

Agenda Item No 6
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
3 February 2026

Title: Project Management Capacity and Capability
 Lead Officer: David Elkington (david.elkington@warwickdc.gov.uk)
 Portfolio Holder: Chris King, Ian Davison
 Wards of the District directly affected: None

Approvals required	Date	Name
Heads of Service	26/01/2026	David Elkington (Project Management)
Finance		Andrew Rollins
Legal Services		
Chief Executive	26/01/2026	Chris Elliott
Deputy Chief Executive	26/01/2026	Daren Knight
Strategic Director	26/01/2026	David Elkington
Section 151 Officer		Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	26/01/2026	Graham Leach
Portfolio Holder	26/01/2026	Chris King (Pump Rooms) Ian Davison (Project Management)
Leadership Co-ordination Group		

Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	Yes, Appendix 1 by virtue of Paragraph 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information); and by virtue of Paragraph 5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No
Accessibility Checked?	Yes

1. Reasons for the Report

- 1.1 At its 17th December 2025 meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested an update to review how the project management capacity of Warwick District Council (WDC) was being improved.
- 1.2 The committee also sought to review the current lessons learned regarding the Royal Pump Rooms Roof Replacement Project.
- 1.3 This report seeks to address the requests made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding both project management capacity, and lessons learned from the Pump Rooms Roof project, so far.

2. Project Management

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Over the years, WDC has delivered a significant number of very successful projects. Whether it's the construction of a new Leisure Centre or the planting of trees, WDC has remained committed to ambitious undertakings, that generate lasting positive outcomes for its communities, the local economy and the environment.
- 2.1.2 This positive commitment to delivering projects that support WDC's strategic priorities and the Council's vision for Warwick District is not just an internal observation. In 2023, this was recognised through the Council's LGA Corporate Peer Challenge which said:

"The Council's ambition and its commitment to the District as a key player is valued and it is clearly an important partner to those the peer team spoke to. Partners spoke very highly of the visible role which the Council has. This is an ambitious Council with a wide programme of projects which it should rightly be celebrated for." (LGA, 2023).

- 2.1.3 In the short period between the end of September 2025 and the start of January 2026, some of the projects successfully delivered by WDC included:

- [Refurbishment of the Mill Gardens Play Area](#)
- [Installation of Solar Panels at St. Nicholas Park Leisure Centre](#)
- [Completion of the Stoneleigh Arms Refurbishment](#)
- [Opening of Newbold Comyn Cycle Hub](#)
- [LED Lighting Upgrades at the Royal Spa Centre](#)

- 2.1.4 Alongside these public initiatives, there were also internal projects, such as:

- The roll out of Windows 11 to all corporate laptops
- Delivery of commercial awareness training
- Migration of waste service calls from Stratford District Council back in-house.
- Multiple Change Programme initiatives resulting in cashable efficiencies.

Overall, a review of Service Area Plans (SAP) for 2025/26 identified more than 250 major workstreams.

- 2.1.5 Historically, WDC's approach to Project Management has been a mixture of dedicated project resources with associated governance structures, and in-service arrangements for projects which are considered as smaller. This may be due to their lower risks, costs or limited-service coverage across one or two areas. In the round, this has worked relatively well for WDC; the formal governance structures established for larger projects have generally ensured that delivery is regularly monitored and progress is kept on track, whilst the in-service management of smaller projects has allowed for flexible and agile delivery.
- 2.1.6 However, this is not without its issues and whilst the 2023 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge praised WDC's ambition, it also highlighted that the scale and breadth of projects being implemented also saw a concurrent increase in the level of financial risk and discussed the importance of robust and effective governance (LGA, 2023). The need to provide capacity in this area and grow the corporate core, was further highlighted in the 2024 follow up review (LGA, 2024).
- 2.2 **Current Project Management Issues**
- 2.2.1 WDC's approach to project management over time, has led to very dispersed project management capacity. In 2023, the Transformation Team in Customer and Digital Services invited officers with responsibility for Project Management to join a Community of Practice and initially, the team were unsure how much traction this would gain. More than 50 staff members signed up to the community, ranging from those who picked up project management as part of their role informally, through to dedicated programme managers looking after portfolios collectively worth millions of pounds.
- 2.2.2 The group identified several issues with WDC's current project management approach, including:
- Inconsistent Project Management methods
 - Inconsistent documentation and templates
 - Limited access to tools
 - Access to training
 - Resourcing issues
 - Prioritisation issues
 - Coordination problems
- 2.2.3 Many of these issues are not uncommon and can be observed in any large organisation. Some however have been exacerbated by WDC's past project management approach, such as the dispersed nature of project management capacity facilitating inconsistency in project management methods and documentation. This is not unexpected, as with no centrally mandated standard or templates to work from, staff have (naturally) created their own approach. Some issues also reinforce themselves, such as where project prioritisation has resulted in resourcing issues that impact progress.
- 2.2.4 There are also macroenvironmental factors which can impact on WDC's project management capability. For example, Construction Design Management expertise is not readily available from a central point for WDC's project managers and as such, each must commission their own services.

This could lead to additional expense but also increases the risk that if something did go wrong during project delivery, there could be significant consequences.

2.2.5 Whilst most of WDC's projects are delivered successfully, these factors can collectively impact on capacity and outcomes. In rare cases they can lead to project failure.

2.2.6 To mitigate these issues, an improvement plan is currently underway.

3. Steps to Improve

3.1 Corporate Programme Team

3.1.1 Prior to the corporate restructuring in 2025 a decision was taken to allocate responsibility for corporate projects to the revised Strategic Director post. Within the new structure, a Corporate Programme Team (CPT) was agreed for inclusion, formed from across the organisation, bringing together programme and project managers, including the former Capital Projects Team, the Leisure Project Team and elements of the Economic Development Team.

3.1.2 This new, centralised corporate resource is intended to support major projects, as part of a wider portfolio of activities. The team would consist of project management experts, who would work directly with internal service areas to help deliver their ambitions, and with supporting services to ensure that resources and expertise were appropriately co-ordinated.

3.1.3 Progress towards building the CPT is now underway. Recruitment was recently completed to the Corporate Programme Manager post, a member of the Economic Development Team has moved into one of the Deputy Programme Manager roles, and recruitment will shortly be underway for the remaining vacant Project Manager and Project Support Officer positions.

3.1.4 It is anticipated that this recruitment will be completed by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, although some individuals may not physically have started work for WDC at that point (due to contractual notice periods and such).

3.1.5 Once complete, the CPT will provide a valuable resource to support project management across WDC and directly champion the work of the Community of Practice, to establish standards across the Council.

3.2 Establishing Standards

3.2.1 Shortly after the Project Management Community of Practice (PMCoP) was created, it was established that WDC lacked consistent templates and approaches to Project Management. The community proposed a workplan that would seek to develop these materials and collectively contribute towards training and the establishment of a "Warwick way". Unfortunately, at the time the group was unable to achieve this, but this work is now being reviewed and will be resourced.

3.2.2 Once recruitment to positions within the CPT is complete, resource will be allocated to support the work of the PMCoP. An initial priority will be to

establish a set of standard documents that will be used on all projects, and standard agile and waterfall project management approaches, together with consideration of change management practices too. Work will be undertaken to centralise existing project management documentation and establish a performance management framework that can offer assurance to WDC that project management is working effectively.

- 3.2.3 The PMCoP will continue to be a driving force behind improving project management standards and will shortly be supported by the resources required to make a real difference to the Council's project management approach.

3.3 **Access to Project Management Tools**

- 3.3.1 WDC currently has a mixture of project management tools in use, ranging from Excel spreadsheets through to online, cloud-based collaboration platforms.
- 3.3.2 The Council's Housing Team have pioneered the use of the Monday.com project management tool in their work to address the regulatory issued faced by WDC. The software has proven itself to be flexible and effective in ensuring that key stakeholders are kept informed of progress and where appropriate, their requirement to undertake associated tasks. The CPT will also shortly begin using Monday.com, to manage the corporate portfolio of projects.
- 3.3.3 Initially this will be undertaken on a trial basis for a period of six months. WDC will also need to engage with the Council's procurement team, should Monday.com be considered as a corporate application. At present, the value of the licences procured is relatively low and can be found within existing budgets, but this will need to be considered should the userbase be expanded. The team will also have to consider how performance dashboards within Monday.com can be shared securely, and how the system will integrate with other project management platforms.
- 3.3.4 Solving the issue of access to tools is relatively simple, and work toward this is already underway.

3.4 **Prioritisation and Coordination**

- 3.4.1 WDC's ICT team have recently launched a new Major Projects portal, which allows staff and members access to key information about ongoing projects within WDC. This tool was initially created to deal with the Major Projects list, but it's usage can be expanded to include a range of other activities, including different sized projects and the co-ordination of documentation.
- 3.4.2 For the 2026/27 Service Plan process, all items on the Major Projects list must be identified as a workstream within a Service Area Plan. Essentially, every major project should have an owner and someone responsible for driving it forward. This is a key aspect of improving how projects are prioritised as services will be able to see the full spectrum of demands upon their resource. There should be no opportunity for something to be a surprise.

3.4.3 Service Plan activities are also being co-ordinated, to ensure that where initiatives from one service or project require resources from or impact upon another service area, these are fully considered. For example, it is not realistic for a service area to say they are going to undertake a major software replacement, without ICT also having a corresponding item on their service plan. This has been attempted in previous years with some success, but significant, dedicated time is being set aside by SLT to ensure that it is fully successful for the group of two-year service plans which are currently in draft.

3.5 **Training**

3.5.1 Whilst some training has taken place regarding corporate responsibilities, such as those associated with health and safety and Construction Design Management requirements within building projects, a full training plan has not yet been completed.

3.5.2 Later in the year, the CPT will engage with Human Resources to create an appropriate training plan, drawing upon external training resources where this is appropriate and relevant. This will help to ensure that all appropriate officers have relevant project management experience and skills to support the Council's needs effectively.

4. **Lessons Learned – Pump Rooms Roof Replacement**

4.1 The project to replace the Pump Rooms Roof is still currently underway and as such, a complete lessons learned review cannot be undertaken. However, a review of the lessons learned to date is possible, and some observations are included below. Further lessons are also included in Confidential Appendix 1. These details are currently considered as confidential as they relate to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

4.2 **Member Involvement**

4.2.1 Throughout the Pump Rooms Roof Replacement project, the Cabinet and Member interests at large have been represented by Cllr. Chris King. Whilst he is not the Portfolio Holder for Assets or the Arts service, his involvement in the project has been both beneficial and welcome, as his previous experience within the construction industry has facilitated meaningful and challenging engagement throughout.

4.2.2 Whilst the particular circumstances that led Cllr. King to be involved with this project may be unique, it has been a positive example of what Members can contribute to a project as part of its governance arrangements. The presence of a Cabinet member at contractor meetings has conveyed how seriously the Council takes the project, and how important a successful conclusion is. It has also positively impacted members of the project team, who have seen the interest being taken in the project, and the personal responsibility Cllr. King has taken in ensuring particular issues are addressed.

4.2.3 Whilst member involvement may not be possible or appropriate for all projects, when considering governance arrangements that include a Councillor as a board member, arrangements should be in place to ensure

they can attend project boards appropriately and that they are able to fulfil the responsibilities of a sponsorship role. Nominated Councillors may not necessarily need to be the most relevant portfolio holder, and in some instances, it may be more appropriate to select a member with an interest in the subject matter, or where they have external skills that may be relevant to the project overall.

4.3 **Resources**

- 4.3.1 The Pump Rooms Roof Replacement project was not fully resourced upon commencement. Attempts were made by the Arts Manager and Projects and Development Manager to run the project, but this was not appropriate as neither had the time or appropriate technical skills to do this role effectively. In addition, resources from the Asset Management team were limited and at several initial contractor meetings, no representation was present. Both of these issues were quickly addressed and resource was put in place to co-ordinate the project and ensure appropriate technical expertise was available from the perspective of WDC.
- 4.3.2 The roof replacement project is a significant and complex piece of work that requires appropriate technical resource. Whilst this was resolved quickly, not having this resource available at the start of the project is an example of the wider project issues identified earlier in this report. As such, we must ensure that WDC's ambition to deliver complex and challenging projects is always matched by appropriate capacity to deliver on our priorities and vision.
- 4.3.3 For the future, no project should be approved by Cabinet or any other body, without a full and appropriately signed off resourcing plan, that clearly defines who will be responsible for key project roles and that their availability has been agreed. Where resources do not exist, the cost of bringing in resource to support the project should be considered as part of the financial case, as if the Council can't afford to provide the resources which will make the project a success, it can't afford to do the actual project either.

4.4 **Financial Resource**

- 4.4.1 The Pump Rooms Roof Replacement project is a complex set of works and a significant financial risk. Undertaking major works on a heritage asset, whilst it remains open and without an extensive understanding of the full scope of works creates multiple variables that could impact on cost. Despite these potential complications, the budget for the project was established with very limited tolerance for variation.
- 4.4.2 The complexity of the project has led to cost overruns. These required reports to Cabinet to request additional funding, but the potential for additional costs should have been anticipated more comprehensively at the start of the project and included at that point. This would have improved transparency and given Councillors a much clearer idea of the potential implications far earlier in the project.
- 4.4.3 For future projects, WDC must ensure it makes every effort to include realistic costs for projects and that expenses are monitored throughout, to ensure any deviations can be quickly and adequately managed.

Improvements around upfront preparations will significantly assist in this area.

4.5 Next Steps

- 4.5.1 It should be noted that whilst the Pump Rooms Roof Replacement Project does have some significant lessons learned to date, the project overall has been well managed from WDC's side, and the resources in place have been responsive to changes and adapted accordingly.
- 4.5.2 The team at the Pump Rooms have been significantly impacted by this project, and the staff have continued to be committed to keeping the centre open, despite being faced with some very challenging circumstances and for this, they should be commended.
- 4.5.3 Requirements around capacity are being addressed through the development of the Corporate Programme Team and whilst this will not be complete in time for the finalisation of the Pump Rooms Roof Project, the lessons learned from this will help to inform how project management standards are developed and how staff are trained in the future, particularly around aspects such as CDM and building safety.
- 4.5.4 Upon completion of the Pump Rooms Roof Replacement project, a full review will be undertaken. The issues identified as part of this review, including positive aspects can be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if required, and will also be used to inform and improve future project delivery.

5. Key Risks

5.1 Project Management

- 5.2 Key risks faced by WDC through its current project management arrangements include:

- a) Resourcing

WDC has a lot of significant projects in place when the full scope of all service and major projects are considered. This level of throughput is challenging and can result in projects not being sufficiently resourced, or not being resourced with people who have the necessary expertise to fully deliver the desired outcomes. In most instances, this can lead to issues of delay or moderate additional costs, but in the most extreme of cases it can lead to project failure, significant additional costs or legal prosecution.

It is essential that WDC has a full understanding of the projects it is undertaking and continues to resource these with appropriately skilled staff, at appropriate volumes.

- b) Commissioning and Contractors

WDC has strong relationships with several suppliers who have worked with the Council through framework agreements for a number of years. It is essential however that WDC ensures these longstanding relationships do not create a risk of familiarity, where projects are allowed to proceed

with lower levels of supervision, or where the commissioning of contracts allows for greater flexibility that would not be accommodated otherwise.

WDC has seen projects where the use of incumbent contractors has led to an outcome that did not meet the full expectations of the Council. Whilst in each instance, steps have immediately been taken to correct this, continually monitoring the performance of contractors, through appropriate commissioning and effective contractual management is essential.

c) Overruns

Each of the previous two risks can contribute to both cost and time overruns that create additional demand on resources and have a knock-on effect with other activities. The completion of the Pump Rooms roof replacement is a recent example of this.

It is essential that WDC's projects, large or small, have appropriate governance mechanisms in place, to ensure that progress is challenged and difficulties addressed. Whether this is through the establishment of project boards for larger undertakings, or through project sponsors, each project should have a clear understanding of its objectives, a defined path to achieve them, and clear protocols for highlighting deviations. This is essential for WDC, to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations to achieve best value, and that it fulfils its organisational purpose, to deliver positive outcomes for its communities.

5.3 **Pump Rooms Roof Replacement Project Lessons Learned**

- 5.3.1 Key risks are not considered as part of this report regarding the lessons learned so far. Future risks for WDC to potentially consider will be discussed as part of the project close down and review process. If required, these can be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a future date.

Background Papers:

LGA, 2023, [Corporate Peer Challenge](#).

LGA, 2024, [Corporate Peer Challenge Review](#).