Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Wednesday 13 December 2023
Time:	2.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 2, Shire Hall

Membership

Councillor Adrian Warwick (Chair)
Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Sarah Boad
Councillor Piers Daniell
Councillor Sarah Feeney
Councillor Wallace Redford
Councillor Will Roberts
Councillor Tim Sinclair
Councillor Richard Spencer
Councillor Robert Tromans

Items on the agenda: -

1. General

- **(1) Apologies**
- **(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**
- **(3) Chair's Announcements**
- **(4) Minutes of Previous Meeting** 5 - 12

2. Public Question Time

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

3. **Questions to Portfolio Holders relevant to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Up to 30 minutes of the meeting is available for the Committee to put questions to the Leader and Portfolio Holders on any matters relevant to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. **Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service: Resourcing to Risk** 13 - 34
5. **VCSE Sector Support Services Progress Report** 35 - 118
6. **Warwickshire Waterways Strategy - progress report and action plan** 119 - 130
7. **Library Performance and Membership** 131 - 190
8. **County Councillors' Grant Fund 2020 to 2023** 191 - 204
9. **Quarter 2 Integrated Performance Report** 205 - 240
10. **Capital Financial Management Project - Closure Report** 241 - 248
11. **Treasury Management Half Year** 249 - 272
12. **Work Programme** 273 - 274
13. **Any Urgent Matters**

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

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Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 13 September 2023

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members
Councillor Adrian Warwick (Chair)
Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Sarah Boad
Councillor Piers Daniell
Councillor Sarah Feeney
Councillor Wallace Redford
Councillor Will Roberts
Councillor Tim Sinclair
Councillor Robert Tromans
Councillor Peter Gilbert

Officers
Rob Powell, Executive Director for Resources
Charles Barlow, Delivery Lead - Localities
Helen Barnsley, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Karina Bird, Trainee Solicitor
Ben Brook, Chief Fire Officer
Andy Carswell, Democratic Services Officer
Jan Cumming, Senior Solicitor and Team Leader
Andrew Felton, Director of Finance
Chris Norton, Head of Investments, Audit and Risk
Emily Reaney, Lead Commissioner - Treasury and Investments
Louise Richards, Partnerships Projects Co-ordinator
Steve Smith, Director of Commissioning Support Unit

Others Present

Councillor Peter Butlin (Portfolio Holder - Finance and Property)
Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder - Environment, Climate and Culture)

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Andy Crump, Yousef Dahmash, Rik Spencer and

Martin Watson. Councillor Pete Gilbert was attending as a substitute for Councillor Spencer. Councillor Sarah Boad had also sent apologies as she was attending another meeting and would be late for the start.

Apologies were also received from Sarah Duxbury. Jan Cumming was attending as legal advisor in her place.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

(3) Chair's Announcements

The Chair informed members that a report from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) regarding Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service had been published that morning, and he was using his discretion to allow Ben Brook (Chief Fire Officer) to update the Committee on its findings. Ben Brook said he wished to place on record his thanks to the staff at WFRS who had worked hard to make improvements. He said the inspection report noted improvements had been made in almost all areas, with significant improvements being made in some. In particular, improvements to community risk management and the response to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion had been noted.

Ben Brook reminded members that three causes for concern had been identified during the 2021/22 inspection, and two of these had now been closed. The number of areas for improvement had reduced from 41 to 26. One notable area of good practice that could be shared with other fire and rescue services had now been identified. Ben Brook said although good progress had been made, more improvements were needed. A programme of work was being created to facilitate this.

The Chair stated he was giving a vote of thanks to Ben Brook and WFRS for the positive direction of travel that had been noted in the inspection report.

(4) Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the public.

3. Questions to Portfolio Holders relevant to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

There were no questions to Portfolio Holders.

4. Sustainable Futures Strategy

The item was introduced by Steve Smith (Director, Commissioning Support Unit). He reminded members the draft strategy had been reviewed by Cabinet in October before an extensive period of public engagement. Partners from industry, academia and the public sector had also been consulted on and the findings from this had gone to the June Cabinet meeting. The newest draft was now being reviewed by all four of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees before being finalised by November.

Responding to questions raised by Councillor Will Roberts in relation to carbon offsetting and the timelines for it, Steve Smith said an offsetting strategy was still in the process of being created and several different scenarios being analysed. An adaptations officer had been appointed to assist with this. A biodiversity and woodlands strategy was also being created, which would tie in with the work on green spaces. Steve Smith said there was an aim to plant a tree for every resident of Warwickshire; however, Councillor Will Roberts said mature trees would be able to provide a greater level of carbon offsetting compared to one that had been newly planted. Councillor Heather Timms said the offsetting plan was due to be implemented during 2023/24, and this would be done jointly with Coventry and Solihull Councils. She added it would be helpful if members were able to attend a meeting with the Council's ecology experts to talk about how this strategy would be achieved.

Members noted an additional £3.29million had been awarded to the Council from the government towards electric vehicle charging points, and said this was welcomed. Councillor Rob Tromans said he had had conversations with representatives from the National Grid, who had expressed frustration that new local developments often lacked the infrastructure to provide charging points, and in some cases they could not be installed at neighbouring properties. He asked if the planning authorities at borough and district level were able to ask for a Section 106 agreement relating to improved infrastructure to provide additional charging points, as often the building contractors would not put them in as a matter of course. Steve Smith said discussions were taking place with the National Grid, who had been one of the consultees during the earlier engagement exercise. It was accepted that the number of charging points was not equal across the county. Councillor Sarah Feeney said in Oxfordshire some charging points had been installed directly into the ground, removing the need for unsightly charging boxes. Councillor Heather Timms said the transport team were prioritising how charging points might be installed in older areas of terraced houses which were not designed with cars in mind. Steve Smith said the transport team were also developing their own decarbonisation plan.

Responding to a point raised by Councillor Sarah Feeney regarding care workers, Steve Smith said the Council wanted to engage with care providers that contributed to the Council's overall net zero carbon targets. However the Council had to be mindful of not enforcing new policies onto care providers that were not affordable. Councillor Sarah Feeney made the point care workers were low paid and were unlikely to be able to afford an electric car, which would help offset carbon emissions as they would also travel a lot for work. Councillor Sarah Feeney said thought needed to be given to behavioural change more generally and how this would assist with the Council's carbon emission and offsetting targets. Steve Smith said Warwick University had been conducting work on behavioural change, and the Council was taking this into consideration while also having regard for affordability. It was accepted some changes may be harder to implement in more rural areas of the county.

Councillor Sarah Boad said improved and more efficient public transport would help to meet net zero targets. She said buses in Warwickshire were often infrequent and in some cases did not turn up at all, meaning would-be passengers had to wait up to two hours. Councillor Sarah Boad stated her belief there ought to be lobbying of central government requiring statutory guidance on installation of solar panels on new build estates.

Responding to a question from Councillor Tim Sinclair, Steve Smith said the Council was taking into account examples of best practice from elsewhere in considering the development of the strategy.

The Chair said he welcomed the report and the work that had been done on the strategy so far. He said he would like to receive an update at a future meeting on the progress that was being made and asked for an item to be added to the work programme.

Members noted the contents of the report and draft strategy.

5. Quarter 1 Integrated Performance Report

Members were reminded the report covered the first three months of the new financial year.

Councillor Rob Tromans noted that 17 of the key business measures were not on track, which was around a fifth and, in his opinion, a high amount. Steve Smith said some measures had not yet been set or started. This might be because they are only reviewed after six months, or at the end of the financial year. Councillor Rob Tromans asked for more information on the handling of customer complaints. Rob Powell (Executive Director, Resources) said implementation of the online customer service platform had been slightly delayed as there had been some vacancies in the team handling it. The team was now fully staffed. Rob Powell told members a report relating to Ombudsman cases would be considered at Cabinet the following day, and it spoke favourably on the Council’s handling of complaints. Councillor Rob Tromans said he was pleased to hear the complaints team was now fully staffed.

Responding to a question from Councillor Sarah Feeney about recruitment of on-call firefighters, Ben Brook said this had been a challenge for the last five years. Historically, on-call firefighters were required to live five minutes from their station, and since the Covid pandemic people had wanted to be less constrained by this requirement. Additionally, people living within five minutes of on-call fire stations were typically of a demographic that made them unsuited to being on-call firefighters. A fuller review of the on-call system was being made.

Councillor Sarah Feeney noted the number of staff sickness days had risen slightly. Rob Powell said these related predominantly to stress and mental health and wellbeing. The majority of service areas had sickness rates in line with national benchmarking, whereas areas with higher rates were due to service-related issues.

Responding to a question from Councillor Sarah Boad regarding the capital programme spending for the Fire and Rescue Service, Ben Brook said much of this was being spent on the new fire training facility.

Members noted the contents of the report.

6. Treasury Management Update Quarterly Report

The Chair said he was grateful for the work of the finance team for being prudent with the Council’s finances.

The item was introduced by Chris Norton (Head of Investments, Audit, Insurance and Risk). He reminded members treasury investments related to ensuring there was sufficient cash available for the Council to use and differed from pension and non-treasury investments. The primary role of treasury investments was to ensure efficiency and security. Interest, inflation and market rates were all taken into account during treasury management, although these were hard to forecast. The Council had looked to diversify its treasury management portfolio into other local authorities, although it could not invest more than £10million per authority.

The current interest rate of 3.69 per cent was lower than the base rate. Fluctuating interest rates meant the Council's treasury management rates would lag behind the real time changes to the base interest rate.

Chris Norton said consideration had been given to an early pre-payment for the Pension Fund. However with fluctuating forecasts a decision was taken not to do this, and it had since been proven to be the correct decision. The Council was also looking to realign its borrowing profile. The Council had paid back historical borrowing of £49million.

Responding to a question from Councillor Tim Sinclair, Chris Norton said the Council worked with an independent treasury advisory company to look at low risk investments and to decide what would be an appropriate amount to invest. Investments relating to equities and the Pension Fund were longer term and would seek a higher return of investment. Poor treasury management could have negative consequences and implications for the Council's overall budget, such as having to increase rates of Council Tax.

Responding to a question from Councillor Rob Tromans, Andy Felton (Director of Finance) said borrowing would be required for the 2025/26 Capital Strategy, and to support the WRIF. The Capital Strategy would assume certain levels of investment.

Members said it was important to get treasury management right. Councillor Pete Gilbert said officers' management had been exemplary. Members thanked officers for their diligence, particularly noting what was happening with the budgets of other councils.

Members noted the report and voted to endorse its contents.

7. Cost-of-living support update

The item was introduced by Charles Barlow (Delivery Lead, Communities and Partnerships Service), who reminded members that in October 2022 Cabinet had approved a fund of up to £1million from the Revenue Investment Fund to help support cost of living initiatives. As of 15 August 2023, £730,000 had either been spent or committed to being spent. Sitting alongside the Revenue Investment Fund, an additional £1million from the Household Support Fund grant had been distributed through the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme. This provided direct support to vulnerable households around energy and water bills, food, and other related essentials. It was felt cost of living support needed to be put in place longer term as increasing costs were affecting individuals – either through increased mortgage costs, or rate increases caused by landlords' mortgage rates going up – and businesses, through higher operating costs. Charles Barlow said the report provided a summary of the investments, and greater detail could be provided to members if they wished.

Councillor Sarah Boad said she was pleased to see libraries would continue to operate as warm hubs. She said community pantries would help provide support for residents' longer-term issues arising from the cost of living crisis. Charles Barlow clarified that funding for the community pantries in the financial year 2023/24 has come from the Revenue Investment Fund, but that further investment for 2024/25 and beyond would need to be secured through the budget setting process, and that a budget pressure had been raised. A report relating to this would be coming to Cabinet soon. He added that libraries were able to do more to support vulnerable people when a volunteer co-ordinator was involved.

Responding to a question from Councillor Tim Sinclair, Charles Barlow said there was a small budget for communications in relation to cost of living initiatives. The Council worked with colleagues from the District and Borough Councils, as well as the voluntary sector. Information was also shared online. It was accepted there had been some duplications in service across the different councils, although attempts had been made to avoid this in future. Charles Barlow said that there had been some added value for money in doing this however.

Responding to a question from Councillor Pete Gilbert, Charles Barlow said grant applications for businesses had come through several routes. Applications from social enterprises had come through the various voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector grant streams, and applications from other types of business had come through grant streams administered by, among other agencies, the County Council's Economy and Skills Service. He observed that grant applications from businesses had increased over the last 12 months. Councillor Pete Gilbert said a number of businesses were struggling with recruitment, and there appeared to have been an erosion in the relationship between businesses and school leavers. Charles Barlow said it was hoped this could be improved through the conversations taking place as part of the Community Powered Warwickshire initiative.

Members noted the contents of the report and endorsed the continuing approach to addressing cost-of-living pressures.

8. Annual Review of Community Pantries

The item was introduced by Louise Richards (Partnerships Projects Co-Ordinator). She told members the report looked at the first 12 months of operation of the community pantries after they were commissioned by the Feed the Hungry initiative. Three pantries were set up, with a £5 membership fee. Each of them were now operating waiting lists as the demand for their use was so big. Pantry members with more complex issues would be signposted to other agencies who would be able to assist them. Members' attention was drawn to the case study examples included in the report, which demonstrated the positive impact the community pantries had had. Louise Richards said it had been agreed to extend the funding for the programme for a further 12 months. There was then a three-year transitional plan to transfer the pantries into community ownership.

Councillor Sarah Boad said one of the community pantries was in her ward. She said the staff did an amazing job and would go the extra mile for residents. She accepted it cost a lot of money to operate the pantries, but hoped that funding could be found so they could continue. It was noted that a user had been excluded for abusing staff. Councillor Sarah Boad said some users had severe mental health issues.

Responding to a point raised by Councillor Tim Sinclair, Louise Richards said Feed the Hungry typically purchased the bulk of their food from FareShare. However depending on what was delivered that week, staff may have to top up and purchase certain fresh foods from supermarkets. She said Feed the Hungry had service level agreements for similar projects in Leicestershire and Coventry and were looking for similar deals in Warwickshire.

Members suggested the scheme could be extended, perhaps in Rugby and in Bedworth.

Members noted the contents of the report.

9. Work Programme

Members noted the contents of the work programme.

10. Any Urgent Matters

There were no urgent matters arising for discussion.

The meeting rose at 3.45pm

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Chair

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Resources & Fire and Rescue Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023.

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service: Resourcing to Risk

Recommendation

That the Resources and FRS Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the contents of the report.

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Members will be aware that Cabinet on 9 November 2023 supported the Resourcing to Risk model and authorised officers to conduct a consultation exercise on Option 2a. Option 2a aligns resources to activity levels and risk. The model introduces an evening shift and removes shift systems that are not sustainable.

1.2 The current model is not suitable or sustainable into the future because:

- There is the highest fire appliance availability during lowest periods of risk and activity.
- There is the lowest fire appliance availability during highest periods of risk and activity.
- There is no guaranteed fire appliance availability other than wholetime appliances which makes managing fire cover difficult on a day to day, hour by hour basis. This is due to reliance on ‘on call’ availability which fluctuates and is significantly reducing.
- There is no guaranteed resilience for surge events, extreme weather incidents, e.g. flooding or high activity as this currently relies on on-call crews.

Maintaining the status quo is not an option.

1.3 Details of the Resourcing to Risk model, the options considered, including the proposed option 2a are set out in the Cabinet report which is attached at Appendix 1.

1.4 A consultation will be conducted, beginning on Monday 11 December 2023 and ending in March 2024. After this, all responses will be analysed and considered in formulating the final recommendations made to Cabinet in Spring / Summer 2024.

1.5 This report is presented to members to aid understanding of the proposed model and to equip members with the relevant information to respond to queries from their residents, communities, business and partners. It also provides members with an outline of the approach WFRS is taking to the consultation and seeks members' views on how best the WFRS can reach all communities and business in Warwickshire to ensure a robust and comprehensive consultation.

2.0 Resourcing to Risk – Option 2a

2.1 Resourcing to risk is about having the right resources in the right place at the right time linked to activity levels and risk. Not all parts of Warwickshire experience the same level of activity or risk. It is about putting our resources in the place where they will make the biggest difference.

2.2 The model guarantees that 12 fire appliances (fire engines) are available during the times of the day when activity levels are highest (0800- 2200hrs). These fire appliances are positioned across Warwickshire where they can make the biggest impact whilst providing an acceptable level of service across the County.

2.3 The model guarantees that 8 fire appliances are available during the times when activity levels are lowest (2200-0800hrs). These fire appliances are positioned across Warwickshire where they can make the biggest impact whilst providing an acceptable level of service across the County.

2.4 The model introduces 'surge' teams enabling 20 fire appliances to be available across Warwickshire within 2 hours between 0800-2200 and 16 fire appliances to be available within 2 hours between 2200-0800 for any large or protracted incident or event.

2.5 Prevention and Protection activities are delivered between 0800-2200hrs, and the model provides guaranteed availability to deliver these interventions during this time.

2.6 The new model introduces an evening shift, ensuring that fire appliance availability is guaranteed between 0800-2200hrs and positioned in the locations where they make the biggest impact whilst providing a level of service across the County. Firefighters that are currently on "on-call" contracts will have the opportunity to work on the evening shifts and surge teams.

3.0 Approach to Consultation

3.1 There will be a period of meaningful consultation on these proposals. This consultation will take place from December 2023 to March 2024. This gives the opportunity and time for all stakeholders to have their say on these proposals.

3.2 Through this period of consultation, the Council will be seeking the views of our communities, partners (including the District and Borough Councils and the Town and Parish Councils), our people in WFRS and Representative Bodies.

3.3 This consultation will include face to face meetings at community venues across the County, through our website and via our social media channels. The face-to-face meetings will be attended by Warwickshire County Council Cabinet Members and senior officers from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.

3.4 The consultation responses will be analysed, and the findings and a final report provided to Resources and Fire and Rescue OSC prior to being considered by Cabinet.

3.5 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed and formed part of the Cabinet report of 9 November 2023. The Assessment considered the approach to consultation and how those with protected characteristics could be encouraged and enabled to respond to the consultation. The Equality Impact Assessment will be kept under review throughout the consultation process and adaptations made as necessary.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The risk-based resource configuration enables early interventions at fires, restricting the ability of smaller fires to grow into larger fires, and a more rapid-fire suppression, resulting in lower financial loss.

4.2 The high-level financials for each of the options considered are set out in Section 3 of the Cabinet report attached at Appendix 1.

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 There are not considered to be any detrimental environmental implications to resourcing to risk.

5.2 The risk-based resource configuration enables early interventions at fires, restricting the ability of smaller fires to grow into larger fires, and a more rapid-fire suppression, resulting in lower contaminants entering the environment.

5.3 Transitional planning will allow the Service to adopt enhanced technology such as low emission vehicles, and the reduction in emissions from building stock through the adoption of sustainable specifications.

5.4 The delivery model also increases available training time for staff for climate events and adaptation, such as more prolific flooding and wildfires.

6.0 Timescales and next steps

6.1 The public and stakeholder consultation is underway, running from 11 December 2023 to March 2024.

6.2 The responses to the consultation will be the subject of detailed analysis with support from the Council's Business Intelligence Team between March – April 2024 to enable a firm recommendation to be made to Cabinet.

6.3 It is envisaged that the proposed recommendations be brought back to this Committee for overview and comment in Spring 2024 before final recommendations are bought to Cabinet in June/ July 2024 for decision. Full Council will consider any changes to the Community Risk Management Plan as a result of the consultation, and any final proposal.

Background papers

Appendix 1 – Cabinet report and appendices – 9 November 2023

	Name	**Contact Information**
Report Author	Sally Waldron – Assistant Chief Fire Officer	sallywaldron@warwickshire.gov.uk
Chief Fire Officer	Ben Brook – Chief Fire Officer	benbrook@warwickshire.gov.uk
Executive Director	Mark Ryder – Executive Director for Communities	markryder@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Andy Crump – Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety	Andycrump@Warwickshire.gov.uk

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

Local Member(s): N/a - this is a county wide matter
Other members:

Cabinet

9 November 2023

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Resourcing to Risk Proposals

Recommendations

That Cabinet

1. Supports the adoption of the resourcing to risk model for Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service as set out in this report.

2. Supports proceeding to staff, stakeholder and public consultation on Delivery Model 2a and authorises the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety to take such steps as are necessary to undertake the consultation, and to report back to Cabinet in due course.

1. Key Issues

1.1 Through its Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) process, risk analysis and subsequent independent validation process, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) has demonstrated that the locations of our fire stations are appropriate to match risk areas.

1.2 However, the analysis identified four key issues that WFRS needs to address to ensure that the delivery of statutory duties is carried out in an effective and sustainable way:

- Fire Appliance base locations need to be optimised to align to risk and activity
- Performance targets for attendance times to incidents are not being met
- On-call fire appliance availability is reducing and raises challenges around sustainability
- Some of our shift systems are not nationally accepted shift systems and have been subject to legal challenge nationally. Others are not sustainable into the future.

1.3 **Current resource configuration**

1.4 Although WFRS moves resources (staffing and fire engines with water carrying and pumping capability known as ‘appliances’) around the county based on risk, our current resource configuration does not allow us to optimise the deployment of resources to align effectively to risk and demand led activity levels.

1.5 Our availability is highest during the night when activity levels are at their lowest and lowest during the day when activity levels are at their highest. See Appendix 1, daily activity levels, and Appendix 2, service availability levels.

1.5 The current working pattern results in the following challenges which are not cost efficient in terms of the overall operation of the WFRS, nor do they effectively address the 'resourcing to risk' principle that is the cornerstone of service delivery and the Community Risk Management Plan (Appendix 4).

- Highest fire appliance availability during lowest periods of risk and demand
- Lowest fire appliance availability during highest periods of risk and demand
- No guaranteed fire appliance availability other than wholetime appliances which makes managing fire cover difficult on a day to day, hour by hour basis. This is due to reliance on 'on call' availability which fluctuates and is reducing. This impacts attendance times.
- No guaranteed resilience for surge events, extreme weather incidents e.g. flooding or high demand as it relies on on-call.

1.6 Attendance times

1.7 The current attendance time performance standard is based on responding to P1 and P2 life risk incidents within 10 minutes on 75% of occasions.

1.8 P1 are incidents which pose an immediate threat to human life. Examples are persons reported building fires and road traffic collisions.

1.9 P2 are incidents which pose a serious hazard and high-risk threat to life. Examples are building fires or explosions.

1.10 WFRS response attendance targets to P1 and P2 are not being achieved and cannot be achieved with the current resource configuration. Our current target to P1s and P2s is 1st pump attendance time of 10 mins 75% of the time. WFRS' current performance is 65% of the time.

1.11 On-call fire appliance availability

1.12 On call fire appliances are crewed by firefighters living or working within 5 minutes of the fire station, who respond to incidents when alerted. Firefighting is their secondary employment. We have 12 on-call fire appliances based at on-call fire stations across the county.

1.13 On-call availability continues to decline even after significant interventions. Service wide average availability of on-call appliances (12) over a 24 hour period is 34% which negatively impacts on response times and community safety. To summarise, on call appliances, on average, are only available 1/3 of the time. The time that they are available is highest at night when activity levels have reduced. Appendix 3 sets out on call availability trends.

1.14 The delivery models set out in this report all present a 'resourcing to risk' approach which aim to address the key issues identified at paragraph 1.2. They will change base locations of appliances and enable WFRS to dynamically and effectively move appliances around the county based on evidence, risk and incidents occurring and be better placed to protect our communities.

1.15 Implementing these changes requires a more flexible and available workforce. The models outline modernisation of the on-call duty system with more wholetime firefighters working day, night and evening shifts as well as in surge teams. Evening shifts and surge teams will be part time contracts.

2. Working Pattern Proposal

2.1 In order to address the key issues identified at paragraph 1.2, independent analysis of WFRS' Risk Analysis produced four delivery model options, all aimed at aligning risk, demand, and productivity levels with effective deployment of resources.

2.2 Each delivery model option requires a change to current working patternswhich are no longer sustainable to address the key issues and challenges faced by WFRS.

2.3 The highest level of demand and risk across prevention, protection and response activity is between 0800 and 2200. This time period is too long for one continuous shift. To ensure we cover the highest demand with the correct number of appliances and people, the following 'working 24-hour model' is proposed:

- Day shift (0800 – 1800)
- Night shift (1800 – 0800)
- Evening shift (1800 - 2200) – part time positions.
- Surge teams available for recall in the event of significant incidents or periods of high demand.

2.6 The delivery model options considered are set out at Section 3 of this report. The recommended delivery model option is **Option 2a**. The reasons for this recommendation are set out below with further detail set out at Appendix 5.

2.7 All options would deliver a working pattern which gives:

- Highest guaranteed fire appliance availability throughout periods of high risk and activities (0800-2200)
- Lowest guaranteed fire appliance availability throughout periods of lower risk and activities (2200-0800)
- Surge teams available for recall during surge events, spate conditions and high demand

2.8 All options introduce a new concept of surge teams. There are times (historic data indicates 4 times every 5 years) when WFRS experiences a very large incident involving up to 20 fire appliances. The surge teams will provide an ability to recall firefighters within specified time periods, to make available additional fire appliances to meet this surge in activity, for example flooding, wildfires or periods of high demand.

2.9 The proposed new working pattern in all options modernises the current on-call model by introducing evening shifts and surge teams. There will be opportunities for on-call firefighters to be recruited onto these shift patterns:

- Evening shifts (based on stations between 1800 and 2200)
- Surge teams (recalled to duty in periods of spate conditions, surge events or high demand).

2.10 Resourcing in this way provides the following improvements and benefits:

- Enhanced productivity through higher resource availability in periods of highest activity and lower resource availability in times of lowest activity.
- Improved 1st appliance response times across Warwickshire.
- Significantly increased resilience through surge teams.
- Transition from an on-call model that is not sustainable to a part time firefighter model providing equity of pay, conditions and competence.
- Guaranteed appliance availability dictated by the agreed resourcing model.

3. Delivery Model Options

3.1 The delivery model options considered are set out below. Maps for each option can be found in Appendix 6, attendance times for each model can be found in Appendix 7. More detailed financial information can be found in Section 4.

3.2 For each option there is an ‘a’ option. The ‘a’ option would involve the removal of some current shift systems as these are problematic to the service for the following reasons:

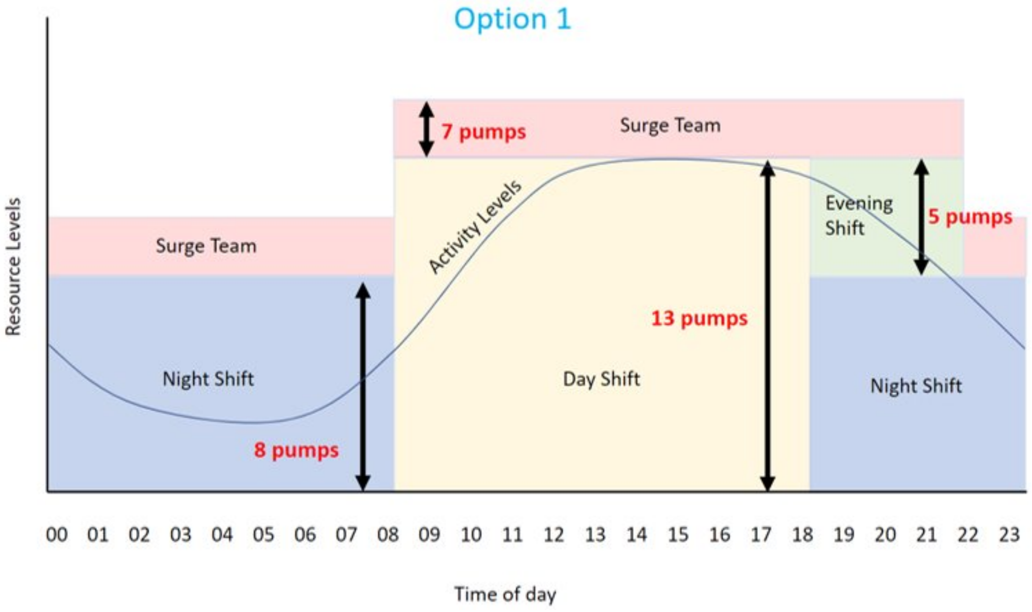
- There is an ongoing risk with non-Grey Book compliant shift systems.
- The service struggles to effectively crew some of our shift systems.
- Due to number of different crewing systems, there have historically been challenges around transfers, promotions, standbys and terms and conditions.
- Not all shift systems align to the activity levels.
- Due to pension changes, some shift systems are less attractive and difficult to attract to.

3.3 All options considered increase the time it takes for the second appliance to arrive on scene, but these increases are small. The geography of Warwickshire results in a balance needing to be found in achieving first and second appliance response times. The only way to improve second appliance response times is through slower first appliance arrival times in many locations or a significant increase in fire appliances which is not sustainable.

3.4 **Delivery Model 1.**

Delivery model 1 as shown below ensures that:

- 13 pumps (fire appliances) are available between 0800 and 2200hrs.
- 8 pumps (fire appliances) are available between 2200 and 0800hrs.
- 7 additional pumps (fire appliances) are available for surge events at any time.



No. of day pumps	*No. of night pumps*	*No. of evening pumps*	*Number of surge team pumps*	*Cost*
13	*8*	*5*	*7*	*£13,323,000*

Current 1st appliance Attendance Time	**Option 1st appliance Attendance Time**
10 min 37 secs	9 min 47 secs
Current 2nd appliance Attendance Time	**Option 2nd appliance Attendance Time**
14 min 16 secs	15 min 31 secs

3.5 **Delivery Model 1a.**

This option is identical to option 1 except that it removes the Day Crew Plus (DCP) shift system from WFRS which increases the overall cost of the model.

No. of day pumps	*No. of night pumps*	*No. of evening pumps*	*Number of surge team pumps*	*Cost*
13	*8*	*5*	*7*	*£13,628,000*

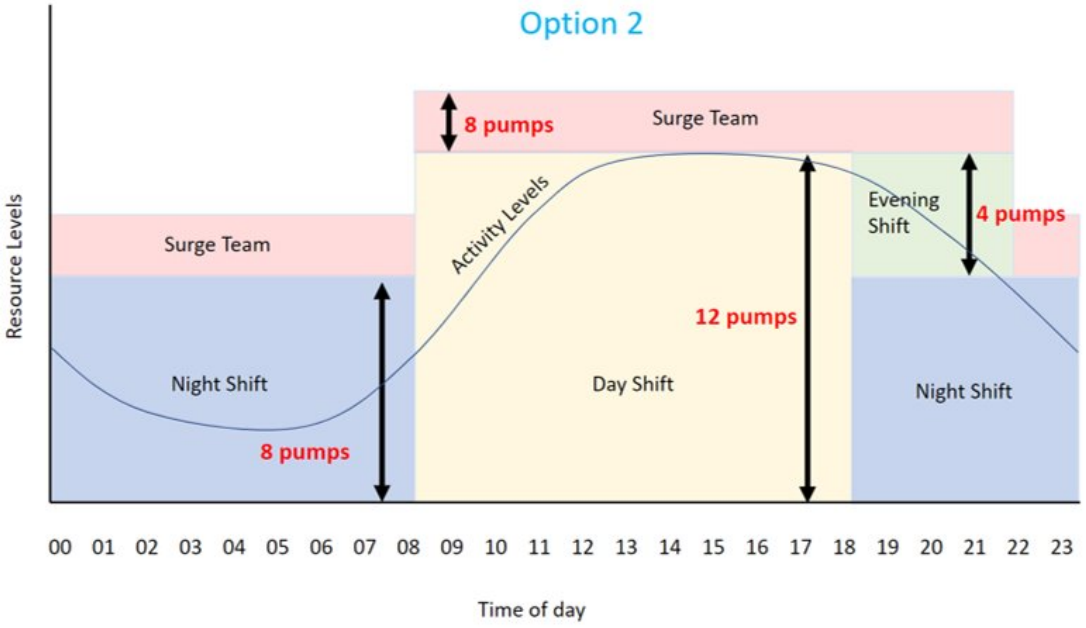
Current 1st appliance Attendance Time	**Option 1st appliance Attendance Time**
10 min 37 secs	9 min 47 secs
Current 2nd appliance Attendance Time	**Option 2nd appliance Attendance Time**
14 min 16 secs	15 min 31 secs

3.6 **Delivery Model 2.**

This model spreads focus to 2nd appliance attendance times.

Delivery model 2 as shown below ensures that:

- 12 pumps (fire appliances) are available between 0800 and 2200hrs.
- 8 pumps (fire appliances) are available between 2200 and 0800hrs.
- 7 additional pumps (fire appliances) are available for surge events at any time.



No. of day pumps	*No. of night pumps*	*No. of evening pumps*	*Number of surge*	*Cost*

			team pumps	
12	*8*	*4*	*8*	*£12,587,000*

Current 1st appliance Attendance Time	**Option 1st appliance Attendance Time**
10 min 37 secs	10 min 20 secs
Current 2nd appliance Attendance Time	**Option 2nd appliance Attendance Time**
14 min 16 secs	14 min 28 secs

3.7 Delivery Model 2a

No. of day pumps	*No. of night pumps*	*No. of evening pumps*	*Number of surge team pumps*	*Cost*
12	*8*	*4*	*8*	*£12,892,000*

Current 1st appliance Attendance Time	**Option 1st appliance Attendance Time**
10 min 37 secs	10 min 20 secs
Current 2nd appliance Attendance Time	**Option 2nd appliance Attendance Time**
14 min 16 secs	14 min 28 secs

3.8 This option is identical to option 2 but removes DCP shift system from Warwickshire which then increases the cost of the model.

3.9 It is proposed as part of these changes that WFRS adopts a 'mean' average target in relation to response intervention times. This is in line with the approach taken by the Office of National Statistics and other Fire and Rescue Services

3.10 It is proposed that WFRS adopts the proposed intervention standards for Prevention, Protection and Response as shown below:

Risk Category	Prevention		Protection		Response	
	Targeted	Specialist	Reactive	Proactive	Targeted	Specialist
Service Wide	N/A		N/A		10 mins 30 seconds	N/A
Very High	24 hrs		4 hrs	24 months	10 mins and 30 seconds	45 mins
High	48 hrs		4 hrs	3 years	11 mins	45 mins
Medium	3 days		1 week	3+ years	11 mins	60 mins
Low	2 weeks	when escalated	1 week +	universal	11 mins	60 mins
Very Low	universal	universal	universal	universal	11 mins 30 seconds	60 mins

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The high-level financials for each option are shown in the table below. Costings shown represent operational posts up to and including Watch Manager that are required for each option.

	Current Model (Actual)	Option 1	Option 1a (DCP removed	Option 2	Option 2a (DCP removed
Number of Evening Appliances	0	5	5	4	4
On-Call	12	0	0	0	0
Number of Whole Time Appliances - Day	11	13	13	12	12
Number of Whole Time Appliances - Night	9	8	8	8	8
Surge Team members	0	112	112	128	128
Surge Fleet	0	7	7	8	8
Cost £	12,906,000	13,323,000	13,628,000	12,587,000	12,892,000
Cost £ +Increase/-decrease	0	+417,000	+722,000*	-320,000	-14,000*

N.B Replacing DCP shift systems with 2-2-4 shift systems is more expensive and is reflected in the costings calculated.

4.2 There are some transition costs associated with each model such as additional welfare facilities on 2 stations, and fixed term transfer allowances. The potential of redundancy payments exists for some on-call firefighters, although this will be avoided if at all possible.

4.3 The only route available for this is the revenue and capital investment funds and putting a clear business case forward. There is a clear case for the changes, but as yet the transition costs to make this happen haven't been made visible, and this process would do that.

5. View of the Chief Fire Officer

5.1 The CFO recognises that we are in a position where retaining the status quo is not an option. To do so would not address the key issues set out in paragraph 1.2 of this report. In the CFO’s view, all options offer a significant improvement on the current operating model due to improved response times, resource availability during times of peak activity, resilience and sustainability. Notwithstanding this, the CFO recognises the performance variations between each option and the financial constraints in which WFRS, like the rest of the Council, is operating.

5.2 The CFO would support either Option 1a or Option 2a. Both present significant improvements on current performance and both involve the removal of the Day Crew Plus shift system which at a national level has been the subject of legal challenge and increasingly FRS across the country are moving away from. In addition, for both options resource availability would be aligned to activity levels and risk levels across Warwickshire which is a key consideration and benefit.

5.3 The key difference between the two models relates to attendance times. Both options have improved first appliance attendance times. Option 1a provides the greatest improvement for first appliance service wide at 50 seconds compared to the current model. 2nd attendance times for Option 1a are slower by 1 min 15 seconds compared to the current model. Option 2a provides an improved 1st appliance attendance service wide of 17 seconds compared to the current model and a quicker 2nd appliance attendance time out of the two models only increasing attendance by 12 seconds service wide compared to the current model.

5.4 On balance therefore, and with the support of Corporate Board, the CFO supports proceeding to public consultation on Option 2a. This option provides a safe and sustainable model for WRFS and is the optimal model, taking into account the operational and service delivery benefits and the financial considerations as set out in this report.

6. Environmental Implications

6.1 There are no detrimental environmental implications to resourcing to risk.

6.2 The risk-based resource configuration enables early interventions at fires, restricting the ability of smaller fires to grow into larger fires, and a more rapid-fire suppression, resulting in lower contaminants entering the environment.

6.3 Transitional planning will allow the Service to adopt enhanced technology such as low emission vehicles, and the reduction in emissions from building stock through the adoption of sustainable specifications.

6.4 The delivery model also increases available training time for staff for climate events and adaptation, such as more prolific flooding and wildfires.

7. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

7.1 Subject to Cabinet’s decision, the proposed option would require a public consultation process which would run from December 2023 to March 2024 and include staff, partner and representative body consultation.

7.2 The outcome of the public, staff, partner and representative body consultation would be reported back to Cabinet who would be asked to confirm the resulting delivery model for implementation. It is expected that the outcome of the consultation will require amendments to the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The modified CRMP would be presented to full Council for approval at the appropriate time.

7.3 An EQIA is in development and will be concluded prior to the start of the consultation and will be made available as required.

Background papers

Appendix 1: WFRS Daily Activity Levels
Appendix 2: Service Availability Levels
Appendix 3: On Call Availability Trend
Appendix 4: Current working pattern
Appendix 5: Proposed Working pattern
Appendix 6: Option Maps for each proposal
Appendix 7: Appliance Attendance Times

	Name	**Contact Information**
Report Author	Sally Waldron – Assistant Chief Fire Officer add title	Sallywaldron@warwickshire.gov.uk
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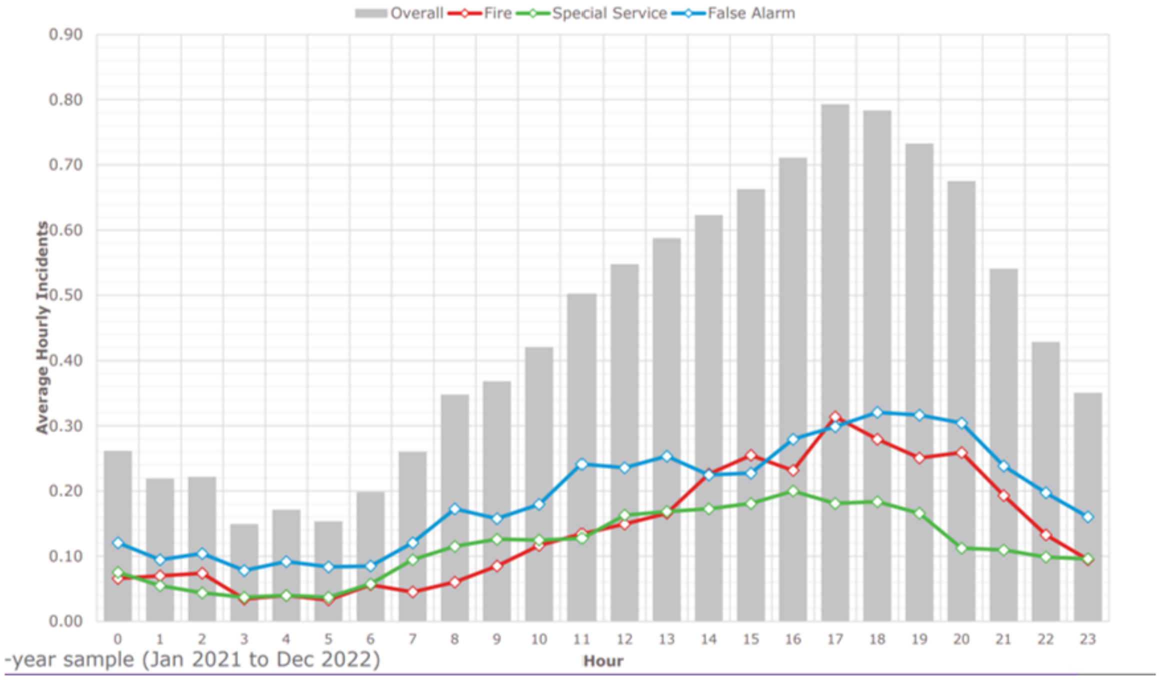
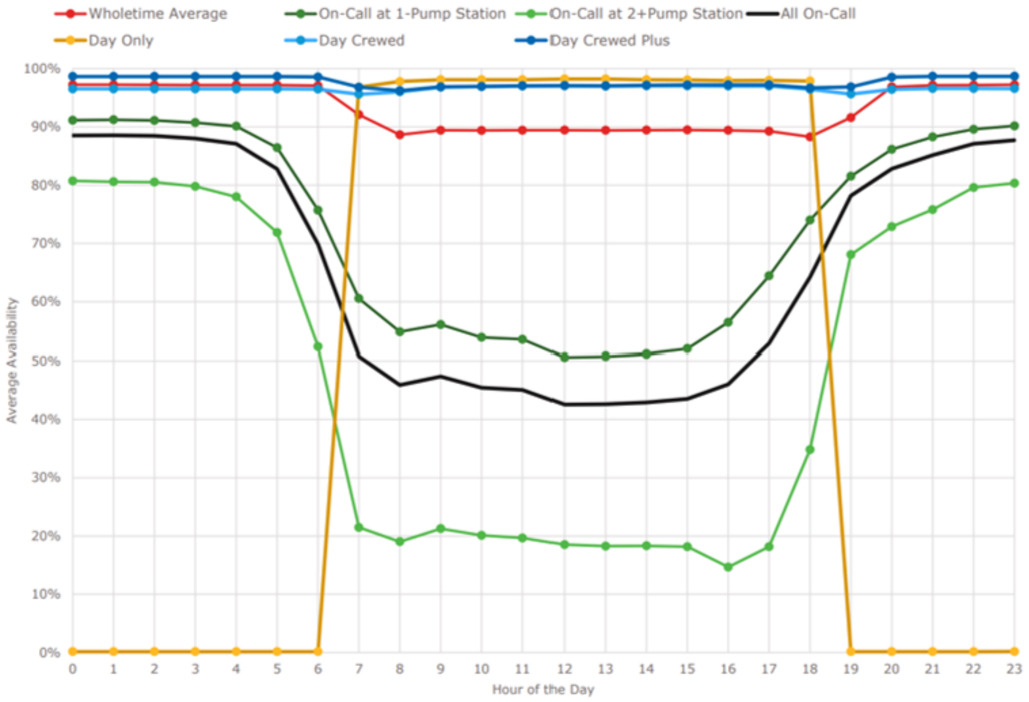
The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/a - county wide matter
Other members: Chair and Party Spokes of the Resources and FRS Overview and Scrutiny Committee

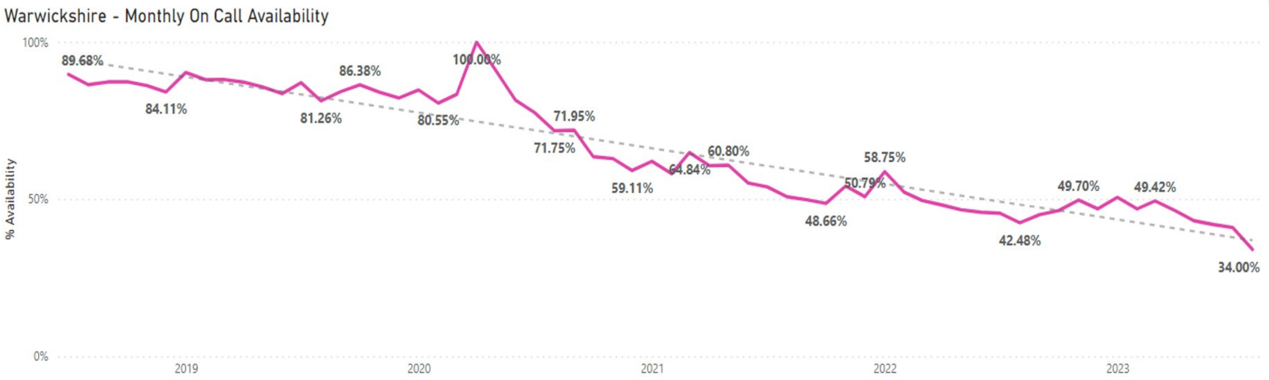
Appendix 1: WFRS Daily Activity Levels



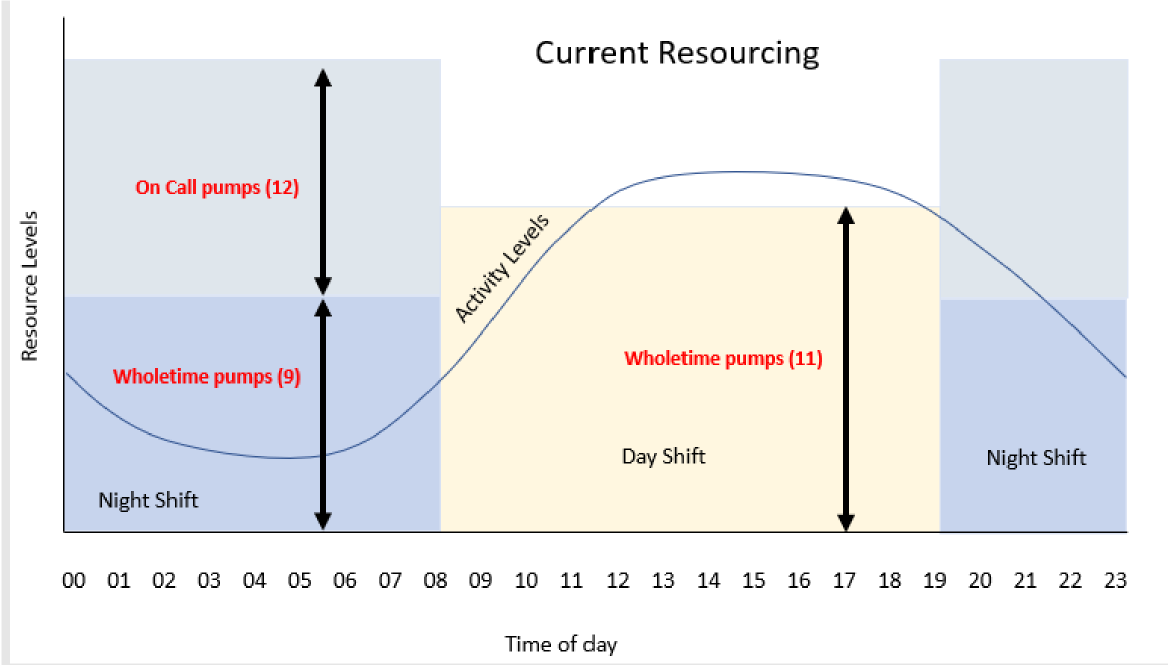
Appendix 2: Service Availability Levels (all Shifts)



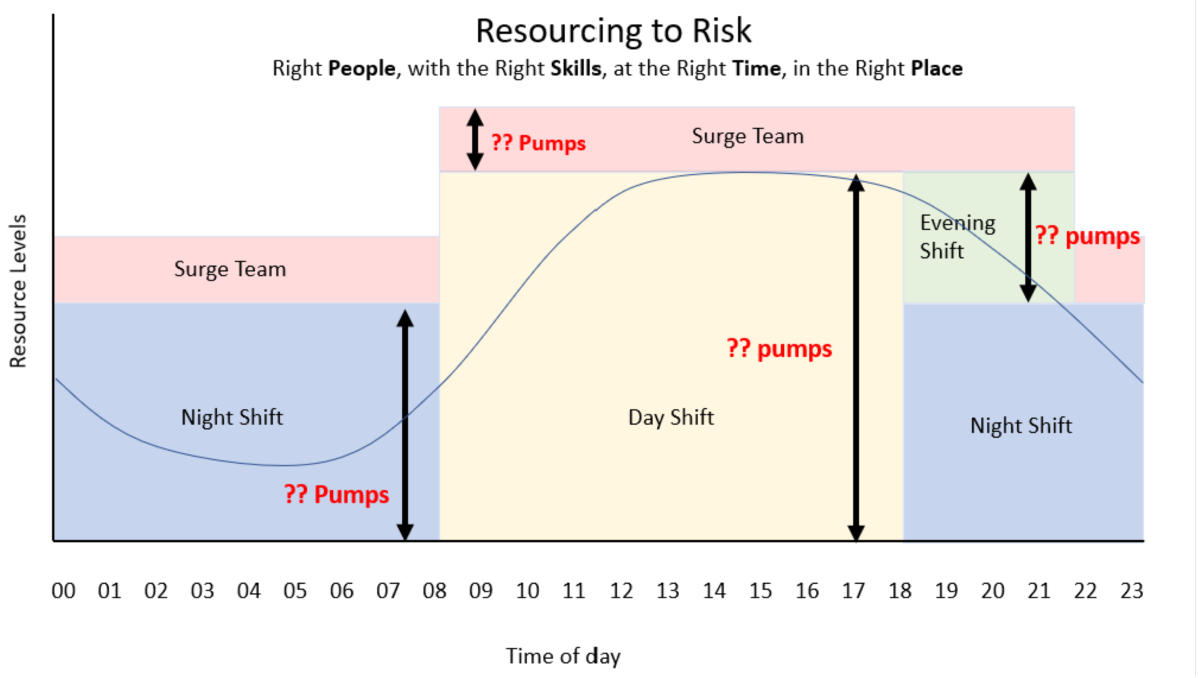
Appendix 3: On Call Availability Trend



Appendix 4: Current Working Patter Model.


Current Resourcing
Resource Levels
On Call pumps (12)
Wholetime pumps (9)
Activity Levels
Wholetime pumps (11)
Night Shift
Day Shift
Night Shift
00
01
02
03
04
05
06
07
08
09
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
Time of day

Appendix 5: Proposed working pattern model.

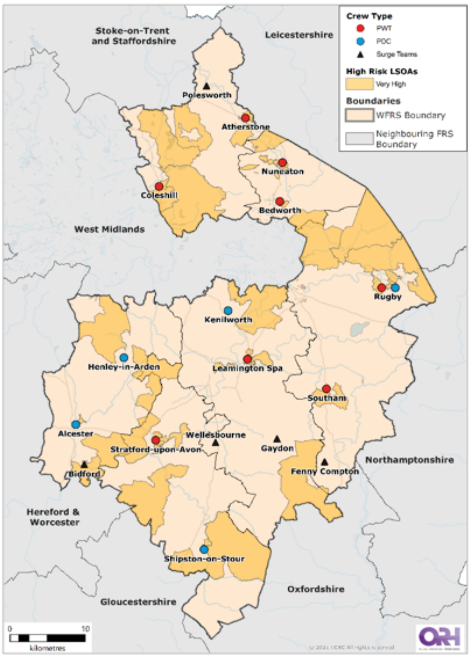


Appendix 6: Delivery Models: Option Mapping

Key:

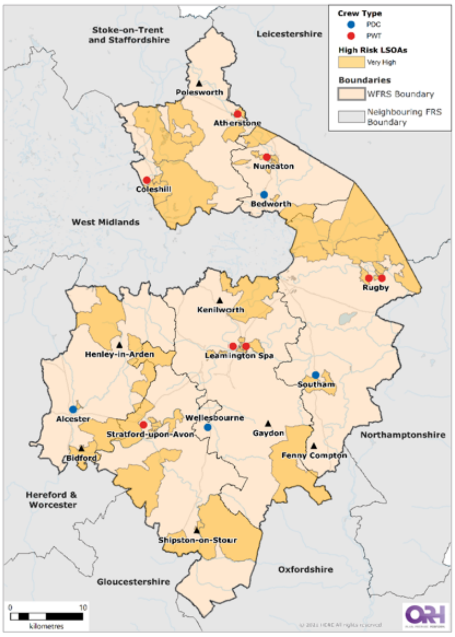
Red – 24/7 appliance
Blue – Appliance available between 0800 and 2200hrs
Black triangle – appliance available 24/7 but with between 30 minutes and 2 hour delayed turnout (surge team)

Option 1 and 1a:


Crew Type
PWT
PDC
Surge Teams
High Risk LSOAs
Very High
Boundaries
WFRS Boundary
Neighbouring FRS Boundary
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire
Leicestershire
Polesworth
Atherstone
Nuneaton
Coleshill
Bedworth
West Midlands
Rugby
Kenilworth
Henley-in-Arden
Leamington Spa
Southam
Alcester
Wellesbourne
Gaydon
Stratford-upon-Avon
Bidford
Fenny Compton
Northamptonshire
Hereford & Worcester
Shipston-on-Stour
Oxfordshire
Gloucestershire
0
10
kilometres
ORH

No. of day appliances	No. of night appliances	No of evening appliances	No of surge appliances
13	8	5	7

Option 2 and 2a:


Crew Type
PDC
PWT
High Risk LSOAs
Very High
Boundaries
WFRS Boundary
Neighbouring FRS Boundary
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire
Leicestershire
Polesworth
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Nuneaton
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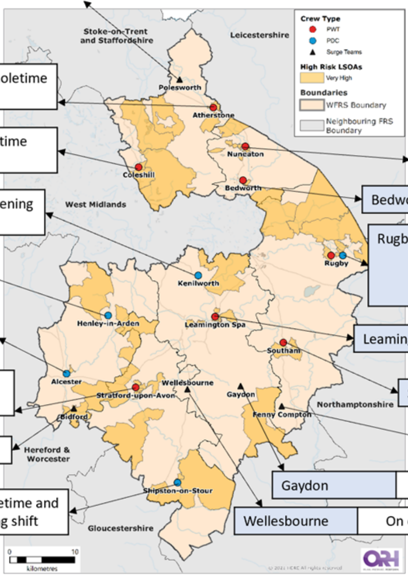
Bedworth
West Midlands
Rugby
Kenilworth
Henley-in-Arden
Leamington Spa
Southam
Alcester
Wellesbourne
Stratford-upon-Avon
Gaydon
Northamptonshire
Bidford
Fenny Compton
Hereford & Worcester
Shipston-on-Stour
Oxfordshire
Gloucestershire
0
10
kilometres
ORH

No. of day appliances	No. of night appliances	No of evening appliances	No of surge appliances
12	8	4	8

Options 1 & 1a


Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire
Leicestershire
Crew Type
PWT
PDC
Surge Teams
High Risk LSOAs
Very High
Boundaries
WFRS Boundary
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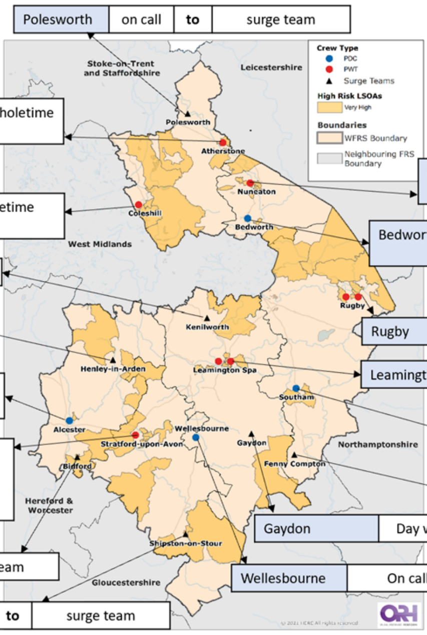
Leamington Spa
Southam
Alcester
Wellesbourne
Stratford-upon-Avon
Gaydon
Bidford
Fenny Compton
Northamptonshire
Hereford & Worcester
Shipston-on-Stour
Gloucestershire
0
10
kilometres

Polesworth	on call	to	surge team
Atherstone	Day wholetime and Night on call	to	24/7 wholetime
Coleshill	Day wholetime and Night on call	to	1 x 24/7 wholetime
Kenilworth	on call	to	Day wholetime and Evening shift
Henley	on call	to	Day wholetime and Evening shift
Alcester	24/7 wholetime	to	Day wholetime and Evening shift
Stratford	24/7 wholetime and Night on call	to	24/7 wholetime
Bidford	on call	to	surge team
Shipston	on call	to	Day wholetime and Evening shift
Nuneaton	2 x 24/7 wholetime	to	1 x 24/7 wholetime
Bedworth	on call	to	1 x 24/7 wholetime
Rugby	2 x 24/7 wholetime	to	1 x 24/7 wholetime and Day wholetime and Evening shift
Leamington	2 x 24/7 wholetime	to	1 x 24/7 wholetime
Southam	on call	to	1 x 24/7 wholetime
Fenny	on call	to	surge team
Gaydon	Day wholetime	to	surge team
Wellesbourne	On call	to	Surge team

Options 2 & 2a


Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire
Leicestershire
Crew Type
PDC
PWT
Surge Teams
High Risk LSOAs
Very High
Boundaries
WFRS Boundary
Neighbouring FRS Boundary
Polesworth
Atherstone
Nuneaton
Coleshill
Bedworth
West Midlands
Rugby
Kenilworth
Henley-in-Arden
Leamington Spa
Southam
Alcester
Wellesbourne
Stratford-upon-Avon
Gaydon
Bidford
Fenny Compton
Northamptonshire
Hereford & Worcester
Shipston-on-Stour
Gloucestershire

Polesworth	on call	to	surge team
Atherstone	Day wholetime and Night on call	to	24/7 wholetime
Coleshill	Day wholetime and Night on call	to	1 x 24/7 wholetime
Kenilworth	on call	to	surge team
Henley	on call	to	surge team
Alcester	24/7 wholetime	to	Day wholetime and Evening shift
Stratford	24/7 wholetime and Night on call	to	24/7 wholetime
Bidford	on call	to	surge team
Shipston	on call	to	surge team
Nuneaton	2 x 24/7 wholetime	to	1 x 24/7 wholetime
Bedworth	on call	to	Day wholetime and Evening shift
Rugby	2 x 24/7 wholetime	to	2 x 24/7 wholetime
Leamington	2 x 24/7 wholetime	to	2 x 24/7 wholetime
Southam	on call	to	Day wholetime and Evening shift
Fenny	on call	to	surge team
Gaydon	Day wholetime	to	surge team
Wellesbourne	On call	to	Day wholetime and Evening shift

Appendix 7: Appliance Attendance Times

First Appliance Attendance Times – P1 and P2 Incidents			
Area (LSOAs)	**Current**	**Option 1**	**Option 2**
Service Wide	10.37	9.47	10.20
Very high risk areas	10.03	9.33	10.03
High risk areas	11.19	9.59	10.54
Medium risk areas	10.18	9.40	9.53
Low risk areas	10.49	9.40	10.10
Very low risk areas	10.47	10.42	11.06

Second Appliance Attendance Times – P1 and P2 Incidents			
Area	**Current**	**Option 1**	**Option 2**
Service Wide	14.16	15.31	14.28
Very high risk areas	13.05	15.21	14.03
High risk areas	15.57	16.16	15.51
Medium risk areas	14.05	14.58	13.34
Low risk areas	14.06	15.41	14.30
Very low risk areas	13.18	14.51	13.46

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Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023

Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Sector Commissioned Services Progress Report

Recommendation

That the Committee notes and comments on the progress of the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Sector Commissioned Services.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 On 8 July 2021, Cabinet approved proceeding with the procurement of the following services, authorising the Executive Director for Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate, and Culture to enter into contracts for the following services:

- Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) Support Service (annual value £331,600);
- Advice Service (annual value £530,550); and
- Equalities Service (annual value £135,375).

1.2 The services were planned to all start from 1 April 2022, replacing broadly similar services that had been in place since April 2016, and to run for an initial period of 3 years, with the option for the Council to extend them for periods of up to a further 24 months.

1.3 The procurement involved extensive stakeholder engagement and coproduction where this was possible to inform the scope and content of the services to be commissioned. Data and evidence from a wide range of sources was reviewed and incorporated into the thinking around the services.

1.4 The procurement involved two rounds of market testing. The first round of testing was restricted because of the onset of the Pandemic. The second round provided an opportunity for commissioners to assess the impact of the Pandemic on service delivery models, and to consider other factors including:

- better applying principles of social value;
- embracing digital delivery to a greater degree;

- how services can play their part in tackling and responding to climate change and challenges around biodiversity; and
- how services can apply the principles of Community Power, asset-based ways of working, and Levelling Up.

1.5 The final service specifications and the related key performance indicators represented a significant shift towards outcomes-based services.

1.6 The services were tendered between October and December 2021 and subsequently two of the contracts were awarded to start on 1 April 2022 and the third, for the Equalities Service, was awarded to start on 1 October 2022.

1.7 At the end of their first year of operation, all the services are performing well against the outcomes in the service specifications.

1.8 Through the Analysis below, and through the Appendices, a fuller and more detailed description of the procurement process, and an overview of the first-year performances of the three services, is presented to Committee.

1.9 Please note that the appendices have been drafted to ensure compliance with data protection requirements and anonymisation of service users.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

2.2 The total value of the services over the initial 3 years is £2,992,575. If the full 24 months’ extension is applied to each service, then the value will be £4,987,625.

3. Environmental Implications

3.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

3.2 As part of the tendering process bidders were required to demonstrate their commitment to mitigating against and adapting to the impacts of climate change, and to increasing biodiversity.

4. Supporting Information

Principles and expectations embedded into the new service specifications.

4.1 The principle of moving towards outcomes-based services was embedded in the specifications to provide the following key benefits:

- at the tendering stage, to enable and empower bidders to be innovative and creative in their thinking around how the services could be delivered; and
- after the award of service contracts, and for the duration of contracts, to provide suppliers with the flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing landscapes and circumstances for communities and residents.

4.2 In practice, the further shift to outcomes-based services saw the removal of substantial amounts of extraneous detail from service specifications (and related key performance indicators) when compared to the similar services that had gone before, and a much greater focus on tangible benefits to communities and residents.

4.3 There was a further shift towards the principles of community power, reflecting the strategic priorities of the Council Plan 2022-27, and asset-based ways of working, asking bidders and latterly suppliers to involve communities in decision making, work alongside communities to take practical action, utilising local assets, and to enable communities to take the lead where this is appropriate and practicable.

4.4 There was an expectation that suppliers are part of a shared solution around supporting the VCSE sector, and communities and residents, and a further expectation that suppliers play a key role in emerging partnerships, especially around health and social care and the Integrated Care System.

4.5 In line with the introduction of the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up in July 2022, there was an expectation underpinning the contracts that suppliers would play their role in supporting the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up and addressing deprivation and inequality within the priority areas and groups referenced in the approach which was in development at the time of contracts being awarded.

Tendering and award process.

4.6 The three services went to open tender between October and December 2021. The VCSE Sector Support Service was tendered in four “lots” opening-up the potential for multiple suppliers to deliver the different lots, and the Equalities Service was tendered in three lots with the same potential for multiple suppliers.

4.7 As a result of the stakeholder engagement and market testing undertaken, the decision was made not to tender the Advice Service in lots. The main reason for this was the crossover of activity between the outcomes of the service and a conclusion that a single service provider would provide the most effective delivery model. However, bidders were invited to tender as consortia or partnerships.

4.8 The VCSE Sector Support Service contract was awarded immediately post-tender, to start on 1 April 2022, to Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action working in partnership with Coventry and Warwickshire Grapevine to deliver the social action lot/outcome, and Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency to deliver the social enterprise lot/outcome.

4.9 The Advice Service contract was awarded immediately post-tender, to start on 1 April 2022, to Bedworth, Rugby, and Nuneaton Citizens Advice Bureau working in partnership with North Warwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau and Citizens Advice South Warwickshire.

4.10 The Equalities Service contract took longer to award and started on 1 October 2022, supplied by the Equality and Inclusion Partnership.

Monitoring and reporting.

4.11 Quarterly monitoring reports are submitted by each of the three suppliers.

4.12 Quarterly meetings take place for each of the three services, attended by the supplier, Director, Head of Service, and Contract Manager, and other internal stakeholders relevant to the service. The meetings combine performance monitoring, especially around key performance indicators, and an opportunity to explore trends and patterns around service delivery and the broader context of the service. An example of the benefit of this approach has been in respect of the Advice Service and increased cost-of-living pressures over the last 12 months: insight and intelligence from Citizens Advice, gained through these quarterly meetings, has been invaluable in shaping the Council’s cost of living response.

4.13 Annual reports are submitted every twelve months by each of the three suppliers, and an annual review meeting takes place to discuss reports and to agree any priorities for the coming twelve months.

Impact of services

Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Sector Support Service, supplied by Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action working in partnership with Coventry and Warwickshire Grapevine, and Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency

Lot 1, Volunteering Infrastructure (Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action)

4.14 Key metrics for the first year of the service were:

- 1,235 new volunteers engaged with, and 958 of these placed with voluntary and community organisations across the County;
- 933 voluntary and community organisations supported with volunteer recruitment; and
- equivalent economic value of these placed volunteers, based on organisations otherwise having to pay for staff time, £3,036,232 over the twelve-month period.

4.15 A key aim of this lot is to create a positive volunteering environment in Warwickshire, where volunteering is open to all, volunteers can make a difference to their community, enjoy their volunteering experience, and volunteering is celebrated. This has been achieved over the first year of the service by:

- connecting organisations and volunteers via promotion and brokerage of volunteering opportunities;
- promoting volunteering opportunities to individuals;
- Corporate Social Responsibility and Employer Supported Volunteering;
- providing good practice and support to VCSE sector organisations around volunteer brokerage and management;
- organising volunteer events, forums, and training; and
- arranging volunteering awards and events.

4.16 Challenges reported around creating a positive volunteering environment have included:

- recruitment for trustee roles;
- increased demand on volunteer capacity, including from statutory services;
- the complex needs of some people being referred to volunteer in combination with limited support available within VCSE sector organisations to place them appropriately;
- a change in volunteer profile post COVID, including a reduced number of older volunteers; and
- the recruitment and retention of volunteers, and the reduced capacity of organisations to support volunteers.

Lot 2, Social Action (Coventry and Warwickshire Grapevine)

4.17 Work around this lot, the outcome of which is difficult to measure numerically, has focused on the Camp Hill area of Nuneaton over the first year of the service, reflecting its designation as a Levelling-Up priority area, with three primary areas of activity:

- community events;
- establishing a resident led action group; and
- establishing a youth voices group.

4.18 Together these three activities create an interconnected “ecosystem”, supporting each other and growing. The impact and success of this activity is that all 3 activities are now linked to the Camp Hill Community Group, developing the community leadership potential of everyone involved.

Lot 3, Social Enterprise Development (Coventry and Warwickshire Cooperative Development Agency)

4.19 40 new and 82 existing social enterprise organisations across Warwickshire were supported over the first year of the service via 1:1 advice and group support sessions.

4.20 Across the year, several challenges have been identified around social enterprise support:

- the legacy of COVID, meaning many social enterprises have had to use reserves to survive, resulting in cash flow issues;
- barriers to procurement and securing contracts, including payment in arrears resulting in cash flow issues;
- lack of understanding of changes to funding sources, and less funding available overall;
- inflation resulting in increased employment costs; and
- increased premises costs.

4.21 Across the year, several opportunities have been identified:

- increased overall awareness of the social enterprise sector;
- anchor institutions wanting to work with the sector;
- funding picture becoming clearer and access to finance becoming easier;
- increased willingness to share knowledge within the sector (peer to peer schemes are developing); and
- greater support from Local Authorities.

Lot 4, Collaboration, Partnerships and Development (Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action)

4.22 Key metrics for the first year of the service were:

- £1,769,573 additional funding awarded to voluntary and community organisations because of the support provided; and
- 1,090 voluntary and community organisations supported and upskilled through funding and development advice.

4.23 Over the first year of the service, collaboration and partnership working both within the VCSE sector and between the VCSE sector and the public and private sectors, has been achieved by:

- delivery of safeguarding awareness sessions for children and adults;
- creation of a comprehensive resource library, for use by VCSE sector organisations;
- organisation of a range of funder events;
- supplier participation in a range of boards and partnerships to act as an effective conduit for the VCSE;

- provision of 1:1 advice and support on Charity Commission requirements, funding, and business planning;
- facilitated meet the funder events and bespoke advice; and
- support for the VCSE sector with emerging issues and trends.

4.24 Some of the challenges that have presented over the year included:

- reduced volunteer hours;
- increased demand for services and more complex needs;
- increased operating and premises costs;
- difficulty recruiting and retaining staff;
- reduced reserves;
- access to funding for core costs; and.
- increase in governance issues for organisations, including difficulty recruiting trustees/directors.

4.25 Opportunities over the year included:

- emerging health and wellbeing agendas; and
- engagement in Local Authority and other partner priorities including Levelling Up funding and the distribution of UK Shared Prosperity Funding.

Advice Service, supplied by Bedworth, Rugby, and Nuneaton Citizens Advice Bureau working in partnership with North Warwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau, and Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

Outcome 1, Residents have access to advice and support around personal debt, financial difficulty, employment, and housing.

4.26 Key metrics for the first year of the service were:

- 2,724 residents were supported across 16,195 debt issues;
- 2,113 residents were supported across 5,824 issues relating to financial services and capability;
- 1,086 residents were supported across 2,559 issues relating to employment; and
- 2,114 residents were supported across 5,327 issues relating to housing.

Outcome 2, Residents have access to (“Tier 1”) advice and support around immigration matters.

4.27 Key metrics for the first year of the service were:

- 264 residents were supported across 616 issues relating to immigration and asylum.

Outcome 3, Residents’ money management skills and confidence is increased.

4.28 Key metrics for the first year of the service were:

- 97% of residents helped reported that they understood their rights or options more because of the service;
- 93% of residents helped reported that they were healthier or less stressed because of the service; and
- 95% of residents helped reported that they felt more confident to sort out their problems in the future.

Outcome 4 Residents' take-up of financial and welfare support services is increased.

4.29 Key metrics for the first year of the service were:

- £3,768,000 debts written off on behalf of residents;
- 2,016 charitable grants/payments and provision of food and goods with a total gain of £447,000 for residents; and
- 185 residents averted homelessness.

Outcome 5, Residents' understanding of their rights relating to social security benefit entitlement is increased, in turn allowing increased levels of self-help among residents.

and

Outcome 6, The social security benefit entitlement rights of residents, especially vulnerable residents, are effectively championed.

4.30 The two lots considered together, key metrics for the first year of the service were:

- £11,832,000 in benefit increase for residents, relating to new awards, reinstatements, or decisions challenged;
- 325 appeal cases handled; and
- 135 tribunal hearings handled.

Outcome 7, Cross sector partnerships work together to tackle poverty, financial exclusion, and social security benefit take-up.

4.31 Key metrics for the first year of the service were:

- 55% of residents helped had experienced a disability or long-term health condition;
- 1,102 residents helped were living in the top 20% most deprived areas of England (top 20% Indices of Multiple Deprivation Lower Super Output Areas). 10,906 residents helped were living in the top 30% most deprived areas; and

- 6,938 issues originated from residents living in the top 20% most deprived areas of England. 23,946 issues originated from residents living in the top 30% most deprived areas.

4.32 The first year of the service saw significant increased demand in comparison to the previous year (the last year of a similar service operated by the supplier). Key drivers were, unsurprisingly, the current economic climate and cost-of-living pressures.

4.33 The service helped 15,660 residents, compared to 13,613 residents the previous year, with 75,103 issues, which were often interconnected, complex, and required a holistic approach.

4.34 Cost-of-living pressures continue to cause hardship for many of the residents helped by the service, who are often the most disadvantaged in society. On the basis that most income for these residents is spent on food and housing costs, the significant fall in “real” disposable incomes causes residents to become more reliant on credit cards, overdrafts, and borrowing, and potentially also unaffordable loans and illegal lenders.

4.35 The service was delivered at 21 locations across the county, including offices in each borough and district, and outreach locations such as community centres, libraries, and job centres, targeting areas of higher deprivation and inequality.

4.36 In the face of mounting pressures on the service, steps were taken to help stretch capacity and resources, including the introduction of a single countywide phone line which connects residents to their local office, and the introduction of an out of hours phone line on Monday evenings. The countywide phone line is funded separately to the main service, via the cost-of-living funding agreed by Cabinet in October 2022 originating from the Revenue Investment Fund. The countywide phone line will boost call capacity from circa 3,500 calls per year to circa 13,000 per year.

4.37 The service continued to strengthen its volunteer base, which is critical to delivery. 144 volunteers gave 45,180 hours in a variety of roles, including advisors, caseworkers, receptionists, administrators, and trustees for the supplier’s governing bodies, alongside 87 paid staff.

4.38 The service was aligned to other, separately funded activity including:

- energy-related projects;
- a welfare advice scheme;
- a Building Better Opportunities programme for unemployed people;
- Making Every Contact Count training;
- outreach projects within local food banks, Children and Family Centres and community pantries; and
- an accredited specialist debt advice service, which supported 3,000 people with more than 16,000 debt issues during 2022/2023.

Equalities Service, supplied by the Equality and Inclusion Partnership

Lot 1, Discrimination and hate crime support.

4.39 Key metrics for the service were:

- 32 new discrimination cases handled;
- 10 new hate crime cases handled; and
- 28 new hate crime reports.

4.40 The above metrics reflect intensive case work, providing emotional and practical support for the residents involved. The hate crime element provides an alternative method for residents who face barriers in reporting incidents to the Police to receive appropriate support. The difference between the number of hate crime cases handled and reported reflects ongoing sensitivities around the willingness of residents (victims) to take advantage of the support available.

Lot 2, Provision of equalities training and guidance.

4.41 92 community organisations were the beneficiaries of training, with 100% rating this as “good”, “very good” or “excellent”. 98% of organisations reporting behavioural changes because of the training.

4.42 The supplier organised a series of one-hour online awareness raising sessions on areas of interest to Warwickshire’s Equality Network with the focus on equality, diversity, equity, and inclusion. The network provides an opportunity for partners to share expertise and raise any newly identified equality issues and trends, with the aim of strengthening partnership working.

Lot 3, Engagement and cohesion

4.43 Over its first year the service played a vital role in providing advice and information and delivering projects and initiatives in relation to equalities, working in partnership with services across the County Council as well as several external partners.

4.44 In partnership with the County Council’s Community Safety team, the supplier co-hosted the Warwickshire Safer Partnership’s Big Conversation event in June which was informed by earlier We Stand Together events organised by the supplier. The countywide events brought together community members, the Police, Victim Support, and other stakeholders to understand the criminal justice process and use real-life experiences to raise awareness of hate crime, and to understand both the strengths of communities and challenges faced by communities in addressing hate crime.

4.45 Over the year the supplier played a significant role in improving access to support and services aimed at addressing cost-of-living pressures within disadvantaged groups. Additionally, the supplier continued to influence the Council's response to cost-of-living pressures by advocating for the need for provision of resources in different formats to ensure that under-represented communities are better informed and empowered to seek support.

4.46 Working closely with the Communities and Partnerships Service, the supplier collaborated with the Trussell Trust and Public Health Warwickshire in organising the Kind Communities, Kind Food event in March 2023. This event, which aligned to the Warwickshire Food Strategy 2023-2026, focused on improving affordability and sustainability of healthier, culturally appropriate food supplies. The event was well received and repeated in September and October 2023.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps.

5.1 The services run to 31 March 2025. The Council has the option to extend the services for periods of up to a further 24 months up to 31 March 2027.

5.2 Further progress reports will be presented to Committee.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 VCSE Sector Support Service, Annual Report April 2022 to March 2023.
2. Appendix 2 Advice Service, Annual Report April 2022 to March 2023.
3. Appendix 3 Equalities Service, Annual Report October 2022 to September 2023.

Background Papers

None

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

Local Member(s): Not applicable

Other members:

Infrastructure Contract Update

April 2022 - March 2023

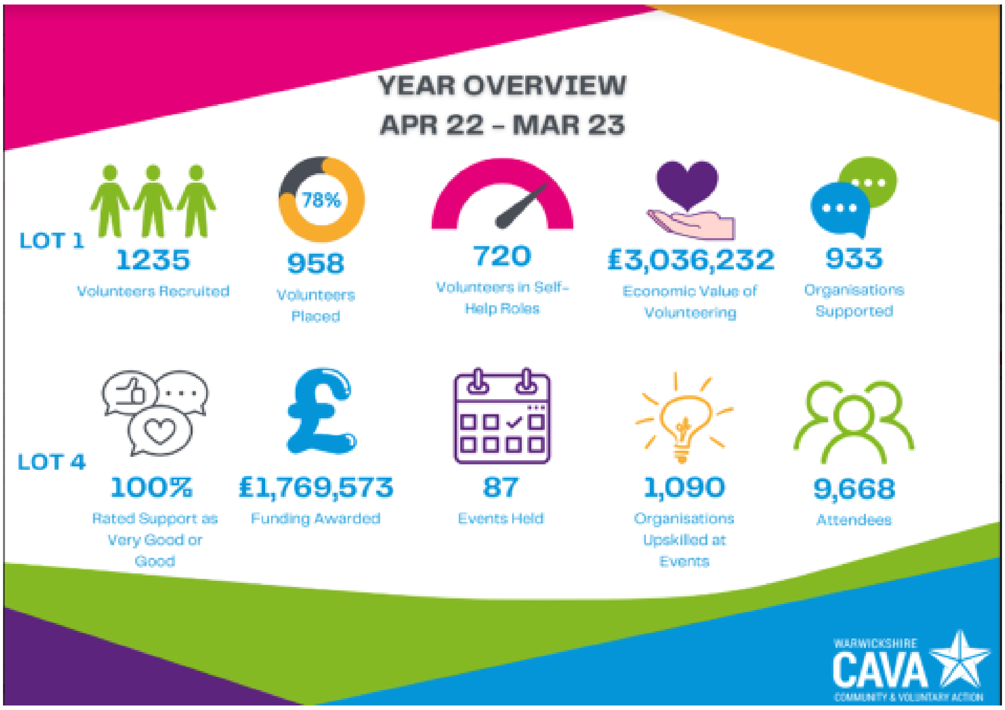
Context

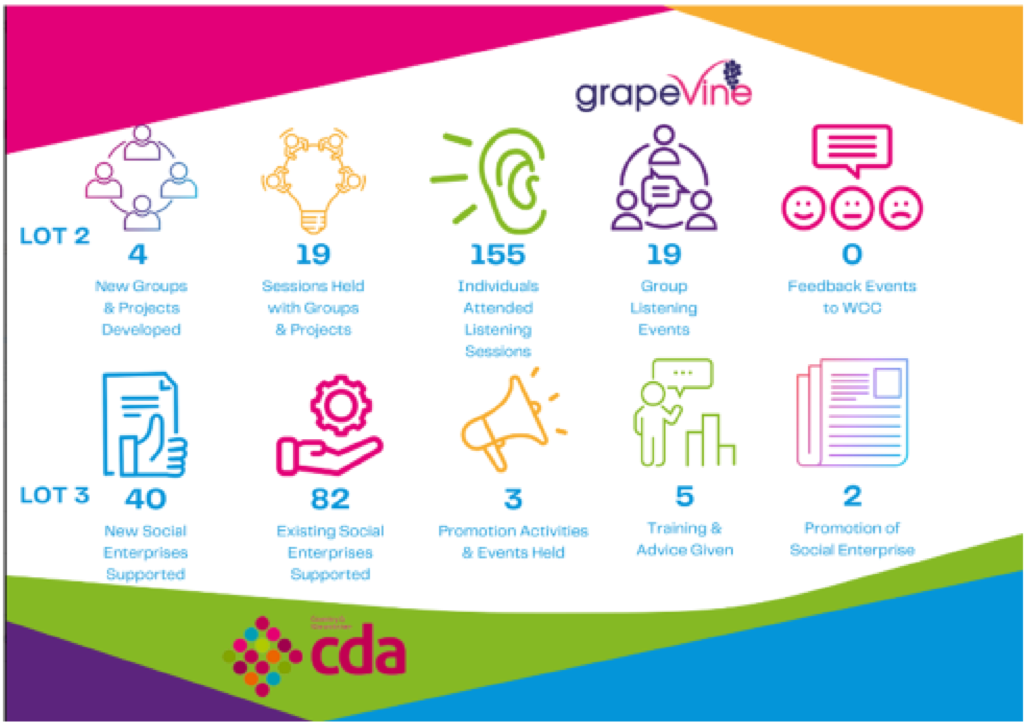
Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) is commissioned by Warwickshire County Council to deliver four lots: volunteering, social action, social enterprise; and collaboration and partnerships. WCAVA works in partnership with Coventry and Warwickshire Grapevine (Grapevine) and Coventry and Warwickshire Cooperative Development Agency (CWCDA) to deliver the programme.

The lots for volunteering and collaboration and partnerships are delivered by WCAVA, with the social action lot delivered by Grapevine, and the social enterprise lot delivered by CWCDA.

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators





Annual overview

Volunteering:

WCAVA aims to create a positive volunteering environment in Warwickshire, where volunteering is open to all, volunteers can make a difference to their community, enjoy their volunteering experience, and volunteering is celebrated.

We have volunteering coordinators based across Warwickshire providing support in person and virtually.

Our volunteering role:

- connecting organisations and volunteers via promotion and brokerage of volunteering opportunities;
- promotion of volunteering opportunities to individuals;
- corporate social responsibility and employer supported volunteering support to businesses;
- good practice support and guidance to voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations around volunteer brokerage and management;
- volunteering events, forums, and training; and
- volunteering awards and celebration events including the Big Help Out in June as part of the Coronation.

Challenges for volunteering:

- recruitment for trustee roles;
- increased demand on volunteer capacity from statutory services;

- complex needs of people being referred to volunteer and support to place them appropriately;
- change in volunteer profile post-Covid;
- recruitment and retention of volunteers; and
- capacity of organisations to support volunteers.

Social action

The Social Action Warwickshire project delivered by Grapevine aims to nurture community-led action in Warwickshire (specifically Camp Hill), helping local people voice their problems and aspirations and then leading action to tackle these problems.

Grapevine is working to a strategy that develops individuals from the area to become community leaders, drawing on their knowledge, skills, community connections, and using Grapevine's community organising techniques and training to make long term and sustainable community lead changes in the area.

Convening those who emerged as leaders/potential leaders from listening and mapping to connect and plan:

- setting up actions and activities;
- mobilising others to get involved as leaders and participants; and
- creating new ways of communicating with service providers and others whose work impacts on the area.

There are currently three areas of focus, and together they create an interconnected ecosystem, supporting each other and growing. These are community events, a resident led action group, and a youth voices group.

All three groups are linked to the Camp Hill Community Group, which Grapevine is also supporting in its development and developing the leadership potential of the people within the group.

All three groups will have a continued focus on recruitment and development of more people. Everybody will be encouraged to move around the areas of work and develop their skills.

Issues identified in Camp Hill:

- anti-social behaviour;
- lack of opportunity for social connection, places to meet or activities;
- lack of aspiration, a feeling that the area has been forgotten and that nothing is likely to change so why bother;
- a disconnect between the old and new communities;
- residents' capacity to commit time to making change; and
- residents' confidence to be part of making change.

Grapevine invites young people to all the meetings it plans. Often, they just join in because they see the door is open and are interested to find out what is going on inside. This develops trust and engages the young people with the Community Association. For example, four teenagers came to a recent events' planning group meeting. They joined in when it suited them, spending time on their phones and chatting to each other, challenging us with tricky questions and behaviours to see how we would respond. As the meeting evolved, they added to conversations, bringing friends in at one stage to help make their point. They transitioned from challenging us to confiding in us and sharing their insights and aspirations.

Social Enterprise

CWCDA are supporting social enterprises to build stronger and more sustainable businesses and communities. CWCDA have supported forty new and eighty-two existing social enterprise organisations across Warwickshire via 1-1 advice and group support sessions.

Across the reporting year CWCDA have identified a number of challenges and opportunities for the social enterprise sector as follows.

Challenges:

- coronavirus has meant that many organisations have had to use reserves to survive, resulting in many groups having cashflow issues;
- barriers to procurement and securing contracts e.g., payment in arrears – cashflow;
- lack of understanding of changes in funding sources and less funding available;
- access to finance;
- inflation (increased wages) – problems recruiting; and
- increased costs - affordable premises.

Opportunities:

- Increase in awareness of the social enterprise sector;
- anchor institutions wanting to work with the social enterprise sector;
- funding picture beginning to be clearer - access to finance;
- increased willingness to share knowledge in the sector (peer-to-peer schemes are developing); and
- support from local Councils e.g., Warwickshire County Council

Collaboration and Partnerships

WCAVA has a team of officers working across the localities of Warwickshire, providing 1-1 support, groups' advice, webinars, and training sessions to the VCSE sector.

Across the year WCAVA has undertaken:

- delivery of safeguarding awareness training sessions for children and adults;
- creation of a comprehensive resource library for VCSE sector organisations;
- arranged a series of meet the funder events;
- participation in a range of boards, partnerships, and meetings to act as an effective conduit for the VCSE sector;
- advice and support on Charity Commission requirements, fundraising, and business planning;
- facilitated meet the funder events and provided bespoke advice to ensure groups are up to date on available funds; and
- continued to support the VCSE sector with emerging issues and trends.

Issues presented by the VCSE sector across the year:

- reduced volunteer hours;
- increased demand for services and more complex need being presented;
- increased costs – operations, premises and running costs;
- lack of affordable premises;
- difficulty recruiting and retaining staff;
- uncertainty re future government funding and contracts;
- difficulties reaching potential private sector sponsors;
- reduced reserves;
- access to funding for core costs;
- more demand for available funding; and
- increase in governance issues for organisations

Opportunities for the VCSE sector:

- emerging health and wellbeing agendas;
- engagement in Council and other partner priorities including levelling up and the UK shared prosperity funds;
- continued responsiveness to emerging issues and priorities; and
- opportunity for alignment with other VCSE sector providers increasing capacity and reducing duplication.

Case Studies

Rugby Borough

The challenge

Initially, in October 2022, the Volunteering Coordinator in Rugby became aware of the ‘Feed my Sheep’ fund, highlighted at a networking event, by Christ Church in Brownsover. They explained that the fund would be used to set up a warm hub initiative known as the “Brownsover Family Winter Project” (BFWP) with its aim to provide a hot meal, warm space, a well-lit space for children to complete homework etc during 4.30pm – 6pm every evening including weekends from October to the end of March 2023. The purpose of this project was to offer support to residents living in an area identified as more deprived, especially as they would be more affected by the 'cost of living' crisis this winter.

Meeting the challenge

The Volunteering Coordinator contacted Peter Bone, the Vicar of Christ Church to ask if they needed any support to recruit volunteers. She then met with his wife Lynne Bone, who was coordinating the project and discussed in detail what was needed in terms of number of volunteers and the Volunteering Coordinator provided role templates, safeguarding policies, volunteer agreement examples, support with using the cava portal and contacted potential volunteers directly to promote the project. Lynne worked in partnership with Brownsover Community Association, Boughton Leigh Infants and Junior School and Christ Church to promote the project and recruit volunteers. The Volunteering Coordinator contacted the local Job Centre and spoke to Stephen Salter who manages the Job Coaches and explained that certain roles would involve food preparation and therefore require a L2 Food Hygiene Certificate. The BFWP agreed to provide the training to gain this certificate, which would help to provide a 'step into employment' for some of his clients interested in catering careers. WCAVA's social media and newsletters were also used to promote the project. The Volunteering Coordinator also volunteered at a shift to gain a greater insight into the project and used this to continue to promote the project in social media as well as contacting the local newspaper to gain support.

North Warwickshire Borough - Inclusive Volunteering and Partnerships

Working with people who are far away from employment for many and varied reasons. Volunteering would help them move forward in many ways both personally and professionally. North Warwickshire Borough is an area of high employment and many of the users of the Job Centre are people with additional needs. The Volunteering Coordinator for North Warwickshire delivers a pop-up session at the Job Centre on the first Tuesday of the month and this partnership with the Job Centre staff has led to referrals at the pop-up sessions and throughout the month.

Meeting the Challenge

Two men were referred to meet the Volunteering Coordinator. One young man, “M,” age 24 came with his dad, he has Aspergers and said he wanted to get out of the house and do something useful. Another man “A,” in his fifties, in recent years had lost his job and his wife had died. He had experienced depression and severe anxiety. He also needed to get out of the house and meet with people as he had become very isolated. Following meetings with both men we talked about the sort of thing they would like to do and what they could gain from being volunteers. In addition to working in partnership with the Job Centre we work in partnership with Atherstone Town Community Football Club (ATCFC) and have recruited a number of volunteers for them. I spoke to Gary Fox who is one of the leads in volunteer recruitment and specialises in supporting and including volunteers with additional needs. Gary arranged to meet both men separately and arrange for them to visit the club.

Outcomes and Impact

Both men have now started volunteering at ATCFC and this is going well.

Social enterprise support - DWRM Consultants CIC

DWRM believes that education is central to prisoner rehabilitation. One of its aims is to increase the number of students accessing higher education in prison to 25% of the prison population.

CWCDA Support included:

- business planning;
- social impact measurement;
- set-up – legal structure;
- financial planning;
- access to finance;
- accessing commercial contracts; and
- policies and procedures.

DWRM
Undergraduate
Prospectus 2021-22
University courses for learners in prison

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-ND

Warwick District - Cost of Living Network Event (19 October 2022)

WCAVA in Warwick District, in partnership with Warwick District Council, planned and delivered a Cost of Living Network and Information event in October. The event had been organised to understand cost of living challenges and pressures on VCSE sector organisations, and to explore solutions and opportunities to respond, particularly through greater partnership working, to tackle key fundamental issues around the crisis.

The event took place at St Peter's Roman Catholic Church Hall, Leamington and was attended by 37 people from 26 different VCSE organisations.

There was a Market Stall Exchange at the event so organisations could share information and leaflets. Stall holders included Healthwatch Warwickshire, Helping Hands, Warwickshire Libraries, Brunswick Hub, Christians Against Poverty and Age UK Coventry and Warwickshire.

There was also a presentation from Transforming Communities Together on Warwick's 'Warm Rooms' initiative - where 10 frontline organisations within the CV34 postcode area are working together to deliver Warm Rooms. Mapping is being done to identify gaps, with a view to filling those gaps, and they are engaging local community groups and businesses in the scheme. There are hopes that there will also be a coordinated 'Warm Rooms' approach in Kenilworth,Leamington and Whitnash.

There were two breakout sessions as part of the event, where organisations worked with facilitators to share their challenges and concerns around the cost of living crisis, both for their own organisations' perspectives and the communities and individuals they help.

Main concerns were capacity of the sector to respond to the cost of living crisis, lack of volunteers and volunteer time, increased running costs, staff burnout and the impact on their own wellbeing, food provision/food banks running low on food, digital poverty, working poor (times/dates of services not suitable to those who work), the sustainability of initiatives (particularly those reliant on funding) and not overloading services.

Some of the opportunities identified were peer networks, encouraging long-term lifestyle changes in communities and in people's behaviour, mobile provision to where it is needed most and approaching local businesses and improving relationships with the business sector, for instance around transport schemes.

Working together to find solutions, those groups present identified partnership funding and joint bids, using libraries as central hubs, funding for core rather than project costs, having a library loan service for household equipment e.g. slow cookers, spreading best practice and having a 'one stop shop' approach rather than multiple referrals.

The event ended with a summary session with a view to relaunching the Warwick District Poverty Forum as the Warwick District Community Alliance, withmeetings and events themed according to current priorities. There will also be ongoing communications and updates on cost of living issues, including Warwick District Council's Cost of Living Action Plan and further networking and events will be explored for the New Year

Stratford-on-Avon District - Rosebird Community Association

The Community

Rosebird Community Hall was built in the early 2010s as part of an out-of-town shopping development to the south of Stratford-upon-Avon. A wide variety of groups make use of the hall and is run day to day by an enthusiastic group of local residents.

The Challenge

By 2022 the 10-year 106 agreement which enabled the facility to be built and offered rent free was coming to an end. This meant not only an increase in rent but also a requirement for the lease to be taken on by the resident’s group to safeguard the future of the hall.

Meeting the Challenge

WCAVA met the Chair of the residents’ group in March 2022 and discussed the challenges faced by the group. A key issue was that the group was not incorporated and therefore committee members were personally liable for contracts and debts.

As a result of this WCAVA worked with a representative of the residents to guide the set up of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which was registered by the Charity Commission in December 2022. This enabled the group to become incorporated and no longer personally liable.

Subsequently, WCAVA ran an online induction workshop for the trustees on the role and requirements of being a charity trustee. As their Chair has stated:

> “Thank you so much WCAVA for informative and relaxed session helping us to set up as a charity. I came into it thinking 'I don't even know what I don't know', now I have a to-do list and signposting to support for each activity. A big step forward, your help is much appreciated.”

Since then, WCAVA has also linked the trustees to a facility group in Stratford-upon-Avon which was restarting after COVID and shared information and best practice. This led to an offer from Foundation House run by the Town Trust to meet and see what help they could also provide.

The outcome

- the Rosebird Community Hall future is now more secure;
- the group is now incorporated with the reduction in personal liability that brings;
- trustees are aware of trustee roles and responsibilities; and
- Rosebird Community Association is now linked to the Stratford upon Avon Facility Group.

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Warwickshire Citizens Advice

Working together in partnership

citizens advice

Impact Report 2022 - 2023

We are Citizens Advice in Warwickshire

Working together in partnership

Contents

Foreword	3
Meet our CEOs	5
Our impact in numbers	6
Our impact continued	7-8
Our value	9
Our reach	10
CoL	11
Our services	12
Frontline services	13
Key stats summary	14
Issues and trends	15
Top issues	16
Social value	17
Volunteers	18
Cummulative client satisfaction surveys	19
Case Studies 1 – 5	20-24
Debt	25
Specialist Benefit Services	26
Case Study 6	27
Client satisfaction surveys - WSBS	28
Contact us	29

Foreword

Last year I prefaced our annual review with the words ‘This has been an eventful decade’. This comment was referenced to COVID-19 and the subsequent invasion of Ukraine. The ‘story’ of 2022/23 has been one of dealing with fallout from these, which resulted in the cost of living issues for significant sections of society. This report demonstrates that, through working in partnership, we have sought to manage increasing demand and continue to deliver quality services to the communities of Warwickshire at a time of great need. This is despite tension between our resources and capacity and the ability to meet this rising demand.

This has been the first year of delivering the new WCC contract. We are grateful to the County Council for their continued support, and this, along with Borough/District funding, has ensured that we are responsive to the needs of local communities in a manner that would not be possible if we were funded solely by national contracts. This local funding ensures the stability of our core services which are volunteer-led. This stability and delivery model, coupled with a reputation for ‘getting things done’, enables us to lever in additional funding for the benefit of Warwickshire. Key examples over the year would be the Orbit Project (delivered by BRANCAB and CASW) and Energy Projects (delivered by NWCA). Collaboration has been a key theme over the year, and the 3 CA’s are working collectively now in a way that has not been as evident before. We are now working on joint projects, have shared posts, and work together to improve quality and consistency.

Collaboration has also been with external agencies, and we now have regular meetings with WCAVA and EQUIP to mirror the emphasis given by WCC to a community-based approach. The greatest encapsulation of this is the Telephony Project. From three different services, we now have a single countywide telephony service that will increase the number of people who can be helped, particularly those who cannot physically attend our sites. At the same time, it will also help us priortise our front-door face-to-face services for those with complex issues or vulnerabilities. This project which commenced in April 2023, is already making a difference. Its foundations for success have rested upon a number of factors: firstly, local authorities recognised that action had to be taken to address the challenges posed to communities by the cost of living; secondly, a willingness to translate this into action through financial support; and thirdly, a constructive and collaborative approach was employed by officers from WCC (and specific thanks go to Charles Barlow-Localities and Partnerships), who acknowledged that a hybrid model of paid staff and volunteers would be required to deliver the project and that the amounts requested were underwritten by a longstanding relationship of trust, honesty and delivery by CA’s within Warwickshire. I look forward to reporting on its successes in the future 2023/2024 review.

The above success and the credibility associated with our organisations are all due to our people (both paid and volunteers) who have yet again risen to the challenge and demonstrated strength and commitment to delivering a quality service, often at times of great personal challenge. This review is a testament to their work, particularly our volunteers (who comprise two-thirds of our workforce). They are critical to our organisations and will continue to be at the heart of our service offer and delivery model.

Thus far, I have deliberately avoided the word ‘crisis’ when referring to the past year. The definition of a crisis is ‘a time of intense difficulty or danger.’ Whilst this was indeed a difficult period, it is important to remember that challenges relating to the cost of living are not new, and many individuals and communities have been affected by such issues over a sustained and inter-generational period of time. The problems we face now are unlikely to recede until at least 2025/26 and, in some ways, will worsen (e.g. mortgage interest rates) in the short term. Whilst some of the solutions to these issues exist at a national level, at a local level, it will require greater collaboration, more resources and greater capacity. Above all, the real test of our commitment and resolve will be when the current challenges subside and the extent to which we are willing and able to address the needs of the ‘least, the last and the lost’ for whom inequalities and financial exclusion have been the norm for many years.

Bill Basra CEO BRANCAB

Warwickshire Citizens Advice Services

Free, confidential advice.
Whoever you are.

We are here for everyone

We are responsible and committed to understanding the difference we make to the people and communities we help across Warwickshire.

Each year, we help thousands of clients find a way forward. We do this by providing advice, education, support, and influencing policies affecting our clients.

Everything we do - and the way we work - benefits individuals and society.

Meet our CEOs

BRANCAB: Bedworth, Rugby and Nuneaton Citizens Advice

CEO

Bill Basra

North Warwickshire Citizens Advice

CEO

Lorraine Verrall

Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

CEO

Julie Robinson

citizens advice

Our impact in numbers

We are here to help find a way forward

Warwickshire Citizens Advice key statistics for 2022/23

75,103
Advice issues dealt with directly. We supported people holistically, often with many different and complex issues

21
Locations across Warwickshire and surrounding areas, with 6 main offices and 15 outreach locations

144
Volunteers, who contributed **45,180+** hours of their time, plus **87** paid staff

545,474
Warwickshire website visitors seeking advice from Citizens Advice. In England there were **42m+** visits to our website

People helped

2021-2022	2022-2023
13,613	15,660

Income generated

2021-2022	2022-2023
£13,429,119	£19,745,385

Our impact in numbers

7,864 clients received help to claim benefits, tax credits and or Universal Credit

£11,831,924 in benefit increase, new awards, reinstatements, and or decisions challenged. **£4,572** average gain per client

£168,981 mainly obtained by helping clients to get better deals. Also through fuel vouchers and reduced costs from energy efficiency behavioural change

2016 Charitable grants/payments and provision of food and goods were obtained, with a total financial gain of **£447,504** and an average gain of **£456** per client

£3,768,520 debts written off. Bankruptcy debts of **£494,174** Debt write off - other **£146,438** DRO (debt relief order) debts of **£3,090,055** and **£37,854** of IVA

184 clients averted homelessness and were helped to remain in their homes. Mainly, tenancies were sustained, suspended possession orders obtained and access to accommodation secured

Total financial gain for clients; **£19,745,385** (including income gains **£11,424,336** Re-imbursements, services **£708,872**, Debts written off **£3,768,520** Repayments rescheduled **£160,003** and other income gain **£3,683,653**

Our impact in numbers

Local government & services

The advice and support we give individuals have a wider impact on society. For instance, improving well-being, preventing evictions or homelessness, saving time, money and resources for public services, helping to reduce administrative costs for our funders and other organisations, such as local housing providers and NHS services.

In 2022 - 2023 we helped save:

£2.8+m

Savings produced for the **DWP**

£1.8+m

Savings produced for **local housing providers**

£679+k

Savings produced for our **local authorities**

£951+k

Savings produced for the **NHS**

Local authority - by preventing homelessness and housing evictions & mental health services	
Savings to local authorities (fiscal benefits)	£609,592
Savings to local authorities (Council tax Arrears repayment scheduled)	£70,322
Total savings to local authorities	**£679,914**
NHS - by reducing use of mental health and GP services, and keeping people in work	
Reducing use of health services	£770,515
Keeping people in work	£181,018
Total saving to NHS	**£951,533**
Other government departments	
Department of Work and Pensions (by keeping people in work)	**£2,835,944**
Criminal Justice System (by preventing housing evictions and homelessness)	**£75,455**
Housing Providers (by preventing housing evictions)	**£1,882,358**
Value of fiscal benefit providing debt advice	
Total Value of Advice	**£2,695,468**
Wider economic and social benefits	
Public value of improving clients' well-being (emotional well-being, family relationships and positive functioning)	**£29,235,781**
Public value of volunteering (part of public value total)	**£793,594**

Our impact in numbers

Our value in Warwickshire

Fiscal benefit total

Financial savings to local and national Government due to fewer payments for out-of-work benefits, costly evictions, re-housing evicted tenants and less demand on the NHS.

£6,356,397

Public value total

When people have fewer problems they have higher levels of wellbeing, participation in society and productivity. Our calculation of public value also includes the value of a volunteer run service.

£40,946,890

Value to the people we help (financial outcomes) total

We help individual clients to achieve individual financial outcomes like getting back-dated benefits, writing-off debts and refunds for consumer issues.

£23,576,724

For every £1 invested in WCA we generated at least:

£3.07 in fiscal benefits

£19.75 in public value

£11.37 in value to the people we helped (financial outcomes)

Our reach

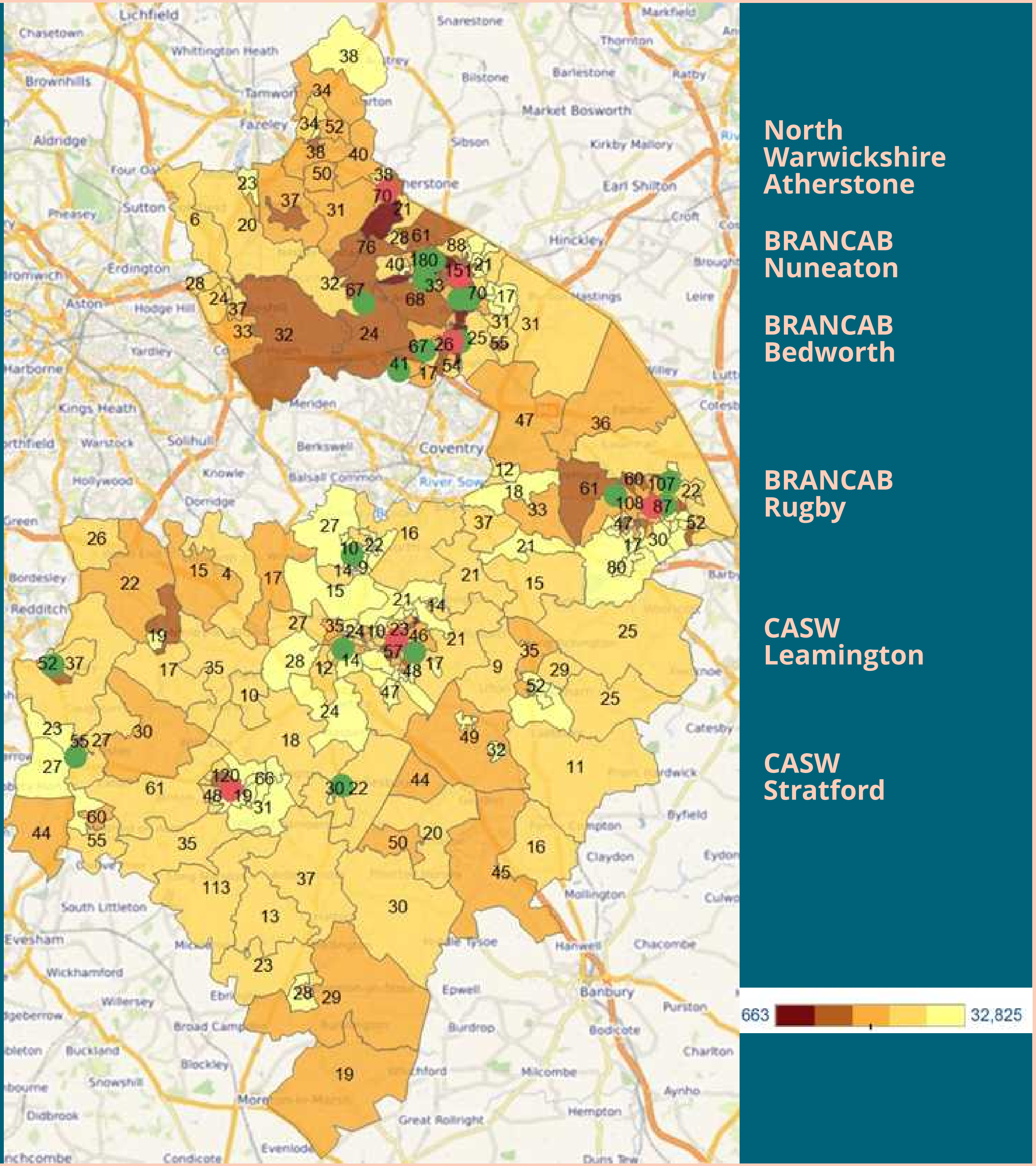
We understand our local communities because we are already working in them. We can map the problems local residents face on a daily basis and identify trends and hotspots. This enables us to work with Warwickshire County Council, our local Borough and District Councils and other stakeholders and partners to target services more effectively.

By having a main office in each Borough and District in the county, we are able to deliver services from these locations as well as a wide range of local outreach locations including Children and Families Centres, Community Centres, Libraries, Health Centres and Job Centres - allowing as many people as possible to access services.

The darker colours on the IMD Map show areas of higher levels of deprivation.

Red dots: Citizens Advice main offices

Green dots: Outreach locations



North Warwickshire Atherstone

BRANCAB Nuneaton

BRANCAB Bedworth

BRANCAB Rugby

CASW Leamington

CASW Stratford

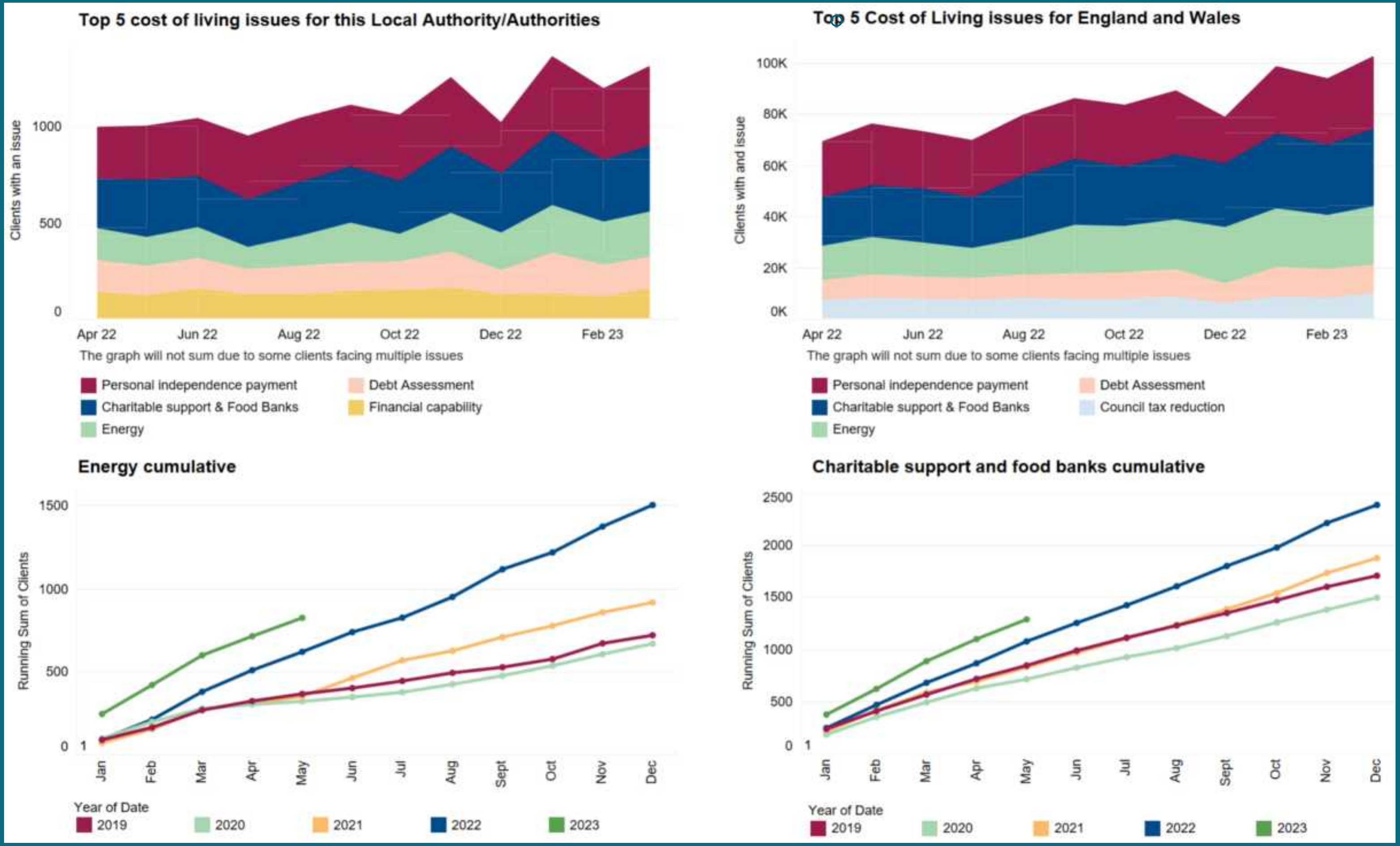
Cost of Living (CoL)

The cost of living continues to rise in the UK and across the world. Food and energy prices have been rising markedly over the past year, particularly gas prices. The price of consumer goods and services rose at the fastest rate in four decades in the year to October 2022. This ongoing problem is even more acute for many of our clients, who are often among the most disadvantaged in society with the greatest needs, and for whom most of their income is spent on food and housing costs. The significant fall in 'real' disposable incomes and the resulting fall in living standards is causing clients to find themselves in a position of having to borrow to cover every day basic living costs, and they increasingly have to rely on credit cards, overdrafts and borrowing to support their household as they continue to face unprecedented hardships. In addition, the inability to pay unexpected expenses is likely to lead to an increase in unaffordable loans at astronomical rates and the potential use of illegal lenders.

We are always trying to help our clients by ensuring they are getting the right benefits, getting the first benefit payments whilst waiting on applications, and helping with essential costs. We are assisting with food and fuel vouchers, applications for grants and providing advice and support to help with other issues such as rent, council tax and other bills, help with health costs, school costs, help with travel costs and help with pets.

The following is our Cost-of-Living Dashboard showing the top line figures for the top five cost of living issues and the top five cost of living issues for our Local Authorities in comparison to England and Wales for the period between 01/03/2022 to 31/03/2023.

There is also an Energy cumulative and a Charitable support and food banks cumulative compared over four years, from 2019 to 2023.



Our Services

Warwickshire Citizens Advice (WCA) comprises three Citizens Advice charities that work in partnership to provide free, independent, impartial, and confidential advice to help resolve the issues affecting people's lives.

Every year thousands of people come to us for help solving their problems; for these people, we are an essential part of the community. Our work gives us a credible understanding of local needs, which we use to tailor our services and help improve our communities. The insights gained also support us in campaigning to improve rights and social policy.

We're here to give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to find their way forward. Whoever they are, and whatever their problem. We're here to help everyone who needs support – including those most in need. Nationally, 91% of clients said their problem was resolved following our advice and 84% of those clients said that they could not have resolved their problem without us.

We are the largest provider of free quality-assured advice and information in Warwickshire. We can help with benefits, debt, housing, employment, family, legal, immigration, consumer issues, and everything in between. As a result, we have helped thousands of local people resolve their problems. We are distinct in that we help so many people with so many different kinds of issues, giving us unique insights into the challenges people face.

Operating in the Boroughs and Districts of Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby, North Warwickshire, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick, we provide multi-channel access to advice, for the people of Warwickshire. Our daily interactions with clients give us a credible understanding of local needs. We use these insights to tailor our services and improve our practices.

55%

of our clients were experiencing a disability or long-term health condition

10,906

of our clients live in the 30% most deprived areas in England. 1102 of these clients live in the 20% most deprived areas and 872 live in the 10% most deprived areas in England

23,946

issues emanated from these deprived areas. **6,938** of these issues were from clients living in the top 20% of the most deprived areas and **6,103** were from clients in the 10% most deprived areas

Frontline services

Warwickshire County Council funding enables the delivery of our core service, which provides generalist advice for Warwickshire clients. The service is overseen by competent supervisors and delivered by volunteer generalist advisors trained and equipped to provide free, confidential and impartial advice. This service is offered through multi-channel access, including face-to-face, telephone and email.

A robust core service enables us to attract additional funding for projects. Through the employment of caseworkers and paid advisors, we can maximise our impact within the communities of Warwickshire. Key projects that we have delivered over 2022/23 included:

BBO: Partnership project that provides support services to enable unemployed and economically inactive people living in Coventry and Warwickshire to overcome their problems and develop their skills to progress people closer to paid employment.

MAPS: Debt casework for people with multiple debts, including support with money management, budgeting and personal insolvency options.

MECC - The MECC Programme is funded by WCC and delivered by NWCA. The course has been designed to enable attendees to understand the factors that impact a person's health and well-being and, in turn, recognise the signs and triggers that could negatively impact a person's health, mental health and or emotional well-being. In addition, the course supports learners to have the ability to focus on listening and using communication skills to be able to deal with health-related issues. The learner is therefore equipped to have the confidence to signpost and make referrals to other agencies where appropriate.

ENERGY - NWCA has several energy projects. Clients will be triaged and allocated to the energy project that most effectively meets their needs. We can offer the client a full assessment, including a benefit check, energy debt advice if applicable, income maximisation, energy efficiency and grant advice, information on smart meters, carbon monoxide advice and free monitors. We can also look at grants for white goods and make an application on behalf of the client. We have a fuel voucher scheme for those struggling to pay and on pre-payment meters. As part of our BESN Project, we attend community groups to deliver energy sessions, with attendees having the opportunity for a 1-1 follow-up energy appointment.

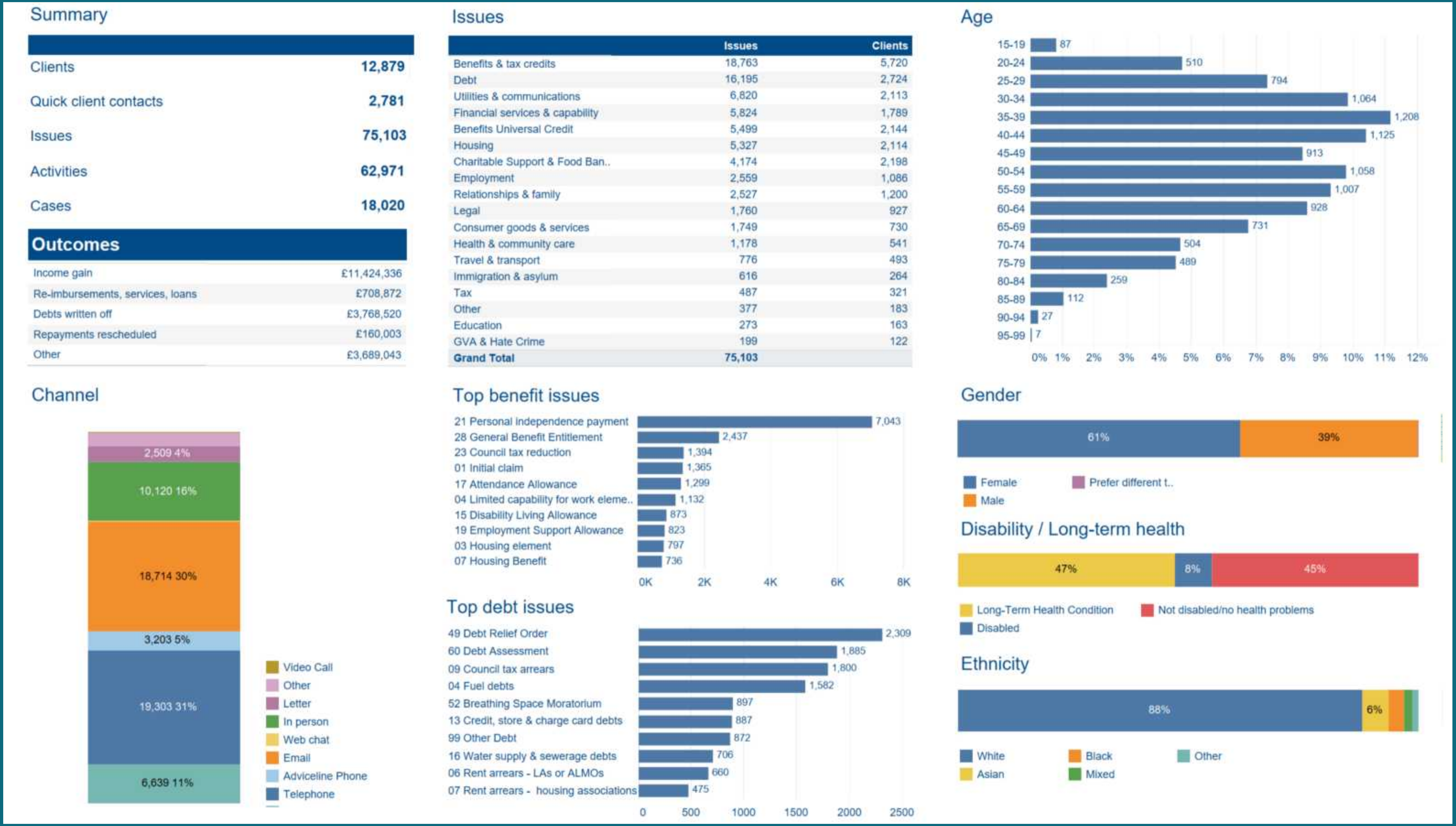
Outreach/Community Advice: Recognising that it may be difficult for people to access our services, we actively (with the help of additional funding) provide services within the community through a variety of community and statutory venues such as children and family centres, libraries, foodbanks and areas of acute need. These services include the **Big Local Advice Project, Foodbank Outreach Projects, Children and Family Centres Project, Community Pantry Project** and the **Reach Out and Help (ROAH)** service.

ROAH operates in Stratford-upon-Avon and **Advice Action Empower Warwick** operates in Warwick. These projects similarly help to:

● Manage household budgets ● Deal with debts ● Cut the cost of utility bills ● Claim eligible benefits, ● Improve job prospects, ● Access volunteering and training opportunities, ● Navigate health, social and home care services. Offering home visiting and comprehensive ongoing casework, our advisers work alongside people for as long as it takes to tackle all the issues they face, drawing in help from other organisations when needed.

Outreach at Community Pantries: Outreach provision is being provided by all 3 LCAs to complement Community Pantry provision in Arley, Camp Hill and Lillington

Key statistics summary



Summary

Clients	**12,879**
Quick client contacts	**2,781**
Issues	**75,103**
Activities	**62,971**
Cases	**18,020**

Outcomes

Income gain	£11,424,336
Re-imbursements, services, loans	£708,872
Debts written off	£3,768,520
Repayments rescheduled	£160,003
Other	£3,689,043

Issues

	Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	18,763	5,720
Debt	16,195	2,724
Utilities & communications	6,820	2,113
Financial services & capability	5,824	1,789
Benefits Universal Credit	5,499	2,144
Housing	5,327	2,114
Charitable Support & Food Ban..	4,174	2,198
Employment	2,559	1,086
Relationships & family	2,527	1,200
Legal	1,760	927
Consumer goods & services	1,749	730
Health & community care	1,178	541
Travel & transport	776	493
Immigration & asylum	616	264
Tax	487	321
Other	377	183
Education	273	163
GVA & Hate Crime	199	122
Grand Total	**75,103**	

Age
15-19 87
20-24 510
25-29 794
30-34 1,064
35-39 1,208
40-44 1,125
45-49 913
50-54 1,058
55-59 1,007
60-64 928
65-69 731
70-74 504
75-79 489
80-84 259
85-89 112
90-94 27
95-99 7
0% 1% 2% 3% 4% 5% 6% 7% 8% 9% 10% 11% 12%
Channel
2,509 4%
10,120 16%
18,714 30%
3,203 5%
19,303 31%
6,639 11%
Video Call
Other
Letter
In person
Web chat
Email
Adviceline Phone
Telephone
Top benefit issues
21 Personal independence payment 7,043
28 General Benefit Entitlement 2,437
23 Council tax reduction 1,394
01 Initial claim 1,365
17 Attendance Allowance 1,299
04 Limited capability for work eleme.. 1,132
15 Disability Living Allowance 873
19 Employment Support Allowance 823
03 Housing element 797
07 Housing Benefit 736
0K 2K 4K 6K 8K
Top debt issues
49 Debt Relief Order 2,309
60 Debt Assessment 1,885
09 Council tax arrears 1,800
04 Fuel debts 1,582
52 Breathing Space Moratorium 897
13 Credit, store & charge card debts 887
99 Other Debt 872
16 Water supply & sewerage debts 706
06 Rent arrears - LAs or ALMOs 660
07 Rent arrears - housing associations 475
0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500
Gender
61%
39%
Female
Male
Prefer different t..
Disability / Long-term health
47%
8%
45%
Long-Term Health Condition
Disabled
Not disabled/no health problems
Ethnicity
88%
6%
White
Asian
Black
Mixed
Other

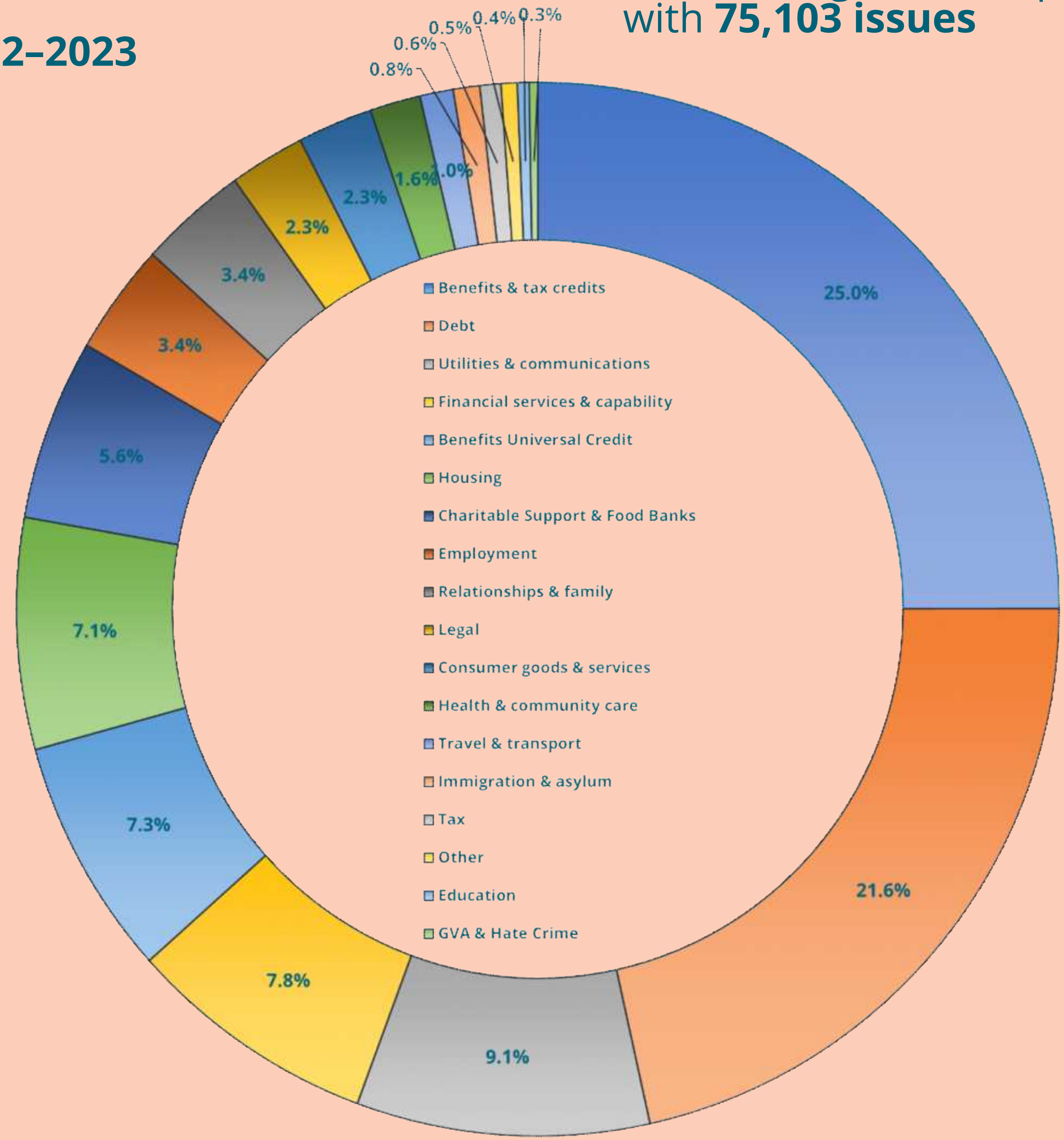
Issues and Trends

Key advice issues and trends 2022–2023

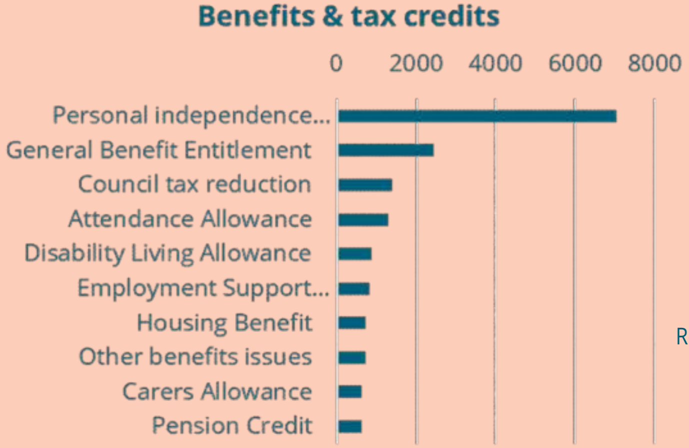
Clients sought our help with **75,103 issues**

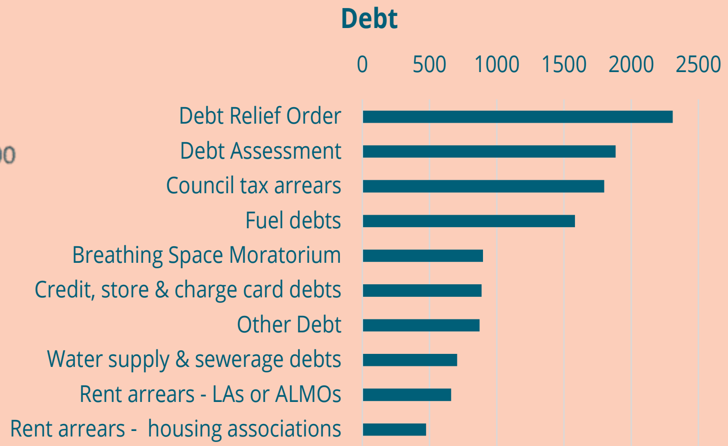
Top 7 advice issues

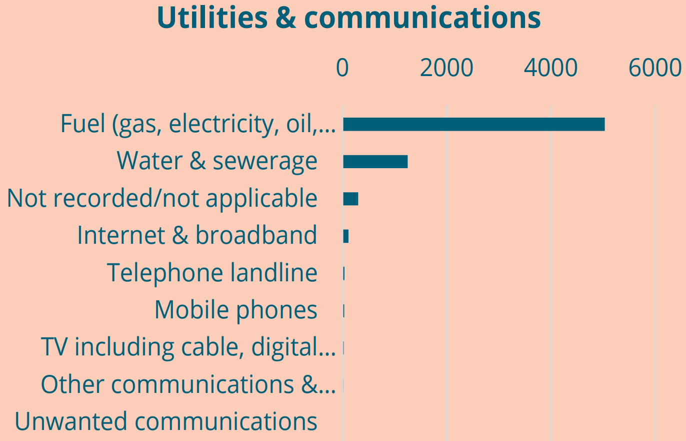
Benefits & tax credits	
25.0%	18,763
Debt	
21.6%	16,195
Utilities & communications	
9.1%	6,820
Financial services & capability	
7.8%	5,824
Benefits Universal Credit	
7.3%	5,499
Housing	
7.1%	5,327
Charitable Support & Food Banks	
5.6%	4,174

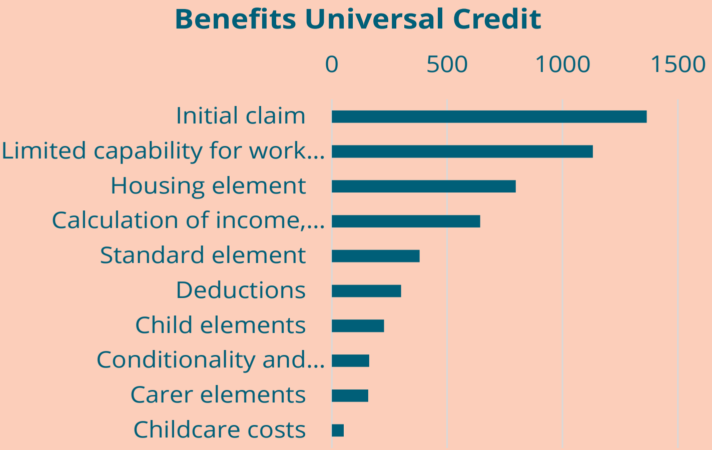


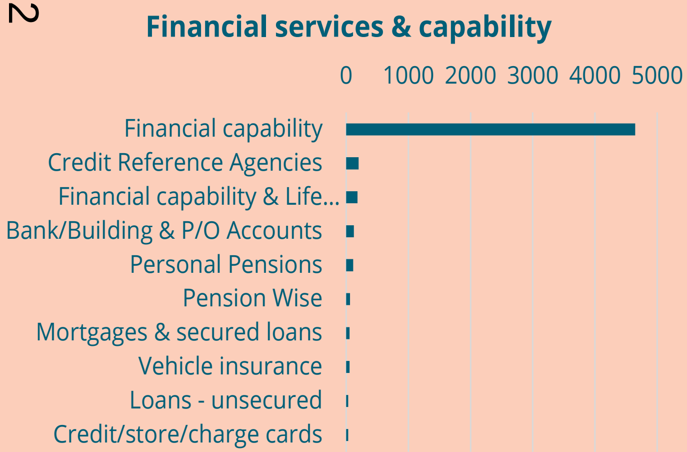
Top 7 advice issues

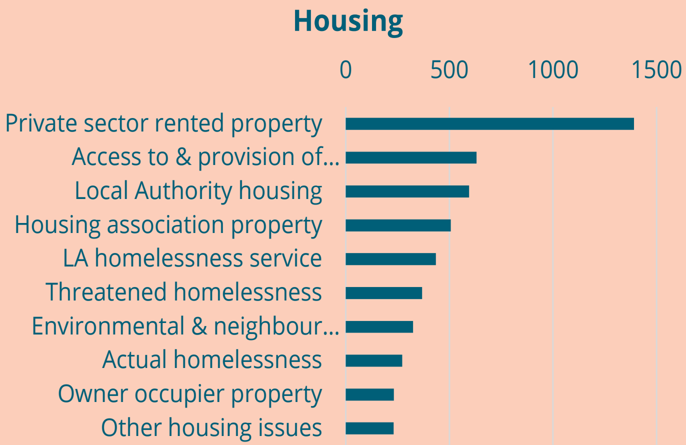


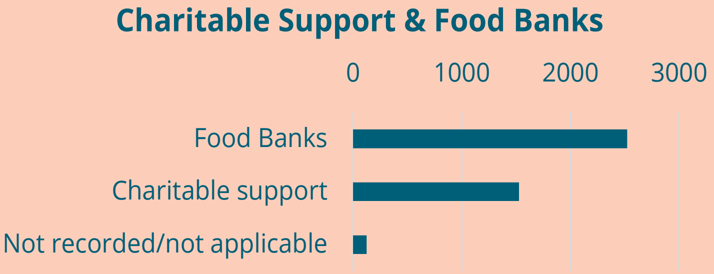




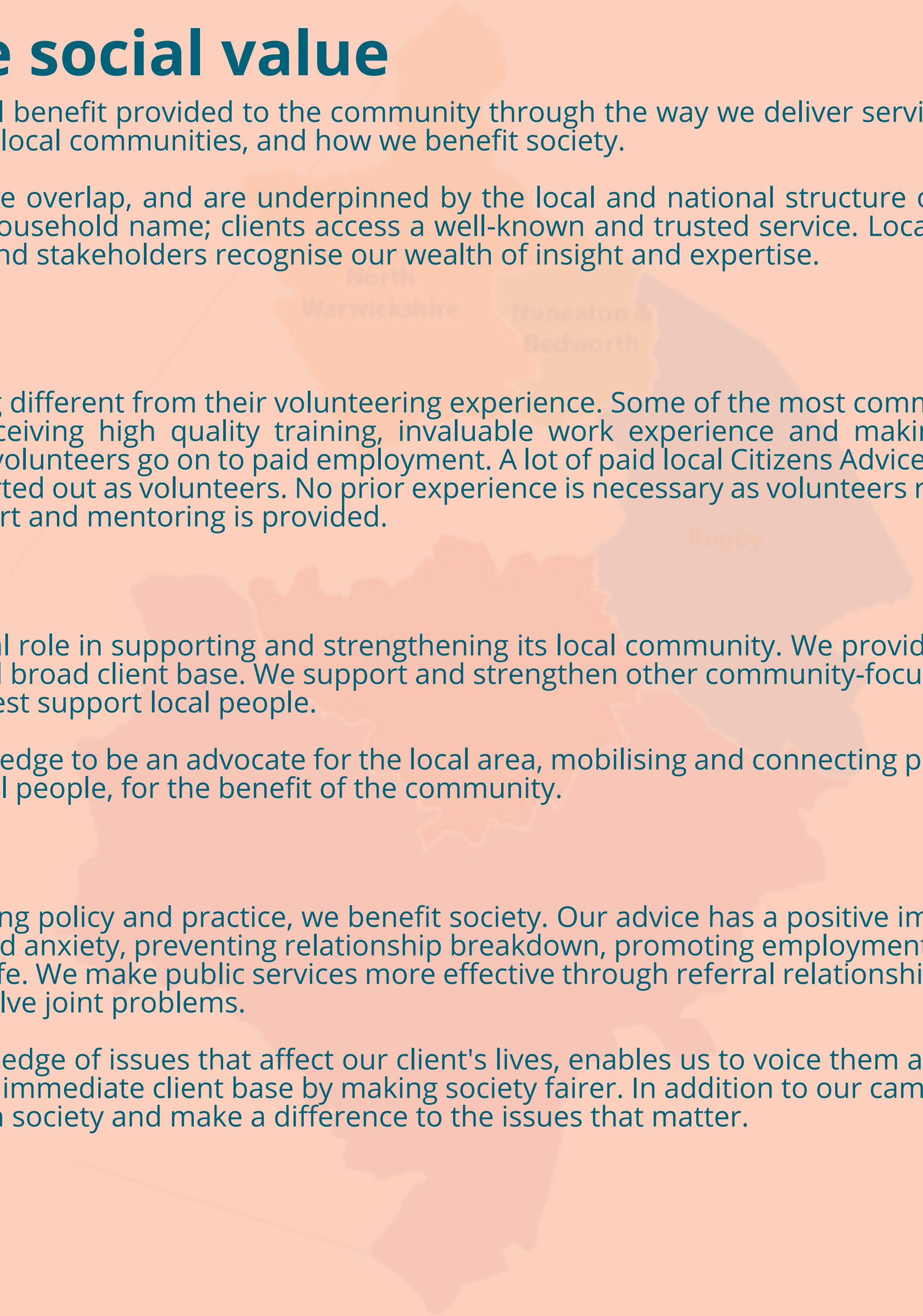








Citizens Advice social value



Our social value is the additional benefit provided to the community through the way we deliver services. It covers the value of working with volunteers, our support for local communities, and how we benefit society.

These aspects of our social value overlap, and are underpinned by the local and national structure of the Citizens Advice service. Our established brand makes us a household name; clients access a well-known and trusted service. Local offices contribute to and benefit from a national infrastructure, and stakeholders recognise our wealth of insight and expertise.

Value to volunteers

All our volunteers get something different from their volunteering experience. Some of the most common benefits are making a positive difference to peoples' lives, receiving high quality training, invaluable work experience and making a positive contribution to the community. Around 30% of our volunteers go on to paid employment. A lot of paid local Citizens Advice staff, for example managers, case workers and administrators, started out as volunteers. No prior experience is necessary as volunteers receive full training before starting, paid travel expenses, and support and mentoring is provided.

Value to communities

Each local office plays an integral role in supporting and strengthening its local community. We provide a service that meets local needs and reaches out to a diverse and broad client base. We support and strengthen other community-focused organisations, partnering with them to share our insight and best support local people.

We also use our extensive knowledge to be an advocate for the local area, mobilising and connecting people with their community. We’re a local service, working with local people, for the benefit of the community.

Value to society

By providing advice and improving policy and practice, we benefit society. Our advice has a positive impact on the health and well-being of our clients, reducing stress and anxiety, preventing relationship breakdown, promoting employment and empowering people to make wider positive changes to their life. We make public services more effective through referral relationships, and by sharing our insight with local and national partners to solve joint problems.

Our unique and extensive knowledge of issues that affect our client's lives, enables us to voice them at a local or national strategic level. This benefits more than just our immediate client base by making society fairer. In addition to our campaigning, we empower individuals and communities to engage with society and make a difference to the issues that matter.

Our volunteers

Citizens Advice volunteers come from all walks of life and choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. Our volunteers include students, people getting back into work after career breaks, people with part-time jobs, carers, and people who've retired.

Volunteers are vital to the way we deliver our service, allowing us to reach many more people than if we were purely staff run.

In 2022/23, we had **144 volunteers**, who gave over **45,180+ hours of their time,** as generalist advisors, caseworkers, receptionists, administrators and Trustee Board members.

Every volunteer gets something different from their volunteering experience, including the opportunity to:

- make a positive difference to people's' lives
- improve self esteem, confidence and well-being
- gain invaluable work experience
- receive high quality training and develop new skills
- use existing skills and knowledge to benefit the local community
- meet new people from a range of backgrounds
- feel valued and part of a team
- change the way things work for the better

4 in 5 believe volunteering had a positive effect on their physical or mental health*

4 in 5 report feeling more confident in their own abilities because of their volunteer position*

8 in 10 of our unemployed volunteers believe they are overcoming barriers to gaining employment*

At Citizens Advice our volunteers help people find a way forward with the problems they face.

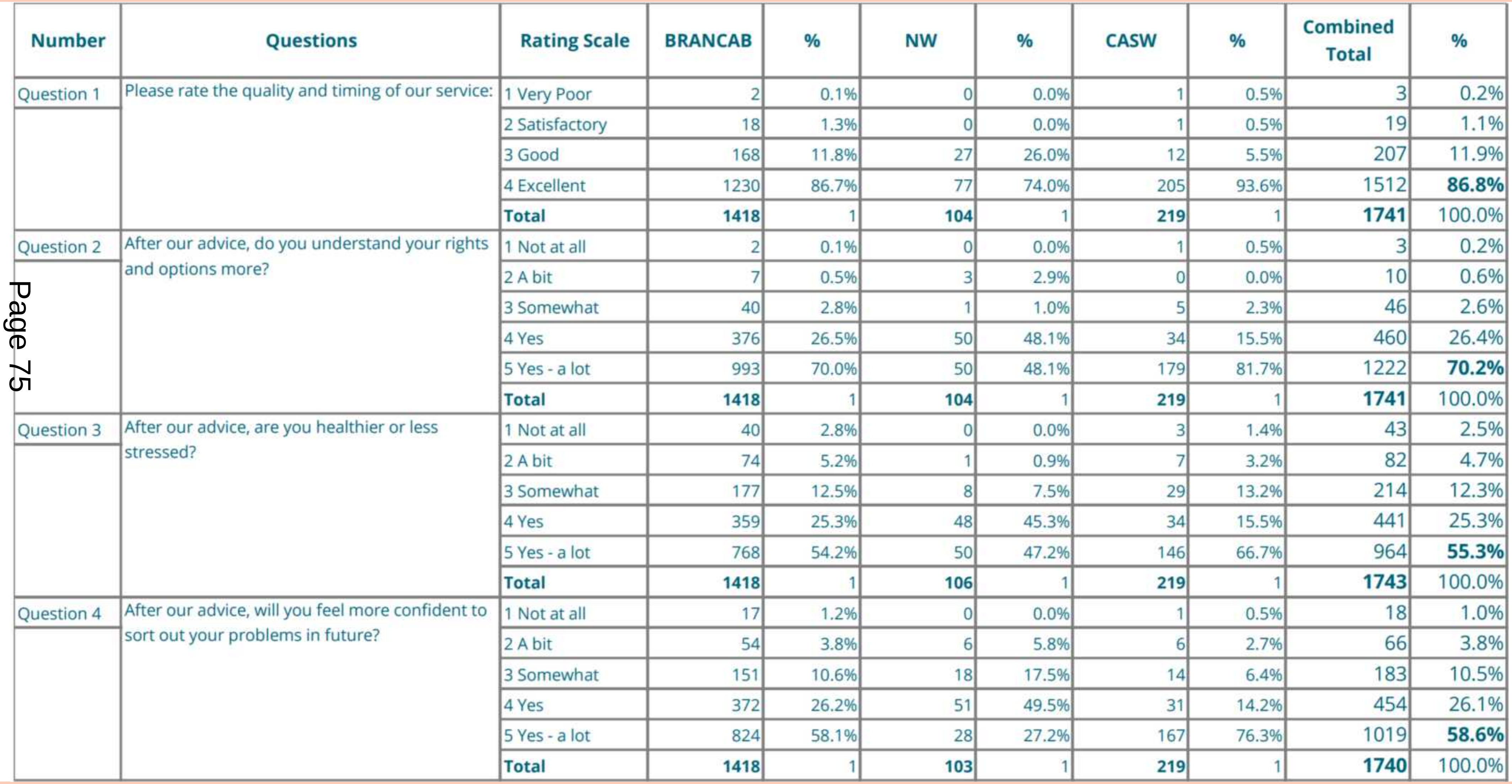
Volunteering with Citizens Advice provides training, skills and experience that is valued by many employers. Many volunteers who leave local Citizens Advice go on to paid employment, including with the Citizens Advice service, as well as other organisations.

If you're looking to get back into work, or considering a career with Citizens Advice, volunteering can be a great place to start. Join our team of volunteers who together are invaluable to delivering our advice service.Search here for volunteering roles near you:

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/support-us/volunteering/volunteering-opportunities_search/

Client Satisfaction Surveys

Cumulative Feedback (Q2, Q3 & Q4)



Number	Questions	Rating Scale	BRANCAB	%	NW	%	CASW	%	Combined Total	%
Question 1	Please rate the quality and timing of our service:	1 Very Poor	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%	3	0.2%
		2 Satisfactory	18	1.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%	19	1.1%
		3 Good	168	11.8%	27	26.0%	12	5.5%	207	11.9%
		4 Excellent	1230	86.7%	77	74.0%	205	93.6%	1512	**86.8%**
		Total	**1418**	1	**104**	1	**219**	1	**1741**	100.0%
Question 2	After our advice, do you understand your rights and options more?	1 Not at all	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%	3	0.2%
		2 A bit	7	0.5%	3	2.9%	0	0.0%	10	0.6%
		3 Somewhat	40	2.8%	1	1.0%	5	2.3%	46	2.6%
		4 Yes	376	26.5%	50	48.1%	34	15.5%	460	26.4%
		5 Yes - a lot	993	70.0%	50	48.1%	179	81.7%	1222	**70.2%**
		Total	**1418**	1	**104**	1	**219**	1	**1741**	100.0%
Question 3	After our advice, are you healthier or less stressed?	1 Not at all	40	2.8%	0	0.0%	3	1.4%	43	2.5%
		2 A bit	74	5.2%	1	0.9%	7	3.2%	82	4.7%
		3 Somewhat	177	12.5%	8	7.5%	29	13.2%	214	12.3%
		4 Yes	359	25.3%	48	45.3%	34	15.5%	441	25.3%
		5 Yes - a lot	768	54.2%	50	47.2%	146	66.7%	964	**55.3%**
		Total	**1418**	1	**106**	1	**219**	1	**1743**	100.0%
Question 4	After our advice, will you feel more confident to sort out your problems in future?	1 Not at all	17	1.2%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%	18	1.0%
		2 A bit	54	3.8%	6	5.8%	6	2.7%	66	3.8%
		3 Somewhat	151	10.6%	18	17.5%	14	6.4%	183	10.5%
		4 Yes	372	26.2%	51	49.5%	31	14.2%	454	26.1%
		5 Yes - a lot	824	58.1%	28	27.2%	167	76.3%	1019	**58.6%**
		Total	**1418**	1	**103**	1	**219**	1	**1740**	100.0%

Case Study - Nuneaton and Bedworth

Mary was referred to Citizens Advice as her husband had a serious accident at work. He was self-employed and now unable to work for at least 18 months. They have four children and one foster child. As a family, they struggled financially and relied on food bank vouchers.

Mary's initial referral was for help with support for the foster child. She had been looking after the child for three years but received no financial support. She was advised to speak to social services and ask for a fostering allowance, which was put in place.

As the biological father receives the child benefit, the client was advised to put in an application for it to be paid to her. Social services also gave her a grant for a school uniform.

Mary was seen by an adviser who carried out a full benefits check and found that, as a family, they were not receiving all their benefit entitlements.

On further investigation, Mary was also not receiving child benefit for two of her three children, and she had made a single claim for Universal Credit. We supported Mary to claim child benefit for the two youngest children and to add her husband to the Universal Credit claim.

Financial outcomes:

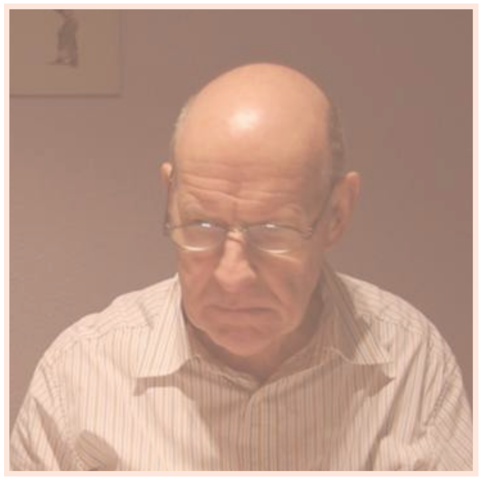
The claim for child benefit and the changes in their Universal Credit claim increased their income by £200 a month which is an **annualised gain of £2,400**.

Mary was also given both **foodbank vouchers and fuel vouchers**.

The intervention of Citizens Advice has **increased** Mary and her **family's income by £3,600 a year.**

Mary was very grateful for the help she and her family had received.

Case study - Rugby



Stephen is 64 years old and lives with his partner (who is retired and receives a state pension) in the house she owns. He was employed full-time, but last year, he was diagnosed with throat cancer, had his voice box removed, and could not speak. Stephen was receiving SSP as his only source of income but was not aware that it was only paid for 28 weeks and hence was surprised/annoyed when his employer informed him this was being stopped. Stephen had been to the Job Centre, where they created a Universal Credit (UC) account and advised him to apply for UC. However, Stephen is not very computer literate, and his computer at home was broken. He also does not have a mobile phone. He did, however, as suggested by the Job Centre, go to the library to try and apply online. An email account was also created for him but he forgot the password. As he was unable to complete the application at the library, a F2F appointment at Rugby Citizens Advice office was booked for him.

When Stephen arrived for the appointment, it was clear that he was frustrated/ emotional that he had not managed to process his UC application and had no income. Initially discussed with Stephen that we could try and help him do his application online however, as he had lost his email password, we could not get the code to proceed with the application. It was clear he was desperate for help to resolve this; therefore, we suggested that we try a phone application which he gave permission to do.

We rang DWP, who was initially reluctant to make a phone application. Having explained the situation Stephen was in, the DWP adviser agreed to proceed and we were able to complete the application over the phone. As Stephen is living with a retired partner, we advised that his partner would need to be included in the UC claim. Stephen was going to go home, and they were going to try a phone application for his partner. Advised Stephen that if they were unsuccessful, they should return for further help. Also advised Stephen that as he was still in full-time employment, he should be eligible for new style contributory-based ESA, and we helped him to complete and submit an online application. We also considered eligibility for Personal Independent Payment and advised on how to apply. We suggested that once he had the application form, he should return and that we would provide support with the application process.

Financial outcomes:

Income gain from UC\ESA : **£344 a month (annualised gain of £4,128)**
Potential income gain from PIP £268 a month **(estimated annualised gain of £3,216)**

Stephen **left very relieved and grateful** that we had been able to sort out his benefit applications.

Case Study - North Warwickshire

James contacted NWCA via telephone for help with an application for Severn Trent Water (STW) Big Difference Scheme (BDS). James is in his 60s and lives in a one-bed social housing property following a mental breakdown due to a bereavement. He is unemployed due to his mental and physical health problems, which are compounded by having no support network. He is receiving Universal Credit, PIP and Council Tax Support, plus a small miner's pension.

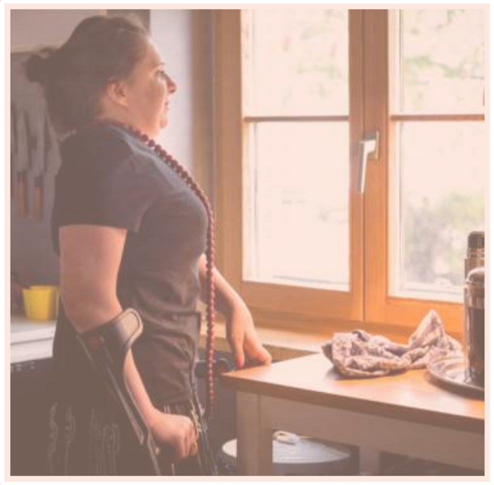
After initial advice by telephone, a face-to-face appointment was arranged to **apply for the BDS**, and James disclosed that he also had a debt with Severn Trent Water. This was being deducted from his Universal Credit payment, and he was struggling to make ends meet. We **completed an application to the Severn Trent Trust Fund** to write off the arrears and reduce his current water bill. Severn Trent **wrote off** James' debt of **£1,900 and reduced his current water bill to £3.75 per month, saving him £28 per month.** This considerably reduced the stress on James, such that he opened up about other debts, totalling around £5,000. Looking into his income and expenditure, we saw that James was renting a number of white goods, such as a washing machine, cooker and vacuum cleaner, which was costing him £94 per month.

Due to his debts and how much he is struggling with his finances, James was **referred to the NWCA debt specialist** for further advice. Initially, he was helped with a **breathing space moratorium** to prevent one creditor from taking him to court, and the help is ongoing to find a permanent debt solution. Applications were made to charities for **white goods** so James can stop renting these items to reduce his outgoings.

James also received **energy advice** on how to reduce the cost of his energy and was given **energy-saving tips** plus a positive **energy pack**. He has implemented some of the tips and used the draught excluder, meaning that he is making **savings of £100+ per year on his energy bills**. James is at risk of fuel poverty, so he was very grateful for the help to reduce his bills. Due to his health conditions, we supported James in registering for the **Priority Services Register**. James was advised about the positives and negatives of Smart Meters, and he decided to apply for a smart meter to have a monitor to check his energy use. As a result, James is now more confident in keeping his energy costs down and knows what to look for when he is able to switch tariffs.

As James is close to retirement age, he was advised and helped him to apply for his **State Retirement Pension** and advised that he could receive help to apply for **Housing Benefits** closer to his retirement date. As a result, James is **now much happier and less stressed**, as he no longer feels like his debts are suffocating him. However, he will continue to be supported by NWCA until he feels financially secure.

Case Study - Stratford-upon-Avon



Sarah was referred to us by Family Information Service (FIS). She lives with her husband Pete and 10-year-old daughter Amanda in private rented accommodation in a rural part of Warwick District. Sarah has cerebral palsy, and Pete is also disabled. Both Sarah and Pete receive personal independence payments (PIP). Amanda has also recently been awarded Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Sarah also has depression and anxiety.

Pete claims carers allowance (CA) for caring for Sarah. She does not care for Pete due to her disability. They received "legacy" benefits, i.e. Employment Support Allowance, Child Tax Credits and Housing Benefit. However, they moved house late last year, and as this involved moving to a new district, they were migrated onto Universal Credit (UC) to replace most of their legacy benefits. After doing so, however, they lost a significant part of their income after rental costs. The financial loss had a significant impact on Sarah’s mental health.

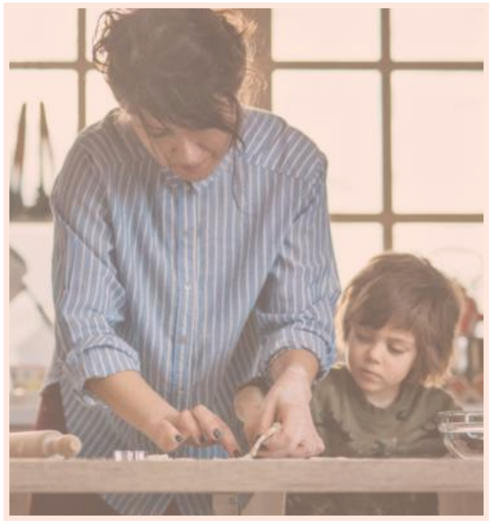
We contacted Sarah by phone, and she was able to provide full details of their current UC award, as well as confirmation of all their rates of PIP and DLA. Our adviser was able to do a benefits check which showed that the UC award would be correct for a family like theirs making a new claim (but without a disabled child). However, as they had previously been on legacy benefits, he also noticed that their situation brought them under the issue of the closure of the 'SDP Gateway'.

As Pete received PIP, no one claimed CA for caring for him, and he was 'treated as living alone' (the only other adult in the property also receiving PIP). He was previously entitled to the 'Severe Disability Premium' (SDP) in the calculation of their ESA. There is no SDP in UC - until January 2021; the rules meant that a family in their situation would not have been able to claim UC - they would have remained on legacy benefits. However, this was changed in January 2021.
Our adviser identified that they should be eligible for a 'transitional element' of at least £120 per month to cover this loss of SDP.

Furthermore, our adviser noticed they were not receiving an additional amount for having a child with a disability of £132.89 per month. This meant their UC claim could be increased by £252.89 per month. We advised the client on how to contact UC to have this corrected and offered further support if required. Sarah was relieved to hear they were entitled to more UC than they were currently getting. She felt able to contact UC herself and **knows we are here to support her if she needs further help.**

Transitional element - £120 per month Addition for Child with disability - £132.89 per month.
Total annualised benefits: £3,034.68 The extra financial amount will significantly help her mental health.

Case Study - Warwick



Phoebe is a 29-year-old lone parent with a 5-year-old son. She is claiming Universal Credit (UC) whilst looking for work. She first approached Citizens Advice after her father died in May 2021. She and her son were living with him in a WD council house. Her father was the tenant, and she was a named occupier. She was permitted to stay on the property, although she never received written confirmation.

Phoebe’s ultimate wish was to move into a two-bedroom property for a fresh start and to avoid paying the under-occupancy charge. Her problems began as soon as she succeeded the tenancy, as she immediately received telephone calls and demands by letter to pay with rent arrears of £2400, later revised to £1917. It was never made clear whether the arrears related to her or her father's tenure.

UC housing payments were allocated to her father's account in error, and additional deductions were made from her UC standard allowance at a time of hardship. She was initially prohibited from applying for a smaller property through Homechoice because of the arrears. She was shocked, frightened and confused when she contacted us. She was also still trying to come to terms with her father's death and felt as though she was being harassed at a time of grieving the loss of her father.

The stress of the situation caused her to suffer from depression and anxiety. Following a lengthy investigation carried out by us on her behalf, the debt was removed from her account. We supported her in commencing a stage 2 complaint against WDC in September 2021 through correspondence and virtual meetings. In January 2022, the stage 2 complaint was upheld, and she received a written apology. The report contained recommendations concerning WDC's internal procedures, lack of internal and external communication, insensitivity and lack of clarity in communications.

Phoebe has since moved into a two-bedroom council property with her son. As recommended in the report, the arrears were removed from her account, a Discretionary Housing Payment was awarded to cover three weeks' rent in the new property, decorating vouchers supplied, and her removal costs paid. We have also assisted her in obtaining grants for school uniforms, white goods and furniture and applied to the BDS on her behalf.

Financial outcomes:

Final balancing arrears of appox., **£702 removed**; **Removal costs** paid approx., **£250**; **Food Bank Voucher** - approx - **£29**; Grant for **School Uniform - £50**; Grant for 2 x **white goods, cooker, bed and other furniture - £900**, **BDS** - £36 pcm income gain **(£432pa)**; **Decorating Vouchers - £380**

Debt

Specialist debt advice services for the people of Warwickshire

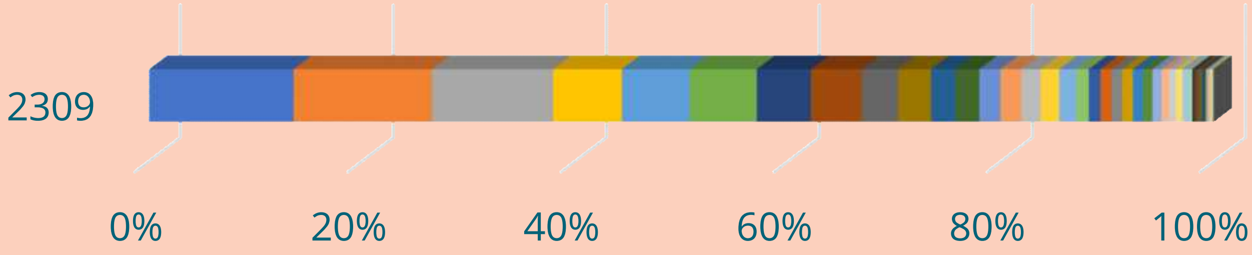
Our debt advice provision is provided through our Money Advice and Pension Service (MaPS) debt services, other projects, and our generalist service. Our offices are accredited by Citizens Advice's local performance and quality framework (LPQF) and the Money Advice Service (MAS) quality framework for debt advice. In addition, our advisers are certified in Money Advice Practice (CertMAP) and participate in continuing professional development. Clients seeking debt advice, therefore, have the assurance that both our organisations and our advisers operate to the highest standards. The service is fully licensed, administers Debt Relief Orders and is registered with the FCA.

Financial Outcome Category			Debts written off		
Outcome	**Clients**	**Number of outcomes**	**Total Value**	**Outcome per client**	**Avg outcome**
Bankruptcy	8	9	£494,173.81	£61,771.73	£54,908.20
Debt write off - other	76	103	£146,437.91	£1,926.81	£1,421.73
DRO - debt relief order	185	496	£3,090,054.67	£16,703.00	£6,229.95
IVA - Individual Voluntary Agreement	4	7	£37,854.00	£9,463.50	£5,407.71
Total	**269**	615	**£3,768,520.39**	**£14,009.37**	£6,127.68

Financial Outcome Category			Repayments rescheduled		
Outcome	**Clients**	**Number of outcomes**	**Total Value**	**Outcome per client**	**Avg outcome**
Administration order only	1	1	£60.00	£60.00	£60.00
DMP - debt management plan	20	28	£64,745.23	£3,237.26	£2,312.33
Remortgage / Consolidation loan	1	1	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Repayment negotiated	69	107	£65,800.82	£953.64	£614.96
Token payments	25	29	£19,337.27	£773.49	£666.80
Voluntary Charge	1	1	£60.00	£60.00	£60.00
Total	**113**	167	**£160,003.32**	**£1,415.96**	£958.10

Helped 2,724 debt clients

Worked on 3,173 cases and helped with 16,195 debt advice issues



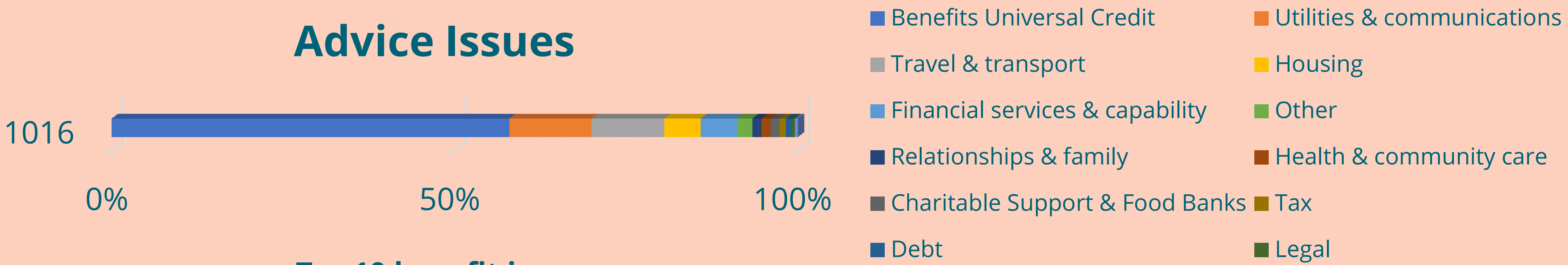
Warwickshire Specialist Benefits Service

Our Warwickshire Specialist Benefits Service (WSBS) provides both direct advice and support to clients across Warwickshire and training and support to paid and voluntary staff on welfare benefits issues.

Our team of five advisers supports clients through welfare benefit appeals: checking the law and case law relevant to each case, advising clients about the strength of their case, helping to obtain additional evidence, preparing written submissions, preparing clients for hearings and representing them on the day when required.

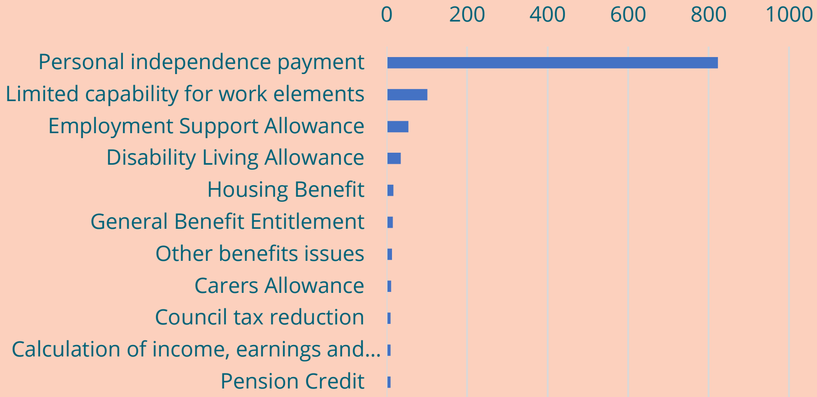
We staff a welfare benefits helpline and regularly provide training to Citizens Advice staff and volunteers and frontline staff at other Warwickshire organisations on welfare benefits.

Key Statistics	
Appeal cases handled	325
Other cases	121
Tribunal hearings	135
Benefits issues advised on	1405
Other advice issues	81
Income gains for clients (achieved/expected)	£1,347,098

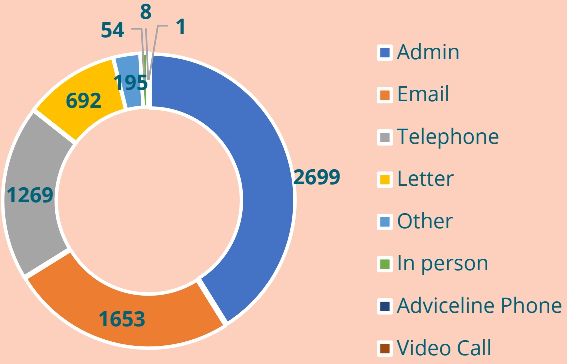


Advice Issues

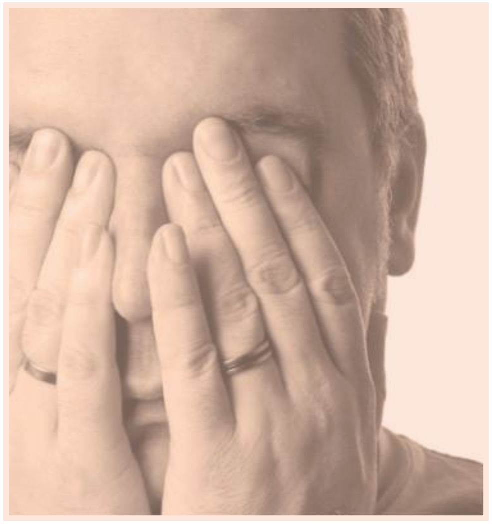
Top 10 benefit issues



Channel of activities 6,571



Case Study - Warwickshire Specialist Benefits Service



Mr A was referred to the Warwickshire Specialist Benefits Service after he had twice claimed Personal Independence Payment and been turned down.

Mr A was a man in his 50's who suffered from severe depression and anxiety, breathing problems and also chronic knee and back pain from arthritis. In addition, he had suffered from addiction to alcohol and non-prescription drugs since he was 13 years old, which had impacted negatively on his mental and physical health. When we saw him, Mr A was endeavouring to turn his life around and had managed to very significantly reduce his consumption of alcohol and drugs. However, he remained severely depressed and anxious and his anxiety was exacerbated by knowing that his home environment and the acquaintances surrounding him could cause him to relapse again.

During our conversations with him, Mr A explained that he really wanted to move to a different area as he felt this would help his recovery from addiction and lead to an improvement in his mental health, but he was financially unable to do so. Citizens Advice had previously assisted Mr A to reduce his debts, but he had a few remaining debts and his income was low.

We assisted Mr A to lodge an appeal against the latest decision refusing PIP and supported him afterwards when his low mood caused him to consider dropping the appeal.

We prepared a written submission to the appeal tribunal, setting out Mr A's case for an award of PIP. When a date was received for the appeal to be heard, we represented Mr A at the hearing as he felt unable to go through it on his own.

The appeal was successful, with Mr A being awarded both components of PIP at the highest rate for a period of 5 years.The award gave the client an **extra £8,200 income a year**, doubling his existing income. In addition, because it had taken nearly 18 months for Mr A's claim to be resolved, he was also **entitled to arrears of £14,400**.

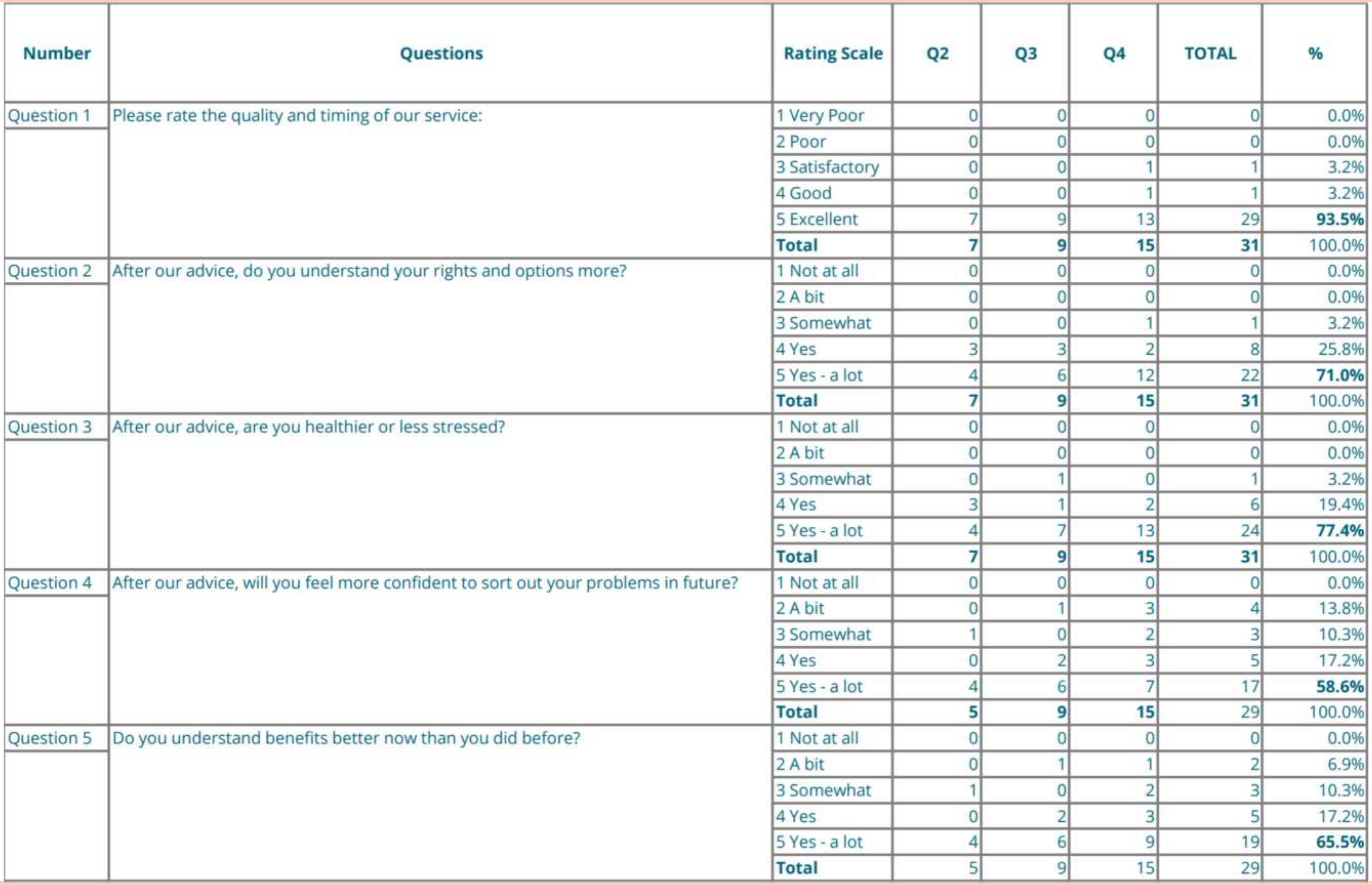
Mr A will now be able to clear his remaining debts and also move out of the area.

Mr A was very happy with the outcome of his appeal and the difference it would make to his life, saying in his feedback on the service provided:

"You gave me a better standard of living with less stress and a smile on my face. Thank you so very much"

Client Satisfaction Surveys WSBS

Cumulative Feedback (Q2, Q3 & Q4)



Number	Questions	Rating Scale	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	%
Question 1	Please rate the quality and timing of our service:	1 Very Poor	0	0	0	0	0.0%
		2 Poor	0	0	0	0	0.0%
		3 Satisfactory	0	0	1	1	3.2%
		4 Good	0	0	1	1	3.2%
		5 Excellent	7	9	13	29	**93.5%**
		Total	**7**	**9**	**15**	**31**	100.0%
Question 2	After our advice, do you understand your rights and options more?	1 Not at all	0	0	0	0	0.0%
		2 A bit	0	0	0	0	0.0%
		3 Somewhat	0	0	1	1	3.2%
		4 Yes	3	3	2	8	25.8%
		5 Yes - a lot	4	6	12	22	**71.0%**
		Total	**7**	**9**	**15**	**31**	100.0%
Question 3	After our advice, are you healthier or less stressed?	1 Not at all	0	0	0	0	0.0%
		2 A bit	0	0	0	0	0.0%
		3 Somewhat	0	1	0	1	3.2%
		4 Yes	3	1	2	6	19.4%
		5 Yes - a lot	4	7	13	24	**77.4%**
		Total	**7**	**9**	**15**	**31**	100.0%
Question 4	After our advice, will you feel more confident to sort out your problems in future?	1 Not at all	0	0	0	0	0.0%
		2 A bit	0	1	3	4	13.8%
		3 Somewhat	1	0	2	3	10.3%
		4 Yes	0	2	3	5	17.2%
		5 Yes - a lot	4	6	7	17	**58.6%**
		Total	**5**	**9**	**15**	29	100.0%
Question 5	Do you understand benefits better now than you did before?	1 Not at all	0	0	0	0	0.0%
		2 A bit	0	1	1	2	6.9%
		3 Somewhat	1	0	2	3	10.3%
		4 Yes	0	2	3	5	17.2%
		5 Yes - a lot	4	6	9	19	**65.5%**
		Total	5	9	15	29	100.0%

Contact information

BRANCAB

Bedworth
25 Congreve Walk, Bedworth. CV12 8LX

Nuneaton
Town Hall, Coton Road, Nuneaton. CV11 5BT

Rugby
1st Floor Chestnut House, 32 North St, Rugby. CV21 2AG

Please visit our website for our opening times, access channels and outreach provisions

Local Website: **www.brancab.org.uk**

Email: info@brancab.org.uk

North Warwickshire Citizens Advice

North Warwickshire
The Parish Rooms, Welcome Street, Atherstone. CV9 1DU

Please visit our website for our opening times, access channels and outreach provisions

Local Website: **www.nwcab.org.uk**

Email: advice@nwcab.org.uk

Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

Warwick District
10 Hamilton Terrace, Leamington Spa. CV32 4LY

Please visit our website for our opening times, access channels and outreach provisions

Local Website: **www.casouthwarwickshire.org.uk**

Email: Website online contact form

TELEPHONE CONTACT:

Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm 0808 250 5715

Out of hours service: Mondays 5.00pm - 7.00pm 0800 995 6047

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EQUIP
Equality & Inclusion Partnership

DIVERSITY
INCLUSION
EQUALITY
COMMUNITY
LIFE
THOUGHTS
ONLINE
DEVELOPMENT
ANALYSIS
GENDER
SEARCHING
PEOPLE
DATA
DIVERSE
TEAMWORK
GLOBAL
MANAGEMENT
CONCEPTS
BUSINESS
MOTIVATION
STRATEGY
STOCK MARKET
INNOVATION
PROFIT
GROWTH
NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023

1st October 2022 - 30th September 2023

Registered Office: Equality and Inclusion Partnership, Room 127, Morgan Conference Suite, Warwickshire College, Technology Drive, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV21 1AR
Registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation No: 1169436

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction **3**
Equality Services Contract 6
Key Highlights 7

KPI 1 – Provision of Support to Individuals **9**
Discrimination and Hate Casework 9

KPI 2 – Provision of Training **13**

KPI 3 – Engagement to Improve Community Cohesion & Equality Service Provision **16**
Notable Issues 18
Engagement Case Study 21

Social Value **22**
Equality Network 23
Asylum Seekers & Refugees 24
Disability Forum 24
Kind Communities – Kind Food 25
We Stand Together 26
Big Conversation 29
Windrush 75 30

INTRODUCTION

As we reflect on the past year of the Equality Services Contract, from 1st October 2022 to 30th September 2023, we are pleased to present the annual report of the Equality and Inclusion Partnership (EQuIP). This document serves as a testament to our unwavering commitment to fostering a more inclusive and equitable society for all. In a year marked by both challenges and triumphs, we have strived to make tangible progress toward the ideal of a county where equality, diversity and inclusion is celebrated and discrimination is eradicated.

A Year of Resilience and Progress

Over the past year, Warwickshire continued to grapple with an array of complex social, economic, and political challenges. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the Cost of Living Crisis has underscored existing inequalities and tested our collective resilience. EQuIP, dedicated to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, recognised the urgency of its mission in the face of these challenges. Our work this year was guided by a profound sense of responsibility to advocate for marginalised communities and to ensure that the principles of equity remained at the forefront of public discourse.

Promoting Inclusivity

One of the fundamental pillars of our work at EQuIP is to foster inclusivity at all levels of society. In 2022-2023, we made significant strides in this area. During the year, we revamped and relaunched the countywide Equality Network, which currently has a membership of 24 partner agencies from the public and voluntary sectors. We also launched awareness campaigns through our involvement in the Warwickshire Hate Crime Partnership and training initiatives designed to raise awareness of hate and methods of reporting. Furthermore, this year, we launched the Equality Refresher sessions, designed to support Equality Network partners to challenge discrimination, biases and improve awareness of cultural nuances and sensitivities among our diverse communities. These efforts are helping to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all residents in Warwickshire.

Advancing Equality

The pursuit of equality is central to our mission and EQuIP remained committed to addressing systemic disparities in various areas. From healthcare access to education, housing to employment, EQuIP has been actively involved in advocating for policy changes and supporting initiatives that address these inequalities. By collaborating with Warwickshire County Council, other partners and engaging with the community, we have been able to make progress towards dismantling some of the barriers that perpetuate disparities.

Diversity Celebrated

At EQuIP, we firmly believe that diversity is one of humanity's greatest strengths. This year, we celebrated the rich tapestry of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences that make our county vibrant and diverse. Through events, dialogues, and focussed projects, we brought our community closer together, fostering a sense of unity and mutual understanding.

Championing Accessibility

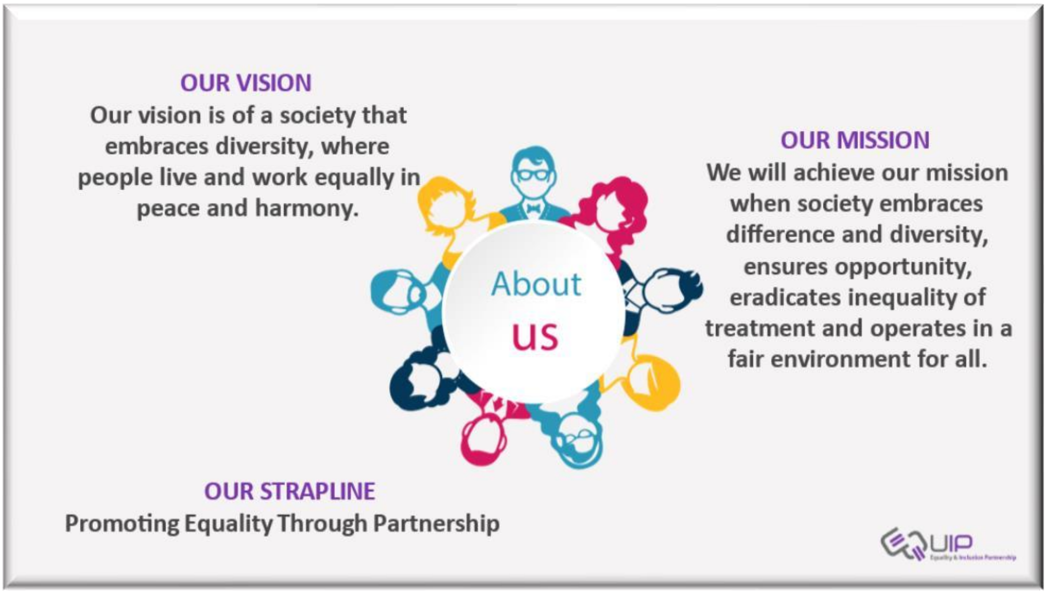
Accessibility is a cornerstone of inclusion. EQuIP has strived to break down the barriers that impede participation for individuals with disabilities. This year, we launched campaigns to raise awareness of accessibility issues and worked closely with local partners and agencies to ensure that physical and digital spaces are accessible to all. Our efforts culminated in the creation of a Disability Forum that serves as a valuable resource for both individuals with disabilities and organisations striving to be more inclusive.

Looking Forward with Hope

As we reflect on the past year, we acknowledge the significant progress made, but we also recognise that there is much work yet to be done. The ongoing struggle for equality, diversity and inclusion remains at the forefront of our efforts, and we are eager to continue the journey with renewed commitment and enthusiasm.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Warwickshire County Council, all our partners, supporters, and the community for their unwavering commitment to our cause. It is your continued support that drives us to strive for a world, a country and a county, where everyone is treated with fairness, respect, and dignity.

This annual report is a testament to the collective power of community-driven change, and it is with great hope and determination that we look ahead to the future, forging a path towards a more inclusive, equitable, and harmonious society. Together, we can achieve our vision of a society that embraces diversity, where people live and work equally in peace and harmony.

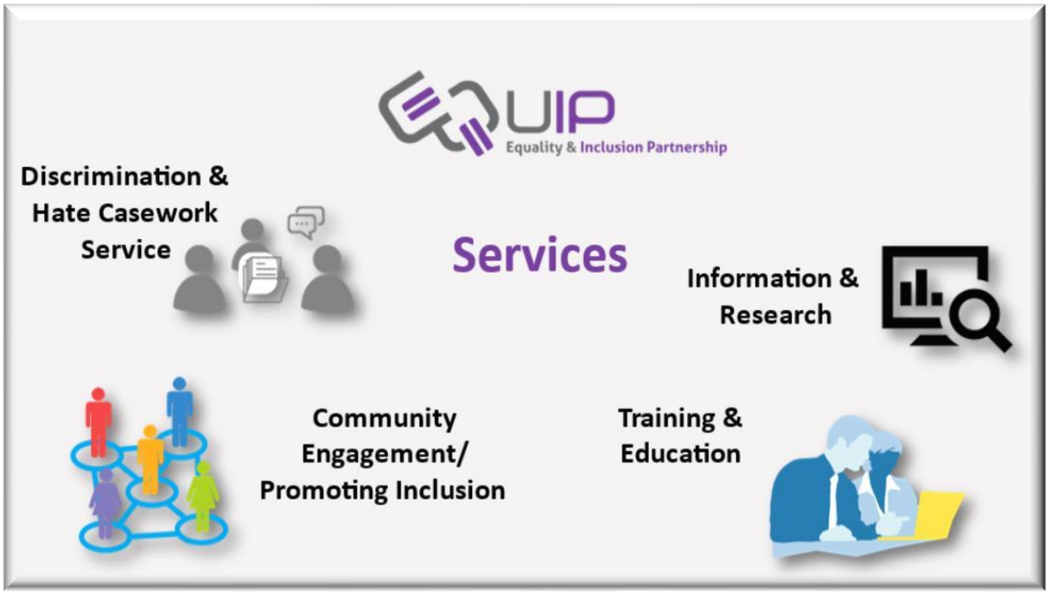


OUR VISION
Our vision is of a society that embraces diversity, where people live and work equally in peace and harmony.

About us

OUR MISSION
We will achieve our mission when society embraces difference and diversity, ensures opportunity, eradicates inequality of treatment and operates in a fair environment for all.

OUR STRAPLINE
Promoting Equality Through Partnership



EQUIP
Equality & Inclusion Partnership

Services

Discrimination & Hate Casework Service

Information & Research

Community Engagement/ Promoting Inclusion

Training & Education

Equality Services Contract

As part of the Equality Services contract commissioned by Warwickshire County Council (WCC), there are 3 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

KPI 1 - Provision of support to individuals

People who live and work in Warwickshire have access to appropriate advice and support to help resolve their issues around victimisation, discrimination, harassment or hate crime, covering the 9 protected characteristics in the Equality Act.

KPI 2 - Provision of training which covers the equalities agenda

Development and delivery of high-quality training and guidance to community groups, faith groups, businesses, schools and public sector organisations.

KPI 3 - Engagement to improve community cohesion and equality of service provision

WCC wants to see an increase in the organisational support by the Equalities Service to public and third sector organisations to positively promote community cohesion and equality through their employment practices and service delivery and an increase in Public Awareness of community cohesion and equality.

By way of achieving the above KPIs, EQuIP delivers the following services:

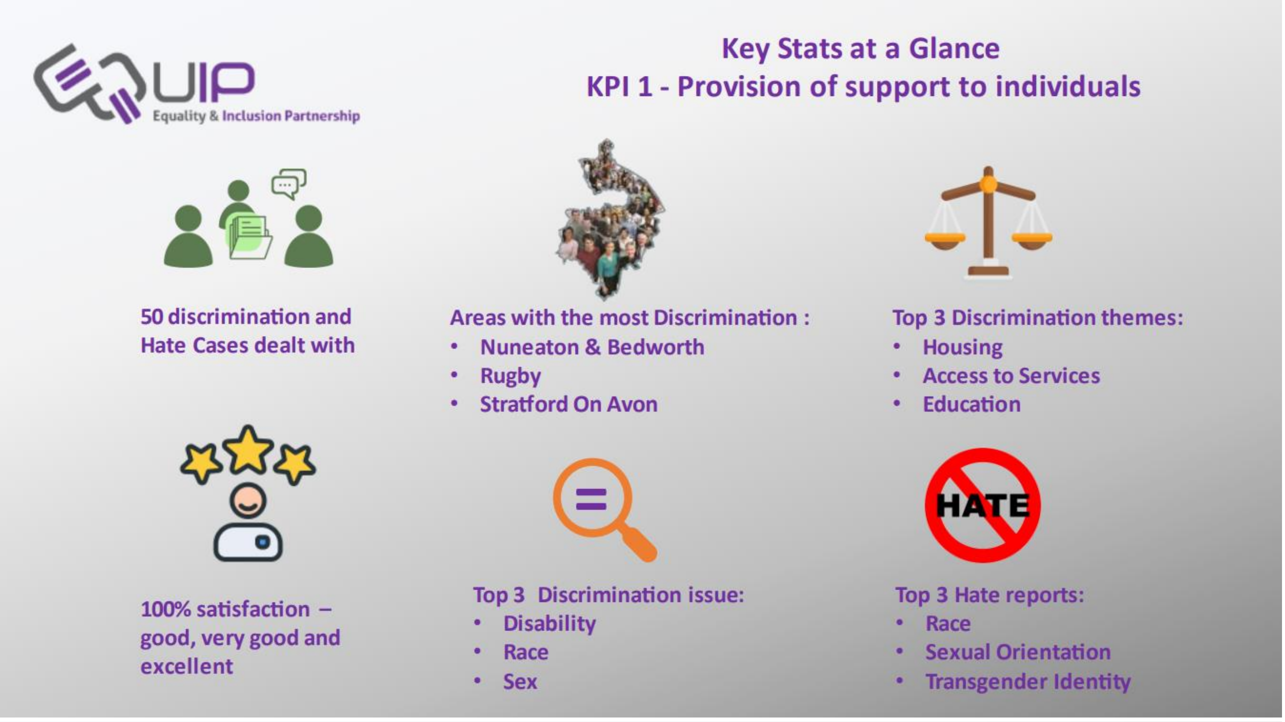
Discrimination and Hate Crime Casework Service – EQuIP offers free, impartial and confidential advice and support for those facing discrimination or anyone who had experienced or witnessed hate. The areas that we cover include:

- Accessing Services
- Criminal Justice System
- Education
- Employment
- Health and Social Care
- Housing

Training and development to individuals, groups and organisations – EQuIP has experienced staff who provide effective and practical equality, diversity and inclusion training, which is adapted to meet the needs of the learner.

Community Engagement Support – EQuIP specialises in engagement with diverse groups and works with a range of community groups and other partners, in understanding, realising and resolving equality issues, concerns and aspirations. We conduct twice yearly Equality Surveys and host an Equality Network across the county. We also engage with a number of strategic partnerships to influence decision makers on matters of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Key Highlights



EQUIP Equality & Inclusion Partnership

Key Stats at a Glance
KPI 1 - Provision of support to individuals

50 discrimination and Hate Cases dealt with

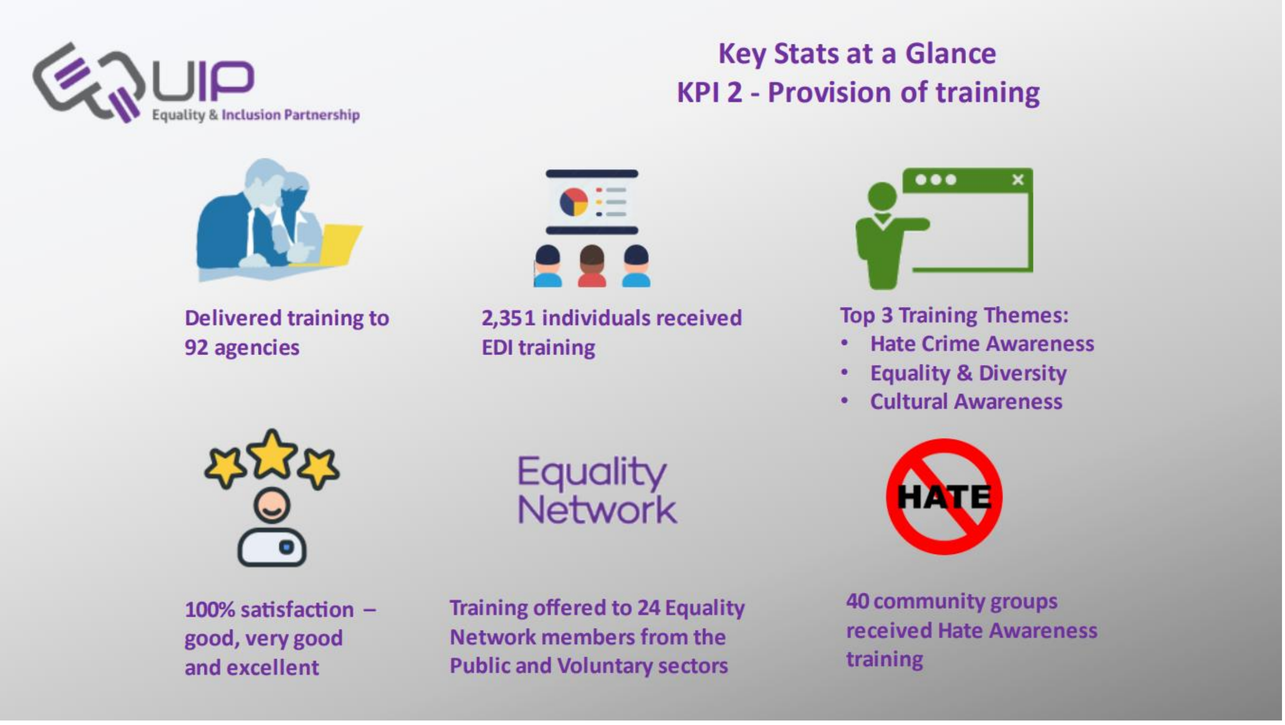
Areas with the most Discrimination :
- Nuneaton & Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford On Avon

Top 3 Discrimination themes:
- Housing
- Access to Services
- Education

100% satisfaction – good, very good and excellent

Top 3 Discrimination issue:
- Disability
- Race
- Sex

Top 3 Hate reports:
- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender Identity



EQUIP Equality & Inclusion Partnership

Key Stats at a Glance
KPI 2 - Provision of training

Delivered training to 92 agencies

2,351 individuals received EDI training

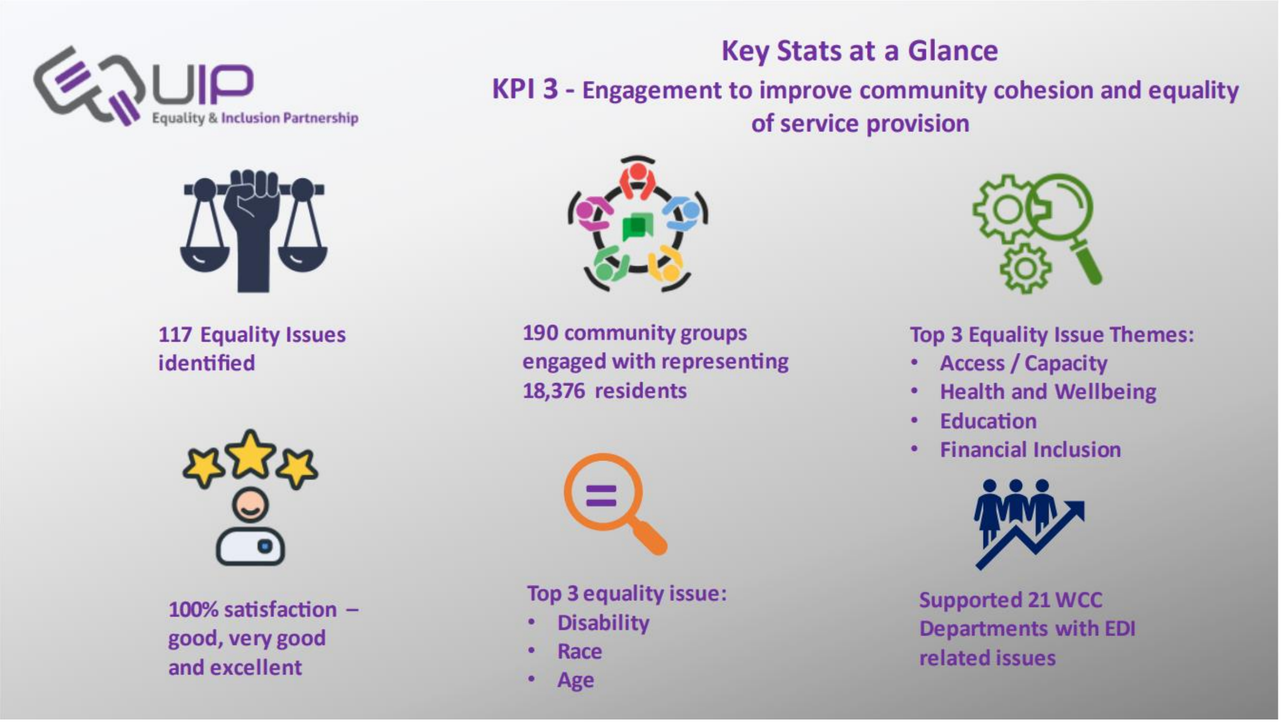
Top 3 Training Themes:
- Hate Crime Awareness
- Equality & Diversity
- Cultural Awareness

100% satisfaction – good, very good and excellent

Equality Network

Training offered to 24 Equality Network members from the Public and Voluntary sectors

40 community groups received Hate Awareness training



EQUIP
Equality & Inclusion Partnership

Key Stats at a Glance

KPI 3 - Engagement to improve community cohesion and equality of service provision

117 Equality Issues identified

190 community groups engaged with representing 18,376 residents

Top 3 Equality Issue Themes:
- Access / Capacity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Education
- Financial Inclusion

100% satisfaction – good, very good and excellent

Top 3 equality issue:
- Disability
- Race
- Age

Supported 21 WCC Departments with EDI related issues

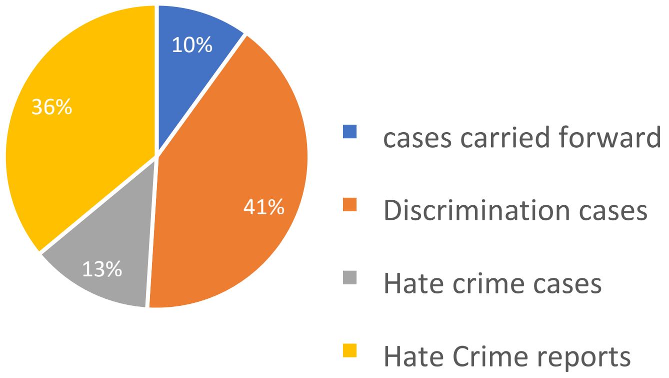
KPI 1 – Provision of support to individuals

Discrimination and Hate Casework

During the year 1st October 2022 – 30th September 2023, EQuIP dealt with a total of 50 cases This includes:

- 8 cases carried over into October 2022
- 32 discrimination cases
- 10 hate cases

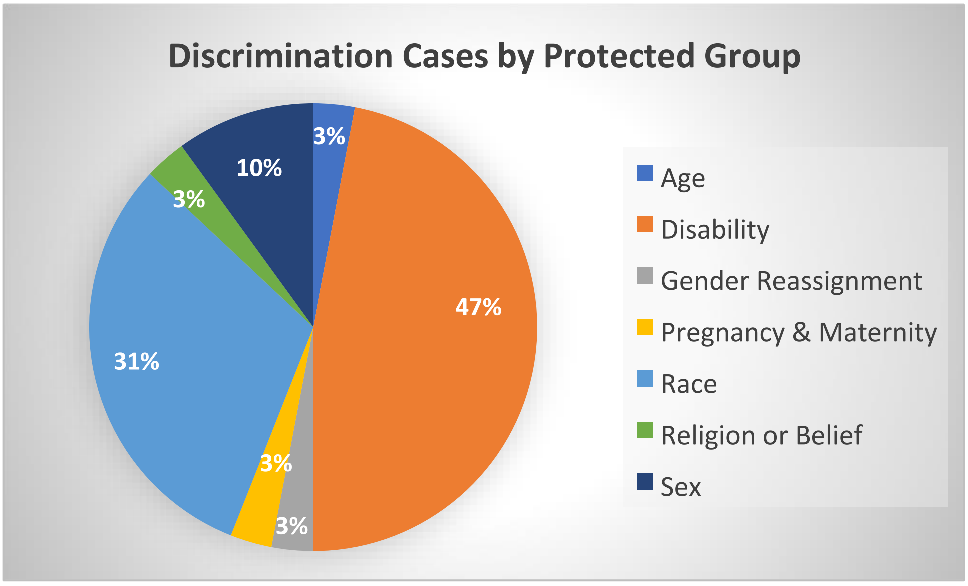
During this year, EQuIP received 28 hate crime reports



	July 2022 – September 2022	October 2022- December 2022	January 2023 – March 2023	April 2023 – June 2023	July 2023 – September 2023	TOTAL YEAR
Existing cases brought forward	29	8	10	17	20	
New Discrimination cases	4	6	8	13	5	**32**
New Hate crime cases	2	3	0	5	2	**10**
Hate crime reports	7	4	8	6	10	**28**
Total	**42**	**21**	**26**	**41**	**37**	

During Q4, EQuIP saw a reduction of new discrimination and hate cases from the previous quarter (Q3), however, when comparing to the same quarter during the previous year, the figures are generally the same.

EQuIP tends to receive fewer cases during this quarter each year as a result of groups and clients being away for the summer months.



The majority of discrimination cases during the year relate to Disability at 47%, followed by Race, at 31%.

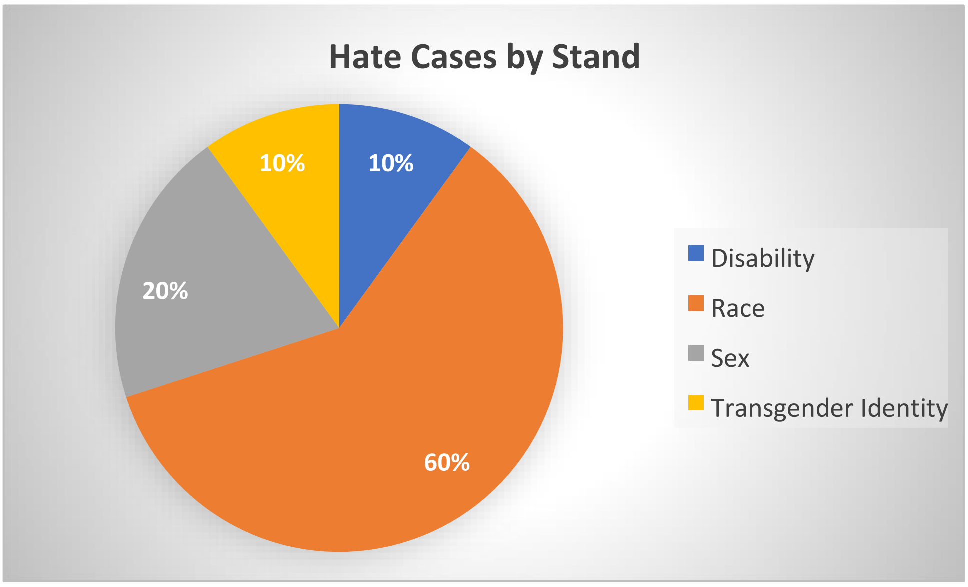
Both Nuneaton and Bedworth and Rugby boroughs had the greatest number of discrimination cases, both at 31%. Followed by Stratford On Avon at 19%.

Top Discrimination issues:

- Housing
- Access to Services
- Education
- Employment

From the 32 cases, the majority related to Housing issues, mainly with neighbour disputes and issues with housing associations in addressing the alleged discrimination. The number of cases equate to 39% overall.

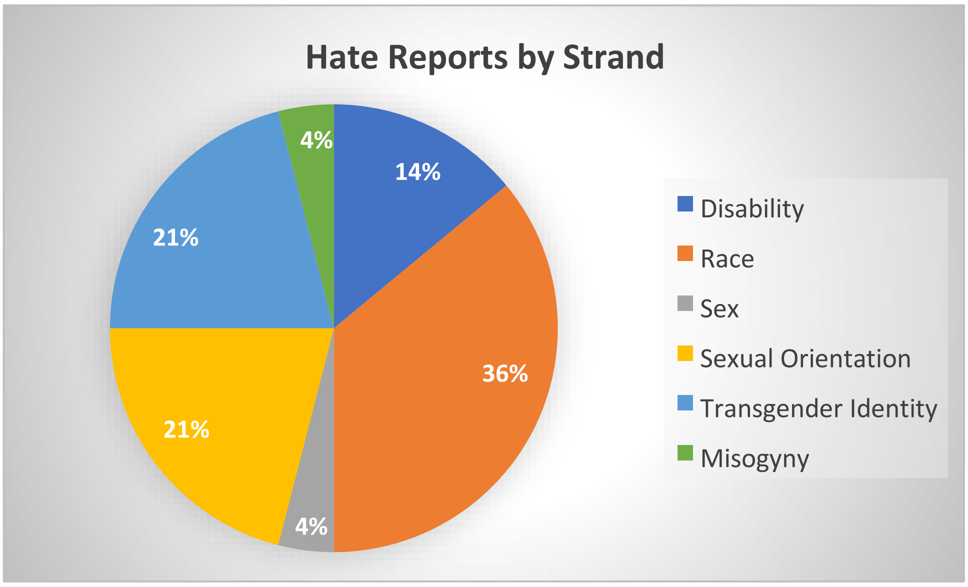
This is followed by Access to Services at 25% and Education at 21%. Access to Services were, in the main, related to health and local authority services and education issues specifically related to Education and Health Care Plans and schools not meeting the neurodiverse needs of students and parents.



By far, the majority of Hate cases dealt with during the year, relate to Race at 60%.

In terms the 10 Hate Cases, most related to Rugby and Nuneaton and Bedworth, with 40% and 30% respectively.

80% of hate cases related to access to Criminal Justice Services, where the crime had been reported but no or little response had been provided. EQuIP meets monthly with colleagues from Warwickshire Police to review any cases that require the intervention of the force and an action plan and response is determined for each client.



The majority of hate reports during the year relate to Race at 36%, followed by Sexual Orientation and Transgender Identity, both at 21%.

Most of the hate reports were from the Rugby area, which amounted to 43% of the reports. This was followed by Warwick District at 21% and Stratford On Avon at 18%

The majority of reports took place public spaces and town centre areas, and online.

KPI 2 - Provision of training which covers the equalities agenda:

During the course of the year, EQuIP has trained a total of **92** agencies and groups. This figure is largely community groups and voluntary organisations. With 76% and 23% respectively.

Training has been provided to a total of **2,351** individuals and awareness sessions have been delivered to:

- Community groups directly – Hate Crime awareness
- Voluntary groups/WCC commissioned services directly – Hate Crime awareness and EDI
- Asylum Hotels – Hate Crime awareness
- Equality Network EDI Refresher sessions – Varied themes

Experienced or Witnessed Hate?
TELL SOMEONE.
Silence Hides Hate
Reporting Hate Is Easy
0330 135 6606
www.reporthatenow.com
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WARWICKSHIRE
HATE
CRIME
PARTNERSHIP

As part of the work surrounding the Warwickshire Hate Crime Partnership, EQuIP was able to revamp the publicity materials for hate crime reporting and awareness of the reporthatenow website. The above materials were circulated to all hate crime partners along with wider circulation to other partners across the public, voluntary and community sectors.

In addition, during the early part of the year, EQuIP identified 40 groups across the county for the roll out of free awareness sessions. The feedback from these sessions has been positive, and it is hoped that with continued awareness, this will drive increase in reports to the 'Report Hate Now' website.

What has not been positive, was the feedback when reporting to the Police, that survivors do not feel that they have been taken seriously, nor listened to. With the roll out of free awareness sessions it was hoped that reporting online will increase awareness of hot spots, targeted groups (e.g. disability, women, race and LGBTQ+) communities. We continue to inform the community that reports can be logged anonymously by themselves or community member that witness Hate crimes and incidents.

The feedback from the awareness sessions led to the planning and roll out of the We Stand Together events, which were held in April / May 2023.

Furthermore, as part of developing the Equality Network, EQuIP has established a series of onehour online awareness raising/training snapshots on issues of interest to the Network, focusing on equality, diversity, equity and inclusion. Delivered on the last Wednesday of every month, the sessions are aimed at partners and their frontline staff. Booking is via Eventbrite link.

The one-hour sessions are held on Microsoft Teams, hosted by EQuIP, where attendees are able to hear from experts in the field. Sessions began in May 2023 with an intended schedule during the year:

Date	Topic	Organisation
29 Mar	Trans Awareness	Warwickshire Pride
26 Apr	Prevent	WCC Community Safety team
28 Jun	Hate Crime – what is it and how to report safely	EQuIP
19 Jul	Restorative Justice	Victim Support
27 Sept	Safeguarding	Family Information Service
25 Oct	Mental Health and Trauma	CW Mind
29 Nov	Cultural Awareness – why does it matter	EQuIP

EQuIP's focus during the summer months of 2023 has been on developing a range of different factsheets as part of EQuIP's core offer.

DIVERSITY
INCLUSION
EQUITY
HONESTY
BELONGING
TRUST
RESPECT

EQuIP often get requests for easy-to-read guides to the most important headline facts on issues that may be of interest to everyone in Warwickshire around equality and discrimination.

○ Equality Act 2010	available now
○ The 9 protected characteristics – what are they	September

○ Hate Crime – what is it and how to report it	October
○ Direct and indirect discrimination	October
○ Cultural Awareness – why is it important	November

All will be available to download from our website: www.equipequality.org.uk/resources

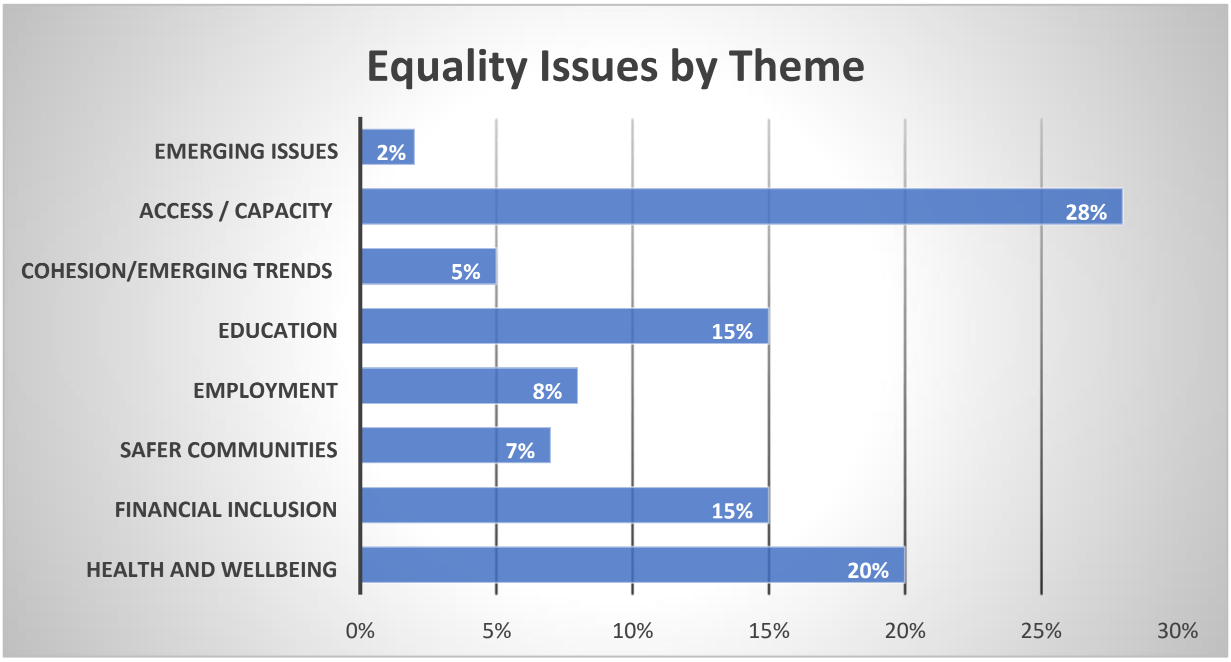
EQuIP is planning to have translated versions soon. In Warwickshire we have traditionally focused on Punjabi, Gujarati, Polish and Portuguese and Hindi but EQuIP is increasingly being asked for languages such as Urdu, Kurdish Sorani and Arabic.

KPI 3 - Engagement to improve community cohesion and equality of service provision

Since the start of the contract in October 2022, EQuIP has identified 117 equality issues from groups and individuals across the county. The equality issues identified are very distinct from community issues, in so far that they have a direct impact on one or more of the 9 protected characteristics, defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Once an equality issue is identified, a resolution is determined directly by EQuIP or through liaison with key partners. Some issues are straight forward to resolve, whereas the majority require a medium to longer term address.

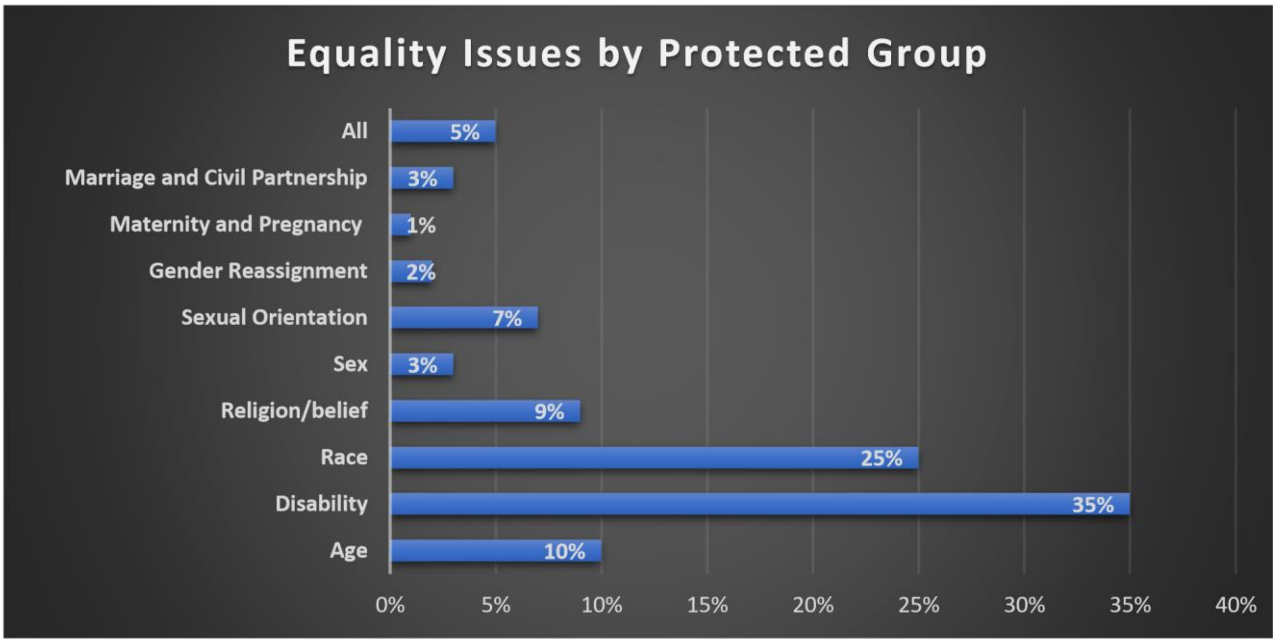
The equality are themed into the following areas shown on the graph:



As shown above, the majority of equality issues raised during the year have been Access/ Capacity related at 28%. These refer to access to services or capacity issues faced by local groups.

This is followed by health and wellbeing issues at 20% and education and financial inclusion, both at 15%.

Theme	Q2 22/23	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Total (since Oct 22)
Health and Wellbeing	13	4	10	5	4	23
Financial Inclusion	2	7	7	4		18
Safer Communities	4		6	2		8
Employment		3	4	1	1	9
Education			6	6	6	18
Cohesion/emerging trends		1	3	2		6
Access / capacity	5	4	21	8		33
Emerging Issues					2	2
Total	**24**	**19**	**57**	**28**	**13**	**117**



The majority of issues identified during the year relate to disability issues at 35%, followed by race at 25% and age, at 10%.

Strand	**Q2 – 22/23**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Total (since Oct 22)**
Age	4		7	4	1	12
Disability	1	3	26	9	3	41
Race	14	9	13	4	3	29
Religion/belief	1	6	3	2		11
Sex	3		2	1	1	4
Sexual Orientation	1		1	2	5	8
Gender Reassignment			2			2
Maternity and Pregnancy				1		1
Marriage and Civil Partnership		1		2		3
All			3	3		6
Total	**24**	**19**	**57**	**28**	**13**	**117**

The majority of the equality issues have been identified from the 3 urban areas across the county, namely Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby and Warwick District areas. This is followed by North Warwickshire and Stratford On Avon. Engagement and equality issues have increased over the year in and from North Warwickshire as a result of EQuIP establishing the Disability Forum, in partnership with North Warwickshire Borough Council.

A breakdown of the most notable issues during the year include:

Access to ESOL provision – This was identified through EQuIP's work with Asylum Seekers and Refugees and a range of support agencies wanting to know what provision is available. This has now largely been remedied through the recently appointed ESOL coordinator however continues to be an issue.

Access to specialist health care services – It was reported that hospitals are discharging patients to free up bed spaces but not following up on subsequent appoints needed.

Community Safety – Reports that the Trans community feel unsafe but that local criminal justice agencies will not take them seriously, if they report a crime. This heightening fear and anxiety within the community.

Financial Inclusion – Access to benefits is difficult due to digital exclusion and appropriate support within the community.

Health and Wellbeing – In particular, transport costs to hospital appointments and the frequency of appointments required, is impacting on household finances.

Interpretation and Translation Services – It had been reported to EQuIP that this service was not being offered when Refugees were attending Job Centre Plus appointments. From discussions with DWP, this has now been resolved and further information was provided as to how to access the services, whereby IT services would be provided.

Accessible formats for the SEND Inclusion Strategy – Engagement with the Autism network had highlighted the need for the strategy to be made available in Easy Read Format. This was raised through attendance of the SEND Network.

Autism Assessments – It was also raised that Autism assessments were taking a considerable length of time, in many cases up to 4 years. This is proving frustrating for families and people with Autism, as without the assessment and diagnosis, they were not able to access relevant support.

Cost of Living – Access to services and information have been raised by a number of community groups through the targeted engagement that EQuIP has started in December. Many of the groups have requested for information to be made available in hard copy form, as well as translated into their respective languages.

- Benefits assessments – a number of the community groups reported that there were delays in these assessments, especially surrounding those possibly entitled to Pension Credits.
- Assessment Delays - Also reported where the significant delaying in Adult Social Care assessments, resulting in individuals not being able to access the day-care provision across the county, especially those that meet specific cultural needs. This is also

having a negative impact on the day-care provision in terms of their capacity to sustain their provision.

- Warm Hubs - Members aware of local warm hubs but would not access due to feeling safe and listened to in their usual setting. Able to speak to each other and share experiences of being back home and common sense of belonging. They do not feel that warm hubs would cater for their needs.
- Meeting benefit thresholds - Concerns that working class are being disadvantaged by not meeting any threshold for support and yet struggling the same as everyone else. Want to know what support is available and how to access this information.
- Affordable food - Access to affordable fresh fruit and veg which some need for health benefits too. Community Champions are noticing many community members are going shopping later in the day, in order that they can buy the reduced items. Would like to know what further benefits/support can be claimed and how to claim these. Would prefer this information face to face, appropriate literature or posters.
- Heating - Biggest concern is heating as elderly members need to keep warm and mobile. If heating only one room, this causes issues with mobility as not moving around so much. Members do not access food banks nor warm hubs as not something community would do, would rather go without

Furthermore, EQuIP has worked with the following 21 WCC departments during Q3:

WCC SEND

- Attended the EQuIP team meeting to update re ECHP and also shared information regarding how to support community groups to access the services.

WCC FIS

- Attends Disability Forum, shares information and updates via their newsletters monthly. Also member of the Equality Network.

WCC Library Services

- Shares information about their events locally to disseminate to community groups. EQuIP is also a member of the Warwickshire Libraries National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) advisory Board.

Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service

- Meetings to discuss engagement with community groups focus being safety in the home. Also collected leaflets in Urdu, Hindi, Polish for distribution. WFRS has requested for EQuIP to share latest recruitment within the service with our contacts and community groups.

Warwickshire County Council – cost of living website

- Signpost community groups and individuals to this site when raising issues.

WCC commissioning Autism team

- Attend monthly meetings.

WCC Parent Carer Voice/Autism

- Shared information regarding the disability forum with them and the Equality Survey.

WCC Financial Assessments & Benefits Advice

- Communication with team trying to sign post community members to correct person who can support with appeal against Pension Credit application.

WCC GRT Dept.

- Attend monthly meetings. Also attended annual GRT event with EQuIP stand at Leek Wootton.

WCC Public Health Warwickshire

- Sharing of information – share updates to community groups. Also member of Equality Network. Receive regular updates at least fortnightly.

WCC Child Friendly

- Request from team to share information about HAF on our website.

WCC Community Safety

- Through the Hate Crime Partnership and the Prevent Steering Group.

WCC Disability Commissioning Team

- Meeting to discuss working together wanting EQuIP support in engaging with seldom heard communities.

WCC Heritage & Cultural Dept

- Email regarding food hub in local rural library and how community groups can access this service.

Warwickshire County Council commissioning support team

- Email sent to EQuIP to inform us of the new Community Autism Support Service.
- (CASS) service. Information sent to community groups.

WCC Targeted Youth Service

- Offered the team support with hate crime sessions in school due to the feedback we are getting from parents and carers about issues within this setting.

WCC Financial Assessments & Benefits Advice

- Correspondence to this team after request for support from one of our community groups in Nuneaton.

Warwickshire Food Forum

- Attendance of meetings and updating on progress on the Kind Communities – Kind Food events.

Warwickshire Hate Crime Partnership

- Chairing of meetings and working alongside Community Safety team on several activities.

Migration partnership

- Attendance at county meetings and chairing of the VCS Subgroup.

Prevent Steering Group

- Attendance of countywide meetings
- Member of the Channel Panel

Engagement Case Study

Life from the perspective of a LGBTQ+ member

There is a notion and belief that all individuals belonging to this community meet and go to the same group and meeting place. We have found through our engagement that this is not the case. There are pockets of groups who belong to the same community but have different interests therefore meet in safe spaces to share their passion for a specific subject or topic.

We echo time and time again post covid that community groups are not necessarily a constituted group or have a set regular meeting place or pattern. Groups who share a common interest just want to meet and talk regardless of time and place, hence 'WhatsApp' groups being set up to accommodate the demand.

It is important for this community to be seen and heard and it is felt that breaking off from mainstream groups allows for more identity and scope.

Some of the community feel that staying together provides the safe environment needed to nurture not only individuality but also safeguard against any hate and discrimination they come up against.

It is felt that when out in public as individuals and alone they have to mask who they are and just blend in. Life is different when you are comfortable or uncomfortable with your surroundings.

We talked about how being oneself is different in a city than a town. In a town everyone tends to know everyone, and this can impact on your individuality. In a city environment its as if the city embraces differences and different cultures and sub-cultures.

Being a young man who identifies as being from the gay community, why do I need to say this. I just want to fit in and go about my daily life. I do have a voice and I am not afraid to use it, I don't see *why I should use it to defend who I am and would rather use it to be an accepted member of whichever place I choose to call my home.*

Social Value

As a dedicated provider for equality, diversity, and inclusion, EQuIP's mission extends beyond its direct services. EQuIP works in close partnership with other agencies and partners, aiming to maximise social value, embedding, enhancing and supporting broader equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) agendas across the county.

EQuIP recognises that true progress in the realm of EDI and the delivery of equality services often requires a collaborative approach. By working in partnership with other agencies, EQuIP can leverage collective resources, expertise, and knowledge to enhance social value and address the diverse needs of the communities it serves.

Supporting Wider EDI Agendas

1. **Amplifying Impact:** Collaborative partnerships allow EQuIP to amplify its impact, hence its organisational strapline of 'Promoting Equality Through Partnership'. By working alongside other agencies with shared EDI goals, EQuIP can extend its reach, providing more comprehensive support to vulnerable groups.

2. **Policy Advocacy:** Collaborative efforts often result in more effective advocacy for policy changes. EQuIP, in conjunction with other agencies, can advocate for policies that address themed equality issues, ensuring that they align with EDI principles and benefit vulnerable communities.

3. **Holistic Services:** Partnerships enable the delivery of holistic services. When multiple agencies come together, it becomes possible to offer a wider range of support, including health services, job opportunities, education, and housing solutions, thus addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by vulnerable groups.

Social Value and Collaborative Partnerships

EQuIP's determination of social value is greatly influenced by the collaborative partnerships it engages in:

1. **Long COVID**: EQuIP, in partnership with health and social care providers and community organisations, can offer a more comprehensive response to the challenges posed by long COVID and the continued threats of the Pandemic.

2. **Cost of Living**: Collaborative efforts can address the rising cost of living by advocating for improved financial inclusion, access to services and information, and food and fuel insecurity programmes. EQuIP, in partnership with other agencies, can more effectively lobby for changes that benefit marginalised groups.

3. **Community Inclusion:** EQuIP's collaborations ensure that vulnerable groups are not isolated. By working with other agencies, it fosters community integration and offers a more extensive range of services, strengthening the social fabric and boosting social value.

4. **Environmental Feedback:** Collaborative efforts can make meaningful strides towards environmental sustainability. EQuIP and partner agencies can jointly promote eco-friendly practices within vulnerable communities, achieving a collective reduction in the environmental impact of their services.

EQuIP's role in delivering the equality services contract across Warwickshire is greatly enhanced through collaborative partnerships. These partnerships amplify social value, support the wider EDI agenda, and address the many challenges posed by factors like long COVID, the rising cost of living, community safety, social isolation, mental health and wellbeing and community capacity development.

The following activities demonstrate how EQuIP has amplified social value by creating partnership initiatives or from being involved in joint activities during the year.

Equality Network

EQuIP first revamped the Equality Network at the start of the contract, and the first meeting was attended by 12 different partner organisations. The membership currently stands at 24 members and we are hoping to include more potential members very soon. The current membership consist of:

1. Age UK Coventry and Warwickshire
2. Alzheimer's Society (Warwickshire)
3. Coventry and Warwickshire Mind
4. Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (NHS)
5. EQuIP
6. Family Information Service
7. Healthwatch Warwickshire
8. North Warwickshire Borough Council
9. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
10. P3 charity
11. Refuge Warwickshire
12. Rugby Borough Council
13. South Warwickshire and Worcestershire Mind (formerly Springfield Mind)
14. UHCW NHS Trust
15. Victim Support
16. Warwickshire County Council – Prevent
17. Warwickshire County Council - E&D lead
18. Warwickshire County Council – G&T team
19. Warwickshire County Council – Migrant Advisory Group
20. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue
21. Warwickshire Police

22. Warwickshire Pride
23. Warwickshire Vision
24. Warwickshire CAVA

Meetings are held quarterly and discussions have focussed on:

- National Police Race Action Plan and how this will be implemented across Warwickshire
- Business Intelligence on the diverse communities of Warwickshire and the 2021 Census, from Public Health,
- GRT team on the wider challenges faced by the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Warwickshire.

At our next meeting in December 2023, we have secured as guest speaker the Chief People Officer of the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board on tackling health inequalities.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

EQuIP is currently a member of the Warwickshire Migration Partnership and regularly meets with colleagues from the Migration Team, concerning issues in the various issues in the hotels across Warwickshire.

More recently, EQuIP has become chair of the VCS sub-group, which meets every quarter and before the full Migration Partnership Group Meetings. Meetings take place every two months and is attended by Voluntary groups across the county, supporting Asylum Seekers and refugees across Warwickshire, local authority representatives as well as colleagues from the WCC Migration Team.

Disability Forum North Warwickshire

The Disability Forum in North Warwickshire has been firmly established with the inaugural meeting taking place in April and followed by quarterly meetings.

The list of members of the public, including individuals, carers and community groups is steadily increasing. There has also been a number of local partners that have either joined or are keen to join future meetings.

These agencies include:

- WCAVA
- NWCAB
- Warwickshire HealthWatch
- FIS
- George Eliot Hospital

Themed discussions have centred around:

- Cost of Living which led to a detailed presentation on the local schemes available to support individuals and families.
- Autism and we were able to invite the System Clinical Lead for Neurodiversity from Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership Trust, as guest speaker.
- Transport, where guest speakers included WCC Highways Department and WFRS.

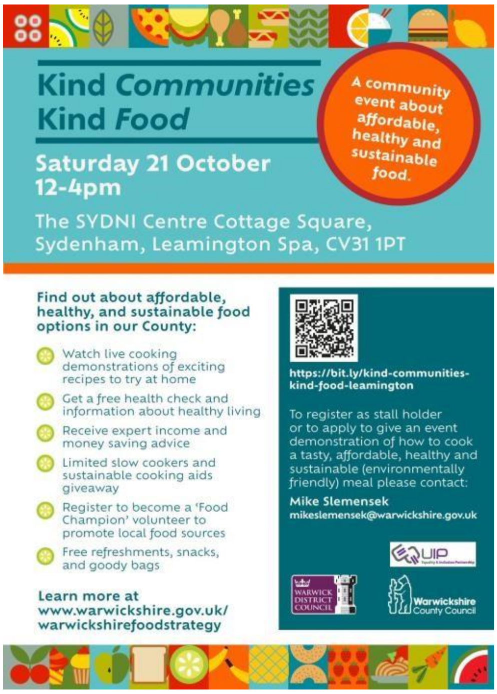
Cost of Living and Food Forum events Kind Communities – Kind Food

Kind Communities - Kind Food

EQuIP is working with WCC's Communities and Partnerships Team on this initiative and has held 2 events so far during the year. The initial event was held online with the aim of better understanding needs within the community surrounding issues of food insecurities and the access to food in the county. This was followed by a face to face event which took place in the North of the county, at the Jubilee Centre in Nuneaton on the 9th September and the second event will be held in the south at the SYDNI Centre in Leamington Spa on 21st October 2023.

The events are open to all and are a day of workshops, food demonstrations, cooking on a budget recipe cards, where to access affordable food that is locally produced. Attendees are also able to access information from a wide range of local public and voluntary services, that have display stands and staff members at the events.

The events follow on from an online event that EQuIP held in March where there was an evident appetite to work more closely together in partnership with communities and to deliver a focused Strategic Warwickshire Food Strategy.



Kind Communities
Kind Food

Saturday 21 October
12-4pm

The SYDNI Centre Cottage Square,
Sydenham, Leamington Spa, CV31 1PT

A community event about affordable, healthy and sustainable food.

Find out about affordable, healthy, and sustainable food options in our County:

- Watch live cooking demonstrations of exciting recipes to try at home
- Get a free health check and information about healthy living
- Receive expert income and money saving advice
- Limited slow cookers and sustainable cooking aids giveaway
- Register to become a 'Food Champion' volunteer to promote local food sources
- Free refreshments, snacks, and goody bags

Learn more at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/warwickshirefoodstrategy

https://bit.ly/kind-communities-kind-food-leamington

To register as stall holder or to apply to give an event demonstration of how to cook a tasty, affordable, healthy and sustainable (environmentally friendly) meal please contact:

Mike Slemensek
mikeslemensek@warwickshire.gov.uk

EQuIP

Warwick District Council

Warwickshire County Council

We Stand Together

Between April and May 2023, a series of 4 events under the banner 'We Stand Together' were organised, involving Warwickshire Police, Crown Prosecution Service and were chaired and managed by the Equality and Inclusion Partnership (EQuIP). Members of the Warwickshire Hate Crime Partnership were invited.

The key aim was to engage with community members, understand the processes currently followed in Warwickshire, and use lived experiences to highlight hate crime, what works and what needs improvement. Colleagues from Victim Support, Neighbourhood Watch and Warwickshire Fire & Rescue also attended.

WE STAND
TOGETHER

166 people attended the 4 sessions in total and a number of very powerful and compelling comments were made and collected. A number of community experiences were recorded, some very positive about the police and agencies working in the field, others less so. All partners need to improve and highlighted are 16 recommendations from the report.

Recommendations

1. Hate crimes/incidents across most of the recognised hate crime strands were reported at every session from across the county in various settings. Whilst reporting figures have slowed down significantly, there is a need to heighten awareness in order to tackle underreporting and challenging and overcoming the many barriers to reporting. More frequent and smaller group sessions are needed throughout the year and ideally in community settings and when groups already meet.

2. A small number of individual concerns of cases with the police were raised but all individual experiences have been logged and will be followed up. This has highlighted the need for an escalations process internally and also among partner agencies.

3. Schools. Experiences of hate crimes/incidents in schools and the need for engagement with schools, better awareness raising for students and staff and that hate crime needs to have a defined reporting process within the school system were very evident. All too often this does not happen and a new improved commitment to tackling hate crime at a school level needs to be made.

4. Youth support is another area that needs improvement, whether via youth workers or targeted youth support to provide greater awareness of the reporting mechanisms and help improve trust in reporting.

5. Race and religiously motivated hate crimes should not be treated as more ‘pressing’ than disability. Hate based on disability, sexual orientation or gender reassignment should attract higher prosecution penalties. Action – write to Warwickshire MPs and Law Commission.
6. Misogyny as a marker is recorded by some police forces, but not by Warwickshire. Therefore, we ask for them to be recorded and monitored by Warwickshire Police.

7. Reporting process of hate crime needs to be made very clear in a variety of formats that are easily followed by victims/witnesses of hate crime and made widely available. A simple, how to guide in a variety of languages including Easy Read.

8. Reporting of hate crimes needs to be available in a variety of formats, including face to face, online, different languages and not just through the police and 999.

9. Confidence and trust in the reporting process needs to improve. One way is ease of reporting, but also greater visibility of uniformed services at a community/local level e.g. community events.

10. Getting advice and support to report at a community needs to be explored – e.g. community champions on hate crime – trusted voices.

11. Victims and witnesses need additional support, so what is available should be more widely advertised so that it is available for seldom heard communities, i.e. those with an equality need not necessarily being met.

12. The Hate Crime Partnership needs to be more visible, more community-led initiatives and feedback from lived-experiences to feed into their work.

13. More regular, less formal, more local community awareness and engagement. Engaging with communities on their terms and fitting in with how they wish to receive information.

14. To ensure that all frontline staff and officers dealing and responding to hate crimes and incidents, receive up to date and regular training that incorporates the lived experiences of those affected by hate and the barriers to accessing services. Developing training, education, learning and publicity materials that are co-produced by communities, especially those that are disproportionately affected by hate.

15. Community Cohesion is rarely mentioned but is fundamental to assist in tackling hate crime at a neighbourhood-level. How are these activities considered when prioritising grant and funding opportunities for local community groups and especially for those groups that are more vulnerable to being targeted by hate.

16. There are several agencies that have responsibility of recording hate crimes as well as agencies that attend the Hate Crime Partnership. Coordinating activities between partners is extremely important and is the only way that the partnership will work. It is therefore recommended that the partnership seek to recruit and employ a full time Hate Crime Partnership Coordinator, that has the sole responsibility of organising the activity of the group and delivering on the partnership action plan.

EQuIP
Warwickshire POLICE
Community Feedback Report
WE STAND TOGETHER
2023
WARWICKSHIRE HATE CRIME PARTNERSHIP

The report has been discussed with relevant partners in the Hate Crime Partnership and forms the basis of its action plan and strategy for 2023 onwards. The action plan and strategy for the Hate Crime Partnership is due to be presented to the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board in December 2023.

Big Conversation 14 June

Warwickshire Safer Partnership Board Big Conversation event on Tackling Discrimination in all its forms held on 14 June 2023

85 participants from 31 organisations took part in the event with EQuIP as guest speaker alongside Sheldon Thomas founder and Chief Executive of the Gangsline Foundation Trust. Hosted by Jonathan Toy, Service Manager for Community Safety, the event was supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Warwickshire Police and colleagues from WCC, other local authorities, and third sector.

EQuIP explored the Warwickshire picture, the results of the We Stand Together initiative and its 16 recommendations and shared a number of key case studies on people’s lived experiences of hate and the barriers to reporting.

Sheldon Thomas shared his experiences of discrimination and it being a key lever for him and others to react to that treatment. In his situation he become a gang member but has been mentored by a number of significant community activists and has changed his life and now mentors other people. His reach is international and focuses on putting yourself into someone’s shoes. Sheldon explored discrimination in terms of class and poverty, he explored parallels with women who struggled for suffrage, the suffragettes, who were treated badly by the system/discriminated against and their human rights removed.

Discrimination is a powerful driver of hate, but there is a middle ground which is where reconciliation lives.

3 workshops were held focused on;

- Tackling discrimination and achieving positive outcomes – a community safety perspective
- Links between hate and extremism
- Building community cohesion in challenging times

EQuIP team members participated in all three workshops exploring the need for greater partnership working, the role of schools, commitment to a hate crime plan and strategy in schools, continued engagement with and between communities, and training. We need to be comprehensive and joined up in our approach to hate and extremism. To report whatever happens so we have a more accurate picture, and to listed to lived experiences, be honest about outcomes but ensure that coordination is much improved. Every organisation has a role to play, but better coordination is key. Communities are at the heart; listen to them, learn from them but manage expectations.

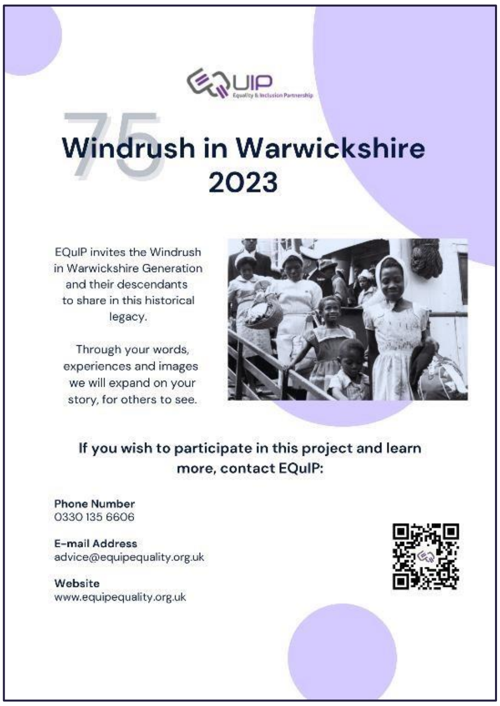
Partnership activities and outcomes needs better co-ordination but need to include lived experiences and trust, to develop trusted relationships.

The report from the event has been produced and shared with members of the Hate Crime Partnership. The report produced by the Community Safety Team at WCC has been used to inform the action plan and strategy for the Warwickshire Hate Crime Partnership, and these are due to be presented and hopefully approved by the Warwickshire Safer Communities Partnership in December 2023.

EQUIP
PROMOTING EQUALITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP
'Come and talk to us about your community'
Comm ty
Saf

Windrush 75

During the year, EQuIP was delighted to have been successful in securing a small fund from the Big Lottery dedicated fund to support key events this summer on the Coronation, Eurovision and Windrush. The Windrush project builds on the work EQuIP delivered in 2021 and will be delivered across the next few months after the launch on 22 June. This project includes a community event in celebration, an exhibition travelling to all 18 libraries in the county and the preparation of a curriculum aimed at improving awareness of the Windrush generation and parallels with subsequent migration into Warwickshire. EQuIP is particularly looking forward to working in collaboration with Black Caribbean community groups across the county, as well as continuing to work with Warwickshire's County Records Office, who is a key partners to this project.



EQUIP
Equality & Inclusion Partnership

75

Windrush in Warwickshire
2023

EQuIP invites the Windrush
in Warwickshire Generation
and their descendants
to share in this historical
legacy.

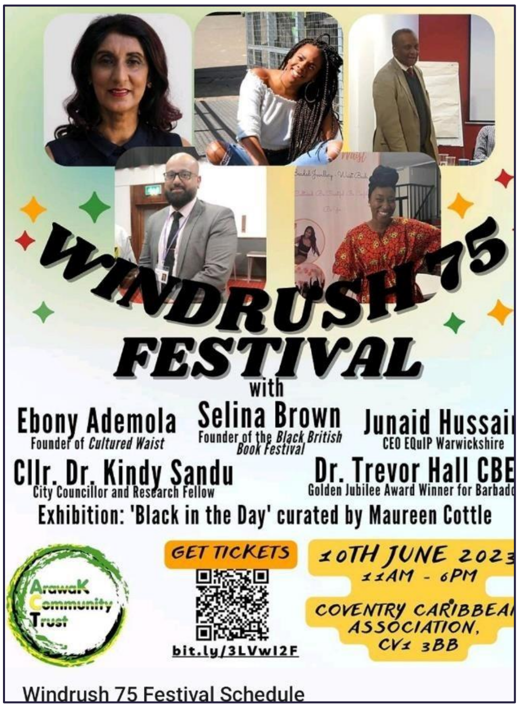
Through your words,
experiences and images
we will expand on your
story, for others to see.

If you wish to participate in this project and learn more, contact EQuIP:

Phone Number
0330 135 6606

E-mail Address
advice@equipequality.org.uk

Website
www.equipequality.org.uk



WINDRUSH 75
FESTIVAL
with

Ebony Ademola
Founder of *Cultured Waist*

Selina Brown
Founder of the *Black British Book Festival*

Junaid Hussai
CEO EQuIP Warwickshire

Cllr. Dr. Kindy Sandu
City Councillor and Research Fellow

Dr. Trevor Hall CBE
Golden Jubilee Award Winner for Barbad

Exhibition: 'Black in the Day' curated by Maureen Cottle

ArawaK
Community
Trust

GET TICKETS
bit.ly/3LVwI2F

10TH JUNE 202
11AM - 6PM
COVENTRY CARIBBEA
ASSOCIATION,
CV1 3BB

Windrush 75 Festival Schedule

People from the Windrush Generation and their descendants will be invited to share their words, experiences and items relating to their culture. 75 items from different parts of Warwickshire will be photographed, with explanations on their importance and relevance to the person. This information will be saved in the Warwickshire County Records Office.

