

Cabinet

Date: Thursday 13 July 2023
Time: 1.45 pm
Venue: Committee Room 2, Shire Hall

Membership

Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE (Chair)
Councillor Margaret Bell
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Yousef Dahmash
Councillor Kam Kaur
Councillor Sue Markham
Councillor Jan Matecki
Councillor Heather Timms
Councillor Martin Watson

Items on the agenda: -

1. General

(1) Apologies

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023.

5 - 12

(4) Public Speaking

To note any requests to speak on any items that are on the agenda in accordance with the Council's Public Speaking Scheme (see footnote to this agenda).

2. A Financial Framework for the 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy Refresh

13 - 28

This report sets out a proposed framework for the 2023/24 MTFS refresh to enable the Council to respond effectively to changing circumstances while maintaining a longer-term focus on the Council's financial sustainability.

Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Peter Butlin

- 3. Addition to the Education Capital Programme 2023-24** 29 - 32
This report sets out a proposed addition to the Education Capital Programme 2023-24 in relation to Kingsway Community Primary School.
Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Kam Kaur
- 4. Education Capital Development Fund** 33 - 36
A paper seeking approval for a rolling fund supporting project development during the initial stages of feasibility and planning with the objective of providing greater cost certainty at approval stage.
Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Peter Butlin
- 5. Addition of Lias Line Improvement Scheme to Capital Programme** 37 - 42
Approval is sought to add the Lias Line Improvement Scheme to the Capital Programme funded by a £2,434,735 grant from the Active Travel Fund.
Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Jan Matecki
- 6. West Midlands Combined Authority & Devolution for Warwickshire** 43 - 58
A report seeking authority to undertake work to explore the option for Warwickshire County Council to become a constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority.
Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Isobel Seccombe
- 7. Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan 2023-25** 59 - 66
Approval is sought for the Warwickshire joint Better Care Fund Plan for 2023-25.
Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Margaret Bell
- 8. Concessionary Travel - Introduction of a Companion Pass** 67 - 102
This report presents the findings of a feasibility study into the introduction of a companion pass to allow bus pass holders with a severe disability to be accompanied on the bus by a carer/companion free of charge.
Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Jan Matecki
- 9. Warwickshire County Council Energy Strategy and Delivery Plan** 103 - 122
This report presents the Council’s Energy Strategy and associated Delivery Plan for approval.
Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Heather Timms

10. Change of Age Range at Brownsover Infant and Long Lawford & Nursery Hill Primary Schools 123 - 136

A paper setting out proposals for Brownsover Infant School to change its age range from 3-7 to 4-7 and Long Lawford & Nursery Hill Primary Schools to change their age ranges from 3-11 to 4-11 to allow early years provision to be delivered via governor-run pre-school rather than existing maintained nursery classes.

Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Kam Kaur

11. Modern Slavery Statement 137 - 146

This report seeks approval of the County Council's updated Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for the financial year 2022/23 and its publication on the Central Government's Registry of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statements for the UK.

Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Isobel Seccombe

12. Reports Containing Exempt or Confidential Information

To consider passing the following resolution:

'That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972'.

13. Exempt Minutes of the 15 June 2023 Meeting of Cabinet 147 - 150

To consider the exempt minutes of the 15 June 2023 meeting of Cabinet.

14. Reorganisation of Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub 151 - 162

An exempt report concerning the proposed reorganisation of the Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub.

Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Councillor Martin Watson

Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

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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 that features on the agenda. 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.

Cabinet

Thursday 15 June 2023

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE (Chair)
Councillor Margaret Bell
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Yousef Dahmash
Councillor Kam Kaur
Councillor Sue Markham
Councillor Jan Matecki
Councillor Heather Timms
Councillor Martin Watson

Officers

Amy Bridgewater-Carnall, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Jan Cummings, Senior Solicitor
Sarah Duxbury, Assistant Director – Governance & Policy
Andrew Felton, Assistant Director Finance
Nigel Minns, Strategic Director for People
Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities
Steve Smith, Assistant Director Commissioning Support Unit
Philippa Young, Strategy & Commissioning Manager, Transport and Highways

Others Present

Councillor John Holland
Councillor Marian Humphreys
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse

1. General

The Leader welcomed everyone to the meeting including the new members of Cabinet, Councillors Yousef Dahmash, Sue Markham and Jan Matecki.

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from the Chief Executive, Monica Fogarty.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Andy Crump declared an interest in Agenda Item 12, WRIF PIF Bids for approval – June 2023, as the applicant was known to him. He left the room whilst the item was discussed.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 May 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

(4) Public Speaking

There was none.

2. Financial Outturn Report 2022/23

Members received a report which provided an analysis and commentary on the financial position of the Council at the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

Councillor Peter Butlin introduced the report and set the scene with regards to the work undertaken over the last twelve months. He felt that the Council had performed well despite national and international events, with the finance team reacting well to the challenges. Councillor Butlin gave an overview of the overspend figures and highlighted that, whilst everyone tried their level best to keep within budget, this was not always possible due to the pressures on services. He also highlighted the additional income secured by the Legal Team along with additional finances being gained from the investments managed by the Treasury Management Team.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse thanked officers for the in-depth report. He raised a concern about the finances in relation to Home to School Transport and the budget for schools in general. He highlighted the mounting pressures that schools were under and hoped colleagues would join in him lobbying the DSG around this subject.

Councillor Butlin agreed with the frustrations relating to school budgets and reminded Members that the Council did have an excellent team of staff available to support schools in managing their budgets. He did not feel that education had received the attention from Central Government it should have and the situation for students had been compromised as a result of Covid.

Councillor Butlin proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved to

- 1) note the net spend in 2022/23 and the consequent revenue overspend for the organisation at the end of the year;
- 2) note the explanations and mitigating actions for variations to budgets, and the implications for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, as set out in Appendix A;
- 3) approve the retention of the surplus of £1.234m in the DSG Deficit Offset Reserve until there is greater certainty about the longer-term direction of travel of spend in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, as set out in paragraph 2.7;
- 4) note the delivery of £9.579m (93.5%) savings in 2022/23, a shortfall of £0.665m against the target, as set out in Section 4;

- 5) approve the drawdown of £0.920m from Externally Earmarked Reserves and Directorate Risk Reserves to support the delivery of the Council Plan in 2023/24, as outlined in paragraph 6.5 and Appendix C;
- 6) approve the drawdown of £7.624m from the Revenue Investment Funds to support the delivery of the Council Plan in 2023/24 and 2024/25, as outlined in Section 5 and Appendix D;
- 7) approve the approach to making good the Communities Directorate Risk Reserve at the end of 2022/23 and for 2023/24 as set out in paragraphs 6.9 to 6.11;
- 8) note the capital spend in 2022/23 of £117.352m; and
- 9) approve the reprofiling of £2.094m Services capital spend from 2022/23 into future years.

3. Treasury Management and Investment Outturn Reports 2022/23

Cabinet received a report which asked them to consider and endorse the Treasury Management and Investment (Non-Treasury) outturns for 2022/23.

Councillor Butlin introduced the report and reiterated the excellent job officers had undertaken, investing Council finances wisely and ensuring the best capital return possible. He highlighted the recent award that the team had been nominated for and congratulated them for the recognition they had received.

Councillor Izzy Seccombe reiterated the Cabinet's gratitude to the Treasury Management Team for their work, in what had been a volatile time across the country.

Having received no further questions, Councillor Butlin proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved that the Treasury Management and Investment (Non-Treasury) outturns for 2022/23 is endorsed.

4. Council Plan 2022-2027 - Integrated Performance Report Year End 2022/23

Councillor Yousef Dahmash introduced the report which provided a retrospective summary of the Council's performance at the end of the financial year. He reminded the meeting to be mindful of the wider national context, the impact of the war in Ukraine and the Covid pandemic.

Councillor Dahmash highlighted the access to the Power BI system which contained further detailed information relating to performance data and had the ability to be interrogated as desired. He summarised some of the positive performance results including the reduction in figures of children being subject to a Child Protection Plan. Councillor Dahmash signposted Members to section 4 of the report which highlighted the Management of Human Resources and the encouraging signs that sickness levels were improving, alongside the improved recruitment and retention data.

Councillor Roodhouse queried the level of commentary on a number of static indicators, which he felt could be separated out and contain more detail to demonstrate if they were moving in the right direction.

Councillor Kam Kaur advised that she and Councillor Dahmash had met with officers to discuss the performance framework and how to successfully review the figures and measures moving forwards.

Councillor Martin Watson encouraged the use of Power BI and welcomed the Warwickshire Outcome Measures which were detailed in table 1b of the report.

Councillor Dahmash thanked Members for the comments and reiterated that this was an ongoing process. He proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Considers and comments on the Year End organisational performance;
- 2) To refer the report to Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider, in detail, the information relevant to their individual remits; and
- 3) Agrees the proposed changes for the 2023/24 reporting period to the Performance Management Framework (PMF) as outlined in Appendix 1c.

5. Establishment of Specialist Resourced Provision at four Infant / Primary Schools

Councillor Kaur introduced the report which sought approval to establish four specialist resourced provisions – two located in Rugby, one in Nuneaton and one in Bedworth. Having looked at the infrastructure within the schools, officers had identified children with and Educational, Health and Care Plan's (EHCP) and wanted to help accommodate these within mainstream primary schools, which would be adapted to meet their needs. Approval was needed to add funds to the Capital Programme which would be funded from the Department for Education, the High Needs Capital Grant and developer contributions.

Councillor John Holland welcomed the proposal and sought clarification on whether the schools in question were maintained or academy schools. He also queried how the quality of the work would be monitored and what learning resources would be available for staff.

In response, Councillor Kaur advised that there were SEND training packs for schools which staff could access at no cost and confirmed the schools in question were part of academies. She reiterated the increased demand in SEND provision which needed to be met and hoped this work would encourage other schools to invite children with specialist needs. In terms of quality, Councillor Kaur confirmed that the Improvement Team engaged with Head Teachers on a quarterly basis, alongside Ofsted, to help provide a rounded approach on monitoring.

Councillor Seccombe welcomed the proposals and recognised the level of funding being utilised from developer contributions. She also highlighted the importance of pupils having the opportunity to be educated in their own communities.

Councillor Kaur proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the establishment of specialist resourced provision at the four schools set out in Section 3 and approves the following additions to the capital programme to deliver the prescribed alterations required:

- a) For Abbey CofE Infant School, an addition to the capital programme of £0.048 million to be funded from the High Needs Capital Grant;
 - b) For Goodyers End Primary School, an addition of £0.089 million to the capital programme to be funded from the Special Provision Fund and the High Needs Capital Grant;
 - c) For St Andrew's Benn CE Primary School, an addition of £0.028 million to the capital programme to be funded from Developer Contributions;
 - d) For St Matthew's Bloxam CE Primary School, an addition of £0.026 million to be funded from Developer Contributions; and
- 2) Authorises the Strategic Director for People to invite tenders and to enter into any agreements necessary to deliver the provisions approved on terms and conditions considered acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

6. SEND (Special Education Needs and Disability) - Improving the transport application experience

Councillor Jan Matecki introduced the report which outlined changes to the Home to School Transport application process and Home to School and College Transport Policy.

Councillor Matecki explained that an internal review had taken place to look at streamlining the service which currently transported 2000 students throughout the County, per day. This was at a cost of £18 million and public consultation took place between November 2022 and March 2023 to consider the proposals. One of the changes enabled parents and carers to apply for transport at the same time as they applied for the school place, providing officers with more time to undertake the necessary assessments and look at the options available. He also outlined a number of other changes including reviewing who needed transport and providing parents and carers with the option of transporting their own child and receiving a Direct Travel Payment in return.

Councillor Matecki advised that recommendation 2 in the report needed to be amended to refer to Appendix 4 and not section 1.12 of the report.

Having received no questions, Councillor Matecki proposed the recommendations as amended.

Resolved

That Cabinet

- 1) endorses the proposed change to the Home to School Transport application process as set out at paragraph 1.7; and
- 2) approves the proposed changes to the wording in the Home to School and College Transport Policy as set out at **Appendix 4**.

7. A New Local Transport Plan for Warwickshire (LTP4)

Councillor Matecki introduced the report which introduced the new Local Transport Plan for Warwickshire. He gave an overview of the level of consultation that had taken place including the engagement of a citizens panel of 30 individuals. Councillor Matecki advised that the plan set out the ambition to become carbon neutral and had been considered by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2023.

The report committed to deeper engagement with District and Borough Councils and communities across Warwickshire.

Councillor Holland expressed a number of concerns including the six key strategies which listed 'Safety' as fifth on the list. He also noted that the 'Travel Choices Hierarchy' was unchanged from the plan produced twenty years ago and did not feel that the money being spent, matched the plan.

Councillor Holland also highlighted the problem that Warwick District Council had their own transport plan, leading to them following their own priorities and potentially putting County Council officers in an impossible position. He requested that the LTP4 be deferred for six months to allow the district and borough councils to outline their plans.

Councillor Roodhouse felt some sympathy with the comments made and referred to the wording of 'action plan' within the report. He stated that the wording was unclear at times and the language confusing and asked for clarification as to which 'action plan' residents had been consulted on.

Councillor Seccombe reminded the meeting that this was a high level document which touched on the discussions planned with the district and boroughs. She felt that the document provided flexibility as it outlined principles for moving forwards.

In response to the comments made, Councillor Matecki stated that he had found the plan easy to read and did not agree that the language was confusing. He advised that this was not a definitive document but rather outlined what the Council was aspiring to.

Philippa Young, Strategy & Commissioning Manager – Transport and Highways, provided clarification on the documents the Citizen's Panel had been consulted on and outlined the timeline for future consultation with local stakeholders.

Councillor Matecki moved the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved

That Cabinet considers the proposed new local transport plan for Warwickshire (LTP4) at Appendix A and recommends that it is put forward for adoption by Full Council.

8. Sustainable Futures Strategy

Councillor Heather Timms introduced the report which summarised the feedback gathered following wide engagement on the Sustainable Futures Strategy. She gave an overview of the different stakeholder groups involved and the proposed establishment of expert panels to help to further develop this work. The aim was to present the draft strategy to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in September before submission to Cabinet in the Autumn.

Councillor Timms applauded the strong engagement from various groups and the ambition to extend that work further. She went on to assure the meeting that work was continuing on a number of actions as outlined in the report including Electric Vehicle Charging and tree planting. She concluded by advising that she was confident the Council was on track for achieving net zero by 2030.

Following a question from Councillor Dahmash, Councillor Timms advised that the theme based panels would comprise industry experts, with a wide range of stakeholders to help inform them.

Having received no questions, Councillor Timms asked Cabinet to approve the recommendations.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Acknowledges the progress made since the approval for engagement of the draft Sustainable Futures Strategy in October 2022 and the stakeholder feedback summarised in Section 2 and Appendix 1;
- 2) Supports the establishment of theme based expert panels drawn from industry and Warwickshire communities to enable production of a final strategy and action plan; and
- 3) Requests that the draft strategy be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committees in September, and the Members' Climate Emergency Group on 20 September for comment and any recommendations before consideration of the final Sustainable Futures Strategy and supporting action plan by Cabinet.

9. Reports Containing Exempt or Confidential Information

Resolved:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

10. Exempt Minutes of the 11 May 2023 Meeting of Cabinet

The exempt minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 May 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

11. WRIF BIG bids for approval - June 2023

Councillor Butlin introduced the item and summarised the exempt report.

Resolved:

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be approved.

12. WRIF PIF Bids for approval - June 2023

Councillor Butlin introduced the item and summarised the exempt report.

Resolved:

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be approved, following a minor amendment to the wording of recommendation 2.

Cabinet

13 July 2023

A Financial Framework for the 2024/25 Medium-Term Financial Strategy Refresh

Recommendations

Cabinet are recommended to:

- 1) note the emerging financial position within which the 2024/25 budget and 2024-29 Medium Term Financial Strategy will be developed;
- 2) agree the strategic principles that will form the basis of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, as set out in paragraph 2.4;
- 3) subject to the agreement of the principles, approve the proposals for the refresh of the 2024/25 Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy, as set out in Sections 3 and 4;
- 4) note the requirement for the Authority to set a sustainable balanced budget which shows how income will equal spend over the short- and medium-term; and
- 5) approve the timetable for agreeing the 2024/25 budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Refresh.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Over the five years to 2027/28 the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved in February 2023 was balanced, considering likely additional spending need and the expected level of resources. It required the delivery of £67.7m of savings and the use of £33.7m of reserves.
- 1.2 The 2024/25 MTFS refresh therefore has a strong and robust starting point. It will update the figures for additional spending need and the resource forecasts based on the latest information available and reflect how the current year's (2023/24) financial position looks compared to the planned budget. It will also extend the MTFS into 2028/29 so the commitment to having a balanced five-year rolling MTFS is maintained.

- 1.3 A five-year MTFS gives greater alignment of the financial position and plans of the Council to the strategic priorities of thriving economy and places, a sustainable future and safe and healthy communities, as well as managing the risk inherent in providing a diverse range of services to a diverse community funded by numerous income streams.
- 1.4 The context in which the 2024/25 refresh is happening includes a number of risks to be monitored, managed and where uncontrollable to be financially underwritten:
- the broader economic environment, such as the impacts of movement in inflation, housing growth, council tax base and interest rates on our day-to-day costs, income and debt repayments;
 - significant cost of living pressures on communities and residents which, alongside the impacts of inflation now include the impact of rising interest rates on both mortgage and rental costs;
 - sustained inflationary pressures and cost of living increases putting pressure on staff costs, recruitment and retention and impacting on service resilience;
 - prolonged uncertainty around Central Government's future decisions about local government financing, including a new funding model for adult social care;
 - dependency on locally collected Business Rates, placing greater importance on the need to maintain reserves to manage any volatility;
 - the results (financial and social) from our commercial investment activities;
 - social and health inequalities and the ability to deliver on our Levelling Up priorities; and
 - designing and implementing sustainable delivery of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services within the level of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding.
- 1.5 As a consequence, our financial situation remains hugely challenging, with the direct and indirect impacts of all these factors on the County Council as well as our partners both unknown and highly volatile at this stage.
- 1.6 Difficult decisions will be needed and therefore the purpose of this report is to bring these strands together and provide a framework for the 2024/25 MTFS refresh for Cabinet to consider. The recommended approach will enable the Council to respond effectively to changing circumstances while maintaining the longer-term focus on the Council's financial sustainability. It seeks agreement to a set of strategic principles that will form the basis of the MTFS Refresh before going on to set out the key areas of activity and proposed timetable of key dates between now and the budget setting Council meeting in early February 2024.

2. Framework for a Robust, Sustainable and Financially Resilient Warwickshire

- 2.1 An effective MTFs ensures the Authority has the financial strategies, plans and financial decision-making framework in place that will deliver a financially resilient and sustainable Authority over the short, medium and long-term. The key components are:
- a 5-year Revenue Plan to balance annual funding and expenditure;
 - a Capital Strategy and Capital Investment Programme to optimise the way in which we generate, manage and allocate the capital funds at our disposal;
 - a Reserves Strategy and an associated programme of reserves reviews to make sure the money we hold is effectively managed to meet the financial risks and uncertainties; and
 - Treasury Management and Investment Strategies that govern how, and to what extent, we can use our cash reserves and balance sheet strength to invest in the Council's priorities and plans.
- 2.2 The MTFs framework set out in this report will cover all of these issues. It will determine the likely levels of resources and balance sheet capacity available over the medium term, the scope for spending priority commitments arising from the Authority's ambitions and their subsequent prioritisation, the impact on the Authority's balance sheet and cash resources; and, given that there is likely to be a gap, additional options to deliver budget reductions that can be evaluated alongside spending priorities.
- 2.3 The approach set out in the report is a holistic one which combines the uncertainty over our medium-term resource levels, growing demand and cost pressures and the effect of the use of our balance sheet to invest in the Warwickshire Property and Development Group (WPDG) and the Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund (WRIF). Driven by the priorities set out in the Council Plan and the Integrated Delivery Plan, the impact of any proposals on both the MTFs and our balance sheet will be considered together. The 2024/25 MTFs refresh is likely to provide Members, with some difficult choices about priorities and the risk appetite around the potential significance and volatility of our assumptions requiring scenario planning and sensitivity analysis.
- 2.4 Cabinet is therefore asked to agree a set of key strategic principles as a starting point within which the 2024/25 MTFs will be developed. The key strategic principles are:

Principle 1: The inflationary uplift is not a temporary phenomenon, with inflation remaining higher for longer than previous Treasury forecasts. Prices are now expected to revert to increasing at roughly 2% per annum from April 2024. The MTFS should provide for this change.

Principle 2: Planned Council Tax increases are essential to achieving a balanced and sustainable MTFS.

Principle 3: The impact of continued inflationary pressures in 2023/24 will, as far as possible, be managed in year through robust budget management and, where necessary the use of the reserves specifically set aside for this purpose in the budget agreed in February 2023.

Principle 4: Given the estimated inflationary impacts, there will be a very high bar for new permanent allocations and a clear expectation that existing planned budget reductions will be delivered.

Principle 5: Substantial inflationary increases in the cost of capital projects will mean that we can no longer afford to fund everything currently on the books or planned to meet our ambitions. We will be able to afford to do less unless we take out additional borrowing with consequent revenue costs. This means a greater need for prioritisation, and we will inevitably need to pause/stop/rescope certain projects as our capital budgets will buy much less than originally expected.

Principle 6: The review/prioritisation of the capital programme and pipeline will, after meeting statutory requirements, be based on the return on investment relative to the Integrated Delivery Plan, the impact on Levelling Up priorities, the overall balance of the programme and deliverability risk.

2.5 All of the elements of a sustainable and financially resilient MTFS will require a range of activity, information and intelligence gathering and reports that will need to be brought together before decisions are made over the next six months. The overall objective is to ensure a transparent approach, taking into account the full risks and implications for services and communities, to meet the overarching aim of being a robust, sustainable and financially resilient Authority well-placed to rise to the challenge of meeting the ambitions set out in the Council Plan in a post-Covid and inflationary environment.

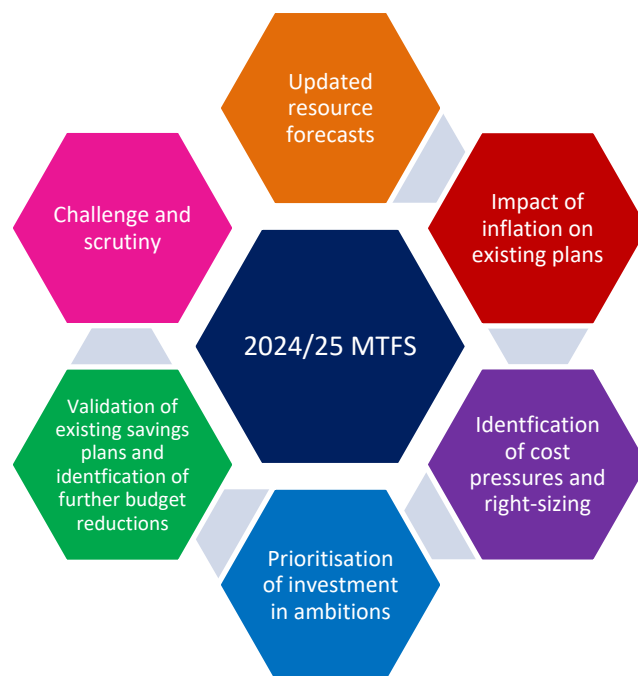
2.6 More details on the proposed activities and how they will contribute to meeting our financial aims are set out in Sections 3 and 4.

3. 2024/25 MTFS Refresh

3.1 The starting assumption for the 2024/25 MTFS refresh is that the impact of inflationary pressures in 2023/24 can be managed in year through robust budget management and, where necessary the use of the reserves specifically set aside for this purpose in the budget agreed in February 2023. If this proves not to be the case, then the approach set out in the report and the rigour with which it is pursued becomes even more important.

3.2 Diagram 1 shows the areas of activity that will need to be undertaken to deliver a refreshed 2024/25 MTFS, alongside a further review of reserves.

Diagram 1: Areas of Activity to Deliver a Refreshed MTFS



Updated Resource Forecasts

3.3 The basic model of resource forecasting used for the 2023/24 MTFS remains valid. However, the level of uncertainty we continue to face means, at least initially, we will need to plan for a range of potential resource scenarios. We will only be able to narrow these down as the medium-term economic position becomes clearer.

3.4 Table 1 summarises the level of additional budget reductions required from 3 broad scenarios. and **Appendix A** outlines the assumptions that underpin them. The scenarios are broadly based on:

- Best Case – economy returns to historic trends of growth, inflation and interest results by April 2024;
- Most Likely – minimal economic growth, with gradual recovery and stabilisation of inflation to historic trends over the next two years through to mid-2025; and
- Worst Case – medium term recession and stabilisation of inflation to historic trends only from year three onwards.

Table 1: Additional MTFS Budget Reductions Required as part of 2024/25 MTFS Refresh

	Best Case	Most Likely	Worst Case
New savings in 2024/25	£0m	£0m	£17m
New savings over MTFS (including the figures above)	£0m	£12m	£106m

3.5 The key variables in all the scenarios are the annual growth in the council tax taxbase, inflation assumptions and then the variables over which we have more influence – the DSG deficit, the level of additional spending allocations and the delivery of the approved savings plan. The most likely scenario assumes Members’ continuing support to increase the council tax by 2% per annum and take the additional 1% adult social care levy increase in 2024/25, which is the assumption that underpinned the 2023/24 MTFS. A 1% increase/decrease in the council tax increase would increase/decrease the level of savings required by £3.6m. The 2023/24 Local Government Settlement included the flexibility to increase the council tax by up to 5% in 2024/25, 3% for the core council tax and 2% adult social care levy.

3.6 The ‘most likely’ scenario assumes an annual increase in the council tax taxbase of 1.65% in 2024/25, similar to the growth in 2023/24, with the growth returning to the 2% of recent trends by 2026/27. Currently there is speculation about a potential slowdown in the housing market as a result of the increased cost of living, rising interest rates and mortgage availability and increased supply costs reducing the viability of developments. A 0.5% reduction in the growth in the taxbase (equating to around 1,000 fewer Band D equivalent properties) will reduce available resources by £1.9m. Trends in the housing market over the short and medium term will need to be kept under review.

3.7 These resource assumptions will determine the level of further budget reductions or additional income generation the Authority will need to plan for over the period 2024-29. The ‘most likely’ scenario is that £12m additional

savings will be needed by 2028/29 in addition to £52.5m already included in the MTFS approved in February 2024 and the £130.0m delivered since 2014.

- 3.8 The need to make effective, appropriate and sustainable savings that support the delivery of the Council Plan and do not stifle recovery, increases the on-going importance of effectively managing the Council's income and expenditure. Maximising the availability of reserves will be critical to allowing the managed, effective implementation of the necessary changes to services. However, it should be noted that any use of reserves to help balance the MTFS in the early years impacts the potential to increase the Investment Funds and the resources available to invest in the priorities set out in the Integrated Delivery Plan.

Impact of Inflation on Existing Plans

- 3.9 Managing the continued impact of inflation will continue to be the biggest factor to accommodate within the MTFS refresh this year. A strategic view of how inflation is impacting on the County Council, and wider partners within the public service delivery system, shows that the inflationary risk is uniform. The assessment of how inflationary pressure is impacting remains complex. It will vary between:
- the revenue budget and the capital programme;
 - the type of spending/income; and
 - the extent and increased cost can be managed without impacting on service delivery and/or capacity.
- 3.10 There are no absolutes in inflation forecasting, the approach taken will, of necessity, be a matter of judgement and will need to be continually updated as more information emerges between now and February 2024 when the budget will be agreed. The current forecast for price inflation is based on the latest ONS figures for 2024/25 with a small margin to reflect the fact that inflation is decreasing less slowly than the Treasury previously anticipated.
- 3.11 The MTFS approved in February 2023 included provision for £89.7m inflationary uplift over the next five years, of which £32.5m relates to 2023/24. Any need to provide for increased inflationary costs, above the level provided for in the MTFS will need to be a first call on the £28.0m for future indicative spending pressures, thereby reducing the amount available to meet increases in demand, investment to deliver on the Council's priorities or to alleviate savings targets. Any such use of the provision for indicative pressures would be a concern given the sustained increases in demand for Council services.
- 3.12 At this point, it is estimated:
- basic pay inflation, without any wider change to improve the Council's market position in terms of pay and reward, will result in an increased

provision of £6m to £10m being needed over the next two years, with the cumulative impact of the employers 2023 pay offer (that is yet to be accepted by the unions) estimated to cost an additional £6.4m;

- forecasts of National Living Wage (NLW) increases and other inflationary costs will require an additional cost of at least £5m a year for adult social care provider inflation next year; and
- outside of these specific elements the provision for price inflation in the MTFs is sufficient, although there is a risk additional provisions may be required in 2024/25 to supplement the budgets for transport and placement costs, which were re-based this year, if costs continue to rise.

3.13 The inflationary outlook remains uncertain and volatile. The expected downturn in inflation is slower than anticipated with only minimal monthly decreases at the moment. The position will be kept under close review as work on the 2024/25 MTFs refresh continues, to ensure our financial strategy remains robust.

3.14 The focus of discussion around the impact of inflation would need to extend beyond costs, to the impact on our income. The approved provision for price inflation in the MTFs assumes that Services increase fees and charges at the same rate as the provision for cost increases. Any decision not to do so will increase the level of savings required. The cost increases assumed to be funded from the income would still need to be funded and we would also need to put in place plans to accommodate the loss of income.

3.15 Furthermore, the existing planned use of reserves and the potential that additional reserves may be needed to meet any excess inflationary impact in 2023/24 in excess of the approved budget is likely to mean any further budget reductions would need to be delivered straight away (or those in the current plan brought forward). There is likely to be insufficient capacity in the Available for Use Reserve to enable any additional budget reductions to be delivered 2 or 3 years into the future.

3.16 To counter this, there are also impacts of inflation that are positive from a financial perspective that will need to be assessed. For example, the current high inflation rate is driving higher interest rates which in turn is increasing the interest income we are earning on our cash balances. The difficult judgement is the length of time over which these higher interest earnings will continue.

Identification of Unavoidable Cost Pressures and Right-Sizing

3.17 The approved MTFs included between £7.0m a year for new cost pressures. This is in addition to the £34.7m (over £8.5m a year) for known areas of cost pressures already included within the remaining four years of the MTFs.

- 3.18 The identification of unavoidable cost pressures therefore has two elements – a review of those pressures already indicatively approved in the MTFs and identification of any new pressures that have emerged over the last nine months.
- 3.19 A robust, evidence-based approach to both elements will be put in place that will cover the cause of the need for an additional budget allocation, the actions the Service has put in place to manage the cost and the implications for service delivery if the allocation is not supported, as well as a detailed calculation of the expected cost and how the funding will be used. This will be accompanied by any further opportunities for right-sizing identified through in-year budget monitoring and an in-depth review of the 2022/23 outturn.

Prioritisation of Investment in Ambitions and Funding Options

- 3.20 The Investment Funds are currently secured, with the 2022/23 outturn report including the further redirection of reserves to retain £10m in the Revenue Investment Fund and the MTFs including sufficient provision to meet the cost of servicing the borrowing that resources the Capital Investment Fund (CIF).
- 3.21 The approach adopted this year and proposed for the 2024/25 MTFs refresh is for a closer alignment of the Investment Funds to proposals in the Integrated Delivery Plan. This will include proactively exploring how the Budget Reductions Revolving Fund can be used to invest in the delivery of the additional savings needed towards the end of the MTFs period.
- 3.22 As part of the refreshed MTFs a prioritised pipeline of projects will be developed that is affordable within the level of resources available. Currently, the level of resources available in both the Revenue Investment Fund and CIF is insufficient to meet the ambitions of the organisation or deliver the full pipeline of projects. Given the inflationary pressures on the budget it is unlikely material additional resources will be available in the short-term. Clear prioritisation to ensure best use is made of the scarce resources available will be key.

Validation of Existing Savings Plans and the Identification of Further Budget Reductions

- 3.23 Even before the impact of changes to resource forecasts and inflationary and demand pressures the existing MTFs requires the delivery of £52.5m of savings over the next four years. It is therefore essential to validate that the plans and savings being targeted are deliverable. The 2024/25 refresh will require action plans for the delivery of planned savings in each of the next two years and outline plans for those in the last two years of the current MTFs. This will be a build on the work undertaken last year.

- 3.24 Any reduction in the level of budget reductions delivered, whether as a result of deliverability or acceptability, will increase the level of new savings that need to be identified. The working assumption is that where, as a result of developing robust delivery plans, the existing MTFS savings cannot be delivered alternative deliverable savings will be brought forward for consideration. These alternative savings would be in addition to the budget reductions needed to balance the MTFS.
- 3.25 The need for additional budget reductions will be identified through an approach that ensures they are appropriate and sustainable spending reductions for the organisation over the medium term. Decisions of Cabinet and Corporate Board will be reviewed to identify where service changes are expected to improve value for money so any cost reductions can be incorporated into the MTFS options. Benchmarking and comparative information will continue to be used to identify potential areas where value for money could be enhanced further and to provide some strategic insight to potential target areas for reduced spending. The Budget Reductions Revolving Fund will be used to invest in sustainable change that will impact towards the end of the MTFS period.
- 3.26 Alongside this work on identifying budget reductions there will be the annual review of reserves to see if we can free up further capacity to allow the lead-in time for any transformation and innovation activity to be delivered. This may also need to include choices around the balance of using reserves for investment and the short term off-setting of savings.

Challenge and Scrutiny

- 3.27 The challenge and scrutiny of proposals will include:
- scrutiny and assessment of spending/savings proposals brought forward for consideration in much the same way as has been put in place for the Investment Funds, providing clear recommendations that supports the balancing of priorities;
 - the use of evidence, such as benchmarking information, insight into the relationship between cost and performance and learning from innovative developments across (and beyond) the sector, to provide a more robust assurance about current base budgets, and to support the proactive challenge and validation of spending proposals; and
 - analysing the alignment of spend with the Council Plan objectives and the impact of proposals on performance.

4. Capital Programme

- 4.1 The approach to future decisions on capital investment need and the management of the programme was approved alongside the Council Plan and MTFs and consists of three core elements:
- the Capital Strategy;
 - the resulting Capital Programme/Pipeline of projects - the content of the capital programme (including schemes to be delivered in 1-5 years); and
 - the Capital Framework which demonstrates our compliance with the Prudential Code and sets out the governance and resourcing arrangements needed to deliver and administer the pipeline/programme.
- 4.2 Local authorities are required to approve a Capital Strategy on an annual basis. For 2024/25 the annual refresh will ensure the Strategy is consistent with the priorities and outcomes of the Council Plan and associated Integrated Delivery Plan and aligned to the emerging thinking on long term place-shaping. This is consistent with the intention of the Capital Strategy to shift to a 20-30 year line of sight and create a more strategic focus to our approach to capital investment.
- 4.3 The need for prioritisation has been a feature of capital planning over the last few years and became more acute during 2022/23 with the impact of inflation on the capital programme. It is likely there will be another step change this year as part of delivering the capital programme in 2023/24 and the planning for 2024/25. With resources likely to be needed to support the provision of new school places and other unavoidable projects, in the simplest of terms, there will be an even greater need for prioritisation to identify those projects that deliver the greatest benefits and highest returns on investment without additional borrowing being taken out. The 2024/25 MTFs refresh will therefore also need to consider whether the current balance between revenue and capital is sustainable.

5. The Need for a Balanced Budget

- 5.1 In putting forward their proposals Members are reminded that local authorities are required by law to have a balanced budget. However, what is meant by 'balanced' is not defined in law. A prudent definition of a sustainable balanced budget is a financial plan based on sound assumptions which shows how income will equal spend over the short- and medium-term. For the purposes of the proposals being developed the medium term has been taken as the five years 2024/25 to 2028/29.
- 5.2 To avoid the risk of setting an unbalanced budget the Local Authority has to be financially resilient. Setting a clear MTFs helps clarify expected income and

expenditure. Awareness of the funding available in the forthcoming years means the Council stands a better chance of balancing the budget. Reserves are a useful option for balancing the budget in the short-term, but they can only be used once. Consequently, proposals will be developed on the basis that reserves should not be used to pay for day-to-day expenditure and that they will be replenished when the short-term need has passed, subject to a risk assessment. This will ensure the MTFs for 2024-29 will be fully balanced on an ongoing basis.

- 5.3 This approach is consistent with the Reserves Strategy approved as part of the MTFs in February 2023.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The starting assumption for the 2024/25 MTFs refresh is that the impact of the continuing inflationary pressures and pay awards in 2023/24, in excess of the approved budget, can be managed in year through robust budget management, including the early tackling of emerging areas of overspend, and the use of reserves. If this assumption proves not to be the case, then the approach set out in the report and the rigour with which it is pursued becomes even more important.
- 6.2 The approach set out in the report is a holistic one which considers and addresses the uncertainty over our medium-term resource levels, inflationary and pay risks, continued high levels of demand and the resourcing of the delivery of the Council Plan, including the use of our balance sheet. This means the 2024/25 MTFs refresh will be complex and challenging than usual and is likely to require some difficult choices about priorities.
- 6.3 Following Cabinet's approval of the approach outlined in the report Services will begin work identifying and quantifying any costs pressures, the opportunities for investing in the Council's ambitions and options for future budget reductions and invest-to-save proposals. This work will continue to be aligned to the approach to Integrated Planning and informed by the considerations of the Conservative Budget Working Group.
- 6.4 The next report to Cabinet will be the first 2023/24 Financial Monitoring report in September 2023. This will start to clarify the assumptions made in setting out the forecast resource forecasts that underpin the MTFs.
- 6.5 The proposed timetable of formal reports through to Council agreeing the 2024/25 budget and MTFs in February 2024 is shown below.

Approach to Agreeing the 2024/25 Budget and 2024-29 MTFS	
Date	Report
14 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Cabinet on the 2023/24 Q1 Financial Monitoring
9 November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Cabinet on the 2023/24 Q2 Financial Monitoring
14 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Cabinet on the options for the 2024/25 budget proposals, MTFS, capital strategy and review of reserves
December and January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political Groups continue to work on their budget and MTFS proposals
23 January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Cabinet outlining final information to be used in setting the budget and the Executive Director for Resources reserves risk assessment Report to Cabinet on the 2023/24 Q3 Financial Monitoring Cabinet release the Conservative Group's 2024/25 budget resolution(s)
Late January to early February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opposition Groups release any amendments to the Conservative Group's proposals
8 February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council sets 2024/25 budget and council tax, 2024-29 MTFS, the Capital Strategy and the 2024/25 Treasury Management and Investment Strategies

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. The report sets out the proposed approach to ensuring the Authority remains financially resilient and sustainable going forward.

8. Environmental Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. The Council's Integrated Delivery Plan will set out the actions and activity planned to address climate change and environmental issues. These in turn will inform the allocations made as part of agreeing the 2024/25 budget and 2024-29 MTFS.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 None

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Elected Members have not been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Resource Scenarios and Underlying Assumptions

	Best Case	Most Likely	Worst Case
New savings in 2024/25	£0m plus potential to reduce existing plan	£0m	£17m
New savings over MTFS, including extra in 2024/25	£0m plus potential to reduce existing plan	£12m	£106m
Assumptions			
Government grants, including BCF/iBCF	1% annual increase in government grants	All government grants continue for MTFS period cash flat	1% annual reduction in government grants
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	£2m a year surplus	Nil across the period of the MTFS	£2m a year deficit
Council tax taxbase	1% extra a year	1.65% in 2024/25, 1.9% in 2025/26 and thereafter 2% a year	1% less a year
Council tax increase	3% in 2024/25 plus 2% adult social care levy in 2024/25 and 2% per annum thereafter	2% per annum plus 1% adult social care levy in 2024/25	2% per annum plus 1% adult social care levy in 2024/25
Business rates income	Annual 1% growth in taxbase, 3% inflationary uplift in 2024/25, 2% thereafter	Flat taxbase as reliefs drop out, 2% inflationary uplift	5% reduction in taxbase in 2024/25 and 2025/26 as reliefs drop out, flat thereafter, 2% inflationary uplift
High Needs DSG deficit	High Needs DSG brought into balance by 2025/26 reserve provision remains unchanged	As per current DSG recovery plan included in the MTFS	£9m contribution to the DSG offset reserve in 2024/25 and 2025/26 and then permanent uplift of £3m a year
Additional permanent spending pressures	£7m a year as per existing MTFS plus £16m in 2028/29 including £3.2m for capital financing and £4m for adult social care demography	£10m in 2024/25, £9m a year thereafter plus £16m in 2028/29 including £3m for capital financing and £4m for adult social care demography	Increase provision to £12m a year plus £3m for capital financing and £4m for adult social care demography in 2028/29
Price/Income Inflation	Maintained at 2% per annum and extra 1% for the NLW in adult social care each year	Maintained at 2% per annum and extra 1% for the NLW in adult social care each year	3% per annum and extra 1% for the NLW in adult social care each year
Pay Inflation	3% in 2024/25, 2% per annum thereafter	4% in 2024/25, 2% per annum thereafter	5% in 2024/25, 3% in 2025/26 and 2% per annum thereafter
Non-delivery of existing savings plan	Current savings plans delivered in full, or alternatives identified	Current savings plans delivered in full, or alternatives identified	20% non-delivery of current savings and no alternatives identified

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Cabinet

13 July 2023

Education Capital Programme 2023/24

Recommendations

That Cabinet

1. Recommend to Council that £2.633 million be added to the capital programme to deliver the scheme at Kingsway Community Primary School.
2. Subject to Council approving the recommendation at paragraph 1 above, authorises the Executive Director for People in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property to enter into the appropriate contractual arrangements for the delivery of the scheme; and make the necessary funding arrangements, all on terms and conditions considered acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources”

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report recommends proposals for allocating resources in the Education (Schools) Capital Programme to the specific project set out in Section 3. The project is funded from a combination of DfE grant, Capital Investment Fund and Capital Inflation Contingency Fund.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The project was originally budgeted at £5.167 million financed via the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) instead of Basic Need funding because the proposal relates to the condition and replacement of a WCC non-school asset i.e. the joined Nursery and Children & Family Centre. Therefore, Basic Need grant cannot be used to finance the additional costs now forecast. A further £0.100 million was allocated from the Capital Inflation Contingency Fund (CICF) in November 2022.

- 2.2 Estimated project costs compared to budget has increased from £5.267 million to £7.900 million per the table below:

Funding Source	Approved Budget September 2020 (£m)	Tendered Costs March 2023 (£m)	Additional Funding Required March 2023 (£m)
DfE Grant	1.550	1.550	0.000
WCC CIF	3.617	4.965	1.348
WCC CICF	0.100	1.385	1.285
Total	5.267	7.900	2.633

The additional £2.633 million is categorised as follows:

- Design development - £0.460 million. This mainly covers fencing and playground extension.
 - Inflationary and additional costs - £2.173 million. Inflationary impacts from Q1 2020 to Q2 2023 form the bulk of this increase. Additionally to this, professional fees and subsidiary costs have increased in line with the overall cost of the project.
- 2.3 A request was made to the DfE via the Trust on 3 April 2023 for additional capital funding of £1.871 million in addition to the £1.550 million already awarded, amounting to £3.421 million in total as a contribution towards costs. The DfE has since confirmed they will not contribute additional funds to the project.
- 2.4 There are sufficient balances within both the Capital Investment Fund and the Capital Inflation Contingency Fund to make the allocations from. The potential outcomes of the Value Engineering workshop may offer the prospect of savings within the indicated budget which if forthcoming will be used to reduce the Capital Investment Fund contribution accordingly.

3. Proposals for addition to the 2023/2024 Education Capital Programme

Kingsway Primary School (Leamington)

- 3.1 Kingsway Community Primary School received an 'Inadequate' Ofsted judgement in July 2017 and in line with Government legislation was subsequently given an academy order. It was agreed by the DfE and WCC that the Community Academies Trust (CAT) were the preferred trust for this school to join. However, the proposed Trust were not willing to take on the liabilities associated with certain elements of the building which houses the school hall, boiler and kitchen as well as the WCC leased Nursery and Children & Family Centre. Kingsway Community Primary School received an improved Ofsted rating of 'Requires Improvement' before joining the CAT in January 2021.

- 3.2 To aid the successful progress of the forced conversion it was agreed to rebuild and relocate the hall and Nursery and Children & Family Centre to maintain separation of the premises. The DfE agreed to a £1.550 million grant as a contribution towards the costs of Full Council approved £3.617 million of Capital Investment Funding (CIF) in October 2020 to fund the WCC element of the proposal (Nursery and Children & Family Centre). This gave a total budget of £5.167 million.
- 3.3 Since funding approval in October 2020, planning permission for the scheme has been obtained, design and development completed and a tender process undertaken. As a result of recent volatile market conditions, the high and variable cost of materials, supply chain issues affecting the market and additional site constraints, surveys and fees not fully clear at the time of the original submission, the total budget for the scheme has increased by £2.733 million to £7.900 million. £0.100 million was added to the scheme in November 2022 from the Capital Inflation Contingency Fund leaving a shortfall of £2.633.
- 3.4 It is proposed to allocate £1.285 million from the Capital Inflation Contingency Fund and £1.348 million from the Capital Investment Fund to support the continued delivery of the scheme.
- 3.5 Cabinet is asked to agree the proposal to allocate £2.633 million funded as follows and recommend to Full Council its addition to the Capital Programme:

Capital Investment Fund	£1.348 million
Capital Inflation Contingency Fund	£1.285 million

4. Environmental Implications

- 4.1 The County Council will look to use modern methods of construction to achieve efficiencies and benefits particularly in terms of time, cost, and the environment.
- 4.2 Environmental risk assessments, together with mitigation statements to reduce any potential environmental impacts, are required for any capital project.
- 4.3 All future school capital projects will be developed in accordance with statutory regulations which include the revised Building Regulations 2021. These new building regulations include significant changes to the regulations around ventilation, energy efficiency and overheating, electric vehicle charging and a number of smaller supporting elements of the regulations. Schools will therefore be built to new standards that are expected to produce lower carbon dioxide omissions compared to previous standards and will also be assessed using primary energy metrics.

- 4.4 Proposed schemes aim to ensure the sufficiency of, and accessibility to, provision in local settings avoiding the need to travel further afield to access education or childcare provision.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, this scheme will be submitted to Council for approval on 25 July 2023.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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

Local Member(s): Councillor Jonathan Chilvers

Other Members: Councillors Marian Humphreys, Jerry Roodhouse, Barbara Brown, Adrian Warwick, Parminder Singh Birdi, Sarah Boad, Sarah Feeney, and Will Roberts

Cabinet

13 July 2023

Education Capital Development Fund

Recommendation:

That Cabinet approves the allocation of £1.4m from the Basic Need Grant to create and implement a fund (the Education Capital Development Fund) that will be used to develop education capital schemes to RIBA Stage 3 prior to requesting authority for procurement and implementation.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report recommends the creation of an Education Capital Development Fund (ECD Fund) to support the Education (Schools) Capital Programme.
- 1.2 It is proposed that the fund is provided from the Basic Need allocation provided by Department for Education which predominately funds Education Schools Capital projects.
- 1.3 The proposed ECD Fund will not create an additional burden on the Education Capital Programme. It is funding that would in any event be used for preparatory work on the development of schemes. It is simply proposed that the funding is spent at an earlier stage to provide greater cost certainty before projects are added to the capital programme and authority to procure and implement schemes is sought from Cabinet. The pot will be replenished as individual or groups of projects are approved from existing budgeted resource. The use of the ECD Fund will be closely monitored via existing internal governance.
- 1.4 An annual block header of £0.200m was approved by Cabinet in March 2017 to undertake initial planning and development work up to (Royal Institute of British Architects) RIBA Stage 1 (development of project brief and feasibility studies). The ECD Fund does not replace this block header but will support the next stage of more comprehensive pre-planning and assessment for individual projects up to RIBA Stage 3 (which includes concept design, costing exercises and coordination of architectural and engineering information required for planning) prior to Cabinet approval.
- 1.5 Currently, Education Capital schemes are approved at RIBA Stage 1. This means individual projects are costed on very early feasibility work

prior to more detailed survey works being undertaken. A confidence rating is given to Cabinet at that stage, However, in the current volatile construction climate, projections based on feasibility work are becoming more challenging and the ability to confidently estimate price is reduced.

- 1.6 These challenges have seen costs increase on several schemes in the last 18 months following initial approval, requiring requests for additional funding during the life of projects. This has also impacted on key project milestones and critical paths which are vital in education due to places being required by specific school year deadlines.
- 1.7 The recommended proposal would support all preliminary work up to the end of RIBA Stage 3 and the timeline of formal approvals for future education capital projects would be re-profiled. The ECD Fund would ensure surveys, building design, ground conditions, Highways phases and archaeological works to be undertaken in advance of requesting funding, and any known abnormalities for the project could thus be investigated further. This will not eliminate all cost increases during the life of projects. Contingency funding would still be required for individual projects as many things occur during a project build which can affect cost including unexpected ground conditions, weather and matters beyond either party's reasonable control which affect either programme or cost and for which a contractor is generally entitled to be compensated. What the fund will do is ensure we start from a realistic baseline and understand the conditions of the project much more before attempting to quantify cost.
- 1.8 Analysis of RIBA stage activity has been forecasted against the pipeline of future proposed projects in the future Education (Schools) Capital programme. It is estimated that an annual ECD Fund of £1.4m would support relevant feasibility, surveys and investigations up to the point of formal planning approval.
- 1.9 The proposed the ECD Fund mirrors the model approved at full council in February 2023 for the Capital Investment Fund.
- 1.10 Delegation is already assigned to the Director for Education to authorise spend of up to £0.500m on individual projects and it is intended that this delegation would be utilised to approve spend within the ECB Fund envelope.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1. The ECD Fund is a capital pot and therefore all expenditure should meet the criteria for capital expenditure. If expenditure from this fund does not meet the criteria for creating or enhancing an asset then the expenditure will be written off to revenue. This could potentially create one-off pressures on the Education Services revenue budget, however, it is expected that the current list of education development projects will ultimately result in the creation of

assets as there is a statutory requirement to provide school places, so the risk of revenue write offs is low.

- 2.2. The full £1.4 million requirement for the fund will be top sliced from the unallocated Basic Need grant balance, currently this stands at £31.568 million. The fund will act as a revolving fund with a maximum balance of £1.4 million to be reviewed annually. As and when development schemes are fully costed and taken forward for approval, the development costs will be transferred to the main project and will replenish the Development Fund. The profiling of the schemes in the Appendix has been reviewed to ensure there will always be sufficient balance within the fund to cover development costs and no additional resources from the Basic Need balance will be required for these specific schemes.
- 2.3. The intention of this fund is that more accurate costings can be secured and achieved prior to full budget approvals being given, this will ensure sufficient full project budget is ultimately allocated and will improve planning of the financial resources available to the Education Service.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 The County Council will look to use modern methods of construction to achieve efficiencies and benefits particularly in terms of time, cost, and the environment.
- 3.2 Environmental risk assessments, together with mitigation statements to reduce any potential environmental impacts, are required for any capital project.
- 3.3 All future school capital projects will be developed in accordance with statutory requirements which include the revised Building Regulations 2021. These new building regulations include significant changes to the regulations around ventilation, energy efficiency and overheating, electric vehicle charging and a number of smaller supporting elements of the regulations. Schools will therefore be built to new standards that are expected to produce lower carbon dioxide omissions compared to previous standards and will also be assessed using primary energy metrics.
- 3.4 Proposed schemes aim to ensure the sufficiency of, and accessibility to, provision in local settings avoiding the need to travel further afield to access education or childcare provision.
- 3.5 As part of the feasibility work on future capital projects, where feasible net zero options will be explored. The approval of this fund will allow these options to be fully developed and associated costs to be produced and considered before recommendation to Cabinet.

4. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, the implementation of the fund will come into effect immediately.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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

Local Member(s): N/A Countywide matter

Other Members: Cllr Sue Markham – Portfolio Holder for Children and Families, Councillors Jonathan Chilvers, John Holland and Jerry Roodhouse.

