

Warwickshire County Council



STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024-2025



Warwickshire County Council

Statement of Accounts

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Introduction

I am pleased to introduce our Statement of Accounts for 2024/25. The purpose of these accounts is to present a true and fair view of the financial results of our activities for the year and the value of our assets and liabilities at the end of the year.

This narrative report is set out in five parts. The first provides some key information on what the Council does, how it does it and its plans for the future. The second part provides further detail on how we plan to resource the Council's activities. This section also considers the factors in the external environment that influence our decisions and highlights some of the key risks that we have identified to the delivery of our priorities. The third part summarises our financial and other performance in 2024/25 and our effectiveness in the use of our resources, while the fourth part describes our outlook moving forward into the new financial year. It includes some of the key pressures facing the Council over the next few years and the changes taking place in the Council to respond to those challenges. Finally, this report explains how the Financial Accounts for 2024/25 are prepared and set out.

Globally and nationally, we continue to experience significant financial uncertainty. Although inflationary pressures are starting to ease, living costs have increased considerably due to a range of factors including global conflict, a shortage in the supply of labour, the medium-term global effects of Covid-19 on the flows of goods and services and the increased cost of energy, food, and fuel. This unprecedented combination has had a profound impact on residents, communities and businesses.

The most significant financial challenge facing the council is the growing Dedicated School's Grant (DSG) deficit which has been mitigated by Central Government via the DSG Statutory override. This situation is unsustainable, and resolution of the difficulties faced will largely depend on national reforms.

The Council continues to strive to deliver against the three strategic priorities set out in the Council Plan: to create a thriving economy with vibrant places; to enable people to live healthy and happy lives; and to create sustainable futures for our people.



Rob Powell

Executive Director for Resources

Organisational overview

2024/25 was the third year of the 2022-27 Council Plan which was approved in February 2022. The purpose of the Council Plan is to set out the strategic direction of the Council and to articulate the Council's vision and ambition for Warwickshire. The Council Plan provides the necessary framework to deliver on our

ambitions, through change management and innovation, and ensures there is a clear line of sight on delivery of the Council's core purpose and outcomes. Our ambition remains to make Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for future generations.

Our ambition for Warwickshire

Three strategic priorities



We want Warwickshire to have a **thriving economy and places** that have the right jobs, skills, education, and infrastructure.



We want to be a County where all **people can live their best lives**; where communities and individuals are supported to live safely, healthily, happily and independently.



We want to be a **County with a sustainable future** which means adapting to and mitigating climate change and meeting net zero commitments, so that our generation ensures future generations can live well and reap the benefits of a sustainable and thriving Warwickshire.

Seven areas of focus



Create vibrant places with safe and inclusive communities



Deliver major infrastructure, digital connectivity and improved transport options



Promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth, successful business, good quality jobs and future skills



Tackle climate change, promote biodiversity and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero



Deliver our Child Friendly Warwickshire strategy - Happy, healthy, safe children



Through education, improve life opportunities for children, young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities



Support people to live healthy, happy, and independent lives and work with partners to reduce health inequalities

To make this happen, we will be a great Council and partner: One which harnesses community power, uses data and digital solutions to improve service efficiency and is a great organisation to work in with outstanding leadership and a talented agile workforce.

The approach to delivering against the Council Plan priorities is fully integrated. The Council Plan communicates priorities for the period 2022-27 in the context of the Council's complex operating environment, ensuring sufficient flexibility to respond to rapidly changing, volatile and often ambiguous external conditions. Our Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy translate the direction set out in the Council Plan into a sustainable financial strategy. This helps us to plan ahead, so we are able to meet our spending requirements, taking into account Government grants, Business Rates and Council Tax income. The financial strategy helps us to ensure our financial resilience and medium-term financial sustainability, so we can continue to provide high quality services to our residents.

The Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy are supported by the Council Delivery Plan which sets out a defined programme of delivery against our strategic ambitions on a rolling two-year basis.

At the heart of these is our commitment to working with partners and communities to identify solutions to the challenges we face; to build on existing strengths and successes and to learn and improve from our experiences.

There are a number of key themes which underpin the Council Delivery Plan:

- joining up, connecting, and working as one Council to focus our collective efforts and maximise their impact for communities and residents;
- a sharp focus on prioritisation to balance rapidly increasing demand with available resource and funding;
- focusing change activities on invest-to-save projects that will release the resources needed to invest in the Council's ambitions, and focus services on the preventative agenda to better meet need and further improve value for money;

- reflecting on and responding to the Council's key strategic risks:
 - slow economic growth and an increase in inequalities across communities;
 - a mismatch between demand and resources;
 - being unable to keep vulnerable children and adults in Warwickshire safe;
 - a lack of movement towards Sustainable Futures;
 - business continuity;
 - an insufficiently skilled and experienced workforce;
 - cyber-attack;
 - sustaining a safe environment;
 - failure of governance arrangements; and
 - Dedicated Schools Grant deficits.

We use reserves to manage financial risk and promote financial sustainability. Any reserves not needed to manage financial risk are used for time-limited investment to support the delivery of the Council's ambitions, to deliver savings and to reduce demand in future years.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy will require regular reviews in order to remain dynamic, robust, ambitious and deliverable, and will be updated annually.

Politically, Warwickshire County Council has 57 councillors, who are elected every four years. The latest elections were held on 1 May 2025. The current political composition of the Council is 22 Reform members, 9 Conservative members, 3 Labour members, 14 Liberal Democrat members, 7 Green Party members and 2 Independent. The Council makes its decisions via a Cabinet of ten members, including the Leader of the Council. Warwickshire's Councillors are responsible for setting and overseeing the strategic direction of the Council and its budget, and for scrutinising

performance. Further details of the governance arrangements in the Council are included in the Annual Governance Statement, included within this document.

Organisationally, in 2024/25 Warwickshire was structured over four Directorates: Communities (including Fire and Rescue), Children & Young People, Social Care & Health and Resources. Each Directorate is headed by an Executive Director who sits on the Council's Corporate Board along with the Chief Executive. Services within each Directorate have plans in place which correspond to the budget set for them by Council and the key outcomes within the Council Plan. Each service has Key Business Measures which are monitored and included in quarterly performance reports to Directorate Leadership Teams and Members.

At the end of the year, we had the equivalent of 4,369 full-time employees and a quarter of our spending each year is on staffing. Warwickshire's employees are responsible for translating Councillors' strategic decisions into actions. Our People Strategy sets out the key principles to ensure we have a workforce that is fit for purpose to deliver the Council Plan.

The Council collaborates with a number of external partner organisations to plan and deliver its intended outcomes. These include neighbouring councils including Coventry City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, and the five Warwickshire District and Borough Councils, and we are a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority. We work closely with local NHS organisations, particularly through the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board. We also work with a number of other bodies, including:

- Central Government departments;
- National and local voluntary and community sector organisations, and charities;
- Academy schools and academy trusts in and outside of Warwickshire;
- Local universities and other academic organisations;
- Local industry and businesses; and
- Town and Parish Councils in Warwickshire.

Further details of the Council's key priorities, plans and outcomes are available in the Council Plan.

Resourcing our activities

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy underpins the delivery of the Council Plan and is agreed as part of the budget-setting process which concludes in February each year. Taking a medium-term approach allows for a more coordinated and planned approach to

prioritisation and allows services to focus on delivery knowing the financial limits and constraints within which they are required to operate. Within the budget resolutions, the Council confirms and applies a number of fundamental financial strategies and policies.

Revenue and capital spending

We use our resources in two ways, through revenue spending and capital investment. Broadly, our revenue spending relates to income received in year and spending on items used in the year. Most of our salary costs are included in revenue expenditure. Our capital spending relates to assets we have bought, created, or improved and which will be used for more than one year. An annualised amount is charged to our revenue accounts to reflect the economic use of assets each year to provide services. This accounting charge does not

reduce our revenue resources but borrowing to fund our capital expenditure does.

Revenue allocations are made to services through a process which balances demand forecasts, inflation and other price increases, commitment to our statutory duties and the investment choices which the Council wishes to make to improve services or reduce costs. By law, we must set a balanced budget which ensures that the Council meets not only its existing commitments but also remains on a firm footing for the future.

Revenue Resources

Original gross income budget at start of year

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Business Rates	90.7	94.7
Council Tax	387.0	413.3
Total Unconditional Revenue Resources (Gross)	477.7	508.0
Specific Government Grants	145	169.8
Customer and Client Receipts	150.3	173.5
Dedicated Schools Grant	295.3	338.0
Total Revenue Resources	1,068.3	1,189.3

The figures shown above for specific Government grants include a number of grants which come with conditions that limit our discretion in how they can be used. The largest of these is the Dedicated Schools Grant which we receive from Government to meet the cost of funding schools and relevant pupil-related services, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; this is presented separately in the table above. We continuously review how

we deploy these resources for maximum impact.

Our capital spending power is the combination of external income which must be spent on capital (such as specific grants or contributions and the receipts from the sale of our assets) and the extent to which the Council is willing to meet the costs associated with borrowing money from its revenue resources.

Capital Resources

Budget for the year after adjusting for previous year's outturn

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27 and later
	£m	£m	£m
Capital Grants and Contributions	89.2	167.7	23.2
Receipts from the Sale of Assets and Repayment of Loans	0.6	9.9	51.3
Direct Application of Revenue Resources	1.9	0.6	-
Borrowing (to be repaid from revenue resources)	57.9	129.6	108.8
Total Capital Resources	149.6	307.9	183.4

Our capital allocations are made in line with our Capital Strategy, which includes three key elements: capital maintenance works to ensure our assets continue to be fit for purpose and able to support the provision of services; replacement of assets that have reached the end of their useful life and capital investment to create and develop new assets. Each element has several strands that ensure a clear focus on the purpose of capital spending and

the prioritisation of proposals, underpinned by specific service asset management strategies.

Allocations included in the maintenance programme meet one of the following three criteria:

- maintaining our assets to ensure services can continue to be delivered;
- statutory health and safety and other regulatory requirements; and

- annual equipment and/or vehicle replacement programmes.

Our annual maintenance programme includes allocations from the government grants received for schools and highways maintenance plus revenue funding used for the replacement of vehicles, where this is more cost effective than leasing the vehicle. We also finance some maintenance from borrowing.

2024/25 saw the third year of the Asset Replacement Fund which was created to alleviate pressure on service revenue budgets accumulating underspends to fund costs of replacing vehicles, plant and equipment and to avoid the depletion of capital resources set aside for investment. A review of the fund balance is undertaken annually as part of the refresh of the capital budget to ensure the level of funding is consistent with the emerging needs from Services' asset management plans.

The Capital Investment Fund is a fund held separately within the capital programme, whose purpose is to drive forward investment which supports the Council Plan and its supporting Delivery Plans.

A further fund linked to capital is the Investigation Design Fund, this is a fund which seeks to reduce the risk of approving capital projects without fully understanding the true costs of delivery, and therefore should reduce the risk of capital projects requesting additional funding once in the delivery stage.

Savings and efficiencies

The resource estimates shown above reflect the broader economic outlook. The Council has a strong track record of delivering savings which has served us well this year through some challenging financial times, Plan and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy aims to build on this approach, maintaining strategies of

The Investigation Design Fund achieves this by providing up-front funding for investigative work that is necessary to give greater cost certainty when a Capital Investment Fund full business case is submitted for approval.

Investment schemes are, by their nature, not routine and so are only considered if they move the organisation towards the delivery of our outcomes or are invest-to-save schemes. Where we have discretion in how to apply capital financing, we use a structured evaluation process that assesses:

- what we are trying to achieve for the Warwickshire residents, businesses and visitors by investing in particular assets;
- the contribution of the new assets to the delivery of the Council's priority outcomes;
- the financial costs and benefits over the short, medium and long-term;
- the risks inherent in the delivery of the scheme itself and the expected benefits, with a focus on better up-front planning and timetabling; and
- the contribution the new asset can make to the Council's Climate Change ambitions.

Investment schemes may be funded by any of the sources in the above table, and often a combination of these.

investment for longer-term savings and, as far as possible in an environment of high inflation, prioritising new ways of working ahead of service reductions wherever possible. The key themes are better procurement, improvements in efficiency, increased income and delivering reductions in demand. The

Medium-Term Financial Strategy tasks the authority with finding £79.6m of savings over the next 5 years.

Reserves

Reserves are resources we have accumulated over time and set aside for a particular purpose as part of an integrated approach to the effective financial management of the authority over the short, medium and long-term.

We hold reserves to:

- ensure future events outside of our control do not undermine the authority's overall financial position or impact on service delivery;
- plan for the effective use of resources over time for a specific purpose;
- ensure we meet funding conditions (set either by an external funding body or a specific decision of Members) in our use of any available resources; and
- retain any other accumulated underspends prior to decisions on their use.

The Council's budget is set to include anticipated levels of reserves added or drawn down in the year; these plans may change as the year progresses to react to emerging pressures or other events and are approved through the quarterly financial monitoring process. Some reserves are held at a corporate level to support overarching risks and strategies.

The level of general reserves is consistent with the overall financial environment and the key financial risks faced by the Council. These risks are assessed at least annually and take account of circumstances at the time of assessment as well as trends into the future.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy includes the planned use of £16.9m of the available reserves below by 2029/30.

Reserves Balances

at start of year

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Short-Term Financial Risk Reserve	13.7	12.4
Medium-Term Financial Strategy Reserve	25.9	10.7
Earmarked Reserves	76.6	84.5
General Reserves	26.0	32.5
Specific Investment	27.9	16.9
DSG	-33.2	-77.9
Medium-Term Financial Risk Reserve	39.5	58.0
Schools' Reserves	18.1	17.3
Total Reserves	194.5	154.4

Borrowing and investments

The management of the Council's borrowings and investments is the foundation of its treasury management activities. These activities are conducted prudently and flexibly to ensure sufficient liquidity is maintained for day-to-day cash flow needs, while also supporting capital expenditure at the lowest possible cost. All treasury operations are carried out within the strategic framework set by the annually reviewed and approved Treasury Management Strategy.

Interest income and expenditure arising from investments and borrowings are reflected in the Council's revenue budgets.

Throughout the year, the Council maintained a net investment position, with total investments exceeding total borrowings. As of 31 March 2025, long-term borrowings stood at £272.98

million—unchanged from the beginning of the financial year, with no new borrowing or repayments made. Total treasury investments amounted to £285.15 million, down from £346.26 million on 31 March 2024, a reduction of £61.11 million.

The reduction in investment balances reflects a deliberate strategy to utilise internal borrowing and operate with lower cash reserves, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the Council's balance sheet.

The investment portfolio included short-term loans to other local authorities and housing associations, deposits with banks, money market funds, and investments in variable net asset value funds.

Pensions

The majority of the Council's employees (excluding schools) are members of the Warwickshire Local Government Pension Scheme, and the Council administers the fund that supports the Scheme. At the end of 2024/25 our share of the scheme showed a net liability of £16.0m.

Both the accounts for the County Council and the Pension Fund are included in this

document, although they are operated as independent entities. The County Council's accounts reflect the pension disclosures relating only to its own employees. This includes disclosures for those staff with alternative pension schemes, such as Teachers and Firefighters. The net liability for our share of these nationally administered schemes is £219.8m.

Management of Risk

The successful delivery of the Council Plan and Council Delivery Plan and our sustainability into the future are dependent on our ability to manage and respond to the risks we face. Many

potential issues will remain on the strategic risk register and be regularly monitored, while others are actively managed to reduce the risk or its impact. Further information can be found

in the Annual Governance Statement section
within this document.

Our performance in 2024/25

£26 million
of external funding secured
by Communities or other
WCC services/ partners to
support Council priorities.



99%

of planning
applications
determined as Highway
Authority within their
statutory time period.



54%
of household waste
re-used, recycled
and composted.

86.2%
of Warwickshire
premises with
gigabit capable
broadband.



There has been a **-0.43%**
decrease in e-books and audio
loans overall, individually
eBooks have gone down by
approximately **15%**, eAudio on
the other hand have gone up
by approximately **8%**



To date **117,906** trees
planted against our
commitment to plant one
tree for each resident of
Warwickshire

56.3%
of Key Stage 4 pupils in
Warwickshire achieved 9 -
5 (Strong Pass) in English
and Maths GCSEs





The Customer Service Centre answered over **156,000** calls over the year and we are proud that customer satisfaction levels have remained high with an average of **91%**



1,740 Safe & Well visits delivered by Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.

60%

of Key Stage 2 Warwickshire pupils achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths



89.2%

of commissioned provision (agency foster care or residential) where our children and young people are placed is rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted (March 2025)



717 

of people with SEND supported by the Warwickshire Supported Employment Service

4,426

emergency incidents attended by Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service



99.2%

of adult social care, reablement and occupational therapy service users were happy with the service they received.





Our Registration Service conducted **2,828 ceremonies** (Marriages and Civil Partnerships) and **1019 Citizenship ceremonies**

2,542 people (or 56.1% of those eligible) open to Adult Social Care with eligible needs and aged over 65 were supported to live in the community



1,908 people (or 82.6% of those eligible) open to Adult Social Care with eligible needs and aged under 65 were supported to live in the community



1,049,490 visits were made to Warwickshire's Country Parks



£6.5 million of investment

secured by Warwickshire businesses as result of WCC funded business support activities



94.3% of 16/17-year-olds participating in education and training



Performance Overview for 2024/25

The Council's ambition is to make Warwickshire the best it can be, and the Council Plan 2022-27 sets out how we will make this happen. It sets out three strategic priorities we will work towards:

- **We want Warwickshire to be a County with a thriving economy and places with the right jobs, skills, and infrastructure;**
- **A place where people can live their best lives; where communities and individuals are supported to live safely, healthily, happily and independently; and**
- **A County with sustainable futures which means adapting to and mitigating climate change and meeting net zero commitments.**

To make this happen, we will be a great Council and partner: one which harnesses community power, uses data and digital solutions to improve service efficiency and is a great organisation to work in with outstanding leadership and a talented agile workforce.

These three strategic priorities are further supported by seven Areas of Focus and our progress this year is detailed against these.

Create vibrant places with safe and inclusive communities

Following a review of how Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (WFRS) uses its resources, a public consultation took place on a new delivery model helping WFRS better align resources to the risks and demands across the County. Feedback from 1,300 responses was used to shape a new operating model subsequently approved by Cabinet.

This new way of working offers a number of improvements on the current model, including:

- Providing 14 fire engines during the day, when activity is highest, and 13 at night, when the risk is lower, a significant improvement from the current 11 engines during the day and 8 at night.
- Providing WFRS with a 27% increase in capacity to conduct prevention work,

helping to stop fires and incidents before they occur.

- Improving average response times for the most urgent incidents across the County by 58 seconds to under 10 minutes, ensuring quicker assistance when and where it is needed the most. It also improves the average response time for a second engine when this is needed.

The official launch of the new Minerva Hot Fire Training facility in Rugby took place in January 2025, the first of its kind in the county. The centre provides a safe and secure environment to carry out hot fire training, meaning our firefighters can train in realistic scenarios.

Following a re-visit by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in February 2025, WFRS was notified in March 2025 that the outstanding Cause of Concern relating to Fire Protection has been discharged. This is a result of significant steps taken by WFRS to address the concern and improve how we keep the communities of Warwickshire Safe through our Protection activities.

