

	Action	Responsible Officer	Timeframe	Update – February 2021
<p>Embed regular Cabinet and Management Team joint working by creating time and space for discussion on strategy, expectations and key issues. For example, more joint meetings and away days</p>				
1.	<p>To agree with the Leader of the Executive an approach to ensuring more joint working is undertaken across the Cabinet and Management Team.</p>	Chief Executive	April 2020	<p>Weekly private meetings are held between the Chief Executive and the Leader (on a Thursday). In addition, weekly meetings are also held between the Chief Executive, the Directors (on a rota basis) and the Leader (on a Monday) to ensure that the Leader is kept abreast of activities across all aspects of the council. These have proven to be useful and productive on all levels.</p> <p>Regular portfolio holder update meetings continue to be held between the Directors and the respective Cabinet Members. In addition, invites have also been extended to the Shadow Cabinet Members should they wish to meet with the Directors to discuss their respective portfolios.</p> <p>Action: there is still a need to establish formal Away days with the Cabinet Members; these have been delayed due to the council's need to respond to the pandemic. Moving forward the intention is to put these in place to facilitate strategic joint working.</p>

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2.	Develop a corporate project plan to maintain an overview of the significant number of corporate projects underway, to form the basis of the joint-working/away days.	Chief Executive	April 2020	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>A Corporate Delivery Plan was drawn up at the start of the financial year which forms the backbone for the 1-2-1 meetings between the Chief Executive and the Directors. This also provides a framework for providing updates to the Leader as well resulting in positive news stories for Gravesham.</p> <p>As detailed above, away days have yet to be established but when they are, the Corporate Delivery Plan will support the direction and discussions accordingly.</p>
3.	Implement a calendar of away days to focus on corporate projects as a Leadership Team (six-monthly).	Chief Executive	June 2020 onwards	<p>As a result of the COVID pandemic, away days for the Leadership Team have yet to be established. The monthly 1-2-1's between the Chief Executive and Directors do focus on corporate projects and there are also monthly catch-ups for the Directors, which the Chief Executive is invited to attend, to discuss corporate issues as a Leadership Team.</p> <p>Action: Away days for the Leadership Team will be established to assist in the facilitation of strategic joint working, once it is appropriate to do so.</p>

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<p>Introduce a clear improvement plan for Planning, which is jointly developed and owned by Cabinet and Management Team, to establish clear targets and deadlines for improvement. This should include member training about their role in planning, inviting in the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and improving processes and procedures</p>				
4.	Complete the internal business process review project that is currently underway within the planning service.	Director (Planning & Development)	June 2020	The internal business process review was commenced towards the end of the 2019 calendar year. As a result of the COVID pandemic and the changes to working practices across council services, the review was not able to progress as had originally been planned.
5.	Develop a service improvement plan as part of the internal business process review process and include provisions for subsequent monitoring and review.	Director (Planning & Development)	August 2020	A number of suggestions resulting from the review have been shared with the Chief Executive, which are being considered and, where appropriate will be progressed through structural changes that are in the process of being reviewed for the Planning department. The development of a service improvement plan will be taken into account as part of this review and the forthcoming structural changes.

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6.	Member Training – explore the opportunities presented from the Planning Advisory Service in respect of the training opportunities.	Director (Planning & Development)	March 2020	<p>Training for Members specifically in relation to Planning has been impacted by COVID but options are being explored for moving this forward, possibly in a more ‘virtual’ form.</p> <p>There have been a number of Member Briefings in the past 12 months in relation to significant planning/regeneration schemes that are coming forward. These have included presentations on The Charter, St George’s and Albion Waterside. These events have been used to raise awareness of planning with the wider Member body across the council and has been used to clearly set out the responsibility of Members when considering planning applications.</p> <p>A separate training session was also provide by the LGA in January 2021 to provide an overview and real-life experience for Members in terms of roles and responsibilities when appointed to an outside body.</p> <p>Action: continue to explore options for Member Training.</p>

