

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of The Council

Date: Thursday, 14th December, 2023

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor S Habermel (Chair)
Councillors K Robinson, B Beggs, M Borton, H Boyd, K Buck, S Buckley, L Burton, P Collins, J Courtenay, D Cowan, T Cowdrey, T Cox, A Dear, M Dent, F Evans, N Folkard, D Garston, S George, I Gilbert, J Harland, L Hyde, D Jarvis, A Jones, D Jones, J Lamb, A Line, R McMullan, J Moyies, C Mulroney, D Nelson, M O'Connor, M Sadza, M Stafford, M Terry, S Wakefield, J Warren, P Wexham, R Woodley, S Aylen, C Campbell, O Cartey, G Leroy, R Longstaff, C Nevin, D Richardson and K Murphy

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 11.00 pm

91 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Berry, Davidson, Walker and Ward.

92 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

(a) Cllr Buckley – Minute 102(b) (Honorary Aldermen Nominations) – Trustee of Eastwood Community Centre (Mr R Weaver is the Chair).

(b) Cllr Collins - Minute 102(b) (Honorary Aldermen Nominations) – Trustee of Eastwood Community Centre (Mr R Weaver is the Chair).

(c) Cllr Cowan - Minute 102(b) (Honorary Aldermen Nominations) – Trustee of Eastwood Community Centre (Mr R Weaver is the Chair).

(d) Cllr Dent – Minute 102(a) (Freedom of the City Nomination) – Member of the Shrimpers Trust.

(e) Cllr Hyde - Minute 102(a) (Freedom of the City Nomination) – Member of the Shrimpers Trust.

(f) Cllr Line – Minute 102(a) (Freedom of the City Nomination) – Co-founder of fans supporting foodbank that works closely with Southend United Football Club.

(g) Cllr Wexham – Minute 103 (Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25) – in receipt of Council Tax support (withdrew).

93 Communications

(a) Minute Silence

The Council remained silent for one minute as a mark of respect to former Councillor, Jim Clinkscales.

(b) Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor

The Mayor presented the badge of office to the new Youth Mayor, Thomas Bell and Deputy Youth Mayor, Edward Melville.

(c) Officer Awards/Recognition

The Mayor presented certificates of recognition to the following Council officers who had recently received prestigious national awards:

(i) Faye Creasey – winner of the Mo Slade Rising Star Award at the Essex Housing Awards 2023.

(ii) Andrew Williett – winner of the Excellence in Construction Skills at the Essex Housing Awards 2023.

(iii) Ben Harrison and Joanne Matthews – winners of the Association of Chief Estates Surveyors Project of the Year 2023 and highly commended at Essex Housing Awards 2023. Joanne Matthews was also the winner of the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation Sustainable Project award.

(d) Presentation of the Yule Log

Councillor Aylen presented the traditional Yule Log.

94 Questions from Members of the Public

The relevant Cabinet Members responded to written questions received from the public.

95 Questions from Members of the Council

The relevant Cabinet Members responded to written and supplementary questions received from Councillors.

96 Minutes of the meeting of Special Council held Tuesday, 26 September 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the special Council meeting held on Tuesday, 26 September 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

97 Minutes of the meeting of Council held Thursday, 19 October 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the special Council meeting held on Thursday, 19 October 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

98 Minutes of the meeting of Special Council held Monday, 20 November 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the special Council meeting held on Monday, 20 November 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

99 Leader of the Council Update

The Leader of the Council addressed the Council and provided a brief overview of the work of the Cabinet. The Group Leaders and Councillors Ayles, Longstaff and Murphy responded.

100 Southend City Council Corporate Plan 2023-2027

The Council had before it Minute 59 of the Cabinet held on 20 November 2023 concerning the Southend City Council Corporate Plan 2023-2027.

Resolved:

That Minute 59 of the Cabinet held on 20th November 2023, be approved.

101 Resourcing Better Outcomes - Finance Performance Report for September 2023 (Period 6)

The Council had before it Minute 60 (Recommendation 9) of the Cabinet held on 20th November 2023 concerning the finance and corporate performance report 2023/24 for September 2023 (period 6).

Resolved:

That Minute 60 (Recommendation 9) of the Cabinet, be approved.

102 Freedom of the City and Honorary Aldermen Nominations

(a) Freedom of the City of Southend-on-Sea

The Council had before it Minute 4 of the General Purposes Committee held on 27th November 2023 concerning the nomination of Mr Kevin Maher for Freedom of the City of Southend-on-Sea.

Resolved:

1. That Minute 4 of the General Purposes Committee held on 27th November 2023, be approved.

2. That a Special meeting of the Council be convened in the New Year to confer the honour.

(b) Honorary Aldermen Nominations

The Council had before it Minute 7 of the General Purposes Committee held on 27th November 2023 concerning the nominations of Mr Roger Weaver and Mr Mike Royston for Honorary Alderman.

Resolved:

1. That Minute 7 of the General Purposes Committee held on 27th November 2023, be approved.

2. That a Special meeting of the Council be convened in the New Year to confer the honours.

103 Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25

The Council considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting a new Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed changes to the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme be adopted for 2024/25.

2. That the administration changes be adopted for 2024/25.

104 Notice of Motion - Cuckoo Corner

In accordance with Standing Order 20, a Notice of Motion concerning Cuckoo Corner was submitted to Council by Councillor Hyde and seconded by Councillor Cowan.

Resolved:

That the Notice of Motion concerning Cuckoo Corner, set out below, be referred to the Cabinet for consideration:

'Improving Cuckoo Corner

Traffic congestion is a major issue in our city, exacerbated by many bottlenecks and areas of high traffic pressure. The Cuckoo Corner roundabout is one such area with regular traffic jams tailing back in multiple directions having a knock-on effect to traffic congestion across the city.

This junction is a vital gateway to the East of the city for buses and motorists. When clogged, tailbacks can reach the city centre, Kent Elms corner, Sutton Road roundabout, and beyond Warner's Bridge into Rochford.

Natural traffic flow is impeded by an unsuitable layout that includes partial traffic signalling at the roundabout, traffic-controlled pedestrian crossings too close to the junction, and merges in-turn that are too short. Planned large-scale developments in the city will add significant volumes of traffic including large vehicles for delivery, causing further congestion.

This junction falls between the two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) of Southend, and the air quality here is not currently sufficiently monitored. On recent walkabouts with ward councillors, members of the senior leadership team found it difficult to breathe after a few short minutes at the junction.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- 1) *Publish existing data around current traffic congestion and any monitoring undertaken at this junction. Where this data does not exist, Council will monitor the following for a period of at least 3 months:*
 - a) *Volume of traffic, given on an hourly basis to identify peak periods of pressure;*
 - b) *Distribution of these vehicle movements at each entry/ exit;*
 - c) *Use of pedestrian crossings, to be cross-referenced with peak traffic periods.*
- 2) *Model alternative layouts and arrangements for Cuckoo Corner junction, including:*
 - a) *Box junctions;*
 - b) *Relocation of the pedestrian crossings;*
 - c) *Relining options;*
 - d) *Improved provisions for cyclists;*
 - e) *Improved provision for buses;*
 - f) *Phasing of traffic lights;*
 - g) *Full traffic signalling on all exits/ entrances, or;*
 - h) *Removal of traffic signals to aid traffic flow.*
- 3) *Conduct a focused assessment of air quality at the Cuckoo Corner junction, to include:*
 - a) *Live monitoring of air quality over a minimum 6-month period;*
 - b) *Particulate monitoring (PM2.5 and PM5).*
- 4) *Liaise with local bus companies to understand the pressures caused by congestion at this junction on achieving a punctual service.'*

105 Notice of Motion - Fly-tipping

In accordance with Standing Order 20, a Notice of Motion concerning fly-tipping enforcement was submitted by Councillor Campbell and seconded by three other members of the Conservative Group.

During consideration of this matter an amendment was proposed by Councillor Hyde and seconded by Councillor Cowan. The amendment was carried.

Resolved:

That the Notice of Motion concerning fly-tipping, as amended below, be referred to the Cabinet for consideration:

'Southend-on-Sea City Council Fly-tipping Enforcement

From April 2021 to March 2022, there were 1,961 reported total incidents of fly-tipping in Southend and 3,060 total enforcement actions in response. Of these total enforcement actions, there were 0 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued. For that reporting year, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (as it was known as) was joint last in 266th place on the league tables for tackling fly-tipping through FPNs. Similarly, from the financial years of 2020-2023, a total of 0 FPNs and 2,789 warning letters were issued in relation to fly-tipping. From the calendar year of 2021-2023 (to date on 19th October 2023), 5,396 educational letters were issued in relation to fly-tipping.

Fly-tipping is a crime under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, worsens the community our residents live in, and is costly to the Council to have to action. Charging perpetrators with an FPN generates income to the Council and reduces the risk of reoffending.

It is recognised that not every situation of fly-tipping requires an FPN as other methods of enforcement may be more effective; however, it cannot be appropriate to never issue an FPN for an offence. In comparison to other local authorities, not issuing a single FPN shows a reluctance on the part of the Council to use all powers given to it to tackle fly-tipping offences. Only law-abiding residents and communities are punished through this lack of enforcement action.

This Council therefore:

1. Notes that the Council's current approach of education and engagement is enshrined in the Council's enforcement policy in accordance with central government's preferred approach.
2. Notes that the Council has not issued FPNs for fly-tipping offences in the past 4 years.
3. Resolves *to request Cabinet* to seek to issue FPNs for fly-tipping offences where appropriate.
4. *Notes that good evidence collection is fundamental to correct identification of perpetrators and resolves to create an easy way for residents to submit video of offences.*
5. *Notes that many fly-tipping hot-spots in Southend-on-Sea are located on private land and resolves to make ward maps of 'relevant land' easily accessible to ward councillors.*
6. *Notes that in many instances, incidents are 'misrepresented waste' rather than fly-tipping. In areas with repeated incidents of this, and resolves to engage constructively with residents to improve understanding.'*

106 Appointments to Committees

There were no changes to the appointments on Committees, etc.

Chair: _____