Our Trading Standards and Community Safety Teams have been actively working to enhance community safety and inclusivity. This year, we launched a successful Virtual Reality (VR) knife project targeting young people and schools, using VR headsets to simulate real-life scenarios and facilitate meaningful dialogues.

We received significant funding from the Home Office, which praised our efforts in preventing serious violence and recognized our prevent strategy as a national best practice. We have produced a local guide on making a Prevent referral, offering detailed instructions on what to include, what happens to the referral, and where to find additional help and support. Additionally, we have introduced a refreshed programme of Prevent training events and recently launched new e-learning products.

Our Team has delivered multi-agency training to partners, achieving record participation levels and introducing a new serious violence prevention training program and engaged with our communities through various initiatives, including the Your Say survey, the Big

Conversation 2, Modern Slavery Conference, and Safer Streets events.

Trading Standards remains focused on tackling the sale of illicit vapes and tobacco, especially to underage children, and has secured external funding to enhance these activities. Protecting vulnerable consumers from rogue traders is another priority, with ongoing investigations and prosecutions.

Our Road Safety Team continue to focus their efforts on making our roads safer for all users by delivering varied safety programmes across the County. This year, the road safety education team has developed several new evidence-led initiatives and interventions. They have broadened their scope of work to include interventions for young motorcyclists, a programme of work to support engagement with businesses to raise awareness of work-related road risk and legal requirements, supported a national evaluation of older driver interventions, and led the way with online events for guardians and parents of young and novice drivers, both of which received national recognition. Additionally, they have widened their community offerings to ensure a more comprehensive approach to road safety education, including delivering weekly child seat check events across the County.

Our School Streets traffic management scheme which improves road safety and air quality outside schools was piloted at Eastlands Primary School. The school road is closed to vehicle traffic at the start and end of the school day helping reduce congestion and air pollution, making it easier and safer to walk or cycle to school. Evaluation found a positive impact on safety and encouraging active travel so additional School Streets schemes are planned.

The Transforming Nuneaton's regeneration programme's Vicarage Street development achieved an approved outline design for the new library and business centre, together with new housing and landscaping together representing a total investment of circa £40 million. Also complete is the outline planning process with consent secured in April 2024. This demolition phase has been procured and

planned to start in the summer of 2025 with the new build due to follow later in 2025.

Deliver major infrastructure, digital connectivity, and improved transport options

During the last year significant progress has been made on our major infrastructure schemes that aim to improve our networks across the County.

We play a significant part in delivering the Warwickshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP4), adopted in July 2023 after extensive consultation, outlining a vision for safe, sustainable transport over the next decade. The plan, shaped by over 300 responses and input from a Citizen's Panel, includes detailed Area Strategies for local transport improvements and an annually updated Implementation Plan. Additionally, Warwickshire County Council has secured over £4 million in Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) grant funding for electric vehicle charge points and a community charging hub, with delivery expected to start in late 2025/26.

In October, Cabinet approved an additional £3.7 million to the Capital Programme to initiate preparations for a highway improvement scheme at the roundabout of Europa Way, Gallows Hill, Harbury Lane, and Heathcote Lane in Leamington. This scheme is necessary due to recent developments in the area, which include approximately 900 new dwellings, a primary school, a local community centre, and a 500-vehicle park & ride facility. The carriageway will be widened, a new footpath and cycleway will be built, along with a signalised crossing to further improve safety.

A year-long scheme is underway to make improvements to the Ford Foundry (Myton Road / Old Warwick Road) and Queensway roundabouts in Leamington. The scheme aims to increase capacity through the provision of additional lanes; enable better control of traffic by installing intelligent traffic signals; create a corridor of connected cycling and walking links; increase business and retail activity in the area through improved links to Warwick and Leamington town centres; and future-proof for

the increased population from homes identified in the Warwick District Local Plan.

The A46 Stoneleigh Junction has experienced significant, unforeseen technical difficulties, which are being addressed with the contractor, partner agencies and funders. Plans are being developed for the re-start of construction.

Other work is on track to be completed in the autumn and relates to the realignment of the A4177 Birmingham / Hatton Road to include a priority junction which will allow access into the new Union View housing development.

In November 2024, Cabinet approved a new vision for access around Leamington Spa town centre. This is the roadmap for a sustainable and attractive town centre where active travel is encouraged and enabled, where the economy can thrive, and air quality and sense of place are improved. We are one of three partners on the Leamington Transformation Board who will seek to bring the plan to fruition.

Coventry electric bus scheme: Carbon-free travel is key to the Council's sustainable futures commitment. In January 2025 Cabinet approved a £1.3 million investment into the Coventry All Electric Bus City Scheme. The scheme benefits both Coventry and Warwickshire and will see Coventry being the UK's first city to have all-electric buses with the fleet serving numerous cross-boundary services on key routes in Warwickshire. The procurement aims to introduce the new all-electric buses by December 2025.

Our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, adopted in February 2024, outlines a vision for a cohesive active travel network. We retained our level two national active travel capability rating, which influences government funding allocations. In February 2025, the Government announced nearly £3 million in additional funding for active travel schemes. Schemes for 2024/25 included routes on Coventry Road, Harbury Lane, and Warwick Road, as well as an upgraded section of the Lias Line, totalling 8km of new infrastructure and approximately £5.5 million in investment, primarily from external grants.

We are making good progress in the development of a new railway station to the east of Rugby at Houlton, with important milestones of securing outline planning permission and securing the land required for the new Rugby Parkway station being achieved in 2024.

Warwickshire Property and Development Group (WPDG) and Develop Warwickshire (a Joint Venture between the Council, WPDG and Countryside Homes) was created to deliver affordable and market-priced homes, as well as a range of commercial, mixed-use and renewable energy opportunities. During the year WPDG continued to develop a number of schemes across the County such as construction of 9 commercial units at Sucham Park Southam to support small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); plans for 52 homes at Manor Park; plans for 27 homes (26% affordable) on unused land at Trent Road, Nuneaton; plans for 28,000 sq. feet of small commercial units in support of SMEs and a serviced development plot to enable Warwick District Council to build a new Royal Mail sorting office at Fusiliers Way; 71 new homes completed with solar panels, air source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points as standard at Brookmill Meadows, Warton; and at Top Farm, Nuneaton which is a multi-phase scheme of approx. 1,725 new dwellings and a new local leisure facility, new primary and a secondary school will be built on the site, over 50 homes are in development.

WPDG is also managing the following activities on behalf of the Council: Blue Boar Minerals Extraction in Rugby and managing lettings and tenancy matters for the Council on more than 600 Council owned properties including commercial offices, public buildings, farms, County parks, nature reserves, charitable housing, group homes, academy schools, community centres and other assets across the County.

Promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth, successful business, good quality jobs and future skills

Warwickshire's economic landscape in 2024/25 has been marked by progress and strategic initiatives, driving growth and development

across the region. The year has seen significant milestones that underscore our commitment to fostering a thriving economy, enhancing employment opportunities, and supporting business development.

June saw the presentation of the new 10-year Warwickshire Economic Growth Strategy, which is a focused, ambitious, inclusive, and sustainable growth plan. It lays out a vision for the future, aiming to create a balanced and resilient economy that benefits all residents. The strategy emphasizes the importance of innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability, ensuring that Warwickshire remains competitive and forward-looking in the years to come.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Investment Zone has progressed significantly with the collaboration of partners at the West Midlands Combined Authority and West Midlands Growth Company. This strategic economic initiative will inject over £20 million of capital investment into a state-of-the-art Gigafactory. This will be a catalyst for economic growth, aiming to create almost 10,000 jobs and supporting the wider supply chain across the region.

Significantly, under its Devolution Deal with Government the Council will be entrusted with the responsibility for Adult Education starting in 2026, with estimated funding of £7 million, alongside responsibility for £5 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) beginning in 2025. This devolution marks a pivotal moment for Warwickshire enabling the Council, with partners, to tailor educational programs to meet specific needs of businesses and their communities, fostering a more skilled and adaptable workforce.

Warwickshire continues to attract foreign investment and latest figures for 2023-24 show that the Coventry & Warwickshire sub-regional functional economic area welcomed 54 foreign investment projects, slightly down from 56 in the previous year. These projects spanned key sectors such as automotive and future mobility, digital creative and software, e-commerce and logistics, and MedTech. The region's strong performance in employment, with 2,717 new and safeguarded jobs, placed it fifth for most

new jobs by area in the UK. Notably, Coventry & Warwickshire emerged as the leading UK destination for foreign direct investment per capita, with one project per 21,000 population. Recent investment projects included contributions from global giants like Accenture, BMW, GM, Polestar, TATA, Tencent, Virtuous, and Visteon, highlighting the region's attractiveness to international investors. The Warwickshire Skills Hub provides a range of employment and skills to support local residents to retain and access employment. Delivering over 25 programmes, the hub has supported careers, businesses, and employment activities across Warwickshire. In the calendar year of 2024, a record number of 918 businesses received support, up from 361 in 2023. The Warwickshire Careers Hub has worked with over 95% of secondary schools and colleges, positively impacting 89,390 young people. The inclusive offer has supported priority groups with initiatives like inclusive apprenticeships and the Future Destination Hub, aiding 57 young people at risk of falling out of education or training. Warwickshire Supported Employment has been instrumental in preparing 577 individuals with learning disabilities and/or autism for work, with 471 moving towards paid employment and achieving a 90% retention rate.

Warwickshire has embraced new opportunities through programmes like the Coventry and Warwickshire WorkWell Programme and Connect to Work. Funded by the Department for Work and Pensions, the WorkWell Programme has supported 120 people with mental health and health conditions to gain or retain work. Connect to Work offers dedicated support for 700 people with learning disabilities and/or autism, health, and mental health barriers to employment, backed by an annual fund of £2.8 million until 2029. These initiatives reflect Warwickshire's commitment to inclusive growth and support for vulnerable populations.

The Business Growth Warwickshire Programme supported by UKSPF, has engaged 1,728 businesses since its launch in November 2023, with 354 businesses benefiting from intensive support, 22 new businesses created, and 386 jobs safeguarded. The Warwickshire Business Energy Advice Service has supported 155 businesses to develop decarbonisation plans,

awarded £694,065 of grants, and is expected to save businesses just under £200,000 per annum on energy bills. The Warwickshire Investment Fund has provided £3.4 million of loans and grants, supporting 36 businesses and safeguarding 102 jobs, while leveraging £3.7 million of private sector investment. The Multiply Programme has supported over 2,500 residents to improve their numeracy skills since its launch in 2022.

Warwickshire has been a proud partner of the Innovate UK Launchpad, which is aimed at supporting clusters of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and the most innovative businesses to progress their ideas toward commercialisation, contributing to local economic growth, attracting £4.35 million to the Coventry and Warwickshire area. Over 80 applications have been submitted for support, focusing on collaborations and research and development for the Creative and Immersive cluster. This initiative underscores Warwickshire's commitment to fostering innovation and supporting emerging sectors.

The Business Growth Team has played a pivotal role in supporting businesses, raising £414,000 in grant funding, matched by £200,000 in private sector investment. The team's efforts have contributed to the success of 8 awards received in Warwickshire this year, highlighting the region's vibrant business environment.

The BBC has pledged £100,000 from its Apprenticeship Levy Fund to WCC, enabling people across Warwickshire who want to work in the media, creative and digital industries, or who already are in the sector, learn while they earn. WCC is one of several Councils receiving levy funds from the national broadcaster so they can encourage SMEs in their area to apply for the funds so they can recruit apprentices and create apprenticeships for their businesses.

Funding for the Connect to Work programme was agreed at Cabinet in January 2025 to enable supported employment services to engage with 700 people with health conditions each year until 2027, with a possible extension into 2029. The scheme is part of the government's 'Get Britain Working' initiative and will make use of Department for Work & Pensions grant funding to build on the work

already put in place by Warwickshire's Supported Employment Service.

Tackle climate change, promote biodiversity and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero

The Sustainable Futures Strategy sets out the Council's environmental ambitions by 2030 and 2050, while adapting services, communities, and businesses to climate changes. Over the past year, significant reductions in Council emissions have been achieved, particularly in electricity (24%), street lighting (17%), and business travel (26%). The Estates Decarbonisation Strategy is progressing, with investments in renewables such as new solar panels. Training and development programmes have built capability to support the Sustainable Futures strategy, and an annual staff sustainability survey is helping engage staff in this work.

We have transitioned some of our own vehicles to electric this year with a new electric utility vehicle which has recently been delivered to Kingsbury Water Park for our Rangers to use and two new electric mobile libraries, replacing the old diesel ones. These new vehicles are similar in size and service, offering the same number of books, and makes 250 stops across the County every four weeks and are equipped with lifts, low entrances, and ramps for wheelchair users. The electric vehicles are environmentally friendly, producing zero emissions and reducing air and noise pollution, marking a significant step towards sustainable library services in Warwickshire.

Developing a Local Area Energy Plan for Warwickshire is underway to ensure energy security and sustainable solutions. Partnerships with local Councils and voluntary sector partners are helping to inspire community action. Communication efforts include podcasts and community events to promote sustainability. Additionally, a dedicated Adaptation Officer is working to manage climate risks, and sustainability elements have been introduced to the Councillor Grants process to encourage sustainable practices.

Restoring biodiversity, creating beautiful pockets of natural space in urban areas and ways of soaking up carbon are all aims as we

create a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Warwickshire. A Warwickshire Nature Recovery Survey was used to gather the opinions of our residents up until September, with findings published in March 2025. An engagement programme is supporting the strategy.

The Council committed to plant a tree for every resident of Warwickshire a few years ago and to date 117,906 have been planted out of the 2030 target of 555,000. Progress has been good having established our tree nursery but challenges of finding available land remain.

Deliver our Child Friendly Warwickshire strategy - Happy, healthy, safe children

There are several achievements this year within this Area of Focus.

As part of our commitment to ensure good quality residential homes that are local and within children's own communities, we continue to progress new and utilise our own Children's Homes. There are currently 5 open homes with 15 places available and being used: Cherry Tree House, Acorn Lodge, Oak Tree, Beechwood House, Silver Birch House. One further home is in the pipeline, which will help to support additional children within the County.

We were successful in our application to the Department for Education for Wave 2 of the Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme. In collaboration with local partners, we are developing new models for family support and safeguarding, and multi-agency teams are being created, benefiting families and practitioners. It will make sure targeted early help is available for families suffering domestic abuse, addiction, or poor mental health; to help them overcome adversity before issues escalate and children are put at risk of harm.

In October 2024 Warwickshire Fostering announced the release of Everything, a heartfelt short film that shines a light on the life-changing impact of fostering. The film tells the poignant story of foster carer Mike and his family on a journey through time with two of the children they have looked after, who are now adults, illustrating the vital role foster

carers play in providing stability and love to children who need it most.

Warwickshire Legends, a football team whose players are all care experienced youngsters, won this year's care leavers football championship. The tournament is an annual regional West Midlands event involving local authority care leaver teams. Warwickshire entered this year's competition aiming to defend their trophy after their victory in 2023 and, again, triumphed. Most team members arrived in Warwickshire as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

One of our goals is to enable children and young people to excel at all levels of learning and gain essential life skills. One way it has done this is through hosting more than 100 work experience placements in the academic year, covering students from Year 10 onwards in service areas including Libraries, Country Parks, Legal Services, Highways, Business Intelligence and Marketing and Communications.

The Warwickshire Youth Council was pleased to announce the opening of its Warwickshire Youth Council Project Grant Fund, aimed at supporting the County's community and voluntary organisations that provide essential services for young people aged 11-17. The fund is designed to strengthen youth provision in three key areas: Crime and safety, experience in schools, and mental health. The funding supports projects through grants of up to £5,000 over a 12-month period, ensuring initiatives are accessible to young people at times and in locations that suit their needs.

Warwickshire's young voices took centre stage at the House of Commons on Friday, 28 February 2025, as Members of Youth Parliament from across the UK, British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, gathered for the annual sitting of the UK Youth Parliament. Representing Warwickshire, Kaddy (15), Christian (16), and Olivia (15) voiced the concerns of young people. Kaddy spoke in the debate on whether public transport should be free for young people, advocating for fair and accessible travel.

Through education, improve life opportunities for children, young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities

This Area of Focus is a priority for us as we endeavour to support schools and help children to reach their full potential.

In July we released our Education Strategy for 2024-2029, which focusses on four key priorities; Best Start, SEND and Inclusion, Sufficiency and Admissions, and a Strong System.

We also published the Warwickshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 in March 2024. Parents, carers, and others with an interest in SEND, were invited to sign up to a one-off webinar to learn more. The strategy has been shaped through the collaborative efforts of the Warwickshire SEND and Inclusion Partnership Board, drawing on a wide range of expertise and experiences. The strategy focuses on six delivery priorities for the next five years, covering commissioning SEND provision, specialist resourced provisions, education health care needs assessments, promoting inclusive practice, preparing for adulthood, and improving workforce development and collaborative working, alongside meeting statutory requirements.

In September we announced additional funding totalling £20.76 million for our Education Capital Programme ensuring the Council can meet growing demand for school places and early years provision by expanding existing provision or creating new schemes.

In September work officially commenced on a new two form entry primary school in Warwickshire named Myton Gardens. Located off Fusiliers Way, the school will provide places in both key stage one and two, with an attached nursery for 34 children and dedicated provision for up to 14 places for SEND children.

Funded by the Department for Education's high needs capital allocation for 2024-2028, the Delivering Better Value programme identified the criticality of increasing the number of SEND

Resourced Provisions across the County from 168 in January 2024 to 529 places by 2028. Increasing Resourced Provision enables more children to attend mainstream school with specialised support and promotes an inclusive environment. As of March 2025, there were 272 places open, with 236 occupied and the highest % of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending a mainstream school reached at 37.9% , the highest proportion since 2018.

The latest data shows that Warwickshire is exceeding national and regional averages for early years education take up for children between the ages of 9 months and 4 years old. Recent figures have revealed that take-up in the County (79%) is higher than the regional (73%) and national (75%) levels. Early education plays a crucial role in a child's social and cognitive development, and this scheme ensures that more children can reap these benefits.

This academic year, there were 6,002 Warwickshire children who applied for a Reception place by the application deadline. Of those, 91.5% have been offered a place at their first-choice school. A further 7% have been offered a place at another of their top school choices. 7,172 Warwickshire children applied for a secondary school place by the application deadline. 81.4% have been offered a place at their first-choice school. A further 13.9% have been offered a place at another of their school choices. This was the first year in Warwickshire where for both the Secondary National Offer Day and Primary National Offer Day the Council automatically accepted school place offers on behalf of each family, reducing the actions parents needed to take.

In September 2025, following extensive preparation work across 2024, Warwickshire Year 7 students will benefit from a simplified school transport process. Rather than having to complete application forms, the Home to School Transport Team will contact families directly to confirm their eligibility by the first week of the summer to confirm arrangements. This approach is designed to simplify the process for eligible pupils, ensuring transport is arranged earlier and more efficiently, ahead of the new school year.

This year we have seen very significantly increasing demand for Education Health Care plans (EHCPs), which need to be completed within the statutory requirement of 20 weeks. Coupled with a backlog, we have been operating below the national average of 50% for this metric, with 19% completed in 20 weeks as of March 2025. A process review took place this year to optimise ways of working and the recommendations are being implemented, but these can only mitigate the fundamental challenge of rapidly increasing demand.

The Future Destination Hub is a unique new wraparound service to provide personalised education and employment support for 16 to 24-year-olds, launched by the six Warwickshire councils. Each person has 1-1 support by a Journey Guide to identify the barriers they face in the search for education or employment and together they identify the best pathway forward and how to overcome those barriers.

The Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) pilot began in 2024 and is now entering into the delivery phase, looking to enhance support for children with neurodivergent needs in 23 schools across the County. Funded through the government's Shared Outcomes Fund, the project will focus on providing early support and training in schools and strengthening relationships with parent carers, to foster a more inclusive learning environment. Over four months participating schools will receive intensive training and guidance to develop a greater understanding of neurodivergent children and their needs.

Support people to live healthy, happy, and independent lives and work with partners to reduce health inequalities

This has been a challenging year for us where with increasing demand in these areas of work with our communities.

As part of the adult social care assessment process, the Council has piloted a new financial self-assessment tool called Better Care Finance. This tool is now live across all adult social care teams and enables customers and their families to make more informed decisions about their

care and support needs. By offering social care customers a self-service option for completing their financial assessment earlier on in the process, customers no longer have to wait for an appointment and can enlist the help of a trusted family member or friend to fill in the form at a time and place convenient for them.

The extension of the companion pass add-on scheme, which gives a concessionary pass for a carer of people who struggle to travel independently, was also approved by Cabinet in January 2025. Giving free off-peak travel, this scheme has supported 83 people with various disabilities to travel and access services to date. Estimates suggest that a further 250-500 people might benefit from the continued rollout in the coming year.

In March 2025 the Caring Together Warwickshire Conference took place in Rugby. The free half-day conference was designed to support and connect local unpaid carers with valuable resources and information. There were guest speakers, exhibitor stands, round table discussions and supervised activities for those being cared for, allowing carers to be involved in the conference.

The % of people open to Adult Social Care with eligible needs living in the community with support over the age of 65 has been consistently below the target of 60%, reaching 56.1% in December 2024. Caring for our older population continues to be an area of very high demand, particularly with increased complexity of cases, frailty and carer fatigue. There is an overall increase in demand for residential and nursing placements, which has been carefully monitored and managed, including the impact on the Council's financial position.

The % of adult social care, reablement and occupational therapy service users happy with the service they received in March 2025 was 99.2%, or 132 out of 133 service users. This is a strong indicator that is consistently at or above the target of 96%, showing high levels of satisfaction from service users when surveyed.

We supported the month of Stoptober and No Smoking Day in March encouraging residents to quit smoking to improve their wellbeing following the launch of the new Smoke Free

Coventry and Warwickshire website. The website, funded by the Government, helps smokers across Coventry and Warwickshire by providing details of the local, free, confidential stop smoking services, as well as resources and information about smoking and vaping. In March 2025 47.6% of smokers using the Stop Smoking Service or Stop Smoking in Pregnancy Service had successfully quit at four weeks, above the 35% four week quit rate aim set by the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training.

Throughout September and as part of World Alzheimer's Month, we promoted the variety of support services available to residents in Warwickshire to help them maintain their independence for as long as possible. Our Living well with dementia website provides support and practical advice to everyone and can help those both living or supporting people with dementia to understand more about the condition, prepare for the future and access other services. In September 2024 Cabinet approved provision of day opportunities in the community, ensuring older people and people with dementia can socialise improving their quality of life and health.

The Coventry & Warwickshire Sexual Health Hub went live in April 2024 offering a range of testing and treatment services for sexually transmitted infections including HIV. It also provides sexual health advice and contraception services. Individuals seeking sexual health services can choose from four hubs located in Nuneaton, Rugby, Leamington Spa and Coventry, with both walk-in and pre-booked appointments available.

In September 2024 we published an evidence based Empowering Futures Joint Strategy Needs Assessment (JSNA) which examined the physical health needs of children across the County, to help children and young people have the best start in life.

In September 2024 we announced that all Warwickshire County Council-managed libraries, and the Market Hall Museum in Warwick, will be offering free 'grab and go' toiletry packs to those who may need them. Customers collecting a toiletry pack will be able to do so at their own discretion, and do not

need to speak to a member of staff beforehand.

The Warwickshire adult weight management service offers free, tailored assistance that focuses on long-term success. Through the programme, residents taking part received a referral to Slimming World to join a free 12-week programme. During the first year of the new Fitter Futures Warwickshire service (July 2023-June 2024), 1,020 people signed up to the service and an inspiring 85% of those who completed the programme lost weight.

The 2024 annual report from Warwickshire's Director of Public Health, Dr Shade Agboola, focused on the impact that people, communities and places have on the health and wellbeing of the population, with the report titled 'The Power of People and Place: Celebrating and inspiring community-based wellbeing'. This is closely aligned to the Council's long-term programme of work on Community Powered Warwickshire. For the first time, the report has been shared in a video format and was showcased at the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2025.

Harnessing Community Power

Access to Affordable Credit is an issue across the County, a project is planned to support the financial resilience of vulnerable groups/individuals, by raising awareness, encouraging and supporting individuals to join Citysave credit union; encouraging and supporting business to set up staff savings and borrowing schemes via payroll deduction and running training courses on budgeting, financial resilience, mental health & wellbeing, loan shark awareness as well as access to affordable credit.

During 2024, Warwickshire's Local Welfare Scheme allocated £6.9 million in funding to assist vulnerable residents and expanded its support to those facing crisis situations. Also, the scheme has provided grants totalling £183,790 to local food banks, charities, and community groups, enhancing projects related to food and energy assistance.

The Warwickshire Social Fabric Fund is worth £2.5 million. It aims to support the

development of local projects and initiatives that positively impact Warwickshire's most deprived communities and, in doing so, improve residents' life chances and reduce inequalities. The fund includes £1.5 million in capital funding and £1 million in revenue funding. 25 projects have been funded, with more than 80% of the funding awarded to projects covering priority areas in North Warwickshire Borough and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough, ranging from investment into community buildings, funding for sports, leisure, and culture groups, through to helping crucial grass-roots community organisations plan for their future. Projects will be delivered over the next 24 months and will be monitored to ensure compliance with original objectives.

We worked collaboratively with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners and local organisations across the County to organise a programme of activities for Refugee Week in June 2024. The programme aims to celebrate refugees and asylum seekers and help understand their journey of settling in the County. The theme of Refugee Week was 'Our Home' and we encouraged organisations working with the new communities to arrange activities to help them in expressing what their home means to them. Activities included a fashion show displaying traditional Afghan and Ukrainian clothing, a Ukrainian theatre production of King Lear, and a sculpture unveiling in Leamington Spa.

In September 2024, we approved a refreshed Local Councils' Charter, reaffirming our commitment to strengthening partnerships with local communities. The Charter outlines how we will work with Borough and District Councils and Town and Parish Councils to improve services and decision-making at a local level, in line with our long-term strategic approach, Community Powered Warwickshire.

Using our data and digital solutions to improve service delivery

We have a continuing aim to seek and develop innovative ways to use data and digital solutions across our organisations to improve the ways we work and our service delivery.

In January 2024, we hosted a free online event exploring the benefits and challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in adult social care and to hear from people who access care and how AI has supported them. The event provided an opportunity to talk openly about ideas, hopes and fears and the ethical use of AI and Digital Technology in adult social care and support.

We introduced Microsoft Copilot Chat across the entire organisation, enabling staff to work in new, more efficient ways using AI. We partnered with Microsoft to deliver training on how to get the most from the tool, with an incredible 1,100 members of staff taking part. We are also implementing a pilot of M365 Copilot across specific service areas before evaluating whether there are wider benefits to be achieved across the Council.

In Children & Families, a new transcription tool has been implemented, enabling staff to take recordings from meetings and automatically summarise the key points to update case notes for quality assurance by staff. The tool can save considerable time enabling staff to spend that time directly supporting children, young people and their families.

Parents and carers of newborns across the County are offered a new opportunity to register their baby for a free library membership thanks to a new initiative from our Libraries and Registration services. As part of the birth registration appointment, Registrars gift BookTrust's Bookstart packs to new parents containing useful information about the benefits of reading books and sharing stories and include a free book and finger puppet to help parents get started. Warwickshire Registration Services together with Warwickshire Libraries, offer parents the opportunity to sign-up their newborn for a free library membership at the same time as their birth registration appointment.

This year the Council needed to re-procure its education, social care, and social care finance systems as the contracts are due to end. The Client Record & Information Systems Programme (CRISP) was set up to oversee this. The procurement was approved by Cabinet in September 2024 aiming to establish a long-

term solution allowing us to use the full functionality of systems to meet the future needs of social care and education. CRISP has completed the mobilisation phase, including planning, preparation work, establishing clear goals and objectives, allocating the resources and establishing the governance to oversee the smooth running of the programme. It has now moved into implementation phase with a delivery plan and proposed timeline.

Our people and the way we work

The Our People Strategy underpins this area of focus.

Our commitment to cultivating future talent and supporting young people has been shortlisted at a national awards event that celebrates the best in workforce innovation. We were proud to have been shortlisted in the Local Government Chronicle's Workforce Awards in the Best Next Generation Employer category that looks to recognise Councils and their efforts to recruit and retain people under 30.

