

Published: 4.00 p.m. on Friday, 17th September 2021
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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Digest of the Decisions of Cabinet
held on Tuesday, 14th September, 2021
Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor I Gilbert (Chair)
Councillors R Woodley (Vice-Chair), L Burton, P Collins, A Jones,
C Mulronev and C Nevin

In Attendance: A Lewis, J Williams, J Chesterton, A Eastgate, T Forster,
A Richards, L Doe, J O'Loughlin, B Martin, C Thomas, S Newman
and C Gamble

Start/End Time: 2.00 pm - 3.25 pm

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Terry.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5 July, 2021

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5th July 2021, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 27 July, 2021

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27th July 2021, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

5 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7 September, 2021

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7th September 2021, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

6 Resourcing Better Outcomes - Financial Performance Report for July 2021 (Period 4)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) reviewing the Council's financial performance.

Recommended:

That, in respect of the 2021/22 Revenue Budget Performance, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report:

1. That the forecast outturn for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as at July 2021, be noted.
2. That the planned budget transfers (virements) of £1,174,050 from earmarked reserves, be approved.

That, in respect of the 2021/22 Capital Budget Performance, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report:

3. That the expenditure to date and the forecast outturn as at July 2021 and its financing, be noted.
4. That the requested changes to the capital investment programme for 2021/22 and future years, as set out in section 3 of Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

Reasons for decisions:

The regular reporting of Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring information provides detailed financial information to Councillors, senior officers and other interested parties on the financial performance of the Council. It sets out the key variances being reported by budget holders and the associated management action being implemented to address any identified issues. It also informs decision making to ensure that the Council's priorities are delivered within the approved budget provision.

Other options:

The Council could choose to monitor its budgetary performance against an alternative timeframe but it is considered that the current reporting schedule provides the appropriate balance to allow strategic oversight of the budget by Councillors and to also formally manage the Council's exposure to financial risk.

Note: This is a Council Function
Eligible for call-in to: Policy and Resources Committee
Executive Members: Cllrs Gilbert and Collins

7 Southend 2050 - Outcome Success Measures Report

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive on the first period of the Southend 2050 Outcome Success Measures for 2021/22, covering 1 April to 30 June 2021.

Resolved:

That the Southend 2050 Outcome Success Measures for 2021/22 period 1 performance, be noted.

Reasons for decision:

To drive the delivery of the Southend 2050 ambition through robust and strategic performance management arrangements and to ensure the Council is clear on prioritised milestones to achieve the desired outcomes, focusing on response to the pandemic, economic recovery and sustainability, including financial, environmental and transformation as an organisation.

Other options:

Not to review the Council's current ambition and desired outcomes. This would mean failing to set out the huge impact the crises have had on the Borough, its people and the Council and its approach to recovery. The Council has committed to undertake an annual review of the outcomes and milestones.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call-in to: All three Scrutiny Committees

Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

8 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) setting out the current crisis in Kent and proposed that 0.07% (27) of the child population in Southend are accepted as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), which is in line with other local authorities and the practice in Southend since 2016.

Resolved:

1. That Southend-on-Sea take 0.07% (27) UASC of the child population.
2. That Southend-on-Sea take two UASC per month until it reaches 0.07% (27), because of the high numbers of UASC numbers coming in through Kent.
3. That a 1 year temporary funding increase upfront of £122,000 to fund an additional Social Worker post and 2 Personal Assistants to work with the expected increase of UASC children, noting that where additional income will be received for the additional UASC placements, if placement costs can be sustained within the additional income a proportion of this cost will be mitigated, be approved.
4. That the funding pressures in relation to support and placement cost of UASC and that this position will continue to be closely monitored and reviewed, be noted.

Reasons for decision:

1. Southend has a responsibility to support these vulnerable young people and assist our colleagues - there is some capacity in the system to accommodate taking 20+ UASC.
2. To be able to manage this influx of UASC as well as supporting them potentially up to the age of 25, additional resources will be required by way of a social worker and Personal Advisors (x2).

