

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title:	Annual Performance Report
Name of Committee:	Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 September 2021
Contact Officer:	Linn Ashmore, Democratic Services Officer 01788533522 or linn.ashmore@rugby.gov.uk
Summary:	An outline of the Council's performance and achievements for 2020/21.
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:	There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

Scrutiny Committee - 13 September 2021

Annual Performance Report

Public Report of the Executive Director

Summary

An outline of the Council's performance and achievements for 2020/21.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 23 March 2020, the Government commenced a number of 'lockdown' measures due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Since that date, the Council has continually adapted to changing legislation, changing local circumstances, and changing needs from our communities.
- 1.2 Our work has included ensuring the continuation of vital services that both residents and local businesses rely upon, the provision of new functions to respond to the unprecedented circumstances and innovation in delivering services via new and previously untested means.
- 1.3 As set out previously, the Council assembled an efficient response structure to deal with the outbreak. This structure has enabled the Council to act proactively and efficiently in dealing with the various issues arising through the COVID-19 pandemic. The success of this structure has been recognised with the Executive Director being recognised for her contribution to the community as part of the West Midlands Employers (WME) #EVERYDAYHEROES campaign. This structure remains in place and will continue throughout the pandemic and into the recovery phase.
- 1.4 The COVID-19 response has also been supported by Members. This has been through positive engagement with both staff and the public. The successful cross collaboration between the political parties, particularly the political Group Leaders has also contributed to dealing with the outbreak and moving into the recovery phase.
- 1.5 **Some 18 months on from the initial lockdown measures, this report seeks to share the Council's key areas of success throughout the pandemic. Details of the Council's performance is attached at Appendix 1.**

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Date of Meeting: 13 September 2021
Subject Matter: Annual Performance Report
Originating Department: Executive Director's Office

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink



SHARING OUR SUCCESS 2020-2021



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Sharing our Success

The 18 months since the emergence of Covid-19 has been unprecedented: globally, nationally and in Rugby too. Rugby Borough Council has been at the forefront of the pandemic response within the borough, providing vital services to our most vulnerable residents, issuing public health messaging, and passing on grant support to businesses. Our work has brought us closer to the communities we serve and given us an improved understanding of our residents and businesses, and the communities that they are part of.

Meanwhile, we have continued to provide all of our services. In the next few pages you can see our main achievements.

As we start to move into a recovery phase – even while continuing to respond to the pandemic – our work on delivering our Corporate Strategy is gaining speed. We host the Rugby Climate Summit later this month, will shortly start consulting on a draft town centre spatial strategy, and continue to transform our service delivery.

No doubt we will continue to have to deal with the unexpected. But, whatever circumstances arise, we will continue to make sure that we do what's right for Rugby.



Cllr Seb Lowe
Leader of the Council



Mannie Ketley
Executive Director



Climate Change and the Environment

In 2019 the UK Parliament set a commitment in law to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Achieving this target will require considerable effort with public bodies, private sector organisations, the third sector and individuals working together.

Rugby Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, and in doing so committed to move the Council's operations to being carbon neutral by 2030.



Prioritising Climate Change

Climate change has remained a key driver for the Council's activities and is an issue of growing concern for the wider community. Several new initiatives are helping to meet the commitments set out in the Climate Emergency Declaration.

<p>CORPORATE STRATEGY</p> <p>We developed and agreed a new Corporate Strategy which made addressing climate change and supporting the environment a key outcome for the Council.</p>	<p>CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY</p> <p>We began the task of baselining the Council's carbon footprint and development of a Climate Change Strategy, to take us toward net zero. The initial report from this work is expected in the coming weeks.</p>	<p>CLIMATE CHANGE CONSULTATION</p> <p>1,000 residents responded to our climate change consultation in December 2020, indicating the strength of public feeling on the issue.</p>
<p>CLIMATE SURVEY</p> <p>The consultation was followed up by a climate survey to seek residents' views on how they can contribute to the climate agenda. This will inform the development of our climate change strategy and help us support residents to adapt the way they live.</p>	<p>CLIMATE SUMMIT</p> <p>We are hosting a Climate Summit to discuss with voluntary sector organisations how we can address the climate emergency together. We recognise that the climate emergency is not something that any organisation can address alone.</p>	<p>ENERGY EFFICIENCY</p> <p>We succeeded in our bid for government funding for improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock. This work has been match funded by the Council and will benefit the environment and save our tenants money.</p>
<p>STAFF BUSINESS TRAVEL</p> <p>We have significantly reduced staff business travel. This will continue beyond the pandemic as we refine our approach to agile working.</p>	<p>DIGITAL CULTURE</p> <p>We have embedded a digital culture, allowing council meetings to be paperless. This has resulted in a 56% reduction in use and expenditure on paper.</p>	<p>IMPACT ASSESSMENTS</p> <p>We have introduced climate change and environmental impact assessments to be used when preparing reports. This ensures that climate change and the environment are a key consideration in all decisions.</p>



Green Spaces

Throughout the pandemic, the importance of good quality green spaces has become more prominent, as has the role which they play in delivering mental and physical health benefits for their users.

