

To: Council
10 January 2024

Executive Report to Council The Leader

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Since the Council agenda for the meeting on the 29 November 2023 was published, the Executive met on the 12 December 2023. This report summarises decisions taken by reference to the relevant portfolio within which they fall.
- 1.2 Updated Forward Plans for the Executive and other Council meetings 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 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. The relevant reports that the Executive considered can be found [here](#).

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Alternative options are discussed in the relevant individual reports considered by the Executive. The relevant reports that the Executive considered can be found [here](#).

5 Supporting Information

Finance and Business Change

5.1 [Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2026/27 and Revenue Budget 2024/25](#)

- 5.1.1 The Executive approved for consultation a draft capital programme based on total spending of £8.328m of which:
- £4.554m of expenditure to be externally funded including £0.380m of S106 funding.
 - £1m would be reserved for Invest-to-Save schemes.
- 5.1.2 The Executive also agreed its draft revenue budget proposals for 2024/25 as the basis for consultation. These proposals included the Treasury Management Strategy

and associated documents, which the Executive requested be reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee.

- 5.1.3 The Executive approved the write-off of £54,150 for a commercial property debt that was no longer recoverable.
- 5.1.4 Both the draft revenue budget and capital programme will now be considered by Overview & Scrutiny, and their views along with any submitted by residents, local groups and businesses would be reported to the Executive and Full Council in February when the final budget proposals for 2024/25 will be agreed.

5.2 Building Maintenance and Repair Service Contract

- 5.2.1 That the Executive approved the Strategic Procurement Plan to tender the services for a single organisation to provide 24 hour Building Maintenance and Reactive Repairs Services for the Councils corporate stock and buy back schools.
- 5.2.2 The current contract for Building Maintenance and Reactive Repair Services contract has been in place since 3 February 2020, which has been successfully carried out. The contract was based on a fixed price for the 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 year from 2023 until 2 February 2025.
- 5.2.3 On the 9 February 2023, the Council granted an extension to the current contractor for one further year, which expires on 2 February 2024. Based on the current provider KPI's and performance the Council would extend the contact for a further year and therefore the contract would expire on 1 February 2025.

5.3 Procurement of Neutral Agency Vendor/Specialist Providers of Agency Staff

- 5.3.1 The Executive approved the re-procurement of a neutral vendor contract to provide the Council with agency staff in accordance with the strategic procurement plan.
- 5.3.2 The Council spends in excess of £7m a year on agency staff, of which on-contract spend through Matrix currently accounts for between 65 and 70% of the total spend. Whilst generally successful, the contract with Matrix (and any neutral vendor) will have gaps in their ability to provide all the Council's agency worker needs due to the specialist nature of some roles.
- 5.3.3 Procurement would be split into three Lots to address the current issues with recruiting specialist social care and education roles under a neutral agency vendor arrangement. It is intended that this approach will reduce the overall costs to the council through more on-contract spending and higher levels of fulfilment thus improving compliance and governance around agency worker recruitment.

Planning and Transport

5.4 Making (adoption) of the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037

- 5.4.1 The Executive agreed the formal "making" (keeping in legal force) of the Winkfield 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).

- 5.4.2 The Council in its capacity as the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty, to make a neighbourhood development plan if more than half of those voting at a referendum have voted in favour of making the neighbourhood development plan. This must be done within 8 weeks of the referendum. 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.
- 5.4.3 The referendum was held on Thursday 23 November 2023 with a total of 1,245 votes being cast. Of these:
- the number of votes in favour of a 'yes' was 1,097
 - the number of votes in favour of a 'no' was 142
 - Six votes were rejected
 - the turnout was 10.6%

Children, Young People & Learning

5.5 [Personal Budgets Policy](#)

- 5.5.1 The Executive approved the revised Personal Budgets Policy and agreed that it be published and implemented December 2023.
- 5.5.2 In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice January 2015, local authorities must provide information on Personal Budgets as part of the Local Offer. This should include a policy on Personal Budgets that sets out a description of the services across education, health and social care that currently lend themselves to the use of Personal Budgets, how that funding will be made available, and clear and simple statements of eligibility criteria and the decision-making processes.

5.6 [Safety Valve Programme Plan](#)

- 5.6.1 The Executive approved the Council's initial Safety Valve proposal for submission to the Department for Education by 15 December 2023 and delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to amend the initial proposal if necessary in response to feedback from the Department for Education prior to a final Safety Valve proposal being presented to the Council meeting on 10 January 2024.
- 5.6.2 The Council was invited by the Department for Education (DfE) to participate in its Safety Valve Intervention Programme 2023/24 in July. The Safety Valve programme aims to agree a package of reforms to local education systems for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through which the systems will become financially sustainable within the level of grant provided by the Department for Education, while improving the experiences of children and young people. Bracknell Forest is one of five authorities invited to participate in the programme this year, due to its large and rising deficit.
- 5.6.3 Participation in the programme can secure access to additional capital funding for new local provision and a material financial contribution from the DfE towards the accumulated Dedicated School Grant (DSG) deficit, should proposals for reform

submitted by the Council be accepted. A significant financial commitment is also required from the Council, both to secure delivery of the proposed programme of activity and to write off the remainder of the accumulated deficit not funded by the DfE.

Culture, Delivery and Public Protection

5.7 [Bracknell Forest Serious Violence Strategy](#)

- 5.7.1 The Executive endorsed the Bracknell Forest Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2027 and agreed that a more detailed Action Plan be compiled which will be subject to review and approval by the Executive Director together with the Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection.
- 5.7.2 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduced a Serious Violence Duty on specified authorities within a local government area. As part of the Duty, a Strategy was required to be prepared, publicised and implemented.
- 5.7.3 The Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategic Sub-Group of the Community Safety Partnership will now work within the recommendations contained in the Strategy to develop an action plan which will be the framework for partners to deliver against local ambitions.

Adult Services, Health and Housing

5.8 [Community Support: Winter Update](#)

- 5.8.1 The Executive endorsed the updated financial hardship action plan and agreed the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) spending plan.
- 5.8.2 In 2022, the council recognised a need for a strategic, sustainable, and preventative approach to supporting residents who may be at risk of, or experiencing, financial hardship. Support throughout this period has been facilitated in large part by one off government grant funding and the development of a financial hardship action plan.
- 5.8.3 There continues to be a lasting impact from the pandemic on health and wellbeing for communities across the borough. Local research was conducted exploring the impact of COVID during 2023, which has supported the identification of key areas of focus. Specific funding has been identified from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to support programmes that address these challenges.

6 Advice Received from Statutory and Other Officers

Leader Appointments

- 6.1 The Leader of the Council has appointed Councillor Gillbe, Executive Member for Planning & Transport and Councillor Robertson as the councillor representatives on the Broadmoor Local External Stakeholder Group.

Legal Advice

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

Financial Advice

- 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.

Climate Change and Ecological Implications

- 6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to have no impact on emissions of CO₂.

The reason the Council believes that this will have no impact on emissions is that the report is providing an update on decisions taken rather than proposing any action. The impact or not of each of the individual decisions was set out in the respective reports.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.7 There are no considerations.

Background Papers

Executive Agenda – [12 December 2023](#)

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