

 <b>Council – 27 June 2012</b>		<b>Agenda Item No. 19</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee - End of Term Report</b>	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Lesley Dury Committee Services Officer 01926 456114 <a href="mailto:committee@warwickdc.gov.uk">committee@warwickdc.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Service Area</b>	Civic and Committee Services	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	n/a	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee 17 April 2012, minute number 102	
<b>Background Papers</b>	O & S Agendas/minutes of 2011/12	

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

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
With regard to officer approval all reports <i>must</i> be approved by the report author's relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Deputy Chief Executive		
Chief Executive		
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		
Legal		
Finance		
Portfolio Holder(s)		
<b>Consultation Undertaken</b>		
This report was approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 April 2012.		
<b>Final Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>		
Final Decision		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 An end of term report to the Council on the work the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have undertaken during the year.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the list of matters considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2011/12, as detailed in appendix A to the report, be noted.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 Under Article 6 of the Council's constitution Overview & Scrutiny Committees and Policy Committees are required to provide an end of term report to the Council on work they have undertaken during the year.
- 3.2 The matters considered during the year are attached at appendix A to the report. Following the Committee's meeting held on 17 April, this report was updated with matters considered at that meeting before being presented to Council.

4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 There are no alternative options as this report complies with the requirements of Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The recommendations of the report do not affect the Council's budgetary framework.

6. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 The recommendations of the report do not affect the Council's policy framework.

**Items considered by**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**2011/2012**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION**

It has been another busy year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it has also been productive in a number of ways.

We have had a number of reports from officers and these have been very effective. A good example is the Anti-Social Behaviour report and problems getting different agencies to work together with those residents with Mental Health issues led to a very strong input by WDC officers into the Working Party at the County Council. This is likely to bring about change throughout the County.

Councillors either individually or in couples looking at items such as Sports Partnerships or Economic Regeneration, reporting back to the O & S Committee have been very useful.

The Task and Finish Group on Volunteering has been active and is expecting to produce a report and a Policy soon. Finally the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has looked at a number of the reports to the Executive and made recommendations. Sometimes this has led to changes, even when it has not produced a different decision it has resulted in lively debate at both the Executive and Full Council.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ITEMS**

A synopsis of discussions and decisions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**June 2011**

Appointment of Chairman

Councillor Gifford was appointed Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

Fit for the Future Oversight Group

The Committee considered a request from Policy and Improvement to appoint three members of the Committee to the Fit for the Future oversight group.

It was resolved that Councillors Boad, Brookes and Mrs Dean be appointed to the Fit for the Future oversight group

Volunteering Policy Scoping Document

The Committee received a scoping document from Councillor Gifford and the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) which set out a proposed remit of a Task and Finish Group to deliver a Council Wide volunteering policy.

It was resolved that all non Executive members should be invited to participate in the Task & Finish Group and that the membership of the Group should be confirmed at the next meeting as part of the Work Programme.

## **July 2011**

### Tackling Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

The Committee considered a report and presentation from the Council's Community Safety Team that provided an analysis of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents in Warwick District; explained how ASB was being tackled; and outlined changes to recording criteria and legislation for ASB.

It was resolved that the report be noted and that a short report outlining issues which were stopping the team progressing/resolving problems be submitted to the Committee.

### Volunteering Policy Scoping Document

The Committee had confirmed the scoping document for this review at its meeting in June but had deferred the appointment of members at the last meeting to enable all non Executive members the opportunity to be part of this Group. It was resolved that the membership of the Group would be Councillors Mrs Bromley, Gifford, Mrs Knight, Mrs Tyrrell, Weber and Williams.

## **August 2011**

### Sports Partnerships

The Committee considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer which outlined the arrangements the Council had in place for three sports partnerships (Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sports Partnership and Warwick District Local Sports Network, Victoria Park Tennis) in the District.

The intention of the report was for members to consider the information on the three sports partnerships along with the Annual Health Check undertaken by officers and if appropriate a member would undertake an individual investigation into the work of the partnership.

The Committee were of the opinion that the three partnerships offered excellent value for the Council. Two members, Councillors Brookes and Gill, were keen to see how the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sports Partnership operated and agreed to attend a meeting with the relevant officers, observe its operation and report back in due course on their findings.

It was resolved that the report be noted and that Councillors Brookes and Gill report back their findings to the November or December meeting of the Committee.

## **September 2011**

### Greenspace Strategy Update

The Committee considered a report from Cultural Services outlining the work undertaken to date on the development of a Greenspace Strategy for Warwick District and the timetable for completion. It was resolved that the report be noted.

### Play Area Review Update

The Committee considered a report from Cultural Services that outlined the progress made to date on implementing the decision of the Executive on 24 November 2010 with regard to the Review of Play Areas. It was resolved that the report be noted.

### Supplementary Report on Tackling Anti Social Behaviour and Problems faced when dealing with individuals with mental health issues

The Committee considered a report from Community Protection which outlined the problems the team had when handling cases of Anti Social Behaviour and providing support to both victims and perpetrators of Anti Social Behaviour who had mental health issues.

The Committee discussed the issues and felt there was a need for more details and also discussion with Warwickshire County Council before this Council took any definitive action. However there was potential for informal discussions with WCC.

It was resolved that a briefing note should be prepared for the Chair to raise at the Warwickshire Overview & Scrutiny Board and that an update should be provided to the Committee at its next meeting as part of the work programme.

#### Discretionary Travel Scheme Task and Finish Group

The Committee considered a report from the Discretionary Travel Scheme Task & Finish Group which outlined their proposals following the significant reductions in the provisions of flexi bus service by Warwickshire County Council.

It was resolved that a report should be submitted to the Executive outlining the proposals for Discretionary Travel in Warwick District.

### **October 2011**

#### Update on Joint Member Working Party Examination of Tree Maintenance

The Committee considered a report from Neighbourhood Services that updated the Committee on the implementation of recommendations of the Joint Task & Finish Group regarding the maintenance of trees and also outlined other issues relevant to these that were being considered.

It was resolved that the WDC/WCC Joint Member Working Group, be suspended until the major contract re-let cost was known in April 2012 and the WDC member Group concluded its work with a final report before the end of 2011.

#### Economic Development Strategy

The Committee considered a report from Development Services that updated the Committee on the progress to date on developing a Warwick District Economic Development Strategy, including the process and timeline to complete the project.

It was resolved that the report be noted.

### **November 2011**

#### Bowls Working Party Recommendations

The Committee considered the recommendations of a Member Working Party that was established in early 2011 to consider future provision of bowling facilities in the district and the associated costs of providing these facilities.

The Committee suggested that there should be greater publicity of the facilities offered to promote interest and that commercial sponsorship should be considered in liaison with relevant partners, both of which could help increase income for the venue.

It was resolved that the recommendations be noted and no further scrutiny be undertaken on this matter.

## **December 2011**

### Work the Council is Undertaking to Deliver more Affordable Housing

The Committee considered the report and recommendations of Housing and Property Services. The report set out the work the Council was undertaking to increase the supply of affordable housing in the District. The report recommended that the Committee should note the progress the Council had made since 2010, in meeting affordable housing targets.

The report highlighted that much work had been done to address the shortfall in affordable housing provision, and showed numbers of additional housing units in the pipeline.

It was resolved that progress the Council has made since 2010 in meeting affordable housing within the District be noted.

### The operation of the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sports Partnership

Councillor Brookes gave a report on his meeting with council officers to learn more about the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sports Partnership (CSW Sport) to which Warwick District Council contributed.

## **February 2012**

### Economic Development Strategy

Joe Baconnet, the Economic Development and Regeneration Manager, gave a presentation to the Committee on progress with the Economic Development Strategy. He referred to the current position, on-going work and the links into other plans such as the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Local Plan, the Housing Strategy, Transport and Infrastructure – the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Finance Strategy and the Investment Strategy for Warwick District Council. He invited feedback from Committee members on the items they thought were important.

The Economic Development Strategy was going to be submitted to the Executive in May 2012 at which time, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would have a report to scrutinise.

## **April 2012**

### Prayers at Full Council Meetings

The Committee considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, Mr Andrew Jones, that advised Members on the legal position in respect of Warwick District Council's practice of holding prayers prior to Full Council meetings.

It was resolved that the report should be presented to Full Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that prayers should be separate from Council meetings.

### End of Term Report 2011/2012

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services on the work the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had undertaken for the municipal year 2011/12.

It was resolved that the list of matters considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee detailed in appendix A to the report be presented to Council with the recommendation that the report be noted.

## **ROUTINE ITEMS**

- Comments from the Executive
- Forward Plan
- Review of the Work Programme

## **EXECUTIVE ITEMS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE**

A synopsis of discussions and comments and recommendations to Executive made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a synopsis of the Executive's response to these comments and recommendations.

### **June 2011**

#### Dog Control Orders

The Committee agreed that in principle the orders were a good move, but the detail of the schedules needed to be refined. It made the following recommendations to the Executive:

- Negotiated solution with the Jockey Club as racecourse lease holders over the management of the land and the Committee has concerns about 7.12 (ii)
- Dogs on leads for crematorium and cemeteries not excluded (a member thought that Oakley should be retained as present with dogs not being permitted);
- Mill Gardens should be removed from the order, to enable dogs to run free but under control, because no complaints have been received about dogs in this area;
- Improved signage advertising the order and enforcement, advertising of free bags, promote the number of fixed penalty notices that we have issued each month; and
- The orders be amended to reflect the discussions with the golf course on clarity of dog control on their land.

Executive Response – It agreed with most of the comments made by the Committee.

#### 2011/12 Service Area Plans and Portfolio Holder Statements

The Committee needed to have complete data to enable fuller scrutiny and accountability. This was key to the success of the Council. If Shadow Portfolio Holders were to undertake most of this work, there was an urgent need for training on this area of work for all opposition members.

There should also be an aim to reduce the number of targets to make the process leaner in line with the FFF ambitions of the Council.

Executive Response – It thanked the Committee for its comments and agreed that training was paramount and should be continually evolving for all members.

#### Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership: 5 Year Strategy

The Committee supported the recommendations of the report but the Committee emphasised the importance of making recommendation 2.2 work as, in their opinion, this would be the key to achieving the full benefit of the LEP.

Executive Response – It agreed with the comments made by the Committee.

### Rural/Urban Capital Improvement Scheme

The scheme overall was welcomed by the Committee as an improvement on the current arrangement and the scheme did provide a tool to leaver money into schemes to enable improved facilities for the community.

Executive Response – It thanked the Committee for its comments.

### Terms of the Warwick District Council / Waterloo Housing Group Development Joint Venture

The Committee felt there was a need to emphasise the need to recognise those in modestly paid work. Five year tenancies were reasonable but there was potentially a need in circumstances to have longer leases. The Committee would welcome cross party involvement, ideally shadow portfolio holders, in monitoring effectiveness of the agreement. The Committee sort clarification on 3.1 and recommended that it read “will deliver 300 units”.

Executive Response – It thanked the Committee for its comments and agreed that the wording should be altered to read the same throughout.

### Proposed Enterprise Zone

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee in essence supported the recommendations. Members had a number of concerns but looked for the Council to discuss the potential with the local parish council.

Executive Response – It agreed to hold a briefing prior to Group Meetings on 27 June to bring all members up to speed.

## **July 2011**

### Open Water Safety

The Committee were reassured of the partnership between the Council ROSPA using a sensible measured approach with the emphasis at assessing the high risks sites first and only installing Personal Rescue Equipment in a couple of appropriate sites.

Executive Response – The Executive thanked the Committee for their comments.

### Article 4 Direction in Leamington Spa

The Committee noted the information circulated in the addendum to the report that was circulated at the meeting.

The Committee were assured that the Planning Policy Team would be considering both small and large HMOs to ensure that Council was in a position to respond to the long terms issues that HMO can cause. It was made clear that further policy changes could be required to ensure there was the correct housing balance in local communities. It was noted that any policies needed to be for both small and large HMOs.

Executive Response – The Executive thanked the Committee for their comments.

### Match Funding for Health Initiatives

The Committee welcomed the money and the initiatives that were being planned by the Council, but would have appreciated these details being circulated to all members.

The Committee had some concerns about ensuring the money delivered benefits to the District and therefore recommended that the recommendation of the report be amended to add the following words at the end:



“subject to the agreed programme of work, in particular looking at drug and alcohol abuse, with measurable outcomes.”

Executive Response – The Executive sympathised with the Scrutiny Committee’s comments but did not think now was the time to alter this, as the programme had been set and had already gone out to tender. Councillor Doody advised that it was not possible to change the focus or priorities at this stage because the Council had been guided by the PCT and would be supplementing works rather than leading on projects.

## **August 2011**

### Update on the Review of Concessions offered by Warwick District Council

The Committee advised the Executive to write to Group Leaders asking them to confirm their representatives on the Income Generation Member Working Party.

Executive Response – The Executive agreed with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

### Future Funding for the Voluntary and Community Sector

The Committee were content with the report and encouraged its approval.

### Support Services Review

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee were content with the report.

### Olympics 2012

The Committee passed comments to the Executive which were confidential by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

### Sydenham Sports Centre

The Committee felt that it was sad that this partnership and the building had reached this position. However, it welcomed the recommendations of the report but encouraged officers to progress paragraph 2.2 of the report as swiftly as possible because every effort needed to be made to relocate the existing users, and ensure that South Leamington residents were aware of the alternative provision.

## **September 2011**

### Dog Control Orders

The Committee felt there was a need for the areas that were clearly designated by location, i.e. Newbold Comyn play area with a road on one side and hedges on the other three sides, to be brought to the next Executive to ensure public confidence could be maintained in the introduction of these orders.

