

 EXECUTIVE 1st October 2014		Agenda Item No. 6
Title	St Mary's Lands Business Strategy	
For further information about this report please contact	Andrew Jones Andrew.jones@warwickdc.gov.uk (01926) 456830	
Wards of the District directly affected	Warwick West	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Executive meeting 16 th April 2014 - min 189 Executive meeting 11 th September 2013 - min 55 Executive meeting 19 th June 2013 - min 13 Executive meeting 12 th December 2012 - min 107	
Background Papers	See above	

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
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive	8 th September 2014	Chris Elliott
CMT	8 th September 2014	Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt, Author
Section 151 Officer	8 th September 2014	Mike Snow
Deputy Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer	20 th August 2014	Author
Warwickshire County Council Legal Services	3 rd September 2014	Ian Marriott, Peter Endall, Barry Jukes
Portfolio Holder(s)	15 th September 2014	Cllr Hammon
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Consultation with the St Mary's Lands Stakeholder Group.		
Final Decision?	Yes	

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the latest position in respect of the work of the St Mary's Lands Stakeholder Group and recommends next steps for the business strategy.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Executive notes the changed position of The Jockey Club in respect of the proposed hotel development at Warwick Racecourse, whereby it has "dropped" those hotel plans following its decision to end flat racing at Warwick racecourse (see Appendix A).
- 2.2 That in the light of recommendation 2.1, Executive notes the final GVA report and associated spatial masterplan at Appendix B and the draft consultation document from the work of the St Mary's Lands Stakeholder Group at Appendix C but determines that the previously agreed public consultation on the masterplan proposals should not take place as envisaged.
- 2.3 That Executive notes the position in respect of the following matters relating to St Mary's Lands:
- a) The legal ownership of St Mary's Lands, other land interests and the rights of third parties;
 - b) The Management Plan for St Mary's Lands;
 - c) The implications of the Warwick District Council Act 1984 on St Mary's Lands development;
 - d) The rejection of a proposed partnership agreement between Warwick District Council and The Jockey Club;
 - e) Warwick District Council's estimated annual investment in maintaining and managing St Mary's Lands;
 - f) Changes that have been made to St Mary's Lands over the previous 10 years.
- 2.4 That subject to agreeing recommendation 2.2, Executive agrees that officers continue to work closely with the stakeholders operating on St Mary's Lands and specifically develop detailed business cases in respect of:
- a) The development of Warwick Golf Centre;
 - b) The development and expansion of the caravan park in the centre of the Racecourse;
 - c) Environmental improvements to various parts of St Mary's Lands, thereby enabling work on the development of a masterplan in accordance with policy CT7 of the draft Local Plan to continue.
- 2.5 That Executive notes the latest position in respect of the West Midlands Reserve Force & Cadets Association's (hereafter referred to as the Cadets) relocation from Racing Club Warwick football ground and agrees that the area of land (approximated by the hatched area at Appendix E) abutting the land under the Corps of Drums' lease may be used for the standing of part of the Cadets' building and shall also be included in the Cadets' lease and that delegated authority is given to the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) to negotiate the precise terms of the surrender of the existing Warwick Corps of Drums Lease and of the new leases to be granted to the Cadets and the Warwick Corps of Drums.
- 2.6 That Executive agrees to make available £50,000 from the Capital Investment Reserve to be administered by Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) in consultation with

the Portfolio Holder for Development Services, as a pump-primer to help facilitate much needed investment in the Warwick Corps of Drums building.

- 2.7 That Executive agrees that officers work with Racing Club Warwick should they wish to bring forward proposals to access funding from the Football Foundation and/ or other charitable bodies.

3 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations 2.1 & 2.2

- 3.1 At its meeting of 11th September 2013, Executive considered the "Called-in" item entitled St Mary's Lands Business Strategy and confirmed the Executive decision of 19th June 2013 that (among other things):
"a business strategy for the development of St Mary's Lands is produced and that the strategy takes a holistic view of the land to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are taken into account"; and
"the development of a business strategy is overseen by a Steering Group (NB The Steering Group subsequently came to be known as the St Mary's Lands Stakeholder Group) chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Development Services, consisting of key stakeholders and that the aforementioned Portfolio Holder, Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) and Warwick Racecourse Company (WRC) representatives agree the key stakeholders".
- 3.1.1 To address the concern from Members that there must be an opportunity for the general public to have their say, Councillor Hammon had assured the Executive that before any decisions were taken there would be full public consultation on the business strategy proposals and that the proposals would come back to Executive for its consideration.
- 3.2 The Stakeholder Group had its first meeting on 22nd October 2013 with its composition and land interests (if applicable) being as follows:
- Councillor Hammon - Warwick District Council representative and Chair of the Group;
 - Councillor Barrott - Warwick District Council representative;
 - Councillor Mrs Blacklock - Warwick District Council representative;
 - Phil Sharp - Warwick Golf Centre - 21 year lease that commenced on 1st August 2011;
 - Ron Everett (and latterly John Morton) - Warwick Corps of Drums - Lease for a term of 20 years from 1st June 1984. The Council has agreed in writing that the Lease arrangements continue until 1st June 2016;
 - Andy Cowlard - Racing Club Warwick - Lease dated 30th June 2014 for a term of 21 years from 1st December 2013;
 - Huw Williams - Warwick Racecourse - 21 year that commenced on 1st June 2005;
 - Councillor Kinson - Warwick Town Council representative;
 - Councillor Holland - Warwick Town Council representative.
- 3.2.1 There were three St Mary's Lands operators who were not on the Stakeholder Group - Hill Close Gardens Limited (30 year lease that commenced on 9th December 2004); Caravan and Camping Club (a lease with Warwick Racecourse having 12 years to run); Boxing Club (annual lease with Warwick Racecourse) - however, officers advised the Group that their respective interests needed to be taken into account during the development of the business strategy. The GVA report reflects consultations with the two clubs as to their aspirations and in

relation to Hill Close Gardens; Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) had discussed its plans with the Chairman David Gray.

- 3.3 The Stakeholder Group's role and remit can broadly be described as follows: To ensure that it had a thorough understanding of the various land interests, legal matters and relationships on St Mary's Lands so that the business strategy took account of all material considerations; to oversee the work of GVA leisure who were tasked with developing the business strategy following a commission by Warwick Racecourse and match-funding from Warwick District Council; to agree the business strategy and associated spatial masterplan for public consultation.
- 3.4 It would be fair to say that the work of the Stakeholder Group did not follow a smooth path. Firstly concerns were raised by the Town Council representatives that the stakeholders had interests in the options being considered and that the membership of the Group was not wide enough, even though what had been envisaged by the Executive was that the stakeholders would oversee the preparation of proposals for the purpose of wider consultation with any decisions being made only by the relevant Council committees. Secondly, the Group was working against a backcloth of the Cadets/Racing Club Warwick/Warwick District Council dispute which whilst largely irrelevant to most aspects of the Group's work was raised during its work, although the Racing Club Warwick representatives themselves did work very constructively as part of the Group.
- 3.5 Despite these difficulties at its fourth and final meeting on 29th May 2014, the Stakeholder Group agreed by majority that the business strategy and spatial masterplan should be released for public consultation. The consultation documents can be seen at Appendix C and it was hoped that the period of consultation would run from mid-July to mid-September. However, a material and significant decision was taken by the Jockey Club in July which now causes officers to recommend that the consultation should not take place.
- 3.5.1 A major element of the proposed consultation was that Warwick Racecourse would bring forward proposals for the creation of a hotel at the racecourse entrance. It was envisaged that the development would not only help address Warwick Racecourse's need to increase its income but through the District Council's sale or long-lease of the land necessary for the development, a large capital receipt could be realised which would then be reinvested in the other activities operating on St Mary's Lands.
- 3.5.2 At this point it is worth revisiting the reason why Warwick Racecourse brought forward the hotel proposal once more despite the District Council's Planning Committee rejecting the idea in May 2012.
- 3.5.3 Previous reports to Executive have painted a picture of a racing industry that is undergoing seismic changes due to the changes in Bookmaking (and consequently the Levy received from Government) and the various other leisure opportunities available to the paying customer. In fact, over the period 2005 to 2011, the Levy contribution to Warwick Racecourse had reduced by nearly £0.5m to £413k (over 50% reduction). This then has a knock-on effect on the level of prize money that can be offered and consequently the quality and number of racehorses entered for races. The manifestation of these challenges has been seen recently with the closures of Folkestone and Hereford racecourses and the proposed ending of flat turf racing and laying of an all-weather circuit at Newcastle and Catterick respectively. This is the landscape that has seen many British racecourses diversify into areas such as

conferences, concerts and events as they can no longer survive as viable businesses on just their allocated 20-25 race days per year.

