Environment and Social Scrutiny Panels was held at the Town Hall, Nuneaton, on Tuesday, 15th December, 2009.

Present


Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.S. Bryden, T.C. Kenning and Mr. M. Perkins.

343 Appointment of Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor A.A. Lloyd be appointed Chair of the joint meeting.

COUNCILLOR A.A. LLOYD IN THE CHAIR

344 Declarations of Interest

Councillor J.A. Jackson declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 by reason of her husband’s employment with the Council and the Leisure Trust and by reason of her being a Member of Warwickshire County Council.

Councillor A.A. Lloyd declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 by reason of him being a Member of the Credit Union.

345 General Fund Budget 2010/11

The report of the Assistant Director - Finance and Procurement on the draft General Fund budget for 2010/11 was considered.

The Head of Accounting and Principle Democratic Services Officer than gave a presentation on the current draft budget for 2010/11, providing information needed to discuss and make decisions within the groups, answering any questions and queries.

Following discussions, the following points were highlighted:
- 211 -

- Members felt that the responses to the questionnaire were not representative of the borough as a whole and the People’s Panel was no longer representative of the local population;

- Members queried the reduction in figures for the Revenue Support Grant. They also requested figures for other authorities in Warwickshire;

- Concern at the cost of the concessionary travel which is far more than the Government anticipated, with concern at the calculation and monitoring of the bus fares;

- The increase of £1.5m in Housing Advice Services;

- The drop in expenditure on cemeteries;

- The dramatic changes in the car parking figures;

- Concern at the increase in the Mayoral and the voluntary bodies allowances;

- LSP priorities and request for 0.5% top slice from the budget - concern raised in particular at the differing waiting time across the County for mental health services, especially for children;

- Contradictory survey figures for the Civic Hall.

**RESOLVED** that

(a) the information in the report and presentations to the meeting be noted;

(b) Social Scrutiny Panel be requested to consider, as part of its work programme in 2010/11, the mental health service in relation to the differing waiting list time for children between the various parts of the County; and

(c) a full list of all growth bids submitted by officers be sent to Members of the Scrutiny Panels.

______________________________  
Chair
A meeting of the Economic Scrutiny Panel was held at the Town Hall, Nuneaton, on Wednesday, 20th January, 2010.

Present

Councillor W.B.H. Lobbett – Chair
Councillor D. Harvey- Vice-Chair


An apology for absence was received from Councillor D. P. Brown.

363 Courtesies

Members of the Panel stood for one minutes silence as a mark of respect in memory of Councillor D. Bryden who recently passed away.

364 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th December, 2009, be confirmed.

365 Declarations of Interest

Councillor J.A. Jackson declared a personal interest in any relevant Agenda Item by reason of her husband's employment by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and the Nuneaton and Bedworth Leisure Trust Board.

Councillors J.A. Jackson, W.B.H. Lobbett and S.L. Wilson declared personal interests in any relevant Agenda Item by reason of them being Members of Warwickshire County Council.

Councillor J.A. Jackson declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 by reason of her being a Governor of Nicholas Chamberlain School Foundation.

Councillor M.C. Jones declared a personal interest in Agenda item 7 by reason of his involvement as Chair of Whitestone Community Centre.

366 Third Sector Review of Funding and Contributions

The Communities Manager and the Head of Estates and Town Centres submitted a joint report seeking Members' views on funding arrangements for organisations that provide advice services to the Borough.

The following issues were highlighted:
• there was some discussion relating to the concept of a countywide contract for the provision of Advice Services and also the possible relocation of third sector organisations at the Town Hall.

• there was discussion relating to a request for additional rental costs for Advice Rights. The general consensus was that this should not be supported.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Cabinet that

(a) the principle of funding for 3 years for organisations that provide advice services in the Borough be agreed with the level and detail of funding being determined at the start of the 3 year period to coincide with the spending review (this will incorporate the agreement already made by the Council to fund the organisations during 2010 – 2011);

(b) rate rebates for organisations with charitable status should remain as they are currently;

(c) in principle, utility costs should not be met by the Council; and

(d) service level agreements should be put in place that enable quarterly performance reporting to this Panel and detailing where money is being spent in the Borough.

367 Dual Use Agreements

The Assistant Directors – Public Amenities, Legal and Democratic Services and Asset Management and Strategic Development submitted a joint report seeking Members’ views on Dual Use Agreements and Community Centre activity.

RESOLVED that

(a) a task and finish working group be established to review how the Council currently operates Dual Use Agreements with local schools in the first instance, followed by the support given to Community Centres;

(b) consideration be given to how Community Centre users can be encouraged to participate in the management of the two centres; and

(c) the review conclusions be reported to Cabinet to agree a new consistent framework and policy for Dual Use and Community facilities that receive financial support from the Council.

368 Work Programme

The Principal Democratic Services Officer (Overview and Scrutiny) requested that Members consider whether the task and finish working group relating to Dual Use Agreements and Community Centres should be carried over to the next Municipal year or added to this year’s Work Programme.
RESOLVED that

(a) a task and finish working group relating to Dual Use Agreements and Community Centres be established during this Municipal Year and within a two month time frame; and

(b) it be noted that Councillor Lobbett expressed an interest in participating in the Dual Use Agreements and Community Centres task and finish working group and that an e-mail be sent to Members of all three Scrutiny Panels to provide all Members with the opportunity to express an interest.

__________________________
Chair
NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC SCRUTINY PANEL

2nd February, 2010

A meeting of the Economic Scrutiny Panel was held at the Town Hall, Nuneaton, on Wednesday, 2nd February, 2010.

Present

Councillor W.B.H. Lobbett – Chair
Councillor D. Harvey- Vice-Chair


Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.A. Jackson and S.L. Wilson.

386 Declarations of Interest

Councillor D.P. Brown declared a personal interest in any Agenda Item by reason of him being a Member of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Leisure Trust Board.


Councillor A. A. Lloyd declared a personal interest in any Agenda Item by reason of him being a Member of the Credit Union.

Councillor W.B.H. Lobbett declared a personal interest in any Agenda Item by reason of him being a Member of Warwickshire County Council.

387 Integrated Performance Report – Third Quarter 2009/10 (April to December, 2009)

The Corporate Services Director, Head of Accounting and Performance and Quality Manager submitted a joint report providing the Panel with the information to enable it to link performance more directly to financial information and enable performance, finance and risk information within the scope of this Panel to be monitored.

The following was discussed:

Concerns were raised about how the data for the Mayoralty was captured. It was felt that the public should be canvassed as well as the Mayor.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.
Increasing Attendance – Improving Health

The Head of Human Resources submitted a progress report relating to improving the health and wellbeing and attendance levels of the workforce.

Consideration was given to the possible introduction of reward schemes for good attendance.

RESOLVED that

(a) Cabinet be recommended to consider the introduction of a 'sick line' facility, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Human Resources, as it will benefit the Council; and

(b) officers be recommended to examine a way of recognising employees positive attendance levels at minimal cost to the Council.

National Pay Agreement 2004

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report on the National Pay Agreement 2004. Members received a verbal update at the meeting. Union officials were also present and invited to contribute to discussions.

The following issues were discussed:

The work done by officers and the unions in negotiating the agreement was acknowledged. It was noted that discussions between the Council and the Trade Unions were continuing.

The change in essential car user allowances and the numbers of staff that would lose out had increased to 27% were noted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Work Programme

The Principal Democratic Services Officer (Overview and Scrutiny) reminded the Panel that more Members were required for the Dual use Working Group to join Councillors W.B.H. Lobbett and S.L. Wilson.

RESOLVED that it be noted that Councillors D. Harvey and A.A. Lloyd had volunteered to serve on the Dual Use Working Group.

Chair
Report to : Economic Scrutiny Panel, 1st March 2010
From : Head of Recovery Services – Finance & Procurement
Subject : Managing Debt Recovery

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To report as requested on the implementation of changes recommended by Scrutiny Panel on 21st September 2009 in relation to Council Tax debt recovery.

2. Matters for Consideration By Economic Scrutiny Panel

2.1 To consider the impact of the changes recommended to date.

3 Legislation

3.1 The collection of Council Tax is governed by The Council Tax (Administration & Enforcement) Regulations 1992.

4 Background

4.1 On 22nd July 2009 the Corporate Debt Policy was adopted by the Cabinet which requested that the Economic Scrutiny Panel consider the process of debt recovery as part of the work programme for the year.

4.2 On 21st September 2009 the panel considered a report on Council Tax debt recovery in light of the current economic climate with the recommendation to Cabinet being that to ensure equality between customers who pay by direct debit and those who do not, no reminder letters should be sent until after the 16th of each month.

4.3 On 14th October 2009 Cabinet approved the recommendation adding that, the decision would be monitored closely for adverse affect on collection rates.

5. Implementation of recommendation

5.1 The recommendation was implemented with effect from 15th October 2009. Recovery notices are now issued as follows:-
a) Between 1\textsuperscript{st} and 16\textsuperscript{th} of each month notices are issued to charge payers who are more than one month in arrears.

b) Between 17\textsuperscript{th} and the end of each month notices are issued to charge payers who are in arrears with the current month only.

6. Continuous improvement

6.1 A number of pro-active working practices were identified and implemented during the current financial year. The most effective outcome has been derived from contacting charge payers by telephone prior to forwarding any case to our external bailiff for collection. Although resource intensive the revised working practice has resulted in fewer cases being referred to the bailiff, the charge payer avoiding additional bailiff fees and the capture of information that will allow us to instigate alternative enforcement methods should the charge payer default upon an arrangement agreed.

7 Direct Debit

7.1 The report submitted to Panel on 21\textsuperscript{st} September advised that as at 31\textsuperscript{st} August 2009 the direct debit take up for Council Tax was 63.9\% (27,960 households).

7.2 Since then we have implemented paperless direct debit in order that a customer may set up a direct debit over the telephone. In addition, we also now offer direct debit, weekly, fortnightly and 4 weekly in addition to the monthly dates of the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 16\textsuperscript{th} that were already in place.

7.3 The Council Tax direct debit take up as at 31\textsuperscript{st} January 2010 has increased to 64.75\% (28,219 households).

8 Council Tax Collection Rates

8.1 The Council Tax collection target has been achieved each month during the current financial year. The collection rate as at 31\textsuperscript{st} January 2010 is 96.28\%.

8.2 The table below shows Council Tax collection rates as at 31\textsuperscript{st} January in previous years in order that a comparison is shown between financial years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>31\textsuperscript{st} January</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006/7</td>
<td>95.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/8</td>
<td>96.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>96.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>96.28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 Recovery Notices issued

9.1 The number of recovery notices issued during the period 1\textsuperscript{st} November 2009 to 31\textsuperscript{st} January 2010, compared to the same period last year is shown below.

Reminder notice 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
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</table>

Reminder notice 2

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<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>1495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Notice

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<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Court Costs

10.1 On 21\textsuperscript{st} September the panel were asked to assess the impact any potential changes to the recovery process would have on the fees & charges income stream.

10.2 It is not possible to provide a direct comparison at the current time as the data held for previous years relates to full financial years. The income stream will be compared at 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2010.

11 Conclusion

11.1 The impact of the changes recommended by the Panel cannot be fully evaluated with limited data covering only 3 months. Therefore, the panel may consider it appropriate to schedule a review of progress in 12 months.

SUE TRAHERN
AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to: Economic Scrutiny Panel

Date: 1 March 2010

From: Gail Hudson, Head of Communities and Communication

Subject: The Council’s Role in the Current Economic Climate

Portfolio: Sustainable Communities – Councillor J Waine

Corporate Aim: Aim 1, Priority 2

1. OBJECTIVES OF SCRUTINY

To update the Panel on the impact of the work of the Economic Development Team since the last report to the Panel on 4th November 2009.

2. WHAT IS THE PANEL BEING ASKED TO CONSIDER?

The Members of the Panel are asked to consider information about the current economic climate and actions/activities carried out by the Economic Development Team.

The Panel is also asked to consider future activities bearing in mind the context of the corporate priorities and the financial constraints.

3. WHO CAN THE PANEL INFLUENCE?

The outcomes of the Panel’s debate will be provided to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities.

The Panel may wish to publicise its findings so that they are accessible to the public, other stakeholder and outside bodies. The Overview & Scrutiny Support Officer and Communications Team will support the Chair of the Panel to do this as required.

4. WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE PRESENTED?

The Panel is asked to consider the information given in presentation form in relation to economic development. The presentation will include:

   a) brief background information on the situation on 4th November 2009;
   b) future plans and links to Corporate Delivery Plan
The item relates specifically to the work of the Economic Overview & Scrutiny Panel and includes details of the work undertaken by the Economic Development Team.

The Head of Communities and Communication will attend the Panel to assist with technical and operational queries relating to the item.

The Overview & Scrutiny Support Officer will provide any additional information as appropriate or as requested by the Panel Members.

GAIL HUDSON
AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to: Economic Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: 1st March 2010

From: Assistant Director Asset Management and Strategic Development

Subject: Town Centres Management Activities

Portfolio: Resources and Support (Councillor B J Grant)

Corporate Aim: Key Aim 1, 2, 3 and 4

1. OBJECTIVES OF SCRUTINY

1.1 To update and advise the panel on the current economic position of the towns of Nuneaton and Bedworth and the work carried out by the Town Centres Team.

2. WHAT IS THE PANEL BEING ASKED TO CONSIDER

2.1 The members of the Panel are asked to consider the information presented in the report on Town Centre Management activities.

3. WHO CAN THE PANEL INFLUENCE

3.1 Where appropriate, the outcomes of the Panel’ considerations will be reported back to the Bedworth Town Management Partnership Board and the Nuneaton Town Management Partnership Board.

4. INFORMATION TO BE REPORTED TO THE PANEL

4.1 Background

4.2 The Town Centres Team is responsible for the Town Centre Management, Markets Management, CCTV Management, Public Conveniences and Promotions and Marketing of the centres.

4.3 This report will outline the current situation in relation to the markets and issues around town centre management such as footfall, empty premises
etc. and work carried out to monitor the marketing of the towns. This will include the annual town centre survey and first impression exercise for Nuneaton and a first impression exercise for Bedworth.

5. **MARKETS**

5.1 **Nuneaton.**

The current economic situation has had an impact on traders as well as other businesses. The Council has done a great deal of promotion for the market in this current financial year and managed to maintain a fairly steady number of traders and stall lets. Saturday numbers have shown a decline but Wednesday actually indicated increases on previous years. This resulted in income on a Saturday slightly down and Wednesday on target. This was so until the start of 2010. Due to weather conditions, traders retiring or downsizing in the number of stalls and the general economy both the stall lets and the income have suddenly been affected which has been reported to CMT as a potential area where the income budget is not achieved due to circumstances outside our control.

5.2 On the positive side a great deal of work has been done integrating the market with the businesses and carrying out joint promotions. This resulted in the market being awarded ‘The Best Street Market 2009’ and now ‘The Best Market Attraction 2010’ which is a higher accolade as it encompasses all types of markets. Nuneaton market has also been used as an example of good practice in the Parliamentary Select Committee report on markets and has now been incorporated in a Policy and Research Report. This has 5 major policy objectives and Nuneaton’s market is used as an example of good practice in relation Policy Objective 4 Community Cohesion –integrating markets into town centre management.

5.3 **Bedworth**

In relation to the economy generally Bedworth market has been subject to the same pressures as Nuneaton. There has been a loss of traders and the stall lets are showing a general decline especially Saturday. Much of this is as a result of the economy and the changes in shopping patterns of people. As a result the income is showing a fall and again the bad weather after Christmas has had a large affect although the effect is less than Nuneaton and is only showing a small deficit in budget.

5.4 In 2009 Bedworth received a commendation as runner up in the small market category.
5.5 Markets Nationally
The picture across the country is not healthy and there is a recent report suggesting that potentially 20% of markets could disappear and there has been a decline in shoppers on 42% of the markets. 53% also indicated there has been a decline in the average spend.

5.6 There is a lot of work being undertaken with governmental and ministerial lead in the area of markets and Nuneaton and Bedworth are directly involved with the production of policy and ways to improve our markets. There are areas where are markets can lead in relation to the promotion of healthy eating, sustainability and recycling. The majority of waste created currently on Nuneaton and Bedworth markets goes for recycling and also working with the colleges on the promotion of healthy eating.

6. TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

6.1 Since reports submitted in July and August 2007 concerning the potential of a downturn in the economy a great deal of work has been undertaken in monitoring the effect on Nuneaton and Bedworth. Town Centres have come under a great deal of scrutiny nationally and the government have produced various documents, since the downturn in the economy, as to why it is important to manage town centres and building strong partnership between local people, businesses and service providers.

6.2 In 2009 Bedworth established its own Town Centre Management Board, which is still in its infancy but growing. It has produced its own constitution and terms of reference with the intentions of supporting Bedworth. Nuneaton has continued, with its own Town Centre Management Board, which has also grown so that virtually every type of stakeholder in the town centre is represented (including the churches). Both Boards are used by both the Borough Council and the County Council as consultees on various matters involving the town centres. The economic position both of the country and the towns have helped to engage the businesses but actual direct contributions of cash cannot be achieved as virtually every national and small independent traders have company policies preventing voluntary payments. As the amount raised in previous years was minimal it is felt that, if a robust partnership is to exist as government wanted, then there would be no direct charge to members but ‘in kind’ support could be attained.

6.3 Footfall on Nuneaton is measured by Rope Walk supplying their electronic figures, which gives a guide as it is felt that around 95% of people in town will go into the shopping centre. Other means were used to supplement the Rope Walk information when there were wardens but these posts were abolished in July 2009. Currently, therefore, there is not any
resource, so Bedworth is not measured. Figures over the last year have shown a decline in footfall in Nuneaton but there is also a decline in the national figures on town centres. It is worthy of note that Rope Walk figures dropped by about 6% as a result of Woolworth closing. At the last count in Bedworth there had been an increase in footfall since the ALDI and Home Bargains had opened which was also supported by traders on the market.

6.4 Vacant property has also been measured over the months and monitored against the national level. Currently, Nuneaton is just under 6% and Bedworth is 7%. The national figure for retail property is an average of 12.7%, so both towns are currently performing well above average under. That is not to say we are not actively involved with local commercial agents and the Warwickshire Investment Partnership in an effort to fill vacant units. Potentially both old Woolworth units could be let in the next few weeks if various legal requirements are fulfilled.

6.5 Marketing and promotion has been carried out and the provision of entertainment on a Saturday, mainly in Nuneaton but also some in Bedworth, has proved extremely popular and successful in retaining people in the towns. Marketing has been done through various methods from ensuring plenty of local good news going out to media, advertising on buses in Coventry, Leicester, Tamworth and Coalville, promotional competitions and advertising on radio and even television advertising jointly with 2 other towns. Results are monitored by feedback from businesses as to where people are from and through the annual town centre survey (appendix A). Another method of monitoring is by using a ‘first impression’ exercise where experienced people in the field of town centre management visit and assess a centre on various aspects and report back (appendix B, C, D, and E).

6.6 New signage has been introduced to the towns following previous surveys and new interactive system for information is also being introduced.

7. **VALUE FOR MONEY**

7.1 The effect of town centre management and markets management is supported by 2 years of markets awards and letters from companies such as Marks and Spencer, Debenhams, Co-op etc as to the effectiveness of the council commitment to supporting the towns and certainly during the economic downturn helping to maintain a good level of occupancy and trade in the towns.
7.2 New initiatives are continually being introduced. An example is the ‘Friends of the Market’ group made up of people who shop on the market and wish to see it remain a sustainable attraction to the towns.

7.3 Whilst 2010 has started with the country coming out of recession, I believe that this year will be harder for businesses in the town centres and they will need a lot of support. There has already been companies going into administration, some local i.e. Adams, which will leave ‘holes on the High Street’ during the year and it will become increasingly difficult to find companies to take on rents and leases. The intention to maintain levels of service that do give value for money to all partners is paramount and the town centres team will endeavour to ensure that this is given.
Appendix A

**NUNEATON TOWN CENTRE SURVEY**

**2009**

**Executive Summary**

During the survey in 2009 a total of 155 people were interviewed.

Generally the results are encouraging, especially the rise in the number of visitors and where they have travelled from. In addition to the usual Hinckley, Coventry etc. there were visitors from Solihull, Stoke on Trent, Leicester, Walsall, Rugby and Burton on Trent. There were also visitors from further afield visiting the area such as Suffolk and Somerset.

The first impression of the town was certainly encouraging as 82% of people thought it was good or excellent. The majority of the survey was carried out on Saturdays which links to the appearance of the market which resulted in 90% of people thinking it to be good or above.

