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Southend-on-Sea City Council

Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance):

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22 March 2023

THE COUNCIL - THURSDAY, 23RD MARCH, 2023 SUPPLEMENTARY PACK – AGENDA ITEMS 18 AND 19 – MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL CABINET HELD 21 MARCH 2023

Please find enclosed, for consideration at the next meeting of the The Council taking place on Thursday, 23rd March, 2023, the following minutes that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item
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18	<u>Minutes of the meeting of Audit Committee held Tuesday, 21 March 2023 (Pages 3 - 4)</u>
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Minutes attached

19	<u>Minutes of the meeting of Special Cabinet held Tuesday, 21 March 2023 (Pages 5 - 8)</u>
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Minutes attached

Rob Harris
Principal Democratic Services Officer

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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Audit Committee

Date: Tuesday, 21st March, 2023

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

18

Present: Councillor M Dent (Chair)
Councillors I Shead (Vice-Chair), H Boyd, T Cox, M Davidson, A Jones* and
R McMullan
K Pandya (Co-opted Member)

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: M Marais, M Ramzan (Deloitte), A Barnes, P Bates, J Chesterton, C Fozzard
and S Tautz

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 7.15 pm

785 Chairs Introduction & Apologies for Absence

(a) Chair's Introduction

Prior to the consideration of the matters set out in the agenda, the Chair outlined their expectations of the standard of conduct and behaviour to be shown at the meeting.

(b) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Buck (no substitute), Councillor A Line (Substitute: Councillor A Jones) and Councillor K Murphy (no substitute).

786 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared at the meeting.

787 Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 11 January 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 January 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

788 Deloitte: Updated report to the Audit Committee on the audit for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Council's external auditors, Deloitte, that provided a summary of the audit work completed to date for the 2020/21 financial year, with regard to the auditor's opinion on the Council's Statement of Accounts and its arrangements for securing Value for Money.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by representatives of Deloitte and officers and were advised that the audit work had been substantially completed subject to the finalisation of a number of outstanding matters,

but that no significant weakness in the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources had been identified.

Resolved:

That the final report of Deloitte on the audit for the year ended 31 March 2021, be noted.

789 Adoption of the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 and Statement of Accounts 2020/21

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21, together with proposed actions for 2021/22 and an update on progress made against the action plan for 2020/21, and the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.

The Committee asked a number of questions in respect of the Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of Accounts, which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

1. That the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 be agreed, subject to any further views expressed by the Council's External Auditor, and that the Governance Statement be recommended to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for authorisation, signature and incorporation in the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.
2. That the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 be adopted and approved for publication, subject to any final review and amendments required as a result of the remaining audit matters outstanding.

790 Deloitte: Audit planning report to the Audit Committee, Audit for the year ending 31 March 2022

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Council's external auditors, Deloitte, that presented the audit planning report for 2021/22 required by the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice, which set out how the auditors intended to carry out their responsibilities in light of their assessment of risk and the planned scope of relevant audit work.

The Committee asked a number of questions in respect of the scope of the audit work for 2021/22, which were responded to by representatives of Deloitte and officers.

Resolved:

That the Deloitte audit planning report for 2021/22, be noted.

Chair: _____

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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 21st March, 2023
Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

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Present: Councillor S George (Chair)
Councillors M Terry (Vice-chair), L Burton, P Collins, I Gilbert, K Mitchell, C Mulroney and S Wakefield

In Attendance: R Polkinghorne, J Burr, S Meah-Sims, R Harris, S Ford, T Breckels and A Keating.

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 6.55 pm

780 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence at this meeting.

781 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

782 Car Cruise PSPO

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment) presenting the responses to the public consultation findings regarding proposals for a car cruise PSPO.

Resolved:

1. That the responses to the consultation, as set out at Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be noted.
2. That the draft Public Spaces Protection Order (Car Cruise PSPO) No.1 of 2023, be implemented.

Reasons for decision:

The introduction of a PSPO will provide a more efficient, tried and tested mechanism to replace the existing injunction to address ASB occurring at car cruises. It will give powers to both Police and Community Safety Officers (and / or other designated Council officers) to address anti-social behaviour associated with care cruises in the city.

Other options:

The Council could choose not to renew the existing car cruise injunction. This would result in the car cruise injunction expiring at midnight on the 11th April 2023, and this enforcement power would no longer be available to Essex Police and the Council's authorised officers for tackling ASB.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Referred direct to Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Terry

783 Grassland Management Policy (Referred back at Council held on 2nd March 2023)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment) presenting the Grassland Management Strategy which was referred back by Council at its meeting held on 2nd March 2023.

On consideration of the report the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Tourism confirmed that consultation with local Councillors and residents would be an important part of the strategy.

Resolved:

1. That the Grassland Management Strategy, as set out at Appendix A to the submitted report to Cabinet held on 12th January 2023, be approved.
2. That the areas for grassland management be identified by officers in advance and engagement be undertaken with Ward Councillors, and residents' associations, with wider publicity, on these areas.
3. That greater City-wide publicity to change 'minds and hearts' and encourage a culture change be undertaken.
4. That onsite notices advising of the changes and benefits, be provided.
5. That officers continue to engage with Councillors and communities in areas proposed for grassland management regime changes.

Reasons for decision:

To allow the delivery of the Strategy and its wider action plans, with the outcome that we have a more sustainable environment in Southend-on-Sea.

Other options

Do nothing and retain the current management and maintenance standards – the impact would be that mowing regimes would not be conducive to enhancing local biodiversity.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has already been the subject of call-in to Place Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Mulroney

784 LGA Corporate Peer Review Findings Report (Referred back by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held Wednesday, 15 March 2023)

Prior to consideration of this matter, the Leader of the Council advised that it would be taken as an urgent item to allow for the Corporate Peer Challenge Officer Programme meeting on 22nd March 2023 to continue and allow for sufficient progress to be made in further developing plans so that the Council can benefit from the learning and improvement at the earliest stage. and to demonstrate progress to the LGA when they return in August.

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive presenting additional information concerning the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report and draft action plan, which had been referred back by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 15th March 2023, and to provide responses to questions raised at the Scrutiny Committee.

On consideration of the matter the Leader of the Council confirmed that meetings of the Corporate Matters and Performance Delivery Working Party would be arranged so that the Working Party can review and have input into the development of the action plan.

Resolved:

1. That the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge findings and the nine recommendations, be noted.
2. That, subject to further consideration by the Corporate Matters and Performance Delivery Working Party, the steps to address the LGA's recommendations, as set out in the Action Plan at Appendix 1 to the submitted report to Cabinet held on 21st February 2023, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

The LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge process independently validated the challenges that the Council faces. The recommendations provide the Council with an improvement focussed and tailored response to its needs. The recommendations further complement and add value to the Council's own performance and improvement plans.

Other options:

None

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has already been the subject of call-in by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member: Cllr George

Chair: _____

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