3.5.4 It is also worth pointing out that the Planning Committee's stated reasons for refusing planning application in May 2012 did not question the economic argument being put forward by Warwick Racecourse or the principle of a hotel. The reasons for the refusal were:

- the design, mass and scale of the proposed building does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, nor does it respect important views into the Conservation Area;
- the design, mass and scale of the proposed building will adversely affect the setting of 6 Hampton Street, a Grade II listed building;
- the scale and mass of the proposed building has an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of the residential properties opposite the application site on Hampton Street.

3.5.5 It is within this industry context, the failure to achieve planning permission for the hotel and the substantial investment that would be required to address concerns about the condition of the flat racetrack that The Jockey Club (parent company of Warwick Racecourse) has announced that after 307 years, Warwick will no longer host flat racing but solely jump racing. At Appendix A, Members can see the Jockey Club's press release in which the Managing Director of Warwick racecourse, Huw Williams, states that the hotel idea has now been "dropped" as an alternative business strategy is to be pursued.

3.5.6 The decision not to progress the hotel proposal not only means that a part of the consultation is no longer relevant but that a potential funding stream to bring about some of the other proposals is no longer available. It is for this reason that officers are recommending that the consultation should not proceed and that an alternative way forward be agreed.

Recommendation 2.3

3.6 As the Stakeholder Group got to grips with its work, there were many issues raised that left members of the Group unclear or at times uncertain about what the correct position was. Whilst the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) was able to properly address all the issues, it seems appropriate now that the Group has finished its work to publically address the matters raised so that Members and the general public are clear about the reality.

3.7 The legal ownership of St Mary's Lands, other land interests and the rights of third parties

3.7.1 It has been argued that St Mary's Lands is Common Land entitling the public to have unfettered access over many parts of the amenity (pursuant to the 'right to roam' introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 "the CROW Act"). It is true that historically St Mary's Lands did function as a common. However, because St Mary's Lands is governed by a private Act of Parliament (the Warwick District Council Act 1984) it is excluded from the operation of the CROW Act. Warwick District Council is the owner of St Mary's Lands, and pursuant to its powers under the 1984 Act has granted a number of land interests (see para 3.2-3.21) to certain parties. There is public access to St Mary's Lands via public footpaths which crisscross the area.

3.8 The Management Plan for St Mary's Lands

- 3.8.1 In 2007, Plincke Landscape Ltd produced a *Management Plan for St Mary's Lands (Racecourse and environs, incorporating areas of Saltisford Common and Pigwells)* on behalf of Warwick District Council. The Management Aims of the plan are detailed at page 7 of the Executive Summary (available upon request). It has been argued that this Management Plan should be the reference point for taking St Mary's Lands forward and that consequently there is no need for a business strategy.
- 3.8.2 The business strategy being developed for St Marys Land's was to be a long term plan of action designed to ensure that the various interests (including commercial) of the site's operators could be achieved and that their individual objectives were not incompatible. The Management Plan did not have this as an aim primarily being a series of "tasks to be carried out (allocating) time scales and responsibilities." The Management Plan does not address how investment can be made in the Golf Centre; how the Racecourse can ensure it is a viable business; or the Warwick Corps of Drums building does not fall down.

3.9 The implications of the Warwick District Council Act 1984 on St Mary's Lands development

- 3.9.1 As stated at para 3.5.6, there was the possibility that should a hotel be constructed at the entrance to the racecourse then changing the land interest by means of a sale or long lease could realise a significant capital receipt .
- 3.9.2 The report to the Executive in 2013 describes three approaches that could be taken to the granting of land interest for the site of the hotel. It has been argued by certain local residents that it is not possible for the Council to grant interests in land that are inconsistent with the Warwick District Council Act 1984, and that what was being proposed in connection with the hotel was just that.
- 3.9.3 Mindful that this was an area of serious contention, officers took advice from the District Council's solicitors who then commissioned advice from Counsel. A summary of the solicitors' advice is provided at Appendix D. It is clear that it is within the District Council's power to permit the construction of a hotel and to sell or lease parts of the St Mary's Lands in connection with such proposals. This advice was provided to the Stakeholder Group on a number of occasions as despite its provenance, the issue was raised time and again with reluctance by some to accept its correctness.

