

LGA PEER CHALLENGE

September 2021



Table of Contents

Welcome to Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council.....	1
Why the Council is commissioning this Corporate.....	2
Peer Challenge	2
Introduction to Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough.....	3
Local priorities and outcomes.....	8
Organisational and place leadership.....	19
Governance and culture.....	27
Financial planning and management.....	33
Capacity for improvement	38
Sharing of successful practice.....	48

Appendices – see Document Pack

A. Corporate Plan – Delivering Our Future
B. Draft Local Economic Assessment
C. Draft Bedworth Socio-economic Review
D. Levelling Up Fund Bid
E. Delivering our Future Assessment 2020-2021
F. Values Booklet
G. Equality Policy
H. Performance Management Framework
I. Agile Working Policy
J. Communications Strategy 2021-2023
K. Code of Conduct for Employees
L. Members Induction Programme, Training and Services Information
M. Flexible Working Policy
N. Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2021
O. Training & Development Policy
P. Sickness/absence reports
Q. Staff survey results – Worklife Balance & Future Working / Mental Well-being Surveys
R. Risk Management Policy & Strategy 2019 and Risk Register 2021
S. Audit Findings for NBBC March 2020
T. Nuneaton Education Strategy
U. Annual Governance Statement 2020-2021
V. Resident satisfaction survey results Star Survey Tenants 2018
W. Key performance data/reports
X. Financial Inclusion Strategy 2016-16
Y. Social Housing Development & Acquisitions Strategy

Welcome to Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council

It's an exciting time to work and live in Nuneaton and Bedworth, as our transformation journey gathers pace. Our borough benefits from two award-winning destination parks, a strategic location at the heart of the major road network and a superb community spirit and infrastructure.

We have real ambition for our borough. Having established the [Transforming Nuneaton](#) Programme, we are working in partnership with Warwickshire County Council to deliver the regeneration of Nuneaton. More than **£100 million** of investment has been secured from partners and through our own financing. In addition, the Council has successfully bid for funding from the [Towns Fund](#) and The [Future High Street Fund](#), achieving additional public sector investment of more than **£38 million** over the next 5 years.

We are clearly making our mark. In their [2021 Vitality Index](#), Lambert Smith Hampton identified Nuneaton as topping the Opportunity Index as the location with the greatest opportunity to overcome current challenges and grow. Additionally, we have secured a prestigious international event that the Arts organisations Artichoke and Imagineer will produce. Built by the community under the guidance of internationally renowned Burning Man artist David Best and his Crew, the event will be known as 'Sanctuary' and will be a public artwork and totem to mark rebirth, recovery and regeneration following the long year of Covid-19. A short [information video](#) provides more information.

However, we experience some significant challenges. Nuneaton and Bedworth is the most deprived borough within Warwickshire, experiencing high levels of poverty, low wages, poor educational attainment and substantial health inequalities. These underlying

structural socio-economic factors contribute to the issues faced by some areas within the borough that experience disproportionately higher levels of crime than the rest of the county.

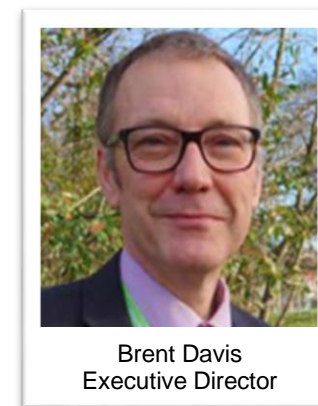
We recognise that we cannot tackle these challenges without our partners and stakeholders across all sectors. There are a number of established partnerships addressing the issues and seeking out the opportunities for positive change.

We acknowledge that there is a balance to be struck between our ambitions and the constraints within which we work, particularly as we emerge from the pandemic and experience emerging issues following the exit from the European Union. Public finances and local government capacity are stretched, whilst demand for services is high.

We welcome this Local Government Association Peer Review as an opportunity for us to share our story so far and open ourselves up to external feedback and fresh ideas about the next steps we can take as we look to build a better borough.



Councillor Kris Wilson
Leader of the Council



Brent Davis
Executive Director

Why the Council is commissioning this Corporate Peer Challenge

Following the retirement of the Council Leader and Managing Director in 2018, the authority undertook a review of its organisational priorities and recognised it needed to forge stronger partnership links and develop longer term strategies to meet the changing needs of the borough and its residents.

A new Corporate Plan, known as Delivering Our Future (**Appendix A**) was developed. It enabled senior managers and elected members to focus on longer term planning, developing and building relationships around the plan's key objectives:

Theme one – Transformation
Theme two – Collaboration
Theme three – Investment

Since the plan was adopted in 2019, the work undertaken has enabled a strong foundation to be developed with evidence and data to make informed decisions. This has placed us in a strong position to apply for external funding, securing substantial public sector investment to transform our towns and to support and empower our communities.

Following a change in political control in May 2021, a review of the borough's future vision, corporate identity, values, priorities and key performance information is being undertaken. A new leadership model has been implemented, the number of Portfolio Holders has been increased from five to six, and an additional Overview and

Scrutiny Panel has been established, with the aim of improving capacity, focus, governance and engagement. Alongside this, the management structure has also been reviewed, moving away from a joint Executive Director model to a single Chief Executive, the aim being to further improve capacity for strategic focus and lines of communication. Director roles have been realigned to ensure a more even breadth of responsibility, creating improved strategic and operational capacity.

The Council has not previously taken advantage of an LGA Peer Challenge. Given the internal and external changes, namely;

- the change in administration that has seen a high proportion of relatively inexperienced Councillors take up their seats;
- the majority of Cabinet Members have not previously held an executive role;
- the financial challenges, both historic and new;
- changes to the Management Team, including following the departure of previous Directors to either further their careers or take retirement;
- the challenges posed by Covid-19 recovery;
- the emerging issues of the exit from the European Union; and
- proposed revised priorities and focus, particularly in relation to regeneration;

a Peer Challenge will be an opportunity to receive beneficial feedback in relation to our revised approach, proposed priorities and capacity to deliver against those priorities.

We welcome the Peer Team to Nuneaton and Bedworth and look forward to using the feedback with our new Corporate Plan – Building a Better Borough - to continue our journey of transformation and improvement.

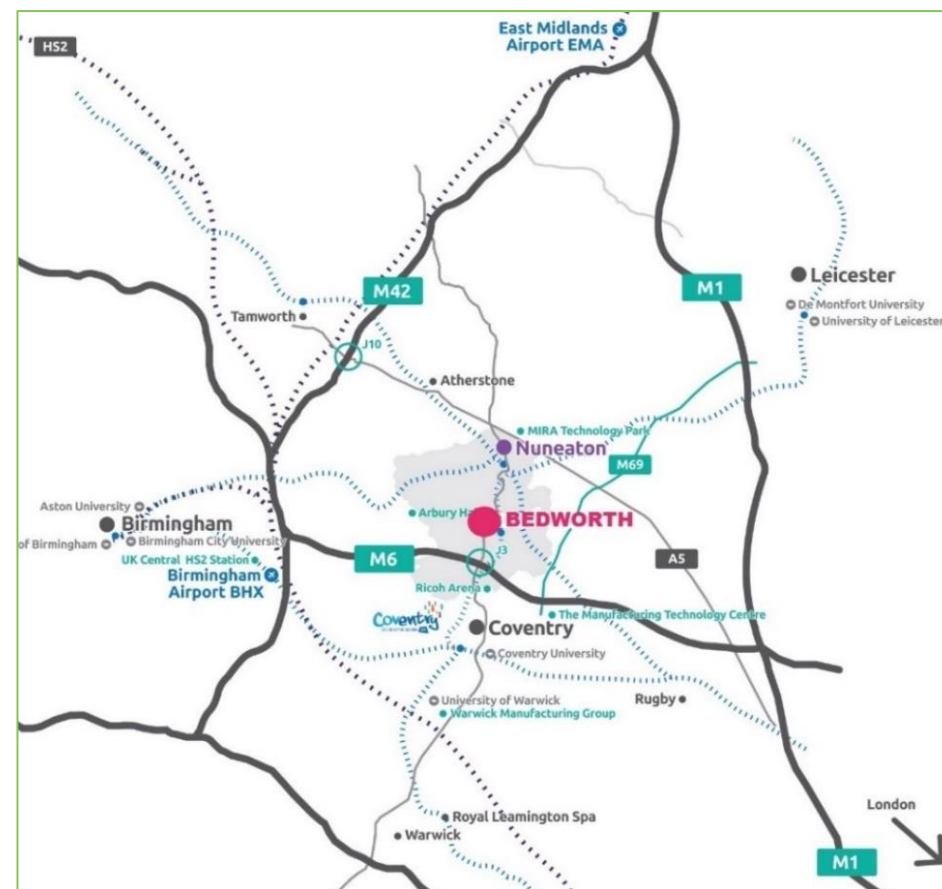
Introduction to Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough

Nuneaton and Bedworth is located in northern Warwickshire. Brought together in 1974, as part of local government reorganisation, the borough has two main towns, Nuneaton bordering North Warwickshire and Bedworth, bordering Coventry.

Nuneaton is the largest town within Warwickshire. It has faced many challenges since the decline of its traditional industries, most recently the impact upon the over reliance of A1 retail within its town centre. Nevertheless, an entrepreneurial spirit has led to the adoption of new manufacturing sectors, building upon the opportunities presented by the town's excellent position at the heart of the transport network.

Bedworth originally developed during the industrial revolution based on traditional industries in ribbon making and coal. Today, it is mainly a commuter town for Nuneaton and Coventry, composed mainly of large housing estates with a town centre and central park.

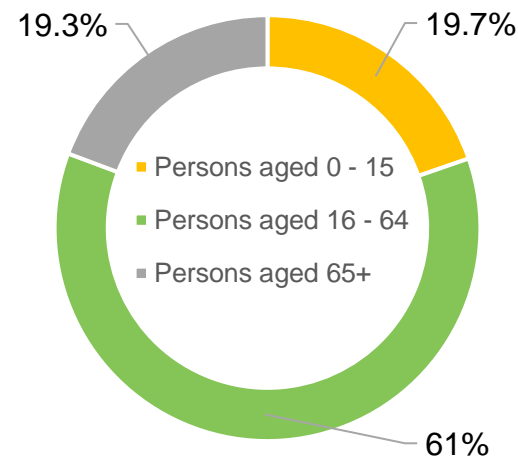
The population of the Borough has increased to over **130,000** people over the last eight years. There are many opportunities upon which we can build. We are superbly well-positioned for commuters within the national transport network, with fast rail links to London and Birmingham and easy access to the M1, M6 and M42. We are the birthplace of the author George Eliot, have three destination parks, are in close proximity to [the MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone](#), a strong Third Sector and excellent, established partnerships. However, there are many challenges facing the borough. Our socio-economic profile is less prosperous than the rest of Warwickshire. Our residents experience higher than average levels of poor health, lower than average educational attainment, lower than average household income, a low wage economy, higher than average unemployment and areas with disproportionately higher levels of crime than the rest of the county. We have however successfully bid for Government funding from the Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund, securing over £38 million of investment. Further statistics and information can be found in the [Nuneaton Town Investment Plan](#), draft Local Economic Assessment (**Appendix B**), draft Bedworth Socio-Economic Review (**Appendix C**) and Levelling Up Fund bid (**Appendix D**).



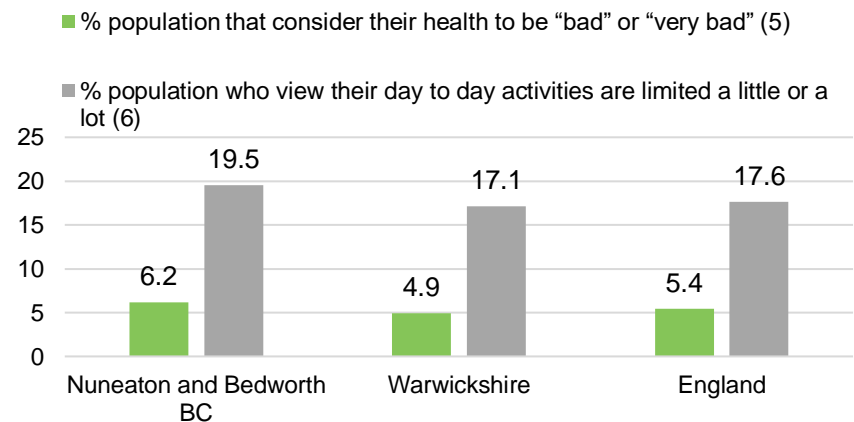
Live



Population by age



Poor health in Nuneaton's most deprived wards



Ethnicity	%	%	
White:English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	88.9	Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	0.4
White: Irish	0.6	Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1	Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0.2
White: Other White	1.8	Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	1
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	0.5	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	0.4
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	0.1	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	0.3
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	0.3	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	0.1
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed	0.2	Other ethnic group	0.4



Average House prices

Bedworth

£209,537

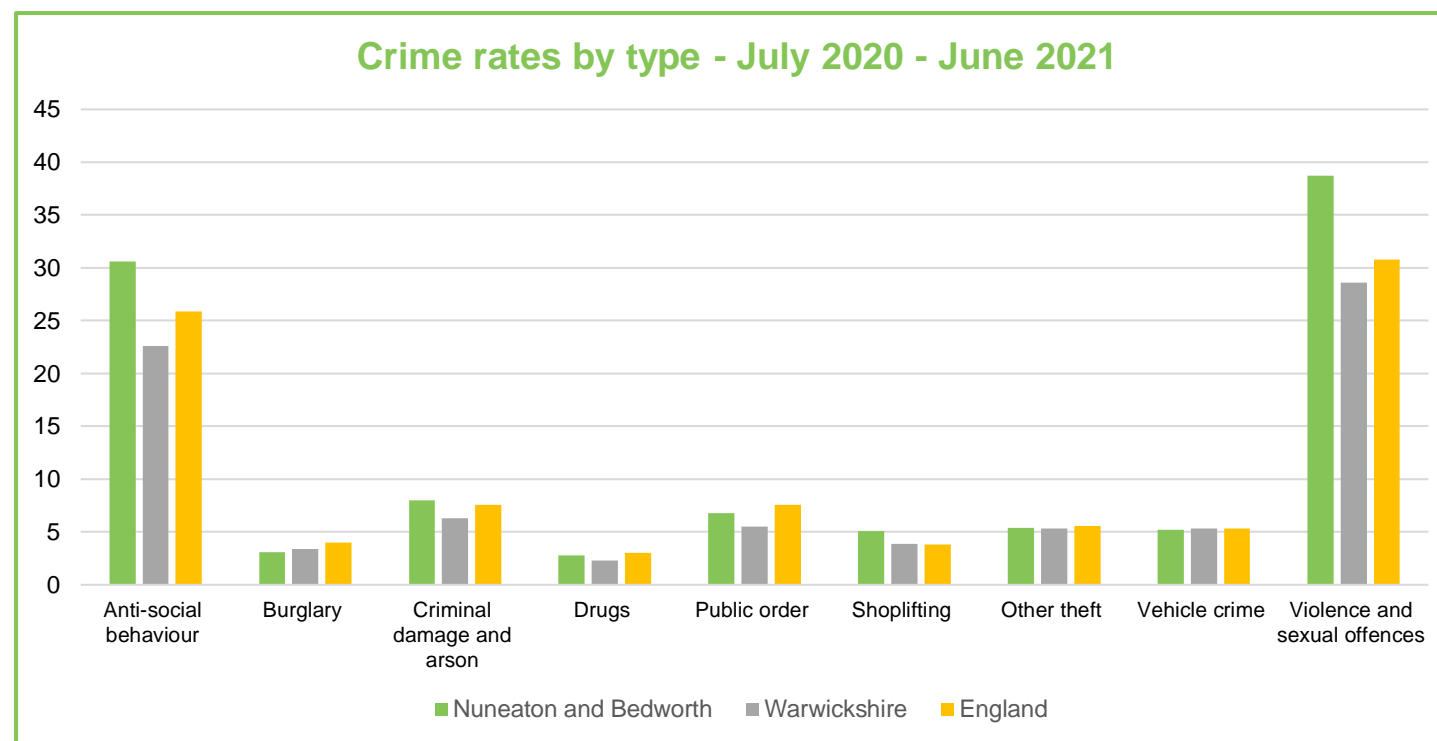
Nuneaton

£235,034

Warwickshire

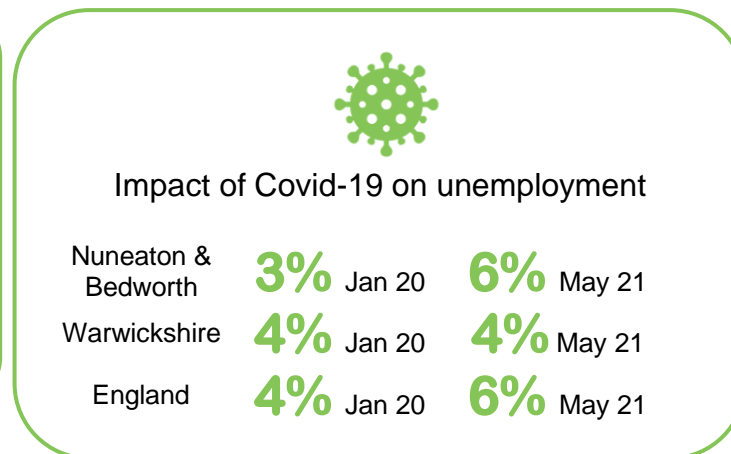
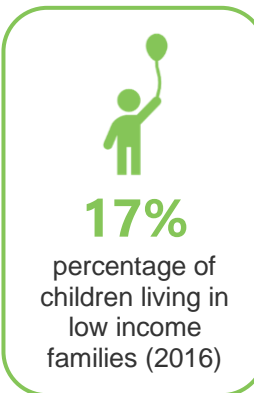
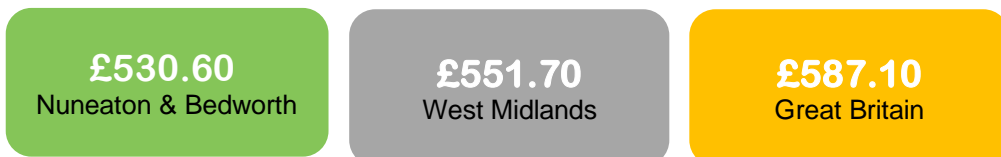
£326,626**3.3%**Homeless and in
priority need - per
1,000 households

Educational Attainment	Attainment 8	Progress 8	% Strong Pass (9-5) in English and Maths
Nuneaton and Bedworth	43.5	-0.31	38
Warwickshire	49.8	0	50
England	46.5	-0.03	43

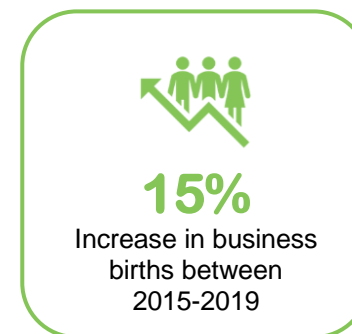
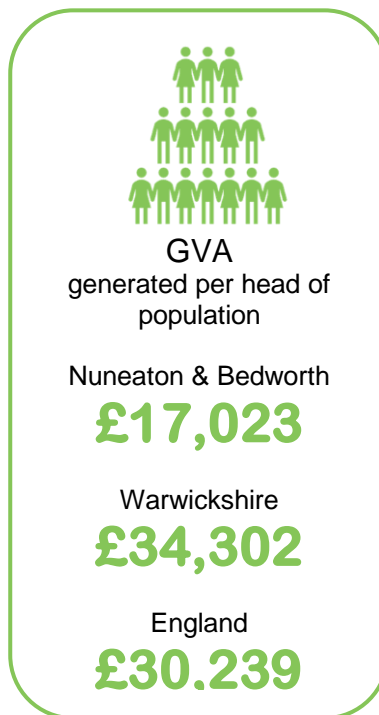


Work

Average gross weekly pay



Average Economic Activity Rates	Nuneaton & Bedworth	Warwickshire	England
Economic activity rate - aged 16-64	81.9%	83.2%	79.5%
Employment rate - aged 16-64	79.2%	80.5%	75.7%
% aged 16-64 who are employees	71.0%	68.6%	65.4%
% aged 16-64 who are self employed	8.1%	11.9%	10.1%
% who are economically inactive - aged 16-64	18.1%	16.8%	20.5%



Number of high growth businesses based on an average annualised growth rate greater than 20% (in employment) over a 3 year period. The data only includes businesses employing 10 or more employees

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Nuneaton & Bedworth	25	25	25	25	15
Warwickshire	125	140	140	130	125
England	10650	11910	11535	12225	11070

Visit



114,144 Nuneaton
49,821 Bedworth

Average visitors to Town




60,000
Visitors to Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery (pre-Covid-19)




50,000
Tickets sales for Bedworth Civic Hall (pre Covid-19)




Bedworth & Nuneaton Markets



3
Destination Parks



17
Community Parks



13
Nature and Wildlife Parks



5k & 10k
Fun Run



4
Leisure/Sports Centres



[Ropewalk](#) & [Abbeygate](#)
Shopping Centres

Annual Events

- Food Festival (Nuneaton)
- Armistice Day (Bedworth)
- Christmas Lights (Nuneaton & Bedworth)



Local priorities and outcomes

To aim to achieve the greatest improvement in quality of life in Warwickshire by 2031.

Our Corporate Plan - 'Delivering Our Future' was implemented in 2019, with the stated ambition of achieving the greatest improvement in quality of life in Warwickshire by 2031. This ambition reflected the significant gap in socio-economic and health indicators between our borough and the rest of Warwickshire.

Monitored via the Delivering our Future Delivery Plan ([Appendix E](#)), a number of priority actions were adopted for the period 2019 – 2022, with the aim of bringing about real improvements for our residents and businesses.

The new administration has taken the opportunity to review our Corporate Plan, to make it more relevant for the present-day, both in terms of language and to better reflect the current issues facing our borough

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Delivering our Future 2019 – 2031

Vision: *To aim to achieve the greatest improvement in quality of life in Warwickshire by 2031*

Theme one: Transformation – We want to take the Borough forward to reach its full potential, we want to create and develop opportunities to deliver the following priorities:

Priority one: Economy and business – *building on our strong economic record, growing our economy, capitalising on our strengths, promoting our Borough, telling our story*

Priority two: People – *promoting skills and improving health within our communities, empowering and supporting our employees to deliver excellent services for residents*

Priority three: Housing and communities – *enabling housing development to match our aspirations for the Borough; building homes, investing in safe, empowered, sustainable communities*

Priority four: Technology – *maximising the opportunities presented by technology for our communities and services*

Theme two: Collaboration – achieving more by working together - We recognise the importance of working with others to deliver our vision and recognise that collaboration needs to be central to our work. Our areas of focus will be:

Priority one: *we will work with our communities*

Priority two: *we will work with our partners, businesses, suppliers*

Priority three: *we will work with our employees and elected members*

Theme Three: Investment – making the most of what we have - We want to build and enhance what we have already. We want to encourage investment within the following priorities:

Priority one: Getting the most from our assets – *from our people, land and property*

Priority two: Maximising funding – *identifying and securing funding opportunities, being creative, maximising income streams*

Priority three: Managing our resources – *maintaining our robust financial management arrangements to deliver efficient, economic and effective services*

Priority four: Promoting *a sustainable, green economy; minimising our carbon footprint*

Priority five: Empowering *our communities to make the most of their resources*

Priority six: Environment – *cherishing our physical environment; enhancing our built environment and open spaces, maximising the value of our green spaces, improving our infrastructure*

The new Plan will be entitled '**Building a Better Borough**'.

Work to formulate the new Plan has already commenced. Its draft aim is:

Nuneaton and Bedworth 2032 :
working in partnership – restoring pride in our borough.

It will be focused around 3 pillars that are already familiar to our partners, employees, residents and partners. These pillars are

Live / Work/ Visit

The Council will apply objectivity and transparency in an enterprising manner, to the management of resources and the decision-making process.

Following sign-off by the Cabinet, the new Plan will be widely consulted upon, with all responses carefully considered and amendments made where appropriate.

Once adopted, an action plan will be compiled, progress against which will be monitored and formally reported within the strategic performance framework. Base data will be gathered in order to evidence tangible progress against the aims and objectives.

To support our new approach, we will undertake a fundamental review of our Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). It is important that our KPI's reflect the renewed focus and priorities, continuing to include both strategic and financial measures.

BUILDING a better BOROUGH



Nuneaton & Bedworth



Working in partnership,
 restoring pride in our borough



- Promote residents' health & wellbeing
- Enable appropriate housing development
- Sponsor a sustainable green approach
- Prioritise Community Safety & Empowerment



- Grow a strong & inclusive economy
- Champion education & skills
- Embrace new & emerging technology
- Support local businesses



- Create vibrant and diverse Town Centres
- Stimulate regeneration
- Celebrate and promote our heritage
- Improve the physical environment



Imaginative, Enterprising & Transparent

Our organisational Values were adopted in 2017, following lengthy consultation with employees (**Appendix F**). They describe the core principles we work to and reflect our organisational culture.

The values are incorporated within our recruitment, annual development review and performance management policies and processes, to reinforce and strengthen our culture.

Whilst fully adopted by our employees, our values were not formally adopted by the previous administration.

Our new political leadership see the adoption of values as important to both employees and members alike. As such, a review of the values will be undertaken, and consultation carried out with all employees and councillors prior to final adoption.

To complete the fundamental review of our core approach, our corporate identity will be refreshed in recognition of changing times and the need to be far more relatable to our residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

Service for our customers – We put our customers first in everything we do.

Integrity in our actions – We are open, honest and fair; communicate accurately and keep our promises. We act within the law and the Council's Constitution and policies.

Accountability for our performance – We accept personal responsibility, not seeking to blame others and apologise if we get things wrong.

Co-operation with Councillors, colleagues and partners – We share ideas, knowledge and resources; we are friendly towards, listen to and respect each other, and work in teams to deliver excellence.

Objectivity in our decisions – We base our decisions on evidence, welcome challenge and take account of alternative opinions and the wider picture.

Efficiency to keep overall costs down – We constantly improve our value for money, learning from good practice, eliminating waste, and making the most of our assets.

Confidence to try things out – We give our people encouragement, authority and support to be creative and flexible in how they deliver services; learning from things that go wrong when we experiment.

Nuneaton & Bedworth – the place of choice to live, work and visit.

A full timetable detailing the formulation and adoption of the new Corporate Plan, KPI's, Values and corporate identity is shown below:

Corporate Plan	111 days?	Mon 13/09/21	Mon 14/02/22
Staff consultation	15 days	Mon 13/09/21	Fri 01/10/21
Public Consultation	16 days	Mon 13/09/21	Mon 04/10/21
Member Workshop	1 day	Thu 16/09/21	Thu 16/09/21
Finance & Public Services OSP	1 day	Thu 18/11/21	Thu 18/11/21
Housing, Environmental & Health OSP	1 day	Thu 25/11/21	Thu 25/11/21
Business, Regeneration and Planning OSP	1 day	Thu 21/10/21	Thu 21/10/21
Leadership Board	1 day	Wed 01/12/21	Wed 01/12/21
Cabinet Approval	0 days	Wed 02/02/22	Wed 02/02/22
Council Approval	0 days	Mon 14/02/22	Mon 14/02/22
Corporate Identity Refresh	110 days?	Tue 14/09/21	Mon 14/02/22
Cabinet Engagement Session	1 day	Tue 14/09/21	Tue 14/09/21
Leadership Board - 1st Proposal	1 day	Wed 06/10/21	Wed 06/10/21
Cabinet Engagement Session	1 day	Thu 14/10/21	Thu 14/10/21
Stakeholder Engagement	20 days	Mon 18/10/21	Fri 12/11/21
Leadership Board - Final Draft	1 day	Wed 01/12/21	Wed 01/12/21
Cabinet Approval		Wed 02/02/22	
Council Approval		Mon 14/02/22	
Values Review	66 days?	Wed 03/11/21	Wed 02/02/22
Leadership Board Engagement Session	1 day	Wed 03/11/21	Wed 03/11/21
Staff Engagement Session	1 day	Mon 15/11/21	Mon 15/11/21
Leadership Board - 1st Review outcomes	1 day	Wed 01/12/21	Wed 01/12/21
Staff Consultation	42 days	Thu 02/12/21	Fri 28/01/22
Leadership Board - Final Approval	0 days	Wed 02/02/22	Wed 02/02/22
KPI Review	21 days?	Wed 05/01/22	Wed 02/02/22
Leadership Board Engagement Session	1 day	Wed 05/01/22	Wed 05/01/22
Staff Engagement Session	1 day	Mon 10/01/22	Mon 10/01/22
OSP Chairs Engagement Session	1 day	Thu 13/01/22	Thu 13/01/22
Leadership Board Proposal Review & adoption		Wed 02/02/22	

How communities and stakeholders shape priorities and delivery

We place great emphasis upon the involvement of all stakeholders and have extremely well-established partnerships across all sectors. We employ a variety of mechanisms to seek feedback which then informs our priority setting agenda and how we deliver services. These mechanisms are designed to be as inclusive as possible and include:

- All [Council meetings](#) are open to the public for non-confidential items, with the opportunity to make statements and ask questions of members. These were live-streamed during lockdown.
- A range of remote meetings with all sectors of the business community to understand challenges and opportunities, particularly in response to Covid-19 and Covid-19 Recovery.
- Numerous web-based consultations have taken place, including in relation to the Corporate Plan, the Borough Plan, priorities for the Future High Streets Fund and Towns Fund, and priorities for future leisure and open space provision.
- The establishment of a business community FaceBook group to allow concerns to be raised, ideas to be shared and to receive feedback on proposed approaches by the Council, such as the Future High Streets Fund projects. Feedback will be used to inform future business support measures.

The outcomes of these consultations have significantly influenced our priorities and service delivery.

Many residents have expressed concerns and dissatisfaction in

relation to our adopted local plan, currently known as the [Borough Plan](#). It is therefore currently being reviewed, with a [Borough Plan Committee](#) established to oversee this. The Borough Plan is a key strategic document that must reflect and support the overall social and economic aspirations and priorities for the borough. These include housing of the right type in the right places, employment land allocation to support our local economy and ecology and climate change matters.

Significant levels of consultation with all stakeholders is being undertaken to ensure their needs and opinions are thoroughly taken into account when preparing the final policy compliant Plan for inspection. The consultation is taking many forms, including face to face meetings and information video aimed at increasing the level of engagement of all stakeholders.





As part of our submission for Towns Fund Funding, extensive consultation was undertaken via a dedicated website MyTown Nuneaton, with promotional information shared via FaceBook, Twitter, the Council's website, local press and

industry bodies. The results of the consultation were used to formulate the projects that were included within the [Town Investment Plan](#) and for which we successfully obtained funding.



In February 2020 a borough wide consultation exercise was undertaken, all about creating a better Bedworth and a new Nuneaton.

Almost **2000** responses were received.

These provided valuable information, opinions and views that helped shape the draft plans for towns, parks and leisure offerings.

Subsequently, these plans and associated consultation have supported bids for external investment including;

- Towns Fund;
- Future High Streets Fund;
- Levelling Up Fund;
- British Cycling

The results of the [survey](#) can be found on the website.

In addition to our consultation exercises, we have a strong network of partnerships with all sectors. The information shared within these partnerships is also used to inform priorities and shape our service delivery. For example, The UK Resettlement Group is a Countywide group that has input from the Home Office and which considers the requirements for the settlement of Syrian refugees.

In response to the issues raised, we have strengthened our Private Sector Landlord approach, with dedicated officers working with the private sector to identify available homes of the right size and in the right location.

Our Communities Team have forged strong links with differing faith based groups and organisations. Utilising these links, additional support measures have been put in place to assist our refugees to integrate into the wider community

Further detail relating to our partnership work and collaboration can be found in Section 2 of this statement.

How equality and diversity considerations inform the Council's prioritisation and delivery arrangements

In response to the Equality Act 2010, we produced an Equality Policy (**Appendix G**) that was formally adopted in December 2014 and revised in June 2018.

As one of the largest employers in the borough and one of the main providers of local services, the Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling any disadvantage. We also aspire to deliver a high standard of customer service, a transparent decision making process and fair employment practices.

This Policy therefore introduced the following 5 Equality Objectives:

- 1 Ensure acceptable behaviour
- 2 Respond to complaints and incidents in a positive and proactive way
- 3 Deliver accessible services and information
- 4 Recruit and employ people fairly
- 5 Meet specific Protected Characteristics needs

This Policy and approach has ensured that we are compliant with statutory duty, and many improvements have been made including:

- All employees undertake mandatory equality and diversity training;
- Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken on all Council policies;
- 19 out of 20 of our public buildings are accessible;
- Robust recruitment and selection policy and procedure;
- The provision of information in differing formats and languages;
- The provision of a higher than average number of Blue Badge parking spaces;

- The provision of Parent & Child parking spaces;
- Hearing loops installed within the Town Hall;
- The publication of Gender Pay Gap information;
- Improved our website accessibility in a number of ways, including the introduction of access/shortcut keys, the ability to change colours to a high contrast and the ability to change the font size to three times that of standard.

A [Public Sector Equality Duty Compliance Report](#) is published annually, demonstrating our compliance with the General Duty, and is monitored via our Scrutiny process and by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

How the Council manages performance and local performance information

Our Performance Management Framework (**Appendix H**) ensures that there is an effective mechanism to align our Corporate Plan to the priority actions adopted by each Directorate. The Framework provides a robust process to sustain a focus on priorities and deliver the following outcomes:

- Improved service delivery and outcomes for customers.
- Demonstrating success or failure and early warnings.
- Effective use of resources.
- Identifying potential improvements / cost savings.
- Improved audit / inspection results.

- Linking financial / non-financial data to provide a balanced picture of the organisation.
- Informing the debate on future priorities.
- More effective partnership working.

Monitoring progress in relation to performance takes place at a number of levels:

- Strategic Performance Reporting to Management Team on a monthly basis and Cabinet quarterly. This is an overview of the Council's position relating to: Finance, People and Service Delivery, Processes and Improvement.
- Our corporate database is the 'TEN' performance management system which provides links for all Performance Indicators / Measures to a Director, Portfolio Holder, Service and individual responsible. Members of the public can access the [TEN](#) system on the Council's website.
- An integrated performance management report linking finance, performance and risk data is produced quarterly for Overview and Scrutiny Panel(s), with progress updates on service improvement plans reported at half year.

Service objectives and targets are set out within service areas. These include performance indicators/measures and are used to plan and monitor the work within service areas to meet the requirements of the Corporate (DOF) Delivery Plan.

The Strategic Performance Report ([Appendix W](#)) for March 2021 details our year end performance outcome.





Customer Services

209,417 calls handled via our contact centre

53,823 self-serve transactions undertaken (increase of 15,389 over the previous year)

1,089 face to Face transactions at the Town Hall during the pandemic period

76.9% complaints responded to within 10 working days



Sickness Absence

8.14 days
Per FTE



Legal & Fraud

Over £181k

Taxpayers' money saved by our Fraud Team and partners.

13 possession Orders obtained for antisocial behaviour



Benefits

18.75 days average time taken to process claims for Housing & Council Tax benefit



Arrears Recovery

95.78%



Finance & Procurement

98.16% invoices paid on time.

74.4% SME invoices paid in 10 days

88.77% spend with SMEs

97.23% Council Tax collected

96.75% Business Rates collected

94.5% Rent collected



Strategic Risk Register

83% satisfactory



Waste & Recycling

11,000 tonnes recycled general waste

8,000 tonnes recycled garden waste



Planning & Property

27% Affordable Homes planning consent

849 Planning Applications received

719 Planning Applications determined

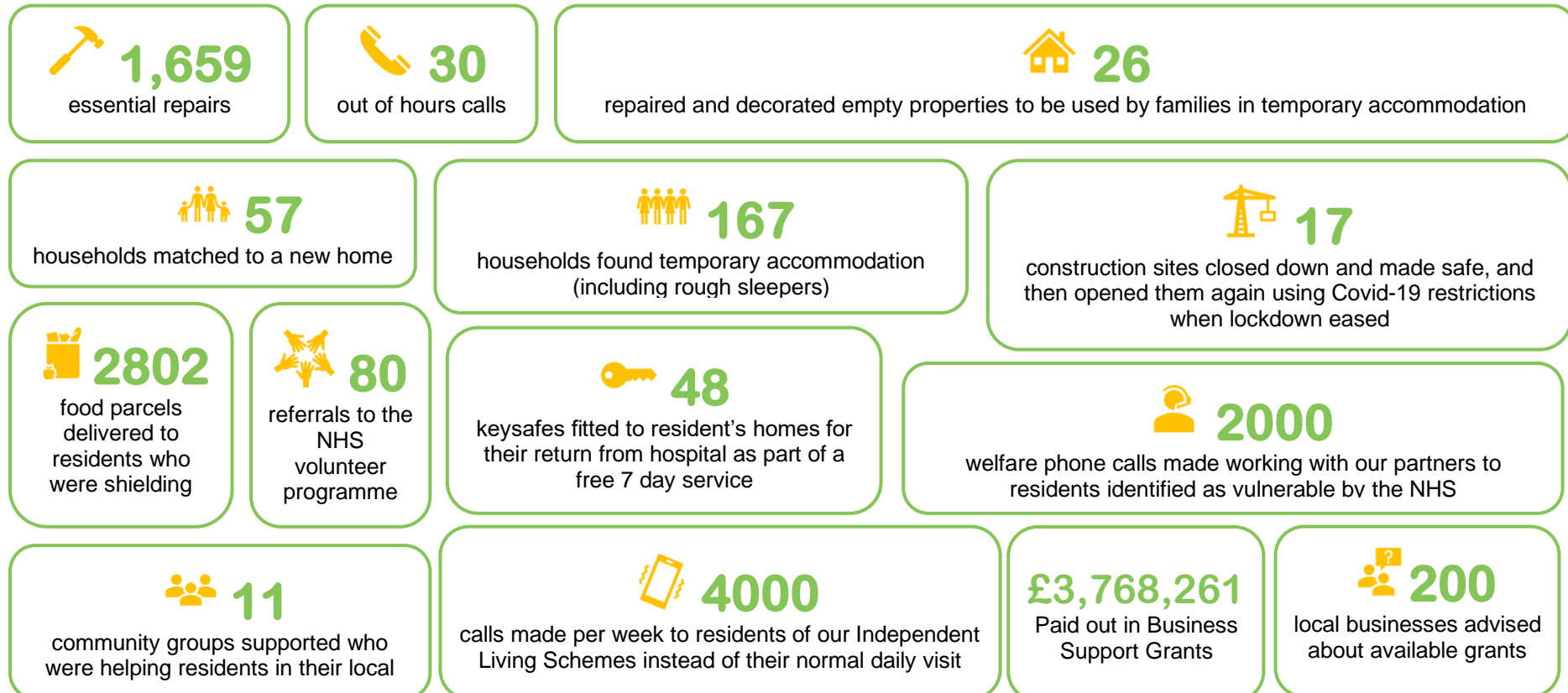
Our response to Covid-19

The Coronavirus pandemic has changed the way the Council has operated over the past 18 months and through hard work, commitment and investment the Authority has risen to that challenge working with partners to support local communities.

Since the start of Covid-19 we have worked closely with partners across Warwickshire, to provide extra support for residents and more vulnerable members of our community. As mentioned, our

socio-economic profile, along with a number of BAME communities has seen our borough experience some of the worst outbreaks in the County. An Incident Management Team was co-ordinated and led by the two north local authorities to support and engage on a wider partnership scale.

Some examples of the activities we undertook during the first lockdown are listed below.



As we had already implemented Agile Working ([Appendix I](#)) in 2017, we were ahead of a number of other local authorities, having the technology and processes in place to continue to deliver key services to our businesses and communities, and to undertake remote Council meetings and livestream them with minimal disruption to the running of the Organisation.

A key area for us has been continuing to work in partnership with the Department for Health and Social Care in relation to the identification and provision of suitable venues for Covid-19 test facilities. We took the lead on working with the NHS to find vaccination sites. In November 2020, we made available our Bedworth Civic Hall for a regional style vaccination site. The Chair of the Coventry Warwickshire Partnership Trust made a specific reference to us in the area on the work we have undertaken to establish this theatre site for residents.

Through ongoing partnership working, a shopping centre outlet was negotiated for a second vaccination site, for ease of access for residents to support the take-up of the vaccines. We also worked closely with faith organisations to provide appropriate vaccination locations to again promote and encourage members of our BAME communities to take-up vaccinations.

The financial impact of the pandemic is not to be underestimated. Whilst some Government funding has been made available, it does not cover all additional Covid-19 and related expenditure. The future challenges of service delivery and what this may look like are already being considered given the challenges ahead.



