

Gravesham Borough Council

Council

Tuesday, 11 October 2016

7.30 pm

Present:

The Worshipful the Mayor
The Deputy Mayor

| | | |
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| Councillors: | Valerie Ashenden | John Knight |
| | Gurjit Kaur Bains | Sara Langdale |
| | Gurdip Ram Bungar | John Loughlin |
| | John Burden | Bronwen McGarrity |
| | Julia Burgoyne | Jordan Meade |
| | Colin Caller | Lyn Milner |
| | John Caller | Leslie Pearton |
| | Harold Craske | Anthony Pritchard |
| | Lee Croxton | Peter Rayner |
| | John Cubitt | Alan Ridgers |
| | Brian Francis | Lenny Rolles |
| | Sandra Garside | Brian Sangha |
| | Greta Goatley | Peter Scollard |
| | Rob Halpin | Derek Shelbrooke |
| | Leslie Hills | Lauren Sullivan |
| | Les Howes | Narinder Singh Thandi |
| | Susan Howes | Robin Theobald |
| | Karen Hurdle | Steve Thompson |
| | David Hurley | David Turner |
| | Samir Jassal | Michael Wenban |

| | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------------------|
| Stuart Bobby | - | Director (Corporate Services) |
| Nick Brown | - | Director (Environment & Operations) |
| Kevin Burbidge | - | Director (Housing & Regeneration) |
| Graham Cole | - | Communications Manager |
| Mike Hayley | - | Assistant Director (Governance & Law) |
| Sarah Kilkie | - | Assistant Director (Communities) |
| Melanie Norris | - | Director (Communities) |
| Sarah Parfitt | - | Assistant Director (Corporate Services) |

36. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lesley Boycott, William Lambert and Makhan Singh.

37. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

38. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2016 were signed by the Chair.

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

The following question had been submitted by Mr Geof Foxwell:

“Are discussions ongoing with Queenridge Properties and if so, what have they been about? Cllr Cubitt stated in a reply to a question in Dec 2015, and I quote, as a matter of fact the necessary changes to the Development Agreement are in the process of being made but have yet to be finalised. We are now 10 months further on and no firm date seems to have been set for the commencement of the works and why are the residents adjacent to the development site being refused any answers by the Council?”

The following reply was given by the Leader of the Executive, Councillor John Cubitt:

The Agreement entered into in February 2007 between Gravesham Borough Council, Queenridge and Edinburgh House remains in place.

Frustratingly, progress has been delayed by a costly and time-consuming Judicial Review, the serious recession, austerity and now the financial uncertainties arising from Brexit.

However, talks are ongoing to bring plans forward but commercial confidentiality surrounds the current negotiations and further information is therefore unavailable.

The Leader remains confident that the plans will achieve the right outcome for the people of Gravesham, delivering greater vitality to the Town Centre, and further details will be published as soon as they are available.

40. Minutes

Motions that proceedings, reports and recommendations of Committees, except those reserved under Council Procedure Rule 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 Cabinet held on 04 July 2016
- Minutes of Overview Scrutiny Committee held on 11 July 2016
- Minutes of Finance & Audit Committee held on 12 July 2016
- Minutes of Regulatory Board held on 20 July 2016
- Minutes of Standards Committee held on Wednesday 27 July 2016
- Minutes of Cabinet held on 05 September 2016
- Minutes of Regulatory Board held on 07 September 2016
- Minutes of Finance & Audit Committee held on 13 September 2016
- Minutes of Overview Scrutiny Committee held on 15 September 2016
- Minutes of Standards Committee held on 27 September 2016

Minutes of Licensing Committee held on 29 September 2016
Minutes of Regulatory Board held on Wednesday, 5 October 2016

The Leader of the Executive drew Council's attention to Minute 33 of Cabinet on 5 September 2016 regarding the potential joint development with Ebbsfleet Development Corporation and the recommendations made by Cabinet to Full Council as set out in the Minute.

It was **resolved** unanimously that:

- a. **agreement in principle be given to further consideration of the scheme and the furtherance of any necessary due diligence to determine the viability of the venture, with delegated authority provided to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Executive, Director (Corporate Services) and Assistant Director (Governance & Law) to take any necessary financial, legal or practical measures in that regard, and;**
- b. **authority be granted to use the retained Growth Fund monies arising from the Kent Business Rates pooling arrangements in 2015-16 to support any necessary expenditure at this stage, together with any necessary amendments to the Council's General Fund net revenue budget or Capital Programme.**

41. Reserved Minutes

It was moved by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr David Hurley that:

The reserved Minute of Overview Scrutiny Committee held on 15 September 2016 be ratified and confirmed.

With reference to Minute 54 of Overview Scrutiny Committee the Minute Members expressed concern at the reduction in funding towards soft landscaping to be implemented by Kent County Council, and the consequential impact this may have upon the Borough in terms of the appearance and safety of roadside verges and public spaces. Following debate the Minute was noted.

42. Commercial Property Acquisitions

Council received a report recommending amendments to the Property Acquisition Strategy.

It was **resolved** unanimously that:

- **A maximum of £500,000 flexibility be made available, over and above the existing fund on £10 million of investment balances for such purposes.**
- **The net initial yield generated, on acquisition, is amended from a minimum level of 6% to 3% above the prevailing 25 year PWLB fixed maturity rate.**
- **The wording regarding the classification of properties that can be purchased under the scheme be amended to those detailed in the body of the report.**

43. Government Multi Year Settlement

Council considered the offer from Central Government for a multi-year financial settlement for Gravesham Borough Council.

It was moved by Cllr John Cubitt and seconded by Cllr David Turner that:

- **The Council accepts the Government's multi-year financial settlement prior to the deadline of 14 October.**
- **The approved Medium Term Financial Strategy covering the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 be put forward by the Council to support the acceptance of the Government's multi-year financial settlement.**

It was proposed by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr Steve Thompson that the motion be amended to:

- **The Council reluctantly accepts the Government's multi-year financial settlement prior to the deadline of 14 October.**
- **The approved Medium Term Financial Strategy covering the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 be put forward by the Council to support the acceptance of the Government's multi-year financial settlement.**

Following a debate, Council **resolved** unanimously that:

- **The Council reluctantly accepts the Government's multi-year financial settlement prior to the deadline of 14 October.**
- **The approved Medium Term Financial Strategy covering the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 be put forward by the Council to support the acceptance of the Government's multi-year financial settlement.**

44. Municipal Bonds Agency

Council received a report that provided an update on the Local Government Association's Municipal Bonds Agency and sought Council approval for the adoption of the Agency's corresponding Framework Agreement.

It was **resolved** unanimously that:

Council approves Gravesham Borough Council's entry into the Framework Agreement and its accompanying schedules (including the joint and several guarantee).

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

No questions had been received.

46. Appointments to Outside Bodies

Council **resolved** to note the following appointment that gives effect to the wishes of the Labour Group:

- Councillor Susan Howes be appointed to the Elizabeth Huggins Cottages Charity (4 year term).

47. To receive the Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor announced that this was the last meeting to be attended by Graham Cole, Communications Manager. Council thanked him for all his hard work and wished him well in his retirement.

The Mayor highlighted the following events that had taken place and thanked her daughter for her support:

- Boundary Walk
- Golf Day
- Bangers and Bingo Evening

The Mayor invited Members to join her in the Parlour for refreshments.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at. 9.00 pm