Other options:

1. To not offer support to colleagues in Kent and refuse to participate in the national voluntary National Transfer scheme (NTS). This is not recommended as it would be neglecting a national responsibility to support vulnerable young people that needs to be shared across all areas. If the voluntary NTS is not successful, then central government may mandate the scheme.

2. Participate in the voluntary National Transfer Scheme – this option is likely to overtake the offer of support, given the expected numbers awaiting transfer and the fact that there is capacity in Southend and the Eastern Region.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call-in to: People Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Burton

9 Selective Licensing

The Cabinet considered a report of the Interim Executive Director (Growth and Housing) providing an update on the work underway to prepare for the implementation of the Selective Licensing scheme within neighbourhoods in the Milton, Kursaal, Victoria and Chalkwell wards.

Resolved:

1. That the financial details of the scheme, as outlined in the financial implications in Section 7 of the submitted report, be noted.

2. That the proposed discounts for the scheme including the early bird period of four months (December 2021 to March 2022) to promote early compliance as stated in paragraph 7.2 of the report, be noted.

Reasons for decision:

To complete the next preparatory stage of the Selective Licensing scheme ahead of the implementation date of 1st December 2021 for Milton, Kursaal, Victoria and Chalkwell wards.

Other options:

None

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call-in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

10 Southend Borough Council - Southend Care Ltd Partnership Agreement

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) presenting an update on progress with the development of a ten-year Partnership Agreement and contract between Southend Borough Council and Southend Care Ltd.

Resolved:

That the Partnership Agreement, set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, noting that the Agreement will be included as part of a new ten-year contract for services provided by Southend Care Ltd, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

The Partnership Agreement creates a shared vision and a set of principles which will build on the Council's relationship and allow Southend Care Ltd to become more commercially focused in its approach whilst remaining true to the values that have informed its development to date.

Other options:

None

Note: This is an Executive Function
Eligible for call-in to: People Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Cllr Nevin

11 Draft Parking Strategy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment) presenting the draft Parking Strategy for external consultation with local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

Resolved:

1. That consultation on the draft Parking Strategy, set out at Appendix A to the submitted report, be approved.
2. That the results of the consultation and parking implementation plan be presented to Cabinet in early 2022 for approval.

Reasons for decision:

To undertake consultation on the draft Parking Strategy.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Eligible for call-in to: Place Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Cllr Woodley

12 Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Implementation Strategy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment) setting out the work undertaken to date on the Domestic Abuse Implementation Strategy to comply with the new statutory obligations which became law through the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 in April this year.

Resolved:

1. That the submitted report, be noted.
2. That the Implementation Strategy set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.
3. That the Implementation Strategy be reviewed within a 12 month period.
4. That the Community Safety Partnership be the appropriate governing Partnership Board for Domestic Abuse.

Reasons for decision:

To comply with the statutory obligations of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Eligible for call-in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Cllr Jones

13 Conservation Area Appraisals

This item was deferred to the special meeting of Cabinet to be held on 18th October 2021.

14 City Status Application

The Cabinet considered a report of the Interim Executive Director (Growth and Housing) seeking approval to the preparation and submission of a bid for City Status, for the Borough of Southend-on-Sea, as part of the Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition.

Resolved:

That the preparation and submission of a City Status bid for the Borough of Southend-on-Sea, as part of the Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

To make an application for City Status in recognition, not only of Southend-on-Sea's rich heritage and what the Borough has to offer now as a 'city by the sea', but also its shared future ambition and the city it aspires to become. Securing City Status brings with it prestige, standing and an opportunity to lever investment.

Other options:

Not to pursue the preparation and submission of a bid for City Status. This would prevent the Council from applying as applications must be made by the relevant Local Authority.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Eligible for call-in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

15 School Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) setting out the admission arrangements for community schools for the academic year, and the Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2023/24.