A programme of training on the Windrush Generation, will be created and offered to schools in Warwickshire, along with a viewing of the 'Stories of the Windrush Generation' film which was created by EQuIP in June 2022. This film captures the stories, journeys and experiences of the individuals that came to Warwickshire from the Caribbean.

Previous contributors to the project will also be invited to participate.

More recently, EQuIP was invited to Windrush 75 celebrations to showcase the work that had been delivered as part of the Windrush in Warwickshire Project. EQuIP attended events in Rugby and Coventry as key note speakers. The events were also used as a platform to inform members of the Caribbean community of the upcoming project, as mentioned above.

At the events, EQuIP was also able to showcase the video that had been produced entitled, Stories of the Windrush Generation, which can be found on EQuIP's YouTube page:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7Qho_NZ5qI&t=22s

Contact Details

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SCAN ME

Equip Equality

EquipEquality1

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023

Warwickshire Waterways Strategy

Recommendation:

That the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and comments upon the contents of the Progress Report and the updated Action Plan for 2023-24 at Appendix 1.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the progress made in implementing the Warwickshire Waterways Strategy 2020 – 2025.

2. Background

2.1 On 22 November 2020, Council requested that a waterways strategy be developed for the County. The Warwickshire Waterways Strategy 2021 - 2026 was approved by Cabinet in September 2021. This Progress Report outlines activities and achievements since then and introduces a refreshed action plan to take the strategy forward through 2023 - 2024.

2.2 Although led by Warwickshire County Council (WCC), this has been a partnership project from the outset. The Canal and Waterway Strategy Steering Group is made up of WCC Officers from different services working alongside representatives from the Canal and River Trust, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, NHS bodies and the Environment Agency. The Waterways Strategy is shaped around three main themes shared with the Warwickshire Heritage and Culture Strategy 2020 - 2025, to which it is closely aligned: health and wellbeing, sense of place and economic vibrancy.

2.3 The partners share common goals and ambitions - particularly but not exclusively around health. A sense of place or belonging, along with economic stability and prospects, also contribute to people's wellbeing. The strategy takes all these factors in the round, as part of a place-based approach to encouraging local people to lead happier, healthier lives whilst protecting and enhancing the natural environment and wildlife habitats for future generations to enjoy.

2.4 Water is fundamental to life. Warwickshire is far from the coast, but evidence suggests people feel better when out and about by canals and rivers. Our waterways were once major transport and trade routes. Nowadays they are equally important for other reasons - not least leisure and quality of life. Their long history helps us to understand the past and how our communities developed over time. Our waterways also support the County's visitor economy and general prosperity.

2.5 Our updated Action Plan for 2023-24 will take this important work forward.

3. Context

3.1 The Warwickshire Waterways Strategy should be seen within the context of other Council policies and programmes including Safe and Active Travel and investment in cycleways, the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up, and the Sustainable Futures Strategy. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's Strategy for Nature Recovery and the Canal and River Trust's 'Nine Ways canals can fight climate change' are further examples of overlapping initiatives and common goals.

3.2 The broader, national context is provided by the Government's recently-refreshed 25-year Environmental Improvement Plan. WCC is, for example, supporting Government ambitions to treble tree-planting rates by May 2024 and has a commitment to plant a tree for every resident in the county by 2030. The aim is to restore long-lost forests and wooded areas such as the ancient Forest of Arden, which once covered most of Warwickshire.

3.3 The Government is also introducing a national nature recovery programme to stem species loss across England. This places a biodiversity duty on designated 'responsible authorities' such as WCC who will each produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy including maps, priorities and proposals for creating or improving wildlife habitats whilst pursuing wider environmental goals.

4. Partnership and Governance

4.1 Three main partners developed the Warwickshire Waterways Strategy - Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and the Canal and River Trust. These partners, along with representatives from the Environment Agency, and the NHS, make up the Strategy Steering Group.

4.2 Although there are currently no plans to increase the membership of the Steering Group, members have discussed how best to invite other relevant, potential partners to get involved and support the strategy. These might include other agencies, local groups, landowners, and businesses with an interest in Warwickshire's waterways. It is proposed that a countywide Strategy conference is held in 2024 to explore the potential for new partnerships and joint work.

5. Strategy Aims in Brief

5.1 The Strategy aims to promote and facilitate cross-sector collaboration and joint working - building strong relationships with a range of interested parties - and to seek funding to:

- Improve public **health and wellbeing** via waterways-related physical/outdoor/leisure activities and ‘family fun’ events
- Further explore/share the history of the waterways, locally and countywide, to increase **sense of place**
- Contribute to the county’s **economic vibrancy** by promoting the waterways network as a tourist attraction and growth generator for the visitor economy
- Promote the waterways environment as **green spaces** and **wildlife habitats** worthy of attention and protection
- Present and promote the waterways as **sustainable transport routes** - for walking and cycling
- Support efforts to address issues around **biodiversity** and the impact of **climate change.**

6. Progress Report

6.1 A video version of the original action plan, approved in November 2021, can be seen here.

6.2 Five sub-groups were established to take forward programmes of work and have made significant progress as set out below:

6.3 Towpath survey and report

6.3.1 Local specialists, the Transport Consultancy, were commissioned to complete a comprehensive analysis using data provided by partners (mainly the Canal and River Trust). A report has been completed identifying areas where investment in towpath improvements could provide significant benefit to the people of Warwickshire.

6.3.2 This will inform the Canal and River Trust’s investment decisions and support Warwickshire County Council in leveraging external funds, should future government grants be made available.

6.3.3 The full copy of the report is available via this **link**. *A link has been included as the report is 109 pages and contains many images.*

6.3.4 This work complements the work being completed by WCC and partners including Canal & River Trust, Sustrans and Warwickshire’s District and Borough Councils through investing in, and supporting, improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure.

6.4 Marketing and promotion

6.4.1 A photography competition was held during Spring 2023 to encourage people to visit waterways across Warwickshire and to capture and promote some of the spectacular scenery Warwickshire boasts. The competition was split into two age-groups - 16 or over and 15 or under.

6.5 Education pack and wayfinding

6.5.1 Warwickshire Wildlife Trust has led on creating learning experiences for families to enjoy together and has created a video mini-series exploring the habitats and wildlife of four different water venues. The Trust has also led ten family walks along Warwickshire Waterways, including bird watching and bat detecting.

6.6 Social prescribing and volunteering

6.6.1 Working with South Warwickshire GP Federation has enabled the sub-group to reach social prescribers and to identify additional social prescribing needs which partners can support. Going forward, social prescribers will be made aware of the activities of partners which support those needs.

6.7 Ecological perspective and climate change

6.7.1 The sub-group surveyed key partners across the sector to start the process of creating guidance for responsible construction near waterways, and of identifying locations and actions where small interventions could have a large and beneficial ecological impact.

7. Updated Action Plan

7.1 To build on the progress made, the Steering Group needs to update the strategy action plan for 2024-25. Our new plan is ambitious but achievable - and is the basis upon which future funding opportunities will be explored.

7.2 The Steering Group will update the original action plan video as a more accessible introduction to the Warwickshire Waterways Strategy.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The County Council allocated an initial investment of £50,000 from the Place-Shaping and Capital Investment Fund to the Waterways Strategy. Any future investment will need to come from external sources, with no additional financial implications for the Council.

9. Environmental Considerations

9.1 Key elements of the strategy relate to issues around climate change, to biodiversity and the preservation and restoration of wildlife habitats, and to the environmental and health benefits of 'active travel'.

10. Conclusion

10.1 The Warwickshire Waterways Strategy has proved effective in bringing together a variety of stakeholders with interests in waterways across Warwickshire. These improved relationships have already resulted in a comprehensive report on the conditions of Warwickshire towpaths (including areas most in need of improvement), putting the county in a strong position to leverage potential government funding in the future (eg active travel). The strategy has also served as a catalyst for a number of successful promotions of Warwickshire waterways. The 2023-24 action plan will focus on addressing environmental considerations and promoting the health benefits of engaging with waterways (including volunteering / social prescribing).

11. Background Papers

Report to Cabinet (9 September 2021)

	Name	**Contact Information**
Report Author	Ayub Khan, Head of Libraries, Heritage & Culture and Registration	ayubkhan@warwickshire.gov.uk
Director	Bal Jacob, Director of Workforce and Local Services	baljacob@warwickshire.gov.uk
Executive Director	Rob Powell, Executive Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Heather Timms, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture	heathertimms@warwickshire.gov.uk

Appendix

Warwickshire Waterways Strategy 2020 -2025: Action Plan 2023 – 2024 (some of these actions support other WCC plans and strategies)

Action	**Theme**	**Progress made**	**Delivery date**	**Lead**
Identify access issues limiting use of canals	Present and promote the waterways as sustainable transport routes - for walking and cycling (Health and Wellbeing)	Access issues identified and recorded	Quarter 4	Transport and Highways, WCC
Share towpath improvements report with key stakeholders to support Canal and River Trust and Warwickshire County Council to leverage funding to improve towpaths	Present and promote the waterways as sustainable transport routes - for walking and cycling (Health and Wellbeing)	Report finalised and shared with key stakeholders	Quarter 1	Heritage & Culture Warwickshire, WCC
Continue to work with Health colleagues to develop ‘green’ social prescribing potential and promote volunteering opportunities	Improve public health and wellbeing via waterways-related physical / outdoor / leisure activities and ‘family fun’ events (Health and Wellbeing)	Social prescribing and volunteering opportunities are documented and shared with key stakeholders	Quarter 2	South Warwickshire GP Federation

Action	Theme	Progress made	Delivery date	Lead
Promote winning images from photographic competition to encourage visitors	Improve public health and wellbeing via waterways-related physical / outdoor / leisure activities and 'family fun' events (Health and Wellbeing)	Winning images shared via social media and other channels	Quarter 1	Marketing and Communications, WCC
Promote waterways activities and events to increase public participation	Improve public health and wellbeing via waterways-related physical / outdoor / leisure activities and 'family fun' events (Health and Wellbeing)	List of events created and events promoted via social media at appropriate times	Quarters 1 – 4	Heritage & Culture Warwickshire, WCC
Complete a pilot project for improved signage and wayfinding in key strategic locations	Further explore / share the history of the waterways, locally and countywide, to increase sense of place (Sense of Place)	Locations identified and signage installed	Quarter 2	Canal & River Trust
Complete volunteer led project to research and share the history of Warwickshire waterways	Further explore / share the history of the waterways, locally and countywide, to increase sense of place (Sense of Place)	Brief History of Warwickshire waterways written	Quarter 4	Heritage & Culture Warwickshire, WCC

Action	Theme	Progress made	Delivery date	Lead

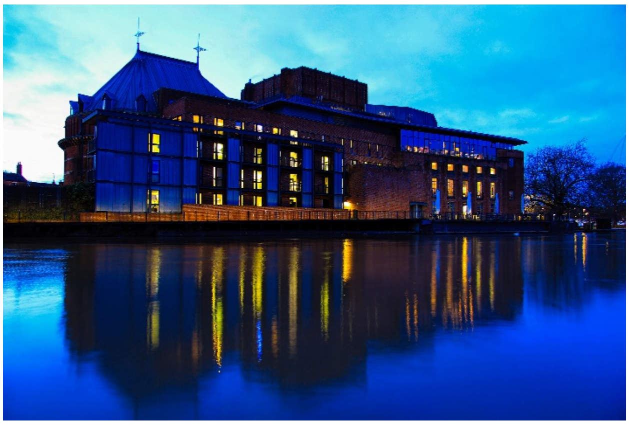
Create and distribute guidance on sensitively managing land to balance ecological / wildlife needs and human access	Promote the waterways environment as green spaces and wildlife habitats worthy of attention and protection, enhancement and restoration (Sense of Place)	Guidance created and shared with stakeholders	Quarter 3	Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
Planting gaps and improving species diversities in hedgerows	Promote the waterways environment as green spaces and wildlife habitats worthy of attention and protection, enhancement and restoration (Sense of Place)	Planting completed	Quarter 4	Canal & River Trust
Identify areas suitable for the creation or restoration of natural habitats including river margins, ponds, wetlands and hedgerows	Promote the waterways environment as green spaces and wildlife habitats worthy of attention and protection, enhancement and restoration (Sense of Place)	List of suitable areas compiled, and appropriate restoration activities detailed	Quarter 3	Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
Plan a conference to attract wider stakeholders to support growth	Contribute to the county’s economic vibrancy by promoting the waterways network as a tourist attraction and growth generator for the visitor economy (Economic Vibrancy)	Conference planned (including identification if venue, programme created and guestlist compiled)	Quarter 3	Heritage & Culture Warwickshire, WCC

Action	**Theme**	**Progress made**	**Delivery date**	**Lead**

Promote local businesses and communities near to waterways	Contribute to the county’s economic vibrancy by promoting the waterways network as a tourist attraction and growth generator for the visitor economy (Economic Vibrancy)	List of local businesses compiled and shared with stakeholders	Quarter 4	Infrastructure & Sustainable Communities, WCC
Promote Project Warwickshire, Warwickshire Skills Hub and funding opportunities to waterway businesses	Contribute to the county’s economic vibrancy by promoting the waterways network as a tourist attraction and growth generator for the visitor economy (Economic Vibrancy)	List of waterway businesses compiled and Project Warwickshire, Warwickshire Skills Hub and funding opportunities promoted to waterway businesses	Quarter 4	Infrastructure & Sustainable Communities, WCC
Finalise and distribute information / advice on ecological responsibility and climate change	Support development of a green visitor economy (Economic Vibrancy)	Information compiled and shared with stakeholders	Quarter 3	Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
Promote green businesses	Support development of a green visitor economy (Economic Vibrancy)	List of green businesses compiled and shared with stakeholders	Quarter 3	Infrastructure & Sustainable Communities, WCC

Images shortlisted in ‘Sixteen and Over’ category of the Waterways Photography Competition

Images shortlisted in ‘Fifteen and Under’ category of the Waterways Photography Competition



Winning images (‘Sixteen and Over’ category (left) and ‘Fifteen and Under’ category (right))

Examples of signage installed alongside canals to support the strategy

Canal & River Trust
The Avon Aqueduct
canalrivertrust.org.uk

Leamington Spa
Leamington Town Centre
Warwick

Resources and Fire & Rescue
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023

Library Service Performance and the Service Offer for Children and Young People

Recommendation:

That Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on this report.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the performance of the Warwickshire Library Service and an update on the library offer for children and young people, including the service's approach to increasing Library membership for children.

2. Background

2.1 Members requested that this report be produced as a result of a debate and motion passed at full Council on 21 March 2023. This report aims to respond to comments from members and strengthen the Library Service offer to children and young people.

2.2 The Service continues to reshape and realign the service offer to meet the changing needs and preferences of Warwickshire residents including physical and online services. In 2022/2023 there were 946,679 visits to our libraries and mobiles, a 59% increase from 2021/22. 85,780 people of all ages attended 5,633 library events, In addition, there were 1,313,076 physical issues and 1,025,769 e-issues of books and audio and newspapers and magazines, which was an increase in overall issues of 16% compared to 2021/22. Digital take up has increased from pre covid levels by on average 15% per year. Footfall has recovered almost to pre-covid levels.

2.3 Services to children and young people are seen as a key area for development within the Library Service strategy. This report highlights the progress the service has made in this area, and the close links with the Children and Families Service and the Registration Service. Section 8 provides an in depth look at the service offer for children, alongside other information on the operation and successes of the Library Service.

Premises

2.4 The Service has 31 libraries across the county (including 12 that are community-managed) plus mobile libraries and limited outreach services.

2.5 In the last few years, the County Council has also delivered newly refurbished libraries in Kenilworth, Wolston and Warwick and the library in Whitnash was successfully re-located to the Whitnash Civic Centre and Library.

2.6 A new Library in Nuneaton is being planned as part of a major town centre regeneration programme, Transforming Nuneaton, which is also planned to incorporate a Business Centre.

2.7 Some Warwickshire Libraries share premises and staff with other local services, e.g., Stockingford Nursery and Children's Centre. Staff increasingly work with partners to ensure a better customer experience for the residents of Warwickshire.

Digital and other offers

2.8 The digital offer in libraries continues to be enhanced and improved. The service has recently introduced You Can On-line (a tablet lending service) and Hublets, which enable library customers to read on-line resources within the library premises.

2.9 All County Council managed libraries also offer free public Wi-Fi and access via bookable computers to the internet, Microsoft office, scanning and printing facilities.

2.10 The Let's Make Offer continues to develop and expand their range of services. Let's Make Spaces enable customers to access bespoke resources such as 3-D printers, sewing machines, coding and music making packages to develop their ICT and creative skills.

Improving Engagement and Supporting Warwickshire Residents

2.11 The service contributes to the outcomes in the Council Plan, for example through holding events/activities throughout the year including events during school holidays such as the Summer Reading Challenge, Lego Club, Code Club, and other holiday activities. These programmes support the delivery of the Council's Child Friendly Warwickshire Strategy – happy, healthy, safe children.

2.12 With a view to further supporting the Council's approach to levelling up and to support the Council Plan objectives, the service has recently been successful in securing additional funding from Arts Council England to become a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). The work of the NPO will target Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire, providing cultural and educational activities and promoting and supporting improved educational attainment. The service has also been able to secure additional one-off funding to expand its digital offer (You Can Online) and to continue to support befriending calls, which were introduced at the beginning of the pandemic to extend support for those vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation. It offers free data to Customers using the service who are currently being referred to the National Data Bank, which provides free mobile data to people in need by the charity Good things Foundation, which is like a "foodbank" for internet connectivity data. Both of these services have now been absorbed into the service offer.

2.13 In order to support families with the Cost of Living challenges over the last 12 months the service has provided warm bags and toiletry bags for both adults and children, targeting those most in need through our network of partners including EQuIP and WCAVA. The programme was made possible following a successful bid to the Household Support Fund. The service distributed these products across the County whilst paying particular focus on the Lower Super Output Areas prioritised in the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up. In addition, Children under 16 do not pay fines on overdue items. This decision was taken because one of the main barriers to library usage in this age group was the accrual of fines. Adult fines and fees remain in place.

2.14 During the winter of 2022/ 2023 the service has also operated a network of “Warm hubs” providing additional activities for both adults and children. There were 984 events across the county during this period with 13,762 attendees. The Library service will continue with the Warn Hubs offer this winter.

The service is an established member of the Living Knowledge Network. The Living Knowledge Network is a UK-wide partnership of national and public libraries, created by the British Library to explore new ways for libraries across the country to work as one to improve access and engagement. The network currently includes over 20 public libraries alongside the British Library itself, the National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales. The Living Knowledge Network is the only network of its kind in the UK and is centred on exchanging knowledge and developing memorable experiences for public library users including exhibitions, live event streams and poetry performances. Staff benefit from skill sharing events, international partnerships, leadership training days and mentoring schemes (a total of 12 events with around 70 participants from Warwickshire).

2.15 The Local Services management portfolio includes Libraries and Information Services, Heritage and Culture and Registration Services. Local Services continue to work closely with the Community Partnerships team to enhance opportunities to work collaboratively. More detail regarding the role of Libraries as Community Hubs is included in Section 7 below.

Summary

2.16 The Service is continuing to find new ways of engaging with children and families and with the wider cohort of Warwickshire residents. The increased footfall since Covid is encouraging alongside the continued growth in digital engagement. The trends across areas of service are set out in more detail in Section 3 alongside performance data in Section 5.

2.17 The service of course continues to consider how to provide the most effective and efficient service. As part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, savings of £103,019 have been identified alongside the vacancy factor built into service budgets

2.18 The Service has a national reputation for innovation and getting things done and is frequently visited by other authorities keen to learn from Warwickshire’s approach.

3. Trends

3.1 Libraries are a universal service which encompasses a cradle to grave service. One of the challenges the service faces is supporting the wide variety of differing requirements of residents (see Appendix 3). The Library Service aims to cater for all of our residents' different needs. Digitisation is a key part of the developing service offer for those who need it, but this is in line with the Council's digital by choice approach, and is not being rolled out at the expense of face-to-face options for those who prefer them.

3.2 There is continuing evolution and change in how members of the public use libraries and what they value libraries for.

3.3 Libraries are more than just a building as the services that are provided, are both face to face and 'virtual'. The use of online library services has continued to rise, and existing work to increase the e-offer usage accelerated significantly due to the pandemic.

3.4 The Library Service continues to exploit digital technology to explore revised ways of delivering services and to continue to develop its online service offer, alongside the core offer in the library buildings.

3.5 Whilst it is difficult to assess library trends due to the impact of the pandemic on library opening hours, the data suggests that Warwickshire Libraries is bucking the national trend with book lending on the increase – 2022/2023 physical issues were up nearly 20% on the previous year. Visits are going up (59% increase) and libraries have put on more events with increased attendance – 85,780 attendees, comparisons for pre-covid years are difficult as the service offer has changed over the past three years. We will use data this year as the baseline.

3.6 Popular online services provided by libraries include the following:

- Customers accessed the library app and website for searching, renewing and requesting 514,733 items using the library catalogue.
- Online access to some of the world's most trusted reference collections including newspaper and journal archives (Times Digital Archive).
- The ability to listen online to classical music (Naxos).
- Free access to Ancestry.com in libraries (for researching family history) and Find my Past.
- Library news and information about events and activities.
- The Working Lives project which showcases audio reminiscences of the working memories of members of the public in Nuneaton and Bedworth. The George Eliot collection of letters provides online access to a facsimile and transcript of the County's unique collection of historical artefacts.

4. The Library Service Network

4.1 The County Council continues to run 18 static libraries as part of a three-tier network:

- Library Hub - in three main centres of population offering the widest range of services and longest opening hours.

- Library Local - in 15 locations with opening hours, which aim to meet local needs.
- Library Direct - online library open 24/7, plus mobile, outreach and housebound reader services.

4.2 Warwickshire Libraries provides services to support some of the Council's key target age groups. The infographic in Appendix 3 demonstrates user needs and what the library service delivers to these key audiences.

5. Library Performance

5.1 In 2022/2023 County Council-run libraries: (see Appendix 1 for all data)

- Received **946,679** visits (around 2,743 per day). Visits continue to rise steadily. - 59% increase on 2021/2022 visits.
- Lent out **1,313,076** books, Spoken Word CDs (around 3,806 per day).
- Handled **133,005** enquiries (around 385 per day).
- Provided **91,295** public computer sessions (around 264 per day).
- Received **85,780** attendees at library events (around 248 per day).

5.2 Appendix 2 sets out the individual library profiles, providing a two-page summary for each library that shows the annual performance of the library and what services and events are available as part of the current service offer. Comparison figures for pre-covid years is not like for like as changes to service delivery and offer has changed over the last few years.

5.3 Digital Services delivered in the Library Service include:

- Use of Virtual Library, please see 5.3 below.
- Use of public computer related events and activities e.g., ICT support to enable people get on-line and use devices effectively.
- Use of public computer network.
- Provision of free Wi-Fi.
- Access to Let's Make spaces – digital equipment and resources, please see below.
- You Can On-line – digital device lending scheme.
- Hublets – eReading devices which can be used within a library setting.

5.4 Digital services enable Warwickshire residents to access online services 24/7, complementing and enhancing the in-library offer.

5.5 The Virtual Library Service consists of:

- eBooks and eAudio books.
- eMagazines; for example Gardeners World, Top Gear, Countryfile, Good Food.
- eNewspapers; over 2,000 popular UK and international titles.
- Electronic Information Resources; subscription sites providing free online reference information from encyclopaedias, dictionaries, Driver Theory Test, GoCitizen (UK Citizenship Test preparation), Britannica Online, Naxos Classical Music Library, Ancestry.com, Times Digital Archive.

5.6 EBook and eAudio, eMagazines and eNewspapers downloads have risen year on year since these were introduced in 2010:

2021/2022	2022/2023
925,308	**1,025,769 (11 %increase)**

Electronic Information Resources (eSubs)

5.7 Our eSubs performance exceeded the cumulative total of the previous year by a percentage of 9.5%:

eSubs	2021/2022	2022/2023	% increase
Ancestry	34,747	66,028	90
Britannica	3,175	3,645	14
Oxford English Dictionary	1,877	4,560	142
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography	2,220	1,828	-18
Oxford Reference Online	141	556	294
Oxford Research Encyclopaedia (new from April 2021)	146	84	-42
Very Short Introductions (Oxford press)	7	0	-100
Times Digital Archive	59,577	52,449	-11
Naxos – Classical Music Online	38,609	31,648	-18
Driver Theory Test	13, 082	16,035	23
Libby	43,275	39,989	-7
Cobra		280	0
Press Display – eNewspapers	629,605	697,276	11
GoCitizen – Life in UK Test Questions	52	167	221
Totals overall	**826, 513**	**914,545**	**11**

Physical Visits

2021/2022	2022/2023
594,164	**946,679 (59 % increase)**

Physical Issues (loans)

5.8 Up until 2019/2020 physical issues had been declining as part of a national trend.

5.9 The onset of the pandemic meant libraries had to completely close to the public, the service gradually re-opened as Government guidelines permitted, this resulted in a severe reduction in the number of books issued, however, the last two years have seen a period of recovery.

Book Issues and Spoken Word CDs:

2021/2022	2022/2023
1,084,127	**1,313,076 (21% increase)**

Community Managed Libraries

5.10 Since April 2012 Warwickshire Library Service has supported 12 Community Managed Libraries (CML). These libraries use the same library management system as the County Council libraries and are stocked with County Council library books including receiving regular allocations of new titles.

5.11 The libraries have a weekly library van delivery service and visits from library staff four times a year. The staff undertake stock work and liaise with the individual CML management team regarding performance, training and other issues. The libraries are also supported by a dedicated telephone helpline. The successful transition of these libraries from the Council to becoming community managed has been used as a model for other local authorities looking to restructure their library service. The Council library service and several of the community managed libraries have hosted visits from colleagues from other authorities to share our collective learning and experiences.

CML physical issues:

2021/2022	2022/2023
39,510	59,332

Home Delivery Service

5.12 Working with 29 volunteers, library staff currently deliver to 333 vulnerable customers around the county who are unable to get to a static library or access the mobile library. Customers of the Home Delivery Service get a 4-weekly delivery of books and spoken word titles direct to their home. The Service also delivers to nursing homes to ensure the residents have an 8-weekly exchange of stock. Volunteers are key to the successful delivery of this service providing approximately 350 hours of their time each month.

5.13 The Mobile Library Service delivers a 3-weekly service to rural areas in Warwickshire, stopping at 258 locations on 36 different routes around the county using 3 purpose-built vehicles, serving over 3,390 registered library customers. The mobile libraries and the home library service issued 71,646 items in 2022/2023.

5.14 The Home Delivery Service and Mobile Library Service also signpost to partner services such as Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Home Safety Checks and Age UK Safe & Well services. All these services enable residents to stay safely in their own homes for longer and the delivery of library services to them helps them stay connected and continue with their leisure or educational reading, promoting mental well-being. https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/libraries-2/mobile-libraries

6. ‘Let’s Make’ in Warwickshire Libraries

6.1 With the help of Arts Council England Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation funding, Let’s Make spaces have been developed in Nuneaton, Rugby and Leamington libraries. This equipment can be taken to other libraries as required.

These facilities complement the existing library offer by supporting and addressing the needs of the digital agenda. This provides an opportunity to build on and improve digital knowledge and skills, together with enhancing local community confidence, helping to raise educational attainment and providing the opportunity to align much sought after digital and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) skills with the job market.

6.2 Let’s Make spaces aim to encourage economic growth and support the skills agenda in Warwickshire. In 2022-2023 there were 120 Let’s Make events with 922 participants.

6.3 ‘Let’s Make’ provides welcoming and accessible spaces where people come together to create, try out new ideas, learn and share new skills and expertise and make things in different ways, offering digital learning opportunities in libraries.

6.4 The spaces offer a range of inspiring activities which include virtual and augmented reality, robotics, coding and programming, 3D design and printing, animation and film making, sewing, embroidery and crafting, together with music creation and soundscapes. The intention is to ‘grow’ the offer, working in partnership with internal WCC partners, digital and design experts, liaising with local digital and design businesses and industries in the area and building on links with Higher Education/Further Education partners to provide additional expertise and user opportunities.

6.5 Let’s Make services and resources help to build confidence and logical thinking, raise aspirations and support the Council’s priorities and policies towards narrowing gaps and creating equality of opportunity for all. The spaces promote digital inclusion, widen participation and demonstrate the impact of libraries in supporting quality learning to meet the needs of 21st century communities.

7. Libraries as community hubs

7.1 There is a major opportunity to develop our libraries as community hubs, helping to support and embed our Community Powered Warwickshire approach. The Service continues to work with a wide range of partners to provide members of the public with the convenience of more integrated services in a single place. For example, Citizens Advice use libraries to meet clients. The library service works closely with Town and Parish Councils and District and Borough Councils to promote the service including contributing to events, such as the “Night at the Museum” which is run in collaboration with Rugby Art Gallery and Museum.

7.2 The Library Service recently met with national leaders in the sector, including the CEO of Libraries Connected, the sector support organisation for public libraries, New Local and Heads of Libraries, who have developed strategies around community power and library outreach. The service has developed a draft action plan to enhance its role in community development and co-creation.

7.3 The library service works in partnership with community artists and the Adult and Community Learning Service to deliver programmes in libraries. The Children and Families Service work closely with libraries as do the Family Information Service who attend events to promote their services.

7.4 The Service is a front-facing, skilled and trusted service that has much to offer other service providers, to help them meet local needs and priorities cost-effectively. Libraries have a physical presence in local communities and the ability to reach, attract and serve wide-ranging audiences.

7.5 Partnership services and arrangements include the following:

- Multi-skilled library teams administer concessionary travel pass applications.
- The service supports the Health & Wellbeing agenda including the Reading Well scheme, that makes available a collection of self-help titles for people with mild to moderate mental health problems. The collection is promoted via the Social Prescribing Network and is supported by Adult Social Care and NHS Warwickshire and continues to be used by members of the public. The service is seeking to develop closer ties with colleagues in Public Health.

7.6 Libraries Connected, (formerly the Society of Chief Librarians) have developed six universal offers: Culture and Creativity, Health and Wellbeing, Information and Digital, Reading, Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise and the Children's Promise, which are an integral part of our services:

- **Health and wellbeing offer** – Public libraries contribute to the health and well-being of local communities. This offer promotes and enables key health partnerships.
- **Reading Offer** – Libraries provide a modern reading service within local communities, in all formats and for all ages.
- **Digital and Information Offer** – Digital services, skills and access underpins a 21st century library service; Digital supports and enables the delivery of all the offers. Libraries support people to access information and services in vital areas: government online information and services, careers and job seeking, health, personal financial information and benefits.
- **Culture and Creativity** – Sharing of resources with the County Records Office, Heritage and Culture traveling display case. There will be further developments of the library offer in this area following the successful achievement of National Portfolio Organisation Status.
- **Children's Promise** – Shaping 21st century children's library services and sets out the library journey and the way libraries engage with children and young people as they grow. The promise underpins all other offers in relation to children.

National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)

7.7 Warwickshire County Council's library service has been successful in a bid to become a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) in Arts Council England's funding plans for 2023-26.

7.8 The new NPO status means that Warwickshire Libraries will receive up to £630k in funding from Arts Council England's Investment Programme over the next three years. There has also been a separate external oversight and advisory board, with independent membership, established in order to lead and guide the project.

7.9 This will support with cultural and creative programming and outreach activities delivered through Warwickshire Libraries, with a particular focus on the North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth areas, which aligns with the majority of the 22 Lower Super Output Areas identified as priorities in the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up.

7.10 All libraries managed by the County Council will reap the local and national benefits of the funding received, but as an Arts Council England priority place there will be particular emphasis to support the creative and cultural offers at Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire libraries, which also meet the criteria for assistance as part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

7.11 The work of the NPO will feed into relevant Local Levelling Up Plans.

7.12 Over the three-year funding period, Warwickshire Libraries will work closely with Arts Council England to:

- promote libraries as places for people to access great art and culture within their local communities;
- create new and exciting opportunities for the people of Warwickshire to enjoy and participate in culture;
- seek new opportunities to work with creative individuals and organisations to explore, develop and deliver new work through Warwickshire Libraries' events programme; and
- grow and develop the creative and practical skills of library staff and embed new opportunities for them to think and approach cultural programming differently and to grow their skills working with artists and creatives.

8. The Library Services - Wider Service Offer for Children

8.1 Library services contribute towards achieving council objectives, local priorities and wider agendas as set out in the Council Plan's seven areas of focus (more detail is available in Appendix 4).

Warwickshire's Seven Areas of Focus (relevant to Children and Young People)	Current Library Service Provision
Deliver our Child Friendly Warwickshire Strategy – happy, healthy, safe children	Early years offer includes: Bookstart (universal and targeted offer); Rhymes Times/Story Stomp Library offer 5-11 - Lego Clubs and Code clubs
Through education, improve life opportunities for	Clearvision (large print/braille books); Bagbooks; wide range of children's fiction/non-fiction

Warwickshire's Seven Areas of Focus (relevant to Children and Young People)	Current Library Service Provision
children, young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities	Electronic resources – Britannica et al Joint operation of the Library and Children's Centre at Stockingford to include delivery of both library and Family Learning Service led activities Partnerships with schools and nurseries to offer library class visits and third sector organisations School Library Service available to advise on Library provision within schools The library service contributes to the Council's Early Years offer, e.g., delivering Bookstart programme, both as part of the Universal Offer and a targeted offer at the most socially deprived Develop the library service's Sensory Offer in Stratford Library; incorporate sensory offer in all refurbishment plans Sensory Storytelling collections and toys available in all libraries

Bookstart

8.2 Bookstart aims to encourage a love of books, stories and rhymes in children from as young an age as possible. Funded by the Reading Agency there are two elements:

i.) a universal offer gifting a free Bookstart pack to every child before the age of 12 months old; and

ii.) Bookstart also offers two further packs, Bookstart Toddler (1-2 year-olds) and Bookstart Pre-schooler (3-4 year-olds), which are gifted by a variety of Early years partners to families who need them most.

8.3 Libraries manage the Bookstart Programme through a dedicated officer. Libraries work closely with partners such as Early Years settings, Health Professionals, Adult Community Learning and Children's Centres, to ensure that the most vulnerable children benefit from the programme and the opportunity to develop their early literacy and oracy skills. The number of Baby packs gifted in 2022/2023 was 4,080, with 738 Toddler packs and 1,878 pre-school packs.

Early Years

8.4 The Library Service run an extensive programme of Early Years activities. The activities include Rhyme Times aimed at the 0-2's their parents and carers introducing them to songs and rhymes that help a child's cognitive development. These sessions are offered at every library and are fun, friendly and extremely popular with large numbers attending.

8.5 Following on Story Stomp sessions are aimed at children aged 2 – 4 and develop the children's love of stories and associated activities that not only develop literacy skills but help develop social and fine motor skills.

8.6 Duplo sessions aimed at the under 5’s are being piloted at Atherstone and Polesworth libraries. These fun sessions help develop fine motor skills. These sessions have been well received and will be rolled out to other service points over the next few months. (Early Years Events: 2,037 Total Attending: 43,351). There are approximately 40,000 children in this age bracket in Warwickshire.

Offer for Children aged 5-11

8.7 The library service offers a range of activities for children aged 5-11. These include Code Clubs, where the children can develop early computing skills; Lego Clubs, which develop creative, social and motor skills. Story and Craft events take place throughout the year, especially during holidays. Recent examples include World Book Day class visits to learn how to use the library, Theatre Group visits, celebrations for Shakespeare Birthday, Interactive Archaeology Activities, Musical performances, Author visits including story and poetry writing workshop.

8.8 These activities are popular with both adults and children alike.

Summer Reading Challenge

8.9 The Library Service engages enthusiastically each year with the Summer Reading Challenge offered by the Reading Agency. The programme encourages primary school children to read over the long summer school holiday, a time when reading attainment levels can dip. Children visit the library to borrow books and are rewarded with a fun pack containing quizzes, games and stickers. The library service runs a range of associated story and craft activities and Let’s Make activities to accompany the challenge. At the end of the challenge, children who complete the scheme are invited to attend Award Ceremonies where they are presented with their certificates, which are often presented by local councillors.

8.10 The Summer Reading Challenge 2023 had 4,038 children who took part in the challenge and there were 127 Summer Reading Challenge Events with a total attendance of 2,213.

8.11 There are in Warwickshire approximately 60,000 children in the 5-11 age group.

Sensory Offer

8.12 The library service has recently introduced a new sensory offer. All libraries have sensory toys, sensory board books and access to Bagbooks story boxes, which are story boxes aimed specifically for use with children and adults with additional needs. Stratford Library is piloting several new sensory items including a bubble wall, weighted bean bags and a sensory projector. The library has specific quiet times for families with children who have additional needs. The area is blocked off and the blackout blinds drawn to enable the children to enjoy the space with limited distractions.

8.13 Sensory activities enhance learning through play, helping individuals to develop their senses, encouraging problem solving and building nerve connections within the brain. Sensory stimulation also engages different areas of the brain, helping individuals to absorb and retain more information. It can also promote communication, reduce anxiety and improve focus. Sensory input has also been shown to improve reading and vocabulary as broadening sensory associations with words assists learning.

8.14 The service has reached out to colleagues, partners and meaningfully included individuals with lived experience of disability and their families in the decision-making process to ensure that the service offer meets the needs of this customer base. This offer will continue to develop over the coming months.

Schools Library Service (SLS)

8.15 The Schools Library Service operates as a traded service and offers subscribing schools value for money services that enable them to offer quality school library provision which supports children to develop their reading and literacy skills.

8.16 There are 230 Primary Schools in Warwickshire and 54 of these subscribe to the Schools Library Service. There are 72 Secondary schools of which 15 subscribe to the service.

8.17 In the academic year 2016/2017 the service had 78 subscribing primary schools and 17 Secondary. As schools face budget pressures, this is having an impact on the ability for schools to subscribe to the SLS.

8.18 The Service operates a project loan service. Delivered termly to schools, all boxes are handpicked from teacher requests and include book resources and an artefact related to the topics. Our boxes are inspiring, hands on and appropriate for the learners.

8.19 The Service also offers reading for pleasure loans. Delivered annually to schools, these are professional selected books to support school and student needs, often filling library shelves or schoolbook corners.

8.20 The School Library Service has a small team of highly experienced staff that can offer support to school staff. This offered through a training programme and associated support, including regular primary and secondary school network meetings for school staff. Telephone/email support and advice services. The service also runs annual book awards at junior, secondary and teen students.

Eduroam

8.21 Eduroam is a portable box, providing secure and seamless internet access for students to access their university resources via the Joint Informations Systems Committee JISC (National UK digital higher Education body) Eduroam network. Leamington Library is part of a pilot project run in partnership with JISC and Libraries Connected. The project aims to improve the connectivity between students and their ‘home’ University and resulted from many courses transferring on-line during the pandemic.

Library Membership

8.22 Membership of the library service is open to all Warwickshire residents. The service aims to encourage all parents and carers to join their child to library service from birth or at the earliest opportunity to enable their child to have the best start in life. At present 37% of children in Warwickshire are library members, and our aim is to increase this through a Universal Library Membership scheme delivered in partnership with the Registration Service.

8.23 The service acknowledges that it would be beneficial to increase the number of children who become library members, and has the following plan to achieve this:

i.) To work with colleagues in Registration to promote library membership from birth.

ii.) Work with partners such as Adult Community Learning; Family Information Service across the County Council to promote both the educational and social benefits for children of library membership.

iii.) Raise the awareness of parents/carers regarding the benefits of library membership and usage with respect to developing their child’s literacy and educational levels. This work will be particularly focussed on the priority Lower Super Output areas identified in the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up. The service will monitor library take-up in these areas and this work will feature in the NPO action and monitoring plan.

iv.) To utilise opportunities provided at Summer Reading Challenge assemblies to promote library membership.

9. Volunteering

9.1 The service has a strong volunteer base and has over 240 volunteers used across the service.

9.2 As an example, Stratford-upon-Avon Library has a thriving and diverse community of volunteers. The long-standing group of IT Help volunteers support a range of customers with their digital needs. The Rhyme Time and Coffee Morning volunteers are both asylum seekers currently housed in Stratford, and a new young volunteer has also recently been recruited to support Chess Club who originally came to us as work experience.

9.3 A number of local reading groups are also supported from the library, which also hosts Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteers and young people aged 13-19 assisting with Summer Reading Challenge. Following the success of last year’s Fun Palace, volunteers will again be involved in running this year’s community-led event. Volunteers enable Stratford-upon-Avon Library to enhance its programme and support staff to deliver an ever-increasing range of events and activities for our local community.

10. Conclusion

10.1 The Service continues to move forward to better meet the needs of the residents of Warwickshire (both young and old) and the 24/7 society. It will continue to innovate, exploring new ways to deliver services both physically and digitally. The shift towards digital lending has added a new dimension to library services, rather than merely transitioning from physical to digital. The strong return of physical issues, alongside digital issues, and active use of ePlatforms remaining at higher levels than pre-pandemic, seemed to indicate that the pandemic had not resulted in a simple shift from physical to digital. This report also highlights the library service's commitment to social value and volunteering.

10.2 Our libraries improve individuals' quality of life and well-being, increased educational attainment, and reduced social isolation and are a key vehicle to support the levelling up agenda.

Appendices

Appendix 1 –	A Year in Warwickshire Libraries Infographic.
Appendix 2 –	Individual Library Profiles – These are a two-page summary for each library, showing the annual performance of the library and what services and events are available for customer use. *It is difficult to compare individual libraries, with each other, as they have varying opening hours, staffing levels, and service offer based on local need and population served.*
Appendix 3 –	Library Service Offer Infographic.

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 Adrian Warwick, Parminder Singh Birdi, Sarah Boad, Sarah Feeney, and Will Roberts

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A Year in Warwickshire Libraries

Warwickshire County Council

946,679

visits to our libraries and mobile libraries

LEARNING

1,313,076
total books loaned

5,633 events
attended by **85,780**

679,040
children and young people book loans

3,931
children's and young people's events
attended by **72,433**
children and young people

13,944
music scores loaned

13
community managed libraries supported

1,137
Schools library service project loan boxes

3,112
children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge

110,737
Number of reservations placed

COMMUNITY, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

249
total regular volunteers

328
people served through the Home Delivery service

3,800
mobile stops over the year

164,129
Registered users

4,264
home deliveries

DIGITAL AND INFORMATION

91,295
public computer sessions

120
Let's Make events
Let's MAKE
attended by
922
participants

48,108
hours of PC use

public total wi-fi sessions
187,523
total wi-fi hours
1,120,109

10,495,163
Virtual visits to our online services

133,005
Number of enquiries

93
tablet loans

39,989
digital magazine downloads
172,632
eAudiobook downloads
115,872
total eBook downloads

697,276
eNewspapers downloaded

7,845
number of eBook users
7,128
number of eAudio users
1,456
number of eMagazine users

Warwickshire Library Service Offer for Everyone

LIBRARIES DELIVER

Services for everyday life

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Users needs including:

- Reading
- Digital literacy
- Health and wellbeing
- Familiy activities
- Life skills

Libraries deliver services including

- Free Wi-Fi, computers and printing
- Health information
- Social spaces
- Bookstart
- Rhymetime & Story Stomp
- Books, eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines, eNewspapers and eInformation
- Summer reading challenge
- Code clubs Volunteering
- Mobile library service
- Board Games
- IT Help

ACTIVE LEARNERS

Users needs including:

- Reading
- Digital literacy
- Health and wellbeing
- Study space
- Connectivity
- Carers information
- Learning resources
- Homework support

Libraries deliver services including

- Free Wi-Fi, computers and printing
- Health information
- Social spaces
- Free study space
- Books, eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines, eNewspapers and eInformation
- Let's Make - digital programmes
- Homework & study support resources
- Access to specialist services e.g. music & drama, local studies
- Board Games
- IT Help

ACTIVE CITIZENS

User needs including:

- Reading
- Digital literacy
- Health and wellbeing
- Community
- Business support
- Family activities

Libraries deliver services including

- Free Wi-Fi, computers and printing
- You can online - tablet loan scheme
- Health information
- Social spaces
- Local information
- Books, eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines, eNewspapers and eInformation
- Job club

ACTIVE AGING

User needs including:

- Reading
- Digital literacy
- Health and wellbeing
- Familiy activities
- Social activities

Libraries deliver services including

- Free Wi-Fi, computers and printing
- Health information
- Social spaces
- Books, eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines, eNewspapers and eInformation
- Events and activities
- Home delivery service Access to council services e.g. concessionary travel
- Board Games
- IT Help

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Alcester

Globe House
Priory Road
Alcester
B49 5DZ

Opening Hours

Mon	09.30 – 17.30
Tue	CLOSED
Wed	09.30 – 17.30
Thu	09.30 – 17.30
Fri	09.30 – 17.30
Sat	10.00 – 16.00
Sun	CLOSED

Library and Museum

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

2.6	Staff (FTE)
19	Regular Volunteers
35	Opening Hours (Weekly)
37,393	Loans
1,540	Public Computer Sessions
1,784	Event Attendance
28,116	Visits
4,005	Enquiries
5,695	Registered Borrowers
126	Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Other Libraries near by: Stratford

Other WCC facilities near by: Fire Station, Leisure Centre

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A3/A4 black and white, read and relax area, meeting rooms, UK Online Centre, public toilet, Disabled parking permit (blue badge), Concessionary Travel Pass, Street lighting and highways, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service, Reading Well Collections & Stratford District Council Services.

Regular events:

Monthly Coffee Morning - Every third Monday at 10am Drop –in, no need to book.

Rhyme Time - Wednesdays 10:30am, ages 0-2. Please book online.

IT Help - Thursdays 10:00 – 12:00pm. Please see a member of staff to book

Story Stomp - Fridays 10:30am, ages 2-4. Please book online.

Crafternoon Tea - Fridays 1:30pm. Drop-in for adults.

Lego Club - Fridays 4-5pm. Drop-in. All welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Lego & Board Games - Saturdays 10:30-11:30 All welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	427
5 - 11 years	305
12 - 17 years	2
18+ years	1,050
Total	**1,784**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	355
6 - 15 years	1,164
16 - 59 years	2,583
60+ years	1,593
Total	**5,695**

Atherstone

Long Street
Atherstone
Warwickshire
CV9 1AX

Opening Hours

Mon	09.30 – 16.00
Tue	09.30 – 17.00
Wed	09.30 – 17.00
Thu	09.30 – 13.00
Fri	09.30 – 16.00
Sat	09.30 – 13.00
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

6.09	Staff (FTE)
2	Regular Volunteers
35	Opening Hours (Weekly
43,620	Loans
2,834	Public Computer Sessions
9,601	Event Attendance
34,428	Visits
6,107	Enquiries
7,053	Registered Borrowers
220	Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Other Libraries near by: Polesworth, Stockingford, Nuneaton

Other WCC facilities near by: Ratcliffe Youth and Community Centre, Fire Station

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers and magazines, computers with printing and scanning – printing is black and white or A4 colour, WiFi, photocopier – A3/A4 black and white or colour, local studies and family history collection, UK Online Centre, designated safe place, Reading Well Collections, Shelf Help for Teens, Concessionary Travel Pass.

Regular events:

Rhyme Time: Babies from birth – Mondays & Fridays 10:00-10:30. Songs and rhymes for new-born and young babies with their parents and carers. Ideal for babies not yet moving around.

Rhyme Time – Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10:00-10:30. Songs and rhymes for 0 to 2 year-olds, and parents and carers.

Do Play with Duplo - Tuesdays 10:30-11:00 & Wednesdays 11:30-12:00. For children aged 0-2 and their families.

Rummikub Club- Tuesdays 13:30-15:00. Play Rummikub with our friendly group!

Story Stomp – Wednesdays 11:00-11:30. Fun session for 2 to 4-year-olds and their parents and carers to follow on from Rhyme Time.

Afternoon Coffee- 1st Wednesday of the month 13:30-15:00. Join us for an interesting talk, coffee, tea, biscuits and chat!

Atherstone Library Reading Group- 2nd Wednesday of the month 13:30-15:00. Try something new and make new friends who share a love of books.

Family History Surgery- 3rd Wednesday of the month 14:00-16:00. Drop in advice with the Nuneaton and North Warwickshire Family History Society.

ABC - Atherstone Board Game Crew- 4th Wednesday of the month 13:00-15:00. Play contemporary board games with our friendly group.

IT Help- Thursdays 10:00-12:00. Get help using a computer or your own device.

Scrabble- Thursdays 10:00-12:00. Play Scrabble with our friendly group!

Crafts Galore- Fridays 13:30-15:00. Join our friendly group for crafts and chat.

Lego Club- Saturdays 10:00-12:00. Creative themed sessions for children to build and create with Lego. Suitable for children aged 4-11 years.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	3,590
5 - 11 years	989
12 - 17 years	36
18+ years	4,986
Total	**9,601**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	551
6 - 15 years	1,623
16 - 59 years	3,246
60+ years	1,633
Total	**7,053**

Bedworth

18 High Street
Bedworth
CV12 8NF

Opening Hours

Mon	09.30 – 17.00
Tue	09.30 – 17.00
Wed	09.30 – 17.00
Thu	CLOSED
Fri	09.30 – 17.00
Sat	09.30 – 14.30
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

4.61	**Staff (FTE)**
2	**Regular Volunteers**
35	**Opening Hours (Weekly)**
52,861	**Loans**
5,506	**Public Computer Sessions**
6,322	**Event Attendance**
40,781	**Visits**
10,894	**Enquiries**
8,915	**Registered Borrowers**
101	**Summer Reading Challenge Starters**

Other Libraries near by: Nuneaton

Other WCC facilities near by: Youth Centre, Kings House, Fire Station

Facilities:

Books, large print, talking books & Playaways; Asian reading material; newspapers and magazines; Reading Well collection; computers with printing & scanning (A3/A4 black & white & colour printing); WiFi; photocopier (A3/A4 black & white & colour); read & relax area; UK Online Centre; designated 'Safe Place,' Concessionary Travel Pass.

Regular events:

Book, Rhyme, and Duplo Time- Mondays 11:00-11:45. Story, rhymes and play with Duplo. Suitable for 18 months to 4 years.

Lego Club- Mondays 15:30-16:15. Creative themed sessions for children to build and create with Lego. Suitable for children aged 4-11 years.

Story Stomp – Tuesdays 10:00-10:30. Fun session for 2 to 4-year-olds and their parents and carers to follow on from Rhyme Time.

Rhyme Time – Tuesdays 11:00-11:30. Songs and rhymes for 0 to 2-year-olds, and their parents and carers.

Adult Board Games- Tuesdays 14:00-15:00. Come and play a range of board games and meet old friends and new.

Coffee & Chat- Wednesdays 10:30-11:30. Come and join us for tea/coffee and a chat, puzzles and games and a speaker on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

IT Help- Wednesdays 14:00-16:00. Get help using a computer or your own device.

Bedworth Book Chat- 1st Wednesday of the month 14:00-15:00. Try something new and make new friends who share a love of books.

Children's Board Games- Wednesdays 15:30-16:30. Come and play a range of board games.

Story Time & Play- Fridays 10:00-11:00. Stories and play to make new friends. This session is for under fives and their parents/carers.

Knit and Natter- Fridays 13:00-15:00. An informal club for crochet, knitting and hand sewing of all kinds!

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	2,248
5 - 11 years	1,120
12 - 17 years	20
18+ years	2,934
Total	**6,322**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	410
6 - 15 years	1,805
16 - 59 years	4,629
60+ years	2,071
Total	**8,915**

Coleshill

19a Parkfield Road
Coleshill
Birmingham
B46 3LD

Opening Hours

Mon	09.30 – 12.30
Tue	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 17.30
Wed	09.30 – 12.30
Thu	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 17.30
Fri	09.30 – 12.30
Sat	09.30 – 12.30
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

1.8	Staff (FTE)
2	Regular Volunteers
26	Opening Hours (Weekly)
26,835	Loans
1,945	Public Computer Sessions
5,438	Event Attendance
23,608	Visits
1,964	Computer Support
9,002	Enquiries
2,829	Registered Borrowers
79	Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Other Libraries near by: Atherstone

Other WCC facilities near by: Fire Station, Orchard Blythe, Home for the Elderly

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers and magazines, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A4 black and white or colour, local studies and family history collection, UK Online Centre, baby changing facilities, public toilet, Concessionary Travel Pass, Street lighting and highways, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service, designated Safe Place & Reading Well Collections.

Regular events:

Family History Surgery- 3rd Monday of the month 10:00-12:00. Drop in advice with the Nuneaton and North Warwickshire Family History Society.

Rhyme Time – Tuesdays 11:00-11:30. Songs and rhymes for 0 to 2-year-olds, and parents and carers.

Coleshill Library Knitting Group- Tuesdays 14:00-15:30. A friendly group of knitters who get together once a week for a knit and a natter.

Coffee and Chat- Wednesdays 10:30-11:30. Come and join us for tea/coffee and a chat.

IT Help- Thursdays 10:00-12:00. Get help using a computer or your own device.

Coleshill Library Crochet Group- Fortnightly Thursdays 10:00-12:00. A friendly group of crocheters who get together to crochet and chat.

Coleshill Reading Group- 1st Thursday of the month 15:00-16:30. Try something new and make new friends who share a love of books.

After School Lego Club- Thursdays 15:30-16:30 (Term time only). Drop in free play lego session.

Story Stomp- Fridays 11:00-11:30. Fun session for 2 to 4-year-olds and their parents and carers to follow on from Rhyme Time.

Duplo - Fridays 10:30-11:00 & Wednesdays 11:30-12:00. For children aged 0-2 and their families.

Coleshill Poetry Group- 1st Saturday of the month 10:00-12:00. A friendly group who meet once a month to share their passion for poetry.

Family Lego Club- Saturdays 11:00-12:00. Creative themed sessions for children to build and create with Lego. Suitable for children aged 4-11 years.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	1,566
5 - 11 years	897
12 - 17 years	31
18+ years	2,944
Total	**5,438**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	232
6 - 15 years	583
16 - 59 years	1,165
60+ years	849
Total	**2,829**

Kenilworth

Smalley Place
Kenilworth
CV8 1QG

Opening Hours

Mon	09.00 – 17.30
Tue	09.00 – 17.30
Wed	10.00 – 17.30
Thu	09.00 – 17.30
Fri	09.00 – 17.30
Sat	09.00 – 13.00
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

7	**Staff (FTE)**
12	**Regular Volunteers**
45.5	**Opening Hours (Weekly)**
83,923	**Loans**
5,994	**Public Computer Sessions**
5,106	**Event Attendance**
59,974	**Visits**
9,435	**Enquiries**
9,844	**Registered Borrowers**
219	**Summer Reading Challenge Starters**

Other Libraries near by: Lillington, Leamington, Warwick

Other WCC facilities near by: Fire Station, Leisure Centre

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers and magazines, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A3/A4 black and white or colour, UK Online Centre, read and relax area, public toilet, baby changing facilities, housing benefit, council tax, housing and repairs, disabled parking permit (blue badge), environmental services, including pest control, street lighting and highways, electoral registration, registrars,

Concessionary Travel Pass, leisure services, arrange collection of large or bulky unwanted household items, recycling, CAB, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service & Reading Well Collections, designated Safe Place

Regular events:

Coffee Morning - last Monday of the month 10:30am

Storystomp - Wednesdays 10:30am

Rhymetime - Wednesdays 10am

Lego Club - Saturdays 10am

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	1,355
5 - 11 years	840
12 - 17 years	1
18+ years	2,910
Total	**5,106**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	531
6 - 15 years	1,965
16 - 59 years	4,304
60+ years	3,044
Total	**9,844**

Leamington Spa

Royal Pump Rooms
Parade
Leamington Spa
CV32 4AA

Opening Hours

Mon	09.30 – 18.00
Tue	09.30 – 18.00
Wed	09.30 – 18.00
Thu	10.00 – 19.00
Fri	09.30 – 18.00
Sat	09.30 – 16.30
Sun	12.00 – 16.00

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

16.7	Staff (FTE)
20	Regular Volunteers
54	Opening Hours (Weekly)
181,709	Loans
16,079	Public Computer Sessions
8,090	Event Attendance
152,590	Visits
12,132	Enquiries
22,946	Registered Borrowers
319	Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Other Libraries near by: Lillington, Warwick, Kenilworth, Stratford **Other WCC facilities near by:** Youth Centre , Fire & Rescue HQ

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers and magazines, spoken word, playaways, Asian reading material, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A3/A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A3/A4 black and white or colour, read and relax area, UK Online Centre, public toilet, baby changing facilities, designated Safe Place, Reading Well Collections, Local & Family History Collections, Concessionary Travel Pass.

Regular events:

Let's Make - Mondays Music 11-1pm

Story Stomp - Tuesdays 10am

Let's Make Animation - Tuesdays 10-12pm

Home Educators Chess - Tuesdays 2pm

Code Club - Tuesdays 4:30pm

Board Games for Adults - Thursdays 2-5pm

Rhymetime - Fridays 10am & 11:30am

Let's Make 3D printing - Fridays 10-12pm

Home Educators Chess - Fridays 2pm

Storytime - Saturdays 11am

Lego Club - Saturdays 2pm

Lego Club - Sundays 2pm

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	2,610
5 - 11 years	1,551
12 - 17 years	127
18+ years	3,802
Total	**8,090**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	1,133
6 - 15 years	3,953
16 - 59 years	14,025
60+ years	3,835
Total	**22,946**

Lillington

Valley Road
Lillington
Leamington Spa
CV32 7SJ

Opening Hours

Mon	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 18.00
Tue	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 17.30
Wed	CLOSED
Thu	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 18.00
Fri	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 17.30
Sat	09.30 – 12.30
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

1.6	Staff (FTE)
8	Regular Volunteers
32	Opening Hours (Weekly)
32,236	Loans
1,728	Public Computer Sessions
2,683	Event Attendance
18,006	Visits
2,224	Enquiries
2,886	Registered Borrowers
99	Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Other Libraries near by: Leamington, Warwick

Other WCC facilities near by: Fire & Rescue HQ, Lillington Youth Centre

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A4 black and white or colour, meeting room for hire, Read and relax area, UK Online Centre, Reading Well Collections, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service & designated Safe Place.

Regular events:

Rhyme Time - Mondays 10:30am

Storytime - Mondays 4pm

Story Stomp - Thursdays 10:30am

Coffee Morning - 3rd Thursday of the month at 11am

Board Games for Adults - Fridays 2pm

Lego Club - Saturdays 10am

IT Help - 1st Saturday month 10-12pm

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	1,036
5 - 11 years	379
12 - 17 years	3
18+ years	1,265
Total	**2,683**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	243
6 - 15 years	635
16 - 59 years	1,367
60+ years	642
Total	**2,886**

Nuneaton

Church Street
Nuneaton
CV11 4DR

Opening Hours

Mon	10.00 – 18.00
Tue	09.00 – 18.00
Wed	09.00 – 18.00
Thu	09.00 – 18.00
Fri	09.00 – 17.00
Sat	09.00 – 16.00
Sun	10.00 – 14.00

NUNEATON LIBRARY

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

16.5	Staff (FTE)
4	Regular Volunteers
54	Opening Hours (Weekly)
149,159	Loans
14,827	Public Computer Sessions
5,007	Event Attendance
106,138	Visits
10,860	Enquiries
22,444	Registered Borrowers
245	Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Other Libraries near by: Stockingford, Bedworth, Atherstone

Other WCC facilities near by: One-stop shop, Police Station, Fire Station, Warwickshire Justice Centre

Facilities:

Books, large print, Audio books & Playaways; Asian, Polish & Nepalese reading material; newspapers and magazines; Reading Well collection; local & family history; Warwickshire Local History Collection, George Eliot Collection; Warwickshire Music and Drama Collection; 'Let's Make' digital technology suite; computers with printing and scanning (A3/A4 black & white & colour printing); WiFi; photocopier (A3/A4 black & white & colour); study area; Warwickshire Police public enquiry service; Warwickshire Registration Service; UK Online Centre; designated 'Safe Place,' Concessionary Travel Pass.

