

Agenda Item No 8

Executive Board

27 November 2023

Report of the Chief Executive

**Adoption of Dordon
Neighbourhood Plan**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the progress of the Dordon Neighbourhood Plan and seeks approval to adopt in accordance with section 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Recommendation to Full Council:

That the Dordon Neighbourhood Plan be adopted and form part of the Development Plan for North Warwickshire.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Councillors Wright and Gosling have been sent a copy of this report for comment. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a mechanism for local communities to produce neighbourhood plans. Once a neighbourhood plan is 'made' (adopted) it becomes part of the statutory development plan for that area and will be used, alongside local and national planning policy and guidance, to determine planning applications. There are now 12 designated Neighbourhood Plan areas within the Borough and 7 made Neighbourhood Plans.

4 Dordon

- 4.1 Dordon is the 8th Neighbourhood Plan to be formally examined by an Independent Examiner and go forward to referendum. There is a requirement that more than 50% of those who vote must support the document for the Borough Council to consider adopting the Plan.

- 4.2 The referendum took place on Thursday 19th October 2023 and the results are as below:

Question: Do you want North Warwickshire Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Dordon to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?	Votes Recorded
Number cast in favour of a Yes	299
Number cast in favour of a No	33

- 4.3 There is clearly good support for the Plan. Therefore, it is recommended to Full Council that the Plan be made (adopted) and becomes part of the Development Plan for the Borough. The Plan submitted for Adoption can be seen at Appendix A.
- ...

5 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 5.1 The Borough Council can claim £20,000 for each Neighbourhood Plan – the money can be applied for when a decision statement is issued detailing their intention to send the plan to referendum. This payment recognises the amount of officer time supporting and advising the community in taking forward a Neighbourhood Plan. It will also cover the cost of the referendum.

5.2 Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2.1 The Borough Council has conformed with the legal requirements for holding a referendum as to whether a Neighbourhood Plan should be made for Dordon. Where more than half those voting in the referendum voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan the Borough Council is under a legal duty to make it unless doing so would be incompatible with any retained EU obligation or with any rights under Human Rights Act. There is nothing to indicate that either applies in this case and the Borough Council is therefore now legally obliged to make the Neighbourhood Plan. This must be done within 8 weeks of the date on which the referendum was held unless there is an outstanding legal challenge to the Plan, meaning that the Council has until 14th December 2023 to do so unless a challenge is made in the meantime.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 Staff time is expected to be provided by the Borough Council to support and advise the Parish Council and community in taking forward a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

5.4 Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 5.4.1 Each Neighbour Plan will need to consider the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan's contents in terms of environmental and sustainability issues in accordance with the relevant regulations.

5.5 Links to Council's Priorities

5.5.1 The designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Designation Area will have links to the following priorities:

1. Enhancing community involvement and access to services
2. Protecting and improving our environment
3. Defending and improving our countryside and rural heritage

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Wilson (719499).

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
1	Dordon Neighbourhood Plan Team and Dordon Parish Council	Neighbourhood Plan	November 2023

Adoption Version

Dordon Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2033



*Produced by Dordon Neighbourhood Plan Working Group on behalf of Dordon Parish Council
businesses and residents
Adoption Version 2023*

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Common Abbreviations

- AOS – Area of Separation
- BHL – Building for a Healthy Life
- DDGC - Dordon Design Guidance and Code 2021
- DNP – Dordon Parish Neighbourhood Plan
- HEDNA – Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment
- NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
- NPWG – Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
- NWBC – North Warwickshire Borough Council
- PRoW – Public Right of Way
- SHMA – Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- SPD – Supplementary Planning Document
- WCC – Warwickshire County Council



1 Foreword

The Neighbourhood Plan Team have now completed Dordon's Neighbourhood Plan, using comments from our various consultations to create a document that will hopefully benefit the whole community over the next decade.

Dordon is a unique village; it has a unique name and heritage of which we are immensely proud. The Parish of Dordon also contains the historic hamlet of Freasley, so our plan includes this lovely area of our parish. With NWBC adopting of the Local Plan, we are determined that the things that make Dordon a great place to live won't be lost, in fact we have made many suggestions on how to improve what already exists.

We are mindful that traffic concerns, maintaining and improving greenspaces, protecting wildlife, caring for the environment and protecting our heritage are all important to the people of Dordon.

We feel this comprehensive plan covers all these issues and more. We have looked at potential new infrastructure, new cycle routes and footpaths to connect our large diverse parish, and protection for the Strategic Gap - we have even explored issues concerning drainage and design codes for any new housing.

This is the community's plan; we have written what we feel is the best possible fit considering the issues facing our village.

The team would like to thank Helen Metcalfe, our consultant, whose advice and expertise has been invaluable. We would also like to thank the late Bob Kind for his input in the early days and hope he would approve of our report.

Dordon is an amazing place worth protecting and enhancing. We feel strongly that the many changes we will be facing must have a positive outcome for the people who actually live here. We look forward to meeting and hearing from you over the following months.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team

Dr Mark Doggett, Beverley Garratt, Byron Melia, Steve Ridley, Davina Ridley, Donna Watts, John Winter



2 The Dordon Parish Neighbourhood Plan

1. The Dordon Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) is a document produced in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. Once it has been 'made' by North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) it will form part of the Development Plan for Dordon which also includes the adopted Local Plan¹ and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan produced by Warwickshire County Council (WCC).
2. The time frame for the Dordon Neighbourhood Plan is aligned to run alongside the Plan period of the Adopted Local Plan (which is up to 2033).
3. The Dordon Neighbourhood Plan will be used by
 - a) Planners at North Warwickshire Borough Council (the planning authority) in assessing future planning applications,
 - b) Developers, as they prepare planning applications for submission to North Warwickshire Borough Council,
 - c) The Parish Council in responding to consultations on applications
 - d) Inspectors will use it at Appeal.
4. Neighbourhood Plans are required to '*have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State*²'; national policies are primarily set down within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and guidance is set down in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) - both of these are updated from time to time.
5. The NPPF is clear that '*Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.*³ The DNP has to be in general conformity with the growth requirements set at Borough level.
6. All neighbourhood plan policies should be read in conjunction with the adopted policies in North Warwickshire Borough Council's Local Plan. No Neighbourhood Plan policy will be applied in isolation; account will be taken of all relevant policies.
7. At the Borough level, planning policy is formulated and delivered by North Warwickshire Borough Council and this body will continue to have the legal duty to provide this.
8. The Plan area includes the whole of Dordon Parish (see Map 1). This was considered the most appropriate boundary in relation to the issues of relevance to local people and was accepted when the area was designated by North Warwickshire Borough Council on 7th November 2017.⁴

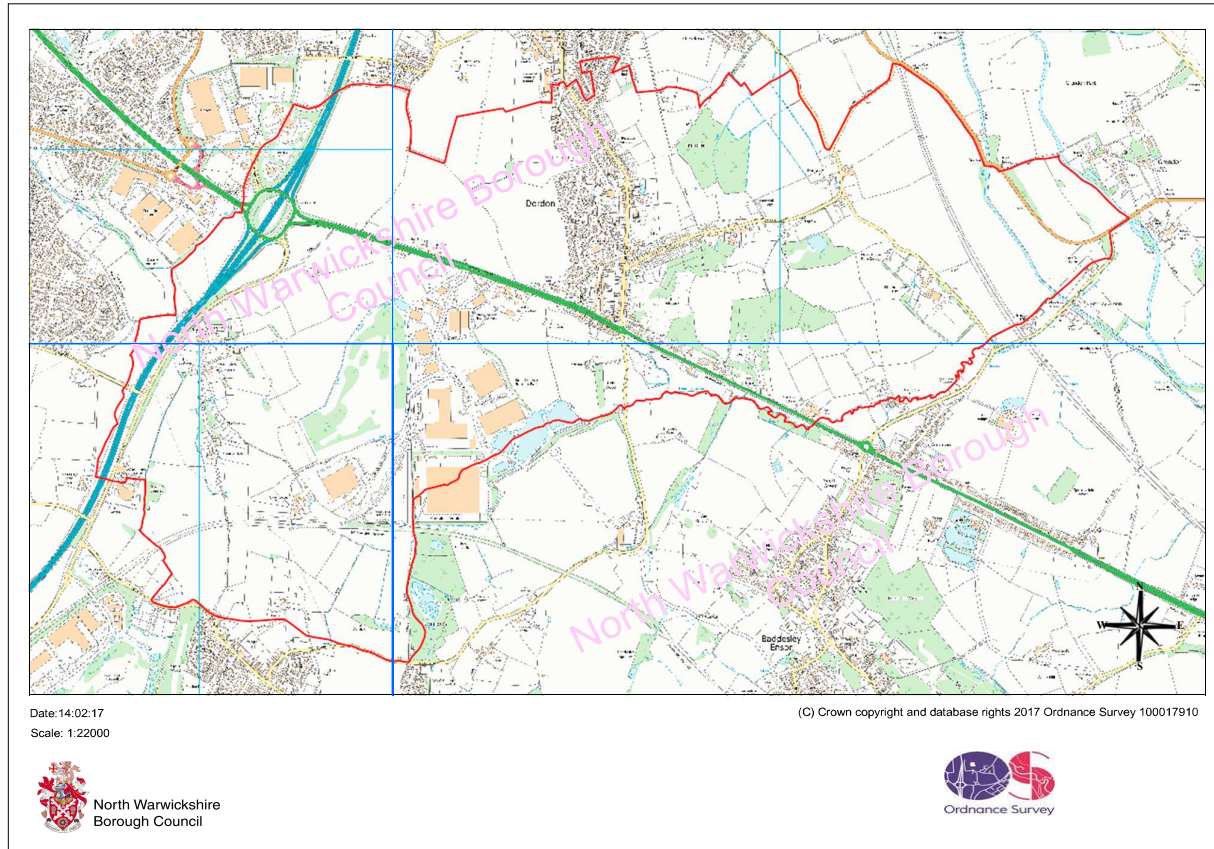
¹The Local Plan was adopted in September 2021

²[paragraph 8\(2\) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

³NPPF para 29

⁴See https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/downloads/file/8256/dordon_parish_council_designation_decision

Map 1 Dordon Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area



OS 100060095

9. A number of Borough wide studies that support the Adopted Local Plan have been used to support the preparation of the DNP⁵. These are:
- a) Draft Residential Guidance 2020 and Draft Distinctiveness Guidance⁶
 - b) Historic Environment Assessment of Potential Development Areas within North Warwickshire
 - c) North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy 2019 – 2033
 - d) LUC Historic Environment Assessment 2019
 - e) West Midland Strategic Site Employment Sites Study 2021
10. There are also some local studies which have been commissioned for the Neighbourhood Plan, and local analysis undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which also form part of the evidence base these are:
- a) Housing Needs Assessment 2021 done by AECOM
 - b) Dordon Masterplan Framework done by AECOM 2021
 - c) Dordon Design Guidance and Code done by AECOM 2022
 - d) Analysis of Buildings for Local Listing done by NPWG 2020
 - e) Key Views Assessment done by NPWG 2020⁷
 - f) Footpaths Assessment done by NPWG 2020⁸

3 The need for a Neighbourhood Plan

Planned Growth and the role of the DNP

11. The Adopted Local Plan allocates sites for over 6183 homes and an additional 57.35 hectares of employment land. There are strategic site allocations along the A5 corridor with other growth at Ansley Common and Hartshill.
12. Included in NWBCs Local Plan is Policy H4 a strategic site allocation which extends beyond Dordon Parish.⁹ Para 2.15 of the Adopted Local Plan states that *'... growth is much greater than ever experienced in the Borough before. This will bring many challenges. In particular, due to the rural nature of the Borough making quality places that are integrated into the existing fabric of settlements wherever possible will be important. Making settlements work will be just as important as delivering a specific site as this will lead to their long-lasting success.'*
13. There remains significant community concern about the scale and location of growth planned for the Parish. The DNP contains local policies that will bring forward sustainable development by;

⁵ Documents are on NWBC's web site

⁶ As these are both at draft stage they have been used as background information

⁷ Assessment involved walkabout by NPWG members, discussion and review by wider group (there is no written report)

⁸ Assessment involved walkabout by NPWG members, discussion and review by wider group (there is no written report)

⁹ See NWBC policies map at https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/downloads/file/8841/adopted_local_plan_maps_-_site_allocations_and_development_boundaries see page 3

- a) promoting a constructive dialogue with developers before a planning application is submitted,
- b) providing design policies that ensure new development reflects the distinctive historic and rural character of the Parish and reinforces its special character ¹⁰,
- c) protecting and enhancing the landscape character of the area,
- d) ensuring new development meets the housing and employment needs of the area,¹¹
- e) ensuring new development minimises its carbon foot print,
- f) mitigating the risk of flooding,
- g) seeking a net biodiversity gain,
- h) enhancing opportunities for cycling across the whole Parish,
- i) seeking opportunities to maximise the community benefit of development (including through the use of S106 where appropriate¹²).

Other planning issues

14. Dordon is a community of nearly 3500 people and there are many land use issues that concern local residents. These include;

- The protection and enhancement of existing parks and open spaces e.g., Long Street Recreation Ground and Freasley Common
- Ensuring the satisfactory relocation of the allotments and playing fields to land off Browns Lane
- The protection of heritage assets and the recognition of the heritage value of Freasley and the identification of buildings and structures of local historic value
- The continued protection of the Strategic Gap
- The protection and enhancement of existing walking routes and making new routes for walking and cycling
- Improving traffic movements (and reducing traffic where possible) especially along Long Street and New Street where access out of and into Dordon is difficult
- Working with landowners to create Dordon Dell on disused and undevelopable land east of Long Street Recreation Area.¹³

¹⁰ supported by NWBCs Draft Distinctiveness Guide for Dordon and South-east Polesworth Planning and Development Board April 2021 from the LDF Sub Committee February 2021 and Dordon Design and Guidance Code 2022

¹¹ In accordance with national policy (para 29 and footnote 18) a neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in NWBC's Local Plan

¹² S106 requirements need to meet the tests set out in the NPPF para 57.

¹³ This is a community aspiration and is described in Appendix A

Climate Change

15. In October 2019 NWBC formally declared a climate emergency. NWBC committed to ‘proactively using local planning powers to accelerate the delivery of net zero carbon new developments and communities’ and noted that ‘North Warwickshire Borough Council is ranked as the joint lowest performing Council in the West Midlands for the measures it has taken to tackle climate change.’¹⁴

16. National policy expects the planning system to support the transition to a low carbon future in the changing climate and that plans should take a proactive approach to climate change¹⁵. Dordon Parish Council recognize the importance of minimizing the impact of climate change and within the scope of land use planning, policies in the Dordon Parish Neighbourhood Plan seek to assist NWBC to achieve this objective.

Sustainable Development

17. The NPPF¹⁶ states that ‘the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’. There are 3 elements of sustainability; social, economic and environmental. The Dordon Neighbourhood Plan seeks to create a balance between these three elements whilst working with the scale of growth for Dordon set out in NWBC’s Local Plan.

18. Table 1 shows how the Neighbourhood Plan policies will ensure the right balance is achieved.

Table 1

Sustainable Development Dimensions	Neighbourhood Plan Focus	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives and Policy
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new developments should be well designed¹⁷ and reflect the distinctive local character creating and enhancing walking and cycling routes for local residents and to visitor destinations highlighting the green spaces that are sensitive to development designating Local Green Spaces encouraging the use of small-scale renewable energy initiatives and construction materials encouraging biodiversity 	<p>Community Objectives 1,2,7, 10</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan Policies 1,2,3,6,7,8,10,13,</p>

¹⁴ See https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/site/scripts/google_results.php?q=climate+emergency

¹⁵ NPPF Para 152/153

¹⁶ NPPF para 7

¹⁷ NPPF para 126

Sustainable Development Dimensions	Neighbourhood Plan Focus	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives and Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the risk of flooding • seeking opportunities to reduce the effects of climate change • promote tree planting 	
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting and improving community facilities • ensuring that the provision of housing meets local as well as wider needs • encouraging the provision of affordable housing • ensuring the design and layout of major development integrates with Dordon • enabling greater participation and influence over the growth and character of the Parish 	Community Objectives 3,4,9 Neighbourhood Plan policies 1,9,11, 12, 13,14
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring that the form and function of new development integrates with the existing community so that existing businesses benefit from the growth in population and local spending • supporting the allocation of E2 and E3 	Community Objectives 3 Neighbourhood Plan Policies 12, 14

19. There is evidently an overlap between policies that support the improvement of green infrastructure, those that address flooding, promote biodiversity and seek to reduce the impact of climate change. Their division across a number of policies is based on the focus of the evidence. The Neighbourhood Plan Policy will not apply in isolation.

4 Community Aspirations

20. One of the immediate benefits of preparing this Neighbourhood Plan is that the community and the Parish Council have identified community aspirations that are directly related to the Plan policies. These Aspirations are important to the community and will play a key part in the implementation of this Plan. Whilst they are not part of the Neighbourhood Plan, they will contribute to the delivery of the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. They are listed at Appendix A along with the policy and community objective to which they relate.

5 Dordon in Context

21. Dordon Parish is located in the northern part of NWBC. Dordon village is broadly a linear settlement and is separated from the M42 by open fields that are designated as 'the Strategic gap' in NWBC policy¹⁸. South of the A5 are logistic warehouses, Birch Coppice Business Park, the former spoil heap from Birch Coppice Colliery which is now landscaped, some open fields and the rural hamlet of Freasley.
22. The M42 runs through the western edge of the Parish; Junction 10 is in Dordon Parish and connects the A5 with the motorway. Watling Street (the A5) is an ancient route paved by the Romans in the 1st century AD and runs west to east through the Parish.
23. Archaeological remnants of bronze age settlements and tools and a hoard of Roman coins have been found on the land between the M42 and Birch Coppice Business Park.¹⁹
24. Coal has been mined from the Orchard since Roman times. The Orchard Site was later used for open cast mining and debris from coal extraction is still visible. The Orchard Site is now a designated Local Wildlife Site and will be part of H4.
25. Deep coal mining at Birch Coppice Colliery began in 1878 when the main shafts and winding towers were constructed. The mine employed up to 1500 miners and closed in 1987. The expansion of Dordon in the 20th century was due in part to the need to provide accommodation for the mine workers.
26. UK Coal sold the site in 1997 and it is now the location of Birch Coppice Business Park which accommodates over 21 businesses including Ocado, UPS and Euro Car Parts. The Business Park employs 6500 people and 38% of the employees live within 5 miles of the Business Park.²⁰

People

27. Data extrapolated by Warwickshire County Council provides a range of useful information.²¹ In 2019 there were 3416 people living in Dordon Parish (2019 estimate) compared to 3215 in 2011.²² (6% increase). In 2011 there were 1286 households with an average household size of 2.5.²³
28. 96% of residents are white British. Dordon's profile of younger people, working age people and older people, is in line with the national average and younger than the County. Fuel poverty is higher in Dordon at 13% than the County or national average at 10 and 11%.²⁴
29. Figures from Public Health England show that 35% of children in Dordon in Year 6 (age 10/11) are overweight and 16% of children live in low-income families in Dordon, this is more than the County average but less than the Country average.²⁵

¹⁸ See NWBC policy LP4

¹⁹ See history at <https://www.dordonparishcouncil.gov.uk>

²⁰ See <https://www.birhcoppice.co.uk/about/>

²¹ See <https://data.warwickshire.gov.uk/search/?q=>

²² See https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04009639#section_6

²³ At time of writing (October 2022) the census 2021 data for local (ie parished) areas was not publicly available

²⁴ From

<https://data.warwickshire.gov.uk/population/report/view/669a979ad329454ca41a5ba9af04e331/E05007465/>

²⁵ See <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/national-child-measurement-programme/data#page/0/gid/1938133288/pat/101/par/E07000218/ati/8/are/E05007465/cid/4/tbm/1>

6 Community Vision and Objectives

30. Based on consultation events and questionnaire feedback, members of the NPWG have prepared this community vision.

In 20 years' time Dordon will have retained its village identity and its heritage will have been preserved. Expansion to the west will have been limited and new development to the east of Dordon village will be integrated with the existing built-up area.

Dordon will be enhanced due to the provision of a range of community facilities and near major employment areas. It will have a network of walking and cycling routes that connect to high quality parks, open spaces and woodland and easy access to the surrounding countryside. Dordon will be an attractive, friendly, healthy, green place to live.

31. A range of issues were confirmed through the early consultation processes. The objectives below have been informed by the residents preferred criteria and reflect the greatest concerns of local people and the primary area of focus for this Neighbourhood Plan.

Community Objective 1: Environmental Protection

Development should minimise the impact on the natural environment ensuring that the design and layout of development protects the water courses and considers flood risk and sustainable drainage systems, protects ancient woodland, Local Wildlife Sites, trees and hedgerows.

Community Objective 2: Access to the Countryside

Development will ensure easy, direct access to the countryside by protecting existing local green spaces, wooded areas, and public rights of way where possible. Opportunities to extend the walking/cycling network across the whole Parish is supported.

Community Objective 3: Community Facilities and Local Services

Development will protect and where possible enhance the existing provision of community facilities (especially the village hall) and local services. As the population of the Parish grows, community facilities should be provided to meet the growing need. To improve the Neighbourhood Centre making it more attractive for businesses and shoppers.

Community Objective 4: Integration

New development will integrate easily with the existing settlement pattern so that it sustains and enhances existing local facilities as well as providing additional amenities for a growing population.

Community Objective 5: Getting Around

Development proposals will find engineered solutions to the existing problems of road safety within Dordon for pedestrians and address the issue of vehicle capacity on Long Street, to reflect the increased traffic volume that will result from the expansion of the village. Making it easier and safer to access work, leisure and local facilities on foot and bike.

Community Objective 6: Protecting the Historic Environment

Development will protect and where possible enhance heritage assets of local or national

significance.
<p>Community Objective 7: Village Identity</p> <p>Any development to the west will ensure there is a sense of space, place and separation between the western edge of the built-up area of Dordon and mainly the M42, in accordance with Local Plan policy LP4.</p>
<p>Community Objective 8: Design Principles</p> <p>All new development will be designed to be in accordance with the standards set out in the National Design Guide, in particular relating to housing design, landscaping, and use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to maximise the existing landscape features.</p>
<p>Community Objective 9: Housing Type</p> <p>Future housing types and tenures will provide a mix to support a balanced community of all ages, based on an up-to-date assessment of local housing need.</p>
<p>Community Objective 10: Local Businesses</p> <p>Maximising local employment opportunities by supporting the establishment and/or expansion of businesses in the Parish where this does not encroach on the open countryside and is in accordance with Local Plan policy LP6.</p>
<p>Community Objective 11: Climate Change</p> <p>The use of renewable energy is vital to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and to enable the transition to a low carbon future. New development should be designed and constructed to minimise carbon emissions²⁶.</p>

7 Engaging with the Community: A Key Principle

32. This Plan reflects the community's need to have greater involvement and influence in development proposals that come forward between 2022 and 2033. The importance of pre-application engagement is endorsed in the National Planning Policy Framework.
33. The NPPF recognises the importance of early discussion between applicants and the local community. *'Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.'*²⁷
34. Encouraging consultation between developers and the Parish Council at an early stage in the planning process will be of benefit to applicants as issues can be discussed and resolved at an early stage in the process. The key principle set out below is a voluntary process and is intended to encourage applicants who are submitting plans for major development to talk to the Parish Council prior to a scheme being submitted for planning permission. This process should result in a scheme that is more acceptable to the community and is more likely to secure approval by North Warwickshire Borough Council.

²⁶ In accordance with Building Regulations

²⁷ NPPF para 39

35. The key principle only applies to major development.²⁸

Key Principle: Pre-Application Community Engagement

1. Applicants submitting proposals for major development, are encouraged to actively engage with the Parish Council and the community as part of the design process at the pre-application stage.
2. Applicants are encouraged to provide a short document with the planning application to explain:
 - a) how the developer has consulted with the community; and
 - b) how issues of concern raised by local people and the Parish Council have been taken into account; and
 - c) how the layout, boundary treatment and design of the proposal responds and reinforces local character (useful information to assist this assessment is in NWBCs Draft Distinctiveness Guide for Dordon and South-east Polesworth)²⁹ and the Dordon Design Guidance and Code 2022 or equivalent); and
 - d) (where the proposals are for housing development), how this meets local as well as wider housing need.

8 Sustainable Development

36. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will ensure that, whilst development is required to meet wider housing needs (including those of adjoining local authorities) this development will minimise harm to the landscape character and that opportunities are taken to improve biodiversity, address issues of flooding, enhance green infrastructure, ensure spatial (and social) integration, and encourage sustainable construction methods and high-quality design. All of which will ensure development is sustainable.

37. Given the scale of development proposed up to 2033 in Dordon, Neighbourhood Plan Policy DNP1 sets out a policy framework to define sustainable development in the context of the Parish.

Policy DNP1 Sustainable Development

1. Development should be located so that it can make a positive contribution towards the achievement of sustainable development. Development proposals will be supported which address the following matters;
 - a) are of a density, layout and design that integrates and is compatible with the character, appearance and amenity of that part of the Parish in which it is located (especially where it is adjoining the existing built up area),
 - b) maintains the sense of space, place and separation on land to the West of the Parish taking into account the amenity of Dordon Residents,
 - c) respects the identified Local Wildlife Sites and areas designated for their nature conservation or priority habitat (as identified on Map 2 and Map 3),
 - d) enhances the biodiversity of the site in accordance with biodiversity net gain requirements as set out in national legislation,

²⁸ Defined as *For housing development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more.*

²⁹ From Planning and Development Board April 2021 from the LDF Sub Committee February 2021

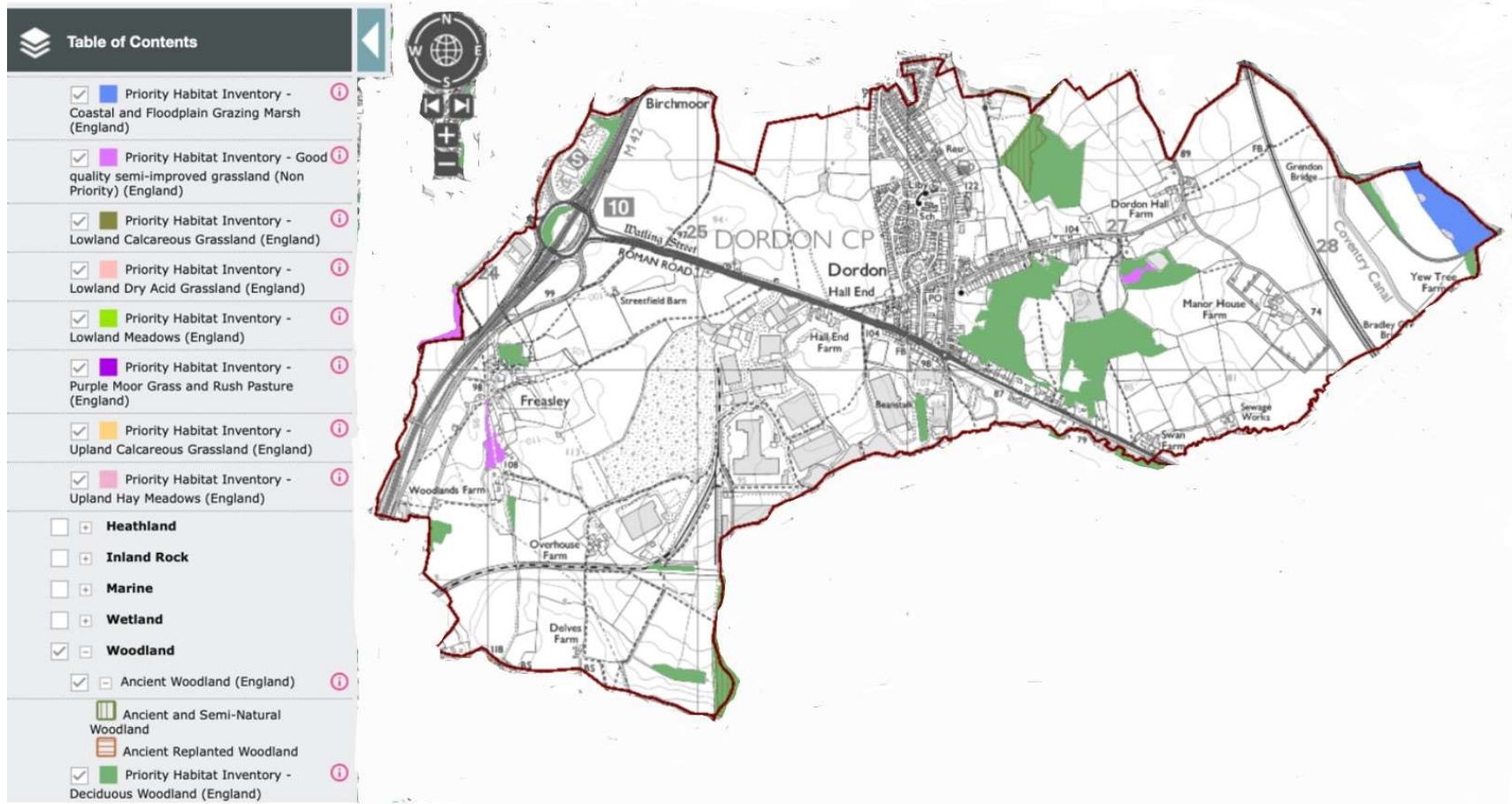
- e) incorporates into the scheme any natural or built features on the site that have heritage or nature conservation value where practicable,**
- f) is well located in relation to public transport and local services,**
- g) promotes active travel (cycling and walking),**
- h) ensures the risk of flooding is not increased elsewhere and, where applicable, includes sustainable drainage systems,**
- i) maximises water efficiency,**
- j) uses sustainable construction methods and materials,**
- k) locates development close to bus routes, local services and facilities where possible.**

9 Protecting the Natural Environment and Enhancing Biodiversity

38. Map 2 is the magic map from Defra showing areas of priority habitat.³⁰ The areas on the priority habitat inventory are also Local Wildlife Sites. Although there are more areas identified as Local Wildlife Sites to the south of the A5 (see Map 3 below).
39. The map also shows the extent of the ancient woodland at the Hollies, the deciduous woodland, areas of good quality semi-improved grassland and beyond the railway line the area of flood plain.

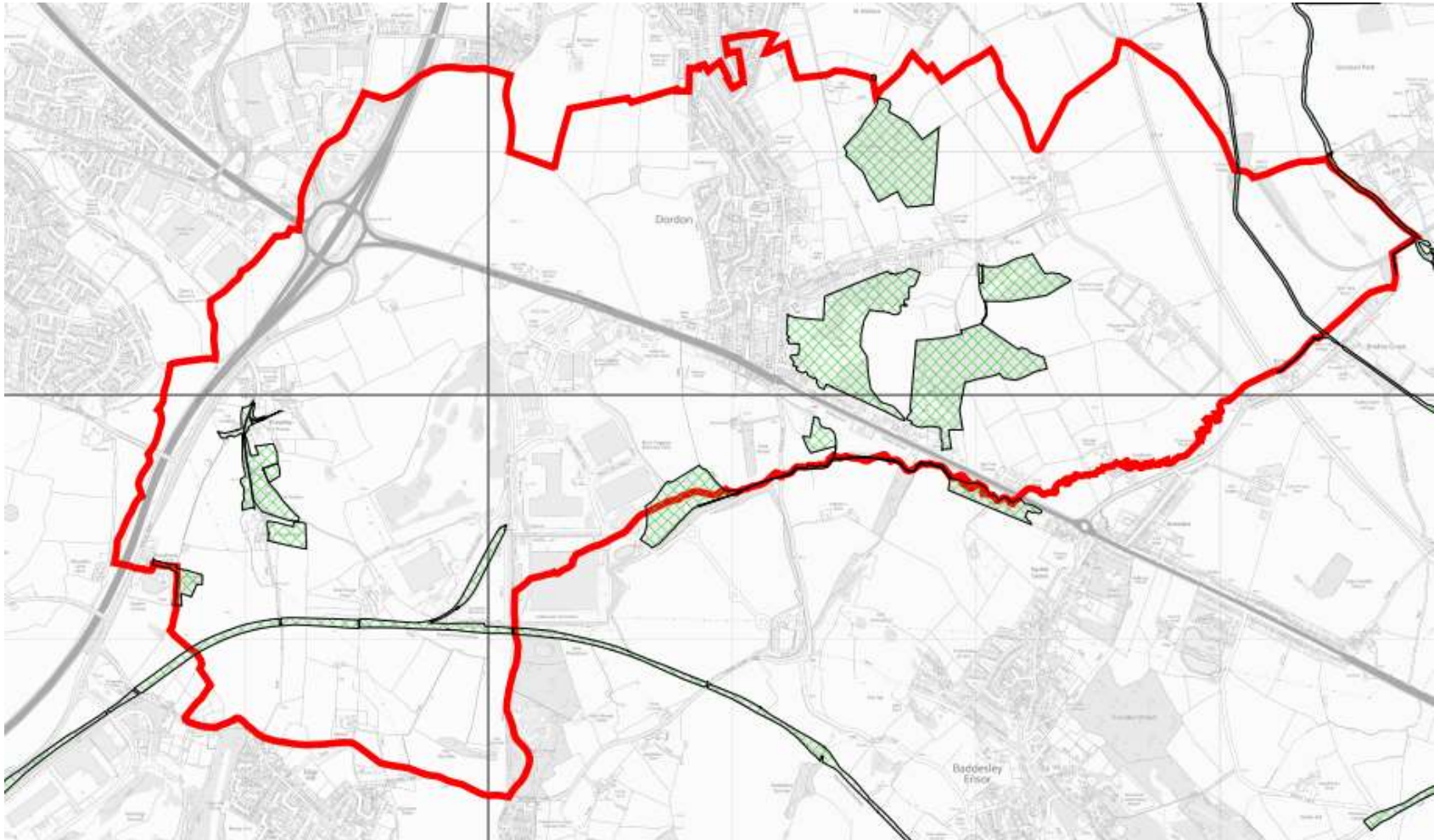
³⁰ See <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

Map 2 Priority Habitats in Dordon Parish



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Map 3 NWBC Designated Local Wildlife Sites



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40. The land to the west of Dordon village is in the Tamworth Fringe Uplands Landscape Character Area (LCA), the village itself and all the land to the east is part of the Anker Valley LCA. The parish character is mostly rural to the east of Dordon village. To the west the industrial buildings at Birch Coppice Business Park are visible across the landscape and influence its character. Appendix C provides a summary of the key points based on the descriptions in the North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment Study 2010 that informs the Adopted Local Plan and DNP policies 2 and 3.³¹

Trees and hedgerows

41. Trees and hedgerows perform a number of important roles in supporting biodiversity, providing attractive shade/shelter and generally improving health and amenity. Hedges are a relatively simple and cheap natural barrier capable of providing a spectrum of benefits. They capture air pollutants, reduce risks of localised flooding (through intercepting rainfall), cool the proximate air, support wildlife and much more. The Royal Horticultural Society has produced guidance on the best hedges to provide environmental benefits.³²
42. Trees will also help the Parish adapt to the effects of climate change. Planting more trees in strategic spaces is a key priority for the community. The location for the new trees will be agreed between partners including the community, the landowner and NWBC where necessary.
43. The extent of development allocated in the Parish over the Neighbourhood Plan period means that it is likely that existing mature trees may also be lost. It is a fact that compensatory planting of new trees does not offset the loss of mature trees³³. A newly planted tree is likely to be a small sapling and significantly smaller than the mature tree that it replaces. Where trees are removed as part of a development scheme they should be replaced. There should be no net loss of tree canopy and where possible a net gain. This may mean planting more than one tree to replace a mature tree (where it had a large tree canopy). This is considered a reasonable policy response recognising the environmental loss of mature trees.
44. Also, in an urban environment many newly planted trees may not survive, so multiple planting helps to ensure that the tree population (and hence tree canopy cover) is at least maintained and possibly enhanced.³⁴
45. The inclusion of street trees is supported in the NPPF³⁵ unless, in specific cases, there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate. There would need to be consultation with WCC on the provision of street trees.

³¹

https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/site/scripts/google_results.php?q=Landscape+Character+Assessment&startNum=21

³² <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/climate-and-sustainability/hedges-for-environmental-benefits.pdf>

³³ <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/in-your-community/neighbourhood-planning/creating-a-neighbourhood-plan/>

³⁴ Friends of the Earth (FoE) recommend that Local Authorities double the coverage of trees in the area to mitigate against climate change this is part of their campaign to see tree coverage double across the UK

³⁵ NPPF para 131

Water Courses

46. The River Anker and Coventry Canal run discretely through the eastern edge of the Parish. Penmire Brook forms the southern and eastern boundary to the Parish. Unnamed water courses intersect the land east of Dordon and the lagoons next to Birch Coppice Business Park are a Local Wildlife Site. Water corridors can be rich in biodiversity.
47. Drainage and managing water in relation to flood risk is addressed in the section on flooding. But well-designed Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are not centrally about flood defence but incorporate management of water flows as part of a broader strategy to deliver multifunctional spaces that have a high biodiversity value. SuDS have wider environmental and community gains should be designed to best practice contained in the CIRIA industry best practice guidance document, The SuDS Manual.
48. Any sites over 1 hectare are classed as major development therefore in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment must be submitted to the Lead Local Flood Authority for review.
49. WCC LLFA are aware of channel capacity issues on the Penmire Brook in the adjacent Parish. Opportunities should be sought to reduce and manage runoff into the brook for the benefit of the downstream flood risk.
50. There are many dry ditches located adjacent to roads and site boundaries. Dry ditches require wider grassed verges which provide a significant contribution to the local setting, character and biodiversity of the local area. These features are effective for the sustainable management of surface water and where possible they should be retained as part of a SuDs scheme.

Birds

51. Appendix D provides a detailed analysis of the birds on the Birds of Conservation Concern 4 Red List (May 2021) provided by a resident and amateur ornithologist. The list shows the wide range of birds and is evidence that the Parish provides a rich habitat for these birds. Development sites can still provide habitat for these birds, where the landscape management plan includes landscape buffers around sensitive sites (for example the Hollies and the Local Wildlife Sites). The planting of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants and sowing of wildflower mixes must comprise native species typical of the region and locally distinctive to the environs of Dordon. Residential planting should use species of high value to pollinators and not be invasive.

Biodiversity Net Gain

52. The Environment Act 2021 requires Local Authorities to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies and for development to achieve a 10% net biodiversity gain. This requirement will amend the Town and Country Planning Act and is expected to become law in winter 2023. Development should provide a net biodiversity gain either on or off site in accordance with the most up to date legislation.
53. Within a development, there are many opportunities to design in features that will deliver net positive biodiversity. Sites can include planned areas of habitat retention, buffering and creation. In addition, formal areas of green spaces, engineered structures and buildings can all be enhanced for wildlife and people, even where biodiversity is not the primary objective.

54. Best practice advice is available on how sites can be developed to enhance biodiversity. Dordon Parish Council will use the guidance on its website to understand the extent to which planning applications have considered best practice in major development³⁶.

Policy DNP2 Protecting the Natural Environment and Enhancing Biodiversity

- 1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should conserve or enhance biodiversity value in accordance with national legislation³⁷. Enhancement measures may include;**
 - a) strengthening hedgerows (gapping up) and field boundaries to provide more robust habitat ‘corridors’,**
 - b) planting wildflower meadows and strips,**
 - c) encouraging native trees and shrub planting on suitable sites, especially species that provide good berry or nectar sources,**
 - d) encouraging the creation of sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS), (e.g., rain gardens, pond and wetland creation) in new schemes and ‘retrofitting’ where appropriate,**
 - e) the installation of habitat features (including nest boxes) and/or the carrying out of planting programmes) suited to bird species of conservation concern, particularly those identified in Appendix D and bats**
 - f) improvements to the water courses that increase biodiversity,**
 - g) minimising the impact of light pollution.**
- 2. Compensatory measures, involving the creation of off-site habitat and/or relocation of species, should only be used as a last resort and agreed by North Warwickshire Borough Council. Mitigation or compensatory measures should be targeted to benefit local conservation priorities as identified in any Local Nature Recovery Strategy covering the area and implemented in partnership with an appropriate nature conservation body.**
- 3. Mature hedgerows identified as significant to the character of the Parish should be retained where possible. (These are the hedgerow along the Coffin Trail, hedgerows lining Dordon Hall Lane leading to St Helena and Dunn’s Lane).**
- 4. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location and in accordance with national policy, a tree-planting programme should be incorporated into development proposals so that there is no net loss of tree canopy and where possible a net gain. Where on site provision is not feasible off-site provision within the Parish may be acceptable. Planning conditions or legal agreements should be used to secure this outcome. New streets should be tree lined where possible in accordance with Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework³⁸.**

³⁶ See Best practice approaches Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Design Considerations for major development at <https://dordon.neighbourhoodplan.uk/evidence-base>

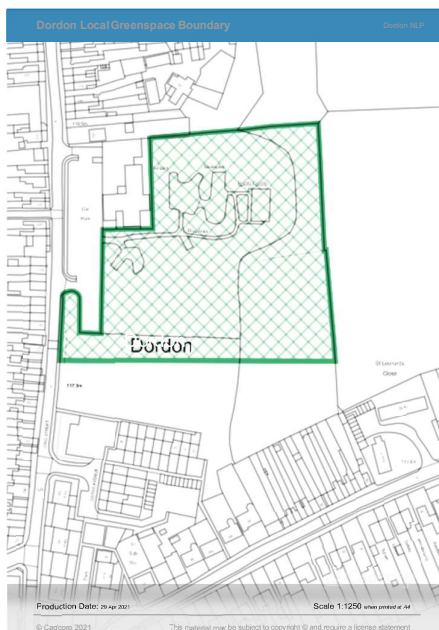
³⁷ NPPF para 174d

³⁸ In accordance with NPPF, unless there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate.

10 Local Green Spaces

55. The National Planning Policy Framework³⁹ affords Local Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans the powers to designate certain areas as Local Green Spaces and protects them from development for the duration of the Plan.
56. The National Planning Policy Framework links the designation of Local Green Space to the wider context of local planning of sustainable development to *'complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services'*.
57. The NPWG consider that Long Street and Freasley Common meet the criteria.
58. Long Street Recreation Ground is well-managed and includes a play area for children and green space and seating for older people. The 2021 Household Survey demonstrated the significant local value of Long Street Recreation Ground and that it is very well used by local people.
59. It meets the NPPF para 102 tests because it is demonstrably special to local people, has a significant recreational value and is located at the centre of the Dordon community. This policy demonstrates the community value of this space. (Its designation may also assist in securing small grants to undertake environmental improvements as necessary over the Plan period.)
60. A Community Aspiration (see Appendix A) is to secure an access route for pedestrians to connect from Long Street Recreation Ground to the east. On this basis the LGS boundary excludes an area to the south of the Long Street Recreation Ground to allow the access route through.

Map 4a Local Green Space Long Street Recreation Ground



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³⁹ NPPF para 99-101

61. Freasley Common is land owned by the Parish Council. The Common forms an open green space that become wide open spaces in places along the main street in Freasley called The Green. The Common contributes to the sense of calm, rurality and tranquility in Freasley despite its location near the M42. It is a treasured space being enclosed by mature trees and hedges and contrasts with so much of the wider Parish.
62. It meets the NPPF para 102 tests because it is demonstrably special to local people, has a significant value for its tranquility and is located at the centre of the small Freasley community

Map 4b Local Green Space Freasley Common



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Policy DNP3 Designation of Local Green Spaces

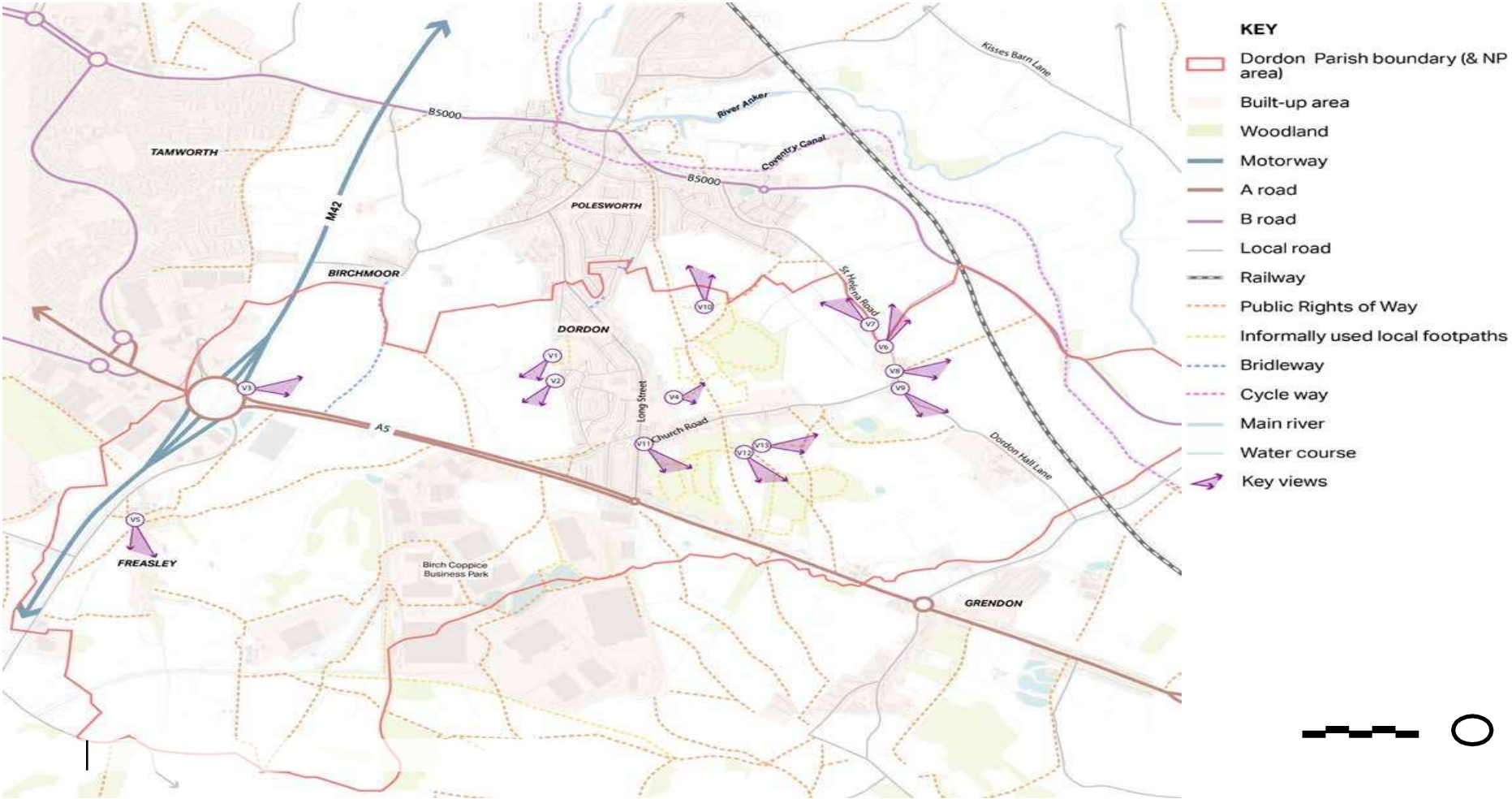
- 1. Long Street Recreation Ground and Freasley Common as identified on Map 4a and 4b are designated Local Green Spaces.**
- 2. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy on Green Belts.**

11 Protecting Landscape Character

Key Views

63. The NWBC LCA shows how the land in Dordon Parish is undulating and intersected with hedgerows, footpaths and clusters of trees. Dordon village is on a ridge and the land to the west of the built-up edge (north of the A5) drops down and is open in character up to the boundary of the M42.
64. The topography of the Parish affords medium and long views into and out of Dordon village. The Map below shows the key views across the Parish. These were identified by the NPWG and is based on both local research and work with AECOM. They are views from publicly accessible locations across the Parish that the local community consider are key in defining the character of the Parish. These are considered the Key Views. It is important that future development takes into account these views. For example, one of the reasons Long Street Recreation Area is highly valued are the views to the east to what is presently the open countryside.
65. Appendix B provides a list of photos of each viewpoint. The key views are not intended to be a bar to development but to provide more information about the variety of the landscape and to identify the viewpoints that are valued by the community. Local people acknowledge that development may take place within these key views, but where possible they would like the layout of development to provide glimpses between buildings to countryside views beyond.
66. Map 5 below is also available on the DNP web site under supporting documents.

Map 5 Key Views

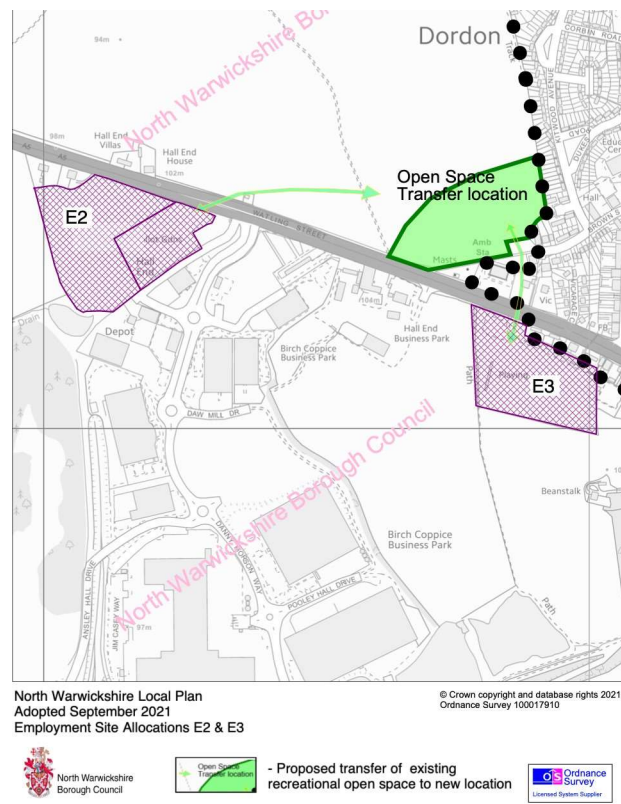


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The relocation of Community Facilities in the Strategic Gap.

- 67. The open land between Dordon village and the M42 is the main area of the Strategic Gap within the Dordon Neighbourhood Plan Area (see LP4 of the Adopted Local Plan). One of the Local Plan’s strategic aims through Policy LP4 (Strategic Gap) is to protect the Strategic Gap between Tamworth and Polesworth with Dordon, with development coming forward only if certain criteria are met relating to the need to find land for land for employment use.
- 68. As part of a proposal to provide more suitably located employment land, Adopted Local Plan policies E2 and E3 relocate the Birch Coppice Club House, playing fields and allotments that are south of the A5 to an area shown on the proposals map in the Strategic Gap (see Map 6 below). Comments from NWBC note that this area is expected to accommodate the equivalent of the two sites south of the A5 but E2 and E3 are not in the same ownership.
- 69. The new location for the community facilities and allotments is shown in the corner of the Strategic Gap and is intended to be accessed from Browns Lane.
- 70. NWBC also note that as the Borough Council own/control the allotments they would not be released unless a replacement in the area to the north of the A5 was provided of the same size/area with expected improvements to the existing allotment facilities and services standard (not simply an ‘equivalent’) as noted in Policy E2.⁴⁰

Map 6 showing relocation of Birch Coppice Sports Club and Allotments in the Strategic gap



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⁴⁰ Adopted Local Plan E2 page 98

71. To be in accordance with LP4, the relocated Birch Coppice Club House will need to demonstrate it has been designed sympathetically, given its visually prominent location on the edge of the Strategic Gap. The opportunity for improving community facilities is addressed in the section on community facilities below.

Policy DNP4 Protecting the Landscape Character

- 1. Development proposals, as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, should be designed to take account of the landscape, the landscape character and topographical setting of the neighbourhood area and its urban environment which contribute to the distinctive character of the Parish.**
- 2. Where possible, development proposals should take into account the key views on Map 5 in their location and layout.**
- 3. The undulating landscape, mature woodland, clumps and individual mature trees and hedgerows lining the ancient tracks and routes strongly inform the character of the land to the east of the built-up form of Dordon and should be taken into account.**
- 4. Development should take account of the way in which it contributes to the wider character of the neighbourhood area. The layout, scale and boundary treatment of any applicable development should seek to retain a sense of space, place and (where relevant) separation⁴¹.**
- 5. Where appropriate, development proposals should demonstrate the way in which they have taken account of the actions identified in the landscape management strategies recommended for the Landscape Character Area in the NWBC landscape Character Assessment (Area 3 the Anker Valley – Land east of Dordon village and Area 5 Tamworth Fringe Uplands - Land west of Dordon village).**
- 6. As appropriate to its scale, nature and location, development proposals across the Neighbourhood Area should demonstrate they are sympathetic to the landscape setting as defined in the NWBC Landscape Character Assessment. All applicants shall show that they have taken into account the matters identified above. However, the provisions of strategic Local Plan Policies LP4 (Strategic Gap), LP6 (Additional Employment Land) and H4 (Land to the east of Polesworth and Dordon) shall have priority**

12 Creating a Green Network Around Dordon Parish

72. On average Dordon's residents are less healthy than the County or national average. 35% of Year 6s carry excess weight, and 10.5% reported to have day to day activities limited a lot compared to 7.7% for Warwickshire and 8.3% for England.
73. WCCs Public Health team advise that
- the prevalence of diabetes and coronary heart disease (CHD) in 2016/17 at the Dordon and Polesworth Group Practice was significantly higher than the England rate.
 - the prevalence of hypertension was significantly higher than the England rate in 2016/17,
 - the estimated prevalence of undiagnosed hypertension was also significantly higher than the England rate
 - the recorded prevalence of depression at both Dordon and Polesworth Group Practice (12.5%) was significantly higher than both the England rate (9.1%) and the Warwickshire North CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) rate (7.7%).
74. It is vital that children grow up being active – safe routes to school that are fun encourage a concept of play on the way and can make car free trips more fun for children making them want to walk or cycle to school.
75. This Neighbourhood Plan seeks opportunities to protect existing walking/cycling routes and to create new routes where possible to encourage active travel.
76. Air quality is also poor along the A5 in Dordon. The 2021 Air Quality Status Report identified that on Watling Street nitrate levels were very near the existing legal limits in 2020.⁴³ The planning system seeks to reduce car usage and to promote development patterns that enable people to access work, school, the shops and leisure activities on foot, bike or public transport.

⁴¹ On the west side of Dordon Parish this is subject to LP4 Strategic Gap and LP6 Additional Employment Land.

⁴² Regulation 14 consultation response

⁴³ See https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/downloads/file/8932/air_quality_progress_report_2021 . See table B.1 for tubes diffusion results for 426025, 426026 and 425943 NO2 were between 35.0 and 35.4 where the legal limit is 40

77. The scale of growth in the Parish will increase traffic volume. The NPPF⁴⁴ requires large scale development to include a '*genuine choice of transport modes.*' This includes cycling and walking with the multi benefits of promoting a healthy lifestyle, reducing car usage and improving air quality.
78. There is strong and growing evidence that access to parks and open spaces and nature can help to maintain or improve mental health. A recent study based in the UK with over 20,000 participants estimated that people may only need to spend two hours each week outdoors in green spaces to derive significant wellbeing benefits.⁴⁵
79. The DNP proposes the creation of a Dordon Green Network. This is a concept for the long-term linking of publicly accessible green spaces and routes around the Parish to create an attractive network of open spaces and connecting routes which are rich in biodiversity, heritage and landscape value. The outer route could be served by a network of smaller local routes leading from the community to the outer edge, and where appropriate to the wider countryside beyond.
80. The existing footpaths and narrow country lanes (particularly Dordon Hall Lane from Manor House Farm Cottage to Saint Helena Road and Dunn's Lane)⁴⁶ provide a network of routes that have been used by local people.
81. The 2021 Household Survey revealed the value and significance of this network of walking routes, and the desire to extend these as well as to make cycling safer, especially to get to Tamworth in the west and the Anker Valley in the east.

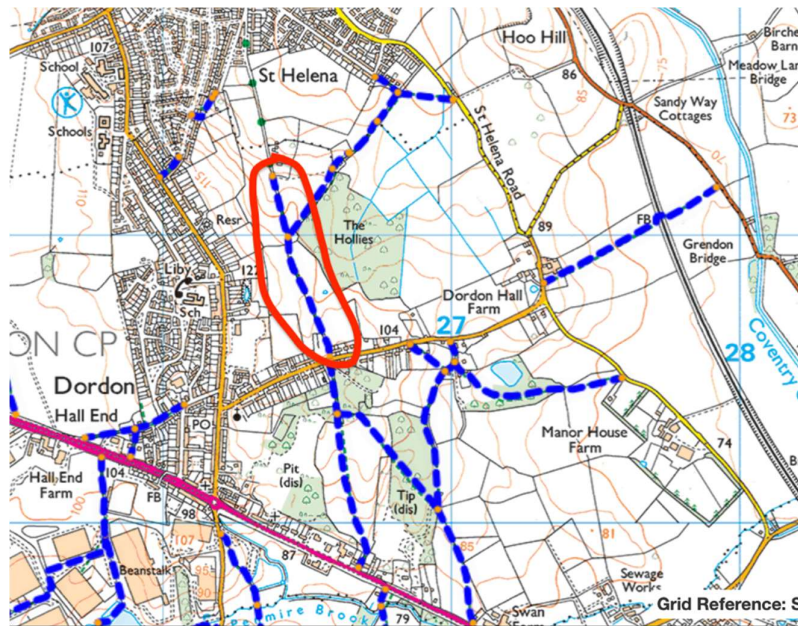
⁴⁴ NPPF para 105

⁴⁵ See <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2206249-two-hours-a-week-spent-outdoors-in-nature-linked-with-better-health/> and WCC Public Health Reg 14 consultation response

⁴⁶ These are unclassified D roads unsuitable for large traffic volumes

82. Where new development affects a Public Rights of Way (ProW) it is a legal requirement for that route to be diverted. Where this has not occurred the Parish Council will liaise with Warwickshire County Council to ensure that the ProW is not lost. There are various routes south of the A5 that run around Birch Coppice Business Park.
83. Map 7 below shows the extensive network of ProW⁴⁷. Some ProW have been blocked off by development and it is important that, wherever possible, suitable diversions are in place, which are accessible and remain functional, both now and in the future. Where practicable and with permission of the landowner, the community support protecting and extending the network of footpaths across the Parish.
84. The open countryside will be developed as part of major development on land to the east of Dordon. There are Y shaped ProW that run north south across the land east of Dordon and various other informal routes that combine to provide a network of highly valued walking routes. The north – south route is an historic route known locally as the Coffin Trail and it provides a direct walking route between the parish churches of Dordon and Polesworth. The route is lined with an ancient hedgerow and passes to the west of the Hollies ancient woodland.

Map 7 Coffin Trail Public Right of Way (circled in red) running north from Church Road/Dunns Lane to Common Lane extracted from the Warwickshire County Council map at <https://rowreporting.warwickshire.gov.uk/CAMSWeb/standardmap.aspx>



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85. There will be new opportunities to create cycle routes as part of major development on the land east of Dordon. Encouraging cycle routes that connect with a wider network is useful to commuters and would provide alternative travel options.
86. The creation of a Local Green Network should be designed to create Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) that would focus footfall and mitigate disturbance around protected areas (for example ancient woodland). Question 24 of the 2021 Household Survey asked respondents

⁴⁷ See <https://rowreporting.warwickshire.gov.uk/CAMSWeb/standardmap.aspx>

to rank what type of community facility was most needed. Significantly 'more open spaces' scored the highest.

87. The provision of this Local Green Network will require the Parish Council to work with developers and landowners as part of a long-term aspiration to connect existing routes and to create a wider green network.⁴⁸ This is a community aspiration (see Appendix A). Opportunities will be taken to work with developers to ensure that existing public rights of way are protected.
88. Accessibility for all to existing and new green infrastructure is important to the community and the use of S106 contributions to improve access for all is supported.

Policy DNP5 Creating a Local Green Network

- 1. Otherwise acceptable proposals which will contribute to protecting and improving Public Rights of Way where practicable (or which diverts them where necessary⁴⁹) will be supported.**
- 2. Proposals should, as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, demonstrate the way in which they would;**
 - a) protect and where possible extend footpaths and cycle routes,**
 - b) enhance the attractiveness of walking and non-motorised transport in and around the Parish,**
 - c) add to the connectivity between existing footpaths, roadways and cycle ways in and around the Parish,**
 - d) accommodate the requirements of people with limited mobility to access existing and any new Green Infrastructure provision.**
- 3. Development proposals should take into account the historic Coffin Trail (ProW) and its ancient hedgerow, proposals should ensure its north south route is protected.⁵⁰**
- 4. A layout which promotes new connections to existing walking and cycling routes will ensure new development is integrated with the existing settlements and will be supported.**
- 5. Opportunities to improve non-vehicular linkages between existing routes from the edge of Dordon into its centre and to the open spaces within Dordon are supported.**
- 6. Proposals which enhance pedestrian safety along New Street and Long Street in accordance with national guidance (NPPF Paragraph 112 a) and c)) will be supported.**

⁴⁸ All contributions must relate directly to the development in order to be compliant with paragraph 57 of the NPPF

⁴⁹ In accordance with TCPA 1990 section 257

⁵⁰ It is accepted that the Coffin Trail may need to be intersected by roads and footpaths/cycleways

13 Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets

89. The term ‘heritage assets’ includes listed buildings and structures, locally listed buildings, non-designated assets, conservation areas and items on the Historic Environment Record.
90. There are 8 listed buildings or structures in the Parish⁵¹. These are shown on Map 8a:

Dordon Hall	Freasely Hall
Grendon Bridge ⁵²	Sycamore Cottage Freasely
Coventry Canal Milestone Bridge	Yew House Freasely
Garden walls and Gate Piers Freasley Hall	Hall End Hall Watling Street, Dordon

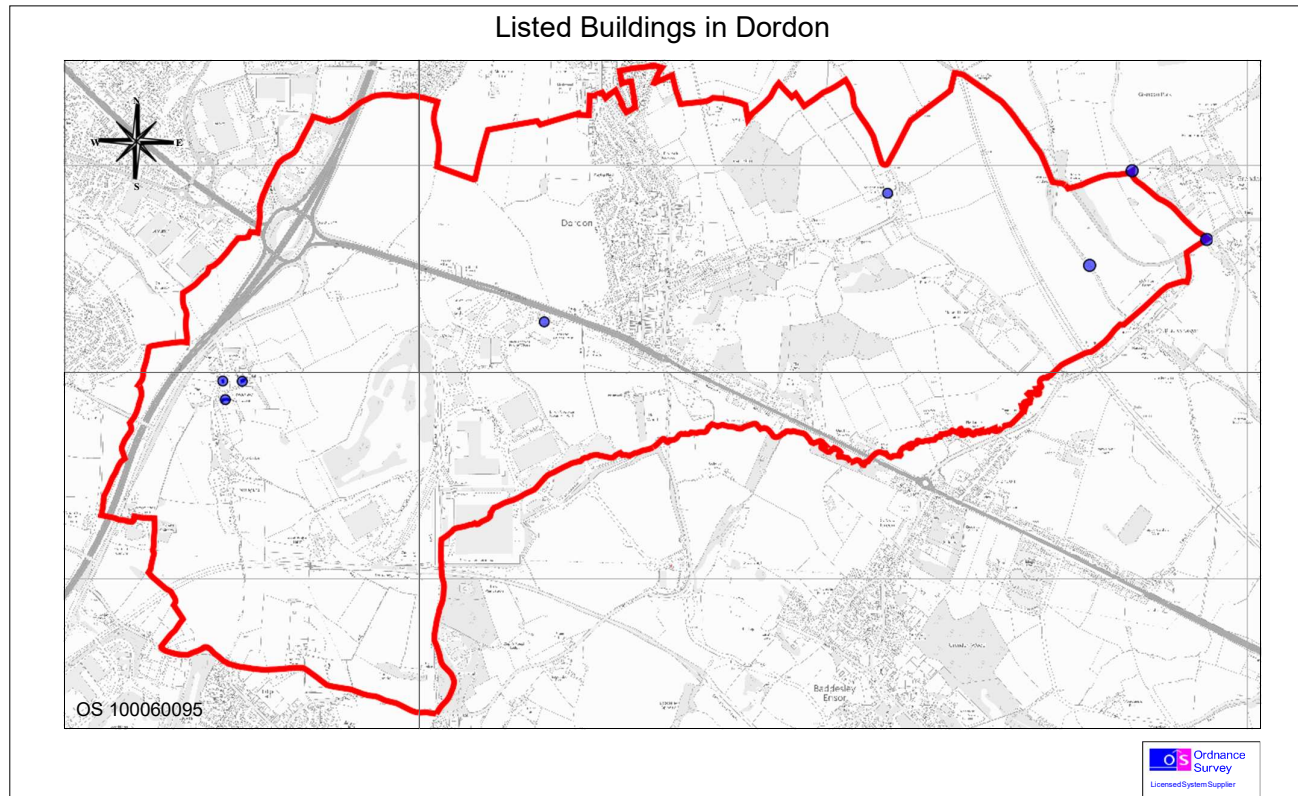
91. There are 39 entries on the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record relating to Dordon which demonstrates the long and varied history of the Parish. Entries include remains of an Iron Age settlement and industrial heritage from the mining industry. From recent archaeological surveys there is evidence of Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation within the Parish.
92. From the junction of St Helena and Dordon Hall Lane going north, the lanes drop down to Polesworth (see photo for Key View 7 at Appendix B). Travelling south along Dordon Hall Lane the route drops toward Grendon. Dordon Hall and the historic lanes combine to give this part of the Parish a historic rural character.
93. Dordon Parish Council remain in discussion with NWBC to identify an appropriate mechanism for recognising and protecting this historic part of the Parish.
94. NWBC are in the process of preparing a Local List. The NPWG have identified the following buildings and structures which they have nominated for Local Listing as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process. All the information to justify the local listing status is at <https://www.dordonparishcouncil.gov.uk/heritage-assets.html> and has been previously provided in accordance with advice from NWBCs Conservation Officer. This information is being reviewed by NWBC. The list is not exhaustive and work with the Conservation Officer is on-going.
95. The layout and design of development must demonstrate an understanding of the contribution of the heritage assets in the landscape. Development in the vicinity of the narrow country lanes (which were drovers’ lanes), particularly the stretch of Dordon Hall Lane running from Manor House Farm Cottage to St Helena, and Dunn’s Lane (see Map 8b), should make a similar assessment reflecting the relative significance of the historic lanes.⁵³
96. The Hollow Way is a medieval route recorded on the Historic Environment Record; development should take into account the impact on it commensurate with its historic significance.

