

# Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday 15 December 2021

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 2, Shire Hall

## Membership

Councillor Adrian Warwick (Chair)

Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Sarah Boad

Councillor Piers Daniell

Councillor Sue Markham

Councillor Caroline Phillips

Councillor Will Roberts

Councillor Richard Spencer

Councillor Robert Tromans

Councillor Martin Watson

Items on the agenda: -

### 1. General

#### (1) Apologies

#### (2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

#### (3) Chair's Announcements

#### (4) Minutes of Previous Meeting

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2021.

5 - 14

### 2. Public Question Time

Up to 30 minutes of the meeting is available for members of the public to ask questions on any matters relevant to the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Questioners may ask two questions and can speak for up to three minutes each. To be sure of receiving an answer to an appropriate question, please contact John Cole (Democratic Services) at least two working days prior to the meeting.

3. **Questions to Portfolio Holders Relevant to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
Up to 30 minutes of the meeting is available for the Committee to put questions to the Leader and Portfolio Holders on any matters relevant to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
4. **Work Programme** 15 - 16  
To consider the Committee's proposed Work Programme and future areas of scrutiny.
5. **Quarter 2 Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarterly Progress Report (April 2021 to September 2021)** 17 - 30  
The Report is attached.
6. **Estates Master Planning (EMP)** 31 - 36  
The Report is attached.
7. **Update on the Voice of Warwickshire Residents' Panel** 37 - 44  
The Report is attached.
8. **Any Urgent Matters**  
At the discretion of the Chair, items may be raised which are considered urgent (please notify Democratic Services in advance of the meeting).

**Monica Fogarty**  
Chief Executive  
Warwickshire County Council  
Shire Hall, Warwick

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### Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election of appointment to the Council. Any changes to matters registered or new matters that require to be registered must be notified to the Monitoring Officer as soon as practicable after they arise.

A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless they have a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if they have not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

Non-pecuniary interests relevant to the agenda should be declared at the commencement of the meeting.

The public reports referred to are available on the Warwickshire Web  
<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

### Public Speaking

Any member of the public who is resident or working in Warwickshire, or who is in receipt of services from the Council, may speak at the meeting for up to three minutes on any matter within the remit of the Committee. This can be in the form of a statement or a question. If you wish to speak please notify Democratic Services in writing at least two working days before the meeting. You should give your name and address and the subject upon which you wish to speak. Full details of the public speaking scheme are set out in the Council's Standing Orders.

### COVID-19 Pandemic

Any member or officer of the Council or any person attending this meeting must inform Democratic Services if within a week of the meeting they discover they have COVID-19 or have been in close proximity to anyone found to have COVID-19.

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# Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 15 September 2021

## Minutes

### Attendance

#### Committee Members

Councillor Adrian Warwick (Chair)  
Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Sarah Boad  
Councillor Piers Daniell  
Councillor Sue Markham  
Councillor Jan Matecki  
Councillor Will Roberts  
Councillor Richard Spencer  
Councillor Robert Tromans

#### Other County Councillors

Councillor Peter Butlin, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property  
Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety  
Councillor Kam Kaur, Portfolio Holder for Economy and Place

#### Officers

Reece Bowman, Interim Programme Manager  
Ben Brook, Chief Fire Officer  
John Cole, Democratic Services Officer  
Andrew Felton, Assistant Director, Finance  
John Findlay, Service Manager, Business and Customer Support  
Chris Kaye, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Commercialism)  
Ian Marriott, Delivery Lead, Commercial and Regulatory  
Isabelle Moorhouse, Democratic Services Officer  
Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources  
Steve Smith, Assistant Director, Commissioning Support Unit

### 1. General

#### (1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Martin Watson; Councillor Jan Matecki was present as a substitute. Apologies were also received from Councillor Caroline Phillips and Councillor Andy Jenns (Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation).

## **(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

There were none.

## **(3) Chair's Announcements**

There were none.

## **(4) Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

## **2. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received or presented at the meeting.

## **3. Questions to Portfolio Holders Relevant to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

In response to Councillor Boad, Ben Brook (Chief Fire Officer) advised that an increase in the number of fires at industrial sites was evident at both a local and national level and was being closely monitored by Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (WFRS). He stated that, nationally, a rise in the number of fires occurring at waste and recycling centres had been recorded leading to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) appointing advisors to support the response to these incidents.

Ben Brook advised that an increased risk of fire had been observed as Pandemic restrictions eased. This was attributable to a change in behaviours during lockdown, including factors such as motorists being out of practice, resulting in road traffic collisions. WFRS was monitoring trends in these areas.

In response to Councillor Boad, Ben Brook advised that prevention work had progressed well as lockdown restrictions had eased. During lockdown, WFRS had been obliged to undertake Safe and Well Checks remotely; it was now possible for fire crews to meet with businesses and the wider public.

The Chair praised the reaction of WFRS to challenging circumstances following a succession of serious fires in the area; they had responded admirably. On behalf of the Committee, he expressed his thanks.

## **4. Work Programme**

### **Resolved:**

That the Committee agrees the updated 2021/22 Work Programme, as set out in the report, and notes the scheduled future meeting dates.

## **5. Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarterly Progress Report - Quarter 1 (April 2021 to June 2021)**

Steve Smith (Assistant Director, Commissioning Support Unit) introduced the report, stating that it drew upon information provided to Cabinet on 9 September 2021 in respect of performance against key business measures (KBMs), strategic risks and workforce management. He encouraged members to make use of Power BI, stating that this resource provided a means to examine data in detail, supporting scrutiny objectives.

Steve Smith highlighted some areas of good performance, stating that customer satisfaction levels had exceeded the set target of 85%. This was a positive trend. He reported that there had been a substantial increase in the number of people following the Council's social media channels. This was attributable to the Authority's response to COVID-19 and the drive to expand social media coverage and digital communication. The increase in social media followers proved the effectiveness of this response and the change in behaviours observed during the Pandemic.

Steve Smith drew attention to the commentaries attached to each of the KBMs outlined within the report where performance had not reached targeted levels. Improvement measures had been prioritised and detailed work was under way with specific departments to analyse issues affecting performance. He stated that the refreshed performance framework would prioritise continuous improvement to ensure that the organisation was moving in the right direction.

The Chair praised the response of the organisation to the additional pressures brought about by COVID-19, including a considerable uplift in demand for specific services.

In response to Councillor Matecki, Steve Smith advised that KBMs were reviewed on an annual basis, including consideration of relevant factors affecting performance. Performance was monitored by a dedicated team to prioritise continuous improvement. This methodology would inform development of the updated performance framework. He stated that Power BI provided a highly effective means of interrogating data to identify areas where remedial action and investment should be targeted.

Councillor Boad highlighted the importance of Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service's commitment to set a target of zero fire-related deaths and fire-related injuries. However, she emphasised that in some remote areas of the County, it was acknowledged that meeting targeted response times was extremely challenging. Similarly, there were instances where response time targets had been met but WFRS had been unable to save the individuals concerned. She emphasised the importance of setting targets that were configured to provide an accurate representation of performance. This was an area being examined by members of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Assurance Panel.

Councillor Crump (Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety) emphasised the importance of prevention work, which had progressed well as lockdown restrictions had eased. He recognised that in some instances, WFRS had acted promptly and proficiently but had been unable to prevent a fire-related death; however, it was right for the target to be set at zero. In respect of response times, he advised that rigorous, evidence-based analysis was utilised to determine the locations of fire stations. This provided the best possible means to ensure that WFRS could respond effectively.

**Resolved:**

That the Committee notes the progress of the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 – 2025 for the period as contained within the report.

**6. Priority Worker Help to Buy Scheme**

Rob Powell (Strategic Director for Resources) introduced the report which provided an outline of the concept to establish a Warwickshire Priority Worker Help to Buy (PWHTB) scheme which could be offered for new-build properties built by Warwickshire Property and Development Group (WPDG) on selected sites. The Committee's recommendations would be progressed to Cabinet ahead of its meeting on 14 October 2021.

Rob Powell advised that the proposed scheme supported the Council's Recovery Plan objective 7.8: "Working in partnership with Homes England, we will remove the blocks that have prevented some sites in Warwickshire from being developed, providing more and affordable housing whilst also supporting the recovery of our local economy." He stated that this provided a clear policy context for the introduction of the PWHTB scheme.

Rob Powell advised that the scheme was designed to encourage homeownership and support priority workers with affordable homes. Consequently, it would seek to address recruitment and retention challenges in key areas of the economy, providing a means to attract and retain priority workers in Warwickshire. He stated that, with effective targeting, the scheme would support levelling-up objectives.

Rob Powell stated that the PWHTB scheme constituted an attractive product for prospective homeowners. It offered high loan to value mortgages, lower deposits, and would be available to eligible applicants irrespective of whether they were first time buyers. The criteria were less restrictive than national schemes; it would be attuned to local market considerations.

Rob Powell advised that the scheme would apply exclusively to new build properties built by WPDG and must be the homeowner's only home. The scheme would not apply to all WPDG developments, a decision would be taken on a site-by-site basis as to whether PWHTB properties could be made available. He stated that financial considerations would limit the extent to which the scheme could be offered. WPDG would assess each site when developing a business plan to ascertain whether availability of help-to-buy homes would support sales and delivery of policy objectives. The Council would then review financial risks and make a site-specific value for money assessment. He stated that a robust decision-making framework would support targeted implementation of the scheme.

Rob Powell reported that the proposal was for the definition of what constituted a 'priority worker' to be decided on a site-by-site basis. This enabled flexibility, allowing the scheme to be tailored to and targeted to address local market requirements.

Rob Powell advised that an eligibility cap would be set. This would be based upon household income. A separate maximum price cap would also be set on a site-by-site basis in recognition of the variance in housing markets across Warwickshire.



