

December 2019

Environment & Business Portfolio Annual Performance Report

1 Introduction

The Environment & Business Portfolio covers a range of services which aim to support and grow the local economy by supporting local businesses, developing policies for economic development, delivering projects and working in partnership with business and other agencies. The work of the Portfolio is supported by staff predominantly based within Development Services. It is one of two portfolios (the other being the Development portfolio) that link directly with Development Services. Specifically, the Portfolio covers the following services:

- **Economic Performance and Labour Market:** working with our partners to monitor and report on indicators relating to the economic well-being of the District and the key sectors that make up our economy. Developing a strategic framework with our partners to support the local economy
- **Business Growth and Inward Investment:** tourism and sector support (e.g. digital games sector, advanced manufacturing and creative industry)
- **Enterprise:** provision of support for District businesses with an emphasis on early start ups and established enterprises with growth potential. Enterprise delivers a variety of services, projects and initiatives which include enterprise centres such as Althorpe Enterprise Hub and 26 Hamilton Terrace (26HT).
- **Business support and events:** ensuring a rich range of events is staged across the district and the economic benefits of these are maximised. Linked to this is liaising with chambers of trade, the Leamington Business Improvement District (BID)*, town centre businesses and developing approaches to improve town centres as places to do business
- **Projects:** providing project management resource for a range of departmental and corporate projects, primarily associated with the development of the District and improvements to the business environment.

2 Service Plan Performance

A Economic Performance and Labour Market

The economic overview for the District's performance during the financial year for the latest quarterly statistics available, paints a generally positive picture:

- Employment rates (the percentage of the working age population who are employed) in Warwick District stand at 82.3%, compared to a national average of 75.3% and the average for Warwickshire of 79.8%. Warwick

District remains the highest percentage of those employed across all of the Districts and Boroughs in the County.

- Unemployment rates stand at 2.9% in Warwick District, compared to a national average of 4%, and the average for the County at 2.8%. Warwick District has the lowest rate of unemployment in the County apart from Stratford District which stands at 2.5%.
- There was a sizable increase (9.1%) in the proportion of residents with NVQ Level 4 qualifications or above.
- Warwick District maintains a high level of job listings per 1000 of the population (38.9) when compared to the national picture (21.9), Warwickshire as a whole (36.3) and has twice the number of vacancies advertised per 1000 population than any other District or Borough in the County. However, there has been a marked reduction since quarter 1 both nationally and regionally in the number of jobs advertised. This is largely due to the economic uncertainties surrounding Brexit and an international economic slow down. This has led firms in general to ease back on investments, including human capital, until there is more stability and certainty in the economy.

B Business Growth and Inward Investment:

1) Tourism

- Shakespeare's England: The Council has continued to support Shakespeare's England, the region's Destination Management Organisation, as a key element of its support to the tourism sector. The Council invests in Tourism by providing an annual contribution of £75,000 towards Shakespeare's England. In March Executive approved funding amounting to £75,000 per annum for the next 3 years from 2019/20 – 2021/22.
- A local set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been written and presented to Shakespeare's England Board. A number of the KPI's were approved by Shakespeare's England Board at their meeting in October 2019. The next Board meeting will take place in January 2020, at which the remaining proposed KPI's will be presented with a view to final sign off. In line with the Executive resolution in March 2019, no funding has been released to Shakespeare's England until the KPI's have all been approved.
- Once agreed, the local set of KPI's will be utilised to monitor the performance of the DMO across the District and report back to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis. The next report is scheduled for March 2020.
- Warwick District Council has a seat on the Shakespeare's England Board, occupied by the Business and Environment Portfolio Holder. Further support for the Board is provided by the Deputy Chief Executive (BH). Operational activities are supported by the Business Manager for Projects and Economic Development and the Strategic Economic Development

Officer, through which day to day liaison and promotion of tourism related activity takes place across Warwick District.