Other issues that were raised by the questionnaire will be compiled into a separate report with a view of incorporating them into a Town Centre Action Plan.

- **Visitors (from outside Nuneaton) to the town.**
  - 2005 - 22%
  - 2006 - 27%
  - 2007 - 30%
  - 2008 - 33%
  - 2009 - 33%
  This would indicate some of the targeted promotional work, as identified in the Action Plans, have maintained the number of visitors to the town from areas outside Nuneaton.

- **The ‘Family Friendly’ image of town.**
  - 2005 - 67% felt it was good or higher
  - 2006 - 67% felt it was good or higher
  - 2007 - 80% felt it was good or higher
  - 2008 - 71% felt it was good or higher
  - 2009 - 80% felt it was good or higher
  With the introduction of more entertainment and events this indicates that the image of the town, (even through the difficult economic times) has returned to the level of 2007. This is positive and will help to attract visitors in the future. It is also ensuring the continual efforts to keep the community shopping in and supporting the town centre.
• **Accessibility.**
  2005 - 64% felt it was good or higher.
  2006 - 76% felt it was good or higher.
  2007 - 90% felt it was good or higher.
  2008 - 74% felt it was good or better.
  2009 - 88% felt it was good or better.
  It is important that this issue is continually reviewed as it does affect the number of visitors and it would appear that the new signage and other works have created the right image to the visitors as the impression is now nearing the 2007 level.

• **Public Transport.**
  2005 - 57% public transport users felt it was good or higher.
  2006 - 68% public transport users felt it was good or higher.
  2007 - 74% public transport users felt it was good or higher.
  2008 - 64% public transport users felt it was good or higher.
  2009 - 76% public transport users felt it was good or higher.
  Stagecoach are part of the Town Centres Partnership and are a company who put a great deal of emphasis on quality customer service. They have worked closely with town centres to, where possible ensure services are acceptable and I am sure working together the image can be even better as only 10% thought it below average. 35% of people actually did not use the public transport system.

• **Signage.**
  2005 - 49% felt it was good or higher.
  2006 - 52% felt it was good or higher.
  2007 - 53% felt it was good or higher.
  2008 - 58% felt it was good or higher.
  2009 - 82% felt it was good or higher.
  The introduction of the new finger posts and signage around the town centre have obviously been successful as there is a big jump in the number of people who think it is of a good or higher standard.

• **The perception of daytime crime.**
  2005 - 45% felt the town was safe.
  2006 - 68% felt the town was safe.
  2005 - 84% felt the town was safe.
  2006 - 93% felt the town was safe.
  2007 - 97% felt the town was safe. (average or above)
  The town achieved the Safer Business Award in the latter part of 2006 and the continual work done on improving the perception of crime by working with the police and the retail crime initiative appears to be effective.
The perception of safety at night.
2005 - Not ascertained
2006 - 22% felt safe.
2007 - 13% felt safe.
2008 - 53% felt safe.
2009 - 63% felt safe (average or above)
There is still an issue with perception and there are many factors surrounding this such as media coverage, TV shows showing the 'violent drinking societies of town centres' etc. This is an area that is being actioned by the night time economy group (BAND).

Cleanliness.
2005 - 37% thought town was tidy and cleansing was good.
2006 - 41% thought town was tidy and cleansing was good.
2007 - 42% thought town was tidy and cleansing was good.
2008 - 61% thought town was tidy and cleansing was good.
2009 - 48% thought town was tidy and cleansing was good.
It is worth noting that only 12% thought it was below average or poor so although the numbers who thought it was good or excellent were down on 2008 more people thought it was average so perhaps use to the 2008 level.
In 2009 there have been 5 community litter picks involving town centre businesses and volunteers from them and apparently this is having the desired effect.

Adequate disabled parking.
2005 - 56% felt there was plenty.
2006 - 41% felt there was plenty.
2007 - 32% felt there was plenty.
2008 - 64% felt there was plenty.
2009 - 51% felt there was plenty.
2010 There was only 18% who thought it below average.

Sufficient Car Parks spaces available?
2005 - 53% satisfied with the amount of space.
2006 - 47% satisfied with the amount of spaces.
2007 - 49% satisfied with the amount of spaces.
2008 - 69% satisfied with the amount of spaces.
2009 - 62% satisfied with the amount of spaces.
The perception of spaces may be influenced by the fact the survey was carried out on a Saturdays which is the day with the largest increase in footfall so spaces would be more of a premium. This is continually monitored and assessed.
• **Ease of accessibility to the car parks around the town centre.**
  2005 - 70% satisfied.
  2006 - 62% satisfied.
  2007 - 63% satisfied.
  2008 - 75% satisfied.
  2009 - 88% satisfied.
  A review of signing has been done and improvements have been made which, shows by the result above, has had an effect on ease of locating the car parks.

• **Car Park cleanliness.**
  2005 - 56% felt it was good or higher.
  2006 - 59% felt it was good or higher.
  2007 - 79% felt it was good or higher.
  2008 - 69% felt it was good or higher.
  2009 - 72% felt it was good or higher.
  Continual monitoring is being done to maintain this level of satisfaction.

• **Car Park safety.**
  2005 - 56% felt it was good or higher.
  2006 - 51% felt it was good or higher.
  2007 - 85% felt it was good or higher.
  2008 - 65% felt it was good or higher.
  2009 - 76% felt it was good or higher.
  This supports the view that the town is safe and most town centre car parks have been awarded the ‘Park Mark’ accreditation for safety.

• **Car Park tariffs.**
  2005 - 47% felt they were good.
  2006 - 37% felt they were good.
  2007 - 28% felt they were good.
  2008 - 39% felt they were good.
  2009 - 38% felt they were good.
  Car Park charges are always a contentious issue to shoppers and visitors. In comparison to other towns of the same size the charges are reasonable, as only 23% thought they were too high.

• **Condition of footways.**
  2005 - 34% felt they were good or higher.
  2006 - 40% felt they were good or higher.
  2007 - 37% felt they were good or higher.
  2008 - 38% felt they were good or higher.
  2009 - 50% felt they were good or higher.
  The WCC have responded to call outs and this is apparently having the effect. There is still room for improvements but much would rely on investment, which currently is not available.
• Pedestrian safety following the introduction of the rising bollards.
  2005 - 60% felt safe.
  2006 - 61% felt safe.
  2007 - 82% felt safe.
  2008 - 65% felt safe.
  2009 - 77% felt safe
  There are comments about feeling unsafe outside the hours the bollards work due to the amount of unlawful traffic in the town. The only criticism whilst the bollards were up was against cyclists.

• Variety of the retail offer.
  2005 - 48% felt it was good.
  2006 - 57% felt it was good.
  2007 - 61% felt it was good.
  2008 - 58% felt it was good.
  2009 - 63% felt it was good.
  This shows that Nuneaton was able to retain a good variety of shops even during a severe recession where other towns were actually losing shops.

