



Council

Members of the **Council of Gravesham Borough Council** are summoned to attend a meeting to be held virtually on **Tuesday, 23 June 2020 at 7.30 pm** when the business specified in the following agenda is proposed to be transacted. Details on how Members can attend the meeting will be sent separately.

In response to COVID-19, the Government has legislated to permit remote attendance by Elected Members at formal meetings. This is conditional on other Elected Members and the public being able to hear those participating in the meeting. This meeting will be streamed live and can be watched via Gravesham Borough Council's YouTube Channel:-

www.youtube.com/graveshamtv

S Walsh
Service Manager (Communities)

Agenda

Part A

Items likely to be considered in Public

1. Apologies for absence
2. To sign the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting and Annual Council Meeting held on 12 May 2020 (Pages 5 - 18)
3. To declare any interests members may have in the items contained on this agenda. When declaring an interest a member must state what their interest is
4. To answer any questions received from members of the public of which notice has been given under Council Procedure Rule 13

5. Minutes of Committees

To receive and adopt the proceedings, reports and recommendations of the following committees, except those items reserved under Council procedure Rule 5.2 (6) and to ratify and confirm the orders made by them.

- a) Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee held on Tuesday, 10 March 2020 (Pages 19 - 26)
- b) Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 23 March 2020 (Pages 27 - 32)
- c) Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 1 June 2020 (Pages 33 - 38)
- d) Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 11 June 2020 - minutes to follow.
- e) Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 17 June 2020 - minutes to follow.

6. Reserved Minutes

To receive and adopt the proceedings, reports and recommendations of committees contained in the list of items reserved under Council Procedure Rule 5.2(6) and to ratify the orders made by them. They will be dealt with in the following order:-

Cabinet
Finance & Audit Committee
Overview Scrutiny Committee
Planning Committee

To consider reports from officers of the Council

- 7. Greenwich Peninsular Development Investment Opportunity - report to follow.
- 8. The Charter Regeneration Project - report to follow.
- 9. Notice of Motion

It will be moved by Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox and seconded by Cllr John Burden that:-

Celebrating 40 years of town twinning between Gravesham Borough Council and Neumünster, Germany.

This Council expresses its gratitude for the 40 years of reciprocal and enduring links of friendship between the peoples of the BOROUGH OF GRAVESHAM and the TOWN OF NEUMÜNSTER since official twinning was approved by our elected bodies on 17th October 1980.

This Council:

- *Commends the benefits that twinning has had in nurturing reciprocal links of friendship between the peoples of Neumünster and Gravesham, and ensuring that all citizens live together in peace and freedom;*

- *Values the dialogue, tolerance, openness, respect and the deepening of understanding of each other and of the way of life of our two peoples;*
- *Recognises and celebrates the unique contribution that representatives of our citizens and members of our respective Town Twinning Associations have made to sustain and develop close, long lasting relations and friendships;*
- *Strongly supports our young people to contribute to our objective through close and friendly association in all types of activity so they can deepen their understanding and respect of each others;*
- *Re-affirms its determination and wish to support and grow this partnership and mutual friendship; and*
- *Renews its pledge to work together in co-operation with the City of Neumünster in the years to come, to ensure that the benefit of town twinning is secured for future generations.*

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

11. To receive the Mayor's Announcements

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Council**Tuesday, 12 May 2020****3.30 pm****Present:**

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

Councillors: Ejaz Aslam
 John Burden
 Harold Craske
 Lee Croxton
 Aaron Elliott
 Gary Harding
 Leslie Hills
 Leslie Hoskins
 Bob Lane
 Jordan Meade
 Lyn Milner
 Shane Mochrie-Cox
 Tony Rice
 Lenny Rolles
 Brian Sangha
 Narinderjit Singh Thandi
 Jenny Wallace

Stuart Bobby	Chief Executive
Nick Brown	Director (Housing and Operations)
Kevin Burbidge	Director (Planning and Development)
Melanie Norris	Director (Communities)
Sarah Parfitt	Director (Corporate Services)
Simon Walsh	Service Manager (Communities)
Jan Guylar	Head of Legal Services, Medway Council
David Herrington	Digital Manager
Carlie Simmonds	Committee Services Manager

79. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

80. Covid-19 update

The Council received a report which provided an overview of the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on the Borough and the subsequent response delivered by the Council and key community partners.

Resolved that:-

1. the Council records its gratitude to all those involved across all sectors in the outstanding response to the global Covid-19 pandemic; the NHS and social care sector, the voluntary and business sectors, local community residents and the Council's workforce; and
2. the report contents and the commitment to the presentation of future reports providing further details of the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan be noted.

81. Proposals for Remote Meetings

The Council received a report which informed Members of the new Regulations that had been issued in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, which enables local authorities to hold meetings remotely.

Appendix Two of the report set out the proposals on how these regulations would be adopted for Council, Cabinet and all other Committee meetings and the consequential impact on the 2020/21 schedule of meetings. It also detailed the amendments required to the procedural rules in the Council's Constitution, which would be followed, but not by way of formal changes.

Resolved that:-

1. the procedures for remote participation at Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings in Appendix Two of the report be agreed; and
2. delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive to amend these procedures, if necessary, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Group Leaders.

82. Representation of Political Groups on Committees

The Council reviewed the representation of political groups on Committees following the death of Cllr Colin Caller and the postponement of by-elections in line with the Coronavirus Act 2020.

The appointments to Committees will be made at the Annual Council meeting.

Resolved that

1. the size of each Committee as set out in the report be agreed; and
2. the allocation of seats on Committees to each of the Council's political groups as set out within the report be agreed.

83. Development of the Corporate Risk Register 2020-2021

The Council received a report which detailed the outcomes of Gravesham Borough Council's annual risk identification and analysis exercise and presented the Corporate Risk Register for 2020- 2021.

Resolved that the Corporate Risk Register for 2020-2021 be approved.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 4.03 pm.

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Council

Tuesday, 12 May 2020

4.03 pm

Present:

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

Councillors: Ejaz Aslam
John Burden
Harold Craske
Lee Croxton
Aaron Elliott
Gary Harding
Leslie Hills
Leslie Hoskins
Bob Lane
Jordan Meade
Lyn Milner
Shane Mochrie-Cox
Tony Rice
Lenny Rolles
Brian Sangha
Narinderjit Singh Thandi
Jenny Wallace

Stuart Bobby	Chief Executive
Nick Brown	Director (Housing and Operations)
Kevin Burbidge	Director (Planning and Development)
Melanie Norris	Director (Communities)
Sarah Parfitt	Director (Corporate Services)
Simon Walsh	Service Manager (Communities)
Jan Guylar	Head of Legal Services, Medway Council
David Herrington	Digital Manager
Carlie Simmonds	Committee Services Manager

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Election of Mayor for the ensuing municipal year

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

Cllr John Caller be elected Mayor of the Borough for the municipal year 2020/2021.

Tribute was paid to Cllr John Caller for his service to the Council, to previous Mayors and the community. Cllr Caller had previously served as Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

It was **resolved** unanimously that Cllr John Caller be duly elected Mayor of the Borough for the municipal year 2020/21.

Cllr John Caller made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office required by Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Mayor, in giving his acceptance speech, stated that he would not be announcing chosen charities. The sponsorship money raised throughout his mayoral year would be distributed locally where it can do the most good.

The Mayor invited any charities that needed support to contact him.

3. Vote of thanks to Outgoing Mayor

It was moved by Cllr John Caller that the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Cllr Gurdip Ram Bungar for the manner in which he carried out the office of Mayor for the past municipal year. Cllr Bungar suitably replied and in doing so offered thanks to those who had assisted him during his year in office.

The Worshipful the Mayor advised that the Past Mayor's Badge and Past Mayoress's Badge would be presented to Cllr Gurdip Ram Bungar after the meeting.

4. Mayoress / Mayor's Escort

The Worshipful the Mayor stated that the Mayoress would be his wife, Mrs Susan Caller.

5. Appointment of the Civic Chaplain

The Worshipful the Mayor stated that the Civic Chaplain would be Reverend Jacqueline Littlewood.

6. Election of the Deputy Mayor for the ensuing municipal year

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

Cllr Lyn Milner be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the municipal year 2020/21.

Tribute was paid to Cllr Lyn Milner for her service to the Council, to previous Mayors and the community. Cllr Milner had previously served as Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

It was **resolved** unanimously that Cllr Lyn Milner be duly elected Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal year 2020/21.

Cllr Lyn Milner made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office required by Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972.

7. Deputy Mayoress / Deputy Mayor's Escort

The Deputy Mayor stated that she would not be appointing a Deputy Mayor's Escort.

The Deputy Mayor intended to invite family, friends and Councillors to accompany her to various events and functions.

8. Minutes of the meeting of Council held on Tuesday, 25 February 2020

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on Tuesday, 25 February 2020 were signed by the Mayor.

9. Appointment of Members to Committee and Boards

1. That the Committees and Boards of the Council be appointed as set out below so as to give effect to the wishes of the political groups as notified to the Service Manager (Communities) and that the Chairs and Vice-Chairs be as shown.

Planning Committee – 9 Seats

Labour Group (4 seats)

Cllr Lauren Sullivan (Chair)
Cllr Steve Thompson
Cllr Brian Francis
Cllr Elizabeth Mulheran

Conservative Group (4 seats)

Conrad Broadley
Tony Rice
Bob Lane
Jordan Meade

Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)

Harold Craske (Vice Chair)

Licensing Committee – 14 Seats

Labour Group (7 seats)

Cllr Steve Thompson (Chair)
Cllr Jenny Wallace (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Brian Francis
Cllr Gurdip Bungar
Cllr Lyn Milner
Cllr Baljit Hayre
Cllr Tony Rana

Conservative Group (6 seats)

Frank Wardle
Derek Ashenden
Helen Ashenden
Emma Elliott
Leslie Hoskins
Denise Tiran

Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)

Leslie Pearton

Finance and Audit Committee – 9 Seats

<u>Labour Group (5 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (4 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (0 seats)</u>
Cllr Gurbax Singh (Chair)	Derek Ashenden	
Cllr Sarah Gow (Vice-Chair)	Ejaz Aslam	
Cllr Nirmal Khabra	Dakota Dibben	
Cllr Elizabeth Mulheran	Tony Rice	
Cllr Emma Morley		

Overview Scrutiny Committee – 9 Seats

<u>Labour Group (5 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (4 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (0 seats)</u>
Cllr Steve Thompson (Vice-Chair)	Jordan Meade (Chair)	
Cllr Emma Morley	Conrad Broadley	
Cllr Elizabeth Mulheran	Alan Ridgers	
Cllr Christina Rolles	Leslie Hills	
Cllr Peter Scollard		

Crime and Disorder Committee – 14 Seats

<u>Labour Group (6 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (7 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)</u>
Cllr Baljit Hayre (Chair)	Derek Ashenden	Leslie Pearton
Cllr Christina Rolles (Vice-Chair)	Helen Ashenden	
Cllr Tony Rana	Ejaz Aslam	
Cllr Brian Francis	Aaron Elliott	
Cllr Lauren Sullivan	Gary Harding	
Cllr Emma Morley	Frank Wardle	
	Dakota Dibben	

Appointments Board – 14 Seats

<u>Labour Group (6 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (7 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)</u>
Cllr John Burden (Chair)	Helen Ashenden	Harold Craske
Cllr Lee Croxton (Vice-Chair)	Ejaz Aslam	
Cllr Jenny Wallace	Diane Marsh	
Cllr Lyn Milner	Jordan Meade	
Cllr Lenny Rolles	Anthony Pritchard	
Cllr Lauren Sullivan	Tony Rice	
	Leslie Hills	

Standards Committee (no substitutes) – 9 Seats

<u>Labour Group (5 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (4 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (0 seats)</u>
Cllr John Caller (Chair)	Emma Elliott	
Cllr Lyn Milner (Vice-Chair)	Gary Harding	
Cllr Emma Morley	Denise Tiran	
Cllr Gurbax Singh	Diane Marsh	
Cllr Lauren Sullivan		

Appeals Sub-Committee – 3 seats

<u>Labour Group (2 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (1 seat)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (0 seat)</u>
Cllr Lyn Milner (Chair)	Gary Harding	
Cllr Christina Rolles (Vice-Chair)		

Hackney Carriage Sub-Committee – 3 seats

<u>Labour Group (2 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (1 seat)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (0 seat)</u>
Cllr John Burden (Chair)	Jordan Meade	
Cllr Lauren Sullivan (Vice-Chair)		

Appointments Panel (3 seats) - The panel's membership is drawn from available Appointments Board Members and will consist of two Labour Members and one Conservative Member.