Organisational and place leadership

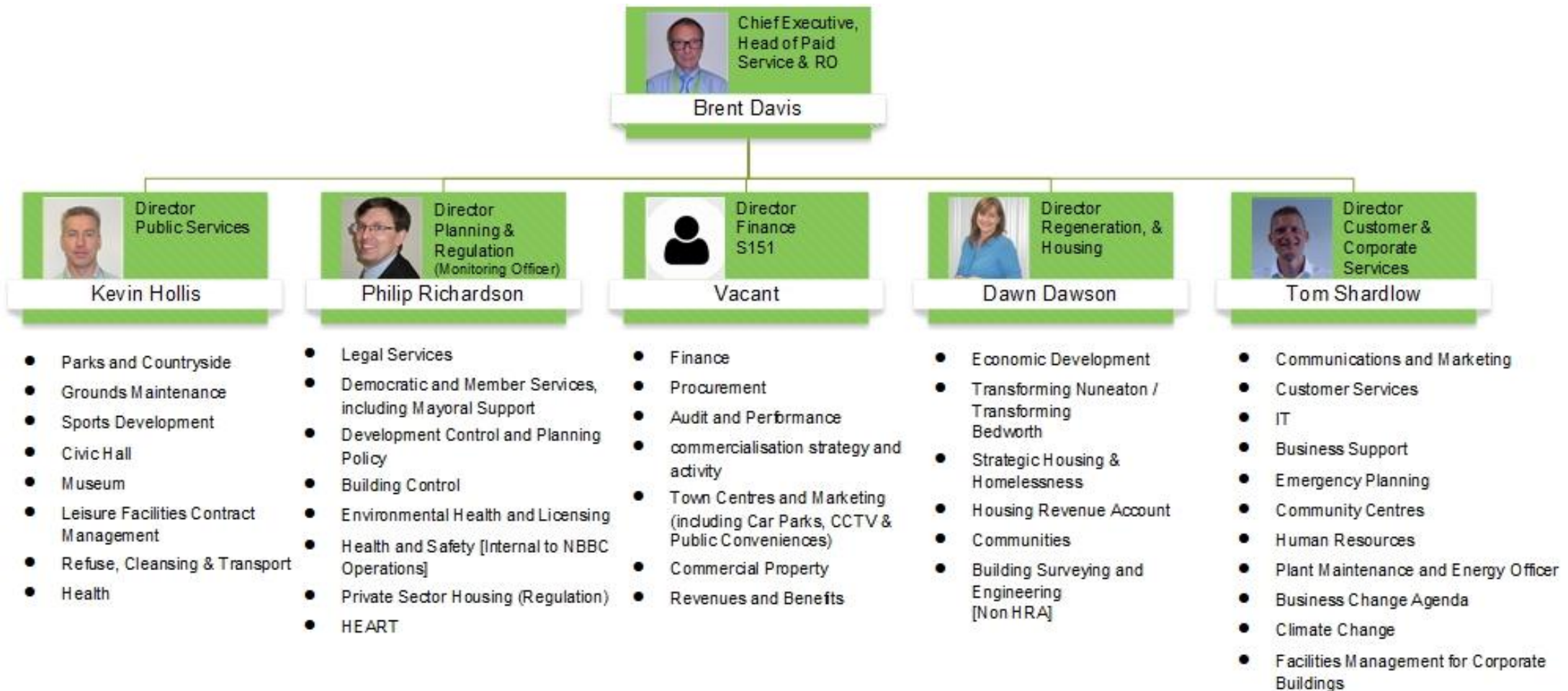
A new structure was implemented in 2018, following the retirement of the previous Managing Director. This led to two Executive Director positions (Operations and Resources), both maintaining some operational/direct reports from senior managers, along with line management of Directors.

This new structure was aimed at providing clear areas of responsibilities and accountability to operate as one Council, with strategic leads for operations and resources being input jointly into all projects. This structure was to respond to the new challenges in a dynamic, cross cutting and agile fashion within its financial capabilities.



Following the resignation of one of the Executive Directors to further progress their career, the new administration has taken the opportunity to review the management structure. Following the review and consultation with affected employees, a decision was approved to appoint an overall Chief Executive and five Directors, one of whom will take up the position of Deputy Chief Executive. The new structure is to be ratified at Full Council in September and will commence from 1st October, 2021.

This new structure shown below, is seen as providing the focus and clarity required at this time, given the number of projects and initiatives being delivered, with a clear and direct steer by one Chief Executive Officer (Designate until 1st October 2021).



The Leader and the Executive Director – Operations (Chief Executive designate) meet on a weekly basis to ensure timely two-way communication of issues, supporting appropriate decision making and leadership of the Organisation.

The new administration has instigated an additional Leadership Board. Meeting monthly, the new Board comprises of all Cabinet members and all members of the Management Team. The focus of this Board is to come together to discuss all existing and emerging strategic and operational issues in a confidential but slightly more informal setting. The meeting allows for open discussion and promotes greater understanding between members and Management Team

Each Director undertakes regular meetings with their relevant Portfolio Holders. These meetings allow a more in-depth discussion in relation to both operational and strategic matters, ensuring that Cabinet Members are fully briefed and knowledgeable in relation to issues directly under their control. The meetings also allow the Directors to gain a greater understanding of Member priorities and rationale allowing both members and officers to fully appreciate and understand the whole picture, including risk identification and progress against priorities.

In addition, following widespread public concern regarding the performance of the council's largest external contract with Glendale – our grounds maintenance provider – the Leader of the Council has instigated a series of bi-monthly meetings with the Glendale Regional Manager. These are to address current issues within the borough, identify upcoming problems with contract performance and investigate solutions to avoid reductions in service and reputational damage for both Glendale and the council.

How the Council leads the local area and works with local and regional partners

We recognise that we cannot deliver all services to all people. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council has taken great strides in recent years to build, and maintain relationships and partnership working, and reinforce its role as enabler and facilitator in the borough. We are involved in a growing number of county and regional partnerships, covering Strategic, Operational, Economic and Community matters. Evidence of this is weaved throughout this document, with some specific examples detailed below.

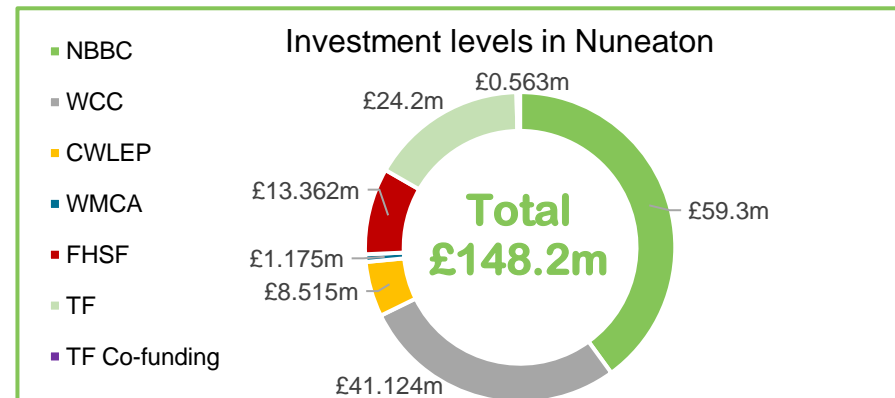


The Transforming Nuneaton Programme (TNP) was established some 6 years ago and is an ambitious multi-agency Plan aimed at transforming Nuneaton by 2030. We are working with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) to deliver the TNP, by boosting economic growth via mixed use regeneration, including housing, leisure and commerce. The associated [Prospectus for Growth](#) details ambitions for the town and is the strategic blueprint to promote and capitalise upon opportunities. Partners including [Coventry and Warwickshire LEP](#) (CWLEP) and the [West Midlands Combined Authority](#) (WMCA) are supporting the plans, having already invested £9.69 million between them for early interventions and enabling works.

Utilising this strategic blueprint, we have successfully bid for more than £13 million funding from the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) to support the delivery of the Abbey Street development. This development includes a Hampton by Hilton hotel, mixed leisure provision, a new public square and a Food Hall. The fund is also supporting the development of the Bridge to Living Scheme which

will replace poor 1970's retail provision with new Live to Work units, housing and will provide a green link from our destination Riversley Park, into Nuneaton town centre.

We have also successfully bid for more than £24 million funding from the Towns Fund (TF). The funding will support a number of projects that were selected in response to consultation feedback, and which form a package of interventions that directly address the challenges and opportunities within Nuneaton whilst achieving significant outputs and outcomes for the town. The delivery of transport infrastructure and sustainable transport improvements; the remediation of land and removal of planning constraints, together with increased and improved training facilities and training offers; the provision of Full Fibre supported new incubation and grow on commercial spaces, combined with the improved leisure and heritage offer, will be the catalyst to achieve the required step-change. Working with our local and regional partners, we have secured more than £148 million of investment into our Borough.





In 2020, we established the Transforming Bedworth Programme (TBP). Working in partnership with Warwickshire County Council, the aim is to regenerate Bedworth town centre and identify the actions and projects that will deliver economic and physical improvements to Bedworth.

Consultation has been undertaken, a [visioning document](#) has been produced, a Market Study has been undertaken and a draft Socio-Economic Review (**Appendix C**) has been compiled. These documents will inform the vision for Bedworth and provide the basis for all future activities, investment and funding opportunities.



We have safeguarded our funding to the Third Sector, awarding more than £200,000 annually and recognising the pivotal role they play in providing services and support to all sections of our community.

In 2018, we launched the Borough Lottery, providing a new opportunity for local charities, community groups and all Third Sector partners to raise additional funds.



The Lottery is on track to raise



£24,336

for this financial year

We have also taken the lead role when required to ensure development opportunities are exploited for the improvement of the borough. Acting as the Developer for the Hampton by Hilton hotel, we are investing **£59 million** to support its delivery and provide tangible contributions to the regeneration of Nuneaton.

During 2019 the Council became one of the five founding “Partner Councils” in a ground breaking project to jointly fund, build, own and operate a Sub-Regional Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) located across our border in Coventry. That project has progressed to a point where there are now eight partner councils (Coventry City Council, Solihull MBC, Walsall MBC, Rugby Borough Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Stratford on Avon District Council, Warwick District Council and ourselves) and construction has commenced on site following a major procurement exercise for building and equipment suppliers.

The facility will cost some **£58 million** to build and fit out and will be able to handle **175,000** tonnes of dry recycle per annum. We have committed **£4.5 million** to the project, mostly by way of a loan on commercial terms and we hold a **7.7%** share in the arms length company Sherbourne Recycling Ltd – that has been established to operate the MRF on behalf of the Partner Councils.



Currently Brent Davis is a Director of Sherbourne Recycling on the Council's behalf.

In addition to the return on the loan made to Sherbourne Recycling, we anticipate saving more than **£250k** per year on gate fee costs as well as receiving dividends from our shareholding.

The MRF will be a highly technologically advanced facility [probably the most technologically advanced in the UK] combining artificial intelligence with minimal human intervention, to achieve very high output quality standards. This will allow changes in consumer habits; anticipated legislative changes as a result of the national Waste and Resource Strategy; impacts of Brexit on trade and workforce engagement to be dealt with over the 25 years + life of the MRF. Capacity has been allowed for dealing with materials from commercial sources to increase income and reduce net operating costs.

The MRF is on track to be constructed by mid-2023 and operational in autumn 2023.

Shared place ambitions, collective leadership capacity and the future focus of joint working

Partnership working is a fundamental element of our current and developing Corporate Plan. We are a relatively small second tier Authority and recognise that building effective collaborations, through a variety of mechanisms, is integral to supporting the delivery of our priorities for the Borough and its residents. Our range of partners is expansive and cover strategic, operational, economic and community themes.

We are one of only ten Non-Constituent (Non-Cons) members of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). Whilst our status does not allow voting rights, we do have access to various funding

streams and networks that have proved beneficial for us. Given the strength of our approach in terms of regeneration, we have successfully attracted land remediation funding of more the **£1 million** to support the regeneration of the Abbey Street site. Our ability to attract co-funding was a significant factor for our successful Future High Streets Fund bid.

Our alliance with the WMCA has proved beneficial in other strategic areas, such as homelessness. Having launched the Homelessness Taskforce, initially aimed at the Constituent authorities, we made contact with the Head of the Taskforce and agreed to represent the other Non-Cons. Our involvement has allowed us to both receive and share our own best practice, a mutually beneficial approach to tackle an area that possesses some of our most difficult challenges. For example, during lockdown, we were able to share our 'direct matching' approach which allowed us to move families out of costly and inappropriate shared temporary accommodation, directly into single family homes as they became available. We have benefited from access to the Tenancy Recovery pilot. Aimed at sustaining tenancies, the pilot provides wrap around support and funding via the Department of Work and Pensions.

We are members of [Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership](#) (CWLEP) and our Leader has a seat on the Board. Our membership allows us to help determine local economic priorities, via the [Strategic Economic Plan](#), and supports our connections with local businesses to improve communications and understanding of issues and priorities in our area. We have successfully attracted more than **£8 million** of funding from CWLEP to support the regeneration of Nuneaton. We continue to recognise CWLEP as a major partner in relation to our place-shaping aspirations.



Strategic

NABSCOP (Nuneaton & Bedworth Community Safety Partnership)

Warwickshire Heads of Housing

District Councils Network

Warwickshire County Council

West Midlands Employers

Association of Retained Council Housing

Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Board

MAPPA (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements)

Homes England (Investment Partner Status)

Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board

SOCJAG (Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Group)

Prevent Board

VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) Board

Domestic Abuse Emerging Trends Partnership

Channel Panel

Harmful Practices Group

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

Warwickshire County Council – Transforming Nuneaton & Education

Sherbourne Recycling Partnership – investing in another arms length company.



Operational

HEART (Countywide HIA)

Private Sector Housing – Shared Service with North Warwickshire Borough Council

Revenues & Benefits Shared Service with North Warwickshire Borough Council

Warwickshire Waste Partnership

Procurement – Shared Service with Rugby Borough Council Everyone Active (Leisure)

3GS (Environmental offences)

Coventry City Council Pest Control Partnership

Lichfield District Council Building Control Partnership

Rugby Borough Council (IT Training)

Problem solving Partnership (Warwickshire Police)

Coventry City Council

- kerbside recycling service,
- trade waste collection,
- vehicle maintenance.