Regular events:

Stitch Up- 1st and 3rd Monday of the month 13:00-15:00. Crochet, knitting and hand sewing of all kinds.

Story Stomp- Thursdays 09:45-10:15. Fun session for 2 to 4-year-olds and their parents and carers to follow on from Rhyme Time.

Rhyme Time- Thursdays 11:00-11:30. Songs and rhymes for 0 to 2-year-olds, and parents and carers.

IT Help- Thursdays 14:00-16:00. Get help using a computer or your own device.

Lego Club- Saturdays 14:15-15:15 and Sundays 10:15-11:15. Creative themed sessions for children to build and create with Lego. Suitable for children aged 4-11 years.

Book Magic- 11:30-12:30. Stories and craft activities for children.

Readers Digest Reading Group - First Tuesday of the month. 14:30-16:00. Try something new and make new friends who share a love of books.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	1,534
5 - 11 years	1,087
12 - 17 years	79
18+ years	2,307
Total	**5,007**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	884
6 - 15 years	4,141
16 - 59 years	12,768
60+ years	4,651
Total	**22,444**

Polesworth

Bridge Street
Polesworth
Tamworth
B78 1DT

Opening Hours

Mon	CLOSED
Tue	09.30 – 13.00 & 14.00 – 19.00
Wed	CLOSED
Thu	09.30 – 13.00 & 14.00 – 18.00
Fri	09.30 – 13.00 & 14.00 – 18.00
Sat	09.30 – 13.00
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

1.5	**Staff (FTE)**
1	**Regular Volunteers**
27	**Opening Hours (Weekly)**
44,248	**Loans**
30,966	**Public Computer Sessions**
4,784	**Event Attendance**
30,966	**Visits**
6,958	**Enquiries**
3,530	**Registered Borrowers**
130	**Summer Reading Challenge Starters**

Other Libraries near by: Atherstone, Nuneaton **Other WCC facilities near by:** Fire Station

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers and magazines, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A4 black and white or colour, UK Online Centre, designated Safe Place, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service, Reading Well Collections, Shelf Help for Teens & MiniSorted, Concessionary Travel Pass.

Regular events:

Rhyme Time- Tuesdays 11:15-11:45. Songs and rhymes for 0 to 2-year-olds, and parents and carers.

Polesworth Page Turners- Tuesdays 16:30-18:00. Reading group talking all things books and sharing reading recommendations.

Book and a Brew- Thursdays 10:30-11:30. Tea, coffee, biscuits, and books.

Story Stomp- Thursdays 10:30-11:00. Fun session for 2 to 4-year-olds and their parents and carers to follow on from Rhyme Time.

IT Help- Fridays 14:00-16:00. Get help using a computer or your own device.

Family Lego Club- Saturdays 10:00-12:00. Creative themed sessions for children to build and create with Lego. Suitable for children aged 4-11 years.

Duplo Club- Saturdays 10:00-12:00. For children aged 0-2 and their families.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	1,386
5 - 11 years	286
12 - 17 years	62
18+ years	3050
Total	**4,784**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	254
6 - 15 years	1,051
16- 59 years	1,482
60+ years	743
Total	**3,530**

Rugby

Little Elborow Street
Rugby
CV21 3BZ

Opening Hours

Mon	09.00 – 17.30
Tue	10.00 – 19.00
Wed	09.00 – 17.30
Thu	09.00 – 17.30
Fri	09.00 – 17.30
Sat	09.00 – 16.00
Sun	12.00 – 16.00

Rugby Art Gallery
Museum & Library

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

16.5	**Staff (FTE)**
51	**Regular Volunteers**
54	**Opening Hours (Weekly)**
225,244	**Loans**
19,044	**Public Computer Sessions**
10,677	**Event Attendance**
155,412	**Visits**
22,733	**Enquiries**
31,337	**Registered Borrowers**
481	**Summer Reading Challenge Starters**

Other Libraries near by: Wolston, Southam

Other WCC facilities near by: Fire Station, Youth & Community Centre

Facilities:

Books, large print, newspapers and magazines; Audio books & Playaways; Asian & Polish reading material; Reading Well collection; local & family history collections; 'Let's Make' digital technology suite; computers with printing & scanning (A3/A4 black & white or colour printing); WiFi; photocopier (A3/A4 black & white or colour); study area; Warwickshire Registration Service; Careers Service; UK Online Centre; designated 'Safe Place,' Concessionary Travel Pass.

Regular events:

'Let's Make' digital technology – workshops, regular events & activities, independent use; see www.warwickshire.gov.uk/letsmake for full details of programmes available or ask staff for details

IT Help – Mondays 10:30 – 11.30 and 11:30 – 12:30 . Free drop-in computer and tablet help sessions

Story Stomp – Mondays 11:00 – 11:30 (term time only). Fun for 2 – 4 year olds and their parents and carers

Duplo Time - Mondays 11:30 - 12:00. 9.30-10:00 during school holidays. Stay and play with our big box of Duplo every Monday.

Living Room in the Library - Mondays 9:30-11:00. Refreshments, games & puzzles, craft materials, and occasional talks and workshops

Code Club – Monday 16:00 – 17:00 and Friday 16:00 - 17:00 (term time only). Free after school coding clubs for children aged 9 – 13 (contact the library to check availability)

Rugby Library Readers – Third Tuesday of the month 18:00 – 19:00. Reading group.

Rhyme Time – Wednesdays 09:30 – 10:00 and 11:00 – 11:30 ; Fridays 11:00 – 11:30 (term time only). Songs and rhymes for 0 – 2 year olds and parents and carers.

Board Games Drop-In - Wednesdays 10:30 - 12:30. Play a wide variety of board games.

Create & Craft Drop-In - Thursdays 13:30-15:00. Volunteer-led textile-based crafts.

Rugby Family History Group. Every third Thursday of the month 14:00 – 16:30.

Saturday Morning Movie - Saturdays 10:30-12:00. Family films.

Lego Club – Saturdays 14:00 – 15:00 and Sundays 12:30 - 13:30. Creative themed sessions for children to build and create with Lego. Booking through Eventbrite required.

Book Magic –Sundays 14:30-15:30 come & listen to stories and enjoy craft fun.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	3,381
5 - 11 years	2,113
12 - 17 years	47
18+ years	5,136
Total	**10,677**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	1,565
6 - 15 years	6,466
16 - 59 years	17,202
60+ years	6,104
Total	**31,337**

Shipston

12 Church Street
Shipston-on-Stour
CV36 4AP

Opening Hours

Mon	09.30 – 12.30
Tue	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 17.30
Wed	CLOSED
Thu	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 17.30
Fri	CLOSED
Sat	09.30 – 12.30
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

1.4	Staff (FTE)
7	Regular Volunteers
20	Opening Hours (Weekly)
27,208	Loans
1,010	Public Computer Sessions
2,809	Event Attendance
14,994	Visits
3,510	Enquiries
2,636	Registered Borrowers
150	Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Other Libraries near by: Kineton, Stratford, Wellesbourne **Other WCC facilities near by:** Fire Station

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A4 black and white or colour, read and relax area, UK Online Centre, Disabled parking permit (blue badge), Concessionary Travel Pass, Street lighting and highways, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service & Reading Well Collections.

Regular events:

IT Help - Mondays 10am-12pm, please see a member of staff to book a session.

Rhyme Time - Tuesdays 10.30am, ages 0-2, please book.

Lego Club - Tuesdays 15:30—16:30, ages 4-11, drop-in.

Shipston Library Reading Group - First Tuesday of the month, 2pm-3pm in the library. See a member of staff for more details.

Story Stomp - Thursdays 10am, ages 2-4, please book.

Scrabble Club - Thursdays 2pm-4pm, Relax, meet new people, enjoy a refreshment and play, Drop In, All Welcome.

Lego Club - Saturdays 10am —12pm, ages 4-11, drop-in.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	619
5 - 11 years	800
12 - 17 years	18
18+ years	1,372
Total	**2,809**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	171
6 - 15 years	606
16 - 59 years	970
60+ years	889
Total	**2,636**

Southam

Tithe Place
High Street
Southam
CV47 0HB

Opening Hours

Mon	09.30 – 17.30
Tue	09.30 – 17.30
Wed	CLOSED
Thu	09.30 – 17.30
Fri	09.30 – 17.30
Sat	09.30 – 12.30
Sun	CLOSED

TITHE PLACE
LIBRAR

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

3	**Staff (FTE)**
9	**Regular Volunteers**
35	**Opening Hours (Weekly)**
61,438	**Loans**
2,034	**Public Computer Sessions**
5,388	**Event Attendance**
45,742	**Visits**
9,074	**Enquiries**
6,665	**Registered Borrowers**
231	**Summer Reading Challenge Starters**

Other Libraries near by: Leamington, Rugby

Other WCC facilities near by: Fire Station, Police Station, Town Council Office

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers and magazines, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photo-copier – A4 black and white or colour, public toilet, baby changing facility, UK Online Centre, Disabled parking permit (blue badge), Concessionary Travel Pass, Report street lighting faults, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service, Stratford District Council Services & Reading Well Collections.

Regular events:

Rhymetime - Tuesdays 11am

Lego Club - Tuesdays 3:30pm

Lego Club - Thursdays 3:30pm

IT Help - Thursdays 12:45-1:45pm & 2-3pm

Rhymetime - Fridays 9:45am

Story Stomp - Fridays 11am

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	2,151
5 - 11 years	708
12 - 17 years	17
18+ years	2,512
Total	**5,388**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	472
6 - 15 years	1,582
16 - 59 years	2,982
60+ years	1,629
Total	**6,665**

Stockingford

St Paul's Road
Stockingford
Nuneaton
CV10 8HW

Opening Hours

Mon	08.30 – 17.00
Tue	08.30 – 17.00
Wed	08.30 – 17.00
Thu	08.30 – 17.00
Fri	08.30 – 17.00
Sat	CLOSED
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

1.78	**Staff (FTE)**
1	**Regular Volunteers**
42.5	**Opening Hours (Weekly)**
10,486	**Loans**
876	**Public Computer Sessions**
3,107	**Event Attendance**
20,164	**Visits**
1,679	**Enquiries**
1,458	**Registered Borrowers**
56	**Summer Reading Challenge Starters**

Other Libraries near by: Nuneaton

Other WCC facilities near by: Business Centre, Children's Services

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, computers with printing – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A4 black and white or colour, Warwickshire Direct, Stockingford Early Years Centre – support for childminders and carers, adult education, toy library, daycare provision, crèche, Designated Safe Place & Reading Well Collections.

Regular events:

Family History Surgery- 3rd Wednesday of the month 10:00-12:00. Drop in advice with the Nuneaton and North Warwickshire Family History Society.

For d'love of Books- 1st Wednesday of the month 10:00-11:00. Reading group, try something new and make new friends who share a love of books.

FORD CHATS- Wednesdays 11:00-12:00. Coffee and conversation, sometimes with a speaker.

Rhyme Time- Thursdays 11:00-11:30. Songs and rhymes for 0 to 2-year-olds, and parents and carers.

Family Lego Club- Thursdays 15:30-16:30. Creative themed sessions for children to build and create with Lego. Suitable for children aged 4-11 years.

Stockingford Knitters- Fridays 14:00-16:00. Knitting and conversation.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	805
5 - 11 years	591
12 - 17 years	29
18+ years	1,682
Total	**3,107**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	197
6 - 15 years	463
16 - 59 years	660
60+ years	138
Total	**1,458**

Stratford

12 Henley Street
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 6PZ

Opening Hours

Mon	09.00 – 17.00
Tue	09.00 – 17.00
Wed	09.00 – 17.00
Thu	09.00 – 17.00
Fri	09.00 – 17.00
Sat	10.00 – 15.00
Sun	CLOSED

LIBRARY AND REGISTRATION SERVICE
LIBRARY AND REGISTRATION SERVICE

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

Stat	Value
Staff (FTE)	11.1
Regular Volunteers	38
Opening Hours (Weekly)	45
Loans	87,984
Public Computer Sessions	9,178
Event Attendance	6,079
Visits	102,010
Enquiries	8,391
Registered Borrowers	13,663
Summer Reading Challenge Starters	217

Other Libraries near by: Wellesbourne, Alcester, Warwick

Other WCC facilities near by: Police Station, Fire Station, Leisure Centre

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers and magazines, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A3/A4 black and white or colour, read and relax area, meeting room, UK Online Centre, Concessionary Travel Pass, Designated Safe Place, Reading Well Collections, Local and Family History Collection, Warwickshire Registration Service.

Regular events:

IT Help - Mondays 1-3pm, please see a member of staff to book a session.

Sensory Library - Mondays 10.30-11.30am, ages 1-4, Come and join us for a 'sensory hour' - a session for children with additional needs who might experience barriers to enjoying the library outside of these sessions, please book.

Rhyme Time - Wednesdays 10.30am, ages 0-2, please book.

Sensory Library - Wednesdays 4-5pm, ages 4-11. Come and join us for a 'sensory hour' - a session for children with additional needs who might experience barriers to enjoying the library outside of these sessions, please book.

Local Interest Coffee Morning - Join us on the first Wednesday of every month at 10am for our local interest coffee mornings.

Warm Welcome - Wednesdays 2-4pm. Refreshments, board games and puzzles available. Drop In, All Welcome.

Story Stomp - Thursdays 10.30am, ages 2-4, please book.

Rhyme Time - Fridays 10.30am, ages 0-2, please book.

Chess Club - Fridays 3.45-4.45pm, ages 4-11yrs, drop in.

Employability Workshops - Fridays 10am-1pm. Ukrainian Working in Warwickshire Programme. Contact skillshub@warwickshire.gov.uk to enquire.

Lego Club - Saturdays 10.10—12.00, ages 4-11, drop in.

Shakespeare For All - Join us on the first Saturday of each month at 10.15am to read Shakespeare plays. All welcome, drop in.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	1,869
5 - 11 years	1,032
12 - 17 years	36
18+ years	3,142
Total	**6,079**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	545
6 - 15 years	2,226
16 - 59 years	6,751
60+ years	4,141
Total	**13,663**

Warwick

Warwick Library and Information Centre Shire Hall
Warwick
CV34 4RL

Opening Hours

Mon	08.00 – 17.30
Tue	08.00 – 17.30
Wed	08.00 – 17.30
Thu	08.00 – 17.30
Fri	08.00 – 17.00
Sat	09.00 – 16.00
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

9
Staff (FTE)

27
Regular Volunteers

54
Opening Hours (Weekly)

112,086
Loans

5,432
Public Computer Sessions

4,960
Event Attendance

62,834
Visits

10,959
Enquiries

12,725
Registered Borrowers

224
Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Other Libraries near by: Leamington, Kenilworth, Stratford **Other WCC facilities near by:** Shire Hall One-Stop Shop, Children's Centre and Nursery

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers and magazines, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A3/A4 black and white or colour, UK Online Centre, public toilet, baby changing facilities, Designated Safe Place, Reading Well Collections, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service.

Regular events:

Story Stomp - Tuesdays 9.30am, ages 2-4, please book, but drop-ins welcome subject to available space.

Coffee Morning - First Wednesday of the month 1015am. Come along to hear a short talk on a variety of topics, and chat with old friends and new over a hot drink.

IT Help - Wednesdays1.30-3.30pm. Please see a member of staff to book a session.

Rhyme Time - Thursdays 9.30am & 11am, ages 0-2, please book, but drop-ins welcome subject to available space.

Lego Club - Saturdays 10am—12pm, ages 4-11, drop-in, no need to book.

Page Turners – Every four weeks on a Saturday 2pm-3.30pm. Enjoy reading and sharing books? Like socialising? Join us at Pageturners, a friendly relaxed book group for secondary school students (years 7-13). Drop-in, no need to book.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	1,885
5 - 11 years	612
12 - 17 years	67
18+ years	2,396
Total	**4,960**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	702
6 - 15 years	2,870
16 - 59 years	6,279
60+ years	2,874
Total	**12,725**

Wellesbourne

Kineton Road
Wellesbourne
Warwick
CV35 9NF

Opening Hours

Mon	09.30 – 12.30
Tue	CLOSED
Wed	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 17.30
Thu	CLOSED
Fri	09.30 – 12.30 & 13.30 – 17.30
Sat	09.30 – 12.30
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

1.1	Staff (FTE)
8	Regular Volunteers
20	Opening Hours (Weekly)
23,003	Loans
993	Public Computer Sessions
2,544	Event Attendance
13,426	Visits
1,291	Enquiries
2,258	Registered Borrowers
68	Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Other Libraries near by: Stratford, Leamington, Warwick **Other WCC facilities near by:** Youth and Community Centre, Fire Station

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, newspapers, computers with printing – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier - A4 black and white, UK Online Centre, Reading Well Collections, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service, read and relax area, Children's Centre outreach events.

Regular events:

Story Stomp (Children's Library) - Mondays 10:00-10:30am 2-4 years, please book on Eventbrite.

Family History –10:00am-12:00pm every 2nd and 4th Monday, please book with library staff.

Timebanking Social (Activity Room) – 10:00am-12:00pm 3rd Monday of the Month .

Lego Club (Activity Room/Children's Library) - Wednesdays 3:30-4:30pm drop in.

Adult's Reading Group (Activity Room)– 11:00am-12:00pm 1st Wednesday of the Month, drop in .

Rhyme Time (Children's Library) - Fridays 0:00-10:30am 0-2 years, please book on Eventbrite.

Games Club (Activity Room) - 2:00-4:00pm alternate Fridays, includes refreshments, drop in.

Craft Club (Activity Room) - 2:00-4:00pm alternate Fridays, includes refreshments, drop in.

Lego & Games Club (Children's Library/Activity room) - Saturdays 11:00am -12:00pm drop in.

IT Help – 10:00am-12:00pm 3rd Saturday of the Month, please book with library staff.

Timebanking Stand (In the Library)—10:00am-12:00pm 1st Saturday of the Month.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	823
5 - 11 years	476
12 - 17 years	0
18+ years	1,245
Total	**2,544**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	193
6 - 15 years	475
16 - 59 years	978
60+ years	612
Total	**2,258**

Whitnash

Whitnash Civic Centre & Library
Acre Close
Whitnash
CV31 2ND

Opening Hours

Mon	10.30 – 17.00
Tue	10.30 – 17.00
Wed	13.30 – 17.00
Thu	CLOSED
Fri	10.30 – 16.00
Sat	10.30 – 13.30
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

1.1	**Staff (FTE)**
3	**Regular Volunteers**
25	**Opening Hours (Weekly)**
27,103	**Loans**
872	**Public Computer Sessions**
812	**Event Attendance**
14,810	**Visits**
1,832	**Enquiries**
2,508	**Registered Borrowers**
130	**Summer Reading Challenge Starters**

Other Libraries near by: Leamington, Warwick, Southam, Stratford **Other WCC facilities near by:** Community Centre

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print, computers with printing and scanning – printing is A4 black and white or colour, WiFi, photocopier – A4 black and white or colour, read and relax area, meeting room for hire, public toilet, baby changing facility, UK Online Centre, Reading Well Collections, Town Council works out of Whitnash, Warwickshire Police public enquiry service.

Regular events:

Story Stomp - Wednesdays 2pm. Fun session for 2 - 4 year olds and their parents and carers to follow on from Rhyme Time.

Rhyme Time - Fridays 11:15am. Songs and rhymes for 0 - 2 year olds and parents and carers.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	331
5 - 11 years	126
12 - 17 years	2
18+ years	353
Total	**812**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	300
6 - 15 years	672
16 - 59 years	1,186
60+ years	350
Total	**2,508**

Wolston

Warwick Road
Wolston
Coventry
CV8 3GX

Opening Hours

Mon	14.30 – 17.00
Tue	14.30 – 17.00
Wed	14.30 – 17.00
Thu	10.30 – 13.00
Fri	10.30 – 13.00
Sat	10.30 – 13.00
Sun	CLOSED

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

0.4	**Staff (FTE)**
5	**Regular Volunteers**
15	**Opening Hours (Weekly)**
13,170	**Loans**
382	**Public Computer Sessions**
241	**Event Attendance**
5,444	**Visits**
1,409	**Enquiries**
1,026	**Registered Borrowers**
17	**Summer Reading Challenge Starters**

Other Libraries near by: Rugby, Southam, Leamington

Other WCC facilities near by: Leisure Centre, Community Centre

Facilities:

Books, large print; Audio books; Reading Well collection; computers with printing & scanning (A4 black & white or colour printing); WiFi; photocopier (A4 black & white or colour); UK Online Centre; designated 'Safe Place'; Warwickshire Police public enquiry service; public toilet, baby changing facilities, Concessionary Travel Pass.

Regular events:

IT Help - Wednesdays 15:00 - 17:00. Free computer and tablet drop in help sessions

Rhyme Time - Wednesdays 14:30 - 15:00. Songs and rhymes for 0 - 2 year olds and parents and carers

Lego Club - Saturdays 11:00 - 12:00. Creative themed sessions for children to build and create with Lego.

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	93
5- 11 years	58
12 - 17 years	2
18+ years	88
Total	**241**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	81
6 - 15 years	247
16 - 59 years	448
60+ years	250
Total	**1,026**

Mobile Library and Home Delivery Service

Mobile Library
A Midsummer Night's Dream

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

Value	Label
10.2	Staff (FTE)
30	Regular Volunteers
71,646	Loans
150	Event Attendance
21,860	Visits
510	Enquiries
3,390	Registered Borrowers

Facilities:

Books, talking books, large print and spoken word, computers with printing and scanning – *printing is A4 colour*, photocopier – *A4 colour*, signposting to safe & well checks for Age UK, Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Services, Shopmobility, Warwickshire Health Transport

Age of event attendees?

0-4 years	0
5-11 years	0
12-17 years	0
18+ years	150
Total	**150**

Age of registered borrowers

0-5 years	54
6-15 years	233
16-59 years	577
60+ years	2,526
Total	**3,390**

Warwickshire

Library & Information Service has a network of 18 core libraries and a fleet of 3 mobile libraries servicing the whole community of Warwickshire; we also support 13 community (Social enterprises) libraries across the county.

Key details and Stats 2022/23:

111.7	Staff (FTE)
249	Volunteers
654	Opening Hours (Weekly
1,313,076	Loans
91,295	Public Computer Sessions
85,582	Event Attendance
951,303	Visits
133,005	Enquiries
163,808	Registered Borrowers
3,112	Summer Reading Challenge Starters

Facilities:

Books, large print, newspapers and magazines; Audio books & Playaways; Asian & Polish reading material; Reading Well collection; local & family history collections; 'Let's Make' digital technology suite; computers with printing & scanning (A3/A4 black & white or colour printing); WiFi; photocopier (A3/A4 black & white or colour); study area; Warwickshire Registration Service; Careers Service; UK Online Centre; designated 'Safe Place,' Concessionary Travel Pass.

Regular events:

'Let's Make' digital technology –workshops, regular events & activities, independent use; see www.warwickshire.gov.uk/letsmake for full details of programmes available or ask staff for details

Knitting Group

IT Help – Free drop-in computer and tablet help sessions for people aged 50 plus.

Story Stomp – Fun for 2 – 4 year olds and their parents and carers, following on from Rhyme Time.

Code Club – Free after school coding clubs for children aged 9 – 11

Evening Reads – Reading group.

Rhyme Time – Songs and rhymes for 0 – 2 year olds and their parents and carers.

Games Group - Come along to play a wide variety of board games.

Family History Group.

Lego Clubs - Creative themed sessions for children to build and create with Lego.

Coder Dojo – For 8-16 year olds. Coding for all abilities

Young Writers Group – For children and young people interested in any kind of creative writing

Book Magic – Come & listen to stories and enjoy craft fun

Age of event attendees

0 - 4 years	27,709
5 - 11 years	13,970
12 - 17 years	579
18+ years	43,174
Total	**85,582**

Age of registered borrowers

0 - 5 years	8,872
6 - 15 years	32,760
16 - 59 years	83,602
60+ years	38,574
Total	**163,808**

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023

County Councillors’ Grant Fund 2020 to 2023

Recommendation

That the Committee notes and comments on the use of the County Councillors’ Grant Fund for the period 2020 to 2023.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report offers an overview of projects funded by the County Councillors' Grant Fund since 2020, highlighting the range of supported initiatives. This is the first such report since the start of the Pandemic.

1.2 For the financial years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, the Fund had a total value of £342,000, with each of the 57 Councillors therefore having £6,000 to award. For the financial year 2022/2023, the Fund value increased to £456,000 with each of the Councillors having £8,000 to award.

1.3 Since 2020 the Fund has been aligned to the County Council’s Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020 to 2025, with the vision and purpose to create “a thriving, sustainable and dynamic voluntary and community sector that improves the lives of individuals and communities in Warwickshire”.

1.4 The Fund also aligns to the key outcomes of the Council Plan 2022 to 2027:

- we want Warwickshire to have a thriving economy and places that have the right jobs, skills, education, and infrastructure;
- we want to be a County where all people can live their best lives; where communities and individuals are supported to live safely, healthily, happily, and independently; and
- we want to be a County with a sustainable future, which means adapting to and mitigating climate change and meeting net zero commitments.

1.5 The Fund strongly aligns to the principles of Community Power and Levelling Up. The many projects supported by the Fund are in response to locally identified priorities with the aim of addressing solutions identified by communities and are often being delivered by communities. There is a strong focus amongst the projects on tackling inequality amongst our most vulnerable communities and residents, which is at the heart of the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up.

1.6 A key feature of the Fund since it started in 2012 is that Councillors have a substantial amount of discretion in the funding awarded to local projects. This report provides information on all funding awards made to voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector groups for the three financial years between 2020 and 2023. Reflecting the circumstances of the first year of the Pandemic, the initial funding round in 2020/2021 was simplified and streamlined to get funding onto the ground as quickly as possible. This included reduced requirements to report as frequently and in as much detail given the pressures of the pandemic and to enable groups to focus on providing critical support to communities.

1.7 Over the three financial years covered in this report, the Fund has received a total of 1,494 applications with figures demonstrating a year-on-year increase since 2020. The overall success rate of applications remained at 74% over the period. Where applications were unsuccessful this tended to be due to a lack of detailed evidence within the application or a failure to align with the priorities in local communities. In some areas Councillors received more applications than could be supported within the available funding envelope.

1.8 Section 4 sets out in more detail the types of projects supported in each area. A full list of projects and awards can be provided upon request but has not been attached to this report due to its size.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

2.2 The report covers the spend for periods 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 with the following total spend breakdown:

2020/21	£346,121
2021/22	£331,916
2022/23	£457,747

2.3 Councillors were encouraged to award their full allocations each financial year and this was mostly achieved. Where there were any underspends, these were carried over with the agreement of Cabinet. On the few occasions where any overspends occurred, as per the Borough and District breakdown, this was balanced by the subsequent year's allocation. Additional scrutiny has been implemented for 2023/24 and the forecast is to award the full allocation for all Councillors.

3. Environmental Implications

3.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

3.2 All applications to the Fund have been assessed against the Council’s commitments to reducing climate change and increasing biodiversity. One of the Fund’s criteria, “To improve the physical environment or reduce the environmental impact’ has been present since 2019.

4. Supporting Information

Councillors’ Grant Fund 2020/2021

Round 1

4.1 As a response to the early stages of the Pandemic, the Fund’s priorities were adapted for Round 1 of 2020/2021 to reflect the rapidly changing needs of communities, to introduce additional flexibility, and to ensure funding reached recipients without undue delay.

4.2 A wide range of projects received funding including youth engagement activity, “scrubs” production for NHS workers, and a socially distanced singing group who performed outside care homes and community venues to raise spirits. Other projects receiving funding were set up to help those shielding, to help vulnerable people to access food and medicines, and to provide health and wellbeing activities in ways appropriate to the constraints of the pandemic.

4.3 Other successful Round 1 projects supported the provision of digital technology to allow projects and services to adapt to online delivery, and to cover the costs of utilities such as gas and electricity for village halls and community centres to maintain their function during the Pandemic.

4.4 The Fund supported the following types of groups to mitigate the impact of the Pandemic:

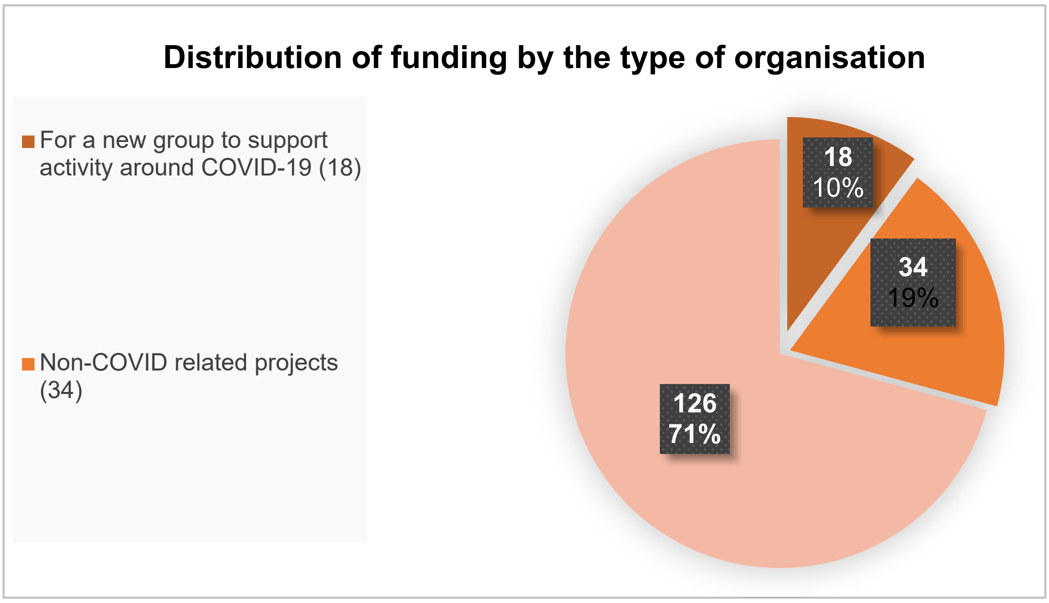
I. Supporting newly formed groups with activities to help:
  - People self-isolating or in quarantine.
  - The community to be resilient against the wider impacts of the Pandemic.
  - Develop community networks to support the above.

II. Supporting existing groups to:
  - Continue activities through the Pandemic.
  - Helping sustain continuing operation of community groups beyond the Pandemic.

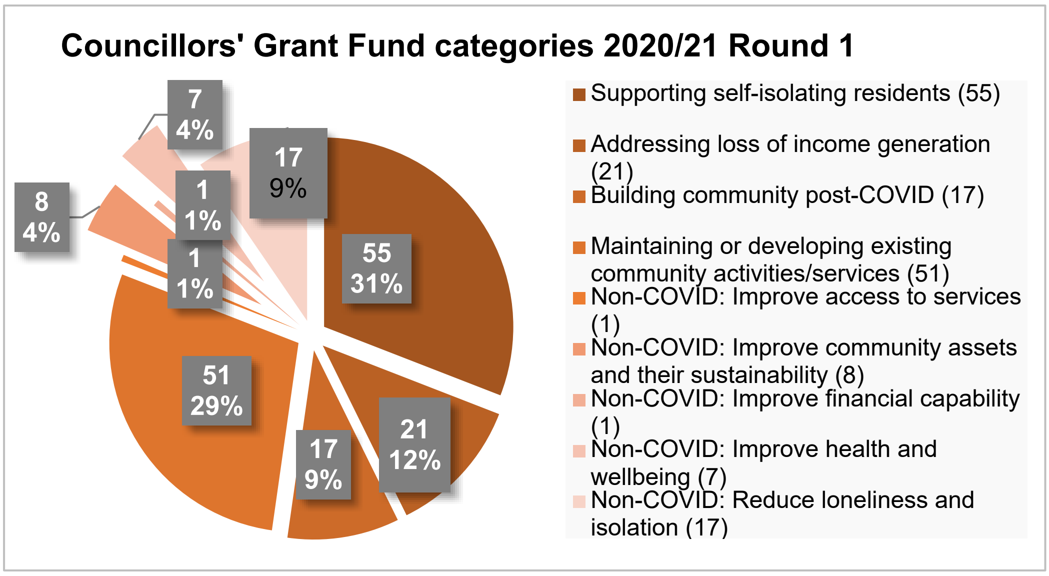
III. Supporting applications not related to the Pandemic but relating to one or more of the following priority categories:
  - Improve community assets and their sustainability.
  - Improve access to services.
  - Improve financial capability.
  - Reduce loneliness and isolation.

- Improve health and wellbeing.

4.5 The chart below shows how the funding was awarded, broken down by the type of applicant. Most of the funding was awarded to existing groups to either support their Pandemic related activities, or to support groups through Pandemic related loss of income. Out of the 178 groups that received funding, 160 were already in existence pre-Pandemic.



4.6 A further breakdown of the funding awards can be seen below. The single biggest category related to projects supporting self-isolating residents.

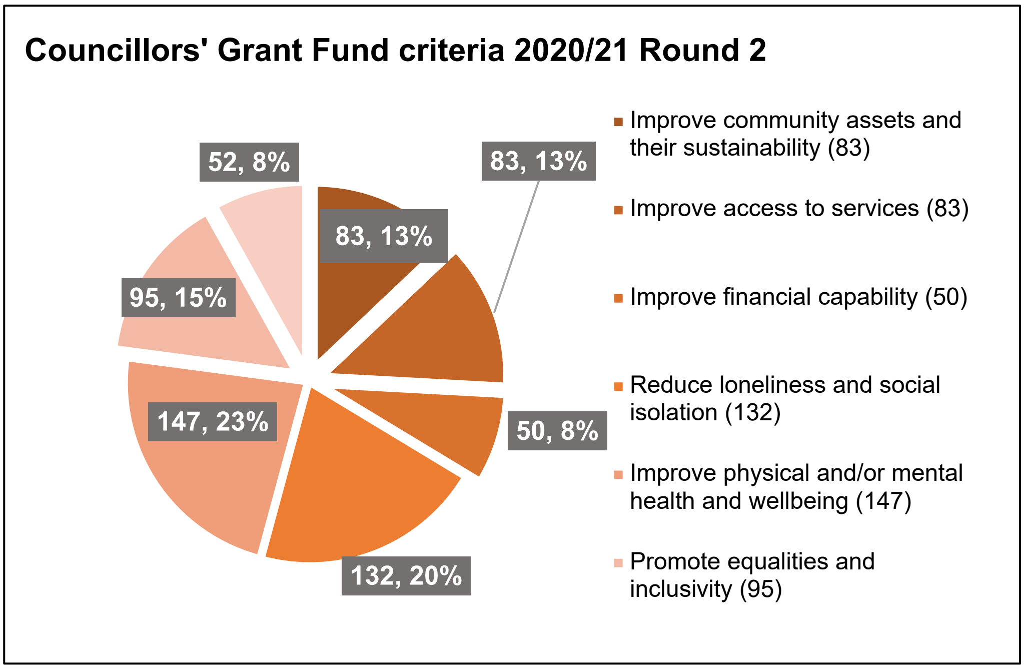


Round 2

4.7 Round 2 of the Fund in 2020/2021 reverted to the usual format, utilising the following criteria whilst continuing to support projects that were addressing the impact of the Pandemic:

- Improve community assets and their sustainability.
- Improve access to services.
- Improve financial capability.
- Reduce loneliness and isolation.
- Improve physical and/or mental health and wellbeing.
- Promote equalities and inclusivity.
- Improve the physical environment or reduce the environmental Impact.

4.8 The following chart provides a breakdown of project criteria (with some projects aligning to more than one).



Summary

4.9 The total amount of funding awarded per Borough and District was as follows:

Borough/District	Total allocation in 2020/21	Total awarded in 2020/21	Percentage of awarded funding
North Warwickshire	£42,000	£43,190	102.83%
Nuneaton & Bedworth	£78,000	£74,240	95.18%
Rugby	£60,000	£59,658	99.43%
Stratford-on-Avon	£78,000	£76,605	98.21%
Warwick	£84,000	£92,428	110.03%
Total	**£342,000**	**£346,121**	**101.20%**

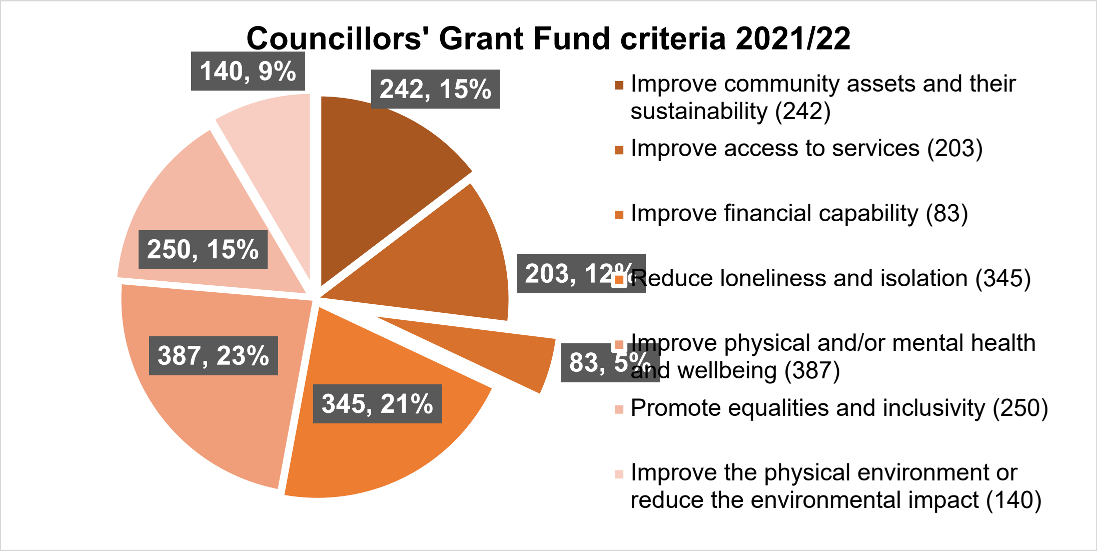
4.10 348 awards were made, out of a total of 468 applications received, with a total value of £346,121. The total amounts awarded include any underspend and any returned funding from previous years.

4.11 Out of 195 groups that reported on their projects, 159 have indicated that their projects were completed. A total of 158 new volunteers have been recruited and over 31,375 volunteer hours have been dedicated to projects equating to the approximate economic value of £560,985 (calculated using an hourly multiplier of £17.88 per hour and using the Annual Survey for Hours and Earning methodology 2022). A minimum of 23,579 individuals have benefitted from projects, however, this figure is likely to be much higher in projects where the organisations found it difficult to quantify the beneficiaries.

4.12 Due to the uncertainty created by the Pandemic some of the organisations faced challenges in delivering their projects. This was mainly due to lockdown restrictions and the evolving guidelines causing practical delivery issues. Localities and Communities Officers offered support to these organisations on an individual basis. The extent and detail of reporting on the projects was balanced to prioritise providing support to the communities.

Councillors' Grants Fund 2021/2022

4.13 The Fund continued to support projects under seven core criteria. The following chart provides a breakdown by criteria of both Round 1 and Round 2 projects. Some projects aligned to more than one criterion.



4.14 Out of the 313 groups that reported on their projects, over 930 volunteers were recruited. 40,384 volunteer hours were recorded equating to an equivalent economic value of approximately £722,000 (calculated using an hourly multiplier of £17.88 per hour and using the Annual Survey for Hours and Earning 2022 methodology.)

4.15 The organisations reported that more than 36,000 people benefitted from projects. The actual number of beneficiaries is likely to be much higher, particularly in instances where the Fund contributed towards purchasing equipment that will be sustained for many years after the funding has been spent, or where, for example, it helped to fund a public event.

4.16 The total amount of funding awarded per Borough and District was as follows:

Borough/District	Total allocation for 2021/22	Total awarded in 2021/22	Percentage of awarded funding
North Warwickshire	£44,300	£42,030	94.87%
Nuneaton & Bedworth	£81,760	£71,849	87.88%
Rugby	£60,000	£53,935	89.89%
Stratford-on-Avon	£78,000	£79,022	101.31%
Warwick	£84,000	£85,080	101.29%
Total	**£348,060**	**£331,916**	**95.36%**

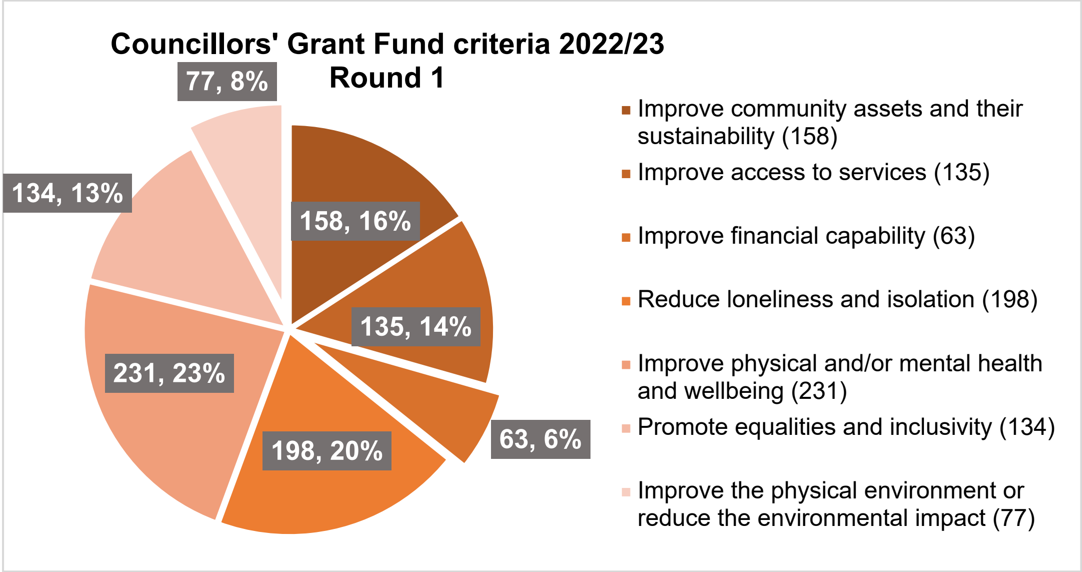
4.17 361 grants were awarded out of a total of 486 applications received, with the total value of £331,916. The total amount awarded reflects any funding returned from 2020/21.

Councillors' Grant Fund 2022/2023

Round 1

4.18 In 2022/2023, the grant outcomes were revised to align them to the refreshed Council Plan 2022-2027. In this year, the Council also approved an increase to each Councillor's allocation from £6,000 to £8,000. This reflected an increased emphasis on community powered approaches. This increased the total fund value up to £456,000.

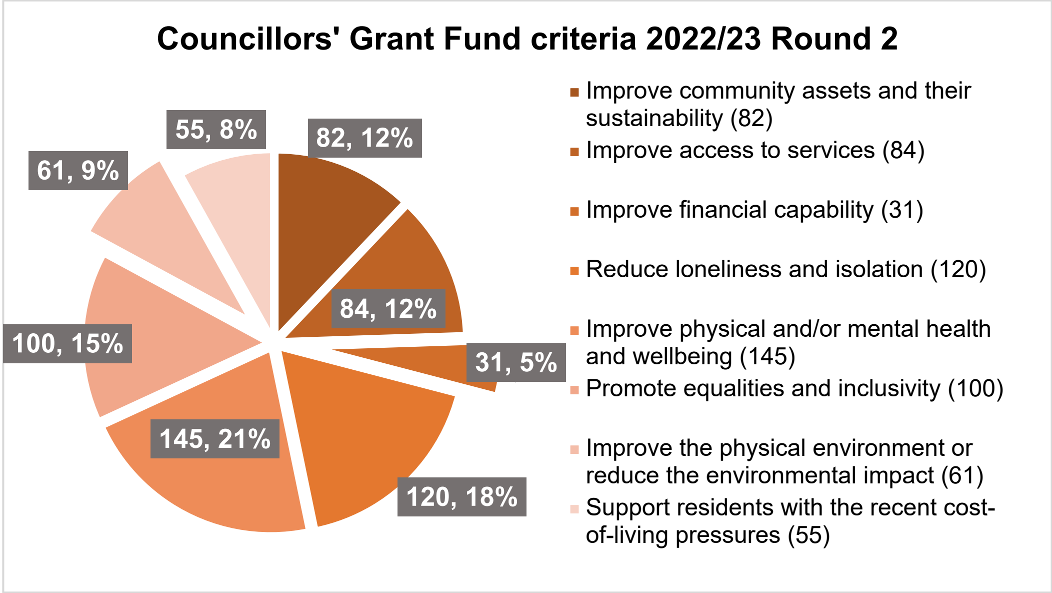
4.19 244 grants were awarded. The chart below provides a breakdown by criteria. Some projects aligned to more than one criterion:



Round 2

4.20 Round 2 incorporated an additional criterion to fund projects reflecting increased cost of living pressures. Successful projects under this criterion included setting up warm hubs, the provision of food parcels, and improved access to community transport services.

4.21 156 awards were made. The chart below provides a breakdown by criteria. Some projects aligned to more than one criterion:



4.22 400 grants were awarded in 2022/23 out of a total of 540 applications received, totalling £457,747.

4.23 The total amount of funding awarded per Borough and District was as follows:

Borough/District	Total allocation for 2022/23	Total awarded 2022/23	Percentage of awarded funding
North Warwickshire	£58,337	£59,812	102.53%
Nuneaton & Bedworth	£110,281	£103,399	93.76%
Rugby	£87,653	£86,169	98.30%
Stratford-on-Avon	£104,320	£104,416	100.10%
Warwick	£112,000	£103,951	92.81%
Total	**£472,591**	**£457,747**	**96.85%**

The above figures reflect the underspend and any funding returned from the previous year.

4.24 As with previous years, most of the projects aligned to the “We want to be a County where all people can live their best lives; where communities and individuals are supported to live safely, healthily, happily and independently” outcome.

4.25 Data around sustainability of projects was collated for the first time in 2022/2023. Out of the 400 funded projects, 244 indicated in their application that the project would continue after the funding had been spent. The Fund receives a number of repeat applicants each year. Following the Pandemic, some of the applying organisations face challenges with their sustainability. In many cases, Localities and Communities Officers work with these organisations and signpost the applicants to Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action to explore alternative funding opportunities and to provide additional support.

4.26 Information on the impact of 2022/2023 is not yet available as the End of Project Reports are not scheduled to be requested until after this report goes to Committee.

Conclusions

4.27 The County Councillors’ Grant Fund strongly aligns with Community Powered Warwickshire and with the Levelling Up principles. Evidence of partnership working, building on strengths, and long-term approaches are required for the applicant to score highly. Many of the projects also address root causes by offering early intervention services. ‘Improving physical and/or mental health and wellbeing’ is the most addressed priority at 22%, closely followed by ‘Reducing loneliness and social isolation’ at 19.75%. These locally driven solutions build on strengths from within the community, hence harnessing the power of our communities to tackle inequality and social inclusion.

4.28 The following quotes are extracted from earlier end of project reports and demonstrate how communities benefited from projects funded by the

Councillors' Grant Fund.

2020/2021

I. *With the grant that has been provided by the Councillors grant fund we have managed to make a start on our community garden we have purchased benches, British lavender plants, some decorative aggregate wind chimes and garden decorations. The outside area has now started to take shape which has been a welcome asset with the current pandemic and hot weather. We hope that the garden will be finished by November 2020 when we will have the fence erected and community vegetable raised beds* (Community Sensory Garden, Arley and St Michael's Community Centre)

II. *Wilmcote Scrubbers [dedicated] 184 volunteer hours. Completed scrubs were collected by the Hub, organised by Wellesbourne Scrubbers. There was a shortage of scrub sets and volunteers stepped up to make these from materials purchased from the Councillor Grant. [The project] exceeded original expectation. Nursing staff, NHS community dental staff and other NHS staff benefited from supplies held within the Hub. Staff are part of the local community.* (Wilmcote Scrubbers, Stratford-on-Avon District)

III. *People living in Bedworth, Nuneaton, Exhall, Bulkington, and on the outskirts of Coventry have been given food parcels from the Foodbank. We provide food for people from the age of 5 upwards to 90+. The number of people who benefited from the project = 15 adults and 40 children. "Thank you so much for the food parcel, I am overwhelmed. When the children go back to school, I would like to volunteer." "Without you, we wouldn't have coped." "Helped me through a rough patch." By giving regular food parcels along with toiletries and cleaning products, families have benefited from this ongoing assistance.* (Bedworth Foodbank)

IV. *78% of the girls Improved mental wellbeing (using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale). 72% of the girls who improved, did so significantly, (the improvement was statistically meaningful, according to the scale used). The girls were taught a range of strategies for emotional resilience over 6 online group sessions. 57% felt less isolated by the end of the course.*
Parent/carer feedback
"I want to say a huge thank you to you and all concerned at Flourish as it really helped F, she really looked forward to it each week and was sad when it finished."
"The course came at a very helpful time for us as it was helpful to have it running during the summer months when school is shut. The course offered a discrete opportunity for my daughter to engage in a positive process that I feel has benefited her wellbeing before returning to school."
"B really enjoyed the mindfulness part of the course and suggested that

this has helped her a lot outside the course. (You Can Flourish, Warwick District)

V. *We have spent the money as we laid out in our application on the recruitment, induction training and management of placement counsellors, we also processed the referrals to the service of parents who wished to access counselling, undertook assessments of them prior to counselling and sought monitoring data from them at the beginning and end of the 18 weeks counselling. Through this specific funding 4 parents were able to access counselling, we average that each family has 4 people, so we anticipate that an additional 12 people indirectly benefited from the counselling. Counselling has been well received by parents and they have engaged well in accessing counselling through an online tool or telephone. We have received feedback that for many parents it has been beneficial, in that they have not had to seek childcare for their children, have felt safe at home and able to share information more easily. Our aim through this funding was to prioritise parents who were pregnant or had given birth over the last 6 months, the counselling service has been a vital life lone for many parents in this situation, as there has experienced isolation due to professionals and family being unable to visit them particularly during lock down. However, the impact with respect to professionals remains as Midwives and Health Visitors are still unable to make home visits, unless there is a clinical need.* (Parenting Project, delivered in Rugby Borough)

2021/2022:

I. *Our group have loved the garden, especially during Covid as it feels safe to be outdoors and the sensory aspect of the garden is just lovely. The group went to select plants and made a conscious effort to pick perennial plants as well as those that smelt lovely, felt lovely and we have a herb garden. The amount of this funding, £527.46 enabled us to purchase garden furniture that will hopefully last several years if treated annually.* (Cohort 4, Time to Relax: Our Outdoor Space)

II. *We achieved everything we set out to achieve. Once again, we have brought high-quality professional affordable theatre to our local schools and community. Our adaptations of Shakespeare are accessible to all audiences of all ages. Our volunteer programme continues to thrive. Direct feedback from a beneficiary: "Just wanted to thank you and [team member] for such a magnificent day yesterday! You covered all the areas we were concerned about and brought the text to life. Your instinctive handling of our very challenging students was AMAZING….wonderful!"*
'I have never seen a Shakespeare play before and wouldn't have ever seen one, but because it was local I thought that I would come along. I absolutely loved every moment. (Aunty Jen Productions, Macbeth - Shakespeare for Schools Project)

III. *We collected comments from people using the service which included: "This is great, so many of my friends are finding it hard right now, this really makes a difference to us".*
"I saw this on Facebook and thought I'd come down to see what all the fuss is about. There are some great bits in here for the lunchboxes, I can't always afford the nice bits and bobs so the kids will love this".
"I swear we have beans on toast 5 times a week before pay day, but tonight we don't have to. I know I'm laughing but I feel so relieved that I don't have to worry about it".
"Thanks for putting me in touch with the college [Adult Learning Service], I've wanted to do something for years but never had the guts to go for it".186 families benefitted directly from this service over the 5 visits. Within those families were 187 children/infants. Beneficiaries came almost entirely from Stockingford with the exception of a minority from neighbouring areas. (Nuneaton and Bedworth Healthy Living Network, Bag a Bargain Project)

IV. *The mats unit has benefitted our bowls group who meet weekly at the hall. There are approximately 20 members of varying ages but mainly over 60 years. The mats have to be stored in a back room and transferred to the main hall and the unit has made moving the mats around much easier. Without the unit the group would have folded.... The leader of the group, who wrote a letter of support, was very worried that because of the age and mobility of many of the members, the mats were getting considerably heavy and more difficult to manoeuvre. However, the new unit has solved this problem and the leader is very grateful for the funding.* (Carpet Bowls Storage Unit, Binley Woods Village Hall)

V. *At the Sydni Centre project, everybody that I've had feedback from has said that it has lifted the mood of the building, having improved the aesthetic look and feel of the space as a whole. Staff have also said there has been a noticeable increase in footfall. The trustee committee of the centre are looking into further funding streams to allow Brink to continue their mural work across their buildings, indicating the success of the projects we've completed with them to date.*

VI. *The Mill Road project has also received glowing feedback from a number of people who work across the road at No. 1 Mill Street, who look directly out onto the mural. They particularly appreciated the positive impact the bright colours of the mural had on the local area they work in, often brightening their days. Feedback has also been provided by members of the Leamington Society, one of which said words to the effect of: 'even though several of our members were in opposition of this concept when we first heard about it, now we've seen it finished, we feel that it is a wonderful addition to the local urban landscape.* (Brink, Leamington Mural Festival Project)

4.29 The County Councillors’ Grant Fund continues to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Warwickshire residents and communities. The projects supported by the Fund consistently deliver excellent value for money and represent an efficient and effective use of resources. The Fund continues to support Warwickshire communities by empowering them to find their own solutions and building on their strengths.

5 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 A further report will be presented to Committee in 2024/2025.

5.2 The Fund's application process was simplified in 2023/24 to reflect the feedback received in recent years. The application form used branching to provide an option to apply for low value grants with fewer application questions and a quicker turnaround. As a result of this change, Round 1 of the fund has seen an increase in applications received by 55%.

5.3 Feedback from applicants and Councillors will continue be sought to further improve the process, making it attractive to new organisations and providing even better value to the Council and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector in Warwickshire.

Appendices

None, but the full list of projects and awards, broken down by Borough/District, is available upon request.

Background Papers

None.

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

Local Member(s): None – county wide report

Other members:

Cllr Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder), and Cllr Adrian Warwick, Cllr Parminder Singh Birdi, Cllr Sarah Boad, Cllr Sarah Feeney, Cllr Wallace Redford, Cllr Will Roberts, Cllr Ian Shenton, Cllr Richard Spencer, Cllr Robert Tromans (Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Resources, Fire & Rescue Service Overview & Scrutiny Committee

13th December 2023

Council Plan 2022-2027
Integrated Performance Report Quarter 2 2023/24

Period under review: April 2023 to September 2023

Recommendation

That the Committee considers and comments on the Quarter 2 2023/24 organisational performance, progress against the Integrated Delivery Plan, management of finances and risk.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report is a retrospective summary of the Council's performance at the end of Quarter 2 (April 2023 - September 2023) against the strategic priorities and Areas of Focus set out in the Council Plan 2022-2027. All information contained within this report has been taken from the Quarter 1 Integrated Performance and Finance reports presented to Cabinet on 9th November. The paper sets out a combined picture of the Council's delivery, performance, HR, and risk.

- Performance is assessed against the Key Business Measures (KBMs) contained within the agreed Performance Management Framework (PMF) in Section 2 and Appendix 1.
- Progress against the Integrated Delivery Plan is summarised in Section 3 and more fully presented within Appendix 2.
- Management of Finance is summarised in Section 4 and the summary dashboard is presented in Appendix 3.
- Management of Risk is summarised in Section 5 and more detailed information is presented in Appendix 4.

1.2 This summary report and the detailed performance appendices provide the complete picture of the Council's performance enabling scrutiny and transparency for the organisation, partners and the public. It enables Overview and Scrutiny Committees the opportunity to consider performance within their own remits. All Members also have continual access to the Performance Management Framework (PMF) using the Performance Portal in Power BI to further monitor performance on an ongoing basis.

1.3 The approach to strategic performance reporting continues to evolve. Members will be aware that there is a wealth of information and data, and that is used in analysis most relevant to the strategic priorities. At a service level, there is also additional performance data which allows managers to manage the performance of the service day to day. In addition, Government is developing the 'Office for Local Government' (Oflog) and Council Officers are seeking to collaborate with Oflog to ensure that a meaningful and useful data set is developed to support improvement in a proportionate manner. As such, it is our aim that we streamline our performance data over the next year or so, to ensure that Members have the right and most useful performance data possible, considering any national metrics emerging from Oflog.

1.4 There are some key themes that emerged last year that continue to be highlighted by this report, and are impacted by WCC's current operating environment, including: increasing demand and costs being reported in Children & Families Services, Adult Social Care, SEND provision, Home to School Transport and in the number of applications made through the Local Welfare Scheme.

- demand increasing much more quickly than resources is resulting in the capacity and workload issues which has a further impact on delivery across the organisation, evidenced through staff feedback and addressing this is acknowledged as a high priority for the organisation;
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in a highly constrained national and local labour market were highlighted throughout 2022/23 and although overall there has been some improvement, issues remain within specific service teams for example Children & Families, Social Care and Support, Waste & Environment, Schools, Commercial and Contracts, On-Call firefighters and Planning officers; and
- other services have specific challenges such as staff absence levels in Business & Customer Services, Children & Families and Social Care and Support.

1.5 Planned improvement activity to address these issues is described in section 4 of this report.

1.6 The 2023/24 PMF was agreed at the June Cabinet meeting and, of the 105 KBMs detailed in that PMF, 91 are available for reporting in Quarter 2. There are 31 KBMs within the remit of this Committee, and 27 KBMs available for reporting this Quarter. The remaining 4 that are not being reported are all new measures to the PMF and not due for reporting until Quarter 3 or Year End. Table 1 below indicators the current assessment of performance.

Status	On Track	Not on Track
Quarter 1	61% (17)	39% (11)
Quarter 2	48% (13)	52% (14)

Table 1

Table 2 below indicates the Direction of Travel (retrospective comparison), however, please note not all measures have a status e.g. where they are new and there is no previous baseline:

Direction of Travel	On Track			Not on Track		
	Improving	Static	Declining	Improving	Static	Declining
Quarter 1	27% (3)	55% (6)	18% (2)	18% (2)	18% (2)	64% (7)
Quarter 2	33% (3)	0	67% (6)	0	64% (9)	36% (5)

Table 2

Table 3 below indicates the future projection forecast for the next reporting period:

Projection	On Track			Not on Track		
	Improving	Static	Declining	Improving	Static	Declining
Quarter 1	6% (1)	88% (15)	6% (1)	18% (2)	27% (3)	55% (6)
Quarter 2	15% (2)	77% (10)	8% (1)	29% (4)	50% (7)	21% (3)

Table 3

1.7 At Quarter 2, with a refreshed PMF, the overall position is a deterioration from the Quarter 1 position where 61% KBMs were reported as On Track and 39% Not on Track. This position is set against the challenges of the current operating environment, which include inflation and interest rates, the global instability, market failures, extremely high demand for social care and education services and resourcing challenges including workforce.

1.8 Appendix 1 details information for all measures within the PMF, including reasons why some measures are not being reported. Detailed measure-by-measure performance reporting is accessible through the Performance Portal.

1.9 The position is positive in terms of delivery of the 67 actions set out in the Integrated Delivery Plan, with 68% being On Track, 28% At Risk or Compromised, 1% complete and 3% have yet to start, and it is these actions which are reported on in Appendix 2 on an exception basis.

