

# CORPORATE PLAN 2019-23

*Delivering a Gravesham to be proud of*

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# Leader of the Executive: *an introduction*

When I first entered council politics all the way back in 1987, my ambition was simple; to use my position to better the lives of local residents and help people feel proud of the place they live.

Times may have changed since then but that ambition, that vision of building a better borough, rings as true today as it did all those years ago.

Gravesham is a great borough. As a local community however, in recent times we seem to have lost our way a little in what Gravesham stands for, what it represents and the place it should be. As the elected leader for the council, I am fully committed to tackling this.

This Corporate Plan therefore has the overriding ambition of *delivering a Gravesham to be proud of*.

- a borough where you can visit a town centre that is safe, attractive and full of life;
- a place where, building on our commitment to tackling climate change, we are considerate of our historical living environment; and,
- a Gravesham where we put local people first, working to ensure residents are safe, healthy and active in a place they are proud to call home.

After a decade of the most significant and sustained cuts to local government funding in living memory, and at a time when people are living longer, we need more homes, more jobs and more investment in the borough, we know we are going to have to do things differently. To get anywhere near our ambition as a council we have to, and we will, take control of our own destiny.

It would be easy for the council to scale back and provide only what we have to. That is simply not enough for myself or my Cabinet colleagues. I firmly believe that the council has a moral and social responsibility to play our part and do whatever we can to improve the well-being and quality of life of local people.

To deliver on this administration's election manifesto, I am therefore delighted to stand by the bold commitments we have set out throughout this plan.

As has always been my own ambition, I therefore look forward to working with you in delivering a Gravesham we can all be proud of.



Councillor John Burden  
Leader of the Executive

# CHAPTER 1: GRAVESHAM COMMUNITY

# Gravesham Profile: *understanding our community*

Gathering relevant information about the profile of the local community enables us to better target our resources and make fully informed decisions when designing service interventions with the greatest impact for local residents.

In understanding the borough, and the scale of community need, we can more effectively plan our services. Profiling the community, against each of the 12 district councils in Kent wherever possible, therefore forms a key part of the evidence base on which this Corporate Plan and its objectives was developed. A selection of datasets are provided below, with the full Community Profile available on the council's website: <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/communityprofile>



## Gravesham in numbers:

106,100: smallest population in Kent.	10.7per hectare: third highest population density in Kent.
23%: residents with an ethnicity other than 'white British', highest in Kent.	25.9%: primary school children without English as a first language.
5.5%: highest rate of housing over-occupancy in Kent.	205: average annual number of dwellings built over the last five years.
13.5 years: difference in average male life expectancy between most and least deprived wards.	8.8 years: difference in average female life expectancy between most and least deprived wards.
44.4%: businesses surviving 5 years or more, ahead of the Kent average.	23.2%: highest level of obesity amongst Year 6 children in Kent.
£576.90: fifth lowest average weekly full-time earnings in Kent.	3.1%: fifth highest rate of unemployment in Kent.
20%: residents holding 'Level 4 (degree) qualifications and above', 4 <sup>th</sup> lowest in Kent.	121: incidents of crime per 1,000 residents, third highest rate in Kent.

# Gravesham Consultation: *listening to our community*

As a local authority, working with and listening to our community through our consultation practices enables us to better understand expectations and more effectively plan our services in response.

Effective consultation helps build trust and public confidence and, ultimately, leads to better informed decision making.

Over 800 Gravesham residents, businesses and community groups took part in our Corporate Plan consultation exercise, providing over 2,500 individual pieces of information and intelligence relating to community requests for council provision and intervention. Leading themes from the consultative process were identified as:

- Positive enforcement: whether in regards to littering, planning conditions, housing tenancies or private housing standards, the community was clear in its request for the council to take a proactive stance to enforcement.
- A local 'green' offer: management of parks, accessible green spaces, greater horticultural coverage and improvements to play sites and the town centre street scene.
- Economic regeneration: a clear message was for the council to take a more hands-on role in shaping Gravesham as a 'place' and to set out our economic plans for the future.
- Clean environment: a commitment to cleanliness in all forms; refuse, littering, fly-tipping, graffiti, parks. The Gravesham environment was the highest scoring theme.
- Tackling homelessness / supporting vulnerable residents: there was a significant number of requests for increased council support in the consultation, none more so than for vulnerable residents.

This exercise provided us with an understanding of what areas of our work are of greatest importance to the local community. Working alongside the community profile and the manifesto of the elected administration, this Corporate Plan was therefore designed in full consideration of the feedback received.

The results gave us a transparent and community-driven platform. It is our responsibility to now make the choices and decisions required to protect, re-invest in and improve those most valued frontline services as we work towards our ambition of *delivering a Gravesham to be proud of*.

# Gravesham Objectives: *planning for our community*

This plan sets out the strategic direction for the council over the 2019-23 period. The plan establishes a suite of corporate objectives and supporting policy commitments that will guide everything we do and how we go about it.

The Corporate Plan presents the scale of the council’s plans for the borough and sets the tone and guiding principles from which all council activity will be based over a four year period.

In drafting this Corporate Plan we have:

- analysed a variety of government sources to identify relevant community needs, inequalities and opportunities;
- listened to and accounted for the ambitions and expectations of local residents and businesses;
- built in the manifesto pledges of the council’s elected administration; and
- costed the plan with an assessment of the likely future resources available to the council.

Working within the context of the council’s established *Gravesham Vision*, these sources have enabled us to draw together our ambition for the borough for 2019-23; *delivering a Gravesham to be proud of*.

In seeking to deliver against that ambition, we have established a suite of corporate objectives and supporting policy commitments that act as a framework against which all council strategies, projects and initiatives will be planned, resourced and delivered. These three corporate objectives will each have their own portfolio of activities and initiatives but, importantly, are designed to work with and support each other for the benefit of our local community.

<b>#1 People</b>	protected environment quality living	<i>a proud community; where residents can call a safe, clean and attractive borough their home.</i>
<b>#2 Place</b>	vibrant economy connected community	<i>a dynamic borough; defined by a vibrant and productive local economy taking advantage of growth in the area, supported by its strong and active community.</i>
<b>#3 Progress</b>	entrepreneurial authority strong leadership	<i>an entrepreneurial authority; commercial in outlook and committed to continuous service improvement, underpinned by a skilled workforce and strong governance environment.</i>



# Gravesham Vision: *shaping our community*

Gravesham has in place a Local Plan that sets out the plans for development in the borough to 2028. At its heart is a spatial vision for Gravesham that is developed by the council's Core Strategy, with the success of planning policies measured against it.

Through its adopted Local Plan, the council has in place a *Gravesham Vision*:

*By 2028, Gravesham will be a place where residents have access to quality housing, jobs and services that allow them to meet their day-to-day needs in an environmentally safe, vibrant and attractive borough; a Gravesham to be proud of. Development and growth will be managed to ensure that local infrastructure impacts are mitigated. Whilst facilitating this growth, the borough's protected landscapes and natural habitats will be safeguarded and the impact of growth on the environment minimised.*

The objectives of our Local Plan, and the successful delivery of the overarching *Gravesham Vision*, can only be achieved through the direct actions of the council as detailed in this Corporate Plan. The organisational objectives and commitments of this Corporate Plan have therefore been developed in full consideration of the *Gravesham Vision* and, equally, designed to commit and shape the council's operations to its successful delivery as detailed below:

Gravesham Vision: objectives	Corporate Plan: objectives
A regenerated Gravesend and Northfleet. From areas with a significant number of brownfield sites and redundant buildings to areas that offers a more diverse range of employment and housing.	#1 People: Quality living & #2 Place: Vibrant economy
Delivery of new homes that allow residents and their families to stay and grow in the Borough. Homes of differing types, tenures and size will have been provided that enhance the character of the Borough's urban and rural areas.	#1 People: Quality living
Economic growth and a matching skilled workforce, increasing the Borough's appeal and prosperity. Increased local employment opportunities for residents will also have reduced the need to travel outside the Borough for employment.	#2 Place: Vibrant economy
Transformation of Gravesend Town Centre it into a community and cultural hub. This modern town centre, and its diverse offer, will provide both residents and visitors with a unique experience, supported by excellent public transport.	#2 Place: Vibrant economy
Enhanced riverfront access and permeability of the Thames Path. Residents and visitors will enjoy the River Thames and local heritage and environmental assets such as the New Tavern Fort and the Thames Estuary and Marshes.	#1 People: Quality living
Improved walking and cycling links and established Green Infrastructure network. This will help reduce health inequalities and improve quality of life, provide benefits to wildlife, protect the landscape and deliver sustainable public transport.	#2 Place: Connected community
Conserved and enhanced the Borough's rich historic built environment, landscape character and biodiversity as well as respected its distinctive local character.	#2 Place: Vibrant economy
Adopted sustainable living and operating practices delivering a cleaner, more attractive and healthier Gravesham, working towards preparing for the borough to become carbon neutral.	#1 People: Protected environment

In order to be successful in our own organisational ambition of *delivering a Gravesham to be proud of*, our community-focussed objectives will be underpinned by our final commercially-driven objective #3: Progress. In an age of limited government support, only by transforming our service delivery models and generating our own income can we hope to finance our expanded frontline offer and, ultimately, deliver the *Gravesham Vision*.

INFOGRAPHIC: GRAVESHAM SCENE INC. OBJECTIVES/COMMITTMENTS

# CHAPTER 2: GRAVESHAM OBJECTIVES

**#1 People: a proud community; where residents can call a safe, clean and attractive borough their home.**

At the heart of every local community are its people: young and old; commuters; parents; business owners; vulnerable residents; all with different hopes, needs and expectations. At the heart of our Corporate Plan therefore is a commitment to deliver the type, scale and quality of services our residents need and deserve. Putting people first and prioritising a protected living environment that is safe, clean and attractive, is at the core of objective #1: *People*.

Protected environment

Gravesham residents want a feeling of safety and a sense of personal pride in where they live; protection of their local environment. That means the knowledge they are safe in their own home and neighbourhood and that the most vulnerable in society are being safeguarded from harm. Residents also have the ambition for a ‘green borough’, one with clean streets and green, open, accessible and protected spaces enjoyed by all.

