



Corporate Plan 2023-27



Horiba MIRA Technology Park

2024/25 Revision

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

Introduction

01

2023 was a significant year for North Warwickshire Borough Council, culminating in all out elections for every seat on the Council. That election was the first in which Voter ID was required and resulted in No Overall Control, with 17 Conservatives, 15 Labour and 3 Independent Councillors being returned. A desire amongst Councillors to ensure that the Council continues to operate smoothly is important and the operation of the Council has not been affected.



17

Conservatives



15

Labour



3

Independent

The Council has resolved the key issue of Board Membership and Council leadership at its annual meetings and in the first year of this Plan the Council has largely continued to follow the strategy and actions set out in the Corporate Plan from the previous Council term.

Eighteen months on from the end of COVID 19 protective measures, the Council is very much back to 'business as usual' albeit that a fresh set of challenges need to be addressed. Staff have moved from the temporary working arrangements of 2020 and 2021 with a series of 'Re-engage, Re-energise' workshops being held to help design

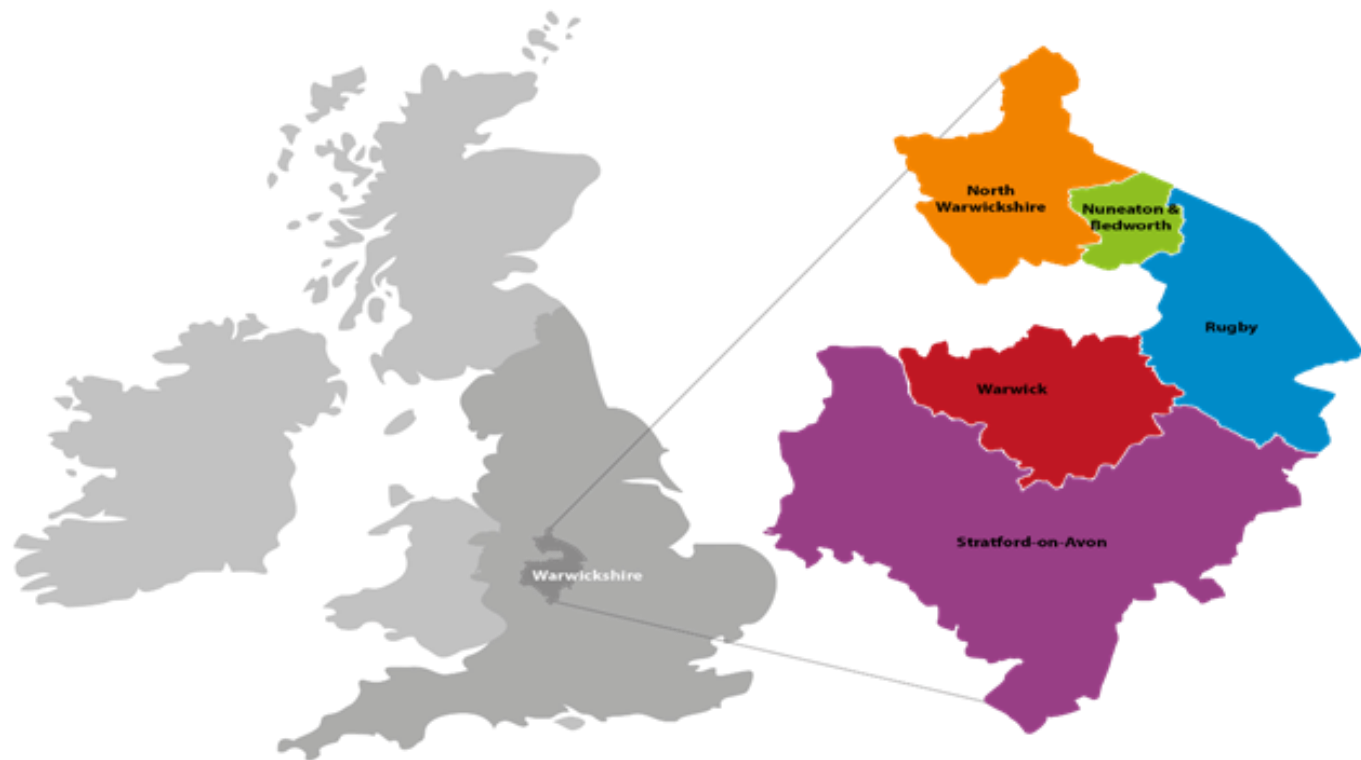
the best working arrangements and refocus efforts on delivering excellent outcomes for residents in line with the Council's adopted priorities.

Staff recruitment and retention continues to be an issue, shared with the rest of the sector (and most of the country), not least this year with regard to senior management. Two of the three members of the Council's Management Team have left and that these moves were planned a long time in advance helps with the risk this poses to the Council. The quality of our interim cover has significantly helped and provides a significant boost in our transformation journey, a key Corporate Plan priority and one which fits well strategically with the 'Re-engage, Re-energise' theme. The wider work on transformation is reported regularly to Members. This also presented an opportunity for the Council to review its staffing structure, using the Local Government Association's (LGA) Decision Making Accountability framework to ensure it has an efficient and effective structure and a new structure was agreed as part of the 2024 budget.



Finances remain extremely tight and uncertain in the medium term, significantly impacted by rising prices generally as experienced across the country in the last year. The Council moved quickly to offer residents all the support it can with the well-established Financial Inclusion Partnership coordinating partnership activity including the first cost of living workshop to be held across the County and the Council has added to its capacity to help residents. Whilst the last two years' financial settlements from the Government have been better than anticipated the Council still faces financial uncertainty however the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy reviewed in the autumn of 2023 established that fresh opportunities exist in the short term particularly as a result of the recent revaluation of Business Rates.





Residents: 65,000
Area: 110 square miles

Bordered by: Birmingham, Coventry, Solihull, Nuneaton, Tamworth, Northwest Leicestershire, Hinckley & Bosworth, Lichfield and South Derbyshire.

Despite these challenges the Council continues to provide excellent services to the public and to deliver on the priorities set by Councillors, as shown in the following very small list of examples:

- Continuing to respond very quickly to fly tipping and prosecute where evidence exists.
- Speedy and effective action on incursions onto public land
- Provide a wide range of increasingly popular leisure facilities despite national uncertainty around changing leisure habits post COVID and rising costs, including the provision of additional health related services.
Work continues on the future provision of leisure services via the Service Improvement Plan, review of facilities and significant work on delivery models.
- Proactive work on housing and employment developments in the Borough. Two of the main housing allocated sites are expected to be considered by the Planning and Development Board this year together with the strategically important Council led extension to the MIRA site. Work on major leisure attractions supported by the Council, the Surf Park and the Eternal Wall, continue.
The Council is ensuring therefore that there is a good range of housing and employment provided in the Borough.
- Significant investment in play areas within communities and support for grassroots sport clubs and facilities
- Progression of the multi partner recycling facility (MRF) providing a commercial opportunity and more secure pathway for recyclates.
Significant housing renovation including the properties in Atherstone which have had a transformative impact in the town.

- Successful bid for UK Shared Prosperity Funding and the commitment of £1.8m to support community facilities and activity and business support.
- Comprehensive response to the risks from some of the protestors at Kingsbury Oil Terminal.
- Adoption of a Corporate Climate Change Strategy and deliver of major 'Green Homes' work in our housing stock.
- Extensive work to support Ukrainians in the Borough with the Council leading the Countywide housing work as well as continuing to support those in housing needs, leading to the lowest use of temporary accommodation in the County.
- Implementation of 'Gov Delivery' to provide targeted communications to residents providing useful help and guidance.
- Introduction of changes to the voting system, particular the requirement for Voter identification
- Maintaining a very high level of customer service with 81% of contacts resolved at first point of contact with an average wait to answer time of 18 seconds and 94% answered in 20 seconds, for the approximately 7000 contacts received each month. The Council has also reviewed its reception arrangements including implementing a Virtual Receptionist.

The start of a new Council term, a review of the staffing structure and review of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy provided a good opportunity to review the priorities and actions and the Council engaged in a consultation exercise in late 2023, early 2024 to understand the main issues of importance to residents. A number of the issues from that survey have been included in the main priorities for this Plan. The Council will also have a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge which will be helpful in ensuring the Council is focused on the delivery of its priorities.

Vision:

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

Values:

The Council has a group of staff at Principal Officer level that have been working with the Chief Executive on a number of cross-cutting issues. That group have suggested a revision to the Council’s staff values:

Thrive - “to grow, develop, be successful.”

T	We will work with a team mindset and work collaboratively to achieve results – whilst demonstrating flexibility, reliability, resilience and a positive attitude.	
H	We will be honest , transparent and act with integrity in all that we do; our employees have pride in their work and are sincere, trustworthy and accountable.	
R	We will respect all by building and maintaining inclusive, caring and collaborative relationships based on trust and mutual respect.	
I	We will show initiative by being resourceful, thinking proactively and we will promote and embrace service improvements.	
V	We will give a voice to our employees and customers; encouraging open communication and feedback which is listened to and considered in order to develop effective solutions.	
E	We will strive to deliver customer service excellence , and be enthusiastic and passionate about achieving the highest quality standards; our employees say “we go the extra mile” and “we care”.	





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 and sustainable organisation:

- Finances
- Lean
- Responsive



Safe, Liveable, Locally Focused communities:

- Feeling safe
- Place-based enforcement
- Quality of life



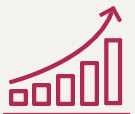
Prosperous, active and healthy:

- Jobs
- Infrastructure
- Connectivity
- Health



Sustainable growth, protected rurality:

- Vibrant growth
- Sense of place
- Recognisably home

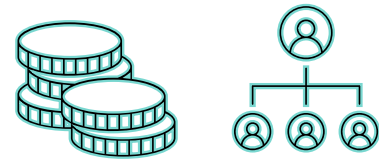


In addition, the Council will continue its work to adopt a meaningful climate change strategy, as well as fully exploring the devolution opportunities available as a result of the Levelling Up agenda, particularly through the 'Trailblazer Devolution Deal' for the West Midlands Combined Authority and a potential County Deal for Warwickshire.

02

Efficient organisation

– financial management,
lean and responsive
organisation



Our Strategic Aims:

We need to be the most **focused 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 can't cover as many areas as before and will continue to **harness the power of the community particularly via the Councillor Community Grant and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund**.

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 are proud of this – it played a vital role in supporting communities through COVID and is one of the reasons for the Council's positive results in the residents' survey. 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:

- Continue to ensure our services are efficient, whilst being as effective as possible for 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.
- Work through the actions in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- Consider new models of working and providing services including proportionate commercial activity.
- Consider the action plan from the Peer Review due in 2024.
- 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.
- Continue the Council's sustainability work looking at the business case for reducing our carbon emissions.
- Review our customer service arrangements and how we communicate with residents (RS)
- Further analysis of the key issues raised in the Residents' Survey.

How we will measure this:

- Balanced budget and savings identified in a revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy. (N)
- A minimum of two major services reviews and reporting on the savings and efficiencies achieved. (PI)
- Review our approach to asset management with an Officer Board, reporting to Members on a coordinated and proactive approach to the use of our assets, linked to service provision and commercial activity. (N)
- 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, in particular with regards to inflationary pressures especially the increased cost of energy. (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 focused 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 **place-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 we will 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. The Council will also work with partners on road safety particular the issue of dangerous junctions. Following the residents' survey, this will include the public's perception of safety after dark.

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

To continue to implement Civil Parking Enforcement in North Warwickshire, including working with the County Council in a review of Traffic Regulation Orders and residents' permit schemes, as part of steps to improve and increase, amongst other things, parking in our town centres, and work with partners on improving HGV parking. In addition, the Council will explore options for further parking provision in Coleshill.

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 fly tipping as quickly as possible, in particular, using the additional funding allocated by the 2024 Budget for street cleaning.

Support for High Streets via the funding provided in the budget and in support of the Town Centre Plans commissioned by UKSPF funding.

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



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

Prosperous, active and healthy

– jobs, infrastructure,
connectivity, health

04



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 active and healthy**.

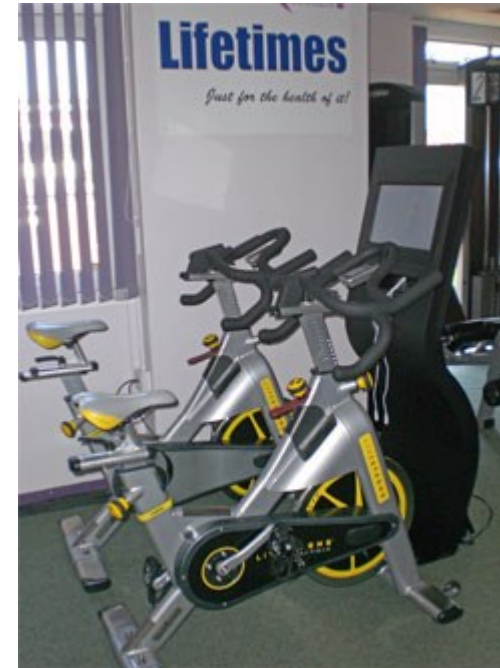
Key to this theme is a **healthy and inclusive economy** with a good supply of jobs, including in emerging 'mega trend' sectors, prioritised in national and regional Industrial Strategies. Ensuring our residents can **acquire the skills** for new and existing jobs is important in this aim. The skills plan to accompany the major new development at MIRA will be an important part of

this as will the ongoing work with HS2 and their contractors.

The Council's work with businesses and funding for skills improvements through the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** will also help with this priority. In addition, the Council has resolved to review its **Local Plan** when the revised guidance and regulations are issued and, in the meantime, to continue to progress the development plan documents in its work programme. That will continue to ensure that the Borough has an appropriate level of development and mix of jobs to ensure the prosperity of the area.

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**. As these plans are long term and take several years to develop, it is important that the Council reviews whether they continue to be fit for purpose. The Government is currently considering revisions to national planning policy and the planning policy evidence base is in the process of being renewed. This is an appropriate point for the Council to review the Local Plan and has resolved to do this once the new national planning policies have been published.

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.

The Government's Levelling Up agenda could be important for this strategic aim, particularly with regard to skills and the local economy.

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. In addition, the Council has a number of ageing leisure and recreation facilities and there is a programme of play area improvements, which will be supplemented by grants from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to improve community facilities in the area. The 2024 budget signalled an ambitious new approach with a commitment to work towards new leisure facilities in Polesworth and Atherstone, as well as a further pump track in Dordon.



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



How we will achieve this:

Consult on the draft Economic Development Strategy linked to the UK and WM Strategies and emerging sub-regional Economic Development Plans as work in this area moves from Local Enterprise Partnerships to local authorities, including identifying projects to be supported from Government funding.

Implement measures funded by the Business Support element of the North Warwickshire UK Shared Prosperity Fund to provide support to business in the Borough.

Continue to progress the actions in the Local Development Scheme and prepare for a review of the Local Plan.

Progress the business case for replacement Leisure facilities at Polesworth and Atherstone.

Implement a second pump track at Dordon.

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 continue to work with partners, particular across the County, to ensure meaningful Levelling Up measures are taken to improve the quality of life in the Borough. This includes continuing the current pilot based on the Mancetter South and Ridge Lane super output area and the formation of a Levelling Up Board, as the successor to the Community Partnership to ensure Levelling Up principles are embedded in all partners' work in the Borough.



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.

Work with partners in Warwickshire and the West Midlands on further devolution deals and ensure issues of interest to North Warwickshire are included.

Continue to work with partners on digital connectivity, including through the Digital Infrastructure Board and, in particular, on the West Midlands Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator.

How we will we 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)
- Progress reports on the Local Development Scheme. (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)
- Report to Members progress on devolution deals. (N)
- Report to Members on the feasibility of new leisure facilities at Polesworth and Atherstone. (N)
- Continue to progress the Levelling Up pilot in Mancetter South and Ridge Lane. (N)
- Establish a 'Levelling Up Board' as the successor to the Community Partnership.
- Report progress on the UKSPF fund to the Member Panel. (N & PI)

N – Narrative / PI – Performance Indicator



Sustainable growth, protected rurality

– vibrant growth, sense of place, recognisably home

05



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.



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



How we will 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. A key part of this is to review Plans at the right time and the Council has committed to starting a review once national planning policy revisions are published. A number of key parts of the preparatory work for this review can commence now.

We will continue to work with regional partners to ensure our Plan fits into the wider regional context and that we are 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. The Council will hold a further round of its Civic Awards scheme.

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. In addition, the Council will progress the business case for a new leisure facility in Polesworth and Atherstone. The Council will review the Green Space Strategy including measures to help with climate change and with the revised Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. The Council will also

continue to review the business case for providing leisure services through a wholly owned trading company given recent external changes in the leisure industry.

To implement our Homeless Strategy, work on private housing and our action plan to meet the new Consumer Standards. In addition, the Council will assess the business case for creating a wholly owned housing company to assist with the provision of housing that will be delivered, particularly on Local Plan allocated sites, in particular whether new approaches can be taken regarding the provision of a wider range of affordable 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 including action to meet the new Consumer Standards. (N)

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



North Warwickshire Borough Council



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