

**To: Leader and Members of the Executive Board
(Councillors D Wright, Bell, Chambers, Deakin, Gosling, Hayfield, D Humphreys, Jenns, Morson, Reilly, Simpson and Symonds)**

For the information of other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01827 719221 or via e-mail – democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

The agenda and reports are available in large print and electronic accessible formats if requested.

EXECUTIVE BOARD AGENDA

22 November 2021

The Executive Board will meet on Monday, 22 November 2021 at 6.30pm via Teams. An email invite will be sent to all Members and the meeting will be live streamed on the Council's YouTube channel, accessible from the home page of the Council's website or at <https://www.youtube.com/user/northwarks>

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council business.**
- 2 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

3 **Public Participation**

Up to twenty minutes will be set aside for members of the public to put questions to elected Members. Questions should be submitted by 9.30am 2 working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THIS MEETING WILL BE TAKING PLACE REMOTELY.

Members of the public wishing to address the Board must register their intention to do so by 9:30 am 2 working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each.

If you wish to put a question to the meeting, please register by:
e-mail to democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk or telephone:
(01827) 719221/719226.

Once registered to speak, an invitation will be sent to join the Teams video conferencing for this meeting. Those registered to speak should dial the telephone number and ID number (provided on their invitation) when joining the meeting to ask their question. However, whilst waiting they will be able hear what is being said at the meeting. They will also be able to view the meeting using the YouTube link provided (if so they may need to mute the sound on YouTube when they speak on the phone to prevent feedback).

4 **Minutes of the Executive Board held on 20 September 2021** – copies herewith, to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 **Calendar of Meetings 2022/2023** – Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

The purpose of this report is to approve a calendar of meetings for 2022/23.

The Contact Officer for this report is Amanda Tonks (719221).

6 **Budgetary Control Report 2020/21 – Period Ended 31 October 2021** – Report of the Corporate Director - Resources

Summary

The report covers revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 October 2021. The 2021/22 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date, are given, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to this Board

The Contact Officer for this report is Nigel Lane (79371).

7 **Draft Economic Strategy** – Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

This report seeks approval of a Draft Economic Development Strategy for consultation.

The Contact Officer for this report is Dorothy Barratt (719250).

8 **Outreach Budget**– Report of the Corporate Director (Resources)

Summary

This report looks at the community hubs currently supported by the Council through the Outreach budget and proposes a way forward.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Garner (719374).

9 **Corporate Plan Update** – Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

This report asks the Board to note the Corporate Plan Performance Update and identify any areas where further information is required.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438).

10 **Appointment of External Auditors** – Report of the Corporate Director (Resources)

Summary

This report sets out proposals for appointing the external auditor for the audit of the Council's accounts for the five year period from 2023/24.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Garner (719374).

11 **Local Land Charge, Planning and Enforcement IT System Upgrades** – Report of the Head of Development Control

Summary

That Capital Budget Resources of £32,550 be allocated for the upgrade of the Local Land Charges System and Planning and Enforcement Systems as set out in the report

The Contact Officer for this report is Erica Levy (719294).

12 **Board Membership Changes – Report of the Chief Executive**

Summary

This report asks the Board to recommend changes to the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Working Party

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438).

13 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

That under Section 100a(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

14 **Member Approval of Absence Report – Report of the Chief Executive**

The Contact Officers for this report are Steve Maxey (719438) and Clive Tobin (719251).

15 **Confidential Extract of the Minutes of the Executive Board held on 20 September 2021.**

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD**

20 September 2021

Present: Councillor D Wright in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Chambers, D Clews, Deakin, Gosling, Hayfield, D Humphreys, Morson, Reilly, Simpson and Symonds.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jenns (Substitute D Clews).

17 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interest

None were declared at the meeting.

18 Minutes of the Executive Board held on 21 July 2021

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 21 July 2021, copies having been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19 Financial Strategy 2021 - 2026

The Corporate Director – Resources summarised the Authority’s Financial Strategy, projects forward the Authority’s General Fund budgets to 2025/26, and suggested a detailed budget approach for the 2022/23 General Fund Budget.

Recommended:

- a That the Financial Strategy shown as Appendix A was approved;**
- b That the General Fund budget projections for 2022/23 to 2025/26 be noted; and**
- c That the budget approach, set out in section 8 of the report, be adopted.**

20 Coleshill Leisure Centre

The Corporate Director – Resources sought the Board approval to use a small proportion of an existing capital allocation to undertake minor changes to the configuration of Coleshill Leisure Centre, with a view to introducing services that would help to improve the operational efficiency of the facility.

Resolved:

That the Board approved the proposed use of a proportion of an existing capital allocation, up to £20,000 as detailed in the report, to undertake minor changes to the configuration of Coleshill Leisure Centre, with a view to introducing services that would help to improve the operational efficiency of the facility.

21 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review 2020/21

The Chief Executive informed the Board about the results of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review 2020/21. The report highlighted the number of complaints and enquiries considered by the Ombudsman relating to the Council and the outcome of their determinations. The report also provided some contextual information about the compliments and complaints received via the Council's corporate Compliments and Complaints Procedure.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

22 Green Space Officer – Market Supplement

Further to the consideration of this matter by the Special Sub-group, this report sought the Board's approval for a supplementary estimate in order to enable a market supplement to be applied to the Green Space Officer post.

Resolved:

- a. That the proposed supplementary estimate, as detailed in the report, be approved in order to enable a market supplement to be applied to the Green Space Officer post; and**
- b. That a report be brought to the Board recommending delegated powers to Officers to agree market supplements, within certain limits**

23 Election Staff Scale of Fees, Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer and Deputy Returning Officer

The Chief Executive reported on the proposed scale of fees to be used by election staff, including the Returning Officer at elections and proposed that the Head of Elections (shared with Nuneaton and Bedworth) be appointed as a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer and Deputy Returning Officer.

Resolved:

- a That the proposed scale of fees be approved;**
- b That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the attached fees to reflect inflation and/or National Joint Council Local Government Pay Award; and**
- c That the Head of Elections be appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officer and approved as Deputy Returning Officer.**

24 Minutes of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee 28 June 2021

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 28 June 2021, copies having been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25 Proposed South Warwickshire Council – Stakeholder Consultation

The Chief Executive asked the Board to agree how this council would respond to the consultation.

Resolved:

That the Chief Executive be given delegated powers to respond to the consultation, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Opposition Leader.

26 North Warwickshire Local Plan – adoption

The Chief Executive sought agreement for the adoption of the Local Plan.

Recommended:

That the Local Plan be adopted.

27 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

28 **Environmental Health Restructure – Supplementary Estimate**

This report asks Members to agree a supplementary estimate for the additional costs resulting from a restructure of the Environmental Health Team.

Resolved:

That the supplementary estimate be approved.

29 **Polesworth Sports Centre**

At its meeting held on 26 July 2021, the Community and Environment Board approved an approach to resolving the short-term future of leisure facility provision in Polesworth, subject to this Board's approval of the financial implications arising from that decision. This report addressed the issue of the potential financial implications of that changed method of service provision.

Resolved:

That Members approved the financial implications of the proposed approach to resolving the short-term future of leisure facility provision in Polesworth and that the consequent expenditure be met from the New Initiatives reserve.

(The Chief Executive has subsequently received a notice signed by Councillors Gosling, Chambers, Deakin and Morson) under Standing Order No 30(1)(b) (Minority Report) with regard to the decision of the Board on this matter and it is therefore referred to Council for confirmation.)

David Wright
CHAIRMAN

Agenda Item No 5

Executive Board

22 November 2021

Report of the Chief Executive

Calendar of Meetings 2022/23

1 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve a calendar of meetings for 2022/23.

Recommendation to the Council

That the draft calendar of meetings for 2022/23 as submitted at Appendix A to the Chief Executive's report be approved.

2 Report

... 2.1 A draft calendar of meetings for 2022/23 is submitted as Appendix A.

2.2 Points to note on the calendar are as follows:-

- a The majority of all main Board meetings will meet on a Monday. Meetings of the Full Council continue to be held on Wednesdays;
- b Planning and Development Board to meet once each month;
- c The Resources Board, the Community and Environment Board and the Executive Board to meet at least once a cycle;
- d A meeting of the Special Sub-Group has been scheduled each month (except in April 2023);
- e A meeting of each Licensing Committee has been set for the end of January and additional meetings will be arranged on an ad hoc basis;
- f A number of meetings of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee have been set and the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee will be arranged on an ad-hoc basis; and
- g A meeting of the Executive Board and Full Council is scheduled on 20 July 2022. It is needed to consider the audited accounts before the end of July and is an annual requirement.

- h There will be a Full Council meeting on 19 April 2023, so that minutes from Board / Committees held in the cycle of meeting during late February, March and early April can be considered prior to the Borough Council elections to be held on 4 May 2023. The Annual Council meeting will then be held on 17 May 2023 to appoint the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and make appointments to Boards / Committees and Outside Bodies etc for the ensuing year.

3 Report Implications

3.1 There are no report implications.

The Contact Officer for this report is Amanda Tonks (719221).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
None			

**NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL
DRAFT MEETINGS TIMETABLE – 2022/23**

	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
1					PLAN			SSG						BHOL
2		BHOL	BHOL							BHOL				
3			BHOL				PLAN						PLAN	
4		COUNCIL		PLAN			SSG							Elections
5				SSG		PLAN			PLAN					
6			PLAN			RES			SSG		PLAN	PLAN		
7			SSG					RES				SSG	BHOL	
8														
9		PLAN			SSG					PLAN				
10		SSG					CEB			SSG			BHOL	
11	PLAN													
12	SSG													
13			EXB			SSG					EXB	RES		
14								SAC			SSG			
15	BHOL													
16		CEB								CEB		SAC		
17														COUNCIL
18	BHOL													
19						EXB							COUNCIL	
20				EXB/COUNCIL										
21								EXB				EXB		
22			COUNCIL								COUNCIL			PLAN
23										RES				SSG
24										LIC				
25				CEB										
26									BHOL					
27			SAC						BHOL		CEB			
28						COUNCIL								
29					BHOL									BHOL
30								COUNCIL						
31							PLAN							

EXB - Executive Board

RES - Resources Board

CEB - Community and Environment Board

PLAN - Planning and Development Board

LIC - Licensing Committee (Alcohol & Gambling Committee & Taxi & General Cc

SAC - Safer Communities Sub-Committee

SSG - Special Sub-Group

LDF - Local Development Framework Sub-Committee

Agenda Item 6

Executive Board

22 November 2021

Report of the Corporate Director - Resources

Budgetary Control Report 2021/22 Period Ended 31 October 2021

1 Summary

- 1.1 The report covers revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 October 2021. The 2021/22 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date, are given, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to this Board.

Recommendation to Council

To consider if any further information is required.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Under the Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP), services should be charged with the total cost of providing the service, which not only includes costs and income directly incurred, but also support costs relating to such areas as finance, office accommodation, telephone costs and IT services. The figures contained within this report are calculated on this basis.

3 Overall Position

- 3.1 Net expenditure for those services that report to the Executive Board as at 31 October 2021 is £359,777 compared with a profiled budgetary position of £436,874; an underspend of £77,097. Appendix A to this report provides details of the profiled and actual position for each service reporting to this Board, together with the variance for the period.

- 3.2 Where possible, the budget to date figure has been calculated with some allowance for seasonal variations, in order to enable a better comparison with actual figures.

3.3 Outreach and Access to Services

- 3.3.1 There is a general underspend on internet access and phone costs of the outreach hubs against the budget.

3.4 Corporate Communication

3.4.1 The production of North Talk has been suspended during the pandemic, leading to an underspend against the budget.

3.5 North Warwickshire Local Development Framework

3.5.1 A delay in the timing of the work on the Local Development Plan as a result of the pandemic, has given an underspend against the budget.

4 Risks to the Budget

4.1 The key risks to the budgetary position of the Council from services under the control of this Board are:-

	Likelihood	Potential impact on Budget
The Local Plan process is becoming more costly due to the Duty to Cooperate and also needs to be repeated more often as national guidance requires.	High	High
The Emergency Planning budget may be insufficient to cover the costs of any major local emergency.	Low	High

5 Estimated Out-turn

5.1 Members have requested that Budgetary Control Reports provide details on the likely out-turn position for each of the services reporting to this Board. The anticipated out-turn for this Board for 2021/22 is £749,550, the same as the Original Budget.

5.2 The figures provided above are based on information available at this time of the year and are the best available estimates for this Board and may change as the financial year progresses. Members will be updated in future reports of any changes to the forecast out turn.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

6.1.1 Income and Expenditure will continue to be closely managed and any issues that arise will be reported to this Board for comment at future meetings.

6.2 Environment and Sustainability Implications

6.2.1 The Council has to ensure that it adopts and implements robust and comprehensive budgetary monitoring and control, to ensure not only the availability of services within the current financial year, but in future years.

The Contact Officer for this report is Nigel Lane (719371).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
Executive Board – Agenda item 10	Corporate Director - Resources	General Fund Revenue Estimates and Setting the Council 2021-22	15 th Feb 2021
Executive Board – Agenda Item 6	Corporate Director - Resources	Financial Strategy 2021 -2026	20 th September 2021

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Executive Board

Budgetary Control Report 2021/22 as at 31 October 2021

Description	Approved Budget 2021/22	Profiled Budget October 2021	Actual October 2021	Variance	Comments
	£	£	£	£	
Housing Strategic Service Review	32,190	18,778	18,778	-	
Outreach and Access to Services	139,720	85,505	82,530	(2,975)	Comment 3.3
Corporate Communications	64,740	34,916	26,955	(7,961)	Comment 3.4
Community Strategy	134,200	78,283	77,391	(892)	
Emergency Planning	50,100	27,580	25,632	(1,948)	
N.Warks Local Development Framework	325,610	190,068	126,747	(63,321)	Comment 3.5
Support to Parishes	2,990	1,744	1,744	-	
Total Expenditure	749,550	436,874	359,777	(77,097)	

Agenda Item No 7

Executive Board

22 November 2021

Report of the Chief Executive

Draft Economic Development Strategy

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of a Draft Economic Development Strategy for consultation.

Recommendation to the Board

That the Draft Economic Development Strategy be approved for consultation.

2 Introduction

- ... 2.1 A Draft Economic Development Strategy (DEDS) is attached as Appendix A. It is the first Economic Strategy that the Council has prepared for some years. It outlines how the North Warwickshire has performed, as well as highlighting the key issues that need to be addressed and outlines four key themes under which actions can be taken.

3 The Draft Strategy

- 3.1 The Draft Strategy has four key themes of Business; People; Places; and, Promotion. Each theme is discussed, and a set of Actions put forward. The Actions listed are those the Borough Council will take, either directly or indirectly, working in partnership with a range of agencies and organisations, to improve the local economy.
- 3.2 Work on the Strategy started prior to covid. Although the pandemic was a shock to the local economy it is expected that it will bounce back, especially taking into account the grants and income support schemes which were introduced. Therefore, although the strategy takes account of the past 18 months many of the actions considered important pre-covid remain at the present time.
- 3.3 It will be important for the DEDS to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that these actions are the right ones. It is also important to take stock and to think about what industries are impacted and then if the actions need to be changed or realigned.

4 Impact of Covid 19 pandemic

- 4.1 The report comes at a difficult time as the world reopens and with the expectation that vaccinations will enable the economy to recover quickly to pre-covid levels. The Government reported that the economy contracted by as much as 35% with around 10% unemployment. In North Warwickshire this would be equivalent to losing the mining industry during the 1970's and 1980's in a matter of months rather than years. It is estimated that five years of growth has been turned around in one month. Evidence is emerging that North Warwickshire based on its employment make-up could be the 11th worst hit local authority in the England. The full impact of the past 18 months may not be felt for some years to come.
- 4.2 However gloomy the picture looked the Bank of England believes that a bounce back will occur mainly due to the interventions that government introduced. The pandemic has clearly shown how important small businesses are to the local economy and local communities as they can provide bespoke local services. Click and collect as well as home deliveries will now form the basis of many companies. As a result, good quality digital access will be key to ensuring that communities and businesses can be kept linked in the future.
- 4.3 The DEEDS does not look in detail at the wide range of schemes that were put in place to aid the economy during the lockdowns which helped ensure the economy was not thrown into a deep recession / depression. There have been several schemes, many of which have either ended or are close to ending. The DEEDS instead looks to the future, mainly in the medium to long term, to provide a framework for where the Borough Council is seeking the local economy to be in the future.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Draft EDS is made available for comment for a period of 4 weeks starting in early January 2022. Any comments made will be brought back to board with any proposed changes.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 6.1.1 Depending on the actions to be delivered there may be financial implications. However, these will be discussed at the earliest opportunity and where possible external funding will be investigated.