⁵¹ The up-to-date list can be found at www.historicengland.org.uk/list

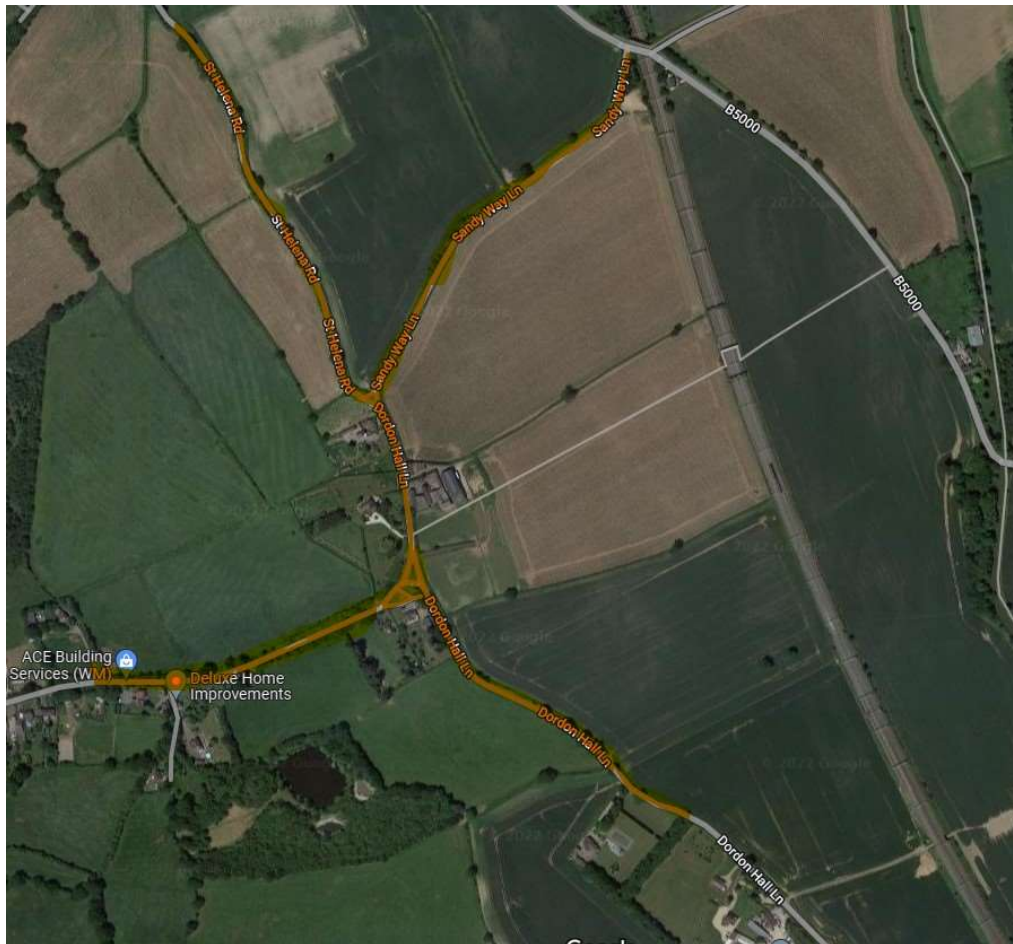
⁵² Grendon Bridge in Dordon Parish is Grade 11* and is on the 2020 Heritage at Risk Register see <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results/?searchType=HAR&search=grendon+bridge>

⁵³ See NPPF para 193

Map 8a Listed Buildings and Structures



Map 8b The Stretch of Drivers' Lanes that have historic and landscape significance within Dordon Parish (highlighted in orange)



97. Where development affecting heritage assets is proposed, the Parish Council will seek to work with the owners to protect the asset where that may be necessary. Sensitive work to ensure there is no erosion of these heritage assets is also encouraged.

98. Dordon Parish Council have also been working with NWBC to seek the designation of a part of the Freasley village as a Conservation Area. This is a community aspiration and is included at Appendix A.

Policy DNP6 Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets

1. Development should demonstrate an understanding of the history of the area. Proposals for development, including change of use, that involve a designated heritage asset, or the setting of a designated heritage asset will be expected to:

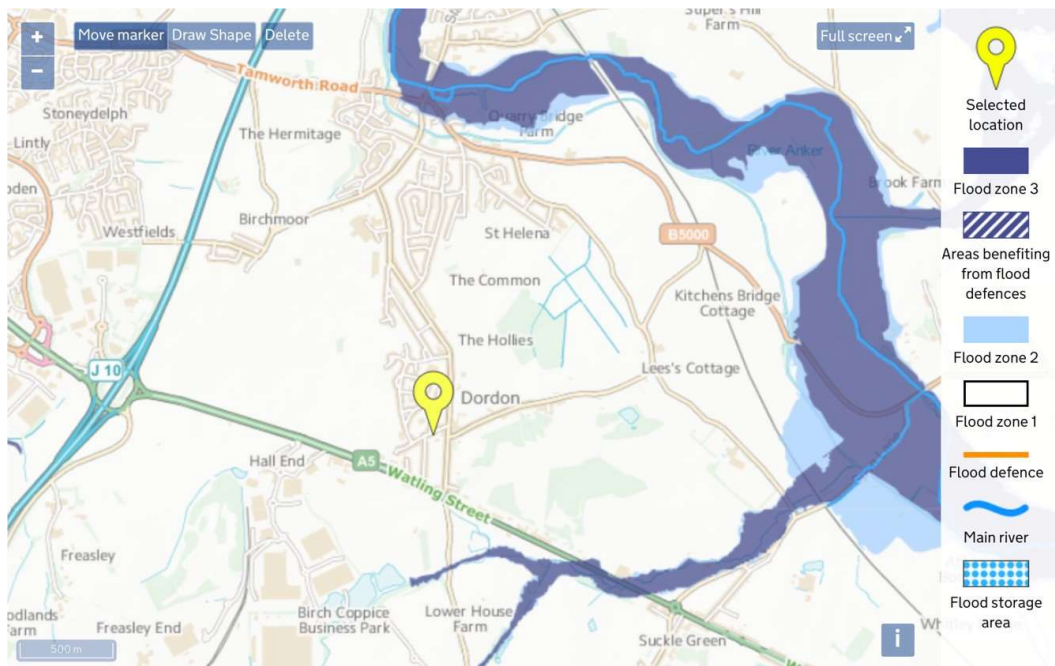
- a) conserve, enhance or better reveal those elements which contribute to the heritage significance and/or its setting;
- b) respect any features of special architectural or historic interest, including where relevant the historic curtilage or context, its value within a group and/or its setting, such as the importance of a street frontage, traditional roofscape, or traditional shopfronts.
- c) be sympathetic in terms of its siting, size, scale, height, alignment, proportions, design

- and form, building technique(s), materials and detailing, boundary treatments and surfacing, or are of a high quality contemporary or innovative nature which complements the local vernacular, in order to retain the special interest that justifies its designation;
- d) ensure significant views away from, through, towards and associated with the heritage asset(s) are conserved or enhanced;
2. Proposals that will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance to a designated heritage asset will be dealt with in accordance with Paragraph 201 of the NPPF.
3. Proposals that would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (including their setting) will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the public benefits will outweigh any harm identified.
4. The following are nominated for inclusion on the Local List of Heritage Assets for further consideration by NWBC:
- Dordon Village Hall
 - Dordon Men's Institute
 - Dordon Congregational Church
 - Dordon War Memorial
 - Dordon Working Men's Club
 - Hall End Hall Farm Barn
 - St Leonards Church
 - St Leonards Church Hall
 - Dordon Hall Farm Buildings
 - Lee's Cottage
5. The restoration of listed buildings on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register, will be supported where the proposal is compatible with the designation provided that the proposal;
- a) recognises the significance of the heritage asset as an integral part of the proposal and its design and layout,
 - b) recognises the significance of the heritage asset as a central part of the design and layout,
 - c) has special regard to the desirability of preserving the asset and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest, and
 - d) removes or seeks to remove the risk to the heritage asset.
6. The former drovers' lanes are narrow country lanes, the stretch of Dordon Hall Lane running from Manor House Farm Cottage to St Helena, and Dunn's Lane (see Map 8b) have a historic and rural landscape character being mainly single width carriageways which are sunken and with mature, high hedges in places. Where possible, proposals should demonstrate they have regard to this historic rural landscape character in the proposals for the movement of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists along them.

14 Flood Risk

99. Understanding how water flows across and pools on development sites is vital to creating a well-designed place. *'Water can be used to enhance biodiversity, create character and improve people's sense of wellbeing'*.⁵⁴
100. Map 9a shows the extent of flood risk from rivers and streams in the Plan area. Note the linear open irrigation ditches to the west of St Helena Road on the land allocated for housing. These ditches are a legacy of the drainage system created to keep water out of the mineworks.

Map 9a⁵⁵



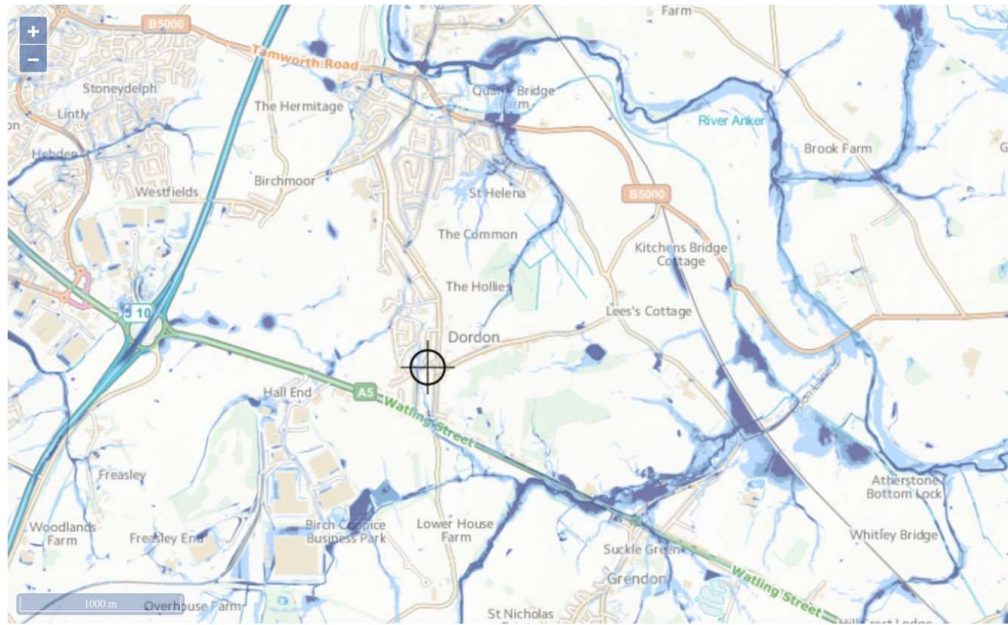
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⁵⁴ Building for a Healthy Life page 38 see <https://www.udg.org.uk/publications/othermanuals/building-healthy-life>

⁵⁵ From <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk> accessed March 2021

101. Map 9b shows the extent of surface water flooding

Map 9b⁵⁶



Extent of flooding from surface water

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Very low
- Location you selected

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102. Map 9b shows the extent of surface water flood risk. However, it does not show all the ponds that are in evidence. For example, there is one approx. 70 metres north of Long Street Recreation Ground – which is 42 metres long and 18 metres wide (see Figure 2 below). This pond is not fed by a water course suggesting the present of underwater springs. The pond overflows into the adjoining field to the east on occasions. There is also a pond just up from the TPO Oak tree and two further ponds in Hollies Wood which have been cleaned and reinstated. The overflow water then runs onto the fields which lead through to St Helena Road.

103. The land to the east of Long Street Recreation Ground is known locally as The Tip. This was where water used to be pumped from the Birch Coppice workings. There was also a brick works near the site. The area is still very boggy and the water is fairly acidic due to contaminants in the soil.

⁵⁶ From <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/> accessed March 2021

Figure 2 Pond not shown on Environment Agency maps and location of old Dordon Tip



104. The soil around Dordon is very heavy clay; good for brick making and synonymous with covering good quality coal seams. It does not drain well. Dordon Hall Lane by the farm has a spring and in the winter the water runs down St Helena Road and tends to pool in ditches and across the road at the junction with Hollies Road. Water runs from Long Street, the Park and The Tip, over the fields and into the area of Dordon Common and the Coffin Trail (water pools in huge puddles).
105. Along Dunn's Lane (opposite the water pumping station) the water pools and makes a pond which is mainly in the field but does encroach onto the road in very heavy rain. if you look at old maps you can see that there was always a pond there. Spon Lane on the Dordon/Grendon border suffers from very severe flooding when flood water from the River Anker breaches the flood plain and cuts Spon Lane off for traffic. This happens several times each winter.

106. On the Orchard Site (where the designated green space is and all along the edges of the fields around it) the water lays in deep puddles. It has been suggested that due to the past mining activities there could be methane and water, this is typical of land that has been mined over many centuries.
107. A new development known locally as the Taylor Wimpey estate located to the north of St Helena Road, just outside the Parish, had issues with flooding in the corner of St Helena and the B5000. The council houses in St Helena Road started getting flooded cellars and the new bungalows on the corner of the estate had permanently soaking gardens.
108. This is contrary to the Flood Risk Assessment that accompanied the planning application that said, *'It is considered the proposed surface water strategy will not increase flood risk at the site or elsewhere, and the effect of the new development will provide betterment to existing run-off rates.'*⁵⁷
109. This demonstrates the complexities of drainage in this area and shows the harm to new and existing properties if the drainage issues are not fully understood and addressed. The community are concerned that a failure to properly understand the drainage issues could lead to significant problems for the existing Dordon community.
110. Climate change means that excessive rainfall will make flooding more likely. New development must manage surface water run off on site and not exacerbate existing surface water flooding. In accordance with the Drainage Hierarchy (Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 80) surface water should be managed sustainability and be directed to
- a. the ground,
 - b. to watercourse/ditch -course
 - c. to a surface water sewer, highway drain or another designated asset
 - d. to the combined sewerage system
111. Culverts are increasingly inadequate to cope with the fluctuations in water flow due to climate change. They are also hard to maintain and can get blocked up. WCC Flood risk team note that new development should be encouraged to open any existing culverts and the creation of new culverts should be kept to a minimum.
112. Developers should be guided by WCC's Flood Risk Management Local Guidance for Developers⁵⁸.
113. Building for a Healthy Life scores as red schemes that funnel rainwater away in underground pipes as the default water management strategy. A red means stop and rethink.⁵⁹
114. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) incorporate management of water flows as part of a broader strategy to deliver multifunctional spaces. SuDs have wider environmental and community gains. Major development is required to submit a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment to the Local Lead Flood Authority for review and to incorporate SuDs.

⁵⁷ See MEC Flood Risk Assessment Revised May 2014 for PAP/2014/0072 at <http://planning.northwarks.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet>

⁵⁸ See <https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1039-95>

⁵⁹ Building for a Healthy Life page 43 see <https://www.udg.org.uk/publications/othermanuals/building-healthy-life>

115. There are many examples of best practice where water has been integrated as part of a blue and green network to create wildlife rich spaces public spaces.⁶⁰

Policy DNP7 Reducing the Risk of Flooding

1. All applications in these locations must be accompanied by a flood risk assessment which is informed by the most up-to-date Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for North Warwickshire Borough Council and by any other available relevant and up to date information covering all sources of flood risk.
2. Development within Flood Zones 2 and 3 will be required to show no increase in flood risk to the site and to others in line with the requirements of the NPPF, and where possible a reduction in flood risk to the site and others should also be encouraged.
3. Surface water management strategies should demonstrate how site-specific guidance in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment ([Strategic Flood Risk Assessment downloads | North Warwickshire \(northwarks.gov.uk\)](#)) has been implemented and should be in accordance with Drainage Hierarchy (Planning Practice Guidance 80).
4. Drainage systems should maintain or, where applicable, enhance the aesthetic, recreational and ecological quality of the area and be available, where appropriate, as recreational space.
5. Major development should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS proposals should be managed in line with the Government's Water Strategy ⁶¹. In particular SuDS proposals should;
 - a) provide multifunctional benefits (for example enhancing biodiversity) by providing natural flood management and mitigation through the improvement or creation of green infrastructure (for example ponds and wetlands, woodland and swales); and
 - b) take account of advice from the Warwickshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority, the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water (as the sewage management company).
6. Proposals will be supported that include the replacement of tarmac or an equivalent non-porous surface with a SuDS scheme in the areas identified as Flood Zone 2, Flood Zone 3 or as an area affected by surface flooding on Map 9a and Map 9b.
7. Where appropriate to the scale, nature and location, development proposals should restore watercourses to a more natural state through the removal of hard engineering, such as culverts and bank reinforcement, in order to reduce flood risk and provide local amenity and biodiversity benefits.

⁶⁰ See https://www.susdrain.org/case-studies/pdfs/004_31_05_20_bertha_park_perth_2020_awards.pdf

⁶¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-water-the-government-s-water-strategy-for-england>

15 Achieving Well Designed Buildings

116. *Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design’.*⁶²
117. The National Design Code 2019 identifies 10 characteristics of good design based on national planning policy, practice guidance. The Design Code states that *‘specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set at the local level.’*
118. The Dordon Design Guidance and Code 2022 (DDGC)⁶³ has been prepared by AECOM and the local community and covers the whole of the Parish. It provides a robust local character analysis; this forms the basis for the specific local criteria and a set of design principles. The DDGC is an important part of the DNP. It is available on the DNP web site⁶⁴ and Policy DNP8 requires development to be in accordance with it.

Policy DNP8 Achieving High Quality Design

- 1. Development proposals must demonstrate a high quality of design that will contribute positively to the character of the Parish. In order to achieve this, new development proposals should demonstrate regard for the Dordon Design Guidance and Code.**
- 2. All proposals are required to demonstrate in a proportionate way, depending on the nature of the application, how they;**
 - a) respond to the local character of both the surrounding area and the immediately neighbouring properties and provide a clear rationale for how this is taken into account in the design of the proposals,**
 - b) use native trees, dry ditches and hedgerows in landscaping schemes and boundary treatment where possible that reflect and enhance the surrounding character,**
 - c) use a colour palette reflecting the hues in local materials,**
 - d) be of a scale, density and mass that is sympathetic to the character of the immediate locality, including the rural setting,**
 - e) show how the buildings, landscaping and planting creates well defined streets and attractive green spaces,**
 - f) include a layout that maximises opportunities to integrate new development with the existing settlement pattern,**
 - g) including landscaping that maximises the use of wildlife beneficial plants, includes street trees where practicable and creates ecosystems that support birds and other wildlife, and**
 - h) where practicable, provides direct and safe access points for pedestrians, cyclists and those using public transport.**
- 3. Well-designed buildings should be appropriate to their location and context. This may include innovative and contemporary design solutions provided they enhance or reinforce local character and distinctiveness.**

⁶² See NPPF para 134

⁶³ See <https://dordon.neighbourhoodplan.uk/supporting-docs>

⁶⁴ See Dordon Design Code at <https://dordon.neighbourhoodplan.uk/supporting-docs>

16 A Mix of House Types and Tenures

119. Evidence has shown⁶⁵ that a community thrives when it is made up of people from a mixture of ages and income levels. Ensuring that Dordon has a balanced provision of house types to meet the needs of young and older people on different incomes is an important aim of this Neighbourhood Plan.
120. The NPWG commissioned AECOM to undertake a Housing Needs Assessment. It is available on the DNP web site.

Affordability

121. The findings show that house prices for 3 bed semis increased the most (by 79%) between 2001 and 2011 and that private rented increased by 60%. People on average household incomes cannot afford to buy a median market home for sale but they can afford an entry level home.⁶⁶ However, a couple on lower quartile household incomes cannot afford an entry level home. Single people on lower quartile earnings are unable to afford entry-level market rents, affordable rent and social rent which suggests that these tenures are not truly affordable to those on poorer incomes. However, *'they are likely to be available where occupants have access to additional subsidy, or housing benefits may enable single earners to live in a room in a shared house.'*⁶⁷
122. There is anecdotal evidence of an increasing number of residents who work at the warehousing and distribution centres in the area and who live in homes in multiple occupation (HMOs). The HNA notes that the proportion of family households has contracted while the proportion of other households and non-dependent children have increased substantially. *'This growth in the number of HMOs and house sharers (around 52% over the decade) could indicate the relative unaffordability of market housing particularly for younger age groups.'*⁶⁸
123. The HNA provides evidence of the cost of housing and affordability of different tenures. Table 4-5 from the HNA (see Appendix E), demonstrates this. Note that an individual on a lower quartile income cannot afford any housing tenure as a single occupant.
124. The HNA identifies a need for affordable rent and affordable routes to home ownership. *'A broad mix of 67% rented tenures and 33% routes to ownership is suggested in order to align with national policy requirement.'*⁶⁹
125. The HNA uses the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2013 for the Coventry and Warwickshire Housing Market Area and extrapolates the data for Dordon Parish.⁷⁰ If Dordon was to meet its share of North Warwickshire's need for social/affordable rented housing this would equate to 100 homes over the Plan period. AECOM also estimate the number of people in Dordon over the Plan period who are likely to enter the private rented sector but who can't buy based on their incomes. This identifies a potential further demand for 133 homes over the plan period. In total, this amounts to 233 affordable homes.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation Creating and Sustaining Mixed Income Communities

⁶⁶ Defined as a 1 or 2 bed dwelling

⁶⁷ HNA para 75

⁶⁸ HNA para 11

⁶⁹ HNA para 6

⁷⁰ See HNA section 4.5

⁷¹ See HNA analysis para 85 and figure 5-3

126. The NPWG considered this calculation of affordable housing need as low. Table 4-5 (at Appendix E) shows that there are likely to be more individuals sharing a rental home who are unable even to afford social rent. The SHMA calculation does not include the needs of future residents who live elsewhere in the Borough and in adjoining areas.
127. LP9 of the Adopted Local Plan requires that on schemes of more than 10 dwellings, 30% of housing should be affordable with 40% on greenfield sites. On this basis, the expected Affordable Housing (AH) provision for Dordon during the Plan period is approximately 817 units.
128. It is the expectation of the local community that the scale of growth in the Parish will ensure a mix of housing tenure such that anyone who wishes to work in the area and live in the Parish is not prevented from doing so due to affordability issues.

House Size

129. The HNA notes that the majority of Dordon's housing stock is semi-detached houses and terraces which account for nearly 75% of the total share. These tend to be medium-size 2 to 3 bedroom dwellings. Respondents to the 2021 Household Survey felt that the house type most needed were starter homes (see Question 25).
130. The HNA considers changes in demographics, predicting an increase in households under 24 and over 65 for the existing population. Given the current dominance of 2-3 bed homes this would suggest that future need focuses on smaller or larger homes. However, this does not take into account the total increase in numbers of houses over the Plan period. The HNA states that '*Dordon is a relatively special case because the estimated delivery of new homes is extremely large in the context of the existing policy. As such, there is an imperative for the new homes to meet not only the needs of existing residents but also to cater to the wider needs of the incoming population (which can be represented by the findings of the SHMA).*'⁷²
131. Policy DNP9 recognises that housing growth in the Parish will need to meet wider needs.

Adaptable and Accessible

132. One important element of sustainable development is ensuring that houses are designed to be adaptable to meet the changing needs of people over their lifetime. LP31 (2) of the Adopted Local Plan requires development to be '*adaptable for future uses and take into account the needs of all users*'. The experience with Covid and the need for more people to work from home has highlighted the importance of creating flexible spaces.
133. Accessible and adaptable homes could be considered as 'homes for life' and would be suitable for any occupant, regardless of whether or not they have a disability at the time of initial occupation. This ensures that dwellings are appropriate for elderly people whilst still being suitable for occupiers such as first-time buyers.
134. Policy DNP9 seeks to focus these requirements on smaller dwellings as these are the homes that will be appropriate for elderly people whilst still being suitable for occupiers such as first-time buyers
135. The provisions of the policy have been designed to ensure that a range and mix of homes come forward in the Plan period. However, the Parish Council recognises that a range of financial

⁷²HNA para 17

issues may influence the ability of homes to be delivered. In this context any planning applications which do not deliver the package of homes intended by the policy for viability reasons should be supported by robust and appropriate information.

Policy DNP9 A Mix of Housing Types and Tenures

- 1. Development proposals for housing will be required to demonstrate that they take into account the most up to date published evidence of both housing needs in Dordon Parish and the wider needs of the surrounding area.**
- 2. Where possible, affordable housing should be made available to eligible households with a local connection to the Parish in the first instance.**
- 3. The affordable dwellings should include a mix of affordable home ownership and affordable dwellings for rent.**
- 4. Subject to viability assessment, homes that are accessible and adaptable homes (as defined in the Building Regulations) will be supported where they otherwise comply with Development Plan policies.**
- 5. Proposals for new dwellings which incorporate flexible layouts (to facilitate homeworking and/or adaptations required by the occupiers over their lifetime) will be supported.**

17 Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technologies

136. The government identifies the planning system as having a significant role to play in tackling climate change. We must reduce the energy we use to heat and cool our homes. The design and layout of new development can significantly affect the efficiency of buildings in terms of their energy use and needs. Effective passive design maintains thermal comfort by utilising the sun's natural cycles and natural ventilation to reduce the need for activity or cooling systems.
137. Heating in buildings and industry create 32% of total UK emissions⁷³. The Committee on Climate Change requires a 36% reduction in carbon emissions between 2016 and 2030 with a 20% reduction for the building sector as a whole. The UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) advocate energy use reduction before the use of renewables providing evidence that between 19 to 20% of improvement (beyond current building regulations standards) could be delivered entirely through energy efficiency measures including enhanced insulation, glazing and air tightness, high efficiency heating and hot water recovery.
138. Energy efficiency in design should incorporate water efficiency design and technology. Water efficient design also provides energy efficiency benefits through a reduced need to treat water for consumption and then treat wastewater along with savings for managing water within the home. Given the issues of drainage in parts of the Parish, water efficient development would also reduce the impact on existing infrastructure. North Warwickshire lies within an area of serious water stress concern⁷⁴. The management of water resources is required to ensure that demand for water

⁷³ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy/clean-growth-strategy-executive-summary>

⁷⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification>

can be achieved in a sustainable manner. Severn Trent advise that the consumption of water per dwelling should not exceed 110 litres per person per day.

139. Simple measures like the provision of water butts for all new houses would be one immediate and effective proposal that would enable residents to conserve and reuse water. The Parish Council would support the inclusion of water butts in all new residential development and will seek this provision where practicable.
140. The DNP seeks to encourage the move to low carbon energy. For example, encouraging the use of low emission vehicles is supported and the provision of charging points in the Parish would encourage this use. New development (commercial, community facilities or housing) should provide electrical infrastructure to enable people to charge electric cars. This does not require planning permission but will be encouraged as part of the pre application discussions with developers.
141. Trees, soils and a well-managed landscape, absorb CO2 and other pollutants – Policy DNP2 will also contribute to improving the carbon footprint of development in the Parish.

Policy DNP10 Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Technologies

- 1. New development should incorporate sustainable design features to reduce carbon emissions, minimise the use of scarce resources and mitigate against and adapt to climate change.**
- 2. Innovative approaches to the construction of low carbon homes which demonstrate sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels will be supported where the resultant-built form respects the character of the setting. Examples include, but would not be limited to;**
 - a) the use of alternative heat sources to gas,**
 - b) siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain,**
 - c) the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials,**
 - d) installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing,**
 - e) the installation of solar panels,**
 - f) the installation of electrical charging points,**
 - g) ensuring every new home has a charging point for electric vehicles.**
- 3. The retrofitting of energy efficiency measures is supported, including the retrofitting of listed buildings, provided that it safeguards the historic characteristics of these heritage assets.**
- 4. Developments should demonstrate that they are water efficient, where possible incorporating innovative water efficiency and water re-use measures.**

18 Protecting and Enhancing Community Facilities and Services

142. The expected growth of the Parish will see the population substantially increase. The provision of adequate community space (indoor and outdoor) fosters social cohesion and well-being, providing venues for a range of community activities for all ages.
143. Local facilities reduce car travel for residents who otherwise have to travel outside the Plan area. For those without a car or with limited mobility being able to access local meeting spaces will be key to their health and well-being.
144. With a growing number of older residents as well, easy access to local facilities would significantly enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents and would contribute towards sustainable development.
145. The cluster of retail shops along Browns Lane and New Street shopping parade is classed as a Neighbourhood Centre in the Local Plan. Table 2 lists the community facilities in Dordon Parish

Table 2

Long Street Recreation Area	Kitwood Recreation Area
Dordon Village Hall ⁷⁵	Dordon Men's Institute
Dordon Congregational Church (also used as a Dance School)	Library
Long Street Doctors and Pharmacy	Birch Coppice Allotments
Birch Coppice Clubhouse and Playing fields	Dordon Primary School and Nursery
Community Halls at Ashlea and Derek Avenue	Freasley Common ⁷⁶
St Leonards Church and Hall	

Changing provision and the Adopted Local Plan

146. LP Policy E3 allocates the allotments, Birch Coppice Club House and Playing Fields as an employment site with these uses being relocated north of the A5. There is an opportunity to create improved facilities in the new location and the community should be involved in the design and layout of these replacement facilities.
147. The community will also seek to work with landowners and developers to develop Dordon Dell.⁷⁷ This is a community aspiration, it is not allocated for this purpose and will require the landowner's approval, see Appendix A.

⁷⁵ The 2021 Household Survey reflected some frustration with the limitations of the existing Village Hall. It is seen as an underused community asset and requires improvement. Proposals for the Village Hall will be complemented by an environmental improvement scheme intended to revitalise the Neighbourhood Centre, (see Appendix A community projects).

⁷⁶ Proposed as a Local Green Space see NPP 3

⁷⁷ A parcel of land was a former brickwork site and is not suitable for development. However, its location and topography make it a good site for a community 'dell'. It is also rich in wildlife and suitable adaption would contribute to the creation of wildlife friendly habitat.

Policy DNP11 Protecting and Enhancing Community Facilities

- 1. In order to promote a thriving Parish for all ages, the community facilities listed in Table 2 will be safeguarded for community uses throughout the Plan period (with the exception of Birch Coppice Clubhouse, allotments and playing fields, which will be relocated in accordance with Local Plan Policy E3). Proposals for the enhancement of these facilities will be supported.**
- 2. Where the proposals relate to the relocation of Birch Coppice Club House, allotments and playing fields to land north of the A5, they should demonstrate an improvement in quality of provision compared to that which is being lost.**
- 3. Any new facilities including retail, health and educational facilities should be located and designed in such a way that encourages and enables safe pedestrian and cycling access from as many parts of Dordon as is practicably possible.**

19 Supporting the Local Economy

148. Access to the M42 and the A5 makes Dordon Parish attractive to businesses. Birch Coppice Business Park is situated south of the dual carriageway and comprises a large business park with substantial commercial buildings accessed from a series of roundabouts. The Business Park contains 21 companies and employs 6500 people.
149. More recently a 321,204 sq ft warehouse has been built on the south of the A5 and near to the M42 junction. (This development secured planning permission on appeal⁷⁸.) This is part of a 32 acre distribution site being built out by St Modwen. The cumulative impact of the scale and dominance of these employment buildings means that the entrance to the Parish has contextually changed dramatically.
150. Immediately to the east of Birch Coppice Business Park, Core42 has also been recently developed. Marketed as a prime logistics park with units of up to 3000 sq metres it adds to the range of very large warehouse buildings on the south of the A5 and on the approach to Dordon village.
151. The relocation of the Birch Coppice Social Club, associated playing fields and allotments as proposed in the emerging Local Plan will result in two more employment sites becoming available south of the A5 (see Map 6 above showing employment allocation E2 and E3).
152. The Birch Coppice Business Park web site notes that 38% of employees live within 5 miles. An important aspect of planning is to reduce car usage. The DNP supports an expansion of employment uses in existing locations (and on the proposed employment site allocations). It is also important to ensure that local people can access these employment opportunities on foot or bike – which is why there is such an emphasis on the importance of cycling and footpath connections from existing and new residential areas to these employment locations.

⁷⁸ See Appeal Ref APP/3705/W/15/31336495 and planning app ref PAP/2014/0648

153. The community support future development on the south of the A5 especially on E2 and E3, but only where the scale and appearance of the buildings reflects their location on the approach to the residential area.
154. Part of the area to the south of the A5 is also a Local Wildlife Site and includes a network of public footpaths. Development should be sensitive to the need to protect this biodiverse environment and to ensure the walking routes are safe and pleasant for walkers.

Shops

155. Within the Parish are a range of shops including hairdressers, beauty salons, convenience food stores, a cafe, coffee shop, a bar, a restaurant, flower shop, car showroom, take aways, off licence, and petrol station.
156. Browns Lane and New Street Shopping Parade is a designated Neighbourhood Centre (see LP21). The NWBC policy seeks to restrict the use of hot food takeaways. The DNP supports this approach – obesity levels in the Parish are high with 35% of Year 6 pupils in the Parish carrying excess weight.⁷⁹ The responses to the Household Survey were strongly in favour of reducing the number of take aways in the Neighbourhood Centre⁸⁰. Recent government changes in the use class order may make NWBCs policy hard to implement.
157. The community survey confirmed that Browns Lane and New Street Shopping Parade were still seen as the neighbourhood centre (location is shown on Map 10) although the newly located Co-op further north on the corner of Whitehouse Road and Roman Way is well used and valued for its offer of convenience and fresh food. The Best One is also useful and is located further north on Whitehouse Road.
158. Public realm improvements (for example trees and seating on the corner of New Street and Browns Lane) would help in attracting shoppers and new businesses and make the area more of a focal point for the village.

⁷⁹ Stats from Public Health England <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/national-child-measurement-programme/data#page/0/gid/1938133288/pat/101/par/E07000218/ati/8/are/E05007465/cid/4/tbm/1>

⁸⁰ See Question 4c of the Household Survey

Map 10 Extract from NWBC Adopted Local Plan Policies Map



Date: 03:09:21 North Warwickshire Local Plan
Adopted September 2021
Neighbourhood Centres



North Warwickshire
Borough Council



OS100060095

Working from Home

159. The 2011 Census identified that 12% of those of working age worked mainly from home. With improving technology and a gradual shift in ways of working, combined with faster broadband speeds this figure will have increased since 2011. The covid pandemic has significantly accelerated the trend towards home working. The reduced commuting provides additional benefits in terms of reduced car usage.
160. For most types of homeworking, it is now essential to have fast broadband speed (at least 100 mps)⁸¹ along with sufficient space in dwellings for a home office space. Policy DNP12 supports the provision of fast broadband speed (the importance of a flexible layout to accommodate a home office if necessary is addressed in the housing policy above).
161. It is also important that businesses wherever they are located have access to fast broadband. This allows businesses to be responsive to customer needs, deal with suppliers more effectively and help to provide a live work balance for employees. This means businesses can be more flexible and respond to ever changing circumstances making them more resilient in the longer term.

⁸¹ See <https://www.airband.co.uk/what-is-a-good-download-and-upload-speed/>

Policy DNP12 Supporting the Local Economy

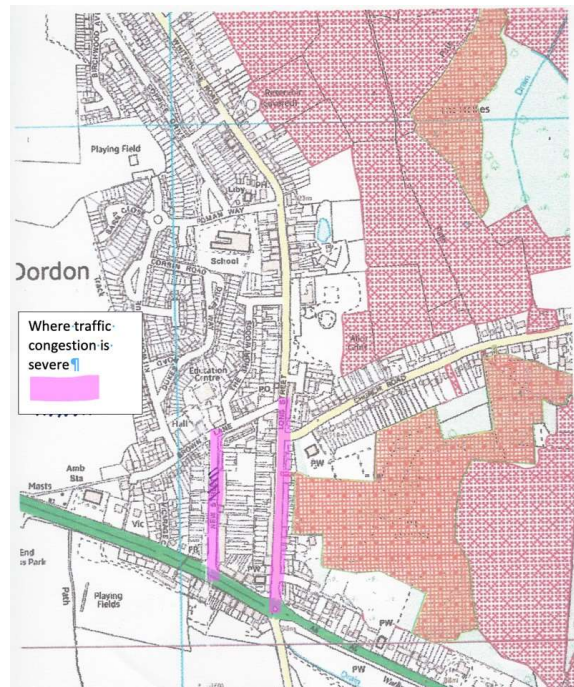
- 1. Development proposals that enable the sustainable growth of businesses both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings will be supported where they are located in accordance with Borough policies.**
- 2. Business development will be supported where it is located in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP6 (Additional Employment Land)**
 - a) on brownfield sites, or**
 - b) on allocated employment sites, or**
 - c) where small scale employment uses already exist in a suitable location, or**
 - d) as part of mixed-use schemes or**
 - e) where evidence demonstrates an immediate need for employment land that will support economic growth which cannot be met via forecast supply or allocations where this takes into account the living conditions of Dordon Parish Council residents living nearby or**
 - f) located in accordance with LP6**
- 3. Development on land south of the A5 for employment uses should demonstrate how they have taken into account the wildlife, footpaths and presence of water.**
- 4. All new development should be provided with appropriate street ducting to allow connection to any superfast broadband service which may be (or may become) available.**
- 5. Proposals including tree planting and seating which improve the public realm in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Centre (see Map 10) will be supported.**
- 6. To ensure the Neighbourhood Centre retains a mix of retail uses to meet local needs, the change of use to take aways will be restricted in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP21 (Services and Facilities).**
- 7. Proposals for retail uses should ensure that there is no unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of existing retail centres.**

20 Traffic Congestion in Dordon village

162. By far the greatest movement of traffic in and out of Dordon village is from the A5 from either New Street or Long Street. (Dordon can also be accessed from the east on the B5000 Grendon Road and Church Road that narrows to become Dunn's Lane.)
163. Development around Dordon Parish including the employment sites along the A5, has resulted in a significant increase in congestion in Dordon village particularly at school drop off and pick up and rush hour.
164. The 2021 Household Survey asked 'Do you think Dordon has got better or worse over the last two years?' 52% thought the area had got worse. In the open responses it was clear that traffic congestion was a major reason for this response.

165. The map below shows the congestion hot spots based on analysis by the NPWG.

Map 11 Traffic Congestion Dordon



OS 100060095

Long Street

166. At busy times a queue of traffic builds up at the roundabout awaiting access to the A5. Long Street does not just serve Dordon. Long Street is a through route to the M42 for residents of Polesworth and villages beyond such as Warton. In Polesworth the route to the M42 is signposted through Dordon and is the most direct route for commuters to Birmingham etc.

167. The traffic problem is greatly aggravated by the fact that many of the terrace houses that line much of lower Long Street have no parking. The parking bays marked on the road mean that often vehicles only go one way at a time particularly if they are larger vehicles, vans, lorries and buses. Damage and loss of wing mirrors has occurred to parked vehicles. Further the changeover space between parking on the left side to the right is only a short section and easily can be filled with stationary cars waiting to get through and so can end up blocked or grid locked at busy times. This is further exacerbated by frequent parking on double yellow lines further limiting space to move, or traffic to cross over, with little evidence of enforcement.

168. There is a second area of parking affecting traffic in Long Street noted in responses to the 2021 Household Survey. This is at the brow of the hill beside the recreation ground where there is parking on the west side. The brow of the hill impairs visibility of oncoming traffic when moving out to pass the parked vehicles.

