

**To: Deputy Leader and Members of the Resources Board
(Councillors L Smith, Johnston, Bowden, Butcher,
N Dirveiks, Forwood, Fowler, Fox, Lea, Moore, Payne,
Smitten, Y Stanley and Winter)
For the information of other Members of the Council**

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**For enquiries about specific reports please
contact the Officer named in the reports.**

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RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA

11 OCTOBER 2010

The Resources Board will meet in the Chamber at The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire on Monday, 11 October 2010 at 6.30 pm.

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure.**
- 2 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council business.**
- 3 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests.**
(Any personal interests arising from the membership of Warwickshire County Council of Councillors Fowler, Fox and Lea, and membership of various Parish Councils of Councillors Butcher, Smitten and Y Stanley (Polesworth), Fox (Shustoke) and Moore (Baddesley Ensor), are deemed to be declared at this meeting).

- 4 **Request for discussion of En Bloc items.**
- 5 **Minutes of the Resources Board held on 5 July 2010 and 6 September 2010** (copies herewith) to be approved and signed by the Chairman.

PART A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION (WHITE PAPERS)

- 6 **Dog Control Orders** – Report of the Assistant Director (Housing)

Summary

The report updates Members on the situation with regard to dog control orders and seeks approval for consultation on a refreshed Order to cover the whole Borough.

The Contact Officer for this report is David Baxendale (719322).

- 7 **Further Postal Savings** – Report of the Assistant Director (Corporate Services)

Summary

This report suggests a new option for further reducing the Council's spend on postal services and recommends we enter into a contract with Birmingham City Council (BCC).

The Contact Officer for this report is Andy Cooper (719432).

PART B – ITEMS FOR EN BLOC DECISIONS (YELLOW PAPERS)

- 8 **Housing Revenue Account Budgetary Control Report 2010/2011 Period Ended 31 August 2010** - Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources)

Summary

The report covers total Housing Revenue Account revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April to 31 August 2010.

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

- 9 **Review of Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy** – Report of the Assistant Director (Housing)

Summary

This report provides the Board with information about the Council's Private Sector Housing Policy and proposes a revised policy for consideration.

The Contact Officer for this report is David Baxendale (719322).

- 10 **Budgetary Control Report 2010/11 Period Ended 31 August 2010** - Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources)

Summary

The report covers revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 August 2010. The 2010/11 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date, are given, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to this Board.

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

- 11 **Changes to Local Land Charges** – Report of the Assistant Director (Corporate Services)

This report is to update Members on the recent changes to legislation affecting the Local Land Charges service and budgets.

The Contact Officer for this report is Andy Cooper (719432).

- 12 **Consolidated Budgetary Control Report 2010/11 - Period Ended 31 August 2010** – Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources)

Summary

The report covers total Council General Fund revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 August 2010.

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

PART C – EXEMPT INFORMATION (GOLD PAPERS)

13 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommendation:

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

14 Old Bank House Garden Wall and Trees – Report of the Assistant Director (Streetscape) and the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development).

The Contact Officers for this report are Chris Jones (719265) and Alethea Wilson (719212).

15 Systems Thinking – Streetscape – Report of the Assistant Director (Streetscape).

The Contact Officer for this report is Richard Dobbs (719440)

JERRY HUTCHINSON
Chief Executive

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES BOARD

5 July 2010

Present: Councillor Smith in the Chair

Councillors Bowden, Butcher, N Dirveiks, Forwood, Fowler, Fox, Johnston, Moore, Payne, Smitten and Winter.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Y Stanley.

Councillors Moss, Phillips and Pickard were also in attendance.

11 **Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests**

Any personal interests arising from the membership of Warwickshire County Council of Councillors Fowler and Fox and membership of various Parish Councils of Councillors Butcher and Smitten (Polesworth), Fox (Shustoke) and Moore (Baddesley Ensor) were deemed to be declared at the meeting.

12 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 13 April and 24 May 2010, copies having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 **Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April 2009 – March 2010**

The Chief Executive and the Director of Resources informed Members of the progress with the achievement of the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Resources Board for April 2009 – March 2010.

Resolved:

That the achievements to date on the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets be noted.

14 **Social Homebuy**

The Assistant Director (Housing) provided Members with information about the Social Homebuy Scheme promoted by Communities and Local Government, which enabled Local Authority tenants to part buy their homes.

Resolved:

- a **That, for the reasons set out in the report of the Assistant Director (Housing) the scheme is not adopted at the current time; and**
- b **That the possible adoption of the scheme be considered again in 6 months when the outcome of the reform of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System is known.**

15 **Dog Control Orders**

The Assistant Director (Housing) updated Members on the situation with regard to dog control orders and sought approval for consultation on a refreshed Order to cover the whole Borough.

Resolved:

That a further report be brought back to the Resources Board providing more detail on a refreshed Dog Control Order.

16 **Tenant Satisfaction Survey**

The Director of Resources presented the results of the Council's annual survey of its Tenants in order to receive feedback on satisfaction levels with the Housing Service.

Resolved:

That the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey be noted.

17 **Risk Management Annual Report 2009/10**

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) informed Members of the progress made on Risk Management during 2009/10.

Resolved:

That the progress made on Risk Management during 2009/10 be noted.

18 **Efficiency Review – Housing Maintenance Services**

The Assistant Director (Housing) provided the Board with an update about work to progress the objective set out in the Housing Division's Forward Work Plan to undertake an efficiency review of its Maintenance Service.

Resolved:

- a That the work undertaken to achieve the Decent Homes Standard be noted;**
- b That the progress made to improve the response repairs service be noted;**
- c That the initial findings of the efficiency review of Housing Maintenance be noted**
- d That the Resources Board and Housing Portfolio Group be kept fully informed of the outcomes of the review to improve Housing Maintenance Services; and**
- e That Tenants be consulted about the scope of service and standards when appropriate.**

19 **Capital Programme 2010/11 Period Ending May 2010**

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) updated Members on the progress of the 2010/11 Capital Programme in terms of both expenditure and outcomes.

Resolved:

That the progress made against the 2010/11 Capital Programme be noted.

20 **Annual Treasury Report for 2009/10**

The Director of Resources reported on the out-turn for 2009/10 and highlighted any areas of significance.

Resolved:

- a That the Annual Treasury Report for 2009/10 be noted; and**
- b That the Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix A to the report of the Director of Resources be noted.**

21 Internal Audit – Performance for 2009/10

The Director of Resources reported on the progress of the Council's Internal Audit function against the agreed plan of work for 2009/10.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

22 Budgetary Control Report 2010/11 - Period Ended 31 May 2010

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) reported on the revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 May 2010. The 2010/11 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date were detailed, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to the Board.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

23 Consolidated Budgetary Control Report 2010/11 – Period Ended 31 May 2010

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) updated the Board on the total Council General Fund revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 May 2010.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

24 Housing Revenue Account Budgetary Control Report 2010/2011 – Period Ended 31 May 2010

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) updated the Board on the total Housing Revenue Account revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 May 2010.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

25 Collection Progress for Sundry Debts 2009/10 and Prompt Payment of Creditor Invoices, LPI 8

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) advised Members of the collection progress for Sundry Debts in 2009/10 and highlighted the performance of LPI 8, Prompt Payment of Creditor Invoices.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

26 Progress Report on Human Resources Issues

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) advised Members of progress against the Human Resources Strategy Action Plan, work being done by the Human Resources team, sickness levels for the period of April 2009 to March 2010 and provided some further information on the action taken in managing absence.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

27 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

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

28 The Arcade

The Assistant Director (Streetscape) reported further on the Arcade, Atherstone and asked the Board to determine an appropriate course of action.

Resolved:

That consideration of this item be deferred to a future meeting of the Resources Board.

29 Request for a Right of Way to Cross Garage Site off Stonebridge Road, Coleshill

The Assistant Director (Housing) informed Members of a request received to obtain a right of way to cross the Council's garage site at Stonebridge Road, Coleshill, to gain access to a proposed property to be built in the garden of 36 Springfields, Coleshill.

Resolved:

That a right of way to cross the garage site of Stonebridge Road, Coleshill, be granted at the value recommended by the Council's Valuer as set out in the report of the Assistant Director (Housing).

30 Atherstone Town Centre CCTV Schemes

The Assistant Director (Housing) outlined progress in respect of the Council's management and operation of the Atherstone Town Centre CCTV scheme and its impact over the last 12 months in relation to the corporate priority to tackle crime and the fear of crime.

Resolved:

- a That the continued and positive impact of the Atherstone Town Centre CCTV scheme in tackling local crime be noted; and**
- b That the revised Partnership Agreement with Atherstone Town Council be noted and agreed.**

31 Housing Act 2004 – Emergency Prohibition Order

The Assistant Director (Housing) gave details of an emergency situation that had occurred recently in a private house and the actions taken by staff on behalf of the Council following consultation with the Chairman.

Resolved:

That the action taken by Officers, in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources Board, in respect of an Emergency Prohibition Order be noted and endorsed.

32 Provision of Public Toilets in Polesworth

The Assistant Director (Streetscape) sought approval for a proposal to install an automatic public convenience on the Bridge Street Car Park, Polesworth.

