

To: Council  
24 November 2021

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## EXECUTIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL The Leader

### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Since the Council meeting on 15 September 2021, the Executive has met twice, on the 21 September 2021 and 19 October. The meetings were conducted remotely and as such were acting in an advisory capacity, making recommendations to the individual executive members who are empowered to make the formal decisions. This approach was in line with the decisions taken by Council on 28 April 2021 to reduce, as far as possible the need for face-to-face meetings whilst the risk of COVID-19 infection remains a threat to the lives of members and officers.
- 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 note the report.

### 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

#### Environment

#### 5.1 Food Waste in Flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) Review Report

- 5.1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission asked The Environment and Communities panel to conduct a review into food waste collections in flats and HMO's following the successful implementation of food waste in households. The review aimed to assess what type of food waste scheme would be most successful in Bracknell forest for Flats and HMO's through speaking to experts and conducting site visits.

### 5.1.2 The Executive agreed the Panel's recommendations:

- That the Executive implements a progressive roll out of food waste collection for up to 20% of properties (up to 1800) with officers developing the criteria for suitable flats taking into account good practice which has been identified within the report and the panel to be consulted on the draft criteria. The implementation of the scheme to begin in Spring 2022.

To make the roll out effective, the Executive committed to undertaking the following proposed actions:

- Individual kerbside food waste caddies be distributed to residents in appropriate flats with blocks that have demonstrated a willingness to recycle and fit within the strict criteria to begin in Spring 2022
- Ongoing communication and engagement with residents in flats is undertaken and where possible, give presentations to interested parties.
- Bins are provided with apertures to minimise contamination where no individual kerbside caddies are issued.
- All new HMO licences and renewals will have inserted into them the mandatory condition regarding waste storage and disposal. Any breach could result in enforcement action by Environmental Health.
- That the Executive produces a report reviewing the roll out after 1 year along with a report on the effectiveness and cost by Spring 2023.

## **Adult Services, Health and Housing**

### **5.2 Overview and Scrutiny Review of Blue Badges Report**

5.2.1 The review was undertaken in response to complaints about blue badge applications being refused, and a local newspaper article highlighting apparent differences in approval rates between Bracknell Forest and other councils. In the event it became clear that the survey that prompted the article was based upon incomplete, and therefore misleading, data. Nonetheless, the council's recent Social Isolation and Loneliness review had highlighted the problems caused when people cannot easily leave their homes, so the panel chose to review the application process to ensure fairness and consistency.

5.2.2 The Executive agreed the Environment and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel's recommendations as below whilst taking into account the comments of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

- That the Executive requests a review to ensure that blue badge refusal letters are empathetic, easy to understand and demonstrate to applicants that all their evidence has been considered. By end December 2021.
- That the Executive Director creates local guidelines that explain the approach to assessing blue badges in Bracknell Forest. The local guidance should be clear how Bracknell Forest Council uses its website and application form to provide and collect information, and how it considers evidence from a wide range of professionals and trusted organisations. By end December 2021.

## **Council Strategy and Community Cohesion**

### **5.3 Residents' COVID-19 Impact Survey 2021**

- 5.3.1 The Executive noted the Covid-19 Impact Survey 2021 results and endorsed the communications plan.
- 5.3.2 The council conducted an initial Residents Covid 19 Impact Survey in July 2020. The results informed the development of the Covid 19 community impact assessment evidence base which was shared widely with partners and informed recovery and renewal planning. The second survey, which took place in April and May 2021 was run as a tracker survey providing updated information about the impact of the pandemic on Bracknell Forest residents and the results have been compared to those from the first survey to identify trends.
- 5.3.3 The results of the tracker survey will also inform the ongoing recovery and renewal strategy.

### **5.4 Council Plan Overview Reports**

- 5.4.1 The Executive noted the performance of the council over the period from January-March 2021 and April to June 2021 highlighted in the Overview Reports.

### **5.5 Surplus Land – Depot Site**

- 5.5.1 The Executive agreed to offer the surplus land that will be created by re-development of the Commercial Centre to the Bracknell Forest Cambium Partnership (the Joint Venture) for development, subject to the satisfactory approval of an Initial Site Development Plan within a 12 month exclusivity period commencing on 1 October 2021. In the event that a Site Development Plan is not approved within the 12 month period, that the surplus land would be sold on the open market for the best available consideration. Oversight of the process is delegated to Assistant Director: Property.

### **5.6 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Annual Review Letter**

- 5.6.1 The Executive noted the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2021.
- 5.6.2 The annual review letter from the LGSCO provides local authorities with an overview of the council's performance in complaint handling, covering the financial year April 2020 to March 2021.
- 5.6.3 In 2020/21 the LGSCO conducted detailed investigations into eight cases, this was an increase on the previous year but was still amongst the lowest compared to Bracknell Forest Council's CIPFA neighbours. Of the eight investigations, fault was found in five cases although it was noted that no injustice was caused in two of the cases.

## **Planning & Transport**

### **5.7 Revised Local Development Scheme 2021 - 2024**

- 5.7.1 The Executive resolved that the Local Development Scheme 2021 – 2024 (October 2021) should come into effect on 27th October 2021.

- 5.7.2 The Council's work programme for preparing local plans is set out in the Local Development Scheme. The current LDS (2021-2024), February 2021 set out timetables for the preparation of the:
- Bracknell Forest Local Plan
  - Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan (covering Bracknell Forest, Wokingham Borough, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Reading Borough)
  - Policies Map.
- 5.7.3 It is essential that the LDS reflects the key deadlines and milestones. The report updated those milestones in the light of progress in relation to the Local Plan.
- 5.8 Bracknell Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2036 "making" The Plan Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (As Amended)**
- 5.8.1 The Executive approved the formal "making" (keeping in legal force) of the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Development Plan to continue to form part of the statutory Bracknell Forest Development Plan pursuant to Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended); and the form, content and publication of the Decision Statement pursuant to Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 5.8.2 The Council in its capacity as the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty, as set out in Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ("PCPA"), to make a neighbourhood development plan if more than half of those voting at referendum have voted in favour of making the neighbourhood development plan. This must be done as soon as reasonably practicable after the referendum is held and, in any event, within 8 weeks of the referendum (as prescribed by Regulation 18A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the Regulations")). Regulation 19 requires the Council to then publish a statement setting out the decision and details of where and when the decision statement may be inspected. This must be done as soon as possible after deciding to make the neighbourhood development plan.
- 5.8.3 The referendum was held on Thursday 9 September 2021 in which the question was asked to those entitled to vote in the referendum: *"Do you want Bracknell Forest Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Bracknell Town to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"* At the referendum a total of 4,085 votes were cast. Of these:
- the number of votes in favour of a 'yes' was 3,457
  - the number of votes in favour of a 'no' was 582
  - 28 votes were rejected, deemed unmarked or void for uncertainty
  - the turnout was 9.6 per cent.

## **Finance & Transformation**

### **5.9 Market Street Block D Options**

- 5.9.1 The Executive agreed to delay the decision on Block D for a period of 3 years and requested officers to assess "meanwhile use" options for this period, focused on public realm/community use of the space. The Pandemic has caused uncertainty in

the office market globally. Current indications are that a permanent shift is likely to occur favouring smaller, more flexible units for office accommodation. Although there is some market confidence that the office market is likely to see recovery post Pandemic, this is by no means certain in the short to medium term and prompting the decision to await greater certainty in the market.

## **Culture, Delivery and Public Protection**

### **5.10 Buckler's Park Community Hub and Facilities**

5.10.1 The Executive agreed that the council takes the freehold from CALA in a single transfer on 1 April 2022 (or soon thereafter) in accordance with S106 of the Buckler's Park community hub with the adjacent courts, the associated car parking, allotments and landscaping (excluding SuDs and Orchard) within the site area. It was also agreed that the management arrangements for the community hub, including courts, car parking, associated landscaping and allotments to be overseen by the Council's Community Engagement and Parks and Countryside teams, through running a procurement exercise to find an operator.

5.10.2 It was agreed that a one-off contribution be allocated to incentivise an operator of the facility towards their start-up cost plus a contribution for other ancillary BFC set up costs and that the Council would engage with the Parish Council on this.

### **5.11 Binfield Community and Health Care Hub**

5.11.1 The Executive noted the progress to date on the community centre and health & wellbeing hub in partnership with the Frimley Care Commissioning Group (CCG) and agree the timetable detailed within the report, and it was agreed that the community centre budget and the development cost of the health centre to be met by the CCG/NHS as noted in the report.

5.11.2 The Executive agreed to forward fund in capital costs the Health part of the building, on the basis that the consequent capital financing costs would be covered by any capital contributions secured by the CCG and/or the long-term rental income from the Health provider. As with Bucklers Park a one-off contribution would be allocated to incentivise an operator of the facility towards their start-up cost along with an allocation of other ancillary set up costs for the borough council.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### **6.1 Leader Appointments**

At the request of Councillor Harrison, the Leader established two advisory panels and confirmed the membership as below:

- Arts & Culture Strategy Advisory Panel – Councillors Gbadebo, Mrs Gibson, Mrs Mattick, Merry, Neil, Parker and Virgo
- Digital, ICT & Customer Experience Advisory Panel – Councillors Harrison, Brunel-Walker, Dale Birch, Heydon, Finch, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle and Neil

### Borough Solicitor

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

### Executive Director: Resources

- 6.3 The Executive Director: Resources' comments have been addressed in the reports to the Executive.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

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

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

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

### Background Papers

Executive Agenda – 21 September 2021  
19 October 2021

### Contact for further information

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