CUSTOMER AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE – 13 NOVEMBER 2014

A meeting of the Customer and Partnerships Committee will be held at 5.30pm on Thursday 13 November 2014 at the Learn Warwickshire Hub, 6 Mitchell Court, Castle Mound Way, Central Park, Rugby.

Councillor Andy Coles
Chairman of Customer of Partnerships Committee

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Minutes.
   To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2014.

2. Apologies.
   To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest
   To receive declarations of -
   (a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors;
   (b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors;
   (c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

   Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their non-pecuniary interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a pecuniary interest, the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.

   Membership of Warwickshire County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.
4. Rugby Youth Council – standing item.
7. Sustainable drainage systems: Feedback from Warwickshire County Council’s flooding summit.
9. Committee Work Programme.

Any additional papers for this meeting can be accessed via the website.

The Reports of Officers (Ref. CUSP 2014/15-04) are attached.

Membership of the Committee: -

Councillors Coles (Chairman), Allen, Birkett, Buckley, Butlin, Hazelton, Mrs New, Mrs O’Rourke and Sandison

If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Linn Ashmore, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer (01788 533522 or e-mail Linn.Ashmore@rugby.gov.uk). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.

If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer named above.
Name of Meeting  Customer and Partnerships Committee

Date of Meeting  13 November 2014

Report Title  Neighbourhood Planning

Ward Relevance  None

Contact Officer  Debbie Dawson, Tel: 01788 533592

Summary  A light touch review of neighbourhood planning was included in the committee’s work programme for 2013-14, with the aim being to capture learning from the Coton Park neighbourhood planning pilot about the benefits and resource implications of supporting local areas to produce a neighbourhood plan. The review will help inform the council’s approach to neighbourhood planning across the borough.

Financial Implications  The committee’s meeting is being held at The Hub at Central Park. The associated costs are expected to be around £80 - £100.

Risk Management Implications  There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications  There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications  The Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers (available from April 2012) for local communities to produce neighbourhood plans for their local area. There is a detailed statutory framework that must be followed in the production of neighbourhood plans.

Equality and Diversity  No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.
Summary

A light touch review of neighbourhood planning was originally included in the committee’s work programme for 2013-14, with the aim being to capture learning from the Coton Park neighbourhood planning pilot about the benefits and resource implications of supporting local areas to produce a neighbourhood plan. The review will help inform the council’s approach to neighbourhood planning across the borough.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this light touch review, which was originally included in the committee’s work programme for 2013-14, is to capture learning from the Coton Park neighbourhood planning pilot about the benefits and resource implications of supporting local areas to produce a neighbourhood plan. This is to help inform the council’s approach to neighbourhood planning across the borough. The item was deferred to the current municipal year as progress with the pilot had been slower than anticipated.

It is intended that this review will assist the council in reaching an informed policy position about the level and nature of the council’s support for neighbourhood planning in the borough. The agreed one page strategy is attached at appendix 1.

At the meeting the committee will take evidence from:
- Sarah Fisher, Development Strategy Manager, Rugby Borough Council
- Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince, Chairman, Coton Forward
- Bob Keith, Planning Aid UK

Bob Keith is the mentor from Planning Aid England who has supported Coton Forward through the process of developing their neighbourhood plan. He has also worked with a number of other neighbourhood groups in relation to neighbourhood plans. He will provide a wider perspective from his work with other areas, giving a flavour of the different sorts of neighbourhood plans being developed, the time and financial costs involved, and the benefits and challenges – as well as the role of the local planning authority and the different approaches being adopted in different areas.

Other representatives from Coton Forward and the wider Coton Park community have also been invited to attend the meeting, as have representatives from Parish Councils in the borough.
The review will seek to address the following questions:

- What are the benefits to local communities of developing a neighbourhood plan and what are the associated costs (both financial and in time commitment)?
- What are the benefits to the council and to the borough as a whole of local communities developing neighbourhood plans?
- What support is available from outside the council for communities interested in developing a neighbourhood plan?
- What options does the council have in fulfilling its duty to provide assistance and advice, and what are the associated resource costs?
- Are the financial costs to local communities and to the council fully met by the available grants?
- Why have no other communities in the borough pursued the development of a neighbourhood plan to date?
- What level of awareness is there in the borough of the availability of new neighbourhood planning provisions?

2. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING – NATIONAL POLICY

2.1 Overview

The Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers, from April 2012, for communities to prepare their own planning policies and site allocations in the shape of neighbourhood plans. Once agreed, a neighbourhood plan forms part of the overall development plan for that area and can be used in the determination of planning applications. The Act also gives powers to communities to make neighbourhood development orders (which allow the community to grant planning permission for development that complies with the order) and Community Right to Build orders (which give permission for small-scale, site-specific developments by a community group).

There are a number of statutory steps that have to be taken in the development of a neighbourhood plan. These include:

- Neighbourhood Forum Application / Designation
- Neighbourhood Area Application / Designation
- Production of Neighbourhood Plan
- Public consultation (at various stages in the process)
- Neighbourhood Plan Public Examination (by Planning Inspector)
- Referendum

A Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Plans is attached at appendix 2 for reference.

2.2 Role of the local planning authority

National Planning Practice Guidance states that a local planning authority must take decisions at key stages in the neighbourhood planning process and provide advice
and assistance\(^1\) to a parish council, neighbourhood forum or community organisation that is producing a neighbourhood plan. The local planning authority is also responsible for holding the examination on a draft neighbourhood plan and for making arrangements for a referendum if required.

In carrying out these duties, the Guidance states that a local planning authority should:

- be proactive in providing information to communities about neighbourhood planning
- fulfil its duties and take decisions as soon as possible, particularly regarding applications for area and forum designation
- set out a clear and transparent decision making timetable and share this with those wishing to prepare a neighbourhood plan or Order
- constructively engage with the community throughout the process.

The Government is engaged in a consultation process on proposals to amend the current regulations to make the neighbourhood planning process simpler and speedier. This includes proposals to:

- set a statutory time limit of 10 weeks within which a local planning authority must make a decision on whether to designate a neighbourhood area that has been applied for by a parish or town council or prospective neighbourhood forum
- remove the current statutory requirement for a minimum or six weeks of consultation and publicity by those preparing a neighbourhood plan or Order
- require consultation with certain landowners
- introduce a new statutory requirement to test the extent of the consultation undertaken during the preparation of a neighbourhood plan or Order.

Rugby Borough Council has responded to this consultation. In the response it is argued that the suggested 10 week statutory time limit might be too short and that there should be a different time period for an area designation application by a neighbourhood forum than for that by a Parish or Town Council. The council has also opposed the removal of the pre-submission consultation stage.

2.3 National picture

As of April 2014:

- around 1,000 communities have taken the first formal steps towards producing a neighbourhood development plan
- 80 full draft plans have been produced for consultation
- 13 neighbourhood plans have been passed at community referendums.

\(^1\) According to ‘Frequently Asked Questions on Neighbourhood Planning funding for Local Planning Authorities’ (DCLG, December 2012) advice and assistance could include:
- Sharing evidence and information on planning issues
- Helping with consultation events
- Providing advice on assessments and evidence
- Providing advice on national and local plan policies
- Helping communities communicate with external partners
Across England the average neighbourhood plan referendum turnout is 33% and the 'yes vote' is 88%\(^2\).

### 3. AVAILABLE SUPPORT

#### 3.1 Support for local planning authorities

Funding is available to local planning authorities to enable them to meet their legislative duties. These duties are to provide advice and assistance, to hold an examination and to make arrangements for a referendum.

Under the current funding arrangements, local planning authorities are able to claim up to £100,000 for up to 20 area designations in each financial year 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. Local planning authorities can also claim for up to 5 forum designations (up to £25,000) in each financial year.

The funding can be claimed as follows:
- the first payment of £5,000 is paid following the designation of the area
- a second payment of £5,000 is paid when the final pre-examination version of the neighbourhood plan is publicised by the local planning authority prior to examination
- the third payment of £20,000 is made on successful completion of the neighbourhood planning examination.

The payments are intended to recognise the officer time involved in providing advice and assistance to communities and subsidise payments for examinations and referendums.

It should be noted that the final payment is only paid if the examiner recommends that the proposal (with or without modifications) proceeds to the referendum stage. A payment cannot be claimed if the examiner considers that the proposal cannot proceed to referendum. In these circumstances the local planning authority bears the cost of the independent examination.

#### 3.2 Support for local communities

The Department for Communities and Local Government has a programme of support in place for communities to assist in the development of neighbourhood plans. Neighbourhood planning groups can apply for direct support in the form of expert advice provided through Locality and the RTPI / Planning Aid England to help groups complete the various stages of the neighbourhood planning process. Applications for direct support open each month (1 October and 4 November) and are currently available to groups who have not yet submitted their neighbourhood area or forum application for designation to the local authority, and groups who have reached the pre-submission consultation of their plan.

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\(^2\) Notes on #neighbourhoodplanning, Edition 10 (August 2014), Department for Communities and Local Government
Groups have also been able to apply for grants of up to £7,000 to cover costs involved in developing a neighbourhood plan, to be used by the end of December 2014. With effect from 20 August, however, the government was no longer accepting new expressions of interest for grant.

The DCLG are currently devising a new support offer which aims to award new grants and support packages as soon as possible in the new financial year. This is likely to be available from April 2015.

Other suggested sources of support (detailed on the ‘My Community Rights’ website – www.mycommunityrights.org.uk) include:

- a free telephone advice service provided by Locality
- free general planning advice from Planning Aid England
- websites with a range of tools and case studies
- Local Planning Authority
- a local Neighbourhood Planning Champion, able to give peer to peer advice
- local university planning school

3.3 Neighbourhood planning frontrunners scheme

Under the neighbourhood planning frontrunners scheme, payments of £20,000 were made to help neighbourhood planning frontrunners develop their plans ahead of legislation and regulations coming into effect. This funding was channelled through the local planning authority.

4. COTON PARK PILOT

Rugby Borough Council received grant funding of £20,000 through the national neighbourhood planning frontrunners scheme to support the neighbourhood planning process at Coton Park. The Council successfully supported Coton Park Residents Association through the initial stages of this process.

‘Coton Forward’ was formed and designated as the neighbourhood forum and the Neighbourhood Area has subsequently been successfully designated by the Council. Coton Forward have undertaken surveys of the neighbourhood area to inform the production of an initial draft neighbourhood plan and have undertaken public consultation on the first draft of the plan. The final draft was submitted to the council in October 2014 and is attached at appendix 3. The Council’s role in this was minimal – the planning service responded to the public consultation on behalf of the council and has held discussions with Coton Forward about their next steps.

Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince is the Chair of Coton Forward and will outline to the committee their experiences as part of the national frontrunners scheme. She will address the following questions:

- What are the aims of Coton Forward in developing a neighbourhood plan?
- How did Coton Forward go about the process of developing a neighbourhood plan?
- How long has it taken?
• How many people have been involved? What has been the time commitment of those involved?
• What financial costs have been incurred?
• What are the expected outcomes?

5. INTEREST FROM OTHER AREAS

Several other areas have expressed an interest in developing a neighbourhood plan, and planning officers have given presentations to several parishes and to a WCAVA event explaining the process involved.

To date no other areas in the borough have decided to take forward the development of a neighbourhood plan. It seems that other groups have been unable to justify the effort and financial investment required to develop a neighbourhood plan for their local area. The Development Strategy Manager will discuss in her presentation the local policy context and potential reasons why the perceived benefits for other areas in the borough are not considered to be so great. The committee will also seek views from parish councils represented at the meeting about their considerations in determining whether to pursue the development of a neighbourhood plan.

6. NEXT STEPS

The committee will receive a range of evidence at the meeting and invite contributions from those attending.

The committee will review that evidence at its next meeting in January 2015 and determine any recommendations to be made to Cabinet on the basis of the review findings.
Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee

Date of Meeting: 13 November 2014

Subject Matter: Neighbourhood Planning

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers relating to this item.
Appendix 1

REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING IN RUGBY

ONE PAGE STRATEGY

What is the broad topic area?
Neighbourhood planning

What is the specific topic area?
The Localism Act introduced new powers, from April 2012, for communities to prepare their own planning policies and site allocations in the shape of neighbourhood plans. Once agreed, a neighbourhood plan forms part of the overall development plan for that area and can be used in the determination of planning applications.

As the local planning authority, the council has a duty to support and consider:
• applications made by a local body, capable of being a forum, for the designation of a neighbourhood area.
• applications made by local groups to become a recognised neighbourhood forum for a designated area.
• neighbourhood plans made by town and parish councils or recognised neighbourhood forums

This review will capture learning from the Coton pilot about the benefits and resource implications of supporting local areas to produce a neighbourhood plan and help to inform the council’s approach to neighbourhood planning across the borough.

What is the ambition of the review?
Where of value, local communities in Rugby borough are effectively supported to develop robust neighbourhood plans to complement the Local Plan.

How well do we perform at the moment?
Rugby Borough Council is currently assisting a community group, Coton Forward, to develop a neighbourhood plan for Coton Park. The council has received grant funding through the national Neighbourhood Planning Frontrunners scheme to support the process at Coton Park.

The council has successfully assisted Coton Forward through the first stages of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Who shall we consult about the current service and about how we can improve it?
Representatives from Coton and potentially other Parishes who have considered or who may be considering developing a neighbourhood plan.
Planning Aid England.

What other help do we need?
National guidance and good practice
Advice and support from Planning Services

How long should it take?
Light touch review at a meeting of the Customer and Partnerships Committee.

What will be the outcome?
An informed policy position about the level and nature of the council’s support for neighbourhood planning in the borough
Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Plans

www.locality.org.uk
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Bringing the Plan into Legal Force

Introduction

Since April 2012, local communities have been able to produce Neighbourhood Plans for their local area, putting in place planning policies for the future development and growth of the neighbourhood.

This guide gives a concise summary of the process for producing a Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act, together with suggestions for good practice.

This guide focuses on Neighbourhood Plans rather than Neighbourhood Development Orders or Community Right to Build Orders or other community-led planning tools.

Elements of Neighbourhood Planning

The elements of neighbourhood planning under the Localism Act are:

Neighbourhood Plans

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development and growth of an area. It may contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development. All Neighbourhood Plans must meet Basic Conditions, which are described later in this guide.

Neighbourhood plans relate to the use and development of land and associated social, economic and environmental issues. It may deal with a wide range of issues (like housing, employment, heritage and transport) or it may focus on one or two issues that are of particular importance in a local area.

A Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to examination and referendum and then form part of the Local Development Plan. This statutory status gives Neighbourhood Plans far more weight than some other local planning documents, such as parish plans, community plans and village design statements.

Neighbourhood Development Orders

A Neighbourhood Development Order is a means for parish/town councils or neighbourhood forums to grant planning permission for certain kinds of development within a specified area. These orders may apply to the whole or just part of the neighbourhood area.

Community Right to Build Orders

A Community Right to Build Order can be used to grant planning permission for development schemes, e.g. housing. Local community organisations that meet certain requirements or parish/town councils are able to prepare Community Right to Build Orders.

It is necessary to gain a more than 50% ‘yes’ vote in a public referendum to bring these plans and orders into force.
Making the Decision to Prepare a Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plans enable communities to take the lead in producing part of the statutory development plan for the area. Crucially, unlike a parish plan, these neighbourhood plans must be used to determine planning applications in a neighbourhood area. It can represent a serious commitment and any group of people considering preparing a Neighbourhood Plan will need to carefully weigh the opportunities against the time/cost implications and come to a balanced view. This is where the flexibility of neighbourhood planning to adapt to time/resource considerations is important. Obviously, a simpler plan with few policies will have less resource implications than a more comprehensive and complex one. Possible sources of help should be identified e.g. the local authority through its duty to support.

Considerations may include what other tools can be used to deliver the community’s ambitions, the adequacy of existing local policies, skills available and alternative use of resources, such as delivering existing parish or community plans.

Project Plan

Effective project planning is important to successful neighbourhood planning. A project plan can identify key stages, actions, an indicative timetable, and available resources and costs. The plan could also allocate responsibilities for coordinating different aspects of the process.

Producing a Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Area

The first formal step in neighbourhood planning is the submission of the proposed neighbourhood area to the local planning authority for designation. The following must be submitted in the area application:

- a map identifying the proposed neighbourhood area
- a statement explaining why the area is appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area
- a statement explaining that the body making the area application (the parish or town council or prospective neighbourhood forum) is capable of being a qualifying body.

For town or parish councils, there is a strong presumption that the neighbourhood area will be the same as the parish boundary. However, they may choose a smaller and more focused area, such as a town or local centre, or an area beyond the parish’s boundaries if that makes a sensible area to plan for. Adjacent parish/town councils may agree to work in partnership to produce a joint Neighbourhood Plan.

Prospective ‘neighbourhood forums’ (see below) will also need to apply for a neighbourhood area to be designated.

Qualifying Bodies

Where there is a town or parish council, then that is the qualifying body for leading a Neighbourhood Plan in a designated neighbourhood area that includes all or part of the council’s area. Further arrangements apply in a multi-parished area, which are not set out here.

Where there is no parish or town council, a neighbourhood forum of at least 21 people must be formed for the neighbourhood area. This should reflect the “inclusivity, diversity and character of the area” and efforts must be made to include at least one person living in the area, one person working in the area and one councillor. The forum will lead the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

An application by the prospective neighbourhood forum to be designated as the “neighbourhood forum” for a particular neighbourhood area has to be submitted to the local planning authority.
Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Plans

The following must be submitted in the forum’s application:

• the name of the proposed neighbourhood forum
• a written constitution for the proposed neighbourhood forum
• the name of the neighbourhood area to which the forum relates and a map identifying that area
• contact details of at least one member of the proposed neighbourhood forum (this will be made public)
• a statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets legal requirements (see below).

Duty to Support

Once the neighbourhood area is designated by the local planning authority, that authority is legally required to provide advice and assistance to those bodies producing a Neighbourhood Plan in its area. This ‘duty to support’ could include things like:

• making existing data and maps available for the evidence base
• identifying key local strategic policies from the Local Plan
• advising on relevant national policies/guidance
• sharing information on key contacts, stakeholders and best practice plan-making activity
• making available venues and helping to arrange community engagement activities
• checking the plan prior to formal submission to give community confidence
• providing technical support, such as assistance in laying out and illustrating a plan and writing plan policies
• providing members for neighbourhood forums or more informal working groups
• setting up a neighbourhood planning web page on the local authority’s website.

Building the Evidence Base

Planning policy and proposals need to be based on a proper understanding of the place they relate to, if they are to be relevant, realistic and to address local issues effectively. It is therefore important that Neighbourhood Plans are based on robust information and analysis of the local area; this is called the evidence base.

A review of existing evidence should be undertaken – particularly as there is already lots of evidence for planning. This may include things like:

• the evidence under-pinning the Local Plan
• socio-economic data for district/ward (census, ONS, etc.)
• technical reports (e.g. retail studies)
• transport studies and public transport data
• mapping of local area
• conservation area appraisals and statutory lists (listed buildings, historic environment record and scheduled ancient monuments)
• details of environmental protection designations, such as tree preservation orders and sites of special scientific interest
• plans from other public bodies or statutory undertakers
• existing plans for an area, such as a community plan or parish plan.

It may be necessary to develop new evidence (or update existing evidence) at neighbourhood level. This could include:

Economic: business surveys, viability, vacancy/floorspace survey, available sites survey, land values, employment need survey, etc.

Social/Community: housing condition survey, housing needs survey, audit of community facilities, ‘Building for Life’ assessment of housing, etc.

Environmental: heritage audit, conservation area appraisals, review of local lists, urban design analysis, open space survey & analysis, etc.

Infrastructure: transport linkages, schools capacity, transport capacity analysis, traffic/pedestrian flow surveys, etc.
Community Engagement

Community engagement is necessary and important for several reasons. It is a requirement of planning legislation including for Neighbourhood Plans. It is essential in developing consensus and creating community support. Finding out what people think and drawing on their skills and knowledge is an important part of developing the evidence base for an area and developing the Neighbourhood Plan, leading to more realistic and deliverable plans and policies. Failure to engage communities properly at an early stage is one of the main causes of conflict later in the planning process. This can lead to additional costs and delays.

The referendum will involve a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ vote on the Neighbourhood Plan. Properly engaging people from the beginning of the process ensures that there is an opportunity to influence the detail of the Neighbourhood Plan, rather than just having the option to accept or reject the whole plan.

Where intensive community engagement has recently been undertaken, such as in respect of the community plan, the material obtained will be useful in informing the Neighbourhood Plan.

Good practice examples of community engagement include:

Front Loading: Community engagement should be undertaken before work commences on the plan (this is called front loading) and throughout the process of plan preparation. The purpose of the first stages of community engagement is to help define issues and aims for the plan, and to inform an overall vision and to start to create a sense of wider ownership for the plan.

Publicity and Awareness: It is important to publicise the proposed Neighbourhood (development) Plan as widely as possible using different media right at the beginning of the process. Feedback should be provided throughout the process.

Local Partnerships: Key partners and stakeholders should be identified. These can provide easier access and support in involving minority groups, different communities, residents, the business community, hard-to-engage communities, etc.

Capacity Building: It will often be necessary to include capacity building (education/training) so that those participating in community engagement events are well informed about the plan and the issues it is dealing with.

Avoid Tokenism: The purpose of undertaking community engagement is to inform the content of the plan. If the outcomes have already been determined, then community engagement is tokenistic (marketing).

Specialist advice and enabling: It may be necessary for those leading and participating in the planning process to bring in specialist advice and support.

Being Creative: Community engagement needs to engage people using a range of approaches and media. It should be stimulating and enjoyable.

Managing Expectations: It is necessary to balance ambitions with realism and practical and legal limitations.

Targeting: Whilst some people will naturally want to get involved in neighbourhood planning, with other groups, people targeting will be necessary. This could include the elderly, young people, ethnic groups and other minority or hard-to-engage groups.

Making it Accessible: Careful thought needs to be given to make events and material accessible, including location, timing, media, format, etc. Events should be informal and unintimidating.

Common Mistakes – What to avoid!

Common mistakes include things like consulting too late, placing a thick document on a stand in the library or on a web site and expecting people to read it, or talking at people at a public meeting. Asking consultants to produce options before consulting the community is also poor practice. Consultation should not be treated as a one-off tick-box exercise. Also, analysis of consultation responses is not about counting the number of consultees making a comment, but considering the depth and range of responses.
Writing the Neighbourhood Plan

There is considerable flexibility over how a plan is structured and written. Careful consideration should be made of how the plan will be delivered and this will require constructive dialogue with key stakeholders, such as development managers in the local authority, public agencies, landowners and developers.

The following are suggestions for possible content of the plan:

- Vision and Aims. The Neighbourhood Plan can set out the community’s overall vision for the area and should include overall aims for its future development and growth. These can relate to a wide range of planning and regeneration matters – social, economic and environmental. The vision and aims of the plan can then be translated into detailed policies, guidance and proposals.

- Planning Policies. A Neighbourhood Plan, once made, will form part of the statutory local development plan for the area and its policies will be used to determine development proposals in the neighbourhood. Planning applications will be determined in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan’s policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policies in the plan could be supplemented if necessary by explanatory text or illustrations to help with their interpretation.

- Site Allocations. The Neighbourhood Plan may identify key sites for specific kinds of development, such as housing, retail, employment or mixed use.

- Community Proposals. Regeneration or enhancement proposals relating to the use and development of land could be included in the plan. For example, it could include policies around improving key public spaces and pedestrian links or allocate sites for new community facilities, such as a community centre.

To keep the Neighbourhood Plan concise, focused and clear on what are the proposed “policies”, a background document could be created, listing the sources of evidence, summarising any new evidence and describing the outcomes of the community engagement programme at different stages in the plan process.

Bringing the Plan into Force

Pre-Submission Consultation

It is a legal requirement that the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is publicised and the subject of public consultation, before it is submitted to the local planning authority. This includes:

- publicising the plan in a manner which brings it to the attention of people who live, work or run businesses in the neighbourhood area. This should include details of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan, details of where and when it may be viewed (e.g. local fairs, schools, etc.), details on how to make comments on the plan and the date by which comments must be received (at least six weeks from the date on which it is first publicised)

- consulting bodies whose interests may be affected by the plan. The local council should be able to advise on this, but it is likely to include the county council, the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage

- sending a copy of the proposed plan to the local authority

- consulting any neighbouring local, town or parish councils, significant landowners, local businesses and local community organisations, such as chambers of commerce, civic societies and local trusts.

It may be useful to produce a concise summary of the plan for those that don’t wish to read the full document.

A brief report must be produced, summarising comments received, issues raised by those comments and describing if and how the plan has been modified in response to the issues raised. This is known as the ‘consultation statement’ which is a legal requirement for all Neighbourhood Plans.

Submitting the Plan

Following any amendments resulting from the pre-submission consultation stage, the proposed Neighbourhood Plan should be submitted to the local planning authority by the qualifying body. The local authority is
Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Plans

responsible for publicising the plan that has been submitted to them and arranging for the independent examination and referendum to take place into that submitted plan.

The submission to the local planning authority must include the following:
- a map or statement, which identifies the area to which the plan relates
- a consultation statement (see below)
- the proposed Neighbourhood Plan
- a statement on how the plan fulfils the Basic Conditions (see later section on the ‘Basic Conditions’).

The consultation statement should contain the following:
- details of people and organisations consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Plan
- details of how they were consulted
- a summary of the main issues and concerns raised through the consultation process
- descriptions of how these issues and concerns were considered and addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

Upon receiving the submitted Neighbourhood Plan proposal the local authority will publicise it and invite comments (six weeks). These comments will be sent subsequently to the independent examiner for their consideration.

Meeting the Basic Conditions

The Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans are specified by law:
- must be appropriate having regard to national policy
- must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area
- must be compatible with human rights requirements
- must be compatible with EU obligations.

Neighbourhood Plans must not breach and must be compatible with EU and human rights obligations, including the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Directive. Neighbourhood Plans should be screened at an early stage to ascertain whether they are likely to trigger significant environmental effects and thus whether an SEA needs to be carried out. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) should undertake this screening assessment, consulting relevant national bodies in coming to its screening opinion. The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that a sustainability appraisal should be an integral part of the plan preparation process, but the particular assessment requirements need to respond to the scale, status and scope of the plan being developed.

Independent Examination

It is the responsibility of the local authority to organise and cover the costs of the independent examination and referendum. The independent examiner will be appointed by the local authority with the consent of the qualifying body.

The independent examination will consider the submitted documents and any comments made during the consultation period on the submitted plan proposal. The independent examiner will examine whether the plan meets the ‘Basic Conditions’ and other relevant legal requirements (e.g. consultation).

The independent examiner may recommend that the plan proceed to the referendum stage (i.e. it meets all the legal requirements) or may suggest that modifications are needed to the plan before it can proceed to the referendum. Or they may recommend that it does not proceed to the referendum, if it does not meet the relevant legal requirements. In addition, they may recommend that the referendum area include individuals beyond the boundary of the neighbourhood area.

Modifications

The local planning authority must make modifications to the plan if, with those modifications, the plan could comply with the Basic Conditions. The local community may withdraw the plan if it is unhappy with modifications being made.

Referendum

If the plan is found to be satisfactory (i.e. complies with the key legal requirements) with modifications if necessary, then the local authority must arrange for the referendum to take place. It must give at least 28 working days notice of the referendum before the date of the referendum. The qualifying body may campaign before the referendum, subject to rules over expenses.

If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote ‘yes’, then the council will bring the plan into legal force.
Delivery

Once a Neighbourhood Plan is made (i.e. brought into legal force by the local authority), it will be used to determine planning applications and guide planning decisions in the neighbourhood area. Having a plan and waiting for development is one thing, but elements of the plan will need active interventions on the part of the community, the local planning authority, developers and other key stakeholders.

Process Diagram

About Locality

Locality is the leading nationwide network of settlements, development trusts, social action centres and community enterprises. We help people to set up locally owned and led organisations. We support existing organisations to work effectively through peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and best practice on community asset ownership, community enterprise, collaboration, commissioning support, social action, community voice, community rights and regeneration. We have been working with communities involved in neighbourhood planning over the past 18 months.

Locality also works to influence government and others at national and local level to build support and investment for the movement. Locality was formed in April 2011 by the merger of BASSAC and the Development Trusts Association; two leading networks of community owned and led organisations.

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About the Author

Dave Chetwyn MA, MRTPI, IHBC, FinstLM

Dave Chetwyn is Managing Director of Urban Vision Enterprise CIC and a Design Council CABE Built Environment Expert. Other roles include Planning Chair with Civic Voice, Vice Chair of the National Planning Forum and Vice Chair of the Historic Towns Forum. He is also Planning Adviser to Locality and Heritage Specialist on Crossrail (Thames Tunnels section).

Former roles include Head of Planning Aid England, UK Chair of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and a team leader in local Government. He has advised and participated in various Government groups, reviews and Parliamentary select committees on planning, regeneration, heritage, urban design, economic development, state aid and community engagement. Dave is a chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and a Fellow of the Institute of Leadership and Management.

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Coton Forward
Neighbourhood Development Plan
2014 - 2029

As prepared by Coton Forward Neighbourhood Forum and submitted to Rugby Borough Council (October 2014)
Foreword

“The Government wants people to be able to influence decisions about development in their area.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers for people to make neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood planning orders, with reduced interference from central government. These new powers are in addition to existing opportunities for community involvement, which are already part of the planning system.

People have the right to get involved in development decisions that affect them but in practice they have often found it difficult to have a meaningful say.

This Government is giving communities the power to set the priorities for local development through neighbourhood planning. These plans will reflect local people’s views of how they wish their area to develop and give communities the right to receive and spend a proportion of community infrastructure levy funds on the local facilities they want.

There is no doubt that Neighbourhood Plans can now play a key part in our country’s planning policy. For the first time, local residents can have a direct say in the planning of developments in their area.

Coton Park Residents’ Association has been one of the country’s frontrunners in compiling their Neighbourhood Plan through Coton Forward, their Neighbourhood Forum. They are trailblazers of this new local agenda and should be proud of all that they have achieved to date.

I have always been fully supportive of the Coton Park Residents’ Association in their pioneering bid for more local planning powers through Coton Forward and look forward to working together with the Forum members and local residents in the future to ensure the local community continue to be empowered in decisions that directly affect them.”

Mark Pawsey MP
Welcome to the plan for the future of Coton Park. Coton Forward was started by local residents with the aim to prepare a plan that would protect the community spirit and continue to be a pleasant and attractive place to live. Since March 2012 we have held public meetings, consultation events, written newsletters and held street chats as ways of engaging our community in every step of this process. We also have an active website and Facebook page.

The Plan has been achieved thanks to the expertise, experience and enthusiasm of the Forum, Steering Group and Working Groups. Thanks also to the many volunteers who delivered leaflets and newsletters, and of course the many residents who completed questionnaires and surveys, as well as the children of Coton Park who also took part in their own consultation.

We could not have done this without the huge support of Planning Aid, Rugby Borough Council Planning Department, Warwickshire County Council Highways Department, Warwickshire CAVA, David Wilson Homes, DCLG and Mark Pawsey MP.

Thanks also go to White Crow Studios Ltd for the images of the future Coton Park and Claire Angus for all the photography.

We have done all of this work ourselves, except for bringing in David Tucker Associates to assist us with the transport proposals. The plan has been written by and for the residents and businesses in the Coton Park Neighbourhood Area.

Cllr Jill Simpson-Vince

Chair, Coton Forward Neighbourhood Forum
### Section A - Coton Forward’s Journey to Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2011</td>
<td>Coton Park Residents’ Association (CPRA) submitted an application, via Rugby Borough Council (RBC), to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to become a front-runner, or pilot, for the new neighbourhood planning process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>RBC informed CPRA that the application had been successful. CPRA decided to form a separate group with a separate constitution to take this forward.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>Coton Park’s Neighbourhood Forum, Coton Forward, was launched at Brownsover Hall Hotel, Rugby.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2012</td>
<td>Coton Forward applied to RBC for Forum status and to designate the neighbourhood area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>RBC approved Coton Forward as the Neighbourhood Forum for Coton Park and approved the Neighbourhood Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan – Dec 2013</td>
<td>Evidence gathering for the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan - Feb 2014</td>
<td>Pre-Submission Draft written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb – Apr 2014</td>
<td>Draft Consultation undertaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td>Key meetings with Warwickshire County Council and RBC to discuss feedback from consultation and get clarity on issues ahead of Forum meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>Coton Forward Neighbourhood Forum approve policies and projects for Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Plan written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2014</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Plan presented to RBC along with Statement on Consultation Engagement and Statement on Basic Conditions.</td>
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Section B - What the Plan Aims to Achieve

The 2011 Localism Act established the right for communities to prepare neighbourhood plans. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations came into effect in March 2012\(^1\) and make further provision as to the procedure to be followed when preparing a neighbourhood plan.

A neighbourhood plan is an opportunity for a community to have a say in how their area is shaped and developed, via a statutory planning document.

Once endorsed by the community it represents and adopted by the local planning authority, a neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan for the area. Any applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with this unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Along with the neighbourhood plan, the regulations require a Neighbourhood Forum to submit a statement to the local planning authority outlining how their plan meets certain basic conditions\(^{14}\). These state that the plan:

- must have regard to national policies and advice, such as the National Planning Policy Framework\(^3\)
- should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area, which includes any adopted Local Plans\(^2\)
- should be compatible with European obligations and human rights requirements

Neighbourhood Planning is intended to be used in making planning decisions. When a change is proposed in Coton Park, the plan will be referred to by the appropriate bodies to check whether proposals are in keeping with policies the community has developed. The policies in this plan will apply for the next 15 years, to 2029.
Section C - Coton Park

Coton Park is a residential development on the north side of Rugby, adjacent to J1 of the M6. The neighbourhood area is not parished but is part of a ward within Rugby Town. It was, therefore, a statutory requirement to create a Neighbourhood Forum to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

Current and future housing development, although sitting within the Coton Park development, extends beyond the neighbourhood area into the adjoining Parish of Newton & Biggin. As a consequence it is difficult to interpret the 2011 Census. However there are approximately 950 properties within the neighbourhood area, so it is estimated that the population is about 3,000 people.

1. Housing

All the housing stock is modern, as the Coton Park development started around 2002. The properties range from 1 and 2 bedroom apartments in blocks to 6 bedroom detached properties with double garages. However it is predominantly 4 bedroom family homes with single or double garages. There are some managed housing association properties on Coton Park, both rented and shared ownership, which are also modern properties and are predominantly 3 bedroom homes with 2 parking spaces.

The development has been constructed at a very high density. Whilst an attractive and intimate layout with varying house styles and rooflines, the nature of the development has created certain problems. For example, the lack of front gardens has restricted the ability of residents to park off road, which in turn has caused traffic flow problems on the narrow road layout. In part this issue prompted the decision to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

2. Further Residential Development

There is no scope within the neighbourhood area for further housing development. There is one developer still on site, building in an area outside the neighbourhood area, in the adjoining Newton & Biggin Parish. This is extending the overall development to the south east. In addition outline planning
applications have been approved for another developer to build additional residential properties immediately outside the neighbourhood area to the east.

All these planned and proposed schemes need to be accessed via the roundabout on the A426 to the west. As a consequence all traffic will have to use existing roads in the neighbourhood area, as Coton Park lies directly between these housing schemes to the east and the main access point on the A426 to the west. The cumulative impact will exacerbate the existing parking and traffic flow problems in the neighbourhood area. This is also at odds with the layout of the narrow roads on the development, which have been designed to deter speeding vehicles.

3. Business

There is a substantial industrial estate (light industrial warehouses and offices) immediately to the north. However there are no industrial units within the neighbourhood area. Some of the residents also work from home and run businesses.

The neighbourhood area does contain a modern retail area, called Central Park, to the west, which is located next to the main access point on the A426. This comprises a supermarket, newsagents, hair and beauty salon, butchers, carpet company, restaurant and two takeaways. There is also a hotel and public house adjoining the retail complex.

There is no scope for further retail units on the complex unless some of the car parking space was utilised. However given the current popularity of the retail area and a car park that is often full, this is highly unlikely to occur.

Most housing developments tend to have the retail area located in the heart of the development, thereby creating a natural centre and focal point for the local community. However the overall development of Coton Park was done in such a way as to locate the retail on the periphery. As a consequence many residents find that the retail area is not within a reasonable walking distance of their homes so often use their cars to do local shopping. This is turn adds to the traffic using the narrow roads on the development.

4. Infrastructure

The quality and capacity of infrastructure has already been mentioned as an area of concern, especially traffic movements and parking issues.

In terms of water and waste, Severn Trent Water is the water utility company for the area and has extended supplies whenever a new phase of development has occurred.

Coton Park is situated on the top and side of a hill, and balancing ponds were constructed as part of the housing scheme, so the Environment Agency does not consider Coton Park a flood risk.

Telecommunications are better since fast broadband was introduced to Coton Park in 2013.
5. Community Facilities

There are no medical facilities on Coton Park, (e.g. a doctor's surgery or dentist) and none are currently planned.

There is also a lack of community facilities on Coton Park. Despite this a strong community spirit has been established in a relatively short period of time as people settled on the new development. Coton Park Residents Association (CPRA) has been running for several years and puts on social events for the community, as well as liaising with local stakeholders and both Rugby and Warwickshire Councils dealing with any problems or issues residents on Coton Park experience or want to improve.

As there is no community facility the public house provides the venue for various community and social events. Every year CPRA hold a Summer Fayre on a local area of parkland known as the Stone Circles. Coton Park Runners are a group set up by local residents, who run at least once a week around Coton Park and use neighbouring tracks, footpaths and bridleways for running and also then enter various races, for example Three Peaks, Wolf Run and Para 10, plus numerous Half Marathons to raise money for charity.

There is no education or nursery provisions anywhere on Coton Park. Coton Park Babies was formed in 2011 for new parents to come along and meet other new parents over a coffee at the local pub. The lack of provision was a major issue for many residents, however, this is something that now has a solution as a successful bid was submitted for a Free Primary School just outside the neighbourhood area, for 4-11 year olds, opening in September 2015.

6. Natural Environment

Coton Park is a high density housing scheme constructed with few front gardens and relatively small rear gardens. The layout of the development has incorporated a small number of open spaces and these provide a valuable resource for the local community and wildlife.
SECTION D - Neighbourhood Area Map
Section E - Community Engagement

As part of the evidence gathering there has been extensive engagement with the local community. All residents of Coton Park have been kept constantly informed during the key stages in the plan preparation process and have been invited to participate in various surveys and consultation events along the way.

Newsletters are our key way of communication, including providing feedback on the responses to the consultation activities.

These are delivered to all properties within the neighbourhood area. Both the CPRA and Coton Forward Facebook pages are also utilised to get messages across to residents. Coton Forward has also used its own website for publicising information.

The various consultation activities are briefly summarized below in chronological order:

- June 2012 - we launched our presence at the annual Summer Picnic
- August 2012 - our key issues questionnaire was sent across the development
- March 2013 - Forum members went door-to-door to get residents responses to a parking audit
- May 2013 - the children on the development were invited to take part in a consultation concerning new park equipment
- June 2013 - the Forum had a large presence at the Summer Picnic
- July/Aug 2013 - a Schools Survey and a Community Centre survey were both launched across the development, with Forum members going door-to-door for responses
- Aug/Sept 2013 - series of street chats at different locations across the development.
- October 2013 - Two days of consultation events were held at a local training centre on the nearby industrial estate, allowing residents to come and talk to us on all the key issues
- March 2014 we held sessions over 4 weekends at the local training centre so residents could come and talk to us about the draft plan and comment on it
- August 2014 newsletter and presence at Summer Picnic to discuss results of consultation

More detailed information on the community engagement activities undertaken can be found in the accompanying consultation statement15.
Section F - Key Issues

Based upon the evidence gathered the following key issues were identified (in no particular order):

- lack of opportunities for on street parking
- poor traffic movement through and within the development
- lack of educational provision in the immediate area
- lack of green space provision, especially the need for a new play area
- the need for a community centre
- lack of health facilities in the immediate area.
Section G - Vision and Objectives

Based upon the aforementioned issues, the Forum agreed the following vision:

In 2029 Coton Park will still have a strong sense of community. It will offer a pleasant and attractive place to live, relax and enjoy the surroundings. The street scene will provide a quality environment that meets the needs of people and vehicular movements. Coton Park will be well served by health, educational, retail and community facilities in or around the neighbourhood that encourage a sustainable community and social interaction. Homes will be interspersed by attractive and well maintained pockets of green space that support the needs of the local community and wildlife.

Objectives

It is acknowledged that the neighbourhood plan can have little influence on the lack of educational provision, especially as there is no suitable site within the neighbourhood area. Similarly there is perhaps little that can be directly done about the lack of healthy facilities in the neighbourhood area, such as a doctor’s surgery or dentist. These are strategic planning matters that need to be assessed beyond the neighbourhood level. The Forum thereby concluded that the neighbourhood plan would focus on addressing the other issues.

Coton Forward therefore has the following objectives and related policies:

| To better manage traffic movements through and within the development | 1 Improving the three roundabouts on Coton Park |
| | 2 Coton Park’s Identity as a Residential Area |
| To promote social interaction, and the health and well-being of the local community | 3 Coton Park Community Centre |
| | 4 Coton Park’s Local Green Spaces |
Section H - Coton Forward’s Policies

Transport Objective – to better manage traffic movements through and within the development

POLICY 1 – Improving the Three Roundabouts on Coton Park

To improve traffic flows on the development, the following junction improvements will be undertaken (see artist’s impressions of improvements):

1. Removal of the roundabout at Coton Park Drive and Stonechat Road and its replacement with a new junction (see artist’s impressions of new junction layout)
   a. from Stonechat Road vehicles would be two-way on the north side of the current roundabout and traffic priority would carry them onto Coton Park Drive North;
   b. from Coton Park Drive South vehicles would stop at junction, turning left to continue along Coton Park Drive, and turning right onto Stonechat Road;
   c. from Coton Park Drive North vehicles would take the road round to the East onto Stonechat Road, or stop at the junction to turn right onto Coton Park Drive South;
   d. the existing island and road forming the south side of the roundabout would be made an open green communal space.

2. Reduction in the diameter and increase in height of the central island at Stonechat Road and Crackthorne Drive and the introduction of a new central feature.

3. Reduction in the diameter and increase in height of the central island at Longstork Road and Tuthill Furlong and the introduction of a new central feature.
There are three roundabouts within the Coton Park neighbourhood area and residents identified all three as needing improvement.

Two of the roundabouts are similar in design and have central islands that are very wide and flat, with the actual road section quite narrow for negotiating the roundabout. There is also no central feature on the roundabout, the block brick is a similar colour to the road and signage is poor, so anyone arriving at the roundabout in the dark, or bad weather, would struggle to realise they are there. Any large vehicles struggle to get round these roundabouts without going over the kerbs.

The main roundabout on Coton Park Drive is an oval shape and again, the road section is quite narrow for negotiating the roundabout. Any large vans, lorries or buses cannot drive along Coton Park Drive from North to South without hitting road signs or breaking the kerbs and damaging block brick and shrubs (as the photo on the left shows, with its regular traffic cone). Warwickshire County Councils Highways Department regularly have to send teams out to repair the roundabout. Coton Forward commissioned Warwickshire County Council to run a traffic survey in June 2013. When it was originally designed, it was never expected to cater for over 3,800 traffic movements daily. The data also showed that traffic coming from Stonechat Road typically turns right on this roundabout and out of the development.

Stagecoach aim to bring a bus service into the development, as per the original plans, down Longstork Road, Snellsdale Road and Crackthorne Drive. However current roundabout design and parking problems make this difficult. This, added to residents own experiences with the roundabouts, adds to the case to make changes. Coton Park has unfortunately been developed in a piecemeal fashion without the benefit of an overall master plan. As a consequence Longstork Road and Crackthorne Drive are now acting as main roads into other parts of the development even though they were not designed to provide this function.

This is the crux of the problem and one of the main motivations to prepare the neighbourhood plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and contributing to wider health issues. It adds that encouragement should be given to solutions which reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.
For larger scale residential developments planning policies should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities including work on site. Where practical, particularly within large-scale developments, it suggests that key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties³.

In August 2013 the Forum appointed David Tucker Associates to further investigate this problem and to consider some practical and creative solutions⁶, which formed part of the Pre-Submission Draft in February 2014⁹.

**POLICY 2 - Coton Park’s Identity as a Residential Area**

1. Gateway features and signage will be constructed at the North and South entrances to Coton Park;
2. There will be directional signage at key locations within Coton Park, improving navigation through the development;
3. Street furniture will be introduced for the benefit of residents, such as seating, to assist those wishing to walk to the retail area;
4. There will be a stronger visual and functional link between the residential development and the retail area.

Coton Park is situated adjacent to a light industrial estate, consisting of warehouses and office buildings as well as a retail area.

Signage out of Rugby from the A426 brings drivers into the north entrance of Coton Park past the retail area, but as there is nothing indicating an entrance to Coton Park, drivers looking for the retail or industrial estates often enter the residential area, and then, in the case of the HGVs, get stuck at the roundabout in Policy 1.1.

From the south entrance via Newton Manor Lane, there is a small brick wall and shrubs marking the entrance of Coton Park but no name. Once inside the development the architectural style and landscape features (such as the ornamental balls at various locations) give a strong image and identity. However this may be threatened if further residential development occurs on the periphery and there is coalescence with these new housing estates.

There is also no strong visual or functional link with the retail area, which is approached across the extensive car park.
Healthy Communities Objective - To promote social interaction, and the health and well-being of the local community

POLICY 3 - Coton Park Community Centre

Land between Coton Park Drive and Lancut Hill is allocated for a Community Centre that will be designed, built and managed by the local community.

Coton Park residents’ first asked Coton Park Residents’ Association to look at the possibility of a community centre on Coton Park a few years ago. In the first Coton Forward survey in August 2012, it was again raised by residents as something they felt the development needed. Every survey that Coton Forward has conducted concerning a community centre has had huge support. A working group was set up to establish the viability of this option, a site has been identified and a business case has now been completed. The site is mentioned in Policy 4.1 and Rugby Borough Council have agreed in principle to the site being used for the community centre.

Coton Park lacks a suitable meeting place within the neighbourhood area, and has a large number of community events throughout the year and currently has nowhere permanent to hold events.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that the planning system ‘can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities’. It adds that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve places which promote opportunities for meetings between members of the local community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other. This should include strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who live and play in the area. It also points out the importance of safe and accessible developments which contain clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public spaces that encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

POLICY 4 - Coton Park’s Local Green Spaces

The following areas are designated as Local Green Spaces:
1. Land between Coton Park Drive and Lancut Hill (with the exception of the community centre);
2. Copse Area/Stone Circles (behind Shortwheat Hill);
3. Badger Sett (off Coton Park Drive);
4. Land to the East and West of Tuthill Furlong (with the exception of the gravel road to the balancing pond);
5. Open space between Shortwheat Hill and Short Fishers Walk.

Development on these Local Green Spaces will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.
All of these areas are currently open green space, however Rugby Borough Council is about to undergo a review of its Open Spaces policy and not all the sites identified in this policy are currently protected. Rugby Borough Council Planning Department have indicated that it is beneficial for residents of Coton Park to identify all these areas as needing to be retained as Green Spaces within this neighbourhood plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that access to high quality open spaces for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Coton Park has few formal and informal public open spaces within walking distance. There are no sports facilities in the neighbourhood area or the immediate vicinity. The green space that does exist is much valued by the local community.

The National Planning Policy Framework also states that neighbourhood plans can identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to the local community. It adds that by designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.
SECTION I - Coton Forward’s Projects

The Neighbourhood Development Plan can only address planning policies that address development and the use of land. However, Planning Practice Guidance states that neighbourhood planning can inspire local people and businesses to consider other ways to improve their neighbourhood other than through the development and use of land. It adds that they may identify specific action or projects to deliver these improvements. Wider community aspirations than those relating to development and use of land can be included in a neighbourhood plan, but should be clearly identifiable.

The following projects came through the community engagement process and are regarded as important to the local community in delivering wider aspirations for the neighbourhood area. However, they do not form part of the statutory neighbourhood development plan and are thereby listed separately.

Transport Objective: To better manage traffic movements through and within the development

PROJECT 1 - Creation of Communal Parking Facilities
To improve off road parking facilities, new bays will be created in:

a) Stonechat Road (maximum 7 car parking spaces)

![artist’s impression of new parking spaces on Stonechat Road](image1)

b) Longstork Road (maximum 18 car parking spaces)

![artist’s impression of new parking spaces on Longstork Road](image2)
In some areas of Coton Park there is insufficient or unsuitable parking. This has contributed to problems with cars parking on roads and pavements. The roads on the development are narrow with properties fronting directly onto the street. Whilst this has the desired effect of slowing down vehicles, on street parking has made roads difficult to negotiate, creating safety issues in places.

A parking audit conducted across Coton Park in March/April 2013 indicated that households typically have at least 2 cars and car park allocation is typically 1 single garage and 1 parking space. However building design means that it is virtually impossible to park anything other than a small car in a single garage. Equally, households use their garages for storage of bikes, bins, lawnmowers, etc. The 2011 Census data shows that the levels of car ownership on Coton Park are higher than across Rugby as a whole, at 1.6 for Coton Park compared to 1.35 for Rugby.

Townhouse properties often have spaces adjacent to each other in a communal car park, this parking is problematic if a household has children and need to open car doors wider. Rented properties pose a problem as well, as the landlord will sometimes keep the garage themselves for storage and just rent out the property and one parking space. Unfortunately for the development, these problems encourage on-street parking and are at their worst on two of the busiest roads on the development; Longstork Road and Stonechat Road.

The areas of Coton Park that are considered by residents to be the worst for on-street parking are ironically on the parts of the development where the pavements are widest. Therefore, it is logical and prudent to use some of the extensive pavements for communal parking spaces. The pavements concerned are not currently green spaces, but purely large areas of block paving, with large concrete balls, so visually there is no detriment to the area and communal spaces would reduce the visibility problems currently associated with cars parking on the road. Indeed, some areas of Longstork Road have already created an informal parking arrangement for themselves.

This improvement would reduce kerb height and paint parking bays onto existing pavement areas. This is a much cheaper option and has less impact on the visual aspect of these roads. This option could then be considered for other areas of the development, if feasible.

Parking Bays would not be allocated to individual properties, they would be communal. The location of some of the spaces also dictates that vehicles would be unable to block junctions as they would be unable to park on the road.

PROJECT 2 - Creation of a Two-way Access Road from the Eastern End of Central Park Drive

A second access road into the development should be constructed from the existing eastern end of Central Park Drive, to relieve existing traffic flows from within the development, as well as providing an alternative access to any new residential development to the East or North East of the neighbourhood area.
There are currently 1150 properties on the entire Coton Park development, the traffic data from Warwickshire County Council Highways indicates 5 vehicle movements per property per day. Coton Park Drive itself has a North and South entrance onto it, so if there is an accident on Coton Park Drive, vehicles can access the development from the other direction. However, if there is an accident blocking Stonechat Road, approximately 800 properties would not be able to get onto or off the development, as Stonechat Road is the only route in and out, as there is currently no second access road.

PROJECT 3 - Road Markings on Coton Park Development

There is a need on Coton Park to make drivers aware of roundabouts and junctions and how close cars can be parked to these. Some line painting has been put in place but this has often faded. There are currently no double yellow lines on the development and the nature of the road system does mean that cars are often parked on blind bends or too close to junctions. Road markings would make drivers more aware of where they are not allowed to park.

PROJECT 4 - Other Traffic Management Measures

Other measures will be considered to minimise car journeys and reduce traffic movements in the neighbourhood area. This will include:

a) A car share database
b) A community car club
c) Improved walking and cycling facilities

The car share database would involve residents registering their journeys to organise car shares. The community car club could be run by an organization on behalf of residents, with a car available for short journeys and 'hired' on a pay as you go basis. Use of car club vehicle can be particularly beneficial for young drivers. It is estimated that for each car club in operation, eight private cars are removed from the road.

The walking and cycling facilities will involve identifying suitable areas for cyclists. There are already numerous paths around Coton Park’s neighbourhood area and into the nearby countryside. It is important that these are maintained and protected as future development takes place.

Healthy Communities Objective - To promote social interaction, and the health and well-being of the local community

PROJECT 5 - Community Focus - Allotments and Community Gardens

The idea of allotments again came from residents and has been looked upon favourably by Rugby Borough Council. An area of land was identified but this has Section 106 constraints which need to be resolved, so this will become an ongoing project until the siting of allotments and a community garden can be resolved. Rugby Borough Council is a strong advocate for community gardens and in September 2014 won the Heart of England in Bloom Award, where a community Edible Gardening project took centre stage, so Coton Forward are confident that allotments and a community garden will develop on Coton Park.
SECTION J - Coton Forward Successes

Park and Play Area

Our survey in 2012 identified a proper play area for children and development of parkland for all residents. The Play and Parks Group worked closely with Rugby Borough Council’s Parks Team to ensure we had the right mix of play equipment. Indeed, in June 2013 we hosted a visit by Nick Boles MP, then the Planning Minister and he considered the consultation event with the children of Coton Park inspiring.

The final landscaping for the park areas are underway and we have been told that the strip of land under the electricity pylons on the main site has the potential to become a very important wildlife corridor. The land there is already developing an interesting and varied flora. To maintain and enhance this corridor the grasslands will need to be managed. To maintain the quality of the grassland an Annual hay cut will take place and the following seeds will be planted: Oxeye Daisy, Common Knapweed, Birdsfoot Trefoil and Yellow Rattle.

Primary School

Schooling featured highly in our survey and consultation events, and although this is an area that is technically outside a neighbourhood plan, we formed a working group for it, as it was important to residents. Discussions with Warwickshire County Council Education Department did not really lead anywhere and we were encouraged to consider a Free School bid.

In January 2014 we became aware of just such a Free School bid being developed by an experienced team, who had looked at Coton Park and realised that there was a desperate need for a primary school in the area. We contacted the team and worked with them in refining the bid. In July 2014 the bid team (including the Coton Forward Chair) went to the Department of Education for the interview.

In September 2014 we heard that the bid was approved by the Department of Education for the pre-opening phase. The school is due to open in September 2015.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rugby Borough Council Planning Applications R10/1708 &amp; R10/0905 - <a href="www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk">www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rugby Free Primary School - <a href="www.rugbyfreeprimary.co.uk">www.rugbyfreeprimary.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>David Tucker Associates Transport Review - <a href="www.cotonforward.org">www.cotonforward.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Warwickshire County Council Traffic Data - <a href="www.cotonforward.org">www.cotonforward.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Parking and Traffic Audit - <a href="www.cotonforward.org">www.cotonforward.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Coton Forward Pre-Submission Draft - <a href="www.cotonforward.org">www.cotonforward.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Coton Forward Key Issues Survey - <a href="www.cotonforward.org">www.cotonforward.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Community Centre Survey - <a href="www.cotonforward.org">www.cotonforward.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2011 Census Data (Warwickshire County Council Observatory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Coton Forward Forum Neighbourhood Development Plan Basic Conditions Statement - <a href="www.cotonforward.org">www.cotonforward.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Coton Forward Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation Statement - <a href="www.cotonforward.org">www.cotonforward.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Meeting Customer and Partnerships Committee

Date of Meeting 13 November 2014

Report Title Universal Credit and Welfare Reform Task Group Update

Ward Relevance All

Contact Officer Debbie Dawson, Tel: 01788 533592

Summary The committee requested an update on the work of the Universal Credit and Welfare Reform task group. The task group has an ongoing remit to maintain a watching brief over the implementation of the welfare reforms in the borough and the measures being taken to manage the impact of the benefit changes. The task group considered its future work on 27 October and this paper briefs the committee on the outcomes of that discussion.

Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.
Summary

The committee requested an update on the work of the Universal Credit and Welfare Reform task group. The task group has an ongoing remit to maintain a watching brief over the implementation of the welfare reforms in the borough and the measures being taken to manage the impact of the benefit changes. The task group considered its future work on 27 October and this paper briefs the committee on the outcomes of that discussion.

1. BACKGROUND

The Universal Credit and Welfare Reform task group has been operating since June 2013. The task group has a watching brief over the council’s corporate approach to managing the impact of the welfare reforms on the council and the local community. It is also monitoring the effectiveness of the measures put in place by the council and partners to prepare for benefit changes and prevent significant detrimental impacts.

The one page strategy for the review is attached at appendix 1 for reference. Since the task group submitted its interim report to the committee on 3 April 2014, the task group has:

- continued to receive routine updates at each meeting on the data measures that were identified to monitor the impact of the reforms (– these were revised in June 2014, with a number of measures removed as they were no longer providing meaningful data)
- taken evidence from the Royal British Legion, Coventry and Warwickshire MIND and from frontline staff and managers from the local Jobcentre Plus office
- considered the proposed revised local council tax reduction scheme for 2015/16
- received evidence from the council’s Senior Revenues Officer about council tax recovery processes in relation to those affected by the benefits changes.

At their meeting on 27 October 2014 the task group:

- reviewed the evidence they had received to date; and
- considered their future work programme.
2. CURRENT POSITION

In the main, the task group has not yet identified any significant concerns relating to the implementation and impact of the welfare reforms in the borough. At this stage, on the basis of the data measures that the group is monitoring and evidence from those operating in this area, the majority of those affected by welfare reforms in the borough appear to be coping with the changes and the impact on the council has been less than anticipated.

However, it is important to recognise that, to some extent, this is because Universal Credit roll-out has been slow. Evidence of impact presented to the task group has, as yet, been fairly limited, and it is clear that we are yet to see the full impact of the welfare reforms as the new benefit rolls out to more complex cases.

In view of this, on 27 October 2014 the task group considered two possible approaches:

Option 1: to take a strategic, long-term view and, satisfied that there are no immediate significant concerns about detrimental impact on residents and the council at present, put the work of the task group on hold for up to a year, by which time there would be more evidence of impact and the national policy position following the General Election would be clearer.

Option 2: to continue to meet regularly over the coming year, specifically to drill down and look in more detail at the impact of the reforms on particular vulnerable groups.

3. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

At the meeting on 27 October the task group selected the second of these options, and agreed two specific areas for further evidence gathering, as detailed below. These will form the main focus of the task group’s work through to September 2015. It was agreed that the task group would continue to receive quarterly updates on the performance measures that are being used to monitor the impact of the reforms.

The specific areas the task group will look at in more detail in the coming months are as follows:

- Strategic approach

One of the concerns raised with the task group by voluntary and community sector organisations was about the lack of strategic coordination of activities to address the impact of welfare reform. Since this concern was raised, a new Financial Inclusion Partnership has been put in place at a borough level. The borough Regeneration Strategy has also been refocused around key themes of financial inclusion and employment and training.
The task group members were keen to look into the impact of the work of the new Rugby Financial Inclusion Partnership in relation to universal credit and welfare reform. The group proposes to hold a meeting in December on this issue, to consider how well the Partnership is working and whether there are any gaps.

- **Use of benefits sanctions**

A national independent review of the operation of Jobseekers’ Allowance sanctions was published in July 2014 (the Oakley report) and generated significant national media interest in this issue. YMCA England has also published research into the impact of benefit sanctions on vulnerable young people. Locally, the task group has received some evidence from the local Jobcentre Plus office about the use of sanctions, although they were advised (in June 2014) that management information was being developed but was not publicly available. The task group also learned that people who are subject to benefit sanctions are not eligible to receive support through the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme (WLWS).

The task group wishes to explore in more detail the real life impact of benefits sanctions. The task group hopes to meet in January to take evidence from Foodbank volunteers, as well as from other organisations involved in providing emergency and longer-term support. The task group will seek further information from the local Jobcentre Plus office about the most common reasons for sanctions and the profile of people subject to sanctions in Rugby. They may also further investigate access to emergency support for those subject to sanctions, as well as what support is, or could be, available to help people re-engage with the process of preparing for and looking for work – including the role and impact of job clubs supported by the council.

Members considered that this work on sanctions might help to highlight particular vulnerable groups affected by the welfare reforms.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers relating to this item.
UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND WELFARE REFORMS TASK GROUP

ONE PAGE STRATEGY

What is the broad topic area?
Impact of welfare reforms on the council and the local community and preparations for the introduction of universal credit.

What is the specific topic area?
This task group will have a watching brief over the council’s corporate approach to managing the impact of the welfare reforms on the council and the local community. The task group’s role is one of oversight and accountability, and its remit does not extend to policy development and problem-solving in response to issues identified through its monitoring work.

The task group will monitor the effectiveness of the measures put in place by the council and partners to prepare for benefit changes and prevent significant detrimental impacts. Such measures include:
- communications strategy
- discretionary financial support
- activities to promote financial inclusion delivered through the new community SLAs
- other advice and support, for example relating to employment and budgeting skills
- redesignation of council housing

It will also consider the extent to which the work of partners in relation to welfare reform is being effectively coordinated to make optimum use of available resources.

In the longer-term the task group will consider the outcomes of the planned reviews of the council’s rental and allocations policies. It will also review preparations for the phased introduction of universal credit, which is unlikely to have a significant effect in the borough before 2015.

What is the ambition of the review?
To ensure that the council and its partners effectively support the implementation of welfare reforms within the borough and work to mitigate the risk of negative impact on vulnerable residents.

How well do we perform at the moment?
The LSP is understood to be taking a lead role in coordinating work related to the welfare reforms in the borough. A corporate officer welfare reform group has also been established.

The first task of this group will be to work with those officers to identify a set of measures that can demonstrate the impact of the welfare changes on individuals and on the council, and help identify where the council should be targeting its interventions. The group will use these measures as the basis for ongoing monitoring.

Who shall we consult about the current service and about how we can improve it?
The group will have ongoing engagement with members of the council’s corporate welfare reform officer group, and with the Sustainable and Inclusive Communities Portfolio Holder and Local Strategic Partnership Chairman.
The task group may, as appropriate, consult with local residents affected by the welfare reforms, statutory and voluntary sector partners, registered social landlords, private sector landlords and tenant representatives, where this would provide useful evidence in assessing the impact of the reforms and the effectiveness of the measures in place.

What other help do we need?
The group will need a clear understanding of the welfare reforms, regular updates on the national policy context and local implementation of the reforms, and clarity about the council’s statutory responsibilities in relation to those affected by the changes.

The group’s membership will be drawn from members of previous task groups relating to the welfare reforms, so a level of prior knowledge will be assumed.

How long should it take?
The task group will begin its work as early as possible in the 2013/14 municipal year and is expected to meet every 6 weeks. As the reforms are being phased in over several years, it is anticipated that the task group’s role will extend until 2015 and potentially longer. The ongoing role and necessity for the task group will be reviewed annually as part of the overview and scrutiny work programme process.

A progress report should be presented to Customer and Partnerships Committee in April 2014 and the one page strategy will be reviewed at that time.

What will be the outcome?
The task group may make recommendations to Cabinet, through Customer and Partnerships Committee, if it identifies a need for new interventions or different approaches to minimise detrimental impacts of the reforms.

More generally, the task group’s ongoing scrutiny should help to support the effective implementation of welfare reforms in the borough by giving clarity and consistency of focus to those responsible for their delivery.
A review on sustainable drainage systems was included in the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2014/15. However OSMB were informed in March 2014 that the County Council was due to hold a major flooding summit, and so it was decided to defer the review and take a decision after the summit as to whether to take this work forward. The flooding summit was held on 16 October 2014 and this paper details the outcomes with regard to this topic. It also explains the policy context to help the committee reach an informed view as to whether it remains appropriate and necessary to pursue a scrutiny review by this council on sustainable drainage systems.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

There are no immediate environmental implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity

No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.
Summary

A review on sustainable drainage systems was included in the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2014/15. However OSMB were informed in March 2014 that the County Council was due to hold a major flooding summit, and so it was decided to defer the review and take a decision after the summit as to whether to take this work forward. The flooding summit was held on 16 October 2014 and this paper details the outcomes with regard to this topic. It also explains the policy context to help the committee reach an informed view as to whether it remains appropriate and necessary to pursue a scrutiny review by this council on sustainable drainage systems.

1. BACKGROUND

A proposal was submitted to the overview and scrutiny work programme workshop in March 2014 for a scrutiny review about sustainable infrastructure and the growth agenda. The workshop recommended that this should be included in the overview and scrutiny review programme for 2014/15, but refined the topic to focus specifically on sustainable drainage systems. The objective behind the original review proposal was to inform members and officers and encourage partner agencies to come forward with sustainable proposals to strengthen the infrastructure in a borough with a growth agenda.

When the proposals from the overview and scrutiny work programme workshop were considered by OSMB, it was reported that the County Council was planning to hold a flooding summit later in the year which might address some of the issues to be covered in the scrutiny review. Given the pressures on the work programme, it was therefore decided to defer the review and take a decision after the summit as to whether to take this work forward.

The summit took place on 16 October 2014. This paper explains the content and outcomes of the summit with reference to this topic, outlines the policy context and discusses the value of pursuing a scrutiny review on sustainable drainage systems at this time.
2. UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

Approaches to managing surface water that take account of water quantity (flooding), water quality (pollution) and amenity issues are collectively referred to as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS mimic nature and typically manage rainfall close to where it falls. Sustainable drainage is moving away from the traditional thinking of designing only for flooding to balancing the impact of urban drainage on flood and water quality management and amenity.

SuDS are technically regarded as a sequence of management practices, control structures and strategies designed to efficiently and sustainably drain surface water, while minimising pollution and managing the impact on water quality of local water bodies.

Sustainable drainage is a concept that includes long term environmental and social factors in decisions about drainage. It takes account of the quantity and quality of runoff, and the amenity and aesthetic value of surface water in the urban environment.¹

Proposals to increase the uptake of sustainable drainage systems in new developments were included in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

3. WARWICKSHIRE FLOOD SUMMIT

The Flood Summit was held on Thursday 16 October in the Benn Hall in Rugby. Its overall focus was on the extent to which the recommendations of the Pitt Review (following the 2007 floods) have been implemented in Warwickshire. The summit was attended by a range of partners and stakeholders including the National Flood Forum, CSW Resilience, AECOM, the Woodland Trust and the Environment Agency, as well as officers and councillors from local authorities in Warwickshire.

The agenda included a presentation from the consultants AECOM regarding Flooding, Housing and Sustainable Drainage.

The presentation explored the potential for use of SuDS and water sensitive urban design within Warwickshire and suggested that the opportunity for sustainable drainage systems in the urban area in the county was in fact fairly limited, with 92% of the county being rural. Nevertheless there are clearly a number of benefits to be gained from SuDS, including:

- Reduced flood risk
- Improved water quality
- Increased biodiversity
- Increased levels of green infrastructure
- Better places to live
- Engagement with local communities
- Adaptation to climate change
- Carbon management.

¹ Information taken from website www.susdrain.org
The presentation argued that a key element of SuDS was having an active design process, with provision of technical advice at every stage of the design and planning process – right through masterplanning, planning application stages and landscape design. The ‘mast site’ in Rugby was cited as an example of where this approach had been followed.

Potential pitfalls in the delivery of SuDs were highlighted, including:
- Maintenance (to maintain aesthetics, water quality and capacity)
- Habitat development
- Protected species
- Prolonged wet weather (resilience)

These matters were discussed and explored, but there were no specific actions or outcomes arising from the summit with regard to SuDS.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Warwickshire County Council has been the Lead Local Flooding Authority since 2010.

Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Warwickshire County Council is also designated as the SuDS Approval Body (SAB) for any new draining system and therefore must approve, adopt and maintain any new SuDS within the area. When the relevant legislation is implemented, the SAB will have responsibility for the approval of proposed drainage systems in new development and redevelopments, subject to exemptions and thresholds, and approval must be granted before a developer can commence construction. In order to be approved, proposed drainage systems will have to meet national standards. The SAB will also be responsible for adopting and maintaining SuDS which serve more than one property, where they have been approved.

Upon receipt of a planning application that includes SuDS, Rugby Borough Council will now consult Warwickshire County Council (WCC), as the relevant SAB, and await comments. The council would be led by the expertise of the SAB, just as the council is currently led by WCC Ecology and WCC Highways. Through that process, the standards outlined at a national level will be implemented. Similarly, the evidence for the new Local Plan will be informed by WCC as Lead Local Flooding Authority and SAB.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Communities and Local Government published a consultation document in September 2014, on ‘Delivering Sustainable Drainage Systems’², which proposed changes to the approaches outlined in the Flood and Water Management Act. This alternative approach aims to use the planning system to deliver effective and sustainable drainage. The consultation proposed providing decision makers with more scope to give increased weight to the provision and maintenance of SuDS so that where applications fail to meet a national policy requirement they could be rejected.

The consultation document lists a number of organisations that Planning Authorities should seek advice from to ensure SuDS are properly planned and implemented. It is already this council’s practice to seek the advice of experts to ensure that the council is properly informed before making a decision as to whether a proposed SuDS is adequate.

For Rugby Borough Council, it remains the case that the expert knowledge of SuDS will be external to the Council and, therefore, officers will seek advice from other organisations, principally WCC. The council already consults WCC on relevant planning applications, as part of the plan making process, and will continue to operate in this way to ensure the right advice is received. All comments made by statutory consultees, including WCC, are contained within the officers report where this is a delegated decision, or in a report to the Planning Committee. All decision makers are therefore aware of comments received prior to a decision being made.

The council has achieved a high standard of SuDS provision on many sites, the Rugby Radio Station being an obvious example, principally with the support of the Environment Agency who have historically been the relevant organisation. This came about because officers consulted the EA and took on board their comments and suggestions. Officers will continue to take this approach with WCC as that council assumes its new responsibilities.

5. POTENTIAL SCRUTINY REVIEW

The discussion above demonstrates the obvious value of encouraging the increased implementation of SuDS in Rugby, particularly in the context of the planned urban growth in the borough.

However, members may wish to consider whether an in-depth scrutiny review at the borough level on this topic would be likely to deliver meaningful outcomes, given that:

a) the lead responsibility and expertise in implementing SuDS now rests with the county council; and

b) there is evidence that, to the extent that this council has influence as the local planning authority it has been successful in achieving a high standard of SuDS provision on new development sites in the borough.

It is suggested that, if members wish to proceed with a scrutiny review on this topic, consideration be given to inviting Warwickshire County Council to consider a joint or county-wide scrutiny exercise, as a review at this level would be likely to have more impact and influence.
Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee

Date of Meeting: 13 November 2014

Subject Matter: Sustainable drainage systems – feedback from Warwickshire County Council’s flooding summit

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers relating to this item.
AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee

Date of Meeting: 13 November 2014

Report Title: Overview and scrutiny review action plans – report for noting

Ward Relevance: All

Contact Officer: Debbie Dawson, Tel: 01788 533592

Summary: Scrutiny committees receive reports on scrutiny review action plans under their remit twice each year, in June and November. Appended to the report are copies of the action plan reports from the Covalent system for all of the ‘live’ action plans for which this committee has responsibility. Completed actions which have already been reported to the committee have been removed.

Financial Implications: There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications: There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications: There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications: There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity: No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.
Summary
Scrutiny committees receive reports on scrutiny review action plans under their remit twice each year, in June and November. Appended to the report are copies of the action plan reports from the Covalent system for all of the 'live' action plans for which this committee has responsibility. Completed actions which have already been reported to the committee have been removed.

1. BACKGROUND

It is the responsibility of the scrutiny committees to monitor progress against the scrutiny review action plans arising from reviews for which they were responsible. This is routinely scheduled to take place twice a year, in June and November. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board receives an exception report on all overdue actions from scrutiny reviews in August and January, and refers to the relevant committee any particular areas of concern for further investigation.

2. REVIEW ACTION PLANS

Attached at appendix one are the latest reports from Covalent on the action plans for the following reviews:

- Planning for Play
- Housing Stock and Housing Needs

The action plan for the review of Fixed Term Tenancies is also included. This has recently been placed on Covalent, but the progress report from Covalent is not yet available. However, members will note that none of the deadlines for the actions have yet been reached.

Those actions that have been previously reported to the committee as having been completed or cancelled have been removed from the reports, as requested by the committee, to simplify the reporting. The date when the action plans were agreed by Cabinet are given alongside the title of each review, so that the context is clear. Please note also that the most recent action plans are produced in a new format.

