

Cabinet

Monday, 25 June 2018

7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr David Turner (Chair)

Councillors: Harold Craske
Sandra Garside
Samir Jassal
Anthony Pritchard
Alan Ridgers
Derek Shelbrooke

Note: Councillors: John Burden, Lee Croxton, Leslie Hills, Shane Mochrie-Cox, Narinderjit Singh Thandi and Jenny Wallace were also in attendance

Stuart Bobby	Director (Corporate Services)
Kevin Burbidge	Director (Housing & Regeneration)
Melanie Norris	Director (Communities)
Sarah Kilkie	Assistant Director (Communities)
Sarah Parfitt	Assistant Director (Corporate Services)
Mark Lees	Regulatory Services Manager
Daniel Killian	Service Manager (Operations)
Roy Catling	Asset Manager
Mark Cordingley	Building & Depot Manager
Andrew Barnett	Principal Accountant
Alexandra Jarvis	Principal Accountant
Lauren Wallis	Committee Services Officer (minutes)

101. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Gurjit Bains, Julia Burgoyne and John Knight.

102. To sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2018 were signed by the Chair.

103. 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.

No declarations of interest were made.

104. Delegated Decisions - Cabinet Members

The Cabinet was informed of the following decision that had been taken by the Portfolio Holder for Business Development on 17 April 2018:-

- To approve the 3 yearly review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy to run from 1 May 2018 until 30 April 2021.

105. Increase in the Penalty for Littering in the Borough

The Cabinet was provided with an update to the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and was requested to give authority to increase the penalty for littering in Gravesham from £75 to the maximum fine level of £150. The Service Manager (Operations) advised that the increase of the littering fine would be part of the anti-littering campaign that would be launched in 1 July 2018. Enforcement of the fine would be undertaken in the town centre by the Council's Safer Place Officers who had received relevant training. Other areas of the Borough would be covered by the waste management teams and appropriate County Council employees.

Members requested that it should be made clear in the campaign that people should not drop litter as it took a great deal of Council resources to clear it and these resources could be put to better use. The Cabinet was advised that this would be part of the thrust of the campaign and the Communications Manager had been asked to include this message.

Resolved that the penalty charge for littering is increased to the maximum fine level of £150 per offence with effect from 1st August 2018.

106. Procurement - Materials and Supplies for Responsive Repairs

The Cabinet was informed by the Service Manager (Operations) of the current position with regards to the procurement of materials and supplies needed to carry out responsive repair work on the Council's housing stock. Approval was sought to use a procurement framework to appoint a sole supplier that could work using digital integration with the DSO Building Management Service. The request had been bought about by the transformation of the Council's service which had included the creation of the position of Stock Control Officer which had proved very successful.

Members' attention was drawn to the table contained in paragraph 2.2 of the report which demonstrated the savings made on combined materials spend year on year following the improvements and changes made to back office systems and processes. However there was an opportunity to reduce spend further by using an OJEU compliant procurement framework to procure a single supplier at more competitive rates than current suppliers could offer and the Building & Depot Manager recommended this way forward.

Resolved that:

- (a) The Director (Environment & Operations) in consultation the Director (Corporate Services), the Monitoring Officer and the Lead Member for Environmental Services, be delegated authority to conduct the procurement process and award the contracts for Materials and Supplies for Responsive Repairs on an annual basis as outlined in the report, subject to satisfactory contractor performance and cost; and

- (b) The Director (Environment & Operations) in consultation with the Director Corporate Services), the Monitoring Officer and the Lead Member for Environmental Services, be delegated authority to grant extensions for Materials and Supplies for Responsive Repairs on an annual basis as outlined in the report, subject to satisfactory contractor performance and cost.

107. Procurement - Major & Planned Works, Servicing, Repairs & Maintenance Contracts

The Asset Manager advised Members of the current position in relation to the contracts in place to maintain the Council's housing stock which incorporated contracts for Major & Planned Works and Servicing, Repairs & Maintenance. Approval was sought for the use of frameworks for the procurement and awarding of contracts. It was noted that 7 contracts were due to expire and the use of the frameworks had been recommended by the South East Consortium (SEC). Appendix 3 of the report outlined those frameworks it was proposed that the Council use and the tenders would be designed to be a combination of 60% cost and 40% quality.

Resolved that:

- (a) The Director (Environment & Operations), in consultation with Director (Corporate Services), the Monitoring Officer and the Lead Member for Environmental Services, be delegated authority to conduct the procurement process and award the contracts for Major & Planned Works and Servicing, Repairs & Maintenance contracts using the South East Consortium (SEC) procurement framework by way of direct call off or mini tender as outlined in the report.
- (b) The Director (Environment & Operations), in consultation with Director (Corporate Services), the Monitoring Officer and the Lead Member for Environmental Services ,be delegated authority to grant annual extensions for Major & Planned Works and Servicing, Repairs & Maintenance contracts subject to satisfactory Contractor performance; and
- (c) The Director (Environment & Operations), in consultation with Director (Corporate Services), the Monitoring Officer and the Lead Member for Environmental Services, be delegated authority to grant temporary extensions on the current Term Contracts in place to provide added resilience and consistency to the service and the Council's tenant during the lead in to the award of the new contracts.

108. Corporate Plan 2015-19: Annual Performance Report (2017-18)

Cabinet was presented with the 2017/18 year-end performance outturns for the Performance Management Framework as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-19. The Director (Corporate Services) advised that that the report summarised the performance of the Council against agreed targets. It was noted that eight performance measures had met the set target and six had not.

Further to Corporate Objective 04 – Sound & Self-Sufficient Council a request was made that long and short term sickness absence statistics be separated and also that a definition

of long-term sickness absence be included. The Director (Communications) agreed to provide the Cabinet with a summary on this subject.

In relation to Corporate Objective 01 - Safer Gravesham (page 116 of the report), the Chair requested that, in future, information from previous years be included for purposes of comparison. The same request was made in relation to Corporate Objective 02 – Stronger Gravesham (page 118 of the report).

The Cabinet noted the report which was for information only.

109. Provisional Outturn Report 2017/18

Members were presented with the following:

- The 2017/18 provisional General Fund Revenue Outturn and movement in the General Fund working balances and earmarked reserves.
- The 2017/18 provisional General Fund Capital Outturn.
- The 2017/18 provisional Housing Revenue Account Revenue Outturn and movements in the Housing Revenue Account working balances and earmarked reserves.
- The 2017/18 provisional Housing Revenue Account Capital Outturn.

The report provided details of the provisional budget outturn for the 2017/18 financial year and complemented the 2017/18 financial statements for the authority which would be submitted for consideration to the Finance & Audit Committee shortly.

The Executive Summary covered the key points as follows:

General Fund (Revenue)

- Year-end underspend £945,890 mainly through the delivery of the Bridging Gap activity
- Minimum working balance £1.25m
- General Fund reserve £2m
- Usable working balance £4.06m

Movements in the year had provisionally resulted in a net increase in specific reserves of £0.44m, with the level of specific reserves being £7.06m at start of year and projected to be £7.5m at year end.

General Fund (Capital)

The final outturn of the General Fund Capital Programme for the year was £4.04m against a budgeted expenditure of £13.74m. Capital budgets totalling £9.29m had been carried forward for 2018/19, principally relating to the Council's Commercial Property Acquisition Strategy.

Housing Revenue Account

Income and expenditure had been balanced at the end of the financial year. Main movements from the original budget for the year related to a change in funding source for

the New Build/Acquisition programme, effective management of vacant posts, higher than expected income from rents and non-dwelling fees and charges and work undertaken during the year to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the repairs and maintenance function.

The level of Working Balances at year end remained at £3m, the minimum level of Working Balances for the HRA. Movements in the year resulted in a net increase in the General HRA Reserves of £2.82m, with the level of reserves being £4.62m at start of year and projected to be £7.44m at year end.

Housing Capital

The final outturn of the Housing Capital Programme for the year was £13.35m against a budgeted expenditure of £14.77m.

The following points were raised during discussion on this item:

- No decision had been made to not fill vacant officer posts and recruitment to each vacancy was considered on its merits.
- The income from the Kent Business Rates Pilot Scheme would be included in the outturn for the next financial year.
- The land at Brookvale Depot had been identified for use by the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC). However the EDC had since had a rethink in relation to this decision. However, the Borough Council had undertaken a feasibility study which had shown that GBC should press ahead with the building of the proposed unit with a pre-construction let being a possibility.
- With regard to the Whitehill Community Centre, the Director (Communities) advised that the spend had been in relation to a squatter and the legal process to remove the person and to enhance the security of the building to prevent a re-occurrence.
- In relation to the £96k adverse variance on New Build Preliminary Costs, the Director (Housing & Regeneration) explained that planning permission was needed and until then this would not be treated as capital expenditure.
- The Service Manager (Operations), in relation to Repairs & Maintenance, referred to the Repairs & Maintenance Policy (which outlines what the Council would and would not do with regard to repairs and maintenance to its housing stock) and the Recharge Policy (work that would be recharged to the Council's tenants) which had been in place since 2017 and assisted, along with several other significant changes within the department to the favourable variance.
- The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) explained that the Southfield Shaw Capital Works had been completed ahead of schedule and therefore next year's costs had been incurred in this financial year.

The Cabinet noted the report which was for information only.

110. Service Review Options - Monitoring Report

Cabinet was provided with a 6 month update against the options approved by Members in respect of the Service Review Process. The Director (Corporate Services) noted that this linked with the report on the Provisional Outturn and gave details of the Council's progress on achieving £2.9m of savings. Three areas were highlighted – the property acquisition in Sittingbourne, the increase in Green Waste income and a significant increase in the Council's fees and charges income and Members' attention was drawn to the table on page 157 of the report.

The Cabinet noted the report which was for information only.

111. The Armed Forces Community Covenant

All local authorities had been encouraged to sign an Armed Forces Community Covenant which is a voluntary statement of mutual support between civilian and Armed Forces communities. The Council had requested an annual update and the Director (Housing & Regeneration) provided details of activities relating to the Gravesham commitment for 2017/18. Members were advised that:

- The Council had appointed an Armed Forces Champion.
- Recognition and Remembrance had been progressed and a flag raising event had taken place outside the Civic Centre that day. In addition, a number of services of remembrance were supported in 2017 and would take place again in November of this year.
- The Covenant Fund had been used on Base Camp Kent and, after due consideration, the decision was made not to continue with this initiative. However, the Council had been allowed to retain this funding to be used for the provision of information for soldiers leaving the armed services.

Members noted that this year was the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I and the creation of the Royal Air Force.

The Director (Communities) advised that the "Silent Soldier" silhouette acquired last year would be joined by further silhouettes and used in the display planned for the raised part of Community Square, which would also include the crown shaped planter and the knitted poppy carpet.

The Mayor intended to continue the work undertaken by Cllr Craske and would visit all war graves in the Borough. Cllr Craske encouraged all Members to take part in this initiative.

The Cabinet noted the report which was for information only.

112. Development of a Shared Service for the Delivery of Licensing Services

Members' approval was sought for the progression of the shared service for the provision of Licensing Services with Medway Council. The Director (Communities) advised that since May 2018 the Council's Licensing Manager (now the Regulatory Services Manager) had worked as a shared manager with Medway Council. The possibility of a shared service with Medway Council had been explored and it was suggested that Gravesham would be the

host authority. It was noted that a report on this subject would be submitted to the Executive of Medway Council in the near future.

The Regulatory Services Manager commented that a great deal of work had been undertaken in the last 2 to 3 years to bring the Council's Licensing Service up to date including the introduction of digitisation. Medway Council's Licensing Service was not quite as far forward and would be able to piggyback GBC's progress. There would be a central processing hub based at the Civic Centre with a few Licensing Officers based at Medway Council.

Resolved that:

- (a) Progression of a fully shared Licensing Service with Medway Council be agreed and Full Council be RECOMMENDED to accept the delegation by Medway Council of its Licensing functions; and
- (b) The Assistant Director (Communities), in consultation with the Director (Corporate Services), the Portfolio Holder for Business Development and the Monitoring Officer, be delegated authority to take all necessary practical, financial and legal actions required to enable the arrangement to be put in place.

113. The minutes of the meetings of the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board held on 14 March 2018

Cllr Ridgers advised that the meeting had been chaired by Cllr Boycott and the chairmanship of the Board would now be handed over the Kent County Council for the current municipal year. Meetings of the Board were a chance for an exchange of information and officers from the Arriva Bus Company had attended the last meeting. In addition, officer advice had been taken in relation to permissions and the status quo had been agreed. The issues with regard to Deering Way had been discussed and officers would be looking at ways to highlight the speed limit. Also the new one way system around the town centre had been mentioned as it was considered that some improvements could be made.

Cllr Shelbrooke highlighted his concern about the possible cessation of the 306/308 rural bus service as he felt it was vital for the outlying areas of the Borough. Members were advised to direct their concerns to Kent County Council (Mike Whiting) or Arriva.

The minutes of the meeting of the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board held on 13 March 2018 were noted.

114. The minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee held on 20 March 2018

The Director (Communities) commented that the Crime & Disorder Committee was very useful and interesting and was often attended by senior police officers who were questioned by Members. It was noted that the Committee fed into the Community Safety Partnership (which covered Gravesham and Dartford).

The minutes of the meeting of the Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee held on 20 March 2018 were noted.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm