# Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Tuesday 21 January 2025**

A meeting of the above Committee will be held in Shire Hall, Market Place, Warwick on Tuesday 21 January, at 6.00pm.

Councillor A Milton (Chair)

Councillor D Armstrong (Vice-Chair)

| | |
|---|---|
| Councillor A Barton | Councillor P Redford |
| Councillor M Collins | Councillor D Russell |
| Councillor D Harrison | Councillor P Wightman |
| Councillor M Luckhurst | Conservative Vacancy |
| Councillor J Payne | |

**Emergency Procedure**

At the commencement of the meeting, the emergency procedure for Shire Hall will be announced.

**Agenda**

1. **Apologies & Substitutes**

   (a) to receive apologies for absence from any Councillor who is unable to attend; and
   (b) to receive the name of any Councillor who is to act as a substitute, notice of which has been given to the Chief Executive, together with the name of the Councillor for whom they are acting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

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

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

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

3. **Minutes**

   To confirm the non-confidential minutes of the meetings held on

   (a) 13 November 2024 **(Pages 1 to 29)**

(b) 3 December 2024 **(Pages 30 to 36)**

4. **Work Programme**

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

5. **Quarter 2 Performance Report**

To consider a report from Governance Services **(Pages 1 to 19)**

6. **Climate Change and Biodiversity Engagement and Communication Activity Report**

To consider a report from Climate Change Team **(Pages 1 to 29)**

7. **Public & Press**

To consider resolving that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

8. **Milverton Homes (Confidential Reports)**

To consider two confidential reports:

(a) WDC Report re. Milverton Homes Ltd **(To follow)**
**(Not for publication)**

(b) Milverton Homes Update: Director's Report **(To follow)**
**(Not for publication)**

9. **Confidential Minutes**

To consider the confidential minutes of the meeting on 13 November 2024.
**(Pages 1 to 8)**
**(Not for publication)**

Published Monday 13 January 2024

General Enquiries: Please contact Warwick District Council, Town Hall, Parade, Royal Leamington Spa, CV32 4AT.
Telephone: 01926 456114
E-Mail: committee@warwickdc.gov.uk

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

Details of all the Council's committees, councillors and agenda papers are available via our website on the Committees page

We endeavour to make all of our agendas and reports fully accessible. Please see our accessibility statement for details.

The agenda is available in large print on request, prior to the meeting, by emailing committee@warwickdc.gov.uk or telephoning (01926) 456114

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 November 2024 at Shire Hall, Warwick at 6.01pm.

**Present:** Councillor Milton (Chair); Councillors Armstrong, Barton, Collins, Day, D Harrison, Luckhurst, Payne, Russell, and P Wightman.

**Also Present:** Councillor Davison – Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, Councillor Roberts – Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood, Councillor Williams – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, and Councillor Melrose – Portfolio Holder for Transformation.

55. **Apologies and Substitutes**

(a) Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Redford.

(b) Councillor Day substituted for Councillor Redford.

56. **Declarations of Interest**

Minute Number 64 – Tachbrook Country Park

Councillor Day declared he sat on the Tachbrook Country Park project board.

57. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 October 2024 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Chair proposed the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 24 September 2024 be amended to be sequentially numbered.

58. **Work Programme, Forward Plan, & Comments from Cabinet**

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2024/25 as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The five main roles of Overview and Scrutiny in local government were: holding to account; performance management; policy review; policy development; and external scrutiny.

Two of the five main roles of Overview and Scrutiny in local government were to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions and to feed into policy development.

The pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions fell within the role of 'holding to account'. To feed into the pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions, the Committee needed to examine the Council's Forward Plan and identify items which it would like to have impacted upon.

The Council's Forward Plan was published 28 days before each Cabinet meeting and set out the key decisions that were expected to be taken by the Cabinet in the next twelve months.

A key decision meant a decision made in the exercise of an executive function by any person (including officers) or body which met one or more of the following conditions:

(1) The decision was likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure or the making of savings in excess of £150,000. Excluded from this were all loans to banks or other financial institutions made in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy.

Officers' delegated powers to make the Cabinet decisions subject to the key decision/call-in regime where it was likely that the Council would incur expenditure or make savings above the threshold of £150,000.

In relation to letting contracts, the key decision was the proposal to let a contract for a particular type of work. The subsequent decision to award the contract to a specific contractor would not have been a key decision provided the value of the contract did not vary above the estimated amount by more than 10% for contracts with a value of up to £500,000 or 5% for contracts of over £500,000.

(2) The decision was likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities that lived or worked in any two or more wards.
In considering whether a decision was likely to be significant, a decision-maker would have needed to consider the strategic nature of the decision and whether the outcome would have had an impact, for better or worse on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the Council to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected.

The Forward Plan was considered at each meeting and allowed the Committee to look at future items and become involved in those Cabinet decisions to be taken if members so wished.

The Forward Plan also identified non-key decisions to be taken by Cabinet in the twelve months that followed, and the Committee, if they wished, could also pre-scrutinise those decisions.

There were also policies identified on the Forward Plan, either as key or non-key decisions, which the Committee could have pre-scrutinised and had an impact upon how these were formulated.

The Committee was mindful that any work it wished to undertake would have needed to have been undertaken without the need to change the timescales as set out within the Forward Plan.

At each meeting, the Committee considered its work programme and made amendments where necessary, and commented on specific Cabinet items, where notice had been given by 9am on the morning after Group meetings. The Committee received a report detailing the response from the Cabinet, on the comments the Committee made on the Cabinet agenda in the previous cycle.

The Committee considered issues that had due significance with reference to the following criteria:

- the number of residents impacted and the significance of that impact;
- the amount of spend involved; and
- if it concerned a strategic priority of the Council or key project.

On the day of publication of the Cabinet agenda, all Councillors were sent an e-mail asking them to contact Committee Services, by 9.00am on the day of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to advise which Cabinet items they would like the Committee to consider.

**Resolved** that

**(1)** a report from Milverton Homes be moved to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2025. Non-executives to attend; and

**(2)** the Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider the Local Plan report from Joint Cabinet at the meeting on 3 December 2024.

59. **Climate Change and Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy Reporting**

At its meeting in July 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed, as part of its work programme, to receive a report on Climate Change data tracking (including carbon emissions) and how this could be provided and managed in the most efficient way.

To reflect the Corporate Strategy and the subsequent Cabinet decisions related to the Low Cost, Carbon Energy Strategy, the report had two parts to it.

Part 1 provided an update on the Low Cost, Low Carbon (LCLC) Energy data, agreed by Cabinet in July 2024, as part of the Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy Strategy. It provided an update on the latest position with regard to those measures, setting out:

- what data would be reported to align with Corporate Strategic Priority 2 and how frequently;

- the role of the Low Cost, Low Carbon Programme Board and the plans for a LCLC Energy Dashboard; and

- how Members could review the latest data on an ongoing basis.

Part 2 provided an update related to the three ambitions agreed as part of the Climate Change Action Programme, which noted that the biodiversity data would be reported separately to Overview and Scrutiny in April 2025.

Updates on the actions associated with Low Cost, Low Carbon (LCLC) Energy were included in the report on the Corporate Strategy, which was also on the Committee agenda. The report focused on plans for how data could support the progress on the Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy priority.

The Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy Strategy included a series of eight primary indicators to be used to track progress. The Strategy also included a further set of five supporting secondary indicators.

The eight primary indicators that were proposed were:

| | 'Low Cost' | 'Low Carbon' |
|---|---|---|
| Public Buildings | Actual cost of energy used in the Council's public buildings. | Actual total CO2 emissions from the Council's public buildings. |
| Existing Council Housing | Predicted savings on energy bills for residents who had been supported by WDC through retrofit advice/implementation. | Predicted CO2 reductions from Council Housing because of WDC retrofit interventions. |
| New housing developments led by the Council | Indicator to be developed potentially drawing on data from the newly adopted NZC DPD. | Indicator to be developed potentially drawing on data from the newly adopted NZC DPD. |
| Helping Others with Retrofit | Predicted savings on energy bills for residents who had been supported by WDC through retrofit advice/implementation. | Predicted total CO2 emission savings for residents who had been supported by WDC through retrofit advice/implementation. |

The secondary indicators were:

- percentage of electricity used in the Council's public buildings generated from renewable electricity produced onsite;
- percentage of Council homes reaching EPC C or above;
- for new WDC homes, the average percentage reduction in pre-offset CO2 emissions compared with other houses built in the District (as measured through the calculations of residual carbon emissions required to comply with the Net Zero Carbon DPD);
- number of retrofit measures implemented by WDC residents or businesses as a result of the Council's retrofit support scheme; and
- estimated overall District-wide carbon emissions from buildings as assessed through "Scatter" or similar data.

As the indicators were fully defined, it would be collated and presented through a dashboard, which would enable managers, the relevant Portfolio Holder, the Programme Board, and all WDC Members to see the latest data. A draft dashboard was presented to and discussed at the Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy Programme Board on 23 October 2024. Further work would be undertaken to refine and populate the dashboard. In time, this would be made available to all WDC Members and would form the basis of ongoing reporting to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to Strategic Priority 2.

The latest position in relation to the 13 indicators in Strategy were set out:

| Ref | Indicator description | Data source | Is data available? If not, date expected. | Is historical data available? | Frequency of reporting |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1a | Public Buildings: Actual cost of energy used in the Council's public buildings | WDC energy consumption and energy bills | Yes for 2023/24 | Yes, since 2018/19 | Annual |
| 1b | Public Buildings: Actual total CO2 emissions from the Council's public buildings | | Yes for 2023/24 | Yes, since 2018/19 | Annual |
| 2a | Existing Council Housing: Predicted savings on energy bills for residents who have been supported by WDC through retrofit advice/implementation. | Proposed energy intervention reports from WDC contractors involved with delivering retrofit grant schemes and/or WDC funded retrofit | No. From April 2025 | No | Quarterly |
| 2b | Existing Council Housing: Predicted CO2 reductions from Council Housing as a result of WDC retrofit interventions | | No. From April 2025 | No | Quarterly |
| 3a | New WDC Housing Developments: Cost indicator to be developed potentially drawing on data from the newly adopted NZC DPD | NB: There had been no planning permissions granted for WDC developments since July 2024, so the current indicator result was zero.<br>Data definition and sources were still to be developed. It was intended that the data would be drawn from energy statements required to support planning applications, along with post construction building | No. From April 2025 | No | Annual |
| 3b | New WDC Housing Developments: Carbon indicator to be developed potentially drawing on data from the newly adopted NZC DPD | | No. From April 2025 | No | Annual |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | evaluation. This data would be compared with the estimated minimum energy/cost required to comply with the Net Zero Carbon DPD. For carbon data it was suggested that this should look at comparative operational carbon per year over at least 10 years. For cost data, this would look at estimated comparative annual fuel costs for residents. | | | |
| 4a | Helping others with retrofit: Predicted savings on energy bills for residents who had been supported by WDC through retrofit advice/implementation. | Advice on how to measure this would be sought from the soft market testing being undertaken in November / December with potential lenders. Until the scheme had been designed, it was not known what data would be available. Subject to advice, it was intended that data would be drawn from the energy intervention reports involved with delivering retrofit grant schemes or | Yes, for green homes grants (collated by Jan 2025), but no for retrofit loan scheme as this had not yet been established. | Yes, for green homes grants (collated by Jan 2025), but no for retrofit loan scheme as this had not yet been established. | Annual |
| 4b | Helping Others with Retrofit: Predicted total CO2 emission savings for residents who had been supported by WDC through retrofit advice/implementation. | | No. From start of retrofit loan scheme. | No | Annual |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | future loan schemes. | | | |
| 5 | Percentage of electricity used in the Council's public buildings generated from renewable electricity produced onsite. | Energy meters in locations where solar was provided. | Yes | Yes (albeit no renewable energy prior to opening of Castle Farm). | Annual |
| 6 | Percentage of Council homes reaching EPC C or above. | Parity Portfolio Software | Yes (albeit accuracy of data needed to be refined through updated EPCs). | No | Annual |
| 7 | For new WDC homes, the average percentage reduction in pre-offset CO2 emissions compared with other houses built in the district (as measured through the calculations of residual carbon emissions required to comply with the Net Zero Carbon DPD). | Post construction building evaluation reports as measured against performance of other houses built in the District within the previous 12 months. | No | No | Annual |
| 8 | Number of retrofit measures implemented by WDC residents or businesses as a result of the Council's retrofit support scheme. | Data relating to residential properties collated through scheme designs to support retrofit grants. In future, surveys of those taking part of the retrofit scheme may be required.<br>There were no business-related schemes operating. This would need to be defined separately should a | Whilst the data was available for residential, it required detailed analysis and collation. Will commence Jan 2025. | Whilst historical data was available for residential, it required detailed analysis and collation. Will commence Jan 2025. | Annual |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | scheme be developed. | | | |
| 9 | Estimated overall District-wide carbon emissions from buildings as assessed through "Scatter" or similar data. | Annual Scatter data collated nationally. | Yes | Yes | Annual |

| Ref | Description | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1a | Public Buildings (including leisure centres and contractor buildings: Actual cost of energy used in the Council's public buildings. | £1,171,415 | £1,240,725 | £1,060,792 | £1.097,544 | £1,544,069 | £2,523,921 |
| 1b | Public Buildings (including leisure centres and contractor buildings): Actual total CO2 emissions from the Council's public buildings | 3736 tonnes CO2e | 3737 tonnes CO2e | 3045 tonnes CO2e | 3021 tonnes CO2e | 2814 tonnes CO2e | 2889 tonnes CO2e |
| 5 | Percentage of electricity used in the Council's public buildings generated from renewable electricity produced onsite. | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | N/A* |
| 6 | Percentage of Council homes reaching EPC C or above (Parity | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 36.5% (2033 out of 5547) |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Portfolio data) | | | | | | |
| 9 | Estimated overall District-wide carbon emissions from buildings as assessed through "Scatter" or similar data. | 517,791 tonnes CO2e | 447,388 tonnes CO2e | 421,726 tonnes CO2e | Data is retrospective and not yet available for these years | | |

*Castle Farm opened Dec 2023 with a rooftop solar. However, faulty data recording technology meant the data for 23/24 was not recorded.

The large increase in energy costs in 2022/23 and 2023/24 was a result of a significant price increase which saw electricity prices more than double and gas prices increase by over 70%, in addition to increased standing charges. A significant part of the reductions in CO2 emissions from buildings was a result of cleaner fuel within the national grid. For instance, 100kwh of electricity in 2018/19 would have been responsible for 28 kilograms of CO2 emissions. In 2023/24, 100kwh of electricity would be responsible for less than 21 kilograms of CO2 emissions.

The buildings energy data collated did not easily allow the impact of WDC's interventions to be seen. However, the Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy dashboard would allow the estimated impact of interventions to be seen, and it was expected that it would be possible to follow this through into energy usage and CO2 emissions data.

A dashboard was developed to present the Low Cost Low Carbon Energy data in a way that enabled progress or issues to be quickly identified and explored. Whilst the dashboard was under development, the Programme Board had provided guidance on how the dashboard should look, to enable the data to be managed at the board meetings. For example, if the aim of reporting the cost of energy from WDC buildings was to aspire to a trend of cost reductions then the graph below would show that the trend for 2022/23 and 2023/24 was an adverse one. This would be flagged as an indicator of concern which in turn would enable the board to drill down into the reasons for this. In this case, the reason was to do with national energy costs rather than WDC energy consumption, which had continued to decline.

Once developed, the LCLC Energy dashboard would be made available to all Councillors through Sharepoint (or similar).

It should have been noted that collating data and reporting through a dashboard required staff resource and skills. Capacity would be put in place within existing budgets.

Ambition 1: WDC to be net zero carbon by 2025/26 and that services provided through contractors included carbon reduction targets to deliver net zero by 2030.

Organisational Carbon Emissions

| **Scope / Activity** | **2018/19** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **(base year)** | | | | | |
| | Tonnes CO2e | Tonnes CO2e | Tonnes CO2e | Tonnes CO2e | Tonnes CO2e | Tonnes CO2e |
| **Scope 1 (emissions occurring in the District as a result of using fossil fuels "on site" e.g. gas, LPG)** | | | | | | |
| Total (Scope 1) | 1,309 | 1,297 | 1,249 | 1,186 | 1,101 | 1,228* |
| | | | | | | |
| **Scope 2 (emissions occurring elsewhere as a result of WDC energy use – e.g electricity consumption)** | | | | | | |
| Total (Scope 2) | 1,261 | 1,280 | 874 | 910 | 874 | 862 |
| | | | | | | |
| **Scope 3 (emissions occurring as a result of contractor activities in providing WDC services)** | | | | | | |
| Total (Scope 3) | 2,724 | 3,616 | 2,410 | 2,627, | 2,315 | 2,354** |
| | | | | | | |
| **Total Gross Emissions (t)** | **5,294** | **6,193** | **4,533** | **4,275** | **4,291** | **4,444** |

The significant increase in Scope 1 emissions was predominantly due to an error in the calculations related to LPG usage and carbon emissions in previous years. If LPG was excluded from Scope 1 emissions, the data showed consumption of gas had fallen by 8% between 2022/23 and 2023/24, with the resulting Scope 1 carbon emissions also falling by 8%.

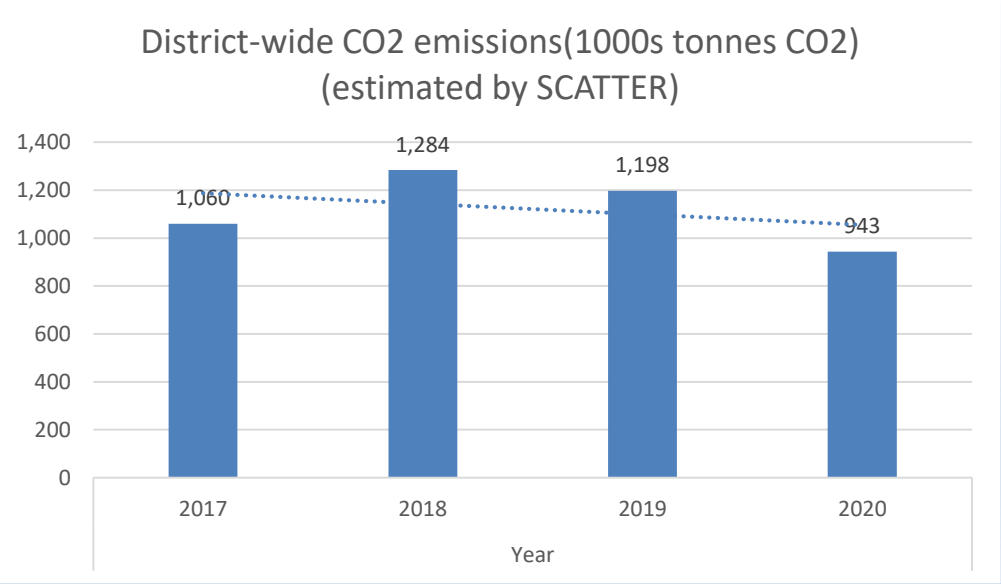
Transmission and Distribution losses (beyond WDC's control) were responsible for the increase. If these were excluded, Scope 3 emissions had fallen by around 1%.

Key points to note were:

- emissions from WDC overall had decreased by 16% since the 2018/19 baseline;
- 2023/24 had seen a small increase in emissions since 2022/23. This was as a result of errors in previous LPG calculations and changes to estimates in transmission and distribution losses (see footnotes above);
- unless there was a dramatic acceleration in the annual level of carbon reduction achieved over the next two years, the ambition to be net zero would be missed without carbon offsetting;
- an approach to carbon offsetting was being developed and would be adopted in 2025; and
- scope 3 emissions (contractors) accounted for more than half of all emissions and the emissions from Scope 3 transport (predominantly refuse collection vehicles) accounted for approximately a third of total emissions. Leisure centre emissions (645 tonnes per year) were also significant in Scope 3 emissions.

**Ambition 2**: reduce net carbon emissions across the District by a minimum of 55% by 2030 (baseline 2018) and plan how to further reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

District-wide carbon emissions as estimated through Scatter data:




Whilst the data above showed significant progress (26.5% reduction against the 2018 baseline) towards the ambition of a 55% reduction, it should have been noted that:

a) 2020 was impacted by Covid and therefore unlikely to be consistent with previous or subsequent years. It was likely the same would be true of 2021 once the data had been published;
b) the 2020-based data was unlikely to be significantly impacted by the declaration of WDC's climate emergency. The Council's actions could therefore not be correlated in any way to the 2020 reduction; and
c) when the 55% reduction ambition was established, this took account of changing national trends around factors such as cleaner electricity production.

**Ambition 3:** To enable our environment and communities to have adapted to the potential of at least three degrees rise in global temperatures by 2100.

No data was being collated specifically in relation to this ambition. The ambition was being managed through a risk-based approach. However, much of the data being collated for the Biodiversity Action Programme was also relevant to adaptation. This would be reported to Overview and Scrutiny in April 2025.