Resolved:

- a That the installation of an automatic public convenience on the car park off Bridge Street, Polesworth, leased from JC Decaux, be approved;**

Recommended:

- b That the site of the existing public conveniences be declared surplus to the requirements of the Council; and**
- c That the site be sold to Mr H at the value recommended by the Council's Valuer as set out in paragraph 7.2 of the report of the Assistant Director (Streetscape).**

33 Phoenix Yard Access

The Assistant Director (Streetscape) provided further information on the proposed grant of a right to carry out highway improvements on land owned by North Warwickshire Borough Council and asked Members to review the time limit which had been imposed.

Resolved:

- a That the extension of the time limit for the completion of the development at Phoenix Yard, Atherstone, linked to the grant of the right to carry out highway improvements on Council owned land, to a period of five years be approved; and**
- b That the Corporate Property Officer negotiate the use of an Overage Agreement with the developer, linked to the granting of that right.**

34 Minutes of the Appeals Sub-Group held on 3 June 2010

The minutes of the Appeals Sub-Group held on 3 June 2010 were received and noted.

L Smith
Chairman

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES BOARD

6 September 2010

Present: Councillor Smith in the Chair

Councillors Bowden, Butcher, N Dirveiks, Forwood, Fowler, Fox, Johnston, Moore and Winter

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lea, Payne, Smitten and Y Stanley.

Councillors Lewis, B Moss, Pickard and Phillips were also in attendance.

35 **Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests**

Any personal interests arising from the membership of Warwickshire County Council of Councillors Fowler and Fox, and membership of various Parish Councils of Councillors Butcher (Polesworth), Fox (Shustoke) and Moore (Baddesley Ensor) were deemed to be declared at the meeting.

36 **Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April – June 2010**

The Chief Executive and Director of Resources informed Members of the actual performance and achievement against the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Resources Board for April – June 2010.

Resolved:

That the actual performance and achievement against the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Resources Board for the quarter April 2010 to June 2010 be noted.

37 **Voice Telecommunications Contract**

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) detailed the process followed to evaluate the suppliers of telephone line rental and call costs and recommended the award of the contract to Global Crossing for the next 2 years with the option to extend for a further year provided costs were still competitive.

Resolved:

That the award of the telephone voice contract to Global Crossing for a period of 2 years from October 2010, with the option to extend for a further year if costs remain competitive, be approved.

38 Consultation on Local Referendum to Veto Excessive Council Tax Increases

The Deputy Chief Executive gave details of a consultation paper issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government on Local Referendum to Veto Excessive Council Tax increases. The Board was asked to consider a draft response to the consultation.

Resolved:

a That point 2 of the draft response be amended as follows:

“We would extend this also to the triggering of a referendum which requires a petition of 5% of the local tax paying electorate”; and

b That subject to the amendment (a) above, the draft response be approved;

39 Tenant Services Authority Regulation – Annual Report for Tenants

The Assistant Director (Housing) updated Members on the work of the Tenant Services Authority and presented a consultation document for consideration and response.

Resolved

a That the requirements for the publication of an annual report to tenants be noted; and

b That the content of the Draft Annual Report for Tenants 2010 be agreed.

40 Capital Programme 2010/11 – Period Ending July 2010

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) updated Members on the progress of the 2010/11 Capital Programme in terms of both expenditure and outcomes.

Resolved:

a That the progress made against the 2010/11 Capital Programme be noted; and

b That recommendation (b) of the report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) be deleted.

41 Internal Audit – Performance for First Quarter 2010-11

The Deputy Chief Executive gave details of the progress of the Council's Internal Audit function against the agreed plan of work for 2010-11.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

42 International Financial Reporting Standards – Progress Update

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) reported on the progress being made on implementing the new International Financial Reporting Standards that had been introduced from the 2010/11 accounts onwards.

Resolved:

That the progress made on implementing International Financial Reporting Standards be noted.

43 Treasury Management Update Quarter 1 2010/11

The Deputy Chief Executive reported on the Treasury Management activity during the first quarter of 2010/11.

Resolved:

That the Treasury Management Update Report for Quarter 1 be noted.

44 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

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

45 Irrecoverable Housing and Local Taxation Debts

The Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) detailed the amounts recommended for write-off, in accordance with the write-off policy agreed by the former Finance Sub-Committee in September 2000.

Resolved:

- a That the write-off of 6 balances over £1,250 totalling £9,554.16 in respect of unpaid Council Tax be approved;**
- b That the write-off of 11 balances over £1,250 totalling £38,833.75 in respect of unpaid Non Domestic Rates be approved;**
- c That the write-off of 1 balance over £1,250 totalling £1,424.81 in respect of overpaid Housing Benefit be approved;**
- d That the write-off of 8 balances over £1,250 totalling £15,019.15 in respect of unpaid former tenant rent arrears be approved;**
- e That the write-off of 77 balances under £1,250 totalling £20,124.37 in respect of unpaid Council Tax be noted;**
- f That the write-off of 10 balances under £1,250 totalling £3,384.02 in respect of unpaid Non Domestic Rates be noted;**
- g That the write-off of 61 balances under £1,250 totalling £8,207.53 in respect of overpaid Housing Benefit be noted;**
- h That the write-off of 47 balances under £1,250 totalling £10,611.57 in respect of unpaid former tenant rent arrears be noted;**
- i That the write-back of 1 balance totalling £36.44 in respect of unpaid Council Tax be noted;**
- j That the write-back of 11 balances totalling £28,230.96 in respect of unpaid Non Domestic Rates be noted; and**
- k That the write-back of 2 balances totalling £0.59 in respect of unpaid former tenant rent arrears be noted.**

L Smith
CHAIRMAN

Agenda Item No 6

Resources Board

11 October 2010

**Report of the
Assistant Director (Housing)**

Dog Control Orders

1 Summary

- 1.1 The report updates Members on the situation with regard to dog control orders and seeks approval for consultation on a refreshed Order to cover the whole Borough.

Recommendation to the Board

That the draft Order as described in the report is approved for statutory and public consultation, responses to which will be reported back to the Board for determination.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 Councillors Wykes (Shadow Cllr N Dirveiks), Smitten (Shadow Cllr Pickard) and Fox (Shadow Cllr Morson) Portfolio Holders for (Environment, Health, Wellbeing and Leisure and Safer Communities) have been consulted and their responses if any will be reported to the meeting.

3 Report

- 3.1 Members will recall that a *poop-scoop* Order was approved by the Council in 2006 following the introduction of powers under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Since then, the dog warden and other staff have actively promoted the issue with both education and enforcement, including issuing fixed penalty notices. Two local parish Councils have also used the process to introduce specific Orders which give effect to a dog ban area (Newton Regis) and a 'dogs on leads' area (Fillongley) in response to local concerns. No other local body has yet introduced such Orders, or which relate to other specified matters; to require dogs to be put on leads when asked by a warden, or to limit the maximum number of dogs a person can exercise at once.

- 3.2 Despite the best efforts of staff since the latest Order was approved, complaints continue to be made.

- ... 3.3 The process to refresh the Order (draft appended) follows that carried out four years ago. Firstly the Council has to consult with Parish and Town Councils

and the Countryside Agency, then publicise it's intention in a newspaper and on the website, then deal with any representations and determine the matter at a future Board or Council meeting which takes responses into account. The Order then takes effect at least seven days after a further advert. It is hoped that this will stimulate better awareness and a culture of no tolerance to offending dog owners within their communities. At the very least, the Council needs more information and cooperation from communities who can give anonymous and/or confidential intelligence on suspects and offenders via the One Stop Shop and online. All reports are investigated.

- 3.4 No change is proposed to the previously reported 'poop scoop' Order, and the fine is already set at the maximum level (discount for early payment).
- 3.5 Staff will also be promoting the less known legal requirement that all dogs in public areas are to have an identity collar or tag. Those which do not can be seized by the warden (even if in company), and owners can be prosecuted. However, this would be a last resort after an informal request and written warning. There has been an increase in reports of dog attacks and so-called status dogs, bred for fighting and intimidation. Details of their ownership are not always apparent or disclosed.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 4.1.1 The proposed activity is met from within existing budgets and may result in an improved, cleaner and safer environment at minimal cost and value for money.

4.2 Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 4.2.1 These issues are addressed in the consultation and legal process. People do have a right to expect an environment substantially free of dog fouling and associated difficulties, and the Council has an implicit obligation to contribute and lead on this matter.

4.3 Environment and Sustainability Implications

- 4.3.1 Positive. Measures to ensure that dog fouling is discouraged or prevented will contribute towards an improved environment and is consistent with sustainability principles.

4.4 Risk Management Implications

- 4.4.1 Not a major policy change, but health and safety risk assessment updated.

4.5 Equalities Implications

- 4.5.1 Registered blind persons are exempt from fouling penalty in respect of guide dogs, and disabled or infirm persons in any circumstances will be treated considerately depending upon the situation.

4.6 Links to Council's Priorities

4.6.1 Clean and safe environment, and meeting the Council's obligations on staff welfare and safety.

The Contact Officer for this report is David Baxendale (719322).

Background Papers

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

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

**The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
The Dog Control Orders (Prescribed Offences and Penalties, etc.) Regulations
2006**

OFFENCE OF FAILING TO REMOVE DOG FAECES and FORM OF ORDER

1. (1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) and (3), it is an offence when being in charge of a dog on land to which a dog control order (described as a "Fouling of Land by Dogs Order" in the form set out below) applies, not to remove faeces deposited by the dog at any time, or at any time during certain periods prescribed in the order.

(2) No offence is committed where a person has a reasonable excuse for failing to remove the faeces, or the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so.

(3) The offence does not apply to a person who is registered as a blind person in a register compiled under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948, or to a person who has a disability which affects his mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination or ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, in respect of a dog trained by Dogs for the Disabled (registered charity number 700454), Support Dogs (registered charity number 1088281) or Canine Partners for Independence (registered charity number 803680) and upon which he relies for assistance.

2. In any Fouling of Land by Dogs Order, the offence of failing to remove dog faeces is to be set out in full as stated in article 3 in the form of order given below.

3. In all other respects, a Fouling of Land by Dogs Order providing for that offence is to be in the form given below, or in a form substantially to the like effect.

Form of Order

The Fouling of Land by Dogs (North Warwickshire) Order 2010

The North Warwickshire Borough Council hereby makes the following Order:

1. This Order comes into force on (date tba)
2. This Order applies to the land specified in [the Schedule]

Offence

3. —(1) If a dog defecates at any time on land to which this Order applies and a person who is in charge of the dog at that time fails to remove the faeces from the land forthwith, that person shall be guilty of an offence unless—

(a) he has a reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or

(b) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so.

(2) Nothing in this article applies to a person who—

(a) is registered as a blind person in a register compiled under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948; or

(b) has a disability which affects his mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination or ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, in respect of a dog trained by a prescribed charity and upon which he relies for assistance.

(3) For the purposes of this article—

(a) a person who habitually has a dog in his possession shall be taken to be in charge of the dog at any time unless at that time some other person is in charge of the dog;

(b) placing the faeces in a receptacle on the land which is provided for the purpose, or for the disposal of waste, shall be a sufficient removal from the land;

(c) being unaware of the defecation (whether by reason of not being in the vicinity or otherwise), or not having a device for or other suitable means of removing the faeces shall not be a reasonable excuse for failing to remove the faeces;

(d) each of the following is a "prescribed charity"—

(i) Dogs for the Disabled (registered charity number 700454);

(ii) Support Dogs (registered charity number 1088281);

(iii) Canine Partners for Independence (registered charity number 803680).

Penalty

4. A person who is guilty of an offence under article 3 shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

[Date] - tba

[Attestation clause] - tba

[SCHEDULE]

[Specification/description of land, or lands, to which the Order applies]

Any land in the Borough of North Warwickshire which is open to the air and to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access (with or without payment).

Agenda Item No 7

Resources Board

11 October 2010

**Report of the
Assistant Director (Corporate Services)**

Further Postal Savings

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report suggests a new option for further reducing the Council's spend on postal services and recommends we enter into a contract with Birmingham City Council (BCC).

Recommendation to the Board

- a Approval is given to enter into a contract with Birmingham City Council for the distribution of outgoing mail, with a review in 12 months; and**
- b Members are asked to decide on their preferred option for the delivery of their post.**

2. Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 This report has been forwarded to the Resources Board Portfolio Holders for their comments.

3 Background

- 3.1 Currently outgoing postal services are provided by various Royal Mail services and TNT Post. TNT Post has provided the standard second class service for the majority of our mail since January 2010. Royal Mail has continued to provide first class and other enhanced services via our franking machine account.

4 The Proposal

- 4.1 Birmingham City Council (BCC) signed a wholesale agreement with Royal Mail in December 2008, and purchased their own sorting machine. They now have their own facilities to sort post prior to passing it to Royal Mail who continue to have responsibility for delivery to the doorstep.

- 4.2 BCC is willing to provide postal services to other public authorities at cost. They would provide wholesale pricing on the standard second class service and also access to first class, and enhanced services, at retail prices plus a small handling charge per item. For standard 2nd class post we would pay a 2p handling charge for each item of post to cover their costs. BCC charges per 2nd Class item are significantly less than the unit charges made by TNT.
- 4.3 Whilst first class and enhanced services from BCC would be at full retail prices, using them would save us having to operate our own franking machine, and therefore the associated running costs. Anyone wishing to send post first class would have to justify the reasons for urgency, or else it will be sent by standard post.
- 4.4 BCC would collect the post from the Council House at 14:30 each day (it is currently collected at 16:30). This would mean we would need to have post in the post room by 13:30 each day; which brings the current deadline forward by two hours. When consulted, services have not identified any major problems with achieving this but they will need to review and possibly change working practices to meet the new deadline.
- 4.5 TNT Post currently applies our return addresses to the envelopes we send out. BCC are unable to do this so we would need to send our envelopes to be pre-printed with our return address. The cost of this has been included in the financial implications.
- 4.6 Having looked at the costs of TNT and BCC services our view is that we could make significant additional savings by moving all outgoing post to a new contract with BCC. There is an expectation that the contract will be for 12 months with 3 month notice for termination.

5 Elected Members Post - Options

- 5.1 When we first moved over to TNT Post in January 2010, we experienced some problems with delays and damage to post, particularly with members post. We therefore continued to send members post by 1st class Royal Mail since TNT did not operate a 1st class service. With BCC we would have access to a 1st class post service although this would be at retail prices, plus a small handling fee.
- 5.2 There are options for the provision of a member's postal service. Members can collect their post from the Group Rooms or we can use either the 1st or 2nd Class postal service from Birmingham City Council. Members are asked to decide their preferred option for the delivery of their post.

6 Option1 – Use BCC 2nd Class Postal Service

- 6.1 Sending Elected Members post via Birmingham CC, using the standard second class service would for example mean Tuesday's post should 'generally' arrive on the doorstep on Thursday, Friday at the latest.

7 **Option2 – Use BCC 1st Class Postal Service**

7.1 Sending Elected Members post via Birmingham CC, with the 1st class service would mean Tuesday's post should 'generally' arrive on the doorstep on Wednesday.

7.2 This option has a premium of approximately £500 per annum.

8 **Report Implications**

8.1 **Finance and Value for Money Implications**

8.1.1 Estimated savings via Birmingham City Council, over and above those already made by moving to TNT Post, will depend on still achieving a high rate of machine readable mail.

8.1.2 Expected annual savings are detailed below:

Postage Savings	- £10,500
Premium for sending 1 st Class at retail + handling fee	+£500
I-Weigh Scales Lease & Maintenance (part of the franking machine)	- £1,768
Franking Machine Maintenance	- £1,082
Franking Machine Ink	- £150
Pre-printing return address on envelopes	+ £3,000
<i>Gross Savings Total</i>	<i>- £10,000</i>
Option of continuing to send Members post by 1 st Class Royal Mail	+£500
<i>Nett Savings Total with above option</i>	<i>-£9,500</i>

8.2 **Legal and Human Rights Implications**

8.2.1 To start using the BCC service we will have to sign a comprehensive legal agreement and complete a Credit Check and Agency Customer Agreement with Royal Mail. The legal agreement is in the process of being simplified, however, initial consultation with Legal Services did not reveal any significant concerns with the agreement.

8.3 **Risk Management Implications**

8.3.1 There is little risk attached to this proposal since there was no minimum contract period for TNT Post so termination is straightforward and there is no investment required from us to use BCC's services.

8.3.2 Moving our postal service to BCC would mean that we would be reliant on them for outgoing postal services. However, this risk is mitigated by BCC's business continuity plan which includes a contract with TNT Post should they have any problems with their service.

8.3.3 There is a risk that the savings will not be achieved if departments try to send their post first class if they are unable to get items to the post room by 13:30.

8.4 **Environment and Sustainability Implications**

8.4.1 If the potential savings are achieved this will provide resources to either offset savings required overall or to reinvest in other services. This is consistent with sustainability implications.

8.5 **Equalities Implications**

8.5.1 The Council is required to provide equal levels of service to all customers.

8.6 **Links to Council's Priorities**

8.6.1 There is a need to review the costs of this service in order to achieve savings targets and meet the Council's priority of making the best use of its resources.

The Contact Officer for this report is Andy Cooper (719432).

Background Papers

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

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

Agenda Item No 8

Resources Board

11 October 2010

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

**Housing Revenue Account
Budgetary Control Report 2010/2011
Period Ended 31 August 2010**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The report covers total Housing Revenue Account revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April to 31 August 2010.

Recommendation to the Board

That the report be noted and that the Board requests any further information it feels would assist it in monitoring the budgets under the Board's control.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 Portfolio Holders and Shadow Portfolio Holders for Resources and Housing have been consulted regarding this report. Any comments received will be reported verbally to the Board.

3 Report

- 3.1 Under the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice (BVACOP), services should be charged with the total cost of providing the service, which not only includes costs and income directly incurred, but also support costs relating to such areas as finance, office accommodation, telephone costs and IT services and Member costs.

4 Overall Position

- 4.1 The Housing Revenue Account includes all costs and income relating to the letting and management of the Council's Housing Stock, and this has to be kept separate from General Fund expenditure. The actual position for the HRA for the period ended 31 August 2010 is a surplus of £120,812, compared with a forecast surplus position for the period of £97,830. Where possible, the forecast position has been profiled to reflect seasonal variations in expenditure and income, in order to give a better comparison with actual figures. The actual position is a favourable variance of £22,982 on the forecast position. Appendix A to this report provides details of the profiled and actual position for expenditure and income incurred by the HRA, and an explanation of significant variations are given in more detail below.

...