Our parks and ground maintenance teams have continued to operate on all sites, adapting to ensure that legislative requirements are met, while ensuring the continued provision of high-quality facilities for our residents.

<p>GREEN FLAG AWARDS</p> <p>We have maintained the outstanding quality of our green spaces, as recognised through receiving 5 Green Flag awards.</p>	<p>ACCESS TO PARKS AND GREEN SPACES</p> <p>We have ensured that residents continue to be able to access parks and green spaces to promote mental and physical wellbeing. This has included adapting the physical design of parks, ensuring additional litter facilities are available and adapting play equipment when required.</p>	<p>TACKLING LITTER</p> <p>We used behavioural change theory to try to reduce littering and supported this with communications campaigns and targeted enforcement. Our work on tackling litter featured in local and national press and national TV.</p>
<p>TRACKERS</p> <p>We fitted our grounds maintenance vehicles with trackers, to ensure the most efficient route is taken and to support our broader climate ambitions.</p>	<p>BIODIVERSITY</p> <p>We continued to promote biodiversity, for example by planting an additional 78 trees on green spaces.</p>	<p>VOLUNTEERING</p> <p>Our volunteers contributed more than 9,227 hours of volunteering on our green spaces.</p>
<p>SOLAR LIGHTS</p> <p>We trialled the use of "Bat Hat" solar lights on footpaths to ensure that residents feel safe. This work is now a national case study.</p>	<p>POLLINATOR FRIENDLY POLICIES</p> <p>We agreed tree and pollinator friendly policies – ensuring that our habitats are protected, long into the future.</p>	<p>PUBLIC CONSULTATION</p> <p>We took public consultation on-line and delivered 2 new skate parks at Whitehall Recreation Ground and Hollowell Way, along with new play areas at Whinfield and Rokeby Recreation Grounds.</p>
<p>PARKS CONNECTOR NETWORK</p> <p>We began work on a parks connector network, which will give residents greener travel options.</p>	<p>PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD</p> <p>The work of our Parks and Grounds Maintenance Teams has been recognised through being shortlisted for a public service excellence award.</p>	<p>INCREASE IN FOOTFALL</p> <p>Caldecott Park saw a dramatic increase in footfall, with 65% more people visiting the park in February 2021, than did in February 2020.</p>

Responsible Waste Management

There has been an enhanced recognition of the vital role of waste management in ensuring that domestic waste continues to be collected and that waste arisings are treated in the most environmentally sustainable way.

Our waste and recycling teams have continued to be very much a public face of the Council, helped by the incredible efforts of our support teams to ensure that our services have been able to continue.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANS

We implemented robust covid secure arrangements and business continuity plans to ensure that the Council has continued with all statutory waste collections throughout the pandemic.

WASTE COLLECTION

The efforts of our waste collection crews were recognised by residents with countless thank you cards, messages and even a dance routine which was shared via social media.

RECYCLING

We collected nearly 1,000 tonnes of dry mixed recycling from households within the Borough each month, diverting that material away from landfill or incineration.

MATERIAL RECYCLING FACILITY

With partners we are developing a state-of-the-art material recycling facility, incorporating a new company in the process. The new facility will ensure a high-quality output of recycled material and less material being disposed of via landfill or incineration, as well as delivering significant financial benefits.

IMPROVED CONTAMINATION RATES

With the help of residents, we have driven down the contamination rate with collected dry mixed recycling to 11.4%. We thank the residents of the Borough for helping us to do this.



Economy

Rugby benefits from a diverse and resilient economy that enables opportunities for all residents. The pandemic has posed significant risk to sectors of the economy and the Council has recognised the important role which it must play in supporting businesses to respond to the pandemic and helping them to flourish during the recovery.





Advice to Businesses

We recognise the challenges which the pandemic has brought to local businesses and our teams have worked with partners to provide advice and guidance throughout. This advice has focussed on enabling businesses to safely open/re-open, reducing the spread of the virus within workplaces and adapt to changing national legislation.

<p>SPECIALISED ADVICE</p> <p>Our commercial regulation team responded to 344 enquiries from businesses to give them specialised advice about covid regulations and safe reopening.</p>	<p>WEBINAR</p> <p>We hosted a webinar for hospitality businesses across Rugby in December 2020 and a further webinar for all businesses on opening safely in April 2021. We also contributed to other webinars on close contact services, sports clubs, places of worship and hospitality. Through our webinars, we reached 120 local businesses.</p>	<p>SUPPORTED OUTBREAKS</p> <p>Working with partners, we supported outbreaks in business settings, including through joint visits (either virtually or in person) to workplaces, Incident Management Meetings and issuing advice and guidance.</p>
<p>GUIDANCE</p> <p>We have provided specific sector related guidance to the following sectors: All food takeaway businesses hospitality venues, including guidance on reopening safely, use of outdoor shelters and applying for pavement licences and high-risk businesses in the areas of large-scale manufacturing, warehousing and distribution covering risks from car sharing, staff living accommodation, workplace testing, new variants and vaccinations.</p>	<p>BUSINESS ADVICE WORK</p> <p>Our business advice work included a number of television and radio appearances, maintaining a high level of public visibility.</p>	<p>SHORTLISTED FOR A NATIONAL AWARD</p> <p>With partners, we have been shortlisted for a national award for 'Collaborative Working'.</p>



Financial Support to Businesses

We recognise the enormous financial strains which local businesses have faced during the pandemic and have provided advice, guidance and financial grant support to help guide them through these challenges.

