

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee

Date: Monday, 12th October, 2020

Place: Virtual Meeting via MS Teams

Present: Councillor A Moring (Chair)
Councillors B Ayling, J Beck, A Bright, L Burton, D Cowan, T Cox,
A Dear, M Dent, S George, D Jarvis, S Wakefield, C Walker, N Ward
and P Wexham

In Attendance: Councillors I Gilbert, C Mulroney, K Robinson, M Terry and
R Woodley (Cabinet Members)
Councillor K Evans
A Lewis, J Chesterton, L Reed, T Forster, E Cooney, S Dolling,
G Halksworth, G Gilbert, N Laver, T Row, A Smyth, and E Cook

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 7.20 pm

421 Simon Leftley MBE

The Committee was informed that Simon Leftley, the Council's former Deputy Chief Executive (People), had received the award of Member of the Order of the British Empire in the Queen's Birthday Honours Lists 2020 in recognition of the outstanding services to People with Learning Disabilities in Southend and Essex. The Leader of the Council and the Committee paid tribute to Mr Leftley and requested that their congratulations be extended to him for his well-deserved award.

422 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buck and Chalk.

423 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

(a) Councillors I Gilbert, A Jones, C Mulroney, K Robinson and R Woodley (Cabinet Members) - Interest in the called-in items; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19th July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011; and

(b) Mr A Lewis – Minute 426 (Updated Local Financial Assessment and Illustration of the Potential Impact of Covid-19 on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/25) – Non-pecuniary interest: Member of the Porters Place LLP Board.

424 Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

425 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 1st September, 2020

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 1st September, 2020 be received, confirmed as a correct record and signed.

426 Updated Local Financial Assessment and Illustration of the Potential Impact of Covid-19 on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/25

The Committee considered Minute 377 of Cabinet held on 15th September, 2020, which had been called-in to all three Scrutiny Committees for consideration, together with the report of the Executive Director (Finance & Resources) providing an updated assessment of the local financial impact of Covid-19 and a range of high level scenarios to illustrate the potential scale of the financial challenge over the short and medium term.

Resolved:-

That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:

“ 1. That the Council's updated assessment of the local financial impact of the unprecedented challenges that has been caused by the pandemic, be noted.

2. That the scale of the potential financial challenge summarised in the submitted report, be noted.

3. That the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy is reviewed and a range of options are developed to ensure continuing financial sustainability.

4. That the Cabinet receive regular reports to future Cabinet meetings, which will provide updated assessments on our financial position and outline any changes to our strategy and range of assumptions.”

Note: This is an Executive Function

Executive Member: Councillor Gilbert

427 SO46 Report

The Committee considered Minute 398 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 15th September 2019 which had been called in to Scrutiny, in connection with the action taken regarding the re-opening the Borough's Leisure Centres following the Covid-19 lockdown.

In response to questions and comments regarding concerns of the service provided at the leisure centres during and after the lockdown period, the Cabinet Member for Business, Tourism and Culture gave an undertaking to raise the issues with the local management team from Fusion at a review meeting taking place in November. The outcome of that meeting would be shared with the Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved:

That the following decision of Cabinet be noted:

“That the report be noted”

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

428 Porters Place Southend-on-Sea LLP: Additional 100 Homes Update

The Committee considered Minute 407 of Cabinet held on 6th October, 2020, which had been referred to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The Committee also had before it the report of the Executive Director (Finance & Resources) providing an update on the provision of an additional 100 affordable homes for social rent and sought approval to enter into and execute the legal agreement to secure the homes.

Resolved:-

That the following decisions and recommendation of Cabinet be noted:

“1. That it be noted that the Legal Agreement (“the Agreement”) that has been negotiated by the Council, Swan Housing Association and Porters Place Southend on Sea LLP as set out in the submitted report is now completed to secure the additional 100 affordable homes for social rent.

2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Finance & Resources) and Director of Housing in consultation with the Leader to:

a) Review and, if applicable, approve any offer made under the Agreement to acquire or gap fund with nomination rights any of the 100 additional affordable homes;

b) Settle and complete the value for money terms of each acquisition or gap funding with nomination rights, within the approved capital investment programme budget; and

c) In the event of an acquisition option being selected, to agree and procure the management arrangements for these units.

Recommended:-

3. That an initial budget addition to the Housing Revenue Account Capital Investment Programme of £10m for this project, to be funded by the HRA capital investment reserve, be approved.”

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

Cabinet Member: Councillor Gilbert

429 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 items of business set out below, on the grounds that they 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.

430 SO46 - Confidential Sheet

The Committee considered Minute 400 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 15th September 2020 which had been called in to Scrutiny, regarding the confidential sheet in connection with the action taken under Council Procedure Rule 46 in respect of the re-opening of the Borough's Leisure Centres following the Covid-19 lockdown.

The Cabinet Member for Business, Culture and Tourism undertook to provide a written response in response to a question regarding why the Council could not have stepped in to take temporary management of the leisure contract.

Resolved:

That the following decision of Cabinet be noted:

"That the report be noted"

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

Chair: _____