

Corporate Peer Challenge

Warwickshire County Council: Position Statement



Foreword

Thank you for agreeing to participate in Warwickshire's Corporate Peer Challenge. We very much look forward to welcoming you on the 8th September as critical friends to challenge, inform and stretch our current thinking and to help ensure our vision for the future is robust.

In particular, we hope you will form a view on how Warwickshire is managing the implementation, phasing and delivery of our One Organisational Plan, and whether our direction of travel is on track to bridge the £92 million funding gap by 2018.

We would like you to challenge us on the progress we are making in our evolving role as an enabler of business and economic growth – both within and beyond the county borders – and how we are working together with other agencies to promote the importance of skills development.

Furthermore, we hope you can comment on our current approach to transformation in line with the wider public sector reforms that are changing the nature of public service delivery, particularly in relation to health, social care and children's services.

We recognise that our future will look very different from the past, with a more defined focus on demand management, joined-up working and a changing relationship with the citizen. And while we are certainly making progress on that journey, we welcome your challenge to our approach and an external view on how we could improve.

Cllr Izzi Seccombe
Leader of the Council

Jim Graham
Chief Executive

Focus areas of the Corporate Peer Challenge:

**Implementation, phasing and
delivery of the One Organisational
Plan**

**Contribution to economic growth
and the skills agenda**

**Approach to transformation and
readiness for public sector reforms**

1. Introduction to Warwickshire

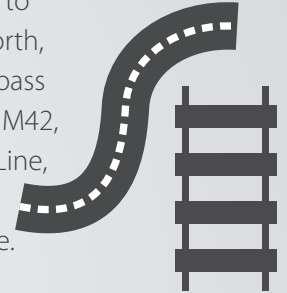
Warwickshire is a two-tier shire county in the heart of the midlands, covering an area of **764 square miles**.



It was recently ranked in the **top ten** best places to live in the UK (*uSwitch.com Quality of Life survey*).



It has well-established road links to London, Birmingham and the north, and several key strategic routes pass through it: the M6, M6 Toll, M40, M42, M45, M69, the West Coast Main Line, the Chiltern Main Line and the proposed High Speed 2 rail route.



Warwickshire's inward investment and growth is fuelled, most notably, by an advanced manufacturing and engineering industry, a first-class university and a number of international tourist attractions.



1.1 Population

Warwickshire has an estimated population of **548,000** across its five districts and boroughs:

This has grown by **8%** since 2001, and is projected to rise by a further **13.9%** by 2037 to reach a total population of **623,900**. Primarily, this growth is due to:

- Inward migration from Coventry and Birmingham
- An increase in the local birth rate
- An ageing population, particularly among the over-85s

**North Warwickshire
(62,000)**

**Nuneaton &
Bedworth (125,300)**

**Rugby
(100,100)**



548,000 people

**Stratford-on-Avon
(120,500)**

**Warwick
(137,600)**

1.2 Characteristics

In its recent history, Warwickshire has been characterised by debates around geographic inequality – the north/south divide.

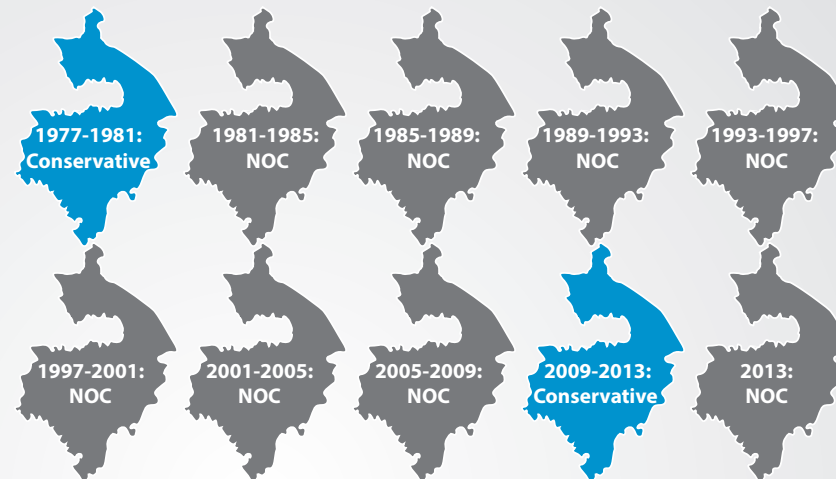
A decline in the coal-mining and car-manufacturing industries during the 1980s led to high unemployment numbers in north Warwickshire. As a result, certain areas have suffered long-standing deprivation, with low aspiration and low attainment prevalent within those communities.