- Furthermore, once a fortnight, a member of the Shakespeare's England team work at Riverside House, working in close partnership with officers and other stakeholders across the District to promote tourism and publicise the events that are taking place in the District.
- The Council commissions an annual district-wide Tourism Economic Impact Analysis. This shows the economic impact of tourism in the District and for the latest report, covering 2018, the headline figures are as follows:
 - Total day trips: 3,494,000 (+1.5% on 2017)
 - Total value of day trips £136,118,000 (+3.3% on 2017)
 - Total overnight trips 405,000 (+6% on 2017)
 - Total value of overnight trips £95,602,000 (+16% on 2017)
 - Total number of jobs supported by tourism 5,217 (+8% on 2017)

2) Creative and Digital Games Sector

- Much of the economic development activity is centred around the thriving creative and digital games sector in the District, particularly in Leamington Spa. This is a key industry for all of the towns in the District, employing approximately 13,000 jobs and contributing around half a billion pounds to the District economy.
- Officers are working closely to address the key issues facing this sector in collaboration with the Art Manager. Following the commissioning of a report into the health of the sector in Summer 2018, the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been identified. An action plan is being formulated to address the threats, and in February 2020 a wide range of stakeholders, including officers from the economic Development team will be holding a symposium specifically designed to start work on sustaining existing companies, and growing the opportunities for new companies locating to the District.
- Interactive Futures: The first of this innovative games industry led event took place in Leamington Spa at the Spa Centre in late January/early February 2019. Spanning 3 days, the event included an Industry Day, Academic Day and Consumer Day thus attracting a wide spectrum of visitors from different perspectives in relation to games, gaming and games development. Some of the key outcomes from the event are as follows:
 - 17,000 visitors over the 3 days of the event

- 6 inward investment enquiries generated with one landed (Sumo Digital)
- 7% visitors to the event were from overseas
- National TV coverage on the Gadget Show, national games industry print media coverage in PocketGamer
- The second Interactive Futures event will again take place in Leamington Spa in late January with another 3 day event. There will be a focus on attracting new talent to the industry with increased engagement with local schools, promoting the culture of the industry and again allowing access to some of the biggest and most well-known studios, developers, artists and emerging studios in the District.
- There will be a number of games industry specific launches at the event in 2020, including the national games industry body, (UKIE), presenting for the first time the results of their latest research into the UK games industry with some specific information around the significant contribution being made to the industry by the cluster in Leamington Spa.
- Funding for the upcoming event has been secured with the key partners – Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council and Coventry and Warwickshire LEP. Further sponsorship and event partners are being sought as the planning for the next event is now well under way.

3) Retail Sector

- Town Centre Vacancy Rates: The latest figures on our town centre vacancy rates (to end October 2019) are as follows:

Vacancy Rates

Town	October 2018	October 2019
Warwick	4.4%	7.7%
Kenilworth	3.8%	4.8%
Leamington Spa	8%	7.2%
West Midlands	10.5%	10.2%
UK	9.6%	10%

- Supporting our town centres: Although the rates have increased slightly over the year, a lot of hard work by a wide group of organisations goes into maintaining the vitality of our town centres and the graph above shows the hard work is paying off comparing the local rates to the national vacancy rate of 10% and West Midlands of 10.2% Given the

evolving state of the High Street, there is a continued need to keep up this focus. This is something that we and our partners (Chambers of Trade, the BID and Town Councils) are committed to. As part of this, driving the continued success of the retail sector is a key focus. The team strives to promote this growth through monitoring the health of our Town centres (vacancy rates and the composition of the premises) and working to fill vacant premises to ensure that vibrant and vital Centres are maintained. BID Leamington helps to contribute to this, and we work together on this as described above.

- One tangible example of this is the establishment of the Covent Garden Quarter. With financial and officer support to the businesses in the immediate vicinity of the Covent Garden car park, this summer saw the launch of a bespoke website, social media campaign and a monthly niche market to drive footfall to this vulnerable area of the town centre. Businesses have been enjoying the success of the monthly market with one business owner stating that their takings in one day matches that of a whole weekend. The market has been suspended during the Christmas period but will recommence in January and in the interim, further support has been provided by officers to maintain the marketing campaign and build interest leading up to the re-launch in January 2020.
- Markets in the District: It is thought that there are 47,000 micro and small and medium sized (SME) businesses operating in markets within the UK (according to Retail Markets Alliance, 2009). Markets actually provide one of the most flexible and cost-effective ways for a new business to start trading. By encouraging more people to start trading as part of a market, the diversity of our retail offering will increase and the benefits can be significant to the local economy. In fact, the benefits of local markets go wider than the pure economics: they also promote social interaction and social inclusion, which, given the rising rates of loneliness amongst the population, has immeasurable benefit. Markets can also be a starting point for small business to build and eventually move into permanent shops. One of our regular stall holders, Core Whole Foods, have recently decided to open a permanent shop in Royal Leamington Spa.
- Leamington BID: Officers continue to work in close collaboration with the BID on all matters relating to the health of Leamington Town Centre, the retail sector and the Christmas lights contract and switch on events. The Portfolio Holder for Business and Environment has a seat on the BID Board, supported by officers from Projects and Economic Development
- The Future High Street Fund: Following the launch of the competitive process for the Future High Street Fund in December 2018, Warwick District Council have submitted a successful Expression of Interest to the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government (DHCLG). One of only 100 town centres shortlisted, this success has resulted in an opportunity to formulate a Full Business Case with a project/projects attracting a potential share of the total £1billion fund that has been

allocated. Whilst no capital funding is guaranteed at this stage, revenue funding has been provided by DHCLG which has allowed us to appoint a Programme Manager for Town Centres who will focus on working up the Full Business Case. In November, the first meeting with key stakeholders took place and some early ideas around potential projects have been put forward. This work will be of a high strategic importance over the coming months, with the deadline to submit the final business case being set by Government as 30th June 2020. Announcements on successful bids will be made in late summer 2020.

- **Inward Investment:**

The Invest in Warwickshire*, which is contracted to deliver WDC's Inward Investment activities, received 242 direct enquiries between April 2018 and March 2019. This resulted in 41 successful investments across Coventry & Warwickshire, of which 19 were in Warwick District, significantly ahead of the number of successful inward investments in any other District or Borough in the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP area.

Collaborative work between our Economic Development team and colleagues at the Growth Hub* and Warwickshire County Council has been ongoing. There have been a 19 individual successes in encouraging organisations to relocate or expand their operation into the District, higher than any other district in the County.

Other inward investment initiatives include:

- Business Rates Relief Policy: An Executive report is due to be presented to the February Executive, recommending that this policy is launched as a pilot for 12 months so that the impacts and outcomes are assessed in terms of its success in attracting inward investment.
- Continued support for the Coventry and Warwickshire Business Festival which took place from 11th – 21st November 2019.

A key element of our role in supporting Inward Investment relates to making employment land available. Data relating to this was reported as part of the Development Portfolio Report presented to the Scrutiny Committees in November. Despite approving outline permission for the Gateway South site in 2018, there remains more work to be done to address market concerns relating to the short-term availability of employment land in the District. In particular, the Service is continuing to work with developers to bring forward the employment sites at Stratford Road in Warwick and at Thickthorn in Kenilworth. Looking beyond, the allocations in the adopted Local Plan, work is getting underway with our partners across Coventry and Warwickshire to update the evidence base relating to longer term land requirements and to review market pressures for employment land. This work seeks to ensure an ongoing pipeline of sites is made available.

A revised and refreshed monthly economic update bulletin is about to be launched and will be published by-monthly for Council staff and members.

This will provide the latest news from across the district relating to business and economic development. The bulletin seeks to ensure staff and members are kept well informed about what is happening within the District.

C Enterprise:

Warwick District Council's Enterprise service was formed in 2008 to support and encourage local economic growth across the District. This is achieved through a range of support provision with focus on early start ups and businesses with growth potential. Enterprise delivers a variety of services and projects. Initiatives include access to business mentoring, workshops, sign posting to finance and grants and, additionally, access to a broad portfolio of commercial space, offered within a supportive structure. Enterprise's current portfolio of projects consists of: -

- **Althorpe Enterprise Hub** – serviced offices offering flexible licence arrangements
- **26 Hamilton Terrace (26HT)** – digital gaming hub, supporting new 'off-spring' game developer studios
- **Court St. Creative Arches** – a scheme of 8 renovated Victorian railway arches; solely targeted towards creative industries
- **Spencer Yard** – the building provides a range of spaces, from large studio space through to smaller offices, suitable for creative businesses
- **CoWorking Arch 4** – this most recent project is aimed at early start-ups, freelancers and agile workers (see below for more detail).

The service is self-sufficient and produces a small annual surplus to reinvest back into business support projects. In addition, it provides a financial contribution to Warwick District Council through internal support charges. The Enterprise budget is ring-fenced allowing the service to continue to reinvest into its provision of support, services and projects.

Enterprise continues to provide a valuable service supporting Warwick District businesses both those in their early stages of development and those with plans for growth. The various projects detailed offer a range of commercial space, either generic or sector specific and are very rarely vacant. This is considered a vital service to assist in business growth. Currently Enterprise is exploring whether there is opportunity to expand into Warwick and Kenilworth. In addition, there are number of other possible options being considered to expand provision within Leamington.

