

Agenda Item No 9

Executive Board

27 November 2023

Report of the Interim Corporate Director - Resources

Budgetary Control Report 2023/24 Period Ended 31 October 2023

1 Summary

- 1.1 The report covers revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 October 2023. The 2023/24 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date, are given, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to this Board.

Recommendation to Council

To consider if any further information is required.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Under the Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP), services should be charged with the total cost of providing the service, which not only includes costs and income directly incurred, but also support costs relating to such areas as finance, office accommodation, telephone costs and IT services. The figures contained within this report are calculated on this basis.

3 Overall Position

- 3.1 Net expenditure for those services that report to the Executive Board as of 31 October 2023 is £300,301 compared with a profiled budgetary position of £301,745; an underspend of £1,444. Appendix A to this report provides details of the profiled and actual position for each service reporting to this Board, together with the variance for the period.

- 3.2 Where possible, the budget to date figure has been calculated with some allowance for seasonal variations, to enable a better comparison with actual figures.

4 Risks to the Budget

- 4.1 The key risks to the budgetary position of the Council from services under the control of this Board are:-

	Likelihood	Potential impact on Budget
The Local Plan requires regular analysis and updating in line with changing circumstances and changes in national guidance.	High	Medium
The Emergency Planning budget may be insufficient to cover the costs of any major local emergency.	Low	High

5 Estimated Out-turn

- 5.1 Members have requested that Budgetary Control Reports provide details on the likely out-turn position for each of the services reporting to this Board. The anticipated out-turn for this Board for 2023/24 is £620,090. The same as the Original Budget.
- 5.2 The figures provided above are based on information available at this time of the year and are the best available estimates for this Board and may change as the financial year progresses. Members will be updated in future reports of any changes to the forecast out turn.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 6.1.1 Income and Expenditure will continue to be closely managed and any issues that arise will be reported to this Board for comment at future meetings.

6.2 Environment and Sustainability Implications

- 6.2.1 The Council must ensure that it adopts and implements robust and comprehensive budgetary monitoring and control, to ensure not only the availability of services within the current financial year, but in future years.

The Contact Officer for this report is Nigel Lane (719371).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
Executive Board – Agenda item 10	Corporate Director - Resources	General Fund Revenue Estimates and Setting the Council 2023-24	13th Feb 2023

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Executive Board

Budgetary Control Report 2023/24 as at 31 October 2023

Cost Centre	Description	Approved Budget 2023/24	Profiled Budget October 2023	Actual October 2023	Variance	Comments
		£	£	£	£	
2000	Housing Strategic Service Review	38,870	22,674	22,674	-	
2002	Corporate Communications	58,650	34,504	34,119	(385)	
2003	Community Strategy	121,110	69,644	69,650	6	
2007	Emergency Planning	58,370	33,487	33,415	(72)	
2009	N.Warks Local Development Framework	339,960	139,610	138,617	(993)	
5050	Support to Parishes	3,130	1,826	1,826	-	
	Total Expenditure	620,090	301,745	300,301	(1,444)	

Agenda Item No 10

Executive Board

27 November 2023

**Report of the
Interim Corporate Director – Resources**

**Medium Term Financial Strategy
2023 - 2028**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy as attached in Appendix A. It projects forward the Authority's General Fund budgets to 2027/28 and suggests a budget approach for the 2024/25 General Fund Budget.

Recommendation to Council

- a That the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Appendix A) is approved;**
- b That the General Fund budget projections for 2023/24 to 2027/28 be noted.**
- c That the approach for balancing the Medium Term Budget set out in section 6 and Table 2 of this report, be adopted.**
- d a supplementary estimate of up to £300,000 be approved for Agency/Interim staff.**
- e a supplementary estimate of up to £100,000 for progressing the invest to save work on Asset Management.**
- f approve the strategy for increasing the council tax to the maximum level approved by the Government.**
- g adopt the guiding principles detailed in Appendix A section 9.5.2 for setting and reviewing fees and charges.**

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council has adopted a clear approach to managing its financial position over a number of years, and this is set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Appendix A to this report. The plan is updated annually and presented to members with the estimated funding position for the period of the plan.

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2.2 This update to the financial strategy has reviewed the Council’s position given current economic changes and reflects the main current financial pressures facing the Council. Economic uncertainty still exists, with cost of living pressures, high inflation (although reducing) and high interest rates, this once again makes forecasting difficult.

2.3 The strategy covers:

- How our resources will support the delivery of our priorities and maintenance of current service levels.
- Consideration of financial issues and pressures facing the Council during the period of the plan.
- Review the national position and the impact of central government funding.
- Consider the local issues and how this impacts financially.
- Consider opportunities to maximise income and reduce expenditure.
- Provide parameters for the annual budget process.

2.4 The figures in the plan are intended to indicate the position at a high level only the detail will follow in the budget reports to each board as part of the budget process for 2024/25. Updated forecasts for Capital and the Housing Revenue Account will also be reported separately as part of the budget process.

3 Summary Position

3.1 The General Fund Summary figures provide an indication of the level of resources and the projected funding gap over the medium term period. Its important to consider the medium term rather than one year in isolation as illustrated by the figures in Table 1. By 2027/28 if no expenditure reductions /increased income are delivered general fund balances would go into a deficit of £1,183,000. Clearly this needs to be avoided by delivering invest to save projects over the period of the strategy.

Table 1 Summary of Medium Term Financial Position 2023 – 2028

	2022/23 Revised £000	2023/24 Estimate £000	2024/25 Estimate £000	2025/26 Estimate £000	2026/27 Estimate £000	2027/28 Estimate £000
Net Service Expenditure	8,249	9,940	11,044	11,581	11,916	12,287
Total Income	8,385	14,022	13,555	8,312	8,542	8,777
Net Expenditure	-136	-4,082	-2,511	3,269	3,374	3,510
Use of/ (Contribution to)Balances	-136	-4,082	-2,511	3,269	3,374	3,510
Balances at the Year End	2,377	6,459	8,970	5,701	2,327	-1,183

3.2 The financial projections have changed since the last MTFS, the main difference in the figures presented in Table 1 and the figures in the Executive Board report February 2023 is the income from business rates. The figures show that the Council is operating from 2025/26 at approximately £3m to £3.5m per annum net expenditure relying on balances to fund the difference. The figures do not include expenditure reductions/increased income in future years in this table but they will be required.

4 Balancing the Medium Term Budget

4.1 To deliver a balanced medium term budget targets need to be set for reducing the net expenditure, in Table 2 targets have been included to illustrate the level of savings require to deliver a balanced budget over the period of this strategy, this assumes that balances are retained except for £1m being transferred to an invest to save fund.

Table 2 Balancing the Medium Term Budget

	2022/23 Revised £000	2023/24 Estimate £000	2024/25 Estimate £000	2025/26 Estimate £000	2026/27 Estimate £000	2027/28 Estimate £000
Net Service Expenditure	8,249	9,940	11,044	11,581	11,416	11,287
Invest to Save Fund	0	0	1,000	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	8,249	9,940	12,044	11,581	11,416	11,287
Total Income	8,385	14,022	13,555	8,312	8,542	8,777
Reductions/Increased Income Target			0	500	500	1,000
Net Expenditure	-136	-4,082	-1,511	2,769	2,374	1,510
Use of/ (Contribution to)Balances	-136	-4,082	-1,511	2,769	2,374	1,510
Balances at the Year End	2,377	6,459	7,970	5,201	2,827	1,317

4.2 Table 2 includes the requirement to find budget reductions in its financial strategy with a provision of £1m put aside to fund invest to save initiatives. Work is already ongoing to deliver reductions and deliver increased income and these could be delivered before 2025/26. However, whilst unidentified reductions are built into financial projections over the medium term, only identified reductions are included in the detailed budget put forward for approval for the coming financial year. This is part of the management of financial risks, and gives greater assurance around the approved budget, and the medium term position.

4.3 As the council looks for specific reductions and increased income in advance of setting the budget for the following year, work on finding savings from projects such as review of refuse and recycling collection, transformation, asset

management, will assist in delivering the target set. The reduction target for 2025/26 is £500k. If this target is not found, it will need to be reflected in the financial strategy for future years.

- 4.4 Any proposed changes or reductions in services will be subject to equality impact assessments to identify if there is any scope for adverse impacts

5 Changes Since 2023/24 Tax Set

- 5.1 The detailed budget work is currently in progress and it is expected that overall the changes in expenditure and income will balance out in the current year, excluding the items detailed in Table 3.

Table 3 Movements in the 2023/24 Estimates

	£000
General Fund Net Expenditure 2023/24 (22.2.23 Tax Set Report)	9,556
Extra Refuse Round (not in original base budget)	145
Salary Adjustments (Payaward, Vacancies)	239
Updated Net Expenditure (Table 1 &2)	9,940
General Fund Income 2023/24 (22.2.23 Tax Set Report)	(8,883)
Increase in Business Rates Income	(5,139)
Total Income (Table 1&2)	(14,022)
Use of/(Contribution to) Balances (22.2.23 Tax Set Report)	673
Use of/(Contribution to) Balances	(4,082)
Year End Balances	6,459

- 5.2 The significant change between the Tax Set Report in February 2023 and the updated figures in the MTFs is the additional business rates income. From 2023/24 all business rates income is going into the general fund rather than the Business Rates specific reserve fund.
- 5.3 The current year figures will if the trajectory continues overspend on **agency/interim staff it is recommended that a supplementary of up to £300k is included in the current year budget.** The organisation has gone through a significant period of change over the past year with both Corporate Director posts becoming vacant giving the opportunity for interim support to provide capacity and challenge where appropriate. In addition the Chief Executive commissioned a Local Government Association (LGA) Decision Making Accountability (DMA) review which reviews the current structure, layers of management etc and recommends possible areas where the structure needs changing, which could include a request for further resources. The outcome of this will assist the Council in agreeing a structure which is fit for purpose which can deliver the priorities in the Corporate plan.

5.4 In the current year work is underway with regard to the Councils Assets, an Asset Management group has been set up with officers across the Council. The group will identify all assets in one list, carry out condition surveys and options appraisals where appropriate. ***A detailed report will be presented to members in early next year and a budget of up to £100k is requested to fund the works to progress this project.*** It is an invest to save initiative and the funding will be replaced by capital receipts when achieved.

6 Sources of Funding

6.1 Settlement Funding Assessment

6.1.1 The Government decides on the level of funding to be allocated to local authorities for their General Fund activities, and then currently allocates this funding between authorities using a formula calculation called the Settlement Funding Assessment.

6.1.2 The Settlement Funding Assessment is made up of two elements: Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates. As the Business Rates element is fixed, other than for inflationary increases, any reduction in the Settlement Funding Assessment is taken out of Revenue Support Grant.

6.1.3 The provisional settlement for 2024/25 is expected at the end of December, figures presented in Table 4 are projections from LG Futures. The Fair Funding Review and Business Rates reset have been deferred several times the latest guidance from the Government is 2025/26 and this is the basis for the figures presented.

Table 4 External Funding Projections (Data from LG Futures Sept 2023)

Funding	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Council Tax	4,784	4,986	5,196	5,414	5,640	5,875
National Non Domestic Rates (NDR) – Baseline	1,922	2,074	2,178	2,610	2,610	2,610
NDR – Additional rates	500					
NDR – Gain estimated above baseline		5,598	4,465	0	0	0
Section 31 Grant – business rate multiplier	158	300	300	0	0	0
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	0	81	85	85	85	85
New Homes Bonus	723	519	519	37	37	37
Lower Tier Grant	86	0	0	0	0	0
Services Grant	132	78	78	78	78	78
Funding Guarantee Grant	0	312	649	0	0	0
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	80	74	85	88	92	92
TOTAL	8,385	14,022	13,555	8,312	8,542	8,777

Note: The figures are based on Business Rates reset being in 2025/26.

2022/23 figures are taken from Tax Set report 2023/24.

6.2 Business Rates

6.2.1 Business Rates Retention was introduced in April 2013 with Local authorities retaining a proportion of the business rates they collect giving an incentive for growth. North Warwickshire BC like most boroughs and districts is a tariff authority which means a significant amount of the income received from business rates is paid over to the Government. Based on the figures in Table 4 the predicted income is significantly above baseline for 2023/24 and 2024/25 due to the impact of the revaluations on business rates payable.

6.3 Council Tax Base

6.3.1 The tax base on which the Council generates its local tax revenue. The tax base rise is calculated based on the same information used to complete the CTB1 and has to be calculated on 30th November, it takes into account the basic tax base, the reduction due to council tax support, growth in new homes and the expected collection rate.

6.3.2 The tax base increase built into the MTFs each year is 1.5% to reflect the growth in number of properties in the borough. The increased revenue from just the tax base is £74,792 per annum.

6.4 Council Tax

6.4.1 This Council has increased the tax to referendum limits since 2020/21 to minimise the cumulative impact of low council tax rises. The assumption in the plan is that the likely referendum limits for district/borough councils will be the higher of 2.99% or £5. The figures in this plan assume that North Warwickshire will be increasing the council tax in line with government limits (2.99% or £5) each year of the plan. ***It is recommended that members approve the strategy for increasing tax to maximum level approved by government.***

6.5 Fees and Charges

6.5.1 The Council has tended to increase fees and charges for inflation, Income Generation is an important part of the MTFs. This Council should adopt a Fees & Charges Strategy with the following key guiding principles:

- All fees and Charges should be increased at least by September CPI unless there is a robust reason why this is not appropriate – Planning fees set by Government, requirement to demonstrate break even in terms of cost and charge, increase would have a detrimental impact on demand reducing income overall.
- The charge should at least cover the cost of providing the service, no subsidy.
- All services should be reviewed to explore opportunities for new charges.

6.5.2 The ability to generate income from other areas continues to be reviewed as part of the ongoing exercise to reduce the Council's required budget. ***It is recommended that members adopt the guiding principles for setting and reviewing fees and charges.***

7 Growth Areas

7.1 The figures presented do not include a provision for growth, any additional funding approved will impact on the target reductions required within the plan (Table 2). Therefore a strong approach is taken with growth areas.

8 Potential Risk Areas

8.1 In preparing this forecast, a number of assumptions have been made his report. Clearly, should these assumptions not materialise, there will be an impact on the figures. The main risk areas for this forecast are:

- **Salary Increases** – union pressure is for pay awards to match inflationary rises and to address the erosion of real pay. Higher pay awards than included in the forecast would have an impact, given the relative size of the payroll. Increasing the provision for pay awards in the forecast should mitigate this risk to some extent.
- **Reduced Income** –the risk of an increased loss of service income is a possibility in the current economic climate.
- **Investment Income** – interest rates have started to stabilise, further changes to the economic position could pose a risk to the investment income assumed.
- **Settlement Funding Assessments** – no indicative figures have been provided for 2024/25 onwards. If the assumptions made in this forecast are materially different to settlements provided, then there will be an impact on the Council's financial position.
- **Business Rates** – the local retention of business rates brought uncertainty around the level of funding to be received on an annual basis. However, it has allowed some additional business rates to be retained by the Council. Although successful rating appeals are an ongoing risk, the greater risk is the expected re-set which is likely to remove the growth the Council has been able to retain.
- **Council Tax Support / Collection** – increases in take up of support will directly increase the costs of the Council. There are also risks around the non-collection of Council Tax, from those who have not previously been required to contribute and generally as a result of the current economic position.
- **Growth in the Borough** – if new homes and estates are delivered in line with expectations, there will be an impact on some Council services. Some funding has been included in the forecast for refuse and recycling, but the impact on services such as grounds maintenance has not yet been considered.
- **Council Tax Income** – a decision to freeze Council Tax will reduce the resources available to the Council on a permanent basis.

9 **Conclusion**

- 9.1 The Medium Term Financial position can be managed if members approve the managed use of balances strategy as detailed in this report in section 4 and Table 2, using balances above the minimum to manage delivery of the reductions/increased income over the period of the plan. Target figures have been built in from 2025/26 onwards to ensure that the net expenditure of approximately £3m to £3.5m per annum is reduced by 2027/28. This financial position gives time to deliver the reductions in a timely manner with a minimum impact on service provision.
- 9.2 It is unlikely that all of the main risk areas will materialise at the same time, in any of the years highlighted above. The main areas of concern included in the risks around the financial position of the Council, are those of Business Rates, external funding, and pay awards.

10 **Report Implications**

10.1 **Finance and Value for Money Implications**

- 10.1.1 As detailed in the body of the report.

10.2 Environment and Sustainability Implications

10.2.1 Continuing the budget strategy will allow the Council to manage its expected shortfall in resources, without disruption of essential services.

10.3 Equality Implications

10.3.1 Any proposed changes or reductions in services will be subject to equality impact assessments to identify if there is any scope for adverse impacts.

The Contact Officer for this report is Alison Turner (719374).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
Council	Corporate Director Resources	General Fund Revenue Estimates 2023/24 and Setting the Council Tax 2023/24	22 February 2023

North Warwickshire Borough Council
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023-28

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the Financial Strategy is to set out the broad financial framework that the Council will operate within for the next medium term period. The period covered by this plan is 2023 to 2028, as for this period reasonably robust financial forecasts can be produced. A longer period would require more speculative forecasts which can be misleading. Anticipated changes to the external funding regime and the difficult economic environment have increased the uncertainty over the resources available to the Council during the strategy period, and this needs to be managed with assumptions based on best available information at the time of producing the plan. It is essential that the plan is reviewed regularly and reflects the most accurate financial projections available.
- 1.2 By using a medium term approach, the Council can ensure that financial and service decisions can be taken in a structured and proportionate way. Short-term policies are not adopted without identifying what the medium term implications of those decisions are.
- 1.3 The strategy covers all revenue and capital activity, although some individual sections may be specific to a particular type of spending only. Areas covered are:
- **General Fund (GF)** – these are the majority of the day to day activities carried out by the Council, such as refuse collection and the payment of benefits
 - **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**– these relate to the management and maintenance of the Council’s housing portfolio. The HRA is the tenants account and is ringfenced so there is no cross subsidisation between GF and HRA.
 - **Capital Spending** – this is spending that provides benefits over the longer term, such as the purchase of vehicles or equipment, new buildings.

2 Linking Resources With Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The Council has identified a number of priorities and these are given in its Corporate Plan. In arriving at the priorities, external influences are taken into account. Other factors such as legislative changes and reward incentives are also considered.
- 2.2 The Corporate Plan has been revised following the election in May 2023 and a draft was presented to members at the Executive Board in

September. This Council is currently consulting with the public during November/December, and this feedback will be used to inform the key priorities and Financial Strategy over the next four years. The Medium Term Financial Strategy(MTFS) is updated and presented to members annually, but the figures are reviewed regularly to ensure that changing circumstances are taken into account and reflected in the Council's decision making.

- 2.3 As in previous years, the approach is to use the current financial year as a base position, inflate this to the price base of the budget year, and add known unavoidable spending pressures. This is then measured against the projection of available funding to determine affordability. The package of measures required to balance the two form the financial strategy for the budget year and medium term.

3 Economic Forecast

- 3.1 The Country is still experiencing significant cost of living pressures which is having a significant impact on people, with interest rates impacting on the affordability of mortgages and high inflation leading to increased cost of food, fuel and energy. Although inflation is going down October CPI at 4.6% compared to October 2022 at 11.1% the increase in cost of food and interest rates is still high. These increases also impact on the Councils budgets both directly and indirectly.

- 3.2 Both general inflation and specific areas of increase affect the spending of the Council. There are two main indices for measuring household inflation: the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Retail Price Index (RPI). The Council reviews these indices when it is assessing the level of inflation to be included in its financial strategy.

- 3.2 Specific areas of increase are considered separately and individual rates of increase used to reflect prevailing market conditions, where they are significantly different to the general rate of inflation. These are assessed on an annual basis and depending on economic conditions, may include:

- Employee costs – pay awards and pension costs;
- fuel and energy costs;
- investment rates.
- income

- 3.3 The pay award for the current financial year was approved on 1st November 2023 at 3.88% which will be backdated to 1st April. The figures in the plan assume a payaward of 4% in 23/24 and 24/25, reducing to 3% for the following 3 years. This is the largest element of expenditure and will have a significant impact on the Council's budgets.

- 3.4 Whilst currently at its lowest level for two years, inflation is still running at significantly higher than in previous years. The CPI for October was 4.6% lower than last year but still high, along with interest rates. The figures

within the MTFs do not automatically include inflation increases its only added where increases are unavoidable eg contractual.

4 Demographic Factors

4.1 Demographic factors can affect the Council's planning in a number of ways:

- Changes in the number and value of households can affect the tax base used in calculating Council Tax
- The characteristics of the population, and households, influences the type of services provided
- The level of demand for services can be affected by changes in either of the above.

4.2 The population of the Borough currently stands at 65,035 and has been subject to limited change over recent years. The Financial Strategy has assumed only limited impact as a result of changes, around the collection of domestic refuse and recycling.

4.3 The Council Tax Base which is the increase in number of properties has assumed an increase of 1.5% in the tax base for 2023/24 and following years, although there will be some movement depending on the number of residents on Council Tax Support. The population of North Warwickshire is due to increase as a result of the 2021 Local Plan, subject to delivery of the allocated housing sites. This will be considered as part of the regular review of this Strategy.

5.0 Summary Position

5.1 The General Fund Summary figures provide an indication of the level of resources and the projected funding gap over the medium term period. Its important to consider the medium term rather than one year in isolation as illustrated by the figures in Table 1. By 2027/28 if no expenditure reductions /increased income are delivered general fund balances would go into a deficit of £1,183,000. Clearly this needs to be avoided by delivering invest to save projects over the period of the strategy.

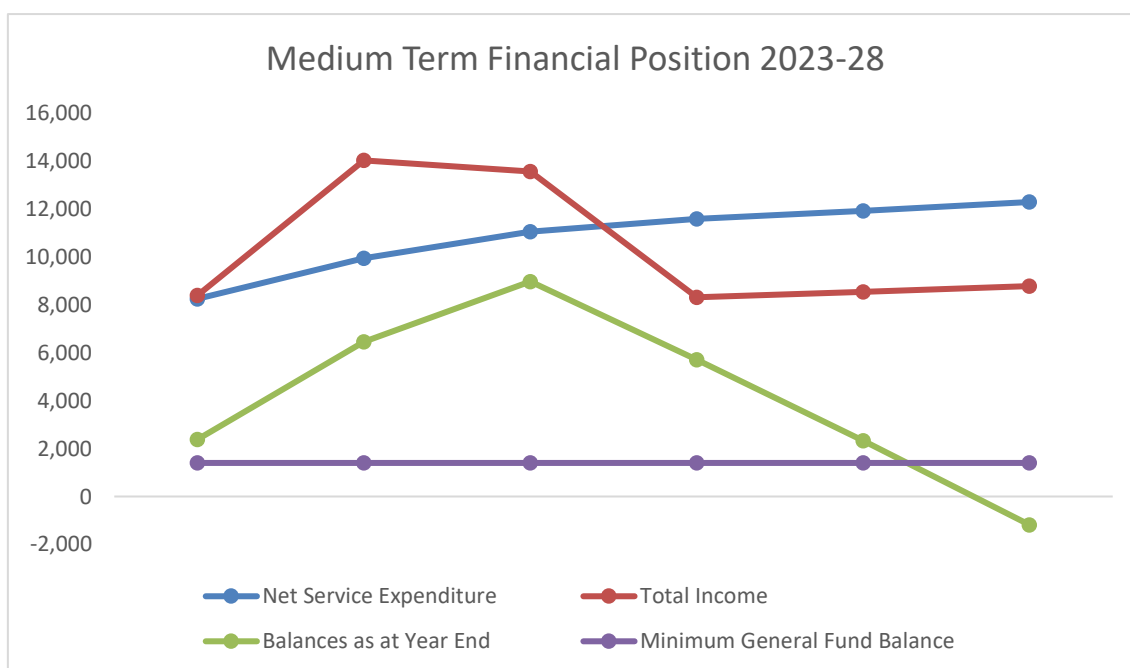
Table 1 Summary of Medium Term Financial Position 2023 – 2028

APPENDIX A

	2022/23 Revised £000	2023/24 Estimate £000	2024/25 Estimate £000	2025/26 Estimate £000	2026/27 Estimate £000	2027/28 Estimate £000
Net Service Expenditure	8,249	9,940	11,044	11,581	11,916	12,287
Total Income	8,385	14,022	13,555	8,312	8,542	8,777
Net Expenditure	-136	-4,082	-2,511	3,269	3,374	3,510
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5.2 The financial projections have changed since the last MTFs the main difference in the figures presented in Table 1 and the figures in the Executive Board report February 2023 is the income from business rates. The impact of the revaluation on the estimated income for NWBC is significant at approx. 30% far higher than the national average at approx. 4.5%. The figures are presented based on the Government reset of business rates being in 2025/26 which is the reason for the income reducing significantly. This has been delayed on a number of occasions which has made it really difficult to estimate potential business rates income with any certainty. The latest information is that reset will be in 2025/26, although it could be delayed further with a General Election next year potentially impacting on timescales.

Graph 1 – Medium Term Financial Position 2023-28



5.3 The graph shows visibly the figures presented in table 1, income drops significantly in 2025/26 with expenditure increasing annually. Balances will drop below minimum potentially into deficit by 2027/28 because the Council is operating at approximately £3m to £3.5m per annum net expenditure which is having a big impact on the level of balances. The figures do not include reductions for savings/increased income in future years at this stage but an appropriate target will need to be identified.

6.0 Balancing the Medium Term Budget

6.1 The figures presented in Table 1 do not include reductions/increased income targets, although these will need to be delivered to deliver a medium term balanced budget. It is recommended that a budget of £1m is approved for invest to save initiatives to fund upfront costs which deliver ongoing revenue reductions in the future. In Table 2 targets have been included to illustrate the level of savings require to deliver a balanced budget over the period of this strategy, this assumes that balances are retained except for £1m being transferred to an invest to save fund.

Table 2 Balancing the Medium Term Budget

	2022/23 Revised £000	2023/24 Estimate £000	2024/25 Estimate £000	2025/26 Estimate £000	2026/27 Estimate £000	2027/28 Estimate £000
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6.2 Table 2 includes the requirement to find budget reductions in its financial strategy with a provision of £1m put aside to fund invest to save initiatives. Work is already ongoing to deliver reductions and deliver increased income and these could be delivered before 2025/26. However, whilst unidentified reductions are built into financial projections over the medium term, only identified reductions are included in the detailed budget put forward for approval for the coming financial year. This is part of the management of financial risks, and gives greater assurance around the approved budget, and the medium term position.

- 6.3 As the council looks for specific reductions and increased income in advance of setting the budget for the following year, work on finding savings from projects such as review of refuse and recycling collection, transformation, asset management, will assist in delivering the target set. The reduction target for 2025/26 is £500k. If this target is not found, it will need to be reflected in the financial strategy for future years.
- 6.4 Any proposed changes or reductions in services will be subject to equality impact assessments to identify if there is any scope for adverse impacts

7.0 Changes Since 2023/24 Tax Set

- 7.1 In order to update the strategy, some areas of budget pressure currently being experienced have been reviewed. These are:
- Refuse and Recycling costs – the figures for this service have been reviewed from a zero base budget approach due to the significant change with the operation of the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). The detailed budget exercise is still being complete before any impact in this year or beyond can be assessed accurately.
 - Recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments – collection of overpayments is lower than anticipated. Collection to date has been affected by the additional workload in the service and work on new business rate reliefs, as well as the increasingly difficult circumstances faced by debtors due to the current economic position
 - Utility costs– there will be a saving on these costs as the actuals have not achieved the estimated increase put in the budgets last year.
- 7.2 The detailed budget work is currently in progress and it is expected that overall the changes in expenditure and income will balance out in the current year, excluding the items detailed in Table 3.

Table 3 Movements in the 2023/24 Estimates

	£000
General Fund Net Expenditure 2023/24 (22.2.23 Tax Set Report)	9,556
Extra Refuse Round (not in original base budget)	145
Salary Adjustments (Payaward, Vacancies)	239
Updated Net Expenditure (Table 1 &2)	9,940
General Fund Income 2023/24 (22.2.23 Tax Set Report)	(8,883)
Increase in Business Rates Income	(5,139)

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Total Income (Table 1&2)	(14,022)
Use of/(Contribution to) Balances (22.2.23 Tax Set Report)	673
Use of/(Contribution to) Balances	(4,082)
Year End Balances	6,459

- 7.3 The significant change between the Tax Set Report in February 2023 and the updated figures in the MTFs is the additional business rates income. Business rates as a tax is volatile (e.g. Revaluation, appeals, reliefs and business growth / decline). This volatility coupled with the added complexity within the BRR scheme (e.g. levy / safety net payments, S31 Grant payments, Pooling, Collection Fund timings, government policy on inflation and the Reset) makes forecasting the resources through scheme difficult. For the first years of the scheme NWBC received resources in line with what would have been received under the previous fixed grant scheme. However, since 2017 there has been a significant improvement in this position. However, with the risk of appeals and the ongoing risk of a reset since 2019/20, this Council took a prudent approach with budgeting for the income and set up a Business Rates Volatility fund and excess income was put into the specific reserve. With the balance on the reserve at £8.5 million and further increases in income due to the 2023 revaluation it is appropriate to budget for the income in the general fund figures as detailed within Tables 1 & 2. The reset is expected in 2025/26 so this impact has also been included.
- 7.4 The current year figures will if the trajectory continues overspend on **agency/interim staff it is recommended that a supplementary of up to £300k is included in the current year budget**. The organisation has gone through a significant period of change over the past year with both Corporate Director posts becoming vacant giving the opportunity for interim support to provide capacity and challenge where appropriate. In addition the Chief Executive commissioned a Local Government Association (LGA) Decision Making Accountability (DMA) review which reviews the current structure, layers of management etc and recommends possible areas where the structure needs changing, which could include a request for further resources. The outcome of this will assist the Council in agreeing a structure which is fit for purpose which can deliver the priorities in the Corporate plan.
- 7.5 In the current year work is underway with regard to the Councils Assets, an Asset Management group has been set up with officers across the Council. The group will identify all assets in one list, carry out condition surveys and options appraisals where appropriate. **A detailed report will be presented to members in early next year and a budget of up to £100k is requested to fund the works to progress this project**. It is an invest to save initiative and the funding will be replaced by capital receipts when achieved.

8.0 Budget Projections 2024/25 to 2027/28

8.1 Budget projections for 2024/25 onwards have been updated, using the major variances identified to date in 2023/24:

- It is assumed that pay awards for 2024/25 will continue at 4% whilst inflation remains at the higher level, for 2025/26 onwards this has been reduced to 3%. There is likely to be continued pressure on pay rates to ensure compliance with the National Living Wage and from unions as pay restraint in previous years eroded public sector pay against the private sector.
- Any additional costs for Refuse and Recycling will be built into this forecast of the budget as the base budget did not provide adequately for staffing costs. In future years, the service will be reviewed to improve efficiency and deliver reductions.
- Interest rates will be reviewed in estimating investment income.

These areas will be revisited in the more detailed work carried out as part of the budget process.

8.2 Legislation has been put forward which will increase planning fees by 35%. It was anticipated that an increase will be in place for 2024/25, so some additional income has been assumed from that year. This is now effective from 6th December 2023 then CPI from April 2025 when the detailed figures are reviewed additional income may be included in the last quarter of the current year.

8.3 The significant income in Business Rates income continues in 2024/25 an additional £4 million with the income being brought into the General fund budgets rather than transferring into the specific reserve fund for Business Rates Volatility, this is detailed in Table 4.

9.0 External Funding

9.1 Settlement Funding Assessment

9.1.1 The Government decides on the level of funding to be allocated to local authorities for their General Fund activities, and then currently allocates this funding between authorities using a formula calculation called the Settlement Funding Assessment.

9.1.2 The Settlement Funding Assessment is made up of two elements: Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates. As the Business Rates element is fixed, other than for inflationary increases, any reduction in the Settlement Funding Assessment is taken out of Revenue Support Grant.

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9.1.3 The provisional settlement for 2024/25 is expected at the end of December, figures presented in Table 4 are projections from LG Futures. The Fair Funding Review and Business Rates reset have been deferred several times the latest guidance from the Government is 2025/26 and this is the basis for the figures presented.

Table 4 External Funding Projections (Data from LG Futures Sept 2023)

Funding	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Council Tax	4,784	4,986	5,196	5,414	5,640	5,875
National Non Domestic Rates (NDR) – Baseline	1,922	2,074	2,178	2,610	2,610	2,610
NDR – Additional rates	500					
NDR – Gain estimated above baseline		5,598	4,465	0	0	0
Section 31 Grant – business rate multiplier	158	300	300	0	0	0
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	0	81	85	85	85	85
New Homes Bonus	723	519	519	37	37	37
Lower Tier Grant	86	0	0	0	0	0
Services Grant	132	78	78	78	78	78
Funding Guarantee Grant	0	312	649	0	0	0
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	80	74	85	88	92	92
TOTAL	8,385	14,022	13,555	8,312	8,542	8,777

Note: The figures are based on Business Rates reset being in 2025/26. 2022/23 figures are taken from Tax Set report 2023/24.

9.2 Business Rates

9.2.1 Business Rates Retention was introduced in April 2013 with Local authorities retaining a proportion of the business rates they collect giving an incentive for growth. North Warwickshire BC like most boroughs and districts is a tariff authority which means a significant amount of the income received from business rates is paid over to the Government. The estimated business rates baseline for 2024/25 based on the LG Futures figures is £2.178 million for North Warwickshire BC. Based on the estimated figures we are required to pay a business rate tariff of £21.2 million, we need our local share of business rates to come to at least £23.38 million, in order to achieve this level of funding. Based on the figures in Table 4 the predicted income is significantly above baseline for 2023/24 and 2024/25 due to the impact of the revaluations on business rates payable. The financial impact could not have been predicted as its approximately 40% increase compared to the average across the county at 4.5%, this will lead to more appeals which needs to be factored into the figures. The Government have said they will reset the business rates back to baseline and its assumed this will be from 2025/26.

- 9.2.2 Business rates, including the tariff payable, will be increased by inflation each year. It is really difficult to accurately predict income from business rates in our area as it can fall due to business closures or rating appeals, and other external factors. The operation of a national safety net system would provide provision when the Authority's baseline funding fell by 7.5%. If additional business rates are collected, they are allocated 50% to the government, 10% to Warwickshire County Council, and 40% to this Council. As a tariff authority we are required to pay a levy of 50% on the additional rates retained by this Council, although being part of a business rates pool reduces the levy significantly.
- 9.2.3 The Council chose to become a member of the Coventry and Warwickshire Business Rates Pool. This Local Pool agreed a safety net provision at a 5% loss of baseline funding, which would benefit the Council in the event that business rates fall. If business rates increase, the Pool will have a lower levy rate than the Council, of around 10%, allowing the Pool to keep more of the increase.
- 9.2.4 With the estimated growth above baseline this Council will benefit from the pool dividend. In 2022/23 the pool dividend was £1.1m with 2023/24 estimated at approx £1.2m. Due to the high level of uncertainty with business rates income a Business Rates specific reserve was set up to assist with smoothing fluctuations, if required. The fund is currently at £8.5m no further contributions are required at this stage.

9.3 Council Tax Base

- 9.3.1 The tax base on which the Council generates its local tax revenue. The tax base rise is calculated based on the same information used to complete the CTB1 and has to be calculated on 30th November, it takes into account the basic tax base, the reduction due to council tax support, growth in new homes and the expected collection rate.
- 9.3.2 The tax base increase built into the MTFs each year is 1.5% to reflect the growth in number of properties in the borough. The increased revenue from just the tax base is £74,792 per annum.

9.4 Council Tax

- 9.4.1 This Council has increased the tax to referendum limits since 2020/21 to minimise the cumulative impact of low council tax rises. Decisions to freeze council tax between 2010/11 and 2019/20 had an on going and cumulative effect on the Council's financial position. Grant funding received towards tax freezes have generally been time limited, whereas the tax base is reduced permanently.

9.4.2 For the past few years there has been a referendum policy of rising the council tax by a maximum of 2.99% or £5. The assumption in the plan is that the likely referendum limits for district/borough councils will be the higher of 2.99% or £5.

The figures in this plan assume that North Warwickshire will be increasing the council tax in line with government limits (2.99% or £5) each year of the plan. ***It is recommended that members approve the strategy for increasing tax to maximum level approved by government.***

9.4.3 The Council attempts to balance the need for retaining an affordable council tax, with the retention of services. This is increasingly difficult with current financial constraints, including the pressures of government funding levels, limited income raising opportunities, economic pressures and rising expectations.

9.5 Fees and Charges

9.5.1 The Council has tended to increase fees and charges for inflation, on an annual basis. Any other changes have tended to be on an ad hoc basis. Income Generation is an important part of the MTFs. In 2023/24 this Council is budgeting approximately £3.4m in income from fees and charges. If all charges for 2023/24 were increased by September CPI this would generate an additional £214k per annum which would assist with achieving a medium term sustainable budget. However, not all fees and charges can be increased by inflation.

9.5.2 This Council should adopt a Fees & Charges Strategy with the following key guiding principles:

- All fees and Charges should be increased at least by September CPI unless there is a robust reason why this is not appropriate – Planning fees set by Government, requirement to demonstrate break even in terms of cost and charge, increase would have a detrimental impact on demand reducing income overall.
- The charge should at least cover the cost of providing the service, no subsidy.
- All services should be reviewed to explore opportunities for new charges.

9.5.3 The ability to generate income from other areas continues to be reviewed as part of the ongoing exercise to reduce the Council's required budget. ***It is recommended that members adopt the guiding principles detailed in 9.5.2 for setting and reviewing fees and charges.***

10.0 Growth

10.1 Growth Areas

10.1.1 The figures presented do not include a provision for growth, any additional funding approved will impact on the target reductions required within the plan (Table 2). Therefore a strong approach is taken with growth areas. In general terms, growth will be allowed if one of the following conditions is met:

- **Statutory Need.** Where the Council needs to spend resources in order to comply with statutory requirements
- **Invest to Save.** Where services can demonstrate that an initial outlay will generate additional income or reduced costs in the future, an advance from an earmarked reserve held for this purpose will be made. The plan recommends putting £1m into a fund for this purpose.
- **External Funding.** Services are encouraged to look for external funding to support service development and enhancement. However the impact of ongoing costs against potential one off funding is always considered.
- **Efficiencies.** The Council looks for efficiencies in service provision, to contribute to savings targets, or reallocate resources to other priorities.
- **Delivering Services.** Where the Council wants to enhance the services its delivering, eg Structure Fit for Purpose to ensure the Council has the correct capacity and expertise to deliver the Corporate Plan priorities and services to the public.

10.1.2 At this stage it is likely that additional ongoing funding will be required to deliver a Structure Fit for Purpose but at this stage this figure can not be quantified. As the work on the structure develops it should become clearer what additional funding is required and this will need to be built into the 2024/25 budgets. A supplementary estimate of up to £300,000 is requested in the current year to fund the difference between the salary savings from vacancies and agency/interim staff costs.

11.0 Reductions and Increased Income

11.1 To deliver a medium term sustainable budget reductions are required from 2025/26 onwards and therefore it is essential that this Council adopts a strategy of a managed use of balances to ensure the projects/initiatives to deliver reductions/increased income can be developed and implemented but the budget is still balanced, see Table 2.

11.2.1 If members approve the strategy to delivering a balanced medium budget, as detailed in Table 2 a programme for Reductions/Increased Income over the medium term will need to be developed to deliver the target figures. Listed below is the initial list of projects:

- Transformation projects – New IT systems improved efficiency
- Invest to save – Asset Management
- Service redesign – Waste & Recycling Service
- Income Generation – Fees and Charges review, Rent review
- Commercialism – Leisure Services, Housing Development
- Structure Fit for Purpose – sustainable structure to deliver corporate plan priorities and excellent service to customers.
- Treasury Management – Review Investments.
- Agree tax rise strategy
- Review specific reserve funds – release funding for specific projects such as Asset Management and increase general balances.

12.0 General Fund Balances

- 12.1 One of the Council's aims is to have a balanced budget. However this does not require a balanced budget in each financial year, the aim is to ensure that services are adequately funded over the medium term. The figures presented in tables 1 and 2 assume minimum balances at £1.3m.
- 12.2 The current policy for general balances is to retain minimum working balances of around £1.3 million on the General Fund. The risk assessments, which support these requirements, are updated on an annual basis as part of the budget process. This allows detailed consideration of changing economic conditions and other potential high risks. In addition to general reserves there are also specific reserve funds for high risk areas such as Business Rate fluctuations.

13 Earmarked/Specific Revenue Reserves

- 13.1 The Council holds a number of reserves that have been earmarked for specific revenue and capital purposes. Earmarked reserves are used to hold:
- Funding received in advance for specific initiatives;
 - Funding set aside for specific services, where the timing of demand can vary;
 - Funding set aside for the future replacement of assets or other capital expenditure;
 - Funding held to enable the Council to manage specific risks; and
 - Funding where work has been delayed.
- 13.2 For the majority of earmarked reserves, there is little or no risk to the financial standing of the Council. Reserves set up to manage timing differences or hold funding received in advance match expenditure to the income available. Reserves held to allow risks to the base budget to be managed are estimated using the best available information. A review of earmarked reserves is planned, so that previous priorities can be reassessed in light of the current financial position and if the fund is no

longer required the balance will be transferred to the general fund balance.

14.0 Treasury Management

- 14.1 This is the management of the Local Authority's cash flows: its banking, money market and capital market transactions. The Council has adopted a Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy, which sets out a framework for its activity in these areas. The current Strategy aims to minimise risk by putting greater emphasis on security and liquidity. Once risk has been minimised, the Council will maximise performance wherever possible, within existing controls.
- 14.2 As highlighted in the Treasury Management Strategy, the Council has a borrowing requirement of £69.953 million. The HRA has external borrowing of £41.979 million, whilst the General Fund has internal borrowing of £15.539 million. Internally borrowed funds come from earmarked reserves held for future revenue and capital spending. As these resources are used, there will be a need for further external borrowing.
- 14.3 The government previously imposed a cap on an authority's total housing borrowing, which has now been removed. The Authority was below the cap, so investment and borrowing decisions were based on affordability within the HRA. This approach remains unchanged.
- 14.4 The Council has internal funds in excess of those needed to cover the internal loans. These are invested on the money market and generate investment income for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. The cash fund portfolio is managed internally, with advice from Link Treasury Services, the Council's treasury management consultants. As part of maximising income generation the investments will be reviewed to ensure they are achieving appropriate returns.

15.0 Budget Process

- 15.1 The budget process operates throughout the year, with the budget strategy updated in November and reported to members. The financial forecast produced in this strategy provides the context for the more detailed four year budget approved in February, as part of the Council Tax Setting process.
- 15.2 In the event of potentially significant changes to the Council's financial position, the Corporate Director - Resources will assess whether additional updates of the financial strategy are needed.

16.0 Budget Consultation

- 16.1 The Council this year is carrying out a consultation exercise with the residents . The questionnaire has been developed to include a number of questions that will inform the Council with regard to the services it delivers. There are a number of questions relating to the services and the cost, and also about income generation. All of the results will be considered by members and assist to inform the Corporate plan and medium term Financial Strategy.

17.0 Housing Revenue Account

- 17.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a separate ring fenced account which holds the income from tenants rent and funds expenditure on managing and maintaining the councils stock. The HRA is required to have a 30 year business plan which estimates the income and expenditure over the life of the plan ensuring that decent homes is maintained and a provision for new build is included. The HRA business plan and budgets will be presented in detail to the January Resources Board.

17.2 General Balances on the Housing Revenue Account

- 17.2.1 The Council aims to have a balanced budget on the Housing Revenue Account. This does not require a balanced budget in each financial year; the aim is to ensure that services are adequately funded over the medium term.
- 17.2.2 The current policy for general balances is to retain minimum working balances of £500,000 - £750,000 on the Housing Revenue Account. The risk assessment, which supports this requirement, is updated annually as part of the budget process. This allows detailed consideration of changing economic conditions and other potential high risks. Given the greater risks that will be faced by the council as a result of welfare reform, an increased requirement to hold general balances may be needed.

17.3 Housing Business Plan

- 17.3.1 To ensure the continued management and maintenance of North Warwickshire's housing stock, both Members and officers need to take decisions on a long term basis. For example, we need to build up surpluses to fund the capital expenditure needed later in the Business Plan. The impact of decisions taken is fundamental to the sustainability of the Business Plan.
- 17.3.2 The Business Plan currently assumes that the authority continues to increase rents in line with government policy. For the current year because September 2022 CPI was so high at over 10% the Government restricted increases to 7%. It is hoped that this year there will be a return

of national rent policy to rent increases of CPI + 1% per annum. The national rent policy increases have not been published to date.

17.3.3 Further detail around the management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock is given in the Housing Business Plan.

18.0 Capital Programme

18.1 Capital Funding

18.1.1 The Council projects its expected resources over both a three and ten-year period. These include receipts from the sale of council assets, revenue funding used to support capital expenditure and anticipated contributions from third parties. Funding from the government is also considered. Specific grant is received towards the cost of Disabled Facility Grants. In future years the capital programme does not include many items which is not representative of the possible challenges and projects which will need to be delivered during the medium term. As part of the detailed budget process the capital programme will be updated.

18.1.2 Given its restricted resources, the council prioritises capital schemes, to enable it to carry out all essential spending.

18.1.3 There are a number of funding issues which need to be addressed moving forward and these will be considered in future updates of the Capital Strategy. The Capital Strategy gives further detail on the allocation of capital funding.

18.2 Interaction between Revenue and Capital Spending

18.2.1 Many capital schemes will impact on the revenue budget. This may be due to ongoing maintenance costs which are incurred following the acquisition of an asset or may be related to the cost of repaying loans taken out to finance capital expenditure, or the loss of investment income if internal loans are used.

18.2.2 In assessing bids put forward for inclusion in the capital programme, the impact of capital spending on the revenue budget is considered.

19 Risk Management

19.1 The Council has a Risk Management strategy in place which it uses to manage all of its risks, including financial risks.

19.2 A system of risk management has been established, which is operated by all services. This ensures that if there are significant changes in the level of risk to the Council from new legislation, or policy changes, they are considered and reported to Board. Any significant increase in financial risks will therefore be addressed during the year, if this is necessary.

19.3 In addition, the financial risks of individual services are considered during the budget preparation process by Service Boards, along with the related budgets. Annual risk assessments are undertaken on the level of balances for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account and

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considered at the same time as the budgets. This ensures that all current issues are included. Where required a specific revenue reserve will be set up to mitigate high financial risk areas such as Business Rates Fluctuations, Recycling credits and buildings maintenance.

- 19.4 To assist with highlighting the impact of the potential risks, the major risks are assessed on differing risk levels, and these are included in reports to Board.

Agenda Item No 11

Executive Board

27 November 2023

**Report of the Chief Executive and
Interim Corporate Director - Resources**

Financial Inclusion

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information further to the motion to Council on 27 September.

Recommendation to the Board

- a That that the update on the Financial Inclusion work of the Council be noted;**
- b That the criteria for the Financial Hardship Fund attached as Appendix A be adopted, or varied as required; and**
- c The actions suggested in the Confidential paper at item 17 of this agenda be approved.**

2 Report

- 2.1 Members will recall that that the following motion was approved by Council on 27 September:

“As our residents will face another worrying winter period due to the ongoing cost of living crisis, this Council should take positive and practical steps to help. Council is recommended to give delegated powers to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition to create a Financial Hardship Fund with £5,000 per Ward for residents, community groups, organisations and schools who support residents in financial hardship and that this Council refers this matter to the Executive to consider holistically the issues of what further financial inclusion work this Council can undertake, in order to access what measures can be put into place to prevent our residents falling into financial crisis.”

- ...
- 2.2 With regard to the Financial Hardship Fund, a draft scheme has been produced by Officers (Appendix A) and consulted on as set out in the motion. The scheme is largely agreed with the only area to be resolved being whether those receiving out of work benefits should be eligible for the fund. The reason for not allowing this in the original draft was Officers' views that help would be available elsewhere for this cohort, however it a matter for Members to decide.
- 2.3 With regard to the work of the Financial Inclusion team, there is a staffing suggestion reported in the confidential section of this agenda.
- 2.4 The rest of this report summarises the key achievements and highlights ongoing challenges faced by the Council and its residents, during a year when we have continued to support the most significant increases in the cost of living for many years. The remaining appendices to this report provide detail on these and expand on our approach, which is focussed on assisting residents in debt, suggesting ways of maximising their income, changing their behaviours, providing emergency help via food support and fuel vouchers, as well as promoting health and well-being.
- ...
- 2.5 Financial health and wellbeing play a prominent role across Northern Warwickshire. Both local authorities covering the north; North Warwickshire BC and Nuneaton and Bedworth BC actively work together to ensure that all residents have access to the advice and support that they need. Financial Inclusion is an asset in NWBC and has been for over ten years. The service, across the council, has been integral to many innovative initiatives and has 'lead the way', and often been seen as best practice, not only countywide but nationally. Financial Inclusion, along with its collaborative approach with partners, has made a difference to the lives of many people and communities.
- 2.6 The Northern Warwickshire Financial Inclusion Partnership (NW FIP) is a long, and well-established partnership, from the private, public and third sector. The organisations work collectively on local initiatives and develop projects to support residents and communities. The NW FIP aim is to minimise the likelihood and impact of financial exclusion in North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth through the provision of advice, support and project delivery in a co-ordinated manner that demonstrates value for money and maximises benefits to local communities.
- 2.7 Our ethos of *'helping others to help themselves'* is achieved by creating opportunities for local people to access and improve their financial wellbeing, change their behaviours, and develop their digital skills to improve their opportunities and enable them to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

- 2.8 The partnership takes a coordinated approach and has developed action plans to tackle key themes identified by the partnership. Over the last twelve months this has enabled the development of early intervention initiatives to effectively minimise the effect of the cost of living, such as the development of the *Positive Energy Working Group* to support local people with increased fuel costs and support those facing fuel poverty.
- 2.9 The Council held a Cost-of-Living Forum following cross-party support for identifying the need to help and support local people facing the challenges of the cost of living. Feedback following the event was very positive with delegates finding the event informative with the use of data from partners and being able to understand the detail of policy and messages. Delegates also found the event invaluable for networking and for understanding what support was available, for whom, and how to access the support. It was acknowledged that there had been a lot of work already undertaken to support residents and it was agreed that this would continue to be developed.
- 2.10 It has been agreed that a second, follow up Cost-of-Living event will take place and has been provisionally booked for the 4 December, to cover the NWBC and NBBC areas. This has been delayed due to WCC hosting an event in October and to avoid a clash and duplication.
- 2.11 The Government announced additional support via The Energy Bills Support Scheme – Alternative Funding Scheme and Alternative Fuel Payments for those households who were affected by the fuel increases but unable to access the Energy Bills Support Main Scheme paid via energy suppliers. The government's Salesforce system was open to applications from 27/2/23 until 31/8/23 and the LA was responsible for the assessment, verification and payment of the 2 Government Energy Bills Support Schemes (EBSS):
- Alternative Funding Scheme EBSS (AFS)
 - Alternative Fuel Payment EBSS (AFP)

The Council administered a total of 308 cases totalling £90,200 (both schemes).

- 2.12 The real positives of the work outlined continues to show that despite significant challenges, the Council continues to lead the way countywide in working with partners to implement initiatives that are supporting people to navigate the cost-of-living challenges and helping them meet their financial obligations.
- 2.13 Ediblelinks have provided a variety of food initiatives across the borough for many years, including access to emergency food provision for those individuals and families referred by the council and its partners. Following Covid 19, lack of funding and a reduction in food available to Ediblelinks, access to emergency food parcels has been reduced over the last year. A recent application was submitted to the UKSPF panel for the expansion of the Social Supermarket, and this will need to be considered against the funding

allocation for next year given all funding for the current year has been awarded. A key element of the Financial Inclusions team's work in the coming months will be on this issue of food support given the changes detailed above.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

3.1.1

3.2 Safer Communities Implications

3.2.1 Access to food in a crisis prevents local theft from supermarkets and small local businesses. Therefore, it is important that we have an effective access to emergency food solution for people in need borough wide.

3.2.2 Working with the Illegal Money Lending team helps to raise awareness, and the dangers of borrowing money from a Loan Shark, and how to report any activity anonymously

3.2.3 Better access to advice and assistance has many direct and indirect benefits that contribute to a greater feeling of wellbeing and community cohesiveness. This can only have a positive impact on the communities we serve.

3.3 Legal, Data Protection and Human Rights Implications

3.3.1 The UK General Data Policy Regulation allow the Council share data for a number of purposes. The proposals in this report are likely to require data sharing with partners. When implementing any approved recommendations the Council will ensure that appropriate data sharing agreements are completed with partners and that any necessary consents from data subjects are obtained.

3.4 Environment, Climate Change and Health Implications

3.4.1 Continuing to provide support and advice in relation to fuel costs and energy efficiency and water, helps the environment and to combat climate change. This is achieved through partnership working with The Green Doctor, Act on Energy, Severn Trent Water and via our Positive Energy webpages providing information and encouraging behavioural changes.

3.5 Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Implications

3.5.1 Homes that are cold due to fuel poverty exacerbate health inequalities. Cold homes can cause and worsen respiratory conditions, cardiovascular diseases, poor mental health, dementia, hypothermia and problems with childhood development. Cold homes prevent children learning in school and widen the attainment gap for the disadvantaged.

3.5.2 The Councils ongoing commitment to assist in helping people address or improve their financial circumstances or well-being has positive impacts. It is hoped that by providing this level of support, it will ensure that residents can learn new skills to enable them to rely less on our help going forward and help keep collection rates in terms of rent, council tax and housing benefit overpayments as high as possible by providing the correct levels of help and support.

3.6 Risk Management Implications

3.6.1 Failure to provide appropriate levels of customer support could have detrimental impact on many areas on Council activity and lead to an increase in costs of collection or support being incurred. The Councils current approach enables us to be proactive as opposed to reactive in our response to issues or circumstances.

3.7 Equalities Implications

3.7.1 The various methods and mediums used to promote financial inclusion activity ensure no group or individual is denied access to help or advice in respect of both Council and other complimentary services.

3.8 Links to Council's Priorities

3.8.1 Supporting its communities and promoting the wellbeing of residents is a key part of the Council's vision.

The Contact Officers for this report are Steve Maxey (719438), Alison Turner (719374) and Sally Roberts (719414).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D

Background Paper Number	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

Equality Impact Assessment Summary Sheet

Please complete the following table summarised from the equality impact assessment form. This should be completed and attached to relevant Board reports.

Name of Policy Procedure/Service	Financial Inclusion
Officer Responsible for assessment	Sally Roberts

Does this policy /procedure /service have any differential impact on the following equality groups /people

- (a) Is there a positive impact on any of the equality target groups or contribute to promoting equal opportunities and improve relations or:
- (b) could there be a negative impact on any of the equality target groups i.e. disadvantage them in any way

Equality Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	Reasons/Comments
Racial			
Gender			
Disabled people			
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people			
Older/Younger people	Yes		Financial Education in Schools / Take up of Free School Meals
Religion and Beliefs			
People having dependents caring responsibilities	Yes		Supporting families on low incomes
People having an offending past			
Transgender people			

If you have answered **No** to any of the above please give your reasons below

The various methods and mediums used to promote financial inclusion activity ensure no group or individual is denied access to help or advice in respect of both Council and other complimentary services.

Please indicate if you believe that this document

Should proceed to further Impact assessment

Needs no further action

Risk Management Form

**NORTH WARWICKSHIRE
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Division

Cost Centre or Service

Risk Ref	Risk: Title/Description	Consequence	Likelihood (5 = high, 1 = low)	Impact (5 = high, 1 = low)	Gross Risk Rating	Responsible Officer	Existing Control Procedures	Likelihood(5 = high, 1 = low)	Impact (5 = high, 1 = low)	Net Risk Rating
Risk Ref	Options for additional / replacement control procedure						Cost Resources	Likelihood (5 = high, 1 = low)	Impact (5 = high, 1 = low)	Net Risk Rating

Completed By:

Date:

Financial Hardship Fund

Project Outline:

North Warwickshire Borough Council has resolved to establish an Emergency Financial Hardship Fund with £5,000 per Ward for residents in that Ward and community groups, organisations and schools who support residents in emergency financial crisis in the Ward.

Criteria (Individuals):

- Customers must demonstrate financial hardship with completion of a financial Statement form and provide a recent bank statement
- Consent to the NWBC Financial Inclusions team undertaking a benefit assessment
- Not entitled to any benefits (except WTC)
 - A benefit check will be the first action taken during the assessment
- No access to support from elsewhere
- Maximum award £100
- No more than 3 awards per year
- Council Tax must be up to date
 - unless already working to reduce this ie payment plan in place and not defaulting
- No rent arrears
 - unless already working to reduce this ie payment plan in place and not defaulting
- Applications can be agreed on a first come first served basis or periodically at the request of the Ward Members.
- If there is a need to prioritise between applications the criteria in the Council Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme will be used as guidance : [Discretionary Housing Payments | Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support | North Warwickshire \(northwarks.gov.uk\)](#)
- Once the fund for a Ward has been used no further applications will be accepted

Criteria (Community Groups, Organisations and Schools):

- Schemes will be considered on a case by case basis against how they can assist individuals in the ways described in the Criteria for individuals, and against the following:

In order to be eligible for grant support, projects must satisfy the following criteria:

- Projects / schemes should be "one-off" capital or revenue undertakings that provide a clear and lasting benefit to the local

community in assisting with emergency need and quickly given this is a scheme for emergency support.

- If applicable, projects must have evidence of any relevant and required permissions in place before a grant award is made (e.g. Planning Consent, landowners permission, etc.)
- Where a project has the potential for regular access to vulnerable people, organisers must have an appropriate and adopted Safeguarding and Equality Policies in place. Advice on this matter can be provided by the Borough Council
- Fund recipients must be formally constituted and have a bank account into which the grant can be paid
- Where works or services of a value between £1,501 and £5,000 are being procured from a single contractor, evidence of at least two written quotations will need to be provided in order to release payment of a grant unless one of the exemptions in the Council's Contract Standing Orders applies

Limitations

- Approved projects will receive support only once, although recipients that have been allocated a grant will be eligible for a further award in respect of a different project

Projects will need to demonstrate how they will assist individuals in a particular ward in order to benefit.

Restrictions

This Fund will not support:

- The existing operational / running costs (including staff costs) of an organisation
- Any costs incurred before a grant award is made
- Projects promoting religious or political beliefs
- Loan or debt repayments

Fund Management:

- Managed by the Financial Inclusion Manager, Revenues and Benefits Manager and Corporate Director Resources
- With any award the customer must continue to work with the FISO or an advice agency, such as the CA, to help manage money better

- The Borough Councillors for each Ward will determine the level of funding to be allocated to each eligible individual or project, although the cumulative sum for each Ward will not exceed £5,000. If Borough Councillors for the Ward wish they may split the fund equally between the Councillors and in this eventuality individual Councillors will determine the level of funding to be allocated to each eligible individual or project, up to a cumulative sum of £2500 (£1667 for the Councillors for the Arley and Whitacre Ward).

Application process:

- Written request to be made to the FI Manager
- The Financial Inclusion Support Officer will:
 - Complete a benefit check to see if the customer is entitled to any additional money and support to maximise their income
 - Complete a financial statement form with the customer
 - The customer will be asked to provide bills, bank statements and other evidence requested
 - Consider all applications on their own merits in line with the qualifying criteria

Award Payments

Payments will be made in the following ways – this will be determined by the FISO:

- A bank transfer will be made direct to the customer's bank account as soon as practical.
- Consideration will also be given as to whether a voucher or similar will be used
- Encouraged to set up a DWP Help to Save account (if entitled to UC) or Credit Union Account to build resilience for the future

Financial Inclusion - Key Achievements 22/23

- **Financial Inclusion Support Officers (FISO)**

NBBC and NWBC both have Financial Inclusion Support Teams offering a service open to all residents, of all tenure types. The service offer from the Financial Inclusion Support Officer is:

- Budgeting and managing money help to all residents
- Help to identify priority debts
- Setting up payment arrangements
- Applying for benefits and grants
- Signposting
- Working in partnership with other FI partners and community groups, and local schools
- Outreach session and community events

Please refer to the document at Appendix C for the number of referrals and households supported with intensive advice and support via the FISO. This role supports people with chaotic lifestyles and can often mean support is needed with a multitude of issues, including health, education for children and addictions issues. The officer provides a coordinated triage approach to a customer's financial position and will ensure that all additional needs are identified and supported into the appropriate service to deal with their needs.

- **MaPs 'Money Guiders Programme'**

In partnership with the Money Advice and Pensions Service (MaPS) we have now launched and enrolled the FISO's (at each LA) on to a new 'free' City and Guilds accredited 'Money Guidance' programme. This will ensure that we have well trained, confident and informed officers. This could be extended in the future, to other front facing teams and councillors, with potential to include our partners and community groups. However, we will learn and reflect on the current cohort experience before extending the offer.

- **Positive Energy Working Group – sub-group of NWFIP**

In response to the initial energy crisis in April 2022, the NW FIP formed a sub-group; '*The Positive Energy*' working group, made up of relevant internal and external partners, to consider how to best support people through the energy crisis. The group have delivered the following:

- one dedicated web platform (hosted at NWBC and NBBC) for all information to be uploaded in relation to fuel and water
- including information regarding government funding available, newsletters and flyers, helpful top-tips about behaviour change to reduce energy consumption, water saving measures available, signposting to support organisations, links to videos helpful and ways to insulate your property with simple solutions, plus much more!
- links to each LA website are:

- [Energy Advice | Energy Advice and Help | North Warwickshire \(northwarks.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Positive energy saving tips | Cost of Living Support | Nuneaton & Bedworth \(nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk\)](#)

- **For all employees**

To support our own employees across the north, both LA's work with Birmingham Citysave Credit Union, to offer an employee savings scheme. This will enable employees to sign up for a CU account, and to start a savings plan direct from their salary. This will help many employees, especially those lowest paid, to build some financial resilience. An account will also enable employees to access more affordable lending options through the Credit Union. Our partnership continues to grow, and the offer is extended to residents and local businesses.

- **Step into YOUR Tenancy Guide**

The 'Step into Your Tenancy' guide has been developed to help prospective tenants register and get set up with all their bills and payments, before they start their tenancy, or as they move in. This approach ensures that all financial matters are in place and will help prevent arrears accruing from day one. The guide is intended to enable and ensure, that all organisations supporting new tenants across the north, will be giving consistent messages. The 'Step into your Tenancy' guide is interactive and takes the user to all of the websites needed to set up all bills and payments and to find out more information.

The links to the guides are available on the respective LA websites:

- [Tenancy ready guide | Housing benefits | Nuneaton & Bedworth \(nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Tenancy Ready | Tenancy Ready Guide | North Warwickshire \(northwarks.gov.uk\)](#)

- **Money Matters events**

Both LA's and their FI partners, have been holding '**Money Matters**' sessions across the boroughs to help residents with the rising cost of living. Residents can get help with energy, water and other bills as well as help with benefit checks, pension credit applications and any arrears and debt issues they may be experiencing.

- **'Energy Savings Club' project** - POCA funded (Illegal Money Lending Team)

The *Energy Savings Club* project funded through POCA funding from IMLT. It is an incentivised savings scheme to encourage people to change their behaviour to start saving and to build financial resilience. Once the customer has saved £2 pw over a 12 week period (25 weeks to achieve this) then £25 will be paid to their account as a 'bonus'. This is alongside advice and information on budgeting and the dangers of using Loan Sharks.

- Cost of Living website Pages
- Social Media messaging

- FSM campaign – targeted approach with comms using FB boosts
- Outreach sessions by FISO's – including working with
- Credit Union – Employee Scheme

- **Fuel Vouchers**

Working with the Fuel Bank foundation the Financial Inclusion Teams across both LA's have access to award Fuel Vouchers to customers on prepayment meters.

- To date we have awarded the following pre-payment vouchers for the period April 23 to Sept 23:
 - 49 issued and 43 redeemed

- **Groundwork 'Green Doctor'**

- Federation Charity looking to expand into W'shire area
- National charity funded by Ofgem Redress fund. Coventry and surrounding areas funded via Cadent Gas due to end Dec 23. New 3-year funding (hopefully) from Jan 24. Also potentially looking at funding via British Gas and National Grid (network distributors)
- Supporting people in fuel poverty – wider offer since energy crisis
- 'Core Offer' is for vulnerable people, but do help with any enquiries / no one turned away
- Generally have partner referrals but will accept direct self-referrals (but not promoted)
- Residents is called via phone and visited 1x or 2x
- Aim to help within 12 weeks but if not, will support until sorted. They can repeat again
- In-home assessment to look for signs and symptoms of fuel poverty
- Look to improve efficiency and change behaviours
- Listen to householders story, look at issues faced such as damp and how to fix
- They refer on to all advice services where additional needs identified
- Energy advisers have a range of skills – retro-fit / OH etc
- Provide small measures as free – LED / rad reflector / draught proofing
- Action plan for customers to help them to reduce their bills – behaviour change key
- Help and support to identify potential grants, dealing with debts or energy companies, disputes etc
- Focus is on key areas – have hubs in Stoke, B'ham, Tipton, Coventry....but looking to have a hub in Nuneaton area
- They provide COL training sessions for teams

NWBC Only Projects:

- **'Household Welcome Bundle' project – Household Support Funding**

The *Household Welcome Bundle* is a project designed to support those starting a new tenancy after spending a period of time in temporary accommodation due to homelessness.

Living in temporary accommodation is a stressful time for people; leaving a familiar environment, their possessions, friends and can affect the schooling of children. The impact on a person's mental health is detrimental and can have a lasting effect. The environment is not conducive for children and can impact on their wellbeing and educational attainment too.

To ensure that they can start on a level playing field with all the basic essentials in place. The Household Welcome provides a supply of basic furniture and equipment. It helps alleviate some of the financial pressures on individuals and families and supports better health and wellbeing for the whole family.

This project is mindful of the environmental impact of buying 'new'. This project therefore addresses the environment agenda with an ethos of 're-using, re-cycling and re-purposing' items. We support the charity Emmaus in Coventry, who have a shop selling second hands goods, including white goods.

To support households with their first 'moving in' shop, we will be working with Ediblelinks (local foodbank) to provide membership fees and a first shop from their Social Supermarket, to encourage, support and promote healthy eating. As part of this offer the household will also receive a 'hygiene' pack to ensure they have the basic necessities for school, employment and feeling good about themselves

This project is complimented by the 'Step into YOUR Tenancy guide' – (see above) to ensure that the tenancy is a success.

- **'Positive Energy Solutions project – Household Support Funding**

The *Positive Energy Solutions* project is designed to support those who are struggling with their energy bills, by providing them with money saving solutions (as opposed to offering a 'cash' payment) to run alongside the provision of advice and support from any of the organisations associated with the Northern Warwickshire Financial Inclusion Partnership (NW FIP).

The solutions will be based on a variety of simple energy saving measures that can be installed by the householder, radiator reflector foil, LED Lightbulbs, Draught Proofing, Chimney Balloons. Households could potentially save up to £180 per year on their annual energy bill. With combined behaviour changes, following the Warm Homes Hack, this could include an additional saving of £534 per year on energy bills. There are videos and written instructions linked to the project to help people instal these simple energy saving solutions.

- During the project we supported 400 households with energy saving solutions
- Provided 40 thermal electric throws, mainly to older people
- Provided 35 slow cookers to families

- **'Business' Workplaces - Money Matters events**

The financial Inclusion team have worked with NW Citizens Advice to offer workplace session to local businesses. These sessions are to raise awareness of help and support available to people are working. With sessions being 'generic' in its approach to information, employees can, if they wish, also book private appointments with either of the services. With the current cost of living, more

people, who may be 'just about managing' need this information to understand what help may be available to them.

- **Cost of Living Engagement Forum**

Following cross-party support for an 'engagement forum' to discuss the impact of the 'Cost of Living' on our local residents and communities, an event was held at NWBC offices on 29th September 2022

The aim of the event was to understand the issues facing our local residents and communities across the borough. To understand what was already happening to support local people, understand the gaps and to look at ways to improve the help and support available through a collaborative and collective approach. The event was well received and had very positive feedback. Outcomes and developments are ongoing, including a report being presented to members.

- **NWBC internal cost of Living working group**

This 'new' group has been established following the Cost-of-Living engagement forum. The group is established to 'join up the dots' internally

- Looking at a NWBC Priority Services Register
- Setting up user groups for co-production work moving forward
- Financial First Aiders
- Working with our local Foodbank Ediblelinks to support people in crisis
- The development of communication packs to be disseminated – there will be a 'digital' pack and a 'paper' pack for those digitally excluded

- **What's in the pipeline across the North.....**

We are looking at some exciting initiatives to develop as follows:

- We are currently working on a project in partnership with MaPS, to establish an 'Advisers Network' which will enable us to transfer people straight through for debt advice. This means that a customer will not have to wait long for debt advice and will get a call back within 30 seconds from a national debt organisation, such as National Debtline or Stepchange
 - The Financial Inclusion Shared Services Manager is a member of a wider WCC Free School Meals working group, looking at 'take up' initiatives to support families, children and to maximise the pupil premium for local schools. This will also include sourcing potential funding pots to fund any initiatives.
- 2nd Cost of Living event 4/12/23
- A NEW project with Severn Trent Water (STW)
 - A water discount scheme for ALL introductory tenancies
 - STW will award a 70% discount on an introductory tenant's water bill for the first 12 months to help them stay on track with their rent and bills
 - This will be reviewed after the 12 months
- Awaiting the outcome of some projects that have been submitted to WN Place Delivery group to access the Tackling Social Inequalities funding to support the following projects:

- 1) Time Out – interim funding until a new application can be made to UKSPF panel
- 2) Connect & Learn – additional funding to be used alongside UKSPF funding
- 3) Red Card Gambling – training for frontline professionals (£199 per person – numbers dependent on funding amount available)
- 4) Michael Drayton – this may be funding for a 'pilot' project to provide a school meal for all children



Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Early Years & Education

Ref: POV001 | Version: 1.2 | Status: Live
 For queries, contact businessintelligence@warwickshire.gov.uk
 Please quote the Ref number in your email

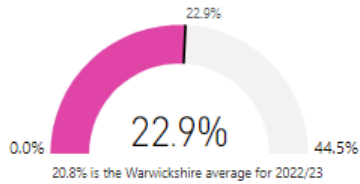


Local Authority Lookup

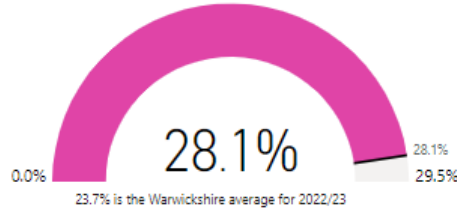
- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick

This page allows users to explore child poverty-related data for Warwickshire at neighbourhood (Lower Super Output Area, LSOA) level. Users can select a local authority from the **Local Authority Lookup** box in order to visualise the data for each LSOA within their chosen area. The map has been colour coded (dark red indicating relatively more children taking up 2 year funding and / or universal or extended 3/4 year funding and pale yellow indicating relatively less). The **charts** below provide more detail on Free Schools Meals, school absence, and educational attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children for each LSOA within the local authority.

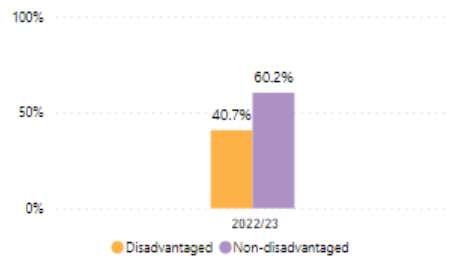
Proportion of children eligible and claiming a Free School Meal (Nursery to Y13+)



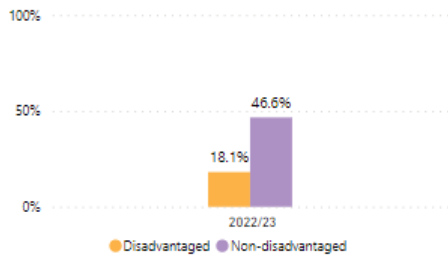
Proportion of pupils missing 10%+ days of school



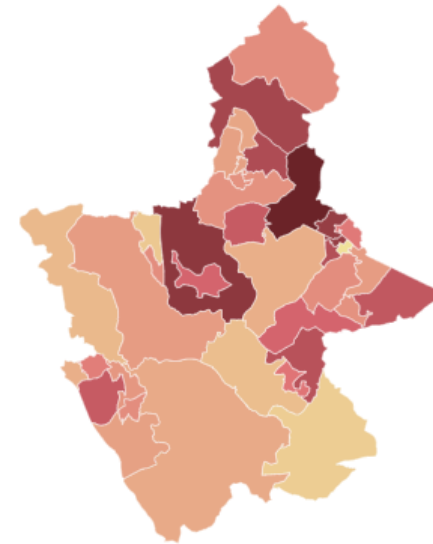
Proportion of Year 6 (KS2) Children achieving the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths



Proportion of Year 11 (KS4) Children achieving 9 to 5 (strong pass) in English and Maths



Number of children taking up 2 year funding and/or universal or extended 3/4 year funding (2022/23)



1036

Children taking up 2yr funding and / or universal or extended 3/4yr funding



Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Employment & Training

Local Authority Lookup

- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick

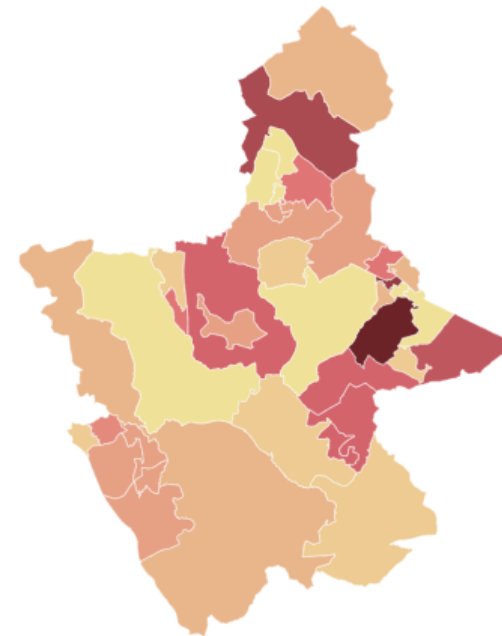
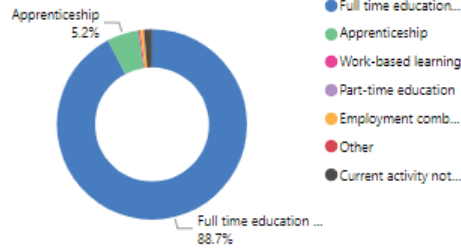
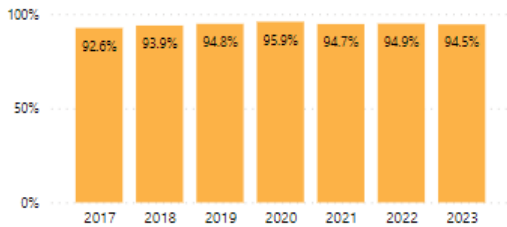
This page allows users to explore economic-related data for Warwickshire. Users can select a local authority from the **Local Authority Lookup** box in order to visualise the data for their chosen area. The map has been colour coded (dark red indicating relatively more claimants and pale yellow indicating relatively less). The **charts** below provides more detail on people in receipt of Universal Credit and Job Seekers Allowance and 16-17 year olds recorded in education and training.

Total claimant count (as at August 2023)

Total claimant count (Universal Credit and Job Seekers Allowance claimants)



Proportion of 16-17 year olds in Warwickshire recorded in education and training





Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Family & Community

Ref: POV001 | Version: 1.2 | Status: Live
 For queries, contact businessintelligence@warwickshire.gov.uk
 Please quote the Ref number in your email



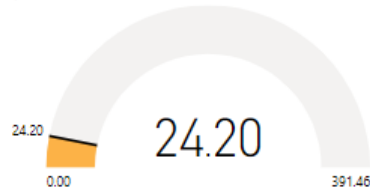
Local Authority Lookup

- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick

This page allows users to explore child poverty-related data for Warwickshire at neighbourhood (Lower Super Output Area, LSOA) level. Users can select a local authority from the **Local Authority Lookup** box in order to visualise the data for each LSOA within their chosen area. The map has been colour coded (dark red indicating relatively more children under 19 in low-income families and pale yellow indicating relatively less). The **charts** below provide more detail on Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plan, Children in Care, active adult service users.

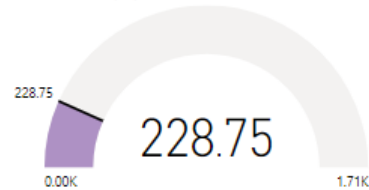
Number of children in relatively low-income families (provisional 2021/22)

Child Protection Plan (rate per 10,000 of child population)



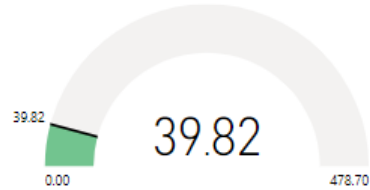
24.42 is the Warwickshire average for 2023

Children subject to a Child in Need Plan (rate per 10,000 of child population)



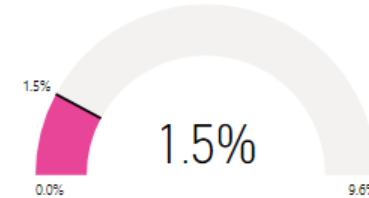
231.47 is the Warwickshire average for 2023

Children in Care (rate per 10,000 of child population)

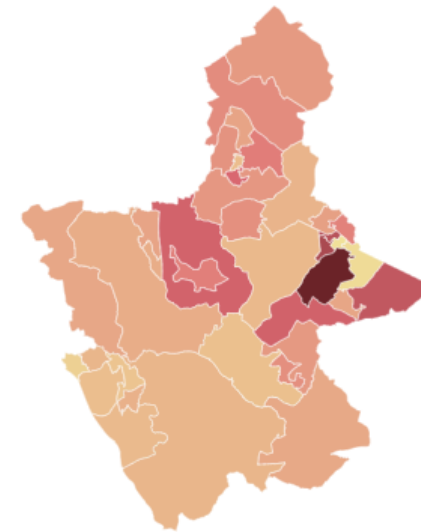


55.56 is the Warwickshire average for 2023

Proportion of active adult service users (aged 18+)



1.3% is the Warwickshire average for 2023



2524

Number of children in relatively low-income families



Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Housing, Living & Fuel

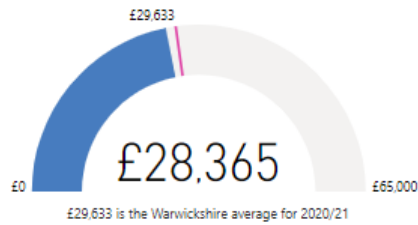
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Local Authority Lookup

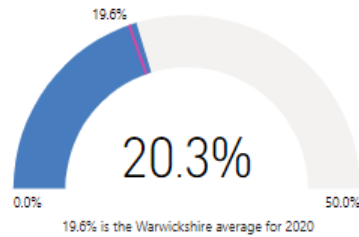
- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick

This page allows users to explore household-related data for Warwickshire at neighbourhood (Lower Super Output Area, LSOA) level. Users can select a local authority from the **Local Authority Lookup** box in order to visualise the data for each LSOA within their chosen area. The map has been colour coded (dark red indicating relatively higher fuel poverty and pale yellow indicating relatively less). The **charts** below provide more detail on household income, state pension, FIS helpline steps started and PIP cases with entitlement.

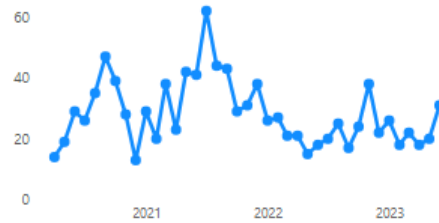
Gross PAYE and benefits equivalised household income (2020/21) 50th percentile



Proportion of population in receipt of State Pension



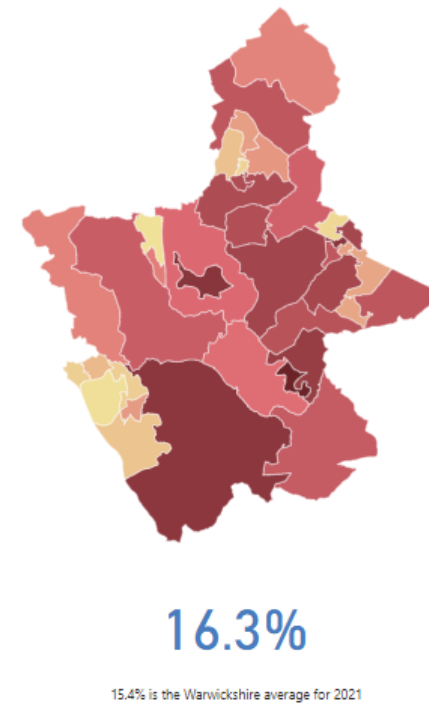
Family Information Service Helpline steps started



Personal Independence Payments (PIP) cases with entitlement



Proportion of fuel poor households (%)





Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Digital & Communication



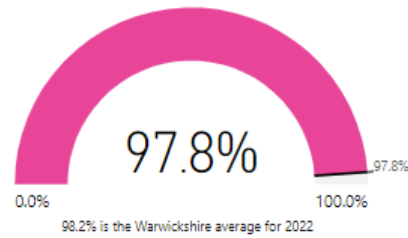
Local Authority Lookup

- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick

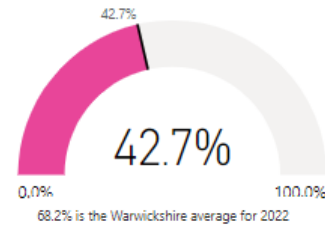
This page allows users to explore digital-related data for Warwickshire at neighbourhood (Lower Super Output Area, LSOA) level. Users can select a local authority from the **Local Authority Lookup** box in order to visualise the data for each LSOA within their chosen area. The map has been colour coded (dark red indicating lower levels of superfast broadband availability and pale yellow indicating higher levels). The **charts** below provide more detail on Warwickshire's broadband coverage, speed and 4G signal.

Proportion of premises able to receive Superfast broadband (30 Mbit/s or more) in 2022

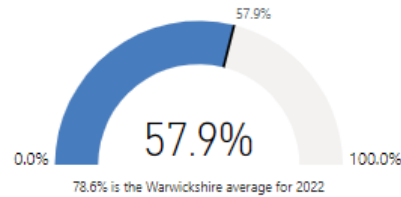
Proportion of premises able to receive Superfast Broadband (30M/bits or more)



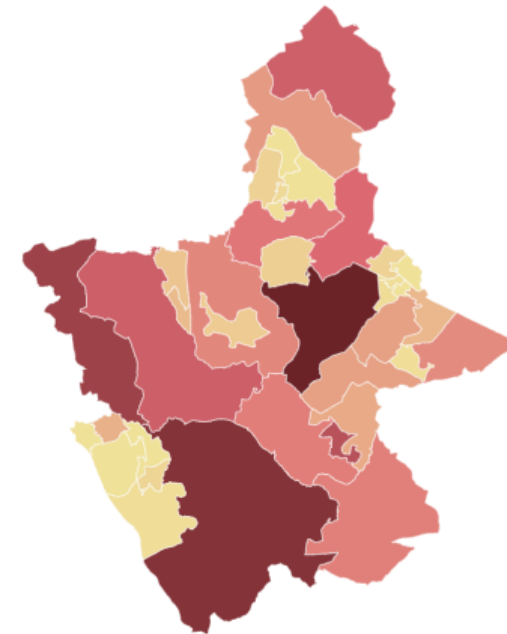
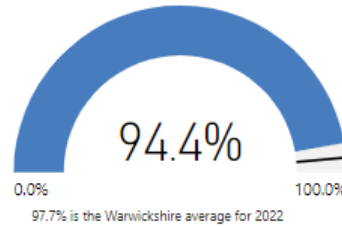
Proportion of premises able to receive Gigabit (Fibre)



Proportion of premises receiving indoor 4G signal from all operators (LA only) and 4G premises (indoor): signal from all operators by LA (%)



Proportion of premises receiving outdoor 4G signal from all operators (LA only)





Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Health & Wellbeing



Local Authority Lookup

- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton & Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick

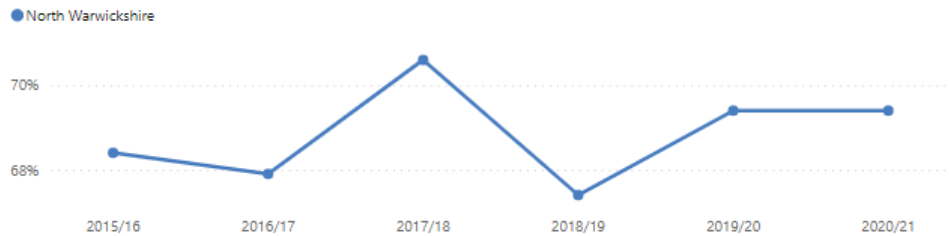
This page allows users to explore health & wellbeing-related data for Warwickshire at Local Authority level. Users can select a local authority from the **Local Authority Lookup** box in order to visualise the data for their chosen area. The map has been colour coded (dark red indicating a shorter life expectancy and pale yellow indicating a longer life expectancy). The **charts** below provide more detail on Healthy Start Voucher take up and the prevalence of overweight and obesity amongst children and adults.

Take up of Healthy Start Vouchers (% Local Authority only) (4-week cycle)

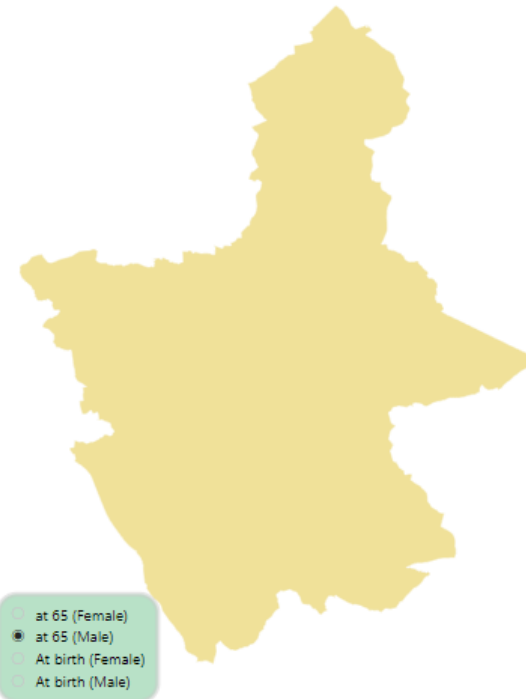


- Percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese
- Reception Prevalence of overweight (including obesity)
- Year 6 Prevalence of overweight (including obesity)

Prevalence of overweight (including obese) over time



Life expectancy (2020)





Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Food

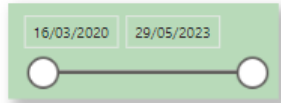
Local Authority Lookup

- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick

Bi-annual period endi...

31 March 2023

This page allows users to explore data related to food poverty in Warwickshire. Users can select a Local Authority in which Trussell Trust foodbank networks operate from the **Lookup** box, along with a time period (bi-annual period date ending). The **charts** below provide more detail on Warwickshire foodbanks - on the right of the page, data relating to Trussell Trust, on the left, Ediblelinks.



17,776

Total number of Trussell Trust parcels distributed

5951

Total Ediblelinks users

2,418

Vouchers

11,260

Number of parcels given to adults

6,516

Number of parcels given to children

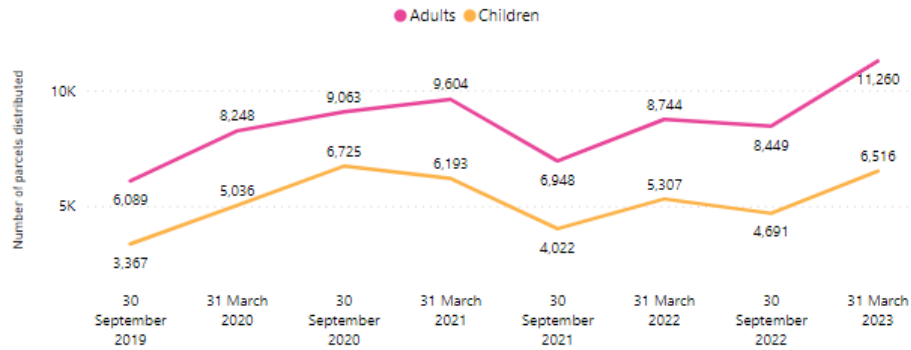
3,230

Adults

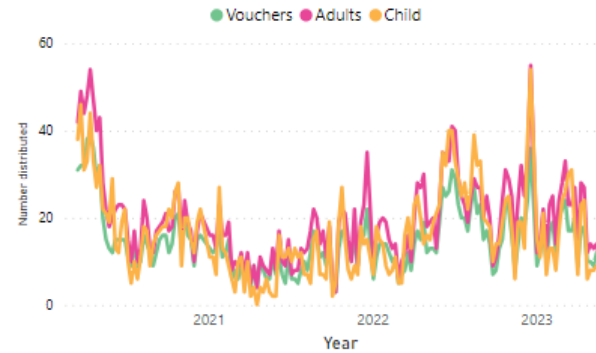
2,721

Children

Trussell Trust

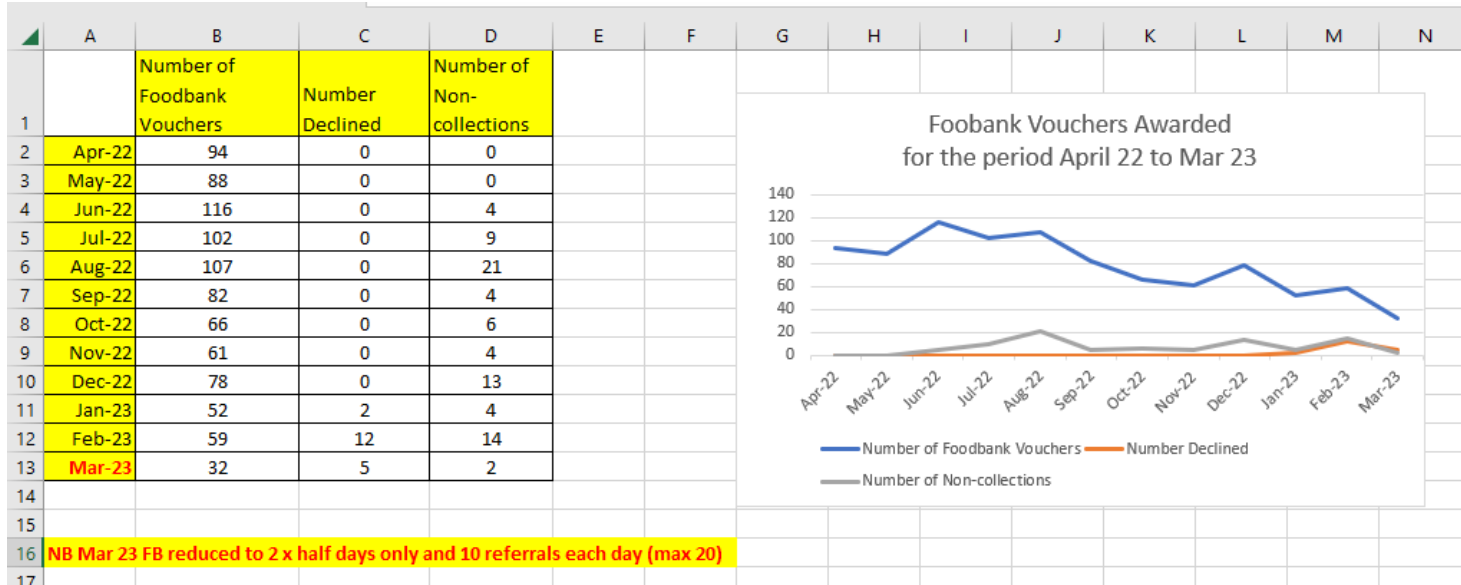


Ediblelinks



Foodbank Vouchers – Ediblelinks

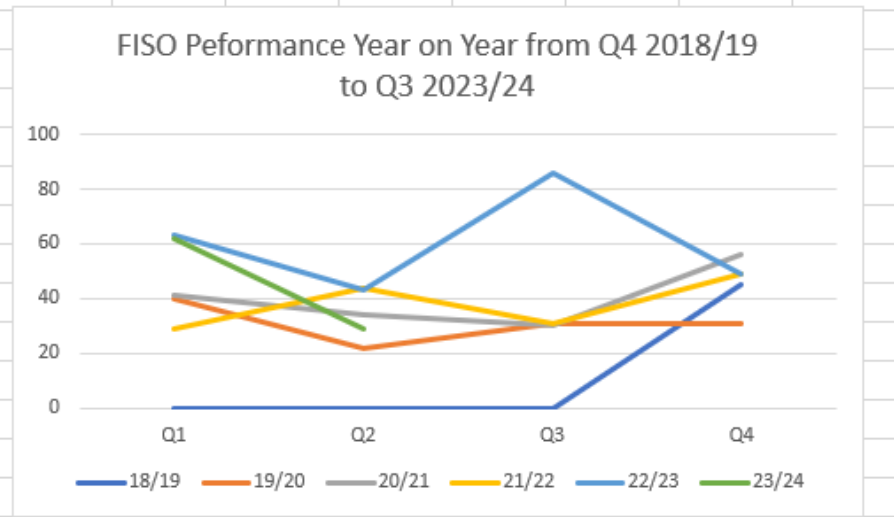
NB: Caveats in relation to 'access' and numbers of vouchers that Ediblelinks accepted. Ediblelinks reduced the number of referral they would accept from Mar 23 (2 days @ 10 referrals per day) and June 23 (1 day @ 14 referrals per day) due to funding, resources and capacity



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1		Number of Foodbank Vouchers	Number Declined	Number of Non-collections										
2	Apr-23	45	15	11										
3	May-23	32	4	6										
4	Jun-23	37	9	11										
5	Jul-23	25	7	5										
6	Aug-23	41	10	8										
7	Sep-23	32	4	7										
8	Oct-23													
9	Nov-23													
10	Dec-23													
11	Jan-24													
12	Feb-24													
13	Mar-24													
14														
15	NB: FB referrals reduced to 1 x day pw and only 14 referrals per day													

Financial Inclusion Support Officers – 1 x FTE Temporary until 31/3/24

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1	FISO Stats - year on year (Q4 2018/19 to Q3 23/24)																
2																	
3		18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24										
4	Q1	-	40	41	29	63	62										
5	Q2	-	22	34	44	43	29										
6	Q3	-	31	30	31	86											
7	Q4	45	31	56	49	49											
8																	
9	NB:	Q2 23/24 low due to management, assesment and award of 308 EBSS cases															
10																	
11																	
12																	
13																	
14																	
15																	



Energy Bills Support Scheme – Alternative Funding Scheme and Alternative Fuel Payments

The government announced additional support for those households who were affected by the fuel increases but unable to access the Energy Bills Support Main Scheme paid via energy suppliers. The government's Salesforce system was open to applications from 27/2/23 until 31/8/23 and the LA was responsible for the assessment, verification and payment of the 2 Government Energy Bills Support Schemes (EBSS):

- Alternative Funding Scheme EBSS (AFS)
- Alternative Fuel Payment EBSS (AFP)

The **Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding Scheme (EBSS AFS)** was a one-off payment of **£400** for people who have not been eligible for the EBSS main scheme (the £400 paid via the electricity provider) because they pay for their electricity in a different way, for example they live in a residential park home, caravan or mobile home, care home where they pay towards their fees and they include energy costs, on a boat, living on business premises etc.

The **Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Fuel Payment (EBSS AFP)** was a payment of **£200** if the household is not connected to the mains gas grid and they use alternative fuels as their main form of heating, this is in addition to the £400 through the EBSS main scheme paid via the electricity provider.

The Payments made for EBSS were as follows:

EBSS Alternative Funding Scheme (EBSS AFS)	EBSS Alternative Fuel Payments (EBSS AFP)
143 cases paid @ £400 Total payment = £57,200	165 cases paid @ £200 Total payment = £33,000

Fuel Vouchers – 23/24 (paid via access and partnership with the Fuel Bank Foundation)

- **Apr 23 to Oct 23 – 48 Fuel Vouchers** awarded by the LA's, of which 43 were redeemed
- NB: Awarded to households with **Pre-Payment Meters only**
- Fuel Bank Foundation 'Fuel Crisis Report 2023' - [Fuel-Bank-Fuel-Crisis-Report-2023.pdf \(plottcreative.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://plottcreative.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/Fuel-Bank-Fuel-Crisis-Report-2023.pdf)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Partner	Week Number	Year	Total Issued	Redeemed	Unredeemed	Wired or Cancel	Total Issued YTD	Redeemed YTD	Unredeemed YTD	Wired or Cancelled YTD	
2	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	2	2023	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	
3	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	3	2023	1	1	0	0	3	3	0	0	
4	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	4	2023	2	2	0	0	5	5	0	0	
5	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	5	2023	2	1	0	1	7	6	0	1	
6	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	6	2023	3	3	0	0	10	9	0	1	
7	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	7	2023	2	2	0	0	12	11	0	1	
8	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	8	2023	5	4	0	1	17	15	0	2	
9	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	9	2023	1	1	0	0	18	16	0	2	
10	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	10	2023	2	2	0	0	20	18	0	2	
11	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	11	2023	2	2	0	0	22	20	0	2	
12	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	12	2023	2	2	0	0	24	22	0	2	
13	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	13	2023	2	2	0	0	26	24	0	2	
14	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	14	2023	1	1	0	0	27	25	0	2	
15	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	15	2023	2	2	0	0	29	27	0	2	
16	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	20	2023	1	1	0	0	30	28	0	2	
17	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	22	2023	1	1	0	0	31	29	0	2	
18	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	24	2023	1	1	0	0	32	30	0	2	
19	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	26	2023	1	1	0	0	33	31	0	2	
20	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	28	2023	1	1	0	0	34	32	0	2	
21	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	30	2023	2	1	0	1	36	33	0	3	
22	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	32	2023	2	1	1	0	38	34	1	3	
23	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	33	2023	2	2	0	0	40	36	1	3	
24	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	34	2023	1	1	0	0	41	37	1	3	
25	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	36	2023	1	1	0	0	42	38	1	3	
26	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	38	2023	1	1	0	0	43	39	1	3	
27	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	39	2023	3	3	0	0	46	42	1	3	
28	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedford	40	2023	2	1	1	0	48	43	2	3	
29												

NEA – Fuel Poverty by constituency

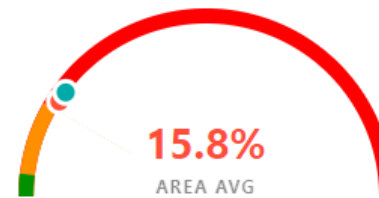
Donate to NEA

Fuel Poverty Statistics by Constituency

North Warwickshire

- In **North Warwickshire**, **6389** households (**15.8%**) live in fuel poverty.
- For every 1000 **North Warwickshire** homes, on average **149.2** received support from the main national energy efficiency programme.

- In **West Midlands**, **441693** households (**17.8%**) live in fuel poverty.
- In the **West Midlands** **41%** of households are rated EPC C and above.



Fuel poor households

● North Warwickshire	15.8%
● West Midlands	17.8%
● National average	13.14%

LOCAL MP

Craig Tracey MP

76 Station Street
Atherstone
Warwickshire

Warwickshire Business Intelligence Team

EPC Data for North Warwickshire – a new prediction tool that has so far had a 97% accuracy rating.

North Warwickshire EPC predictions October 2023

WCC Business Intelligence data - Thomas Foster

	Number of NW households	No with EPC Rating A, B, C	No with EPC Rating D,E,F,G	Potential no of D,E,F,G to gain A,B,C Rating	Potential no of total households that could achieve A, B C Rating
	29,825	10,083	19,741	17,396	27,479
Percentage of total		33.80%	66.20%	88.10%	92.10%

Benefits and CTS Caseload

1	HB & LCTRS Caseload												
2													
3		April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
4	Total Caseload 10/11	5302	5296	5297	5281	5281	5285	5280	5299	5308	5342	5314	5327
5	Total Caseload 11/12	5284	5315	5279	5279	5275	5239	5275	5216	5214	5291	5330	5297
6	Total Caseload 12/13	5314	5265	5275	5257	5240	5255	5186	5229	5178	5226	5229	5187
7	Total Caseload 13/14	5173	5141	5152	5167	5160	5120	5080	5067	4998	5063	5050	4958
8	Total Caseload 14/15	4960	4948	4910	4882	4905	4859	4838	4849	4762	4870	4853	4751
9	Total Caseload 15/16	4766	4758	4710	4698	4731	4720	4719	4688	4605	4672	4663	4613
10	Total Caseload 16/17	4653	4643	4620	4606	4624	4622	4615	4626	4515	4610	4611	4552
11	Total Caseload 17/18	4583	4573	4535	4528	4512	4474	4502	4467	4373	4453	4422	4318
12	Total Caseload 18/19	4388	4395	4354	4363	4375	4328	4332	4331	4315	4334	4314	4312
13	Total Caseload 19/20	4327	4299	4275	4289	4336	4327	4327	4337	4331	4325	4335	4325
14	Total Caseload 20/21	4392	4522	4624	4612	4620	4609	4560	4556	4482	4463	4492	4416
15	Total Caseload 21/22	4376	4351	4314	4272	4243	4216	4195	4165	4155	4081	4057	4047
16	Total Caseload 22/23	4028	3974	3949	3950	3951	3941	3931	3895	3906	3890	3887	3903
17	Total Caseload 23/24	3891	3887	3870	3846	3861	3842						
18													

Housing

Highlighted information:

- Our £1k+ debt has increased by £4.5k, the number of cases has increased by 6
- The 7wk+ debt has increased by £14,848.65, the number of cases has increased by 9
- We currently have 4 Breathing Spaces in situ, 3 for Tenants.
- DRO's are on the increase, we have 4 DRO's with a debt of £4,672.46

Homeless Cases

2020\2021	2021\2022	2022\2023	2023-to date (6months)
175	283 ↑ 61.7%	292 ↑ 3.2%	144

Temporary Accommodation – Number of households supported.

2020\2021	2021\2022	2022/2023	20 23 - to date (6 months)
41	59 ↑ 43.9%	70 ↑ 18.6%	56

Single Male Hostels – number of males supported.

2021 – to date Erdington Road	2021 – to date Watling Street Project
10	32

Aldi Vouchers Awarded

Amount per voucher:

- £25 singles
- £50 for families

To date we have issued **52 vouchers at a total cost of £1,675** – as follows;

- 37 singles (37 x £25 = £925)
- 6 families with 1 child (6 x £50 = £300)
- 5 families with 2 children (5 x £50 = £250)
- 4 families with 3 children (4 x £50 = £200)

Agenda Item No 12

Executive Board

27 November 2023

Report of the Chief Executive

Calendar of Meetings 2023/24 and 2024/25

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for changes to dates of meetings in March and May 2024 and to approve a calendar of meetings for 2024/25.

Recommendation to the Council

- a That the revised calendar of meetings for 2023/24, as submitted at Appendix A to the Chief Executive's report be approved; and
- b That the draft calendar of meetings for 2024/25 as submitted at Appendix B to the Chief Executive's report be approved.

2 Report

- 2.1 The Executive Board approved a calendar of meetings for 2023/24 at its meeting held on 21 November 2022. There are some proposed changes to meetings in March and May 2024 as set out below:

- (i) To align the meeting of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee with the availability of Warwickshire County Council Community Safety Performance data, it is proposed to move the meeting of the Sub-Committee from 12 March 2024 to 26 March 2024. Meetings of the Sub-Committee in the 2024/25 calendar have been scheduled so they also align with the data being available.
- (ii) To allow time for the publication of agendas following the Police and Crime Commissioner elections being held on 2 May 2024, it is proposed to change the dates of two meetings and cancel one meeting as follows:
- Council – 8 May 2024 meeting moved to 15 May 2024;
 - Planning and Development Board – 13 May 2024 meeting moved to 21 May 2024; and

- Special Sub-Group – cancellation of meeting due to be held on 14 May 2024.

... 2.2 A revised calendar of meeting for 2023/24 is submitted at Appendix A.

... 2.3 A draft calendar of meetings for 2024/25 is attached at Appendix B.

2.2 Points to note on the 2024/25 calendar are as follows:-

- a The majority of all main Board meetings will take place on a Monday. Meetings of the Full Council continue to be held on Wednesdays;
- b Planning and Development Board to meet once each month;
- c The Resources Board, the Community and Environment Board and the Executive Board to meet at least once a cycle;
- d A meeting of the Special Sub-Group has been scheduled each month (except for May 2025);
- e A meeting of each Licensing Committee has been set for the end of January and additional meetings will be arranged on an ad hoc basis;
- f A number of meetings of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee and the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee have been set; and
- g A meeting of the Executive Board and Full Council is scheduled on 17 July 2024. It is needed to consider the audited accounts before the end of July and is an annual requirement.
- h The Annual Council meeting will be held at 6.30pm on 15 May 2024 to appoint the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and make appointments to Boards / Committees and Outside Bodies etc for the ensuing year.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Legal Implications

3.1.1 The Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to hold its Annual Meeting in a non-election year during March, April, or May however, the Act states that if no other time is specified for the Annual meeting to take place, it must begin at 12 noon. Accordingly, the start time should be confirmed now for the avoidance of doubt.

3.1.2 The 1972 Act gives the Council broad discretion in relation to arranging other Council, Board (Committee) and Sub-committee meetings and the proposals above and in the appendices are within the discretion allowed.

The Contact Officer for this report is Amanda Tonks (719221).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
None			

**NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL
REVISED MEETINGS TIMETABLE – 2023/24**

Appendix A

	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24
1	BHOL								BHOL			BHOL	
2													Elections
3			SAC										
4	Elections		LDF		PLAN						PLAN		
5		CEB			RES					PLAN	SSG		
6							PLAN	COUNCIL					BHOL
7				PLAN			SSG						
8				CEB					PLAN			PLAN	
9						PLAN			SSG			SSG	
10			PLAN			SSG							
11					LDF			PLAN			RES		
12		PLAN			SSG			SSG		EXB			
13							RES			SSG			
14							LDF						
15				SSG				LDF					COUNCIL
16						CEB							
17	COUNCIL		SSG										
18					EXB						EXB		
19		RES	EXB/COUNCIL										
20		EXB					SAC						CEB
21										COUNCIL			PLAN
22	PLAN								CEB				
23	SSG												
24													
25								BHOL			CEB		
26		SSG						BHOL			SAC		
27					COUNCIL		EXB						BHOL
28		COUNCIL		BHOL									
29	BHOL								RES		BHOL		
30									LIC				
31													

EXB - Executive Board
RES - Resources Board
CEB - Community and Environment Board
PLAN - Planning and Development Board

LIC - Licensing Committee (Alcohol & Gambling Committee & Taxi & General Committee)
SAC - Safer Communities Sub-Committee
SSG - Special Sub-Group
LDF - Local Development Framework Sub-Committee

**NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL
DRAFT MEETINGS TIMETABLE – 2024/25**

Appendix B

	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25
1			SAC						BHOL				Elections
2	Elections		LDF		PLAN								
3		RES			RES					PLAN	PLAN		
4							PLAN	COUNCIL			SSG		
5				PLAN			SSG						BHOL
6	BHOL								PLAN				
7						PLAN			SSG			PLAN	
8			PLAN			SSG						SSG	
9					SSG			PLAN					
10		PLAN			LDF			SSG		EXB	RES		
11		EXB					RES			SSG			
12				SSG									
13									SAC				
14						CEB							COUNCIL
15	COUNCIL		SSG										
16					EXB								
17		SSG	EXB/COUNCIL								EXB		
18												BHOL	
19		COUNCIL					LDF			COUNCIL			CEB
20	CEB								CEB				PLAN
21	PLAN								LDF			BHOL	
22			CEB										
23													
24											CEB		
25					COUNCIL		EXB	BHOL			SAC		
26				BHOL				BHOL					BHOL
27	BHOL								RES				
28									LIC				
29													
30													
31													

EXB - Executive Board
RES - Resources Board
CEB - Community and Environment Board
PLAN - Planning and Development Board

LIC - Licensing Committee (Alcohol & Gambling Committee & Taxi & General Committee)
SAC - Safer Communities Sub-Committee
SSG - Special Sub-Group
LDF - Local Development Framework Sub-Committee

Agenda Item No 13

Executive Board

27 November 2023

**Atherstone Public Spaces
Protection Order**

Report of the Chief Executive

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Members considering consulting on a Public Spaces Protection Order in Atherstone.

Recommendation to the Board:

That the draft Public Spaces Protection Order set out in the attached report to the Safer Communities Sub-Committee be consulted upon

2 Report

- 2.1 The Safer Communities Sub-Committee is due to consider recommending to the Board that the Council commences a consultation on a Public Spaces Protection Order.
- 2.2 The background to the Proposed Order, including the reasons for the Order and details of its terms, together with the relevant implications, are set out in the attached report and appendices to the Sub-Committee.
- 2.3 This Board will be notified of the resolution of the Sub-Committee at the meeting.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (01827 719438).

Agenda Item No 9

Safer Communities Sub-Committee

20 November 2023

Atherstone Town Centre PSPO

Report of the Chief Executive

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on progress with the proposal that a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is made in relation to Atherstone Town Centre.

Recommendation to the Sub-Committee

- a That the Safer Communities Sub-Committee recommend that Executive Board approves commencement of the formal consultation on the proposed PSPO, as set out in Appendix 1; and**
- b That provided the consultation does not identify any significant reason not to make an Order, the Safer Communities Sub-Committee recommend approval of the proposed PSPO to the Executive Board.**

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation has taken place with the relevant Members and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

3 Background

- 3.1 Members will recall that in July this year, as part of the Partnership Update, the Sub-Committee received a report stating that the Police had contacted the Council requesting that we work with them to address crime and anti-social behaviour in Atherstone Town Centre. The report stated that a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) covering the Market Square, Long Street, and nearby areas may be an appropriate way of doing so.
- 3.2 This report provides further background and context for the proposed PSPO and summarises the relevant provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (the 2014 Act) which introduced PSPOs as a tool for councils to address anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their areas.

3.3 The purpose of this report is to update the Sub Committee on the development of a PSPO for the town covering the areas concerned, and to seek approval for consultation on the draft PSPO as set out in Appendix 1.

...

4 **Strategic Priorities**

4.1 The PSPO supports the Council's vision of 'Protecting the rurality of North Warwickshire, supporting its communities, and promoting the wellbeing of residents and business. A key priority is to ensure North Warwickshire is 'Safe, Liveable and has Locally Focussed communities'. The proposed PSPO in Atherstone Town Centre will address and reduce anti-social behaviour and the detrimental impact it causes, including to the most vulnerable people in our community and support the Council's overall vision.

5 **Public Space Protection Orders**

5.1 PSPOs were introduced by the 2014 Act as part of a revised range of tools available to councils to address anti-social behaviour. Rather than targeting specific individuals or properties, PSPOs focus on specific types of behaviour in a location and the impact of that behaviour on communities and individuals.

5.2 PSPOs can last up to three years before councils are required to review them, at which point they may be removed, amended, or extended by up to a further three years. The length of a PSPO should reflect the need for a proportionate response to the problem and can be reviewed at any time to vary the prohibitions or area to which it applies. There is no limit on the number of times a PSPO may be reviewed and renewed, provided on each occasion there is evidence which justifies doing so.

5.3.1 Orders can be introduced in a specific public area where the local authority is satisfied on reasonable grounds that certain conditions are met, namely that the activities concerned:

- have had (or are likely to have) a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality,
- are (or are likely to be) persistent or continuing in nature,
- are (or are likely to be) unreasonable, and
- justify the restrictions being imposed.

5.4 As a minimum, the PSPO must set out:

- what the detrimental activities are,
- what is being prohibited and/or required, including any exemptions,
- the area covered,
- the consequences for breach; and
- the period for which it has effect.

6 North Warwickshire Safer Communities Partnership

- 6.1 The North Warwickshire Safer Communities Partnership (NWSCP) is our local community safety partnership which brings together both statutory and strategic partners, as required by the Crime and Disorder Act.
- 6.2 The role of the NWSCP is to facilitate information sharing, identify local priorities and coordinate a planned response to the prevention of crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and reoffending, at a borough level.
- 6.3 In North Warwickshire there is already one PSPO in place in Fillongley, and consultation has commenced on a further PSPO relating to dog fouling. This proposed PSPO relates to alcohol consumption and substance misuse in Atherstone Town Centre, in particular the Market Square and Long Street areas.

7 Statutory guidance

- 7.1 Statutory guidance has been issued under the 2014 Act by the Home Office which the Council must consider when considering introducing a PSPO. In addition, the Local Government Association (LGA) has produced guidance for councils considering making a PSPO. The LGA guidance advises on the practical implementation of the statutory guidance.
- 7.2 The 2014 Act and statutory guidance sets out the process councils must follow before an order is introduced. This includes determining the scope, areas covered and impact of the PSPO, as well as how each of the restrictions meets the legal test. Our Legal Services team have provided advice and scrutiny against the statutory guidance. The proposed PSPO:
 - has been discussed at multi agency meetings including NW Problem Solving and ASB Group.
 - is supported by data collection and analysis.
 - has included non-statutory stakeholder consultation including sending a survey to over 70 local businesses seeking their views on ASB in the town area and its impact on business.
 - follows consideration and use of alternative ASB tools to address this problem which demonstrate that work should be undertaken to develop a PSPO.
 - if made, should be subject to careful enforcement planning.

8 Consultations

- 8.1 A range of stakeholders were identified including residents, businesses, ward councillors, and Police, Community Safety meetings and internal Council teams.

8.1.1 Partner and public surveys

In order to scope the behaviours and locations that should be considered for a PSPO we carried out a survey in September 2023.

8.1.2 Notification to relevant councils

The statutory guidance requires councils to notify relevant county and parish councils when reviewing or developing a PSPO. Both have been informed of the Council's intentions.

9 Statutory partners

9.1 Statutory partners have been contacted including Warwickshire Police.

10 Statutory Consultation

10.1 The non-statutory steps set out in paragraphs 8. and 9. above have been highly effective in identifying the types of anti-social behaviour which are affecting those in the locality, the impact of that behaviour, and the areas which may benefit from protection by a PSPO. The engagement with Atherstone Town Council has also highlighted how a PSPO could impact on their use of the Market Square for public events. The Town Council is due to consider this matter further at a forthcoming meeting and will provide further feedback to the Council shortly, which will assist in refining the terms of any PSPO.

10.2 Against the background of this non-statutory consultation, the Council now seeks to commence the formal statutory consultation, the results of which can be considered when the Council decides whether to make a PSPO. The statutory consultation must contain details of the proposed PSPO so that those consulted can comment on its terms and extent.

10.3. The informal engagement has shown that some privately owned areas of land may benefit from protection by a PSPO, for example, shopfront areas which are not part of the adopted highway, alleyways and accesses. Identifying this land is crucial to ensuring that the correct areas are covered.

11 Report Implications

11.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

11.1.1 None.

11.2 Safer Communities Implications

11.2.1 These are set in the report and the appendices.

11.3 Legal, Data Protection and Human Rights Implications

11.3.1 The test in the 2014 Act which applies when considering making a PSPO is set out above. The Act requires consultation with specific bodies, those in the area likely to be affected by a PSPO and, including the owners and occupiers of the land which to which it would apply. The statutory consultation must include the prohibitions which would be included in the proposed PSPO, along with the area it would apply to. If those details are not included, then it is not possible for those consulted to respond effectively.

11.3.2 If a PSPO is made then it may be challenged in the High Court within six weeks of it being made. If such a challenge is made, the Council will need to show that it carried out the appropriate consultation when deciding whether to make the PSPO. Also, if a person is prosecuted for breaching any PSPO, it is a defence to show that it includes a prohibition which the Council did not have power to include. Proper consultation will allow the Council to identify all relevant areas of land, ensure that the views of owners and occupiers are considered, and that all prohibitions are within the Council's power.

11.4 Environment, Climate Change and Health Implications

11.4.1 By working to reduce crime and disorder, the partnership is contributing towards improving the quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors to North Warwickshire.

11.5 Health Implications

11.5.1 The work of the partnership has several synergies with contributing towards healthier communities. These include tackling violent crime, supporting victims of domestic abuse, tackling alcohol and drug misuse, and reducing anti-social behaviour.

11.6 Risk Management Implications

11.6.1 The Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment includes risk analysis of risk and harm. The analysis uses an adapted Association of Chief Police Officers' Model (ACPO 3 PLEM). This is a basis scoring matrix for levels of harm. The assessment also includes consideration of a Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MORILE) matrix. The key risks for the partnership are identified within the strategic assessment prepared each year.

11.7 Equality Implications

11.7.1 The work of the partnership includes several activities which contribute towards equality objectives. These include support services for victims of domestic abuse, reducing repeat victimisation, monitoring of hate crimes and rehabilitation of offenders.

11.8 Links to Council's Priorities

11.8.1 The Council has a priority for creating safer communities.

The Contact Officers for this report are Julie Taylor (01827 719437) and Clive Tobin (01827 719251).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	North Warks Community Safety Partnership	Results of survey relating to ASB in Atherstone Town Centre	August 2023



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014
SECTION 59
PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND
SUBSTANCE MISUSE)
NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL ORDER *****

North Warwickshire Borough Council (“the Council”) in exercise of its powers under Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (“the Act”) and under all other enabling powers, hereby makes the following order:

1. This order may be cited as the North Warwickshire Borough Council (Atherstone) Public Space Protection Order 2023 No 1 (Alcohol consumption and substance misuse).

2. **Location** - This order relates to the public space within the area of Market Square and Long Street, Atherstone, and includes adjoining alleyways as shown edged in red on the attached Plan at Appendix 1 (the restricted area) unless subject to exemptions.

3. The Council is satisfied that the three conditions below have been met, in that: -

- a. Activities carried out in the restricted area as described below have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or it is likely that these activities will be carried on in the restricted area and they will have such an effect.
- b. The effect, or likely effects of the activities is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature, is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and justifies the restrictions imposed by the Order.
- c. The restricted behaviour is or is likely to be unreasonable.

PROHIBITIONS:

4. The effect of the Order is to impose the following prohibitions and/or requirements at all times: -

- a. Persons within the restricted area must not without reasonable excuse ingest, inhale, inject, smoke or otherwise use intoxicating substances. 'Intoxicating substances' is given the following definition (which includes - what are commonly known as 'legal highs'): substances with the capacity to stimulate or depress the central nervous system.
- b. Any person who uses or is in possession of intoxicating substances in breach of this prohibition must surrender those items to a Police Officer, Police Community Support Officer or Authorised Person from the Council.
- c. Persons within the restricted area must not without reasonable excuse consume alcohol.
- d. If a Police Officer, Police Community Support Officer or Authorised Person from the Council reasonably believes that any person is or has been consuming alcohol in breach of this prohibition the Officer / Authorised Person may require the person:
 - i. not to consume alcohol or anything that the Officer / Authorised Person believes to be alcohol; and/or
 - ii. to surrender anything in that person's possession which is or which the Officer / Authorised Person believes to be alcohol or a container for alcohol.

5. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES AND OFFENCES:

In accordance with section 63 and 67 of the Act:

- a. any person found to be in breach of this Order by consuming alcohol who refuses to stop doing so or refuses to surrender the items to a Police Officer, Police Community Support Officer or Authorised Person from the Council without reasonable excuse is liable to get a Fixed Penalty Notice up to £100 or on summary conviction to a maximum fine not exceeding level 2 (£500).
- b. any person found to be in breach of this Order by consuming intoxicating substances or refusing to surrender those items to a Police Officer, Police Community Support Officer or Authorised Person from the Council without reasonable excuse is liable to get a Fixed

Penalty Notice up to £100 or on summary conviction to a maximum fine not exceeding level 3 (£1000).

A constable or authorised person may issue a fixed penalty notice to anyone he or she believes has committed an offence. The person will have 14 days to pay the fixed penalty of £100 (discounted to £75 if paid in 10 days).

6. EXEMPTIONS AND APPEALS

EXEMPTIONS

- a. Premises authorised by a premises licence (other than Council operated licensed premises) to be used for the supply of alcohol.
- b. Premises authorised by a club premises certificate to be used by the Club for the supply of alcohol.
- c. A place within the curtilage of the premises described at (a) and (b) above.
- d. Premises which by virtue of Part 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 may at the relevant time be used for the supply of alcohol or which, by virtue of that Part, could have been used within 30 minutes before that time.
- e. A place where facilities or activities relating to the sale or consumption of alcohol are at relevant time permitted by virtue of a permission granted under Section 115 of the Highways Act 1980 (highway related use).

APPEALS

Any challenge to this order must be made to the High Court by an interested person within six weeks of it being made.

The order will come into force on ***** and remain in place for the period of three years.

Date this day of 2023

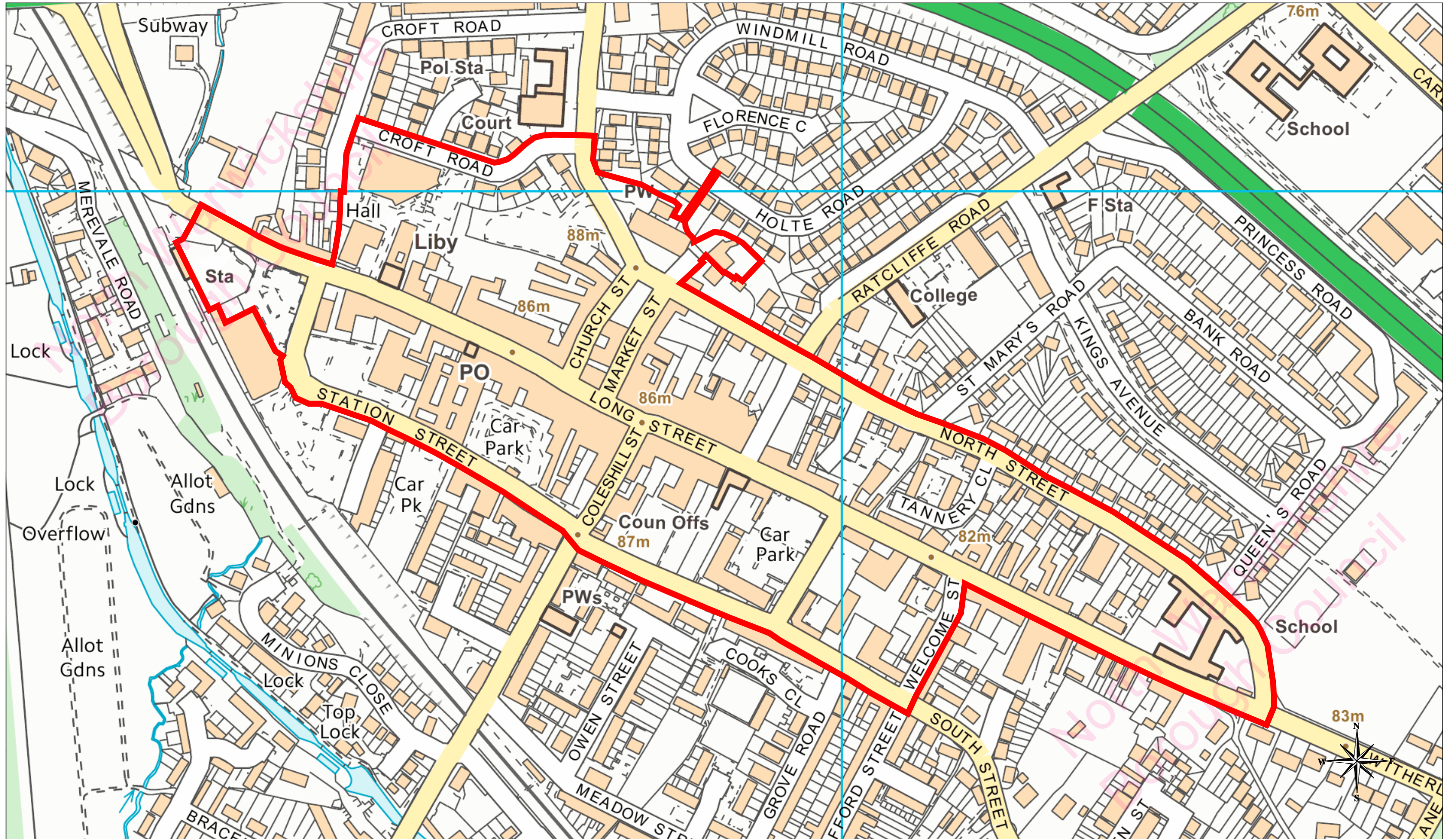
The Common seal of

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Was here unto affixed in the presence of –

Designated Officer

Atherstone PSPO



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Ordnance Survey 100017910



**North Warwickshire
Borough Council**



Operator:	xxxxxx
Department:	xxxxxx
Drawing No:	xxxxxx
Date: 09/11/2023	Scale: 1:3173

Atherstone Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)

	Question	Yes	No	Comments
1	In the last 3 months, have you noticed Anti-Social-Behaviour (ASB) in Atherstone Town Centre?			
2	If so, are there are any specific locations in Atherstone Town Centre where you have experienced ASB. (Street name, shop name, landmarks etc)			
3	What days and what time of day does this occur?			
4	What impact has this ASB had on you when you are in Atherstone Town Centre?			
5	Attached is a copy of a draft Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).			
6	Do you agree that this PSPO would help deal with ASB in Atherstone Town Centre?			
7	Do you think that any additional or alternative prohibitions should be added to the Draft PSPO to deal with the ASB?			
8	Do you have any suggestions/recommendations as to how we can reduce the impact of such behaviour?			
9	<p>Do you own any land within or adjoining the plan attached to the draft PSPO?</p> <p>(a) If so, please identify that land;</p> <p>(b) If so, do you agree that this should be included in the PSPO if made?</p>			

Agenda Item No 14

Executive Board

27 November 2023

Report of the Chief Executive

Income Manager Upgrade

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update regarding our income management system and seeks approval from Members to approve hosting the system externally and support the additional revenue cost in 2024/25 of £12,999 and in the following two years additional £16,801 per annum.

Recommendation to the Board

- a That the report is approved; and**
- b That the revenue growth is approved for 2024/25 at £12,999 and the following two years at £16,801 per annum.**

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council implemented our Income Management system in the region 12 years ago.
- 2.2 We currently host the system on-premises (in the Council's server room).
- 2.3 The Council last upgraded the system in May 2022, and it is a system that is upgraded on average every two years due to the data security standards. The current on-premises software is used for telephone, online and ATP (automated telephone payments) and in person payments.
- 2.4 As with many IT companies' software is moving to Software as a Service (SaaS) model.
- 2.5 The PCI Security Standards Council (PCI SSC) has recently imposed some changes to DSS certification of payments products and stated that any software deployed after October 2022 cannot be PA-DSS compliant. PA-DSS (Payment Application Data Security Standard) was the security standard which specifically covered software that stores, transmits, or processes payment card data.

Our current Income Management system provider - Access Group are committed to supporting compliance and data security. The PCI SSC's decision means that Pay360 is no longer able to accredit our Income Management and

Paye.net application suite software under the PA-DSS standard. They will therefore, with immediate effect, no longer be carrying out on-site customer deployments of these applications and therefore the Council is being forced to move to a cloud-based system or procure, implement, train and support a new system which based the current workload is not achieved within the timeframe.

3 Evaluation

- 3.1 The Council has looked at another supplier to gauge whether the costs being quoted by our existing supplier are reasonable. A competitor who we have evaluated costs considerably more than our current software provider, the costs below are as per the competitor's quotation:

	Costs
Annual support and maintenance	£46,000
One-off implementation costs	£75,000

4 Hosting

- 4.1 Historically, the Council would have had all the server hardware located in the Council's server room. Over the last few years, we have shifted to virtualising some servers. More recently the market has developed, and hosting is now an attractive option. Hosting software in the cloud with a supplier has the following benefits:

- Hardware savings
- Upgrades are carried out by the supplier, so software is latest release.
- Less demand on IT Technical staff
- Increased security
- Server patching
- Manage resilient back-ups
- Monitored 24-7 by the supplier.

- 4.2 The Income Management System is an in-house server, however with the supplier no longer developing and supporting the software hosting in the cloud will feasibly be our only option.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 There are several reasons why the Council want to upgrade to the hosted software and continue to stay with Access Group as a supplier, they are:

- The product is still fit for purpose.
- Secure
- Reliable
- Minimal impact on our staff
- Easier long-term maintainability
- Disaster recovery - data replication across multiple data centres, reducing the risk of data loss and offering robust disaster recovery capabilities ensuring high availability.
- By moving to the cloud, we can eliminate the need for substantial upfront hardware investments, ongoing maintenance costs and system upgrade fees.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 6.1.1 The one-off can be funded from Corporate Services Capital Programme and our current annual support and maintenance is listed below:

	Costs for 23/24
Cost for implementation (one-off) from 23/24	£31,350

However, there is no budget provision for the increase in revenue costs, therefore Executive Board will need to approve a recurring growth bid for 2024/25 onwards and this will need to be included in the base budgets. The financial implications for 24/25 are as follows:

	Cost for 24/25	Cost for 25/26 (full year cost)
Current annual support (until June 2024)	£4,060	0
New annual support and maintenance (from July 2024)	£9,897	£13,197
Annual costs for hosting (from July 2024)	£16,031	£21,375
Current budget for annual support and maintenance	-£16,990	-£17,771
Total increase in annual revenue budget provision	£12,999	£16,801

- 6.1.2 The financial implications for a period of 3 years are listed below:

	Current Supplier	Competitor
One-off	£31,350	£75,000
Year 1	£29,988	£46,000
Year 2	£34,572	£46,000
Year 3	£34,572	£46,000
Total over 3 years	£130,482	£213,000

6.2 Safer Communities Implications

- 6.2.1 Not replacing our Income Management system before it is de-supported would prevent us from a number of information and technical security standards and compliance regimes.

6.3 Legal, Data Protection and Human Rights Implications

- 6.3.1 The ICT Strategy supports developments, such as security improvements, to ensure that the Council complies with relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR .
- 6.3.2 The Head of Legal Services who is also the Council's Data Protection Officer will be consulted before entering any contracts for further support and in relation to whether any intended changes to processes are legally compliant or expose

the Council to risk. When consulting Head of Legal Services regarding any contracts we will ensure that Access group undertake to provide appropriate security measures to ensure compliance with data protection legislation, including whether any part of the service would be provided outside the United Kingdom, in which case assurance will be required that specific provisions applying to such transfers are met.

6.4 Environment, Climate Change and Health Implications

6.4.1 Access Group's Cloud data centres are part of the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact. This includes the use of rainwater for cooling, vegetable oil for generators and they have dedicated conservation areas to encourage the local wildlife to thrive.

6.5 Human resources implications

6.5.1 The recommendation to continue to use Access Groups Income Management software which will dramatically reduce the need for staff training much less than moving to unfamiliar software.

6.6 Risk Management Implications

6.6.1 The current Income Management System will remain operational until we are 'live' with the new hosted software so there is no interruption of service to residents, members of the public and our staff taking payments.

6.6.2 If the Council doesn't move to a hosted system with the following:

- No payments can be taken (over the phone, online or in person),
- The on-premises system will no longer be supported,
- No security patches or updates will be applied.

6.6.3 The new contract will be in place for three years, so a full review will commence in 2026.

6.7 Equalities Implications

6.7.1 With the system being hosted the upgrade will deliver improvements in accessibility for staff that will be able to access the system from anywhere provided data security measures are adhered to.

6.8 **Links to Council's Priorities**

- 6.8.1 Taking payments is an essential channel for customers to access information, report, pay and apply for Council services. The provision of services via the web is more cost effective than providing paper information, delivering services face to face or over the telephone. Using modern, functionality rich software can help staff be more efficient and productive which links to the corporate plan 'with being an efficient organisation and upskilling staff in IT skills.

The Contact Officer for this report is Trudi Barnsley (719388).

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE SAFER COMMUNITIES
SUB-COMMITTEE**

3 July 2023

Present: Councillor Jarvis in the Chair.

Councillors Barnett, Bates, Clews, Davey, Gosling, Melia, Osborne, O Phillips, Ririe and Watson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Humphreys and Jackson.

1 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were declared at the meeting.

2 Minutes of the Meeting of the Safer Communities held on 16 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023, copies having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 The Serious Violence Duty

The Chief Executive provided a summary of the requirements of the Council in meeting the Serious Violence Duty and proposed suitable governance arrangements to meet the responsibilities.

Resolved:

- a That the adoption of the Serious Violence Strategy be noted;**
- b That funding of £10,000 to support local interventions 2023/4 be noted;**
- c That both the commitment to participate and contribute to the development of the countywide delivery plan, develop the Local Delivery Plan, and contribute to the implementation of the Local Delivery Plan to reduce serious violence in North Warwickshire be noted; and**
- d That the Terms of Reference for the Safer Communities Sub Committee to include a specific reference to scrutinise the crime and disorder and serious violence duties be noted.**

4 North Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership Update

The Chief Executive provided Members with an update on recent activities with the North Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership and about progress with the agreed priorities from the Strategic Assessment 2021/2022 and latest crime statistics.

Resolved:

- a That Members consider the update and identify any areas for further scrutiny and consideration;**
- b That Members note progress of the North Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership Plan; and**
- c That Members note that the three applications for the CSP grant were turned down.**

Councillor Jarvis
CHAIR

Agenda Item No 16

Executive Board

27 November 2023

**Report of the
Chief Executive**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommendation to the Board

To consider, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, whether it is in the public interest that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

Agenda Item No 17

Staffing Matter – Report of the Chief Executive

Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual.

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Paragraph 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Agenda Item No 18

Monitoring Officer – Report of the Chief Executive

Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual.

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Paragraph 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Agenda Item No 19

Commercial Housing Company Feasibility Study – Report of the Chief Executive

Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual.

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Paragraph 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Agenda Item No 20

Exempt Extract of the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 18 September 2023

Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual.

In relation to the items listed above members should only exclude the public if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, giving their reasons as to why that is the case.

The Contact Officer for this report is Amanda Tonks (719221)