Conversely, good connections to the more economically prosperous south of the country, alongside internationally recognised tourist attractions like Shakespeare's Stratford and Warwick Castle have helped to sustain a vibrant economy in south Warwickshire.

The geography and topography of a number of villages and communities within the south have also tended to attract more affluent residents than the more industrial and densely populated towns of the north.

That said, as a County Council, we are developing a more localised understanding of inequity that goes beyond a simple north/south divide. Deprivation exists in pockets right across the county. There are severely deprived wards in the south, just as there are prosperous areas in the north. Deprivation can also be defined in more than socioeconomic terms; we have areas of rural deprivation (in both the north and south) where limited transport links and distance from services can lead to negative outcomes for

1.2 Political landscape



Warwickshire's political history has been dominated by the position of no overall control, with regular swings between Labour and Conservative as the largest group. Since formation in 1973, there have been only two periods of overall control.

Evidence: 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation

Nuneaton & Bedworth has the highest levels of deprivation in the county and is among the top-third most deprived districts in England

Stratford is the least deprived district in Warwickshire, and ranks 278th nationally out of 326

1.3 Core purpose

Following the local elections in May 2013, the Council returned to a position of no overall control with the Conservative group leading a minority administration through a Cabinet of 9 members.

One of its first tasks was to agree a new mechanism for setting the annual budget and medium-term financial plan, which were subsequently approved by full council in February 2014. This put in place a core purpose for the Council.

Our Core Purpose is to

“ Develop and sustain a society that looks after its most vulnerable members, delivers appropriate, quality services at the right time, and seeks opportunities for economic growth and innovation. ”

2. Recent history (2011-2014)

In 2010, following the incoming government's Comprehensive Spending Review, we set about Facing the Challenge of saving £70 million over three years (2011-2014).

2.1 Redesigning services

As with many other councils, this saw us introduce a formal ambition for the Council to be a commissioning-led authority, moving us from being the default provider of public services to the responsible broker, choosing the best-placed provider to deliver those services.

A phased review programme called Transformation through Strategic Commissioning helped us consider the most efficient delivery model for each service, highlighting different ways of working, such as trading companies, social enterprises, mutuals and joint ventures.

2.2 Empowering communities

One significant service change during Facing the Challenge was the move to community-managed libraries. Our library service had been set a challenging savings target, which resulted in 16 libraries being identified as unsustainable. Local communities stepped forward to take over the running of 14 of those libraries, with the council providing financial and business support to help the transfer. This model has attracted much attention nationally.

Success: an emerging health and social care market

Warwickshire now has a local market of health and social care providers from whom to commission support to meet personalisation agenda

We set out clear commissioning intentions and expectations, and work closely with providers to offer a choice of quality services that enable independence and wellbeing

Performance is measured via an outcomes framework that helps us to continually improve the choice and quality available



2.3 Rationalising property

We also started the process of reducing our property portfolio and moving people away from a building-focused mindset.

We have brought different services together under one roof through our One Stop Shops (county council services, district/borough services, police, post office, library etc.), and we continue to rationalise our office buildings via a culture of modern and flexible working based around new technology, remote working and hot-desking.

Success: modernising the fire and rescue service

Rationalising the number of fire stations within the county network has allowed us to restructure the crewing system and increase the number of wholetime firefighters on cover

New models of delivery are being explored further, including an alliance with Hereford & Worcestershire that could yield operational efficiencies and enhanced cross-border resilience



2.4 Being proactive

The shift in focus towards outcomes along with the pressing need to reduce spend, has placed more emphasis on early intervention. For example, through reablement services we are helping people back into independent living quickly after leaving hospital, preventing the need for long-term costly social care later on. Yet we need to ensure our investment in early intervention is effective, which means seeking an evidence base for the type of services we commission.

2.5 Broadening our boundaries

Together with Coventry City Council and Solihull MBC, we have signed a joint memorandum of understanding that commits us to explore shared-service arrangements whenever we review the delivery or commissioning of a service. Current shared services across the sub-region include:

- A shared resilience team across the three authorities
- A shared mobile library service with Solihull
- A joint highways maintenance contract with Coventry
- A joint contract for waste disposal with Coventry

2.6 Reflecting on ourselves

A key factor in achieving £70 million savings during 2011-14 has been the organisation's willingness to self-reflect and seek new perspectives. For example:

- The Fire and Rescue Service undertook its own Peer Review to assess organisational confidence following the Atherstone on Stour tragedy. This resulted in a number of useful recommendations that are currently being pursued within ongoing transformation activity
- Corporately, Warwickshire has achieved the Customer Service Excellence standard in recognition of our focus on customer needs and outcomes
- We have continued to operate a robust performance-monitoring system, despite the rollback of reporting requirements from central government
- Later in September, we will be also hosting a dedicated peer review of our adult social care services and then a further LGA peer challenge is scheduled in January, focusing specifically on health and wellbeing

Success: building an evidence base for early intervention

A three-year social research project has been completed with Dartington to establish an evidence base for the most effective approach to family support

This will help us establish intervention programmes most likely to succeed in stemming the year-on-year increase in entrants to our care system



3. Shaping the future (2014-2018)

We are currently in the next period of transformation, characterised by further funding reductions, increased demand on services and the emerging impacts of new legislation. Specifically, we anticipate that a funding gap of £92 million will need to be closed between 2014 and 2018.

In order to tackle this, we began work in summer 2013 on a new approach to our budget setting and business planning – the One Organisational Plan – which sought to give residents, staff, partners and stakeholders absolute clarity on our core purpose, the outcomes we seek and how they will be delivered.

3.1 Focused on priorities

All Heads of Service were asked to prioritise their service offerings – according to what is essential, what is a priority and what is discretionary – in order to present achievable savings proposals to elected members. A review of statutory services was also completed to understand, from a legal perspective, what we really have to deliver and to what extent.

3.2 Importance of engagement

The Leader of the Council, along with fellow Cabinet members, actively engaged with residents across the county to seek views on what the future should look like. We also adopted a structured “staff first” approach to communication, whereby staff were formally updated via managers before any wider release.

3.3 Core purpose

The result is a comprehensive plan for 2014-2018 that sets out where we are going and how we hope to get there. Notably, the plan targets resources at those with greatest need and encourages better multi-agency working, especially in areas of deprivation. It also makes the pursuit of economic growth a priority, which will only be achieved through close working with our public and private sector partners, locally and across the sub-region.

Investing for the future



Capital Growth Fund to support invest-to- projects



investment in safer routes to schools and improved transport infrastructure



additional capital funding to develop assets that support service delivery



investment into highways drainage and flood alleviation

Making difficult choices

Fire and Rescue savings of **£505,000** in the current financial year

Adult social care services to save **£17.9m** over four years

Further library service savings, including mobile library service

Reductions to Children's Centres and Supporting People schemes

Reductions to family support services

Reshaping of heritage and culture services

4. The journey continues

As many other local authorities have done, Warwickshire has gone through the process of streamlining the organisation and finding efficiencies in response to reduced financial settlements. Leadership has been cut back; property has been rationalised; teams have been integrated; services have been commissioned out.

In order to meet the financial targets of the next four years – and beyond – we now need to rethink how we operate and continue our progress to a more joined-up, customer-led, partnership-based way of working.

This journey will take us further away from being the provider and arbiter of services, towards becoming one of just many contributors in the coproduction of solutions – working together with individuals, communities and partner organisations to enable positive and lasting outcomes for residents.

Our role is also evolving to that of a place-shaper; working in partnership with public and private agencies to make Warwickshire a thriving place to live and do business. That is why economic growth and innovation is so prominent in our core purpose.

In conclusion, we are seeking to move beyond the traditional organisational boundaries of a county council to work closer with partners across the public and private sector to create the right conditions for local people to live healthy, full and independent lives.

We do not underestimate the size or scope of this task and we are willing to listen, reflect, learn and adapt our thinking in order to succeed. We encourage you to push us hard to justify our current thinking so we gain maximum value from this exercise. We look forward to welcoming you to Warwickshire.

