



Title	Comments from the Executive
For further information about this report please contact	Peter Dixon Committee Services Officer 01926 456114 committee@warwickdc.gov.uk
Service Area	Civic & Committee Services
Wards of the District directly affected	N/A
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	Yes
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	N/A
Background Papers	Finance & Audit minutes 16/4/2013 Executive minutes 17/4/2013

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <i>must</i> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executive		Andrew Jones
Chief Executive		
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		Mike Snow
Legal		
Finance		Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holders		

Consultation Undertaken	
N/A	
Final Decision?	Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises the Executive's response to comments given by the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee on reports submitted to the Executive on 17 April 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the responses made by the Executive be noted.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 This report is produced to create a dialogue between the Executive and the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee, ensuring that the Scrutiny Committee is formally made aware of the Executive's responses.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Committee receives and notes the minutes of the Executive instead.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 There is no impact on the budgetary framework. This is for the Committee's information only.

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 The work carried out by the Committee helps the Council to improve in line with its priority to manage services openly, efficiently and effectively.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 As part of the scrutiny process, the Committee no longer considers the whole of the Executive agenda.
- 7.2 Councillors are emailed at the time of the publication of the Executive and Scrutiny Committee agendas, asking them to contact Committee Services by 9.00 am on the day of the Scrutiny Committee, to advise which Executive items they wish the Scrutiny Committee to pass comment on and the reasons why.
- 7.3 As a result, at its meeting on 16 April 2013, the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the items detailed in appendix 1. The responses which the Executive gave are also shown.

APPENDIX 1

Responses from the meeting of the Executive held on 17 April 2013 on the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee's comments

Item no	6	Title	Council Tax Fraud Penalties	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment	The Committee expressed concern at how difficult the Sanctions Policy might be for some people to understand and was therefore reassured to note that safeguards were in place to protect the vulnerable and supported the recommendations in the report.				
Executive Response	The Portfolio Holder for Finance endorsed the report and drew attention to paragraph 3.2 which stated that, to apply the legislation consistently with that for the Council Tax reduction scheme, it would be appropriate to introduce penalties in respect of these cases. Similar policies had been in place for a number of years at other Local Authorities.				

Item no	8	Title	Exemption to the Code of Procurement Practice – Street Lights	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment	The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.				
Executive Response	-				

Item no	9	Title	Corporate Repairs & Improvement Programme 2013/14	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment	The Committee felt that, in relation to recommendation 2.7, the report should have spelt out more specifically how the proposed allocation would be spent. Upon receiving this information verbally from the Head of Housing and Property Services, the Committee agreed to support the recommendations in the report, but suggested that it would be more appropriate for recommendation 2.8 to read "...the ongoing work to produce..."				
Executive Response	The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property Services accepted the comments and stated that he had addressed a number of the Committee's queries at the meeting. He reminded Members that the department was undergoing a restructure and many of the issues raised had emerged due to staffing issues and the urgent timescales involved.				

Item no	10	Title	HS2 Update & Ongoing Strategy / Council Involvement	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment	<p>The Committee expressed concern that this was the first update report Members had received since the 2010 agreement that HS2 be opposed. The Committee felt it was essential that all Members receive regular feedback, with particular emphasis on what work had been carried out and how monies had been spent to date in the Council's opposition to the HS2 proposal, what the on-going plan was and how budgetary provisions were intended to be spent going forward. The Committee was keen to see transparency and accountability. Dissatisfaction was expressed over how the initial agreed budget of £50,000 had been increased without consultation and some Members suggested that decisions relating to HS2 should be taken by Council as a whole rather than by the Executive. Nevertheless, the Committee was largely supportive of continuing with the 51M consortium of Authorities as part of the appeal against the findings of the Judicial Review. Members felt that they needed regular updates on the ongoing work with 51M and any other meetings that took place on the subject of HS2.</p>				
Executive Response	<p>The Executive pointed out that an update on HS2 had been given in March 2012. Like the Committee, the Executive was keen for the process to be transparent and accountable. It did not understand the comment about the budget being increased without consultation, as the increase had been approved by Council in February 2011.</p>				

Item no	11	Title	Development of the Destination Management Organisation (DMO)	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment	<p>The Committee was concerned that, until an appropriate business plan was accepted in line with recommendation 2.5, then recommendations 2.3 and 2.4 should not be taken forward. (The Committee also felt that recommendation 2.3 should make reference to the business plan.) Members were frustrated both by the lack of a business plan and by the lack of information generally, and cited as an example of the latter that evidently it was intended that there should be a board of directors, but there was no information as to whether or not those directors would be paid.</p>				
Executive Response	<p>The Executive was surprised by the Committee's comments, particularly given the overwhelming support shown for the DMO by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Portfolio Holders were sympathetic with the Committee's frustrations over the lack of a business plan but reiterated the need for this Council to be involved. It was confirmed that the board of directors would receive no remuneration and that the DMO was a not-for-profit organisation.</p>				

Item no	12 A	Title	Rural / Urban Capital Improvement Scheme	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment	<p>The Committee accepted that the title of the report should be "Rural / Urban Capital Improvement Scheme", not "Application".</p> <p>There was some discussion over whether it would be appropriate to lower the maximum amount that could be applied for, but Members ultimately agreed that it should remain the same because a cap might rule out what were otherwise very good applications. Members felt that the third statement under "Grant Conditions" should read "must" rather than talk about "the right to", but otherwise supported the recommendations in the report.</p>				
Executive Response	<p>In light of comments made by the Scrutiny Committees and debate at the Executive meeting, this item was withdrawn.</p>				

Two confidential items on the Executive agenda - item 14 "Exemption to the Code of Procurement Practice - Telephony" and item 15 "Shades Judicial Review" - were also considered and are detailed under a separate confidential appendix.