

**NORTH WARWICKSHIRE  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



# **Peer Review Action Plan - 2025**

## Recommendation 1

The Council's corporate priorities need to be consistently communicated and understood throughout the organisation with an effective performance management framework and culture in place to monitor delivery.

### ACTION 1

The Council has comprehensively reviewed its Corporate Priorities including how these are presented and also reviewed its performance management framework.

- Corporate Plan Annual Refresh – [March 25 Executive Board](#)
- Latest Corporate Plan Performance Report - [March 25 Executive Board](#)
- The Performance Framework and progress on performance indicators has been [reported](#) to Members and a dashboard created with various reporting levels (Public, Members, Management etc) - [NWBC Performance Indicators | Performance Indicators - Interactive Report | North Warwickshire Borough Council](#) and a Data Analyst position has been created and is now operational. We have defined a process that we are working to for our data, it is as follows:

**Level 1** - obtaining accurate and consistent data for depts.

**Level 2** - linking to data source (if possible)

**Level 3** - review of data with data owner to ensure data is displaying accurately and visual is clearly defined understood

**Level 4** - can we add additional measures that would be beneficial? For example displaying for data on enforcements for fly tipping, improvements in food hygiene scores and peaks and troughs in workloads

**Level 5** - determining RAG status with officers

**Level 6** - comparing our data with other Councils

- The Chief Executive is in the process of attending divisional meetings to increase awareness of the priorities and discuss performance.

## Recommendation 2

The Council must strengthen its core governance arrangements.

### ACTION 2

The Council has undertaken a governance internal audit, and this has been reported to the Resources Board in [January 2025](#). Progress against the actions will be reported via the Corporate Director Resources.

External solicitors have been commissioned to assist with the updating of the Constitution. As set out in the main report, one of the main suggestions in the CPC report was that the Council should have a separate Audit Committee. Whilst a number of comparable Councils do have an Audit Committee, it is

suggested that given our democratic arrangements that the focus of the Resources Board be changed to the Audit, Governance and Resources Board with a renewed emphasis with its terms of reference for governance, risk, and internal audit matters. It is suggested that given the scope of the terms of reference for the Executive Board, that external audit remains being reported to that Board. The detail of this change will be reported to Members once the review of the Constitution has completed.

The Government has also consulted on changes to the Local Government Audit system including mandating some elements of how an Audit Committee will work (such as a requirement to have at least one independent Members). The Council will therefore review progress on this matter from Government as it may wish to see this detail before changing our current arrangements.

A number of policies and procedures have been and are in the process of being updated and have been reported to Members. Examples include new [Contract Standing Orders](#) adopted in March 2025, a number of Data Protection [Policies](#) (February 2025) and considerable progress has been made with regard to external audit, financial statements and governance statements with reports to the Executive Board in [February 2025](#).

Several all staff and officer briefings have been carried out for Data Protection, the new Procurement Act (that came into force in February 2025) and the newly adopted Contract Standing Orders. A new policy has been implemented to prevent inappropriate words being used electronically.

There is a clear plan in place for the 24/25 external audit and the much-improved working relationship with our new External Auditors is of significant assistance.

The Council is undertaking significant work to renew its analysis of corporate risk with RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP being commissioned on this work. Two officer workshops have taken place with a draft Corporate Strategic Risk Register has been created and will be reported to Members in due course.

### Recommendation 3

The Council should develop a comprehensive budget saving plan, investing in the resources to deliver the savings needed in the medium term. The plan needs to be agreed with clear milestones and be resourced, risk assessed, monitored, and widely communicated.

#### ACTION 3

This action is outstanding and will form part of the work of our new Corporate Director Resources.

### Recommendation 4

The digitisation/modernisation journey needs to be clearly embedded in a transformation programme. It must be sufficiently resourced, with an appropriate skill set level with processes and governance in place to ensure delivery. This includes appropriate engagement and reporting lines to Members.

#### ACTION 4

Further resources have been added to the transformation team with the Data Analyst and a further Transformation Officer.

The work of the team is reported to Members as part of the Corporate Plan update, the latest report of which was considered by the Executive Board in [March 2025](#). A specific report on the work of the

team was considered by the Executive Board in [September 2024](#) (page 9), this is reported to Executive board annually. An update on recent progress is included [here](#).

The Corporate Services Division's Service Plan sets out the work for the coming year with a list of transformation project appended to that Plan –



service plan 25 26  
CS.xlsx

The Council will be commencing a review of our Customer Services to ensure that the Council is providing an efficient and excellent service to both internally and externally to our residents.

Most of the Transformation team are Prince II qualified and they are tightening up project documentation to ensure services have an opportunity to input into the scope, have an increased awareness of what time project entails. Here's a brief outline:

1. Project Mandate,
2. Business Case – includes scope, team, sponsor, objectives, measurables etc,
3. PID – this will vary depending on size of the project but will include things like Plan, Issues log, change log, risk log,
4. Highlight reports,
5. Project close – lessons learnt and did we achieve the savings, additional income or efficiency.

## Recommendation 5

NWBC should strengthen its strategic leadership capacity and resolve the interim nature of the Senior Management Team, with a timescale to develop a permanent structure.

### ACTION 5

Detailed reports on this action will take place in the late summer/early Autumn to Executive Board and the Senior Management Recruitment Sub-committee.

## Recommendation 6

Establish regular staff session input from all senior managers and explore opportunities for political leaders to participate in these sessions.

### ACTION 6

As part of the consideration of the key issues facing the Council that will be reported to Executive Board in the Autumn, sessions to allow staff to input into this work will be arranged including involvement from the political leadership.

## Recommendation 7

Embrace the opportunities technology brings to increase access and improve communication across Council business.

## ACTION 7

### Technology

An IT skills survey has been undertaken; the results are here: [ICT Skills Audit Survey](#)

Work has begun on training videos. They can be found here: [Welcome](#)

### Communications - external

The Council has improved its communications to residents over the last couple of years with the procurement and implementation of gov delivery (email and text subscription service), increased activity on our social media page and increasing the amount of news releases we do we also work to a yearly plan for social media activity.

### Communications - internal

The Council has two full time Communications Officers, and they manage the Council's website, internal and external communications. They arranged a fundraising event in November 2024 for Children in Need that raised over £800 and working with colleagues arranged several activities around Mental Health Week which included lots of emails for staff, a 'walk and talk' session at a lunchtime and a video from the Chief Executive and others from other organisations.

One of the Communications Officer attends the monthly Extended Management Team for a proactive discussion.

We have a staff forum internally for all staff to attend if they so wish, with the next one taking place in June 2025. We also have a staff Facebook page and several TVs around the building with key messages for staff.

The Chief Executive has held all staff meetings to ensure that the messages, potential impact and proposals are well communicated about Local Government Re-organisation.

## Recommendation 8

Consider an environment that better supports Members to fulfil their role. This will include internal and external Member training and development and utilisation of technology to improve access (e.g. hybrid briefings/meetings).

## ACTION 8

A training and development plan is being worked up and will be reported to Members shortly, based in the induction sessions for new Members, refresher sessions for existing Councillors and topic specific training such as Planning, Finance and Conduct.

## Recommendation 9

The Council should develop a systematic and strategic approach to engaging with key partners across Warwickshire and beyond, making use of both Member and officer skills to build profile and influence, and bring back insight and learning to the Council.

## ACTION 9

The Council engages very widely with local partners in local government, health, Police, FE colleges and other sectors.

The Leader is now involved in work within the LGA and District Council Network.

## Recommendation 10, 11 & 12

Create a clear, shared understanding of the process to further develop the business case for the redevelopment and management of NWBC leisure centres, with adequate resources and a longer timescale for delivery.