Our proactive approach to partnerships has seen us both host and receive a number of shared service functions. We host the county wide home improvement agencies services. Known as HEART, the service covers all five Warwickshire councils and includes the County Council with their social care act functions integrated into service delivery. Our shared service with Coventry City Council provides our kerbside recycling and trade waste collection services and has been expanded to include vehicle maintenance.



Economic

Town Deal Board

Northern Warwickshire Financial Inclusion Partnership

Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Hub

Federation of Small Businesses

Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce

West Midlands Combined Authority

Coventry & Warwickshire Champions

Warwickshire County Council (OPE & Economic Development initiatives)



Community

Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action

Bedworth, Rugby and Nuneaton Citizens Advice Bureau

Nuneaton Education Partnership

UK Resettlement Programme

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking group

Nuneaton Harriers Community Trust

How is the council communicating its challenges, future ambitions and organisational changes

The Council communicates its challenges, ambitions and organisational changes in a number of ways. The vision of our Corporate Communications Strategy ([Appendix J](#)) is

That our borough is seen as a great place to be, and that the local authority is consistently seen as a champion of that vision.

The Strategy reflects and supports the changing needs of the Council, places our values at the heart of how we work, focusses on priorities set out in our current Corporate Plan -Delivering our Future, under its three key themes of Transformation, Collaboration and Investment. It is focused on the period to 2023 within five communication themes of:

- 1 The Council and its services
- 2 Nuneaton and Bedworth - the place
- 3 Covid-19 recovery
- 4 Digital service delivery
- 5 Building our 'offline' community

Communications and marketing efforts across the Council are based around achieving consistency of tone, message and timeliness across all its online channels, these being FaceBook,

Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, our [Website](#), press releases , and includes offline channels such as public meetings.

In consultation with Heads of Service, a Forward Plan for communications is produced and reviewed by Management Team on a monthly basis. This review seeks to ensure that all relevant matters for communication are identified in a timely manner.

In supporting this work for example, considerable resource has been invested in external help to facilitate appropriate communications around regeneration programmes such as [My Town Nuneaton](#) in support of our Towns Fund grant application, [Transforming Nuneaton](#) and public engagement in the [Be-Nu website](#). A new Sharepoint intranet is currently being constructed to aid employee collaboration in a more informal manner, Local businesses are being engaged through a new social media project; and a business case to enable investment in a new email channel for residents is being formulated.

We are also establishing a Town Centre Partnership for each of our town centres. Six meetings have so far been undertaken with businesses from across all sectors. These meetings discussed the regeneration agenda and provided further details on the Future High Streets Fund and Towns Fund projects. Businesses were also asked for their feedback in relation to the projects, the future of the town centres, how we might better communicate with businesses and what support would be most helpful to support Covid Recovery. The meetings were extremely well received and volunteers for membership of each Town Centre Partnership were obtained.



Governance and culture

Governance

The Council has experienced very little political change until May 2021 when a Conservative administration took overall control. For the previous three years there was no overall control, with labour as the largest Political Group and having half the total number of councillors, forming holding power. In all but a two-year period since 1974 a Labour administration has been in control.

In May 2021, following local elections, the Conservatives hold 24 of the 34 seats available in the borough. This overall control has led to a number of areas being reviewed and refreshed with a new manifesto, fresh ideas and ways of working.

The current Executive is as follows:



Cllr Kris Wilson

Leader and Portfolio Holder
for Business & Regeneration



Cllr Sam Croft

Portfolio Holder for
Finance & Corporate



Cllr Kyle Evans

Portfolio Holder for
Public Services



Cllr Clare Golby

Deputy Leader and Portfolio
Holder for Housing &
Communities



Cllr Julian Gutteridge

Portfolio Holder for
Health & Environment



Cllr Richard Smith
Portfolio Holder Planning
& Regulation

The Council's decision-making is governed by its [Constitution](#) which is made available to Members both in hard copy format and via the Council's website, although it is currently being updated following recent changes that the new Conservative administration has implemented. The Constitution reflects the seven Principles of Public Life and has been expanded to incorporate not only the general protocols related to officers and members, but also outlines the Council's approach to Performance Management and Risk Management.

Decision Making Process

Council

- Sets the budget & Policy Framework
- Agrees the Scheme for members' Allowances
- Appoints the Head of paid service
- Any decisions reserved to Council by Law

Cabinet

(Executive Decisions)

- Cabinet makes most of the decisions.
- Decisions must be within the Budget & Policy Framework

Regulatory Committees

- Appeals
- Licensing
- Planning Applications

Other Committees

- Audit & Standards
- NABCEL Shareholder
- Borough Plan
- Civic Awards
- Employment

Overview & Scrutiny Panels

- Finance & Public Services
- Housing, Environment & Health
- Business, Regeneration & Planning

The Council has recently increased the number of Overview & Scrutiny panels from two to three, with the focus being aligned, in each case, towards two of the six portfolios. [Overview & Scrutiny](#) is member-led and training from the CfGS offered to all members of the panels. The Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules were recently amended to provide for attendance by a Cabinet Member to answer questions from the panel on any topic related to the functions of that panel.

The Council's primary Governance Committee is the [Audit & Standards Committee](#) which oversees all internal and external audit reports; standards investigations; and sub-committee hearings. The Committee sets an annual work programme at the start of each

municipal year focusing upon key themes, as well as standing items such as the annual review of the [Register of Gifts & Hospitality](#); approval of the [Annual Accounts](#); consideration of the Annual Ombudsman Report ([Appendix N](#)); and summaries of internal audits undertaken within the preceding 12 months.

Alongside the Audit & Standards Committee, the Council convenes a Constitution Review Working Party to keep the Constitution under permanent review. Recent items that have been dealt with by the Audit & Standards Committee include the introduction of an Employment Committee; revisions to the [Petitions Scheme](#); changes to the Officer/Member Protocol; the Code of Conduct for Employees ([Appendix K](#)).



The Council also has a [Shareholder Committee](#) for Nuneaton & Bedworth Community Enterprises Limited, the Council's wholly owned delivery body (NABCEL). The Committee discharges the duties of shareholder on behalf of the Council in connection with the matters reserved to them. The agendas and minutes of the Committee and the Board of Directors are published on the Council's website, in accordance with the recommendation from the Committee on Standards in Public Life's 20th Report into Local Government ethics.

At the start of each new municipal year, members are provided with an induction programme of training ([Appendix L](#)) in matters such as Planning and Licensing; the Code of Conduct and Standards generally; as well as training on finance; performance management and internal audit. Members also receive Corporate Governance training addressing matters such as procurement; the Bribery Act; Equalities Act and Diversity; and Safeguarding.

All decisions of the Council are publicly available on the [Your Council](#) pages of the Council's website, including [Executive Decision](#); [Single Member Decisions](#) and [officer decision taken under delegated powers](#). To support transparency, the Council publishes its [Forward Plan](#) at the start of each month. The Forward Plan is also reported to each OSP in case the Panel wishes to undertake pre-scrutiny exercise on any issues noted in the Plan. In addition, the Plan encompasses not only Key Decisions of the Cabinet, but also incorporates all reports that are considered to be exempt items, to give adequate notice to the public and give an opportunity to raise any concerns as to the need to deal with such matters in private session.

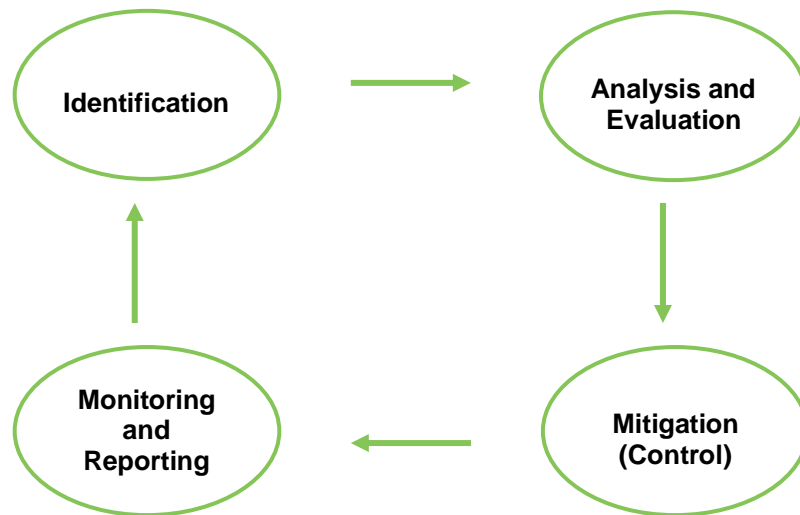
Strategic risk management arrangements

Our Risk Management Policy and Strategy ([Appendix R](#)), details our commitment to maintaining robust risk management and business continuity arrangements that make a positive contribution towards the achievement of the Council's corporate aims and priorities, and maximise the opportunities to achieve our vision.

We recognise the importance of an excellent risk management culture, embraced by all members and employees. To facilitate this, our approach is supportive rather than unduly restrictive, and embedded within our decision-making, planning and management functions. Our aims are;

- To embed risk management into the culture of the Council;
- To adopt an effective and transparent corporate approach to risk management, which also applies to the Council's work with external partners and contractors;
- To work with partners and stakeholders to identify and exploit opportunities that will contribute to corporate aims and priorities;
- To integrate risk management into the operational and management practices of the Council;
- To promote risk awareness throughout the Council and among our contractors and key partners;
- To be responsive to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements, whilst effectively managing the related risks and opportunities;
- To undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of the risk management arrangements to support the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

Our approach can be broadly defined as systematically identifying risks, analysing those risks to understand their likelihood and severity, determining mitigation control measures and regularly monitoring and reviewing both the risk and the mitigation control measures.



We have established a corporate Strategic Risk Register (**Appendix R**) that identifies all cross cutting risks across the Organisation. This is monitored on a monthly basis by our Management Team and reported to the Audit & Standards Committee on a quarterly basis.

In addition, each directorate has an Operational Risk Register, reviewed on a monthly basis by Departmental Management Teams

and reviewed annually by the Corporate Governance Group (CGG).

The CGG comprises of members of the Management Team and relevant Heads of Service, including the Head of Audit and Governance and the Head of Financial Services. Its role is to monitor and review all risk issues (including financial) and escalate any matters that require attention.

To support our risk management approach, we also have the Health and Safety Co-ordinators Group (HASCOG). Meeting on a quarterly basis, the Group ensures that maximum oversight is given to health and safety matters to safeguard our employees, residents, tenants and other stakeholders. Performance against health and safety measures are included within the Strategic Performance report.

Staff engagement mechanisms and internal communications

Our staff are our best assets, and ensuring effective engagement and communication is key to the success of our organisation.

As referenced in Section 2 of this Statement, communication has been identified by employees as fundamentally important. We undertake an annual Employee Survey, the results of which are reviewed by the Management Team. An action plan to address key issues is developed and communicated to all staff.

We also run an Employee Suggestion Scheme. This Scheme is aimed at providing a mechanism by which any member of staff can raise an idea or initiative directly with Management Team. Suggestions are welcomed in relation to improved customer

experience, efficiency of the organisation, income generation suggestions and savings. The suggestion is discussed and if adopted, a cash award of either **£25** or **£50** is awarded.

An example of a recent successful suggestion is below;

I didn't have time to suggest this via this route beforehand, due to the urgency, but I did suggest the idea of the market stall for giving out PCR tests for surge testing in a meeting with Simone. This idea was taken up and has been implemented on both Wednesday and Saturday market days during the duration of the surge testing period. Wednesday 19th May was the first day of the market stalls and over 900 tests had been given out before 12 noon.

During the first lockdown, in recognition that some members of staff had expressed concerns around isolation, a Feel Good Friday newsletter was introduced. This was a lighthearted communication, giving details on good news stories, a Friday quiz and helpful tips to support good mental and physical health. This newsletter proved extremely popular and the Friday quiz has been incorporated into the re-launched Employee Bulletin.

The monthly Employee Bulletin replaced the Management Team Bulletin, in recognition that an Employee Bulletin was seen as more inclusive. The Bulletin gives information in relation to the Council's activities over the previous month and its plans for the future, promotes the Employee Suggestion Scheme, as well as good news stories that celebrate our staff and their achievements.

The Leader of the Council has fully embraced the importance of communications with our employees and has commenced a quarterly letter to staff the aim of which is to give recognition to staff and to provide information from the political leadership.

Regular updates are provided to all staff, directly from our Human Resources Team. These updates provide information on such matters as staff benefits, staff initiatives such as mental health support, as well as policy and procedural updates. All staff are copied into press releases as they are issued to ensure timely communication of matters. We also took part in Social Care and Frontline Workers Day in July of this year, promoting the work of our own staff and showing our appreciation of them.

Each year, we hold a Staff Celebration week. In the run up to Christmas, we host daily events and competitions such as the Best Christmas Joke, Best Christmas Jumper, a Staff Bake-Off and Christmas Carols in the reception area of the Town Hall. The culmination of the week is the presentation of the Staff Achievement Awards. The categories are aligned with our values and for 2020, to reflect the pandemic, some categories were slightly amended;

- Outstanding Customer Service
- Going the Xtra Mile
- Sunshine Award
- COVID Keep Calm and Carry On
- Pandemic Hero
- Pandemic Team of the Year

Nominations are received from members of staff from across the Organisation and judged by the Management Team. There is an additional category that is both nominated by and voted upon, by

our members of staff. This is the extremely popular **SPOTY** (Staff Personality of the Year). In normal times, we take great care to ensure that this is an informal presentation ceremony which takes place in the Council Chamber attended by both the Leader of the Council and the Mayor.

In 2020, due to restrictions, video messages were recorded by the Directors, the Leader of the Council and the Mayor. The Executive Directors hosted a virtual presentation which was recorded. This, together with the other messages, were assembled into one [video](#) – with the obligatory outtakes that were very much appreciated by our staff.



