

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Digest of the Decisions of Cabinet
held on Tuesday, 19th September, 2017
Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite**

Present: Councillor J Lamb (Chair)
Councillors A Holland (Vice-Chair), T Byford, J Courtenay, T Cox,
M Flewitt, A Moring and L Salter

In Attendance: Councillors B Arscott, D McGlone and C Mulrone
A Griffin, J K Williams, S Leftley, A Lewis, A Atherton, J Chesterton,
S Dolling, P Geraghty, B Martin, C Robinson, T MacGregor,
A Keating, K Clarke, J Astle, J Tompson and C Gamble

Start/End Time: 2.00 p.m. - 3.10 p.m.

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence at this meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared interests as indicated:

(a) Councillor Flewitt – Agenda Item No. 10 (Secondary School Placements) – Non-pecuniary interest: Ward Councillor for St Laurence Ward and has been communicating with residents;

(b) Councillor Holland – Agenda Item No. 4 (Fire Safety Measures following Grenfell Tower Tragedy) – Non-pecuniary interest: Vice-Chair of the Essex Fire Authority; and

(c) Councillor Lamb – Agenda Item No. 12 (Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme) – Non-pecuniary interest: School governor.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 20th June 2017

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20th June 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4 Fire Safety Measures following Grenfell Tower Tragedy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) advising of the action the Council has taken following the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy.

Resolved:

1. That the action taken to date, be noted.

2. That it be noted that a further report will be submitted to Cabinet detailing the outcomes of the first phase of the Fire Safety review being undertaken by the Council, South Essex Homes and Essex Fire & Rescue Service.

3. That it be agreed that there is consideration in the Capital Budget proposals for 2018/19 to fund any necessary remedial work or fire safety improvements that are identified by the review set out in resolution 2 above.

Reason for Decision:

To reassure Members that the Council has reviewed the fire safety management measures across its own property portfolio and that assurance is being sought from other public and private sector building owners that they are also reviewing safety measures.

Other options

None.

Note:- This is an Executive function
Eligible for call in to Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Flewitt

5 Monthly Performance Report (July)

Resolved:

That the submitted report be noted.

Note: This is an Executive function.
Eligible for call in to all three Scrutiny Committees
Executive Councillor: as appropriate to the item

6 Risk Based Verification Framework

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive proposing the adoption of a policy for risk based verification within the benefits service.

Resolved:

That the implementation of the Risk Based Verification Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

Reason for Decision

To improve performance in reducing fraud and error leading to additional Government funding through the Right Benefit initiative.

Other Options

To continue to work as we are but this would not free up the additional resources required to do the further checks.

Note: This is an Executive function
Eligible for call in to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Moring

7 **Quarter One Treasury Management Report**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive covering the treasury management activity for the period from April 2017 to June 2017.

Resolved:

1. That the Quarter One Treasury Management Report for 2017/18, be approved.
2. That it be noted that the Treasury management activities were carried out in accordance with the CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector during the period from April to June 2017.
3. That it be noted that the loan and investment portfolios were actively managed to minimise cost and maximise interest earned, whilst maintaining a low level of risk.
4. That it be noted that an average of £48.6m of investments were managed in-house. These earned £0.052m of interest during the three month period at an average rate of 0.43%. This is 0.32% over the average 7-day LIBID and 0.18% over the bank base rate.
5. That it be noted that an average of £5.0m was managed by an enhanced cash fund manager. This earned £0.006m during this three month period at an average rate of 0.52%.
6. That it be noted that an average of £15.2m was managed by two short dated bond fund managers. This earned £0.046m during this three month period from a combination of an increase in the value of the units and income distribution, giving a combined return of 1.21%.
7. That it be noted that an average of £15.9m was managed by two property fund managers. These earned £0.403m during this three month period from a combination of an increase in the value of the units and income distribution, giving a combined return of 10.14%.
8. That it be noted that the level of borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) (excluding debt relating to services transferred from Essex County Council on 1st April 1998) remained at the same level of £227.8m (HRA: £77.0m, GF: £150.8m) during the period from April to June 2017.
9. That it be noted that during the quarter the level of financing for 'invest to save' schemes increased from £7.90m to £8.75m.

Reason for Decision

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management recommends that Local Authorities should submit reports regularly. The Treasury Management Policy

Statement for 2017/18 sets out that reports would be submitted to Cabinet quarterly on the activities of the treasury management operation.

Other options

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call in to: Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Moring

8 Debt Position at 31 July 2017

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive informing Members of the current position on the outstanding debt to the Council as at 31st July 2017.

Resolved:

1. That the current outstanding debt position as at 31st July 2017 and the position of debts written off to 31st July 2017 as set out in Appendices A and B of the submitted report, be noted.

2. That the write offs as detailed in Appendix B, be approved.

Reason for Decision

All reasonable steps to recover the debt have been taken and therefore where a write-off is recommended it is the only course of action available.

If the Council wishes to pursue debts for bankruptcy proceedings, it will follow the agreed and published recovery policy that covers this.

Other options

None

Note: This is an Executive function

Eligible for call in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Moring

9 Appropriation of Land at Burr Hill Chase

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive proposing the appropriation of land at Priory School and Burr Hill Chase from education use for planning purposes to enable the wider redevelopment of the land following the relocation of the school.

Resolved:

That under S122 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the land at Priory School and Burr Hill Chase be appropriated from education use for planning purposes immediately following the vacation of the site to enable its redevelopment following relocation of the school in accordance with the consent of the Secretary of State for Education.

Reasons for Decision

The appropriation of land is required to ensure that the use is appropriately recorded and the land is enabled for future development.

Other options

As the Cabinet has agreed the future use of land subject to the consent of the Secretary of State for education which has now been received, other options are not relevant in this case.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Moring

10 Secondary School Placements

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) updating Members on the progress of the Secondary School Places Programme and the progress on identifying a site for a new Free School.

Resolved:

1. That current progress on the progression of current expansion projects at good and outstanding secondary schools for September 2018, namely Shoeburyness High School and St Thomas More High School, be noted.
2. That the continuation of expansion discussions with remaining Good and Outstanding Schools, namely Belfairs Academy, The Eastwood Academy and St Bernard's High School, to secure the remaining 60 places still required for September 2018, be approved.
3. That work continues on securing the plot of land identified in the submitted report to support an application to the Department of Education for a new secondary free school for September 2019.

Reasons for Decision

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient places for all statutory school aged children

Other Options

The Council has no option other than to provide sufficient school places if it is to meet its statutory duties.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call in to: People Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Courtenay

11 School Performance Report Summer 2017 - Outcomes KS2 and KS4

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which informed Members of the high level performance outcome for all Southend schools at all key stages following the summer tests and examinations.

On consideration of the report, the Chairman referred to the excellent school examination results and thanked the relevant officers and others for their contribution towards the positive outcomes.

Resolved:

That the overall performance of Southend schools at each of the key stages, in particular relative to the emerging national benchmarks, be noted.

Reasons for Decision

To note the performance of Southend schools.

Other Options

None.

Note: This is an Executive function
Eligible for call in to: People Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Courtenay

12 Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) presenting the Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2019 onwards and the Published Admission Limits for community schools.

Resolved:

1. That a consultation with governing bodies of community schools takes place on the published admission numbers for community infant, junior and primary schools for September 2019, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

2. That the proposed Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2019 onwards (as set out at Appendix 2 to the submitted report), in principle, be approved, and if there are minor areas to be resolved following the consultation with all schools, the decisions on minor amendments be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive (People) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Children & Learning.

Reasons for Decision

The determination of admission arrangements for community schools and the provision of a coordinated admissions scheme is a statutory requirement.

Other Options

None.

Note: This is an Executive function
Eligible for call in to: People Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Courtenay

13 Suicide Prevention Strategy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) presenting the draft Suicide Prevention Strategy for Southend, Essex and Thurrock entitled 'Let's Talk About Suicide.'

Resolved:

That the Suicide Prevention Strategy and associated actions, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

To reduce suicide rates.

Other Options

None.

Note: This is an Executive function
Eligible for call in to: People Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Salter

14 Skills Strategy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) updating Members on the development of a Skills and Labour Market Strategy for Southend-on-Sea 2018-2022.

Resolved:

That the Towards a Skills and Labour Market Strategy for Southend-on-Sea, attached at appendix 1 to the submitted report, for wider consultation, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

The strategy aims to improve the Southend skills support landscape, raise ambition and skills levels, increase employment opportunities in local jobs and enable economic growth through equipping residents with the skills needed by business. A clear strategy for the Council and its stakeholders will play an integral role in maximising the benefit realised by local residents facilitating economic growth.

Other Options

Decide not to pursue the development of a Skills and Labour Market Strategy and allow the market to continue as it is. The result of this would be an absence of community leadership on the subject and a lack of response to the issues identified in the first stage consultation and assessment.

Note: This is an Executive function
Eligible call in to: Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Holland

15 Energy Opportunities

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which sought approval to launch a set of energy generation, storage and management services under the Southend Energy brand underpinned by minimum standards and an associated marketing campaign.

Resolved:

1. That a set of minimum standards for energy generation and storage devices and associated management services to be managed through the proposed governance process, be established.
2. That the devices and services be marketed to help households to save money and reduce their net energy consumption.
3. That the scheme be supported by an appropriate governance process, as set out in paragraph 5 of the submitted report, that will approve suppliers and processes for the scheme and the marketing for both the scheme, as a whole, and individual suppliers.
4. That it be noted that the scheme will be funded over time by referral fees and marketing contributions from suppliers with an initial investment of £50k from the Business Transformation Fund (already approved) to launch the scheme and to fund one staffing post until revenues cover on-going costs. Over time, any net revenues will be used to fund the energy team.

Reasons for Decision

The savings to households together with other benefits of the proposals are detailed in the report.

Other Options

Doing nothing will remove the opportunity for Southend residents to make significant savings on their energy costs in the face of rising energy prices and remove the opportunity for improved local grid resilience. Households wishing to engage with the market would be exposed to a confusing marketplace without support.

Note: This is an Executive function
Eligible for call in to: Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Holland

16 S-CATS (London Road Projects)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) providing an update on the progress of the 'Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS).

Resolved:

1. That either of the two design options for London Road (between Queensway and College Way) be taken forward to construction which will allow selection of the final design to be carried out in consultation with stakeholders and public.
2. That the drainage works can be started along London Road in September 2017, in preparation for the scheme construction to start in October 2017.
3. That the authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive (Place), in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Executive Councillor for Transport, Waste and Regulatory Services, to agree the final design option, Option A or Option B, selected after stakeholder and public consultation, to be taken forward to implementation with a programmed commencement in October 2017, together with the advertisement of any necessary Traffic Regulation Orders.

Reasons for Decision

Southend Central Area Transport Scheme represents a major opportunity to support the continued growth and regeneration of the Southend Central Area.

Other Options

If no action was taken, the investment opportunity would be lost. This would reduce the contribution to supporting local health and wellbeing and restrict accessibility and local mobility, and potentially undermine business confidence and investment within the area.

Note: This is an Executive function.

Eligible for call in to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Cox

17 Museums Service – Large Objects Collection

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) informing Members of the large object social history collection of Southend Museums Service and set out a future plan for maximising related resources.

Resolved:

That the submitted proposals for the future of the Museum Service's large object social history collection, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

This is essential to the maintenance and development of the Museums Service and its collections.

Other Options

None.

Note: This is an Executive function
Eligible for call in to: Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Holland

18 Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) providing an update on progress in developing the Council's approach to Highways/Transport Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) and requesting that consideration be given to the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP).

Resolved:

1. That the HIAMP and associated appendices as the Council's approach to asset management and operational service delivery, be approved.

2. That continued cross boundary joint working on asset management, enabling better understanding and development of collaborative working, benchmarking and efficiency, resilience, customer communications and operation delivery to support the management of assets in Southend-on-Sea, be approved.

3. That the lifecycle plans which form the basis for the prediction of future performance of a group of assets, based on investment scenarios and maintenance strategies, be noted.

4. That it be agreed that the HIAMP and appendices will influence the Council's approach to highway maintenance and management of assets in order to meet the requirements as set out by the Department of Transport.

5. That the increase of the Council's banding for the next Department for Transport self-assessment questionnaire (SaQ) return, be noted. (The result of which will be the Council will receive its full funding awards and improve the case for additional funding grants by adopting asset management principles).

Reasons for Decision

To establish a framework which has the means to deliver a more efficient and effective approach to the management of highway infrastructure assets.

Other Options

Do nothing and settle for a lower band score. However, this would mean that the Council has no credible strategy for investing in assets and result in a significant loss of external funding for maintenance.

Note: This is an Executive function
Eligible for call in to: Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Cox

19 Essex & Southend Waste Local Plan

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) presenting the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan.

Recommended:

1. That all the recommendations of the Inspector's Report set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report and the revised version of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
2. That the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, in accordance with Planning Regulations, be approved.
3. That it be noted that the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan Proposed Submission version, approved by Council for publication and submission in February 2016 has been amended as per:
 - a) the main modifications recommended by the Inspector in her report and agreed for consultation under delegated authority in 2016 (attached at Appendix 1);
 - b) The minor modifications agreed for consultation under delegated authority in 2016 (attached at Appendix 3); and
 - c) The further minor modification (attached at Appendix 4).

Reasons for Decision:

It is clearly advantageous for the Council to have a new Waste Local Plan in place as soon as possible. This would avoid the risk of new planning applications for waste related development being considered without an up-to-date Plan - one of the consequences being a lack of certainty regarding where new waste development will take place in future and whether such development is indeed required in the Plan area.

Other Options

Do nothing – work on the Plan would cease and the joint planning authorities would be forced to rely on national planning policy and guidance in making planning decisions in future. This option risks penalties for the Councils levied by the Government for the absence of an up-to-date Waste Local Plan

Note: This is a Council function
Eligible for call in to: Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Flewitt

20 Council Procedure Rule 46

Resolved:

That the submitted report be noted.

Note: This is an Executive function
Eligible for call in to: As appropriate to the item

21 Minutes of the Grants Strategy Working Party held on Tuesday 5th September 2017

The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Grants Strategy Working Party held on 5th September 2017 regarding a Community Commissioning Prospectus 2018-21

Resolved:

That the proposals put forward for a Community Commissioning Prospectus 2018-21, be approved.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call in to: Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor: Moring