Licensing Panel (3 seats) - The panel's membership is drawn from available Licensing Committee Members and will consist of two Labour Members and one Conservative Member.

Joint Arrangements with other Local Authorities**Joint Transportation Board (no substitutes) – 5 seats**

<u>Labour Group (3 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (2 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (0 seat)</u>
Cllr Peter Scollard (Vice Chair)	Bob Lane	
Cllr Nirmal Khabra	Leslie Hills	
Cllr Brian Francis		

South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee – 1 seat (plus substitute)

<u>Labour Group (1 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (0 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (0 seat)</u>
John Burden		
Brian Sangha (Substitute)		

Cabinet Committees**Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee – 10 seats**

<u>Labour Group (5 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (4 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)</u>
Shane Mochrie-Cox (Chair)	Helen Ashenden	Harold Craske
Tony Rana (Vice Chair)	Ejaz Aslam	
Christina Rolles	Aaron Elliott	
Peter Scollard	Gary Harding	
Emma Morley		

Operational Services Cabinet Committee – 10 seats

<u>Labour Group (5 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (4 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)</u>
Lee Croxton (Chair)	Conrad Broadley	Leslie Pearton
Gurbax Singh (Vice Chair)	Dakota Dibben	
Nirmal Khabra	Gary Harding	
Steve Thompson	Frank Wardle	
Peter Scollard		

Housing Services Cabinet Committee – 10 seats

<u>Labour Group (5 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (4 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)</u>
Jenny Wallace (Chair)	Leslie Hills	Leslie Pearton
Christina Rolles (Vice Chair)	Leslie Hoskins	
Lyn Milner	Diane Marsh	
Baljit Hayre	Frank Wardle	
Peter Scollard		

Performance and Administration Cabinet Committee – 10 seats

<u>Labour Group (5 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (4 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)</u>
Narinderjit Thandi (Chair)	Helen Ashenden	Harold Craske
Brian Francis (Vice Chair)	Dakota Dibben	
Gurbax Singh	Gary Harding	
Elizabeth Mulheran	Leslie Hills	
Sarah Gow		

Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee – 10 seats

<u>Labour Group (5 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (4 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)</u>
Brian Sangha (Chair)	Leslie Hills	Harold Craske
Lauren Sullivan (Vice Chair)	Leslie Hoskins	
Brian Francis	Bob Lane	
Baljit Hayre	Alan Ridgers	
Emma Morley		

Commercial Services Cabinet Committee – 10 seats

<u>Labour Group (5 seats)</u>	<u>Conservative Group (4 seats)</u>	<u>Gravesham Independent Group (1 seat)</u>
Lenny Rolles (Chair)	Jordan Meade	Leslie Pearton
Sarah Gow (Vice Chair)	Anthony Pritchard	
Gurbax Singh	Tony Rice	
Tony Rana	Denise Tiran	
Gurdip Bungar		

10. Appointment of representatives to Outside Bodies

That appointments to outside bodies be made in accordance with the following list:-

Action with Communities in Rural Kent

Cllrs John Burden and Leslie Hills

Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Services

Cllr Lyn Milner

Charity of Knight's Almshouses (4 year term)

John Burden

Choices (formerly North Kent Women's Aid)

Cllr Sarah Gow

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Cllr Lauren Sullivan

CCTV – Lay Panel of Visitors

Cllrs Lyn Milner, Jenny Wallace and Frank Wardle

Substitutes: Cllrs John Burden, Shane Mochrie-Cox and Dakota Dibben

Cyclopark

Cllr John Caller

Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership

Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox

Substitute: Cllr John Burden

Dartford and Gravesham District Partnership Group

Cllr John Burden

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust Stakeholder Council

Cllrs John Burden and Jordan Meade

DGSM Your Choice

Cllr Lenny Rolles

Ebbsfleet UDC Board

Cllr John Burden

Elizabeth Huggins Cottages Charity (4 year term)

Karen Hurdle

Gravesend & District Mencap Society

Cllrs Lee Croxton and Leslie Hoskins

Gravesend Regatta Committee

Cllrs Lenny Rolles, Shane Mochrie-Cox and Harold Craske

Gravesham Access Group

Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox

Gravesham Arts Council and Executive Committee

Cllrs Shane Mochrie-Cox, Jenny Wallace and Helen Ashenden

Gravesham Community Leisure Limited

Cllrs Shane Mochrie-Cox and Peter Scollard

Gravesham Rights of Way Committee

Cllrs Lee Croxton, Brian Francis and Jordan Meade.

Henry Pinnocks Charity (4 year term)

Cllr Baljit Hayre

Kent County Playing Fields Association

Cllr Brian Sangha

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Cllr Lee Croxton

Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox

Local Government Association

Cllr John Burden

Local Government Information Unit

Cllr John Burden

Meopham Community Sports and Leisure Association Management Committee

Cllrs John Caller and Ejaz Aslam

North Kent Crime Prevention Panel

Cllr Tony Rana

North Kent Marshes Internal Drainage Board

Cllrs Jenny Wallace, Harold Craske and Lee Croxton

North Kent Relate

Cllr Christina Rolles

North West Kent Volunteer Centre

Cllr Peter Scollard

Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS)

Cllr Lauren Sullivan

Substitute: Cllr Harold Craske

South East Employers

Cllr John Burden

Substitute: Cllr Lee Croxton

The Grand Community Interest Company

Cllrs John Burden and Shane Mochrie-Cox

Town Twinning Association

Cllrs Lyn Milner and Alan Ridgers

11. Scheme of Delegation

The scheme of delegation relating to the Council's functions other than Cabinet functions contained within Annexes 1.2, 1.3, 1.13, 1.14 and 1.15 of the Constitution were re-affirmed.

12. Timetable of meetings for the forthcoming municipal year

That the timetable of meetings for the 2020/21 municipal year be adopted.

13. Questions

No questions had been received.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 4.29 pm.

