

## **Cabinet**

**Monday, 12 November 2018**

**7.30 pm**

### **Present:**

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

Councillors: Julia Burgoyne  
Harold Craske  
Sandra Garside  
Derek Shelbrooke

**Note:** Councillors John Burden, Leslie Hills, Shane Mochrie-Cox, Brian Sangha and Narinder Singh Thandi were also in attendance.

David Hughes	Chief Executive
Stuart Bobby	Director (Corporate Services)
Nick Brown	Director (Environment & Operations)
Kevin Burbidge	Director (Housing & Regeneration)
Melanie Norris	Director (Communities)
Daniel Killian	Assistant Director (Operations)
Sarah Parfitt	Assistant Director (Corporate Services)
Ashley Wilcox	Communications Manager
Carlie Simmonds	Committee Services Manager (Minutes)

### **131. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2018 were signed by the Chair.

### **132. Declaration of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

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

No decisions other than those already circulated had been made.

### **134. Corporate Performance Update – Quarter Two 2018-19**

The Cabinet received an update against the Performance Management Framework (PMF), as set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-19, for Quarter Two 2018-19 (July to September 2018).

Appendix Two to the report provided Cabinet with a statistical overview of the Council's performance. Page one of the appendix provided a summary of performance against target in the last reporting quarter, with the following key statistical headlines from the performance measures:-

- 7 performance measures had met their set target; and
- 6 performance measures had not met their set target.

The Director (Corporate Services) advised that following review by the Cabinet, all Cabinet Committees will be presented with individual performance reports tailored to the respective portfolios. These will provide statistical content in support of more detailed contextual updates outlining what actions have been delivered, and what is to be taken, to successfully realise the Corporate Plan's four corporate objectives and supporting policy commitments.

The Cabinet noted the information contained within the report.

### **135. Balancing the Budget - Additional Budget Initiatives**

The Director (Corporate Services) informed Members that the Council's Medium-term Financial Strategy 2016-17 to 2019-20, set out an identified funding gap by 2019-20 of £2.5 million. The identified gap increased to £2.9 million at budget setting 2017-18, primarily driven by changes to the design of the New Homes Bonus Scheme. The strategy incorporated a number of workstreams that would be put in place to 'bridge the gap' in funding that the Council was facing at that time as detailed in the report.

Over recent years, officers had been working to deliver those savings required against each of the identified activities and have made significant progress; approx. £800k was still required in order to meet the full £2.9 million and work was continuing to deliver those initiatives.

Over the course of the past two years, however, there have been a number of further changes which had culminated in the need to identify additional savings/income generation initiatives to deliver at least a further £1 million in order to balance the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

In order to take a step towards addressing the additional budget gap of at least £1 million, officers had been working to identify potential budget savings initiatives and income generating ideas in order to bridge the gap. The exercise produced a list of options, detailed at appendix two of the report, which were considered viable at the present time. The initiatives amount to just under £1.3 million. Given the risks outlined at section 1.4 of the report, it was considered prudent to consider options that deliver more than the identified budget gap.

Following discussion of the suggested initiatives with Cabinet, the intention will be for the report to be presented to the Overview Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2018; this was the practice adopted for the first round of the service review options.

Subject to the outcomes of the discussions at the Overview Scrutiny Committee, it is suggested that update reports on these new initiatives, together with the residual actions remaining from the agreed service review options, be presented back to Cabinet and Overview Scrutiny in November 2019. As some of the initiatives will take some time to implement, this will provide sufficient time for actions to be progressed effectively, in order to provide a meaningful update to Members.

The Director (Corporate Services) drew Members' attention to section 1.4 of the report and advised that in respect of the introduction of the International Financial Reporting Standard 9 (IFRS9), it had been announced, following the recent consultation, that local authorities were able to mitigate the impacts of the introduction of this new accounting standard from the original three years to five years.

With regard to the proposal to increase car parking fees, Members requested that consideration be given to increasing the on-street parking fees as they were considerably lower than the car parking fees. The Assistant Director (Operations) advised that Gravesham Borough Council currently acted as the agent of Kent County Council (the Highway Authority in Kent) in managing the on-street parking function and therefore any income generated from on-street parking needed to be spent on highways related project and was at the discretion of Kent County Council.

Members also requested that car parking fees be reviewed regularly in order to avoid substantial increases.