Risks were managed through the Low Cost, Low Carbon Risk Register which was under review by the Programme Board. The highest scoring risks within the Draft Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy Risk Register were:

| RISK TITLE | RISK DESCRIPTION | RISK EXPOSURE | RAW RISK RATING | | | RISK CONTROL MEASURES | EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTROL MEASURES | RISK CONTROL ACTIONEE(S) | CURRENT RISK RATING | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | LIKELIHOOD | IMPACT | OVERALL RISK RATING | | | | LIKELIHOOD | IMPACT | OVERALL RISK RATING |
| Costs exceeding available funds. | Cost of delivering low cost, low carbon energy and the potential that insufficient funding available to deliver the priorities | Financial, business disruption | 4 | 4 | 16 | The funding strategy will be utilised to establish applicable funding opportunities. The funding strategy needs to be developed. For the time being, the PB and officers understand broadly which pots of funding are being used | Fully Effective | The Programme Board and officers supporting the Programme Board | 3 | 4 | 12 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | on which projects. | | | | | |
| Changing national priorities | Changing national priorities and funding | Unrealised opportunity | 4 | 3 | **12** | Include horizon scanning on Programme Board agendas to ensure we are aware as early as possible of any changes or opportunities. | Partially Effective | Officers supporting the Programme Board. | 2 | 3 | **6** |
| **Grant requirements** | Constraints associated with grant funds | Missed opportunity | 3 | 4 | **12** | Apply for grants that align with our aims; establish a pipeline of projects where regular grant schemes are in place | Full Effective | Officers supporting the Programme Board. | 1 | 4 | **4** |
| **Technology advances** | Changing technology and lack of examples and benchmarks from elsewhere to learn from | Missed opportunity/ineffective use of resources | 4 | 3 | **12** | As far as possible, learn from examples elsewhere and be prepared to experiment and learn from our own experiences. | Partially Effective | Programme Board and officers supporting the Programme Board | 2 | 4 | **8** |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Expertise** | Access to technical expertise in a fast-changing world | Financial, missed opportunity | 4 | 4 | **16** | Seek to recruit and retain internal expertise where we can, work with partners and use consultancies where other options are not available. | Partially Effective | Programme Board and officers supporting the Programme Board | 2 | 4 | **8** |

Specifically in relation to collating and reporting data, the main risks concerned were:

a) The accuracy of some of the data, for example:

- EPC data which was reliant on some out-of-date EPCs and would therefore need to be improved over time;
- changing national formulas such as transmission and distribution data;
- data complexities which made it difficult to ensure consistencies between different years;
- staff leaving, again made it difficult to achieve consistency between years; and
- reliance on data from contractors.

b) Impacts that were beyond WDC's control such as the rate of decarbonisation of the electricity grid and energy prices.

c) Difficulties in defining indicators which enabled meaningful and timely data to be made available:

- most of the data was annual, and in the case of Scatter data there was a 3-to-4-year time lag;
- alternatives such as predicted savings from WDC interventions were complex to collate and were based on estimates rather than hard data; and
- the Net Zero Carbon DPD was still relatively new. Although it had potential to be a valuable mine of data, work was still being carried out to understand its full potential and therefore some indicators remained less well defined.

Working well in data collection:

- strong focus on the Corporate Strategy priorities in relation to Low Cost, Carbon Energy, supported by a Programme Board, clear Portfolio Holder responsibilities and a dedicated officer team;
- significant investment in decarbonisation of public buildings had been agreed and plans to roll this out were advanced;
- good data, including historical trends to support this;
- the climate change officer team had good technical skills to back up the political and managerial commitment to decarbonisation of buildings; and

- the Net Zero Carbon DPD was in place and provided further potential for improving data in relation to building performance.

What was not working so well in data collection:

- there needed to be more focus on the post construction impact on energy in relation to new buildings and retrofit measures;
- as set out in the risks above, data collation and reporting required much more development to enable progress to be tracked in a timely manner;
- for some data, the time lag was an issue which required proxy measures to be put in place;
- improvements in defining Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy indicators and putting in place sound, consistent, and effective data collection methods to support the programme; and
- the development of a Low Cost, Low Carbon dashboard to enable effective tracking of progress.

In answer to questions from Members, the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Strategic Leadership, and Neighbourhood, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood, the Programme Director for Climate Change, and the Head of Customer and Digital Services advised that:

- they had been slow to get started and there was still work to do;
- they wanted to make the dashboard as accessible as possible, including to residents;
- they were making good progress;
- the data had been quantified;
- there had been positive cross working within the Council;
- the dashboard would be published soon;
- the trajectory for carbon emissions was driven in different ways. The focus had been on Low Cost Low Carbon energy of buildings;
- a report to the Low Cost Low Carbon Energy Board in June 2024 set out a program of works around LED lighting and solar. The two programmes of work had resulted in a carbon reduction of hundreds of tonnes;
- they had predicted a further 20% reduction in gross carbon emissions;
- the Council had a green electricity tariff (REGO certified), resulting in clean renewable energy;
- there were some political choices to be made around how the Council described carbon emissions;
- moving out of Riverside House had a significant impact on the reduction in carbon emissions;
- Abbey Fields pool would open soon, which would result in an increase in carbon emissions;
- as a Council, a formal decision had not been made around offsetting;
- the target for 2026/2027 was an estimate that would constantly be refined, it would be iterative;
- there was an initiative to make finance available to homeowners and businesses to decarbonise their properties;
- they were using scatter data to record the decarbonisation of non Council buildings;
- they were hopeful that by the end of January 2025 they would have a proposal for the way forward for the two sites in Kenilworth;

- the data for the Council's buildings was drawn from a range of very complicated and diverse spreadsheets. There was not a single database. This took a lot of manual handing to pull the data together;
- they would like to pull the data into a consistent format. They were working with the Assets team to consider whether there was a business case for a new system to support the data, in a similar way to the housing data, to present it in a dashboard;
- with regards to the data, they would like to share learning across the Council to look at maximising skills and capacity;
- the Customer and Digital Services department had the capacity within the application support team to look at the structures associated with data, to pull information out of the existing systems and platforms in an automated way. However, some of the data that was related with the carbon emissions and calculations was from such a diverse set of sources it was difficult. It was part of the service plan to look at in 2025;
- the existing dashboards were predominantly spreadsheet based. However, the Customer and Digital Services department were trying to move away from using spreadsheets to automate the process as much as possible;
- regarding the refuse collection vehicles, the Council had put solar matting on top of the vehicles, which helped to reduce their carbon emissions;
- a decision had been made not to replace the existing refuse collection vehicles with electric vehicles mid-way through the contract because it was deemed incredibly difficult and expensive. This would be reconsidered during the procurement cycle for the new contract in 2029; and
- the service area plan, due to be listed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in February 2025, set out the definition of each of the indicators.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

60. **Annual Update on the Corporate Strategy**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive which set out the progress after a year of the agreed Corporate Strategy for Warwick District Council and offered an opportunity to reflect on the experience of its first year and make any adjustments accordingly. The report was read in conjunction with the report on the Low Cost, Low Carbon Strategic Priority area and the report on Quarter 1 Performance of Service Area Plans, specifically related to the Performance Management Framework being developed for the Council and Service Area Planning Process for the 2025/2026 Service Area Plan.

The Corporate Strategy was adopted by Full Council in December 2023, so it had been formal Council Policy for almost a year. The Strategy set out the administration's vision for the future of Warwick District, the values which were a key part of the Council's culture and guided the actions and behaviours expected or its representatives, and the three strategic priorities the Council sought to achieve by 2030.

The strategic priorities should be translated into the provisions within the Service Area Plans, the Council's Budget and therefore its projects and allocations of resources whether that be people, money or assets. The

performance report was a key tool to help the Council demonstrate the services it was providing were performing well (or not) and that it was delivering its strategic objectives. It was not proposed to replicate the contents of the other report on this same agenda which covered Service Area Plan performance. Instead, the approach deployed was to look at the key elements of the strategy and assess progress.

The Vision adopted for the Warwick 2030 strategy was to:

"Make Warwick District a great place to live work and visit by improving lives and the environment."

Whilst the aspirational content was largely unchanged from the original 2009 iteration, the revised vision importantly also set direction - to improve the environment and to improve lives. This was an important addition as it provided a broad framework for the Council's objectives. The vision also continued to align with WDC's values and clearly articulated where the Council sought to go.

The challenge had always been to find an effective way to measure achievement of this vision, especially as it was outcome focused, rather than being focused on transactional service efficiency or effectiveness. An additional challenge was also whether it related to the whole experience for citizens and businesses or just those things that this Council had direct control over.

The organisational values were updated and revised. Translating these values into actions and behaviours was a complex task. To introduce the new values, in February 2024, the Human Resources team facilitated a series of Conversation Café sessions, inviting staff from across the entire Council to engage with the new values and make them real. However, it was critical to recognise that the values were also for Councillors, as well as for staff. The task faced was to ensure all leaders, at all levels of the Council, Councillors, and staff, demonstrated the behaviours aspired to in the values and for everyone to challenge behaviour which did not accord with them.

Since the Conversation Cafés were completed, a staff pulse survey had been undertaken. There would be a further series of these surveys in the future, to help test the experience of the adopted values in real life.

The Corporate Strategy focused on three Strategic Priorities, each with a few objectives. Appendix 1 to the report illustrated high level progress against each objective and gave a RAG rating. This demonstrated good progress was being made on almost all fronts in a short period of time.

Two Member/Officer Programme Boards oversaw the first two Strategic Priorities while a Member/Officer informal meeting oversaw progress on the third priority.

Another report on the agenda for the meeting set out proposed performance measures for the Low-Cost Low Carbon Strategic Priority. There was not a full set of measures across three priority areas, which remained a matter to be addressed but needed to be considered in conjunction with the targets or measures for the Service Area Plans. These did not need to duplicate efforts.

The primary risks for the Strategy would be reflected in the Strategic Risk Register which was reported upon separately.

A reflection, a year on, indicated a drafting oversight as there had been two objectives with near similar wording (these being x and y).

There was the challenge of ensuring the strategic priorities and each of their objectives were translated effectively into the Service Area Plans, as well as decisions around projects and the allocation of resources. 2023 was the first year for this Corporate Strategy and, given the issues in Housing and Assets, it was not as effective across the board as it could have been.

The following year offered an opportunity to correct that position and to ensure measures and targets in the Service Area Plans reflected priorities set by the Corporate Strategy, as well as being an appropriate set of performance measures for each Strategic Priority. As set out in the Performance Report, to record progress, a Performance Management Framework was also being developed to come to Cabinet in February 2025.

In answer to questions from Members, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, the Chief Executive, and the Deputy Chief Executive advised that:

- there had been challenges in housing for the past few years and there had been separate reports on this;
- strategic priority 3 was less developed, as a result of this;
- on reflection, it had been a challenging year, in many ways;
- the Council was making progress in most of the strategic priorities and that the strategic priorities that had not started, would be starting very soon;
- milestone dates needed to be added to the report;
- the change programme was a substantive part of strategic priority one;
- strategic priority three was difficult because it was more diverse. There was not a programme board in place as there were other priorities, particularly focussed on the housing interventions;
- progress had been made but there was still work to be done on the performance framework, including milestone achievements;
- paragraph 3.1.3 of the report should have been highlighted green as the investment zone had been agreed;
- the Council were at 'the starting line' for green industries and expected to see two reserve matters planning applications during the first quarter of next year, which will generate income;
- with regards to the creative games listed in the report, this should also be highlighted green. The gaming industry in Royal Leamington Spa was well established, with the third largest games company cluster in the country, after London and Dundee;
- the challenge around the local plan is that there were statutory processes that could be an opportunity but also a constraint;
- the South Warwickshire Local Plan would be on the agenda at the Joint Cabinet meeting on 12 December 2024, for the preferred options. If the preferred options were agreed, the public consultation would commence in January 2025;
- there was a statutory minimum of six weeks for the public consultation. If the preferred options were agreed at Joint Cabinet on 12 December 2024, the public consultation would be for eight weeks;

- there would be an opportunity at the next Overview & Scrutiny meeting, on 3 December 2024, to combine the Cabinet papers and Joint Cabinet papers, to scrutinise the items on both the agendas;
- it would be possible, going forward, to provide SWLP Member briefings prior to Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings;
- the Council need to ensure the Council's stock and its tenants were as safe and secure as they could be;
- the Council recognised that it needed to bring together risk, project performance, and strategy to one place, to be able to show where, as an organisation, they were performing, and how they interacted. As a result, the performance needed to be reported in more granular detail, per task, milestone, and percentage completion, which would be much easier to understand;
- within the housing compliance work, they had been trialling the use of Monday.com. This enabled access to see every task by percentage, task, milestone, and document. This gave the Committee and the Compliance Board the confidence that there was control, visibility, and a level of detail. The Council were considering whether this tool could be used corporately to meet business need, and how this could be funded;
- the priority, however, for the IT department, was the customer and relationship management system because the Council wanted to go live for the new waste management calls; and
- the Corporate Strategy dictates to the Service Area Plans the projects the Council wanted to support.

61. **The Royal Pump Rooms Customer Service Centre – Six Months On**

The Committee considered a report from Customer & Digital Services. In February 2023, Warwick District Council's (WDC) Cabinet considered a report which discussed the relocation of services away from the (then) Council's headquarters, Riverside House. The report put forward several recommendations which included migrating back-office functions to Saltisford One in Warwick and relocating front facing Customer Service operations to the Royal Pump Rooms. Cabinet agreed to these proposals and work towards the relocation commenced.

The Customer and Digital Services team, supported by the Assets team engaged with an architectural contractor, Atkins, to design a new customer service centre, to be located at the site occupied by the Royal Pump Rooms shop. Atkins architects worked through several design iterations to ensure that any development would protect the character of the Royal Pump Rooms whilst providing a modern and efficient customer service space. Officers from Customer Services, the Assets team, and the Royal Pump Rooms informed these discussions at every stage.

Following several months of planning a final design was produced which was significantly more expensive than originally anticipated. February's Cabinet report stated that the costs of relocating Customer Services to the Royal Pump Rooms was provisionally expected to be around £200,000. However, due to massive inflationary costs for building materials and other complications discovered during the design phase, the estimated costs had grown to between £380,000 and £410,000.

Considering the significant cost increases, a report was taken to Cabinet again in July 2023 that requested a final decision on the route to be taken. The

report revisited previous relocation options, which included renting a shop or relocating to the Town Hall, but ultimately continued to recommend the Royal Pump Rooms as the best choice. These recommendations were accepted by Cabinet and budget was assigned.

The significant increase in costs created apprehension amongst Councillors, as did a negative reception to the project from members of the public. This was expressed most significantly in an online petition entitled "Hands Off Our Pump Rooms" which was concerned about the closure of the shop and the perceived impact introducing Customer Services would have on the Royal Pump Rooms environment. The Cabinet decision was called into Overview and Scrutiny for further consideration and after discussing the matter, the Committee resolved to refer their concerns to Council for wider dialogue.

The Chairman of the Council agreed to take the Overview and Scrutiny Committees referral as an urgent item at the 26 July 2023 meeting, where the Cabinet report and supporting information regarding customer numbers and alternative options were considered. After debate, a decision was reached to take no further action and therefore, the project could commence.

Some of the modifications to the Royal Pump Rooms required listed building consent and these were considered by the Planning Committee in November 2023. No work started towards building the Customer Service Centre until the consent had been gained and following this approval, the Royal Pump Rooms shop closed on Sunday 19 November 2023. Work on converting the space started a week later and took approximately four months to complete. During this time, most of the Council's other services relocated to Saltisford One and Customer Services were the last team to move out of Riverside House.
The new Customer Service Centre officially opened to the public on Tuesday 9 April 2024.

The proposal to Cabinet in July 2023 outlined costs of between £380,000 and £410,000. This was comprised of £315,000 for building and contractor works, £65,000 for professional fees and £30,000 contingency budget.
When the Customer Service Centre opened, the delivery cost of the project stood at £306,851. This consisted of:

- £66,767 Professional Fees.
- £240,084 Building, Contract and Equipment.
- Carpentry – £79,428.
- Electrical - £30,298.
- Mechanical - £46,477.
- Furniture - £79,994.
- ICT Equipment – 3,126.
- Decommissioning of shop - £760.

During the project, several value engineering decisions were taken to reduce costs without significant detrimental impact on the project's overall outcome. For example, approximately £10,000 was saved by reusing desks and seats from Riverside House. Around £5,000 was saved by changing the specification of the light fittings proposed for use in the main Customer Service area and a further £6,000 was saved by increasing the gap between the oak slats used on the dividing wall to more closely match those of the Café. The Council also used its own contractors to facilitate building works and procured the required furniture directly. These actions secured significant savings on the original

quoted costs.

Cabinet agreed that a contingency budget of £30,000 could be carried into the 2024/25 financial year in case further expenditure was incurred following the opening of the Customer Service Centre. To date, £3,323.75 had been spent, predominantly to replace a manual door opening mechanism with a powered alternative.

A further potential expense may be incurred to improve CCTV in the Customer Service Centre, following an internal audit of the wider Royal Pump Rooms system. Customer and Digital Services were in discussion with the Council's CCTV team, but it was not anticipated that costs would require any further budget to be allocated. Improvements to signage at the Royal Pump Rooms were also required and this was being investigated.

It was reported to Council in July 2023, that the Royal Pump Rooms Customer Service Centre was anticipated to be fully operational by 8 January 2024. There were two key assumptions made in the associated report which facilitated the January opening: 1) listed building consent would be granted at the October Planning Committee; and 2) that works which did not require planning permission would be allowed to start straight away – which included closing the shop. Approximately four months were allocated for building work between October and January.

Unfortunately, this deadline was not met. Due to the level of public interest in the Royal Pump Rooms development, the project board did not want to create any impression that work was commencing without the appropriate planning permission. The Listed Building Consent application was scheduled for consideration at the October Planning Committee, but due to timing constraints, was deferred until the November meeting. The shop remained open, and the site was not effectively handed over to Customer and Digital Services until the end of November.

Once the site had been handed over and all required permissions were gained, building work took approximately four months, as expected. Whilst the original January deadline was not met, the decision to work transparently, not undertake any action until Listed Building Consent was gained, and to keep the shop open was in the best interests of the Council and its communities. The delay did not materially impact the move from Riverside House.

The new Customer Service Centre facilities were extensive and significantly better than those previously available to customers at Riverside House.

Customers primarily met with Customer Service agents in two private meeting pods. These pods could comfortably accommodate up to six people, including the Customer Service Agent. They were fully wheelchair accessible with an extra wide opening door, a completely flat floor and significant turnaround space, which made them easily navigable for both manual and powered wheelchair users. The desk within each pod was height adjustable and all equipment could easily be turned around and shared with the customer. Lighting and ventilation levels could fully adjust to account for customers with complex sensory needs, and a portable hearing loop was also available. Privacy screening on the entrance to the pods ensured that whilst the main door panels were glass (to let in natural light), customers could not easily be seen whilst interacting with teams. The meeting pods were very private and

extensive sound insulation ensured that audio travel into the main customer service area was minimal.

A further private meeting pod was also available with video conferencing facilities, should a customer need to speak to an officer located elsewhere, or if they had a planned online meeting and did not have facilities of their own. The pod was enclosed and a PC with a camera was fixed to a motorised height adjustable desk. Lighting and ventilation could be completely controlled by the occupant and the door was powered to ensure wheelchair accessibility.

Open meeting tables were also available, with some customers preferring to meet with the team in the open space. This area benefitted from particularly good views of the Royal Pump Room Gardens. The open meeting tables did not provide the same level of privacy as the meeting pods and were only used if the customer expressed a preference for them. Staff on reception could also deal with simple customer queries, such as returning a form or requesting non-personal information.

The main customer service space also benefitted from high efficiency cooling and heating. Ceiling mounted units were able to fully control the temperature and ventilation in the area, which ensured the site would remain warm during the winter and cool during the summer. The office behind the Customer Service Centre, which had no openable windows itself, also benefitted from this climate control system.

The back-office area could accommodate up to four Customer Service Agents. Facilities available to staff were comparable to those at Saltisford One, as well as being fully accessible, with a similarly wide, powered entrance door and large turning circle to accommodate any type of user. A height adjustable desk was also available.

As a wider improvement for the Royal Pump Rooms, public and staff internet connectivity were significantly improved as part of the Customer Service Centre project. The old public Wi-Fi system was completely replaced by a modern, secure, scalable solution that was significantly faster and attracted lower costs. This new system was also universal and accessible from other sites, such as the Town Hall, Spa Centre and Tennis Pavilions. Staff access was also improved with the installation of a faster separate connection, as well as improved Wi-Fi infrastructure and general networking equipment. Later in the year, ICT would expand the service further into other areas of the Royal Pump Rooms which were not currently served.

