

Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 February 2024

Warwickshire Futures – looking ahead to 2030/40

Recommendation(s)

That the Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Notes the trends and themes highlighted in the 'Warwickshire Futures 2030/40' and 'Warwickshire in 2030 and beyond' reports and considers how they may relate to ongoing and future policy development.
2. Considers the Committee's current work programme in light of the Warwickshire Futures work.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Warwickshire Futures introduces an exciting new capability to the County Council for 2024.
- 1.2 Conducted in Summer/Autumn 2023, the exercise brings together thinking, best practice and research from across the sector, together with the insight and intelligence from our own teams and services, to give a long-term view of some of the large-scale challenges and opportunities for Warwickshire, and Warwickshire County Council, into 2030/40 and grouped into five main themes:
 - Societal change
 - Community and health
 - Jobs, economy and technology
 - Environment, climate and infrastructure
 - Transport and travel

Five priority issues have also been identified, which are detailed in 4.4.

- 1.3 Similar exercises are conducted at national and regional level and so the intention of introducing Warwickshire Futures is to provide a specific view for the County and the Council.

- 1.4 In doing so, the aim is to build a perspective on the long term, stretching past current challenges and decisions, whilst helping to ensure these are made in the context of anticipated future trends and policy direction.
- 1.5 This allows for a consideration both of future challenges, but also opportunities, giving Members and Officers the platform to consider future policy in the context of the long term.
- 1.6 This is the first time that a document such as this has been developed within the Council and it should be emphasised that the Futures work is not a precise science and nor does it present a definitive position.
- 1.7 This exercise is intended to:
- Provide a snapshot in time, giving a flavour of some of the key issues and trends on the horizon.
 - Create a lens on the long-term future challenges and opportunities based on this snapshot in time.
 - Link these themes and make them real for the County Council in the context of Warwickshire.
 - Create a holistic resource that can be continuously updated and regularly reviewed as part of the business planning cycle.
- 1.8 There is a high level of uncertainty at the local, national and global level at the current time. Futures work is therefore indicative and open to debate and interpretation in terms of what this means for the near term as well as the longer term. As stated above, it is not a precise science and provides scenarios and options, rather than definitive outcomes.
- 1.8 In terms of actions, there are no immediate actions required, but it is hoped that the Futures work will provide the Committee with a greater insight into future trends and challenges, and the opportunity to consider this in the context of the Committee's future work programme.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report. However, specific themes and trends discussed within the report will be likely to have their own potential financial consequences.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 Whilst there are no direct environmental implications arising as a result of this report, environmental changes are themselves a major theme. As such, the exercise highlights the importance of considering environmental implications when making policy decisions in the near, medium and longer term.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 The Futures exercise is made up of two main products:

- “Warwickshire in 2030 and beyond”, a report from Business Intelligence which takes a data-lead approach to examine potential future changes across the county.
- “Warwickshire Futures 2030/40”, a detailed briefing produced by the Corporate Policy team, that uses national data, research, and best practice examples to provide a long-term view of the policy landscape and impacts on the work of the Council.

Each of these products are provided in **Appendices 1 and 2** to this report.

4.2 In reaching this point the material and messages have been shared and tested with Strategy Network, Senior Leadership Forum and Corporate Board to ensure they provided a rounded and balanced view across all service areas.

4.3 We have identified five priority issues that are likely to have significant impact across the organisation into 2030/40 and beyond. There is a natural synergy between these themes and with the priorities and the areas of focus set out in the Council Plan 2022-27. However, it should be noted that the Futures work extends beyond this and touches more on long term, mega-trends and therefore there is not an exact match.

4.4 These five priority issues are:

- Demographic shifts
- Global economic and political uncertainty
- Climate change
- Artificial Intelligence
- Inequalities between groups and places

4.5 The 5 themes and full list of areas of analysis are set out below:

Societal changes	Community & Health	Jobs, economy & technology	Environment, climate and infrastructure	Transport & travel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic shifts • Global economic and political uncertainty • Deglobalisation • Changing footfall patterns in town centres • Inequalities within and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce challenges • Political engagement • Public trust • Future of devolution deals and combined authorities • Long-term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital connectivity • Local energy sources • Sustainable local economy • Artificial intelligence • Future skills • Future of workspaces • Skills gap, reskilling and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public support for environmental policies • Evolving national government policy • Climate change • Alternative fuels (inc. electric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and transport demand • Connectivity • Energy vectors (power sources) • Autonomy • Transport infrastructure • Active travel

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between groups and places • Shifting urban/rural living patterns • Changing living situations • Ongoing impact of pandemic on educational outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging health issues • Mental health and loneliness • Governance of health and social care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • future employment • Town centre regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charging infrastructure) • Housing pressure (green and right type) 	
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The emerging themes and trends identified of being of particular significance to the Resources and Fire and Rescue OSC are the following. Full descriptions can be found within the full report in Appendix 1.

- Workforce challenges – alongside challenges in particular teams, we will need to consider innovative approaches to our employee offer to attract and retain senior officers, and the next generation of staff members.
- Political engagement and public trust – a possible focus on co-production and co-delivery of services within communities to build trust, social cohesion and community relationships, building on our Community Powered Warwickshire approach. We will need to be ready to explore innovative approaches to local democracy.
- Digitalisation – as organisations shift away from a physical presence towards much greater reliance on the internet, we will need to consider the digital divide, as well as how we can maximise our own use of digital technologies across services and internally.
- Mental health and loneliness as a growing area of need – responding to demand and adapting services.
- Building a Fire and Rescue service for the future – what does a modern FRS look like, how can diversifying its role help to meet emerging challenges.

4.6 These themes will be drawn out in more detail as a presentation to the Committee.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 Following consideration of the reports across all Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the following activity is planned:

- Integration of the Futures tool into the business planning cycle, with a 6-monthly update based on input from service leads.
- Integration into the monthly Policy Bites publication, managed by the Graduate Management Trainees within the Corporate Policy and Strategy team.

- Access for all staff and Members to the key products via the Intranet.

Appendices

1. [Warwickshire Futures 2030/40](#)
2. [Warwickshire in 2030 and beyond, Business Intelligence report](#)

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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: