

A meeting of the Executive will be held remotely on Thursday 1 October 2020, at 6.00pm and available for the public to watch via the Warwick District Council [YouTube channel](#).

Councillor A Day (Chairman)

Councillor J Cooke

Councillor J Falp

Councillor M-A Grainger

Councillor R Hales

Councillor J Matecki

Councillor A Rhead

Also attending (but not members of the Executive):

Chair of the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee

Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Green Group Observer

Liberal Democrat Group Observer

Labour Group Observer

Councillor J Nicholls

Councillor A Milton

Councillor I Davison

Councillor A Boad

Councillor M Mangat

Agenda

1. Declarations of Interest

Members to declare the existence and nature of interests in items on the agenda in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct.

Declarations should be disclosed during this item. However, the existence and nature of any interest that subsequently becomes apparent during the course of the meeting must be disclosed immediately. If the interest is not registered, Members must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

Members are also reminded of the need to declare predetermination on any matter.

If Members are unsure about whether or not they have an interest, or about its nature, they are strongly advised to seek advice from officers prior to the meeting.

2. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2020

(To follow)

Part 2

(Items upon which a decision by Council is not required)

3. Risk Management Annual Report 2019/20 and Strategy

To consider a report from Finance

(Pages 1 to 14)

4. Joint Local Plan Review

To consider a report from the Development Services **(Pages 1 to 21)**

5. Trees for our Future – Project Framework and Start-up

To consider a report from Neighbourhood Services **(Pages 1 to 11)**

6. Use of Delegated Powers – One Off Budget to Procure Independent Support for a Citizens Assembly

To consider a report from the Programme Director for Climate Change **(Pages 1 to 4)**

7. Land off Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ

To consider a report from Assets **(Pages 1 to 5)**

8. Progress Report on Joint Work with Stratford District Council

To consider a report from the Chief Executive **(Pages 1 to 18)**

9. Public and Press

To consider resolving that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Item Numbers	Paragraph Numbers	Reason
10, 11	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Part 2

(Items upon which a decision by Council is not required)

10. Confidential Appendix 1 to Item 7

To consider a confidential Appendix from Assets **(Pages 1 to 2)**

11. Minutes

To confirm the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2020 **(To follow)**
(Not for publication)

Published Monday 21 September 2020

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For enquiries about specific reports, please contact the officers named in the reports You can e-mail the members of the Executive at executive@warwickdc.gov.uk

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Executive

Minutes of the meeting held remotely on Monday 24 August 2020, which was broadcast live via the Council's YouTube Channel.

Present: Councillors Day (Leader), Cooke, Falp, Grainger, Hales, and Rhead.

Also present: Councillors: Boad (Liberal Democrat Group Observer), Davison (Green Group Observer), Mangat (Labour Group Observer) Milton (Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee) and Nicholls (Chair of Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matecki.

23. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

24. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held 13 July and 30 July 2020 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Part 1

(Items upon which a decision by Council was required)

25. **Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Enforcement Process – Private Sector Housing**

The Executive considered a report from Housing bringing forward an enforcement process to enable officers to apply penalties for breaches of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) regulations.

These regulations were the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015, as amended (most recently by the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2019).

The regulations set out that from 1 April 2020, the minimum level of energy efficiency for all private rented domestic property in England and Wales was an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of band E. Therefore, from that date, landlords of properties with EPC ratings of F or G would no longer be able to legally let them, subject to certain exceptions that were set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

Although the powers were within the regulations, for officers to be able to use them, the Council needed to formally adopt a process to do so. The Council also had the discretion to set a schedule of penalties for the various offences.

The regulations allowed the Council to determine any level of financial penalty, for each offence, up to the maximum amounts set out in recommendation 2.2 in the report.

The proposed approach of using the maximum penalties for the various offences was arrived at following consultation with colleagues in the West Midlands. The intention was to be as consistent as possible across the region, in terms of both the level of the penalties and the process for applying them.

So that the policy could be applied quickly and efficiently, once adopted, it was proposed that the Head of Housing Services should be granted the authority to decide on the serving of compliance notices and imposing penalties.

In terms of alternative options, not adopting this process would limit the Council's options in its role as a regulator of private sector housing. It could also affect community confidence in the Council's ability and ambition to deal with poor management and to raise housing and energy efficiency standards.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report and agreed it would monitor their implementation. In agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services, the Committee agreed that its Chair and the Portfolio Holder would liaise with Democratic Services to review whether ongoing reporting could be done using a dashboard within the Business Intelligence Portal.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to add a review of the process to its Work Programme after it had been operational for a minimum of 12 months.

Councillor Rhead proposed the report as laid out.

Recommended to Council that

- (1) the penalties of the Warwick District Council's MEE's scheme be as follows:
 - i. £2,000 for renting out a non-compliant property for less than 3 months;
 - ii. £4,000 and a publication penalty for renting out a non-compliant property for 3 months or more;
 - iii. £1,000 and a publication penalty for providing false or misleading information on the PRS Exemptions Register; and
 - iv. £2,000 and a publication penalty for failure to comply with a compliance notice;
- (2) the Constitution be updated to reflect the changes to the Head of Housing Services delegations as below;

Resolved that

- (1) subject to Council on 2 September agreeing the proposed penalties above, Appendix 1 to the report for the enforcement of the MEES regulations be adopted, to come into force from 3 September 2020; and
- (2) authority be delegated to the Head of Housing Services to enforce the MEES regulations as set out within the approved penalties process.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Matecki)

Forward Plan Reference 1,124

Part 2

(Items upon which a decision by Council was not required)

26. Minor Amendment to the Canal Conservation Area

The Executive considered a report from Development Services seeking authority from the Executive to remove a property, known as Clinton House, and its curtilage from the Canal Conservation Area (the CCA).

Following the adoption of the Canal Conservation Area in January 2019, a resident alleged that their property was included within the designated area, without having the opportunity to make representations.

The boundary map that formed the basis of the consultation exercise, which ran over a seven-week period between July-September 2018, did not include Clinton House. The owner of Clinton House indicated that had this property been shown as within the Conservation Area on the consultation map, then he would have responded to the 2018 consultation objecting to its inclusion.

The character area referred to as *Length 1: Rowington* in the Canal Conservation Area appraisal, which included the land subject to this recommendation, made no reference to the particular reasons for the property's inclusion.

The owner of Clinton House submitted a report providing evidence that the property and its curtilage was not of sufficient architectural or historic interest to warrant inclusion in the Canal Conservation Area. The Council's Principal Conservation Officer agreed with its findings.

The property in question dated from the 1920s and was considered to be of little architectural and historic interest to warrant inclusion in the Conservation Area. The property did not feature within medium to longer range views associated with the canal and there was no evidence to suggest any historical or functional relationship between the site and the canal. Architecturally, the Edwardian house was relatively unremarkable and was an example of common domestic architecture that was not linked with the canal's architectural interest or historical development.

There was a requirement under paragraph 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework that when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justified such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation was not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

The Council ran a consultation process proposing to remove this area of land from the designated Canal Conservation Area. No comments were received during the process.

On adoption, the duties of formal designation required an advertisement in a local paper and the London Gazette, together with a letter to the property owner affected within the boundary, as this was a land charge, and notification to the Secretary of State.

An alternative option would be to retain the property within the Canal Conservation Area. This would present the potential risk of a legal challenge as highlighted above.

Councillor Cooke proposed the report as laid out.

Resolved that the minor amendment to the Canal Conservation Area, as defined in Appendix 1 to the report as shown on the boundary map, be agreed.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Cooke)

Forward Plan Reference 1,125

27. **Article 4(1) Direction for Sherbourne Conservation Area**

The Executive considered a report from Development Services seeking approval from the Executive to make an immediate Direction under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, resulting in the removal of certain permitted development rights, outlined in Appendix D to the report, in the Sherbourne Conservation Area, and to undertake the related public consultation. A further report would be submitted within six months of the service of the Notice recording public consultation and recommending confirmation or otherwise of the Direction.

It was a requirement under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that local planning authorities determined which parts of their area were areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it was desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate these areas as Conservation Areas. This resulted in additional planning controls and considerations to protect the historic and architectural elements which made the place special. Local Planning Authorities also had a duty under Section 72 of the same Act, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area when exercising planning functions.

Single dwellings within Conservation Areas did nonetheless have certain permitted development rights, meaning that no planning permission was required to undertake a range of works, including replacing windows, removing and replacing roofing materials, installing panels on roofs (such as solar panels) and removing or replacing boundary walls. The cumulative impact of these small alterations could result in the gradual erosion of the appearance and character of the District's Conservation Areas.

The Council had been made aware that certain changes which were benefitting from permitted development rights, such as use of modern materials when replacing historic windows and removal of original boundary walls to facilitate parking, had taken place in Sherbourne Conservation Area. The Direction sought to prevent further changes that detracted from the Area's special characteristics.

The making of Article 4(1) Direction was a mechanism available to Local Planning Authorities, which offered a level of protection to prevent such alterations that could detrimentally change the character of the Conservation Area.

The Direction was made immediately for a temporary period of up to six months and further consideration was given to making it permanent after consultation with residents affected.

The Notice under Article 4(1), together with an explanatory letter and information sheet, was served upon the owners of single dwellings in the streets listed in Appendix A to the report. Upon receipt of the Notice, permitted development rights were removed for six months and any works listed in the schedule accompanying the Notice during that period required planning permission.

The recipients of the Notice were invited to make comments on the possibility of the Notice becoming permanent or not. During the six-month period, it would therefore necessary to bring back a report to the Executive with the findings of the consultation and a recommendation or otherwise of the confirmation of the Notice. If the Notice was not confirmed within six months, then it would expire and a temporary need for planning permission for the items listed in the schedule would also expire.

An alternative option was to not serve the Notice. This however, meant that the Conservation Area only benefitted from limited protection and therefore a gradual erosion of the character of the Conservation Area could continue.

Another option was to consider a non-immediate Direction; however, this posed the risk that work may have been implemented during this period prior to making the Direction.

A further option was to consider a blanket Article 4 Direction across the whole of Sherbourne Conservation Area. This could, however, result in an unnecessary level of planning control to properties that did not necessarily contribute positively towards the appearance and character of the Conservation Area.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the recommendations. In discussion it welcomed officers' proposals to check and update guidance on the Council's website but expressed concerns that changes to the regulations should not impede people from fitting equipment into their property, in line with the Council's Climate Emergency ambitions.

Councillor Cooke proposed the report as laid out.

Resolved that

- (1) the immediate making of a Direction under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 to remove the permitted development rights outlined in Appendix D to the report, and serve Notices upon all owners and occupiers of such properties with an explanatory letter and the undertaking of the associated consultation and publicity, be authorised; and
- (2) a report with the findings of the consultation and recommendations for the confirmation or otherwise of the Article 4 Direction (which must be confirmed or otherwise within six months from the period of the service of the Notice), be presented to the Executive.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Cooke)
Reference number 1,127

28. The Outcome of a Local Government Ombudsman (LGO - Investigation into the Consideration of a Planning Application

The Executive considered a report from Development Services that summarised the recent outcome of an investigation by the LGO and set out the actions that were taken in response to that.

In their final report dated 15 June 2020, the Ombudsman found fault causing injustice in respect of the consideration of a planning application for a residential development in Barford.

The decision on that application was made on 14 September 2017 following consideration by Planning Committee and the subsequent completion of a legal agreement.

In summary, the Ombudsman found that:

- i. The decision was made without sufficient information about how the development would impact upon protected species. This was because the application was determined prior to the undertaking of any protected species survey work and therefore before there was sufficient baseline data on the impact on such species contrary to national guidance;

- ii. The Committee report was insufficiently detailed in the way that the law and guidance on protected species and the response of the County Council's Ecology team was summarised;
- iii. In presenting the application to Planning Committee, no reference was made to the Council's differing view of the ecological advice received from the County Council;
- iv. Those omissions therefore had the potential to mislead Planning Committee and resulted in a significant material planning matter not being properly considered;
- v. Whilst detailed protected species survey work was undertaken following the grant of planning permission, site clearance work had begun by then and it was therefore not possible to know the extent of any impact from the outset or consider possible alternative means of ameliorating any such impact;
- vi. Whilst the Council intended to require the developer to provide compensation and/or offsetting for biodiversity loss arising from the development through a legal agreement, in error this did not happen and there had therefore been harm to the environment as a result; and
- vii. Contrary to the complainant's assertion, the Council had not failed to properly protect their privacy.

As a result of those findings, the Ombudsman recommended that within three months of the date of the report, the Council had to take the following actions:

- i. Apologise to the complainant for failing to properly protect the environment;
- ii. Provide details (to the ombudsman) of a review of its procedures for the undertaking of legal (Section 106) agreements;
- iii. Remind Officers and Members involved in planning matters:
 - That planning decisions should not have been made until they have all of the information necessary to make their decisions;
 - That reports should include sufficient details about significant material planning considerations, so that it was clear from council records that decision-makers were properly informed, and decisions properly made;
 - That when planning officers disagreed with the recommendations and advice of statutory consultees or others with relevant expertise, that they would ensure there was a record of their reasons for disagreement on the planning file and in their report; and;
 - Of the details of its revised section 106 procedures to ensure that decisions and intentions were carried through into decisions and planning obligations.

- iv. Pay £1,000 to the Warwickshire Bat Group to enhance or promote the environment for bats; and
- v. In consultation with the ecology service, provide 8-10 suitable hibernation boxes for bats on land it controlled.

From the outset of the receipt of the complaint into the above matters, which were investigated internally first prior to being considered by the Ombudsman, officers had acknowledged the error in respect of the omission of an ecological offsetting requirement from the legal agreement in this case.

Revised procedural measures were in place to ensure that no such requirements were omitted again in error moving forward.

Officers responded in detail to the Ombudsman during the course of the investigation and commented at length on the issues that had been raised.

Prior to the publication of the outcome of the investigation, the Ombudsman's findings and recommendations were accepted and were progressed with the intention that they would all be completed and reported to the Ombudsman within three months of the decision on the complaint.

In that respect, Members were requested to note that the headline matters identified in bullet point iii. of the list of recommendations were never in dispute, and that the learning points identified by the Ombudsman in this case were matters of interpretation and detail rather than principle.

With regard to the undertaking of the ecological survey work which formed one of the Ombudsman's main criticisms of the Council, Members were also requested to note that in this particular case, officers made a judgement as to the appropriateness of the timing of that work with which the Ombudsman had disagreed.

The drafting of the committee report and the manner in which the application was presented to Planning Committee were, of course, undertaken with the intention of ensuring that the Committee had all of the information that they needed to make a decision in respect of which the Ombudsman had made recommendations.

However, it was essential that in striving to continually improve and fine tune its procedures, the Council was open to criticism and feedback in cases such as this and in that respect, the Ombudsman's findings were welcomed and as indicated above, taken on board and actioned within the timescales indicated.

Finally, the LGO report was shared with the Internal Audit team in order that they could monitor progress in completing the recommendations included therein.

As indicated above, as part of continual service improvement, it was important to reflect on feedback such as this and therefore it would not be appropriate to consider the alternative option of not doing so.

Councillor Cooke proposed the report as laid out, emphasising that lessons had been learnt from this experience.

Resolved that

- (1) the report and the recommendations of the LGO report (included at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and
- (2) the actions being taken as set out at paragraph 3.4 of the report; be endorsed.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Cooke)

Part 1

(Items upon which a decision by Council was required)

29. Park Exercise Permits

At the beginning of this item, the Leader informed Members that, following advice from officers, this report was, in fact, a Part 1 item, due to the fees and charges proposals in recommendation 2.2.

The Executive considered a report from Cultural Services. In 2018, the Council implemented its first test process for the use of parks, to help monitor the use of parks and open spaces. This was intended to be used to monitor the usage of parks and open spaces by organisations and individuals such as fitness groups and personal trainers. The report sought approval for a formal policy to replace the informal process which was currently in place. By introducing fees and charges within the new policy, the Council would have a more effective monitoring system, as well as being able to generate some limited income.

The policy was recommended because it would encourage more park users to enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle and use the Council's parks and open spaces to do so.

Rangers would check on exercise groups in the parks, and groups would be asked to show their pdf permit on a phone, or a paper permit if a mobile version was not possible. This would be issued by Cultural Services when the organisation applied for a permit with the Council. The Parks Exercise Policy was based on similar policies and charges set by other Councils around the UK, to ensure Warwick District Council was in line with other areas. It allowed the Council to fully monitor the usage of its parks and open spaces, as well as making some income when issuing the permits.

Having this policy would also enable officers to monitor the activities and behaviours of groups using the parks. Any misuse of the parks or the trees, ecology or equipment within them could be more easily connected to a particular group, and the misuse stopped.

The draft policy at Appendix A to the report showed proposed prices to charge the various groups and organisations. It was intended that these charges would apply from the implementation of the policy until the annual Fees and Charges review in January 2021. Prices were set with reference to charges in similar authorities and on the Council's own view of the market for this service. Any annual permit allocated to a group would apply for 12 months from the time of allocation.

An annual review by Cultural Services allowed the Council to update the policy and the charges when necessary. Updates would be based on market conditions and would also consider any feedback from groups using the permits. This annual review would take place as part of the wider review of charges undertaken by the Council each year.

In terms of alternative options, the Council could choose not to propose the Parks Exercise Policy and continue without a formal policy and without charging users. However, the current informal system was not effective and the lack of groups using it did not allow the Council to fully monitor the usage of the parks or generate any income from the current users.

An addendum circulated prior to the meeting advised Members that in consulting on the content of the report, it had become clear that there might be other Parks and Open Spaces that served as unofficial venues for outdoor fitness classes, apart from those listed in the proposed Policy. It was also considered possible, although unlikely, that existing classes might move from those areas covered by the Policy, in order to avoid the requirements of the Policy. It had thus been decided to propose that the Portfolio Holder for Culture and the Head of Cultural Services be delegated the authority to add other areas of the Council's Parks and Open Spaces to the Policy from time to time, if it is considered appropriate to do so.

The addendum advised Members of an additional recommendation 2.4, to read:

2.4 That Members delegate authority to the Head of Cultural Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture the decision as to the future inclusion of new areas of the Council's Parks and Open Spaces within the remit of this policy.

Officers also provided reasons for the additional recommendation in the addendum. The Policy was currently proposed to apply to the larger Parks and Open Spaces within the Council's ownership. This was because it was believed that these were the main areas where these activities currently took place. However, if it became clear that other areas within the Council's ownership were being used for activities of the nature covered by the Policy, it might be necessary to include additional areas into the Policy at a later date.

It was also possible, although it was not considered likely, that existing groups might move from the major parks to smaller open spaces in order to deliberately evade the requirements of the Policy.

It was therefore proposed that authority should be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Culture and the Head of Cultural Services to add additional Parks and Open Spaces to the Policy if required to maintain consistency. This could be done as part of the annual review of the Policy, or at other times if necessary.

Following the meetings of the Scrutiny Committees, a second addendum was circulated prior to the meeting, advising of the following amendments to the recommendations in the report agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Neighbourhood.

Amended Recommendations

2.2 That the Executive recommends to Council for approval the prices shown in Appendix A to this report for the period of time between the implementation of the policy and 1st January 2021 with a delegation to the Head of Cultural Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture, to apply discount prices as deemed appropriate for the purpose of launching the scheme; and

2.3 That Members instruct officers to review the Park Exercise Policy after the first 6 months of operation and then on an annual basis, with charges being included as part of the annual review of fees and charges.

Additional Recommendation

2.5 That members ask officers to update the relevant pages on the Council website to promote the new policy and to list those organisations who have registered as part of the scheme.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the recommendations in the report and agreed it would monitor their implementation.

The Head of Cultural Services and Portfolio Holder for Culture agreed to explore if a method to allow new licence holders to upgrade easily from monthly to annual payments would be feasible.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to add a review of the permit scheme to its Work Programme after it had been operational for six months.

Councillor Boad, the Liberal Democrat Group Observer, pointed out that for consistency reasons, the word **designated** should be added at Paragraph 6, page 11 – Pricing Policy, to read: "*The following prices are for the use of all **designated** Warwick District Council parks.*"

Councillor Grainger reminded Members of the revised recommendations. In addition, she informed Members that the policy would include Mill Gardens in the list of designated parks, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, and was happy to take on board the addition of the word **designated** as suggested by Councillor Boad. She then proposed the report as laid out, subject to the amendments above and additional recommendations as laid out in the update reports.

Recommended to Council that the prices shown in Appendix A to the report be approved for the period of time between the implementation of the policy and 1st January 2021, with a delegation to the Head of Cultural Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture, to apply discount prices as deemed appropriate for the purpose of launching the scheme.

Resolved that

- (1) the Park Exercise Policy shown as Appendix A to the report, be approved, and officers be instructed to implement the policy as soon as possible;
- (2) officers be instructed to review the Park Exercise Policy after the first six months of operation and then on an annual basis, with charges being included as part of the annual review of fees and charges;
- (3) delegated authority be given to the Head of Cultural Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture, for the decision as to the future inclusion of new areas of the Council's Parks and Open Spaces within the remit of this policy; and
- (4) officers update the relevant pages on the Council website to promote the new policy and to list those organisations who have registered as part of the scheme.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Grainger)

Forward Plan Reference 1,145

Part 2

(Items upon which a decision by Council was not required)

30. Quarter 1 Budget Report

The Executive considered a report from Finance providing an update on the current financial position as at 30 June 2020, both for the current year 2020/21 at the end of Quarter 1, and for the medium term through the Financial Strategy. Key variances and changes were highlighted to inform Members, with some recommendations also being put forward for their consideration.

Variations had been identified by the Accountancy Team in conjunction with the relevant budget managers, giving an adverse variance of £1,233,000 as at 30 June, with a forecast adverse variance for 2020/21 of £5,676,000. A summary of this was provided below:

2020-21				
Service	Variation Description	Q1 Variation £'000	Forecast Full Year Variation £'000	Rec / Non-rec
General Fund	Staffing	£271 F	£500 F	Non-rec
Business (Development Services)	Town centre road closures	£16 A	-	Non-rec
	Market and Events Income	£4 A	£6 A	Non-rec
	Event Savings	-	£36 A	Non-rec
Cultural Services	Closure of Concessions	£146 A	£578 A	Non-rec
	Arts staff Furlough	£22 F	£31 F	Non-rec
	Leisure Centre Concession	£233 A	£940 A	Non-rec
	Leisure Centre Expenditure	£111 A	£943 A	Non-rec
Development Services	Building Control Income	£19 A	£334 A	Non-rec
	Planning Fee Income	£95 A	£567 A	Non-rec
Finance	Investment Interest	£50 A	£200 A	Rec
	Court Fee Revenue		£208 A	Non-rec
Neighbourhood Services	Bereavement Activity Increased	£70 F	£100 F	Non-rec
	Car park closures	£692 A	£1,820 A	Non-rec
	Additional waste collection	£190 A	£600 A	Non-rec
Strategic Leadership	Apprenticeship scheme	£13 F	£25 F	Non-rec

	COVID-19 Other Costs	£85 A	£100 A	Non-rec
TOTAL		£1,233 A	£5,676 A	

Vacancies across a number of teams had resulted in staffing costs being underspent by £271,100 during Q1. Key drivers of the underspend included vacancies within Neighbourhood Services for waste management and green space development, Finance for Revenues and customer contact services, Health and Community Protection for a Community Safety Officer and Strategic leadership within ICT. Vacancy durations had increased caused by delays to recruitment as a result of COVID-19 and remote working. It was anticipated that vacancies would continue through the second quarter. Any savings were likely to be offset with the agreement of the latest pay award for staff which was at the time still in negotiation.

In terms of Business, Leamington and Warwick High Streets had been closed to traffic as part of town centre social distancing measures. Traffic Stewards had been appointed to manage the closures. These additional costs (£16,300 to date) would be reimbursed by Warwickshire County Council in due course.