Cabinet

13 July 2023

Addition of Lias Line Improvement Scheme to Capital Programme

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1) Recommends that Council approves the addition to the Capital Programme of £2,434,735 secured from the Government's Active Travel Fund for the purpose of improving the eastern section of the Lias Line traffic free greenway as part of the creation of a walking, cycling and wheeling route which connects Rugby, Long Itchington, Leamington Spa and other rural communities; and
- 2) Subject to Council approving recommendation 1 above, Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director for Communities to enter into a sub-grant agreement with Sustrans, the owner of the Lias Line, to facilitate delivery of the project in line with the Active Travel Fund grant conditions and on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources and on the basis of a full transfer of all the relevant obligations to Sustrans.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In March 2023 the County Council received £2.5 million (£2,434,735 in capital funding and £65,265 in revenue funding) from the Government's Active Travel Fund for works to improve the eastern section of the Lias Line greenway. As the value of the Active Travel Fund grant exceeds £2,000,000, a decision of Council is required to add the project to the Capital Programme.
- 1.2 The Lias Line is part of the Rugby to Leamington Spa and / Leamington Spa to Daventry disused railway lines and is owned by Sustrans, a charity dedicated to making it easier for people to walk, wheel and cycle and the custodian of the National Cycle Network. The Lias Line extends between the Fosse Way near Offchurch in the west and Rugby in the east, with a branch line connecting to Model Village near Long Itchington. At Fosse Way the Lias Line connects with the County Council owned Offchurch Greenway which extends west to the Grand Union Canal close to Radford Semele. The County Council and Sustrans have an aspiration to create a network of approximately 15km of high-quality accessible traffic-free greenways for walking, wheeling and cycling based on the Lias Line and Offchurch Greenway which connect the communities of Rugby, Leamington Spa and Long Itchington and which

form part of the National Cycle Network.

- 1.3 In 2022 Sustrans completed a first phase of improvement works to the Lias Line, providing 4.5km of traffic-free path with a sealed surface between a point just east of Fosse Way and following the branch line to Long Itchington. The route has proved popular with the local community and is well used for leisure activities.
- 1.4 The £2.5m funding secured from the Active Travel Fund will extend the upgraded section of the Lias Line greenway eastwards towards Rugby. The funding bid committed delivery of a further 3.5km of upgraded route between Long Itchington Road near Hunningham Hill and Birdingbury Road between Marton and Birdingbury, however it is hoped that the funding will also be sufficient to improve a further 1.2km, extending the route to Bourton Lane, Birdingbury.
- 1.5 The proposed improvements extend across land in Warwick District, Stratford-on-Avon District and Rugby Borough and were granted planning permission by each planning authority between November 2020 and July 2021. The works will need to overcome engineering challenges, including replacing the recently demolished bridge over the A423 near Marton which had been repeatedly damaged by vehicle strikes, replacing a further bridge and meeting ecological requirements.
- 1.6 The works will be managed and delivered by Sustrans, and they will also be responsible for the future operation and maintenance of the facility. The County Council has entered into a grant agreement with Active Travel England in respect of the Active Travel Fund grant and is required to use the funding as proposed in the submitted funding bid. The funding cannot be transferred to an alternative scheme without the agreement of Active Travel England.
- 1.7 The Active Travel Fund grant is required to be committed (i.e. allocated) by the end of the 2023/24 financial year with completion of the works to be no later than March 2025 which is a realistic timescale given the scope of the work and scheme readiness. Design work is at an advanced stage, some preliminary works have been completed and the project has an existing site compound. The scheme has secured the required planning approvals and been scrutinised by Active Travel England through the funding bid assessment process to ensure it meets the fund requirements. Sustrans has significant local and national experience of delivering schemes of this type. As with the first phase of the Lias Line works which opened in 2022, Sustrans will utilise their Midlands based in-house network development and engineering teams to complete the scheme design work and project manage delivery and will commission construction contractors to undertake the scheme build.
- 1.8 The Council is requested to delegate authority to the Executive Director for Communities to enter into a sub-grant agreement with Sustrans to facilitate delivery of the project in line with the Active Travel Fund grant conditions and

on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources.

- 1.9 The Council will work with Sustrans as the scheme is developed to ensure it is delivered in line with the funding agreement and this will include ensuring it has no adverse impacts upon people with protected characteristics.
- 1.10 Concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the scheme on current equestrian use of the facility between Long Itchington Road and the A423 Coventry Road. Sustrans have confirmed that consideration is being given to this issue as part of the design process, however it is recognised that the Council in all likelihood will not have significant influence over the design given this is a Sustrans led project with the route being owned and upgraded by them.
- 1.11 Sustrans hope to upgrade the remaining sections of the Lias Line in future years, subject to feasibility work and securing funding. East of Bourton Lane Birdingbury, the Lias Line is accessible for walking, wheeling and cycling for a further 2.4km to Popehill Lane, but the route is of poor quality and in need of upgrade to make it suitable for comfortable multi-user year-round use. From Popehill Lane users can connect to Rugby's cycling network via a circuitous route following quiet lanes and Draycote Water. The final 2.6km section of the Lias Line between Popehill Lane and the B4642 Coventry Road at Cawston will provide a more direct route to Rugby, but much of this section is currently inaccessible having been largely untouched since the railway closed.
- 1.12 Work is being carried out on the western section of the Rugby to Leamington Spa route. Sustrans is working on the provision of a short section of approximately 100 metres between the upgraded section of the Lias Line opened in 2022 and the Fosse Way where HS2 is required to provide a bridge over the road to connect the Lias Line to the Offchurch Greenway. HS2 is also providing a pedestrian / cycle bridge for the Offchurch Greenway crossing of HS2 and working with partners including the County Council, Sustrans, District Council and Department for Transport to identify options for how the Offchurch Greenway will cross Welsh Road as part of HS2 works to reconfigure the junction of Welsh Road and Long Itchington Road.
- 1.13 The County Council has secured an additional £150,000 revenue funding from the Active Travel Fund to undertake scheme development work with a view to upgrading the Offchurch Greenway to a standard consistent to the Lias Line, and to further improve connections to Radford Semele and Leamington Spa. A project to upgrade the cycling and walking infrastructure between the Radford Road entrance to Newbold Comyn and the western end of the Offchurch Greenway is due to be delivered later this year. This project involves providing a new toucan crossing on Radford Road, improving an existing access and creating a new access to the canal towpath and improving sections of the towpath. It is being delivered by Sustrans, the Canal and River Trust and County Council.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 In March 2023 the County Council secured £2.5 million (£2,434,735 capital and £65,265 revenue) from the Government's Active Travel Fund for the purpose of improving the eastern section of the Lias Line greenway, as set out in a funding bid to the Active Travel Fund. The terms and conditions of the grant are set out in a Grant Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Active Travel England. This includes a requirement to commit the grant funding by the end of 31 March 2024. The MoU also places responsibility for meeting any costs over and above the Active Travel Fund grant contribution, including cost overruns, on the Council, though this responsibility will pass to Sustrans as part of the sub-grant agreement. Failure to comply with Grant Agreement / MOU could result in clawback of the grant.
- 2.2 The Lias Line is owned and managed by Sustrans which will design and deliver the works. Subject to Cabinet and Council agreeing recommendations 1 and 2, the Council will release the grant funding to Sustrans on terms and conditions which has been set out in a draft sub-grant agreement prepared to ensure the County Council is able to meet its obligations to Active Travel England and other legal requirements. The sub-grant agreement passes responsibility for meeting all the terms and conditions set out in the Grant Agreement and MOU between the Council and Active Travel England to Sustrans. This will include responsibility for meeting any unfunded costs and any potential clawback of funds by Active Travel England. The Council will work closely with Sustrans on the project and will monitor progress against the terms of the agreement through project governance measures.
- 2.3 Should delivery costs escalate and exceed the grant funding the options will be to work with Sustrans and Active Travel England to agree a reduced project scope, for example by accepting a lower quality finish or reducing the length of route being upgraded, or to stop or delay the project delivery until additional funding can be secured to complete it. The County Council has not committed to contribute funding to the scheme and there is no expectation that it should do so.
- 2.4 The project is expected to support the growth and development of the rural economy, bringing increased trade for pubs, cafes, and other businesses. The development of the route also provides an opportunity for start-up businesses linked to the cycle route for example bike hire and cycle maintenance, as well as within the hospitality sector. Work by Sustrans using a Department for Transport approved methodology demonstrates the investment in the route will have a benefit cost ratio of 3.39 which the Government considers represents high value for money.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 Transport is the single largest cause of carbon emissions in the UK. The Lias Line improvements will form part of a network of high-quality active travel infrastructure, which when complete will connect Rugby and Leamington Spa and many smaller rural communities located on or near the route including

Long Itchington and Birdingbury. In common with other active travel infrastructure projects, improving more of the Lias Line for walking, cycling and wheeling will support journeys to be made by sustainable forms of transport and will contribute to reduced carbon emissions as well as lower levels of congestion and improved air quality.

- 3.2 The greenway has the potential to become a popular leisure destination which could generate car-based trips to access it. To help overcome this issue work is being carried out to make the route accessible by walking, wheeling and cycling from the key local population centres of Leamington Spa, Rugby and Southam, including connections to the stations at Leamington Spa and Rugby.
- 3.3 The Lias Line is an important ecological resource with identified populations of protected species including great crested newts and badgers. Work will be carried out to ensure the ecology of the route is understood and to manage and mitigate the impact of the scheme in line with the planning conditions and the project's Landscape and Ecology Management Plan.

4. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.1 The decision is required to enable the project to progress. Sustrans is progressing design work and it is anticipated that construction works will commence in the early part of 2024, but that a phased delivery approach may be followed to enable all necessary design requirements to be undertaken.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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

Local Member(s): Cllr Redford, Cllr Kettle, Cllr H. Roberts

Other members: Clarke, Chilvers, Feeney and Fradgley

Cabinet

13 July 2023

West Midlands Combined Authority & Devolution for Warwickshire

Recommendation

That Cabinet authorises the Chief Executive to undertake such work as she considers necessary, in consultation with the Leader, including the completion of a governance review and consideration of a draft Scheme, to explore the option for Warwickshire County Council to become a constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Warwickshire County Council has been a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) since 2016. The WMCA comprises 7 constituent members (Birmingham City Council, Coventry City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC), City of Wolverhampton Council, Sandwell MBC, Dudley MBC, Walsall MBC) with full voting rights and a number of non-constituent members, with reduced voting rights, of which Warwickshire County Council is one. During that time, the Council has enjoyed positive relations with the WMCA, with the Leader of the Council being a portfolio holder on the WMCA executive and has continued to engage constructively with the WMCA as it has entered into subsequent devolution deals with Government, the most recent being the Deeper Devolution Deal which was announced in March 2023.
- 1.2 Warwickshire County Council has continued to be a key contributor to the WMCA over the period of its membership, not least due to its shared economic footprint with Coventry (a constituent member) and the significant contribution Warwickshire makes to the wider regional economy. A testament to the strength of our relationship with the WMCA has been the engagement we have had from the WMCA on the Transforming Nuneaton programme, the inclusion of the Gigafactory site in the proposed West Midlands Investment Zone and the inclusion of Coventry & Warwickshire as a potential Levelling Up Zone that could benefit from enhanced and targeted fiscal measures. To this end, the consideration of devolution and the potential benefits to Warwickshire of a devolution deal, whether for Warwickshire alone or arising from the WMCA devolution deal(s), have been kept under continual review and sets the context for this report and the position now reached.
- 1.3 On 2 February 2022 the Government published the Levelling Up White Paper, followed by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill in May 2022 which is making its way through Parliament. The White Paper outlines the Government's

strategy to “spread opportunity and prosperity to all parts of the country” by 2030, through twelve national missions, one of which is focused on devolution – *‘By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement’*.

- 1.4 On 10 March 2022 Cabinet considered the content of the White Paper and supported the development of a devolution deal for Warwickshire. The Leader of the Council subsequently wrote to the Secretary of State expressing the Council’s interest in being invited to commence negotiations on a Devolution Deal for Warwickshire.
- 1.5 A further update was provided to Cabinet in May 2022. This was followed by the establishment of a cross-party group of Members which explored options for each of the different themes and elements of a potential devolution deal for Warwickshire.
- 1.6 The outcome of this detailed cross-party work was considered by Cabinet on 11 May 2023. At this meeting, Cabinet agreed to engagement with partners on a potential future county devolution deal for Warwickshire and continued engagement with the West Midlands Combined Authority to maximise the opportunities for Warwickshire (as a non-constituent member) from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) ‘Deeper Devolution’ Deal.
- 1.7 Since the May Cabinet meeting it has become more apparent that negotiations with Government around a devolution deal for Warwickshire are unlikely to progress in the short to medium term due to the number of local authorities nationally which are already progressing, or in line to progress a deal, and the capacity for negotiation within Government. As set out previously, Level 3 deals, which offer greater freedoms and flexibilities, and which require a directly elected Mayor or a directly elected Leader, appear to remain the priority for Government, which is reflected in their priorities for negotiation to date. In light of Warwickshire’s preference to date not to pursue a directly elected Leader or elected Mayor, as discussed with the District and Borough Councils, it is recognised that negotiation of a Level 2 deal would be a lower priority for Government.
- 1.8 In addition, through discussions with the West Midlands Combined Authority, it is recognised that, understandably, their current focus is on finalising the Deeper Devolution Deal with constituent authorities, expected in the Autumn, with dialogue around the opportunities for non-constituent members following on from that later in the year and likely into next year. Currently, it is equally uncertain as to what opportunities from the Deeper Devolution Deal may be open to non-constituent members. Understandably, due to Warwickshire County Council’s status as a non-constituent member, the opportunity for access to benefits from the Deeper Devolution Deal will be proportionately less, in comparison to those accessible to a full constituent member of the WMCA. For Warwickshire this means that we are some distance from being able to either secure our own deal or benefit fully from the WMCA Deeper Devolution Deal.

- 1.9 This, coupled with uncertainty over future fundings streams (such as the Levelling Up Fund), and the reduction of external funding available to Warwickshire via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (a reduction in funding of c. 60% for employment & skills activities, and 67% for business support programmes compared to the previous European Structural and Investment Funds allocation), leaves Warwickshire with a challenge as to how best to secure our longer-term ambitions for the County around important issues such as economic growth, skills, transport connectivity, net zero, fiscal devolution, housing, land and regeneration, all of which are key aspects of the WMCA Deeper Devolution Deal, and also support the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up. The added pressure is to ensure that Warwickshire secures the maximum benefits from devolution and is not 'left behind' given the timeframe of opportunity.
- 1.10 This report sets out the options available to the Council and proposes that the Council undertakes work to explore the option of becoming a constituent member of the WMCA.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Devolution deals are fundamentally based on the devolution of either funding, powers, or both.
- 2.2 With the agreement with Government of the Deeper Devolution Deal, the WMCA has secured its third devolution deal, each one building on and strengthening its predecessor. We envisage that any expansion of the WMCA area to include Warwickshire would be based on the existing functions devolved to WMCA in addition to the benefits contained in the Deeper Devolution Deal which has been agreed with Government and is in the process of being implemented.
- 2.3 The WMCA Deals 1 and 2 offer a number of freedoms and flexibilities including;

Deal 1 – Creating the WMCA (2015)

- Control of a new additional £36.5 million a year funding allocation over 30 years, to be invested to drive growth.
- Responsibility for chairing area-based reviews of 16+ skills provision, and devolved control over 19+ adult skills funding from 2018/19, estimated at £128m pa
- Joint responsibility with the government to co-design employment support for the hardest-to-help claimants
- Responsibility to work with the Government to develop and implement a devolved approach to the delivery of business support programmes from 2017 and deliver more integrated working together on investment and trade.

Deal 2 – To promote growth (2017)

- Created a Mayoral Housing Delivery Team supported by a £5m investment to expand construction skills.
- £250m for transport infrastructure used for the extension of the Midland Metro from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.
- Established new Skills Advisory Panels to create new local partnerships to plan investment in skills around local labour market needs.
- £5m over 3 years for local construction training programme.
- The creation of a digital hub in Birmingham as part of the TechNation programme and a share of a £2m pilot for Coventry and Warwickshire for ultra-fast broadband roll-out.
- Approval for a Housing First pilot to take place.
- £250m over 4 years from Transforming Cities Fund for local transport priorities.
- Approval for the £250 million West Midlands bid into the Housing Infrastructure Fund
- A Land Fund of £100M to buy and ‘clean up’ land around priority sites
- Commitment from Government to work with Housing Associations on new ways to finance and build affordable housing
- A new Joint Delivery Team with Homes England.

2.4 However, it is recognised that the Deeper Devolution Deal comprises significant additional financial benefits for the WMCA area as summarised below, which Warwickshire would seek to negotiate benefit from to ensure parity of benefit as a Constituent Member of the WMCA:

- Through its ‘Single Settlement’, a Government commitment to giving WMCA single capital and revenue funding certainty, in a way that is equivalent to Government Departments’ annual spending allocations for revenue and capital.
- Fiscal devolution, including the continuation of the pilot allowing 100% retention of business rates growth (rather than the usual 50%) for the next 10 years – worth an estimated £45 million a year to the WMCA and local authorities.
- A £100m Single Regeneration Fund will be deployed flexibly across the region, and for the first time, brownfield land funding will support commercial, employment land and mixed-use development, as well as delivering 4,000 homes.
- A housing deal worth up to £500 million, offering greater flexibility to drive brownfield regeneration and unique powers and funding to deliver affordable housing at pace.
- Inclusion of the Gigafactory and surrounding sites (known collectively as the GigaPark) as part of the proposed West Midlands Investment Zone, enabling initial grant investment into the site, business rates retention, and tax incentives for future occupants – constituent membership would enable greater influence and sharing in expected returns from this investment
- Up to six Levelling Up Zones, backed by 25-year business rate retention, with an expected total value to the region of at least £500 million, to target investment and encourage jobs and regeneration in areas agreed between the WMCA and Government.

- Measures to tackle digital exclusion including greater influence over high-speed broadband investment across the region and a £4 million fund for devices and data to get more people online.
- 2.5 Warwickshire would seek to adopt the principles set out in paragraph 4.10 in its negotiations (i.e. no detriment to existing constituent members and equal benefit for Warwickshire joining). What this means financially for Warwickshire in the context of the current WMCA devolution deal and the Deeper Devolution deal would need to be worked up in negotiation with Government, however it leaves open the possibility that the financing elements of the Deeper Devolution deal could be increased to factor in Warwickshire's inclusion, whilst still respecting the guiding principles that have been applied to previous deals.
- 2.6 In terms of operating costs, non-constituent members of the WMCA (of which Warwickshire County Council is one) pay an annual contribution of £30,000 since 2022/23. Constituent members of the WMCA contribute an annual sum relative to their size, ranging from Birmingham at £1.08m to Solihull at £0.55m, which includes a standard membership fee for all constituent Local Authorities. Should Warwickshire County Council become a constituent member of the WMCA, then an increased contribution would be required. This would need to be factored into the refresh of the Council's MTFS from April 2024 onwards and considered alongside the financial benefits that would arise from full membership.
- 2.7 A change in membership status to 'constituent member' for Warwickshire County Council would also have implications for the five District and Borough Councils in the County who would automatically be admitted as constituent members. It is recognised that the level of financial contribution as a constituent member could be challenging for the District and Borough Councils and if levied at the current 'constituent member' level would mean Warwickshire Councils as a whole contributing a disproportionate amount compared to other members. This would therefore need to be a matter for local agreement as part of the negotiations.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 Although not featured in the White Paper as one of the 12 specific Levelling Up missions, the local definition of Levelling Up adopted for Warwickshire highlights the importance of climate change and net zero as a key element of Levelling Up and therefore devolution.
- 3.2 The West Midlands Combined Authority 'Deeper Devolution Deal' contains a number of workstreams focused on net zero and the environment. These include the following:
- From 2025, Government will pilot with the West Midlands the devolution of housing retrofit funding. This will remove uncertainty and inefficiencies in the existing funding system and inform future models for Government net zero funding.

- Recognition of the region’s involvement in wider energy system management and planning, and responsibility for heat zone designation, energy efficiency advice and attracting private sector finance.
- Funding from the £25m capital pot is anticipated for industrial decarbonisation programmes for regional businesses, natural environment finance models and air quality monitors to support the region’s wider environment and net zero ambitions.

3.3 A number of these would be of particular interest to Warwickshire. Not only would they complement and support the County Council’s ongoing work on our Sustainable Futures Strategy, but it would also be difficult to replicate or recreate them to the scale, extent and pace required on a Warwickshire only footprint. In addition, the housing retrofit workstream also has the potential to offer tangible benefits to Warwickshire residents should Warwickshire progress proposals to become a constituent member of the WMCA. This would be a particularly tangible benefit for Warwickshire’s District and Borough Councils and could play a significant role in our Levelling Up activities, working with partners across the County, on issues such as housing standards, cost of living and healthy living conditions.

4. Supporting Information

Devolution Options for Warwickshire

- 4.1 The options available, which are not mutually exclusive (with the exception of Option 1), are set out below.
- 4.2 Options 2 and 3 are not necessarily binary choices and could be part of the same option.

		Pros	Cons
Option 1	Pause pursuit of a Warwickshire Level 2 devolution deal	<p>Frees up officer time to focus on other priorities</p> <p>May be advantages of letting others go ahead of us – learning from other deals</p>	<p>Warwickshire is potentially ‘left behind’ with no imminent devolution benefits</p> <p>Potential negative impact on Warwickshire’s ambitions for economic growth, skills, transport, climate change etc</p> <p>Lose the benefit of the significant work already undertaken, especially that of the member working group</p>

		Pros	Cons
Option 2	Continue to pursue with Government a standalone Level 2 Devolution Deal for Warwickshire	<p>Any deal negotiated would be for the benefit of Warwickshire only</p> <p>Frees up officer time to focus on other priorities in the shorter term until Government has capacity to negotiate</p>	<p>Government is not currently prioritising Level 2 deals – so likely to take significant time to deliver</p> <p>Level 2 deals offer significantly less benefits than Level 3 (directly elected mayor/leader) deals</p> <p>Warwickshire’s ambitions for economic growth, skills, transport, climate change etc would not be realisable in the shorter term</p> <p>Lose the benefit of the significant work already undertaken, especially that of the member working group</p>
Option 3	Continue to pursue the benefits of the WMCA Deeper Devolution Deal as a non-constituent member	<p>Simpler to identify areas from the Deeper Devolution Deal that would be of interest to Warwickshire</p> <p>Negotiation on defined aspects would be less complex and time consuming</p>	<p>Relies on WMCA capacity to progress benefits for non-constituent members</p> <p>Risk that access to benefits for non-constituent members is more limited than full members</p> <p>The extent of Government involvement in negotiations and impact on current Deeper Devolution deal not clear</p>
Option 4	Explore Warwickshire’s addition to the WMCA Devolution Deal(s) as a result of Constituent Membership of the WMCA	<p>Speedier access to benefits from an existing Devolution Deal</p> <p>Potential for significant benefits from the existing WMCA deal(s)</p> <p>Supports Warwickshire’s ambitions for economic growth, skills, transport etc and potential for delivery at pace</p> <p>Potentially less complex process of negotiation</p>	<p>Financial contribution greater than currently (annual fee), and would require bespoke fee arrangement for Warwickshire councils given two tier structure</p> <p>Some functions (to be agreed) would transfer to the control of a third party (WMCA)</p> <p>Will require dedicated resource to progress in the timeframe required</p>

- 4.3 Option 1 would see the Council pausing work on a Level 2 devolution deal. Options 2 and 3 would see the Council continue on the current mid to longer-term trajectory. Option 4 would see the Council accelerate its consideration of becoming a constituent member as, any decision for the Council to join the WMCA would need to align with the WMCA Mayoral elections which are due to take place in May 2024. If this timeframe were not met, Warwickshire would need to await the next cycle of Mayoral elections (May 2028) before it could reconsider its membership status.

Considerations around a Devolution Deal

- 4.4 Devolution is critical to the wider work and commitments of the Levelling Up agenda. Whilst 'Levelling Up' is a new policy term, it has been a long-held driver within Warwickshire to raise the levels of aspiration and achievement across the whole of the County and reducing inequalities. This levelling up mission is also crucial to realising the ambitions of key related strategies for Warwickshire such as Economic Growth, Sustainable Futures, Transport and Skills.
- 4.5 The direction of travel on devolution from the Government is clear, and Mayoral Combined Authorities are increasingly seen as the vehicles of choice for significant levels of funding and responsibility. The most recent "deeper devolution deal", and agreement for a Single Funding Settlement for the WMCA area are clear evidence of this.
- 4.6 The county of Warwickshire enjoys a strong and diverse functional economic geography, on a shared footprint with Coventry. We are recognised as something of an economic 'powerhouse' and a key contributor to the regional economy, particularly in sectors such as automotive technology and battery development, advanced technology, digital & creative and logistics. As a county Warwickshire is delivering significant economic benefits for residents and businesses. Similarly, our thriving heritage, culture and tourism offer across Warwickshire enjoys a worldwide reputation which successfully competes at a national and international level. However, our reach and impact for Warwickshire is somewhat held back by the lack of access to a devolution deal which would provide greater freedoms and flexibilities at a local level to ensure stronger alignment with our particular needs and opportunities, helping to drive greater economic advantage for the whole of Warwickshire.
- 4.7 Access to the WMCA Deeper Devolution deal has the potential, through access to funding and greater freedoms, to accelerate growth, promote sustainable development and reduce inequalities in Warwickshire. By virtue of the scale and strength of the wider West Midlands, there is scope to create more and enhanced opportunities for residents and businesses, both within Warwickshire and the WMCA area. The potential opportunities and considerations are set out in more detail at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.8 Extending membership to Warwickshire would also strengthen the West Midlands Combined Authority, generating strong growth faster for local people

and reinforcing the West Midlands place, firmly at the heart of the UK's economic prosperity.