Resolved:

1. That the Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools for the academic year 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.
2. That consultation with governing bodies of community schools takes place on the published admission number (PAN) for community infant, junior and primary schools for September 2023, as set out in the Admission Arrangements in Appendix 1 to the report.
3. That the proposed Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2023/24 onwards, as set out in Appendices 2 and 3 of the report, with any changes after School Governor consultation to be ratified by the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) in December, be approved for publication as required by law by 1st January 2022.
4. That the relevant area for schools be reviewed and approved as follows: Southend, Castle Point and Rochford for the years 2023 and 2024.

Reasons for decision:

The Council is required to publish the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2023/24 by 1st January 2022 and to consult the Governing Bodies of community schools as required for increased or unchanged PAN's.

Other options:

The Council could change the admission arrangements for the community/local authority maintained schools. However, this would add undue pressure on a small number of local schools for 2023, where no need for change has been identified.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Eligible for call-in to: People Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Cllr Burton

16 Information Governance Update

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) providing a summary of the Council's key actions concerning information governance and management during 2020/21.

Resolved:

1. That the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) Annual Report 2020/21 on Information Governance, be noted.
2. That the key actions taken during 2020/21 and the opportunities and challenges for 2021/22, be noted.

Reasons for decision:

To ensure that the Council holds personal data securely, disseminates information effectively and is transparent and enabling in its handling of information and operates within the necessary legal framework.

Other options:

It is a requirement of the Council's Information Management Strategy that an annual report is made to Councillors.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call-in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

17 Regulatory of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) reporting on the use of powers available to the Council under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) during the financial year 2020/21.

Resolved:

1. That it be noted that the Council has used the surveillance powers available to it under RIPA on one occasion during the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, but it has not used any covert human intelligence source (CHIS).
2. That the staff training undertaken in 2020/21 and proposed for 2021/22 in connection with RIPA, be noted.
3. That the details of the regulation of CCTV activities as set out in the submitted report, be noted.

Recommended:

4. That minor amendments be made to Section 5.1 of the Delegation Scheme in Part 3, Schedule 3 of the Constitution, as set out in the submitted report. ||

Reason for decision:

To comply with the Home Office Codes of Practice and IPCO Guidance on RIPA.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function save that the Recommendation in 4 above constitutes a Council Function.

Eligible for call-in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

18 Treasury Management Report - Quarter One

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) on the treasury management activity for the period from April to June 2021.

Resolved:

1. That the Treasury Management report for quarter one 2021/22, 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 2021.
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 £0.376m of interest and income distributions for all investments were earned during this three month period at an average rate of 0.97%. This is 1.05% over the average 7 day LIBID (London Interbank Bid Rate) and 0.87% over the average bank rate. Also the value of the externally managed funds increased by a net of £0.734m due to changes in the unit price, giving the combined overall return of 2.85%.
5. 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 £310.3m (HRA: £75.0m, GF: £235.3m) during the period April to June 2021.
6. That it be noted that during the quarter the level of financing for 'invest to save' schemes decreased from £8.53m to £8.52m.

Reasons for decision:

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management recommends that Local Authorities should submit reports regularly. The Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2021/22 set out that reports would be submitted to Cabinet quarterly on the activities of the treasury management operation.

Other options:

There are many options available for the operation of the Treasury Management function, with varying degrees of risk associated with them. The Treasury Management Policy aims to effectively control risk to within a prudent level, whilst providing optimum performance consistent with that level of risk.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Eligible for call-in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Cllr Collins

19 Council Debt Management Position

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) on the current position of outstanding debt to the Council, as at 31st July 2021.

Resolved:

1. That the current outstanding debt position on 31st July 2021 and the position of debts written off to 31st July 2021, as set out in Appendices A and B to the submitted report, be noted.
2. That the three write offs for debts exceeding £25,000, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

All reasonable steps to recover the debt have been taken, and therefore where write off is recommended it is the only course of action that is left 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 Member: Cllr Gilbert