

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee

Date: Monday, 5th July, 2021

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor A Moring (Chair)
Councillors N Folkard (Vice-Chair), K Buck, M Berry*, T Cox*,
M Dent, S George, D Jarvis, K Mitchell, J Moyies*, K Robinson,
S Wakefield, C Walker, N Ward and P Wexham
*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: Councillors I Gilbert and C Mulroney (Cabinet Members)
Councillor K Evans
A Lewis, J Williams, T Forster, S Dolling, E Cooney, I Kazalbash, K
Waters, S Harrington, C Victory, A Smith and T Row

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 8.30 pm

96 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bright (no substitute), Cowan (substitute: Councillor Berry), F Evans (substitute: Councillor Cox) and Warren (substitute: Councillor Moyies).

97 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

(i) Councillors Gilbert and Mulroney (Cabinet Members) – Interest in the called-in items; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19th July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011.

(ii) Councillor Buck – Agenda Item No. 11 (In-depth Scrutiny Project - To improve and increase domestic waste recycling in the Borough - Draft Final Report) – Non-pecuniary interest: A local waste services provider in Southend is a client;

(ii) Councillor Folkard – Agenda Item No. 5 (COVID Update) – Non-pecuniary interest: Uses the swimming pool at Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre which was mentioned in the debate;

(iii) Councillor Gilbert – Agenda Item No. 7 (Culture-led Regeneration and the Town Centre) – Non-pecuniary interest: Works for a business located in the Town Centre;

(iv) Councillor Moring – Agenda Item No. 10 (Thorpe Bay Gardens - Covenant) – Non-pecuniary interest: Lives in Thorpe Bay;

(v) Councillor Wakefield – Agenda Item No. 7 (Culture-led Regeneration and the Town Centre) – Non-pecuniary interest: Has a business located in the Town Centre; and

(vi) Councillor Walker – Agenda Item No. 5 (COVID Update) – Non-pecuniary interest: Grand-daughter uses the diving facilities at Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre which was mentioned in the debate.

98 Questions from Members of the Public

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism & Planning responded to two questions from Mr David Webb and one question from Mr Jonathan Garston.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Transport, Asset management and Inward Investment, the Leader of the Council responded to a question also from Mr Jonathan Garston.

The Committee also noted the response to a question received from Mr Alan Grubb to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism & Planning. A copy of the response will be sent to him as he was not present at the meeting.

99 Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 15th March 2021

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 15th March 2021 be received, confirmed as a correct record and signed.

100 COVID Update

The Committee considered Minute 53 of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 15th June, 2021, which had been called-in to all three scrutiny Committees for consideration. The Committee also had before it the report of the Chief Executive which provided an update on the action taken by the Council in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its approach to protect and support residents, local businesses, staff and the Borough in general.

Resolved:

That the following decision of Cabinet be noted:

“That the action taken to date in response to the Covid-19 crisis, be noted.”

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

101 Southend New Local Plan

The Committee considered Minute 55 of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 15th June, 2021, which had been called-in to scrutiny, together with the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (Growth and Housing). This sought approval to publish the ‘Refining the Plan Options’ for public consultation as part of the next stage in preparing the Southend New Local Plan.

Resolved:-

1. That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the ‘Refining the Plan Options’ document set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved as the second stage of the preparation of the Southend New Local Plan to be published for public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

2. That the feedback received during the previous stage of consultation, the Southend New Local Plan Issues and Options Document 2019, as set out in the accompanying Consultation Statement set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be noted.

3. That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (Growth and Housing), in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning to:

- Make minor amendments to the Southend New Local Plan prior to consultation; and
- Take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory processes and procedures to undertake the consultation.

4. That, in view of the constraints within the Borough and given the potential effects on the Green Belt of meeting our housing needs in full, being consulted upon in Options 2 and 3 of the Local Plan Consultation Document, that the Council seek the assistance of the local Members of Parliament to effect a meeting with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in order to lay before him the difficulties which the Council finds itself in meeting the housing figures imposed by the Government without impinging on substantial green belt land or over-densification of the urban area and the consequent detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of residents of the Borough.”

2. That, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 39, the matter be referred to full Council for consideration. ||

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Mulronee

102 **Culture-led Regeneration and the Town Centre**

The Committee considered Minute 56 of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 15th June, 2021, which had been called-in to scrutiny, together with the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Director (Growth and Housing) and Executive Director (Adults and Communities) setting out the planned next steps towards a reimagined and thriving town centre and the transformational role of culture led regeneration in delivering this and other outcomes across the Borough.

Resolved:-

That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the principles of the Culture Visions as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report to shape and inform culture-led regeneration, be adopted.

2. That the progress of outcomes contributing towards a reimagined and thriving town centre, be noted.

3. That the design plans for the LGF funded public realm external works at the Forum (Elmer Square), be approved.

4. That the development of a visual ‘masterplan lite’ for the town centre be progressed with a culture-led regeneration focus and that £125,000 be set aside to support this work to be funded from the Covid Recovery Reserve.”

