

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13 February 2006 in the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Crowther (Chair), Councillors Mrs Begg, Boad, Gifford, Gill, Mrs McFarland and Tamlin.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Caborn (Chairman of the Audit and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Councillor Mrs Compton (Chairman of the Environment and Economic Policy Committee)

Councillor Doody (Chairman of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee);

Councillor Kirton (Chairman of the Culture and Social Policy Committee)

Councillor Hammon (Conservative Group Observer); and

Councillor Coker.

David Whitehouse (District Commander for Warwickshire Police)

857. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute Number 860 – Budget 2006/2007 and Council Tax – Revenue and Capital

Councillor Mrs McFarland declared a personal interest because she was a Warwick Town Councillor.

Minute Number 864 – Strategy to Reduce Crime, Disorder and Drugs Misuse

Councillor Tamlin declared a personal interest because he was member of the Probation Board.

Minute Number 870 (C) – Review of Small Grants Scheme

Councillor Mrs Begg declared a personal interest because she was a member of BABPA.

858. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2005 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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859. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL – 2006/07

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) Councillor Bill Evans be elected Chair of the Council for 2006/2007; and
- (2) Councillor Les Caborn be elected as Vice Chair of the Council for 2006/2007.

860. BUDGET 2006/2007 AND COUNCIL TAX – REVENUE AND CAPITAL

The Executive considered a report from Strategic Director (Community Resources) and Chief Financial Officer on the Budget for 2006/2007 and council tax.

The Council was required to set a budget and council tax each year taking into account the many factors that were detailed in paragraphs 5 and onwards of the report. In particular:-

- The revenue and capital budget were being considered together.
- The Council was required to determine an affordable borrowing limit in accordance with the Local Government Act 2004, Section 3, and to agree prudential indicators in accordance with the CIPFA Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- The Chief Financial Officer was required to report on the robustness of the estimates made and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The financial strategy and capital strategy had been revised in the light of the proposed revenue and capital budgets, and the issues that these budgets addressed.

No specific alternative to the recommendation was made, however the information given enabled members to propose variations to the proposals.

Members had a duty to consider all possible options. The proposals detailed in the report reflected the Portfolio Holder priorities as put to the last meeting of the Executive and consulted on with the Scrutiny Committees and others. Amendments had been made as a result of consultation comments made.

The Audit & Resources Scrutiny Committee supported the financial strategy, the financial criteria used and prudence of this Council. The Committee had requested a report back over the concerns expressed about the collection fund and questioned if the additional allocation of resources to be spent on the Harbury Lane sports pavilion should have been a separate report to the Executive.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report and made the following comments:

- Para 8.1.14 - The Executive should not proceed with the pigeoncote in Old Town as it is unlikely to solve the problem and resources could be better

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- spent elsewhere
- Para 8.1.16 – Support for the Bid for £10,000 for Warwick Market Place
- With regard to the Residents magazine, before a decision is taken by the Executive, other channels of distribution be investigated, such as it being circulated with the council tax bills and electoral registration forms, to see if these are viable.

The Executive had a lengthy debate with regard to the budget and in particular the pigeoncote and issues with Warwick Market Place. They felt that the officers had done enough research to justify the expenditure for the pigeoncote as other ways of dealing with the problems with the pigeons would not be successful.

With regard to Warwick Market Place there was already budget provision for maintenance of the benches and they felt that promotions of the town centre was a wider issue for the town centre initiative in Warwick and a one-off payment was not appropriate.

The Chief Executive circulated information and costs on various channels of distribution for the residents magazine. This showed that the proposals were the cheapest viable option.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the 2005/06 Revised General Fund Revenue Estimated net expenditure of £14,294,407 (as summarised within revised Appendices 1 and 3a to the report), after £97,307 contribution to the General Fund Balance, be approved;
- (2) the changes to the 2006/07 General Fund revenue base budget in paragraph 7.2 of the report, together with the Portfolio Holder proposals for new growth and savings in paragraph 8.1 be approved, with net expenditure of £15,909,000 as summarised in Appendix 1 to the report (and the formal resolution to this effect be contained in the further budget report that will be prepared for the 23 February Council meeting. This report is to include the parish, county and police precepts.);
- (3) the Council Tax for Warwick District Council for 2006/07 before the addition of parish/town council, Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Police Authority precepts be agreed at £125.87, an increase of 4.94% on 2005/06;
- (4) the Council Tax charges for Warwick District Council for 2006/07 before the addition of parish/town council, Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Police Authority precepts, for each band be as follows:-

A £83.91

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B	£97.90
C	£111.88
D	£125.87
E	£153.84
F	£181.81
G	£209.78
H	£251.74

- (5) the General Fund Capital Programme and the Housing Investment Programme as set out in Appendix 8 to the report and Paragraph 12 of the report, be approved together with their financing as shown in paragraphs 12.4 and 12.5 of the report;
- (6) If there is any mismatch between the Council's subsidiary strategies and action plans officers bring forward proposals for managing within the agreed budgets;
- (7) the proposals to develop the grass land at Chantry Green by the Gap, be approved;
- (8) A further report be submitted to the Executive on the operation of a rent deposit loan scheme;
- (9) The Head of Member Services and the Head of Revenue and Customer Services conduct a risk review with an independent person in order to decide a way forward on security for Riverside House;
- (10) The implications for future year's taxes as set out in Paragraph 9 and Appendix 3 of the report be noted;
- (11) Officers investigate what action can be taken to ameliorate the loss of Housing Benefit income;
- (12) A member working group be set up to look at the options to improve the utilisation of the Town Hall;
- (13) The Portfolio Holder write to the Chair of the Area Committee asking that a cycle path from Heathcote Lane to Harbury Lane be funded;
- (14) £284,000 to be spent on the refurbishment of the former railway arches in Court Street;
- (15) The following capital projects be reviewed during 2006/07 to see if they are viable on a business case basis are:-
 - New personnel system

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- Electronic burial records
- Spa on-line booking
- Renewable energy

And if a business case can be demonstrated these projects be considered by the Executive;

- (16) detailed business cases be drawn up for each new capital project and approved by the Executive, with the project plans being agreed by the Officer Capital Working Group;
- (17) the prudential indicators as set out in Appendix 6 to the report be approved;
- (18) the revised financial strategy as detailed in Appendix 10 to the report, be approved; and
- (19) the distribution of the residents magazine be monitored and the Executive respond accordingly.

(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillors Mrs Begg, Boad, Crowther, Gill, Mrs McFarland and Tamlin)

(Forward Plan reference 43/05)

(This item was considered at the Council meeting on 23 February 2006 and is included here for information purposes only)

861. HOUSING RENTS AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 2006/2007

The Executive considered a report from the Strategic Director (Community Resources) and Chief Financial Officer on the housing rents and Housing Revenue Account 2006/2007.

The Council was required to set a budget for the HRA each year which required agreement on the level of rents to be charged. The Executive was therefore required to make recommendations to Council that took into account the base budget revenue estimates for the HRA, the 2006/07 subsidy determination and the latest guidance from the Government on rent restructuring.

The proposed rent increase followed Government guidance and was in accordance with the Council's financial strategy. The recommendations would enable the proposed Housing Investment Programme to be carried out whilst maintaining a minimum working balance on the HRA of at least £750,000, in line with Council policy.

There was no alternative option for the setting of housing dwelling rents other than to comply with the Government's Rent Restructuring criteria. New guidance, issued in late 2005, required authorities to ensure that the average rent increase for 2006/07 and 2007/08 did not exceed 5% per annum. Technically, it would be possible to set a percentage increase below 5% but this would have an adverse impact on rent convergence and significantly increase the need for higher rent rises

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in later years. The unfeasibility of such an option was implicitly acknowledged in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) commitment to compensate authorities adversely affected by the maximum 5% average increase for lost rental income.

There were alternative options in relation to garage rents as these were not subject to the Government's rent restructuring criteria.

The proposed increase of 5%, incorporated in the estimates within the report, was equivalent to the increase in dwelling rents and would yield an estimated £20,100 of additional revenue income. This was £7,800 higher than the initial 2006/07 budget estimates which assumed a 3% increase. However, any option from a nil increase to a percentage in excess of the proposed 5.0% could be set, each of which would realise greater or lesser levels of additional income. In 2005/06 the approved level of the garage rent increase was pegged at 5.5%, equivalent to the increase in dwelling rents for that year.

The proposed 5% was considered reasonable as it balanced the desire to maximise additional income, which could be recycled into improvements in the housing stock, with the need to ensure that garage rents remained affordable as otherwise the income stream could be diminished. The table set out at 7.3 of the report demonstrated that even with the proposed increase average garage rents would remain amongst the lowest charged in the county.

A 17% increase would be required to achieve parity with the current average garage rent in the local area.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) housing dwelling rents for 2006/07 be increased by an average of 5.0%, as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2A to the report;
- (2) garage rents be increased by 5.0%;
- (3) Supporting People charges be increased by 2.5%; and
- (4) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), updated with the information from the Final Subsidy Determination, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be agreed.

(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillors Boad and Crowther)
(Forward Plan reference 44/05)

(This item was considered at the Council meeting on 23 February 2006 and is included here for information purposes only)

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862. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY PLAN FOR 2006/2007

The Executive considered a report from the Responsible Financial Officer and Finance on the Treasury Management Strategy Plan for 2006/2007.

The Council was required to have an approved Treasury Management Strategy, including an Annual Investment Strategy, within which its Treasury Management operations could be carried out. The Council had investing approximately £11 million in new capital in 2006/2007 and would have average investments of £22 million. This level of investments arose from the Council's reserves and provisions, the General Fund balance, and accumulated capital receipts.

Both the Audit & Resources and the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy for 2006/2007 as detailed in Appendix A to the report be approved; and
- (2) the Treasury Management Practices which have been revised and are detailed in Appendix B to the report be approved.

RECOMMENDED that the 2006/2007 Annual Investment Strategy as detailed in Appendix C to the report including the increase in the amount that can be invested for more than 364 days from £1 million to £2 million, be approved.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Crowther)
(Forward Plan reference 45/05)

863. WARWICK DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

The Executive considered a report from Planning and Engineering on amendments to the Warwick District Local Plan.

At its meeting in January, the Council approved a report from the Executive which had delegated authority to the Head of Planning & Engineering, in consultation with the Environment Portfolio Holder, to approve minor changes to the Local Plan as may be required both before and during the forthcoming local plan inquiry. A number of minor changes had since been made to the Local Plan and these had been published as part of the preparation for the Local Plan Inquiry commencing in April.

In addition to these, it was possible that further changes might be required to the Local Plan (both leading up to, and during the inquiry), including some that might be more substantive. Given the tight timetable of the inquiry and the large amount of evidence that was currently being assembled by officers, it was important that there existed a means for the Council to make a quick response to these. It was pointed out that the report of the Local Plan Inquiry that the Council would receive later this

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year from the Inspector would be a binding one. At that time there would be virtually no opportunity to challenge decisions of the Inspector with which the Council disagreed. It was therefore particularly important that a means existed by which the Inspector could be aware of the Council's formal views on certain issues.

Accordingly, it was proposed that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Development, in consultation with all Group Leaders, to approve any such changes to the local plan as may be required.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report, but would like recommendation 1.2 to include consultation with the Local Plan Working Party as well as the Group Leaders, and the Executive should ensure every effort was made to enable people who wished to make representations at the inquiry, can do so.

Philip Clarke from Planning and Engineering, explained to the Executive that it would not be possible for people who made representations to the Planning Inspector at this stage to be able to speak at the Planning Inquiry.

It was agreed that it would not be practical for the delegated authority to be in consultation with Local Plan Working Party as well as Group Leaders, but for the Working Party to be kept informed on how the Inquiry was going.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the changes to the Local Plan be approved and used as part of the Council's evidence at the Local Plan inquiry; and
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning & Engineering, in consultation with Group Leaders, to approve any further changes to the local plan as may be required both before and during the forthcoming local plan inquiry (except for minor changes for which delegated authority already exists).

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mrs Begg)
(Forward Plan reference 59/05)

864. STRATEGY TO REDUCE CRIME, DISORDER AND DRUGS MISUSE

The Executive considered a report from Community Safety on the Strategy to reduce crime, disorder and drugs misuse.

The Crime & Disorder Act (1998) amended by the Police Reform Act (2000) placed a statutory duty on the Council to work in partnership to produce a strategy to reduce crime, disorder and drugs misuse in this district.

This was the third strategy produced to reduce crime, disorder, drugs misuse and the fear of crime in Warwick District. Printing of the strategy document was funded from Home Office money awarded to the Warwick District Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (WDCDRP).

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For the first time a South Warwickshire Strategy had been produced, evidence of the Council's close working relationship with the Stratford-on-Avon CDRP. The Council's issues, priorities and targets were almost identical with residents identifying alcohol-related violent crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime as their top priorities. Business crime had been added as the fourth priority as it made up 32% of all crime in the district.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED that the 2005-2008 Crime, Disorder & Drugs Misuse Reduction Strategy be adopted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mrs Begg)
(Forward Plan reference 68/05)

865. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Executive considered an amended report from the Environment Directorate on safer neighbourhoods in Warwick district.

David Whitehouse, District Commander for Warwickshire Police also attended the meeting for this item only, to brief the Executive and answer questions on the project.

This approach was based on district council wards with clearly defined neighbourhoods. It was anticipated that there would be a District-wide framework of local groups with secretariat cover provided from existing resources within the respective participating councils. Town & Parish Councils would also be consulted on how they wished to become involved. This ensured that elected members from all Councils and their constituents would be given an opportunity to become involved in issues which were vital to secure community intelligence, identifying and tackling issues important to the community.

For the first time each and every area, and neighbourhoods within those larger areas, would have a dedicated team of Police Officers, led by a Sergeant with Community Beat Officers and Police Community Support Officers working closely with other statutory and voluntary agencies, including Neighbourhood Watch.

Option 2 which had been revised and circulated at the meeting, was the preferred option because it better reflected the composition of the towns and communities, which would comprise the wider area, and more fully involved and utilised existing support to council structures and neighbourhoods within those areas.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee had no preferred option at the moment as they felt more information was required and the Police should be invited to Council on 8 March 2006, to make a presentation to all members.

The Executive considered the request for a presentation from the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but given their support for the recommendations in the report, the Executive felt this was now satisfied by the consultation process,

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and that they would give further consideration to the comments received and any final proposals.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the area-based approach to Community Safety being led by Warwickshire Police under the Home Office national initiative be supported;
- (2) the principles of neighbourhood policing and the participation of elected members and officers be supported; and
- (3) the revised option 2, as the initial area approach proposed by the Police for consultation purposes be noted, and a further report be submitted at a later date.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mrs Begg)
(Forward Plan reference 67/05)

866. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT TEAM

The Executive considered a report from the Director for Customer Information and Advice on the establishment of a community support team.

Although the District overall was a very prosperous one, there were geographical locations which had not experienced the same level of benefit from that prosperity and there were groups of people across the District who continued to experience significant economic and social disadvantage. The areas (and the people who lived in them) of disadvantage tended to experience the greater problems of poverty, crime, poor health, educational attainment and so on. The Poverty Map which had been produced and was available on the Council's web site, illustrated the differences of experience across the District.

Other neighbourhoods and villages had benefited from some capital investment in facilities from the Council and SRB6 funding and from occasional revenue grants. However, the level of support for communities was variable, for some it was non-existent. In addition, the SRB5 funding ended in March 2006 and the SRB6 funding in March 2007. The Lillington SRB6 project was due to end in June 2006. This meant that unless action was taken there would only be a very low level of support available for disadvantaged communities and that support would be very unevenly distributed.

Alternative options considered included:

- Providing no support for communities – whilst this would generate a larger financial saving eventually (2006/07 some funding would be required to pay for redundancy costs) it would risk losing the progress that had been made in the last few years via existing interventions. It would also perpetuate the uneven distribution of support that currently existed.

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- Considering a more integrated approach with the County Council – this remained a strong possibility and one that could be developed over the next year for possible implementation in 2007.
- Considering a proposal from the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) – a South Warwickshire wide proposal had been developed by the CVS as part of a possible forward strategy for the overall SRB6 scheme. However, whilst that would only have cost the District Council £43,000 per annum, it would also have delivered less staff time on the ground for local communities. Approximately one third of the total funding had been required to cover all management on costs. However, Stratford District Council had written to the CVS to state that they would not be continuing its financial support for the SRB6 scheme after its completion. It seemed unlikely that the County Council would continue its funding of that scheme either. In this context even if this Council did want to support that proposal it was now highly unlikely that the CVS proposal was viable. Even so, this current proposal did not prevent at a later stage amalgamation within a South Warwickshire approach should the opportunity present itself.

The District Council, with various partner agencies, had over the last few years supported interventions in local communities through a variety of means and in a variety of locations.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations 1.1 to 1.4 in the report, and if it was decided to phase the reduction in funding to GAP from 2008 onwards, the Council should try to assist them in obtaining alternative support, perhaps through WCC.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Subject to confirmation of funding from Warwickshire County Council, the proposal to establish a Community Support Team using existing funding be supported;
- (2) a report be presented to the next meeting of the Executive setting out a detailed service plan relating to activities, outputs and outcomes as well as management and governance arrangements for the Community Support Team;
- (3) a report be presented to the Employment Committee in March regarding the employment consequences of this proposal for existing staff;
- (4) detailed discussions be carried out with the Warwickshire County Council during 2006 regarding the establishment of a joint Community Support Team for Warwick District area and a report be submitted to the Executive for consideration;
- (5) the Gap be given 2 year's notice that its funding is to be reduced from £24,000 to £16,000 in 2008/09 and to £8,000 in 2009/10.

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(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillor Mrs McFarland and Tamlin)
(Forward Plan reference 63/05)

867. QUARTERLY CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW

The Executive considered a report from the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) on the quarterly corporate risk register review.

At its June 2005 meeting, the Executive considered a report on Risk Management and asked for all items which scored 12 or above on the Corporate Risk Register to be monitored and reported on a quarterly basis. The register was last reviewed by CMT on 14th December 2005.

The new CPA Use of Resources Assessment included at Level 3 the following requirement:

“The risk management process specifically identified risks in relation to partnerships and provides for assurances to be obtained about the management of those risks.”

CMT had discussed this point and had agreed that they would include a specific heading for Partnership Risk in order to remind them to ensure all partnership issues were addressed. However the embedding of risk management had meant that partnership issues had been included as an integral part of other projects.

The Audit & Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report but concern was expressed over items 4 Corporate Priority - Support a prosperous mixed economy and 11 Strategic Project - new initiatives due to the exceptionally high total risk score.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Corporate Risk Register items scoring 12 and above be noted; and
- (2) a further report for review be submitted to the Executive in June 2006.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Crowther)

868. PORTFOLIO HOLDER STATEMENTS, SERVICE AREA PLAN TARGETS, BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN

The Executive considered a report from Policy and Performance on the Portfolio Holder Statements, Service Area Plan Targets and Best Value Performance Plan.

