

	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 11 October 2011</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 5</b>
<b>Title</b>	Comments from the Executive	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Graham Leach, Committee Services Officer, 01926 456114 or <a href="mailto:committee@warwickdc.gov.uk">committee@warwickdc.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Service Area</b>	Members' Services	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	N/A	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	13 September 2011	
<b>Background Papers</b>	Executive Agenda – 14 September 2011	

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

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
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).		
	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Relevant Director		
Chief Executive		
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		
Legal		
Finance		
Portfolio Holders		

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

## 1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report informs the Committee of the response the Executive gave to their comments regarding the reports submitted to the Executive in August.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The responses made by the Executive are noted.

## 3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 This report is produced to create a dialogue between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It ensures that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are formally made aware of the Executive's responses.
- 3.2 Where the Overview & Scrutiny Committee have made a recommendation as opposed to a comment the Executive are required to respond to the recommendation(s) made, including whether or not they accept the recommendation(s).

## 4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 This report is not produced and presented to the Committee.

## 5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 All work for the Committee has to be carried out within existing resources.

## 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 new scrutiny process, the Committee is no longer considering the whole of the Executive agenda.
- 7.2 On the day of publication of the Executive agenda all Councillors are sent an e-mail asking them to contact Committee Services, by 10.00am on the day of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to advise which Executive items they would like the Committee to consider.
- 7.3 As a result the Committee considered the items detailed in appendix 1. The response the Executive gave on each item is also shown.
- 7.4 In reviewing these responses Committee can identify any issues for which they would like a progress report. A future report, for example on how the decision has been implemented, would then be submitted to the Committee at an agreed date which would then be incorporated within the work programme.
- 7.5 The responses to the comments which were confidential form item 16 of the Agenda and form Appendix 2 of this report

**Response from the meeting of the Executive on Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee Comments –  
14 September 2011**

<b>Item no.</b>	4	<b>Title</b>	Dog Control Orders	<b>Requested by</b>	Liberal Democrat Group
<b>Reason considered</b>	<p>Because we consider there are gaps in protection in children’s play areas and there is still a need for extra bins.</p>				
<b>Scrutiny Comment</b>	<p>The Committee felt there was a need for the areas that were clearly designated by location, i.e. Newbold Comyn play area with a road on one side and hedges on the other three sides, to be brought to the next Executive to ensure public confidence could be maintained in the introduction of these orders.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the comment from the Portfolio Holder that Bishop’s Tachbrook and Norton Lindsey play areas, as fenced play areas, would be included in the decision by Executive in the first round.</p> <p>The Committee felt there was a need for additional bins across the district either dog waste specific or general ones which could be used and it needed to be publicised that dog waste could be put into normal waste bins. The Committee was pleased to hear that money saved on removing dog bins would all be spent on a considerable increase in dual use bins.</p> <p>The Committee asked the Portfolio Holder to investigate the reporting process for contacting the Dog Warden because at present both the public and Councillors had experienced problems.</p>				
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>In response the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, Councillor Coker, assured members that the issues raised regarding the difficulties in contacting the Dog Warden were being investigated and officers were working on improving the delivery of this important service. Councillor Coker also advised that the two areas noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as missing from the original reports would be included and the comments made concerning clearer demarcation would also be highlighted to officers.</p> <p>Members felt strongly that the situation regarding dog bins was imperative to get right, which included not only the installation but also the maintenance of them. Councillor Shilton assured members that area officers could be contacted in Neighbourhood Services if members were made aware of any problems with the bins and agreed that further advertising was needed to promote the use of the dual bins to the public.</p> <p>There was a strong feeling that all play areas needed to be treated with respect and these areas should be able to be maintained satisfactorily with clearer demarcation of the areas in question and the perseverance of officers to work with dog owners and the public.</p>				

<b>Item no.</b>	5	<b>Title</b>	Empty Homes Strategy	<b>Requested by</b>	Labour & Liberal Democrat Group
<b>Reason considered</b>	<p>Members had queries about delivery of the strategy (Labour).</p> <p>Because of doubts as to whether the strategy can be delivered without the staff resource and how that resource would be paid for after December 2011 (Lib Dem).</p>				
<b>Scrutiny Comment</b>	<p>The Committee welcomed the explanation that the Head of Housing &amp; Property Services was looking at the correlation between the reduction in empty homes and the work of the Empty Homes Officer before determining how the strategy could be implemented. In addition the Committee welcomed the agreement from Head of Service that for this reason all references to the Empty Home Officers would be removed from the Strategy before the final version was published. The Committee also welcomed the inclusion within the Strategy of working with Councillors to identify empty properties and bringing them into use.</p> <p>The Committee also noted that a report on the implementation of the Strategy would be brought to the December Executive.</p>				
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>The Executive thanked the committee for their beneficial comments and reiterated that there were alternative options available but this had to be balanced with the risk of a missed opportunity. The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Vincett, distributed a revised version of the strategy at the meeting but advised that this was still a draft version. Members were keen that a report come back to them in December and welcomed the implementation of the strategy. It was felt that the Executive's thanks should be passed to the Empty Homes officers involved in compiling the work to date.</p>				

<b>Item no.</b>	6	<b>Title</b>	Photovoltaic Systems on WDC Housing and Corporate Buildings.	<b>Requested by</b>	Labour & Liberal Democrat Groups
<b>Reason considered</b>	<p>Members had queries about management of the project. (Labour)</p> <p>Because of concerns about the (non) equity of this proposal amongst our tenants (Lib Dem)</p>				
<b>Scrutiny Comment</b>	<p>The Committee welcomed the report but did have concerns about the implementation timescales involved with a large project where a number of people would also be aiming to install similar schemes. In addition the Executive should look at what action it could take to help reduce fuel poverty issues by making homes more fuel/energy efficient through schemes such as super insulation or improved water heating schemes.</p> <p>The Committee would also welcome some monitoring of local employment levels to see the impact that this had on reducing long term unemployment in the area and improved skills levels. In addition this money should be treated as windfall money for additional improvements and not stop gap money to fill short falls.</p>				
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>In response, Councillor Doody advised the scrutiny chairs that there had been a great deal of work done on the Council's housing stock in previous years including a rolling programme to carry out insulation works to</p>				

	<p>properties. Councillor Mrs Grainger reminded members that a thorough thermal imaging survey had been carried out and work was continuing on this. She stated that many of the issues raised by the scrutiny committees were continually being worked on through the rolling maintenance programme.</p> <p>Councillor Gifford expressed his committees concerns regarding offering employment opportunities to local people and ensuring that there was equity and fairness to all the Council's tenants.</p> <p>In response, Councillor Vincett agreed that ideally, any training and employment opportunities would be offered to local people, however, due to the tight timescales this may be more feasible for the maintenance contracts than the initial installation phase. He ensured members that a lot of background research had already been completed and recent discussions with local businesses had proved promising with regard to them employing local labour. In answer to the concerns raised regarding keeping the same contractor for installation and maintenance, Councillor Vincett felt that this would be a convenient solution but may not be practicable in the current economic climate.</p> <p>Councillor Vincett proposed that the Executive's thanks be passed to Bhavan Jhita, Building Surveyor, whose hard work had ensured the Council were in a position to accept this opportunity and commit to reducing carbon emissions across the District.</p>
--	---

<b>Item no.</b>	7	<b>Title</b>	Warwick Town Centre Action Plan	<b>Requested by</b>	Labour Group
<b>Reason considered</b>	Members had queries about further work now proposed.				
<b>Scrutiny Comment</b>	The Committee felt there was a need for proceeding this at speed but at the same time there was a need for the partnership to bring the ideas forward and would encourage WDC to outline its plans and vision to the Town Centre Partnership. The Committee did recognise that Stratford Town Council had been driving a neighbourhood plan under the localism bill for Stratford Town Centre. It was accepted that Warwick Town Council did want to bring the changes and development while recognising the historical and architectural heritage of the Town but there were other groups who had caused problems for this plan.				
<b>Executive Response</b>	The Executive thanked the committee for their comments and assured them that their frustrations were echoed but there was hope that the core group would be able to move this project forward. Members were mindful that there was a lot of frustration for the members involved in the partnership and recognised that the involvement of other authorities had created further issues. Members felt strongly that the Senior Planner in Policy, Projects and Conservation, should be highly commended for her dedication to the work so far.				

<b>Item no.</b>	12	<b>Title</b>	Safeguarding Children Action Plan	<b>Requested by</b>	Liberal Democrat Group
<b>Reason considered</b>	Because the Scrutiny Committee is being asked to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.				
<b>Scrutiny Comment</b>	The Committee accepted the recommendations in the report, particularly recommendation 2.6.				
<b>Executive Response</b>	The Leader of the Council, Councillor Doody, addressed members and advised that Councillor Mrs Gallagher, Portfolio Holder for Cultural Services, had been nominated as the member Champion. He stated that with her background as a foster carer for a number of years, the Chairman of the Youth Court, her work at the Magistrates Court and her role teaching Life Skills, she was in an excellent position to take the role of Champion on.				

<b>Item no.</b>	15	<b>Title</b>	Redundancy Payment	<b>Requested by</b>	Labour Group
<b>Reason considered</b>	Members had queries about the process.				
<b>Scrutiny Comment</b>	The Committee had some concern about another redundancy and felt the Council should continue to avoid redundancies.				
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>In response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees comments, the Leader, Councillor Doody, reiterated that the Council were opposed to redundancies and reminded members that very few had been made over the past few years.</p> <p>Councillor Barrott was assured by officers that all individuals who have been affected by this, or similar, situations have received the full help and support of the Council's Human Resources team. In addition, members were advised that the Human Resources team had been congratulated on the way they had handled these difficult situations.</p>				