Income from events and room bookings at sites including the Royal Spa Centre, Royal pump Rooms and Town Hall were significantly down due to cancelled events as a result of the national lockdown. These sites had been closed for the duration of Q1. The income lost had been offset by a reduction in expenditure costs, such as bar supplies and Art booking Fees. However, the decision to continue to pay all substantive staff 100% pay had resulted in £250k of staffing costs on services which were not at the time operational, leading to a net adverse position of £146,100. While the Council had supported casual staff as part of this, the decision was made to furlough them from May, resulting in WDC receiving Grant payments for Q1 totalling £22,100. Furlough grants would continue to be claimed (estimated £60k in total) to cover most of these costs while awaiting further guidance and decisions on the reopening of sites.

A support package had been agreed to support the Leisure Centre concession provider. Payments had been made for each of the months in Q1 totalling £111,000, to cover costs not covered by other Government schemes, such as staff pay through furlough. This support package would continue throughout 2020/21, and would be received by Everyone Active in conjunction to them not paying Warwick District Council any concession this financial year. More details on the agreed arrangements could be found in section 3.9 of the report.

Building Control income was adversely impacted by COVID-19 during April. While this had shown signs of recovery in subsequent months, it was anticipated there would be a reduction of income in the region of 40% over the financial year.

There had been increased Bereavement activity, with levels of burials and cremations being driven by COVID-19 related deaths, giving rise to some additional income. It was forecast that this would stabilise as COVID-19

deaths reduced across the District, but at a level higher than originally budgeted for.

Car parks had been free to use since the start of lockdown, resulting in £692,200 of forecast lost income during Q1. Car parks were to remain free to use until 1 August, to support the high streets by encouraging people to head back to shops and restaurants. After this date, the previously agreed charges would recommence. However, it was forecast that car park use would be down significantly against budget, with anticipated levels being 50% of usual income.

Waste collections had increased in cost as a result of more people being at home rather than at work, which had generated more waste requiring collection through the waste management contractor, at a level of approximately £15k per week. It was anticipated that this level of service would need to continue beyond the first quarter as more people continue to remain in their homes.

The apprenticeship scheme was at the time, underspending due to a lack of recruitment during the first quarter as a result of COVID-19. It was anticipated that this was likely to continue until September when a number of apprentice schemes commenced.

A number of other COVID-19 specific costs had been incurred during the first quarter of the year, including the purchase of specific Hardship Fund and Business Rates software, the distribution of a Council newsletter to all households in the District, and the costs incurred with establishing and running the Shielding Hub. As the focus turned to recovery, it was likely more costs would be outlined in future reports.

Variations had been identified by the Accountancy Team in conjunction with the relevant budget managers, giving a favourable variance of £883,000 as at 30 June, with a forecast favourable variance for 2020/21 of £381,000. A summary of this was provided below:

2020/21				
Service	Variation Description	Q1 Variation	Forecast Full Year Variation	Rec / Non-rec
		£'000	£ '000	
HRA	Staffing	£228 F	£400 F	Non-rec
	Council Tax vacant properties	£19 A	£19 A	Non-rec
	Housing Repairs	£674 F	-	Non-rec
TOTAL		£883 F	£381 F	

There were a significant number of vacancies across the HRA, within Estates supervisors, Housing Strategy and Development, Tenancy Management, William Wallsgrove House and Lifeline services. Some of these vacancies had remained vacant following the recent Housing restructure, with COVID-19 presenting further recruitment challenges.

There had been an increase in void properties during the first quarter, as Housing Services were not able to re-let properties during the lockdown period, because work could not be guaranteed to ensure properties were up to the necessary standard, or to ensure the properties were clean. When a property became void, the HRA had to bear the cost of the Council tax, until a new tenant commenced occupancy. This was resolved as lockdown restrictions eased, and so there was not forecast a rise in vacant properties as the year progressed.

Housing repairs, both major and responsive, had suffered from delays due to COVID-19, presenting issues with contractors being available to work, and with getting the necessary access to properties. It was anticipated that there would be a catch up on these works later in the year.

As it was early in the financial year, and owing to the fact that many external factors, predominately related to COVID-19, were continually evolving, it was possible that the forecast outturn position could change substantially. Work was on-going by officers to assess to what extent this net forecast deficit position could be accommodated within the overall budget.

The proposed funding of these pressures was discussed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy in Section 3.5 of the report.

It was noted from the above that many of the significant additional costs falling on the Council and reduced income were as a result of the current pandemic.

In response to much lobbying by local government, the Government had announced some packages of support to local authorities. The Council had received the following grants which were non-ring-fenced:

	Total Local Authority support	Warwick District Council support
	£	£
Tranche 1	1,600,000,000	60,705
Tranche 2	1,600,000,000	1,423,355
Tranche 3	500,000,000	199,729
Total	3,700,000,000	1,683,789

These grants were allocated to go towards the overall revenue deficit projected for the year.

It could be seen from the significant variances detailed in paragraph 3.1.1 in the report, that the most significant drivers of the Council's shortfall in the current year were income reductions, mainly from fees and charges. This was in common with most District Councils.

The Government had recently announced an income loss scheme. From the initial details:

- the local authority would absorb the first 5% of the loss;
- the Government would fund 75% of the loss thereafter;
- the losses were in respect of sales, fees and charges that were not recoverable;
- rents, commercial income and interest receipts were excluded; and
- it was understood that the concession that the Council was due to receive from Everyone Active (c£940k in 2020/21) was eligible as a loss of income.

It was expected that claims for the support would need to be made retrospectively, based on the actual losses against the Council's budgeted income for the year; further details were at the time awaited.

Within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, estimated income in respect of this scheme of £3.1m had been included for 2020/21. Until the definitive details of the scheme were made available alongside the Council losses, the actual amount that could be claimed would remain uncertain.

All the funding packages announced were in respect of the current year. Whilst local authorities would undoubtedly continue to incur additional costs and reduced income as a consequence of the pandemic, the Government had not intimated that any further funding would be available.

With regards to Commonwealth Game Funding, in July 2019 the Executive agreed a funding package to support a bid for funding from Coventry and Warwickshire Local Economic Partnership (CWLEP). That bid was successful, with the Council being awarded £1,798,255 to be spent by 31 March 2021.

Following the sign-off of the original bid, it became apparent that not all schemes within the overall bid were deliverable within the CWLEP timescales. The CWLEP project cost plan was included as Appendix A to the report.

More recently, in April 2020, as a consequence of the pandemic and concerns about its impact on project deliverability, CWLEP requested that Warwick District Council would review and amend its bid again, to ensure that any projects that would be majority grant-funded could, despite COVID-19, be completed by March 2021.

Following a review of the original bid, the following projects were removed from the delivery plan due to the high-risk of being unable to achieve completion of these projects by March 2021:

- Bike Hub Facilities;
- Electric bus services; and
- Access bridge across River Leam.

The removal of these projects from the delivery plan reduced grant-funded capital costs amount by £971,975 and overall project costs (excluding professional fees and contingencies) to £4,194,152.

Given the reduced claim for grant-funding, a proportionate reduction in the match-funding contribution towards the projects was considered appropriate when resubmitting the bid. Consequently, the project programme was further reviewed and the following projects were considered appropriate to remove from the CWLEP delivery agreement:

- Lighting in Victoria Park;
- Commonwealth Park proposals for development; and
- Branded car parking and signage for Leamington Town Centre.

The removal of these projects from the programme reduced the total capital project costs to £3,137,478 and total project costs allowing for fees and contingency to £3,733,219 (48% of which was to grant funded through CWLEP and 52% of which was match-funding from Warwick District Council and other partners). The amended bid was submitted in April 2020 and agreed by CWLEP in May 2020.

As a result of the successful bid, the Council needed to provide match funding of £1,934,964. Most of this funding would come from pre-agreed budgets. It was proposed that the following sources of match funding were agreed:

	£
WCC Contribution	60,000
PPM budget 2020/21	392,410
Capitalisation of WDC Project Support	350,000
WDC Grant - paid to Sustrans	50,000
Royal Priors - wayfinding (2018) as match	2,000
B'ham 2022	15,000
Community Project Reserve	280,000
Car Park Displacement Reserve	484,824

Commonwealth Games (Bowls) reserve	47,911
CIL - "wayfinding in Leamington"	32,000
Pavilion café (completed)	20,000
Service Transformation Reserve	200,820
Total	1,934,964

Specific points relating to changes in funding were detailed below:

- The Pre-Planned Maintenance (PPM) funding was allowed for within the PPM Programme agreed in February;
- The Community Projects Reserve funding was agreed by Executive in July 2019, as part of agreeing the CWLEP bid, as funding the installation of charging infrastructure for an electric bus scheme. This scheme was not now progressing due to the project being undeliverable before the end of March 2021 – the deadline for defrayment of grant funding from CWLEP. The funding was still required as part of the match funding;
- Within the Bid the Car Park Displacement Reserve was to fund £225,800 Blue badge holder car parking in Victoria Park and improve parking in Archery Road and Princes Drive. The sum requested to be used from the Car Park Displacement Reserve was £484,824. This represented the unallocated balance on that reserve on the basis that the other projected originally intended to be funded to support the proposed temporary closure of Covent Garden Car Park were not required; and
- For the Council to come up with the overall match funding, a further £200,820 was required. This was proposed to come from the Service Transformation Reserve. The balance and use of this reserve was discussed in more detail within paragraph 3.4.3 of the report.

With the intention for the LEP funding to be all spent by 31 March 2021, the LEP funding projects had to take priority. It was, therefore, intended that the Council funding was primarily used for the projects in 2021/22. It was therefore, necessary for some expenditure on schemes and funding thereof, to be pre-profiled within years within the Council's Budgets.

Appendix B to the report set out the unallocated balances on the General Fund Reserves. Each of these reserves had been allocated for specific purposes.

The Business Rate Retention Volatility Reserve was one of the Council's most significant reserves. Much of this reserve had been agreed to support the General Fund in forth-coming years, pending the Council securing revenue budget savings. With changes planned to the Business Rate Retention Scheme, and the difficulties many businesses could have in forthcoming years, it was not considered prudent to allocate further sums from this reserve.

Within the February 2020 Budget report, the Service Transformation Reserve was shown as having an unallocated balance of £916k. This was on the basis of the Council Tax Referendum taking place and having a successful outcome. With the Referendum not taking place, it had meant the Council had not incurred the cost of the ballot (estimated £300k), but had to fund the cost of council tax re-billing (estimate £63,000). The latest unallocated balance on the Service Transformation Reserve was shown below:

Service Transformation Reserve	£000
Balance Executive February 2020	916
Net previous allocations returned	101
Less Allocation agreed in main Budget Report	-707
Add allocation in alternate Budget Report	189
Add Referendum funding not required	300
Reduced cost of re-billing	137
COVID-19 £15k 120 RSA Tokens	-15
Kenilworth Leisure additional funding. July 13 Exec	-391
£48k for HR support June Exec	-48
HS2 Bridge - CE delegated	-60
Racing Club Warwick	-60
CWRT loan - underwriting - July 20 Exec.	-250
Kenilworth Rugby Football Club £3k - June 20 Exec.	-3
NS Project Officers - 3 years at £30.4k	-91
Current Unallocated Balance	18

The Final Accounts 2019/20 report was considered by the Executive in July 2020. This showed a General Fund surplus of £782.4k, with £490.7k agreed to be returned to the Corporate Assets Reserve, leaving an unallocated net surplus of £291.7k. It was proposed that this balance was allocated to the Service Transformation Reserve to meet forth-coming funding requests that were anticipated in future months.

Taking into account the above appropriation, the proposed funding of the Commonwealth Games (£200,820) and other recently approved allocations, the unallocated balance on the Service Transformation Reserve would be £60,000, as set out below:

Service Transformation Reserve	£000
Current Unallocated Balance	18
General Fund Surplus 2019/20	292
New Balance	310
Newbold Comyn Masterplan - CE delegated	-14
Commonwealth Games	-201
Local Government Review	-35
Balance	60

It was noted that some of the reserves were forecast to be over-committed within the following five years, based on expected commitments. If these commitments were to be met, funding would need to be found to be allocated to these reserves. In recent years, some of the Council's allocations of New Homes Bonus had been allocated to specific reserves. The future of New Homes Bonus remained uncertain, with expectations that from the following year, allocations would reduce considerably, or potentially cease altogether. More details were expected as part of the Local Government Settlement in December.

The Covent Garden Multi Storey Car Park Reserve was set up to fund the income losses whilst the car park was redeveloped and the debt charges until the income stream re-commenced. With this project on hold, it was possible for this funding to be used for alternative purposes. This would be considered as part of a future Budget report to Executive.

Within 2020/21, £370k was allocated to the Leisure Options Reserve. This was to fund the cost of the operator and initial debt charges whilst Kenilworth Leisure Centres were re-developed. It was planned for a further £370k to be similarly allocated to this reserve in 2021/22. This project was planned to be paused once it reached RIBA 4, as reported to Executive in July 2020. Consequently, it was possible for the £370k allocated to this reserve to be re-directed to alternative uses. This should be considered as part of a future Budget report to Executive. If this project was eventually funded from capital receipts as reported to Executive, it would still be necessary to find funding to compensate the leisure centre operator during the closures.

In addition to the various reserves, the Council also held a Contingency Budget for unplanned items of expenditure. At the start of the year, £200k was allocated here. To date, the unallocated balance was £192.5k. As discussed in paragraph 3.8.2 of the report, £30k was proposed to be allocated for a comprehensive analysis of Stratford Road depot options and infrastructure requirements, and £26.5k for Lone Workings. This would reduce the balance on the Contingency to £136k.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFN) was last formally reported to members in February as part of the 2020/21 Budget setting. At that stage to profile of revenue savings to be found was as follows:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Deficit-Savings Req(+)/Surplus(-) future years	0	0	522	1,868	1,762
Change on previous year		0	522	1,346	-106

This profile of savings reflected net £6.245m contribution from the Business Rate Retention Volatility Reserve to support the General Fund over the period 2020/21 to 2024/25.

In addition to the Quarter 1 variations, and their full year forecasts presented in section 3.1 of the report, there had been further changes to the Strategy.

While negotiations were ongoing with the contractor regarding an extension for 2021/22, it had become clear the additional budget requirements identified in the February MTFS would not be sufficient. Therefore, an additional £1.863m had been allocated on a recurrent basis, and one-off costs in the current year of £528k. The waste contract was discussed in further detail in section 3.6 of the report.

Whilst the procurement of these contracts was still taking place, figures received suggested it was possible to reduce the budget for these works by £127k; this had been included as a recurrent saving from 2021/22 within the MTFS. There was the potential for greater savings. Members would be informed of the outcome of the tender process in due course.

Car parking income had been reduced for future years by £750k p.a. to reflect the reduced demand for parking in the district expected as a consequence to the COVID-19 crisis, as people were expected to change their travel and working arrangements in future years.

Following the two changes introduced in March, interest rates were reduced from 0.75% to 0.1%. This had impacted the expected yield from the Council's financial investments during the year. Reserve balances were invested in money market and equity funds to maximise their return while they were not being utilised. It was anticipated that this would reduce income by £200k recurrently from 2020/21.

Budgeted Council Tax income for 2020/21 was £107.7m, with the majority of this due to WCC, and the District Council's element being £9.6m. The Council tax expected to be collected in the current year was impacted in several ways as a result of the pandemic:

- Council Tax Support - The level of Council Tax Support was estimated to be around £7m for the year within the tax base calculations. With increased claimants, this had increased to £8m. This figure was expected to increase further in forthcoming months as unemployment increased as a result of the ending of the furlough scheme;
- Growth in new properties - With house moves having been put on hold for some of the year and due to broader economic impacts of the pandemic, the number of new properties had not increased in the year to date as originally estimated, and was unlikely to increase at the expected rate for the rest of this year; and
- Non-payment - Many council tax payers had opted to shift their instalments from April - January to June - March. At the time of the report, there had not been evidence of significant non-payment, although this remained a possibility.

Taking into account all these factors, it was estimated that there may be a deficit in Council Tax for the current year of approximately £2.4m. This would be shared between the County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the District Council. This Council's share was estimated at £300k. Normally, this balance would need to be recovered in the subsequent year. However, due to the magnitude of the balances expected by local authorities, the Government had announced that these balances could be spread over three years. This had been reflected within the MTFS, with £100k being charged to each year 2021/22 to 2023/24.

With the increase in Council Tax support and delays to new properties, the council tax base was significantly below the estimated figure for the year of 55,851 by over 1,000. This would impact on the tax base for 2021/22 and future years. Previously within the MTFS, the tax base had been forecast to increase by 2% each year. This had been re-based further downwards to reflect the current position. Consequently, the forecast tax base for 2021/22 was below that for 2020/21. This meant that the Council Tax income due to the District Council, based on forecast Council Tax levels would be approximately £200k less than previously estimated for 2021/22, and increasing thereafter. This reduction was carried through each year of the MTFS. The tax base for 2021/22 was due to be formally agreed in the Autumn of 2020.

Taking into account the above two paragraphs, there was a net cost to the MTFS of £650k in 2021/22 to 2023/24, and £550k per annum thereafter.

The MTFS still relied upon £6.245m support from the Business Rate Volatility Reserve, as referred to in paragraph 3.5.2 of the report. However, in view of the increased financial pressures being incurred by the Council in 2020/21 and 2021/22, it had been necessary to bring forward the use of this reserve. Whilst the Business Rate Retention Volatility Reserve had previously allowed the Council to have some time to get savings initiatives in place, this was no longer the case. It was by the use of this reserve that the Council was able to maintain its going concern status. Without this, the Council may have been in the position of having to consider S114 notices, as some authorities

had encountered in recent months, as a consequence of the financial impact of the pandemic. The use of this reserve was enabling the Council to show a balanced budget for the current year, taking into account all the changes discussed within sections 3.1 and 3.5 of the report.

Taking into account the above changes, the savings to be found within the Medium Term Financial Strategy were as follows:

	2020 /21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025 /26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Deficit-Savings Req(+)/Surplus (-) future years	0	3,190	6,139	5,701	5,355	5,306
Change on previous year		3,190	2,949	-438	-346	-49

It was noted that 2020/21 presented a balanced position. This took into account of all the budget pressures detailed in section 3.1 of the report, the Covid funding from the Government, the one-off costs of the waste contract and the additional payments to Everyone Active. With the re-profiling of the use of the Business Rate Retention Volatility Reserve to support 2020/21, it had been possible to accommodate these significant budget pressures so as to give the neutral position shown in the table for this year. For 2021/22, without the use of the Business Rate Retention Volatility Reserve, the deficit for that year would have been far greater.

The figures in the above table were the estimated level of savings that the Council needed to find out of its General Fund revenue account. The gross expenditure on the General Fund, excluding recharges, benefits and capital charges, over which the Council had control, was estimated at £35m. It was noted that £3.2m savings needed to be secured to enable the Council to be able to set a balanced budget for 2021/22.

Appendix C to the report detailed proposed projects and savings which would assist the Council to reduce the above deficit. It was noted that the savings in Appendix C to the report, if they all materialised at the levels quoted, would not be sufficient to remove the forecast deficit. Further projects and initiatives needed to be agreed in forthcoming months to seek to enable the budgeted deficit to be eradicated. Members were asked to agree these proposals within Appendix C to the report, for officers to progress as soon as possible. It was noted that some savings related to the Council working with Stratford on Avon District Council. Work was already on-going in terms of sharing some heads of service. Green waste charges had been included on the basis that if the Council jointly re-procured for the waste service with Stratford, it would be necessary for the service provisions to be closer aligned.

With such a significant saving to be found for 2021/22, and increasing thereafter, it would be wrong for the Council to commit future resources to any project that had limited prospect of payback, or with the potential to be a further draw on the Council's finances. The reserves referred to in paragraphs 3.4.6 and 3.4.7 of the report, were held back to support the General Fund in the 2021/22 Budget, if necessary.

With effect from the 31st March 2021, the Council's contracts for its major public realm contracts were due to end. These contracts covered many of the services that were most visible to the District's residents and therefore preparation for the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) compliant tender processes commenced over 18 months ago. The tenders were broken down into three lots:

- Waste collection (lot 1);
- Street cleansing (lot 2); and
- Grounds Maintenance (lot 3).

The process for lots 2 and 3 had gone relatively smoothly and the remaining timeline for the process saw final tender submissions by 31 August and tender evaluation completed and contract awarded by 30 September. Based on the information received from bidders thus far, it was anticipated that the bids would be within budget and that no further Executive approvals were required.

With regard to lot 1 for the reasons described in the confidential note (Minute Number 34), officers had worked closely with a Leader established Councillor Working Party (Councillors Grainger, Hales and Matecki) to determine the next steps. Concluding that it was untenable to continue the lot 1 procurement process, officers were asked to request a contract extension of 18 months (with the option of a further year) from the current service provider Suez.

Prior to Councillors making this decision, the erstwhile Head of Neighbourhood Services had requested a contract extension quote from Suez as a contingency, should the procurement process be hampered by the pandemic. Suez had provided a quote of £5,290,610 which was £1,768,407 greater than in the Council's indicative budget for 2021/22. Whilst this amount would bring significant challenges to the Council's finances for the period of the extension, it was felt that it would be sensible to recommence the procurement process afresh and revisit the parameters upon which the process was launched to determine whether a less expensive long-term contract could be achieved. Councillors were keen to use the contract extension period to explore options around co-mingling, Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) options, a joint contract with Stratford and service redesign. Officers had already commenced this work.

Discussions had concluded with Suez and the cost of a contract extension would be £5.823m. There was no alternative other than to accept this offer as the procurement process for lot 1 had ended, and there would be no time to commence and conclude a new process in time for the new contract period

from April 2021. Councils were able to deliver waste collection services themselves but with no relevant in-house experience and the limited time left before the current contract ends, it was just not feasible to have a service up-and-running. Under the new contract the Council would retain the income from the sale of recyclables, estimated at £315k per annum, making the net cost to the Council of £5.507m. However, this figure would vary as the values of the recyclables could be highly volatile.

Under the contract, the Council would need to agree to £328k works to Stratford Road depot and other one-off costs of £200k.

Within the tender documents for lots 2 and 3, there was a request for bidders to provide costs for delivery of services with electric vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes in weight. To enable an objective tender evaluation to take place, bidders had been asked to provide a pricing schedule A, where there was no requirement for electric vehicles and schedule B, where electric vehicles were included. Following discussions with the bidders, the following issues were identified which had since been discussed with the Working Party:

- 3.5t vehicles were available but bidders were not confident in their reliability and performance;
- concerns about contractual and reputational risk if the Council specified 3.5t electric vehicles from contract start; and
- capacity of electrical supply to Council's depot was unknown and bidders might struggle to put together a comprehensive proposal in time for tender submission.

Bidders requested a phased approach to introduction of electric vehicles and the Working Party therefore concluded that there should be two costed bids:

- Schedule A - standard fleet; and
- Schedule B - electric fleet up to and including 3.5t vehicles. Schedule B would allow a phased approach with introduction of electric vehicles from 1 April 2024.

The final bids were not available before 31 August. Having considered the detail of those bids, it may be the case that if the Council was to finance the purchase of vehicles above 3.5t, there could be a cost saving. Should the Council go down this route, then there would need to be capital financing. As the extent of that potential financing was not known at this point, it was recommended that authority was delegated to the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to determine whether it was appropriate and if so, to amend the capital programme accordingly with the Executive updated in a subsequent report.

Within Warwick District Council's Local Plan 2011-2029, there was a land allocation off Stratford Road, Warwick, for employment use. The land was owned in various parcels by this Council, Severn Trent and a private individual. The parties had been discussing over a period of time how to bring the land forward for development. Among other issues was the fact

that part of the land housed a depot for the Council's waste and ground maintenance contractors. Despite best efforts by bidders and officers to find an alternative site from which the contractors could operate, this did not prove possible. It had therefore been necessary to give a commitment to the bidders that Stratford Road would be available as a depot for the life of the new contract.

The location of the depot was at the entrance to the site, which in land value terms was the most attractive. Officers were therefore working with Severn Trent to appraise various options for relocating the depot on the site. This work would feed into the overall master planning of the site and given the Council's climate change commitment and desire to see the contractors using electric vehicles where possible, the planning work would have needed to consider the electric infrastructure requirements. To undertake this master planning work and potential negotiations, it was estimated that a budget of £30,000 was required, which was proposed to be funded from the Contingency Budget.

