Southend-on-Sea City Council

Legal & Democratic Services

Executive Director: John Williams

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07 March 2022

CABINET - MONDAY, 14TH MARCH, 2022
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT PACK: CITY COUNCIL BRANDING REPORT

Please find enclosed, for consideration at the next meeting of the Cabinet taking place on Monday, 14th March, 2022, the following report that was unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No   Item

3   City Council Branding (Pages 1 - 20)

Report of Executive Director (Transformation) attached

Robert Harris
Principal Democratic Services Officer

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Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

**Report of Executive Director
(Transformation)**

To
Cabinet
On
14th March 2022

Report prepared by Stephen Meah-Sims, Executive
Director (Transformation) and Adam Keating,
Strategic Communications Manager

City Council Corporate Branding Refresh (Pre-engagement)
Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Members: Councillor Ian Gilbert

1   Purpose of Report

1.1   Following the tragic death of Sir David Amess MP in October 2021, Southend-on-Sea, the place, was granted the privilege of being granted City Status; a long-standing ambition which Sir David Amess fought for on behalf of Southend.

1.2   Southend, the place, officially became a city at a Civic Commemoration Event on the 1st of March 2022, where His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Cornwall bestowed city status, through the handing of the Letters Patent to our serving Mayor at a Full Council meeting, as part of the Commemoration Event.

1.3   Southend-on-Sea Borough Council became the local authority serving the new city and at the same Full Council, it was agreed that council's name would change with immediate effect to Southend-on-Sea City Council.

1.4   The new city designation for Southend provides an opportunity for the council to consider options connected to the council's existing corporate branding and updating it to reflect the new name of the council.

1.5   In preparation for the council's change in name, this report builds on cross-party engagement, led through the Leader of the council's Cross-Party Working Group, which was mobilised in January 2022 to work with all political groups to build a shared view of councillors in developing a new corporate brand for the council. This engagement has informed the options set out in appendix 1 of this report.

1.6   This report sets out the opportunities connected to updating the corporate branding for the council and presents options for Cabinet to agree on, as branding options to go out to engage more widely.

1.7   It is important to clarify that the corporate branding for the council is not a wide Southend place branding. The place branding for Southend, which is used across many sectors in the city, as a way of attracting visitors and investment was developed in 2021 and has been successfully implemented across the city to date.

1.8   Thus far, engagement with the Cross-Party Working Group and Group Leaders on concepts for a new corporate brand for the council has generated four different branding concepts. This Cabinet Report presents the four options to date, for Cabinet to endorse the next stage in further engagement with a wider group of stakeholders, which will contribute to the final decision on the council's new corporate branding.

2   Recommendations

That Cabinet consider the corporate branding options set out within this report.

2.1   **To agree on the four branding concepts to go out to wider engagement, as set out in section 4.1.**

2.2   **To agree to the timeframe of engagement of 2 weeks.**

2.3   **To use the feedback as an evidence-base to inform the final decision on the council's new corporate branding.**

3   Background

3.1   The current branding, known as the council's corporate brand, should enable users of council services to instantly recognise the council. Corporate branding aims to identify the council and the range of services that the council is connected to across the city. Branding also raises awareness of council services and makes the council publicly accountable. For example, if a resident sees a service that they are dissatisfied with and the corporate branding is visible, this transparency makes the council more accountable to that resident. If an excellent service is experienced, the same applies.

3.2   Corporate branding exists in variety of settings. Some can feel obvious, whereas others can feel subtle. The vast range of settings where branding exists stretches from virtual channels and social media, to livery on our uniforms, buildings, and vehicles.

3.3   Our branding also conveys our authenticity as a local authority, whether that is in council communication, policies and strategies, to official correspondence from the council.

3.4   Using corporate branding also aims to promote direct and subtle messages about the values and principles of the organisation that it represents or aspires to.

3.5   The change of Southend to a city includes the council changing its name to reflect its new status within a new city. Looking forward as a strong, ambitious and cohesive city; the council has the opportunity to embrace the change of status by updating the corporate branding, which reflects where the council sees itself in the city and how it wants to be perceived going forward.

