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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 15th October, 2020

Place: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

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

In Attendance: Councillors I Gilbert, C Mulroney, M Terry and R Woodley (Cabinet Members), Councillor K Evans, A Griffin, A Lewis, J Chesterton, L Reed, J Ruffle, J Williams, E Cook, G Halksworth, S Meah-Sims, S Newman, T Row, M Sargood and S Tautz

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 7.40 pm

444 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence for the meeting.

445 Declarations of Interest

The following councillors declared interests as indicated:

- (a) Councillors I Gilbert, C Mulroney, M Terry and R Woodley (Cabinet Members) - Interest in the called-in items; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19 July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011; and
- (b) Councillor D McGlone - Minute 446 (Questions from Members of the Public) - Previous involvement with residents of Lundy Close - Non-pecuniary interest.

446 Questions from Members of the Public

The Committee noted the responses of the relevant cabinet members to questions submitted by Ms. L Newman, which would be sent to the questioner as she was not able to be present at the meeting.

447 Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 September 2020

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 September 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

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

The Committee considered Minute 375 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 September 2020, which had been called in to each of the three scrutiny committees, together with a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) providing an updated assessment of the local financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a range of high-level scenarios to illustrate the potential scale of the financial challenge over the short and medium-term.

The Leader of the Council undertook to provide a written response to a question with regard to the level of support provided to local authorities by the Government, as part of the current three-tier COVID-19 alert system.

Resolved:

That the following decisions of the 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
Cabinet Member: Councillor I Gilbert

449 Southend 2050 Milestones & Measures: Refresh in response to Covid-19

The Committee considered Minute 377 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 September 2020, which had been called in to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, together with a report of the Chief Executive presenting the second stage of the review and refresh of the Southend 2050 milestones and measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the request of the Committee, the Leader of the Council agreed to consider options for the circulation of the monthly Corporate Performance Dashboard to all members of the Council.

Resolved:

That the following decisions of the Cabinet be noted:

- “1. That the new format of the outcome success measures report, which presents insight at an outcome level, be noted.
2. That it be noted that the associated measures and insight against each of the outcomes will be used to manage performance against the delivery of Southend 2050.
3. That the Quarter 1 performance (April-June 2020), be noted.
4. That the Southend 2050 roadmap milestones will form part of future reports that update on Southend’s recovery journey in order for responsive developments.
5. That the detailed Transforming Together programme of work, be noted.
6. That it be noted that Covid-19 is presenting lots of unknowns, as a result 2050 needs to be flexible to deal with the challenges therefore our outcomes will need to be responsive to the changing situations.

7. That the performance and measures of success and progress to achieve 2050 continue to be reported through the quarterly Outcome Success Measures Report, reported 4 times a year to Cabinet.

8. That the creation of a Covid-19 recovery fund with an initial value of £500,000 to be funded by the Business Transformation Reserve, be approved.”

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Councillor I Gilbert

450 Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) Update

The Committee considered Minute 382 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 September 2020, which had been called in to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, together with a report of the Chief Executive providing a general update on the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA), as well as wider developments including the establishment of the new ASELA and Local Government Reform Working Party.

At the request of the Committee, the Leader of the Council agreed that a link to the publication of minutes of meetings of ASLEA be provided to all councillors on an ongoing basis, that such minutes be received by the new Working Party as a standing item and that options to enable the minutes to be available for scrutiny be considered.

Resolved:

That the following decisions of the Cabinet be noted:

“1. That updates provided in the submitted report be noted, in particular that the ASELA prospectus has now been submitted to the government and the stated position of Essex County Council in relation to Local Government Reform (LGR).

2. That the ongoing programme of work to explore and develop local government reform options with neighbouring councils, be supported.

3. That it be noted that specialist advice will continue to be obtained, under officer delegations and within approved budgets, to support the exploration of options, assess and validate data and help ensure the best outcomes for Southend-on-Sea.”

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Councillor I Gilbert

451 Enabling Major Projects and Recovery

The Committee considered Minute 385 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 September 2020, which had been called in to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, together with a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) seeking to reconfigure existing and secure additional resources to enable the delivery of the Council’s major projects and recovery journey to support the 2050 Ambition, refreshed roadmap, outcomes and administration recovery priorities, and to support the financial challenge faced by the Council to ensure that it’s corporate support was appropriately resourced for the future.

Resolved:

That the following recommendations and decisions of the Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the additional permanent resources required for this increased staffing capacity of 10 FTE at a revenue impact of £497,000 pa and to be included as part of the budget setting for 2021/22 onwards, be approved.

2. That the estimated requirement to establish the new arrangements and any part year effect of recruitment up to £150,000 in 2020/21 is to be funded from the Business Transformation Reserve.

3. That it be noted that a consultation will be undertaken with the officers affected in line with employment law and the Council’s HR Policies.

4. That it be noted that a combination of internal and external recruitment will be arranged to fill the posts required.”

Note: The decisions in 1-2 above constitute a Council Function. The decisions in 3-4 above constitute an Executive Function

Cabinet Members: Councillors I Gilbert and R Woodley

452 SO46 Report

The Committee considered Minute 398 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 September 2020, which had been called in to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, together with a report setting out action with regard to applications made to the Government for funding to provide permanent accommodation for rough sleepers, that had been taken in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 46.

Resolved:

That the following decision of the Cabinet be noted:

“That the submitted report be noted.”

Note: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Member: Councillor I Gilbert

453 In-Depth Scrutiny Project 2019/20-2020/21

The Democratic Services Officer reported that a meeting of the Project Team leading the current in-depth scrutiny project for the Committee was to be held on 9 November 2020.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Note: This is a Scrutiny Function

Chair: _____