In March we conducted our Your Say Survey Council wide. Headline results include:

- a 58% response rate (an increase from 56% last year), the highest response rate achieved over the last 5 years;
- Employee engagement has increased to 80% from 79% last year; 84% were proud to work for WCC;
- The combined Wellbeing score has marginally decreased to 80% from 81% last year;
- 82% feel comfortable to be themselves at work, an increase from 78% last year;
- 83% agreed "working here makes me want to do the best I can" which is up from 81% last year; and
- 79% would recommend the organisation as a great place to work, which is an increase from 78% in 2024.

Sickness levels have increased throughout the year to 10.72 days per Full Time Equivalent which is above our target of 8 days (+1-day tolerance). Whilst the increasing trend is in line with the national picture across both public and private sectors, we have introduced a proactive

action plan to address the increase, focussing on long term absence and stress and mental health. Sickness absence has been regularly reviewed by the Resources and Fire Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Awards and recognition

In Warwickshire we are proud of our strong record of national recognition receiving awards as an organisation and for staff members. This year has seen significant external recognition for the Council.

Our Legal Services team has achieved recognition in two categories at the Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) Awards for 2024. Announced at LLG's Spring Conference in Leeds on Friday 7 June 2024, Warwickshire Legal Services (WLS) won the 'Excellence in Training' category, whilst also securing a Highly Commended result in the 'Lawyer of the Year'. For the 25th year the team was awarded with LEXCEL 6.1 an internationally recognised legal practice quality mark, administered by the Law Society for client care, compliance, and practice management. The assessment report highlighted that WLS delivers good practice across many areas of its work. For example, the Service's approach to strategic planning was described as "meticulous", its approach to risk management "robust", and file and case management "excellent" and "easy to navigate and user-friendly" for staff.

Our Business Intelligence (BI) team won a 'Highly Commended' award at the British Data Awards for the BI Solution of the Year for our Serious Violence Tool developed as part of the Serious Violence Needs Assessment. BI were also finalists for the Public Sector Organisation of the Year.

We were shortlisted for the second time in three years in the Public Finance Awards in the Finance Team of the Year category, which recognises the people, products and services that demonstrate excellence and originality within public finance. The shortlisted nomination recognises the project team that oversaw the migration of the Council's key financial systems to the cloud, delivering new functionality and future proofing this critical system, whilst ensuring continuation of

business-as-usual activity, and all financial systems remained available during implementation.

Warwickshire Libraries' Chatterbooks programme gained national recognition. The scheme engages with school children who may otherwise not attend their local library. Stratford-upon-Avon and Alcester Libraries have been crowned regional winners for the Midlands in the Bookseller's Library of the Year Awards. The nomination for these two libraries, while recognising the quality of the broader Warwickshire Libraries offer, was based largely on the Chatterbooks for Reluctant Readers project, which sees library staff work in partnership with local schools to support children who have lower engagement with reading.

Staff at Rugby Library also won the Highly Commended Book Club Award at the Beyond Words Book Club Awards, for its group for adults with learning difficulties.

Thrive at Work is a workplace commitment to create an organisation that promotes employee health and wellbeing. We achieved Silver Thrive at Work accreditation this year, is a significant milestone for the Council's ongoing commitment to the health and wellbeing of colleagues. It reflects work to create a supportive environment for everyone, improve our wellbeing programme, and listen to staff feedback to ensure our support offer truly meets their needs.

In November 2024, Warwickshire Property and Development Group (WPDG) landed major recognition for its contribution to unlocking investment in the County - just three years after it launched. WPDG was named Newcomer of the Year at the Insider West Midlands Property Awards 2024. Judges hailed WPDG's work as a "blueprint for public sector innovation" and said it was "an excellent example of a commercially minded local authority taking the initiative".

We achieved ISO 14001 certification for the 16th consecutive year for our strong environmental management system (EMS).

Our Children and Families Service has been recognised nationally, winning the Best Project Award from the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum for their Brothers and Sisters in Care project. This initiative has been celebrated for its exceptional work to improve outcomes for care-experienced young people, amplifying their voices, and strengthening sibling relationships in care.

Our Baby Box Project initiative initially developed by a care experienced employee at the Council support looked after young people and care leavers who have become parents, providing supplies and information to help young people prepare for parenthood and the box itself can be used as a safe space for napping. The project has been recognised nationally and selected as joint winner of the Best Project Award at The National Leaving Care Bench Marking Forum.

Two of our exceptional foster carers, were awarded Medallists of the Order of the British Empire in the New Year's Honours List for their services to fostering. Over the years, these staff have fostered children from various backgrounds and numerous countries. Despite language barriers, they have built strong connections with each child, going above and beyond researching the countries that the children were from and learned about the various cultures, food and religion.

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

During the year we heard from the new Labour Government that we had been awarded a Level 2 Devolution Deal. The Warwickshire Devolution Agreement is a significant long-term milestone for the County which provides a strong foundation from which to secure further powers and resources, further strengthen our economy and improve the life prospects for all who live, work or do business in Warwickshire.

Government published its English Devolution White Paper in December 2024, setting out ambitions for both devolution and local government reorganisation in county areas. An interim plan for local government reform in Warwickshire was submitted to Government in March 2025.

Financial performance

Revenue income and expenditure

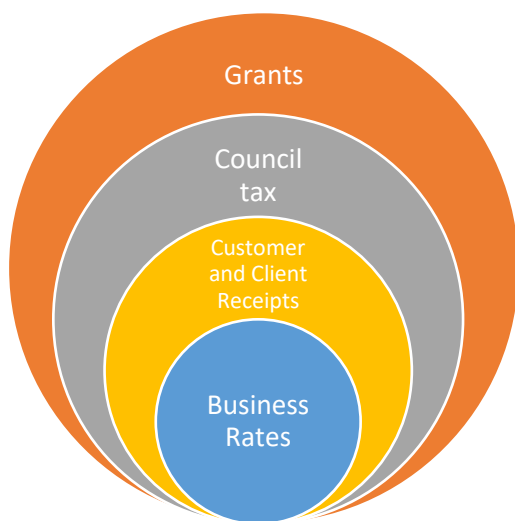
Our net revenue income from all sources in 2024/25 was £1,186.6m, £29.1m higher than the gross income budget at the beginning of the year. The increase is attributable to higher than anticipated government grants, an increase in receipts from customers for services provided and interest earned on deposits.

Revenue Income

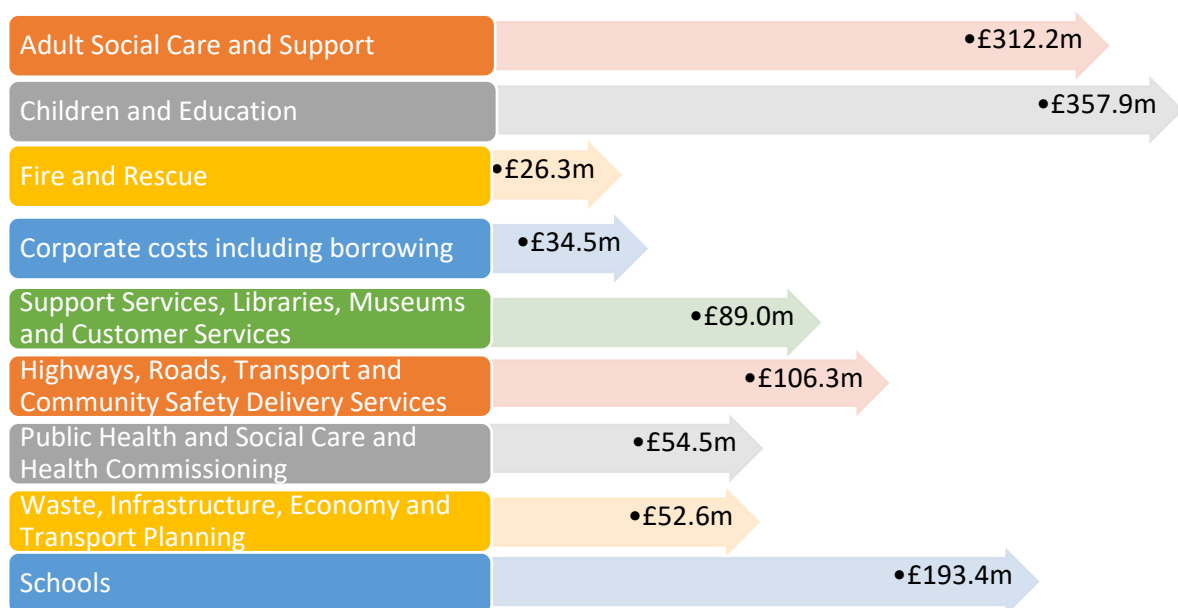
Grants	£497.1m
Council tax	£386.7m
Other Income	£208.9m
Business rates	£93.9m
Total	£1,186.6m

We spent £1,226.7m in 2024/25 on the various services we provide (including schools) and used £40.1m of one-off funding from reserves to fund the difference between income and expenditure.

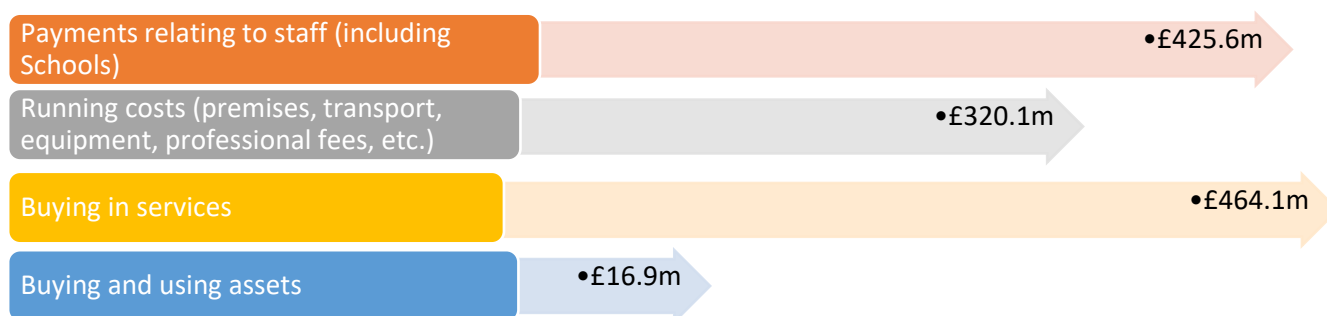
The figures above exclude technical adjustments of £146.8m. Together these figures make up the gross expenditure of £1,373.5m, as shown in our Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.