• Condition of shop fronts.
  2005 - 48% thought they were good.
  2006 - 60% thought they were good.
  2007 - 57% thought they were good.
  2008 - 58% thought they were good.
  2009 - 57% thought they were good.
  This appears to have remained at a reasonable level.

• Street Furniture.
  2005 - 42% felt it was good or higher.
  2006 - 57% felt it was good or higher.
  2007 - 62% felt it was good or higher.
  2008 - 59% felt it was good or higher.
  2009 - 68% felt it was good or higher.
  This is another area where there is need for improvement and continual monitoring of its condition is done.

• The condition of the toilets.
  2005 - 8% thought they were good.
  2006 - 32% thought they were good.
  2007 - 37% thought they were good.
  2008 - 42% thought they were good.
  2009 - 39% thought they were good.
This is an area that continues to create a problem. Much of the problem is with the ‘blue’ lighting. It is worth noting that only 20% thought it was below average.

- **Market importance.**
  2005 - 90% felt the market important to the town.
  2006 - 87% felt the market important to the town.
  2007 - 96% felt the market important to the town.
  2008 - 96% felt the market important to the town.
  2009 - 98% felt the market important to the town.
This shows how important the market is to the town as it attracts visitors as well as local residents especially in a year it won the best street market in Britain award. Interestingly 83% of people actually bought goods from the market.

- **Market appearance.**
  2005 - 74% felt it was good or higher.
  2006 - 79% felt it was good or higher.
  2007 - 92% felt it was good or higher.
  2008 - 84% felt it was good or higher.
  2009 - 82% felt it was good or higher.
These results indicate that the investment in the new stalls and layout have been effective and help attract new visitors but further improvements on issues such as traders merchandising standards still need continual attention. With this small reduction again, perhaps also indicates people just treat it as average.

- **The service from the business sector.**
  2005 - Not available.
  2006 - 80% satisfaction.
  2007 - 78% satisfaction.
  2008 - 78% satisfaction.
  2009 - 82% satisfaction.
This highlights the issue of training within business and Town Centres Management is still sourcing the various training providers which include the local colleges. Quality customer service is essential in a successful town.

- **This years events and entertainment in the town centre** have proved very successful. There has been entertainment on virtually every Saturday since March in the Town Centre and will run through to Christmas. In addition ‘buskers’ have been brought in where possible to help with the atmosphere in the town centre (under an agreed code of conduct). It is hoped that this will continue next year subject to budget availability.

Alan Ottey  
Town Centres Manager  
10.11.09
Report on the First Impressions Exercise in Nuneaton

The exercise was carried out on Thursday 15th October 2009 by Cynthia Palmer, City Centre Manager for Hereford. The weather was cloudy with fine rain and travel to the destination was by train.

Introduction

The first impressions exercise is a simple and inexpensive way to gain valuable feedback and insights from a ‘first rime’ visitor about how your town is perceived through a neutral eye.

I spent my childhood in Hinckley and with my family made occasional trips to Nuneaton to shop at Smith’s department store and Marks & Spencer’s but, other than to attend a ATCM meeting in December 2007, I had not spent any time in the town for at least thirty years. Nuneaton’s association with coal mining had always made it more of an industrial town than a visitor destination and so I was very impressed with how the town has renewed itself and turned into a very pleasant Midlands town.

The Walking Tour

Public Transport Interchanges

I arrived at the railway station and found the staff very friendly. After having a coffee in the railway café I walked into the town. The signs to the town centre were clearly visible and supported by the first of a number of Heritage boards with a town centre map. The map was easy to understand and the heritage information very interesting. I decided to walk to the bus station and found the pavements clean and well maintained. As it was October the roadside flower beds were empty, awaiting their winter planting, but I did notice the chained iron work surrounds to the beds that I thought were unusual and well designed.
I found my way to the bus station and was very impressed with the information board clearly explaining which service runs from which bay. The green tarmac crossings gave definition of where to cross safely within the large undefined area and the local cafes and shops in the immediate area appeared to meet the needs of travellers.

The CandiTV was very interesting and good technology for the younger generations. I know that the usage is closely monitored and would recommend a bigger scene if possible so that it is more easily visible to visitors.

With the bus station being in close proximity to the railway station travellers can easily transfer from one service to the other. There were also a number of taxis waiting near both interchanges.

**Pedestrianised Area**

Continuing on towards the pedestrianised area I watched a post office van negotiate the rising bollards. These bollards are an effective barrier to stop traffic entering during the closure period and the signage was cleverly displayed in planted beds that softened their starkness. The paving was in good condition with very little chewing gum and devoid of litter. I stopped to read the second Heritage board that carried on the same theme as the first and once again confirmed where I was by using the map.

I found the Abbeygate Shopping Centre to be light and airy, the seats along the middle allowing shoppers to take a break or wait for friends and family. The shops were a mixture of independents and small chain stores with good window displays. The shop assistants were pleasant and helpful.

There were a number of vacant shops in Harefield Road but I understand that some of these are potentially let. The street furniture was of a good quality heritage design that was replicated throughout the town. The furniture blended well with the paving that had some interesting designs at the street intersections.

**Library Area**

As the town is not a visitor destination I presumed that there would not be a Tourist Information Centre so I followed the well placed finger posts and found my way to the library. This was a welcoming building but I was disappointed to find that the
tourist information was almost hidden at the rear of the building. I couldn’t find a leaflet on the town but did pick up a copy of *George Eliot: Scenes Trails* that included a town centre map showing the areas of interest that were connected with the author’s writings.

The Library Car Park was almost full by 11:00 and I thought the charges were reasonable with savings for longer stays. I am sure that the ease of entry into the car park from the ring road makes this a very popular place to park. Continuing my walk into Vicarage Street I could see that Sainsbury’s car park was also very busy. I noticed a road sign to the Museum and Art Gallery, that was rather dirty, and walked along the riverside to the Museum. The small café was excellent and I took time out to visit the George Eliot exhibition. The exhibits were good but unfortunately some of the information was difficult to read in the dimmed light.

The riverside, War Memorial Gardens, Memorial Garden and the George Eliot Gardens were a delight to walk through and were all well maintained and free of litter. The underpass under the ring road was very impressive with its tribute to the Memorial garden’s benefactor.

**Town Hall and Rope Walk Area**

Heading for the Town Hall from the George Eliot Garden I went into the public toilets in Mill Walk. I found these clean and in good condition although my eyes took time to adjust to the blue light.

The Town Hall and surrounding buildings add an air of elegance to the town and the planting outside the Town Hall helps to green the area.

The tall glass front of the Ropewalk Shopping Centre gives a modern contrast to the surrounding Victorian buildings and gives the town its destination shopping appeal. The Pay on Exit car park is well signed and helps shoppers to extend their stays rather than having retailers loose sales because shoppers have to dash back before their parking tickets expire.

The range of multiples and chain stores in the centre clearly cater for both the younger and older generations but also reflect the level of income of local residents. It was pleasing to see that almost all the units were occupied.

