

Cabinet

Monday, 22 February 2021

7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr John Burden (Chair)
Cllr Lee Croxton (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Shane Mochrie-Cox
 Lenny Rolles
 Brian Sangha
 Narinderjit Singh Thandi
 Jenny Wallace

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| Stuart Bobby | Chief Executive |
| Nick Brown | Director (Housing & Operations) |
| Kevin Burbidge | Director (Planning & Development) |
| Melanie Norris | Director (Communities) |
| Sarah Parfitt | Director (Corporate Services) |
| Lisa Nyon | Assistant Director (Corporate Services) |
| Jan Guylar | Head of Legal Shared Services |
| Elizabeth Thornton | Service Manager (Property & Regulatory) |
| Andy Rayfield | Communications Manager |
| Michelle Batstone | Corporate Change Manager |
| James Bridges | Digital Developer (Technical Support) |
| Ben Clarke | Committee & Scrutiny Assistant (Minutes) |

76. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

77. To sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Monday, 01 February 2021 were signed by the Chair.

78. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Lenny Rolles declared a significant interest, in agenda item 8 – Proposed Amendments to the Articles of Association for Rosherville Limited as he was a Director on and the Chair of the Rosherville Ltd Board. Cllr Rolles agreed to leave the meeting whilst Cabinet discussed the agenda item.

Cllr Narinderjit Singh Thandi declared a significant interest, in agenda item 11 – Gurdwara Car Park and agreed to leave the meeting whilst Cabinet discussed the agenda item.

79. Delegated Decisions - Cabinet Members

Cllr Jenny Wallace informed Cabinet that she had agreed to the Revised Housing Allocation Policy and it had been circulated last Friday.

No other decisions other than those already circulated had been made.

80. GBC Response to the COVID Pandemic

The Cabinet were provided with a summary of the outcomes of the internal review that had been undertaken in relation to how the Council had responded to the COVID-19 pandemic both through the first lockdown, and subsequent lockdowns that were announced.

The Corporate Change Manager guided Members through the report and outlined key points from the following outcomes:

- Responding to the first lockdown – March 2020 to July 2020
- Subsequent lockdown period – November 2020 to date
- Maintaining Council services
- GBC Operational Activities
- Involvement with the Kent Resilience Forums
- Next Steps and future workstreams

The Corporate Change Manager advised Members that the report gave them a general overview of the Council's response to the pandemic but there would be more specific update reports submitted to each of the Cabinet Committees during the next Committee cycle. Those reports would give a more detailed update for each Portfolio and give all Members the chance to actively contribute to the discussions.

The Chair, on behalf of the Cabinet and Members from across the Council, expressed his thanks and appreciation for all of the officer's hard work in delivering vital services throughout the course of the pandemic. Many officers faced additional burdens responding to the needs of the pandemic as well as fulfilling their duties of their 'day job' but they worked exceedingly hard to support the Community and it was recognised by residents as well as Members.

The Cabinet Members agreed with the Chair's sincere thanks and voiced their interest in the detailed update reports being submitted to their respective Cabinet Committees for discussion.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments and in response to a point raised regarding officers working from home in the future, the Chair advised that the mechanisms in place had worked very well but hopefully a roadmap would soon be unveiled by the Government which would outline how to get officers safely back into the workplace.

The Cabinet noted the outcomes of the review that has been undertaken, and the future work streams identified to support the Borough's recovery from the pandemic.

81. Update against the LGA Peer Challenge Recommendations

The Cabinet were provided with an update against the recommendations made by the LGA as part of their review in October 2019 and arrangements were set out for a follow-up review by the Peer Challenge Team in March 2021.

The Chief Executive informed Members that Gravesham were the first local authority to take up the offer of a 'light touch' review to investigate what progress the Council had made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the Peer team in 2019. The follow up review would be conducted virtually by the previous Peer Challenge Team apart from the previous Officer Peer who was not available and had been replaced by an Officer Peer from Hertfordshire County Council; the Officer Peers main focus would be on Planning as that was a specific request by the Council.

The Corporate Change Manager directed Members attention to appendix two to the report which outlined the progress made against the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations. Of the twenty-seven key recommendations, twelve had been completed and fifteen had some measure of progress made against them; the Corporate Change Manager was pleased to announce that there weren't any recommendations where zero progress had been made to date.

The Corporate Change Manager further explained the process of the upcoming review and advised that once the Peer Review was completed a short report would be produced by the LGA and presented back to the Council; that report would be shared with Members in due course following its review by officers.

The Chair commended officers for all of the hard work that had gone into addressing the recommendations from the Review, but the Chair felt that the Peer Challenge Team also needed to be informed of the following:

- All of the progress made to date to ensure the Council meets its 2030 target of becoming carbon neutral
- The restructuring changes made to the Housing Team and the progress made within Housing with regards to the day-to-day roles of officers and the Housing policies

The Cabinet voiced their approval of the Council accepting a follow up review and were all confident that a positive report would be received back; any feedback that might be received would only enhance the services provided by the Council.

The Cabinet noted the progress made in respect of the agreed action plan and the arrangements for the follow-up review in March 2021.

82. Proposed amendments to the Articles of Association for Rosherville Limited

The Chief Executive set out the proposed amendments to the Articles of Association for Rosherville Limited for Member approval:

- Article 3 (1) be updated to reflect that Rosherville Limited would continue to have five Directors but for subsidiary companies, there would be a requirement to have three Directors

- Article 11 (2) be updated to reflect that the quorate for Rosherville Limited would continue to be three Directors, including one officer Director, and for the subsidiary companies, the quorate would be two officer Directors

The Chief Executive advised that Cabinet approval was also being sought to provide delegated authority to the Leader of the Executive, in consultation with the Chief Executive, regarding future appointment to the Boards for both the Holding Company and the subsidiary companies.

Resolved that the Cabinet:

- Approved the updated Articles of Association as set out in appendix two to this report

Delegated authority or the appointment and approval of Directors, in line with the revised Articles of Association to the Leader of the Executive in consultation with the Chief Executive

83. Exclusion

The Chair moved that pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded from any items included in Part B of the agenda because it was likely in view of the nature of business to be transacted that if members of the public were present during those items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

84. Gurdwara Car Park

The Service Manager (Property and Regulatory) sought the Cabinets approval to the terms provisionally agreed on the Gurdwara car park lease renewal.

The Service Manager (Property and Regulatory) informed Cabinet that the Gurdwara approached the Council a couple of months ago to commence negotiations on a new lease; the terms of the lease could be found at section two of the report. There were a few amendments to the original lease agreement, but they were considerable acceptable, and the recommendation was to approve the agreement based on those terms.

The Chair advised that the terms seemed fair and the car park was very popular with local shoppers.

Resolved that the Cabinet approved entering into a new lease on the terms provisionally agreed.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 19:59pm.