Rob Powell reported that the PWHTB product was an equity-based loan, meaning that WCC would, in effect, take a share of the property. This tied the loan to the current house value, so if house prices fell, the loan would reduce in value. If house prices increased, the value of the loan would rise proportionately. He advised that an interest-free equity loan was proposed for a duration of five years. At the end of the five years, the buyer would either re-finance, or allow the loan to convert to an interest-bearing loan. The interest rate would be set at a rate to incentivise re-financing, mitigating the financial risk to WCC.

Rob Powell advised that WPDG would receive 75% of the sale value. This was a reason for taking a selective approach to the introduction of the scheme, as it would entail deferral of 25% of the overall receipt, delaying some of the contributions to WPDG's dividends. It would be necessary to assess the ongoing implications of this arrangement to ensure that WPDG could continue to resource its contribution to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Rob Powell reported that, if house prices continued to rise, the Authority would benefit from 25% of the change in market value. However, it would also be exposed to the risk of a fall in market values. It was important to note that this was a second charge; the first charge would be with the mortgage company.

Changes in value would need to be recognised in the Council's accounts. Consequently, Rob Powell stated that attention would be given to the levels of commercial risk reserves held. These had been determined prior to development of the PWHTB scheme. A commensurate adjustment would be made to cover any additional exposure to risk the scheme posed. Robust measures were proposed to protect the Authority from the impact of a potential drop in house prices. As roll-out of the scheme progressed, there would be greater certainty in managing risks.

Rob Powell advised that users of the scheme would be provided with the opportunity to buy out WCC's share of the equity on their property (known as 'staircasing up') in blocks of 5%. They could make use of this opportunity at any point during the agreement.

Rob Powell advised that considerable attention had been given to the scope of the definition of 'priority workers'. He advised that advantages had been identified associated with a narrow definition focusing upon NHS workers, educators, emergency services personnel, priority areas of local government, and others. However, the exclusion of roles in other areas such as prison and probation services, highways, public transport, supermarkets, care workers, and energy could lead to some disadvantages. It was felt that a local, targeted approach based upon local intelligence was preferred.

Councillor Tromans indicated his support for the initiative. He stated that site-by-site assessment based upon local knowledge was a sensible course of action, enabling a flexible approach. He stated that a scheme of this type was unlikely to be offered by most mainstream mortgage lenders who would be unwilling to postpone their first charge. However, he expressed concern at the regulatory and ethical implications if the interest rate formula involved annual accumulation. He suggested that communication with prospective applicants was required to make clear the rationale for why a second charge formed part of the terms of the scheme.

In response to Councillor Tromans, Rob Powell advised that the interest rate charged at the conclusion of the initial five-year period (in circumstances when a house buyer had elected not to

re-finance) was proposed to be set at x% plus Retail Price Index (RPI). It would not accumulate over successive years.

Councillor Tromans stated that applicants would benefit from improved clarity by modifying this arrangement so that the year six interest rate was fixed at the base rate plus a percentage. This would still provide security for the Council and incentivise homeowners to refinance.

Councillor Tromans suggested that scope to reassign contracts after the initial five-year period was required. This would mitigate the risk of disproportionately expensive administrative costs applying to the remainder of loans which had not been refinanced.

The Chair commented that this was an area of interest; he asked what measures would be in place in instances when users of the scheme were unable to refinance after the initial five-year period.

Andrew Felton (Assistant Director, Finance) advised that precise details relating to regulation of the scheme would require attention prior to its potential implementation. He stated that the concept of the scheme 'in principle' formed the focus of examination at this stage. The points raised by the Committee would be given attention prior to any proposal to seek formal approval for the scheme. He stated that a policy which left those accessing the scheme vulnerable to homelessness would not be pursued; however, a balance was necessary to incentivise a transition to conventional mortgage lenders.

Councillor Roberts praised the scheme, stating that efforts should be made to support the widest possible uptake. He commented that narrowing of the number of sites the scheme applied to and the definition of what constituted a 'priority worker' could be an obstacle to this. In instances where take-up was limited, would the pool of eligible priority workers be expanded?

Rob Powell stated that if the definition of 'priority worker' was cast too broadly, it would be difficult to manage public expectations against resources available to the Council. There was an awareness of significant recruitment challenges and shortages in some key areas. He commented that in some cases the affordability of homes was an obstacle to recruitment; WPDG provided a vehicle to address this. Ultimately, a flexible approach would allow targeted interventions to be made according to local market conditions.

In response to Councillor Spencer, Rob Powell advised that the prices of eligible new build properties would not be fixed and would be a matter for WPDG to decide in the usual way. However, the loan provided by the PWHTB scheme would be a fixed percentage of the market price.

Councillor Boad stated that house prices in Leamington Spa were extremely high, prompting many to seek more affordable options in Coventry and North Warwickshire. She commented that, as the scheme would be available only within some of the areas where WPDG developments were located, it was possible that prospective homeowners could face a long commute to their workplaces. The scheme should not encourage this outcome.

Councillor Boad commented that, taking account of rising house prices, a household might be able to afford a two-bedroom house; however, this would be inadequate for a large family. She asked

what provision would be available for households in the event of a change in circumstances, such as redundancy or illness.

Councillor Boad stated that many low-income households would not be able to afford to buy a house, even given the support offered by the PWHTB scheme. At present, these individuals were cut off from the prospect of homeownership.

Councillor Butlin (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property) stated that a recognition of rising house prices in certain parts of the County was a main driver for introduction of the scheme. He stated that priority workers, such as firefighters, needed affordable homes close to their place of work. The scheme enabled support for this by providing a platform for homeowners based on an expectation of career progression and improved wages. He praised the social value element of the scheme; however, he emphasised the importance of protecting public money by ensuring that the scheme was targeted to reach its intended market.

Councillor Butlin stated that the scheme was not open-ended, this provided security for the Council's investment. He stated that it offered a tool for WPDG to deploy to reach its affordable housing objectives. A targeted approach would enable the Council to make use of local intelligence to identify where priority worker shortages were present and intervene effectively. This provided an advantage over national schemes. He welcomed the observations made by the Committee, stating that, should the initiative be progressed, attention would be given to financial regulatory considerations.

In response to the points raised by Councillor Boad, Rob Powell stated that the PWHTB scheme would complement national help to buy schemes, and that this could be developed further with Government. It was not regarded as a 'silver bullet' which would solve the affordable housing challenge in Warwickshire; however, it would contribute to a wider solution. He advised that, if the early results of the scheme were not positive, there would be an opportunity to step back, limiting exposure to risk.

Rob Powell advised that the maximum price for a PWHTB property was likely to be self-selecting due to the cap on joint income and the sum mortgage companies would be prepared to lend. The Council would adopt a prudent approach; however, even on a limited scale, the scheme could make an important difference to the lives of Warwickshire residents.

Councillor Birdi expressed support for the targeted approach to determining eligibility of priority workers according to site-specific requirements. He asked how decisions would be reached in respect of the types of accommodation made available to PWHTB applicants.

Rob Powell advised that planning authorities would be instrumental in approving sites for development as well as the mix of housing available on a particular site in the usual way for any development. WPDG would support this process and input would be sought from an officer governance group prior to recommendation being made to Cabinet. Local requirements would be taken into consideration and the local member/s engaged appropriately on each site.

In response to Councillor Daniell, Rob Powell advised that the value of the equity-based loan on offer would increase or decrease proportionately with the market value of the property. This was a key factor for both the Council and purchaser of the property. It would be necessary for a prospective house buyer to enter into the agreement from an informed perspective and be well

advised of their options at the conclusion of the initial five-year period. He stated that priority workers were likely to benefit from good job security and opportunities for career progression.

The Chair summarised the points of debate and sought the view of the Committee in respect of a resolution. It was agreed that the Committee was supportive of the proposal and that its observations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration as part of the decision-making process.

**Resolved:**

That the Committee:

1. Notes the proposals outlined by the Priority Worker Help to Buy (PWHTB) report;
2. Supports the concept of the scheme outlined in principle;
3. Agrees that its observations be forwarded to Cabinet and asks that they be taken into consideration as part of the decision-making process.

**7. Customer Feedback Overview Report**

John Findlay (Service Manager, Business and Customer Support) introduced the report, the purpose of which was to provide an overview of the organisation's performance in responding to customer complaints, including outcomes and timeliness of complaints processing. The report identified areas of principal concern to customers alongside details of complaints upheld (partially or fully), where an apology or compensation had been provided, and details of cases forwarded to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

John Findlay advised that information captured using the Authority's 'Contact Us' system provided a means to categorise complaints and identify areas where learning from feedback could be derived. He stated that during 2020/21, the proportion of complaint cases resolved within the agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA) timeframe was 77.77%. This surpassed the 70% target. He reported that the proportion of complaints received through digital channels had increased during 2020/21.

John Findlay stated that an examination of the reasons for complaints showed three areas which constituted 90% of all complaints received. Of this amount, 8% related to WCC service standards; 9.5% related to the physical environment; and 69% related to communication. This provided a clear focus for the Customer Relations Team. He advised that an analysis of findings, with input from ICT and Business Intelligence, had provided a means to utilise customer feedback to seek improvements. The Customer Experience Strategy offered a means to accomplish this, including a project examining schools admissions systems which had shown good results.

In response to Councillor Roberts, John Findlay advised that complaints received outside of digital channels (for example by a letter or telephone call) were transferred to the 'Contact Us' system to enable comments to be captured, recorded, and tracked.

Councillor Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Economy and Place) praised the work undertaken by Business and Customer Support, stating that impressive progress had been made since 2018

when it was resolved to undertake in-depth analysis of customer feedback. She stated that there was a need to listen to residents' concerns and respond positively.

Councillor Tromans highlighted the improved response rate of complaints managed within required timescales in 2020/21. He acknowledged the considerable effort required to achieve this level of progress.

In response to Councillor Tromans, John Findlay advised that where it was considered that in-depth analysis was required to resolve a complaint, the Customer Relations Team would work closely with the relevant service area. This provided a means for service level risk registers and practices at a local level to be updated. Previously, the Customer Relations Team had taken a less prominent role in this process. The current arrangement provided improved support for service areas.

In response to Councillor Boad, John Findlay advised that the Marketing and Communications Team monitored and responded to complaints received on social media. Should an official complaint be received via social media, it would be referred to the Customer Relations Team.

Rob Powell (Strategic Director for Resources) stated that an opportunity was present to develop links between social media and customer feedback processes. Social media provided valuable insight for the Authority. He stated that, at present, resources were not available to pursue this line of inquiry in detail, but it constituted an area of future interest.

Councillor Butlin (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property) commented that the transition in ways of working brought about by the Pandemic had resulted in some disruption to council services. This coincided with increased demand for public services due to COVID-19. He stated that, in these circumstances, it was reasonable to expect complaint figures to be much higher. The Authority would continue to heed customer feedback to respond to changing circumstances and drive improvement.

**Resolved:**

That the Committee notes the WCC Corporate Customer Feedback Overview report.

**8. Any Urgent Matters**

There were none.

The meeting rose at 15:25.

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Chair

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**Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Work Programme 2021/2022 – December 2021**

Item / Lead Officer	Report detail	Date of next report
Public Question Time/Questions to the Portfolio Holders / Work Programme	Standing items for every meeting.	* Standing item
Council Plan 2020 – 2025 Performance Report	Council Plan 2020 – 2025 Performance Report	* Standing item
Refresh of the 'Our People' Strategy	A report to the OSC prior to progression of the refreshed Our People Strategy to the Staff and Pensions Committee (Sarah Duxbury/Rich Thomas).	23 February 2022
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service	HMICFRS Inspection Report – findings of the Inspectorate and response of WFRS.	TBC (Ben Brook to advise)
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service	Verbal Update: Impact of the construction phase of HS2 on Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service.	TBC
Member Oversight Group (WPDG / WRIF)	Annual Report of the Member Oversight Group to be presented to the Committee each year to enable attention to be given to the performance, progress, and priorities of WDPG and WRIF.	TBC (recurring annually)

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## Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 December 2021

### Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarter 2 Performance Progress Report

Period Under Review: 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021

#### Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Considers progress on the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 - 2025 for the period as contained in the report.

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council Plan Quarter 2 Performance Progress Report for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 was considered and approved by Cabinet on 25 November. The report provides an overview of progress of the key elements of the Council Plan, specifically in relation to performance against Key Business Measures (KBMs), strategic risks and workforce management. A separate Financial Monitoring report for the period covering both the revenue and capital budgets, reserves and delivery of the savings plan was presented and considered at the same Cabinet meeting.
- 1.2. This report draws on information extracted from both Cabinet reports to provide this Committee with information relevant to its remit.
- 1.3. Comprehensive performance reporting is now enabled through the following link to Power BI [full OSC Quarter 2 2021/22 Performance Report](#).

#### 2. Council Plan 2020 - 2025: Strategic Context and Performance Commentary

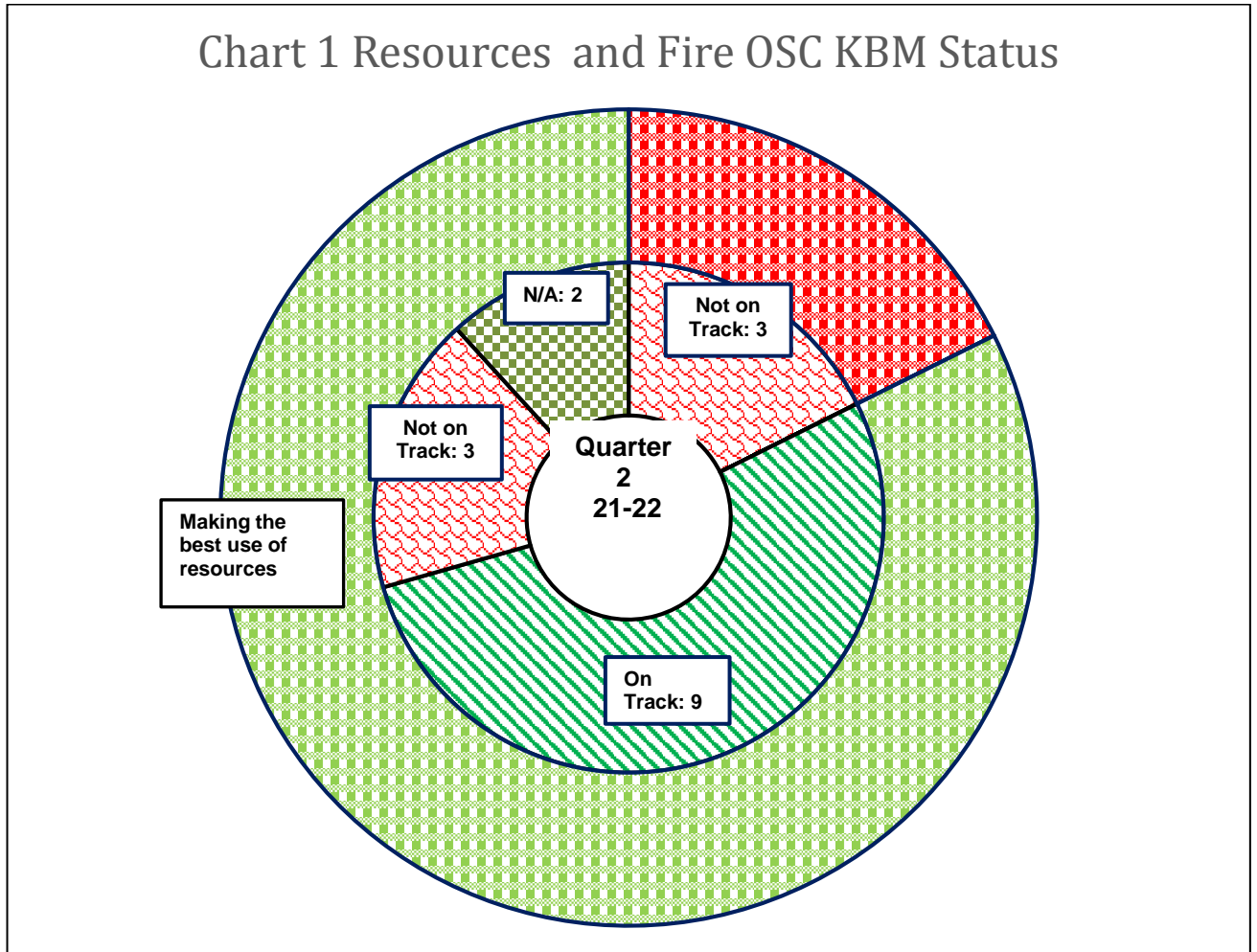
- 2.1 The Council Plan 2020 – 2025 aims to achieve two high level Outcomes:
  - **Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent;** and,
  - **Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure.**

Delivery of the outcomes is supported by **WCC making the best use of its resources.**

Progress to achieve these outcomes is assessed against 54 KBMs.

Outcome	No. of KBMs	No. of KBMs available for reporting at Quarter 2
<b>Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent</b>	27	23
<b>Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure</b>	13	8
<b>WCC making the best use of its resources</b>	14	12

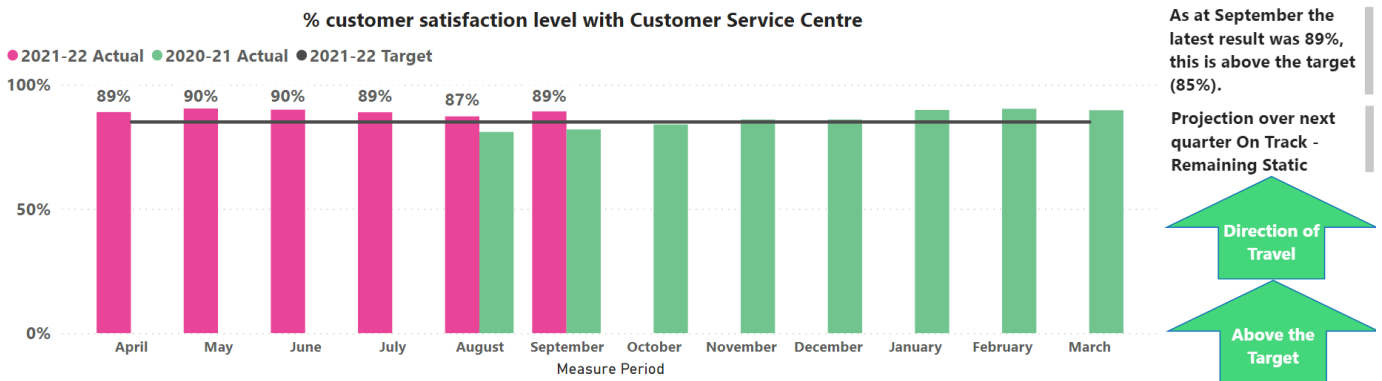
- 2.2 Overall, the Council continues to maintain its robust performance across the board in the face of increased and changing demand, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in significant changes in how services are delivered. Now restrictions have been removed Council Services are focusing more resource on their core work and less on specific Covid response, which is now being reflected in KBM performance.
- 2.3 Of the 54 KBMs, 17 are in the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and at Quarter 2, 15 KBMs are currently available for reporting. Of the 2 not being reported, 1 measure is an annual one which will be reported at Year End and 1 has delayed data (% of Pension Fund Returns Compared to Target) and will be reported as soon as possible). 56% (9) KBMs are On Track and 38% (6) are Not on Track.
- 2.4 Chart 1 (on the following page) summarises KBM status at Quarter 2 by agreed Outcomes



2.5 Of the 56% (9) KBMs which are On Track at Quarter 2, there are 2 of note as Areas of Good Progress which are detailed in Table 1 below:

### WCC makes the best use of its resources

#### % customer satisfaction level with Customer Contact Centre



Current performance narrative:

During Quarter 2, the Customer Service Centre (CSC) has continued to experience an increase in call volumes (5%) up from 61,244 calls answered in Quarter 1 to 64,192 in Quarter 2. This is reflective of the corporate response to Covid-19 to ensure the most vulnerable can access services and support through all channels including telephone e.g., Covid-19 hotline with the focus shifting more towards testing queries, Covid-19 Local Grant Scheme (welfare support) and Adult Social Care.

Data for this measure is provided via telephone surveys and the customer satisfaction levels continue to remain consistently above target.

Improvement activity:

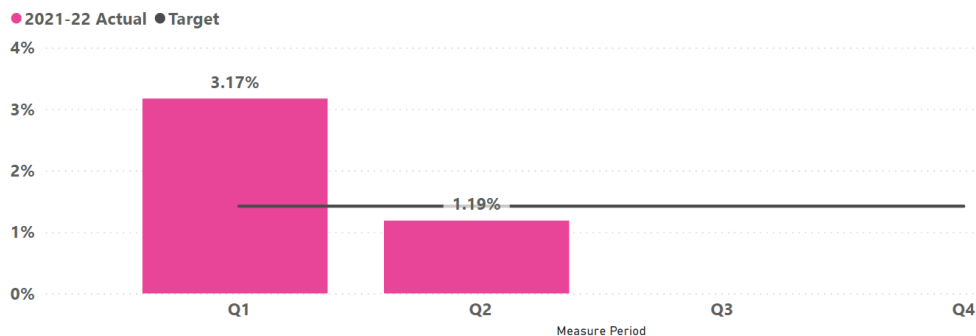
The Service will continue its quality assurance processes as well as monitor demand and resource availability and take appropriate action as and when needed.

Explanation of the projection trajectory:

The CSC is operating both virtual and from office bases and has increased its service offer in response to Covid-19 and customer needs. Despite the increased call volume and challenging circumstances, individual customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and this is reflected in this measure and it is expected this will continue to be on or above target going forward.

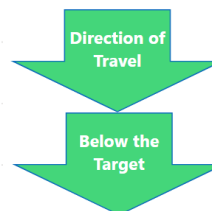
### % Variation DSG overspend compared to DSG recovery plan (KBM)

% Variation DSG overspend compared to Budget Provision



As at Quarter 2 the latest result was 1.19%, this is below the target: 1.42%

Projection over next quarter - On track - Remaining Static.



#### Current performance:

Please note that this is a new measure. The target of 1.45% is based upon the high needs block anticipated overspend for 2021/22 from the DSG recovery plan. The target assumes nil forecast variance for the other three DSG blocks. The actual percentage of 1.19% reflects the period 6 forecast combined overspend of all four DSG blocks, which is in line with national reporting standards for DSG. The high needs block overspend element represents 1.58% which is slightly over the target of 1.45%. The shift from Quarter 1 is mainly due to work being completed on the positive impact of the transformation programme on forecasts and having now been able to model the impact of the increased funding announced. The good progress on transformations is partly off-set though by increased residential education costs associated with more out of county placements for children with disabilities. The high needs overspend position is offset by underspends on the other three DSG blocks.

#### Improvement activity:

The position has improved since Quarter 1 due to efforts by the Service to reduce the overspends in mainstream school top ups and post-16 as a result of transformation activity now making a difference. The overspend that remains is largely due to Independent Special Provision and Other Local Authority placements (OLA) and an increased number of places at Warwickshire special schools. There is a Corporate Board deep dive on Education finance planned and the momentum will be maintained on the SEND Transformation Programme, which is demonstrating it is having the desired impact now.

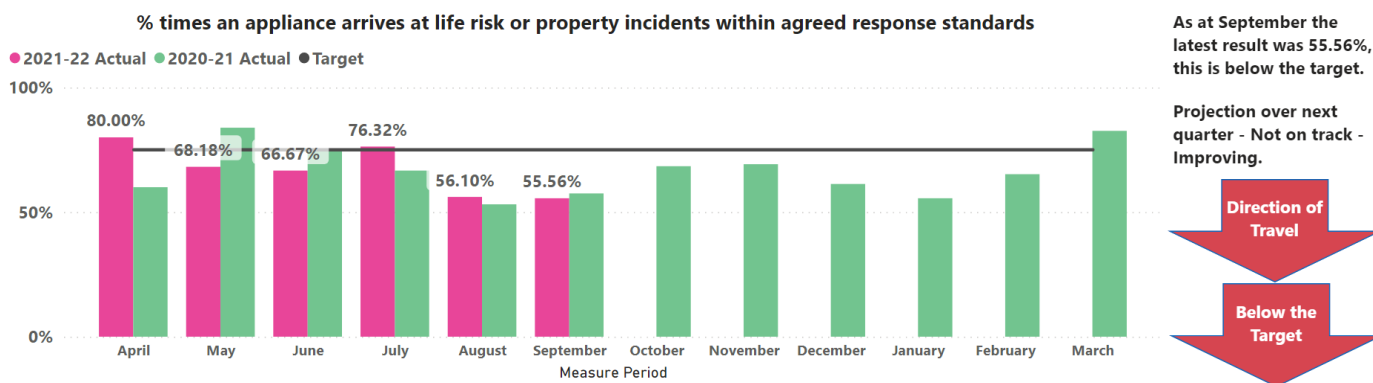
#### Explanation of the projection trajectory:

It is not anticipated that reporting will change significantly between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3. Please note that census data submitted in January is likely to impact the Early Years block resulting in a change in the projection.

2.6 Of the 38% (6) KBMs that are Not on Track at Quarter 2, 3 KBMs require highlighting below with details of the current performance narrative, improvement activity and explanation of projected trajectory:

**Warwickshire’s communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent**

**% times an appliance arrives at life risk or property incidents within agreed response standards**



**Current performance:**

The April to September 2021 figure 67.14% is a slight improvement on the year end 2020/21 figure of 66.54%.

The beginning of a return to normality post-covid has brought an increase in operational activity but no reduction in staff absences due to positive Covid-19 tests or self-isolating. Increased social contact outside of the work environment has increased Covid-19 related absence. The resultant reductions in crewing levels have a direct impact on appliance availability and attendance times. In addition, this quarter saw two significant, extended multi-pump incidents which reduced the Service's immediately available resources over a period of several days.

**Improvement activity:**

The Service deploys staff flexibly across duty systems to provide optimum operational crewing at any given time. 24 new wholetime recruits are due to join the Service in the next 6 months which should improve the wholetime availability picture. Recruitment and retention of On-Call firefighters is an ongoing and increasingly difficult challenge, reflecting the national picture, and the Service now has a dedicated On-Call support officer looking at options to address this.

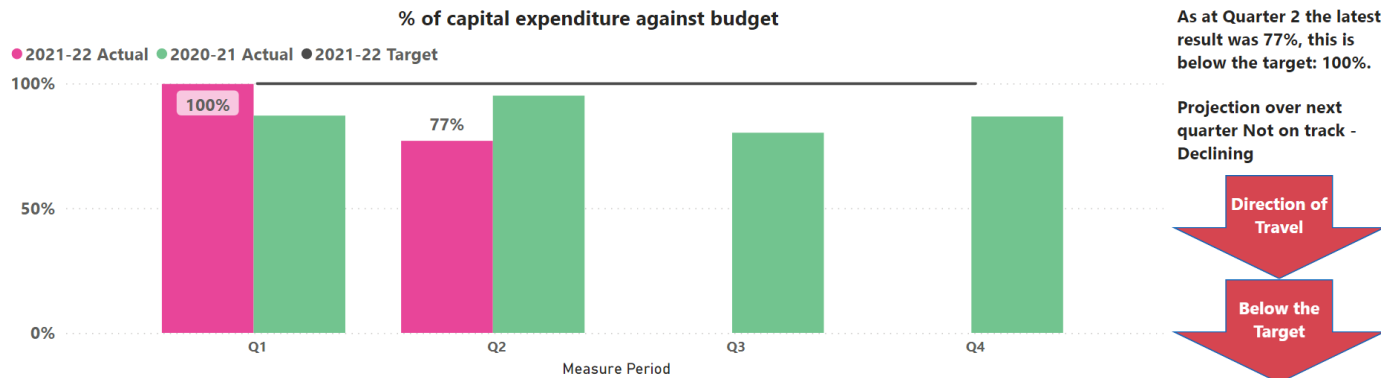
The Integrated Risk Management Plan Assurance Panel is reviewing the targets around response.

**Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not on Track - Improving**

In the longer term the Service Asset Management Plan sets out the intention to relocate some whole-time response points onto transport nodes across the County with the intention of improving response to emergency incidents outside of the current predicted 10 minute travel time, particularly those on the motorway network.

## WCC makes the best use of its resources

### % of Capital Expenditure Against Budget



#### Current Performance:

As a result of reviewing projects the forecast has been reduced significantly since Quarter 1, the Quarter 2 capital forecast is now £168.424m against the approved budget of £218.783m, resulting in an underspend of £50.360m. There is a significant impact currently stemming from labour shortages and material shortages due to supply chain issues and haulage problems. We are also seeing significant inflationary increases in all aspects of scheme spend where we aren't protected by fixed price contracts or are just going out to tender. The impact of Covid-19 on supply chains globally, EU Exit impact on supply chains and labour, and specific localised labour and materials pressures arising from demand from HS2 and the Commonwealth Games, are all contributing to a difficult capital construction environment.