To meet these expectations, through this Corporate Plan the council is putting in place a strong local offer for its core frontline services; to not just do what it can when it can, but to do what it should when it’s needed most.

Our commitments:

- **Create stronger neighbourhoods:** work with Kent Police on the prevention, detection and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, and the safeguarding of local residents.
- **Enforce high regulatory standards:** put customer and employee safety first by ensuring commercial businesses and licence holders are fully compliant with expected legislative standards.
- **Carbon neutral borough:** in declaring a climate emergency, begin to take action to prepare Gravesham to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- **Improve the local environment:** deliver projects and initiatives to further increase levels of household recycling and actively address contaminated land and noise, flood and oil pollution in the borough.
- **Create clean, welcoming neighbourhoods and parks, and an attractive town centre:** a comprehensive programme of street cleansing and high standard of horticultural maintenance.
- **Actively enforce environmental standards:** use available powers to pursue anyone committing environmental crime or damaging the local environment.

Our performance:

PI 1	Total number of reported crime offences
PI 2	Total number of reported Anti-Social Behaviour incidents
PI 3	Total number of reported health and safety incidents
PI 4	% of broadly compliant food establishments
PI 5	% of environmental health service requests receiving a first response within five working days
PI 6	Total co <sup>2</sup> emissions in the borough
PI 7	Total co <sup>2</sup> emissions from council assets
PI 8	% of household waste recycled
PI 9	Total volume of residual waste per household
PI 10	% of household waste sent to landfill
PI 11	Average time taken to remove graffiti identified as GBC responsibility
PI 12	% of areas with unacceptable levels of littering
PI 13	Total number of environmental enforcement actions taken

### Quality living

A sustainable housing sector improves the lives of local people, strengthens communities and delivers a number of associated social benefits; tackling public health inequalities whilst increasing social mobility. In that knowledge we are determined to play our part for local people in meeting demand for quality market and affordable housing across all needs. Equally, as a social housing landlord, our commitment is to provide a service that works closely with tenants at all times, progressively delivering housing improvements and creatively working to meet local housing needs, particularly for the most vulnerable residents.

Alongside our housing efforts, a number of other frontline services directly impact on the quality of life for local people. Whether ensuring an efficient council tax service, delivering an accessible, competitively priced and properly enforced car parking offer, or making sure our customer based services are effective, responsive and open to all, we are committed to getting things right first time. We will create a living environment that, importantly, puts local people first.

### Our commitments:

- **Deliver an ambitious and diverse programme of building:** increase the supply of high quality market and affordable housing.
- **Enforce a high quality of private housing:** work with landlords to tackle property standards, empty homes and homes in multiple occupation.
- **Provide a proactive, supportive and financially efficient housing service:** high quality tenant management experienced through a service making full use of its assets.
- **Safeguard residents:** put in place a package of housing measures and creative interventions that support the most vulnerable.
- **Deliver a skilled in-house building management team:** progressively improve the standard and efficiency of local housing.
- **Put our customers first:** implement a suite of quality and effective frontline services accessible to all.
- **A sound car parking offer:** support the local living environment with suitable and competitive parking provision, maintained by an effective enforcement regime.

### Our performance:

PI 14	Total number of net additional homes delivered
PI 15	Gross number of affordable homes delivered
PI 16	Total number of empty private sector homes brought back into occupation
PI 17	Total number of private sector homes brought up to standard
PI 18	Average time taken to re-let council housing
PI 19	% of Disabled Facility Grant applications processed on time
PI 20	Total number of households in temporary accommodation
PI 21	% of emergency jobs completed on time
PI 22	% of council properties with valid gas safety certification
PI 23	Average processing time for Housing Benefit claims
PI 24	Average processing time for changes of circumstance in Housing Benefit claims
PI 25	% satisfaction with Customer Services (Reception)
PI 26	Total number of reported corporate complaints
PI 27	% of council car parks awarded Park Mark status

**#2 Place:** a dynamic borough; defined by a vibrant and productive local economy taking advantage of growth in the area, supported by its strong and active community.

Gravesham has a proud heritage and benefits from a strong, diverse local community. To build on these foundations, as local place-shapers this Corporate Plan commits us to securing much-needed development that addresses local resident need and, ultimately, presents a Gravesham for the future; one in which people choose to live, work and enjoy. High quality regeneration projects and creative initiatives to deliver sustained economic growth, supported by a package of community well-being measures that promote the unique sense of Gravesham as a place therefore form the foundations of objective #2: *Place*.

#### Vibrant economy

We want a strong, resilient and productive Gravesham economy, providing rewarding jobs and incomes for local people. To achieve this, we have a vital responsibility to create the right conditions for major regeneration and sustained economic growth, now and into the future; providing the required space, accommodation and infrastructure to attract investment and enable businesses to grow, developing resident employability and promoting the borough as 'open for business'. Our efforts will not end there. We will proactively facilitate economic growth in the borough using our own resources and assets; building new industrial units and, importantly, progressively intervening where the market has failed in tackling empty and unused sites primed for development.

From the regeneration of the traditional heart of Gravesend town centre into an attractive, mixed community hub for modern living, leisure and work, through to the implementation of a high quality business infrastructure, we are committed to delivering growth in Gravesham and making it a place that works for all.

#### Our commitments:

- **Enhance the vibrancy of the Gravesham economy:** deliver a programme of strategic regeneration schemes, supported by an effective Town Centre team.
- **Raise Gravesham's economic profile:** develop business and transport infrastructure and improve local land usage through a diversified commercial premises portfolio.
- **Promote a borough 'open for business':** with a focus on retaining existing businesses and encouraging new start-ups, increase the level and range of business investment to drive economic growth.
- **Improve economic conditions:** alongside key partner agencies, develop a package of measures that support local enterprises and deliver a workforce with the skills needed by modern business.
- **Positively promote sustainable development:** deliver a pro-active development management service, underpinned by a sound Local Plan that protects and enhances our historic natural and built environment.

#### Our performance:

PI 28	% rate of vacant town centre retail properties
PI 29	Average weekly town centre footfall
PI 30	Total rateable value of all commercial properties
PI 31	Total number of vacant commercial properties
PI 32	% net gain in new businesses
PI 33	% rate of resident unemployment
PI 34	% rate of youth unemployment
PI 35	% of 'Major' planning applications processed on time
PI 36	% of 'Non-Major' planning applications processed on time

### Connected community

Gravesham is a borough of significant cultural heritage with a strong sense of community, something we want to nurture in delivering a place people want to live, work and enjoy. Gravesham is the most diverse borough in Kent. If we are to be successful in our aim therefore, with that knowledge comes the need and opportunity to bring people together; helping consult, educate and celebrate in building a cohesive community. Our identity also extends to the cultural sector and we understand the fundamental and diverse role it plays, from tackling social isolation through to boosting the local economy. To promote the Gravesham brand, we therefore have the responsibility to further develop the borough's physical heritage and strong arts offer.

Building a strong, happy, integrated community is not restricted to promotional work alone. Gravesham has large scale health inequalities and, whilst improvements have been made in recent times, the difference experienced across the borough is stark. We are committed to addressing this. Through this Corporate Plan we will provide high quality leisure facilities, sporting programmes and green open spaces that are accessible to all. Aligned to that general offer, working with our partners we will promote a series of targeted support interventions aimed at improving the overall health and well-being of residents.

### Our commitments:

- **Design a quality and affordable leisure offer:** improved facilities and creative sports programmes to tackle local health inequalities.
- **Improve resident well-being:** provide and preserve a suite of high quality play areas and promote opportunities for active lives.
- **Manage a programme of proactive healthy living interventions:** work with partners to help support and safeguard vulnerable residents.
- **Develop a cohesive and resilient community:** implement a leading programme of engagement initiatives, showcasing the borough's diversity and enabling greater participation in civic life.
- **Enhance the borough's cultural offer:** maximise the usage of The Woodville and the Borough Market as community assets.
- **Promote Gravesham's arts and heritage:** support local groups in their community reach and expand the visitor economy.

### Our performance:

PI 37	Total number of leisure centre attendees
PI 38	Total number of 'Active Gravesham' attendees
PI 39	% of council play sites annually inspected
PI 40	Total number of people achieving a target outcome from the Gr@nd's healthy living services
PI 41	Total number of community activities/events delivered by the council and in conjunction with its partners
PI 42	Total number of patron tickets sold by The Woodville
PI 43	Average weekly Borough Market footfall
PI 44	Total number of visitors attending Gravesham heritage sites

**#3 Progress: an entrepreneurial authority; commercial in outlook and committed to continuous service improvement, underpinned by a skilled workforce and strong governance environment.**

Gravesham residents have made it clear - they want a more 'hands-on' and community-focussed council. If the last Corporate Plan was defined by our work to 'Bridge the Gap' financially, this plan is to be defined by a progressive, interventionist approach; vital to improve the quality of life deserved by residents and the development of a place to be proud. To fulfil our stated objectives and commitments it is essential that a systematic change in how we approach service delivery is undertaken, within a framework of creative management and sound governance; collectively this forms the basis of objective #3: *Progress*.

Entrepreneurial authority

We operate in an environment of ever-increasing demand for our services and ever-growing customer expectations of the quality we provide. Compounding this has been a decade of the largest ever cuts to local government funding that have, inevitably, had a lasting impact on the borough. In the face of ongoing uncertainty to local government funding, to successfully realise our community-focussed objectives we will put in place a package of new ways of working. Whether creating new income via a trading company and a diversified property investment portfolio, or delivering a comprehensive programme of business process reviews to realise service efficiencies, we will implement a commercial culture to finance our expanded frontline offer; a social return on investment.

Central to our change agenda is a commitment to the creative use of technology. Digital technology is reshaping and impacting every business, industry and economy, as well as customer expectations for 24-hour accessible services. High quality and personalised digital services that provide the flexibility expected of a modern business, coupled with IT solutions that transform the way we are able to deliver our services, are the foundation of our plans for innovation.

Our commitments:

- **Develop an entrepreneurial culture:** deliver on commercial opportunities to generate income and provide a social impact.
- **A financially innovative council:** design a suite of initiatives to achieve genuine financial independence and generate the income required for our enhanced frontline offer.
- **Deliver a more resilient, creative and cost-effective council:** implement a programme of 'continuous change', overhauling business processes and delivering new, innovative service design.
- **Digital innovation:** provide the platforms for intelligent customer insight and a quality digital experience, and the IT solutions to transform services, delivering a dynamic working environment.

Our performance:

PI 45	Total rental income from property investments
PI 46	Average yield generated by property investment activity
PI 47	Total amount secured through contractual social value
PI 48	% of income from commercial activity in relation to net revenue spend
PI 49	% of posts involved in shared service arrangements
PI 50	Total number of people signed up to Citizens Access
PI 51	Total number of online self-help forms completed
PI 52	% of workforce IT-enabled for remote working



### Strong leadership

To truly embrace the scale of change and innovation required to deliver our ambition for the borough, we need our organisation to be fully prepared. We recognise that the quality of our service is inherently linked to the performance talent of our staff. For this reason we are committed to being an employer of choice; one that delivers a fully agile, creative, skilled and supported workforce. From robust and progressive policies and practices fit for a modern employer, to a workforce development plan that unlocks the potential of staff and develops strong leaders throughout the organisation, we know that only by engaging, developing and empowering our most valuable asset can we hope to deliver the ambition set out in this plan.

In conducting our business, at the heart of the council will be a culture of strong leadership and a robust framework of governance. In delivering this Corporate Plan's identified priorities, our commitment to good governance will ensure we direct the right resources to the right services at the right time, operate on an inclusive and transparent platform and, crucially, achieve our stated outcomes - all designed to make a genuine difference to local residents.

### Our commitments:

- **An employer of choice:** advance the council's Investors in People standard through excellent working practices and conditions, delivering a high performing, engaged, and celebrated workforce.
- **Build a strong and trusted brand:** establish a vibrant visual identity and develop excellent key stakeholder engagement.
- **Sound financial management:** deliver an environment of responsible financial management through a robust Medium-Term Financial Strategy and consistent budget monitoring regime.
- **Drive service improvement and corporate governance:** a robust and benchmarked performance management framework, delivered by services underpinned with sound internal controls.
- **Successfully manage key business risks:** embed a culture of compliance with all policy, constitutional and legislative demands.

### Our performance:

PI 53	% gender pay gap across council staff
PI 54	% of apprentices securing employment by end of apprenticeship
PI 55	% of internal audit recommendations implemented
PI 56	% of information requests completed within statutory deadline
PI 57	% meeting attendance rate of councillors

# 'Plan on a page': a summary

#1 People		#2 Place		#3 Progress	
protected environment	quality living	vibrant economy	connected community	entrepreneurial authority	strong leadership
create stronger neighbourhoods	deliver an ambitious and diverse programme of building	enhance the vibrancy of the Gravesham economy	design a quality and affordable leisure offer	develop an entrepreneurial culture	an employer of choice
enforce high regulatory standards	enforce a high quality of private housing	raise Gravesham's economic profile	improve resident well-being	a financially innovative council	build a strong and trusted brand
carbon neutral borough	provide a proactive, supportive and financially efficient housing service	promote a borough 'open for business'	manage a programme of proactive health interventions	deliver more resilient, creative and cost-effective council	sound financial management
improve the local environment	safeguard residents	improve economic conditions	develop a cohesive and resilient community	digital innovation	drive service improvement and corporate governance
create clean, welcoming neighbourhoods and parks, and an attractive town centre	deliver a skilled in-house building management team	positively promote sustainable development	enhance the borough's cultural offer		successfully manage key business risks
actively enforce environmental standards	put our customers first		promote Gravesham's arts and heritage		
	a sound car parking offer				

# CHAPTER 3: GRAVESHAM DELIVERY

# Who will deliver: *meet the Cabinet*

The council's Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Executive and six other elected councillors. Each councillor has their own specific portfolio and is responsible for ensuring officers proactively work to deliver the council's corporate objectives at the community's expected level of service.



**Councillor John Burden**  
**Leader of the Executive**

*"This administration was elected with a clear mandate to deliver a Gravesham to be proud of. As council Leader, my portfolio sets a tone for the authority. I will deliver a financially confident council; one that will provide financially efficient services and generate the income needed to re-invest in our expanded community offer. We cannot however operate in isolation. I will be making it a priority of this administration to reconnect the council with local residents, businesses and community groups. To deliver our ambition we need to understand what is needed, how it should be delivered and when it matters most. Together we truly can deliver a Gravesham to be proud of."*

**Responsible for:** Finance, Legal, Communications, Digital, IT, Property, Human Resources, Car Parking, Customer Services, Emergency Planning and Special Projects

**Councillor Lee Croxton**  
**Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Operational Services**

*“Our election manifesto was clear; a safe, clean, green borough is essential if we are to deliver a Gravesham to be proud of. My portfolio is therefore tasked with creating a living environment people can truly enjoy. That means pro-actively using all the influence we have to work towards becoming a carbon neutral borough, whilst putting in place the highest possible offer from our environmental services to keep Gravesham tidy. It also means safeguarding residents from any business taking short cuts and putting the health and safety of residents at risk. Our community consultation told us a quality environment was top priority and it is one I am committed to delivering.”*



**Responsible for:** Waste & Horticulture, Street Cleansing, Cemeteries, Environmental Health, Health & Safety and Licensing.

**Councillor Shane Mochrie-Cox**  
**Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure**

*“The foundation of our council is to build a safe, accessible, inclusive and healthy community, fully engaged on issues that affect them. My portfolio therefore has three key themes. First safety; I will ensure the Police and our Community Safety Team are accountable in protecting residents from crime and anti-social behaviour whilst reviewing our youth and community offer, including support for the Gr@nd. Secondly, access and inclusivity; ensuring a viable leisure offer open to all and, through our tourism, events and Borough Market assets, showcase the very best of Gravesham, including our integral relationship with the River, whilst giving arts groups space to flourish. Finally, engagement; deliver a listening council, intrinsically linked to its residents in its support for our elderly and young people, including the Gravesham Youth Council, to become active and engaged citizens.”*



**Responsible for:** Community Safety, Sport Development, GCLL, The Woodville, Community Engagement, Gr@nd, Arts, Heritage & Tourism, Gravesham Borough Market and Town Twinning.

**Councillor Lenny Rolles**  
**Cabinet Member for Commercial Services**

*“At a time of increased cuts to local authority funding from central government we promised to deliver an ambitious strategy, providing exceptional services for our community. As the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services, I am determined that we strive towards finding innovative ways to generate the resources needed to deliver this exciting strategy, developed in partnership with our officers and this administration. Only by innovating and adopting a commercial approach will we be able to re-invest and deliver the excellent services our residents expect and deserve. I am delighted to play my part, delivering our strategy and developing a secure source of funding for our community.”*



**Responsible for:** Commercial Activities and Property Investment.

**Councillor Brian Sangha**  
**Cabinet Member for Strategic Environment**

*“My priority is to deliver a programme of much needed community-led regeneration, building a place fit for the future. Residents have made it clear; the council must lead the charge. Economically this means promoting Gravesham as open for business, a place that drives growth and sustainable employment prospects for local residents and, crucially, a place that can attract new business investment through positive development of its land and transport assets. Success can only be achieved however with a truly efficient planning function. I am therefore committed to providing a service with the right policy solutions, particularly in addressing the impact of climate change, and one that is underpinned by a timely and supportive development process.”*



**Responsible for:** Development Management, Building Control, Conservation, Environmental Management, Planning Policy and Economic Development.

**Councillor Narinder Singh Thandi**  
**Cabinet Member for Performance & Administration**

*“The council has a new, progressive ambition for the borough and the Performance and Administration portfolio is vital in its success. My brief is twofold; firstly to positively implement new ways of working, challenging our services to operate as efficiently as possible. Secondly, my role is to ensure the council has in place a strong governance offer, one where services work to tested internal controls and a robust performance management framework. Collectively these aims will work to provide quality council services that deliver the outcomes our community need at the greatest possible value for money.”*



**Responsible for:** Revenue & Benefits, Corporate Performance, Audit & Counter Fraud, Corporate Change, Information Governance and Corporate Governance.

**Councillor Jenny Wallace**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing Services**

*“Decent and affordable housing for all local people was a cornerstone of our election manifesto and something close to my heart. I will be working to deliver new council housing for Gravesham residents whilst ensuring developers play their part, providing new affordable housing in local developments. Housing is not just about volume. Decent housing promotes health and well-being, helping people look forward in life. I will therefore tackle poor, unsuitable housing standards and, equally, work alongside partners to find a sustainable solution to the cause and effect of homelessness. Getting this right is essential if we are to truly deliver a Gravesham to be proud of.”*



**Responsible for:** Social Housing, Repairs, Housing Strategy & Development, Housing Provision, Private Sector Housing, Rented Sector Housing and Affordable Homes.



# How we deliver: the 'Golden Thread'

In order to successfully deliver on our ambition for the borough, we have implemented a 'Golden Thread'; a continuous cycle connecting the corporate aims, policy framework and delivery plans of the council, with the actions of Members, officers and partners at all levels.

The Corporate Plan presents the scale of the council's ambition and the core objectives and commitments required in *delivering a Gravesham to be proud of*.

To be successful, it is vital that all corporate policies, strategies and business plans are fully informed, designed and resourced to support the delivery of our corporate objectives. For the council, this is not a single top-down exercise. We have instead adopted an ongoing method of engaging all stakeholders: staff; Members; partners and residents; in the informing, planning, reviewing and, ultimately, delivering of continuous improvement in council services; the 'Golden Thread'.

The diagram outlines our adopted 'Golden Thread' model of corporate planning, tasked with *delivering a Gravesham to be proud of*. With our policy framework at its heart, the 'Golden Thread' involves the following:

- **Inform:** community intelligence relating to resident need and aspiration, pooled alongside external factors such as government legislation, to establish the scale of corporate ambition and the intent of the council's policy framework.
- **Plan:** business plans and strategies that design the projects, initiatives and processes required to deliver the corporate objectives and the aims of the council's wider policy framework. These fully resourced plans commit to how we will achieve, who will be responsible and how we will measure performance.
- **Review:** performance outcomes are reviewed throughout the organisation. The Cabinet and Corporate Management Team are provided with regular intelligence relating to the council's achievement against our established objectives. The council's corporate aims also provide the framework for the setting of personal objectives and measuring the effectiveness of officers via the council's appraisal process. This in turn is reintroduced to the cycle to help shape future service strategies and consideration of the scale of council aims and ambition at a corporate level.





# Measuring delivery: *performance management*

The council recognises the importance of an effective, transparent and intelligence-led performance management culture informed by officers, Members and residents. Adopting such an approach is essential to realise our corporate objectives and, ultimately, *delivering a Gravesham to be proud of*.

A comprehensive and robust Performance Management Framework (PMF) is key to any successful organisation. Our adopted PMF allows us to critically evaluate progress against our stated objectives, provides industry intelligence that can drive service transformation and, for residents, it delivers genuine scrutiny in how successfully the council is administering its resources.

## Management

In order to realise our ambition for the borough, everyone is responsible for managing and delivering expected levels of performance:

**Cabinet:** establishes the council's ambition and policy commitments, as set out in this Corporate Plan 2019-23, and works with and holds officers to account in its successful delivery. Cabinet is also responsible for the setting of the council's associated Annual Budget.

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**Corporate Management Team (CMT):** providing strategic oversight of performance management, CMT reviews operational progress identifying relevant areas for improvement and establishing appropriate intervention.

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**Wider Management Team (WMT):** take the lead in setting stretching objectives that support and respond to the delivery of the council's policy commitments. WMT establish resourced business plans setting appropriate planning, monitoring and review processes with officers.

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**Gravesham Borough Council officers:** responsible for their own performance in achieving personal targets directly linked to corporate objectives. Personal milestones are established in the annual appraisal process and continuously reviewed in-year.

## Monitoring

The effective management of the council relies upon having good quality information with which to monitor and deliver evidence-based decisions. The council's PMF involves a range of information, including corporate performance indicators and a suite of internal management indicators that, collectively, provide insight into the progressive impact of council services.

## Reporting

To ensure fully informed and transparent decision making, formal performance reporting takes place at different times and to different audiences including:

**Quarterly:** performance reports of corporate indicators to CMT and subsequently to Cabinet for consideration and scrutiny. This is supported by tailored contextual reports to Cabinet Committees detailing the scale of work delivered by the authority. All material is published via the council's digital platform and '*Your Borough*' publication.

**Yearly:** audited annual performance report to Cabinet covering all performance indicators contributing to the council's corporate objectives, providing an effective position statement.

To further embed a performance-related culture within the council, the PMF is also analysed against other local authorities. This approach enables us to better understand our comparative levels of service performance and, equally, to identify opportunities for improvement in the quality of council services. Covering both core service performance and expenditure, benchmarking analysis is regularly reported to the CMT to inform executive decision making.

# Financing delivery: *how we fund our services*

The local Gravesham community has identified the key areas of business we should prioritise over the next four years; the council has put in place the financial planning infrastructure to deliver against these objectives and realise our corporate vision, whilst responding to the financial challenges it faces.

## Financial Planning

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets the framework within which the council plans and manages its finances, ensuring that these fit with and support the achievement of the council's corporate objectives. Good financial management is driven by our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for the council's landlord responsibilities, both of which provide effective tools for in-year budget monitoring and longer-term financial forecasting.

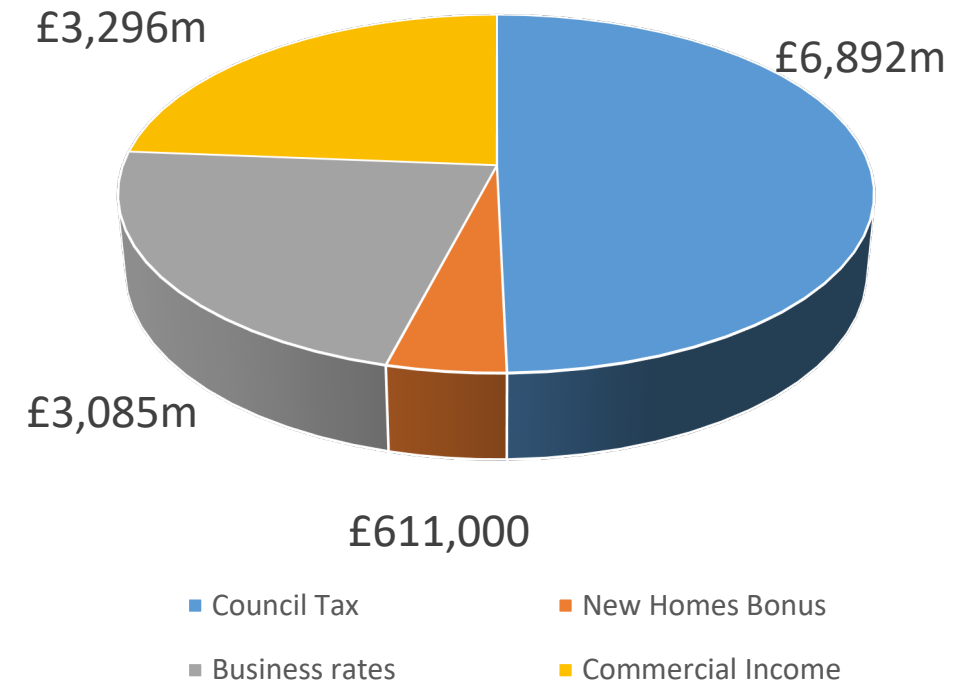
Since the start of the government's austerity programme in 2010, local government funding has been significantly reduced. Gravesham Borough Council has seen a 62% reduction in funding support from central government over this period; in excess of £3m per annum.

In late 2015 central government announced that it would be ending support grants to local authorities as part of its deficit reduction policy. As a response to this, in early 2016 the council developed a proactive and multi-faceted Bridging the Gap strategy intended to overcome the funding gap identified at that time of £2.5m, equivalent to the council needing to save £10,000 each working day. By 2019, this funding gap had increased to £4.2m due to other pressures on spending and further funding reductions.

There is significant ongoing uncertainty in the financial environment in which local government operates. The long-term arrangements for the funding of local government services from April 2020 is unclear, and the delay in the UK leaving the European Union and impact of any decisions around this may create further pressures.

Against this background, we are committed to the ongoing analysis and review of the MTFS and sound financial governance in order to ensure the sustainability of the council's finances and its community services.

Gravesham Borough Council's revenue funding: 2019/20



### Financial Innovation

Alongside our own financial challenge, the council recognises that its residents have also been under pressure from changes to welfare benefits and the roll-out of Universal Credit, increasing costs and uncertainty within the economy caused by the delay in Brexit.

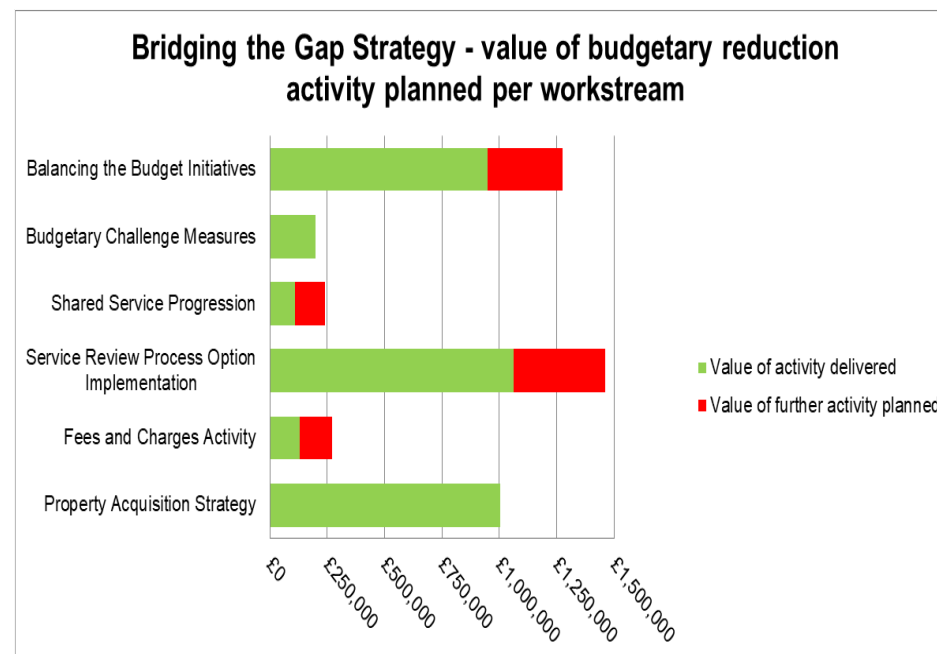
Resident needs are also becoming increasingly complex and the way in which people want to interact with the council is evolving; in the same way, the manner in which the council delivers its services and manages its financial sustainability also needs to continuously develop and evolve.

The council has a strong track record in being agile and innovative in its response to the financial challenges it has faced, as demonstrated by the delivery of its 'Bridging the Gap' activities which have to date delivered annual savings of £3.5m against the £4.2m target.

But we can't stop there and we won't. In order for us to truly fulfil our ambition for the borough, and meet the needs and expectations of our residents for our expanded frontline offer, we have to innovate.

Alongside fulfilling the remaining Bridging the Gap activity, we are therefore committed through this Corporate Plan to implement a commercial culture; identifying new financially efficient ways of providing our services as well as generating additional sources of income. To deliver on this commitment, planned initiatives include:

- Expanding our commercial activity through the launch of a Local Authority Trading Company;
- Acquiring and building property to drive future income streams;
- Making best use of our cashflow balances through our investment activity, whilst maintaining security in any investment decisions made;
- Challenging procurement activity to ensure they are fit for purpose and offer excellent value for money for our residents;
- Continuing to review service delivery arrangements to ensure these reflect customer needs, are delivered in an efficient manner and make appropriate use of the latest technology; and
- Maintaining robust control over our financial budgets and strong governance around its decision-making processes.



# CORPORATE PLAN 2019-23

[BACK COVER]