

To: COUNCIL
18 JANUARY 2017

EXECUTIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL
The Leader

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Since the Council meeting on 30 November 2016, the Executive has met once on 13 December 2016. This report summarises decisions taken at that meeting by reference to the relevant portfolio within which they fall.
- 1.2 Updated Forward Plans are published every Friday and are available for public inspection at Easthampstead House in the usual way and online at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk. Full details on the decisions taken by individual portfolio holders can also be accessed online through the Council's website.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **Council is asked to consider the recommendations set out at paragraphs 5.1.2 and 5.3.3.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The reasons for recommendations are set out in the supporting information and in the reports considered by the Executive.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Alternative options are discussed in the relevant individual reports considered by the Executive.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Transformation and Finance

5.1 Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2019/20

- 5.1.1 The Executive approved for consultation a capital programme of £48.531m for 2017/18 which included:
- £1m for Invest-to-Save schemes
 - 0.942m funded from S106; and
 - £18.041m of externally funded expenditure
- 5.1.2 **The Executive recommends to Council the release of £190,000 capital funding in 2016/17 from the 2017/18 Capital Programme to fund the investment required at South Hill Park.**

- 5.1.3 In compiling the draft capital programme for 2017/18 – 2019/20 the main focus was inevitably on determining the requirements for 2017/18. The financial implications of the recommendations agreed by the Executive are reflected in the Council's draft revenue budget 2017/18 which were also agreed for consultation.
- 5.1.4 The proposed programme for 2017/18 will be funded by a combination of Government grants, other external contributions, borrowing and capital receipts. Historically capital receipts have averaged around £5m per annum. However, with the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy and the forthcoming sale of the Sandy Lane land there is potential for a larger level of receipts in 2017/18, depending upon the timing of the Sandy Lane sale.
- 5.1.5 Within the overall financial framework, Service Departments have considered new schemes for inclusion within the Capital Programme for 2017/18 – 2019/20. Given that both capital and revenue resources are under severe pressure, each Department has evaluated and prioritised proposed schemes into the key categories within the Council's well established Asset Management Plan. Having done this, only the very highest priority schemes and programmes are being recommended for inclusion in the Capital Programme. Against this backdrop, important New Schemes include:

i) Town Centre

Following the conclusion of the Development Agreement with Bracknell Regeneration Partnership (BRP) in 2015 the Council set out its own planned investment on wider Town Centre infrastructure as part of the 2015/16 Capital Programme. These investment plans follow through 2016/17 and into 2017/18. In addition to facilitating wider traffic movement, the additional expenditure in 2017/18 will help maximise the positive experience of visiting the regenerated town centre. Whilst the items have a much wider impact than the new development itself, the expenditure needs to be co-ordinated with the specific work that BRP are planning to carry out to minimise disruption over a prolonged period.

ii) Commercial Investment Strategy

The Council's Efficiency Plan 2016 – 2020, approved by Council on 14 September 2016 demonstrates how the Council will achieve balanced and sustainable budgets throughout the period of the four year settlement. A key element of the plan is a Commercial Property Investment Strategy (as outlined in the Report to 16 November Executive) designed to deliver additional income of £1m in 2017/18 with a further £1m in each 2018/19 and 2019/20. At an average net yield of 5% per annum this will require the Council to invest £20m per annum in commercial property during 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

iii) South Hill Park

An investment of £190,000 is proposed in advance of the 2017/18 programme to secure ongoing annual reductions of £100,000 in the grant aid provided to South Hill Park Trust. The investment will create a new wedding venue, refurbish all toilets and upgrade kitchens. As a standalone investment the planned work will improve the building which ultimately belongs to the Council and this is recommended to Council.

5.2 General Fund Revenue Budget 2017/18

- 5.2.1 The Executive agreed draft revenue budget proposals for 2017/18 as the basis for consultation with the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and other interested parties. All comments received on the proposals will be submitted to the Executive on 14

February 2017. This will allow the Executive to determine its final budget package and recommend the appropriate Council Tax level to Council.

5.2.2 The Executive also agreed:

- i) the Treasury Management Strategy and associated documents and requested that the Governance and Audit Committee review each of the key elements.
- ii) that the 2017/18 Schools Budget be set at the eventual level of grant income plus any accumulated balances, with the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning authorised to make amendments and agree budgets for schools and services centrally managed by the Council; and
- iii) approved the virements relating to the 2016/17 budget as set out in Annexes F and G of the Executive report and recommended those that are over £0.100m be approved by Council.

5.2.3 Initial preparations for the annual revenue budget always focus on the Commitment Budget. This brings together the Council's existing expenditure plans, taking account of approved commitments and the ongoing effects of service developments and efficiencies that were agreed when the 2016/17 budget was set.