Financial planning and management

We have routinely demonstrated robust and prudent management of our finances and have consistently been given unqualified external audit opinions on our accounts. In relation to value for money (VFM), the external auditors are satisfied that the Council had proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources.

As for all Councils, the past year has been particularly challenging. Nevertheless, we have maintained a sustainable financial position. The last audit opinion and VFM conclusion was presented to our Audit & Standards Committee on 16th March 2021 as part of the Audit Findings Report presented by Grant Thornton LLP (**Appendix S**).

Council Tax and Budget

For 2021/22, the Council set a Council Tax levy of **£243.66** for its element of the tax. This was an increase of £5 or **2.1%**.

The net portfolio service budgets for the General Fund are **£17,342,270** for 2021/22. This is a decrease of £1,228,760 (6.6%) from the restated prior year budget (Covid-19 implications), but an increase of £2,002,240 from the original 2020/21 budget. This is because the impact of Covid-19 remains a significant issue as we progress through the recovery phase of the pandemic.

To support the maintenance of a sustainable position, we have achieved savings of more than **£3 million** over the past 2 years.

Major savings including in the total savings are:

2021/22	£'000
Conversion of vacant Council House offices as temporary accommodation to mitigate subsidy losses (<i>remaining saving from previous part year saving included</i>)	331
Review of historic underspends	284
Additional rental income on property portfolios	188
Increased take up of green waste service	100
Extending asset lives of vehicles reducing requirement for capital investment	100

2020/21	£'000
Opening of Council House as temporary accommodation to mitigate subsidy loss part year saving)	400
Increased take up on Green Waste	328
Utilisation of alternative properties for temporary accommodation purposes	281
New Grounds Maintenance contract	100
Restructure of Civic Hall – staffing savings	55

Revenue Reserves

General Fund Revenue Reserves are set at **£12.15m** as at 1st April 2020. The table below compares with the other Warwickshire Districts. These values include unallocated General Fund Balances and the minimum working balances for each Council.

[It should be noted that reserves as at 1st April 2021 have not been included in the analysis due to the inclusion of the Section 31 grants in relation to NNDR Covid-19 losses which are to be temporarily held within General Fund reserves pending the release of losses from the collection fund. Therefore, as these amounts are material the inclusion of such would create a distorted picture of the financial position of the councils].

	01 April 2019	2019/20		01 April 2020	2020/21	
	GF Total Reserves	GF Budgeted Net Revenue Expenditure (i.e. before funding)		GF Total Reserves	GF Budgeted Net Revenue Expenditure (i.e. before funding)	
	£000	£000		£000	£000	
Nuneaton & Bedworth BC	10,654	15,847	67%	12,150	16,336	74%
North Warwickshire BC	9,489	8,815	108%	9,848	8,313	118%
Rugby BC	10,197	16,151	63%	12,004	16,579	72%
Stratford upon Avon DC	15,886	17,642	90%	14,657	20,821	70%
Warwick DC	20,813	18,259	114%	23,073	17,301	133%

The reserves have been increased to reflect the identified financial risks.

The Housing Revenue Account also has a minimum working balance and holds Earmarked Reserves to manage risk, either from changes in the Housing Act, capital investment financing (e.g. reduced receipts from Right to Buy Sales or urgent action from health & safety requirements).

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The key elements of our Medium Term Financial Strategy are:

- Commerciality
- Building Shared Services
- Lean Service Reviews
- Prudent treasury and debt management
- Investment in business technology

The latest update was provided as part of the [Annual Budget Report](#) as submitted to Council on 15th February 2021.

Given the recent change in political administration, we are currently reviewing our Strategy.

As part of the existing strategy, we have identified and are actively managing the following key financial risks:

Risk	Mitigation/ Actions
Future income for key income generating services as we proceed through the Covid-19 recovery phase and the uncertainty of whether these will return to pre-pandemic levels (i.e. car parking, market rents, planning fees)	Regular budget monitoring and forecasting to inform MTFS/ resources forecast.
Inflation risk on key contracts and services (e.g. recycling, grounds maintenance, insurance)	Review of inflation forecasts from Bank of England/ Treasury Advisors to update budget monitoring, resources forecast and MTFS
Increases in key contract costs at point of retendering	Liaison with procurement section in advance of tendering requirement to ensure access to frameworks available to ensure value for money
Increased demand for services (e.g. homelessness) as a result of external influences	Ensuring access to appropriate accommodation available (e.g. conversions of existing assets, use of general purpose stock, hostels etc) to reduce subsidy losses
<p>NDR – Business Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impact of ‘reset’ of NDR Business Rates retention baselines; ● Business failure resulting in loss of NNDR income to the Council; ● Increased appeals from businesses increasing the provision for appeals and thereby reducing growth income; ● Reduced collection rates due to Covid-19. 	<p>Engage with LG Futures to provide future forecasting of NDR utilising range of assumptions. Regular monitoring of collection fund collection rates and arrears, taking appropriate action through approved channels for recovery Use of experts (Analyse Local) to provide detailed appeals information and likely provision requirement using their national expertise A specific Earmarked Reserve is held to smooth volatility in Business Rates and likely reset implications. Use data to inform MTFS resource forecasting</p>
<p>Council Tax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased take up of Local Council Tax Support Scheme; ● Reduced collection rates due to Covid-19. 	<p>Regular monitoring of collection fund collection rates and arrears, taking appropriate action through approved channels for recovery Use data to inform MTFS resource forecasting</p>
Removal or redesign of New Homes Bonus scheme.	<p>Historically used to fund capital investment rather than committing to ongoing, long term, revenue expenditure. MTFS has assumed only known legacy payments in modelling and no new/ redesigned scheme income</p>
Impact of Brexit and supply chain	Regular budget monitoring and feedback from procurement section into Corporate Governance Group of known issues
Revenue impact of regeneration projects	Financial modelling has been done internally and also by external consultants on implications. Due to internal resource pressures approval has been given for a permanent post with Financial Services for a Project Financial Business Partner to add capacity and robustness to our approach.

Revenue Budget Monitoring

Budget monitoring is carried out in a timely fashion through a business partnering model. Reporting is made each month to the Management Team and the Leadership Board. Formal updates are provided to the Cabinet, with formal quarterly reports presented to Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

We have a good record of spending within budget. Currently, General Fund revenue expenditure is showing a small forecast underspend compared to a budget of (£31k) at the end of the first quarter. In-year budget performance is monitored on a monthly basis by the Council's officer level, Senior Management Team. Overspends are addressed and remedial action taken, while underspends are reallocated where appropriate or held to contribute to reserves.

Capital Programme

The Capital Programme for 2020/21 is **£15.6m** and for 2021/22 **£38.6m**. In addition, **£13m** has been allocated by Central Government from the Towns Fund. Major priorities include:

- Regeneration projects in Nuneaton Town Centre;
- The Transforming Bedworth Programme;
- The Leisure Strategy and the redevelopment of Bedworth Leisure Centre;
- Other Major Repairs;
- Sub-Regional Materials Recycling Facility.

The Council also has significant housing responsibilities with a Housing Revenue Account with an annual turnover **£26.0m** and approximately 5,800 dwellings. The Capital Programme for 2020/21 is **£17.2m** and for 2021/22 is **£25.1m**, with significant investment proposed for innovative new build schemes using modern methods of construction. For 2021/22 the housing rents have been increased.

Capital monitoring is presented to the Council's Management Team through exception reporting on a monthly basis. In addition, monitoring is undertaken by the officer led Corporate Asset Management Team. Formal reports are presented to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. Required revisions to the Capital Programme are recommended to Full Council for approval via the Cabinet.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Enterprises Ltd (NABCEL)

NABCEL is the Council's trading arm established in 2013 as part of the Council's long term strategy to become self-financing and generate additional income that the Council could use to protect priority services. It provides a budgeted **£529k** income for the financial year 2021/22. The business streams include:-

- rental of private rented properties at full market rent, managing a portfolio of properties;
- management of two Bed and Breakfast establishments, providing lease income and secondary savings via the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless households at a less than market rate;

- management of electrical servicing and maintenance to our social housing stock;
- gas servicing to our social housing stock;
- cleaning services, including void property clearance and valeting for our social housing stock.

Annual dividend payments are received in addition to the budgeted income, the level of which is set by the NABCEL Board following receipt of final accounts.

Capacity and External Focus

In 2017, we undertook a benchmarking exercise with LG Futures, to compare our Fees and Charges and understand where amendments should be made to support our revenue income. Subsequently, the levels of fees and charges were adjusted where appropriate and assisted in the contribution to a balanced budget and long term financial stability.



Given the significant increase in the level of regeneration initiatives and associated funding, the Council took the decision to fund a Special Projects Officer within the Finance team. This officer will have responsibility for supporting the production of business cases and analysing financial viability, technical accounting implications and cash flow requirements.

Financial Decision Making

Decision making on financial issues is made via full Council, Cabinet, and delegated authority at member level, as described within our Constitution. To further support these arrangements, the Leadership Board receives financial information on a monthly basis where it can be discussed in a slightly less formal setting. This process allows for full discussion of strategic and financial issues/options in advance of formal decision making.

Capacity for improvement

Covid-19 has and continues to present challenges for us. However, those challenges have provided great opportunities for innovation and amended working practices.

We have recorded and published our public meetings on [YouTube](#) for a number of years, until March 2020, when the first lockdown occurred. With the virtual meetings regulations in place, we began livestreaming meetings to the general public. The livestreaming of meetings saw public participation increase significantly, and notably, an increase in the younger age bracket. Prior to the pandemic, our meetings were viewed via recordings uploaded to our YouTube channel. For the year May 2019 to May 2020, these videos had **7,800** views. For the year May 2020 to May 2021, our livestreaming events attracted **41,900** viewers, an increase of more than **400%**.

Statistic	2019-2020	2020-2021
Highest video view	Extraordinary meeting on 10 June 2019 attracted the highest view of 813 (10.5%)	Full council meeting on 16 September 2020 attracted the highest view of 22,398 (53.4%)
Largest viewer age range	45-54 years attracted 61.9% of views	25-34 years attracted 36% of views
Most popular device type	Mobile phone attracted 46.7% of viewers	Mobile phone attracted 64.5% of viewers

We have therefore continued to livestream after the regulations were repealed and are currently investigating a technology refresh. This will facilitate more robust arrangements for livestreaming and to build in flexibility and cater for the possibility of hybrid meetings, should the law be changed at some point in the near future.

Like many organisations, prior to the pandemic we had ambitions to migrate customer contact away from an expensive face-to-face channel, to digital, self-service and phone contact. The restrictions on customer mobility during lockdown resulted in a dramatic shift in customer contact away from face-to-face channels to self-serve methods including phone and digital, accelerating the channel shift trend. As restrictions have lifted, we have sought to maintain this trend, and customers are continuing to access services predominantly by digital and telephone. We have established plans to rebalance our resource utilisation to the channels that customers are now demanding. In practice this has meant maintaining face-to-face access for those customers with specific vulnerabilities, complex enquiries, or those otherwise in need of face-to-face contact. This is provided through an appointment system, with all other customers encouraged to self-serve. Going forward we will continue to regularly evaluate customer demand and allocate its resources based on this.



Having already implemented agile working in 2017, we were largely familiar with the use of video calling via Skype for Business. That being said, the move to predominantly remote working forced the increased use of video meetings, which rapidly increased the confidence and competence of both staff and members. The outcome of this move has brought increased flexibility and therefore productivity. In addition, less travel has been required to attend meetings with the resultant effect of reduced carbon emissions and a reduction in car mileage payments from

£89,000 during 2019/20 to
£43,000 during 2020/21.

This trend is continuing during the current financial year.



Car Mileage

106% cost reduction
2019/20 - 2020/21

Our partnership working has also been positively impacted by remote working. It has been noticeable that a greater number of partners from a greater number of organisations have been able to attend as the requirement for travel and therefore the time taken for this, has been removed. All partners anticipate that it will be beneficial to largely continue on in this manner in the future.

Prior to the pandemic, we regularly experienced staffing difficulties in relation to the cleaning of our corporate properties, particularly the Town Hall. Given the skeleton staff arrangements in place during lockdown, cleaning was undertaken at any point during the day. This meant that cleaning staff had the flexibility in terms of the times during the day that they undertook their duties, with the

resultant effect that they were able to cover for sickness and annual leave absence, removing the requirement to source agency staff, and therefore reducing agency spend. As offices have become slightly more populated, it has identified that carrying out cleaning duties during the day is of no detriment to the operations of office-based staff. As such, this arrangement has now become permanent.

Before the pandemic, our Independent Living (previously known as Sheltered Housing) residents were clear in their request for daily face-to-face checks. During the first lockdown, we amended our approach to welfare contact in order to reduce physical interaction and help safeguard our residents. Staff undertook daily phone calls instead of physical visits. Following the lockdown of restrictions, a high proportion of residents have indicated that their preferred method of welfare contact is via telephone as it provides them with more flexibility whilst remaining safe in the knowledge that should they require assistance, it will be provided in a timely manner. In recognition of this, our procedures are currently being amended to include the telephone contact request.

Organisational development

Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council has always recognised the value of our employees. We offer a wide range of staff benefits that include a Flexible Working Policy ([Appendix M](#)) and Agile Working Policy ([Appendix I](#)), both with generous bandwidths, enhanced annual leave entitlement, Bupa cashback scheme and a variety of home and leisure benefits via our partner [Vivup Benefits](#). We have a low gender pay gap at **4.5%** and almost 40% of our top 5% earners are female.

Our Training and Development Policy ([Appendix O](#)) emphasises the Council's commitment to the investment of time and financial resources to support the learning and development of its employees, thus enabling them to make a positive contribution to the effectiveness of the Council's services and develop their full potential in employment.