The Committee welcomed the comment from the Portfolio Holder that Bishop’s Tachbrook and Norton Lindsey play areas, as fenced play areas, would be included in the decision by Executive in the first round.

The Committee felt there was a need for additional bins across the district either dog waste specific or general ones which could be used and it needed to be publicised that dog waste could be put into normal waste bins. The Committee was pleased to hear that money saved on removing dog bins would all be spent on a considerable increase in dual use bins.

The Committee asked the Portfolio Holder to investigate the reporting process for contacting the Dog Warden because at present both the public and Councillors had experienced problems.

Executive Response – The Executive assured members that the issues raised regarding the difficulties in contacting the Dog Warden were being investigated and officers were working on improving the delivery of this important service.

#### Empty Homes Strategy

The Committee welcomed the explanation that the Head of Housing & Property Services was looking at the correlation between the reduction in empty homes and the work of the Empty Homes Officer before determining how the strategy could be implemented. The Committee also welcomed the inclusion within the Strategy of working with Councillors to identify empty properties and bringing them into use.

Executive Response - The Executive thanked the committee for their beneficial comments and reiterated that there were alternative options available but this had to be balanced with the risk of a missed opportunity.

#### Proposal to install Photovoltaic Systems to suitable WDC Housing and Corporate Properties

The Committee welcomed the report but had concerns about the implementation timescales involved with a large project where a number of people would also be aiming to install similar schemes. In addition the Executive should look at what action it could take to help reduce fuel poverty issues by making homes more fuel/energy efficient through schemes such as super insulation or improved water heating schemes.

The Committee would also welcome some monitoring of local employment levels to see the impact that this had on reducing long term unemployment in the area and improved skills levels. In addition this money should be treated as windfall money for additional improvements and not stop gap money to fill short falls.

Executive Response – The Executive advised that many of the issues raised were continually being worked on through a rolling maintenance programme. Councillor Vincett agreed that ideally, any training and employment opportunities would be offered to local people, however, due to the tight timescales this may be more feasible for the maintenance contracts than the initial installation phase.

#### Warwick Town Centre Action Plan

The Committee felt there was a need for proceeding this at speed but at the same time there was a need for the partnership to bring the ideas forward and would encourage WDC to outline its plans and vision to the Town Centre Partnership. The Committee did recognise that Stratford Town Council had been driving a neighbourhood plan under the localism bill for Stratford Town Centre. It was accepted that Warwick Town Council did want to bring the changes and development while recognising the historical and architectural heritage of the Town but there were other groups who had caused problems for this plan.

Executive Response - The Executive thanked the Committee for its comments.

#### Safeguarding Children Action Plan

The Committee accepted the recommendations in the report, particularly recommendation 2.6.

Executive Response - Councillor Mrs Gallagher, Portfolio Holder for Cultural Services, had been nominated as the member Champion.

#### Request for Redundancy and Early Retirement Payment

The Committee had some concern about another redundancy and felt the Council should continue to avoid redundancies.

Executive Response - The Council was opposed to redundancies. Very few had been made over the past few years.

### **October 2011**

#### Racing Club Warwick

The Committee recognised that the Council had accepted the surrender of the lease by Racing Club Warwick in good faith and that in this situation it had been correct to work with the Army Cadets and Air Training Corp to secure them a lease on Council land. The Committee also recognised the good working relationship that was in place between WDC, RCW and the Army Cadets and Air Training Corp prior to 2009 and that the planning application for the Army Cadets and Air Training Corp was submitted by RCW but the new trustees had now realised the limitations/restrictions this building placed on RCW and appeared to be trying to undo decisions of the previous trustees.

The Committee were mindful of the large amount of money the Council had contributed to the club in the last two years excluding the significant amount of specialist officer time to not only trying to resolve these issues but also in supporting the work of the club. The Committee were of the opinion that Racing Club Warwick had drawn a line in the sand and were unwilling to negotiate further. Although, they did welcome the fact that Racing Club Warwick had cleared all its outstanding rent and business rate payments with Warwick District Council as well as the outstanding invoice for remedial work following the dumping of grass cuttings in a scientifically sensitive area.

The Committee were in agreement that the Council would want to see Racing Club Warwick return to the vibrant community organisation helping to improve the community of Warwick West and Warwick as a whole for the betterment of the district.

It is for these reasons the Committee were content with the report but felt a need to recommend to the Executive that the £120,000 be withdrawn from Racing Club Warwick. However this should be ring fenced for the use of or establishment of a community organisation in Warwick West because of the significant level of deprivation in this area.

Executive Response - After some debate, and following advice from the Chief Officer, it was agreed that a specifically named reserve could be created to hold this money until a time when it was needed.

#### Fees and Charges

The Committee felt that the main reasoning and decision making behind changes in car parking charges should not be to generate income but to stimulate economic benefit within the Town Centres in the District. The Committee had some concerns that not all responses to the consultation on the Car Parking charges had yet been received and encouraged the Executive not to make any recommendations on this area until these had all been received especially considering the decrease in footfall in Warwick which had led Warwick Town Council to reconsider their response.

The Committee also highlighted the Newbold Comyn charges for Senior Citizens and asked the Portfolio Holder, who was present, to investigate why a swimming ticket cost £2.40, a sauna £1.40 but for a combined Swim and Sauna ticket it cost £4.00.

Executive Response - The Executive agreed that the recommendations should be agreed as printed.

#### Charges for use of the Parks

The Committee welcomed this report and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder who was present at the meeting made the following recommendations to the Executive:

Recommendation 2.3 should include the Head of Development Services and Development Services Portfolio Holder because of the need to consider the economic impact of any event as well as its cultural impact; and

Recommendation 2.4 should include a working party of four members, plus the portfolio holder to develop the hiring policy which should also include the Town Hall and Spa Centre. (If this recommendation was accepted Councillors Ms Dean, Ms De-Lara-Bond and Mrs Falp have agreed to be involved)

Executive Response - The Executive decided to agree recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 as set out in the report and to amend recommendations 2.3 and 2.4 to incorporate the Scrutiny Committees' comments.

#### Portfolio Holder Statements

The Committee highlighted a number of areas where they felt they would appreciate further detail from the Portfolio Holder or Head of Service during the Shadow Portfolio Holder briefings.

Executive Response - Members felt it was imperative that the Shadow Portfolio Holders had sight of these documents regularly and were made aware of any changes as soon as agreed.

#### Government Consultation on Draft Planning Policy Framework

The Committee were appreciative of this detailed report and thanked the report author for all his work on this matter.

#### Coventry and Warwick Gateway Development Proposals

The Committee were in agreement with the report. However, because of the potential wider impacts of this scheme not only across the District but also the sub region, the Committee felt the need to recommend to the Executive that the working party as set out in recommendation 2.7 of the report should include a representative from all parties on the Council.

Executive Response - Councillor Caborn thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments and advised that they would be taken on board. However, he highlighted that the membership of the working party would have to be agreed and balanced with Coventry City Council.

#### Business Rates Retention

The Committee welcomed the circulation of the responses to the consultation and appreciated that they had been circulated so late because of the detailed and technical nature of them it had originally been thought it would not be possible. However, for this reason they asked the Executive to allow members to submit their comments individually or by Group up to a deadline to be agreed with the Head of Service.

Executive Response – It welcomed the Committee’s comments.

#### Localisation of Council Tax Support

The Committee welcomed the circulation of the responses to the consultation and appreciated that they had been circulated so late because of the detailed and technical nature of them it had originally been thought it would not be possible. However for this reason they asked the Executive to allow members to submit their comments individually or by Group up to a deadline to be agreed with the Head of Service.

In addition the Committee expressed an interest in assisting with the development of any policy which was required in the future, with regard to Council Tax support because of the potential impact this could have on the vulnerable members of the community.

Executive Response - Members again highlighted the need for Group Leaders to encourage comments in from their colleagues but appreciated that the deadline for submitting them was somewhat closer than for the previous report.

### **November 2011**

#### Dog Control Orders

Paragraph 7.4 – the list should include Eagle Recreation multi use games area, Leamington instead of Kennedy Square multi use games area.

The Committee was disappointed that some areas clearly demarked by surfacing had not been included, such as the Holt and the main play area at Victoria Park. These should be brought forward as soon as possible for addition to the areas excluded.

The Committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to review the orders in 12 months considering such matters as issues that have come up and the number of breaches of the orders, by area and type of order reported and acted upon.

The Committee recommended that the Executive should respond to the following points to provide clarity for all parties, including:

1. What is the timetable for installation for signage in original areas?
2. What is time frame for introducing these new areas and signage?
3. What is their definition of clearly demarked areas?
4. What is the completion date for the intro of these areas?
5. How are the areas being demarked?
6. Have they informed the Public of how areas will be demarked and how enforcement will operate?

Executive Response - The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, Councillor Coker advised that:

- The signage would be printed to coincide with the order coming into effect on 21 November 2011.
- With regard to the timeframe for introducing the new areas and signage, it was agreed that these would only be included after consideration by the Scrutiny Committees and Executive. Some areas would be implemented straight-away but Parish Councils would be written to for their opinion on any areas that fell in their rural area. In addition the short list would be listed in the minutes of the meeting and officers would like to examine these areas prior to them being printed in the newspapers.

- A clearly demarcated area was one that was completely fenced off or where a boundary was clearly shown.
- The completion date for the introduction of the areas would be approximately two to three weeks or as soon as the posts were in position.
- Areas would be demarcated by a clearly defined boundary and signs.
- The Public would be advised by easily distinguishable signage in the area, through some enforcement and by details in the Press.
- Councillor Coker apologised for the absence of The Holt play area in the report and encouraged any member to indicate suitable areas to him and the officers. He agreed to the amendment of the wording in paragraph 7.4 of the report and advised that the Head of Environmental Services, Richard Hall, would write to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee addressing the points that they had raised.
- Councillor Coker also welcomed the idea of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee creating a Task and Finish Group to assess that the process was running smoothly.

Executive Response - The Executive agreed that the recommendations should be agreed as printed.

#### Strategic Principles for Tourism and the Visitor Economy

The Committee supported the recommendations of the report but expressed disappointment that it did not have the opportunity to see the addendum referred to in recommendation 2.2.

Overall the Committee was pleased with the work but disappointed that there was not the opportunity for greater member involvement in the draft tourism strategy and encouraged all Councillors to send views to the Economic Development Manager on potential inclusions.

The Committee asked the Executive to consult with Town and Parish Councils as early as possible regarding the potential contributions towards the provision of tourism to ensure that this can be incorporated in the setting of their precepts in January/February.

Executive Response - The Executive decided to agree recommendation 2.5 in the report.

It was felt that member involvement in the creation of the strategy should be maintained and the Scrutiny Committees should be used to their full advantage.

#### Disposal of 21 Church Street, Warwick

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

The Committee asked for opinion on the potential for creating a footpath through the car park to the rear of this property, in line with the Warwick Town Centre Action Group, to see if it was financially viable.

Executive Response - Members felt this was a good offer which needed acting on quickly.

With respect to the opinion that money should be ring fenced for use in Warwick, this was felt to be too parochial as the District Council is made up of numerous towns, villages and rural areas.

There was some discussion regarding the viability of creating a footpath from New Street Car Park into Old Square but it was felt that this could be detrimental to the offer because it could encroach onto the development curtilage.

## **December 2011**

### Gypsy and Traveller Sites Update

The Committee was very concerned at the suggestion that money from the budget detailed in the report was going to be used. For this reason, the Committee recommended to the Executive that this money should not be used as a source of funding for providing the transit facility detailed in the report and alternative funding should be found.

The Committee also stated that they felt the transit site detailed in the report was a good location and encouraged the Executive to approve it.

Executive Response - The Executive stated that it did not envisage using the budget detailed in the report and a business case would be worked on showing full costings and how this would be funded.

In response to their 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation, and having taken into account Councillor Brookes's comment it was decided that additional wording should be added to recommendation 2.4 to read "Whilst continuing to look at alternative sites".

### Allocation of budget to deliver Voluntary Sector Services in Warwick District 2012-2015

The Committee recognised how difficult the process had been and congratulated the team involved.

The Committee recommended to the Executive that all Councillors receive training for handling bids and potentially this could be provided by WCAVA.

In addition, the Committee added a review of the contracts to their Work Plan for December 2012 so they could assess the process and monitor how the contracts were operating.

Executive Response - It agreed with the sentiment of the recommendation, but amended it so that it read that officers review the training plan for members to incorporate not only the handling of bids, but any other areas that require strengthening, in consultation with the Member Development Group.

### Technical Reform of Council Tax

The Committee considered the report and welcomed the flexibility that this provided to Local Government.

### Retail Development in Leamington Town Centre – Part One

The Committee recommended to the Executive that if there was a viable and suitable scheme going forward, that the Executive consider public engagement to enable mature debate on the retail benefits or otherwise for retail development.

Executive Response - The Executive stated that if they believed there was a viable scheme, the Council would work with the Developer on an improved communication strategy which should address the Committee's concerns. They therefore decided to refuse the recommendation.

### Approval of Compensation Payment

The report was noted.

Executive Response - It was agreed to withdraw this item to allow officers sufficient time to investigate an issue raised at the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

#### Sale of Art Gallery

The report was noted.

Executive Response - The Executive thanked both the F & A and the O & S Committees for their comments.

### **January 2012**

#### General Fund Revenue Base Estimates Revised 2011/12 and Original 2012/13

After consideration of the report and comments made, the Committee agreed that it was concerned about the failure of the Fit for the Future programme to meet its savings targets and the effect that may have. The Committee recommended that the "Fit for Future Scrutiny Group", consisting of Councillors Brookes, Boad and Ms Dean, meet to understand the Executive plans to ensure that the Fit for the Future programme delivered the agreed outcomes.

Executive Response - Councillor Mobbs believed that the Fit for the Future Scrutiny Group had been a one off and suggested that any interested members attend the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in March when a further report would be submitted. This would give those members a chance to scrutinise the report in full and Councillor Gifford accepted the invitation.

#### General Reports – Quality of Life Report

It was noted that on "Waste", Warwick District performed very well with the quantity of waste collected per head being the lowest in the County. The Committee commented that it would like more information on waste levels in all districts and wards.

On "Health", the level of teenage conceptions gave cause for some concern as Warwick was the only district in the County that had seen an increase between 2000 and 2009. The Committee raised the issue that conceptions going through to term would have an overall impact on all services and housing and questioned whether there were initiatives being carried out nationally that Warwick District was not aware of.

The Committee strongly supported the recommendations in the report and wanted them to be enacted.

Executive Response - The Executive thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its comments.



## General Reports – Newbold Comyn Leisure Centre Water Flume Replacement Exception Report

The Committee recommended that the Executive should satisfy itself that the price had been driven down as far as possible if the Council was going with a single supplier.

Executive Response – The Executive were very satisfied that they were receiving a quality product for a good price and were happy with the combined departmental decision.

## **February 2012**

### Housing Revenue Account Budget 2012/13 and Housing Rents

The Committee was concerned about the increase recommended for housing dwelling rents which was proposed as an average increase of 8.39% for 2012/13. It would be felt especially by tenants whose income fell just above the qualifying limit for Housing Benefit. The Committee questioned whether there was scope for flexibility to spread the impact over more years.

After consideration of the report and comments made, the Committee recommended to the Executive that details on other scenarios to mitigate the impact of the rent increases, such as smoothing the impact over a few years, and background information, especially in light of the fact that inflation was predicted to fall should be provided for when the Full Council was ready to make its decision. Councillor Vincett agreed to provide the data.

Executive Response - The Executive agreed that for reasons of transparency the data requested would be provided in time for the Council meeting on 22 February 2012.

### Members' Allowances Scheme

The Committee was concerned that the report did not give good reasons for the recommendations. These recommendations effectively meant a decrease in true terms of allowance levels for most Members. The Committee discussed various recommendations.

After consideration of the report and comments made, the Committee recommended to the Executive that there should not be any changes to the current allowance scheme with the exception that the Deputy Leader on the Executive should receive the recommended Special Responsibility Allowance and the Vice Chairman Planning should receive the recommended Special Responsibility Allowance.

Executive Response - The Executive agreed with the recommendation proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### Budget 2012/13 and Council Tax – Revenue and Capital

In respect of the review of 2011/12 revenue budget and implications for 2012/13, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was informed that the work that the Community Enterprise Officer at the Brunswick Enterprise Zone had been doing could be delivered in a more cost effective manner by working in partnership. This would safeguard the work that had already been done.

In respect of the 2012/13 revenue budget, dealing with staff pay and a proposal that if the Authority achieved the required level of savings and service performance each year, all staff would receive a one-off payment as a percentage of their basic pay in place of a possible annual negotiated increase, the Committee had concerns about how this would be negotiated if it had links to performance. Mike Snow, Head of

Finance, explained some ideas on how the system could be implemented. Lower paid workers would possibly receive a guaranteed amount rather than a percentage of their base pay.

It thanked Mike Snow for his hard work.

Executive Response - The Executive agreed with the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that Mike Snow should be thanked for his hard work.

### The New Standards Regime

The Committee was concerned that the new regime required the appointment of a new independent person, and therefore all the knowledge and experience of the current independent representative would be lost. It was also concerned that the independent person could not vote. Matters that were currently dealt with by the Standards Board would become Police matters. This could have the potential to discourage people to become a councillor.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee strongly emphasised the need for a working group to be formed to examine the requirements and the processes for the New Standards Regime. The members of the working group should know how Standards worked.

The Committee recommended that the working group considered comments and recommendations made by the Standards Committee when it had discussed the New Standards Regime on 1 February 2012. The Committee also recommended that the working group should not be constrained by political party proportionality balance for any Standards Committee; the Committee felt that a strict party balance within the Standards Committee was not needed, but this could be something the working group would examine.

The Committee was very concerned about how the issue of the independent member was handled. The Committee felt strongly that the independent members had been very useful and there was a real risk of skill and knowledge being lost. The Committee also felt strongly that the inclusion of Parish and Town Councillors on any Committee was vital. The Committee emphasised the urgency in the delivery timescales as the new regime started in July.

Executive Response - The Executive agreed with all the comments the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made and was also concerned that in losing the independent members, it could result in great deal of knowledge and experience being lost. However, the Executive was confident that independent members would still be involved in a supporting role to ensure that impartiality was not compromised.

In response to political party balance on the working group, the Monitoring Officer advised that the proportionality stems from the Act itself.

## **March 2012**

### Housing Revenue Account Draft Business Plan 2012 – 2062 and Self Financing

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was keen that the existing Project Board remained in place until September, and that the planned replacement governance structure should be subject to a wide ranging review. The Committee felt that Councillors from all parties, the relevant Portfolio Holders and tenant representatives should be involved in this review.

Executive Response - The Portfolio Holder agreed with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments regarding governance of the Project Board and anticipated that the Board would bring the recommendation forward regarding their structure in line with the Scrutiny Committee's suggestions.

#### C&CS Review – Team Structure, ICT Strategy & Channel Strategy

The Committee noted the report.

Executive Response - The Executive thanked the Committee for its support.

#### Tourism and Visitor Economy

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

Executive Response - The Executive was pleased that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's queries had been clarified by officers the previous evening and thanked the Committee for its support.

#### Disposal of Council owned Land at Kingsway, Royal Leamington Spa

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report, subject to a change to recommendation 2.4. The Committee recommended that an offer should be made to the community to give it the chance to have a community hub facility. The Committee recommended that the wording of 2.4 should be altered as follows:

"To agree to make an offer to the local community that 1 of the 11 dwellings be converted to a community hub facility. If the community do not wish to take up this offer, then the apartment will be used as affordable housing."

Executive Response - The wording would be altered to read:

"To invite the local community to consider an offer by Warwick District Council in partnership with Waterloo Housing Group that 1 of the 11 dwellings be converted to a community hub facility. If the community do not wish to take up this offer, then the apartment will be used as affordable housing."

#### Health and Wellbeing Improvements in Warwick West

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report but recommended that recommendation 2.1 should be amended to promote education, skills and training. The recommendation should be worded as follows:

"That Executive agrees to officers commencing an open and transparent procurement process to commission health and wellbeing activities, and activities to promote education, skills and training, for the residents of the District with particular focus on those who live on the Forbes Estate."

Executive Response - The Executive felt that the recommendation put forward could be clarified further and suggested that it should be less prescriptive leaving it open to innovative bids from groups. The recommendation should be worded as follows:

"That Executive agrees to officers commencing an open and transparent procurement process to commission health and wellbeing activities, and activities to promote education, skills and training, for the residents of the District with particular focus on those who live on the Forbes Estate/St Mary's Lands."

### South West Warwick (Chase Meadow) Community Centre Development

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report but recommended that the Council's contribution should not come from the Capital Investment Reserve, but should come from the Urban/Rural Initiatives Fund.

This would mean a change to the wording of recommendation 2.5 with "Capital Investment Reserve" being replaced with "Urban/Rural Initiatives Fund".

Executive Response - The Portfolio Holder advised that to use the Urban/Rural Initiatives Fund was not an option. Officers had advised that any unallocated balance would be used by the end of 2012/13 because the Council already had eight applications for the scheme in the pipeline.

### **April 2012**

#### Fit for the Future Change Programme Update

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee accepted the recommendations in the report, but had concerns on achievability and concerns about how Overview and Scrutiny could effectively scrutinise. The Committee had concerns that if the savings were not achieved, it may lead to cuts in services.

Executive Response - Councillor Caborn, the portfolio holder for this item, was confident that by working as 'One Council', it was possible to achieve the ambitions proposed and assured members that services would not be cut. He accepted the committee's concerns and agreed to a more consistent approach to the formatting of the Service Area Plans.

#### Draft Green Space Strategy

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee accepted the recommendations in the report but wanted to ensure that the whole issue of the Green Space Strategy tied in with the Local Plan.

Executive Response - Members were mindful that the District was lucky to have so many areas of open space and welcomed the strategy. They also agreed that the strategy was inextricably linked to the Local Plan and clarified that the timescales involved were achievable.

#### Joint working with Bowls England

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee was very keen that Bowls England relocate to the District as it had the potential to bring great economic benefit to the community. The Committee felt that consultation with both local residents and the Royal Leamington Spa Bowls Club was vitally important.

Executive Response - Members felt that this would be a huge benefit to the local economy and the Women's Bowls event already resulted in return visits to the town by players and supporters alike.

#### The Dogs Exclusion Order 2011

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that it would consider what constituted demarcation and try to set some sort of standard, when the Task and Finish Group looked at Dog Control Orders in the autumn.

Executive Response - The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Coker, supported the scrutiny committee's suggestion regarding demarcation.

**ITEMS CONSIDERED BY JOINT MEETINGS OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- Peer Challenge (Executive item)