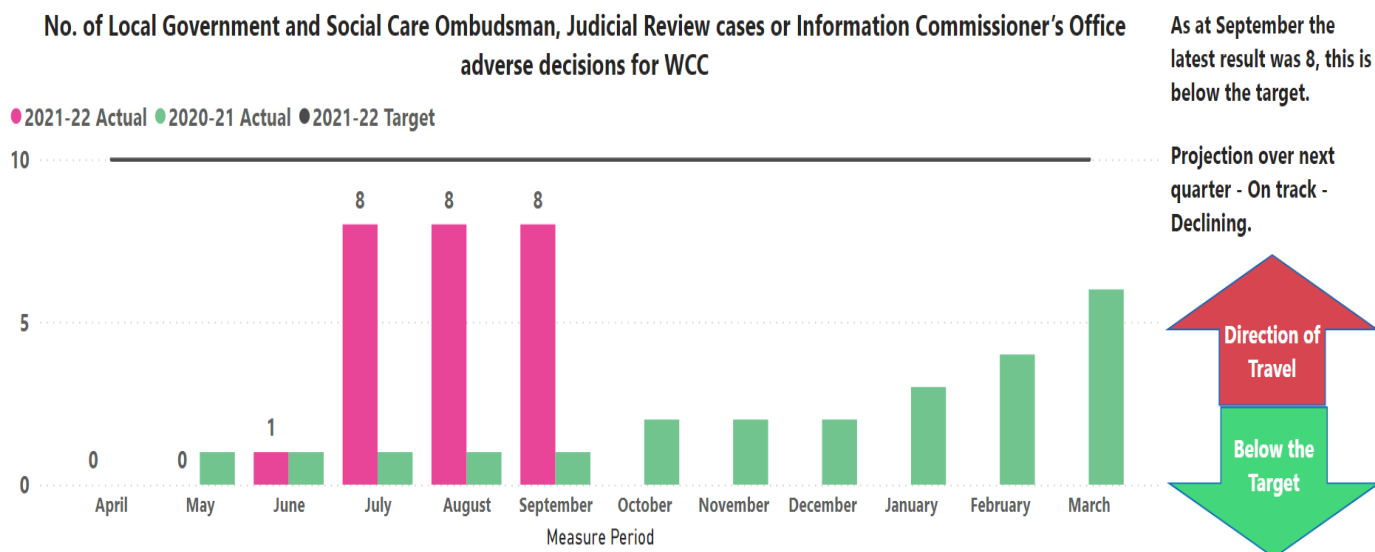
#### Improvement activity:

Given the impact of both national and specific localised labour and materials shortages, it is likely the forecast will continue to reduce as the year progresses, which may also be a tactical decision for some schemes to avoid significant short-term cost increases driven by difficult market conditions, which could reduce the overall amount of capital works able to be delivered.

#### Explanation of the projection trajectory: Not on Track – Declining

There is a risk this position will deteriorate for the reasons set out above.

### No. of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, Judicial Review cases or Information Commissioner's Office adverse decisions for WCC



#### Current performance:

After 2 quarters there have been 8 adverse decisions against the Council - 7 LGSCO upheld decisions and 1 upheld ICO decision. Of the 7 LGSCO upheld decisions 4 relate to Adult Social Care (2 relating to care costs, 1 an assessment of need and 1 complaint about a care home) and 2 relate to Education Services - although in both cases the Ombudsman upheld the complaint despite finding no fault with the admissions panels. 1 related to Children & Families and was in respect of unpaid care charges to a carer which the Council agreed to resolve. The upheld ICO complaint relates to Fire & Rescue and related to a request for information about incident details attended by Fire & Rescue and the Council's initial decision to refuse disclosure. These numbers will include matters that were delayed due to the Ombudsman's suspension of investigations due to Covid-19. As a consequence a higher number is expected this year as it will include those matters which would ordinarily have been investigated last year.

#### Improvement activity:

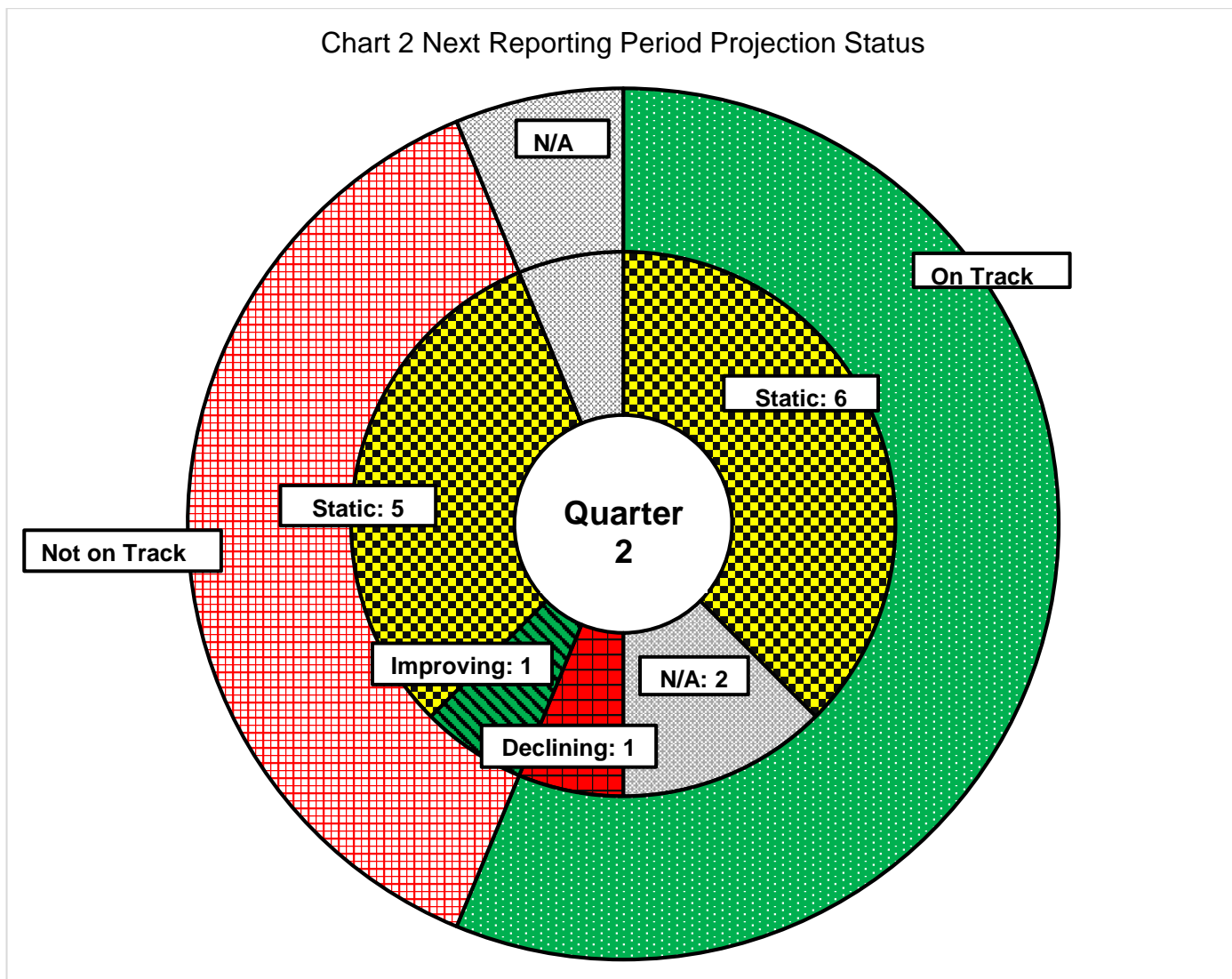
It is difficult to improve on this as decisions that are likely to be upheld by either the LGSCO or the ICO in the next quarter are already being investigated. However, lessons learnt from all upheld complaints are always considered and shared with relevant officers.

#### Explanation of the projection trajectory: Not on Track – Declining

There are currently a further 11 complaints of which Council is aware, being investigated by the LGSCO - 1 of these has a draft upheld decision (relates to a complaint about nursery fees). There are also 2 complaints about WCC currently being investigated by the ICO. Two potential Judicial Review cases have recently been received in relation to Education Services although these are both only at the pre-action stage and therefore it is unlikely that there will be any final determinations this financial year.



2.6 Chart 2 below illustrates the considered forecast performance projection over the forthcoming reporting period



2.7 It is forecast that over the next period overall performance will be similar to current performance. Of the 56% (9) of measures reporting On Track, 6 will remain static, 2 are N/A because they are annual measures and one is forecast to decline:

- Number of days sick leave per FTE (rolling 12 months)

2.8 The Pandemic has impacted the majority of these measures leading to delays in programmes of activity and both additional and frequently changing service demands. Improvement activity is in place to improve performance across all measures and this is under constant review to ensure it is robust. Full context on all measures is provided in the Power BI reports.

2.9 The Council is developing a new performance management framework alongside the Council Plan refresh, which aims to provide a sharpened focus on performance and trajectory and will better support delivery of the Organisation's new priorities as outlined in the refreshed Council Plan. A comprehensive review of the entire Framework is in progress ready for implementation in 2022/23 and a Cross Party Member Working Group is supporting the review and has met twice.

## Financial Commentary

### 3.1 Revenue Budget

3.1.1 The Council has set the performance threshold in relation to revenue spend as zero overspend and no more than a 2% underspend. The following Table 3 shows the forecast position for the Services concerned.

Service Area	Approved Budget	Service Forecast	(Under) /Over spend	Variation as a % of budget	Change from Q1 forecast	Represented by:				Remaining service variance as a % of budget	Remaining Service Variance change from Q1
						Investment Funds	Impact on Earmarked Reserves	Covid Impact	Remaining Service Variance		
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m
Business and Customer Services	19.051	24.167	5.116	26.85%	1.233	0	-0.007	5.097	0.026	0.14%	-0.878
Commissioning Support Unit	7.180	10.074	2.894	40.31%	-3.713	-0.612	0	3.569	-0.063	-0.88%	-0.106
Enabling Services	25.778	23.511	-2.267	-8.79%	-0.667	-0.696	0.097	0.098	-1.766	-6.85%	-0.538
Finance	6.336	6.447	0.111	1.75%	0.045	0	0.069	0.126	-0.084	-1.33%	-0.043
Governance and Policy	2.591	3.679	1.088	41.99%	-0.276	-0.015	0.015	0.970	0.118	4.55%	-0.760
Fire and Rescue	22.081	22.234	0.153	0.69%	0.194	-0.025	0.029	0.072	0.077	0.35%	-0.271
<b>Total</b>	<b>83.017</b>	<b>90.112</b>	<b>7.095</b>	<b>8.55%</b>	<b>-3.184</b>	<b>-1.348</b>	<b>0.203</b>	<b>9.932</b>	<b>1.692</b>	<b>-2.04%</b>	<b>-2.596</b>

Table 3

3.1.2 Business and Customer Services forecast an overspend of £3.698m at the end of Quarter 2 including £3.679m Covid pressures. Covid pressures will be funded from Covid grant income and they predominantly relate to welfare support and contact tracing. After taking account of Covid pressures, the remaining service overspend is £0.027m (0.14%), which has reduced by £0.878m since Q1 as the result of some detailed work taking place to thoroughly review all salary forecasts for the service area, combined with ensuring that all Covid related costs are charged correctly.

3.1.3 Commissioning Support Unit forecast an overspend of £2.894m at the end of Quarter 2 including £3.570m Covid pressures. Covid pressures will be funded from Covid grant income. After taking account of Covid related pressures and the impact of

Investment/Transformation funds the remaining service variance is an underspend of £0.064m (0.88% underspend).

3.1.4 Enabling Services is reporting an underspend of £2.267m including Covid pressures of £0.098m. Covid pressures will be funded from Covid grant income. The service variance after taking into account Covid funding and planned movements in reserves is £1.766m (6.85% underspend).

3.1.5 Finance is reporting overspend of £0.110m including £0.126m Covid pressure, which will be funded from Covid grant income. After taking account of Covid pressures, the remaining service underspend is £0.043. (1.33% underspend).

3.1.6 Governance and Policy is reporting an overspend of £1.087m including £0.970m Covid pressures which will be funded from Covid grant income. After taking account of Covid pressures, the remaining service overspend is £0.118m (4.55% overspend).

3.1.7 Fire and Rescue service reporting an overspend of £0.153m including £0.072m Covid pressures funded by Covid grant income. After taking into account the impact of Covid and planned movements in reserves the remaining service variation is £0.077m (0.35% overspend).

### 3.2. Delivery of the Savings Plan

3.2.1. The savings targets and forecast outturn for the Services are shown below: in Chart 3.

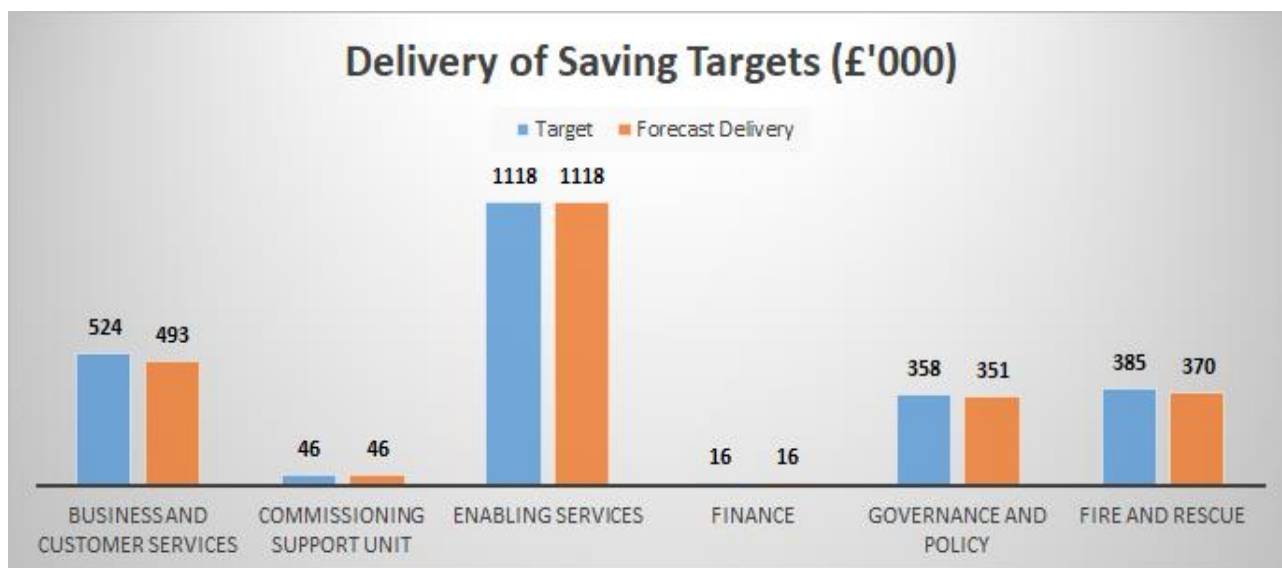


Chart 3

3.2.2 Commissioning Support Unit, Enabling Services and Finance are forecasting to deliver their saving target in full for the current financial year.

3.2.3 Business and Customer services expected to deliver a shortfall of £0.031m (6% of the saving target) due to increased demand on the service leading to reduced saving

opportunities via vacancy management.

3.2.4 Governance and Policy are expected to deliver a short fall of £0.007m (2% of their target) due to increased SLA cost.

3.2.5 Fire and rescue Service expected to deliver a shortfall of £0.015m (4% their target) due to a delay on the Training capital programme.

### 3.3 Capital Programme

3.3.1. The Table 4 below shows the approved capital budget for the Services and any delays into future years.

	<b>Approved budget for current and future years (£'000)</b>	<b>2021/22 Forecast £'000</b>	<b>Delays from 2021/22 into Future Years (%)</b>	<b>All Current and Future Years Forecast (£'000)</b>
Business and Customer Services	1,630	471	0%	1,629
Enabling Services	28,055	24,327	12.5%	27,905
Governance and Policy	3,626	2,826	0%	3,996
Fire and Rescue	7,595	3,902	17.1%	7,595

**Enabling Services** - £3.510 million delay caused by:

- £3.230m Development of Rural Broadband - The forecast expenditure on the project has reduced in 2021/22. This is subject to delays in delivery due to: a) the project working in more rural areas b) a national shortage of civil engineering contractors b) revised DCMS guidance regarding finances and project end dates and c) the recent Covid 19 pandemic. In addition, DCMS has put in place an annual Grant Gainshare clawback process which has resulted in a reduction in the Grant claimed back by DCMS in 2021/22 with the remainder expected to be claimed in yearly requests based upon DCMS's gainshare calculations.
- £0.280m IT Infrastructure 2021-22: We are not fully utilising all WCC sites, therefore hardware spend will be low in this financial year. There is also an initiative to move to the Cloud so hardware spend will only take place where there is a risk for out of date or end of life devices.

**Fire and Rescue – £1.297 million delay caused by:**

- £1.237m Fire and Rescue Training Programme: Lea Marston and EA Water site - The project slippage is due to major decisions being made about the viability of the Lea Marston site and securing an alternative site for the planned works.
- £0.061m Fire Emergency Service Network (ESN) Preparedness - National delays have meant that the expected timelines for the ESN project has been extended.

Table 4

**4. Supporting Papers**

A copy of the full report and supporting documents that went to Cabinet on 25 November is available via the committee system.

**5. Environmental Implications**

None specific to this report.

**6. Background Papers**

None

Authors:	Vanessa Belton, Delivery Lead Business Intelligence Performance, Planning and Quality <a href="mailto:vanessabelton@warwickshire.gov.uk">vanessabelton@warwickshire.gov.uk</a> Mandeep Kalsi, Performance Officer <a href="mailto:mandeepkalsi@warwickshire.gov.uk">mandeepkalsi@warwickshire.gov.uk</a> Amber Soni, Performance Officer <a href="mailto:ambersoni@warwickshire.gov.uk">ambersoni@warwickshire.gov.uk</a> Natalia Szabo, Lead Commissioner Finance Strategy <a href="mailto:nataliaszabo@warwickshire.gov.uk">nataliaszabo@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Assistant Directors	Andrew Felton, Assistant Director Finance <a href="mailto:Andrewfelton@warwickshire.gov.uk">Andrewfelton@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
	Craig Cusack, Assistant Director Enabling Services <a href="mailto:craigcusack@warwickshire.gov.uk">craigcusack@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
	Ben Brook, Chief Fire Officer; <a href="mailto:benbrook@warwickshire.gov.uk">benbrook@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
	Sarah Stear, Assistant Director Business and Customer Services <a href="mailto:sarahstear@warwickshire.gov.uk">sarahstear@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
	Sarah Duxbury, Assistant Director Governance and Policy <a href="mailto:sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk">sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
	Steve Smith, Assistant Director Commissioning Support Unit <a href="mailto:stevesmith@warwickshire.gov.uk">stevesmith@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>

Strategic Directors	Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities <a href="mailto:Markryder@warwickshire.gov.uk">Markryder@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
	Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources <a href="mailto:robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk">robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Portfolio Holders	Cllr P Butlin, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property <a href="mailto:cllrbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk">cllrbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
	Cllr A Jenns, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation <a href="mailto:cllrjenns@warwickshire.gov.uk">cllrjenns@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
	Cllr A Crump, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Fire & Community Safety <a href="mailto:andycrump@warwickshire.gov.uk">andycrump@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>

## Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Estates Master Planning (EMP)

15 December 2021

#### Recommendation

That the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider and comment on the content of the report and the proposals for future activity to progress the Estates Masterplan.

#### 1. Executive Summary

1.1 The continued development of the Estates Masterplanning and Workplace Redesign for Shire Hall and Old Shire Hall has been aligned to the Reinstatement of Services. For the Period 19/7/21 to 15/10/21, five Pilot Teams have been working from Shire Hall aligned to the following objectives:

- To understand how all elements of the 'How we work Programme' support pilot teams to develop their hybrid working model and what adjustments we need to make to support this.
- Use the feedback obtained from this pilot to inform the future redesign of Shire Hall/Old Shire Hall and other buildings across the estate, as we seek to improve the utilisation of our sites/rationalise our Warwick portfolio.
- Understand how we successfully bring services back to a safe working environment and test some of the concepts of our final Workplace Redesign.

1.2 The five pilot teams were:

- Resources
  - Legal and Democratic Services
  - Strategic Finance and
  - HR Enabling
- Communities
  - Engineering Design Services and
  - Transport and Highways.

## 2. Conclusions

2.1 The Pilot has been and continues to be impacted by people being reluctant or nervous to come into the office. The pilot identified the following key findings:

- The top three reasons that staff are returning to the office relate to collaboration activity. As a result there is likely to be a requirement for additional collaboration space. Staff have indicated that they do not believe they need to be in the office to undertake their roles, but do wish to be able to attend to collaborate.
- A number of external factors have affected the desire/willingness of staff to return to the office during the Pilot. These include
  - the increase in Covid infection rates,
  - “Pingdemics”,
  - people isolating to protect others,
  - the petrol shortage, and
  - to increase ventilation, all windows are opened, and areas can be found to be colder.
- Hybrid meeting room technology has been successfully introduced and is welcomed. There is a desire for this technology to be standardised and widely available
- The use of the terms “agile” to describe a way of remote working for staff and “hybrid” to describe the use of technology to accommodate both in person and virtual attendance at the same meeting can be confusing for staff and would benefit from greater clarity. Although we have seen some staff move away from flex time arrangements in favour of a move onto agile contracts, the move has not been as great as we would have hoped and demonstrated that more work should be done to highlight the benefits of agile working.
- Pilot Teams are not in the same place on the change curve. For some, freedom and choice were liberating, for others the lack of corporate set rules caused difficulties with embedding the offer within teams.
- It takes time to embed an agile working culture within a Service and the Services who had taken steps to adopt an agile working culture pre-pandemic adapted much more quickly.



- 2.2 In summary, the results from the pilot are not conclusive due to a number of matters outside of the control of the organisation and the differing positions of teams on the change curve. Further piloting will not overcome this. Moving to “normalize” working in Shire Hall is therefore considered to be appropriate.
- 2.3 To normalize working in Shire Hall, the Project is recommending an interim reshaping of Shire Hall to accommodate more collaboration areas at the expense of some individual workstations. This recognises the preferred workstyle of staff

### 3. Analysis

- 3.1 At the outset of the pilot a number of success and productivity measures were created to support the pilot and help understand the results, these measures and findings are as follows:
- **Workstation utilisation is on average >75% Monday to Friday.** This measure was not met, desk utilisation is on average between 15% and 20% and typically staff are attending the office for a full day. Utilisation is currently higher on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays and low utilisation relates, in part, to the ongoing and changing Covid situation.
  - **Hybrid Meeting technology was successfully used 90% of the time.** This measure was not met, technology was successfully used 80% of the time.
  - **Understand why colleagues are using office space.** Colleagues came into the office for the following reasons:
    - I needed the support of colleagues and enjoyed the interaction – 20%
    - To collaborate with colleagues, members, partners or members of the public –17.8%
    - To attend a meeting 16.7%
    - My manager had asked me to come in 9.6%
    - I needed to support or provide peer to peer learning 6.2%
    - I needed a quieter working location 5.7%
    - I needed to attend a hybrid meeting 4.6%
    - Other 19.4%
  - **The Percentage of staff on agile working contracts (WCC total) % of staff on agile working contracts (Pilot teams).** Except for Transport and Highways who pro-actively managed the transfer of staff from Flex contracts, there has been little change to Agile Contract take up.

- **Productivity Measure: Staff have said they feel more productive:**
  - Home or remotely 52%
  - Working between remote and office locations 36%
  - Working in the office 7%
  - My productivity was equal whether I worked from home or in the office 5%

## **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Once plans are developed, and benefits identified, for the next stage of the Estates Masterplan these will be costed and taken through the appropriate governance processes.

## **5. Environmental Implications.**

- 5.1 The Council is committed to reducing its environmental impact and becoming net zero by 2030. The Estate Masterplanning activity will contribute towards reducing the Council's carbon usage in a number of ways:
- 5.1.1 A lower carbon buildings strategy is being developed and will support a move away from fossil fuel usage.
  - 5.1.2 The Estates Master Planning will align the lower carbon technology investment required to those assets that are most likely to remain operational in the long term.
  - 5.1.3 Property is recognised as a substantial contributor to carbon emissions, therefore any reductions in office space will lead to reduced carbon emissions, supporting our net zero carbon targets
  - 5.1.4 Reduction in mileage claims submitted by staff, given the promotion of agile working and the investment in technology.
  - 5.1.5 Short term there is evidence to suggest that staggered commuting times as a result of introducing agile working will have a beneficial environmental impact with less congestion in Town Centres.
  - 5.1.6 Over the longer term it is expected that utility usage will be reduced with a corresponding carbon reduction aligned to the size of the portfolio. This is likely to balance increasing utility costs.

## 6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 6.1 Interim Collaboration space and revised booking systems will be implemented between January and April 2022.
- 6.2 By December 2022 the following activities (including relevant procurement and redesign work) will be undertaken
- 6.2.1 Introduction of interim agile working in Shire Hall (SH) to enable additional Services to utilise the space with emphasis on additional collaboration and 1:1 spaces.
- 6.2.2 Development of an “end state” Agile Working Protocol and design for Shire Hall that sets a vision of how we work across core settings.
- 6.2.3 Clarification and communication of our ‘Working from Home’ Offer which should be considered alongside the Agile Working Protocol.
- 6.2.4 Progress the future “end state” design of Shire Hall with an emphasis on increasing the amount of 1:1 and collaboration space available.
- 6.2.5 Enable the hybrid technology set-up in collaboration space to become our service standard for these spaces.
- 6.2.6 Senior Leadership Team will continue to advocate agile working and support the required culture change, checking in with their services, supporting and challenging when necessary.

### Appendices

None

### Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Martin Lewis	<a href="mailto:martinlewis@warwickshire.gov.uk">martinlewis@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Assistant Director	Craig Cusack	<a href="mailto:craigcusack@warwickshire.gov.uk">craigcusack@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Strategic Director	Strategic Director for Resources	<a href="mailto:robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk">robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property	<a href="mailto:cllrbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk">cllrbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>

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## Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Update on the Voice of Warwickshire Residents' Panel

15 December 2021

#### Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Notes the progress made on establishing the 'Voice of Warwickshire' residents' panel.
2. Utilises intelligence gathered through the Panel to help ensure that the Council's future policy development is informed by the views of our residents where appropriate.
3. Receives a further report in early 2023 that evaluates the impact and success of the Panel.

#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Cabinet has previously approved (October 2020) the creation of a Warwickshire residents' panel to help inform the Council's policy making. This would deliver a specific action set out in the Customer Experience Strategy but, more broadly, provide a mechanism for the Council to engage with residents and take their views into account on a range of policy areas.
- 1.2 This commitment was reiterated at Cabinet (July 2021) as part of plans to develop a more integrated approach to strategic planning. As work on the new Council Plan took place, the emerging residents' panel was acknowledged as an important part of our approach to informing the delivery of the plan.
- 1.3 Since then, work has taken place to recruit residents to the panel, now branded as the 'Voice of Warwickshire'. The panel will be available as a mechanism for engagement in January 2022.
- 1.4 The project has been funded on a pilot basis for twelve months. The impact of the project will be monitored throughout this period and, if successful, proposals made around the potential extension of this approach.
- 1.5 This paper provides details on the make-up of the panel, how it will be used and how it fits into our wider Consultation & Engagement Framework.

## **2. Recruitment to the Voice of Warwickshire**

- 2.1 A recruitment campaign was launched in October 2021. The aim was to recruit up to 1,000 residents aged 18 and over from across the county and to ensure that they are as representative of the county's adult population as possible. A wide variety of channels were used to encourage residents to sign up. These included writing directly to a randomly stratified sample of 20,000 households, using social media channels, sharing with local media to push and promoting the panel via our network of partners. Messaging was supported by a consistent and attractive visual identity for the project.
- 2.2 The initial recruitment exercise concluded on November 14<sup>th</sup>, by which point 829 residents had registered with their details to be part of the Voice of Warwickshire. In addition to registering online, residents could request telephone support. We also provided opportunities for those residents whose first language is not English to receive support in participating in the group.
- 2.3 To ensure the group was representative, we had asked residents to provide some basic information about themselves such as their postcode, age group, gender, disability and ethnic group. We compared the profile of the 829 respondents to the county's adult population and were satisfied that the panel was broadly representative. The analysis did, however, identify some areas where we needed to boost numbers and this informed a shorter second wave of more targeted recruitment activity in the second half of November.
- 2.4 Those registering were also asked for their preference on how we should engage with them. The vast majority were happy to participate online but a small number will require telephone support or paper copies, and/or communication in a different language.
- 2.5 For reference, the current profile of the Voice of Warwickshire panel is provided in Appendix 1.