Members noted from the information contained in Appendix D to the report that since the Government imposed its lockdown measures in response to the pandemic, the Council's leisure operator had been unable to generate any income as service delivery had to cease. As soon as the measures came into force, officers started discussions with Everyone Active, to consider what steps could be taken to ensure that when the lockdown was either relaxed or removed, Everyone Active was in a position to recommence the delivery of the service. Initially, Group Leaders agreed that payments of £37,000 per month should be made to ensure that the buildings did not need to be mothballed and that when the measures were relaxed, the leisure centres could reopen as soon as possible.

The Government announced in the week commencing 13 July that it would allow gym and fitness classes, swimming and other indoor leisure activities to recommence from 25 July. Due to the initial financial support that the Council had provided, Everyone Active had been able to thoroughly prepare for the reopening of the leisure centres within a "covid-safe" environment with effect from 25th July in respect of gyms and sports halls and from 1 August for indoor swimming pools. To reopen the buildings, Everyone Active required a further subsidy of £245,465 for the period 1 July to 31 August which was agreed with Group Leaders under the Chief Executive's emergency powers.

During the lockdown period, not only had officers been working with Everyone Active on the practicalities of reopening the leisure centre, but also on the financial business plan, which would be needed to support the commencement of the service. A cross-Council project team, led by the Deputy Chief Executive Andrew Jones, was established to oversee the negotiations, whose work ultimately led to a draft variation of the underlying contract between this Council and EA. The variation was commercially sensitive but could be found at Appendix E to the report.

During the course of the negotiations, officers discussed the situation with Executive Members to get a steer on what outcomes the Council was looking

for. It was clear that having just invested approximately £16m in new facilities at Newbold Comyn and St Nicholas Park, Members wanted to reopen the facilities right across the District as soon as possible, but also wanted to do this in a way that limited the cost to the taxpayer as much as possible.

Therefore, the following principles of negotiation were summarised by the Council Leader:

- That the Council recognised that EA and WDC had shared values, with both valuing the public service ethos each brought to their service delivery, and that this underlying ethos should govern how negotiations were conducted;
- That the Council recognised that the situation was fast changing and that if the relationship was to endure, then there needed to be complete transparency from each party;
- That the Council recognised that it was not impossible that Everyone Active could go insolvent and therefore there had to be due diligence of its financial status, with officers drawing-up a framework for Plan B, should Everyone Active cease trading;
- That the Council recognised that to support Everyone Active, it would require a significant financial subsidy and so financial monitoring of the contract had to be on an open book basis and that subsidy had to not include any element of profit;
- That the Council would require weekly performance management information to be provided by EA;
- That whilst negotiations were ongoing, officers had to continue to talk with other Councils to ensure that by-and-large, they were in-step with what the sector was doing and to be alive to any evidence to suggest that Everyone Active might be in financial difficulty that could ultimately threaten the survival of the parent company; and
- That specifically, the Head of Service ensured that she was aware of how negotiations between Everyone Active and Stratford District Council (SDC) were progressing.

In line with these parameters, officers continued their negotiations with Everyone Active, and were able to recommend the business plan at Appendix F to the report. This business plan would require a Council subsidy of up to £1,049,194 for the period 1 April 2020 up to 31 March 2021, although it was important to note that this was a capped figure and should Everyone Active perform better than anticipated, then it would require less subsidy.

Officers had also undertaken the following activities:

- Ensured that the Council's negotiations had been supported by Warwickshire Legal Services;

- Ensured that Everyone Active’s financial position was properly understood by reference to a Creditsafe enquiry;
- Drawn-up a framework for Plan B which had been approved by the Council’s Leader and Deputy Leader;
- Had put processes in place to monitor EA’s financial performance on a monthly basis and activity performance on a weekly basis through an open-book approach;
- Maintained regular liaison with Councils throughout the County and further afield including with Stratford District Council; and
- Continued to lobby the Local Government Association and other bodies for a comprehensive financial rescue package for the leisure industry.

Members were reminded that the Government had produced an income compensation scheme for Councils, which should allow the Council to recover an element of the concession fee it was due from Everyone Active. Whereas the Council was due to receive £940k, the scheme should enable it to recover £669k in 2020/21.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy was based on Everyone Active being able to pay the Council the full concession, as within the original contract. The position here would be kept under review, with there being a risk that this would not be possible.

Following the Government’s instruction that the country went into “lockdown”, officers considered all the practical and financial support the Council could potentially provide for local residents. Among many initiatives, an Emergency Response Fund was established, following Group Leader approval to support various organisations who were providing financial support to vulnerable residents. The fund was established through the aggregation of budgets from Community Forum Grants (£21k), Sports Grants (£17.3k), Arts Grants (11.7k), Rural / Urban Capital Improvement Scheme (RUCIS) Grants (£169.9k), VE Day 75th Anniversary Grant Fund (£8k). The future of the scheme was at the time being reviewed to consider its effectiveness.

Following a review of the Council’s lone working procedures that had taken place, it was identified that the current system was outdated and no longer met the needs of the Council. As a result, research of the available systems on the market, including product trials, had taken place. This allowed the Council to identify a specification which met the needs of the various lone worker employees. Subject to agreement of the budget, purchase of the lone worker system would be subject to a procurement exercise. Accordingly, it was recommended that a £26.5k recurring budget was agreed from 2020/21 to fund this, funded in the current year from the Contingency Budget, and future years to be included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Hill Close Gardens Trust ran a well-regarded facility on a lease from the Council. The Trust had benefitted in previous years from a grant from the Council, but this expired at the end of the previous financial year. The Trust

had sought a renewed grant from the Council of £20,000, especially in the context of the impact on visitor numbers from the COVID-19 emergency. Given the risk that should the Trust fold, then the job and the cost of maintaining the Gardens would fall to the Council, at a cost greater than £20,000 per year, it was suggested that from within the existing St Mary's Lands project budget, £20,000 would be reallocated as a one off grant to the Trust, on condition that before the end of the calendar year, the Trust would submit a robust three-year business plan upon which the Council could then consider any ongoing financial support in the form of a Service Level Agreement.

The development of the Tach Brook Country Park had progressed, working with a consultant to an agreed budget. This work had been varied to accommodate proposed additions to the project and was continuing.

Two elements of the project had altered since the original specification for the project work was agreed:

- the development of a school adjacent to the country park was on-going and a planning application was required to be submitted for the school in spring 2021. In parallel, a planning application for the country park would need to be submitted at the same time as that for the school to ensure that links between the sites were properly considered and approved; and
- at the outset of the project, it was not anticipated that a full planning application would be required for the country park. However, the Planning Authority had now confirmed that a full planning application would be required. The completion of all the necessary supporting information and development of the full planning application was therefore a new and unplanned element to the Tach Brook Country Park project.

Costs had been estimated following soft market research and information from previous similar activity procured by the Council. The final figure would be subject to the completion of a procurement exercise in accordance with the Council's Code of Procurement Practice. The costs were proposed to be funded from S106 receipts, which at the time, totalled in excess of £1.2m. This funding was specifically for the delivery and maintenance of the Country Park and the obligations set out in the Agreement.

No alternative options were presented for consideration. Members might choose to not accept all of the recommendations within the report.

The Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee noted that whilst the report was a snapshot in time and still a work in progress, there had been a significant impact on the Council's budget, showing a considerable deficit which needed to be addressed. The underlying deficit issue prior to Covid-19 had been exacerbated by the loss of income due to Covid-19. The Committee acknowledged that the Council had a legal requirement to set a balanced budget, which had to take priority. With that in mind, Members felt that there were difficult decisions and choices to be made, for example how to

fulfil the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan in the changed financial situation it now faced.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee wished to comment to the Executive about the desirability of including a wider group of Members when it came to reviewing what the Council would do in terms of the proposed savings or alternatives and the impact they may have. The Committee agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business that there were some choices to be made by the Council in order for it to be able to set a balanced budget in February 2021. As a result, Members suggested arranging a different meeting involving a larger number of, or all, Councillors where they could consider the savings options and the income generating options, so that the right choices were made for residents, based on cross-party support and collaboration.

An addendum circulated prior to the meeting provided Members with the "to follow" details from paragraph 3.9.6 of the report, to read: "*In line with these parameters, officers have continued their negotiations with EA and are able to recommend the business plan at Appendix F (**now available online**). This business plan will require a Council subsidy of up to **£1,049,194** for the period **1 April 2020** up to 31 March **2021** although it is important to note that this is a capped figure and should EA perform better than anticipated then EA will require less subsidy*".

Councillor Hales, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, informed Members of an amendment to recommendation 2.4, to read: "*That the Executive notes the impact of both current year and future years ongoing and forecast changes will have upon the Medium term Financial Strategy (MFTS), how these changes are expected to be accommodated, and where further savings / income generation need to be achieved to mitigate the deficit position to enable it to set a balanced budget for 2021/22 **and the 2020/21 Budget is duly updated to reflect the changes in Sections 3.1 and 3.5***". He then proposed the report as laid out, subject to the amendment above and the additional information to paragraph 3.9.6, as laid out in the update report.

Resolved that

- (1) the latest current year Financial position for both Quarter 1 (General Fund £1,233,000 Adverse and Housing Revenue Account £833,000 Favourable) at forecast for the year (General Fund £5,676,000 Adverse and Housing Revenue Account £381,000 Favourable), with the key variations that drive these positions, be noted;
- (2) the match funding for the CWLEP Bid as detailed in section 3.3 of the report, be agreed, and budgets be amended and re-profiled between years to ensure the Council's requirements as part of the LEP funding can be fulfilled;

- (3) the unallocated net General Fund surplus of £291,700 be appropriated to the Service Transformation Reserve;
- (4) the impact of both current year and future years ongoing and forecast changes will have upon the Medium term Financial Strategy (MFTS), how these changes are expected to be accommodated, and where further savings / income generation need to be achieved to mitigate the deficit position to enable it to set a balanced budget for 2021/22, be noted;
- (5) progressing the savings proposals, detailed in Appendix C to the report, be agreed;
- (6) entering into a contract extension with Suez for the provision of refuse, green waste and recycling collection services, be agreed, and thereby agreed that the budget shortfall for the service in the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will increase by £1.863m, noting the steps that officers are now taking in preparation for a new tender process, with a further one-off sum required in 2020/21 of £528k;
- (7) noting the timeline for the conclusion of the tender process for the street cleanings (lot 2) and grounds maintenance (lot 3) contracts, authority be delegated to the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to determine whether it would be more advantageous for the Council to purchase the vehicles necessary to deliver those contracts and that if this is the case, the capital programme be amended accordingly and reported to a subsequent Executive Committee;
- (8) releasing funding of £30,000 from the Contingency budget to enable a comprehensive analysis of Stratford Road depot options and infrastructure requirements to be undertaken, be agreed;
- (9) the request by the Chief Executive, in accordance with his constitutional authority CE (4), and approved by the Group Leaders, as detailed in Appendix D to the report, to provide financial subsidy of £245,465 for the period 1 July to 31 August to Sports Leisure Management (trading as Everyone Active and hereafter referred to as EA), be noted, further noting that emergency

payments for the period 1 April to 30 June of £37,000 per month had already been agreed, and agrees that the Council should provide further financial subsidy to EA for the period 1 September to 31 March 2021 in accordance with the principles set out at paragraph 3.9 in the report and so the WDC/EA contract variation at Appendix E to the report, be agreed;

- (10) the funding for this financial support be dealt with as part of the overall funding shortfalls for 2020/21 funded from the Government COVID support and the use of the Business Rate Retention Volatility Reserve;
- (11) in accordance with the Chief Executive's emergency authority CE (4), approval given for the creation of a pandemic Emergency Response Fund financed by budgets appropriated from Community Forum Grants (£21k), Sports Grants (£17.3k), Arts Grants (11.7k), Rural / Urban Capital Improvement Scheme (RUCIS) Grants (£169.9k), VE Day 75th Anniversary Grant Fund (£8k), be noted;
- (12) funding for lone working facilities of £26.5k per annum, with the current year funded from the Contingency Budget and future years included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, be agreed;
- (13) 20,000 being reallocated from the St Mary's Lands project budget to provide a one off grant to Hill Close Gardens Trust for a year, be agreed, and by Christmas 2020, the Trust be required as a condition of that grant to submit a robust business plan for the financial years 2021/22 to 2023/24 to help the Council consider any further financial support; and
- (14) a sum of £250,000 be allocated from the s106 receipts for Tach Brook Country Park to support the submission of a full planning application for the country park.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Hales)

31. **WDC Post Covid-19 Recovery Strategy – Back to the Future**

The Executive considered a report from the Chief Executive setting out and seeking support for the high level Warwick District Council Post Covid-19 Recovery Strategy for the Council – Back to the Future, based on the three

threads: Organisational Recovery, Economic Recovery and Community Recovery.

The report also focused on the implementation steps for the Organisational Recovery thread around the operations based at Riverside House, and sought approval for funding for those steps.

The report also suggested further reports on the progress of the three threads at regular intervals.

In preparing for the recovery phase of the Covid-19 Emergency, a strategy was prepared, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, which was based on the three threads of Organisational Recovery, Economic Recovery and Community Recovery. The first of these threads was necessarily internally focused, while the other two related to the support the Council could give economically and socially to the wider community in the District.

The Strategy reflected the experience as an organisation and as individuals, that the Council was going through. The experience had changed the organisation and as individuals and it meant that there was not a situation that the organisation could return to; they could not unlearn or undo the experience, nor should they try to. Rather, as the Council restored its services, it recognised the learning points, including the many positive lessons, and sought to incorporate them into the future pattern of service delivery and ways of working. This meant that what the Council delivered going forward was and would be different in many ways compared to the pre Covid-19 period.

Throughout the lockdown period, Riverside House, which represented the main work place for WDC staff, had only 20 members of staff working there on a regular basis. On average, another 20 per day had dropped in for specific items. Most Riverside House staff had been able to work at home, albeit some under difficult circumstances.

Officers worked up an implementation plan for Riverside House as part of the Organisational Recovery thread, having been informed by dialogue with the Executive and the Leaders Coordinating Group; it was also based on an assessment of all staff, of their needs, experiences, etc. This plan was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. The key elements of it were:

- i) that given the continued uncertainty over the pattern of infection, to ensure the health and safety of staff, the emphasis was to support staff being able to continue to work at home where and if they could;
- ii) that circa 40 existing staff members overall had been identified who were unable to continue to work at home for a variety of reasons and needed therefore to be able to work at Riverside House (RH);
- iii) that in order to be able to accommodate those members of staff working at RH safely, taking account of social distancing, a radical reorganisation of the layout of office furniture was required, as were measures to further control entry and exit. This would also enable the mothballing of Floor 4 of RH;

- iv) that further minor alterations would be required to enable safe but inevitably limited public access; and
- v) that future provision for some occasional use, staff meetings and so on would be catered for.

There were other locations used by the Council as workplaces and these needed to be assessed in greater detail.

This process had to be communicated in advance to members of staff, and the message and a FAQ was attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

The cost of the capital proposals totalled £286,300, with a revenue proposal of £6,300, and was made up of:

- £237,300 for ICT provisions (mainly laptops) to support people working at home;
- £26,000 for desks and chairs for people working at home;
- £23,000 minor alterations to RH to help make it safe for those people working there;
- £6,300 annually for Remote Desktop Services Licences.

To offset this cost, Floor 4 could be mothballed for a year, which would save the Council approximately £100,000. It was envisaged that the mothballing would commence from 1 October 2020, so saving £50,000 for current financial year which could be used to cover part of the abovementioned costs.

The work to date only took the Council up to a certain point in time and only on certain fronts. Work was being done on the other elements which would need reporting and considering by Members, perhaps involving the new Programme Advisory Boards, before being formally considered by the Scrutiny Committees and the Executive. In particular, there was a stage 3 to the future for Riverside House.

In terms of alternatives, not adopting this strategy would require the Council to recommence work on a new strategy and would require Councillor guidance on what that should be, if the one proposed was not acceptable.

Not adopting or funding the implementation plan would leave the Council unable to do much to help staff in the short term who were not able to continue to work at home and would therefore leave the Council exposed on health and safety matters.

The Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

An addendum circulated prior to the meeting provided Members with a further update to the total estimated cost of the implementation steps of the

Back to the Future Strategy, which was previously outlined in Section 5 of the original report, as follows:

"The total costs were proposed to be funded as follows:

Funding of Proposals	Service Transformation Reserve	Contingency Budget	2020/21 Business Rates saving on Riverside House	Business Rate Retention Volatility Reserve	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Desks /Chairs	26				26
Minor Alterations/equipment	23				23
ICT Provision	31	73	50	83	237
RDS CALs		6			6
Total	80	79	50	83	292
Funding available	80	136	50	-	
Balance carried forward	0	57	0	-	

The use of the Business Rate Retention Volatility Reserve was considered as part of the Q1 Budget report on the Executive agenda for this meeting.

The latest General Fund Capital Programme could be found at Appendix A to the report, with Appendix B to the report outlining the Financing requirements. This included the proposals outlined above.

The addendum also advised of the following change to paragraph 3.7 of the original report, to read:

*"The cost of the proposals totals **£286,300, with a revenue proposal of £6,300, and are** made up of:*

- *£237,300 for ICT provisions (mainly laptops) to support people working at home;*
- *£26,000 for desks and chairs for people working at home;*
- *£23,000 minor alterations to RH to help make is safe for those people working there.*
- **£6,300 annually for Remote Desktop Services Licences".**

In addition, the addendum advised of an amendment to recommendation 2.3 in the report, to read:

"2.3 The Executive agrees to fund the total estimated cost of the implementation steps of £292,600, to be funded as detailed in Section 3."

Officers also advised of an additional recommendation 2.5 in the addendum, to read:

"2.5 The Executive agrees to the latest version of the General Fund Capital Programme, last agreed by Executive as part of the 2020/21 General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report".

During the meeting, the Chief Executive advised Members that for flexibility purposes, the word **vacating** should replace the word **mothballing** in recommendation 2.2 of the report, to read: *"The Executive agrees to the broad implementation steps set out in Appendix 2 to this report, including **vacating** Floor 4".*

Councillor Day, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, supported the amendment. He then proposed the report as laid out, subject to the amendments above, additional recommendation and the additional information as laid out in the update report.

Resolved that

- (1) the Back to the Future Recovery Strategy attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be supported;
- (2) the broad implementation steps set out in Appendix 2 to the report, including vacating Floor 4, be agreed;
- (3) the total estimated cost of the implementation steps of £292,600 to be funded as detailed in Section 5 of the report, be agreed;
- (4) further reports be brought to the Executive on the three threads of the Recovery Strategy; and
- (5) the latest version of the General Fund Capital programme, last agreed by Executive as part of the 2020/21 General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report, be agreed.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Day.)

32. **Public and Press**

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be

excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minute Nos.	Para Nos.	Reason
33, 34, 35	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

33. **Purchase of a Footbridge in Royal Leamington Spa**

The Executive considered a confidential report from Housing.

The recommendations in the report were approved.

(The Portfolio Holder for this report was Councillor Matecki)

Reference number 1,134.

34. **Confidential Note and Confidential Appendix to Agenda Item 8 - Quarter 1 Budget Report**

The Executive noted a confidential appendix and a confidential note from Finance in relation to Agenda Item 8, Minute Number 30 – Quarter 1 Budget Report.

35. **Minutes**

The confidential minutes of 13 July 2020 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(The meeting ended at 6.53pm)

CHAIRMAN

1 October 2020

Appendix 1 to Minute Number 25

Penalties Process

This process follows the general principles set out in the Council's Enforcement Policy and the Government guidance.

In summary where the Council believes that a property has been let in breach of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard Regulations (MEES) it will serve a compliance notice requesting information. If the Council are then satisfied that a breach has occurred, they can serve a notice on the landlord imposing financial penalties. The landlord may ask for the penalty notice to be reviewed. Following the outcome of the review the landlord still has the option to appeal the penalty notice to the First Tier Tribunal.

Compliance Notice

Where the Council believe that a landlord is letting a property in breach of the MEES Regulations or has registered false or misleading information on the Private Rented Sector (PRS) Exemptions Register a compliance notice will be issued.

A compliance notice requests information to help the Council decide whether a breach has occurred. The Council may serve a compliance notice up to 12 months after the suspected breach occurred.

A compliance notice may request information on:

- the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) that was valid for the time when the property was let
- the tenancy agreement used for letting the property
- information on energy efficiency improvements made
- any Energy Advice Report in relation to the property
- any other relevant document

Penalties

If it is confirmed that a property has been let since April 2020 in breach of the regulations, and the landlord is not working with the Council to comply with the regulations, a penalty notice will be served with the maximum applicable penalty.

The maximum penalty amounts that apply per property and per breach of the regulations are:

- £2,000 for renting out a non-compliant property for less than 3 months
- £4,000 and a publication penalty for renting out a non-compliant property for 3 months or more.
- £1,000 and a publication penalty for providing false or misleading information on the PRS Exemptions Register
- £2,000 and a publication penalty for failure to comply with a compliance notice

In total the maximum amount a landlord can be fined per property is £5,000.

A publication penalty means that the Council will publish some details of the landlord's breach on a publicly accessible part of the PRS Exemptions Register.

Right of Appeal

The landlord can ask for the decision to serve a penalty to be reviewed by writing to Head of Housing Services within 28 days of the penalty notice being served, giving their reasons for the review request.

The Council must withdraw the penalty notice if:

- new evidence shows a breach has not occurred.
- a breach has occurred, but the evidence shows that the landlord took all reasonable steps to avoid the breach.
- It is decided that because of the circumstances of the case, it was not appropriate to issue a penalty.

The Council can also decide to vary the level of penalties following representations from the landlord.

If a local authority decides to uphold the penalty notice, a landlord may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal. The landlord has 28 days to submit an appeal from the date of the local authority's decision.

The First-Tier Tribunal may quash the penalty notice or confirm the penalty notice in its original form. If the penalty notice is quashed, the Local Authority must repay any amount paid by the landlord in carrying out the notice.

If a landlord does not pay a financial penalty imposed on them, the Local Authority may take the landlord to court to recover the money.

Exemptions

If a property meets the criteria below the landlord, or an agent for the landlord, will be able to let it once they have registered an exemption in the Government's PRS Exemptions Register:

- **All relevant improvements have been made exemption (valid for 5 years)**

Where a property is still below an EPC rating of E after improvements have been made up to the cost cap (£3,500 incl VAT) or where no relevant improvements can be made

- **High cost exemption (valid for 5 years)**

Where no improvement can be made because the cost of installing even the cheapest recommended measure would exceed £3,500 (including VAT).

After the exemption expires the landlord must try again to improve the property's rating to meet the minimum level of energy efficiency. If this still cannot be achieved, then a further exemption may be registered.

- **Third-party consent exemption (valid for 5 years)**

Where the relevant improvements for the property need consent from another party, and the landlord can evidence that despite their best efforts consent cannot be obtained, or is given subject to conditions that they could not reasonably comply with.

- **Property devaluation exemption (valid for 5 years)**

Where the landlord can evidence that making energy efficiency improvements to the property would devalue it by more than 5%.

- **Temporary exemption due to recently becoming a landlord (valid for 6 months)**

Where a person recently becomes a landlord, under certain circumstances they will not be expected to take immediate action to improve your property to an EPC rating of E. They may claim a 6 months' exemption from the date that they became the landlord for the property.

Any exemptions which are registered on the Private Rented Sector Exemptions Register may not pass over to a new owner or landlord of a property upon sale, or other transfer. If a property is sold or otherwise transferred with an exemption registered, the exemption will cease to be effective and the new owner will either need to improve the property to the minimum standard at that point, or register an exemption where one applies, if they intend to continue to let the property.



Parks Exercise Permits

Usage & Charging Policy for

Warwick District Council

Parks & Open Spaces



Written by:

Meg Smith, Cultural Services – Warwick District Council

Please contact the Business Support Team on culturebst@warwickdc.gov.uk or 01926 456207 if you wish to discuss the policy any further.

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Introduction

This policy has been introduced in order to ensure that the parks and open spaces within Warwick District are accessible to everyone. Increasingly, businesses are choosing our parks and open spaces to host various activities, which need regulating and should be in some cases chargeable.

In order to ensure everyone gets to enjoy our parks and open spaces it is important that we achieve a balance between the various users.

Over the last few years there has been a change in the usage of some of our parks and open spaces which has seen them used not only for informal recreation such as dog walking and more formal sports such as football, but for a wider range of group fitness activities – Boot Camps, Park Run, Buggy Fit, Circuit Training, Personal Training and Running Groups etc.

1. Aims and Objectives

This Policy aims to ensure the following:

- That our Parks and Open Spaces can be used by a wide range of clubs, organisations and individuals for formal and informal recreation
- To encourage and support activities which align with Warwick District Council's Fit for the Future Strategy

The key objectives of the Policy are:

- To support local community groups and charitable organisations in delivering healthy activities for our residents
- To promote a varied programme of activities and events
- To ensure the health and safety of activities, attendees and the wider public
- To encourage activities which promote local community participation and have strong community benefit
- To continue to maintain the parks and open spaces to a high standard ensuring their long term sustainability

2. Parks and Open Spaces

The following Parks and Open Spaces are covered by this policy:

- Harbury Lane Recreation Ground
- Newbold Comyn
- Castle Farm Recreation Ground

- St Mary's Lands
- St Nicholas Park
- Victoria Park
- Jephson Gardens
- Mill Gardens
- Pump Room Gardens
- Abbey Fields
- Priory Park

3. Organisations and Individuals covered by this Policy

Organisations that utilise the areas in section 3 to conduct their business activities will be subject to paying a hirers fee, these organisations include:

- A Company Limited by Guarantee
- Sole Traders
- Self Employed coaches/trainers
- Any individual or company seeking to make commercial gain from the use of the above open spaces

4. Exemptions

If you or your organisation meets one of the following criteria, then it will be exempt from charges and issued with a permit stating that the organisation is exempt:

- A Registered Charity
- A fully constituted Not for Profit Organisation where any surplus is reinvested directly into the organisation
- School/Educational Establishment

The above list is not exhaustive and the Council will consider each request for use of the parks on its merits and reserves the right to waive charges for certain events that address key Council priorities.

5. Pricing Policy

The following prices are for the use of all Warwick District Council parks. Annual permits are available and should be paid as one payment at the beginning of the permit year. Monthly permits can be paid by direct debit.

This policy does not limit the amount of sessions per week.

1-3 Sessions Per Week	Monthly	Annual
Groups up to 5	£30.00	£310.00
Groups of 6 or more	£75.00	£760.00
4 or More Sessions Per Week	Monthly	Annual
Groups up to 5	£50.00	£510.00
Groups of 6 or more	£125.00	£1260.00

**Numbers in table exclude the trainer themselves any staff member of the organisation. Warwick District Council has established that these charges are exempt from VAT.*

The Council reserves the right to undertake head counts at activities without prior notice. If circumstances change and the initial permit is deemed incorrect by either party, then this can be amended through discussion with Warwick District Council. One calendar months' notice will be required for permit changes.

The booking entitles an organisation to non-exclusive use of parks and open spaces and does not include access to buildings.

Before being issued with a permit the individual or organisation will need to provide a risk assessment for the activity taking place and a copy of their £5m public liability insurance, although Warwick District Council reserves the right to request a higher level of cover. Once a booking has been confirmed the organisation will be issued with a confirmation email and an attached pdf permit, this must be available for inspection by Council staff when the activity is taking place. In situations where an email is not possible a permit card will be issued to the organisation.

6. Activities in Parks and Open Spaces

Warwick District Council wishes to encourage a wide range of uses and activities within our parks.

However, we reserve the right to reject any applications on the grounds of the activity being damaging to the parks directly or the environment, mis-use of equipment, spoiling the enjoyment for other park users or in direct conflict with other businesses.

All organisations using the parks and open spaces will be subject to the usual booking terms and conditions.

Note: Sports clubs such as football and cricket clubs hiring the pitches and pavilions, do not form part of this policy as they are required to book the facilities to guarantee the pitches and changing facilities along with appropriate equipment.

Please contact the Business Support Team on culturebst@warwickdc.gov.uk or 01926 456207 if you have any queries regarding the policy

Implementation Date – This policy will be implemented on 1st October 2020.

Review Date (Annually) – This policy will be reviewed as part of the Council's annual Fees and Charges review

Executive
1 October 2020

Title: Risk Management Annual Report 2019/20 and Strategy

Lead Officer: Richard Barr

Portfolio Holders: Councillors Day and Hales

Public report / Confidential report: No

Wards of the District directly affected: Not applicable

Contrary to the policy framework: No

Contrary to the budgetary framework: No

Key Decision: No

Included within the Forward Plan: Yes

Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: Not applicable

Consultation & Community Engagement: Not applicable

Final Decision: Yes.

Officer/Councillor Approval

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	7 Sept 2020	Chris Elliott/Andrew Jones
Head of Service	7 Sept 2020	Mike Snow
CMT	7 Sept 2020	Chris Elliott/Andrew Jones/Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	7 Sept 2020	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	7 Sept 2020	Andrew Jones
Finance	7 Sept 2020	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	15 Sept 2020	Councillors Day and Hales

1 **Summary**

- 1.1 This report presents the annual report for risk management and updates the Risk Management Strategy for implementing and embedding risk management in the Council.

2 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Executive reaffirms the Council's Risk Management Strategy, including confirming the responsibilities of Members to oversee the risk management framework (Appendix A).
- 2.2 That Executive confirms it is satisfied with existing risk management activities and culture in the Council (Appendix B).

3 **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 As part of their responsibility for overseeing the organisation's risk management arrangements, Members are responsible for the Council's Risk Management Strategy (Recommendation 2.1) and for developing risk management within the Council (Recommendation 2.2).

4 **Policy Framework**

4.1 **Fit for the Future (FFF)**

- 4.1.1 The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects.
- 4.1.2 The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the Council's website](#). The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

4.2 **FFF Strands**

4.2.1 **External impacts of proposal(s)**

Money- Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment

Although there are no direct policy implications, risk management is an essential part of corporate governance and will be a major factor in shaping the Policy Framework and Council policies.

4.2.2 **Internal impacts of the proposal(s)**

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term

Although there are no direct policy implications, risk management is an essential part of corporate governance and will be a major factor in shaping the Policy Framework and Council policies.

4.3 **Supporting Strategies**

4.3.1 Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies but description of these is not relevant for the purposes of this report.

4.4 **Changes to Existing Policies**

4.4.1 This section is not applicable.

4.5 **Impact Assessments**

4.5.1 This section is not applicable.

5 **Budgetary Framework**

5.1 Although there are no direct budgetary implications arising from this report, risk management performs a key role in corporate governance including that of the Budgetary Framework. An effective risk management framework helps to ensure that the Authority manages its resources and achieves its objectives economically, efficiently and effectively.

6 **Risks**

6.1 The entire report is, in effect, about risks as its purpose is to affirm the Council's arrangements for managing its risks.

7 **Alternative Options(s) Considered**

7.1 The report is not based on 'project appraisal' so this section is not applicable.

8 **Background**

8.1 The overriding objective for risk management is to embed it within the organisation so that it is a seamless, but fundamental, part of the organisation's processes and not viewed as a separate bureaucratic activity with little value. However, as with all objectives of this nature, there is no specific picture of what a fully risk-embedded organisation looks like and the goal of embedding risk management is an ongoing journey rather than one with a definite ending.

8.2 To help achieve the objective of embedding risk management throughout the organisation, the Council has a Risk Management Strategy. This is set out as Appendix A to this report.

8.3 Evidence of the application of risk management and of a risk management culture is set out as Appendix B.

Warwick District Council Risk Management Strategy

Purpose of strategy

The purpose of the strategy is to embed risk management in the Authority by establishing a risk management framework that provides:

- an efficient control environment
- the overt allocation of accountability for risk management throughout the organisation
- a well-established risk assessment process
- performance monitoring of risk management activity
- communications process to support risk management

Definition and scope of risk management

The Council has adopted the Audit Commission's definition of risk and risk management as contained in its Management Paper, 'Worth the risk: improving risk management in local government'. Although the Audit Commission has been recently abolished its definition of risk is still relevant and relied upon by many organisations.

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.

The overall process of managing risk can be divided into:

- *Risk analysis, or assessment, which includes the identification, estimation and evaluation of the risks; and*
- *Risk management that encompasses the planning, monitoring and controlling activities based on the information derived from risk analysis.*

Aims and objectives

The risk management policy of Warwick District Council is to adopt best practices in the identification, evaluation, and cost-effective control of risks to ensure that they are eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level.

It is acknowledged that some risks will always exist and will never be eliminated. All employees must understand the nature of risk and accept responsibility for risks

associated with their area of authority. The necessary support, assistance and commitment of senior management will be provided.

The risk management objectives of the Council are to:

- integrate risk management into the culture of the Council
- manage risk in accordance with best practice
- consider legal compliance as a minimum standard
- anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements
- prevent injury and damage and reduce the cost of risk
- raise awareness of the need for risk management.

These objectives will be achieved by:

- establishing a risk management organisational structure to act in an advisory and guiding capacity which is accessible to all employees
- including risk management as an agenda item at meetings as appropriate
- continuing to demonstrate the application of risk management principles
- providing risk management awareness training
- maintaining documented procedures for the control of risk and the provision of suitable information, training and supervision
- maintaining an appropriate incident reporting and recording system, with investigation procedures to establish cause and prevent recurrence
- preparing contingency plans in areas where there is a potential for an occurrence having a catastrophic effect on the Council and its service delivery capability
- maintaining effective communication
- monitoring arrangements on an ongoing basis.

Definition of the Council's risk appetite

An organisation's risk appetite is the amount of risk that it is prepared to take in order to achieve its objectives. Defining the organisation's risk appetite provides the strategic framework for effective decision-making. Risk appetites for local authorities will be lower due to the regulatory nature of most services and because of their stewardship obligations for public resources. However, local authorities may be forced to take risks beyond their choosing to comply with central government directives or to satisfy public expectations of improved services.

Warwick District Council's risk appetite is determined by individual circumstances. In general terms, the Council's approach to providing services is to be innovative and to seek continuous improvement within a framework of robust corporate governance. This framework includes risk management that identifies and assesses risks appertaining to actions being considered or proposed. Decisions on whether to proceed with such actions should only be taken after the careful assessment of the identified risks and an analysis of the risks compared to the benefits.

However, in all circumstances and at all times:

- The Council would wish to manage its financial affairs such that no action will be taken that would jeopardise its ability to continue to provide services within its available resource; and
- The Council would wish to secure the legal integrity of its actions.

Roles and responsibilities

In its management paper, "Worth the risk: improving risk management in local government", the Audit Commission sets out clearly the responsibilities of members and officers. Although the Audit Commission no longer exists, the guidance that it produced is still relevant and thereby applied by the Council. An extract of the guidance is set out below:

"Members need to determine within existing and new leadership structures how they will plan and monitor the council's risk management arrangements. They should:

- Decide on the structure through which risk management will be led and monitored;
- consider appointing a particular group or committee, such as an audit committee, to oversee risk management and to provide a focus for the process;
- agree an implementation strategy;
- approve the Council's policy on risk (including the degree to which the council is willing to accept risk);
- agree the list of most significant risks;
- receive reports on risk management and internal control – officers should report at least annually, with possibly interim reporting on a quarterly basis;
- commission and review an annual assessment of effectiveness; and
- approve the public disclosure of the outcome of this annual assessment, including publishing it in an appropriate manner.

The role of senior officers is to implement the risk management policy agreed by members.

It is important that the Chief Executive is the clear figurehead for implementing the risk management process by making a clear and public personal commitment to making it work. However, it is unlikely that the Chief Executive will have the time to lead in practice and, as part of the planning process, the person best placed to lead the risk management implementation and improvement process should be identified and appointed to carry out this task. Other people throughout the organisation should also be tasked with taking clear responsibility for appropriate aspects of risk management in their area of responsibility."

Summarised below are the risk management roles and responsibilities for the various groups and individuals within the Council.

Executive

To oversee the effective management of risk throughout the Council; to hold the senior management team accountable for the effective management of risk by officers of the Council.

Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

To scrutinise and review the management of risk on behalf of Executive.

Elected Members

To promote the importance of risk management in all that the Council does; to champion the cause of risk management.

Chief Executive

To be the clear figurehead for implementing the risk management process by making a clear and public personal commitment to making it work.

Senior Management Team

To ensure that the Council manages risk effectively through the development of a comprehensive risk management strategy; to monitor delivery by receiving reports from the Council's Risk Management Group and from the Audit & Risk Manager.

Risk champion¹

To champion the cause of risk management within the Council, particularly at the strategic level; to take personal responsibility for ensuring that the risk management objectives as set out in the policy are achieved.

Risk manager²

To support the Council and its departments and services in the effective development, implementation and review of the risk management strategy.

Risk management group

To determine, implement and review the Council's risk management policy and its risk management strategy. The risk management group is responsible for developing specific programmes and procedures for establishing and maintaining risk management activities. This group will ensure the dispersal of vital information and, where appropriate, provide guidance, interpretation and understanding of the systems involved.

The terms of reference of this group are set out as Annexe 1.

Departmental management teams

¹ This officer is the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ)

² This officer is the Audit and Risk Manager.

To ensure that risk is managed effectively in each service area within the agreed risk management strategy; to report to the Risk Management Group on how hazards and risks have been managed within their service area.

Service managers

To manage risk effectively in their particular service areas; to report on how hazards and risks have been managed to their Departmental Management Team or directly to the Risk Management Group.

Asset Steering Group

To ensure that WDC's property assets are provided, maintained and utilised to meet the current and future needs of the Council and its service users.

Assets Compliance and Delivery Group

Responsible to the Asset Steering Group for ensuring the compliance of corporate assets including HRA stock and also for delivering work streams and objectives from the Asset Steering Group.

Health and Safety Advisor

To advise on all matters pertaining to health and safety in relation to the Council as an employer and provider of services.

Insurance & Risk officer

To advise on practices which will minimise the likelihood of adverse events occurring and arrange insurance cover where necessary and appropriate.

Employees

To manage risk effectively in their jobs and report hazards and risks to their service managers.

The responsibilities of the various groups and individuals are summarised in the table that is included as Annexe 2.

Methodology for identifying and assessing risk

Risk Identification and Categorisation

Risks can be categorised under strategic and operational.

Strategic risks are those risks identified as potentially damaging to the achievement of the Council's objectives. These can be sub-classified into:

- Political
- Social
- Legislative
- Competitive
- Economic
- Technological
- Environmental
- Customer/citizen

Operational risks are those risks that should be managed by departmental officers who will be responsible for operating and maintaining the services. These can be sub-classified into:

- Professional
- Legal
- Contractual
- Environmental
- Financial
- Physical
- Information

Risk Assessment

For risk registers, the following definitions are applied for the measurement of risk in respect of probability and consequences:

Probability of Occurrence

Estimation	Description	Indicators
5: High (Probable)	Likely to occur each year (e.g. considered as more than 50% chance of occurrence in any year).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential of it occurring several times within the specified period (for example - ten years).• Has occurred recently.
4: Medium to High	Apply judgement	Apply judgement
3: Medium (Possible)	Likely to occur during a 10 year period (considered as between 5% and 25% chance of occurrence in any year).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could occur more than once within the period (for example - ten years).• Could be difficult to control due to some external influences.• There's a history of occurrence.
2: Low to Medium	Apply judgement	Apply judgement
1: Low (Remote)	Not likely to occur in a 10 year period (considered as less than 2% chance of occurrence in any year).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has not occurred.• Unlikely to occur.

Consequences

Estimation	Description
5: High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial impact on the organisation is likely to exceed £500K• Significant impact on the organisation's strategy or operational activities• Significant stakeholder concern
4: Medium to High	Apply judgement
3: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial impact on the organisation likely to be between £100K and £250K• Moderate impact on the organisation's strategy or operational activities• Moderate stakeholder concern
2: Low to Medium	Apply judgement
1: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial impact on the organisation likely to be less than £10K• Low impact on the organisation's strategy or operational activities• Low stakeholder concern

Annexe 1 to Strategy: Risk Management Group - Terms of Reference

The terms of the reference of the risk management group comprises:

Overall aim

- To ensure that effective Risk Management is in place across the Council.

Membership

- The Group will comprise representatives from key services across the Council.

Specific Objectives and Responsibilities

- Promote best practice in the management of risks.
- Assist in the identification and evaluation of risks that could threaten achievement of the Council's objectives.
- Help develop, implement and review the corporate risk management strategy and policy.
- Help managers maintain and develop their risk registers by periodically reviewing them and making recommendations on their improvement.
- Review events and disseminate information regarding lessons learnt in an attempt to help services improve on the management of risk.
- Compile and implement an annual work plan that helps to embed risk management in the organisation.
- Help create a risk-aware culture by, for example, instilling in staff the need to manage risks in their jobs.
- Identify cross-cutting and strategic risks for the attention of senior management.
- Make recommendations to management on practices and procedures that it is intended will improve the management of risks within Warwick District Council.
- Oversee the development and implementation of a consistent approach to risk management across the Council's services.

Annexe 2 to Strategy: Summary of Responsibilities

	Develop the corporate risk management strategy	Agree the corporate risk management strategy	Provide advice and support on strategy development and implementation	Implement the strategy	Share experience of risk and risk management issues	Review the effectiveness of the strategy
Elected members / Executive		▪				▪
Chief Executive		▪		▪		▪
Senior management team	▪	▪		▪		▪
Risk champion	▪		▪	▪	▪	▪
Audit & Risk Manager	▪		▪	▪	▪	▪
Risk management group	▪		▪	▪	▪	▪
Departmental management teams				▪	▪	▪
Service managers				▪	▪	▪
Asset Compliance Group				▪	▪	
Health & Safety Adviser			▪	▪	▪	
Insurance & Risk Officer			▪	▪	▪	
Employees				▪	▪	

Application of Risk Management Activities and of a Risk Management Culture in the Council

Programme of Service Risk Register Reviews

Until fairly recently, the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee had a programme of service risk register reviews. This proved to be a very effective process and helped to raise the profile of risk management throughout the organisation as well as the value derived from it. The programme of reviews was later incorporated within overall service area reviews that included contract risk registers, performance information and budgetary/financial information but this too has ceased. Service area management teams are required to review their service risk registers at least quarterly.

Risk Management Group

The Council has a Risk Management Group comprising representatives from services whose main purpose is to champion risk management throughout the organisation.

Risk Management Training

Risk management training is provided as and when required, for example after Council elections or, in the case of managers, for new starters.

Committee Reports Risk Template

Committee reports are now required to detail the risk management implications in respect of the issues contained in the report. This requirement raises the profile of risk management and helps to ensure the proper consideration of risks when embarking on new projects or developing strategies and policies.

Project Risk Registers

Project risk registers are now routinely in place for specific projects such as the Local Plan and Europa Way. In the case of the Local Plan, until its implementation, this was reviewed by SMT regularly. There is of course scope for the greater use of project risk registers.

Identification of Emerging Risks

SMT now review 'potentially emerging risks' and these are included in the quarterly Significant Business Risk Register report to Executive. Clearly, emerging risks or triggers, if they are significant, corporate or strategic, had always been included on the SBRR, but potentially emerging risks had not been highlighted in any way, either on the SBRR or in the covering report. These are risks related to events that may or may not happen such as ideas or proposals. It was felt that emerging risks should be mentioned in the covering report in order that they are brought to Members' attention. Future reports will describe any developments in respect of these prospective events.

Performance Management Information: Risk Management Indicators

Risk management information is used as a key indicator of organisational performance. The number of red, amber and green risks recorded on the service risk registers (in total) and on the Significant Business Risk Register is monitored by SMT quarterly. The information, together with other Governance data, is presented to SMT in the following way:



Service Activities

Services embed risk management approaches and practices in many of their activities, whether day-to-day or strategic. Numerous examples exist including the administration of Section 106 agreements, fire risk assessments, buildings security, and the delivery of community events. Aside from tangible examples, there is no doubt that managers more and more demonstrate a risk management culture in delivering their services. This can be hard to evidence, however, as it can sometimes be based on a state of mind rather than discernible activities.

Executive
1st October 2020

Title: Joint Local Plan Review
Lead Officers: Bill Hunt, Philip Clarke
Portfolio Holder: John Cooke
Public report / Confidential report: Public
Wards of the District directly affected: All

Contrary to the policy framework: No
 Contrary to the budgetary framework: No
 Key Decision: Yes
 Included within the Forward Plan: Yes
 Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: No
 Consultation & Community Engagement: No
 Final Decision: Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	7/9/20	Bill Hunt
Head of Service	7/9/20	Dave Barber
CMT	7/9/20	Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt, Andrew Jones, Dave Barber
Section 151 Officer	7/9/20	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	7/9/20	Andrew Jones
Finance	7/9/20	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	7/9/20	Cllr. Cooke

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for the preparation of a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire to be carried out by this Council in conjunction with Stratford District Council, and seeks approval for this work to progress.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Executive notes the work that has been undertaken by officers to explore how a Joint Local Plan Review may be undertaken with Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC) as set out in appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Executive supports the Council working with SDC to deliver a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire.
- 2.3 That, subject to SDC Cabinet also agreeing to work with this Council to deliver a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire, Executive agrees to the recommendations set out in appendix 1 as the basis for the Joint Local Plan to be prepared.
- 2.4 That Executive agrees that a budget of £100,000 be made available from the Planning Appeals Reserve to fund initial work of the Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire during 2020/2021.
- 2.5 That, subject to recommendation 2.3, Executive notes that in respect of the recommendations in appendix 1 relating to the establishment of a Joint Executive/Cabinet, the details of how this will operate will need to be approved by this Council and SDC, and instructs officers to prepare a further report on the options and operations for this.
- 2.6 That Executive ask the Leader to agree terms of reference and other arrangements for the Local Plan Advisory Board and to appoint its members on behalf of this Council and that the Chief Executive be authorised to take all other steps necessary to implement the recommendations on the appendix.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

Recommendation 2.1

- 3.1 In July, Executive approved a paper which considered matters relating to local government restructure, and in particular identified a number of opportunities for closer working with Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC). Specifically, it agreed that in the context of the joint statement that had been prepared by the leaders of the two councils *"that agreement be given in principle to conducting a Joint Core Strategy/Local Plan Review and that a further paper be presented setting out details of a proposed programme, a member and officer governance"*.
- 3.2 Following this decision, officers have begun detailed discussions with officers from SDC to consider both the whether a Joint Core Strategy/Local Plan Review should be undertaken, and the way in which this work should be

undertaken. The outcome of these discussions are set out in the paper attached as **appendix 1** to this report. This paper is being considered both by this meeting today, and also by SDC's Cabinet on 5th October.

Recommendation 2.2

- 3.3 As the July Council report identified, within the Coventry and Warwickshire sub region there have been and are extensive discussions ongoing about developing a sub-regional spatial framework. Both SDC and WDC are part of that discussion. Whilst there seems to be general agreement there is no agreed proposal to consider and implement. Meanwhile, both SDC and WDC are committed to reviewing their respective Local Plans/Core Strategies in 2021, though in reality preparatory work should start now. Given the close relationship between the plans, as demonstrated by the extensive joint work undertaken in the development of the existing agreed Local Plan/Core Strategy proposals; there is a logic to undertake the planned reviews at the same time as one co-ordinated effort.
- 3.4 There are other good reasons to support development of a Local Plan for South Warwickshire which covers both Stratford on Avon and Warwick Districts particularly around accommodating housing growth, planning for infrastructure and supporting employment growth and the economy. These are discussed further in section 1 of appendix 1. Taken together, there is a strong case for preparing a joint Local Plan to cover both districts, hence the reference to South Warwickshire.

Recommendation 2.3

- 3.5 Appendix 1 also goes on to consider in more detail a number of specific matters relating to the production of the Local Plan. These are:-
- What might a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire (JLPSW) look like?
 - What organisational / staffing structure is required to deliver a JLPSW?
 - What governance arrangements should we put in place to support and manage the delivery of the JLPSW?
 - What might be an indicative work programme?
 - What Finance issues need to be addressed?
 - What are the next steps for taking this work forward?
- 3.6 At the end of each section are recommendations in relation to each of these matters. As noted above, this paper, and these same recommendations, are also to be presented to SDC's Cabinet on 5th October. It is recommended that, subject to SDC Cabinet also agreeing these, the Executive supports all of the recommendations in the appendix.
- 3.7 A few additional comments on this, some of which are particularly relevant to Warwick District Council, can be made.
- 3.8 Many of the principles and recommendations in the appendix are there to give a guide to how work on the JLPSW will commence. Some of these may well change as the JLPSW is prepared. For example:-

- Section 2 sets out a proposed scope for the JLPSW, however it is understood that this will be kept under review as work is undertaken.
- Section 3 sets out how the work on the JLPSW will be staffed. Currently it is proposed that a small team of three officers is created through secondments from the two authorities however this may be kept under review.

- 3.9 As regards the organisational and staffing structure of the JLPSW Team, this is set out in section 3 of appendix 1. So that members are aware, if WDC was to second 1.5 officers to the JLPSW Team, this would still retain a core of four planning policy officers to undertake other planning policy work for this council (noting however that these officers may be required to support the core JLPSW Team at key stages of the JLPSW production (such as during periods of public consultation)).
- 3.10 Some of the key recommendations relate to the governance and management arrangements (section 4 of the appendix). A few comments can be made about these.
- 3.11 Local Plan Advisory Board: In this Council, the role of Member Working Groups and Member Reference Groups has been important in many projects, to ensure both that members across the Council are fully briefed on key issues, and also can effectively input into projects. In the preparation of all previous Local Plans in Warwick District, groups such as this have been vital for building an understanding in, and confidence of, the emerging Local Plan. Such groups have been a place where policy ideas can be tested and discussed and have provided a much greater level of scrutiny that is ever possible through formal Scrutiny Committee. In the context of the major decisions which will have to be made in a JLPSW, the need to understand wider geography of the new JLPSW and the need to understand the views and concerns of fellow councillors in SDC, such a member working group is felt to be of particular importance.
- 3.12 Recently, the Council has agreed to replace its many working and reference groups with a series of Programme Advisory Boards. These provide a good model for how any member involvement in the Joint Local Plan may operate. The proposal in this report is therefore to create a South Warwickshire Local Plan Advisory Board, made up – equally - of councillors from both SDC and WDC and chaired jointly by portfolio holders. For this Council that person is proposed to be the Development Portfolio Holder.

Recommendation 2.4

- 3.13 As regards costs associated with preparing a JLPSW, these are known to be significant. The current Local Plan (adopted in 2017) cost approximately £1 million (not including staffing costs). Key areas where costs will be incurred include commissioning the evidence base, public consultation and costs associated with the Public Examination. It is expected that through economies of scale (including by commissioning parts of the evidence base on a wider sub-regional basis), and - importantly - sharing of costs with SDC, the costs of delivering the JLP will be less than for WDC than if it was

to prepare a Local Plan on its own.

- 3.14 It will be a key early task of the JLP Team that it establishes a detailed programme for preparing the JLPSW and estimates a budget cost for this work. The budget report to be presented to Executive in February 2021 will set out the likely budgetary requirements for preparing the JLPSW in the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. It is estimated that this is likely to be in the region of £500,000 to £600,000 in total (on the basis that the total cost will be £1 - £1.2m and that these costs will be shared equally with SDC). It is prudent now, however, to identify funds to commence work the JLPSW in 2020/21 and £100,000 is identified from within the Planning Appeals Reserve for this purpose. An element of this will be to cover early legal fees, including the cost of legal advice pertaining to the establishment of the Joint Committee.

Recommendation 2.5

- 3.15 Section 4 of appendix 1 proposed two alternative models for how key decisions on the JLPSW could be taken. The recommendation in this report is that, except for those matters that need to be referred to the Full Councils of both authorities, the two councils establish a Joint Executive Committee. Given that the two councils are actively exploring much closer working, the creation of a single decision-making body for key decisions relating to the JLPSW would be strong expression of the desire of both councils to work closely together to address key development challenges across both districts.
- 3.16 The Joint Executive Committee would be established in accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and powers would be delegated to it by the Leader. The Joint Executive Committee would exercise the executive functions relating to the preparation of a joint plan, with decisions on its submission to the Secretary of State and its adoption reserved to the respective full Councils. Because the Joint Executive Committee will exercise statutory functions on behalf of both authorities, it will be necessary to agree formal arrangements for its governance and operation and a separate report will be brought to Executive and the Leader at the earliest opportunity. The Joint Executive Committee will not need to make any decisions in the near future and work can get under way on establishing the other arrangements proposed in the appendix and beginning the investigatory work for the review in advance of establishing the Joint Executive Committee.

Recommendation 2.6

- 3.17 In establishing the Local Plan Advisory Board, there will be a number of important matters to agree including the terms of reference and appointment of members who will sit on it. It is recommended that Executive ask the Leader to agree these and other arrangements and that the Chief Executive be authorised to take all other steps necessary to implement the recommendations on the appendix. In doing this, both the Leader and Chief Executive will work in partnership with the Leader and Chief Executive at SDC.

4. Policy Framework

4.1. Fit for the Future (FFF)

- 4.1.1. The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. This report shows the way forward for implementing a significant part of one of the Council's Key projects.
- 4.1.2. The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the Council's website](#). The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

4.2. FFF Strands

4.2.1 External impacts of proposal(s)

People - Health, Homes, Communities - A JLPSW will have a major impact on the Council's ability to meet its housing needs, including the provision of affordable housing, and to provide sports, recreation, leisure, community and cultural facilities to serve its population.

Services - Green, Clean, Safe - A JLPSW will have a major impact on all the Council's "green, clean and safe" aspirations. It will support the Council's ability to meet its climate change targets through the planning policies it puts in place regarding the location of new development and standards for new buildings. Policies in the Local Plan will also support safer communities.

Money- Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment - A JLPSW will have a major impact on the Council's ability to support the local economy through providing appropriate and affordable places of work in the right locations and by other policies to support the economy including within the district's town centres.

4.2.2. Internal impacts of the proposal(s)

People - Effective Staff - It will be integral to the success of the JLPS that staff are properly trained and supported to undertake a wider range of tasks. As this is a joint Local Plan then the council will need to work with Stratford District Council to ensure that proper training and support is given to staff across both councils.

Services - Maintain or Improve Services - Good stakeholder engagement and public consultation are key to ensuring the success of the JLPSW.

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term - It is anticipated that a joint Local Plan will save costs over each authority undertaking its Local Plan review separately. This will be kept under close review throughout the process.

4.3. Supporting Strategies

4.3.1. The Local Plan is a key supporting strategy for FFF. It supports all three strands as set out above. Preparing and adopting a Local Plan will therefore ensure a key tool for delivering FFF is in place and can be used to underpin a range of implementation policies, proposals and projects.

4.4. Changes to Existing Policies

4.4.1. Council's current planning policies are set, in large part in the current Warwick District Local Plan (2011 – 29). A new JLPSW will replace this Plan and set a new policy framework for making key planning decisions affecting Warwick District.

4.5. Impact Assessments

4.5.1. Sustainability Assessments and Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out throughout the preparation of the JLPSW.

5. Budgetary Framework

5.1 The staffing costs of resourcing the Joint Local Plan Team will be met through existing resources within the salary budgets of the exiting team.

5.2 As regards other costs associated with preparing a JLP, the Planning Appeals Reserve currently has £475,000 in it. Some of this is currently committed to other appeals work however it would be reasonable to set £100,000 aside for the JLPSW.

6. Risks

6.1 There are many risks associated with undertaking a Local Plan review. These are financial, reputational and, sometimes, legal. All local authorities are required to prepare Local Plans and this Council is experienced in managing these risks. All stages of the Local Plan are subject to councillor advice, scrutiny and approval and so there is plenty of opportunity for councillors to have proper oversight of the technical work and procedures that are being undertaken.

6.2 There are additional risks in undertaking a joint Local Plan review with another local authority as is being proposed here. These are largely political and relate to the willingness of both councils to continue to work together to approve the document. Although many key decisions are being made jointly through a Joint Executive Committee the Local Plan will require to be approved at key stages by each Council (see section 4 in appendix 1). Failure of either council to approve the Local Plan will mean that it cannot progress beyond that stage. This risk will be managed through close joint management of the Local Plan by both councils together, and significant levels of involvement from councillors of both councils particularly through the JLP Advisory Board.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 Executive could decide not to progress with a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire but to continue to prepare a Local Plan for Warwick District alone. For the reasons set out in appendix 1, this option is not supported. The two councils have agreed in principle to prepare a joint Local Plan and nothing in this report would suggest that this is not an achievable option.

Proposal for preparing a South Warwickshire Plan involving Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council

Introduction

This paper has been prepared jointly by officers from Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) and Warwick District Council (WDC) for consideration and agreement by both Councils.

Both SDC and WDC have agreed to prepare a Local Plan for both Council areas, given the economic and geographic functional synergies between the two Districts and the fact that both Districts are keen to commence early reviews of their adopted Local Plan/Core Strategy.

The purpose of this paper is to consider a number of key issues that need to be addressed before the two councils commence preparation of a South Warwickshire Plan (SWP), and then to make recommendations based on these. The key issues and recommendations can be summarised around a number of key questions:-

1. What is the case for preparing a joint Local Plan?
2. What might a Joint Local Plan look like?
3. What organisational / staffing structure is required to deliver a SWP?
4. What governance arrangements should we put in place to support and manage the delivery of the SWP?
5. What might be an indicative work programme?
6. What might be the financial implications?
7. What are the next steps for taking this work forward?

It is worth noting here that the current government White Paper ("Planning for the future" August 2020) proposes some significant changes to the scope of Local Plans. This will impact on both Councils regardless of how each decides to progress its Local Plan review. These changes will also require new primary legislation and, even once enacted, there will be transitional arrangements put in place as all local authorities update their plans to follow the new format and scope. There will therefore be a considerable time before both Councils know when and how these proposed changes will impact on our Local Plan review. There are good reasons for each Council to make progress now on Local Plan review, and therefore the advent of the White Paper is not a reason to delay this work. Having said that, it would be prudent to seek to ensure as far as possible, that the SWP is future proofed and anticipates expected changes. It is worth remembering, that irrespective of the system for preparing Local Plans, the evidence sitting behind them will remain the same. Indeed, the Government's Chief Planner has advised that the proposed reforms should not be seen as an opportunity to pause the preparation of plans and address the development challenges facing local areas.

It should also be noted that both Councils have been involved in discussions about joint plan-making for the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region. Those discussions are ongoing. There is no conflict between these discussions and the Proposal for a single SWP. Indeed, it represents a continuation of existing practices of joint preparation for the evidence base to underpin Local Plans.

By way of background, the preparation of Local Plans is led by a Service Manager. Whilst there are similarities between the planning policy service structures of both Councils, there are some important differences:

	SDC	WDC
Head of Service	Deputy Chief Executive	Head of Development Services
Service Manager	Policy Manager (Enterprise, Housing & Planning)	Policy & Projects Manager
Teams	Local Plans Housing Policy & Development "Enterprise & Planning Projects"*	Policy & Delivery (i.e. Local Plans) Enterprise Projects & Economic Development
* Not a defined team as such but staff led by a Senior Policy Planner reporting directly to the Policy Manager		

WDC has a much larger economic development function than SDC. Reflecting the holistic approach to plan-preparation, the SDC Policy Service also includes Housing Policy and Development, which leads on housing enabling and the provision of affordable housing. These activities sit within the Housing Service at WDC. All aspects of CIL also sit within the Policy Service at WDC, whereas CIL administration at SDC is within the Central Administration Service. The WDC Projects & Economic Development function also includes the Business Support & Events team.

Whilst the focus of this proposal at the current time is the preparation of a Local Plan for the two Council areas, this collaborative approach is a natural precursor to closer integration and working in the context of Local Government Review.

1. What is the case for preparing a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire (SWP)?

The geography of south Warwickshire means that Stratford on Avon and Warwick Districts have a strong relationship in relation to infrastructure (M40/A46/rail links/etc) the economy (JLR; Tourism; commuting); population migration; social and cultural offer, and environmental assets (such as the River Avon and canal network). On this basis alone, there is a strong planning case for closer working for strategic planning issues. This is particularly with respect to the following:-

- accommodating housing growth: the two authorities face housing pressures from two housing market areas: the Coventry & Warwickshire HMA (WDC & SDC) and the Birmingham HMA (SDC). It will also enable a comprehensive approach to be taken to strategic cross-boundary issues such as Green Belt. The SWP will include a Green Belt Review which would ideally be carried out as part of a wider review of the West Midlands Green Belt across the Coventry & Warwickshire sub-region.
- infrastructure planning: similarly, infrastructure cross local authority boundaries and key road (e.g. M40, M42 and A46) and rail infrastructure link the two districts with the wider sub-region and beyond, offering opportunities as well as challenges for how these can best be supported. A joint approach to strategic planning would help shape a case for where additional infrastructure investment should be directed and how it should be funded and provided.

- allocation of employment land: there is a strong link between the economies of the two districts that would benefit from a shared understanding and policy framework. This includes where employment should be located (including with respect to major transport corridors), how major local employers working in both districts (e.g. JLR) can best be supported and tackling pressing common local issues such as the availability of affordable employment land.
- adapting and mitigating climate change: the environment has no boundaries and there is greater scope for a more environmentally-focused approach across a wider geography including to take account of environmental opportunities

Importantly, this approach enables a South Warwickshire approach to the development challenges facing both Districts and in doing so the SWP will be ‘local authority boundary blind’.

There is therefore a logic to the two councils working more closely together to address these strategic planning matters. The two councils have agreed in principle to consider conducting a joint review of the council’s respective Core Strategy / Local Plan. A joint SWP would be a logical way for strategic planning decisions affecting both districts to be made. There is provision in section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for two or more planning authorities to agree to prepare a single development plan document for both their areas. It furthermore follows that both authorities should undertake a Joint Local Plan on the basis that the whole of South Warwickshire (SDC and WDC geographical areas) can be treated as a single entity for the purpose of the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: both councils, working together, commit to preparing a Local Plan for South Warwickshire pursuant to section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and that this commitment guides consideration of all the following recommendations set out in this report.

Duty to Cooperate

As part of any plan preparation, all local authorities are required to cooperate with one another on cross-boundary issues. Failure to do so can lead to plans being found unsound by inspectors, leading to considerable delays in bringing forward a plan if the duty is not complied with. Part of this cooperation involves liaising with wider outside bodies as appropriate. As part of preparing a SWP, and given that the whole of south Warwickshire is being treated as a single geographic entity for the purposes of plan making, it is a fundamental principle that the two authorities speak with one voice as part of the Duty to Cooperate requirement. This will normally be as part of officer-to-officer meetings and engagement, but may also include Member engagement. This will include, as necessary, on matters which previously would only have impacted on one of the authorities. For example, both councils are in the Coventry & Warwickshire Housing Market Area (HMA) and would be involved in discussions over housing numbers and distribution within this area. SDC, however, is also in the Greater Birmingham HMA and is involved in these discussions also. In future, both councils will share information on, and involvement in, the Greater Birmingham HMA as part of Duty to Cooperate. The Planning White Paper proposes that the statutory duty be repealed but, even if this comes to pass, effective co-operation between authorities and the ability to speak with one voice will remain vital.

On a day to day basis, this requirement will be managed by the SWP Team under the guidance of the SWP Management Team (see section 6 below).

RECOMMENDATION: both SDC and WDC agree to share information and to work together as a single team in all respects in the preparation of the SWP including for the purposes of the “Duty to Cooperate” requirements.

2. What might a South Warwickshire Plan look like?

It is recognised that the scope of this may – to an extent – evolve as work progresses, and so any scope should not be too rigidly prescribed at this stage. Also notwithstanding the above comments on the Government White Paper, the following is suggested as a likely scope for any Local Plan review.

Definitely in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development strategy including spatial strategy - Place shaping and visions for towns - Levels of housing and employment growth - Directions of growth - Strategic infrastructure - Major green belt revisions - Climate change policies - Strategic employment and housing allocations - Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure
Possibly in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major allocations - Strategic town centre policies - Employment land policies - Affordable housing
Probably not in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non strategic town centre policies (retail frontages, etc) - Non strategic allocations (including small allocations in villages) - Local development management policies - Open space policies
Definitely not in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed local policies, eg: parking, - Policies for specific sites except where these relate to strategic allocations or revisions to the Green Belt

The rationale for this suggested scope is not because those matters that may “probably” or “definitely” not be in the SWP are not important, nor that they would not necessarily be appropriate for joint working across the two authorities. The scope is being suggested so that the SWP can focus on the key strategic priorities that any Local Plan review needs to focus on and speed up the timetable for preparing the SWP. Other matters can be dealt with outside of the SWP, either as separate Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents as appropriate. There could well be a good case for these being prepared jointly, and this should be kept under active review.

The details of the precise scope of the SWP will be agreed as work progresses, including through joint member involvement in the governance of the SWP (see below).

Importantly, the preparation of the SWP will be informed by the lessons learnt from both Councils from preparing their current plans.

RECOMMENDATION: the scope set out above forms the basis for starting work on the SWP and that this will be kept under review as the work progresses. This would include preparation of a joint evidence base as well as a call for strategic sites.

3. What organisational/staffing structure is required to deliver the South Warwickshire Plan?

There are potentially four options to deliver a SWP:-

- a. The two Services remain wholly separate but work collaboratively to prepare the SWP
- b. A shared project team, drawn from officers across both councils, is created to prepare the SWP lead by a dedicated project lead officer. Team members would work on the SWP on as required. Non-SWP functions would remain with respective Councils.
- c. A dedicated SWP team is created staffed by officers on secondment from both Councils. Non-SWP functions remain with respective Councils.
- d. The two services merge completely to create a single Policy Unit to deliver all policy services for both Councils.

In determining the most appropriate option, consideration also needs to be given to the other work streams currently undertaken by the planning teams in each respective Policy Service, and these are summarised below. A particular issue is the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Plan. Depending on its scope, this topic could be included within the SWP. Alternatively, the two Councils could also agree to preparing a separate SWP specifically for Gypsies and Travellers. Unsurprisingly, many are duplicated because each LPA is obliged to prepare its own version of planning-related documents and data. However, there could be scope, depending on the option, for efficiencies to be achieved by removing some duplication of effort.

- G&T Plan
- Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS)
- CIL Spend
- Monitoring & 5YHLSC
- Self-build Register
- Brownfield Land Register
- Conservation Area Assessments
- SHLAA / Urban Capacity
- Neighbourhood Plans¹

SDC Only:

- Site Allocations Plan
- G&T SPD
- Parish Plans
- Cotswolds AONB

WDC Only:

- Climate Change Plan
- Canalside Plan

¹ This is a significant work stream for SDC

In addition, each Council has to produce a Local Development Scheme (LDS) or plan timetable and a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how they will engage stakeholders and communities in plan preparation. Both will require co-ordination in respect of the SWP.

As a wider consideration, thought also needs to be given as to where CIL would sit in each respective Council. SDC is keen to review its CIL regime alongside its plan review but doing so could have resource implications. A SWP would, at the very least, require co-ordination in terms of infrastructure provision. Retaining separate CIL regimes could pose practical difficulties. At the very least, agreement would be required for a certain percentage to be spent on South Warwickshire-wide infrastructure to deliver the SWP.

Option A - Collaboration

It is unlikely that this option would work on a practical level. In particular, there would be no single officer taking responsibility and ownership for the preparation of the plan. Allocating work responsibilities could prove difficult with junior officers unclear about a 'chain of command'.

Option B - Shared Project Team

This option would resolve the ownership issue and enable a chain of command for SWP work. Officers from both Councils would be brought in, as appropriate, for SWP work. Tension may arise however in terms of prioritisation of workloads between SWP and non-SWP work. The SWP Lead would report to both existing Policy Managers but also directly to a SWP Member Working Group (see below).

The Councils would have to agree how the dedicated project lead officer post was to be funded and delivered. Would this be through the creation of a new post (jointly funded by both councils) or would it be created through a secondment opportunity? If through a secondment opportunity, then it is likely that one council would provide the secondee and the other would need to provide a financial contribution to fund 50% of this post. Other posts in the team would remain with their respective Councils.

Option C - Dedicated SWP Team

This is an extension of option B above, but with the creation of a dedicated core "SWP Team". It would be staffed by both authorities putting staff at the disposal of each other under section 113 of the Local Government Act 2972, which would not constitute a formal secondment or alter their employment status. The two Council's would jointly recruit staff from the two existing Policy Services, in the first instance.

The major benefit of this approach is that it provides a dedicated resource to prepare the SWP with officers focused solely on this task without being 'distracted' by other priorities. Those planning policy officers that are not assigned to the SWP Team would remain within their authority to progress other planning policy work outside of the SWP. There would need to be an expectation, however, that all officers would be available to support the work of the SWP Team at key times or to provide specific skills. This would include, for example, at key points when commissioning elements of the evidence base, during public consultation exercises and during the Public Examination. In this way, the effective capacity of the team could flex to meet operational requirements.

This Team could comprise, as a minimum, a Manager, Senior Planning Policy Officer and Planning Assistant. In addition, the potential for a dedicated project manager role to lead on the successful delivery of this major project will be explored. A smaller core team would have less impact on the

wider service but may not be as effective in terms of delivery (depending on other priorities) although it could be established on the proviso that the team would expect to call on both individual authority's teams for additional help where required. A significantly larger team could negatively impact upon the residual functions of both Councils.

Both Councils would fund 50% of the staffing costs. It is expected that the team will be staffed from existing staff resources, although there may need to be some financial contribution (in lieu of personnel) depending on salary grading.

The exact role and grading of the Team Manager post is still to be determined. It is acknowledged that there could be a lack of clarity for this post-holder in terms of line management. However, this post would 'report' to the South Warwickshire Plan Advisory Group (see Section 4 below) to ensure consistent oversight from both Councils. In establishing the post, both Councils could commit to reviewing the scope and remit of the role after 6 months to see how effective the new arrangements were. This approach is considered to be a pragmatic first step to the preparation of the SWP.

Option D - Shared Service / Joint Policy Unit

This option would see both planning policy services combined and restructured into a single Joint Policy Unit. A SWP Team would be set up within this unit, but there would be a wider merging of the functions of each authority including, importantly at Senior Management level. This would create a clear framework within which resources across the two authorities could be combined and work that could be reasonably carried out on a cross-authority basis could be undertaken.

A JPU would be more challenging to set up, with potential greater impacts on existing staff. As set out above, whilst there are synergies between the two Council's Policy Services there are some important differences. The Council's would need to resolve what service functions are included in any JPU and any consequential structural implications. The fact that both Council's already operate Policy Services that encompass functions outside of the land-use planning system suggests that they both appreciate and understand the benefits of a holistic approach to plan-making and better outputs that can be achieved when the teams responsible for planning strategy are combined with those for economic and housing strategy, for example.

One further benefit of a JPU could be in terms of the ICT support packages, e.g. GIS, consultation databases, monitoring systems etc especially where existing systems are not fit for purpose. Whilst licensing arrangements would need to be considered, migrating to shared systems would have the benefit of some staff being familiar with their use.

There are clear benefits in moving towards creating a Joint Policy Unit, however to do so now would be time consuming, would impact upon existing staff and, in the short term, divert resources away from the immediate priority of progressing the SWP. Whilst a Joint Policy Unit may be a long term aspiration for both Councils many of its objectives, including – but not limited to – making progress with the SWP, can be achieved more quickly by other options. Creating a more focussed SWP Team (as proposed in option C above) creates a springboard for wider discussions about different models of closer joint working in the future.

RECOMMENDATION: option C (a dedicated core "SWP Team") is created to manage the work of the SWP. It is also recommended that this be funded on 50/50 basis by each authority. Each council's contribution would be made up by either assigning staff or making a financial contribution to the

other. The precise size of the SWP Team will be an operational matter, however the model set out above of a 3 FTE officer team with consideration given to a dedicated project management support, would seem an appropriate first step.

4. What governance and management arrangements should we put in place to support the delivery of the SWP?

Creating a governance structure that is operationally effective, ensures good stakeholder engagement and has the confidence of councillors for both councils will be fundamentally important to the success of the SWP.

