

Current WDC activity that contributes to the Prosperity agenda

Commercial economy

This sector of the economy is driven by the private sector so WDC's role is a supportive one, assisting the sector to develop and prosper.

Support activities include:

- Delivering an effective and efficient planning service
- Signposting businesses to specialist support and/or the correct point of contact within the Council or other organisations
- 'Hand-holding' and guiding businesses seeking to invest/relocate in the area e.g. Vitsoe, JLR at Fen End, Rolls Royce
- Organising training events, particularly for SMEs (e.g. access to finance, intellectual property legal advice etc.)
- Liaising with agents to find alternative accommodation for businesses seeking to relocate (e.g. CeraCon) or needing to relocate when affected by a development scheme (e.g. Sydenham)
- Providing advice and support to developers of major sites e.g. Stoneleigh Park, Tournament Fields, Gateway, Fen End
- Offering use of CPO powers to ensure development can progress e.g. Regent Court, Chandos Street, Station Approach
- Provision, and management of, managed workspaces for start-up, growing & sector specific companies at the Althorpe Innovation & Enterprise Centre, Creative Arches and 26 Hamilton Terrace.
- Providing retail and office properties for letting from within the Council's stock of 'non-operational' assets
- Creating and enhancing business to business (B2B) connections by hosting networking events and through direct introductions
- Provision of skills training to SMEs
- Working with private sector support and membership agencies, e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Chambers of Trade, TIGA (Games Industry Awards), UKIE (dames and interactive entertainment industry)
- Attendance at trade shows to promote the district and its local businesses, e.g. BCSC (the professional body for the UK retail sector), MIPIM UK (commercial property sector)

Public economy

All the services and activities provided by the Council directly contribute to this sector of the local economy with indirect support given through engagement with local businesses and residents.

- In the current financial year the Council will be providing services with a gross value of £96m to the economy and running a capital investment programme of £14m
- We collect Business Rates of some £70m per annum (of which this Council retains c£3-4m) and have an agreement to 'pool' resources across the sub-region to maximise the amount of this revenue that is retained within the sub-regional economy

- The Council directly employs over 500 people (463.77 full time equivalent posts as at 30/9/14), with the bulk of the workforce living within the district
- The spending power and prosperity of the lower paid sections of the workforce will be strengthened by the introduction of the Living Wage for all Council staff
- In addition the bulk of the staff working for our major contractors live in the district, for example:
Sita 60 staff (82% of the workforce)
The Landscape Group 34 staff (71% of the workforce)
Veolia 43 staff (83% of the workforce)
- The Council runs a Code of Procurement Practice which defines how it procures goods and services. Supplies and services are procured from a mix of local and national companies depending on the product but the Council encourages local businesses to become its suppliers: any potential supplier contacting the Procurement Team is encouraged to register on the CSW-JETS e.tendering portal; all procurement opportunities are advertised via this portal; in future WDC will be using this system for 'quick' quotes for low value spend under £20k which will also encourage local companies, if registered, to quote for work; introducing a Purchasing Card for low value, low risk spend often below £500; breaking contracts into lots to facilitate SME participation (as per the EU Public contract Directive); where applicable, e.g. building maintenance contracts, inserting clauses to ensure local suppliers are engaged to supply materials or to employ apprentices, which will favour local people.
- There are numerous examples of us using locally based contractors and suppliers, for example, All About People (Counselling and Mediation Service – Leamington) Typing service (Wellesbourne), Stress and MBTI training (Trudie Donnelly – Leamington)
- The Council has established a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) to assist it to deliver complex development projects and it is LLP policy to engage local firms (e.g. architects) to support its operations
- The Council employs 2 Senior Project Coordinators to ensure it has the capacity and skills to deliver large scale projects that stimulate the local economy, e.g. Chandos Street retail development, Station area redevelopment, HQ relocation project, Lillington regeneration feasibility study etc.
- The Council directly engages with the private sector to encourage economic development within the district e.g. presentations to Leamington Chamber, Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, BID Leamington, the local branch of the Federation of Small Business; discussions with national retailers (e.g. Marks & Spencer, John Lewis Partnership, River Island) or businesses (e.g. Vitsoe, Bowls England) to encourage operation/relocation to the district; attendance at BCSC
- Using the Sustainability theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy to promote prosperity: working with other local housing providers to establish energy efficiency performance standards for existing and new stock and developing a local supply chain to deliver to these standards; working with some of our commercial tenants to help them reduce their utility bills through simple no- and low-cost measures and then developing case studies on their achievements that could be used to encourage others to follow suit; ensuring WDC officers who work routinely with local business (EHOs, building control officers etc) are equipped to provide basic advice on sustainability-type issues as and when opportunities arise (along the lines of 'making every contact count'); developing a web-based resource or newsletter for businesses to make them aware of business risks and opportunities relating to sustainability

- Direct business support, for example, running a health and safety intervention project and engaging with via business forums to raise awareness amongst local businesses; operating a taxi driver and operator forum; providing an (optional) advisory service to new businesses on food hygiene and health and safety; advising businesses with advice on standards.
- Using the Health & Well-being theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy to promote prosperity, with the ultimate aim of reducing health inequalities and increasing productivity as a healthier community is a more productive one: Interacting with the public health and third sectors to promote health and well-being; engaging with the planning process to promote health impact assessments of development proposals; inviting bids from the VCS sector for support with projects that address social determinants of health; working with Warwickshire College on catering and health related training across this agenda; providing training for businesses on food hygiene, health and safety and licensing; prosecuting those who ignore health and safety or hygiene legislation and undercapitalise their businesses in these areas as consistent regulation aids prosperity; running an award scheme that promotes those businesses that 'gold plate' in these areas and issuing Charters to employers who understand that a healthy workforce is a more productive one.
- Ensuring our activities do not compete with the private sector, for example, reviewing the merchandise sold at the Visitor Information Centre to avoid purchasing the usual gift shop items offered by high street retailers and instead commissioning commission merchandise with a local feel which is not available elsewhere and promotes the locality.
- Running festivals and events to promote the area
- Successfully bidding to ensure that Bowls England relocate to the area and that the district hosts both the men and women's national championships
- Financially and professionally supporting the Destination Management Partnership (Shakespeare's England – www.shakespeares-england.co.uk) to promote tourism and 'capture' visitor spending within the district
- Provision of visitor information services
- Using the Housing theme of the Sustainable Communities Strategy to promote the prosperity agenda: working with Registered Providers to deliver new affordable housing with rents below market levels which, in turn, gives the occupiers more disposable income, increases the ability of those on benefits to move into work, and for those in shared ownership housing providing the opportunity for people on lower incomes to acquire an asset; new build generates work in the building industry and trade for local businesses as the workers spend money locally.
- Using the Safer Communities theme of the Sustainable Communities Strategy to support the prosperity agenda: Chairing Safety Advisory Group meetings to provide professional advice to event organisers to ensure their event is run safely and professionally, including regular meetings with Stoneleigh Park, Warwick Castle, etc.; Investigating complaints of noise nuisance and other pollution incidents; providing advice on licensing (public nuisance) issues and/or advice on noise control to pubs and clubs (e.g. assisting to set levels on noise-limiter devices in their premises); providing advice and assistance on contaminated land liabilities
- Supporting local people into work: We offer work placements and places for student EHOs; we financially support Job Clubs and have used s106 funding to expand their operation; we are working with Warwickshire College on the skills agenda; we employ our own Apprentice via Warwickshire County Council - providing a previously NEET young person with NVQ Level 3 training and 18 months' worth of work experience; utilising our in-house community

development activities to provide opportunities for individuals in targeted communities to build their confidence, gain new skills and work experience in order to gain future employment; working with local schools and attending their career fairs to offer advice with C.V.'s and interviewing skills and providing information about 'a day in the life of a council'; we have allocated £50,000 to deliver and evaluate a range of employment support activities in 2014/15 to allow evaluation and the potential allocation of future permanent funding

- Working with the public sector to produce a new traffic management plan for Warwick and Leamington. As part of this process, stakeholder groups have been held with the larger employers in the district to explore their views on travel to work, local air quality, etc.
- Direct provision and indirect commissioning of business support activities for local businesses, primarily SMEs
- Provision of a town centre management function and liaison with the town centre businesses to address their needs
- Supporting the delivery of Government funded programmes (eg: GRO Warwickshire, LEADER etc.) aimed at assisting business development in rural areas

Social economy

This sector of the economy is defined by the economic activity generated by social and environmental activities, carried out by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), for example by community enterprises, credit unions, trading arms of charities, employee-owned businesses, development trusts. However, this sector also includes the economic activities driven by Registered Providers (housing associations) which are normally established as a charity.

As with the commercial economy WDC's role is a supportive one, assisting the sector to develop and prosper. Support activities include:

- Working with Sports Coach UK to deliver training for existing or prospective coaches who wish to develop their skills.
- Offering discounts to people wishing to enrol on these courses who live in the district.
- Supporting over 100 events per year across the district – of a wide range of size and with differing audiences. These include the National Bowls Championships with an estimated 20,000 visitors to the district and in excess of £1m coming into the economy of the district as a result. Other events which we know bring in visitors from outside the district include Peace Festival, Food and Drink Festival (BID), Warwickshire Pride, Kenilworth Foodie Fortnight; Thai Festival, Warwick Folk Festival, Heartbreak Productions, Khalsa sports festival, Victorian Evening and Christmas Light Switch-ons.
- Commissioning WCAVA to give local VCS/Social Enterprise organisations advice about procurement, securing new premises, organisational development and expansion (NB contract due to expire in March 2015 although a new provider will be commissioned for a further 3 years).
- Commissioning a volunteer centre recruitment and support service, enabling local businesses to tap into the volunteer economy by offering work placements/ work experience opportunities to support people to access work or develop new career opportunities
- Commissioning a range of VCS organisations in the District to deliver various

community-level support to residents within targeted neighbourhoods, including Job Clubs and support for NEETs

- Providing funding to VCS organisations through the RUCIS scheme and providing advice on cost reduction through the business rates relief scheme
- Total financial support to the VCS sector is:
VCS Commissioning - £350k
Community Forum Grant Fund - £35k (plus £75k match funding from WCC)
Small Grants Fund - £11k
Community Engagement Fund - £8k
- Working with the Registered Provider sector through the Joint Commissioning Partnership to bring forward new affordable housing in the district
- Establishing the W2 Partnership with a Registered Provider