

## **Cabinet**

**Monday, 8 January 2018**

**7.30 pm**

### **Present:**

Cllr David Turner (Chair)  
Cllr John Knight (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:       Gurjit Kaur Bains  
                          Julia Burgoyne  
                          Sandra Garside  
                          Samir Jassal  
                          Jordan Meade  
                          Anthony Pritchard  
                          Alan Ridgers

**Note:** Councillors John Burden, Leslie Hills, David Hurley, Shane Mochrie-Cox, Lenny Rolles and Steve Thompson were also in attendance.

David Hughes       Chief Executive  
Stuart Bobby       Director (Corporate Services)  
Nick Brown         Director (Environment & Operations)  
Kevin Burbidge     Director (Housing & Regeneration)  
Sarah Kilkie        Assistant Director (Communities)  
Carlie Simmonds   Committee Services Manager

### **52. Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Derek Shelbrooke.

### **53. To sign the minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2017 were signed by the Chair.

### **54. Declarations of Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **55. Delegated Decisions - Cabinet Members**

No decisions other than those already circulated had been made.

### **56. Service Review Options - Monitoring Report**

Further to minute 18 (11.07.2017), the Cabinet was presented with the six-monthly monitoring report against the options approved by Members in respect of the Service Review Process.

The Council's Medium-term Financial Strategy 2016-17 to 2019-20, sets out a funding gap by 2019-20 of £2.5m. The strategy presents a number of workstreams that have been put in place to 'bridge the gap' in funding that the Council will face, the key workstream being the implementation of the Service Review Options.

Eight service reviews have been completed and the options identified by officers and agreed by the Cabinet amount to £1,461,870 as detailed in the report and appendix two:-

- Economic Development & Town Centre Management;
- Public Health & Communities;
- Parking & Amenities;
- Revenues & Benefits;
- Regulatory Services;
- Planning & Regeneration Services;
- Customer & Theatre Services; and
- Direct Services Operation (DSO).

The Director (Corporate Services) advised that the total service review savings reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan to date was £1,017,840.

In addition to the delivery of the Service Review Options, work was also underway to implement actions against the other four areas identified in the Medium-term Financial Strategy and an update against these workstreams was provided in the report:-

- Property Acquisitions Strategy;
- Fees and Charges activity;
- Shared Services progression; and
- Budgetary Challenge Measures.

The Cabinet was informed that officers will continue to work on the implementation of the options over the coming months and years and the next monitoring report would be presented to the Cabinet in July 2018.

The Cabinet thanked officers for the work that had been undertaken to date.

## **57. Cessation of the Revenues & Benefits Shared Service**

Further to minute 95 (27.03.2017), the Cabinet formally approved the progression of a shared service for the delivery of Revenues & Benefits with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC) and delegated authority to the Director (Corporate Services), in consultation with the Lead Member for Performance and Administration, to take all necessary practical, financial and legal actions required to enable the arrangement to be put in place.

The Director (Corporate Services) advised that, since that date, officers from both Gravesham Borough Council and TMBC have been actively progressing the various workstreams in order to work towards the agreed implementation date of 1 July 2018. However, it became clear that due to a number of different reasons, as detailed in section two of the report, the best decision would be to cease the shared service.

**Resolved** that the Cabinet formally rescind the delegated authority provided to the Director (Corporate Services), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Administration, for the progression of a shared Revenues & Benefits Service between Gravesham Borough Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

## **58. Scrutiny Topic Review Report - Waste & Recycling in HMOs and Flats**

The Cabinet was presented with the Topic Review report for 'Waste and Recycling in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Flats' that had been approved by Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet was informed that one comprehensive meeting of the sub-group was held in October 2017, which was deemed sufficient in reviewing and determining recommendations associated with the waste and recycling service in HMOs and flats.

The report detailed the following four recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet:-

- continue to explore alternative options to allow residents in flats to recycle their food waste (this is also to be considered for those residents in HMOS not already provided with a food waste service);
- explore the provision of a reusable recycling receptacle for residents in flats;
- Ward Members are to be encouraged to notify officers of specific HMO waste-related issues they identify within their ward areas; and
- expand the work undertaken with one letting agency to other letting agencies in the borough.

In addition, at the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee, Members felt that it was important that a meeting with the lead letting agencies in the borough be progressed as soon as possible, in conjunction with the Lead Members for Environment and Housing; officers had already started to progress this issue.

The Director (Environment & Operations) advised that if the Cabinet was supportive of the recommendations, he and the Assistant Director (Environment) would progress the recommendations and that an update would be provided to the Overview Scrutiny Committee in six months.

**Resolved** that following the review by the Overview Scrutiny Committee sub-group, the four recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.

## **59. Procurement Strategy**

The Cabinet was informed that at the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee on 14 January 2016, Members were presented with a full list of all policies, both internal and external, currently in place across the Council. The Committee identified a total of 13 policies that they wished to review prior to the policy being finalised, one of which was the Procurement Strategy.

The Procurement Strategy sets out the principles that the Council will follow in the acquisition of goods, works and services from third-party and in-house providers.

The draft strategy was prepared with the assistance of procurement colleagues from Medway Council and presented to the Overview Scrutiny Committee on 19 October 2017 for comment. It was subsequently amended following that meeting due to comments received which were detailed in section 2.3 of the report for Members' information. It was also presented to the Performance & Administration Cabinet Committee on 9 November 2017 and no further amendments were proposed.

The Cabinet was presented with the draft Procurement Strategy and advised that the decision-making arrangements of the Council regarding procurement remain as set out in Annex 2.7 of the Constitution (Contract Procedure Rules).

**Resolved** that the draft Procurement Strategy, attached at appendix two of the report, be approved for adoption.

#### **60. Joint Working with Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) in respect of Potential Housing Development Sites**

The Cabinet received a report which detailed ongoing discussions with Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) to bring forward housing development within the borough and seek authority to progress this work beyond the discussion stage.

The Director (Housing and Regeneration) advised that EDC was charged with delivering a total of 15,000 homes which cannot be achieved within the area covered by the organisation. Therefore, EDC officers have been working with officers from Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils to identify potential sites within their 'area of influence' where their assistance could bring forward further housing to assist in delivery of that target.

To enable an open discussion of potential options for joint working, officers shared with EDC details of its own landholdings, together with details of 'stalled' sites where their abilities to become involved in a way not open to local authorities might assist in moving permitted, or previously permitted, schemes forward.

As part of this exercise, as well as the potential for using EDC funds to undertake feasibility work, with repayment occurring when the site is sold or developed, officers have worked together to identify other funding for such purposes, e.g. One Public Estate (OPE).

Two sites have been identified for initial consideration, both of which have previously been identified by Members in 2014 for inclusion in the Local Plan 'call for sites' exercise. Those sites include General Fund land at Milton Place, including the corner site owned by Fairview Homes and the site of the Shears Green Community Centre (HRA), which costs the Council more to maintain than it receives in income and which will have major repair requirements in the near future.

The progress to date was detailed in the report for Members' information and authority was sought to allow officers to enter into any necessary agreements to move this work forward. Members were advised that as work progresses, further information/decision reports would be presented to the Cabinet for example whether there should be a replacement community facility at Shears Green (either integral, on-site or nearby).

A number of other GBC-owned sites are considered potentially suitable for a further phase of this work, but initial investigations will be undertaken by officers to identify potential 'show-

stoppers' before being progressed further. Initial thoughts have highlighted the following sites to consider as a second phase, which were also included within GBC's submission in the 'call for sites' or are 'stalled':-

- Rembrandt Drive, Gravesend;
- Dering Way, Gravesend; and
- Canal Basin Regeneration Area, Gravesend.

The Leader invited Members to submit any sites for consideration.

Members expressed concern with the Former Police Station and Hospital 'M' Block which have not been redeveloped to date despite planning permission being obtained.

The Cabinet was informed that the Homes and Communities Agency had been rebranded to Homes England and tasked with taking a more active role in relation to compulsory purchase, by working closely with local authorities to use their compulsory purchase powers to support the development and regeneration of land for housing.

The Chief Executive stated that he would be meeting with representatives of Homes England to discuss 'stalled' sites within Gravesham where their powers may be of assistance.

**Resolved** that officers be authorised to progress the work, as outlined in the report, including the entering into of any appropriate Exclusivity Agreements and the Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **61. Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.**

The Chief Executive informed Members of an incident that happened in Rochester involving a homeless man being accidentally tipped into a bin lorry after using a large communal bin for shelter.

The Chief Executive advised that 1100 litre communal bin are used within Gravesham and following notification of the incident, Gravesham's refuse crews were instructed, from now on, to lift the lid of these bin and check prior to loading.

#### **62. 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 as defined in paragraph 1 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

#### **63. STG Business Plan 2018-21**

The Cabinet was reminded that the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (involving Medway, Gravesham and Swale) went live in 2007 and was now in its third five-year term. The partnership's business plan outlined how the building control function for the

partnership Councils would be delivered over the next three years and also included a financial plan up until 2020-21.

Before 1 October each year, the Joint Committee is required to approve and send its draft Business Plan for the following year to each partner authority for comments. The Joint Committee agreed a consultation draft on 21 September 2017.

Approval to include Canterbury City Council's building control service in the partnership from April 2018 was given in October 2017 and negotiations have commenced covering a number of areas of the agreement. Therefore, two scenarios have been included in the financial plan to cover both a three partner and four partner arrangement. It was also envisaged that there would be some small savings in the first year with subsequent further savings once the new arrangement was in place.

For Gravesham Borough Council (GBC), the contribution to the shared service will fall from the current £53,371 in 2017-18 to £47,812 by 2020-21 in the 3 way partnership. In a 4 way partnership GBC's contributions would fall to £42,317 by 2020-21.

GBC's contribution in the forthcoming 2018-19 year is £50,854 in the 3 way partnership, which is already allowed for in the Medium Term Financial Plan. In a four way partnership our contribution in 2018-19 would be reduced to £48,733.

**Resolved that:-**

- 1) the proposed STG Building Control Partnership Business Plan 2018-2021 (version 4) including the Financial Plan and the Delivery Plan (version 4) appended to it, be approved;
- 2) the Secretary to the STG Building Control Partnership be notified accordingly; and
- 3) the Cabinet delegates to the Director (Corporate Services) and Assistant Director (Communities), in consultation with the Leader, the authority to approve any additional Gravesham BC contribution to balance any deficit that may arise for the STG Building Control Partnership in 2017-18.

**Close of meeting**

The meeting ended at 8.15pm