WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL	**Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 13 March 2012**	**Agenda Item No. 6**

Title	Forward Plan
For further information about this report please contact	Graham Leach, Committee Services Officer, 01926 456114 or committee@warwickdc.gov.uk
Service Area	Members' Services
Wards of the District directly affected	N/A
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	February 2012
Background Papers	

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

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports *must* be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	**Date**	**Name**
Relevant Director		
Chief Executive		
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		
Legal		
Finance		
Portfolio Holders		
Consultation Undertaken		
n/a		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report informs the Committee of the current Forward Plan, attached at appendix 1 to the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 (i) the contents of the Forward Plan be noted; and

(ii) the Committee to identify any future Executive decisions to be made, or future policies to be adopted, which members wish to have an input into before the Executive take the decision, and either:

a) nominate one member to investigate that future decision/policy and report back to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, before the final report is submitted to the Executive.

b) request an officer report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, before the final report is submitted to the Executive.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Two of the five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government are to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of executive decisions and to feed into policy development.

3.2 If the Committee have an interest in a future decision to be made by the Executive, or policy to be implemented, it is within the Committees' remit to feed into these processes.

3.3 The Forward Plan is actually the future work programme for the Executive. If a non-executive member highlighted a decision(s) which is to be taken by the Executive which they would like to be involved in, that member(s) could then provide useful background to the Committee when the report is submitted to the Executive and they are passing comment on it.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The only alternative option is not to undertake these aspects of the overview and scrutiny function.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

5.1 All work for the Committee has to be carried out within existing resources. Therefore, there is a limit to the time available that officers will have to assist members, so the Committee may wish to prioritise areas of investigation.

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.1 The work carried out by the Committee helps the Council to improve in line with its priority to manage services openly efficiently and effectively.

7. **BACKGROUND**

7.1 There are five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government. These being:

- Holding to account
- Performance management
- Policy review
- Policy development
- External scrutiny

7.2 The pre-decision scrutiny of Executive decisions falls within the role of 'holding to account' and to feed into the pre-decision scrutiny of Executive decisions, the Committee need to examine the Council's Forward Plan and identify items which they would like to have an impact upon.

7.3 The Council's Forward Plan is published on a monthly basis and sets out the key decisions to be taken by the Council in the next twelve months. The Council only have a statutory duty to publish key decisions to be taken in the next four months. However, the Forward Plan was expanded to a twelve month period to give a clearer picture of how and when the Council will be making important decisions.

7.4 A key decision is a decision which has a significant impact or effect on two or more wards and/or a budgetary effect of £50,000 or more.

7.5 The Forward Plan also identifies non-key decisions to be made by the Council in the next twelve months, and the Committee, if it wishes, may also pre-scrutinise these decisions.

7.6 There may also be policies identified on the Forward Plan, either as key or non-key decisions, which the Committee could pre-scrutinise and have an impact upon how these are formulated.

7.7 As members are aware, the scrutiny process has been developing over the last few months and there has been good progress made with the Task and Finish Groups, and the structured setting of the agenda for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Therefore, it was felt that the pre-decision scrutiny of Executive decisions and policies were the next steps to develop.

7.8 The Committee should be mindful that any work they wish to undertake would need to be undertaken without the need to change the timescales as set out within the Forward Plan. The Forward Plan has also been recently amended to contain much more information and Committee may wish to give greater consideration to the reports in section 2 of appendix 1, to maximise the time available for them to input into the process.