The Enterprise service is inherently required to function commercially, both from a strategic and operational point of view. As such, new opportunities are always being considered, whether that be looking to address any relevant gaps in demand, such as the recent co-working space, or expanding its

service provision and exploring opportunities to support the service and its objectives.

Since January 2019 to date, Enterprise has supported 128 businesses, whether directly linked to services or through other engagement or initiatives, such as the Business Support Programme, which provides mentoring and workshops for those with aspirations to start a business. Other initiatives included:

- Start-up Business Support Programme: this commenced with a three year programme, which started in September 2016. It has been very successful for the District. The Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce were contracted to provide a business support service to deliver the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme to provide direct and practical support to businesses, focusing on Start-Ups. The final outputs reported for Warwick District were 132 (+216% overachievement vs a target of 61). This includes 58 new business starts and 60.44 FTE new jobs, as a result of the new start-ups created. Subsequently, we extended the contract for a further year, with remaining budget still available. This extension comes to an end on 31 December 2019. In 2020 begins a new three year programme and, again, this has been largely funded through the ERDF.
- Co-working (Arch 4): eight months ago, saw the launch of a new co-working space in a recently vacated arch within the Court Street Creative Arches scheme. This project is targeted specifically to early start ups, small businesses, freelancers and agile workers. We have a number of co-workers employed by London firms, who work remotely full-time. This, for many, can bring feelings of loneliness and isolation. This project provides a much needed space for our target market to work in a friendly, collaborative environment with other like-minded individuals. Furthermore, such a space, provides opportunities for B2B and to gain new business. A small capital investment was required to fit out the space and this has been self-funded through the services reserves.
- Opportunities: the team are exploring a number of opportunities within the town of Leamington to expand its provision of support to growing businesses. This includes our digital creative sector and, amongst them, the valued gaming cluster. These digital creatives increasingly demand a location within or close to Leamington town centre. However, there is currently a short supply of grow-on commercial space in the town. Without intervention Warwick District run the risk of losing this important sector, to Coventry, Birmingham or other UK cities.

D Business Support and Events:

Once again, during the past year a rich variety of events have taken place across the District. Not only have we been host to some incredible annual events (Warwick Folk Festival, Art in the Park, Bowls National Championships and Kenilworth Carnival, to name but a few), but we also had the privilege of

hosting the start for both 2019 OVO Energy Women's Tour and the Men's Tour of Britain as well as Pub in the Park and Fake Festival.

- Women's Cycle tour: In May the Women's Tour came back to the District unexpectedly as the Tour route usually alters after three stages in the same County. This year we hosted the Start of the event and showcased the cycle race in the heart of Warwick Town.
- Men's Cycle Tour: The Tour of Britain Stage 7 brought great excitement to the district, building on the success of the Women's Tour described above. With internationally recognised riders such as Mark Cavendish, it was an unforgettable day. Due to the size and scale of the event, the Business Support & Events Team hosted the event at Warwick Racecourse and this added to the occasion by utilising the grandstands at the venue.
- National Bowls: Once again the National Bowls Championship was hosted in Royal Leamington Spa. The event was again a huge success and really helped us build up to the Commonwealth Games in 2022.
- Christmas Lights Switch On Events: We had successful Christmas events in Warwick, Royal Leamington Spa and two in Kenilworth. All four events attract and engaged large crowds. We also brought in a whole new lighting scheme for Royal Leamington Spa to replace the aging scheme.
- Pub in the Park: 14,000 visitors across 3 days and £10,000 of income for the council. This also produced an increase in parking income for the District over the weekend. This is a national event that tours the country but helped to feature 9 local businesses at the Warwick Event.

Across the whole year, the number and variety of other events has been amazing and has included sporting events (such as 10k runs), community events (fun days and carnivals); arts and cultural events (Warwick Folk Festival and Art in the Park); events to celebrate and support local business (food festivals and the Smith Street Party), and as mentioned above, the ever popular and vibrant Christmas Lights switch-on events in the four towns.

Over the year, the team have begun work on the implementation of Events Manual:

- a) Laying out designated event spaces
- b) Explaining what services are on offer
- c) Giving clear guidance of what is expected and the paperwork needed, etc..

The Business Support & Events team have also employed a company to conduct an Economic Impact Assessment of some of our largest events over the summer and three of the Christmas Lights Events. The results of this EIA will be available in January 2020.