- 4.9 These potential benefits need to be considered alongside the potential risks to Warwickshire, such as the powers in relation to key functions (transport, housing, skills) being taken at a regional rather than a local level and the risk that Warwickshire is unable to access an appropriate share of the funding being devolved from Government.
- 4.10 This has been addressed in other devolution deals through a series of fundamental guiding principles which underpin the development of the proposals such as:
- i.) extension of membership will be at no detriment to the existing constituent members; and
 - ii.) the joining authority will enjoy the same benefits as existing constituent members.
- 4.11 The guiding principles for Warwickshire and the extent of the benefits and/or risks to Warwickshire, with particular reference to the statutory test set out at paragraph 4.13, would need to be developed and tested through the work on the Governance Review.

Legislative Process

- 4.12 The process to consider becoming a constituent member of the WMCA commences with the County Council undertaking a governance review pursuant to Section 111 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). This report seeks authority to undertake such review. As this is an initial first step and at an early stage in the Council's consideration of the issue, it is not considered to be a key decision as defined in the Council's Constitution.
- 4.13 Under the Act, the Council would initiate a governance review which would consider the expansion of the WMCA area and its functions to include Warwickshire. The statutory test for consideration is whether the *proposals for expansion would be likely to 'improve the exercise of statutory functions in relation to an area of a combined authority or a proposed area of a combined authority.'* In undertaking a governance review officers would consider those produced for other areas creating or joining a combined authority. An indicative outline of the format that could be applied to a governance review is set out at **Appendix 2.**
- 4.14 If having concluded the governance review the Council concludes the test is met, the Council would:
- i.) Publish a Scheme under Section 112 of the 2009 Act. The Scheme would contain details of the proposed expanded area of the WMCA, its proposed membership, voting and other constitutional arrangements, its proposed functions (to be exercised by the WMCA or shared with the constituent authorities), the way it will be funded and any property, rights and liabilities that would be transferred to the WMCA;

- ii.) Undertake a public consultation, the proposals for which would need to be worked up, across the area of the expanded WMCA in connection with the proposals contained in the Scheme; and
- iii.) Provide the Secretary of State with a summary of the consultation responses.
- iv.) The Secretary of State would then consider whether the statutory requirements are met and whether or not to make an Order to implement a Scheme.

4.15 The statutory requirements include that the Secretary of State:

- i.) considers that no further consultation is needed
- ii.) considers that the proposed changes would be “likely to improve the exercise of statutory functions in the area or areas”
- iii.) must have regard to the need to reflect identities and interests of local communities and to secure effective and convenient local government.
- iv.) must have regard to the likely effect of the change to the WMCA area and its function on each adjoining local government area.

4.16 If the Secretary of State decides to proceed, an Order would be made which would:

- i.) expand the area of the Combined Authority;
- ii.) provide for an election of a Mayor for the expanded area of the combined authority (on the same dates as the current WMCA election date in 2024 and every four years thereafter);
- iii.) specify the powers conferred on the Combined Authority for the expanded area, together with any transitional arrangements; and
- iv.) provide for constitutional arrangements (including membership and decision taking) which are made as a result of the expansion of the area; all six Councils in Warwickshire would be specified as “constituent members” of the Combined Authority, joining the current constituent council members and the Mayor, and the Statutory Instrument would specify the number of representatives from each constituent Council.

4.17 All required local consents to the Order would be required by December 2023 / January 2024 to allow for the Parliamentary process to conclude in advance of the timeframes for commencement of the Mayoral electoral process.

4.18 In respect of the Council’s public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010, it is considered unlikely that the decision proposed and the matters contained in the report will have any material impact and as such there are not considered to be any specific equalities implications arising from this report. It may be possible that such implications arise if this matter proceeds, but they will be assessed and considered as appropriate at that time.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 Following Cabinet’s decision, the following next steps would be taken, in line with the indicative high-level timetable set out below:

- July 2023 – undertake governance review;

- July/August 2023 – report outcome of governance review and consider consultation on draft Scheme;
- July/August/September 2023 – if agreed, public consultation period;
- October 2023 – consider application / summary of consultation responses for submission to the Secretary of State;
- November 2023 - Government draft legislation produced enabling admission to the WMCA;
- December 2023 – Local consents required;
- January 2024 – Legislation laid in Parliament (requires approval of each House); and
- May 2024 – Mayoral elections for expanded area.

5.2 Government has indicated that should Warwickshire wish to proceed, it would be imperative that the Council is in a position to submit an application, including a summary of consultation responses in early October. This tight timeframe is required to enable relevant legislative drafting and orders to be made before the statutory deadlines for the Mayoral elections. Working backwards and taking into account a public consultation period of 8 weeks, this timeframe may require consideration of urgent decisions being made during the process.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of potential opportunities and considerations

Appendix 2 – Outline governance review document

Background Papers

Developing a Devolution Deal for Warwickshire – Cabinet, March 2022

Levelling Up and Devolution for Warwickshire, - Cabinet, May 2022

A Countywide Approach to Levelling Up in Warwickshire, - Cabinet, July 2022

Developing Devolution Deal for Warwickshire – May 2023

	Name	Contact Information
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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/a – county wide matter

APPENDIX 1 – OPPORTUNITIES & CONSIDERATIONS

Thematic Area	Opportunities	Considerations
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration into Transport for West Midlands, enabling investment in bus routes and operations and cheaper cross-boundary and multi-modal ticketing. For instance, a day unlimited bus ticket across the WMCA conurbation is currently £4.20, compared to £5.50 for Warwickshire urban areas, and £10.10 for urban + peri-urban areas in Warwickshire. Cross subsidisation of income across the whole geography enables lower price ticketing. • Utilisation of TfWM back-office systems to enable multi-modal ticketing (to include bus, rail, metro, cycle/e-scooter), and lowest price guarantees. • Ability to access greater funding settlements for transport. WMCA secured £87.857m of Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding (£29.88 per resident) compared to £2.072m by Warwickshire (£3.55 per resident). The WMCA has also secured £1.328bn of funding via the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement over the 2022/23-2026/7 period. • Opportunity to proactively engage and benefit from transport innovation activity and funding, particularly around infrastructure for connected and autonomous vehicles – important component to support our automotive sector going forward. • More effective strategic planning and consideration of cross-boundary transport infrastructure connections – critical to support the functional economic geography of Coventry & Warwickshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warwickshire would contribute to the WMCA Transport Levy on a pro-rata basis linked to population. • Increasingly limited transport funding coming from “normal” DfT routes. With limited capacity for WCC capital funding, question where significant funding for transport schemes will come from in the future outside of the CA model and developer contributions. • Importance of improved connectivity with urban areas for economic growth (improves agglomeration effects)
Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to access potentially significant funding for economic development activity via the new Single Funding Settlement. • Double devolution of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to constituent members for delivery of business support activity. Warwickshire would secure both more funding and more control over the use of this to support businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At present, Warwickshire likely to see a significant reduction in funding (c. 67%) as a result of end of European Funding Streams and the availability of funding for economic development.

Thematic Area	Opportunities	Considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of 100% retention of business rates growth pilot for 10 years. • Secure and maintain clear C&W business support infrastructure, avoiding differential offering across the functional economic area • Stronger relationship with Government departments on innovation, trade and investment through the devolution deal. • Look to capitalise on wider strengths and scale linked to our key priority sectors – particularly automotive, future mobility and digital creative industries. Warwickshire (with Coventry) have clear strengths in these areas, but opportunity to link with wider sectors across the WMCA and secure funding to support. • Enhanced opportunities to utilise Single Investment Fund to support employment land development (see housing & regeneration below) • Access to equity, grant and loan funding to support business growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could reduce reach of business support programmes and have implications for the CW Growth Hub. • Tourism is an emerging area of interest for the WMCA, with Warwickshire offering a range of assets. Opportunity for us to strongly shape and influence going forward.
Employment & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMCA have devolved control over c£128m annual adult skills funding and can make strategic choices for use of funding to support skills and training activity to support local priorities and identified sectors. Increased scope to significantly shape adult skills activity in Warwickshire to support local growth opportunities and re-training/up-skilling to meet business needs. • Increasing control and influence over careers activity, taking on powers and responsibility from Careers England & Careers & Enterprise Company. Opportunity for Warwickshire to benefit from this, and enable more focused and resourced approach in key geographic areas (e.g. Nuneaton and Bedworth). • Single funding source and approach for our FE and training providers in Warwickshire who operate across wider geography or who support residents in the WMCA area. Will enable improved efficiency, focus and alignment of activity. • Through latest devolution deal, greater influence over national employment support programmes. Can tailor support more closely to local economic need and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local control over skills funding is recognised as a key lever to support economic growth and improve employability of residents. • Would be a key priority ask of any Warwickshire devolution deal • Significant reduction in funding for Employment & Skills (c. 60%) through shift from European Funding to UKSPF. Unclear where funding to fill this gap would come from outside of the WMCA.

Thematic Area	Opportunities	Considerations
	<p>improve support to unemployed. Opportunity for better targeted interventions in Warwickshire in key areas of need (linked to Levelling Up agenda). Important given significant reduction in funding for this work following end of European Programmes and limited investment via UKSPF.</p>	
Housing and Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full access to the range of land and development investment funds that can be used flexibly to bring forward housing, regeneration and employment land schemes. While technically there are opportunities for non-constituents to access this funding, scope and scale is limited and progress to date difficult. • Access to £400m Affordable Housing Programmes to help significantly increase the quantum of affordable housing across the WMCA area. • Opportunity to engage more fully with a range of investors that the WMCA are developing strong partnerships with, including L&G, SEGRO and others. • Opportunities to access new and additional funding and support for town centre regeneration plans. • Investment Zone proposal currently progressing for Gigafactory site, but governance and financial arrangements to make this work will be complex and complicated with WCC and WDC outside of the WMCA. • Levelling Up Zones also being progressed later in the year by the WMCA, currently unlikely to be available to areas outside of the core WMCA area. Would be an opportunity to engage in this new policy model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities here for WCC and WPDG. Potentially as great an opportunity for the District & Borough Councils to support delivery of Local Plans, housing need and town centre regeneration. • Outside of the Levelling Up Fund, very little recent or proposed new Government funding to support this agenda.

APPENDIX 2 – INDICATIVE HEADINGS FOR GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Section 1	Executive Summary
Section 2	Purpose of the Review
Section 3	Methodology for the Governance Review
Section 4	Our ambition
Section 5	Warwickshire and WMCA context
Section 6	Warwickshire and WMCA Economy
Section 7	Economic Profile
Section 8	Challenges
Section 9	Understanding Current Governance Arrangements
Section 10	Benefits/ risks assessment
Section 11	Functions
Section 12	Financial considerations
Section 13	Criteria
Section 14	Options for Warwickshire
Section 15	Conclusion
Section 16	Next steps

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Cabinet

13 July 2023

Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan 2023-25

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the proposed pooled contribution of £17.254m by the Council to the Better Care Fund Plan (known as the Better Together programme plan) for 2023/24 and the provisional pooled contribution of £18.669m for 2024/25 and the plan for resources as set out in paragraph 2.2;
2. Delegates authority to the Executive Director for People to enter into the proposed section 75 NHS Act 2006 agreement, with Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) for delivery of the Better Care Fund Plan for 2023-25, on terms and conditions acceptable to him and the Strategic Director for Resources; and
3. Approves the County Council continuing as the pooled budget holder for the fund.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a programme spanning both local government and the NHS which seeks to join-up health and care services, so that people can manage their own health and wellbeing and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.
- 1.2 The Better Care Fund 2023/25 Planning Requirements published on 4th April 2023, set out the template for Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) to submit their plans for the next two years for approval. The deadline for submission of the BCF plan to NHS England is 28th June 2023. Due to the tight timescales required for preparation and approval of the plan, permission has been obtained from NHS England for Cabinet (13th July) and HWBB (19th July) approval to follow submission. Any subsequent changes required as a result of consideration by the Cabinet and/or Health and Wellbeing Board would result in the BCF plan being re-submitted.
- 1.3 The Better Care Fund Policy Statement for 2023-25 provides continuity to previous years of the programme, with four national conditions:

1. A jointly developed and agreed plan between local health and social care commissioners and signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
2. Implementing BCF Policy Objective 1: enabling people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer.
3. Implementing BCF Policy Objective 2: providing the right care in the right place at the right time
4. Maintaining the NHS:
 - a. contribution to adult social care in line with the uplift to the NHS minimum contribution - The contribution to social care from the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board via the BCF is agreed and meets or exceeds the minimum expectation. For Warwickshire the minimum contribution is:
 - £16.138m in 2023/24
 - £17.051m in 2024/25.
 - b. investment in NHS commissioned out-of-hospital services - That a specific proportion of the area’s allocation is invested in NHS commissioned out-of-hospital services, while supporting integration plans. For Warwickshire the minimum expenditure is:
 - £12.897m in 2023/24
 - £13.627m in 2024/25

1.4 Prior to approval by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 19th July 2023, the BCF Plan for 2022/23 will be reviewed and approved by:

Review and Approval	Date
Partnership - Joint Commissioning Board	06/06/23
Partnership - Warwickshire Care Collaborative	08/06/23
ICB – Executive	13/06/23
WCC – People DLT	21/06/23
WCC - Corporate Board	20/06/23
NHS Submission Deadline	28/06/23
WCC – Cabinet	13/07/23
Partnership – Health and Wellbeing Board	19/07/23

1.5 NHS England will approve BCF plans in consultation with the Department for Health and Social Care and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Assurance processes will confirm that national conditions are met, ambitions are agreed for all national metrics and that all funding is pooled, with relevant spend agreed. Assurance of plans will be led by Better Care Managers (BCMs) with input from NHS England and local government representatives and will be a single stage exercise based on a set of key lines of enquiry. A cross-regional calibration meeting will be held after regions have submitted their recommendations, bringing together representatives from each region.

- 1.6 Once approved - NHS England, as the accountable body for the NHS minimum contribution to the fund, will write to areas to confirm that the NHS minimum funding can be released.
- 1.7 These approval letters give formal permission to spend the NHS minimum contribution. This means that the NHS minimum funding can then be released by the Integrated Care Board.
- 1.8 Cabinet approval is required to enable the minimum contributions (specified in the BCF allocations and grant determinations set out in section 2.2 below) to be pooled into a section 75 agreement. The BCF Policy Framework requires section 75 agreements to be signed and in place by 31st October 2023.
- 1.9 At this point all conditions for the funding will then be met.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 Funding sources and expenditure plans:

	2023/24			2024/25		
	Pooled Contribution	Aligned Allocation	Total Budget	Pooled Contribution	Aligned Allocation	Total Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Minimum NHS ring-fenced from ICB allocation	45,204	110,543	155,747	47,762	116,799	164,562
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	5,124	-	5,124	5,124	-	5,124
Warwickshire County Council Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)	15,133	-	15,133	15,133	-	15,133
ICB Discharge Fund	3,518	-	3,518	4,666	-	4,666
WCC Discharge Fund	2,121	-	2,121	3,536	-	3,536
Warwickshire County Council	-	175,938	175,938	-	180,988	180,988
Total Pooled Contribution	71,101			76,223		
Total Additional Aligned Allocation		286,482			297,788	
Total Budget			357,584			374,011

Notes:

- 1) The above table is rounded to £000's for summary purposes.
- 2) Cabinet approved the list of schemes to be delivered and funded through the Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) allocation for 2023/24 at the Cabinet meeting on the 16th March 2023.
- 3) The local authority pooled contribution of £17.245m for 2023/24 comprises of the iBCF allocation (£15.133m) and WCC Discharge Fund (£2.121m)
- 4) The iBCF allocation for 2024/25 will be published in the Local Authority Settlement in December 2023.
- 5) More detail is provided in the Appendix - Financial Schedule 3.

- 2.2 The following minimum funding must be pooled into the Better Care Fund in 2023-25:

Funding Sources	2023/24	2024/25
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	£5,124,786	£5,124,786
Minimum NHS Contribution	£45,204,245	£47,762,805
Discharge Fund - ICB Contribution	£3,518,000	£4,666,667
Discharge Fund – Local Authority Contribution (WCC)	£2,121,662	£3,536,103
iBCF (WCC)	£15,133,281	£15,133,281
Total	£71,101,974	£76,223,642

- 2.3 Additional discharge funds provided through the Hospital Discharge Grant in previous years, have now been included in the BCF for 2023-25 and are being used to deliver the new Community Recovery Service and residential short-term placements.

3. Environmental Implications

None.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 National Condition 1 (as detailed in section 1.3 above) requires a BCF Plan, covering all mandatory funding contributions to have been agreed by Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) areas and minimum contributions (specified in the BCF allocations and grant determinations) to be pooled in a section 75 agreement (an agreement made under section 75 of the NHS Act 2006) by the constituent local authorities (LAs) and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs).
- 4.2 For 2023-25, BCF plans will consist of:
- A narrative plan
 - A completed BCF planning template, including:
 - Planned expenditure from BCF sources.
 - Confirmation that national conditions of the fund are met, as well as specific conditions attached to individual funding streams.
 - Ambitions and plans for performance against BCF national metrics.
 - Any additional contributions to BCF section 75 agreements.
 - An intermediate care capacity and demand plan.
- 4.3 Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 gives powers to local authorities and Integrated Care Boards to establish and maintain pooled funds out of which payment may be made towards expenditure incurred in the exercise of prescribed local authority functions and prescribed NHS functions.
- 4.4 The purpose of the section 75 agreement is to set out the terms on which the local authority and ICB have agreed to collaborate and to establish a

framework through which the Partners can secure the future provision of health and social care services through lead or joint commissioning arrangements. It is also the means through which the local authority and ICB will pool funds and align budgets

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 Regional and national assurance activity:

Assurance activity	Date
BCF planning requirements received	4 th April 2023
Optional draft BCF planning submission submitted to BCM	30 th May 2023
BCF planning submission from local HWB areas (agreed by ICB and WCC) sent to national BCF Team at NHS England	28 th June 2023
Scrutiny of BCF plans by regional assurers, assurance panel meetings and regional moderation	28 th June – 28 th July 2023
Cross regional collaboration	3 rd August 2023
Approval letters issued giving formal permission to spend (NHS minimum)	8 th September 2023
All section 75 agreements to be signed and in place	31 st October 2023

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – BCF Plan 2023-25 Schedule 3

Background Papers

- None.

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

Local Member(s): None

Other members: Councillors John Holland, Jerry Roodhouse and Jonathan Chilvers.

5.66%

2023/25 BCF Budget - Warwickshire

	Theme
Out of Hospital	Integrated Care and Support
Discharge to Assess beds (D2A)	Integrated Care and Support
Carers breaks	Care at Home
ICES (Health)	Care at Home
Joint funded CHC packages	Accommodation With Care
Domiciliary Care	Care at Home
Reablement	Care at Home
ICES (Social Care)	Care at Home
Moving on beds	Integrated Care and Support
ICB Funding	
Sub Total - ICB Funding	
North Warwickshire DFG	Care at Home
Nuneaton and Bedworth DFG	Care at Home
Rugby DFG	Care at Home
Stratford-on-Avon DFG	Care at Home
Warwick DFG	Care at Home
Total - District/Borough Funding Stream	
Total Basic BCF	
Stabilising the market	Cross Cutting
Reducing pressure on the NHS	Cross Cutting
Meeting social care needs	Cross Cutting
Resources / support arrangements	Cross Cutting
IBCF (Note: 24/25 allocation TBC in Dec 23)	
Local Authority Discharge funding	
ICB Discharge funding	
Discharge funding	
Total Pooled Budget	
Aligned Budgets	
Out of Hospital	Integrated Care and Support
Personal Health budgets	
Residential and Nursing Care	
Domiciliary Care	Care at Home
Social Prescribing (Joint Healthy SW)	
<other>	
ICB Aligned budgets	
Sub-Total ICB Aligned budgets	
Falls Prevention	Cross Cutting
Domiciliary Care	Care at Home
Residential and Nursing Care	Accommodation With Care
Supported Living	
Direct payments	Care at Home
Carers	Care at Home
Social Prescribing	
HEART	Care at Home
WCC Aligned budgets	
Sub Total - Additional Funds For Alignment	
Total Pooled and Aligned Budgets	

2023/24 BCF budget			
ICB Spending	LA Spending	District/Borough Council Spending	Total
£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
16,294	0	0	16,294
1,288	0	0	1,288
1,080	0	0	1,080
4,501	0	0	4,501
5,903	0	0	5,903
0	8,716	0	8,716
0	5,206	0	5,206
0	1,720	0	1,720
0	496	0	496
29,066	16,138	0	45,204
29,066	16,138	0	45,204
		795	795
		1,652	1,652
		717	717
		961	961
		999	999
0	0	5,125	5,125
29,066	16,138	5,125	50,329
0	6,837	0	6,837
0	3,693	0	3,693
0	4,353	0	4,353
0	250	0	250
0	15,133	0	15,133
0	2,122		2,122
3,518	0		3,518
3,518	2,122	0	5,640
32,584	33,393	5,125	71,101
41,027	0	0	41,027
10,860	0	0	10,860
33,019	0	0	33,019
25,500	0	0	25,500
136	0	0	136
0	0	0	0
110,542	0	0	110,542
110,542	0	0	110,542
0	0	0	0
0	18,606	0	18,606
0	93,833	0	93,833
0	41,800	0	41,800
0	20,561	0	20,561
0	510	0	510
0	0	0	0
0	629	0	629
0	175,939	0	175,939
110,542	175,939	0	286,481
143,126	209,332	5,125	357,582

2024/25 BCF budget			
ICB Spending	LA Spending	District/Borough Council Spending	Total
£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
17,216	0	0	17,216
1,361	0	0	1,361
1,141	0	0	1,141
4,756	0	0	4,756
6,237	0	0	6,237
0	9,209	0	9,209
0	5,501	0	5,501
0	1,817	0	1,817
0	524	0	524
30,711	17,051	0	47,762
30,711	17,051	0	47,762
		795	795
		1,652	1,652
		717	717
		961	961
		999	999
0	0	5,124	5,124
30,711	17,051	5,124	52,886
0	6,921	0	6,921
0	3,602	0	3,602
0	4,353	0	4,353
0	257	0	257
0	15,133	0	15,133
0	3,536		3,536
4,666	0		4,666
4,666	3,536	0	8,202
35,377	35,720	5,124	76,221
43,350	0	0	43,350
11,474	0	0	11,474
34,888	0	0	34,888
26,943	0	0	26,943
144	0	0	144
0	0	0	0
116,799	0	0	116,799
116,799	0	0	116,799
0	0	0	0
0	18,932	0	18,932
0	96,651	0	96,651
0	43,054	0	43,054
0	21,178	0	21,178
0	525	0	525
0	0	0	0
0	648	0	648
0	180,988	0	180,988
116,799	180,988	0	297,787
152,176	216,709	5,124	374,009

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Cabinet

13 July 2023

Concessionary Travel - Introduction of Companion Passes

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the development of a companion enhancement to the existing concessionary travel pass for a fixed term, ending on 31 March 2025
2. Approve the eligibility criteria set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Warwickshire County Council is responsible for operating the England National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) in Warwickshire. The statutory scheme provides free off-peak travel and funding is within the overall financial settlement for local government.
- 1.2. A report was taken to Cabinet in April 2023, and one of the recommendations was that Cabinet support a feasibility study for the introduction of a companion pass, and that the results were reported back to Cabinet. A companion pass is a discretionary enhancement to the statutory ENCTS scheme and so is referred to both as a companion enhancement, where it relates to eligibility, and a companion pass, where it relates to a physical bus pass.
- 1.3. A feasibility study was undertaken, covering eligibility and costs, by consultants ITP and the report is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Background

- 2.1. Although the Council is required to deliver the ENCTS in Warwickshire, no specific funding is received. Funding for concessionary travel, as with the majority of local authority services, is part of the Authority's core spending power, calculated as part of the annual Local Government Finance Settlement. Notional funding to provide the statutory travel is included as part of the underlying assessment of the Authority's relative need to spend that underpins the calculation of core spending power. The assessment of relative need was determined in 2011 and has been rolled forward unchanged since. In the Council's budget the funding for concessionary travel is part of the approved budget for Environment Services.

- 2.2. Delivery of services over and above the statutory scheme must be funded by Warwickshire County Council. The Department for Transport collects data every year about the statutory and non-statutory journey numbers, local enhancements, and reimbursement costs. Currently the only enhancement offered by the Council is extended travel time for passholders. This covers the period from 9am until 9.30am, and from 11pm until midnight, on weekdays.
- 2.3. ENCTS rules dictate the disabilities which would entitle people to a concessionary pass. Disabled Person's Passes are issued from the age of 5 up to the age someone becomes entitled to an Older Person's Pass. The qualifying disabilities are;
 - a. Blind or partially sighted
 - b. Profoundly or severely deaf
 - c. Without speech
 - d. Disability which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on ability to walk
 - e. No arms or no use of both arms
 - f. Learning disability involving significant impairment of intelligence as well as significant impairment of social functioning
 - g. Would be refused a driving licence on medical grounds (other than because of the use of alcohol or drugs)
- 2.4. A pass which allows a passholder to travel with a carer or companion free of charge (known as a 'companion pass' or a '+1 pass') is an established discretionary enhancement which some authorities offer, but has never been offered by Warwickshire County Council.
- 2.5. Prior to April 2011, when the scheme was administered by the district and borough councils, both Warwick District Council and Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council did offer this as an enhancement for their residents, but chose not to continue funding when Warwickshire County Council took over the scheme. Any passes already in circulation were honoured until their expiry date, but were replaced with a statutory pass on expiry.
- 2.6. During the engagement exercise carried out as part of the concessionary travel review in 2022, respondents were asked which discretionary enhancements they would want to see. 74% of respondents responded that "A carer or companion travelling with a disabled passholder who cannot travel alone (eligibility criteria would apply)" should be entitled to free or reduced cost travel.
- 2.7. Cabinet requested a feasibility study was carried out and reported back as soon as possible. Research was subsequently commissioned looking into the feasibility and cost of introducing a companion pass for Warwickshire passholders. The research report is included at Appendix 1
- 2.8. The Warwickshire Cross Party Member Working Group discussed the April Cabinet report at their meeting on 19 April 2023 and were supportive of adding a companion enhancement.

