

Cabinet

18 April 2023

Warwickshire County Council Suicide Prevention proposals

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approve the Coventry and Warwickshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023-2030 on behalf of the Council which has been endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board;
- 2) Approve the Council's "Our Approach to Suicide Prevention" attached at Appendix 1;
- 3) Approve the proposals for embedding suicide prevention activity within the Council's activities as set out in this Report; and
- 4) Authorise the Strategic Director for People to identify a Suicide Prevention Sponsor to champion the role of the Council in the wider suicide prevention work programme.

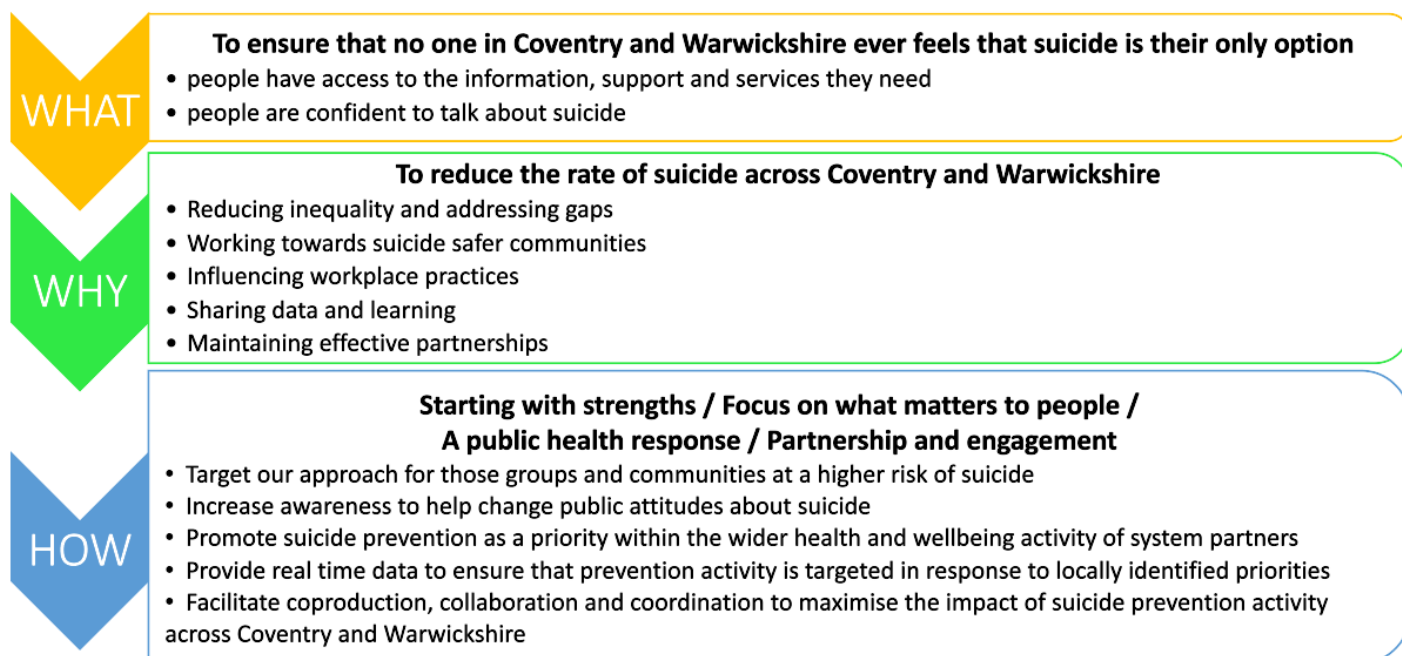
1. Executive Summary

Coventry and Warwickshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023-2030

- 1.1 Following completion of the National Health Service England (NHSE) funded national suicide prevention programme in Coventry and Warwickshire (which ran from 2018 – 2021), work has been underway to develop a new partnership work programme that sets out a vision for suicide prevention in Coventry and Warwickshire until 2030.
- 1.2 Early engagement on this process identified that the new work programme should build on the work developed through the NHSE funded programme and bring together the previously separate suicide prevention strategies for Coventry and Warwickshire into a single system wide strategy and approach.
- 1.3 The new Strategy reflects significant engagement with a range of stakeholders, partners and the public. This was undertaken to test the draft

vision, strategic ambitions and local priorities and help shape the content of the strategy.

