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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 29th January, 2020

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor L Salter (Chair)
Councillors N Folkard (Vice-Chair), H Boyd, M Borton, A Chalk,
A Dear, M Dent, F Evans, D Garne, B Hooper, M Kelly, K Mitchell,
C Nevin, I Shead, M Stafford, A Thompson and C Willis
T Watts and F Dawkins (co-opted members)

In Attendance: Councillors I Gilbert, A Jones and M Terry (Cabinet Members)
S Baker, K Ramkhelawon, D Simon, T Forster, J O'Loughlin,
M Marks and R Harris

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 7.20 pm

756 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Broadbent (substitute: F Dawkins).

757 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:-

(a) Councillors Gilbert, Jones and Terry (Cabinet Members) – interest in the referred items; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19th July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011;

(b) Councillor Borton – Agenda Item No. 6 (Admission Arrangements) Minute 726 and Agenda Item No. 7 (School Term Dates 2021/22) (Minute 727) – Non-pecuniary interest: Governor at Milton Hall School; and Agenda Item No. 8 (Additional Outcome Success Measures) (Minute 728) – Non-pecuniary interest: EPUT mentioned under 'safe and well' – daughter is a ward manager at Basildon MHU;

(c) Councillor Hooper – Agenda Item No. 6 (Admission Arrangements) Minute 726 and Agenda Item No. 7 (School Term Dates 2021/22) (Minute 727) – Non-pecuniary interest: son attends Southend High School for Boys and works with schools as director of BE; and

(d) Councillor Folkard – Agenda Item No. 5 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes) (Minute 725) – Non-pecuniary interest: ambassador for the fund raising team at Southend University Hospital and on the review panel at the hospital for the information leaflets; relative works at Broomfield Hospital.

758 Questions from Members of the Public

Councillor Jones, the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, responded to written questions received from Mr Webb.

759 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 26th November, 2019

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2019, be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

760 Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes – 2020/21 to 2024/25

The Committee considered Minute 692 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16th January 2020, which had been referred direct to all three Scrutiny Committees, together with a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the draft General Fund Revenue Budget for 2020/21.

In response to a question regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant Budget and schools revenue funding, the Cabinet Member for Children & Learning said that she would circulate further details to the Committee on the final funding allocations.

In response to a question regarding the £300,000 for complex needs provision, the Leader of the Council confirmed that this was a one-off investment from reserves.

Resolved:

That the following decisions of Cabinet, be noted:-

“1. That the draft Financial Sustainability Strategy (Appendix 1 to the submitted report) be endorsed.

2. That the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (Appendix 2 to the report) and the resulting Medium Term Financial Forecast and Earmarked Reserves Balances up to 2024/25 (Annexes 1 and 2 to Appendix 2 to the report), be endorsed.

3. That the Section 151 Officer’s report on the robustness of the proposed budget, the adequacy of the Council’s reserves and the Reserves Strategy (Appendix 3 to the report), be noted.

4. That the appropriation of the sums to earmarked reserves totalling £3.37 million (Appendix 4 to the report), be endorsed.

5. That the appropriation of the sums from earmarked reserves totalling £8.972 million (Appendix 4 to the report), be endorsed;

6. That General Fund net revenue budget for 2020/21 of £130.428M (Appendix 5a to the report) and any required commencement of consultation, statutory or otherwise, be endorsed.
7. That a Council Tax increase of 3.99% for the Southend-on-Sea element of the Council Tax for 2020/21, being 1.99% for general use and 2% for Adult Social care (Paragraph 10.10 of the report), be endorsed.
8. That it be noted that the 2020/21 revenue budget has been prepared on the basis of using £2 million from the Collection Fund for the core budget to allow for a smoothing of the budget gap across the next three financial years (Paragraph 10.9 of the report).
9. That it be noted that the position of the Council's preceptors is to be determined:
 - Essex Police – no indication of Council Tax position;
 - Essex Fire & Rescue Services – no indication of Council Tax position; and
 - Leigh-on-Sea Town Council – proposed precept increase ranging from 4.72% to 8.30%.
10. That no Special Expenses be charged other than the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council precept for 2020/21.
11. That the proposed General Fund on-going budget investment and reprioritisation of £5.355M (Appendix 6 to the report), be endorsed.
12. That the one-off investment items, as set out in paragraph 10.8 of the report and included within the appropriations (Appendix 7 to the report), be endorsed.
13. That the schools budget and its relevant distribution as recommended by the Education Board (Appendix 8 to the report), be endorsed.
14. That the Capital Investment Strategy for 2020/21 to 2024/25 (Appendix 9 to the submitted report) and the Capital Investment Policy (Annex 1 to Appendix 9 to the report), be endorsed.
15. That the new schemes and additions to the Capital Investment Programme for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 totalling £28.4M for the General Fund and £18.7M for the Housing Revenue Account (Appendix 10, to the report), be endorsed.
16. That the schemes subject to viable business cases for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23 (Appendix 10 to the report), be endorsed.
17. That the proposed changes to the current Capital Investment Programme (Appendix 11, to the report), be endorsed.
18. That the proposed Capital Investment Programme for 2020/21 to 2024/25 (Appendix 12 to the report) be approved and it be noted that the changes to the approved programme will result in a proposed Capital Investment Programme