Note: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Members: Cllr Gilbert and Cllr Mulroney

103 Electric Vehicle Charging Policy

The Committee considered Minute 60 of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 15th June, 2021, which had been called-in to scrutiny, together with the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (Growth and Housing) concerning the preparation of new local planning policy for developers on the provision of electric vehicle charging points in new residential and commercial schemes, to support the Council’s Green City Action Plan, and assist in delivering on relevant Southend 2050 outcomes.

Resolved:-

That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the Interim Policy Guidance for Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure Requirements to guide new developments in developing management decisions set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

2. That the Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure Requirements in the New Developments draft Supplementary Planning Document set out in Appendix 2 to the report being subject to a 4-week period of public consultation, be approved.

3. That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (Growth and Housing), in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning to:

- Make minor amendments to the draft Supplementary Planning Document prior to consultation; and
- Take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory processes and procedures to undertake the consultation.”

Note: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Member: Cllr Mulroney

104 Minutes of the Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning Working Party held 8th June 2021

The Committee considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning Working Party held on 8th June 2021, which had been called-in to scrutiny. These had been considered by Cabinet in conjunction with the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (Growth & Housing) regarding the New Southend Local Plan.

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning Working Party held on 8th June 2021 be noted.

Note: This is an Executive function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Mulroney

105 Thorpe Bay Gardens - Covenant

The Committee considered Minute 49 of Cabinet Committee held on Monday, 10th June, 2021, which had been called-in to scrutiny, together with the report of the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment) regarding a covenant (“the Covenant” as detailed at paragraph 3.1 of the submitted report) in relation to parking restrictions in Thorpe Bay Gardens. The report also set out options for the way forward in relation to this matter.

Resolved:-

1. That the following decision of Cabinet Committee be noted:

“1. That the Council, acting in its capacity as Highway Authority, commence the statutory consultation for the revocation of the existing seasonal restrictions in Thorpe Bay Gardens from its junction with St Augustine’s Avenue to its eastern extremity and the introduction of no waiting at any time restrictions daily between the hours of 8.00 a.m. until 10.00 p.m.

2. That, any unresolved objections to the statutory consultation, be referred to the Traffic Regulations Working Party for consideration.

3. That the situation in Thorpe Bay Gardens be monitored and kept under review and that a report be submitted to the meeting of the Traffic Regulations Working Party and Cabinet Committee within one year.”

2. That, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 39, the matter be referred to full Council for consideration. ||

Note: This is an Executive function
Cabinet Member: Councillor Woodley

106 In-depth Scrutiny Project - To improve and increase domestic waste recycling in the Borough - Draft Final Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services) which presented the draft final report and recommendations from the in-depth Scrutiny Project undertaken on behalf of the Committee 'To improve and increase domestic waste recycling in the Borough.'

The Committee was informed that the recommendations in the draft had been slightly amended, as a result of comments received from members of the project team. A copy of the amended recommendations were circulated at the meeting.

Resolved:-

1. That the report and amended recommendations arising from the in-depth scrutiny project, be agreed.
2. That, in accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10 (Part 4 (e) of the Constitution), the Chair of the Committee present the report and amended recommendations of the in-depth scrutiny project to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

Note: This is a Scrutiny function

107 In-Depth Scrutiny Projects and Summary of Work 2020/21

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services) on progress with regard to the in-depth scrutiny projects undertaken during the 2020/21 municipal year and which sought the agreement of a possible joint approach to in-depth scrutiny activity for 2021/22. The report, which was being made to each of the scrutiny committees in the current cycle of meetings, also provided information on the work carried out by the scrutiny committees during the previous municipal year.

The Committee considered the benefits of undertaking a joint scrutiny project around the 'Councillor Queries' process but felt that the nature of such scrutiny activity should be broadened to reflect the theme of 'Enabling Councillors to be Effective' and that the scoping of the project should incorporate appropriate matters of importance to councillors within this theme, including councillors' contact and engagement with the Council and residents.

The Committee was advised that the proposed project could also complement the work of a design group currently looking at councillor development as part of the leadership programme and were reminded that a separate review was to be undertaken of the Council's Constitution, to which all members would have an opportunity to contribute.

Resolved:

1. That the progress of the in-depth scrutiny projects undertaken during the 2020/21 municipal year, be noted.

2. That, subject to the concurrence of the other scrutiny committees, a single scrutiny project be undertaken on behalf of the three scrutiny committees during the 2021/22 municipal year on the theme of 'Enabling Councillors to be Effective.'

3. That the Council be recommended to appoint members to a Project Team to lead the proposed scrutiny project for 2021/22 (by convention proportionality shall apply), in order that the scoping of the of the project can commence as soon as possible.

4. That no other topic(s) be selected by the Committee for additional in-depth review during 2021/22.

5. That the summary of the scrutiny work undertaken by the Committee during 2020/21 municipal year be noted.

Note: This is a Scrutiny function, save that the appointment of the Project Team detailed in Resolution 3 above is a Council function.

Chair: _____