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Finance & Audit Committee

Tuesday, 10 March 2020

7:30pm

Present:

Cllr Gurbax Singh (Chair)
Cllr Sarah Gow (Acting Vice-Chair)

Cllrs: Derek Ashenden
 Ejaz Aslam
 Dakota Dibben
 Nirmal Khabra
 Elizabeth Mulheran
 Tony Rice

Sarah Parfitt	Assistant Director (Corporate Services)
Andrew Barnett	Principal Accountant (General Fund)
Helen Thaqi	Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service Team Leader
Nikki Ashby	Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service Team Leader
Liulu Chen	External Auditor, Grant Thornton
Ben Clarke	Committee & Scrutiny Assistant (Minutes)

44. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Paul Grady – the External Auditor, Grant Thornton.

45. To sign the minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting on Monday, 17 February 2020 were signed by the Chair.

46. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gow, Cllr Rice and the Assistant Director (Corporate Services) declared an Other Significant Interest for agenda item 8 as appointed Directors of Rosherville Limited, the Council's Local Authority Trading Company.

47. Order of Agenda

The Committee agreed that agenda item 10 & 11 be brought forward as the External Auditor, Grant Thornton had to leave the meeting early.

48. 2019-20 External Audit Plan

Liulu Chen introduced herself to the Committee as the new Audit Manager from Grant Thornton and presented Members with the External Audit Plan for the year ending 31 March 2020.

The External Auditor, Grant Thornton advised Members that the three significant risks identified were the same as in the External Audit Plan for 2018-19. Those risks requiring special audit consideration and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error were identified as:

- Management override of controls
- Valuation of land and buildings
- Valuation of net pension fund liability

The External Auditor, Grant Thornton further directed Members attention to page 5 of the report which explained the findings for the below headlines:

- Materiality
- Value for Money Arrangements
- Audit Logistics
- Independence

In response to Members questions, the Assistant Director (Corporate Services) and the External Auditor, Grant Thornton explained that:

- KCC operate the Local Government Pension Scheme; the Council pay them the staff pension contributions and they invest and manage the liability of that fund. The Council are required, annually, to value the liabilities under the Local Government Pension Scheme and the auditors focus on the significant numbers that appear on the balance sheet. The auditors focused on the balance sheet figures as they were significant and they are obliged to confirm that the sheet is balanced correctly
- The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) specifically highlighted that the quality and extent of work around PPE, Investment Property valuations and IAS 19 valuations had to increase across local audit . Therefore Grant Thornton had to engage with more audit experts and extend the level of work and resources to meet the increased requirements resulting in the revised scale fee
- With regards to certification of Housing Benefit Grant, the Council receive a grant from the Government for housing benefit. Grant Thornton then carry out sample testing of random residents housing benefit claims to check if the claims were valid and calculated correctly. Upon confirmation that the housing benefit claims are valid and correctly calculated, a certification is issued to Gravesham which the Council is required to submit. If any mistakes or errors were identified then Grant Thornton were required to conduct further work and extrapolate the risks; if numerous errors were identified then there was also the possibility that the Council may have to repay a certain amount of grant funding

Following a question, regarding if it was a mandatory requirement or a choice by Grant Thornton to have their findings verified externally, the External Auditor, Grant Thornton advised that she would consult with the Engagement Lead for Gravesham and circulate an answer after the meeting.

The Chair thanked the External Auditor, Grant Thornton for her presentation.

49. Interim Progress Report

This item was dealt with under item 11 – 2019-20 External Audit Plan.

50. Review of Accounting Policies 2019-20

The Committees endorsement was sought for the Accounting Policies to be used in formulating the Financial Statements for the authority for the financial year 2019-20.

The Principal Accountant (General Fund) advised that they identified no major changes to The Code that will influence the Council's accounting policies for 2019-20. Therefore, the accounting policies will broadly remain in line with those used to prepare the 2018-19 statement of accounts, although the wording of accounting policies has been updated where necessary to provide greater clarification.

The Principal Accountant (General Fund) drew Members attention to paragraph 2.3, as with the agreement of the Council's Engagement Lead from Grant Thornton following a discussion in autumn 2019, the de-minimis level when considering accruals will be increased from £750 to £2,000 for preparation of the 2019-20 accounts. An accrual relates to adjustment for income or expenditure which hasn't been recorded yet such as expenses not paid or income not yet received.

The Council has been required to undertake an assessment to see what the impact of the new accounting standard listed at paragraph 2.4, IFRS 16 – Leases, will have on the Councils accounts as all qualifying leases will now be recorded on the Council balance sheet as assets and what's owed on that asset will become its liability. Officers from the Finance Team have already identified steps for existing leases and have ensured arrangements are in place to comply with the new standard. The new accounting standard has not directly affected the preparation of the financial statements for 2019-20.

The Principal Accountant (General Fund) concluded that the accounting policies have been shared with the external auditors and may therefore be subject to any comments / feedback from the Council's external auditors.

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) and the Principal Accountant (General Fund) fielded questions from the Committee, explaining that:

- The impact of the new accounting standard IFRS 16 will not have a hugely significant impact on the Council; officers have attended various training courses on the standard and preparations have already been undertaken. Discussions have been held with senior managers, budget holders, the contracts register and various lease agreements have been reviewed. The Council has various leases; an example being the big belly solar panel bins and a £35K annual lease fee for the Woodville's cinema equipment. All of those fees added together weren't a significant figure but they will all feature on the Council balance sheet next year under the new process
- As a local authority, the exposure from IFRS 16 was more limited for Gravesham where as other Councils will be more impacted due to their usage of their vehicle leases. Those using their vehicles for delivering their services and contracting our service externally will have to go on the balance sheet
- As the policies have been submitted to Grant Thornton, they may raise some queries or wording issues, but there have not been any major issues reported in previous years. However, if they raised any significant problems then they would be brought to the Committees attention

Resolved that Members endorsed the use of the Accounting Policies as outlined at Appendix Two to this report, subject to comments from the Council's external auditor.

51. Audit & Counter Fraud Quality Assurance & Improvement Program

The Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme for 2020-21 was presented for approval to the Committee.

The Audit & Counter Fraud Team Leader advised that the QAIP had been reviewed and was considered to continue to meet the necessary requirements and will therefore continue to be in place for the coming financial year, subject to the proposed amendments from 2.2.1 to 2.2.4 of the report.

