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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 28th November, 2019

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor D Garston (Chair)
Councillors D McGlone (Vice-Chair), B Ayling, D Burzotta, D Cowan, T Cox, P Collins, M Dent, George, S Habermel, B Hooper (Councillor), D Jarvis, H McDonald, D Nelson, I Shead, M Stafford and S Wakefield

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: Councillors I Gilbert, M Terry, R Woodley (Executive Councillors), Councillors S Aylen, K Evans and C Mulroney
J Chesterton, E Cooney, J Ruffle, J K Williams and R Harris

Start/End Time: 6.30 - 8.25 pm

571 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Davidson (substitute: Cllr Jarvis) and Councillor Wexham (substitute: Cllr Hooper).

572 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:-

- (a) Councillors Gilbert, Terry and Woodley (Cabinet Members) – interest in the called in items / referred item; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19th July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011;
- (b) Councillor Ayling – Minute 582 (Council Procedure Rule 46 – East Beach Café surrender of Lease) – non-pecuniary interest – member of Shoebury Watermans Association that has a licence for land at East Beach;
- (c) Councillor Cowan – Minute 577 (Notice of Motion – White Ribbon) – non-pecuniary interest – White Ribbon Ambassador and Council representative with 'safe steps';
- (d) Councillor Dent – Minute 577 (Notice of Motion – White Ribbon) – non-pecuniary interest – White Ribbon Ambassador; Minute *** (Notice of Motion – Kursaal Museum – non-pecuniary interest – Ward Councillor and has lobbied for the Kursaal to be reopened;
- (e) Councillor Hooper – Minute 577 (Notice of Motion – White Ribbon) – non-pecuniary interest – On the Board of Safe Steps;
- (f) Councillor McDonald – Minute 577 (Notice of Motion – White Ribbon) – non-pecuniary interest – works at local charity supporting survivors of sexual violence and is a White Ribbon Champion/Ambassador;
- (g) Councillor Nelson – Minute 575 (Notice of Motion – White Ribbon) – non-pecuniary interest – A pending White Ribbon Ambassador;
- (h) Councillor Wakefield – Minute 581 (Minutes of the Shareholder Board held on 16th October 2019) – pecuniary interest – sub-contractor and provides work for South Essex Homes (however, the matters relating to South Essex Homes were not discussed at this meeting).

573 Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

574 Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 10th October, 2019

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 10th October, 2019, be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

575 Notice of Motion - Kursaal Museum

The Committee considered Minute 515 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th November 2019 which had been called in to Scrutiny, concerning the Notice of Motion relating to the Kursaal.

The Cabinet Member for Business, Culture and Tourism undertook to provide written responses to questions concerning the lease arrangements (and any break clauses) and the conditions of the lease relating to the maintenance of the external and internal fabric of the Kursaal building.

Resolved:-

That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:-

“1. That the officers maintain dialogue with the leaseholder and its representatives about their plans for the Kursaal.

2. That the possible opportunities to support evolving plans to enable the building to be let and re-occupied be considered, where appropriate and viable.

3. That it be noted that the current tenant has no plans to sell the leasehold interest at this stage and therefore the suggestions for the Council to purchase the building back for the Prittlewell Prince or any other use are not pursued at this time.”

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Robinson

576 Notice of Motion - Gender Neutral Language in the Council

The Committee considered Minute 516 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th November 2019 which had been called in to Scrutiny, concerning the Notice of Motion relating to Gender Neutral Language in the Council.

Resolved:-

1. That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:-

“1. That male universals, such as ‘chairman’, be removed from the constitution, policies and all written and verbal communications and be replaced with gender-neutral terms, such as ‘chair’.

2. Desist from making reference to a person's marital status unless they expressly request it is included.

3. That gender-neutral language be used where an individual's sex or social gender are not relevant or not known.

4. That these changes be communicated to all departments and members of staff within Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.”

2. That, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 39, the matter be referred to full Council. ||

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

577 Notice of Motion - White Ribbon

The Committee considered Minute 517 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th November 2019 which had been called in to Scrutiny, concerning the Notice of Motion relating to White Ribbon Campaign.

Resolved:-

That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:-

“1. That the Council recognises the importance of White Ribbon and its contribution as part of a global campaign taking action to stop male violence against women and resolves to become an accredited authority.

2. That the Council commits to making White Ribbon Day (25th November) part of the civic calendar with ambassador-led activities involving staff, members and the public.

3. That the Council agrees to raise awareness of the White Ribbon Campaign through regular updates and features in internal and external communications.

4. That the Council will provide support to staff and members to take the pledge never to commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women and to become ambassadors and champions.

5. That the Council work closely with local agencies and organisations involved in tackling male violence against women to work towards making Southend a White Ribbon Borough.

6. That the Council commits to hosting annual awareness training for all Councillors.”

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Members: Cllr Terry

578 Corporate Budget Performance - Period 6

The Committee considered Minute 521 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th November 2019 which had been called in to Scrutiny together with a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources). This provided an overview of the corporate budget performance.

Resolved:-

That the following recommendations of Cabinet be noted:-

“In respect of the 2019/20 Revenue Budget Performance as set out in Appendix 1 to this report:

1. That the forecast outturn and mitigating actions for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as at September 2019, be noted.

2. That the planned budget transfers (virements) of £185,875 between portfolio services, as set out in section 3.7 to the submitted report, be approved.

In respect of the 2019/20 Capital Budget Performance as set out in Appendix 2 of this report:

3. The expenditure to date and the forecast outturn as at September 2019 and its financing, be noted.

4. That the requested changes to the 2019/20 Capital Investment Programme as set out in Section 2 of Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be noted.”

Note: This is a Council Function

Cabinet Member: Cllrs Gilbert and Woodley

579 Southend 2050 Outcome Success Measures - Quarter 2 Report 2019/20

The Committee considered Minute 522 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th November 2019, which had been referred direct to all three Scrutiny Committees, together with a report of the Chief Executive. This provided an update on the second quarter of the Southend 2050 Outcome Success Measures for 2019/20.

Resolved:-

That the following decision of Cabinet be noted:-

“That the Quarter 2 performance, be noted.”

Note: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

580 Treasury Management Report - Mid Year 2019/20

The Committee considered Minute 524 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th November 2019 which had been called in to Scrutiny together with a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources). This covered the treasury management activity and compliance with the treasury management strategy for both quarter two and the period from April to September 2019.

Resolved:-

That the following recommendations of Cabinet be noted:-

“1. That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Position report for 2019/20, be approved.

That the following be noted:

2. 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 2019.

3. The loan and investment portfolios were actively managed to minimise cost and maximise interest earned, whilst maintaining a low level of risk.

4. £1.067m of interest was received during this six month period. The total investment income earned including this interest during this six month period was £1.104m, at an average rate of 1.85%. This is 1.28% over the average 7 day LIBID (London Interbank Bid Rate) and 1.10% over the average bank rate. (Section 8).

5. 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) increased from £267.8m to £310.3m (Housing Revenue Account (HRA): £75.0m, General Fund: £235.3m) during the period from April to September 2019.

6. The level of financing for ‘invest to save’ schemes decreased from £8.73m to £8.67m during the period from April to September 2019.”

Note: This is a Council Function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Woodley

581 Minutes of the meeting of the Shareholder Board held on Wednesday, 16th October 2019

The Committee considered Minute 526 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th November 2019 which had been called in to Scrutiny concerning the Minutes of the meeting of the Shareholder Board, held on 16th October 2019.

In consideration of the Shareholder Board minutes held on 16th October 2019, the Committee only asked questions and made comments concerning the Porters Place LLP Business Plan.

The Leader of the Council agreed to provide a written response as to where the part 1 report on the matter could be accessed.

Resolved:-

That the following decision of Cabinet be noted:-

“That the recommendations of the Shareholder Board held on 16th October 2019, be approved.”

2. That, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 39, the matter, be referred to full Council. ||

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

582 Council Procedure Rule 46

The Committee considered Minute 527 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th November 2019 which had been called in to Scrutiny, in connection with the action taken with regard to East Beach Café – Surrender of Lease (item 2.1 refers).

Resolved:-

1. That the following decision of Cabinet be noted:-

“That the submitted report be noted.”

2. That, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 39, the matter be referred to full Council. ||

Note: This is a Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Woodley

Chair: _____