

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Cabinet

Date: Monday, 4th March, 2024

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor T Cox (Chair)
Councillors M Davidson (Vice-Chair), H Boyd, K Buck, J Courtenay,
D Garston, D Nelson and C Campbell

(*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 30.)

In Attendance: Councillors D Cowan and L Hyde
M Marks, J Chesterton, C Gamble, C Ansell, M Harvey, A Keating,
A Richards, C Shuter and S Zeiss

Start/End Time: 6.30 - 7.05 pm

96 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jarvis and Lamb..

97 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

98 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 31 October 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 31 October 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

99 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 30 January 2024

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 30 January 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

100 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 13 February 2024

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 13 February 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

101 Corporate Risk Register

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Corporate Risk Register for the period to January 2024.

Resolved:

That the revised Corporate Risk Register and the position in January 2024 set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report and the actions being taken to manage the risks, be noted.

Reasons for decision:

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require that a relevant authority must ensure it has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its function and the achievement of its aims and objectives, ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective and includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Lamb

102 Treasury Management Report - Quarter Three 2023/24

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Quarter Three Treasury Management Report covering the treasury management activity and compliance with the treasury management strategy for both quarter three and the period from April to December 2023.

Resolved:

1. That the Quarter Three Treasury Management Report for 2023/24, 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 December 2023.
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 £4.811m of interest and income distributions for all investments were earned during this nine-month period at an average rate of 4.56%. This is 0.33% below the average SONIA rate (Sterling Overnight Index Average) and 0.39% below the average bank rate. Also, the value of the externally managed funds decreased by a net of £1.152m due to changes in the unit price, giving a combined overall return of 3.47%.

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 £347.3m (Housing Revenue Account (HRA): £74.2m, General Fund: £273.1m) during the period from April to December 2023 at an average rate of 3.46%.

6. That it be noted that the level of financing for 'invest to save' capital schemes decreased from £8.22m to £8.13m during the period from April to December 2023.

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 2023/24 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
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Cox

103 Dementia Support Service - Consultation

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) presenting the proposal to end the Dementia Community Support Service (DCSS) by the end of March 2024.

The Cabinet also received a supplementary paper setting out the feedback from the People Scrutiny Committee on 27th February 2024, together with a revised recommendation.

Resolved:

1. That the closure of the DCSS in its current format and the restructure of adult social care services, to include a prevention and enablement service to ensure that continuous appropriate and accessible information and advice is available, be approved.

2. That in response to the public consultation and views expressed, four new full-time equivalent posts (dementia community navigators) and one part-time community builder be developed as part of the new prevention and enablement service in Adult Social Care.

3. That the development of 4 locality-based support groups for people with dementia and their informal carers, be approved. This would make accessing a club local to them easier for residents across the city.

4. That additional investment to enable relevant carer organisations to be able to attend the proposed locality groups more regularly to support carers, be approved.

5. That the new community navigator roles, locality groups and additional support for carers be funded via the investment of £100,000 from the additional social care grant recently announced by Government.

Reasons for decision:

Continuing to provide the service in its current format is not financially sustainable because of the financial pressure experienced by Southend City Council and removal of funding from partners.

Other options:

1. Option 2 (not recommended) End the service without providing support for the clubs or new community navigator roles. The outcome of the public consultation showed the value people place on the support groups, especially in supporting informal carers in their caring roles.

2. Option 3 (not recommended) Continue to provide the service in its current format. This is not financially sustainable and would retain the financial risk for the areas outside of Southend that were funded by partners. It would also leave the council continuing to be the provider of a service while being responsible for the Quality Assurance.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Nelson

104 Family Centres - Consultation

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) presenting the outcome of the public consultation to review the current Family Centre offer which concluded on 1st February 2024.

The Cabinet also received a supplementary paper setting out the feedback from the People Scrutiny Committee on 27th February 2024.

Resolved:

1. That the outcome of the public consultation which also engaged with delivery partners and local agencies, set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be noted.

2. That the proposed new Family Centre model, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

3. That it be noted that the proposed new Family Centre offer, will deliver an efficiency of £350,000 against the Family Centre budget.

Reasons for decision:

By reconfiguring this service now there will be a service offer that delivers good public health and early years foundation outcomes, as part of an early intervention and prevention agenda to under 5s, as efficiently as possible.

Other options:

There were three options, including an option with 'no change' and the report outlines the outcome of the consultation and how this has informed the restructure of the new service.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Members: Cllr Boyd/Cllr Nelson

105 Community Response Service & Telecare Charging System - Consultation

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) presenting the outcome of the consultation concerning the proposed changes to the telecare monitoring service within adult social care.

The Cabinet also received a supplementary paper setting out the feedback from the People Scrutiny Committee on 27th February 2024.

Resolved:

1. That the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed changes to the telecare monitoring service and the Council's recommendation for the introduction of a contributory charge, be noted
2. That the recommended changes to the charging arrangements for the Telecare Monitoring Service, be approved.
3. That it be noted that the results of the consultation will be published on the website and those affected by the charge will be notified by letter.

Reasons for decision:

The Telecare Monitoring Service has been identified as a service which would benefit from revisiting its charging structure which at present is free for customers who go through the Council's adult social care service.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Nelson

106 Economic Growth Strategy 2024-2028

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting the Economic Growth Strategy 2024-28.

Resolved:

That the Economic Growth Strategy 2024-2028, as set out at appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved and that any final minor changes prior to publication be delegated to the Executive Director (Environment and Place), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Investment.

Reasons for decision:

Enabling economic growth and a strong and prosperous community is integral to the work of the Council. Whilst, there is no statutory requirement to have an economic growth strategy it is good practice and the strategy can guide Council decision-making and activity to maximise the level of and benefits from economic growth for businesses and residents.

Other options:

Not to produce a new economic growth strategy. This would represent a missed opportunity to promote and capitalise on economic growth opportunities in the city.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Campbell

107 New Tenancy Strategy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting the Council Tenancy Strategy 2024-29.

Resolved:

That the updated Tenancy Strategy 2024-29, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved, in particular:

1. The Council's stance/ask of RPs with regards to the use of flexible/fixed term tenancies.
2. The Council's position on how fixed term/flexible tenancies interplay with domestic abuse.
3. The council's proposal on affordable rent.

Reasons for decision:

Approval of the Council's Tenancy Strategy is required as the current strategy has expired and the Council is legally required to have one in place.

Other options:

1. Continue with the current out-of-date strategy which is no longer fit for purpose.
2. Decide not to have a Tenancy Strategy, but the Council would not be fulfilling its legal requirements.
3. Delay implementation and find/fund officer resource to undertake further revisions and subsequent consultation/engagement.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Garston

108 Environment & Regulatory Enforcement Policy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting the updated Environment and Regulatory Enforcement Policy.

Resolved:

That the updated Environment and Regulatory Enforcement Policy, as set out at Appendix 1, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

The Council has a duty to ensure its policies are fit for purpose and comply with the discharge of statutory duties and operational functions. The review and updated policy is a requirement of these duties.

Other options:

None

Note: this is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Lamb

109 Annual Procurement Plan

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Annual Procurement Plan for 2024/25.

Resolved:

1. That the annual procurement plan for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, which contains those procurements with a value of £250,000 or above, be approved.

2. That it be noted that any capital projects/procurements will be added as required, having being approved as part of the capital programme (both Southend City Council and South Essex Homes).

Reasons for decision:

The approval of the Council's annual procurement plan is required under part 4g of the Council's constitution.

Other options:

To just publish an annual plan, but it is felt that the development of a pipeline plan will assist the Council and businesses in their resource and future planning. The move to a 3-year plan (2024-2027) also aligns with the requirements once the UK Procurement Act commences in October 2024.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in.
Cabinet Member: Cllr Lamb

110 PSPO - Leigh (Anti-social Behaviour)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting the Public Spaces Protection Order (Leigh-on-Sea and Chalkwell Seafront and Adjoining Areas) for renewal.

