

 Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee - 29 July 2014		Agenda Item No. 7
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Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	N/A	
Background Papers	Finance & Audit minutes 01/07/2014 Executive minutes 02/07/2014	

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 2 July 2014.

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 1 July 2014, the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the items detailed in the appendices. The responses which the Executive gave are also shown.

Responses from the meeting of the Executive held on 2 July 2014 to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee's comments

Item no	4	Title	Service Area Plan/FFF Performance 2013/2014	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment	<p>The Committee broadly supported the recommendations in the report but had some concerns about the Finance Service Area Plan and that the report did not set out steps being taken to meet savings which the Council had to achieve as part of the Fit for the Future programme. With regards to the Finance Service Area Plan, the Committee was extremely concerned that a lack of resources had contributed to an increase in the number of days it was taking to reply to correspondence regarding council tax. The Portfolio Holder and Head of Finance did outline the reasons for this, but also emphasised the need to review staff resources moving forward. Additionally, with regard to the overall Financial Efficiencies, it was noted that while Cultural Services had met its savings target for 2013/14, there was no guarantee that this level of income could be found year on year. It was also noted that there were other savings which the Council still had to achieve in coming years and yet the report had not identified any actions as to how this could be done. Members did note that a detailed report including financial projections was due before the end of July.</p> <p>The report raised other issues which concerned Members, including a lack of Warwick residents being involved in the "Sky Blues Community Project", the fact that a £5 charge was being made and also that the Warwick Folk Festival had talked about pulling out next year because of the lack of involvement from Warwick District Council. While the Portfolio Holder and officers had responded to these points, the Committee remained concerned about them.</p>				
Executive Response	<p>Members discussed the issue of Shadow Portfolio Holders and felt that Group Leaders needed to address this to ensure that effective scrutiny continued. It was suggested that the scrutiny committees may wish to challenge this although some Members felt that it depended on who was given the role in the first place.</p> <p>Councillor Mobbs advised Members that further information on FFF financial projections and savings would be provided in the report being submitted to the 30 July Executive meeting. He also reminded Members that the Shadow Portfolio Holder issue was a two way street and Councillors needed to be invited to attend meetings.</p>				

Item no	5	Title	Creation of Digital Gaming Hub at 26 Hamilton Terrace, Royal Leamington Spa	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment	The Committee fully supported the recommendations in the report. Members were pleased to hear that the contract from the LEP had been received and urged that the project be started as soon as practically possible.				
Executive Response	-				

Urgent Item	Title	Bowls 2014 Additional Marketing	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment	<p>The Committee supported the recommendations in the report but with some reservations. The Committee was extremely disappointed with the lateness of this report and that the issues it addressed had not been considered earlier. Members expressed some dissatisfaction with the breakdown of costs for the items required and were concerned at how quickly the procurement process had been followed given the lateness of the request for the report.</p> <p>The Committee felt that it had been presented with a number of piecemeal reports concerning the bowls event and requested that when the review of the event was concluded, Members be presented with the report in order to establish what lessons could be learned going forward.</p>			
Executive Response	<p>The Leader apologised for the lateness of the report and accepted responsibility for the late circulation. However, he had felt it important to ensure that all Members were aware of the situation and included in the decision making process.</p> <p>Members were in agreement that national publicity was needed to encourage as many visitors to the District during the event. It was appreciated that a lot of work had been taking place 'behind the scenes' but such a high profile event should be showcased to residents and businesses within the District.</p> <p>The Executive agreed the recommendations with an amendment to the proposed figure being increased to £20,000.</p>			

The Committee also considered the following Executive agenda items which are detailed in a separate confidential appendix:

- Item 8 - Refurbishment of 4 Jury Street, Warwick
- Item 9 - Land off Radford Road, Royal Leamington Spa