Within this business case provide greater clarity on the drivers for the project, distinguishing between those relating to asset management, need to reduce subsidy, improve the health of residents; and then ensure a consistency of understanding and focus.

Within the delivery plan create clarity as to how to effectively integrate leisure provision with green and open spaces (including fees and charges), develop the asset management plan, and consider how community capacity building could support leisure and health needs including asset management.

## ACTION 10, 11 & 12

There have been a series of reports to the Council on the business case for the redevelopment of Atherstone and Polesworth Leisure centres.

The relevant committee reports are as follows

- [August 2024](#) (page 26 – 62)
- [November 2024](#) (page 7 - 23)
- April 2025 – confidential report to be shared with the CPC team
- May 2025 – confidential report to be shared with the CPC team
- June 2025 – confidential report to be shared with the CPC team

The meetings in August, November and May were preceded by an invitation to councillors to attend briefing meetings to understand the project in more detail before the communities and Environment Board took their decisions. A visioning workshop was also held with members in February 2025 (refer to the May 2025 report above) this established the wider community needs, drivers and aspiration for the new design and use of a future facility. The decision to proceed with the Option selected, highlights the cost balance between the facility mix and the wider community benefits and health needs.

We have also established a C and E Board Member sounding board to work with officers on some of the detail required in advance of the full meetings.

There is an officer Leisure Board that is driving the project. The Project Sponsor is the Interim Corporate Director (Streetscape) with a series of senior officers and project support for delivery. An interim Project Manager was appointed last summer to supplement this work.

The Leisure board and the Members of the C and E Leisure sounding board, alongside the chair of the Resources committee held a separate Risk Management Workshop with RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP to identify the Council's approach to managing the overall risks, governance and resources for the project – this is attached as an Appendix to the May 2025 report. The risk register is a standing item on the C and E Board agenda, whereby officers advise on any changes to the risks identified. This will be reviewed at regular intervals by the Resources Board too.

Update reports are also presented to Management Team this includes the monitoring of key risks and issues. In addition, all key project decisions/reports/papers are presented to MT.

The Council has appointed external design and build/project management/legal and technical support and is shortly due to start the procurement process for a contractor to build Atherstone Leisure Complex and the appointment of a new Operator to run all of the leisure facilities from Spring 2026. The programmes are included in the reports above.

As part of the business planning process, it was agreed that Atherstone Leisure Complex would be prioritised due to the age of the building and the on-going disruption and closures due to mechanical failures. We believe the revised programme to be pacy but achievable by 2028.

Work is on-going around developing a second business case for the redevelopment of a leisure facility/facilities at Polesworth.

Work is also in hand with regard to future papers around the scheme impacts on staffing, parking, community groups and stakeholders. A full communications plan is being drafted to deal with stakeholder and planning engagement as the project progresses.

We also meet with Sport England to discuss opportunities within the borough.

The Council has an adopted [Green Spaces Strategy](#) and a [Playing pitch Strategy](#) we have recently taken an update report on the [Green Spaces Strategy on the 20 January 2025](#) (pages 51 – 81) which identifies a future vision for green space usage including the hire of land (for a suitable charge) for community events.

We also have a programme of improvements for pavilions and changing rooms with the objective that once complete those facilities, and the associated playing pitches will be subject to community asset transfer and community sports group, [see the June board report](#) (pages 6 – 46).

We have regular meetings with the Football Foundation as part of an investment strategy in 3G pitches across the borough.

We have a rolling annual programme of play area improvements which now includes non-smoking areas/smoke free places in enclosed fenced areas. Through the hire of pitches and green spaces we are also encouraging teams and spectators to be smoke free.

The Council currently commissions Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) to manage four Local Nature Reserves. Each site has a management plan which are reviewed annually, and WWT utilises volunteers to help work on the sites.

Through UK Shared Prosperity Funding and Rural England Prosperity Funding, work has been completed to a number of green spaces to improve accessibility to sites. This includes the installation of k-barriers, inclusive play equipment and improvement to paths.