Revenue Spend by Service



Revenue Spend by Type



Revenue Underspends/Overspends

The net difference between our funding and expenditure for the year is £24.8m, through our Medium-Term Financial Strategy we planned to use £15.5m of reserves at the start of the year.

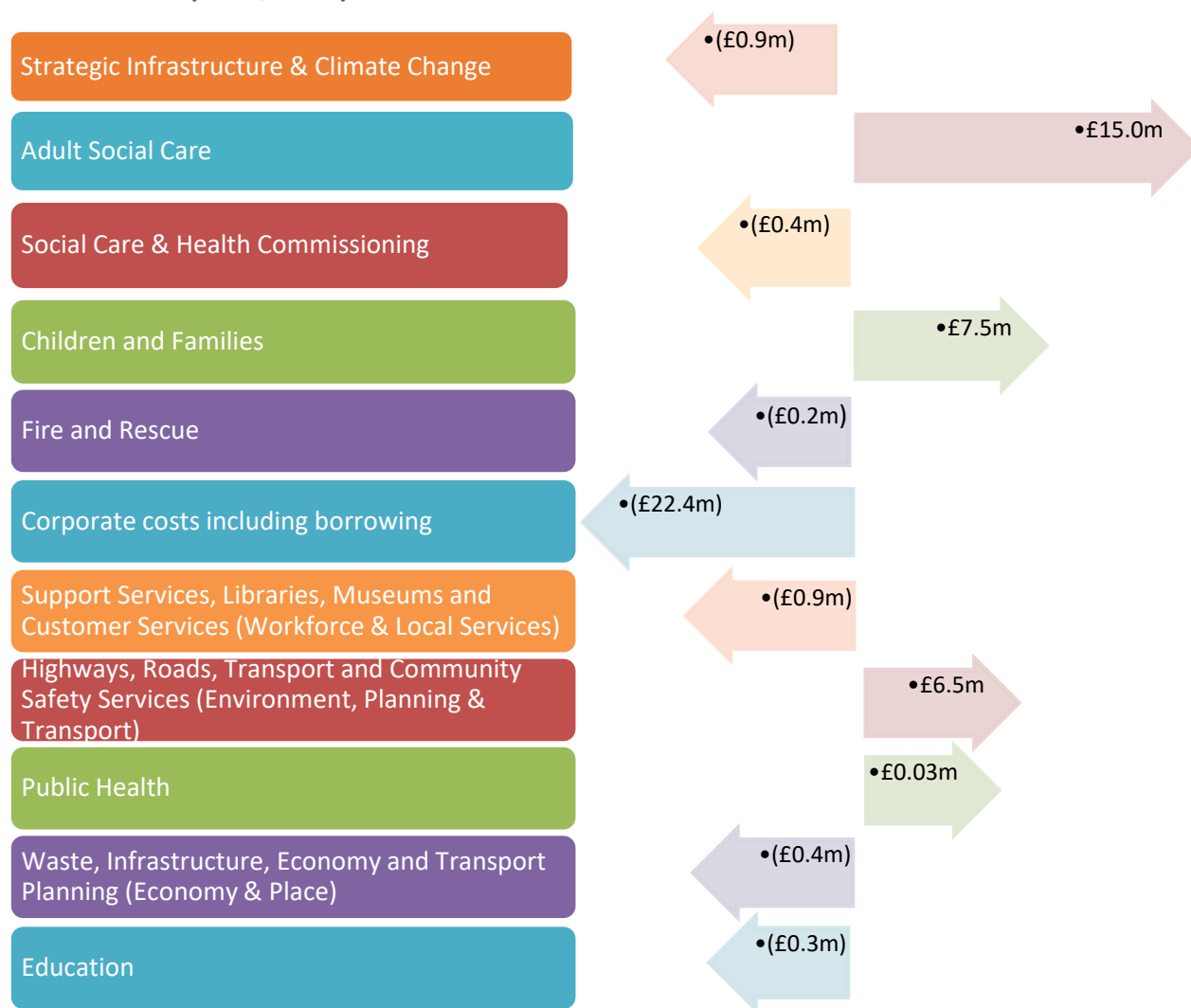
Of the additional £24.5m used from reserves during the year:

- (£2.0m) was used to fund the residual net overspend on services at the end of the financial year;
- (£3.0m) was a reduction due to allocations to specific projects delivering the Council's ambitions;

- £18.5m was to increase our financial management reserves to take account of increasing risk arising from our operating environment;
- (£44.5m) was a decrease in funds resulting from the Dedicated School Grant overspend
- £6.5m is the increase in the General Reserve per the Reserves Strategy.

The chart below shows the residual service variance after accounting for Investment Fund allocations, approved reserve movements, totalling £22.7m.

Revenue Underspends/Overspends



Capital spending and the value of our assets

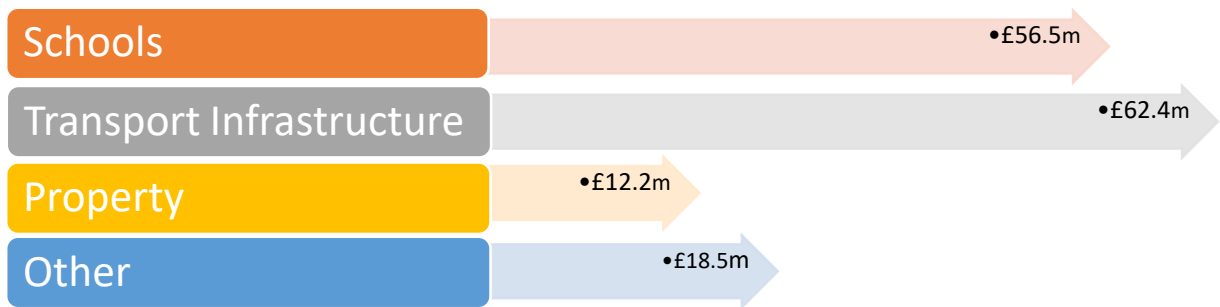
We spent £149.6m on the purchase and creation of assets in 2024/25 including £60.8m on assets owned by other parties and £3.6m of capital loans issued. Our initial estimate was £250.6m but in-year adjustments for additions (for example, to spend newly-awarded grants), reductions or rescheduling brought our approved budget for 2024/25 down to £206.6m by January 2025. Our capital spending was therefore £101.0m less than our original budget, and £57.0m less than the latest approved budget. This underspend against the approved budget was due to delays on individual projects. Most of this spending now is expected to be incurred in future years, with planned expenditure for 2025/26 being £250.6m.

The value of our fixed assets has increased from £1,467.3m to £1,526.0m in 2024/25.

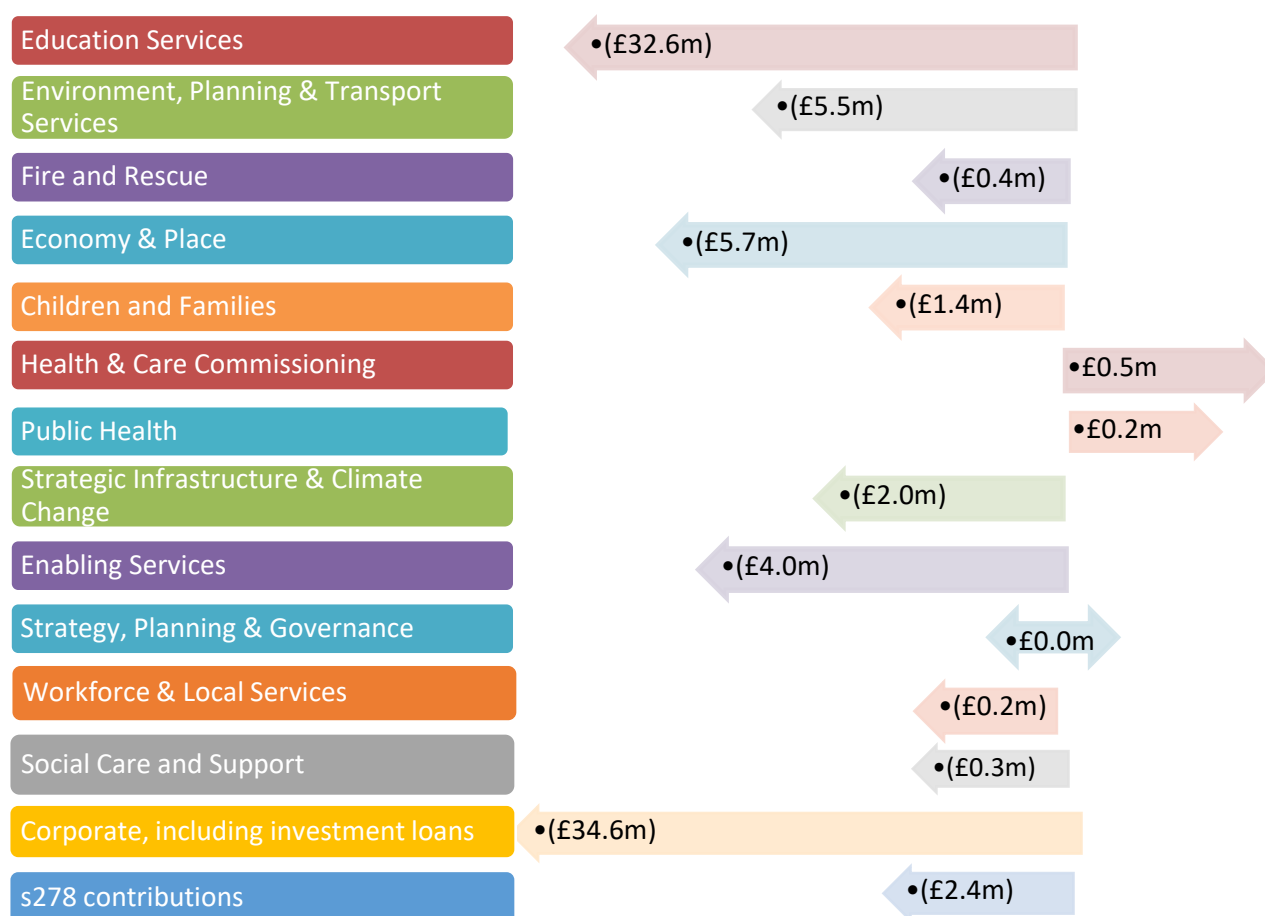
The main reasons for the £58.7m increase in the value of our assets are:

