

Appendix 3 - Update of activity undertaken by officers to manage or mitigate risks documented in Gravesham Borough Councils Corporate Risk Register 2016-17

Risk Number	Risk Title	Mitigating Actions	Lead Officer	Target Date	Progress Update
1	Ongoing financial viability of the Council	Review and update the Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure the Council has a sound and realistic plan for managing the Council's finances moving forward.	Director (Corporate Services) Assistant Director (Corporate Services)	In place for 1 April 2016	The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was fundamentally reviewed and updated to reflect the financial position of the council going into the 2016/17 financial year and set the strategic plan for managing the council's finances through the 2019/20. The MTFS was adopted by Full Council in April 2016, and was again considered when Full Council debated acceptance of the multi-year settlement offer from Central Government in October 2016.
		Diversification of investment activity to increase the financial returns received by the Council, within approved parameters.	Director (Corporate Services)	Apr-16	The Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2016/17 was adopted by Full Council on 23 February and reflects the Council's desire to generate greater returns from its investment balances through placing £10m in property investment funds. Following consideration by the Property Acquisition Cross-Party Working Group the council has placed £2m with CCLA, £3m with Hermes and £5m with Lothbury (all figures inclusive of fund entrance expenses). It is anticipated that returns on these funds will be around 4% higher than the council has been achieving by placing these monies with more traditional investments. The council has also developed a Property Acquisition Strategy providing for a further £10m to be directed to the acquisition of commercial property to secure an ongoing revenue rental stream. In May the council secured its first purchase of the Network Centre, Gillingham, which will deliver an ongoing annual revenue income stream of £222k. In October the council finalised the acquisition of the head-leasehold interest of A4-A5 and C1-C6 Springhead Enterprise Park, resulting in the Council having an uninterrupted interest in these Units and delivering an initial ongoing revenue income stream of £240k.
		Monitoring of budgets and key areas of expenditure and income.	Management Team	On-going throughout the year	Budget holders continue to routinely monitor service budgets, with quarterly budget monitoring information for both General Fund and the HRA presented to Members. Management Team receive monthly monitoring information relating to significant items of income and expenditure such as staffing costs and fees and charges income.
		Challenge of existing budgetary provisions for services.	Assistant Director (Corporate Services)	On-going throughout the year	A specific exercise is currently underway focusing on areas of consistent underspend and overspend against budgetary provisions over the last four years. This will contribute to the council's activity to 'Bridge the Gap' in its financial position, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/2020. A review of reserves is also due to commence in the next month to ensure that earmarked reserves continue to be fit for purpose.
		Development of budget monitoring arrangements to improve process and ensure robustness of monitoring arrangements is maintained.	Assistant Director (Corporate Services)	On-going throughout the year	The format of budget monitoring information has been reviewed and refined to improve the efficiency of production and usability by budget holders. Consideration is currently being given to enhanced usage of the council's Financial Management System, with the intention to reduce the requirement for manual intervention in reporting and increase the ability for budget holders to 'self-serve'.
		Presentation of recommendations from the Service Review Process for consideration and implementation by Members.	Director (Corporate Services)	On-going throughout the year	The process for consideration of Service Review options was endorsed by Cabinet on 5 September 2016 and noted by the Overview Scrutiny on 15 September 2016. From October, 2016, Members will begin selecting options for service areas for further appraisal, before approval of options to be taken forward to 'bridge the gap' in funding that the council is facing.

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2	Changes in national priorities and legislative change	Continuation on monthly policy briefings and six-monthly legislative briefings.	Corporate Performance Manager	Monthly/six-monthly as required	<p>Monthly Policy Briefings are prepared and circulated to Management Team and Wider Management Team providing an update on key issues emerging from central government departments, including new and proposed legislative changes. These Briefings continue to ensure that officers are fully informed of changes or potential changes affecting their own service areas and the wider council. From this activity relevant Service Managers report to Management Team on government proposals impacting upon their areas of business.</p> <p>In support of this approach the council also proactively responds to consultations from central government departments and agencies, where it is considered the council has the opportunity to help shape government policy. This is carried out individually on behalf of the council, or collaboratively with other neighbouring district authorities, or as part of a wider network group (Local Government Association, District Councils' Network (DCN) etc.).</p> <p>Adopting this approach ensures that the views of the council are communicated back to government so that they may be taken into account as policy decisions are formulated ahead of any new legislative programme. For example, in the last six months the council assisted in formulating a response, on behalf of the DCN, to the Department for Communities and Local Government consultation on Business Rates Retention. The Council's own consultation response was discussed by the council's senior Management Team and ultimately approved by the council Leader, outlining the importance given to the council's position to the policy proposals. Members of the Performance & Administration Committee were also informed of the anticipated impact of the proposals, and their feedback was fed into the response accordingly. The council's activities in this area are not limited to proposed policy changes. Of equal importance is the council's work in adapting to legislative and working practice changes as they are made. A good example of this in the last reporting period can be seen in the redeveloped programme for Member Training. In June 2016 Cabinet approved the establishment of a new training and development plan for the next three years. Since its adoption, training has been provided for specific Member duties governed by a statutory framework (Regulatory Board), and also for new emerging themes driven by government policy ('Stop the Traffik' – Modern Slavery Act). The training helps develop knowledge and resilience at a Member and officer level, and ensures the council makes informed decisions whilst meeting legislative requirements.</p> <p>Often there is a requirement to address the impact of government policy initiatives in partnership with other agencies. The Gravesham Area Board, established as a forum for collectively reviewing and steering public resources in local services to meet the needs of the local Gravesham community. Central to that aim, partners of the Board provide regular briefings and intelligence sharing on the core legislative developments impacting on their services (e.g. public health agenda) with a view to ensure joint-working opportunities are delivered wherever possible to the benefit of local residents.</p>
3	Organisational capacity/resilience	Monitoring and allocation of resources to critical tasks and services	Management Team	On-going throughout the year	Management Team continue to evaluate service requests to fill vacant posts; where appropriate departments have been restructured to align resources to services in order to improve service delivery.
		Continue to encourage staff to work more flexibly across the organisation – offer opportunities for redeployment, secondments and project work.	Management Team	On-going throughout the year	Shared Service opportunities continue to be explored in the areas of Legal Services, Revenues & Benefits and Payroll. As the organisation moves to realise visions for the future in order to achieve efficiency savings it will look to actively encourage staff to take up opportunities for redeployment and secondment.
		Provide training to support increased flexible working across the organisation.	Director Communities	On-going throughout the year	The council remain committed both financially and in terms of resources to developing the skills of the workforce in order that they are able to take up alternative roles and redeployment opportunities in the future.
		Ongoing provision and review of initiatives to support the workforce.	Director Communities	On-going throughout the year	Ongoing support in the form of an employee assistance programme and occupational health provision remain in place. Building on the retention of IIP Gold a review of joint staff working has resulted in a new joint staff forum with wider staff representation being set up to improve communication. Work also continues to improve staff Health & Wellbeing.
4	Housing Revenue Account Services	Working group established to systematically look at options available to GBC in bridging the gap resulting from governments announcement re rent reductions (working with Service Review Team and Member Scrutiny review)	Director (Corporate Services) Assistant Director (Housing)	On-going throughout the year	An officer group specifically considered options for addressing the budgetary shortfalls resulting from the government's decision to reduce rental charges by 1% for four years commencing 1 April 2016 considered options in the autumn of 2015, and these were presented to Members as part of the budget setting papers for 2016-17 in February/March 2016. These options include restructuring of the HRA loans portfolio, increasing the level of savings from staffing vacancies and introducing market rents for newly built properties, and were all adopted as part of the approved HRA Budget for 2016-17 and HRA Business Plan for 2017-18 and beyond.
		Presentation of options for consideration and implementation by Management Team and Members.	Director (Corporate Services) Assistant Director (Housing)	On-going throughout the year	Further to the presentation and adoption of options into the HRA Budget for 2016-17, these are being actively monitored through regular budget monitoring reports to Cabinet and Finance & Audit Committee