3.10 The rejected partnership agreement between Warwick District Council and The Jockey Club

- 3.10.1 Members will be aware that a high profile photo-shoot by The Courier and involving a Mr Nigel Hamilton took place at St Mary's Lands in early August following the (voluntary) release of documents under a Freedom of Information Act request. That article referred to an approach from the Jockey Club about a "potential partnership agreement" which it was said had only been made public as a result of Mr Hamilton's information request. Members will also be aware that the Chief Executive of Warwick District Council responded to that article the following week and The Courier published the response.
- 3.10.2 The Chief Executive made clear that officers had been wholly transparent about the "partnership approach" from The Jockey Club, having been reported to the

Executive on 12th December 2012. To suggest that the public had been “kept in the dark” was inaccurate with the Executive report specifically stating: *“Consequently officers consider that at this point it is premature to enter into a partnership arrangement but it would be sensible to examine the options for St Mary’s Lands.”* The Executive’s agreement to examine the options is what led to Warwick District Council supporting, through officer time and financially, the Warwick Racecourse’s commission of GVA.

3.10.3 It is also pertinent to emphasise the point the Chief Executive made in relation to the Racecourse’s place on St Mary’s Lands. It is an integral part of its character and has been since 1707 (one of the oldest racecourses in the United Kingdom). As previous reports have highlighted, the racing industry is undergoing significant upheaval. No racecourse can be guaranteed a future and it is entirely legitimate that the District Council as custodian of St Mary’s Lands, upon which the racecourse sits, works with the Jockey Club to protect its future. The fact that the Racecourse is leased to a Company owned by The Jockey Club does not mean that it is guaranteed existence in perpetuity. As Paul Fisher (Managing Director of The Jockey Club) emphasised to Executive when he met with them, each course is expected to “wash its own face” (i.e. justify itself in commercial terms). If this was not the case, it would not be ending flat racing after 300 years and moving to jump racing only. If The Jockey Club was prepared to fund loss making enterprises without question, it would not have made that decision.

3.11 Warwick District Council’s estimated annual investment in maintaining and managing St Mary’s Lands

3.11.1 Like all of the public amenities and open space in the District Council’s ownership, it endeavours to maintain its facilities to the highest possible standards. The estimated expenditure each year is £10,000 along with a myriad of officer duties such as:

- Regular liaison meetings with Racecourse and golf course operators;
- Monitoring works of other contractors working on the land i.e. checking public liability risk and method statements;
- Footpath safety inspections and ongoing repairs;
- Managing model aeroplane flying;
- Fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour monitoring;
- Managing the local wildlife site including species management;
- Liaison with community groups;
- Tree-works safety inspection and - programming routine works.

3.11.2 Members will be only too aware of the significant reductions in Government grant over the last four years, a situation that is unlikely to improve going forward. Recognising this position the Council, through its refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy has put “first among equals” the theme of Prosperity to try and put the Council on a more commercial footing. There are proposals that the GVA report has highlighted which may provide the Council

with the opportunity to further defray the significant investment it makes in St Mary's Lands and these opportunities are explored further on in the report.

3.12 Changes that have been made to St Mary's Lands over the previous 10 years

3.12.1 St Mary's Lands is constantly changing, whether this is through careful landscape and environmental management (the site has been awarded Local Wildlife Site status) or more significant changes such as the construction of the 1707 Restaurant. Indeed the Plincke report of 2007 highlighted the following major changes that had taken place on the site:

- Flood alleviation works;
- Improvement to sports facilities;
- Provision of car parking;
- New stables and jockeys block;
- Restoration of Hill Close Gardens and development of a visitor facility;
- Environmental improvement schemes; and
- The sale of part of St Mary's Lands to facilitate the construction of 80 homes on the old stable site and Bread & Meat Close of which 30% affordable housing.

3.12.2 This record of change demonstrates that it is possible for the site to evolve in a positive direction and whilst there will always be day-to-day grumbles with aspects of the site or its management the track record of successful changes shows what can be achieved. In fact many on the Stakeholder Group were clear in stating that the site was a real credit to the District and its residents.

Recommendation 2.4

3.13 Progressing the non-hotel related GVA proposals

3.13.1 It is important to emphasise that the remit of the Stakeholder Group was to bring forward a business strategy for the whole of St Mary's Lands which did not go against the interests of any of the operators. Although The Jockey Club has decided not to pursue the hotel option, the other proposals in the "consultation document" still have potential merit and will assist with the development of a masterplan for St Mary's Lands as envisaged in planning policy CT7 of the draft Local Plan.

3.13.2 Proposals for an early, comprehensive, public consultation were primarily intended to address widespread public concerns regarding the Jockey Club's previous ambitions. Recent events on the hotel front have however moved the goal posts somewhat. It is now felt by officers that a full public consultation would be premature until such time as the range of options has been properly reviewed in light of events. In respect of the proposals for the Golf Centre, Caravan park and Environmental improvements, it is recommended that officers work with the respective stakeholders to bring forward detailed business cases for consideration. It may well be that the business ideas require public consultation should there be planning implications.

3.13.3 In summary, the proposals for the three aforementioned areas are as follows:

3.13.4 Golf Centre

1. On-site car parking is provided;
2. The driving range is upgraded with associated landscaping;

3. Creation of a new short game area enabling player improvement of short distance shots;
4. Enhancement of the clubhouse to include café, bar and larger changing room facilities;
5. Construction of a 9 or 18 holed themed adventure golf course.

3.13.5 Caravan Park

1. The park is open throughout the year to mirror the demand profile of short city breaks;
2. The number of pitches is increased to 100: The current pitch numbers makes the park marginal as a standalone business and the occupancy combined with the location suggest an increase in numbers would be merited;
3. Investment in better quality infrastructure is made to drive higher occupancy and tariff and allow a longer season to be achieved. It will also prevent any reduction in occupancy and tariff on account of improving competition.

3.13.6 Environmental Improvements

1. Creation of blocks of MG4 & MG5 grassland with paths cut for public access;
2. Installation of a focal element where a number of public footpaths meet;
3. Creation of pond and wetland features with appropriate public access and interpretation boards on display;
4. Creation of appropriate places for bird watching;
5. Various habitat improvements.

Recommendation 2.5

3.14 The latest position in respect of the West Midlands Reserve Force & Cadets Association (the Cadets) & Warwick Corps of Drums

- 3.14.1 Members will recall at their Executive meeting of 16th April 2014 it decided that if Racing Club Warwick was not prepared to agree to the Cadets constructing and occupying a new building on the land under their (Racing Club Warwick's) lease then all negotiations with Racing Club Warwick were to end and instead negotiations begin with Warwick Corps of Drums to enable the Cadets to build a new facility on the land currently under the Corps of Drums' lease. As Racing Club Warwick was not prepared to agree to Executive's request then attention has turned to the alternative option.
- 3.14.2 It is therefore encouraging to report that the negotiations have gone well and also that planning approval was granted on 16th September 2014. However, the positioning of the proposed Cadets building requires a portion of land to the rear of the Corps of Drums' site which is in the ownership of Warwick District Council. The plan at Appendix E shows the land in question. To enable the building to be constructed it is therefore proposed that Executive agrees to the building being part-situated on the Council's land and for the new lease arrangements to reflect this.
- 3.14.3 Given the successful planning application and subject to Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) determining new lease arrangements with Warwick Corps of Drums and the Cadets (with appropriate professional support from Warwickshire County Council Legal Services), it is hoped that the Cadets' new building will be up-and-running by spring 2015.

Recommendation 2.6

13.15.1 As a key stakeholder, Warwick Corps of Drums had developed its own proposals for public consultation. The proposals are as follows:

1. Structural improvements are made to deal with the building's water penetration;
2. Investment is made in the fabric of the building to provide better insulation;
3. Internal improvements to the building are made enabling multi-use;
4. The toilet and showering facilities are upgraded.

13.15.2 As part of the work to support the negotiations between Warwick District Council, Warwick Corps of Drums and the Cadets, officers undertook building survey work on behalf of the Corps of Drums to enable them to determine how much investment would be required to undertake the changes described in the proposals. A rough estimate of costs is £155,000.

13.15.3 The Corps of Drums is a registered charity and so would have access to a number of grant schemes that could deliver the improvements to its building. As Chairman of the Stakeholder Group, Councillor Hammon has asked that officers work closely with the organisation, supporting them in establishing building improvement costs, writing funding bids and general process facilitation. To provide the Corps of Drums with a start to lever in further funding, it is recommended that Executive approves the release of £50,000 (a third of the anticipated necessary investment) from the Capital Investment Reserve to be administered by Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Development Services.

Recommendation 2.7

13.16 Racing Club Warwick

13.16.1 Under the terms of its 1992 lease, Racing Club Warwick has the right to renew for a further 21 years. This right has been exercised and a new Lease was completed in June 2014. The only issue that remains outstanding is the amount of rent to be paid. This matter is currently being discussed by the representatives of Racing Club Warwick and Warwick District Council.

13.16.2 Racing Club Warwick had developed its own proposals for consultation. These are as follows:

1. An all-weather pitch is created;
2. New changing-rooms, showering facilities and other functional rooms are created;
3. The Clubhouse is improved to offer an attractive function room for the local community.

13.16.3 As stated earlier, the representatives of the Football Club worked very constructively on the Stakeholder Group and it is to be hoped that now that a solution appears to have been found for the Cadets, that relations between the Football Club and Warwick District Council can move forward in a positive manner. It is therefore recommended that to help Racing Club Warwick achieve its ambitions, the Council's officers provide the necessary support to assist with any funding bids.

4 POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Executive had determined that a business strategy and spatial masterplan should be developed for public consultation as it recognised that St Mary's Lands is an essential community amenity that needs to receive the necessary investment to enable its attractions and operations to prosper.
- 4.2 The Council has approved a Sustainable Community Strategy for Warwick District which has as one of its five key themes Prosperity. Under this theme priorities relevant to the St Mary's Lands Stakeholder Group's work are:
- Ensuring effective promotion of the district to attract growth;
 - Making better use of public assets to increase financial rewards;
 - Incentivising growth of existing businesses and attracting inward investment.

To do this the Council has committed itself, among other things, to:

- Using public land/assets to stimulate growth;
 - Ensuring a co-ordinated approach to inward investment.
- 4.3 The Council has also agreed a strategy statement "The future and sustainable prosperity for Warwick district" which among other things seeks to:
- Support the growth of the local economy; and
 - Maintain and promote thriving town centres.

- 4.4 The Local Plan - Publication Draft has a specific proposed policy for St Mary's Lands as follows:

"3.142 The Council will therefore work with the operators of the Racecourse to bring forward a Masterplan for the area which;

- ensures the ongoing vitality and viability of the Racecourse;*
- protects and enhances the significance of the Listed Building and Conservation Area and their setting;*
- retains the land for public recreation;*
- protects and enhances biodiversity within the Racecourse as well as links to the open countryside and other areas; and*
- restricts uses to those associated with visitor accommodation, recreation, leisure and horse racing"*

5 BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 In order to undertake the further piece of GVA work, Executive agreed that £10,000 was made available from the Contingency Budget to match fund the contribution Warwick Racecourse was making. The GVA commission was awarded by Warwick Racecourse, in consultation with Warwick District Council, in accordance with their own procurement rules. Warwick District Council has thus far spent £5,400 leaving a balance of £4,600.
- 5.2 The Capital Investment Reserve stands at £760,000. If the contribution of £50,000 to help facilitate improvement works to the Warwick Corps of Drums

building is approved then the balance remaining will be £710,000. However, there is an opportunity as part of the 2015/2016 budget setting process to consider making the funding available from the New Homes Bonus allocation thereby supporting a community project.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The option to continue with a full public consultation was considered, however, one of the main proposals from the GVA report and undoubtedly the most controversial is no longer relevant so it was felt that there were alternative ways to take the other proposals forward.
- 6.2 The option to abandon the work altogether was discounted as the stakeholders have put a lot of time and effort into formulating and discussing the proposals; Warwick District Council has invested a significant sum in match-funding Warwick Racecourse's contribution; and the Stakeholder Group work had developed proposals that required further investigation which will contribute to the development of a masterplan for St Mary's Lands.

7 RISKS

- 7.1 Before a final decision is made to progress specific proposals it will be necessary to develop a complete understanding of how project-specific risks for each project can be properly addressed, and what controls and mitigation actions will need to be put in place to that end. At the time of this report the question that arises is whether a risk would be generated by not undertaking a public consultation immediately. This risk is easily mitigated by ensuring that all future reports to Executive address the need for consultation in the light of circumstances as they then exist. All proposals will be discussed within the Council, and if necessary consulted on, with the appropriate third parties when the proposal has evolved sufficiently to make consultation productive.
- 7.2 Guidance will be sought from our planning officers to help ensure that any proposals are likely to prove acceptable in planning terms, although in accordance with established practice care will be taken to avoid any suggestion that improper influence has been brought to bear on those responsible for making or advising on planning decisions.