As of 1 November 2024, since opening in April some 5277 customers had used the Royal Pump Room facilities. Council Tax, Benefits and Housing related enquiries continued to be the most popular services, as was the case at Riverside House. It was reported to Council in July 2023 that on average 266 customers per week accessed the facilities at Riverside House, which had decreased slightly to 202 customers per week, on average, at the Royal Pump Rooms. This decrease was not unexpected.

Customer and Digital Services anticipated that around 30 enquiries per week, which related to services located at Riverside House, would no-longer be received and that around 26 people per week would require video-conference facilities. Changed working practices had helped reduce this number significantly, as at Riverside House customers would often be asked to

reattend for a video conference appointment at a later time or date. Such issues were now typically dealt with immediately, reducing the overall customer count.

Customer Satisfaction with the facility was also high and since opening, no complaints had been received. Customer Services operated a feedback system where, most customers rated the quality of the facilities as good, or very good. During conversations with staff, the quality of the site and it's calming location had also been complimented, with the clear views of the Royal Pump Room Gardens being a particular high point.

The impact that Customer Services may have had on the Royal Pump Room's other facilities and privacy issues were also cited as significant concerns when the proposals were considered. Since opening, there had been no negative incidents related to customers visiting the Customer Service Centre, their interactions with the wider Royal Pump Rooms environment, or issues related to loud or disruptive behaviour. The privacy of customers had been maintained throughout, with all customer interactions contained to the customer service area.

As part of the July Cabinet report, it was agreed that options for a future shop location would be investigated. Unfortunately, this work did not yield a successful outcome, with the most significant issue related to staffing. The Royal Pump Rooms original shop benefitted from "passive" staffing whereby personnel within the Royal Pump Rooms were always available, but it was not their primary role. This would not have been possible at another site, which would have needed a permanent, dedicated staff presence.

Following the closure of the main shop, the Royal Pump Rooms Team relocated some display stands into the main Pump Rooms foyer to continue selling some items. Further modifications to the reception desk in the main foyer had increased the available space, and a pop-up shop was created, which worked with some of the artists who used to sell their works in the original shop, as part of the Royal Pump Rooms 25 anniversary celebrations.

No plans were being actively worked on to specifically create a new, dedicated shop space within the Royal Pump Rooms. However, there were ongoing refinements being made to the foyer reception area which was facilitating more retail activity. Other projects that were being undertaken, such as the Stoneleigh Arms and Town Hall refurbishments, may provide opportunities in future to reconsider a dedicated shop facility.

During the project, concerns were raised that the Royal Pump Rooms Customer Service Centre was temporary, and that significant investment was being made in a facility that would not continue to be used in the long term. To offer clarity on this situation, temporary was not intended to describe the overall facility, but some of the construction techniques used to create the centre overall.

Almost all the furnishings and equipment installed at the Royal Pump Rooms were freestanding and could easily be removed if Customer Services were to be relocated elsewhere. The only change that could not be easily reversed without undertaking corrective building work would be the removal of the oak dividing wall – which had been installed in such a way that it could be removed, with minimal damage to the surrounding building.

Customer Services could remain at the Royal Pump Rooms for as long as the Council required them to. The independence of the site created several significant benefits for WDC when it considered its wider future office location. A town centre presence for Customer Services could continue to be maintained regardless of where any back-office function was located. The site also meant that any future moves for back-office staff would not disrupt customer access in any way, unlike the move from Riverside House.

The centre had also opened opportunities for customers to access other partner services and in early October, as part of the Council's drive to increase the take up of Pension Credits, the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) offered sessions at the Pump Rooms every Thursday afternoon. Although take up of the sessions for Pension Credit assistance had been limited, there had been other more positive, sustainable outcomes.

The slots allowed the CAB to undertake additional sessions with their own customers in a better environment. This was particularly important for customers with accessibility needs, as their current offices were not entirely suitable. The partnership had also created a mechanism whereby the Customer Services team could easily book appointments and refer customers to the CAB if required. This was reciprocated if a CAB customer required help from the Council.

This development added significant value to the customer's journey by simplifying the interaction between two important public services. For example, if a customer were to visit the CAB to request financial advice, the CAB may have recommended they speak to the Council's benefits team, which historically would have required another visit. After the change, they could ask a member of the customer service team to pick up the case and immediately undertake the required assessments. Ultimately this didn't change the outcome for the customer, but the journey to achieving it was significantly easier.

Overall, the opening of the Royal Pump Rooms Customer Service Centre had been hugely successful. The project was delivered within budget and whilst slightly later than planned, within the original anticipated build time. The site was favourable to customers, had excellent facilities, extended future flexibility for Council's back-office operations and provided services that were not available at Riverside House.

The Committee acknowledged that the project had been delivered well and congratulated the Portfolio Holders and officers for their work.

In answer to questions from Members, the Portfolio Holder for Transformation, and the Head of Customer and Digital Services advised that:

- the customer service centre was open between Monday to Friday, 9:30 to 16:30;
- there was a constant flow of customers coming through the centre, predominantly housing and revenues enquiries. These made-up half of all queries;
- in the majority of incidences staff were able to address the customer's need on the first point of contact;
- the customer feedback analysis to date has been informal. There were

plans to introduce a formal method of recording customer feedback, to include a questionnaire;
- the feedback they had received from the public had been positive;
- they had introduced services from the Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB);
- there was room for four members of staff in the back office;
- they had a rota system in place for staff;
- they would be completing a staff satisfaction survey, similar to the one completed at Saltisford, for staff working at the Pump Rooms;
- the CRM system would allow the Council to create a consistent experience to customers, regardless of how they contacted the Council, whether that be via the website, over the telephone, or if they came into the centre face-to-face;
- this would enable improved analysis of how customers interact will the Council and their 'journey', and how long it had taken the Council to respond to the enquiry. This would give a greater insight into the services the Council provided;
- they would be able to anonymise the information;
- there were no plans to relocate the customer service location;
- if the Council chose to relocate customers services somewhere else in the future, 90% of what was at the Royal Pump Rooms could be moved to somewhere else (the pods, the infrastructure, the furniture);
- they would predominantly be using Microsoft forms to collect the information regarding customer feedback. This would be fed into a Sharepoint database which would be able to provide live information on customer satisfaction;
- they were trying to make the process as automated and as live as possible; and
- they did not have information on how the opening of the Customer Service Centre at the Pump Rooms had impacted the other tenants at the Pump Rooms, for example, the café.

**Resolved** that an update, with data, and feedback from users of the Pump Rooms, be added to the work programme in six months, to enable the Committee to scrutinise the evidence.

62. **2024/25 Quarter 1 Performance Report**

The Committee considered a report from Governance which set out the 2024/2025 Quarter 1 Performance Report for Warwick District Council against the measures/targets included within the adopted Service area plans. It also set out the timetable for reporting on performance for the remainder of the Financial Year.

The report provided an update on the Performance Management Framework being developed for the Council and Service Area Planning Process for the 2025/2026 Service Area Plans.

The Performance report was a key tool in helping the Council demonstrate the services it was providing were performing. The performance report focused on measures within the Service Plans and if they were achieving the expected level of performance. The commentary provided by officers against those

measures, which were below the expected level, enabled an understanding of the reasons for this and if there was a need for further investigation.

The Quarter 1 report was set out at Appendix A to the report. Quarter 1 for 2024/2025 ran from 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024. This data had not been previously reported as time was taken to reflect on the best approach and format.

The performance report at the time provided an overview of the measures within the approved service area plans for 2024/25, with a focus on those that were either in red or amber status. The status was defined within the specific measure on expected performance. The report also provided details of measures where the "Measure/Target trending down for at least two consecutive quarters".

Not all measures were reported on within the report, but all could be found, along with full service area plans on the WDC Business Intelligence Portal, the link to which had been circulated separately to all Councillors.

Table 1 below, set out the reporting timeline for the performance report for the remainder of the 2024/25 Service Area Plans.

**Table 1**

| Stage | Q2 report | Q3 report | Q4 report |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deadline for Service Areas to provide the data** | 4 November 2024 | 3 February 2025 | 5 May 2025 |
| **Date for the draft SAP to SLT** | 11 November 2024 | 10 February 2025 | 12 May 2025 |
| **Date SLT to provide commentary** | 18 November 2024 | 17 February 2025 | 19 May 2025 |
| **Date to be considered at SLT** | 28 November 2024 | 20 February 2025 | 29 May 2025 |
| **Date to be considered at Cabinet Catch Up** | 2 December 2024 | 24 February 2025 | 2 June 2025 |
| **Date SAP will be shared with all Councillors** | 4 December 2024 | 26 February 2025 | 4 June 2025 |
| **Date to be considered by O&S Cttee** | 21 January 2025 | 18 March 2025 | TBC |

Also available, via the Business Intelligence Portal, were the corporate projects list, the significant risk register and procurement activity, that set out the current and upcoming procurement activity planned to become available in the future. The link to which had been circulated separately to all Councillors.

The Service Area Plans for 2025/26 were being developed by Service Areas in partnership with their relevant Portfolio Holder(s). This was with a view to them being approved by Cabinet in February 2025, alongside the budget. The timetable for their approval ran alongside the budget setting process, which allowed for cross checking that funds were aligned to the relevant areas where appropriate. This also allowed for consideration of overall capacity and risks at an early stage of planning.

To compliment this planning process, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Cabinet discussed broad themes for the Service Area plans on 28 October 2024. The next phase would see SLT review all Service Area Plans, with a focus on checking and challenging performance measures/targets as part of an awayday on 28 November 2024. This would be followed by a further review with SLT and Cabinet on 9 December 2024 before final sign off of the drafts on 13 January 2025 and the agenda being published on 27 January 2025.

The primary risks around performance monitoring reports included ensuring that the data provided in the service area plans report was accurate and provided commentary on the rationale for the level of performance. This helped the Council identify at an early stage where performance was below the expected standard and investigate and challenge as appropriate.

Performance reporting allowed the Council to see a broad view of performance and highlighted areas of underperformance. However, it did not allow for recognising success where services were performing at or above the expected level.

At the time of writing, further development was required to improve highlighting the performance of the Council in respect of its regulatory/statutory requirements and drawing these out as a performance indicator. This was important so Officers, Councillors, and the public could see that the legal duty was being met as required. This was being developed for the 2025/2026 Service Area Plans to clearly show this information, by providing the definition of target (those where there is a duty to meet a specific performance rate (for example ensuring gas safety certificates are in place and up to date) and a measure (for example footfall in the Town Hall) which would look more at the trend over time. At the time, this data was not differentiated within the Service Area Plans but would be for next year, with a view to back dating it over the current Service Area Plans.

There was also development underway of a Performance Management Framework for the Council. This was being developed alongside the Service Area Plans for 2025/26 and was due to be considered by Cabinet in February 2025.

To support the Framework some minor changes to the Service Area Plan format were being designed for 2025/26. As an example, there would be a definition of a target and measure when they were expected to be used, as set out above. This would also see reflection on the current status of nearly all

measures being Key Performance Indicators where some were simply Performance Indicators.

There would also be further work on the alignment to the Corporate Strategy of Service Area Plans and the project list. The current service area plans were approved around the same time as the new Corporate Strategy. This time officers were planning to show clearer links between the plans and the performance, and the Strategy. The key area to develop more detailed modelling was on Corporate Priority 3, where The Head of Governance, Head of Digital and Customer Services, Head of Safer Communities, Leisure and Environment and the Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager were looking at the most appropriate model for this.

In answer to questions from Members, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, Head of Governance, and the Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager advised that:

- the Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager position had been an investment by Cabinet as part of the response to the peer review and the Pennington report, to introduce corporate resource in the core of the Council;
- Members would soon be able to access a list of all the procurement activities which are ongoing and the values that were associated with each of them;
- the dashboard highlighted the areas of concern, to challenge and see how they were progressing to resolve them;
- the quarter one performance report had been delayed for various reasons, including two elections;
- the new Service Area Plans (SAPs) were underway and would be on the Cabinet agenda for February 2025. Prior to this, the Senior Leadership Team would check and challenge them, particularly with a focus on the performance measures and targets within them;
- there was a performance management framework being developed which linked the corporate strategy with performance and explained how that came together;
- the list of projects that the O&S Committee raised concerns about previously, had been worked on by two project officers, creating a scoring matrix, to evaluate which project were considered high priority. This would be going to SLT on Thursday 14 November 2024 for their consideration. It would then be informally given to Cabinet to check and challenge, and passed back to the project officers to implement;
- the project list would also indicate which corporate strategy the project was linked to;
- this had been a recommendation from the peer challenge review around strengthening the corporate core; and
- officers would feed back to SLT that Members would like to include the net zero carbon targets for each of the service areas in the Service Area Plans.

**Resolved** that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will focus on:

(a) anything that is a regulatory requirement, highlighted red;

(b) anything that is highlighted red, that is trending negatively; and
(c) thematic reviews where there is consistent underperformance.

These will be added, as an appendix, to the report to explain the anticipated action by the service to move them away from red.

63. **Public and Press**

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

| Minute Number | Paragraph Number | Reason |
|---|---|---|
| 64, 65 | 3 | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) |

64. **Tachbrook Country Park**

This was detailed in the confidential minutes of the meeting.

(The meeting resumed in public session.).

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

65. **Confidential minutes**

The confidential minutes of the meetings held on 24 September and 15 October 2024 were taken as read and signed by the Chair of the Committee as a correct record.

(The meeting ended at 8.21pm)

CHAIR
21 January 2025

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3 December 2024 at Shire Hall, Warwick at 6.01pm.

**Present:** Councillor Milton (Chair); Councillors Aizlewood, Armstrong, Barton, Collins, Harrison, Payne, Redford, Russell, and P Wightman.

**Also Present:** Councillor Davison – Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, Councillor King – Portfolio Holder for Place, Councillor Melrose – Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Councillor Sinnott - Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities, Leisure and Environment, and Councillor Williams – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change.

66. **Apologies and Substitutes**

Councillor Aizlewood substituted for Councillor Luckhurst.

67. **Declarations of Interest**

Joint Cabinet Agenda - 12 December 2024 - Item 5 – South Warwickshire Local Plan – Preferred Options Version

There were no declarations of interest made, but in reference to item 5 on the Joint Cabinet agenda - South Warwickshire Local Plan Preferred Options, there was an acknowledgement that all Members of the Committee lived within South Warwickshire.

68. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 13 November 2024 had not been published prior to the meeting, therefore they would come to the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled on 21 January 2024 to be approved and signed by the Chair.

69. **Work Programme**

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2024/25 as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer which informed Members of the Committee's work programme for 2024-2025, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, and sought confirmation of approach to a number of areas in respect of the work plan.

The five main roles of Overview and Scrutiny in local government were: holding to account; performance management; policy review; policy development; and external scrutiny.

Two of the five main roles of Overview and Scrutiny in local government were to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions and to feed into policy development.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

70. **Joint Cabinet Report – Thursday 12 December 2024**

The Committee considered the following item which would be discussed at the meeting of the Joint Cabinet on Thursday 12 December 2024.

Item 5 - South Warwickshire Local Plan – Preferred Options

A public speaker, Mr George Martin, addressed the Committee, for a period of three minutes to air his concerns regarding climate change, carbon reduction, and energy efficiency in respect to buildings in the South Warwickshire Local Plan.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked officers for their work to date on the Local Plan and for facilitating the recent Member briefings for all Councillors at both Stratford-on-Avon District and Warwick District.

The Committee sought assurance on the transparency and communication around the consultation, particularly with residents and Parish Councils.

The Committee asked officers to review future reports on the Local Plan to provide them in smaller and more focussed sections clearly for residents so they could see 'how does this affect me?'.

The Committee noted that there would be an interactive map available online and asked for the information this would provide.

The Committee asked officers to review various infrastructure delays relating to previous developments and lessons learned to see if similar challenges could be avoided within the proposed local plan.

The Committee recommended to Joint Cabinet there be a significant amount of face-to-face consultation.

71. **Park Exercise Permit**

The Committee considered a report from Safer Communities, Leisure and Environment which outlined the current performance following the relaunch of the Park Exercise Permit Scheme in April 2024.

A report was presented to Cabinet on 10 April 2024, which outlined proposed changes to the existing Park Exercise Permit scheme to enable the scheme to be relaunched.

The recommendations in the report to Cabinet did not include an option on whether to proceed or not with the scheme, it was purely to determine if the terms and conditions of the scheme should be changed, with this in mind the Committee requested that a report be produced after the summer on how the scheme was performing along with data that included officers' time allocated for the implementation and governance of the scheme.

Prior to the relaunch in June 2024 of the scheme, several processes needed to be amended and created. These included an online application and payment system, amendments to the terms and conditions, and a full review of all

previous processes, such as assessing applications, monitoring and delivery of the scheme. The review, of which parks and open spaces were included within the scheme, meant that new location maps, management of the usage of each open space and park, and monitoring processes for these locations, were also required.

In June 2024, the Park Exercise Permit scheme was relaunched across the District in the following parks and open spaces:

- Newbold Comyn;
- Pump Room Gardens;
- Victoria Park;
- St Nicholas Park;
- Castle Farm;
- Abbey Fields;
- Myton Green;
- Campion Hills;
- Eagle Recreation Ground;
- Myton Fields (April-September only); and
- Tapping Way.

All previous permit holders were contacted ahead of the launch date to allow these users first refusal on their existing arrangements. At this time, eight previous permit holders rejoined the scheme. Following a period of two weeks the scheme was opened to all, and was advertised on park notice boards, social media, and websites, along with officers visiting locations to make users aware of the relaunch of the scheme.

Applicants were invited to apply to the scheme online, paper versions were also accepted. Once received these were reviewed against the agreed criteria which included qualifications, insurance, and risk assessments. This was to ensure that proposed activities were inclusive, safe, and that a variety of activities were offered across the District. Following the review of the application, applicants were then contacted to inform them of the decision and payment options.

Following receipt of payment, granted permits were issued in person by officers to the activity lead, to highlight and discuss the parks protocols.

Officers undertook regular monitoring and spot checks across the permitted open spaces and parks which ensured only permit granted activities were taking place.

Ten activity groups had signed up to the scheme, these activity groups offered a variety of activities that ranged from Tai Chi, Boot camps, yoga, junior cycling, junior park runs, women’s running groups, and walking groups.

Four of the activities were exempt from payment. One permitted group, Nordic Walking, were working closely with local Parkinsons group to support physical activity within the District. This in turn supported the local NHS services, which improved the health and wellbeing of residents.

Feedback received from activity leaders and participants stated that the application and payment system was easier to navigate. Previous permit holders had reapplied to the scheme and had raised no concerns to staff in relation to the permit scheme.

The table below showed the four officers (Active Communities Team Leader, Active Communities Officer, and two Business Support Officers) time dedicated to the scheme during the initial set up and management of the scheme since its re-launch. Following relaunch, the time spent had stabilised and equated to a total of 1-2 hours per month (all posts time aggregated). A total year to date cost of officer time equated to £4,844, which included on costs.

| **Month** | **Time in hours** |
|---|---|
| June 2024 | 42 |
| July 2024 | 10 |
| August 2024 | 2 |
| September 2024 | 2 |
| October 2024 | 2 |
| November 2024 | 1 |
| Total | 59 |

In terms of alternative options, the scheme could have been discontinued, however, it was thought that this would lead to a detrimental impact on the District's health benefits and to the parks and open spaces. All of which were outlined within the report. In addition, the scheme would generate income in its second year.

In answer to questions from Members, the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities, Leisure & Environment, the Head of Safer Communities, Leisure and Environment, the Sports and Leisure Contract Manager and the Active Communities Team Leader advised that:

- the relaunched scheme had been running for five months;
- the first year hadn't made the income they had hoped. This had been because the initial set up of the scheme had taken a lot of officer time, however, officers were now able to visit and monitor the parks and open spaces within their day-to-day tasks. This also included the Community Support Wardens and Green Spaces officers;
- there had been some football teams using the pitches without a park permit;
- there were no charges for volunteers;
- there had been some Personal Trainers that had not been aware of the park permits;
- they had not received any complaints regarding the need to apply for a park permit;
- once the scheme was launched, there had been advertisements on notice boards within the parks, and leaflet drops, to help engage with the public;
- the money generated by the scheme had been put back into maintaining the parks and open spaces;
- the scheme had been a good way to measure the use of parks and open spaces;
- there were 1,500 users using the park permit scheme per week;
- it was not necessary to change the charging structure;

- the scheme only allowed one large group to use the park at a time, for example, Park Run at Newbold Common on a Saturday morning;
- officers regularly bench marked with other Councils to ensure they were offering value for money;
- there was a set fee, per session, per group of users;
- there was a fee for groups of five or more exercising together;
- officers responded to park permit applications withing five working days; and
- officers were regularly monitoring the wear and tear of each of the parks and open spaces.

The Committee thanked officers and the Portfolio Holder for their work and the report.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

72. **LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan Progress**

The Committee considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive which explained that Warwick District Council (WDC) was a member of the Local Government Association (LGA), which enabled a number of benefits, one of which was taking part in a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC).