**Market Place and Abbey Street**

These streets were a mixture of local independent stores and a large Cooperative Department store. I felt that this store, Debenhams and Marks & Spencer’s would all benefit from refits and hopefully these will happen after the recession.
There was no street market on the day I visited but I understand that it really lifts this area on Wednesdays and Saturdays and attracts many people to the town. The fountain at the top of the Market Place is an excellent feature. It was clean and attractive and the seats around made it a pleasant meeting place. The finger post nearby appears to have suffered some vandalism.

**Streetscape**

It is difficult to keep the public realm in good condition when you have different streetscapes and uses. However the Council should be congratulated for providing such good quality, well maintained, paving throughout, seamlessly joining the Victorian street pattern together. The bronze statue of George Eliot celebrates the life of the town’s most famous resident and the areas of high quality black street furniture and trees provide seating and shade on hot days.

The notices advertising on the spot fines are clearly working as I saw almost no litter and the Council’s rapid removal policy on graffiti is also a success story. I liked the new J C Decaux free standing concrete advertising panels that allow the council to display important information about their services.

**Conclusions**

I enjoyed my visit much more than I thought I would and was very impressed with the good mixture of nice parks and pleasant walkways. There are some superb Victorian buildings, such as Barclays bank and the Yorkshire bank, that may be lost on shoppers as most people don’t look up as they are walking. The ring road may technically feel like a concrete collar but the well placed roundabouts make access into the town centre very easy and the entrances to the car parks were all well signed.

The six most positive features were:

1. Well maintained public realm, high quality street furniture and public art
2. Excellent heritage and map information boards that tell the history of the town and help visitors to get their bearings
3. A good mix of independent, multiples and department stores
4. Well maintained parks and riverside walk
5. Good street and pedestrian signage
6. Total lack of litter, detritus and graffiti – congratulations!

The areas that could possibly be worked on are:

1. Moving the Tourist Information to a more prominent place within the library
2. Cleaning the road sign to the Museum and Art Gallery and possibly the facility more prominent for visitors on foot from the Library
3. Introduction of good quality all day restaurants and wine bars
4. Bigger screen for CandiTV
5. Free town brochure heritage sites and town trials

The Borough Council should be proud of how the town has developed and improved over the past twenty years. Situated between Coventry, Leicester, Hinckley and Rugby it is difficult for Nuneaton to attract visitors and shoppers but by creating a niche with its award winning markets and regenerating the town so that it looks good has reaped benefits and has made the town viable and an enjoyable place in which to live, work and visit.

Keep up the good work !!!

Cynthia Palmer
Hereford City Manager
01432 383610
15th October 2009
First Impressions Exercise – Bedworth, Warwickshire - 26th January 2010

Weather: cold but bright

Time: Arrival 10.30am – Departure 3.30pm

North West Leicestershire District Team – Meggie Bailey, Kathy Belfield, Emily Todd

The group had very little existing knowledge about Bedworth prior to the visit. One member had visited the Civic Hall some 5-10 years previously but had not visited the town centre, one member had visited Bedworth briefly one year ago and one member of the group had never been to Bedworth.

**Initial impressions section**

*Expectations*
The group was divided between those that thought Bedworth had a market and those that didn’t.
The group was expecting Bedworth to be smaller than Coalville, to have a small shopping precinct and not much else.
The group had no knowledge about any ‘tourist’ or visitor attractions either within or near to the town centre.

*Initial Impressions*
The verges of the dual carriage way (Uni-part) were strewn with rubbish and litter and created a poor impression.
We noticed two large roundabouts en route to Bedworth (before Nuneaton is reached). One was largely overgrown – the second looked as if some care had been taken to landscape it.
On route between Ashby de la Zouch and Bedworth (A42, then A444) there were no signs to Bedworth until we reached Nuneaton town centre.
The highway signage on the approach into the town centre was dirty
At the Bedworth boundary there was a ‘Welcome to Nuneaton and Bedworth sign’ which called the county ‘George Elliot’ county – maybe this could do with a clean?
The entrance (and exit) to the town centre along the main street (before Tesco) seemed tired and neglected as a result of the quality of the housing stock and business frontages. However as soon as one reaches the ‘core’ town centre an entirely different impression is given e.g. the town seems bustling and busy, and there seemed to be more ‘colour’.

We parked in the car park next to the cemetery (the car parking spaces were of a generous size!) – we recommend a sign be installed to direct visitors to the town centre from the car park via the church walkway as this is well maintained and traffic free.

**Drive About Section**

We didn’t spend a great deal of time driving round the outskirts of Bedworth and there is only one vehicular route through the town centre itself. Bedworth is largely pedestrianised.

**Walking Tour Section**
Physical state of businesses
Some of the shops look somewhat tired. The street with Wetherspoons seems the most down at heel part of the town centre – perhaps this is exacerbated by the width of the street. Also the row of shops outside the market building are not particularly enticing. However the precinct is well cared for and the shops in this area are more inviting.

There are relatively few empty premises with one of those currently empty subject to a change of use planning application and the town taken as a whole exudes a well kept, well cared for air.

The florists on the entrance to the town after Tesco provides a glorious splash of colour and a good welcome to the town centre.

The columns on this building which houses JB news, the florist and Blockbuster need a new coat of paint.

The Savers frontage is in desperate need of a clean.

The Joe Richards greengrocers shop frontage is of a high quality and should be commended.

The window displays on the whole lacked flair.

Range and diversity of businesses
The town centre benefits from a good basic range of shops and services including a supermarket, video store, newsagents, jewellers, florists, opticians, gift shops, banks, discount shops, charity shops, estate agents, sandwich shop, bakery, fashion outlets, betting shops, credit union, chemists, dry cleaners, greengrocers etc

Notable gaps include a restaurant/bistro (although the Civic Hall fulfils this role to some extent), wine bar, upper range fashion/clothing shops, hairdressers/beauty salon.

The people factor
The group was extremely impressed by the friendliness and helpfulness of the people of Bedworth. Examples include:

- Very polite service from JB News
- Being asked whether I was lost by a passer by who was then able to confirm which was the oldest complete building in Bedworth
- Exceptional service from the Heritage Centre

People seemed to know each other and frequently called out to each other across the street.
Car users seemed happy to let pedestrians cross in front of them.

People shopping in Bedworth at first glance seemed to be in the older age bracket.

There seemed to be a good take up of the Shopmobility service.
There were a good number of notice boards dotted throughout the town which provided a map on one side and heritage information relevant to the location on the other side.

In the library we found the town centre guide to Nuneaton and Bedworth but this doesn’t include a map of Bedworth.

**Public toilets and other facilities**
Bedworth has a good selection of public toilets available.

The public toilets by the Alms Houses are well maintained – well stocked with toilet paper, hand wash and free! The doors would benefit from hooks on the back for handbags, coats etc.

The public toilets by the market were equally well maintained but the amount of space given to the cubicles was not sufficient.

We located two post boxes – presumably there are more than this?

Bedworth benefits from a fabulous amount of benches. There is somewhere to sit at virtually every location within the town centre. This is to be commended. Some of the benches would benefit from a spruce up.

**Parking**
Signs to the car parks were adequate.
Why are the car parking charges different for different car parks e.g. Mill Street car park was £5.20 for 24 hours and others were £3.20 for 24 hours.
It was good to see police notices about not leaving valuables on display at all the car parks.
The car parks were all located within easy walking distance of the town centre.

**Actor Section**

**Tourist/visitor**
Bedworth is fortunate to have a Heritage centre and the Alms houses as key visitor attractions.

**Potential resident**
Reeds Rains estate agents gave me a range of literature about housing options available in both Bedworth and Nuneaton. The estate agent was very complimentary about the local primary schools in Bedworth.
As someone potentially relocating to Bedworth I would be impressed by the proximity of the lovely park, the Arts Centre, the Civic hall, the Almshouses. Bedworth has a fabulous amount of sport and recreation opportunities available including a football club, swimming pool, cricket pitch and cultural activities provided by the Arts Centre and Civic hall.

**Overall Feelings**

**Gut feeling**
I came away from Bedworth feeling that the community was extremely friendly but that they didn’t appreciate their town centre.
6 most positive features
The friendliness of the people
The Arts Centre
The recreational facilities available (park, swimming pool)
The number of benches
The beautiful Almshouses being right in the town centre
The clear signage

Ideas for Coalville
I’d like to set up a Coalville Heritage centre

Attention needed
Bedworth should promote itself more and focus on creating its own identity – own town centre guide for example

Greatest impact
The impressive levels friendliness of the people and the high level of good customer service given in the shops

Final comments
The Christmas decorations were still up – presumably as a result of the heavy snow fall at the beginning of January
The town seemed busy until about 2pm when there was a noticeable decline in pedestrian footfall
The town was generally clean and litter free
The land by the Arts Centre requires some environmental improvement
The columns of the building housing Blockbuster and the Florist on Leicester Road(?) are in need of a repaint.
I noticed a number of shields for the ‘floral trail’ – what is this, where does it go and how does one follow the route?
The railings on both sides of Leicester Road (Tesco and Domestic and General Group PLC) need a repaint
The Old Meeting Yard street name is bent
The flower bed outside Blockbusters has been used as a cigarette butt bin and creates a poor impression.
The finger post signage in the town centre was excellent.
There was little graffiti within the town centre.
Most of the railings were neat and well painted

Officials seen working:
Police
Town centre maintenance with the green machine
Impressions Survey Form

A Initial Impressions Section

1. I have only visited Bedworth once, 6-7 years ago at night in the dark to attend an event at the Civic Hall. I remember we struggled to find the Civic Hall although it was close to the car park. I remember an urban town but I have a low awareness of the town even though my job at Ashby Tourist information Centre demands a good working knowledge of the Midlands. I have a low expectation of it's offer. I tend not to travel in that direction.

2. • As we approached along the A444 which is a beautiful road, there was a lack of signage for Bedworth, but we followed the Nuneaton signs.
• Closer to the town I was surprised to see a thatched cottage, pretty fields, posh pub and livery stables, so my expectation rose.
• We passed a modern business/industrial development and recent traffic system which indicated a healthy economic development but unfortunately this has caused lots of litter on the duel carriage way.

3. • Driving through the town, the most noticeable thing for me was that ALL the road signs were filthy dirty and gave the place a scruffy look.
• The precinct area however was a delightful surprise and I was impressed with the centre.
• Outskirts of town looked tired, clutter of dirty signs.

B Drive About Section

1. Town gateways
• Roundabouts had been landscaped nicely but were let down by clutter of dirty signs and litter.
• Evidence of nice wrought iron hanging baskets stands.
• Nice green verges and flower beds.
• Not really shouting about BEDWORTH – signage says Nuneaton and Bedworth

2. Main shopping area appearance
• Went in the Heritage Centre, discreet entrance but door was ajar so I knew it was open. Inviting atmosphere, excellent displays, superb customer care. Real enthusiasm and passion for the history of the town from the volunteers. This also included the Mayor who was there in his chain of office.
• Very impressed to see the Almshouses integrated well into the centre of town
• Surprised by the amount of shops. Beautifully landscaped garden area in the centre.
• Lots and lots of attractive benches and seating areas around the town.
• Modern attractive shopping precinct ensured we knew we had arrived at the centre of the town. Good sense of place.
• Iconic green and white striped market hall
• Range of modern supermarkets
• Ugly boarded up shops at other end of town.
• Long/short stay Car parking well signed
• Road signs were all dirty and green mouldy.
• The place was buzzing and busy. Good traffic flow.

3. Industrial area appearance
• Impressive new road layout and roundabout however we did miss the tiny sign for BEDWORTH and we went round the island 3 times.
• Impressive industrial/business parks were well signed.
• Couldn’t call them beautiful but may mellow with time.
• Lots of litter along this duel carriageway.
• Location and accessibility seemed good i.e. close but not too close to the town

C Walking Tour Section
1. Physical state of businesses
• Shopping precinct buildings very smart, shops facing market varied but OK
• Window displays on the whole were poor, no style

2. Range and diversity of businesses
• Range of cheap household goods was excellent
• Lack of upmarket clothes/shoe shops.
• Not many places for lunch but Civic Centre and Wetherspoons were busy.

3. The people factor
• Overwhelmed with the friendliness of people
• Although it was a cold morning, people walked around with chins up shoulders back smiley faces, no problem returning a friendly good morning.
• Superb customer care. Real enthusiasm and passion for the history of the town from the volunteers at the Heritage Centre. I asked for a shop where I could get photos developed and John Burton recommended Skeltons on Congreve Walk and came outside with me and gave me clear directions.
• Very helpful lady in Skeltons worked the photo computer for me and also sold me a photo Album. On request she gave me helpful directions.
• Popped into Lloyd Bank to ask for a Santander Branch Clear helpful info given
• Nice Santander lady gave me helpful info on location of nearest toilets
• Nice lady in Mobility area of the post office gave helpful advice and added that they would shortly be closing but the nearest place would then be etc etc.
• Friendly staff at the Civic Centre gave programme of events.
• Really friendly staff at Arts Centre gave us a tour and lots of info. Made me want to come back and see a show.
• Friendly and helpful lady at the library was asked for a street plan. She had a bit of a moan that they didn’t have one any more. However she
turned it into a positive as she said with a smile “Not to worry as Bedworth is easy to find your way around”

- Met Alan Town Centre Manager at Civic Hall Café for lovely big mug of coffee. Impressed with large portions of roast lunches.
- Had value for money lunch at Wetherspoons which was busy with older chaps who were meeting and chatting with friends.
- One negative comment from a shop assistant Oh there’s nothing much to do here.
- Two different people told us about the award winning park which we went to see and it was lovely. Excellent facility for the town. Swimming pool, football ground and everything all in one place.