## **3. Using the Voice of Warwickshire**

- 3.1 The Voice of Warwickshire panel will be used to gather our residents' views on a range of key policy areas throughout 2022. It will be used to help inform the delivery of our next Council Plan and will ensure we understand residents' perspectives on themes such as climate change, Community Powered Warwickshire and tackling inequalities.
- 3.2 A programme of work will be created in January/February 2022 to confirm the priority themes we want to explore and ensure we are utilising the Panel in a balanced way so that they remain engaged while not feeling over-burdened. We anticipate 4-6 engagement activities taking place throughout the year. The Committee is invited to suggest possible topics for consideration as part of the work programme.

- 3.3 Although the majority of the work programme will be survey-based, we have also made provision for the possibility of more detailed deliberative work on specific themes where a number of people from the Voice of Warwickshire group are invited to discuss an issue in more detail and make recommendations that can feed into policy development.
- 3.4 We will also utilise the new 'Dialogue' tool we have built into our Ask Warwickshire engagement platform. 'Dialogue' provides an opportunity for more discussion-based engagement on particular themes, where panel members can be invited to offer ideas as to how particular challenges can be addressed. We can then gauge how much support there is for specific ideas and feed that insight into the delivery of the Council Plan. This new capability is part of our wider Consultation & Engagement Framework, described in more detail in section 4. A demonstration of this new tool can be provided to Committee members if helpful.
- 3.5 It is critical that we keep participants informed as to how the input they provide is being used. We will ensure panel members get regular feedback on the outcome of engagement activities. We will also create a dedicated website for the Voice of Warwickshire to keep panel members informed as the project develops while also helping to promote the work of the panel to the Council and the wider population.
- 3.6 The Voice of Warwickshire project is a one-year pilot exercise. It will be evaluated in late 2022 / early 2023 to determine its impact and success. It is proposed that the evaluation of the project is brought to this Committee in Spring 2023 for consideration.

#### **4. Broader Consultation & Engagement**

- 4.1 The Voice of Warwickshire is one element of our approach to engaging with our residents. The Council's Consultation & Engagement Framework sets out the way we will use a blended approach to involve our residents in developing services and decision making, using the right methods with the right people at the right times. The framework describes the standards we need to apply so that we provide opportunities for everyone to participate, including our seldom heard groups, and ensure Warwickshire residents, people who use our services, communities, organisations and partners, are informed, involved and able to have their voice heard.
- 4.2 Appendix 2 provides a visual summary of the blended approach that will underpin the Consultation & Engagement Framework.
- 4.3 We will ensure the Voice of Warwickshire panel complies with the principles and standards set out in the Consultation & Engagement Framework. This will mean engagement activities are meaningful, appropriate, timely and inclusive.

- 4.4 The Voice of Warwickshire provides an opportunity for residents aged 18 and over to engage with the Council on key policy areas. Younger residents have similar opportunities via mechanisms such as the Youth Council. The new Children & Young People's Strategy also has engagement with young people at its heart, based on our approach to 'Child Friendly Warwickshire, and the Consultation & Engagement Framework will ensure we provide inclusive opportunities for young people to get involved.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 As described in para 3.6, the Voice of Warwickshire project is a pilot and is being delivered through corporate transformation funding. This concludes at the end of 2022/23. The project will be evaluated during 2022 and recommendations made about future options.

## **6. Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications although the Committee is advised that the panel will be largely online-based, reducing the need for printing paper copies of the various surveys issued to the panel. Where participants have expressed a preference for hard copies of the surveys these will be made available so that we ensure opportunities to participate are maximised.
- 6.2 Although not a direct environmental implication of the panel itself, it is also noted that the Voice of Warwickshire group will be engaged with to help inform the Council's approach to broader environmental themes such as our approach to tackling climate change.

## **7. Supporting Information**

N/A



## Appendices

### 1. Appendix 1 – Voice of Warwickshire profile (as at 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021)

Total registrations to date: 861

Areas lived in	Total	Percent	Benchmark
North Warwickshire	84	9.8%	11.3%
Nuneaton & Bedworth	140	16.3%	21.9%
Rugby	152	17.7%	18.5%
Stratford-on-Avon	227	26.4%	23.1%
Warwick	254	29.5%	25.1%
Other	4	0.5%	N/A

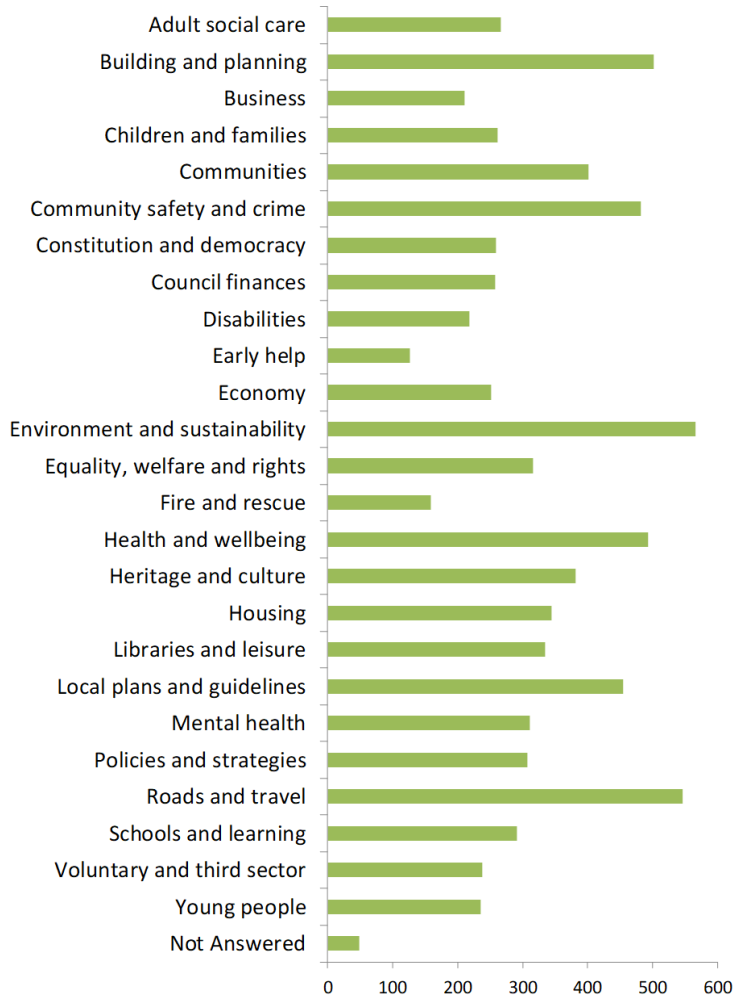
Age profile	Total	Percent	Benchmark
18 – 24	9	1.05%	9.6%
22 – 39	108	12.56%	22.5%
40 – 49	125	14.52%	15.3%
50 – 59	172	20.00%	17.4%
60 – 64	112	13.02%	12.3%
65 – 74	232	26.98%	7.2%
75 +	91	10.58%	12.2%
Prefer not to say	12	1.40%	N/A

Ethnicity	Total	Percent	Benchmark
Arab	0	0.00%	0.10%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0	0.00%	0.05%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	21	2.44%	2.90%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	3	0.35%	0.05%
Chinese	4	0.47%	0.50%
Other Asian Background	4	0.47%	0.80%
Black or Black British - African	3	0.35%	0.40%
Black or Black British - Caribbean	5	0.58%	0.40%
Other Black Background	0	0.00%	0.10%
Mixed - Asian and White	5	0.58%	0.30%
Mixed - Black African and White	0	0.00%	0.10%
Mixed - Black Caribbean and White	1	0.12%	0.30%
Other Mixed Background	6	0.70%	0.20%
White British	736	85.58%	89.0%
White Irish	13	1.51%	1.10%
Gypsy or Traveler	2	0.23%	0.10%
Other White background	37	4.30%	3.30%
Prefer to self-describe	9	1.05%	0.30%
Prefer not to say	12	1.40%	

Experian Mosaic Group	% of sample	Benchmark
City Prosperity	1.97%	0.9%
Prestige Positions	12.89%	9.9%
Country Living	16.84%	11.0%
Rural Reality	6.85%	6.5%
Senior Security	8.94%	10.0%
Suburban Stability	5.92%	8.1%
Domestic Success	15.33%	9.6%
Aspiring Homemakers	10.10%	12.5%
Family Basics	5.92%	7.1%
Transient Renters	2.21%	4.3%
Municipal Tenants	0.23%	2.2%
Vintage Value	2.67%	5.9%
Modest Traditions	2.21%	4.6%
Urban Cohesion	1.74%	2.0%
Rental Hubs	5.81%	5.6%

- c15% (133) have said they have a disability / long term condition
- c19% (166) have said they have caring responsibilities
- c4% (37) are WCC employees
- c3% (29) are an elected member (County / D&B / Parish / MP)
- c3% (26) have said they have been a serving member of armed forces
- 8 have requested alternative formats and 7 have indicated they may need this (mainly large print / easy read)

Areas of interest



2. [Appendix 2 – Engagement Tools & Techniques](#)

**Background Papers**

N/A

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Report Author	Spencer Payne	spencerpayne@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Steve Smith	stevesmithps@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Director	Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Member	Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation	andyjenns@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: Councillors Warwick, Birdi, Boad, Philipps and W. Roberts

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