The committee is asked to confirm the completed actions, and to consider whether further action is needed in respect of the outcomes of any particular review.
Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee
Date of Meeting: 13 November 2014
Subject Matter: Overview and scrutiny review action plans

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers relating to this item.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation 3: Consultation on planning applications</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Latest Note</td>
<td></td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>31-Mar-2016</td>
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</table>

Ensure that any necessary internal consultations with officers within the Parks and Grounds Team and Sports & Recreation are carried out as appropriate and co-ordinate any response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biennial review by Customer and Partnerships Committee 2016</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Progress</th>
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<th>Recommendation 4: Advising ward members of applications</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Progress</th>
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<th>Evaluate compliance as part of biennial review by Customer and Partnerships Committee 2016</th>
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<th>Progress</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latest Note</td>
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### Recommendation 5: Ensure timely delivery of play areas through appropriate planning conditions or legal agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>31-Mar-2016</td>
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| Latest Note | Inspections carried out. Awaiting reports. |

### Carry out annual inspection of the quality of outcome in Rugby BC’s adopted playspaces and report outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
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| Latest Note | Inspections carried out. Awaiting reports. |

### Carry out annual inspection of the quality of outcome in Rugby BC’s adopted playspaces on the ground for 2014

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<th>Status</th>
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| Latest Note | Inspections carried out. Awaiting reports. |

### An annual check to be made as to whether consultation of Parks & Grounds Manager has taken place.

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<th>Status</th>
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| Latest Note | |

### Carry out annual check that early internal consultation on play provision in new housing schemes has taken place during of implementation of action plan for 2014

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<th>Status</th>
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| Latest Note | |
### Recommendation 6: Make report to the Customer and Partnerships Committee and Cabinet on a broader evaluation of the impact of the changes

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<th>Latest Note</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An evaluation of the re-designation programme has been carried out by officers and reported to a meeting of Housing Managers on 11.2.14. A report will be made to Customer &amp; Partnerships Committee during the 2014/15 municipal year.</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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## Recommendations and actions

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<th>Assigned to</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The council’s tenancy policy should be reviewed again at the end of 2015</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Sub-actions and milestones</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reconvene Member task group to review the council's tenancy policy</td>
<td>Liz Dunlop</td>
<td>Debbie Dawson</td>
<td>December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task group to send report to Cabinet</td>
<td>Liz Dunlop</td>
<td>Debbie Dawson</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Housing officers are trained to work more proactively with tenants to discuss alternative housing options with them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-actions and milestones</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Put in place training for housing officers to work with tenants to discuss alternative housing options where appropriate.</td>
<td>Steve Shanahan</td>
<td>Liz Dunlop</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide evidence that housing officers are taking a more proactive approach to discussing alternative housing options with tenants.</td>
<td>Steve Shanahan</td>
<td>Liz Dunlop</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Further work is undertaken to explore the potential introduction of tenant incentive schemes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendations and actions</td>
<td>Managed by</td>
<td>Assigned to</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-actions and milestones</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undertake research and consider the potential use of tenant incentive schemes.</td>
<td>Steve Shanahan</td>
<td>Liz Dunlop</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong> Councillors are briefed on the national ‘Pay to Stay’ policy when the details are confirmed.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-actions and milestones</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a Housing Member Conversation to brief councillors on the national ‘Guidance on Rents for Social Housing’ published in May 2014.</td>
<td>Steve Shanahan</td>
<td>Liz Dunlop</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Customer and Partnerships Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Meeting</strong></td>
<td>13 November 2014</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report Title</strong></td>
<td>Committee Work Programme</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ward Relevance</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Officer</strong></td>
<td>Debbie Dawson, Tel: 01788 533592</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**
The report updates the Committee on the progress of task group reviews within its remit and details the Committee’s forward work programme.

**Financial Implications**
There is a budget of £500 available to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in 2014/15 to spend on the delivery of the overview and scrutiny work programme.

**Risk Management Implications**
There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

**Environmental Implications**
There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**Legal Implications**
There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**Equality and Diversity**
No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.
Summary
The report updates the Committee on the progress of task group reviews within its
remit and details the Committee's forward work programme.

1. PROGRESS ON SCRUTINY REVIEWS

1.1 Universal Credit and Welfare Reform

The group is meeting on 27 October to identify any specific issues it wishes to
investigate in greater depth. An update on the work of the task group is a separate
item on this meeting agenda.

1.2 Rugby Business Improvement District

Councillor Helen Walton was appointed to chair this task group. However, following
her appointment to Cabinet, the chairmanship is now vacant.

The first business meeting of the task group took place on 1 October, where
members were briefed on key background information and considered the
consultation strategy and programme of work for the review.

The task group has invited representatives of Rugby First Ltd to a meeting on 10
November 2014. It has also issued a call for evidence which has been sent to key
stakeholders and promoted on the council website.

The task group plans to report to the Committee on the outcomes of the review on
29 January 2015.

1.3 Hackney Carriage Stands

On 2 August, the task group agreed a consultation process aimed at users, town
centre businesses and taxi drivers and operators, together with separate letters to
groups representing particular interests such as Rugby Disability Forum, Rugby First
and RHODA. The consultation asks for views on whether present town centre taxi
rank provision is sufficient and, if it is not, in what part of the town any additional
provision might be made. It is taking the form of calls for evidence, along with a quick
questionnaire for those who prefer not to make a formal submission.
Subject to the data being collated in time, the meeting of the task group on 3 December will analyse the responses, make a judgement on whether additional provision is necessary and, if it is, discuss possible locations. Discussions will then be held with the county council, the police and other affected bodies before firming-up any proposals.

1.4 New review – promoting independent living

The one page strategy for this review was agreed at the last meeting of the committee and task group members are now being recruited with a view to beginning work on the review before the end of the calendar year. Councillors Sue Roodhouse, Belinda Garcia and Claire Edwards have all expressed an interest in being a member of this task group.

At the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting on 13 October 2014, members commented that there were a number of significant reviews underway, involving a considerable amount of work, and suggested that it may be necessary for this review to slip if there was not sufficient member capacity to take this forward at this time. Officers consider that it would be possible to proceed with a small task group of three members, though it may be easier in terms of time management to commence work on this review after the Rugby BID review has reported at the end of January.

The Committee are asked to confirm the membership of this task group and determine the timescale for commencing work on this review.

1.5 Other forthcoming reviews

- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems: The need for a review of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in the borough is to be considered separately at this meeting.

- Ambulance Service restructuring: The review of the impact of the ambulance service restructuring in the borough has been scheduled for the 26 March meeting of the committee.

2. PLANNING FOR NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The committee’s future work programme is attached at appendix 1 for approval. There has been some rearrangement of the forward work programme since this was last considered by the committee, to ensure a balance of work at forthcoming meetings.

The items in the work programme for the committee’s next meeting on 29 January 2015 include:

Health and wellbeing update – focus on alcohol and health

The Committee will receive a routine update from Councillor Belinda Garcia, the Council Health Champion and borough representative on the county Adult Social
Services and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board

Representatives of the county council’s Drug and Alcohol Team will also be invited to meet with the committee to review progress in the implementation of the Warwickshire Alcohol Improvement Programme in Rugby, with a particular focus on the borough council’s contribution in promotion and publicity and in giving direct advice on alcohol. This follows a recommendation to the committee from the review of alcohol and health that the committee should review progress in the implementation of the Warwickshire Alcohol Improvement Programme in Rugby on an annual basis.

Rugby World Cup 2015 update

Further to the report to the committee in June 2014 on plans to mark the Rugby Union World Cup 2015 in the borough, the Executive Director agreed to come back to the committee to provide an update on further progress on the work of the Steering Group later in the year.

3. CONCLUSION

The committee is asked to:
- note the progress in the task group reviews; and
- determine and approve the future work programme for the committee.
Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee
Date of Meeting: 13 November 2014
Subject Matter: Committee Work Programme

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Document</th>
<th>Officer’s Reference</th>
<th>File Reference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>17 March</td>
<td>Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, agenda and minutes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>26 June</td>
<td>Customer and Partnerships Committee, agenda item 10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>(Review of Alcohol and Health)</td>
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</table>
# Customer and Partnerships Committee – Forward Work Programme

**13 November 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Who to involve</th>
<th>Budget considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rugby Youth Council</td>
<td>Standing item</td>
<td></td>
<td>The meeting is to be held at The Hub at Central Park, to facilitate attendance by Coton Forward members. Costs are expected to be around £80.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light touch review of neighbourhood planning</td>
<td>To capture learning from the Coton pilot about the benefits and resource implications of supporting local areas to produce a neighbourhood plan and help to inform the council’s approach to neighbourhood planning across the borough.</td>
<td>Head of Planning and Culture Development Strategy Manager, Economy, Development and Culture Portfolio Holder, Coton Forward Planning Aid Parish council representatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Warwickshire County Council Flooding Summit</td>
<td>Feedback from the summit (3 October 2014) to inform decision regarding the need for a scrutiny review on Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems</td>
<td>Head of Environmental Services, Cllr Peter Butlin (WCC Portfolio Holder)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal Credit and Welfare Reform Task Group</td>
<td>Update on the work of the task group.</td>
<td>Cllr Tom Mahoney, Task Group Chairman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scrutiny review action plans</td>
<td>Routine report on progress against scrutiny review action plans within the committee’s remit.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Who to involve</td>
<td>Budget considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rugby Youth Council</td>
<td>Standing item</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback from Children and Young People’s Champion</td>
<td>Routine report on the work of the council’s member champion for Children and Young People.</td>
<td>Children and Young People’s Champion, Councillor Kathryn Lawrence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and wellbeing update – focus on alcohol and health</td>
<td>Standing item To review progress in the implementation of the Warwickshire Alcohol Improvement Programme in Rugby, with a particular focus on the borough council’s contribution in promotion and publicity and in giving direct advice on alcohol.</td>
<td>Councillor Belinda Garcia: Council Health Champion (representative on WCC Adult Social Services and Health OSC and Health and Wellbeing Board) Representative of WCC’s Drug and Alcohol Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby World Cup 2015 update</td>
<td>Feedback from the Steering Group on plans to mark the RWC2015 in the borough</td>
<td>Executive Director Economic Investment Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby BID Task Group Review</td>
<td>Report of the Task Group</td>
<td>Task Group Chairman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Planning</td>
<td>To review evidence received at 13 November meeting and agree review report and recommendations</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Who to involve</td>
<td>Budget considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rugby Youth Council</td>
<td>Standing item</td>
<td>Councillor Health Champion and council representative on WCC</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coventry and Rugby CCG (regarding funding for WMAS)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and wellbeing update</td>
<td>Standing item</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambulance Service restructuring</td>
<td>To consider the local impact of restructuring</td>
<td>West Midlands Ambulance Service Patient representative groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime and Disorder Update</td>
<td>Part of the committee’s responsibility to review the decisions and actions of the responsible authorities within the Community Safety Partnership in relation to their crime and disorder functions.</td>
<td>Warwickshire Police – Rugby Safer Neighbourhoods Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up to Review of Housing Stock and Housing Need</td>
<td>Report to committee evaluating the impact of the changes following redesignation of housing stock.</td>
<td>Operational Housing Manager</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Review title</td>
<td>Start date</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>Expected report date</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal credit and welfare reforms</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>An interim report on the task group’s work was presented to Customer and Partnerships Committee in April 2014. The group is continuing its work through the current municipal year and has agreed two specific areas on which to focus in more detail through to September 2015.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby BID</td>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>The task group is now in its evidence-gathering stage and due to meet with representatives of Rugby First on 10 November 2014.</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting independent living</td>
<td>November / December 2014?</td>
<td>The one page strategy was agreed by CUSP on 11 September 2014 and members are now being recruited to the task group.</td>
<td>tbc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackney carriage stands</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>The task group has now embarked on an information gathering campaign for the review.</td>
<td>tbc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance service restructuring</td>
<td>Q4 2014/15</td>
<td>To consider the local impact of restructuring. Scheduled for March 2015 meeting of CUSP.</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable urban drainage systems</td>
<td>tbc</td>
<td>The need for this proposed review is to be reconsidered by CUSP on 13 November, after a WCC flooding summit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>