

<b>Service Area Plan Year:</b>	1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026
<b>Service Area :</b>	Finance
<b>Service Area Manager:</b>	Andrew Rollins
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Cllr Jonathan Chilvers (Resources)

**Sections:**

<b>Links to Warwick 2030 Strategy</b>
<b>Main Aspects of Workloads and Major Workstreams</b>
<b>Performance</b>
<b>Risk Management</b>

Theme and Strategic Goals		Direct	Indirect
<b>Delivering Valued, Sustainable Services</b>			
1.1 Ensure sustainability is at the heart of our decision making	1.1.1 We will develop climate and sustainability impact tool to help inform, shape and improve our decision making. 1.2.1 Our medium-term financial strategy will set out the steps we will take to ensure we continue to be financially sustainable and can continue to invest across the district – this will include making better use of existing resources and consider how we can increase income generating opportunities. 1.2.2 Our change programme will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how the Council delivers services to ensure they remain responsive and accessible to customer needs.		
1.2 Continue to ensure the Council's finances remain on a firm and sustainable footing	1.3.1 By reviewing how Council services are delivered and measuring performance will help ensure high quality services are being delivered across the Council. 1.3.2 The Digital and Customer Strategy and Change Management Programme will make it easier for customers to contact the Council 24/7, 365 days a year and enable our customer service team to help more customers at the first point of contact through different communication channels. 1.3.3 We will measure our performance and develop how we use data, benchmarking and customer insight to ensure we continuously learn and improve how we deliver services 1.3.4 We will further develop our approach to commissioning and contract management across the Council to continue to ensure residents receive the best service possible and value for the taxpayer. 1.3.5 Ensure Council homes are safe and meet the Decent Homes standard for all our tenants including improving the energy efficiency of their homes and meeting all new social housing regulatory requirements.		
1.3 Achieve and demonstrate delivery of high quality services	Our People Strategy will help to attract the right people with the right skills the Council needs and are recognised locally, regionally and nationally as an employer of choice. 1.5.1 A new Asset Strategy and Management Plan will set out how we will best use our assets to drive sustainability, enable regeneration, and commercial value to contribute to our long-term financial position and place shaping ambitions. 1.5.2 We will continue to develop our approach for maximising social value through our place shaping initiatives and investments, to recycle the Warwick District Pound		
1.4 We want to attract and retain the best talent to deliver our ambitions			
1.5 Ensure the best use of the council's assets and resources to deliver the council wider corporate aims and support the circular economy			
<b>Low cost, low carbon energy across the District</b>			
2.1 Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions from the council's public buildings	2.1.1 Significantly improve the energy efficiency of Council buildings and introduce renewable energy generation capacity where possible. 2.1.2 Assess the creation of an investment fund for energy conservation and energy generation projects.		
2.2 Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions from existing Council Housing Stock	2.2.1 Develop a Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency Strategy, for existing Council homes to reach a minimum of EPC C by 2030. Aim to go further to reduce carbon emissions and energy bills for Council tenants by exploring how we can maximise the impact and prioritisation of our maintenance programme and any external funding opportunities. This will include developing the toolkit to measure and assess impact.		
2.3 Provide homes which are safe and meet the decent homes standard for all our tenant including improving energy efficiency of their homes.	2.3.1 Working with tenants and using sector best practice to ensure that our homes are safe, energy efficient, free from damp and mould and, as a minimum, meet decent home standards.		
2.4 Ensure new housing developments led by the Council are exemplars of planning and construction to meet the climate emergency and other challenges	2.4.1 New Council homes are net zero carbon in operation. To support this, we will set out our aspirations relating to carbon performance and for WDC-led developments recognising that there may be times when these aspirations cannot be fully achieved in light of viability.		
2.5 Explore multiple, innovative approaches to make it easier for others in the district	2.5.1 By working in partnership locally, regionally and nationally, we will identify, evaluate and undertake initiatives to help local people reduce their energy needs		
<b>Creating Vibrant, Safe and Healthy Communities of the Future</b>			
3.1 Support all our communities, rural and urban to be economically ready for the future, with the right infrastructure and protect community identity with a focus on people and the environment	3.1.1 Enhance our town centres by working with businesses in place making initiatives, events and active travel to support the daytime and nighttime economy. This will include taking forward the future high street fund and the progression of the creative quarter. 3.1.2 Any opportunities for an investment zone will focus on the transition to a green economy, protect against unsuitable development and deliver for biodiversity, sustainable transport, and job creation. 3.1.3 Promote the district as a location for advanced manufacturing, "green" industries, creative games and hi-tech based companies, building on our national reputation. Work with educational establishments to inspire people to learn new skills, help local people access jobs and opportunities. 3.1.4 Increase the volume of high quality, low carbon, affordable and social housing including increasing the Council's and Milverton Homes' home building activity. This will help meet demand for housing and help tackle rough sleeping and homelessness.		
3.2 Promote vibrant communities, a welcoming atmosphere and good mental and physical health and wellbeing within all our towns and villages.	3.2.1 Support our creative community, including local artists, dancers, actors, musicians and history and heritage organisations through a revised Creative Framework and a programme of support through UKSPF projects. 3.2.2 Build on our reputation as a home for national and international sporting events. 3.2.3 Encourage everyone to have a more active lifestyle via use of our leisure centres, parks and open spaces, other sports facilities, and the provision of other outreach activities. 3.2.4 Review, update and continue to take forward initiatives in the Climate Emergency Action Programme and evaluate their impact 3.2.5 Using our joint WDC/SDC new Local Plan to: • prioritise housing development on brownfield sites. • minimize use of greenfield sites where possible. • promote new developments using 20-minute neighbourhood/settlement designs. • ensuring convenient access to services and shop. • protect existing community identities. • ensure the provision of appropriate infrastructure is available to support new and existing development. 3.2.6 In partnership with Warwickshire County Council, promote and implement active travel choices as a priority – public transport, walking and cycling. 3.2.7 Adopt a Net Zero Carbon DPD and provide supplementary guidance, training and support to ensure that new homes and other buildings in the district are net zero carbon.		
3.3 Enhance the Biodiversity of the District	3.3.1 Increase the level of biodiversity on Council owned land and create a network of accessible linked biodiversity rich spaces. 3.3.2 Encourage residents, communities and businesses to enhance the biodiversity of the district using the planning system, the Biodiversity Net Gain legislation and other opportunities 3.4.1 Reduce health inequalities within the district and develop a series of health and community wellbeing hubs.		
3.4 To champion new and innovative ways of working together to improve health and wellbeing and tackle inequalities – focussing on prevention and building resilience in communities	3.4.2 Develop and implement an asset based community development strategy where the Council and partners will work with communities to build capacity to help address their own health, safety and wellbeing needs, especially those with a more deprived socioeconomic or isolated backgrounds. 3.4.3 Working with partners to deliver community safety interventions to address ASB and fear of crime.		

Service Overview

Key to : Actual Workload to date 25/26 (updated half yearly)	
	Significant issues or delays in service delivery that require immediate attention
	Potential issues or delays in service delivery that require corrective actions
	Service being delivered as expected
	Completed
	Not Started

	Service Being Delivered	Main aspects of service delivery	Estimated Expected Workload	Notes	Actual Workload to date 25/26 (updated half yearly)	Percentage of estimated workload experienced 25/26	
Accountancy	Accountancy	Budget / Council Tax Setting		Ensure council tax and budget setting complies with legislation, meets Council priorities and is within available resources.			
		Budget Review		To monitor income and expenditure on an on-going basis and assess implications for medium term financial strategy, reporting regularly to SLT and members.			
		Final Accounts		Ensure annual accounts closed down correctly and promptly. Production of Annual Statement of Accounts within statutory deadlines. Liaison with external auditors.			
		Fees and Charges		Ensure fees and charges are set through liaison with service areas and reported to members			
		Financial Advice		Advise officers and members of the financial implications of proposed actions and decisions and provide appropriate challenge.			
		Financial Planning		Forecast the Council's income and expenditure for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and HRA Business Plan.			
		Parish / town council support		Arrange payments to parish/town council in respect of precepts.			
	Treasury Management	Investments		Manage the Council's investments to minimise risk whilst securing the optimum return.			
		Cashflow		Manage the Council's banking, cashflow and borrowing requirements.			
		Capital		Funding the Council's Capital Programme.			
		Rural and Urban Capital Initiatives Scheme		Manage the Council's RUCI scheme, making recommendations to Executive on grant awards, payment and monitoring of awards agreed.			
	Audit, Risk & insurance	Audit, Risk & Insurance	Internal Audit		Provision of comprehensive internal audit service for management in line with the Internal Audit Strategic Plan.		
			Risk Management		Promote and advise on good risk management across the authority.		
Insurances				Ensure that the Council is appropriately insured in the provision of its services and manage any resulting claims.			
Investigations				Undertake ad-hoc internal investigations on behalf of management.			
Fraud Investigation				Undertake investigations into fraud against the council in respect of services such as council tax, business rates, house lettings. Promotion of fraud awareness.			
Revenues	Revenues	Collection of Council Tax		Maintenance of council tax records, award of reliefs, calculation of tax due, billing and recovery thereof.			
		Collection of Business Rates		Maintenance of business rates records, award of reliefs, calculation of rates due, billing and recovery thereof.			
		Recovery of CT, BR and benefit overpayments		Take appropriate action to recover sums due to the Council, including use of magistrates courts.			

