

## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 3 November 2015**

### **Addendum**

"To Follow" and late reports received after the agenda was published

Contents:

- Item 5 – Portfolio Holder Update – Finance Report
- Item 7 - Additional reports for Appendix 1:
  - Shakespeare's England Limited (representative Councillor Cross)
  - Warwick Town Centre Management Group (representative Councillor Cross)
- Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) (representative Councillor Phillips)

## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**3 November 2015**

### **Finance Portfolio Holder update**

#### Performance

1. What do the measures in the Service Plan tell you about the performance of the service at this point in the year?

The processing time for council tax correspondence has reduced from 41 days for quarter 1, to 26 days for quarter 2 (as measured by the oldest item of correspondence awaiting processing). Whilst this is a welcome improvement, actions are still being taken to reduce the time.

The average number of days from receipt of all information to determine changes to benefit/reduction claims has increased from 13 for Q1 to 23 for Q2. Reasons for this include staff working on getting the new "E-forms" module live (discussed below).

2. What actions do you intend to take based on the measures?

The move towards more generic working within Council Tax/Business Rates (discussed below) is intended to reduce processing times. New functionality within the Civica is being introduced which will allow us to automate certain admin procedures freeing up time to enable staff to focus on reducing processing times. In addition, the change to the call centre arrangements should enable closer working between staff and result in a better service to customers.

With E-Forms now being live for new claims, this should assist in reducing processing time as staff do not have to re-key data, scan documents and should not have to request items not submitted.

#### Risks

3. Highlight any significant changes to the risks in your Service Plan and any actions that you intend to take to address the revised risks.

The main new risks facing Finance relate to staffing issues.

The Strategic Finance Manager has been on long term sick since May. An interim Principal Accountant has been appointed to undertake some of the

work, with other duties being undertaken by other staff. Plans are being made for the Strategic Finance Manager's return to work in November.

The Procurement Team saw the resignation of the Procurement Officer earlier in the year. A new Procurement Officer started work with the Council in September. The Procurement Manager has secured alternative employment and is due to leave in November. A recruitment process is underway to find a replacement, with interviews scheduled to be held in November. To assist in "managing the gap", it is intended that an interim procurement will need to be sought through Comensura. With the change in the Procurement Officer appointment, it has not been possible to fill the 3 year Procurement Officer post agreed earlier in the year. Consideration is now being given to using agency staff to fill this role. In addition, there is the option of obtaining procurement advice from WCC lawyers and procurement team if necessary. Based on the foregoing, plans are in place to seek to ensure as smooth a transition as possible when the Procurement Manager leaves.

Finance has the continued responsibility for co-ordinating risk management across the Council. Within the Annual Risk Management report that is being presented to Finance & Audit Scrutiny, more details of work is included. The authority is increasingly recognising the importance of openly and transparently monitoring its risks, and making sure that members are informed of all potential risks, especially as part of the decision making process.

#### Workforce Planning

4. Highlight any significant changes to your Workforce Planning and any actions that you intend to take to address the revised plan

Over the last year, more "generic working" has been the aim within the Council Tax/Business Rates Section. Under this approach, newly appointed Revenues Officers are being trained so as to be able to process council tax, business rates and recovery correspondence, rather than each officer being ascribed to their own specialism. This work has so far concentrated on new appointments. With the recent vacancy for the council tax team leader, the generic working is being trialled across the whole Section. As part of this an additional temporary team leader has been appointed (with Revenues Officer seconded into the post). This trial is due to last a year, by which time it is hoped that it will be possible to streamline the overall workforce whilst improving service to customers.

An interim Principal Benefits Officer is being appointed to assist the Benefits & Fraud Manager with specific projects, most notably the Customer Service Centre re-integration, and the Review of the Council

Tax Reduction scheme, and to act as a deputy to the manager. The appointee will be seconded from an existing post within the Benefits Section. This post is intended to provide additional resilience and support for the specific projects, but also will be part of workforce planning. The appointment is due to be reviewed after a year.

