

	Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee 23 rd November 2010	Agenda Item No. <div style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">7</div>
	Title	Scrutiny of Partnerships
For further information about this report please contact	Andrew Jones Andrew.jones@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Service Area	Deputy Chief Executive	
Wards of the District directly affected	None	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	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	None	
Background Papers	Executive Report 17 th March 2010 Executive Report 23 rd June 2010	

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 author's relevant Deputy Chief Executive, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executive	05/11/10	Author
CMT		Chris Elliott Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	05/11/10	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)		Michael Doody
Consultation Undertaken		
Please insert details of any consultation undertaken with regard to this report. Dual-use site lead officers.		
Final Decision?	Yes	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides details of the Council's partnership arrangements at its dual-use leisure sites in Leamington Spa, Kenilworth and Warwick and allows Members to assess the success or otherwise of the respective partnerships over the preceding twelve months.
- 1.2 The report describes a new approach to scrutiny which Members will want to discuss and upon which make comment.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members consider the partnership arrangements in place for the dual-use Leisure sites making any recommendations considered appropriate.
- 2.2 Members consider the revised approach to Scrutiny making any recommendations considered appropriate.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Executive of 17th, March 2010 agreed the Council's policy (Appendix 1) for involvement in partnerships. Executive also agreed that before Warwick District Council enters into any future partnership, a report is brought to the Executive clearly spelling out the reasons for the proposed partnership arrangements along with a completed Partnership Checklist.
- 3.2 At its meeting of 23rd June 2010 Executive agreed that scrutiny of the Council's partnerships should be undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Committees and that the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Scrutiny Chairs, should determine the practical arrangements for how this should happen.
- 3.3 Members will be aware that Officers are encouraging the Scrutiny Committees to undertake their work in a variety of ways: Consideration of reports; interviews with officers and service users; observation of service delivery. Following discussions with Councillors Mrs Knight and Gifford, it was felt useful to trial the new approach to scrutiny in two areas of partnership working namely, dual-use leisure sites (to be considered by Finance & Audit) and Town Centre Management arrangements (to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny).
- 3.4 The process started with Lead Officers being asked to complete an Annual Health Check template (Appendix 2) describing the outcomes for the respective partnerships over the last twelve months. This template builds-on the Partnership Checklist which is already in place for all of the Council's partnerships. With this background information, Councillors visited the respective sites and discussed the service with the lead officers.
- 3.5 When considering this report Members will not only have background information from Officers but will also be able to hear testimony from Councillors.

4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 No alternative options were considered as Executive had requested that scrutiny of the Council's partnerships be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny process could have relied wholly on Members receiving a report, however, this would have been contrary to Council's Lean Systems Thinking approach of understanding service delivery from the customer's perspective.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 There are no budgetary implications as a consequence of this report.

6. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 Executive agreed the Council's Partnership Policy at its meetings of 17th March 2010. The Policy ensures that there is a robust business case for entering into a partnership and provides for ongoing scrutiny of the arrangements through the Council's Scrutiny Committees.
- 6.2 The Council has put Lean Systems Thinking at the heart of its approach to service design. Members are being encouraged to use Lean Systems Thinking principles when undertaking their roles on the Scrutiny Committees.

7. **BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 It is often difficult to be definitive whether there is a partnership arrangement in place – there is no legal definition. Officers have therefore erred on the side of caution and where there is the look and feel of a partnership arrangement, a Partnership Checklist has been completed. Service Level Agreements the Council has entered into with Third Sector organisations (a commissioning/delivery agent relationship) have been excluded from the scope of this exercise as different governance arrangements have been agreed and are in place. However, the Scrutiny Chairs have asked for full details of the Council's Service Level Agreements to be provided.
- 7.2 The Council is currently party to the following partnership arrangements and Service Level Agreements:

PARTNERSHIP
Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Partnership
Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Sports Partnership
Joint Commissioning Partnership
Victoria Park Tennis
Learning Academy
Meadow Community Sports Centre
Myton Sports Centre
Public Service Board
Sydenham Sports Centre
Warwick District Local Sports Network
Warwick Town Centre Management Group
Warwickshire Direct Partnership
Warwickshire Inward Investment Partnership

PARTNERSHIP
Warwickshire Waste Partnership
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
Warwick Partnership Executive Group
Warwick Town Centre Partnership
Kenilworth Town Centre Partnership
Leamington Spa Town Centre Partnership
South Warwickshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
WDC/SDC Shared Business Rates Service

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
Warwickshire Community And Voluntary Action
Warwickshire Rural Community Council
Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership
Warwick District Citizens Advice Bureau
Mid-Warwickshire Victim Support
Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service
Relate South Warwickshire
Age Concern Warwickshire
Warwick District Senior People's Forum
Warwick District Older People in Action
The CHAIN
The GAP
Brunswick Healthy Living Centre
Warwick Gates Community Centre
African Caribbean Project
Hill Close Gardens
Leamington Shopmobility
Action 21

- 7.3 The Audit Commission has defined a partnership as, 'a joint working arrangement where the partners:
- are otherwise independent bodies;
 - agree to co-operate to achieve a common goal; and
 - to achieve it create an organisational structure or process and agreed programme, and share information, risks and rewards.'
- 7.4 Partnership working in the public sector is not new. However, the range and complexity of partnerships has increased significantly in recent years. Public Sector organisations have been given powers to set up and run partnerships that provide services to the public. What is often lagging behind is the experience to manage partnerships effectively.
- 7.5 Partnerships can be more effective in making service users the focus of service planning, commissioning and delivery, and this greater engagement by users can help to raise service quality. The incentive to work with other organisations is also often driven by the additional resources that partnerships can attract. Partnerships should deliver better outcomes for service users and better value for money for the wider public. Partnership working can bring clear benefits that improve people's lives.

- 7.6 However, there are also a number of risks. Partnership working is difficult to manage because working across organisational boundaries is complex and can involve significant risks. Complexity and ambiguity can generate confusion and weak accountability. Effective partnership working can be time consuming and difficult to achieve. In particular, partnerships require more commitment and time from senior managers than is needed for delivery through mainstream programmes. The time it takes to break down the cultural barriers between organisations from different sectors, to build mutual trust and respect and develop a sharing culture should not be underestimated.
- 7.7 Partnerships face complex issues of accountability. Governance arrangements should be proportionate to the risks involved. The right balance needs to be struck between the need to protect the public purse and ensure value for money, with the innovation and flexibility that exists when organisations collaborate. The governance of partnerships should promote good internal accountability between partners and better external accountability to service users. Shared responsibility should not mean diminished accountability.
- 7.8 Effective partnership working is based on clarity. An organisation needs to know why it is entering into a partnership, what it is seeking to achieve and how this will be done. This clarity is particularly important in a partnership when resources are involved.