6.2 Human Resources Implications

- 6.2.1 There may be resource implications of implementing the full strategy depending on the actions to be delivered.

6.3 Safer Communities Implications

6.3.1 The North Warwickshire Community Safety Performance Report for quarter 4 2020/21 shows that crimes recorded as business crimes reduced from 885 in the 2019/20 year to 641 in the 2020/21 year. Reducing crime and disorder in the borough will make a positive contribution towards improving and strengthening the economy in North Warwickshire. Specific community safety and crime prevention support is available to businesses in Warwickshire via Warwickshire Police and the Community Safety Team at Warwickshire County Council.

6.4 Equality Implications

6.4.1 The proposed Economic Strategy includes a priority theme of people. This priority includes aims to achieve the following which are positive contributions towards equality objectives:

- Improve aspirations, skills and training
- Encourage apprenticeships and lifelong learning
- Develop and attract highly skilled people
- Become a living wage Borough
- Include all communities - recognising the importance of social and financial inclusion and the provision of housing and social facilities

6.5 Sustainability implications

6.5.1 Sustainable development promotes economic growth, environmental sustainability and social development. The North Warwickshire Economic Development Strategy addresses these priorities as set out under the strategy headings business, people, places and promotion. It is largely about people, their wellbeing and equity in their relationship with each other.

6.6 Links to Council's Priorities

6.3.1 A buoyant local economy is an important part of ensuring that the Borough is a good place for both residents to live and businesses to do business.

The Contact Officer for this report is Dorothy Barratt (01827 719250).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

DRAFT

Economic Development Strategy

Looking forward to 2033



**North Warwickshire
Borough Council**

Draft as of October 2021

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	➤ Priority 3 Place	
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Forward

It is with pleasure that I present the first Economic Development Strategy for some time. This document started life in a pre-covid world where the economy in North Warwickshire was mainly good news. It was expected that the aim of the document would be to make sure that all businesses and residents benefited from the way the Borough was performing.

The pandemic has meant, however, that new and unexpected challenges have emerged. Resilience of businesses to cope and still operate is of paramount importance in order to keep the economy buoyant and get it back to pre-covid levels. Home working has become the “norm” for many. The lasting impact on the retail, tourism and hospitality industries are currently immeasurable.

The Strategy and Action Plan will be kept under review as more data emerges about the impact of the pandemic.

The Borough Council is seeking your views on this draft strategy. Have we got the right themes and the right focus for future work.

David Wright,
Leader of the Council

Abbreviations used in this document

Chamber	Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
CWLEP	Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership
FSB	Federation of Small Businesses
NWBC	North Warwickshire Borough Council
WCC	Warwickshire County Council
WMCA	West Midlands Combined Authority

Executive Summary

Priority Theme 1: Business

- Broaden the business base within the Borough
- Helping businesses to be competitive and innovative
- Help businesses to meet the challenges of climate change
- Take advantage of the Borough's location
- Support existing and new businesses
- Support rural diversification
- Explore provision of affordable workspace / land
- Protect existing employment land
- Ensure the vitality and vibrancy of the three market towns and local service centres



Priority Theme 2: People

- Improve aspirations, skills and training
- Encourage apprenticeships and lifelong learning
- Develop and attract highly skilled people
- Become a living wage Borough
- Include all communities - recognising the importance of social and financial inclusion and the provision of housing and social facilities
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of residents

Priority Theme 3 Place

Ensure the context and environment for economic growth to successfully take place is created by:

- Provision of infrastructure
- Places being attractive
- Develop a programme for regenerating key sites including existing industrial estates
- Improve access between jobs, training and home
- Ensure the power and infrastructure is available to take advantage of electric and autonomous vehicles
- Work towards being a carbon neutral Borough
- Work with partners to improve digital connectivity
- Mitigate the impacts from the construction of HS2



Priority Theme 4: Promotion

- Maximise the growth of the visitor economy
- Actively promote the Borough
- Ensure a legacy from major events such as City of Culture, Commonwealth Games, National Cycling events
- Make the most of the Borough's natural and heritage assets
- Grow employment in the tourism sector

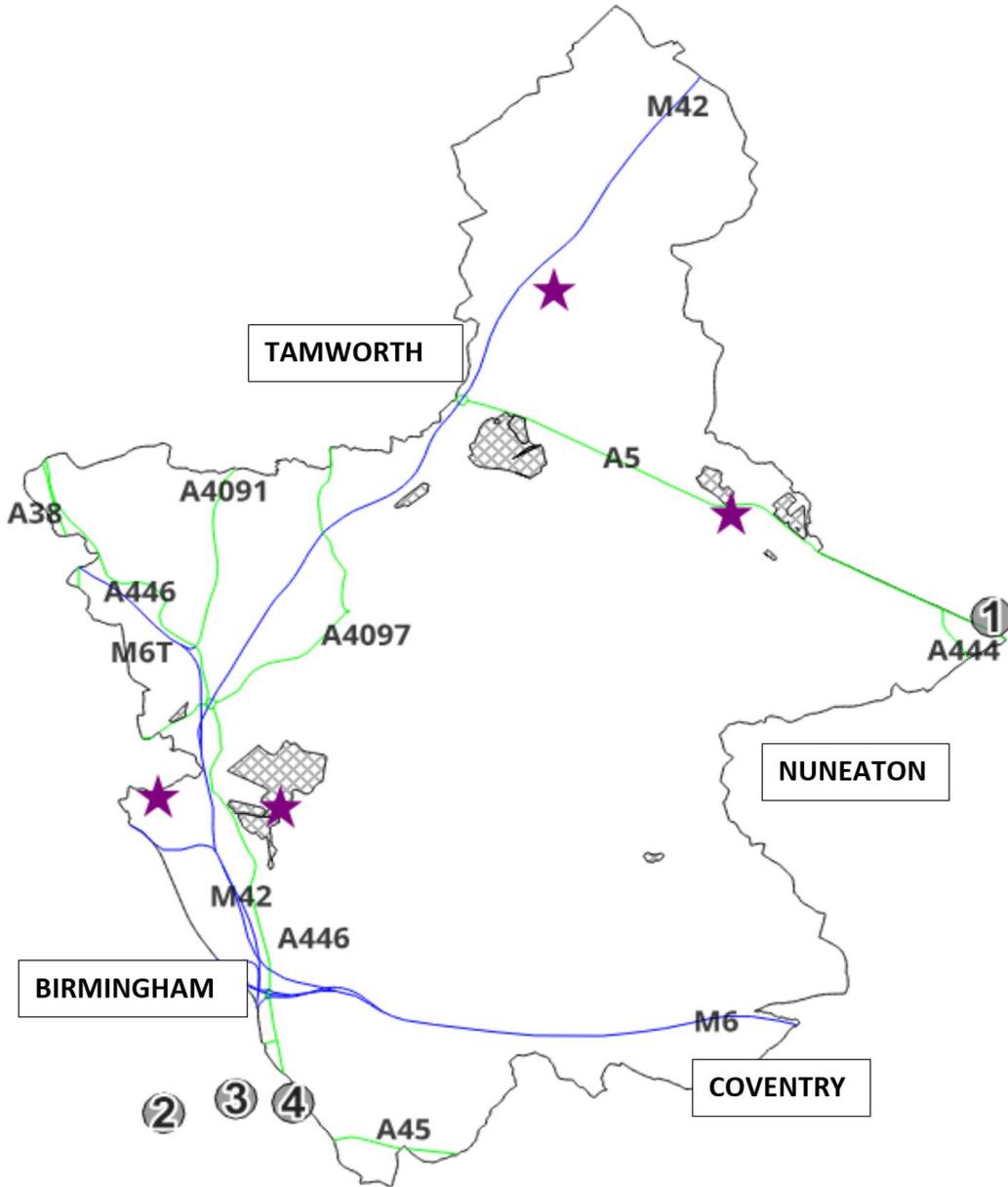
1 Introduction

- 1.1 Over the last decade the Borough has grown in many ways with a change in the overall business environment. Logistics is a major part of the local economy. There are now more jobs than residents within the Borough. There is a large amount of in and out commuting with over 50% of the resident population commuting to work outside of the borough. Unemployment generally is low. However, there are still challenges to overcome including making sure the resident population have the skills to take up new job opportunities that may arrive in the coming years.
- 1.2 A further challenge is that of a post covid world. As of 23rd March, the UK changed completely with the country put into lockdown with social distancing and home working becoming the new normal. All sectors have been hit by a change in working practices or by a complete shutdown. Those businesses with an online presence and able to still obtain materials and ensure deliveries have been able to deal with the crisis better than some. Recovery of the economy will be vitally important.
- 1.3 Before March 2020 it was considered that generally North Warwickshire was doing well as it had more jobs than residents North Warwickshire. However, it was clear from recent economic statistics that this was not the case for all businesses and all residents within the Borough. It is important if a place is to be considered truly successful that all businesses and residents benefit from the success of the Borough. The purpose of this strategy is to work towards all parts of the Borough's economy doing as well as each other and ensuring as speedy recovery as possible.
- 1.4 In a post March 2020 world it is predicted that North Warwickshire could potentially be the 11th worst hit Borough in England due to its reliance on logistics. This is devastating news considering how well the economy was performing. Recent economic data is showing that North Warwickshire is being resilient and is bouncing back post lockdowns. It is vitally important therefore that this bounce back is maintained and does not turn into a long-term recession.
- 1.5 Logistics is one of the key sectors that will use automation. Automation itself is inevitable, however, the impact on our resident population is an important factor as to what interventions the Borough Council wishes to pursue in the future. Widening the employment base and ensuring our residents have the right skills to take up the job opportunities are important aspects of ensuring the borough will thrive into the future.
- 1.6 Ensuring that all businesses, both large and small, and residents share in the economic growth is increasingly referred to as inclusive growth. Whichever way it is termed it is seeking to deliver long term wealth, health and wellbeing for the borough, ensuring that growth of the borough benefits all of its residents and businesses making it inclusive for all. Social and financial inclusion are key to ensuring inclusion growth.
- 1.7 Growth that is sustainable also means that social and environmental factors can influence the economic wellbeing of the Borough. Although they are not central to this strategy, they will impact on the economic wellbeing of the borough and so this

strategy will point to initiatives and actions that could be used to address an identified need.

- 1.8 This strategy should be read in conjunction with other strategies the Borough Council produces including the Corporate Plan, Community Strategy and Local Plan. This strategy is seen to compliment these strategies.
- 1.9 In addition, the Borough Council cannot do this in isolation and must work with a range of partners and stakeholders to achieve its ambitions. This economic development strategy looks to build on strategies and actions of our partners especially the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) and Warwickshire County Council (WCC). Working with the private sector will also be vitally important.

Map of the Borough



- | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|----------------------------------|
|  | Borough Boundary |  | MIRA |
|  | Trunk Road |  | Birmingham Airport |
|  | Motorway |  | National Exhibition Centre (NEC) |
|  | Industrial Estate |  | HS2 Station |
|  | Railway Stations | | |

2 Context

2.1 Economic Profile

North Warwickshire is a rural borough located between the major conurbations of Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry, Tamworth, Hinckley and Nuneaton. It has good strategic road network connections including the M6, M42, A5 and A446. It is also located within what is known as the “Golden Triangle”. Being at the heart of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) is a key reason why the Borough has attracted major warehousing and distribution companies.

The Borough has three main market towns of Atherstone, Coleshill and Polesworth with a number of smaller local service centres and a range of rural villages. Most of the growth is directed to the largest settlements which provide the greatest range of services and facilities. This includes settlements adjoining the Borough such as Nuneaton and Tamworth. Although there are no out of town shopping areas in North Warwickshire many residents travel outside the Borough to the larger retail centres. However, all retail areas have seen a change in provision with changing shopping habits. The retail offer on high streets is changing with more leisure activities. Online presence as well as having a store window are now equally important.

Total GVA

- Sub-regional economic output is measured using Gross Value Added (GVA) which is the value generated by the total production of goods and services within the area.
- North Warwickshire’s current **total GVA value stands at £2,951m (2018)**
- **Growth of 72.7%** since 2009

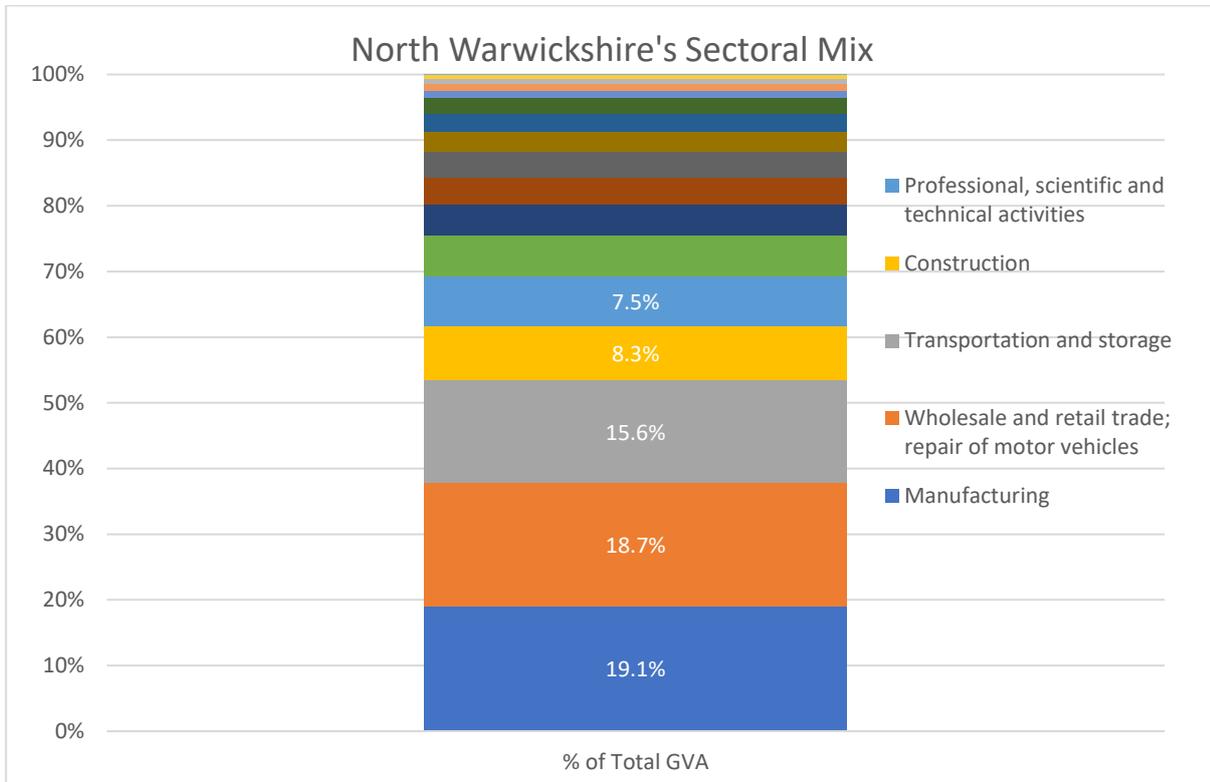
GVA per Job

- The relative productivity of an area is measured by its GVA per job.
- North Warwickshire’s GVA per job currently stands at **£47,020**
- **2nd lowest GVA per job in Warwickshire** falling by nearly 9% since 2014
- **Largest fall in productivity growth across the county between 2014 and 2017**
- North Warwickshire’s GVA per job is 11.6% lower than Warwickshire’s average and 14.7% lower than England’s average.

As can be seen from above North Warwickshire has seen substantial growth since 2009. However, it is clear from the latest productivity figures that there has been a fall in productivity within the borough as well as having the second lowest GVA per job in Warwickshire. This points to not everything working as it should. Further work will need to be undertaken to fully understand the reasons behind these statistics.

The top 3 sectors are Manufacturing, Wholesale and Retail trade and Transportation and Storage industries, contributing 19.1%, 18.7% and 15.6% to total GVA respectively. Transport and Storage sector generates £461m and is 3 times more concentrated in NW than the national average with a location quotient (LQ) of 3.13. TNT, Ocado, Aldi and CEVA/VW are some of the large businesses within this sector based in the Borough.

Diagram 1: North Warwickshire's Sectoral Mix

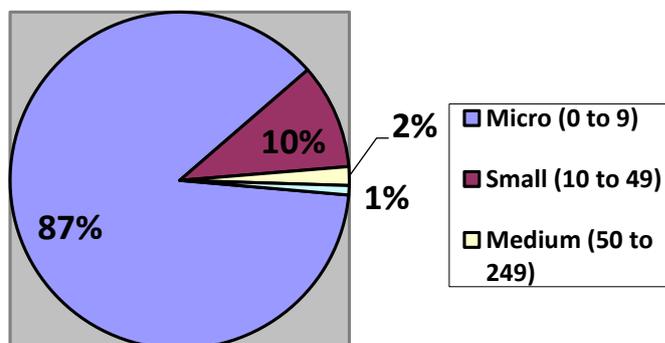


Source: ONS (2020)

Sizes of Enterprises in North Warwickshire (%)

Manufacturing, transportation and storage and wholesale retail / motor repair are the three largest sectors within the Borough each having around 19% of the mix of sectors. However, the Borough is highly concentrated within very large enterprises, making the economy susceptible to 'shocks' associated within those sectors. Over reliance on any one sector is of concern because of experience due to the demise of the coal industry and its supply chain with its major impact on the local economy.

Diagram 2:



Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS)

Note: % is as a proportion of total (enterprises or local units)

There are 25 companies in North Warwickshire that make up 1% of all enterprises within the Borough with 97% of businesses being between 1 and 49 employees

Today the borough is seen as a great location for logistics due to the excellent transport location at the heart of the Strategic Road Network. The risk today is not that these will close but that increasingly automation may lead to greater unemployment. It is expected that with automation those jobs that will be available will be more highly skilled.

North Warwickshire is a place considered as one of the top two places to be most vulnerable to automation – this is referred to as “cliff-edge automation”¹. It is ranked 2nd across England, Scotland and Wales behind Corby as a place at most risk of losing jobs due to automation. It is estimated that around 31% of employment, equating to 13780 jobs, are at most risk.

Survival Rates

The table below indicates the overall number of active enterprises. Generally, since 2015 births of new enterprises within the Borough have exceeded the deaths of such enterprises, but only marginally.

Table 1: Count of Active Enterprises with Births and Deaths

	Active enterprises	Births	Births as % of all active enterprises	Deaths	Deaths as % of all active enterprises
2015	2830	340	12%	235	8.3%
2016	2980	365	12.25%	265	8.9%
2017	2930	270	9.22%	285	9.73%
2018	2925	310	10.6%	265	9.1%

Source: Business demography, UK provided by ONS

It is equally important to understand the survival of such enterprises beyond their first year of trading. A company starting in 2015 could only expect a less than 50% chance of still trading into years 3, 4 and 5. There will be many reasons for enterprises ceasing trading. However, survival rates need to improve, which is aligned to an improved gap between the number of births and deaths of enterprises.

Employment / Unemployment Rates

In March 2019 the unemployment rate in the Borough stood at 2.9% with 665 claimants. This rose to 4% as of December 2020 with 1995 claimants compared to a UK unemployment

¹ “The Automation Impact - Which, where and when?” Joe Fyans, Localis (2018)

The report explores the likely impact of automation across the country. Produced in association with Sky News, the research considers the places where automation should cause the most immediate concern because their economies are most-reliant on high-risk industries.

rate of 5%.² These figures will need to be monitored especially with the reduction and then ending of the Government's furlough scheme later in 2021.

In North Warwickshire at one stage there were 8700 employees on furlough. This had reduced to 3300 by May 2021.

In terms of job vacancies however there were between 55 to 77 job vacancies advertised in North Warwickshire. These were mainly in the logistics sector and included operatives (warehouse, production) and cleaners.

2.2 Policy Context

National policy context

Whilst the Strategy has a strong local and regional focus, it also takes account of and responds to national policy, recognising the important role the Borough plays in the wider economy.

Levelling Up

The Levelling Up Fund was announced at the 2020 Spending Review to support communities in realising this vision and is a competitive fund, with funding distributed to places across the UK based on successful project selection. The Fund will focus on capital investment in local infrastructure thereby building on and consolidating prior programmes such as the Local Growth Fund and Towns Fund. It will also create opportunity across the country, prioritising bids that invest in regeneration and growth in places in need and areas of low productivity and connectivity.

Build Back Better, Plan for Growth (previously the Industrial Strategy)

In November 2017 Government published its Industrial Strategy White Paper; "*Building a Britain Fit For The Future*". The White Paper identifies "*Five Foundations*" of productivity that are described as being "*the essential attributes of every successful economy*". These five foundations align to Government's vision for a transformed national economy, and focus on Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment, and Places.

North Warwickshire is in a particularly strong position to contribute to these national challenges. Our four Themes of Business, Place, People, and Promotion align to the Industrial Strategy, and the outcomes we seek to deliver stand to make a valuable contribution to the Government's ambitions.

West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy

The West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy (2019) is the long-term economic strategy for the West Midlands, guiding policy on transport infrastructure, housing, skills and innovation. There are key market opportunities which it is aimed at and these are:

² Warwickshire Economic Recovery Dashboard, WCC

- **Future of mobility**
- **Data driven health and life sciences**
- **Creative, content, techniques and technologies**
- **Modern services**

It recognises that the global economy is predicated on the following 5 components:

1. **People, Skills and Employment**
2. **Infrastructure**
3. **Ideas and Innovation**
4. **Business Environment**
5. **Place**

Warwickshire County Council (WCC)

Warwickshire County is home to some 571,010 residents. The One Organisational Plan aims to achieve two high level outcomes:

1. **Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent; and,**
2. **Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure.**

Warwickshire County Council is currently refreshing its economic strategy and work has taken place to ensure that the two strategies align closely. The emerging strategy has the following themes:

- 1 **Maximising the county's economic strengths** – building on our particular strengths in relation to automotive technology, advanced manufacturing, digital creative, video game development and tourism.
- 2 **Supporting business growth** – pro-actively helping businesses start, grow and scale and providing the right environment and support to enable this to happen consistently
- 3 **A well and appropriately skilled population** – skills activity closely aligned with the needs of businesses, now and into the future; working to build a strong pipeline of talent to support our future economic growth
- 4 **Inclusive Growth** – ensuring that all residents - particularly our more vulnerable - have the support and opportunity to benefit from economic growth in the county
- 5 **A network of diverse and vibrant places** – celebrating our diversity, supporting growth across all areas, securing the future of our town centres, and tackling areas of disadvantage and lower economic performance
- 6 **A connected county** – ensuring we have the right physical and digital infrastructure to facilitate and enable future economic growth
- 7 **A green and sustainable economy** – helping enable and support our businesses to transition to the low carbon economy

The County Council is a key partner. Many of our strategically important economic development projects involve significant road and other infrastructure improvements where the County Council has lead responsibility. We will continue to work closely with the County Council to ensure that the infrastructure developments come forward at a pace that matches our ambition for the Borough.

Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP)

The CW LEP prepared a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) in 2016. The SEP identifies five core pillars of activity for improving economic performance and creating rapid, dynamic change across the Coventry & Warwickshire region. The five pillars are:

- 1. Unlocking Growth Potential**
- 2. Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Sector Development**
- 3. Growing Our SMEs**
- 4. Growing Our Talent**
- 5. Culture and Tourism**

These priorities inform the projects and initiatives that the LEP delivers, to where funding is allocated and how actions are co-orientated with partners to achieve success. The LEP is working with GBS LEP and Black Country LEP to implement the West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy. It also has the ambition of creating a complimentary Industrial Strategy for the Coventry and Warwickshire area.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Deal supports the local area's aspirations to build on its advanced manufacturing and engineering strengths by investing in:

- **New transport infrastructure which will improve connections with other cities and towns and tackle congestion on the area's roads.**
- **Driving innovation in advanced manufacturing and engineering through the provision of new R&D and business support facilities.**
- **Supporting businesses to flourish through the provision of effective business advice and support.**
- **Growing local skills and talent through investment in Further Education Colleges.**

The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership secured £74.1m from the Government's Local Growth Fund to support economic growth in the area – with £13.6m of funding for 2015/16 with £20.5m for 2016/17 to 2021.

Local Policy Context

Corporate Plan

North Warwickshire Borough Council sets out seven corporate priorities in its Corporate Plan 2020:

- 1. Responsible financial & resource management**
- 2. Creating safer communities**
- 3. Protecting our countryside & heritage**

4. **Improving leisure & wellbeing opportunities**
5. **Promoting sustainable & vibrant communities**
6. **Supporting employment & business**
7. **Tackle climate change**

The Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in October 2019. There may be business opportunities which will come out of the focus on reducing the impact on our climate.

Economic development has been carried out by a range of people within the Council and the purpose of this strategy is to focus this work to ensure it is making a difference.

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. 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.

North Warwickshire 2026 Vision and Priorities

"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".

The North Warwickshire 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**
- **Tackling poverty**

(These are currently under review)

The 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.

North Warwickshire Local Plan 2011-2033

The adopted North Warwickshire Local Plan directs development to the appropriate location through a settlement hierarchy and is looking to support broadening the employment base within the Borough. This is to take advantage of its location between Horiba MIRA to the east and UK Central to the west, both primarily aimed at research and development industries. The key employment policies are:

- **LP6 Amount of Development** seeks to deliver around 100 hectares of employment land between 2011 and 2033
- **LP11 Economic Regeneration** is focused on protecting existing employment land and seeks regeneration
- **LP12 Employment Areas** identifies the key industrial areas within the Borough
- **LP13 Rural Employment** looks to farm diversification and the re-use of rural buildings
- **LP39 Employment Allocations** identifies employment land to be brought forward within the plan period up to 2033

2.3 Overview of the Borough

Existing Business Parks

There are 10 main industrial estates within the Borough, as well as two rail freight terminals at Hams Hall and Birch Coppice. These support the three main towns and 5 local service centres in the Borough. The main estates are:

- **Holly Lane, Atherstone**
- **Carlyon Road, Ratcliffe Road and the Netherwood Estate, Atherstone**
- **Manor Road, Mancetter**
- **Coleshill Industrial Estate**
- **Kingsbury Link**
- **Collier's Way, Arley**
- **Kingsbury Road, Curdworth**
- **Hams Hall, Coleshill**
- **Birch Coppice, Dordon including Core 42**

The rail freight terminals at Birch Coppice and Hams Hall are of strategic significance. Developments on these two estates are encouraged to use these terminals to reduce road traffic. Existing rail sidings on these sites will be safeguarded.

In addition, there is land allocated to the south of the existing MIRA Technology Park. This is aimed at Class B2 manufacturing uses and is known as the Southern Manufacturing Site (SMS). It is not seen as a location for logistics uses. The site will provide the opportunity for complimentary but not competing uses to those on the northern site. The development of this site is important to broadening the employment base for the Borough.

It is expected that the majority of employment generating uses will be concentrated into the existing industrial estates and proposed employment allocations.

Services and Facilities

A Settlement Sustainability Assessment was carried out in 2010 and then updated in 2018. This lists all the known services and facilities in each settlement within the Borough. The 2018 Study indicated an overall decline in services and facilities within all settlements. Pubs and villages shops as well as bus services have all been under pressure due to changing habits and changes in funding.

Infrastructure Transport

Road

The Borough is well located at the heart of England with major parts of both the strategic road network (SRN) and main roads network (MRN). The main routes are identified (as of January 2020) as:

- **A5** – complete overhaul to improve capacity and to unlock future growth
- **A446** – impact of growth and HS2 requires the completion of dualling
- **A4097** (Kingsbury Road) – impact of growth and HS2
- **Junction 9 M42** – capacity, impact of growth and HS2 Phase 1
- **Junction 10 M42** – capacity, impact of growth and HS2 Phase 2b
- **Junction 4 M6** - capacity, impact of growth and HS2 Phase 1

Being in a central location has meant there has been growth pressures which are continuing. If any further sites are brought forward for development they will need to be accompanied as a minimum with major transport improvements. Studies are being undertaken to assess impacts of growth both within and close to the Borough to determine the long-term infrastructure needs of the Borough as well as identify key constraints for future growth both within and outside of the Borough. These studies will include road, rail and sustainable travel solutions.

Public Transport

The private car is used for most of the commuting in and out of the Borough. Almost 80% of the working population in the 2011 census travelled to work by car by driving or as a passenger. This highlights that the rural nature of the Borough can make travelling by public transport difficult.

Accessing public transport for shift working can be particularly difficult. As part of the development of some employment sites bus services have been supported, such as at Birch Coppice and Horiba MIRA. Other solutions have been explored in projects such as wheels to work.

The Borough currently has four train stations: Atherstone, Coleshill, Polesworth and Water Orton. WCC has prepared a Rail Strategy which seeks to improve passenger rail services and facilities at all of the stations. It includes a new station for Kingsbury with a fully operational Polesworth Station (be this on the existing site or an alternative location).

Rail Freight

There are two sites in North Warwickshire which provide for rail freight: BIFT (Maritime Transport Birmingham Intermodal Freight Terminal) at Birch Coppice and ABP (Associated British Ports) Hams Hall Railfreight Terminal at the Hams Hall Distribution Park.

Digital infrastructure

The Warwickshire local authorities in partnership with BT OpenReach have been rolling out superfast broadband across the county for some years. The percentage of homes and businesses with broadband connection now stands at 98% across Warwickshire with around 92% in North Warwickshire. Many businesses in the Borough do not however have access to ultra-broadband connections. This is due principally to path dependency on old digital infrastructure based on copper cabling, rather than modern optical fibre connections to homes and businesses (full fibre).

2.4 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headquarters of national and international companies • High level of jobs per residents • Land south of MIRA for major expansion • Second fastest growing economy in the UK <p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Steady improvement in those achieving NVQ levels 3 / 4 and above • Graduate retention? Is this an issue for us? <p>Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good connections – located within the Golden Triangle for logistics • Located Between UK central and Mira, which are research and development hotspots • Future development of the Southern Manufacturing Site at MIRA • Growth being promoted • Sense of community <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great rural environment • Natural and heritage assets 	<p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of industrial stock • Affordability of business space • Economy is highly dependent upon large scale employers with relatively low levels of business start-ups and SMEs • GVA per job has fallen that last few years (productivity) <p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger than average proportion of workers at risk of automation • Lower GVA per resident compared to jobs • Need to improve skills / re-skilling • Ageing population • Low unemployment rates mean less spare capacity in the labour force <p>Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in infrastructure • Transient workforce (High levels of in and out commuting) • High levels of in and out commuting • Regeneration required on key sites • Need to keep pace with the digital revolution <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The larger urban areas take the accolade of things happening in North Warwickshire

<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out of 5G and fibre – explore creating digital hubs • Business diversification • Encourage more business start-ups • Provision of affordable workspace • Explore supply chain opportunities to exploit automotive, research and development as well as Hs2 opportunities • Encourage growth of low carbon technologies <p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding labour market risks and futureproofing the workforce • Investigate the opportunities that automation may present to increase job growth <p>Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site regeneration opportunities • Improvement of rail services and connectivity <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure a legacy from key events in and around the Borough • Implement the Destination Management Plan 	<p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-reliance on a limited number of companies • Impacts of automation • Lack of or lower than required energy supply • Pressure for more and bigger sites • Changing shopping habits impacting on the high streets <p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat of redeployment of workers due to automation in the future • Impacts of increasing debt <p>Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion could stifle growth • Lack of investment in infrastructure • Pressure for change to old established high streets • Relatively rural location with a small and dispersed population that impacts on the cost of service provision. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The larger urban areas and southern Warwickshire take the credit of what is happening in North Warwickshire

3 Vision

3.1 Our vision for the North Warwickshire economy is:

To create an economy that is competitive, sustainable and delivers local benefits through supporting growth and development by supporting employment and businesses to grow the local economy in terms of access to work, skills improvement and wider business development opportunities.

Draft

4 Themes

- 4.1 The vision will be delivered by focussing on four key themes. They are considered fundamental components of the framework for economic growth and complement the strategies of key partners. These are:

Priority Theme 1: Business
Priority Theme 2: People
Priority Theme 3: Place
Priority Theme 4: Promotion

- 4.2 Each of the priority themes are inter linked. For example, without proper skills training businesses can't flourish. Without the right marketing a place may not thrive. The following divides a range of objectives into the four main themes. Objectives may cross over into other themes. An Action Plan is attached as Appendix 1. The actions may help to deliver more than one objective.

Priority Theme 1: Business

- 4.3 For businesses it is important to ensure both the context and environment for economic growth to successfully take place are created. The Borough Council will work with a range of partners and stakeholders to facilitate and co-ordinate activities accordingly. There are already many partners and stakeholders undertaking activities and the Borough Council will not undermine these but will seek to add value wherever possible.

Business Base

- 4.4 Broadening the business base of the Borough is important to ensure resilience and to allow innovation. It will ensure that no one industry impacts so adversely on the area that it is detrimental to any future prosperity. The area was a mining area and when the pits closed this had a dramatic impact on the local economy. Logistics are attracted to the Borough due to its location therefore, it is, with this in mind, broadening the employment base is particularly important to the area.
- 4.5 Innovation in a variety of business sectors should be encouraged to take advantage of the wide range of sectors located within and around the area. Great opportunities exist for businesses within the Borough to take advantage of its location between UK Central to the west and Horiba MIRA to the north-east. One of the ways the Borough sees this being achieved is through the delivery of the Southern Manufacturing Site at Horiba MIRA. The site provides an opportunity to complement but not compete with the northern site of the MIRA Technology site and will assist with broadening the employment base with the Borough.