Procurement	Procurement Team	Lead / Manage corporate procurement		Review and develop the Council's approach to procurement, management of the Council's Procurement Strategy and completion of the Procurement Action Plan.		
		Maintain contracts register		Work with officers across the Council to ensure that the Council's contract register is correct, is duly published, and contracts within the register are appropriately managed.		
		Lead / advise on procurement and tenders		Advise and assist officers in the procurement of goods and services in line with the Council's Code of Procurement Practice and UK Regulations.		
		Lead / advise on Corporate purchasing and spend		Manage, maintain and improve the purchasing and contracts functionality of the Finance Management Solution.		
		Lead / advise on Contract Management		Advise and assist officers on good contract management practices in line with the Council's Code of Procurement Practice and UK Regulations.		
Financial Services Team		Payment of suppliers		Arrange payment to suppliers for goods ordered.		
		Recovery of sundry debts		Raise sundry debt accounts for sums due to the Council, and recovery thereof.		
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Service Management	Budget	Regular budget monitoring				
		Delivering services within budget				
	Procurement	Attendance of key officers at in-house Ongoing training		Ongoing training of officers and those participating in procurement		
		Regular meetings with procurement officers				
		Procurement project meetings for major projects including - Back office system procurement.				
		<b>Planned Procurement exercises in year:</b>		Scheduled procurement exercises and review of long term service level agreements.		
		Electronic payment system				
		Revenues & Benefits system				
		<b>Service level Agreements</b>				
		AMS T1 Support				
	Bristol & Sutor - Enforcement agent					
	Oxford City Council					
	Contract Management	No. Contracts due for renewal during the year (as identified above)		Ongoing training		
		Training in relation to contract monitoring				
		Quarterly update of the contract register				
	Audits	<b>External Audit programme 2022/23</b>				
		Statement of Accounts 2021/22, including VFM				
		Statement of Accounts 2022/23, including VFM				
		Housing Benefits				
		<b>Internal audit programme 2023/2024</b>				
		Financial Strategy, Planning and Budgetary Control				
		Main Accounting System				
		Treasury Management				
Sundry Debtors						
Payment of creditors						
Risk Register	Regular review at departmental management meetings					
	Annual review					
	Quarterly PH review					
	Peer Review at SMT, by Risk Manager and Insurance Officer					
	Implementation of mitigation and control					
Service Assurance	Actions arising out of Annual SA document include: -					
	Monitoring of customer measures					
	Refresher training in procurement and finance procedures, where appropriate					
	Update of Business Continuity Plan					
	Completion of the statutory returns.					
Corporate Health and Safety	Ongoing reviews of risk assessment (Covid and standard)					
Workforce Planning and Development	Establishment					
	Vacancies					
	Recruitment to vacant posts.					
	Continuing development of post holders					
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		Monitoring				
		Assurance		S151 Shareholder Rep for MHL. Quarterly meetings for		



Managing Planned Changes, Major Work streams, Projects and Budget Pressures

<b>Key to : On track? RAG</b>	
	Significant issues or delays that require immediate attention
	Potential issues or delays that require corrective actions
	On track, no immediate issues or risks
	Completed
	Not Started