Corporate Peer Challenge provided robust, strategic, credible challenge, and support to Councils, which brought together political and managerial leadership, using Member and officer peers.

It was a highly valued sector led improvement and assurance tool that was by the sector for the sector. It was available, at no cost, to all English Councils wherever they sat on the improvement spectrum and involved a diverse team of experienced peers comprising of senior local government Councillors and officers.

The peer team undertook a review of key finance, performance and governance information and then spent up to four days at the Council to provide robust, strategic, credible challenge, and support.

The Deputy Chief Executive provided an update to Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the progress against the action plan, which was last reviewed by Cabinet in November 2023.

Warwick District Council's CPC review was undertaken in July 2023, and a copy was included in Appendix 1 to the report. The CPC made nine recommendations.

Appendix 2 to the report, set out the action plan developed from the CPC report and an update which was reported to Cabinet in November 2023.

The Progress Review was an integral part of the CPC process. Taking place approximately ten months after the CPC, it was designed to provide space for the Council's Senior Leadership Team to:

- receive feedback from peers on the early progress made by the Council against the CPC recommendations and the Council's RAG rated CPC Action Plan;

- consider peer's reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that might have arisen since the peer team were on-site, including any further support needed; and
- discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date.

A copy of the progress review was included in Appendix 3 to the report.

In answer to questions from Members, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, the Deputy Chief Executive, and the Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer advised that:

- the peer review had been useful, the recommendations had been accepted, and progress was being made;
- they were still working around performance management, work was progressing;
- work had started and was progressing round risk management. There had been a new strategic risk register, confidential risk register, and training booked in for both officers and Members;
- the Deputy Chief Executive was due to look at the Council's approach to project and programme management;
- there had been changes to the organisational structure; where they were looking at bringing together a capital programme team;
- the new service delivery plans together with the performance matrix would be shared in the new year, to show how the Council was performing against benchmarks and trends in respect of the direction of travel;
- where there were areas the Council were not performing well, these would be flagged for the Committee to challenge;
- the new Performance Management Framework would be listed as an agenda item at Cabinet in February 2025, alongside the Service Area Plans;
- the Quarter 2 performance report would be on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda in January 2025;
- 89 corporate projects were to be considered by the Senior Leadership Team against the prioritisation matrix;
- a lot of these projects were housing projects;
- that they intended to complete an effective gateway review on major projects going forward;
- that officers were considering how to make best use of the resources available to make efficiencies and to work smarter;
- there was a national shortage of Planners and were current vacancies within Warwick District Council;
- WDC was well placed against other District Councils with regards to open vacancies;
- the LGA would not be invited back unless the Council requested another peer review; and
- the Deputy Chief Executive Officer would bring an updated action plan to Cabinet in February 2025.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

73. **Cabinet Agenda – (Non-Confidential Items and Reports) – Thursday 5 December 2024**

There were no non-confidential items called in.

74. **Public & Press**

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

| Minute Number | Paragraph Number | Reason |
|---|---|---|
| 75 | 3 | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) |

75. **Cabinet Agenda – (Confidential Items and Reports) – Thursday 5 December 2024**

The Committee considered the following confidential item which would be discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet:

Item 23 – HRA Repairs and Maintenance Procurement

(The meeting ended at 20.20pm)

CHAIR
21 January 2025

Agenda Item 4

Overview & Scrutiny Committee
21 January 2025

Title: Work Programme, Forward Plan & Comments from Cabinet
Lead Officer: Graham Leach, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer
Portfolio Holder: Not applicable
Public report
Wards of the District directly affected: Not applicable

**Summary**

This report informs Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the Committee's work programme for 2024-2025 (Appendix 1) and seeks confirmation of approach of a number of areas in respect of that work plan.

**Recommendations**

(1) That Members consider the work programme (Appendix 1), the themes the Committee intends to scrutinise this year and agree changes to its Work Programme appropriately.

(2) That the Committee:

- identifies any Cabinet items on the Forward Plan on which it wishes to have an input before the Cabinet makes its decision; and
- nominates a Member to investigate that future decision and report back to the Committee.

## 1 Background/Information & Reasons for the Recommendation

1.1 The five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government are: holding to account; performance management; policy review; policy development; and external scrutiny.

1.2 Two of the five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government are to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions and to feed into policy development.

1.3 The pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions falls within the role of 'holding to account'. To feed into the pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions, the Committee needs to examine the Council's Forward Plan and identify items which it would like to have an impact upon.

1.4 The Council's Forward Plan is published 28 days before each Cabinet meeting and sets out the key decisions that are expected to be taken by the Cabinet in the next twelve months.

1.5 A key decision means a decision made in the exercise of an executive function by any person (including officers) or body which meets one or more of the following conditions:

(1) The decision is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure or the making of savings in excess of £150,000. Excluded from this are all loans to banks or other financial institutions made in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy.

Officers' delegated powers to make the cabinet decisions are subject to the key decision/call-in regime where it is likely that the Council would incur expenditure or make savings above the threshold of £150,000.

In relation to letting contracts the key decision is the proposal to let a contract for a particular type of work. The subsequent decision to award the contract to a specific contractor will not be a key decision provided the value of the contract does not vary above the estimated amount by more than 10% for contracts with a value of up to £500,000 or 5% for contracts of over £500,000.

(2) The decision is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in any two or more Wards.

In considering whether a decision is likely to be significant, a decision-maker will need to consider the strategic nature of the decision and whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the Council to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected.

1.6 The Forward Plan is considered at each meeting and allows the Committee to look at future items and become involved in those Cabinet decisions to be taken if members so wish.

1.7 The Forward Plan also identifies non-key decisions to be taken by Cabinet in the next twelve months, and the Committee, if it wishes, may also pre-scrutinise these decisions.

1.8 There may also be policies identified on the Forward Plan, either as key or non-key decisions, which the Committee could pre-scrutinise and have an impact upon how these are formulated.

1.9 The Committee should be mindful that any work it wishes to undertake would need to be undertaken without the need to change the timescales as set out within the Forward Plan.

1.10 At each meeting, the Committee will consider its work programme and make amendments where necessary, and also make comments on specific Cabinet items, where notice has been given by 9am on the morning after Group meetings. The Committee will also receive a report detailing the response from the Cabinet, on the comments the Committee made on the Cabinet agenda in the previous cycle.

1.11 The Committee will consider issues that have due significance with reference to the following criteria:

- The number of residents impacted and he significance of that impact.
- The amount of spend involved.
- It concerns a strategic priority of the Council or key project.

1.12 On the day of publication of the Cabinet agenda all Councillors are sent an e-mail asking them to contact Committee Services, by 9.00am on the day of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to advise which Cabinet items they would like the Committee to consider.

| Criteria for Items on the work plan | Scheduled Meeting dates |
|---|---|
| **1.** High Risk<br>**2.** High Value<br>**3.** Major Project<br>**4.** Decreasing Performance<br>**5.** Statutory/Constitution requirement | 21/1/2025 (NC)<br>4/2/2025<br>18/2/2025 (NC)<br>18/3/2025<br>*NC = No Cabinet meeting |

| Title | Lead Officer / Councillor | Meeting Date | Where did item originate from | Notes | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quarter 2 Performance Report | Graham Leach / Dale Duffy | 21/01/2025 | | | |
| Climate change and biodiversity engagement and communication activity - part of the Climate Change and Biodiversity reporting | Dave Barber; Councillor Williams | 21/01/2025 | 30 July 2024 O&S | "Resident engagement and communication" theme. To include a risk assessment. | |
| Milverton Homes (MH) – the Committee has requested a specific meeting be set up around the time that the Milverton Homes's AGM is held. There was a suggestion that non-executive directors from MH could be invited to attend. Also see the Summary of Comments from O&S meeting 9 April 2024 (confidential version). | Graham Leach & Andrew Rollins; Councillor Adkins; Councillor Chilvers; and Councillor Davison | 21/01/2025 | O&S 9 April 2024 | A non-Cabinet meeting to coincide around the time of the Milverton Homes AGM specifically to discuss MH. | |
| Service Area Plans and Performance Management Framework | Graham Leach | 4/2/2025 (Cab Report) | | | 3 |
| MRF Update – Richard Dobbs from Sherbourne Recycling | Darren Knight; Zoe Court; Steven Leathley; Councillor Roberts; | 18/02/2025 | O&S Meeting 03/09/2024 | 2 reports – 1 report from WDC perspective, the other from MRF perspective. Richard Dobbs | 2&3 |

| Title | Lead Officer / Councillor | Meeting Date | Where did item originate from | Notes | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | to provide briefing paper to discuss performance to date, risks, issues, challenges, and opportunities. | |
| Quarter 2 Budget Update | Steven Leathley Councillor Chilvers | 18/02/2024 (Cab report) | | | 1 & 2 |
| Kenilworth Wardens update | Darren Knight, Becky Burridge | 18/02/2024 | 15/10/2024 | | |
| I.D Verde Maintenance Contract Review – Grounds Maintenance Services and Street Cleansing Services | Zoe Court | 18/03/2025 | O&S 06/02/2024 | | |
| O&S End of Term report. | Committee Services Officer. | 18/3/2025 | Standing Annual Item, Constitution requirement | Annual report - last scheduled O&S meeting in the municipal year. | 5 |
| Quarter 3 Performance Report | Graham Leach / Dale Duffy | 18/03/2025 | | | |
| Summary of the role, responsibilities and performance of the SWCSP.<br><br>Invite Councillor Falp (non-Exec rep) and the PH Safer Communities to O&S | Liz Young / Marianne Rolfe. | 18/03/2025 | This is a Statutory requirement | Annual report next due March 2026 | 5 |

| Title | Lead Officer / Councillor | Meeting Date | Where did item originate from | Notes | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (This report was originally scheduled 2023/24 so the reps for that year were Councillors Sinnott and Falp)<br><br>See minute 76, 6 February 2024 for details requested in the report. | | | | | |
| Change Programme – Case for Change | Darren Knight; Councillor Davison | 18/03/25 | O&S 5 March 24 and 3 Sept 2024 | A six-monthly update to ensure that the savings are coming through and the Committee can see their impact in the budget. | |
| Commercial Strategy scoping paper – outlining what is to be covered in the commercial strategy and the process for developing it | Andrew Rollins | 18/03/2025 | O&S 15/10/2025 | | |
| Future High Streets Fund update – if everything is on track, the Committee will accept a short report to this effect following liaison with the O&S Chair. | Martin O'Neill Councillor Billiald | 18/03/2024 - Short update to be provided via email before the meeting | O&S February 2023 | Every 3 months until further notice | 1, 2, and 3 |
| Biodiversity Action Programme - part of the Climate Change and Biodiversity reporting | Dave Barber; Councillor Williams | April 2025 | 30 July 2024 meeting | To include a risk assessment. | |

| Title | Lead Officer / Councillor | Meeting Date | Where did item originate from | Notes | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Report on Adaptation – part of the Climate Change and Biodiversity reporting | Dave Barber; Councillor Williams | April 2025 | 30 July 2024 meeting | To include a risk assessment. | |
| Elect a Chair and Vice Chair | | May 2025 | Standing Annual Item | On-going at the first meeting of each Municipal Year | 5 |
| To appoint members to the Budget Review Group (add the Group's remit which is saved to the annex in the Constitution) | | May 2025 | Standing Annual Item. | | 5 |
| Appoint Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Champion | | May 2025 | Standing Annual | | 5 |
| The Royal Pump Rooms Customer Service Centre – A year on | Dave Elkington, Cllr Melrose | May 2025 | 13 November 2024 | O&S have requested an update in six months time to include data and feedback from users of the Pump Rooms, not just users of the Customer Service Centre. | |

**Scheduled Briefing Notes to All Councillors requested by the Committee**

| Title | Lead Officer | Update Due by (end of Month) |
|---|---|---|
| Revised Arrangements for Destination Management Organisations including LVEP | Martin O'Neil | December 2024 |
| Update - plans to improve accessibility to, and the condition / cleanliness of, toilets for people living with disabilities. - Update to all Councillors from Officers on the work that has taken place following the meeting at Committee. | Zoë Court<br>Councillor Roberts | January 2025 |
| Update - plans to improve accessibility to, and the play areas for people living with disabilities. - Update to all Councillors from Officers on the work that has taken place following the meeting at Committee | Dave Anderson<br>Councillor Roberts | January 2025 |
| Review additional Licensing Scheme to include:<br>• How effective it had been.<br>• How many licenses had been issued.<br>• Was there enough resources in place | Paul Hughes<br>Councillor Adkins | January 2025 |
| Review on the Identification and Remediation of Damp and Mould in Council Homes to include:<br>• What was happening with the policy;<br>• Was it being put into action; and<br>• The impact it has made | Lisa Barker, Interim Assets Manager and Darren Knight<br>Councillor Adkins | February 2025 |

| Title | Lead Officer | Update Due by (end of Month) |
|---|---|---|
| **Resident Engagement Strategy** (report to Cabinet August 2023). The Committee is keen to understand a) how is it going? And b) what are we learning? (include some examples of changes that have been made as a result of the consultation.) - Change to Councillor Briefing session in first instance covering these areas. Also raised by Asset Compliance Committee as an area that needs to be understood<br><br>The question that sits behind this is as-to whether this is a good use of the Council's resources. There are benefits to us as a Council from getting resident feedback and what we'd like to get is visibility of those. This is 'value for money' in its broadest sense (No need to come with figures and a ROI.)<br><br>Housing is one of the biggest ways that we impact residents' lives and getting a bit more visibility amongst members of some of the good things we do but also some of the challenges residents face will be valuable" | Sally Kelsall/<br>Councillor Adkins | February 2025 |
| South Warwickshire Local Plan – an update on communication as suggested at O&S 3 December 2024. | Philip Clarke, Head of Place, Arts and Economy; Councillor Chris King | Ask for an update in March/April 2025. |
| Members' Annual Feedback on Outside Appointments / Annual review of membership/participation of Outside Bodies (Includes a short synopsis on Champions) | Graham Leach (report collated by the Scrutiny Officer) | April every year |
| Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Champions: End of Term Report. | Marianne Rolfe/Jane Rostron | April every year |

| Title | Lead Officer | Update Due by (end of Month) |
|---|---|---|
| MRF – What is it, what's it doing, is it meeting our performance expectations, financials, what's our liability, | Zoe Court | |
| Commercial Strategy scoping paper – outlining what is to be covered in the commercial strategy and the process for developing it | Andrew Rollins | |

Agenda Item 5
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
21 January 2025

Title: 2024/25 Quarter 2 Performance Report
Lead Officer: Graham Leach
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Davison
Wards of the District directly affected:

| **Approvals required** | **Date** | **Name** |
|---|---|---|
| **Portfolio Holder** | 13/1/2025 | Ian Davison |
| **Finance** | | |
| **Legal Services** | | |
| **Chief Executive** | 13/1/2025 | Chris Elliott |
| **Director of Climate Change** | 13/1/2025 | Dave Barber |
| **Head of Service(s)** | 13/1/2025 | Graham Leach |
| **Section 151 Officer** | 13/1/2025 | Andrew Rollins |
| **Monitoring Officer** | 13/1/2025 | Graham Leach |
| **Leadership Co-ordination Group** | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?** | Yes |
| **Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?** | No |
| **Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?** | No |
| **Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?** | No |
| **Accessibility Checked?** | Yes |

## 1. Summary Why Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked for the report

1.1 The report sets out the 2024/2025 Quarter 2 Performance Report for Warwick District Council against the measures/targets included within the adopted Service area plans. It also sets out the timetable for reporting on performance for the remainder of the Financial Year.

## 2. What is being delivered

2.1 The Performance report is a key tool in helping the Council demonstrate the services it is providing are performing. At present the performance report focuses on the measures within the Service Plans and if they are achieving the expected level of performance. The commentary provided by officers against those measures which are below the expected level enables an understanding of the reasons for this and if there is a need for further investigation.

2.2 The Quarter 1 report was reported to Committee in November 2024 and Quarter 2 report is set out at Appendix A to the report. Quarter 2 for 2024/2025 ran from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024, with Quarter 3 ending on 31 December 2024.

2.3 The current performance report provides an overview of the measures within the approved service area plans for 2024/25 with a focus on those that were either in red or amber status. The status is defined within the specific measure on expected performance. The report also provides details of measures where the "Measure/Target trending down for at least two consecutive quarters".

2.4 Not all measures are reported on within the report, but all can be found, along with full service area plans on the WDC Business Intelligence Portal the link to which has been circulated separately to all Councillors.

2.5 Table 1, below sets out the reporting timeline for the performance report for the remainder of the 2024/25 Service Area Plans.

**Table 1**

| **Stage** | **Q3 report** | **Q4 report** |
|---|---|---|
| **Deadline for Service Areas to provide the data** | 3 February 2025 | 5 May 2025 |
| **Date for the draft SAP to SLT** | 10 February 2025 | 12 May 2025 |
| **Date SLT to provide commentary** | 17 February 2025 | 19 May 2025 |
| **Date to be considered at SLT** | 20 February 2025 | 29 May 2025 |
| **Date to be considered at Cabinet Catch Up** | 24 February 2025 | 2 June 2025 |
| **Date SAP will be shared with all Councillors** | 26 February 2025 | 4 June 2025 |
| **Date to be considered by O&S Cttee** | 18 March 2025 | TBC |

2.6 Also available, via the Business Intelligence Portal, are the corporate projects list, the significant risk register (which is also reported to both Cabinet and Audit & Standards Committee) and procurement activity setting out current and upcoming procurement activity. The link to which have been circulated separately to all Councillors.

2.7 The Service Area Plans for 2025/26 are being developed by Service Areas in partnership with their relevant Portfolio Holder(s) and on course for reporting to Cabinet in February 2025, alongside the budget.

## 3. The key risks to the service and how they are being managed

3.1 The primary risks around performance monitoring reports are ensuring that the data provided in the service area plans report is accurate and provides commentary on the rationale for the level of performance. This helps the Council to identify at an early stage where performance is below the expected standard and investigate/challenge as appropriate.

## 4. Further Development and Review

4.1 Performance reporting allows the Council to see a broad view of performance and highlights areas of underperformance. However, it does not allow for recognising success where Services are performing at or above the expected level.

4.2 At present further development is required to improve highlighting the performance of the Council in respect of its regulatory/statutory requirements and drawing these out as a performance indicator. This is important so officers/Councillors and the public can see that the legal duty is being met as required. This is being developed for the 2025/2026 Service Area Plans to clearly show this information, by providing the definition of target (those where there is a duty to meet a specific performance rate (for example ensuring gas safety certificates are in place and up to date) and a measure (for example footfall in the Town Hall) which will look more at the trend over time. As yet, this data is not differentiated within the Service Area Plans but will be for next year, with a view to back dating it over the current Service Area Plans.

4.3 There is also development underway of a Performance Management Framework for the Council. This is being developed alongside the Service Area Plans for 2025/26 and is due to be considered by Cabinet in February 2025.

4.4 To support the Framework some minor changes to the Service Area Plan format are being designed for 2025/26. As an example, there will be a definition of a target and measure and when they are expected to be used, as set out above. This will also see reflection on the current status of nearly all measures currently being Key Performance Indicators where some are simply Performance Indicators.

4.5 There will also be further work on the alignment to the Corporate Strategy of Service Area Plans and the project list. The current service area plans were approved at nearly the same time as the new Corporate Strategy. This time officers are using time to plan to show clearer links between the plans and performance and the Strategy. The key area to develop more detailed modelling is on Corporate Priority 3 where The Head of Governance, Head of Digital and Customer Services, Head of Safer Communities, Leisure and Environment and the Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager are looking at the most appropriate model for this but no significant steps forward have been taken since the last report to this Committee in November due to time constraints and capacity.

## 5 Key points to highlight

5.1 The performance report has been considered by SLT and feedback was provided to them following the review of the Q1 Performance report by this Committee and guidance from the Housing Compliance Board that for any measure within the Orange or Red a brief explanation of why this is the case and what actions.

5.2 The Committee will note that there are 15 red, 9 amber measures and one with no data input from the 99 reported. This compares to quarter 1 where there were 101 reported with 17 red, 8 amber, 7 trending down and 13 no data input.

5.3 The one measure in quarter two with no data input time is (N&A14) in respect of the percentage of homes that do not meet the decent home standards. This is because the Data produced from the stock condition surveys is currently being evaluated and undergoing an assurance process. This exercise will be completed by the end of March 2025, when valid data can be input against this measure. From the 15 measures reported in red this time 7 (N&A5, N&A6, N&A9 N&A24, F4, F16 and H6) were in red for the last quarter. 1 of these measures in red (N&A4 was in Amber last time).

5.4 From the 9 amber measures this time 3 (DCX1 N&A15 and SCLE9) were in red last quarter and 5 (N&A1, N&A18, N&A21, H4 and PA&E10) were all amber last time.