169. The volume of traffic on the A5 through Dordon is reflected in the poor Air Quality. The 2021 Air Quality Status Report identified that on Watling Street nitrate levels were very near the existing legal limits in 2020.⁸²
170. A one-way system has been considered by the Parish Council over the years and representations have been made in the last 10 years to NWBC, WCC and Highways England. This would have involved traffic accessing Dordon up Long Street and exiting onto the A5 via New Street. This would significantly improve traffic movement on both Long Street and New Street. Along the south end of Long Street one way traffic movement would mean that parking was no longer a major problem. Traffic flow in and out of Dordon would therefore be significantly improved and congestion reduced.
171. In the past Highways England has responded that access onto the A5 from New Street was not satisfactory for the increased volume of traffic and the idea has not gone forward. However, the current proposal is to move the Dordon roundabout east when the dualling (for which finance is earmarked) of the A5 occurs between Dordon and Grendon Islands. This might provide an opportunity to re-engineer the New Street / A5 junction and the Long Street/A5 junction to make a safe and efficient exit onto the A5.
172. Since then, planning permission has been granted for additional large industrial warehouses as part of the Core 42 employment site. This included putting in a further signal-controlled junction on the A5. It is understood that the new Dordon roundabout will also be signal controlled. Therefore, including the one way exit from Dordon in this signaling might render the junction safe and satisfactory for Highways England.
173. The community agree with NWBCs assessment in 2014 that *'the junction of the A5 and Long Street needs to be improved or changed if development in this area can be taken forward. In addition, Long Street itself may constrain the number of developments that take place to the north of the A5 and needs to be addressed in any development proposals that look towards the A5 for access.'*⁸³
174. The Parish will inevitably see even more traffic on the A5 which will in turn cause even more congestion for those living in Dordon as it will be even harder to exit from Long Street at peak times.
175. Reducing traffic congestion in Dordon Parish is an aspirational policy and is set out at Appendix A, because highway planning is classed as a strategic matter (and is not within the remit of the neighbourhood plan) and it does not relate to any specific development site. However, it is the matter of greatest concern to local residents and as part of its on-going work the Parish Council will continue to lobby the Borough and County Council to address this significant transport issue.

Car Parking on Long Street and New Street

176. On street parking exacerbates the problem, Long Street is narrow and lined with terraced houses most of which do not have off street parking. Pedestrian safety is impacted by cars parked on pavements. At one point in Long Street houses open directly onto a rather narrow pavement, where in order to pass each other, at times cars can mount the pavement because of permitted parking on the other side of the road. This constitutes a risk to individuals or children stepping out

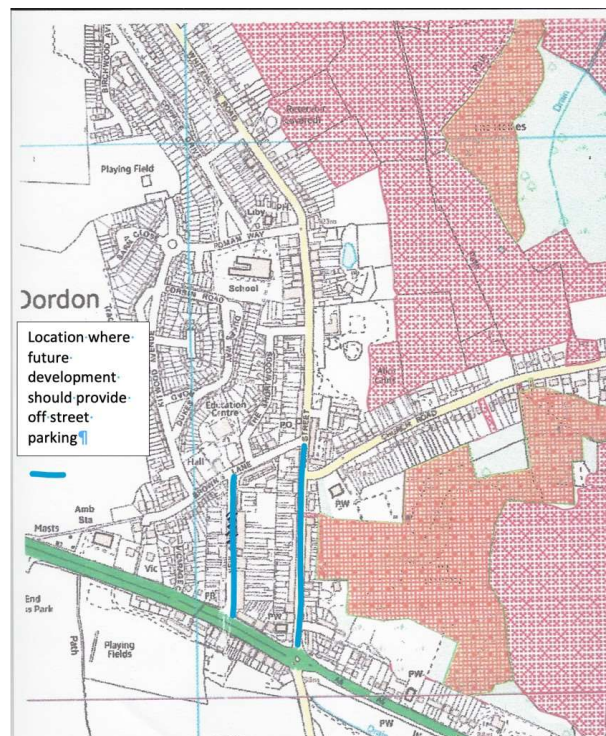
⁸² See https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/downloads/file/8932/air_quality_progress_report_2021 . See table B.1 for tubes diffusion results for tubes at 426025, 426026 and 425943 NO2 were between 35.0 and 35.4 where the legal limit is 40.

⁸³ See NWBCs 2014 Core Strategy Para 7.88

of their front doors. In the past the possibility of putting bollards or a railing up to prevent cars going onto the pavement has been raised by the Parish Council. However, they have been advised that Bollard or railings would make the pavement too narrow for push chairs / prams etc., so it cannot be done.

177. Map 12 identifies those areas where future development should provide on street parking and is based on local knowledge and use of Long Street and New Street by members of the NPWG over 25 plus years.
178. The NPPF⁸⁴ allows local parking standards to be set and the community feel that the evidence justifies this. Where new development is proposed (on infill sites or as part of the redevelopment of a site) in the areas marked on the map below, off street parking should be provided.

Map 12 showing areas where off street parking should be provided on new development schemes



OS 100060095

Public Transport

179. The community support improvements proposed to public transport which should provide a more attractive alternative to the car and would reduce congestion. The Warwickshire Bus Service Improvement Plan in October 2021 is supported as it will make bus travel more pleasant and easier. The provision of upgraded bus shelters and real time bus service information will encourage more travel on public transport, reduce car usage is supported.

⁸⁴ NPPF para 107

180. The scale of development in the Parish also provides some opportunity to use planning gain to secure improvements to bus stop facilities like shelters and real time passenger information both on H4 and in Dordon.

Policy DNP13 Car Parking along Long Street and New Street

Development proposals in the locations identified on Map 12 will be required to demonstrate that residents' and visitors' parking requirements can be accommodated off street to facilitate traffic flow and accessibility for service and emergency vehicles. Proposals should ensure that off-street parking is integrated into the layout of the scheme or provided off-site.

21 Development Contributions

181. Developer contributions (sometimes called planning obligations or S106 agreements) seek to mitigate the negative impacts of development, address infrastructure needs, contribute towards place-making and meet Local Plan policy requirements. NWBC do not have an adopted Community Infrastructure Levy policy.
182. The scale of development proposed based on the growth in the NWBC Local Plan will put pressure on the infrastructure in the Parish. The impact on existing services and facilities and the increase in traffic volume are all matters of legitimate concern.
183. The requirements for developer contributions should be discussed as part of the planning application process, where applicable, Dordon Parish Council, NWBC and other agencies i.e., Warwickshire County Council.
184. Plainly there will be detailed discussions on the nature and the scale of any development contributions associated with individual development proposals in the Plan period and it is likely that the majority of developer contributions will be taken up by infrastructure given the scale of development proposed.
185. Nevertheless, where such an approach would relate both to national policy and to local discussions, and as part of the work on the DNP, the Parish Council would support a package of measures which include contributions towards relevant projects listed in Appendix A of this Plan. In the event that the Borough Council introduces a Community Infrastructure Levy in the future, the policy could be reviewed to take account of its contents.

Policy DNP14 Development Contributions

- 1. Subject to their scale and significance, development proposals should demonstrate a consideration of their impact on local infrastructure (including highways services and general facilities) and how any required works would mitigate the identified impacts in a satisfactory way in accordance with national regulations (s106 and CIL where applicable).**

22 Implementation

186. The policies in this plan will be implemented by North Warwickshire Borough Council as part of their development management process. Where applicable Dordon Parish Council will be actively involved, for example as part of the pre-application process as outlined in the Key Principle. The Parish Council will also use this Neighbourhood Plan to frame their representations on submitted planning applications.
187. There are several areas of activity which will affect delivery and each is important in shaping Dordon Parish in the months and years ahead. These comprise:
- a) the statutory planning process: this Neighbourhood Plan will direct and shape developer and investor interest in the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, this is also in the context of the wider North Warwickshire Borough Council planning policies and the National Planning Policy Framework,
 - b) investment in and active management of public services and community assets, together with other measures to support local services for the vitality and viability of the village,
 - c) the voluntary and community (third) sector will have a strong role to play particularly in terms of local community infrastructure, events and village life,
 - d) the role of the Parish Council in delivering the projects that have been identified as part of this Neighbourhood Planning process,
 - e) the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of a hierarchy of planning documents. The Parish Council will also look to Borough and County Council investment programmes where a policy can be shown to be delivering Borough and County objectives.

23 Monitoring and Review

188. The impact Neighbourhood Plan policies have on influencing the shape and direction of development across the Plan area during the Plan period will be monitored by Dordon Parish Council.
189. If it is apparent that any policy in this Plan has unintended consequences or is ineffective it will be reviewed. It is the expectation of the Neighbourhood Plan group and the Parish Council that there will be a review of the Plan 5 years after it has been made.
190. Any amendments to the Plan will only be made following consultation with North Warwickshire Borough Council, local residents and other statutory stake holders as required by legislation.

Appendix A Community Aspirations

This separate annex of the DNP contains a number of community aspirations. Some take the form of projects which will be pursued by the Parish Council, others take the form of actions where the Parish Council will seek to work alongside other organisations and landowners whilst some are expressions of the local community’s vision and ambitions for the future of the Parish.

All of the community aspirations have resulted from work carried out during the production of the DNP but are not subject to planning policies. This annex therefore does not form part of the statutory development plan, but nevertheless is an important element for the community in achieving the vision set out in the DNP for the Parish.

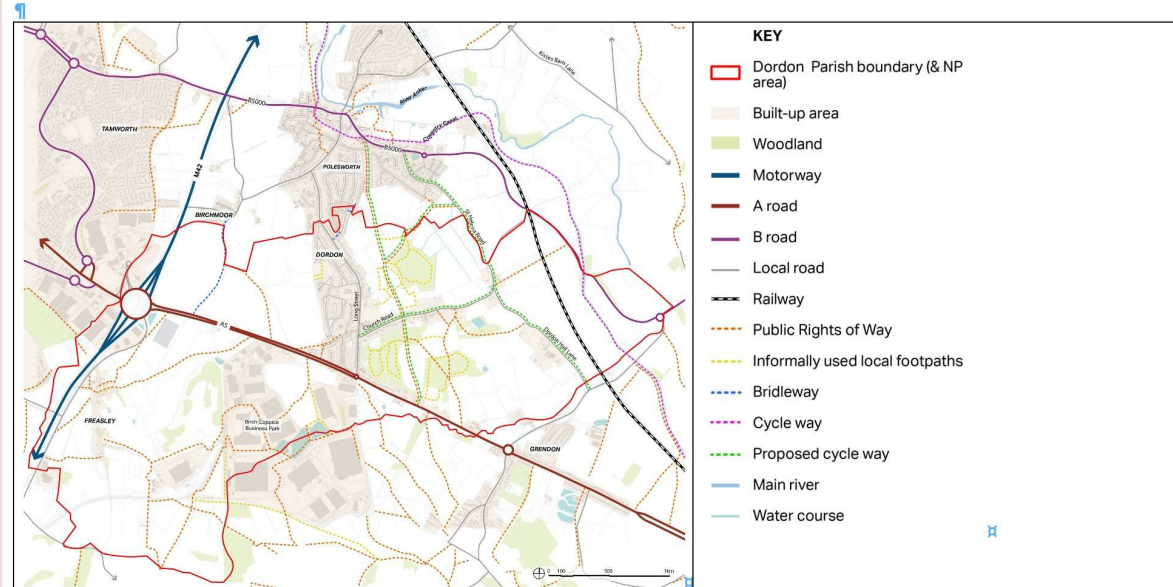
<p>Community Aspiration 1 Tree Planting Linked to Community Objective (CO) 1 Environmental Protection and Policy DNP2 Protecting the Natural Environment and Enhancing Biodiversity, Policy DNP4 Protecting Landscape Character</p>	<p>To increase the number of trees, wooded areas and hedges in the Parish. Working with the community and landowners to seek funding opportunities and to identify locations across the Parish for new tree planting.</p>
<p>Community Aspiration 2 Community Engagement on Birch Coppice Club Linked to CO 3 Community Services and Facilities and Policy DNP11 Protecting and Enhancing the Provision of Community Facilities</p>	<p>To work with the landowners, Birch Coppice Club and NWBC to help shape the provision of improved facilities when they are relocated and to ensure that the layout and design does not visually impact the Significant gap.</p>
<p>Community Aspiration 3 Enhancing the Public Right of Way Network Linked to CO 2 Access to the Countryside, CO 4 Integration, CO 5 Getting Around and Policy DNP5 Creating a Local Green Network</p>	<p>To work with NWBC, local landowners and WCC to identify and reinstate any PRoWs that have been lost. To work with developers and landowners as part of a long-term aspiration to connect existing routes and to create a wider green network.</p>

To work with local landowners and WCC to secure permissive routes where possible and including from Kitwood Recreation Ground to the relocated Birch Coppice Sports Club.

To work with NWBC and local landowners to provide a pedestrian route from Long Street Recreation Ground (proposed as a LGS) to the east.

To work with NWBC, WCC and Polesworth Parish Council to create new cycling routes both within the Parish and connecting to the wider network as shown in the map below.

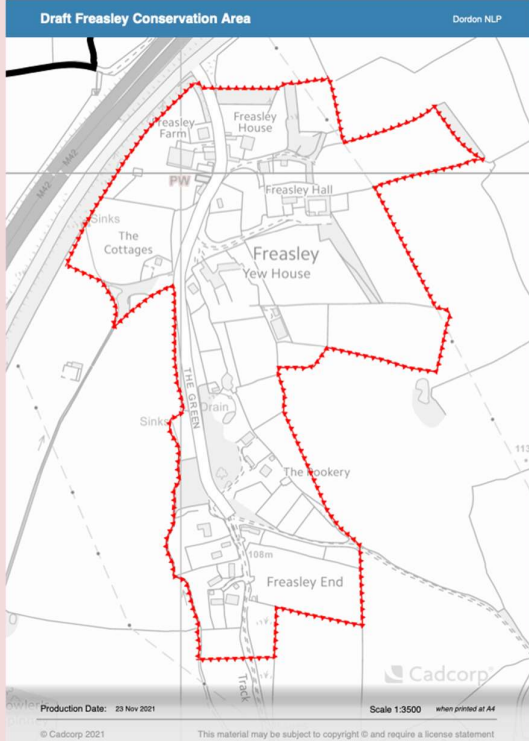
Extract from AECOM Masterplan analysis of the Parish showing Dordon's Local Green Network—existing and proposed cycle and walking routes




OS 100060095

Note that informal routes shown indicate informal places where people walk

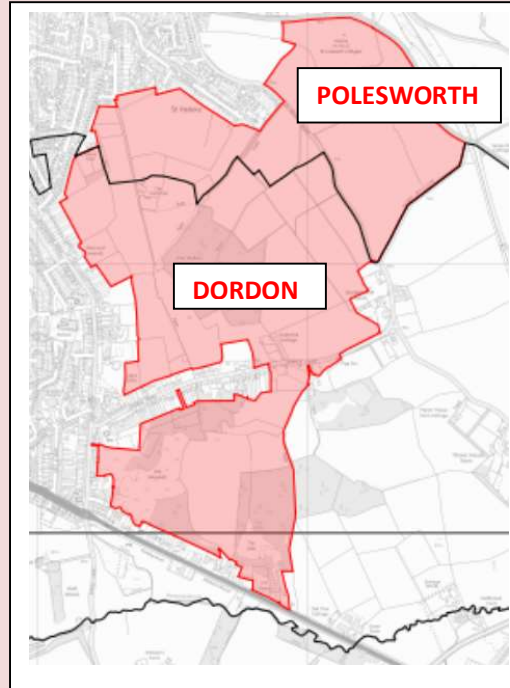
The area outside the DNP boundary is outside the remit of DNP policy 5 but shows the wider context and where the routes can connect to the wider area

<p>Community Aspiration 4 Designation of a Conservation Area for Freasley Linked to CO 6 Protecting the Historic Environment and Policy DNP6 Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets</p>	<p>To seek the designation of a part of Freasley village including the common and its environs as a Conservation Area. (see map of suggested boundary below)</p>  <p>OS 100060095</p>
<p>Community Aspiration 5 Narrow Country Lanes Linked to CO 6 Protecting the Historic Environment and Policy DNP6 Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets</p>	<p>To seek the appropriate recognition for the narrow country lanes (former drovers' lanes) see map 8b that converge near Dordon Hall, in particular, the sunken ancient Holloway as referenced in the HER 8375 Grid ref SK 27 00</p>

<p><u>Community Aspiration 6 Energy Efficiency</u> Linked to CO 11 Climate Change and Policy DNP10 Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technologies</p>	<p>To work with developers to identify opportunities to maximise energy efficiency and use renewable energy in all aspects of development.</p>
<p><u>Community Aspiration 7 Community Facilities</u></p> <p><u>Community Aspiration 8 Village Hall</u></p> <p><u>Community Aspiration 9 Dordon Dell</u></p> <p>All linked to CO3 Community Facilities and Local Services, Policy DNP11 Protecting and Enhancing the Provision of Community Facilities</p>	<p>To work with NWBC, the landowners and the local community to ensure that community facilities meet local needs.</p> <p>To seek funding to renovate the Village Hall (including using renewable energy and altering the interior to make it more suitable for modern users. Linked to proposal to improve the public realm (including adding trees and seating) around the Neighbourhood Centre making this area a community hub.</p> <p>To work with the landowners to create a habitat rich community space called Dordon Dell on the site next to Long Street Recreation Area. In the map below Long Street Recreation area is shown in green stripes with the proposed Dordon Dell in dark green.</p>  <p>The idea has community support and the proposal is in accordance with the Borough Priorities in NWBCs Green Space Strategy <i>'Where appropriate, and in consultation with the local community, allow some informal open</i></p>

	<p><i>space to be developed for alternative green space uses such as new play space or for management as natural green space’.</i>⁸⁵</p>
<p>Community Aspiration 10 Traffic Congestion Linked to CO 5 Getting Around</p>	<p>To lobby and work with NWBC and WCC to provide a solution to the severe traffic congestion on Long Street and New Street. To explore the introduction of a one-way system to improve traffic flow.</p>
<p>Community Aspiration 11 Community Engagement on H4 Linked to CO1 Environmental Protection, CO2 Access to the Countryside, CO3 Community Services and Facilities, CO4 Integration, CO6 Protecting the Historic Environment, CO7 Village Identity, CO8 Design Principles, CO9 Housing Type</p>	<p>Policy H4 of the recently adopted North Warwickshire Local Plan allocates land to the east of Polesworth and Dordon for a minimum of 2000 homes (with 1675 provided within the plan period). This is meeting a wider housing need and about 60% of H4 is in Dordon Parish with the remainder of the site falling within Polesworth Parish. As a result, it is not possible to include a planning policy on the site as the site does not fall wholly within the DNP plan area.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the allocation was an important driver in bringing the community together to work on the DNP and as the development will double in size the number of dwellings in Dordon and will change the character of Dordon Parish, it is critical that the DNP acknowledges the allocation. The inclusion of this community aspiration sets out the local community’s wishes for the allocation and more than begins the conversation with the developers, signalling how the new can be successfully integrated with the existing village.</p> <p>The Map below shows the extent of H4 that is within Dordon Parish.</p>

⁸⁵ See page 16 Green Space Strategy at <https://www.northwarks.gov.uk>



Local residents still have significant concerns about the loss of the open countryside and the impact on the highway network, but work carried out as part of, and during the production of the DNP has focused on maximising the benefits of the allocation for local residents.

To this end, the NPWG has developed a positive approach to the development of the site and identified key criteria that the Parish Council will take forward on behalf of the local community. The approach taken has been based on a mix of local knowledge and understanding, community engagement and work carried out by AECOM. Key criteria were prepared early on in the DNP process that were informed and supported by the National Design Guidance 2019, the NPPF, Building for a Healthy Life 2020 and the Local Plan. The key criteria formed the basis for the discussions with AECOM. The Key Criteria are on the DNP web site as background information.

The key criteria informed AECOMs Design Guide and Code and the Masterplan Framework, these are available at

<https://dordon.neighbourhoodplan.uk/supporting-docs>

It is recognised that the Masterplan Framework plan is one expression of how H4 can be built out. Whilst it is the community's preferred expression, technical studies may require alternate layouts.

It is therefore the community's aspiration, in supporting development in accordance with Policy H4 of the Local Plan, that any proposals:

- Are well designed and take account of the Dordon Design Guide and Code 2021 and the Masterplan Framework

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate well to the local and wider context ensuring that integration and connection with the existing village is successful and designed with the existing community, as well as the new community in mind, and avoids the creation of a separate settlement • Create a new focal point for both the existing and new community, promoting integration and a shared sense of being in a conveniently located local centre without adversely affecting the vitality and viability of existing services and facilities • Provide direct and safe access points for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport to and from the existing village, its services and facilities, the new primary school and any newly created local centre • Ensure that key amenities and services are conveniently located and accessible to all people including for those with mobility issues to maximise the options for promoting healthy lifestyles and the enhancement of quality of life • Include open spaces, green corridors and networks for wildlife to create a smooth transition between new development, open countryside and the existing village • Protect mature trees and hedgerows to provide wildlife corridors to Anker Valley where practicable • Protect the existing areas of ancient woodland and local wildlife sites by incorporating appropriate landscape buffers that enhance existing habitats with sympathetic use of species appropriate to the locale and soil conditions • Incorporate landscaping as an integral part of the scheme to maximise the use of wildlife beneficial plants including for tree planting along streets and pavements (where practicable and viable) and uses native hedgerows and trees for boundary treatments to create the habitats that support the birds and protected species on the red list identified in Appendix D (or up to date ornithologist assessment) • Are of an exemplary standard in combating climate change and respond to NWBC’s declaration of a climate emergency • Respond positively to, and respect, the rich heritage of the area including the heritage assets on the site and the historic rural character of the landscape and its characteristic narrow lanes and historic routes • Take account of the undulating topography of the area and respect key views and create a visual connection between the existing village and new development • Identify potential impacts on health and wellbeing through a Health Impact Assessment or similar as encouraged by Public Health Warwickshire <p>Dordon Parish Council will continue to work positively with NWBC, the developers and Polesworth Parish Council to ensure that the key criteria remain central to the delivery of the final H4 Masterplan.</p>
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Appendix B Photos of Key Views (shown on Map 5)



V1 looking south west across Kitwood Park and beyond across the Strategic Gap. Long view but with hedgerow and trees showing the boundary of Kitwood Park. Demonstrates the contribution the Strategic Gap makes to the separation of the edge of the Dordon built up area from development of large industrial units south of the A5 and the separation between Dordon and Tamworth.



V2 Looking from Barn Close across the Strategic Gap towards Birch Coppice industrial estate. The mound which was Birch Coppice Slag heap is in the distance. The long view demonstrates the contribution the Strategic Gap makes to the separation of the residential edge of the Dordon built up area from development of large industrial units south of the A5.



V3 looking north east across the Strategic Gap looking from A5/M42 junction looking towards Dordon. Shows how the land gently rises up to the edge of Dordon on a ridgeline and how the Strategic Gap provides an important area of separation between the residential edge to the major transport corridor and large industrial units. The Key View shows the landscape relationship with the built form.



V4 From Long Street Recreation Park looking east across hedgerows with an Oak tree (TPO) to the left on Dordon Common. In the middle-distance is Hollies Woodland. This view demonstrates the close relationship of this part of Dordon with the landscape to the east, its open aspect and rural scene. The undeveloped nature of the space and the richness of the hedgerows is apparent. Long views are glimpsed to Leicestershire.



V5 Looking south across Freasley Common (this is a Local Green Space Designation). Demonstrates the mature landscape in this part of Dordon.



V6 At Dordon Hall Lane junction with St Helena Road looking north east down Sandy Lane.



V7 St Helena Road junction with Dordon Hall Lane looking towards Polesworth. Demonstrates the very rural landscape character in this part of the Parish with the mature trees and hedgerows.



V8 Dunn's Lane/Dordon Hall Lane looking south east adjacent to PRoW– note train to London in the distance. Demonstrates the open rural aspect and long views from this high point on the east of the Parish. Land in the far distance is Leicestershire.



V9 Dordon Hall Lane dropping down to Grendon – the route here is a Medieval Hollow Way and shows the glimpsed long views looking south east with mature trees and hedgerows.



V10 At the high vantage point with the Hollies on the left, looking north the buildings are in Polesworth. Demonstrates the landscape relationship with the built form with long views interspersed with woodland and hedgerow.



V11 from Ollies Bench looking south east shows how Dordon village sits atop a ridgeline and how the landscape falls away to the south east before rising up. The wooded area in near view is the remnant of Birch Coppice wood. It is a Local Wildlife Site. The rising land in the distance is outside the Plan area.



V12 top of the Orchard Site looking south east across the woodland that is a Local Wildlife Site. Demonstrates the topography and the sense of openness in this part of the Plan area with long views towards Baddesley (the rising land is outside the Plan area).



V13 top of Orchard Site looking east towards Grendon and Atherstone in the distance. Demonstrates the rolling topography of the area and the mature trees with long views.

Appendix C Summary of Landscape Characteristics from the Landscape Character Assessment for Dordon Parish

Area 3 Anker Valley – Land east of Dordon village

- The landform is undulating, but generally descends to the east, with Dordon on the ridge of higher ground. Land use is prominently agricultural. Both pasture and arable, old woodland, with a large block of woodland (The Hollies) which is an ancient woodland and a SINC.
- On the western side near Dordon village there are small to medium side fields, enclosed by hedgerows with some hedgerow trees. Land is mainly under pasture. Further east and north the fields become large and more regular.
- There are tracks and paths (a mixture of public rights of way and informal routes) that allow access to the landscape. The River Anker, Coventry Canal and flood plain cut through the eastern edge of the Parish, the northern edge of the Parish east of Dordon village is more undulating.

Area 5 Tamworth Fringe Uplands - Land west of Dordon village

- Dordon village and the industrial buildings at Birch Coppice Business Park are visible across the landscape and influence its character.
- A varied area of land south of the A5 at Dordon, extending east from Birch Coppice Business Park. The landform descends from the A5 south to a watercourse, before rising again further south. Land is under a variety of uses including arable and pasture, agricultural land but also a former sewage treatment works (now rough ground) and blocks of deciduous woodland and a large pond.
- Some field boundaries appear historic with a high proportion of mature hedgerows. Other field boundaries have been removed or comprise closely maintained hawthorn. There are also some isolated farms/houses. Views are possible from the A5, the local lanes and paths.
- To the north of the A5 the land is undulating and slopes to the north. [This is the area designated as a Strategic Gap in NWBC's Adopted Local Plan.] In places the slopes are fairly steep. The landform provides some evidence to the settlement to the north, although the properties on the higher ground towards Birch Coppice are more exposed. The land is mainly under arable cultivation, with medium size fields. There are some hedgerows and trees.

Appendix D A Review of the Birds of Dordon 2021 Compiled by a Local Resident

As a keen amateur ornithologist and ‘birder’ I have been walking the areas around Dordon, since the early 1980’s. These started with trips out with my grandfather as a child, when I would stay with my grandparents at the weekend. I moved into the village of Dordon eight years ago and have been enjoying the wildlife of the area ever since. Over nearly forty years I have witnessed an unfortunate decline in a huge number of bird species. This has coincided with increased the intensification of agriculture, an increase in traffic levels and the development of the old Birch Coppice Pit site. Further developments will no doubt contribute to the continued downward trajectory of a number of important bird species.

In this review I have used the most recent Birds of Conservation Concern 4 report to identify the species held within the red and amber lists and to provide information for each species from a local perspective.

Birds of Conservation Concern Overview

The UK’s leading bird organisations have worked together to review the status of birds in the UK. The bird species that breed or overwinter were assessed against a set of objective criteria to be placed on the green, amber or red list – indicating an increasing level of conservation concern. Birds of Conservation Concern 4 has placed more species onto the red list than ever before. The review used up-to-date information on the status of birds in the UK in their ranges, drawing on data collated through the UK’s bird monitoring schemes.

The BoCC4 Red List Dordon

Grey Partridge

This species is probably just about clinging on as a breeding bird in the area. Sightings are now sporadic with the Straight Fields and the Hoo Hill to Sandy Way Lane area being the best areas. This native species is not to be confused with the **Red-legged Partridge** that is released in large number with the area for shooting purposes.

Lapwing

This species was once a familiar and abundant breeding bird of the Dordon area. Unfortunately, the decline in the area mirrors that of the decline nationally. The species just about clings on as a breeding species in the following areas:

Hoo Hill to Sandy Way Lane – Sheep pasture and agricultural land – 2 to 3 pairs annually.

Sandy Way Lane to Spon Lane – Agricultural land – 1 to 2 pairs annually.

Straight Fields (M42 to Kitwood Avenue south of Birchmoor) – Agricultural land – 2 to 3 pairs annually.

The species was once a prolific breeder on the site of the old Birch Coppice Pit. Unfortunately, it has now been lost as a breeding bird due to the development of the site and the subsequent extension of it.

The agricultural area between Hoo Hill to Spon Lane are an important wintering site in the area. Numbers vary from 40 to 120 birds each winter.

Ringed Plover

This is a former breeding species that once used the old Birch Coppice Pit site (1 to 2 pairs annually). There have also been occasional breeding attempts in the Straight Fields area south of Birchmoor. There has been no evidence of breeding since 2016.

Cuckoo

This is another species that has suffered a huge decline in the area over the past twenty years or so. Calling males can usually be heard from the end of April to mid-May with juveniles appearing in The Hollies area from June and July. Due to the secretive nature of this species, it is difficult to confirm breeding, but with juvenile birds being seen in the areas from Long Street Park over to St Helena Road during most years, evidence may suggest that breeding does still occur.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

To my knowledge this species has never bred in the area and my first sighting came as recently as Spring 2020 at The Hollies. Since this time, both male and female birds have been seen and 'drumming' has been heard during 2020 and 2021. The recent thinning out of some species of tree at The Hollies seems to be to their liking.

Merlin

Although not a breeding bird, this species can often be found in the area during the winter. It seems to be attracted to the passerines that are attracted to the game crop that is planted north of St Helena Road. Another favoured area during winter is the Straight Fields.

Willow Tit

This is another species that was once abundant around the former Birch Coppice Pit site but is now very scarce. Calling birds now seem to be restricted to area of birch woodland just north of the A5 between Watling Street and Dunn's Lane. They have also occurred very occasionally at The Hollies in recent years. They seem to be clinging on a breeding species in the area, but only just.

Skylark

By far the most important area for this species is the Straight Fields site south of Birchmoor and east of the M42. I estimate that 8 to 15 pairs use the cereal fields to breed. Smaller numbers can also be found breeding in the cereal fields from Hoo Hill to Spon Lane.

Grasshopper Warbler

This a sporadic breeding bird of the area, with the sparse hedges and bramble patches around the Straight Fields being their favoured sites. The last confirmed breeding attempt here was in 2018. Singing males have also been recorded at the old Dordon Sewage Works site south of the A5 and around the pond to the east of the birch woodland between the A5 and the Dunn's Lane/Dordon Hall Lane junction.

Starling

Although the numbers of this species have greatly reduced over the years, breeding does occur in fairly healthy numbers throughout the area (including the roof of my house in Long Street). This species requires areas of open land in order to forage for leatherjackets. It will therefore come as no surprise that the sheep fields around Dordon Hall and Hoo Hill are favoured feeding areas throughout the year but especially during the winter when a flock of up to 600 birds can be seen. They also feed in good numbers in the fields between The Hollies and Long Street, particularly during the spring when they have hungry chicks to feed.

Fieldfare

This a widespread yet declining autumn and winter visitor to the area. Flocks of up to 200 to 600 birds can still be encountered. The favoured feeding areas include the sheep fields and agricultural fields between Hoo Hill and Spon Land and the sheep fields between Dordon Hall and The Hollies. The berries of the hawthorn hedges surrounding the fields between The Hollies and Long Street are also an important food source, especially during harsh weather conditions as is the area between the A5 and Dunn's Lane.

Song Thrush

This is still fortunately a familiar sight and sound in the area, although not in the numbers I once witnessed as a child. Breeding territories can be found all over the area where there is suitable habitat. Breeding hotspots include Hall End Coppice, The Hollies (and surrounding hedgerows), Long Street Park, the Church Road gardens and the old brickworks. I estimate there to be around 8 to 15 breeding pairs in the area.

Redwing

The status is fairly similar to the Fieldfare above but in much smaller numbers with around 50 to 200 birds present during the winter. The birch woodlands of The Hollies and the old brickworks seem to be an important feeding area in Spring just before they migrate back to their breeding grounds in northern Europe.

Mistle Thrush

This is a scarce breeding bird in the area with just 3-6 pairs present. The favoured breeding areas are Dordon churchyard and the adjacent birch woodland, the Dordon Hall area and Hoo Hill area.

Whinchat

A former breeder around the old Birch Coppice Pit site. The hedgerows between The Hollies and Long Street, as well as the Straight Fields seem to be important stop over sites for feeding during their Spring migration.

House Sparrow

Although suffering concerning declines nationwide, this a species that seems to do well around Dordon, especially around the older housing of Long Street/New Street and what is known as the 'Coalboard Estate'. Healthy numbers can also be found around Dordon Hall. During the breeding season, the hawthorn hedgerows between The Hollies and Long Street are an important feeding area for the village population.

Tree Sparrow

This a fickle breeding species of the area. After an absence of several years it can suddenly reappear in small numbers to breed. The only area that seems to attract them nowadays is the Dordon Hall locality including the sheep fields east of The Hollies and the hedgerows around Hoo Hill and Sandy Way Lane. The last confirmed breeding attempt occurred in 2018 when up to four territories were found in this area.

Spotted Flycatcher

Once a regular breeding species of the area, especially around Dordon churchyard and the site of the former Dordon sewage works. It was once also regular in The Hollies area. There have been occasional sightings at this site in recent Springs so hopefully it has the potential to recolonise, especially since the management of a part of woodland has created suitable breeding habitat.

Yellow Wagtail

Another rapidly declining species. The good news is that regular breeding still occurs in the area. Confirmed breeding sites include the Straight Fields, south of Birchmoor. This site contains 1-5 breeding pairs each year, especially when oilseed rape is planted. Other breeding locations include the area from Hoo Hill to Spon Lane where 1-3 pairs breed most years.

Grey Wagtail

This species seems to be established around the Birch Coppice industrial site where 1-2 pairs breed each year. A minor success among all the other declines.

Linnet

Another species that seems to be making a bit of a resurgence in the area. Regular breeding occurs in most areas of suitable mixed farmland habitat. The main areas are The Hollies hedgerows (3-4 pairs), the Straight Fields (3-4 pairs) and The Hoo Hill to Spon Lane area (5-6 pairs). An important wintering site is the area between Hoo Hill and Sandy Way Lane where flocks of up to 500 birds have been seen in recent winters. These are no doubt attracted to the game crop planted there. These flocks in turn attract both **Merlin** and **Sparrowhawk** during the winter months.

Lesser Redpoll

The established birch woodland between the A5 and Dunn's Lane and the site of the former brickworks have produced breeding pairs in recent years but no more than 1-3 pairs. These same areas of woodland are also important as winter feeding sites with mixed flocks of **Lesser Redpoll** and **Siskin** containing anything from 20-70 birds. This past winter has produced decent numbers that have even attracted the scarce **Mealy Redpoll** to the area.

Yellowhammer

Numbers of this once abundant farmland species seem to be declining year on year. Just 3-8 pairs now seem to breed with the Hoo Hill to Spon Lane area holding most territories. The only other site nowadays is the Straight Fields area which holds no more than 1-2 pairs. As with the **Linnet**, an important wintering site is the area between Hoo Hill and Sandy Way Lane where flocks of up to 25 birds have been seen in recent winters.

Corn Bunting

Most definitely extinct as a breeding bird in the area unfortunately. Sporadic sightings of single birds have occurred in the Sandy Way Lane area in winter.

Survey Information on other species provided by another local resident

There is an active Badger Sett on Hoo Hill
H4 has Hedgehogs, Slow worms, Adders
Common and Soprano Pipistrelle bat on H4
Great Crested Newts in the Ponds around Dordon Hall

18 May 2021

Appendix E Housing Affordability

From the Housing Needs Assessment for Dordon Parish showing that single earners cannot afford any housing product

Table 4-5: Affordability thresholds in Dordon (income required, £)

Tenure	Mortgage Value	Rent	Income required	Affordable on average incomes? £38,300	Affordable on LQ earnings (single earner)? £17,089	Affordable on LQ earnings (2 earners)? £34,178
Market Housing						
NA Median House Price	£142,200	-	£40,629	No	No	No
LA New Build Mean House Price	£262,102	-	£74,886	No	No	No
NA LQ/Entry-level House Price	£125,100	-	£35,743	Yes	No	No
Average Market Rent	-	£14,034	£46,780	No	No	No
Entry-level Market Rent	-	£8,502	£28,340	Yes	No	Yes
Affordable Home Ownership						
Discounted Market Sale (-20%)	£126,400	-	£32,503	Yes	No	Yes
Discounted Market Sale (-30%)	£110,600	-	£28,440	Yes	No	Yes
Discounted Market Sale (-40%)	£94,800	-	£24,377	Yes	No	Yes
Discounted Market Sale (-50%)	£20,314	£6,583	£26,898	Yes	No	Yes
Shared Ownership (50%)	£10,157	£9,875	£20,032	Yes	No	Yes
Shared Ownership (25%)	£126,400	-	£32,503	Yes	No	Yes
Affordable Rented Housing						
Affordable Rent (average)	-	£5,777	£23,107	Yes	No	Yes
Social Rent (average)	-	£5,216	£20,862	Yes	No	Yes

Source: AECOM Calculations

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.

<p>Recommendation to Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">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.

...

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 MTF5 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 pay award 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.

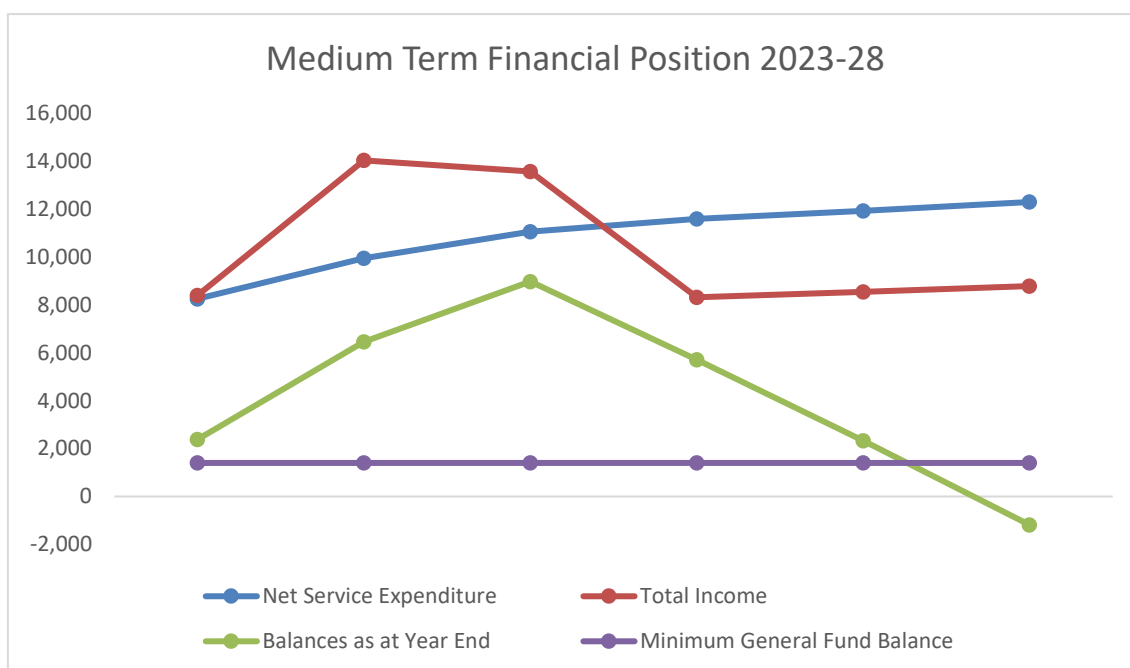
Table 1 Summary of Medium Term Financial Position 2023 – 2028

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
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

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
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

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 customers 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 customers bank account as 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:

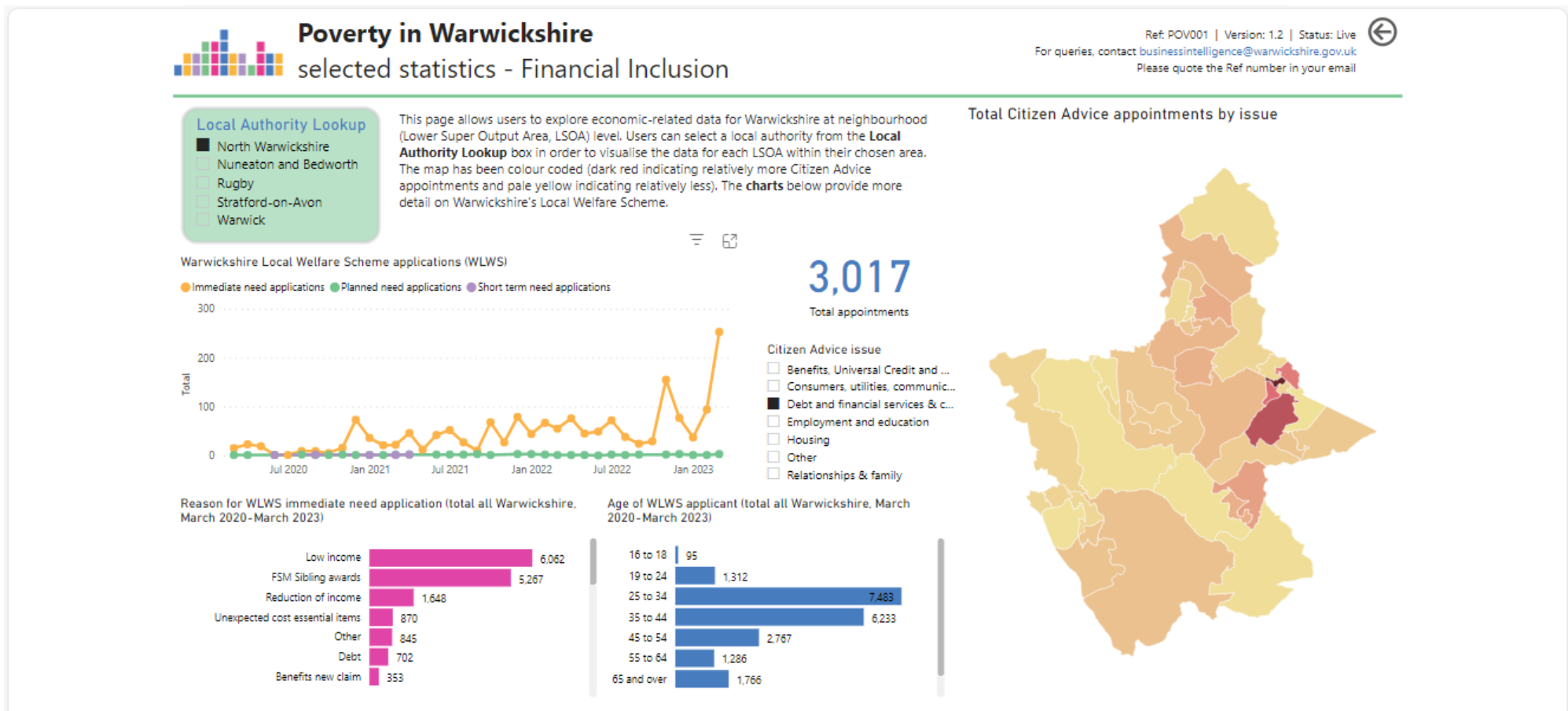
- We are currently working on a project in partnership with MaPS, to establish an 'Advisers Network' which will enable us to transfer people straight through for debt advice. This means that a customer will not have to wait long for debt advice and will get a call back within 30 seconds from a national 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

Financial Inclusion Data 23/24

This following data is from the WCC Poverty Dashboard - :

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiNzU3NGlyMjUtODAxOC00NTYzLTg0MDktMGJhODA0YTMzMk0liiwidCI6Ijg4YjBhYTA2LTU5MjctNGJiYi1hODkzLTg5Y2MyNzEzYWM4MjI5MmMiOj9>





Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Early Years & Education

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 Please quote the Ref number in your email

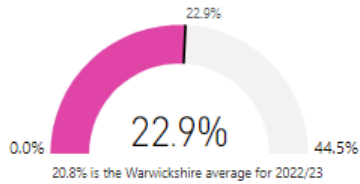


Local Authority Lookup

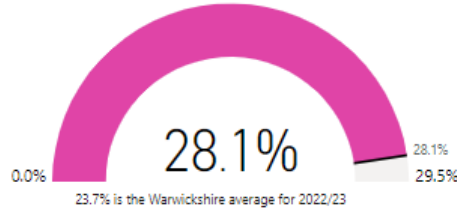
- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick

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.

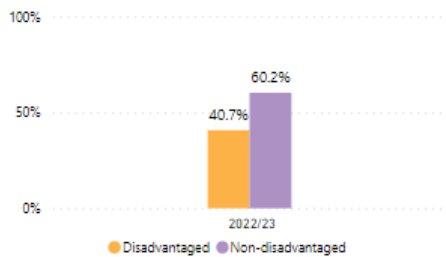
Proportion of children eligible and claiming a Free School Meal (Nursery to Y13+)



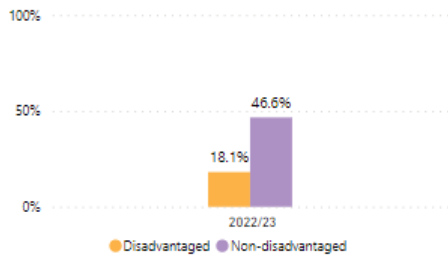
Proportion of pupils missing 10%+ days of school



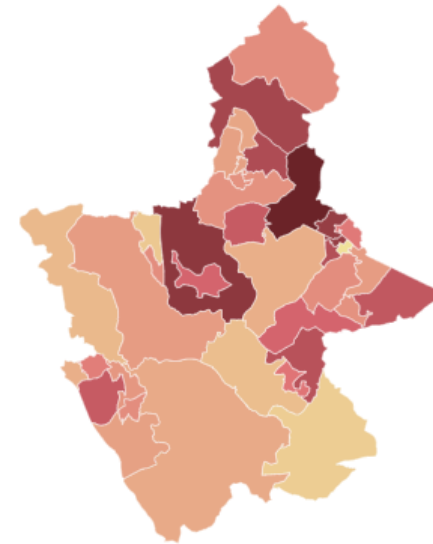
Proportion of Year 6 (KS2) Children achieving the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths



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

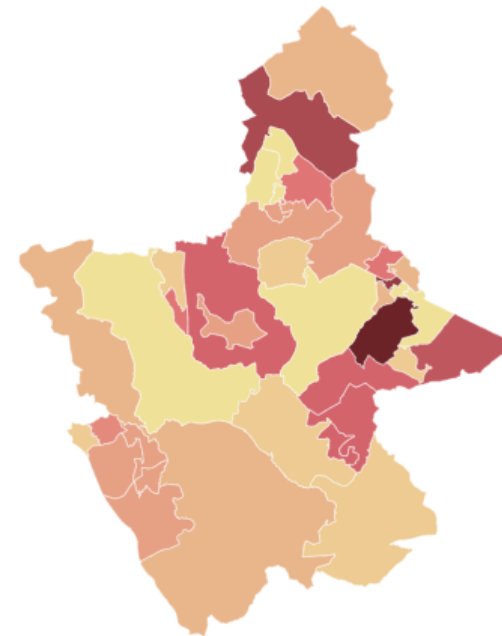
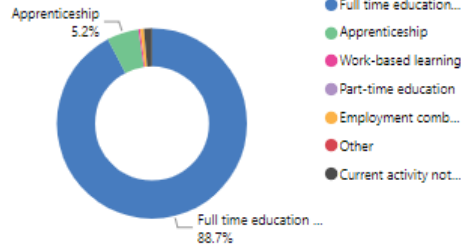
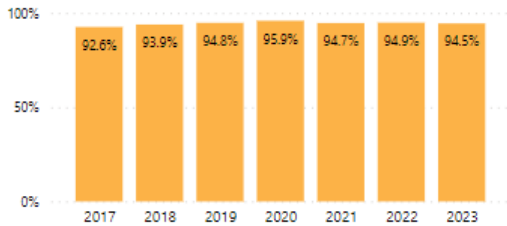
This page allows users to explore economic-related data for Warwickshire. Users can select a local authority from the **Local Authority Lookup** box in order to visualise the data for their chosen area. The map has been colour coded (dark red indicating relatively more claimants and pale yellow indicating 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

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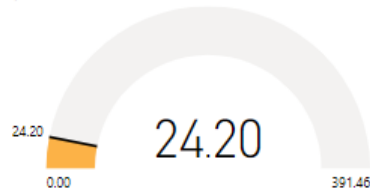
Local Authority Lookup

- 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.

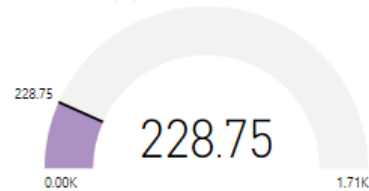
Number of children in relatively low-income families (provisional 2021/22)

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



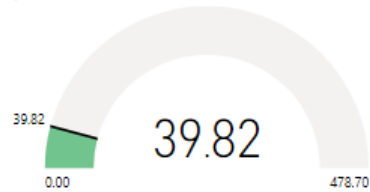
24.42 is the Warwickshire average for 2023

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



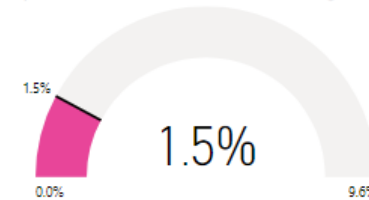
231.47 is the Warwickshire average for 2023

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

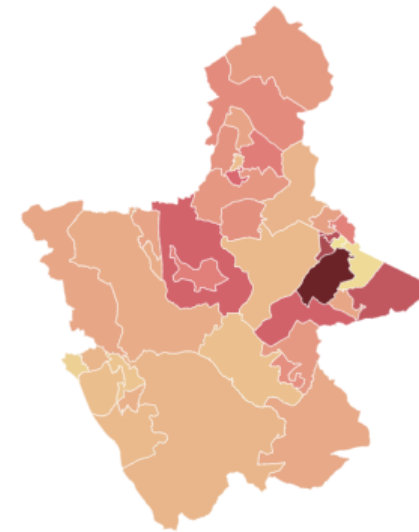


55.56 is the Warwickshire average for 2023

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

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

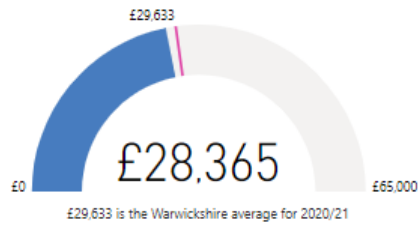


Local Authority Lookup

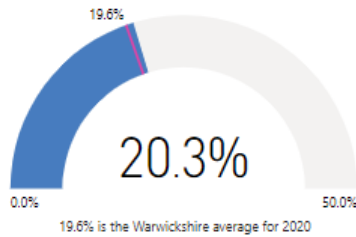
- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick

This page allows users to explore 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.

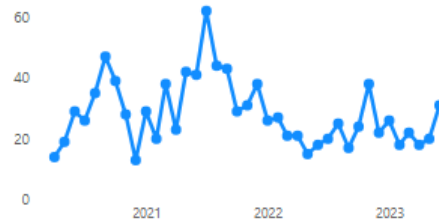
Gross PAYE and benefits equivalised household income (2020/21) 50th percentile



Proportion of population in receipt of State Pension



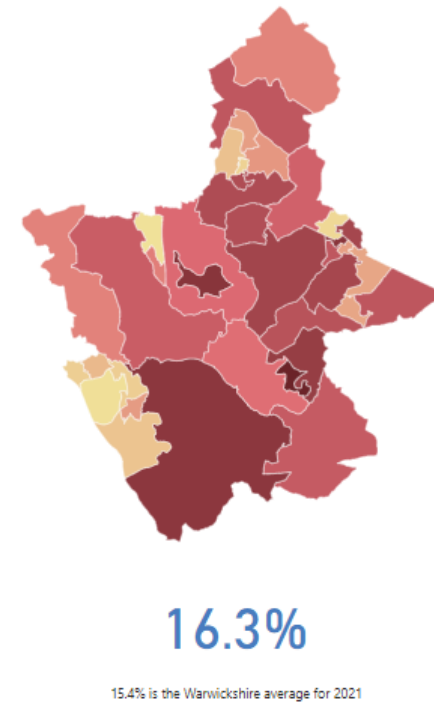
Family Information Service Helpline steps started



Personal Independence Payments (PIP) cases with entitlement



Proportion of fuel poor households (%)





Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Digital & Communication



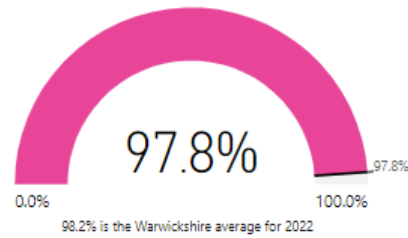
Local Authority Lookup

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

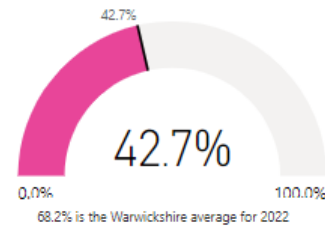
This page allows users to explore digital-related data for Warwickshire at neighbourhood (Lower Super Output Area, LSOA) level. Users can select a local authority from the **Local Authority Lookup** box in order to visualise the data for each LSOA within their chosen area. The map has been colour coded (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

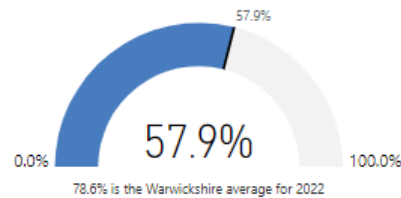
Proportion of premises able to receive Superfast Broadband (30M/bits or more)



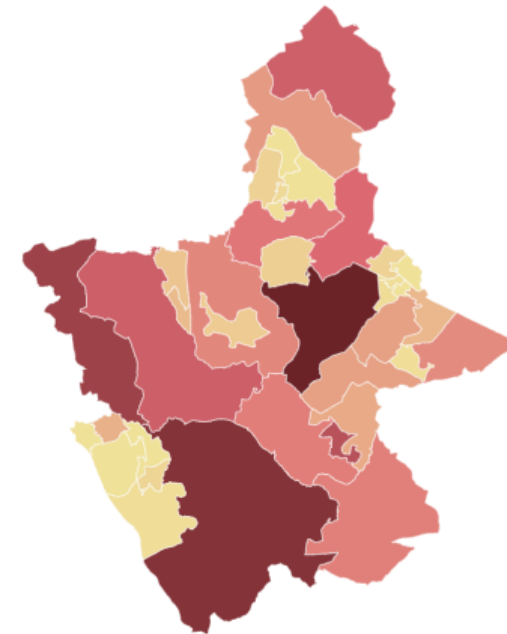
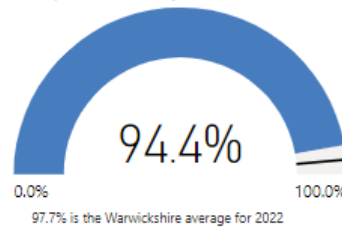
Proportion of premises able to receive Gigabit (Fibre)



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

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 & 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.

Life expectancy (2020)

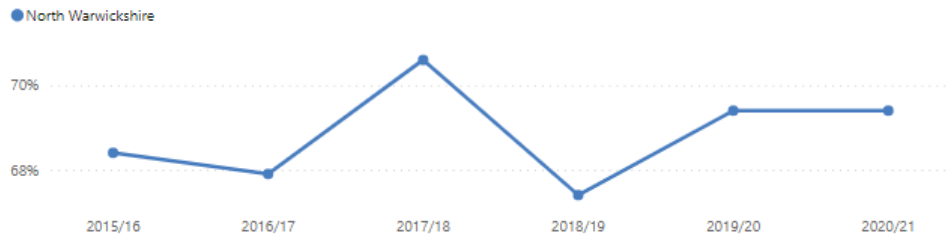


Take up of Healthy Start Vouchers (% Local Authority only) (4-week cycle)



- 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



- at 65 (Female)
- at 65 (Male)
- At birth (Female)
- At birth (Male)



Poverty in Warwickshire

selected statistics - Food

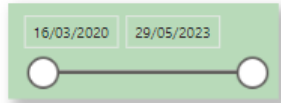
Local Authority Lookup

- 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

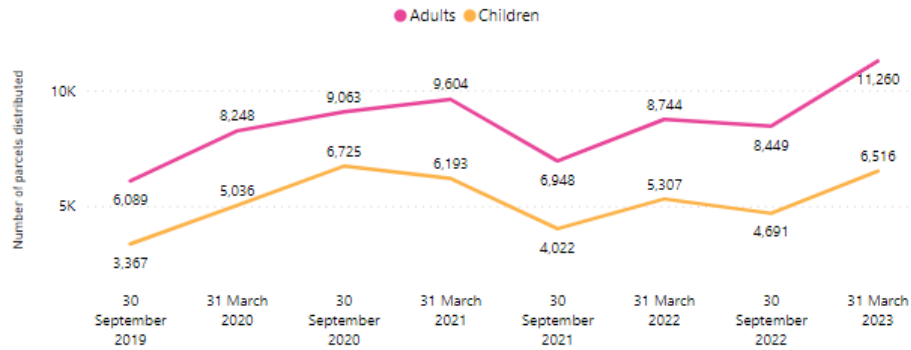
3,230

Adults

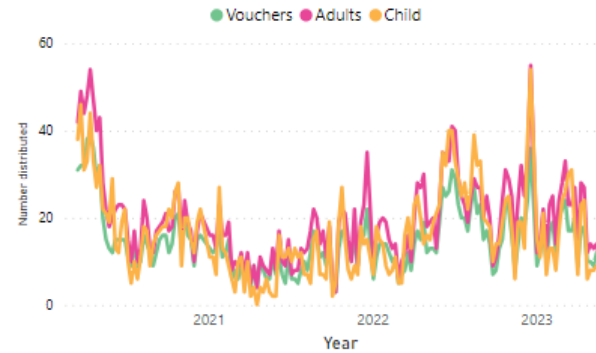
2,721

Children

Trussell Trust

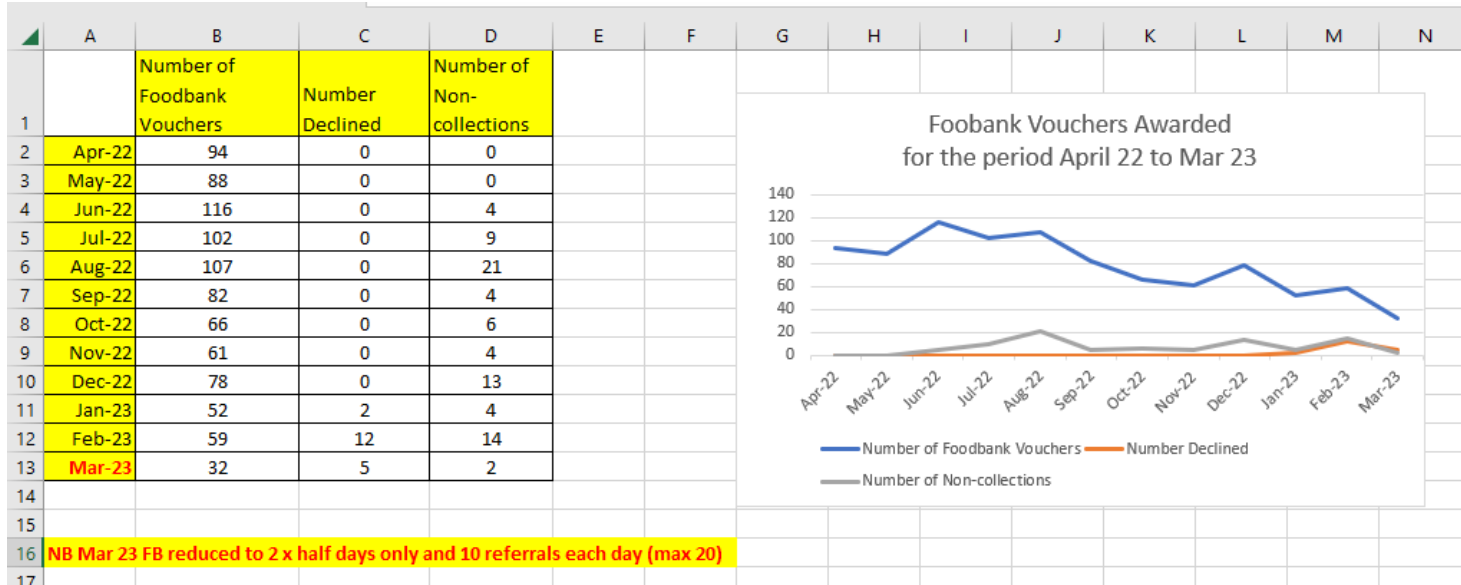


Ediblelinks



Foodbank Vouchers – Ediblelinks

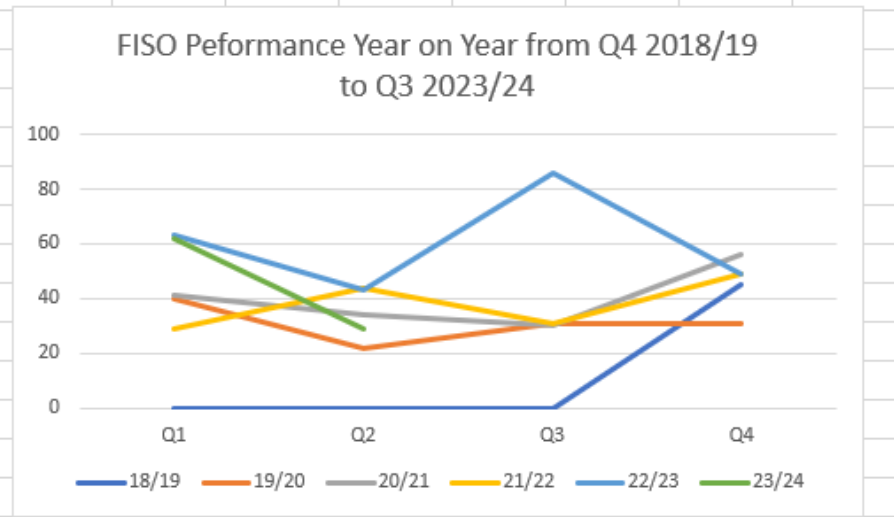
NB: Caveats in relation to 'access' and numbers of vouchers that Ediblelinks accepted. Ediblelinks reduced the number of referral they would accept from Mar 23 (2 days @ 10 referrals per day) and June 23 (1 day @ 14 referrals per day) due to funding, resources and capacity



	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

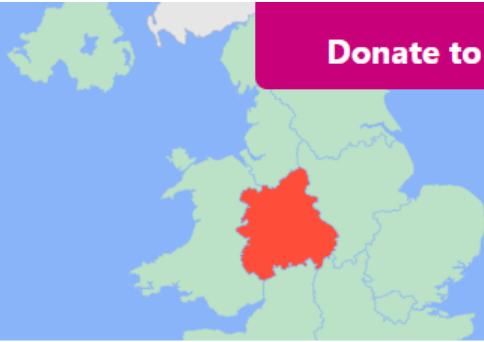
Fuel Vouchers – 23/24 (paid via access and partnership with the Fuel Bank Foundation)

- **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

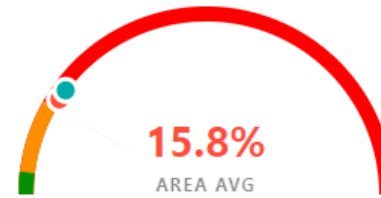


Fuel Poverty Statistics by Constituency

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)
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SSG - Special Sub-Group
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