Our approach is defined within the following main areas:

Mandatory Training	for all employees, including Equality & Diversity, Safeguarding and GDPR.
Post Entry Training	for managers, including Management & Leadership, Performance Management and Corporate Governance
E-Learning	for all employees with time off for study and examinations.
Other	for all employees via our Delta platform. Covering work related subjects and accessible during normal working hours.
	for all employees. This includes both in-house and external training courses, conferences and seminars.

In addition, we are members of the [West Midlands Coaching Pool](#). All employees are able to access coaching and mentoring services to assist them both for their current roles and for any career development aspirations.

Our employee welfare has long been a priority. Reviews of our sickness absence data ([Appendix P](#)) highlighted a trend of increasing absences due to mental health issues. We are currently working towards Foundation Level of the [Thrive at Work](#) initiative, and during 2020 and 2021, we have undertaken a number of health and well-being related surveys with our workforce ([Appendix Q](#)). Led by the West Midlands Combined Authority, the Programme shows a commitment to the health and wellbeing of employees. By working towards accreditation, we will develop and build on the criteria needed to maximise the potential of our employees and ensure better results with the benefits of a healthier workforce. This is achieved by reduced sickness absence, improved retention and more resilience. All managers have undertaken stress awareness training, improving their ability to offer support at the earliest opportunity. Following Covid-19, further support measures have been introduced. These include the [Employee Assistance Programme](#). This service is free to all employees and offers confidential and impartial assistance to help in times of need, including a 24/7, 365 days a year help line, manned by trained professionals. There are also a wide range of resources available on the online portal, including self-help workbooks on various topics such as debt advice and bereavement. We have also established an Employee Support Group (ESG), with specially trained members of staff able to offer support, guidance and signposting. This is a confidential group that employees are able to contact on a self-referral basis.



616

employees on the payroll (497.6 FTE)

Our last formal staff survey was undertaken prior to the pandemic in November 2019. The responses were largely positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction in most areas. However, the requirement to improve communications further was an area that stood out for action. The Management Team instigated the following;

- A regular dedicated Employee Bulletin to support improved communications;
- A monthly Management Team Bulletin to support improved communications and greater visibility of the Management Team;
- All press releases are shared via email with all employees;
- A new intranet, which is currently under development to provide a mechanism for a more informal approach to communications.

Staff Survey 2019

79%

satisfied with their job role

82%

indicated that they are kept informed of developments (72% for 2018)

91%

feel that they are able to put forward ideas and opinions

80%

believe that their working environment is safe, happy and productive

79-87%

satisfied with their Line Manager's communication, support, decision making, approachability, ability to listen and trust

Work-Life Balance and Future Work Survey 2021

70%

of respondents would recommend us as an employer

59.8%

said they had a good work-life balance

69.2%

said the ability to work agilely was a benefit of working for the Council

73.5%

said flexible working hours was a benefit of working for the Council

94% of employees are clear about their role in relation to meeting the Corporate Values

Digital and data

We undertook a major review of our IT infrastructure in 2015, replacing aging and static technology with solutions that promoted a more agile way of working. Skype for Business replaced an old PBX solution for telephony, wi-fi was installed in Council offices and end user devices were replaced with laptops and tablets. This enabled users to work from anywhere seamlessly. A new data centre infrastructure was implemented, with primary and secondary sites located in separate Council buildings, and a new MPLS network was established, providing a more resilient environment and an improved back up and disaster recovery solution.

Homeworking was encouraged and approximately **25%** of connections were typically from home. This enabled us to be more prepared than we realised for the transition to **97%+** homeworking experienced from March 2020.

The current infrastructure is now approaching end of life and a review of what our needs are for now and for the future have led us to adopt a strategy to migrate our on-premises infrastructure to the cloud via Microsoft Azure and to continue to optimise our use of Cloud technology wherever possible. The new infrastructure will form the foundation of our Cloud First Strategy and enable the IT Team to better support the organisation in implementing improved ways of working.

A recent success has been the implementation of a fully electronic solution for our Waste Management Team, in particular the electronic/GPS real time tracking of collection crews and their progress. Further work is planned to engage all service areas in this programme.

The following projects are currently underway:

- **Azure Migration** - we moved to M365 during 2020 and are currently in the process of building an Azure Landing Zone and associated connectivity in preparation for the migration of our on-premises servers into Azure.
- **Azure Virtual Desktop** - we are creating an Azure Virtual Desktop to deliver applications to end users, which will replace our current Citrix environment.
- **Migration of telephony from Skype for Business to Teams** - we currently have both Skype for Business and Teams in use in Island mode, with telephony being provided via Skype, with Teams being used for meetings and chat. We are currently completing the design that will enable us to migrate our telephony from Skype for Business to Teams. This will include integration with our contact centre solution used by our Customer Services Team.
- **WAN Network reconfiguration** - in order to facilitate better connectivity to Azure we have engaged with Virgin Media Business to reconfigure our MPLS network to provide an SD-WAN solution.
- **Internet and firewall provision** - the new infrastructure allows us to reconfigure and refresh our internet and firewall provision – this will form part of the new SD-WAN deployment.

Further projects that are currently underway:

- **Sharepoint deployment** - work is currently in progress to implement SharePoint, to provide both a corporate Intranet solution and to enable the migration of documents and records from network drives into SharePoint. This will also provide a new communication tool in the form of a staff intranet, enabling the organisation to take an informal approach to communications.
- **Replacement end user devices** - evaluation is currently underway to identify a suitable model to replace aging end user devices. A program to build and roll out the new devices once procured is being planned.
- **Digital and channel shift** - improvements to remove waste and paper from processes across the organisation has been taking place over a number of years, primarily utilising our CRM and forms/workflow system. A large % of all transactions now occur digitally and many processes are end to end.

Equality and diversity – identifying and addressing inequalities

Our borough has a diverse population that experiences equality/inequality issues on many levels that go beyond the Protected Characteristics contained within legislation. As discussed in more detail within the Introduction to Nuneaton and Bedworth, our socio-economic profile is less prosperous than the rest of Warwickshire. This means that our residents face challenges around health, income, employment and housing and the associated physical environment.

We both author and consider a number of strategic documents and information that inform our approach to identifying and addressing inequalities. These documents and information include;

- [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#);
- [Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment](#);
- Deprivation Indices;
- Economic Data;
- [Warwickshire Observatory](#) information, including socio-economic data.

Our priorities are reflected within the Delivering our Future Corporate Plan and further strengthened within the draft Building a Better Borough Corporate Plan. Listed below are some examples of our priorities and delivery arrangements aimed at tackling these issues:

Financial exclusion is a real and enduring problem for many of our residents. A Financial Inclusion Partnership and Strategy was launched in 2010, aiming to bring together all councils from across the County to consider ways in which affected residents could be supported to become financially included. A key aim of the presiding Corporate Plan at that time was to develop and implement a Financial Inclusion Strategy to tackle the increasing need across the area. To this end, a Nuneaton and Bedworth Financial Inclusion Strategy (**Appendix X**) was adopted in 2015. A number of successful initiatives have been instigated as a result of this Strategy, including, grant funding, which is made to [Bedworth, Rugby and Nuneaton Citizens Advice Bureau](#) (BRANCAB), to provide debt advice tailored to our residents' needs. BRANCAB has recently located their Nuneaton offices into the Town Hall to support greater ease of referral and access for residents.

Homelessness is a significant issue for our borough. The combination of low incomes, high benefit dependency and a low wage economy, coupled with a shortage of affordable housing has seen homelessness rise to unprecedented levels. It is an issue recognised within our Strategic Risk Register (**Appendix R**) and which places an extreme burden upon our finances. To deal with this, the Council has an Affordable Housing SPD within the Borough Plan detailing the percentage of affordable housing to be delivered and detailing Section 106 arrangements. We have also previously gifted Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land to our Registered Provider partners to enable the delivery of increased levels of affordable housing. Following the introduction of self-financing for the HRA in 2012, we prioritised the development and delivery of new social housing stock and adopted a Development and Acquisitions Strategy (**Appendix Y**).

We achieved Investment Partner Status with [Homes England](#) and have so far delivered **75** new build units supported by more than **£2 million** of funding from Homes England, along with **43** units acquired from the open market utilising One for One Right to Buy receipts. We have established a development programme with funding built into the HRA Business Plan to deliver this.



Poor educational attainment is a key factor that contributes to residents' ability to both obtain employment and further, obtain well paid employment. Identified as part of the Transforming Nuneaton Programme and working with Warwickshire County Council, the Nuneaton Education Strategy ([Appendix T](#)) is the first place-based Strategy aimed at improving education prospects and aspirations

for young people of Nuneaton and therefore, ultimately, their life chances. Using the Bradford Education Covenant as a model, the Strategy is focused upon helping schools and teachers to raise standards, support parents to get ready for school, work and life, and to work with businesses and colleges to increase career options and to give young people valuable, relevant work experience.

We recognise the positive influence our procurement choices can make upon our local economy, and therefore bring money into the local supply chain, ultimately supporting local businesses to prosper, offer local employment, and to grow. We formulated our [award winning Think Local First](#) approach which boosts the local economy and presents opportunities particularly for local Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME's). **88.7%** of our spend in Nuneaton and Bedworth is with SME's and we aim to pay them within 10 working days, to support cash flow.

In addition, we have created and are currently trialling a set of social value KPI's within the major contract for the new hotel in Abbey Street – part of the Transforming Nuneaton Programme, supported by Future High Streets Fund funding, with a view to standardising these across the Council's portfolio. The social value KPI's cover three diverse supply chain KPI's, five employment KPI's and other social value outcomes discussed in the latest PPN 06/20 guidance. For this trial contract, they include that a minimum of **15%** of the value of the Contract must be spent with businesses within the Council's administrative boundary. This will allow us to report in a standardised format across the Council's portfolio for its major contracts, putting procurement, supply chain relationships and social outcomes key to operational delivery.

Programme Management & Transformation

We have an evolving but robust approach to Programme Management and Transformation - robust as our systems and approach have been honed, as we have progressed with the Transforming Nuneaton Programme, and evolving as the number of projects relating to regeneration have significantly increased within a very short space of time.

In relation to physical regeneration projects, the Transforming Nuneaton Programme Board was established. Comprising of senior officers from Warwickshire County Council, CWLEP and ourselves, the Board meets on a six weekly basis. It is the key mechanism by which the Programme is driven forward to deliver the stated outcomes and benefits. Reports are received in relation to progress, risk, finance and capacity, with the Board resolving any strategic or directional issues that need the agreement of senior stakeholders, to ensure the continued progress of the Programme.

Following the successful bids to the Future High Streets Fund and the Towns Fund, a further 13 projects are being undertaken. As these projects directly relate to the Regeneration Programme, they have been rolled into the remit of the existing Programme Board.

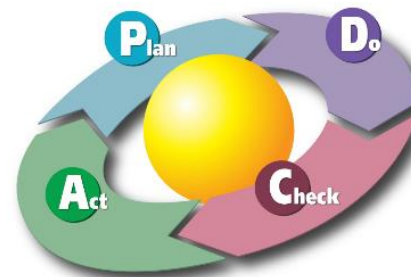
In addition to the Programme Board, a [Town Deal Board](#) was established in January 2020, as a requirement of the Towns Fund initiative. Comprising of seventeen members from across our public, private and third sector partners, the Board oversaw the development of the Town Investment Plan and analysing and prioritising the projects that were chosen. As we move forward into delivery phase, the Board receive regular reports in relation to progress, risk and finance, providing direction and technical and general support to resolve any issues that may occur.

To increase capacity, we have strong relationships with consultants to support our technical requirements, in May 2020, we engaged Queensberry as our Development Partner, and we have recently appointed a dedicated Programme Manager.

Transformation projects are undertaken based upon data and other relevant evidence. This applies to both the physical regeneration of our borough and to the Council as an organisation.

As already discussed, significant levels of consultation and data gathering relating to social, economic and infrastructure issues are undertaken. This informs the direction of the transformation of the borough.

In relation to us as an organisation, the same principles are applied. Since 2010, we have undertaken a number of Lean System reviews. These reviews cross cut teams and directorates, and have an initial focus upon evidence gathering to identify how systems operate, what the level of demand is and from where and finally, what actions are taken that add no value to the service. Once this data is gathered and analysed, 'experiments' are devised, that is the piloting of an often radically different approach that seeks to improve the customer experience and improve efficiency.



Many services have been through the 'Lean' process, and those that have, continue to apply the approach, seeking continual improvement. An example of this is given in more detail at page 41 of this document, particularly as it relates to the move to a Cloud Based approach for our IT infrastructure.

Key Programmes and Projects

Programme	Projects
Transforming Nuneaton (including FHSF & TF)	Abbey Street
	Vicarage Street
	Bridge to Living
	Flood Alleviation Measures
	Re-Imagining Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery
	Digital Evolution
	George Eliot Visitor Centre
	Digital Skills & Innovation Centre
	The Saints
	Weddington Road Cycle Link
	Visiting Nuneaton: Changing Perspectives
	Wheat Street Junction
	Corporation Street / Queens Road Junction
	E-Mobility Hub

Programme	Projects
Housing Development & Acquisition	Vale View
	Byford Court
	Independent Living Scheme Review
	Upper Abbey Street regeneration viability
	ModPods LLP
Corporate Transformation	Borough Plan Review
	Corporate Plan Review (Building a Better Borough)
	Corporate Identity Refresh
	Values Review
	Communications and Marketing Strategy
IT Infrastructure	Sharepoint
	Azure migration
	Virtual Desktop Creation
	Telephony Migration
	WAN Network Reconfiguration

Community Capacity – how the Council listens, empowers and co-designs with residents and communities, including the voluntary sector

We are committed to listening to and supporting our communities in Nuneaton and Bedworth such that they feel able to make positive choices. We understand the importance of having the right type of structures across our communities to ensure we engage them in ways that work for them and help them. The aim is to ensure we accurately understand the needs and challenges of all our communities, in particular supporting some of our most vulnerable communities to ensure they are as resilient and empowered, which is critically important.