A possible governance framework – and some options within this - is set out below in the diagram below.

	Purpose (see below for further details)		
1	Formal approval of Local Plan at key stages as required by constitution	SDC Council	WDC Council
2	Formal approval of Local Plan at key stages where Full Council approval is not required by constitution	SWP Executive Committee	
3	Formal scrutiny by each Council prior to (2) above.	SDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee	WDC Scrutiny Committee
4	Focal point for stakeholder engagement	South Warwickshire Place Board	
5	Further informal stakeholder engagement with existing groups	Coventry & Warwickshire Infrastructure Partnership	Existing Stakeholder Forums (Business, Citizens, Developer, Parish)
6	A joint member working group to provide informal scrutiny of Local Plan proposals as advised by SWP Management Team (7).	South Warwickshire Plan Advisory Group	
7	Management support for officer team.	SWP Management Team	
8	Officer team delivering SWP	SWP officer team	

	Decision making
	Scrutiny
	Operational
	Advisory

Within this framework there are a few key elements that need particular consideration.

Formal decision making on the SWP

There are some key stages of Local Plan preparation that require formal approval by Full Council. It would mean that both Councils would need to separately approve the SWP at these key stages. At the very least, these stages are Proposed Submission consultation, the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State, considering the Inspector’s Proposed Modifications and its final adoption. Consideration would need to be given to where authority for approval to consult on the earlier stages

of the SWP sat and whether in the circumstances of a single plan, it should also sit with the respective Councils. It would be possible to create a statutory joint committee (under section 29 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) able to make these decisions but that would require an order made by the Secretary of State establishing a new planning authority. This is thought to be an option that exceeds the pooling of responsibilities presently envisaged.

Approval of all other stages of any Local Plan/Core Strategy are currently delegated to Executive/Cabinet. There are two options available for how these decisions could be made for a SWP.

- Firstly, each council could separately and formally approve all key stages of the SWP (much as happens at the moment) through Executive/Cabinet. The main limitation here would be that one council could not progress to the next stage of plan production without the approval of the other. This option would retain sovereignty of decision making within each Council but runs the risk that if one Council refused to support the SWP, the other could not progress it.
- Secondly, both councils could agree to cede authority for agreeing the SWP to a separate Joint Executive Committee made up of Councillors from both councils. The decision of this committee would be binding on both councils.

In practice, in most places where joint strategic plans are prepared (e.g. the Black Country) authorities opt for the first option, and rely on the close joint working that has been fostered throughout the process to identify and therefore help manage the political risks inherent in such an option. However, most joint strategic plans are not prepared in the context of two councils that are actively exploring much closer working in the way that SDC and WDC currently is doing. Creating a single decision-making body for key decisions relating to the SWP would be a strong expression of the desire of both councils to work closely together to address key development challenges across both districts.

As such, it is recommended that a single Executive Committee with decision-making powers is established which then prepares a single report to the two respective Councils.

SWP Management Team

On a day to day level, management support for the SWP Team would be provided by a nominated Head of Service/Senior Manager from both councils. This in turn would be supported by a wider SWP Management Team. It is suggested that this is made up of the following from each authority: relevant Portfolio Holder, a member of Corporate Management Team and the HoS/Senior Manager responsible for the SWP. This Management team would meet on a regular basis (to be agreed but suggest this is on a fortnightly or monthly basis). The purpose of the Management Team is to:

- provide a regular strategic steer including when and how wider political and stakeholder engagement (the SWP Member Working Group – see below) is needed.
- give support and enabling wider resource allocation and advice where needed
- ensure key milestones are being met.

South Warwickshire Plan Advisory Board (SWPAB)

The SWPAB is a vital element of the wider governance structure for developing the SWP. It would not have any formal decision making role but would be a wider working and reference group of councillors for the SWP with a wide and deep informal scrutiny role. Its main purposes are as follows:

- provide an informal conduit for wider political involvement from both councils on the SWP to build knowledge of the SWP and confidence in the work that is being done

- provide a place where key issues for the SWP and key decisions could be informally discussed in a confidential setting.

The SWPAB would be a key place where (hopefully) understanding and consensus can be established built around key policy issues, including those that impact on cross-boundary issues. It would allow a greater level of Member involvement than is available through normal scrutiny committees. Meetings of the SWPAB would be private and confidential, and allow a “safe space” where councillors could discuss sometimes challenging issues and help officers to shape policy options for wider public discussion including with stakeholders.

Membership would be agreed but there would be equal representation from both councils. The SWPAG would be jointly chaired by the two relevant portfolio holders. The officer lead for this group would be the SWP Team Leader supported by the officers from within the SWP Management Team.

South Warwickshire Place Board

The creation of the ‘Place Board’ (akin to the former Local Strategic Partnerships) is considered integral to the success of the plan, allowing a wider group of key stakeholders to ‘buy-in’ to the plan and the process. Membership could include SDC, WDC, town councils, Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC), Warwickshire County Council, CWLEP, Chambers of Commerce, Shakespeare’s England, BIDs, Universities and key businesses.

SDC has put together a model for a Place Board and it is considered that this offers a good model which could easily be expanded to incorporate key stakeholders in Warwick District. A draft of the Place Board (as it relates to SDC) is shown in appendix A. In addition to the main Place Board it includes a number of sub groups. The exact composition of the Place Board can be agreed by the SWP Management Team in consultation with the SWPAB.

There are also a number of existing stakeholder networks operating across the two districts. In addition to the Place Board, these groups will need to be engaged and consulted with in developing the SWP.

RECOMMENDATION:

- **the above governance model is used as the basis for delivering the SWP.**
- **In respect of any decisions and recommendations currently made by the Cabinet at SDC and Executive at WDC, the Executives will explore more detailed proposals for their replacement by a single Joint Executive Committee made up of Councillors from both councils. Where a decision is made by this committee, this will be binding on both councils.**

Councillor composition of the SWP committees/groups will agreed by the Leaders of SDC and WDC, on the basis of parity between the two councils

5. Indicative work programme

Both Authorities Local Development Schemes show the Plan Review submission stage public consultation taking place in quarter 4 of 2022. In order to get to this stage an indicative work programme is set out below:

Date	Stage
Autumn 2020	Initial stakeholder engagement and Housing & Economic Development Needs Assessments (HEDNA) commissioned
2021	Prepare all other evidence base, compare extant policies with revised NPPF, drafting of new policies
Jan/Feb 2021	Initial spatial options consultation and call for strategic sites
Mar 2021	Deadline for south of Coventry limited Review (will require WDC Exec paper deferring)
Winter 2021	Deliverability and viability work on strategic sites
Jan/Feb 2022	Preferred options consultation
Spring 2022	Second call for sites if required
Summer 2022	Finalise draft SWP (inc. allocations)
Oct 2022	Public consultation (Submission Stage)
Spring 2023	Public Examination
Autumn 2023	Proposed Modifications
Spring 2024	Adoption of SWP

It is recognised that this timetable is ambitious, and indeed the first task is being carried out jointly by authorities across Coventry and Warwickshire so it is reliant on wider cross boundary cooperation.

Once the SWP Team is in place, an initial priority will be to review this timetable. Once this is done, both SDC and WDC will need to review their respective Local Development Schemes. The timetable will also need to be kept under review to take account of any changes to the planning system itself as a result of the Government's proposed reforms of the planning system.

6. Financial Implications

The funding of the officer team (the SWP Team) will be on a 50/50 basis as set out in the recommendation in section 5 above. Whilst it is proposed that the Place Board and stakeholder groups would be serviced by Policy staff, consideration needs to be given to how any joint committees are serviced and resourced.

Other costs of preparing a revised Local Plan are recognised to be significant. Officers are currently working to establish an estimate which will include the cost of the evidence base, public consultation and the Public Examination. As a guide, the cost of preparing each current Local Plan/Core Strategy (not including officer costs) was approximately £1 million.

Approvals will need to be sought from within each Council (as appropriate) to make these funds available, however it is recommended that both councils commit, in principle, that all costs will be shared equally except where, by agreement, there is a particular strategic issue that is only relevant to one council. In this case, that Council would bear the additional costs. This could be, for example, where a specific piece of evidence needs to be procured. Given the suggested scope of the SWP suggested in section 4 above, it is considered that there will be few cases where this will be the case.

RECOMMENDATION: the above approaches to Finance are adopted as founding principles underpinning the work on the SWP.

7. Next steps

This paper is being considered by Warwick District Council at its Executive on 1st October and Stratford District Council at its Cabinet on 5th October.

Subject to both councils agreeing to the recommendations contained in this report at these meetings, the following next steps are RECOMMENDED.

- 1. Officers work together to engage with staff, draft job descriptions and to appoint officers to the SWP Team.**
- 2. Officers agree any detailed financial arrangements relating to funding the SWP Team within the framework set out in this report.**
- 3. Officers and members agree a shared approach to managing the SWP Team within the framework set out in this report.**
- 4. The two Council Leaders agree an approach to creating the Joint Local Plan Advisory Board and appoint councillors to this group.**

FINAL VERSION: 21/9/20

Appendix: Suggested model of Stratford on Avon Place Board

Underlined text refers to multiple organisations

Stratford District Place Board

SDC, WCC, CWLEP, WMCA, CW Chamber of Commerce, Shakespeare's England, WRCC, WALC, VASA, Stratford-upon-Avon TC, Alcester TC, Shipston-on-Stour TC, Southam TC, Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board, CPRE, Stratford, SuA Town Trust

Advisory Groups and Forums

CW Travel Infrastructure Group

Highways England
Network Rail
Midlands Connect
WCC Highways
WCC Public Transport
WCC Transport Planning
CCC Highways
CCC Public Transport
CCC Transport Planning
Chiltern Railways
West Midlands Trains
London Northwestern Railway
Great Western Railway
Heart of England Community Rail Partnership
Campaign for Better Transport
Bus Operators

CW Green & Blue Infrastructure Group

Natural England
Environment Agency
WCC Lead Local Flood Authority
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
WCC Ecology
CCC Ecology
Severn Trent
Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board
Thames Water
Canal & River Trust
Sport England
WCC Archaeology
CCC Archaeology
Historic England
Friends of the Earth

CW Resilience Infrastructure Group

Western Power
National Grid Gas
National Grid
BT Open Reach
BDUK
Cadent Gas
Severn Trent
Environment Agency
Warwickshire Police
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue
West Midlands Police
West Midlands Fire & Rescue
West Midlands Ambulance Trust
Biffa
Act on Energy

CW Community Infrastructure Group

Colleges
CCC Education
WCC Education
University of Warwick
University of Birmingham
Sport England
SDC Leisure
WDC Leisure
NBBC Leisure
NWBC Leisure
RBC Leisure
WALC
WCC Communities
CCC Communities
ThinkActive

CW Wellbeing Infrastructure Group

CW NHS Trust
South Warks NHS Trust
South Warks CCG
CW CCG
Oxford CCG
CCC Public Health
WCC Public Health
SDC Housing
WDC Housing
NBBC Housing
NWBC Housing
RBC Housing
WCC Communities
CCC Communities
Diocese of Gloucester
Diocese of Coventry
P3
Age UK
Citizens Advice

CW Developer Forum

Housebuilders
Housing Associations
Homes England
National Housing Federation
Home Builders Federation
Land Promoters Group
Civic Voice
MADE

CW Business Forum

Businesses
BIDs
Federation of Small Businesses
CW Chamber of Commerce
WCC Economic Development
CCC Economic Development
CW Growth Hub
CWLEP
WM Growth Company
NFU
Country Land & Business Association

SDC Citizens Forum

Citizens Panel
Youth parliament

SDC Parish Forums

Avon
Arden
Feldon
Stour

Title of Committee: Executive
Date of meeting: 1st October 2020

Title: Trees for our Future – Project Framework and Start-up

Lead Officer: Debbie Cole, Project Manager, Debbie.cole@warwickdc.gov.uk, 01926 456205

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Alan Rhead, Environment; Cllr Moira-Ann Grainger, Neighbourhood

Public report / Confidential report: Public – not confidential

Wards of the District directly affected: All

Contrary to the policy framework: No

Contrary to the budgetary framework: Yes

Key Decision: Yes

Included within the Forward Plan: Yes

Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: No. An EqIA will be undertaken, following the completion of the mapping stage of the project.

Consultation & Community Engagement: The project offers wide opportunities to engage with communities on the Climate Emergency Action Programme, including establishing new partnerships to enable tree planting, sustainable management of sites and enabling community action to plant trees.

Final Decision: No

Officer/Councillor Approval

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	14/09/2020	Dave Barber - Programme Director for Climate Change Bill Hunt - Deputy Chief Executive
Head of Service	14/09/2020	Dave Barber - Programme Director for Climate Change
CMT	14/09/2020	Chris Elliott - Chief Executive Andrew Jones - Deputy Chief Executive Bill Hunt - Deputy Chief Executive Dave Barber - Programme Director for Climate Change
Section 151 Officer	14/09/2020	Andrew Jones
Monitoring Officer	14/09/2020	Andrew Jones
Finance	14/09/2020	Mike Snow - Head of Finance
Portfolio Holder(s)	14/09/2020	Cllr Alan Rhead, Environment Cllr Moira-Ann Grainger, Neighbourhood

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out recommendations for the scope and delivery of the Trees for our Future planting project confirmed by the Council at its meeting on 12 February 2020.
- 1.2. The report is to agree mapping, delivery and monitoring processes for tree planting across the District. These will establish a basis for achieving the target of planting 160,000 trees in a sustainable and effective way.
- 1.3. The report is to agree initial project funding to ensure that the tree planting work commences for a period of 18 months. Further reports will be brought to the Executive following the initial phase.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Executive agrees the project targets 160,000 trees planted by 2030. This will be in accordance with the hierarchy of target types of planting (set out in Appendix 1 and 8.7).
- 2.2 The Executive agrees the project model, targeting some key sites owned by Warwick District Council, to lead the way in enabling a wide range of partners to undertake tree planting on sites in other ownership.
- 2.3 The Executive agrees up to £35,500 for the project for the remaining current financial year (2020/21) to be funded from the Contingency Reserve as set out in the table at para 3.12. The funding is to enable the project start-up and establishment of detailed project scope and delivery structure.
- 2.4 The Executive notes that the funding for work programmed for 2021/22 (as identified in 3.12) will be included in the Council's February 2021 budget report. This work is currently estimated at £82,500.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

Recommendation 2.1

- 3.1 The Climate Emergency Action Programme identifies the need to plant trees that will achieve a range of benefits set out in the background information shown at Section 8.
- 3.2 The timescale proposed allows for a range of differing types of tree planting to be established across the District. The approach will be sustainable, having allowed appropriate assessment of sites and their opportunities, alongside the longer term need for maintenance and care.
- 3.3 The recommendation targets early achievable planting that will be recognisable and pave the way for a measured approach of "the right tree in the right place" each year until 2030. Lessons can be learnt throughout the project period and methods refined.
- 3.4 An original target of 160,000 over the next four years was set in the Council's Business Strategy. The revised time period allows for sustainable and

appropriate tree planting that will bring long lasting impacts.

Recommendation 2.2

- 3.5 It is not possible to achieve the target only on land owned by Warwick District Council. The project is therefore structured to enable others to achieve the targets alongside the Council by offering advice, site assessments and signposting partners to available funding sources.
- 3.6 There are currently around eight sites that offer potential to plant immediately in the 2020/21 planting season from the autumn. These include seven owned by Warwick District Council and another owned by a parish council. These could lead the way in establishing the project more widely. Prioritising these sites, where the Council can directly influence success, will help establish the work.

Recommendation 2.3

- 3.7 Initial work is required to underpin the ten-year period of planting schemes and ensure the benefits are sustainable for residents of the District. Over the first 18 months, an expert resource is needed to identify tree planting opportunities specifically for Warwick District. Data gathered by the Habitat Biodiversity Audit Partnership to which the Council belongs would be used to achieve this. Once the mapping and detailed proposals have been developed, refined proposals will be brought to the Executive.
- 3.8 There will be few opportunities to launch the project in 2020 because preparation work is likely to last beyond the earliest planting season (from autumn 2020). The eight identified sites present the possibility of immediately establishing a tangible presence of tree planting in the District that will lead the way to enable others to continue the work. Work is on-going to identify external funding sources that would reduce the overall costs.
- 3.9 The project offers the opportunity to communicate a wider understanding of the climate emergency and support the development of new projects under the Trees for our Future programme, as well as the direct benefits of tree planting within the District's communities.
- 3.10 Specialist forestry expertise is required, as sites come forward, to ensure that appropriate schemes happen. This work will entail a wide range of engagement with interested organisations and residents and will include advice and support on appropriate planting and accessing funding. In addition, sites need to be monitored throughout the duration of the project to ensure the number of trees planted and on-going maintenance and sustainability. Dialogue has indicated that two partners, the Heart of England Forest and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, would be prepared to offer relevant services from within their teams via a call-off arrangement, as well as work individually or together. Discussions continue with these partners.
- 3.11 Initial funds are required to enable 'early wins' and one-off opportunities as they come forward and to support the community in driving the project forward. This element of the project relates to more innovative and unanticipated proposals that would benefit the programme's delivery.

Recommendations 2.1-2.3

3.12 Indicative table of costs for the project initiation period

Proposal	Description	Indicative Total Cost (over initial 18 months)	2020/21	2021/22
Identification of a baseline for trees and woodland in the District	Mapping of the tree planting opportunities District-wide, using existing habitat data.	£2,200	£2,200	£0
Early establishment of trees on identified sites	Undertake immediate planting on WDC and Budbrooke Parish Council (BPC) to launch the programme.	WDC – up to £27,000* BPC – up to £5,800 max**	WDC - £17,000 BPC £5,800	WDC - £10,000 (if required) BPC £0
Commission expert advice	Specialist forestry expertise is required, as sites come forward, to ensure that appropriate schemes happen. This work will include partner engagement and funding advice for those who are considering taking part. In addition, sites need to be monitored throughout the duration of the project to ensure the number of trees planted and on-going maintenance and sustainability.	£27,500	£9,000	£18,500
Communications work in support of the project	The project offers the opportunity to communicate a wider understanding of the climate emergency and	£5,500	£1,500	£4,000

Proposal	Description	Indicative Total Cost (over initial 18 months)	2020/21	2021/22
	support the development of new projects under the Trees for our Future programme, as well as the direct benefits of tree planting within the District's communities.			
Provision of grant funding	This is for the Council to support community tree planting initiatives and other one-off opportunities directly, including in 2021/22 a contribution to Leamington Street Trees subject to further discussions	£50,000	£0	£50,000 ***
Total		£118,000	£35,500	£82,500

*Funding of approx. £10,000 may be available from Woodland Trust for these schemes.

**Budbrooke Parish Council have provisionally indicated the potential to provide an element of Parish Council funding towards planting.

***Consideration will be given to the funding of this work stream through the potential use of any RUCIS funding or future funding associated with the Climate Emergency Action Programme.

Recommendations 2.4

3.13 In light of the Council's current overall financial position it is recognised that it is necessary to split the funding of this work over the 18-month period. This will enable the Council to progress initial opportunities within the forthcoming planting session (November 2020 – February 2021). The funding required for next financial year (currently estimated at £82,500) will be identified through the February 2021 budget report, to enable the Council to consider the funding needed for this project against other corporate priorities.

4. Policy Framework

4.1. Fit for the Future (FFF)

4.1.1. The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. This report shows the way forward for implementing a significant part of one of the Council's Key projects.

4.1.2. The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the Council's website](#). The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

4.2. FFF Strands

4.2.1 External impacts of proposal(s)

People - Health, Homes, Communities - Planting schemes will enhance the amenity of the District, provide opportunities for greater health and well-being and offer communities the chance to get involved.

Services - Green, Clean, Safe - Tree planting directly addresses a carbon zero vision and supports improved open and public spaces.

Money - Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment - Some employment is anticipated through the use of local nurseries and workers to establish and maintain the sites.

4.2.2. Internal impacts of the proposal(s)

People - Effective Staff – No impact

Services - Maintain or Improve Services - The project targets direct improvements in the environment for residents.

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term - The creation of initial mapping and monitoring frameworks will ensure that the delivery of tree planting will be most effective and target available grant funding opportunities.

4.3. Supporting Strategies

4.3.1. Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies and the relevant one for this proposal is the Council's Business Strategy 2019-2023 that commits to achieving the planting of 160,000 trees within the District in support of the Climate Emergency Action Programme.

4.4. Changes to Existing Policies

4.4.1 None

4.5. Impact Assessments

4.5.1. None

5. Budgetary Framework

- 5.1 It is recommended that funding for work targeted for the remainder of the current financial year (£35,500) is met from the Contingency Reserve, which currently has approximately £182,200 available.
- 5.2 Funding required for the remaining work in 2021/22, will be included within the February 2021 budget report. This is currently estimated at £82,500 and is subject to change dependent on the tree planting opportunities which arise through the mapping work.

6. Risks

- 6.1. The project may not reach the targeted number of trees planted by 2030. However, the timeframe could be extended. The framework approach to the project mitigates this through identifying a hierarchy of sites to prioritise and allows the opportunities to be maximised. Ultimately the time period would need to be extended should this not address the risk.
- 6.2. A risk to the project is that planted trees do not thrive or are not maintained. The project method of identifying opportunities via mapping means that this should offer the best habitat conditions for the success of the planted trees. Using a site assessment approach means that sustainability for the planting will also be taken into account via the site owner and maintenance budgets will be confirmed at the outset. The project proposal includes a monitoring resource that could ensure grant conditions relating to maintenance are kept.
- 6.3. A risk to project success is insufficient land supply in appropriate areas. This could be addressed by looking at the potential for land acquisition in areas shown on the mapping exercise. The introduction of new mechanisms to encourage further planting, such as short term grant funding being offered, could also be considered.
- 6.4. Risks to the project are insufficient available funding to achieve all the required planting and associated communications to bring forward the maximum benefits. These are being addressed by taking an "enabling" approach to achieving the project via sign posting to a range of potential grant funds for tree planting. Working with partners will also bring expertise, new funding and inform the site choices and management. By also bringing forward a focused communications strategy, the benefits of the project can be maximised.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1. Aiming to achieve all planting directly via the resources of the Council is an alternative option. Whilst it might provide the opportunity to strengthen community engagement in connection with the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, this option would require additional financial and staff resources. It would also not maximise the potential to involve partners in the achievement of the targets. These partners may also be able to access additional grant funding themselves.
- 7.2. The variety and range of possibilities for tree planting is wide. An alternative option to address all of these as soon as they arise, without prioritising particular sites might return quick and visible results. However, experience from other programmes suggests that without following considered mapping and

planning for future site maintenance, those quick returns are unsustainable into the medium and longer term future. This could have negative repercussions on the benefits for the project.

8. Background

- 8.1 A tree planting project can help to address climate change and the decline of biodiversity. The benefits of tree planting are widely recognised. These include: visual enhancement of landscapes and benefits to our physical and mental wellbeing, flood alleviation, provision of sustainable building materials, cooler temperatures, absorption of carbon and other pollutants and reduction of soil erosion.
- 8.2 Linking to the Climate Emergency action plan, The Trees for our Future project is identified as an initiative within the Council's Business Strategy 2019 – 2023 and commits us to "Enable the planting of 160,000 trees over the next four years". The Council has a number of existing policies and strategies available which support the principle of the creation and protection of green space within the District. These policies are:
 - Local Plan 2019 - 2026
 - WDC Public Open Space Supplementary Planning Document 2019
 - Green Space Strategy 2012 – 26
 - Tree and Woodlands Strategy 1999 (review pending)
- 8.3 This project presents an opportunity to transform the District into a better place for both people and wildlife. To make best use of this opportunity, it is important to focus on an appropriate and sustainable local tree planting programme set against the wider context of the types of projects this could involve.
- 8.4 The government Committee on Climate Change has recommended that we should be aiming to plant around 30,000 hectares of new woodland in the UK every year. In recognition, Warwick District Council has launched its own tree planting initiative to enable a tree for every resident of the District.
- 8.5 Opportunities will continue to arise linked directly to the Council's operational activities and policy making, enabling tree planting. The project also provides an opportunity to harness increasing community interest and use this interest to deliver the tree planting collaboratively, alongside other climate emergency mitigation and delivery. A wide range of partners and land owners have the potential to make the project work, including the Warwickshire County Council initiative to plant more trees.
- 8.6 More tree cover is needed to combat climate change. The Government's Committee on Climate Change has set out a target of 17 – 19% tree/woodland cover if the UK is to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Currently the national average of tree cover is 13%. In Warwick District it is only 4%. This low coverage can also have an adverse impact on the District's biodiversity and air quality.
- 8.7 There are numerous types of planting set out below. It should however be acknowledged that trees have to be maintained and thinned. Part of the project would include communication around these issues. Within the project, the

following types of planting could be relevant:

- new plantations
- buffer zones – for built development and habitats
- connections between habitats
- street trees
- hedgerow planting
- infrastructure for new built developments
- natural regeneration (allowing spread of existing woodlands naturally through self-seeding etc.)
- other opportunities e.g. trialling new urban plantation methods, trialling of alternative tree species at particular sites (e.g. to address mitigation of tree disease)

8.8 An average indicator for planting would be to assume 1440 trees per hectare, requiring more than 111ha to achieve the target number of trees across the District. The final use of any timber would also have a bearing on the type of planting e.g. does it need to be to Forestry Stewardship Certification (FSC) standards? Not all sites are appropriate for tree planting. The appropriate habitat, landscape and physical infrastructure need to be taken into account. National policy for trees continues to be reviewed but the basic tenet is that there should be “the right tree, in the right place”. This would include consideration of locally sourced species of trees.

8.9 Bearing in mind the factors set out above, this implies that to ensure a sustainable impact in achieving the target number of trees to be planted across each of the years, a technical assessment of opportunity needs to be undertaken and matched to delivery. This exercise will need to take into account ongoing monitoring of success. The need to continue impetus and visible impact of the initiative until 2030 is important and a hierarchy of tree planting priorities is proposed and set out at Appendix 1.

8.10 There are a number of potential funding sources available from a range of funders. These funding opportunities will be explored for each of the planting opportunities and pursued as appropriate dependent on funding criteria for the fund in question.

The principal funders identified to date include:

- Defra
- Forestry Commission
- Woodland Trust
- Severn Trent
- HS2 Ltd
- Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
- The Tree Council

Funding source*	Scheme name	Summary
Forestry Commission	Woodland Creation Planning Grant	Funding is to create a design plan. Available for large scale, multi-purpose, productive woodlands of 10 ha or more. Funding includes contribution towards specialist surveys.
Forestry Commission	HS2 Woodland Fund	For creation of restoration of ancient woodland sites within 25-mile route of

Funding source*	Scheme name	Summary
		HS2 route. Includes contribution towards maintenance
Forestry Commission	Urban Tree Challenge Fund	For planting of small and large trees in urban and peri-urban areas. Includes 3yrs establishment payments following planting. 50% match funding required
Forestry Commission	Woodland Carbon Fund	For creation of woodland for carbon sequestration.
Woodland Trust	Community Tree Packs	Available to community groups (not Councils) for tree packs of up to 240 whips. Excludes labour and future maintenance
Woodland Trust	Morewood	Up to 75% of costs for sites between 0.5 – 3 hectares.
Woodland Trust	Morehedges	Up to 75% of costs for 100 – 250 meters of hedging
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust	Dunsmore Living Landscape	Expires early 2021. Limited eligibility for WDC. Princethorpe area meets criteria
The Tree Council	Branching Out Fund	Available for community groups who can demonstrate ongoing involvement of young people within the scheme
Severn Trent Water	Bio-diversity Fund	Flexible criteria with requirement to evidence increase in bio-diversity as result of projects.
HS2	Community and Environment Fund	For based community projects to benefit communities disrupted by construction of route.
Defra	Green Recovery Challenge Fund	Using funding from Nature Recovery Fund and Nature for Climate Funding for shovel ready projects.

*Each fund has its own criteria in terms of who can apply, minimum area of land, match funding and availability funding for maintenance.

The potential to secure CIL funding for this project is also being pursued. Further work has also been initiated to explore the potential to secure biodiversity offsetting funds held by WCC from developer contributions.

Regular dialogue with the Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust continues to ensure that the Council is able to capitalise on the support and funding available from these bodies, alongside the development of relationships with other potential funders such as HS2 Ltd and Severn Trent.

Appendix 1 – Hierarchy of tree planting priorities

Priority 1	To include:	Facilitated by:	Comments
Warwick District Council (WDC) – owned sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites within Warwick District Council ownership where planting can commence in the 2020/21 winter season. • Newbold Comyn • Tach Brook Country Park • Housing areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of other work • Opportunities to attract funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly accessible areas
WDC planning gains	Any opportunity via planning negotiations e.g. hedgerow extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDC policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly achievable
Priority 2			
Partner-enabled delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sites owned by others e.g. local businesses • Sites owned by other organisations e.g. schools, parish councils, charities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available grant funding • Communications from WDC • WDC baseline mapping 	
Priority 3			
One-off partner project proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street trees • Pilot project ideas for case studies/trials • Unanticipated opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct grant offer from WDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria and assessment will need to be established. • These projects are more likely to be unique and innovative, requiring different effort to achieve.

Executive
1 October 2020

Title: Use of Delegated Powers – One Off Budget to Procure Independent Support for a Citizens Assembly

Lead Officer: Dave Barber – Programme Director for Climate Change

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Rhead

Public report / Confidential report

Wards of the District directly affected: All

Contrary to the policy framework: No

Contrary to the budgetary framework: No

Key Decision: Yes

Included within the Forward Plan: Yes (1,147)

Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: No – An impact assessment will be undertaken during the implementation to identify any specific matters arising

Consultation & Community Engagement: N/A

Final Decision: Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	1/9/20	Chris Elliot
Head of Service	27/8/20	Dave Barber
CMT		Leadership Group Coordination
Section 151 Officer	1/9/20	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	1/9/20	Andrew Jones
Finance	1/9/20	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)		Councillor Alan Rhead

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Executive approved the Climate Emergency Action Programme (CEAP) at its meeting in February 2020. The CEAP includes a proposal to conduct a Citizens' Assembly. This report asks Executive to formally note the approval of additional one off funding of £35,000 from the contingency reserve to commission a Citizens' Assembly to help inform proposals to achieve a Zero Carbon District by 2030 (Work Package 3 of the CEAP).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Executive are recommended to formally note the approval of additional one off funding of £35,000 from the contingency reserve approved under the Chief Executive's delegated authority CE(4), to enable consultants to be appointed to prepare and manage a Citizens Assembly (or similar citizen's engagement process).

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1. A key priority for the first year of the Climate Emergency Action Programme is the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly during 2020. The Citizens' Assembly provides a positive way to engage with the community in a high profile way to obtain positive backing on the CEAP proposals. In supporting this as a method of undertaking some initial citizen's engagement, it was also accepted that other methods are likely to have value in terms of ongoing engagement as the CEAP unfolds. Specifically, it was agreed that a Citizens' Assembly should inform answers to "how" questions, to help the Council understand the best way to plan and deliver the areas of work set out in the CEAP.
- 3.2. To set up and deliver an effective engagement process, the Council needs to engage consultants to provide an independent approach. The consultants will be responsible for:
 - (a) Planning and setting up the engagement process to provide answers to the lines of enquiry that Council is seeking answers to.
 - (b) Running the process, ensuring participants are well informed regarding the issues and all have a fair opportunity to contribute to an in-depth enquiry in to those issues.
 - (c) Reporting the key outcomes from the assembly
- 3.3. A major challenge will be the timescales involved if the Citizens' Assembly is to inform the budget setting for 2021/22. For this reason, officers took the view that a budget for the Citizens' Assembly needed to be agreed under the Chief Executives delegated authority CE(4). This has allowed a procurement process to take place and a consultant has been appointed, with the first engagement meetings getting underway in October. The cost of the work is £35,000 which has been set aside from the Contingency Reserve
- 3.4. It should be noted that through the discussions with potential consultants (including those appointed), there is a need to limit the size of the Citizens'

Assembly to 30 people to enable it to be managed using virtual online tools rather than face to face meetings. Whilst this is a smaller sample size than had originally been envisaged, it is sufficiently large to enable participation from a comprehensive cross section of the District's communities and will provide a legitimate source of advice for future Council decisions relating to the Climate Emergency.

4. Policy Framework

4.1. Fit for the Future (FFF)

4.1.1. "The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. This report shows the way forward for implementing a significant part of one of the Council's Key projects."

4.1.2. "The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the Council's website](#). The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy."

4.2. FFF Strands

4.2.1 External impacts of proposal

People - Health, Homes, Communities – The engagement process is a key element of the CEAP and will inform priorities and actions for future work to achieve net zero carbon for the District Council.

4.2.3 Impacts of Proposal

Maintain or Improve Services – The engagement process set out in the report provides an important method of engagement with the District's communities and will allow the Council to shape its responses to the Climate Emergency in a way that improves our services to customers

Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term – The engagement process set out in the report provides an important method of engagement with the District's communities and will allow the Council to plan how to utilise its finances in the long term to deliver priorities relating to the Climate Emergency.

4.3. Supporting Strategies

4.3.1. The proposals set out in this report directly address the Climate Emergency Action Programme (CEAP), including the commitment within the CEAP to undertake citizens' engagement to inform future work to address the Climate Emergency.

4.4. Changes to Existing Policies

4.4.1. No changes to existing policies

4.5. **Impact Assessments**

- 4.5.1. The participants in the engagement process will closely reflect the make-up of the District as a whole in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, geography and income levels. To ensure this is done comprehensively, an Oversight Panel will be formed to advise on how the question(s) for the Citizens' Assembly to address should be framed and what stratification model should be used in recruiting to the Assembly.

5. **Budgetary Framework**

- 5.1. In consultation with Section 151 Officer, the Chief Executive has used his delegated authority under CE(4) to utilise £35,000 from the contingency reserve to support the proposals set out in the report. All reports that have financial implications must be submitted to Finance for consideration and approval before being submitted for inclusion on the agenda.

6. **Risks**

- 6.1. As the budget for this work has already been established and consultants have been appointed, the residual risks are minimal. The greatest risk is that the timetable to deliver the outcomes from the Citizens' Assembly will overrun and will therefore prevent the findings from the Assembly feeding in to Service Area Plans and budget setting for 2021/22. To mitigate this risk, officers are in the process of agreeing a timetable with the consultants and have agreed that if necessary an interim report can be provided. Further, the findings of the Citizens' Assembly and other community engagement will inform the Council's Climate Emergency work for a number of years to come and will therefore continue to be of value.

7. **Alternative Option(s) considered**

- 7.1. A range of potential engagement methodologies have been considered. It is recognised that engagement needs to be an ongoing process and is therefore likely to involve a number of different methodologies over time. At this stage, the Council is looking to engage through a Citizens' Assembly. This is seen as important because it is perhaps the only methodology that:
- (a) has a sufficiently large sample to provide balanced representation of the District's population thereby ensuring the views of different communities are shared.
 - (b) provides for in-depth enquiry in to complex issues.

Title: Land off Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ

Lead Officer: Chris Makasis, Estates Management Surveyor

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jan Matecki

Confidential report No but a linked confidential report appears elsewhere on the agenda

Wards of the District directly affected:

Leamington Brunswick, Warwick Myton & Heathcote

Contrary to the policy framework: No

Contrary to the budgetary framework: No

Key Decision: Yes

Included within the Forward Plan: Yes

Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: N/A

Consultation & Community Engagement: N/A

Final Decision:

Officer/Councillor Approval

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	September 2020	Chris Elliott
Head of Service	September 2020	Steve Partner
CMT	September 2020	Yes
Section 151 Officer	September 2020	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	September 2020	Andrew Jones
Finance	September 2020	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	September 2020	Cllr J Matecki

1. Summary

- 1.1. To consider the disposal of land off Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Executive approve the disposal of the land off Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ, hatched on the plan attached at Appendix One, subject to terms & conditions listed in the Private & Confidential report elsewhere on in the agenda.
- 2.2. That the use of this capital receipt is agreed by Executive, alongside other funding demands, as part of the Budget process in February 2021

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1. The land in question, shown hatched on the plan at Appendix One, covers an area of approximately 3,200 square metres (or approximately 0.8 acres) and is located off Queensway in Leamington Spa. It is owned by Warwick District Council (hereafter referred to as 'WDC') and currently leased to another party under a long lease agreement, upon which a restaurant was erected by the original Tenant, following planning consent in August 1993.
- 3.2. The long lease agreement commenced in October 1993, for a term of 125 years, for which WDC received a capital receipt at the commencement of the Lease, followed by a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum, if charged, for the length of the lease. The land, however, retained in the ownership of WDC.
- 3.3. The current Tenant of the land in question has now approached WDC with a request to purchase the land over which they currently have a long lease and following negotiations between WDC, its external valuers, and the current Tenant, terms & conditions for the sale of the land in question have been agreed, subject to Executive approval.
- 3.4. These terms & conditions are private & confidential as they fall within the provision of information that relates to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information, and, hence, are set out in full in the private & confidential report elsewhere on in this agenda.
- 3.5. The proposal will provide WDC with a capital receipt and remove any future concerns that may arise from the long lease and any possible future vacant periods.

4. Policy Framework

4.1. Fit for the Future (FFF)

- 4.1.1. The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. This report shows the

way forward for implementing a significant part of one of the Council's Key projects.

- 4.1.2. The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the Council's website](#). The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy."

4.2. FFF Strands

4.2.1 External impacts of proposal(s)

People - Health, Homes, Communities - Intended outcomes: Impressive cultural and sports activities, Cohesive and active communities

Services - Green, Clean, Safe - Intended outcomes: Site kept green, clean and safe, Capital receipt will assist with future PPM including works to achieve Climate Change objectives and to be Carbon Neutral by 2030

Money- Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment - Intended outcomes: Dynamic and diverse local economy, Improved performance/productivity of local economy, Increased employment and income levels

4.2.2. Internal impacts of the proposal(s)

People - Effective Staff – Intended outcomes: Impressive cultural and sports activities, Cohesive and active communities

Services - Maintain or Improve Services - Intended outcomes: Focusing on our customers' needs, Site kept green, clean and safe

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term - Intended outcomes: Dynamic and diverse local economy, Improved performance/productivity of local economy, Improved performance/productivity of local economy Supporting Strategies

- 4.3.1. Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies and the relevant ones for this proposal are explained here; The proposal would support WDC's Fit for the Future programme, through the Money strand, by allowing WDC to secure a capital receipt for the General Fund in accordance with the Asset Strategy

5. Budgetary Framework

- 5.1 WDC currently receives a peppercorn rent of £1 if charged for the land in question

- 5.2 The proposal shall provide WDC with a Capital Receipt and will assist WDC to in funding planned and programmed maintenance on the Council's General Fund assets. Details of the proposed receipt are set out in the Private & Confidential report.

6. Risks

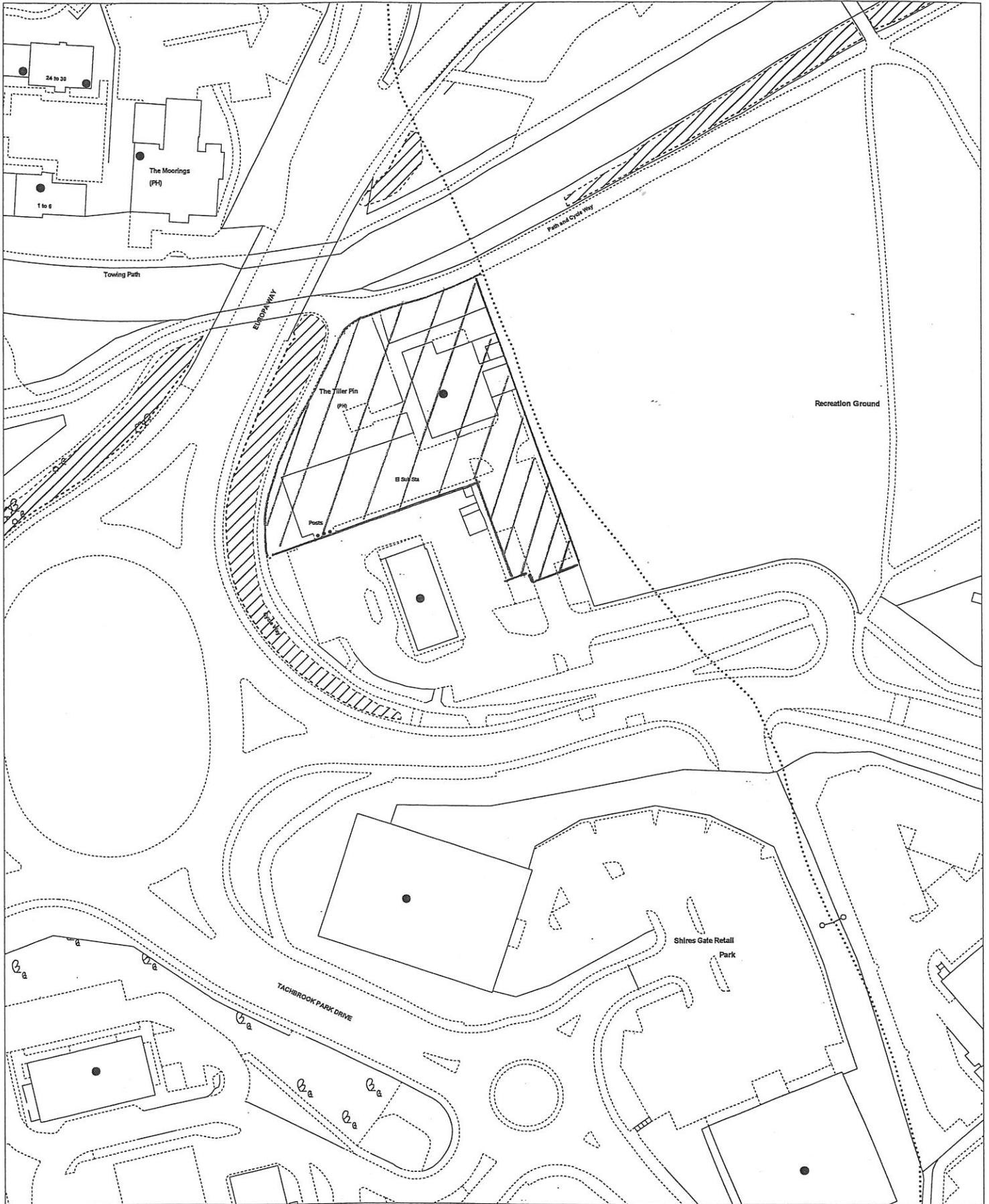
- 6.1. The current interested party decides not to progress with the proposal and the capital receipt is not received by WDC. WDC would retain its legal interest in the land in question but would not receive the capital receipt.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1. The Executive could decide not to proceed with the proposal. This is not recommended as it would not deliver the benefits set out in section 5.

8. Background

- 8.1. Planning consent for a restaurant on the land in question was approved in August 1993.
- 8.2. At that time, rather than agree to dispose of the site to the other party, WDC agreed to enter into a long lease with the other party, in return for a capital receipt at that time and an annual rent thereafter of £1 per annum, if charged.
- 8.3. The long lease is due to expire in 2118 after which the Tenant shall have the right to renew the long lease for another term of 125 years, at a rent that will be assessed for the new term of 125 years at that time.
- 8.4. Following discussions between WDC and the current Tenant of the long lease, WDC has agreed appropriate terms and conditions in order that WDC can benefit from disposing of this land, and making use of the capital receipt that it shall receive, in return for losing its ownership and final control of the land in question.
- 8.5. Whilst WDC currently has ownership and final control of the land in question, it does not currently benefit from day-to-day control or use of the site in question, and it will not currently receive any financial benefit from retaining the land until the current long lease expires in 2118.
- 8.6. Taking the above points into account, and the benefits that WDC shall gain from the disposal that are noted in section (5) of this report, the Executive are asked to approve the proposal noted on this report.



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Title: Progress Report on Joint Work with Stratford District Council

Lead Officer: Chris Elliott

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Andrew Day

Public report

Wards of the District directly affected: All

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision:	No
Included within the Forward Plan:	No
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken:	Not applicable
Consultation & Community Engagement:	Not applicable
Final Decision:	Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive	14.09.20	Chris Elliott
Head of Service	14.09.20	-
CMT	14.09.20	Andrew Jones, Bill Hunt, Chris Elliott, Dave Barber
Section 151 Officer	14.09.20	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	14.09.20	Andrew Jones
Finance	14.09.20	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	14.09.20	Councillor Andrew Day

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of progress made in respect of decisions made at the end of June 2020 relating to joint work with Stratford District Council (SDC) and on Local Government Review and to seek authority to progress other opportunities with SDC.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Executive notes the progress made in respect of its decisions made at the 30th June Executive.
- 2.2. The Executive agrees that other opportunities for joint work with SDC outside of SMT also be explored as a priority and be reported back upon early in the new year.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

Recommendation 2.1

- 3.1 At its meeting on 13 July the Executive agreed that:

"2.1The Executive agrees that the joint statement (Appendix 1 of that report – *see attached*) that was issued by the Leader of the Council and the Leader of Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC) be endorsed, and in doing so:

- i) Agrees to a jointly commissioned review of local government across South Warwickshire and the wider Warwickshire County area;
- ii) that the Leaders of this Council and of SDC invite all of the other Borough/District Councils in the County, Warwickshire County Council and the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) on behalf of the town and parish councils, to participate in the review as equal partners.
- iii) that the Leader of the Council be the Council's nominee on a multi Council working party to steer the review.
- iv) that the Leadership Co-ordinating Group (i.e. all the Political Group Leaders and the Executive) act as this Council's internal steering group of the review and the joint work with SDC.
- v) that the brief for the review be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the Leadership Co-ordinating Group and that the report be procured as a matter of urgency.
- vi) that provision of cost for the review be made from a source to be determined by the S151 Officer (at the time of writing the cost has not been determined and will be affected by the number of Councils participating).

2.2The Executive agrees in the context of the joint statement to exploring with SDC, in relation to the following:

- i) Sharing of Senior Management Team posts across the two authorities;
- ii) Exploration of shared contracts across the two authorities; and,
- iii) That agreement be given in principle to conducting a Joint Core Strategy/Local Plan Review and that a further paper be presented setting out details of a proposed programme, a member and officer governance.

Agenda Item 8

Further reports to be presented to Employment and/or Executive on all of the items above as soon as possible.

2.3 Subject to the agreement to 2.1 above it is recommended to Council that:

- (1) That the principle of joint working with SDC be included as part of the Council's Business Strategy.
- (2) That agreement(s) be entered into with SDC pursuant to section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all other enabling powers so that employees can be placed at the disposal of the other Councils as may be required"

2.4 £35,000 be provided from the Service Transformation Reserve to fund the Council's contribution to the joint study and for additional support in respect of communications.

2.5 The cabinet of the County Council be asked to reconsider its informal decision to commission a separate business case for a single unitary Council and instead, to participate in the joint study with the other Borough and District Councils to look at all options and to listen to the public's views".

3.2 In terms of progress in respect of the first of the endorsed recommendations:

i) All Borough and District Councils were invited to join the review and all have agreed to do so. WALC have also agreed. Warwickshire County Council was invited as an equal partner and initially agreed but then decided it would commission a business case for a single county wide unitary. It was felt that it was impossible for WCC to be both part of the joint work and pursue a separate case especially as its brief had not and has not been shared nor was an opportunity given to offer a comment on a draft of the subsequent report presented to the WCC Cabinet on 27th August.

ii) The brief for the review was agreed and is attached at Appendix 2. Deloitte were commissioned to carry out the work from a framework with SDC as the procuring body on behalf of all the Borough and District Councils.

iii) The Council's Group Leaders when meeting as the Leadership Co-ordinating Group are kept up to date with progress.

iv) The sum of £35,000 was agreed as the Council's contribution to the cost of the review and communications.

v) As part of the review work a number of steps are to be undertaken to engage the community to help the Borough and District Councils to arrive at a conclusion on the options. These steps include focus groups with residents across the county area; a telephone survey of a sample of residents; a focus group of parish and town councils; businesses; and other key stakeholders. The first of the focus groups will commence before the end of September.

vi) Discussions have been held with various stakeholders to gain their perspective on the issues and approaches inherent in the options.