5.2.4 A number of changes are proposed to the Commitment Budget since it was last considered by the Executive in July. The most significant are:

- The significant in-year savings agreed in February by the Council as part of the transformation programme have been delivered and are now incorporated (-£3.397m relating to 2016/17 and -£0.620m to 2017/18).
- Additional Business Rates income from the regeneration of the Town Centre (-£0.750m) is included for 2018/19 onwards.
- The projection for the Minimum Revenue Provision now incorporates the latest forecast for capital spend and receipts and the use of an annuity basis rather than equal instalments basis for calculating the element of the charge based on asset life (-£0.371m).
- Updated Waste Disposal projections based on the latest tonnages and recycling data (-£0.357m).
- Interest on external borrowing now reflects the latest information on cash balances (£0.400m). This is not a new item but was previously reflected under additional capital programme costs rather than the Commitment Budget in the budget model.

The overall impact of these changes is to decrease the Council's Commitment Budget by £5.107m compared to the position reported in July 2016. This marks a significant step in the programme to bring future spending down to sustainable levels that match future reduced levels central government support.

The full report considered by the Executive is attached as Appendix A.

Culture, Corporate Services & Public Protection

5.3 Local Council Tax Discount Scheme

5.3.1 The Executive has approved the introduction of a Council Tax Discount Scheme for working age households and referred these to full Council for adoption.

The Council's Annual Plan 2015-2019 includes the commitment that, "In targeting our services, we will prioritise people and areas with the greatest need, early help and prevention so struggling or vulnerable people can maximise their opportunities to become independent".

The proposed new Local Council Tax Discount Scheme specifically targets financial support to those who most need it whilst encouraging and rewarding employment and incentivising households to increase their earnings. It also simplifies administration.

5.3.2 As a result, the Executive recommends that the Local Council Tax Discount Scheme for working age households be introduced based on the following elements:

i) That all working age household income will be calculated on the same basis as the previous Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the purposes of establishing the discount, except that for self employed households the national living wage will be used rather than the national minimum wage.

ii) That Carers Allowance will be disregarded when calculating household income.

iii) That those working age households where the claimant or partner are receiving a disability benefit are placed into Band 1 and receive an 80% discount unless their household income is greater than £440 a week when they will not receive a discount at all.

iv) That 8 income bands are established with corresponding discounts as follows:

Band	Discount on Council Tax	Household income band £ per week
1- household in receipt of disability premium, severe disability premium and enhanced disability premium	80%	
2	75	£0-£80
3	70	£80.01-£140
4	60	£140.01-£200
5	50	£200.01-£260
6	40	£260.01-£320
7	30	£320.01-£380
8	20	£380.01-£440

5.3.3 The Executive recommends to Council:

- i) **to adopt the Local Council Tax Discount Scheme and the Local Council Tax Discount Summary Scheme at Appendix B of this Executive Report.**
- ii) **to delegate the operation of the Local Council Tax Discount Scheme to the Director of Adult Social Care, Health & Housing.**

5.3.4 The Executive also agreed that the Local Council Tax Discount Scheme be reviewed on an annual basis. The full report considered by the Executive is attached as Appendix B.

5.4 Transfer of 0.18ha approx. of Land adjacent to Bull Lane Car Park

- 5.4.1 The Executive agreed to dispose of 0.18ha of land at Wick Hill adjacent to Bull Lane Car Park, Bracknell on the terms set out in the exempt Executive report. This offer provides the Council with an opportunity for a capital receipt on land which otherwise is unlikely to be useable.

Adult Services, Health & Housing

5.5 Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Report on “A review of whether there is sufficient General Practitioner Capacity in Bracknell Forest to meet future demands”

- 5.5.1 The Executive commended the working group for the review it conducted and the helpful report it produced and fully endorsed two of the three recommendations set out in the report. It amended the third recommendation relating to provision of health facilities, preferring to focus efforts on identifying S106 opportunities rather than on CIL to help fund health facilities before also endorsing that.
- 5.5.2 The Executive noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group had spent considerable time on this review which has provided valuable insights into the increasing demands on GPs and Primary Care.

Council Strategy & Community Cohesion

5.6 Council Plan Overview Report

- 5.6.1 The Executive received the Chief Executive’s latest Council Plan Overview Report covering the second quarter of 2016/17 (July–September 2016). At the end of the quarter, 135 actions (82.3%) were on target to complete within the timescales set; 13 actions (7.9%) were at risk of falling behind schedule, 2 actions (1.2%) had fallen behind schedule and 14 actions had been completed (8.5%).
- 5.6.2 Progress against key performance indicators across the Council was also very positive, with 35 (81.4%) green – i.e. on, above or within 5% of target; 2 (4.6%) were amber – i.e. between 5% and 10% of target; and 6 (13.9%) were red – i.e. more than 10% from target.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor's comments have been addressed in the reports to the Executive.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The Borough Treasurer's comments have been addressed in the reports to the Executive.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 Equalities issues, where appropriate, have been addressed in the reports to the Executive.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 Any strategic risks have been identified in the reports to the Executive.

Background Papers

Executive Agenda – 13 December 2016

Contact for further information

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