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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Environment & Planning Working Party

Date: Thursday, 22nd August, 2019
Place: Committee Room 3 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor C Mulroney (Chair)
Councillors C Nevin (Vice-Chair), A Bright, D Garston, D McGlone,
K Mitchell, S Wakefield and P Wexham
Mr M Dedman (co-optee: Shoebury Society) and Ms J. Lambert (co-optee: Southend Society)

In Attendance: R Harris, I Brown, P Jenkinson, T MacGregor, C Robinson and J Martin.

Start/End Time: 6.30 - 8.15 pm

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A. Atkinson (Milton Conservation Group).

2 Declarations of Interest

The following Councillor declared interests, as indicated:

Councillor K Mitchell – Agenda Items 5 and 6 – non-pecuniary interest – members of Extinction Rebellion are known to her.

3 Introduction: Configuration and Composition of Cabinet Working Parties to help drive the Southend 2050 Programme

The Working Party received the report to Cabinet held on 25th June 2019 setting out the revised configuration and composition of Cabinet Working Parties to help drive the Southend 2050 programme. The recommendations were agreed by Full Council held on 18th July 2019.

The Working Party also received the Southend 2050 summary sheet setting out the five themes and twenty-three outcomes for 2023.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet report and Southend 2050 summary sheet be noted.

4 How the Environment and Planning Working Party will work

The Chair provided an overview of how this Working Party will operate, summarised below:

- Initially the working party will meet once a month given its wide remit of environment and planning;

- The focus of the Working Party is on policy matters and not minutiae or individual issues;
- To generate ideas and proposals which support delivery of the Southend 2050 Road Map Ambition and Outcomes;
- Make recommendations to Cabinet, as and when appropriate;
- Each meeting will cover one or two policy topics.

Resolved:

That the Chair's overview be noted.

5 Overview of the Council's current progress and plans on sustainability issues, looking at energy related issues in particular

The Working Party received a power point presentation from officers which provided an overview of the current progress and plans on sustainability issues, specifically focused on energy related issues, covering:

- Background information (weather, 2018/19 achievements, etc)
- Reducing emissions;
- Sustainable Planning and Regulation;
- Delivering Low Carbon Growth (i.e. housing growth, Queensway);
- Creating Sustainable Communities;
- Mobilising Sustainable Transport (i.e. Electric Vehicles)
- Climate Change adaptation;
- Next steps in range of areas (i.e. Environment Bill, New Low Carbon Strategy).

The Working Party asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers.

Given that energy and sustainability covers a significant range of issues and policy areas, officers invited the Working Party to give their views on the topics and policies it would like covered in more detail and focus.

Resolved:

That the relevant officers progress solar energy and electric vehicles as topics/policy areas for focussed attention and discussion at a future meeting of the Working Party.

6 Promoting wildflowers on grass verges, central reservations and public spaces

The Working Party received a power point presentation from officers providing an overview of how naturalised grassland helps support a Green City. The presentation covered the following:

- Background and context (e.g. global decline in the numbers of pollinating insects);
- The current position in the borough in terms of highways verges and street trees;

- Existing strategies and management;
- State of Nature survey;
- Parks Management Plans;
- The current management of grass verges and boulevards;
- Parks and open spaces – 1,234,972 square metres of naturalised grass and meadow across the borough;
- A number of options for naturalised grassland and greater biodiversity in the borough that supports the borough to be a Green City;
- A range of potential projects and next steps (i.e. identify sites, costings, etc).

The Working Party asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers.

The Working Party discussed the range of options and opportunities for naturalised grassland and greater biodiversity and the potential project areas across the borough.

Resolved:

That the relevant officers progress and develop the different approaches to biodiversity and naturalised grassland and identify two or three possible pilot areas where this can be achieved, within existing resources, in the borough.

7 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 2nd October 2019 at 6.30pm – Civic Centre, Committee Room 5.

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