5 **Supervision and Management – General**

5.1 There has been lower spending on legal action and court costs to date.

6 **Supervision and Management – Special**

6.1 There is currently a general under spend on utility costs on flats and Community Centres of £5,432, in addition there is an under spend on laundries maintenance of equipment of £3,627

7 **Dwelling rental income**

7.1 Rental income is higher than expected due to a lower level of voids than was included in the budget. The actual rate is 0.8% against a budgeted rate of 1%. Two council house sales were included in the budget at this point, however only one has been sold to date.

8 **Garage Rents**

8.1 Rental income is lower than expected. This is partially due to the removal of garages demolished as part of the New Build Schemes of £4,760.

9 **Housing Direct Works**

9.1 As at the end of May there is a deficit on Housing Direct Works of £9,620, compared with a forecast surplus position of £23,962. The account balance fluctuates throughout the year depending on workloads and invoice payments. It is expected that the surplus will be achieved by the end of the financial year. Appendix B to this report provides the profiled and actual expenditure of Housing Direct Works in more detail.

9.2 The under-spend on employee costs reflects the lower number of directly employed staff utilised to date (27.5 employees), compared with the budget for day-to-day repairs (28 employees). The increase in supplies and services has occurred due to a higher use of Sub Contractors to date. Transport costs have decreased mainly due to lower maintenance costs and lower fuel prices. Income is ahead of the profile as more jobs have been completed than expected in the period.

10 **Housing Repairs Fund**

10.1 The Housing Repairs Fund covers expenditure on all repairs and maintenance, both day to day and programmed whether carried out by Housing Direct Works or external contractors. This includes any surplus or deficit on the operation of Housing Direct Works.

10.2 The balance on the Fund at the start of the year amounted to £176,121. The balance can be used to cover timing issues between years. In 2010/11 the contribution to the fund is £2,397,400. Any over-spend in the repairs fund would impact on the use of Housing Revenue Account balances if it exceeded the balance on the fund and the contribution in the year. The position on the

... Fund at the end of May is shown in Appendix C, and is showing an over-spend to date, including the current deficit of Housing Direct Works.

11 Risks to the Budget

11.1 The key risks to the budgetary position of the Housing Revenue Account in 2010/11 include:

- Rising tenant expectations, following extensive improvement works may increase the demand for repairs, which will need to be continuously monitored;
- Any reduction in the performance of Housing Direct Works will put pressure on the Council to use external contractors and therefore will impact on the level of expenditure.

12 Estimated Out-turn

12.1 Members have requested that Budgetary Control Reports provide details on the likely out-turn position for the Council. Based upon currently available information, the Council is forecast to return a surplus on the HRA in 2010/11 of £7,160, as per the original Budget.

12.2 The estimated out-turn for the Repairs Fund remains the same as that included in the original budget.

13 Report Implications

13.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

13.1.1 The Council is currently forecasting a contribution to the Housing Revenue Fund balance for the 2010/11 financial year of £7,160. Income and expenditure will continue to be closely managed and any issues that arise will be reported to this Board for comment.

13.2 Environment and Sustainability Implications

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

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

Background Papers

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

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT
Budgetary Control Report as at 31 August 2010

	Original Budget 2010/2011	Expected Spend 2010/2011	Actual Spend 2010/2011	Variance	Comments
EXPENDITURE					
Repairs and Maintenance	2,397,400	998,917	998,917	-	
Supervision and Management - General	1,097,040	410,942	402,042	(8,900)	Section 4.2
Supervision and Management - Special Services	390,470	163,745	155,015	(8,730)	Section 4.3
Provision for Bad Debts	20,000	8,333	8,333	-	
Transfer to CLG	3,331,970	1,332,788	1,332,788	-	
Depreciation and Impairment	1,985,680	827,367	827,367	-	
Total Expenditure	9,222,560	3,742,092	3,724,462	(17,630)	
INCOME					
Gross Rent Income from Dwellings	(8,892,090)	(3,705,038)	(3,718,440)	(13,402)	Section 4.4
Gross Rent Income from Non-Dwellings	(324,890)	(143,138)	(137,118)	6,020	Section 4.5
Charges for Services and Facilities	(85,870)	(22,217)	(20,187)	2,030	
Total Income	(9,302,850)	(3,870,393)	(3,875,745)	(5,352)	
NET COST OF SERVICES	(80,290)	(128,301)	(151,283)	(22,982)	
Amortised Premiums and Discounts	29,880	12,450	12,450	-	
Investment Income - Mortgages	(440)	(183)	(183)	-	
- Other	(26,790)	(11,163)	(11,163)	-	
NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	(77,640)	(127,197)	(150,179)	(22,982)	
Revenue Contributions to Capital	392,000	163,333	163,333	-	
Transfer to/(from) Pensions Reserve	(67,700)	(28,208)	(28,208)	-	
Transfer to/(from) Major Repairs Reserve	(253,820)	(105,758)	(105,758)	-	
TOTAL (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	(7,160)	(97,830)	(120,812)	(22,982)	

APPENDIX B

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT
HOUSING DIRECT WORKS
Budgetary Control Report as at 31 August 2010

	Original Budget 2010/2011	Expected Spend 2010/2011	Actual Spend 2010/2011	Variance
EXPENDITURE				
Employee Costs	876,710	358,707	342,779	(15,928)
Supplies and Services	673,290	276,546	389,890	113,344
Transport	87,740	33,977	27,801	(6,176)
Gross Expenditure	1,637,740	669,230	760,470	91,240
Total Income	(2,012,800)	(844,329)	(901,222)	(56,893)
Net Controllable Expenditure	(375,060)	(175,099)	(140,752)	34,347
Central Support	314,340	129,285	128,520	(765)
Capital Charges	53,130	21,852	21,852	-
NET EXPENDITURE	(7,590)	(23,962)	9,620	33,582

Appendix C

HOUSING REPAIRS FUND (to end of August 2010)

	£
Balance at 1 April 2010	176,121
Contribution 2010/11 (to August 2010)	1,045,491
Expected Use of Fund (to August 2010)	(1,115,683)
Balance at 31 May 2010	105,928

Agenda Item No 9

Resources Board

11 October 2010

Report of the Assistant Director (Housing)

Review of Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the Board with information about the Council's Private Sector Housing Policy and proposes a revised policy for consideration.

Recommendation to the Board

That the Resources Board approve the policy principles set out at Appendix 1.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 The Housing Portfolio Holder Group has considered the revised policy and support the principles which are set out in the document.

3 Background

- 3.1 There is no mandatory duty for Councils to provide grants to private occupiers to improve the condition of their homes. There are powers available to Councils to address its obligations to be aware of and address local housing conditions (Housing Acts 1985 and 2004) and in connection with its enforcement duties. (Housing Health and Safety Rating System and Houses in Multiple Occupation) There is also an expectation that the Council will find ways of supporting vulnerable occupiers with regard to addressing fuel poverty. (Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 and Regulatory Reform Order 2003) Addressing fuel poverty remains a public sector national target (PSA7) which the Council is expected to report on annually.
- 3.2 Since 2007 the Council's approach to providing assistance to private occupiers has been to offer a combination of grant and interest free loan. The grants and loans are subject to a means test and are only available to households are defined as vulnerable and who have homes that fail the standards set out in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.
- 3.3 The level of grant and loan made available to eligible applicants is linked to the extent of the work that needs to be undertaken to bring the property up to standard. The assessment is carried out by trained staff in the Private Sector

Team. 50% of the funding required is offered as grant with the rest being offered as a loan. The extent of combined grant and loan made available is usually in the region of £2,000 to £3,000.

- 3.4 The Private Sector Team can assist private owners in a number of ways and they do not all depend on grant or loan. Extensive and very productive use has been made of the Warm Front service over recent years to address energy efficiency issues faced by some private occupiers. This has brought in the region of £600,000 per annum of financial assistance into the Borough. In addition the Home Safety Check and Handyperson schemes are also recommended as appropriate.
- 3.5 In February 2010 the Resources Board agreed to add the West Midland's Kick Start scheme to the options it can offer to support vulnerable households with sub standard houses. This is a partnership scheme governed by local authorities in the West Midlands that is able to offer loans to occupiers as equity release.
- 3.6 As well as the recognition that the West Midland's Kick Start scheme gave another option to some private occupiers Members agreed to introduce it in North Warwickshire because funding available for housing assistance is reducing.
- 3.7 Mandatory grants for the repair of private domestic property ceased over 10 years ago since when such assistance has become generally discretionary or loan based. Discretionary grants allow local housing authorities to target limited budgets on local priorities, and to set conditions which lever-in other funding from the client or elsewhere (e.g. Warm Front). Loans have had a similar effect with the added value of being recycled for use in the future. Local housing authority loans have been 'off market' products aimed at people who cannot access or afford market loans. Equity release products, charitable donations, savings and family contributions have also played a part.

4 **Current Position**

- 4.1 In recognition of reducing resources and adding the Kick Start Scheme to the options which can be offered to private occupiers has provided a stimulus to review the Council's private sector housing assistance policy. The policy principles are set out at Appendix 1. This shows both the eligibility criteria and proposes different levels of grant and loan that might be offered. The principles are intended to provide a framework which is transparent and consistent but it is also important that there is some flexibility to address particularly difficult circumstances. As Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council are currently working with Kick Start and provide support to North Warwickshire customers through their Home Improvement Agency the policy is closely aligned with theirs.
- 4.2 The policy document expresses the aims of North Warwickshire Borough Council in meeting aspirations in private sector housing through grants, loans, third-party referrals and associated financial, technical and professional support. It refers to enforcement and to the policies of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council in respect of the West Midlands Kick Start (WMKS) partnership through who's Home Improvement Agency (HIA) NWBC will continue working.