3.6   Developing a new corporate brand for any organisation comes with challenges as brands can mean different things to different audiences. It is important to emphasise that the corporate branding for the council is not the same as the place branding that was developed for Southend as a whole, in 2021. The corporate branding for the council is focused on the council. Drawing in ideas and preferences from across the political spectrum was essential in working up the design brief. A Cross-Party Working Group, chaired by the Leader of the Council came together in January 2022 to start the conversation about working up a design brief for a new corporate brand for Southend-on-Sea City Council.

3.7   The design team working under the design brief are the council's contracted bespoke design and print company. They are a local company that have worked with the council since a procurement exercise in 2017, with a track record of high-quality design work across council services.

3.8   Through the Cross-Party Working Group, and conversations with political group leaders outside of the working group, a number of points around design preferences were established. These included:

        a) Keeping the new branding simple and identifiable

        b) Drawing on our location as a city by the sea

        c) Using colour, shapes and form in our branding to signal our city as a diverse one, where many council services operate for a diverse range of residents and businesses

        d) Must work well across different settings, e.g., for social media and digital channels, to large vehicle livery

        e) Looks forward, not backwards

        f) Draws on good recent examples from other local authorities and sectors

3.9   The design preferences under 3.8 were used as the framework to work up design options, which were presented back to the Cross-Party Working Group and political group leaders. In a process of further discussion, the design options were further refined based on a range of feedback, with some new additions, such as the Southend 'S' Monogram with the pier option.

3.10   The corporate branding options set out in detail within appendix A illustrates four branding options.

3.10.1   Option 1: The Seaside Windmill

The Seaside Windmill sticks to the design preferences around simplicity, seaside connection and colour and form. The windmill represents an iconic symbol of the seaside, evoking memories of handheld windmills that continue to be a feature among visitors to the seafront. It also represents the different components of Southend, for example being urban, rural, coastal, diverse and our values of inclusivity and working together. The fans also represent the range of services and the five 2050 ambitions. It also shares similarities with the St Mary's lily from our traditional crest, representing the origins of the new City. This design works as a standalone device without supporting text, for social media.

3.10.2   Option 2: The Shell

The shell design is also simple and identifiable and represents several different features connected to Southend, including the seaside and beach, shells, waves, water and the 'S' motif representing Southend. This design works as a standalone device without supporting text, for social media.

3.10.3   Option 3: The Modern Coat of Arms

This is modern take on the Borough's traditional coat of arms/crest and focuses on the main shield element and its four arms that represent the heritage of the city. These symbols have been simplified into basic icons and arranged in a clear and uncomplicated quadrant design. This does not replace the formal Coat of Arms, but links the corporate brand identity. This design works as a standalone device without supporting text, for social media.

3.10.4   Option 4:   Southend 'S' Monogram

An upper case 'S' motif for 'Southend' monogram with waves and pier in the lower portion. This option was developed following feedback from the Group Leader discussions.

Including a simple representation of the pier with the Royal Pavilion makes this icon unmistakably 'Southend' and is in unique in that it cannot be applied to any other Seaside town or city, even those that have a name that starts with S.

As a bold, simple design this will be easy to implement across all platforms as a standalone devices or with accompanying text.

3.11   The four options set out very different design concepts which work across the visual platforms that the council use. The options apply the design preferences across three very different styles, yet remain consistent with contemporary branding concepts used by local authorities and other sectors.

3.12   The design summary for each of the four options set out are attached as **Appendix 1** where the examples are illustrated against different visual situations, for example, electronic, print and livery.

4   Seeking views on the four options

4.1   As part of engaging, a market testing exercise on public perceptions around the four proposed options, an on-line poll to different testing groups will be conducted to obtain feedback. The groups approached for feedback, in addition to the Cross-Party Working Group and Political Group Leaders will be:

- All 51 Councillors
- Council staff
- Business community leaders
- Voluntary and Community leaders
- Young people
- Anyone wishing to share views through the council's website

4.2   The opportunity to participate will be promoted through social media and direct contact that signposts to where the four options are, with the ability to feedback.

4.3   It is essential to ensure that a new corporate brand is accessible and contains no reference that could cause offence. The initial testing will also assess Equality Impact.

5   Transitioning to a new Corporate Brand

5.1   It is important to balance the requirement to update corporate branding with public perception and council reputation with respect to implementing a corporate branding change.

5.2   Branding for the council will be required across a broad range of situations, which include:

- Electronic – Websites, Social Media, Service Portals
- Print – Letterheads, documents, publications
- Uniforms
- Building signage
- Vehicles

5.3   Given the scale and range of services provided by the council, it is not advised to change branding across all areas at the same time. The costs associated with this approach will not represent best value.

5.4   Once the decision is made on the new corporate brand, it is advised that the council prioritises areas to be updated with new corporate branding. This is a common approach across local government and other sectors. This will enable the council to focus updated branding where it has the most impact and value for money. Following this approach, it is advised that the council update it's Corporate Style Guide, which sets out the guidelines for use of corporate branding where all newly commissioned items requiring branding contain the new format and new branding replaces the old as part of a programme of 'as and when' renewal. This pragmatic approach to updating the council's branding over time, is sensitive to budget challenges.

6   Costs connected to corporate rebranding

6.1   The work on new brand concepts for the council was developed through a long-standing local Southend business, that the council has a history and contractual relationship with, having developed a range of products across council services. The costs associated with development work leading up to the latest iteration of corporate brand concepts for the council is £4338.75 and is based on 111.25 hours, including all the design work and meetings.

7   Reasons for Recommendations

7.1   Part of updating the council's branding and visual identity, connected to the council's change in name. Enabling the council to take an active lead in responding to the new city status for Southend, with a fresh step into a new identity for the council.

8   Corporate Implications

8.1   **Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map**

        The council is a major delivery partner of Southend 2050 and though the updated corporate branding will not affect the agreed outcomes in Southend 2050, the council being perceived as a pro-active, engaging, and a forward-looking organisation is essential in successful leadership of Southend 2050.

8.2   **Financial Implications**

        Financial implications up to this point total £4338.75 and is based on 111.25 hours of work. This is likely to increase with final development and design work, following the engagement connected to this report. This is within the budget identified for council rebranding, which was established to support the council with its City Status programme of work.

8.3   **Legal Implications**

        None identified at this stage.

8.4   **People Implications**

        People implications will be assessed as part of the equality impact, which is set out under section 8.7 below and underpins section 4 (4.3) of this report.

8.5   **Property Implications**

        Updated signage to electronic property, buildings, signs and vehicles in due course.

8.6   **Consultation**

        Market testing connected to perception of brand options is set out in section 4 of this report.

8.7 **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

Equality impact, ensuring that new Corporate Branding for the council is accessible and does not contain any reference to cause offence on religious or cultural grounds.

8.8 **Risk Assessment**

None identified at this stage.

8.9 **Value for Money**

The proposals within this report are consistent with the council's plans to continue to improve value for money within financial strategy and the services it offers.

8.10 **Community Safety Implications**

None identified at this stage.

8.11 **Environmental Impact**

None at this stage.

9 **Background Papers**

Please refer to appendix 1.

10 **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Corporate Branding Options

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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL
CORPORATE IDENTITY REBRAND

LOGO DESIGN CONCEPTS FROM

FORMARA
print & marketing

Please note. Colour schemes and typefaces are for illustration only and subject to change.

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CONCEPT 1 – SEASIDE WINDMILL/PINWHEEL

A pinwheel design has been developed that clearly represents Southend's seaside town heritage but also acknowledges the Council's environmental credentials such as wind power, and shares similarities with the St Mary's lily, representing the origins of the new City.

It also demonstrates working together and inclusivity.

As symbol, a pinwheel is a childhood symbol – it represents a time when things were simple and natural. In Chinese culture, for example, the pinwheel signifies "turning one's luck around"; the pinwheel figures prominently in Chinese New Year celebrations where it is represents good luck, longevity, health and prosperity.

Mono treatment are also shown to illustrate how the design can work with different solid fills, outlines only or single colour.

The icon could equally be used in single colours as standalone devices, such as a the

2050 icons or to represent council services/campaign, and broken into individual elements as part of a design scheme.

Alternative treatments and colour schemes for the pinwheel design are shown below.

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CONCEPT 2 – SHELL DESIGN

Conch shell design that includes a subtle 'S' motif on the right hand section of the shell.

This icon is representative of the seaside and beach and also alludes to waves, water and the environment.

Again, we can use this in various colour ways and treatments as well as having different orientations.

This design works as a standalone device without supporting text, for social media.

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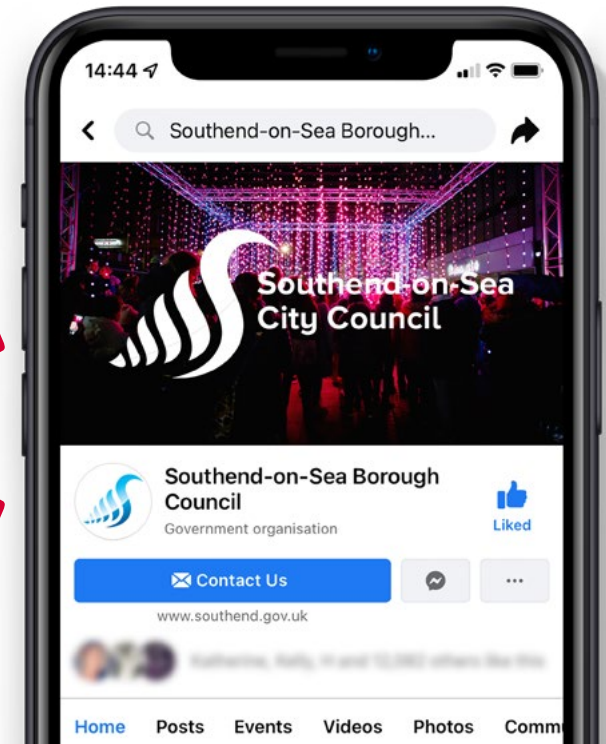
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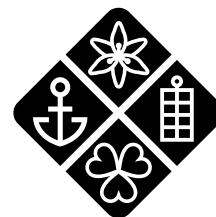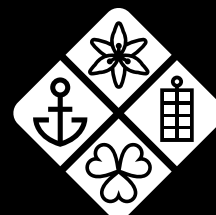
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CONCEPT 3 – MODERN COAT OF ARMS

A modern take on the coat of arms, focussing on the main shield element and its four arms that represent the heritage of the city.

- The lilies and vase, symbol of the Virgin Mary are for St Mary, Prittlewell,
- The anchor, the symbol of St Clement is for Leigh,
- The gridiron is for St Lawrence, Eastwood,
- The trefoil, symbol of the Holy Trinity, is for Southchurch.

These symbols can be simplified into basic icons and arranged in clear and uncomplicated quadrant design.

Furthermore, we can assign colours that are frequently associated with each saint: blue for St Mary, gold for St Clement, red for St Lawrence and green for the Holy Trinity.

This design works as a standalone device without supporting text, for social media.

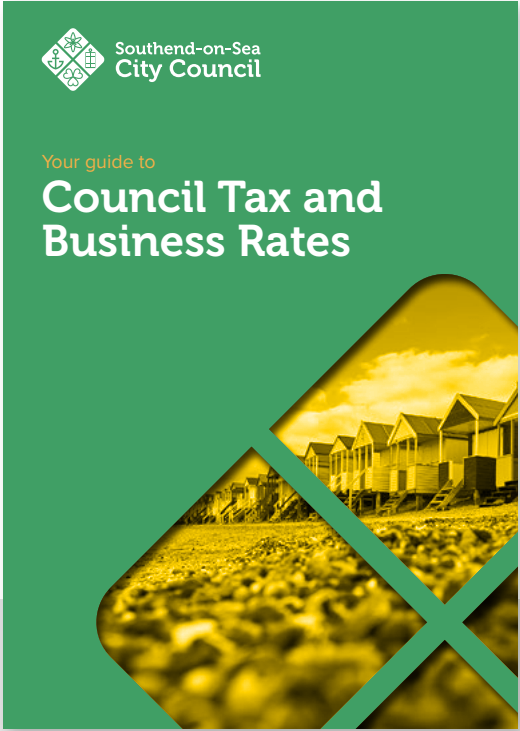Alternative colour schemes show below.

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CONCEPT 4 – S MONOGRAM

An upper case 'S' for 'Southend' monogram style logo including waves and pier in the lower portion.

Including a simple representation of the pier with the Royal Pavilion makes this icon unmistakably 'Southend' and is unique in that it cannot be applied to any other Seaside town or city, even those that have a name that starts with an 'S'.

As a bold, striking design this logo works well across all platforms as a standalone logomark or combined with the Council name.

We can use this in various colour combinations and treatments as well as in different orientations with the Council name.
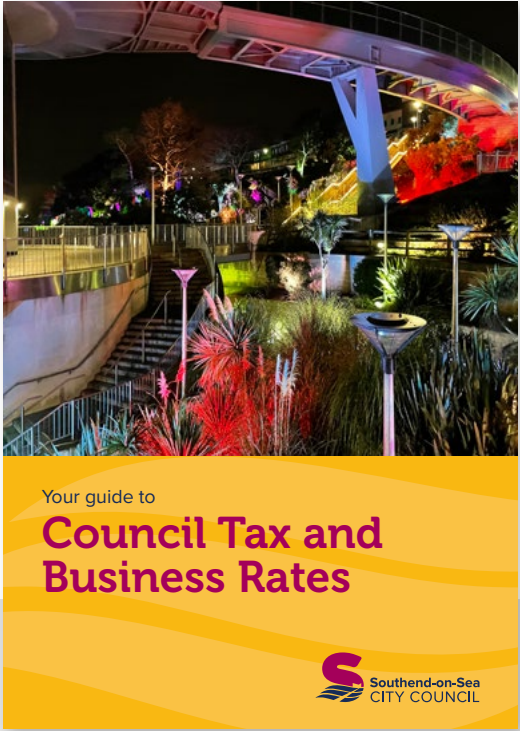
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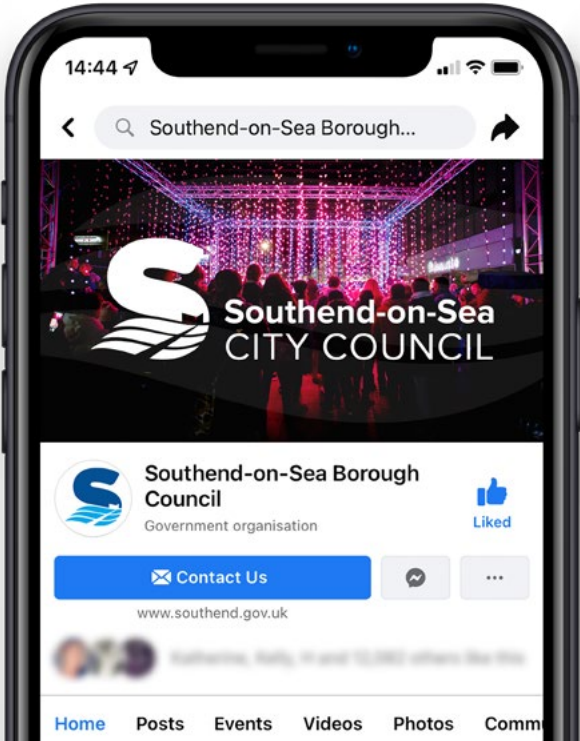Chief Executive : Andy Lewis
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SBC Primary Blue	SBC Primary Cyan	SBC Primary Yellow

SBC Secondary Red	SBC Secondary Purple	SBC Secondary Pink	SBC Secondary Orange	SBC Secondary Jade	SBC Secondary Green

Blueberry	Raspberry	Banana
Text example	Text example	Text example

ANNEX A – COLOUR PALETTES

We have used the existing SBC colour palette throughout the design process as a baseline. However, we feel that it doesn't completely meet the requirements for accessibility, so an alternative palette option is being developed that could be applied to the new brand that meets WCAG compliance. These colours have been used sporadically on the previous pages.

The colour palette will form the basis of the entire brand identity. Whilst the primary colour will feature most heavily, a selection of secondary colours will help expand the flexibility of the design scheme when required, such as graphs, illustrations and CTAs.

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Proxima Nova (current S.B.C brand font)

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Museo

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PT Sans

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Aleo

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ANNEX B – TYPEFACES

A few typeface options for the wordmark element of the logo are shown above. These have been specifically chosen to meet accessibility standards for legibility.

The typeface used in the logo will ideally be used as part of the wider design scheme for the Council's new brand identity. In the case of Museo for example, this could be used as a display font paired with a simple body copy font such as Arial.

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