

Council

Tuesday, 16 April 2024

7.30 pm

Present:

The Worshipful the Mayor, Gurdip Bungar

Councillors	Derek Ashenden	Jordan Meade
	Helen Ashenden	Lyn Milner
	Ejaz Aslam	Shane Mochrie-Cox
	Rajinder Atwal	Emma Morley
	Gurjit Bains	Karina O'Malley
	David Beattie	Leslie Pearton
	John Burden	Tony Rana
	Deborah Croxton	Alan Ridgers
	Lee Croxton	Christina Rolles
	Dakota Dibben	Lenny Rolles
	Aaron Elliott	Peter Scollard
	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	

Stuart Bobby	Chief Executive
Nick Brown	Director (Environment) & Deputy Chief Executive
Daniel Killian	Director (Housing)
Sarah Parfitt	Director (Corporate Services)
Simon Walsh	Assistant Director (Organisational Development & Democratic Support)
Vicky Nutley	Head of Legal Services
Andy Rayfield	Communications Manager
Carlie Simmonds	Committee Services Manager (Minutes)
Calvin Lee	IT Projects Officer

73. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Daniel Adewale King and Councillors Alan Metcalf and Alison Williams.

74. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 February 2024 were signed by the Mayor.

75. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Alan Ridgers declared an interest in agenda item 7 - Urgency Decision - Amendment to the 2024/25 Capital Programme and approval for 2025/26 as he is a Trustee on the Henry Pinnocks Charity.

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.

76. 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 received from Tina Brooker/Catherine Marshall (on behalf of concerned residents):-

"At the 17th October 2023 Full Council meeting a question was read out to the committee:-

"Why did the Council call a Climate Emergency in June 2019 - supplementary information was supplied (evidenced on the minutes of that meeting). A declaration made by a global network of over 1,900 international scientists and professionals stating "There is NO climate emergency" ... "climate science should be less political, policies should be more scientific. To believe the outcome of a climate model is to believe what the model makers have put in",,,

So our question is:

Did the Councillors invoking the climate emergency do their due diligence and research dissenting scientific evidence or just blindly follow IPCC Projections?

Response by Cllr John Burden, Leader of the Council:-

The Council's decision to declare a climate emergency was based on the evidence set out by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The IPCC were created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Environment Programme to provide governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies.

The IPCC currently has 195 member countries. Thousands of people from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC, including the production of "Assessment Reports" which compile the key findings of the work of the IPCC for policymakers and the general public. Experts have described this work as the biggest peer review process in the scientific community, with these reports also providing a key input into international climate change negotiations.

To respond to the question posed, in declaring a climate emergency the Council did follow the evidence set out by the IPCC as an internationally recognised source of scientific research in the area of Climate Change.

77. 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 Cabinet held on Monday, 19 February 2024;
- Minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee held on Tuesday, 5 March 2024;
- Minutes of the Planning Committee held on Thursday, 7 March 2024;
- Minutes of the Cabinet held on Monday, 18 March 2024; and
- Minutes of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 25 March 2024.

78. Reserved Minutes

The following minutes of Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 25 March 2024 were reserved:-

- Item called-in from the Cabinet meeting of 18 March 2024: Item 11, Balancing the Budget - Gravesend Town Centre Options; and
- Item called-in from the Cabinet meeting of 18 March 2024: Item 13, Lothbury Property Fund.

The minutes were ratified and confirmed.

79. Urgency Decision - Amendment to the 2024/25 Capital Programme and approval for 2025/26

The Council was informed of an urgent decision taken by Director (Housing) in consultation with the Leader of the Administration, the Leader of the Opposition, and Section 151 Officer as per the Constitution, to accept government grant funding of £1,521,000 to facilitate participation in the Local Authority Fund (LAHF) Round 3 which was designed to increase the availability of nine homes of which seven were for temporary accommodation and two were affordable housing for the governments Afghan Resettlement Scheme.

Accepting the grant funding will require the amendment of the agreed 2024/25 Capital Programme. The government will pay 45% of the £1,521,000 in year 1 which means the capital budget for 2024/25 will need adjusting to reflect £684,450. The remaining 55% of the grant of £836,550 will be received in 2025/26 financial year.

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

The Council notes the urgent decision taken by Director (Housing) in consultation with the Leader of the Administration, the Leader of the Opposition, and Section 151 Officer to accept a capital grant of £1,521,000 that will amend the Council's 2024/25 agreed capital programme.

The above motion was **resolved** unanimously.

80. Review of the Constitution (Phase 3)

The Council was presented with proposed amendments to Annex 1: Responsibility for Functions of the Constitution for formal approval and adoption.

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

The Council approves:-

1. the amendments to Annex 1: Responsibility for Functions of the Constitution as set out in section two of the report and appendix one; and
2. delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Director for Corporate Services to make amendments which are consequential to the changes approved to ensure consistency throughout the Constitution.

The above motion was **resolved** unanimously.

81. Live Streaming Council Meetings - Changes to the Constitution

The Council was presented with an update on the progress of the project to Live Stream Council meetings and the installation of audio visual (AV) equipment in the Council Chamber; together with proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution, recommended to Full Council by the Cabinet.

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

The Council approves the proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution in relation to:-

1. a new Annex 3.13 'Filming, Photographing, Audio Recording at Committee meetings'; and
2. additional wording to be added to Annex 2.2, paragraph 5.3:
'Members of the press and public are also entitled to report on meetings of the Council, Committees and Cabinet, except in circumstances where the public have been excluded as permitted by law'. – The protocol and further guidance can be found in Annex 3.13 Filming, Photographing, Audio Recording at Committee meetings.'

The above motion was **resolved** unanimously.

82. Working in Partnership Framework - April 2024

The Council was presented with an updated Working in Partnership Framework for Gravesham Borough Council for adoption.

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

The Council adopts the Working in Partnership Framework, attached at appendix one, for incorporation into the Council's Policy Framework.

The above motion was **resolved** unanimously.

83. Development of the Corporate Risk Register 2024-2025

The report informed the Council of the outcome of the annual risk identification and analysis exercise and presented the Corporate Risk Register for 2024-2025 for approval.

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

The Council approves the Corporate Risk Register for 2024-2025.

The above motion was **resolved** unanimously.

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

No questions had been received.

85. To receive the Mayor's Announcements

The Leader stated that this will be the last meeting of the Council to be attended by Mr Nick Brown, Director (Environment) & Deputy Chief Executive, who will be retiring.

On behalf of the Council, the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition paid tribute to Mr Brown on the work undertaken during his tenure at Gravesham Borough Council.

Mr Brown in his response thanked Members for the support they had given to him and stated that it had been a privilege to work for Gravesham Borough Council.

The Mayor thanked those that had attended the Vaisakhi celebrations/procession which took place on 13 April 2024.

The Mayor invited Members to attend the following events:-

- the Mayor's Coffee Morning which would be taking place on 17 April 2024; and
- the Mayor's retirement Curry Night at The Woodville which would be taking place on Friday 10 May 2024.

The Mayor invited those present to join him in the Parlour for refreshments.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm.