

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 November 2013 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Doody (Chairman); Councillors Caborn, Coker, Cross, Mrs Grainger, Hammon, Mobbs and Vincett.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Barrott (Chair of Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Mrs Blacklock (Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Boad (Liberal Democrat Group Observer), Councillor MacKay (Independent Group Observer) and Councillor Wilkinson (Labour Group Observer).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Shilton.

77. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

78. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 September and 9 October 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PART 2

(Items on which a decision by Council is not required)

79. **LOCAL PLAN: VILLAGE HOUSING OPTIONS AND SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES**

The Executive considered a report from Development Services which set out the preferred options for housing development sites in rural settlements along with associated changes to Green Belt where these were applicable.

At its meeting on 24 May 2013, the Executive approved the Revised Development Strategy (RDS) for consultation. This set out proposals to meet a housing requirement of 12,300 homes between 2011 and 2029, along with proposals to make provision for 22.5 hectares of employment land. The strategy was subject to a period of consultation running from 14 June to 29 July 2013. To enable preferred village sites to be selected, representations relating to rural housing and village sites had been analysed ahead of other aspects of the Revised Development Strategy.

The report recommended that the preferred site options for development and the proposals for village boundary and Green Belt boundary changes be approved for public consultation.

The preferred options were set out in appendix 1 to the report and had been prepared taking into account the level of growth, the proposal in the RDS, the 2013 consultation and detailed site assessment work.

The report also proposed that the Green Belt boundaries be amended in and around villages for two main reasons detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report. Full justification for the exceptional circumstances for making the changes was provided in appendix 1 to the report.

A significant number of alternative options for the preferred options sites had been considered during a detailed assessment of over 50 sites, prior to this report being submitted. The reasoning for the selection or rejection of the alternative sites was summarise in appendix 1.

An alternative option to the proposed amendments to the Green Belt boundaries was to continue with the approach of the Green Belt "washing over" villages. This option had been rejected for the details contained in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee congratulated the officer on an excellent report and requested prompt action to implement the consultation on the villages report.

Mr Galliford, a resident of Radford Semele, addressed Members with his concerns regarding the length and timing of the consultation process. He also advised that residents were extremely concerned about option 3 of the Radford Semele proposed sites, with concerns centering around local traffic congestion and the impact on the character of the village.

Mr Jones, a resident of Radford Semele, also addressed Members and requested that the views of developers were not heard over the views of the Parish Council.

Members did not feel that the consultation should be delayed due to the potential for increased applications being submitted by developers during the consultation period. However, concerns were raised regarding the wording of 'proposed options' compared to 'preferred options' because it was felt that 'proposed' implied that a decision had already been made.

Councillor Caborn stated that all parish councils had been included in discussions with officers but not all of them had chosen to engage fully. He hoped that all parishes would join in discussions and keep the communication going between all parties.

Having read the report and the representations from Overview and Scrutiny and local residents, the Executive decided to agree the recommendations in the report with the assurance that prior to consultation, any reference to the word 'proposed' would be amended to read 'preferred'.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the preferred site options for development in and adjacent to rural settlements, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, are approved for public consultation; and

- (2) the proposals for village boundary and Green Belt boundary changes, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, are approved for public consultation.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Caborn)
(Forward Plan reference number 542)

80. **WORKING WITH BOWLS ENGLAND - UPDATE**

The Executive considered a report from Cultural Services which updated members on the Bowls England project as requested at the September Executive. The report also incorporated a series of options in respect of car parking for the National Championships, as requested by the Executive following the presentation of a petition by the Friends of Victoria Park.

The report gave a history of the project from the endorsement of proposals to move the Bowls England headquarters to Leamington along with the Men's Championships, in August 2012. A number of reports had since been submitted outlining the improvements needed to Victoria Park and the bowls pavilion.

The recommendations requested that progress to date be noted, as well as noting that a further report would be submitted setting out the Action Plan to maximise the economic benefits of the extended National Championships. In addition, the Executive were asked to note the use of the Chief Executive's emergency powers in respect of procuring gas and water utility diversion works and associated costs.

Officers advised that site surveys had identified that public gas, electric and water supplies ran beneath the area required for the additional changing room and the new irrigation tank and this therefore required the public utilities to be re-routed.

