

 Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee - 7 January 2014		Agenda Item No. <div style="font-size: 2em; float: right;">6</div>
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Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	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 10/12/2013 & Executive minutes 11/12/2013	

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

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

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

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises the Executive's response to comments given by the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee on reports submitted to the Executive on 11 December 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATION

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

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

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

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

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

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

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

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

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

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 As part of the scrutiny process, the Committee no longer considers the whole of the Executive agenda.
- 7.2 Councillors are emailed at the time of the publication of the Executive and Scrutiny Committee agendas, asking them to contact Committee Services by 9.00 am on the day of the Scrutiny Committee, to advise which Executive items they wish the Scrutiny Committee to pass comment on and the reasons why.
- 7.3 As a result, at its meeting on 10 December 2013, the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the items detailed in the appendices. The responses which the Executive gave are also shown.

APPENDIX 1**Responses from the meeting of the Executive held on 11 December 2013 to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee's comments**

Item no	5	Title	General Fund base budgets latest 2013/14 and original 2014-15	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment		<p>The Committee noted a number of discrepancies in figures within the report which officers agreed to clarify in time for the Executive meeting, but was pleased that there was a surplus in the budget this year and a projected surplus for the coming year and supported the recommendations in the report.</p> <p>Members were keen to see the Planning reserve topped up from the current surplus.</p>			
Executive Response		<p>In response to the discrepancies highlighted by the Committee, officers circulated amended documents prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Having read the report and the comments from the Committee, the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.</p>			

Item no	6	Title	Housing Revenue Account base budgets latest 2013/14 and original 2014/15	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment		<p>The Committee noted that at the time of submission of the Rent Setting report in February 2014 there would be an opportunity to address contentious issues such as rent increases. Members also noted the potential for a knock-on effect on the HRA Business Plan. The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.</p>			
Executive Response		<p>The Executive agreed the recommendations as written.</p>			

Item no	7	Title	The new HRA Business Plan 2013-2062	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment		<p>The Committee noted that, due to a shift towards social rent policy by the government, it was projected that the Council should be able to build 4000 rather than 6000 properties during the term of the Plan. However, Members were encouraged that this was still considerably higher than the original estimate, that the Plan was constantly under review and supported the recommendations in the report.</p>			
Executive Response		<p>The Executive agreed the recommendations as written.</p>			

Item no	8	Title	Assets Review	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment		The Committee accepted that £30,000 was the maximum cost of market testing for the three properties in question, expressed a desire to see free public access to the Pump Rooms in future in one form or another, noted that a report due in February 2014 would estimate the cost to the budget and supported the recommendations in the report.			
Executive Response		The Executive accepted that special care and attention was needed for these facilities and did not want officers to be restricted at the exploratory stage.			

Item no	9	Title	Council Tax Uninhabitable Discount	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment		The Committee was addressed by a member of the public, a pensioner who had bought a derelict property but who had as yet been unable to pay for the work required to move the project forward due to financial burdens such as the Council Tax. He could not see how the current system would encourage people to work on derelict properties and therefore supported the recommendations in the report, which the Committee also supported.			
Executive Response		The Committee was thanked for its comments.			

Item no	10	Title	CCTV & Lighting in St Nicholas Park	Requested by	Chair
Scrutiny Comment		A member of the Committee raised concerns that money should still be ring fenced in the budget for the provision of cameras and argued that there was a need for additional cameras in the park to protect members of the public. Members and officers responded that investigations had established that it was not possible to install further cameras due to there being no line of sight to a base station and it was considered that the current cameras were in the best position it was possible to achieve. The Committee noted the Member's concerns and the responses given, recognised that monies remained in the budget to address safety concerns and supported the recommendations in the report.			
Executive Response		<p>The Executive agreed the recommendations, incorporating suggestions made by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Recommendation 2.5 was amended to read "as a matter of urgency, officers work with Warwickshire Police to ensure that boy racers are eradicated from the park by taking appropriate action".</p>			

	<p>Recommendation 2.6 was amended to read "Neighbourhood Services act urgently to work with Ward Councillors, Friends of St Nicholas Park and its users to allocate the remaining funding to those other desirable projects previously identified by the working party whilst looking at resolving the public nuisance issues from boy racers".</p> <p>An additional recommendation was added which read "Councillor Coker will write to the Police Commissioner independently about the issues with boy racers and encourage police liaison to help tackle the problem early in the summer months when the problem is most acute."</p>
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The Committee also considered Executive agenda item 16 "Kenilworth Public Service Centre Feasibility Study & Business Case". This item was confidential and is therefore detailed in a separate confidential appendix.