

To: **COUNCIL**  
**9 September 2020**

---

**EXECUTIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL**  
**The Leader**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 Since the Council meeting on 22 July 2020, the Executive has met on the 25 August 2020. 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](http://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 paragraph 5.1.2.**

**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 Financial Update**

- 5.1.1 The Executive noted the extreme uncertainty in the financial outlook in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, they identified best case and worst-case scenarios for the Council's current year financial position summarised in Table 1 and detailed in Annex A. They also approved the virements relating to the 2020/21 budget included in Annex A of the Director: Resources report. The Executive also endorsed the medium-term financial planning framework to guide detailed preparations for the 2021/22 and future years' budgets, the out-turn capital expenditure and financing for 2019/20 and approved carry-forwards of £31.596m into the 2020/21 capital programme. It was also agreed that a vacant domestic property owned by the Council be made available for social care purposes.
- 5.1.2 The Executive recommended to Council the proposed additions to the current year's capital programme detailed in paragraph 5.37 of the Director: Resources report.**

- 5.1.3 The Council approved the current year's budget and council tax at its meeting on 26 February 2020 which at the time it was recognised to be one of the most difficult budgets that the council had ever faced. Spending pressures totalled an unprecedented £8m, the majority being related to Children's and Adult Social Care. The increased demands meant the budget includes £5m of savings, a maximum permitted increase in council tax plus the use of £0.4m from reserves to achieve a balanced budget for the year.
- 5.1.5 The impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on Council budgets since March 2020 has been widely reported. In recognising the important role that local authorities have played in responding to the situation, Government has provided an additional £3.7bn of funding to English councils directly and undertaken to mitigate some lost income from sales, fees and charges. Details of arrangements in respect of the income support were received in late August and were being evaluated when this report was published. Further costs incurred by upper tier authorities to support hospital discharges are also being covered by funding being passed through Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) although again, the detail is still awaited.
- 5.1.6 It was important to recognise the scale of uncertainty that the Council is facing at this time with estimated best- and worst-case scenarios which reflect actual expenditure to date plus a range of financial predictions from Assistant Directors covering the remainder of the year.

Looking forward there is further uncertainty about the length of time during which the additional pressures and lost income will last and the extent to which the Government will continue to support Councils beyond the current year. The budget framework for the next three years therefore includes a need to identify significant savings so that the Council can respond to the worst case, should it happen.

## **Planning and Transport**

### **5.2 Temporary Changes to the Bracknell Forest Statement of Community Involvement**

- 5.2.1 The Executive approved the Temporary Changes Addendum and that it be published alongside the Bracknell Forest Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2014).
- 5.2.2 National Planning Practice Guidance requires local planning authorities to assess their SCIs to identify whether elements are inconsistent with public health guidelines and restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These restrictions mean the Council is unable to fulfil some of the commitments set out in the currently adopted SCI in respect of how the Council consults on policy documents. Some amendments to consultation procedures relating to planning applications are also required. The temporary changes have been made to protect the health of local communities and follow national advice and guidelines.

## **6 NOTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENTS MADE BY THE LEADER**

- 6.1 The Leader appointed Councillor Mark Brunel-Walker and Councillor Peter Heydon to the Joint Venture Board.

- 6.2 The Leader appointed Councillor Nigel Atkinson, Councillor Nick Allen and Councillor Peter Heydon to the Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee.
- 6.3 The Leader has clarified that Councillor Brunel-Walker's appointment to the Business Improvement District (BID) Company should be as the Council's representative on other Joint Committees, Panels and Groups list rather than external organisations. This distinction means that the restriction on nominees to external bodies subsequently accepting a role on the organisation's board as a Trustee / Director or in any other management capacity such as Treasurer does not apply to this appointment.
- 6.4 The Leader confirmed an amendment of the Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee to include oversight of matters relating to the ongoing management of the Joint Venture Project.

## **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.

### Director: Resources

- 7.2 The Director: Resources' 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 – 25 August 2020

### Contact for further information

Hannah Stevenson, Delivery - 01344 352308  
Hannah.stevenson@bracknell-forest.gov.uk