

FINANCE & AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S COMMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2011

ITEM No.	TITLE	REQUESTED BY	COMMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE
5	Additional Funds for Housing & Property Services	Chair	Supported recommendations, having been reassured by the Head of Housing & Property Services as to why certain approaches had been adopted in addressing critical areas for improvement identified by the Audit Commission. Noted a projected surplus of around £19,000 in relation to rent arrears. The Head of H&PS was thanked for his work and offered the continued support of the Committee.	Thanked the Committee for its comments.
6	Budget 2011/12 and Council Tax – Revenue and Capital	Chair	<p>Suggested adding "continue to" to the sentence "Members will need to address the underlying budget deficit in future years" before the word "address". Concerned that anticipated cuts could leave some voluntary & charitable organisations under threat of closure, so</p> <p>RECOMMENDED to Executive that</p> <p>Executive approve the creation of a Third Sector Support Reserve in 2010/11 with £100,000 from the General Fund Balance and that the detail of the new scheme be considered as part of the work by the Grants Review Panel, to be agreed by a future Executive meeting. To enable this to be financed, the appropriation to the Services Transformation Reserve should be reduced to £1,375,000.</p> <p>Members were keen to ensure that appropriate checks and balances were in place to ensure that bids for funding were supported by a sound business case.</p>	Accepted the concerns but felt that individual funding would pre-empt work due to be undertaken by the Grants Review Panel. Councillor Caborn reassured Members that any hardship cases that arose could be brought forward to the Executive and dealt with on a case by case basis. He stated that no organisation would be placed in jeopardy and highlighted the importance of the review to ensure that all organisations were on the Council's list.

7	Housing Revenue Account Budget 2011/12 and Housing Rents	Chair	The Committee was disheartened by the size of the rent increase, but recognised there was no option and supported the recommendations in the report.	Thanked the Committee for its comments. Pointed out that although not ideal, rent increases could have been higher, considering current financial difficulties.
8	Approval of Heating, Lighting and Water Charges 2011/12 – Council Tenants	Chair	Supported the recommendations. Suggested that potential savings from alternative energy should be an incentive for the organisation to look at heating and lighting across all Council property, not just housing stock.	Thanked the Committee for its comments.
10	Change Programme	Chair	The Committee was happy with the way the process for the programme was developing, made a plea that efforts be made to avoid jargon and supported the recommendations. Councillors Edwards, Pittarello and Vincett confirmed their continuing commitment to be involved in the Members Programme Oversight Group.	
11	Feasibility Study of various WDC assets in Leamington	Chair	The Committee noted contingency plans, expressed a desire to see external scrutiny at an appropriate point in the process, and supported the recommendations.	