

To: **COUNCIL**
26 APRIL 2017

EXECUTIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL
The Leader

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Since the Council meeting on 1 March 2017, the Executive has met twice on 14 March 2017 and 11 April 2017. This report summarises decisions taken at those meetings 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 note the Executive decisions detailed in this report taken since the last Council meeting on 1 March 2017.**

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 Customer Contact Strategy 2016-2019

- 5.1.1 The Executive agreed the new Customer Contact Strategy including action plans for delivery. This strategy will provide a clear direction of travel for the way the Council manages customer contact through to December 2020, following on from the good progress achieved in the delivery of the Customer Contact and Channel Strategies, since their introduction in 2011.
- 5.1.2 The 'new narrative' published in the Council Plan, acknowledges the significant financial pressures faced by the Council. It is vital that the new Customer Contact Strategy reflects this new narrative. Significant developments in the digital world since the previous strategy was agreed give an opportunity to rethink how we enable customers to interact with the Council.

- 5.1.3 This has resulted in a strong focus on delivering more digitally, and on developing a whole systems approach to dealing with customers with high level and complex needs. An important element in this is providing a common approach to all contact that also allows those requiring specialist support to access that support easily and quickly. The current approach was recently endorsed by a Transformation Programme Gateway Review.

5.2 Council Wide Support Services Transformation Project

- 5.2.1 The Executive endorsed the business case and agreed the implementation plan for the 'Do' phase of the Council Wide Support Services Review. Effective support services are essential to effective service delivery. However, to minimise the impact of financial constraints on front line services, the cost of support services need to be minimised.
- 5.2.2 The review covers: Finance (including Procurement), HR (including Learning and Development and Health and Safety), Property, ICT and Legal. Performance Management and Business Intelligence are subject to a separate review which is currently in the "Analyse" Phase.
- 5.2.3 There are 196 (176 fte) staff in scope. The project aims to achieve savings of at least 10% (£800,000) during the first two years of implementation (2017/18 and 2018/19). It is hoped that a further 20% saving can be achieved during years 3-5 when the Transformation programme is bedded in across the Council. A Target Operating Model has been developed which focusses on strategic enabling and support hubs with business partners ensuring service needs are central to the model.
- 5.2.4 Self service will be the default mode for managers and staff enabled by improved ICT systems and intranet support pages which formed a key part of the ICT strategy agreed in March. Staff for each function will be centralised and co-located. Functional centralisation is the most appropriate model to facilitate future shared services with other partners.
- 5.2.5 The new model has a number of benefits: it delivers savings now with further savings possible after two years; it's scalable with the changing size and shape of the Council to meet our changing requirements; it improves resilience by aggregating resource; it supports increased professionalism as staff can provide their expertise where it is needed across the Council; it delivers a consistent service across the Council; and it challenges existing ways of doing things and simplifies processes.

5.3 Civic Accommodation

- 5.3.1 The Executive approved the procurement plan for the contract to refurbish/remodel Time Square. This project will enable the Council to consolidate its property portfolio and to vacate its current base in Easthampstead House generating a significant annual saving. It is expected that construction work will take place throughout the autumn and winter so that the Council can consolidate its office accommodation in Time Square during 2018.

Council Strategy and Community Cohesion

5.4 Council Plan Overview Report

- 5.4.1 The Executive received the Chief Executive's latest Council Plan Overview Report covering the third quarter of 2016/17 (October–December 2016). At the end of the

quarter, 166 actions (74.1%) were on target to complete within the timescales set; 18 actions (8.0%) were at risk of falling behind schedule, 1 action (0.4%) had fallen behind schedule and 36 actions had been completed (15.6%). Overall, good progress has been made against the actions in the departmental service plans.

- 5.4.2 Progress against key performance indicators across the Council was also strong, with 36 (50.7%) green – i.e. on, above or within 5% of target; 3 (4.2%) were amber – i.e. between 5% and 10% of target; and only 8 (11.3%) were red – i.e. more than 10% from target. 24 further indicators had no set target.

Children, Young People & Learning

5.5 Response to the Children, Young People & Learning Overview and Scrutiny Report on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- 5.5.1 The Executive noted the recommendations of the Working Group “Safeguarding is everyone’s business: A Review of Child Sexual Exploitation”. A total of 14 recommendations were proposed by the working group, of which the Executive accepted seven in full and six in part. With regards to the partially accepted recommendations, the Executive were concerned that they would place additional burdens on already stretched resources. However, progress will be made towards them from within existing resources. The one recommendation that is outstanding is awaiting confirmation and acceptance from the NHS.
- 5.5.2 The Executive thanked the Working Group for their helpful and well informed report which recognised the work being completed in this area and would enable further improvement in this area as well as help the Council to develop services.

5.6 Family Safeguarding Model – Outcome of Innovation Bid

- 5.6.1 The Executive were pleased to note the successful outcome from an innovation bid, securing funding to implement a Family Safeguarding Model within social work teams within Children Social Care.
- 5.6.2 In the summer of 2014, the Department for Education (DfE) announced it had set aside £30m to fund innovative projects to transform ‘edge of care’ and child protection services in England. Expressions of Interest were invited from local authorities and the voluntary sector. Hertfordshire County Council were successful and rolled out a family Safeguarding Model of practice.
- 5.6.3 The Family Safeguarding (FS) is a whole system change to how child protection services are delivered in Hertfordshire. It includes creating multi-disciplinary teams with additional specialists, recruiting staff to reduce workloads, training staff in Motivational Interviewing, as well as a structured approach to risk assessment.
- 5.6.4 In April 2016, the DfE announced further funding of £100m over the next four years, to support the development of new approaches to Children’s Social Care. An Expression of Interest was submitted in May 2016 by Hertfordshire to scale up the model to cover a further four local authorities – Luton, Peterborough, West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest. A full bid was worked up and submitted in September 2016 and approved by the Minister Edward Timpson on 23 February 2017. Bracknell Forest will received £1.9m over the next two years to develop the models.

5.6.5 There are four key elements to the proposed Family Safeguarding model:

- multi-disciplinary Family Safeguarding Teams;
- a core skills set with Motivational Interviewing at its heart;
- a structured 'workbook' approach to assessing parent's 'capacity for change';
- an outcomes based performance framework.

5.7 Summary Report on Examination and Test Performance in Bracknell Forest Schools: Academic Year 2015-16

5.7.1 The Executive noted school results for the academic year 2015-16 and endorsed recent policy developments and priorities for the School Improvement Service for the academic year 2016-17.

5.7.2 The Executive noted that outcomes were broadly in line or above national benchmarks across all key stages. However, the gap for disadvantaged pupils across all key stages remained a key focus area for schools in Bracknell Forest.

5.7.3 Diminishing the gap for disadvantaged pupils across all key stages has been highlighted by Ofsted within the South East region as an area for focus during Ofsted inspections, particularly for most able disadvantaged pupils. A whole council strategy and approach has been developed in order to address the areas that require improvement in the borough's schools. The School Improvement team is being restructured and is developing service plans to tackle the key areas of weakness identified by the internal analysis.

Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

5.8 ICT and Digital Strategy 2017-20

5.8.1 The Executive approved the ICT and Digital Strategy for the period 2017-2020. The ICT and Digital Strategy maps out the proposed direction for the Council, in terms of the development of its ICT infrastructure, applications and devices, and in particular recommends a way ahead in terms of the adoption of digital technology, for both customer-facing and internal administrative processes. This approach provides the essential technological underpinning that will enable the transformation agenda, the Customer Contact Strategy, the Accommodation Strategy, the changes in Council-Wide Support Services and changes in care and health.

5.9 Proposed Shared Emergency Planning Service for Berkshire

5.9.1 The Executive agreed to be part of a pan-Berkshire Emergency Planning Service governed through the Berkshire Chief Executive's Group. Subject to the approval of all six unitary authorities, the shared service will commence on 1 October 2017. The service will provide Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Planning to all six unitary authorities, with West Berkshire acting as the lead authority.

5.9.2 The budget for the service is set in the first year at £371k and apportioned to each unitary authority as an annual payment as follows:

Unrestricted

Bracknell Forest -	£45k
Reading -	£65k
RBWM -	£71k
Slough -	£48k
West Berkshire -	£82k
Wokingham -	£60k

Permanent staff will TUPE to the lead authority on their existing terms and conditions and will be slotted into the staffing structure where appropriate. Vacancies will be filled through internal/external recruitment where required.

5.10 Library I.T Procurement Plan

5.10.1 The Executive agreed the procurement plan to introduce new technology in all Bracknell Forest libraries to support the recent Transformation Review.

5.10.2 The transformation project has reviewed the Council's approach to library service provision. The fundamental principles of the new strategic plan for libraries revolves around three main areas: significant savings in the management of stock by automating and involving local staff in stock selection; revenue savings and an increase in opening hours of the library service through technology enabled opening and self service; and further service remodelling requiring the support of local volunteers. The savings envisaged are summarised in the table below:

Savings initiative £000	Totals	Year 1 2017/18	Year 2 2018/19
1. Stock management transformation	110	90	20
2. Technology enabled transformation	131		131
3. Service remodelling and single staffing	149	131	14
Totals	390	225	165

5.11 Complaint Against the Council – Local Government Ombudsman Decision

5.11.1 The Executive noted the Local Government Ombudsman's finding of maladministration with injustice in response to a complaint against the Council from a Miss X with regard to the conduct of the Council's care assessment of her child AB. The Executive agreed that no further action needed be taken in relation to this matter and that the report be approved, in compliance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

5.11.2 The Ombudsman accepted that the Council had investigated the safeguarding concerns without fault. With regard to its assessment of AB's care needs in 2014, the Council had already accepted the findings of its own Stage 2 report as part of its own complaints procedure. This had found fault in the way that the assessment of AB had been conducted. As a result the Council offered to amend the assessment or complete a new assessment. However, Miss X did not take up this offer.

5.11.3 Any finding against the Council is disappointing. However, perhaps most important in this case is the Ombudsman's conclusion that officers acted "without fault" in reviewing safeguarding concerns relating Miss X's care of AB. This, of course, must always be the Council's primary focus.

5.12 Equality Scheme 2017-20

5.12.1 The Executive approved the Council's Equality Scheme 2017-20. The Council is required by the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty Regulations to publish equality objectives at least every four years. The Scheme highlights the Council's equality objectives including those to promote good community relations. Through its normal service planning, the Council will ensure that the objectives are achievable, measurable and outcome focused with actions identified in the Council's service plans.

Planning and Transport

5.13 Adoption of the Design Supplementary Planning Document

5.13.1 The Executive approved the adoption of the Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications validated from the date of its adoption.

5.13.2 The Design SPD is a new document which sets out design principles and best practice to guide the design quality of developments proposals in the borough. It:

- Incorporates information for householders on extending their homes as currently set out in the design leaflet entitled "Extending your Home: A Householders Guide". The design leaflet will therefore cease to have effect from the date of the adoption of the Design SPD:
- Builds on the design guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): and
- Builds upon the Council's own policies as set out in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2007; the saved policies of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan 2002 and the current Streetscene SPD and Character Area Assessment.

5.13.3 A Draft SPD was subject to public consultation between 17 October 2016 and 27 November 2016. A total of 26 responses from the public and professionals were received during the consultation period. All responses were considered in producing the final version of the Design SPD.

5.14 Capital Programme 2017-18 Integrated Transport

5.14.1 The Executive approved the Capital Programme for Integrated Transport for 2017/18 and its implementation. This programme supports the adopted Local Transport Plan which sets out the key challenges facing Bracknell Forest through the period 2011-2026. Schemes are developed taking account of the wider policy goals and issues such as deliverability and public impact/acceptability.

5.14.2 Historically, funding for the programme has been funded by an Integrated Transport Grant from Central Government, alongside developer contributions (S106) for transport mitigation measures. However, in addition to grant allocation of (£520k) and S106 funds (£350k), the Council has also been successful in securing additional funds from Central Government through the Local Growth Fund towards implementing transport measures linked to economic growth and carbon reduction

with a focus on unlocking the Town Centre regeneration and housing development. This work began with Warfield Link Road and Coral Reef Junction improvements in 2015/16 along with Town Centre accessibility improvements which will continue into 2017/18.

- 5.14.3 Further Local Growth funds of £2.9m have now also been secured for the A329 London Road Corridor improvements which are due to start in 2017/18 and continue into 2018/19. The total cost of the project is £3.8m with the funding gap of £900k coming from the Council's own resources.

5.15 Highway Maintenance Works Programme 2017-18

- 5.15.1 The Executive agreed that the budget for 2017-2018 be targeted at the four year indicative Highway Maintenance Works Programme, having due regard to the priority, availability of road space and available budget.
- 5.15.2 The 2017/18 budget includes £1.637m for the non-routine highway maintenance schemes. This is the level of funding provided via the Department for Transport's (DfT) Highway Maintenance Capital Funding which is a reduction on last year.

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 – 14 March 2017 and 11 April 2017

Contact for further information

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