3. Eligibility – factors not relating to individual disability

- 3.1. In terms of age, it is realistic to expect a primary age child to be accompanied by a parent. It is therefore suggested that the companion enhancement is not available to children before their 11th birthday. It is expected that a child younger than 11 years would be accompanied by an adult whether disabled or not. Therefore, the companion should not get free travel to undertake their normal duty as a parent or guardian.
- 3.2. In Warwickshire Disabled Person's Passes are not issued to passholders who have reached the age where they are eligible for an Older Person's Pass. It will therefore be necessary for the companion enhancement to be available for both Older Person's Passes and Disabled Person's Passes provided the passholder meets the eligibility requirements.

4. Eligibility criteria and evidence

- 4.1. Estimates from the research indicate that between 16% and 66% of disabled person's passholders at other authorities have the companion enhancement, or between 1.3% and 7% of all passholders. This is an average of 2.97%
- 4.2. In Warwickshire we do not know how many older person's passholders would have a qualifying disability, and so have based figures on the overall percentage of passholders. If we apply the 2.97% average, then this would result in 2,477 passholders with the companion enhancement in Warwickshire.
- 4.3. Within each disability category there will be a wide variation in people's ability to travel independently, with some people needing no assistance and others relying on one or more carer or companion at all times.
- 4.4. If someone meets the criteria for the companion enhancement and must be accompanied by two carers or companions, then a +2 pass will be considered on a one-off basis and will require additional information from a medical professional.
- 4.5. The research included data on eligibility criteria used by other authorities for a companion enhancement. The criteria varied widely, with some authorities accepting a letter from a medical professional as the only way of demonstrating eligibility, others allowing automatic entitlement on the basis of receipt of certain levels of benefits. The level of disability necessary to receive a companion enhancement varies widely as well.
- 4.6. In terms of eligibility criteria, we do rely on applicants getting evidence from medical professionals in order to demonstrate they have a qualifying disability, if they do not have one of the Automatic entitlements. This is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons;
 - Medical professionals can fill out an evidence form incorrectly and it is rejected

- The applicant has to pay for the service if they approach a GP.
- There may be a long lead time waiting for an appointment
- Doctors' letters often lack the information required for assessment.

- 4.7. It is therefore recommended that the eligibility for the companion enhancement is linked to receipt of benefits, where possible, which are likely to be received by those applicants with the more severe disabilities. The proposed eligibility criteria are outlined in Appendix 2
- 4.8. Where other documentation is not available, evidence is provided by the customer, using template forms we provide, and a decision is made by officers. New forms will be needed for a companion enhancement.

5. Practical matters

- 5.1. Bus operators will need to receive formal notice that the scheme is changing.
- 5.2. The ENCTS pass is a smartcard and work will be required to configure the way the passes are issued before a scheme can be introduced. This includes;
- Additional smartcard products need to be registered to the ITSO scheme. ITSO is the National standard developed by DfT for transport smartcards. It is mandatory for concessionary bus passes to use this standard.
 - Electronic ticket machines need to be updated by bus operators to recognise the passes with the companion enhancement
 - The card management system (CMS) and online portal needs reconfiguring to include a companion enhancement
 - The card production company needs to amend their systems to add the new companion enhancement where necessary.
- 5.3. A communications plan will be needed, so that passholders can be provided with information about the companion enhancement and how to apply for it if they qualify.
- 5.4. Once the scheme is introduced there are likely to be a large number of passholders who will want to 'upgrade' their pass to include the companion enhancement. Customer expectations will need to be managed, as current capacity is around 400-450 new applications per month, and applications for pass upgrades would add to these totals with consequent resource implications.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The cost of reimbursing operators is the largest cost associated with the introduction of the companion enhancement.

- 6.2. Under normal conditions, bus operators must be reimbursed so that they are no better off and no worse off than they would have been if the scheme did not exist. The scheme is designed to take advantage of spare capacity on the bus network.
- 6.3. However, in March 2020, bus patronage dropped to very low levels whilst people were in lockdown. Currently, patronage has recovered to only around 60% of pre-COVID levels
- 6.4. In order to maintain the viability of the bus network and support bus operators through the pandemic, authorities have been requested by DfT to reimburse operators at levels the same as or approaching the same as they were pre-COVID. During 2023-24 WCC is paying 100% of the pre-COVID amount, adjusted for any substantial changes to the network e.g. less frequent services, or routes being dropped.
- 6.5. In the longer term, DfT has indicated that funding may be reduced if patronage has not recovered. They are also currently undertaking a complete review of the scheme, including the eligibility criteria. Any reduction in government funding will not occur until at least 2024/25 once the DfT review of concessionary travel is complete.
- 6.6. Research (Appendix 1) was not able to collect much data around the cost of a companion enhancement at other authorities, but estimates for annual additional reimbursement range from between £39k p.a. and £150k p a. It should be stressed these are estimates only and the range is broad as the actual cost will be affected by many factors such as:
 - The eligibility criteria, and how many passholders would qualify (compared to other authorities)
 - The number of eligible passholders who take up the enhancement
 - The number of journeys they undertake
 - The nature and frequency of bus services in general
- 6.7. Between 2011 and 2013, when the Council was honouring the companion passes issued by Warwick District Council alone, the annual cost or operator reimbursement was estimated to be £42k p.a. Scaled up across the County based on current pass numbers, this could result in expenditure of as much as £169k.
- 6.8. WCC is currently only seeing around 60% of pre-COVID journey numbers each month. This equates to around 210k concessionary journeys per month now compared to 350k journeys per month before COVID. Journeys made with companion passes are likely to be in the hundreds or low thousands.
- 6.9. Whilst there is no certainty, it is unlikely that concessionary patronage will recover by the end of 2024-25 to the point where the full amount in the budget would be required for reimbursement based on actual journeys.

- 6.10. The proposed eligibility criteria are stricter than some of the other authorities from the research results so that only those most severely affected by their disabilities will be entitled to this companion enhancement. This will have a bearing on the financial implications of the proposal..
- 6.11. The most likely scenarios for expenditure are that;
- DfT extends their advice to keep paying at 100% of pre-COVID levels for 2024-25, or
 - WCC reverts to paying for actual journeys, which will be less than we are currently paying. WCC is unlikely to see journey increasing beyond 90% in that timescale
- 6.12. In the case of 6.11 b. , if journey numbers increase to 90% and reimbursement paid drops to that level then there will still be sufficient funding in the current budget to cover the companion expenditure for 2024-25.
- 6.13. It is important to note that DfT are currently reviewing all aspects of Concessionary travel, including value for money, and anything could happen. However, primary legislation would be required to make any major changes and this is unlikely to be a priority for the next government.
- 6.14. If the scheme were to be renewed, or extended beyond 31 March 2025 then additional revenue funding, estimated at £100k, would be needed. Operating the proposed companion enhancement during 2024-25 would enable a much better estimate of costs with clear data on take up and the cost of resourcing the scheme administration.
- 6.15. it is not currently possible to predict with any accuracy what the future patronage (and consequently the future funding requirements) might be for a permanent scheme. There is therefore a risk that the budget in future may not cover the additional reimbursement to operators required to operate the scheme. This may result in wider dissatisfaction if the scheme is not renewed beyond 31 March 2025.
- 6.16. The following one-off costs are estimated.

<i>Est. cost</i>	<i>Reason</i>
£4,200	Registering 10 new ITSO smartcard products
£3,570	Configure CMS to handle the companion enhancement
£1,200	Configure card production to issue companion passes
£12,200	Staff time to handle initial upgrade requests as applicants may want a pass straight away – mid range estimate is 2,000 successful upgrades + 500 unsuccessful ones, + staff training
£3,260	Reissuing passes as companion passes – mid range estimate is 2,000 passes
£2,000	Publicity
£26,430	TOTAL one-off costs

These can be covered from within the current concessionary travel budget for 2023-24

6.17. The following are estimated to be the ongoing costs

Reason	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 onwards p.a. *
Annual ITSO licence fees for companion enhancement	Can be covered within existing budget £4,200		£4,200
Reimbursement to bus operators (mid range estimate)	Included in current reimbursement whilst journey numbers are low and until outcome of DfT review is known*		£100,000**
TOTAL additional annual costs	Nil		£104,200

* If the scheme were to be extended or renewed beyond 31 March 2025

** mid-range figure – estimates range from £39k- £169k

6.18. It is open to the authority to charge for adding the companion enhancement as it is not part of the statutory scheme. A modest charge of £20 would be value for money for a passholder over the life of the pass, compared to the cost of bus fares for carers, even paying the current reduced £2 single fare. However, with the current cost of living challenges it is not recommended that a charge be introduced at this time.

7. Environmental Implications

7.1. Overall, there is environmental benefit to getting more people traveling by bus. However, it is not possible to quantify the impact of any changes at present as this will depend on take up of passes and the effect the new pass has on modal shift.

8. Social Implications

8.1. Introduction of a companion pass would allow more people to access public transport. Currently passholders who require someone to travel with them must pay for that person to travel, and this restricts their ability to utilise their entitlement to free bus travel.

8.2. It is recommended that the scheme is a set up for a fixed period, to the end of 2024-25 after which time the results from the review and any funding or eligibility changes to the statutory scheme will be known.

8.3. Whilst it would be difficult to remove an enhancement which people have become used to, it is still considered better to provide the enhancement for a short period than not to provide it at all.

8.4. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and can be found in Appendix 3

9. Timescales

- 9.1. There will be a lead time required to implement the scheme. There are a number of connected activities that must take place before the scheme can be rolled out and applications accepted. These include::
- giving statutory notice to bus operators (allow two months, including time for a participation notice to be issued should any operator not prepared to accept the variation)
 - commissioning and implementing changes to the CMS card management system, and to the online portal
 - obtaining smartcard licences and working with the card producers to implement the new companion pass
 - training staff who handle the face to face transactions with customers on the eligibility criteria and implementation of the scheme
- 9.2. The following milestone dates are proposed to enable appropriate preparation to be undertaken to commence the scheme and ensure all technology is in place and working:
- December 2023 – start accepting and processing applications
 - January 2024 – start issuing companion passes

Appendices

1. Research results
2. Proposed eligibility criteria
3. Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Papers

None.

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

Local Member(s): N/A – This is a countywide matter.

Other members: Councillors Jeff Clarke, Jonathan Chilvers, Sarah Feeney, and Jenny Fradgley

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Title	Warwickshire Companion Passes Feasibility Study
Date	30/05/2023
Author(s)	Rebecca Phillips
Project Code	3532
Version	1.3



1. Introduction

- 1.1 ITP has been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study to explore the introduction of a companion pass to the existing concessionary travel scheme in Warwickshire.
- 1.2 This aims to explore how the concessionary companion pass is managed in other local authorities; understand best practice; and estimate the potential financial implications of introducing companion passes as a discretionary enhancement in Warwickshire.

Background

- 1.3 A companion pass for concessionary travel is a discretionary enhancement to the English National Concession Travel Scheme (ENCTS).
- 1.4 A companion pass is typically offered to a concessionary travel pass holder who would be unable to make a journey without assistance. A companion pass therefore allows the holder of a pass to travel with a companion without the need for that companion to pay a fare. These can be offered to disabled person's pass (DPP) holders, older person's pass (OPP) holders, or both.
- 1.5 Using ONS data, of the 83 travel concession authorities in England, 53 offer a companion pass as a discretionary element within their concessionary travel schemes. However, management of these schemes differs widely across authorities.

Review of best practice

- 1.6 Of the 53 authorities which offer a companion pass, a request for information was sent to 44 authorities, for whom we had contact information.
- 1.7 Information was requested relating to the overall management of the companion pass scheme, data on the current scheme, and eligibility criteria including assessments.
- 1.8 Information for 40 authorities has been gathered either directly from the local authority via email or Knowledge Hub (20) or from their website (20).

2. Overall management of companion pass scheme

2.1 Overall management of the companion pass scheme explored the background of the scheme and how it is administered. This covered:

- 1) Is a companion pass available for both OPP and DPP holders?
- 2) Is there age limit cut off either lower or above retirement age?
- 3) Is there a charge for a companion pass?
- 4) Does the pass allow for multiple companions?
- 5) Are temporary companion passes provided?

Availability of companion passes

2.2 Of the 40 local authorities, 27 offer a companion pass to disabled passholders only; 13 offer a companion pass to both disabled and older persons passholders.

Age requirements for companion passes

2.3 Of the 22 authorities with information on provision of disabled passes to applicants over retirement age:

- 11 provided disabled passes to people over retirement age.
- 7 authorities did not provide disabled passes to applicants over retirement age.
- 3 gave applicants a disabled pass to people over retirement age when only the companion element is required.
- 1 provided the choice to the applicant.

2.4 With regards to minimum age, 12 authorities had a lower age cut off for companion concessionary passes:

- 7 authorities required passholders to be aged 11/12 or above.
- 4 required passholders to be aged 5 or above.
- 1 specified that children aged 5 to 15 must provide evidence from a medical specialist to demonstrate requirement.

2.5 Of those that did not have a lower age cut off, 3 stated that discretion is taken with each application.

Charge for companion pass

2.6 Only 1 of the companion pass schemes reviewed, charged for a companion pass. This was for Oxfordshire County Council, which charges £10 if upgrading to a companion pass outside of scheduled renewal period.

- 2.7 Whilst none of the other schemes charged for a companion pass, many schemes which required evidence from a medical specialist or professional did not cover the cost of obtaining this additional evidence.

Multiple companions

- 2.8 Of the 22 authorities with data, only 3 allowed for multiple companions, the remaining 19 authorities did not.

Temporary companion passes

- 2.9 Only 1 of the 16 schemes with available data provided temporary companion passes, with 6 stating their scheme has no provision of temporary passes.

3. Companion pass data

- 3.1 This section requested information on the number of companion passholders in an authority (and split by OPP and DPP), the total of all passholders, and expenditure of companion passholders.

Companion pass holders

- 3.2 Companion passholder data varied by authority, 20 provided data either as a number or a percentage of all passholders or disabled passholders.
- 3.3 Nine authorities provided information of companion passes as a percentage of disabled passholders. These ranged from 16% to 66%, providing an average of **39.3% of DPP holders**.
- 3.4 Nine authorities provided information of companion passes as a percentage of all passholders. These ranged from 1.3% to 7%, providing an average across the authorities of **2.97% of all passholders**.
- 3.5 Where companion passes were offered to both DPP and OPP holders, OPP holders with a companion pass were typically less than 0.5% of all passholders (e.g., 0.3% for Staffordshire and 0.24% for Medway).
- 3.6 Table 1 below details information provided by authorities for total passholders, total companion pass holders, and percentages of companion passes for disabled passholders and all passholders.

Table 1 - Companion pass data provided by local authorities (gaps where information not provided)

Travel Concession Authority	Total ENCTS passholders	Total companion passholders	Companion passholders as a percentage of all passholders	DPP with companion pass
Bedford Borough Council				16% of DPP holders
Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council	66,505	2,249	3.4%	35.9% of DPP holders
Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness Council				27% of DPP holders
Devon County Council	135,772	2,313	1.7%	
Durham County Council	115,900	8,247	7%	39% of DPP holders
East Sussex County Council	101,011	2,708	2.69%	47% of DPP holders
Essex County Council			2.6%	44% of DPP holders
Hertfordshire County Council	184,510		2.38%	
Medway Council	32,946	1,687	5.12%	66% of DPP holders
Nottinghamshire County Council		3,500		34% of DPP holders
Oxfordshire County Council				33.8% of DPP holders

Staffordshire County Council	112,839	1,960	1.74%	
Swindon Borough Council	33,279	456 (169 bus passes, 222 companion taxi OPP passes, 65 companion taxi DPP passes)	1.3%	
Thurrock Council				36% of DPP holders
City of York Council				55% of DPP holders
Wiltshire County Council	71,946	1,304	1.81%	38% of DPP holders
Average			2.97%	39.3%

Companion pass expenditure

- 3.7 Two authorities provided estimated annual companion pass expenditure – [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Table 2 - Companion pass expenditure information provided by local authorities

Travel Concession Authority	Number of Companion Pass Holders	Companion Pass Expenditure	Estimated cost per companion passholder
[REDACTED]	2,313	£80,000 per year	£34.60
[REDACTED]	3,500	£75,000 per year	£21.43

- 3.8 Using the above, an average estimated cost per companion passholder would be **£28.00**.

- 3.9 Information on expenditure of companion passes was commonly not recorded by local authorities, as such, the request for a split of expenditure by statutory and non-statutory times received no data.

Journey Data

- 3.10 Whilst journey data was not specifically requested from local authorities, 2 provided information on what proportion of journeys are undertaken using a companion pass.
- 3.11 2.46% of journeys in Hertfordshire and 3% of journeys in Staffordshire are undertaken using a companion pass.

4. Eligibility criteria and assessments

- 4.1 Eligibility criteria is similar across different local authorities. A companion pass is only provided where a need for assistance when travelling by bus can be proven. Therefore, eligibility is typically for all categories of disability, however, need for assistance must be proven alongside this.
- 4.2 Where applicants are required to provide documentation evidence of disability, approved documents usually include (this was the case for 21 authorities):
- Disability Living Allowance – higher rate for either mobility or care component
 - Award of Personal Independence Payments – either 8 or 12+ points for 'moving around' category and 8 or 10+ for 'planning and following a journey'
 - War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement
 - Attendance Allowance – higher rate
- 4.3 For 14 authorities, evidence was required from either a medical specialist, GP, or medical professional to prove need for assistance, regardless of whether they had the above documentation.
- 4.4 Cost of approval from a medical specialist typically fell on the applicant of the companion pass.

Assessments for Eligibility

- 4.5 Two authorities provide assessments for eligibility for a companion pass, the remaining authorities required applicants to provide all relevant documentation with their application.
- 4.6 Bedford Borough Council provide for a short telephone assessment to be undertaken if evidence is unclear from the documentation provided; this is administered by an independent mobility company.

- 4.7 Nottingham City Council provides medical assessments, costing £60 per assessment.

Additional eligibility

- 4.8 Several authorities provided reciprocal arrangements for the provision of companion passes. For example, companion pass holders in Thurrock Council are able to use their passes in the neighbouring authorities of Essex and Southend.
- 4.9 Some authorities provide automatic eligibility for certain groups. Swindon Council provides automatic eligibility to those over 80 and Oxfordshire County Council provides automatic entitlement to DPP holders aged 5-15.

5. Companion passes for Warwickshire

- 5.1 As of the end of March 2023, the split of concessionary pass holders in Warwickshire are as follows:

Table 3 - Warwickshire concession passholder data for 2022/3

Category	Number of Passes
Older Person	79,651
a. Blind or Partially Sighted	332
b. Profoundly or Severely Deaf	109
c. Without Speech	27
d. Ability to Walk	1,411
e. No arms or loss of use of both arms	0
f. Learning disability	849
g. Would be refused a driving licence	913
Total	83,292

- 5.2 Of all passholders in Warwickshire, 4.4% (3,641) are disabled pass holders and 95.6% (79,651) are older persons passholders.

- 5.3 Using the information provided by local authorities, the average percentage of DPP holders with a companion pass was 39.3% and the percentage of all passholders with a companion pass was 2.97%
- 5.4 Applying this to the passholder data for Warwickshire, this produces the following estimates for companion pass uptake in Warwickshire:

Table 4 - Estimates for companion pass holders for Warwickshire

Pass Category	Est. Number of Companion Pass Uptake
Disabled Persons Pass (38.6%)	1,431
All passholders (2.97%)	2,477

- 5.5 The total cost of Warwickshire ENCTS scheme for the 2022/3 scheme year, including additional costs paid to Stagecoach, is £5,060,296.
- 5.6 In terms of expenditure for companion passholders, applying the average percentage of companion passholders (2.97%) to the total ENCTS expenditure, the annual cost for companion passes would be around **£150,000**.
- 5.7 Applying the average percentage of percentage of DPP with a companion pass (39.3%) to Warwickshire figures, the number of companion passes would be 1,431, which is 1.7% of the total number of passholders. Applying this to the total reimbursement results in an estimated cost of **£86,000**.
- 5.8 Alternatively, if we apply an average cost of £28.00 per companion passholder, and assuming the uptake of 1,400-2,500 companion pass holders, the expenditure would be an estimated **£39,200 - £70,000** annually.
- 5.9 Taking into consideration the different methodologies and assumptions relating to percentage uptake and percentage of total spend, the estimated cost of a companion enhancement to the ENCTS scheme range from **£39,000 to £150,000** per year in Warwickshire.

Warwickshire County Council**Concessionary Travel Scheme - proposed companion enhancement**

The companion enhancement entitles the disabled pass holder to have one companion with them who can travel for free. A pass will have an identifying symbol. Such as '+1' or 'C+' in the top right hand corner if the passholder has this enhancement.

Companions can travel with the pass holder at any time that the passholder is entitled to travel. A companion CANNOT use the pass without the pass holder.

A companion is someone (a carer, friend, relative etc) of bus fare paying age, who can travel with and assist a Disabled Person's Pass holder when using public transport. It doesn't have to be the same person for each journey.

Although the Disabled Person's Pass allows free travel for the pass holder throughout England, the companion can only travel free when the journey starts in Warwickshire, and the companion and the pass holder must get on and off the bus at the same point.

It is possible for someone to meet the companion enhancement criteria but not qualify for an ENCTS pass. This is due to the ENCTS eligibility criteria which are set down in legislation, and which are outside the control of the Council.

Eligibility

An applicant will be eligible for the companion enhancement if they are over the age of 11, qualify for an ENCTS bus pass under the current scheme AND one of the following applies;

1. They are registered blind (severely sight impaired) or entitled to be registered as such.
2. They need to be accompanied or supervised at all times due to their disability e.g. challenging behaviours, an unstable or unpredictable medical condition, or severe cognitive or mental impairment
3. They are physically unable to get on or off the bus without the assistance of another person.

The following is a draft list of documents which we may be able to accept in order to demonstrate eligibility for the proposed companion enhancement. The list will be kept under review by officers throughout, as there may be additional documents which demonstrate eligibility under points 2 and 3 above.

Documents which we can accept as evidence you meet the criteria for the Companion enhancement

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVI, BD8 or registration with Warwickshire Vision Support
2*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher rate Care Component of DLA • Higher rate Attendance Allowance • PIP mobility – 12 points on the 'Planning and following a journey' activity* • PIP care – Enhanced rate provided it includes one of the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 8+ points for Communicating (or Communicating verbally) → 8 points for Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words • Evidence form completed by a specialist medical professional.
3*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence form completed by a specialist medical professional.

* Documents need to be dated within the last 12 months to be used as evidence

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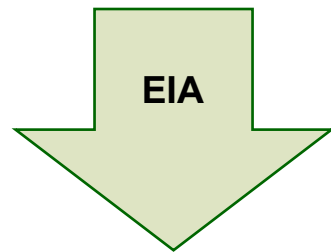
Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

The purpose of an EIA is to ensure WCC is as inclusive as possible, both as a service deliverer and as an employer. It also demonstrates our compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

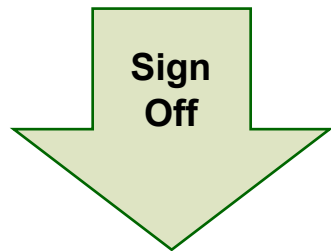
This document is a planning tool, designed to help you improve programmes of work by considering the implications for different groups of people. A guidance document is available [here](#).

Please note that, once approved, this document will be made public, unless you have indicated that it contains sensitive information. Please ensure that the form is clear and easy to understand. If you would like any support or advice on completing this document, please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team via equalities@warwickshire.gov.uk, or if it's relating to health inequalities, please contact Public Health via padmin@warwickshire.gov.uk.

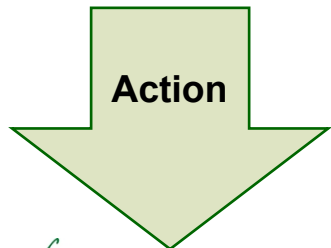
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- Having identified an EIA is required, ensure that the EIA form is completed before any work is started. This includes gathering evidence and / or engaging the relevant stakeholders to inform your assessment.



- Brief the relevant Assistant Director for sign off and upload the completed form here: [Upload Completed Equality Impact Assessments](#). Please name it "EIA [project] [service area] [year]"
- Undertake further research / engagement to further understand impacts (if identified).
- Undertake engagement and / or consultation to understand if EIA has identified and considered impacts.
- Amend accordingly to engagement / consultation feedback and brief decision makers of any changes.



- Implement proposed activity.
- Monitor impacts and mitigations as evidence of duty of care.

*Working for
Warwickshire*

Section One: Essential Information

Service / policy / strategy / practice / plan being assessed	Introduction of a Companion enhancement to the ENCTS Concessionary Travel Scheme in Warwickshire
Business Unit / Service Area	Transport Delivery/Concessionary Travel
Is this a new or existing service / policy / strategy / practice / plan? If existing, please state date of last assessment.	This would be a new element added to an existing service
EIA Authors N.B. It is best practice to have more than one person complete the EIA to bring different perspectives to the table.	Jo Cooper
Do any other Business Units / Service Areas need to be included?	No
Does this EIA contain personal and / or sensitive information?	No
Are any of the outcomes from this assessment likely to result in complaints from existing services users, members of the public and / or employees?	No

1. Please explain the background to your proposed activity and the reasons for it.

The concessionary travel scheme was reviewed in 2022 and over 74% of respondents were in favour of the introduction of free travel for a carer or companion accompanying a passholder who cannot travel alone (subject to eligibility criteria). A feasibility study has been undertaken and decision will be made by Cabinet on whether a companion enhancement will be introduced to the existing concessionary travel scheme.

2. Please outline your proposed activity including a summary of the main actions.

An added benefit would be available for some passholders with disabilities which would allow a carer or companion to travel free of charge on buses when accompanying a passholder who is using their pass.

3. Who is this going to impact and how?

Customers	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
This will affect some holders of concessionary bus passes	No impact for members of the public who are not passholders	No impact	No impact
Other, please specify:			

Section Two: Evidence

Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EIA. This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups and additional groups outlined in Section Four.

A – Quantitative Evidence

This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

As of 31 May 2023 there were 83,319 passholders in Warwickshire, of which 79,702 hold Older Person's passes (OPP) and 3,617 held Disabled Person's Passes (DPP).

However, passes are reissued as OPP when a passholder reached the eligible age. We therefore know that there will also be people with qualifying disabilities within the OPP numbers.

Research from our consultants indicates that in other authorities the proportion of people who qualify for a companion enhancement range from 1.3% to 7% of all passholders. The difference is accounted for by the difference in the criteria used for different authorities as there is no national standard or rules, or even guidance, on who might qualify.

This means that we might expect between 1,083 and 5,832 passholder to apply for and qualify for the companion enhancement.

B – Qualitative Evidence

This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

- The companion enhancement entitles the disabled pass holder to have one companion with them who can travel for free. A pass will have an identifying symbol. Such as '+1' or 'C+' in the top right hand corner if the passholder has this enhancement.
- Companions can travel with the pass holder at any time that the passholder is entitled to travel. A companion CANNOT use the pass without the pass holder.
- A companion is someone (a carer, friend, relative etc) of bus fare paying age, who can travel with and assist a Disabled Person's Pass holder when using public transport. It doesn't have to be the same person for each journey.
- Although the Disabled Person's Pass allows free travel for the pass holder throughout England, the companion can only travel free when the journey starts in Warwickshire, and the companion and the pass holder must get on and off the bus at the same point.
- It is possible for someone to meet the companion enhancement criteria but not qualify for an ENCTS pass. This is due to the ENCTS eligibility criteria which are set down in legislation, and which are outside the control of the Council.

Section Three: Engagement

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the proposed activity must take place. For further advice and support with engagement and consultations, click [here](#).

<p>Has the proposed activity been subject to engagement or consultation with those it's going to impact, taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If YES, please state who with.</p>	<p>As part of the review of the concessionary travel scheme in July-September 2022, the following question was asked.</p> <p>Do you think anyone else should be entitled to free or reduced cost bus travel?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Young People aged 16-25 <input type="checkbox"/> A carer or companion travelling with a disabled passholder who cannot travel alone (eligibility criteria would apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Apprentices <input type="checkbox"/> Refugees <input type="checkbox"/> No one else should be offered free or reduced cost bus travel <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below) <hr/> <p>Over 74% of respondents (9,329 respondents) said that a carer or companion should be entitled to free or reduced cost travel. This compares to less than 20% choosing any other option.</p> <p>365 of those respondents had a pass because of a qualifying disability, and 291 respondents said they qualified because of their age but also have a disability.</p>

	It is not possible to break the figures down by the nature of the disability, as that question was not asked. Not all people with disabled person's passes will qualify for the companion enhancement, as the proposed eligibility criteria mean that only the people whose ability to travel alone is most severely affected will qualify for the enhancement	
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.		
How was the engagement carried out?	Yes / No	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...
Focus Groups	No	
Surveys	Yes	
Public Event	No	
Displays / Exhibitions	No	
Other (please specify)	No	
Has the proposed activity changed as a result of the engagement?	Yes	The feasibility of the proposed companion enhancement has been studied as a direct result of the scheme review survey results
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	No	

Is further engagement or consultation recommended or planned?	No	
What process have you got in place to review and evaluate?	We will collect feedback from passholders and members of the public through the life of the scheme to inform any similar future scheme.	

Section Four: Assessing the Impact

Protected Characteristics and other groups that experience greater inequalities

What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposed activity? This section also allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. health inequalities such as deprivation, socio-economic status, vulnerable groups such as individuals who suffer socio-economic disadvantage, armed forces, carers, homelessness, people leaving prison, young people leaving care etc.

On the basis of evidence, has the potential impact of the proposed activity been judged to be positive (+), neutral (=), negative (-), or positive and negative (+&-), for each of the protected characteristic groups below and in what way?

N.B In our Guidance to EIAs we have provided you with potential questions to ask yourself when considering the impact of your proposed activity. Think about what actions you might take to mitigate / remove the negative impacts and maximize on the positive ones. This will form part of your action plan at Section Six.

	Impact type (+) (=) (-) or (+&-)	Nature of impact including health inequalities Will your proposal have negative or positive implications for each group, including on health inequalities?	Mitigating Actions for Negative Impacts What can you do to mitigate any identified negative impacts or health inequalities? Use this column to form the basis of Section 6.
Age	=	There will be no specific advantage or disadvantages relating to age, as the companion enhancement will depend on level of disability and will be available to all, regardless of age. However, holders of older person's passes may not realise they can apply as it is linked to disability.	Careful consideration of methods of publicity used to publicise the scheme. There is a need to avoid raising expectations as only a small proportion of passholders will be eligible.
Disability Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical disabilities Sensory impairments Neurodiverse conditions (e.g. dyslexia) Mental health conditions (e.g. depression) Medical conditions (e.g. diabetes) 	= + -	<p>Not all passholders with disabilities will qualify for the companion enhancement, but their existing right to free bus travel will be unchanged.</p> <p>For those who do qualify for the companion enhancement there will be a benefit in that they will not have to pay when a companion travels with them on the bus network within Warwickshire.</p> <p>There may be negative impacts for those passholders who do not meet the eligibility criteria, particularly those who are vulnerable because of mental health conditions.</p> <p>Not all qualifying passholders will have documentation showing they are eligible.</p>	<p>Information needs to be clear from the beginning that there are eligibility criteria in order to avoid raising expectations.</p> <p>An evidence form will be developed which can be completed by a medical professional on their behalf. This will be kept under review.</p>
Gender Reassignment	=	There is no anticipated impact.	

	Impact type (+) (=) (-) or (+&-)	Nature of impact including health inequalities Will your proposal have negative or positive implications for each group, including on health inequalities?	Mitigating Actions for Negative Impacts What can you do to mitigate any identified negative impacts or health inequalities? Use this column to form the basis of Section 6.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	=	There is no anticipated impact.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	=	There is no anticipated impact.	
Race Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour • Nationality • Citizenship • Ethnic or national origins 	=	People whose first language is not English may struggle to understand the entitlement and eligibility criteria	Careful consideration of methods and language used to publicise the scheme.
Religion or Belief	=	There is no anticipated impact.	
Sex	=	There is no anticipated impact.	
Sexual Orientation	=	There is no anticipated impact.	
Groups who may require support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who suffer socio-economic disadvantage • Armed Forces (WCC signed the Armed Forces Covenant in June 2012) • Carers • Homelessness 	=	There is no anticipated impact.	

	Impact type (+) (=) (-) or (+&-)	Nature of impact including health inequalities Will your proposal have negative or positive implications for each group, including on health inequalities?	Mitigating Actions for Negative Impacts What can you do to mitigate any identified negative impacts or health inequalities? Use this column to form the basis of Section 6.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People leaving Prison • People leaving Care 			
<p>Other Identified Health Inequalities (HI) Many issues can have an impact on health: is it an area of deprivation, does every population group have equal access, unemployment, work conditions, education, skills, our living situation, rural, urban, rates of crime etc.</p>		<p>What health inequalities already exist?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all with disabilities will qualify for a bus pass under the statutory scheme (England National Concessionary Travel Scheme or ENCTS) bus pass. This is due to the legislation and guidance, and is outside the control of WCC. <p>Will your proposal have a negative or positive implications on health inequalities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a positive impact on those passholders where their disability meet the companion enhancement eligibility criteria. There will be no impact on those people who are already unable to access the ENCTS pass. <p>What can you do to mitigate any identified health inequalities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide thoughtful and clear advice to people about eligibility, and how to obtain the appropriate evidence to show they are entitled to the ENCTS bus pass with the companion enhancement. 	
<p>Other Groups If there are any other groups</p>			

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Please evidence how your proposed activity meets our obligations under the PSED.

	Evidence of Due Regard
<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination (harrasment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):</p>	<p>The criteria for holding a bus pass is set out in legislation and accompanying government guidance. WCC has no control over these.</p>
<p>Advance equality of opportunity:</p> <p>This involves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people, for example, taking steps to take account of people with disabilities; encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low. 	<p>The current bus pass scheme is a statutory scheme set up by central government, and not all passholders can access the service equally. For example, those who must be accompanied at all times must pay extra for a carer or companion to travel, even when their own travel is free of charge.</p> <p>A companion enhancement will allow people who would otherwise be unable to access public transport to do so, subject to some eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The criteria are necessary in order to provide the scheme within the funds available whilst assisting those least able to access bus travel at present.</p>
<p>Foster good relations:</p> <p>This means tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups and communities.</p>	<p>The companion enhancement will not be available to all passholders, and so it is important to make it clear that there is limited funding and this is being directed where we believe there is the most need.</p>

Section Five: Partners / Stakeholders

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposed activity?	Yes / No	Describe the interest / affect
Businesses	No	
Councils	No	
Education Sector	No	
Fire and Rescue	No	
Governance Structures	No	
NHS	No	
Police	No	
Voluntary and Community Sector	Yes	Carers and companions of people with a disabled person's bus pass are often unpaid, or work for charitable or voluntary organisations. Voluntary and community organisations often act as advocates for people who either hold or wish to apply for a disabled person's bus pass.
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact		

Section Six: Action Planning

If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section Four, please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. It is also important to consider how often this E.I.A. will be reviewed, and who is responsible for doing this. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact, you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	Action(s)	Timescale incl. evaluation and review date	Name of person responsible
The scheme is proposed to run for a fixed period until 31 March 2025. Funding beyond that point cannot be guaranteed.	When the scheme is introduced it must be made clear that this is a short term scheme until the outcome of a government review of both the scheme and the next review of local government funding is complete.	The scheme will be reviewed after it has been in operation for nine months (likely to be October 2025). A report will be taken to Cabinet before the scheme expires with recommendations as to whether a further scheme can be agreed	Concessionary Travel Lead (Jo Cooper)
Not all passholders will qualify for the companion enhancement.	Eligibility criteria need to be clear so as not to raise expectations. Eligibility criteria will be approved by Cabinet and so changes (if any were required) would need to be approved by Cabinet.	Data about applicants and applications will be retained and evaluated when the scheme is reviewed.	Concessionary Travel Lead (Jo Cooper)
Evidence initially listed as acceptable may not be available to all applicants.	The list of acceptable evidence will be kept under review. Additional pieces of evidence will be considered on an individual basis.	The evidence list will be kept under continual review and if additional suitable pieces of evidence are identified they will be added.	Concessionary Travel Lead (Jo Cooper)
People who do not qualify for the companion enhancement may think	Feedback from the public will be retained and collated, and considered when the scheme is reviewed.	In line with the review mentioned above.	Concessionary Travel Lead (Jo Cooper)

Identified Impact	Action(s)	Timescale incl. evaluation and review date	Name of person responsible
the eligibility criteria are unfair.			

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposed activity.
n/a

Section Seven: Assessment Outcome

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposed activity. Please select one and provide your reasons.		
No major change required		
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups and/or health inequalities		
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups and/or health inequalities	x	It is accepted that the scheme will be limited by the funds available, and this means limiting the eligibility and timescale,. However, the enhancement as proposed is of more benefit than continuing without the enhancement.

Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation		
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Section Eight: Sign Off

N.B To be completed after the EIA is completed but before the area of work commences.

Name of person/s completing EIA	Jo Cooper
Name and signature of Assistant Director	
Date	
Date of next review and name of person/s responsible	

Once signed off, please ensure the EIA is uploaded using the following form. Please name it “EIA [project] [service area] [year]”: [Upload Completed Equality Impact Assessments](#)

These will be stored on a [Sharepoint library](#) which Warwickshire County Council colleagues can access.

It is the responsibility of the individuals and teams who completed the EIA to review it regularly and to carry out any required activities in line with the action plan made.

For advice or support, please contact equalities@warwickshire.gov.uk.

Cabinet

Warwickshire County Council Energy Strategy and Delivery Plan

13 July 2023

Recommendation

That Cabinet approves the Energy Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In 2022 the new Council Plan and the draft Sustainable Futures Strategy (SFS) were published, both having a focus on responding to climate change and meeting net zero commitments (for our Council emissions by 2030 and for County emissions by 2050). In response there is a need to review and align the Council's previous Energy Plans and its longstanding work in measuring and monitoring emissions, with the new targets, standards and legislation.
- 1.2 The Energy Strategy draws these elements together, setting out the Council's approach to sustainable energy management for the future and how we will reduce, use, generate and measure our own energy requirements whilst also supporting that of Warwickshire residents and businesses. An associated Delivery Plan (as set out in the Appendices) has also been created which identifies specific actions we will be taking to achieve our targets.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The Energy Strategy will bring a range of benefits, from a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a smaller carbon footprint and associated with this will be improvements in the management of water, gas, electricity and waste; all of which we expect will collectively lead to financial savings and improved energy security.
- 2.2 Many of the actions in this Strategy and Delivery Plan will however require revenue investment and / or capital funding (particularly for development of the pipeline of future programmes of work).
- 2.3 All proposals will be aligned to our Medium Term Financial Strategy and we will work with Finance and Commercial colleagues to ensure opportunities are viable, and all funding routes are explored (including external funding such as

grants and/or investment opportunities) through the development of business cases to prioritise cost reduction and future revenue generation.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 The current Council Plan, Sustainable Futures Strategy and the delivery actions proposed by the Energy Strategy will support the Council's net zero targets for 2030 and 2050, which in turn are intended to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change on the environment and on the lives of Warwickshire residents.
- 3.2 Using 2019 as a baseline year, it has been calculated that Warwickshire County Council's total carbon footprint is 18,245tCO₂e per year.
- 3.3 It is expected that the UK electricity grid will naturally decarbonise over time (as more renewable projects come on stream and improvements are made) and this will support our move to net zero by approximately 5,919tCO₂e by 2030.
- 3.4 As outlined in the Sustainable Futures Strategy (SFS), additional expectations are that a further 9,816tCO₂e can be achieved by a combination of insetting (within Warwickshire County Council's boundary) and offsetting (out-side of Warwickshire). Insetting and offsetting in scope of this Strategy will be investigated with SFS colleagues in the 2023/24 financial year.
- 3.5 The remaining 2,510tCO₂e will need to be decarbonised from direct measures in a number of areas including on our own estate, transport and waste. Direct decarbonisation in scope of this Strategy will involve reducing emissions from electricity, gas and oil use on our own estate. As electricity will be declining naturally a particular focus for this Energy Strategy will be reduction of gas and oil.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Assets within scope of the Energy Strategy will be those sites where the Council is landlord, occupier and holds responsibility for full repairs, maintenance and operational costs (i.e., assets such as, but not exclusively, offices, Libraries, Children & Family Hubs, Business Centres, Fire Stations, maintained Primary and Secondary Schools and Country Parks). For other areas / assets, the Council will have an important influencing role which will be developed in collaboration with partners and will be included in the Delivery Plan.
- 4.2 Other areas of Transport, Biodiversity and Waste are addressed in the wider Sustainable Futures Strategy, however where they make use of energy on the Council's estate, they will also be considered in scope.

- 4.3 Following the energy hierarchy structure, and the International Standard for Energy Management (ISO50001), key areas of focus have been identified as Energy Saving, Energy Efficiency, Renewables and Lower Carbon Generation and Offsetting.
- 4.4 The Strategy also identifies a number of supporting enablers that will need to be addressed to ensure the success of the Strategy and the Delivery Plan – i.e., resourcing, financing, procurement, data capture and management, supportive strategies and programmes and wider networks.
- 4.5 The Energy Strategy has been developed in a way that aligns with other relevant Council strategies, policies and programmes to improve the connectivity, delivery and integration across the Council. The Strategy also confirms our commitment to working with Partners in supporting public sector sustainability and also by including Levelling Up delivery themes e.g., considering the impact of regeneration schemes and the building and acquisition of new assets which are publicly owned or supporting community ventures.
- 4.6 The development of the Energy Strategy and Delivery Plan has been overseen by an officer Working Group and has involved Member engagement (from the Climate Emergency Cross-Party Group and Resources, Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee). The Sustainable Futures Board has also been updated to ensure alignment with the Sustainable Futures Strategy.
- 4.7 We will regularly monitor our data to ensure we identify areas needing additional focus. We will report annually to Corporate Board via the annual Environmental Management Report, as required for Warwickshire County Council's ISO14001 certification and we will externally publish our progress annually via the Council's Building Energy Consumption and Emissions Review and the wider Sustainable Futures Strategy footprint.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 Energy Strategy published August 2023.
- 5.2 Review of the Strategy after 1 year (August 2024), and three yearly thereafter. Review of the Delivery Plan via annual progress report to Corporate Board (2024 onwards).

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Warwickshire County Council Energy Strategy

Appendix 2 – Warwickshire County Council Energy Strategy Delivery Plan

Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Rebecca Couch, Louise Saunders – Commissioner Energy & Environmental Management	louisesaunders@warwickshire.gov.uk
Director	Sarah Duxbury – Director for Governance & Policy	sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk
Executive Director	Executive Director for Resources – Executive Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Heather Timms - Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate & Culture	heathertimms@warwickshire.gov.uk

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

Local Member(s): N/a - county wide matter

Other members: Councillors Jeff Clarke, Jonathan Chilvers, Sarah Feeney, and Jenny Fradgley

Engagement with Member Climate Emergency Cross Party Group

Warwickshire County Council Energy Strategy

(Please Note – Comms Team will be supporting on layout, pagination, graphics and Appendices before issue)

Foreword (draft – pending approval from Cllr Timms)

Taking action to ensure Warwickshire has a sustainable future is a key strategic priority for Warwickshire County Council and sustainable energy management has a critical role to play in us reaching our goal of becoming a net zero Council by 2030.

The implementation of this Energy Strategy will enable us to effectively address our energy needs by reducing consumption, optimising usage, generating renewable energy, and establishing robust measurement mechanisms. The Strategy primarily focuses on those property assets owned and occupied by the Council, however we recognise that our energy consumption extends beyond this and also that we have a key role, working with partners, to support Warwickshire residents and businesses to create greater energy security. We will use this Strategy to influence on the widest possible basis.

The Strategy has been informed by engagement with stakeholders, it acknowledges the scale of the challenge, recognising that establishing a low carbon estate will require significant financial investment. Many of the actions will relate to our property portfolio. We will therefore need to work across the Authority, and with the support of Cllr Peter Butlin, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property, to identify and capitalise on those opportunities.

Our approach for sustainable energy management is not limited to the Council alone, and as part of our ambition to lead the County to be net zero by 2050 or earlier, this Strategy also extends its benefits by actively supporting Warwickshire residents and businesses in their pursuit of sustainable energy practices.

By linking these three crucial elements—strategic priority, net zero objectives, and support for stakeholders—the Energy Strategy will pave the way to make Warwickshire sustainable now and for future generations.

Cllr Heather Timms, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture

Executive Summary

This Energy Strategy has been developed to support both the overarching Council Plan's strategic priority to be a County with a sustainable future, adapting to and mitigating climate change and meeting net zero commitments, and the Sustainable Futures Strategy's focus areas of energy, built environment and resources & waste.

The Strategy also incorporates and replaces the previous Warwickshire Energy Plan and the WCC Energy Policy, setting out a clear action plan for sustainable energy management, and how we plan to reduce, use, generate and measure our own internal energy requirements (and therefore CO2) to ensure we meet all applicable energy legislation requirements, support the Council's net zero targets and offer guidance to Warwickshire residents and businesses.

We believe this Energy Strategy will bring a range of benefits. These include a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a smaller carbon footprint, but also associated improvements in the management of water, gas, electricity, and waste; all of which collectively will lead to improved energy security and financial savings.

Strategy Connections

The Energy Strategy has been developed in a way that aligns with other relevant WCC strategies, policies and programmes to improve the connectivity, delivery and integration across the Council.

The Energy Strategy complements the [Council Plan](#) and [Sustainable Futures Strategy](#) but also the individual [Property](#), [Smallholdings](#), [Commercial](#) and [Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure](#) strategies. It is also aligned to the County-Wide approach to [Levelling Up](#) and its commitment that future generations can live in a sustainable county with good opportunities and quality of life, including standards of living. The Strategy also has connections to the ISO14001 certified WCC Environmental Management System which supports continuous improvement in areas such as use of natural resources and the wider impacts of waste generation in our own buildings.

Strategy Development

The Strategy has been created following an assessment of relevant standards and legislation, the output of our engagement with the public on the draft Sustainable Futures Strategy and after engagement with key stakeholders (including relevant internal experts).

It also includes input from elected members through the Resources and Fire and Rescue Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Climate Emergency Cross-Party Group and has been steered by an internal officer Working Group.

Scope

To support our WCC 2030 targets, the primary scope of the Energy Strategy will be those sites and assets where WCC is landlord, occupier and holds responsibility for full repairs, maintenance and operational costs ('centralised' assets). This includes offices, Libraries, Children & Family Hubs, Business Centres, Fire Stations, maintained Primary and Secondary Schools and Country Parks.

For aspects of energy that go beyond WCC buildings, such as local area energy generation and community engagement in energy issues, the Council has an important influencing role

which will be developed in collaboration with partners, primarily through the Sustainable Futures Strategy Action Plan or, where relevant the Delivery Plan supporting the Energy Strategy.

CO2 emissions from other key areas such as transport, biodiversity and waste are addressed in the wider Sustainable Futures Strategy, however where those areas make use of energy on the WCC estate, they are within the scope of this Energy Strategy.

Purpose of our Energy Strategy

In 2022 the Council Plan and the draft Sustainable Futures Strategy were published, both with a focus on responding to climate change and meeting net zero commitments (for our Council emissions by 2030 and for County emissions by 2050). In response, there is a need to review and align WCC's previous Energy Plans, and its longstanding work in measuring and monitoring emissions, with the new targets, standards and legislation.

The Energy Strategy draws these elements together, setting out WCC's approach to sustainable energy management for the future and how we will reduce, use, generate and measure our own energy requirements whilst also supporting Warwickshire residents and businesses. An associated Delivery Plan has also been created which identifies specific actions we will be taking to achieve our targets.

Together, these documents support the Council Plan's commitment to be a County with a sustainable future, adapting to and mitigating climate change and meeting net zero commitments, and the key Sustainable Futures Strategy themes of:

Energy: maximise decarbonisation of the energy used by the Council and identify opportunities to increase the installation of renewable technologies

Built Environment: reduce emissions from Council buildings, increase our knowledge of energy use within our assets, decarbonise our natural gas heat supply (where viable), identify opportunities to co-locate with partners, undertake further property decarbonisation feasibility studies and support additional renewable energy schemes where viable. We will also identify future fiscal and carbon savings via improvements to the fabric of our buildings and align investment in our portfolio to our Property Strategy, incorporating utilisation, service demand and estate rationalisation so we right size our built environments to our current use.

Resources and Waste: reduce waste and resource usage while supporting the necessary economic transition required to deliver net zero, improve and increase educational campaigns to encourage behaviour change around consumption, identify opportunities to use waste as a resource and work to promote the use of sustainable and reusable materials, extend product life and reduce packaging and single use plastics.

Where we are now and where do we need to get to

Using 2019 as a baseline year, it has been calculated that WCC's total carbon footprint is 18,245 tonnes of CO₂e per year. This number was calculated using actual data from our centralised estate and data estimated using standard factors for our wider owned and occupied estate, e.g., primary schools (this does not include Academy schools).

It is expected that the UK electricity grid will decarbonise over time, as more renewable projects come on stream and improvements are made. We anticipate this will result in a reduction of 5,919 tonnes of CO₂e by 2030 against our 2019/20 baseline, which will support our move to net zero by 2030.

Expectations as outlined in the Sustainable Futures Strategy are that a further 9,816 tonnes' CO₂e can be achieved by a combination of insetting (i.e., carbon capture measures within WCC's boundary such as tree planting) and offsetting (measures outside of Warwickshire e.g., exporting our generated renewable energy to the UK grid, rather than using it in our own buildings). The remaining 2,510 tonnes of CO₂e will need to be decarbonised from direct measures in a number of areas including in our own buildings, or via transport and waste initiatives.

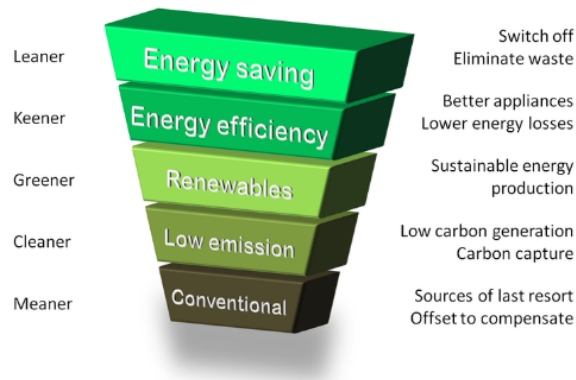
Direct decarbonisation actions in scope of this Strategy will involve reducing emissions from electricity, gas and oil use on our own estate. However, as electricity is already set to decarbonise over time a particular focus for this Strategy will be reduction of gas and oil.

Strategy Objectives

Key Themes

Following the energy hierarchy structure, and the International Standard for Energy Management (ISO50001), key areas of focus have been identified as

(NOTE diag to be re drafted by Comms Team to show 4 rows as per text below) :



- **Energy Saving** – reduce usage requirements by encouraging behaviour change, switching electrical items off, reducing heat and energy losses, constructing new builds to high standards, carrying out regular preventative maintenance and effectively managing the Council owned portfolio of assets and land
- **Energy Efficiency** – use the most efficient appliances, including building energy management systems and heat pumps and consider a fabric first approach.
- **Renewables and lower carbon generation** – supporting generation of renewable electricity, reducing our reliance on the UK grid, and being ready to make best use of developing technologies
- **Offsetting** – A plan to develop an approach to offsetting (initiatives outside of Warwickshire County Council’s boundary), the options and initiatives will be developed in 2023/24.

For WCC to address the above hierarchy, we have also identified several key **supporting enablers**:

- Resourcing
 - o We will identify where additional resourcing is required to deliver the objectives of the strategy. Where appropriate we will upskill or reskill colleagues to support the delivery of the strategy.
- Financing
 - o We will ensure opportunities are viable and all funding routes are explored including maximising the use of the Council’s Revenue Investment Fund, Capital Investment Fund and accessing third party funding.
- Procurement
 - o We will use procurement, and particularly social value, as a tool to drive improvements wherever possible with our contractors and suppliers.
- Data Capture and Management
 - o We will use clear data flows and associated processes to support validation of our reported numbers.
- Supportive Strategies & Programmes
 - o We will work with internal and external partners to share ideas, minimise duplication and drive best outcomes to support both our residents and public sector sustainable strategy.
- Wider Networks
 - o We will ensure we identify wider Warwickshire energy opportunities and influence other areas where we have a supportive role, e.g., schools. We will collaborate with other organisations and groups to foster innovation and knowledge sharing to provide recommendations to meet our 2030 and 2050 climate targets.

