

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Cabinet

Date: Monday, 18th November, 2024

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor D Cowan (Chair)
Councillors A Jones (Vice-Chair), L Burton, P Collins, M Dent,
L Hyde, K Robinson, M Sadza and M Terry

In Attendance: Councillors M Borton, S Nadeem and C Nevin
S Zeiss, A Richards, C Shuter, M Harvey, C Gamble, G Halksworth
and A Penn

Start/End Time: 6.00 pm - 7.30 pm

39 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence at this meeting.

40 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made at the meeting:

- (a) Councillor Dent – Minute 53 (Notice of Motion – Seafront Parking Displacement) – has had significant contact with residents on the matter.
- (b) Councillor A Jones – Minute 46 (Revised Shareholder Agreement) – Council appointed member of South Essex Homes Board.

41 Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 16 September 2024

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 16 September 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

42 Corporate Performance Report - Quarter 2

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy and Change) presenting the quarter two corporate performance report for the period 1st July to 31st September 2024.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Performance Report as at 31st September 2024, as set out in appendix 1 to the submitted report, be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

1. The Corporate Performance Report informs decision making to ensure that the Council's priorities are on track to be achieved and aligns with the Financial Performance Report to ensure that they are delivered within the approved budget provision.

2. Improving efficiency and productivity is essential but the scale of the unprecedented financial pressures will inevitably lead to a reduction in the range, quality, cost and responsiveness of other discretionary Council services, as well as challenging our approach to statutory services.

Other Options:

The Council could monitor its corporate 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. More frequent monitoring is undertaken by officers and considered by individual service Directors and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) including the implementation of any necessary remedial actions.

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

43 Corporate Risk Register

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy and Change) presenting the revised Corporate Risk Register setting out the key risks to the successful delivery of the Council's priorities and objectives and the key management arrangements in place to mitigate the risks.

Resolved:

That the revised Corporate Risk Register and the position in October 2024, as 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 Collins

44 Financial Performance Report for September 2024 (Period 6)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance & Resources) providing an update of the Council's current financial position and which highlighted the corrective action where necessary and reasonable mitigation required to try to deliver a balanced financial position by the end of the year.

Resolved:

1. That, in respect of the 2024/25 Revenue Budget Performance as set out in appendix 1 to the submitted report:

(i) That the forecast outturn for 2024/25 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as at 30 September 2024, be noted.

(ii) That the plans and intentions to try to reduce the forecast overspend of the Council's revenue budget for 2024/25, be noted and that the Chief Executive and Executive Director (Finance & Resources) explore all opportunities within their delegated powers and authority to improve the financial position by the year-end.

(iii) That the budget transfers (virements) of £3,187,000, as set out in the submitted report, including specific drawdowns from earmarked reserves, be approved.

2. That, in respect of the 2024/25 Capital Budget Performance as set out in appendix 2 of the submitted report:

(i) That the expenditure to date and the forecast outturn as at 30 September 2024 and its financing, be noted.

Recommended:

3. That the requested changes to the capital investment programme for 2024/25 and future years, as set out in section 4 of appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

To provide detailed financial information on the financial performance of the Council. The report sets out the key variances by budget holders and associated management action being implemented to address the identified issues.

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: The decisions in resolutions 1 and 2 above constitute an Executive Function. The recommendation in 3 above constitutes a Council Function.

Not eligible for call-in

Cabinet Member: Cllr Cowan/Cllr Collins

45 Treasury Management Report - Mid Year 2024/25

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance & Resources) presenting the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report covering the treasury management activity and compliance with the treasury management strategy for both quarter two and the period from April to September 2024.

Resolved:

1. That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Position report for 2024/25, be approved.
2. That it be noted that 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 September 2024.
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 £3.106m of interest and income distributions for all investments were earned during this six-month period at an average rate of 4.71%. Also, the value of the externally managed funds increased by a net of £0.459m due to changes in the unit price, giving a combined overall return of 5.40%.
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 September 2024.
6. That it be noted that the level of financing for 'invest to save' schemes decreased from £8.03m to £7.93m during the period from April to September 2024.

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 2024/25 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 Collins

46 Revised Shareholder Agreement

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy and Change) presenting a new Shareholder Agreement and updated Partnership Agreement for Southend Care Ltd.

Resolved:

That the Shareholder Agreement and Partnership Agreement for Southend Care Ltd, as set out in the submitted report, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

The requirement to review and update the governance documents for Southend Care Ltd was an outcome of the independent review of the Council's trading companies.

Other options:

Not to approve a new set of governance documents and current ways of working would continue. This option would mean the recommendation of the independent review would not be met.

Note: This is an Executive Function.

Not eligible for call-in

Cabinet Member: Cllr Cowan

47 Domestic Abuse Essex Wide Contract (to include Southend-on-Sea)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) setting out the tendering process for the recommissioning of domestic abuse services for victims, survivors and perpetrators across Essex (Southend, Essex and Thurrock).

Resolved:

That authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Adults and Communities), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Healthier Communities to award contracts to those providers who are successful following the procurement and evaluation process, and to conclude any necessary documentation.

Reasons for decision:

The tender closes on Wednesday 27 November 2024, with evaluations taking place until Tuesday 17 December 2024 and will require significant work to be completed during the mobilisation stage as there are TUPE implications and accommodation moves to consider if a new provider is appointed. The current governance dates do not align with the tender timeline and therefore delegated authority is required.

Other options:

None

Note: This is an Executive Function.

Not eligible for call-in

Cabinet Member: Cllr Sadza

48 Framework for Supply and Installation of Home Adaptations

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) requesting approval to proceed with the procurement for the supply and installation of home adaptations for older and disabled residents.

Resolved:

1. That the procurement of a framework of contractors for the supply, delivery, and installation of home adaptations for qualifying residents of Southend-on-Sea, be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Healthier Communities to appoint to the framework those suppliers who are successful following the procurement and evaluation process, and to conclude any necessary documentation.

Reasons for decision:

The framework agreement will deliver our statutory role in providing adaptations to improve and increase our prevention offer, enabling the independence of older and disabled people in Southend on Sea.

Other options:

1. Tender for a single service contract – This may lead to a potential inability to meet demand and cause the council to not meet its statutory requirements. There is also a risk of single point of failure should there be business or quality concerns.
2. Do not tender – The Council will be unable to meet its statutory responsibilities for the residents of Southend on Sea.

Note: This is an Executive Function.

Not eligible for call-in

Cabinet Member: Cllr Sadza

49 Extension of Contract for Provision of Southend Sexual Health Services

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) requesting approval to extend the contract for the provision of Southend sexual health services.

Resolved:

1. That the current contracts (for Lot 1 and Lot 2) be extended for a period of 12 months until 31st March 2026, subject to all necessary steps being undertaken to negotiate and finalise the extension of these contracts.

2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Adults and Communities), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Healthier Communities, to take all necessary steps to put into effect a further extension of the contracts (for Lot 1 and Lot 2), such authority to include finalising any negotiations and entering into legal agreements from 1 April 2026 (if necessary) until a new contract has been procured and awarded for the future provision of sexual health services.

Reasons for decision:

Following the review of service activity and performance and feedback, the commissioning team are satisfied that for both Lot 1 and Lot 2, delivery against the service KPIs and broader service performance and quality indicators is positive.

Other options:

1. Decommission the service. This is a statutory service which will need to be replaced with some level of provision to meet minimum requirements for meeting nationally defined sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

2. Go out to tender for a new/revised service specification. The current provider is performing well and going out to tender risks destabilising service delivery with no evidence of any benefits.

Note: This is an Executive Function.

Not eligible for call-in

Cabinet Member: Cllr Sadza

50 Approval of Statement of Licensing Policy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting the revised Licensing Policy Statement.

Recommended:

That the revised Statement of Licensing Policy as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

To enable the Council to comply with its statutory duty to publish a Statement of Policy in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 of The Licensing Act 2003.

Other options:

None. This is a statutory duty.

Note: This is a Council Function.

Not eligible for call-in

Cabinet Member: Cllr Robinson

51 Approval of Statement of Gambling Policy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting the revised Statement of Gambling Policy.

Recommended:

That the revised Statement of Gambling Policy, as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

To enable the Council to comply with its statutory duty to publish a Statement of Policy in accordance with the provisions of Section 349 of The Gambling Act 2005.

Other options:

None. This is a statutory duty.

Note: This is a Council Function.

Not eligible for call-in

Cabinet Member: Cllr Robinson

52 Notice of Motion - Kursaal Building (Referred at Council held 18th July 2024)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) concerning the amended Notice of Motion relating to the Kursaal Building referred to it by Council at its meeting on 18th July 2024.

Resolved:

That the action taken by officers, be noted and further conversations and appropriate action be taken with a view to encouraging private investment.

Reasons for decision:

To respond to the Notice of Motion.

Other options:

None

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in

Cabinet Member: Cllr Collins

53 Notice of Motion - Seafront Parking Displacement (Referred at Council held 18th July 2024)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) concerning the amended Notice of Motion relating to Seafront Parking Displacement referred to it by Council at its meeting on 18th July 2024.

Resolved:

1. That officers review the existing double yellow lines and current parking provision around the Woodgrange Housing estate area and report back to the Cabinet member's Working Party to inform discussions on the possible next steps.
2. That officers engage with Estuary Housing Association regarding the existing parking provision in place for their residents on the Woodgrange Housing estate and possible improvements.

Reasons for decision:

To respond to the Notice of Motion.

Other options:

None

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

Chair: _____