

**To: The Chairman and Members of the
Community and Environment Board
(Councillors May, L Dirveiks, Fox, Freer,
Gordon, Lewis, M Moss, Payne, Phillips,
Pickard, Sherratt, Smitten, Y Stanley, and
Wykes).**

For the information of other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact Jenny Price,
Democratic Services Officer, on 01827 719450 or
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For enquiries about specific reports please contact
the officer named in the reports.

The agenda and reports are available in large print
and electronic accessible formats if requested.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD AGENDA

8 March 2010

The Community and Environment Board will meet in The
Chamber, The Council House, South Street, Atherstone,
Warwickshire on Monday 8 March 2010, at 6.30pm.

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure.**
- 2 Apologies for Absence / Members away on
official Council business.**
- 3 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial
Interests** (Any personal interests arising from the
membership of Warwickshire County Council of
Councillors Fox and May and the various
Town/Parish Councils of Councillors Fox
(Shustoke), Freer (Atherstone), Lewis (Kingsbury),
M Moss (Kingsbury), Phillips (Kingsbury), Y
Stanley (Polesworth) Sherratt (Coleshill) and
Smitten (Polesworth) are deemed to be declared
at this meeting).

- 4 **Request for discussion of En Bloc items.**
- 5 **Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 25 January 2010** - copy herewith, to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PART A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

- 6 **Financial Assistance to Outside Organisations** - Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Summary

This report provides details of two requests for assistance through the provision of an annual grant. Additionally, the Board is requested to note the support currently being provided to Warwickshire Rural Community Council and to further consider the Authority's future working relationship with this organisation.

The Contact Officers for this report are Jaki Douglas (719492) and Ann McLauchlan (719202).

- 7 **Allotments Development Programme** – Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Summary

This report sets out progress in respect of the implementation of the Allotments Development Programme and seeks approval for a revision of the Allotments Policy Statement, originally approved in 2009, and for further work to be undertaken in respect of the leasing and protection of allotment sites.

The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (01827 719212).

- 8 **North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy Action and Funding Plan** – Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Summary

This report sets out progress in respect of the implementation of Year 2 (2009/10) of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy Action and Funding Plan and informs Members of the work proposed to be undertaken in Year 3 (2010/11).

The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (719212).

- 9 **Streetscape Value for Money Reviews** – Report of the Assistant Director (Streetscape)

Summary

This report informs the Board of the reviews of the Amenity Cleansing and Refuse Collection functions, as part of the Council's policy of reviewing its key services to assess the degree to which they provide Value for Money to Council Tax payers.

The Contact Officer for this report is Richard Dobbs (719440).

- 10 **Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April 2009 – January 2010** - Report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Resources

Summary

This report informs Members of the actual performance and achievement against the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Board for the period April 2009 to January 2010.

The Contact Officer for this report is Robert Beggs (719238).

**PART B – ITEMS FOR EN BLOC DECISIONS
(YELLOW PAPERS)**

- 11 **Tree Management** – Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Summary

This report informs the Board of the Authority's approach in respect of tree management.

The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (719212).

- 12 **North Warwickshire Play Strategy and Play Partnership** - Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the progress being made in the delivery of the North Warwickshire Play Strategy, which exists to provide a co-ordinated approach to play provision and development throughout the Borough.

The Contact Officers for this report are Jaki Douglas (719492) and Jessica Grove (719220)

- 13 **Play Area Development Programme** – Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Summary

This report sets out progress in respect of the implementation of the Council's Play Area Development Programme.

The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (719212).

- 14 **Minutes of the Environment Portfolio Group meeting held 14 January 2010** – copies herewith.

JERRY HUTCHINSON
Chief Executive

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD

25 January 2010

Present: Councillor May in the Chair

Councillors L Dirveiks, Fox, Freer, Gordon, Lewis, M Moss, Phillips, Pickard, Sherratt, Smitten, Y Stanley and Wykes.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Payne.

21 **Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests**

Any personal interests arising from the membership of Warwickshire County Council of Councillors Fox and May and membership of the various Town/Parish Councils of Councillors Fox (Shustoke), Freer (Atherstone), Lewis (Kingsbury), M Moss (Kingsbury), Phillips (Kingsbury), Sherratt (Coleshill) and Smitten (Polesworth) were deemed to be declared at the meeting.

Councillor Smitten declared an interest in Minute No. 26 General Fund Revenue Estimates 2010/11 by reason of being a trustee of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

22 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2009, copies having been previously circulated were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 **Corporate Plan 2010/11**

The Chief Executive presented the updated Corporate Plan for 2010/11. The Board's approval was sought to those parts of the Corporate Plan for which the Board was responsible. Members were also asked to agree the 2010-11 Service Plans for the Leisure and Community Development, Streetscape and Environmental Divisions.

Recommendation to the Executive Board:

- a **That the Executive Board be recommended to agree those parts of the Corporate Plan for which the Community and Environment Board is responsible as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Chief Executive; and**

Resolved:

- b That the Service Plans as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Chief Executive, be approved.**

24 Removal of Sunbeds from Leisure Facilities

The Board was asked to consider a proposal to remove sunbeds from the Council's leisure facilities in view of recent information that identified a direct link between the use of UV sunbeds and cancer.

Resolved:

- a That, in view of recent research that identifies a direct link between the use of UV sunbeds and cancer, the removal of sunbeds from the Council's leisure facilities at the earliest opportunity, be approved; and**
- b That the associated growth bid for inclusion within the 2010/11 revenue estimates, be approved.**

25 General Fund Fees and Charges 2010/2011

The Board was asked to consider the fees and charges for 2009/10 and the proposed fees and charges for 2010/11.

Resolved:

That the schedule of fees and charges as set out in Appendix A, be accepted.

26 General Fund Revenue Estimates 2010/11

The Director of Resources detailed the revised budget for 2009/2010 and an estimate of expenditure for 2010/2011, together with forward commitments for 2011/2012 and 2012/2013.

Resolved:

- a That the revised budget for 2009/2010, be accepted;**

Recommendation to Executive Board

- b That the Executive Board approves Growth items for 2010/11 as follows;**
 - = i). removal of sunbeds from the Council's leisure facilities**
 - = i). additional CAB funding**
 - iii). litter bin replacement programme; and**

- c That the Estimates of Expenditure for 2010/2011 as submitted in the report of the Director of Resources be accepted, and included in the budget to be brought before the meeting of the Executive Board on 8 February 2010.**

27 Capital Programme Bids – Leisure and Community Development Division

The Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) set out the proposed schemes to be included within the Council's capital programme over the next three years (from 2010/2011).

Resolved:

- a That the capital programme scheme as set out in Appendix A of the report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) and previously approved within the Council's three year capital programme be supported for continued inclusion in the Council's three year capital programme;**

Recommendation to Executive Board

- b That the Executive Board be requested to endorse the previously approved Leisure and Community Development capital scheme for continued inclusion within the final capital programme; and**
- c That the Executive Board be requested to endorse the land drainage scheme at Hurley and Wood End Recreation Grounds and the scheme for improvements to Abbey Green Park, Polesworth, for inclusion in the long term capital programme.**

28 Capital Programme Bids – Streetscape

The Assistant Director (Streetscape) highlighted the current position relating to capital programme schemes under the control of the Board.

Resolved:

That no schemes are currently approved for inclusion in the three year capital programme, be noted

29 Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April 2009 – November 2009.

Members were informed of the actual performance and achievement against the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Community and Environment Board for the period of April 2009 to November 2009.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

30 Climate Change Strategy

The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council sought the Board's approval of the draft Climate Change Strategy.

Resolved:

a That the draft Climate Change Strategy be approved; and

b That, following consultation with the Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson, the Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council be given delegated power to make any minor amendments to the Strategy.

31 Prosecution Outcomes – Three Fly Tipping and Waste (Duty of Care) Offences

The Board was updated on the outcome of three prosecutions brought following cases of fly tipping.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

32 Minutes of the Health, Well-being and Leisure Portfolio Group meetings held on 18 September 2009 and 16 December 2009.

The minutes of the Health, Well-being and Leisure Portfolio Group meetings held on 18 September 2009 and 16 December 2009, were received and noted.

33 Minutes of the Community Life Portfolio Group held on 9 December 2009

Minutes of the Community Life Portfolio Group held on 9 December 2009 were received and noted.

34 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

35 **Atherstone Leisure Complex Crèche**

The Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) outlined various options that had been considered relating to the Council's operation of the crèche at Atherstone Leisure Complex and, given the outcome of the review, proposed the closure of the facility at the end of March 2010.

Resolved:

That the proposal to close the crèche at Atherstone Leisure Complex at the end of March 2010, as set out in the report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development), be not accepted.

M.MAY
Chairman

Agenda Item No 6

Community and Environment Board

8 March 2010

**Report of the
Assistant Director
(Leisure and Community Development)**

**Financial Assistance to
Outside Organisations**

1 Summary

- 1.1 Borough Council assistance to outside organisations is provided in many ways, including through its Annual Grants scheme. Two requests for assistance through the provision of an annual grant have been received, one of which is from WCAVA, which is now supported through a three-year countywide arrangement. Additionally, the Board is requested to note the support currently being provided to Warwickshire Rural Community Council and to further consider the Authority's future working relationship with this organisation.

Recommendation to the Board

- a That the draft Service Level Agreement for further negotiation with NW CAB and the two awards for Annual Grants to Voluntary Organisations be approved and administered as indicated in the report, including provision for second instalment payments to made subject to the prior agreement of the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Board;**
- b That Members note that, in line with the Third Sector Strategy timetable, Volunteer and Third Sector Support Services (VATS Services) in Warwickshire are now jointly monitored through a single tendered three-year (April 2010 to March 2013) agreement, which includes an option to extend for a further period, up to a maximum of three years, and that this agreement is currently held with WCAVA;**
- c That the methods for monitoring the VATS Service, as identified in paragraph 4.3 of the report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development), be noted; and**
- d That progress in respect of the review of the services provided by WRCC through funding received from the Borough Council be noted, and that the preferred option (of those detailed in paragraph 8.8) for the future development of this relationship be agreed.**

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 The Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders for Safer Communities, Health, Well-being and Leisure, The Environment, Community Life and Resources have all had an opportunity to comment on the content of this report.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 Through its provision of financial assistance to voluntary and outside organisations, the Council seeks to ensure cost effective support for a broad range of services for the community of North Warwickshire. In pursuance of this objective, this report considers applications for assistance, and recommends awards, through its Annual Grants to Voluntary Organisations scheme.

4 Annual Grants to Voluntary Organisations

- 4.1 An Annual Grant application for 2010/11 has been received from the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB). Additionally, Members will be aware that Volunteer and Third Sector Support Services (VATS Services) in Warwickshire are now jointly monitored through a three-year agreement, which was awarded to WCAVA following a joint tendering and interview process that took place during November 2009. The WCAVA agreement will commence on 01 April 2010 and will run for three years (with an option to extend for a further period, up to a maximum of three years).

- 4.2 Warwickshire CAVA is the countywide infrastructure support organisation that was created through the amalgamation of North Warwickshire Council for Voluntary Service with other county-based CVSs and Volunteer Centres. The Volunteer Centre in North Warwickshire did not assimilate into WCAVA. A partnership and funding agreement is now in place with WCAVA, however, through which the local Volunteer Centre will be delivering volunteering services across North Warwickshire.

- 4.3 Given its previous support for the CAB and WCAVA, the Board will be familiar with the nature of the requests from these two organisations and the previously approved need to link Annual Grant awards to the negotiation of an approved Service Level Agreement (SLA) with recipient bodies. Through these Agreements, the Council seeks to ensure the delivery of mutually compatible outcomes in return for its investment. Wherever possible, these outcomes are linked to the objectives and priorities of the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy. In this regard, the draft SLA for 2010/11 for the CAB is attached at Appendix A. Subject to Board approval, it will provide the basis for the negotiation of the final Agreement. WCAVA, however, is now to be monitored through its achievements against the countywide tender and, as a consequence, a single report will be produced for all partners. In this regard, the proposed monitoring arrangements necessitate the production of an annual report (possibly in January of each year), which will include an

...

Annual Report for the previous year, details of progress to date in the current year (April to December), together with proposals for the forthcoming year, making sure that there is enough detail at district level to enable Members to approve the release of next year's funding. The final monitoring arrangements are currently being determined with partner organisations.

- 4.4 In respect of the Annual Grant applications, it is proposed that 1.5% inflation is added to the 2009/10 awards, resulting in a total sum of £31,536 to be granted to the CAB and £13, 449 to Warwickshire CAVA. The SLA for the CAB requires a six monthly review of its work to be undertaken in pursuance of the provisions of the Agreement. It is proposed that this award continues to be made in two half-yearly payments and that the second payment is only made with the agreement of the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Board and upon the satisfactory completion of work in the first period. For information, the 2009/10 April to December review reports are attached at Appendix B (Part 1 CAB and Part 2 WCAVA).

5 Total Financial Support Granted to CAB and WCAVA-NW

- 5.1 The funding agreed through the Annual Grants scheme provides financial assistance towards the core functions of North Warwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau and Warwickshire CAVA (as detailed in the Service Level Agreement and the Principles and Outcomes for Volunteering and Third Sector Support Services in Warwickshire (VATS Service). The Borough Council also provides additional financial support by offering the CAB and Warwickshire CAVA maximum levels of rate relief. This comprises a sum of 80% mandatory relief and a further 20% discretionary award. The 20% discretionary award granted to the CAB will cost the Council an additional £610 (approximate) and £415 (approximate) for Warwickshire CAVA in 2010/11. The CAB and Warwickshire CAVA also have charitable waste collections, which cost the Authority £203.18 per organisation. These three forms of support result in the Council providing in excess of £14,067 to Warwickshire CAVA in 2010/11.
- 5.2 Members will recall that last year an additional sum of £15,000 was granted to the CAB due to the economic climate and the heightened need for advice and support on a wide range of social issues and in respect of debt advice in particular. Given on-going economic difficulties, there is still a considerable need for this form of advice and support, which has a resultant impact upon people's ability to pay bills (including council tax) and on levels of homelessness. A similar "one off" growth bid, therefore, has been submitted to the Council for approval. The three forms of assistance detailed in paragraph 5.1, plus the additional growth bid of £15,000 (subject to Full Council approval), result in total financial assistance in the sum of £47,349 being awarded to the CAB in 2010/11.

6 Update on the Work of NW CAB

- 6.1 During the period April to December 2009, CAB advisors had 7,172 contacts with clients, which is an increase of 56% over the same period in the preceding year. The number of clients who were new to North Warwickshire CAB increased by 28% in this period. Although this represents a significant increase in contacts, it was lower than anticipated, partly as a consequence of CAB NW joining, in November 2009, the developing county CAB telephone advice service, which currently includes Rugby, Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire. Due to technical difficulties within the service there was an initial reduction in call volumes. This problem has now been resolved. The CAB volunteer recruitment campaign has been successful and has taken on new volunteers. The recruits have received reception training and are now moving into the Assessor training programme. Ultimately, it is hoped that they will move onto Advisor training.
- 6.2 In December 2009, the contract ended for the additional money advisor position, which was funded through "Narrowing the Gap" support. As expected, demand for debt advice remains high and with the loss of a full-time money advisor, it is anticipated that there will be a return to longer waiting times for appointments. Advisors dealt with £7.7 million of debt from April to December 2009. Worryingly, this included 373 priority debts (rent, council tax and mortgage arrears, utilities, secured loans, etc). It should be noted, however, that following the successful bid to the DCSF (in partnership with the Borough Council), a CAB advisor is available on the Branching Out Bus and two static CAB outreach venues, Baddesley Ensor and Coleshill, have been added to the Branching Out Bus (Bob) project.
- 6.3 Funding from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust for the CAB's Community Debt project has been extended to December 2010. A further award of £10,000 has been received from Advantage West Midlands Market Towns Project for recession based advice, which will help economically inactive people to gain skills, thereby preparing them move into employment.

7 Update on the Work of WCAVA - NW

- 7.1 The Board is aware that North Warwickshire Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) merged with Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) on the 01 April 2009. A Local Members Committee (LMC) has now been recruited, which is currently made up of 13 representatives who have a wealth of experience in running local voluntary and community sector organisations. The LMC's role is to ensure that the North Warwickshire locality continues to deliver a high quality service to its members and to scrutinise the work of WCAVA. The LMC has two places at Board level, which will allow for a two way flow of information, enabling local issues and concerns to be raised with the Board.
- 7.2 In establishing WCAVA, local community and voluntary sector organisations were surveyed to ascertain future needs, for which the following prioritised services were identified: One-to-one funding advice, one-to-one help with writing funding bids, the provision of governance advice and funding markets,

one-to-one support in writing constitutions and starting a new group, email bulletins, the provision of a resource library and advice on charity law and business planning. Qualitative data was also collected that identifies the value of current service provision.

- 7.3 WCAVA gained the NAVCA Quality Award in 2009, which confirms that a wide range of high quality services are being provided to member organisations. Unfortunately, a lack of local funding is having a negative impact on service provision. Funding for the Community Development Worker (CDW) ceased in May 2009, leaving the North Warwickshire locality under-resourced for community and voluntary organisations wishing to access one-to-one group development and support. The position helped groups to access funding worth over £2 million to the Borough, enabling community assets such as village and church halls to be refurbished and volunteers to run localised activities, such as luncheon clubs and pre-schools. In response to evident need, a Funding Bid workshop is now open on one evening per month.
- 7.4 The quarterly Voluntary Action North (VAN) forum has been well supported, with 30 to 35 groups attending each meeting. Forum topics are chosen by the groups and have included Writing a Business Plan, Financial Management, the Warwickshire Compact, the Village Hall Kite Mark and External Funding. February's forum considered "How Local Authorities Work with The Local Voluntary Sector". This provided an opportunity for groups to gain a greater understanding of potential partnership opportunities and enabled representatives to discuss their experiences with staff from both the Borough and County Council.

8 Financial Support to Warwickshire Rural Community Council

- 8.1 The Borough Council has provided funding to the Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC) for a number of years for particular project related work. Unlike WCAVA and the CAB, there is no associated Service Level Agreement.
- 8.2 One of the projects supported by the Borough Council has been support for village shops. Support for village shops, post offices and social enterprises remains a priority in the Corporate Plan in 2010/11 but other than providing rate relief this support is via "identifying opportunities to find resources to support village shops and social enterprises" rather than direct allocation of grant funding. Any proposal to re-establish a grant aid budget for village shops would require a growth bid. Previous grant aid support for the rural retail sector has included the SRB5 "Vital Villages" fund, the rural access to services "WRASP" fund and the North Warwickshire Retail Support programme. The role of WRCC in securing delivery of these programmes has included promotion, direct work with and provision of advice and guidance to shop owners to develop business plans and funding applications and to implement activity. WRCC's Rural Enterprise Project Officer has provided business planning support to rural retailers over seven years and an example of a shop that has benefitted from this is Curdworth Shop and Post Office. As a result of being in a position to take advantage of WRASP grant, they have

nearly doubled the size of the shop and are going from strength to strength in providing a service to their community. The Project Officer has also used his network to gather intelligence concerning the issues faced by rural shops and to champion their case with funders and to work with partners to develop solutions. The functions of providing support, advice and guidance and intelligence gathering remain of value even in the absence of direct grants to shops from the Borough Council.

- 8.3 Additionally, the Borough Council has made provision of £10,000 per annum to WRCC from the Forward Planning budget for supporting the development of Parish Plans. The production of Parish Plans is seen as a means to identify community needs and aspirations at the most local level that can inform development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Core Strategy for the Borough. Although originally subject to a service level agreement, there has been no specification of the level of outputs or outcomes anticipated as a result of the grant funding support. WRCC provided information following the last Board meeting confirming that four Parish Plans have been completed; these are Arley, Atherstone, Curdworth and Hartshill. Other communities at various stages of undertaking Parish planning are: Newton Regis, Austrey, Grendon, Baddesley Ensor, Baxterley, Ansley, Fillongley, Corley, Middleton, Kingsbury and Shuttington. Of these, it is anticipated that Austrey, Baddesley Ensor, Fillongley, Middleton and Shuttington will complete the process during 2010.
- 8.4 Support for Parish Plans has been a corporate priority since 2007 and last year the role of Parish liaison was integrated into the post of Community Development Officer (Rural Regeneration) that was created as part of the review of planning services. The liaison role of this post is to act as a contact point for Parishes in relation to delivery of actions in their Parish Plans that involve Borough Council services, and to liaise internally with relevant officers who will engage with the Parishes. The post also involves support for community initiatives that help to sustain and/or regenerate our rural communities and this includes acting as a support officer for the LEADER project. The LEADER support role is seen as a priority for the next three years and there is no capacity in this post to facilitate development of Parish Plans.
- 8.5 In relation to LEADER, WRCC has played an active role in the development of the project and has expressed interest in delivering projects in rural communities, for example a Rural Communication Initiative and Village Agents, (they also play an active role in the Central Warwickshire LEADER Project).
- 8.6 In order to inform the recommendations to the Board, Ann McLauchlan and Jaki Douglas met with County Council colleagues (Martin Gibbins and Nick Darwen) in December 2009 to discuss the support provided to WRCC and what future arrangements might be. The County Council currently allocates £30,000 to WRCC on a county-wide basis but this mainly supports organisational costs as opposed to grassroots activity. Warwick District Council has also considered with the County Council its relationship to WRCC

in relation to Parish planning and a protocol has been proposed to “add value and clarity to the process and help establish closer working relationships between the three tiers of local government and the rural communities they serve”. This will be discussed at the March meeting of the Warwick Area Committee. WDC currently contributes £5,200 per annum to “actively and directly assist Parishes in developing Appraisals and Plans and promoting public involvement in the process”.

- 8.7 These discussions with County concerning WRCC have been held in the context that the County Council is also reviewing funding arrangements for Community and Voluntary agencies, this resulted in 2009/10 in the tendering for Community and Voluntary sector infrastructure support that was won by WCAVA and it is likely that the County will review its relationship with WRCC in 2010/11.
- 8.8 It is therefore proposed that any funding agreement entered into with WRCC for 2010/11 is an interim agreement that specifies the outputs and outcomes the Borough seeks that help to deliver our corporate priorities and that the Borough Council participates in a County-led review of the services provided by and support for WRCC.

Options are:

- a) Cease funding WRCC. The outcome of this in the community is likely to be slow-down of current Parish planning and potentially no further Plans coming forward. It may also impact on the viability of current posts in WRCC and its ability to continue to support rural communities for example through engagement in LEADER. All or part of the savings could be used to invest in support for village shops or to fund activity identified in Parish Plans that could be delivered in partnership if these were seen as priorities.
- b) Continue to fund WRCC £10,000 in 2010/11 as an interim arrangement, whilst participating in a review with the County Council, conditional upon a service level agreement specifying anticipated outputs and outcomes. The outcome of this would be to enable continued support for Parish planning that is already underway but uncertainty about ability to commit to further Plans.
- c) Continue to fund WRCC but reduce the amount of funding, and proceed as in b) above. This would result in a reduction in the level of support that could be provided to Parishes. The savings could be used to invest in support for village shops or to fund activity identified in Parish Plans that could be delivered in partnership if these were seen as priorities.

9 Report Implications

9.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 9.1.1 Provision has been made for the proposed annual grant awards within the Support to Voluntary Organisations revenue budget allocation for 2010/11. Following the single tendered agreement for VATS Service support for an initial period of three years, it should be noted that this is provided subject to the availability of resources and consideration of this issue within the annual process of setting the Council's revenue budgets.
- 9.1.2 Supporting community and voluntary sector work is a very cost effective way for the Borough Council to increase service provision for the residents of North Warwickshire.

9.2 Safer Communities Implications

- 9.2.1 There is no direct implication arising from this report, although the community-based activities that are supported by WCAVA provide a positive diversion from anti-social and/or nuisance behaviour. The CAB's work, particularly with regard to financial advice, can help to prevent people from resorting to criminal activity to resolve their personal problems.

9.3 Environment and Sustainability Implications

- 9.3.1 Providing grant-aid to community and voluntary sector organisations is a cost-effective way of enhancing community service provision and helping to enhance individual and collective quality of life. WCAVA is an active partner in the North Warwickshire Community Partnership and it will be a key contributor to the delivery of the new Sustainable Community Strategy. It will provide valuable links to local community and voluntary groups that will directly enhance the capacity of the partnership working.

9.4 Equalities Implications

- 9.4.1 None directly, although the advice provided by both of the proposed grant recipients helps to provide equality of opportunity and address inequality within the local community.

9.5 Links to Council's Priorities

- 9.5.1 The provision of grant aid to community and voluntary sector organisations has positive and direct links to the corporate priorities to "enhance community involvement and access to services"; "work with our partners to tackle crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour" and "make best use of our resources through achieving a balanced budget and developing our workforce".

The Contact Officers for this report are Jaki Douglas (719492) and Ann McLauchlan (719202).

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	WCC	Principles and Outcomes for Volunteering and Third Sector Support Services in Warwickshire (VATS Service)	2009

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT 2010 – 2011

Appendix A

North Warwickshire Borough Council agrees funding for the provision of core advice and information services by North Warwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau as set out in this agreement.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the bureau is to provide free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to enable local residents to deal with a wide range of issues, including benefits, housing, money advice, employment, consumer, relationships, taxation and many more. The nature of the assistance provided will depend on a client's needs and ranges from the provision of information to formal representation.

The North Warwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) deals with approximately 9000 client contacts a year involving in the region of 10,000 issues.

The provision of this service requires that, at any one time, up to 3 advisers are on duty and 1 telephone line is available to members of the public for a period of 9 hours per week. For face-to-face advice, offices are available in Atherstone. Advice by e-mail is also available.

The standard of service is set out in the Citizens Advice Quality Assurance Standards Membership Agreement and the Community Legal Service Quality Mark (see Part 2 of this agreement).

The CAB also receives funds from the Financial Inclusion Fund and the Wellbeing Fund, which provides debt advice. These additional services do not form part of this agreement. However whilst the council does not directly contribute towards these activities, the bureau might not be in a position to provide them without the council's funding of the core service under this SLA. The bureau also receives funding for core services from Warwickshire County Council.

Further information can be found in the CAB's Annual Report 2009/010, which is submitted with this agreement.

CONTENTS:

- Part 1 – General conditions
- Part 2 – Service objectives and specification
- Part 3 – Financial and resourcing arrangements
- Part 4 – Monitoring arrangements
- Part 5 – Declaration

PART 1 – GENERAL CONDITIONS

1.1 PARTIES

This is an agreement between North Warwickshire Borough Council (hereinafter called "the council") and the Trustee Board of North Warwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau (hereinafter called "the bureau").

1.2 OBJECT OF AGREEMENT

The council wishes to support the services of the bureau for the purpose of providing an information and advice service operated within the aims, principles and policies of Citizens Advice subject to an agreed grant and to a defined level of service.

1.3 PERIOD OF THE AGREEMENT

The agreement will commence on 1 April 2010 for a period of 12 months.

1.4 THE PARTIES' OBLIGATIONS

- a) The bureau agrees to provide the services specified in Part 2 of this agreement (Service Objectives and Specifications).
- b) The council agrees to make the grant payments specified in Part 3 of this agreement (Financial and resourcing arrangements).

1.5 STATUS OF AGREEMENT

It is not the intention of either party that this agreement shall be legally binding and therefore neither party shall have any liability to the other for any failure to observe the terms of this agreement.

1.6 STATUS OF SERVICE PROVIDER

In carrying out this agreement, the bureau is acting in its own right as an independent organisation, and not as agents of the council.

1.7 MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for the management of the bureau is vested in the Trustee Board, the membership and operation of which is laid down by a constitution Memorandum and Articles of Association.

1.8 PARTIES' REPRESENTATIVES

The council and the bureau will each appoint a contact officer.

- a) The role of the council's contact officer is to:
 - Be the initial point of contact within the council for the bureau
 - Inform the bureau of any issues which may have an effect on the implementation of the service provision in this agreement
 - Provide information, advice and support to the bureau as reasonably required
 - Set up an six monthly monitoring meeting with the bureau contact officer to consider the information set out in Part 4 of this agreement
 - Inform the bureau of any change in the council's contact officer.
- b) The role of the bureau's contact officer is to provide the information required in Part 4 of this agreement and to inform the council's contact officer, in writing, if there is:
 - a proposal by the bureau to change or reduce the core services set out in Part 2 of this agreement;

- a major change to the bureau's financial budget;
- a change to the bureau's constitution; or
- a change in the bureau contact officer.

The parties' contact officers will be the Partnership and Development Manager of the Council and the Bureau Manager.

1.9 CONFIDENTIALITY

The council accepts that the bureau offers a confidential service and that all matters raised by individual clients are kept confidential.

1.10 STAFFING

- a) Paid and volunteer staff will be recruited and selected with full regard to an equal opportunities policy and procedures approved by Citizens Advice.
- b) Paid staff will be employed and remunerated with full regard to Citizens Advice Guidelines.

1.11 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The bureau undertakes to operate the quality assurance systems described in Part 2 of this agreement.

1.12 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The bureau shall have regard to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and any other Acts, Regulations, Directives or Orders etc about health and safety.

1.13 INSURANCES

The bureau shall maintain with a reputable insurer the following insurances:

- Employer's Liability in a minimum amount of £5 million
- Public Liability in a minimum amount of £5 million per claim or series of claims.

1.14 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If either party considers the other to be in breach of their duties under this agreement or has a grievance about some aspect of the agreement's operation, the parties shall make every effort to resolve the issue through joint discussions. Where this fails:

- the party wishing to make the complaint should provide the other with written details, including proposals for resolving it;
- a written response should be sent to the initiating party within 14 days;
- if the response is not considered to resolve the issue, the initiating party may request in writing to the contact officer a meeting of the authorised signatories (or their successor);
- where possible the meeting should be held within 14 days of the contact officer receiving the request;
- where the meeting does not resolve the complaint, the issue should be considered by the bureau's Trustee Board or the relevant council committee as a confidential

item. Any submissions should be sent in advance to the other party and representation permitted;

- If either party is dissatisfied with the outcome as notified to it in writing within seven days of the meeting, arbitration can be requested and this will take place with a mutually acceptable external party.

1.15 REVIEW

- a) This agreement may require amendments in the light of experience of implementing its terms. Any amendments will need to be negotiated and agreed in writing by both parties.
- b) The mechanism used for determining the core-funding grant set out in 3.2 cannot be the subject of an amendment under a).
- c) A review of the level of services specified in 2.3 and 2.4 can be requested by either party, and a meeting held as soon as practicable after this. It can take into account changes in community needs, feedback from clients or other stakeholders, changes in the council's corporate objectives and any other relevant factors beyond the control of the bureau, such as the availability of staff.
- d) Any amendment to the service specification under c) will need to be negotiated and agreed in writing by both parties, as would any amount to be taken into account under 3.2c).

1.16 TERMINATION

- a) Either party giving the other party six months notice in writing, clearly stating the reasons, can terminate the agreement.
- b) Notice can be served if delivered, posted or faxed to the contact officer (see 1.8)

PART 2 – SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 AIMS OF THE SERVICE

The aims of the Citizens Advice service, of which the bureau is a member and to which the bureau adheres are:

To ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available, or through an inability to express their needs effectively

and equally

To exercise a responsible influence in the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally

2.2 PRINCIPLES UNDER WHICH THE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED

The bureau will provide an information and advice service which is:

- free
- confidential
- impartial
- open to all regardless of race, gender, sexuality or disability and
- in accordance with the Citizens Advice guidelines on equal opportunities.

2.3 CORE SERVICES FUNDED UNDER THIS AGREEMENT

The service (to which the funding arrangements in Part 3 relate) offered by the bureau shall be 'assisted information' and 'general help' (as defined by the Community Legal Service Quality Mark - see 2.5)

Assisted information is a service in which staff are available to help clients access information, and to identify where a client needs further information or advice.

General help is:

- Diagnosing the client's problems
- Giving information and explaining options
- Identifying further action the client can take and
- Giving basic assistance e.g. filling in forms, helping the client draft letters, and contacting third parties to seek information on the client's behalf.

Where necessary for a particular client, the core service provided by the bureau will also include contacting a third party to negotiate on the client's behalf.

In accordance with the Citizens Advice membership agreement the subjects covered will include:

- Consumer
- Money advice
- Welfare Benefits
- Employment
- Housing
- Family and personal matters
- Taxes
- Immigration and nationality
- Health
- Education

The service covered by this agreement will not include casework as defined by the Community Legal Service Quality Mark i.e. with casework, the service provider takes responsibility for further action, whereas with a general help service, the client retains responsibility for the case. Casework also includes representing a client at appeal proceedings where necessary, which general help does not.

2.4 MEANS OF ACCESSING THE SERVICE

The core service shall be available:

- a) by letter and fax
- b) to personal callers on a drop-in and appointment based basis at:

Location; The Parish Rooms, Welcome Street, Atherstone, CV9 1DU.

Hours of opening:

Monday 10.00 – 2.00
Tuesday 10.00 – 2.00
Wednesday 4.00 - 6.30
Friday 10.00 – 2.00

- c) by telephone on 0844 499 4192 during the above hours.

In addition an assisted information service is provided by e-mail on nwcab.advice@cabnet.org.uk

A home visiting service is not provided as part of this agreement.

All of these services shall be clearly advertised.

2.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- a) The bureau operates the core service to the requirements of the Community Legal Service Quality Mark at General Help level. This quality scheme for advice services is set nationally by the Legal Services Commission and audits are carried out annually. The seven key quality areas covered are:

- Access to service
- Seamless service (includes referral to other agencies)
- Running the organisation
- People management
- Running the service
- Meeting clients' needs
- Commitment to quality (includes complaints, user feedback)

- b) The bureau also complies with Citizens Advice Quality Assurance Standards Membership Agreement, which is fully convergent with a) but contains additional requirements. The quality areas covered are:

- Quality of advice
- Quality of social policy work
- Governance
- Operational management
- Financial management
- Planning and managing resources
- Volunteers and paid staff
- Training and people development
- Networking and partnership
- Complaints and suggestions
- Client-centred service
- Case management

A copy of the scheme is supplied with this agreement.

- c) All staff, both paid and voluntary, are required to undergo relevant training in order to achieve their competence level to a standard acceptable to the Trustee Board, and compatible with the aims, principles, and membership standards of Citizens Advice.

2.6 SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

- a) The bureau has a business and development plan (see 4.6), the monitoring of which and the results of audits (see 4.2 and 4.3) lead to innovation and improvements in its service
- b) The bureau will participate in the activities of the Legal Advice Warwickshire Network and other relevant local networks in order to enhance the services provided to local residents.
- c) The bureau will work to secure additional funding in order to meet unmet needs for advice amongst the diverse local communities.
- d) The bureau will make use of clients' experiences to inform and influence the policy and delivery of other local services, and will inform the council of relevant issues

2.7 USER FEEDBACK AND INVOLVEMENT

- a) The bureau will operate a procedure for representations and complaints about the service in accordance with Citizens Advice guidelines and shall take all reasonable steps to bring this to the attention of the users of the bureau.
- b) The bureau will undertake an annual client satisfaction survey.
- c) The bureau will consult both clients and potential clients about service provision and opening hours.
- d) The bureau will encourage users to take up appropriate training opportunities within the bureau.
- e) The Trustee Board are to be constituted in such a way as to encourage representation from as wide a range of local people and organisations as possible.

2.8 CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND THE BUREAU'S CONTROL

- a) The bureau will not be held responsible for any interruption in or disruption to the core services due to circumstances beyond its control.
- b) The services specified are dependent on the availability of suitable advisers.

PART 3 – FINANCIAL AND RESOURCING ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 The Council has agreed that the grants to be paid to the bureau for the financial year beginning April 2010 shall be £31,536 (1.5% increase on 2009).
- 3.2 Together with the funds from Warwickshire County Council, these grants shall be construed as being sufficient to fund those core services referred to in Part 2 of this agreement, and for the purposes of this agreement are deemed to be the bureau's 'core funding'.
- 3.3 Service developments and additional services over and above those supported by the core funding and described in Part 2 of this agreement, can be considered for additional funding by the Council on the understanding that the Council can offer no commitment to fund. If the Council does fund these developments or additions in any one year, such funding will not affect the core funding arrangements and shall not be taken into account when calculating the core funding grants in the succeeding year.
- 3.4 All payments to be made under this agreement are exclusive of VAT. In the event of the bureau becoming liable for VAT during the period of the operation of this

agreement, the council will enter into discussions with the bureau with the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable outcome.

- 3.5 The core funding grants awarded to the bureau under this agreement will be paid in two instalments, subject to full compliance with the terms of Part 4 of this agreement by the bureau, by 1 May and 1 November. There will be no need for the bureau to invoice or otherwise apply for the payments.
- 3.6 The bureau agrees to submit, to the council a copy of its approved accounts, within the meaning of the Charities Act, 1992 and 1993.
- 3.7 Any change to the core funding provided by North Warwickshire Borough Council or Warwickshire County Council referred to in 3.3 could cause the bureau to be unable to provide the services specified in part 2 of this agreement.
- 3.8 Where the bureau gains a surplus of income from grants, fundraising or other sources in any one year, the council will not seek repayment of any part of the grant. The bureau will maintain a level of reserves appropriate to meet its financial responsibilities.

PART 4 – MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 The bureau monitors and evaluates its services in accordance with the procedures and directions set out in the Citizens Advice Quality Assurance Standards Membership Agreement (a copy of which is supplied with this agreement).
- 4.2 The bureau will be subject to annual external audits to ensure that it is meeting the standards required for the Community Legal Service Quality Mark at the Generalist Help level.
- 4.3 The bureau is subject to a three-yearly audit by Citizens Advice to ensure the service meets the standards set down in the Quality Assurance Standards Membership Agreements, as well as the Community Legal Service Quality Mark. This audit includes a quality of advice assessment. Continued membership of Citizens Advice is dependent on a satisfactory performance in this audit.
- 4.4 The bureau will provide a copy of the Annual Report to the council and an invitation for the council's contact officer to its Annual General Meeting.
- 4.5 The bureau will provide to the Council the annual information that it provides to Citizens Advice such as follows:
 - a) Opening hours.
 - b) Number of enquiries (new and repeat listed separately).
 - c) Number of enquiries categorised by their complexity.
 - d) Percentage of people using the bureau by telephone [and by e-mail].
 - e) Number of paid staff. Hours worked. Type of paid staff.
 - f) Number of volunteers. Hours worked. Type of volunteer staff.
 - g) Training sessions undertaken by staff. Number of trainees.
 - h) Number of formal complaints about the bureau.
- 4.6 The bureau produces a three-year business and development plan, which it reviews annually. The plan includes, amongst other things:

- an assessment of client satisfaction
 - a client and community profile
 - a community advice needs analysis
 - a strategy for promoting the bureau within the community
 - a funding strategy; and
 - an equality action plan covering all aspects of the bureau's operation.
- 4.7 The bureau will provide information reasonably required by the council, subject to those requirements not being in breach of clients' confidentiality. Information will not be required more frequently than at quarterly intervals.
- 4.8 Subject to Citizens Advice guidelines these monitoring arrangements can be amended by agreement between the council and the bureau to reflect changes in service practice, for example data collection.
- 4.9 The bureau undertakes, in discussion with the Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council, over the period of this agreement to develop a set of performance indicators. These indicators should take note of those under development nationally.

PART 5 – DECLARATION

On behalf of North Warwickshire Borough Council I confirm that I have read the agreement as set out above and the council will comply with the terms and conditions contained within

Signed ...

Date:

Name of authorised signatory for North Warwickshire Borough Council Council:

Address of NWBC: The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1BG.

On behalf of North Warwickshire CAB I confirm that I have read the agreement as set out above and the CAB will comply with the terms and conditions contained within

Signed ...

Date:

Name of authorised signatory(ies) for North Warwickshire CAB:

Address of CAB: The Parish Rooms, Welcome Street, Atherstone, CV9 1DU

North Warwickshire CAB Report January 2010



1. Bureau statistics

New social policy issues April 2009 - December 2009

Category	Q1	Q2	Q3	Col %
Benefits	543	726	598	25.9
Consumer	52	61	56	2.3
Debt	999	1140	1139	45.6
Education	3	19	2	0.3
Employment	154	186	166	7
Finance	37	38	24	1.4
Health	14	10	14	0.5
Housing	87	123	110	4.4
Immigration	3	5	8	0.2
Legal	70	83	61	3
Other	36	79	143	3.6
Relationships	105	114	97	4.4
Signposting	0	1	0	0
Tax	10	7	15	0.4
Travel	6	7	4	0.2
Utilities	13	11	9	0.5
Total	2132	2610	2446	100

Advisors had 7172 contacts with clients, an increase of 56% over the same period in the preceding year.

The number of clients new to North Warwickshire CAB increased by 28% over the comparable period of the year before.

Although the statistics reflect a significant increase we were actually on target for even greater increases as we joined the developing County CAB telephone advice service (currently Rugby, Nuneaton and Bedworth, and ourselves) in November 2009.

Unfortunately the implementation of this project was beset with technical issues and instead of dealing with an increase in the number of telephone enquiries received by phone, the number actually declined in comparison with our previous service.

These issues have now been resolved and we are now taking calls at the anticipated rate. Our volunteer recruitment campaign has been successful and we have a new intake of volunteers who have received reception training and are now moving into the Assessor training programme. Some of these Assessors will move into Advisor training.

2. Money Advice.

In December 2009 Money Advisor Asma Amejis 1 year contract under Narrowing the Gap funding ended and Asma has moved to Birmingham CAB. Demand for debt advice remains high and with the loss of 1 full time money advisor we anticipate a return to longer waiting times for appointments. Advisors dealt with £7.7m of debt from April – December 2009. This included 373 priority debts (rent, council tax and mortgage arrears, utilities, secured loans etc)

3. Bob Project

Two static CAB outreach venues have been added to the Branching Out Bus (Bob) project, Baddesley Ensor and Coleshill.

4. Funding update

Additional Hours of Advice. Funding has been extended until Autumn 2010.

Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Community Debt Project. Funding has been extended to December 2010.

Advantage West Midlands Market Towns Project. £10000 has been awarded for recession based advice and volunteer training which will help economically inactive people to gain skills which will help them move into employment.

LEADER. The Leader funding programme is now underway. I am currently vice chair of the 'shadow' Local Action Group and expect to have an ongoing involvement with the project as there is a requirement for substantial input from the third sector. The LEADER programme will run until December 2013.

Carol Musgrave
Manager
January 2010

WAVCA Core Standards and NWBC Performance Measures

DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT & LIAISON

NAVCA Standard 1: The organisation pro-actively identifies needs in the local community and facilitates improvement in service provision to meet those needs

WCAVA outputs	NWBC Performance Indicators	Detail
1a works with new groups to address new/unmet needs	To work with 2 new groups each year with a range of advice	The Whitaker Pram Race Committee & Shuttington and Alvecote Villages Improvement Plan
1b maintains and updates a directory of local VCS orgs and the services they provide, or ensures that one is available elsewhere	Maintain a database to provide information about the local VCS	Database used by various organisations including LINKS - Have your say on social care services. Mapping for Sporting Equals. Simon Weaver for Disability Forum.
1c Facilitates one or more interest networks each year, where needs can be identified/discussed	Facilitate 1 network with specific focus on eg health, volunteer management, compact plans, young people	The VAN forums has focused on Compact (compact week), Village Hall kite mark, Financial issues for groups, funding.Feb Van forum will include Borough and County Council- topic- How do local authorities work with the VCS
1d Develops or maintains a system for collecting information on needs/unmet needs		

NAVCA Standard 2: The organisation assists local voluntary and community organisations to function more effectively and deliver quality services to their users, members or constituents

WCAVA Outputs	NWBC Performance Indicators	Detail
2a Produces and distributes at least 4 newsletters per year. E-grapevine - weekly ezine. WCAVA website	Provide at least 12 email bulletins giving information to affiliated members ie funding sources, consultations, services offered by WCAVA	Quarterly newsletter distributed to 250 members. Weekly CAVA E-newsletter includes training opps, funding sources i.e. CDF, Area Forum Fund, funding workshops, launch of Warwickshire Voluntary and Community Assembly, volunteering opps...
2b Models of good practice by committing itself to achieving an appropriate quality assurance standard	1 group working towards quality standards eg PQASSO, VISIBLE	The Ley Young People's project is working towards PQASSO and has taken up training from WCAVA
2c provides access to routinely updated information and resource materials about legal structures and effective management of a voluntary org	Development and promotion of best practice models eg using First Steps. Maintain a resource library to be available 2 days per week.	Updated Constitution from Charity Commission being used with new groups. Resource library used by Ley Group, Polesworth Pre-school
2d signposts orgs to appropriate training and support		
2e advises on funding sources using up to date reference material. J4B free funding portal available on WCAVA website	Provide 2 different groups with fundraising advice and help in making applications. Promote Area Forum funding.	Area Forum Funding promoted in e-newsletter, email bulletins and Funding Bid Workshops. Assisted Corley and Baddesley Colliery Bowling Clubs on funding applications.
2f consults annually with existing and potential membership to ensure that services are appropriate and accessible		
2g provides information and support re financial and administrative management	4 groups provided with 121 development work	1-2-1 development work with Ley Group Young Peoples Project on Big Lottery funding and writing business plan, Owen Street Arts Centre - WET funding, Polesworth Pre-school - Governance work, Work Care - CRT funding

NAVCA Standard 3: The organisation facilitates effective communication or networking and collaboration amongst local VCS group

WCAVA Output	NWBC Performance Indicators	Detail
3a Provides information on models of partnership working		
3b Organises conferences or meetings where issues can be debated and practice shared	Signpost, through e-mail bulletins, web site, affiliates to Warwickshire Assembly	Warwickshire Assembly 8th Feb, topic- Driving Engagement: Increasing Influence. 25th Feb VAN forum, topic - How Local Authorities Work With Local Infrastructure Organisation.
3c Provides space in newsletter or other mechanisms to enable VCOs to make contact with local groups concerning activities, needs etc		
3d Is actively involved in a range of community networks taking opportunities to promote the services of the LIO		

**WCAVCA Core Standards and NWBC Performance Measures
REPRESENTATION, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

NAVCA Standard 4: The organisation enables the diverse views of the local VCS to be represented to external bodies, developing and facilitating structures which promote effective working relationships and two way

WCAVA Output	NWBC Performance Indicators	Detail
4a facilitates the two way flow of information and views between the voluntary and community sector and relevant external bodies eg via newsletter or meetings	In partnership with the Borough Council Inform VCS groups of 1 consultation per year	Email bulletin to groups regardsing consultation on the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy. This email bulletin also takes groups to a link to view other consultations.
4b raises awareness amongst external agencies about the expertise, role and value that VCOs can contribute to discussion and decision making on local/regional/national issues	To maintain membership of 3 theme groups and contribute to Partnership Meetings/days	North Warwickshire locality represent community and voluntary organisation through the following theme groups - VACAT, Area Community Learning Partnership, Health and Wellbeing, Children, Young People and their families. Also at the Community Partnership
4c Provides information about groups in the local area, and networks which can be accessed by external agencies wishing to communicate with communities/ interest groups		
4d Plays an active part in the development and operation of working agreements,protocols and/or compacts	Attend Compact champions meetings and assist in the development of Compact in North Warwickshire	Attended the Compact monitoring and risk workshop. The information gained at the VAN foun to also influence the local Compact plan.

NAVCA Standard 5: The organisation enhances the VCS role as an integral part of local planning and policy making

WCAVA Output	NWBC Performance Indicators	Detail
5a Plays an active part in the development and operation of relevant strategic partnerships	WCAVA staff membership on each district LSP	WCAVA staff represent VCS on VACAT, Health and Wellbeing group, Community Learning Partnership, Children and Young People and their Families. Also Community Partnership.Active member of task and finish group for Narrowing the Gap.
5b Provides voluntary and community organisations with the information they need to be able to take an active part in strategic partnerships	Support North Warwickshire affiliates on Warwickshire Assesmbly	Older People's Forum supported to attend the Warwickshire Assembly meetings
5c works with other VCS groups to identify and implement appropriate representation and membership on key local partnerships		
5d helps representatives on partnerships understand their role and responsibilities	Support North Warwickshire affiliates on Warwickshire Assesmbly	This will be done through the Warwickshire Assembly
5e Facilitates the exchange of information and views between representatives and a wider constituency	Keep local Councillors upto date with development in their localities	Borough Councillors receive all email bulletins and are made aware of new groups in their locality.

Agenda Item No 7

Community and Environment Board

8 March 2010

**Report of the
Assistant Director
(Leisure and Community Development)**

**Allotments Development
Programme**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out progress in respect of the implementation of the Allotments Development Programme and seeks approval for a revision of the Allotments Policy Statement, originally approved in 2009, and for further work to be undertaken in respect of the leasing and protection of allotment sites.

Recommendation to the Board

- a That progress in respect of the Allotments Development Programme, as set out in the report and detailed in Appendix A, be noted and approved;**
- b That the revised Allotments Policy Statement set out at Appendix B be approved; and**
- c That the proposal to carry out further work in respect of the leasing and protection of allotment sites, as set out in paragraph 9.1, be approved and that a further report on this matter be presented to an early future meeting of the Board.**

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 The Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders for Countryside and Heritage, Safer Communities, Health, Well-being and Leisure, Environment, Community Life and Resources, together with all appropriate Ward Members, have had the opportunity to comment on the content of this report.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 A progress report on the Allotments Development Programme was presented to the Board at its meeting held in January 2009 and a further update was provided within the report on Leisure and Community Development Division's Action Plans in September 2009. The latest position in respect of the

... Development Programme is summarised in the Action Plan attached at Appendix A.

- 3.2 The Action Plan has been revised to ensure that the development of allotments in the Borough is considered within the context provided by the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy (2008 to 2018) and the Council's Allotments Policy Statement, which together provide the framework guiding work in this important area of activity.

4 **Delivery of the Strategic Priorities of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy**

- 4.1 The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy sets out two strategic priorities in respect of the provision of allotments in the Borough:

SP017 – Support the establishment of a federation of allotments associations for North Warwickshire

SP018 – Support the establishment of allotment associations to bring about regeneration of underused sites or to establish new ones

- 4.2 The Allotments Policy Statement, which sets out a framework to enable the Authority to contribute to the delivery of these priorities, was approved by the Board at its meeting held in January 2009.

- 4.3 Recent contact with well-established allotment associations has, however, highlighted that both the Green Space Strategy and the Allotments Policy Statement fail to make provision for assisting such groups to improve their sites in response to the resurgence of interest in the sector. A revised Allotments Policy Statement is, therefore, attached at Appendix B. The revisions within the Statement seek to afford the Authority the opportunity to work with established associations and to provide financial assistance towards improvements at their sites, provided that such expenditure does not prejudice the funding required for the creation of new sites. In each case, Board approval will be sought prior to any funding being awarded to either an existing or new allotment association. The need to make a similar amendment to the Green Space Strategy will be addressed in the interim review of the document, which is due to be carried out in 2012/13.

- 4.4 In respect of SP017, the North Warwickshire Allotment Federation was formally constituted in January 2009. In accordance with the Allotments Policy Statement, a Service Level Agreement has been established and agreed with this organisation. The Federation has been engaged in a number of initiatives, most notably the launch of an annual awards event in August 2009, which attracted 20 entries across two categories. The Federation has recently held its second AGM and is developing a programme of events for the coming year, including further developing the awards event and initiating an "annual show". It is anticipated that the Federation will be reporting in September 2010 on its work to carry out a mapping exercise to determine allotment supply, usage and need in North Warwickshire.

4.5 Progress with regard to projects initiated in accordance with SP018 is detailed in sections 5 to 7 below.

5 Warton

5.1 In 2009/10, work has focused on completing the regeneration of the site at Waverton Avenue, Warton and its handover to the Warton Allotments Association. This project has been successfully completed. The Association has taken over management of the site and all but one quarter-sized plot are now in cultivation. The development of a proposed wildlife area in conjunction with this project has been put on hold until proposals for housing development on part of the site have been more fully prepared.

6 Mancetter

6.1 As agreed by the Board at its meeting held in January 2009, further consideration of the proposal to develop allotments in Mancetter has been deferred until the outcome of the mapping exercise being carried out by the North Warwickshire Allotment Federation is known (see paragraph 4.4 above).

7 Hurley

7.1 A very well attended open meeting, hosted by Hurley Community Association on 11 February 2010, established that there is considerable local support for the formation of an Allotment Association and the will to advance a project to establish an allotment site in the village. As reported to the Board in January 2009, a possible site has been identified on land within the Authority's ownership, off Queensway. A report will be taken to the Resources Board in April 2010 to request that this land, which was originally acquired for housing development, be transferred to this Board for use as an allotment site. The Board will be updated on progress in respect of the potential development of this site at its meeting to be held in October 2010.

8 Ansley Common – Bretts Hall

8.1 Within its Area-based Priorities, the Green Space Strategy identifies a specific need in respect of the Bretts Hall Allotments site in Ansley Common:

AP027 – Develop a management plan for Bretts Hall Recreation Ground in Ansley Common, in conjunction with an improvement plan for the adjacent Bretts Hall Allotments site.

8.2 In recent years, the Bretts Hall Allotments Association has made significant improvements to the management of its site and has achieved an increased uptake of plots. Over several months, however, the site has suffered from the effects of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly-tipping. Plot holders have become demoralised and the success of the site is under threat. Addressing the problems in the area is a Safer Neighbourhoods priority (as identified by

Area Forum South) and a multi-agency Action Plan has been established to deal with the many and various issues. As part of this Action Plan, the Authority has undertaken to install more secure boundary fencing to the whole site, with funding from the existing revenue budget. This will have the advantage not only of securing the site, but also of allowing a currently abandoned area to be brought back into cultivation. Officers will work with the Allotments Association to further develop the site to ensure that this valuable community project can thrive and be sustained in the future.

9 Leasing Arrangements and Protection of Allotment Sites

- 9.1 Recent contact with Ansley Common Allotments Society has drawn attention to the fact that where a lease is within a few years of the end of its term the organisation renting the site has difficulty in accessing grant support from external agencies. Further difficulty arises in that under the terms of the leases the Authority would seem to be able to take back sites where planning permission for development has been granted. Such terms may not be consistent with the provisions of Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925, which gives protection to land acquired specifically for use as allotments, so called "statutory allotment sites". At present it is unclear how many of the Authority's sites should be designated as "statutory", but many of the leases fall due in 13 months time. It is, therefore, timely that further work be undertaken on this matter and that a report on a recommended way forward be brought to an early future meeting of the Board.

10 Report Implications

10.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 10.1.1 The regeneration of Warton Allotments has been funded from within the existing "Allotments and Biodiversity" revenue budget.
- 10.1.2 The transfer of land from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund to create the allotment site at Hurley. This is likely to have a small costs implication for the General Fund, which will be reported as part of the report to Resources Board in April 2010.
- 10.1.3 The proposed establishment of allotments in Hurley will be funded from the approved 2010/11 Allotments and Biodiversity revenue budget, supplemented, if necessary, by expenditure from the Allotments Improvement Fund.
- 10.1.4 The installation of fencing at Bretts Hall Allotments in Ansley Common will be funded from the existing Allotments and Biodiversity revenue budget, supplemented by a contribution from the Parks and Playing Fields budget, which has received additional income this year from the County Council, in respect of amenity grass cutting.

10.2 Safer Communities

10.2.1 Community engagement at allotment sites can contribute to a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour, both directly by offering positive activities and indirectly by changing the perception of an area through good land management and increased presence. Well-managed allotment sites make a valuable contribution to the pride and well-being of local communities and help to ensure that these areas are less vulnerable to vandalism and flytipping.

10.2.2 Specific action, set out in paragraph 8.2 above, is being taken in respect of community safety issues at Bretts Hall Allotments in Ansley Common.

10.3 Legal and Human Rights Implications

10.3.1 Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925 gives protection to “statutory allotment sites”. As proposed at paragraph 9.1 above, further work will be undertaken to ensure that the Authority’s allotment provision is compliant with this legislation.

10.3.2 Any improvements undertaken to new or existing allotment sites will be compliant with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act.

10.3.3 The provisions contained within leases to allotment associations shall be compliant with all relevant equalities legislation. In addition, the constitutions and lettings policies of associations will be vetted to ensure similar compliance.

10.4 Environment and Sustainability Implications

10.4.1 Regeneration of allotment sites offers the opportunity for community engagement in sustainable food production, composting of green waste and wildlife-friendly land management. As such, related activity affords opportunities for constructive and healthy activity within communities, an improvement of the local environment, enhanced social inclusion and heightened individual and collective quality of life.

10.5 Risk Management Implications

10.5.1 The risk management implications of the Allotments Development Programme were addressed in the report to the Board meeting held in January 2009.

10.5.2 The risk management implications of individual projects are assessed as the projects are developed.

10.6 Equalities Implications

10.6.1 The equalities implications of the Allotments Development Programme were similarly addressed in the report to the Board meeting held in January 2009.

10.7 Links to Council's Priorities

10.7.1 The implementation of the Allotments Development Programme contributes directly to the corporate priorities of:

- Enhancing community involvement and access to services
- Protecting and improving our environment
- Defending and improving our countryside and rural heritage
- Tackling health inequalities through improving well-being and providing leisure opportunities to all our citizens
- Working with our partners to tackle crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Making best use of our resources

10.7.2 The Allotments Development Programme also has positive and direct links to the priorities of the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Plan (2009 to 2016) to:

- Raise aspirations, educational attainment and skills
- Develop healthier communities
- Improve access to services

10.7.3 Further, the Allotments Development Programme delivers against priorities set out in the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy (2008 to 2018) and the Authority's Allotments Policy Statement.

The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (719212).

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	Assistant Director (Leisure and Facilities) and Assistant Director (Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Borough Council Allotments)	20 Mar 2006
2	Director of Housing and Environment	Report to Resources Board (Underused Council Landholdings)	18 Sep 2006
3	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Borough Council Allotments)	30 Oct 2006
4	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Borough Council Allotments)	11 June 2007
5	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Borough Council Allotments)	28 Jan 2008
6	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Borough Council Allotments)	9 June 2008
7	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Borough Council Allotments)	27 Oct 2008
8	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Allotments Development Programme)	26 Jan 2009
9	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Leisure & Community Development Division Action Plans)	28 Sep 2009

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resources	Responsible Officer	Progress
DELIVERY AGAINST THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE GREEN SPACE STRATEGY					
Establish a framework to enable the Borough Council to contribute to delivery of key priorities SP017 and SP018 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy	Prepare an Allotments Policy Statement for approval by Members	December 2008	Staff time	LM / CDO(E)	Complete – policy Statement approved at C.& E Board in January 2009
In accordance with key priority SP017 support the establishment of a federation of allotments associations for North Warwickshire	Carry out consultation with allotment associations to establish demand for a federation and to determine a way forward	December 2008	staff time and volunteer time £1000 grant from WCC	CDO(E)	Complete - North Warwickshire Allotment Federation constituted
	Establish a framework through an SLA to support the continuing development of the Allotment Federation and ensure funding is available to enable delivery	March 2009	staff and volunteer time £1000 in 2008/09, £750 in 2009/10, £500 per annum thereafter	CDO(E) / Federation / LM	Complete - SLA in place and funding identified in existing budget
	Establish an annual prize giving event	March 2009	staff and volunteer time	Federation / CDO(E)	First Allotment Awards presented in September 2009

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resources	Responsible Officer	Progress
PROJECTS					
New Arley Gun Hill					
In accordance with key priority SP018 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy support the local community to establish an Allotment Association and bring about the regeneration of the former site at Gun Hill, New Arley					Complete
Warton					
In accordance with key priority SP018 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy support the local community to establish an Allotment Association and bring about the regeneration of the former site at Waverton Avenue, Warton	Carry out community consultation to determine feasibility and a way forward for the regeneration and long-term management of the site	June 2007	staff time	LM / CDO(E)	Complete - Allotment Association established to lease and manage the site
	Prepare the allotment area of the site for handover to an Allotment Association	March 2009	staff and volunteer time	Association / LM / CDO(E)	Complete – site in cultivation
	Prepare the wildlife area of the site for handover to the Allotment Association				Delayed pending the outcome of proposals to develop housing on part of the site

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resources	Responsible Officer	Progress
Warton <i>continued</i>					
In accordance with key priority SP018 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy support the local community to establish an Allotment Association and bring about the regeneration of the former site at Waverton Avenue, Warton <i>continued</i>	Formalise tenure of the site and effect handover by executing a lease between the Borough Council and the Allotment Association	April 2009	staff time / income £25 pa from 2011-2012	LM / Association	Lease in respect of the allotment area executed – wildlife area excluded pending the outcome of proposals to develop housing on part of the site
Mancetter					
In accordance with key priority SP018 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy support the local community to establish an Allotment Association and bring about the development of a site in Mancetter	Carry out community and member consultation to determine the way forward with regard to land at Ramsden Road, Mancetter	October 2008	staff time	LM / CDO(E)	C. & E. Board October 2008 determined not to progress with this site – matter referred to Corporate Property Officer Dec 2008 for future consideration.

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resources	Responsible Officer	Progress
Mancetter <i>continued</i>					
In accordance with key priority SP018 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy support the local community to establish an Allotment Association and bring about the development of a site in Mancetter <i>continued</i>	Confirm the need for further allotment land in Mancetter	August 2010	staff and volunteer time	CDO(E) / Federation	To be progressed through a Borough-wide mapping exercise to be carried out by the North Warwickshire Federation
	Subject to a need for new provision being confirmed, determine the availability of the site at Old Farm Road, Mancetter	September 2010	staff time	LM	To be progressed once the outcome of the mapping exercise is known
Hurley					
In accordance with key priority SP018 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy, and in response to a petition from local residents, support the local community to establish an Allotment Association and bring about the development of a site in Hurley	Carry out community consultation to determine feasibility and the way forward for the establishment and long-term management of a site	Summer 2010	staff time	CDO(E) / LM	Event facilitated by Hurley Community Association on 11 th February 2010 was well attended Further meeting to advance formation of an Allotment Association to be held in March 2010

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resources	Responsible Officer	Progress
Hurley continued.....					
In accordance with key priority SP018 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy, and in response to a petition from local residents, support the local community to establish an Allotment Association and bring about the development of a site in Hurley <i>continued.....</i>	Secure a new site for allotment provision in Hurley subject to confirmation of community interest - confirm the availability of a potential site identified off Queensway	April 2010	staff time	LM	Community interest confirmed – request for the use of the land off Queens way to be taken to Resources Board in April 2010
	Subject to availability of a site prepare the land for handover to an Allotment Association	Summer / Autumn 2010	staff and volunteer time £10,000 from the revenue budget	Allotment Association / LM / CDO(E)	Subject to site availability and successful establishment of an Allotment Association
Ansley Common, Bretts Hall					
In accordance with area priority AP027 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy and the Safer Neighbourhoods Action Plan develop an improvement plan for the Bretts Hall Allotments site in Ansley Common	As a first step secure the site by the installation of more robust boundary fencing	March 2010	£25,000 from the revenue budget	LM	Quotes secured

PROJECT MANAGEMENT					
Ensure effective delivery of, and accountability for, the Allotments Development Programme	Review and, if necessary, revise the Allotments Policy Statement annually	annual	staff time	LM / CDO(E)	Policy Statement revised March 2010 for consideration by C. & E. Board
	Review and, if necessary, revise leasing arrangements for Borough Council sites	June 2010	Staff time	LM	To be progressed
	Hold regular progress meetings	bi-monthly	staff time	LM/ PDM/ CDO(E)	Ongoing minuted meetings
	Complete risk assessments for the Allotments Development Programme and for each development project	December 2008 and at inception of projects	staff time	LM	Assessments in place
	Complete initial equalities impact needs assessment for the Allotments Policy Framework	December 2008	staff time	LM	Initial EINA completed
	Monitor revenue budget	on-going	Staff time	LM	Monthly finance reports
	Reporting to Members	on-going	staff time	LM / AD(L&CD)	Next report to C. & E. Board in March 2010

AD (L&CD) – Assistant Director (Leisure & Community Development Division) LM – Landscape Manager PDM – Partnership & Development Manager
 CDO(E) – Community Development Officer (Environment)

ALLOTMENTS POLICY STATEMENT FIRST REVISION – amendments to the text are underlined

This statement sets out a framework to enable North Warwickshire Borough Council to contribute to the delivery of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy key priorities SP017 to **“support the establishment of a federation of allotments associations for North Warwickshire”** and SP018 to **“support the establishment of allotment associations to bring about the regeneration of underused sites or to establish new ones”** and also to support improvements to the Authority’s established allotment sites.

In order to support the establishment of the North Warwickshire Allotment Federation, the Borough Council will:

- APS 01 Promote the work of the Federation to encourage active membership from allotment groups, co-operation from landowners and use by members of the public seeking advice on allotment matters
- APS 02 Enter into a service level agreement with the Federation for the delivery of activities and events to promote and support the sustainable development of allotment sites in North Warwickshire
- APS 03 Provide funding to the Federation to support delivery of the service level agreement, subject to confirmation of the Council’s annual revenue programme

In order to support the establishment of allotment associations to bring about the regeneration of underused sites or to establish new ones, the Borough Council will:

- APS 04 Provide advice and assistance to individuals and the community to encourage the formation of allotment associations and to ensure their proper constitution
- APS 05 Work with town and parish councils to develop allotment sites within their control and to bring more allotment land back into use
- APS 06 Support the development, where possible, of one new allotment site in each financial year through the provision of advice and in-kind assistance
- APS 07 Provide direct funding to support the development of one new allotment site in each financial year, subject to confirmation of the Council’s annual revenue programme
- APS 08 Allow the conversion of sites owned by the Borough Council to allotment use, subject to the requirements of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy and of the Council’s overall asset management programme and subject to any planning constraints
- APS 09 Support the autonomy of allotment associations by leasing Borough Council owned allotment sites to them for self-management at a level of rent advised by the Council’s valuer, allowing for the first year to be rent free and the second to be at half cost
- APS 10 Ensure that annual rent income received for allotment sites is used to support the Allotments Development Programme
- APS 11 Consider the purchase of land for allotment use where there is a demonstrable need if this is consistent with the Council’s revenue, capital and asset management programmes

continues

ALLOTMENTS POLICY STATEMENT FIRST REVISION – amendments to the text are underlined

- APS 12 Assist groups seeking land for allotment use, where Borough Council owned land is not available, by funding any necessary land searches and providing advice to enable them to apply to external funding streams in order to buy and develop land
- APS 13 Provide financial assistance to town and parish councils and to fully constituted allotment associations as match funding towards the direct purchase of land for allotment use, subject to confirmation of the Council's annual revenue programme

In order to support improvements to its established allotment sites, the Borough Council will:

- APS 14 Provide advice and assistance to established allotment groups that lease Borough Council sites to enable them to make improvements to those sites and to apply for external funding to advance such improvements
- APS 15 Provide direct funding to support improvements to the Borough Council's established allotment sites, subject to Community and Environment Board approval, to confirmation of the availability of resources and to the priority need being established to fund projects to bring about the regeneration of underused sites or the establishment of new sites

Agenda Item No 8

Community and Environment Board

8 March 2010

**Report of the
Assistant Director
(Leisure and Community Development)**

**North Warwickshire Green Space
Strategy Action and Funding Plan**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out progress in respect of the implementation of Year 2 (2009/10) of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy Action and Funding Plan and informs Members of the work proposed to be undertaken in Year 3 (2010/11).

Recommendation to the Board

- a That progress in respect of the implementation of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy Action and Funding Plan be noted; and**
- b That Members approve, or otherwise vary, the activities proposed for future development within the Action and Funding Plan, including the provision that discussions are held with the Community Partnership's Environment Theme Group regarding the possibility of it taking a more active role in advancing the objectives of the Green Space Strategy and that the outcome of these discussions be reported to a future meeting of the Board.**

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 The Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders for Environment, Countryside and Heritage, Safer Communities, Health, Well-being and Leisure, Community Life and Resources have had the opportunity to comment on the content of this report.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy (2008 to 2018)* was formally adopted by the Council in December 2008. The supporting Action and Funding Plan was approved in principle, pending the need to consider each phase within the context of the Council's overall capital and revenue requirements. The Action and Funding Plan directs the work of the

Landscape Section within the Leisure and Community Development Division but depends, for its successful delivery, on extensive partnership working both within and outwith the Authority.

- 3.2 A full report on implementation of the first year of the Action and Funding Plan was brought to the Board at its meeting held in September 2009. An interim report on progress within the second year was presented at the same time. This current report brings Members up to date with progress at the end of Year 2 and sets out the actions scheduled to be progressed in Year 3.
- 3.3. The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy has direct links to the Council's corporate priorities, with those links being shown in the Action Plan. In reviewing the Action Plan for roll-forward, the opportunity has been taken to revise its structure to show the contribution it also makes to delivery of the priorities of the new Sustainable Community Strategy. The full, revised Action Plan is presented at Appendix A.**
- 3.4 The Green Space Strategy sets out a number of policy and service priorities, a set of area-based priorities and policies in respect of resources and monitoring and development. Progress and forthcoming action in respect of each of these is set out in sections 4 to 7 below.

4 Policy Priorities

- 4.1 Preparation of an Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document will be key to ensuring that the Authority makes optimum use of developer contributions in improving green space provision across the Borough. This will be taken forward in 2010/11, having so far been deferred due to capacity constraints within both the Landscape Management Team and the Forward Planning Team.
- 4.2 Work will also be undertaken to ensure a common understanding within Divisions of the Authority in respect of the provisions of the Green Space Strategy, particularly with reference to the planning process and to corporate asset management.

5 Service Priorities

5.1 Maintenance and Cleanliness

The review of current grounds maintenance arrangements is progressing with the benchmarking exercise in respect of the service in 2008/09 having been completed, a value for money review being underway and work to verify quantitative data and the mapping record due to be concluded shortly. The outcome of the review will be reported to an early future meeting of the Board.

5.2 Safety and Security

It has not yet been possible to commit additional capital resources or increased revenue funding to support a fully developed programme of green

space improvements. However, an unplanned increase in remuneration from the County Council in respect of amenity grass cutting in 2009/10, which is credited to the parks and playing fields budget, has been approved for use within the service. It is proposed to use this funding to offset the cost of more secure boundary fencing and gates at Bretts Hall Allotments in Ansley Common, thereby contributing to delivery of both the area priority in respect of this site and the Action Plan in respect of this Safer Neighbourhoods Area Priority. A limited programme of site improvements at recreation grounds will be implemented in 2010/11, funded from within the existing approved revenue budget. Progress in this regard will be reported to a future meeting of the Board.

5.3 Tree Management

Preparation of a Tree Management Policy for adoption by the Council had been deferred pending appointment to the post of Landscape Officer (Trees), which had been vacant since July 2008. The post was filled in October 2009 and preparation of the Policy is a key task for this officer in 2010/11. In the meantime, a Tree Management Briefing Note has been prepared, which is more fully reported elsewhere on this agenda. Since appointment to the post, the Landscape Officer (Trees) has been addressing the considerable backlog of tree-related issues that had built up and putting in hand any necessary works. This backlog has now been cleared as a consequence of which work will now resume to progress the proactive tree inspection programme.

5.4 Biodiversity and Climate Change

As previously reported, the Community Development Officer (Environment) is leading a project, in conjunction with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Groundwork Coventry and Warwickshire, to establish Local Nature Reserves at Borough Council recreation sites in Coleshill, Kingsbury, Polesworth and New Arley. The second stage bid to secure funding is due to be submitted to Natural England by April 2010. This project will contribute to delivery of the priorities to enhance and conserve biodiversity through habitat creation and management and to increase opportunities for community engagement in this area.

5.5 Partnership Working

Members will be aware that £40,000 revenue funding has been made available in 2009/10 to support delivery of some of the area-based priorities set out in the Green Space Strategy. The outcome of consultation on the allocation of this funding was reported to each Area Forum in January / February 2010 and the recommendations for supporting a number of partners to deliver improvements to green spaces in Atherstone, Fillongley, Kingsbury, Middleton and Warton (as detailed in section 6 below) were approved. These projects will be progressed in 2010/11.

5.6 Outdoor Sports

Following a tender process for the appointment of appropriately qualified and experienced consultants, preparation of a Playing Pitch Strategy for North Warwickshire is due to commence in mid-March 2010, with an expected completion date in mid-June 2010. This significant exercise will build on the findings of the Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study (PPG 17 Study)* to provide a framework for the delivery of sustainable outdoor sports provision in the Borough. This Strategy will be key to the future development of many of the Authority's recreation sites and will inform the future preparation of management plans for a number of these locations.

5.7 Children and Young People

The Green Space Strategy identifies a priority to develop a Play Area Business Plan to enable the Authority to ensure that all of its built play facilities offer good play value, meet current safety standards, are accessible, are secured by design and support the objectives of the North Warwickshire Play Strategy. A full report in respect of the Play Area Development Programme is presented elsewhere on this agenda.

5.8 Community Engagement

The successful delivery of the Local Nature Reserves Project (paragraph 5.4 above) will be dependent on strong community engagement and is predicated upon the establishment of a "friends group" for each site. The possibility of also establishing a friends group for the recreation ground in Hurley is being explored following a well-attended open meeting hosted by the Community Association in February 2010. Progress in respect of the Allotments Development Programme, which can only succeed through the commitment of local communities, is reported in full elsewhere on this agenda. Both the Local Nature Reserves project and Allotments are promoted on the Borough Council's website. Work to promote parks, play areas and outdoor sports facilities on the website will be taken forward in 2010/11.

6 **Area-based Priorities**

- 6.1 Advancement of many of the area-based priorities is dependent on direct engagement with town and parish councils to take forward projects on sites that they manage. Although originally proposed as an action in Year 2, proactive engagement has not yet been possible in most instances due to capacity constraints. It is anticipated that progress in this respect will be made in 2010/11. Those town and parish councils that have been identified in the Green Space Strategy for support in developing improved play facilities have been invited to a "Play in the Community" event in March 2010, to be hosted by the Authority and supported by Play England. Speakers from the sector will make presentations around current trends in play provision and techniques for successful engagement with children and young people.

- 6.2 The provision of £40,000 revenue funding (as identified in paragraph 5.5 above) will contribute to the delivery of a number of area-based priorities in 2010/11 – i.e. the provision of a synthetic turf pitch in Atherstone at Queen Elizabeth School and Sports College; the preparation of a management plan for the recreation ground, including improved play provision, in Fillongley; the provision of improved play facilities at the recreation ground in Church Lane, Kingsbury; support for the RSPB in its development work at Middleton Lakes; and the preparation of management plans for the recreation ground in Warton and Abbey Green Park in Polesworth.
- 6.3 The area-based priorities to provide improved play facilities at the recreation grounds in Ridge Lane, Sycamore Road, Kingsbury, and Speedwell Lane, Baddesley Ensor, will be achieved through the Play Area Development Programme, with funding from the DCFS Playbuilder Programme, as reported elsewhere on this agenda.

7 Resources, Monitoring and Development

- 7.1 The review of grounds maintenance arrangements (paragraph 5.1 above) and the adoption of a supplementary planning document (paragraph 4.1 above) will each contribute to ensuring the appropriate targeting of resources to deliver the priorities set out in the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy, within the context of the Authority's overall capital and revenue requirements.
- 7.2 It has not been possible, due to budgetary constraints, to take forward the establishment of a Landscape Officer post to enable delivery of the Action and Funding Plan. However, it has been proposed that the Environment Theme Group could take a more active role in advancing the provisions of the Green Space Strategy and that this may be a means through which to increase capacity to deliver the Action and Funding Plan.
- 7.3 Monitoring and development of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy, and review and revision of the supporting Action and Funding Plan, are key to maintaining a dynamic and living document through which to advance the sustainable provision of green space into the future. "Ownership" of the Strategy by the Environment Theme Group would ensure that monitoring and development are robust and would strengthen partnership working to ensure delivery against its objectives.
- 7.4 Members' approval is sought for the proposal that the role of the Environment Theme Group in respect of the Green Space Strategy be explored at the Group's next meeting and that a way forward be reported to a future meeting of this Board.

8 Report Implications

8.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 8.1.1 There is no new financial implication arising out of this report, as implementation of the Green Space Strategy Action and Funding Plan is

being advanced within the context provided by approved capital and revenue budgets.

- 8.1.2 There will be a need to establish a reserve of £40,000 at the end of 2009/10 for the Green Space Strategy Fund, in order to fund the projects recommended for support at the Area Forum meetings. Partners have been given the period up to 31 March 2011 for the completion of their projects.

8.2 Safer Communities Implications

- 8.2.1 Projects advanced through the Green Space Strategy contribute to community safety by providing well-managed recreation areas that provide opportunities for positive activity.

8.3 Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 8.3.1 Projects advanced through the Green Space Strategy are compliant with all relevant legislation.

8.4 Environment and Sustainability Implications

- 8.4.1 Projects advanced through the Green Space Strategy contribute directly to environmental improvements, enhancement of biodiversity and mitigation of the effects of climate change and help to build sustainable communities.

8.5 Risk Management Implications

- 8.5.1 The risks associated with this report have already been identified within the context of the corporate risk management process. Risk implications of all projects advanced through the Green Space Strategy are considered as part of the project management process.

8.6 Equalities Implications

- 8.6.1 The provisions of the Green Space Strategy are targeted at reducing inequalities in access to good quality green space provision. The equalities implications of all projects advanced through the Strategy are considered as part of the project management process.

8.7 Links to Council's Priorities

- 8.7.1 The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy has direct and positive links to the corporate priorities to:

- Enhance community involvement and access to services
- Protect and improve our environment
- Defend and improve our countryside and rural heritage
- Tackle health inequalities through improving well-being and providing leisure opportunities to all our citizens

- Work with our partners to tackle crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Make the best use of our resources through achieving a balanced budget and developing our workforce

8.7.2 The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy contributes directly to the following priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skills
- Developing healthier communities
- Improving access to services

* The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy and the Open Spaces Sport and Recreation Study can be viewed by following the link below

http://www.northwarks.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=744

** A copy of Appendix A (Revised Action Plan), has been placed in the Group Rooms for viewing.

The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (719212).

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	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Executive Board	08 Dec 2008
2	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board	26 Jan 2009
3	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board	07 Apr 2009
4	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Reports to Area Forums	July 2009
5	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Resources Board	06 July 2009
6	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board	28 Sep 2009
7	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Reports to Area Forums	Jan / Feb 2010

Agenda Item No 9

**Community and Environment
Board**

8 March 2010

**Report of the Assistant Director
(Streetscape)**

**Streetscape Value for Money
Reviews**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Streetscape Division has undertaken reviews of its Amenity Cleansing and Refuse Collection functions, as part of the Council's policy of reviewing its key services to assess the degree to which they provide Value for Money to Council Tax payers and to establish which areas of its services are costly or inefficient.
- 1.2 The process has taken some time to complete due to the complexity of the information being gathered and assessed, the difficulty in obtaining key elements of the data required and the fact that the reviews have been completed in two stages, with an element of challenge and the conclusion of each stage. As a result, the information gathered and presented in the reports and the attached appendices has been reviewed and revised several times over the course of the review process.
- 1.3 Members will note that the final report draws no conclusions and makes no recommendations. This is due, in part, to the fact that the services under review are complex and provided in different ways for different demographic groups in different geographical areas and comparisons are difficult to make with absolute certainty. Officers are reluctant to focus on any one element of the report or the supporting information, but believe that the information presented in the attached documents is as comprehensive and balanced as it can be. Members are therefore asked to draw their own conclusions and recommend further action as appropriate.

Recommendation to the Board

- a That Members note the contents of the attached reports and supporting information; and**
- b That any areas for further investigation be identified by Members and made the subject of further reports to this Board in the future.**

2 Background

- 2.1 The report has been compiled by officers from the Streetscape Division with a great deal of help from officers from other divisions, including Finance, as well as from information gathered from a wide variety of sources including benchmarking with other authorities, using national indicators, centrally compiled performance indicator information, questionnaires, reports from associations such as CIPFA, SOLACE, SPARSE and APSE.
- 2.2 A significant amount of information is presented in the appendices to this report and covers areas such as cost per head of population and per household, frequency of refuse collection, containers used, areas covered, numbers and types of vehicles used, staff employed, rates of pay, fuel costs, etc. The final report has sought to look at those cost elements which are within the Council's direct control to establish if particular areas of the service are expensive or inefficient.
- 2.3 While explanations of the data have been given and the results placed in context where possible, one of the main difficulties in compiling the information has been the major differences from authority to authority in how they collect refuse, clean streets, commission vehicles, report financial information etc. There appears to be no standardised approach to collecting and reporting much of the data relied on in reviews such as these, and certainly no standard model exists for operating refuse and cleansing services. Every local authority area is different and every service similarly diverse. The review has also covered a period where many local authority services have changed. There was a big push in recent years to move to alternate weekly collections which has a significant effect on performance levels and cost. So, for these reasons, the information should be regarded as a snapshot of local authority services. Finally, many national performance indicator returns (from which many of these studies draw their conclusions) have changed in the past few years. The emphasis is more on recycling rates achieved and overall tonnages of waste collected than on satisfaction levels and service efficiency. By those measures, North Warwickshire Borough Council continues to perform very well indeed.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Links to Council's Priorities

- 3.1.1 The scheme links to the Council's priorities of Protecting the Environment and Making Best Use of the Council's Resources.

The Contact Officer for this report is Richard Dobbs (719440).

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Waste Collection and Street Cleaning Services Value for money

Introduction

The Council as statutorily required provides services for the collection of waste and amenity cleaning. These services are primary front line services that have the highest public recognition as 'Council services' and accordingly are a major factor in the perception residents have of the Authority.

Notwithstanding the above the services should also be seen to provide value for money. The purpose of this report is to indicate how North Warwickshire's services measure in terms of cost and performance.

A previous Vfm report has been made and this report seeks to address criticism of that as defensive and too generalist. A direct approach to selected authorities was chosen for this report to allow more specific reference.

Method

North Warwickshire provides these services by a combination of in-house operations and external contractors. To provide a comparator base for the services thirteen other authorities were asked to complete a questionnaire with reference to the provision of their own services. These authorities were chosen to reflect some areas with high performance as well as those of a similar geographic and demographic structure. The questions were based on unit costs for discrete elements of the services provided to try and establish a cost baseline for comparison between authorities in order to try and exclude other factors such as central support costs and differing methods of accounting or performance reporting.

All questionnaires were eventually returned with varying degrees of completion and also some comment that information was not recorded in like manner. The questions covered a wide range of service topics and whilst all are of some relevance this report references the primary factors for expediency. Where information was not considered comparable or was inadequate alternative reference was obtained from national indicator sources. There has been input into this process from Financial Accountancy as well as Streetscape staff. Despite a very comprehensive process, which aimed to provide as much comparable information as possible, there are still considerable variations within the data provided, including discrepancies with the way in which financial information is recorded and reported.

Report presentation

The report has required the compilation of a number of comparison tables and in the following sections reference will be made to those tables. Accordingly the tables themselves are appended to the report.

Waste Collection

Reference is made to Table 1. Waste Collection Cost/Performance profiles & Table 2. Cost Per Head.

The declared cost of waste collection per household places NWBC as the seventh least expensive in this grouping. Five of the six the authorities reporting lower cost are shown to provide alternate weekly collection of residual waste whereas NWBC maintains weekly collections.

The cost per head table generally mirrors the results of Table 1. It is may be considered that given the variances in service and council areas that there is not a greater variation in the cost per head. This perhaps reflects the general limit to which authorities are prepared to commit to waste management.

Recycling performance places NWBC as tenth in the percentage of waste recycled. The best performing authorities are generally operating alternate weekly collections of residual waste. Notably Oadby who still maintain weekly collections are also the most costly and operate a sack collection with a limit of three sacks of residual waste being collected. West Lindsey also performs well on recycling with weekly collections of residual waste however they restrict households to a 180 litre bin instead of the usual standard 240 litre bin.

Reference is made to Table 3. Area-Vehicles-Mileage-Fuel

Unfortunately this was an area of enquiry that a number of the authorities did not answer completely or did so with data that was not directly comparable, however useful information was still obtained. The table indicates a number of variances that are intrinsic even when comparing areas that are considered to be similar.

The mileage travelled per household for waste collections would initially appear to indicate the scatter of households in a given area but it has to be borne in mind that the mileages include travel to tipping sites. An area with 'tight' collection rounds may well record comparatively high mileages if their tipping sites are someway distant. In that sense NWBC benefits from relatively close proximity to tipping sites but that could indicate that the relative distance travelled per household is during actual collection is not truly proportionate.

Fuel costs where adequately identified would suggest that NWBC is one of the most efficient. There is qualification to this as the type of area and conditions for collection e.g. hilly area, high traffic volumes will dramatically affect fuel usage. It also has to be considered that the vehicles are least fuel efficient whilst emptying bins and by implication more fuel is used proportionate to mileage, however there is some indication that NWBC performs well on the basis of the number of households collected per vehicle.

Whilst it was not possible to identify the exact configuration of the collection rounds for each authority an estimate based upon the number of vehicles has been made. It is likely that most of the authorities perform at a greater rate on their main rounds, rural and isolated collections will cause overall anomaly, however the indication shows that NWBC performs well.

Reference is made to Table 4. Rates of Pay

The table indicates that NWBC employees are towards the higher earning end of the table. There is some lack of clarity in returns with regard to additional payments or standard overtime payments however these totals were stated as the average gross pay.

It is apparent that a number of authorities are paying similar rates to NWBC and there is perhaps some correlation in rates to the area of the country. It is difficult to understand though that it seems that some authority employees are paid less than NWBC agency staff.

The table also shows the average number of sick days and NWBC is reasonably placed in these results.

Satisfaction

As a measure of value for money as far as residents are concerned then their satisfaction with services should be a good indication. It has recently been reported that North Warwickshire's waste collection service has been ranked 9th out of all collection authorities in the country in terms of resident's satisfaction with the service. This is obviously an excellent result for the Council and places the authority in the top quartile nationally for customer satisfaction. The Council also sits in the top quartile nationally for satisfaction with doorstep recycling and keeping land clear of litter and refuse.

It can be assumed that there is an effect of having retained a weekly collection of residual waste however we are by no means unusual in that so the result is still to the credit of the service staff. It should be noted that user satisfaction with Streetscape services has been high for several years and so may not be based solely on the retention of a weekly services but on other factors. No doubt continuing low levels of missed collections and the almost unerring regularity of collection times contributes greatly to this indicator.

Stripped-out costs

Recent information gained at an APSE seminar gave the average basic cost of refuse collection by wheeled bin in an urban area as £32 per household. Kerbside recycling collections were rated at £13 per household. It is also noted that the garden waste service is also covered within the household collection cost and it is reasonable to allow another £5 per property for that provision. These costs do not include on-costs such as Contact Centre, Depot, Central Services and Finance etc., hence being called 'stripped-out'. By implication this suggests that currently on top of basic cost the service would have approx. £41k of centralised support or on-costs. Budget line totals would suggest that the true figure is considerably higher than that and accordingly indicate that North Warwicks is probably well within the stated average of stripped-out costs.

Information from the Audit Commission suggests that Central Services cost for NWBC are high in comparison to this grouping as shown in the Table 6 Central

Services and Other Total £'s per head and Table 7 Central Services and Corporate Core £'s per head. The implication of these is not clear but it may be that North Warwicks does not apportion these costs in the same way that other authorities do.

Street Cleaning

The funding for Street cleaning service has been substantially increased in recent years to answer the demands for improved standards to meet national targets and not the least the demands of residents in the Borough.

Standards of cleaning have been improved year on year and the reporting indicators now place NWBC in the top quartile for performance nationally.

Reference is made to Table 5. Street Cleaning Costs & Table 4 Rates of Pay

The table (5) shows that NWBC has the highest rate of expenditure per head and also ranks quite high in cost per household and per hectare. These results are a reflection of the cost of achieving top quartile performance. The data that has been provided in respect of performance supports the high level of performance with North Warwicks outperforming overall against those shown, apart from West Lindsey. (*South Derbys info. is not trusted as decimal place scores should not occur*). It will be seen that the two top performers here are also the highest costing per household.

The table (4) shows that employee pay for street cleaning is in the mid-range of these results. As with the rates of pay for waste collection there is indication that certain areas have substantially lower pay rates and may be inconsistent with NWBC's local circumstances.

Next Steps

Officers will continue to analyse the information supplied by the authorities as part of this study as there remains a great deal of information to sift through. NWBC will also seek to make the best use of joint procurement activity with neighbouring authorities wherever possible to achieve economies of scale and best value.

It is also proposed to make further enquiries with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council as they report the lowest cost for services and yet are attaining 42% recycling, although alternate week collections may well have bearing upon those results. It would be useful, however to have some information exchange meetings and as a neighbouring authority more easily arranged.

BSW/0709

Waste Collection
Cost / Performance profiles

Appendix B

Figures for 2007/08	Cost per household	Overall recycling %	Recycling rank. Best to worst	Frequency of Refuse Collection	Method of collection	Lowest to Highest		Freq. Of Ref. Collection
NWBC:	£51.53	28.22	10	Weekly	W/Bin	£39.48	Hinckley	<i>Alt.</i>
Crewe	£57.59	37.80	7	Weekly	W/Bin	£44.37	Wyre F	<i>Alt.</i>
Harrogate	£57.35	26.95	13	Weekly	Sack	£47.96	South Derbys	<i>Alt.</i>
Hinckley	£39.48	42.00	4	Alternate	W/Bin	£49.38	NW Leics	<i>Alt.</i>
Kettering	£60.84	45.00	3	Alternate	W/Bin	£49.48	South Kest	<i>Alt.</i>
North West Leics	£49.38	39.00	6	Alternate	W/Bin	£50.71	Nuneaton	<i>Wkly.</i>
Nuneaton	£50.71	27.00	12	Weekly	W/Bin	£51.53	NWBC	<i>Wkly.</i>
Oadby	£60.20	40.43	5	Weekly	Sack	£52.04	Rugby	<i>Wkly.</i>
Rugby	£52.04	26.00	14	Weekly	W/Bin	£55.02	West Lindsey	<i>Wkly.</i>
Rushcliffe	£58.52	54.00	1	Alternate	W/Bin	£57.35	Harrogate	<i>Wkly.</i>
South Derbys	£47.96	33.60	9	Alternate	W/Bin	£57.59	Crewe	<i>Wkly.</i>
South Kesteven	£49.48	49.00	2	Alternate	W/Bin	£58.52	Rushcliffe	<i>Alt.</i>
West Lindsey	£55.02	37.00	8	Weekly	W/Bin 180 litre	£60.20	Oadby	<i>Wkly.</i>
Wyre Forest	£44.37	28.00	11	Alternate	W/Bin	£60.84	Kettering	<i>Alt.</i>
Average:	£52.46	36.71		7 Weekly - 7 Alternate				

Appendix C

Cost per head	Cost per household	<i>Low to High per h/hld</i>	No H/holds	Total	Pop.	Cost per head	<i>Low to High per head</i>
NWBC:	£51.53	7	26,556	£1,368,431	62,556	£21.88	6
Crewe	£57.59	11	51,372	£2,958,513	113,600	£26.04	12
Harrogate	£57.35	10	68,600	£3,934,210	158,800	£24.77	9
Hinckley	£39.48	1	43,498	£1,717,301	104,400	£16.45	1
Kettering	£60.84	14	40,289	£2,451,183	89,500	£27.39	14
North West Leics	£49.38	4	39,534	£1,952,189	90,400	£21.60	5
Nuneaton	£50.71	6	53,189	£2,697,214	120,000	£22.48	7
Oadby	£60.20	13	24,400	£1,468,880	56,000	£26.23	13
Rugby	£52.04	8	42,000	£2,185,680	88,000	£24.84	10
Rushcliffe	£58.52	12	46,630	£2,728,788	107,000	£25.50	11
South Derbys	£47.96	3	39,000	£1,870,440	91,000	£20.55	4
South Kesteven	£49.48	5	58,400	£2,889,632	125,000	£23.12	8
West Lindsey	£55.02	9	28,800	£1,584,576	80,000	£19.81	2
Wyre Forest	£44.37	2	44,042	£1,954,144	98,000	£19.94	3

Appendix E

Average gross pay per employee per annum	Single status implemented	Refuse Driver	Driver rate rank high to low	Refuse Loader	Loader rate rank high to low	Average No. Sick days		Driver	Driver rate rank high to low	Litter Picker	Litter picker rate rank high to low	Average No. Sick days	
NWBC:	Yes	£22,258	3	£17,719	5=	11.83	incl. long term	£18,430	6	£16,626	5	3.2	
Crewe	not given	Not given	n/a	Not given	n/a	not given		£16,614	9	£14,545	9	19.14	incl. long term
Harrogate	Yes	£22,110	4	£15,365	9	8.00		£19,363	3	£15,635	7	8.00	
Hinckley	Yes	£18,217	10	£14,545	11	9.40		£17,574	8	£12,592	12	5.80	incl. long term
Kettering	Yes	£22,426	2	£20,696	1	6.20	estimate	£19,982	2	£17,883	2	5.00	estimate
North West Leics	Yes	£21,306	5	£14,800	9	not given		£18,907	5	£16,217	6	not given	
Nuneaton	No	£20,479	6	£19,370	3	not given		£18,217	7	£18,217	1	not given	
Oadby	Yes	£26,366	1	£19,670	2	not given		£21,435	1	n/a	n/a	not given	
Rugby	No	£20,304	7	£17,719	5=	12.40	excl. long term & ind injury	£14,322	14	£14,322	10	12.45	
Rushcliffe	not given	£20,088	8	£18,270	4	13.86		£15,499	11	£15,499	8	13.86	
South Derbys	Yes	£17,322	11	£16,034	8	12.5		£16,267	10	n/a	n/a	12.50	
South Kesteven	not given	£16,161	13	£13,323	12	18.60		£16,653	13	£14,369	4	18.60	
West Lindsey	Yes	£16,536	12	£13,062	13	14.00		£14,702	12	£13,062	11	14.00	
Wyre Forest	Yes	£18,940	9	£16,660	7	9.20		£18,940	4	£16,660	3	16.10	
<i>Average:</i>		£20,193		£16,710		8.06		£18,993		£14,279		7.96	

Appendix F

St Cleaning Costs	St. Clean Budget	Population	Area size hectares	Cost per head	Cost per hectare	No. H/hlds	Costper H/hld	Employees	Cost per employee	Employee salary cost	Emp.cost as % of total budget	NI 195 Survey Results - 2008-09 Litter.	Detritus	Graffiti	Fly-Posting
NWBC:	£686,820	62,556	28,425	£10.98	£24.16	26,556	£25.86	12	£57,235.00	£217,942	31.73%	4.00%	9.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Crewe	£1,212,840	113,000 <i>est</i>	43,041	£10.73	£28.18			28	£43,315.71	£434,157	35.80%	New Unitary - Cheshire East Council			
Harrogate	£1,373,900	158,800	130,535	£8.65	£10.53	68,600	£20.03	21	£65,423.81	£346,975	25.25%				
Hinckley	£725,940	104,400	29,740	£6.95	£24.41	43,498	£16.69	22	£32,997.27	£300,858	41.44%				
Kettering	£695,990	89,500	23,364	£7.78	£29.79	40,289	£17.27	14	£49,713.57	£273,649	39.32%	2.00%	5.00%	6.00%	0.00%
North West Leics	£766,700	90,400	27,933	£8.48	£27.45	39,534	£19.39	13	£58,976.92	£224,271	29.25%	5.00%	15.00%	3.00%	1.00%
Nuneaton	Not provided	120,000 <i>est</i>				53,189		20	n/a			9.00%	15.00%	6.00%	0.00%
Oadby	£582,830	56,000 <i>est</i>	23,310	£10.41	£25.00	24,400	£23.89	4	£145,707.50	£85,740	14.71%	13.00%	32.00%	14.00%	1.00%
Rugby	Not provided	88,000 <i>est</i>	35,620 <i>est</i>			42,000		23	n/a	£335,388		6.00%	21.00%	3.00%	0.00%
Rushcliffe	£904,360	107,000 <i>est</i>	40,923	£8.45	£22.10	46,630	£19.39	16	£56,522.50	£278,982	30.85%	2.83%	5.15%	1.31%	0.16%
South Derbys	£454,217	91,000	34,000	£4.25	£13.36	39,000	£11.65	8	£56,777.13	£130,136	28.65%	No response to request.			
South Kesteven	Not provided	125,000 <i>est</i>	94,534			58,400		17	n/a			No response to request.			
West Lindsey	£832,730	80,000 <i>est</i>	115,773	£10.41	£7.19	28,800	£28.91	15	£55,515.33	£209,050	25.10%	5.00%	3.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Wyre Forest	£758,260	98,000 <i>est</i>	19,571	£7.74	£38.74	44,042	£17.22	22	£34,466.36	£380,200	50.14%				
Average:				£9.48	£25.09		£20.03					5.85%	13.14%	4.16%	0.27%

**NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH
COUNCIL.**

Value for Money.

Street Cleaning Service Review.

Author of Report: Adrian Allen (Streetscape Manager)
Finance Contributor: Donna Newell (Management Accountancy)

November 2007

Value for Money Review of Street Cleaning Service

Introduction

“Value for Money is not about securing the lowest initial price; it is defined as the optimum combination of whole-life costs and quality to meet the customers’ requirements.”

The purpose of this service review is to seek comparison of performance, public satisfaction and costs against those of other local authorities, in particular those which share the same challenges and enjoy the benefits of maintaining a local authority area located in a predominantly rural environment. At the same time other key factors, which differ between authorities, must also be taken into account.

This report sets out the various factors which were considered, the methodology which was employed, the relevant information which it was possible to gather, collate and verify and the conclusions which can be drawn from the review. The report then attempts to identify possible actions to be taken in the future to improve the service.

Background

Information and data has been obtained from the Audit Commission, Councils’ published Best Value Performance Plans, Public Service Network Benchmarking Group and the results of a questionnaire circulated amongst willing partners of both the District Audit Family and Nearest Neighbour Groups. A sample of the questionnaire is given at Appendix A and asked the responding authorities to submit detailed returns in a number of key areas including cost, resources, staffing, nature of the local authority area and the performance achieved.

Whilst trying to gather as much information as possible in order to build up a comprehensive dataset for comparison between District Councils, the questionnaire also had to be reasonably simple and quick to complete, encourage information to be reported in a consistent manner and allow areas of similarity and of diversity to be clearly identified.

Financial information proved particularly difficult to gather and analyse. The help of Management Accountancy was invaluable in trying to interpret the data that

was submitted by the contributing authorities and it was often necessary to contact Finance Officers to try to establish a common method for comparing costs (particularly central support charges and overheads). While this report attempts to compare like for like throughout, costs should be considered as estimates or approximations only, due to the uncertainty surrounding the submitted data.

Methodology

○ Use of Resources

The Audit Commission has a wealth of data that council officers and auditors consider while undertaking the Use of Resources Assessment. This management tool has been produced to assist councils in the review of individual performances as well as to support auditors by acting as an initial filter to help identify the key issues facing a particular council. Data of other councils can be compared and explored on planned spending and service performance.

The tool presents information about councils spending plans and performance graphically to assist in the identification of distinctive features amongst various groups and is illustrated graphically to show comparisons of neighbouring authorities. The current edition of the “value for money profiles tool uses 2005/06 financial estimates and 2004/05 performance information. The tool is being updated at present and a new version incorporating 2006/07 financial estimates and 2005/06 performance information will be available during the early part of this financial period (2007/08).

○ PSNet

NWBC has been a member of PSNet since the year 2002, this is an organisation for public service providers, and offers members a benchmarking service that makes comparisons across more than 20 services including housing maintenance, highways, building cleaning, grounds maintenance, recycling, street cleaning and vehicle maintenance. Membership comprises of 36 local authorities including North Warwickshire and other public sector organisations with a common aim:

To provide better services

Their philosophy is to improve quality public services through the sharing of ideas and best practice, and offer a range of services to enable this to take place.

Through their efforts to promote high standards of service management and delivery, extended private sector data is also included in Psnet benchmarking and is regularly employed as an useful tool for performance improvement and “value for money” service reviews in comparison to in-house service providers.

- **Benchmarking Questionnaire**

In addition to the aforementioned benchmarking groups, letters were sent to 13 councils of the District Audit Family Group and 6 of the Nearest Neighbour Group, seeking their co-operation in completing a prepared questionnaire as part of the VFM review. This resulted in a total of 7 questionnaires being received from the following local authorities:

District Audit Family Group:

Council	Population	Overview
Crewe & Nantwich BC	114,000	Vehicle mtce. costs high @£132k
Hinckley & Bosworth BC	102,100	Highest provider of litter bins @ 861
Tynedale DC	58,808	Largest geographical area – 221,948ha
Babergh DC	38,500	Limited financial data provided

Nearest Neighbour Group:

Council	Population	Overview
Derbyshire Dales DC	69,800	Service externalised 1998
South Staffordshire DC	105,927	Lowest spend per head of pop. @ £3.40
Wyre Forest DC	98,100	Vehicle fleet includes 3 precinct sweepers

- **Householder Satisfaction Survey**

In Autumn 2005, North Warwickshire Borough Council commissioned BMG Research to undertake its Householder Satisfaction Survey; the initial mailing of three thousand local residents, via a postal survey was carried out December 2005 – January 2006.

In total, 1311 usable completed questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 37%. A sample size of 1311 is subject to a maximum standard error of +/-2.7% at the 95% level of confidence.

Analysis and Presentation

Figures, tables and graphs are used throughout the report to assist explanation and analysis. Analysing value for money helps to understand current performance and identifies potential changes necessary for continuous improvement in service delivery.

Financial Verification

The data provided by PSNet and the five completed questionnaires have been subjected to a process of verification undertaken by a member of Management Accountancy to ensure all financial factors are a true and accurate account. The purpose of which will lead to a consistent approach in the comparison of submitted costs. Several attempts have been made to obtain a similar level of data from Tynedale and Babergh District Councils, unfortunately their respective assistance has not been forthcoming. As outlined earlier in this report, although every effort has been made to analyse and compare costs on a true “like for like” basis, only a broad assessment has been possible, due to the different approaches adopted by individual authorities.

Local Factors

The Borough has a population of 62,800 and is predominantly rural in character with three market towns and has 25,600 residential properties. It covers an area of 28,505 hectares and is served by 380 kilometres of rural roads and 192 kilometres of urban streets and roads that include strategic routes such as A5, A38, A446, A4091, A51, A4097, A45 and A452. Although the Highway Agency has overall responsibility for the management of the motorway network that includes M6, M6 Toll and M42, consideration has to be given to the motorway links and the amount of litter and detritus generated by commuting traffic. The western side of the Borough acts as a gateway to both the NEC and Birmingham International Airport.

Due to the excellent road network, industry and warehousing facilities have expanded over recent years, such as; Gorsey Lane and Station Road Industrial Estates at Coleshill, The Channel Tunnel Rail Freight Terminal, BMW engine plant, Sainsbury's, Bird's Eye Walls, Chubb and Exel Logistics at the National Manufacturing and Distribution Centre at Hams Hall, near Coleshill. Not far from Junction 10 of the M42, the 400 acre Birch Coppice Business Park is located where TNT occupies one of Britain's largest buildings. Further along the A5 at Atherstone are the industrial parks at Holly Lane and Carlyon Road, headquarters to Aldi, TNT, BHS and 3M. Inherent vehicle movements

necessitate substantial temporary traffic management and in some cases costly lane closures that allow street cleansing operations to be undertaken.

The transfer of waste to disposal sites, spread across the borough and neighbouring councils, also has a significant impact on the local environment. These tipping facilities at Packington, Wilnecote, Tuttle Hill, Dunton and the civic amenity sites at Grendon and Solihull can only increase the risk of discarded litter and refuse on the public highway.

Fly-tipping has long been a scourge on the rural landscape and incidents of illegal dumping, particularly used pneumatic tyres, have increased following high profile campaigns and enforcement actions of neighbouring authorities. In December 1998, Warwickshire County Council introduced a “van ban” at all its Civic Amenity sites across the county that may, along with other factors such as the landfill tax, have contributed to a rise in the amount of fly-tipped waste. In addition, tighter legislation on the treatment and disposal of material such as asbestos, and restrictions on the landfilling of tyres have led to more incidents of such materials being dumped in North Warwickshire. Asbestos and tyres cost this authority hundreds, even thousands of pounds to remove and dispose of correctly. It is believed that much of the commercial waste fly-tipped in the Borough’s quiet rural lanes has been imported from neighbouring urban centres such as Tamworth, Coventry, Nuneaton and Birmingham.

Summary of Benchmarking Information

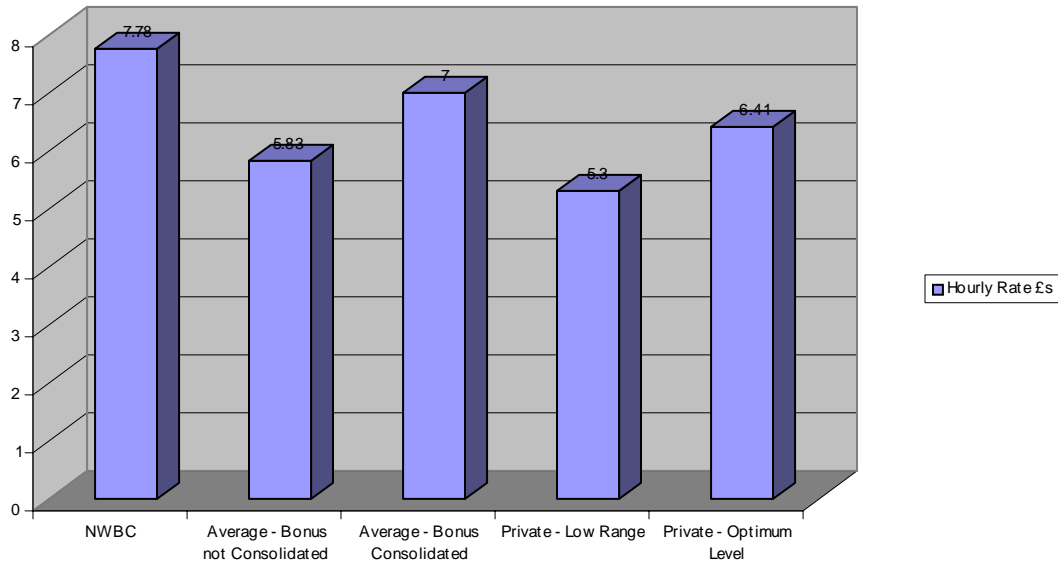
The information gathered from the various sources outlined above is detailed below. Where possible, that information has also been represented graphically.

PSNet Benchmarking Results

The information in this section is based on PSNet statistics covering all member local authorities and the private sector.

○ **Hourly Rate of Pay for Litterpickers**

Hourly Rate of Pay as supplied by PSNet 2005 - £s.



Submissions show North Warwickshire Borough Council to be a good employer with regards to the level of earnings for operatives at £7.78 per hour. Other councils' comparative average wage of £7.00 includes a consolidated bonus element with the private sector showing an optimum wage of £6.41 per hour. Such a differential cannot be solely due to the decision of this council to implement a single status of employment conditions in April 2003. That is understood to have led to a marginal increase in earnings equivalent to 0.92% but may have been influenced by generous allowances of the former incentive scheme.

○ **Composition of Hourly Wage Cost in Comparison to Operating Budget**

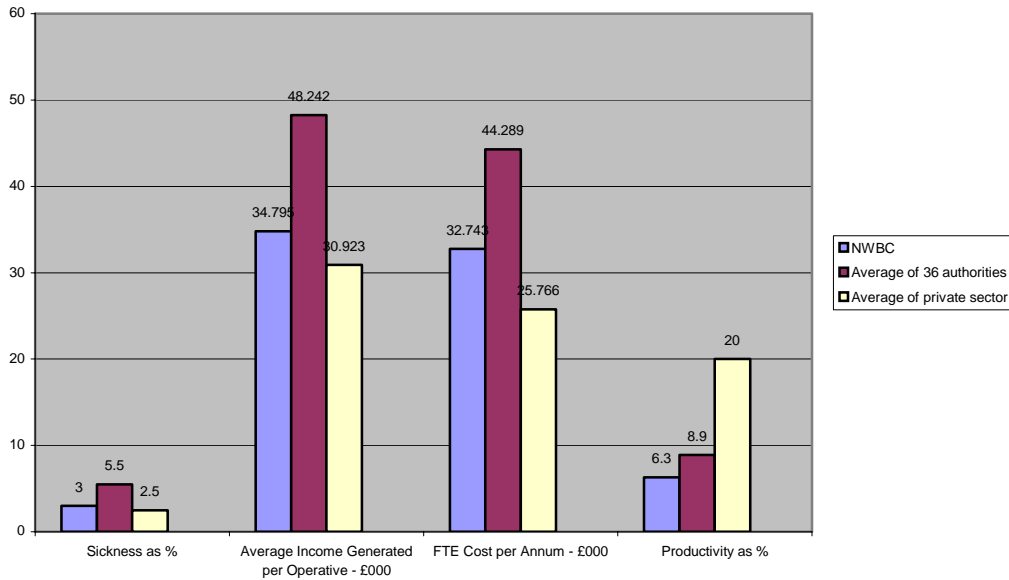
The above illustration shows a detailed breakdown of individual elements. However the following table shows the five main components for consideration:

	NWBC	Average	Private Sector
Labour & Wage On Costs	68.4%	63.3%	62%
Transport	15%	21.1%	12%
Divisional Support Services	6.7%	3.9%	5%
Central Establishment Support	3.1%	2.5%	nil
Training	0.2%	0.4%	1%
Profit	nil	nil	7%
Others	6.6%	8.8%	13%
Total – 100%			

Wage costs have already been identified as being high but similarly, central and divisional support costs seem to be the most expensive of the benchmarking group.

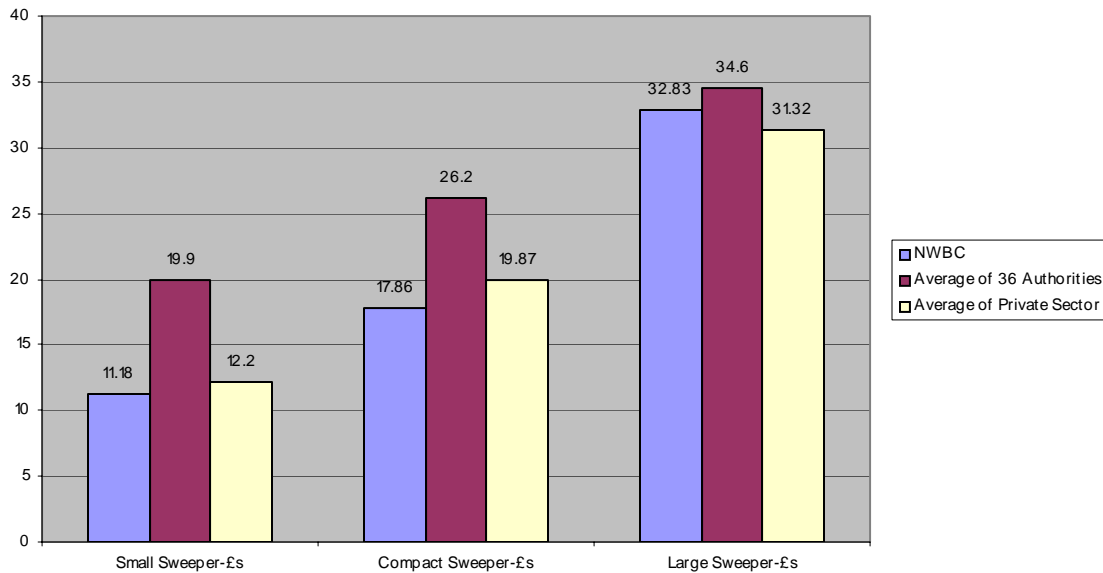
○ **Sickness and Productivity**

PSNet 2005 - 06: Average Sickness, Income, FTE Cost & Productivity.



The above graph reveals an admirable sickness level of 3% with the other councils recording an average of 5.5%. Productivity, or surplus of generated income, against that of Full Time Equivalent costs for NWBC is 6% compared to 8.9% for other councils and 20% for private service providers.

PSNet: Mechanical Sweeper Hourly Rates.



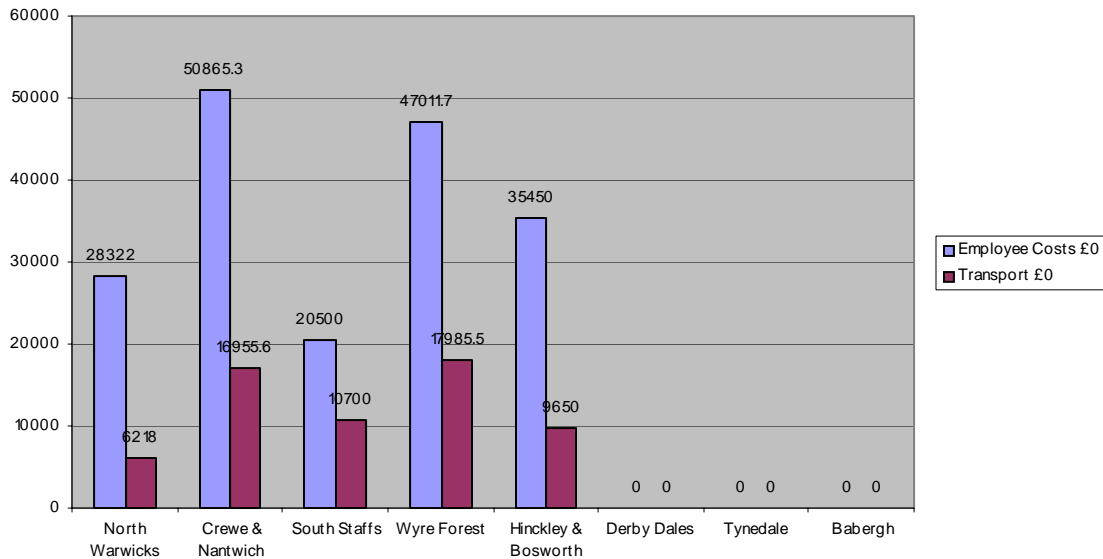
○ Hourly Rates of Mechanical Sweepers

The above rates reaffirm NWBC's transport costs to be competitive with those of other authorities and the private sector. The exception being the large sweeper rates in comparison to the private sector, however this particular element of the street cleaning service was externalised through the partnership arrangement with Enterprise plc that commenced in October 2005.

Results of Benchmarking Questionnaire

The information in this section is based on the questionnaires completed and returned by several authorities approached specifically by NWBC.

Results of Questionnaire: Employee & Transport Costs Verified by Finance.



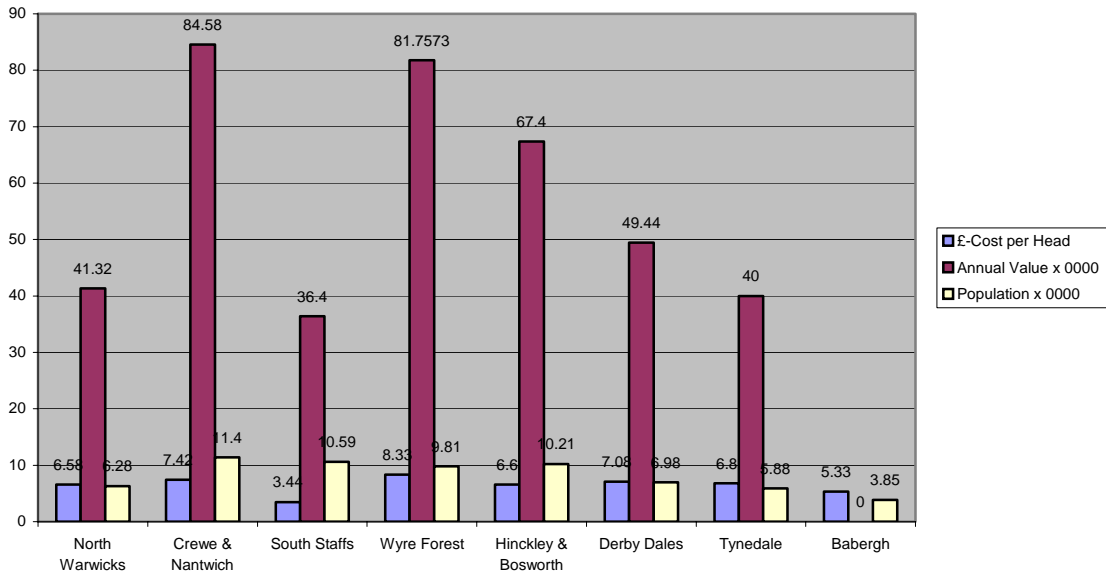
○ **Employee and Transport Nett Costs**

The above table displays the authenticated nett costs of four councils, Crewe & Nantwich, Hinckley & Bosworth, South Staffordshire and Wyre Forest. NWBC spends less on transport than the others with South Staffordshire's employee costs being the cheapest and employ 13 FTE, 2 more than NWBC. Despite Tynedale employing the least number a true comparison cannot be made in the absence of their costs. There also appears to be no pattern or trend in relation to the employee expenditure and single status employment. It is not clear whether this is down to variations in wage levels across different councils or a as result of how central and departmental support charges and on-costs are allocated as there seems to be no consistency of approach in this area.

Authority	Employee Expenditure	Number of FTE	Average cost per FTE	Single Status	Transport
NWBC	£283,220	11 + 1.8*	£22,126.56	Yes	£62,180
Crewe & Nantwich	£508,653	25	£20,346.12	No	£169,556
South Staffordshire	£205,000	13	£15,769.23	Yes	£107,000
Hinckley & Bosworth	£354,500	24	£14,770.83	No	£96,500
Wyre Forest	£470,117	21.5	£21,865.90	Yes	£179,855
Tynedale	Not disclosed	9.29	Not applicable	Yes	Not available

* denotes 1.2 FTE for agency staff and 0.6 FTE for former sweeper driver.

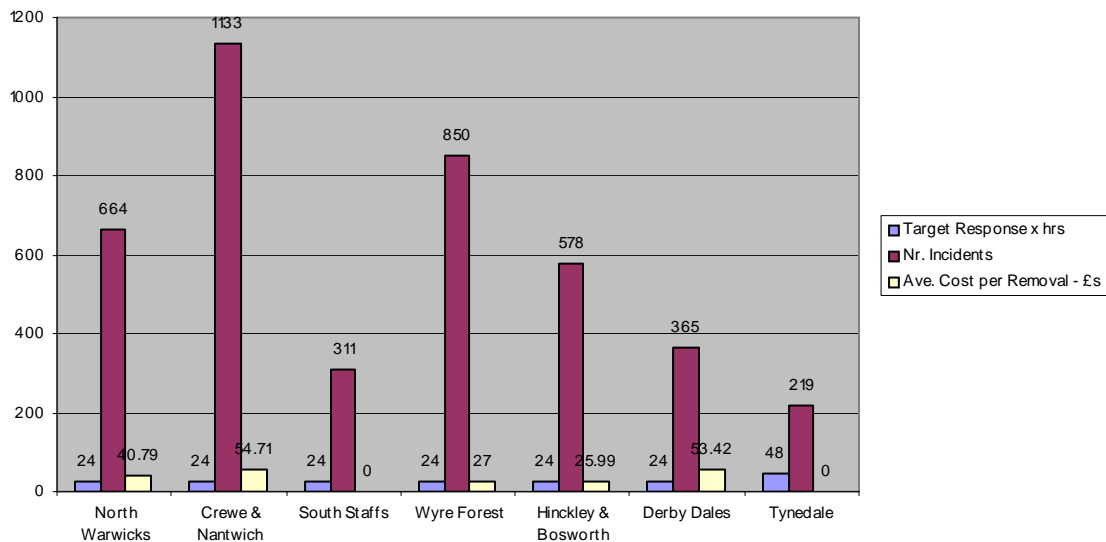
Results of Questionnaire: Cost per Head, Nett Annual Cost & Population 2005.



○ **Cost of Service £/Head of Population**

South Staffordshire provides the least amount of finance into the street cleaning service with £3.44 per head of population. Babergh is next with £5.33 followed by NWBC at £6.58. The biggest provider is Wyre Forest with £8.33 and has a population of 98,100, a greater factor of 1.562 compared to that of NWBC.

Results of Questionnaire: Fly-tipping Responses, Number & Average Cost per Incident.



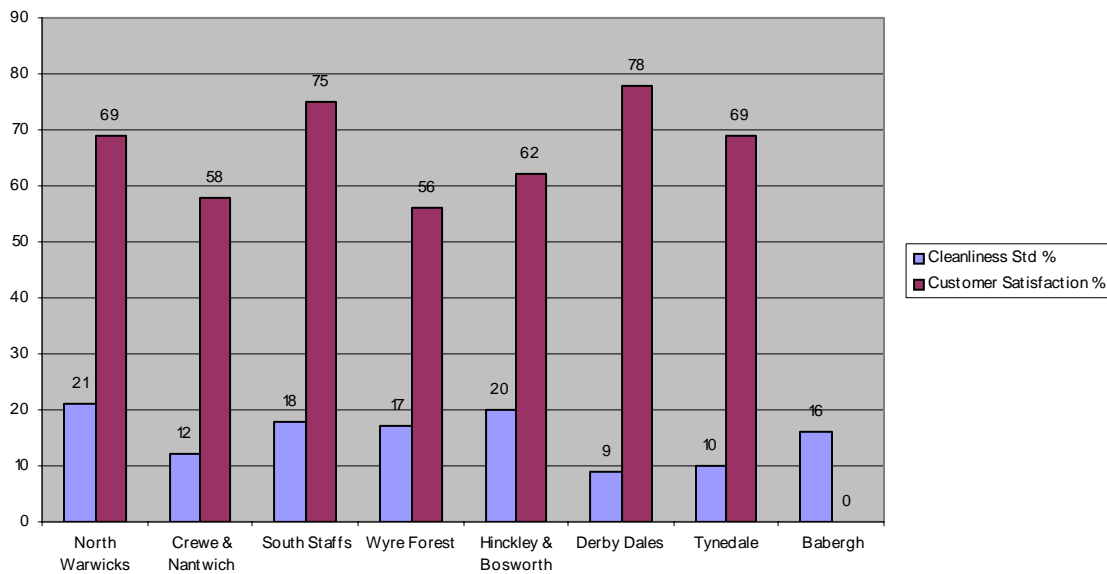
○ **Fly-tipping: Response Targets, Number and Cost per Incident**

All of the contributing councils except Tynedale offer a response time of 24 hours. The average cost of the five councils is £40.38 with NWBC at £40.79 per incident. The highest number of incidents lies with Crewe and Nantwich at 1,133 per annum, following in second place is Wyre Forest with 850. NWBC dealt with 664 reported incidents over the same period at a cost of £27,084.

Over the last two years there has been a significant increase in costs of 78.77% for fly-tipping within North Warwickshire and the consequential costs are valued at £32,300 and £48,417.*

* Includes disposal charges of specialist contractors for asbestos removal amounting to £7,497. Although increased incidents of fly-tipping has led to higher costs, the escalating charges for dealing with hazardous, or difficult to dispose of waste such as asbestos and used tyres, has had an even greater impact.

Results of Questionnaire: Customer Satisfaction & Cleanliness Standard 2005



○ **Customer Satisfaction and Achieved Cleanliness Standards**

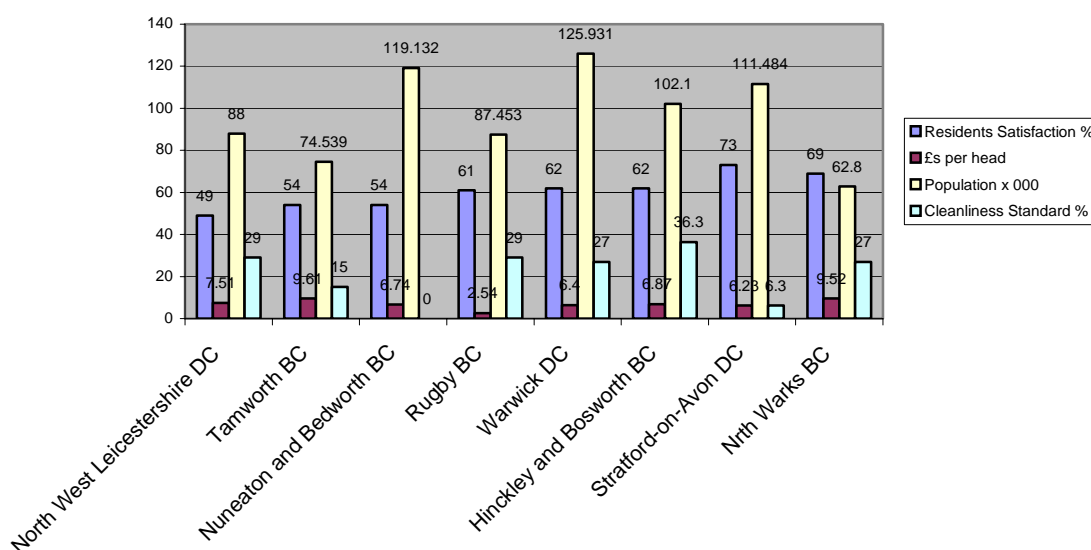
Two of the key factors in any major review of a frontline service are the level at which that service is performing and how satisfied the Council Tax Payer is with what is being delivered. Satisfaction is measured through annual and 3 yearly householder surveys through BVPI 89. The above graph shows NWBC to be amongst the top four councils in respect of customer satisfaction. However its standard of cleanliness, as measured through BVPI 199 surveys, shows NWBC to be in the lower position with a score of 21%.

N.B. Currently data shows a significant improvement in cleanliness since 2005-06 with the latest figure for North Warwickshire dropping to 12% overall. The most recent report from BMG Research presents a satisfaction level of 78% and indicates continuous improvement since the initial outcome of 2003-04.

Audit Commission 2005, Neighbouring Authorities

The information in this section is based on Audit Commission statistics covering those authorities nearest geographically to NWBC.

Audit Commission 2005 - Residents Satisfaction / £s per Head / Population / Cleanliness Standard.



○ Resident Satisfaction, Cost of Service per Head of Population and Achieved Cleanliness Standard

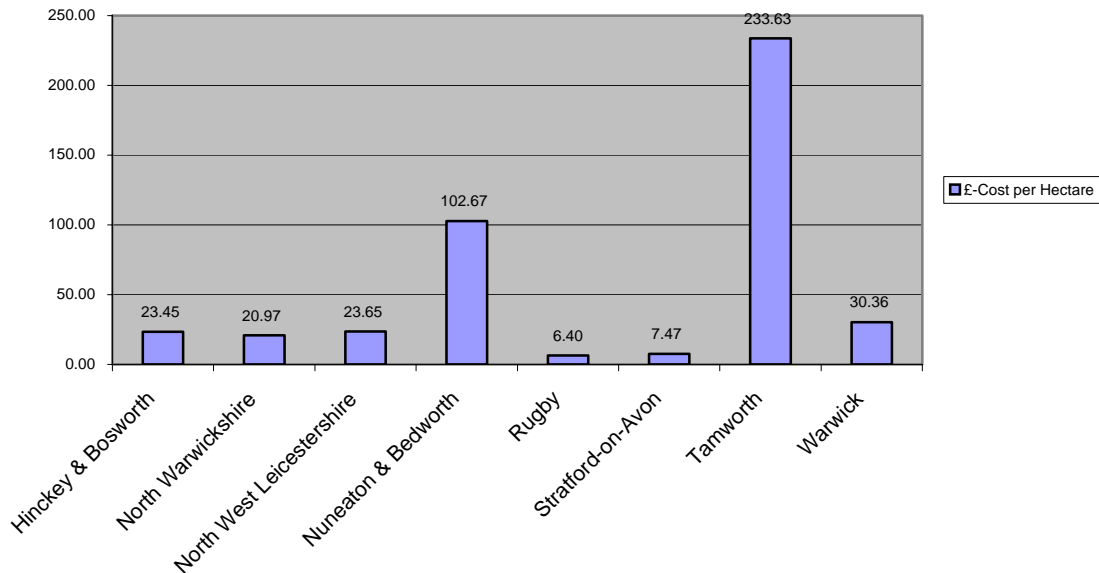
The following table serves as an indicator on the performance of each council in relation to cost and outcome. Scores are based on the lowest being the leading authority in cost effectiveness.

Council	£s per Head	Population	Cleanliness	Satisfaction	Total Score	Position
NWBC	7	1	3	2	13	2
Stratford	2	6	1	1	10	1
Hinckley & Bosworth	5	5	7	3	20	6
Warwick	3	8	3	3	17	4
Rugby	1	3	5	5	14	3
Nun & Bed	4	7	8	7	26	8

Tamworth	8	2	2	7	19	5
N W Leics	6	4	5	8	23	7

In summary NWBC is only second to the best performing council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

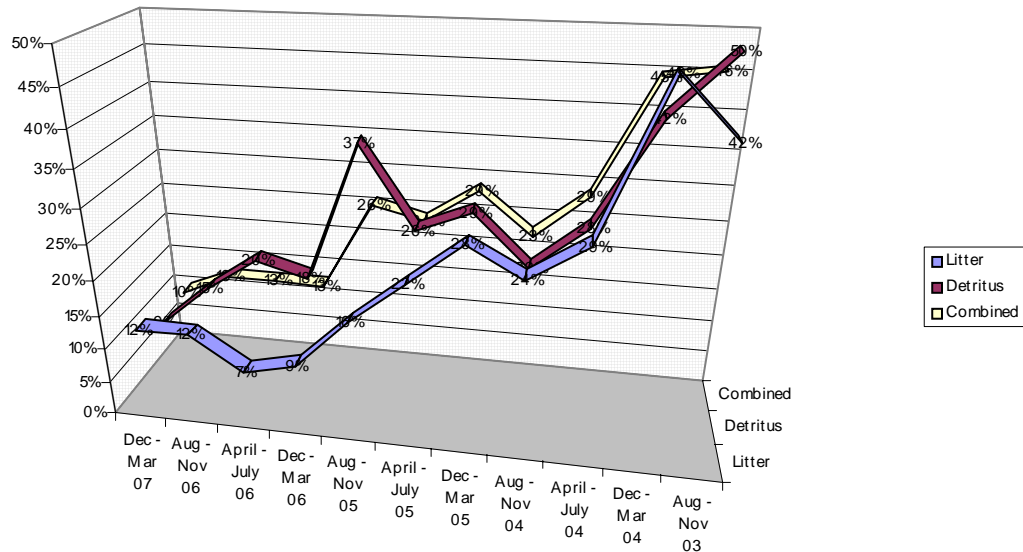
Audit Commission 2005 - Neighbouring Councils: £-Cost per Hectare



○ **Cost of Cleaning per Hectare of Land**

One of the key factors dictating cost of a service such as street cleansing is the size of the area that the authority has to clean. The challenge for rural councils with small populations such as North Warwickshire is to maintain high cleanliness standards when overall council tax income is low. Heavily used transport links through the Borough will only exacerbate the problems. Rugby Borough Council spends the least of the service providers at £6.40 with Stratford in second position with a cost of £7.47 followed by NWBC at £20.97.

BVPI 199 Cleanliness Standards - North Warwickshire



○ BVPI 199 Survey Results

Since NWBC commenced these statutory surveys between August and November 2003, there has been considerable progress on the standard of cleanliness throughout the borough up to present day. The combined failure rate was initially 46% of 300 surveys undertaken by council staff, for the period relevant to this review saw a reduction to 27%. This year's final overall result of 12% (with a BV199a score of only 10% over the last four months) clearly demonstrates continuous improvement in service delivery and is lower than the present national average of 15.3% and would place this authority in the second quartile for performance.

Enforcement

While compiling this report, no account has been taken of the costs of providing enforcement activity in the area of litter and fly-tipping, nor of the income received from fixed penalty notices. It has been assumed that benchmarking information submitted by other authorities surveyed has also excluded such costs. However, enforcement looks set to play an ever more important role in tackling issues such as fly-tipping and litter. The recent introduction of the smoking ban has seen sharp rises in the amount of smoking related litter in the town centres and other urban areas of the Borough. In order to tackle these increasing problems in a cost-effective way, approaches other than increased sweeping and litter-picking of affected areas will be required and so the Streetscape and Regulatory Divisions have agreed to investigate what further enforcement action can be undertaken, including the potential for introducing street wardens to increase our profile in this area through increased awareness, greater enforcement alongside more education.

Summary

a) Householder Satisfaction Survey:

Continuous improvement since 2003 –

2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
---------	---------	---------	---------

60%	67%	69%	78%
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b) Hourly Rate of Pay for Litterpickers:

NWBC-£7.78

Other Councils-£7.00

Private Sector£6.41



c) Composition of Hourly Wage Costs:

Divisional Support Services and Central Establishment Support found to be the most costly with the least amount invested in training.



d) Sickness and Productivity:

Attendance is good with sickness level at 3%



Achieved productivity level 6.3%



e) Hourly rates of mechanical Sweepers:

Found to be the most competitive with those of other councils and private Sector.



f) Employee and Transport nett costs:

Authenticated transport costs found NWBC to be the most competitive.



However average cost per full time equivalent is the most expensive.



Least number of employees compared with other councils.



g) Cost of Service per head of population:
Of 8 neighbouring NWBC spends the third least on service provision.



h) Fly-tipping; Response Targets, Number & Cost per Incident:
All but one council Tynedale District, offer a 24hour response service.



The average cost of comparative councils is £40.38 with NWBC at £40.79.



i) Resident Satisfaction, Cost of Service per Head of Population and Achieved Cleanliness Standard:

NWBC is second only to Stratford-on-Avon within nearest neighbour group.



j) BVPI 199 Cleanliness Standard:

NWBC has significantly improved its level of cleanliness from 46% in November 2003 to 10% in March 2007.

*N.B. % measurement relates to an unsatisfactory standard of cleanliness, higher readings indicate greater quantities of litter and detritus.



Recommendations and Proposed Future Actions:

To be agreed by the Member Review Group

- Increase partnership working with Warwickshire County Council and other agencies.
- Review agency staffing arrangements.
- Investigate economy of scale savings through joint procurement of products and services with neighbouring authorities.
- Increase education and enforcement measures to reduce levels of discarded litter.
- Look at the feasibility of introducing street wardens in town centre areas.

Assistant Director's Comments

I support the recommendations set out above which are in line with Council Priorities and which should be considered by the Environment Portfolio Holders Group and, once agreed, should form the basis of a Street Cleansing Value for Money Action Plan, with specific objectives set out alongside a timetable for delivery.

Many of the recommendations have already been included in the draft Divisional Plan for next year and some areas of work (such as the review of agency staffing arrangements) is already underway. Partnership working with the County Council in particular has been a highly successful outcome of the Public Realm Partnership and it is hoped that the imminent detrunking of sections of the A446 and A38 will enable the current partnership arrangements with WCC to tackle the issues of litter and detritus along those main arterial routes much more successfully than has been possible under previous maintenance regimes. It is intended that opportunities to explore greater partnership working with other agencies and neighbouring authorities will be pursued further over coming months in order to improve efficiency and provide even better value for money.

**North Warwickshire Borough Council – Street Cleaning Service Review.
Value for Money Questionnaire.**

Contact: Adrian Allen, Streetscape Manager, Tel. No. 01827 719408, e-mail adrianallen@northwarks.gov.uk

Background:

The Borough, as the title suggests, comprises the northern area of the County of Warwickshire and lies to the east of the City of Birmingham. It is mainly rural in character and has three market towns, namely Atherstone, Coleshill and Polesworth. It covers an area of 28,500 hectares and is served by 380 kilometres of rural and 192 kilometres urban roads that include strategic routes such as A5, A38, A446, A4091, A51, A4097, A45 and A452. Although the responsibility rests with The Highway Agency we also have to contend with a motorway network that comprises of M42, M6 Toll and M6. The population of the Borough is approximately 62,000 persons with 25,600 dwellings and its neighbouring authorities include Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough, Tamworth Borough, Coventry City and Solihull MBC.

All information to be based on 2005-06 year.

Reference	Question	Answer
1	Area of Borough / District Council, expressed as square hectares.	
2	Size of local population.	
3	Number of residential properties.	
4	Length of All Purpose Trunk Roads, expressed in kilometres.	
5	When was the service last subjected to competitive tendering.	
6	Has the service been externalised.	Yes / No
6a	If yes, what is the annual value of contract, exclusive of client costs.	£
6b	Have any elements of the service been contracted-out	Yes / No
6c	If yes, please specify along with annual value.	£
7	If the service is provided by an in-house team, how many FTE operational staff do you employ, exclusive of supervision, management and client officers.	
8	Have you integrated the operational and client roles.	Yes / No
8a	If no, how many client officers do you employ in relation to street cleaning.	
8c	FTE of operational supervision and management.	
9	Have operational staff been subjected to “single status” pay and conditions.	Yes / No

9a	If no, do you currently operate a productivity bonus scheme.	
9b	The ratio of supervisors or equivalents to the number of street cleansing operatives	
10	Please state the number of the following vehicles and items of plant employed on street cleaning activities, excluding gully emptying.	
10a	Large mechanical carriageway sweeper (17 tonnes gvw)	
10b	Small mechanical footway sweeper (1 tonne payload)	
10c	Pedestrian sweeper (Applied type)	
10d	Transit type tipper or pick up	
10e	Dandy cart (single barrow)	
10f	Fly poster & grafitti removal unit	
10g	Chewing gum removal unit	
10h	Annual fuel costs for vehicles employed on street cleansing service	£
10i	Annual maintenance costs of vehicles employed on street cleansing service	£
11	Customer Satisfaction	
11a	Do you carry out a regular Customer Satisfaction Survey	Yes / No
11b	If yes, what overall satisfaction did you achieve	%
11c	Does your Corporate Plan, Service Plan, Performance Plan or Contract specify a satisfaction level to be achieved	Yes / No
11d	If yes, what level is required	%
13	Average BVPI 199 Survey Results 2005 – 06	
13a	Litter	%
13b	Detritus	%
13c	Combined	%
13d	Fly-posting	%
13e	Grafitti	%
13f	Which two Of the ten Land Uses would be of most concern to your council with regards to standard of cleanliness	
14	Other Performance Indicators	
14a	Street Cleansing spend per head of population, based upon the service provider's operating budget.	£
14b	Cost of cleaning both channels of 1 Km of carriageway, that does not require temporary traffic management	£
14c	Amount of detritus collected by carriageway mechanical sweeper over 12 month period	tonnes
14d	Cost of lane closures for dual carriageway roads per 3 Km length.	£
15	Of the streets cleansed within the Street Cleansing Contract, what % of the total are the following	
15a	Primary Retail	
15b	Secondary Retail	

15c	High Density Housing	
15d	Low Density Social Housing	
15e	Industry / Warehousing	
15f	Main Roads	
15g	Rural Roads	
15h	Other Highways	
15i	Recreational Areas	
16	<u>Provision of Litter Bins on Public Highway</u>	
16a	Number of litter bins	
16b	Number of litter bin emptyings per week	
16c	Number of dog waste bins	
16d	Number of dog waste bin emptyings per week	
16e	Number of 240 litre wheely litter bins	
16f	Cost of emptying litter bin per occasion	£
16g	Cost of emptying dog waste bin per occasion	£
16h	Cost of emptying 240 litre wheely litter bin	£
17	<u>Fly-tipping</u>	
17a	<u>Target response time to deal with reported fly-tipping incidents</u>	
17b	<u>Number of reported fly-tipping incidents per year.</u>	
17c	<u>Average cost of dealing with a fly-tipping incident</u>	£
18	<u>Quality Management</u>	
18a	<u>What % of completed work does the service provider inspect. NB exclusive of post inspection undertaken by gang during works.</u>	%
18b	<u>Is there a formal community involvement in post inspection, such as Parish Councils, Town Councils or other representative groups.</u>	Yes / No
18c	<u>If yes, % of completed work inspected</u>	%
18d	<u>Do members of the public have access to cleansing schedules via the Council's web site</u>	Yes / No
18e	<u>If yes, how specific are the schedules; week commencing, frequency, date, day, am or pm</u>	

Refuse Collection and Recycling Service Benchmarking Report

Outline

The Refuse Collection and Recycling Service was the subject of a Best Value Review with subsequent Audit Commission inspection taking place in October 2002 and their corresponding Inspection Report being presented in January 2003.

The Service was judged to be 'A Fair Service with Uncertain prospects for improvement'. The following extract encapsulates the general tenor of the inspection report.

'North Warwickshire residents are satisfied with a reliable Council refuse service. However the service is too expensive, the Council collects too much waste and its recycling is poor.'

Whilst some aspects adjudged as performing poorly such as recycling have as we predicted in the Review improved dramatically the issue of alleged high cost had not been thoroughly addressed. Accordingly a benchmarking study has been undertaken with the authorities of our Nearest Neighbours Group to allow comparison. In total including North Warwickshire there are 16 authorities in this group.

Basis of information obtained

In order to make the completion of the enquiry as balanced as possible information has been gathered using the Audit Commission's value for money website facility and directly from individual Authority reports. The information relates to a spread of financial years 2004/05 to 2006/07.

There is data upon:

- Cost per household of waste collection
- Percentage of waste recycled
- Percentage of waste composted
- Weight of waste per head of population

- Short description of service provided

Apart from the last point all the others are based upon BVPI reporting requirements and were therefore considered to be readily available.

In order to provide further useful background to aid the comparison information from the Neighbourhood Statistics Online website was also obtained. These enquiries supplied information in respect of population, numbers of households.

Study Methods

Completing a meaningful comparison has not been easily achieved. There are a number of factors that have crucial bearing upon the headline parameter of cost per household.

The accompanying spreadsheet provides an initial overview of the current standing of the authorities and will be referred to in the statement of results that follow.

Results of Survey (Nearest Neighbour Group – 16 authorities)

Based upon the financial year **2004/05** the following results for North Warwickshire were established:

- The cost of waste collection per head of population was the sixth least costly within this grouping (i.e. five authorities cost less)
- The Authority ranked ninth for percentage of waste recycled (i.e. eight recycled more)
- Measured as a return of cost for recycling performance NWBC ranked seventh (i.e. six were less costly)
- The Authority was ranked first for satisfaction with waste collection

Further research of performance in **2005/06** revealed that in simple terms North Warwickshire's position had slipped. The corresponding results for 2005/06 were:

- The cost of waste collection per head of population was the thirteenth least costly within this grouping (i.e. twelve authorities cost less)

- The Authority ranked fifteenth for percentage of waste recycled (i.e. fourteen recycled more)
- Measured as a return of cost for recycling performance NWBC ranked sixteenth (i.e. fifteen were less costly)
- The Authority was ranked first for satisfaction with waste collection

The latest information for the year **2006/07** shows yet more fluctuations:

- The cost of waste collection per head of population was the eleventh least costly within this grouping (i.e. ten authorities cost less)
- The Authority ranked thirteenth for percentage of waste recycled (i.e. twelve recycled more)
- Measured as a return of cost for recycling performance NWBC ranked twelfth equal (i.e. three were less costly)
- The Authority was ranked first for satisfaction with waste collection

In considering these results certain factors should be taken into account. The type of area and the method of collection employed affect the cost of collection. In addition the method of recycling collection and the number of properties included will have a considerable effect upon the costs of collection. In some cases it has been possible to add some additional information in the service level description.

Also included in the spreadsheet there is an indicator of the density of housing per square mile. Whilst this only allows a cursory judgement to be made about the topography of the authority concerned it may give an indication correspondingly of the likely efficiency of collections.

Value for Money Considerations

At the time of the Best Value inspection it was contended that other authority costs would increase as they were all having to broaden their service levels to meet the targets set for recycling. There is evidence in support for that original contention. A correlation between performance and cost could also be drawn and in most cases the higher the recycling performance accordingly the higher the cost. The most recent indicators show that some authorities have apparently managed to reduce their cost per household but this perhaps should be viewed having regard to the later section on Grants and Subsidies.

However it still needs to be borne in mind to take account of the level of service provided. For instance in most cases a wheeled bin refuse collection scheme is in operation the exception being South Kesteven where a sack based refuse collection is still used.

The frequency of collection will also have a large influence on the cost of services and/or the extent to which recycling collections can be provided/afforded. For example NWBC has 5 refuse vehicles and crews collecting residual domestic waste, it is probable that changing to alternate week collection would then only require 3 vehicles and crews. Effectively the resource for 2 refuse vehicles and crews would be available to offset recycling costs or could be utilised to increase recycling performance.

The frequency of refuse or residual waste collection will also affect the participation rates for recycling schemes which obviously will have a direct effect upon recycling percentages particularly dry recyclates e.g. paper, glass, cans. Despite claims to the contrary it is surely logical to assume that an alternate week collection of residual waste will cause more residents to utilise their recycling containers, particularly when NWBC with weekly collection of residual waste collections has a participation rate of only 33% in its kerbside recycling scheme. The conclusion would seem inescapable.

It should also be recognised that the type of materials collected for recycling will affect the cost of schemes. Plastics and cardboard are often relatively expensive to collect primarily because they are invariably high volume but low weight materials. The method of collection used e.g. commingled collection or source separated schemes can also affect the percentage recycled, for instance the commingling of materials can produce contamination and subsequent rejection of the material by reprocessors thereby reducing the actual percentage successfully recycled. That will by implication make a scheme more costly when judged by a cost per percentage point recycled assessment.

Perhaps not always considered to be a major factor within nearest neighbour groupings the density of population has an important bearing upon the efficiency and therefore the cost of service provision. In this category North Warwickshire is ranked in 8th place which possibly indicates that it is not the most compact of areas to service but none of the authorities would be described as densely populated when compared with an urban area such as Birmingham. However the figures themselves do not really identify the variation that can exist even between closely ranked groupings. We know that North Warwickshire is largely a rural area with several small town centres of population and then numerous and varying sized villages and hamlets. By comparison North West Leicestershire covers an area of similar size and

would probably be described in the same way. However their respective populations are very different in size and distribution, North Warwickshire's largest urban area is Polesworth and Dordon which has a population of around 13,000 whereas North West Leicestershire's Coalville has a population of almost 33,000. But apart from that main centre of population there may be some closer comparison.

The foregoing paragraph illustrates the difficulty in reaching definitive conclusions across just two apparently similar and adjacent authorities but hopefully in general it indicates that purely statistic based performance comparisons are only a part of the process of evaluation. The following extract from a report by the *Sparsity Partnership and specific to waste collection appears in broad terms to confirm the distinction between more urban based collection areas and more rural ones.

(Start of Extract)

*(*The Sparsity Partnership for Authorities delivering Rural Services – SPARSE – is a Special Interest Group within the Local Government Association (LGA). The Group represents almost 60 of the local authorities that serve communities in the most rural parts of England - and includes within its membership county councils, unitary authorities and district councils.)*

“Refuse Collection Costs

39. The refuse collection service in South Shropshire is provided by an external contractor - Biffa Waste Services Ltd. The data supplied by the contractor show that refuse collection costs for properties in the rural parts of the District are three times those, in £s per property terms, for the urban parts of the District.

40. The refuse collection service is provided by an in-house team in East Riding of Yorkshire. I found when I analysed the data supplied by East Riding that:
there is a wide variation in the number of properties on the “urban” and “rural” rounds, the length of the “urban” and “rural” rounds, the distances travelled to the tip; and the non-productive time per round;
in absolute terms, the amount of non-productive time – in minutes – tends to be greater on the “urban” rounds than on the “rural” rounds; but SPARSE Summary May 2006 viii the non-productive time per property is 71% higher for the “rural” rounds than for the “urban” rounds;
the unit costs for the “rural” rounds are invariably higher than those for the “urban” round;
and
on average, the unit cost for the “rural” rounds is 90% higher than the unit cost for the “urban” rounds and 72% higher than the average unit cost for the Study area.

- 41.** I found that the unit costs are very closely related to the number of properties per round – ie:
93% of the variation in unit costs on the “urban” rounds; and
98% of the variation in unit costs on the “rural” rounds; and
appear to be “explained” by the number of properties per round.
- 42.** I found that the variation between the average unit costs for the “rural” rounds and the average unit cost for the East Riding Study area is not quite as dramatic as that between the average unit costs for the “rural” rounds and the average unit cost for South Shropshire – ie:
a rural premium of 72% in East Riding; as compared with
a rural premium of 90% in South Shropshire; but
that the rural premium in both authorities is very significant.
- 43.** I concluded that:
recent advances in technology make it possible to match unit costs to geographical areas within a local authority area; and
it should be possible in a larger study to identify the size of the “rural premium” by matching refuse collection costs to areas within local authorities with different spatial characteristics - and then identifying the differences in refuse collection costs between urban areas and more sparsely populated / remote areas in a way that could be used in RNF calculations. “
(End of Extract)

The implication of the Sparse report is therefore that rurally based rounds will be more costly than urban based rounds. The reference to spatial characteristics bears witness to the earlier comment upon comparison with North West Leicestershire.

In evidence submitted by Sparse to the Communities and Government Select Committee inquiry into Refuse Collection (Fifth Report of Session 2006–07) reference is made to the July 2006 study into Rural Premium Costs in providing the Refuse Collection/Recycling Service. In that evidence it states ‘The study demonstrated that it costs circa 90% more to provide the same level of service within the same local authority, using the same collection methods in sparsely populated parts of the Council’s area compared to the more urban parts of the same Authority’s area (the “Rural Premium Costs”)’.

By inference the statement above indicates that the more rural an authority area the less favourable will be the comparison with urban authority areas.

In the accompanying Sparse benchmarking recycling analysis report 'with particular focus on North Warwickshire' the following Vfm judgement is shown:

- For example, based on the data for the 81 (rural) authorities, an authority spending £50 per head would, on average, be expected to have a recycling rate of 28%.

In 2006/07 North Warwickshire's recycling rate was 24.92% and the cost per household was £48.49.

Current statistics suggest that for 2007/08 a recycling rate of 27% to 28% is likely. Whilst the cost per household is not yet known it is not anticipated to be more than £50.

Grants and Subsidies

Another factor that has a bearing upon the costs of service are the awards and rewards that an authority has achieved, together with grants for specific initiatives the monies from these sources can have a significant effect.

There is no direct data list for the monies so derived in relation to individual authorities. However when NWBC position is considered it should be recognised that there has been substantial support received via WCC in the form of collection vehicles and wheeled bins for the garden waste collection service. Undoubtedly other authorities have to a greater or lesser extent received support from these sources. Effectively these subsidies will reduce the declared cost from the actual cost of waste collection over a given period and perhaps enable facilities to be provided that otherwise would probably not be possible to support.

Trying to make comparison with our local Recycling Beacon Authority, Lichfield District Council, demonstrates the paucity of reliable and relevant information. In a report compiled by Defra in 2005 – *Kerbside Recycling – Experiences from authorities receiving funding from the National Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund* – the assessment of actual cost was carried by the means described below.

(Start of Extract)

Standard collection costs

It is difficult to compare collection costs between authorities for many reasons including contracting out versus in-house service, lease versus purchase of capital equipment, accounting practices, etc. Therefore, for the purpose of the case study analysis, Kerbside Analysis Tool (KAT) has been used to estimate a standardised cost for each collection. It should be stressed that the use of KAT is to overcome difficulties in comparing a service that is operated and paid for in a number of different ways across authorities and not as a reflection of perceived inaccuracies in the audited or declared costs for individual authorities. KAT uses information on the infrastructure actually employed to carry out the collection, for example the number and type of vehicles, and applies a unit cost, uniform depreciation and financing. The standard costs calculated by KAT are not the same as the price paid to a contractor for operating the service or the same as the costs that appear in the audited accounts of the authority. However, they enable a fair comparison between authorities of the costs of running kerbside collections.

Standard costs have been estimated for all the kerbside collections operating in the authority including refuse collection, regardless of if they were funded by Round 2 or not. It is sometimes impossible to separate out the elements funded by Round 2, for example if it only covered part of a collection or if it replaced an existing collection. Therefore, the cost analysis can only be undertaken at an authority wide level. Refuse collection costs are included as well as those for recyclables collection because it provides a useful base reference against which to compare the costs of the recyclables collections, refuse collection costs not being uniform over the country.

When considering the costs presented in it is essential to remember that they cover the collection of household waste/recyclables only, i.e. trade waste is not included, and additional costs for spare vehicles, depots and other support costs relating to collection are not included. Post collection costs, such as gate fees for refuse, MRF processing and composting, and ancillary costs such as for promotion, education, call centres and communications are also not included. Depending on the extent of these facilities and activities, and also the level of recycling credits or sales revenues, the standard KAT cost may be lower or higher than the audited accounts and a direct comparison is impossible.

(End of Extract)

Had all authorities been similarly subject to a KAT study there may have been some value in comparison but it would seem that there are still anomalies within this study that would not necessarily make such a comparison any more valid than others. For example St. Edmundsbury Borough Council was also in receipt of support from the Fund and there is a corresponding section for that Authority. The cost of collection per household for 2004/05 based on the KAT study and the declared actual cost for the two authorities were:

Lichfield	£68 (KAT)	£57.61 (Declared)
St. Edmundsbury	£55 (KAT)	£50.17 (Declared)

How a £13 study difference translates to £7.44 difference in declared costs perhaps illustrates how difficult it is to make a value assessment that is itself of value.

Waste Content

Consideration should also be given to the weight of waste collected. As shown North Warwickshire had the highest number of Kg's per head of population. There is evidence within the Warwickshire Waste Analysis that there is a much higher percentage of 'fines' within the domestic waste content from certain areas of North Warwickshire than any other district in Warwickshire. Fines in layman's terms and in reference to these areas would be described as ashes. The finding of the analysis supports the long held contention that the historic prevalence of coal mining in the Borough still impacts on waste arisings by way of many households still receiving coal allowance and therefore maintaining solid fuel heating for their homes. In the particular location studied by the analysis team fines amounted to 12% of the waste stream, in the main 10% higher than other areas. Given that other materials in the waste stream do not display such a wide variation and having regard to the effects of local recycling schemes on those, it is reasonable to assume that the fines are in addition when compared with other authorities waste arisings.

The implication of a higher proportion of fines will be a greater weight for a given volume and mean that whilst capacity may still be available within a collection vehicle the mandatory weight limit will have been reached and the vehicle will have to go to tip. Correspondingly over a collection week this could result in more tip runs than other authorities which will obviously affect efficiency/cost outturns.

Contracted and In- House Services

The difference between services provided by external contract and in-house operation has generally been seen as an economic one. Whilst there were apparently substantial cost efficiencies in early refuse contracts the evidence of latter contracts is that the 'savings' have largely been eroded. Locally this could be seen in the increase of £12 per property in the cost of Stratford-upon-Avon's collection cost from 2003/04 to 2005/06. However in light of the difficulties already described in obtaining meaningful cost indicators this should perhaps only be seen as an indication of how costs have increased.

However cost is too simple a comparison and it should be considered what benefits overall are gained. In general an in-house service offers the control and flexibility that will not be available in a contracted service. That is not to say that the ability to vary and change the nature of the tasks within a contract could not be agreed but it would be at substantial cost to do so.

Conclusion

It is considered that there is no real conclusion that can be drawn from comparison. The factors that have an effect upon cost are, as has been shown, diverse and essentially not quantifiable. Therefore it would not be of value to draw conclusions that cannot be soundly defended.

The real measure for consideration should be a local one based upon the known tasks of the services, the performance returns, response and satisfaction ratings set against the cost.

Enquiries have been made to try and establish some base costs of providing refuse collection services by comparison with other in-house services in Warwickshire. Whilst there has been no indication of great disparity this as an area that needs to be further researched ensuring like for like comparison of items such as wages, fuel costs, vehicle provision and maintenance costs.

Author – Bernard Woodhall (Refuse & Recycling Manager)
Final Draft – December 2007

Assistant Director's Comments

It is clear from the evidence contained within this report and from evaluating data compiled by the audit commission, SPARSE and from other sources that true like-for-like cost comparisons are almost impossible to produce as the nature of service delivery, local demographics and accounting practice differs markedly across the country.

The recent move from six refuse rounds to five showed that efficiency within the service could be (and was) improved and the introduction of a second garden waste collection round has boosted the Borough's recycling rate. The current recycling rate (in the region of 28%) balanced against costs of under £50 per household per year should be considered to represent good value for money given the rural nature of the Borough, the outstanding reliability of the refuse collection service (fewer than 30 missed collections per 100,000), the retention of a weekly refuse collection service and the very high public satisfaction rate (94%).

Areas for further consideration (subject to review and approval by the Portfolio Holder Group) are:

- Increasing the level of public participation in kerbside recycling through education, promotion and awareness raising
- Continue the ongoing review of agency worker provision with an aim to drive down costs and improve procurement efficiency
- Benchmark key service delivery costs such as maintenance, fuel, salaries and insurance with other local authorities (particularly near neighbours) with a view to identifying and achieving ongoing savings in these areas where possible

This is in line with current Council priorities and much of this work is ongoing and appears in the draft Divisional Plan for 2008.

Agenda Item No 10

Community and Environment Board

8 March 2010

Report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Resources

Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April 2009 – January 2010

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the actual performance and achievement against the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Community and Environment Board for the period April 2009 to January 2010.

Recommendation to the Board

That Members consider the achievements and highlight any areas for further investigation.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 The Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillors Bowden and Butcher have been sent a copy of this report and any comments received will be reported to the Board.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 This report is the third report for the 2009/10 year and reflects the Corporate Plan, which has been agreed for 2009/10. A key change to last years reports were the introduction of new national indicators and the removal of some of the best value performance indicators. The new national indicators include some of the existing best value performance indicators. Management Team have agreed which existing performance indicators are to be monitored during this year. The indicators relevant to this Board are shown in Appendices A and B. There are no new national indicators relevant to this Board. The indicators shown are the ones which are being monitored for this Board on a local basis only.

...

- 3.2 Management Team receive monthly reports from each division and are monitoring performance on an exception basis i.e. they are reviewing all the red and amber responses. This report informs Members of the progress achieved from April to January 2010 on all of the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicators relevant to this Board. The following definition has been applied using the traffic light warning indicator of red, amber and green.

Red – target not achieved

Amber – target currently behind schedule and requires remedial action.

Green – target achieved.

4 **Progress April 2009 to January 2010**

- ... 4.1 Attached at Appendices A and B are reports showing all the Performance Indicators and Corporate Plan targets relevant to this Board. The report is split into divisions as appropriate. The report includes individual comments where appropriate against each of the targets and indicators prepared by the relevant division. The report shows the following status in terms of the traffic light indicator status:

Corporate Plan

Status	Quarter 3 Number	Quarter 3 Percentage
Red	0	0%
Amber	4	14%
Green	24	86%
Total	28	100%

Performance Indicators

Status	Quarter 3 Number	Quarter 3 Percentage
Red	0	0%
Amber	7	22%
Green	25	78%
Total	32	100%

5 **Conclusion**

- 5.1 The progress report shows that 86% of the Corporate Plan targets and 78% of the Performance Indicator targets are currently on schedule to be achieved. Members are asked to consider the achievement overall and to identify any areas of concern which require further investigation.

6 **Report Implications**

6.1 **Safer Communities Implications**

- 6.1.1 There are community safety performance indicators which are reported to Executive Board.

6.2 **Legal and Human Rights Implications**

- 6.2.1 The new national indicators have been specified by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government as part of a new performance framework for local government as set out in the local Government White Paper Strong and Prosperous Communities.

6.3 **Environment and Sustainability Implications**

6.3.1 Improvements in the performance and quality of services will contribute to improving the quality of life within the community.

6.4 **Risk Management Implications**

6.4.1 Effective performance monitoring will enable the Council to minimise associated risks with the failure to achieve targets and deliver services at the required performance level.

6.5 **Equalities**

6.5.1 There are a number of equality related actions and indicators highlighted in the report including developing outreach services, affordable housing, disabled facilities grants, the employment of staff declaring they have a disability and the employment of black and minority ethnic people.

6.6 **Links to Council's Priorities**

6.6.1 There are a number of targets and performance indicators contributing towards the priorities of access to services, improving housing in the borough, tackling health inequalities, achieving a balanced budget and developing our workforce.

The Contact Officer for this report is Robert Beggs (719238).

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
National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships	Department for Communities and Local Government	Statutory Guidance	February 2008

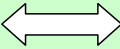
Ref	Start Date	Action	Board	Lead Officer	Reporting Officer	Theme	Sub-Theme	Update	Traffic Light	Direction
4	Apr-09	Taking action to protect existing village shops and post offices by continue supporting rural post offices by awarding 100% rate relief, investigating and pursuing projects and opportunities which help to maintain rural services and looking to extend to the rural retail grant scheme	Community & Environment Board	AD (R&B)/DCE	Assitant Director Revenues & Benefits	Community Life		100% Rate Relief awarded to all qualifying rural post offices and general stores for 2009/10.	Green	
32	Apr-09	Through the Framework for Rural Action continuing to be sympathetic to the needs of the farming and rural communities, primarily to use the opportunity provided by LEADER to improve access and enhance communication for and with rural communities	Community & Environment Board	DCE/AD (R&B)	Director of Community & Environment	Community Life		We signed the contract for LEADER with AWM at end of October and are currently developing a publicity strategy and contacting LAG partners to come forward with expressions of interest fo projects to benefit rural communities.	Green	
34	Apr-09	Continuing to progress actions identified through the work of the LEADER project	Community & Environment Board	DCE/AD (R&B)	Director of Community & Environment	Community Life		We are currently working with WCAVA to recruit staff and anticipate convening the Local Action Group in February to move forward to review and initiate project proposals.	Green	
37	Apr-09	Limited ability to continue to promote as Economic Development team disbanded but opportunities may arise through introduction of Rural Enterprise Grant.	Community & Environment Board	DCE	Director of Community & Environment	Community Life		We have limited capacity to support rural enterprises but are increasingly woking with partners to secure benefits in NW from County and Sub-regional initiatives. Report to C and E Board in January 2010 will address relationship with WRCC and their role in support for rural communities.	Green	
42	Apr-09	Continuing to maintain the cleanliness of the Borough's streets and open spaces, including ensuring that the number of streets failing to meet the cleanliness standard does not exceed the Council's target of 10%	Community & Environment Board	AD (S)	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		The latest survey results indicate that standards of cleanliness across the Borough continue to improve with the most recent score of 2% representing the best return to date.	Green	
43	Apr-09	Continuing to take action to improve the quality of the local environment by working more closely with WCC on cleaning and maintenance issues across the Borough and on land drainage and flooding issues targeting those areas identified as most at risk in priority order	Community & Environment Board	AD (S)	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		Joint working continues with WCC and other agencies where possible, however recent long term staffing issues both at WCC and NWBC have meant that certain joint projects (particularly around flooding and land drainage) have been delayed. Support in this area continues to be provided by WDC and projects are being progressed where possible.	Amber	

Ref	Start Date	Action	Board	Lead Officer	Reporting Officer	Theme	Sub-Theme	Update	Traffic Light	Direction
44	Apr-09	Maintaining the benefits of joint working achieved through the Public Realm Partnership and reviewing their effectiveness annually	Community & Environment Board	AD (S)	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		A446 - Coleshill Heath to Birmingham Road, northbound. Traffic management provided by WCC Highways.	Amber	↔
45	Apr-09	Maintaining the clean-up programme, and community litter pick and grot spot schemes as well as expanding new initiatives such as the litter picking equipment loan scheme	Community & Environment Board	AD (S)/AD(L&CD)	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		Completed questionnaire received from 10 Parish Councils regarding clean-up activities. Information yet to be processed. Clean-up kits distributed to 8 PCs and Fire Service. Litter picking equipment loaned to 7 groups for community events. Support given to Leicester Housing Ass. for community clean-up event at Stoneleigh Estate, Hartshill. Litter picking activity included in summer activities for young people in Hartshill (Snow Hill Recreation Ground) as part of reward scheme.	Green	↔
46	Apr-09	Continuing to develop effective and proactive measuring for the reduction of litter, fly tipping and dog fouling, including both raising awareness (including the expansion of the litter pledge scheme) and taking enforcement action. Supporting Parish and Town Councils who wish to introduce additional dog control Orders	Community & Environment Board	AD (S)/DCE/AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		Dog Douling Campaign launched July 2009 with local support from local primary schools and the Police. The campaign focuses on the Atherstone area and raising awareness on the effects of dog fouling on others. The publicity will be continued through the rest of the year. Closer working arrangements set up between Dog Warden Service and PSCOs with the aim of PCSOs supporting the Dog Warden service through promotion of responsible dog ownership and the reporting of offenders. Environmental Health launched Good Job campaign but incident with Dog Warden has had an impact on service.	Green	↔
47	Apr-09	Introducing a warden scheme in the Borough's main towns concentrating on local public realm and environmental issues	Community & Environment Board	AD (S)/DCE	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		New Warden Scheme implemented in April 2009 and will be reviewed in Spring 2010.	Green	↑
48	Apr-09	Introducing further improvements to the grass cutting service where possible and assessing their impact on the overall level of service provision	Community & Environment Board	AD (S)	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		Grounds Maintenance Service Review in conjunction with the outcome of the Green Space Strategy is ongoing.	Amber	↔
49	Apr-09	To implement agreed outcomes of the review of the Grounds Maintenance Service Specification by December 2009	Community & Environment Board	AD(S)/AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		Ongoing.	Amber	↔

Ref	Start Date	Action	Board	Lead Officer	Reporting Officer	Theme	Sub-Theme	Update	Traffic Light	Direction
50	Apr-09	Continuing the ongoing programme of recycling in various ways, including through education and awareness raising programmes and school visits, in line with the agreed action plan	Community & Environment Board	AD (S)/AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		Support given to 3 schools with eco-schools programme activities. Recycling display and information taken to two events. One presentation given to a community group on Recycling.	Green	↔
51	Apr-09	Ensuring that the requirements of the Household Waste Recycling that are met by collecting at least two materials for recycling from every suitable household in the Borough	Community & Environment Board	AD(S)/AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Streetscape	Environment		Flats and more scattered location are now include but the figure has yet to be confirmed under recalculation according to Wastedateflow submission. There is confidence however that the requirements of the Act will be met.	Green	↔
52	Apr-09	Recording and monitoring the Council's carbon footprint and assessing how the Council can take action to reduce its impact on Climate Change through specific action	Community & Environment Board	ACESC	Assistant Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council	Environment		The officer working group continues to meet. The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan was adopted by the Community and Environment Board in January. The Power Perfector equipment, designed to reduce the energy use at the Council Offices, will be installed on 10th and 11th February. A report from the Energy Savings Trust on our use of transport has been received and officers will recommend a number of the initiatives suggested be adopted. A section on our website devoted to advice to the public has been created and went live recently. Funding has been obtained from the Energy Savings Trust to employ energy advisors to go out with the BOB bus to advise the public. The first climate change community action group has been formed in Fillongley with plans to roll this out to other areas. Other actions from the action plan continued to be worked through.	Green	↔
53	Apr-09	Continuing to implement the Green Space Strategy in accordance with the approved Action and Funding Plans	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		The GSS is being implemented in accordance with the approved Action and Funding Plan and within the constraints of available resources. The GSS Fund is currently being administered through the Area Fora, with applications being considered in January/February 2010 cycle.	Green	↔

Ref	Start Date	Action	Board	Lead Officer	Reporting Officer	Theme	Sub-Theme	Update	Traffic Light	Direction
54	Apr-09	Subsequent to the adoption of the corporate "Health, Well-being and Leisure Strategy" and its associated Action Plans, and further to discussion with the Health, Well-being and Leisure Portfolio Group, determine and commence implementation of the approach to the future provision, management and operation of the Council's leisure facilities	Community & Environment Board	DCE/AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		The future provision, management and operation of the Council's leisure facilities are currently subject to detailed consideration, most notably in respect of the future of indoor leisure provision in Coleshill, appertaining to which initial public consultation concluded at the end of September 2009.	Green	
55	Apr-09	Continuing to co-ordinate and implement relevant sections of the North Warwickshire Play Strategy, in accordance with the approved action and funding plans	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		The NW Play Strategy is being co-ordinated and delivered in accordance with the approved action and funding plans. All six priority projects are being implemented according to timescale. The multi-agency Play Partnership is also being reinvigorated.	Green	
56	Apr-09	Evaluating the impact of the three-year Play Area Development Programme, in part as a precursor to giving consideration to the means by which to improve those plays areas not included within the initial Programme	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		The Play Area Development Programme evaluation project plan has been approved by the relevant Scrutiny Board sub-committee. Actions are being progressed, albeit slower than anticipated as a consequence of the demands of the Playbuilder programme, through which a further four play spaces are to be improved in 2010.	Green	
57	Apr-09	Completing the development of the allotment site in Warton including agreement on the terms of the corresponding lease by May 2009 and advancing the development of a further site in Mancetter	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		Development of the allotment in Warton is complete. This scheme, which was handed over to the community in December 2009, has been recognised for an award within the Best Kept Villages Competition as a consequence of the positive community involvement in the project. The scheme at Mancetter is subject to a demand analysis being undertaken by the NW Allotment Federation and the identification of a suitable site. Consideration is also being given to the possible provision of allotments in Hurley, where a potential site has been identified.	Green	

Ref	Start Date	Action	Board	Lead Officer	Reporting Officer	Theme	Sub-Theme	Update	Traffic Light	Direction
58	Apr-09	Supporting the North Warwickshire Allotment Federation in its provision of encouragement, advice and mutual assistance. to local Allotment Associations	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		Support continues to be given to the NW Allotment Federation in accordance with an agreement with this organisation.	Green	↔
59	Apr-09	Co-ordinating the sustainable development of Wellness Matters, in conjunction with NHS Warwickshire including its potential expansion into targeted outreach communities	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		Wellness Matters is continuing to be developed in conjunction with Warwickshire PCT and the Community Partnership's Health and Well-being Theme Group. Recent initiatives include the development of a Wellness Matters website and the provision of services through BOBs Bus.	Green	↔
60	Apr-09	Continuing to implement the agreed Action Plan for investing in children and young people's health and well-being	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		Action plan being implemented according to agreed timescales.	Green	↔
61	Apr-09	Ensuring compliance with the Council's statutory responsibilities as a partner on the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board. and drafting a revised Child Protection Policy	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		The Council is meeting its responsibilities as a partner on the WSCB. A new Child Protection Policy has been drafted and will be reported to the Executive Board in February 2010. Consideration is also being given to the proposed ISA regulations.	Green	↔
62	Apr-09	Continuing to prioritise children, young people and their families in the delivery and co-ordination of leisure service provision in accordance with agreed Council priorities and structures and as identified in the Health Well-being and Leisure Strategy	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		Children, young people and their families are being prioritised in the delivery of services in accordance with agreed (Leisure Facility and P&D) action plans.	Green	↔
63	Apr-09	Continuing to ensure that the work of one of the Council's Community Development Officers is dedicated to identifying and addressing the needs and aspirations of children and young people across the range of service provision, in partnership with Extended Services Teams	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Health and Well Being		Achieved. The Council has a CDO (Young People and Inter-generation) and a Community Projects Officer (Youth) within its P&D section. Both posts are dedicated to addressing the needs and aspirations of young people in conjunction with key partners.	Green	↔
65	Apr-09	Undertake a fundamental service review of Environmental Health, including external peer challenge	Community & Environment Board/Resource Board/	ACE	Assistant Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council	Housing/Environment		The review is complete and was agreed by Executive Board and Council. The changes have been fully implemented.	Green	↔

Ref	Start Date	Action	Board	Lead Officer	Reporting Officer	Theme	Sub-Theme	Update	Traffic Light	Direction
67	Apr-09	Continue to develop and deliver a wide range of initiatives such as Activities 4U, Call 4 Sport and holiday play schemes to contribute both to a reduction in instances of anti-social behaviour and to provide constructive leisure opportunities for young people. Continuing to co-ordinate a wide range of targeted community safety projects, including work with young people, both to provide diversionary activities, and to meet the wider needs and aspirations of young people, inter-generational work and wider community development activity.	Community & Environment Board	AD (L&CD)	Assistant Director Leisure & Community Development	Safer Communities		Activities4U and Call4Sport are being targeted at priority areas for reports of anti-social behaviour. These initiatives are successfully engaging young people in positive diversionary activities. A problem solving approach to identified anti-social behaviour is being used on a multi-agency basis. This has proved to be effective across the Borough (Polesworth, Hartshill and Atherstone).	Green	

PI Ref	Description	Division	Section	Year End Target	2008/9 Year End	National Best Quartile	SPARSE Best Quartile	Performance	Traffic Light Red/Amber/ Green	Direction	Comments	Suggested reporting interval	Board
BVPI 82	Percentage of household waste arisings : which have been sent by the Authority for recycling	Streetscape	Refuse & Recycling	12%	11.52%			9.89%	Amber	↑	Slight increase. (All Warks areas apparently seeing recessionary effect on dry recycling.) End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
BVPI 82	The percentage of household waste sent by the Authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion. :	Streetscape	Refuse & Recycling	18%	18.16%			21.23%	Green	↓	Stet. Anticipated reduction as the autumn/winter transition is evidenced. End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
BVPI 84	Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population. :	Streetscape	Refuse & Recycling	480	469			477	Amber	↑	This figure improves with decreasing garden waste figures. End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
BVPI 88	Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections of household waste :	Streetscape	Refuse & Recycling	20	24.74			24.5	Green	↓	Minor increase in missed reports. End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
REF-LPI 2	Percentage of missed collections put right by the end of the next working day :	Streetscape	Refuse & Recycling	95%	89%			89%	Amber	↓	Slight decrease in performance. (effectively equal to just 3 bins not being cleared next day). End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
NI191	Residual household waste per household	Streetscape	Refuse & Recycling	751kg	770			767	Amber	↑	Very marginal decrease. End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
NI192	Household waste recycled and composted	Streetscape	Refuse & Recycling	30%	29.68%			31.12%	Green	↓	Stet. Remains above target at this report date. End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
NI193	Municipal waste landfilled	Streetscape	Refuse & Recycling	65%	72.24%			70.85%	Amber	↓	Minor increase. End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
BVPI 91	Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by kerbside collection of at least two recyclables. :	Streetscape	Refuse & Recycling	95%	91.66%			97%	Green	↔	Stet.Figure has increased and revised collection round information is being collated to reflect further additions.that will reflect almost 100%. End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
NI195a	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (litter)	Streetscape	Streetscape	8.00%	4.00%			2%	Green	↑	End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
NI195b	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (detritus)	Streetscape	Streetscape	12.00%	7.00%			2%	Green	↑	End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
NI195c	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (graffiti)	Streetscape	Streetscape	4.00%	0.00%			0%	Green	↑	End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board
NI195d	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (fly posting)	Streetscape	Streetscape	4.00%	1.00%			0%	Green	↑	End of December figure reported.	Q	Community and Environment Board

PI Ref	Description	Division	Section	Year End Target	2008/9 Year End	National Best Quartile	SPARSE Best Quartile	Performance	Traffic Light Red/Amber/ Green	Direction	Comments	Suggested reporting interval	Board
P&D PI 1	Number of customer contacts	Leisure & Community Development	Partnership & Development	10,000	-			14,329	Green	↑		Q	Community and Environment Board
P&D PI 3	Total number of partners	Leisure & Community Development	Partnership & Development	30	-			25	Green	↑	Number of partners will exceed 30 by the year end	Q	Community and Environment Board
P&D PI 4	Customer satisfaction with Community Development activities	Leisure & Community Development	Partnership & Development	8	-			8.8	Green	↑	The maximum score is out of 10	Q	Community and Environment Board
P&D PI 5	Percentage of successful funding applications	Leisure & Community Development	Partnership & Development	60%	-			88%	Green	↑	£118,550 of external funding has been secured in 2009/10	Q	Community and Environment Board
P&D PI 6	Number of funding bids supported	Leisure & Community Development	Partnership & Development	30	-			47	Green	↑		Q	Community and Environment Board
P&D PI 7	Team benchmark % satisfaction scores	Leisure & Community Development	Partnership & Development	75%	-			93%	Green	↑		Q	Community and Environment Board
ACPI I1b	Swimming pools and sports centres: : The net cost per swim/visit	Leisure & Community Development	Leisure Facilities	1.92	1.93			2.01	Amber	↓		Q	Community and Environment Board
FAC-LPI 9	Leisure Centres - Total income per visit :	Leisure & Community Development	Leisure Facilities	2.24	2.22			2.61	Green	↑		Q	Community and Environment Board
ACPI I1a	Swimming pools and sports centres: : The number of swims and other visits per 1,000 population.	Leisure & Community Development	Leisure Facilities	7,100	7,011			5,178	Amber	↓		Q	Community and Environment Board
ACPI H1	The percentage of food premises inspections that should have been carried out that were carried out for high risk premises.	Chief Executive	Env Health (C, L &HP)	100%	91%			85.00%	Green	↑		Q	Community and Environment Board
NI184	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	Chief Executive	Env Health (C, L &HP)	85%	83%			81.00%	Green	↓		Q	Community and Environment Board
EH-LPI 1	To respond to all complaints and requests for service within three working days (Pests, Dogs and general env health FLARE system)	Housing	Private Sector & Public Health	99%	99.50%			99.00%	Green	↔		M	Community and Environment Board
BVPI 218a	Percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24hrs of notification.	Housing	Private Sector & Public Health	80.00%	100.00%			100%	Green	↔		M	Community and Environment Board
BVPI 218b	Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle.	Housing	Private Sector & Public Health	80.00%	95.00%			100%	Green	↔		M	Community and Environment Board
EH-LPI 2	Number of Pest Control service requests per pest type and income checked by EHM (monthly)	Housing	Private Sector & Public Health	100.00%	-			100%	Green	↔		M	Community and Environment Board
EH-LPI 3	Number of Dog Warden service requests per type, income, expenditure and fines checked by EHM (monthly)	Housing	Private Sector & Public Health	100.00%	-			100%	Green	↔		M	Community and Environment Board

PI Ref	Description	Division	Section	Year End Target	2008/9 Year End	National Best Quartile	SPARSE Best Quartile	Performance	Traffic Light Red/Amber/ Green	Direction	Comments	Suggested reporting interval	Board
EH-LPI 4	financial - income / expenditure and fixed penalty fines plus monies recovered - 6 month WCC reconciliation as per Audit requirement	Housing	Private Sector & Public Health	100.00%	-			100%	Green	↔		M	Community and Environment Board
EH-LPI 5	EHM/HOS to review each enforcement notice completed or signed FOR THIS TEAM during the previous month in accordance with enforcement protocols, plus case reviews of all prosecutions / cautions etc. and press releases	Housing	Private Sector & Public Health	100.00%	-			100%	Green	↔		M	Community and Environment Board
EH-LPI 7	letters to all clients who made a service request or were subject to investigation / enforcement plus closed grant cases on a monthly basis with replies followed through - results to feed into NI 182 also	Housing	Private Sector & Public Health	100.00%	-			100%	Green	↔		M	Community and Environment Board

Agenda Item No 11

Community and Environment Board

8 March 2010

**Report of the
Assistant Director
(Leisure and Community Development)**

Tree Management

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report informs the Board of the Authority's approach in respect of tree management, as set out in the Briefing Note attached at Appendix A.

Recommendation to the Board

That the contents of the Tree Management Briefing Note, as set out in Appendix A, be noted and approved.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 The Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders for Countryside and Heritage, Environment and Resources have had the opportunity to comment on the content of this report.

3 Report

- 3.1 The Authority is responsible for the care of many mature trees in its parks and open spaces across the Borough. Trees make an important contribution to the quality of the environment and especially to neighbourhoods where people live, work or take their leisure. Trees are, however, one of the most emotive elements that the Council must manage. They are growing, dynamic structures that must be proactively managed to ensure their long term well-being, to minimise any potential risk to public safety and to ensure that they do not cause an "actionable nuisance".
- 3.2 Given that the Authority must work within limited resources, it is right that its tree management programme should take a risk-based approach and that issues that pose the highest risk should be prioritised for attention before those that arise from a misconception of danger or are merely a matter of inconvenience.

3.3 The Briefing Note attached at Appendix A sets out the Borough Council's understanding of its duties, its approach to tree management and, particularly, its inspection methodology. The intent of this document is to provide the Authority with a clear and coherent position statement in respect of its tree management responsibilities, pending the preparation and subsequent adoption of a full Tree Management Policy and Strategy. It is anticipated that the Policy and Strategy will be brought to the Board for consideration later in the year. In the meantime, and subject to Board approval, tree management will continue to be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Briefing Note.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

4.1.1 Tree management is funded from within the existing parks and playing fields budget. There is no additional financial implication arising from this report.

4.2 Safer Communities Implications

4.2.1 Trees that are routinely inspected and well-managed are less likely to present a hazard to persons or property.

4.3 Legal and Human Rights Implications

4.3.1 The Authority has a Duty of Care in respect of the management of trees on its land. The act of a tree or part of a tree causing injury to person or persons is likely to give rise to litigation, either as a claim in negligence or under the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984. The Briefing Note appended to this report sets out the approach taken by the Authority to mitigate against the risk of any such claim arising.

4.4 Environment and Sustainability Implications

4.4.1 Well-managed trees make a positive contribution to the environment and to creating sustainable communities within which a good quality of life is enjoyed by local residents.

4.5 Risk Management Implications

4.5.1 The Briefing Note appended to this report sets out the Authority's approach to managing any potential risks arising from the trees in its care. The operational risks of the tree management programme are reviewed regularly.

4.6 Equalities Implications

4.6.1 There are no differential equality-related impacts on particular groups or individuals within the community arising from this report.

4.7 Links to Council's Priorities

4.7.1 The implementation of a proactive tree management programme contributes directly to the corporate priorities of:

- Enhancing community involvement and access to services
- Protecting and improving our environment
- Defending and improving our countryside and rural heritage
- Making best use of our resources

The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (719212).

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
None			

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Tree Management Briefing Note

1. Introduction

This is an interim tree management briefing note and does not constitute a tree management strategy or policy for North Warwickshire Borough Council. This note sets out the basic duties that the Council is to uphold, the surveying regime and methodology it follows. A full and detailed tree management policy and strategy is to be prepared in 2010 for formal adoption.

2. Duty of Care

Statute law does not require a tree owner to maintain completely safe trees. "Duty of Care", however, requires tree owners to take "reasonable care". The act of a tree or part of a tree causing injury to person or persons is likely to give rise to litigation. This may take the form of a claim either in negligence or, where the injury to the person is on the same land as the tree, under the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 (the Acts referred to hereafter).

The basic principle underlying both the law of negligence and the Acts, is that the owner of the land and trees, owes a duty to take reasonable care to protect those reasonably likely to be affected, including trespassers. As a result, the tree owner responsible for them must take steps to ensure that they are aware of whether a tree is likely to cause a problem and, if it is, they should take appropriate action as necessary to protect those who are reasonably likely to be adversely affected.

A "Duty of Care" in relation to tree inspections is owed to persons who may reasonably be contemplated by tree owners, those responsible for managing trees and the tree inspector to be affected by their actions (or inaction).

North Warwickshire Borough Council recognises that it has to uphold its "Duty of Care", although it also recognises that it cannot be expected to inspect all of its trees on a regular basis using tree officers or tree inspectors alone. The task is unmanageable due to the size of the tree population and the fact that trees are living and dynamic organisms and thus affected by changes to the environmental, physical and geological conditions in which they grow.

This duty means that the actions of North Warwickshire Borough Council need to meet a standard of care. If it does not, then negligence in Common Law (which arises as a result of a court case and a precedent being set) may be proved and may result in a claim for damages.

Under the Duty of Care North Warwickshire Borough Council must take reasonable care/steps to avoid acts or omissions, that could reasonably be foreseen, which would otherwise be likely to cause harm to persons or property.

3. Industry Guidance

Existing guidance has not specifically been written for use by private or public landowners for application across their holdings. The following, however, have been used to inform the Borough Council's approach to tree management:

- Forestry Commission's *Operational Guidance Booklet 1: Tree Safety Management*, written in 2007 for its own woodland managers, see:

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ogb01.pdf/\\$FILE/ogb01.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ogb01.pdf/$FILE/ogb01.pdf)

- Health and Safety Executive's *SIM 01/2007/05: Management of the Risk from Falling Trees*, written in 2007 for FOD Inspectors and Local Authority Enforcement Officers, see:
http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sectors/ag_food/1_07_05.pdf
- English Nature's *Veteran Trees: A Guide to Risk and Responsibility*, written in 2000 for general use, see:
<http://naturalengland.communisis.com/naturalenglandshop/docs/IN1.3-1.pdf>
- Arboricultural Association: *Guidance Note 7 – Tree Surveys: A Guide to good Practice*, written in 2005 for tree managers.
- The Stationery Office: *Well Maintained Highways: A Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management*, written in July 2005 for Highways Managers.
- *Updated Field Guide for Visual Tree Assessment*, published in 2007, Claus Mattheck
- Forestry Commission's *Practice Guide 13 – Hazards from Trees*, written in 2000, David Lonsdale
- The Stationery Office: *Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment*, written in 1999, David Lonsdale

4. Scope of Survey/Caveats and Limitations

Preliminary tree surveys are undertaken in line with the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) and the Basic Level Tree Inspection, as set out by Lantra. The initial surveys are undertaken from ground level on individual or groups of trees in order to assess their structural and physiological condition and management requirements. If significant defects are identified then a more detailed Professional Level Inspection is undertaken.

These are arboricultural surveys/reports and as such no reliance should be given to comments relating to buildings, engineering or soil, unless otherwise specified.

These are preliminary arboricultural health and safety surveys. Where a more detailed assessment is required, such as aerial inspection or decay detection methodologies, this will be specified. At the current time, surveys will not include quantified tree risk assessment (QTRA), although this may be required as a secondary element of work.

All tree inspections are undertaken from ground level and no climbing inspections will be undertaken unless considered necessary.

For the purposes of these surveys all dimensions of trees and their associated parts are based on estimation unless otherwise stated.

Trees are growing dynamic structures. The comments within the schedules are valid for a period of five years from the date of report or until prescribed works have been undertaken, whichever comes first or unless otherwise stated.

No tree is ever absolutely safe due to the unpredictable laws and forces of nature. As a result, natural failure of intact trees may be expected to occur.

The schedules/reports are arboricultural and therefore do not rely on ecological or archaeological data. If either is commented upon within the schedules/reports, further professional advice will be sought.

5. Tree Inspection Programme

The *Well Maintained Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance and Management: July 2005* provides guidance in relation to the frequency of inspection of trees and gives a default period of five years. At the current time, although inspection frequencies will be provided within any tree schedule, a five year cycle will be implemented in most instances. Legislation and best practice guidance notes will be reviewed annually and alterations to this inspection frequency will be made if required.

To make this programme as efficient as possible, individual inspection areas are identified and allocated a suitable inspection frequency based upon consideration of significant factors such as:

- age
- size
- condition of trees and their parts present; and
- the potential “targets” (i.e. public footpaths, residential homes, highways and play areas, etc.) located within influencing distance of those trees and their parts

It is important that resources are applied in a rational way so an initial risk zoning/usage exercise will be undertaken to categorise areas within the Borough. This will be assessed using high, medium and low usage areas. This will enable systematic surveying of high to low target use areas. The risk zones will be clearly indicated on a plan of the Borough prior to commencing any survey work.

Convention is to divide the land into risk zones based on the likelihood of people coming into contact with potentially hazardous trees. The Borough Council will use the Forestry Commission’s Usage Zones, summarised in the following table:

Table 1: Forestry Commission Usage Zones

Usage zone	Level of Public Usage	Site Examples
1	High	Areas within falling distance of busy and moderately used public roads, railways, neighbouring properties, amenity areas and car-parks. Well used way-marked trails and public rights of way (PROW)
2	Medium	Areas within falling distance of other lightly used public roads, way-marked trails, PROW and tracks, paths and desire lines
3	Low	Away from known access routes

6. Tree Assessment Methodology

All trees surveyed are inspected using the visual tree assessment (VTA) methodology, as detailed by Claus Mattheck, and the Basic and Professional Level Tree Inspection methodology, as set out by LANTRA.

The positions of the trees will be plotted with reference to the surrounding landmark features using OS plans of the area.

Individual trees are given a tree identification number, which is represented by a circular metal tag and which has been attached to the trunk at 2m, this is cross referenced within the complete schedule. Where trees are surveyed as a group, tags are not used unless otherwise stated.

The tree species are recorded with both common and botanical names.

All tree heights are assessed using a clinometer and where indicated in groups the height of the tallest tree is measured unless otherwise stated. Specific height categories may also be used as detailed below. Tree heights are given in metres.

0 – 5m

6 – 10m

11 – 15m

16 – 20m

21 – 25m

< 25m

The canopy spread is recorded as an estimate in either the four cardinal points or is given as an average diameter for the crown, especially in groups or where the crown is evenly weighted. Canopy spreads are measured in metres.

In the absence of detailed information on the age of the tree, the following classification has been used:

NP	Newly/recently planted trees or self-set specimens of a similar size
Yng	Young trees age less than 1/3 life expectancy
Mid	Middle age trees 1/3 – 2/3 life expectancy
Mat	Mature trees over 2/3 life expectancy
O/mat	Over-mature – declining or moribund trees of low vigour; and
Vet	Veteran trees – specimens exhibiting features of biological, cultural or aesthetic value that are characteristic of, but not exclusive to, individuals surviving beyond the typical age range for the species concerned

Age class is indicative and will vary between species.

Physiological conditions are recorded to provide an indication of the trees' general health and vitality. The trees are described thus:

Good	Generally in good vitality typical of the species of specific maturity
Fair	Reasonable vitality with few defects
Poor	Trees that exhibit significant defects which are irremediable (such as dieback) or moribund tree; and
Dead	Tree has died

The structural condition of each tree is assessed and is summarised as:

Good	Few minor defects of little overall significance to the structure;
Fair	A significant defect or several small defects, such as deadwood; and
Poor	Major defect present or many small defects which compromise the structural integrity of the tree

Comments and additional notes, where appropriate, are recorded for the condition of each tree's roots, main stem and canopy. General comments are also made where appropriate and a list of recommended actions is described.

Preliminary management recommendations are provided where required, which can include physical works to the trees, further investigation and movement of targets to abate potential hazards or reduce risk.

In the absence of detailed information on the priority for undertaking works the following classification is used and will be followed unless otherwise stated:

1 – Urgent	Works which must be undertaken immediately within 24 hours
2 – Very High	Works which must be undertaken within one month
3 – High	Works to be undertaken within three to six months
4 – Moderate	Works to be undertaken within six to 12 months and/or as part of scheduled maintenance
5 – Low	Works to be undertaken as lowest priority and may be considered if budget allows; and
6 – None	No works are required at the current time

All works prescribed will be systematically completed, working from high to low priority and once complete will be formally signed off. Individual recommendations will be provided in relation to priority of works where required.

In the absence of detailed information on the frequency of re-inspections, the following classification is used and will be followed unless otherwise stated. This classification is based on risk and target area value:

1 - Urgent	Undertake a detailed inspection of the aerial parts and/or with the use of decay detection equipment as soon as can be arranged
2 – Very High	Re-inspect within six months and/or when it is likely that any fruiting boding may appear whichever is sooner
3 – High	Re-inspect in 12 months time
4 – Moderate	Re-inspect in 18 months time
5 – Low	Re-inspect in 24 - 48 months time
6 – Very Low	Re-inspect in five years time
7 – None	No targets exist currently and therefore no current requirement for re-inspection

Agenda Item No 12

Community and Environment Board

8 March 2010

**Report of the
Assistant Director
(Leisure and Community Development)**

**North Warwickshire Play Strategy
and Play Partnership**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the progress being made in the delivery of the North Warwickshire Play Strategy, which exists to provide a co-ordinated approach to play provision and development throughout the Borough.

Recommendation to the Board

That the Board notes the progress of the North Warwickshire Play Partnership in its delivery of relevant actions identified in the Borough-wide Play Strategy.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 The Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders for Housing, Safer Communities, Health, Well-being and Leisure, The Environment, Community Life and Resources have all had an opportunity to comment on the content of this report.

3 Report

- 3.1 The Children's Play Programme is a national initiative, supported through the Big Lottery Fund. Through the Programme, and as part of a £155 million project, £200,000 was made available to the North Warwickshire area (not exclusively to the Borough Council) to develop locally identified play projects. In order to access the funding, the Borough Council was required to undertake a lead role in the application process and to work in partnership with other agencies/organisations in the play sector. Applicant "Play Partnerships" were required to develop a co-ordinated Play Strategy (encompassing all forms of play for children and young people, aged from 0 to 18 years), which included a portfolio of projects that focused on the areas of greatest need. The North Warwickshire Play Strategy was formally adopted by the Board in January 2007 and by the Community Partnership the following March. The Strategy evidences widespread consultation and includes projects that are being delivered by a range of local organisations.

4 North Warwickshire Play Partnership

- 4.1 As identified above, the Play Strategy process was led by a local Play Partnership (a sub-group of the Children, Young People and their Families Theme Group). A declining membership of the Partnership, together with priorities that were shared with the local Sport and Active Recreation Group, culminated in a decision to amalgamate the two groups into a "North Warwickshire Sport, Play and Active Recreation Group". Unfortunately, as there was no further funding available following the Big Lottery's Play Programme, attendance from "play" partners at this forum has further declined. The residents of North Warwickshire, however, have highlighted a lack of facilities and activities for young people as a priority within their communities. The priorities remain, therefore, to ensure that the development of play facilities and the delivery of co-ordinated activity are addressed through local partnership working. In this regard, efforts will be made to re-invigorate the initial multi-agency Play Partnership and to emphasise the value of co-operation and co-ordination in the drive to meet needs and demands identified by the local community.
- 4.2 The Borough Council's Partnership and Development section, and its Community Development Officer (Young People and Inter-generation) in particular, have continued to progress work identified in the Play Strategy Action Plan. This Action Plan will be addressed alongside the County Council's Youth and Community Service Locality Based Action Plans and in conjunction with the Area Cluster Co-ordinator Meetings, in order to ensure the delivery of a coherent response to identified community-based priorities.

5 Play Progress

- 5.1 Subsequent to its approval and adoption by the Board in January 2007, a Big Lottery Fund Children's Play Programme application was submitted in March 2007 in order to support the delivery of the local Play Strategy. The application was approved in June 2007, as a consequence of which £200,000 was secured to support the realisation of six priority projects that form part of the overall Strategy. These priority projects are:
- Mancetter Play Area
 - Hartshill Hayes Play Area
 - St Mary's Road Play Area, Atherstone
 - "More Time to Play" – Lighting provision on priority recreation grounds
 - Wildplay – Outdoor play and traditional games in natural settings
 - Take a Break/"Tiny Tabs" – Playschemes for young children with a disability
- 5.2 Further to the success of the Big Lottery Fund application, the Play Partnership worked hard to ensure the delivery of the relevant actions identified in the Strategy itself. In this regard, the multi-agency Partnership accomplished the following key tasks:
- Sought and secured the appointment of a Borough Council "Play Champion", in order to ensure that the Authority fulfils its role in developing children's play opportunities as identified in the Strategy's

corresponding Action Plan. The Portfolio Holder for Community Life, Councillor L Freer, has been appointed to this role.

- Further to assisting in the development of a county-wide Play Strategy, a successful application for Playbuilder funding has been made to the Department for Children, Schools and Families, resulting in more than £200,000 being available to progress the development of a further four play spaces, as identified in both the Play Strategy and Green Space Strategy. These play spaces will be located in Arley, Baddesley Ensor, Kingsbury and Ridge Lane.
- Delivered several successful family events during the summer period, aimed at increased use of the Borough Council recreation grounds. The family event in Atherstone was combined with the launch of the new Royal Meadow Drive Play Area.
- Enabled Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to deliver its “Wildplay” programme, which is operating to maximum capacity and achieving all of its targets and identified outcomes (programme end date October 2010).
- Enabled Take a Break to deliver its “Tiny Tabs” playschemes for children with a disability, which is also operating at maximum capacity and achieving its targets and identified outcomes (programme end date October 2010).

5.3 As identified above, Playbuilder funding will allow for the development of four new play spaces across North Warwickshire. Consultation work has already been undertaken for the proposed new facilities in Ridge Lane and Baddesley Ensor. In partnership with the Ridge Lane Play Area Association and Baddesley Ensor Parish Council, it is anticipated that site works will be undertaken in March 2010. Thereafter work will commence in Kingsbury and Arley, where it is expected that new facilities will be provided in the current calendar year.

5.4 In order to comply with Big Lottery Fund criteria and to ensure that phase one of the Borough Council’s Play Area Development Programme achieved its expected outcomes, a significant play area evaluation programme has commenced. As a cornerstone within this process, consultation is now underway with partners, residents and children and young people. The outcomes of the evaluation programme will be reported to relevant Boards later in the year and will provide Members and officers with the evidence to determine the relative success of the Authority’s significant investment in new play provision. The results of the consultation will also inform the evolution of the Borough-wide Play Strategy and any future play area development activity undertaken in North Warwickshire.

5.5 To assist Parish Councils in developing their play facilities, the CDO (YP&I) is organising a “Play Development in your Community” event, which will provide Parish and Town Council representatives with information to ensure that provision is developed in line with user needs and in accordance with good practice models. The event has been organised with the assistance of Play England and will focus on informing local Parish and Town Councils about “Play Principles”, “Developing Play in their Community” and consultation and

participation methods focusing on the involvement of children and young people.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

6.1.1 There is no new financial implication arising directly from this report. It should be noted, however, that the Borough Council, as a provider of play opportunities for children and young people, commits financial resources that impact on the delivery of the Play Strategy and Action Plan. In this regard, the required resources have been incorporated within the approved 2010/11 revenue budget.

6.2 Safer Communities Implications

6.2.1 Appropriately designed and located play opportunities for children and young people provide constructive alternatives to anti-social and/or criminal behaviour. Improving the quality and accessibility of play areas and activities will also help to reduce the likelihood of disorder within the community. Involvement of the community in these processes will create ownership of the sites, thereby further reducing the likelihood of anti-social and/or criminal behaviour.

6.3 Environment and Sustainability Implications

6.3.1 The provision of opportunities for constructive activity within communities enhances local cohesion, social inclusion and individual and collective quality of life. It also impacts positively upon the creation of sustainable communities, within which people feel safe, healthy and valued.

6.4 Risk Management Implications

6.4.1 The risks associated with the Play Strategy and Play Partnership have previously been reported to the Board.

6.5 Equalities Implications

6.5.1 The provision of new and improved play opportunities is designed to enhance the quality of life for everyone in the local community. The Strategy is aimed at developing better quality and more inclusive play spaces and opportunities. The EINA concludes that the Strategy will have a positive impact, as it aims to increase usage of play areas and open spaces by disadvantaged groups, reduce barriers in play and promote community cohesion

6.6 Links to Council's Priorities

6.6.1 The North Warwickshire Play Strategy has positive and direct links to the following corporate priorities:

- Enhancing community involvement and access to services
- Protecting and improving our environment

- Tackling health inequalities through improving well-being and providing leisure opportunities to all our citizens
- Working with our partners to tackle crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

6.6.2 The Play Strategy also contributes to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy by addressing all three priorities:

- Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skills
- Developing healthier communities
- Improving access to services

The Contact Officers for this report are Jaki Douglas (719492) and Jessica Grove (719220)

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
None			

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	North Warwickshire Play Strategy
Officer Responsible for assessment	Jaki Douglas

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	Y		Play encourages people of all backgrounds to enjoy being together
Gender			
Disabled people	Y		Services and facilities are provided in a manner that is as inclusive as possible. Funding is also provided to specialist services
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people			
Older/Younger people	Y		Although play areas and play schemes are developed with children and young people in mind – play should be encouraged for all ages
Religion and Beliefs			
People having dependents caring responsibilities			
People having an offending past			
Transgender people			

Agenda Item No 13

**Community and Environment
Board**

8 March 2010

**Report of the
Assistant Director
(Leisure and Community Development)**

**Play Area
Development Programme**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out progress in respect of the implementation of the Council's Play Area Development Programme.

Recommendation to the Board

That progress in respect of the Play Area Development Programme be noted and approved.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 The Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders for Housing, Safer Communities, Health, Well-being and Leisure, Community Life, Environment and Resources and all appropriate Ward Members have had an opportunity to comment on the content of this report.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 A progress report on the Play Area Development Programme was presented to the Board at its meeting held in January 2009 and a further update was made within the report on Leisure and Community Development Division Action Plans presented to Members in September 2009. A report concerning the national Playbuilder Programme and its implications for North Warwickshire, was considered by the Board in June 2009. The latest position in respect of the Development Programme, which now incorporates Playbuilder, is summarised in the Action Plan at Appendix A.

...

- 3.2 The Action Plan has been revised and expanded to ensure that the provision of outdoor play opportunities in the Borough are considered in the context of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy (2008 to 2018) and the North Warwickshire Play Strategy (2007 to 2012), both of which have been approved by members and are the overarching documents guiding the Council's work in this area.

4 Delivery of the Strategic Priorities of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy

4.1 The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy sets out three strategic priorities in respect of Children and Young People:

SP013 – Develop a Play Area Business Plan to enable us to ensure that all of our built play facilities offer good play value, meet current safety standards, are accessible, are secured by design and support the objectives of the North Warwickshire Play Strategy

SP014 – Support the development of a strategic network of play facilities across the Borough and assist other providers to deliver improvements through partnership working

SP015 – Explore opportunities to include natural, wildplay areas when developing individual site management plans

4.2 In respect of SP013, and as reported to the Board in January 2009, the first step in the process to develop a Business Plan is to carry out an evaluation of the first phase of the Play Area Development Programme. Work is now underway on this exercise and it is expected that the outcomes will be reported to this Board in June 2010 and to the Scrutiny Board in September 2010.

4.3 With regard to SP014 the Borough Council has worked successfully in partnership with Hartshill Parish Council to provide improved play facilities in the parish and is currently working with the parish councils in Kingsbury and Fillongley to advance projects in their areas, as detailed in section 6 below.

4.4 Within its Area-based Priorities, the Green Space Strategy identifies a number of additional town and parish councils that may benefit from support to deliver improved play facilities. Some of these authorities have unsuccessfully applied to external agencies for funding to advance play projects, which it is felt may be due to projects not complying with current advice from Government and Play England. Thinking around outdoor play provision has developed rapidly in recent years with a move away from the traditional style of play area to a “design-led” approach that encourages more “natural” play opportunities. The Leisure and Community Development Division will be hosting an event for town and parish councils on 13 March 2010, at which speakers from the play sector will provide advice on this new approach and on effective community engagement, especially with children and young people, to ensure that projects can be delivered successfully.

4.5 In respect of SP015 the projects being undertaken through the Playbuilder Programme, described in paragraph 6 below, will have regard to the need to provide more natural play opportunities. This is a theme that will be further developed as the Authority moves into developing broader management plans for its recreation sites in the future.

5 Play Area Development Programme - Phase 1

- 5.1 The first phase of the Development Programme was concluded with the installation of new facilities at Royal Meadow Drive Recreation Ground, Atherstone, which was celebrated at the Big Launch Lunch in August 2009. This was the twelfth site to be renewed and includes a junior / toddler area, a teen area and a multi-use games area. The opportunity was also taken to install fencing and gates to the car park at the same time. The scheme has been well received by the local community and has been commended by the police for providing positive opportunities for children and young people in the area.
- 5.2 A small number of outstanding items from the phase 1 Programme have been rolled into phase 2 and are addressed below.

6. Play Area Development Programme - Phase 2

- 6.1 During the spring, community consultation will take place to determine whether there is support for the retention of the play area at Warwick Drive in Atherstone now that the new facilities at the nearby Royal Meadow Drive Recreation Ground are in place. Once the outcome of this consultation is known discussions will be held with Atherstone Town Council regarding the future management of both this site and that at Minions Close.
- 6.2 As previously reported, there is money held in reserve (see Report Implications below) for a second phase of work at Bretts Hall Recreation Ground in Ansley Common. This will be considered in the context of wider improvements to the Recreation Ground and also the adjacent allotment site, which it is anticipated will be taken forward in the new financial year.
- 6.3 Work has continued with Kingsbury Parish Council to prepare a scheme for its recreation ground at Church Lane, Kingsbury. Local consultation has taken place and a design and specification for the site have been prepared. At its meeting in February 2010 Area Forum West agreed to allocate £5,500 from the Green Space Strategy Fund towards this project. It is hoped that this award will be sufficient as third party funding to draw down £50,000 from the Landfill Tax Communities Fund to enable the project to go ahead.
- 6.4 As previously reported, funding of £203,125 has been made available for the provision of play spaces in North Warwickshire, through Warwickshire County Council, from the Government's Playbuilder Programme. At its meeting held in June 2009, the Board agreed to the allocation of this funding to the Authority's sites at Ridge Lane, Old Arley and Sycamore Road, Kingsbury and to the parish council site in Speedwell Lane, Baddesley Ensor.
- 6.5 Unfortunately it has not been possible to advance joint procurement through the Warwickshire Play Partnership, as originally intended, and delays beyond the control of this Council in progressing the programme have left a very short period in which to deliver the "year one" projects in Ridge Lane and Baddesley Ensor. As a pragmatic solution, procurement was carried out

through a mini-tender under Braintree District Council's Framework Agreement for the design, supply and installation of play areas, further to which Wicksteed Leisure Ltd. has been appointed as contractor for the project.

- 6.6 Informed by consultation events undertaken in January, designs and specifications have been prepared for the play spaces Ridge Lane and Baddesley Ensor. Attendance at the events was good, especially in view of the poor weather at the time, and the feedback was very positive. Installation of these schemes is expected to take place in March 2010, with opening events being planned for the Easter holiday.
- 6.7 Local consultation in Old Arley and Sycamore Road, Kingsbury, will start in April, with a view to the new facilities being installed by the summer. Members will be kept informed of progress in respect of the Playbuilder Programme.
- 6.8 At its meeting in January 2010, Area Forum South agreed to allocate £10,000 from the Green Space Strategy Fund to Fillongley Parish Council to develop a management plan, including improved play provision, for its recreation ground. Officers will now be working with the Parish Council to advance this initiative.

7 Report Implications

7.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- ... 7.1.1 A summary of funding for the Play Area Development Programme is set out at Appendix B.
- 7.1.2 The Phase 1 schemes have been completed over the financial years 2005/06 to 2009/10 with funding of £598,444 allocated from the capital programme for play area development and improvements to parks, £113,542 from the play areas and parks and playing fields revenue budgets and £286,210 from external sources. £14,430 was secured in Third Party Funding to draw down grants through the Landfill Tax Communities Fund.
- ... 7.1.3 The Partnership with Hags Play Ltd. realised 14% added value for the Council, as set out in Appendix C, against a target of 10%.
- 7.1.4 With reference to paragraph 6.2 above, £8,360 remains in hand in the capital programme for further work at Bretts Hall Recreation Ground.
- 7.1.5 The Phase 2 schemes at Ridge Lane, Baddesley Ensor, Old Arley and Kingsbury will be funded by a capital allocation of £203,125 from the DCSF Playbuilder Programme, administered by Warwickshire County Council. This will be supplemented, where appropriate, by funding from the existing play area revenue budget.

7.1.6 £5,500 has been allocated from the Green Space Strategy Fund to provide Third Party Funding for Kingsbury Parish Council's scheme at Church Lane. £10,000 has been allocated to Fillongley Parish Council from the Green Space Strategy Fund, some of which will be spent on new play facilities, although the precise breakdown of this expenditure has yet to be determined.

7.1.7 The play area revenue budget has been increased by £2,500 per new play area per annum to ensure that on-going maintenance of Phase 1 schemes is appropriately funded. A related growth bid for 2010/11 in respect of the first of the Phase 2 schemes, at Ridge Lane, has previously been approved by Members. Similar bids will be put forward for 2011/12 for those schemes approved to be undertaken at Old Arley and Kingsbury.

7.1.8 A play area replacement fund has been established with contributions of £3,000 per new play area per annum from the revenue budget to ensure that facilities can be renewed in the future. A life expectancy of 15 years has been assumed for each facility. A growth bid for 2010/11 in respect of the first of the Phase 2 schemes, at Ridge Lane, has been approved and similar bids will be put forward for 2011/12 for those at Old Arley and Kingsbury.

7.2 Safer Communities Implications

7.2.1 Appropriately designed and located play opportunities for children and young people provide constructive alternatives to anti-social and/or criminal behaviour. Improving the quality and accessibility of play areas will also help to reduce the likelihood of disorder within the community.

7.3 Legal and Human Rights Implications

7.3.1 The new play areas comply with the requirements of all appropriate legislation, including the Disability discrimination Act 1995, and with recommended European safety standards.

7.4 Environment and Sustainability Implications

7.4.1 The provision of opportunities for constructive activity within communities enhances local cohesion, social inclusion and individual and collective quality of life. It also impacts positively upon the creation of sustainable communities, within which people feel safe, healthy and valued.

7.5 Risk Management Implications

7.5.1 The risk management implications of the Play Area Development Programme have been addressed in previous reports to the Board.

7.6 Equalities Implications

7.6.1 The equalities implications of the Play Area Development Programme have been addressed in previous reports to the Board, including the submission of an Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment in September 2008.

7.7 Links to Council's Priorities

7.7.1 The Play Area Development Programme has positive and direct links to the corporate priorities to:

- Enhance community involvement and access to services
- Protect and improve the environment
- Tackle health inequalities through improving well-being and providing leisure opportunities to all of our citizens
- Work with our partners to tackle crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Make best use of our resources through achieving a balanced budget and developing our workforce

7.7.2 Additionally, the Play Area Development Programme has positive links to the priorities of the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy (2009 to 2026) to:

- Develop healthier communities
- Improve access to services

7.7.3 The Play Area Development Programme also delivers against priorities set out in the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy (2008 to 2018) and the North Warwickshire Play Strategy (2007 to 2012).

The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (719212).

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	Assistant Director (Leisure and Facilities)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	06 Sept 2004
2	Assistant Director (Leisure and Facilities)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	06 June 2005
3	Assistant Director (Leisure and Facilities)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	05 Sept 2005
4	Assistant Director (Leisure and Facilities)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	31 Oct 2005
5	Assistant Director (Community Development)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	20 March 2006
6	Assistant Director ((Community Development)	Report to Leaders' Group	24 April 2006

7	Assistant Director (Community Development)	Report to Leaders' Group	18 Sept 2006
8	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	30 Oct 2006
9	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Management Team	20 Feb 2007
10	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	19 Mar 2007
11	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	11 June 2007
12	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	28 Jan 2008
13	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	01 Sep 2008
14	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	26 Jan 2009
15	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	08 June 2009
16	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to the Community and Environment Board	28 Sep 2009

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
DELIVERY AGAINST THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE GREEN SPACE STRATEGY					
In accordance with key priority SP013 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy ensure all Borough Council play facilities offer good play value, meet current safety standards, are accessible, are secured by design and support the objectives of the North Warwickshire Play Strategy	Develop a Play Area Business Plan to determine the action to be taken at those Borough Council play areas still awaiting improvement	March 2011	Staff time	LM	To be informed by the post project evaluation (see below)
	Establish a play area replacement fund to replace equipment at Borough Council sites in the long-term	On-going	Revenue budget - £3000 per play area per annum	LM / AD(L&CD)	Fund established with annual payments from the revenue budget
	Ensure all Borough Council play areas are subject to routine inspection and maintenance and to annual independent inspections	On-going	Staff time, revenue budget	LM	Staff training undertaken Inspection and maintenance schedules in place Annual independent inspections completed May 2009 Risk assessment has identified a need for improved inspection system and more responsive maintenance

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
DELIVERY AGAINST THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE GREEN SPACE STRATEGY <i>continued.....</i>					
In accordance with key priority SP014 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy support the development of a strategic network of play facilities across the Borough and assist other providers to deliver improvements through partnership working	Where appropriate include other providers' sites in the Play Area Development Programme	Ongoing	Staff time External funding Revenue budget	LM	Parish Council sites at Baddesley Ensor, Kingsbury and Fillongley included in Phase 2 of the programme, details set out above.
	Facilitate an event for other providers to raise awareness of current thinking on the provision of outdoor play opportunities	March 2010	Staff time £600 - Revenue funding	PDM	Event arranged
PHASE 1 SCHEMES					
Piccadilly Recreation Ground Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities Coleshill Cole End Park / Coleshill Memorial Park Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities / teen kickabout Austrey Hollybank Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities Polesworth Abbey Green Park Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities Ansley Common Bretts Hall Phase 1 Provision of new teen facilities					All Complete

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
PHASE 1 SCHEMES <i>continued</i>					
<p>Corley Church Lane Provision of extra equipment to increase play value for juniors / toddlers</p> <p>Hurley Brick Kiln Lane Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities</p> <p>Wood End Johnson Street Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities</p> <p>Water Orton George Road Provision of fencing and extension to hard surface</p> <p>Hartshill Snowhill Recreation Ground (Parish Council) Provision of junior / toddler & teen facilities</p> <p>Hartshill Grange Road Recreation Ground and Moorwood Estate Removal of existing equipment</p> <p>Mancetter Recreation Ground Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities</p> <p>Dordon Kitwood Avenue Recreation Ground Provision of additional junior / toddler facilities</p> <p>Atherstone Royal Meadow Drive Provision of family play facility</p> <p>Atherstone St George's Road Removal of inappropriately sited play facility</p>					All complete

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
PHASE 2 SCHEMES					
Atherstone Minions Close					
Transfer to Atherstone Town Council	Implement remedial groundworks and install replacement fencing				Complete
	Negotiate formal Agreement with ATC	April 2010	Staff time	LM / Legal	To be progressed
Atherstone Warwick Drive					
Transfer to Atherstone Town Council or removal of facility	Community-based consultation to determine retention or otherwise of the facility	Spring 2010	Staff time	LM / PDM	To be progressed
Ansley Common Bretts Hall Phase 2					
Provision of further play facilities in conjunction with improvements to the recreation ground and adjacent allotment site	Community-based consultation and feasibility study	Summer 2010	Staff time	LM / PDM	To be considered in the context of delivery of the Green Space Strategy

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
Kingsbury Church Lane Recreation Ground (Parish Council)					
Support Kingsbury Parish Council to provide new play facilities at the recreation ground, in accordance with key priority AP020 of the Green Space Strategy	Scoping meetings with Parish Council	June and July 2008	Staff time	LM / PDM	Complete
	Preliminary site meeting with Hags Play Ltd to consider feasibility	August 2008	Staff time	LM	Complete
	Planning meetings with Parish Council	October and November 2008	Staff time	LM	Ongoing
	Community based consultation	January 2009	Staff & Volunteer time	PC	Complete
	Design and Specification	February 2009	Staff time	Hags Play / LM	Complete
	Fundraising	Commencing March 2009	Staff & Volunteer time	PC	£5,500 allocated from Green Space Strategy Fund towards the project. Other fundraising ongoing
	Installation	To be confirmed	£60,000 External funding	AW / KPC	Dependent on outcome of fundraising

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
Ridge Lane Recreation Ground					
Provide new play facilities at the recreation ground in accordance with key priority AP31 of the Green Space Strategy	Include in the submission to the Warwickshire Playbuilder Programme	July 2009	Staff time	LM	Business plan submitted to WCC
	Community based consultation	January 2010	Staff time	PDM / Wicksteed	Complete
	Preparation of design, specification and costings	January 2010	Staff time	Wicksteed / LM	Complete
	Removal of old equipment and installation of new facilities on site	March 2010	External funding - £50,780 Revenue budget - £5495	Wicksteed / LM	On schedule
Baddesley Ensor Recreation Ground (Parish Council)					
Support the Parish Council to provide new / additional play facilities in accordance with key priority AP44 of the Green Space Strategy	Include in the submission to the Warwickshire Playbuilder Programme	July 2009	Staff time	LM	Business plan submitted to WCC
	Community based consultation	January 2010	Staff time	PDM / Wicksteed	Complete
	Preparation of design, specification and costings	January 2010	Staff time	Wicksteed / PDM	Complete
	Removal of old equipment and installation of new facilities on site	March 2010	External funding - £50,780	Wicksteed / PDM	On schedule

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
Old Arley Recreation Ground					
Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities	Include in the submission to the Warwickshire Playbuilder Programme	July 2009	Staff time	LM	Business plan submitted to WCC
	Community based consultation		Staff time	JD / Wicksteed	To be progressed
	Preparation of design, specification and costings		Staff time	Wicksteed / LM	To be progressed
	Removal of old equipment and installation of new facilities on site		External funding - £50,780 Revenue budget - £5000	Wicksteed / LM	To be progressed
Kingsbury Sycamore Road Recreation Ground					
Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities in accordance with key priority AP19 of the Green Space Strategy	Include in the submission to the Warwickshire Playbuilder Programme	July 2009	Staff time	LM	Business plan submitted to WCC
	Community based consultation		Staff time	PDM / Wicksteed	To be progressed
	Preparation of design, specification and costings		Staff time	Wicksteed / LM	To be progressed
	Removal of old equipment and installation of new facilities on site		External funding - £50,780 Revenue budget - £5000	Wicksteed / LM	To be progressed

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
Fillongley Church Lane Recreation Ground (Parish Council)					
Support Fillongley Parish Council to provide new play facilities at the recreation ground, in accordance with key priority AP047 of the Green Space Strategy	Recommend allocation of Green Space Strategy Funding to Fillongley Parish Council at Area Forum meeting	January 2010	£10,000 revenue budget	LM	Funding agreed at Area Forum
	Meet the Parish Council to determine a way forward	February 2010	Staff time	LM	Meeting arranged
PROJECT MANAGEMENT					
Ensure effective delivery of and accountability for the Play Area Development Programme	Carry out post project evaluation of the delivery of Play Area Development Programme Phase 1 Schemes	April 2010	Staff time	AD (L&CD) / LM / PDM	Methodology and timetable agreed with Overview & Scrutiny Working Party and evaluation underway
	Hold regular progress meetings	On-going	Staff time	LM / PDM	On-going
	Monitor revenue budget	On-going	Staff time	LM	Monthly finance reports in place
	Monitor capital budget	On-going	Staff time	LM	Monthly finance reports in place
	Report to Members	Ongoing	Staff time	AD(L&CD) / LM	Report to be presented to C. & E. Board in March 2010

AD (L&CD) – Assistant Director (Leisure & Community Development Division) LM – Landscape Manager PDM – Partnership & Development Manager

Funding Source	Schemes																Total
	Piccadilly	Coleshill Cole End	Austrey Hollybank	Polesworth Abbey Green	Ansley Common	Corley Church Lane	Hurley	Wood End	Water Orton George Road	Hartshill Snowhill	Hartshill Grange Road / Moorwood Estate	Mancetter Brook Walk	Atherstone Minions Close	Dordon Kitwood Avenue	Atherstone Royal Meadow Drive	Atherstone St George's Road	
NWBC Capital	54509.00	42801.00	39062.00	97302.00	40780.58	19591.80	55583.50	52517.03		44500.00		52223.92		49573.00	50000.00		598443.83
NWBC Revenue	1200.00	9274.71	1970.00	18346.00		2900.00	8843.00	8664.00	12519.13		12550.00	12757.00	2110.00	8667.00	6841.41	6900.00	113542.25
sub-total	55709.00	52075.71	41032.00	115648.00	40780.58	22491.80	64426.50	61181.03	12519.13	44500.00	12550.00	64980.92	2110.00	58240.00	56841.41	6900.00	711986.08
Atherstone Town Council															25000.00		25000.00
BIG Lottery Fund										5000.00		54900.00					59900.00
Hartshill & Nuneaton JRC										4900.32							4900.32
Kingsbury Parish Council	5000.00			24000.00			3680.00	9280.00									17960.00
Market Towns Initiative																	24000.00
Narrowing the Gap															12000.00		12000.00
SITA Trust (Landfill Fund)																	32500.00
Snap-It-Safe Project	5000.00							7500.00	12500.00	12500.00							7000.00
WCC Well-Being Fund																	2950.00
WREN Trust (Landfill Fund)															50000.00		100000.00
sub-total	10000.00	0.00	0.00	24000.00	4950.00	7500.00	16180.00	21780.00	0.00	59900.32	0.00	54900.00	0.00	0.00	87000.00	0.00	286210.32
Total	65709.00	52075.71	41032.00	139648.00	45730.58	29991.80	80606.50	82961.03	12519.13	104400.32	12550.00	119880.92	2110.00	58240.00	143841.41	6900.00	998196.40

Phase 2 Schemes

Funding Source	Scheme				Total
	Ridge Lane	Baddesley Ensor	Old Arley	Kingsbury Sycamore Road	
NWBC Capital					0.00
NWBC Revenue	5495.00				5495.00
sub-total	5495.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5495.00
Playbuilder	50781.25	50781.25	50781.25	50781.25	203125.00
sub-total	50781.25	50781.25	50781.25	50781.25	203125.00
Total	56276.25	50781.25	50781.25	50781.25	208620.00

Third Party Funding Contributions to draw down SITA / WREN Funding

Funding Source	Phase 1 Schemes					Total
	Corley	Hurley	Wood End	Hartshill	Atherstone Royal Meadow Drive	
Corley Parish Council	791.77					791.77
Kingsbury Parish Council		1320.00	1320.00			2640.00
NWBC				5500.00		5500.00
WCC					5500.00	5500.00
Total	791.77	1320.00	1320.00	5500.00		14431.77

Funding Source	Phase 2 Schemes		Total
	Kingsbury Church Lane		
NWBC	5500.00		5500.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
Total	5500.00		5500.00

Site	Standard Cost	Partnership Cost	Added Value
Piccadilly Recreation Ground	77,861.00	64,509.00	13,352.00
Coleshill Old Mill Road	58,885.00	52,075.00	6,810.00
Austrey Hollybank Estate	44,147.00	39,062.00	5,085.00
Polesworth Abbey Green Park	158,629.00	138,882.00	19,747.00
Ansley Common Bretts Hall Recreation Ground	52,150.10	45,730.58	6,419.52
Corley Church Lane	32,320.00	27,091.80	5,228.20
Hurley Recreation Ground	76,760.00	68,673.00	8,087.00
Wood End Recreation Ground	84,712.00	75,934.53	8,777.47
Hartshill Snowhill Recreation Ground	72,183.00	64,454.32	7,728.68
Mancetter Brook Walk Recreation Ground	137,142.00	119,880.92	17,261.08
Dordon Kitwood Avenue Recreation Ground	60,571.00	53,209.96	7,361.04
Atherstone Royal Meadow Drive Recreation Ground	159,825.00	143,841.41	15,983.59
Total	1,015,185.10	893,344.52	121,840.58

standard cost would apply in a conventional contracting situation

partnership cost applied through the agreement between NWBC and Hags Play Ltd

Minutes of the Environment Portfolio Group Meeting held on 14th January, 2010 held at Old Bank House

Present: Councillor Freer, Councillor May, Councillor Wykes, Councillor Lewis, Councillor Pickard, Bernard Woodhall, Richard Dobbs, Steve Maxey (part)

Apologies: Councillor Phillips, Councillor Swann

		Action
1)	<p>Streetscape Divisional Service Plan</p> <p>Members had previously been sent a copy of the Streetscape Division's annual service plan for comment. Cllr. Freer asked about the joint depot project and how far advanced we were with it. BW gave an update on progress to date. Lambert Smith Hampton have been engaged by HBBC, NBBC & NWBC to identify and appraise potential sites within the A5 corridor, and officers were working through the findings of the initial report. Cllr. Freer stated that she was concerned about parking at and near the current depot as well as other issues on the present site and whether these would be addressed as part of the depot project.</p> <p>BW confirmed that such issues would be addressed.</p>	<p>RD/BW to report on progress with joint depot project at the next Portfolio meeting</p>
2	<p>Scrutiny of Recycling</p> <p>The group discussed the paper which BW had prepared on Recycling Options and which had previously been discussed by the Scrutiny Board. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Board should continue to look at how recycling rates within the Borough could be improved, but that meetings of that Board should be open to Environment Portfolio Group members. Cllr Wykes argued that more emphasis should be placed on waste minimisation. There was also some discussion around alternate weekly collections as it was felt by members of the group that more could be done to establish the facts of AWC and that more evidence was needed about the impacts of introducing it and the pros and cons of such schemes. The group agreed that the Scrutiny Board should look in more detail at AWC so that any future decisions could be made based on detailed information.</p>	<p>Scrutiny Board to be asked to gather more evidence around AWC schemes</p>
3	<p>Plastics Recycling</p> <p>Cllr. Freer raised the question of the recycling of cardboard and plastics over the festive period as there had been problems with the site at Atherstone. BW replied that the banks had been emptied frequently over the Christmas period and that the problems which had arisen were largely due to fly-tipping and irresponsible behaviour. Funding for new</p>	<p>BW to circulate list of potential sites to members of the Group</p>

banks for plastics had been obtained from WCC and it was hoped that they would be rolled out shortly which should help relieve some of the pressure on the sites at Atherstone & Coleshill. Cllr May made a case for Newton Regis to be including in any roll-out as the local primary school had been very proactive in campaigning for more recycling facilities.

for comment

4 **Education & Publicity**

BW gave an update from Zoe Davies on Education and Publicity and the events and campaigns which had taken place across the Borough over previous months. It was reported that there were problems getting across to a mass audience as there was no major shopping centre, dedicated local newspaper or radio station centred on the Borough which tended to dilute the messages which the Council was trying to promote. RD also circulated a report which had been presented to the Warwickshire Waste Partnership which set out details of countywide schemes and initiatives to which NWBC had contributed.

5 **Advertising Hoardings for Refuse Vehicles**

Members felt that the advertising hoardings were very good and noted that there was an opportunity for more designs to be used in the future. Some Members felt that the adverts could be harder hitting or more "short, snappy and witty". It was also felt that this would be an ideal opportunity to get schools and children involved in the design of new banners and that a competition could be arranged through North Talk.

BW/ZD to organise school competition for banner design

Cllr. Freer mentioned a performance by "the Recycling Man" she had seen at Coombe Abbey and whether we could find out the cost of getting him to tour NWBC schools during the winter as he was very good.

ZD to investigate cost & availability of "Recycling Man"

6 **Dog Fouling**

This item was deferred to a future meeting which would tackle the issue in more depth.

RD to arrange meeting on Dog Fouling

7 **Climate Change**

Steve Maxey attended for this item and circulated a draft Board report, Climate Change Strategy and an accompanying action plan for Members' consideration and updated the Group on the steps which could be taken by NWBC to tackle climate change. Members endorsed the documents circulated by SM and agreed that they should next be considered by CEB and recommended approval. It was further agreed that the Council should concentrate its efforts on those things that, as a Council, could reasonably be achieved.

8 **AOB**

None

9

Date of Next Meeting

Special meeting of the Group to look at issues around dog fouling to be arranged by RD

The meeting closed at 13.00