- 4.3 The context of this policy is that public funding is restricted and likely to reduce further, and that people should be encouraged and supported or where necessary required to resolve issues affecting their property and their wellbeing through their own resources in favour of public intervention. Further context is the condition of local housing and its rural nature (some being off the gas grid network), and the socio-economic and health circumstances of our local population plus the needs to address housing supply, affordable warmth and climate change risks.
- 4.4 The aim of the policy remains to support people most at risk who are least able to improve their own circumstances. This includes those in properties which fail the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (i.e. homes with category 1 hazards) and those which fail other aspects of the Decent Homes Standard. It is concerned with those households on low incomes classified as 'vulnerable', and those households with a registered disability, those suffering from fuel poverty, and owners of vacant properties who can return them to occupation or to market for sale or rent. We aim also to reduce the climate impact of local housing by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through better heating systems and insulation plus associated measures. Where a property requires an adaptation for a disabled resident or relocation which is not deliverable by mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, this policy also aims to meet that aspiration.
- 4.5 For the purposes of making the Kickstart Scheme available in North Warwickshire the policy has to set out the terms within which West Midlands Kickstart works. However this does not deter from the principle that this is an option that owners may or may not wish to consider.
- 4.6 In considering the policy principles Members will see that it is concerned with different types of owners and occupiers:
- Vulnerable owners with no equity in their property
 - Vulnerable owners with equity in their property
 - Private landlords with empty properties in disrepair
 - Private landlords with tenanted properties in disrepair
- When dealing with private landlords enforcement can be an option. However the Council is expected to strike a balance in its approach when seeking, for example, to bring empty homes back into occupation.
- 4.7 There are a number of partners who work together to address the circumstances set out here. They include: Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) West Midlands Kick Start (WMKS) Partnership – Independent Financial Advisors, Street UK (fund manager), Age Concern Warwickshire (Home Safety Check Scheme and Handy-person) Warwickshire County Council, Supporting People (SP) and Adult Health and Care Services PHILLIS – low level home support and advice, First Stop Warwickshire, Warm Front; Citizens Advice Bureau.

5 Report Implications

5.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 5.1.1 The budget available for private housing assistance is £160,000 in 2010-2011. It is £65,000 in 2011-2012.
- 5.1.2 The Council's policy principles in this work aim to give assistance to private owners with a mix of loans, grants and external funds to meet their needs.

5.2 Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2.1 Grants for private housing assistance are no longer mandatory. However the Council has a duty to assess and act to local housing conditions. The interventions set out here act alongside enforcement powers to enable the Council to carry out its duties.

5.3 Environment and Sustainability Implications

- 5.3.1 Unfit properties which may be boarded up can degrade an area or an estate. Interventions can improve an area.

5.4 Risk Management Implications

- 5.4.1 This is not a major policy change but sets out more formally than before how the Council will act when it receives a request for assistance.

The Contact Officer for this report is David Baxendale (719322)

Background Papers

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

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

Appendix 1

Private Sector Housing Assistance – Proposed Policy Principles

1 The types and extent of works considered

Preferable/primary

- The removal of category 1 HHSRS hazards, with the most serious and high scoring hazards prioritised - as per DCLG guidance on the Housing Act 2004, especially for tenants and the vulnerable in line with our enforcement policy
- Addressing other failures of the decent homes standard (beyond HHSRS) in the following priority order; 1. thermal comfort, 2. reasonable state of repair and modern facilities - ditto as DCLG
- Addressing fuel poverty by means of additional insulation, controls and sustainable heating systems or energy sources
- Disabled adaptations not covered by mandatory DFG including relocation Bringing empty homes to occupation via market, rent, leasing (with repair or not) or otherwise (enforcement via various measures including Housing Act, Public Health Acts, Building Act, Planning section 215 intervention, Empty Dwelling Management Orders, enforced sale and compulsory purchase).
- Reduced climate impact through heating, controls, insulation and adaptation to the effects of climate change.

Desirable works

- Replacing all windows to achieve standard appearance and specification even if all are not defective,
- Rewiring and re-flooring the kitchen at the same time as fitting new kitchen units
- Upgrading energy performance beyond thermal comfort standard
- Improving accessibility (e.g. including installing a shower) to bathrooms, kitchens, front doors, at the same time as other works to these areas, even if not required by an Occupational Therapist)

Exclusions - works which WMKS and Council funding will not pay for

- Creation of garage/parking space except where mobility is an issue for disabled client/resident
- Creation of storage space except for medical requirement or disabled aids
- Extensions to properties (including loft and garage conversions) except to alleviate statutory overcrowding
- (Re)decoration, except where arising out of other loan/grant funded works or disturbed by such works (£500 maximum)
- Fitted carpets, laminate, tiled or floating floors / similar, wardrobes and other furnishing items, except as for decoration (above)
- Conservatories, except to replace existing in disrepair and replacement is most appropriate option

- Repairs resulting from occupant's malicious damage or willful / reckless negligence
- Any desirable works where the owner is choosing to ignore higher priority works
- Any subsequent application for a loan within 5 years of the completion of original (loan / grant assisted) works

2 The range of loan products:

(These will be detailed in an appendix.) *The policy may also refer clients to High Street commercial loan providers and the Home Improvement Trust for third-party loans. WMKS is the ***lender of last resort***. Where clients can access other financial resources first, such as Warm Front, then they will be required to do so and this policy will consider top-up assistance.

3 Costs of delivering the service:

The services will be delivered by the partnership. Members will be responsible for their own operating costs save for any agreements relating to WMKS delivery funding and agency fees etc.

NBBC employ professional, technical, caseworker and administrative staff directly and within the Home Improvement Agency, which is part funded by client's fees, part by Supporting People, part by WMKS delivery funding and part by NWBC.

NWBC employ a similar range of skills from within its own funds, through capital support for a project worker, and through WMKS delivery funding.

NWBC will fund land registry fees for those properties being processed for WMKS financial assistance. Valuations and solicitors fees may be paid by the client, or by WMKS/partners subject to their terms and conditions, or may be added to any loan.

4 Lending values:

WMKS loans will be subject to a minimum value of £2000 and a maximum value of £30,000* per property. A 10% contingency will be included for unforeseen works. This can be discounted if unused at the completion of works.

Loans secured against properties will depend on the residual equity and the value and terms of any secured debt. Generally, loans will not exceed 50% of debt free equity, subject to the maximum as stated above.

Clients may not secure further debts or loans against the property in preference to the WMKS loan charge, without the Council's express written permission.

5 Policy of redemptions (re-paid loans):

WMKS loans must be repaid in full, with any interest (if applicable) on the sale or transfer of title of the subject property or on breach of any condition. WMKS loans may be repaid early in full or by agreed installments by agreement with the Council and subject to an administration fee.

6 Performance Management of the policy, including complaints and appeals:

(Key performance indicators will be set out in an appendix.) The Council will use the corporate complaints procedure to deal with any complaints. In order to deal with discretionary or exceptional matters the Assistant Director (Housing), Environmental Health Manager and the case worker(s) will consider the circumstances of the case.

7 Other services

To offer a holistic service, the following complimentary activities will be offered via the Home Improvement Agency the Council or its partners as appropriate;

- Home safety check (including handyperson services, fire safety and home security) - Age Concern Warwickshire, 01827 717172
- Benefits check and debt advice – Citizens Advice Bureau
- PHILLIS (Promoting Health and Independence through Low Level Integrated Support) - 01926 731142
- Technical advice on repairs and home maintenance planning - via the Council, 01827 715341
- Project management - via the Council, 01827 715341
- Reputable builders list - via the Home Improvement Agency 02476 376376
- Housing options and relocation support - via the Council, 01827 715341
- Enforcement - where category 1 HHSRS hazards exist and the landlord declines to address them, or in exceptional cases the owner/occupier or repairing tenant, as per the Council's enforcement policy and protocol

8 Private Landlords

Landlords will be expected to meet their statutory obligations to address HHSRS failings, especially category 1 hazards. 'Repairing tenants' will be treated as owner-occupiers. Landlords may be supported to achieve outcomes beyond or outside of HHSRS obligations as resources permit. Tenants will be protected with the available enforcement tools and encouraged to resolve issues in cooperation with their landlord and via their own civil opportunities such as the Landlord and Tenant Act, statutory nuisance etc.

