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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Chair's Scrutiny Forum
Date: Tuesday, 18th June, 2019
Place: Committee Room 7 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillors N Folkard, M Flewitt, D Garston, D McGlone, A Moring and L Salter

In Attendance: J K Williams and F Abbott

Start/End Time: 6.00 - 6.40 pm

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from T Row and R Harris.

2 Appointment of Chair for Municipal Year

Resolved:-

That Councillor Folkard be appointed Chair for the Municipal Year.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4 Role of Forum - extract from Constitution

The Strategic Director (Legal and Democratic Services) provided an outline of the role and purpose of the Forum. He also circulated a letter to each of the Scrutiny Chair's and gave a copy to the Vice Chairs, which provided some background information on the role of the Chair of each of the 3 Scrutiny Committees.

The letters included a copy of Council Procedure Rules (CPR's) and Scrutiny Procedure Rules which generally govern proceedings at Committees and which can be found in Parts 4(a) and 4(e) of the Constitution respectively and included a copy of the recent LGA publication 'Councillor's workbook on Charing Skills'. The letter to the People Scrutiny Committee Chair also included a copy of the briefing paper which provided information specifically on health scrutiny and the health system locally. This has also been circulated to all Councillors on the Scrutiny Committee.

It was felt that, at the first Scrutiny Committee meetings in July, it would be useful for the Chairs to explain the process when dealing with a call in item and the options available to the Committee.

5 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 20th November, 2018

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 20th November, 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

6 In depth scrutiny projects

The Forum considered a report by the Strategic Director (Legal & Democratic Services) which provided information about previous studies undertaken since 2012 and provided an update on the projects carried out by the Scrutiny Committees in 2018/19:-

- a) Re-imagining the Town Centre in the context of the vision for Southend 2050 – Joint Place & Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee
- b) In context of vision for Southend 2050 – what is the vision of young people which improves their lives and what are the pathways to achieve this ambition – People Scrutiny Committee

Both projects have been concluded and the recommendations will be formally submitted to Cabinet at its meeting on 25th June 2019. The Forum noted that the Scrutiny Committees in July will look at subjects for in depth review for 2019/20.

7 Statutory Scrutiny Guidance

The Forum considered a report by the Strategic Director (Legal & Democratic Services) which advised Councillors about the publication of the statutory scrutiny Guidance published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 7th May 2019. The Guidance has been produced following a commitment that Government made in early 2018 following on from the Communities & Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into overview and scrutiny.

The Guidance is 'light touch' in its approach and initial analysis of the Guidance indicates that the scrutiny system at Southend in the main appears to remain fit for purpose. The Scrutiny Officer said that a more detailed report will be submitted to each of the 3 Scrutiny Committees and will include suggestions to make some minor tweaks to the process at Southend.

Resolved:

That the report be noted and a more detailed report be submitted to each of the 3 Scrutiny Committee meetings on 8th, 9th and 11th July 2019.

8 Scrutiny training

The Forum noted that a training session for Councillors had been arranged for Thursday 4th July 2019 @ 18.00. The session provides an overview of scrutiny and whilst is primarily aimed at new Councillors, all Councillors are welcome to attend.

The Forum felt that it would be a useful session to attend as it will provide a useful reminder of good practice and that it was beneficial having the session run 'in-house'. The Strategic Director said that he is also more than happy to arrange external training sessions if this would be of use.

9 Any Items from Forum Members

There were no additional items raised at the meeting.

10 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Forum will be arranged for last November 2019 (date to be confirmed).

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