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<p>Develop greater partnership working. Gravesham has been very self-sufficient, but to tackle some of the bigger issues it needs to develop greater partnership working to deliver on key priorities such as housing.</p>				
7.	<p>Forge new relationships with key partner organisations – Homes England, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) etc. in order to work together on the development of sites within the borough.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Director (Planning & Development)</p>	<p>February 2020 onwards</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>The Chief Executive and the Director (Planning & Development) have set up a series of meetings with key partner agencies in order to boost the profile of Gravesham and to try and leverage the necessary infrastructure funding to support development in the borough.</p> <p>Recent engagement with Paul Kitson (Director of High Growth and New Settlements) at Homes England, facilitated by the Thames Estuary Growth Board Envoy (Kate Willard) has opened up a useful dialogue in an effort to bring forward stalled development in the Canal Basin and North-East Gravesend area.</p> <p>Similar discussions have also been undertaken with the London Resort and Lower Thames Crossing teams to ensure that there are synergies in those developments that maximise the benefits for Gravesham and unlock growth.</p>

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8.	Ensure a dedicated grants/bidding resource is in place to assist the progression of projects, both internally and with partners, in terms of sourcing grant-funding opportunities.	Chief Executive	April 2020	<p>Agreement has been reached to recruit to a specific post to support the council is identifying and accessing potential grants/funding opportunities; this post will sit within the Finance Team.</p> <p>There have been a number of changes within the Finance team with the previous Assistant Director assuming the Director (Corporate Services) role, which has meant recruitment has been required to the Assistant Director post within the Finance Team; this was filled in November 2020. This, coupled with the current recruitment process for a new Principal Accountant (Special Projects) role has meant the recruitment to the grant funding post has been delayed.</p> <p>However, it is anticipated that an advert for this new post will be posted by the end of February 2021 and subject to a suitable candidate being identified, the post being filled in the new financial year.</p>
9.	Engage with the <i>Thames Estuary Envoy</i> to ensure a collaborative approach to this project and to develop a strong relationship with this partnership.	Chief Executive	February 2020 onwards	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>The Chief Executive has implemented regular meetings with Kate Willard, the Thames Estuary Envoy.</p> <p>As a result of this connection, communication channels have been opened up with Homes England.</p> <p>The meetings have been productive and facilitated discussions with central Government departments.</p>

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<p>Seize on the cross-party consensus on the need for the Council to be pro-active in relation to housing delivery in Gravesham, including putting its argument strongly to government.</p>				
10.	Regular Member briefings to all parties regarding the housing delivery targets for the borough (linking to the Local Plan) to ensure all Members are informed about the council's position.	Director (Planning & Development)	February 2020 onwards	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>The housing delivery target is set out in the Councils Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and thus has not yet changed. However, the Housing Delivery Plan was presented to Cabinet in September 2019 with the associated action plan being considered by the Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee in November 2019. A number of Local Plan reports have been presented to Cabinet and reference to delivery included in the context of New Homes Bonus in the Budget Monitoring reports. The current Local Plan Partial Review, which extends the Plan period to 2036 will provide the context to new targets in the coming months.</p> <p>A “Presentation on current Government planning consultations” was taken to Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee on 28 September 2020. This covered the White Paper and Technical Consultation which look at the future of planning and proposed changes to the standard method for assessing housing need respectively.</p>

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11.	Liaise with the <i>Thames Estuary Envoy</i> to enable an argument to be put to government for investment in the area to support the communities' already in place within Gravesham, to ensure GBC is set within the context of the Thames Estuary Growth Area.	Chief Executive Director (Planning & Development)	February 2020 onwards	COMPLETED As set out under action point 7, the regular contact with the Thames Estuary Envoy has facilitated other conversations and with the support of the Thames Estuary Envoy, the council has been able to secure further investment in the area.
12.	Improved liaison with the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP), and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to ensure a stronger focus on Gravesham and the growth areas within Kent.	Chief Executive Director (Planning & Development)	Ongoing	A piece of work has been commissioned from an external consultant that seeks to establish the economic context of Gravesham relative to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KEMP). It is considered that this piece of work will set the foundations for Gravesham and the ability to leverage greater funding and support for Gravesham from relevant associations.
13.	Liaison with the Kent Developers Group to forge stronger relationships with developers across the county by hosting a Group session and engaging with the private sector.	Director (Planning & Development)	March 2020 and ongoing	Liaising with Locate in Kent / Kent Developers' Group has resulted in the introduction of a developer with plans to bring forward a scheme for the Canal Basin area. Plans to present to Members of the Kent Developer's Group had to be postponed due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and as yet, a date has not yet been set for this piece of work.

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<p>Be a spokesperson for the area. The Council should put itself at the forefront of telling the story of Gravesham’s proud history, vibrant and varied heritage – creating a local ‘brand’ to unlock development opportunities and investments.</p>				
14.	Development of an Arts and Cultural Strategy for the borough ensuring this is developed with the community and communicated effectively.	Director (Communities)	September 2020	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>The Arts and Cultural Strategy for Gravesham was developed over the summer 2020 in collaboration with the Community and Leisure Cabinet Committee and was agreed at the meeting of the Committee on 15 September 2020.</p>
15.	Development of an external communications strategy to link to the council’s corporate projects, ensuring communication of key projects affecting the borough to the community.	Communications Manager	June 2020	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Communications Strategy adopted by Cabinet in November 2020 and published on council website.</p>
16.	Develop closer link between the Economic Development Team and the council’s Communications Team to ensure a ‘brand’ for Gravesham is developed.	Director (Communities)	September 2020	<p>Work is underway in order to establish a ‘brand’ for Gravesham</p> <p>The Communications Team have been working with the Economic Development Team to develop a detailed communications plan, including actions to promote the borough over the forthcoming 12 months. The key focus of these activities is to further enhance the council’s brand in relation to economic stimulus and future regeneration projects.</p> <p>This work has not progressed as rapidly as originally anticipated as the Economic Development team have been actively involved in the provision of grants to businesses during the pandemic.</p>

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<p>Develop an induction programme for the new Chief Executive, which includes joint sessions delivered by the Leader and Chief Executive to cascade key information and expectations from the Corporate Plan to staff</p>				
17.	Ensure a thorough handover from the current Chief Executive to the newly appointed Chief Executive.	Chief Executive Chief Executive (Designate)	March 2020	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Due to the COVID pandemic, the previous Chief Executive stayed on in the role of Deputy Chief Executive to support the new chief executive through this unprecedented time to ensure a thorough handover took place.</p> <p>For the month of April to assist in the council's response to the pandemic in particular.</p>
18.	Ensure the new Chief Executive is engaged in key partnership meetings (Kent Joint Chief Executives, Kent and Medway Leaders, North Kent Leaders, C2E Executive Group, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership (TGKP), etc.) prior to commencement of role.	Chief Executive Chief Executive (Designate)	March 2020	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>The new Chief Executive was introduced to all partners by the previous Chief Executive as planned, prior to him leaving the Council. The new Chief Executive is also actively involved in bodies such as Kent Joint Chief Executives, Kent and Medway Leaders, North Kent Leaders, C2E Executive Group, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership (TGKP).</p> <p>In addition, the new Chief Executive is the representative from the Joint Kent Chief Executive Group on the District Council's Network (DCN), which demonstrates the important role that Gravesham Borough Council has across the county and the regard the other authorities across Kent pay to GBC and its officers.</p>

	Action	Responsible Officer	Timeframe	Update – February 2021
<p>Review council policy for flexible working arrangements and ensure consistency of implementation. A synchronisation of the policies with the investment in the equipment to make this happen.</p>				
19.	Develop a consistent, corporate approach to flexible working for the council as a whole in line with the action plan that has been developed in response to the council's liP assessment, ensuring this is communicated to all staff.	Director (Communities)	October 2020	<p>As a result of the pandemic, at present a large proportion of the council's workforce are working from home, so temporary arrangements for flexible working have been put in place.</p> <p>The council is actively reviewing its flexible working arrangements, and other associated policies, in light of the way in which the council is currently delivering its services to ensure it embraces embrace these new ways of working to maintain the higher output and efficiency levels that have been generated over the last 12 months.</p>
20.	Undertake a review of current office space requirements in order to determine if there is the potential for reducing the number of desks required and develop a more 'hot desking' approach for the workplace.	Chief Executive	September 2020	<p>Proposals are in place for a new Civic Centre, which include reduced office space and more opportunity for 'hot desking' within the building. Discussions are progressing with key public sector partners regarding the use of the new office facilities as a true public sector hub given the new ways of working and Gravesham's location along the North Kent corridor and its strong transport links.</p> <p>This will be explored further by the internal Homeworking Task and Finish Group which will look at homeworking and agile working as part of the council's overall review that is underway.</p>

