

Council

Tuesday, 12 April 2022

7.30 pm

Present:

The Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr Lyn Milner
The Deputy Mayor, Peter Scollard

Councillors:

Derek Ashenden	Jordan Meade
Helen Ashenden	Shane Mochrie-Cox
Ejaz Aslam	Emma Morley
Gurjit Bains	Diane Morton
Conrad Broadley	Elizabeth Mulheran
John Burden	Leslie Pearton
Gurdip Ram Bungar	Anthony Pritchard
John Caller	Tony Rana
Harold Craske	Tony Rice
Lee Croxton	Alan Ridgers
Dakota Dibben	Christina Rolles
Aaron Elliott	Lenny Rolles
Emma Elliott	Brian Sangha
Brian Francis	Lauren Sullivan
Sarah Gow	Narinderjit Singh Thandi
Gary Harding	Steve Thompson
Leslie Hills	Jenny Wallace
Leslie Hoskins	Frank Wardle
Bob Lane	

Stuart Bobby	Chief Executive
Nick Brown	Director (Environment) & Deputy Chief Executive
Melanie Norris	Director (Communities)
Lisa Nyon	Assistant Director (Corporate Services)
Bhupinder Gill	Assistant Director Legal and Governance
Simon Walsh	Service Manager (Communities)
Andy Rayfield	Communications Manager
Carlie Simmonds	Committee Services Manager

63. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baljit Hayre, Samir Jassal, Nirmal Khabra, Gurbax Singh and Denise Tiran.

64. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2022 were signed by the Mayor.

65. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

66. 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 John Milner (Gravesham and Dartford Extinction Rebellion) and a response was given by Cllr John Burden, Leader of the Council.

Question

If the Council is still in support of the London Resort Scheme, can you explain why? In view of:-

- a) LR withdrawing their DCO application (for now)*
- b) BBC and ITV have pulled out*
- c) Dartford Council and Buglife are opposed*
- d) Save Swanscombe Peninsula Group has 1.6k local residents amongst its numbers*
- e) The area is an important SSSI and we are in a biodiversity emergency*
- f) There are 3000 existing skilled jobs in the area which will not be surpassed by the suggested 6000 "popcorn selling" jobs*

Thanks

Gravesham and Dartford Extinction Rebellion

Response

In principle the Council continues to support London Resort a £2.5 billion project. This does not mean that the Council is not acutely aware of the challenges posed by the project, many of which would not have become apparent without the due diligence and efforts of LRCH and our own officers.

As with any project of this scale, there will be local people and businesses both for and against the scheme and this is recognised.

Over these past years, I've spoken directly to those on both side of the fence about this scheme, and what is clear to me is that everyone wants to see the local area improve to the benefit of local people, and that is at the forefront of this Council's approach.

The potential economic impact for the local area is considerable, with total direct jobs on site of around 11,000 full-time equivalent and with many thousands more jobs created indirectly, with around 23,000 during construction and more during its operating lifetime.

Businesses, local hotels, retailers and restaurants will also benefit.

These jobs will of course vary in nature between very skilled and less skilled, however we are a diverse community, and we do need a diverse range of jobs for all of our residents.

Unfortunately, proposals like this result in the displacement of existing occupiers. However, I am reassured by the measures London Resort have to take in compensating existing

businesses and working with them under the rules to continue, if that is what they want. This may mean many of the existing jobs will be displaced to the wider local area, rather than being lost.

The new jobs provided on site, in the local supply chain and wider, are much needed.

We're in an environment where jobs are increasingly becoming automated, skilled and spread in areas offering large commercial floorplates such as in Dartford and Thurrock.

I make no apologies for thinking about young local residents of the Borough today and wanting to do all that this Council can to ensure that they will have a variety of local job opportunities in the future.

More local jobs, also means less commuting, less congestion and less pollution.

We're all disappointed that the application has taken such a long time and that it has then been subsequently withdrawn, but I believe London Resort are following the correct approach.

I would rather they get it right, and address the concerns of local businesses, residents and wildlife groups upfront rather than down the line after they got permission from the government if that was to happen in due course.

I'm encouraged by the announcements of PY Gerbeau and will reemphasise the need for London Resort to continue engaging but with more transparency than before with the local community, land owners, and local authorities to get agreements in place and to address outstanding issues.

I also look forward to seeing further details of how London Resort will address the infrastructure issues and biodiversity matters that have been raised by this Council and others.

London Resort have already committed to investing £150m on mitigation and habitat enhancement. If more needs to be done on biodiversity, I will be encouraging London Resort through this council to work with the Government to find solutions for addressing the unique nature of this brownfield site.

67. Minutes of Committees

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

- Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 21 February 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 2 March 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee held on Tuesday, 8 March 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 21 March 2022

- Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 31 March 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 6 April 2022

68. Reserved Minutes

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

- the reserved Minute of Cabinet (Corporate Performance Update: Quarter Three 2021-22) held on Monday, 21 February 2022 be ratified and confirmed.

The Council paid tribute to the Environmental Enforcement Team for the work being undertaken to tackle fly tipping which had resulted in the Council securing its first conviction. The defendant pleaded guilty to the incident and was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment. The defendant had also previously admitted common assault on one of the Council's Civil Enforcement Officer. The Council condemned this behaviour.

- the reserved Minute of Cabinet (Support for energy bills - the Council Tax Rebate 2022/2023) held on Monday, 21 March 2022 be ratified and confirmed.

The Council paid tribute to Emma French, a Council employee, for speaking in an honest and brave way on BBC Panorama 'Surviving the Cost of Living Crisis'.

69. Independent Remuneration Panel

The Council received a report which requested approval to re-appoint two of the existing Members and one new Member to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years. This will enable the 2022 review of the Members' Allowances Scheme to be carried out in a timely manner.

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

70. Development of the Corporate Risk Register 2022-2023

The Council received a report which informed Members of the outcomes from Gravesham Borough Council's annual risk identification and analysis exercise and presented a copy of the Corporate Risk Register 2022-23 for approval.

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

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

No questions had been received.

72. To receive the Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor invited Members to attend:-

- her Coffee and Cake morning on 20 April 2022;
- her Dinner Dance on 6 May 2022; and
- the St George's Day Celebrations on 22 April and 24 April 2022.

The Mayor wished a Happy Ramadan, Easter, Vaisakhi and Passover to all who celebrate.

The Mayor stated that this will be the last meeting of the Council to be attended by Mrs Melanie Norris, Director (Communities), who will be retiring at the end of April 2022. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor and each Group Leader paid tribute to Mrs Norris on the work undertaken during her tenure at Gravesham Borough Council.

Mrs Norris in her response thanked Members for the support they had given to her and stated that it had been a privilege to work for Gravesham Borough Council.

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

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.38 pm