of £204.8M for 2020/21 to 2024/25 (Appendix 12 to the report) of which £51.3M is supported by external funding.

19. That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2020/21 (Appendix 13 to the report) and the prudential indicators (Appendix 14 to the report), be endorsed.

20. That the operational boundary and authorised limits for borrowing for 2020/21 are set at £375M and £385M respectively (Appendix 14 to the report).”

Note: This is an Executive Function save that approval of the final budget following Cabinet on 11th February 2020 is a Council Function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

761 Admission Arrangements for Community schools and Admission Co-ordinated Scheme

The Committee considered Minute 705 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16th January 2020, which had been referred direct to Scrutiny, together with a report of the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) on the above matter.

In response to a question concerning the number of appeals related to deferred entry to school the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning agreed to provide details on the number of appeals and how many were successful.

Resolved:

That the following decision of Cabinet, be noted:-

“1. That the Cabinet determines (i.e. formally agrees) the oversubscription criteria (including explanatory notes) and Published Admission Number (PAN) within Admission Arrangements for Community Schools as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

2. That it be noted that the Determined Coordinated Admission Scheme for the academic year 2021/22 was published on 31st December 2019 (Appendix 2 to the report).”

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

762 School Term Dates 2021/22

The Committee considered Minute 706 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16th January 2020, which had been referred direct to Scrutiny, together with a report of the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) proposing the guideline school term and holiday dates for the academic year 2021/22.

Resolved:

That the following decision of Cabinet, be noted:-

“That the school term and holiday dates for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved for community schools and as a guide to all schools in the Borough.”

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

763 Additional Outcome Success Measures Reporting

The Committee considered Minute 708 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16th January 2020, which had been referred direct to Scrutiny, together with a report of the Chief Executive presenting the Outcome Success Measures report that provides an update on the Council’s progression on the 23 Southend 2050 outcomes.

In response to a question regarding EPUT, the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning highlighted that the early stages of recommissioning were underway and undertook to circulate details to the Committee.

In response to a question regarding the temporary accommodation under ‘safe and well’ the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning undertook to provide the figures in writing to the Committee.

In response to a question regarding the NEET figures under ‘Opportunity and Prosperity’, the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning undertook to provide details on the trends and information relating to the unknown ‘NEETs’ over the same period of time for comparison purposes.

Resolved:

That the following decision of Cabinet, be noted:-

“That the Outcome Success Measures report, be noted.”

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

764 2019/20 Corporate Risk Register

The Committee considered Minute 708 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16th January 2020, which had been referred direct to Scrutiny, together with a report of the Chief Executive, outlining the 2019/20 Corporate Risk Register mid-year update.

Resolved:

That the following decision of Cabinet, be noted:-

“That the 2019/20 Corporate Risk Register and the mid-year updates outlined in Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be noted.”

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

765 Council Procedure Rule 46

The Committee considered Minute 712 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16th January 2020 which had been referred direct to Scrutiny, in connection with the action taken with regard to the provision of passenger transport.

Resolved:-

That the following decision of Cabinet, be noted:-

“That the submitted report be noted.”

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet member: As appropriate to the item

766 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:-

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below, on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

767 Council Procedure Rule 46 - Confidential Sheet

The Committee considered Minute 714 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16th January 2020 which had been referred direct to Scrutiny concerning action taken under Standing Order 46 – Confidential sheet.

Resolved:-

That the following decision of Cabinet, be noted:-

“That the SO46 confidential sheet, be noted.”

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

Chair: _____