3.3 In respect of the second of the endorsed recommendations:

i) A Head of Service from SDC – Julie Lewis - is now also operating as Head of Neighbourhood Services for WDC. An advert of a Joint Head of ICT has been placed and interviews will have been held and concluded by the time this report is considered. Work on addressing the other vacancies will be timed so they could be implemented in the next financial year.

ii) Work is now progressing looking at a Joint Waste Contract. A report will be forthcoming for the November Executive to consider the details. It is also recognised that there are other possible procurement opportunities that could be exploited and a mapping exercise is underway to look at them and in particular at the timing.

iii) Elsewhere on this report is a detailed report setting out the proposals for a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire.

3.4 The third recommendation has been actioned.

Recommendation 2.2

3.5 Whilst examining how the “splicing” of the SMT’s of both Councils might be achieved and in the context of other discussions about how the Council can maintain service delivery but with fewer resources, discussions have identified that various opportunities outside of SMT level either exist or should be subject to examination over the next few months with the intention of reporting back on progress early in the new year (2021).

3.6 Mapping work of IT systems and procurement opportunities will also be undertaken as part of that opportunity assessment.

4. Policy Framework

4.1. Fit for the Future (FFF)

4.1.1 The Council’s FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several key projects. This report shows the way forward for implementing a significant part of one of the Council’s key projects.

4.1.2 The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the Council’s website](#). The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council’s FFF Strategy.”

4.2. FFF Strands

4.2.1 External impacts of proposal(s)

People - Health, Homes, Communities - The proposal could assist with the attainment of the Council’s objectives across all its policy priorities.

Services - Green, Clean, Safe - The proposal could assist with the attainment of the Council’s objectives across all its policy priorities.

Money- Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment - The proposal could assist with the attainment of the Council's objectives across all its policy priorities.

4.2.2. **Internal impacts of the proposal(s)**

People - Effective Staff – The initial proposals will help to address vacant posts in the Senior Management Teams of both Councils. A wider examination will help to address other employment opportunities.

Services - Maintain or Improve Services - In addressing people and finance issues it will enable the Council to better maintain or improve services.

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term - This would help the Council to address the unfolding financial issue arising from the Covid 19 emergency on top of the underlying pressures.

4.3. **Supporting Strategies**

4.3.1. Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies but none are particularly relevant here.

4.4. **Changes to Existing Policies**

4.4.1. The Council's Business Strategy has been updated to reflect this area of work as it will be significant. However, it is not anticipated that this will divert the Council from tackling Climate Emergency as the central plank of its policy objectives and indeed working closer with SDC should aid that objective.

4.5. **Impact Assessments**

None at this stage.

5. **Budgetary Framework**

5.1 At this point other than the cost of contributing toward the review there is no immediate budgetary impact. However, the proposals if implemented should enable beneficial financial impacts to occur in the short term in respect of the joint work with SDC.

5.2 The potential for change within WDC of working with SDC is significant and could create a significant body of additional work for the transitional phase and given the extensive work programme already of the Council some additional resource will be needed.

6. **Risks**

6.1 There is clearly a risk that the money and effort expended on the review and the joint work may not deliver the expected benefits for WDC and more importantly for its communities. This is best mitigated by ensuring an effective scope of work and that in the detailed papers for the joint work that the benefits are clearly identified, quantified and assessed for deliverability.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 The Executive could decide not to agree to explore further opportunities but this is not helpful in the context of the challenges which the Council now faces.



Taking a fresh look at local government in South Warwickshire

The Stratford on Avon District Council Cabinet met informally with the Executive from Warwick District Council to explore ways to work together for the benefit of the people of South Warwickshire and indeed the wider County.

The purpose of these discussions was to consider the best way for our local government to evolve for the benefit of our residents ahead of an expected white paper in relation to devolution scheduled to be released by government later this year.

We already have successful experience of working together, through the South Warwickshire Health Improvement Partnership; the South Warwickshire Crime reduction partnership and Shakespeare's England, our destination management organisation which we jointly founded to promote our local tourism offer around the World. The two authorities share a number of characteristics and a large proportion of our residents live in one authority area and travel to work in the other.

As we look to the future of our communities across South Warwickshire now is the time to capture the lessons learnt from the current COVID crisis and review the way our Councils could better meet the needs of our residents, taking advantage of new opportunities that are emerging for our communities and businesses.

Local government is playing a significant role in positively addressing the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our way of life. Supporting our businesses and communities as we adjust during this period of uncertainty, has required our Councils to embrace changes to the way we work.

Like so many other organisations at this time, our Councils are looking to be more agile and efficient, to address the emerging economic challenges and capitalising on the issues around the climate emergency, all the while providing the best possible services to you. There are also a number of opportunities which could be developed quickly including jointly procuring contracts; addressing a number of vacancies at senior officer level that could lead to the possibility of sharing posts across the two management teams, as well as the possibility of producing a joint Core Strategy / Local Plan for our communities to secure long-term benefits.

These initial discussions are at an early stage and would need to be subject to formal decisions at both authorities. However, our discussions will hopefully pave the way for a wider dialogue with other local government partners with the view of forming a common position for debate with central government as the anticipated devolution white paper comes forward, which is expected in the Autumn.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Day'.

Cllr Andrew Day
Leader, Warwick District Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Jefferson'.

Cllr Tony Jefferson
Leader, Stratford on Avon District Council

Dear Sir or Madam

Request for Quotation for the Provision of Consultancy Services to study options for the future of public services within Warwickshire on behalf of a consortium of District and Borough Councils

Thank you for your interest in this opportunity.

Quotations are invited in respect of consultancy services to deliver an appraisal of options for the future of public services within Warwickshire. This appraisal is concerned with assessing organisational arrangements, future devolution options and local government structure options.

The study is comprised of two stages. Progression to the second stage is dependent upon successful completion of the first stage and decisions by the commissioning authorities to confirm the content of the second stage brief. You are requested to quote for each stage.

This study is being commissioned by Stratford-on-Avon District Council on behalf of the consortium of the Borough and District Councils that make up Warwickshire working together. Details of the commissioning authorities will be provided during the selection phase of quotation. Any questions regarding the brief should in the first instance be referred to David Buckland, Chief Executive, Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Requirements are defined in the Statement of Requirements section of this document. The Statement of Requirements should be read in conjunction with Schedule One – Instructions and Guidance for Suppliers.

The Stage One report must be delivered by close of business on Friday 11 September 2020, or any such other date as mutually agreed.

Yours faithfully

SPECIFICATION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The purpose of this two-stage brief is to seek an authoritative assessment of the options for revised local public service delivery in Warwickshire.

The following is a scoping of the brief to identify the considerations to guide the study.

STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

Contents:

Context

Proposed Criteria

Developing Proposals and Options – key tests

Specification of work required

Guidance for submissions

Schedule 1 - Instructions for completion

Appendix A - Suppliers Response to the Statement of Requirements

Appendix B - Declarations

Context

Context - Place

Warwickshire lies to the south and east, and is adjacent to, the West Midlands conurbation with established links to Coventry, Birmingham and Solihull in the West Midlands region and also to the East and South-East Midlands. Despite the focus of population being within the main towns of the County, a significant part of Warwickshire is rural in its nature. Warwickshire lies at the heart of Britain's transport network and several key strategic rail and road routes pass through the County.

Warwickshire is a three-tier local authority:-

1. Warwickshire County Council;
2. Five District & Borough Councils;
 - North Warwickshire Borough,
 - Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough,
 - Rugby Borough,
 - Stratford-on-Avon District,
 - Warwick District.
3. 219 Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings, most of whom are members of the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC). Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough has no Town or Parish Councils.

Warwickshire - the area

The county is bordered by Leicestershire to the northeast, Staffordshire to the northwest, Worcestershire and the West Midlands to the west, Northamptonshire to the east and southeast, Gloucestershire to the southwest and Oxfordshire to the south. The northern tip of the county is only 3 miles (5 km) from the Derbyshire border. Warwickshire is an average-sized English county covering an area of almost 2,000 km² (770 square miles). It runs some 60 miles (97 km) north to south, extending as far north as Tamworth in Staffordshire and as far south as Banbury in north Oxfordshire.

The majority of Warwickshire's population live within the north and centre of the county. The market towns of northern and eastern Warwickshire which were industrialised in the 19th Century, include Atherstone, Bedworth, Coleshill, Nuneaton, and Rugby. Of these, Atherstone has retained most of its original character. Past major industries included coal mining, textiles, engineering and cement production but heavy industry is in decline and is being gradually replaced by distribution centres and other light-to-medium industry and services.

Of the northern and eastern towns, only Nuneaton and Rugby, the fastest-growing town in the West Midlands and in the top ten nationwide, are well-known outside Warwickshire. The prosperous towns of central and western Warwickshire include Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon, Kenilworth, Alcester, Southam and Wellesbourne which harbour light-to-medium industries, services and tourism as major employment sectors.

The north of the county bordering Staffordshire and Leicestershire consists of mildly undulating countryside and the northern-most village of No Man's Heath is only 34 miles (55 km) south of the Peak District National Park's southernmost point.

The far south of the County is largely rural and sparsely populated and includes a very small area of the Cotswolds at its border with northeast Gloucestershire. The plain between the outlying Cotswolds and the Edgehill escarpment is known as the Vale of the

Red Horse [4]. The only town in the far south of Warwickshire is Shipston-on-Stour. At 261m (856 ft) is Ebrington Hill, the highest point in the County, again on the border with Gloucestershire, grid reference SP187426 at the County's southwest extremity [5].

There are no cities within the County of Warwickshire as both Coventry and Birmingham were incorporated into the County of the West Midlands in 1974 and are now both independent Metropolitan authorities. The largest towns (+20,000 population) in Warwickshire in 2011 were as follows:-

- Nuneaton (81,900)
- Rugby (70,600)
- Leamington Spa (49,500)
- Bedworth (32,500)
- Warwick (30,100)
- Stratford (25,500)
- Kenilworth (22,400)

The current population is 577,900 and the latest ONS population projections for Warwickshire take this to 630,394 by 2030 and 672,247 by 2040.

Warwickshire has a strong and growing economy. Indeed, since the recession of 2008/2009, the County has experienced some of the strongest economic growth (as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA)) of any upper-tier local authority area in the country.

The growth in the economy has led to a very strong labour market with an employment rate (the proportion of working age residents in employment) rising strongly to the highest level seen this century. Unemployment is currently recorded at its lowest level, however, this may not now be completely accurate following the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Challenges remain for Warwickshire. There is significant diversity across the County and highly variable levels of economic performance. In Nuneaton & Bedworth, GVA per head of population is just one third that of Warwick District and average median annual wages are much lower in Nuneaton & Bedworth (£28,061 in 2018) than the best-performing area of Warwick (£32,952). The north of the County has a higher-than-average proportion of the workforce in low-paid sectors, accounting for more than 1 in 3 employees. There are also significant variations in Quality of Life indicators, particularly around health, skills and educational attainment. Nuneaton and Bedworth has 20% of Lower Super Output Areas and is in the top 20% of the nationally most deprived areas, compared to 0% in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Furthermore, while Warwickshire has seen strong rates of growth, it still lags behind better performing areas in the southeast. Warwickshire's GVA per head has grown by 43.96% since 2009 compared to growth of 16.57% and 28.03% in Berkshire and Oxfordshire respectively. However, these two areas still have GVA per head of £41,727 and £34,016 compared to GVA per head in Warwickshire of £30,245 (2017 figures). If these discrepancies in performance could be reduced – within the County, by significant 'levelling up' between the north and south of the County and then matching the stronger economic performance of areas within the south east – then very significant additional economic output would be generated within Warwickshire.

We therefore need to continue to build upon and maximise Warwickshire's economic strengths whilst also addressing areas of under-performance in order to fulfil our full potential. We also need to ensure that the local economy is able to embrace future economic, social and environmental changes and opportunities, both in the shorter term as we deal with the uncertainties around future trading arrangements following Brexit, and in the medium to longer-term through climate change and continued technological advancements.

There has been a dramatic change in the demography of the County over the last decade in terms of ethnicity and inward migration; an ageing population, growth in people with disabilities, and in a greatly increased school age population, all of which have had an impact on public service provision.

The emphasis on community and economic geographies in Government policy is clear. There are many lenses through which that can be viewed; however, if public service is to be responsive to local communities, it would be wrong to think that boundaries developed decades or even centuries ago accurately represent current travel to work, demographic, and economic boundaries, or indeed, today's modern society and its needs.

The National Agenda

The devolution agenda is clearly a priority for the Government. The arguments put by Government are that, via the devolution agenda, it can delegate greater powers and budgets to a local area stimulate economic growth through investment in housing and infrastructure, achieve public service reform and strengthen local political leadership.

The means by which Government seeks to do this are by agreements with clusters of local authorities coming together as combined authorities, to date and usually with a locally-elected Mayor. There is also some evidence that rationalising the local authority map via some form of 'unitisation' could be welcome and there is local support amongst some partners for the development of unitary approaches.

As detailed in the Queen's Speech in December 2019, the Government is expected to issue a White Paper in the Autumn of 2020 which will concentrate upon the devolution agenda and this is expected to include consideration of local government structures.

The Warwickshire local authorities are committed to a review of the existing arrangement across the Country to ensure that there is a clear and shared understanding of the most appropriate structures to meet this challenge, along with the challenges that have been raised through the recent COVID-19 outbreak.

Local Context - Recent Developments

Public services in Warwickshire across all sectors are likely to be facing very substantial financial challenges. Some of these challenges relate to the underlying increases in the elderly population and the strain that this is placing upon Adult Social Care.

In addition to the longer term issues there are also immediate financial pressures caused by the recent COVID-19 outbreak. Districts and Boroughs have been particularly affected by this outbreak, especially those which rely upon income from fees and charges in order to support their net budgets. There are also uncertainties surrounding the further delay of the Fair Funding Review, in the first instance due to BREXIT and the General Election in late 2019 and more recently, delays owing to the Covid-19 crisis.

The prospect of local government reorganisation within Warwickshire was last raised in 2014 following a public interest debate held at Warwickshire County Council. At that time there was no interest from the Districts and Boroughs to engage in this debate; however, with the current increased financial pressures and the opportunities surrounding greater devolution, it is felt that this is now the ideal time to undertake an objective review.

There are a range of perspectives on potential future local government reorganisation that may be considered during the review, including, but not limited to:-

- Status quo
- Single Unitary Warwickshire
- Two-Unitary Warwickshire

Context - Regional arrangements

The County Council and all of its Borough and Districts are members of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) and all authorities are represented on the CWLEP Board.

Apart from Warwick District Council, all other Warwickshire authorities are represented as non-Constituent members of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). Leadership of the WMCA is provided by the Mayor of the West Midlands together with the Leaders of seven constituent local authorities, all of which have full voting rights. Leadership also comprises of the chairpersons of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), business-led organisations that help build relationships between businesses and local authorities, non-constituent authorities; including LEPs and the ten local Councils from across the wider West Midlands region, which all have reduced voting rights but play a crucial role at Board level in helping to formulate policy and drive the WMCA agenda forward.

Elected Members and Officers lead on key policy portfolio areas, working in partnership with LEP colleagues.

There are also observer organisations, including Warwick District Council which is currently awaiting non-constituent membership, as well as non-voting observers.

The Study

In light of the above context and in seeking a way forward for local public services in Warwickshire, Warwickshire authorities are seeking to appoint consultants to prepare a Stage One Strategic Options Study as preparation for a Stage Two appraisal of the options available to the commissioning authorities.

Stage One – Strategic Option identification and assessment

For Stage One we are looking for the appointed consultants to identify, in discussion with the commissioning authorities, the different options available for consideration, to assess and score these options according to criteria set out below, taking into account context and key tests as below.

The consultants will need to work with the commissioning authorities to:-

- initially define these options,
- understand them sufficiently for them to be assessed in this way, and
- understand the concerns and priorities of the commissioning authorities in relation to each option.

In order to be able to assess the options under these criteria, the report produced from Stage One will:-

- a) Provide an overall commentary regarding the need or otherwise for local public service reorganisation in Warwickshire;
- b) Identify and define the options that are to be assessed at Stage One and describe these fully;
- c) Provide a qualitatively scored assessment of each of these options;
- d) Provide a commentary in relation to each option which will define their respective strengths and weaknesses and identify contextual issues and tests applying to each option.

The consultants will work with the commissioning authorities in discussing the final report and considering the scope of Stage Two, if so commissioned. The authorities are under no obligation to commission Stage Two.

Stage Two – Detailed Assessment and Viability Study

At this stage it is envisaged that commissioning authorities will identify a small number of options from Stage One requiring development in more detail, including a detailed financial assessment, risk analysis and scoping of the implementation requirements.

It is assumed that Stage Two will require three options to be fully assessed but this is subject to review and it should be clear in any costs quoted how a change in the number of options will affect this.

The Criteria Proposed

In examining which options might be best for the delivery of public services, the following factors are considered to be important:-

1. Community identity and democratic representation,
2. Economic geographies,
3. Comprehensiveness of proposals including their coherence with other neighbouring plans and alignment with Government expectations,
4. The opportunities for real transformation and deep integration of services,
5. Value for money – in particular new approaches to service delivery which provide increased productivity,
6. Partner and stakeholder support/commitment to options,
7. The track record of joint and collaborative working,
8. The cultural alignment between constituent authorities,
9. The fiscal and performance profile of constituent authorities,
10. Key service challenges,
11. Ease of migration to any new arrangements,
12. Identified risks (both now and in the future),
13. 'Levelling' up opportunities between the north and the south of the county.

Developing Proposals and Options – Key Tests

It is clear that final proposals need to be deliverable and that therefore the Stage One assessment needs to take account of:

- The context, nationally, regionally and locally which may affect stakeholder support and deliverability;
- The current context of both national and local government resulting in several areas of key service challenges which any credible proposal will need to be able to meet, namely;
 - Adult Social Care,
 - Protecting Vulnerable Children,
 - Assisting economically vulnerable families and individuals,
 - Climate Change,
 - Delivering housing growth,
 - Delivering business growth,
 - Responding to the Covid-19 challenges,
 - Regenerating and repurposing town centres,
 - Levelling up the current north/south divide.

These challenges arise from societal trends and the economic conditions and policy drivers which we face. It will be important to consider how well any options might meet these challenges.

The study should consider how, in each option, these and other services may be provided in collaboration or conjunction with other public services provided, such as with health (for example through creating an Accountable Care Organisation), with skills and education sectors, and what cross-border arrangements would be appropriate.

Government is understood to prefer 'as much consensus as possible' but the overarching driver for any decision is understood to be to reach a sound and sustainable proposal based on a strong evidence base whilst meeting the following four 'tests':

1. Strengthen local leadership –

Service delivery can be radically changed and still maintain absolute democratic accountability. A single tier of local government working in partnership with Town

and Parish Councils could sharpen accountability because there is only one local authority for each area and confusion about functional responsibility is reduced for the public. A single tier may enable partners to be more effectively engaged and make leadership more visible. Single-tier authorities nested within a combined authority may ensure a double layer of democratic accountability with devolved powers being subject to local control, whilst a single tier of local government delivery may enable simplified local government to make the best use of its resources and capacity to engage people. It provides the scope to have place-based leadership from the bottom up, rather than top-down, institutional leadership. Any arrangement must have clear lines of accountability.

2. Improve service delivery –

Whilst any new arrangement will create new separate legal entities, it is naïve to assume that the DNA of predecessor bodies will not wash into successor arrangements; hence, the fiscal and performance profile of constituent organisations is a serious consideration. The rationale for creating new arrangements has to focus on improving service delivery and resilience by doing things differently, including looking at how the government sector can work more closely with the health sector, policing, utilities and transport bodies, jointly designing, commissioning or managing services as appropriate.

3. Provide value for money –

The opportunity for improvements in value for money will need to be taken in the widest sense. The three 'E's of Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness are useful touchstones in considering the value-for-money test. Early interventions, in any sphere of work, can reduce longer term costs, as well as improve the service experience and increase productivity. Doing so, by working across existing silos and functional boundaries, will need to be a core feature of any new structures.

4. Reduce net costs –

This should be an 'inevitable consequence' of the proposed new arrangements as the three factors above are realised. The financial resilience of local government bodies needs to be strengthened, through development of new sources of income, making better use of assets and by designing services across functional boundaries enabling costs to be shared. The payback period for transitional costs should also be taken into consideration.

Specification of work required

Stage One – Strategic Options Identification and Assessment

Production of a report by Friday 11 September 2020 (or such other date as may be mutually agreed) which, having followed a process which complies with the above statement of requirements, will:

- a) Provide an overall commentary regarding the need for local public service reorganisation in Warwickshire,
- b) Identify and define the options that are to be assessed at Stage One and describe these fully,
- c) Provide a scored assessment of each of these options,
- d) Provide a commentary in relation to each option which will define the strength and weaknesses of each option and identify contextual issues and tests applying to each option,
- e) Enable the commissioning authorities to understand, at a strategic level, from your analysis;
 - How services can better relate to a local sense of place and to communities,
 - The strengths and weaknesses of the current system of local public service organisation and delivery in Warwickshire,
 - The budget pressures currently faced by the various local authorities and partner agencies,
 - Any identified underperformance in services and their impacts on budget pressures,
 - Opportunities for sharing of services over a wider geography,
 - Opportunities for service integration through transfer of functions,
 - Opportunities for redesigning services that can be delivered or commissioned collectively,
 - Opportunities for cross-sector service redesign,
 - The potential for costs and savings arising from service re-design,
 - Opportunities for service improvements through options for a new approach,
 - Opportunities to address the future devolution agenda, along with options for potential Mayoral areas ,
 - Opportunities for leveraging benefits from other agencies to support strategic aims.

The consultants will work with the commissioning authorities in discussing the final report and, if commissioned, in considering the scope of Stage Two.

Stage Two – Detailed Assessment and Viability Study

Authorities are under no obligation to commission Stage Two.

Produce a report by a date to be agreed which develops and evaluates a number of options in more detail, including a detailed financial assessment, risk analysis and scoping of the implementation requirements of each option.

It is assumed that Stage Two will require three options to be fully assessed but this may be reviewed and it should be clear in your fee how a change in the number of options will affect this.

Guidance for Bidders

a) Engaging Stakeholders

The consultant team is required to engage with all commissioning authorities including Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC). The commissioning authorities will lead engagement with key stakeholders, including public engagement, to inform development of the proposals and identify their views on the possible options. It is expected that consultants will take part in these discussions. An officer steering group will also be established to liaise with the appointed consultants.

b) Submitted bids should include the following:

- Set out the approach and outline plan for completing the work,
- Give details of the project team who would be carrying out the work identifying expertise in local government governance and re-structuring, financial modelling and service transformation ,
- Give the details of the staff who would be undertaking the work,
- Confirm that the project team will be available to attend meetings with Members and Officers to present and discuss the report,
- Provide details of similar work the organisation has previously undertaken and provide the names of two referees who the commissioning Councils can contact,
- Advise the commissioning authorities of further information required from them,
- Advise the commissioning authorities of the cost of completing the work together with any associated expenses.

c) Access to information

Much of the information needed for the financial analysis of the study will be taken from publically available sources and data available to the commissioning authorities. Where additional information is required from other organisations, e.g. CWLEP and the CCGs, we will seek to agree an information-sharing protocol to request the data needed. We will also explore with DCLG the potential for securing an open-book approach. Alternatively, this information would need to be accessed through Freedom of Information requests.

d) Confidentiality

The commissioning authorities consider the work to be ***strictly confidential*** and the contractor must not share the working or communicate with other parties about it without consulting the authorities first.

Timescales

A final written report for Stage One is required by close of business on Friday 11 September 2020 with associated presentation resources for various audiences. It is anticipated that the further stages will form part of the timetable.

Stage Two timescales will be determined only if Stage Two is commissioned, following consideration of the Stage One Report.

Further Information

For further information about this proposal, please contact David Buckland, Chief Executive, Stratford-on-Avon District Council on 01789 260425 or 07854 088030.