

Council

Tuesday, 25 February 2020

7.30 pm

Present:

The Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr Gurdip Ram Bungar
The Deputy Mayor, Cllr John Caller

Councillors:	Derek Ashenden	Shane Mochrie-Cox
	Helen Ashenden	Emma Morley
	Ejaz Aslam	Elizabeth Mulheran
	Conrad Broadley	Leslie Pearton
	John Burden	Anthony Pritchard
	Harold Craske	Tony Rana
	Lee Croxton	Tony Rice
	Dakota Dibben	Alan Ridgers
	Aaron Elliott	Christina Rolles
	Emma Elliott	Lenny Rolles
	Brian Francis	Brian Sangha
	Sarah Gow	Peter Scollard
	Gary Harding	Gurbax Singh
	Baljit Hayre	Lauren Sullivan
	Leslie Hills	Narinderjit Singh Thandi
	Leslie Hoskins	Steve Thompson
	Nirmal Khabra	Denise Tiran
	Bob Lane	Jenny Wallace
	Jordan Meade	Frank Wardle
	Lyn Milner	

David Hughes	Chief Executive
Stuart Bobby	Director (Corporate Services)
Nick Brown	Director (Housing and Operations)
Melanie Norris	Director (Communities)
Sarah Parfitt	Assistant Director (Corporate Services)
Simon Walsh	Service Manager (Communities)
Jan Guyler	Head of Legal Services, Medway Council
Andy Rayfield	Communications Manager
Andrew Barnett	Principal Accountant (General Fund)
Alexandra Jarvis	Principal Accountant (Housing & Exchequer)
Donna Riley	Deputy Principal Accountant
Carlie Simmonds	Committee Services Manager

66. Councillor Colin Caller

The meeting observed a minutes silence as a mark of respect for Cllr Colin Caller who had recently passed away.

67. Minutes

The Minutes of the extraordinary and scheduled meeting of the Council held on 17 December 2019 were signed by the Mayor.

68. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Sarah Gow, Tony Rice and Lenny Rolles declared an Other Significant Interest in agenda items 7 (Council Tax and Budget Setting 2020-21) and 8 (Supplementary Report to Council Tax and Budget Setting 2020-21 - Gravesend Town Centre) in that they have been appointed as Directors of Rosherville Limited, the Council's Local Authority Trading Company and had been advised by the Monitoring Officer that although the budget item could be an OSI relevant to the allocation of capital funding, as Cabinet will be making any decisions about actual allocation of capital, they can stay in the Council Chamber this evening, take part in the debate and vote.

69. To answer any questions received from members of the public of which notice has been given under Council Procedure Rule 13

No questions had been received.

70. Minutes of Committees

Motions that proceedings, reports and recommendations of Committees, except those reserved under Council Procedure 5.2(6) as referred to below be received and adopted and where applicable the Orders made by them be ratified and confirmed were duly proposed, seconded and resolved in each case.

- Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 6 January 2020
- Minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory Board (Planning) held on Wednesday, 8 January 2020
- Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 16 January 2020
- Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 3 February 2020
- Minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory Board (Planning) held on Wednesday, 5 February 2020
- Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 13 February 2020
- Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee held on Monday, 17 February 2020

The Council's attention was drawn to Minute 38 of the Finance and Audit Committee held on Monday, 17 February 2020.

71. Reserved Minutes

There were no reserved minutes.

72. Council Tax and Budget Setting 2020-21 (including the Supplementary Report on Gravesend Town Centre)

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.4.1, an extension of time was given to Councillor John Burden and an equal amount of time to Cllrs Jordan Meade and Harold Craske.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that all individual votes in relation to the budget and any amendments thereto would be recorded as required by legislation.

It was moved by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr Lee Croxton that:-

the motion before Council as set out in the order paper be approved.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Jordan Meade and seconded by Councillor Ejaz Aslam that:-

Proposal one: A council tax reduction for care leavers aged 22-25

This Council will offer a Council Tax reduction to zero liability in respect of Care Leavers aged between 22-25.

Based on the figures provided (KCC Budget) and working on an average of 12 cases per district, the total cost to Gravesham would be estimated at £2,500.

Proposal two: Provision of 18 additional dog waste bins across the Borough

This Council will provide 18 additional multipurpose receptacles dog waste bins across the borough, with an expectation that Ward Members will provide intelligence as to where these should be located.

The cost of this solution would be £6,300. There would be no further cost of collection as officers have advised that this could be absorbed into existing collection rounds.

Proposal three: A 25% business rate relief to assets of community value

This Council will offer a 25% discretionary relief on business rates to all Assets of Community Value in Gravesham.

There are currently five properties listed on the register of assets of community value and all are already receiving reliefs or exemptions from Business Rates. A further 25% relief on the remaining business rates would be an annual estimated cost of some £2,200.

Proposal four: Ringfenced funding to conduct a digital connectivity review

This Council shall ringfence £20,000 from the "Balance available after capital expenditure" in Appendix 2 of the Town Centre Regeneration paper to undertake a comprehensive review of the borough's digital connectivity.

This review shall assess the digital capacity of Gravesham's existing networks in both the town centre and in out of town locations.

Proposal five: Reintroduction of Members' can grant scheme

This Council shall reintroduce the Gravesham CAN Grant Scheme at 2015/16 levels, thus providing each Ward Member with a grant of £1000 to spend on projects within their Wards.

Based on a £1,000 grant to 44 Councillors the estimated cost to the Council would be £44,000.

These budget amendments (with the exception of Proposal Four which will be funded from ring-fenced capital reserves) to be funded from the Council's General Fund working balances.

Where Proposal Four was in relation to the connectivity assessment.

Following a debate, the amendment was put to the meeting and declared to be lost by 22 votes to 17:-

For the motion	Against the motion	Abstain
Cllrs: D Ashenden, H Ashenden, Aslam, Broadley, Dibben, A Elliott, E Elliott, Harding, Hills, Hoskins, Lane, Meade, Pritchard, Rice, Ridgers, Tiran, Wardle.	The Worshipful the Mayor Cllrs: Burden, Caller, Croxton, Francis, Gow, Hayre, Khabra, L Milner, Mochrie-Cox, Morley, Mulheran, Rana, C Rolles, L Rolles, Sangha, Scollard, Singh, Sullivan, Thandi, Thompson and Wallace.	Cllrs: Craske and Pearton.

The substantive motion was put to the meeting and declared to be carried unanimously:-

For the motion	Against the motion	Abstain
The Worshipful the Mayor Cllrs: D Ashenden, H Ashenden, Aslam, Broadley, Burden, Caller, Craske, Croxton, Dibben, A Elliott, Francis, Gow, Harding, Hayre, Hills, Hoskins, Khabra, Lane, Meade, L Milner, Mochrie-Cox, Morley, Mulheran, Pearton, Pritchard, Rana, Rice, Ridgers, C Rolles, L Rolles, Sangha, Scollard, Singh, Sullivan, Thandi, Thompson, Tiran, Wallace and Wardle.	None.	None.

It was therefore **resolved** that:-

1. It be noted that on 10 January 2020 the Director (Corporate Services) calculated;

(a) the Council Tax Base 2020-21 for the whole Council area as **34,334.50** Band D equivalent properties, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011.

- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as set out below;

Part of the Council's area:	£
Cobham	674.93
Higham	1,572.62
Luddesdown	101.09
Meopham	3,069.44
Shorne	1,155.76
Vigo	696.13
Gravesham & Northfleet	27,064.53
Total	34,334.50

2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2020-21 (excluding Parish precepts) is £7,144,320 (£208.08 per Band D Property).

3. That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2020-21 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011:

- (a) £67,136,220 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
- (b) £59,623,690 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £7,512,530 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- (d) £218.80 being the amount at 3(c) above, all divided by Item 1a above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- (e) £368,210 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

- (f) £208.08 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item 1a above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

(g) Part of the Council's area:	£
Parish of:	
Cobham	239.19
Higham	266.13
Luddesdown	270.65
Meopham	242.88
Shorne	241.07
Vigo	358.38

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for the dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (h) Part of the Council's area

Parish of:	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cobham	159.46	186.04	212.61	239.19	292.34	345.50	398.65	478.38
Higham	177.42	206.99	236.56	266.13	325.27	384.41	443.55	532.26
Luddesdown	180.43	210.51	240.58	270.65	330.79	390.94	451.08	541.30
Meopham	161.92	188.91	215.89	242.88	296.85	350.83	404.80	485.76
Shorne	160.71	187.50	214.28	241.07	294.64	348.21	401.78	482.14
Vigo	238.92	278.74	318.56	358.38	438.02	517.66	597.30	716.76
All other parts	138.72	161.84	184.96	208.08	254.32	300.56	346.80	416.16

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(f) and 3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4. That it be noted that for the year 2020-21 the Kent County Council has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
900.84	1,050.98	1,201.12	1,351.26	1,651.54	1,951.82	2,252.10	2,702.52

5. That it be noted that for the year 2020-21 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
135.43	158.01	180.58	203.15	248.29	293.44	338.58	406.30

6. That it be noted that for the year 2020-21 the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below: -

Valuation Bands							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
52.86	61.67	70.48	79.29	96.91	114.53	132.15	158.58

7. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3(h), 4, 5 and 6 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2020-21 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Part of the Council's area	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Parish of:	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cobham	1,248.59	1,456.70	1,664.79	1,872.89	2,289.08	2,705.29	3,121.48	3,745.78
Higham	1,266.55	1,477.65	1,688.74	1,899.83	2,322.01	2,744.20	3,166.38	3,799.66
Luddesdown	1,269.56	1,481.17	1,692.76	1,904.35	2,327.53	2,750.73	3,173.91	3,808.70
Meopham	1,251.05	1,459.57	1,668.07	1,876.58	2,293.59	2,710.62	3,127.63	3,753.16
Shorne	1,249.84	1,458.16	1,666.46	1,874.77	2,291.38	2,708.00	3,124.61	3,749.54
Vigo	1,328.05	1,549.40	1,770.74	1,992.08	2,434.76	2,877.45	3,320.13	3,984.16
All other parts	1,227.85	1,432.50	1,637.14	1,841.78	2,251.06	2,660.35	3,069.63	3,683.56

8. the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020-21 at Appendix 2 be approved;

9. consideration was given to the view of the Director (Corporate Services) (as S151 Officer) on the robustness of estimates for the coming year, the medium term financial strategy and the adequacy of proposed reserves and balances, as required under Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003;
10. the Council Tax Base as at Appendix 4 be ratified;
11. consideration was given to the budget proposals contained within the report and the proposed Budget Book for Gravesham Borough Council provided at Appendix 7 and the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account revenue and capital budgets for 2020- 21 be determined, noting the provisional estimates for the further nine years;
12. delegated authority be provided to the Director (Corporate Services), in consultation with the Leader of the Executive and Leader of the Opposition to make an adjustment to the budget in the form of a transfer to or from working balances equal to the difference between the provisional local government settlement and the final local government settlement, if the final settlement has not been received by 25 February 2020 (further information can be seen in paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 of the report);
13. the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020-21 be agreed; and
14. the proposed plans for the Town Centre contained within the supplementary report be agreed and the Director (Corporate Services) makes the necessary amendments to the Capital and Revenue Budgets in 2020/21 and future years to reflect the associated costs and financing options, as set out in Appendix 2 of the supplementary report.

Note:

- (1) During the debate, the meeting was adjourned in order to provide the Palantypist with an appropriate break; and
- (2) Councillor Emma Elliott did not participate in the vote for the substantive motion because she was feeling unwell and had left the Council Chamber before the vote had taken place.

73. Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

The Council received a report which detailed the outcome of the review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations in Gravesham.

Resolved that having taking into account all representations received, the revised schedule of polling districts and polling places be adopted with immediate effect.

74. Notice of Motion

It was moved by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr Jordan Meade that:-

This Council adopts in full the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism, and its working examples, as set out below:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.

Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong. “It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.

Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.

Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.

Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).

Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.

Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.

Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.

Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.

Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Anti-Semitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of anti-Semitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are anti-Semitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Anti-Semitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

The motion was put to the meeting and declared to be carried unanimously.

75. Appointments to Outside Body

Resolved that Mr Philip Painter be re-appointed to the Henry Pinnock and Victoria & Albert Memorial Charity for a four year term.

76. To consider questions from Members of the Council of which notice has been given under Council Procedure Rule 14.

No questions had been received.

77. Chief Executive, David Hughes

The Leader stated that this will be the last meeting of the Council to be attended by David Hughes, Chief Executive, who will be retiring on 31 March 2020. On behalf of the Council, the Leader of the Executive paid tribute to Mr Hughes on the work undertaken during his tenure at Gravesham Borough Council.

Mr Hughes in his response thanked Members, past and present, for the support they had given to him and stated that it had been a privilege to work for Gravesham Borough Council. Mr Hughes invited Members to attend his farewell gathering on 31 March 2020.

78. To receive the Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor:-

- thanked all those that had attended Gravesham's Chinese New Year celebration which was well attended;
- invited Members to attend the Commonwealth Day Flag Raising event on 9 March 2020 at 10am on the Community Square; and
- invited Members to attend his Fish and Chip Charity Quiz Night on 16 March 2020 at 6.30pm at Reliance Fish Bar.

The Mayor invited those present to join him in the Parlour for refreshments.

Close of Meeting

The meeting ended at 10.26am