



Title	HEART Service Progress Report
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Wards of the District directly affected	All
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	6 th February 2018 – Overview and Scrutiny Report, minute 75
Background Papers	None

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executive	10/03/19	Bill Hunt
Head of Service	08/03/19	Lisa Barker
CMT	13/03/19	Chris Elliott
Section 151 Officer	14/03/19	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	11/03/19	Andrew Jones
Portfolio Holder(s)	18/03/19	Councillor Peter Phillips
Consultation & Community Engagement		
None		
Final Decision?	Yes	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report informs the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of current operational and financial performance with the countywide Home Environment Assessment and Response Team (HEART) shared service.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the performance of HEART as set out in Appendix 1

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 The HEART service began operating across the whole of Warwickshire on 1st April 2017. Appendix 1 to this report provides an update for members on the progress and performance up to the end of quarter 3 in 2018/19.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

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. The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all. Housing needs for all met. Impressive cultural and sports activities. Cohesive and active communities.	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Area has well looked after public spaces. All communities have access to decent open space. Improved air quality. Low levels of crime and ASB.	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy. Vibrant town centres. Improved performance/productivity of local economy. Increased employment and income levels.
Impacts of Proposal		
The HEART service enables people with physical disabilities to meet their housing needs and remain in	None.	None.

their own homes for longer.		
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained. All staff have the appropriate tools. All staff are engaged, empowered and supported. The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours.	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs. Continuously improve our processes. Increase the digital provision of services.	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets. Full cost accounting. Continued cost management. Maximise income earning opportunities. Seek best value for money.
Impacts of Proposal		
None.	None.	None.

4.2 **Supporting Strategies**

Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies. The Council adopted the current Housing and Homelessness Strategy in April 2017. This includes an objective of supporting people to sustain, manage and maintain their housing and an action of implementing, monitoring and evaluating the new HEART service.

4.3 **Changes to Existing Policies**

Not applicable – this is a progress report on a shared service.

4.4 **Impact Assessments**

An impact assessment has not been completed because this is a progress report on a shared service.

5. **Budgetary Framework**

5.1 The HEART project has now been set up as a countywide shared service and has its own revenue budgets. The capital funding previously provided to Warwick District Council from central government to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) is passed directly across to the HEART service for the same purpose.

5.2 Whilst HEART undertakes the assessment for adaptations in all tenures, DFG funds private sector adaptations with the Housing Revenue Account covering the costs of adaptations for council tenants.

5.3 The DFG allocations from Government have increased by 112% since 2015/16. There is a planned 8% increase in 2019/20 bringing the total

Government DFG allocation up to £505 million. The increase in DFG allocations gives the service the potential to earn additional fee income, to help with any increase in costs.

5.4 In Warwick District, the Government DFG allocation has increased as follows:

YEAR	Total National Allocation	WDC Allocation	Percent Increase on previous year
2015/16	£220m	£373,000	
2016/17	£394m	£684,000	83%
2017/18	£431m	£750,000	9.6%
2018/19	£468m	£816,000	8.8%
2019/20 (planned)	£505m	£880,000 (predicted)	7.9%

5.5 In 2017/18, the Government also released some additional funding for DFG's. WDC took up and spent this additional allocation of £79,000. In December 2018 the Government offered additional funding of £98,296 for the remainder of 2018/19 and again we have managed to spend this additional allocation.

5.6 Due to the organisational changes, vacancies and sickness experienced during 2017/18 the service managed to allocate £339k of the capital budget. This amounted to 45% of the budget. The uncommitted funding was carried over to the 2018/19 financial year. It is being used to proactively fund level access showers, external wall insulation and first time central heating systems through the Housing Financial Assistance Policy.

5.7 At the end of Quarter 3 for 2018/19 the capital position in WDC stood at:

Budget: £816k

Committed: £475k

Profiled rate of commitment: 78%

5.8 This is a substantial improvement on the previous financial year. It is currently predicted that there will be an under committed amount of £181,000 at the end of the year, which can be used to support work under the Housing Financial Assistance Policy.

5.9 Current approvals show a continuing uptake of the assistance available under the Housing Financial Assistance Policy.

Assistance Type (Approval	Percent of	Number of
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Amounts)		approved grant value.	approvals.
DFG	£423,357	89%	38
WaSH (warm and safer homes)	£35,190	7%	8
Home Safety	£11,326	2%	46
Hospital Discharge	£5,841	1%	1

5.10 Overall there have been 93 grants awarded at the end of quarter 3, this financial year. The number of Home Safety Grants (max £500) have significantly increased this financial year, but due to its maximum value it has little impact on the overall budget.

5.11 The Housing Financial Assistance Policy included provision for a Hospital Discharge Grant to help with discharge or reducing care costs where the home environment was contributing to bed blocking or increased care costs. There has been limited take up of this grant so far. However, it has been agreed with the Director of Public Health (WCC) that Housing would work jointly with Social Care and NHS to promote HEART in George Eliot and Warwick Hospitals. Two temporary posts have been funded by WCC for this purpose, with the intention of understanding housing blockages in relation to discharge from hospital and to increase uptake of the Hospital Discharge Grant. It should be noted that housing reasons form only a very small percentage of the overall numbers of delayed hospital discharges.

