

 Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee 30 June 2015		Agenda Item No. <h1 style="text-align: right;">8</h1>
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Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	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 Scrutiny Committee minutes 10/06/2015 Executive minutes from 16/06/2015	

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		
Chief Executive		
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		
Legal		
Finance		
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 16 June 2015.

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 June 2015, the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the items detailed in the appendices. The responses which the Executive gave are also shown.

Responses from the meeting of the Executive held on 16 June 2015 to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee's comments

Item no	2	Title	Final Accounts 2014/15
Scrutiny Comment		<p>The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.</p> <p>The Committee was concerned by levels of slippage detailed in the report and questioned officers extensively over why this should be. Members accepted that much of it had been down to forces outside of the Council's control, but suggested that where there were resource or other internal issues causing slippage, efforts should be made to address this and to keep the Committee informed of progress.</p> <p>Officers had pointing out that particularly over the last quarter there had been a significantly higher level of business rate appeals than anticipated due to a 31 March 2015 deadline before which successful appeals could be backdated.</p> <p>Officers also detailed overspends relating to the Openbook process used by Housing & Property Services. The process was being reviewed in an effort to gain better control over repairs, pricing and resources, and it was intended that an update would be presented to Members in the autumn. Consultants who had projected highly optimistic savings through the use of Openbook were to be challenged as part of the review.</p> <p>Members noted that work had yet to be carried out following asbestos surveys. Delays had been caused by the tendering process and it was intended that work would be completed over the summer.</p>	
Executive Response		<p>The Leader echoed Councillor Barrott's thanks to all Finance staff. He stated his confidence in every Head of Service and Senior Officer to assist in delivering the Council's objectives.</p> <p>The Head of Finance explained that it would take a long time to process the large volume of appeals logged. He advised that the appeals would not affect the 2014/15 figures but 2015/16 would receive the full impact.</p> <p>Councillor Whiting thanked Mike Snow for his assistance since taking on the new role as Finance Portfolio Holder and congratulated all officers for delivering a surplus in the current financial climate.</p> <p>Councillor Whiting assured the Committee that officers were already working on resolving issues and meetings had been booked.</p> <p>Councillor Whiting stated that whilst the report detailed great surplus results, the reserves needed observing carefully. He encouraged all Portfolio Holders and Heads of Service to engage with Finance and strengthen the work already underway.</p> <p>The recommendations were approved as laid out.</p>	