Western Power had completed the diversion of the electricity supply on site. The water and gas had yet to be diverted at the time of writing, but contractors had been instructed to carry out these works. The use of the Chief Executive's emergency powers was deemed necessary following the quotations provided by the utility boards to carry out the diversions for gas and water. Their combined figures amounted to close to £75,000 due to an insistence that utility infrastructure be upgraded alongside the diversions.

The options regarding car parking had been produced following the launch of a petition from the Friends of Victoria Park, which was subsequently submitted to Council in September 2013. Officers had been investigating the options of other car parking sites in the area and a sub-group of the main project group was formed to undertake a feasibility assessment of the options. These were detailed in appendix 5 to the report.

There were no alternative options with regard to the submission of the report because an update had been requested by Council, however, the alternatives relating to the car parking elements of the project were outlined in appendix 4 to the report.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report, but noted that although the Championships presented an opportunity to promote the District as a whole, references to Warwick and Kenilworth were lacking.

The Committee also highlighted the point that car parking had been a major concern for Bowls England when the championships were held in Worthing and that Bowls England did not favour park and ride.

Having read the report and the Scrutiny Committee comments the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the progress that has been made on the projects associated with the relocation of the Men's National Championships and Bowls England's HQ to Leamington, is noted;
- (2) the shortlist of car parking options, as set out in paragraph 3.10.4 of the report, is confirmed for officers to investigate more fully and bring a further report in early 2014;
- (3) a further report will be brought to the Executive setting out the Action Plan to maximise the economic benefits of the extended National Championships; and
- (3) the use of the Chief Executive's emergency powers under G4 of the Constitution is noted, where in consultation with Group Leaders he waived the Procurement Policy in respect of procuring gas and water utility diversion works and agree to use £12,000 from the Corporate Property Investment Budget (CPIB) to upgrade the existing utility infrastructure to the Bowls Pavilion.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Cross)

(Forward Plan reference number 551)

PART 1

(Items on which a decision by Council is required)

81. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION

The Executive considered a report from Finance which provided members with details regarding the outcome of the Council Tax Reduction consultation which ended on the 13th October 2013.

The report advised that following the July 2013 Executive report, the proposed changes to the council tax reduction scheme from 1 April 2014 had been consulted upon. Over 8,000 residents were contacted, including all of those currently in receipt of a reduction who would be affected by the changes, and a

sample of non-claimants. There were 162 responses which were analysed in section 3.1 of the report.

The responses overall supported the proposed changes to the council tax reduction and it was recommended that the changes to the scheme were in line with these recommendations.

Consultation responses suggested there were some concerns around vulnerable people facing financial hardship as a result of these changes and this could be addressed by a hardship fund. Some local authorities had introduced such a fund as part of their council tax reduction scheme.

The Council received Discretionary Housing Payments funding from DWP to assist housing benefit claimants facing hardship. This funding had been increased for the current year due to the Welfare Reforms (Benefits Cap and Under-occupancy charges), however, this funding was not available to assist council tax.

The report recommended that a similar fund of £20,000 for 2014/15 be established to be managed in a similar manner for any claimants facing financial difficulty as a result of these changes to the council tax reduction scheme. Whilst this was not proposed as part of the council tax reduction consultation, it was proposed that this now be factored into the scheme. The use of this fund should be subject to a review ahead of setting the 2015/16 budget.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee noted that all of the recommended changes had been taken account of in the Council's budget, and supported the recommendations in the report.

The alternative options were to retain the existing means tested scheme allowing claimants to receive up to 100% council tax discount, or to reduce the discount by another factor.

Having read the report and the comments from the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the following changes to the Council's reduction scheme for 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2016, be accepted:-
 - a) for all claimants the council tax support calculation is based upon the council tax liability being reduced by 7.5% of the total liability from April 2014, and 15% from April 2015;
 - b) the second adult rebate will no longer be part of the council tax reduction scheme; and
 - c) a minimum wage to be used when calculating a reduction for the self employed where a claimant has declared that they have no income from their

self employed work and have had no income for a period longer than six months;

- (2) a council tax reduction hardship fund is established for 2014/15 of £20,000, with the cost shared between the major preceptors, for claimants having financial difficulty as a result of these changes to be administered on a similar basis to Discretionary Housing Payments; the use of this fund to be subject to a future review ahead of setting the 2015/16 budget.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mobbs)
(Forward Plan reference number 517)

82. **HOUSING STRATEGY 2014-2017**

The Executive considered a report from Housing Strategy which outlined a new Housing Strategy for the District for the three years 2014 to 2017. The strategy would fit within the wider framework provided by the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy, within which housing was a key priority.

The report requested that the strategy, which was attached as an appendix to the report be adopted. In addition, Members were asked to note that a more detailed delivery plan would be worked up and reported for approval once the results of the joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment had been finalised, the option appraisal to maximise new affordable housing had been considered and the updated Housing Revenue Account business plan approved.

Section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003 gave the Secretary of State power to require local authorities to have a strategy for housing and to impose various requirements in terms of the form, content, objectives and policy of the strategy. The production of a housing strategy was therefore a discretionary option for local authorities.

Warwick District Council had not had a Housing Strategy for some time but, in the absence of one, the Sustainable Community Strategy, within which housing was identified as a key priority, had provided a strong policy framework for our work in housing since 2009.

Officers considered it advantageous to have a reasonably short and specifically focussed Housing Strategy in place and the proposed strategy provided the framework for a number of headline actions under three broad priorities. These were; enabling and providing services that help people to sustain their homes; meeting the need for housing across the District; and raising standards of management, repair and improvement of existing housing and neighbourhoods.

There were no alternative options reported.

Having read the report and the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the Housing Strategy 2014-2017 as appended to this report be adopted; and
- (2) a more detailed delivery plan will be worked up and reported for approval once the results of the joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment are finalised, the option appraisal to maximise new affordable housing has been considered and the updated Housing Revenue Account business plan approved.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Vincett)
(Forward Plan reference number A1)

83. **PLANNING POLICY FOR HMOS AND STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN WARWICK DISTRICT**

The Executive considered a report from Development Services which requested approval of a revised Planning Policy for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and Student Accommodation in the District. This was an interim policy in advance of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan.

At the Executive meeting in June 2013, a draft Policy on HMOs and Student Accommodation was agreed for consultation purposes. A consultation exercise was carried out between 5 July and 16 August 2013, during which time copies of the draft policy were placed in various deposit points throughout the District and comments invited. Officers considered and responded to the representations received and it were recommending the attached policy for approval.

In Warwick District, there were high concentrations of student accommodation, particularly in south Leamington. The areas around central Leamington were also popular for landlords, and there was continued demand and growing interest in the provision of student accommodation.

The Council recognised the clear benefits arising from a student population, particularly in terms of support for the economy of Leamington town centre and the potential to retain a highly qualified, graduate workforce. However, the annual changeover of tenants meant that the same issues would arise again each year.

It was hoped that increased planning control would enable the Council to better manage the location of new student accommodation. The Policy, the subject of consultation, also aimed to address issues such as the concentration of HMOs and student accommodation and inappropriate refuse storage.

An alternative option was to not prepare an interim policy and to include a policy on HMO's and student accommodation in the emerging Local Plan. However, officers felt that this could result in a worsening of the existing situation and potentially create new areas of concentration. In addition, it could

result in an unclear framework within which planning applications would need to be considered with a lack of clarity as to what constituted an over concentration.

Having read the report the Executive decided to agree the recommendation as written.

RECOMMENDED that the revised policy, attached as appendix 1 to the report, be approved as an Interim Policy in advance of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Hammon)

84. **CITY DEAL GOVERNANCE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUB-REGIONAL JOINT COMMITTEE**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) which set out the proposal to establish a Joint Committee of all the local authorities across the Coventry & Warwickshire City Deal area to drive, and provide sub-regional governance, to the economic development and prosperity agendas.

The report advised that the Council had been involved in the development of a City Deal proposal for the Coventry & Warwickshire (CW) sub-region, including the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council area. A report elsewhere on the agenda detailed the City Deal proposals. These focused on promoting economic development and business growth, particularly in the Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Sector (AME), through integrating and co-ordinating business support and tackling barriers to growth across areas as diverse as skills and planning.

A key requirement from Government was that 'strong governance arrangements' were in place before any City Deal can be signed. During the development phase this had been provided by a Steering Group, comprising of all the Chief Executives of the eight participating Councils, reporting to a Leaders' Board, comprising of the Leader (or their nominated deputy) of each Council. However, Government had made it clear that these arrangements were not sufficiently robust to satisfy their governance requirements and allow a City Deal to be signed.

The Steering Group, therefore, established a sub-group to assess governance options and this identified three possible models; creation of a Joint Committee with delegated decision making powers; creation of an Economic Prosperity Board; or creation of a Combined Authority. Further examination of the options revealed practical difficulties that would currently prevent the establishment of either a Combined Authority (CA) or an Economic Prosperity Board (EPB) for the City Deal area.

At a recent joint meeting of Leaders and Chief Executives of the eight City Deal local authorities it was concluded that the only viable option was to establish a Joint Committee.

An alternative option was to not participate in the proposed Joint Committee, either at all or on the principle of the Terms of Reference set out at Appendix One. However, both of these alternatives had been rejected. This was because

the need to establish a strong governance framework was a requirement if the Council were to persuade Government to sign a CW City Deal. Neither a CA nor an EPB was a realistic option for delivery in the timescale required and any arrangement less robust than a Joint Committee was extremely unlikely to satisfy the Government's requirement.

Officers felt that strong partnership working would be required to deliver the economic prosperity agenda for this District and prosperity would not be delivered in isolation from what happens across the wider sub-region. The terms of reference were therefore considered the minimum needed to ensure such delivery.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed the reports and strongly supported the initiative/thrust to develop the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector. In respect of Recommendation 2.7 of the City Deal Governance Report (Item 7 on the Executive Agenda), the Committee felt that in light of the significance of what was being proposed, the Council's representative on the Joint Committee should provide feedback to Overview and Scrutiny on a six monthly basis or in respect of any significant issues or decisions between times, to ensure proper scrutiny of the new arrangements.

The Committee was concerned that the wording of the planning proposals within appendix one was disappointing and that this was remedied within the final City Deal document, as while fully supportive of the principle of removing barriers to AME sector applications the reference to a 21 day determination might feed a public perception that any such applications would be driven through without proper consultation, in contravention of statutory timescales and/or full consideration of any public concerns raised.

Finally, the Committee felt that it was extremely important that the Joint Sub-Regional Committee should operate transparently and that agendas and minutes should be publicly available with minutes published within one month.

Having read the report and the comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) Warwick District Council becomes a member of a Joint Committee to oversee the sub-regional economic development and economic prosperity agendas;
- (2) the proposed Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee, as set out at Appendix One, be agreed 'in principle';
- (3) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executives, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Development Services Portfolio Holder, to finalise the Terms of Reference, with a retrospective report brought back to members;

- (4) the Council's nominee to the Joint Committee will be the Council Leader or their nominee;
- (5) the proposed sub-regional approach of moving as quickly as possible from a Joint Committee structure to an Economic Prosperity Board for the City Deal sub-region, is agreed 'in principle';
- (6) an immediate priority for the Joint Committee will be to inform and agree the Single Economic Policy (SEP) being developed by the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP); and
- (7) an annual report on the work undertaken by the Joint Committee (or any successor body) will be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Hammon)
(Forward Plan reference number 546)

PART 2

(Items on which a decision by Council is not required)

85. COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE CITY DEAL

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) which updated members on the proposed Coventry & Warwickshire City Deal (CW City Deal), including proposals for local authority funding contributions to the financing of specific proposals.

The report advised that after a long and iterative development process the final set of CW City Deal proposals were 'signed off' by the CWLEP Board and City Deal Leaders' Board in September 2013. Subsequent discussions with Government led to one of the agreed proposals, regarding the provision of broadband connectivity to specific development sites, being dropped as it did not comply with state aid provisions.

However, this could be offset by the development, with Cabinet Office encouragement, of a new proposal relating to a request for capital funding for highway infrastructure improvements at a specific development site. Following agreement of the proposals an accompanying narrative was developed by the Project Team. In addition, the Government required their presentation within a proscribed format in a Negotiation Document and this was attached as an appendix to the report.

A high level five year business plan had also been developed for the Clearing House, with assistance on costings provided by Grant Thornton LLP. These costings had been reviewed and challenged by the finance officers representing the Section 151 officers of all the participating local authorities and the cost estimates were presented in appendix two to the report.

Finance teams met regularly to ensure their understanding of the City Deal as it developed and the Section 151 officers developed a cost sharing methodology

to apportion the running costs of the Clearing House across the eight participating local authorities. The cost sharing proposals were set out in appendix three to the report and considered in further detail in paragraph 5.

An alternative option was that the Council could decide not to remain engaged with the City Deal proposals or agree to any financial support of the Clearing House. However, these options had been rejected at this stage because they would squander a rare opportunity for additional investment and devolution. It would also be contrary to good partnership arrangements with neighbouring authorities.

An addendum to the report was distributed prior to the meeting and outlined amended recommendations 2.3, 2.4 and 2.7 as well as revised appendices two and three.

The addendum advised that as a result of the latest discussions with Government, it was possible that the year 1 costs of Clearing House may be met as a result of a bid being made to the Lancaster Pot. This was a fund that would be running from January 2014 to March 2015, administered by Lancaster University and established with Regional Growth Fund monies. A bid had been submitted and this was detailed in appendix one.

If successful, this would have an impact on the figures, reducing the overall requirement for local authority funding. The revised split of contributions from each Council was shown in the revised appendix three.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report as amended in the addendum, but requested clarification of the Council's expected long term financial commitment, which was unclear.

Having read the report and the comments from the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee the Executive decided to agree recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.8 as written in the report and recommendations 2.3, 2.4 and 2.7 as detailed in the addendum.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the content of the Coventry & Warwickshire (CW) City Deal Negotiation Document, as set out in appendix one to the report, is noted;
- (2) that following the presentation of the proposals to Government by the CW City Deal's 'pitch team' it is Government's intention to conclude negotiations on the detail within the proposals as quickly as possible to enable the City Deal to be signed;
- (3) the cost sharing proposals to provide funding for the flagship Clearing House proposal, as recommended by the Section 151 Officers of the Local Authorities who will participate in the CW City Deal are approved and under these proposal this Council's estimated financial contribution would be in the range of £22,000 - 45,000 per annum;

- (4) the Council's proposed share of the Local Authority funding for the Clearing House is funded from New Homes Bonus income during the remainder of 2013/14 and 2014/15 , if required;
- (5) the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) will be informed that, should the proposed future NHB top-slicing and transfer of an element of NHB to the CWLEP be implemented, it will require future funding of WDC's cost share contribution to the funding of the Clearing House to become the responsibility of CWLEP, financed from the income it received from the top-sliced NHB, with a future report back to Executive if appropriate;
- (6) the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) will be informed of the Council's intention to propose that, should the proposed future NHB top-slicing proposals be implemented, the CWLEP should be formally requested to utilise all the funding it receives from this source to support the CW City Deal, with any excess remaining after this source of funding is used to cover the total funding contribution to the Clearing House, previously provided by the local authority sector, being used to create a local Business Investment Fund;
- (7) should the New Homes Bonus top-slicing proposals not proceed, the Council will fund, or continue to fund, if appropriate, its cost share allocation from New Homes Bonus beyond 2014/15; and
- (8) a business case will be explored for this Council making a financial contribution to a local Business Investment Fund, regardless of the outcome of the NHB top-slice proposals.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Hammon)
(Forward Plan reference number 558)

86. **BUDGET REVIEW TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2013**

The Executive considered a report from Finance which updated Members on the latest position for the current financial year and the financial outlook. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy had been updated since the 2013/14 Budget was agreed in February of this year in light of the Government's Spending Review 2013 announcements and other known changes discussed below.

Various changes to 2013/14 budgets were presented in the report, in line with the Financial Code of Practice which was approved in March of this year.

The report advised that Members received quarterly budget reports and this was the second of these reports in the current financial year. The current General Fund service expenditure position was a projected underspend of £601,400 compared to the latest 2013/14 budgets and appendix A to the report listed the changes identified.

In addition, there were some budget changes to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which required approval and these were listed in appendix A to the report.

It was essential to update Members on the financial projections at regular intervals during the year, as many factors which had long term financial implications had changed since the last report to Executive in the summer. Full details of the changes, implications and risks were detailed in sections 8 and 11 of the report. Members were reminded of the £1.05 million deficit and that further savings and efficiencies of this amount needed to be achieved by 2018/19, in addition to those already identified. The Strategy was shown within appendix H to the report.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee noted savings still to be achieved within 2013-14, detailed in Appendix F, and sought reassurance those targets would be reached and supported the recommendations in the report.

Appendix B1 updated Members on Capital Programme Budgets and changes to the programme since it was last amended in September when it stood at £6,494,100. Managers had identified a further reduction to the Capital Programme, totalling £1,923,100 which related to slippage for various items outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report.

An alternative option was not to report to the Executive on a regular basis, however, in the current financial climate it was imperative that budgets were reviewed, monitored and reported upon on a continuous basis. The Council could revert to its previous practice of deferring making such changes until December when the new-year budgets were considered, however, this would mean that the budgets were not up-to-date and were irrelevant for managers to monitor. As demonstrated in the Final Accounts Report 9 June 2013, the new Review Process led to more robust monitoring and Financial management than the old system.

The full alternative options were detailed in section 6 of the report.

Having read the report and the comments from the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the budget position for the current year for the General Fund, of currently £601,400 surplus and the £586,200 net favourable variance on the HRA, are noted;
- (2) the Budget Changes in appendix A to the report (General Fund and HRA), the most significant of which are discussed in this report, are agreed;

- (3) the updated Financial Strategy and the forecast required recurrent savings of £1.05 million to be achieved by 2018/19, are noted along with the latest progress towards meeting the Fit for the Future Targets;
- (4) the slippage of £1,918,700 detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report, as well as the small underspend for the Warwick Boathouse project, are approved. These two items now mean that latest General Fund Capital Programme for 2013/14 now stands at £4,571,000, as detailed in appendix B1;
- (5) the changes in the Housing Investment (HIP) Capital Programme listed in Appendix B2 are approved, resulting in a decrease of £50,800 overall; and
- (6) the latest position in respect of all the Council's Reserves, as set out in Appendix C, is noted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mobbs)
(Forward Plan reference number 493)

87. **ALTERNATIVE USE OF PART OF WEST ROCK CAR PARK**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) requesting approval for the disposal of part of West Rock car park for housing (13 affordable dwellings, subject to planning permission) and thereby grant a sale of that part of the land to Waterloo Housing Group.

The report reminded Members that Warwick District Council (WDC) and Waterloo Housing Group (WHG) entered into a contractual joint venture with the objective of delivering affordable accommodation in Warwick District. Over the course of the last eighteen months the venture had brought forward, or was in the process of bringing forward, housing development at a number of sites including Edinburgh Crescent, Park Road, Station Approach and Old Gas Works/Warwick Fire Station.

During 2012, the Council consulted on an Area Action Plan for Warwick Town Centre and the consultation considered proposals for the development of 20 "opportunity sites" in or on the edge of the Town Centre. Opportunity site 16 was West Rock Car Park which it was hoped would provide "low level parking beneath residential development with possible synergy with Sainsburys".

Officers felt that the site provided a development opportunity afforded by its location and the gradient of the land which could be utilised to give another layer or two of parking with residential above, in close proximity to other housing but with the supermarket, public transport and town centre facilities close at hand.

The proposal to develop part of West Rock car park would remove approximately 40 car parking spaces from the Town's immediate off-street supply. However, survey details provided in paragraph 3.6 of the report

showed that there was still ample supply in the immediate vicinity with nearby car parks due to undergo major refurbishment.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the plan and it was noted that most Warwick councillors agreed that there is a need for affordable housing.

There were no alternative options reported.

Having read the report the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that the part of West Rock car park, shown as the hatched area at appendix 1 to the report, be disposed of to Waterloo Housing, under the terms of the Warwick District Council/Waterloo Housing Group Joint Venture.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Shilton)
(Forward Plan reference number 548)

88. **ACCESS TO KINGFISHER POOLS, WARWICK**

The Executive considered a report from Neighbourhood Services detailing issues relating to access to Kingfisher Pools, Myton Fields which had been highlighted by the Junior Angling Committee (JAC) and outlined how these issues could be resolved.

The report requested approval of funding to assist the Junior Angling Club users and members with disabilities by the construction of an improved access route and parking. The Council's contribution would be £10,000 and would be funded from the Corporate Property Improvement Budget with a further £3,500 to be provided by the Junior Angling Club.

The report advised that the facility was well used and the Club had seen a steady increase in usage since it was formed in 1997. The development of facilities for more users was important if the Club was to develop further and the provision of improved access down to Kingfisher Pool would allow this to happen.

Since the facility opened there had been issues regarding access to Kingfisher Pool. This was particularly the case in bad weather when the site could become water logged and this had resulted in vehicle ruts and the site not being accessible for periods of the year.

In addition, the facility had been opened up to anglers with disabilities so access and parking was more of a concern. The parking area held a maximum of five cars due to space constraint.

The preferred option was to lay a heavy duty purpose-made product called Grassprotecta from the entrance off Myton Road to the proposed parking area close to the site. The existing ruts would be filled with topsoil and consolidated before the product was laid. The cost for the work had been priced at £13,500 and included materials and labour costs for the laying of the material.

The full alternative options were outlined in section 6 of the report and included using fibre sand, a permanent plastic grid system, a stone path and a permanent concrete grid system. These had been rejected due to the high costs involved amongst other reasons.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that this decision be deferred until local Ward Councillors and the Town Council had been consulted to facilitate looking at alternative options and all issues.

In response, the Executive did not feel that a deferral would assist the Club especially with the imminent arrival of winter weather. In addition, it felt that officers had already investigated any alternative routes available and had reported on the most suitable option available. However, to ensure that all parties were sufficiently consulted with, it was agreed that authority to carry out the works could be delegated to the Head of Service in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

Having read the report and the recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Executive decided to amend the recommendation to ensure that the relevant Ward Councillors and Warwick Town Councillors were consulted prior to the works taking place.

RESOLVED that the requested funds be approved and authority to carry out the works be delegated to the Head of Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and following consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors and Warwick Town Councillors.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Shilton)
(Forward Plan reference number 557)

89. **AUTO ENROLMENT – PENSION SCHEME**

The Executive considered a report from Finance which recommended that the Council's casual employees should be entitled to be admitted to the Local Government Pension Scheme. This followed consideration of a report in April on pension changes relating to the introduction of auto-enrolment.

The report advised that workplace pension law had changed. Every employer had new legal duties to help their workers in the UK save for retirement. This would mean the Council would have to automatically enrol employees into a qualifying workplace pension scheme and make contributions towards it.

Members had previously agreed that the Council should open a National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) scheme for casual employees wishing to join a pension scheme. As casual employees had no contract of employment, they currently had no automatic right to join the LGPS. However, more recent advice confirmed that it is ultimately for the employer to decide who did and did not have access to the LGPS.

It was difficult to estimate the likely cost to the Council of the employers' pension contributions in respect of these casual employees. Based on the numbers of employees referred to in the report, if all eligible casual employees agreed to be enrolled and stay within the LGPS, the cost could in theory total £50,000. However, this assumed all continued to earn above the thresholds (pro rata) and chose to remain in the scheme. In reality, it was expected that the actual cost would be minimal.

In addition to the cost of the employer pension contributions, there was also the cost of time in administering auto enrolment. It was recognised that the scheme would be administratively burdensome, with increased repeated correspondence to employees, and the need to auto enrol some employees who would then subsequently opt out, and so be entitled to an employee contributions refund.

Whilst the Council had no choice but to comply with auto enrolment, it did have the option of opening a "National Employee Savings Trust" (NEST) scheme for casual employees rather than agreeing to admit them to the LGPS. The report advised that this would result in reduced employer pension contributions (assuming employees chose to remain in the scheme), but would greatly increase the administration in terms of having a separate pension scheme to be administered.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

Having read the report and the comments from the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that "casual" employees be eligible to join the Local Government Pension scheme (LGPS).

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mobbs)

90. **SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER**

The Executive considered a report from Health and Community Protection which requested approval of the extension to the contract for a Sustainability Officer, from 12 months to two years.

At its meeting on the 14 November 2012 the Executive agreed to the appointment of a Sustainability Officer on a 12 month contract, however, the person appointed to this post had found a new job and an extension of this arrangement was necessary.

The report advised that the original reasons for appointing a Sustainability Officer remained relevant and the officer appointed had begun to make progress in bringing together a comprehensive corporate approach to Sustainability/Climate Change for the Council.

In the current circumstances officers could not recommend a permanent appointment, however, a two year contract should ensure that a post holder would be in place for sufficient length of time to make significant progress in

the development and implementation of the Council's sustainability/climate change strategy.

However, it was recognised that a weakness of 12 month job contracts was that those appointed often looked for other jobs before the end of the contract period, to gain the assurance of longer term prospects.

A figure of £36,000, from the Contingency Budget, had been agreed for this post over a 12 month period in November 2012, to cover salary and on-costs and it was projected that when the existing postholder left, £18,000 of this would have been spent, leaving a balance of £18,000.

It was, therefore, recommended that the unspent balance on the initial budget (£18,000), be rolled forward into 2014-15 with the residual non-recurrent costs (£18,000 and £36,000) being built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and included in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 budgets as part of the budget setting process.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report. Members requested further details of what this post had achieved to date.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection, outlined a number of projects that the previous officer had introduced, including a review of the Council's overall work on Sustainability, the various renewable energy projects already carried out and scope for potential new projects. He took on the Affordable Warmth work from Private Sector Housing and engaged with other services areas to begin to coordinate actions on climate change.

In addition, a lot of the officer's time involved coordinating HS2 issues and ensuring the Council were in a good position on the financial arrangements.

Having read the report and the comments from the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that, subject to agreement of the post at Employment Committee, the unspent balance on the initial budget (£18,000), be rolled forward into 2014-15 with the residual non-recurrent costs (£18,000 and £36,000) being built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and included in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 budgets as part of the budget setting process, as explained in section 5 of this report.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Coker)

91. **RURAL / URBAN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT APPLICATION**

The Executive considered a report from Finance which provided details of a Rural/Urban Capital Improvement application by Baginton Village Hall to resurface the car park.

The report advised that the existing car park was approximately 50 years old and was now in a poor condition with an uneven surface and several pot holes.

In poor wet weather conditions large puddles were created which in turn created potential health & safety slip hazards and also lead to further deterioration of the car park surface despite several repair attempts made in recent years.

The project was to resurface the car park which would alleviate these potential health & safety problems and create clearer and safer parking to maximise capacity. In addition, by resurfacing the car park and re-marking white and yellow lines, off-street parking spaces would be maximised and up to two or three disabled parking bays would be created. This would make the club's facilities more accessible and help to further increase the number of people using them.

Baginton Village Hall's application was for 50% of the total project cost up to a maximum of £7,500. Baginton Village Hall would be providing £7,000 (47% of the total project costs) towards the project from their own cash reserves, and had written confirmation from Baginton Parish Council that a £500 contribution had been approved from them.

Baginton Village Hall had previously had a successful RUCIS application for £12,900 (50% of the total project costs) to resurface the car park and redecorate the hall in November 2011. However, this award had been withdrawn in February 2013 because the scope of the project presented to the Executive Committee had changed and therefore no longer met the required criteria for the RUCIS scheme. This meant that the car park was never resurfaced and had led to this new redefined application.

The Council only had a specific capital budget to provide grants of this nature and therefore there were no alternative sources of funding if the Council was to provide funding for Rural/Urban Capital Improvement Schemes. However, Members could choose not to approve the grant funding, or to vary the amount awarded.

Having read the report, the Executive decided to agree the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that a Rural/Urban Capital Improvement Grant of 50% of the total project cost up to a maximum of £7,500, is approved to Baginton Village Hall.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mobbs)

92. **PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minute No.	Para Nos.	Reason
94	1	Information relating to an individual
94	2	Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
93 & 95	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

93. **FETHERSTONE COURT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE**

The recommendations of the report were agreed as written.

The full minute for this item will be set out in the confidential minutes of the meeting.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Vincett)
(Forward Plan reference number 552)

94. **TREE PRESERVATION ORDER INSURANCE CLAIMS**

The recommendations of the report were agreed as written.

The full minute for this item will be set out in the confidential minutes of the meeting.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Hammon)

95. **MINUTES**

The confidential minutes of the meetings held on 7 August and 9 October 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(The meeting ended at 7.45 pm)