**Resolved that:-**

1. the additional budget saving/income generating initiatives amounting to just under £1.3 million be approved and that delegated authority be provided to the Director (Corporate Services) in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader of the Executive and Monitoring Officer to take all necessary legal, practical and financial actions necessary to implement those initiatives; and
2. a report be brought back to Cabinet and Overview Scrutiny in November 2019 to set out the progress achieved against the approved initiatives.

### **136. Budget Monitoring Report 2018/19 - Quarter Two**

The Cabinet received the second budget monitoring report for 2018/19 showing the position up to 30 September 2018.

The Cabinet noted the information provided on:-

- actual performance against the approved Revenue and Capital budgets for 2018/19, including known variances agreed or identified through budgetary control activity; and
- other key areas of financial performance that may impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, Medium Term Financial Plan, HRA Business Plan or Financial Statements.

The Council will continue to maintain robust budgetary control actions to ensure good financial governance and respond to the pressures on the Council's finances.

Members considered the report and highlighted the following:-

- further to the installation of the new LED/motion sensor lighting, had any saving been made to date. The Director (Corporate Services) advised that he would circulate details to Members outside of the meeting;

- had any further progress been made with the gatekeeper replacement. The Director (Communities) advised that the Council had been in dialogue with Kent County Council and Arriva. The intention will be to introduce a bus-only lane with an enforcement camera. A traffic regulation order will need to be prepared/advertised;
- in respect of vacancy management, Members requested that a before and after staffing structure be made available, upon request, when a service has been re-designed;
- no spend had been reported to date on the replacement of play equipment within the HRA Capital Programme. The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) advised that the Assistant Director (Environment) was currently investigating those sites within the HRA and that details would be circulated to Members outside of the meeting.

The Cabinet noted the information contained within the report.

### **137. Empty Homes Premium**

The Director (Corporate Services) informed Members that in 2013 the Government gave Councils the power to charge an additional 50% on properties that had been empty for more than 2 years, i.e. the whole Council Tax be charged, plus half again. However, further legislation had now been approved that gives Councils the power to increase the premium from 50% to 100% with effect from 1 April 2019 (if the property has been empty for a period of more than two years) then 200% in 2020 (if the property has been empty for a period of more than five years) and 300% in 2021 (if the property has been empty for a period of more than ten years) where regulations allow.

Members were advised that the legislation only required Royal Assent and the intention will be for it to come into effect during 2018/19 allowing Councils to charge the increased additional amount from April 2019. The Director (Corporate Services) advised that authority was being sought at this stage in order to incorporate any change into the Council's Council Tax base calculations for 2019-20.

The Director (Corporate Services) also drew Members' attention to section 2.4 of the report which detailed the situation, as it would stand to date, if the increases were to be introduced:-

- 2-5 years – 35 empty properties;
- 5-10 years – 20 empty properties; and
- 10+ years – 11 empty properties.

Members requested that they be provided with the approximate location of the empty properties.

**Resolved** that the Cabinet recommends to Full Council that the Empty Homes Premium be increased from 50% to 100% with effect from 1 April 2019 (if the property has been empty for a period of more than two years) then 200% in 2020 (if the property has been empty for a period of more than five years) and 300% in 2021 (if the property has been empty for a period of more than ten years) where regulations allow.

**138. Annual review of the Payroll Shared Service**

The Cabinet was provided with a copy of the annual review that had been conducted in respect of the Payroll Shared Service with Medway Council.

The Director (Communities) drew Members' attention to appendix two of the report which detailed the following objectives that had been identified for the shared service and were currently being met:-

- resilience to the service provision; employees, Members and casuals (e.g. working on elections) paid on a monthly basis on specified date;
- maintenance of integrated HR system and provision of access and information to support the HR function within GBC;
- provision of self-service function reducing administrative impact on HR;
- provision of pension administration service; and
- provision of financial reports which integrate with General Ledger.

The Director (Communities) advised that, as part of the review, Gravesham had requested improvement to the self-service function within the SS4U system which was being used by GBC Staff and Members to book leave, submit travel and subsistence claims etc. - the system was not user-friendly and can be problematic.

The Cabinet noted the information contained within the report.

**139. Minutes of the meeting of the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board held on Wednesday 12 September 2018**

The Cabinet considered the minutes of the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board held on Wednesday 12 September 2018.

**140. Minutes of the meeting of the Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 11 October 2018**

The Cabinet considered the minutes of the Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 11 October 2018.

**Close of meeting**

The meeting ended at 8.29 pm