

## **SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: Thursday, 7th December, 2023**

**Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite**

**Present:** Councillor L Burton (Chair)  
Councillors M Sadza (Vice-Chair), B Beggs, M Borton, S Buckley,  
O Carley, C Campbell\*, P Collins\*, D Cowan\*, T Cowdrey, F Evans,  
N Folkard, S George, J Harland, R McMullan and J Warren

\*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

**In Attendance:** Councillors T Cox and D Garston (Cabinet Members)  
J Chesterton, A Richards, C Shuter and S Cox

**Start/End Time:** 6.30 - 7.45 pm

#### **47 Chair's 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 S Wakefield, Councillor M Dent (substitute: Councillor D Cowan), Councillor C Walker (substitute: Councillor C Campbell) and Councillor P Wexham (substitute: Councillor P Collins).

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor L Burton (as the appointed Vice-Chair) Chaired the meeting with Councillor M Sadza acting as Vice-Chair.

#### **48 Declarations of Interest**

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

- (a) Councillors M Borton, N Folkard, D Garston (Cabinet Member) – non-pecuniary interest, Minute 50 (Resourcing Better Outcomes) – concessionary bus pass holders.
- (b) Councillor N Folkard – non-pecuniary interest, Minute 50 (Resourcing Better Outcomes) – was a daily user of the swimming pool at Garon's Park (operated by fusion leisure).

#### **49 Questions from Members of the Public**

The Committee noted the response of the Cabinet Member for Environment to a question presented by Mr Webb.

**50 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 November 2023**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

**51 Resourcing Better Outcomes - Financial Performance Report for September 2023 (Period 6)**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Finance and Resources which had been referred direct by the Cabinet from the meeting held on 20 November 2023.

The report summarised the current forecast position to the end of September 2023 (Period 6).

The Committee asking a number of questions which were responded to by the Leader of the Council.

The relevant Cabinet Members and Executive Directors undertook to provide written responses to questions raised by Members of the Committee, with regard to:

- a) Tree net gain in the City – why trees had been left over from the previous year and an update on planting for the current year.
- b) To share the final Grant Thornton report with Members, whilst noting the situation had moved on since its publication.

The Leader of the Council asked Councillors to raise any concerns about parking and parking enforcement through appropriate channels so that the relevant Director could review and take action as appropriate.

A brief discussion took place on the take up of the voluntary redundancy scheme which had recently closed.

The Committee agreed to stop printing paper declaration of interest forms and public questions at meetings in the interest of efficiency and cost saving.

Resolved:

That the following recommendations of the Cabinet be noted:

1. Cabinet notes the continued unprecedented levels of reported financial pressure and challenges right across the local government sector (appendix 1).

That, in respect of the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Performance as set out in appendix 2 to this report, Cabinet:

2. Note the forecast outturn for 2023/24 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as at 30 September 2023.
3. Note the plans and intentions to try to reduce the forecast overspend of the Council's revenue budget for 2023/24 and agree that the Chief Executive and Executive Director (Finance & Resources) continue to explore all opportunities within their delegated powers and authority to improve the financial position by the year-end (section 5).
4. Approve the planned budget transfers (virements) of £2,710,000 from earmarked reserves, as set out in section 5.58.

That, in respect of the 2023/24 Capital Budget Performance as set out in appendix 3 of this report, Cabinet:

5. Note the expenditure to date and the forecast outturn as at 30 September 2023 and its financing.
6. Approve the requested changes to the capital investment programme for 2023/24 and future years, as set out in section 4 of appendix 3.
7. Note the Corporate Performance Report as at 30 September 2023 set out in appendix 4.

Notes: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Members: Councillor T Cox, Leader and Cabinet Member for Special Educational Needs & Disability

## 52 Exclusion of the Public

During the aforementioned item the Committee agreed to move into Part 2 session to enable the Leader to respond to questions relating to Seaway.

Resolved:

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below, on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

*At 7.40pm the meeting moved into exempt session.*

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_