Following questions and comments from Members, the Audit & Counter Fraud Team Leader advised that:

- The programme that has been put together fulfils the Committees role in reviewing the performance of the Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service; the changes that were proposed had to be formally approved by the Committee. Additionally, the work of the shared service is subject to an external review every five years. The previous external assessment, in 2018, assessed the council's compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards by reviewing the work carried out by the team and concluded that the shared service was 98% compliant with the Standards. Prior to this, the shared service had also carried out its own internal assessment, with an improvement programme put in place. No significant changes have been made since these assessments were undertaken.
- PM9 relates to the percentage of work the team can charge to implementation of the Audit & Counter Fraud Plan. The description was amended from 'productive' to 'chargeable' as the former implied that the remaining time was unproductive, whereas this is actually used for tasks which support delivery of the Plan, such as one to ones, team meetings and time recording etc.
- PM13 tracked the percentage of audits which are completed within the allocated day budget but was removed as it did not take into account how far the audit had gone over the allocated day budget or that audits go over the day budget for legitimate reasons. Members will still be able to see the budgeted days and the number of days used for each specific review as part of the team's quarterly update and annual reports to the Committee and this will continue to be monitored internally, however PM13 will not be reported going forward.

Resolved that Members approved the QAIP presented at Appendix 3 for use in 2020-21.

52. Audit & Counter Fraud Strategy 2020-24

The Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service Strategy for 2020-2024 was presented to the Committee for approval.

The Audit & Counter Fraud Team Leader stated that the document attached at appendix two was the updated Audit & Counter Fraud Strategy designed for the next four years up until 2024, but the three main objectives remained the same. The team will continue to build on the success achieved by the shared service since 01 March 2016.

The Committee asked for clarification on any changes to the Strategy compared to the previous one.

The Audit & Counter Team Leader advised that there had been a minor amendment to Objective Three – Positive Impact; the below wording was added to the Objective

- We will continue to build on the success of the shared working arrangements and explore all opportunities for further development, including the potential to expand the partnership and increase cost savings and resilience or sell services.

Resolved that Members approved the Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service Strategy 2020-24 presented at Appendix 2.

53. Audit & Counter Fraud Plan 2020-21

The Audit & Counter Fraud Plan 2020-21 for Gravesham, attached at appendix two to the report, was presented to the Committee for approval.

The Audit & Counter Fraud Team Leader stated that the Audit & Counter Fraud Plan has been prepared based on the cyclical programme of core financial and governance activities listed on page 8 of the Plan and a risk assessment to ensure that the team's resources are directed to the highest area of risk. Senior management have also been consulted on the draft plan to corroborate this risk assessment.

The Audit & Counter Fraud Team Leader fielded questions from the Committee, explaining that:

- The Committee will receive quarterly update reports on the Plan throughout the financial year and reviews will be conducted to ensure that the shared service can deliver the Plan effectively ahead of these. If any issues were detected with the Plan and amendments were necessary then they would be presented to the Committee as part of the next update report, asking for Members approval.
- Following on from the previous meeting of the committee and the item on the Strategic Risk Register, a review was undertaken of the Lower Thames Crossing as a strategic risk to the organisation with the Planning Department and the risk was assessed as below the threshold. However, it has been recognised as a risk under risk two of the proposed Strategic Risk Register, which related to national priorities and legislative change, as a significant infrastructure project that the Council will be obliged to react to over the course of next year.
- Within the team are the following staff:
 - James Larkin as the Head of Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service
 - Helen Thaqi, Nikki Ashby and Mark Cayzer as Audit & Counter Fraud Team leaders
 - Eight Audit & Counter Fraud Officers
 - An Intelligence Analyst and an Assistant
- With regard to the total number of days in the Plan, highlighted in the summary table on page 6, this time is made up from the Assistant, the Intelligence Analyst, the eight A&CF Officers and a portion of the Team Leaders time. The total of this time is then

split between the two local authorities as per the Shared Service Agreement, at 64% for Medway and 36% for Gravesham.

Resolved that Members approved the Audit & Counter Fraud Plan 2020-21 for Gravesham presented at Appendix 2.

54. 2019-20 Audit Scope Letter (Please note that Appendix 2 is restricted and will only be available in the private document pack)

The Committee was provided with a copy of a letter received from the Council's External Auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, setting out proposed additional fees relating to the 2019/20 audit of the Council's financial statements.

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) summarised the background of the letter and informed Members of the Councils decision in 2016 to unanimously accept the invitation to opt into the appointing persons arrangements made by PSAA for the appointment of external auditors.

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) advised that the additional fee of £7,500 in addition to the scale fee of £41,036 was set out as being necessary for Grant Thornton to meet their requirements for the Councils 2019/20 accounts.

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) outlined key points from the report to the Committee regarding the below four key areas that Grant Thornton explained were directly related to the need for the additional fee:

- Increased challenge and depth of work – raising the quality bar
- Property, plant and equipment (PPE or 'Fixed Assets')
- Pensions (IAS 19)
- Complex accounting issues and new accounting standards

The Letter set out the intention to approach the PSAA for the additional fee; the Section 151 Officer attended a meeting of the Kent Finance Officer Group and it has been recognised that the current level of audit fee was not sustainable to deliver a quality and compliant audit service.. There is a government review currently being undertaken to consider the scope and role of external audit, the Redmond review; the initial findings from the review are expected later on this month with formal reporting currently scheduled for June..

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) fielded questions from Members and explained that:

- The Council is registered for VAT and is able to claim VAT back
- The fee was discussed with the Director (Corporate Services) and he felt that it was an acceptable charge. The consultation from the PSAA on fees for 2020/21 is underway and the Council will be submitting a response to that through the District Councils Network
- Grant Thornton have always reserved the right to increase their prices most likely in preparation of cases where Councils haven't prepared sufficient working papers to support their Statement of Accounts or they haven't complied with the Code of Practice creating more work for the external auditors

- Gravesham have a very good track record with responding to audit enquiries and producing quality working papers to support the Statement of Accounts which is supported by the outcomes from the Audit Letters. There is nothing to suggest that the outcome of the Audit Letter in July 2020 will be any different
- The external audit fees have significantly reduced since they peaked in the mid 2000's at £125K. Before that the Council used to be charged by the Audit Commission who undertook Value for Money and CPA assessments ranking the Council under Performance Measures 1-4. Over time the scope of audit has reduced, and as the scope decreased so did the fee

The Chair echoed the Assistant Director (Corporate Services) comments regarding external auditing and advised that they both attended a PSAA conference where her comments were reflected by other Finance Officers from London.

Before the end of the meeting, the Committee congratulated the Assistant Director (Corporate Services) on her recent promotion to the post of Director (Corporate Services).

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8:30pm.

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Cabinet**Monday, 23 March 2020****7.30 pm****Present:**

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

Councillors: Shane Mochrie-Cox
Lenny Rolles
Narinderjit Singh Thandi

Note: Councillors: Dikken and Meade were also in attendance.

David Hughes	Chief Executive
Stuart Bobby	Director (Corporate Services)
Nick Brown	Director (Housing & Operations)
Kevin Burbidge	Director (Planning & Development)
Lauren Wallis	Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

80. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brian Sangha and Jenny Wallace.

81. To sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2020 were signed by the Chair.

82. To declare any interest members may have in the items contained on this agenda. When declaring an interest a member must state what their interest is.

Cllr Lenny Rolles declared an interest in agenda item 10 (Establishment of Rosherville Servicing Limited) and item 11 (Formation of a Local Authority Trading Company Subsidiary – Property Development Company) as he had been registered as a Director of the Rosherville and was the Chair of the Rosherville Limited Board. Cllr Lenny Rolles left the Chamber during consideration of these items.

83. To consider whether any items in Part A of the agenda should be considered in private or any items in Part B in public

The Chair took the opportunity to thank everyone with bearing with the Leadership of the Council and the Management Team during this difficult time. He thanked Cllr Jordan Meade – Leader of the Conservative Group for his co-operation with regard to the adjusted administrative arrangements in that all decision-making meetings of the Council would take place with the minimum number of members and officers present, would also be politically proportional and debate and decision making would be kept concise for the protection of participants. It would continue to be possible to call-in Cabinet decisions but this would only

take place in consultation between the political parties in an effort to keep meetings to a minimum. Cllr Meade, who was in attendance, confirmed his agreement with the arrangements and the Chair advised of the agreement of the Independent Group.

The Chair continued that where possible, all decisions would be made by the appropriate individual or the Leader of the Council.

The IT Service had been asked to investigate the use of cameras and/or recording equipment at meetings going forward as it would be better to engage with all Members.

84. Delegated Decisions - Cabinet Members

No decisions other than those already circulated had been made.

85. Lower Thames Crossing Supplementary Consultation

Members were apprised of the Council's draft response to the supplementary consultation on the Lower Thames Crossing and received a review on the overall progress on this project.

The Director (Planning & Development) noted that the consultation had been extended by a week. However, the Leader of Thurrock Council had submitted a plea for a further extension given the current situation. A draft response would be submitted to Management Team and the Leader of the Council for consideration. The Government had responded positively to some of the Borough Council's suggestions but there were still areas that lacked detail or clarity in the documents including the electrical sub-station and arisings from tunnels and their disposal and these would be addressed in the Council's response.

The Chief Executive suggested the removal of the word "minor" in recommendation 1 to avoid the process becoming bogged down.

The Leader of the Conservative Group confirmed he was happy with the Cabinet's approach.

Resolved that:

- 1) the draft response to Highways England's Lower Thames Crossing Supplementary Consultation Questionnaire set out in Appendix 3 for submission by 25 March 2020 and authorise the Director (Planning and Development, in consultation with the Leader of the Executive, to make any necessary typographical or other adjustments ahead of submission;
- 2) the Supplementary Consultation Appraisal in Appendix 4 be noted;
- 3) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive for the production of a letter to Highways England, which will be jointly signed by the Leader of the Executive, setting out the concerns not covered by that response set out in Appendix 3 of the report. This letter will be sent shortly after the close of the supplementary consultation;
- 4) the Planning Inspectorate be sent a copy of the agreed letter referred to in 3) above, emphasising the Council's concerns about the adequacy of information in the PEIR and this consultation; and

- 5) It be agreed that the Director (Communities) write to Highways England from a property perspective including issues raised by the potential Compulsory Purchase of land at Cascades Leisure Centre.

86. Development of the Corporate Risk Register 2020-2021

Cabinet was informed of the outcomes from Gravesham Borough Council's annual risk identification and analysis exercise and were presented with a copy of the Corporate Risk Register for 2020/21.

Following a suggestion from the Chair to include a reference to Covid-19 be included in the Corporate Risk Register, the Director (Corporate Services) noted the steep learning curve with regard to the Council's Business Continuity Plans given the current Covid-19 outbreak and asked permission from the Chair for delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader, to include that current learning in the finalised version of the Risk Register as considered appropriate.

The Leader of the Conservative Group confirmed he was happy with the Cabinet's approach.

Recommended that the Corporate Risk Register that has been developed for 2020/21 be agreed for submission to Council.

87. Exclusion

Resolved pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded during the following item of business because it was likely in view of the nature of business to be transacted that, if members of the public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

88. Establishment of Rosherville Servicing Limited

Cllr Lenny Rolles left the Chamber during discussion and voting on this item.

Cabinet was provided with a business case, on behalf of the Board of Rosherville Limited, for the formation of a subsidiary company – Rosherville Servicing Limited. The Director (Housing & Operations) advised that the purpose of the company would be to provide vehicle servicing and repairs for the public and businesses and to provide an income stream for the Council. Improvements made within the Vehicle Workshop operation had delivered efficiencies and spare capacity to enable the team to undertake the extra work. The business case had been approved by the Board of Rosherville Limited on 25 February 2020 and the Vehicle Workshop would be ready to commence commercial work on 1 April. The Director (Housing & Operations) advised that Covid-19 was bound to have an adverse impact on customer demand but hopefully this impact would only be short term. If Covid-19 had an adverse impact on the Vehicle Workshop resources, work on the Council's vehicle fleet would be prioritised.

The Executive Member for Operational Services felt that this was an excellent approach which would enhance the Council's brand and he had every confidence in the operation and its employees.

Resolved that:

- 1) the formation of the Rosherville Servicing Limited subsidiary company be approved;
- 2) the provision of £15,000 working capital to Rosherville Servicing Limited as set out within the business case be approved; and
- 3) authority be provided for the Director (Housing & Operations) in conjunction with the Rosherville Limited Company Secretary to make the necessary arrangements to register the company with Companies House.

89. Formation of a Local Authority Trading Company Subsidiary – Property Development Company

Cllr Lenny Rolles left the Chamber during discussion and voting on this item.

Members were provided with a business case, on behalf of the Board of Rosherville Limited, for the formation of a subsidiary company – Rosherville Property Development Limited. The Director (Corporate Services) explained that authority was being sought to create a property development subsidiary which it was felt would be a success because of the demand for housing in the town centre. It was important to note that approval of funding for the proposed scheme in the town centre was not being sought and this would be the subject of a further report.

With reference to the Covid-19 impact, the Council was awaiting advice from the Council's advisors on this matter, Jones Lang LaSalle.

Resolved that:

- 1) the formation of the Rosherville Property Development Limited subsidiary company be approved; and
- 2) authority be provided for the Director (Corporate Services) in conjunction with the Rosherville Limited Company Secretary to make the necessary arrangements to register the company with companies House.

Cllr Lenny Rolles returned to the Chamber.

90. Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.Covid-19 Update

The Chief Executive advised that the Director (Corporate Services) had been tasked with keeping Councillors apprised of actions and issues and the Chief Executive was responsible for communications to staff. The Council's Management Team met daily to consider new announcements from the Government and a number of different work streams had been set up. For example, there was a resilience work stream with regard to home working and compliance with Government guidance. A third of Council staff were currently working from home on a week on week off rota basis. New categories of vulnerability were being identified and the Government would be sending out letters to 1.5 million people in the UK the first of which would be delivered the next day who would then have to stay indoors for the next 12

weeks. These people would need a great deal of support. The Government guidance on this had not yet arrived. Another work stream was how to provide support to all vulnerable people in the Borough and those over the age of 70 years. The Government had announced a great deal of support for example, for businesses who would be offered a Business Rate relief and grants etc and the Council was making preparations to roll out this relief to businesses as quickly as possible when the funding from Government was received.

The Chief Executive also advised of the following:

- £1billion of hardship support would be made available to people in real financial difficulty. However, Government guidance on how this funding was to be used had not yet been received.
- Issues had arisen about the closure of businesses and emergency regulations had been published in relation to Environmental Health and Trading Standards services which would enable officers to use prohibition powers and to issue fines for non-compliance to public houses, restaurants etc.
- There had been some modest changes to housing benefits and officers were working through this. Those making benefit claims were required to provide documents to support their claims and officers were considering using their discretion and asking claimants to submit their documents after the fact.
- The Civic Centre had been closed to the public as reception and other frontline staff had struggled to persuade people to maintain social distance.
- Some local authorities had closed their parks including the Royal Parks, to the public. The Council did not consider this measure a necessity in the Borough at the present time.
- Many local authorities were also closing children's play areas because of concern about social distancing. This subject would be discussed further at tomorrow's meeting of Management Team.
- One of the side effects of home working had been an increase of parking on residential streets and some local authorities had chosen not to take enforcement action. The Council intended to take enforcement action in the case of pinch points and access for emergency vehicles and common sense would be applied.

The Chief Executive concluded that it was a very busy time for officers and it would not be viable to give Members a daily update. Tribute was paid to the officers of the Council for all their hard work in an unprecedented situation.

The Director (Corporate Services) noted that it now recognised that the 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday was no longer reserved work time and the resilience team was working all hours. In the present circumstances the conventional out of hours service would not work and improved resilience arrangements were being put in place.

Chief Executive

The Chair noted that David Hughes last day as Chief Executive was 31st March 2020 and Stuart Bobby would be assuming the role of Chief Executive from 1st April 2020 as planned. However, David Hughes had offered to stay on for an additional month to assist the Council in coping with the current situation and the Chair expressed his appreciation. The Chief Executive had cancelled his farewell gathering. However, Cabinet wished to thank him for everything he had done for the Council and presented him with a small gift in the shape of a suitably engraved sterling silver Scottish Quaich which represented the gift of friendship. The

Chair hoped that the Chief Executive to come back later in the year to celebrate his retirement.

The Chief Executive thanked Members and advised that they could not have made a better choice of gift and stated that it had been a privilege to work at Gravesham.

Cllr Thandi advised that the Sikh Vaisakhi community event had had to be cancelled but he intended visit the Civic Centre to present a gift to the Chief Executive.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.07 pm

Cabinet**Monday, 1 June 2020****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

Stuart Bobby	Chief Executive
Nick Brown	Director (Housing & Operations)
Melanie Norris	Director (Communities)
Sarah Parfitt	Director (Corporate Services)
Jan Guylar	Head of Legal Services
Elizabeth Thornton	Service Manager (Property & Regulatory Services)
Andy Rayfield	Communications Manager
David Herrington	Digital Manager
Carlie Simmonds	Committee Services Manager

Note: Martin LeGrice and Jack Bergin, representatives of Jones Lang LaSalle, were also in attendance.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2020 were signed by the Chair.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Lenny Rolles declared an Other Significant Interest in agenda item 11 - The Charter (formerly Eastern Quarter) Regeneration Development due to his role as Chair of the Rosherville Limited Board. Cllr Lenny Rolles left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Melanie Norris, Director (Communities) also declared an interest in agenda item 11 - The Charter (formerly Eastern Quarter) Regeneration Development due to her role as a Director of the Rosherville Limited Board. Melanie Norris left the meeting during consideration of this item.

3. Delegated Decisions - Cabinet Members

Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox advised that, following the Community and Leisure Cabinet Committee held on 3 March 2020, he had taken a delegated decision to adopt the Gravesend Borough Market Strategy 2020-2030.

4. Insurance Tender Update

Further to minute 62 (06.01.2020), Members were informed that a report was submitted to the Cabinet advising that the Council's existing insurance contract will expire on the 29 June 2020 and of the need for the Council to determine how cover for beyond this date should be procured. The intention was for the Council to continue discussion with the Local Government Mutual (LGM) and, subject to a satisfactory offer coming forward, seek to obtain a quotation for the Council's requirements from the LGM.

Since January, discussions had been ongoing with representatives from the LGM. The Council had shared relevant data with the LGM to enable it to assess the Council's cover requirements and prepare an offer for the Council to consider however there had been delays in the LGM presenting an offer for the Council to consider and in addition, since mid-March, there had been a need for Council resources to be focused on and deployed to delivering the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

These two events had resultantly required officers to revisit the procurement options for securing appropriate insurance protections for the Council from 30 June 2020.

Negotiations with the Council's existing insurance provider, Zurich Municipal, resulted in a proposal for the Council to secure ongoing provision of insurance cover from Zurich for a further two years with a percentage reduction on existing premium costs. This would enable the Council to reassess its insurance requirements in a further 18 months' time and consider its options for procurement at that time, which could again include an offer from the LGM.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution and with due regard to the Government's Procurement Procedure Note (PPN 01/20), the Director (Corporate Services) had agreed to a two year contract being put in place with Zurich Municipal to provide insurance cover for the Council from 30 June 2020 to 29 June 2022, with a further procurement exercise taking place at an appropriate time to seek provision for cover after this date.

The Cabinet noted the report.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board held on Wednesday, 11 March 2020

The Cabinet considered the minutes of the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board meeting held on Wednesday 11 March 2020.

6. Exclusion

Resolved that pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded during the following items of business because it was likely in view of the nature of business to be transacted that, if members of the public were present during these items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

All Members and officers in remote attendance declared that there were no other persons present who were not entitled to be (either hearing or seeing) and/or recording the proceedings.

7. Investment Opportunity – long term leasehold arrangement

The Cabinet was presented with a report which sought approval for the progression of the proposals outlined within the report in relation to an investment opportunity.

The Council had been approached by The Reef Group in late 2019 with regard to a potential development opportunity on the Greenwich Peninsular.

Initial due diligence had been completed by officers to ensure that the proposals put forward were in the best interest of the Borough, but also the Council as a whole, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council had also sought external legal and financial advice to undertake an independent review of the proposals.

Detailed consideration was given to the information contained within the report and questions from Cabinet Members were put to and answered by officers and the external property consultants.

The Chair drew Members' attention to the recommendations detailed within the report and stated that, in order to provide additional time for all Members to raise any questions they might have in relation to the proposals, the intention would be for the recommendations to be slightly amended to allow for the Cabinet to delegate authority to the Leader to make the recommendations within a few days' time.

The Chief Executive also highlighted that the recommendations should state 'delegated authority' not 'delegated responsibility'.

Resolved that:-

Delegated authority be provided to the Leader to:-

- support the proposals for the Council to enter into the transaction as detailed in the report, subject to satisfaction of specific conditions as set out within the report;
- recommend to Full Council that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, the Director (Corporate Services) (in the role of Section 151 Officer) and the Deputy Monitoring Officer to take all necessary practical, financial and legal actions required to determine viability of the project and take a final decision to proceed, including entering into the relevant formal legal agreements;

- recommend to Full Council that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement is updated to extend the existing Operational Borrowing Limit and Authorised Borrowing Limits to ensure there is sufficient capacity to support this investment.

8. The Charter (formerly Eastern Quarter) Regeneration Development

The Cabinet was presented with a report which:-

- provided an overview of progress with The Charter project;
- sought consideration of a request received from the Rosherville Limited Board to the Council, as Shareholder, to make available the necessary funding for the project; and
- sought delegated authority to continue the necessary practical, financial and legal actions required to determine viability of the project and take a final decision to proceed.

In June 2018, the Council entered into an Exclusivity Agreement with Reef Estates Limited to bring forward residential and commercial development proposals for land formerly known as the Eastern and Western Quarters of Gravesend Town Centre. The agreement was for a period of 24 months which could be extended by a further 12 month period.

Rosherville Limited, through its subsidiary Rosherville Property Limited, will appoint an entity within The Reef Group as its Development Partner under a commercial agreement to secure the planning permission and deliver on the proposed scheme. In order for this to take place, the Council will be required to advance a loan to Roshverille Limited to enable the development to be brought forward.

The report provided detailed information regarding the proposals for The Charter area (formerly the Eastern Quarter), which had been developed by Reef Estates Limited as part of the wider masterplan for the area. Reef Estates Limited submitted a planning application to the Council on 6 April 2020 setting out their proposals for The Charter, which was currently being considered.

The Council had sought external legal and financial advice to undertake an independent review of the proposals.

Detailed consideration was given to the information contained within the report and questions from Cabinet Members were put to and answered by officers and the external property consultants.

The Chair drew Members' attention to the recommendations detailed within the report and stated that, in order to provide additional time for all Members to raise any questions they might have in relation to the proposals, the intention would be for the recommendations to be slightly amended to allow for the Cabinet to delegate authority to the Leader to make the recommendations within a few days' time.

The Chief Executive also highlighted that the recommendations should state 'delegated authority' not 'delegated responsibility'.

Resolved that-

Delegated authority be provided to the Leader to:-

- support the proposals for delivering The Charter Project and for the issuance of a long-term loan to Rosherville Limited to ensure the delivery of the project, subject to satisfaction of specific conditions as set out within the report;
- recommend to Full Council that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, the Director (Corporate Services) (in the role of Section 151 Officer) and the Deputy Monitoring Officer to take all necessary practical, financial and legal actions required to determine viability of the project and take a final decision to proceed, including entering into the relevant formal legal agreements;
- recommend to Full Council that delegated authority be given to the Director (Communities) in consultation with the Director (Corporate Services) (in the role of Section 151 Officer) to settle the terms and price of disposal of the associated land assets to Rosherville Limited for the purpose of bringing forward the proposed scheme;
- recommend to Full Council that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement is updated to extend the existing Operational Borrowing Limit and Authorised Borrowing Limits to £310.410m and £295.410m respectively to ensure there is sufficient capacity to support this loan;
- recommend to Full Council that an amount of £82m is added to the approved capital programme for 2020/21 for the purpose of providing long-term funding up to that defined level to Rosherville Limited as a means of delivering long-term economic benefits to the borough for both regeneration and community benefit.

Note: Cllr Lenny Rolles and Melanie Norris left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9.04 pm.

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