<p>GRANTS</p> <p>£34m of grants have been paid out to date, providing emergency funding to support businesses to manage day to day cash flow whilst impacted by lockdown restrictions.</p>	<p>NATIONAL AWARDS</p> <p>Recognising the impact which they made, the squad formed to process the grant funding were nominated for two national awards.</p>	<p>CREDITORS ACTION PLAN</p> <p>Our 'creditors action plan' ensured that suppliers were paid urgently with SME's paid within 10 working days of the receipt of the invoice wherever possible.</p>
<p>GROWTH HUB</p> <p>We emailed all businesses to alert them to available grants and introduce them to the growth hub small business support team. We wrote letters to 500 businesses that did not respond to email communications.</p>	<p>ADDITIONAL BUSINESS RATES</p> <p>We granted £16m in additional business rates relief to eligible retail, leisure, and hospitality properties, providing significant cost savings for this vital sector in our local economy.</p>	<p>CORONAVIRUS BUSINESS INTERRUPTION LOANS</p> <p>58% of our total spend was with small and medium businesses (SMEs)</p> <p>We provided £1/4 million to the Coventry and Warwickshire Reinvestment Trust (CWRT) to kick start the process of awarding Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans.</p>



Supporting the Town Centre

We recognise the importance of a thriving and sustainable Town Centre, and the adverse impact which the pandemic has had on this. We have worked with partners, across sectors, to ensure that the Town Centre remains a place where businesses can thrive and that residents can safely enjoy.

<p>RETURNING TO THE TOWN CENTRE SAFELY</p> <p>We have worked with partners to ensure that town centre businesses were able to operate safely within the town centre and encourage residents to return to the centre safely. A successful bid for government funding meant we were able to provide signs to encourage social distancing, hand washing and mask-wearing. Every household in Rugby was sent a leaflet encouraging residents to return to the town centre safely.</p>	<p>CHANGING PLACES FACILITY</p> <p>We secured a grant to add a "Changing Places" facility to Rugby Central shopping centre and have completed design work. These accessible toilets will open in 2021/22.</p>	
<p>SHOPAPPY</p> <p>We helped businesses to adopt 'click and collect' operations through the local shopping platform 'ShopAppy'. 34 Rugby businesses registered and became active on ShopAppy at no cost to themselves.</p>	<p>RUGBY BID</p> <p>We continued our support to the Rugby BID and supported the renewal of their services, with a ballot showing 77% support.</p>	<p>FREE EVENT</p> <p>We partnered with Rugby School to organise an outdoor dance event by the Motionhouse dance company in the town centre. This was free to residents, and the event was fully booked.</p>
<p>OUTDOOR TRADING</p> <p>Two town centre businesses were able to use council land so they could open and trade outdoors. 17 businesses selling food and drink were helped to adapt to become COVID secure by granting them pavement licenses, allowing the placement of tables and chairs on the highway outside their premises.</p>	<p>TOWN CENTRE SPATIAL STRATEGY</p> <p>We sought the views of our residents and businesses on the future of the town centre, to progress the development of a Town Centre Spatial Strategy. This attracted 1,292 responses.</p>	<p>COVID SAFETY</p> <p>We have held weekly online town centre meetings engaging with Rugby First and the Police to monitor town centre challenges and COVID safety management as well as working actively together to encourage residents and visitors back into the town centre when it was safe to do so.</p>
<p>COVID ADVISORS</p> <p>The Community Wardens became Covid Advisors, providing patrols and giving advice to businesses and customers during busy weekend periods.</p>	<p>RUGBY SUMMERTIME</p> <p>£193,000 EU grant funded a very popular Rugby Summertime programme brought a town centre beach, an outdoor cinema, live music and street entertainment.</p>	<p>SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND</p> <p>We actively partnered with Shakespeare's England to feature Rugby on their Warwickshire tourism promotion website as an attractive destination for UK and international visitors.</p>



Enabling Sustainable Growth

With ambitious plans for growth in the Borough, we have continued to support sustainable growth, adopting new ways of working and developing innovative solutions as they arose. This has led to:

<p>PLANNING APPLICATIONS</p> <p>Our planning team have dealt with an unprecedented volume of planning applications while adapting to agile working. On average 75 applications have been determined each month since March 2020.</p>	<p>FUTURE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK</p> <p>The framework for future development was set out in three new supplementary planning documents, covering South West Rugby, air quality and housing needs.</p>	<p>CALDECOTT SQUARE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>We secured £2m grant funding for the Caldecott Square development. This innovative scheme has been nationally recognised and will be used as a vital contribution to £27m regeneration scheme which will bring the college site back into use by creating a high-quality retirement scheme. The redevelopment will aid economic recovery and bring new homes, facilities, and jobs in the area.</p>
<p>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>753 new dwellings were granted planning permission, supporting the sustainable development and recovery of the Borough.</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Planning permission was granted on 400,000 square metres of new employment land, to support the economic development and recovery of the Borough.</p>	<p>AFFORDABLE HOMES</p> <p>233 affordable homes were built, supporting our current and future residents into sustainable housing.</p>
<p>HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT</p> <p>We are carrying out a new Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment with neighbouring councils to inform our future development strategies.</p>	<p>MARKET QUARTER</p> <p>The market quarter site is bringing a 4.25 acre piece of derelict land back into use providing 360 new apartments. These much-needed homes are in a very sustainable location between the railway station and the town centre.</p>	<p>BIART PLACE</p> <p>We were able to deconstruct Biart Place during the lockdowns and rehoused all the tenants in two of the three tower blocks at Rounds Gardens, with the third block likely to be empty before the end of 2021.</p>
<p>SYMMETRY PARK</p> <p>We granted approval for the net carbon zero Symmetry Park development at South West Rugby.</p>	<p>HOUSING STRATEGY</p> <p>We have identified and consulted on the priorities for the new Housing Strategy.</p>	<p>ECONOMIC STRATEGY</p> <p>Work is currently underway on a new economic strategy, which will support the economic recovery of the Borough.</p>



Health and Wellbeing

The wellbeing and health of our communities has been amongst our highest priorities, carrying more importance than ever before. We have worked with partners to implement schemes which seek to maintain wellbeing, address the key issues associated with the pandemic and overcome inequalities.





Supporting our Vulnerable Communities

We recognise that parts of the community have been, and continue to be, disproportionately affected by the pandemic and we have put in place specific measures to support our more vulnerable communities.

<p>SUPPORT FOR THE VULNERABLE</p> <p>We wrote to 46,000 households and phoned 4140 vulnerable residents to check on their wellbeing and ensure that they knew what support we were providing.</p>	<p>COVID SAFETY ADVISE</p> <p>We sent letters to landlords of Houses in Multiple Occupation to advise of the increased risk of household transmission in these types of accommodation.</p>	<p>SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM SEEKER</p> <p>We worked with WCAVA and our VCS partners to tackle issues such as loneliness and support for asylum seekers.</p>
<p>FOODBANK</p> <p>The trustees of Rugby Foodbank approached the Council for support in keeping the foodbank open, following a reduction in their own volunteers as a result of the 'lockdown' measures. Through our support, more than 700 food parcels were provided to residents and nearly 150 parcels were delivered to people unable to visit the foodbank to collect.</p>	<p>MULTILINGUAL INFORMATION</p> <p>Multilingual versions of COVID information leaflets and posters were distributed to shops, ensuring that key messages reached priority community groups.</p>	<p>LIFELINE</p> <p>The Lifeline service received 24,500 incoming calls. Over 1,100 of these calls resulted in the emergency services being called, 635 were passed to registered responders for assistance, 10 resulted in calls to GP's, 22 emergency calls were attended by officers.</p>
<p>SHIELDING RESIDENTS</p> <p>We distributed nearly 1,700 supply packages to over 300 shielding residents. In addition to food, supply packages also contained activity packs created by Rugby Art Gallery and Museum, which included puzzle books, sketch pads, pencils, paints and 'lockdown diaries' for children.</p>	<p>BEREAVEMENT SERVICES</p> <p>The Council's Bereavement Services have been able to maintain an efficient service and put in place operational procedures to supportive and sensitive services and ensure the safety of staff. This included a low cost option for live streaming services. Over the past 18 months, the hard work of staff has ensured that 1390 crematorium services have been able to take place. The service received recognition through a High Sherriff's award.</p>	
<p>YOUNG CARERS</p> <p>The art gallery worked with Warwickshire Young Carers. Those that were able to visit came to the gallery, others who were isolating were given activity packs including sketchbooks, craft materials, pastels, paints and brushes.</p>	<p>HARRASSMENT AND UNWANTED ATTENTION</p> <p>We sought views on the key issues faced by women and girls in relation to harassment and unwanted attention. This attracted over 700 responses and highlighted that 3 in 5 respondents had experienced unwanted attention over the past 12 months. The Rugby Community Safety Partnership is finalising an action plan in response.</p>	<p>STAFF REDEPLOYMENT</p> <p>We redeployed staff to operate the Shielding Hub Monday to Friday 9am-5pm with additional out of hours support over the weekends.</p>
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Meeting housing needs

We have provided specific support to people that are homeless, recognising the higher risks which COVID-19 presents to them. We have recognised that these individuals can be more likely to have poor health and multiple comorbidities and therefore could face a higher likelihood of serious disease or death from this disease.