Portfolio Holder Statements formed an important annual element of the Council's integrated performance management framework. They provided a clear statement

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from each portfolio holder detailing achievements over the past 12 months and direction of travel for the next in delivering the longer term Corporate Strategy.

Portfolio Holder Statements were prepared in association with Directors and Service Area Managers and were closely coordinated with the service area planning process to ensure priorities and targets were aligned.

Service Area Plans had been developed by each Service Area to reflect the portfolio holder's priorities and the other demands being placed on each service. The Plans included detailed and challenging improvement targets for each service to ensure that continuous improvement in priority areas was achieved. These targets would form the basis for performance management during the year 2006/07 and, where possible, would be reported on a quarterly basis.

The Best Value Performance Plan remained a statutory requirement placed on the authority by central government and was a primary communication tool for staff, members, stakeholders and the public containing information on ambitions, priorities and targets. Its publication within agreed timescales each year was an essential element of the Council's performance reporting cycles.

Both the Audit & Resources and the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the 2006/07 Portfolio Holder Statements for each portfolio be approved;
- (2) the 2006/07 service targets for each service area which have been extracted from the 2006/07 Service Area Plans be approved;
- (3) the format and structure of the 2006/07 Best Value Performance Plan and its publication in accordance with statutory requirements be approved; and
- (4) it be noted that the performance indicators in appendix 3 to the report will no longer be reported as from 1st April 2006.

(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillors Mrs Begg, Boad, Crowther, Gill, Mrs McFarland and Tamlin)
(Forward Plan reference 71/05)

869. MARLBOROUGH HOUSE

The Executive considered a report from Corporate Management Team on Marlborough House.

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The issue of Marlborough House lease had been subject to previous reports to the Executive. This report brought together the details of the overall costs relating to the Council continuing to hold the lease for the period 25 December 2002 to 3 January 2006.

Appendix 1 to the report, showed that the net total costs incurred by the Council in retaining the lease of Marlborough House for the period 25 December 2002 to 3 January 2006 totalled £523,500. These figures excluded the costs of dilapidations that were incurred at the end of the lease as these would have been required had the lease terminated at the end of 2003. Additional costs, which related to legal advice over the lease were incurred in 2002 and 2003 totalling £2,222.

The Audit and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee Supported the recommendations of the report.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report and would like a further 'fuller' report on this matter. The Chief Executive agreed to produce the document that was not a confidential document.

RESOLVED that the expenditure incurred on Marlborough House relating to the period 25 December 2002 to 3 January 2006, be noted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Crowther)

870. GENERAL REPORT

(A) WDC REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE FOR SIERRA LEONE

The Executive considered a report from the Leader of the Executive regarding a WDC representative to the National Task Force for Sierra Leone.

The Council had a long established association with the community link between Warwick District and Bo District in Sierra Leone. Democratic local government institutions were being established in Sierra Leone, including in Bo. The National Task Force for Sierra Leone was bringing together those UK local authorities for areas which had established links in order to help channel support.

As a consequence of her active involvement in the Warwick District / Bo District link and the recent developments, Cllr Jane Knight had been elected as a joint Vice-chair of the Task Force and it would be helpful for her position to be regularised by formally appointing her as a representative from this Council.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report, but also noted that only travel expenses in this country would be paid.

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RESOLVED that Councillor Jane Knight be appointed as the Council's representative to the National Task Force for Sierra Leone.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Crowther)

(B) RURAL INITIATIVES SCHEME APPLICATIONS

The Executive considered a report from Finance on applications received for the rural initiatives scheme.

The assistance provided to applicants under this scheme contributed to the Council's objective of targeting resources to the areas of greatest need.

The Council had a £300,000 budget for Rural Initiatives grants. Allowing for grants approved but not yet paid, approval of these requests would leave £156,793 for future applications.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED that the requests for grants as detailed below, be approved:

- (a) Baginton Parish Council - A grant of 33% of the total cost of the replacement bus shelter excluding VAT (including the Parish Council's in kind contribution which is estimated to amount to £500) up to a maximum of £1,750;
- (b) Lowonsford Village Hall - A grant of 50% of the total cost of installing the doors including VAT up to a maximum of £598; and
- (C) Eathorpe, Hunningham etc. Parish Council - A grant of 50% of the total cost of the project excluding VAT up to a maximum of £1,210.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mrs McFarland)

(C) REVIEW OF THE SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

The Executive considered a report from Community Resources on a review of the small grants scheme.

The Small Grants Budget had been underspent for a number of years and in the 2004/05 financial year a virement of £12,000 had been made to cover the increased demand on the Rate Relief by voluntary organisations

When setting the 2005/06 budget the reduction which had arisen from the virement was only re-instated in part and the Portfolio Holder undertook to review the budget during the year.

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The Members Grant Review Panel had presented a report to the Executive which changed the process for allocating small grants. It was agreed that the decision on Small Grant applications be delegated to the Strategic Director (Community Resources), who could delegate this to another senior officer, and that these officers be advised by a small group of Members subject to an annual report being made to members. The Member Group also identified the need to extend the current system of publicising the grants to include organisations such as Town and Parish Council's, CVS and Warwickshire County Council to provide more equity of access to the grant scheme.

It had also been agreed that Members of the Executive would review the new Small Grants Scheme to evaluate the effects of the recommendations half way through the financial year.

The current budget for the Small Grants Scheme stood at £10,000 of which £2,050 had been allocated to date.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report and would like further information on how many applications had been received for the Small Grants budget and what percentage had been refused and why, and also suggested the following amendments:

- Page 243 – Warwickshire Clubs for Young People - The amount of grant recommended be £500
- Page 244 – Both applications for £500 from the British Asian Business and Professional Association be approved.

The Executive discussed the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments, but felt that the Strategic Director (Community Resources) and the group of members which made the decision to allocate these amounts had done so presented with all the facts and therefore their recommendations were accurate.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Small Grants Budget at it's current level, be confirmed and any changes be dealt with through the service planning process; and
- (2) the approved applications for grant aid listed in appendices A and B to the report, be noted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mrs McFarland)

(D) EQUALITY STANDARD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT – EXTENSION OF CORPORATE STRATEGY TARGET

The Executive considered a report from Community Resources on the extension of the corporate strategy target, equality standard for local government.

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The Council participated in an external Peer Review and the Equality Standard for Local Government on 2 and 3 August 2005.

The Peer Review had identified a number of gaps at Levels 1 and 2 of the Equality Standard as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. The Corporate Management Team had agreed that the Council would undertake work to address these gaps. They had also agreed the deadlines of December 2005 to address Level 1 gaps and March 2006 to address Level 2 gaps.

There was a large workload involved in carrying out Equality Impact Assessments which was essential for progressing onto Level 3. Consequently CMT recommended the extension of the target in order to enable the work to be completed in a proper manner.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED that the extension of the original Corporate Strategy target for achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government from March 2007 to March 2008, be approved.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mrs McFarland)

(E) MONEY LAUNDERING REGULATIONS 2003

The Executive considered a report from Finance on Money Laundering Regulations 2003.

The Regulations changed with effect from 1 March 2004 with the implementation of Statutory Instrument 2003 no. 3075. The Council needed to establish procedures of internal control and communication for the purpose of forestalling and preventing money laundering.

Both the Audit & Resources and the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the Head of Finance be appointed the Council's Money Laundering Reporting Officer;
- (2) the Council do not accept cash payments in excess of £9,000; and
- (3) the Code of Financial Practice and Treasury Management Policy be amended to reflect the recommendations above, and be incorporated in the next update.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Crowther)

EXECUTIVE MINUTES (Continued)

(F) HEATING, LIGHTING AND WATER CHARGES 2006/2007 – COUNCIL TENANTS

The Executive considered a report from Finance and Housing Services on the heating, lighting and water charge for 2006/2007 for council tenants.

Service charges were levied for the costs of electricity, gas and water supply usage in the communal areas of sheltered and very sheltered housing schemes and direct supply to individual properties through communal heating schemes. The costs of maintaining communal laundry facilities were also recharged as a service charge at those sites benefiting from these facilities under the heading of miscellaneous charges. The charges required annual review as a result of variations in the costs associated with these services with tenants being notified of the change at the same time as the annual rent increase.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED that the revised service charges for council tenants relating to heating, lighting, water and miscellaneous charges for the year commencing 1st April 2006, be approved as set out in paragraph 6 to 9 of the report.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Boad)

(G) HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME: REPLACEMENT OF KITCHENS AND BATHROOMS

The Executive considered a report from Property Services on the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms as part of the housing investment programme.

The existing partnership arrangement with Sol (West Midlands) for the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms was due to end in the 2nd quarter of 2006 as the value of work would reach the financial threshold stated in EU Procurement Directive for the Procurement of Public Works.

It was therefore recommended that the next phase of this programme be tendered with a view to entering into a partnering arrangement up to the EU threshold which was currently £3,611,474.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED that the seeking of tenders to continue the programme for the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms in council dwellings for 2006/07, be approved.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Boad)
(Forward Plan reference 53/05)

(H) LETTING OF CONTRACTS

The Executive considered a report from Members' Services on the letting of contracts for office cleaning and office copiers.

The Council employed contractors to clean its offices at Riverside House and the Town Hall. The contract also included the communal areas in Pageant House and Wilton House, Southbank Road, Kenilworth. The cleaning of the windows was also arranged through the cleaning contractor.

The current contract was let in 1998 for a five year period subject to an annual review. The contract was extended on an annual basis since 2003 and this action had been approved retrospectively by the Executive on 24 October 2005.

Consideration would be given as to how the EU procurement rules related to the contract to ensure that all requirements were followed. The length of the new contract would also be reviewed possibly with an initial contract of two years followed by another contract of five years to link in with the package of contracts to be let in 2008.

The current leasing agreement for the supply of office copiers and those used in the Print Unit, expired in May 2006.

In accordance with paragraph 4.3.3 of the Council's Code of Contract Practice, it was proposed to source new copiers using OGC Buying Solutions, the government's buying agency otherwise known as the Office of Government Commerce in the Treasury.

An assurance had been received from the OGC that their framework was fully compliant with EC regulations. They had followed the full procurement process in order to give their customers a route to market without having to go through the lengthy EC procurement process. The Council also ensured customers received value for money savings that could be obtained from their significant buying power.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the re-tendering of the cleaning contract for the cleaning of the Council's offices, be approved;
- (2) the Assistant Chief Executive (Members' Services) be authorised to invite tenders for the work, and accept the best offer for the new contract; and
- (3) the leasing of new office copiers be sourced through OGC Buying Solutions.

EXECUTIVE MINUTES (Continued)

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Crowther)
(Forward Plan reference 55/05)

(I) THE CONSTITUTION

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Monitoring Officer on amendments to the Council's Constitution.

Aspects of the Council's Constitution were regularly amended updated and replaced. During the last 12 months there had been a significant number of changes to the constitution. The complete document was being submitted for approval to ensure that all changes had been formally adopted by Council, along with the new numbering system.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report.

RECOMMENDED that the amended Constitution incorporating various amendments already approved, a new page number system and the further amendments as detailed in the report be approved.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Crowther)

(J) ENABLEMENT OF FLEXIBLE WORKING THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP) TELEPHONY AND VOICE OVER IP

The Executive considered a report from the Director of Customer Information and Advice/Head of ICT on the enablement of flexible working through the introduction of Internet Protocol (IP) Telephony and Voice Over IP

As an excellent CPA rated Authority, this Council was constantly seeking to demonstrate value for money in the delivery of services. As in many cases it was already operating in the bottom quartile of costs for many of its services, it was increasingly difficult to find ways of achieving savings without cutting services. This situation was critical given that the Council was facing the retendering of its major contracts in 2008 and was likely to face a significant rise in the tendered costs. However, one way to seek a reduction in costs or to increase its income was to look at how it can make more effective use of its property and make maximum use of new technology. Such an approach should help to reduce existing costs, the savings from which could then be redirected to other areas and/or lessen Council Tax increases.

The business case detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, showed how an investment in new technology would help to transform the way the Council delivered services and generate a saving/ increase in income. If adopted, the proposal would also off set the need to spend some money already the subject of a capital programme bid of £38,000.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report.

EXECUTIVE MINUTES (Continued)

RESOLVED that the business case for the introduction of IP Telephony and Voice Over IP to enable flexible working as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be noted, and the Executive receive a further report at the special meeting on 11th April 2006 which will set out:

1. evidence of market demand for office space
2. the response from staff and unions
3. advice on the procurement process

(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillor Crowther and Mrs McFarland)
(Forward Plan reference 61/05)

(K) RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED NHS RE-ORGANISATION

The Executive considered a report from the Health Forum on the response to consultation on proposed NHS re-organisation.

The changes which were proposed to the NHS had the potential to significantly affect the community within Warwick District Council's area. It was therefore appropriate that the Council made its stance known on these matters. Responses to the consultation process were required by the 22nd March 2006.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the reports and strongly disagree with another re-organisation of the ambulance trusts which should be left alone to allow the current arrangements to 'bed-in'.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Warwick District Council adopts the following position as its response to NHS consultation papers with respect to re-organisation of the NHS and Ambulance Service.

Strategic Health Authority

Warwick District Council would prefer that the West Midlands South SHA be retained.

Ambulance Trusts

Warwick District Council is concerned that the current arrangements with the Coventry and Warwickshire service needs time to 'bed-in'. The preferred option would be to maintain the status quo.

Primary Care Trusts

EXECUTIVE MINUTES (Continued)

Having regard to the current proposal for a Warwickshire PCT, combining Rugby, South and North Warks, Warwick District Council is concerned to ensure that the new structure maintains and develops links at the local level. It should be organised with local areas co-terminous with the Districts, with devolved budgets and the ability to respond to local needs and community priorities. There should be a lay member of the Board from this locality. There should be effective links with the LSP; and

- (2) the comments of Mr Malcolm Hazel (Chief Executive, Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance NHS Trust) in his appraisal of the proposed changes to the Ambulance Trust be noted, and the Council shares the concerns he expresses with regard to the potential detrimental impact on patient care.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mrs Begg)

(L) GRANT AID TO WARWICKIANS RUGBY CLUB

The Executive considered a report from Director of Customer Information and Advice on grant aid to Warwickians rugby club.

In June 2003 the Executive agreed that as part of the overall St Mary's Lands scheme, Warwick RUFC would be offered a contribution to the development of their new facilities of £200,000. Of this £2,000 had been committed to help the club to move leaving £198,000. At that time the Council had agreed that the offer to the Rugby club would be index linked i.e. it would be up-rated for inflation if there had been significant delays in the project. However, due to the many demands on the St Mary's Lands Budget, the Council had not been able to index link this amount.

Warwick RUFC had now moved off site and had merged with Old Warwickians RUFC to form Warwickians RUFC. The new organisation had now obtained planning permission for the upgrade of their facility on their ground to the west of the A46. The estimated cost of their scheme was circa £300,000 and to help them overcome the gap between what they needed and what the Council was providing the Club had proposed that WDC gave them the agreed amount (£198,000) upfront so that they could invest it and then draw upon that money when works started on their proposed scheme.

Both the Audit & Resources and the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Council follow the approach detailed in paragraph 2.3 of the report and the capital grant budget for Warwickians RUFC as part of the St Mary's Lands scheme be increased in lieu of the interest by £9,000. and payments be made in instalments to the Rugby Club

EXECUTIVE MINUTES (Continued)

in line with interim valuations as capital works proceed;
and

- (2) the increased capital grant for Warwickians RUFC be financed by a contribution from Revenue.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Tamlin)

871. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND POLICY COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive and Audit & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committees held on 6 December 2005 and the Environment & Economic and Social & Culture Policy Committees held on 7 December 2005 be noted.

872. PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as set out below:

Nos.	Para Nos.	Reason
873 & 874	9	Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services. [for so long as disclosure would prejudice the Council in consultations or negotiations]
874	8	The amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the authority under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services. [for so long as disclosure would be likely to advantage a person contracting, or seeking the contract with the Council]
875	1	Information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office-holder, former office-holder or applicant to become an office-holder under the authority. [but the information must relate to the person in the capacity of the description given]

EXECUTIVE MINUTES (Continued)

873. MANAGEMENT OF NEWBOLD COMYN GOLF COURSE

The Executive considered a report from Leisure and Amenities on the management of Newbold Comyn golf course.

The Executive asked the Golf Working Party to look at the options for the future management of the golf course at its meeting on the 24th October 2005 and report back accordingly.

The Working Party were unable to make any recommendations to the Executive at the moment, so a report would be submitted to the next meeting.

The Audit & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report and would await the final report from the working party.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Gill)
(Forward Plan reference 54/05)

874. FORMER ART GALLERY, AVENUE ROAD, LEAMINGTON SPA

The Executive considered a report from the Asset Management Steering Group on the sale of the former art gallery.

Leamington Spa Art Gallery relocated to the Royal Pump Rooms in June 1999 resulting in these premises being no longer required.

The disposal of the former Library was part of the College's Property Strategy and the proceeds from the sale would contribute towards their investment in the new Art and Design Centre, located within the grounds of Warwickshire College, which had opened in October 2005.

The former Art Gallery and Library were, therefore, now considered to be surplus to requirements and a joint venture was seen as the best opportunity of disposing of the properties.

The College marketed the site and the best offer was being recommended for acceptance. Net proceeds would be split pro rata to the areas owned by each party. The sale would be subject to the developer obtaining planning permission for a scheme that currently included Offices, a Restaurant and Housing (40% affordable) and having vacant possession.

Both the Audit & Resources and the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report.

EXECUTIVE MINUTES (Continued)

RESOLVED that the sale the former Art Gallery to Oakmore Estates Ltd as part of a site for a mixed development that will also include the adjoining ex. Library premises and the car park at the rear for the sum of £608,625, be approved.

(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillors Boad and Crowther)
(Forward Plan reference 52/05)

(Chris Elliott, Strategic Director for Customer Information and Advice, left the room for this item because he was a Governor at the college)

875. EARLY RETIREMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISOR

The Executive considered a report from the Chief Executive on the early retirement of the Health and Safety Advisor.

The Employment Committee at it's meeting of 19th December 2005 approved the early retirement of the Health and Safety Advisor under Regulation 31 of the Local Government Pension Regulations with effect from 31st March 2006.

The Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED that the funding for the early retirement of the Health and Safety Advisor in Environment Health from the early retirement fund, be approved.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Crowther)

(The meeting ended at 8.20pm)