Key Themes

Energy Saving

- Our aim is to reduce unnecessary energy usage and conserve energy wherever possible,
- We will achieve this by:
 - o ensuring that our property portfolio (of over 770 assets, including more than 2,500 buildings) is sustainably and efficiently managed;
 - o consolidating utility contracts across our portfolio to improve data collection and performance monitoring (considering partner and tenant occupation).
 - o embedding energy management into all decision-making, preventative maintenance and rationalising our estate to reduce our emissions;
 - o carrying out detailed energy surveys on those Council-owned assets that have high emissions;
 - o embedding energy considerations into regeneration schemes and development or acquisition of new assets;
 - o increasing awareness and engagement with staff around energy efficiency to make building users more aware of impacts and opportunities to save;
 - o using less raw materials and conserving energy to protect natural resources and reduce carbon emissions; and
- We will measure success by the reduction in energy usage (gas and electricity usage in buildings), number of energy surveys undertaken, the increased percentage coverage of energy saving measures installed across the estate, setting energy targets for new build Council assets, energy considered as part of the preventative maintenance schedule, staff training take up.

Energy Efficiency

- Our aim is to efficiently generate and use heat and electricity in our own operations (i.e., electrical, mechanical and fuel), with a particular focus on reducing gas consumption.
- We will achieve this by:
 - o using the most energy efficient technologies to generate energy and heat in our buildings, wherever viable;
 - o meeting compliance with statutory and future obligations and standards for energy efficiency (i.e., Energy Performance Certificates and Display Energy Certificates) and comparing energy performance for similar buildings to identify where improvements are required;
 - o identifying the potential for, and impact of, retrofits on our current Property Maintenance Strategy and work programmes (recognising that this is a fundamental change to the existing strategic approach which focusses on condition-based programmes);
 - o moving from heating using gas to electricity by retrofitting new technology where viable – i.e., heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, batteries and explore the potentials for hydrogen solutions; and
 - o ensuring all new build properties are built to high energy standards (i.e., Statutory Standards and Building Regulations) and investigating low carbon construction methods.
- We will measure success by the reduction in electricity and gas consumption, (individual buildings and averaged), energy efficiency measures being fully embedded in the Property Maintenance Strategy and all new build projects, and the number of projects that include retrofits.

Renewables and Lower Carbon Generation

- Our aim is to support carbon avoidance or removal projects within WCC's boundaries (insetting) e.g., tree planting, generation of renewable electricity on our own assets (reducing our reliance on grid), and maximising use of our own estate for new and future technologies (e.g. energy storage and hydrogen).
- We will achieve this by:
 - o confirming our ambitions and targets for renewable energy schemes, including

- biomass and waste-to-heat technologies;
 - identifying opportunities to reduce reliance on the UK grid by identifying and assessing opportunities for renewable energy generation and energy storage on our own estate and wider;
 - developing a pipeline for implementing renewable technologies across our portfolio, aligned to asset investment plans;
 - confirming and progressing our commitment to working with partners to identify long-term investment opportunities to supplying our own sites with renewable energy; and
 - reviewing the potential for hydrogen ready schemes and heat networks.
- We will measure this by the increase in installed renewable capacity, increased income generated from the Government backed Smart export Guarantee scheme, and increased readiness for new lower carbon opportunities (e.g., hydrogen in place of natural gas and heat network growth).

Offsetting

- Our aim is to support the wider approach to renewables and lower carbon generation across the County to close the gap between low carbon emissions and residual emissions to reach net zero.
- We will achieve this by:
 - purchasing only green, REGO (Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin) matched electricity for our own estate;
 - confirming our approach to long-term investment opportunities via large scale renewable sites within Warwickshire.
- We will measure this by the increase in green electricity purchased.

Strategy Delivery

The Energy Strategy has an associated delivery plan that will identify the required resources, financing and key actions needed to support the transition to net zero by 2030 (Council) and by 2050 (County).

We have identified a number of supporting enablers that will also need to be addressed to ensure the success of both the Strategy and the Delivery Plan.

Supporting Enablers [Comms to make this page more visual]

Resourcing

The Delivery Plan will identify where additional resourcing is required. We recognise that a phased approach will need to be taken due to the range and volume of objectives and the timescales involved.

Financing

The Energy Strategy will consider the financial impact that establishing a low carbon estate will have on the Council (this will include costs / benefits of energy improvements and new construction and energy installations on our own estate, as well as larger scale projects). Many of the actions in this Strategy and Delivery Plan will require revenue investment and / or capital funding, particularly for development of the pipeline of future programmes of work. This is essential to enable and support a realistic and deliverable approach for the organisation to reach net zero by 2030 and for Warwickshire by 2050.

There will be a requirement to ensure that proposals are affordable and are aligned to our Medium-Term Financial Strategy. We will ensure opportunities are viable and explore all funding routes including external funding (e.g. grants) and/or investment to enable prioritisation of costs reduction and future revenue generation.

Procurement

Procurement of services and goods from third parties is key to reducing the emissions we generate and influence. Wherever possible we will use procurement as a tool to drive improvements with our contractors and suppliers.

Data Capture and Management

Clear data flows and associated processes will support validation of our reported numbers. We will use data to track our long-term trajectory and progress, using benchmarks where possible. We will learn and continually improve our approach to energy management based on our findings.

Supportive Strategies and Programmes

Due to the complexity of energy management in a large and diverse organisation there are many links across to other Strategies and Programmes, e.g., Levelling Up and Property, Smallholdings, Commercial and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure strategies. We will work with internal and external partners to share ideas, minimise duplication and optimise outcomes.

Wider Networks

We will continue to review the scope of the Strategy to ensure we include wider Warwickshire energy opportunities and the potential to influence in areas where we have a supportive or advisory role, e.g., schools. The Strategy confirms our commitment to working with Partners in supporting public sector sustainability via improved utilisation of our assets, co-locating where appropriate to reduce the public sector portfolio and focussing on investing in assets which meet our environmental standards. We will continue to work with other Local Authorities and Public Sector working groups to share learning and collaborate on joint projects.

Monitoring, Review and Governance

We will monitor our data to ensure we identify areas needing additional focus. We will report quarterly to the Sustainable Futures Board and annually to Corporate Board, via the annual Environmental Management Report as required for WCC's ISO14001 certification, and we will publish our progress externally via the annual WCC Building Energy Consumption and Emissions Review and the wider Sustainable Futures Strategy footprint. (These reports, hosted on our website, provide a record of WCC's energy performance and are useful tools in supporting public awareness and self-serve (e.g., for Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Requests)).

The supporting Delivery Plan will be refreshed annually, alongside the annual Medium Term Financial Strategy, the [Integrated Delivery Plan](#) (IDP) and other Key Performance Measures (i.e., KMBs and KBIs). The Energy Strategy will be reviewed after its first year (to ensure ongoing alignment to the agreed Sustainable Futures Strategy actions) and thereafter three yearly.

Key Roles

The Energy Strategy will be overseen and championed by several boards and working Groups.

The table below summarises the key roles that support the Energy Strategy:

Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture	Sponsor of Energy Strategy
Resources and Fire & Rescue Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Monitor/ scrutinise progress of the Strategy
Corporate Board	Oversight of the Strategy and annual review of progress of the Delivery Plan
Sustainable Futures Strategy Delivery Board	Quarterly review of progress of the Delivery Plan
Director Governance and Policy	Owner of Energy Strategy
Environment and Energy Team	Responsible for coordinating the Strategy and completion of associated Delivery Plan
Project Management Delivery Teams	Ensuring the full assessment of resourcing for each strategy
Change Team	Ensuring alignment of the 'what' element of the strategy to Council's Delivery Plan

Stakeholder Groups

The Energy Strategy has been developed in conjunction with stakeholders and input from elected members including through the Resources and Fire & Rescue Service Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Cross Council Climate Emergency Member Group and will be approved by Cabinet with the support of the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture.

We will continue to define our approach to wider stakeholders such as Schools and Districts & Boroughs.

Communication

A communication plan will be developed to ensure progress is visible to all.

Key Dates

Publication Date – August 2023 (post ratification by Cabinet July 2023)

Review Date – Three yearly review of Strategy (after an initial annual review) and annual review of Delivery Plan.

Appendix 1 - Glossary (PLACEHOLDER)

- Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) - measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their global-warming potential (GWP). Volumes of other gases are converted to the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide, to give an overall global warming potential. For example the GWP of methane is 25 times higher than that of carbon dioxide so 1 tonne of methane is equivalent to 25 tonnes of Carbon dioxide.
- Carbon insetting – action or process of compensating for carbon dioxide emissions by removing carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere using an organisation’s own products / boundaries (e.g. Warwickshire). An example for WCC would be a biodiversity or tree planting scheme.
- Carbon offsetting - involves investing in projects that are not related to an organisation’s products or boundary, for example purchasing carbon credits, tree planting outside its own organisation
- Energy – all energy supplied and used to enable WCC to power its estate and carry out its activities, i.e., primarily electricity and heat (via gas used in boilers to produce heating / cooling) but also that used to provide essential services, i.e., water usage and disposal of internal waste generated
- Energy storage - capture of energy produced at one time for use at a later time to reduce imbalances between energy demand and energy production. A device that stores energy is generally called an accumulator or battery.
- Fabric First - approach to building design (or retrofit) which involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself, before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building services systems. This approach can help reduce capital and operational costs improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and reduce the need for maintenance over a building's lifetime for example passive improvements in design such insulation, triple glazing, roof insulation, draught reduction.
- Lower Carbon Energy - energy that is generated using lower amounts of carbon emissions such as, wind, solar, hydro or nuclear power but also other technologies such as heat pumps, energy storage and hydrogen).
- Net zero - state when the amount of greenhouse gas being emitted into the atmosphere is balanced by removal of the same amount out of the atmosphere.
- Renewable power – method of producing low carbon energy (e.g. energy solar, wind, biomass) which can be used to reduce consumption of electricity from the grid
- Retrofitting – installing energy efficient measures to established properties to reduce carbon footprint

Appendix 2 - Where are we now (PLACEHOLDER)

NOTE we are considering taking all the sticker/stats info and making more visual with crunchy targets from the SFS and adding to this Appendix, rather than body of Strategy. We will work this up with Comms]

- Ref to info graphics / stickers:
 - STICKER - WCC has 14 renewable assets (13 solar and 1 wind) and in 2022/23 generated 213 MWh of electricity.
 - STICKER - In 2022/23 WCC generated more than 8,000tCO₂ from gas and electricity consumption in owned and occupied buildings, approximately 70% of which are emissions from natural gas usage.
 - STICKER - In 2022/23 226.2 tonnes of waste was generated by our corporate buildings
- Ref to graphics in annual Buildings Energy Report
- Ref to Annual Environment Management System report

Energy Hierarchy	Objective	Action	Indicator	References where applicable (e.g. SFS action No)	Timescale / Phase	Commentary
Energy Saving	Ensure our current property portfolio is sustainably managed by identifying opportunities to reduce resource consumption with partners (to Inc. electricity, gas (scope 1&2), water and waste (scope 3))	-Work with utility and waste companies to improve visibility of data, spot problems, improve automatic meter reading (AMR) coverage (where possible) and share reduction initiatives -Deliver WCC Internal Waste Strategy	- increased % of Automated Meter Readers (AMRs) coverage (where cost benefit favourable)	SFS W&CE5, W&CE4	1 - 3 years	-Quarterly meetings with contracted utilities companies and report to budget holders to update them on changes, prices and opportunities to reduce consumption
Enabling - Data Capture	Improve visibility of WCC gas and electricity usage and maximise additional contractual benefits	- Work with Total and ESPO to give full clarity of sites and responsible individuals identified (e.g. highways, lighting) - All sites under WCC budgetary control to be offered entry to the corporate contracts for electricity and gas) - arm's length users (e.g. maintained schools) to be offered entry in phased approach -Review ESPO work on annual capacity of buildings to ensure over use charges are minimised and opportunities to maximise use of under capacity	- % meters accounted for with contacts for budget holder, BS, site visible and shared with Total and ESPO -% of WCC sites included (corporate budgetary control only) - % of all sites in WCC budgetary control sites included		- 1 year - 1 year - 2 years	
Enabling - Data Capture	Improve visibility of WCC water usage	Enter into a WCC corporate water contract	-% WCC sites included	SFS BE15	1 years	-Cabinet approval to be sought Autumn 23
Energy saving	Carry out detailed energy surveys and use results to embed energy into estate decision making processes	-Undertake high level Energy Performance audits for all WCC properties in scope and consider opportunities to reduce usage -Identify lower performing buildings and develop actions to address -Full Energy Assessments to be carried out on key Council owned properties -Produce quarterly report for management and building users on absolute energy usage per building and guidance for reduction -Lower performing buildings identified as needing efficiency improvements / moved to surplus / - occupancy managed to reduce wastage	-No of audits carried out -Quarterly report issued to management and building users, benchmark with similar type/use buildings, EPC ratings and DEC ratings, Degree day Regression analysis	SFS BE5, SFS BE2 SFS BE3, SFS BE12	1 - 3 years	Identify opportunities to reduce usage by: -turning appliances / equipment off - improving additional insulation on windows and doors - use of Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting, Passive Infra-Red (PIR) movement sensors and thermostatic radiator valves (TRV) - improving effectiveness of Building Energy Management Systems (BEMS) Some buildings may be energy inefficient but will need to be retained for strategic reasons - document. include in current H&S, FM and Environmental auditing schedules. Commission assessments to identify opportunities to reduce usage over and above basic assessments with increased technical surveying, and assessments of plant room, HVAC, BEMS efficiency etc Representation required from all building types and ages
Energy Saving	Embed energy considerations into regeneration schemes and development or acquisition	Work across the Council to ensure assessment of impact of energy is considered as part of developments / acquisitions etc. Investigate with Delivery Teams, Surveyors and Procurement.	- increased consideration of energy in our portfolio		1-2 years	
Energy Saving	Create costed Decarbonisation Delivery Plan for WCC	Focus on reducing Scope 1 carbon emissions from gas boilers and create specific Heat Decarbonisation delivery plan for on-site gas and liquid fuel boilers Bring together results of previous decarbonisation work to develop an overall heat decarbonisation plan	- reducing volume of gas / liquid fuel used in buildings	SFS BE4	1-2 years	Review previous decarbonisation work (LCSF1-4) and recent Energy Assessments (MNZEH, CPW)

Energy Hierarchy	Objective	Action	Indicator	References where applicable (e.g. SFS action No)	Timescale / Phase	Commentary
Energy Saving	Engage wider Warwickshire	-Explore opportunities for how the WMCA Devo Deal could benefit Warwickshire (re. retrofits) -Manage Community Project on energy and fuel poverty (Switch & Save).	-costs covered on Switch and Save	SFS BE29	1 - 3 years	
Energy Saving	Increase awareness of energy saving to change behaviours	-Run an Energy Saving Campaign and develop energy training course for all staff and key contractors to raise awareness of individuals impact and clarify terminology -'Provide basic signposting resource for residents to support their own energy reduction. Highlight what support is available from council, government and other avenues	50% response to Intranet survey of awareness ->50% uptake of training (contractors) ->75% uptake of training (staff) - no of hits on external guidance pages	SFS BE10, SFS En18, SFS BE29	1 - 2 years	-Link in to Climate Change Champions, Working for Warwickshire, Management Briefings, Senior Leadership Forum, Intranet, Environment in Brief, SD Briefings, Senior Leadership Forum -Review current offering and update as required before roll out. -Consider Carbon Literacy Training for wide audience -Link to Hotline to id issues like over / under heating, lights etc -Inc engagement but would need monitoring to ensure not overly onerous
Enabling - Data Capture	Establish effective data sets, collection and procedures to move WCC towards an auditable set of data which clearly states assumptions, factors and calculations used and relevant processes recorded.	-Review current database offer from suppliers (i.e. Systems Link and Wind Crane) to ensure maximising capability -Work with Business Intelligence to develop in house quarterly carbon reporting capability (if not fully available from Systems Link. To also include all Scope 1 (WCC vehicle fleet emissions, liquid fuel emissions, fugitive emissions and SF6 leaks) and Scope 2 (purchased electricity) metrics (e.g. Inc. supportive such as training uptake)	- 100% of sites under WCC budgetary control (i.e. on corporate utility contracts) to have data visible on Systems Link reporting database - to allow accurate reporting of Carbon for SFS, IDP and external Buildings Energy Report and others, robust quarterly reporting in place for electricity (kwh total and per m2), gas (kwh total and per m3), water (m2) consumption, WCC fleet vehicle diesel and petrol usage (litres), liquid fuel use for heating (m3), fugitive emissions and SF6 leaks (calculated m3) - work with database supplier to improve awareness of database capability for reporting - Scope 1 and 2 CO2 emission procedure' written and	SFS BE11 + 50001 (Recording, Monitoring and Reporting)	1 year	Ref to Local Authorities Carbon Literacy Toolkit '-Systems Link contract increase -Current database version not supported - factors to be agreed for conversion to CO2
Enabling - Wider Networks	Use wider networks	Engage with external partners (e.g. Districts and Boroughs re Local Plans (Warwick and Solihull), NHS Climate Change Group, Midlands Net Zero Energy Hub, Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE), Local Government Association (LGA)), to gain lessons learnt and identify opportunities for joint working	-Representation and attendance at meetings of relevant public sector groups -Opportunity Pipeline developed -right size fit for portfolio	SFS En22 Check also Energy Systems Catapult (SFS En23), SFS BE6, BE032.BE033, BE034	1 Years	
Enabling - Wider Networks	Use wider networks	Work with external Partners in supporting a public sector sustainable strategy. Improve utilisation of assets, considering co-locations and where appropriate reducing the public sector portfolio.	-Portfolio right sized -Opportunity Pipeline developed	Property Strategy, SFS BE5, BE6	1 -5 years	

Energy Hierarchy	Objective	Action	Indicator	References where applicable (e.g. SFS action No)	Timescale / Phase	Commentary
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Cabinet

13 July 2023

Change of Age Range Brownsover Community Infant School and Long Lawford & Nursery Hill Primary Schools

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. approves the change of age range at Brownsover Infant School from 3-7 to 4-7 from September 2023
2. approves the change of age range at Long Lawford Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11 from September 2023
3. approves the change of age range at Nursery Hill Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11 from September 2023

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The proposed changes at Brownsover Community Infant School and Long Lawford & Nursery Hill Primary Schools, as outlined in section 3 are a consequence of national funding levels with many families entitled to 30 hours per week of funded early education, alongside the demand for funded places for eligible 2 year olds.
- 1.2 Maintained schools with a maintained nursery class see these places usually created in conjunction with the Local Authority with a designated PAN and specific age range allocated. Any changes to the delivery would usually be made in consultation with the Local Authority e.g to increase place numbers. (Maintained nursery classes used to receive higher levels of early education funding. However, this is no longer the case).
- 1.3 School run, governor led provision (s27) sees a service run by the governors for the benefit of their local community, e.g. nursery provision, and can include services for children that are not pupils of the school. This model provides greater flexibility and autonomy for the school who can flex the delivery to meet local need. Children in a maintained nursery class are registered pupils of the school and are reported via the school census. Under governor-led provision the children are reported on the Early Years Census and are not registered pupils.

- 1.4 In both cases there is a statutory obligation for the services to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum which specifies the learning and development requirements and delivery requirements e.g. staffing and premises.
- 1.5 Parents are increasingly seeking more flexibility from nursery places, to support them with work commitments. This is difficult to manage when nursery places are offered via a maintained nursery class, where there is less scope for flexibility.
- 1.6 The proposed change is in the legal operating model from maintained to fully governor run for all early years places - this will make the service more flexible and cost efficient for the school to meet the needs of the community and demand for 2, 3 and 4 year old places. The change would enable each school to rebalance staffing to become more cost effective.
- 1.7 There will be no material change to the relevant schools' operation – in each case, both school and nursery will continue to be governed by the same board and led by the same head teacher.
- 1.8 The plans propose that the Early Years provision will be teacher directed as opposed to teacher led. There is the expectation therefore that an EYFS teacher/lead will have oversight of the quality of all early years provision at the school. This is to ensure there will be no intended reduction in the quality of provision as a result of the proposed change.
- 1.9 Any proposed changes to the age range of a community school must be carried out in accordance with the Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education, '*Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools*'. The guidance requires the local authority to undertake a statutory consultation for a period of at least 4 weeks.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are no financial implications for Warwickshire County Council.
- 2.2 The three schools concerned may benefit financially from being able to offer a more flexible and comprehensive early years provision to parents.

3. Proposals for Prescribed Alteration

Brownsover Community Infant School

- 3.1 Brownsover Community Infant School currently operates two separate provisions at its site for 2, 3 and eligible 4 year olds: a Nursery class and a Pre-School. School Governors want to close the Nursery class and accommodate all those pupils in the Pre-School, to achieve greater flexibility in their provision.

- 3.2 The school has recently consulted to transition from a two-form entry infant school to a one-form entry primary school. As a consequence, approval has already been received to extend the school's current 3-7 age range to 3-11 from September 2026.
- 3.3 Therefore, this proposal is twofold. To change the age range from 3-7 to 4-7 from September 2023, then change the age range from 4-7 to 4-11 in September 2026.
- 3.4 The published admission number (PAN) for the main school will not be affected by these proposals.
- 3.5 The PAN for the maintained nursery class will cease to exist, as nursery provision will be offered in a more flexible way, according to parental demand. All nursery provision for 2,3 and eligible 4 year olds will be provided via Community Facility Powers, at the existing Pre-School, under the direction of the School Governors from September 2023.
- 3.6 There will be no reduction in, nor material change to, the service provided by the school. The EYFS teacher/lead will have oversight of the quality of all early years provision at the school. This is to ensure there will be no intended reduction in the quality of provision as a result of the proposed change.
- 3.7 It is the school's intention for the nursery to be teacher directed. This will be done by the EY lead/DHT who will have weekly allocated time to support planning and preparation as well as weekly teaching time within the nursery. The nursery groups will be lead on a daily basis by 2 SEYE, supported by 2 additional Level 3 staff and another level 2 TA. Each child will continue to have a keyworker (minimum level 3), and all reports, assessments and activities will be monitored by EY lead. Their continuing teaching commitment will enable them to oversee day-to-day provision and progress to ensure that it continues to meet high standards that the provision already provides.
- 3.8 A statutory consultation was undertaken between 5 June and 2 July 2023, during which 2 responses were received. Both responders strongly agreed with the proposal (a more detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix 4).

Long Lawford Primary School

- 3.9 Long Lawford Primary School currently operates a nursery class for 3 and 4 year olds. School Governors want to close the Nursery class and accommodate all those pupils in a newly developed school operated setting.
- 3.10 The proposal is to change the age range at Long Lawford Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11 from September 2023. The published admission number (PAN) for the main school will not be affected by these proposals.
- 3.11 The PAN for the maintained nursery class will cease to exist, as nursery provision will be offered in a more flexible way, according to parental demand. All nursery provision will be provided via Community Facility Powers, at the

newly developed Pre-School, under the direction of the School Governors from September 2023.

- 3.12 There will be no reduction in, nor material change to, the service provided by the school. The EYFS teacher/lead will have oversight of the quality of all early years provision at the school. This is to ensure there will be no intended reduction in the quality of provision as a result of the proposed change.
- 3.13 If the proposal is agreed, the school would maintain a teacher in the pre-school setting. The teacher would teach in the unit in the morning and a L3 TA (supported by a L2 TA and apprentice TA) would deliver the session in the afternoon. All sessions would be planned by a qualified teacher, who would maintain oversight of the provision. Additionally, the Early Years Leader would maintain oversight of admissions and ratios, which have been established this year and would continue next year. The teacher and L3 TA would work closely together, and the teacher would maintain responsibility for assessment data also. All EYFS staff receive regular EYFS training and would continue to complete monitoring exercises throughout the year and across the school.
- 3.14 A statutory consultation was undertaken between 5 June and 2 July 2023, during which 5 responses were received. Of the 5 responses, 3 strongly agreed with the proposal and one agreed. The remaining responder strongly disagreed with the proposal as they were concerned that there wasn't enough time to find alternative provision. They misunderstood that closing the nursery would not mean removing the early years provision but that it would be delivered in a different way (a more detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix 4).

Nursery Hill Primary School

- 3.15 Nursery Hill Primary School currently operates a nursery class for 3 and 4 year olds. School Governors want to close the Nursery class and accommodate all those pupils in a newly developed school operated setting, to achieve greater flexibility in their provision and creating places for funded 2 year olds.
- 3.16 The proposal is to change the age range at Nursery Hill Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11 from September 2023. The published admission number (PAN) for the main school will not be affected by these proposals.
- 3.17 The PAN for the maintained nursery class will cease to exist, as nursery provision will be offered in a more flexible way, according to parental demand. All nursery provision for 2,3 and eligible 4 year olds will be provided via Community Facility Powers, at the school run nursery, under the direction of the School Governors from September 2023.
- 3.18 There will be no reduction in, nor material change to, the service provided by the school. The EYFS teacher/lead will have oversight of the quality of all

early years provision at the school. This is to ensure there will be no intended reduction in the quality of provision as a result of the proposed change.

- 3.19 It is the school's intention for the nursery to be teacher directed. This will be done by the EY lead who will have weekly allocated time to support planning and preparation as well as weekly teaching time within the nursery. The nursery groups will be led on a daily basis by Level 3 staff. Each child will continue to have a key person (minimum level 3), and all reports and activities will be monitored by EY lead. The teacher and L3 TAs would work closely together, and the teacher would maintain responsibility for assessment data. Additionally, the Early Years Leader would maintain oversight of admissions and ratios, which have been established this year and would continue next year. All EYFS staff receive regular EYFS training and would continue to complete monitoring exercises throughout the year and across the school. Their continuing teaching commitment will enable them to oversee day-to-day provision and progress to ensure that it continues to meet high standards that the provision already provides.
- 3.20 A statutory consultation was undertaken between 5 June and 2 July 2023, during which 0 responses were received.