5.5 The committee requested more commentary on those measures which were either Red or Amber, the reasons for this and how they can be returned to Green status. This detail is provided below:

**Measures in red Status for Quarter 2**

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Governance | DCX2 | % Subject Access Requests responded to on time | 100% | 46% | ↓ |
| The response times have been significantly skewed by the number of requests received and to be responded to. This can depend on the information requested and the work required with Service Areas to consider what should and can be released within the legislative remit. This is specifically the point when in one month only has 2 requests both of which were late which skews figures | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A4 | % of Corporate Properties with up to date gas certificate | 100% | 89.5% | ↑ |
| Lag on Corp (GF) data reaching ActiveH. Historically resolved to 100% on investigation. Work required to emulate process in place for HRA | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A5 | % of HRA homes with a stock condition survey completed in last 5 years | 100% | 70% | ↑ |
| Meetings are scheduled for mid-January with the contractors undertaking the surveys to validate the number of surveys completed to date. The meeting will also agree on a plan to complete the remaining surveys and deal with the no access issues. The measure will be updated at Q3. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A6 | % corporate properties with an in date electrical certificate | 100% | 81.2% | ↔ |
| Lag on Corp (GF) data reaching ActiveH. Historically resolved to 100% on investigation. Work required to emulate process in place for HRA | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A9 | % corporate properties with in date DEC displayed | 100% | 92% | ↑ |
| Reviewing whether this is actually the case or whether ActiveH needs updating. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A20 | Total no. of fly tips | 709 | 833 | ↓ |
| There is various workstreams under way to tackle the number of flytips. Including installation of CCTV in hotspots, recommendation to return to weekly refuse collections in L/spa town centre. The introduction and issuing of FPNs, a dedicated RRU team and we are now writing a waste education strategy. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A24 | % street cleaning operations to acceptable standard | 80% | 63% | ↔ |
| There have been challenges with mechanical sweepers off the road with mechanical issues which is affecting the capability and performance of the contractor. Officers have applied pressure with contractor, with an extra sweeper being deployed, however there is ongoing work reviewing scheduling of street cleaning to identify a more efficient delivery of service. More details on this will be reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in March, as part of the I.D Verde contract performance report. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Safer Communities, Leisure and Environment | SCLE8 | Average time to resolve noise nuisance | 33 days | 45 days | ↓ |
| The target of 33 days is based on the average resolution period for noise nuisance investigations in the previous year. Each case is different and the length of time to investigate noise nuisance will depend on several factors; the willingness of the complainant to cooperate with the investigation, when they return their nuisance dairies, when officers can visit to witness the noise, the complexity of noise identification and witnessing and the engagement and co-operation of the noise creator. Whilst in December the average time to resolve noise nuisance is above average this month. In November the average was 24 days. The average of the year to date is 39 days. Officers resolved 75% of cases within 30 days in the first half of the year. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Finance | F4 | Age of oldest item in council tax queue | 30 | 50 | ↓ |
| The reasons behind the performance will be detailed in the pre meeting question responses. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Finance | F15 | Completion of Internal Audit Plan | 9 | 3 | ↓ |
| Target figures and progress are cumulative rather than individual figures for those quarters. The progress is also monitored by the Audit & Standards Committee with detailed reasoning for changes provided to them. This was last reported to Audit & Standards Committee in January 2025 who were satisfied with the progress. Plan has now been amended due to vacancy within the team (depending on the start date and experience of the person appointed) and to align with work ongoing with Housing compliance. This was approved by A&S on 7 January 2025. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Finance | F16 | Number of outstanding NNDR appeals | 20 | 149 | ↓ |
| WDC has no control over this and its inclusion as a reportable measure is being reviewed | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Housing | H5 | No. of households with children in B&B for more than 6 weeks | 0 | 3 | ↓ |
| Whilst 3 households have been included in the figures – further investigation revealed that one household was incorrectly recorded and therefore there were two households in B&B accommodation in excess of 6 weeks. Both households were moved to permanent accommodation on 14th October 2024. The cases have been discussed with the relevant officers in order to prevent further occurrences. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Housing | H6 | No. of rough sleepers at end of period | 0 | 6 | ↓ |
| The Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator chairs weekly multi agency meetings where each rough Sleeper is discussed and actions agreed. In addition, we work closely with P3 charity who undertake weekly visits to all known rough sleepers to provide advice and offer housing assistance. Unfortunately, not all rough sleepers want housing assistance and prefer to continue with their lifestyle choice.<br><br>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have recently announced funding awards from the Rough Sleeper Prevention & Recovery Grant – Warwick District Council have been awarded £222k for 2025/26 which will be used to continue to support rough sleepers and seek to encourage them into housing. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People & Communications | P&C4 | Website satisfaction | 60% | 50% | ↓ |
| 179 people completed the survey in Q2<br>- The reporting figures reflect the task being carried out, or the service area they are dealing with.<br>- This will move from red through work with the relevant service area and ensuring that they understand what has been the problem on their pages, so it can be fixed and this could be either a website issue, or a service issue.<br>- Comment: 57% of all responses relating to waste service. 21% housing. Issues reporting a missed bin collection through the Stratford DC reporting form. Issues with available houses on HomeChoice. Fly tipping being reported and not collected. Issues with bin collection calendar not displaying. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People & Communications | P&C6 | Task success in searches, % people who could complete what they wanted to | 60% | 52% | ↓ |

179 people completed the survey in Q2

- The reporting figures reflect the task being carried out, or the service area they are dealing with.
- This will move from red through work with the relevant service area and ensuring that they understand what has been the problem on their pages, so it can be fixed and this could be either a website issue, or a service issue.
- Comment: 57% of all responses relating to waste service. 21% housing. Issues reporting a missed bin collection through the Stratford DC reporting form. Issues with available houses on HomeChoice. Fly tipping being reported and not collected. Issues with bin collection calendar not displaying.

**Measures in Amber Status for Quarter 2**

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Governance | DCX1 | % of FOI requests responded to on time | 90% | 86% | ↔ |

The delivery of this is reliant on the work from all officers across the Council in responding to information requests.

There is a new information Governance Team in place and they had to learn and establish themselves across WDC and SDC which will take time. However performance is stabilising overall and while is good does need to move over 90% so this is being monitored closely.

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A1 | % of HRA repair requests completed on time | 90% | 88% | ↔ |

Creating a Standard Meeting Agenda was an action from the Compliance, (Pennington's) Audit. This has now been used at Contractor meetings since October 2024 and KPI's including 'Percentage of Requests Complete on Time' is a standard agenda item.

However, since the publication of the HQN Audit report we have been investigating possible internal root causes of why works are not being completed within target time and how we can help improve Contractor performance.

We have identified a number of issues generated by own our processes and system procedures that hugely effect this KPI reporting. This consequently does not give us a clear indication of how Contractors are actually performing and enable us to identify what actions they need to take to improve.

Internal WDC issues identified and are now being worked on to resolve. These include but are not limited to:
• Adding new and redefining existing Works Order Priority codes. This is the field that defines the initial target for the Contractor.
• Educating the team on the connection between the mandatory Priority code and the expected target date for the Contractor and ultimately what is being reported on in key performance measures.
• Educating the team on the ability to extend target dates within the system when a Contractor provides reasonable justification or evidence.
• Updating our interface to display target dates to the contractor and facilitate requests to extend.
• Scheduling works appropriately to give the Contractor every opportunity to complete within their target SLA
• Raising follow on works as separate tasks/works orders with own target dates.

These actions or system improvements, (of which there are a good many more being investigated) are being planned/implemented in accordance with the Consumer Standards Improvement Plan and in refining our process/procedures ahead of mobilising a new Repairs & Maintenance Contract in 2026.

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A15 | % HRA asbestos safety checks in date | 100% | 97.1% | ↑ |

All are currently being renewed via a planned programme of works

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A18 | % of HRA properties with in date EICR certificate | 100% | 98% | ↔ |

We are actively addressing this through regular weekly catch-up meetings and monthly contract meetings with our Electrical Contractor.

In early summer and as part of the Compliance Audit Action Plan, we implemented a pro-active approach of pushing Planned Programmes (bulk Works Orders) to renew Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR's) three months in advance of expiry to the Contractor. We are now at a point where we are evaluating which of the outstanding EICR's are now persistent 'No Access' and currently seeking the support of Housing teams to gain access.

We are also currently developing/reviewing the 'No Access' policy and how this is systematically managed. At present this is only managed comprehensively and to a satisfactory conclusion for Gas Safety. Over the next 6 months and in response to actions in the Consumer standards Improvement Plan, we are developing procedures and systems to extend the Gas Safety No Access procedure to other areas. EICR being the first priority.

We are aiming to have this more robust system processing in place by the new financial year. From that point onwards the EICR Programme will run in exactly the same manner as the Gas Safe Programme

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A21 | % of household waste recycled, reused or composted | 62% | 61.87% | ↔ |

Waste, recycling & food are comparable to last year. Green Waste amount collected is down, most likely due to weather conditions as permit numbers are higher

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SCLE | SCLE9 | % completion of IPPC inspections | 50% | 47% | ↓ |

This area of work was suspended during covid, and officers have been working to recovery the inspection programme. This was also a specialist area which was delivered by a single member of staff who retired last year. The Environmental Protection team have had significant recruitment this year including a team leader (who brought extensive expertise in dealing with IPPC permits,) and a new team colleagues, all of whom were relatively inexperienced in this subject and that have all required training or refresher training on the subject matters and different types of installations in the district.

When the target was initially set, we were unaware of the amount of work that would evolve from the inspection of all of the IPPC permits. Every single permit inspection has required a thorough review to bring them up to date, and in some cases multiple inspections have had to be carried out to ensure polluters are complying with new and/or revised conditions.

The demands have been far greater than anticipated, which has meant that whilst this 3% equates to one premises in this instance, we do not believe we will be able to inspect all the premises as planned by the end of the year. We believe that we will miss the target by 9% (3 premises). However, because of the hard work carried out this year and the extensive training program put in place for staff, future year(s) inspections will be much more straight forward, risk based, and any backlog will be corrected in 25/26.

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Housing | H3 | % Lifeline calls answered in 60 seconds | 98% | 97.29% | ↔ |

The Lifeline Service has a KPI set nationally by the TSA (Telecare Services Authority) which we are audited upon of 97.5% meaning in the last quarter we missed the target by 0.21%. 97.5%. The SAP target is higher and a challenging one but helps to drive up performance. Annual Leave sickness and officers needing to leave the office to respond to customers and incidents is a factor that has to be managed and can reflect in calls taking longer to answer.
A wallboard has been fitted in the control centre this has already made the team focus more on the calls they are taking and the response time stats.
The performance is being discussed at one to ones and team meetings to bring back performance to the targets set by Quarter 4.

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Housing | H4 | % of ended preventions and relieved duties successful | 75% | 71.6% | ↑ |
| Whilst performance has improved on last quarters outturn, the current performance is slightly short of target.<br><br>During this quarter there has been an increase in homeless presentations as emergencies many are highly complex cases which takes up a considerable amount of officer time. This has had an impact on officers being able to undertake prevention work. However, there has been a reorganisation of officer duties, and it is now anticipated that the improvement will continue in order to achieve target. | | | | | |

| | | Measure/Target Description | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Trend Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Place, Arts & Economy | PA&E10 | Proportion of Searches issued within 10 days | 100% | 98% | ↔ |
| This is considered excellent performance and is being reviewed for 2025/26 in respect of tolerance for reporting. | | | | | |

**Background papers:** Nil

**Supporting documents:**

Service Area Plans for 2024/25

# 2024/25 Quarter 2 Performance Overview

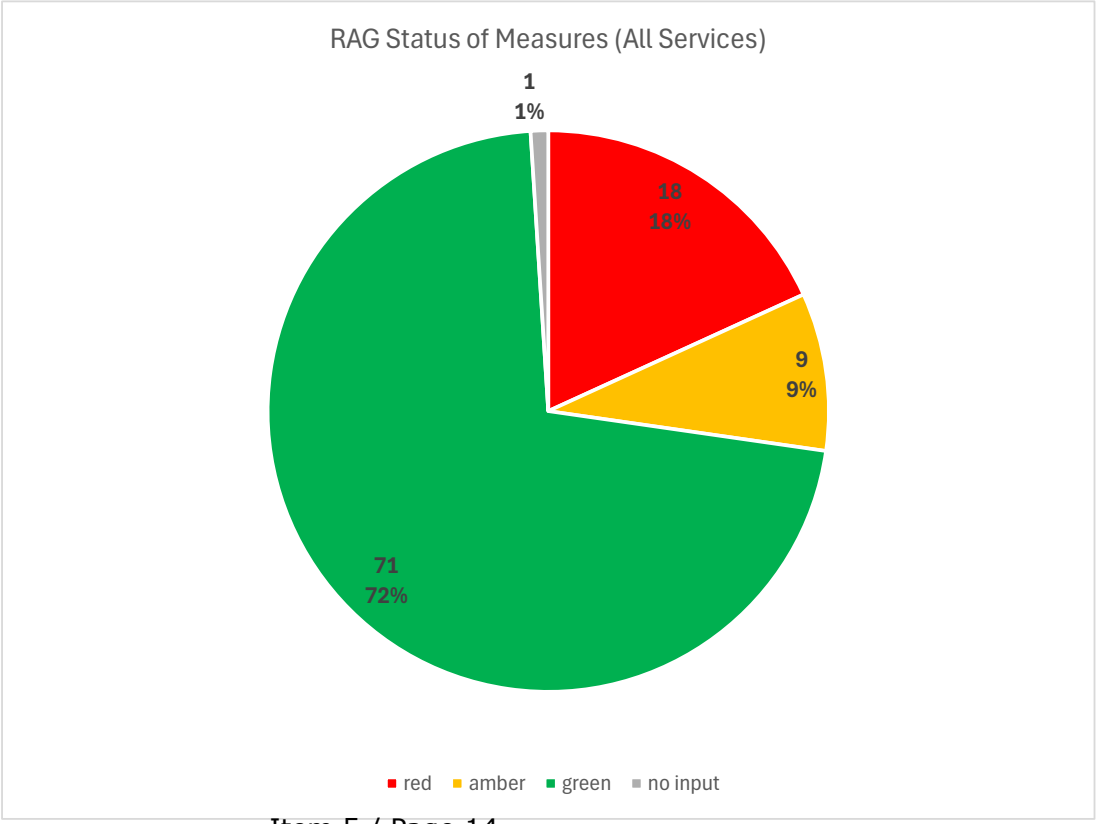
Appendix 1

## RAG Status of Measures

| Service Area | Measures on SAP | Red Status | Amber Status | Green Status | No data input | No target | % red~ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CD&S | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Climate Change | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | N/A |
| Finance | 17 | 4 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 1 | 24% |
| Governance | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 25% |
| Housing | 29 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 25% |
| Neighbourhood and Assets | 31 | 7 | 4 | 14 | 1 | 2 | 23% |
| P&C | 6 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 33% |
| Place, Arts, Economy | 14 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 5 | 7% |
| SCLE | 21 | 1 | 1 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 5% |
| **Total** | **147** | **19** | **9** | **72** | **1** | **9** | **18%** |

**There are 21 Housing, 10 Climate Change, 3 Neighbourhood & Assets, 2 Finance and 1 SCLE measures that cannot be measured measured until year end. These are excluded from the table above and the pie chart below.**

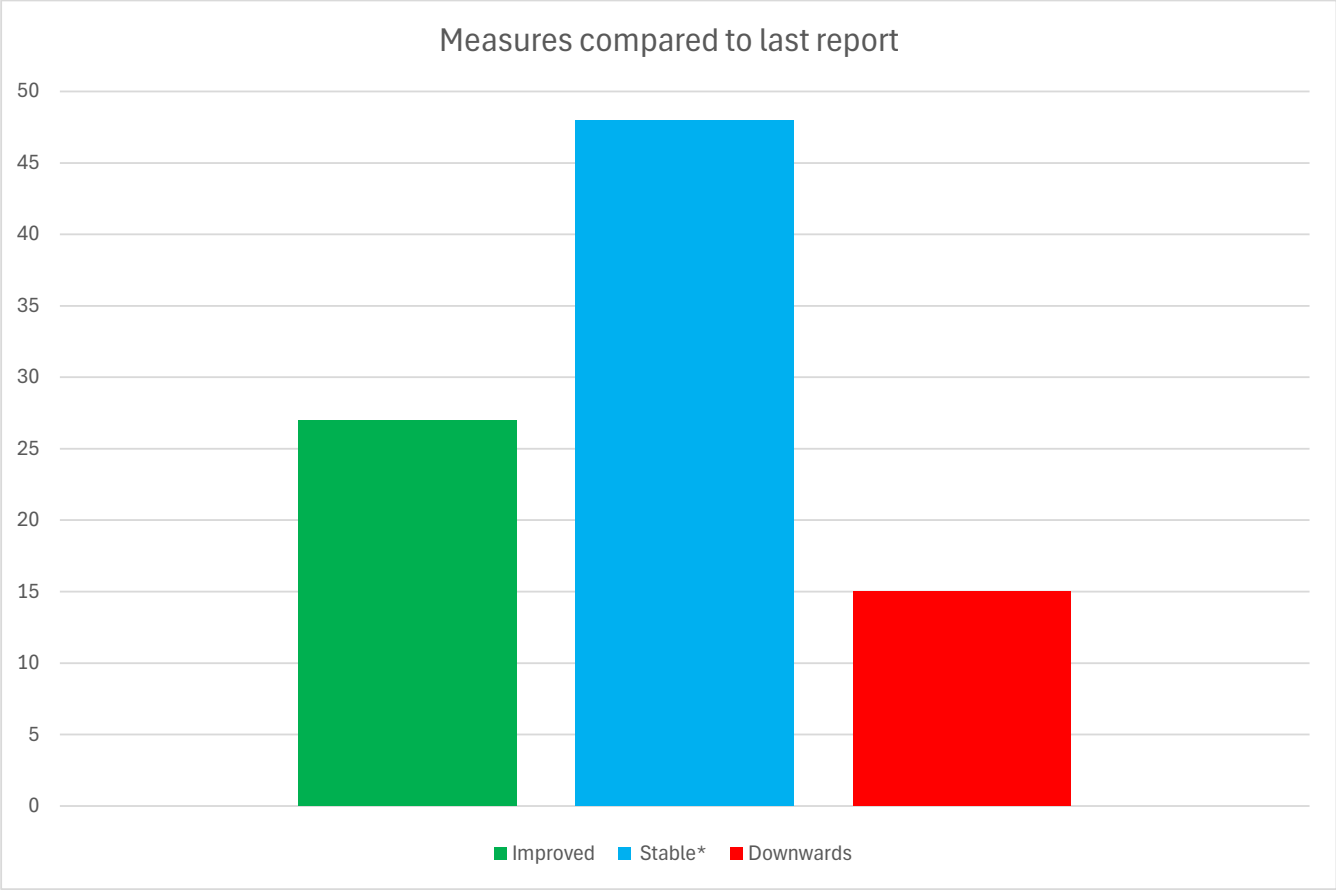
**~Of those with targets and not annual**



## Measure comparison to previous report

| Service Area | Improved | Stable* | Downwards |
|---|---|---|---|
| CD&S | 1 | 8 | 3 |
| Climate Change | 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Finance | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| Governance | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Housing | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Neighbourhood and Assets | 9 | 14 | 1 |
| P&C | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Place, Arts, Economy | 6 | 6 | 1 |
| SCLE | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| **Total** | **27** | **48** | **15** |

***Within 5% of last year**



## Red & Amber Measures

| Red Measures | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service Area | Refence Num | Measure/Target Descriptio | Measure/Target | This Performance Period | Time Missing Target/Measure | Distance From Target/Measure | Previous Performance Period | Trend Direction |
| Governance | DCX2 | % Subject Access Requests responded to on time | 100% | 46% | 3 of 3 months | 54% | 93% | ↓ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A4 | % of Corporate Properties with up to date gas certificate | 100% | 89.5% | 1 of 3 months | 10.5% | 80.7% | ↑ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A5 | % of HRA homes with a stock condition survey completed in last 5 years | 100% | 70% | 3 of 3 months | 30% | 55% | ↑ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A6 | % corporate properties with an in date electrical certificate | 100% | 81.2% | 3 of 3 months | 18.8% | 84.8% | ↔ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A9 | % corporate properties with in date DEC displayed | 100% | 92% | 1 of 3 months | 8% | 75% | ↑ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A20 | Total no. of fly tips | 709 | 833 | 3 of 3 months | 76 | 750 | ↓ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A24 | % street cleaning operations to acceptable standard | 80% | 63% | 3 of 3 months | 17% | 64% | ↔ |
| SCLE | SCLE8 | Average time to resolve noise nuisance | 33 days | 45 days | 2 of 3 months | 12 days | 33 | ↓ |
| Finance | F2 | Unqualified audit of Accounts | 100% | 90% | Second period | 10% | 90% | ↔ |
| Finance | F4 | Age of oldest item in council tax queue | 30 | 50 | 3 of 3 months | 20 | 40 | ↓ |
| Finance | F15 | Completin of Internal Audit Plan | 9 | 3 | 2 quarters | 6 | 1 of 2 | ↓ |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Finance | F16 | Number of outstanding NNDR appeals | 20 | 149 | 2nd quarter | 129 | 142 | ↓ |
| Housing | H5 | No. of households with children in B&B for more than 6 weeks | 0 | 3 | 1st quarter in a row | 3 | 0 | ↓ |
| Housing | H6 | No. of rough sleepers at end of period | 0 | 6 | 2 quarters | 6 | 2 | ↓ |
| People & Communications | P&C4 | Website satisfaction | 60% | 50% | 3 of 3 months | 10% | 58% | ↓ |
| People & Communications | P&C6 | Task success in searches, % people who could complete what they wanted to | 60% | 52% | 3 of 3 months | 8% | 59% | ↓ |

| **Amber Measures** | | | | | | | | Appendix 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Governance | DCX1 | % of FOI requests responded to on time | 90% | 86% | 2 of 3 months | 4% | 86% | ↔ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A1 | % of HRA repair requests completed on time | 90% | 88% | 3 months amber | 2% | 89% | ↔ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A15 | % HRA asbestos safety checks in date | 100% | 97.1% | Up from red to amber | 2.9% | 93.7% | ↑ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A18 | % of HRA properties with in date EICR certificate | 100% | 98% | 2 quarters | 2% | 98% | ↔ |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A21 | % of household waste recycled, reused or composted | 62% | 61.87% | 2 of 3 months | 0.13% | 62.88% | ↔ |
| SCLE | SCLE9 | % completion of IPPC inspections | 50% | 47% | 1 of 3 months | 3% | 30% against 25% target | ↓ |
| Housing | H3 | % Lifeline calls answered in 60 seconds | 98% | 97.29% | 2nd quarter amber | 0.71% | 97.70% | ↔ |
| Housing | H4 | % of ended preventions and relieved duties successful | 75% | 71.6% | 2nd quarter | 3.4% | 64.28% | ↑ |
| Place, Arts & Economy | PA&E10 | Proportion of Searches issued within 10 days | 100% | 98% | 2 quarters | 2% | 98% | ↔ |

## Measure/Target trending down for at least two consecutive quarters

| Service Area | Reference number | Measure/ target description | Measure/Target | Latest performance period | Previous Performance Period | Change in Performance | Distance from measure/target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SCLE | SCLE5 | % of CCTV incidents self sourced | 55% | 62% | 67% | -5% | +7% |
| Finance | F4 | Age of oldest item in council tax queue | 30 | 50 | 40 | 10 days | 20 days |
| Finance | F16 | No. of outstanding NNDR appeals | 20 | 149 | 142 | 7 | 129 |
| Governance | DCX2 | % Subject Access Requests responded on time | 100% | 46% | 93% | -47% | 54% |
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A20 | Total no. of fly tips | 236 | 278 | 250 | 28 | 42 |

## Measures not input

| Service Area | Reference number | Measure/ target description | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood & Assets | N&A14 | % home that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard | Data produced from the stock condition surveys is currently being evaluated and undergoing an assurance process. |

Agenda Item 6
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
21 January 2025

Title: Climate Change and Biodiversity Communications Update
Lead Officer: Chloe Wiltshire; Graham Folkes-Skinner; Becky Davies
Portfolio Holder: Lowell Williams (Decarbonisation); Will Roberts (Neighbourhood); Ian Davison (Strategic Leadership)
Wards of the District directly affected: All

| **Approvals required** | **Date** | **Name** |
|---|---|---|
| **Portfolio Holder** | 13 Jan 25 | Cllrs Lowell Williams, Ian Davison and Will Roberts |
| **Finance** | | Andrew Rollins |
| **Legal Services** | | Not applicable |
| **Chief Executive** | 13 Jan 25 | Chris Elliot |
| **Director of Climate Change** | 9 Jan 25 | Dave Barber |
| **Head of Service(s)** | 9 Jan 25 | Dave Barber |
| **Section 151 Officer** | | |
| **Monitoring Officer** | 13 Jan 25 | Graham Leach |
| **Leadership Co-ordination Group** | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?** | Yes |
| **Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?** | No |
| **Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?** | No |
| **Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?** | No |
| **Accessibility Checked?** | Yes |

## 1. Summary: Why Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked for the report

1.1 A report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2024 ("Climate Change and Biodiversity Reporting") that suggested that a further report should be provided in January 2025 to summarise and further explain climate change communications activities (Paragraph 2.12), especially Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy and Biodiversity Action Programme. This report is the first of a series of annual reports giving communications updates.

1.2 This report provides the principal communication initiatives undertaken within 2024 and summarises the planned work for between January and March 2025.

1.3 The report has been prepared in the context of the Climate Change Communications and Community Engagement Strategy which was agreed within a report presented to Cabinet in December 2023. (See Appendix 1)

1.4 Section 5 of the above Climate Change Communications and Community Engagement Strategy identifies the range of communication channels that can be used for both internal and external audiences and they are summarised in the table below.

1.5 Table 1 - Communication Channels

| **Internal** | **External** |
|---|---|
| Member briefings and emails | Website updates |
| Staff updates – Intranet | Press releases |
| Webinars and carbon literacy training | Social media |
| Staff briefings | Resident's newsletters including Social Tenants newsletters |
| Sustainability Officers Group | Webinars and short videos |
| Clear and constant message from senior managers | Stakeholder groups and other partner organisations |
| Team Meetings | Conferences |

1.6 To reflect the Corporate Strategy and subsequent Cabinet decisions, this report indicates which programmes of work are relevant to each communication initiative including the Biodiversity Action Programme (BAP); the Climate Change Action Programme (CCAP) and the Low-Cost, Low Carbon Programme (LCLC).

1.7 £13K has been set aside from the Climate Change budget for Communications and Engagement and that includes £8K for the Local Community Engagement (LCE) work (See Section 3.2 below)

1.8 The social media statistics highlighted in this report have been given different terminology and below is a glossary of the terms.

1.9 Table 2 – Glossary of social media statistics

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Engagement | Total number of people who have engaged with content, either by liking, commenting, replying, sharing etc. |
| Impressions | Total number of times content is displayed. (Can be viewed by the same person multiple times, making an "impression" on that person multiple times) |
| Open rate | Percentage of recipients that opened a newsletter email in relation to the total number of recipients. |
| Click rate | Percentage of recipients who clicked on a link in a newsletter in relation to the total number of recipients. |
| Reactions | Number of responses to a social media post, (i.e. "likes;" "shares;" "comments" and "saves") |
| Shares | The act of reposting the content of a social media post |
| Sentiments | The feeling or attitude expressed on social media regarding a social media post. |

1.10 For context and clarity, the report is only highlighting the significant communication and engagement activities undertaken across the 2024 calendar year and the anticipated work during the first quarter of 2025 (January to April)

## 2. Communication highlights over past 12 months (Jan – Dec 2024)

### 2.1 Biodiversity Action Programme (BAP)

**Biodiversity Action Programme (BAP) launch and related activities**

2.1.1. The Biodiversity Action Programme (BAP) was launched in April 2024 with an "explainer" animation and a new website, where the BAP could be read in summary or in full.

2.1.2. Since April several other activities were linked to the BAP, including meadow management, spring bulb planting, the City Nature Challenge, the Big Butterfly Count, the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch and National Tree Week to maintain awareness of the BAP and the areas that it covers.

2.1.3. The launch press release issued in April 2024 was picked up, however, the focus was on the Council's participation in No Mow May rather than the BAP.

2.1.4. Table 3 – Summary of communication statistics for launch of BAP and related activities throughout 2024

| Communication type | Numbers/Statistics |
|---|---|
| Press releases issued | 1 |
| Press Coverage | BBC Article - "No Mow May return after complaints in 2023" (16 April 2024) BBC<br>The Guardian - "No Mow May: councils urge Britons to put away lawnmowers (3 May 2024)<br>The Guardian<br>Warwick Nub News – "No Mow |

| | |
|---|---|
| | May to return to Warwick and Leamington for 2024 – but have lessons been learned (16 April 2024) Nub News<br>Warwickshire World – "Warwick District Council is once again joining No Mow May – and encouraging residents to join in"(16 April 2024) Warwickshire World |
| Video views | 5,457 |
| Social Media Posts | 49 |
| Engagement | 1,042 |
| Impressions | 178,258 |
| Newsletter subscribers | 1,693 |
| Newsletter open rate | 58% |
| Newsletter click rate | 17% |
| Website views | 4,069* |

*not all visitors to the website consent for their data to be tracked so this figure doesn't provide a completely accurate number of visitors.

**Biodiversity Photography Competition 2024**

2.1.5. The second biodiversity photography competition was launched in July 2024 with the theme, "bright, beautiful, great and small." The competition aimed to engage residents with the target habitats and species in the BAP, as well as provide more awareness about the need for a biodiverse and nature-rich environment.

2.1.6. Table 5 – Biodiversity Photography Competition Statistics

| **Communication Type** | **Numbers/Statistics** |
|---|---|
| Competition entries | 78 eligible entries (67 entries in over 18s category and 11 entries in 17 and under category) |
| Social media posts | 14 |
| Engagement | 1,655 |
| Impressions | 92,458 |

## 2.2 Low Cost, Low Carbon Programme (LCLC)

**Green Homes Grants**

2.2.1 The Green Homes Grants scheme was delivered as part of what was called the Home Upgrade Grant Scheme (HUG2) and was designed to help improve the comfort and energy efficiency of lower income homes that are not heated by mains gas central heating.

2.2.2 The work was a collaboration between Warwick District, Act on Energy and

E.ON.

2.2.3 Table 6 – Green Homes Grants Statistics

| **Communication Type** | **Numbers/Statistics** |
|---|---|
| Posters and leaflets printed | 60 |
| Letters printed and posted | 6,784 |
| Social Media posts | 38 |
| Engagement | 122 |
| Impressions | 37,417 |

**Home Energy Help Scheme**

2.2.4 This initiative originated from the Climate Change People's Enquiry when one of the recommendations was to help householders that are "able to pay" with high quality retrofit advice and information.

2.2.5 The initiative was a 12-month pilot scheme, which concluded in July 2024.

2.2.6 A partnership was formed with the charity Act on Energy and a retrofit organisation called Furbnow, where Act on Energy would help with signposting and wider advice support and Furbnow would develop tailored and (paid-for) Home Energy Plans with optional project management.

2.2.7 The initiative was communicated in a variety of ways, including: -

- advertising in various newsletters including Low Carbon Warwickshire Network (LCWN); e-leaflets to 36 Community Groups; WDC weekly newsletter; emails to emails to local Councillors and Town and Parish Councils
- launch of new Act on Energy website
- 17 Community Engagement events, 12 of which were linked with Retrofit Action Week and Great Big Green Week.

2.2.8 Throughout the 12 months of the initiative, Act on Energy, collected a variety of communication statistics that have been summarised below.

2.2.9 Table 7 – Home Energy Help Scheme Statistics

| **Communication Type** | **Number/Statistic** |
|---|---|
| Retrofit advice calls received | 220 |
| Average length of call | 30-80 mins |
| Community Engagement events attended | 17 |
| No. receiving retrofit advice at events | >120 |
| No. receiving "light-touch" advice | >215 |
| No. of Community Groups receiving newsletter | 36 |
| No. of retrofit assessments/energy plans completed | 6 |

## 2.3 Climate Change Action Programme

**Better Points**

2.3.1 The sustainable travel incentive initiative, termed, "Choose How You Move" hosted by Better Points was launched within Warwick District in 2021 and closed in November 2024.

2.3.2 Generic marketing materials were produced, both posters and flyers alongside social media content. Variants on these core designs were produced for specific promotions and partnerships, such as Chiltern Railways; Everyone Active and Stagecoach.

2.3.3 As of November 2024, there were 2567 signed up members of the public to the initiative with 26% considered to be active participants from the 1st-30th November. There were 9 local businesses signed up to the scheme and there have been 12 promotional events in 2024.

2.3.4 The largest of the above campaigns was Clean Air Day in June, where Climate Change Officers partnered with Air Quality colleagues, alongside Kenilworth Town Council and Warwickshire County Council. The event involved the closing of a 1.5-mile road route in the centre of Kenilworth which provided the opportunity to promote the benefits of active travel, alongside stalls and entertainment.

2.3.4 Table 8 – Clean Air Day Event, Kenilworth Statistics

| **Communication Type** | **Numbers/Statistics** |
|---|---|
| Posters, banners and leaflets printed | Printed by Kenilworth Town Council |
| Social media posts | 12 |
| Story views | 1,055 |
| Facebook event responses | 144 |
| Engagement | 166 |
| Impressions | 14,962 |
| Video views | 2,261 |

**Eco-Fest**

2.3.5 Returning for its fifth year in 2024, the event saw over 1500 members of the public visit the Pump Rooms in August.

2.3.6 It was a collaborative event, involving teams from Business Support and Events, Marketing and Communications and Climate Change working together with an external event coordinator.

2.3.7 The public were invited to engage in all aspects of the Climate Change Action Programme with a specific activity focused on retrofit.

2.3.8 Table 9 – Eco-Fest event statistics

| **Communication Type** | **Numbers/Statistics** |
|---|---|
| Press release | 1 |
| Press coverage | Leamington Observer Pre-event "EcoFest set to turn Leamington Green" (9 August 2024) Leamington Observer pre-event<br><br>Leamington Observer post-event "Everything goes green at Leamington EcoFest" (5 September 2024) Leamington Observer post-event |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Leamington Observer further coverage "Crowds enjoy inspirational theatre, bespoke stories and bee-keeping demo at Leamington EcoFest" (5 September 2024) further coverage<br><br>Leamington Courier pre-event "Leamington's popular EcoFest event to return for its fifth year" (2 August 2024) Leamington Courier pre-event<br><br>Leamington Courier post-event "In pictures: large crowd attends the fifth annual EcoFest at Pump Room Gardens in Leamington" (4 September 2024) Leamington Courier post-event<br><br>BBC "Thousands expected for free eco-friendly event" (11 August 2024) BBC |
| Posters printed | 30 |
| Social Media posts | 15 |
| Story views | 2,874 |
| Facebook event responses | 889 |
| Engagement | 494 |
| Impressions | 58,518 |
| Website views | 4,362 |

**Installation of cycle parking, Newbold Comyn Pavilion**

2.3.9 In collaboration with Warwickshire County Council and Leamington Park Run with financial backing from Leamington Town Council, three Sheffield stand "toast-rack" cycle stands were installed at Newbold Comyn Pavilion. A press release was produced and Leamington Mayor and local Councillors invited to its formal "opening"

2.3.10 Photo of formal opening of cycle stands


2.3.11 Appendix 2 illustrates the type of communications highlighted above.

## 3. Communication plans for next 3 months (Jan – Mar 2025)

3.1 Appendix 3 summarises the planned communications for the first 3 months of 2025.

3.2 Due to the lead officer for the Local Climate Engagement (LCE) leaving his role within the Climate Change team in September, this piece of work has lost its momentum. As Appendix 3 indicates however, there are plans to reinvigorate the initiative and could potentially be used as an important conduit for communication across the roles undertaken by the Climate Change team.

## 4. Any lessons learnt and plans for improvement

4.1 It is important to evaluate the success of any communication initiative to learn which activities worked well and which should be improved. An evaluation summary of the initiatives highlighted above can be found in Appendix 4

4.2 As the tables in Section 2 above indicate, we do measure the recognised evaluation tools for any communication initiative, by monitoring the media and web data, but arguably it could be considered that we need to do more within the Climate Change team to understand whether our communications are working and follow a simple plan for communication to consider some basic questions: -

- Why do we want to communicate? (What is the purpose?)
- Who do we want to communicate with? (Who's our audience?)
- What do we want to communicate? (What is the message?)
- How do we want to communicate it? (What communication channels will we use?)
- Who should we contact and what should we do to use those channels? (How will be distribute the message?)

4.3 The Climate Change team have a monthly internal communication meeting with the Media team and this report suggests that at an appropriate opportunity the group discusses the potential for an overarching communications plan that tie

together the campaign specific communication plans already in place and aligns with the Council's Corporate Strategy.

4.4 A basic evaluation process could be part of this communication plan as it can help to measure the success of a communication initiative and benchmark it against other projects and learn best practice from other initiatives, share ideas and potential work on joint communication activities. Dynamic monitoring and evaluation of our communications is essential during the initiative to ensure that we are reaching the right audience with the right messages. We can then adapt and amend our communication as required.

4.5 A good proportion of the communication work undertaken within the Climate Change team has the goal of changing behaviour; nudging perceptions, attitudes and opinions. A benchmarking survey would have enabled us to measure the effectiveness of our communication strategy in achieving that.

4.6 In a benchmarking survey target audiences are surveyed at the outset of a communications programme and then at the end. This will enable us to track the impact of our activities. However, there are resource and budget implications to undertaking formal benchmarking exercises and further consideration needs to be given to this subject, as currently there is not the resource and finances available to undertake this role.

## 5. The key risks to the service and how they are being managed

5.1 Communications is vital to promoting our key initiatives and projects, but we need clear aims and objectives to enable us to demonstrate tangible results and even with that, it can be a challenge.

5.2 We cannot always be sure of the impact of our communications and engagement activity and therefore it is not possible to demonstrate if it is value for money. However, the impact could be seen as people turning up to events, phone calls, responses to social media etc.

5.3 Perception and benchmarking data would be helpful but is likely to be costly and therefore impact on the ability to do other things within the Climate Change budget. Discussions could be had on the finances allocated against the marketing budget and the importance placed on this data to the success of the communications.

5.4 Communications and perceptions are heavily influenced by many things, including national messages, so isolating Warwick District's impacts is very difficult. Therefore, public perception and understanding of local projects and initiatives should be taken within the wider context of national and government initiatives.

5.5 Social media can sometimes be misused by the public resulting in virtual abuse and/or reputational damage. This risk can be mitigated by deleting inflammatory comments and/or turning off the comment section on sensitive or controversial posts.

## 6. One Change to improve performance

7.1 See Section 4.

**Background papers:**

Climate Change Action Programme Review Report – Cabinet December 2023 (Item 6)

Biodiversity Action Programme Report – Cabinet April 2024 (Item 6)

Low-Cost Low Carbon Energy Programme – Cabinet July 2024 (Item 4)

**Supporting documents:**

None

**Climate Change**
**Communications and Community Engagement Strategy**

**November 2023**

## 1 Aims

The Climate Change Communications Strategy has three key aims.

1. **Tell** – To get our own house in order and communicate with communities, partners, businesses, Members and staff about our progress.

2. **Provide** – Provide community leadership on climate change working with a range of stakeholders and partners.

3. **Mobilise** – to enable the mobilisation of residents, communities and organisations to accept responsibility and adapt their behaviours.

## 2 Background

The Climate Change Action Plan provides a clear path to understand the actions the Council must now take to meet its key ambitions.

Climate change requires a huge effort by all sectors of the community. In a post-Covid climate, it is recognised that some communities desperately want to see the way we live change to a more environmentally sustainable one. But, this is also balanced against some residents living in financial hardship and in this case, climate change will certainly not be at the forefront of people's minds.

Climate change action requires a huge amount of motivation and continued positivity. Those working together on this agenda must recognise that every action counts and share in the successes. Different people will be motivated to act for different reasons. We recognise that message around climate change must also cover co-benefits and that we need to repeat messages and utilise a variety of channels.

## 3 Communications Objectives

### Our Communities

- To develop a clear narrative around the shared ambition towards achieving the Council's goals.
- To raise awareness within our communities about climate change risks (global and local) and the impacts this will and could have on our daily lives
- To set an example and motivate others to do likewise
- To help our communities (residents and visitors,) understand how they can play their part in mitigating and adapting to climate change

- To inform our communities about the work Warwick District Council is doing in relation to climate change, particularly where this provides opportunities for local people or visitors to adapt their behaviours
- To listen to the ideas and initiatives that our communities have in relation to climate change so that we can consider how to align our work with local ideas

**Our Partners and Business**

- To raise awareness within our communities about climate change risks (global and local) and the impacts this will and could have on our daily lives
- To share respective climate change priorities, targets opportunities and challenges with partners and business
- To help local businesses and organisations understand how they can play their part in mitigating and adapting to climate change
- To listen to the ideas and concerns of local businesses and organisations and use these to inform the action plan.
- To inform businesses about the work the District Council is doing in relation to climate change.