- 1.4 The diagram below summarises the approach to suicide prevention as outlined in the new strategy, including the vision, strategic ambitions and local delivery priorities:



- 1.5 The new Strategy was presented to and endorsed by the two Health and Wellbeing Boards in Coventry and Warwickshire in January 2023, and once approved by Cabinet will be published on the County Council's website under the social care and health strategies page.

- 1.6 Health and Wellbeing Board members were asked to consider their organisational contributions to suicide prevention and identify any governance routes for approving and sharing the Strategy.

Warwickshire County Council "Our Approach to suicide prevention"

- 1.7 Within the Council, discussions are underway to explore opportunities as to how we can build a suicide safe workplace, support our commissioned providers and reach out to individuals and communities across Warwickshire.
- 1.8 To capture this, colleagues from the Council's Organisational Development Strategy and Commissioning Team have drafted an "Our Approach to Suicide Prevention" – this outlines the Council's organisational commitment to suicide prevention. A copy of this document is attached as Appendix A. It is intended that the Our Approach will develop and evolve overtime to reflect changes in the services offered and the priorities of the Council.

- 1.9 To help deliver these commitments, it is proposed that any internal suicide prevention activity is written into the corporate wellbeing delivery plan, and specific activities and initiatives are influenced by organisationally representative employee and leader insight.
- 1.10 It is anticipated that the wider delivery of the Council's Approach to Suicide Prevention will be overseen by the Leading Organisational Wellbeing Group with input from the Council's Suicide Prevention and Partnership Manager (Public Health).
- 1.11 It is important to note that some activity in relation to suicide prevention is already underway and will form part of any ongoing work programme. Furthermore, conversations are ongoing with senior leadership teams across the Council to consider the requirements and opportunities to support suicide prevention activity, awareness and support across different service areas. A summary of some of the initial proposals for consideration are attached as Appendix B.
- 1.12 It is proposed that the initial key areas of focus for the Council's approach to suicide prevention relate to the following:
- A) **Awareness and communications:** Objective – the Council's workforce is well informed about suicide prevention.
 - B) **Wellbeing:** Objective – the Council's workforce is supported to prioritise their mental wellbeing and resilience.
 - C) **Customers, clients and communities:** Objective – the Council's workforce and commissioned providers are equipped with the right skills and tools to support people in crisis.
 - D) **Partnership and collaboration:** Objective – the Council's workforce engage with opportunities to raise awareness of suicide and suicide prevention.
 - E) **Leadership:** Objective - the Council is committed to supporting the delivery of the Coventry and Warwickshire Suicide Prevention Strategy..
- 1.13 A cross-organisational approach will help with:
- embedding suicide prevention practice across service delivery (both in-house and through commissioned providers)
 - supporting the wellbeing and inclusivity agendas of the Council's workforce by raising awareness of suicide
 - identifying opportunities to add social value through internal activity
 - effectively targeting higher risk population groups
 - aligning suicide prevention activity with other related workstreams, specifically where there are common risk factors and prevention opportunities

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are no capital implications related to the delivery of the Coventry and Warwickshire Suicide Prevention Strategy.
- 2.2 The Council has already committed dedicated resources to the development and implementation of suicide prevention activity across Coventry and Warwickshire in the form of the permanent employment of a Suicide Prevention and Partnership Manager (commenced September 2021) funded from the Public Health Grant.
- 2.3 The Council already has an allocated project budget for 2023/24 to support the initial implementation and embedding of the new Suicide Prevention Strategy.
- 2.4 From 2024/25 onwards, in order to continue to support the wider delivery of the strategy, ongoing funding is required to secure the following:
- Make permanent the existing Coventry and Warwickshire Real Time Surveillance System
 - Ongoing suicide awareness and prevention training
 - Local awareness campaigns and resources (including input from people with lived experience)
- 2.5 The Real Time Surveillance System (RTSS) total cost per annum is approximately £115,000 and incorporates: 1) RTS Coordinator post (approx. £45k pa), 2) case management system (approx. £5k pa), 3) specialist suicide bereavement support service (approx. £65k pa).
- 2.6 The estimated total cost for the suicide awareness, prevention training and local campaign and resources is in the region of £50,000 per annum.
- 2.7 Our intention going forward is to secure a 3-way partnership arrangement with Coventry and the ICB to co-fund this work from 2024/25 onwards.
- 2.8 A paper is being prepared for the Coventry and Warwickshire Health Care Partnership Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Delivery Group in April 2023 detailing the RTSS programme specifically and the financial implications associated with this. This includes an ask of the Council, Coventry City Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to jointly fund this programme on an ongoing basis. The proposed split is a 50% contribution from the ICB and 25% from each of the Local Authorities.
- 2.9 Assuming partners make the requested contribution, the Councils' estimated annual contribution towards the RTSS programme would be £30k pa from 2024/25 onwards, and we are proposing that this will be funded from the Public Health Grant.

- 2.10 An optional recurring, revised project budget to contribute towards the additional projected spend for training, awareness and campaign resources will also be sought from the Public Health Grant, to a maximum value of £20,000 per year in line with available service budget.
- 2.11 There are further opportunities to explore alternative funding streams to meet some of these costs, including: social value commitments, joint prevention programmes (particularly around risk or causal factors) and external or national funding programmes. These will be explored as part of the ongoing delivery of the strategy.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The most recent suicide data from the Office of National Statistics shows that the suicide rates in Warwickshire are currently 11.2 per 100,000 (2019-21). This represents a slight increase from the previous figures (9.2 per 100,000 for 2018-2020) The comparative figures for Coventry are 9.3 per 100,000 (2019-2021). For the same time frame, the West Midlands region and England as a whole, the figures are 10.7 and 10.4 respectively.
- 4.2 Whilst there is some variation in these rates between the district/boroughs within Warwickshire, the overall picture shows an increase in the suicide rate – which is higher than both the regional and national average.
- 4.3 Positively, this national data shows a decline in the overall suicide rate in Warwickshire since a peak in 2014-16 (12.2 per 100,00). It is however important to note that national figures are up to 2 years behind real time data at the point at which the data is reported.
- 4.4 To address this, it is critical that we can identify real time figures across Coventry and Warwickshire in order that we can respond to emerging trends or areas of concern in a timely manner.
- 4.5 A local Real Time Surveillance (RTS) system (for suspected suicides) was developed as part of the NHSE funded suicide prevention programme, and the data collected through this process ensures we have access to weekly figures which are used to provide quarterly updates to our partners. Importantly this information also enables us to activate an immediate response if a potential cluster is identified.
- 4.6 In the current climate of financial uncertainty and societal challenges and the increased anxiety that this can cause, it is increasingly important that we are able to monitor any changes in suicide trends. This would include new or

emerging trends in the demographic profile, location or method used and background circumstances of people who die by suicide.

- 4.7 Discussions are currently underway with system partners to identify long-term funding to secure the future of this as an essential and ongoing part of the suicide prevention programme.
- 4.8 The existing National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England ('Preventing suicide in England: A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives'): identifies seven key areas for action. These are:
- Reducing the risk of suicide in key high-risk groups
 - Tailor approaches to improve mental health in specific groups
 - Reduce access to the means of suicide
 - Provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide
 - Support the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour
 - Support research, data collection and monitoring
 - Reducing rates of self-harm as an indicator for suicide risk
- 4.9 A new National Plan for Suicide Prevention is currently in development and will outline the new national priorities. Coventry and Warwickshire are committed to supporting with the delivery of the new national strategy and will align to the national priorities within the local delivery plan, at the same time reflecting local needs across the area.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 Once approved by Cabinet, the Council's "Our Approach to Suicide Prevention" will form part of the internal communications plan to raise awareness of suicide prevention across the Council.
- 5.2 The approach will also be shared with partners to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the delivery of the Coventry and Warwickshire Suicide Prevention Strategy and to promote good practice as one of the lead organisations for the associated work programme.
- 5.3 Where appropriate, key activities delivered as part of the Council's Approach to Suicide Prevention will be incorporated into the Coventry and Warwickshire Suicide Prevention Delivery Plan, which will be monitored by the Health and Wellbeing Boards for both Coventry and Warwickshire.
- 5.4 Internal conversations with senior leaders of the Council and the Council's corporate Leading Organisational Wellbeing Group will continue to ensure that the Council's approach to suicide prevention continues to respond to the priorities and opportunities identified.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – WCC Our Approach to Suicide Prevention

Appendix 2 – Draft proposals for WCC suicide prevention activity

Background Papers

Report to Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board January 2023 (agenda and minutes relating to the Coventry and Warwickshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023-2030 – agenda Item 6).

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

Local Member(s):

Other members: Councillors Clarke, Chilvers, Crump, Fradgley, D’Arcy, Timms, Redford, Watson.