Supply Chain

- 4.6 The supply chain can be a source for all businesses to access great opportunities. The focus of the WMCA, the CWLEP and WCC is on automotive and advanced manufacturing. Again, reliance on one sector, if avoidable, is not supported. Companies should ideally look at crosscutting opportunities that can be used in a range of sectors which will hopefully provide resilience in an economic downturn.
- 4.7 A range of industries and businesses support the various sectors. This is from technology to hospitality / service sectors. It should be an exciting time for business to start or to expand with the opportunities in the economy. This is of course linked to having people with the right skills to take up these opportunities.

Competitive and Innovative Businesses

- 4.8 In order to ensure that the Borough is at the forefront of nurturing innovation and technologies it is important to ensure that businesses can be competitive and there is the right environment to be innovative. The Borough Council will explore ways this can be achieved and work with partners to enable the right environment to be created. In particular, it will explore the provision of workspace, co-working space and / or incubator units.

- 4.9 Climate change will mean businesses must be able to adapt. This may be through the supply chain or working businesses in the office / factory. It could also be in relation to where their business should be based – closer to the customer or closer to their workforce. There will also be green business opportunities. It will be important to assist businesses to adapt and have the knowledge and skills to take advantage of these opportunities.

Business Support

- 4.9 Although there are some big companies within the area most companies with the Borough employ between 1 to 10 people. The survival rates of companies within the borough is around 50% (2015 after 3 to 4 years) with the number of business start-up births being cancelled out by the number of business start-up deaths. There is an emphasis from Central Government to assist those businesses which are the most able to develop and expand with a focus on assisting business to scale up. Locally it is equally important to increase the survival rate of companies to last longer than 1 to 2 years. A key part of this strategy is to support the provision of affordable workspace for a range of size of businesses but particularly the smaller ones to assist with start-ups as well as the move on stages for enterprises.
- 4.10 Business support can provide both new and established business with guidance and support to deal with new markets and opportunities. Several organisations already provide business support, including the Chamber, Growth Hub, WCC and the FSB. The Borough Council does not intend to get involved with this except to be a supportive partner facilitating events / meetings.

Rural Enterprises

- 4.11 As identified in this strategy 80% of businesses in the Borough are small scale. The rural economy is very important to the Borough. It provides rural employment as well maintains the rural vibrancy which is necessary for a successful area. The visitor economy, in particular, can be supported by rural enterprises be these visitor attractions or accommodation.
- 4.12 However, encouraging more employment in the rural areas must be balanced with the impact on the environment and ensuring that as much as possible the Borough retains its landscape and ruralness as this is one of its key assets which will facilitate growth. Opportunities for small scale rural enterprises will be supported where they do not have an adverse effect on the local area.

Provision of Affordable Land / Workspace

- 4.13 There are two aspects of affordable space. The first is land and the second is workspace. The Coventry and Warwickshire Market Signals Report³ highlights the need for affordable land. The cost of land for many small to medium sized businesses is too expensive. On site charges also add to the cost of sites making them uneconomical for many businesses. Hams Hall and Birch Coppice are aimed at large

³ Coventry & Warwickshire Sub-Regional Employment Market Signals Study (2019) prepared by BBP Regeneration
https://www.cwlep.com/sites/default/files/employment_market_signals_study_-_final_report_v6_clean_170719.pdf

logistics end users and are some of the most expensive sites within England due to their great location. In terms of workspace there may be opportunities in the development of larger sites as well as in regeneration schemes.

- 4.14 Both of these aspects will be explored further with partners to explore the range of options and the best way to deliver the preferred option(s) and determine funding streams.

Protection of Employment Land

- 4.15 The Local Plan has a policy to protect existing employment sites. The Market Signals Report makes it even more important to protect employment land from being turned into other uses. Often the older employment sites provide a source of affordable space. Over recent years the focus has been on the redevelopment of these sites for housing which has meant that those companies use and need these type of spaces have been squeezed out.

- 4.16 The CWLEP is looking to undertake a study to consider the implications of brownfield land redevelopment for housing on the business community. This will help to inform what actions the Borough Council needs to undertake to assist with the protection of employment land to ensure a wide range of sites and tenures.

Town Centres

- 4.17 The vitality and vibrancy of the town centres and local service centres are important for the economic prosperity of the Borough. In other areas single services and facilities such as the local pub or village shop can play just as an important role to those local communities. All these are unique and will require different interventions from community support to physical regeneration. The changing nature of retail will also influence the actions the Borough Council and partners will take.

- 4.18 A master plan for Atherstone, involving public involvement, has already been drafted a few years ago by WCC and the Borough Council. This identified some regeneration potential projects as well as public realm improvements. There are further regeneration opportunities within Atherstone. These are due to old industrial buildings becoming vacant as well as looking at the One Public Estate (OPE). Working with partners gives the opportunity to look at rationalisation of public assets as well as securing opportunities for regeneration. Discussions have been on going to take forward the draft masterplan and to explore what projects could be implemented. Any projects will involve a range of partners.

- 4.19 Similar work will be developed for each of the market towns and then local service centres to assist in maintaining their vibrancy and vitality as well as exploring ways to maintain services and facilities in the wider countryside.

Priority Theme 1 - Business Objectives

- 1a: To broaden the business base within the Borough**
- 1b: To help businesses to be competitive and innovative**
- 1c: • Help businesses to meet the challenges of climate change**
- 1d: To take advantage of the location of the Borough with UK Central to the west and MIRA to the east**
- 1e: To explore broadening the employment base through rural diversification**
- 1f: To support existing and new businesses**
- 1g To seek to provide affordable land / workspace**
- 1h To protect existing employment land**
- 1i To ensure the vitality and vibrancy of the three market towns and local service centres**

Key Partners:

Private sector, WMCA, WCC, CWLEP, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, other LPA's

Priority Theme 2: People

- 4.20 For the Borough's economy to flourish there needs to be the required workforce with the skills to fill the vacancies as well as a community which can take advantage of the opportunities that may be available. There are more jobs than people within the Borough but there are still many people within the Borough who have not reached their full potential and/or require retraining especially with the increased use of automation. However, automation can also be an opportunity as the skills required to install and run the systems require different and often more advanced skills.
- 4.21 The Council will work with partners ensuring that schools and/or training providers are providing the right education and training for the businesses within the Borough. Even though work in this field has been ongoing for many years there is still a gap between the future aspirations of companies who require more highly skilled workforce and the NVQ level attainment of residents within the Borough. Those achieving NVQ 3 and above has improved over recent years, but further work is and will continue to be required as needs of companies change over time.
- 4.22 It is not just those at the start of their working lives that the Borough Council wants to assist but also those in work to help them to develop new skills or to change careers. It is getting rare that people leave school and remain in the same occupation / job / company until they retire so change is inevitable for everyone. Encouraging lifelong learning is one way to help.
- 4.23 In addition, the health and wellbeing of residents is extremely important in making the economic aspirations a reality. The Council will work with individuals and local communities to enable them to have the capacity to pick up the opportunities available and develop new ones. These could be individually or jointly through co-operative working initiatives. Financial inclusion initiatives will be key to ensuring no-one is left behind.
- 4.24 Other factors, such as social and environmental factors, influence how inclusive an economy is. For example, affordable housing and a living wage can affect the perception as well as the actual wellbeing of its residents and thus impact on the local economy. The Borough Council is keen to lead by example and will explore the possibility of becoming a living wage local authority. This will be done in conjunction with exploring ways to encourage other businesses in North Warwickshire to do the same.

Priority Theme 2 - People Objectives

- 2a: To improve aspirations, skills and training**
- 2b: Encourage apprenticeships and lifelong learning**
- 2c: To increasing the number of highly skilled people by raising the number of people in the Borough who have a NVQ4 or higher**
- 2d: Becoming a living wage Borough**
- 2f Promoting the health and wellbeing of residents**

Key Partners:

Training providers, WMCA, WCC, CWLEP, other LPA's

Priority Theme 3: Place

Attractive Places

4.25 For an economy to be truly successful it is important that the physical place is attractive, with the right infrastructure, and portraying the right image. The third priority fits in with the Government's agenda on placemaking.

Environment

4.26 Although many of the reasons for the change in services and facilities are outside of the Council's control a key part of the Borough Council's role is to work with partners to ensure that there is the right environment for enough services and facilities for both residents and businesses. By ensuring a place is vibrant impacts on the confidence of businesses and of the local community.

4.27 For places to be economically vibrant it is important that the historic fabric is maintained and is an asset in order to attract business investment and visitors. Schemes looking at the three main town centres will be explored to identify key areas and buildings which require investment in the short medium and longer term. Projects such as the High Street Fund will be explored as well as ways to ensure regeneration projects have a wider impact to create confidence to invest. This is linked to ensuring the businesses within these centres are able to take on the challenge of the changing high street and retail provision.



Example of a Regeneration Opportunity, Atherstone

Public Buildings

4.28 Public buildings are key in making sure the continued vibrancy of towns and local service centres are maintained. The Borough Council will work with other public authorities including the County Council to maximise and to facilitate the best use of its land and buildings. The One Public Estate (OPE) agenda is a key government priority to ensure the buildings are used to their maximum benefit. When looking at regeneration opportunities this will be a key factor in any final decision-making process.

Refurbishment of space

- 4.29 The existing industrial estates are becoming old with much of the stock on the older industrial estates built in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's. Further work will be required to determine if intervention is required to improve the buildings and environments of these estates. However, this needs to be balanced with providing spaces that are affordable especially to young fledging businesses as refurbishment could push up the costs of the space.

Repurposing of Space

- 4.30 With changes to permitted development rights and changes to retail and working habits there will be a need to consider repurposing buildings. This could affect a range of buildings such as retail and office premises. With covid there also be other types of buildings such as hospitality and leisure buildings that will also need to be repurposed. Further work will be required to consider this issue.

Parking

- 4.31 As part of creating attractive places parking is a key issue to be addressed. CPE (civil parking enforcement) is likely to be introduced in the Borough during 2020. With improved enforcement there needs to be greater provision of off-street parking. Where this can be provided will be explored and where possible projects will be implemented to deliver additional parking capacity. In addition, this will have the added benefit of assisting not only the town centres but the continued use of the railway stations which are located within the three market towns.

Infrastructure

Sustainable travel / Transport

- 4.32 Transport is a major issue within the Borough. Although the Borough Council is not the transport authority (this is the role of WCC) transport is a key issue that is important to both businesses and residents. The Borough Council is working with Warwickshire County Council to develop a transport strategy for North Warwickshire as part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Warwickshire. This will consider modes of travel and their impact on the environment
- 4.32 With the Borough lying at the heart of the strategic transport network with M42, M6 and M6(toll) along with A5, A446 and A38. There is pressure on developing larger and larger employment sites, particularly around motorway junctions. The main junctions in the Borough are junctions 9 and 10 M42, junction 4 of M6, and M6 Toll junction 1. The Borough is also close to other junctions namely junction 3 of M6, junctions 6, 7, 8 and 11 of M42. The development to the south east of junction 10 M42 has changed the entrance into North Warwickshire and highlights the impact and size of this developments. In this area there is increased pressure to release the fourth quadrant to the north east of that motorway junction. However, many of these junctions are already needing substantial improvement and investment even before development takes place. Developing them may also change the character of the Borough to a very urban in nature.

4.33 The A5 is part of the strategic road network and is where a lot of the development from the Local Plan is targeted. £79.5m has been secured for Phases 1 and 2 of the A5 improvements. Further funding is required to ensure that Phases 3 and 4 are completed.

4.34 With the declaration of a climate change emergency it is now important that not only



road improvements are sought but also alternative means of travel are also provided. Longer journeys will inevitably be in a motor vehicle of some sort but increasingly rail is being used for these distances. However, the services the operators run on the existing railway lines are often overcrowded and on shorter trains. It is therefore important that as part of a North Warwickshire transport strategy the interlinkages of how sites are developed are considered as a whole. This would allow walking cycling for shorter journeys with inter connections on public transport. It is likely that for the foreseeable future the use of the motor car will continue and without proper improvements to the existing road network congestion will only increase.

This would have an adverse effect on the existing businesses within the borough and would restrict future investment.

Rail

4.35 Rail patronage has increased substantially over the last decade. However, it is important improvements are made to services and facilities to ensure that it can keep pace with the expected growth within the area. The Warwickshire Rail Strategy and the North Warwickshire Transport Strategy will both point to the extent of the required improvements. This will involve improvement stations, new stations, increased car parking as well as improved trains and services.

HS2

4.36 HS2 is being built through the Borough with Phase 1 expected to be completed by late 2020's. A decision is still expected on the implementation of Phase 2b. Ensuring that appropriate mitigation has been ongoing for many years and will continue during the construction period.

Rail freight

4.37 It is not expected that during the life of this strategy that further rail freight facilities will be required within the region or the Borough. The CWLEP understands there is satisfactory provision of strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) rail served freight sites within the East and West Midlands particularly with permission being granted in

Northamptonshire for Rail Central. The next possible time to consider this will be following the opening of HS2 as this may release capacity on the West Coast Mainline for further freight routes.

Digital

- 4.38 For a successful economy the settlements within North Warwickshire need to be adaptable to embrace a digital future. Technological improvements are not only good for business growth but could assist with the climate change agenda. The pace of change is quick, and the Borough Council needs to be able to react and embrace the introduction of new technologies. It is important to find solutions and make sure that economic growth is not stifled.
- 4.39 The Council is working with the WMCA through the WM5G to stimulate provision of 5G / full fibre in the Borough. The Borough's focus needs to initially be towards the main urban areas and industrial estates. In addition, as part of the emerging Local Plan developers are required to provide ducts and sub ducts to new homes and business sites ready for fibre to be pulled through. The recent coronavirus pandemic emphasises how important this is to ensure the economy can continue to work even if in part.
- 4.40 As well as making sure that residents and businesses are well connected the Borough Council will actively support approaches that maximise the opportunities for smaller and innovative businesses to take part in the local economy utilising digital technologies.
- 4.41 Regeneration opportunities, particularly within the market towns, will also provide additional opportunities to ensure that the highest specification of digital infrastructure is provided of the schemes.

Power / Energy Supply

- 4.42 Energy supply is becoming increasingly important for all businesses especially the ability of energy companies to supply unrestricted power of the size required. Climate change means it is increasingly important at the same time to implement energy efficiencies within businesses. There are two complimentary studies being undertaken by WMCA and the CWLEP on the issue of ensuring there is enough and consistent sources of power. These studies are looking at site constraints and how these can be overcome to ensure businesses are not compromised. The full implications of encouraging the use of electric vehicles on power supply will need to also be determined and planned for.

Autonomous Vehicles

- 4.43 Being located between UK Central and Mira it seems only logical that North Warwickshire it looks to take advantage of this. If progress is going to be made towards autonomous vehicles, then enabling the right road infrastructure will be necessary. There is the opportunity to exploit and be a front runner in providing the right infrastructure to ensure autonomous vehicles can be fully utilised on the roads within the Borough.

Priority Theme 3 – Place Objectives

- 3a:** *Ensure places are attractive*
- 3b:** *To ensure the market towns and local service centres can continue to provide the services and facilities required for a growing economy*
- 3c:** *To improve access between jobs, training and home through sustainable forms of transport – rail, bus, cycling and working*
- 3d:** *Develop a programme for regenerating key sites*
- 3e:** *To explore existing industrial estates and to determine if any interventions are required to improve the buildings and environment.*
- 3f:** *To work with partners to improve digital connectivity*
- 3g:** *To ensure power is supplied to cater for the needs of businesses*
- 3h:** *Work towards being a carbon neutral Borough*
- 3i:** *To ensure the necessary power and infrastructure is available to take advantage of electric and autonomous vehicles*
- 3j:** *To consider the repurposing of buildings and spaces*
- 3k:** *Mitigate the impacts from the construction of HS2*

Key Partners:

Private sector, Central Government, WMCA, Midlands Connect, CWLEP, Highways England, WCC, other LPA's, West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE), Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), Train Operators

Priority Theme 4: Promotion

Visitor Economy

4.44 The Borough Council has been working with a range of partners for a number of years to promote the area. This has led to the production of the Destination Management Plan⁴ prepared with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. In addition, funding has been secured for various projects with the most recent being for visitor signage and information. This work will continue.



Legacy

4.45 In 2021 Coventry will be the City of Culture and in 2022 Birmingham will host the Commonwealth games. It is important that these key events will have a legacy on the Borough and the region. The Borough Council will continue to work with partners to explore and develop projects.

Accommodation

4.46 The Northern Warwickshire Tourism Association along with the Destination Management Plan indicate that there is a need for further visitor accommodation. It has always been considered that the best location for this type of use is within the market towns of Atherstone Coleshill and Polesworth. In Atherstone, for example, there are regeneration opportunities which may facilitate the development of hotel accommodation. This will be explored further through consideration of the future development of the market towns.

Natural and Heritage Assets

4.47 Within the Borough there are a range of both natural and heritage assets which are key to ensure the lasting benefits of the environmental assets of the borough. HS2 will impact on some of these assets including the two country parks of Kingsbury and Pooley. The natural and heritage assets are important for maintaining the character of the Borough which will also benefit the economic wellbeing of the area.

⁴ https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/downloads/file/6908/destination_management_plan_-_executive_summary

Priority Theme 4 - Promotion Objectives

4a: Maximise the growth of the visitor economy

4b: To actively promote the Borough

4c: To ensure a legacy from major events such as City of Culture, Commonwealth Games, National Cycling events

4d: To maintain and improve the natural and historic assets of the Borough

Key Partners:

WMCA, CWLEP, WCC, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Historic England

5 Funding

- 5.1 The Borough Council will work with partners to develop projects which could secure funding from a range of sources including Section 106 agreements, the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Growth Deal, CW LEP, WMCA, HIF, RIS as well as other funding streams that are announced.
- 5.2 As part of the delivery of this strategy and understanding that many of the actions will require external funding the Borough Council will work with partners wherever possible to develop projects so that they have been progressed in order to take advantage of funding opportunities as and when they arise.

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 There are four main strands of risk in the delivery of this strategy. These are:
1. *project funding* – securing appropriate funding to address the strategic priorities;
 2. *staffing* – ensuring sufficient resources can be made available to develop the strategy;
 3. *processes* – ensuring appropriate operational arrangements to ensure the smooth delivery of the strategic priorities; and
 4. *momentum* – enabling progress to be made to ensure sufficient forward progress is achieved.
- 6.2 A full risk assessment is attached as Appendix B.

7 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 7.1 Progress is driving forward the Strategy and progress in the delivery of specific outcomes will be regularly monitored and reviewed. In particular, the specific actions set out in the action plan will be subject to proportionate monitoring and scrutiny reflecting the size, scope, complexity and risk associated with each of those actions
- 7.2 Some actions relate to projects or programmes that will have their own monitoring arrangements. These will continue to operate alongside the Strategy.
- 7.3 North Warwickshire will monitor delivery of the Strategy by reporting regularly to Members through the relevant Board
- 7.4 The Action Plan will be monitored annually in order to track progress of the actions against each objective. A simple red-amber-green (RAG) assessment will be used:
- Red action has not been commenced and/or high risk of action not being achieved
 - Amber progress is being made towards achieving the action
 - Green action has been achieved
- 7.5 Monitoring will also provide the opportunity, if necessary, to review specific objectives and actions as well as, if appropriate, include new objectives and actions. The strategy as a whole will be reviewed by 2025 and if required an amended strategy will be put in place for the subsequent 5 years. There will therefore be an annual review of the action plan and a five year review of the Strategy.

Summary of all objectives

Objective 1a:	<i>To broaden the business base within the Borough</i>
Objective 1b:	<i>To help businesses to be competitive and innovative</i>
Objective 1c:	<i>To take advantage of the location of the Borough with UK Central to the west and MIRA to the east</i>
Objective 1d:	<i>To explore broadening of the employment base through rural diversification</i>
Objective 1e:	<i>Supporting existing and new businesses</i>
Objective 1f:	<i>Provision of affordable land / workspace</i>
Objective 1g:	<i>To protect existing employment land</i>
Objective 1h:	<i>To ensure the vitality and vibrancy of the three market towns and local service centres</i>
Objective 2a:	<i>Improving aspirations, skills and training</i>
Objective 2b:	<i>Encourage apprenticeships and lifelong learning</i>
Objective 2c:	<i>To increasing the number of highly skilled people by raising the number of people in the Borough who have a NVQ4 or higher</i>
Objective 2d:	<i>Becoming a living wage Borough</i>
Objective 2e:	<i>Include all communities - recognising the importance of social inclusion and the provision of housing and social facilities</i>
Objective 3a:	<i>Ensure places are attractive</i>
Objective 3b:	<i>To ensure the market towns and local service centres can continue to provide the services and facilities required for a growing economy</i>
Objective 3c:	<i>To improve access between jobs, training and home through sustainable forms of transport – rail, bus, cycling and working</i>
Objective 3d:	<i>Develop a programme for regenerating key sites</i>
Objective 3e:	<i>To explore the existing industrial estates and to determine what if any interventions are required to improve the buildings and environment.</i>
Objective 3f:	<i>To work with partners to improve digital connectivity</i>
Objective 3g:	<i>To ensure power is supplied to cater for the needs of businesses</i>
Objective 3h:	<i>Work towards being a carbon neutral Borough</i>
Objective 3i:	<i>To ensure the power and infrastructure is available to take advantage of electric vehicles as well as autonomous vehicles.</i>
Objective 3j:	<i>To consider the repurposing of buildings and spaces</i>
Objective 4a:	<i>Maximise the growth of the visitor economy</i>
Objective 4b:	<i>To actively promote the Borough</i>
Objective 4c:	<i>To ensure a legacy from major events such as City of Culture, Commonwealth Games, National Cycling events</i>
Objective 4d:	<i>To maintain and improve the natural and historic assets of the Borough</i>
Objective 4e:	<i>To mitigate the impacts from the construction of HS2</i>

Action Plan

Timescales

	Immediate	0-12 months
	Short terms	1 to 2 years
	Medium term	2 to 5 years
	Longer term	6 to 15 years

	Action	Objective	Timescale	Cost if known	Key Partners
	Work with partners to explore ways to provide affordable workspace, grow on space and co-working space	1a 1f			
	Town Centre Action Plans				ERDF funding, businesses in town centres, Chamber, FSB
	Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Action Plan				
	Work with partners to explore the way to provide affordable land	1f			
	Support start-up enterprises	1b			
	Encourage more self-employment to create more micro enterprises	2a			
	Support partners in providing start-up / growth advice and guidance	1e			Growth Hub, WMCA, WCC, CWLEP, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses
	Support business networking groups, signposting to relevant agencies and partners (Growth Hub, WMCA, WCC, CWLEP, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses) and promote relevant business-related initiative				
	Foster and support innovation	1b 2a			
	Assist and ensure the delivery of the Southern Manufacturing Park at Horiba MIRA	1a 1c			
	Create employment opportunities in a range of businesses	2a			
	Encouraging businesses to exploit new markets including the climate change agenda and supply chain for other companies and projects including HS2 Explore supply chain opportunities to exploit automotive, research and development as well as Hs2 opportunities Encouraging supply chain opportunities, particularly in the automotive and R and D sectors	1a 1e1b 1c 1e			
	Encourage growth of low carbon technologies	1b			
	Explore opportunities and implications for rural diversification	1d			

Work with educational providers and other stakeholders	2a			
Ensure growth sectors our key areas for future training and skills of both the existing and potential work force	2a			
Encourage apprenticeships and lifelong learning	2a			
Highly skilled people	2a			
Retention of graduates	2a			
Become a living wage Borough	2a			
Work with WCC to develop a programme of improvements to public buildings and the public realm	3a			
Develop a Transport Strategy for North Warwickshire	3a			WCC
Secure funding for all phases of the A5 improvements	3a			MHCLG, DoT, HE, WCC,
Work with partners to develop projects to increase resilience in the transport infrastructure	3a			WMCA, TfWM, Midlands Connect, WCC
Seek improvements to the SRN, MRN as well as local roads	3a			MHCLG, DoT, HE, WCC,
Seek improvements to the services and facilities relating to rail	3a			WMTE
Work with partners to seek the delivery of a range of regeneration projects to assist with improving footfall within the main towns	3b			
Explore opportunities to assist in this respect a masterplan for Atherstone. This will include the potential for additional car parking, improvements to the railways station and improvements to the public realm	3b			
Work with WM5G to initially make	3c			
Encourage the provision of 5G / fibre to the main urban areas and Industrial Estates to ensure businesses have the digital connections to exploit future possibilities	3b			
Work with partners and stakeholders to ensure there is sufficient and constant power supply	3d			
Support the ongoing development of the town partnerships, namely those operating in Atherstone, Coleshill and Polesworth	3a			
Maximise the growth of the visitor economy by	4a			
(i) Provision of visitor accommodation	4a			
(ii) Grow employment in the tourism sector	4a			
(iii) Ensure availability of trained skilled workforce in the hospitality industry	4a			
(iv) Work with partners to implement the destination management plan	4b			
(v) Work with the local community to ensure a lasting legacy in a range of activities	4b			

	Support the development of tourism websites for the three towns within the Borough and the delivery of activities and events to increase footfall and drive economic growth	4c			
	Continue to promote the tourism and cultural assets within the Borough working closely with Northern Warwickshire Tourism	4c			
	Promote the Borough's natural and heritage assets	4d			
	Work closely with partners and stakeholders to capitalise on and promote key assets within the Borough through initiatives such as Heritage Open Days and English Tourism Week to engage with and attract new visitors and tourists to the area	4d			
	Carry out Conservation Area Appraisals of all Conservation Areas and development of Conservation Area Management Plans	4d			Private sector, local community

Draft

Risk Management Form

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Economic Development Strategy

Risk Ref	Risk: Title/Description	Consequence	Likelihood (5 = high, 1 = low)	Impact (5 = high, 1 = low)	Gross Risk Rating	Responsible Officer	Existing Control Procedures	Likelihood (5 = high, 1 = low)	Impact (5 = high, 1 = low)	Net Risk Rating
1	<i>project funding</i> – not securing appropriate funding to address the strategic priorities;	Priorities will not be delivered	4	5	20	SM / DMB				
2	<i>staffing</i> – ensuring sufficient resources can be made available to develop the strategy;	The full extent of the strategy will not be delivered	4	4	18	SM / DMB				
3	<i>processes</i> – ensuring appropriate operational arrangements to ensure the smooth delivery of the strategic priorities;	Unsuccessful delivery of projects and initiatives	3	3	9	SM / DMB				
4	<i>momentum</i> – enabling progress to be made to ensure sufficient forward progress is achieved.	This will ensure the successful delivery of a range of projects and initiatives	3	4	14	SM / DMB				

Economic Development Strategy 2020 - 2033
North Warwickshire

Risk Ref	Options for additional / replacement control procedure	Cost Resources	Likelihood (5 = high, 1 = low)	Impact (5 = high, 1 = low)	Net Risk Rating

Completed By: Dorothy Barratt

Date: October 2021

Draft

Agenda Item No 8

Executive Board

22 November 2021

**Report of the
Corporate Director Resources**

Outreach Budget

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report looks at the community hubs currently supported by the Council through the Outreach budget and proposes a way forward.

<p>Recommendation to the Board</p> <p>a To remove the post of Community Projects Officer from the establishment; and</p> <p>b To notify the remaining community hubs that financial support will cease after 2021/22.</p>
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2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council worked with partners to set up community hubs, with the aim of providing greater access to the internet and services provided by a range of public authorities and voluntary and community sectors. The initial capital investment was provided in 2011/12, together with some initial revenue support, with the aim of local partners taking on the ongoing running costs.
- 2.2 Initially there were eight Information Points and six Hubs located across the Borough. These hubs were located in non-council owned premises such as community centres and libraries. NWBC supplied the IT equipment and paid for broadband connections. Each venue had a phone with dedicated numbers installed (to support services such as CAB, NWBC, Age UK etc.) and were provided with IT equipment. Skype and scanning opportunities were included in a few of the hubs but were not used effectively and were subsequently discontinued.
- 2.3 The hubs were intended to promote access to Council and other services. As the hubs were administered by volunteers, the need for attendance at training and awareness events could not be imposed. This meant that the quality of support was variable.

- 2.4 In August 2016 a new Community Projects Officer (CPO) was appointed and part of his responsibilities were to help and support digital inclusion activities in the Borough through the Community Hub network; assist in the development of activity provided within the hubs and related projects to maximise use by the public; organise training and awareness events for volunteers and hub managers; liaise with the community to promote activities and the facilities at the hubs and a host of other productive measures to improve hub “take up”.
- 2.5 In order to receive funding, locations were required to stay open for 15 hours a week and also to provide regular statistical information on usage to the Council. In practice compliance with these requirements was variable and has disappeared over time.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 The Community Projects Officer made significant efforts to encourage volunteers and partners to participate in developing hubs but met with only limited success. Interaction depended on the volunteers who were engaged at each hub and the activity or group they were involved in. As time went on, even the limited success was not achieved.
- 3.2 The budget currently supports just six hubs, at: Atherstone, Arley, Baddesley Ensor, Coleshill, Dordon and Hartshill. Contact has been limited to the provision of financial support, with a landline and broadband connection paid for in five of the hubs and payment for broadband in the sixth hub. It has not been possible to collect information on usage of the hubs and as demonstrated by the reduction from fourteen to six hubs there is only very limited appetite for this type of facility. The Community Projects Officer took on the administration of applications for the foodbank and supported some other community initiatives, but his role reduced. He has recently left the Council, leaving the post vacant.
- 3.3 Funding for the Community Projects Officer is included in the base budget, however, ongoing revenue funding for telephone and broadband costs aren't. These costs are currently funded through an earmarked reserve, which only has enough funding to cover costs in 2021/22. As the Council has a significant budget shortfall and needs to reduce its costs, the option of taking these costs into the base budget is not feasible. Indeed, the current vacancy in the Community Projects Officer post provides an opportunity to review the overall budget provision. The administration of foodbank applications is currently being successfully managed within the Customer Services Team and it is proposed to make this a permanent arrangement.
- 3.4 The Council currently puts other resources into financial inclusion work and is part of the North Warwickshire Financial Inclusion Partnership, working with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and a range of voluntary organisations. The partnership continues to raise awareness of support available to residents, directing and supporting those in need to access

specific support. This provides benefits for both the individuals and the Council.

4 Remaining Hubs

4.1 Contact has been made with the five of the six hubs currently supported.

Hartshill (based in Hartshill Community Centre) – the Parish Council have recently had the phone number transferred to themselves. Whilst it gets very limited use, they plan to keep the hub open and available for anyone wishing to use it.

Atherstone (based in St Marys Church) – Prior to the pandemic and lockdown, the hub was open on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday via the community café, when those who wished to access partner services were able to, along with access to ten numbers via a free phone. A number of support organisations used the hub to promote services and hub services were promoted via community groups run by the church. No information was kept on usage of the hub.

Baddesley (based in the community library) – little to no use is made of the hub by the community and it was estimated that only one voluntary service had used the facility in the last five years.

Arley (based in the community centre) – usage of around seventeen people per month was estimated prior to the lockdowns. As the hub has started to reopen, usage has also recommenced, albeit currently at lower levels. Volunteers are finding that increasingly laptops are being used to resolve queries and issues, rather than the phone provided.

Dordon - operation ceased from January 2018. This has been overlooked and needs to be addressed.

Coleshill (based in the Town Hall) – this is currently organised by the Town Council, with volunteers attending each day to provide assistance. Although numbers were not provided, anecdotally the hub is well used and getting busier. Partners attend the hub to provide support to residents / put on events. Social media is used to share NWBC / WCC information on social media.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Community hubs appear to be working well in a couple of areas, but this is where they are working in the way originally intended – being managed and run by the community. They are not dependent on the employment of the Community Projects Officer. Taking this and the need to reduce expenditure into account, it is proposed to take the post of the Community Projects Officer out of the establishment and reduce the budget accordingly.

5.2 The hubs were started with the intention that local partners would take on the ongoing running costs and this was referred to by one of the hubs contacted. Given the Council's difficult financial position, it is proposed to contact the remaining hubs and make them aware that the Council is only able to fund their phone and broadband costs until the end of the current financial year. As mentioned earlier, Hartshill have recently taken on the running costs of the telephone.

6 Report Implications

6.1.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

Whilst funding for the Community Projects Officer is included in the base budget, ongoing revenue funding for telephone and broadband costs aren't. These costs are currently funded through an earmarked reserve. The earmarked reserve only has enough funding to cover costs in 2021/22.

6.1.2 Taking the post of Community Projects Officer out of the establishment will contribute £37,000 towards the significant budget reductions needed in 2022/23.

6.1.2 Legal, Data Protection and Human Rights Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6.1.3 Environment, Sustainability and Health Implications

The community hubs model provide access to a wealth of information and support by providing access to IT without the need to travel. This supports both the digital agenda and climate change.

6.1.4 Risk Management Implications

The removal of the Community Projects Officer won't affect the continued operation of the hubs currently in operation. Other work on financial inclusion activities will continue to provide support to residents who need it.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Garner (719374).

Agenda Item No 9

Executive Board

22 November 2021

Report of the Chief Executive

Corporate Plan Performance Update

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report asks the Board to note the Corporate Plan Performance Update and identify any areas where further information is required.

Recommendation to the Board:-

- a That the report be noted; and**
- b That the Board considers whether the Performance Working Group should meet in order to consider any areas where further consideration is needed.**

2 Report

- 2.1 Members will recall that a new style Corporate Plan was adopted by the Council earlier this year. The new Plan seeks to provide a sharper focus and concentrates on the major outcomes the Council wishes to see, rather than the detailed work programme. The Plan is attached as Appendix 1.

- 2.2 Members have also expressed the view that previous performance reports have not fully given Councillors the information about the key issues facing the Borough and its residents.

- 2.3 The Performance Update attached as Appendix 2 seeks to do that. Members are therefore asked to note the report and identify any areas where further information is required.

3 Report Implications

- 3.1 There are no specific implications.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438).



North Warwickshire
Borough Council



Corporate Plan 2021-23



2021/22 Revision

Protecting the rurality of North Warwickshire, supporting its communities and promoting the wellbeing of residents and business.



01

Introduction

The last year has been very challenging for everyone and the impact on residents, communities, business, and the Council has been significant.

We wanted to thank communities for their exceptional response during this time. Through our work at the Council we are aware of the many support groups and other work that has gone on, and we have tried to support this work with our Community Fund providing £300,000 of funding for Councillors to directly support work in local areas. We also directly contacted by phone around 10% of our residents during the height of the crisis to support the work within communities to help those in particular need at this time.

As a Council we have experienced a lot of challenges, not least of which was the need to move many staff to home working and to make front line services as safe as possible, whilst continuing service provision.

Going forward we aim to retain and build on the positives that have been achieved, whilst retaining the best parts of our service provision before the pandemic.

This has changed the way we operate in some areas. Whilst there have been difficulties, it has also brought forward some service efficiencies. Going forward we aim to retain and build on the positives that have been achieved, whilst retaining the best parts of our service provision before the pandemic.

We have taken on a significant amount of additional work as part of the response to the coronavirus. Direct shielding work in the early part of the pandemic was undertaken from Coleshill Leisure Centre.



As the situation has changed, we have moved from direct provision to supporting other service providers provide help.

There are many businesses in the Borough who have been affected by the pandemic. Support has been provided through different agencies and we have been administering a range of business grants which have varied in line with national and local tier restrictions resulting in over £14m being paid to businesses in the Borough. Many of these grant schemes relate to business ratepayers but we had a discretionary business scheme which was open to non-ratepayers.

As with many others, our finances have been hit by the pandemic. Refuse and recycling costs have

increased, whilst we have lost various income streams such as leisure due to the closure of the leisure centres. We also took the decision to delay the introduction of the charge for green waste for a year. Although we received government support, it hasn't covered all of our additional costs. Managing our financial position will be very challenging going forward, even with the council tax increase set for the coming year.

Whilst we need to find ways of reducing our expenditure significantly over the next few years, we will continue to do all we can to support our communities and improve jobs and opportunities for the residents of North Warwickshire. There are major challenges ahead, but we are up to the task.

Notwithstanding this, we have an ambitious programme to deal with the issues which matter the most to residents. Being based in North Warwickshire and close to communities we are well placed not only to provide excellent services directly to you, but also to use our position and knowledge of the Borough to argue for improvements in the range of other public services that are so important to quality of life. An important part of this is how we as a Borough recover from the COVID outbreak, and this is reflected in our separate COVID recovery plan.



Vision

Protecting the rurality of North Warwickshire, supporting its communities and promoting the wellbeing of residents and business.



Values

Service provider, enabler, point of contact, champion of North Warwickshire



Priorities and Objectives

This section of the plan outlines how we will achieve our priorities and objectives and how we will measure our progress

Priorities:

Efficient organisation:

- Finances
- Lean
- Responsive



Safe, Liveable, Locally Focussed communities:

- Feeling safe
- Place based enforcement
- Quality of life



Prosperous and healthy:

- Jobs
- Infrastructure
- Connectivity
- Health



Sustainable growth, protected rurality:

- Vibrant growth
- Sense of place
- Recognisably home



In addition, the Council will adopt two cross cutting Strategies – our COVID 19 Recovery Plan and our Climate Change Strategy

02

Efficient organisation

– financial management, lean and responsive organisation

Our Strategic Aims

We need to be the most **focussed and prioritised organisation** we can be – clear on our vision and priorities, skilled and motivated staff in the right places.

We need to **know what we are about** but also that we cant cover as many areas as before and will continue to **harness the power of the community**.

Our **advocacy for the area** will aim to ensure other parts of the systems we live in recognise the needs of North Warwickshire.

We recognise that North Warwickshire Borough Council is an organisation a lot of people turn to for help and we proud of this – it played a vital role in supporting communities through COVID and will continue as we learn to live with the virus in the longer term. A key reason for this is our **responsiveness – we know the area and can be relied on to respond**. This need to be allied with a greater understanding of you, as residents of the Borough. Recent changes in our working practices have shown the benefit of the **Council truly leaving the building** in every sense, being more problem solving in complex cases and seeing the person as well as the process.



How we will achieve this

Make the financial savings we need in ways which least affect our residents

A robust transformation programme to ensure our services and processes are as lean as possible

Identifying the resources needed to deliver the Council's plan to provide high-quality priority services to our communities

Consider new models of working and providing services

Develop our staff in the new skills needed, properly supported by IT

Develop our vulnerability work from COVID 19 to provide additional assurance to residents who may be experiencing difficulties

Ensure as many services are based in North Warwickshire as possible to ensure they reflect and respond to the Borough.

How we will measure this

- Balanced budget and savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (N)
- A minimum of two major services reviews and reporting on the savings and efficiencies achieved (PI)
- Increased commercial activity in areas that will promote the wellbeing of the Borough to assist with market weaknesses and make a contribution to the Council's budget (N&PI)
- Appropriate charges for Green Waste and Parking to help sustain services (PI)
- Contact those we know to be vulnerable with information, advice and as often as possible with direct contact to ensure the help available is reaching our residents (N&PI)
- Efficiently collect money due to the Council, whilst continuing to offer support (PI)
- Staff survey results (PI)
- Customer satisfaction (PI)

03

Safe, Liveable, Locally Focussed Communities

– feeling safe, place based enforcement, quality of life

Our Strategic Aims

North Warwickshire is a recognisable community with a distinctive sense of place. It is connected to but separate from the wider West Midlands area as well as the East Midlands and therefore benefits from public services based on its real geography rather than administrative convenience.

Key to our sense of place is **quality of life** - being able to enjoy the rurality and communities within North Warwickshire. **Feeling safe** is of paramount importance to this and as part of our **advocacy role** for the Borough we will work with the Police and other partners on the key safety issues of concern to local residents.

We will adopt a **placed based approach to enforcement** using our powers where appropriate to ensure the protections to residents' quality of life are used. As well as our professional powers in areas such as Planning, Housing and Environmental Health we will use a problem solving approach to cross cutting and multi agency issues to ensure people enjoy their homes and communities.



How will we achieve this

Continue to play a leading role in the North Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership working with the community, including the Police, Town and Parish Councils and people of all ages, background and areas, to improve public perception of crime and public confidence in feeling safe by contributing towards the achievement of the Partnership plan actions and targets for the current strategic priorities. This will be particularly important for those who have spent considerable periods of time shielding against the risk caused by COVID 19.

Advocate on behalf of the Borough to ensure sufficient levels of key services in the area, particularly Police and street lighting.

To introduce Civil Parking Enforcement into North Warwickshire at the earliest opportunity as part of steps to improve and increase, amongst other things, parking in our town centres, and work with partners on improving HGV parking.

Work with partners to resolve Safer Neighbourhood issues, including, where necessary, taking action to address anti-social and nuisance behaviour

Maintain a very high standard of street cleanliness throughout the Borough, tackling litter and flytipping as quickly as possible.

Ensure maximum coordination between enforcement teams to resolve complex social and environmental issues likely to significantly impact on quality of life.

How we will measure this

- Reporting on a range of Safer Communities indicators linked to Violent Crime (with a focus on domestic violence and abuse, sexual offences and drug and alcohol related), Anti-Social Behaviour, Road Safety (with a focus on road traffic accidents resulting in killed or serious injuries), Crime in Rural Areas (PI, N)
- Report on the cleanliness of the Borough (PI)
- Report on the work of our enforcement teams in Planning, Housing and Environmental Health (N)
- Satisfaction surveys with residents and key partners such as Town and Parish Councils. (N)



Key to our sense of place is quality of life, feeling safe and using our powers to protect residents' quality of life

04

Prosperous and healthy

– Jobs, Infrastructure, connectivity, health

Our Strategic Aims

The first two objectives may be regarded as ensuring the foundations for the organisation and Borough are as firm as possible – the Council should add value to the area and residents should feel at home and secure in their communities.

The next two objectives build on the **quality of life theme** to ensure our communities **thrive**, being **prosperous and healthy**.

Key to this theme is a **healthy and inclusive economy** with a good supply of jobs, including in emerging 'mega trend' sectors, prioritised in national and regional Industrial Strategies. Ensuring our residents can **acquire the skills** for new and existing jobs is important in this aim.

As part of the final aim, ensuring investment into North Warwickshire in terms of sufficient housing and employment for our residents is a generally shared aim as long as the **infrastructure that makes places work** comes with it.

The Council has established an ambitious growth and investment programme following years of low input to the area and we will continue to lead on the Borough's input into securing the improvements to roads, schools, community services and environmental assets to **bring quality to growth**.

A key component is ensuring we are **connected with the people, places and factors which influence our life** – in terms of transport and physical connection and also technology as COVID produces a generational shift to digital services.

Finally, but fundamentally, a number of **health outcomes need to significantly improve** within the Borough. Loss of economic opportunity can often be replaced eventually but reduced health prospects are more damaging.



We want our communities to thrive, being prosperous and healthy, and ensure we add quality to prosperity and growth

How will we achieve this

Produce a revised Economic Development Strategy linked to the UK and WM Industrial Strategies, including identifying projects to be supported from Government funding.

Use developer contributions and other funding to maximise opportunities for the employment of local people including addressing skills gaps as well as the improvement of the environment, leisure and other community services that add value to people's lives.

Manage development and work with partners to deliver its associated infrastructure, in line with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Progress the North Warwickshire Transport Strategy to improve strategic roads such as the A5 and A446, improve transport links, including cycle links, footpath links, public transport, and all forms of rail provision.

We will work in partnership with other agencies to tackle health inequalities through implementation of the corporate Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and relevant Warwickshire North Place Plan priorities, as part of our advocacy work for the Borough within the health system as well as by ensuring access to leisure and other community service opportunities that promote active, healthy lifestyles.



Ensure our work through a number of services such as Planning, Environmental Health, Leisure and Community Development and Housing contribute to improving the wider determinants of health and to enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of local residents.

How we will measure this

- A dashboard of economic indicators linked to the Economic Development Strategy including skill levels, employment rates, benefit claimant rates, wage/salary data (PI, N)
- Progress reports on the action plan for the Transport Strategy (N)
- Progress reports on the action plans for the corporate Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and JSNA and relevant Warwickshire North Place Plan priorities (N)
- A dashboard of health indicators on key health indicators, including life expectancy, access to mental health services, road mortality, and active lifestyle indicators (PI)

05

Sustainable growth, protected rurality

– Vibrant growth, sense of place, recognisably home

Our Strategic Aims

Linked to the last theme, one of the most important roles North Warwickshire Borough Council can play is to **shape the type of place** North Warwickshire is and ensure there is **a plentiful supply of houses, of the right type and quality.**

There is a housing crisis in the UK caused by insufficient properties being built over a long period of time. The Council will therefore play its part in providing **sustainable growth, facilitating investment in the Borough.** This will ensure the housing needs of the area are met and provide impetus through new jobs, and good quality facilities and services in North Warwickshire.

The growth however must not come at the expense of future generations and must seek to **retain the rurality of North Warwickshire.** The new necessary growth must integrate well with existing development and seek to retain a recognisable North Warwickshire, in particular protecting as far as possible our Green Belt and other strategic designations of land.

Working with partner organisations and advocating for the Borough for the infrastructure mentioned in the last objective is key to this aim.



How will we achieve this

We will ensure we have an up-to-date Local Plan, which remains the best way to provide the homes, jobs and other sustainable growth needed in the area. Crucially it also provides the best mechanism to ensure as far as we can that development only happens in the right areas, and for the protection of the Green Belt.

We will continue to work with regional partners to ensure our Plan fits into the wider regional context and that we all working together ensure the necessary supply of homes, jobs and infrastructure.

Use our Design Champions to ensure the best achievable designs are implemented and developed so as to reflect setting and local character.

Seek to secure the protection of the best of the Borough's built and rural heritage, as well as our natural assets such as the Tame Valley Wetlands Partnership

To press for the maximum mitigation and benefits for the Borough arising from HS2, particularly during construction in partnership with other affected Councils and community action groups

Continue to implement the adopted North Warwickshire Leisure Facilities, Green Space and Playing Pitch Strategies, and the accompanying Local Football Facilities Plan, in accordance with their associated Action and Funding Plans.

To implement our Homeless Strategy and work on private housing.

How we will measure this

- Report on progress of the Local Plan and subsequent reviews (N)
- Report on key planning and housing data such as the five year housing supply, percentage of affordable homes, amount of land built on brownfield and allocated sites. (PI)
- Report to the Planning and Development Board on pressures on the Green Belt, design and heritage issues including conservation areas (N)
- Report progress on Leisure Facilities, Playing Pitches and Green Space Strategies (N)
- Report progress on homelessness, private housing and other housing issues (N)



Sustainable growth providing sufficient houses and jobs, bringing investment into our places whilst keeping our recognisable rurality



Protecting the rurality of North Warwickshire, supporting its communities and promoting the wellbeing of residents and business.





North Warwickshire
Borough Council



www.northwarks.gov.uk



Performance Report



November 2021

PERFORMANCE REPORT NOVEMBER 2021

TRAFFIC LIGHT

Measure improving markedly

Measure improving

No/virtually no change, no trend or measure not “good” or bad”

Measure worsening

Measure worsening markedly

Corporate Plan key objectives:

Efficient organisation – financial management, lean and responsive organisation

Safe, Liveable, Locally Focussed Communities – feeling safe, place-based enforcement, quality of life

Prosperous and healthy – jobs, infrastructure, connectivity, health

Sustainable growth, protected rurality - vibrant growth, sense of place, recognisably home

EFFICIENT ORGANISATION – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, LEAN AND RESPONSIVE ORGANISATION

<p>EO 1 - Make the financial savings we need in ways which least affect our residents</p> <p>Identifying the resources needed to deliver the Council's plan to provide high-quality priority services to our communities</p>	<p><i>Balanced budget and savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (N)</i></p> <p><i>Increased commercial activity in areas that will promote the wellbeing of the Borough to assist with market weaknesses and make a contribution to the Council's budget (N&PI)</i></p> <p><i>Appropriate charges for Green Waste and Parking to help sustain services (PI)</i></p> <p><i>Efficiently collect money due to the Council, whilst continuing to offer support (PI)</i></p> <p>The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is reported to the Executive Board and the latest update can be found here</p> <p>Work on finding savings is ongoing, with some proposals for consideration included on this agenda.</p> <p>Charging for Green Waste has been implemented, with income above projected levels. Further details will be reported to the next Community and Environment Board</p> <p>We continue to offer support to those who need it and have extended the post of Financial Inclusion Officer to ensure this continues. Collection rates for the current year at the end of October are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business rates - Target 67%, Collection 61.36% • Council Tax – Target 67%, Collection 64.47% • Sundry Debts – Target 80%, Collection 84%
<p>EO 2 - A robust transformation programme to ensure our services and processes are as lean as possible</p> <p>Consider new models of working and providing services</p>	<p>The Administration Unit has been subject to a full transformation review led by the Head of Corporate Services and the Transformation Manager (a new role created to lead this work). A revised structure for the Unit was approved by Members in March with expected savings in the region of £100,000, the Central Services team has been restructured. All processes have been streamlined and efficiencies captured.</p> <p>Support has been given to the Environmental Health team in transforming the way they intend to work by looking at procuring and implementing a new modern Environmental Health and Licensing system. Our aim will be to have a system that can manage cases from end-to-end, i.e. from a receipt of a citizen request to closure and reporting. The system should enable officers on site, enabling</p>

	<p>processes to be electronic and reduce printing and paper and eliminate re-keying of information freeing up officers to focus on service delivery.</p> <p>The Council continues to deliver and develop accessible digital services with citizens to be able to report and apply for services online and promote a self-serve model of working for officers by streamlining and automating our internal processes, eliminating duplication, reducing unnecessary hand-offs and paperwork.</p> <p>Work continues to make better use of building space; this could be achieved by rationalising working patterns, sharing desks and could lead to the closure or reuse of Old Bank House.</p> <p>Work continues to develop and support hybrid working by:-</p> <p>Implementation of Hybrid Mail - this will enable staff to post correspondence to citizens from any location (home or office), supporting efficiencies and reflecting having a smaller team for incoming and outgoing post as a result of the Admin Review mentioned above.</p> <p>Enable and promote better communications in the use of Teams for internal ad-hoc communications from any location, using technology to support efficient gains.</p> <p>The Council also agreed to purchase the In Cab software solution for our waste and recycling collection vehicles to enable increased service efficiencies in key areas, improved quality and management of performance data, improved access for customers and staff to service information as well as enabling much better allocation of resources and improved communication.</p>
<p>EO 3 - Develop our staff in the new skills needed, properly supported by IT</p>	<p><i>Staff survey results (PI)</i></p> <p>Staff appraisals take place on an annual basis and lead to the production of a training plan</p> <p>During the Coronavirus pandemic, the Council undertook four staff surveys:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2020 & January 2021 – for all employees covering the Council’s approach to the pandemic, health & wellbeing, working from home (if applicable) and support & suggestions; • June 2021 – for employees who had been working from home and covered future considerations for potential hybrid working; and • July 2021 – for all employees, to monitor levels of vaccination across the Council <p>The Coronavirus (Covid-19) Staff Survey undertaken in July 2020 was completed by a total of 224 employees, which is an overall response rate of 52%. Some results were:</p> <p><i>As an organisation I believe the Council has adapted quickly to changing working conditions</i> – 93.7% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this.</p> <p><i>During COVID-19 have you been working from home?</i> 67% of respondents said ‘yes’, 33% said ‘no’.</p> <p>For those that responded ‘yes’:</p> <p><i>The IT I have allows me to fulfil my role</i> – 92% of respondents agree/strongly agree with this.</p> <p><i>I am clear about what is expected of me at this time while working from home</i> – 97.9% of respondents agree/strongly agree with this.</p> <p>The Council is co-ordinating the Staff Survey 2021, which will be sent to all employees in November 2021. This survey will use the same survey format as in previous years, in order to undertake a comparison exercise to former results.</p> <p>The HR team will encourage responses to the 2021 survey to facilitate a high response rate, which in turn, ensures a more representative result base.</p>
<p>EO 4 - Develop our vulnerability work from COVID 19 to provide additional assurance to residents who may be experiencing difficulties</p>	<p><i>Contact those we know to be vulnerable with information, advice and as often as possible with direct contact to ensure the help available is reaching our residents (N&PI)</i></p> <p>The Council has worked to minimise the likelihood and impact of financial exclusion in North Warwickshire through the provision of advice, support and project delivery in a co-ordinated manner that demonstrates value for money and maximises benefits to its communities.</p> <p>Support for those most vulnerable is coordinated through the Northern Warwickshire Financial Inclusion Partnership</p> <p>NWBC Financial Inclusion (FI) Initiatives include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWBC Promotion Activity – social media campaigns • FI Training – staff/teams/partners/community attended • Financial Education in Secondary Schools / College • Community Events and Job Fairs • Customer Referral Form (inc Foodbank) • LA Support for Vulnerable Customers – non LA tenure / LA tenure (FISO work) • A Data Dashboard in conjunction with Warwickshire County Council • Reviews of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support caseload performance <p>The Council has allocated around £190,000 of support from the Local Community Fund, almost £90,000 of which was related to work within the community to counteract the impacts of the pandemic, allied to direct work by Community Development in support of local community groups</p>
<p>EO 5 - Ensure as many services are based in North Warwickshire as possible to ensure they reflect and respond to the Borough.</p>	<p>The Council continues to advocate for as many services as possible to be delivered in the Borough.</p> <p>Recently a number of services have been co-located with leisure services, such as the phlebotomy service at Atherstone Memorial Hall and Coleshill Leisure Centre</p> <p>Our work on Community Safety continues to push for greater Police resource in the Borough and more continuity of service. Discussions are currently ongoing regarding an offer from the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding a focus on rural crime.</p>

SAFE, LIVEABLE, LOCALLY FOCUSED COMMUNITIES – FEELING SAFE, PLACE BASED ENFORCEMENT, QUALITY OF LIFE

<p>COM 1 - Continue to play a leading role in the North Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership working with the community, including the Police, Town and Parish Councils and people of all ages, background and areas, to improve public perception of crime and public confidence in feeling safe by contributing towards the achievement of the Partnership plan actions and targets for the current strategic priorities. This will be particularly important for those who have spent considerable periods of time shielding against the risk caused by COVID 19.</p> <p>COM 2 - Work with partners to resolve Safer Neighbourhood issues, including, where necessary, taking action to address anti-social and nuisance behaviour</p>		<p><i>Reporting on a range of Safer Communities indicators linked to Violent Crime (with a focus on domestic violence and abuse, sexual offences and drug and alcohol related), Anti-Social Behaviour, Road Safety (with a focus on road traffic accidents resulting in killed or serious injuries), Crime in Rural Areas (PI, N)</i></p> <p>Updates regarding the key Safer Communities issues are reported to the Safer Communities Sub Group</p> <p>The latest agendas can be found here and here the latest performance data is attached to this report</p>
<p>COM 3 - Advocate on behalf of the Borough to ensure sufficient levels of key services in the area, particularly Police and street lighting.</p>		<p>See update on EO 5 above, pages 4-5</p>
<p>COM 4 - To introduce Civil Parking Enforcement into North Warwickshire at the earliest opportunity as part of steps to improve and increase, amongst other things, parking in our town centres, and work with partners on improving HGV parking.</p>		<p>Engagement with Government led to North Warwickshire being progressed for civil enforcement of parking after many years delay. The necessary Statutory Instrument was passed by the Department for Transport on 7th October. A decision on the arrangements for on street parking will be made by Warwickshire County Council on 10th December, and a decision on off street parking in respect of car parks owned or controlled by this Council was made by the Resources Board on the 8th November.</p>
<p>COM 5 - Maintain a very high standard of street cleanliness throughout the Borough, tackling</p>		<p><i>Report on the cleanliness of the Borough (PI)</i></p> <p>The latest position on fly tipping is reported to the Safer Communities Sub Group and can be found here and here with the fly tipping report attached to this report</p>

<p>litter and fly tipping as quickly as possible</p>		<p>The clean up response to flytipping has remained very quick. Enforcement of flytipping has been impacted by Environmental Health staff's work on COVID and staff vacancies, however recruitment to the Environmental Health team is ongoing.</p> <p>Street cleanliness monitoring will recommence following a return to normal cleaning schedules affected by the COVID pandemic.</p>
<p>COM 6 - Ensure maximum coordination between enforcement teams to resolve complex social and environmental issues likely to significantly impact on quality of life.</p>		<p><i>Report on the work of our enforcement teams in Planning, Housing and Environmental Health (N)</i></p> <p>The Planning and Environmental Health teams continue to work together on cross cutting issues, which will increase as the work required on COVID 19, particularly in Environment Health, reduces. Staffing vacancies are being filled in Environmental Health following a restructure agreed by Special Sub Group on 8th June.</p> <p>The Chief Executive will chair joint working project groups on issues as necessary, for example on the Lea Marston Shooting Ground, and various fly tipping and anti social behaviour reports in Middleton</p> <p>A revised Planning Enforcement Policy has been drafted and will be reported to Members later in 2021</p>

Prosperous and healthy –

Jobs, Infrastructure, connectivity, health

PROSPEROUS AND HEALTHY – JOBS, INFRASTRUCTURE, CONNECTIVITY, HEALTH

<p>PH 1 - Produce a revised Economic Development Strategy linked to the UK and WM Industrial Strategies, including identifying projects to be supported from Government funding.</p>	<p><i>A dashboard of economic indicators linked to the Economic Development Strategy including skill levels, employment rates, benefit claimant rates, wage/salary data (PI, N)</i></p> <p>A draft Economic Development Strategy, to complement the employment land strategy within the adopted Local Plan, will be considered by Executive Board on 22nd November. This will be subject to consultation.</p> <p>A draft economic development dashboard is being created with Warwickshire County Council and data from that will be included in future reports</p>
<p>PH 2 - Use developer contributions and other funding to maximise opportunities for the employment of local people including addressing skills gaps as well as the improvement of the environment, leisure and other community services that add value to people’s lives.</p>	<p>The Council issues an Infrastructure Funding Report every year the latest of which can be viewed here</p> <p>There is an extensive Infrastructure Delivery Plan linked to the adopted Local Plan which will seek developer contributions on a range of issues IDP 2018</p> <p>Members will be asked to change the LDF Sub-committee into a board with part of its remit to look at the delivery of infrastructure. As part of this work the Council will draft and adopt a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Developer Contributions</p> <p>Work continues to offer support to those seeking jobs and further training. In particular a skills plan is being developed with local partners to support the employment land allocation in the Local Plan for Horiba MIRA, and we are working also on skill support for a major employer at the Core 42 development in Dordon</p>
<p>PH 3 - Manage development and work with partners to deliver its associated infrastructure, in line with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan</p>	<p>Following the adoption of the Local Plan the focus of the Forward Planning Team now moves towards delivery of the Plan. This is particularly important in relation to the strategic allocations.</p>

	<p>The Local Development Scheme will be updated to reflect the work programme. This is currently being developed.</p> <p>The high-level work programme is as follows and will be developed by the LDF Sub committee (to be renamed the Planning Policy and Delivery Group):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Delivery of Strategic Allocations – in particular allocated sites H2, H4, E4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Master Plans o Design Codes o Infrastructure delivery 2 Delivery of infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A5 Phases 1 and 2 – HIG funded o A5 Phases 3 and 4 – RIS3 pipeline project o Other key facilities and services such as education, health and community facilities 3 Supplementary Planning Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Residential Design SPD o Open Space and Sports SPD o Developer Contributions SPD 4 Gypsy, Romany and Traveller Development Plan Document 5 Neighbourhood Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Advice and guidance to those preparing their NP's 6 Improve monitoring of Local Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reviewing current process and looking to improve use of IT 7 Review and keep evidence up to date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o HEDNA – Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 8 Conservation work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Designation of Conservation Area for Caldecote o Designation of Conservation Area for Frezley
<p>PH 4 - Progress the North Warwickshire Transport Strategy to improve strategic roads such as the A5 and A446, improve transport links, including cycle links, footpath links, public transport, and all forms of rail provision.</p>	<p><i>Progress reports on the action plan for the Transport Strategy (N)</i></p> <p>Warwickshire County Council is developing a revised Transport Strategy and the strategy relating to North Warwickshire will now be contained within that document. Consultation and other work on that strategy is due to start in Spring 2022.</p>

		<p>Nearly £80m was allocated for the first phase of improvements to the A5 in the March 2020 budget, one of only three schemes in the country allocated funding. Project meetings have started on that scheme and the wider upgrade from the M42 to the M69 is now thought more likely as a result of the funding for the first phase. That proposal will be submitted for inclusion in the next phase of the Government's Road Investment Strategy</p>
<p>PH 5 - We will work in partnership with other agencies to tackle health inequalities through implementation of the corporate Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and relevant Warwickshire North Place Plan priorities, as part of our advocacy work for the Borough within the health system as well as by ensuring access to leisure and other community service opportunities that promote active, healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>PH 6 - Ensure our work through a number of services such as Planning, Environmental Health, Leisure and Community Development and Housing contribute to improving the wider determinants of health and to enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of local residents</p>		<p><i>Progress reports on the action plans for the corporate Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and JSNA and relevant Warwickshire North Place Plan priorities (N)</i></p> <p><i>A dashboard of health indicators on key health indicators, including life expectancy, access to mental health services, road mortality, and active lifestyle indicators(PI)</i></p> <p>The Council's Health and Wellbeing Action Plan is reported to the Health and Wellbeing Working Party and the Community and Environment Board. The latest update report can be viewed here</p> <p>A health inequalities dashboard is being developed with Warwickshire County Council and data from that will be included in future reports.</p> <p>The Warwickshire North Place partnership is also in the process of developing a dashboard which will be reported to Members when available.</p> <p>The Warwickshire North Health and Wellbeing Board has identified four priorities, identified through workshops prior to the COVID 19 outbreak – Access to services; Reducing Health Inequalities; Housing and Health; and Reducing Obesity and Improving Lifestyles. Work has not progressed due to the outbreak and due to two of the three public health positions in Warwickshire North being vacant currently. Steps to recruit are ongoing.</p> <p>Work within the Housing and Health priority is progressing and reported to the Board and Partnership</p> <p>Officers continue to attend the Local Estates Forum which looks at physical assets available to promote health and wellbeing</p>

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH, PROTECTED RURALITY – VIBRANT GROWTH, SENSE OF PLACE, RECOGNISABLY HOME

<p>SG 1 - We will ensure we have an up-to-date Local Plan, which remains the best way to provide the homes, jobs and other sustainable growth needed in the area. Crucially it also provides the best mechanism to ensure as far as we can that development only happens in the right areas, and for the protection of the Green Belt.</p>	<p><i>Report on progress of the Local Plan and subsequent reviews (N)</i></p> <p><i>Report on key planning and housing data such as the five year housing supply, percentage of affordable homes, amount of land built on brownfield and allocated sites. (PI)</i></p> <p><i>Report to the Planning and Development Board on pressures on the Green Belt, design and heritage issues including conservation areas (N)</i></p> <p>The North Warwickshire Local Plan was adopted on 29th September</p> <p>Regular updates are reported to the Planning and Development Board on recent appeal decisions</p> <p>Monitoring information on the development provided during each year will be report to Board on an annual basis</p>
<p>SG 2 - We will continue to work with regional partners to ensure our Plan fits into the wider regional context and that we all working together ensure the necessary supply of homes, jobs and infrastructure.</p>	<p>The Duty to Cooperate was a key component in the North Warwickshire Local Plan and the housing allocations make a substantial contribution to the wider regional housing need, a requirement given that North Warwickshire is part of both the Coventry and Warwickshire and Greater Birmingham Housing Market Areas.</p> <p>Further work continues to refresh the evidence that sits behind the Local Plan with work on a Coventry and Warwickshire housing and economic needs assessment and a Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment. Work to progress the West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites is also continuing.</p>
<p>SG 3 - Use our Design Champions to ensure the best achievable designs are implemented and developed so as to reflect setting and local character.</p> <p>SG 4 - Seek to secure the protection of the best of the Borough's built and rural heritage, as well as our natural assets such</p>	<p>Members will be involved in Master Planning for the Strategic Allocations.</p> <p>Design Champions will continue to be involved with developers at both pre-application and application stages of the process</p> <p>Officers to continue to sit on the board of the Tame Valley Wetlands Partnership</p>

<p>as the Tame Valley Wetlands Partnership</p>		<p>Opportunities for biodiversity net gain will be explored and developed, particularly as the Environment Bill progressed to enactment</p>
<p>SG 5 - To press for the maximum mitigation and benefits for the Borough arising from HS2, particularly during construction in partnership with other affected Councils and community action groups</p>		<p>Officers continue to meet with HS2 regularly to discuss the project. In particular officers attend the Special Management Zone.</p> <p>HS2 have agreed to fund an officer to deal with consents under the HS2 Act as well as other development issues. Recent work has included concerns regarding the Bromford Tunnel extension and the current position has been reported to the Planning and Development Board.</p> <p>Members will be consulted on the design of the Delta Junction viaducts</p> <p>Officers continue to be part of the national HS2 Planning Forum</p>
<p>SG 6 - Continue to implement the adopted North Warwickshire Leisure Facilities, Green Space and Playing Pitch Strategies, and the accompanying Local Football Facilities Plan, in accordance with their associated Action and Funding Plans.</p>		<p><i>Report progress on Leisure Facilities, Playing Pitches and Green Space Strategies (N)</i></p> <p>Progress with regard to these strategies and plans are reported to the Community and Environment Board and the latest reports can be found here</p> <p>The Board has approved a new approach to the short-term delivery of leisure services in Polesworth, whilst significant developments to local open spaces and playing pitches are being undertaken in conjunction with the community and voluntary sector and a number of parish and town councils. A programme of improvements to local play areas has also been approved by Councillors.</p> <p>An Open Space and Sports SPD will be drafted</p>
<p>SG 7 - To implement our Homeless Strategy and work on private housing.</p>		<p>Report progress on homelessness, private housing and other housing issues (N)</p> <p>An update on the Countywide Homelessness Strategy and the HEART private sector housing service was given to Resources Board earlier this year</p>

Agenda Item No 10

Executive Board

22 November 2021

Report of the Corporate Director Resources

Appointment of External Auditors

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for appointing the external auditor for the audit of the Council's accounts for the five year period from 2023/24.

