

**To: Leader and Members of the Executive Board
(Councillors Humphreys, Chambers, Davey, Farrell, Gosling, Hayfield, Phillips, Simpson, Smith and D Wright)**

For the information of other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact David Harris, Democratic Services Manager, on 01827 719222 or via e-mail - davidharris@northwarks.gov.uk.

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

The agenda and reports are available in large print and electronic accessible formats if requested.

EXECUTIVE BOARD AGENDA

20 NOVEMBER 2017

The Executive Board will meet in the Committee Room at the Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire on Monday 20 November 2017 at 6.30pm

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure**
- 2 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council business.**
- 3 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

- 4 **Minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 18 September and 18 October 2017** – copies herewith to be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 **Public Participation**

Up to twenty minutes will be set aside for members of the public to put questions to elected Members. Questions should be submitted by 9.30am 2 working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each. If you wish to put a question to the meeting please contact David Harris on 01827 719222 or email democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk .

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION (WHITE PAPERS)

- 6 **2016/17 Annual Audit Letter** - Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Summary

This report presents the 2016/17 Annual Audit Letter received from the Council's external auditors, Ernst & Young LLP.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Garner (719374).

- 7 **Key Corporate Issues** – Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

The purpose of this report is to draw Members' attention to the key Corporate issues facing the Council in the mid-term future. It seeks to assist Members in addressing these issues during the finalisation of the 2018/19 Corporate Plan and Budget and thereafter.

The Contact Officer for this report is Jerry Hutchinson (719200).

- 8 **Budgetary Control Report 2017/18 - Period Ended 31 October 2017**
- Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources)

Summary

The report covers revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 October 2017. The 2017/2018 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date, are given, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to this Board.

The Contact Officer for this report is Nigel Lane (719371).

9 **Calendar of Meetings 2018/19** – Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

The purpose of this report is to approve a calendar of meetings for 2018/19.

The Contact Officer for this report is David Harris (719222).

10 **2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review** – Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider the Council's response to the Boundary Commission's latest report published on 17 October 2017 in respect of the 2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review for North Warwickshire.

The Contact Officer for this report is David Harris (719222).

11 **Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets – April 2017 to September 2017** – Report of the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive

Summary

This report informs Members of the progress with the achievement of the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Executive Board for April to September 2017.

The Contact Officer for this report is Robert Beggs (719238).

12 **Standards Committee Arrangements** – Report of the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer

Summary

This report asks Members to agree amendments to the Council's arrangements for considering complaints under the Member Code of Conduct.

The Contact Officers for this report are Jerry Hutchinson (719216) and Steve Maxey (719438).

13 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Recommendation:

That under Section 110A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

**EXEMPT INFORMATION
(GOLD PAPERS)**

14 **Procurement of a Replacement Revenues and Benefits System -
Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services)**

The Contact Officer for this report is Bob Trahern (719378).

JERRY HUTCHINSON
Chief Executive

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

18 September 2017

Present: Councillor Humphreys in the Chair

Councillors Chambers, Davey, Hayfield, Morson, Phillips, Simpson, Sweet, Waters and D Wright

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Farrell (substitute Councillor Morson), Councillor Gosling (substitute Councillor Sweet) and Councillor Smith (substitute Walters).

19 **Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interest.**

None were declared at the meeting.

20 **Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 19 June 2017.**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 19 June 2017, copies having been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21 **Financial Statements 2016/17**

The Deputy Chief Executive reported on the Annual Financial Statements for 2016/17 and Members were asked to agree a suggested course of action.

Resolved:

That the 2016/17 Financial Statements shown in Appendix A to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive be approved.

22 **External Auditors' Report**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted the External Auditors' report to those charged with governance. Avtar Sohal and Stephen Clarke from Ernst & Young LLP were in attendance.

Recommended:

That the contents of the External Auditors' report be noted.

23 Financial Strategy 2018-2022

The Deputy Chief Executive report on the Authority's Financial Strategy projected forward the Authority's General Fund budgets to 2021/22, and suggested a detailed budget approach for the 2018/19 General Fund Budget.

Recommended:

- a That the Financial Strategy shown as Appendix A to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive be approved;**
- b That the General Fund budget projections for 2018/19 to 2021/22 be noted; and**
- c That the budget approach, set out in section 8 of the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, be adopted.**

24 Grant to Parish Councils

The Deputy Chief Executive detailed proposal to stop grant payments to Parish Councils, with regard to the Council Tax Support scheme.

Recommended:

That Parish Councils be informed that a grant towards Council Tax Support will not be paid in 2018/19 and subsequent years.

25 Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19

The Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) outlined the recommended Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for 2018/19.

Recommended:

- a That the retention of an 8.5% reduction in Council Tax Support to all current working age customer, in the 2018/19 Council Tax Support Scheme be approved; and**
- b That the Council Tax Support Scheme adopted for 2015/16 be updated in line with the statutory increases as notified by the Department of Work and Pensions.**

26 **Economic Review**

The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council advised Members of an economic review undertaken with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

27 **Review of Area Forum Working**

The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council made recommendations to the Board regarding Area Forums, following the debate at Full Council and a subsequent meeting of the Area Forum Task and Finish Group.

Recommended:

- a **That the Council consults with the Police, Warwickshire County Council and other interested parties on the current round of Area Forums being the last such meetings; and**
- b **That subsequent reports be brought to the Board as part of the Council's review of communications, including a revised Consultation Strategy, in order to ensure that the positive elements of Forum meetings are continued.**

28 **Public Speaking at the Planning and Development Board/ Substitutes for all Boards**

The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council asked Members to consider a slight revision to the public speaking at Planning and Development Board Scheme and to endorse a 1pm deadline on the day of a meeting for substitutes at all Boards.

Recommended:

- a **That the revised scheme for public speaking, as set out in the report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council be agreed and implements from the meeting to be held on 9 October 2017; and**

- b That substitutes for all Boards must be notified to the Democratic Services Section by 1pm on the day of the meeting.**

29 HS2 Update and Consultation

The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council sought Member approval for a joint consultation response with Warwickshire County Council and updated Members on issues relating to HS2.

Recommended:

- a That the report be noted; and**
- b That Warwickshire County Council's response to the current consultation be endorsed.**

30 Unauthorised Encampments Protocol

The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council asked Members to adopt the Unauthorised Encampments Protocol.

Recommended:

That consideration of the Unauthorised Encampments Protocol be deferred to allow further discussions to take place with partners.

31 Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review 2016/17

The Chief Executive informed the Board about the results of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review 2016/17. The number of complaints and enquiries considered by the Ombudsman relating to the Council and the outcome of their determinations were highlighted. Information was also given about the compliments and complaints received via the Council's corporate Compliments and Complaints Procedure.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

32 Bretts Hall Play Area – Use of Urgent Business Powers

The Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) asked the Board to endorse the action taken under the Chief Executive's Urgent Business Powers to contract a play equipment supplier to undertake the previously approved work at Bretts Hall Recreation Ground, Ansley Common and sought approval for an

increase in the Capital Programme budget through which to carry out the work.

Resolved:

- a That the action taken under the Chief Executive's Urgent Business Powers to contract a plan equipment supplier to undertake the approved work at Bretts Hall Recreation Ground be noted; and**
- b That an increase of £38,800 in the Capital Programme budget be approved, consequent upon the progression of the play area scheme at Bretts Hall Recreation Ground.**

33 Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April – June 2017

The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive informed Members of the progress with the achievement of the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Executive Board for April to June 2017.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

34 Residents Satisfaction with Communication Survey 2017 Results

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) provided Members with the results of the Communication Survey carried out in July 2017 and made recommendations for decisions, based on the results, in some areas.

Resolved:

- a That the survey results be noted; and**
- b That the recommendations set out in Section 5 of the report of the Assistant Director (Corporate Services) be agreed.**

35 Corporate Narrative

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) provided Members with the final draft of the 'Corporate Narrative' developed as one of the agreed actions from the Council's Communications health check, carried out by the Local Government Association (LGA).

Recommended:

- a That the draft ‘Corporate Narrative’ provided at Appendix 1 to the report of the Assistant Director (Corporate Services) be approved; and**
- b That a further report be brought to the Board on developing a strapline for the Council.**

36 Minutes of the meeting of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee held on 18 July 2017

The minutes of the meeting of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee held on 18 July 2017 were received and noted.

37 Minutes of the meetings of the Special Sub-Group held on 20 June, 11 July and 15 August 2017

The minutes of the meetings of the Special Sub-Group held on 20 June, 11 July and 15 August 2017 were received and noted.

38 Minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on 11 September 2017

The minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on 11 September 2017 were received and noted.

39 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Act.

40 Communications Resourcing

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) provided additional details requested by the Board at its meeting on 19 June 2017, relating to the implementation of the recommendations of the LGA’s communications health check.

Recommended:

- a That the report be approved;**

- b That a supplementary estimate as detailed in Section 5.1.2 of the report of the Assistant Director (Corporate Services) be agreed.**

David Humphreys
Chairman

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

18 October 2017

Present: Councillor Humphreys in the Chair

Councillors Davey, Farrell, Gosling, Hayfield, Jenns, Phillips, Smith, M Stanley and Symonds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chambers (substitute Councillor M Stanley), Simpson (substitute Councillor Jenns) and Councillor D Wright (substitute Councillor Symonds).

Councillors Bell, Chambers, Clews, Lea, Moss, Reilly, Smitten, Sweet and A Wright were also in attendance.

41 **Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interest.**

None were declared at the meeting.

42 **Public Participation**

The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council made reference to two questions received after the deadline for the submission. Responses had however been sent to the questioners and circulated to all Members. In addition he also made reference to further correspondence received from IM Properties.

43 **Housing Numbers – Government consultation**

The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council advised Members of the Government's current consultation on housing numbers and other planning matters. The Board was asked to endorse a response in respect of housing numbers.

Resolved:

- a That the report is noted;**
- b That a response to the consultation is prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council based on the comments in the report; and**
- c That the proposed approach to housing numbers is agreed and forms part of the submission version of the Local Plan.**

(The Chief Executive has subsequently received a notice signed by Councillors Chambers, Farrell, Gosling and Phillips under Standing Order No 30(1)(b)(Minority Report) with regard to the decision of the Board on this matter and it is therefore referred to Council for determination.)

44 **North Warwickshire Local Plan – Draft Submission for consultation**

The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council submitted the Draft Submission of the North Warwickshire Local Plan for consideration.

Resolved:

- a **That the recommendations on the responses be supported;**
- b **That the recommended changes to the Draft Local Plan proposed in the report be supported and be incorporated into a submission version of the Local Plan;**
- c **That the Draft Submission of the North Warwickshire Local Plan is approved for consultation; and**
- d **That the Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council be authorised to make any minor changes to the Draft Submission Local Plan in consultation with the Executive Board Chair the LDF Chair and Opposition LDF spokesman, including any changes required as a result of the final Sustainability Appraisal.**

(The Chief Executive has subsequently received a notice signed by Councillors Chambers, Farrell, Gosling and Phillips under Standing Order No 30(1)(b)(Minority Report) with regard to the decision of the Board on this matter and it is therefore referred to Council for determination.)

David Humphreys
Chairman

Agenda Item No 6

Executive Board

20 November 2017

**Report of the
Deputy Chief Executive**

2016/17 Annual Audit Letter

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the 2016/17 Annual Audit Letter received from the Council's external auditors, Ernst & Young LLP.

Recommendation to the Council

That the report presented as Appendix A be noted.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council's external auditors, Ernst & Young LLP, have summarised the work they undertook relating to the 2016/17 financial year in an annual audit letter. The information contained in the letter has already been presented to Board at its September meeting, so the annual audit letter is attached as Appendix A for information only.

...

3 Report Implications

3.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 3.1.1 Budget provision for external audit costs has been made. The auditors review the financial arrangements of the Council, including an assessment of the value for money achieved by the council in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

3.2 Risk Management Implications

- 3.2.1 An external audit process provides some assurance over the Council's internal control system, and highlights any areas where improvements could be made.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Garner (719374).

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2017
October 2017

Ernst & Young LLP

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Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) have issued a “Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies”. It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the PSAA website (www.psaa.co.uk)

The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The “Terms of Appointment (updated 23 February 2017)” issued by PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Annual Audit Letter is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Members of the audited body, and is prepared for their sole use. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure - If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.

A hand with white nail polish is writing on a document with a blue pen. In the background, there is a calculator, a laptop, and a white mug. A yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

We are required to issue an annual audit letter to North Warwickshire Borough Council (the Council) following completion of our audit procedures for the year ended 31 March 2017.

Below are the results and conclusions on the significant areas of the audit process.

Area of Work	Conclusion
Opinion on the Council's: ▶ Financial statements	Unqualified - the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2017 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended
▶ Consistency of other information published with the financial statements	Other information published with the financial statements was consistent with the Annual Accounts
Concluding on the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness	We concluded that you have put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in your use of resources

Area of Work	Conclusion
Reports by exception:	
▶ Consistency of Governance Statement	The Governance Statement was consistent with our understanding of the Council
▶ Public interest report	We had no matters to report in the public interest.
▶ Written recommendations to the Council, which should be copied to the Secretary of State	We had no matters to report.
▶ Other actions taken in relation to our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014	We had no matters to report.

Area of Work	Conclusion
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Reporting to the National Audit Office (NAO) on our review of the Council's Whole of Government Accounts return (WGA).	We had no matters to report.
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As a result of the above we have also:

Area of Work	Conclusion
Issued a report to those charged with governance of the Council communicating significant findings resulting from our audit.	Our Audit Results Report was issued on 18 September 2017
Issued a certificate that we have completed the audit in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice.	Our certificate was issued on 26 September 2017.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council's staff for their assistance during the course of our work.

Stephen Clark

Partner
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Purpose



Purpose

The Purpose of this Letter

The purpose of this annual audit letter is to communicate to Members and external stakeholders, including members of the public, the key issues arising from our work, which we consider should be brought to the attention of the Council.

We have already reported the detailed findings from our audit work in our 2016/17 Audit Results Report to the 18 September 2017 Executive Board, representing those charged with governance. We do not repeat those detailed findings in this letter. The matters reported here are the most significant for the Council.



Responsibilities

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Appointed Auditor

Our 2016/17 audit work has been undertaken in accordance with the Audit Plan that we issued on 2 March 2017 and is conducted in accordance with the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), and other guidance issued by the National Audit Office.

As auditors we are responsible for:

- ▶ Expressing an opinion:
 - ▶ On the 2016/17 financial statements; and
 - ▶ On the consistency of other information published with the financial statements.
- ▶ Forming a conclusion on the arrangements the Council has to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- ▶ Reporting by exception:
 - ▶ If the annual governance statement is misleading or not consistent with our understanding of the Council;
 - ▶ Any significant matters that are in the public interest;
 - ▶ Any written recommendations to the Council, which should be copied to the Secretary of State; and
 - ▶ If we have discharged our duties and responsibilities as established by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Code of Audit Practice.

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office (NAO) on your Whole of Government Accounts return. The Council is below the specified audit threshold of £350 million. Therefore, we did not perform any audit procedures on the return.

Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is responsible for preparing and publishing its statement of accounts accompanied by an Annual Governance Statement. In the AGS, the Council reports publicly each year on how far it complies with its own code of governance, including how it has monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in year, and any changes planned in the coming period.

The Council is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Financial Statement Audit



Financial Statement Audit

Key Issues

The Council's Statement of Accounts is an important tool for the Council to show how it has used public money and how it can demonstrate its financial management and financial health.

We audited the Council's Statement of Accounts in line with the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), and other guidance issued by the National Audit Office and issued an unqualified audit report on the 14 September 2017.

Our detailed findings were reported to the 18 September 2017 Executive Board.

The key issues identified as part of our audit were as follows:

Significant Risk	Conclusion
<p>Management override of controls</p> <p>A risk present on all audits is that management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly, and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.</p> <p>Auditing standards require us to respond to this risk by testing the appropriateness of journals, testing accounting estimates for possible management bias and obtaining an understanding of the business rationale for any significant unusual transactions.</p>	<p>We tested the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in preparing the financial statements;</p> <p>We tested a sample of journal entries across the year based on appropriate risk based criteria to identify potential manipulation of revenue;</p> <p>We reviewed accounting estimates for evidence of management bias as identified in the response to revenue recognition;</p> <p>We evaluated the business rationale for any significant unusual transactions. No such transactions were identified; and</p> <p>We reviewed the accounting adjustments processed and disclosed in the Movement in Reserves Statement and supporting notes.</p> <p>We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override.</p> <p>We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.</p> <p>We did not identify any other transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Council's normal course of business</p>

Revenue and expenditure recognition

Auditing standards also required us to presume that there is a risk that revenue and expenditure may be misstated due to improper recognition or manipulation.

We respond to this risk by reviewing and testing material revenue and expenditure streams and revenue cut-off at the year end.

We reviewed and tested revenue and expenditure recognition policies;

We reviewed accounting estimates for evidence of management bias. This included testing of expenditure accruals and provisions;

We reviewed the financial statements for evidence of significant or unusual transactions. No such transactions were identified;

We tested a sample of income and expenditure transactions from other service expenditure streams including year-end debtor and creditor balances;

We tested cut-off of income and expenditure at the year-end; and

We conducted testing to identify any unrecorded liabilities at the year-end.

Our testing has not revealed any material misstatements with respect to revenue and expenditure recognition.

Overall our audit work did not identify any issues or unusual transactions which indicated that there had been any misreporting of the Council's financial position.

The Council's Statement of Accounts is an important tool for the Council to show how it has used public money and how it can demonstrate its financial management and financial health.

Our application of materiality

When establishing our overall audit strategy, we determined a magnitude of uncorrected misstatements that we judged would be material for the financial statements as a whole.

Item	Thresholds applied
Planning materiality and Reporting threshold	We planned out audit procedures using a materiality of £845,120. We reassessed materiality on receipt of the financial statements and performed our procedures using a materiality of £973,440 which was an increase from the planning. The threshold for reporting audit differences is £48,500. The basis of our assessment of materiality has remained consistent with prior years at 2 % of gross expenditure.

We also identified the following areas where misstatement at a level lower than our overall materiality level might influence the reader. For these areas we developed an audit strategy specific to these areas. The areas identified and audit strategy applied include:

- Remuneration disclosures including any severance payments, exit packages and termination benefits
- Related party transactions
- Members Allowances

We evaluate any uncorrected misstatements against both the quantitative measures of materiality discussed above and in light of other relevant qualitative considerations.

A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of a stack of coins. The coins are stacked vertically, with some showing their edges and others showing their faces. The lighting is warm, highlighting the metallic texture and the ridges on the edges. A bright yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "Value for Money".

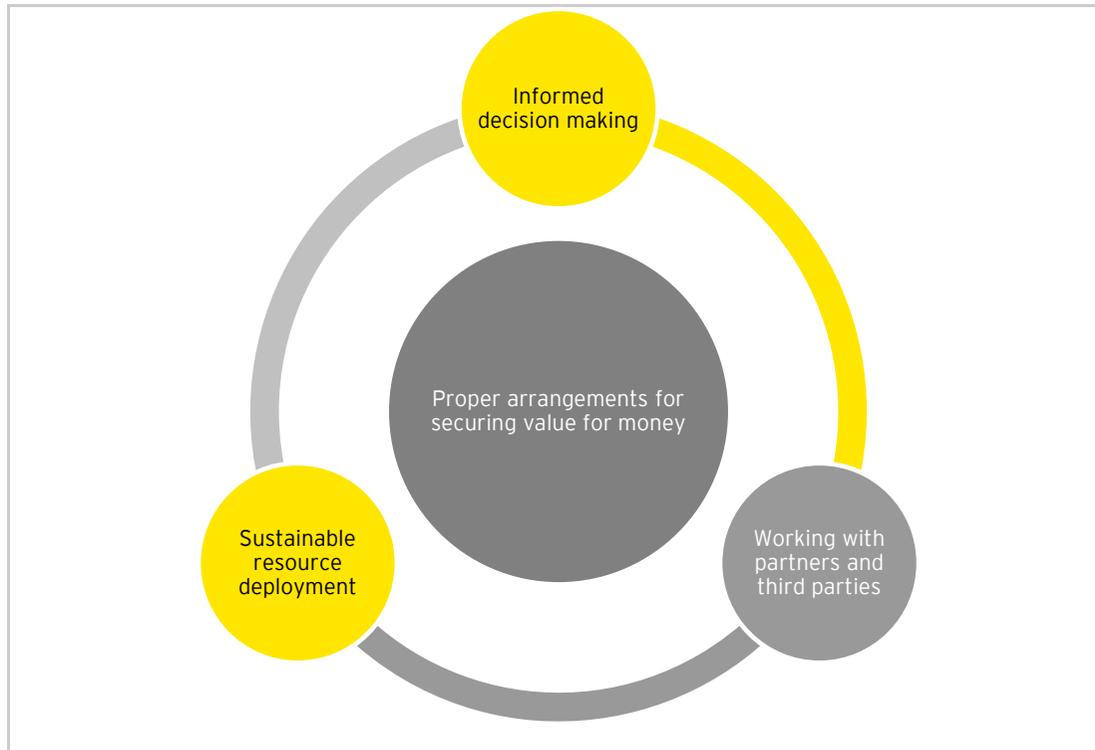
Value for Money

Value for Money

We are required to consider whether the Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. This is known as our value for money conclusion.

Proper arrangements are defined by statutory guidance issued by the National Audit Office. They comprise your arrangements to:

- Take informed decisions;
- Deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and
- Work with partners and other third parties.



We did not identify any significant risks in relation to these criteria. We did not identify any significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements. We therefore issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 26 September 2017.



Other Reporting Issues

Other Reporting Issues

Whole of Government Accounts

We performed the procedures required by the National Audit Office on the accuracy of the consolidation pack prepared by the Council for Whole of Government Accounts purposes. We had no issues to report.

The Council is below the specified audit threshold of £350 million. Therefore, we did not perform any audit procedures on the consolidation pack.

Annual Governance Statement

We are required to consider the completeness of disclosures in the Council's annual governance statement, identify any inconsistencies with the other information of which we are aware from our work, and consider whether it is misleading.

We completed this work and did not identify any areas of concern

Report in the Public Interest

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether, in the public interest, to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit in order for it to be considered by the Council or brought to the attention of the public.

We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a report in the public interest.

Written Recommendations

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to designate any audit recommendation as one that requires the Council to consider it at a public meeting and to decide what action to take in response.

We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a written recommendation.

Objections Received

We did not receive any objections to the 2016/17 financial statements from member of the public.

Other Powers and Duties

We identified no issues during our audit that required us to use our additional powers under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Independence

We communicated our assessment of independence in our Audit Results Report to the Audit Committee on 24 August 2017. In our professional judgement the firm is independent and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff has not been compromised within the meaning regulatory and professional requirements.

Control Themes and Observations

As part of our work, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, we are required to communicate to you significant deficiencies in internal control identified during our audit.

We have adopted a fully substantive approach and have therefore not tested the operation of controls

Appendix A

Audit Fees



Appendix A Audit Fees

Our fee for 2016/17 is in line with the scale fee set by the PSAA and reported in our Audit Plan and Annual Results Report.

Description	Final Fee 2017 £
Total Audit Fee - Code work	42,361
Total Audit Fee - Certification of Housing Benefits-	10,005
Certification of the capital pooling return	2,000

EY | Assurance | Tax | Transactions | Advisory

Ernst & Young LLP

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ED None

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Agenda Item No 7

Executive Board

20 November 2017

Report of the Chief Executive

Key Corporate Issues

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to draw Members' attention to the key Corporate issues facing the Council in the mid-term future. It seeks to assist Members in addressing these issues during the finalisation of the 2018/19 Corporate Plan and Budget and thereafter.

Recommendation to the Council

That the issues raised in this report be taken into consideration by Members when preparing the Corporate Plan and Budget for 2018/19 and beyond.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Many of the key issues in this report have been the subject of discussions in various Board meetings and with political groups.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 Members have already agreed the Financial Strategy 2018-22 and consequently in broad terms many of the issues referred to below are within Members' knowledge.
- 3.2 The purpose of the report is to give Members a strategic overview of the main issues affecting the Council to aid both short term decision making and medium term planning.
- 3.3 In putting this report together, I have used information given to Members in previous years so, hopefully, much of the content will be familiar.
- 3.4 As always though, there have been significant changes and developments since the last report.

4 **Snapshot of the Borough**

- 4.1 It is perhaps useful to start with a brief description of North Warwickshire, as it is today.
- 4.2 It is a rural former mining area which had had virtually no population growth over the last twenty years, but the growth that is significantly higher than historically is now underway.
- 4.3 This change has been reflected in the Council's new Corporate Narrative, agreed at the September Council meeting.
- 4.4 In employment terms, it is very popular due to its strategic position on the transport network. This includes A5, M6, M42, M6 Toll, West Coast Mainline, two rail-served major logistics sites, located between Birmingham and East Midlands Airports and bordering the cities of Birmingham and Coventry, in addition to the large towns of Nuneaton and Tamworth.
- 4.5 Due to its location, the economic connections go in a number of directions, namely towards Greater Birmingham (including South Staffordshire); Leicestershire (particularly Hinckley & Bosworth) and the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region.
- 4.6 Because of this, there is a great deal of inward and outward job migration.
- 4.7 Despite its key strategic position in the country, North Warwickshire does still have a significant issue with communication and access. This has, to some extent, been addressed by the setting up of rural hubs around the Borough, which have also helped compensate for the loss of some key services, eg, libraries, but there is still an underlying issue around Broadband access (although this has greatly improved with the Council and other agencies providing significant investment) and rural transport, particularly, but not exclusively, in relation to accessibility to local employment. The accessibility issue is also key in relation to the fact that we have an ageing population and financial constraints which are pulling more and more key services out of rural areas and into towns and cities.

5 **Key External Issues Affecting North Warwickshire**

- 5.1 As with any organisation, external factors have a huge impact on what the Council can and cannot do and its direction of travel. This next section looks at the various external issues which may affect the Borough over the next few years.

5.2 Political

5.2.1 For the last few years and driven largely by the economy, there has been a continuing drive for reduction in public service levels. Linked to this, there has been a relaxation of regulation, particularly over Planning, and, of particular relevance for North Warwickshire, a national push for housing and economic growth and the emergence of HS2 as a national infrastructure project.

5.2.2 This potentially means that national policy issues will leave us with even less money as an organisation, whilst dealing with the effects of a major infrastructure project running right through the Borough and increasing demands to develop the Borough (both in terms of housing and employment land) to meet national and regional as well as local requirements.

5.3 Economic

5.3.1 There is a distinct overlap between political and economic issues and, helped by the national drive to build more housing, there has been an upsurge in the demand for residential development in areas around the Borough. This is likely to have a significant impact on what North Warwickshire will look like in the future.

5.3.2 That demand is coming from within the Borough and also from Tamworth, Birmingham and, to some extent, Coventry too.

5.3.3 In addition to the housing demand, however, there are other economic pressures on our borders. Birmingham Airport has already made overtures about expansion and continues to do so, HS2 is underway and there is a need for a lot more strategic allocations of employment land in the West Midlands.

5.3.4 Government policy expects Councils to embrace this growth, encouraged with incentives such as Business Rate income (although it is still unclear how and when this will work following the proposed move to 100% funding) and New Homes Bonus.

5.3.5 The other side of the coin is that the growth will put additional strains on the infrastructure of the Borough and on the provision of public services by a number of agencies, whether it is schools, policing, health services, social care, refuse collection or a host of other issues.

5.3.6 Planning agreements with Developers are important in terms of helping to meet the increased needs generated by future growth on a range of services. The funds derived from such agreements are, however, highly unlikely to be sufficient to resolve all issues. The Council has made the provision of sufficient infrastructure an important issue and this will bring challenges of its own for the Council as there will be capacity demands on a limited pot of Developer contributions. Clarity of priority will be essential.

5.4 Social

5.4.1 North Warwickshire has a higher than average demographic profile, with a relatively low proportion of 20-39 year olds. There is already a national issue about how the public sector will cope with our ageing population moving into the future and North Warwickshire's demands are likely to become acute more quickly, simply because of that demographic profile.

5.4.2 In terms of employment opportunities for younger people in the Borough, there is no shortage of jobs, but many of them are relatively low paid. In terms of skills, school results are generally improving in the Borough, but there is still work to be done around linking the skills that people have to employer requirements, with engineering being a particular issue, as it is nationally. Proposed allocations in the Local Plan seek to address this by supporting high tech employers such as MIRA, but the Council will continue to face pressure to release land for logistics.

5.4.3 The ongoing issue of rural isolation continues to be a factor in terms of, for example, access to services for older people and access to employment for younger ones, as well as those people without their own private transport. The improving broadband provision and the establishment of hubs around the Borough has made some impact on this issue.

5.5 Technical

5.5.1 Since 2012, the availability of Superfast Broadband has increased from just 50% of the Borough having access, to 85% at the end of Contract 1 in July 2016 and is predicted to be 96.3% once Contract 2 is completed in Autumn 2018. Additional BDUK grant and match funding from this Council and the County Council is expected to take coverage to 98% of Warwickshire. However, due to the rural nature of the Borough, it is likely to have a higher proportion of people and premises which are unable to access Superfast Broadband. Whilst ways of addressing this shortfall are being investigated, we need to be mindful of the impact this will have on those not served going into the future.

6 Internal Issues

6.1 North Warwickshire Borough Council has been in existence for over forty years and prides itself on delivering effective and efficient local services to meet local need. This has been more and more challenging over the last few years as finances have continued to diminish, but the authority has been peer assessed as “punching far beyond its weight”. This section looks at North Warwickshire Borough Council as an organisation and the challenges it might face over the next few years.

6.2 Partnership

6.2.1 The financial constraints applying to the Council also affect many other bodies in the public and third sectors. This has sharpened the thinking of many organisations in terms of working in partnership and this Council has a good track record of achieving impressive results through partnership. This was picked up in the Council’s Peer Challenge in 2013, with examples around the Welfare Reform Agenda particularly highlighted. There are many others, eg:-

- Maximising public building usage by having other agencies in the Council offices, most notably the co-located Job Centre, Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire County Council officers;
- Sharing the Building Control Service with Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council;
- Shared management of Revenues & Benefits, also with Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council;
- A number of joint leisure partnerships with local schools and, most particularly, the dual-use agreements operating in respect of Coleshill Leisure Centre and Polesworth Sports Centre;
- Joint working on HS2 and economic development;
- Partnership arrangements with key local parishes around the ongoing development of community hubs;
- Running an expanding food operation under the “Ediblelinks” branding, delivered by the Healthy Living Network, in partnership with the private sector. This is supporting vulnerable customers and community groups, predominantly across the north of the County since 2013;

- North Warwickshire Community Partnership, which is providing a local strategic oversight of achieving improvements on priorities for education attainment, health and poverty;
- The LEADER Project, undertaken in partnership with organisations in the business and third sector, as well as with Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council;
- The Warwickshire North Health & Wellbeing Partnership, working across the area of the Warwickshire North Clinical Commissioning Group on health-related issues;
- Sharing or employing staff from neighbouring local authorities on a part-time or short-term basis in areas where we lack expertise or capacity (eg, engineering, recycling promotion, land valuations and project management);
- The HEART Partnership with Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby Borough Councils and Warwickshire County Council;
- Warwickshire Third and Public Sector Partnership Group; and
- The partnership with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, through which the Borough's four local nature reserves are managed and community engagement encouraged.

6.2.2 It is important that the authority continues to look to use partnerships for opportunities to both maintain/enhance services and make financial savings, but, equally important, is that we use them to ensure that North Warwickshire has a voice. North Warwickshire Borough Council is small in population terms and, as a result, did not always find itself at the table in terms of bigger strategic issues. This situation is starting to change significantly as the Council became a full member of the LEP, as well as a Non-Constituent Member of the West Midlands Combined Authority in 2017.

6.2.3 As a result of this, we have been in a better position to get more recognition given to our strategic importance and to push, for example, the need to improve the A5.

6.2.4 As the economy takes off and there is increasing demand for space to construct new housing and employment sites, the Council needs to constantly consider how it can best influence that agenda. The geography that affects us is bigger than the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP, as much of the pressure on North Warwickshire is coming from across the border in Greater Birmingham (which includes Southern Staffordshire).

- 6.2.5 As Members are aware, the emerging Local Plan needs to deal with the development pressures from outside our boundaries.
- 6.2.6 Whilst it is for this Council to decide how it wants to deal with the opportunities and threats coming from any economic upsurge (within requirements of the national policy framework), it will be important to ensure that we have mechanisms for ensuring that our voice is listened to and, indeed, whether we are in the right partnerships at all.
- 6.2.7 The major new factor at a local level coming out of the Government's devolution agenda has been the emergence of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). This has started to change much of the thinking around strategic partnership working and whilst the Borough is an even smaller cog in the wheel, our Non-Constituent Membership creates more opportunity to have a seat at the table on key initiatives and we have secured positions of influence on bodies looking at HS2 and devolution. In deciding where to deploy spare and diminishing resources, the Council has taken the view that this new player cannot be ignored.

7 **Stakeholders**

- 7.1 This is a brief section on who our stakeholders are and what their aspirations might be.

7.2 Politicians

- 7.2.1 Members' aspirations will continue to be constrained by diminishing resources which means that it is highly unlikely whether we can continue to run "business as usual" right across the board.

- 7.2.2 Members will, therefore, continue to have some difficult choices to make over priorities going forward.

7.3 Staff

- 7.3.1 We continue to have a relatively well-motivated, stable and dedicated workforce and largely deliver services in-house, despite the challenges caused by the ongoing financial reductions. (This includes redundancies as services are cut back.) As the economy and local opportunities have changed, there has been greater external movement in staff which can create difficulties in recruiting to our more senior vacancies in a number of key areas in what are already small teams. In addition, despite using a number of successful initiatives to reduce short term sickness levels, the overall position remains a concern, although recent statistics, particularly in relation to long-term sickness, are encouraging.

7.3.2 Staffing changes create both opportunities and problems. Staff development through training, including for professional qualifications, apprenticeships, etc, and particularly looking at our future leaders, is an area that needs to be given proper consideration, as ways of ensuring that we both recruit and retain our best staff.

7.3.3 Underlying these issues though, the fact is that the workforce is, as stated above, well-motivated and dedicated and, in addition, highly-experienced, which has been of great benefit to the Council as staffing numbers have reduced in previous years. The pace of change is accelerating all the time and it is crucial that, as there are changes to employment practices such as digitisation and more commercial approaches to service delivery, we help staff through the transition process.

7.4 Local Community

7.4.1 Whilst there have been significant cuts in Council spending over the last few years, these have only recently started to filter through to delivery of front-line services.

7.4.2 It is difficult to see how it will be possible to continue to deliver everything going into the next few years and Members know that they will have to make some difficult choices. There will be some interesting challenges with the local community, if and when things stop happening. Local communities have an understandable passion for those services that they value and it is going to be vital to have absolute clarity about the direction the Council is going in and consulting and getting coherent and consistent messages out well in advance of taking any action.

7.4.3 To help in this process, the Council has reviewed its communications policies and practices and agreed a number of reports at the last Executive Board meeting, including the need to develop a new Communications Strategy.

7.4.4 The Housing Division works closely with its tenants and specifically the Borough Wide Tenants' Forum to deliver the Council's landlord services. The Forum provides for a scrutiny role and supports the Division in policy development.

7.5 External Partners

7.5.1 We work with a number of organisations across the public and voluntary sectors, as well as with local businesses. Frequently, the Borough Council itself is perceived to be a partner of choice.

7.5.2 Many of these organisations are reviewing how they provide and deliver services and often the Council is seen as a long-stop when local services disappear. Whilst there are some really good examples where this makes sense (eg, providing accommodation for phlebotomy and physiotherapy services locally) we will always try and look for efficiencies through partnership working. What the Borough Council cannot do is pick up work that was mainstream for other organisations on a regular basis in order that they do not stop altogether. There will often be a real temptation to do this but, in the long-term, it is just not sustainable.

8 **Key Service Issues**

8.1 **Housing Services**

8.1 These fall into Statutory Services (private sector housing standards, homelessness, mandatory disabled facilities grants, stray dogs); Regulated Services (Council's landlord services – management and maintenance) and Non-Statutory Services (including Borough Care, Pest Control and CCTV in Atherstone).

8.1.1 Key Challenges

- The provisions set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 come into effect on 1 April 2018. These present significant changes to the Council's legal services for homeless applicants.
- We are still awaiting the outcome of the Housing & Planning Act provisions with regard to the finances for our own stock however it is likely that fixed term tenancies will be introduced as a mandatory requirement in the new financial year.
- Continuing and potentially increasing demand, from households with difficult financial issues which could be exacerbated by rising interest rates and the roll out of welfare reforms. Some of the demand will be met by shared housing provided in the private sector. The Private Sector Housing Team will face challenges with regard to property conditions, monitoring licenced premises, ensuring suitable housing standards and the need for enforcement.

- There is a requirement to support the health and social care economy to make savings and act efficiently. We are well placed to support this agenda as part of a joint Housing Board which is part of the Warwickshire Better Together partnership arrangements however true partnership working remains underdeveloped in most areas.
- The HEART contractual partnership which delivers home adaptations and improvements to support the warm and well agenda is now fully established. A joint policy to provide grants has been agreed which supports the holistic purpose of this service.
- As a landlord, maintaining our 30 year Business Plan in the context of:-
 - (a) Dealing with the impact of more Right to Buy sales;
 - (b) Collecting rent in the face of Welfare Reforms and changes to rent restructuring; and
 - (c) Being able to let single person flats in the face of the shared room rate limits for under 35s.
- In terms of stock maintenance, we need to balance making a contribution to providing homes both strategically in partnership and through delivery of our own stock on the one hand whilst, on the other, not impacting on our ability to provide high quality homes through our existing stock. Health and safety compliance for the stock and tenants is a critical area of work.
- Promoting the Borough Care Service generally and seeking partnership work is challenging in the face of both local and national competition. However, progress is being made.

8.2 **Revenues & Benefits and Customer Services**

8.2.1 As mentioned above, the current economic position is still having a significant impact, particularly on those on low income, as welfare reforms that started in 2011 continue to take effect. There are, however, some positive signs:-

- The Council has been able to retain its Council Tax Support scheme at a maximum level of 91.5% since introducing it in 2013 (in the best 25% schemes nationally), along with other discount and exemption changes that are raising increased income. Despite these changes, which have resulted in higher bills, the Council has returned its highest ever collection rates in respect of Council Tax in 2016/17, placing it 55th of 329

Councils nationally and, in respect of Business Rates, is in the top ten performing Councils in the country. This saw the service being recognised as the Public Sector Collections Team of the Year in 2016.

- Our Benefits caseload has steadily fallen from a peak in 2012 by nearly 15%. This can be attributed in part to the number of job opportunities in the area and less pensioners claiming support.
- Local Partnership initiatives such as the Community Hubs and the Food Hub are helping local communities access help and advice, as well as supporting activities that support wider financial inclusion and increasingly health-related ambitions.
- A positive trend is showing that more of our customers are choosing to pay by electronic methods where direct debit isn't preferred and more on-line services are being used, which has seen a reduction in telephone calls received.

8.2.2 Challenges include:-

- Those unemployed and left on the unemployment register will need significant support to be work ready. Many are currently in receipt of disability benefits that currently do not require them to work. This remains under ongoing review and initiatives are being delivered to help people into or nearer work, alongside the DWP and with other internal/external partners, a number of which have taken place in the Community Hubs.
- Further Welfare Reforms are planned for 2017 onwards. These will have a particular impact on tenants on social housing that will make collecting Housing Rents, Council Tax and Housing Benefit overpayments more challenging.
- The moving target of the delayed Universal Credit programme finally started in June 2017 and will be rolled-out across all four job centres covering North Warwickshire by May 2018. It is expected to now be fully rolled-out by 2022. This, alongside the ongoing annual cuts in benefits subsidy from the Government, will make the service increasingly more expensive to run and is making workforce planning more difficult. This has and continues to create uncertainty for staff due to both moving timescales and reductions in staffing capacity as funding is withdrawn.

- Workloads are becoming more complex as the welfare changes are increasingly requiring the Council to recover money from very low paid or unemployed residents with fewer resources. At the same time, funding for advice agencies such as CAB is reducing at a time that levels of personal debt in the area are increasing. The Council is addressing these challenges through the ongoing and effective work of the North Warwickshire Community Partnership and its Financial Inclusion Partnership.
- Decisions need to continue to be reviewed on an annual basis regarding whether or not the Council can afford to maintain the current level of Council Tax Support and whether we can continue with initiatives such as the Food Hub and support of the Hubs as funding reduces.
- There are anticipated further changes to statutory regimes expected, particularly in respect of the administration of Business Rates. These are requiring increasing new demands and responsibilities to be taken on from 2017 that has seen the implementation of an increasing number of localised rate relief schemes to offset the impact of the revaluation. There is also the phased introduction of Universal Credit and further welfare changes to implement, as stated above, and we are currently undertaking a review of all Council Tax overpayment and rent arrear levels, as we are now dealing with people who can't, as opposed to won't pay, which is creating new challenges as to how we help these residents.
- Work that the Council has already put in place through its Financial Inclusion Partnership and, in particular, work with key partners in the DWP and Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council, should help us to help our residents "to do more to help themselves" and engage with greater online and remote support than was previously necessary. It cannot be understated how challenging this is as it is creating significant additional demands at a time of ongoing and reduced resource levels.

8.3 **Planning**

8.3.1 I have referred to the overall planning position in previous sections, but specific up and coming challenges include:-

- Getting the new draft Local Plan adopted, so as to provide a strong spatial strategy for the growth agenda.

- Dealing with a sustained increase in major planning applications and managing new development on a significant scale, so as to deliver new infrastructure and to integrate with existing communities.
- HS2 – dealing with the implications as Phase 1 has started to be constructed and working with the community to lobby Government on Phase 2, which was announced recently.
- Continuing to deal with changes in the planning system, particularly those affecting affordable housing and the general reduction in the number of development proposals that come to the Council for decision.
- Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, WMCA and Joint Committee – continuing to develop a role and maximising funding opportunities, linked to better working with Warwickshire County Council to produce “pipeline” projects for funding.
- Developing a coherent economic development picture for the Borough – based on the report carried out for the three A5 Councils following the LGA Peer Reviews and advice from LEADER Consultants and linked to the Birmingham, Tamworth, Coventry, HS2 and LEP issues above.

8.4 **Leisure & Community Development**

- 8.4.1 The key issue for the Division over the next twelve months will be the implementation of the agreed outcomes of the Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Strategy, the Leisure Facilities Strategy, Green Space Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy, which together will provide the long-term framework and strategic direction for the Borough Council's involvement in these important aspects of service provision. These strategies, which each take account of predicted population and housing growth over the next fifteen years, will have profound implications for the nature of services to be provided for and within the local economy.

8.4.2 Particular challenges for the Borough Council exist in the following areas of activity:-

- The increase in the importance of landscapes and open space functions. Whilst much has been achieved through the first Green Space and Playing Pitch Strategies, there is still a lot to do, most particularly in ensuring that the quality of provision meets local need and demand. Much of this work will require partnerships to be established with community and voluntary sector organisations, the majority of which are not used to, or prepared for, taking an active role in the development of important public assets. . Examples of effective local practice now exist, however, and further progress will be needed in order to ensure the provision of linked and locally valued green space, enhanced play provision for children and young people, and better quality grass and non-turf playing pitches served by appropriate ancillary accommodation. There is also a need to resolve the longer-term future of Atherstone Football Ground.
- Determining the future of leisure facility provision across North Warwickshire, including the location and appropriateness of the authority's current sports and leisure facilities. There is a need to resolve the future of Arley Sports Centre which has already been the subject of much debate, both politically and within local communities, but the dual-use agreement relating to Polesworth Sports Centre concludes in December 2018 and a decision will need to be made about future provision on this site. The Strategic Leisure Review process has highlighted that progress has been made in respect of the improved operational efficiency of the authority's leisure facilities, but this trend must continue whilst longer-term decisions are made about the shape of future leisure facility provision.
- The continued implementation of the "new way of working" in Community Development through which activity will primarily be targeted in certain locations and in which communities will become central to the identification of their own needs and the means by which those needs will be met. Initially at least, activity will be targeted into Atherstone/Mancetter, Dordon and Arley and Whitacre and its scope will be more limited than in previous years (Community Safety, Health Improvement and Rural Regeneration). The Division will need to better engage partners and communities in service design, development and delivery and to focus its work on longer-term engagement within areas of greatest need.

- Ensuring that “health and wellbeing” is further embedded as a central theme of work across the Division and more corporately.
- Ensuring the enhanced operational efficiency of all aspects of service provision, including the need for a more overtly commercial approach to elements of service delivery, most particularly in respect of the operation of the leisure facilities.
- The reintroduction of a proactive tree management and inspection service for the first time since 2011.
- The continued effective management of the local LEADER programme, in conjunction with Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, including the need to ensure the realisation of projects that meet the priorities of DEFRA and the European Union, as well as those of the Local development Strategy.
- Ensuring the delivery of a growing programme of special events, through which to promote the priorities of the Borough Council, including, for example, the Women’s Tour Cycle Race.

8.5 **Corporate Services** (including **Information Services, Procurement, Communications & Central Administration**)

8.5.1 Key projects, issues and challenges include:-

- Understanding and responding to the impact of Brexit on Procurement regulation and practices.
- Dealing with the conflict we have due to the requirements on us around security and compliance, balanced against business/customer demand and the need for innovation, openness and transparency.
- Working to prevent cyber security incidents affecting the Council through staff training and technical measures, whilst ensuring systems are fit for purpose and information is accessible.
- Supporting corporate work on implementing the General Data Protection Regulations, which is a major new statutory requirement.
- Investigating what staff and Members need from ‘personal productivity’ software and planning for when the Microsoft software we currently use goes out of support.

- Developing online services and making their provision central to how we do things. Government is pushing “digital by default” and moving towards online, digital only services.
- Opening up public information (Open data) for others to use and to see in response to the Transparency Agenda. There is still a lack of evidence of real demand, but it is likely to increase.
- The need for pervasive and fast broadband and mobile data coverage, accessible/usable online services and skills. The Council’s support to extend Broadband and access via the hubs has moved things forward significantly but there is still a lot to do.
- The drive to use ICT to help us manage, tailor and personalise customer services and information.
- Understanding as an organisation and exploiting technology changes and particularly the next developments of the internet – more connected, more mobile, more location and situation aware technology “the internet of things”.
- Technology and social media will continue to change the way we communicate and how people engage and interact with us and we will need to be up to speed and able to respond.
- Managing the tension between keeping technology and business applications working and the need to innovate, experiment and take risks, with fewer resources and less budget.

8.6 **Finance & Human Resources**

8.6.1 The Finance & Human Resources Division has a number of key tasks/projects to deal with, some of which support the action referred to in the section on the Council’s Financial position set out later, including:-

(a) Finance

- Understanding proposed changes to external funding received by the Council, including the impact of a move to 100% business rate retention, changes to the allocations of New Homes Bonus and specific grants and the impact of the HS2 project.

- Forecasting movements in the collection of Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) as a result of the 2017 Valuation and changes in the economy.
- Managing the Medium Term Financial Strategy and savings targets and assisting service divisions to assess the financial implications of savings proposals.
- Forecasting the financial impact of the Housing and Planning Act on the Council's thirty year Business Plan and assisting with information to ensure ongoing sustainability.
- Managing capital funding and projecting future resource issues.
- Assisting with the financial aspects of key projects, eg, the Depot refurbishment/replacement.
- Completing the implementation of the payroll system with Coventry City Council and starting to assess the viability of the current finance system going forward.

(b) Human Resources

- Maintenance of Health and Safety systems of control, despite pressure on resources.
- Assisting service divisions with the management of attendance and ensuring that Occupational Health is accessed as effectively as possible.
- Retention of key staff, particularly if the economy improves.
- Monitoring capacity issues across the organisation and assisting with the exploration and implementation of new ways of working.
- Ongoing staffing issues which can take up significant resources.

8.7 **Streetscape**

8.7.1 **Priorities/Challenges**

8.7.2 The pressures on frontline Streetscape services continue to increase, most notably in Refuse & Recycling, but also in other areas. The costs of recycling are increasing and the planned levels of new housing development in the Borough will stretch existing services such as waste management, street cleaning and grounds maintenance. Areas which will require further attention and action are:-

- Garden waste collections (including households with additional bins).
- Kerbside recycling service (including looking at ways to minimise the cost of processing recyclable material).
- Options to reduce the impact of high material recycling facility gate fees, storage and haulage costs.
- Explore different options for the future location of operational centres for the Council's frontline services and the associated impact on how the Council continues to repair and maintain its vehicle fleet.
- Start to prepare for the move away from traditional fuels for motor vehicles and assess the future impact on the Council's transport fleet and the infrastructure requirements to support private motorists.
- Review of refuse & recycling collection frequencies and methods.
- Investigating ways to increase efficiencies in street cleaning and grounds maintenance.
- Options for compensating for the loss of public toilets.
- Preparing the financial business model and the subsequent enforcement and capacity implications of off-street parking provision following the eventual implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) within North Warwickshire.

- Continuing to service, repair and, where appropriate, refurbish the Council's corporate property assets to ensure that our buildings are safe, well-maintained, sustainable, accessible and fit-for-purpose.
- Work with other public sector partners to rationalise property and other assets to enable local services to be delivered in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible through programmes such as One Public Estate.

8.8 **Democratic Services**

8.8.1 The new Electoral Registration system continues to take a lot of staff time and there has also been an increase in democratic activity as Neighbourhood Plan referenda roll out, as well as the additional General Election this year.

8.9 **Environmental Health/Licensing**

8.9.1 One problematic licensed premises was shut last year. The Team has also seen an increased number of food premises.

8.9.2 Fly-tipping is also taking an increasing amount of time and resource to deal with.

8.10 **Other Issues**

8.10.1 Having looked at the main demands and challenges on a service by service basis, there are some other key areas which require a specific mention.

8.11 **Cross-Agency Issues**

8.11.1 The remaining areas are all ones where we work closely with partners often with more resources and wider remits than we have.

(a) **Health & Wellbeing**

Local Government now has direct responsibility for Public Health exercised through the County Health & Wellbeing Board on which we are represented. Health Improvement has been a key concern for the Council over many years and, with a higher age profile than many areas, it is important that we play our role with partners in improving the quality of life of our residents. Many of our functions are health related, eg, Environmental Health, Leisure and Community Development Services and Housing, and we work with partners to look at ways of improving public health and unlocking financial resources. Our resources for getting involved in the bigger health issues are, however, limited and capacity remains a real problem in such a

complex partnership agenda. Looking into the future, the Council needs to give consideration as to how it can maximise its effectiveness in this area as pressures on Health Budgets grow and there is greater pressure (and willingness) on Health Agencies to work more closely and potentially integrate with local government services, particularly but not exclusively, adult social care.

The Borough Council has taken the proactive step to introduce a Health and Wellbeing Working Party, which has led on the production of the authority's first corporate "Health and Wellbeing Action Plan". Over the next twelve months, the Working Party will seek to ensure delivery of the Action Plan priorities, which will impact on many areas of service provision. The authority is also a key partner within the Warwickshire North Health & Wellbeing Partnership and is active at both officer and Member level in the Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Board, which is playing a significant role in trying to facilitate improvements in key health issues.

(b) Community Safety

As with the previous topic, we have a lot of involvement but limited resources to deal with this key issue. The Borough Council has, however, made some important interventions working in partnership, particularly in relation to CCTV and reducing rural crime.

The implementation of the successful Warwickshire Rural Watch Scheme has been developed from the North Warwickshire Reducing Rural Crime Project. The case for prioritising Rural Crime is now well established and is included in the Warwickshire Police & Crime Plan 2016 – 2021. There are external influences, including changes to local Policing structures which require effective partnership arrangements to sustain Making North Warwickshire a Safer Place. Additional work is being developed to help improve road safety in the Borough and to tackle fly-tipping using a multi-agency approach. The Council will, however, need to keep the way it can most effectively contribute to this agenda under review.

(c) Safeguarding

The authority provides a wide range of services to the local community, many of which involve Borough Council staff and Councillors coming into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Members of the public have the right to expect high standards of conduct, integrity and service provision from the Borough Council. Accordingly, the authority recognises that, in the provision of its services, it has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure that it provides its community, including all potentially vulnerable people, with the highest possible standards of care. The development and implementation of its Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policies, along with the associated training for all Councillors and staff, in part ensures that the authority fulfils its obligations in this regard.

It has, however, been necessary for the authority to recognise that “abuse” in its various forms can occur within many situations, formal and informal, including the home, school, work and in voluntary, community and other organisational settings. All organisations providing services for children, young people and vulnerable adults, including the Borough Council, have a role to play in safeguarding the health and welfare of those people in their care. The authority is a member of both the Warwickshire Safeguarding Adults Board and the county-wide Safeguarding Children Board. It takes its safeguarding responsibilities seriously and, as awareness of the risks to vulnerable people grows, the extent of this commitment will also increase.

9 The Council’s Financial Position

- 9.1 Local authority finance has moved from a reliance on government grant to one where finance is linked to growth, either through new housing development which attracts new homes bonus and additional Council Tax, or growth in the business rates base, some of which can be retained by the Council. Authorities that are unable to grow are at risk of becoming financially unsustainable.
- 9.2 Local authority funding is being reviewed. An update of relative spending needs for authorities is being worked on and this, together with a move to 100% retention of business rates by local government, is likely to be implemented from 2020/21. This move will not produce more income for services for authorities as additional responsibilities will be transferred to local government and a number of grants will cease to be paid. However, it will further increase the reliance on growth for individual authorities’ funding. In addition, money has been taken from New Homes Bonus, therefore, funding from this source will reduce and the methodology for its distribution is subject to review.

- 9.3 The amount of funding the Council receives from Government (net of Council Tax Support funding) has fallen by £2.5 million from 2010-11 and now finances only 39% of our net expenditure in 2017-18, as opposed to 55% in 2010-11. At the same time, the Council's budget has reduced by £1.5m in that period. Decisions to freeze Council Tax have reduced Council Tax income by £560,000. In order to compensate for these losses of income, the Council has made savings of £4.1 million in the seven years to 2017-18 and our net expenditure is now £8.4 million.
- 9.4 The Council's financial strategy anticipates further reductions in government funding in the next two years of around 11% pa, with cash standstills in the following two years and requires further savings of £1.6 million by the end of 2021-22 if financial reserves are to be maintained at acceptable levels. Savings of this magnitude cannot be achieved without impacting on service delivery.
- 9.5 The main risks to the Council's financial strategy are as follows:-
- The new Government spending needs assessment reduces the Council's base funding level.
 - Assumptions about future government funding prove to be too optimistic.
 - Successful appeals on business rates means the Council cannot achieve its assumed level of income.
 - Further freezes in Council Tax which permanently erode the Council's income base.
 - Additional new homes are not delivered at the level assumed in the budget (300 pa) resulting in a reduction in New Homes Bonus and Council Tax receipts.
 - The review of New Homes Bonus methodology reduces Council income more than anticipated.
 - The necessary level of savings cannot be achieved to timescale.
 - The national economy deteriorates, resulting in a fall in income and increased costs falling on the Council.
 - Growth in Housing provision increases Council costs.

9.6 If any of these risks materialise, then either savings required will increase substantially or reserves will fall well below the minimum acceptable level of £1.3 million.

10 **Human Resources**

10.1 Whilst this has been mentioned in various sections, particularly section 7.3, it is important that we look after our workforce and ensure that North Warwickshire is seen as an attractive place to work.

10.2 Through its Human Resources Strategy, the Council has worked hard to do this in challenging economic times and, as a result, our workforce has stepped up to the mark. This has been done despite reducing the staffing numbers over a long period and against a backcloth of reducing financial resources. In this environment, service standards have been maintained and the Council in staff surveys is seen as a good employer with morale levels largely being maintained.

11 **Conclusion**

11.1 It is hoped that this report has given Members sufficient information on External factors affecting the Council, Internal issues which they may wish to take account of, including challenges facing individual services, and the requirements and aspirations of stakeholders.

11.2 In addition, when having thought about options for reviewing existing and determining future priorities, Members need to be aware of the resources available to them. That information is also outlined in the report so, hopefully, this provides enough of a framework to enable further discussion and planning to take place in preparation for the next few years.

12 **Report Implications**

12.1 **Finance and Value for Money Implications**

12.1.2 Any new financial implications will be reported as part of the Budget and Corporate Planning processes.

12.2 **Risk Management Implications**

12.2.1 These will be identified as proposals for 2018/19 are developed.

12.2.2 The key issue in this report however is to note the importance of matching the Council's obligations and ambitions with the resources available to it. This issue was also picked up by the Peer Challenge Team.

12.3 **Equalities Implications**

12.3.1 In making major strategic policy and financial decisions, it will be necessary to consider whether an Equality Impact Needs Assessment needs to be carried out.

12.4 **Links to Council's Priorities**

12.4.1 These are referred to in the report.

The Contact Officer for this report is Jerry Hutchinson (719200).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
None			

Agenda Item 8

Executive Board

20 November 2017

**Report of the Assistant Director
(Finance and Human Resources)**

**Budgetary Control Report 2017/18
Period Ended 31 October 2017**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The report covers revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 October 2017. The 2017/2018 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date, are given, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to this Board.

Recommendation to Council

To consider if any further information is required.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Under the Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP), services should be charged with the total cost of providing the service, which not only includes costs and income directly incurred, but also support costs relating to such areas as finance, office accommodation, telephone costs and IT services. The figures contained within this report are calculated on this basis.

3 Overall Position

- 3.1 Net expenditure for those services that report to the Executive Board as at 31 October 2017 is £334,433 compared with a profiled budgetary position of £335,940; an under spend of £1,507. Appendix A to this report provides details of the profiled and actual position for each service reporting to this Board, together with the variance for the period.

- 3.2 Where possible, the budget to date figure has been calculated with some allowance for seasonal variations, in order to give a better comparison with actual figures.

4 Risks to the Budget

- 4.1 The key risk to the budgetary position of the Council from services under the control of this Board is that the Emergency Planning budget of £5,850 may be insufficient to cover the costs of any major local emergency.

...

5 Estimated Out-turn

- 5.1 Members have requested that Budgetary Control Reports provide details on the likely out-turn position for each of the services reporting to this Board. The anticipated out-turn for this Board for 2017/18 is £569,340, the same as the Original Budget.
- 5.2 The figures provided above are based on information available at this time of the year and are the best available estimates for this board, and may change as the financial year progresses. Members will be updated in future reports of any changes to the forecast out turn.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 6.1.1 The Council's budgeted contribution from General Fund balances for the 2017/18 financial year is £589,740. Income and Expenditure will continue to be closely managed and any issues that arise will be reported to this Board for comment.

6.2 Environment and Sustainability Implications

- 6.2.1 The Council has to ensure that it adopts and implements robust and comprehensive budgetary monitoring and control, to ensure not only the availability of services within the current financial year, but in future years.

The Contact Officer for this report is Nigel Lane (719371).

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Executive Board

Budgetary Control Report 2017/2018 as at 31 October 2017

Description	Approved Budget 2017/2018	Profiled Budget October 2017	Actual October 2017	Variance	Comments
	£	£	£	£	
Housing Strategic Service Review	32,440	18,923	18,923	-	
Outreach and Access to Services	118,290	73,424	74,273	849	
Corporate Communications	63,730	36,579	36,229	(351)	
Community Strategy	122,190	71,278	70,439	(838)	
Emergency Planning	41,930	24,459	23,174	(1,285)	
N.Warks Local Development Framework	188,470	109,941	110,059	118	
Support to Parishes	2,290	1,336	1,336	-	
Total Expenditure	569,340	335,940	334,433	(1,507)	

Agenda Item No 9

Executive Board

20 November 2017

Report of the Chief Executive

Calendar of Meetings 2018/19

1 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve a calendar of meetings for 2018/19.

Recommendation to the Council

That the draft calendar of meetings for 2018/19 as submitted at Appendix A to the Chief Executive's report be approved.

2 Report

- ...
- 2.1 A draft calendar of meetings for 2018/19 is submitted as Appendix A.
- 2.2 As with the current calendar of meetings the May Full Council meeting will be a ceremonial meeting with Mayor making and the appointment of Boards as the main business.
- 2.3 Other points to note on the calendar are as follows:-
- a The majority of all main Board meetings will meet on a Monday. Meetings of the Full Council continue to be held on Wednesdays;
 - b Planning and Development Board to meet once each month;
 - c The Resources Board, the Community and Environment Board and the Executive Board to meet at least once a cycle;
 - d A meeting of the Special Sub-Group has been scheduled each month (with the exception of May 2019);
 - e A meeting of the Licensing Committee has been set for the end of January and additional meetings will be arranged on an ad hoc basis;
 - f A number of meetings of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee have been set and the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee will be arranged on an ad-hoc basis;

- g An additional Executive Board and Full Council is scheduled at the end July (25 July 2018 in this case). It is needed to consider audited accounts before the end of July and will be annual requirement; and
- h As a result of the Borough elections 2019, a Full Council is scheduled towards the end of April 2019 to enable Council business for the four year term to be concluded.

3 Report Implications

3.1 There are no report implications.

The Contact Officer for this report is David Harris (719222).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
None			

**NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL
DRAFT MEETINGS TIMETABLE – 2018/19**

	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19
1									BHOL					
2													ELECTIONS	
3					PLAN									RES
4					RES			SAC		PLAN	PLAN			
5							PLAN	COUNCIL			SSG			
6				PLAN			SSG						BHOL	
7	BHOL													
8						PLAN						PLAN		
9	COUNCIL		PLAN			SSG						SSG		
10			SSG					PLAN						PLAN
11		PLAN			SSG			SSG		EXB	CEB			
12							RES			SSG	SAC			
13														
14	PLAN			SSG					PLAN					
15	CEB					CEB			SSG				COUNCIL	
16			CEB											
17			SAC		EXB									EXB
18		EXB												SSG
19		SSG					EXB					BHOL		
20										COUNCIL			PLAN	
21	RES								CEB				CEB	
22	SSG											BHOL		
23														
24												COUNCIL		
25			EXB/COUNCIL					BHOL			RES			
26					COUNCIL			BHOL						COUNCIL
27		COUNCIL		BHOL									BHOL	
28	BHOL								RES					
29									LIC					
30														
31														

EXB - Executive Board
 RES - Resources Board
 CEB - Community and Environment Board
 PLAN - Planning and Development Board

LIC - Licensing Committee
 SAC - Safer Communities Sub-Committee
 SSG - Special Sub-Group
 LDF - Local Development Framework Sub-Committee

Agenda Item No 10

Executive Board

20 November 2017

Report of the Chief Executive

2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the Council's response to the Boundary Commission's latest report published on 17 October 2017 in respect of the 2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review for North Warwickshire.

Recommendation to the Council

- a That the Council confirms its support for the latest proposals published on 17 October 2017 for the North Warwickshire Constituency as set out in the report; and**
- b That the Chief Executive be authorised to write to the Boundary Commission accordingly.**

2 Background

- 2.1 Last year, the Boundary Commission for England published and consulted on initial proposals for new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries.
- 2.2 Nearly 20,000 responses were received by the Boundary Commission for England to that consultation. The next stage of the 2018 Review was that the Boundary Commission for England published all those representations and invited comments on them for the statutory four-week period, until Monday 27 March 2017. Members will be aware that on Wednesday 22 March 2017 the Council resolved

“That North Warwickshire Borough Council supports the Boundary Commission for England’s initial proposals for the North Warwickshire Constituency as published on Tuesday 13 September 2016, and requests the Boundary Commission rejects the alternative proposal by Jim Cunningham MP, and supported by Geoffrey Robinson MP.

3 Next Steps

3.1 On 17 October 2017 the Boundary Commission for England published its latest report for new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries. Details have been circulated to all Members.

3.2 Consultation on the latest proposals is for an eight-week period, from 17 October 2017 to 11 December 2017. The latest report can viewed through the consultation website: www.bce2018.org.uk .

4 **North Warwickshire Constituency**

4.1 The proposals for the North Warwickshire Constituency remain unaltered from the initial report published in 2016. This would result in a Constituency containing the 17 wards from the Borough of North Warwickshire together with the 5 Bedworth wards from the Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth.

5 **Formal Report**

5.1 The Boundary Commission for England BCE is required to make a formal report to the Government during September 2018, recommending any changes that it believes are appropriate to the distribution, size, shape, name or designation of constituencies in England.

5.2 The Government will turn the recommendations of the Boundary Commission for England into draft legislation, which is then presented to Parliament. If Parliament approves the legislation, the recommended changes will be implemented for the next General Election after the date on which the legislation is passed.

The Contact Officer for this report is Jerry Hutchinson (719200).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Boundary Commission	Report	16 October 2017

Agenda Item No 11

Executive Board

20 November 2017

Report of the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive

Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April - September 2017

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the progress with the achievement of the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Executive Board for April to September 2017.

Recommendation to Council

That Members consider the performance achieved and highlight any areas for further investigation.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation has taken place with the relevant Members and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

3 Background

- 3.1 This report shows the second quarter position with the achievement of the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets for 2017/18. This is the second report showing the progress achieved so far during 2017/18.

4 Progress achieved during 2017/18

- 4.1 Attached at Appendices A and B are reports outlining the progress achieved for all the Corporate Plan targets and the performance with the national and local performance indicators during April to September 2017/18 for the Executive Board.

- 4.2 Members will recall the use of a traffic light indicator for the monitoring of the performance achieved.

Red – target not achieved (shown as a red triangle)

Amber – target currently behind schedule and requires remedial action to be achieved (shown as an amber circle)

Green – target currently on schedule to be achieved (shown as a green star)

5 Performance Indicators

- 5.1 The current performance indicators have been reviewed by each division and Management Team for monitoring for the 2017/18 year.

6 Overall Performance

- 6.1 The Corporate Plan performance report shows that 100% of the Corporate Plan targets and 0% of the performance indicator targets are currently on schedule to be achieved. Six of the indicators are on Amber status and require some improvement for the targets to be achieved. The report shows that individual targets that have been classified as red, amber or green. Individual comments from the relevant division have been included where appropriate. The table below shows the following status in terms of the traffic light indicator status:

Corporate Plan

Status	Number	Percentage
Green	12	100%
Amber	0	0%
Red	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Performance Indicators

Status	Number	Percentage
Green	0	0%
Amber	6	75%
Red	2	25%
Total	8	100%

7 Summary

- 7.1 Members may wish to identify any areas that require further consideration where targets are not currently being achieved.

8 Report Implications

8.1 Safer Communities Implications

- 8.1.1 The community safety performance indicators are included in the report.

8.2 Legal and Human Rights Implications

8.2.1 The national indicators were specified by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. They have now been ended and replaced by a single list of data returns to Central Government from April 2011.

8.3 Environment and Sustainability Implications

8.3.1 Improvements in the performance and quality of services will contribute to improving the quality of life within the community. There are a number of targets and indicators included which contribute towards the priorities of the sustainable community strategy including financial inclusion, core strategy, community safety and affordable housing.

8.4 Risk Management Implications

8.4.1 Effective performance monitoring will enable the Council to minimise associated risks with the failure to achieve targets and deliver services at the required performance level.

8.5 Equality Implications

8.5.1 There are a number of contributions towards equality related targets and indicators including, informing customers about opportunities to influence decision making, customer access, consultation, domestic abuse and financial inclusion highlighted in the report.

8.6 Links to Council's Priorities

8.6.1 There are a number of targets and performance indicators contributing towards the priorities of protecting our countryside and heritage, creating safer communities, responsible financial and resource management, supporting employment and businesses and promoting sustainable and vibrant communities.

The Contact Officer for this report is Robert Beggs (719238).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

NWCP Executive Board 17/18

	Action	Priority	Reporting Officer	Quarter 1	Quarter 2 Update	Status	Direction
NWCP 004	To submit the revised Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate in line with the Local Development Scheme	Protecting our Countryside & Heritage	Dorothy Barratt	Work is ongoing to consider the representations following the Regualtion 18 consutlaiotn. An updated LDS will be brought to Board.	A report on all of the representations with a revised Local Plan has been presented to Board and will be considered at Full Council on 7th November.	★ Green	➔
NWCP 005	Whilst continuing to oppose a) the route of HS2 Phase 2b in principle, to press for maximum mitigation and benefits for the Borough, required as a consequence of the HS2 proposal, in partnership with other affected Councils and community action groups and; b) To continue to oppose the principle of Opencast Mining and Mineral Extraction	Protecting our Countryside & Heritage	Dorothy Barratt	a) The route of Phase 2b has now been formally announced. Work on the petitioning process will take place in 2018. b) No recent updates	a) The route of Phase 2b has now been formally announced. Work on the petitioning process will take place in 2018. b) No recent updates	★ Green	➔
NWCP 008	To ensure that the Council is prepared for emergencies and has suitable emergency and business continuity plans, as required by the Civil Contingencies Act, and to review both the emergency and business continuity plans annually in March	Creating Safer Communities	Robert Beggs	Preparations to carry out an emergency exercise are being discussed with the CSWR team. A WLRP event regarding resilience risks associated with pipeline fuel thefts is being arranged in July. Chief Executive attended a SCG for Operation Mantleline in May following the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London.	Work to assess our current business continuity plans has been reported to Management Team including options for the loss of buildings. Within the WLRP preparations for a Recovery workshop leading to a major exercise in March 18 is underway. A table top exercise for the off site COMAH plan for Kingsbury Oil Terminal was carried out in September.	★ Green	➔
NWCP 009	To achieve the savings required by the Budget Strategy including the commitment to keep Council Tax as low as possible and to update the Strategy to reflect future developments by September 2017	Responsible Financial & Resource Management	Sue Garner	Work on savings is in progress.	Work on savings is in progress.	★ Green	➔
NWCP 010	To continue to implement more efficient ways of working, including exploring opportunities for shared working that may arise, with a view to achieving savings and/or increasing capacity	Responsible Financial & Resource Management	Chris Brewer	Shared working with Nuneaton & Bedworth BC on Revenues & Benefits. Exploring a new payroll system with Coventry City Council.	Shared working with Nuneaton & Bedworth BC on Revenues & Benefits. Exploring a new payroll system with Coventry City Council.	★ Green	➔
NWCP 042	To report on the Council's debt and reserves and options for narrowing the Council's capital funding gap by February 2018	Responsible Financial & Resource Management	Sue Garner	An initial review of reserves has been undertaken, but further work will be undertaken later in the year.	An initial review of reserves has been undertaken. Work has started on updating capital requirements.	★ Green	➔
NWCP 076	To update the Medium Term Financial Strategy in September 2017 and February 2018, to take account of external funding changes relating to Business Rates	Responsible Financial & Resource Management	Sue Garner	Updated MTFS is due to be reported at the Sep meeting.	Updated MTFS was reported to the Sept meeting of Executive Board. Business rate income is being monitored.	★ Green	➔
NWCP 078	To continue to work with partner organisations in the Coventry, Warwickshire and Hinckley Joint Committee and to consider further options for joint work in the light of Central Government proposals for greater devolution, if this proves beneficial to the local economy	Supporting Employment & Business	Steve Maxey	The Council is a Non Constituent Member of the West Midlands Combined Authority and involved in a number of work streams. The Joint Committee for Coventry and Warwickshire continues its work, primarily on joint planning issues	The Council is a Non Constituent Member of the West Midlands Combined Authority and involved in a number of work streams. The Joint Committee for Coventry and Warwickshire continues its work, primarily on joint planning issues	★ Green	➔

	Action	Priority	Reporting Officer	Quarter 1	Quarter 2 Update	Status	Direction
NWCP 080	To continue to work with Warwickshire County Council, the Environment Agency and local communities to mitigate the effects of, and protect against, the impacts of localised flooding and to update as part of the quarterly performance reports	Creating Safer Communities	Richard Dobbs/Steve Maxey	Current flood risks are raised at the Warwickshire Strategic Flood Forum. This helps identify strategic priorities for remedial and mitigation measures. Work to move the Fillongley flood warning equipment has been carried out. Local Flood Groups currently meeting in Austrey and Fillongley.	Current flood risks are raised at the Warwickshire Strategic Flood Forum. This helps identify strategic priorities for remedial and mitigation measures. Work to move the Fillongley flood warning equipment has been carried out. Local Flood Groups currently meeting in Austrey and Fillongley.	★ Green	➔
NWCP 092	To ensure we communicate effectively to help inform residents, businesses and all sections of our communities of the Council's services and priorities and made clear the opportunities for them to be involved in decision making via consultation. To take into account the LGA Communications Health-Check and the commitments in the Council's Customer Access Strategy in all aspects of work in this area and to report on progress by May 2018	Promoting Sustainable & Vibrant Communities	Linda Bird/Steve Maxey/Bob Trahern	This work is all in hand and will be reported at appropriate boards at intervals throughout the rest of the financial year	The Communications Review continues. A consultation strategy will be reported to Members in December as part of the work to replace Area Forums with more effective engagement and informing mechanisms	★ Green	➔
NWCP 110	To develop an action plan based on the Economic Review and Impact Assessment and report on progress by March 2018	Supporting Employment & Business	Steve Maxey	The Review has completed and will be reported to the Executive Board in September	The Review was reported to the Executive Board in September. Work is being carried forward in a number of ways, principally through the Local Plan	★ Green	➔
NEW	To adopt an updated Customer Access Strategy (2018 to 2023) by March 2018	Promoting Sustainable & Vibrant Communities	Bob Trahern/Steve Maxey/Linda Bird	Work to update the existing Customer Access Strategy is planned to start in the Autumn with a view to adopting the revised strategy by March as planned.	Work to update the existing Customer Access Strategy is planned to start in the Autumn with a view to adopting the revised strategy by March as planned. This will be informed by the LGA Peer Review report that demonstrated very good results in respect of the Councils overall performance in terms of delivering customer responsive services and satisfaction that was received in July.	★ Green	➔

NWPI Executive Board 17/18

Ref	Description	Section	Priority	Year End Target 2017/18	Outturn 2016/17	April - Sept Performance	Traffic Light	Direction of Travel	Comments
Council Performance Indicators									
NWLPI 158	To respond to all complaints and requests for service within three working days	Env Health (C, L & HP)	Public Services and Council Tax	99	97	98	 Amber		Has been affected by a long term vacancy and the main holiday period.
NWLPI 162	Percentage of Freedom of Information replies dealt with within 20 days	Policy Support	Public Services & Council Tax	100	96%	96%	 Red		361 Freedom of Information requests received, 346 completed within 20 days, 13 overdue, 2 outstanding and overdue
New	The number of LG & Housing Ombudsman complaints determined as maladministration	Policy Support	Public Services & Council Tax	0	1	1	 Red		There have been 6 complaints referred to the LG or Housing Ombudsman so far. One complaint has been determined as maladministration for communications about a Notice Seeking Possession. This complaint was also determined as no maladministration in serving a Notice Seeking Possession. Three complaints have not been investigated by the Ombudsman. One complaint is currently being investigated and one is on hold pending a response from the complainant.
State of the Borough Indicators									
NWLPI 153	Number of residential burglaries in the Local Authority area	Policy Support	Crime and Disorder	244	266	112	 Amber		There has been increases in burglaries in residential dwellings over the first two quarters. . Analysis of the recent trends shows the wards of Fillongley and Curdworth as a priority. Plans to promote crime prevention advice and pilot local Police SNT deployment from a base in Corley are being arranged.
NWLPI 154	Number of violent offences and sexual offences in the local authority area	Policy Support	Crime and Disorder	1249	1250	704	 Amber		Increases in recorded violence offences are still being seen. In quarter 2 there has been an increase in domestic abuse related violence with injury. High risk cases are considered at multi agency case management meetings.
NWLPI 155	The number of vehicle crimes in the local authority area	Policy Support	Crime and Disorder	489	490	276	 Amber		Vehicle crimes are increasing in quarter 2 and the Fillongley and Curdworth wards have been identified as priority areas. The plans highlighted for residential burglary will apply for vehicle crimes.

Ref	Description	Section	Priority	Year End Target 2017/18	Outturn 2016/17	April - Sept Performance	Traffic Light	Direction of Travel	Comments
@NW:NI032	Violence Against the person with injury Offences related to Domestic Violence	Policy Support	Crime and Disorder	144	145	88	 Amber		In quarter 2 there has been an increase in domestic abuse related violence with injury. High risk cases are considered at multi agency case management meetings.
@NW:NI047	People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	Policy Support	Crime and Disorder	51	62	26	 Amber		During April to August 26 KSI's have been recorded.

Agenda Item No 12

Executive Board

20 November 2017

Report of the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer

Standards Committee Arrangements

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report asks Members to agree amendments to the Council's arrangements for considering complaints under the Member Code of Conduct.

Recommendation to the Council

That the revised arrangements detailed in this report for the investigation of complaints be adopted

2 Consultation

- 2.1 All Members have been invited to this meeting.

3 Report

- 3.1 The Council adopted the current Code of Conduct and arrangements for considering complaints in 2012. The Code and arrangements were drafted by external solicitors, Bevan Brittan, and reflected the desire of the Government to have a 'filter mechanism' (called a first sift) for complaints to ensure fewer matters were investigated. It was thought by Government that too much time and public money was being taken up by relatively minor cases.
- 3.2 The arrangements adopted in 2012 required the Monitoring Officer to make a decision on whether a complaint merited formal investigation. This was to provide the 'first sift' arrangement suggested by Government.
- 3.3 Lessons from recent cases however suggest that this decision is often very controversial and therefore in order to increase the transparency and democratic accountability it is recommended that where a complainant is not happy with that first sift decision, the matter can be referred to the Standards Committee for a decision to be made by Councillors. This will also help to confirm the perception that the Monitoring Officer role is neutral between the various parties (internally and externally).
- 3.4 Similarly, the Council's current arrangements provide that where an investigation takes place but finds no case to answer, the Monitoring Officer

again decides that no further action is taken. The revised arrangements suggest that the Monitoring Officer should have the power to refer that report to the Standards Committee if needed.

- 3.5 The revised arrangements, with the amendments shown in track changes, are attached to this report as Appendix 1.

The Contact Officers for this report are Jerry Hutchinson (719216) and Steve Maxey (719438).

Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011

1 Context

These “Arrangements” set out how you may make a complaint that an elected or co-opted member of this authority or of a parish council within North Warwickshire has failed to comply with the authority’s Code of Conduct, and sets out how the authority will deal with allegations of a failure to comply with the authority’s Code of Conduct.

Under Section 28(6) and (7) of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must have in place “arrangements” under which allegations that a member or co-opted member of the authority, or of a Committee or Sub-Committee of the authority, or of a parish council within the authority’s area has failed to comply with that authority’s Code of Conduct can be investigated and decisions made on such allegations.

Such arrangements must provide for the authority to appoint at least one Independent Person, whose views must be sought by the authority before it takes a decision on an allegation which it has decided shall be investigated, and whose views can be sought by the authority at any other stage, or by a member or a member or co-opted member of a parish council against whom an allegation as been made.

2 The Code of Conduct

The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for members, which is attached as Appendix One to these arrangements and available for inspection on the authority’s website and on request from Reception at the Council’s Offices.

Each parish council is also required to adopt a Code of Conduct. If you wish to inspect a Parish Council’s Code of Conduct, you should inspect any website operated by the parish council or request the parish clerk to allow you to inspect the parish council’s Code of Conduct.

3 Making a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint, please write to:

Steve Maxey
Monitoring Officer
North Warwickshire Borough Council
Council Offices
South Street
Atherstone
Warwickshire
CV9 1DE

Or email: stevemaxey@northwarks.gov.uk

The Monitoring Officer is a senior officer of the authority who has statutory responsibility for maintaining the register of members' interests and who is responsible for administering the system in respect of complaints of member misconduct.

In order to ensure that we have all the information which we need to be able to process your complaint, please complete and send us the model complaint form, which can be downloaded from the authority's website, next to the Code of Conduct, and is available on request from the One Stop Shop at the Council's Offices.

Please do provide us with your name and a contact address or email address, so that we can acknowledge receipt of your complaint and keep you informed of its progress. If you want to keep your name and address confidential, please indicate this in the space provided on the complaint form, in which case we will not disclose your name and address to the member against whom you make the complaint, without your prior consent. The authority does not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless there is a clear public interest in doing so.

The Monitoring Officer will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days of receiving it, and will keep you informed of the progress of your complaint.

4 Will your complaint be investigated?

The Monitoring Officer will review every complaint received and, after consultation with the Independent Person and the Group Spokespersons on the Standards Committee, take a decision as to whether it merits formal investigation. This decision will normally be taken within 14 days of receipt of your complaint. Where the Monitoring Officer has taken a decision, he/she will inform you of his/her decision and the reasons for that decision.

[If the complainant is not happy with that decision, the matter will be reported to the Standards Committee for Councillors to review that decision.](#)

Where he/she requires additional information in order to come to a decision, he/she may come back to you for such information, and may request information from the member against whom your complaint is directed. Where your complaint relates to a Parish Councillor, the Monitoring Officer may also inform the Parish Council of your complaint and seek the views of the Parish Council before deciding whether the complaint merits formal investigation.

In appropriate cases, the Monitoring Officer may seek to resolve the complaint informally, without the need for a formal investigation. Such informal resolution may involve the member accepting that his/her conduct was unacceptable and/or offering an apology, or other remedial action by the authority. Where the member or the authority makes a reasonable offer of local resolution, but you are not willing to accept that offer, the Monitoring Officer will take account of this in deciding whether the complaint merits formal investigation.

If your complaint identifies criminal conduct or breach of other regulation by any person, the Monitoring Officer has the power to call in the Police and other regulatory agencies.

5 How is the investigation conducted?

The Council has adopted a procedure for the investigation of misconduct complaints, which is attached as Appendix Two to these arrangements.

If the Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee decides that a complaint merits formal investigation, he/she will appoint an Investigating Officer, who may be another officer of the authority, an officer of another authority or an external investigator. The Investigating Officer will decide whether he/she needs to meet or speak to you to understand the nature of your complaint and so that you can explain your understanding of events and suggest what documents the Investigating Officer needs to see, and who the Investigating Officer needs to interview.

The Investigating Officer would normally write to the member against whom you have complained and provide him/her with a copy of your complaint, and ask the member to provide his/her explanation of events, and to identify what documents he needs to see and who he needs to interview. In exceptional cases, where it is appropriate to keep your identity confidential or disclosure of details of the complaint to the member might prejudice the investigation, the Monitoring Officer can delete your name and address from the papers given to the member, or delay notifying the member until the investigation has progressed sufficiently.

At the end of his/her investigation, the Investigating Officer will produce a draft report and will send copies of that draft report, in confidence, to you and to the member concerned, to give you both an opportunity to identify any matter in that draft report which you disagree with or which you consider requires more consideration.

Having received and taken account of any comments which you may make on the draft report, the Investigating Officer will send his/her final report to the Monitoring Officer.

6 What happens if the Investigating Officer concludes that there is no evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct?

The Monitoring Officer will review the Investigating Officer's report and, if he is satisfied that the Investigating Officer's report is sufficient, the Monitoring Officer will write to you and to the member concerned and to the Parish Council, where your complaint relates to a Parish Councillor, notifying you that he is satisfied that no further action is required, and give you both a copy of the Investigating Officer's final report. If the Monitoring Officer is not satisfied that the investigation has been conducted properly, he may ask the Investigating Officer to reconsider his/her report.

The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Group Spokesperson, may still report the findings of the Investigating Officer to the Standards Committee.

7 What happens if the Investigating Officer concludes that there is evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct?

The Monitoring Officer will review the Investigating Officer's report and will then either send the matter for local hearing before the Hearings Panel or, after consulting the Independent Person and Group Spokespersons on the Standards Committee, seek local resolution.

7.1 Local Resolution

The Monitoring Officer may consider that the matter can reasonably be resolved without the need for a hearing. In such a case, he/she will consult with the Independent Person, Group Spokespersons on the Standards Committee and with you as complainant and seek to agree what you consider to be a fair resolution which also helps to ensure higher standards of conduct for the future. Such resolution may include the member accepting that his/her conduct was unacceptable and/or offering an apology, and/or other remedial action by the

authority. If the member complies with the suggested resolution, the Monitoring Officer will report the matter to the Standards Committee and the Parish Council for information, but will take no further action. However, if you tell the Monitoring Officer that any suggested resolution would not be adequate, the Monitoring Officer will refer the matter for a local hearing.

7.2 Local Hearing

If the Monitoring Officer considers that local resolution is not appropriate, or you are not satisfied by the proposed resolution, or the member concerned is not prepared to undertake any proposed remedial action, such as giving an apology, then the Monitoring Officer will report the Investigating Officer's report to the Hearings Panel which will conduct a local hearing before deciding whether the member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and, if so, whether to take any action in respect of the member.

The Council has agreed a procedure for local hearings, which is attached as Appendix Three to these arrangements.

Essentially, the Monitoring Officer will conduct a "pre-hearing process", requiring the member to give his/her response to the Investigating Officer's report, in order to identify what is likely to be agreed and what is likely to be in contention at the hearing, and the Chair of the Hearings Panel may issue directions as to the manner in which the hearing will be conducted. At the hearing, the Investigating Officer will present his/her report, call such witnesses as he/she considers necessary and make representations to substantiate his/her conclusion that the member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. For this purpose, the Investigating Officer may ask you as the complainant to attend and give evidence to the Hearings Panel. The member will then have an opportunity to give his/her evidence, to call witnesses and to make representations to the Hearings Panel as to why he/she considers that he/she did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct.

The Hearings Panel, with the benefit of any advice from the Independent Person, may conclude that the member did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, and so dismiss the complaint. If the Hearings Panel concludes that the member did fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Chair will inform the member of this finding and the Hearings Panel will then consider what action, if any, the Hearings Panel should take as a result of the member's failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. In doing this, the Hearings Panel will give the member an opportunity to make representations to the Panel and will consult the Independent Person, but will then decide what action, if any, to take in respect of the matter..

8 What action can the Hearings Panel take where a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct?

The Council has delegated to the Hearings Panel such of its powers to take action in respect of individual members as may be necessary to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. Accordingly the Hearings Panel may:

- 8.1 Censure or reprimand the member;
- 8.2 Publish its findings in respect of the member's conduct;
- 8.3 Report its findings to Council or to the Parish Council for information;

- 8.4 Recommend to the member's Group Leader (or in the case of un-grouped members, recommend to Council or to Committees) that he/she be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;
- 8.5 Recommend to the Leader of the Council that the member be removed from particular responsibilities;
- 8.6 Instruct the Monitoring Officer to or recommend that the Parish Council arrange training for the member;
- 8.7 Remove or recommend to the Parish Council that the member be removed from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the authority or by the Parish Council;
- 8.8 Withdraw or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access; or
- 8.9 Exclude or recommend that the Parish Council exclude the member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

The Hearings Panel has no power to suspend or disqualify the member or to withdraw members' special responsibility allowances.

9 What happens at the end of the hearing?

At the end of the hearing, the Chair will state the decision of the Hearings Panel as to whether the member failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any actions which the Hearings Panel resolves to take.

As soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, the Monitoring Officer shall prepare a formal decision notice in consultation with the Chair of the Hearings Panel, and send a copy to you, to the member and to the Parish Council, make that decision notice available for public inspection and report the decision to the next convenient meeting of the Council.

10 Who are the Hearings Panel?

The Hearings Panel is a sub-committee of the Council's Standards Committee. The Standards Committee has decided that it will comprise a maximum of five members of the Council, including members drawn from at least two different political parties. Subject to those requirements, it is appointed on the nomination of party group leaders in proportion to the strengths of each party group on the Council.

The Independent Person is invited to attend all meetings of the Hearings Panel and his/her views are sought and taken into consideration before the Hearings Panel takes any decision on whether the member's conduct constitutes a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

11 Who is the Independent Person?

The Independent Person is a person who has applied for the post following advertisement of a vacancy for the post, and is appointed by a positive vote from a majority of all the members of Council.

A person cannot be “independent” if he/she:

- 11.1 Is, or has been within the past five years, a member, co-opted member or officer of the authority, with the exception that former Independent Members of Standards Committees can be appointed as Independent Persons;
- 11.2 Is or has been within the past five years, a member, co-opted member or officer of a parish council within the authority’s area, or
- 11.3 Is a relative, or close friend, of a person within paragraph 11.1 or 11.2 above. For this purpose, “relative” means:
 - 11.3.1 Spouse or civil partner;
 - 11.3.2 Living with the other person as husband and wife or as if they were civil partners;
 - 11.3.3 Grandparent of the other person;
 - 11.3.4 A lineal descendant of a grandparent of the other person;
 - 11.3.5 A parent, sibling or child of a person within paragraphs 11.3.1 or 11.3.2;
 - 11.3.6 A spouse or civil partner of a person within paragraphs 11.3.3, 11.3.4 or 11.3.5; or
 - 11.3.7 Living with a person within paragraphs 11.3.3, 11.3.4 or 11.3.5 as husband and wife or as if they were civil partners.

12 Revision of these arrangements

The Council may by resolution agree to amend these arrangements, and has delegated to the Chair of the Hearings Panel the right to depart from these arrangements where he/she considers that it is expedient to do so in order to secure the effective and fair consideration of any matter.

13 Appeals

There is no right of appeal for you as complainant or for the member against a decision of the Monitoring Officer or of the Hearings Panel.

If you feel that the authority has failed to deal with your complaint properly, you may make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Agenda Item No 13

Resources Board

20 November 2017

**Report of the
Chief Executive**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommendation to the Board

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

Agenda Item No 14

Procurement of a Replacement Revenues and Benefits System – Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services)

Paragraph 3 - by reason of the report containing financial information