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<p>A more diverse workforce. The Council has a strong programme of engagement initiatives with its diverse community but there is a need for the Council to reflect that diversity within its workforce</p>				
21.	Ensure that job advertisements are publicised externally to enable the potential pool of candidates to be expanded.	Director (Communities)	Ongoing	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>A large percentage of job advertisements are advertised externally, but some Jobs are still advertised internally, especially where we have suitable candidates. It was agreed with staff side representatives that they did not want us to advertise in situations where an internal candidate is clearly better suited for the role and we can offer career opportunities</p>
22.	Explore the potential for introducing a jobs/career fair to the borough to not only open up the employment market across the borough but also the council's specific requirements to the community.	Director (Communities)	February 2020 onwards	<p>Due to the pandemic, a jobs/career fair has not been progressed. Instead the council is exploring other ways to give young people future job opportunities.</p> <p>A piece of work is currently underway to improve and reinvigorate the council's apprenticeship and work experience offering. The council is taking part in the Government Kickstart scheme and is offering over 30 placements within the council. It is also expanding the number of career-graded job opportunities across the council.</p>
23.	Review of person specification, apprenticeships and work experience opportunities to ensure they are as inclusive as possible	Director (Communities)	May 2020	

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<p>Communicate success more effectively. Utilise expertise of new Communications Team to develop a corporate approach to communications that enables the Council to sell its success to the public, partners and staff more effectively</p>				
24.	Further building on action point 15, develop a Communications Strategy, which includes internal communications, to ensure that there is an approach to ensuring the council celebrates its success and publicises its achievements.	Communications Manager	September 2020	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Communications Strategy, including internal Communications Strategy, adopted by Cabinet in November 2020.</p> <p>Further, an LGA communications health check was undertaken in October 2020 and recommendations for further improving internal communications have been included in a post review action plan.</p>

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<p>Review risk management. Risk management should be reviewed to include issues such as property investment strategy and non-delivery of key developments.</p>				
25.	Engage with Zurich Municipal to review the council’s overall approach to risk management and implement any recommendations as required.	Director (Corporate Services)	April 2020	<p>The review was conducted by Zurich in October 2019 and concluded that the council had strong arrangements in place within its risk management arrangements, though did identify opportunities to enhance the strategic risk analysis and reporting processes, as well as the potential to strengthen governance arrangements around service-level risk registers.</p> <p>Recommendations regarding strategic risk management were implemented through the risk management process adopted for reviewing the Risk Management Strategy and developing the Corporate Risk Register for 2020/21.</p> <p>The recommendations relating to Service Risk Registers will be implemented as part of the Departmental Business Planning process for 2021-22 which is currently underway. Following completion of the draft business plans, it is intended to introduced a new method of ‘peer review’ of plans and service risks at a Corporate Management Team level.</p>
26.	Ensure that a thorough review of the council’s risk register is undertaken to ensure that all potential risks, including property investment strategy and non-delivery of key developments, are assessed against the current risk criteria.	Director (Corporate Services)	April 2020	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>As part of the work conducted by Zurich in October 2019, time was taken to focus on risks to the council’s new strategic objectives (the Corporate Plan having been adopted earlier that month) through a specific review by Zurich and also the hosting of officer and Member risk identification workshops. These risks were then assessed against the current risk criteria and included within the Strategic Risk Register where they were identified to be above the council’s risk tolerance threshold.</p>