Recommendation to the Council

To accept the invitation from Public Sector Audit Appointments to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors for five financial years from 1 April 2023.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The external auditor for the audit of the Council's accounts for 2023/24 has to be appointed before the end of December 2022. The Council has a choice about how to make that appointment, so the decision-making process needs to begin.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 sets out a framework which requires authorities to appoint their own auditors for a maximum period of five years.
- 3.2 Authorities have some flexibility around how they appoint their Auditor and they can:
- Appoint their own Auditor, following the procedures set out in the Act;
 - Join with other bodies to procure an Auditor, following the procedures in the Act; or
 - Opt into the national auditor appointment scheme administered by a body designated by the Secretary of State as the 'appointing person'.
- 3.3 If the Council chooses to appoint its own Auditor, it would need to establish its own auditor panel with an independent chair and independent members to oversee a local auditor procurement and the ongoing management of the audit contract.

- 3.4 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA), a company established by the Local Government Association (LGA), provides a national option to join a collective scheme for auditor appointments. The Secretary of State has confirmed PSAA in the role of the appointing person for eligible principal bodies for the period commencing April 2023.
- 3.5 The current auditor appointment arrangements cover the period up to and including the audit of the 2022/23 accounts. This Council opted into the 'appointing person' national auditor appointment arrangements established by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the period covering the accounts for 2018/19 to 2022/23.
- 3.6 PSAA is a not-for-profit company, which already administers the majority of current audit contracts. PSAA is staffed by a team with significant experience in appointing auditors, managing contracts with audit firms, and setting and determining audit fees. Their aim is for all opted in bodies to receive an audit service of the required quality at a realistic market price, which represents value for money. Feedback from the sector and learning from the 2018 experience has been used by PSAA to refine their scheme prospectus and procurement strategy.
- 3.7 The national scheme timetable for appointing auditors from 2023/24 means PSAA have issued a formal invitation to local authorities to opt into these arrangements. PSAA have specified the five consecutive financial years beginning 1 April 2023 as the compulsory appointing period for the purposes of the regulations, which govern the national scheme.
- 3.8 A decision to become an opted-in authority must be taken in accordance with the Regulation 19, that is by the members of an authority meeting as a whole (i.e. Full Council or equivalent). The closing date to give notice to PSAA of the authority's acceptance of the invitation is 11 March 2022.

4 Considerations

- 4.1 The appointed auditor will undertake the statutory audit of accounts and best value assessment of the Council in each financial year, in accordance with all relevant codes of practice and guidance. The appointed auditor is also responsible for investigating questions raised by electors and has powers and responsibilities in relation to Public Interest Reports and statutory recommendations. The auditor must act independently of the Council and the main purpose of the procurement legislation is to ensure that the appointed auditor is sufficiently qualified and independent.
- 4.2 The auditor must be registered to undertake local audits by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) and employ authorised Key Audit Partners to oversee the work. There is currently a shortage of registered firms and Key Audit Partners. Councils have very limited influence over the nature of the audit services they are procuring, the nature and quality of which are determined or overseen by third parties.

- 4.3 Since audit contracts were last awarded in 2017, the audit market has changed considerably following a series of failures in the private sector. There has been a focus on audit quality, requiring additional work to gain deeper levels of assurance. This has put pressure on audit firms and has been accentuated by growing auditor recruitment and retention challenges. Increasing complexity in local government financial statements, as authorities explore innovative ways to fund services have also added to current pressures. Similar challenges in other sectors have led to increased fees and disappointing responses to tender invitations over the last two years.
- 4.4 For the five-year period commencing in 2018, 98% of eligible bodies made the choice to opt-in to the national scheme. Given the very challenging local audit market, it is considered that the Council will again be best served by opting to join the national scheme.
- 4.5 There are a number of benefits in joining a national scheme:
- It avoids the need to run our own procurement process, allowing staffing resources to focus on Council priorities;
 - It avoids the necessity of establishing and managing our own auditor panel, saving on staff time and resource;
 - It is likely to provide the best opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified, registered auditor. There are only nine accredited local audit firms, and a local procurement would be drawing from the same limited supply of auditor resources as PSAA’s national procurement; and
 - Collective procurement reduces costs for individual authorities and a national scheme is likely to be more competitively priced.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 Following the receipt of an opt-in notice, PSAA will request information on any joint working arrangements relevant to the Council’s auditor appointment, and any potential independence matters which may need to be taken into consideration when appointing our auditor. This would allow us to highlight any joint working arrangements, such as in the Revenues and Benefits area.
- 5.2 PSAA expect to formally commence the procurement of audit services in early February 2022. If the Council decides not to accept the invitation to opt in by the closing date, we may subsequently make a request to opt in, but only after 1 April 2023. This is later than the required date for awarding the audit.
- 5.3 In this late scenario, PSAA would be required to consider such a request under the Regulations and agree to it unless there were reasonable grounds for refusal. The Regulations allow PSAA to recover their reasonable costs for making arrangements to appoint a local auditor in these circumstances, for example if they need to embark on a further procurement or enter into further discussions with their contracted firms.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

6.1.1 There is a risk that current audit fee levels could increase when the current contract ends, as the scope of audit has increased, requiring more audit work. There are also concerns about capacity and sustainability in the local audit market.

6.1.2 Opting into a national scheme provides the best opportunity to ensure fees are as realistic as possible, while ensuring the quality of audit is maintained. Joining a national scheme should result in a lower audit fee than individual purchase.

6.1.3 If the national scheme is not used, resource will need to be diverted to establish an auditor panel and conduct a local procurement exercise.

6.2 Legal, Data Protection and Human Rights Implications

6.2.1 Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires a relevant Authority to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding year.

6.2.2 Section 8 governs the procedure for appointment including that the Authority must consult and take account of the advice of its auditor panel on the selection and appointment of a local auditor however, if an appointment is made via the national scheme as proposed, this requirement is removed. This section also requires the Council to publicise the appointment of its Auditor once made.

6.2.3 Section 12 makes provision for the failure to appoint a local auditor. The Authority must immediately inform the Secretary of State who may direct the Council to appoint a specific auditor or appoint a local auditor on behalf of the Council.

6.2.4 Section 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations in relation to an 'appointing person' specified by the Secretary of State. This gives the Secretary of State the ability to enable a sector-led body to become the appointing person. In July 2016 the Secretary of State specified PSAA as the appointing person.

6.3 Risk Management Implications

6.3.1 The principal risks are that the Council fails to appoint an auditor in accordance with the requirements and timing specified in local audit legislation and does not achieve value for money on the appointment process.

6.3.1 These risks are considered best mitigated by opting into the sector-led approach through PSAA.

6.4 Links to Council's Priorities

- 6.4.1 The proposed approach is in line with the Council's aim to be an efficient and lean organisation.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Garner (719374).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

Agenda Item No 11

Executive Board

22 November 2021

**Report of the Head of Development
Control**

**Local Land Charge, Planning and
Enforcement IT System Upgrades**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks financial provision for the upgrade of the Land Charges and Planning and Enforcement IT systems.

Recommendation to the Board

That Capital Budget Resources of £32,550 be allocated for the upgrade of the Local Land Charges System and Planning and Enforcement Systems as set out in the report.

2 Background

- 2.1 There are essentially two separate but strongly associated matters that drive the request for additional resources to address IT system upgrades:-

- Pending changes to the delivery of part of the Local Land Charges Register to the Land Registry and the consequent requirement to upgrade the Local Land Charges database system; and
- The information technology requirements to upgrade the outdated Planning and Enforcement Database system.

- 2.2 The Land Charges and the Planning and Enforcement systems currently operated by the service are part of the land and property suite supplied by NEC (formerly Northgate) and are both named 'iLap'.

3 The Issues

- 3.1 a) Local Land Charges

- 3.1.1 Every local authority in England and Wales, with the exception of County Councils, is required to hold a local land charges register that records obligations affecting properties within their administrative area. Under the Infrastructure Act 2015 responsibility for the local land charges registers was transferred to HM Land Registry (HMLR). The transition is to take place in a phased approach. The first transfer of a Local Authority Register to HMLR was in the summer of 2018 and a phased programme has been set for other local authorities, including North Warwickshire. HMLR is now working with the

Council to standardise our register and to migrate the register information to the Land Registry systems.

- 3.1.2 Our current iLap Land Charges System is an old product which NEC has indicated it will not develop to integrate with the Land Registry upload process. If the system is not upgraded or replaced with another system, all uploads to the Land Charges Register will have to be entered manually on to the Land Registry Portal. This is an undesirable prospect because it would be resource wasteful, requiring double entry data and a drain on staffing resource.
- 3.1.3 NEC has another land and property system in its portfolio called 'M3'. It has successfully developed the M3 product to integrate with Land Registry for automated uploads and has 'gone live' with other Councils.
- 3.1.4 A demonstration of the M3 Land Charges system has taken place and been evaluated. It would represent a good functional upgrade of the current system; would provide some general enhancements over and above the current product and, crucially, the M3 product would provide for automatic uploads of the Register to the Land Registry, both initially and for future maintenance uploads.
- 3.1.5 The Land Registry has indicated that it too sees advantage in the Council having a system capable of automatic uploads to the portal. In discussion about the project timeframe, the Land Registry has indicated that it would be willing, in principle, to work with us to combine the move to their delivery model alongside an upgrade of our systems. There is a discussion about pushing back the project timetable by 18 months to enable that to happen.
- 3.1.6 In the event that we upgrade our Land Charges system to the M3 product, the Land Registry has indicated that it will work with the Council to support the integration. However, if we go forward based on our current system, and upgrade or replace the Land Charges system at a later date, it will not be able to devote the same resources to assisting the integration and the Council will need to find the expertise to implement the integration itself, with the resultant additional cost and disruption to service delivery that a later upgrade will entail.

3.2 b) Planning and Enforcement

- 3.2.1 The Planning and Enforcement System was last renewed 16 years ago in 2005. This is clearly an old system now and based on outdated technology. The iLap Planning and Enforcement System is no longer being developed and the support we receive for it is being scaled down as NEC develop its replacement product 'ASSURE'. There are inherent risks to running with such an old product, it will not be developed to keep pace with changes in service delivery or legislative change and support services will be withdrawn in due course.
- 3.2.2 The ASSURE product is browser-based and cloud ready and thus capable of adaption to the Government's White Paper aspirations of delivering Planning in a user-friendly up-front manner with interactive digital services and tools. It incorporates opportunities for quicker and easier reporting, a public facing self-service portal, clear workflows, actions, improved reporting for all users, better

audit trails, mapping, better security and full regulatory and GDPR compliance. The system also enables mobile working capabilities with ASSURE working on any screen size and improved working with spatially held data.

4 The Proposed Solution

4.1 Upgrades of the existing products from within the current suppliers' suite of Land and Property products are sought, rather than the purchase of completely new systems. The reasons for this include the following:-

- a) Firstly, and significantly, cost. An upgrade of the two existing systems is substantially more cost effective. It is quoted at £32,550, whereas it is known that a move to a completely new product will require a budget allocation exceeding £100,000.

The upgrade costs breakdown is as follows:-

Project Management for Upgrade to M3 Land Charges and Assure Planning delivered during normal working hours 9 days @ £850 = £7,650 ex VAT.

Upgrade M3 Land Charges and Assure Planning 30 days @ £830 = £24,900 ex VAT.

Total = £32,550

- b) In order to realise the benefit of the Land Registry assisting with the integration of the Land Charges system with their Portal, time is a consideration. A search for completely new systems will necessitate a market evaluation and competitive tendering process. Given the complexity of the systems and the need to thoroughly test the functionality of alternative systems, critically challenging the product claims made by sales teams, a market analysis will be time consuming. A project timeframe of 24 months might reasonably be anticipated. Whilst the Land Registry has indicated a willingness to extend its project to facilitate a shorter timeframe upgrade, it would not be willing to work with us to integrate a completely new product involving a longer delay. If we were to go to the market it is likely to mean that we could not integrate a 'go-live' with Land Registry at the same time as 'go-live' with our back-office systems, and there would be a period of time when we had to upload data manually, then when the new system was procured and live, we would need to integrate with Land Registry without their active involvement in that work.
- c) The Planning and Enforcement is a complex system. An upgrade involving a transfer of data between two products owned by NEC is likely to be undertaken with enhanced expertise, more reliably and seamlessly than having to map data to a dissimilar competitor's product.

- d) There are other complexities here that lean towards an upgrade of the current system to the other product within the NEC suite of products. NEC have advised for some time now that they are developing a new suite of land and property products called ASSURE. Until recently, they have advised that ASSURE would work with their two existing land and property products – iLap and M3. They previously took the position that the two existing databases would both link to the ASSURE product. However, this has changed, and it is no longer proposed that ASSURE will work off the iLap database, just the M3 database.
- e) Local authorities will continue to provide replies to CON29 enquiries, such as nearby road schemes or outstanding notices, which may affect a purchaser's decision whether to proceed. The upgraded system will assist with the reengineering of Land Charges processes to create a more integrated solution to the keeping and retrieval of the CON29 data.
- f) NEC proposes to upgrade M3 Land Charges to a module within ASSURE in due course and operate all products based on the M3 database. The upgrade to ASSURE Land Charges will come with nil software cost. There are efficiencies to be achieved by running the Planning and Land Charges systems on the same platform.

5 Future Requirements

5.1 For the reasons set out above, it is considered expedient to upgrade to NEC's M3 and ASSURE products at this stage to address the immediate needs. However, Members should be aware that this may just be a step in the advancement of the use of information technology within the Planning and Land Charges services. The NEC ASSURE products are at relatively early stages of development and presently have a relatively small market share – fewer than 30 local authorities. Much will depend on how NEC continue to develop the product beyond the basic functionality that it presently does well. Whilst it is considered expedient to take the upgrade to ASSURE initially, the service may be seeking budget provision for an evaluation of the wider market in a few years (possibly 3 or 4-years' time). This stepped approach has a number of advantages:-

- Within this three-to-four-year time period it is also anticipated that there will be greater clarity about the nature of the Government's White Paper aspirations for the digital delivery of Planning and potentially central government funding to off-set associated costs.
- Moving to the ASSURE product will focus a review/update/streamlining of planning and enforcement communications, processes and management reporting will put in a better place before going to the market to assess the functionality of other products.
- It is anticipated that the Land Registry project will result in increased volumes of data held in a spatial form. It will be good to have cleaned up and modernised our data in this way ahead of looking for a new product.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The costs of the upgrades will be offset against the savings achieved from automatic update integration with Land Registry, the upgrades will enable both systems to move to products that are actively being developed and supported and will facilitate opportunities to modernise and improve service delivery.
- 6.2 The upgrade is expedient to achieve the most cost effective, timely and sustainable way of integration with the Land Registry Project.

7 Report Implications

7.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 7.1.1 The system upgrade will require a supplementary capital allocation of £32,500, which will incur borrowing costs of £8,410 per annum for a 4 year period.

7.2 Legal Implications

- 7.2.1 Even after the Land Registry has taken over the Local Land Charges function, the Council will still have a legal obligation to provide relevant information to the Land Registry and the Council has a legal obligation to maintain a planning enforcement register. Acquisition of the systems referred to will underpin the Council's ability to perform these obligations.

7.3 Environment and Sustainability Implications

- 7.3.1 Improvements in the performance and quality of services will contribute to improving the quality of life within the community and the economic prosperity of the area.

7.4 Risk Management Implications

- 7.4.1 There is a risk to the effective delivery of planning services from continuing to operate with outdated systems that do not keep pace with legislative and technology changes.

The Contact Officer for this report is Erica Levy (719294).

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

Agenda Item No 12

Executive Board

22 November 2021

Report of the Chief Executive

Board Membership Changes

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report asks the Board to recommend changes to the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Working Party.

Recommendation to Council

That the changes to the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Party set out in the report be approved.

2 Report

- 2.1 The Conservative Group have asked for some changes to the membership of Health and Wellbeing Party.
- 2.2 Councillor McDonald is to come off the Party to be replaced by Councillors Hancocks. It is proposed that Councillor M Humphreys becomes the Chairman of the Party, with Councillor S Smith as the Vice Chairman.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438).

Agenda Item No 13

Executive Board

22 November 2021

**Report of the
Chief Executive**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommendation to the Board

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

14 **Approval of Absence Report** – Report of the Chief Executive

Paragraph 1 – by reason of Information relating to any individual.

15 **Confidential Extract of the Executive Board Minutes – 20 September 2021**

Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual.

Paragraph 2 – Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

In relation to the item listed above members should only exclude the public if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, giving their reasons as to why that is the case.

The Contact Officer for this report is Emma Humphreys (719221).