(Appendices to be attached)

- 1 Range of loan products and qualifying criteria
- 2 Key Performance Indicators - tba
- 3 Operational process notes - tba
- 4 List of addenda details/dates – tba)

North Warwickshire proposed housing assistance packages

Name	Range. £ **	Purpose	Household	Property	Delivery	Terms
Minor works grants* includes Warm Front top-up	200 - 2,000	Repairs etc. for removal of HHSRS category 1 hazards and <i>towards</i> decent homes standard.	Vulnerable* means tested benefits	Non decent	NWBC	Owned house min. 3 years, no repeat application in 5 yrs.
Small Repair Loans (unsecured)	200 - 2,000	Repairs etc. for removal of HHSRS category 1 hazards and <i>towards</i> decent homes standard.	Vulnerable <i>with some disposable income</i>	Non decent	WMKS / partners	Can be in addition to Minor Works Grant
Repair Loans (secured)	3,000 - 30,000	Repairs etc. for removal of HHSRS category 1 hazards and <i>towards</i> decent homes standard.	Vulnerable	Non decent	WMKS / partners	Can be in addition to Minor Works Grant / Small Repair Loan
DFG Relocation / other (loan – charge on property or other)	500 - 30,000	For non mandatory DFG adaptation works, works in excess of maximum mandatory £30,000 grant*, unaffordable client contribution* and relocation. *excepting WCC grant/loan obligations	Any disabled DFG eligible but unable to borrow on market	Any	WCC / WMKS	In accordance with WMKS regulations
Empty Homes (rent) – 50% grant*	negotiable per property	To bring empty homes to rent (priority long term and for vulnerable residents)	Any owner / landlord, but to target those without finance and to accommodate vulnerable	Priority empty over 6 months	NWBC	Property leased to NWBC/RSL, 50% of repair costs & management recovered from rent
Empty Homes (sell) – loan / charge	negotiable per property	To bring empty homes to market (priority long term)	ditto	Priority empty over 6 months	NWBC	75% costs recovered from sale
Eco-homes Loan / charge	negotiable per property	To install sustainable energy (priority fuel poverty)	Priority fuel poor, others if resourced	Priority PV suitable for FIT*	NWBC	80 - 100% costs recovered from feed-in tariff over time.

Agenda Item No 10

Resources Board

11 October 2010

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

**Budgetary Control Report 2010/11
Period Ended 31 August 2010**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The report covers revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 August 2010. The 2010/11 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date, are given, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to this Board.

Recommendation to the Board

That the report be noted and that the Board requests any further information it feels would assist it in monitoring the budgets under the Board's control.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 Both Councillors' Bowden and Butcher have been consulted regarding this report. Any comments received will be reported verbally to the Board.

3 Report

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Under the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice (BVACOP), services should be charged with the total cost of providing the service, which not only includes costs and income directly incurred, but also support costs relating to such areas as finance, office accommodation, telephone costs and IT services.

- 3.1.2 Therefore, to comply with this requirement, the budgets reporting to this Board fall into two categories – services where the costs incurred are recharged to other services and Boards, and those services where costs remain within Resources Boards – and are reported separately within this report.

4 Services Remaining Within Resources Board

4.1 Overall Position

4.1.1 The total expenditure for those services that remain within Resources Board as at 31 August 2010 is £1,672,036, compared with a profiled budgetary position of £1,788,502; an under-spend of £116,466 for the period. Appendix A to this report provides details of the profiled and actual position for each service reporting to this Board, together with the variance for the period. Where possible, the year-to-date budget figures have been calculated with some allowance for seasonal variations, in order to give a better comparison with actual figures. Reasons for the variations are given, where appropriate, in more detail below:

4.2 Democratic Process

4.2.1 Spend relating to members expenses is approximately £5,800 under budget at this stage. The principle reason for this is that the budget assumes pay inflation of 1.5% and actual increases are not expected, although this has yet to be determined. The remaining variation relates to member training which has yet to take place and telephone charges which are lower than anticipated.

4.3 Council Tax Collection

4.3.1 There are underspends within legal costs and bailiffs due in part to legal costs now only being paid where cases are lost. If cases are won then costs are reclaimed from the other party.

4.4 Corporate and Democratic Core

4.4.1 There is a rebate relating to audit fees of £7,060. This rebate is a contribution to the estimated 6% rise in audit fees as a result of the implementation of IFRS. No invoices for audit fees have been paid to date to Price Waterhouse Coopers LLP.

4.5 Innage Park Industrial Estate

4.5.1 Lease payments to the landlord are currently below budget as no annual increase has been applied to the lease which was anticipated when the budget was set. Increases are usually applied from April each year but this has not materialised to date this year.

4.6 Public Conveniences

4.6.1 The budget had assumed replacement of the facilities at Polesworth in the early part of this year. The budget includes demolition costs and a full year lease rental of a new convenience. Replacement is now expected in late 2010 or early 2011 so there will only be part year lease costs in the current year.

4.7 Rent Allowances

4.7.1 The variance within this budget relates to increases in recovery of Housing Benefits overpayments.

4.8 Concessionary Fares

4.8.1 Built into the budget is provision for possible payments relating to previous years. There is an ongoing discussion with travel companies at the moment and the likely outcome is that there will be a sizeable under-spend on this budget in 2010/11.

4.9 Car Parks

4.9.1 Non Domestic Rates payable on car parks is £5,990 above budget. Budget provision for one car park had not been included in the original estimate.

5 Services Recharged to Other Directorates and Services

5.1 Overall Position

5.1.1 Net expenditure for those services that are recharged to other Directorates and Services, as at 31 August 2010, is £131,442, compared with a profiled budgetary position of £284,888; an under-spend of £153,446 for the period. Appendix B to the report gives the profiled and actual positions for the period for each service, together with the variance. Where possible, the year-to-date budget figures have been calculated with some allowance for seasonal variations, in order to give a better comparison with actual figures. Reasons for the variations are given, where appropriate, in more detail below.

...

5.2 Directorate Budgets

5.2.1 The Council's budget requirement for 2010/11 assumed that there would be salary vacancy savings in the year of £80,000, and this was included as a central amount. The central vacancy factor has been added into the budget columns shown in Appendix B, to enable easier comparison with the actual position. Current vacancy levels within the Directorates mean that we are on target at the current time, taking into account the use of temporary and agency staff to cover key duties and any recruitment costs resulting from these vacancies, and excluding vacancies that relate to the Housing Revenue Account.

5.2.2 The main vacancies occur within Commercial Enforcement and Licensing, Housing Direct Works (HRA) and Internal Audit. There are also underspends arising from the recent restructuring of senior management. Previously vacant posts within Leisure Centres, Financial Services and Human Resources have recently been filled. A summary of the position contributing to the central vacancy factor is shown below:

	Total £
Current agency staff variance	10,696
Current salaries underspend (less pay award)	(78,688)
TOTAL	(67,992)

5.2.3 Other significant variances include under-spends on photocopy charges, vehicle repair materials, computer hardware maintenance, franking costs and contingencies. The only significant over-spend currently relates to an increase in Non Domestic Rates payable on the Council offices.

5.2.4 In addition to the variances identified above there is £39,664 relating to there being a zero pay award in the current year.

6 Performance Indicators

6.1 In addition to the financial information provided to this Board, when the budgets were set in February, performance indicators were included as a means of putting the financial position into context. These are shown at Appendix C.

7 Risks to the Budget

7.1 A number of key risks to the budgetary position of the Council from services under the control of this Board were identified when the budget was set in February.

7.2 The key risks to the budgetary position of the Council from services under the control of this Board include:

7.3 A change in rental income at industrial estates through changes to vacancy levels and the added effect of the obligation for the Council to pay the Non Domestic Rates of these units was identified as a risk. Overall income is currently at budgeted levels although it should be noted that the budget assumed a high number of vacant units, especially at Innage Park.

7.4 The costs of managing absence, for example occupational health costs and cover by agency staff. Occupational health costs are currently running below the profiled budget provision whilst agency staff is over budget but in all cases covered by salary underspends in the relevant departments.

7.5 Changes to economic circumstances that require increases in the Authority's contribution levels to the pension scheme, which are above previous forecasts. Ongoing turmoil in financial markets may impact on this but it is far too early for an impact to be quantified.

- 7.6 Increasing costs of maintaining mechanical equipment within the Council offices. As core mechanical elements of the building, such as the lift or the automatic entrance doors, continue to age, the likelihood of breakdown increases. At the moment expenditure is at a level at or below budget in most areas.
- 7.7 The possible need to 'buy in' professional services to cover some work that cannot be met by the current staffing levels. However, it is likely that any such costs would be met from the salary under-spend within the relevant division.
- 7.8 The assumption has been made that the purchase of new refuse vehicles will result in lower repairs costs. The vehicle repairs budget includes provision for a reasonable level of wear and tear but any excess damages would put a strain on this budget.
- 7.9 Potential increases in vehicle fuel and utilities such as gas and electricity. Over the last 12 months there appears to have been some stability in vehicle fuel prices although price increases may well be seen in the future. Significant changes to the price of vehicle fuel will be monitored and reported should they occur. Regarding utility costs, this Authority has recently renegotiated many of its gas and electricity tariffs which have resulted in reduced bills, again, any changes will be reported back together with any likely impact on the financial position.
- 7.10 The increase in numbers of claimants for benefits could increase the council's costs. Whilst most of the costs are covered by Subsidy, approximately 98%, the council would still have to find the balance.

8 Estimated Out-turn

- 8.1 Members have requested that Budgetary Control Reports provide details on the likely out-turn position for each of the services reporting to this Board. The anticipated out-turn for this Board for 2010/11 is £4,093,410 as detailed in the table below: -

	£
Approved budget 2010/2011	4,444,130
Increase in Non Domestic Rates	8,000
Zero pay award for Members 2010/11	(3,450)
Saving on lease payment re Polesworth Public Conveniences	(16,370)
Greater recovery of Benefit Overpayments	(71,000)
Potential reduction in concessionary fare payments	(74,000)
2011/12 savings found early	(94,000)
Zero pay award for 2010/2011	(99,900)
Expected Out-turn 2010/11	4,093,410

9 Report Implications

9.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

9.1.1 The Council's budgeted contribution to General Fund balances for the 2010/2011 financial year is £17,310. The current expected contribution to balances for 2010/11 is £255,630, an increase of £238,320 from expected reductions in Board expenditure within this board and elsewhere. Income and Expenditure will continue to be closely managed and any issues that arise will be reported to this Board at future meetings.