1.10 At the end of the second quarter the services reporting to Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee forecast an overspend of £3.414m, equivalent to 3.9% of their combined revenue budget. Once planned transfers from earmarked reserves are accounted for the position alters to a 1.3% overspend. A £0.080m shortfall is forecast against the current year saving target of £1.942m. Within this underachievement, £0.050 million is attributed to Facilities Management and Maintenance, where cost savings tied to asset rationalisation are not expected to materialise due to increased expenditure. Additionally, the Libraries and Heritage & Culture sectors are forecasting a shortfall of £0.030 million in vacancy factor savings. Deliberations are underway within the Service regarding the necessary actions to be implemented to achieve the targeted savings. Most areas of Resources remain largely on track to deliver their approved capital programme for the 2023/24, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue service is forecasting a £0.402m delay, representing 6.8% their planned capital spend for the financial year and Strategy, Planning and Governance forecasting £0.605m delay equivalent to 18.6% of their approved capital budget.

1.11 Over Quarter two, the strategic risks have been refreshed to ensure that they reflect the most significant risks facing the Council in the pursuit of its priorities. At the end of Quarter two, three of seven strategic risks more directly relate to the remit of this Committee. Two of the related strategic risks have a red, high level, rating: insufficient skilled and experienced workforce and successful cyber attack. Both risks are significantly influenced by the national and international environment with limited employees in the labour market and low unemployment rates nationally. The cyber related risk is influenced by the increase in related threats, the everchanging type and approaches used and these often originate in overseas countries. Failure to operate and / or improve is the third risk and this is currently medium net risk rated.

1.12 At a service level there are four risks that are rated red (high) and which at the same time have had an actual risk rating greater than their risk target for 3 quarters or more and are 3 points above target: insufficient resources to deliver the Council Plan and Priorities and increase in serious data breaches and/or backlog of Subject Access Requests within Resources and cyber security and Reduced on call availability within Fire and Rescue Services.

1.13 The wider national context remains a critical frame within which to view the Council’s performance. The UK continues to experience the consequences of both significant political, global and macro-economic factors. This includes increasing demand, industrial action across many sectors, the legacy impact of the Pandemic, global conflict, high inflation and interest rates and the resulting fiscal challenges are impacting the communities of Warwickshire.

1.14 Such an unprecedented combination of events at a global and national level creates a period of significant uncertainty and a very challenging financial outlook in the short- to medium-term. This volatility is impacting on the Council’s resources, both financial and in terms of recruitment and retention, levels of demand, and the approach to developing national policy, particularly Adult Social Care reform, levelling up, support or cost of living pressures and climate change.

1.15 Performance reporting will continue to track and highlight the impacts of this operating environment on delivery and performance. Ongoing analysis continues to inform the prioritisation of activity and resource allocation of the Integrated Delivery Plan and the Performance Management Framework.

2. Performance against the Performance Management Framework

2.1 The three strategic priorities set out in the Council Plan 2022 - 2027 are delivered through seven Areas of Focus. In addition to these, there are three further areas to support the Council to be known for as ‘a Great Council and Partner’. The full performance summary is contained in Appendix 1.

2.2 Comprehensive performance reporting is enabled through the Power BI Performance Portal as part of the Performance Management Framework. Where applicable, some performance figures may now have been updated on the Power BI reporting system. The number of reportable measures will change each quarter as the framework considers the availability of new data.

2.3 Of the of the 27 KBMs available for reporting Quarter 2, 48% (13) are On Track and 52% (14) are Not on Track. There are 4 measures unavailable for reporting at Quarter 2 for a number of reasons which are all outlined in Appendix 1.

2.4 Notable aspects of positive performance for specific measures include:

- The measure ‘% of applications made to the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme which are supported’ considers the number of successful applications for support to the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme, whereby 99% of applicants received support in kind this period. Between 1st April and 30th September 2023 there were 5,902 applications to the Local Welfare Scheme, with 5,852 successful applications. There has been sustained high levels of performance for this measure, despite the service anticipating a continued increase in demand from households facing financial challenges due to the cost of living rises. Between Quarter 2 2022/23 and Quarter 2 2023/24, there was a 59% increase in the number of applications.
- The Employee Wellbeing Score this year has increased from 77% in 2022/2023 to 81% in 2023/2024, which aligns to the focussed work on the wellbeing offer and reflects positively on work on equality, diversity, inclusion and well-being; and
- Gross Warwickshire Recovery & Investment Fund lending where expected investments are due for drawdown by the end of the year mean this measurement is on track.

2.5 There are some emerging performance challenges that are becoming apparent through the PMF this Quarter:

- Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service has not achieved the agreed performance targets for appliance arrival time at incidents; the Service is looking at evidence based options in order to review standards going forward to continue to keep communities across the County safe from harm;

- No. of documents being printed by the organisation where performance continues to be above target, continues to increase and is projected to decline further over the next reporting period;
- Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs % overspend compared to DSG recovery plan remains a significant challenge due to demand and individual unit costs continuing to rise above expectations. There are a variety of contributing reasons including overspends on Independent School places; Specialist Resource Provision and Post 16 provision, all leading to significant pressure on the High Needs Block, which is materially underfunded at a national level; while the Council is pleased to be working with the Department for Education on the Delivering Better Value programme to mitigate this risk, it is highly unlikely it will prevent long-term overspends in the absence of a national solution to SEND funding; and
- % Net Variation of Outturn Forecasts to Revenue Budget (Whole Council) is an area of improvement activity with the estimated Year End outturn estimated at 4.25% which is outside the +/- 2% tolerance. The Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring Report has the full detail on the position.

2.6 There are 23 measures of the 27 available for reporting, where there is enough trend data available to ascertain a Direction of Travel. 39% (9) of measures have a Direction of Travel that is On Track, the majority of which, 6, are declining. The other 3 are improving. Conversely, 61% (14) are Not on Track, the majority of which (9) are static.

2.7 All 27 reportable KBMs have a forecast projection from the responsible service for the forthcoming period. Of the measures that are forecast to be On Track at Quarter 2, 2 are forecast to improve further, with 10 to remain static and 1 to decline. Of the 14 that are forecast to be Not on Track, the following are forecast to decline further at the next reporting period. Full details can be found within Appendix 1 and the Performance Portal.

- % of maintained Schools with a Deficit Budget;
- Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block (HNB) in year forecast % overspend compared to the DSG Recovery Plan; and
- No. of documents being printed by the organisation.

2.8 The projection provided at Quarter 1 for Quarter 2 was broadly accurate for those measures that remain in the new PMF.

2.8 A set of high-level, cross-cutting, long-term Warwickshire Outcome Measures, which the Council can influence but are not solely responsible for, are also contained in the Performance Management Framework. These are reported within a dashboard informing the ongoing State of Warwickshire reporting and includes Levelling Up and the Cost of Living metrics. A summary position will be included in the Year End Integrated Performance Report.

3. Progress against the Integrated Delivery Plan

3.1 The Integrated Delivery Plan aligns priority activity from across all service areas against all Areas of Focus within the Council Plan 2022-27. The plan shows how activity across services collectively contributes to delivering these priorities.

3.2 Detailed information on the performance summary of the Integrated Delivery Plan is included at Appendix 2. A new Power BI reporting dashboard is now available and will enable Members to track progress by Service, status, Council Plan Area of Focus, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Portfolio Holder.

3.3 Of the 197 actions within the Integrated Delivery Plan, 67 are attributable to the Resources, Fire and Rescue OSC. The position is positive in terms of delivery, with 68% being On Track, 28% At Risk or Compromised, 1% complete and 3% have yet to start, and it is these actions which are reported on in Appendix 2 on an exception basis

4. Management of Finance

4.1 The key metrics of financial management are summarised below with further information providing context available in Appendix 3 and in the Q2 Finance Monitoring Report presented to Cabinet on 9th November 2023.

4.2 In response to the forecast overspend that emerged at Q1 Corporate Board developed an action plan aiming to contain and minimise the 2023/24 overspend, ensure the nature and impact of pressures is understood and key staff members as well as elected members are engaged in identifying solutions and developing long term transformation plans.

4.3 As part of the Financial Recovery Strategy all Directors with a forecast overspend have been asked to develop a Financial Recovery Plan with primary focus on the areas of Social Care and Support, Children and Families, SEND (linked to the Delivering Best Value plan), Home to School Transport and Enabling Services (utilities).

4.4 As part of the strategy a review of short-term budget balancing options is taking place as well as a review of all transformation activity.

4.5 The impact of the Financial Recovery Strategy on both one-off and permanent cost will be reflected in the MTFS when it is presented to Cabinet in December 2023.

Metric	Target	Service	Performance at Q2 2023/24
Performance against the 1 latest approved	On budget or no more	Business and Customer Services	0.9%

revenue budget as measured by forecast under/overspend	than 2% underspent	Commissioning Support Unit	(3.1%)
		Enabling Services	10.6%
		Finance	3.0%
		Strategy, Planning & Governance	10.4%
		Fire & Rescue	0.9%
The headline revenue forecast at the end of the second quarter is £3.414m (3.9%) overspend however, specific funding has been set aside to be transferred from earmarked reserves. Once these factors are considered the adjusted forecast position is £1.086m (1.3%).			
Performance against the approved savings target as measured by forecast under/overachievement	100%	Business and Customer Services	95%
		Commissioning Support Unit	100%
		Enabling Services	92%
		Finance	100%
		Strategy, Planning and Governance	100%
		Fire & Rescue	100%
Performance against the approved capital programme as measured by forecast delays in delivery	No more than 5% delay	Business & Customer Services	0%
		Enabling Services	-1.7%
		Strategy, Planning & Governance	-18.6%
		Fire & Rescue	-6.8%

5. Management of Risk

5.1 Risks are monitored in risk registers at a strategic/corporate level and at service level. At a strategic level the following strategic risks relating to Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Two are currently rated as red (high risk) and one rated as amber:

- Insufficient skilled and experienced workforce (red); and
- Cyber-attack is successful and systems and / or data compromised (red)
- Failure to operate and / or improve (amber).

5.2 Mitigating controls are in place in respect of these risks and includes the Council Plan and Integrated Delivery Plan setting out the respective direction and deliverables. A people strategy is in place and is currently being reconsidered. A new post, Director of Workforce and Local Services, has been established acknowledging the risk and demonstrating the commitment to address the risk. In relation to the cyber attack being successful, strategies and mandatory training takes place and there are multiple technical controls in place to help manage the risk. The amber risk, failure to operate and / or improve is mitigated through transformational programmes, projects and activity and work focused on resilience and recovery.

5.3 At a service level there are 40 risks recorded, which relate to Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny related services. Key risks are highlighted where they are red risks (high risk) and where a risk has been higher than the risk target for 3 quarters or more and is 3 points or more over target. To highlight the key risks a table of both red risks and risks significantly above target is provided at Appendix 4.

5.4 The risks that are both red and significantly above target are the most significant risks, further detail is help in Appendix 4, and these are:

- Insufficient resources to deliver the Authority's Council Plan and priorities (Finance);
- Cyber attacks (Fire and Rescue Services);
- Reduced on call availability (Fire and Rescue Services); and
- Increase in serious data breaches and/or backlog of Subject Access Requests (SAR) (Governance and Policy).

5.5 Mitigating activities are in place, in relation to these risks, and includes a MTFS for 2023-24 onwards to deliver a balanced and sustainable position. However, there are emerging pressures in some service areas e.g. SEND and a capital funding gap for the schools programme. The risk of successful cyber-attack is predominantly mitigated corporately as highlighted in 5.2 above and the mitigations also help in managing the data breach risk. Reduced on call availability is being managed in Fire and Rescue Services and includes enhancement to workforce planning and further development of recruitment material aimed at targeting to help attract potential employees.

5.6 Over the summer, strategic risks have been reviewed and updated to ensure that the most significant risks are captured. Over the course of the autumn and winter periods, aspects of the Strategic Risk Management Framework will be refreshed along with any implications for the practical application of the Framework to ensure all aspects are fit for purpose.

6. Environmental Implications

6.1 There are none specific to this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Quarterly Performance Report
Appendix 2 – Progress on the Integrated Delivery Plan
Appendix 3 – Management of Financial Risk
Appendix 4 – Management of Risk

Background Papers

Cabinet Report 9th November 2023

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Local Members: n/a (Countywide report)

Other Members: Councillors Warwick, Birdi, Boad, Feeney and Roberts.

1 Resources, Fire & Rescue OSC Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 2

1.1 Detailed measure-by-measure performance reporting is accessible through the **Performance Portal** .

1.2 The three strategic priorities set out in the Council Plan 2022 - 2027 are delivered through seven Areas of Focus. In addition to these, there are three further areas to support the Council to be known for as ‘a Great Council and Partner’. These are detailed in the table below alongside the number of KBMs that will be used to assess delivery, and the number being reported this Quarter.

Area of Focus	No. of KBMs	No. of KBMs available for reporting this Quarter
Create vibrant places with safe and inclusive communities	8	8
Deliver major infrastructure, digital connectivity and major transport options	17	14
Promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth, successful business, good quality jobs and future skills	9	8
Tackle climate change, promote biodiversity and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero	7	4
Deliver our Child Friendly Warwickshire strategy - Happy, healthy, safe children	7	6
Through education, improve life opportunities for children, young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities	21	17
Support people to live healthy, happy, and independent lives and work with partners to reduce health inequalities	21	19
A Great Council and Partner	**No. of KBMs**	**No. of KBMs available for reporting this Quarter**
Harnessing community power	3	3
Our people and the way we work	8	8
Using our data and digital solutions to improve service delivery	4	4

1.3 **Key Insights for Quarter 2 2023/24**

1.4 There are 31 KBMs in total that are in the remit of this Committee. Chart 1 details the reported status of the 27 KBMs which are being reported at Quarter 2. 48% (13) KBMs are On Track and 52% (14) are Not on Track.

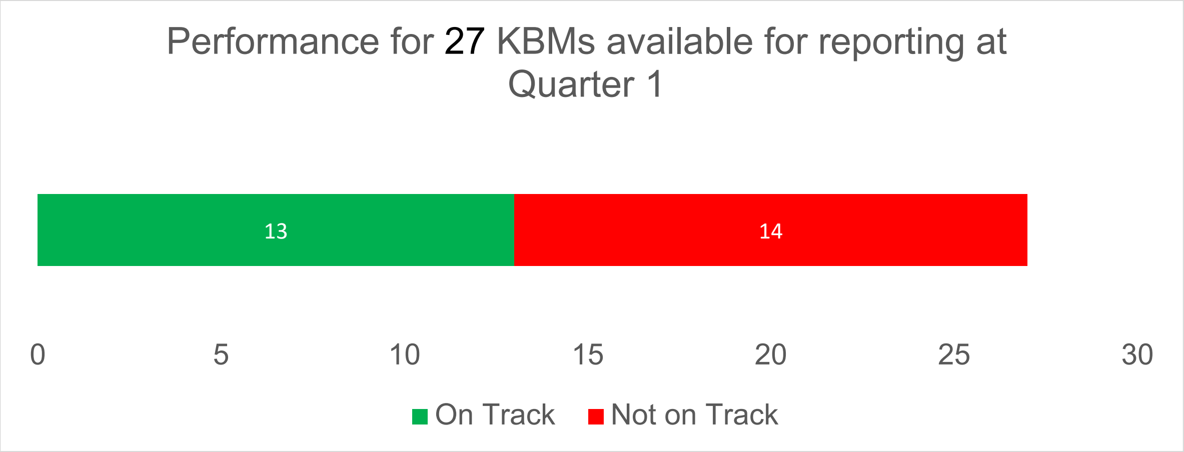


Chart 1

Chart 2 details the overall Direction of Travel, where trend data is available, assessing whether the performance has been improving or declining.

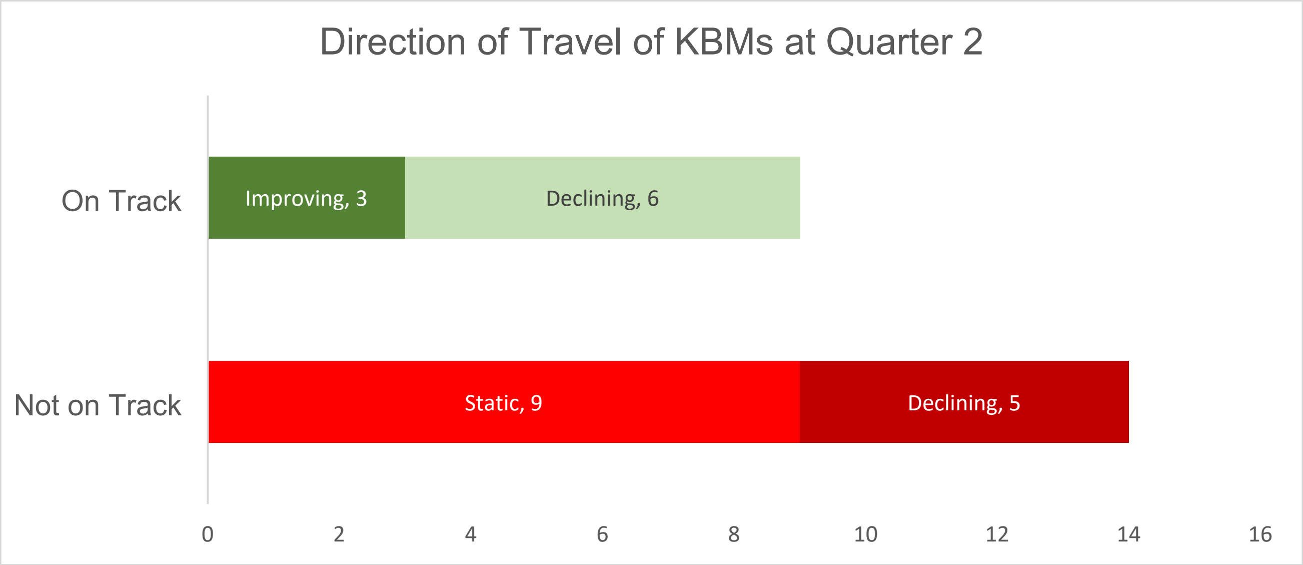


Chart 2

Chart 3 details the projected performance based on a Service forecast of the 27 reportable KBMs at the next Quarter.

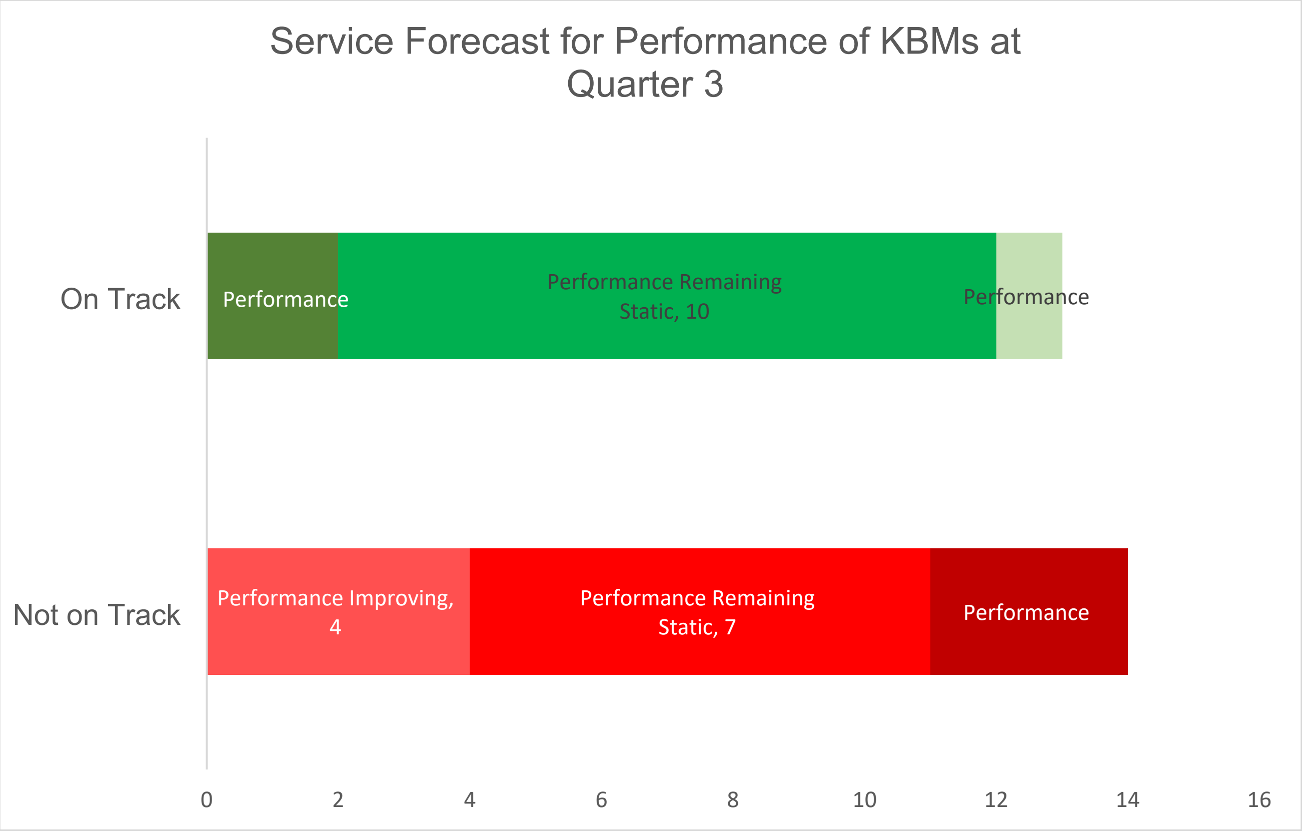


Chart 3

Explanatory Notes on Summary Tables

The following sections provide an overview of current performance by Area of Focus. The measure summary tables are a representation of the tables in the full Committee report on Power BI and are interactive. Please note:

- data is being added into the system as it becomes available so new information may be in the reports since the writing of this Quarterly position report;
- measure names in the summary tables and where highlighted are all links to take the reader directly to the measure report page in Power BI which provides full detail on the measure including charted data, performance narrative, improvement activity, trends and targets if applicable;
- a measure status is included based on performance either against the target and polarity of measure or where there is no target on improving/ declining performance;

- Services provide a forecast of where performance is heading over the next reporting period, this is informed by local knowledge, improvement activity and trend information;
- where the measure status or projection is Not Applicable, this is due to exceptional circumstances regarding the measure such as it is setting a baseline this year, the Power BI report will provide the reason by measure;
- the Latest Figure column represents the most current data available including last quarter, previous year or longer if data is lagged, full details are on Power Bi report;
- not all measures have targets and the approach now is to have improving performance and targets where appropriate;
- Direction of Travel is an indication of whether performance is improving based on trend data where available; and,
- as the framework is more responsive there are annual or termly measures included on the tables with no reported data, this will be added as the relevant data becomes available e.g. attainment data from November.

1.5 Create vibrant places with safe and inclusive communities

Measure Name	Latest Actual	Target	Measure Status	Direction of Travel	Service Forecast for next period
No. of fire related deaths	2*	N/A	Not on Track	Static	Not on Track Performance Remaining Static
No. of fire related injuries	18*	N/A	Not on Track	Static	Not on Track Performance Remaining Static
% times a first appliance arrives at life risk of property incidents within agreed response standards	67.1*	75*	Not on Track	Declining	Not on Track Performance Remaining Static
No. of Road Traffic Collisions attended by WFRS	199*	N/A	Not on Track	Declining	Not on Track Performance Remaining Static

* Cumulative actual or year end target

Overall performance in this Area of Focus has moderately deteriorated from Quarter 1 with an increase of Not on Track to all four measures in Quarter 2. The position for next reporting period is to remain similar with all measures projecting to remain static.

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service has not achieved the agreed performance targets for appliance arrival time at incidents; the Service is looking at evidence-based options to review standards going forward to continue to keep communities across the County safe from harm.

Improvement Activity as there have been 2 fire related deaths to date this year:

- No. of fire related deaths

Improvement Activity as the levels of last year have been exceeded at Quarter 2:

- No. of fire related injuries
- No. of Road Traffic Collisions attended by WFRS

Improvement activity for not achieving the target over 21 months with performance declining:

- % times a first appliance arrives at life risk of property incidents within agreed response standards

1.6 Deliver major infrastructure, digital connectivity and improved transport options

Measure Name	Latest Actual	Target	Measure Status	Direction of Travel	Service Forecast for next period
% of site specific business cases approved for Warwickshire Property & Development Group	0	100	Not on Track	Static	Not on Track Performance Improving
% Company Borrowing profile Warwickshire Property & Development Group	100	100	On Track	Static	On Track Performance Remaining Static
Gross Warwickshire Recovery & Investment Fund lending (£)	26,000,000	20,600,000*	On Track	Improving	On Track Performance Remaining Static
% Delivery of projected output by Warwickshire Property & Development Group	Due for reporting at Quarter 3				
% of all capital schemes completed on budget	Annual measure due for reporting at Year End				
% of capital schemes completed on time					
No. of projects seeking member approval to changes in cost, time, scope or risk	189	N/A	Not on Track	Static	Not on Track Performance Remaining Static

* Cumulative actual or year end target

Performance within this Area of Focus is mixed with half of the available measures reporting as On Track, with the projection to remain in a similar position over the next period, whereas the other half are not on track, of which one is projected to improve.

Area of good progress as expected investments due for drawdown by the end of the year mean this measurement is on track:

- Gross Warwickshire Recovery & Investment Fund lending (£)

1.7 Tackle climate change, promote biodiversity and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero

Measure Name	Latest Actual	Target	Measure Status	Direction of Travel	Service Forecast for next period
No. of documents being printed by the organisation	2,507,710	2,045,876	Not on Track	Declining	Not on Track Performance Declining
Total annual reduction in carbon emissions from Council related activities (tCo2)	Annual measure due for reporting at Year End				

At Quarter 2, only 1 measure is available for reporting with within this Area of Focus.

Improvement activity as performance continues to be above target, continues to increase and is projected to decline further over the next reporting period:

- No. of documents being printed by the organisation

1.8 Through education, improve life opportunities for children, young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities

Measure Name	Latest Actual	Target	Measure Status	Direction of Travel	Service Forecast for next period
Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block in year forecast overspend as a % of the in year High Needs overspend that is expected within the Dedicated Schools Grant Recovery Plan	281.92	0	Not on Track	Declining	Not on Track Performance Declining
% of maintained schools with a deficit budget	18.85	N/A	Not on Track	Declining	Not on Track Performance Declining

Both of the measures in this Area of Focus are Not on Track at Quarter 2, with both set to decline further over the next reporting period. They also have a Direction of Travel of declining over the trend information.

Improvement activity due to a variety of reasons including overspends on Independent School places, Specialist Resource Provision and post 16 provision causing significant pressure on the High Needs Block.

- Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block in year forecast overspend as a % of the in year High Needs overspend that is expected within the Dedicated Schools Grant Recovery Plan

1.9 Support people to live healthy, happy, and independent lives and work with partners to reduce health inequalities

Measure Name	Latest Actual	Target	Measure Status	Direction of Travel	Service Forecast for next period
% of applications made to the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme which are supported	99	88	On Track	Static	On Track Performance Remaining Static

At Quarter 2 performance within this Area of Focus is positive with the one measure currently On Track set to remain static over the next reporting period.

Area of good progress as despite increases in demand in this area, performance consistently remains high:

- % of applications made to the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme which are supported

1.10 Harnessing Community Power

Measure Name	Latest Actual	Target	Measure Status	Direction of Travel	Service Forecast for next period
% of positive media coverage of WCC news releases, statements and campaigns	96	90	On Track	Static	On Track Performance Remaining Static
Total no. of community groups	9700	N/A	On Track	Static	On Track Performance Improving
Value (£) going into community groups	1546,000	N/A	On Track	N/A insufficient trend data	On Track Performance Remaining Static

Performance within this Area of Focus is within expected levels and projection for the next period is either to remain at similar levels or improve. At this time there are no measures which need highlighting.

1.11 Our people and the way we work

Measure Name	Latest Actual	Target	Measure Status	Direction of Travel	Service Forecast for next period
No. of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) adverse determinations received	5	10*	On Track	Static	On Track Performance Declining

Measure Name	Latest Actual	Target	Measure Status	Direction of Travel	Service Forecast for next period
% Employee Engagement Score	76	78	On Track	N/A insufficient trend data	On Track Performance Remaining Static
% of staff agreeing that they are proud to work for WCC	80	75	On Track	Static	On Track Performance Remaining Static
% Employee Wellbeing score	81	75	On Track	Improving	On Track Performance Remaining Static
% of staff agreement with “I feel safe to be my authentic self at work”	79	75	On Track	N/A insufficient trend data	On Track Performance Remaining Static
% of staff agreeing "The council's internal communication keep me informed of what the council is doing"	79	85	Not on Track	Declining	Not on Track Performance Improving
No. of days sick absence per FTE (rolling 12 months)	9.13	8 (+/- 1 day)	Not on Track	Declining	Not on Track Performance Improving
No. of people utilising WCC core settings	308	N/A	On Track	Improving	On Track Performance Improving

* Cumulative actual or year end target

Performance within this Area of Focus is largely positive with 6 out of 8 measures being On Track. Where measures are Not on Track, the projection for the next period is to improve.

Area of good progress as the score has increased by four percentage points from 77% in 2022/2023 to 81% in 2023/2024, which aligns to the focussed work on the wellbeing offer:

- % Employee Wellbeing score

Improvement activity which, albeit a slight decrease from Quarter 1, is still slightly above the tolerance of +/- 1 day against the target of 8 days per FTE.

- No. of days sick absence per FTE (rolling 12 months)

1.12 Using our data and digital solutions to improve service delivery

Measure Name	Latest Actual	Target	Measure Status	Direction of Travel	Service Forecast for next period
% customer satisfaction level with the Customer Service Centre	83	85	Not On Track	Declining	Not on Track Performance Improving
% Net Variation of Outturn Forecasts to Revenue Budget (Whole Council)	4.25	+/-2	Not on Track	Static	Not on Track Performance Remaining Static
% of green ratings against Value for Money (VFM) audit	67	67	On Track	N/A comparison of data points unsuitable	On Track Performance Remaining Static
% return on traded activity	98.4	100	Not On Track	Declining	Not on Track Performance Remaining Static

Performance within this Area of Focus has shifted from Quarter 1 where it was largely positive, with 3 of the 4 measures On Track and likely to remain in a similar position for the next period to Quarter 2 where there are now 3 measures Not on Track and forecast to remain so at Quarter 3.

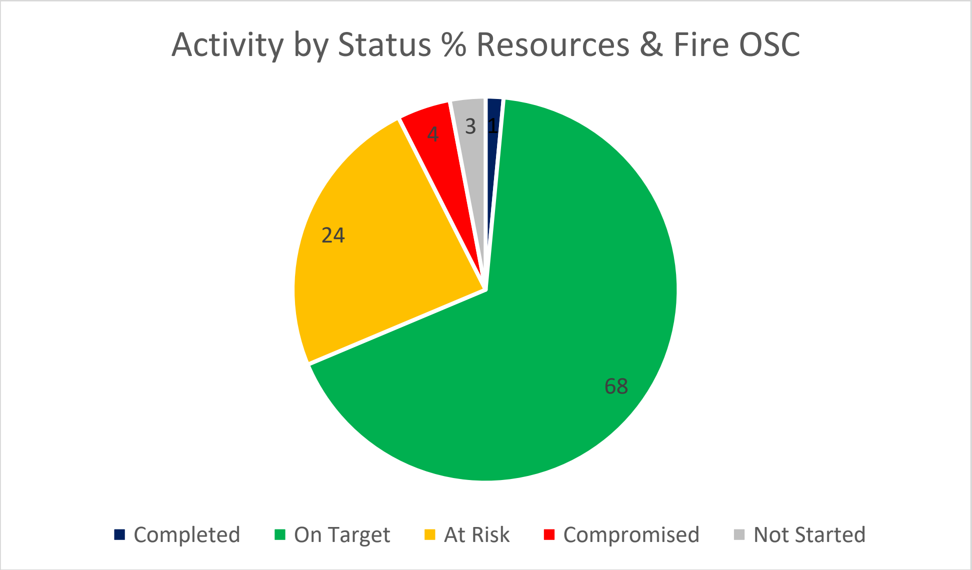
Improvement activity due to being Not on Track and Service Forecast to decline further over the next reporting period, further details of which will be presented in the Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report:

- % Net Variation of Outturn Forecasts to Revenue Budget (Whole Council).

1. Resources, Fire & Rescue OSC Progress on the Integrated Delivery Plan Quarter 2

1.1 Key Insights for Quarter 2 2023/24

Of the 197 actions within the Integrated Delivery Plan, 67 are attributable to the Resources, Fire and Rescue OSC. There is positive progress this Quarter with 68% of activities being On Track to achieve their objectives within the set timeframes, 28% are At Risk or Compromised, with 3% yet to start. One percent is now complete.



Completed activity this Quarter:

- **Establish the Data Roadmap closely aligned to the Digital Roadmap that will ensure delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy: Contribute to Data Ownership Audit and support delivery of any emerging recommendations**
  Data Ownership Audit report published 22/9/23; will go to Audit & Standards Committee.

1.2 Create vibrant places with safe and inclusive communities.

Activity	Status	Narrative
Deliver our Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (WFRS) 2-year improvement plan -	At Risk	The tender process is now in progress. A cabinet paper is being drafted to set out options around funding. Target date for delivery is May 2024.

Activity	Status	Narrative
Deliver new firefighter training sites to upgrade our facilities.		
Deliver our Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (WFRS) 2-year improvement plan - **Achieve a positive reinspection outcome by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).**	At Risk	HMICFRS report now published. WFRS has reduced Causes of Concern to one (continuation of a previous area) - this is down by 2. Areas for improvement have reduced by half. HMICFRS report going to Corporate Board and Cabinet in Oct 2023.

1.3 **Deliver major infrastructure, digital connectivity and improved transport options**

Activity	Status	Narrative
Develop an infrastructure strategy and create a supporting action plan that sets out our priority infrastructure opportunities and schemes across Warwickshire - **Confirm 3rd party specialist to deliver the strategy**	At Risk	Tender documentation draft - now considering combining with Physical Places approach as a result of Corporate Board paper
Develop an infrastructure strategy and create a supporting action plan that sets out our priority infrastructure opportunities and schemes across Warwickshire - **Confirm implementation timeline**	At Risk	Tender documentation draft - now considering combining with Physical Places approach as a result of Corporate Board paper
Support our subsidiary property company, Warwickshire Property and Development Group to **provide flexible ownership models for priority workers with the first scheme/s identified.**	At Risk	No Change, project still under consideration
Support our subsidiary property company, Warwickshire Property and Development Group to **begin the Top Farm Housing project**	At Risk	Infrastructure approval for planning to be confirmed October 2023 by Nuneaton & Bedworth BC. Submitted to WCC by Develop Warwickshire at the end of September 2023.

1.4 Tackle climate change, promote biodiversity and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero

Activity	Status	Narrative
Develop and secure approval for a sustainable futures strategy, carbon reduction plan and costed action plan, engaging creatively with residents, partners and stakeholders, **to achieve the goal of being a net zero council by 2030.**	At Risk	Six expert panel groups were held in August 2023 to extend engagement on the strategy. The 4 OSC's were consulted in September 2023. The strategy has been developed into a final state ready for Corporate Board in October 2023 prior to Cabinet in November 2023.
Develop and secure approval for a sustainable futures strategy, carbon reduction plan and costed action plan, engaging creatively with residents, partners and stakeholders, **to achieve the goal of being a net zero County by 2050 (informed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals).**	At Risk	Six expert panel groups were held in August 2023 to extend engagement in the strategy. The 4 OSC's were consulted in September 2023. The strategy has been developed into a final state ready for Corporate Board in October 2023 prior to Cabinet in November 2023.
Move forward with renewable energy initiatives to include **exploring opportunities with District and Borough Councils and partners to develop a scheme to support residents make choices and take action within their homes to become carbon neutral.**	Not Started	Once the current project to support home owners with renewables (Solar Together Warwickshire) is completed (now expected by end Q4 23/24) options for further initiatives will be reviewed. Engagement with wider areas is ongoing via West Midlands Energy Hub only. Potential opportunity also to be explored with WMCA as part of the Deeper Devo Deal at an appropriate time.
Move forward with renewable energy initiatives to include **creating a 3-5 year plan for commercial renewable energy initiatives.**	At Risk	Commercial Renewable Energy Initiatives currently under review by Finance Team.
Identify projects and funding for a retrofit programme to improve energy efficiency of the Council's property estate.	At Risk	Having a defined programme to support Retrofitting our buildings is unlikely to be agreed this financial year. Retrofitting will continue on an adhoc basis. There will be continued engagement with Consultants to support development of a programme longer term. All works to properties will be aligned to a long term strategy for our buildings.

1.5 Harnessing Community Power

Activity	Status	Narrative
Finalise and roll-out with partners and communities a community powered approach (Warwickshire Stepping Forward) including: **Holding a 2023 'Big Conversation' event**	Not Started	A planned event for June 2023 was cancelled/postponed because of low sign-up. Investigating alternative engagement means.

1.6 Using our data and digital solutions to improve service delivery.

Activity	Status	Narrative
Deliver initiatives to improve how users of our services can have a better experience of interacting with the Council. Our initial focus will be on improving the following - **Social Media: Make recommendations on how we can best use social media to gain insight and feedback about issues or concerns raised about Council services.**	Compromised	Craig Cusack will own this going forwards. Activity paused pending consideration of whether this remains a priority for the service.
Deliver the first horizon of our digital Roadmap to improve customer service and reduce cost through the redesign of services and automation, specifically by: **Implementing a new Customer Platform system to handle all of our initial contact with those who contact the Council**	At Risk	Release 1 development completed on time. Testing is in progress and we await security tests before establishing release date.
Deliver the first horizon of our digital Roadmap to improve customer service and reduce cost through the redesign of services and automation, specifically by: **Working with Assistant Directors and the Commissioning Support Unit to identify opportunities that could benefit from process automation and recommending a programme to achieve the**	At Risk	Situation remains static. A new Process and Digital Change Programme is established but no identified automation opportunities. Programme will take responsibility after Corporate Board have prioritised activity in Q3.

Activity	Status	Narrative
associated MTFS savings from 2024/25 onwards		
Establish the Data Roadmap closely aligned to the Digital Roadmap that will ensure delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy: **Implement new Master Data Management (MDM) tool**	Compromised	Pilot exercise, matching Youth Justice data with Children's Social Care data, is being evaluated before the new tool (Splink) is fully implemented. As previously identified, this will provide the organisation with the ability to (where appropriate) match client level data across systems and suggest where previously unidentifed matches might exist.
Establish the Data Roadmap closely aligned to the Digital Roadmap that will ensure delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy: **Via the Education Digital Board, improve the use of the Synergy system and improve data management practices across the Education service**	At Risk	The Education System Board has not yet articulated what support is required to tackle the known issues with the Synergy system. BI and other Resources services will continue to offer support, and other activities being completed within the Data Roadmap (such as establishing new corporate data standards) will enable Education to make progress in this area.
Establish the Data Roadmap closely aligned to the Digital Roadmap that will ensure delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy: **Design and begin roll-out of a 'data literacy' programme for the organisation**	Compromised	Initial discussions with HR&OD have taken place and an outline brief has been produced. Further meetings will explore the delivery options, including the possibility of utilising a third party.

1.7 Our People and the Way We Work

Activity	Status	Narrative
Strategic Development of Procurement, Contract Management and Quality Assurance: **Roll out of new approach to Social Value in procurement.**	At Risk	Social Value guidance/training materials are all ready and the How to Manual includes a section on social value signposting to this guidance. Relevant procurement exercises being led/supported by the Procurement Teams now include social value in line with the policy and guidance. However, this is a very soft launch and a more formal roll out programme needs to be agreed. This should form part of the Strategy Launch.

Activity	Status	Narrative
Strategic Development of Procurement, Contract Management and Quality Assurance: **Deliver savings in 3rd party spend set out in the medium-term financial strategy**	At Risk	Recruitment to these posts continues to be challenging and this is putting delivery at risk. However, robust plans are being put into place to secure the savings and this is mitigating the risk to delivery. The delivery leads supporting these efforts recognise where resources can be saved quickly in the short term and are planning what strategies are required to save more on a long term, ongoing basis.

2 The following projects are currently On Track

Activity
Deliver our Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (WFRS) 2-year improvement plan - **Implement a new risk-based inspection programme.**
Deliver our Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (WFRS) 2-year improvement plan - **Improve the understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across our Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service and implement the actions in our WFRS People & Ethics action plan to include staff engagement, training and a review of fire station facilities.**
Support our subsidiary property company, Warwickshire Property and Development Group to **identify land acquisition opportunities to support our plans for new homes, business development and growth in the county.**
Support our subsidiary property company, Warwickshire Property and Development Group to **deliver the first scheme in Southam to create 9 business units totalling 42,000 square feet in support of our economic growth ambitions.**
Support our subsidiary property company, Warwickshire Property and Development Group to **complete Warton Allotments Housing project**
Deliver a refreshed and more strategic approach to managing our capital spend within the Council by implementing a new capital operating model to include: **Reviewing and enhancing our approach to capital decision making, assurance and risk**
Deliver a refreshed and more strategic approach to managing our capital spend within the Council by implementing a new capital operating model to include: **Streamlining our capital systems and performance reporting**
Deliver a refreshed and more strategic approach to managing our capital spend within the Council by implementing a new capital operating model to include: **Delivery of the capital element of the new Unit4 Cloud hosting project in September 2023 and associated process training/communications by end of December 2023.**

Activity
Develop and deliver on our plans to decarbonise our Council buildings with our carbon reduction target developed and agreed as part of our sustainable futures strategy and supported by our Energy Strategy.
Move forward with renewable energy initiatives to include **investigating our approach to renewable energy as part of the development of the Energy Strategy.**
Move forward with renewable energy initiatives to include **reviewing current estate to identify additional PV opportunities**
Move forward with renewable energy initiatives to include **having the plan for estate decarbonisation endorsed by Council/Cabinet**
Adaptation: Rollout of organisational climate change adaptation risk assessments and action plans in line with the 2022 piloted process for fire and rescue, public health and flood prevention.
Implement opportunities for further school engagement in climate change and achieving net zero through Eco Schools and other engagement tools.
Supporting those who need the most help to include: **Delivering the Household Support Fund Grant in 2023/24**
Supporting those who need the most help to include: **Capturing learning from the operation of the Household Support Fund to inform a review of the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme (to include options appraisal and costed model)**
Embed a continuous improvement approach across the Benefits Assessment and Income Charging teams, which will support the on-going redesign of core processes: **Pilot approach by September 23 and fully embed by March 24**
Embed a continuous improvement approach across the Benefits Assessment and Income Charging teams, which will support the on-going redesign of core processes: **Significant redesign progress / improvement made by March 24**
Embed a continuous improvement approach across the Benefits Assessment and Income Charging teams, which will support the on-going redesign of core processes: **Embed Better Care Finance self-service portal for financial assessments**
Finalise and roll-out with partners and communities a community powered approach (Warwickshire Stepping Forward) including: **Delivering an Elected Member Peer Learning programme working with key delivery partners**
Finalise and roll-out with partners and communities a community powered approach (Warwickshire Stepping Forward) including: **Making community power a central tenet of our Levelling Up pilots**

Activity
Finalise and roll-out with partners and communities a community powered approach (Warwickshire Stepping Forward) including: **Through existing partnerships, build and embed a community powered way of working including Thriving Communities Partnership, Stratford's Social Impact Partnership, Health and Well-Being Board, ICS Place Boards and governance arrangements for local Levelling Up plans.**
Deliver the “ground breaker” Community Power projects: **Supporting local transformation and regeneration, including community capacity building around the Transforming Nuneaton programme, and the Levelling Up pilots in Mancetter South and Ridge Lane, Bar Pool North and Crescents, and Lillington East (and linking to the pilot in Rugby Town Centre being led by Rugby Borough Council).**
Deliver the “ground breaker” Community Power projects: **Unlocking the skills and time of Council staff to support communities, including continuation and development of the Community of Practice.**
Deliver the “ground breaker” Community Power projects: **Enabling collaborative working on highways, transport and road safety,** , **including modern Lengthsman Schemes, community work gangs, community information packs, safe and active travel champions.**
Deliver the “ground breaker” Community Power projects: **Combatting food inequality through the sustainable extension of the Community Pantry proof-of-concept.**
Create the conditions for greater volunteering and social action and provide tools to support the creation and development of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector commissioned services.
Create and deliver a blended revenue and capital Social Fabric Fund to focus on community powered initiatives primarily in the 22 Levelling Up priority LSOAs.
Complete and implement the 5 Levelling Up place plans, joining up activity across agencies, targeting effort, and resetting the relationship with communities (specific actions from the plans picked up elsewhere in this delivery plan).
Deliver initiatives to improve how users of our services can have a better experience of interacting with the Council. Our initial focus will be on improving the following - **Correspondence and Complaints: Change how we respond consistently across all our services to improve customer experience, using the new Customer Platform and revising the Complaints Policy.**
Deliver the first horizon of our digital Roadmap to improve customer service and reduce cost through the redesign of services and automation, specifically by: **Implementing a single Contact Centre Telephony Solution**

Activity
Establish the Data Roadmap closely aligned to the Digital Roadmap that will ensure delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy: **Implement activities by Horizon 1 of the Data Roadmap**
Establish the Data Roadmap closely aligned to the Digital Roadmap that will ensure delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy: **Design corporate Data Standards**
Establish the Data Roadmap closely aligned to the Digital Roadmap that will ensure delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy: **Implement activities by Horizon 2 of the Data Roadmap**
Establish the Data Roadmap closely aligned to the Digital Roadmap that will ensure delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy: **Support the roll-out and use of the Data Governance System, including the role of nominated 'data stewards'**
Deliver Year 3 of “Our People” strategy action plan in 2023/24 and in particular our 5 key priority areas and including: **Strategic workforce planning - to enable us to better understand our future workforce needs, to include work on establishment control**
Deliver Year 3 of “Our People” strategy action plan in 2023/24 and in particular our 5 key priority areas and including: **Recruitment and retention - to consider our recruitment and retention approach** **to include promoting working for the Council and addressing hard to recruit roles and staff retention**
Deliver Year 3 of “Our People” strategy action plan in 2023/24 and in particular our 5 key priority areas and including: **Pay and reward - consolidate our employee offer and consideration of apprenticeships, career progression posts, leadership and development training**
Deliver Year 3 of “Our People” strategy action plan in 2023/24 and in particular our 5 key priority areas and including: **Equality Diversity & Inclusion - to include launching our approach to EDI and developing an approach to social mobility with partners, linked to Levelling Up**
Deliver Year 3 of “Our People” strategy action plan in 2023/24 and in particular our 5 key priority areas and including: **Employee engagement - continue to look at creative ways to increase response rate, particularly in our community teams and to continue to build on our work supporting staff well-being and consolidate our ‘Thrive at work’ achievements**
Develop a wider Estates Master Plan for the entirety of the Council’s estate across the County which provides options on its optimal use
Strategic Development of Procurement, Contract Management and Quality Assurance: **Roll out of Procurement and Contract Management Strategy. To include standardising practice, upskilling staff delivering this activity**

Activity
Strategic Development of Procurement, Contract Management and Quality Assurance: **Plan, support and deliver activity to ensure the Council is prepared for the new Procurement Act.**
Strategic Development of Procurement, Contract Management and Quality Assurance: **Improve procurement practice and culture against performance standards and the annual procurement pipeline**

Appendix 3 Resources, Fire & Rescue OSC Management of Financial Risk

Management of Financial Risk

1. Performance against the latest approved revenue budget as measured by the forecast position at the end of the second quarter. Further information and reasons for variances can be found in the Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring Report, presented to Cabinet on 9th November 2023.

Service Area	**Approved Budget**	**Forecast Spend**	**(Under) /Overspend**	**% Change from Budget**	**Represented by:**			
					Investment Funds	**Impact on Earmarked Reserves**	**Remaining Service Variance**	**% change Remaining Service Variance from Approved Budget**
	£m	£m	**£m**	**%**	£m	£m	£m	%
Business and Customer Services	19.976	20.150	0.174	0.9%	0.258	(0.115)	0.031	0.2%
Commissioning Support Unit	6.431	6.232	(0.199)	(3.1%)	(0.065)	0.000	(0.134)	(2.1%)
Enabling Services	25.700	28.415	2.715	10.6%	1.356	0.376	0.983	3.8%
Finance	6.374	6.567	0.193	3.0%	0.374	(0.092)	(0.089)	(1.4%)
Strategy, Planning & Governance	3.013	3.327	0.314	10.4%	(0.011)	0.019	0.306	10.2%
Fire & Rescue	25.086	25.303	0.217	0.9%	0.000	0.228	(0.011)	(0.0%)
Subtotal Resources	86.580	89.994	3.414	3.9%	1.912	0.416	1.086	1.3%

2. Performance against the approved savings target as measured by forecast delivery.

At the end of the second quarter Commissioning Support Unit, Strategy Planning and Governance, Finance and Fire & Rescue are reporting 100% delivery of their saving targets (13 schemes totalling £0.730m). Business and Customer Services are forecasting a shortfall of 5% on their target of £0.546m, Enabling Services forecasting an 8% shortfall on a target of £0.666m. The total shortfall across the two services is forecast to be £0.80m.

3. Performance against the approved capital programme as measured by forecast delays in delivery

Service	Approved 2022-23 capital programme	New projects in year	Net over / underspend	Total capital programme	Budget Reprofile	Delays	Forecast In year capital spend	% Delays
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Business and Customer Support	1.261	0.000	0.000	1.261	0.216	0.000	1.477	0.0%
Enabling Services	16.053	0.000	0.000	16.053	0.223	(0.278)	15.998	(1.7%)
Strategy Planning & Governance	3.247	0.000	0.000	3.247	0.000	(0.605)	2.642	(18.6%)
Fire and Rescue	5.902	0.000	0.000	5.902	0.196	(0.402)	5.696	(6.8%)
Total	26.463	0.000	0.000	26.463	0.635	(1.285)	25.813	

Enabling Services - £0.278m:

- Lillington Academy Conversion to Academy Works (£0.278m) - Delays have been caused by the need to fit a new electrical power unit on site. Works are now delayed until 2024-25.

Strategy, Planning & Governance - £0.605m:

- Acquisition of land in Warwick (£0.028m) - The budget phasing has been adjusted to allow for post-occupation works.
- Strategic Site planning applications (£0.100m) Projected costs in meeting legal obligation to provide a serviced site to the DfE. Capital works include demolition (underway) and bovine remediation where the detail is to be determined. Works projected to be completed 2023/24. Professional fees supporting works being invoiced as the scheme progresses.
- Land at Leicester Lane Cubbington (£0.475m) The land has been returned back to the owner and the Council are now awaiting a dilapidation report to agree the way forward.

Fire & Rescue - £0.402m:

- Fire & Rescue HQ Leamington Spa - £1.987m - Leamington Headquarters Refurbishment is currently on hold whilst discussions take place and strategic decisions are made. The Service will be requesting a budget virement of £1.8m (exact figure to be confirmed at Q3 reporting) from this project to the Minerva Paynes Lane project. A further report will be taken to Cabinet for formal approval of this required forecast position.

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Appendix 4 Resources, Fire & Rescue OSC Management of Risk

Key Service Risks Summary

At a service level there are 40 risks recorded against Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview & Scrutiny Committee related services. Key risks are highlighted which are red risks (high risk) and where a risk level has been higher than the risk target for 3 quarters or more and is 3 points or more over target.

Key Service Risks	Net risk is currently green or amber	Net risk is currently red
Risk level has not exceeded the target for 3 quarters in a row	• 30 other risks	• **(Enabling Services)** Cyber-attack is successful • **(Enabling Services)** Capital costs for Education Construction exceed basic need funding • **(Fire and Rescue Services)** Unfavourable results from DBS checks impact service delivery • **(Fire and Rescue Services)** Weaknesses in Light Rescue Pumps impact service delivery
Risk level has exceeded target for 3 quarters in a row and is currently more than 3 points above target	• **(Fire and Rescue Services)** Control Room critical systems failure • **(Finance)** Workforce capacity and resilience	• **(Finance)** Insufficient resources to deliver the Authority's Council Plan and priorities • **(Fire and Rescue Services)** Cyber Attacks • **(Fire and Rescue Services)** Reduced on call availability • **(Governance and Policy)** Increase in serious data breaches and/or backlog of Subject Access Requests

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Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023

Capital Financial Management Project - Closure Report

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Notes the changes implemented as a result of the project and the outputs and benefits delivered.

2. Endorses that this project has now been completed and any further continuous improvement activity becomes part of “business as usual”.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The County Council has a vital responsibility to support growth, develop key infrastructure, enable service delivery, and attract external investment into the County. Capital investment is one of the ways in which it delivers this.

1.2 The context for capital projects has become significantly more challenging in recent years because of numerous factors, in particular high levels of inflation, rising borrowing costs, and supply chain and workforce challenges/shortages.

1.3 The Capital Financial Management project was established to improve financial management for capital investment and maintenance in light of perceived and actual cost increases and delays in the delivery of the Council’s approved capital programme.

1.4 The recommendations from this project have now been implemented, and this report summarises the changes that have been made and the benefits that have been delivered.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The project was allocated £125,000 from the Council Change Fund. Of this, around £19,000 was used to secure additional project resource. The remainder has funded key changes to the Council’s Unit4 accounting system, to deliver significant improvements in capital financial planning, budgeting, management and reporting capability.

3. Environmental Implications

3.1 The introduction of the Capital Strategy Group has enabled better strategic oversight of the capital programme, to ensure that the balance of the Council's capital investment aligns with its corporate objectives. This includes ensuring that sufficient priority is given to projects which help to deliver the Council's Sustainable Futures strategy.

4. Project Objectives and Findings

4.1 The Capital Financial Management project was set up to respond to Members' concerns around the Council's effective management of its capital programme.

4.2 The project team engaged in extensive consultation with stakeholders and consideration of sector best practice in the development and implementation of its recommendations.

4.3 While the Council successfully delivers a programme of £100m to £120m every year, with the majority of capital schemes being completed on time and within budget, the project identified a number of areas for improvement:

- the need for more accurate costings at the point of project approval;
- more effective monitoring and reporting, supported by fit-for-purpose systems and processes;
- improved risk management;
- the need for skills and knowledge development supported by appropriate training;
- a better understanding of the link between financial performance and operational delivery; and
- a culture which supports all of these changes.

4.4 In February 2022 Corporate Board approved a number of recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1. In essence, the recommendations introduced a new Target Operating Model for capital and set out the changes that needed to take place for it to be implemented.

5. Changes Implemented and Benefits Delivered

5.1 Following approval of the recommendations by Corporate Board, the proposed changes have now been implemented. At the 2022/23 outturn, when the project recommendations had been partially implemented, capital delays compared to Quarter 3 forecasts were low and significantly improved on previous years, at 2%. This suggests that the changes implemented are starting to have the desired effect, and this will be kept under active review. The changes made and benefits delivered are set out in more detail below.

Capital Strategy Group

5.2 The Capital Strategy Group was established over 12 months ago, chaired by the Director of Finance, to take a corporate overview of the capital programme, provide a steer on key issues, and approve additions to the Capital Investment Fund pipeline in a way that ensures the overall mix of investments is best placed to deliver on the Council's priorities.

5.3 Examples of work undertaken by the Capital Strategy Group since its inception include:

- approval of new investment proposals funded by the Capital Investment Fund to be taken forward to Corporate Board before going on to Members for approval;
- providing advice on approaches to managing capital resources through the Medium-Term Financial Strategy;
- leading early discussion of potential issues, such as the funding of the increase in school places needed across Warwickshire, and the need to maximise developer contributions, to ensure they are being proactively managed before problems arise;
- agreeing a suite of Key Business Measures and Indicators by which we can better measure the performance of the capital programme; and
- agreeing a new Capital Annual Report to give greater visibility of the achievements and challenges faced in delivering the capital programme.

Investigation Design Fund

5.4 A new £4m Investigation Design Fund (IDF) has been set up, top-sliced from the Capital Investment Fund, to enable complex, high value and higher risk projects to access resources to carry out investigation works. The IDF could be used, for example, to undertake ground condition investigations, ecological or archaeological surveys or land ownership surveys, where the outcomes could have a significant impact on scheme costs.

5.5 In this way, services will be able to estimate project costs more accurately and manage risks better before submitting funding bids for approval. In turn, this should reduce the number of schemes experiencing significant cost increases or delays.

5.6 This fund has been available since April 2023 and to date, £44,000 of IDF has been awarded, to undertake surveys of public buildings relating to access for disabled persons, and decarbonisation, with further bids pending As more large-scale schemes come through the CIF it is anticipated that take-up will increase.

New Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) System

5.7 The use of Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) software for capital monitoring and forecasting was implemented in time for 2023/24 Quarter 2.

5.8 FP&A holds more information about capital schemes, at a greater level of granularity, than was previously possible, providing a much-improved means of forecasting and reporting insights. It also replaces the previous capital forecasting process which required a high degree of manual intervention and maintenance, thus allowing officers to focus time on better quality forecasting and reporting.

Capital Approval Processes

5.9 Improvements have been made to the approval process for projects seeking to use Capital Investment Fund (CIF) monies. A new, three stage approval process (Project Proposal, Outline Business Case and Full Business Case), is in place for high value, high complexity projects which have significant financial, operational and/or reputational risk. This will provide more rigour to ensure the Council’s limited funds are directed to the ‘right’ projects. This is being supplemented with improvements to the way we record and manage the use of contingency budgets so that there is greater visibility and monitoring of how contingency funding is being used.

5.10 All new project proposals are scrutinised by the Capital Strategy Group to ensure the Council’s resources are being allocated in a way that most efficiently and effectively contributes to its priorities.

Performance Measures

5.11 Three new Key Business Measures (KBMs) have been introduced to show how the capital programme is performing. These measures are:

a) the percentage of capital schemes completed on time;

b) the percentage of capital schemes completed on budget; and

c) the number of projects seeking member approval to changes in cost, time, scope or risk.

5.12 KBMs (a) and (b) are being measured from April 2023 and will be reported at the end of the year. Performance against KBM (c) is expected to improve over time, as a result of other changes implemented through this project.

5.13 In addition, three Key Business Indicators (KBIs) have recently been agreed, to assist officers in managing the overall performance of the capital programme:

d) Number of live Capital Investment Fund funded Capital Projects currently classified as 'at risk'.

e) Number of live capital projects that are forecasting a need for additional funding.

f) The value of gross forecasted additional funding requests across the capital programme.

Managing Culture Change

5.14 Throughout the project there has been a focus on embedding the required cultural change across the organisation to support the practical changes that have been made. Through regular engagement and discussion, different stakeholder groups have a greater awareness of the impact their behaviours and actions have on the effectiveness of financial management of the capital programme. This has been and continues to be supported by:

- a communications plan, incorporating staff briefings, attendance at officer meetings and distribution of written updates;
- briefings for key members, directly with the Portfolio Holder, through the Budget Working Group, and via Resources and Fire Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- training and drop-in sessions for all project managers on the new FP&A forecasting system;
- a new Capital Hub on the Council’s intranet, containing all relevant information and guidance;
- a new Capital Induction e-learning course which is mandatory for all new capital project managers; and
- a refreshed Capital Financial Management suite of e-learning to provide more detailed training.

6. Outstanding actions

6.1 There are now two specific actions outstanding, both of which are in progress:

- Production of a video tutorial to support project managers with capital forecasting on the FP&A system. Now that Quarter 2 capital monitoring has been finalised, the project team will look to produce a video tutorial ahead of Quarter 3, to ensure there is continued support for project managers as they embed usage of the new forecasting tool.
- Completion and publication of the first Capital Annual Report for 2022/23. A draft report has been considered by the Capital Strategy Group and reviewed by the Executive Director for Resources, and final changes are being made. This report will be made available electronically, via the Council’s internet, in order that it can be shared with elected members, partners, staff, business and other stakeholders, to promote achievements, highlight challenges, and recognise lessons learned.

7. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

7.1 Following the implementation of the recommendations, it is proposed that this project is now closed, and that all further continuous improvement activity becomes part of “business as usual”. This includes, for example, ongoing production of an annual report, and maintenance of learning and development resources. The new performance measures will allow the impact of the new framework to be reported transparently to Councillors.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of project recommendations

Background Papers

Report to Resources and Fire Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 22 February 2023: Update on Capital Financial Management Project

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

Local Member(s):
Other members:

Appendix 1: Project Proposals Approved by Corporate Board, February 2022

No.	Proposal
1	New operating model where capital commissioning decisions are driven by strategic priorities
2	Capital Strategy Group to fill missing oversight / governance role
3	Investment at Outline Business Case stage to ensure accurate project costing
4	Simplified budget and forecasting for greater transparency, accuracy and ease of use
5	Proactive management of contingencies
6	Clear change management principles and proportionate escalation thresholds and routes for managing project variances
7	Technical systems development to support the recommendations
8	Consistent risk management approach aligned to Strategic Risk Management Framework
9	Capital performance measures integrated into Corporate Performance Framework
10	Changes supported by Skills Competency Framework, Training Needs Analysis and refreshed capital Learning & Development offer
11	Launch, annual event and annual report
12	Use existing systems to record, share and use Lessons Learned

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Cabinet

9 November 2023

Treasury Management Half Year Monitoring Report

Recommendation

That Cabinet receives and comments upon the update on Treasury Management activity and performance in respect of the first 6 months of the 2023/24 financial year.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice for Treasury Management 2021 recommends that members be updated on treasury management activities at least quarterly.

1.2 Treasury activity has previously been reported half-yearly and at year end to Cabinet, and this will continue. Quarterly reporting to Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also been introduced this year and provides additional opportunity for oversight and assurance regarding this aspect of the Council's financial activities. In this way the Council meets best practice in accordance with the Code.

1.3 The Treasury Management Strategy sets out that Council delegates to Cabinet responsibility for receiving and reviewing monitoring reports and acting on recommendations in respect of treasury management activity.

1.4 The first quarterly report for this financial year was considered at the quarterly Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 September 2023. This half year report will, following this Cabinet meeting, be taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's next meeting in December.

1.5 This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and includes coverage of the following:

i.) A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement

ii.) A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2023/24 (Section 2);

iii.) A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2023/24, including comments on any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2023/24 (Section 3);

iv.) The Council’s capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators (Appendix 2 of this report);

v.) An economic update for the first half of the 2023/24 financial year (Appendix 3).

1.6 The following highlights are detailed in this report:

i.) Total borrowings reduced by £49 million following a decision to repay six Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans early. This early repayment makes the borrowing position more efficient.

ii.) A debt early settlement discount of £1.9 million was gained on the early settlement of the six PWLB loans. In line with accounting standards the gain will be spread over the next 10 years with £193,000 being recognized in the revenue account each year and is included as part of the emerging 2024/25 budget position.

iii.) Total treasury investments were £391m on 30 September 2023 compared to the opening balance on 1 April 2023 of £457m, a reduction of £66m largely due to the early repayment of the £49m PWLB debt towards the end of the first quarter.

iv.) Liquid funds (*funds that can be accessed very quickly*) decreased by £50m. Again, the reduction was largely due to the debt early settlement.

v.) Investments on fixed maturity terms increased by £30m reflecting our first ever investments in the Housing Association sector, and divestments from a Santander bank deposit fund and a BlackRock variable net asset value investment.

vi.) Interest rates continued to move upwards during the greater part of the half year in response to high inflation and an increasing Bank of England (BOE) base rate which rose by 100bps from 4.25% to 5.25%. The Bank had consecutively raised the rate in the past fourteen monetary policy meetings, with the exception of the 20 September meeting where they left the rate unchanged at 5.25%.

vii.) Interest income on treasury investments of £8.89m was recorded during the six months, against a budget of £1.8m. Whilst these significant additional returns are welcomed in the context of the wider council budget, there needs to be a degree of caution around how this influences the budget setting for returns, which are influenced by the level of cash available, interest rates and need for external borrowing.

viii.) The option in the approved Treasury Management Strategy to explore paying a three year £104m pension prepayment was not taken in light of the outlook for interest rates in March 2023.

ix.) The Treasury team have continued to ensure they are up to date with developments in the sector, including undertaking formal technical training from CIPFA, and receiving market updates and briefings from third parties.

2. Annual Investment Strategy

2.1 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2023/24, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by the Council on 7 February 2023. In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, it sets out the Council's investment priorities as being:

- security of capital;
- liquidity; and
- yield.

2.2 The Council's aim is to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper and prudent levels of security and liquidity, aligned with the Council's risk appetite. This is in-line with the CIPFA Prudential Code, which governs our Treasury Management activity. In the current economic climate, over and above keeping investments short-term to cover cash flow needs, we are looking to achieve this by seeking out the value available from investing in periods up to 36 months with high credit rated financial institutions.

2.3 The Council has an investment portfolio funded by reserves and cash arising from daily receipts being more than payments on a short-term basis.

Investment balances

2.4 The average level of funds available for investment purposes during the half year was **£430m**. These funds were available on a temporary basis, and the level of funds available was mainly dependent on the timing of precept payments, receipt of grants and progress on the capital programme.

2.5 Total investments balance reduced by £67m from the £457m at the end of the last financial year to £391m on 30 September 2023, mainly because of the amount applied towards the early settlement of the £49m PWLB loans. Over 70% (£272m) of the total treasury investments were managed in-house through fixed term lending to local authorities, housing associations and local building societies, while 26% (£102m) was externally managed through money market funds and special purpose variable net asset value funds. The remainder, 4% (£17m) was held in a call account with the Council's main bank as a reserve liquidity fund.

Table 1 Investment Balances movements during the half year

Investment Type in £ Millions	Balance at 31 March 2023	Movement during H1	Balance at 30 September 2023
Building Society Loans	50	0	50
Housing Association Loans	0	30	30
Local Authority Loans	200	-8	192
Bank Deposits	38	-21	17
Managed In House	**288**	**1**	**289**
Money Market Funds	112	-50	63
VNAV Funds	57	-18	39
Externally Managed	**169**	**-68**	**102**
Total Funds	**457**	**-67**	**391**

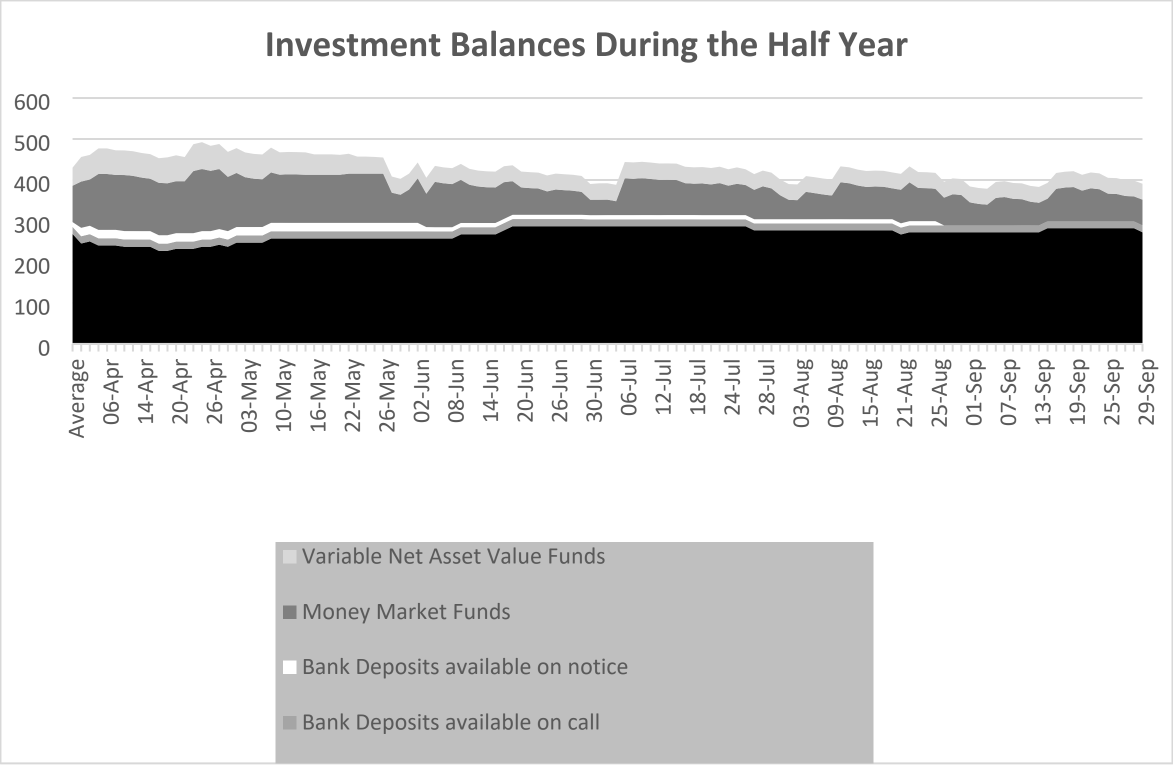
2.6 **Total liquid funds** (bank balances plus money market funds) reduced from £150m at the beginning of the financial year to £80m on 30 September 2023. The high liquidity at the beginning of the financial year had been planned to cover the potential pension fund prepayment which, was not ultimately proceeded with (see paragraphs 2.23 and 2.24).

2.7 As depicted in the chart below, all other investment types slightly reduced except for the investments in fixed deposits with local authorities, housing associations and building societies which increased from £250m at the end of last financial year to £272m at the end of the half year. The decision to increase the fixed deposits category was anchored on locking in the current high interest rates longer to limit the investment portfolio's exposure to downward repricing of interest rates expected when inflation and the base rate begin to fall in near medium term.

2.8 Throughout the half year we have maintained about £17m in a call account with the Council's main bank as a reserve instant access account in case we experience any technical issues with withdrawals from the liquid money market funds or emergency payments that need to be made after the cut off time for withdrawing from money market fund pools. This ensures the Council will always have cash to meet its statutory duties regardless of system malfunctioning or delays at the money market trading platform.

2.9 Also salient on this investment balances chart is the discontinuation of the white area in the middle of the chart representing bank deposits available on notice following the divestment from two notice deposit accounts due to the lower-than-average interest rates the bank was paying.

Figure 1 – Daily Investment Balances



Creditworthiness

2.10 There have been few changes to credit ratings of investment counterparties over the quarter under review. However, officers continue to monitor these, and other measures of creditworthiness to ensure that only appropriate counterparties are considered for investment purposes.

2.11 The Council uses Fitch, Standard & Poors (S&P) and Moodys ratings to assess the creditworthiness of Treasury investment counterparties. A creditworthiness ratings table can be found in Appendix 4.

2.12 As stipulated in the Treasury Management Strategy, investments have been made in either UK based banks, rated building societies with a minimum of A- Fitch credit rating, and UK local authorities. As at 31 August all the four building societies we have investment balances with were rated A- while four money market funds were rated AAA and two were rated AA- and A1, respectively.

2.13 While a number of local authorities have issued Section 114 notices and many others are reported to be facing serious financial challenges, the sector generally remains a relatively safe investment destination due to statutory protection. Where a loan is made to a UK local authority, the lender is provided with a statutory protection via the Local Government Act 2003. It means that all money borrowed by a local authority, together with any interest on the money borrowed, shall be charged, on all the revenues of the authority. There are only a small number of local authorities that have a formal credit rating, so all lenders will rely on this statutory protection when they arrange any loans with a UK based local authority. The CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority

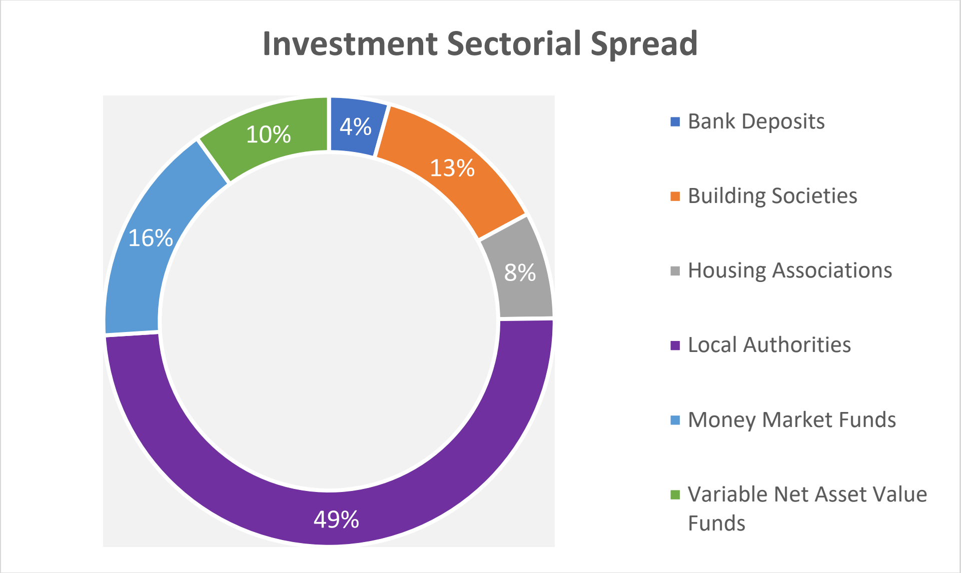
Accounting also includes wording to support this view, as they say “Local authorities shall not recognise a loss allowance for expected credit losses on a financial asset where the counterparty for a financial asset is central government or a local authority for which relevant statutory provision prevents default.”

2.14 Despite the cover provided in paragraph 2.13, the Council still endeavours to invest with local authorities that have good financial standing. Several financial checks are completed before entering into a loan agreement. The Council does not lend to other local authorities that have recently issued Section 114 notices, capitalisation notices or have been identified publicly as financially struggling. The current local authority investment portfolio does not include any Councils who have issued these notices.

Investment Counterparty Criteria

2.15 As set out in the approved 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy, we have continued to prioritize security and liquidity with yields being considered within these two parameters. The approach resulted in the Council’s treasury investments being spread across diverse sectors which exhibit strong security and liquidity features. The graph below (*Figure 1*) illustrates which sectors and in what proportions where the treasury funds were invested as of 30 September 2023:

Figure 2 – Investments Sectorial Spread

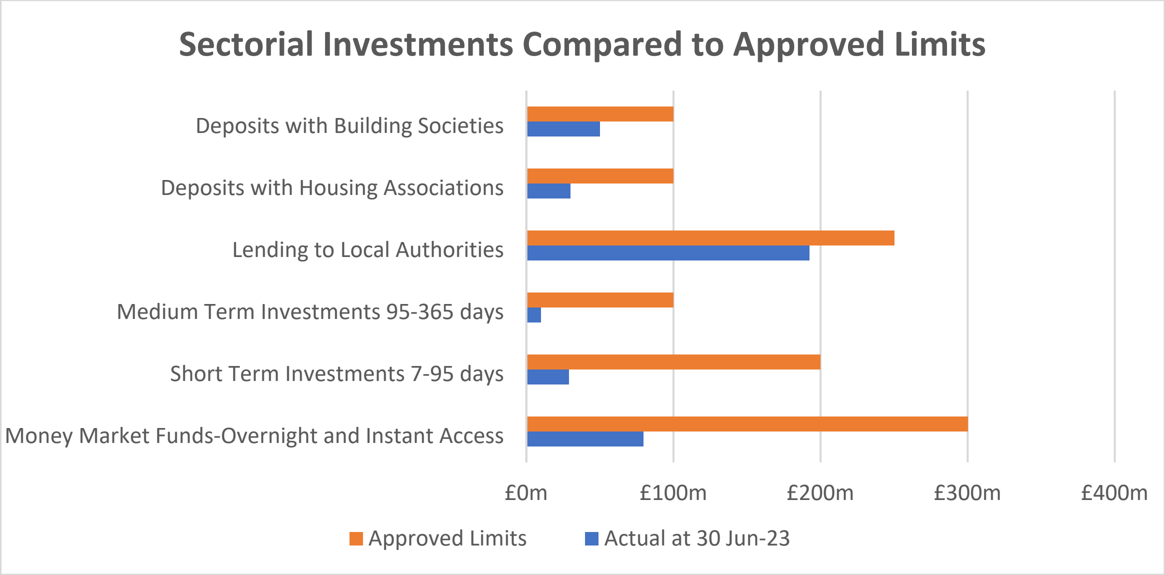


2.16 Local authorities, housing associations and building societies together held 70% of the Council’s treasury funds on fixed term loans with varying durations of up to January 2026. Investments held with local authorities alone amounted to £192m equivalent to 49% of the total investment portfolio. As pointed out above, investments in local authorities remain the safest investments, regardless of the increasing financial pressures in the sector, due to the statutory protection.

2.17 While the investment counterparty criteria selection included Housing Associations, we had not invested in any housing association until the first quarter when we placed three fixed term loan investments with three different housing associations worth £30m. This expansion is increasing the range of viable investment options open to us and reduces the investment concentration risk profile.

2.18 The counterparty and sectoral total investments were all within the limits set in the Treasury Management Strategy approved by the Council. The graph below (*Figure 3*) illustrates how the sectorial exposures compared to the approved sector limits:

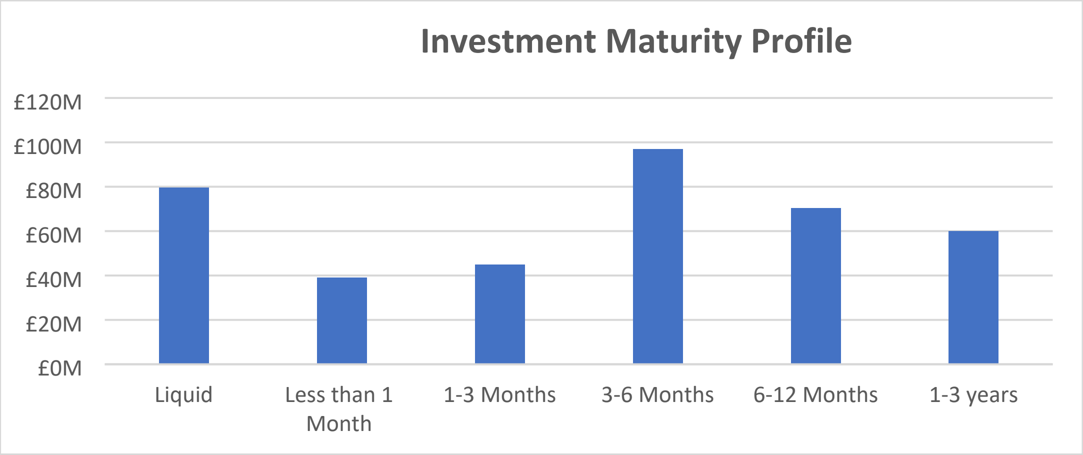
Figure 3 – Sectorial Investments Compared to Approved Limits



Investments Maturity Profile

2.19 With the bulk of the investment funds being held for financing the Council's capital programme, the maturity profile of the investments depicted in the chart below tended to lean mostly to the short-term, with 85% of maturing within twelve months and only 15% maturing over 12 months. This is also in line with the prevailing market where borrowers and funds are reluctant to commit to long term securities as they will be tied to expensive debt/deposits when the long-term market expectation is that interest rates will begin to fall in the medium-term as inflation declines. The chart below illustrates the maturity profile of the investments at the end of the quarter:

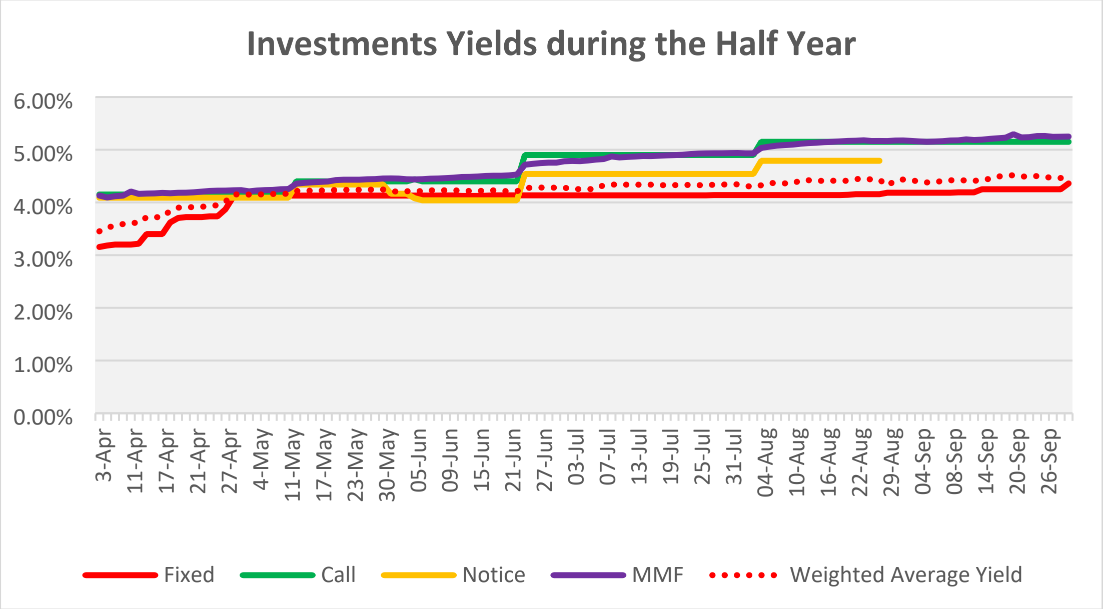
Figure 4 – Investment Maturity Profile



Investment Yield

2.20 During the period market interest rates continued with the upward trend that started during the last months of the pandemic and continued to rise further due to subsequent global and national political and economic events. The Council's treasury investment yields followed this pattern with the maturing and liquid funds being reinvested at improving interest rates. However, a few long-dated fixed deposits that were placed during the low interest era and are yet to mature, slowed down the upward trend of the portfolio yield as illustrated in the following graph where the solid red line reflects the lagging average yield from fixed deposits. All of these fixed term investments had repriced by the end of the first quarter leading to an average fixed investment interest rate of 4.36% compared to 3.15% at end of last financial year and 0.46% at June 2022.

Figure 5 – Investment Yield during the Half Year



2.21 The increasing interest rates referred to above, together with adjustments to the mix of investments, resulted in treasury activities outperforming the budget after recording total income of £8.89m compared to a half-year budget of £1.8m. The interest income budget for the year was set up before the increase in interest rates.

2.22 The recorded £8.89m interest income represents an annualized yield of 4.13% on an average investment portfolio of £430m. The Treasury activities income was earned on investments that are managed inhouse and externally managed as shown in the table below:

First Half Year Investment Yields	Yield in £'000s	Budget HY	Yield in %	Relevant Benchmark
Managed In House	**6,089**	**1,479**	**4.10%**	**3.74%**
Money Market Funds	2,168		4.89%	4.37%
Variable Net Asset Value Funds	632		2.86%	2.83%
Externally Managed	**2,800**	**861**	**4.22%**	
Total Funds	**8,889**	**2,341**	**4.13%**	

2.23 It is positive to highlight that all the yields surpassed the relevant benchmarks.

Pension Early Payment

2.24 The 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy included an option to pay the Council’s 3year pension fund contributions for the valuation period 2023/24 to 2025/26 in one lump sum at the start of the valuation period, with the preference being to do this in April 2023. This would have resulted in the Council being given a discount of £6m compared to cash payments made at normal monthly intervals. In anticipation of this potential decision, and in order to act in a timely fashion, the Treasury Management Team maintained a larger amount of investments in more liquid money market funds a few weeks before year end through to early April.

2.25 Following exploration of the business case for the prepayment, the section 151 officer (Executive Director for Resources), in consultation with the Pensions and Finance teams, took a decision to not make the prepayment. Given interest rates on mainstream investments had continued to rise, the business case highlighted that an equivalent return could be delivered through core Treasury Management activity, with the added benefit of funds being more accessible than being locked away for three years by the pensions prepayment approach.

2.26 The business case indicated that not making the early payment would result in an expected net yield of 4.4% over three years compared to the 4% yield for the early payment option. Following the decision, the cash has been invested with local authorities, housing associations, and building societies at rates that are actually earning more than the prepayment discount would have delivered, further justifying the decision.

2.27 The annual saving of £500,000 included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy predicated on making the Pension Fund early payment is therefore still being delivered, albeit through Treasury.

3. Borrowing

3.1 Total borrowing stood at £272m at 30 September 2023, compared to £321m at the start of the financial year on 1 April 2023. The reduction was due to the early repayment of six loans. No new borrowing was undertaken during the half year ended 30th September 2023. It is anticipated that no new borrowing will be undertaken during the remainder of this fiscal year.

3.2 While no new loans were drawn, due to market conditions around interest rates and gilt yield the Council was able to take the opportunity to repay prematurely some of our debt. Normally the Council faces repayment penalties that prevents repayment, however, conditions shifted to enable a £1.9m repayment discount. The discount arises due to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) being able to re-lend the funds at interest rates higher than the loans the Council holds, so the discount incentivises Councils to repay early.

3.3 The table below summarizes the loan early settlement transaction:

PWLB Early Repayment	**GBP**
Total Principal to be repaid	49,000,000
Discount	1,925,404
Net Payment after discount	**47,074,596**
Accrued interest to be repaid	315,956
Total Repayment	**47,390,552**

3.4 Another factor in the debt early repayment decision was that this reduced our over-borrowed position, moving the debt more towards our liability benchmark. The decision also reduced peak exposure to debt in loan repayments in future years (this can be seen in Appendix 1, Graph 3), which will allows the Council to re-profile this exposure more effectively as we take out future debt to finance our capital programme, thereby delivering on one of the borrowing objectives set out in the 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy.

3.5 The only other borrowing activities related to interest payments made to PWLB which is done every half year and we can confirm that the interest payments that fell due at the end of the half year were paid on time. The early settlement of the £49m debt resulted in the September debt interest bill reducing to £6.97m compared to £8m that was incurred last financial year during the first half of that year.

Debt Rescheduling

3.6 Debt rescheduling opportunities have increased significantly in the period where gilt yields, which underpin PWLB rates and market loans, have risen materially. However, during the half year under review, no viable opportunity was identified to reschedule the Council's PWLB debt.

PWLB maturity certainty rates (gilts plus 80bps) year to date to 29 September 2023

3.7 Gilt yields and PWLB certainty rates were on a generally rising trend throughout the first half of 2023/24. At the beginning of April, the 5-year rate was the cheapest and touched 4.14% whilst the 25-year rate was relatively expensive at 4.58%.

3.8 July saw short-dated rates peak at their most expensive. The 1-year rate spiked to 6.36% and the 5-year rate to 5.93%. Although, in due course, short-dated rate expectations fell, the medium dates shifted higher through August and the 10-year rate pushed higher to 5.51% and the 25-year rate to 5.73%. The 50-year rate was 4.27% on 5 April but rose to 5.45% on 28th September. It is expected that rates will fall back over the next two to three years as inflation dampens. The CPI (Consumer Price Index) measure of inflation is expected to fall below 2% in the second half of 2024, and we forecast 50-year rates to stand at 3.90% by the end of September 2025.

HIGH / LOW / AVERAGE PWLB RATES FOR 01/04/23 – 29/09/23

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
Low	4.65%	4.14%	4.20%	4.58%	4.27%
Date	06/04/2023	06/04/2023	06/04/2023	06/04/2023	05/04/2023
High	6.36%	5.93%	5.51%	5.73%	5.45%
Date	06/07/2023	07/07/2023	22/08/2023	17/08/2023	28/09/2023
Average	5.62%	5.16%	5.01%	5.29%	5.00%
Spread	1.71%	1.79%	1.31%	1.15%	1.18%

3.9 The current PWLB rates are set as margins over gilt yields as follows: -.

- **PWLB Standard Rate** is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
- **PWLB Certainty Rate (GF)** is gilt plus 80 basis points (G+80bps)
- **PWLB Local Infrastructure Rate** is gilt plus 60 basis points (G+60bps)
- **PWLB Certainty Rate (HRA)** is gilt plus 40bps (G+40bps)

3.10 The **UK Infrastructure Bank** will lend to local authorities that meet its scheme criteria at a rate currently set at gilt plus 40bps (G+40bps).

4. Liability Benchmark

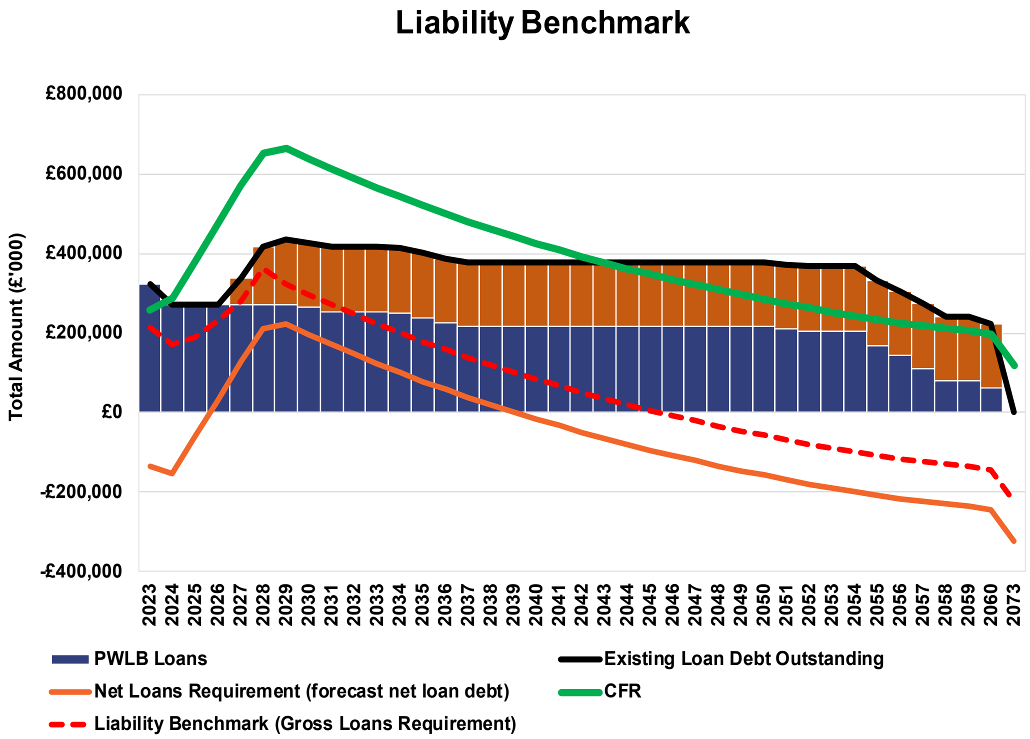
4.1 The purpose of this prudential indicator is to compare the authority's existing loans outstanding against a standardised assessment of need for external loan debt, called the liability benchmark. The benchmark reflects the borrowing required to finance capital spending but taking into account any ability to make use of cash balances instead of borrowing externally and taking account of the need to hold a certain amount of cash liquidity. If the existing external loans outstanding are below the debt required, the authority will potentially need to borrow to meet the shortfall. If the existing external loans outstanding are more than it needs, the resulting excess cash may need to be invested. The chart therefore provides insight to an authority on how much it needs to borrow, when, and to what maturities to match its planned borrowing needs.

4.2 The liability benchmark makes no assumptions about the level of future prudential borrowing beyond the horizon of the 5year Medium Term Financial Strategy and so the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and the liability benchmark tail off in the chart below, when in reality a rolling programme of new capital expenditure will be approved over time and the CFR will not reduce.

4.3 The liability benchmark is the lowest level of borrowing compared to the CFR borrowing requirement – borrowing only when reserves reach a set minimum level. This assumes that internal resources such as reserves and working capital are utilised and that cash and investment balances are reduced gradually over time.

4.4 The chart below shows how the recent repayment of debt has reduced external debt (the black line) and brought it closer to the benchmark (the dotted red line). Then as capital spending increases over the next few years and the Council utilises its reserves rather than borrowing more, the gap reduces further until the Council does start borrowing externally again (where the brown bars appear in 2027).

4.5 The cash liquidity buffer is reflected in the gap between the dotted red line (the liability benchmark) and the solid orange line (the net loans requirement). This buffer is set at £350m in the current year hence the large gap, but the buffer is planned to be brought down to £100m over time, representing a more efficient use of balance sheet resources, and this shows as a reduced gap between these two lines.



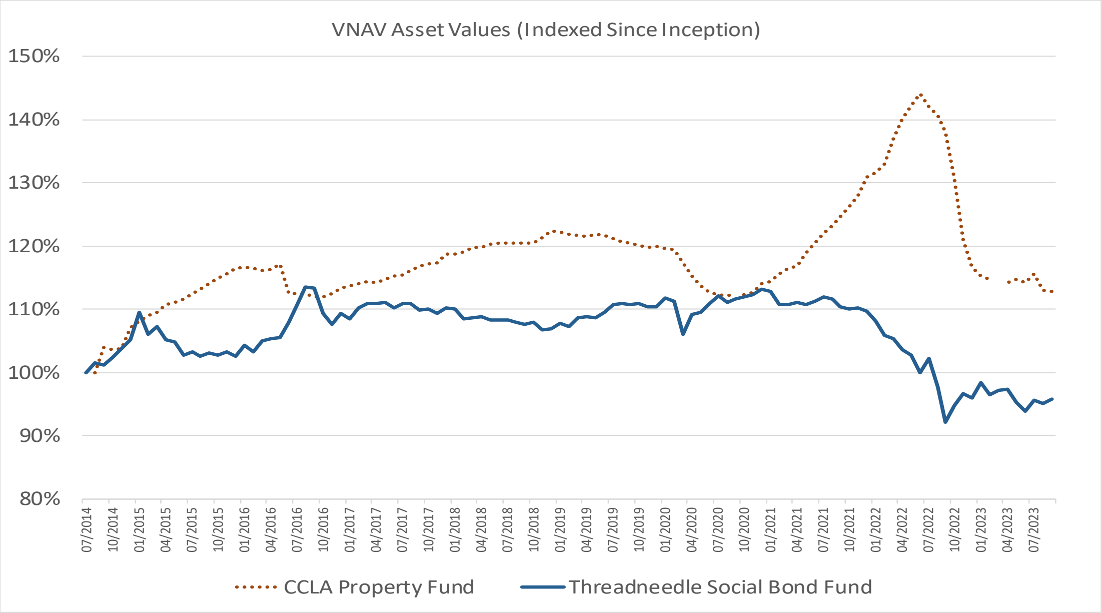
5. Variable Net Asset Value (VNAV) Investments

5.1 As noted earlier in the report, included in the treasury investments is £39m invested in variable net asset value investments as at 30 September 2023. These are investments that are traded in a way like listed stock where the value of the assets held vary up and down dependent on the performance of the funds. At the beginning of the 2023/24 financial year the Council had investments in three separate funds namely, the Threadneedle Social Bond Fund, CCLA Local Authority Property Fund and the BlackRock ICS Sterling Liquid Environmentally Aware Fund. During the first quarter, a decision was made to divest from the BlackRock fund and divert funds to fixed deposits where higher returns were prevailing. The remaining two funds have consistently paid good dividends.

5.2 During the half year, the three funds earned £0.632m in income, equivalent to 2.86% yield on the average investment balance of £44m held during the period.

5.3 The two remaining funds gained in value during the period of prevailing low interest rates, as shown in the graph below. However, both funds have experienced volatility driven by Covid followed by a period of stabilization.

5.4 Treasury officers are reviewing the balances on these funds in light of prevailing market conditions.



6. Non-Treasury Investments

6.1 In addition to managing the Council's treasury investments and borrowings, the Treasury officers are also responsible for managing other non-treasury investments, undertaken in pursuit of achieving the Council's economic, commercial, and social objectives. Among the ongoing non-treasury investments that the Treasury team is involved in are loans through the Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund, and loans to the Warwickshire Property and Development Group, and Educaterers, the schools catering local authority trading company.

6.2 The non-treasury investments activities are reported and monitored at other Council governance forums and are not included in this report.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The financial implications of the Treasury Management outturn are set out in the body of the report.

8. Environmental Implications

8.1 As stated in the Council approved Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS), the Council is committed to considering environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues, and has a particular interest in terms of climate change and pursuing activities that have a positive social impact.

8.2 In the TMSS, the Council undertook to ensure an understanding of the degree to which investments may contribute towards climate change and where appropriate, move cash balances to funds that have are ESG driven targets, or "green funds", to ensure our investment is contributing towards tackling ESG issues, among other undertakings, with security and liquidity of investments taking precedence.

8.3 **Environmental**: The majority (70%) of the treasury investments outstanding at the end of this half year (30th September 2023) were fixed-term deposits with other local authorities, housing associations and building societies. Of these deposits, 66% by value were with local authorities, housing associations or building societies with a climate action plan. However, as security and liquidity take priority over ESG impact, the Council divested from the Blackrock Liquid Environmentally Aware Fund. This was because the fund was deemed a Variable Net Asset Value fund (VNAV) which means that there was capital at risk.

8.4 **Governance:** Officers rely on credit rating for assessing governance alignment. Governance considerations are included as part of the credit rating process, such as whether the money market fund asset manager is suitably qualified, competent, and capable, and whether there is an experienced and credible senior management team and sufficient resources. Therefore, the high credit ratings suggest that there are robust governance procedures within the banks, building societies and money market funds in which the Council invested in the quarter.

8.5 **Social alignment**: It is assumed that other local authorities will largely align with the Council's objectives. They are likely to provide similar services to the communities within their area, and have similar objectives, such as promoting a thriving economy and supporting people to live their best lives. Similarly, the primary objective of most housing associations is to provide affordable housing, which aligns with the Council Plan objectives.

9. Timescales Associated with Next Steps

9.1 This report will be presented to Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 December 2023.

9.2 A further Treasury Management report on Q3 activity will be presented to Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2024.

9.3 A Treasury Management Outturn report and Investment Outturn report will be presented to Cabinet after the yearend.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Investment and Borrowing Portfolio
Appendix 3 – Prudential Indicators
Appendix 3 – Economic Update
Appendix 4 – Creditworthiness ratings table

Background Papers
None.

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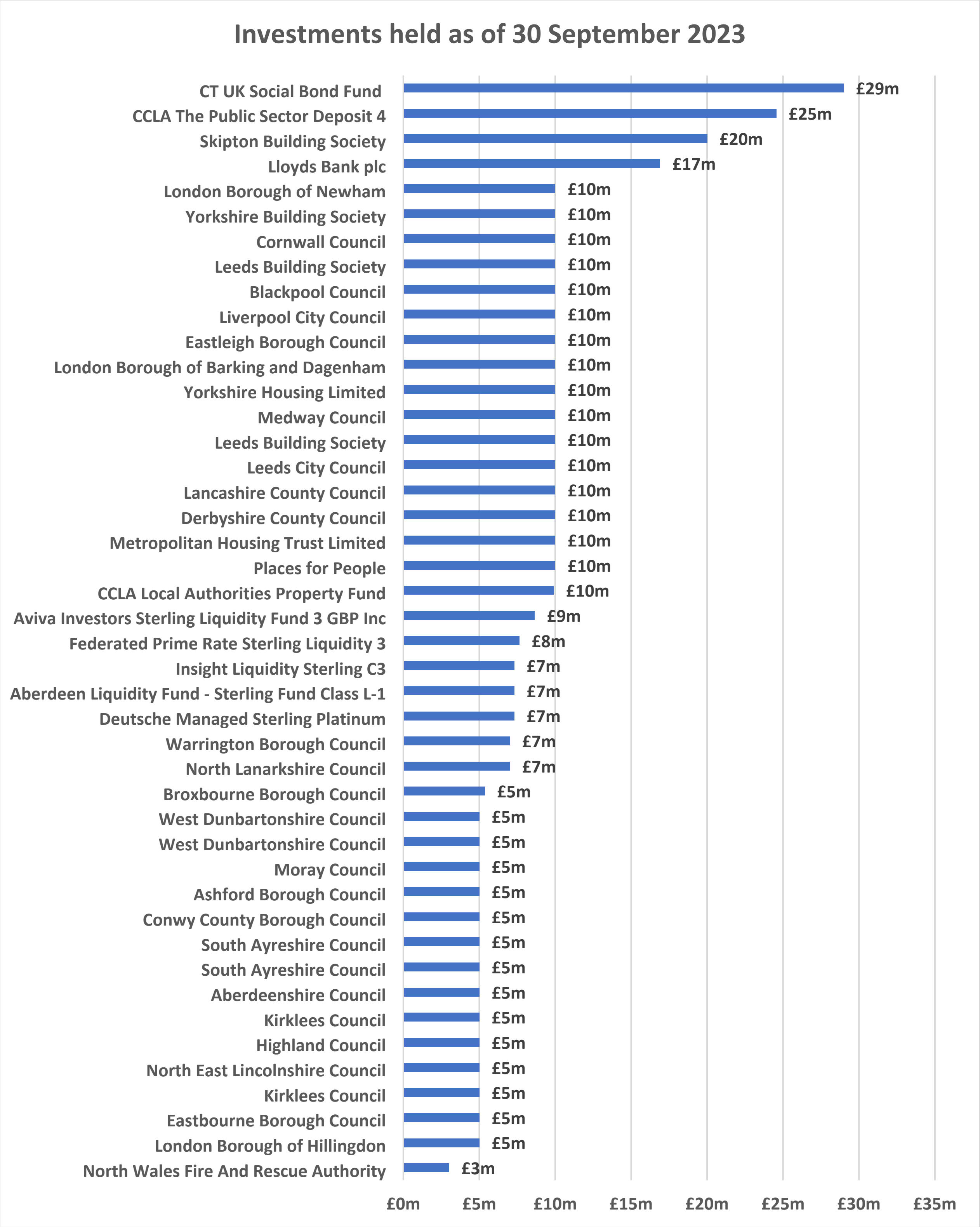
The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

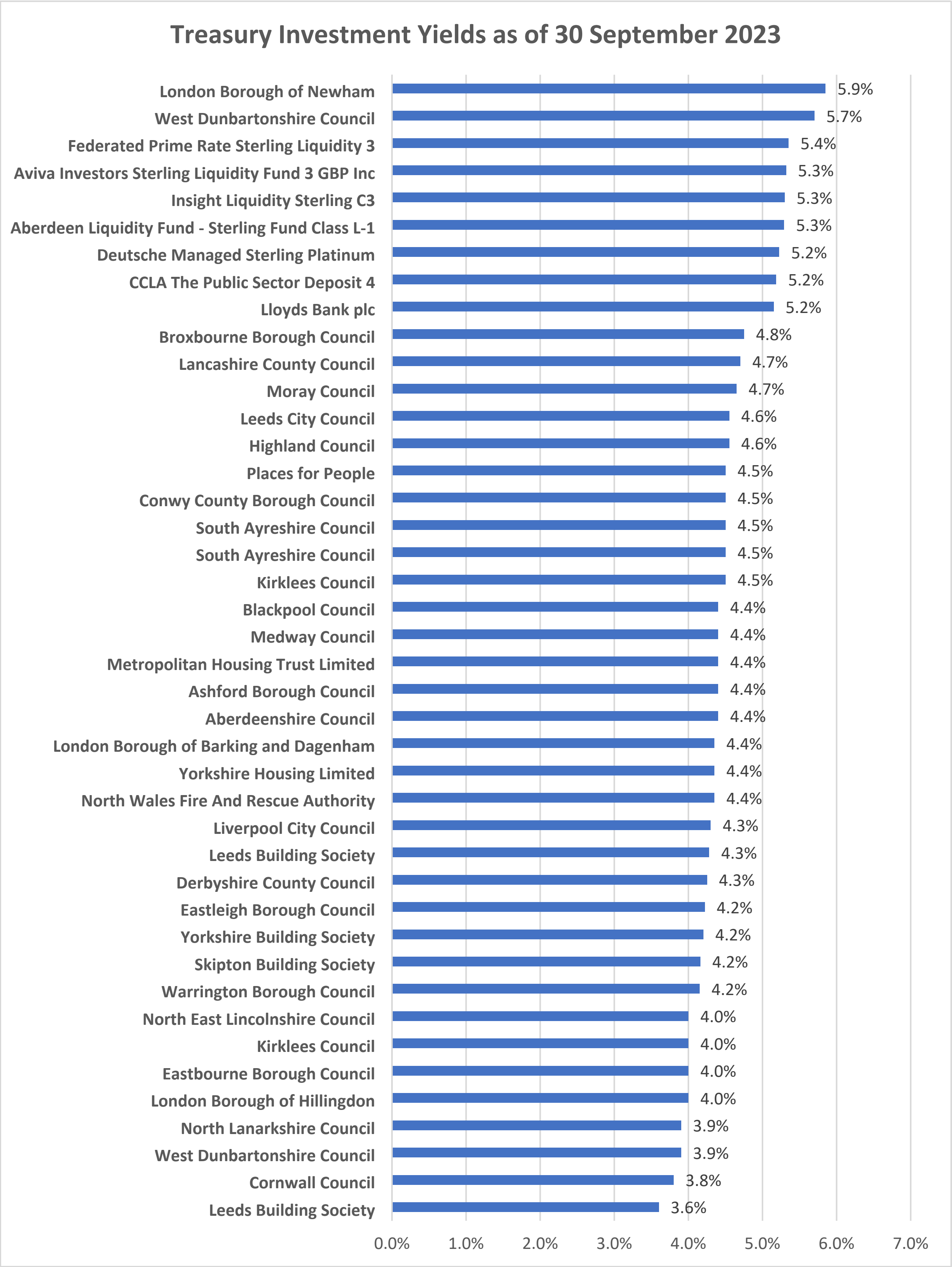
Local Member(s): N/A - This is a countywide matter.
Other Members: Leaders of the Labour, Liberal Democrats and Green Groups
Chair and Spokespersons of the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview & Scrutiny Committee

APPENDIX 1: Investment and Borrowing Portfolios

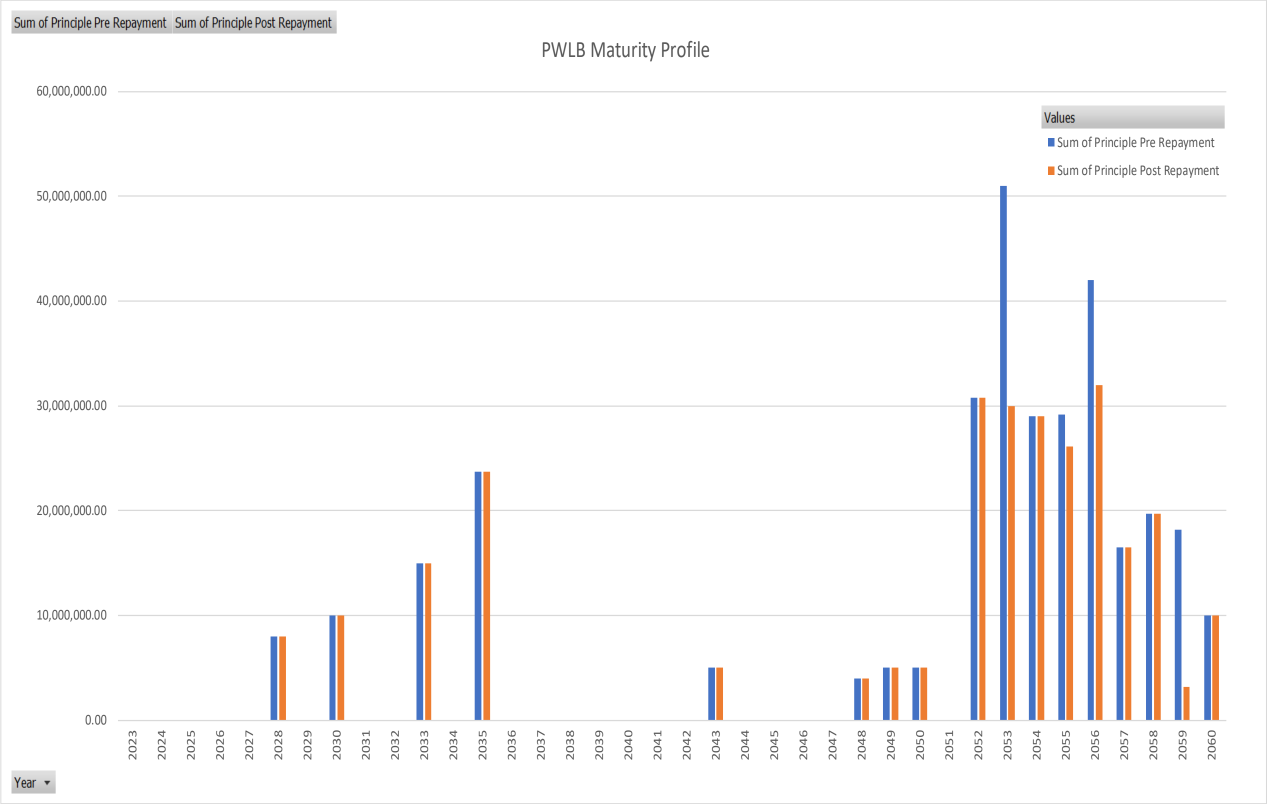
Investments held as of 30th September 2023



Investment yield as of the 30th September 2023



Borrowing profile as at the 30th of September 2023, compared to 31st March 2023.



APPENDIX 2: Prudential Indicators

PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR (1). AFFORDABILITY PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate
	£'000	**£'000**	**£'000**
Capital Expenditure	117,352	160,094	179,508
	%	**%**	**%**
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	5.13%	4.33%	4.40%
Gross borrowing requirement	**£'000**	**£'000**	**£'000**
Gross Debt	321,413	272,413	272,413
Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 March	256,854	287,253	381,922
Under/(Over) Borrowing	(64,559)	14,840	109,509
	£'000	**£'000**	**£'000**
In year Capital Financing Requirement	10,503	11,083	11,299
PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR (2). TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS	**2022/23 Actual**	**2023/24 Estimate**	**2024/25 Estimate**
Authorised limit for external debt -	**£'000**	**£'000**	**£'000**
Borrowing	386,000	490,000	625,000
TOTAL	**386,000**	**490,000**	**625,000**
Operational boundary for external debt -	**£'000**	**£'000**	**£'000**
Borrowing	321,413	467,851	597,155
TOTAL	**321,413**	**326,320**	**311,976**
Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure			
Net principal re fixed rate borrowing / fixed term investments	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit for variable rate exposure			
Net principal re fixed rate borrowing / fixed term investments	25%	25%	25%
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 365	**£'000**	**£'000**	**£'000**
(per maturity date)	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000

Maturity structure of borrowing during year	upper limit	lower limit
under 12 months	20%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	40%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	60%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	100%	0%
10 years and above	100%	0%

Maturity structure of new variable rate borrowing during	upper limit	lower limit
under 12 months	35%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	45%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	65%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	100%	0%
10 years and above	100%	0%

APPENDIX 3: Economic Update (provided by Link Group)

1. Economic Update

- The first half of 2023/24 saw:
    - Interest rates rise by a further 100bps, taking Bank Rate from 4.25% to 5.25% and, possibly, the peak in the tightening cycle.
    - Short, medium, and long-dated gilts remain elevated as inflation continually surprised to the upside.
    - A 0.5% month on month decline in real GDP in July, mainly due to more strikes.
    - CPI inflation falling from 8.7% in April to 6.7% in August, its lowest rate since February 2022, but still the highest in the G7.
    - Core CPI inflation declining to 6.2% in August from 7.1% in April and May, a then 31 years high.
    - A cooling in labour market conditions, but no evidence yet that it has led to an easing in wage growth (as the 3-month year on year growth of average earnings rose to 7.8% in August, excluding bonuses).
- The 0.5% m/m fall in GDP in July suggests that underlying growth has lost momentum since earlier in the year. Some of the weakness in July was due to there being almost twice as many working days lost to strikes in July (281,000) than in June (160,000). But with output falling in 10 out of the 17 sectors, there is an air of underlying weakness.
- The fall in the composite Purchasing Managers Index from 48.6 in August to 46.8 in September left it at its lowest level since COVID-19 lockdowns reduced activity in January 2021. At face value, it is consistent with the 0.2% quarter on quarter rise in real GDP in the period April to June, being followed by a contraction of up to 1% in the second half of 2023.
- The 0.4% month on month rebound in retail sales volumes in August is not as good as it looks as it partly reflected a pickup in sales after the unusually wet weather in July. Sales volumes in August were 0.2% below their level in May, suggesting much of the resilience in retail activity in the first half of the year has faded.
- As the growing drag from higher interest rates intensifies over the next six months, we think the economy will continue to lose momentum and soon fall into a mild recession. Strong labour demand, fast wage growth and government handouts have all supported household incomes over the past year. And with CPI inflation past its peak and expected to decline further, the economy has got through the cost-of- living crisis without recession. But even though the worst of the falls in real household disposable incomes are behind us, the phasing out of financial support packages provided by the government during the energy crisis means real incomes are unlikely to grow strongly. Higher interest rates will soon bite harder too. We expect the Bank of England to keep interest rates at the probable peak of 5.25% until the second half of 2024. Mortgage rates are likely to stay above 5.0% for around a year.
- The tightness of the labour market continued to ease, with employment in the three months to July falling by 207,000. The further decline in the number of job vacancies from 1.017m in July to 0.989m in August suggests that the labour market has loosened a bit further since July. That is the first time it has fallen below 1m since July 2021. At 3.0% in July, and likely to have fallen to 2.9% in August, the job vacancy rate is getting closer to 2.5%, which would be consistent with slower wage growth. Meanwhile, the 48,000 decline in the supply of workers in the three months to July offset some of the loosening in the tightness of the labour market. That was due to a 63,000 increase in inactivity in the three months to July as more people left the labour market due to long term sickness or to enter education. The supply of labour is still 0.3% below its pre-pandemic February 2020 level.
- But the cooling in labour market conditions still has not fed through to an easing in wage growth. While the monthly rate of earnings growth eased sharply from an upwardly revised +2.2% in June to -0.9% in July, a lot of that was due to the one-off bonus payments for NHS staff in June not being repeated in July. The headline 3 monthly year on year rate rose from 8.4% (revised

up from 8.2%) to 8.5%, which meant UK wage growth remains much faster than in the US and in the Euro-zone. Moreover, while the Bank of England's closely watched measure of regular private sector wage growth eased a touch in July, from 8.2% 3myy in June to 8.1% 3myy, it is still well above the Bank of England's prediction for it to fall to 6.9% in September.

- CPI inflation declined from 6.8% in July to 6.7% in August, the lowest rate since February 2022. The biggest positive surprise was the drop in core CPI inflation, which declined from 6.9% to 6.2%. That reverses all the rise since March and means the gap between the UK and elsewhere has shrunk (US core inflation is 4.4% and in the Euro-zone it is 5.3%). Core goods inflation fell from 5.9% to 5.2% and the further easing in core goods producer price inflation, from 2.2% in July to a 29-month low of 1.5% in August, suggests it will eventually fall close to zero. But the really positive development was the fall in services inflation from 7.4% to 6.8%. That also reverses most of the rise since March and takes it below the forecast of 7.2% the Bank of England published in early August.
- In its latest monetary policy meeting on 20 September, the Bank of England left interest rates unchanged at 5.25%. The weak August CPI inflation release, the recent loosening in the labour market and the downbeat activity surveys appear to have convinced the Bank of England that it has already raised rates far enough. The minutes show the decision was "finely balanced". Five MPC members (Bailey, Broadbent, Dhingra, Pill and Ramsden) voted for no change and the other four (Cunliffe, Greene, Haskel and Mann) voted for a 25bps hike.
- Like the US Fed, the Bank of England wants the markets to believe in the higher for longer narrative. The statement did not say that rates have peaked and once again said if there was evidence of more persistent inflation pressures "further tightening in policy would be required". Governor Bailey stated, "we'll be watching closely to see if further increases are needed". The Bank also retained the hawkish guidance that rates will stay "sufficiently restrictive for sufficiently long".
- This narrative makes sense as the Bank of England does not want the markets to decide that a peak in rates will be soon followed by rate cuts, which would loosen financial conditions and undermine its attempts to quash inflation. The language also gives the Bank of England the flexibility to respond to new developments. A rebound in services inflation, another surge in wage growth and/or a further leap in oil prices could conceivably force it to raise rates at the next meeting on 2 November, or even pause in November and raise rates in December.
- The yield on 10-year Gilts fell from a peak of 4.74% on 17th August to 4.44% on 29th September, mainly on the back of investors revising down their interest rate expectations. But even after their recent pullback, the rise in Gilt yields has exceeded the rise in most other Developed Market government yields since the start of the year. Looking forward, once inflation falls back, Gilt yields are set to reduce further. A (mild) recession over the next couple of quarters will support this outlook if it helps to loosen the labour market (higher unemployment/lower wage increases).
- The pound weakened from its cycle high of $1.30 in the middle of July to $1.21 in late September. In the first half of the year, the pound bounced back strongly from the Truss debacle last autumn. That rebound was in large part driven by the substantial shift up in UK interest rate expectations. However, over the past couple of months, interest rate expectations have dropped sharply as inflation started to come down, growth faltered, and the Bank of England called an end to its hiking cycle.
- The FTSE 100 has gained more than 2% since the end of August, from around 7,440 on 31 August to 7,608 on 29 September. The rebound has been primarily driven by higher energy prices which boosted the valuations of energy companies. The FTSE 100's relatively high concentration of energy companies helps to explain why UK equities outperformed both US and Euro-zone equities in September. Nonetheless, as recently as 21 April the FTSE 100 stood at 7,914.

2. Interest Rate Forecasts

The Council has appointed Link Group as its treasury advisors and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. The PWLB rate forecasts below are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1st November 2012.

The latest forecast on 25 September sets out a view that short, medium, and long-dated interest rates will be elevated for some little while, as the Bank of England seeks to squeeze inflation out of the economy.

Our PWLB rate forecasts below are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps, calculated as gilts plus 80bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1 November 2012.

Link Group Interest Rate View	25.09.23												
	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
BANK RATE	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80
6 month ave earnings	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.60	3.10	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90
12 month ave earnings	5.80	5.70	5.50	5.20	4.70	4.20	3.70	3.20	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
5 yr PWLB	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50
10 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50
25 yr PWLB	5.40	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.80
50 yr PWLB	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60

APPENDIX 4 – Creditworthiness Ratings Table

Moodys	S&P	Fitch	Description
Aaa	AAA	AAA	Highest credit quality, minimum credit risk
Aa1, Aa2 Aa3	AA+, AA, AA-	AA+, AA, AA-	Very high credit quality, very low credit risk
A1, A2, A3	A+, A, A-	A+, A, A-	High credit quality (upper-medium grade)
Baa1, Baa2, Baa3	BBB+, BBB, BBB-	BBB+, BBB, BBB-	Good credit quality, currently low credit risk
Ba1, Ba2, Ba3	BB+, BB, BB-	BB+, BB, BB-	Speculative elements, issue faces uncertainties and adverse conditions
B1, B2, B3	B+, B, B-	B+, B, B-	High credit risk, but issue still able to meet financial commitments
Caa1, Caa2, Caa3	CCC+, CCC, CCC-	CCC	Issuer currently vulnerable, default likely
Ca	CC	CC	Issuer currently highly vulnerable, near default
C	R, SD, D	C, RD, D	Lower rating typically in fault on some or all of its financial obligations

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2022/2023 – December 2023

Item / Lead Officer	Report detail	Date of next report
Public Question Time/Questions to the Portfolio Holders / Work Programme	Standing items for every meeting.	* Standing item
Council Plan 2020 – 2027 Performance Report	Council Plan 2020 – 2027 Performance Report	* Standing item
Estates Masterplan Update	To consider the future of the WCC estates portfolio	21 February 2024
Quarter 3 Integrated Performance Report	To receive an update	21 February 2024
Warwickshire Property and Development Group Performance Update	To review the performance of the Warwickshire Property and Development Group	21 February 2024

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