E Projects:

1) Regeneration at Leamington Railway Station:

Following many years of work on the part of the Council and our partners, development of this site for 212 new homes, 75% of which will be affordable, commenced in September 2016. Phase one, which included 24 affordable apartments on the land around the station underpass was formally opened in November 2018. Phase two is scheduled for completion in December 2019 at which time the Council will take possession of a 99 space public car park. The whole scheme is scheduled for completion in 2021/22.

2) Lillington health hub:

The Council is maintaining an active dialogue with the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) about how to support improvements to the delivery of NHS primary care services in Lillington and this will include consideration of how to provide new surgery premises. In May 2018, the Council agreed to work with the CCG and NHS South Warwickshire Foundation Trust to explore how a new surgery could be provided in the Lillington area to replace the current surgery on Cubbington Road. Provision of a new surgery is currently a CIL commitment (£2.8m currently committed) and within this the Council allocated £60,000 in 2019/20 to fund further feasibility and design work. This work is ongoing. It is expected that by early 2020, officers will have received a report from the CCG considering ways forward, and then the Council can consider how it can best support this project.

3) 2nd Warwick Sea Scouts Headquarters (2WSS):

In 2014 the Council granted landlord's permission to undertake works to refresh and improve their facilities in St. Nicholas Park, Warwick. New jetties and a boatyard at their existing HQ were completed in 2018. Since then 2WSS have continued with a major fundraising programme to develop a new HQ adjacent to the St. Nicholas Leisure Centre on the site of the skatepark. Support by the Council they have now secured funding and begun works on their new building which will enable them to extend their work and support access to the river. The Council will continue to maintain a watching brief and provide advice and support to 2WSS and key stakeholders with the delivery of this project.

4) Creative Quarter:

Following the appointment of Complex Development Projects Ltd (CDP) as our development partner in November 2017 CDP commenced an intensive period of working with stakeholders to develop a masterplan and identify and bring forward projects within this area to support the established cluster of creative industries. Following a public consultation in December 2018 and January 2019 the Executive approved "The Big Picture" document which set out a vision for the Creative Quarter and gave an indication of schemes that may come forward. CDP did further more detailed work on these possible schemes and in November 2019 submitted a "Phase One Report" which set out some high level

principles for the development of a number of sites. This document was approved by Executive in November. This brings phase 1 of the partnership to a close and gives CDP the authority to progress with a number of projects. The approved projects are:-

- Spencer Yard and the URC church
- Bath Place car park
- Court Street (subject to WDC determining its car parking requirement on this site)

It was also agreed that the Council would undertake further investigations with regard to future management and ownership options for, and uses for, the Town Hall before deciding whether and how to progress this building.

It is anticipated that CDP will now make rapid progress in bringing the first of these schemes forward. This is likely to be the restoration of the URC church and other vacant buildings in Spencer Yard. CDP has developed a timeline which would see the project completed in time for the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

5) Stratford Road Employment Land

Following the adoption of the Local Plan, land at Stratford Road in Warwick is part of a wider area now allocated for employment uses. Disposal of this site is also included in the Council's draft Business Strategy. The Council has begun discussions with the other land owners, including Severn Trent Water (STW) about how best to bring the site forward. It is anticipated that a report will be brought to Executive during 2020/2.

6) Newbold Comyn

Project officers in Development Services have been supporting Neighbourhood Services with this project.

Work has continued to progress with the masterplan for future uses of Newbold Comyn. A second stage of consultation has been completed with an increase in participation on the 2018 consultation. This included an online survey and two drop-in days where members of the public could meet with the Council's consultants (SLC) and Officers to provide feedback on future facility options. This was followed by a workshop with Members and Officers to inform the drafting of a masterplan. A draft masterplan will be presented to the Council in early 2020 for approval for a final stage of consultation.

7) Income maximisation Programme

One of the elements within the Council's FFF programme is looking to maximise opportunities to generate income for the Council. A number of ideas are being separately considered and these have been brought together as projects within an Income Maximisation programme. The four elements are:-

- Advertising and sponsorship
- Local authority lottery

- Opportunities to access external grant funding
- Crowdfunding platforms

Subject to these being viable, officers will look to maximise income generating potential, seeking approval from members where appropriate.

Although significant background work was undertaken on these projects, there has been less focus on these since the local elections in May 2019. The officer leading this work has been temporarily seconded to Culture to help progress other development projects for that department.

8) Future High Streets Fund

In December 2018, the Government launched a major new initiative to support town centres, the Future High Streets Fund. This was a fund of £660m to support “transformational change” that will “renew and refresh” town centres in a way that “improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability”. The Council submitted an Expression of Interest in March and this was supported by a wide number of partners and other stakeholders across Leamington town centre and the wider area including the BID, Chamber of Trade, Town Council, LEP, Leamington Society and University of Warwick.

Although the Council was not successful when the first tranche of 50 shortlisted town centres was announced in June, we were later successful when the Government increased the Fund to £1 billion in August and shortlisted a further 50 town centres. We were awarded £75k to prepare our bid and have created a two-year post of “Programme Manager (town centres)” to steer this work. Under the timetable, the Council will need to prepare a draft business case by mid-March and a full business case by the end of June. It is expected that successful bids will be announced late in 2020.

Although the Council is leading of the submission of the bid, we will continue to work with members and our partners to develop our proposal.

3 Risks

The Service risk register is monitored on at least a quarterly basis by service managers and the portfolio-holder. Significant risks are reported to the Senior Management Team. The most recent risk register update took place on 426th November 2019.

The Portfolio has one risk in the “red” band (indicating the highest category of risk). This is the risk that has emerged following the sale of the leasehold of the railway arches to the Arch Co and the implications for Court Street Creative Arches”. This risk is high due to the significant degree of uncertainty surrounding the appetite for the new owners to continue to support the Creative Arches project with potential knock on consequences for lease arrangements and the long term viability of the Creative Arches project.

Overall there are 20 risks currently being managed by the Portfolio. Of these 3 are "green" (indicating a lower category of risk) and 16 are "yellow" (indicating the moderate category of risk)

Other significant risks include:

- The Regions' Destination Management Organisation (DMO), Shakespeare's England fails to deliver desired outputs. This risk is being managed through careful partnership work with Shakespeare's England, including monitoring of their key performance indicators through the Board. The annual report on Shakespeare's England's performance was brought to Scrutiny in March 2019.
- Failure to capitalise on opportunities to invest in Leamington (eg: FHSF). This is a new risk which is relevant in view of the various initiatives in Leamington town centre (the most significant of which are the Future High Streets Fund and Creative Quarter). These are both being managed through close monitoring and liaison with the portfolio folder.
- Enterprise: Insufficient insurance cover as WDC currently only insure its buildings for fire and malicious damage. In the event of a burglary any resulting loss is at the mercy of WDC's insurance reserve fund. This could pose financial risk to projects and ring-fenced budget. This happened following the burglaries in late 2017 which resulted in Enterprise having to meet uninsured costs of £7000 from its own budget. The risk has now been mitigated through improved security arrangements at AEH and a review security at Spencer Yard and 26HT.
- Failure to progress key corporate projects on time or budget, with impacts on budget savings, additional costs and failure to deliver against corporate priorities. This is mitigated by the Projects team closely monitoring and managing projects to ensure that they meet the timelines set, and if there are changes or impacts in terms of delay or budgetary issues, there is a robust reporting mechanism and a governance structure in place to respond to these changes. It will be kept under close review with the portfolio holder. This risk has been increased to reflect the possible impact of the business strategy and the current (temporary) uncertainties over whether resources will be in place to progress these.

4 Workforce Planning

Development Services (including the Business Portfolio) seeks to take a proactive approach to workforce planning. Experience over the recent years has shown that recruitment of experienced senior staff can be a real challenge. For that reason, the service has put in place a range of initiatives to support and retain staff and to develop staff with potential so that they can grow within the service. In particular, the service undertakes the following activities

- A rigorous approach to training, including the development of a training plan to maximise value achieved from budgets
- The introduction of monthly lunchtime briefings on issues of professional importance
- Professional training opportunities for two planning assistants and a number of Building Control staff
- Routine approach to one to ones for all staff to support them within work priorities
- Regular management discussions on developing key members of staff
- A comprehensive approach to appraisals and personal development planning

Over the last two years the teams involved with the Business Portfolio have grown to provide additional capacity to support the organisation's ambitions around major projects.

The teams have been successful recruiting to vacant posts.

Within the Projects Team, in the last year one Projects Officer undertook a six-month secondment to support projects in Culture (and in particular the Whitnash Civic Centre & Library) however is shortly to return to work within the team. The only post to be appointed in the last 12 months has been the Programme Manager (town centres). This was appointed in November from an internal candidate and the process is currently underway to backfill this post with a temporary 2-year appointment to maintain capacity within the projects team.