Change/Project	Sponsor/Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Planned End Date	On track? RAG	Comments
<b>Budget Pressures</b>							
<b>Following Corporate Decisions</b>	Head of Finance - Andrew Rollins	TBC	Unknown	Qtrly Budget Reviews	Feb-24	Green	Presenting a balanced budget and ongoing sustainable position through the Medium Term Financial Strategy will require delivery of existing budgetary proposals, delivery within already agreed budgets and for further schemes to be developed.
<b>Change Management programme</b>	Head of Finance - Andrew Rollins	TBC	All services contribute to the change process and will need to outline areas for	Qtrly Budget Reviews	Feb-24	Amber	
<b>New Financial Management System - Phase 2</b>	Principal Accountant (Systems) - Tony Sidhu	£30k support contract agreed in place currently for 23/24	Delivery of phase will focus on tailored reporting and refining information to better support service management and delivery.		Jun-24	Green	
<b>Production of audited 2024/25 Accounts, including VFM</b>	Strategic Finance Manager - Steven Leathley	Additional budget required due to additional work required. Report in Q1 and Q2 budget reports 23/24	All services contribute to the closure process and need to adhere to internally set deadlines to ensure delivery to statutory deadlines	Draft Accounts Published 30 June Audited Accounts signed and published Feb	Feb-26	Amber	A timeline will be agreed with our External Auditors, Azets, in Feb-March 25
<b>Transforming Public Procurement</b>	Strategic Procurement and Creditors Manager - Rebecca Reading	TBC	All services contribute to effective procurement	Monthly procurement board meeting	Oct-24	Green	New procurement bill redefined the procurement principles and objectives for the UK as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering value for money</li> <li>• Maximising public benefit</li> <li>• Sharing info to allow suppliers and others to understand the Authority's procurement policies and decisions</li> <li>• Acting and being seen to act with integrity</li> </ul>
<b>WMIZ LGI's</b>	Head of Finance - Andrew Rollins	Capital schemes funded through IZ generated business rates rather than internal funding	Delivery of capital schemes supporting wider strategic priorities of Council	Quarterly Meetings	Mar-26	Amber	Need to agree LGI's with WMCA by 31 March 26



Performance Measures

Ref	Type	Corporate Plan Links	Corporate Plan Measure	Measure	Target	Higher or lower is better?	Progress	Comments	Current Status	Lead Officer	Reporting Month
F1	Measure	Maintain or Improve services	No	Prompt payment of invoices within 30 day payment terms	95%	Higher	0%	0		Rebecca Reading	April-25
F2	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	Yes	Completion of 24/25 Statement of Accounts	N/A	Higher	0	0		Andrew Rollins	Q1 Apr - Jun
F3	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	Yes	Financial Forecasts / Revenue performance within agreed tolerance	2%	Higher	0%	0		Steven Leathley	April-25
F4	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Efficient and timely council tax processing (Age of oldest item) - Days	30	Lower	0	0		Paul Town	Q1 Apr - Jun
F5	Measure	Maintain or Improve services	No	Number of Council Tax correspondence awaiting processing	0	Lower	0	0		Paul Town	As Heading
F6	Measure	Maintain or Improve services	No	Efficient and timely NNDR processing (Age of oldest item) - Days	30	Lower	0	0		Paul Town	As Heading
F7	Measure	Maintain or Improve services	No	Number of legal challenges (formal and informal)	0	Lower	0	0		Rebecca Reading	As Heading
F8	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Percentage of locally supplied contracts (Warwickshire)	10%	Higher	0%	0		Rebecca Reading	Q1 Apr - Jun
F9	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Sundry Debt balance outstanding over 90 days (excl BID)	£140,000	Higher	0%	0		Rebecca Reading	As Heading
			No	Number of transactions - orders, creditor invoices, Supplier Credit Notes, sundry debtor Credit notes & invoices AND Write Offs (This excludes Non-order transactions and receipting/income cash transactions, Direct Debit, rejections etc)	500	Higher	0	0			
F10	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Value cashable and non-cashable fraud savings detected	N/A	Lower	0	0		Rebecca Reading	As Heading
F11	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Council tax collection rate	24.6%	Higher	0%	0		Ian Davy	Q1 Apr - Jun
F12	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	NNDR collection rate	24.0%	Higher	0%	0		Paul Town	Q1 Apr - Jun
F13	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Business Rate Growth (Rateable value)		Higher	0	0		Paul Town	Q1 Apr - Jun
F14	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Completion of Internal Audit Plan (% variation to profiled plan)		Higher	0	0		Paul Town	As Heading
F15	Measure	Maintain or Improve services	Yes	Number of outstanding appeals (Business Rates)		Higher	0	0		Ian Davy	Q1 Apr - Jun
F16	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Percentage of SME contracts	50%	Higher	0%	0		Paul Town	Q1 Apr - Jun
F17	Measure	Maintain or Improve services	No	Number of missing contracts (contracts that are not signed by both parties and saved on file)	5	Higher	0	0		Rebecca Reading	Q1 Apr - Jun
F18	Measure	Maintain or Improve services	No	Percentage of Procurement Projects submitting PPTD on time (as per CoPP)	80%	Higher	0%	0		Rebecca Reading	April-25
F19	Measure	Maintain or Improve services	No	Efficient and timely council tax processing - average processing time	15	Lower	0	0		Rebecca Reading	Q1 Apr - Jun
F20	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Efficient and timely NNDR processing - Average processing time	15	Lower	0	0		Paul Town	As Heading
F21	Measure	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No			Lower	0	0		Paul Town	As Heading