

To: COUNCIL
17 January 2018

EXECUTIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL
The Leader

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Since the Council meeting on 29 November 2017, the Executive has met once, on the 19 December 2017. This report summarises decisions taken by reference to the relevant portfolio within which they fall.
- 1.2 Updated Forward Plans are published every Friday and can be viewed 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 29 November 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 Capital Programme 2018/19 – 2020/21

- 5.1.1 The Capital Programme report considered by the Executive draws together each department's proposals which enabled the Executive to agree a draft capital programme for 2018/19 – 2020/21 as the basis for consultation. In compiling the draft programme the main focus was inevitably on determining the requirements for 2018/19, although future year's schemes did also form an important part of the programme.
- 5.1.2 The proposed programme for 2018/19 had been developed on the assumption that it would be funded by a combination of Government grants, other external contributions and borrowing in addition to capital receipts. Historically capital receipts have averaged around £5m per annum – however this had largely been made up of the VAT and Right-to-Buy sharing agreement contributions from Bracknell Forest Homes – these schemes have since ended. However receipts from two large sites and CIL contributions should enable £8m of the capital programme to be funded from receipts. Internal resources will be used in the first instance and borrowing from external sources (e.g. the PWLB) will be used when necessary. The financing costs

associated with the General Fund Capital Programme had also been provided for the Council's revenue budget plans.

- 5.1.3 Within the general financial framework outlined above, Service Departments have considered new schemes for inclusion within the Council's Capital Programme for 2018/19 – 2020/21. Given that both capital and revenue resources are under pressure, each Department has evaluated and prioritised proposed schemes into broad categories in line with the Council's Asset Management Plan. Having done this, only the very highest priority schemes and programmes are being recommended for inclusion in the Capital Programme.
- 5.1.4 On this basis the Executive approved for consultation:
- the initial Council funded capital programme (excluding the Commercial Property Investment Strategy budget) of £10.546m for 2018/19.
 - the inclusion of an additional budget of £1m for Invest-to-Save schemes.
 - the inclusion of £3.48m of schemes and projects to be funded from S106.
 - the inclusion of £13.850m of schemes to be externally or self funded.
 - and the Contract Standing Order (CSO) requirements relating to the Procurement Plan, Competition and Advertising elements for the procurement of offsite road works at the Blue Mountain development to be waived.

5.2 Revenue Budget 2018/19

- 5.2.1 The Executive also agreed the draft revenue budget proposals for 2018/19 as the basis for consultation with the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and other interested parties.
- 5.2.2 Initial preparations for the budget always begin with the Council's three year Commitment Budget. The commitment budget for 2018/19 and 2020/21 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 2017/18 budget was set.
- 5.2.3 A number of changes are proposed to the Commitment Budget since it was last considered by the Executive. The most significant are:
- The impact of the transformation programme is now reflected (-£6.417m) including forecast savings from Adults (-£1.800m) and Children's Services (-£1.165m), the Commercial Property Investment Strategy (-£1.000m) and the Leisure Services Review (-£0.600m), which are at different stages of delivery.
 - The one-off additional Adult Social Care grant received in 2017/18 has been removed (£0.363m).
 - Additional funding for Adult Social Care, announced as part of the Government's March 2017 Budget, has now been incorporated (-£1.016m). This is supplementary funding to the improved Better Care Fund payable between 2017/18 and 2019/20.

The overall impact of these changes is to decrease the Council's Commitment Budget by £7.230m compared to the position reported in February.

- 5.2.4 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) the 2018/19 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.
- iii) that authority to set town centre car park charges is delegated to the Regeneration Committee.
- iv) the bid submitted by Bracknell Forest Council on behalf of the Berkshire Unitaries to DCLG to form a pilot business rates pool across the County, that would see a greater proportion of business rates collected being retained locally to support priority infrastructure projects was supported.
- v) the virements relating to the 2017/18 budget as set out in Annexes F and G of the Executive Report are approved and recommended those that are over £0.100m be approved by Council.

Members will be aware that the business rate submission was one of a small number that the Government announced were successful in the Provisional Local Government Finance Statement in late December.

5.3 Contract Award for Cleaning Contract

- 5.3.1 The Executive agreed to award the Corporate Cleaning Framework Agreement due to commence on 1 April 2018. The current cleaning contract was due to expire on 31st March 2018, having been extended beyond its original expiry date of 4th January 2018. The purpose of the extension was to allow sufficient time for the move of Easthampstead House Staff to the remodelled civic accommodation at Time Square – due to be completed during the first quarter of 2018. This would avoid the requirement for the new contract to cover Easthampstead House for a limited period which would necessitate a move of the contractor's staff and equipment.
- 5.3.2 A full competitive tendering exercise using the Restricted Procedure in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 was carried out. The process complies with the Procurement Plan which was endorsed by the Executive Member for Transformation and Finance in July 2017. Following advertising, a robust evaluation of tenders submitted from short-listed candidates was carried out.
- 5.3.3 The current value of the contract is approximately £1.2m per annum which includes 27 schools. However, the move towards academisation led to initial doubts regarding their continued involvement. However, following consultation with all schools, 24 decided that they wished to be included in the new contract.

Council Strategy & Community Cohesion

5.4 Council Plan Overview Report

- 5.4.1 The Executive noted the Chief Executives latest Council Plan Overview Report covering the second quarter of the 2017/18 financial year (July – September 2017). At the end of the first quarter 90 actions (69%) were on target to be completed within the timescales set; 25 actions (19%) had been completed; 13 actions (10%) were at risk of falling behind schedule and 2 actions (2%) had fallen behind schedule.

- 5.4.2 The Executive also noted the performance of the Council from the LG Inform benchmarking report
- 5.4.3 Progress against the key indicators in the Council Plan was also positive with 32 (76%) green – i.e. on, above or within 5% of target; 2 (5%) amber – i.e. between 5% and 10% of target; and 8 (19%) red – i.e. more than 10% from target.
- 5.4.4 Quarter 2 saw the opening of The Lexicon on 7 September. This was a landmark day, and the regenerated town centre has, to date, been a huge success. The opening of The Lexicon was shortly followed by the opening of Coral Reef on 29 September. This was a very challenging construction on a building that is over 30 years old that came to a successful conclusion. The newly refurbished facility is proving to be very popular.
- 5.4.5 The transformation programme continues to progress well, delivering over £6.5m of savings to date. The new Resources directorate was launched on 1 September 2017 to reflect the consolidation of the teams covered by the Council Wide Support Services Review (CWSS) – Finance, ICT and HR. A sharp focus is now on our Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care Transformation Programmes in order to progress those and ensure they deliver the necessary savings.
- 5.4.6 A 'Local Area Review' was undertaken in adult social care by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in September. This took the form of seven intensive days of visits by eight inspectors over two separate periods and a great deal of work in between. CQC looked at how well Care and Health organisations, including the private and voluntary sector, worked together to deliver person centred and effective care to older people on their journey into and out of hospital. The CQC report found that we serve the people of Bracknell well with positive findings against all five key lines of enquiry. The contribution made by our partner organisations in the health sector in demonstrating this effective working was outstanding.
- 5.4.7 The successful CQC inspection followed on from the Ofsted Inspection of children's services in May. One side effect of successful inspections is that a number of staff have very marketable and transferable sets of skills. Therefore there was a higher than normal rate of vacancy within a number of key service areas in children's services during Quarter 2. Further analysis was being undertaken around detailed exit interviews to understand the motivation for leaving. However, the level of vacancies places increased pressure on social worker caseloads which are closely monitored. As well as social workers, a number of other key roles within the organisation have been difficult to recruit to including a Chief Officer and Business Partner in ICT, a permanent Organisation Development Manager and Payroll Manager. Further work is being planned with the Overview & Scrutiny Commission to identify what the barriers to a successful recruitment have been and how these might be overcome.

Planning & Transport

5.5 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

- 5.5.1 The Executive approved the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2017 / 2026 (RoWIP2).
- 5.5.2 As a unitary authority, the Council is responsible for public rights of way in the borough, and has a duty to produce, review and re-publish a RoWIP. RoWIP2 is the

second version of the plan prepared for the Borough. The requirement to produce this statutory plan arose from the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and with it there is a duty to review the plan every 10 years. The first RoWIP for Bracknell Forest was published in 2006. RoWIPs are intended to be a mechanism for improving the local network of public rights of way for all users – walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, horse and carriage drivers, vehicular users and those with mobility problems.

- 5.5.3 A survey of rights of way users was carried out to gather up to date information about current use, needs and demands. Feedback from the consultation was incorporated where appropriate. From a range of feedback, there were particularly significant contributions from Binfield Parish Council, the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum, and the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership. The Bracknell Forest Local Countryside Access Forum (LCAF) was also consulted from the very earliest stages in the process in 2016 starting with the structure, vision and policies.

5.6 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection

- 5.6.1 The Executive approved the draft Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Supplementary Planning Document (draft SPASPD) for public consultation for the six week period from the 8th January to the 19th February 2018. The intention is to provide prospective applicants with a clearer idea of the Council's requirements for mitigating the impact of development on the SPA.
- 5.6.2 The draft SPASPD provides guidance on the statutory requirement to avoid and mitigate harmful impacts caused by recreational pressure on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). In particular it:
- Provides context to the SPA designation including regulations, harmful impacts and other issues.
 - Describes buffer zones of influence as to where development can or cannot be located.
 - Sets out avoidance and mitigation measures relating to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring measures (SAMM) and their standards, criteria and costs.
 - Provided details maps and supporting evidence in the Appendices of the Executive report.
- 5.6.4 Not producing the draft SPASPD would result in the loss of the required contributions to support alternative open space (SANG) provision in Council management which would risk the Council's effectiveness over the long term.

6 NOTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENTS MADE BY THE LEADER

The portfolio title 'Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection' was amended to 'Executive Member for Culture, Resources and Public Protection' to reflect the directorate name change from Corporate Services to Resources.

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

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

Borough Treasurer

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

Equalities Impact Assessment

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

Strategic Risk Management Issues

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

Background Papers

Executive Agenda – 19 December 2017

Contact for further information

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