4. Environmental Implications

- 4.1 As there will be no associated change to the numbers of pupils attending the schools or early years settings, the location or transport arrangements, there are considered to be no environmental implications.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 If approved, the age range change for each school will be effective from 1 September 2023.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Consultation document for Brownsover Community Infant School
Appendix 2 Consultation document for Long Lawford Primary School
Appendix 3 Consultation document for Nursery Hill Primary School
Appendix 4 Consultation Responses

Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Nikki Daly, Admissions and Home to School Transport Coordinator	nikkidaly@warwickshire.gov.uk
Director	Johnny Kyriacou, Director of Education	johnnykyriacou@warwickshire.gov.uk
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Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kam Kaur, Portfolio Holder for Education	cllrkaur@warwickshire.gov.uk

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

Local Members: Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince, Councillor Heather Timms, Councillor Margaret Bell

Other Members: Councillor Marian Humphreys, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Councillor Barbara Brown

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE AGE RANGE AT BROWNSOVER COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL

Introduction

This consultation is being undertaken to advise you of proposals concerning Brownsover Community Infant School, and to invite you to tell us what you think of the proposals. This is part of a statutory consultation process that Warwickshire County Council is managing in partnership with the school's Governing Body. The proposal is:

- 1) To change the age range at Brownsover Community Infant School from 3 - 7 to 4 - 7 from September 2023. The published admission number (PAN) for the main school will not be affected by these proposals. The PAN for the maintained nursery class will cease to exist, as nursery provision will be offered in a more flexible way, according to parental demand.
- 2) As a consequence of previous approval being given for Brownsover Community Infant School to transition from a two form entry infant school to a one form entry primary school in 2026, should this proposal be agreed then the age range would subsequently change from 4-7 to 4-11 from September of that year
- 3) To run all nursery provision for 2,3 and eligible 4 year olds via Community Facility Powers, at the existing Pre-School, under the direction of the School Governors from September 2023

There will be no reduction in, nor material change to, the service provided by the school.

Why Change?

The proposed changes at Brownsover Community Infant School are related to changes at national level, with many families now entitled to 30 hours per week of funded early education, instead of the 15 hours per week they were previously entitled to, alongside the demand for funded places for eligible 2 year olds.

Parents are increasingly seeking more flexibility from nursery places, to support them with work commitments. This is difficult to manage when nursery places are offered via a maintained nursery class, where there is less scope for flexibility.

There will be no material change to the school's operation, other than that which was previously agreed to move from a two form entry primary school in 2026 – both school and nursery will continue to be governed by the same board and led by the same head teacher.

Building consequences

There will be no changes to the accommodation, and early years children will continue to attend their sessions where they do now.

What is the proposed timetable?

- **12 May 2023:** The County Council Portfolio Holder for Education gave approval for the proposal to go out for consultation. This report is available to the general public by following the link below to the County Council website: <https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=203&MId=3675&Ver=4>
- **5 June 2023 – 2 July 2023:** Consultation with parents and the local community to take into account the views expressed regarding the proposals to change the age range.

- **13 July 2023:** If Cabinet agree to the proposals, the decision will begin to be implemented from September 2023 with the new arrangements beginning in time for the new intake of children in **September 2023**.

Have Your Say...

As an integral part of this process, we are inviting you to take part in this consultation. We welcome your views on the proposed changes raised in this letter and all viewpoints will be taken into account before deciding to publish formal proposals. Feedback can be given in the following ways;

In Writing to:

Education & Early Years,
Shire Hall,
Warwick
CV34 4RL

Via Email

schoolorganisation@warwickshire.gov.uk

Or by completing the online survey:

<https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/schools/brownsover-infant-school>

The closing date for comments to be submitted is 11.59pm **2 July 2023**.

Further information can be found in Frequently Asked Questions

Following the end of the consultation we shall publish the results and this may include quotes of comments which will be anonymous. If you reply to an anonymous survey then no personal details will be captured. If you would like further information, visit our website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/privacy or contact our Customer Service Centre on 01926 410410

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE AGE RANGE AT LONG LAWFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

This consultation is being undertaken to advise you of proposals concerning Long Lawford Primary School, and to invite you to tell us what you think of the proposals. This is part of a statutory consultation process that Warwickshire County Council is managing in partnership with the school's Governing Body. The proposal is:

- 1) To change the age range at Long Lawford Primary School from 3 - 11 to 4 - 11 from September 2023. The published admission number (PAN) for the main school will not be affected by these proposals. The PAN for the maintained nursery class will cease to exist, as nursery provision will be offered in a more flexible way, according to parental demand.
- 2) To run all nursery provision for 2,3 and eligible 4 year olds via Community Facility Powers, under the direction of the School Governors from September 2023. The Nursery would close and reopen as a Pre-School.

There will be no reduction in, nor material change to, the service provided by the school.

Why Change?

The proposed changes at Long Lawford Primary School are related to changes at national level, with many families now entitled to 30 hours per week of funded early education, instead of the 15 hours per week they were previously entitled to, alongside the demand for funded places for eligible 2 year olds.

Parents are increasingly seeking more flexibility from nursery places, to support them with work commitments. This is difficult to manage when nursery places are offered via a maintained nursery class, where there is less scope for flexibility.

There will be no material change to the school's operation – both school and pre-school will continue to be governed by the same board and led by the same head teacher.

Building consequences

There will be no changes to the accommodation, and early years children will continue to attend their sessions where they do now.

What is the proposed timetable?

- **12 May 2023:** The County Council Portfolio Holder for Education gave approval for the proposal to go out for consultation. This report is available to the general public by following the link below to the County Council website:
<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=203&MId=3675&Ver=4>
- **5 June 2023 – 2 July 2023:** Consultation with parents and the local community to take into account the views expressed regarding the proposals to change the age range.
- **13 July 2023:** If Cabinet agree to the proposals, the decision will begin to be implemented from September 2023 with the new arrangements beginning in time for the new intake of children in **September 2023**.

Have Your Say...

As an integral part of this process, we are inviting you to take part in this consultation. We welcome your views on the proposed changes raised in this letter and all viewpoints will be taken into account before deciding to publish formal proposals. Feedback can be given in the following ways;

In Writing to:

Education & Early Years,
Shire Hall,
Warwick
CV34 4RL

Via Email

schoolorganisation@warwickshire.gov.uk

Or by completing the online survey: <https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/schools/long-lawford-primary-school>

The closing date for comments to be submitted is 11.59pm **2 July 2023**.

Further information can be found in Frequently Asked Questions

Following the end of the consultation we shall publish the results and this may include quotes of comments which will be anonymous. If you reply to an anonymous survey then no personal details will be captured. If you would like further information, visit our website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/privacy or contact our Customer Service Centre on 01926 410410

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE AGE RANGE AT NURSERY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

This consultation is being undertaken to advise you of proposals concerning Nursery Hill Primary School, and to invite you to tell us what you think of the proposals. This is part of a statutory consultation process that Warwickshire County Council is managing in partnership with the school's Governing Body. The proposal is:

- 1) To change the age range at Nursery Hill Primary School from 3 - 11 to 4 - 11 from September 2023. The published admission number (PAN) for the main school will not be affected by these proposals. The PAN for the maintained nursery class will cease to exist, as nursery provision will be offered in a more flexible way, according to parental demand.
- 2) To run all nursery provision for 2,3 and eligible 4 year olds via Community Facility Powers, under the direction of the School Governors from September 2023

There will be no reduction in, nor material change to, the service provided by the school.

Why Change?

The proposed changes at Nursery Hill Primary School are related to changes at national level, with many families now entitled to 30 hours per week of funded early education, instead of the 15 hours per week they were previously entitled to, alongside the demand for funded places for eligible 2 year olds.

Parents are increasingly seeking more flexibility from nursery places, to support them with work commitments. This is difficult to manage when nursery places are offered via a maintained nursery class, where there is less scope for flexibility.

There will be no material change to the school's operation – both school and nursery will continue to be governed by the same board and led by the same head teacher.

Building consequences

There will be no changes to the accommodation, and early years children will continue to attend their sessions where they do now.

What is the proposed timetable?

- **12 May 2023:** The County Council Portfolio Holder for Education gave approval for the proposal to go out for consultation. This report is available to the general public by following the link below to the County Council website:
<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=203&MId=3675&Ver=4>
- **5 June 2023 – 2 July 2023:** Consultation with parents and the local community to take into account the views expressed regarding the proposals to change the age range.
- **13 July 2023:** If Cabinet agree to the proposals, the decision will begin to be implemented from September 2023 with the new arrangements beginning in time for the new intake of children in **September 2023**.

Have Your Say...

As an integral part of this process, we are inviting you to take part in this consultation. We welcome your views on the proposed changes raised in this letter and all viewpoints will be taken into account before deciding to publish formal proposals. Feedback can be given in the following ways;

In Writing to:

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Via Email

schoolorganisation@warwickshire.gov.uk

Or by completing the online survey: <https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/schools/nursery-hill-primary-school>

The closing date for comments to be submitted is 11.59pm **2 July 2023**.

Further information can be found in Frequently Asked Questions

Following the end of the consultation we shall publish the results and this may include quotes of comments which will be anonymous. If you reply to an anonymous survey then no personal details will be captured. If you would like further information, visit our website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/privacy or contact our Customer Service Centre on 01926 410410

Consultation Responses

Brownsover Community School Proposal

1. To change the age range at Brownsover Community School from 3 - 7 to 4 - 7 from September 2023. The published admission number (PAN) for the main school will not be affected by these proposals. The PAN for the maintained nursery class will cease to exist, as nursery provision will be offered in a more flexible way, according to parental demand.
2. As a consequence of previous approval being given for Brownsover Community School to transition from a two form entry infant school to a one form entry primary school in 2026, should this proposal be agreed then the age range would subsequently change from 4-7 to 4-11 from September of that year.
3. To run all nursery provision for 2,3 and eligible 4 year olds via Community Facility Powers, at the existing Pre-School, under the direction of the School Governors from September 2023

Overview of Consultation Responses (2 responses received)

Agree	Specific Impacts	Comments	WCC response
Strongly Agree			
Strongly Agree	Parents will have greater flexibility		The proposal will create one service that will be able to flex and change depending on demand whilst there being no reduction to the number of places available.
Disagree	Specific Impacts	Comments	WCC response

Long Lawford Primary School Proposal

1. To change the age range at Long Lawford Primary School from 3 - 11 to 4 - 11 from September 2023. The published admission number (PAN) for the main school will not be affected by these proposals. The PAN for the maintained nursery class will cease to exist, as nursery provision will be offered in a more flexible way, according to parental demand.
2. To run all nursery provision for 2,3 and eligible 4 year olds via Community Facility Powers under the direction of the School Governors from September 2023

Overview of Consultation Responses (5 responses received)

Agree	Specific Impacts	Comments	WCC response
Strongly Agree	The School will be able to take 2 year olds	The School will be able to take 2 year olds	The proposal will allow greater flexibility to respond to demand and provide more options for longer sessions
Strongly Agree			
Strongly Agree		It will be good to have a fully functioning nursery locally for 2-4 year olds with the ne 30 hours funding	The proposal will allow greater flexibility to respond to demand and provide more options for longer sessions
Agree	Children will benefit	It will help the school with more funding	The proposal will allow the school to deliver the service in a more cost efficient way
Disagree	Specific Impacts	Comments	WCC response
Strongly Disagree	Too short notice to find another nursery. Siblings at the school and daughter has been offered and accepted a nursery place	Timing of the proposal unfair. No time to find an alternative	Although the proposal is to close the nursery, provision will be provided in a newly formed pre-school at the school. There will be no reduction in available places. The proposal will offer a more flexible service which will benefit parents

Nursery Hill Primary School Proposal

1. To change the age range at Nursery Hill Primary School from 3 - 11 to 4 - 11 from September 2023. The published admission number (PAN) for the main school will not be affected by these proposals. The PAN for the maintained nursery class will cease to exist, as nursery provision will be offered in a more flexible way, according to parental demand.
2. To run all nursery provision for 2,3 and eligible 4 year olds via Community Facility Powers under the direction of the School Governors from September 2023

Overview of Consultation Responses (0 responses received)

Agree	Specific Impacts	Comments	WCC response
Disagree	Specific Impacts	Comments	WCC response

Cabinet

13 July 2023

Modern Slavery Statement

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the Council's updated Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for the financial year 2022/23; and
2. Authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to publish the Council's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement on the Central Government Registry alongside the estimated income for the Council in the year covered by the statement.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 is a piece of legislation designed to combat modern slavery and human trafficking. Section 54 of Act requires certain organisations to develop a Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement (a Statement) each year. The Statement must set out what steps the organisation has taken during the previous financial year to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place in any part of its business or supply chain.
- 1.2 The organisations required to develop a Statement include commercial organisations which supply goods or services and have a total turnover of not less than £36m. Whilst it has previously not been clear whether this requirement currently applies to local authorities, the Council has taken the view that it could and therefore has published a Statement since 2018. In any event, the government has now indicated that it intends to change the legislation so it is clear that it includes public bodies which have a budget of more than £36m and therefore whilst we are still awaiting these legislative changes, it would appear sensible to continue to publish a Statement.
- 1.3 The government also has a central registry for organisations to publish their Statements which was launched in March 2021 and whilst it is not currently mandatory to publish Statements on the registry it is strongly encouraged and the government plans to make this a requirement under the legislation for any organisation that is required to produce a Statement under section 54 of the Act. The Council published its Statement on the Registry for the previous two financial years.

- 1.4 The Central Government Registry also asks for the turnover or budget of the organisation in the year covered by the Statement. The Council's estimated turnover for the financial year covered by the statement (2022/23) is over £500 million.

2. Changes to the Statement since last year

- 2.1 The High-Risk section has been amended to include the following activities:
 - 2.1.1 The Council's [Asylum Seekers](#) and [UK Resettlement](#) schemes alongside the Homes for Ukraine scheme;
 - 2.1.2 The activities of the Warwickshire Recovery Investment Fund (WRIF) due to the increased risk of money laundering and its link with modern slavery and human trafficking;
- 2.2 The Responsibility (Investigations/due diligence) section has been amended to include reference to further information and guidance that is available for Council staff on making modern slavery referrals via the national framework.
- 2.3 The Initiatives section has been amended to include details of the following initiatives:
 - 2.3.1 Devolved Decision Making – this provides details of the Home Office pilot that the Council is currently participating in to devolve decision making for child victims of modern slavery;
 - 2.3.2 National Referral Mechanism Coordination – this provides details of the NRM Coordinator and explains what their role is;
 - 2.3.3 Child Exploitation Awareness – this provides details of the Something's Not Right website and action the Council has taken to raise awareness of child exploitation.
- 2.4 The Relevant Policies section has been updated to reflect that the Whistleblowing policy is currently being reviewed to ensure that it remains up to date.
- 2.5 The Training section has been updated to explain awareness raising of modern slavery for all social care employees including reference to more training that is being developed.
- 2.6 The Partnership section has been updated to refer to the Something's Not Right partnership.

3. Proposed amendments to the legislation

- 3.1 Amendments to the legislation were proposed in a Modern Slavery Bill published in June 2021 with the aim of increasing the accountability of companies and other organisations operating in the UK to drive modern

slavery and human trafficking out of their supply chains. It included the proposed introduction of two offences. The bill was discontinued after its first reading but amendments to strengthen the legislation are still anticipated.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the report. The actions and activity outlined within the Statement can be delivered from within the Council's existing resources.

5. Environmental Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from the report.

6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 6.1 Once the Statement is approved it will be published on the Council's website and on the Central Government Registry within 6 months of the end of the Council's financial year.
- 6.2 The legislation states that the Statement: "if the organisation is a body corporate other than a limited liability partnership, must be approved by the board of directors (or equivalent management body) and signed by a director (or equivalent)". As an executive function, Cabinet currently approves the Statement and it is signed by the Leader, however, officers are considering recommending that for future years the Leader delegates this function to the relevant Portfolio Holder to approve each year. The Constitution would need amending to reflect this.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - updated Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for the financial year 2022/23.

Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Sioned Harper – Team Leader and Senior Solicitor	sionedharper@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Sarah Duxbury - Assistant Director for Governance & Policy	sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Rob Powell - Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Izzi Seccombe Leader of the Council	cllrseccombe@warwickshire.gov.uk

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

Local Member(s): N/A – this is a countywide matter

Other members: Chair and Vice Chair and members of Chair and Spokes

Modern Slavery Act 2015 - Warwickshire County Council's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2022/23

Introduction

Warwickshire County Council is committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in our corporate activities and in our supply chain management. This statement sets out Warwickshire County Council's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to our services and business and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in our own services and business and our supply chains. This statement also applies to Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service which is part of the Council.

This statement is published in response to the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

This statement relates to actions and activities during the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

We remain dedicated to improving our policies and procedures to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking and will continue to do so in the current financial year.

Organisational Structure

Warwickshire County Council is a local authority which provides a range of statutory and discretionary services delivered both directly by the Council and through external organisations. Our structure can be found on our [website](#).

Supply Chains

The Council procures goods and services from various suppliers, and this is governed by our [Procurement Strategy](#).

Countries of Operation and Supply

Warwickshire County Council only operates within the United Kingdom. Whilst the risk of slavery and human trafficking is considered low due to the nature of the Council's business, the Council remains vigilant to any potential risks, and through our procurement policy, strategy and guidance sets high expectations from its supply chains.

High Risk Activities

The Council considers that, due to the nature of its business and the policies / processes that are in operation, there are few areas of its business that are considered to be at high risk of slavery or human trafficking.

The [Homes for Ukraine](#), [Asylum Seekers](#), and [UK Resettlement](#) schemes that offer housing and support for refugees and asylum seekers provide some level of risk as vulnerable people are being placed with members of the public, or in local housing. Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks and home inspections are carried out for every member of a sponsor family, and dedicated housing officer liaises with families to support them in order to mitigate this risk.

The Warwickshire Recovery Investment Fund (WRIF) is part of the council's COVID-19 Recovery Plan to stimulate Warwickshire's economy, create jobs, support local businesses, and bring investment into the county. Loans and investments can be made under three pillars of the WRIF:

1. The Business Growth Pillar;
2. The Local Communities and Enterprise Pillar; and
3. The Property and Infrastructure Pillar.

As a result of this lending activity the Council is required to comply with additional rules in relation to the prevention of money laundering and has strengthened its anti-money laundering policy and procedure to ensure it complies with these obligations and safeguards the Council's resources. The strengthened policy and procedure include an organisational risk assessment and thorough customer due diligence for individual investments. This helps to ensure that the investment opportunities provided by the WRIF are not used to launder any profits made by those involved in modern slavery and human trafficking.

Responsibility

Responsibility for the Council's anti-slavery initiatives is as follows:

Policies: These are developed by officers in the relevant Service area and are agreed in line with the Council's scheme of delegation. Policies are reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant.

Risk assessments: These are undertaken by the relevant Service area where there is deemed to be a risk of modern slavery or human trafficking, with support from colleagues in Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR&OD) and Procurement.

Investigations / due diligence: Any concerns regarding modern slavery or human trafficking should be notified to the Council's Monitoring Officer who is currently the Assistant Director for Governance & Policy as soon as practicable. Further information and guidance on referrals are provided for Council staff on the Council's

intranet and will be reviewed to ensure notification to the Monitoring Officer is undertaken.

Children in Employment: All school-age children who work part-time must be registered with Warwickshire County Council. Information about child employment can be found on our [website](#), including information on the law around child working hours, information for children, parents and employers, and how to report concerns about children in employment.

Strategies: The [Warwickshire Exploitation Strategy 2020-2023](#) ensures that Warwickshire County Council relevant staff and partners have an understanding of exploitation, the impact it has on children, young people, adults with care and support needs, and the wider community. It exists to improve the lives of those who are at risk. It is overseen by the Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership. The approach to tackling the problem is multi agency and collaborative to ensure those at risk are protected from harm. The scope of this strategy crosses the domains of sexual exploitation, missing children, gangs, criminal exploitation, organised crime, cuckooing, trafficking, hate crime and prevent/extremism.

Initiatives

Devolved Decision Making: Warwickshire County Council is participating in a Home Office pilot to devolve decision making for child victims of Modern Slavery. Since February 2023, all National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals completed by professionals for Warwickshire children are referred to a local multi-agency NRM Panel which is set up for the purpose of making decisions whether the children are victims of Modern Slavery. This helps to bring more effective and timely decision making by agencies known to the child and connecting them to local safeguarding and support.

National Referral Mechanism Coordination: The NRM process is facilitated by a NRM Coordinator who coordinates the collection and analysis of information required by the Warwickshire Panel to enable decisions to be made on the referrals. This individual is available to support practitioners assessing and supporting victims of modern slavery, providing specialist guidance and advice, and raising service standards regarding modern slavery and use of NRM through the provision of training and awareness. The Coordinator also supports individuals in deciding whether a referral needs to be made to the Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service (ICTG).

Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service (ICTG): Warwickshire County Council partners with Barnardo's who provide the ICTG service, which offers advice, guidance, and support for children who have been exploited through trafficking and Modern Slavery, and for professionals working with them.

Child Exploitation Awareness: The [Something's Not Right Website](#) raises awareness of child exploitation in Warwickshire, how it manifests, and what people and organisations can do to keep children safe. In March 2023 as part of Children

Exploitation Awareness Week, the Council put on awareness activities and training events in a bid to help professionals, parents, carers and members of the public in recognising child exploitation and knowing how to take action when they spot it. The Targeted Youth Support service engaged child and young people with a range of activities, including quizzes, discussions, poster designs and pledging to the #HelpingHands campaign. Helping children understand what exploitation may look like to them is an essential part of stopping it. Social media posts highlighting the different types of child exploitation were shared on the Warwickshire County Council social media pages over the week.

Relevant Policies

Warwickshire County Council reviews its policies and procedures on an on-going basis to ensure they remain compliant and fit for purpose. The following policies and procedures are considered to be key in meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act:

Safeguarding policies: In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults living in Warwickshire the Council's safeguarding strategy is underpinned by a range of policies and guidance.

Whistleblowing policy: The Council encourages all its employees, consultants, contractors, volunteers and workers to report any concerns related to its direct activities, or the supply chains of the Council. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. The Council's whistleblowing procedure is designed to make it easy for workers to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation. This policy is currently being reviewed to ensure it is up to date.

Employer and Employee Responsibilities Code: The Council's Code makes clear to our employees the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the organisation. The organisation strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour in all its operations and when managing our supply chain.

Recruitment: The Council's recruitment processes are transparent and reviewed regularly. They include robust procedures for vetting new employees, which ensures they are able to confirm their age, identities and qualifications, and they are paid directly into an appropriate personal bank account. To comply with the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act 2006, all prospective employees are asked to supply evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. A reference is also requested and followed up. Our Terms of Employment allow employees to terminate employment and to join unions. They also outline our procedures around overtime working.

Bullying and Harassment: Our Bullying and Harassment policy and procedure prohibits harassment, intimidation and discrimination and outlines procedures to deal with such instances.

Agency Workers: The Council uses employment agencies to source additional workforce capacity. Where agency workers are required, these are primarily engaged through the Council's managed service provider. Our contract with external agencies prohibits attempts to restrict the freedoms of temporary workers, and the use of worker-paid recruitment fees.

Expectations of suppliers: The Council is committed to ensuring that its suppliers adhere to the highest standards of ethics. Suppliers are required to demonstrate that they provide safe working conditions where necessary, treat workers with respect and dignity and act ethically and within the law in workforce matters. The Council has a dedicated procurement website, and our supplier guidance contains a 'Supplier Checklist'.

Due Diligence

The Council requires its contractors and suppliers to demonstrate their commitment to supporting human rights within their supply chain relating to, for example, child labour, forced labour, health and safety and working hours. The Council undertakes due diligence when considering taking on new suppliers and regularly reviews its existing suppliers. This is the responsibility of the particular Council contracting managers with the support of the Council's Procurement Team. The Council's due diligence measures in place include:

- the implementation of measures in the evaluation of suppliers to enable the exclusion of suppliers with convictions under the relevant sections of the Modern Slavery Act.
- clarity that if a supplier misrepresents any information, that the supplier may be excluded from the procurement process and from bidding for other contracts in the future. If information comes to light after a contract has been entered into, that supplier may be sued for damages and the contract rescinded.
- a review of contract terms and conditions and appropriate clauses for inclusion to ensure compliance with the Modern Slavery Act. Such terms and conditions are also applicable to sub-contractors in the supply chain.
- embedding a county wide approach to contract management to consider any potential risk of slavery as it relates to each contract, and through active contract management to more effectively ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in the supply chain.
- the use of the e-tendering system to further strengthen the approach to ensuring modern slavery and human trafficking does not exist within the supply chain.

Training

The Council has an e-learning package to raise awareness of modern slavery and trafficking amongst all employees and workers. This elearning package is entitled

“See Past the Obvious - Vulnerability and Serious Crime” and has been developed in partnership with the Police. It includes a light touch, awareness raising section on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

An e-Learning module is available to all staff entitled “Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking”. It includes information and guidance on what modern slavery and human trafficking are, forms they might take, legal protections and obligations, how to identify and raise concerns about modern slavery or human trafficking, risks to children and adults, and further resources.

Awareness is also raised with all social care employees of modern slavery and the UK framework for tackling it, explaining specific responsibilities to different services. This includes the National Referral Mechanism, how to identify and support victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, the West Midlands local procedures for children affected by exploitation and trafficking, and the Modern Slavery helpline for the public.

As part of the new NRM Coordinator role, more training on modern slavery and human trafficking is currently being developed. This will be included in next year’s statement.

Whistleblowing training will also be reviewed following the policy update. This will be included in next year’s statement.

Partnerships

The Council works in partnership with a wide range of partners and agencies to prevent abuse and neglect, to detect and report occurrences and to support victims. This includes district and borough Councils, Warwickshire Police, Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Bernardo’s, and the Local Safeguarding Boards. These form the [Something’s Not Right](#) partnership. The [Warwickshire Safeguarding website](#) and the Council’s own website have guidance, procedures and a toolkit relating to the trafficking and exploitation of children and on the duty to report.

Approval for this Statement

This statement has been approved by the Council’s Cabinet. It will continue to be reviewed and provided annually.

Signature:

Date:

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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