Within the Business Support & Events Team, we have recruited to the post of Business Support Team Manager. There is currently one vacancy for an Business Support & Events Officer however it is anticipated that this will be filled shortly.

5 Finance

- **Budget:** As Development Services supports two portfolios, it is not possible to separate out all the financial implications that are specific to the business portfolio as budgets are managed on a service basis rather than a portfolio basis. Development Services continues to meet its required savings year on year in relation to discretionary budgets. These savings requirements are increasingly challenging to meet as some budgets have been reduced to such an extent that it is becoming difficult to meet the basic service requirements within the given budget, with the Christmas Lights budgets being an example of this. Budgets to support events management continue to be overspent as a consequence of the growth in number of events in the district and the policy of not charging

event's organisers for Council support. This is currently being reviewed by the portfolio holder and the Business Support & Events Team.

- **Training:** Officers have undertaken training on a range of matters including traffic management duties in association with events management (Chapter 8 training).
- **Procurement and Contract management:** As part of the training stated above, officers are working closely with the Procurement team to ensure that good practice is maintained. The Contracts Register is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Portfolio Holder and the management team within the service area. This has helped in focussing on reviewing contracts in a timelier manner.
- **Audits:** There have been no audits affecting this portfolio since the last update in March 2018.
- **Risk Register:** see above. This is reviewed on at least a quarterly basis.

6 Work Streams and Projects

Looking ahead to 2020, it is anticipated that the service will progress a number of key work areas:

- **2022 Commonwealth Games:** Staff are playing a key role in planning the Commonwealth Games with the Portfolio Holder providing the member-lead for the Council. In particular, there will be a focus on planning for the games in a way that ensures the potential economic benefits are exploited and maximised. This will aim to provide a great experience for visitors to Leamington for the Bowls tournament and also to maximise the economic benefit to the district as a result. Members of the Policy and Projects team are involved in the project team specifically in relation to economic development, business support and tourism.
- **Explore opportunities to further expand provision of services and projects:** Work will continue to identify opportunities to expand its support and services, from its geographical reach through to addressing gaps in demand within Leamington town centre.
- **Deliver progress on a range of major projects:** The major projects listed above will continue to be delivered. 2020 promises to be a year of substantial progress for the Leamington town centre, particularly in view of the Future High Streets Fund bid.
- **Creative Quarter:** With phase 1 of the Creative Quarter initiative now signed off, it is expected that rapid progress will be made by the Council's Creative Quarter partners CDP on the proposals for the restoration of buildings at Spencer Yard.
- **City of Culture** – our Economic Development team are part of a cross departmental group working on a case to support Coventry in its year of culture. This presents huge potential benefits to the district and a focused

piece of work is ongoing to ensure we maximise our contribution in conjunction with the County Council and our closest big city neighbour.

Any Changes Required to Service Area Plan

None.

Authors:

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November 2019

Glossary

AAA games studio – refers to a large studio working at the highest quality with the biggest budgets that will receive the widest promotion.

Business Ready Programme – The Business Ready Programme, hosted at the University of Warwick Science Park, is designed to assist those businesses with the potential for growth, or are now reaching their growth potential.

Creative Warwickshire – Creative Warwickshire is a dedicated business support programme for Warwickshire-based creative and digital businesses, focussing on peer-to-peer mentoring

Digital Influence Index – a measurement of the digital reach each retailer, town or city has.

Disabled Go (now known as AccessAble) – a charitable organisation which seeks to provide detailed information in the form of access guides, to meet everyone's access needs. To achieve this they provide trained surveyors to check locations in person and to prepare a guide/report. This helps people to understand whether a location is accessible to them

Growth Hub – The growth and inward investment arm of the LEP

Interactive Futures: An event for the games industry to be held in Leamington from 31st January to the 2nd February 2019.

Invest in Warwickshire – part of Warwickshire County Council, Invest in Warwickshire is offers free support and advice to help businesses make an informed investment and relocation decisions by responding to inward investment enquiries from local, national and international companies.

Business Improvement District (BID) - A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led and controlled partnership in a given area such as the Town Centre, which delivers an agreed set of services and projects. These are agreed, and formally voted for, by all businesses in the Business Improvement District and are in addition to what the public agencies provide.

Silicon Spa – the name of the games cluster in and around Leamington Spa