<p>ROUGH SLEEPERS</p> <p>We ensured that that all rough sleepers had accommodation and meals.</p>	<p>EVERYONE IN</p> <p>As part of the “everyone in” initiative, over 90 individuals with a history of rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping were accommodated.</p>	<p>PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS</p> <p>102 people were prevented from becoming homeless through the ‘Preventing Homelessness, Improving Lives’ programme, which is hosted and managed by the Council.</p>
<p>RUGBY PATHWAY</p> <p>20 former long term rough sleepers began secure tenancies with support from Rugby Pathway.</p>	<p>SOFA-SURFERS</p> <p>In addition to working with rough sleepers, accommodation was provided to those who were previously staying with friends or sofa-surfing prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.</p>	<p>HIGH SHERIFF AWARD</p> <p>The Council’s work with rough sleepers and the homeless was recognised through a High Sherriff’s Award.</p>
<p>HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION</p> <p>Between March 2020 and end of August 2021 – the Preventing Homelessness and Improving Lives Team (PHIL), led by RBC, completed 162 homelessness preventions across the county - 47 of these were specific to Rugby.</p>	<p>TEST AND TRACE</p> <p>We created and implemented the Test and Trace Scheme in accordance with very tight time schedules and provided services to clients who were isolating, including over Bank Holidays.</p>	<p>AFFORDABLE HOMES</p> <p>We worked with Midland Heart to secure Homes England funding for 145 new affordable homes at Houlton. The first will be completed in late summer 2021.</p>
<p>DEMOLITION OF BELL HOUSE</p> <p>We demolished Bell House – a long-term derelict building - and 18 council owned apartments part funded by Homes England are due for completion in December 2021.</p>		<p>RENTAL PROPERTIES</p> <p>We bought 40 new properties in the borough for social renting.</p>



Financial Support

We have recognised the ongoing financial hardships experienced by residents throughout the pandemic and where possible, have taken all possible steps to play our part in alleviating these pressures.

<p>COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION</p> <p>£643,000 of Council Tax reduction was granted to residents, through the standard reduction of £150 and other discretionary support paid to residents who needed additional support.</p>	<p>GRANTS TO ISOLATING RESIDENTS</p> <p>£137,000 of grants have been paid to help individuals who were required to isolate during the pandemic.</p>	<p>TEST AND TRACE SUPPORT PAYMENT</p> <p>We implemented a Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. Between September 2020 and August 2021, 440 awards were made worth £217,000.</p>
<p>SIGNPOSTING RESIDENTS TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT</p> <p>Our Revenues team used every appropriate contact they had directly with residents to signpost them to financial support from community and voluntary sector partners.</p>	<p>FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS</p> <p>We worked with homeless residents and rough sleepers to make sure they had complementary financial advice and support – either from our own resources or through support provided by our partners.</p>	<p>SUSPENSION OF ENFORCEMENT PROCESSES</p> <p>To support our most vulnerable residents, we suspended most of our enforcement processes for Council Tax and sundry debt recovery during the 2020/21 financial year.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL INCLUSION</p> <p>We are working with the local Strategic Partnership to provide a strategic framework for increasing financial inclusion in our communities.</p>	<p>PREVENTING RESIDENTS FROM FALLING INTO DEBT</p> <p>Our tenancy support officers gave appropriate advice and signposted other organisations who could help. We used the RentSense system to identify tenants who were most likely to fall into arrears and offered them support before they fell into debt.</p>	



Test, Trace and Vaccination

We have developed existing, and created new, partnerships with organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to support testing, contact tracing and more recently vaccinations. Much of this work has been coordinated through the Rugby IMT (Incident Management Team), which meets weekly and is chaired by Council Officers.

VENUES FOR MOBILE TESTING CENTRES

We provided venues for mobile testing centres at locations throughout the Borough, ensuring that testing provision was available in the areas that needed it most.

PCR TEST CENTRE

We established a fixed PCR test centre on our Railway Terrace Car Park, meaning that all of the Borough's residents could access tests if they developed symptoms.

ASYMPTOMATIC/ LATERAL FLOW TEST CENTRE

We supported the establishment of an asymptomatic / Lateral Flow test centre at Edward Street Indian Community Centre so that residents could access regular rapid tests.

VACCINE INEQUALITY

We targeted vaccine inequality to ensure that communities where take up was low received additional support. This included a vaccination registration clinic being established in the heart of the ward with lowest vaccine uptake. This helped residents overcome language and technology issues to get a vaccine.

VACCINATION CLINICS

We hosted 21 vaccination clinics at the Benn Hall over 12 weekends. This supplemented the offer at Locke House and helped to ensure that vaccinations continued to be available to residents.

