

North Warwickshire
Community Partnership
a community of communities



**North Warwickshire
Sustainable Community Strategy
2009-2026**



In these times of economic restraint, it is more important than ever that all communities and interests in North Warwickshire should work together to tackle the key issues in our area.

I believe that we should also be clear and determined about what we want to achieve and not be frightened to be more ambitious about less.

Educational attainment in North Warwickshire is currently the lowest in the County, the health of our population is also amongst the poorest in the County, whilst our Borough also includes some of the most remote and diverse rural communities in Warwickshire.

Raising educational attainment, improving health, and tackling rural access are thus the three priorities we have decided to focus on as a Partnership. Each is a complex long-term ambition that is going to require tenacity and commitment in order to make any real difference.

Over the coming years, we will therefore monitor the success of our Partnership through a series of timetabled, targeted outcomes for each of these three priorities.



**Colin Hayfield,
Chair of the North Warwickshire
Community Partnership**





Section 1: Introduction	4
Section 2: Developing the Strategy	7
Section 3: Pressures, challenges and priorities	8
Section 4: Measuring Progress	13
Section 5: Further information	14



North Warwickshire 2026 Vision:

“Rural North Warwickshire; a community of communities. A place where people want to live, work and visit, now and in the future, which meets the diverse needs of existing and future residents, is sensitive to the local environment, and contributes to a high quality of life. A place which is safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offers equality of opportunity and good services for all”.

North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy and Vision

This Sustainable Community Strategy sets out our three key priorities for improving the overall quality of life in North Warwickshire from 2009 to 2026. These are:

- Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skills
- Developing healthier communities
- Improving access to services

Our challenge is to put in place the appropriate tools and infrastructure to deliver sustained improvement for all our communities so that more people can enjoy life and reach their full potential.

To achieve this, we want to help local people to look after themselves, stay healthy, independent and participate fully as members of the community.

The North Warwickshire Community Partnership

The North Warwickshire Community Partnership is responsible for the delivery of the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy and Action Plans. The Partnership comprises of representatives of the public, private and voluntary sector including the Borough and County Councils, NHS Warwickshire, Warwickshire Police and a range of other organisations from the voluntary, business, community and public sectors.

Through its diverse membership, the Partnership seeks to influence the way partners plan and deliver services, providing the strategic co-ordination within the area and will put in place the appropriate structures to deliver the strategy.



Locality Working

Area Forums (North, South, East and West) have been running for some years and provide an opportunity for the Borough Council, County Council, Police and other public agencies to engage with local people. The Area Forums provide local people with the opportunity to raise their hopes and concerns and influence the way services are delivered.

Priority Communities

Evidence shows that some communities experience greater deprivation than others. The North Warwickshire Community Partnership will continue to focus on 'Narrowing the Gaps', reducing differences locally in terms of achievement, opportunity and quality of life.

Partnership Success

Since the first strategy in 2001, the North Warwickshire Community Partnership has made real progress and we want to build on this success with our new Sustainable Community Strategy.

During the period of our last Strategy 2006 - 09 our successes included:

Community Safety

Since 2006/07 crime levels have been on a sustained downward trend and are at the lowest point for over five years. In 2008/09 overall crime was down by 6% compared to the previous year. These reductions have been supported by attracting over £500,000 of external funding to deliver community safety projects.

Children and Young People

A borough-wide Play Strategy addressed gaps in play provision for children and young people aged 0-18, resulting in improvements to seven play facilities.

Voluntary and Community Activity

Since 2006, over 200 groups have been helped to attract external funding of over £1million, enabling groups to provide social activities for their communities and resourcing the refurbishment of community buildings. During the 12 month period ending 31 March 2009, volunteer recruitment increased by 100% compared to previous years.

Access to Services

In May 2007 a One Stop Shop opened in Atherstone providing residents and visitors to North Warwickshire access to a wide range of services provided by the Council and partner organisations.

Housing - Working to Prevent Homelessness

A Financial Literacy and Homelessness Project provided people who were experiencing financial problems with access to training to help them with their budgeting skills. The project has helped to prevent people from being evicted from their properties.

Education, Aspirations and Attainment

The Kingsbury School Programme explored the potential to improve the attainment of young people by raising aspirations and changing attitudes of both young people and their parents. A variety of projects were undertaken including E-learning, providing net books to allow access for all to the internet and a Community Services Project. This provided young volunteers to become involved in the life of their community to reduce disaffection and promote good citizenship.

Celebrating Local Heritage

With Heritage Lottery funding of £0.5 million, the North Arden Heritage Trail (a 25-mile circular walk passing through 12 local parishes) was created. As well as establishing a well-maintained, major new walking route in itself, it has encouraged local communities to develop smaller circular walks taking in their parishes' historic, natural and cultural heritage.

Encouraging Healthier Lifestyles

The Partnership contributed to the Warwickshire Stop Smoking Service target of reducing the number of people who smoke in North Warwickshire. A target of 362 four-week quitters was exceeded by nearly 10% by running a number of targeted projects and healthy lifestyle events.

European Funding

To help address issues of improving access to services in rural areas and improve communication a successful application for 'LEADER' - European Funding was submitted and approved. North Warwickshire has been awarded just over £1 million covering the period 2009 to 2013 to support and deliver projects across North Warwickshire's rural communities.



Bridge at Polesworth



Civic Garden, Atherstone

What are Sustainable Communities?

How we live is shaped by where we live. Rural areas, like North Warwickshire, have their own issues, which need to be addressed. Wherever people live, they still have the same basic needs: jobs; a healthy economy; a stable and safe place to live and work; a decent and affordable home; a pleasant and healthy environment; good public services; opportunity and choice for all and the chance to shape their own future. The Local Development Framework has an important role in supporting the delivery of the physical infrastructure required by the Sustainable Community Strategy, ensuring the Strategy is genuinely sustainable.

How did we prepare the Strategy?

Our priorities have been developed in consultation with local people and stakeholders and are supported by evidence, which was collated by the North Warwickshire Community Partnership.

This Strategy takes account of the various influences and pressures facing North Warwickshire and is supported by a number of national, regional and local strategies and plans. In particular:

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out what future development will take place within the Borough and the emerging Local Development Framework will take account of what it says.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) sets out sustainable planning policies to guide future land use and development in terms of housing, local transport, environmental concerns, industrial and commercial development and wider social issues.

The Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy sets out a long term vision for Warwickshire and provides the framework at a county level for partnership working from now until 2026.

The Warwickshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a contract between central government and partners in Warwickshire and is the delivery plan for the Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy.

Warwickshire Health Inequality Strategy sets out a long term approach for reducing health inequalities across Warwickshire and sets out a framework to improve life expectancy in Warwickshire.

Green Space Strategy sets out a ten year framework for the management and development of green space in North Warwickshire.

Parish Plans set out local community priorities and demonstrate how distinctive characteristics and features can be preserved.

Area Pledges set out locally agreed commitments to improve specific local priorities within each Area Forum.

Section 3: Pressures, challenges and priorities

We recognise that a broad range of work is needed to tackle the priorities set out in this Strategy. Our intention is not to reflect the core business of an individual organisation but to add value by working together using staff time and resources more flexibly. This will target our priorities where the greatest achievement can be made and make the best use of the resources available.

We recognise that some issues, for example climate change, do not appear as one of our three key priorities. It is, however, being addressed elsewhere, through the Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy to ensure that appropriate linkages are made to educate, enable and empower communities to reduce carbon emissions. The Local Development Framework will be addressing the quality and design of new development and the opportunities for improving the Borough's existing built stock, where the greatest need and potential benefits for reducing carbon emissions lie.

Our priorities will change over time to ensure that we address the Borough's biggest challenges and help those communities in greatest need.

Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skills

Current information shows that too many of our children and young people are not reaching their full potential. We believe that every young person in North Warwickshire deserves the best possible support and encouragement to achieve this.

Families have a key role in influencing the aspirations of young people, encouraging personal and academic development and fostering a good work ethic. We all have a part to play and we want to see everyone in the area working together to make sure our young people are inspired to achieve.

North Warwickshire has some significant challenges ahead:

- significantly lower educational attainment and skills compared to the rest of the County
- low levels, or lack, of formal qualifications
- fewer young people gaining five or more A* - C GCSE grades (including English and Maths)
- the number of young people aged 16-18 not in education, employment or training (NEETs)
- low levels of aspiration and expectation



The North Warwickshire Community Partnership will raise aspirations, educational attainment and skills by:

- improving North Warwickshire’s economic prosperity
- working with local employers to identify skills shortages and access to local job opportunities
- providing easily accessible and affordable learning opportunities
- supporting the engagement and attainment of young people who are not engaged in education, training or employment
- promoting the development of vocational skills and volunteering

By 2026, we will have:

Raised aspirations, educational attainment and skills

- more people will be in work and unemployment and worklessness will be low
- educational attainment and skill base will be improved to meet local economic needs and more young people will be in education, training and employment
- training and education links with growth in the Borough’s major strategic employment sites and employers, such as Birch Coppice and Hams Hall will be in place, focussing on matching local employee skills with local commercial/business employment needs and ensuring equality of job opportunity for all
- economic inequalities between communities will be reduced



The Belfry

Developing Healthier Communities

Health is a key determinant of well-being. It can enable or inhibit the quality of life more than any other factor. While health and social care make a contribution to health, most of the key determinants of health lie outside their direct influence. These include an individual's local environment, living and working conditions, income, genetic factors and choices made, as well as opportunities taken about lifestyle. Housing, which is in good condition and affordable, is inextricably linked to good health and well-being.

The above issues are a challenge in their own right which will be exacerbated by an ageing population. We will need to ensure that we make provision for future demographic changes in our longer term planning for the Borough.

We believe we have a responsibility to local people to enable them to have their say, provide good quality health care and advice and encourage healthier lifestyles. The ability to have a say in and influence your environment is a key determinant of mental health and well-being. North Warwickshire scores well:

- 85% of residents said they were satisfied with the area as a place to live,
- 80% said they feel people from different backgrounds get on well together and
- 65% feel very or fairly strongly that they belong to their immediate neighbourhood.

(Source: Place Survey 2008)

North Warwickshire still has some significant challenges ahead:

- life expectancy in North Warwickshire is lower than the Warwickshire average
- higher levels of people classifying themselves as not being in good health and above average early death rates from heart disease and strokes
- rising levels of obesity
- the number of people who smoke
- the pressures of an ageing population who will need support to live independently
- ensuring the availability of sufficient affordable housing and that properties are in a decent condition
- despite a decrease in recorded crime, fear of crime and disorder remains a high community concern
- the consumption of alcohol by young people and its associated link to anti social behaviour is often raised as a concern
- the rates of hospital stay for alcohol related harm and rates of drug misuse are lower than national averages but there are concerns about the impact on some of our communities



The North Warwickshire Community Partnership will develop healthier communities by:

- reducing the number of people who smoke
- reducing obesity by improving diet, nutrition and increasing exercise
- tackling alcohol misuse amongst young people
- reducing the impact of alcohol related harm and drug misuse on some of our communities
- enabling people to have access to and choice and control over services provided to help them remain independent as they grow older
- promoting active citizenship
- enabling decent, affordable and sustainable housing
- enabling people to feel safe and secure
- planning for an ageing population

By 2026, we will have:

Developed Healthier Communities

- there will be improved health - people choosing healthy and active lifestyles, lower levels of obesity and alcohol consumption, increased levels of physical activity, healthier eating and fewer people will smoke
- more people living independently for longer and in warm homes and modern facilities
- active citizenship
- decent, affordable and sustainable housing
- safe and secure local environment



Coleshill Housing Development



Cook and Taste
Arden Hill

Improving Access to Services

The rural nature of the area means that some people face a number of problems with accessing everyday services for example jobs, education, GP surgeries, shops and Post Offices. Compounding this issue is that some services are located outside the area, for example, the George Eliot Hospital. This can be a significant problem for people, who do not have their own transport.

Public transport is provided across the Borough although the frequency of the services and their routes will not meet everyone's transport needs. Access to information about public transport, cost and frequency of services are concerns.

Communication within North Warwickshire presents many challenges. There is no single newspaper or radio station that covers the whole area. Furthermore, broadband coverage and the speed of the connection are not always good.

Many people in North Warwickshire, particularly those living on low incomes, find it difficult to access mainstream financial services such as bank accounts and low cost loans, which can lead to financial exclusion and poverty. Access to affordable financial services is central to improving families' economic wellbeing.

North Warwickshire has some significant challenges ahead:

- the provision of a greater range of access to services
- transport links and communication
- tackling financial exclusion

The North Warwickshire Community Partnership will improve access to services by:

- being better informed about customer needs
- supporting, developing and promoting greater access to a range of local services and job opportunities
- building greater capacity in the communication network
- tackling the causes of financial exclusion

By 2026, we will have:

Improved access to services

- greater range of access to services
- improved transport links and communication
- increased prosperity for those on lower income

Section 4: Measuring Progress

The North Warwickshire Community Partnership will oversee the delivery of the Action Plans and ensure progress is maintained. At the end of each year, we shall compare our progress with what was planned and confirm the next year's targets.

The Action Plans will be reviewed and updated annually whilst the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy will be reviewed approximately every three years. The Action Plans are published separately as they will change over time.

To make sure we stay on track, the North Warwickshire Community Partnership will continue to listen to and involve local people, reviewing the planning and reporting progress. This will ensure that we continue to improve and adapt the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy.



Abbey Green Park, Polesworth

Section 5: Further Information



If you would like information on the North Warwickshire Community Partnership or to receive further copies of the Sustainable North Warwickshire Community Strategy please contact:

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If you need this information in larger print or in another language, please feel free to contact us. A full strategy document is available on the North Warwickshire Community Partnership website www.northwarks.gov.uk/nwcp

