

Cabinet

Monday, 28 May 2024

19.30 pm

Present:

Cllr John Burden (Chair)
Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Emma Morely
Lauren Sullivan
Narinderjit Singh Thandi
Karina O'Malley

Note: Cllrs Lenny Rolles and Jordan Meade were also in attendance.

Jamie Izzard	Director (Communities and Inclusive Growth) & Deputy Chief Executive
Sarah Parfitt	Director (Corporate Services)
Tom Reynolds	Assistant Director (Inclusive Growth)
Anita Tysoe	Head of Community Support
Shazad Ghani	Head of Planning
Mark Lees	Head of Community Protection
Paul White	Senior Development Manager
Ben Clarke	Committee Services Officer (Minutes)
Calvin Lee	IT Projects Officer (AV)

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 18 March 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4. Delegated Decisions - Cabinet Members

No decisions other than those already circulated had been made.

5. Continuous Improvement team - Sport & Leisure Options for consideration

The Cabinet were provided with the options for consideration, following completion of the Corporate Improvement Team (CIT) Review into Sports and Leisure. The process was one of five identified streams defined in the MTFP to actively work towards meeting the financial challenges and budget gap faced by the council at that time of £4.6m.

The Director (Corporate Services) advised that:

- To date, the team had identified £197K of potential future savings. The CIT Team worked with the Director (Communities) and the Assistant Director (Inclusive Growth) looking at the provision of services and how they could be improved upon moving forward
- The Sports & Leisure review determined that the majority of functions were managed in-house by a small team and supported the corporate plan objectives and the ambitions within the new corporate plan
- Paragraph 2.3 of the report outlined the key priorities linked to the Corporate Plan
- Paragraph 2.4 outlined the areas within Sports & Leisure that were reviewed
- Paragraph 2.5 outlined the significant areas of Council business that the team delivered
- Appendix one provided a summary of the options that had been identified by the CIT for consideration by Members.

The Chair recognised that difficult decisions would have to be made with regards to the service as it had been identified as an area where savings could be made. The Chair elaborated that immediate savings could be made across the area to improve efficiency without necessarily completely cutting services. However if further savings needed to be made in the future, once the whole package of reviews had been completed, then the Sports & Leisure area would be revisited to find those further savings in order to make a balanced budget.

Following a question, the Chair made it clear that Council owned land would not be sold off as the review was concerning increasing revenue and the Sports & Leisure Team would be maintained.

The Head of Community Protection gave a high-level overview of the options available to Cabinet, outlined in appendix one.

The Cabinet welcomed the level of transparency within the document and held a discussion on the options available to them: it was echoed that the Sports & Leisure Team were an important team in the Council, and they should be maintained.

The Chair concluded that the report would not be brought back to Cabinet to agree minor changes but would be handled through the relevant Cabinet Member.

Resolved that Cabinet agreed:

That the following options arising from the Corporate Improvement Team's review of the Sports and Leisure function were to be further explored/taken forward as part of the council's 'Balancing the Budget' process:

- Explore alternative/partial management arrangements of Windmill Gardens/bowls green/tennis courts
- Review the supervision of football matches and leagues at weekends
- Review the ground maintenance contract agreement for Wombwell Park Cricket Square
- Review the management and maintenance fee arrangement with Woodlands Bowls Club at Woodlands Park

- Review the operational and maintenance grant to Northfleet Bowls Club at Wombwell Park
- Review fees and charges across Sports and Leisure

6. Design For Gravesham

The Cabinet were provided with the final draft of the Design for Gravesham Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for approval and adoption.

The Assistant Director (Inclusive Growth) guided members through the final draft of the document and highlighted key areas of note. Members were advised that the document would also be submitted to the next meeting of Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee for discussion.

The Cabinet gave thanks to the officers, especially the Assistant Director (Inclusive Growth) and the Head of Planning, Cllr Mochrie-Cox and Levitt Bernstein for their hard work in completing the document; the Cabinet noted that the document had a 'Gravesham lens' and supported the document in its current form.

Resolved that Cabinet:

- Approved and adopted the final draft of Design for Gravesham Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Agreed that the Assistant Director (Inclusive Growth) be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader, to undertake any final amends to the document prior to publication

That Design for Gravesham Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is approved and adopted and the Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth is delegated, in consultation with the Leader, to undertake any final amends to the document prior to publication.

7. Gravesham 2040

The Cabinet were provided with a draft of 'Gravesham 2040'.

The Assistant Director (Inclusive Growth) advised that the document was a holistic regeneration prospectus to support discussions with government agencies and promote inward investment into the borough. The document would also be consulted on as part of the Big Conversation initiative and, subject to Cabinet approval, may be adopted as a regeneration strategy to support the Corporate Plan and emerging Local Plan.

The Chair recognised the hard work put into the document by the team and felt it demonstrated clearly what the Council was trying to achieve in the Borough. The Chair was confident it would be adopted once the document had gone through final consultation with the public; in order to ensure the document was moved forward, any further amendments following consultation would be approved via the Leader.

Resolved that Cabinet:

- Approved the latest draft of the Gravesham 2040 prospectus and the Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader, to undertake the final amends to the document prior to publication

- Agreed that Gravesham 2040 be tabled as part of the Big Conversation initiative in due course to seek the community's views on the document to shape its development
1. That the Cabinet approved this paper, the latest draft of the Gravesham 2040 prospectus and the Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth is delegated, in consultation with the Leader, to undertake the final amends to the document prior to publication.
 2. That Gravesham 2040 is tabled as part of the Big Conversation initiative in due course to seek the community's views on the document to shape its development.

8. Housing Development Strategy 2024-29

The Cabinet were provided with the updated Housing Development Strategy which set out how the Council would successfully deliver on its target of 1,000 affordable homes by 2028/29.

The Senior Development Manager took the Cabinet through the report providing an overview of the new Housing Development Strategy 2024 – 2028/29.

The Chair stated that the Strategy set out clearly what the Council intended to do and would greatly assist in the building of more affordable homes in the Borough. The Chair assured the Cabinet that Ward Members would be consulted on schemes in their wards where land was considered suitable to be built on or converted; however, Ward Members could not kill off a Scheme and any disagreements would be brought back to Cabinet for discussion.

Resolved that Cabinet supported the Housing Development Strategy 2024-29 and approved its adoption.
to approve and implement the new Housing Development Strategy 2024-29

9. Social Value Policy

The Cabinet were presented with a draft Social Value Policy, Statement and Framework which, if adopted, would enable the Council to develop its Social Value approach and achieve greater benefits in the Borough.

The Head of Community Support advised the Cabinet of the current position and proposed approach which was set out at sections two and three of the report. The Cabinet noted that small businesses were keen to help the local community and the policy would help guide them as to how they could add social value to the Borough.

The Cabinet echoed that businesses were keen to add social value of the Borough and highlighted the importance of maintaining a positive working relationship with the local business community.

Resolved that Cabinet approved the Social Value policy and supporting documents for formal adoption.

To adopt the updated Social Value Policy and associated framework documents to develop the Council's Social Value Journey and achieve greater outcomes for the community.

10. Corporate Complaint Policy

The Cabinet were provided with a working draft copy of the new Complaint Policy & Procedure. To address the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, the Council's current procedure had been reviewed and changes made to ensure it met the requirements as set out in section one of the report.

The Head of Community Support explained that the new procedure required the separation of housing related complaints from complaints received relating to other council services.. Both areas were now required to be under the oversight of a Member.

In response to a question, the Head of Community Support advised that according to the Housing Ombudsman, it was the Members' responsibility to ensure there was oversight of the complaints received, identifying trends and reviewing performance information. If the Member felt that the policy wasn't robust enough or complaints weren't being dealt with in an appropriate manner, then they should request a review.

The Chair added that the Members roles was to provide direction and management of implementation, but they should not get involved with the day-to-day process of dealing with complaints.

The Chair proposed that the Portfolio Holder for Housing, currently Cllr O'Malley, be the Member be responsible of oversight of the housing related complaints process and the Leader retain responsibility for oversight of complaints process relating to other council services.

Resolved that Cabinet:

- Approved the draft Policy & Procedure for formal adoption
- Appointed the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Housing as responsible for Complaints falling within the jurisdiction of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman

To adopt the Corporate Complaint Policy & Procedure, which included amendments to the current process for managing complaints, in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code

To appoint the Leader of the Executive to have oversight on corporate complaints and the Cabinet Member for Housing to have oversight of Housing complaints

11. Corporate Performance Report: Q4 2023-24

The Cabinet were presented with an update against the Performance Management Framework, as introduced within the council's Corporate Plan, for Quarter Four 2023-24 (January to March 2024).

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that appendix 1 to the report provided Cabinet with a statistical overview of the council's performance against the Corporate Plan for Quarter Four 2023-24, covering the period January to March 2024.

The Chair expected portfolio holders to discuss the indicators at their respective Cabinet Committees.

12. Learning from Local Government Interventions

The Cabinet were provided with a report that updated them on the actions to further enhance or strengthen governance and culture within the council identified as a result of the self-assessment conducted in September 2023.

The Director (Corporate Services) explained that appendix One outlined the actions identified from the self-assessment to further enhance or strengthen governance and culture within the council; the report confirmed that all actions identified through the self-assessment had been progressed.

To ensure the Council's good governance arrangements were maintained, it was proposed that the indicators of cultural or governance issues identified in the DLUHC Guidance were incorporated into the annual governance assessment process.

The Director (Corporate Services) confirmed that the report would be submitted to the next Finance & Audit Committee meeting.

The Cabinet was happy with the report and highlighted the importance of the report being submitted to Finance & Audit Committee where it could be scrutinised and challenged which only further strengthened the Council's governance arrangements.

Resolved that Cabinet agreed:

- that the report be considered at the next Finance & Audit Committee in order to allow the Committee to provide independent assurance and oversight of the council's governance arrangements
- that moving forward, the indicators of cultural or governance issues set out in the DLUHC guidance document be assessed as part of the process undertaken to prepare the Annual Governance Statement of the council.

13. Minutes of meeting of Gravesham Joint Transportation Board on Wednesday, 06 March 2024

The Cabinet noted the minutes.

14. Minutes of the meeting of Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 03 April 2024

The Cabinet noted the minutes.

15. Minutes of the meeting of Climate Change Advisory Board on Monday, 08 April 2024

The Cabinet noted the minutes.

16. Exclusion

Resolved that 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 the item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

17. Rosherville Remuneration Policy Review

The Cabinet were presented with the draft Remuneration Policy for the Rosherville group of companies to Cabinet for approval, following the annual review process.

The Deputy Chief Executive guided Members through the report and highlighted key points to note.

Resolved that Cabinet:

- Approved the Remuneration Policy for the Rosherville group of companies at appendix one
- Agreed for the annual updates to the salary information within the policy to be updated as necessary to ensure it was reflective of the annual pay awards approved by the Shareholder. This would not require the policy to be re-presented to Cabinet for approval but would require written consent from the Leader of the Executive, in line with the Shareholder Agreement.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 20:17pm.