HELP WITH TEST AND TRACE

The Community Wardens and Commercial Regulation Team have visited residents who have tested positive but have not been reached by test and trace to ensure they are ok, are isolating and contact tracing can be completed.

LOCAL VACCINATION CENTRE

We worked with local NHS partners to help them establish and then retain the local vaccination centre at Locke House.

VACCINATION WALK IN CLINICS

Work has continued to address vaccine inequality working in partnership with health agencies to deliver vaccination walk in clinics and to promote these directly to communities with lower uptake through faith groups, community groups and work place employees.



Community Leadership

In any declared emergency public information and community leadership is critical, however it has provided a particular challenge through the pandemic due to the prolonged nature of the emergency response.

The Council's communications response has focused on providing critical public information at the right time, in a way that is accessible to residents and encourages an appropriate response. With local news now only published weekly to a very limited audience the Council has deliberately targeted its communications directly to residents.

<p>COMMUNITY WARDENS</p> <p>Community Wardens monitored public outdoor spaces, focusing on areas where large numbers were gathering externally during lockdown to disperse groups and lower the transmission risks.</p>	<p>SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING</p> <p>We have issued around 1500 social media posts related to the pandemic with a reach per post of up to 100,000 adults age 13 or older. Posts had a combined reach of nearly 10 million adults age 13 or older.</p>	<p>COUNCIL APP</p> <p>On a single day, a social media post on checking your next bin day resulted in nearly 300 downloads of the Council's app, helping the Council reach one in ten households in the borough.</p>
<p>SUPPORT FOR OUR RESIDENTS</p> <p>The Council wrote to all households explaining how residents could get the support that they needed.</p>	<p>PARTNERSHIP WORKING</p> <p>We have continued to work closely with the community associations that we support to ensure they meet community needs during the pandemic.</p>	<p>RUGBY LOTTO</p> <p>The Rugby Lotto generated an annual revenue of £35,000 to support the voluntary and community sector.</p>
<p>COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>We have consulted on a new communications and community engagement strategy that will provide a clear vision of how we will keep our communities informed, engaged, included and involved, and more readily able to help shape their place.</p>	<p>HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIPS</p> <p>Through the Rugby Health and Wellbeing Partnership, chaired by the Executive Director, we have begun the process of joining up health and wellbeing services across the Borough to ensure they meet the needs of our residents.</p>	
<p>COMMUNITY LEADERS ENGAGEMENT EVENT</p> <p>We convened a Community Leaders engagement event to better understand potential barriers to testing and vaccine take up with particular focus on areas of lower take up of both.</p>	<p>ACCESSING FUNDING</p> <p>We helped New Directions, Age UK, Rugby Parkinsons, Long Lawford Community Association and Nu:Gen Care CIC to access funds worth £7,200 to deliver food and support to the community during the pandemic.</p>	<p>COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP</p> <p>We are reviewing the work of the Community Safety Partnership, with partners, to ensure it meets the needs of the public and business.</p>
<p>WORK WITH COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD NETWORKS</p> <p>During periods of lockdown, we worked with community and neighbourhood networks to encourage neighbourliness by avoiding smoky bonfires and keeping the noise down.</p>		



Wellbeing Initiatives

We recognised the importance of maintaining physical and mental wellbeing, particularly through periods of lockdown, and so adapted our offer to communities to ensure that safe and rewarding activities could still be undertaken.

<p>ONLINE MUSIC FESTIVAL</p> <p>Over 16,000 viewers tuned in to Rugby Live - the first ever online festival celebrating the best of the borough's music, arts and heritage.</p>	<p>HELP FOR THE SOCIALLY ISOLATED</p> <p>Rugby Art Gallery and Museum developed and distributed a 12-page activity booklet aimed at the over 65s and those living with dementia who were socially isolated.</p>	<p>ON TRACK ONLINE</p> <p>On Track moved their services online with pupil mentoring being delivered to those requiring additional support from their schools and families.</p>
<p>PLAY SERVICE ONLINE</p> <p>The Play Service continued to deliver a range of online materials for families to engage with including a 6-part series of 'Tree Top Tom' and Forest Schools @ Home. This series generated 3,000 views on the Sport and Recreation Facebook page and were supplemented by a number of 'how to' instructional videos for homemade arts and crafts such as milk bottle elephants.</p>	<p>RUGBY ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM REBRAND</p> <p>Rugby Art Gallery and Museum successfully rebranded and launched a new website to make the offer more relevant and attractive to Rugby's communities.</p>	<p>FUNDING FROM THE ARTS RECOVERY FUND</p> <p>£78,000 of additional funding was granted from the Arts Recovery Fund, to help secure future Arts and Entertainment Services in the Borough.</p>
<p>NATIONAL LEISURE RELIEF FUNDING</p> <p>£224,000 was secured from the National Leisure Relief Fund to support the continued operation of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre during the initial reopening phase post Covid restriction on the leisure industry.</p>		
<p>CLOSING THE INEQUALITY GAP</p> <p>We have worked with partners to help all of our communities access track and trace, isolation payments and vaccines. The Equality & Diversity Steering Group is reviewing the Public Health England report into outcome disparities for COVID-19 along with our new understanding of health inequalities in Rugby. Their recommendations will be considered by members and we will use service delivery reviews and policy development to further close the inequality gap.</p>		<p>UPDATE TO HOUSING ACTION PLANS</p> <p>We have updated our housing action plans to signpost stop smoking services, reflecting the higher levels of smoking in Rugby.</p> <p>TACKLING LONELINESS</p> <p>We are reviewing agreements with community associations so that they include activities to tackle loneliness and isolation.</p>

Organisation

Whilst responding and adapting to the pandemic, the Council has continued to be a responsible, effective and efficient organisation – delivering high quality services and innovative solutions while managing public funds responsibly and ensuring good governance.

Furthermore, we have continued to recognise that our staff are our greatest assets and that without them, none of these successes would have been possible. **We thank all of our staff for their efforts over the past 18 months.**



Response Structure

The Council's Senior Management Team initiated an emergency response structure consisting of strategic and tactical coordinating groups, prior to the Local Resilience Forum declaring an emergency. This response structure has remained in place for an unprecedented 18 months.

<p>COVID SECURE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS</p> <p>We quickly developed and implemented Covid secure premises and working arrangements, with these being independently and externally validated.</p>	<p>COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC RESPONSE</p> <p>The Council's Strategic Response has been fulfilled by the Leadership Team, with the tactical response being led largely by service managers.</p>	<p>TACTICAL TEAM</p> <p>The Tactical Team developed and initiated many of the key responses detailed within this report, in addition to their day to day responsibilities.</p>
<p>MEETINGS WITH THE LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM</p> <p>Council Officers have engaged in regular meetings with the Local Resilience Forum on both a strategic and tactical basis, ensuring that opportunities to work across Warwickshire and the West Midlands have been maximised. This included work to establish the shielding hub, testing provision and vaccination provision.</p>	<p>STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS</p> <p>We developed further strategic and operational partnerships with a range of individual organisations to facilitate our response. This included the military, public health, NHS, and local authority partners.</p>	<p>RESTRUCTURE</p> <p>The Senior Management Team was restructured, with seven Chief Officers being recruited. The refocused 'Leadership Team' subsequently had the capacity to progress key corporate priorities, while ensuring relevant subject matter expertise for the services they lead.</p>
<p>RUGBY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM</p> <p>Council Officers have chaired a weekly meeting of the Rugby Incident Management Team (IMT), which exists to examine local COVID-19 data and develop local partnership-based responses.</p>	<p>PILLARS OF RECOVERY</p> <p>Our new Corporate Strategy was designed and agreed around four themes which are broadly accepted as being the 'pillars of recovery'. This recognises both the key issues facing our Borough and the long term nature of the solutions needed.</p>	

Maintaining Good Governance

We continue to recognise that effective local government relies upon establishing and maintaining the public's confidence in both the councillors and officers, and that it determines credibility and confidence in the services that we provide. Good governance incorporates all our activities, our priorities and strategic planning.

Through the pandemic, we have continued to ensure that we have done the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open and an accountable manner.

<p>IN HOUSE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXPERTISE</p> <p>The Council has extended its in house health and safety expertise through professional qualification, and is utilising additional external support and expertise in this area.</p>	<p>MEETING LIVE STREAM</p> <p>We have live streamed around 80 virtual meetings including formal committees and working parties.</p>	<p>NEW POLICIES</p> <p>A specially formed policy cell implemented 6 new policies through the period, including a new information governance policy and agile working policy.</p>
<p>IMPROVED COMMUNICATION</p> <p>We have identified ways to improve communication between members and officers and will introduce changes in conjunction with our wider communications and engagement strategy.</p>	<p>INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN</p> <p>The corporate assurance and improvement team delivered the internal audit plan and a substantial level of assurance was provided. They completed 15 audits and a further 4 audits were completed by external consultancies.</p>	<p>COVID-19 REGISTER</p> <p>In addition to our organisational risk register, a specific COVID-19 risk register has been developed and regularly reviewed. Rugby Borough Council is the only authority of 30 in the Midlands to have introduced this measure.</p>
<p>SQUAD WORKING</p> <p>A "squad" working approach was introduced, to make sure we take a cross council, one team approach. Squads comprise relevant officers from throughout the organisation, who bring their expertise and work together to find solutions.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT</p> <p>We consulted on updating the Councillor Code of Conduct and referred it to the Audit & Ethics Committee for their recommendations. We are reviewing the constitution to reflect the new structure and align with the Corporate Strategy.</p>	<p>EMPOWERING OUR STAFF</p> <p>A review of internal officer working groups is underway to ensure they are fit for purpose and to enhance empowerment and decision making at all levels of the organisation.</p>
<p>SAFE DELIVERY OF ELECTIONS</p> <p>We delivered simultaneous elections to the Borough Council, County Council, Parish Councils, and the Police and Crime Commissioner. The elections were COVID secure to ensure there was no adverse impact on turnout and we were also able to process the additional volume of postal votes.</p>		<p>NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES</p> <p>A new Health and Safety Committee has agreed a new suite of health and safety performance measures, with the overarching objective being to reduce accidents, incidents and near misses.</p>



The pandemic has increased the need for officers to find innovative solutions to problems as they arise, implementing them in a very short space of time. This has included utilising previously untested methods of service delivery, while ensuring that the risk associated with these methods is minimised.

<p>AGILE WORKING</p> <p>We have given staff the knowledge and equipment to work from remote locations, moving our workforce to agile working.</p>	<p>TRADING COMPANY</p> <p>We incorporated a trading company, established a concession contract for a framework management agreement and made progress on the sub regional Materials Recycling Facility.</p>	<p>CHANNEL SHIFT</p> <p>We supported channel shift, reducing the number of face to face contacts from 9% to 2%.</p>
<p>HEIGHTENED DEMAND ON CUSTOMER SERVICE</p> <p>Our Customer Services Team processed 30% more customer service requests than the previous year.</p>	<p>DIGITAL TRANSACTIONS</p> <p>29,000 customer transactions were completed via our digital platforms.</p>	<p>INNOVATION</p> <p>We have developed new ways of addressing long standing problems, for example through the recent approval of the use of drones.</p>
<p>SELF SERVICE TRANSACTIONS</p> <p>We enabled a 55% increase in the number of transactions carried out by 'self service'.</p>	<p>INCREASED USE OF THE RBC APP</p> <p>Use of the Rugby Borough Council app has increased dramatically with 1 in 10 households having downloaded it. Notification subscriptions increased by 440%.</p>	
<p>CALDECOTT SQUARE</p> <p>Entered final negotiations for the town centre Caldecott Square development.</p>	<p>HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY</p> <p>We are about to incorporate our Housing Development Company and shareholders committee to manage the commercial interests of the Council.</p>	<p>CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY</p> <p>Our draft Customer Access Strategy defines how the council will continue to deliver services through digital and non-digital channels, taking into account the needs of digitally-excluded communities.</p>

Supporting our Workforce

We recognise the incredible strains which the pandemic has placed on our workforce, both through the additional workloads that they have had to undertake and also through the pressures which they have faced living through the pandemic. We have prioritised support to our workforce, recognising that they remain the Council's greatest asset.

<p>1:1 SUPPORT SESSIONS</p> <p>Regular 1:1 support sessions have continued between managers and our workforce, usually on a monthly basis.</p>	<p>APPRENTICES</p> <p>Despite the difficulties associated with the pandemic 13 apprentices started qualifications with us in 2020/21. Of these 5 were existing employees and 8 were new employees. 4 were under the age of 20.</p>	<p>WELLBEING OF OUR WORKFORCE</p> <p>We have continued to support the wellbeing of our workforce and the HR team have achieved Foundation level of Thrive at Work. Thrive at work is a commitment that organisations can sign up to with criteria and guidelines to help create a workplace that promotes employee health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>WELLBEING INITIATIVES</p> <p>We provided information and links to wellbeing initiatives - such as how to work healthily from home, how to manage remote workers etc.</p>		
<p>ART OF BRILLIANCE</p> <p>We delivered 5 virtual "Art of Brilliance" sessions on topics such as Mindfulness, Self Esteem, Change and Leading in the New Normal and Working from Home - recovering some of the cost by selling places to other authorities.</p>		<p>REDUCTION IN STAFF SICKNESS</p> <p>We lost 19% fewer days due to staff sickness.</p>
<p>RUN FOR KEITH</p> <p>We held our "Run for Keith" event to celebrate the life of Keith Appleton - 5k, 3k run or 1k walk starting from Caldecott Park to help raise money for the Warwickshire Search and Rescue charity.</p>	<p>HEALTHY LUNCHTIME ACTIVITIES</p> <p>We organised Healthy Lunchtime activities - for example 20 minutes of virtual workout on Tuesdays and Thursdays and ran virtual sessions on Resilience, Dealing with Stress, Change and Lone Working.</p>	<p>WELLNESS ACTION PLAN</p> <p>We made the "Working at Home" Wellness Action Plan from Mind available and enabled "Time to Talk" conversations.</p>
<p>MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS</p> <p>We have 7 fully qualified Mental Health first aiders (MHFA) who have had approximately 90 hours of conversations over the last 18 months on topics such as general anxiety, Covid anxiety, low mood, work pressures, isolation issues and suicidal thoughts.</p>		<p>EMPLOYEE E-LEARNING</p> <p>Our e-learning offer (including courses for Wellbeing, Stress, Mindfulness, Focus, Positive Attitude and Emotional Intelligence) was adapted to include new coaching -style courses and we made the "How to Thrive in Isolation" course available to everyone.</p>



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