

Council

Tuesday, 20 June 2023

7.30 pm

Present:

The Worshipful the Mayor, Gurdip Bungar
The Deputy Mayor, Daniel Adewale King

Councillors

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| Derek Ashenden | Jordan Meade |
| Helen Ashenden | Alan Metcalf |
| Ejaz Aslam | Lyn Milner |
| Rajinder Atwal | Shane Mochrie-Cox |
| Gurjit Bains | Emma Morley |
| David Beattie | Karina O'Malley |
| John Burden | Leslie Pearton |
| Deborah Croxton | Tony Rana |
| Lee Croxton | Alan Ridgers |
| Dakota Dibben | Christina Rolles |
| Aaron Elliott | Lenny Rolles |
| Emma Elliott | Benjamin Sizer |
| Gary Harding | Lauren Sullivan |
| Jo Hart | Ektaveen Thandi |
| Baljit Hayre | Narinderjit Singh Thandi |
| Leslie Hills | Jenny Wallace |
| Samir Jassal | Frank Wardle |
| Gavin Larkins | Alison Williams |

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| Stuart Bobby | Chief Executive |
| Nick Brown | Director (Environment) & Deputy Chief Executive |
| Jamie Izzard | Director (Communities) |
| Daniel Killian | Director (Housing) |
| Sarah Parfitt | Director (Corporate Services) |
| Wendy Lane | Assistant Director (Planning) |
| Vicky Nutley | Head of Legal Services |
| Simon Walsh | Service Manager (Communities) |
| Andy Rayfield | Communications Manager |
| Carlie Simmonds | Committee Services Manager |

22. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Peter Scollard.

23. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 16 May 2023 were signed by the Mayor.

24. Declarations of Interest

The Chief Executive advised that, in accordance with advice received from the Council's Monitoring Officer, Members only needed to declare interests which had not already been listed within their Disclosable Pecuniary Interests form.

No declarations of interest were made.

25. To answer any questions received from members of the public of which notice has been given under Council Procedure Rule 13

The following question had been submitted:-

- **Question from John Milner (on behalf of Extinction Rebellion Gravesham):**

Would the Council please provide a progress update regarding the setting up of the Residents' Action Group (which is on the Climate Advisory Group's plan 3.1.8).

Response by Cllr John Burden, Leader of the Council:

Updates on the delivery of the Climate Action Plan are provided to the Climate Change Advisory Board bi-annually.

The latest update provided to the Board in April this year set out how the council is developing a programme of engagement activities for residents; the setting up of a Residents' Action Group is just one of many ways we can look to deliver advice and support to our residents.

As a listening council, we will continue to engage with the wider community to understand how we can most effectively support residents to make changes and reduce their own carbon footprint.

Feedback from the community so far has led to information being provided on the council website on funding and advice available for making energy improvements to homes, group-buying schemes for solar panel installation, as well as specific campaigns focusing on recycling unwanted electrical equipment and reducing food waste.

Looking forward, we are holding an engagement event with the Gravesham Voluntary Community Sector on 7 June and will be looking to gather the views more generally of Gravesham residents at the Fort Gardens during the Riverside event on 1 July.

The council will also be holding a Home Energy Efficiency event on 19 July and a Residents Information Event 7 September. Both of these events are taking place at The Woodville.

Providing this information to residents not only reduces our collective impact on the climate, but also helps people to have better insulated homes and save money on gas and electricity, delivering financial and health benefits to the community.

The Chief Executive advised that the following question had been received after the deadline however, due to it being a topical subject, the Mayor had agreed for the question to be accepted.

- **Question from Mr Robert Ballantyne:**

Would the Leader of the Council please provide the community with an explanation as to why work on the Charter has stopped, and in doing so could he please confirm:

- A) That the Council's investment in this scheme is safe?*
- B) What mitigation measures the Council is putting in place?*

Could he please use this opportunity to completely rule out that neither Gravesham Borough Council or Rosherville Ltd have entered discussions or have planned arrangements with any London Boroughs regarding future occupancy of these flats.

Response by Cllr John Burden, Leader of the Council:

Work on the Charter development has temporarily paused after the main construction contractor, Henry Construction, a significant player of scale in the UK market, went into administration.

The council's investment in the project is protected by the terms of the development agreement in place with our development partners Reef Group and Rosherville Ltd. Reef and Rosherville are working on viable options to complete work at the Charter.

A number have been identified which are being examined in detail ahead of any decision being made.

Regular meetings are taking place between Rosherville, Reef and lead officers from the council to consider the practical, technical and legal aspects of the situation and how best to progress the project.

I can confirm that neither the council, nor Rosherville Ltd, have had any discussions or entered into any arrangements with any London Boroughs, or any borough, district or other local authority from anywhere else in the country with regards future occupancy of the apartments, and under this administration, no such discussions will be held or arrangements considered at any time.

I would like to add that, contrary to rumours, the development is wholly-owned by Rosherville Ltd, this council's own commercial trading company.

It is not owned by, and nor has it been built for or in collaboration with, any London borough, or any borough, district or local other authority from anywhere else in the country.

All 242 apartments will be available to rent on the open market, and we will be adopting a local-first marketing strategy when the apartments become available.

26. Minutes of Committees

Motions that proceedings, reports and recommendations of Committees, except those reserved under Council Procedure 5.2(6) as referred to below be received and adopted and where applicable the Orders made by them be ratified and confirmed were duly proposed, seconded and resolved in each case.

- Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 30 May 2023;
- Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 8 June 2023;
- Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Monday, 12 June 2023; and
- Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 14 June 2023.

27. Reserved Minutes

It was moved by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox that:-

- the reserved Minute of Cabinet (Formation of a Social Lettings Agency) held on 30 May 2023 be ratified and confirmed.

28. Service Restructuring

The Council received a report which set out proposals for a restructuring of functions within the Wider Management Team structure of the Council and the consequential effects that this will have upon the senior management structure of the Council.

Resolved that the revised Service and Management structure of the Council be approved and all necessary authorities be delegated to the Chief Executive to implement the structural changes.

29. Lower Thames Crossing Opposition

The Council received a report which:-

- provided an update on the current progress on the Lower Thames Crossing Development Consent Order application;
- reaffirmed the Council's opposition to the Lower Thames Crossing; and
- reiterated the Council's key asks for mitigation and compensation.

Resolved that the Council:-

1. reaffirms its opposition to the siting of a new Lower Thames Crossing to the east of Gravesend, which will have significant detrimental impacts on communities in Gravesham who would potentially suffer air quality, noise and health issues, as well as congestion on local roads which will be exacerbated as drivers seek to avoid problems elsewhere on the local and wider highway network. Other significant detrimental impacts include increased carbon emissions, damage to the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and internationally significant nature conservation areas, Green Belt and heritage sites;

2. endorses the key asks for mitigation and compensation as set out in section 3 of the report; and
3. objects to the loss of its land at the Cascades Leisure Centre site to the proposed scheme.

30. To consider questions from Members of the Council of which notice has been given under Council Procedure Rule 14.

No questions had been received.

31. To receive the Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that details of forthcoming charity events will be circulated in due course.

The Mayor wished everyone a great summer and invited those present to join him in the Parlour for refreshments.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.41 pm.