The Finance Support Team, through extensive training, have become multi-skilled which has led to efficiencies and thereby reducing their processing times. In addition a temporary post has been made permanent thereby enabling them to take over direct debit admin for the Revenues team as well as purchasing card admin from Procurement.

### Budget

5. Highlight any significant changes to the budget pressures highlighted in the Service Plan and any actions required to address these changes

In the absence of the Strategic Finance Manager, there have been additional costs relating to the appointment of the interim Principal Accountant, for which funding is requested from the Executive as part of the Budget Review report.

One of Finance's main roles is the co-ordination of the Budget Review process across the Council. This includes monitoring the current year budget and also updating the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. As part of this, and with the procurement role, Finance actively set out to seek to challenge expenditure and ensure value for money. The mobile phones are now managed by the FS Team within Finance, whereby much tighter processes are being put in place to ensure officers have appropriate phones for their business needs, making use of the existing stock of phones where possible.

As part of the overall savings plan agreed by Executive, Finance is actively working on the relevant project to help ensure those projected savings are achieved. Within the Savings project, Finance is seeking to make improved investment returns, and is looking at other investment instruments to assist with this. Proposals will be included within the 2016/17 Investment Strategy.

## Planned changes, work streams and projects

6. Highlight any work streams/projects that have been completed at this point in the year

### *E-Forms – Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction Claims*

Following on from Executive's agreement to the new "Risk Based Verification" approach to benefit claims in September 2015, work has been progressing on "E-Forms". From October, it has been possible for new housing benefit council tax reduction claimants to submit applications on line via the Council's website. This is to be supplemented by the ability to submit "change in circumstances" similarly shortly. So far there has been a "soft roll out" of the service, but more general promotion is planned.

It is intended that this service will provide a better service to customers. It will also be possible to make better use of staff resources, which have seen a reduction due to forthcoming introduction for Universal Credit for working age claimants.

### *Procurement Training*

Procurement training has been rolled out across the Council to all officers involved in the procurement process. This has entailed half day sessions provided by the Procurement Manager and a lawyer from WCC. A further session is being planned for those staff who were unable to attend.

Member Training – a similar procurement training sessions was provided in July. This session was very well received by those attending.

Contract Management Training – An external provider provided a full day training session for officers across the Council, which again was well attended. Further service specific contract management training remains the responsibility of the respective Service Areas.

7. Highlight any significant changes or new work streams/projects expected during the year.

The proposal to cease the joint Customer Service Centre (CSC) with WCC will impact significantly upon Finance, where Benefits, Council Tax and Business Rates are the largest WDC element of the CSC. There is pressure for these calls to be returned to the department as soon as possible. As part of the overall CSC transfer project, a departmental project has been set up to form a service specific contact centre within Finance for these services. This has highlighted the complexity of transferring the calls back, having regard to staffing, technology, location, finance, and, as a priority, seeking to improve the service to customers. Whilst we are confident that we will in due course be able to provide an improved service in the

medium term, detailed consideration is being given to how the transfer can be made as smooth as possible.

#### Any changes required to Service Area Plan

8. This is an opportunity to flag up any changes to milestones on projects, or any actions required due to pressures occurring in the service area. The Service Area Plan Actions reported to members in September are attached to this paper. Specific attention is drawn to the following items.

#### *On-Line Returns*

The "On Line Returns" module to the Council's Income Management System is continuing to be subject to delays. Currently the supplier is seeking to fix various technical problems. This is leading delays to the anticipated rollout, but should still be within this financial year.

#### *Discretionary Rate Relief policy for new businesses*

This policy was originally proposed to consider how the Council may be able to consider granting rate relief to attract new businesses in the district, financed from the Business Rate Volatility Reserve. However, given the lack of growth in the overall business rate base, the high number of appeals, the Volatility Reserve does not hold sufficient resources to fund such a policy. Accordingly, it was agreed with the Deputy Chief Executive that consideration of this policy is not viable at this time.