6. Risks

6.1 Not applicable – this is a progress report on a shared service.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

7.1 Not applicable – this is a progress report on a shared service.

8. Background

8.1 On 28th September 2016 Executive resolved that Warwick District Council should participate in the countywide Home Environment Assessment and Response Team (HEART) shared service for the future delivery of its home adaptation responsibilities for a period of five years from 1st April 2017.

8.2 This followed a previous pilot project, the Housing Assessment Team or HAT, which had been running across the south of the county since 2014.

8.3 Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) hosts the HEART service and provides all of the infrastructure and administrative support. Operational management is provided by an officer from NBBC seconded to the post of Head of Home Environment Services. The “on-the-ground” service for the south of the county (WDC & SDC) is delivered locally from Warwick District Council’s office at Riverside House.

- 8.4 Strategic management is provided by a Management Board consisting of the Heads of Housing (or equivalent) from each of the five district and borough councils and senior managers from relevant services within Warwickshire County Council.
- 8.5 The first year of the HEART countywide service (2017/18) was very challenging with performance deteriorating during the year. This was due to the considerable change involved in developing the service, staff sickness and several vacancies that effectively prevented the service from operating at the levels it is capable of.
- 8.6 However, significant progress has been made over the first three quarters of the current financial year with performance improving every quarter:
- Enquiries have increased over the previous financial year, being approximately 30% higher to date.
 - The number of people waiting for a visit has fallen from 231 to 93. This represents good progress when demand is rising.
 - There has been an increase in the number of people visited compared to the same quarter last year, up from 98 to 123 (a 24% increase).
 - The end-to-end time measures from enquiry to works completed for DFG's has shown a gradual improvement over the year after initially rising to 189 days for the south of the county at the end the previous financial year. It takes 6 months for improvements to work through, so given the lower numbers currently on the waiting list, it is expected that the end to end time will continue to improve if other variables remain constant.
 - The approval rate has been significantly higher than in the previous financial year. An additional staff member has been employed by the service within the South, which will assist with the processing of more grants. There are two vacancies that are currently being recruited to. One of these vacancies is the WDC employee contribution to the HEART service and the new member of staff will be in post on 1 April 2019.
 - In general the stage times in the South (WDC & SDC) are improving and at the end of quarter 3 are better than the North (NBBC, NWBC & RBC).
- 8.7 Part of the delivery performance relies on contractors to provide quotes and deliver the works. To help improve this HEART is procuring contractors to allow better allocation of work and monitoring of performance. Two contracts, architects and stairlifts went live at the end of January 2019. Procurement for level access showers is due to closed in January and will be awarded shortly. This is the first time that major procurement exercises have been undertaken to deliver private sector adaptations throughout the county.

- 8.8 The HEART Management Board will be closely monitoring that the improving trend in performance continues.
- 8.9 To help try and identify where further improvements to the service can be made The Partnership Agreement included a 2-year review of the HEART service.
- 8.10 This independent review is due to begin in April 2019 and will consider the following 5 lines of enquiry:
- Leadership and governance and that operational management is effective.
To include partnership arrangements, governance, the board and reporting.
 - Data is recorded and counted accurately.
To include operational data, trends, understanding system and highlighting pressure points.
 - Processes are optimised.
To include the flow through the system and testing process when under pressure and working with partners.
 - Demand is actively managed.
To include performance against priority outcomes, benchmark comparisons, capacity and productivity.
 - Service offer and capacity is appropriate.
To include expenditure and how we compare nationally, capacity in the system and cost benefit analysis of services as well as consistency across the teams.
- 8.11 In addition the Management Board are reviewing how the staffing arrangements are impacting on the service. Staff members are seconded from partner authorities, with WDC providing one seconded employee. New posts are now employed by HEART via NBBC. This creates challenges and partners are discussing the best way to resolve the legacy inconsistencies that have arisen from staff being seconded from different partners.
- 8.12 The Management Board meets quarterly and receives reports enabling it to monitor operational and financial performance as well as issues around the strategic direction of the service. Appendix 1 is the most recent performance report received by the board for quarter 3.
- 8.13 While members will find this useful, attention is drawn in particular to the following sections of the Performance Report in Appendix 1:
- Section 3 shows demand for the services with some accompanying commentary.

- Sections 5a gives the number of major adaptations funded by (DFG) the number approved, completed and closed for the quarter.
- Section 7b shows the average cost for each type of major adaptation.
- Sections 8 and 9 show end-to-end times for the quarter and the trend over time.
- Section 10 shows the average time taken to carry out key stages of the process.
- Sections 14 to 16 cover customer satisfaction with the service and with contractors, including compliments and complaints;
- Section 17 is the Head of Service report for the quarter.

8.14 The HEART Head of Service, Paul Coopey, will attend the meeting to assist with answering any questions that members may have on the progress.