

To: **COUNCIL**
24 November 2021

EXECUTIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL
The Leader

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Since the Council agenda for the 24 November 2021 was published, the Executive met on the 16 November 2021. This report summarises decisions taken by reference to the relevant portfolio within which they fall. The meeting was conducted remotely and as such was 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 health of members and officers and the Council's consequent ability to deliver services.
- 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 approve the recommendations at 5.1.1.**

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

Adult Services, Health and Housing

- 5.1 Approval to Spend S106 Commuted Sum Monies to Acquire Move-On Properties for Single Homeless Households.**

- 5.1.1 The Executive RECOMMENDED that Council approve the total capital spend of up to £1,177,200 commencing in the 2021-22 financial year, in order to purchase six properties to ensure that Council has suitable temporary emergency affordable housing. The Executive also recommended that Council**

approve £450,000 (£75,000 per property) of this total to be funded through S106 affordable housing commuted funds, which will not incur borrowing costs and that borrowing be approved to fund the remaining balance of £727,200. The cost of borrowing and MRP (minimum revenue provision) will be met by net rental income so will be cost neutral.

- 5.1.2 The Council has a small stock of temporary accommodation to meet the needs of homeless households which are predominantly 2- and 3-bedroom properties. Currently there is a lack of one-bedroom units for temporary placement of single homeless households. This increases reliance on more costly nightly paid accommodation. The proposal to acquire six properties to meet the one bedroom demand is revenue cost neutral as the residual borrowing required after the application of Section 106 funding will be met through net rental income.

Council Strategy and Community Cohesion

5.2 Equality Scheme 2022-25

- 5.2.1 The Executive approved the Equality Scheme 2022-25 for publication.
- 5.2.2 Schedule 1 and 2 of The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 requires that the Council must:
- Prepare and publish equality objectives by 6 April 2012, and at least every four years thereafter.
 - Ensure that those objectives are specific and measurable.
 - Publish those objectives in such a manner that they are accessible to the public.
- 5.2.3 The council's 2017-20 'All of Us' Equality Scheme was extended for a year to cover 2020-21 to allow time for development of the new Council Plan in 2019 and directorate service plans. The Covid-19 pandemic further delayed the development of new objectives and an equality scheme in 2021-22. The new scheme will be reflected in departmental service plans when they are revised in February 2022.

Finance & Transformation

5.3 Strategic Procurement Plan – Corporate Cleaning

- 5.3.1 The Executive agreed to the extension of the current contract arrangements until 30 August 2022 to align with the schools' academic year and approved the Strategic Procurement Plan for Corporate Cleaning.
- 5.3.2 There is an on-going requirement for a reliable cleaning contractor within the Council's premises, including Civic buildings, nine Libraries, Youth centres and, at present, 10 schools who buy into the corporate contract. Due to the value of the requirement, it must be tendered in accordance with Public Contract Regulations 2015 and advertised on the Find a Tender Service (FTS), the South East Business Portal and Contracts Finder.
- 5.3.3 The Council has commissioned additional "deep cleaning" throughout Covid-19 on an as needed basis, which the current contract has enabled us to do. The contract arrangements from September 2022 offers the same flexibility.

Culture, Delivery and Public Protection

5.4 To agree the Public Protection Partnership MK II business plan from 22/23

- 5.4.1 The Executive agreed the priorities for the service for 2022/23 and to the proposed contractual position with Wokingham Council in order to protect existing PPP services.
- 5.4.2 In order to set the priorities for PPP MKII, Members were invited to attend a workshop to put forward their views on what they saw were the key priorities for their local residents. Areas that were highlighted by Members as priorities included animal welfare, fly tipping, licensing and air quality linked to climate change.
- 5.4.3 The focus areas would link in with the well established high level priorities from the Inter Authority Agreement as well as a number of cross cutting priorities.

Children, Young People and Learning

5.5 Education Capital Strategy 2022-26

- 5.5.1 The Executive noted the proposed plan to develop a new Capital Strategy for Education & Learning 2022-26.
- 5.5.2 The Capital Strategy has the following objectives:
- To meet the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places
 - Make recommendations following discussions with Headteachers, Governors and Trustees for the best use of the Education estate
 - Consider in consultation with Headteachers, Governors and Trustees whether any potentially surplus mainstream accommodation could be used for SEND use
 - Produce specific outcomes as projects on the Council's capital programme
- 5.5.3 The Education Capital Strategy 2022-26 is informed by existing school places forecasting system used to create the annual DfE School Capacity survey return and School Places Plan. Forecasts are calculated from cohort survival in each year group adjusted for housing and migration. This is already well established, with forecasts in place up to 2028.

5.6 All Age Advocacy Tender

- 5.6.1 The Executive approved the Strategic Procurement Plan for procuring a provider for all age advocacy for Bracknell Forest residents.
- 5.6.2 The Care Act 2014 and The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to provide access for residents of each local authority area to advocacy support to ensure each person's voice is heard in relation to their care and support. For Bracknell Forest this is through an adult advocacy contract, with spot purchases for children and young people on an 'as needed' basis. The adult advocacy contract is being extended until 30 September 2022.
- 5.6.3 In line with the Council's approach to integrating support for children and adults where appropriate, an all-age advocacy provision will allow for streamlined advocacy support for children and young people as they approach adulthood, avoiding the need for change at a challenging time of their life.

5.7 Household Support Grant Distribution and Procurement

- 5.7.1 The Executive agreed the proposed approach to spend the Household Support Fund by the end of March 2022 and the Strategic Procurement Plan for purchasing supermarket vouchers.
- 5.7.2 The Council is required to create a local eligibility framework to disburse the funding that has been received from the Department of Work and Pensions. The distribution as set out in the Strategic Procurement Plan provides the basis for this framework.
- 5.7.3 Supermarket vouchers have been recommended as the primary use for the fund as this has previously proved successful with supporting children eligible for free school meals with the cost of food during the school holidays. The vouchers will be distributed to low-income households within Bracknell Forest to help alleviate the increased financial pressures related to the pandemic and the winter months as well as offsetting the increase in household bills.
- 5.7.4 The funding from the DWP must be distributed by the end of March 2022. The approach being adopted allows an extension of the current contract to enable this timetable to be met.

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.

Executive Director: Resources

- 6.2 The Executive Director: Resources' 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 – 16 November 2021

Contact for further information

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