As we embark on some significant regeneration of our town centres we have placed communities at the heart of this. The well-established relationship we have with our third sector infrastructure body Warwickshire Community & Voluntary Action (WCAVA) has enabled us to develop an array of mechanisms to regularly talk to community and voluntary organisations. This has helped us to co-design services, projects and interventions in a very organic way having invested in these relationships over many years. This includes designing and providing Homework Hubs, community phlebotomy services, and supporting the work of our local food banks.



The pandemic has tested the strength of our partnerships with the voluntary sector and this in many ways has empowered so many organisations who have come forward to assist our residents.

Our approach continues to be simple but dynamic by regularly informing and engaging residents and groups so that they are empowered to deal with any challenges they face.

Raising aspirations, particularly amongst younger residents, continues to be critically important to help change the trajectory of areas of poverty in the borough. We are working on several fronts with partners in the public, private and community sectors to improve community capacity in these key areas. Our aim is to reduce educational inequalities which have lasting impacts into adulthood. This Programme is in its early stages but is making some great progress as we embed interventions in community settings across the Borough.

As we strive to build safer and stronger communities this will always be built around well-developed relationships with all our partners and critically our communities, who are helping to shape and design the interventions and services that impact their daily lives.

Sharing of successful practice

This section provides two case study examples of practice that the Council thinks will be of help to the sector:

Study One: Think Local First (TLF)

Study Two: Nuneaton & Bedworth Community Enterprise Ltd (NABCEL)

Case Study One

Date: 31/08/2021

Local authority: Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC)

Submitted by: Matthew Wallbank

Case study title: Think Local First (TLF)

Small-to-Medium Enterprises (SME's)

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

Case study synopsis (100 words):

The Council launched a 'Think Local First' (TLF) campaign in 2017. Following close work with the FSB, the Council implemented policies and strategies to encourage the use of SME's and local businesses. The campaign highlighted the Council's ambition whilst also endeavoring to raise awareness amongst other suppliers and businesses to follow suit. The campaign was recognised and awarded at the [2017 FSB Local Authority Awards](#) and in 2019, NBBC was later awarded Best Procurement Policy at the annual [Local Small Business Friendly Awards 2019](#).

The challenge:

Four main challenges are listed below.

- Obtaining buy-in from officers and to change the mindset across the Council to 'Think Local First' and prioritise invoice payments.
- The procurement process itself regarding legislative obligations to publicly advertise contractual opportunities nationally or across the EU which can put suppliers off, particularly SME's.
- The Council is required to undertake a high level of due diligence during the evaluation process resulting in complex and comprehensive amounts of paperwork. Suppliers view the process

as time consuming, onerous and costly.

- General knowledge of the procurement process, paperwork required and obligations of the Council when undertaking a procurement process.

Despite the four main challenges above, NBBC identified huge opportunities by using local businesses and SME's, which has become more apparent to many other Local Authorities nationally. A study published by the FSB, following research undertaken by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, stated public procurement could be used as a lever to tackle economic and social challenges. NBBC recognised this and believes the support it can and has provided to the local economy is of critical importance. In addition, the FSB identified in July 2013 that for every £1 spent with a small or medium-sized business, 63p was re-spent in the local area compared to 40p in every £1 spent with a larger business.

The solution:

Strategy

The Council implemented practices within its [Procurement Strategy](#), [Contract Procedure Rules](#) and [Procurement Toolkit](#) to support the TLF campaign. These key strategic documents present officers with Policy guidance to 'Think Local First'. The use of standardised documentation and technology, particularly in relation to access to opportunities and the payment process, has helped reduce barriers for businesses and achieved good outcomes (see data tables below).

This is supported by marketing campaigns and face-to-face buyer events (subject to Covid-19) all with a view of encouraging local suppliers and SME's, to become a supplier to the Council. The Council last held a buyer event in November 2019, split into two sessions:

1. Session one for existing suppliers to cover corporate governance updates
2. Session two for new suppliers to provide an opportunity to meet officers and to understand how they could work with the Council in the future.

As part of the Council's ongoing monitoring, the Council frequently reports SME and Local Spend data internally. Please see two tables below providing a snapshot of NBBC's spend and invoicing performance.

Data

Data available from 2019 provided below (Table 1), shows the percentage of spend with SME's within the local area on an upward trend. Furthermore, the Council's continuous e-invoicing improvement, [recognised by the LGA](#), emphasises its continuous improvement reinforced by performance achieved over the last 6 years (table 2).

Table 1

Description	19/20 FY	20/21 FY	21/22 FY (Q1 only)
% of spend in Region*	58.10%	52.83%	46.21%
% of spend in Region* with SME's	51.28%	62.90%	67.32%
% of spend in Local Area** with SME's	81.91%	88.77%	87.82%

Whilst we only have reports from April 2019 onwards, the Council routinely undertakes quarterly analysis and KPI monitoring. As a result, we have provided a Q1 data in the current financial year accounting period.

Please note, the data above appears different to the report provided separately. The report provided separates out the Borough from Warwickshire and West Midlands whereas the above data (Region data) combines the Borough, Warwickshire and the West Midlands.*

Table 2

Financial Year Period	% of invoices paid in 30 days	% of SME payments within 10 days
2015/2016 FY	88.31%	<i>No data available</i>
2016/2017 FY	94.27%	<i>No data available</i>
2017/2018 FY	95.00%	<i>No data available</i>
2018/2019 FY	97.09%	48.26%
2019/2020 FY	96.92%	54.50%
<u>2020/2021 FY</u>	<u>98.16%</u>	<u>74.40%</u>

Please also see attached report for the 2020/2021 financial accounting period. Please note, sections one to three have been removed.



Working closely with Strategic Supply Chain Partners

The Council, where possible, also looks to work with its strategic supply chain partners to use local suppliers and SME's within their supply chain. For instance, following discussions with Bradfords Building Supplies (the Council's building merchants), Bradfords onboarded a local timber supplier who they use to supply NBBC and neighboring authorities with timber products. Whilst we do not have the data available or in a format we are able to provide in the case study, this is a further step NBBC has taken to encourage suppliers and it's supply chain to 'Think Local First'.

The impact (including cost savings/income generated if applicable):

Whilst there is no direct financial implication for the Council, it is worth noting as highlighted by the FSB in July 2013, for every £1 spent with a small or medium-sized business, 63p was re-spent in the local area. Using NBBC's local SME spend data, that would suggest the following:

	Local** SME Spend	Amount re-spent in Local** area
2019/2020 FY	£3,967,601.13	£2,499,588.71
2020/2021 FY	£5,049,611.28	£3,181,255.11

Currently the Council has data for its own spend. However, the Council is taking this a step further. As part of the Council's Transforming Nuneaton Programme, we recognise we will require a combination of tier 1 and tier 2 contractors to undertake works. NBBC has recently implemented within a procurement exercise a set of supply chain KPI's related to the contractor's sub-contracted spend. The KPI's are set out below and will allow the Council to monitor spend throughout the supply chain in support of it's Think Local First campaign.

- Target 1: Number of opportunities awarded to SME's.
Performance Measure: % of total outsourced/contracted spend to SME's. KPI 75%.
- Target 2: Value of opportunities awarded to local supply chain operators. Performance Measure: Value (£) of total outsourced/contracted spend to local supply chain operators (Local = Nuneaton & Bedworth).
KPI 12.50% of contract value.

- Target 3: Value of opportunities awarded to local supply chain operators. Performance Measure: Value (£) of total outsourced/contracted spend to sub-region supply chain operators (Sub-region = Warwickshire & West Midlands). KPI 27.50% of contract value.

How is the new approach being sustained?

- Continuous Policy document review.
- Ongoing monitoring and data analytics to track performance.
- Corporate Governance training for officers.
- Centralised location for officers to obtain:
 - o Procurement guidance and best practice
 - o A list of locally registered suppliers registered on the Council's e-tendering system to allow officers to identify local suppliers to invite to quote/tender opportunities.
- Subject to Covid-19, holding bi-annual meet the buyer events.
- Included as an ongoing item on the Council's Strategic Plan and Procurement & Creditors Business Plan.

Lessons learned:

There were three lessons learned as a result of the Think Local First campaign launched by NBBC.

The first being the process upon which we have to obtain buy-in from Executive Directors and councillors. Without buy-in at senior level, it is a huge challenge to implement the practices and policies described above. The amount of time and perseverance that is required to obtain buy in at senior level and across the Organisation should not be underestimated. However, once senior management buy-in has been obtained, that provides the basis upon which practices and policies can be updated to implement the Strategy. This does however require clear communication to officers to ensure the objective is understood and delivered.

The second lesson learnt is understanding your current position and being able to obtain the right data to monitor and report progress. This requires clear identification of the data required, together with the process upon which data shall be obtained. This required a joint effort from the Procurement team, Accounts Payable team and Finance team to be able

to capture, store, extract and analyse the data in a way that allows reports to be created.

The third lesson was engagement with suppliers and businesses. The Council recognised that in order to achieve the objective it set out, it not only had to change the culture of NBBC officers to Think Local First, but it needed to encourage and support suppliers and businesses. This can be achieved in numerous ways such as news/press releases, guidance and information on the Council website, direct engagement with suppliers at buyer events and engaging with organisations such as the FSB, CW Growth Hub and Chamber of Commerce.

Contact:

Matthew Wallbank - Strategic Creditors and Procurement Manager

Links to relevant documents and links:

1. [2017 award](#)
2. [2019 award](#)
3. [Buyer event](#)
4. [E-invoicing case study](#)

Case Study Two

Date: 1st September 2021

Local authority: Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC)

Submitted by: Dawn Dawson

Case study title: Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Enterprises Ltd (NABCEL)



Case study synopsis (100 words):

Following ongoing reductions to Local Government financing, and in light of the powers granted under the Localism Act 2011 and General Powers of Competence, in 2013 NBBC established a Local Authority Trading Arm, aiming to increase income to the Council.

Nuneaton & Bedworth Community Enterprises Ltd (NABCEL) is a company limited by shares. As a wholly owned subsidiary NBBC is the only shareholder – owning £1 share.

NABCEL vision;

‘To become a professional, profit-making company delivering services for local people - the income from which would assist the council to be less reliant on government grant and ultimately become self-financing.’

The challenge:

The main challenges that we needed to address are listed below:

- Securing Corporate buy in, both political and senior staff;
- Promoting Corporate understanding;
- Obtaining the relevant external professional advice;
- Improving our commercial approach – acumen, skills & processes;
- Understanding and negotiating private sector accounting and tax rules;
- Establishing a staffing structure of the right people with the right skills, able to deliver.

The solution:

We undertook a significant amount of research in relation to what powers we had to set up the company and obtained specialist legal and tax advice. With that information, we then further modelled financing options, identifying which option presented the greatest return on investment but posed the least risk to the Council. A full business case was formulated, modelling income, voids, bad debts, inflation in market rents and also capital appreciation. The most beneficial approach for us was to use New Homes Bonus funding to purchase homes (setting a minimum gross yield of 5%) and then lease them to the Company for letting at market rates. This addressed an identified market demand for accommodation and allowed us to use existing knowledge of legislation to successfully implement this business stream. This thorough and robust approach achieved Corporate buy in, and NABCEL was registered in September 2013 with its first year of trading in 2014.

We identified relevant staff members with the appropriate knowledge of private sector housing and undertook additional training to ensure we would be legally compliant in relation private sector housing legislation. A member of our legal team undertook additional training in company law and a senior member of our human resources team undertook refresher training as relevant to the private sector. All staff involved undertook commercial training via an external provider.

The impact (including cost savings/income generated if applicable):

Between 2014 and 2021, NABCEL has generated well in excess of £2m revenue income to the Council. Income from NABCEL has risen steadily each year as the company has grown and commenced delivery of new business streams. For the year ending March 2021, a dividend payment of £36k will also be received. For the current financial year 2021/22, there is a forecast revenue income of £529k.

A capital appreciation exercise was undertaken in February 2021 which identified a 59% increase in the value of the assets held.

How is the new approach being sustained?:

The key has been the robust approach to the initial establishment of the company. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition are Board members and therefore have a developed understanding of NABCEL and its benefits to the Council. Their knowledge supports the understanding of the broader political membership.

We have established a Shareholder Committee which receives quarterly reports in relation to the progress against the Business Plan. This Committee provides a robust governance approach and further strengthens knowledge within the political arena.

NABCEL is a Teckal Company, which has removed many procurement barriers. This has assisted the Company to grow.

New business streams have been developed that reflect the existing knowledge of the Council. This has helped to ensure their success, both from a financial and compliance aspect.

At the end of 2018, the company turnover had reached a point where it could support the funding for a senior leadership team. In 2019, an experienced Managing Director and a New Business Director were appointed.

A 5-year business plan was established in 2019, detailing the proposed growth of the company and potential financial return to the Council. As at March 2021, NABCEL undertakes Facilities Management, Cleaning Services, Gas Maintenance & Installation Services, Void Valeting & Clearance.

The reputation of NABCEL is now being noticed by our neighbouring local authorities. This has presented opportunities to provide services to them that will support the long-term viability and growth of the company.

Finally, since NABCEL was first conceived, the financial challenges facing local authorities have increased. There is complete acceptance of the value of NABCEL to the Council, particularly in terms of its financial contribution and broad support for the continuation and growth of the company.

Lessons learned:

- The time taken to research and establish the company should not be underestimated;
- Utilise existing skills and competencies – where you have the greatest knowledge and what you do well;
- It is critical to obtain specialist external advice;
- Improving the commercial awareness of both staff and Members is vital;
- Ensure the business is separate from the Council – the Council's reputation can be both a help and a hindrance;
- Without full corporate buy in, the pace that the business can develop is severely restricted;
- Capacity – this is stretched until the business reaches a point that it can fund its own dedicated staff and importantly, its own Managing Director.

Contact: Dawn Dawson – Director, Regeneration, Economy & Assets
Email: dawn.dawson@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk

