CUSTOMER AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE – 7 FEBRUARY 2013

A meeting of the Customer and Partnerships Committee will be held at 5.30pm on Thursday 7 February 2013 in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Rugby.

Councillor Claire Edwards
Chair of Customer of Partnerships Committee

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Minutes
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2012.

2. Apologies
To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of:

(a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their non-pecuniary interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a pecuniary interest the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.

Membership of Warwickshire County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.
4. Call Ins
   To receive any Call Ins from Cabinet

5. Update from Rugby Youth Council – standing item

6. UHCW Integrated Business Plan – verbal report from Mr Andy Hardy, Chief Executive, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

7. Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership – feedback from the Leader of the Council

8. Inward Investment Review Report

9. Housing Income Protection Review Report

10. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14

11. Committee Work Programme

Any additional papers for this meeting can be accessed via the website.

Membership of the Committee:

Councillors Ms Edwards (Chairman), Mrs Watson (Vice Chairman), M Francis, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Hazelton, Keeling, Mrs New and Mrs O'Rourke

If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Veronika Beckova, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer (01788 533522 or e-mail veronika.beckova@rugby.gov.uk). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.

If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer named above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name of Meeting</strong></th>
<th>Customer and Partnerships Committee</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Meeting</strong></td>
<td>7 February 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report Title</strong></td>
<td>University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Business Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ward Relevance</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Officer</strong></td>
<td>Debbie Dawson, Tel: 01788 533592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**
The Chief Executive of the Trust will attend the meeting to provide an update on the work underway on the Integrated Business Plan (IBP). He will also address other matters identified by the Committee for discussion.

**Financial Implications**
There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**Risk Management Implications**
There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

**Environmental Implications**
There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**Legal Implications**
There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**Equality and Diversity**
No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.
Summary

The Chief Executive of the Trust will attend the meeting to provide an update on the work underway on the Integrated Business Plan (IBP). He will also address other matters identified by the Committee for discussion.

1. BACKGROUND

The Chief Executive of the University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust attended a meeting of the Committee on 2 February 2012 to discuss further the decision to close Birch Ward at the Hospital of St Cross, Rugby, following a special meeting held on 16 December 2011 jointly with the County Council’s Adult Social Services and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

At the time the committee invited Mr Hardy to return to update the committee on the Integrated Business Plan at a future date. Mr Hardy will give a verbal update to the committee on the work underway on the Integrated Business Plan (IBP).

2. OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

The committee identified the following additional points for discussion with Mr Hardy:

Hospital of St Cross
- Update on the impact of the Birch Ward closure
- Plans for the future of St Cross Hospital
- Provision of diagnostic services at St Cross

UHCW Trust
- Progress of the Trust in the application for Foundation status
- Cost improvement savings (what savings have been identified?)

Transport and parking
- Update on how the situation is improving at UHCW as a result of the measures put in place

Discharge of patients into community care
3. HEALTH INDICATORS

At its last meeting in November the Committee received a presentation on the 2012 Health Profile for Rugby from the Public Health Intelligence Manager at NHS Warwickshire.

Since that meeting the Public Health Intelligence Manager has provided an update of the MOSAIC data to reflect the new ward boundaries in the borough, and additional data on intentional self-harm.

This updated information, together with the most relevant points from the health data, are reproduced at appendix 1 to the report to provide a context to the discussion with Mr Hardy.
Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee
Date of Meeting: 7 November 2013
Subject Matter: University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Business Plan

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers relating to this item.
Appendix 1

Rugby Borough Health Profile
Summary of Key Statistics

1. Quality of Life Indicators 2012

As a borough Rugby performed significantly better than the Warwickshire average for child obesity (Reception age) and slightly worse than the county average for alcohol-related hospital admissions.

2. Mosaic groups

The revised mosaic data reflecting the new ward boundaries is presented below:

Rugby Wards & Mosaic
Most Frequent Mosaic Group, with new ward boundaries

Rugby has significantly more ‘couples and young singles in modern starter homes’ and ‘lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas’ than the Warwickshire average. ‘Wealthy people living in the most sought after neighbourhoods’ and ‘young, well-educated city-dwellers’ are under-represented in the borough compared with the Warwickshire average.
3. Life expectancy

Life expectancy in Rugby was just below England average in 2007-09, but is now slightly above. Overall life expectancy is on the increase.

4. Deprivation

Two of the borough’s SOAs are in the top 20% most deprived nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010: part of ‘Brownsover South Lake District North’ and ‘Town Central’.

The nature of deprivation in these areas is very different:

- Brownsover South Lake District North: highest number of council tax benefit claimants with children, highest free school meal claimants, highest lone parent benefit claimants and highest teenage pregnancy.
- Town Central: lowest household income levels, highest pension credit claimants, highest incapacity benefit claimants.

The Town Centre SOA is in the most deprived 10% nationally in the health domain, pointing to the health needs of an older deprived population.

5. Educational attainment

This is the most important wider socio-determinant of health. Between 2007 and 2011 results improved across all Warwickshire districts except Rugby Borough, which saw a slight dip in attainment although its results continue to be above the national average.

6. Obesity

Adults
- Obese Adults - Rugby = 25.8% (20,700 adults)
- Obese Adults - Warwickshire = 25.5%

Children
- Obese Children (Year 6) = 13.9% (Statistically significantly better than England average)
- Physically Active Children = 51.8% (Statistically significantly worse than England average)

7. Alcohol

Rugby showed the sharpest increase in the rate of alcohol related hospital admissions rose dramatically in Rugby between 2007/08 (when it had the lowest rate in the county) and 2010/11 (when it had the second highest rate in the county).
Rugby Borough has the second highest proportion of increasing risk (18.1%) and higher risk (5.5%) drinkers in the county, higher than the percentages for the West Midlands region (14.9% and 4.3%).

8. Smoking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population (16 years and over)</th>
<th>% Smoking Prevalence</th>
<th>No. of Smokers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Warwickshire</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuneaton &amp; Bedworth</td>
<td>101,400</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>81,100</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>100,400</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratford-on-Avon</td>
<td>114,100</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwickshire</td>
<td>448,200</td>
<td>19.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NHS Warwickshire Stop Smoking Service and National Statistics Mid-2011 Population Estimates*

Overall figures hide differences in prevalence rates amongst specific types of residents. For example, there are considerably higher rates amongst routine and manual workers in the borough:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010-11 Rates (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Warwickshire</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Stratford-on-Avon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwickshire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Integrated Household Survey, 2009-2011*

9. Teenage Conceptions

Overall, Rugby experienced the largest fall in the under-18 conception rate in the period 98/00 – 08/11, with a 33% fall in rate per 1,000 female pop 15-17. However, three wards in borough still feature within highest 20% in England and the top 10 in Warwickshire (Brownsover South, Newbold and Benn).
10. Health Profile

This table below highlights those health indicators where Rugby borough performs significantly worse than the England average:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Name</th>
<th>Number of Admissions</th>
<th>Resident Population</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>England Average Rate</th>
<th>Significance Compared to England</th>
<th>Region Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Warwickshire</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>61,872</td>
<td>197.0</td>
<td>212.0</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>220.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuneaton and Bedworth</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>122,181</td>
<td>255.6</td>
<td>212.0</td>
<td>worse</td>
<td>220.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>94,188</td>
<td>257.2</td>
<td>212.0</td>
<td>worse</td>
<td>220.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratford-on-Avon</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>118,985</td>
<td>149.4</td>
<td>212.0</td>
<td>better</td>
<td>220.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>138,756</td>
<td>120.1</td>
<td>212.0</td>
<td>better</td>
<td>220.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Hospital admissions due to intentional self-harm, 2010/11

The following additional information on this indicator has been provided by the Public Health Intelligence Manager:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Name</th>
<th>Number of Admissions</th>
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Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) held its first Board meeting in January 2011. The Leader of the Council is a member of the Board, representing all of the Warwickshire district authorities. In the absence of formal scrutiny arrangements in the sub-region for this public/private sector collaboration, the Committee has invited the Leader to provide feedback on his role on the CWLEP Board. This paper provides background information on the work and role of the CWLEP.

Financial Implications
There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications
There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications
There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications
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Equality and Diversity
No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.
Summary

Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CW LEP) held its first Board meeting in January 2011. The Leader of the Council is a member of the Board, representing all of the Warwickshire district authorities. In the absence of formal scrutiny arrangements in the sub-region for this public/private sector collaboration, the Committee has invited the Leader to provide feedback on his role on the CW LEP Board. This paper provides background information on the work and role of the CW LEP.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Leader of the Council has been invited to provide feedback to the Committee on his role on the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CW LEP) Board. This is in the absence of any formal arrangements within the sub-region for scrutiny of the CW LEP. The LEP is a private sector/public sector collaboration which plays a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. It has been in operation since January 2011.

2. **WHAT IS COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP?**

Local Enterprise Partnerships are locally-owned partnerships between local authorities and businesses and play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs.

They are also a key vehicle in delivering Government objectives for economic growth and decentralisation, whilst also providing a means for local authorities to work together with business in order to quicken the economic recovery.

2.1 **CW LEP Board**

Coventry and Warwickshire LEP Board held its first meeting in January 2011. The Board members are as follows:

**Chairman**
Sir Peter Rigby – SCH, Patriot Aerospace, Eden Hotel Collection
**Private Sector**
Martyn Hollingsworth – Director, Jaguar Land Rover
Michael Woodhead – Director: E.ON UK Ltd
Bruce Undy – Federation of Small Businesses
George Gillespie – CEO: MIRA
Vacancies x3 (nb. appointments have recently been made to these vacancies, but have not yet been announced publicly)

**Public Sector**
Cllr John Mutton - Vice Chairman and Leader Coventry City Council
Cllr Alan Farnell - Leader Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Alan Cockburn - Cabinet Member Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Lynnette Kelly - Cabinet Member Coventry City Council
Cllr Craig Humphrey - Leader Rugby Borough Council
Cllr Les Caborn - Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member Warwick District Council

**Universities**
Madeleine Atkins - Vice-Chancellor: Coventry University
Professor Koen Lamberts - Deputy Vice-Chancellor: University of Warwick

2.2 **Structure**
The Board is supported by a Delivery Board of key officers who are focused on achieving the strategic goals of the LEP, and they are supported by public and private sector partners from across the Coventry and Warwickshire area.

During 2011 the CW LEP set up a number of focus groups (recently renamed ‘business groups’) to look at issues raised by businesses in the area as being possible barriers to growth. These include:

- Inward Investment
- Skills and employability
- Access to finance
- Planning
- Low carbon
- Advanced manufacturing
- Transport
- Small and medium businesses

The Council’s Head of Planning and Culture, Anna Rose, recently took over as chair of the Planning Business Group, having been a member of the group since its inception in 2011. This appointment recognises her involvement in national and regional planning for a number of years on behalf of the Council, and her personal expertise and reputation in this field.

3. **AIMS AND STRATEGY**
In April 2011 the CW LEP published its five-year strategy, and this is attached at appendix 1 to this report for reference.

At its March 2012 meeting, the Board approved a refresh of this strategy in order to focus the activity and aims of the LEP.
The Board agreed:

- to retain the focus on jobs, particularly high value jobs, growth and removing the barriers to growth;
- to put greater emphasis on inward investment and helping existing businesses to grow;
- to sharpen the focus on four key sectors: Intelligent Mobility, Advanced Engineering, Low Carbon Vehicles, Digital Technology; and
- to concentrate on core enablers including higher education and skills, infrastructure and access to finance.

The Board has an ongoing commitment to consider the challenges and opportunities presented by low carbon issues in all that they do.

4. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

By way of background to the discussion with the Leader of the Council, the Committee may be interested in the following notable developments from the past 6 months:

- In July 2012 the CW LEP Board agreed a proposal to incorporate as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Articles of Association for the company were agreed by the CW LEP Board on 10 September 2012.

- In September 2012 Sir Peter Rigby formally took over the chairmanship of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). His company, Specialist Computer Holdings, is the largest privately-owned IT company in Europe, and owns Coventry Airport and two hotels in the area.

- The Coventry and Warwickshire Gateway scheme, which will see the redevelopment of land around the airport and the possible creation of 14,000 jobs, is described as one of the main economic priorities for the LEP. The planning application has been submitted to Warwick District Council.

- In October 2012 it was announced that the CW LEP had been awarded £24.4 million from the Government’s Regional Growth Fund to boost the local economy and help create jobs. In December the Board announced that it had decided to add this to some of the funding from the Growing Places Fund and from the European Regional Development Fund, amounting to a programme of more than £30 million. This will be aimed at helping three target areas – access to finance, support for strategic companies and for assistance to infrastructure and major projects.

- CW LEP locally manages the Growing Places fund for the benefit of Coventry and Warwickshire businesses and is currently (January 2013) seeking expressions of interest from businesses or local authorities with proposals for using Growing Places funding to create jobs and economic growth in Coventry and Warwickshire.

- The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CW LEP) lead on the City Deal bid designed to bring new powers and prosperity to the area. The Government is inviting a second wave of bids for the City Deals after eight cities
were successful in bidding in early 2012. City Deals have been devised by the Government to give cities and areas the powers and tools they need to drive local economic growth, to unlock projects or initiatives that will boost their economies and to strengthen the governance arrangements. The LEP will lead Coventry and Warwickshire’s bid on behalf of the districts, the county and the city under the banner of ‘Re-engineering Engineering’. Cllr Humphrey represents this council on the Coventry and Warwickshire City Deal Leaders Board, which has representation from all the local authorities in the CW LEP area. Ian Davis sits on the Executive Steering Group and Anna Rose is a member of the Advisory Group.
Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee

Date of Meeting: 7 February 2013

Subject Matter: Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers relating to this item.
5-Year Strategy
(2011-2016)

April 2011
Foreword

The UK economy has just gone through the deepest recession for over eighty years. Coventry and Warwickshire has not been immune to this, with a number of businesses closing and, at its peak, unemployment increasing by over 12,000 people from pre-recession levels.

However, tentative signs of recovery are already showing, and we need to do all we can to stimulate and support growth within the local economy. The new driving force behind this will be the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership – a new private sector/public sector collaboration that is business led and allows the people who know their local economy best to plan and undertake the most appropriate actions.

In light of the need for central Government to reduce public expenditure, we know we need to be much smarter and much more focussed in how we deploy and utilise our assets & talents and the resources available to us. This five-year strategy sets out how we intend to do this to achieve our overall aim of making Coventry & Warwickshire one of the best and easiest places to start, grow and locate a business. This is based on a comprehensive and robust evidence base, established through the first Coventry & Warwickshire Economic Assessment, and has been shaped and informed by the needs and issues that businesses within the local area have told us. The strategy is also supported by a detailed 12 month Business Plan, which sets out how all the partners across Coventry & Warwickshire are working together on practical actions to deliver our shared objectives for the area.

I am in no doubt that the Coventry & Warwickshire economy will bounce back strongly from the recession, and will be stronger and more fit for the future than ever before. This area has a huge number of distinctive strengths and key assets, including:

- Internationally recognised brands such as Jaguar Land Rover, E.On., IBM, Peugeot, and Codemasters;
- Unique assets such as Stratford-on-Avon and the Royal Shakespeare Company, Warwick Castle, and Coventry Cathedral;
- World class research institutions of the University of Warwick, Coventry University, and Warwick Manufacturing Group/Manufacturing Technology Centre as the part of the new automotive Technology Innovation Centre
- Our prime location on the strategic transport network, and in easy reach of central London
- A long history of invention, innovation and entrepreneurialism

I am confident that these key strengths, combined with strong leadership from the private and public sector, a genuine desire to work closely together and a clear and focussed strategy for future growth, we can make a real difference and can look to the future with confidence and optimism.

Denys Shortt
Chairman & CEO of DCS Europe & Enable Software
Chair of the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Vision

The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership has a broad, long-term mission statement: “To make our area a World Class economy in which to do business; a place to: lead a great life, excel at learning, visit and return to - all supported by exceptional private, public and voluntary services”.

This strategy sets out our more focussed plans for the next five years, and is driven by the following vision for the Coventry and Warwickshire economy:

“By 2016, through strong private-public sector collaboration, Coventry and Warwickshire will be regarded as one of the best and easiest places in the country to establish, run and grow strong and successful businesses; generating significant new employment and skills opportunities in the area.”

We will achieve this vision in three key ways:

1) Developing new ways of working through a strong private-public sector partnership

2) Focussing on a limited set of priorities that can make a real difference to local economic growth over the next five years.

3) Play a national influencing role with central Government to promote and support the growth of the low carbon mobility sector

Measuring progress:

A balanced scorecard will developed to monitor overall progress against this vision, and will be published alongside this strategy when completed. The balanced scorecard is a strategic planning and management system that is used extensively worldwide to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communications, and monitor organization performance against strategic goals. Generally, a balanced scorecard has four key elements: 1) organisational capacity/training & learning; 2) internal processes; 3) financial effectiveness, and 4) the customer. For purposes of monitoring the effectiveness of this strategy, a fifth element based around performance against the key objectives has also been included.

The proposed balanced scorecard for the CWLEP 5-Year Strategy is shown in Figure 1 below. The work to develop the CWLEP Balanced Scorecard will be supported by research being undertaken by a Research Fellow at Coventry University, looking at developing and utilising the qualitative elements of the scorecard, as part of an assessment of CWLEP’s development process and initial impact. The research will involve: appraising stakeholders’ views on LEP priorities and their ability to shape policy; evaluating mechanisms aiming to improve knowledge and understanding between private and public sectors; assessing the scale and scope of joint working within CWLEP including external engagement of
stakeholders and; making broader recommendations for LEP development and impact which can be transferred to other LEPs.

**Figure 1: Proposed Balanced Scorecard model for the CWLEP Strategy**

Key Issues facing the local economy

Over the past ten years, the local economy has seen faster than national average growth in the business base, but lower than average growth in terms of employment – highlighting the growth of small businesses in the area. Total economic output for Coventry and Warwickshire has grown more slowly than England over the period 1998-2008, although there is significant variation across the local economy. Warwickshire as a whole saw stronger than average economic growth, largely driven by a buoyant economy in the south (Warwick, Leamington, Stratford) and key employment sites in the north of the county (Hams Hall and Birch Coppice). Coventry and Nuneaton & Bedworth have seen much slower rates of growth, predominantly as a result of the significant restructuring of these economies away from large-scale manufacturing companies.

A detailed analysis of the economic conditions of Coventry & Warwickshire has been undertaken in the recent Local Economic Assessment (Appendix 1). The following provides a short summary of the key points arising from this work:

- Slower than average growth of the economy is predominantly a result of the sectoral profile of the area (i.e. too few higher-value, knowledge-intensive businesses, and too many lower-value industries); and below average levels of productivity.
The productivity of the Coventry & Warwickshire economy (i.e. the economic output per employee) has been falling steadily over the past 5-6 years. Analysis suggests that this is a result of:

- A lack of growing businesses, despite relatively good performance in terms of new business start-ups. Potential lack of “high-growth” businesses (in terms of employment growth).
- Below average diffusion and take-up of innovation across the local economy
- Lack of higher level skills, particularly in the centre and north of the sub-region
- Weak agglomeration effects of the core urban area, probably exacerbated by poor north/south transport connectivity
- Lack of growth of higher value, knowledge intensive business sectors

Entrenched and sustained levels of worklessness, poverty and deprivation in some parts of the sub-region. Some evidence to suggest that these areas are becoming slowly more deprived, and more concentrated, over time.

Stronger population and employment growth forecast in the south of the sub-region ... but the significant increase in working age population will be in Coventry and Nuneaton & Bedworth. This could create pressures around housing supply and transport networks.

A need for the sub-regional economy to focus more on knowledge intensive sectors to maintain competitive advantage in a global economy, and to better exploit exporting and business links with the fast –growing BRIC countries. Applied manufacturing and high technology engineering could be key growth areas for the sub-regional economy.

The low carbon economy and an ageing population present both challenges and huge market opportunities for the sub-regional economy

Significant variation in economic performance, prosperity, vulnerability and resilience across the sub-regional economy (see Figure 2). The south of the sub-region is performing quite strongly, while the north is less resilient and more vulnerable

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**Top 5 Priorities:**

(based on feedback from local businesses to the CWLEP)

1) **Skills** – particularly tackling skills gaps, and need to improve skills across all levels
2) **Create new jobs** – need to generate more jobs in higher growth, private sector businesses
3) **Enterprise, Entrepreneurship & Start-Ups** - important driver of jobs growth
4) **Access to Finance, Innovation, Low Carbon, Local Procurement, Planning & Transportation, Housing Supply**
5) **Export & International Links** – important in terms of new market opportunities
New Ways of Working:

The Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) was one of the first in the country to be approved, and is already gaining a strong reputation as a pro-active and dynamic partnership. We believe that the new CWLEP Board – comprised of seven business leaders from some of the biggest companies in the area; five public sector leaders representing the local authorities within Coventry and Warwickshire; and high level representation from our two world class universities – can make a real and long-lasting difference to the way we all work together for the benefit of the local economy.

While it is clear that national (and increasingly global) policies and economic conditions have a very strong influence over our local economy (as the recent recession proved), evidence from around the world proves that strong local leadership and action can make a significant difference to economic growth and prosperity in different areas. Creating the right conditions for growth, providing quality infrastructure, supporting the local economy and equipping residents with the right skills can all make some areas more attractive to business than others. Local knowledge of the particular needs, issues and opportunities of the economy is therefore vital, and highlights the clear role and benefit of a Local Enterprise Partnership.
While the creation of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership is an important step, we recognise that this is not enough. This new partnership must generate a new way of working, a new approach to local economic development. We want to move to a position where the private and public sector are working closely together in an open, honest and transparent way to develop joint solutions to the issues facing the local economy. Such an approach is fundamental at a time of increasingly limited resources to enable us to make a real difference on the local economy. Focussing our activity and working in new ways are more important in delivering this strategy than establishing a range of new projects and interventions.

Key Ambitions:

It is recognised by the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP that it is important to focus on only a small number of priorities. We cannot achieve everything immediately, and if we try to do too much then we are in danger of spreading ourselves too thinly and having limited impact. The CWLEP will therefore initially focus on three Key Ambitions where we believe new ways of joint working and targeted investment can make a real difference. These are:

- **Key Ambition 1: Create an environment where it is easy for businesses to start, locate and thrive.** We want to make Coventry & Warwickshire become regarded as a great and easy place to start and grow a business, and we want to ensure that we provide a holistic package of support throughout the stages of business start-up and growth. This objective is about better aligning, co-ordinating, packaging, and signposting of the various services that are already available, and filling gaps where we can. It is also vital that we help create the best conditions for growth, by providing a clear, market-focussed plan for infrastructure delivery to support and strengthen the economy.

- **Key Ambition 2: Accelerate the growth of our economy through targeted support in our key strategic sectors.** Coventry & Warwickshire has some clear strengths and specialisms, which provide the economy with real competitive advantages. The future growth of our local economy should be driven by these key sectors, and so this objective is about ensuring that we pro-actively target and support these key elements of our economy.

- **Key Ambition 3: Tackle the skills problem by aligning supply and demand.** This objective is about specifically focussing on a key barrier that business is clearly saying is holding back the growth of the local economy. It is recognised that we need to do more to better align the needs of business with the provision of skills and training, and to ensure that we have the right skills mix to enable our target strategic sectors to grow and succeed.

While these three Key Ambitions will be the key focus of activity by the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, it is also recognised that the LEP could and should play a key role in helping shape and influence national Government policies and interventions. Again, instead of taking a “broad-brush” approach to
this, it is felt that we should focus on a key issue where the sub-region is playing a leading role and enjoys comparative advantage. As such, the CWLEP will lead on promoting and supporting the development of the “low carbon mobility” agenda at a national level, working in co-operation with other LEP areas that also have an interest in this area. Low carbon mobility includes automobiles, rail travel, aerospace and marine activity, along with associated technology and infrastructure requirements.

The Coventry & Warwickshire area have strong collection of key assets related to this agenda – from world class research establishments such as Warwick Manufacturing Group and Coventry University’s Automotive Engineering Research Group; to leading automotive businesses investing in low carbon vehicles, such as Jaguar Land Rover, Prodrive and Ricardo (who have their Low Carbon Technology centre based in Warwickshire). The recently announced Technology Innovation Centre for High Value Manufacturing also has a strong presence in Coventry & Warwickshire, with a particular focus on this agenda. These present real strengths which can help place the local area at the forefront of low carbon mobility, which can be strengthened and enhanced though this national influencing role.

This targeted approach by the CWLEP can be summarised in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: The Strategic Focus of the CWLEP:**

- **KA 1:** Create an environment where it is easy for businesses to start and thrive
- **KA 2:** Targeted support for our strategic growth sectors
- **KA 3:** Matching skills demand with supply

**National influencing role on promoting Low Carbon Mobility**
The rationale, aims and objectives of these Key Ambitions, along with the Key Objectives that will be undertaken to deliver them, are detailed below. This Strategy will be supported by an annual Business Plan, which will provide further information on the specific activities, lead partner(s), outputs & milestones, and resource requirements.

### Key Ambition 1: Create an environment where it is easy for businesses to start, locate and thrive

**What do we mean and how will the CWLEP make a difference?**

A stronger partnership between the private and public sectors can help ensure that business support services better meet the needs of the users. Specifically, we are looking to refine, improve and package the range of support services that are currently available to businesses in a more coherent and accessible way. We recognise that individual and business needs and issues change over the course of the business life-cycle shown below.

At the core of this Key Ambition is therefore a need to develop a single, comprehensive, holistic “business growth” offer to all companies within the sub-region, which is accessible and tailored to the needs of our businesses wherever possible. We also recognise that individuals and businesses may face a number of barriers and obstacles during their progress through this life-cycle. The CWLEP is therefore committed to exploring these issues, and through strong private-public partnership working develop solutions to address or reduce them.

It is also vital that the private and public sectors work closely together to ensure that we provide the necessary conditions for growth. This involves ensuring that we are providing the right infrastructure to support and facilitate growth, which is deliverable, focussed and market focussed.

**Why is it needed?**

Numerous studies and surveys in the past have shown that a significant number of people would like to start their own business, but either lack the idea, confidence or necessary resources to actually take that step. If we are to generate higher levels of entrepreneurialism and start-up rates in Coventry & Warwickshire, then helping develop an “enterprise culture” and enabling easy access to support and guidance is crucial. We are also seeing below average growth in businesses in expected “high-growth”, knowledge intensive sectors.

We also know that new business survival rates can vary between areas and between different types of areas quite significantly. While many business start-up programmes seek to offer an on-going relationship with their clients, this can be costly and resource intensive. Furthermore, many more start-ups that do not
receive any initial help can find themselves in difficulty because of poor business planning and/or lack of skills and experience. A more accessible and co-ordinated package of support for early stage businesses should be helpful.

Analysis undertaken for the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Economic Assessment has highlighted that while the sub-region as a whole has reasonably good business start-up rates, the proportion of these businesses that experience business growth is below average. Helping more businesses in the local area to develop and expand will create significant employment opportunities, and help drive up productivity levels in the economy.

Feedback from the local business community has highlighted a number of issues, barriers and obstacles which may be constraining stronger growth. These include issues such as access to finance, planning issues and local procurement (skills and training has been identified as such a key issue that it is a separate priority in its own right). Ensuring that the sub-region undertakes the necessary planning and investment in wider infrastructures to support, enable and accommodate the growth of the economy is also essential.

**Priority Objectives**

- Develop a single, accessible “Business Growth” offer for the Coventry & Warwickshire area, linking local and national provision of support
- Boost support for engaging and supporting individuals in Coventry and Nuneaton & Bedworth to start their own business
- Identify and address identified obstacles and barriers to growth of businesses within the local area, initially focussing on access to finance and planning issues
- Develop an Infrastructure Delivery Strategy to support economic growth and focus future investment activity
- Promote the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP area as a good place to invest and do business
- Increase opportunities for local procurement activity

**Measures of Success:**

- Higher business start-up rates, particularly in areas that currently have lower than average levels (Coventry and Nuneaton & Bedworth)
- Greater number of new business starts in expected “high-growth”, knowledge intensive sectors
- More businesses experiencing employment growth
- Business tracker: the qualitative impact of this objective will be measured through following a small number of case study small businesses over the 5 year period, incorporating start-up and growth phases.
Key Ambition 2: Accelerate the growth our economy through targeted support in our key strategic sectors

What do we mean and how will the CWLEP make a difference?

The Coventry & Warwickshire economy has a number of clear strengths, assets and opportunities that can be targeted and better utilised to help stimulate and strengthen future economic growth. By focusing on pro-active actions and interventions on these specific high growth and strategic businesses (rather than the more general support for all businesses outlined above), we can maximise our impact and help shape the future direction of the local economy.

The identified target sectors for Coventry & Warwickshire are:

- Advanced engineering and high-value manufacturing
- Automotive and low carbon mobility
- Business & professional services
- Computing & gaming
- Creative & cultural industries
- Low carbon technologies
- Sustainable construction
- Tourism

Why is it needed?

Understanding and exploiting your comparative advantages is crucial in achieving economic growth and success. To compete in a global economy, we need to develop more knowledge intensive sectors, based around research & development and niche products, and providing a value-added product to consumers. A number of key expected growth sectors within the UK economy already have a reasonably strong presence in the Coventry & Warwickshire area, and we need to help build and grow these areas if we are to successfully diversify and develop our economy in the future. A targeted approach, focused on our key strengths and specialisms will enable more effective use of resources and maximise our impacts on the local economy.

Priority Objectives

- Better understand and map our key sectoral specialisms, and our particular niche strengths within them
- Focus our business engagement, support activities and inward investment focus around these key strengths and specialisms
- Ensure we have the relevant sites, premises and infrastructure provision to support the growth of these key target sectors
### Key Ambition 2: Accelerate the growth our economy through targeted support in our key strategic sectors

- Ensure our local skills and training system meets the needs of these sectors
- Maximise the benefit to local businesses in these strategic sectors of our key innovation and R&D assets in the area, particularly the new Technology Innovation Centre for High Value Manufacturing (incorporating WMG and the national Manufacturing Technology Centre)
- Encourage growth companies in related sectors to diversify and exploit niche opportunities to promote longer-term survival and growth

### Measures of Success:

- Increased business numbers in the target sectors
- Increased employment within the target sectors
- Business tracker: the qualitative impact of this objective will be measured through following a selection of businesses in these key sectors over the period of the strategy

### Key Ambition 3: Tackle the skills problem by aligning supply and demand

#### What do we mean and how will the CWLEP make a difference?

Skills is a broad term, which encapsulates attainment of qualifications, but also includes issues such as attitude, approach, work-readiness and experience. “Skills supply” refers to the whole system that helps educate and train individuals for work, and the product in terms of the individual and their particular skills set. Skills demand refers to the particular skill needs of businesses and organisations within the local area. This includes both current and immediate skill needs, and more longer-term requirements as the economy grows and develops.

By focussing the CWLEP on this particular issue, and through developing new ways of working between private and public sector partners, we believe we can make a real impact on this key issue

#### Why is it needed?

Skills shortages and skills gaps in the local labour force has been identified as the key issue facing local businesses. Lack of suitably trained staff can constrain growth, limit employment opportunities and increase costs to businesses as they seek to address these gaps. A well skilled economy is also known to be more productive, innovative and adaptable.
Key Ambition 3: Tackle the skills problem by aligning supply and demand

Priority Objectives

- Develop a mechanism with which to match current vacancies/skill requirements with those looking for work/change of jobs (i.e. matchskills.com)
- Develop a process or mechanism to bring together businesses, training providers and local authorities to share information about future detailed skill requirements in the medium-term (1-5 years) to ensure that training and education is demand led
- Increase the uptake of Apprenticeships within businesses in Coventry & Warwickshire
- Retain a greater proportion of graduates from our Universities, and increase the use and progression of graduates within our businesses (including the use of graduate placements and internships)
- Increase “business content & focus” of education within the local area, increasing aspirations, improving work-readiness and creating the next generation of entrepreneurs
- Better equip the longer-term unemployed in the area with the skills, experiences and aptitude for employment

Measures of Success:

- A marked reduction in skills shortages reported by local businesses
- Improvement in qualification attainment rates across the sub-region
- Increased provision and uptake of Apprenticeships
- Business Tracker: the qualitative impact of this work will be measured by following a selection of businesses in the area that are currently facing skills shortage problems

National Influencing role on Low Carbon Mobility

Aim: to play a key role in shaping and influencing national policy and intervention that supports the development of the low carbon mobility agenda

Priority Objectives:

- Clarify the sub-regional ‘offer’ in low carbon mobility that underpins our comparative advantage in this area
- Identify, establish and lead a network of LEPs who are similarly strategically focused on the low carbon mobility agenda
• Provide the voice from this network to lobby and influence government policy and agendas

An annual 12-month Business Plan sits alongside this strategy, and sets out more specific and detailed actions which partners across Coventry & Warwickshire will focus on delivering in support of these Key Ambitions and Priority Objectives. This will be used to programme manage the work of partners undertaken in support of the LEP, while the Balanced Scorecard will help us monitor and evaluate the impact of these activities towards our vision.
# Agenda No 8

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

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<th>Customer and Partnerships Committee</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Meeting</strong></td>
<td>7 February 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report Title</strong></td>
<td>Review of Inward Investment – Final Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ward Relevance</strong></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Officer</strong></td>
<td>Debbie Dawson, Tel: (01788) 533592</td>
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**Summary**

The Committee included in its work programme for 2012/13 a review of inward investment. The review looked at what could be done to promote economic growth and attract businesses into the borough, particularly in the context of the new scheme from April 2013 enabling local authorities to retain a proportion of any growth in their business rate base.

The review is now complete and the report presents the findings and recommendations of the task group for consideration by the Committee and submission to Cabinet.

**Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the review recommendations. Where there are officer resource implications, these are indicated in the classification of the recommendations.

**Risk Management Implications**

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

**Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**Equality and Diversity**

No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken when the report is presented to Cabinet.
Summary

The Committee included in its work programme for 2012/13 a review of inward investment. The review looked at what could be done to promote economic growth and attract businesses into the borough, particularly in the context of the new scheme from April 2013 enabling local authorities to retain a proportion of any growth in their business rate base. The review is now complete and the report presents the findings and recommendations of the task group for consideration by the Committee and submission to Cabinet.

1. BACKGROUND

On 19 March, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board placed a review of inward investment in the overview and scrutiny work programme, on the recommendation of the work programme workshop held in February 2012. The review topic had been suggested both by Leadership and Operations Team and by Customer and Partnerships Committee.

A draft one page strategy for the review was agreed by Customer and Partnerships Committee on 21 June 2012. A task group was appointed and began work on 3 September 2012.

2. REPORTING PROCESS

The task group has completed its work and the appendix to this paper details its findings. Please note that the draft report is subject to any further suggested amendments from task group members, which will be reported at the Committee meeting if required. The chairman of the task group, Councillor Carolyn Robbins, will attend the Committee meeting to present the report.

The review recommendations form section 1 of the report. The findings and recommendations were discussed with the Economy, Development and Culture Portfolio Holder at the final meeting of the task group.

It is proposed that the report will be considered by Cabinet on 11 March, subject to the approval and comments of the Committee.

The review report includes a draft action plan which has been agreed by the task group members and discussed with the relevant officers and Portfolio Holder. Once agreed by Cabinet, this will be placed on the Covalent performance management system and used by the Committee to monitor the progress of the review outcomes.
**Name of Meeting:** Customer and Partnerships Committee  
**Date of Meeting:** 7 February 2013  
**Subject Matter:** Review of Inward Investment – Final Report

## LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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<th>Officer’s Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>September 2012 – January 2013</td>
<td>The agendas, reports and minutes relating to this review can be found online at <a href="http://www.rugby.gov.uk">www.rugby.gov.uk</a>, following the links to the Committee Papers system and then clicking on Inward Investment Task Group</td>
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A REVIEW OF INWARD INVESTMENT

January 2013
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TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The task group consisted of the following members:

Councillor Ms Carolyn Robbins (Chairman)
Councillor Ms Claire Edwards
Councillor Graham Francis
Councillor Robin Hazelton
Councillor Mrs Maggie O’Rourke
Councillor Howard Roberts

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact:

Debbie Dawson          Linn Ashmore
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tel: 01788 533592       tel. 01788 533523
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Group would like to thank everyone who contributed to the review, in particular:

Dave Hill, Strategic Economic Development Team Manager, Warwickshire County Council
Torin Spence, Warwickshire County Council Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships Manager
Krishna Patel, Business Relationship Manager, Warwickshire College
Linsey Luke, Federation of Small Businesses
Aftab Gaffer, Rugby First
Alistair George, Director, George and Company Chartered Surveyors
Margaret Burnham, Centre Manager, Sir Frank Whittle Business Centre
Julie Crawshaw, Warwickshire County Council
Geraldine Fisher, Relationship Manager, Department for Work and Pensions

The Group also valued the contribution of local business owners who took time to speak to members and to the Economic Development Officer about their experiences as a business in the local area.

The Group would also like to thank all the officers involved for their invaluable support and contributions. Particular thanks are due to Adam Norburn, Anna Rose, John Dale, Sarah Fisher and Chryssa Burdett.
CHAIRMAN’S FOREWORD

This has been a very challenging Task Group that has stretched our abilities and imagination. It has however been a very enjoyable and rewarding task and I am confident that we have arrived at good decisions and recommendations.

We enjoyed the interactive experiences, especially the visit to the Sir Frank Whittle Business Centre. I think we learned a lot from this particular trip. We also realised the amount of misconception regarding difficulties in taking on apprentices and the possible extra costs that could be incurred. Our thanks must go to all the staff for their help and hospitality during our visit.

The select committee gave us a good insight into the requirements of local businesses and their concerns about the shortage of skilled workers. It soon became clear that whilst we have a lower than average unemployment rate, this was actually a disadvantage when it came to new businesses wishing to locate in Rugby. Our biggest challenge was in establishing where the gaps in employment requirements were and how schools and colleges were directing students towards those gaps. This is an area that could benefit from partnership working.

Encouraging new businesses to settle in Rugby will not be an easy task but we are now more aware of the difficulties and drawbacks that we face in the future growth of the Borough. It should be noted that we are actually doing quite well at the present time but we must not become complacent. As the Borough grows and the need for more investment becomes more important, especially with the implementation of the local retention of business rates, we must become more inventive and imaginative in our thinking. Rugby is a beautiful Borough and we have a good reputation within the business world, we need to use that and expand on it if we are to compete for top quality businesses to invest here in the future.

I must take this opportunity to thank all the officers, visitors and everyone who took part in the task group and for their valuable contributions to the whole review. I would particularly like to thank John Dale and Debbie Dawson, without their help we would not have such a successful review.

*Councillor Carolyn Robbins*  
*Chairman*
1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Group proposes the following recommendations to Cabinet:

**IMPROVEMENTS THAT COULD BE MADE QUICKLY AND AT LOW COST**

1. The Council should work with local agents to develop a showcase pack for potential investors in the town and wider Rugby area, based around a redesigned commercial property guide.

2. The Council should promote local land and development sites across the borough in a privately-funded sub-regional magazine.

3. The working group established in relation to the Rugby World Cup events in 2013 and 2015 should be fully supported by the Council to exploit economic development opportunities arising from the events.

**MODIFICATIONS OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

4. An interactive web-based version of the commercial property guide should be developed on the council’s website, and maintained as an up-to-date resource.

5. The Council should keep under regular review how neighbouring local authorities are responding to the additional powers in the Localism Act to grant discretionary business rate relief.

**SIGNIFICANT PROPOSALS WHICH WILL REQUIRE COMMITMENT OF TIME OR FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

6. To raise the profile of the borough, relevant award schemes should be identified and applications submitted on a quarterly basis.

7. More effective and formal partnership working between agencies should be encouraged to map and respond to employer skills needs across the county.

The task group also recommended that a copy of the final review report should be sent to Warwickshire County Council, highlighting in particular the review findings about the lack of awareness amongst employers about apprentice scheme opportunities and the negative perceptions that exist about the potential burdens of taking on an apprentice.

1.1 Alignment with the Corporate Strategy

The review relates to the following corporate priority:

Establish an environment that will attract new businesses into the borough and enable existing businesses to flourish.
2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 Background

On 19 March, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board placed a review of inward investment in the overview and scrutiny work programme, on the recommendation of the work programme workshop held in February 2012. The review topic had been suggested both by Leadership and Operations Team and by Customer and Partnerships Committee.

The level of investment in any country is largely determined by national economic policy. Nevertheless, there are many ways in which local councils can influence the level of inward investment into their own particular areas. The review looked at what can be done to promote economic growth and attract businesses into the borough, particularly in the context of a new scheme being introduced from April 2013 enabling local authorities to retain a proportion of any growth in their business rate base.

A draft one page strategy for the review was agreed by Customer and Partnerships Committee on 21 June 2012, and several amendments were made by the task group at their first meeting on 3 September 2012.

2.2 The One-Page Strategy

The one-page strategy is the name given to the scoping document for the review. It defines the task and the improvements being aimed for and how these are going to be achieved. The review’s one-page strategy is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the broad topic area?</th>
<th>Inward Investment</th>
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<table>
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<th>What is the specific topic area?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The review will focus on the council’s policy in relation to the retention of business rates by local authorities, which is being proposed in the first phase of the Local Government Resource Review. It will consider:</td>
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- how the council might retain current business and encourage economic growth in the borough
- the council’s policy for providing relief to businesses in support of inward investment and spending any income earned from growth in local business rates;
- what other income sources there might be to support economic growth.

Inward investment is about encouraging businesses to relocate and invest in the area. Local authorities can support local economic growth through the planning system, investment in local infrastructure, ensuring access to education and training, building strong relationships with businesses and through the way they exercise their regulatory powers in relation to local businesses. These are all areas the review may wish to consider in the context of encouraging economic growth in the borough to maximise income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the ambition of the review?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rugby will have a clear policy in relation to the retention of business rates and be</td>
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successful in supporting economic growth to maximise the new income opportunities. Rugby will be effectively marketed as an attractive location for businesses and the Council will work well with partners to attract more businesses to the borough.

**How well do we perform at the moment?**
The task group will begin by considering:
- number of companies in the borough
- an analysis of the borough’s rateable value tax base, and recent trends
- comparative performance data against other Warwickshire authorities on inward investment
- details of recent planning decisions relating to new businesses
- evidence and comparative data on inward investment in other local authority areas.

Supporting documents for the task group to consider include:

- Rugby Borough Council Core Strategy (chapter 8) – specifically land allocations for commercial uses
- Economic Development Action Plan
- Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership 5-year Strategy
- Warwickshire Investment Partnership Annual Report 2010/11
- The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets

**Who shall we consult about the current service and about how we can improve it?**
Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Inward Investment task group lead)
Warwickshire Investment Partnership (arm of Warwickshire County Council)
Chamber of Commerce
Federation of Small Businesses
Coventry and Warwickshire Institute of Directors
Local commercial agents
Rugby BID / Town Centre Company
Warwickshire County Council work-based learning and apprenticeship team
Warwickshire College
Economy, Development and Culture Portfolio Holder

**What other help do we need?**
Support from the Head of Resources, Economic Development Officer, Revenues Manager and the Forward Planning team.

The task group will need to understand the Government’s proposals for business rate retention in the Local Government Resource Review.

The review may also make use of any relevant evidence gathered as part of Warwickshire County Council’s recent scrutiny review (August 2011) on supporting the local economy, and take into account the findings of Rugby Borough Council’s review of the town centre economy (2010).

**How long should it take?**
The review will commence in September 2012 and conclude by the end of January 2013.

**What will be the outcome?**
Recommendations to Cabinet on measures to support local businesses and encourage local economic growth.
3. METHODOLOGY

The task group built a strong evidence base to support its conclusions, drawing on a variety of sources. This included:

- Briefings and presentations from the Head of Resources, the Revenues Manager, the Economic Development Officer and the Development Strategy Manager on the
  - local retention of business rates
  - business rate administration in Rugby
  - the council’s Economic Strategy
  - planning policy and practice relating to commercial developments
- Oral evidence from the Strategic Economic Development Team Manager at Warwickshire County Council on future plans for economic growth at the county and sub-regional (CW LEP) level.
- Comparative data from the Audit Commission and official labour market statistics ('nomis') on economic development
- Benchmarking data for Warwickshire authorities from Warwickshire Investment Partnership on key economic indicators
- Information and examples of good practice from the LGA local growth campaign
- Updates from the Head of Resources on the proposals to pool business rates with other local authorities in Coventry and Warwickshire.

The task group held a select committee meeting on 24 October 2012 at the Town Hall, the purpose of which was to bring together those with expertise and insight on inward investment. The following attended the meeting:

- Torin Spence, Warwickshire County Council Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships Manager
- Krishna Patel, Business Relationship Manager, Warwickshire College
- Linsey Luke, Federation of Small Businesses
- Aftab Gaffer, Rugby First
- Alistair George, Director, George and Company Chartered Surveyors
- Cllr Professor Mark Williams, WMG, University of Warwick

Some of those attending the meeting also provided written submissions to the task group in advance of the meeting.

Task group members also visited the Sir Frank Whittle Business Centre and met with the centre manager and the Warwickshire County Council officer with responsibility for all of the business centres. They also spoke with some of the business owners who are based at the centre.

To obtain feedback from local businesses, the task group commissioned a short survey which was placed on the council website and promoted to the membership of local business organisations. It was also circulated in hard copy at a ‘meet the buyer’ event organised by the council and partners. Disappointingly, only one response was received. The Economic Development Officer contacted a number of larger employers on behalf of the task group to obtain direct feedback regarding skills gaps. These were: Precision Laser, Cemex, Nationwide Windows, DK Packing, Bretherton’s Solicitors and Perry Appleton Group.
4. FINDINGS

4.1 BUSINESS RATES

4.1.1 Local retention of business rates

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 introduces a local business rates retention scheme from April 2013. The detail of the proposals and the council’s approach in response to the new policy evolved during the course of the review, and the task group received regular updates from the Head of Resources.

The thrust of the policy is to return to greater local influence over funding and spending, the aim being to:
- incentivise councils to encourage economic growth
- provide greater certainty about future funding; and
- offer councils greater autonomy and flexibility.

Once underway the scheme will allow councils to keep a proportion of 50% of the additional funds they generate. However, there is a complex framework underpinning this. Government will assess a baseline funding level for each council and only a proportion of growth in business rate income above that level will be retained. Any amount of business rates collected by councils that rise over the set baseline will be paid into a central tariff. This central pot will be used to pay out top-ups to those authorities whose business rates fall below their own set baseline figure. Government will also set a figure for the percentage level of increase in revenue local authorities may keep, with any growth above this collected by Government as a levy. This levy has now been set at a maximum of 50%, so all councils will be able to keep at least 50% of 50% (ie. 25%) of the growth that they generate. Funding from the levy will be passed back to local authorities who have lost income, such as through big businesses moving out of their area.

It was reported to the task group that, for Rugby, each 0.5% increase in the borough’s business rate base equates to a potential funding increase of around £80,000 per annum. However, it is also the case that in order to retain the current level of income received by the council, the council’s business rate growth will need to increase at least in line with inflation.

Included within the Government’s policy regarding the local retention of business rates is the stated intention that business rates paid in respect of new renewable energy projects will be retained entirely by local authorities.

4.1.2 Pooling business rates

Councils have the option to pool business rates with other councils in order to mitigate the risk of loss of income due to the closure of a major business in their area, or to retain income within the area which might otherwise be taken away by the Government in the form of a levy. Even in a pooling arrangement, however, individual councils still retain 25% of any growth in their business rates and the pooling only applies to any growth above this level.
Prior to the start of the review Cabinet had taken a decision that Rugby should express an interest in being included in a wider business rate pooling arrangement being considered for Warwickshire (and subsequently extended to include Coventry). Officers had been given delegated authority to pull out of any pooling arrangement, once actual funding allocations from the Government were known in early December 2012, should this show that the council would be in some way disadvantaged by pooling with other councils. The initial expression of interest for a Coventry and Warwickshire Business Rates Pool was submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government on 27 July 2012.

It was reported to the task group in October that Cabinet had approved a report outlining the arrangements and financial benefits for all local authorities in Coventry and Warwickshire to join a pool. The proposal was submitted to the DCLG by 9 November 2012 and was subject to the approval of the department. At the conclusion of the review the DCLG had confirmed their acceptance of the pooling application.

The pool will become effective for one year from 1 April 2013, and there will be an opportunity to review the arrangements half way through the year to ensure they are working and that the anticipated benefits are forthcoming.

The pool will determine how any income gained will be redistributed within the Coventry and Warwickshire area. A memorandum of understanding will be needed to establish the governance arrangements and determine how any income will be redistributed, with the expectation that a proportion of any growth would be reinvested to support economic growth in the area.

The financial benefits of the pooling arrangement were estimated to be around £150-£200,000 per annum. Since this initial evaluation the Government has set a maximum for the levy that can be taken from any authority at 50%. Previously it had been calculated that the Council was likely to incur a levy on its growth in excess of 86%. The Council will therefore be able to retain a larger proportion of its growth and the financial benefits of being in a pool will be correspondingly reduced. However, it is still advantageous for the Council to remain in the Coventry and Warwickshire Pool but the financial benefits are now estimated to be around £100,000 per annum.

4.1.3 Business rates – current position

The task group were informed about the current business rates arrangements and the administration around their collection.

National Non-Domestic Rates in their current form were introduced in 1990. Prior to this the rates from businesses were collected and retained locally.

All properties that are non-domestic have a ‘rateable value’ attributed to them by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The Council has a duty to report all new builds, extensions or demolitions to the VOA. Some properties such as churches and parks are exempt from rating. Business rates are charged in zones, with properties in the town centre charged a higher rate. These rates are set nationally and are the same for all town centres.
The total rateable value in Rugby (September 2012) is £102,509,171 and there are 2,983 assessments. These include wider business activities, such as trafficmaster sites, advertising rights and valet services in car parks. The rateable value broadly represents the yearly rent a property could be let for on the open market and the rateable values are reassessed every 5 years.

The Government calculates a rating multiplier and this is used to calculate how much each ratepayer will have to pay. This is currently 45.8p in the pound. Throughout the 5 year period, the multiplier goes up by the rate of inflation.

4.1.4 Business rate relief

There are several reductions that can be allowed and the most common are listed below:

- Empty properties – there is no charge for the first three months that a property is empty and this extends to six months for industrial properties. After that rates are due in full, except where properties have a rateable value of less than £2,600. There are further exemptions such as listed buildings and properties owned by a charity or part of a business in administration.

- Small Business Rate Relief – Nationally, businesses currently receive 100% relief, if their rateable value is under £6,000 and it is their only business. It was announced in the Autumn Statement in December 2012 that the doubling of rate relief (from 50% to 100%) for small businesses would be extended to April 2014. The percentage reduces for all those properties with between £6,000 and £12,000 RV by 2% per £120 RV.

- Charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) and rural – There is a mandatory 80% relief for all registered charities and CASCs. Certain businesses in rural areas are entitled to 50% relief.

- Discretionary Rate Relief – the council can give discretionary relief to charities and non-profit making organisations. Part of this relief has to be funded by the local authority.

Rugby Borough Council has a policy, in some cases, of topping up the mandatory relief to registered charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs to 100%, but not all authorities do this. The council funds 75% of this top-up and Government funds the remainder. These cases are all assessed individually. Generally, national charities do not get the additional discretionary rate relief but local charities are treated more favourably.

The Localism Act 2011 gives councils wider discretion to reduce the business rates of any local ratepayer. This could be considered on an individual basis, for example where a case of extreme hardship can be demonstrated. However, unlike the current arrangements for additional discretionary rate relief, any increased discretionary relief given would be at a direct cost to the council. Central government will continue to part fund discretionary reliefs in the same circumstances and to the same degree as in previous years.

Rate bills can be served on newly built premises provided they are reasonably complete. Business rates do not apply once buildings have been demolished, and
developers sometimes demolish or allow charities to use the premises in order to avoid paying rates.

### 4.1.5 Business rate collection in Rugby

Business rates are normally collected over 10 monthly payments. During 2011/12 Rugby collected in £36,661,412. This was paid directly to the Government in full and the council received back a grant of £4,045,475. Warwickshire County Council also received a grant, which amounted £102,500,000 (reflecting the income from the five Warwickshire district and borough councils).

Over the past five years, the following amounts have been collected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>£36,708,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>£36,079,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>£35,106,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>£34,512,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>£35,095,338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rugby Borough Council collected 98.9% of the charge in 2011/12 and continues to collect the remainder in subsequent years. This figure had fallen from the usual rate of around 99.4% the impact of the current economic climate. It is anticipated this figure will rise again when the financial situation improves. This authority has a practice of vigorously collecting business rates but not all authorities do so with the same level of commitment. In Rugby empty properties are currently visited every three months to check for any occupancy but it is planned to increase the frequency of visits.

The Council’s effectiveness in collecting rates was endorsed by external parties. Rugby First commented in their written submission:

“It appears to take an inordinate amount of time for the rates office in Birmingham to catch up with the reality on the ground… We would commend the RBC’s Non Domestic Rates department for their dedication and ability to chase things down. We employ them to collect our BID levy and they have performed admirably”.

The Federation of Small Businesses added: “the council have actively promoted SBRR to the local businesses and have a good take up. We see this as a positive step to support small businesses”.

### 4.2 ECONOMIC STRATEGY AND PLANNING PROVISION

#### 4.2.1 Context

The task group considered a range of statistical indicators relating to economic development, comparing Rugby with nearest statistical neighbours, other local authorities within Warwickshire and national averages. This included business starts and closures in the borough, average weekly earnings, employment rate, percentage of Jobseekers Allowance claimants and qualifications of local residents.
Overall the data demonstrates that Rugby is an average local authority area – performing very much in the middle both within the county and when compared with statistical neighbours on all of these indicators. Data provided by Warwickshire Investment Partnership on the level of inward investment placed Rugby consistently 3rd or 4th amongst the five Warwickshire districts and boroughs over the past 4 years for the net number of new businesses.

The task group were informed that inward investment is influenced by three key factors:
- labour supply (including appropriate skill levels)
- location (both of customers and competition)
- availability of land or property (at an agreeable rate).

In terms of location, Rugby is clearly very well situated for transport links. Labour supply and availability of land and property, as well as the council’s proactive role in economic development, are explored in more detail below.

4.2.2 Land and Property

The area that Rugby Borough Council can most influence is the availability of land, property and appropriate development sites through the planning system. The Council has a duty not only to allocate business land, but also to deliver jobs. The allocation of land for commercial use is a key priority of the council’s development planning document, the Core Strategy. Not all local authorities have produced such a document.

The Council’s economic strategy is articulated within the Core Strategy. This is informed by a strong evidence base.

4.2.2.1 Core Strategy

The council’s vision is to “develop the prosperity of the Borough of Rugby and raise its importance as an economic engine within the sub-region”. The vision acknowledges that future development in Rugby should encourage the existing business base to grow organically, whilst also shaping and promoting diversity amongst the sectors represented and types of employment they support.

Key points from the strategy include:

- Rugby has a healthy economy with low unemployment and steady growth in new employment development. (At the time that the Core Strategy was written approximately 43,000 people were employed within the Borough.)
- The period 2006 to 2020 will see the Borough’s economy grow by a predicted rate of 12%. For the West Midlands this figure is 13%.
- Existing employment land should be protected, and any redevelopment of existing sites should incorporate at least 20% as employment land.
- Further diversity of Rugby’s economic base will be encouraged.
- There is a need to provide employment land for more small to medium-sized enterprises.
- The Borough needs to provide more B1 (offices, research and development, light industry) floor space. (The provision of such floor space will help in diversifying the economic base of the Borough).
- There is potential for over-reliance on storage and distribution if more B1 floor space is not achieved.
- Rugby should maintain and improve a job density of 48 jobs per ha.
- By 2027 distribution, transport and communications is predicted to be the most prominent employment section, providing approximately 14,500 jobs.
- The next largest sector will be non-marketed services (ie. public administration, health, social care etc.), highlighting that there will generally be an increase in demand for office floor space to support these sectors.
- Predicted sector growth will also see a continued demand for the supply of B2 land to serve the Borough’s significant manufacturing and construction industries up to 2027.

Overall, the strategy recognises that Rugby has a healthy economy in terms of an existing business base, unemployment and also gradual commercial growth. It concludes that the steady increase in employment within the logistic sector in the area indicates a need to ensure that any future development recognises the importance of that sector, yet also ensures diversity in the borough’s employment offer.

4.2.2.2 Business Growth Forecasts – Core Strategy allocations

Outlined below is the economic growth forecast through the allocation of land in the Core Strategy:

- The Core Strategy allocates 108 ha of employment land, to be delivered between 2006 and 2020.
- This allocation assumes a job density of 48 jobs per ha. This figure does not include the Ryton (former Peugeot site) or Ansty Regional Investment Sites.
- There will be a ‘rolling reservoir’ of delivery of 36 ha every 5 years.
- 67 ha of this allocation will be delivered through the two urban extensions – the Mast Site and the Gateway site. This land forms the medium to long term commercial growth.

The production of the Core Strategy already appears to be paying dividends. During the course of the review, a news item on BBC Midlands Today highlighted major developments in Rugby, which were bucking national trends. Though development of employment land is phased for completion behind housing development on the Gateway site, there is evidence of a good level of interest from developers in the employment land since it began to be marketed.

Due to market conditions, development in recent years has been largely limited to speculative built commercial properties. There was no development / completion of employment floorspace in 2010/11 and 2009/10. In 2008/09 15568 sqm of office space (B1) was developed. The task group were provided with a list of major sites that are either in the process of development or have planning permission and are expected to be built by the end of 2013. These amounted to a total of 337,685 sqm net of predicted completions.

4.2.2.3 Availability of appropriate land and property

It was suggested in some of the evidence presented to the task group that one of the main barriers to inward investment in the borough is the lack of the right type of
property, causing companies to locate elsewhere. There is a particular need for good quality and adaptable industrial units that can be split or expanded to suit changing business needs.

There is a perceived shortage of smaller industrial units (between 800 and 2,000 sq ft) and modern offices in Rugby. Once small businesses have been established they need space and facilities to grow and expand. Compartmentalisation of old industrial units is too expensive to be a viable option for such businesses. There is also an issue over the size of units available in the town – many are too large for the types of retailers who would be looking to locate in the town.

By comparison, it was suggested that Daventry offers more suitable accommodation to medium-sized businesses. However, a large proportion of smaller industrial units are owned by Daventry District Council, meaning they are able to control rents and discretionary rate relief. Rugby Borough Council is not similarly ‘capital rich’.

That said, evidence from the Sir Frank Whittle Business Centre stated that they had found “no evidence of the Rugby area not providing the space required”, reporting that most of their vacating businesses had relocated in the Rugby area. It was suggested that a gap analysis of the premises available and the demand for commercial property was needed to provide more robust evidence on this point. However, this would require commissioned research, at a cost to the council. The findings could only capture a snapshot in time, and it was unclear that the council would be in a position to take any positive action to address the findings.

### Case Study – Sir Frank Whittle Business Centre

The Sir Frank Whittle Business Centre (SFWBC) opened in May 1994 and has accommodated 127 companies in that time. The centre is made up of 42 light industrial units ranging from 148sq ft to 718 sq ft, with the rent level starting at £50 per week for the smallest unit. The variety of unit sizes enables companies to up or downsize as required. The units can be extended by installing a mezzanine floor (at the companies own expense).

There are shared kitchen and toilet facilities and a small offloading area. Companies rent a basic shell and install their own equipment, utilities and broadband etc. The centre offers 24-hour access for 364 days per year, and provides a reception service for the companies based there during normal office hours. The centre holds seminars around three times per year offering basic business advice on topics such as human resources.

The centre often attracts home-based businesses that have outgrown the space they have available. There is no minimum or maximum occupancy period. Companies are issued with a 28 day licence which enables them to move out quickly if they wish or need to. For the businesses moving to the centre, this is important in mitigating the risks attached to taking on a business premises. Business owners value the kudos of having a businesses address and the support of centre staff and other businesses around them.

There is a turnover of approximately four companies a year. In December 2012, there were just two vacant units, one of which will be occupied from mid January. The current occupancy by floor space is 91%, against a national benchmark of 85%.
There is a wide mix of business types and size based at the centre. Some employ staff, and others are staffed by the owner or joint owners. The failure rate of businesses within the centre is extremely low.

It was clear from the conversations with business owners at the centre that in many cases the facilities and support it offered had enabled their businesses to grow, and the centre was able to accommodate this growth by offering larger units and facilities.

In 2012 the centre received 28 enquiries, four of which now have units at the centre. Of these enquiries:
- four had activities which were unsuitable (eg. indoor skate area, car upholstery, paint spraying)
- four have found alternative premises
- two went to other WCC business centres in Nuneaton and Bidford on Avon
- one wanted larger accommodation (1500 square feet)
- the remaining are on the waiting list for suitable units to become available.

4.2.2.4 Planning Service

Whilst the Core Strategy is important in setting out a clear intention by the council to encourage new business developments, the council can also have an important influence through the way it responds to queries from potential developers. Officers provided specific examples of where a ‘VIP service’ to potential investors and developers could make a real difference in attracting new businesses. A case study illustrating how the council’s planning service has worked effectively to assist businesses and facilitate new investment in the area by Sainsburys is included below.

This was endorsed in the written evidence received from the Federation of Small Businesses, which included the following comments:

“Inward investment can be greatly impacted by the service a business receives from all departments with a local authority, particularly the planning department. We are please to say that anecdotally our members inform us that RBC has a ‘can do’ attitude to planning and have always held the business community in high regard and recognising them as key to the prosperity of the area. This is very often not the case in many areas, where businesses are seen as the enemy and not encouraged to expand or build.”

The planning service at the council has been through an end to end review and radically changed its service structure as a result, with a clear focus on the customer. As a result, planning officers have a flexible, common sense approach which encourages growth. This is further strengthened by the principle of sustainable development introduced by the National Planning Policy Framework introduced in March 2012, which encourages planning officers to give strong consideration to economic benefit when determining planning applications.
In the early part of last year, Rugby Borough Council (RBC) received an investment enquiry from Sainsbury’s with a request for a sizeable piece of land suitable to locate their research and development function; producing upwards of 500 skilled jobs. The particular site that interested them, although only one of several locations in the West Midlands they were investigating, was the investment site at Ansty. Indeed Ansty was seen to be somewhat of a wild card by those managing the relocation project.

The site at Ansty is classified as a Major Investment Site (MIS), part of a handful of similar sites throughout the country brought forward under the previous government. MIS’ were managed and promoted at a national and international level by the regional development agencies (RDAs), in our case Advantage West Midlands. When the RDAs were abolished in 2010 their assets were passed to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The HCA has therefore inherited the management and promotion responsibilities for the Ansty MIS.

The role of RBC has not changed throughout the administration change and the council remains the planning authority for the site. That said, the council has proactively maintained a constant working relationship with the HCA and the project manager for the site, who has remained since the site’s conception. As such we have been able to positively influence the promotion and growth of the site.

The main criteria Sainsbury’s were working towards were that the site location had to be available quickly and needed to have good connections, in particular with London and their HQ.

The RBC role in securing this investment was centred on positive pressure through continual communication with the senior level of the business. We have a history of being able to use the planning system to enable growth and investment and this is something that we knew would attract them to our Borough.

Some of their requirements were not entirely fitting with the original concept of the site, for example they would require a multi level car park. However, through our relationship with the HCA and ability to approach the planning matters flexibly we could demonstrate that we would be able to overcome this issue, amongst others.

Once Sainsbury’s had indicated their wish to locate at Ansty, senior planners worked solidly on the project to ensure that the council was able to meet their demanding timescales. As such the council was able to use a Certificate of Lawful Proposal; it was previously thought that a full planning permission would be required to change the use of that part of the site. This meant that consent for the development was achieved within a week.

The work of RBC on this project not only ensured this investment but also furthered our reputation as an authority that is pro-business and pro-growth. The investment has also subsequently formed part of the relocation decision of another part of the Sainsbury’s division to DIRFT, bringing further investment and jobs to the area.
4.2.3 Labour market supply and demand

4.2.3.1 Employment rate and qualifications data

The official labour market statistics show that Rugby has a comparatively low unemployment rate and higher than average weekly earnings when compared with the West Midlands and national averages. Though this can be a sign of a healthy local economy, it also means that new businesses cannot be guaranteed a pool of labour. This was borne out by evidence submitted to the task group. Rugby First stated that “there isn’t enough choice… (with) insufficient people looking for work”, while the Federation of Small Businesses stated: “Our members in Rugby tell us that they struggle to recruit because there isn’t a pool of skilled/qualified people looking for work (as unemployment is low). Low unemployment is obviously a benefit to the area but strangely can be an issue for businesses looking to recruit.” Low unemployment in itself can inflate wages, an issue that is further compounded by a reliance on employment in one business sector (logistics), which also drives wages up.

The statistics on qualifications levels show that Rugby has a higher proportion of the working age population with no qualifications than the national (Great Britain) average, though a lower proportion than the West Midlands average. More generally, Rugby performs at an average or above average level in the proportion of its working age population with level 2, 3 and 4 qualifications.

4.2.3.2 Employer skills needs

A key issue raised with the task group was the lack of market intelligence about what employers need. Agencies such as the West Midlands Observatory and the Learning and Skills Council no longer exist, making it difficult to gather such information. In addition, Warwickshire County Council no longer has a strategic role in education and skills provision. There is no data being collected by the public sector and there is just limited data on demand for apprenticeships or Jobcentre Plus vacancies, with Jobcentre Plus only holding 48% of job vacancies. It was clear that more information is needed on the skills employers need so courses can be tailored to meet these.

Warwickshire College reported that they have introduced local consultation boards at each of their centres to work closely with the local business community to better understand their education and training needs. However, it was noted that the commercial focus of the college meant it was more likely to tailor courses to the needs of individual larger employers, and it was not clear that the needs of small and medium-sized businesses were always met, though these employers made up around 85% of the local business base.

The evidence from the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership suggests that the skills base that is needed in the sub-region is technical and science or engineering based, and there is an issue about retaining skilled school-leavers and graduates to work in the area.

There are a number of warehouses in the area which may require a less skilled workforce, though this is not always the case. A new logistics employment hub, led by the Sector Skills Council for logistics, had been established in Daventry, and part
of its role is to demonstrate the breadth of jobs in this sector. Skills for other industry areas such as care and hospitality are also needed.

Evidence from employers and from Jobcentre Plus indicated that companies in the borough have difficulties in recruiting higher skilled employees. The Jobcentre Plus vacancies that fill quickest are for lower skilled jobs, including warehouse / picking and packing, retail, administrative, driving, cleaning and bar work. Chefs, hotel and catering, and engineering are amongst the vacancies that prove more difficult to fill.

There was some evidence from larger employers that both Jobcentre Plus and Warwickshire College were not meeting the requirements of local companies, in terms of quality of employees and relevance of training provision, although this feedback was anecdotal and from a small sample. This was not the universal view, and others cited positive experiences of working with the college and of using Jobcentre Plus to recruit staff.

4.2.3.3 Education and skills – meeting skills needs

Schools, colleges and universities all have a key role to play in meeting employer skills needs and providing a strong local labour market. Rugby benefits from having good local grammar schools and secondary schools and this is seen as a key strength.

Between 2007 and 2011 educational attainment improved across all Warwickshire districts except Rugby Borough, which saw a slight dip in attainment, although results continue to be above the national average. It was reported that there is a downward trend in the number of young people who are ‘not in education training or employment’ (NEETS) across the county, while in Rugby the figure had been relatively static.

The task group heard from business representatives that it is increasingly difficult for employers to compare qualifications due to the range available and this is likely to become an increasing problem as further changes are planned to qualifications. The group also learned that there is a notable difference between school and employer definitions of ‘work-ready’. Employers report that softer skills such as timekeeping, telephone answering and a general readiness and willingness to work are often lacking. This appeared to be borne out in data shared privately with the task group from Warwickshire College about their course enrolments, which indicated high numbers of enrolments on ‘preparation for life and work’ courses.

Apprenticeships are an important element of providing skilled employees to meet local employer demand. Warwickshire has seen a 10% growth in apprenticeships compared to the national figure of 2%. Even so, it was reported that there are not enough apprentices coming through with the relevant skills for local employers. Though apprenticeships are perceived as being aimed at young people not going to university, students still need 5 GCSE grades A-C to qualify. Many ‘NEETs’ do not have this level of qualification and work is ongoing to try to support these individuals to reach the required level.

The task group learned that the burden of taking on an apprentice should be no more than that of employing any other employee. The college or training provider takes on the administration to help and support the recruitment process. However,
it was clear from the feedback from businesses that many do not have a real understanding of the apprenticeship scheme, and smaller businesses have particular concerns about potential burdens and additional costs.

The development of the Power Academy at Warwickshire College was directly aimed at reflecting local business interests. The Power Academy delivers engineering courses and apprenticeships for large employers at levels 2, 3, 4 and 5. The college is also working towards becoming an entrepreneurial college, as part of the Gazelle initiative, which involves embedding entrepreneurial skills into all of their courses. They are also developing strong links with higher education providers, to demonstrate progression pathways, and now offer their own degree courses.

There are significant changes underway in education for 14-19 year-olds, with the age for compulsory participation in education and training set to increase to 18 years by 2015. It was noted that a University Technical College, supported by the University of Warwick, will be opening in 2013 and will take students from age 14. This will have an engineering focus.

4.2.4 Economic development activity

Inward investment operations can be both proactive and reactive. Examples of proactive inward investment include advertising and marketing, research into the future of the commercial landscape and visiting internal/external businesses. Reactive inward investment operations include the availability of data for enquiries, council services being geared up to deal effectively with enquiries and the ability to engage quickly with third parties. Historically Rugby Borough Council has operated in both of these areas, and has employed a dedicated resource for this purpose.

To support inward investment, this officer is able to facilitate meetings with interested business representatives. Another key role for the Council is to invest in the town centre as a beacon to promote wider growth in the borough, and an example of how the Council does this is the provision of moving-in grants for vacant shop premises. The Council’s own economic development activity is extended by support from Warwickshire Investment Partnership (Warwickshire County Council).

The evidence from external bodies suggested that Rugby is recognised locally for its forward thinking and proactive approach in working with businesses. In particular it was noted that, at a time when many other authorities had reduced or removed their economic development function, Rugby had committed to retaining this role and this had meant that Rugby had strengthened its position in this area. Rugby works well with partners and outside agencies.

With this in mind, it was suggested that the Council could do more to promote itself in this respect. Other councils appear to be better at selling themselves, and the Council needs to build its reputation and promote the borough more visibly within the business community. More emphasis should be placed on building Rugby’s external profile.
Initial expressions of interest in locating businesses in Rugby come from external companies who may then contact the Council, or be referred by agents. It is important at that stage to get the message across about how easy the Council is to work with, and to ensure that a strong package of support is available to these potential investors.

The Council prepares a commercial property guide which is used to help promote the borough. This could be redesigned to produce a showcase pack for potential investors, tailored to particular audiences, and including a section on ‘life in Rugby’ with information on local schools, housing, transport and leisure facilities. It should also introduce the council’s business-friendly planning department to potential investors.

It was also suggested that the use of social media could be considered as a way of promoting the town/borough. Many potential investors will undertake research online, so the availability of good information in this form, and tailored to the particular audiences, is crucial. During the course of the review the Economic Development Officer explored with local businesses and the Communications Manager some ideas for improving the borough’s web presence for inward investment purposes. It was suggested that, at minimal cost, an interactive web-based version of the commercial property guide could be developed. Administrative support to maintain this facility could be provided by the Business Support Team.

It was also suggested to the task group that the Council could work more closely with developers in promoting the borough, as they share the same aim of attracting businesses and individuals to the area. The Economic Development Officer informed the task group about a sub-regional magazine he had identified, funded by developers and businesses, which showcases commercial development opportunities for the sub-region. Some of the sites in the borough are not currently featured, and there was an opportunity to be more proactive in using this magazine.

The Rugby (League and Union) World Cup events to be hosted by England and Wales in 2013 and 2015 provide an important opportunity to promote the town and the borough. There is already a working group in place, involving key external partners, looking at how these opportunities can best be exploited. The task group also learned that officers had had initial discussions with Creative England about the potential to promote Rugby as a film location.

### 4.3 COUNTY AND SUB-REGIONAL CONTEXT

It was clear from the evidence presented to the task group that inward investment has to be considered in a county and sub-regional context.

#### 4.3.1 Warwickshire County Council

Within Warwickshire, the County Council’s Warwickshire Investment Partnership (WIP) team offers a single point of contact for businesses considering locating in the county and works to promote the county as a location for businesses and to support existing businesses. There is an inward investment officer within this team who has a particular focus on Rugby. The council pays an annual fee to WIP of
£5,500, which is the same figure paid by all of the Warwickshire boroughs and districts. They provide a valuable service to the council in making connections with potential investors.

A comment was made at the select committee meeting that the relationship between Warwickshire County Council (WCC), Rugby Borough Council and external commercial agents is too fragmented. It was also suggested that the county council may concentrate more on promoting their priority areas and that Rugby is lost within the county-wide offer. Similarly there are inherent tensions as there will be competition between the Warwickshire boroughs and districts to attract new businesses.

As part of its ‘Going for Growth’ agenda, Warwickshire County Council agreed (December 2012) funding for new schemes, including a small business loan scheme and a scheme to revitalise Warwickshire’s town centres and market towns, focusing on increasing footfall. Funding for Rugby will be administered by Rugby First (BID Company).

Warwickshire County Council owns ten small business incubation units across the county. The centres are now income-generating.

4.3.2 Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP)

The key strategic body influencing inward investment and supporting business growth in the sub-region is the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP). The LEP is a private sector/public sector collaboration which plays a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. It has been in operation since January 2011. Its role is even more pivotal with the adoption of the pooling arrangement for local retention of business rates.

In April 2011 the CW LEP published its five-year strategy, which sets out focussed plans to achieve three Key Ambitions:

1. Create an environment where it is easy for businesses to start, locate and thrive
2. Accelerate the growth of our economy through targeting support in our key strategic sectors
3. Tackle the skills problem by aligning supply and demand.

Alongside these ambitions, the CW LEP Board has identified a national influencing role on promoting low carbon mobility, and has an ongoing commitment to consider the challenges and opportunities presented by low carbon issues in all that they do.

More recently, the CW LEP commissioned commercial research which has resulted in a decision to focus attention on four niche sectors within Coventry and Warwickshire:

- **Low carbon mobility**
  The right level of research and development for prototype testing exists and other assets include test-beds and support from both Coventry University and the University of Warwick in delivering students with the right skills. This is a growing market of which Coventry and Warwickshire is at the forefront.
• **Motorsport**
  This is not a huge market but is at the pinnacle of advanced engineering. Successes include design and development for Formula 1 teams.

• **Serious games and software**
  This technology has become a valuable business tool. Internet based software can be used to sell goods or train staff through a virtual world. Coventry and Warwickshire is a global leader in this sector and a number of companies are exploiting this.

• **Intelligent Transport Systems**
  This includes intelligent software and digital technology for cars and transport to develop automatic traffic flow control systems. Interest in this technology would come mainly from the transport and logistics sector, one of the area’s key industries.

The level of employment in these sectors is only around 8% and therefore they are not a direct source of growth, but the model the LEP is adopting is to highlight these sectoral strengths as a means of attracting a wider range of businesses to the area from around the globe. The LEP’s emerging strategic approach to inward investment is one of focusing on these strengths as a top priority, but also building on the sub-region’s broader strengths and assets (eg. advanced engineering and manufacturing, transport and logistics, digital media, head office functions, development opportunities) and continuing the routine approach of reactive services based on interest and demand.

The proposed inward investment offer from the LEP involves the following key components:

• Property offer – right properties in the right places are available for investors
• Key strengths – promoting and selling the sub-region’s unique strengths, providing confidence to businesses that they can be successful here
• VIP service – providing a high quality, integrated, consistent and welcoming service to potential investors, utilising full range of assets and partners.

Though the LEP is business-led, it needs public sector input and local authorities have a key contribution to make on skills, infrastructure and support for businesses. The Leader of Rugby Borough Council has an important role as a member of the CW LEP Board, representing all of the Warwickshire districts and boroughs.

In October 2012 it was announced that the CW LEP had been awarded £24.4 million from the Government’s Regional Growth Fund to boost the local economy and help create jobs. In December the Board announced that it had decided to add this to some of the funding from the Growing Places Fund and from the European Regional Development Fund, amounting to a programme of more than £30 million. This will be aimed at helping three target areas – access to finance, support for strategic companies and for assistance to infrastructure and major projects.
5. CONCLUSIONS

The task group has drawn the following conclusions from the evidence it received:

5.1 Planning

Having a Core Strategy, and therefore plan-led growth, is a clear strength and inspires confidence in investors.

The Council’s Planning Service has been reviewed and restructured so that it is now able and willing to have a wider role in inward investment. It is very much linked with economic development and is known to be business friendly.

5.2 Availability of commercial land and property

Availability of commercial land is generally good, but the shortage of appropriately-sized business units is a key issue.

The council is limited in its ability to control the provision of appropriately sized business properties. It is not possible to control the build on pre-let units which are built to match particular requirements.

The review proved inconclusive as to whether small and medium business property requirements are being adequately met. Consideration was given to the possibility of undertaking a gap analysis to establish the level of unmet demand. However it was concluded that this would require commissioned research, at a cost to the council, and this would not be a worthwhile value for money exercise in the current economic climate.

Nevertheless there would be value in exploring the potential for providing additional facilities for small businesses in Rugby, like the Sir Frank Whittle Business Centre, should the opportunity arise to access external funding.

5.3 Communication and profile

There is a need for better promotion of Rugby to potential investors. Communication should be tailored to particular audiences and focus both on the business case for investment in Rugby (clear information about finance, land and infrastructure) and on shaping perceptions of the town and borough as a place to live.

A strong emphasis should be placed on developing effective electronic information about Rugby as a place to do business.

Consideration could be given to the possibility of seeking joint financing for such work with developers who have an interest in attracting new businesses to the area.

Rugby needs to build its reputation and is more than capable of winning more business awards, which would raise its profile. Such opportunities should be more actively pursued.
The Council should fully support the Rugby World Cup working group to maximise the opportunities arising from the events in 2013 and 2015 and continue to pursue any potential to promote Rugby as a film location.

5.4 Skills

Following the closure of the West Midlands Observatory and the Learning and Skills Council there is an absence of data about employer skills needs.

In the absence of a coordinating body with a strategic role in education and skills provision, there is a need for more effective and formal partnership working between agencies to map and respond to employer skills needs.

It is possible that the skills needs of small and medium-sized businesses (which make up around 85% of the local business base) are not being adequately reflected in local skills training provision, as courses tailored to the needs of larger employer are more commercially viable.

There is evidence that school leavers lack the soft skills required to make them ready for employment, and that the college and Jobcentre Plus are having to plug the gap by delivering courses to a large number of students specifically aimed at preparation for work.

More could be done to promote apprenticeships to local employers and debunk some of the myths about the administrative burdens.

Rugby might benefit from better links with Coventry University to enable businesses to tap into a pool of higher skilled graduates. The University has a global reputation for its design and research programmes, and students are actively recruited by companies outside of the area.

5.5 Labour market supply

Rugby has relatively low unemployment levels, and there is some evidence that this creates difficulties in recruitment.

There is evidence that companies in Rugby have difficulties in recruiting higher skilled employees. The majority of vacancies filled quickly by Jobcentre Plus are for lower skilled type jobs.

5.6 Business rates

Rugby BC performs well on the collection of business rates.

Coventry and Warwickshire local authorities have done well to develop a pooling proposal in the limited time available, and this should place all seven of the councils involved in a financially favourable position when the local retention of business rates scheme is introduced.

The Localism Act gives councils wider discretion in the use of discretionary rate relief. However, any increased discretionary relief given would be at a direct cost to the council and significant gains would be needed to justify additional expenditure.
The council should keep under review how neighbouring authorities are responding to the new powers under the Localism Act.

5.7 Economic development activity

Having a dedicated (but still limited) resource to support economic development is seen as a strength by external bodies. The local retention of business rates gives the council an added incentive to invest in activity to attract new businesses and retaining existing businesses in the borough.

5.8 Sub-regional context

The wider county and sub-regional context is crucial to inward investment, particularly following the formation of a Coventry and Warwickshire pool for business rates.

The council should continue to engage proactively with the CW LEP to ensure it is well-placed to access new funding opportunities as they arise.
### Recommendations and Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recommendations and Actions</th>
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<th>Due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>The Council should work with local agents to develop a showcase pack for potential investors in the town and wider Rugby area, based around a re-designed commercial property guide.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Commercial property guide redesigned and expanded into a showcase pack for potential investors.</td>
<td>Sarah Fisher</td>
<td>John Dale</td>
<td>May 2013</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Consultation with local agents on the new showcase pack.</td>
<td>Sarah Fisher</td>
<td>John Dale</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>The Council should promote local land and development sites across the borough in a privately-funded sub-regional magazine.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Establish contact with magazine and provide information on local land and development sites for publication.</td>
<td>Sarah Fisher</td>
<td>John Dale</td>
<td>April 2013</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Covalent update to confirm that regular updates are being provided and key local land and development sites are featuring in the magazine on an ongoing basis.</td>
<td>Sarah Fisher</td>
<td>John Dale</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
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<td>3 The working group established in relation to the Rugby World Cup events in 2013 and 2015 should be fully supported by the Council to exploit economic development opportunities arising from the events.</td>
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<td>3.1 Feedback from the working group to Customer and Partnerships Committee on activities to promote economic development opportunities arising from the RWC events.</td>
<td>Anna Rose</td>
<td>Debbie Dawson</td>
<td>November 2013</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 An interactive web-based version of the commercial property guide should be developed on the council's website, and maintained as an up-to-date resource.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1 Redesigned commercial property guide developed in interactive format for council website.</td>
<td>Matthew Deaves</td>
<td>John Dale</td>
<td>April 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Support secured from Business Support Team to administer the web-based commercial property guide.</td>
<td>Debbie McCarthy</td>
<td>John Dale</td>
<td>April 2013</td>
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<td>5 The Council should keep under regular review how neighbouring local authorities are responding to the additional powers in the Localism Act to grant discretionary business rate relief.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 Covalent update to confirm that officers are monitoring whether neighbouring local authorities are offering any additional discretionary business rate relief</td>
<td>Adam Norburn</td>
<td>Chryssa Burdett</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
<td></td>
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<td>6 To raise the profile of the borough, relevant award schemes should be identified and applications submitted on a quarterly basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.1 Covalent update to confirm that award schemes are being researched and applications submitted where relevant.</td>
<td>Anna Rose</td>
<td>John Dale</td>
<td>Sep 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2 The Council is successful in winning an award which helps to raise the council’s profile externally.</td>
<td>Anna Rose</td>
<td>John Dale</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
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<td>7 More effective and formal partnership working between agencies should be encouraged to map and respond to employer skills needs across the county.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.1 tbc</td>
<td>Anna Rose</td>
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</table>
A copy of the final review report should be sent to Warwickshire County Council, highlighting in particular the review findings about the lack of awareness amongst employers about apprentice scheme opportunities and the negative perceptions that exist about the potential burdens of taking on an apprentice.

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<td>Debbie Dawson</td>
<td>April 2013</td>
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<td>This is not an action for monitoring through Covalent.</td>
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AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee

Date of Meeting: 7 February 2013

Report Title: Review of Housing Income Protection – Final Report

Ward Relevance: All

Contact Officer: Debbie Dawson, Tel: (01788) 533592

Summary: The Committee included in its work programme for 2012/13 a review on ‘housing income protection: minimising council rent arrears’. The review aimed to address the challenges for the collection of housing income arising from the economic downturn and impending welfare benefit reform.

The review is now complete and the report presents the findings and recommendations of the task group for consideration by the Committee and submission to Cabinet.

Financial Implications: While there are no specific budgetary implications arising from the review recommendations, the report advocates an ‘invest to save’ approach and suggests areas where investment might be needed. There are some officer resource implications arising and these are indicated in the categorisation of the recommendations.

Risk Management Implications: There are no specific risk management implications arising from the review recommendations. However, a key focus of the review is around mitigating the risks to council housing income arising from the welfare benefit reforms.

Environmental Implications: There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications: There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity: No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken when the report is presented to Cabinet.
Summary

The Committee included in its work programme for 2012/13 a review on ‘housing income protection: minimising council rent arrears’. The review aimed to address the challenges for the collection of housing income arising from the economic downturn and impending welfare benefit reform. The review is now complete and the report presents the findings and recommendations of the task group for consideration by the Committee and submission to Cabinet.

1. BACKGROUND

On 19 March 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board placed a review on ‘housing income protection: minimising council rent arrears’ in the overview and scrutiny work programme, on the recommendation of the work programme workshop held in February 2012. The review topic had been suggested by Leadership and Operations Team and was supported by the Sustainable Inclusive Communities Portfolio Holder.

A draft one-page strategy for the review was agreed by Customer and Partnerships Committee on 21 June 2012. A task group was appointed and began its work on 26 July 2012.

2. REPORTING PROCESS

The task group has completed its work and the appendix to this paper details its findings. Please note that the draft report is subject to any further suggested amendments from task group members, which will be reported at the Committee meeting if required.

The review recommendations form section 1 of the report. The emerging findings and recommendations were discussed with the Head of Housing at the final meeting of the task group, and the Sustainable Inclusive Communities Portfolio Holder was also consulted on the draft report.

The chairman of the task group, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, will attend the Committee meeting to present the report. The Sustainable Inclusive Communities Portfolio Holder also plans to attend to discuss the review with the Committee.

It is proposed that the report will then be considered by Cabinet on 11 March, subject to the approval and comments of the Committee.
3. WELFARE REFORM – ONGOING ROLE FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

A key recommendation of the task group is that a strategic group of elected members should be established to oversee the council’s corporate approach to the welfare reforms and monitor the impact of the reforms on the council and the local community.

It is usual practice for task groups to agree an action plan to deliver the review recommendations, and for progress to be monitored through the Covalent system and regularly reported to the relevant Committee. However, it is the view of this task group that, if supported by Cabinet, the strategic member group should oversee progress on the actions identified in the review recommendations. The existing housing service action plan for welfare reform is included as an appendix to the review report, and it was felt that it would add an unnecessary administrative burden to create and monitor a separate review action plan on this occasion.

It should also be noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considered the report of the localisation of council tax support review on 21 January 2013, and resolved that further scrutiny work on welfare reforms should be consolidated under one scrutiny body and be the responsibility of Customer and Partnerships Committee.

There will need to be further discussion by the Board, in the context of development of the 2013/14 overview and scrutiny work programme and the outcomes of this review, regarding the ongoing scrutiny role in relation to welfare reform. It is suggested that a possible approach would be to establish a standing task group, under the management of this Committee, and drawn from the membership of the task groups on housing income protection and the localisation of council tax support. It is likely that its oversight and accountability role would be substantial, and it may therefore be included as a major item within the scrutiny review work programme for the coming year.
Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee
Date of Meeting: 7 February 2013
Subject Matter: Review of Housing Income Protection – Final Report

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Document</th>
<th>Officer’s Reference</th>
<th>File Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>July 2012 – January 2013</td>
<td>The agendas, reports and minutes relating to this review can be found online at <a href="http://www.rugby.gov.uk">www.rugby.gov.uk</a>, following the links to the Committee Papers system and then clicking on Housing Income Protection Task Group</td>
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A REVIEW OF HOUSING INCOME PROTECTION: MINIMISING RENT ARREARS

January 2013
## CONTENTS

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2 Objectives

3 Methodology

4 Findings

4.1 Welfare benefit reforms
4.2 Impact on housing income
4.3 Issues for council tenants
4.4 The Council’s response
4.5 The role of partners

5 Conclusions

TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The Task Group consisted of the following members:

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Tina Avis
Councillor Ms Claire Edwards
Councillor Mrs Belinda Garcia
Councillor Mrs Kam Kaur
Councillor Mrs Noreen New
Councillor Chris Pacey-Day
Councillor Neil Sandison
Ms Tracey Nuttall (co-opted member from the Tenant Representative Panel)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact:

Debbie Dawson    Claire Waleczek
Scrutiny Officer  Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer
                  (Team Leader)
tel: 01788 533592  tel. 01788 533524
email: debbie.dawson@rugby.gov.uk  email: claire.waleczek@rugby.gov.uk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Group would like to thank everyone who contributed to the review, in particular:

Laurie Bird, Rugby Credit Union
David Gooding, Bedworth, Rugby and Nuneaton Citizens Advice Bureau
(BRANCAB)
Nick Gower-Johnson, Troubled Families Coordinator, Warwickshire County Council
Diana Mansell, Rugby Food Bank
Mark Stanyer, Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service
Denise Wilson, BRANCAB
Joyce Woodings, Benn Partnership Centre
Affinity Sutton
Midland Heart Limited
Orbit Heart of England
Staff at Boughton Leigh Children’s Centre, Claremont Children’s Centre and
Hillmorton Children’s Centre, Rugby
Andrew Lewis, Centre Manager, Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Rugby

The Group would also like to thank all the officers from the council’s housing and
benefits services for their invaluable support and contributions. Particular thanks
are due to Liz Dunlop, Dave Wortley, Penny Jeffers and Matt Taylor.
CHAIRMAN’S FOREWORD

This review was established to look at how as a council we can minimise the impact of the welfare changes on the income received from housing rental payments. Welfare reform is happening and, as this review found out, it will be affecting not only our tenants but individuals across the Borough. The Council has a duty of wellbeing to its residents and is also required to deliver the policy within the resources that are allocated. Our resources are very tight and the welfare benefits changes will impact on this organisation and will place extra pressure on maintaining low levels of rent arrears.

Whilst the review has focused on protecting the council’s housing income, the evidence gathered exposed the wider impacts that are already starting to occur within the Borough. The review, in its conclusions, calls for a strategic group made up of cross-party elected members to work with officers to ensure that the strands of the reforms are pulled together, eliminating duplication, and also to ensure effective working through other delivery mechanisms, such as the Local Strategic Partnership.

In this review we make no judgement on the rights or wrongs of welfare reform but we do highlight the work already being carried out and the findings from the third sector. We make recommendations as to what further work will be needed, as the reforms will take some years to bed in.

As Chairman I would like to thank the officers involved and councillors for their input. The contribution of Tracey Nuttall, as a co-opted member of the task group, was especially valuable. I would also like to thank in particular the individuals and organisations that have engaged with this review and provided evidence on the early signs of the welfare benefits changes that are now taking place in the Borough.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse
Chairman
### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Group proposes the following recommendations to Cabinet:

#### IMPROVEMENTS THAT COULD BE MADE QUICKLY AND AT LOW COST

| 1. | A strategic group of elected members should be established to oversee the council’s corporate approach to the welfare reforms and monitor the impact of the reforms on the council and the local community. |
| 2. | Officers should work with this strategic group to identify a set of measurable outcomes that can demonstrate the impact of the benefits changes on individuals and identify where the council should be targeting its interventions and ‘investing to save’. |
| 3. | The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) further develops its work in delivering a cohesive and co-ordinated approach on welfare reforms, involving statutory and voluntary and community sector agencies. |

#### MODIFICATIONS OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

| 4. | All elected members should receive quarterly briefings on the impact of welfare benefits reforms, which should highlight any emerging trends and update members on available sources of advice and support so that they are able to signpost residents appropriately (ref. conclusion 5.2). |
| 5. | The communications strategy for welfare reform should encourage better coordination between agencies to provide good information and clear contact points for frontline workers who work directly with people in crisis and should recognise a role for partner agencies in promoting key messages and signposting affected tenants to appropriate services (ref conclusions 5.1, 5.5, and 5.7). |
| 6. | Face-to-face advice and support should be offered in tenants’ homes, or other neutral locations to suit the tenant, wherever possible (ref. conclusion 5.1) |
| 7. | The Council’s approach to collecting rent should be subject to a full review as a matter of priority to prevent worsening debt accumulation by tenants in arrears in the light of the welfare reforms (ref. conclusion 5.14). |
| 8. | While the additional funding for discretionary support in 2013/14 is significant, the strategic group should keep under review the overall support available to tenants affected by the welfare reforms. Specifically, they should consider the potential need for longer-term provision to support those disproportionately affected, and ensure the support is effectively promoted to those who need it (ref. conclusion 5.13). |
| 9. | Further research should be undertaken, drawing on data from partner organisations, to identify vulnerable groups and individuals to ensure appropriate support is put in place to prevent rent arrears (ref. conclusion 5.8). |
SIGNIFICANT PROPOSALS WHICH WILL REQUIRE COMMITMENT OF TIME OR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

10. The council should work to ensure there is advice and support in place to assist those making the transition to Universal Credit to manage the gap in income arising from the move to monthly payments in arrears (ref. conclusion 5.10).

11. The LSP and the Council should work with partners to ensure there is a wider package of support in place to assist tenants affected by the reforms, including financial skills training, access to affordable credit and debt counselling services, and short-term hardship support (ref. conclusion 5.6).

12. The impact of activities to promote financial inclusion delivered through the new community SLAs should be monitored and reported to the strategic group to inform decisions about council support for future ‘invest to save’ projects.

1.1 Progress monitoring

It is usual practice for task groups to agree an action plan to deliver the review recommendations, and for this to be monitored through the Covalent performance management system. However, in this case it was agreed by the task group that, if supported by Cabinet, the strategic member group should oversee progress on the actions identified in the review recommendations. The existing housing service action plan for welfare reform is included as an appendix to this report, and it was felt that it would add an unnecessary administrative burden to create and monitor a separate review action plan on this occasion.

1.2 Alignment with the Corporate Strategy

The review relates to the following corporate priority:

Facilitate the provision and upkeep of good quality housing to meet local needs and to cater for the growth of Rugby.
2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 Background

On 19 March 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board placed a review on ‘housing income protection: minimising council rent arrears’ in the overview and scrutiny work programme, on the recommendation of the work programme workshop held in February 2012. The review topic had been suggested by Leadership and Operations Team and was supported by the Sustainable Inclusive Communities Portfolio Holder.

The review topic addresses an important issue for the council. The economic downturn, combined with the impending welfare benefit reforms, present new challenges for the collection of housing income. This income is vital to the sustainability of the council’s Housing Revenue Account business plan, which underpins the future maintenance and improvement of council housing and the ability to provide a high quality housing service. This is even more relevant in the context of the new devolved council housing self-financing system which took effect in April 2012. The council therefore needs to carefully consider the likely impact of the reforms and identify measures to protect rent payments and support tenants affected by the changes.

A draft one-page strategy for the review was agreed by Customer and Partnerships Committee on 21 June 2012 and was adopted by the task group unamended. The first meeting of the task group was held on 26 July 2012.

2.2 The One-Page Strategy

The one-page strategy is the name given to the scoping document for the review. It defines the task and the improvements being aimed for and how these are going to be achieved. The review’s one-page strategy is as follows:

What is the broad topic area?
Protection of the council’s housing income in the context of changes to the benefits system

What is the specific topic area?
The review will address the challenges for the collection of housing income arising from the economic downturn and impending welfare benefit reform. It will cover the following issues:

- preventative and enabling measures; for example minimising potential exposure when letting through appropriate allocations, promoting a payment culture, access to banking services, incentives and payment methods
- maximising tenants’ income
- contact with tenants: communication, help and advice

A separate scrutiny review on the impact of Universal Credit on the benefits service is planned for later in the year, and will include consideration of issues around access to the new system for all residents. This review will not therefore include consideration of those issues.
What is the ambition of the review?
To enable our tenants to sustain their tenancies and facilitate swift recovery of housing rent where necessary.

How well do we perform at the moment?
The review will establish:
- current proportion of rent collected
- number of evictions per annum
- number of council tenants likely to be affected by new under-occupancy measures from April 2013
- indication of the percentage of our working age tenants who hold a bank account
- percentage of council tenants currently in receipt of housing benefit, including a breakdown of those tenants above pension age.

Who shall we consult about the current service and about how we can improve it?
Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency
Rugby Tenant Representative Panel (co-opted member)
Local banks and building societies
Rugby Citizens Advice Bureau
Warwickshire Financial Inclusion Partnership
Local private sector landlords

What other help do we need?
Support from housing and benefits officers

Other sources of further information may include:
National Housing Federation
Chartered Institute of Housing
CIH Direct Payment Demonstration Projects

Task group members will need a clear understanding of the welfare benefit reforms and legislative changes.

How long should it take?
6 months, concluding by January 2013

What will be the outcome?
An action plan with clear measures in place to protect housing income in advance of the impending welfare benefit reforms.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fact-finding

The task group built a strong evidence base to support its conclusions, drawing on a variety of sources. This included:

- An introductory presentation from the Operational Housing Manager, Benefits Manager and Scrutiny Officer covering:
  - details of recent and impending welfare reforms
  - baseline data about rent collection rates and profile of council tenants in receipt of housing benefits
  - preparations being made by the council.

- A private internal research report with analysis on those council tenants who would be likely to be affected by the new under-occupancy rules from April 2013.

- Research evidence from the Council’s Regeneration Projects Officer on work clubs in Rugby.

The task group also received updates throughout the review on a draft action plan that the Housing service had in place in preparation for the reforms. This included feedback from the welfare reform officers (who were appointed during the course of the review) on their initial visits to tenants affected by the under-occupancy rules. In addition, the Communication, Consultation and Information Manager informed the group about a communications strategy that was being developed in relation to the benefits changes.

3.2 Focus Groups and survey

To gather evidence directly from tenants, the task group organised a series of focus groups in local Children’s Centres in October 2012. The groups were as follows:

- Tuesday 23 October, 1.30-2.30pm, Claremont Children's Centre – with Cllr Tina Avis, Cllr Noreen New, Tracey Nuttall and Cllr Neil Sandison
- Wednesday 24 October, 2-3pm, Boughton Leigh Children's Centre – with Cllr Claire Edwards and Cllr Belinda Garcia
- Thursday 25 October, 1.30-2.30pm, Hillmorton Children's Centre – with Tracey Nuttall, Cllr Pacey-Day and Cllr Jerry Roodhouse.

For each of the focus groups, 20 local tenants were invited at random from a database of council tenants likely to be affected by the under-occupancy rules. In addition, flyers were placed in the Town Hall reception and were distributed to the Children’s Centres that were hosting the focus groups, where staff promoted the events to centre users.

The response was disappointing. At Claremont Children’s Centre, no tenants attended, although task group members were able to speak with a local resident.
who was leading a training course at the centre. The focus group at Boughton Leigh Children’s Centre was attended by three local residents, one of whom was a council tenant, the others being other social housing tenants. A Family Support Worker at the Centre also contributed to the discussion. Finally, while no tenants attended the event at Hillmorton Children’s Centre, there was a young parent’s group taking place at the time and the task group members were able to speak with some of those attending.

A survey was also conducted to try to capture feedback from tenants living in rural parts of the borough. Hard copies of the survey were posted to 83 council tenant households which had been identified as likely to be directly affected by the under-occupancy rules. Pre-paid reply envelopes were enclosed. The survey was also posted on the council’s website, and was promoted on the flyers issued to advertise the focus groups. In total, 17 responses were received, including two completed online.

3.3 Select Committee

The task group held a select committee meeting on 24 October 2012 at the Town Hall, which brought together those with expertise and insight into the impact of the welfare reforms on council tenants, and those with an understanding of, or role to play in, supporting tenants affected by the changes.

The following attended the meeting:
Laurie Bird, Rugby Credit Union
David Gooding, Bedworth, Rugby and Nuneaton Citizens Advice Bureau (BRANCAB)
Nick Gower-Johnson, Troubled Families Coordinator, Warwickshire County Council
Diana Mansell, Rugby Food Bank
Mark Stanyer, Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service
Denise Wilson, BRANCAB
Joyce Woodings, Benn Partnership Centre

A number of those attending the meeting also provided written submissions to the task group in advance of the meeting. The meeting itself and the written submissions received provided a wealth of invaluable evidence.

3.4 Call for evidence

Several other organisations were invited to supply written evidence to the task group, and some very detailed and insightful contributions were received. The following organisations provided written evidence:

Orbit Heart of England
Affinity Sutton
Midland Heart Limited
Christians Against Poverty UK (Rugby branch)
Jobcentre Plus

These submissions can be found in the task group review papers which are all available online at www.rugby.gov.uk in the section ‘agendas, reports and minutes’.
4. FINDINGS

4.1 WELFARE BENEFIT REFORMS

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 set out fundamental changes to the welfare system aimed at improving the benefits system to reduce dependency on welfare. The welfare reforms will bring about a major cultural change in the benefits system and there will be both short-term and long-term cumulative effects arising from the reforms.

The main changes affecting the council as a social housing landlord are detailed below.

4.1.1 Universal Credit

Universal Credit will replace existing means-tested benefits for people of working age. It comes into effect from October 2013. By 2017 Universal Credit will replace:

- housing benefit
- income-based jobseekers’ allowance
- income support
- income-related employment and support allowance
- working tax credit
- child tax credit

The government has stated that no-one will see their benefits reduced at the point of change.

Instead of separate benefits, claimants will receive one monthly payment, described as a ‘surrogate wage’. Unlike the current housing benefit system, the payment will be made in arrears, with the intention being to prepare claimants for employment. There will be no separately identifiable payment made exclusively for housing costs. The new system is designed to provide an improved incentive to work, as the loss of benefit as earnings rise will be less steep than currently.

The housing element will usually be paid directly to the tenant, rather than to their landlord, with the aim of promoting personal independence and financial responsibility. It can, however, be paid to the landlord in some circumstances, where the tenant is vulnerable (though this is still to be defined). The government has also stated that there will be an arrears trigger put in place to protect landlords from persistent failure to pay – which will again result in direct payment to landlords.

For pension-age claims a new housing credit element within the existing pension credit will replace housing benefit for pensioners who need help with their rent.

Universal Credit will be administered through a centralised IT system. The majority of claims will be dealt with online, with a back-up national telephone call centre for all other cases. DWP has an initial target of 50% of claims to be dealt with on-line,
rising to 80% by 2017. Local authorities will therefore no longer administer support for help with housing costs.

4.1.2 Overall benefit cap

The overall amount of benefit that workless households can receive is to be capped. This policy is to be piloted in four London boroughs from April 2013 and rolled out nationally from July 2013. The total state support available from Universal Credit and child benefit to working-age households will be limited to:
- £500 per week for couple and lone-parent households
- £350 per week for single-person households

This level is based on median incomes and will be reviewed annually.

The cap will not apply to:
- households where someone is in receipt of disability living allowance, industrial injuries disablement benefit, support component of employment and support allowance, and attendance allowance;
- households who are entitled to working tax credit; and
- war widows and widowers.

For claimants who have been in work continuously for the previous 12 months, a 39-week grace period will apply during which the benefit cap will be deferred.

The DWP has allocated additional support to local authorities (an additional £80 million in 2013/14 and £50 million in 2014/15) to assist households affected by the benefit cap through the discretionary housing payments scheme, which allows local authorities to make additional payments to people entitled to housing benefits where the person needs temporary help with housing costs. The additional support is particularly aimed at those who live in properties adapted for disabled people and foster carers, who may not be able to move immediately after being hit by the cap. Local authorities will be free to allocate the resource locally as they see fit.

4.1.3 Size Criteria

From April 2013 all current and future working-age tenants renting from a local authority, housing association or other registered social landlord will receive housing benefit based on the need of their household. The size criteria allow one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household, with the following exceptions:

- children under 16 of the same gender are expected to share
- children under 10 are expected to share regardless of gender
- a disabled tenant or partner who needs a non-resident overnight carer will be allowed an extra room.

Those tenants whose accommodation is larger than they need will lose part of their housing benefit. For those with one spare bedroom, their eligible rent will be reduced by 14 per cent and for those with two or more spare bedrooms it will be reduced by 25 per cent.
An additional £30 million per year will be available nationally for the discretionary payments scheme from 2013/14 to help with the introduction of this change. This extra funding is aimed at two specific groups: disabled people living in significantly adapted accommodation and foster carers.

Those qualifying for state pension credit from April 2013 (those aged 61 years and above) will not be subject to the size criteria.

4.1.4 Council Tax support

Existing council tax support is to be replaced by grants to local authorities from April 2013 and expenditure is to be reduced by 10 per cent. The national scheme will still be used for customers over pensionable age but for all other customers each council will devise its own local scheme of council tax support. In Rugby the 10 per cent saving will be borne by 55 per cent of customers (4,400) who are of working age. Under the scheme adopted by the Council in December 2013, customers of working age will pay at least 15 per cent towards their Council Tax bill.

4.1.5 Non-dependant charges

Once a household member reaches 18, they are no longer classed as part of the claimant’s family for benefit purposes, and are classed as non-dependant. Housing benefit and council tax benefit is reduced for every non-dependant residing with the claimant, reflecting the contribution the Government expects non-dependants to make to the household costs.

Non-dependant deduction rates were frozen between April 2001 and April 2011. However, in the June 2010 Budget, the Government announced that non-dependant deductions would be increased over a phased three-year period, starting in April 2011.

4.1.6 Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans

From April 2013 Crisis Loans for general living expenses (including rent in advance) and Community Care Grants will be replaced by Local Welfare Assistance and responsibility will be transferred to the county council, who will deliver support to vulnerable people in the way they deem most appropriate to meet local needs. In England this will be on a non ring-fenced basis, and there will be no new duties on local authorities to provide the new assistance. Local authorities are being discouraged from operating loan schemes in future but instead are expected to provide support on the basis of one-off grants. Warwickshire County Council was expected to consult on proposals for this scheme in January 2013.

4.1.7 Local housing allowance changes

Local authorities administer local housing allowance (LHA) to tenants in the private-rented sector who require help with housing costs. From January 2012 in the private-rented sector the age limit for single claimants to whom the shared accommodation rate applies rose from 25 to 35 years of age for new claims. This
means that single people under 35 in the private rented sector no longer receive housing benefit based on one-bedroom self-contained accommodation.

From April 2013 LHA claims for private tenants will be set using the April 2012 LHA rate increased in line with the consumer price index measure of inflation relevant in September 2012, rather than the higher retail price index.

### 4.1.8 Disability Living Allowance

Personal Independence Payments will be replacing Disability Living Allowance, starting in a pilot area in 2013 followed by a phased introduction starting with new claimants. It is anticipated that many claimants will see their benefit reduced or removed.

### 4.2 IMPACT ON HOUSING INCOME

#### 4.2.1 Housing income at risk

During 2011/2012 the council collected 99.13% of its rental income, amounting to £13.9 million. Approximately 60% of this was received directly through housing benefit. The phased introduction of Universal Credit over the next 3-4 years will mean that this housing benefit will no longer be paid directly to the council, but will form part of a tenant’s monthly benefits payment which they will be responsible for managing.

#### 4.2.2 Overall benefits cap

In Rugby, 28 households have been identified (November 2012) as being affected by the cap:
- 4 council tenants will have a benefit reduction of £12 - £118 per week
- 10 housing association tenants will have a benefit reduction of 10p - £255 per week
- 14 private rented sector tenants will have a benefit reduction of £2.50-£150 per week.

#### 4.2.3 Size criteria

The impact of the under-occupancy rules on council tenants is more significant. While individual circumstances are constantly changing and the figures offer only a snapshot in time, internal research indicates that more than 420 council tenants will be affected by these rules (more than one in six tenants of working age).

The benefit reductions range from £6 to just under £30 per week. Some tenants will no longer receive any benefit due to the changes. The majority of those affected are under-occupying by one bedroom.

Across a full financial year around £268,000 of housing income will no longer be met by benefit and will become payable directly by the tenants.
The scale of impact on Rugby Borough Council’s tenants clearly has implications for the council’s stock profile and allocations policy. Opportunities for the council to offer smaller accommodation are limited both by the number of vacancies and by the profile of the stock in relation to people’s preferences and needs. Options for those in rural areas are particularly limited – many of those under-occupying two-bedroom houses will have no available options to downsize within the same village. It is also the case that two-bedroom high-rise flats may become increasingly difficult to let.

4.2.4 Cumulative impact

A point that was repeatedly made to the task group was the cumulative impact of all the different benefits changes on council tenants, both in terms of reduced income and their ability to manage household budgets. This points to an increased risk to the council of tenants being unable to meet their rent (and, equally, council tax) demands.

4.3 ISSUES FOR COUNCIL TENANTS

A key focus of the review was to explore how council tenants are likely to be affected by the welfare changes, and what the main issues will be for them. The issues and impacts for council tenants highlighted in direct feedback from tenants and in evidence and research from those who work with them, are detailed below.

4.3.1 Understanding the benefit changes

Most people the task group members spoke with had a lack of understanding about the changes ahead, and in some cases did not seem to be particularly concerned. Evidence from other sources reinforced the view that there is considerable confusion amongst those who will be affected by the changes, with some even being unaware of their impact.

It is likely that many clients affected by the welfare reform changes will turn to the council for support in the first instance.

4.3.2 Reduced income

Tenants who are faced with restricted or reduced income as a result of the welfare reforms are likely to struggle to meet their rent and council tax demands and there is likely to be an increase in rent arrears and, potentially, homelessness as a result. It is notable that the council currently has a fairly low number of evictions for rent arrears, with only 6 cases in 2011/12.

Those who commented in response to a survey question about how they might cover the shortfall in the event of reduced income were on the whole struggling to identify easy savings. One respondent stated that they would “have to cut back but there is nothing left to cut back on”. The extent of hardship already experienced by some of the borough’s residents is highlighted by the work of Rugby Food Bank, which had given emergency food relief to 570 people during the previous 6 months, 200 of whom had children.
The group heard that people in receipt of benefits often do not have any savings, and so are unable to cope with gaps or delays in benefits payments. One single parent said that “you can’t put children on hold”. People turn to loan sharks if they run out of other options and there is concern that local communities could become targeted by high cost credit providers and loan sharks.

Submissions to the task group also highlighted the wider social impact of increased poverty – for example the mental health issues arising from stress and anxiety about housing and financial pressures.

### 4.3.3 Budgeting skills

The shift to Universal Credit will make tenants’ financial management of their household budgets a key issue, particularly as payment of housing benefit changes from weekly and fortnightly payments direct to the landlord to monthly direct payments, paid in arrears. Training and advice will need to be available to help tenants to manage the transition to the new payment arrangements and to manage household budgets and change spending habits.

For people who have recently been in work and hope to return to work, the shift to a single benefits payment should make it easier to manage the household budget and simplify the benefits system. However, there was evidence from a range of sources that, for those currently budgeting on a weekly basis and without savings to fall back on, the transition to a single monthly payment in arrears will be difficult to manage and there will need to be a strong support structure in place to help them make this transition.

Task group members heard from a Family Support Worker that many of the individuals they work with lack the skills to save or budget effectively. They are often living on a day to day basis – for example spending the day at the Children’s Centre on the day before benefits payments are received as they have run out of money on their heating meter and need somewhere warm for their family. If they are struggling with debt they can often be overwhelmed by the demands from creditors, and much of their time is spent deflecting these demands.

Of those who responded to the survey, 14 out of 17 ranked rent among their top three budget priorities, with food and heating being the other high ranking budget priorities. In response to a question about whether tenants would use the service if the council were to offer help or advice about budgeting, 8 responded positively, and 6 said they would not. The feedback from the initial face-to-face visits by the welfare reform officers was that 24% had indicated they would require some assistance with budgetary management as a result of the introduction of Universal Credit.

### 4.3.4 Financial inclusion

Many people are currently unable to access even basic banking services, which will create difficulty when it comes to them receiving direct payments. National estimates are that between 15% and 20% of social housing tenants do not have a bank account. There is no available data on how many Rugby Borough Council tenants have a bank account, but currently 29% pay their rent by direct debit or
standing order. This is split 60:40 between those aged 60 or more and those younger than 60). Initial feedback from the face-to-face visits to tenants by the welfare reform officers was more positive, with only around 10% of tenants stating they did not have a bank account which allowed direct debit payments.

Of those who responded to the survey only 3 stated that they did not have a bank account through which they could set up a direct debit or standing order, although one of these commented: “can’t get a bank account in my name – I’ve tried all those in the town centre.” There were mixed reactions from respondents to the suggestion of opening a ‘jam jar’ account.

4.3.5 Housing options

There is clearly an issue around availability of affordable, appropriately-sized housing and a potential increased risk of over-crowding as a result of the reforms, if families look to move to smaller, lower cost properties. In some cases tenants may have to move area, away from family and friends, or further away from work or potential work.

It has been suggested by the Department of Work and Pensions that some could mitigate the effects of the size criteria by taking in a lodger to fill a ‘spare bedroom’. Clearly this is a personal decision, but submissions to the task group highlighted concerns that families with young children may have about sharing their home with another adult, as well as issues about the size of shared living space and whether there would be a market for such rooms.

4.3.5 Employment

Encouraging benefits claimants to find work is a key thrust of the welfare reforms. However, this is a complex issue and in many cases a longer-term solution. Many people require training in employability, literacy and numeracy skills, and they often experience difficulties in applying for jobs online. In addition, many opportunities for employment are with agencies, which often offer poor terms of employment and temporary contracts. This type of employment offers no security for assured or secure tenancy holders.

Finding work is not necessarily an easy option. Members heard from a single parent who had applied for nearly 50 jobs in the previous few weeks, and had attended 10 interviews. At all of the interviews she had been asked about childcare arrangements should her children be unwell. Repeated rejections were undermining her resolve to find work. Family Support Workers also have contact with many people who require a lot of support to prepare CVs and job applications, and need other practical help, such as interview clothes.

Evidence from Jobcentre Plus also highlighted concerns about the challenges for lone parents and people who have been claiming benefit due to a sickness or disability in joining the labour market for the first time in many years (or ever). They raised questions about the adequacy of provision to meet training needs, and how to encourage employers to recruit such individuals.
4.3.6 Computer access

There are issues about the move to online claims, with concerns as to whether tenants will have the ability and internet access to enable them to make such claims.

Ten of those responding to the survey stated that they did not have a computer with internet access that they could use to claim benefits. (Six said they did). Of those who said ‘no’, only three said they knew where they could access the internet, and only one mentioned the library. Initial feedback from the face-to-face visits to tenants by welfare reform officers found that 58% of households have a computer with internet access. 41% indicated they would require support in making online claims for benefit.

4.3.7 Advice and support

Anecdotal feedback suggested that some tenants find it difficult to engage with official agencies, such as the council and the Jobcentre, which they can find to be intimidating and unfriendly. They can also be intimidated by ‘official-looking’ letters, and tend to put them to one side, unopened. Most respondents to the survey said (unprompted) that they would go to the CAB for advice and help if they were having difficulty paying their bills. The responses to this question are presented in the chart below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAB</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Debtline</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobcentre</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobcentre, 1</td>
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<td>CAB, 11</td>
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It was suggested to members that the Children’s Centres were a more neutral and accessible venue. An idea was put forward that benefits advisers could go out and run support and advice sessions in these more accessible locations. The library was cited as another such venue. The general feedback was that face to face communication was probably the most effective – even young people said they were unlikely to use Facebook, for example. Offering real-life scenarios/case studies may have more impact in trying to get messages out.

The task group learnt of other creative ways of getting key messages out to people that were being employed elsewhere – for example through hairdressers and GP surgeries.
Tenants from minority ethnic groups may require specific support and communication strategies, though this will not be the case for everyone.

4.3.8 Disproportionate impact

It was suggested that the new under-occupancy rules may have a disproportionate effect on the following key council tenant groups:

- separated parents who share childcare
- foster carers (foster children will not be included in any housing benefit calculation)
- disabled people living in adapted/specially designed properties.

There is also some evidence that women may be disproportionately affected by these rules. There are some concerns about the fact that Universal Credit will be paid to just one member of the household.

4.3.9 Evidence from face-to-face visits

The welfare reform housing officers reported to the task group on the feedback from tenants through their home visits to those identified as being affected by the new size criteria. At the final meeting of the task group it was reported that officers had conducted 172 face to face visits to date, equating to 54% of the total case load having been completed. The following findings had emerged:

- 87 (51%) households wished to stay in their property and seek to make up the shortfall in rent either by paying from their benefits or from finding employment
- 35 (20%) households wish to move to a smaller property
- 12 households were willing to consider taking a lodger to help address the shortfall in rent
- 50 households were no longer affected by the under-occupancy reform due to changes in their circumstances
- 28 households may be eligible for discretionary housing payment, with 4 of these likely to require long-term assistance.

4.4 THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE

4.4.1 Action to date

Due to the speed with which some of the reforms are being introduced, the council has had to act quickly to prepare for the changes. The Housing service has an action plan in place, progress against which was reported to the task group during the review. This is included at appendix 1 to the report. This includes working with the benefits service to identify tenants of working age who are claiming housing benefit and will be under-occupying council properties under the new size criteria.

Before the task group began its work, Council had already approved the appointment of two housing officers with specific responsibility for dealing with the implications of the welfare reforms as temporary posts for two years. These officers were in post from the end of October 2012.
Following initial research on the impact of the under-occupancy rule, Cabinet approved further actions in November 2012 to address the resulting challenges. These included:

- amending the allocation policy to prevent people moving into properties where they would under-occupy the home, unless a financial assessment demonstrates they are likely to be able to afford to pay the rent from April 2013;
- provision of an under-occupation alleviation fund (£10,000 in 2012/13 and £25,000 in 2013/14)
- further redesignation of one-bedroom sheltered housing flats to general needs accommodation, with these vacancies ring-fenced to existing tenants in the first instance.

From summer 2012, information about the benefits changes was made available to tenants through Tenant Times. At the end of October 2012 the council wrote to all tenants identified as being affected by the under-occupancy rules advising them of the changes. It was intended that all of these households would receive a personal visit from the welfare reform officers by early February 2013.

In autumn 2012 the new welfare reform officers prepared an extensive information pack with clear explanations of the new size criteria and the potential options available to affected tenants. The officers were using a questionnaire in their visits to affected tenants and the data captured was being recorded and profiled for future reference and reported to housing managers on a monthly basis.

It was also reported to the task group that a communications strategy in relation to the benefits changes was being developed, with two clear objectives:

(i) ensure that the people affected by the welfare reform changes have a range of options to deal with the impact of the changes on them; and
(ii) ensure that the information and capability (ie. access to leaflets, internet etc) was available to enable people to get the help and support they required.

It was intended that face-to-face contact would be the key form of communication wherever possible, with demographics and profiling used to ensure that communication was in a suitable format for the target audience.

The task group emphasised the need to include elected members as a key audience for the communications strategy and, as a result, officers ensured that all members were issued with a copy of the full information pack in December 2012.

At its final meeting the task group was informed that a corporate officer welfare reform group had recently been established, and was working on a Corporate Debt Strategy to deal with the implications of the various austerity measures. The task group were also advised that housing officers had received training from mental health services to help them identify tenants showing signs of mental health problems and to offer signposts to other agencies for help and advice. Other agencies would be providing similar training in the near future.

### 4.4.2 Further potential areas for action

- Identifying vulnerable groups
Although the housing service has undertaken initial analysis of households affected by the under-occupancy rules, this has focused on identifying these households and the extent to which they are under-occupying. At the select committee meeting a persuasive argument was made that further analysis is needed to identify the most vulnerable clients in order to take pre-emptive action to support these individuals to manage the impact of benefits changes as a whole. Failure to do so may result in them becoming subject to sanctions, which would ultimately place greater burdens on statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

- **Rental Income Policy**

Under the council’s current Rental Income Policy the council serves notice on tenants who fall 5 weeks in arrears. Tenants are not permitted to move if they are subject to a court order. A full review of the Council’s approach to collecting rent is scheduled to be undertaken immediately after the conclusion of the voids end-to-end. This could include giving consideration to enabling tenants in arrears to move to smaller, more affordable properties, to prevent them from incurring further debt.

- **Discretionary Housing Payments**

Discretionary Housing Payment funding is being increased by central government from April 2013 – Rugby Borough Council will receive £111,000 in 2013/14. The payments are intended to provide short-term support to protect disadvantaged groups, and any tenant experiencing a shortfall in their rent will be eligible to apply for assistance. Local authorities across the county are working together on revised guidelines for the discretionary housing payment scheme, with the intention that consistent criteria would be applied.

It was suggested to the task group that there may be some cases where longer-term support may be needed. Local authorities are able to top-up funding from government, and consideration may need to be given to provision of additional funding for this purpose. The importance of proper advertising and promotion of such support was also emphasised.

- **Allocations Policy**

Further to the interim amendment to the allocations policy detailed above, additional recommendations about amendments to the allocations policy were due to be submitted to Cabinet in April 2013. It was reported to the task group that a full policy review would be carried out following the completion of an internal review of the UChoose system.

### 4.5 THE ROLE OF PARTNERS

The task group received evidence from a range of partners who all have an important role to play in addressing the issues for council tenants identified above.

#### 4.5.1 Statutory sector

From April 2013 Warwickshire County Council will be taking responsibility for administering social fund elements (see 4.1.6 above). In October 2012 it was reported that the criteria had yet to be developed and agreed and that this would be
subject to partner and community consultation which would provide an opportunity to highlight concerns about the impact of the welfare reforms.

It was also suggested that it may be possible to draw on support through the County Council’s Troubled Families Programme. This new programme involves key workers with a small caseload working intensively with targeted families, drawing on support from different agencies to provide assistance around health, money, and employment advice. There are an estimated 180 ‘troubled’ families in Rugby, 20% of the total number for Warwickshire. Families are identified as ‘troubled’ using national criteria relating to crime and anti-social behaviour, education issues such as poor school attendance and behaviour, and being out of work (and in receipt of benefits). It is also possible to introduce a local criterion, which could offer an opportunity to capture those adversely affected by the welfare reforms.

Jobcentre Plus provides, and signposts clients to, a wide range of support to assist people to enter employment. Programmes and services range from work clubs to support to set up a business; from help to tackle drug and alcohol dependency to work experience and job trial placements.

Discussions with Children’s Centre staff identified the need for better information for frontline support workers who have direct contact with people in difficulty. Family support workers would welcome a direct point of reference within the Town Hall and other statutory agencies that they could approach when they are dealing with someone in crisis.

### 4.5.2 Voluntary and Community Sector

Voluntary and community sector bodies are engaged in a wide range of activities to address the needs of those affected by the welfare reforms.

An important area is around financial inclusion, including access to banking services, budgeting skills and debt counselling. It was reported to the task group that voluntary and community sector partners were being asked to identify activities they could undertake to support financial inclusion within the new Community Service Level Agreements.

The task group learnt that Credit Unions are investigating the feasibility of providing ‘jam jar accounts’ for those who are not eligible to apply for a high street bank account. Most credit unions make an administration charge of £2-4 per month for each account and, in many cases, housing associations and landlords are paying this for their tenants as the accounts provide assurance that rent payments will be prioritised.

It is unclear at present what level of demand there would be for ‘jam jar’ accounts in Rugby, but Rugby Credit Union stated that they would be able to draw on support from larger Credit Unions in Coventry if they were unable to meet demand on their own. In anticipation of the reforms, Rugby Credit Union had recently introduced a significant software upgrade, and was in the process of moving to larger premises which would be more visible and provide improved access.
It was noted that private providers are also offering similar services, often charging a higher management fee but offering customers cashback deals on bills at participating supermarkets. It is likely that tenants would welcome a choice of different providers.

BRANCAB provided evidence about financial capability training they had piloted with Orbit tenants, highlighting ways of increasing disposable income by changing shopping habits. The training had been the subject of independent research by the University of Bristol, which confirmed the value of social landlords becoming involved in financial skills training for their tenants. The research report concluded that “the positive change made by tenant learners following the training, and the financial benefit they enjoyed as a result, can help to make their household finances more sustainable going forward”. It was suggested that this may make them more likely to be able to meet their rent payments.

BRANCAB had made a short film showing how, as a result of the training, participants had made real changes in managing their income. They were now looking to make further short films to promote hard-hitting messages about the impact of the welfare reforms and how to access help. It was envisaged that these films could be shown in local agencies' reception areas. BRANCAB requires funding for these.

60 per cent of enquiries to Rugby Citizens Advice Bureau relate to debt and financial problems and the welfare reforms are likely to increase the demand for financial and debt advice. The loss of legal aid funding means that Citizens Advice Bureau services are being reduced, and there is a real threat that Rugby CAB could lose its specialist debt counselling service due to funding cuts.

Christians Against Poverty UK (CAP UK) is a national debt counselling charity, which offers a combination of advice, financial education, budgeting and insolvency services. Evidence from their Rugby Centre Manager stated that they expect to see more new clients in 2013 and now have three debt coaches based in Rugby, compared with only one the previous last year. The centre also runs CAP Money courses to help people learn how to budget before their problems become too severe.

Rugby Food Bank has a continuing role in meeting the immediate needs of people finding themselves in financial crisis. It is significant that most cases they deal with have been a result of changes to benefits, delays in benefits and debt, and it is envisaged that the number of cases referred to Rugby Food Bank will increase as a result of the welfare reforms.

Benn Partnership Centre provides work clubs and basic skills training to tackle longer term issues around worklessness.

4.5.3 Registered Social Landlords

Registered Social Landlords within the borough are themselves having to tackle the impact of the changes in benefits for social tenants, and the benefits service is assisting them by providing information about benefits claimants in this sector who will be affected. Housing managers also hold regular management meetings with
preferred partners and welfare reforms implications are considered as a regular item.

One of the housing associations that submitted written evidence to the task group made a suggestion that the Council could proactively pool properties with other housing providers to encourage movement across landlords to reduce the impact of the under-occupancy rules. This could be facilitated through the ‘West Midlands best use of stock group’ (WMBUS) which brings together local authorities and housing associations across the region. However, the task group were advised by officers that, in Rugby, housing associations are experiencing the same difficulties as the council in identifying smaller accommodation for affected tenants.

4.5.4 Coordination

One of the strongest points made to the task group was about the importance of building bridges between agencies (statutory and voluntary sectors) and encouraging better joint working. It was argued that a strategic partnership approach is needed, with voluntary and community groups, in response to the welfare reforms, to avoid duplication and make optimum use of existing resource.

For example, the use of appropriately trained volunteers in voluntary and community groups to give advice to tenants could help to secure a robust and cohesive line of communication whilst avoiding duplication by other agencies. Similarly, a more coordinated approach would enable better signposting between agencies, which should mean that people are directed to appropriate support and advice at an early stage, before problems become too complex.

There could also be value in sharing data amongst agencies, where possible, to assist in identifying vulnerable local tenants. For example, BRANCAB holds statistics relating to the queries they receive, and the ethnic backgrounds of those accessing their services in Rugby. Faith communities are also often well-informed about the support needs of their members.

At its final meeting the task group were informed that the Local Strategic Partnership was taking an overarching view on welfare reforms and was currently working with partner agencies to coordinate activity on this issue. This included joint work by borough and county council officers to produce a leaflet about services and surgeries available to support those affected by the reforms. A corporate officer welfare reform group had also been established late in 2012 and was currently working on a Corporate Debt Strategy to deal with the implications of the various austerity measures.
5. CONCLUSIONS

The task group drew the following conclusions from the evidence that it gathered. Where the conclusion is directly supported by evidence in the report, the relevant sections of the report are indicated in parenthesis for reference:

5.1 Communication (4.3.1, 4.3.7): The impact of the welfare reforms on tenants is a serious issue and tenants need to be informed about the changes. Currently there is considerable unawareness of the changes. The development of a clear communication strategy is important, and this should include use of a range of communication methods. Some communication should be through ‘non-official’ agencies and in neutral locations, as official bodies are sometimes perceived as intimidating and unfriendly.

5.2 Regular information and feedback to members (4.4.1): the review has highlighted the role of elected members in dealing with some of the impact of the welfare reforms through their casework and in their interactions with residents. This means that they are an important ‘audience’ for the communication strategy and need to be kept well-informed about the changes and sources of advice and support.

5.3 ‘Invest to save’ principle: As a landlord the council risks losing a considerable amount of housing income if tenants are not supported to prepare for the welfare reforms. The case for ‘investing to save’ is a strong one, and there may need to be increased expenditure in the short term to help prevent future demands on council services and loss of income due to rent arrears and evictions. The impact of such activities should be monitored so that the council builds on this experience when future ‘invest to save’ projects are considered.

5.4 Role of housing officers (4.4.1): The newly appointed welfare reform officers have a key role to play in helping to prevent tenants from falling into rent arrears and identifying those who are likely to be considered to be ‘vulnerable’ and therefore eligible for direct payment to the landlord under the Universal Credit arrangements. More generally, housing officers have an important role in identifying tenants with support needs and signposting tenants to appropriate agencies when they are in need of additional help and advice.

5.4 Flexible approach: There will need to be a flexible approach to dealing with the implications of welfare reform for tenants. The Council is constrained by legislation and compliance with policies, while the voluntary and community sector is able to offer a more flexible response.

5.5 Coordination and partnership working (4.5.1, 4.5.2, 4.5.4): There is a plethora of agencies that have involvement with local people affected by the benefits changes. When the select committee meeting was held in October 2012, a strong case was made for the need for a strategic group – involving voluntary and community organisations working with the Council – to produce a cohesive approach to dealing with the issue of welfare reforms.
The task group welcomes the steps taken during the review period to coordinate work related to the welfare reforms and to encourage a more strategic approach both within the council and through the Local Strategic Partnership. The LSP now appears to be taking a lead role, but this will require ongoing monitoring to ensure that partnership working is effective and the work of different agencies is coordinated to make optimum use of the resources available and avoid duplication of effort.

5.6 Meeting individual support needs (4.3): The evidence identifies a range of support needs that tenants might have, including financial capability, debt advice, employability skills, support to find suitable work and digital inclusion (ability to make online claims). The voluntary and community sector is well-placed to provide some of this advice and support, but is faced with reductions and a tighter financial climate, and the council will need to consider providing financial support to enable voluntary and community sector agencies to meet these demands.

5.7 Advice and support (4.3.7, 4.5.1, 4.5.4): Consideration needs to be given to which agencies are best placed to deliver each aspect of advice, to take advantage of good partnership working and avoid duplication by agencies and voluntary groups. This will involve better sharing of information and consequently more effective signposting and early intervention by appropriate services. There is a need to provide good information and sources of advice to frontline workers who have direct contact with those affected.

5.8 Data sharing is vital in ensuring targeted support (4.4.2, 4.5.4): Vulnerable groups and individuals need to be identified locally and specific support put in place to assist them in the transition to Universal Credit and in managing any reduction in benefits income. Agencies will need to share and analyse current data held to help identify these groups.

5.9 Financial inclusion (4.3.4, 4.5.2): Access to financial services will be an issue for many, and jam jar accounts need to be explored in further detail and the resource implications for the Credit Union investigated. This should be considered in the context of the work on the new community service level agreements (SLAs) through which voluntary and community sector partners are being asked to identify activities they could undertake to support financial inclusion.

5.10 Managing the transition (4.3.3): There will need to be a clear package of support in place to assist those moving to Universal Credit to manage the gap in income as a result of the move to a monthly payment in arrears.

5.11 Social and economic impact (4.3.2): Though beyond the scope of this review, the evidence has highlighted the likely wider social and economic impact of the reforms within the local community as a result of the new pressures they will place on households.

5.12 Availability of housing (4.3.5, 4.4.1, 4.4.2): The evidence highlights concerns about the availability of low-cost, appropriately sized housing for those
affected by the under-occupancy rules, or seeking a more affordable rent level. This will have implications for the council’s allocations policy, which is currently under review, and for the ongoing work regarding the redesignation of smaller council properties as general needs accommodation. The council should also work with other registered social landlords in response to this issue, though it is recognised that housing associations in Rugby are experiencing the same difficulties as the council in identifying smaller accommodation for affected tenants.

5.13 Provision of discretionary support to tenants affected by the reforms (4.4.2): The cumulative impact of the different benefits changes, and the significant number of council tenant households affected by the under-occupancy rules means that there is likely to be considerable demand for discretionary housing payments and other short-term support. The council has an important role to play in helping to ensure that financial support is there for those who need it and that the support available is effectively advertised. Consideration should also be given to whether there may be cases where longer-term support is needed – for example, where a tenant is living in an adapted property.

5.14 Rental Income Policy (4.4.2): The council’s current Rental Income Policy places tenants at risk of spiralling rent arrears as a tenant is unable to move once they have rent arrears attached to their property. There is a role for Discretionary Housing Payments to assist households finding themselves in temporary hardship but a full review of the Council’s approach to collecting rent is needed as matter of priority in response to the pressures on household incomes arising from the welfare reforms. This should include giving consideration to enabling tenants who are subject to a court order to move to smaller, more affordable properties, to prevent them from incurring further debt.

5.15 The emergence of the new health infrastructure and a Rugby locality Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG): In this context, the welfare reform agenda brings new opportunities to work strategically with partners in health and social care to take a holistic approach in supporting tenants (and residents) affected by the changes. GPs have been clear that they will play a vital role in supporting individuals, especially those with mental health needs.

5.16 Ongoing scrutiny role: The task group considered that there was a role for a strategic group of elected members to undertake an accountability and oversight role in relation to the work on welfare reform, as the policies begin to take effect. The recent task group review on the localisation of council tax highlighted the cumulative effect of the various welfare reforms for the affected individuals and for the council in maintaining its income. This task group concurs with the conclusion of that review that future scrutiny work on the different aspects of the welfare reforms needs to be consolidated.
### Welfare Reforms -
### Draft Action Plan for Housing 2012/13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timescale/Complete by</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shared Room Rate under 35’s</td>
<td>January 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1 Use information from P1E and Housing Options Team experiments to see if any increase in homelessness for under 35’s – if increase look to extend priority for under 35’s.</td>
<td>October 2012</td>
<td>There is no evidence of an increase in homelessness for under 35s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Identify suitable provision – undertake viability exercise – identify suitable provider partners</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Identify potential empty homes to bring into use for under 35’s</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 Engage with private Landlords and look to include in the agenda for the Landlords’ Forum</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 Train front line workers in housing options for under 35’s</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.6 Ensure housing options fact sheet includes relevant information</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7 Update website to encourage people to attend a housing options interview</td>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>In progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Size Criteria / Under-Occupancy</td>
<td>April 13</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Work with housing benefit service to identify tenants of working age who are claiming housing benefit and under-occupying council properties</td>
<td>August 2012</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Include under-occupation check as part of pre-tenancy financial health check</td>
<td>August 2012</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Prior to allocation policy being reviewed develop a separate transfer policy for tenants who are under-occupying council properties</td>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Now to be considered under 2.6 - existing policy allows Band 2 status in cases of under-occupation. No further action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Contact and visit tenants that are under-occupying to identify solutions/develop a plan for action from menu of options</td>
<td>From September 2012 (Commenced October 2012 when new officers in post)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Produce easy read advice leaflet providing practical advice for people who may be under-occupying</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Review allocations policy in relation to under-occupation to ensure new and existing tenants are not put at risk due to under-occupying their home</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>Interim recommendations to Cabinet April 2013. Full review to be carried out after completion of UChoose review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Universal Credit &amp; Direct Payments</td>
<td>Oct 13 (new claims &amp; 4 year phased period)</td>
<td>Warwickshire County Council responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Input into Social Fund and Community Care Grant protocol and understand the impact on council tenants</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>Housing Officers (Welfare Reform) are informing tenants when doing under-occupation visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Understand the impact of new council tax rebate scheme being developed and the affect on council tenants</td>
<td>Ready for April 13</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Understand and be aware of DWP vulnerability/safeguarding procedure for those receiving direct payments and impact on council tenants and their rent payments</td>
<td>Ready for October 2013</td>
<td>Requirement for training and type of awareness sessions to be assessed once feedback from visits to tenants under-occupying is reviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Understand and be aware of DWP procedure relating to direct payments where council tenants have escalating rent arrears</td>
<td>Ready for October 2013</td>
<td>Requirement for training and type of awareness sessions to be assessed once feedback from visits to tenants under-occupying is reviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Ensure appropriate joint working with the housing benefit service</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Requirement for training and type of awareness sessions to be assessed once feedback from visits to tenants under-occupying is reviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Training and awareness sessions for tenants relating to welfare reform and financial management.</td>
<td>From Spring 2013</td>
<td>Requirement for training and type of awareness sessions to be assessed once feedback from visits to tenants under-occupying is reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Communicate changes to tenants</td>
<td>Ready for October 2013</td>
<td>Requirement for training and type of awareness sessions to be assessed once feedback from visits to tenants under-occupying is reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Review money advice services available to customers to ensure effective services are delivered</td>
<td>From November 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Develop process for undertaking financial health checks for new tenants as part of pre-sign up</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Ensure appropriate training for Housing Management Teams via briefings, staff awareness sessions</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Develop Communications Plan for tenants i.e. newsletters, leaflets, website</td>
<td>From September 2012</td>
<td>Meeting with Communications Manager to finalise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Develop customer insight data to include financial data and whether customers have a bank account to inform our approaches to rent collection</td>
<td>From September 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Feasibility on whether we can use Credit Unions to do “jam jar” accounts.</td>
<td>From September 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Work with other stakeholders, partners, Credit Union, Banks, CAB, etc to inform them of changes and explore flexible transactional banking opportunities.</td>
<td>From September 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Review rent policy and procedures to take into account changes arising from welfare reform act</td>
<td>September 2013</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name of Meeting</strong></th>
<th>Customer and Partnerships Committee</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Meeting</strong></td>
<td>7 February 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report Title</strong></td>
<td>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ward Relevance</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Officer</strong></td>
<td>Debbie Dawson, Tel: 01788 533592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Workshop takes place on 4 March 2013, and the Committee is invited to submit suggestions for review topics for the coming year.

**Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**Risk Management Implications**

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

**Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**Equality and Diversity**

No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.
Public Report to the Customer and Partnerships Committee

7 February 2013

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14

Summary

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Workshop takes place on 4 March 2013, and the Committee is invited to submit suggestions for review topics for the coming year.

1. Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Workshop takes place on 4 March 2013, and as always the Committee is invited to submit suggestions for review topics for the coming year. The guidance notes for submitting suggestions are attached at appendix 1.

2. Potential review topics

At a previous meeting the Committee identified the following item for consideration at the 2013/14 work programme workshop:

- Review of the impact of the reduction in medical services at the Hospital of St Cross

Following the discussion with the Chief Executive of University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust at this meeting, the Committee is asked to consider whether this review topic remains pertinent for consideration at the workshop.

Consideration might also be given to whether there are any possible areas of joint scrutiny that could be proposed to Warwickshire County Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Board. The Committee Chairman represents the Council on that Board.

3. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to confirm what, if any, potential review topics it wishes to submit for consideration by the workshop.

Members may, of course, choose to submit their own individual proposals for possible review topics for consideration at the workshop.
Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee
Date of Meeting: 7 February 2013
Subject Matter: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Document</th>
<th>Officer’s Reference</th>
<th>File Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>19 March 2012</td>
<td>Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, agenda and minutes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What reviews would you like Overview and Scrutiny to tackle?

Guidelines for submitting suggestions

Rugby Borough Council runs a continuous programme of overview and scrutiny reviews covering a range of service areas. These are carried out by small cross-party task groups of councillors. The reviews culminate in a series of recommendations to the council’s cabinet. Experience shows that they have a real, positive effect in making improvements for the borough.

One of the criteria for inclusion in the programme is that the topic should be a matter of real concern in the borough. For this reason, we invite suggestions from individual members of the public and from local organisations.

If there is something you think a task group should be looking at, the council would welcome your ideas. The closing date for proposals to be considered for the 2013/14 programme is 4 February 2013. Please use the enclosed form or use the online form at www.rugby.gov.uk/scrutiny (follow the link to ‘getting involved’).

After a shortlisting process, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will make a final decision on the work programme on 18 March. Even if you do not make a suggestion in time for the 2013/14 selection process, ideas for future years are welcome at any time after the closing date.

Council functions

The borough council is responsible for a range of services including refuse collection, parks and open spaces, sports and recreation, cemeteries, housing, environmental health, licensing, town and country planning, building control, housing and council tax benefits, land charges, council tax collection, street cleaning, parking, the art gallery and museum and economic development. Scrutiny of a substantial topic covering any of these functions is therefore clearly suitable for borough council scrutiny.

Some other public services, such as education, social services and roads are the sole responsibility of the county council and would not usually sit comfortably in the borough council scrutiny programme.

The borough council is also responsible for scrutinising the Rugby Community Safety Partnership, although certain anti-crime and disorder services administered on a countywide basis are scrutinised by the county council.

Sometimes a local issue does not fit entirely within a single organisation’s remit. In such a case, the council can take the lead and coordinate a review involving different organisations, subject to those organisations having the capacity to be involved.
What cannot be reviewed?

When you are considering what should be reviewed, please remember that scrutiny cannot review any of the following:

- Individual complaints
- Decisions or appeals regarding planning and licensing applications
- Any matter that is likely to have severe legal implications

A topic that concerns itself entirely with an operational problem in a particular locality is less likely to get into the programme than one that has a strategic theme that can be applied widely. Nearly all reviews that get into the programme are about issues that have relevance across the borough and are of real strategic importance.

Sometimes we receive ideas for scrutiny that are specific suggestions about how to improve particular services or are complaints about particular shortcomings in the delivery of a service. These often do not leave much scope for a deeper scrutiny review. The council values comments or complaints such as these, but they are better channelled through the council’s customer feedback procedure rather than the scrutiny programme.

Efficiency and savings

In the present climate, all councils have to make large-scale economies. There is therefore little value in reviews that will result in new activities that require new resources. You should bear in mind that the scrutiny work programme will need to give emphasis to identifying opportunities for savings, increasing revenue, and making more effective use of resources.

Corporate priorities

One of the purposes of overview and scrutiny reviews is to help the council to implement its corporate strategy, the priorities of which are listed on page 4. Your proposal for scrutiny is likely to be viewed more favourably if it can be seen to be contributing to the achievement of the council’s priorities in the strategy. However, do not be put off if the topic you have in mind is not specifically mentioned. If it is of concern to you, we want to know about it.

Avoiding topics already reviewed

A suggestion will stand more chance of being put into the work programme if it has not been reviewed in recent years. In the last five years, the following subjects have been reviewed:

In progress

- Housing income protection
- Employee wellbeing
- Inward investment
Completed in 2012

Youth provision
Complaints procedure
Matching the council’s housing stock to local housing needs
Localisation of Council Tax Support
Procurement

2011

Town Hall reception
Housing anti-social behaviour policy
Multi-storey flats
Play area provision in new housing developments
Youth provision
Air quality monitoring

2010

Health services for teenage parents (jointly with Warwickshire County Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council)
Biodiversity in open spaces
Public Realm and the Works Services Unit
End-to-end service reviews and systems thinking
Future of leisure centre provision
Provision of a crematorium and burial facility

2009

Local transport review (jointly with Warwickshire County Council)
Drainage
Risk management of play
Involvement of young people
Effectiveness of parish plans
Town centre economy

2008

Alleygates
Community engagement
Local economy
Mental health services (jointly with Warwickshire County Council)
Parking
Accessible public toilets
Sustainability of Works Services vehicles
Tourism
Travel tokens

Please make your scrutiny suggestion either using the enclosed paper form or using the online “suggest a topic” form at

www.rugby.gov.uk/scrutiny (select getting involved)
PEOPLE

Outcomes sought:
• High standards of existing and future housing stock
• Regeneration of our priority neighbourhoods
• Improved health and wellbeing for all age groups and communities
• Safe and empowered communities

Our priorities are to:
1. Support wider participation in decision making and help communities to deliver services.
2. Facilitate the provision and upkeep of good quality housing to meet local needs and to cater for the growth of Rugby.
3. Provide leisure facilities and support independent and healthy living.
4. Work with partners to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.
5. Provide safe and attractive streets.

BUSINESS

Outcomes sought:
• Increased employment and training opportunities for residents
• An attractive and thriving town centre
• A diverse and sustainable economic base

Our priorities are to:
1. Actively encourage parish councils and community bodies in neighbourhood development planning.
2. Establish an environment that will attract new businesses into the borough and enable existing businesses to flourish.
3. Support training in new technologies and promote apprenticeship opportunities.
4. Work with developers to provide new housing and infrastructure.
5. Facilitate the expansion of Rugby town by identifying and removing barriers to growth.

ENVIRONMENT

Outcomes sought:
• Sustainable urban and infrastructure expansion
• Reduced carbon footprint across the borough
• Increased waste recycling and a reduction of waste sent to landfill
• A variety of habitats and uses supporting biodiversity across the Borough

Our priorities are to:
1. Promote the highest standards of sustainability.
2. Actively progress energy-saving initiatives within the council and by residents and businesses.
3. Provide new burial and cremation facilities.
4. Increase biodiversity across the borough.
5. Promote and maintain high levels of waste recycling.
6. Minimise the impact of litter and fly tipping.

COUNCIL

Outcomes sought:
• Residents find it easy to access local services
• Delivery of high-quality services built around the real demands of our customers
• Innovative approaches to service delivery

Our priorities are to:
1. Increase the availability of information that will help residents and businesses.
2. Improve service delivery via customer-focused reviews and the development of our staff.
3. Engage in partnerships to meet local needs, reduce costs and increase efficiency.
4. Actively seek revenue-generating opportunities and apply charges in order to meet our costs.
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<tr>
<td>Contact Officer</td>
<td>Debbie Dawson, Tel: 01788 533592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td>The report updates the Committee on the progress of task group reviews within its remit and details the Committee's forward work programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Implications</strong></td>
<td>There is a budget of £1,000 available to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in 2012/13 to spend on the delivery of the overview and scrutiny work programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Management Implications</strong></td>
<td>There are no risk management implications arising from this report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Implications</strong></td>
<td>There are no environmental implications arising from this report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Implications</strong></td>
<td>There are no legal implications arising from this report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equality and Diversity</strong></td>
<td>No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary
The report updates the Committee on the progress of task group reviews within its remit and details the Committee's forward work programme.

1. PROGRESS ON SCRUTINY REVIEWS

1.1 Housing Income Protection
The final meeting of the task group was held on 23 January 2013 and the final report of the review forms a separate item on the agenda for this meeting.

1.2 Inward Investment
The final meeting of the task group was held on 17 January 2013 and the final report of the review forms a separate item on the agenda for this meeting.

2. PLANNING FOR NEXT MEETING
The items included in the work programme for the Committee’s meeting on 11 April 2013 are detailed in the future work programme at appendix 1. The item on the Government consultation on transfer of responsibility for air quality monitoring has been rescheduled for June, as it is unlikely that the consultation will be launched before May 2013.

Further explanations of the other agenda items for the April meeting are given below, where necessary.

2.1 Healthwatch Warwickshire
The new Healthwatch Warwickshire, which is replacing the LINk, will be in operation by the time of the committee’s next meeting. HealthWatch is the new, independent consumer champion for health and social care in England. On 11 January 2013 Warwickshire County Council announced that it had awarded the contract to set up Healthwatch Warwickshire to a local consortium led by Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA). A transition period will run from January to the end of March to allow WCAVA to prepare the new service for delivery from 1 April 2013.
Once appointed, the Chair and the lead officer will be invited to attend the meeting to talk to the Committee about their role and plans. It is suggested that the Committee may wish to explore with them opportunities to work in partnership with Healthwatch in their scrutiny and accountability role.

2.2 Review of Youth Provision follow-up

In April 2012 the Committee considered a report on feedback from Cabinet and the Local Strategic Partnership Board on the review report and recommendations from the committee regarding youth provision in the borough. The LSP was taking forward the proposals in the report and, given the timescales involved, it was agreed that a follow-up exercise to the review should be scheduled for April 2013.

The LSP Chairman has been invited to attend the meeting, along with a relevant officer, to report on youth provision in the borough and progress made in relation to the recommendations to Cabinet and the LSP Board arising from the review.

2.3 2013/14 Work Programme

The Committee will have an opportunity to consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board regarding the draft work programme for the coming year, following the overview and scrutiny work programme workshop to be held on 4 March 2013. The Committee will agree its programme of task group reviews as well as begin to develop a programme of scrutiny work for the scheduled committee meetings.

3. CONCLUSION

The Committee is asked to:

- note the progress in the active scrutiny reviews;
- agree the focus of items for the 11 April meeting of the Committee; and
- determine and approve the forward work programme for the Committee.
Name of Meeting: Customer and Partnerships Committee
Date of Meeting: 7 February 2013
Subject Matter: Committee Work Programme

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Document</th>
<th>Officer’s Reference</th>
<th>File Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>19 March 2012</td>
<td>Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, agenda and minutes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Customer and Partnerships Committee – Work Programme

### 7 February 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Who to involve</th>
<th>Budget considerations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rugby Youth Council</td>
<td>Standing Item</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and wellbeing update</td>
<td>Standing item</td>
<td>Councillor Health Champion and council representative on WCC Adult Social Services and Health OSC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Enterprise Partnership</td>
<td>Leader of the Council to provide feedback to the Committee on his role on the LEP Board</td>
<td>Cllr Craig Humphrey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UHCW Integrated Business Plan</td>
<td>Integrated Business Plan highlighted by Mr Hardy in discussion at Committee meeting February 2012. Also to include: - Update on the impact of the Birch Ward closure - Plans for the future of St Cross Hospital - Provision of diagnostic services at St Cross - Progress of the Trust in the application for Foundation status - Transport and parking at UHCW (how is the situation improving as a result of the measures put in place?) - Discharge of patients into community care - Cost improvement savings (what savings have been identified?)</td>
<td>Andy Hardy, Chief Executive, UHCW</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inward Investment review</th>
<th>Report of the task group</th>
<th>Cllr Carolyn Robbins, Task group chairman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing income protection review</td>
<td>Report of the task group</td>
<td>Cllr Jerry Roodhouse, Task group chairman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 11 April 2013

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<tr>
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<td>Standing Item</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of Youth Provision follow-up</td>
<td>To receive an update on youth provision in the borough and progress made in relation to the recommendations to Cabinet and the LSP Board arising from the committee’s light touch review</td>
<td>Cllr Leigh Hunt Lead Officer for Children and Young People’s Theme Group of Rugby LSP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Children and Young People’s Champion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Councillor Sally Bragg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and wellbeing update</td>
<td>Standing item Focus on Healthwatch</td>
<td>Councillor Health Champion and council representative on WCC Adult Social Services and Health OSC Healthwatch Warwickshire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Committee Work Programme</td>
<td>To consider recommendations from OSMB regarding the draft work programme for the coming year</td>
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</table>
### 20 June 2013

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Standing item</td>
<td>Councillor Health Champion and council representative on WCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air quality monitoring annual report</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regulatory Services Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government consultation on transfer of responsibility for air quality monitoring</td>
<td>The Government intends to consult on transferring responsibility for air quality monitoring to the authority with power to influence the main pollutant (ie. the county council) in April 2012. Consultation document to come to CUSP for comment.</td>
<td>Regulatory Services Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress against scrutiny review action plans</td>
<td>Routine 6-monthly review, as agreed at OSMB (agenda item 11) 19 March 2012</td>
<td>Scrutiny officers Heads of Service and responsible officers as required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 12 September 2013

<table>
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### Customer and Partnerships Committee – Programme of Reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review title</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Expected report date</th>
<th>Budget considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing income protection – minimising council rent arrears</td>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>Final meeting planned for mid-January to discuss emerging findings and draft review report with the Head of Housing and Sustainable Inclusive Communities Portfolio Holder.</td>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>Around £30 spent on refreshments and venue hire for focus groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inward Investment</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>Final meeting planned for 17 January to discuss review report and recommendations with the Economic Development and Culture Portfolio Holder.</td>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>None anticipated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Items for consideration at 2013/14 work programme workshop

Review of the impact of the reduction of medical services at St Cross Hospital
What reviews would you like
Overview and Scrutiny to tackle?
Guidelines for submitting suggestions

Rugby Borough Council runs a continuous programme of overview and scrutiny reviews covering a range of service areas. These are carried out by small cross-party task groups of councillors. The reviews culminate in a series of recommendations to the council’s cabinet. Experience shows that they have a real, positive effect in making improvements for the borough.

One of the criteria for inclusion in the programme is that the topic should be a matter of real concern in the borough. For this reason, we invite suggestions from individual members of the public and from local organisations.

If there is something you think a task group should be looking at, the council would welcome your ideas. The closing date for proposals to be considered for the 2013/14 programme is 4 February 2013. Please use the enclosed form or use the online form at www.rugby.gov.uk/scrutiny (follow the link to ‘getting involved’).

After a shortlisting process, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will make a final decision on the work programme on 18 March. Even if you do not make a suggestion in time for the 2013/14 selection process, ideas for future years are welcome at any time after the closing date.

Council functions

The borough council is responsible for a range of services including refuse collection, parks and open spaces, sports and recreation, cemeteries, housing, environmental health, licensing, town and country planning, building control, housing and council tax benefits, land charges, council tax collection, street cleaning, parking, the art gallery and museum and economic development. Scrutiny of a substantial topic covering any of these functions is therefore clearly suitable for borough council scrutiny.

Some other public services, such as education, social services and roads are the sole responsibility of the county council and would not usually sit comfortably in the borough council scrutiny programme.

The borough council is also responsible for scrutinising the Rugby Community Safety Partnership, although certain anti-crime and disorder services administered on a countywide basis are scrutinised by the county council.

Sometimes a local issue does not fit entirely within a single organisation’s remit. In such a case, the council can take the lead and coordinate a review involving different organisations, subject to those organisations having the capacity to be involved.
What cannot be reviewed?

When you are considering what should be reviewed, please remember that scrutiny cannot review any of the following:

- Individual complaints
- Decisions or appeals regarding planning and licensing applications
- Any matter that is likely to have severe legal implications

A topic that concerns itself entirely with an operational problem in a particular locality is less likely to get into the programme than one that has a strategic theme that can be applied widely. Nearly all reviews that get into the programme are about issues that have relevance across the borough and are of real strategic importance.

Sometimes we receive ideas for scrutiny that are specific suggestions about how to improve particular services or are complaints about particular shortcomings in the delivery of a service. These often do not leave much scope for a deeper scrutiny review. The council values comments or complaints such as these, but they are better channelled through the council’s customer feedback procedure rather than the scrutiny programme.

Efficiency and savings

In the present climate, all councils have to make large-scale economies. There is therefore little value in reviews that will result in new activities that require new resources. You should bear in mind that the scrutiny work programme will need to give emphasis to identifying opportunities for savings, increasing revenue, and making more effective use of resources.

Corporate priorities

One of the purposes of overview and scrutiny reviews is to help the council to implement its corporate strategy, the priorities of which are listed on page 4. Your proposal for scrutiny is likely to be viewed more favourably if it can be seen to be contributing to the achievement of the council’s priorities in the strategy. However, do not be put off if the topic you have in mind is not specifically mentioned. If it is of concern to you, we want to know about it.

Avoiding topics already reviewed

A suggestion will stand more chance of being put into the work programme if it has not been reviewed in recent years. In the last five years, the following subjects have been reviewed:

- Housing income protection
- Employee wellbeing
- Inward investment

Appendix 2
Completed in 2012

Youth provision
Complaints procedure
Matching the council’s housing stock to local housing needs
Localisation of Council Tax Support
Procurement

2011

Town Hall reception
Housing anti-social behaviour policy
Multi-storey flats
Play area provision in new housing developments
Youth provision
Air quality monitoring

2010

Health services for teenage parents (jointly with Warwickshire County Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council)
Biodiversity in open spaces
Public Realm and the Works Services Unit
End-to-end service reviews and systems thinking
Future of leisure centre provision
Provision of a crematorium and burial facility

2009

Local transport review (jointly with Warwickshire County Council)
Drainage
Risk management of play
Involvement of young people
Effectiveness of parish plans
Town centre economy

2008

Alleygates
Community engagement
Local economy
Mental health services (jointly with Warwickshire County Council)
Parking
Accessible public toilets
Sustainability of Works Services vehicles
Tourism
Travel tokens

Please make your scrutiny suggestion either using the enclosed paper form or using the online “suggest a topic” form at

www.rugby.gov.uk/scrutiny (select getting involved)
PEOPLE
Outcomes sought:
• High standards of existing and future housing stock
• Regeneration of our priority neighbourhoods
• Improved health and wellbeing for all age groups and communities
• Safe and empowered communities

Our priorities are to:
1. Support wider participation in decision making and help communities to deliver services.
2. Facilitate the provision and upkeep of good quality housing to meet local needs and to cater for the growth of Rugby.
3. Provide leisure facilities and support independent and healthy living.
4. Work with partners to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.
5. Provide safe and attractive streets.

BUSINESS
Outcomes sought:
• Increased employment and training opportunities for residents
• An attractive and thriving town centre
• A diverse and sustainable economic base

Our priorities are to:
1. Actively encourage parish councils and community bodies in neighbourhood development planning.
2. Establish an environment that will attract new businesses into the borough and enable existing businesses to flourish.
3. Support training in new technologies and promote apprenticeship opportunities.
4. Work with developers to provide new housing and infrastructure.
5. Facilitate the expansion of Rugby town by identifying and removing barriers to growth.

ENVIRONMENT
Outcomes sought:
• Sustainable urban and infrastructure expansion
• Reduced carbon footprint across the borough
• Increased waste recycling and a reduction of waste sent to landfill
• A variety of habitats and uses supporting biodiversity across the Borough

Our priorities are to:
1. Promote the highest standards of sustainability.
2. Actively progress energy-saving initiatives within the council and by residents and businesses.
3. Provide new burial and cremation facilities.
4. Increase biodiversity across the borough.
5. Promote and maintain high levels of waste recycling.
6. Minimise the impact of litter and fly tipping.

COUNCIL
Outcomes sought:
• Residents find it easy to access local services
• Delivery of high-quality services built around the real demands of our customers
• Innovative approaches to service delivery

Our priorities are to:
1. Increase the availability of information that will help residents and businesses.
2. Improve service delivery via customer-focused reviews and the development of our staff.
3. Engage in partnerships to meet local needs, reduce costs and increase efficiency.
4. Actively seek revenue-generating opportunities and apply charges in order to meet our costs.