9.2 Environment and Sustainability Implications

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

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

Background Papers

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

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

North Warwickshire Borough Council
RESOURCES BOARD (REMAINING)
Budgetary Control Report 2010/11 as at 31 August 2010

Code	Description	Original Budget 2010/2011	Profiled Budget to Aug 2010	Actual to end Aug 2010	Variance to Date	Comments
3000	Democratic Process	771,460	327,325	312,399	(14,926)	Paragraph 4.2
3001	Election Expenses	24,320	9,996	12,354	2,358	
3002	Register of Electors	47,890	14,793	13,773	(1,020)	
3003	Non Domestic Rates	39,030	60,425	56,648	(3,777)	
3004	Council Tax Collection	242,880	97,172	89,743	(7,428)	Paragraph 4.3
3049	Investors in People	14,460	5,221	5,221	-	
3050	Finance Miscellaneous	830	333	(49)	(382)	
3051	Compensation & Pension	117,320	36,572	34,484	(2,088)	
3053	Minor Works	5,510	2,296	363	(1,933)	
3054	Electricity at Work	25,610	6,319	4,689	(1,630)	
3057	Best Value and Gershon	60,330	24,163	24,163	-	
3059	Finance Unused Land	470	196	196	-	
3060	Corporate and Democratic Core	834,910	289,292	278,719	(10,573)	Paragraph 4.4
3061	Unallocated Central Support Services	202,220	48,947	48,628	(319)	
3062	External Funding Consultants	4,410	1,838	4,900	3,063	
3065	Coleshill Shops and Flats	(63,160)	(26,400)	(25,365)	1,035	
3066	The Arcade	1,840	(8,310)	(8,131)	179	
3067	The Pavilions, Holly Lane	(58,150)	(30,117)	(30,979)	(862)	
3068	Carlyon Road Industrial Estate	(109,600)	(51,627)	(52,585)	(957)	
3069	Innage Park Industrial Estate	59,320	21,215	14,115	(7,100)	Paragraph 4.5
3070	Polesworth Workspace Units	(3,700)	(3,598)	(4,178)	(580)	
3079	The Bear and Ragged Staff	(12,260)	(5,371)	(5,371)	-	
3080	Football Stadium	390	162	162	-	
3084	Homeless Persons	64,080	8,482	8,482	(0)	
3089	Public Conveniences	106,450	53,952	49,997	(3,955)	Paragraph 4.6
3090	Fillongley Kitchens	1,590	517	517	-	
3094	Customer Contact	160,450	50,001	48,105	(1,896)	
3097	Rent Allowances	152,140	62,083	38,594	(23,489)	Paragraph 4.7
3098	Rent Rebates	86,140	34,637	33,750	(887)	
3099	Concessionary Fares	462,240	207,344	165,442	(41,903)	Paragraph 4.8
3100	Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief	24,190	850	850	-	
3101	Council Tax Benefits	149,300	58,264	57,598	(666)	
3102	Car Parks	52,830	31,064	34,973	3,908	Paragraph 4.9
3106	Business Improvement District	1,010	421	421	-	
3109	Environmental Sustainability	3,560	1,483	1,483	-	
5008	Private Sector Housing Assistance	207,590	27,604	27,649	45	
5035	CCTV	111,060	33,295	34,070	775	
5036	Community Support	559,820	212,500	211,076	(1,424)	
7360	North Warwickshire Leader (External)	18,400	7,656	7,656	-	
7750	Narrowing the Gap (External)	-	-	-	-	
7760	Branch Out Bus (External)	15,640	58,121	58,121	-	
7800	North Arden Heritage Trail (External)	14,840	119,385	119,352	(33)	
	TOTALS	4,397,660	1,788,502	1,672,036	(116,466)	

APPENDIX B

North Warwickshire Borough Council
RESOURCES BOARD (RECHARGED)
Budgetary Control Report 2010/11 as at 31 August 2010

Description	Original Budget 2009/2010	Profiled Budget to Aug 2010	Actual to end Aug 2010	Variance to Date	Comments
Building Maintenance Fund	-	-	-	-	
Council Offices	-	45,635	46,275	640	
Central Telephones	-	442	(2,199)	(2,641)	
Recruitment	-	-	-	-	
Printing and Copying	-	(2,562)	(1,798)	764	
Training	-	-	-	-	
Depot and Stores	-	8,847	10,210	1,363	
Postage and Franking	-	-	(126)	(126)	
Chief Executive Directorate	7,890	39,992	18,660	(21,332)	
Deputy Chief Executive	11,340	87,464	(33,567)	(121,031)	
Corporate Services	12,420	138,403	106,039	(32,364)	
Transport	-	-	(12,052)	(12,052)	
TOTALS	31,650	318,221	131,442	(186,779)	
Central Vacancy Factor	(80,000)	(33,333)	-	33,333	
TOTALS	(48,350)	284,888	131,442	(153,446)	

Appendix C

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for budgets reporting to the Resources Board

	Budgeted Performance	Profiled Budgeted Performance	Actual Performance to Date
Registration of Electors			
Cost per elector for the Electoral Register	£0.96	£0.30	£0.28
Non Domestic Rates			
% of NDR Collection Rate	99.50%	49.75%	50.10%
Cost Per NDR Property	£18.59	£28.77	£26.48
Council Tax Collection			
% of Council Tax Collection Tax	98.50%	49.25%	49.17%
Cost Per Household	£9.18	£3.67	£3.35
Coleshill Shops and Flats			
Occupancy Rate	100%	100%	100%
Annual Income Per Shop	£8,540	£3,938	£4,083
The Arcade			
Occupancy Rate	33%	33%	36%
Annual Income Per Unit	£1,402	£1,115	£1,250
The Pavilions			
Occupancy Rate	88%	88%	88%
Annual Income Per Unit	£8,803	£4,464	£4,357
Carlyon Road Industrial Estate			
Occupancy Rate	100%	100%	100%
Annual Income Per Unit	£14,571	£6,656	£6,767
Innage Park Industrial Estate			
Occupancy Rate	51%	51%	51%
Annual Income Per Unit	£3,041	£1,530	£1,477
Polesworth Workspaces			
Occupancy Rate	100%	100%	100%
Annual Income Per Unit	£1,468	£829	£881
Rent Allowances			
Rent Allowances Per Claimant	£4,047.33	£1,686.39	£1,819.20
Cost of Administration Per Claimant	£87.49	£35.70	£22.66
Rent Rebates			
Rent Rebates Per Claimant	£3,541.92	£1,475.80	£1,408.40
Cost of Administration Per Claimant	£54.01	£21.72	£19.88
Council Tax Benefits			
Council Tax Benefits Per Claimant	£917.20	£903.08	£845.73
Cost of Administration Per Claimant	£29.47	£11.50	£10.71

Agenda Item No 11

Resources Board

11 October 2010

**Report of the
Assistant Director (Corporate Services)**

Changes to Local Land Charges

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report is to update Members on the recent changes to legislation effecting the Local Land Charges service and budgets.

Recommendation to the Board

That the report be noted.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 This report has been forwarded to the Resources Board Portfolio Holders for their comments.

3 Background

- 3.1 There have been many changes to Local Land Charges and the legislation surrounding the service over recent years, most notably the introductions of Home Information Packs in 2007 (HIPS).
- 3.2 The Government was trying to create what it termed a “level playing field” between Local Authority Local Land Charges services and the private sector “Personal Search” companies.
- 3.3 As part of creating this level playing field the Personal Search fee was increased from £11 to £22 from 1 January 2010, at which point Members may recall that a report was presented to base our Local Land Charges fees on cost recovery.

3.4 The Government has now abolished the £22 fee for a Personal Search on the basis that the information accessed falls under the Environmental Information Regulations (2004), which states that that the information should be accessible free of charge; and hence the Personal Fee is in direct contention with EIR(2004).

3.5 The Government is also expected to announce that all information required to complete a full search (Con29 Pt1 and LLC1) should be accessible free of charge under EIR (2004).

4 The Position

4.1 The statutory instrument (SI 2010 No.1812) to abolish the current £22 Personal Search fee came into force on 17 August 2010, although we stopped charging on 3 August 2010, as advised.

4.2 It is difficult to accurately predict how the removal of the Personal Search fee will affect us since the number of Personal Searches being undertaken has dropped significantly over the past year due to the depressed housing market, and more so since the abolition of Home Information Packs in March 2010, all we can say is that we budgeted for £9000 income from PS in the current financial year which we will now fail to achieve.

4.3 Any resurgence of the Personal Search industry will undoubtedly reduce our share of the Search market and as such would further impact our budgets through a reduction of income for Official Searches.

4.4 Even though the information for a Personal Search is now available free of charge, we still have a responsibility to maintain the Local Land Charges Register and therefore the cost of providing the service remains.

4.5 EIR (2004) says that we should provide access to the information as soon as possible, but within 20 working days. We have extended the access time from 48hours to 5 full working days to fall in line with the time taken to process an Official Search.

4.6 The Local Land Charges officer has been tasked with continuing with the electronic capture of our paper Land Charges Register, to facilitate easier access in the future.

4.7 We will be writing to Government to express our views on the change, and to seek further clarification.

5 Refunds

- 5.1 Where a fee has been wrongly charged since 1 January 2005, we have also been advised by Central Government to consider bringing the potential refund to the attention of those who have been wrongfully charged. We are also advised that the measures taken should be proportional to the sum of the refund.
- 5.2 In relation to refunds for personal searches to date, each authority has been advised to consider any claims made based on the facts of each individual case. In the case of fees paid by firms of personal searchers these fees have been passed on to their customers, therefore we do not see how the Personal Search company will have suffered any loss, and any refund would constitute enrichment. We therefore have no plans to offer refunds to property search companies.
- 5.3 The LGA is seeking clarification on refunds from DEFRA.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 6.1.1 Loss of the budgeted income for Personal Searches and possibly the further loss of income via a reduction in the number of Official Searches received.
- 6.1.2 There is the potential cost of refunds, although unlikely, should we be challenged.

6.2 Equalities Implications

- 6.2.1 The Council is required to provide equal levels of service to all customers, and continues to do so by allowing free access to records for Personal Searchers.

6.3 Links to Council's Priorities

- 6.3.1 To maintain Quality Service Provision inline with current legislation SI 2010 No.1812 was implemented immediately to avoid legal challenge.

The Contact Officer for this report is Andy Cooper (719432).

Background Papers

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

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

Agenda Item No 12

Resources Board

11 October 2010

Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources)

Consolidated Budgetary Control Report 2010/11 - Period Ended 31 August 2010

1 Summary

- 1.1 The report covers total Council General Fund revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 August 2010.

Recommendation to the Board

That the report be noted and that the Board requests any further information it feels would assist it in monitoring the budgets under the Board's control.

2 Consultation

2.1 Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and Ward Members

- 2.1.1 Both Councillor Bowden and Councillor Butcher have been consulted regarding this report. Any comments received will be reported verbally to the Board.

3 Board Report

3.1 Overall Position

- 3.1.1 The actual level of Board expenditure for the period to 31 August 2010 is £4,476,446 compared with a profiled budgetary position of £4,796,378; an under-spend of £319,932 for the period. Appendix A provides an analysis of Board expenditure and the overall position for the Council for this period.

...

- 3.1.2 As well as expenditure directly attributable to services, and included in the Board totals, there are a number of other amounts that need to be taken into account that provide the total net expenditure for the Council. This includes investment income, external interest payments and adjustments to reverse capital charges included within Board expenditure, from out of Council expenditure. Taking these amounts into account, net expenditure for the Council to the end of August totals £4,128,227, compared with a profiled position of £4,453,663, resulting in an under-spend for the period of £325,436.

3.1.3 Where possible, the budget profile figures have been calculated with some allowance for seasonal variations, in order to give a better comparison with actual figures. Reasons for the variations are given, where appropriate, in more detail below:

4 **Board Expenditure**

4.1 **Executive Board** – Grant of £8,418 has been received from the government to cover new burdens set out in the Habitat Regulation Assessments and Climate Change Policy Statement. The grant was awarded after the budget had been set.

4.2 **Planning and Development Board** - Income on Development Control is behind target by £22,191. This has been partially offset by a reduction in professional services of £7,110. However, the expected planning application for the Ocado scheme is likely to be submitted very shortly, which should reduce the shortfall in income.

4.3 **Community and Environment Board** – There are currently under-spends on employee related expenditure for Leisure Centres, Grounds Maintenance, Amenity Cleaning and Refuse DSO's due to staff vacancies and lower than anticipated cover for holiday and sickness at this stage in the year. This is partially offset by increased employee costs within Recycling. Spend that had been earmarked for the Playbuilders Scheme has been put on hold due to the recent government review on the scheme. There are general under spends on grants within Corporate Policy and Rural Regeneration. Income from Trade Waste is below budget, as most of this income is received at the beginning of the year and is likely to remain the position for the rest of the year.

4.4 **Resources Board**

4.4.1 **Recharged to Services** – The non payment of the pay award accounts for an £52,080 under-spend, whilst there are a number of posts that have become vacant since the budget was set and are now unfilled. Some of these posts have also been frozen. There are also notable under-spends against photocopy charges, vehicle repairs, computer hardware maintenance and postage and franking. Set against this there is an increase in Non Domestic Rates payable on council offices and the depot.

4.4.2 **Remaining** – Within Corporate and Democratic Core there is a rebate of £7,060 relating to audit fees. This is a contribution towards the additional audit costs of implementing IFRS. The Concessionary Fares budget had built into it an amount to cover possible claims by travel companies for prior year travel costs. It now looks unlikely that this budget will be called upon. There is an under spend on members expenses and training, a saving due to the delay in replacement of the public conveniences in Polesworth and no annual increase in the lease payment on phase 2 of Innage Park as expected when the budget was set. In addition the recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments in higher than expected. These have been offset by an increase in Non Domestic Rates charged against Car Parks due to the omission of budget for one car park.

5 Risks to the Budget

5.1 In setting the budget in February 2010, a number of key risks to the overall budgetary position of the Council are highlighted below: -

- Changes to the expected cash flow of the Authority, leading to an increase or decrease in investment income.
- A vacancy factor of £80,000 has been included within the overall estimate. The current vacancy factor is above the profiled budget.
- A reduction in expected income will increase the costs to the Council. Currently Planning Control Fees and Leisure Centres (overall) are below budget. This is something that needs monitoring to determine whether this is a temporary downturn or something more permanent.
- Council expenditure on housing benefit is significant, although the majority is recouped through grant. A dip in performance in this area could reduce the grant able to be reclaimed, also the level of recovery of overpayments. Costs in this area are increasing and will be closely monitored.
- Transport fuel and utilities prices have seen significant fluctuations over recent times, and this is still a possibility. However, the Authority has renegotiated many of the electricity and gas contracts and this has helped in eliminating some of the uncertainty.
- Income related to economic activity within the Borough is an area that may cause some concern. Budgets that may be affected include Trade Refuse, Cesspool Emptying, Licensing, Industrial Units and Leisure Facilities. A reduction of just 1% in the collection of income from fees and charges increases the costs of the Council by £19,280.
- In addition to reduction in Industrial Units income, the NDR exempt period on vacant commercial properties is only a temporary measure, so any prolonged vacancies will impact directly on the Council's costs.
- The economic situation could also impact on other Council services such as Homelessness, with increased demand leading to additional expenditure.
- The Council is promoting recycling activities across the Borough. If take up increases significantly, this could add to the costs of the service.
- Limited budgetary provision is available for one off spending on areas such as public enquiries on planning, unadopted roads and contaminated land issues.

- In addition to these, the Borough may be affected by decisions taken to cease or reduce some service specific grants from central government in light of the need to cut public sector spending. The Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) expected will no longer be received and this will need to be reflected in the budgets of the authority. Swimming grant ceased from the end of July, however it is hoped that the reinstatement of charging will cover this loss of income.

6 Estimated Out-turn

- 6.1 Members have requested that Budgetary Control Reports provide details on the likely out-turn position for each of the services reporting to this Board. The anticipated out-turn for this Board for 2010/11 is £10,515,140 as detailed in the table below: -

	£
Approved budget 2010/2011	10,753,460
Increase in Non Domestic Rates	8,000
Loss of Income - Trade Refuse	8,500
Loss of Income - Planning Fees	25,000
Increase in Minimum Revenue Provision	25,000
Provision for West Midlands Leader Organisation costs	60,000
Loss of Housing Planning Delivery Grant	61,000
Zero pay award for Members 2010/11	(3,450)
Saving on lease payment re Polesworth Public Conveniences	(16,370)
Additional Investment Income	(20,000)
Greater recovery of Benefit Overpayments	(71,000)
Potential reduction in concessionary fare payments	(74,000)
2011/12 savings found early	(116,000)
Possible saving if a 0% pay award occurs (this has not been accepted by the unions)	(125,000)
Expected Out-turn 2010/11	10,515,140

- 6.2 The figures provided above are based on information available at this time of the year and are the best available estimates for this Board, and may change as the financial year progresses. Members will be updated in future reports of any changes to the forecast out turn.

7 Report Implications

7.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 7.1.1 The Council's budgeted contribution to General Fund balances for the 2010/2011 financial year is £17,310. As can be seen above, a reduction in net expenditure of £238,320 is expected to date. The position will continue to be monitored closely and reported to Members at a future meeting of this Board.

- 7.1.2 Income and Expenditure will continue to be closely managed and any issues that arise will be reported to this Board for comment.

7.2 Environment and Sustainability Implications

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

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

Background Papers

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

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Consolidated Budgetary Position for the Period 31 August 2010

Board	2010/11 Original Budget	Expected Spending August	Actual Spending August	Variance
Executive	503,130	219,693	209,966	(9,727)
Planning and Development	496,670	274,532	285,707	11,175
Licensing Committee	35,690	19,379	19,719	340
Community and Environment	5,576,750	2,209,384	2,157,576	(51,808)
Resources (including staff vacancies)	4,116,370	2,073,390	1,803,478	(269,912)
Net Board Expenditure	10,728,610	4,796,378	4,476,446	(319,932)
Contingencies	24,850	-	-	-
Net Board Expenditure	10,753,460	4,796,378	4,476,446	(319,932)
Investment Income	(100,000)	(35,068)	(40,572)	(5,504)
RCCO	130,000	54,167	54,167	-
Use of Balances	17,310	-	-	-
Financing Adjustment	(868,350)	(361,813)	(361,813)	-
Net Expenditure	9,932,420	4,453,663	4,128,227	(325,436)