

Fit For The Future

The Council's Corporate Business Improvement Plan – Fit For the Future provides its policy Framework. The plan brings together the Council's strategies, projects and service area plans into one document. The plan is broken down into the following sections:

Table of Contents

1	Background and Context.....	2
2	Understanding our Customers	4
3	Our Vision and Purpose	6
4	Our Organisational Business Strategy	9
5	Leadership, Values and Organisational Design	16
6	Members, the Council's Constitution and Governance.....	23
7	Strategies including management of Resource Strategies	25
8	Service Area Plans	26
9	Corporate Projects	26
10	Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessments	27
11	Managing Risk	27
12	Measuring success	28

1 Background and Context

The environment that the Council operates within is changing significantly and at an increasingly fast pace and we face a range of complex, interlinked challenges:

- Decreasing finances

A combination of the recession, less income and significant reductions in Government grant has placed, and will continue to place, considerable pressure on our finances. The new Government's budget suggests reductions in future grant of 25% or more over the next four years. At the same time Council Tax has been frozen for at least 2011/12.

The impact of these reductions is that on current financial projections we will need to save £2.8M on an ongoing basis by the end of 2014/15, equivalent to a near twenty per-cent reduction in current net revenue expenditure. The current financial projections for the Council are detailed in the following table:

Table 1

	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	2014/15 £
Cumulative On-going Savings	178,000	715,000	2,068,000	2,762,000
Additional Savings required each year	178,000	537,000	1,353,000	694,000

- Increasing expectations

Whilst income has decreased, workload has increased – more people are claiming Housing and Council Tax benefit, we have more of our housing tenants in arrears and more people simply want advice. It is also perhaps inevitable that when money is tight people expect real value for money from their Council tax or council rent, with no compromise on quality and inevitably this places further pressure on us.

- Increasing and changing demand

The Government has confirmed that it expects Council's to have a land-bank for housing development for five year periods. There will therefore be housing growth in the district. With the growth will come changing demands meaning we will need to adapt existing services or offer new ones – for example more elderly people within the district will mean an impact on services such as housing, benefits, community involvement and leisure.

In meeting these challenges the Council needs to understand the local government framework within the region, sub-region and county. We need

to ensure that what we do interacts smoothly with the emerging structures and partnerships and that our strategic development complements rather than conflicts with the strategic framework being developed by other bodies.

Specifically in relation to sub-regional working a programme for joint working is being developed. This has evolved over the past year and builds upon the pilot work done in the sub-region as part of Total Place (known now as Place Based Budgeting) and the work that had been done to develop a consistent and more integrated approach to economic, spatial and housing strategies. It is likely that the work streams of most benefit to this Council will be Strategic Planning and Infrastructure; Waste Collection/Recycling; Procurement; and Asset Management.

2 Understanding our Customers

The Council's customers are inevitably diverse and disparate. However, it is vital we understand who they are and what matters to them to ensure that we provide value to them. This knowledge will also help us understand the things we do that are not of value to customers and which therefore provide us with the opportunity to reduce costs without reducing service quality.

We need to understand the variety of customer demands and respond by designing our services in a way that enables this variation to be absorbed to ensure that individuals are treated with fairness, respect and dignity. An effective response requires us to understand what demographic, geographic, locality and survey data is telling us. We will use a number of sources of data including Partnership Place Survey, National Indicators, Systems Thinking Intervention Demand Analysis, Business Surveys, Locality Profiles and the Census.

We will consider how the external environment is changing on at least an annual basis and will learn from this to ensure our organisation and services are designed to address what matters most to our customers.

To better understand our service users we will use a range of techniques and tools including listening to and observing actual customer experiences, talking to frontline staff, using complaints data and developing capability measures. We will consider how our service user experience is developing on an ongoing basis and will learn from this to ensure our services are designed to address what matters most to our customers.

To ensure that we are wholly customer focused we have developed a set of key customer principles which are described as follows:

We will work to:

- Provide a wide range of well publicised services that are easy to use, access and presented in a way that customers understand
- Provide direct, timely feedback with regular dialogue
- Ensure customers enjoy a positive experience when they contact us and request or use our services
- Ensure processes and systems operate smoothly and consistently for customers, with expertise in the right place at the right time
- Treat customers with fairness, respect and dignity and as individuals
- Be pro-active about communicating with and taking our services to certain groups of people

We will do this by:

- Understanding the operational demands service users place on our services
- Understanding what is changing in our communities and what this means for the design of our services
- Understanding variation and design our systems in a way which absorbs this variation

- Focusing what we do on providing value to our customers
- Understanding what matters to customers and measuring this
- Working to continuously improve the things that matter to customers (by using measures)
- Developing a culture whereby the customer's perspective is the starting point for changes we make to our systems. This should include:
 - Improving the end to end time of the service we provide
 - Improving the level of accuracy and success in getting things right first time
 - Improving the quality of the customer experience
 - Prioritising what we do so that we maximise the customer value of work

3 Our Vision and Purpose

The **vision** agreed for the Warwick District area in the Sustainable Community Strategy is:

“Warwick District, a great place to live, work and visit, where we aspire to build sustainable, safe, stronger and healthier communities”

This has been developed through extensive consultation and is agreed by all the key partners in the area including Warwick District Council.

The Sustainable Community Strategy has 4 Thematic Priorities and 5 Cross-cutting Priorities each with strategic aims:

Table 2

Thematic Priorities	Strategic Aims
Housing – Building communities – providing sustainable, affordable, quality housing for everyone who wishes to live and work in the District	By 2026 everyone’s housing needs are met
Economy, Skills and Employment – An economically vibrant and creative community – low carbon based, focusing on the development of the knowledge economy/creative/high value engineering and design industries, the health of its town centres and rural areas and promoting continuous learning and innovation in our educational, economic, tourism, sporting and cultural activities	There is a strong, diverse economy which provides jobs for all There is a strong learning culture that spans all age groups There is a thriving tourist economy making it one of the top visitor destinations
Safer Communities – Protecting our communities from harm with an emphasis on the prevention of incidents, whilst focusing on the most vulnerable to make them feel safer	By 2026 the people of Warwick District will feel safe going about their everyday lives
Health and Well Being – A healthier community – encouraging a rounded and active view of lifestyles including exercise and healthy eating to minimise preventable deaths and illnesses	Everyone is able to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and sense of well being There are opportunities for everyone to enjoy and participate in sport, the arts and cultural

Table 3

Cross-cutting Themes	Strategic Aims
Narrowing the Gaps on a range of priority actions	The gap between affluent and poor people has been significantly reduced
Embedding Sustainability throughout – including environmental issues	Our community has actively minimised environmental impacts The transport infrastructure enables easy access to services and facilities The built and natural environment has been protected and enhanced
Working with families at risk	Every child and young person, including those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, has the greatest opportunity to be the best they can be Our older and vulnerable citizens are valued and live fulfilling and independent lives
Engaging and strengthening communities including community cohesion	Citizens are actively engaged in decision making and participate fully in community life People from different backgrounds get on well together
Rurality – targeting disadvantaged rural locations	There are vibrant and sustainable rural communities

There are also some targeted geographical areas to ensure that there is no area within the District that is within the worst 30% of Super Output Areas in the country (there are currently 4, two within one ward) by 2026. The targeted areas are:

Table 4

Brunswick Ward – Leamington Spa
Crown Ward – Leamington
West Warwick Ward – Warwick

The Town Centres of **Kenilworth, Leamington Spa and Warwick** will also be targeted to underpin and develop economic activity.

In the context of this vision, the **purpose** of Warwick District Council, its Councillors, all of its members of staff and everything it does should be to enable that vision to be fulfilled. If what the Council does, does not contribute to that purpose then quite rightly it ought to be questioned why it is being done.

4 Our Organisational Business Strategy

For many years the Council had an ambition to be an Acknowledged Excellent Council and this culminated in achieving an Excellent rating in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2004. In 2007 as part of the Building on Excellence proposals it set a new ambition to be World Class by 2012 as exemplified in the areas of Employer, Use of ICT, Continuous Improvement, Communication and Customer Satisfaction.

It was recognised as being in the top 25 of Best Councils to Work for in 2008; it achieved the Investors in Excellence award in 2008; and won two awards from Midlands in Excellence.

In the short time since then it has realised that the “world has changed” and while it is still the ambition to be a World Class organisation, how that is to be achieved has changed.

An Organisational Business Strategy has been developed to help the Council fulfil its **vision** and **purpose** and will be achieved by:

Table 5

Organisational Business Strategy	Strategic Aim
Fit for the Future	Listening to and leading the community it serves to learn how to deliver exceptional quality services at good value for money in a way that enables the Council to effectively fulfil its vision and purpose

Given the background and context described in Section 1, the Council will have more to do but with much less money.

Therefore there are a number of strands which the Council is taking to work within this scenario although the first two strands are the most predominant and to which the others must not compromise:

1. Reducing waste within its system by adopting a lean systems thinking approach to its service delivery and by managing vacancy control to reduce staffing levels by 20% over 4 years;
2. Questioning whether what we do helps to fulfil our purpose and rightly, to question why we do something if it doesn't. And equally to question if there is something we are not doing but should, to help fulfil our purpose;
3. Undertaking greater sub-regional or county-wide joint working particularly based around the concept of Pooled Budgets;
4. Reducing costs associated with accommodation and energy use;

5. Adopting a best practice approach to procurement to elicit savings and better value for money;
6. Increasing income especially by seeking to increase recycling levels;
7. Adopting shared services with our preferred partner Stratford District Council or other organisations where this would help service resilience, quality and/or lower cost;
8. Supporting the economy as there is a direct correlation between economic success and the Council's income.

The following table displays alternative options available to the Council and why they have been discounted:

Table 6

Alternative Option	Reason Rejected
The Council could decide not to change	In view of the circumstances being faced our traditional approaches are not likely to deliver sufficient savings to avoid having to simply cut services
The Council could decide to meet its budgetary challenges by cutting services both in range and quality across the spectrum	Such an approach has greater potential to conflict with the Council's priorities and flies in the face of the evidence from the local community of not wanting reduced services
The Council could consider sharing all of its services	Whilst this may have the capacity of save money, experience to date shows that alone it is often limited in the financial savings it can bring and would be insufficient by itself. It is an additional component not an alternative one
The Council could rely wholly on greater sub-regional or county-wide joint working particularly based around the concept of Total Place	This is probably not an alternative but an additional component
The Council could Outsource all its services allowed by law	The Council has outsourced some activities. However, outsourcing is not in itself an automatic guarantee of success in terms of service delivery or in lowering costs. There is quite a record of large scale outsourcing experiencing significant problems and of having had to be brought back in house. That is not to say

	that on a case by case basis there may be a justification for such an approach but it is an additional component not an alternative
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In short the scenario faced requires a radically different response than the Council has developed previously.

Fit for the Future is that radically different approach. The Strategy is organised around **lean systems thinking** as an approach. The basic pillars of a lean systems thinking approach are as follows:

Table 7

Taking the customer's perspective	Measuring what matters to the customer	Understand demand – value and failure	Design against demand	Variation is normal
Clarity of purpose in customers' terms	Consider the whole system – end to end	Understand flow – value and waste	No targets – seek perfection	Don't ignore the people

It is not just a technical process, it is as much cultural since it requires a different mindset and it requires active and continuous learning in order to continuously improve and gives the Council's staff the opportunity to shape the way in which they work. It is also not target based but relies on measures which are meaningful for and to the Council's customers.

Before adopting lean systems thinking the Council ran two *experiments*. In both cases, of the total demand experienced, between 60 to 70 % was found to be of no value to the customer but was created because of our system, not getting it right first time, poor communication and simply not understanding sufficiently the customer's actual needs.

The work involves following a customer's journey through and across the organisation. Looking at things this way it is possible to see how customers "hit" the Council but because our system is not designed to deal with them coherently or effectively (our operations are within silos) it means that there are considerable costs incurred. More preventative work could therefore help to reduce costs but that means taking a different perspective on organisational design. Likewise, trying to capture and eliminate all of the waste demand for work will also give the Council a different shape and ethos.

In adopting a lean systems thinking approach the Council needs to manage the Council as one system and therefore its Corporate Strategy, the Budget and Improvement Programme and subsidiary strategies and measuring

mechanisms need to be brought together in this Corporate Business Improvement Plan.

Lean systems thinking also throws into question the previous approach that we have taken to service plans and team operational plans.

In operational terms the Plan and its measures will be reported regularly where possible to the Executive and the Scrutiny Committees and internally to the Senior Management Team. That will allow continuous scrutiny of progress or delay and to allow Councillors and senior managers to manage the Council's business as one business or system although it will be important not to make the new management approach bureaucratically painful.

It will also mean that judgements can be made more easily about whether activities and projects do help to fulfil our purpose and are part of the Council's value demand, or not. It will help to prioritise.

It will also allow issues such as strategy, risk, budgets, projects and performance to be linked more openly. It means there is one Plan with a clear line of purpose for the organisation as a whole, to service areas to teams and to individuals – the proverbial golden thread.

Lean Systems Thinking will be deployed via a series of interventions right across the Council's Service Areas. The proposed programme of interventions is detailed in the table below:

Table 8

Year of Intervention	Service(s)
2010/2011	Staff Terms and Conditions
2010/2011	Riverside House Review
2010/2011	Town Hall Review
2010/2011	Customer Access Channels Review
2010/2011	Benefits and Revenues Shared Service
2010/2011	Support Services
2010/2011	Development Services
2010/2011	Leisure Centres/Sports Development/Open Spaces
2010/2011	Environmental Services
2010/2011	Contract Services
2011/2012	Parking Services
2011/2012	Housing and Property Services
2012/2013	Engineers Team
2012/2013	Art Gallery and Museum
2013/2014	Improvement and Performance Team
2013/2014	Bereavement Services

By adopting a lean systems approach, there is likely to be most impact on staff as the experience has shown that fewer people will be needed. However, it is not a good motivational implicit message to give to staff in undertaking this approach – change the system and lose your job, especially when the lean systems thinking approach is so dependent on staff being given the ability to design the system rather than have it imposed on them.

Therefore, by putting staff into generic job groups (e.g. Administration Officers) rather than say Admin Clerk Planning or Housing Admin Officer, staff within a job group could be moved to where they are needed. The basis for this is that members of staff work for the Council not a service area. This does not compromise staff's salaries or other terms and conditions but does mean that by using vacancy control to greater effect staff can be kept employed even if not in their original position. Based on previous years' data, 50 to 60 jobs a year will become vacant. If half are not filled because of the lean systems work then over the next four years the Council will save approximately £3.4 million, of which £3m is in respect of the General Fund as shown in the table below:

Table 9

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total Ongoing
Salaries - General Fund	-783	-759	-735	-713	-2,990
Salaries -HRA	-97	-94	-91	-88	-370
Total Salary Savings	-880	-853	-826	-801	-3,360

This will mean that staff will need training and developing in order to be more flexibly deployed. There will also need to be a package of measures to recognise staff achievements and efforts (non pay). It needs to be stressed that the approach advocated cannot be said to absolutely avoid redundancies but it will help to minimise that the necessity for that course of action.

This approach acts as a safeguard. It should not be assumed that all of the forecast savings or income will be earned and there may be delays, additional costs or investment elsewhere.

Managing the Programme

The accountabilities and responsibilities for the Fit For the Future Programme are as follows:

1. Executive
Responsible for: Political accountability and responsibility and agreeing any significant changes to budget, outcomes or timescales
This involves: Receiving regular update reports on the Programme and making any decision relating to the Executive's responsibilities and considering other reports requesting decisions.
2. Senior Management Team (SMT)
Responsible for: The delivery of Programme Benefits
This involves: Regularly looking at the data in relation to the whole programme to understand how things are going and to consider how to adjust activity to stay focused on the programme benefits.
3. Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee
Responsible for: Independent scrutiny of progress towards the delivery of Programme Benefits
This involves: Receiving regular update reports on the Programme and feeding comments and suggestions to the Executive and SMT as appropriate
4. Programme Manager
Responsible for: Providing SMT, Executive and Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee with the data and analysis they need
This involves: Working with the "Programme Office" staff and liaising with project sponsors and managers to collate the relevant data. Reporting data to Executive, SMT and Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in line with agreed reporting frequencies and undertaking informal briefings to ensure that programme issues can be addressed as quickly as possible. Constantly reflecting on the effectiveness of the approach and improving the data and the way it is presented.
5. Programme Office
Responsible for: Supporting the collection, collation and reporting of programme data.
This involves: Liaising with project sponsors and managers; maintaining the data relevant to the Programme; supporting the Programme Manager in preparing reports.
6. Intervention/Project Sponsors and Board
Responsible for: Delivery of project deliverables and highlighting exceptions which impact at Programme level to the Programme Manager/SMT.
This involves: Ensuring the project is carried out in line with the purpose and method agreed.

7. Intervention/Project Managers

Responsible for: Co-ordinating the work needed to carry out the project.

This involves: In liaison with the project sponsor and board, carrying out the project in line with the purpose and method agreed.

5 Leadership, Values and Organisational Design

To deliver our vision and purpose through our organisational business strategy we require three key qualities:

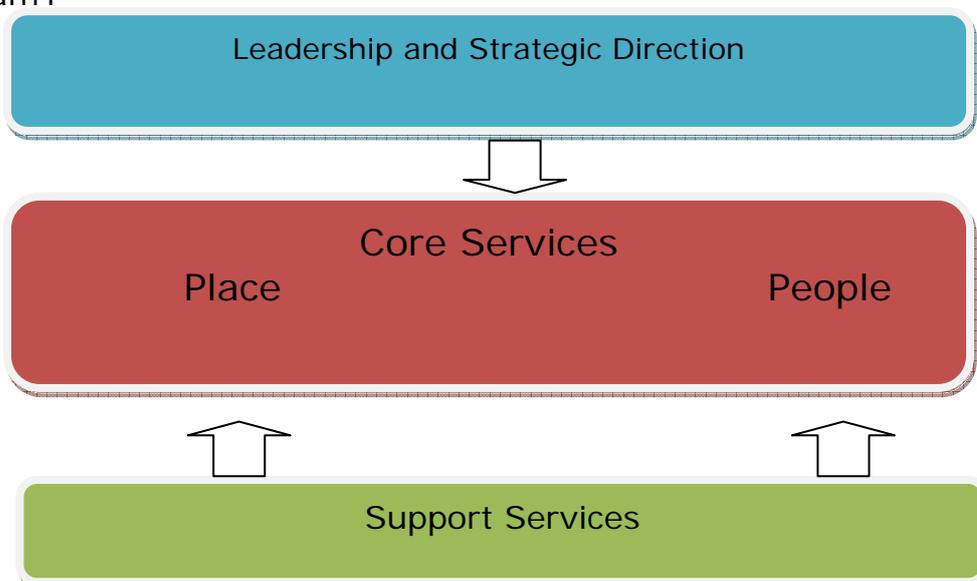
Table 10

Quality	What this means
Fit leadership	Understanding the challenges we face and a sound plan as to how we will meet them with a clear vision for the Council and of the purpose of the services we provide for people
Fit strategies and policies	Setting out clearly what people can expect
Fit service delivery	Offering services that people need and value through staff who are well trained, know what we're here for and who are motivated and empowered and can work flexibly to ensure we deliver our promises

To achieve these qualities we need to understand our organisational picture and have a robust and coherent delivery plan that reviews each element within it. We also need a set of values and principles that guide how we operate as a Council. Our customers should be able to hold us to account when we do not behave as we have promised.

In developing Fit for the Future we have adopted a very simple organisational picture of the Council.

Diagram1



Strategic Direction

We recognise that we need leadership and policies that give the Council direction and ensure our core services are properly managed, properly resourced and focussed on delivering what customers need.

We have concluded that our previous strategy framework was confused with too many documents and targets to give the clear direction we need to ensure that what we do is customer focussed.

This Plan therefore draws together all the existing strands to create a leaner policy and strategy framework.

Core Services

In drawing our organisational picture we found that we could group our core services under the broad headings of Place and People.

Place services are about ensuring we provide and maintain places within the district that people value, enjoy and use, regularly and safely. People services are more personal. They're about providing direct help and assistance whether that is through, for example, housing advice, with benefit claims or ensuring people can vote or enhancing the quality of life through, for example, art or sport.

To thoroughly review our core service provision we will:

- Complete the variety of projects that we identified under the Budget and Improvement Programme.
- Complete existing and undertake new Lean Systems interventions
- Undertake 'experiments' to test new approaches to service delivery, based on lean systems principles that cut across existing service area boundaries.

Support Services

Without support services we are unable to deliver our core services. It is essential that these services are as efficient, effective and as low cost as possible, so we can focus our limited resources on the core services. We will therefore review the full range of support services under lean systems thinking principles.

Values and Principles of Organisational Design

Fit for the Future has expanded on the Council's existing core values to create a series of principles to underpin the delivery plan. Within each of these principles is a detailed description of what the Council needs to look like in terms of its business processes, people, systems and facilities. By creating an 'artist's impression' of what the Council should look like in the future we will be able to judge whether or not we've achieved our intentions.

The principles are grouped under the headings of leadership, staff, customers and budget:

Diagram 2: Leadership

Leadership that:

- Has an excellent awareness of the community's needs
- Has well defined, strong leadership from members & officers who support a culture of improvement,
- Has a clear purpose and direction that is well communicated to stakeholders
- Understands and translates customer's needs into actions and champion their cause
- Understands the work that needs to be done and the interactions between the work and our systems, learning and behaviours
- Establishes a 'One Council' culture, delivering generic and integrated services
- Makes progress, timely decisions, enables things to happen and removes barriers
- Has an ability to think in terms of systems and knowing how to lead systems
- Ensures service delivery reflects political priorities
- Embraces partnership working where the value exceeds the cost

Diagram 3: Staff

Staff who:

- Are empowered to influence the process of service delivery and their customers' experience.
- Are competent to deliver what their customers need and what's more, they're motivated by that.
- Are continually focussed on customers and adopt a 'customer first' approach
- Put themselves in customers' shoes, sharing that experience, understanding their perspective and using that knowledge to influence the services and processes they provide.
- Know what they're here for and how they can make a difference.
- Deliver proactive and preventative services where duplication is eliminated.
- Ensure the Council is compliant with legislation.
- Strive for continuous improvement of services—through innovation, best practice and experimentation
- Collect the right data for decision making and measurement of effectiveness

Diagram 4: Customers

Customers who:

- Can expect honesty, transparency, openness, fairness and equality from their Council
- Have a wide range of well publicised services that are simple, easy to use and access and that are presented in a way that they understand
- Benefit from the development and promotion of services ensuring all who can potentially receive or benefit from a service have the opportunity to do so
- Receive direct, timely feedback with regular dialogue.
- Enjoy a positive experience when they contact us and request services.
- Can access processes and systems that operate smoothly and consistently for them, with expertise available in the right place at the right time.
- Can expect flexible, agile & responsive services which respond to changing circumstances

Diagram 5: Budget

A Budget that:

- Is a balanced budget
- Has the capability to meet future budget challenges because we have the culture, skills and experience to manage future challenges with staff empowered to react.
- Is based on an understanding of how much our services cost providing us with the capacity and capability to reduce them further.
- Allows us to deliver affordable and value for money services
- Allows us to operate with minimal waste and low operating costs.
- Enables us to have energy efficient facilities that make best use of their space and maximise income generating opportunities

By adopting these principles we are able to give our customers the following commitments:

Table 11

Commitments
We will deliver high quality, effective and efficient services that customers' value
We will deliver a balanced budget for the Council along with the capability to meet future budget challenges
Our councillors and staff will be empowered and motivated to influence and improve the services we provide through excellent political and managerial leadership, supporting it and making it happen
We will work effectively with our partners to the benefit of our customers
We will use our resources flexibly and to the maximum effect

6 Members, the Council's Constitution and Governance

Warwick District Council operates under a Constitution which sets out how the Council makes its decisions and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, whilst others are matters for the Council to choose. The Constitution is based on a model version produced in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

Article 1 of the Constitution commits the Council to quality and equality in all the services it provides. Quality of life within the District will be the Council's key consideration. Articles 2 to 16 explain the rights of citizens and how the key parts of the Council operate.

The Council is composed of 46 councillors who are elected every four years. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their electoral wards. The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.

Councillors have to agree to follow a Code of Conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties.

All Councillors meet together, as the Council, to decide their overall policies and set the budget each year.

The Council has an explicit commitment to openness in all of its dealings, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it be proper and appropriate to do so.

The Executive is the part of the Council which is responsible for most day-to-day decisions. The Executive is made up of the Leader and up to nine other Councillors, including the Deputy Leader. When major decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Executive's Forward Plan in so far as they can be anticipated. If these major decisions are to be discussed with council officers at a meeting of the Executive, this will generally be open for the public to attend except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed. The Executive has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework, this must be referred to the Council as a whole to decide.

There are two Scrutiny Committees which support the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. They allow citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public inquiries into matters of local concern. These result in reports and recommendations being produced which advise the Executive and the Council on its policies, budget and service delivery.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees also monitor the decisions of the Executive. Councillors can 'call-in' a decision which has been made by the Executive but not yet implemented for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This enables them to consider whether the decision is appropriate. They may recommend that the Executive reconsider the decision. They may also be consulted by the Executive or the Council on forthcoming decisions and the development of policy.

The Council's Standards Committee trains and advises Councillors on the Code of Conduct. It also advises the Council about the effectiveness of its Constitution, governance practices and other matters relevant to assisting with the Annual Governance Statement, including: overview of the whistle blowing policy and Member/Officer Code of Conduct where it relates to member conduct; and overview of complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations.

The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement process is to provide a continuous review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework to give assurance of its effectiveness and to produce a management action plan to address any identified weaknesses. The action plan, as it stood at the beginning of the year, is shown at Appendix I. A half-year review is submitted to Standards Committee in November.

7 Strategies including management of Resource Strategies

Warwick District Council's purpose is to enable a good quality of life for all who live in, work in or visit Warwick District. This purpose is encapsulated in its Vision of making Warwick District "a great place to live, work and visit".

The Vision mirrors that contained in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Warwick District which has been endorsed by the Local Strategic Partnership (known as the Warwick Partnership). Warwick Partnership is made up of individuals, groups and organisations across the voluntary and community sector and the public and private sectors.

As the Vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Warwick District Council's are the same, we will ensure that the Council's strategies contribute to its purpose.

The Council's Strategies can be broken down into three broad areas: a. Resource; b. Subject; and c. those required by Government or Council initiative.

Our Resource Strategies ensure that the Council has the infrastructure in place to support the delivery of the council's purpose.

If we are to ensure that our resources are deployed to deliver the council's purpose then the Subject Strategies must contribute to the agreed Priorities contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

There is a third category of Strategy which is neither Resource nor Subject. This could be because there is a legal requirement or although not contributing to an identified Sustainable Community Strategy theme, the Council considers it important that such a Strategy is in place.

Details of all the Council's strategies are at Appendix II wherein the respective purpose and principles are also described. Each of the Council's Resource Strategies has an annual operational plan so that the Senior Management Team can monitor progress and take any necessary actions.

8 Service Area Plans

The operational running of the Council is organised into eight Service Areas. Each Service Area has an Executive Member Portfolio Holder who, in collaboration with the relevant Service Area Manager, annually agrees the Service's programme of work which will help deliver the Council's vision. To ensure that there is a match between aspiration and resources, Service Area Plans are developed in tandem with the Council's budget setting process.

When determining a Service Area work programme it is essential that any cross-cutting issues are taken into account as our customers do not lead their lives through a "silo" based approach but have needs which overlap functional areas.

At Appendix III are the Service Area Plans for each of the Council's Portfolios. These plans enable the development of Team Operational Plans which as the names infers are the plans of how the different functional teams of the Council will undertake the delivery of Council services.

The Service Area Plans will be managed on an ongoing basis by the respective Service Area Manager, however, Fit For the Future enables the Senior Management Team to take a cross-council view of the Council's business as all the relevant documents are in a single place.

In accordance with Lean Systems Thinking principles the Service Area Plans are used in place of annual Portfolio Holder Statements.

9 Corporate Projects

Along with day-to-day service delivery, many of the Council's Service Area Plans will detail projects, feasibility work or future projects. If the Council is to agree that a project should commence then it must be clear the project contributes to the Council's purpose of achieving its vision.

At Appendix IV each of the Council's projects has been mapped against the Council's strategic aims and at Appendix V for each of the Fit For the Future projects a template has been completed enabling the Senior Management Team to monitor progress.

As future Corporate projects are fully scoped a project template will be completed so progress can be properly monitored.

10 Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessments

As a key partner to the vision of making Warwick a great place to live, work and visit, the Council delivers and will develop many different services. To ensure that the aims of the Council are not compromised, checklists have been developed in the shape of templates so that officers can determine what the impact of a particular proposal is with regard to Equality and Sustainability.

The templates allow officers to record any positive or negative impacts so that a fully informed decision can be made as to the viability of a particular project or proposal. The templates can be seen at Appendix VI and VII.

11 Managing Risk

The management of risk is central to the successful delivery of public services.

It is critical that the Council can clearly demonstrate to local residents and other key stakeholders that all risks are fully considered in the delivery of services. The Council is committed to an effective, systematic and proportionate approach that will minimise risk and so enable the Council to achieve its strategic objectives and thereby improve outcomes for local communities.

Risk management is a critical element of corporate governance and is a statutory requirement for public sector organisations. The Council is required to provide for the health and safety of its elected members, employees and those that it serves. It has a duty to ensure effective planning for civil emergencies. It is required to protect its assets and to take steps to minimise losses and liabilities.

Risks must be reduced to an acceptable level or, if possible, be eliminated. Robust risk management will enable the Council to effectively discharge its responsibilities and deliver its various functions. The Council is committed to maintaining a systematic and cost-effective approach to the identification and management of risk that is consistent with best practice and complies with statutory and audit requirements. The Council's Corporate and Strategic Risk Register is shown at Appendix VIII although this is currently under review.

The Council's Risk Management Strategy is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it reflects best practice and promotes continuous improvement in the management of risk. It provides a comprehensive framework to support elected members and officers in their work to address risk and so enable the Council to discharge fully its responsibilities in this area.

The Strategy identifies the objectives and benefits of managing risk, outlines responsibilities for risk management within the Council, and provides an overview of the process utilised to manage risk successfully.

The focus of good risk management is the systematic identification and treatment of risk, in order to reduce the probability of failure and increase the probability of success. It is a continuous process that runs throughout the Council's corporate and business improvement plan, methodically addressing all risks and opportunities influencing the Council's activities. It is critical to effective decision-making and performance management.

12 Measuring success

We measure things to learn about how well we are delivering our purpose and what matters to customers and to enable us to understand what we need to do to continuously improve. So first and foremost, measures are about learning.

At a strategic level there are three different kinds of data we need to ensure we learn about to understand how well we are delivering our strategic purpose/vision:

- Strategic Context / Intelligence – This contextual data is vital to understand what is changing in the district and within the communities who live within the District including population and demographic changes, social and economic changes, locality profiles and public perceptions and priorities.
- Strategic System Measures – This is data about our internal operations and the way we work. It is vital in helping understand our organisation and in understanding what is helping and hindering the delivery of our strategic purpose/vision and can include effectiveness of leadership, effectiveness of partnerships, staff measures, financial measures and forecasts and risk
- Strategic Outcomes – These need to be developed based on a clear understanding of what matters to people in our community. It is therefore important that in developing these measures they are aligned with Sustainable Community Strategy priority themes and cross cutting themes and may include levels of employment, economic vitality measures, quality and affordability of housing in the District, levels of Traffic congestion, cleanliness of streets and public spaces, air quality and health Indicators such as levels of obesity or physical activity. We will use the Quality of Life Indicators to measure our journey of continuous improvement.

In addition to these strategic measures it is important that we also measure what matters to our direct customers (service users). At an operational level we will therefore be looking at three kinds of measure:

- Operational Context – Measures relating to the context within which an operation works (e.g. number benefits claims made per month or number of houses in multiple occupation).
- Operational System Measures – These are often temporary measures that tell us how effective our system is being – we often measure these when we want to change something, but may not continue with these measures once the change is embedded. Some of these measures may be permanent – e.g. cost of service.
- Customer Measures: these are at the heart of any operational system in that these measures tell us about the things that matter most to customers (e.g. speed of response; accuracy; etc).

Using Our Measures

Data needs to be useful and relevant. It needs to help us learn so that we can improve. In this context, collecting, collating, analysing and using data is very much part core work of every managers in the Council. At a strategic level we will experiment with using the data described above as follows:

Senior Management Team (SMT) will play a central role in capturing learning from strategic measures and using this learning to improve our strategic system. When SMT are considering data, the following questions should be used as a basis for the discussion:

- What is data telling us about what is happening in our system?
- Why do we think that is happening?
- What else do we need to know to improve our understanding of what is happening and why?
- What are we currently doing to intervene or impact on the measures?
- What else could we do?
- Who needs to be involved with further action?

Strategic Context and Intelligence

- We will develop a library of resources to help us keep track of what we know about the strategic context. Improvement and Performance will act as the hub for this data;
- Where necessary we will undertake detailed analysis of the data to enhance our understanding;
- New data will be made available to all service managers as and when it is provided by external agencies;
- Regular discussions about the strategic context will take place at SMT as follows:
 - Highlight reports of the main changes in the strategic context will be considered every 6 months
 - Where changes identified require additional investigation or analysis these will be reported back to SMT on an ad hoc basis

- At least annually, SMT will hold a workshop to make sense of what is changing in our context and will consider what implications these changes have for our organisation, priorities and services
- Involvement of Executive, Scrutiny and Team Leaders in understanding and using these will be designed in the coming months.

Strategic System Measures:

- Strategic System Measures will be considered on a monthly basis by SMT;
- A timetable will be developed and regularly reviewed showing which system measures should be routinely considered at what frequency by SMT;
- Where those responsible for collecting and managing system measures identify learning points which require consideration by the whole of SMT, these will be raised at SMT on an ad hoc basis from and of system measures;
- Where the regular timetabled reviews identify key learning points about our strategic system, further research may be commissioned and brought back to SMT to help us understand what is happening and why.

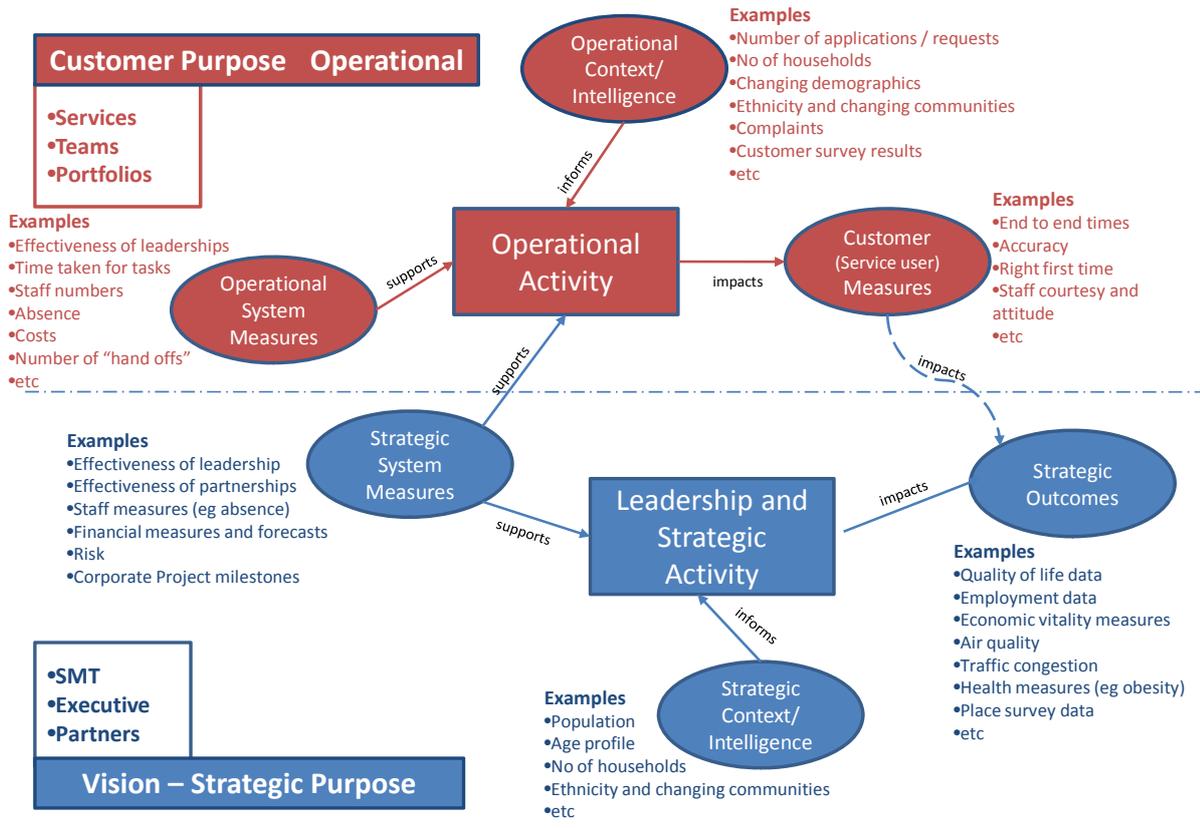
Strategic Outcomes:

- The priority Strategic Outcomes will be considered by SMT every 6 months;
- Where these 6 monthly reviews identify key learning points about the outcomes, further research may be commissioned and brought back to SMT to help us understand what is happening and why;
- On an at least annual basis SMT will consider the Warwickshire Quality of Life Report and the Place Survey results to consider whether the priority strategic outcomes need to be changed.

How we use measures is shown pictorially in Diagram 6 :

Diagram 6

Using the Corporate Business and Improvement Plan : Measures



Notes about demonstrating achievement and holding people to account: We have learned that 95% of the factors which affect the performance of our systems are attributable to the way we have designed the system – just 5% is down to how individual people perform. Well-founded efforts to improve the system can deliver significant improvements...in essence all our people are responsible for just three things:

- o Providing services for customers
- o Understanding how their systems are currently performing – and it is impossible to do this without measures
- o Playing their part in improving that performance – basing this improvement activity on an understanding of what the measures are telling us

So measures are, first and foremost about learning. They are a starting point for gaining a better understanding; they are not an end in themselves – though continuous improvement and the pursuit of perfection are.