<b>Change/Project</b>	<b>Sponsor/Lead Officer</b>	<b>Budget Impact</b>	<b>Impact on other Services</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sundry Debtor training	Strategic Finance Manager		Relevant for all services raising sundry debts	Initial pilot course and subsequent course programme.	March 2016
Review of Concurrent Services and parish support	Strategic Finance Manager	Potential savings £100k.		Paper to PFH and Leader. Potential subsequent Executive report.	To be determined by November 2015
Review of Active H/Total interface and associated working practices	Head of Housing & Property Services.		Joint project with H&PS, requiring some support from ICT.	Meeting 3 August	March 2016
On-line Returns	Strategic Finance Manager		Culture, Neighbourhood	Rollouts for Spa Centre, Leisure Centres, followed by feasibility Car Parks	March 2016
Benefits – E-Forms	Benefits & Fraud Manager		DMC, CSC, Font Line	Initial rollout, active promotion working with CSC and Front Line	June 2015. March 2016
Review of potential changes to Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Benefits & Fraud Manager		CSC, Front line, ICT	2015/16 fact finding and analysis, and monitoring impact of UC.	Executive report Spring 2016
Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for new businesses	Exchequer Manager			Report for CMT consideration	Autumn 2015
Auto-matching feasibility for	Exchequer Manager		DMC, All Services	Feasibility by end of	December

<b>Change/Project</b>	<b>Sponsor/Lead Officer</b>	<b>Budget Impact</b>	<b>Impact on other Services</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Date</b>
Creditor invoices				September	r 2015
Review usage being made of Procurement System with a view to its use being made across the Council in managing contracts and procuring services.	Procurement Manager		All Services	Feasibility, plan, roll-out	March 2016
Procurement Training for officers across the Council	Procurement Manager		All Services	Workshop 1 on-going, Support to contract management training	July 2015, December 2015
Prepare for 5 yearly review of Internal Audit during 2016/17	Audit & Risk Manager			Produce Plan of how to undertake it	March 2016
Promotion of Risk Management and RM initiatives.	Audit & Risk Manager		All Services	Risk Management Annual report to Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee	September 2015



Partnership: **Shakespeare's England Limited**

	<b>Annual Health Check Questions</b>	<b>Commentary (Please refer to any supporting documents)</b>	<b>Scrutiny Comments</b>
9.1	What has the partnership achieved during the course of the previous twelve months?	<p><b>Outward facing Marketing Campaigns</b> including (but not exclusively):                      Joint print and web campaigns with VisitEngland – eg: family campaigns, romance involving partners.</p> <p>Overseas promotions &amp; sales missions with key partners (inc Warwick Castle, RSC etc..)</p> <p>Promotion of the area at key trade shows – eg: Confex, Best of Britain and Ireland (BOBI), Tourism &amp; Attractions show, Tourism &amp; Destination Show etc..</p> <p>Key launch partner of the China Welcome Campaign</p> <p>Promotional campaigns with Chiltern Railways at 250 poster sites in August 2015</p> <p>Promotional events – eg: Station Take Over at Marylebone (including partners)</p> <p>Launch of consumer leaflet &amp; distribution in domestic target markets – eg: London, Birmingham, Manchester, etc..</p> <p>Standalone campaigns such as: The Times advertising feature October 3<sup>rd</sup> – featuring Kenilworth Castle, The Cross etc...</p>	

		<p>Estimated Advertising Value of £1.7m (by end of July 2015) arising from facilitation of press visits, press release activity, &amp; campaigns. Familiarisation visits include journalists from China, Germany, India, Dubai, Kuwait, Japan.</p> <p>Increase in web traffic and social media engagement over the last 12 months</p> <p>Monthly consumer e-newsletters targeting database</p> <p><b>Development of the Destination Management Plan</b> for South Warwickshire. Adopted by partners. Delivery overseen by board members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Including purchase of statistical package for measurement of tourism performance in the area</li> </ul> <p><b>Company development and appraisal of funding options</b></p> <p><b>Member liaison and engagement with tourism forums</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly Newsletters/updates to members including calls for access to funding</li> <li>- Planning for promotion of 2016 anniversaries – including Kenilworth 750, Capability Brown 300, &amp; Shakespeare 400</li> </ul>	
9.2	How have the achievements made a difference to the	Co-ordination of the promotion of tourism	

	<p>residents/visitors/businesses of Warwick district and how do those achievements align to the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy?</p>	<p>activities is a key action of the Prosperity element of the SCS</p> <p>Helping to shape destination role and development of product through the DMP.</p> <p>Greater profile of the area and subsequent business opportunities</p> <p>Business members receive opportunities to work with each other and generate additional business through new opportunities – eg: advertising in The Times etc..</p> <p>Promotion of the area that has widened the 'pool' of visitors actively looking to visit the area.</p> <p>Businesses involved in journalist familiarisation visits get additional profile through articles.</p>	
9.3	<p>Have there been any significant changes to the external environment, such as the state of the economy or the introduction of new legislation, which require a re-appraisal of the need for the partnership? If so, what are these?</p>	<p>Review of national tourism structures (and funding) by the government provides a level of uncertainty for Visit England and Visit Britain.</p> <p>Entered year 3 of the 3 year funding agreement. A review is underway.</p>	
9.4	<p>What measures have been used to determine whether the partnership is providing value for money?</p>	<p>Advertising Return on investment</p> <p>Delivery vs agreed business and marketing plans</p> <p>Membership renewals</p> <p>Development of the destination management plan</p>	
9.5	<p>What consideration to extending the scope of the partnership has been made?</p>	<p>The company Board is considering future working partnerships to increase effectiveness and reduce costs, expansion of board membership to include other</p>	

		key partners (eg: rail companies) and looking at different models of delivery.	
9.6	How can it be demonstrated that the achievements were not possible without the partnership?	<p>Visit England recognition of the official DMO and therefore access to government funding.</p> <p>Significant delivery of joint opportunities for working with key partners in different markets under a common brand.</p> <p>Access to key players within the industry.</p> <p>One point of contact for journalists/travel trade to enable promotions and familiarisation visits.</p> <p>Commissioning and fund raising for Development of Destination Management Plan (for South Warwickshire)..</p> <p>Common voice for the area and tourism.</p>	
9.7	What alternative options to the partnership have been considered?	Alternatives were considered as part of the development of the WDC strategy for tourism development before the set-up of the company.	
9.8	What are the key outcomes to be achieved over the forthcoming twelve months and how will they be measured?	<p>The review of tourism will potentially redefine what outputs WDC will require as part of the partnership.</p> <p>Delivery of the marketing plan.</p> <p>Increase in membership and therefore company viability.</p> <p>Activity levels and EAV (as one measure of press value)</p> <p>Web and social media reach.</p> <p>Maximisation of benefits to WDC based businesses and increase in company membership.</p>	
9.9	What arrangements have been in place during the previous 12 months for the management of risk? If no risk register is in place, why was one considered	<p>Board reviews financial position regularly and progress against action plans.</p> <p>Devt Services Risk Register</p>	

Addendum for Item 7, Appendix 1

	unnecessary?	includes tourism co risk management.	
--	--------------	--------------------------------------	--

Joseph Baconnet  
Development Services  
October 2015

## Warwick Town Centre Action Plan

2015 – 2017

### Enhancing the Environment

Project	Lead	Partners	Timescale
Work with the ongoing Warwick & Leamington Spa Area Transport Strategy	TCMG	WCC WTC WDC COT	On-going
Support Warwick StreetPride group to maintain Gold standard in the Bloom competition	TCMG	WTC Community Forum WDC Warwick Society	On-going
Improve & maintain the sense of arrival to Warwick via road, bus and train	TCMG	WTC WDC Chiltern Railways Friends of Warwick Station	On-going
Work with WDC to analyse car park usage with the aim of creating a Warwick specific strategy for increasing dwell time in the town/utilisation of car parks	TCMG	WDC WCC	December 2015
Investigate signage and flow of visitors through the town, developing appropriate strategy	TCMG	WTC WCC WDC	December 2015
Investigate innovative ways of utilising and improving Warwick Market Square	TCMG	WCC WTC WDC Businesses	Summer 2015
Initiate creative temporary uses for long-term vacant units	TCMG	WDC Landlords Businesses COT	On-going
Work with Town	TCMG	WTC	On-going

Council to maintain and improve the Christmas lights display		WDC Businesses COT	
--	--	--------------------------	--

## Investment & Business Support

### Enhancing the Offer

Project	Lead	Partners	Timescale
Promote the WIPs vacant property database and ensure all information is up to date?	TCMG	WCC Landlords	On-going
Using available data, investigate projects to broaden economic activity within the town e.g. Sunday, or late night openings	TCMG	WCC WTC WDC Springboard ATCM	Autumn 2015
Produce a Welcome to Warwick brochure/on-line data source for new businesses to access	TCMG	Businesses/COT WDC WCC WTC	Autumn 2015
Promote the town's investment opportunities at BCSC annual conference and other key events	WCC WDC	WCC WDC	On-going
Investigate town centre projects which increase and maintain economic vitality in the town such as car parking scheme, town loyalty card	TCMG	Businesses COT	On-going
Develop and/or promote a programme of guidance for shop front maintenance & other specific licensing, planning information	TCMG	WDC WTC WCC COT Businesses	December 2015

Develop and/or facilitate a programme of skills sharing and networking for local businesses	COT	Businesses TCMG WDC	Summer 2016
---	-----	---------------------------	-------------

## Markets & Events

### Enhancing the offer

Project	Lead	Partners	Timescale
Maintain and improve Warwick Market for visitors and residents	TCMG	Market contractor WDC	2017
Facilitate and support a calendar of diverse events across the town	TCMG	COT Event organisers WCC WDC WTC	On-going
Work towards making the spread of events is across the whole town and are promoted early so that all businesses can support them and take advantage of increased footfall	TCMG	COT SSTA	Summer 2015
Continue to work with the Licence holder and town centre stakeholders to minimise disruption during the Mop Fairs	TCMG	Showmen's Guild Licence holder WDC COT Businesses	On-going
Look at ways to measure and evaluate the success of events & projects	TCMG	COT SSTA Businesses WDC WCC WTC ATCM	On-going
Maintain and enhance the Warwick Victorian Christmas Evening	TCMG	WDC WTC COT/SSTA	November 2015 November 2016



## Safety & Security

Investigate the future use of retail radio	WRCI	COT WRCI Police	March 2015
--	------	-----------------------	------------

## Marketing

### Promoting the offer

Project	Lead	Partners	Timescale
Review the brand image for Warwick and mission statement for the town	TCMG	WDC WCC COT/SSTA WTC SE	June 2015
Establish a marketing strategy to promote Warwick as a destination to visit both on its own and also within the wider area	TCMG	DMO WCC WDC	On-going
Co-ordinate and streamline the town's websites, communicating the purpose of each; <a href="http://www.visitwarwick.co.uk">www.visitwarwick.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.enjoywarwick.co.uk">www.enjoywarwick.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.warwickrocks.co.uk">www.warwickrocks.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.unlockingwarwick.co.uk">www.unlockingwarwick.co.uk</a>	TCMG	WDC COT Warwick Rocks WTC	September 2015
Establish a shared library of quality Warwick images for publications and media opportunities	WDC	WDC SE WCC WTC	On-going
Produce an annual Events Diary to showcase Warwick's rich and diverse programme	WDC	WDC Event Organisers	Spring/Summer 2015 Autumn/Winter 2015
Review the town's promotional literature and establish what is required and how it will be delivered to businesses and promoted to the public	TCMG	WDC COT SSTA	On-going

Promote Warwick’s historical buildings and investigate projects to showcase them	TCMG	Warwick Society WDC WCC VIC	On-going
Work with the DMO to package visitor and tourist information and encourage visitors to stay longer in the town to improve its economic vitality	TCMG	WTC WCC	On-going

**Glossary**

- TCMG – Town Centre Management Group
- SSTA – Smith Street Traders Association
- WDC – Warwick District Council
- WTC – Warwick Town Council
- WCC – Warwickshire County Council
- VIC – Visitor Information Centre
- DMO – Destination Management Organisation
- SE – Shakespeare’s England
- COT – Chamber of Trade
- WRCI –
- WIP -

Partnership: **Town Centre Management Group - Warwick**

	<b>Annual Health Check Questions</b>	<b>Commentary (Please refer to any supporting documents)</b>	<b>Scrutiny Comments</b>
9.1	What has the partnership achieved during the course of the previous twelve months?	<p>Action Plan that businesses and stakeholders have all worked on together and signed up to as the way forward for the town in terms of promoting and supporting businesses.</p> <p>We achieved funding from WCC to develop some additional Christmas lights for the town – which will support the business drive to help establish Warwick as a Christmas shopping destination for residents and visitors. This application would not have been made without the collaborative work of the TCMG.</p>	
9.2	How have the achievements made a difference to the residents/visitors/businesses of Warwick district and how do those achievements align to the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy?	<p>A forum for businesses to come and discuss their needs and objectives in the town. This enables better communication between the council and the business community and shared knowledge and expertise. Residents and visitors will benefit from this approach with businesses having greater awareness of activities in the town, which they can take advantage of eg. Staying open late for Victorian evening, opening on Sundays if there's a market.</p>	
9.3	Have there been any significant changes to the external environment, such as the state of the economy or the introduction of new legislation, which require a	No.	

	re-appraisal of the need for the partnership? If so, what are these?		
9.4	What measures have been used to determine whether the partnership is providing value for money?	Deliveries of actions listed on the Action Plan against KPI's. Reviewed annually.	
9.5	What consideration to extending the scope of the partnership has been made?	The current Action Plan is for 2 years with the intention of reviewing and extending to 5 years. The Partnership will continue to invite key partners to the partnership and expand the work with businesses.	
9.6	How can it be demonstrated that the achievements were not possible without the partnership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of businesses attending the meetings</li> <li>Success of projects delivered</li> <li>Feedback from the Chamber of Trade</li> <li>Feedback from Smith Street Traders</li> <li>Resolution of issues and planning of works – without the need to escalate further up the hierarchy</li> <li>Feedback from businesses</li> <li>Feedback from councillors</li> <li>Footfall</li> <li>Business satisfaction and morale</li> <li>Economies of scale when booking stage for events</li> <li>Shared knowledge and expertise</li> </ul>	
9.7	What alternative options to the partnership have been considered?	The alternative would be to withdraw as an outside body, but the businesses and Warwick District Council would seek to continue a forum to ensure we were still responding to business needs.	
9.8	What are the key outcomes to be achieved over the	See attached Action Plan	

	forthcoming twelve months and how will they be measured?		
9.9	What arrangements have been in place during the previous 12 months for the management of risk? If no risk register is in place, why was one considered unnecessary?	No significant risk is attached to this partnership. However, it is included within the Development Services Risk Register in relation to the breakdown of Partnerships and a potential reduction in funding from partners.	

Nicki Curwood  
22 October