4. Community information
- Useful blue pedestrian signage around the town
- Impressed with TIPs with easy to locate maps and interesting info on history of the town.
- Heritage centre had info on events but no town map
- Library had no map but offered one to look at.

5. Public toilets and other facilities
- Public toilets near heritage centre were well stocked, clean, functional and easy to find.
- The ones near the market were not quite so clean but it was later in the day.
- Telephone box looked a bit scruffy
- Only saw one post box which was near the housing estate across from the car park.
- Lots of good condition public seating

6. Parking
- Well signed from the town centre
- Car Park at the side of the church had useful short cut to the town centre but there were no signs to indicate this.
- Car park spaces were nice and wide. Charges were acceptable.

D Actor Section
1. Tourist/visitor
Comment on such things as knowledge and attitude of locals towards tourist attractions and services, tourist information, range and appeal of attractions, opening hours, costs, etc.
- Impressive local heritage knowledge of volunteers at Heritage Centre who were genuinely pleased to help. Added lots of other info and John Burton even invited me to come back at the weekend when there was an organised walk.
- Further information on other places to visit in the area.
- Nice range of small gifts well presented, clean and tidy.
- I didn’t see any information about where to stay, either here or in the library.
- I will genuinely come back for a longer visit another day.
2. Potential resident/retiree
I called in to Hawkins Estate agent asked for details of 4 bed detached as husband was considering job relocation. My age and conversation would have led to this being director level and pretty much a done deal, but we didn’t get that far, as Andrew Beven only showed me one property and suggested I’d probably prefer to live in Nuneaton

3. Potential Business Operator
- missed this one

E Overall Feelings
1. Overall "gut feeling" about the community
2. List the 6 most positive features you observed in the community
   - Friendliness of everyone and excellent customer service.
   - Lovely precinct area, clean and tidy. Would love to come back in summer to see hanging baskets.
   - Excellent heritage centre and beautiful alms houses
   - The range of events at the Civic Centre will attract people from out of the area.
   - The range of events at the Arts Centre will help strengthen the community spirit of the area community
   - Walkways from the parks and cemetery through to the town are lovely in daytime but would be dodgy at night.
3. Describe one or two ideas that you feel you could steal for your own community.
   - I would love to have that Arts Centre
4. What do you consider the key area that the community needs to give attention to?
   - Ensure that traders have a passion for the town and that they share this with locals and visitors. Excellent customer service is essential.
5. What aspect of the community made the greatest impact on you (positive or negative)?
   - Friendly buzz around the town, everyone was engaging with everyone else.
6. Any final comment(s) you would like to record.
   I think you are very lucky in BEDWORTH as you have
   - All the parks and recreation facilities together
   - All the public services are all together Police, Library, Civic Hall and Council Offices
   - All the shops are all together
INITIAL IMPRESSIONS:
Upon arrival to Bedworth discussions were had about the expectations we each had of the town. Perceptions were that it would not be a large town mainly based around an open shopping precinct area. There were mixed views as to whether the town had a market, but it was thought that the town did have a concert hall. There was a question raised as to whether it had any tourist attractions and what its Leisure Facilities were like.

DRIVE ABOUT:
Once we approached the town centre we noticed that several of the road signs were in need of cleaning and there was a lot of litter either side of the road on the dual carriageway near Unipart. On route there were no signs for Bedworth. The road sign which showed we were in Nuneaton and Bedworth was extremely old fashioned, quite tired looking. After passing this sign we then struggled to know which area we were in.

The Tesco building which seemed to be the first building to the entrance of the town is rather off putting due to the style and the fact that it seemed not to fit in with the rest of the town.

Once approaching the town it seemed very lively with some very nice areas. A Long stay car park was easy to find but a road sign is needed allocating on the street where the car park is. We also noticed some police patrolling the town before entering the car park which was nice to see.

Car parking charges were reasonable and in my opinion there needs to be a sign in the Long stay car park pointing towards the path which can lead you straight into the centre of the town, as we had to ask where the path lead to.

WALKING TOUR:
The physical state of some of the businesses was rather run down i.e. windows were dirty. Some buildings looked extremely tired and in need of an update.

There was not a wide variety of shops with in the town for example only two clothes shops seemed to be there these being New Look and Peacock. Whilst there were several charity shops, banks and estate agents. However looking at the number of vacant units within the town it was not too bad.

Community information was very clear with clear signage pointing to local amenities. There were several boards around the town with maps and also a bit of local history about particular areas.
Locations of public toilets were good and local people seemed more than happy to point you in the right direction when asked. However, the conditions of the public toilets near to the market were quite poor. There were no hooks on doors to allow you to hang belongings on there.

The location of the car parking works very well but as stated before on the Long Stay car park a sign needs to be placed somewhere along the path stating that you can walk along there to get to the centre of town.

We went into the Council offices to get a map of the town centre and were directed to the library next door. Some of the leaflets in the reception area were significantly out of date (2007).

**ACTOR SECTION:**
We assumed the role of potential residents with the story that our partners were having a job interview and we were potentially going to be relocating to the Bedworth area. The estate agent I went to was opposite the Weatherspoons. I approached them and spoke to a lady who wasn’t really that helpful and who struggled to tell me how much houses were within the area. I asked her about the local newspaper next to her desk and asked if I could have one of which she said yes and continued to look at her computer. Soon after I left their shop feeling a little disheartened and felt that if I had my house on the market with them I would be rather angry that they were not willing to show me any.
## MONITORING OF CABINET RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC OSP RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CABINET DECISIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Recommendation/s</th>
<th>Date approved by OSP</th>
<th>Date report went to Cabinet</th>
<th>Date of Cabinet Response</th>
<th>Cabinet's Response from Schedule of Executive Decisions</th>
<th>Follow up action/Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third Sector Funding &amp; Contributions</td>
<td>a) the principal of funding, for Third Sector Organisations that provide advice services in the Borough, for 3 year periods is agreed with: - the level and detail of funding being determined at the start of each 3 year period - the 3 year period should coincide with the Spending Review - to incorporate the</td>
<td>20/1/10</td>
<td>17/2/10</td>
<td>17/2/10</td>
<td>a) Agreed all parts</td>
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<td><strong>agreement already made by the Council to fund the organisations during 2010/11:</strong></td>
<td><strong>b)</strong> rate rebates for organisations with charitable status should remain as they are currently;</td>
<td><strong>c)</strong> in principal, utility costs should not be met by the Council;</td>
<td><strong>d)</strong> Service Level Agreements (SLAs) should be put in place that enable quarterly performance reporting to the Economic OSP and detailing where money is being spent in the Borough; and</td>
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<td><strong>e)</strong> that the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities attends the Economic Overview and Scrutiny Panel with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>e)</strong> Chair agreed that the Portfolio Holder would not be required to attend OSP as all above recommendations were agreed</td>
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b) Agreed

c) Agreed

d) Agreed

Economic Scrutiny Panel Agenda 01 03 2010
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<tr>
<th><strong>Cabinet's response indicating what (if any) action the Cabinet proposes, to take.</strong></th>
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