**Our Staff and Members**

- To raise awareness about climate change risks (global and local) and the impacts this will and could have on our daily lives
- To inform staff and Members on the work we are doing on climate change and motivate to support the work in meeting the climate change targets.
- To enable staff to champion climate change initiatives and narrative when they have contact with residents and other customers

## 4 Key Activities

- Gain expert comments and quotes to reinforce messages and build trust
- Planned, regular themed messages on an ongoing basis
- Develop a suite of case studies to reflect progress, so that it can be seen to be real and achievable and to celebrate successes
- Identify stakeholder involvement to discuss the work programme and be helpful 'critical friends' in the process. This will include a variety of forums for dialogue with these stakeholders
- Ensure staff and councillors have the highest levels of awareness to play their part in climate communications through everyday communication mechanism
- Use all our channels to reach all groups of our community and recognise that different channels will be important for different parts of our communities

- Coordinate with partners (especially WCC) to support mutual messaging and to channel messaging through the most effective "mouthpiece"
- Link to co-benefits such as health, improved air quality, warmer homes, cost of living etc
- Think about how people make changes: the need, the capability, opportunity and motivation

## 5 Communications Channels

There are a range of communication channels we can use. These need to be used to align with the message and the audience at different times and in different ways. Communication channels must consider the 'every contact counts' means of using effective and existing mechanisms or channels to deliver messages to the widest of audiences. All communications should consider which of these should be utilised at any given time and are broken down into internal and external action methods.

| **Internal** | **External** |
|---|---|
| Member briefings and emails | Website updates |
| Staff updates - Intranet | Press releases |
| Webinars an and carbon literacy training | Social Media |
| Staff briefings | Residents newsletters including Social Tenants newsletters |
| Sustainability Officers Group | Webinars and short videos |
| Clear and constant message from senior managers | Stakeholder groups and other partner organisations |
| Team meetings | Conferences |

## 6. Measuring Success

The measure of success with fully engaging with the community to drive down carbon emissions could realistically come from the bottom-line carbon emissions reduction data, for example from the domestic sector, although this is always two years behind.

There are also more immediate ways to establish the success of a communications exercise, and these are already monitored by the Media team as follows.

- Engagement – the number of people interacting with a social media post in some way (reacting, commenting, sharing).
- Link clicks – a measure of engagement which usually forms part of a call to action.
- Impressions – these are numbers given by the social media platforms that tell us how many accounts will have seen our post in their timeline. The more impressions, the more people who will potentially engage with our content.

- Press coverage – Where the press release has been picked up by the local newspapers for coverage. Whether the press release has been adapted (if and the overall tone of the newspaper's coverage (negative, neutral, positive).

- Website – Traffic to the climate change web page, how many visits, how long someone spends on the web page and number of people that have completed a form/survey/quiz.

- Events and Webinars – Numbers of people attending and feeling or 'vibe' of the event (negative, neutral, positive).

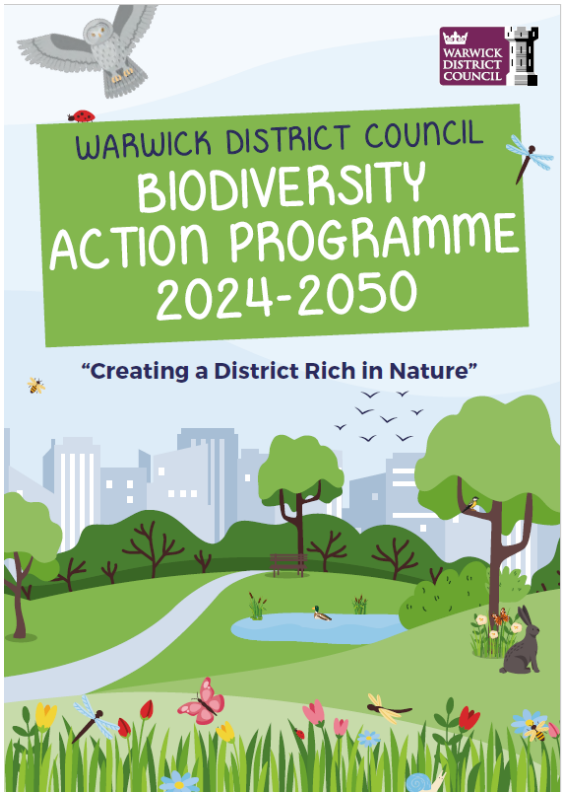
## 7 Governance and Reporting Progress

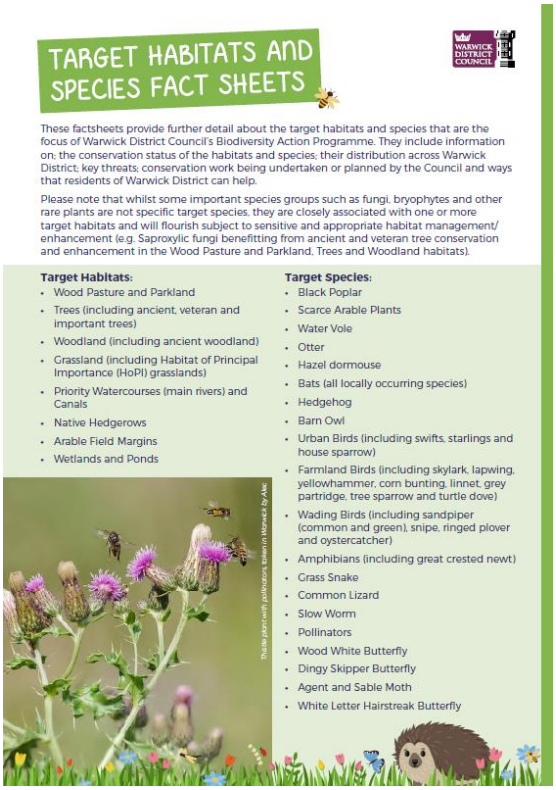
Progress reporting on the Communications Strategy will be through the WDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. The three month rolling programme and outcomes as set out in section 6 will form the basis of this reporting and, recognising the vital role of members in communications, will provide members with the opportunity to advice on the ongoing review of the rolling programme.

## Appendix 2 - Examples of communication materials

Biodiversity Action Programme (BAP)

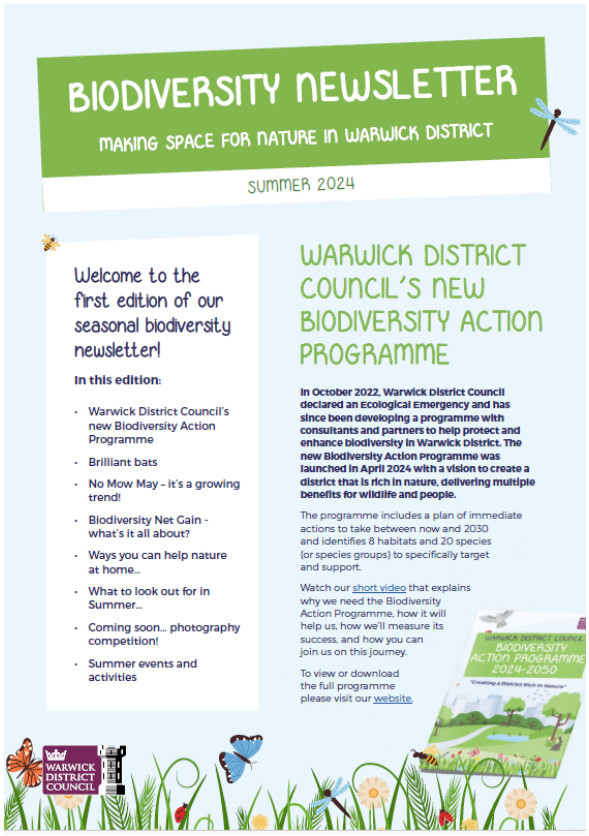
BAP strategy document and target habitats/species fact sheets:




Email signature to encourage new sign-ups to the biodiversity newsletter:

Seasonal biodiversity newsletters (Summer, Autumn and Winter 2024 editions):



BIODIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

MAKING SPACE FOR NATURE IN WARWICK DISTRICT

SUMMER 2024

Welcome to the first edition of our seasonal biodiversity newsletter!

**In this edition:**

- Warwick District Council's new Biodiversity Action Programme
- Brilliant bats
- No Mow May – it's a growing trend!
- Biodiversity Net Gain - what's it all about?
- Ways you can help nature at home...
- What to look out for in Summer...
- Coming soon... photography competition!
- Summer events and activities

## WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL'S NEW BIODIVERSITY ACTION PROGRAMME

**In October 2022, Warwick District Council declared an Ecological Emergency and has since been developing a programme with consultants and partners to help protect and enhance biodiversity in Warwick District. The new Biodiversity Action Programme was launched in April 2024 with a vision to create a district that is rich in nature, delivering multiple benefits for wildlife and people.**

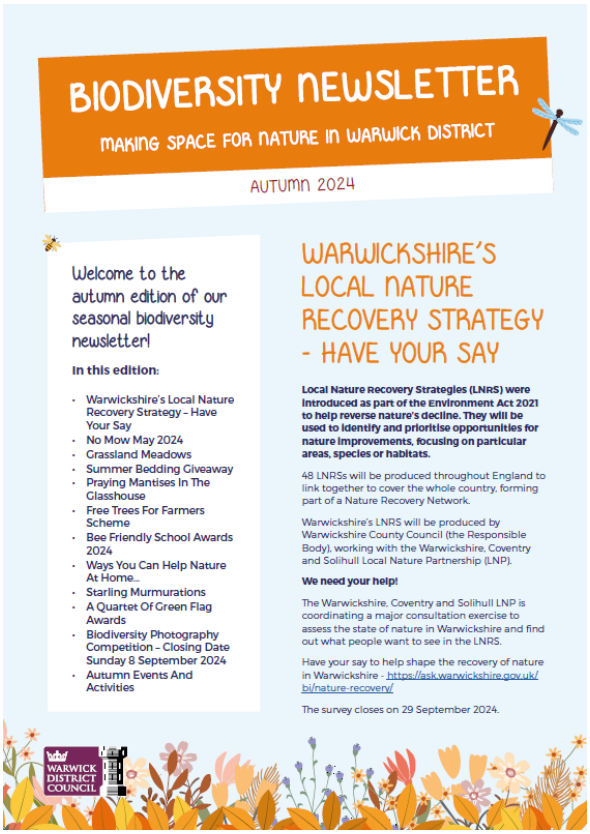
The programme includes a plan of immediate actions to take between now and 2030 and identifies 8 habitats and 20 species (or species groups) to specifically target and support.

Watch our short video that explains why we need the Biodiversity Action Programme, how it will help us, how we'll measure its success, and how you can join us on this journey.

To view or download the full programme please visit our website.




WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL



BIODIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

MAKING SPACE FOR NATURE IN WARWICK DISTRICT

AUTUMN 2024

Welcome to the autumn edition of our seasonal biodiversity newsletter!

**In this edition:**

- Warwickshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Have Your Say
- No Mow May 2024
- Grassland Meadows
- Summer Bedding Giveaway
- Praying Mantises In The Classhouse
- Free Trees For Farmers Scheme
- Bee Friendly School Awards 2024
- Ways You Can Help Nature At Home...
- Starling Murmurations
- A Quartet Of Green Flag Awards
- Biodiversity Photography Competition – Closing Date Sunday 8 September 2024
- Autumn Events And Activities

## WARWICKSHIRE'S LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY - HAVE YOUR SAY

**Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) were introduced as part of the Environment Act 2021 to help reverse nature's decline. They will be used to identify and prioritise opportunities for nature improvements, focusing on particular areas, species or habitats.**

48 LNRSs will be produced throughout England to link together to cover the whole country, forming part of a Nature Recovery Network.

Warwickshire's LNRS will be produced by Warwickshire County Council (the Responsible Body), working with the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Nature Partnership (LNP).

**We need your help!**

The Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull LNP is coordinating a major consultation exercise to assess the state of nature in Warwickshire and find out what people want to see in the LNRS.

Have your say to help shape the recovery of nature in Warwickshire - https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/bi/nature-recovery/

The survey closes on 29 September 2024.

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

MAKING SPACE FOR NATURE IN WARWICK DISTRICT

WINTER 2024/25

Welcome to the winter edition of our seasonal biodiversity newsletter, with a special focus on trees, woodlands and hedgerows, timed to coincide with tree planting season.

**In this edition:**

- Biodiversity Photography Competition 2024 - Winners Announced!
- Monolith Trees
- Community-Driven Tree Planting Across Warwick District
- Meadow Management - Watch Our New Video!
- Ancient and Veteran Trees
- Funding for Tree and Hedgerow Planting
- Over 150,000 Spring Bulbs Planted for Early Pollinators
- Ways You Can Help Nature at Home
- National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme
- Hedge Laying: A Traditional Skill for Wildlife and Conservation
- Radford Road Bridge - Biodiversity Enhancements
- Warwickshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- South Warwickshire Local Plan - Have Your Say!
- Welcome Deb Merrick - New Green Space Development Officer for Biodiversity
- Local Nature Action Plans
- Winter Events and Activities

## BIODIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION 2024 - WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

**The 2024 Biodiversity Photography Competition closed on 8th September, with a fantastic range of entries celebrating the theme of *"All Things Bright, Beautiful, Great and Small."***

Shortlisted entries were featured on our Facebook page for public voting, and the winners were announced:

- **Over 18s Category:** Garry from Barford
- **17 and Under Category:** Charles from Warwick

Both winners received a £100 gift voucher as their prize. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make this year's competition such a success!

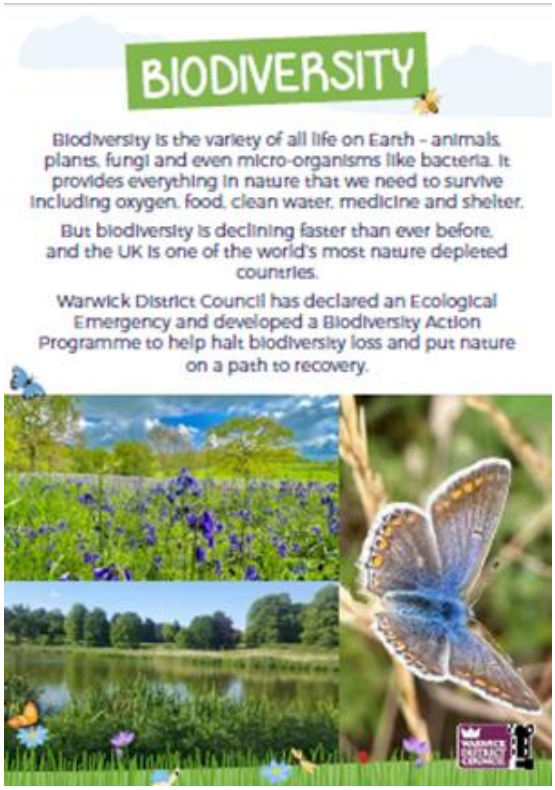






WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

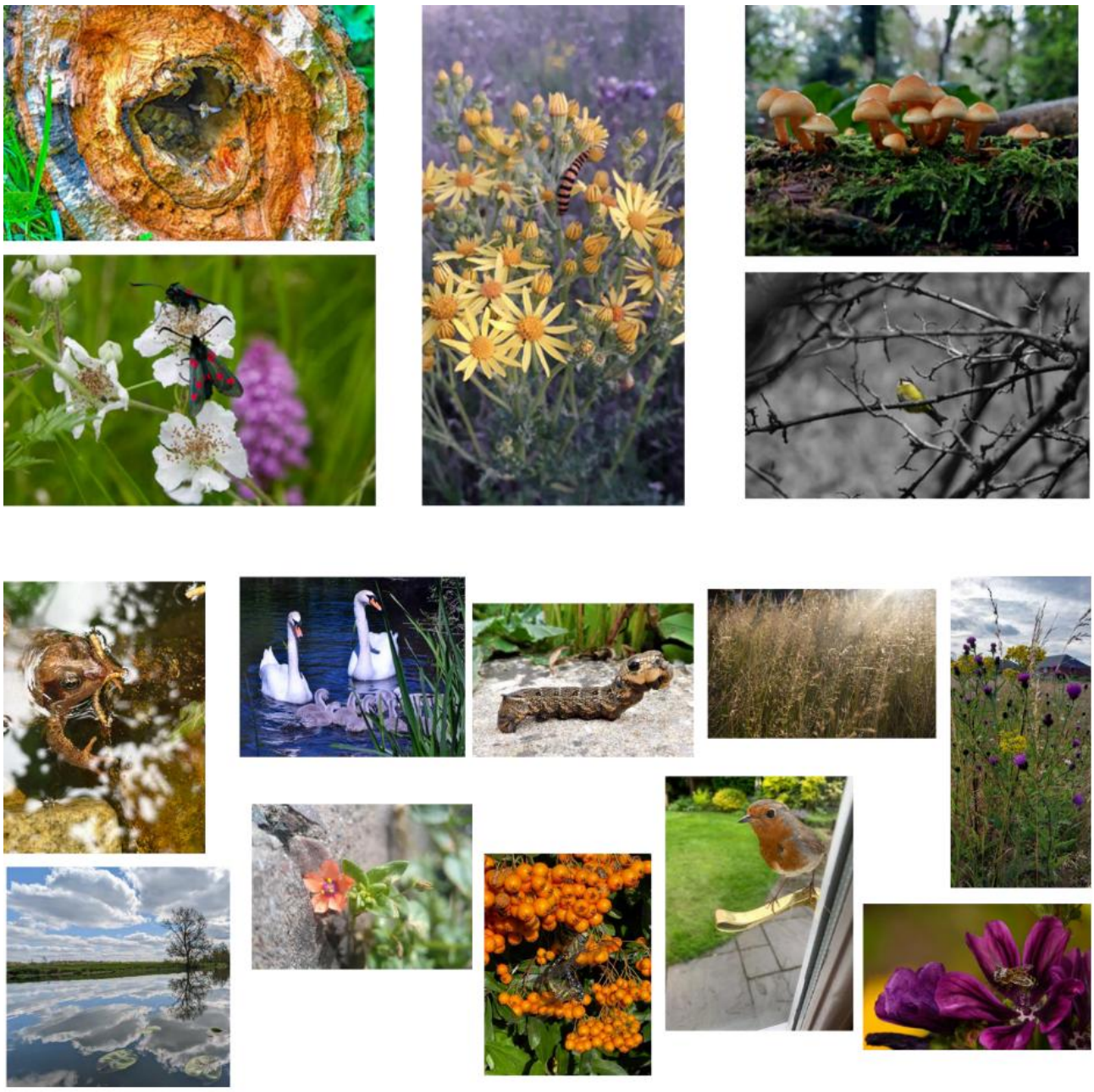
BAP information leaflet used at events:





Downloadable poster promoting the biodiversity photography competition:

Shortlisted entries from 2023 and 2024 photography competition:



Low Cost, Low Carbon Programme (LCLC)

Green Homes Grants:



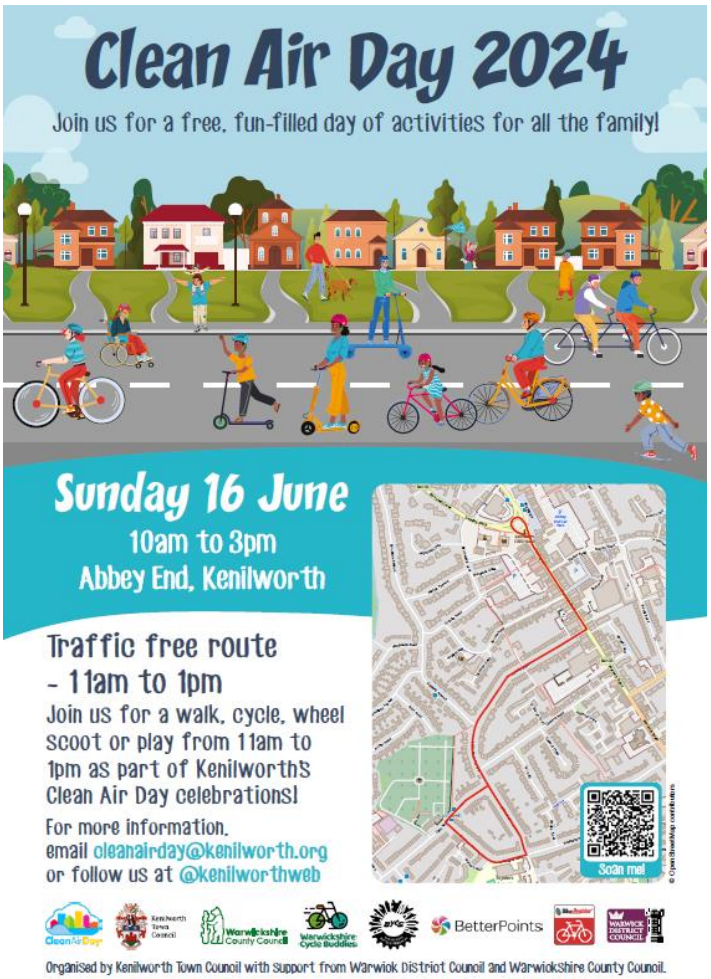
Home Energy Help:


HOME ENERGY HELP
Planning an extension or creating your forever low-carbon home?
Whatever your plans for 2024, it can be tricky knowing where to start.
FREE, impartial retrofit advice for homeowners within the Warwick District
Act On Energy
save money and the environment
WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL
Are you able and willing to invest in upgrading the energy efficiency of your home?
Reduce your energy bills, cut carbon emissions, make your home more comfortable and healthy with help from our Retrofit Advice Team.
Check Here
Chat with a qualified Retrofit Advisor about:
✔ Home Energy Assessment & Retrofit Plans
✔ Low-cost DIY options to whole house retrofit
✔ Insulation, ventilation & heating
✔ Renewable technologies
✔ Grants, finance & VAT
✔ Thermal imaging & local community groups
✔ Phasing work to minimise disruption & maximise your budget
Contact Act on Energy today!
0800 988 2881
retrofit@actonenergy.org.uk
www.actonenergy.org.uk
quote Home Energy Help
Thanks to funding from Warwick District Council, Act On Energy can now offer support to homeowners across the Warwick District to reduce their carbon emissions through retrofitting.
Act On Energy
save money and the environment
WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

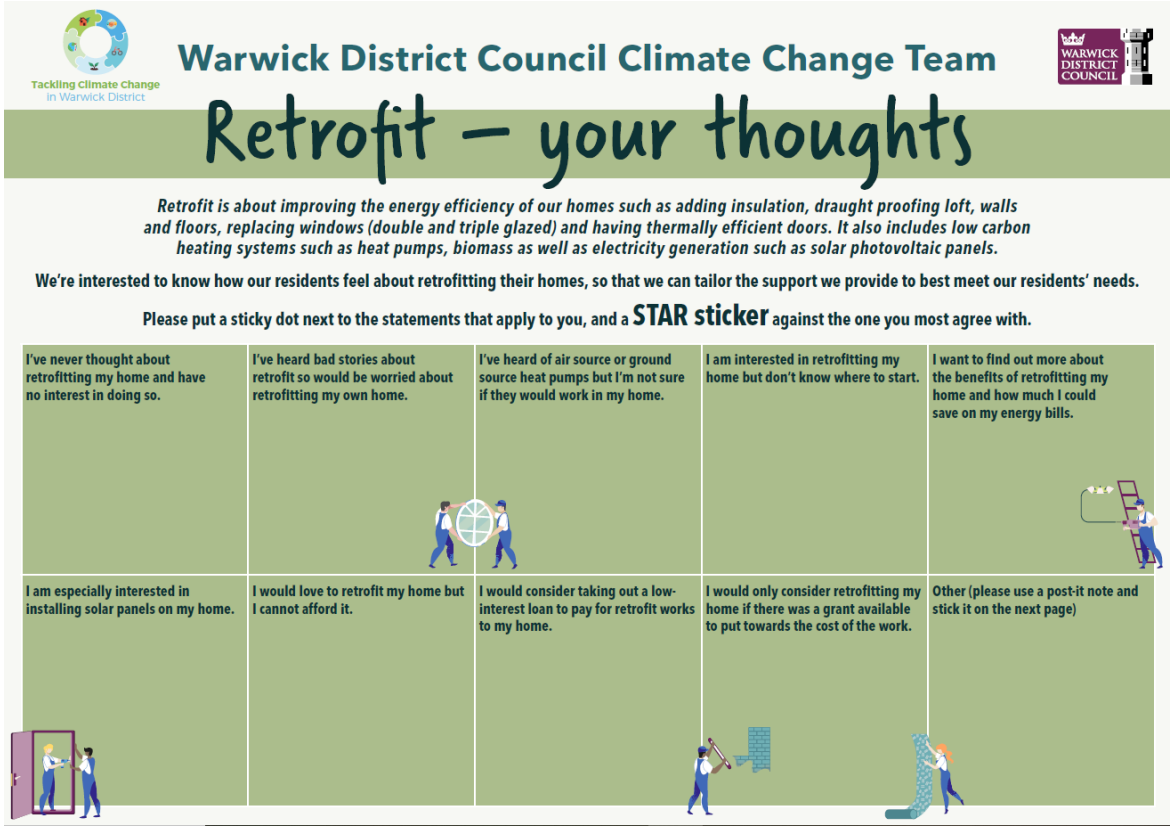
Better Points leaflets and posters:

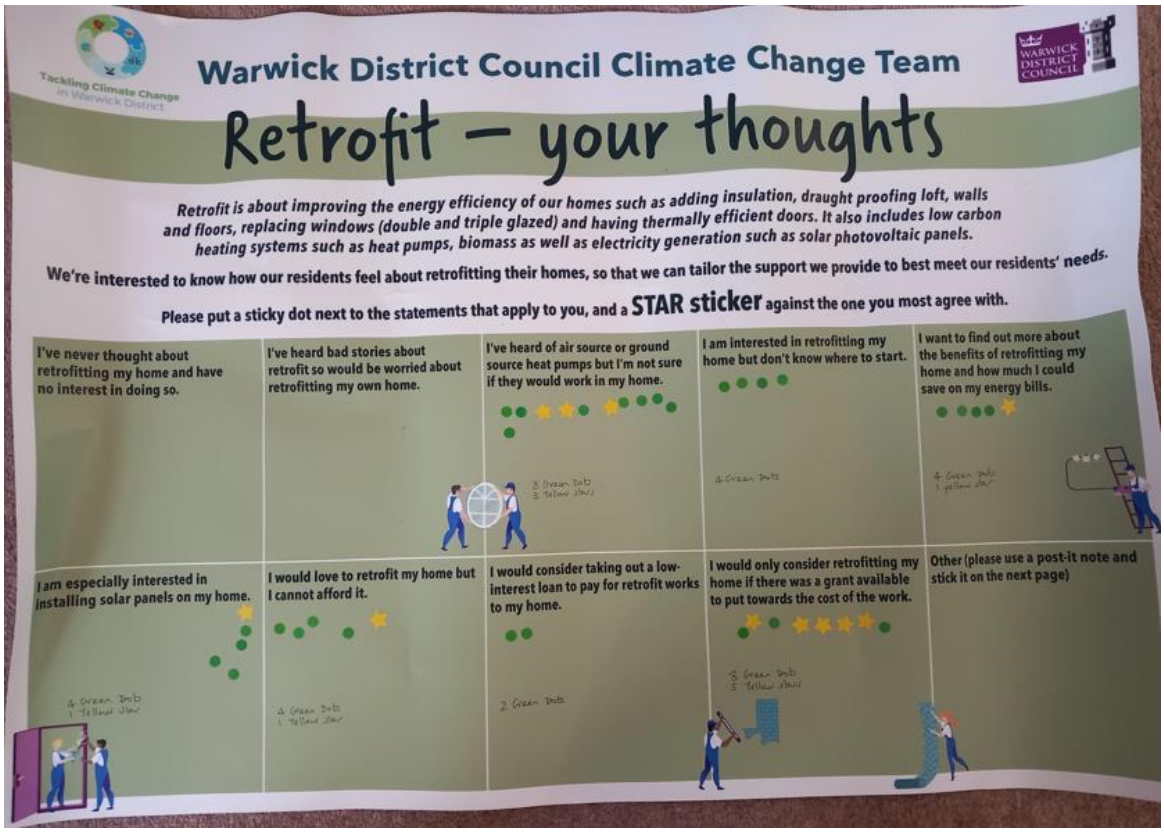



Clean Air Day 2024 poster:

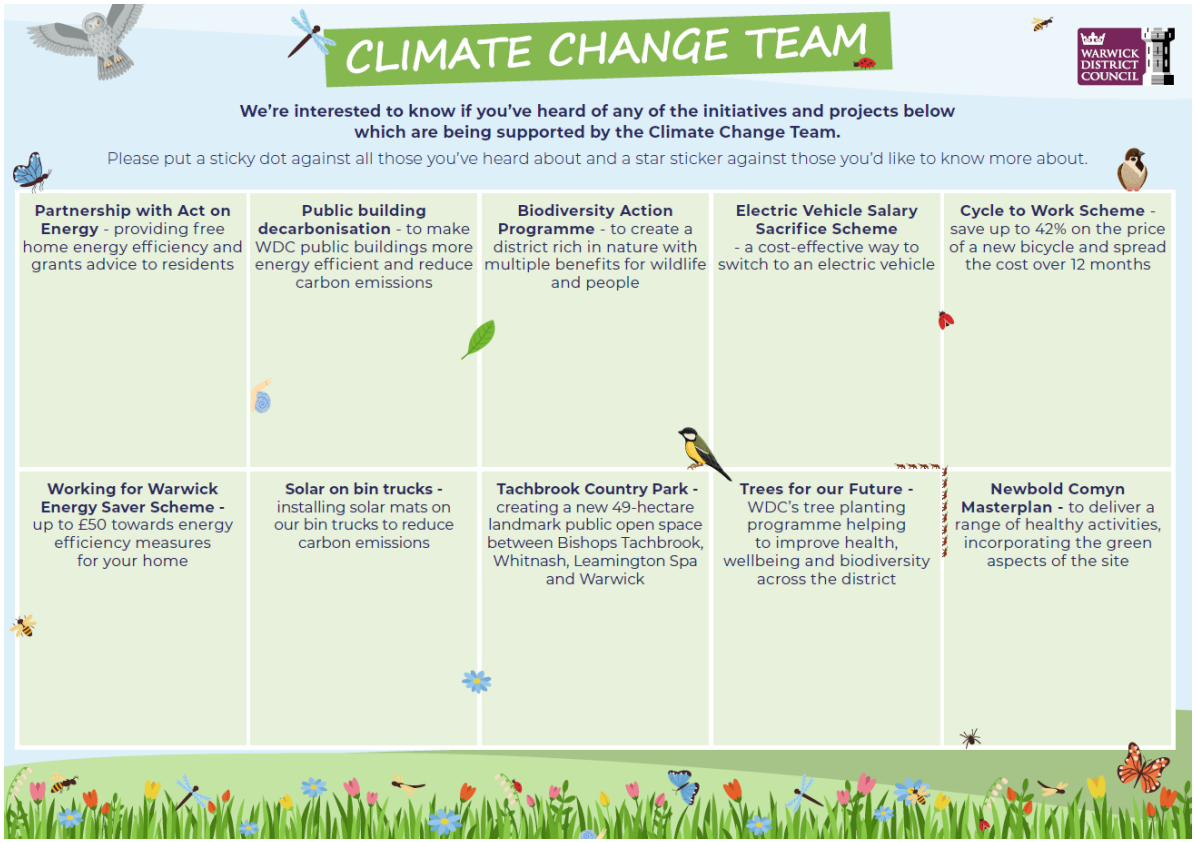


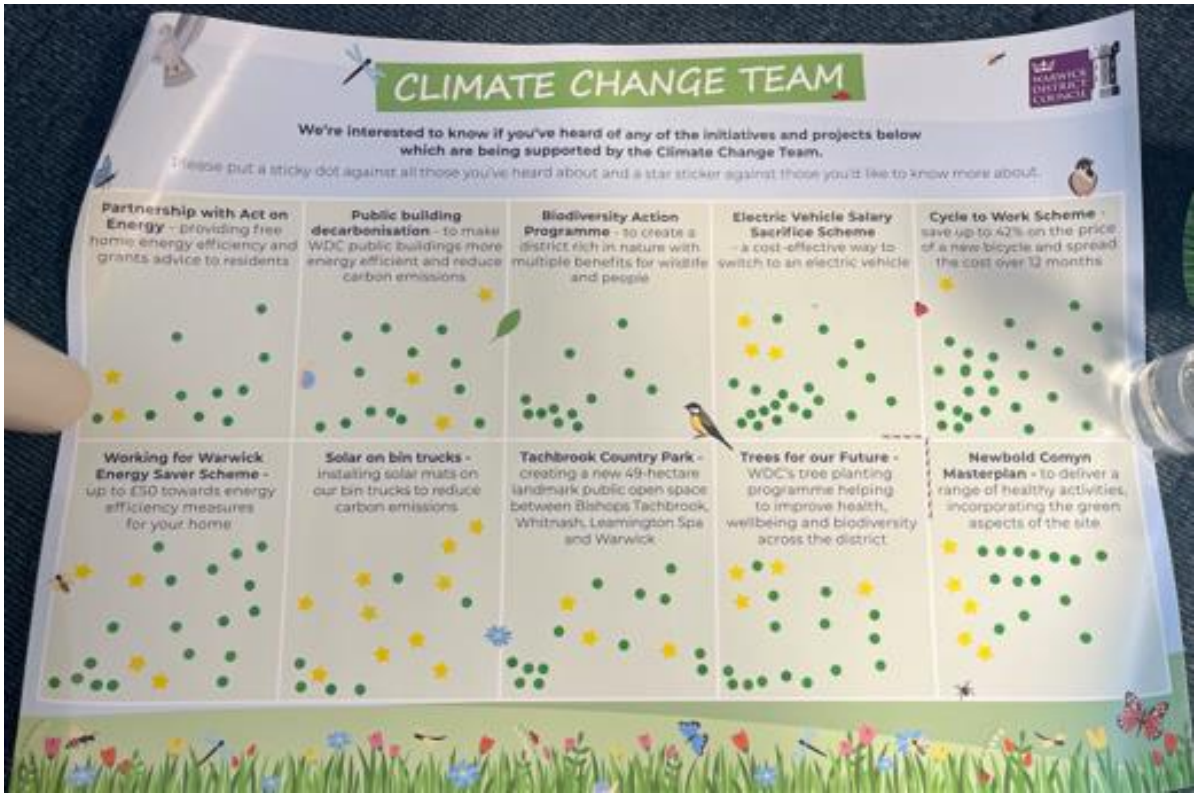
Ecofest 2024 – retrofit engagement activity sheet:



WDC Staff EXPO 2024 – staff engagement activity sheet:



## Appendix 3 – Planned communications for January to April 2025

| Action | When |
|---|---|
| **Biodiversity Action Programme** | |
| Traditional hedge-laying communications and bitesize video | January |
| Biodiversity Newsletter – Spring edition | March |
| Leamington Nature Patchwork Event | March |
| World Wildlife Day | March |
| National Gardening Week | April |
| **Climate Change Action Programme** | |
| Proposed Cycle Path, Abbey Fields Public Consultation | February/March |
| Cycle Parking Working Group Meetings | Quarterly |
| Political consultation - way forward EV Infrastructure Feasibility | January/February |
| Ongoing Local Climate Engagement (LCE) work including<br>- Steering Group Meetings<br>- Working Group Meetings<br>- Planned liaison with WALC and local communities | Ongoing |
| Solar Mats on Refuse Collection Vehicles – Press Release | February/March |
| **Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy Programme** | |
| Thermal Imaging Camera Loan Scheme Launch | January |
| Kenilworth School Sites – Passivhaus market and contractor engagement | January/February |
| Air Source Heat Pump Training – Press Release | March/April |
| | |

## Appendix 4 – Evaluation of highlighted communication initiatives

1. **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**
    - Several other initiatives were linked to the BAP Programme throughout the year, including National Tree Week and the Biodiversity Photography competition mentioned below.
    - The press release issued in April was picked up, but the focus was on the Council's participation in No Mow May rather than the BAP.

2. **National Tree Week**
    - Annual campaign run by the Tree Council in November/December.
    - Warwick District Council supported the campaign with social media posts focussing on the target tree related habitats and species in our biodiversity action programme (including wood pasture and parkland, ancient and veteran trees, woodland, native hedgerows and black poplar trees).
    - This initiative highlighted the disparity between the intentions and aspirations of the biodiversity action programme vs. public perception. The comments received were overwhelmingly negative. There were 149 comments to the 5 social media posts put out on WDC channels – 94% were negative. In general, public perception was that development was causing destruction/decline of biodiversity which is at odds to the ambitions of the BAP to protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity.
    - When supporting the campaign in future, we agreed the focus should be more about tree planting activities and positive action being taken in Warwick District, rather than a focus on strategy, plans and ambitions.

3. **Biodiversity Photography Competition 2024**
    - The 2024 biodiversity photography competition ran between July and September 2024 with this year's theme being 'bright, beautiful, great and small'. A panel of judges including staff and Councillors from WDC helped to shortlist the entries which were then posted on Facebook for public voting. The winners in each age group received a gift voucher prize.
    - There were 67 eligible entries in the over-18s category and 11 eligible entries in the under-17s category.
    - The competition was well received but participation was lower than the 2023 competition.
    - Participation in the 17 and under category was very low in both the 2023 and 2024 competition. This could have been due to the time of year, although the 2024 competition was purposefully run throughout summer (including school holidays) as opposed to the 2023 competition which was run in Autumn.
    - Warwickshire County Council was also running a photography competition at the same time which may have diluted the focus on our competition.
    - One of the positive outcomes is that we have some great photos of biodiversity in Warwick District, including the Council's parks and open spaces, which can be used in future communications.
    - We're not looking to repeat the competition in the short-term but may consider in the long-term.

4. **Green Homes Grants**

- During 2024/25, funding continued for the Home Upgrade Grant 2 scheme to support off gas properties with home energy retrofit measures in partnership with Act on Energy and EON.
- So far, the scheme has resulted in 137 leads and of those, 13 homes have had retrofit measures installed including solar PV panels, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, ventilation and high heat retention storage heaters. It is anticipated that by the end of March 2025, over 40 low-income households which also meet the property energy inefficient criteria, will have received home energy measures.
- There have been challenges with delivering the funding due to the cost measure caps set by DESNZ and other policy requirements regarding the measure combinations allowed.
- Going forwards, further funding is expected from DESNZ for both on and off gas properties. WDC is also looking to undertake market testing to help consider partnership arrangements going forwards.

**5. Home Energy Help Scheme**

- The scheme was delivered in partnership with Act on Energy and a thorough review demonstrated that residents were reluctant to pay for Home Energy Plans, due to balancing this cost towards retrofit work.
- The "Able to Pay" or affordability target audience is questionable given the above and residents may fall into the category but may be still unable to afford the work with the benefits of retrofit not being clear.
- Feedback at engagement events showed that many residents were interested to do retrofit but required more information about what is involved with the specifics of having the work done in their homes.
- It has been concluded because of this initiative that further targeted communications tools need to be developed, such as local videos and the promotion of readily available information, alongside future schemes, whether this be future Green Homes Grants, or any proposed loan or similar home energy help type programmes.
- Further to the pilot, discussions were had with Act on Energy to work in partnership with other neighbouring Local Authorities on a similar scheme called 'Retrofit for All' and this has resulted in a bid submitted by Act on Energy to the Energy Saving Trust: Energy Redress Innovation Fund in October 2024. If successful, the funding will deliver a similar scheme building on the lessons learned. The aim is to deliver community engagement events, webinars, workshops and home visit support. Additionally, the funding will help to develop a Retrofit Software tool to support with free Home Energy Plans for local residents.

**6. BetterPoints**

- Throughout 2024, the BetterPoints initiative continued to run partnerships with local events and businesses to offer time-limited rewards and prizes. This included Everyone Active Leisure Centres, Chiltern Railways and IndieGo Plus demand responsive bus.
- This year the initiative started to work with internal colleagues responsible for the Council's Health and Wellbeing Agenda. As a result, BetterPoints worked with Leamington Primary Care Network to offer Better Points for users that participated in Spa Pramblers, a buggy walking group for parents, and "Walk Talk

Walk" and "Run Talk Run", which are accessible running groups at Clarendon Lodge Medical Centre.

- Registered users continued to increase and outreach promotion at events, which coincided with a related increased in registrations.
- Annual evaluation surveys were undertaken, and the last one undertaken before the initiative closed showed the following results: -
    - 51% of engaged participants responded
    - 76% "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they were more likely to walk or cycle because of the initiative
    - 67% "Strongly agreed" or "agreed" that taking part made them less likely to use a car in the future.
    - 61% of respondents "Strongly agreed" or "Agreed" with the statement "During the challenge, I used a car less to get from place to place"
- It always proved difficult to engage with local businesses to get them signed up to the initiative, despite a variety of communication techniques being employed, such as emails; "door-knocking;" leafleting and promotion at local business events.
- It was always a challenge to evaluate real behavioural change. Were participants travelling sustainably because of the initiative or would have travelled in that mode irrespective of the initiative? However, the scheme did raise awareness of sustainable travel.

**7. Ecofest**

- The Ecofest working group meets to debrief the event each year to understand the successes and any lessons learnt and to help plan future events.
- Warwick District Council and partner organisations were grouped together to support collaboration and help signpost enquiries.
- The talk tent has never been very popular with attendees and different approaches have been trialled over the years. The working group has discussed no longer providing a talk tent and instead focussing on the activities that prove popular each year.
- In terms of the climate change team stand, we have found it useful to have a type of engagement activity to act as a conversation starter and provide feedback on the level of interest and awareness of the work being done.

**8. Cycle Parking Installation - Newbold Comyn Pavilion**

- This was a simple and discrete initiative, and the communications were straightforward.
- Interested parties were involved from the beginning and everyone was on board.