- £32.3m of assets disposed of mostly through schools transferring to Academy status;
- Capital investment of £85.2m increasing the value of our assets;
- A write-down of £65.8m to reflect our assets’ usage by services;
- A net increase in the value of our assets of £60.9m as a result of updated valuations to reflect market movements and usage changes; and
- £10.7m of right-of-use assets brought onto our balance sheet due to the implementation of accounting standard IFRS16 - Leases.

Capital Spend by Service



Capital over/underspends compared to the budget at the start of the year



Savings and efficiencies

As part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy the savings target set for the 2024/25 financial year was £16.177m. These savings were spread across a number of areas and delivered through better procurement, improvements in efficiency, increased income and delivering reductions in demand.

Some of the larger items were:

- £2.0m savings through managing the cost of externally commissioned care for adults;

- £2.4m savings by reducing the cost of children's social care including the increased use of WCC homes, boarding schools and residential schools;
- £1.7m savings by reducing demand for adult social care support through early intervention, prevention and reablement; and

61.25% of the saving target has been delivered during the year despite the ongoing challenge of the wider economic conditions.

Reserves

We planned to use £15.480m of our reserves to support the delivery of services in 2024/25. However, services spent £24.598m more than their cash-limited budget. When combined with further movements of reserves to deliver the Council's priorities, our usable revenue reserves decreased overall by £40.078m (excluding funding set aside to offset our DSG deficit).

At 31 March 2025 our usable revenue reserves were therefore £154.381 million, of which £17.3 million was held by schools. We consider this to be a robust figure and allows us some flexibility to balance the challenges of meeting current

and unknown future economic uncertainty alongside investment to improve our efficiency and the wider community economic recovery. We will continue to apply our Reserves Strategy which describes how and when these reserves should be used or added to. Based on our current Medium Term Financial Strategy it is anticipated that the level of revenue reserves will reduce to £137.501m by the end of 2029/30. However, ongoing uncertainty about Dedicated School Grant deficits caused by SEND demand and costs create significant financial risks for our balance sheet and cashflow.

Borrowing and Investments

Whilst the Council's benchmark rate of return on investment in 2024/25 was 4.45%, treasury management activity generated a higher average interest on investments of 4.96%. This performance also exceeded the average yield of 4.66% recorded by six comparable local authorities. In line with the Treasury Management Strategy, the Council has prioritised security, then liquidity and finally

yield within its treasury management investments. Our treasury management activity involved investing in banks, building societies and other local authorities, as well as through external fund managers operating cash, property and bond funds. Debt outstanding was £272.98 million at 31 March 2025, with £285.15 million of cash, cash equivalents and investments.

Pensions

At 31 March 2025 our total pensions net liability was £235.7m, a decrease of £49.4m over the year. The increase is largely attributable to the re-measurement of the net liability relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme to

recognise the changes in actuarial assumptions at the balance sheet date. This remains within the expected range and we are confident that this liability is well managed within the statutory arrangements.

Outlook

Pre-Existing Financial Challenges

The current Council Plan approved in February 2022 is supported by a 5-year Medium-Term Financial Strategy and reserves strategy that are updated annually. This gives greater alignment of the financial position and plans of the Council to the strategic priorities of thriving economy and places, sustainable futures and safe and healthy communities, as well as managing the risk inherent in providing a diverse range of services to our diverse communities funded by numerous income streams.

The financial strategy recognised a number of risks to be monitored, managed and where uncontrollable to be financially underwritten:

- The broader economic environment, such as the impacts of movement in inflation, housing growth, council tax base and interest rates on our day-to-day costs, income and debt repayments;
- Sustained inflationary pressures and cost of living increases putting pressure on staff costs, recruitment and retention and impacting on service resilience;
- prolonged uncertainty around future Government about local government financing, including the Government's Fair Funding Review 2.0;
- dependence on locally collected Business Rates, placing greater importance on the need to maintain reserves to manage any volatility;
- the results (financial and social) from our commercial investment activities; and
- unsustainable delivery of Special Educational Needs services within the level of DSG funding provided by Government and the delay in the resolution to the DSG Statutory Override and its impacts on the Council's financial resilience and sustainability.

Inflation and the macroeconomic environment

We are now experiencing a period of declining inflation and stagnating growth, however, inflation is currently falling less sharply than expected and interest rates remain at a higher level than has been the case over the last decade. Inflationary pressures and interest rates have significantly impacted living standards. Economic forecasts remain volatile and uncertain.

Against this challenging backdrop we are expecting to experience continuing increase in the demand for council services.

The current economic climate, inflationary pressures and rapidly growing demands may result in the need for some agility and flexibility in resource allocations and the prioritisation of our activity, while maintaining focus on the delivery of our priorities as set out in the Council Plan.

Major Developments

Two major developments that we brought forward in 2020/21 to support economic growth and Warwickshire's recovery after the Covid-19 Pandemic are in their fifth year of operation.

Warwickshire Property and Development Group (WPDG) is a local authority trading group set up to deliver our policy objective of creating jobs and more homes across Warwickshire. During 2024, the group commenced work on-site for its second development project and increased the tenant occupancy of its industrial unit development in Southam to 100%.

A joint venture partnership between WPDG, the Council and Countryside Partnerships PLC, called Develop Warwickshire, was incorporated in December 2022 and a significant increase in activity is in train with material investment

planned as a number of sites come forward for development. The first development project at Brookmill Meadows in North Warwickshire is due to be completed in 2025 and the second development project at Milby Meadows in Nuneaton and Bedworth is currently underway.

The Warwickshire Investment Fund was set up to provide access to finance, on a repayable basis, that helps businesses in Warwickshire start, grow and scale-up; helps businesses locate in the county; and leverages additional resources for the County through investment and support for key growth businesses.

The forecast level of demand for investment was reassessed during 2023/24 resulting in the investment fund being reduced from £104m to £64.4m over the next three years and at the end of the 2024/25 financial year £20.6m of lending had been approved by Cabinet.

Basis of preparation and presentation

In considering this report, readers should note that the comparison of spend against service budgets which we use internally to assess our financial performance is not directly comparable to the cost of services disclosed in the Statement of Accounts. This is mainly due to the accounting adjustments required to comply with international financial reporting requirements, which do not impact on the amount of our

spending to be met by local taxpayers, which is central to our in-year monitoring of our financial performance. The key differences relate to the way in which we account for items such as depreciation, impairment, reserves, provisions and carry-forwards. Each of these items is explained further in our accounting policies or the glossary.

Core Financial Statements

These comprise the four key pieces of information in the Statement of Accounts

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Balance Sheet
<p>An accounting deficit of £76.3m for 2024/25 has been reported; the outturn position is a £24.8m deficit.</p> <p><i>This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. The main factors in the move are capital depreciation, revaluation and pensions charges.</i></p>	<p>An increase of £24.3m in County Council's net assets as at 31 March 2025.</p> <p><i>The balance sheet shows the value of the assets and liabilities recognised by the County Council. At 31 March 2025 the County Council's net worth was £1,144.8m.</i></p>
Cash Flow Statement	Movement in Reserves Statement
<p>A net cash outflow of £9.8m in 2024/25 in cash or cash equivalents.</p> <p><i>This statement summarises the cash that has been paid to us and which we have paid to other organisations and individuals.</i></p>	<p>An increase of £4.0m in the County Council's usable reserves, made up of an increase of £4.6m in revenue reserves and decrease of £0.6m in capital reserves.</p> <p><i>This statement shows the movement in year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into usable reserves (i.e. those that can be used to fund spending or reduce taxation) and other reserves.</i></p>

Statement of accounting policies

This summarises the accounting rules and conventions we have used in preparing these financial statements. There have been no changes to our accounting policies during the year.

Notes to the core financial statements

The notes include more detail to support the information contained in the core financial statements as well as information on critical judgements and assumptions applied in the production of the accounts.

Other sections of this Document

As well as the Statement of Accounts for the County Council, this document includes separate sections for the Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of Accounts for the Warwickshire Pension Fund.

The Annual Governance Statement describes the Council's Governance Framework and system of internal control. It includes a review of the effectiveness of this system in the past year and identifies key risks for the Council to manage in

the future. The Annual Governance Statement also covers the Warwickshire Pension Fund.

The Warwickshire Pension Fund's Statement of Accounts describes the Fund's financial position and performance in 2024/25. While the County Council administers the Fund, the Fund's accounts represent its activities on behalf of all its member organisations. Further information about the Fund can be found in Note 1 of that document.



Rob Powell
Executive Director for Resource