Resolved:

That the renewal of the Public Spaces Protection Order (Leigh-on-Sea and Chalkwell Seafront and Adjoining Areas) No1 of 2021 ("the 2021 PSPO), be approved.

Reasons for decision:

The renewal of the PSPO will enable continued necessary control of relevant matters relating to behaviours listed in the Order and the ability for officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices where breaches of the Order are witnessed and those responsible are identified.

Other options:

Not to renew the 2021 PSPO. This would result in the current PSPO expiring at midnight on 31st July 2024, and this enforcement power would no longer be available to Essex Police and the Council's authorised officers for tackling ASB in the restricted area.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Courtenay

111 PSPO (Dog Control)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting the Southend-on-Sea City Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order of 2021 for renewal.

Resolved:

That the renewal of the Southend-on-Sea City Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order of 2021 (“the 2021 PSPO”), be approved.

Reasons for decision:

The Renewal will enable continued necessary control of relevant matters relating to dogs and the ability for officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices where breaches of the Order are witnessed and those responsible are identified.

Other options:

Not to renew the 2021 PSPO. This would result in the current PSPO expiring at midnight on the 30th April 2024, and this enforcement power would no longer be available to Essex Police and the Council’s authorised officers for tackling ASB in the restricted area.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Courtenay

112 Notices of Motion: Cuckoo Corner and Fly-tipping (referred from Council held on Thursday, 14th December 2023)

This matter was deferred to the meeting of Cabinet to be held on 14th March 2024.

113 Stray Dog Service Contract Award

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting the Stray Dog Service Contract re-procurement for approval.

Resolved:

1. That the award of the stray dog service to provide the following services, be approved:

- Collection of stray dogs between the hours of 8.30am and 10pm, this being the point at which the Council accepts responsibility and receives the stray dog.
- Kennelling of strays until re-united with their owners, they are re-homed, or the statutory requirement of the local authority ends.

2. That a review of the fees and charges charged to owners, be approved. This will include the statutory fee and recovery of expenses associated with seizing and detaining a stray dog.

Reasons for decision:

None. This is a statutory duty to deliver a service that provides for the seizure and detention of stray dogs. The financial rules require that a formal procurement process is undertaken.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Lamb

114 Extension of Contact - Severe & Multiple Disadvantage Service 2024/25

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) presenting the proposal for a one-year extension of the contract for the Severe and Multiple Disadvantage Service (SMDS) 2024/25.

Resolved:

That the one-year extension to the Severe and Multiple Disadvantage Service 2024/25 contract to 31st March 2025, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

Not extending the SMDS service would have a negative impact on service users, residents and the Council. The extension of the contract by one year will enable a more coherent review of supported housing need, and it will also enable time to expand the evidence-base for any future offer that includes the SMDS service.

Other options:

The current contract could be allowed to expire on 31st March 2024. There would likely to be a severe impact for the individuals supported if the services were ended, as well as the Council and potentially other residents of Southend.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Nelson

115 Independent review of Southend Care Ltd and Vecteo

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy and Change) presenting the findings of the independent review of two of the Council's wholly owned companies, Southend Care Ltd (SCL) and LHCS and Southend Travel Partnership Ltd (known as 'Vecteo').

Resolved:

1. That the findings of the independent reviews of Southend Care Ltd and Vecteo, be noted.

2. That the proposed recommendations of the independent reviews, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, and that the Shareholder Board monitor progress against the action plan, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

Implementation of the recommendations identified through the independent review should enable the companies to return to/or sustain financial viability and enable savings for the Council.

Other options:

Not to accept the findings of the review or the recommendations and continue with the arrangements for the companies as they are. The likely consequence of this is that the financial viability of the companies will deteriorate and the quality of services will be compromised.

Note: This is an Executive Function
Not eligible for call-in
Cabinet Member: Cllr Cox

Chair: _____