

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 2nd February, 2021

Place: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillor L Salter (Chair)
Councillors N Folkard (Vice-Chair), M Borton, H Boyd, A Chalk, D Cowan, M Dent, F Evans, M Flewitt, D Garne, B Hooper, M Kelly, K Mitchell, C Nevin, I Shead, M Stafford and A Thompson

In Attendance: Councillors T Harp, A Jones, M Terry (Cabinet Members), Councillor K Evans, P Bates, J Chesterton, E Cook, T Forster, P Grout, A Keating, B Leigh, J O'Loughlin, M Marks, B Martin, S Tautz and J Williams
O Richards (Healthwatch Southend), T Watts (Southend Carers Forum) (Co-Opted Members)
M Faulkner-Hatt, N Biju (Southend Youth Council) (Observers)

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 7.30 pm

768 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence from the meeting.

769 Declarations of Interest

The following councillors declared interests as indicated:

- (a) Councillors T Harp, A Jones and M Terry (Cabinet Members) - Interest in the referred item; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19 July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- (b) Councillor L Salter - Minute 773 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Husband is a consultant surgeon at Southend Hospital; daughter is a consultant at Basildon Hospital; son-in-law is a general practitioner in the Borough - Non-pecuniary interests.
- (c) Councillor N Folkard - Minute 773 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Ambassador for Fund Raising Team at Southend University Hospital; member of the Readers' Panel for Southend University Hospital; relative employed at Broomfield Hospital - Non-pecuniary interests.
- (d) Councillor B Hooper - Minute 773 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Director of Blade Education (a not-for-profit company); parent of child attending secondary school in Borough; family member resident in supported living accommodation - Non-pecuniary interests.
- (e) Councillor H Boyd - Minute 773 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Family member employed in care home setting - Non-pecuniary interest.
- (f) Councillor C Nevin - Minute 773 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Employed at external NHS Trust; previous care home worker; family members employed at Mid and South-Essex Trust hospitals and by Public Health England - Non-pecuniary interests.

- (g) Councillor F Evans - Minute 77 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Director of Belfairs Academy - Non-pecuniary interest.
- (h) Councillor K Mitchell - Minute 773 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Member of Fostering Panel; family member resident in supported living accommodation - Non-pecuniary interests.
- (i) Councillor I Shead - Minute 773 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Family member resident in supported living accommodation outside the Borough - Non-pecuniary interest.
- (j) Councillor T Harp - Minute 773 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Volunteer with Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS) and the 'Turning Tides' project; wife is employed by SAVS – Non-pecuniary interests.
- (k) Councillor A Jones - Minute 773 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes - 2021/22 to 2025/26) - Parent of child attending secondary school in Borough - Non-pecuniary interest.

770 Questions from Members of the Public

The Cabinet Member for Children and Learning responded to questions presented by Mr D Webb.

771 Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 November 2020

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

772 Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 7 December 2020

Resolved:

That the minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 7 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

773 Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes – 2021/22 to 2025/26

The Committee considered Minute 730 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 January 2021, which had been referred directly to the People Scrutiny Committee, together with a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the draft General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget for 2021/22 to 2025/26.

Resolved:

That the following decisions of the Cabinet be noted:

"1. That it be noted that a Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 – 2025/26 will be available for consideration in February 2021 and the draft Medium Term Financial Forecast and estimated Earmarked Reserves Balances up to 2025/26 (Annexes 1 and 2 to Appendix 1 to the submitted report), be endorsed.

2. That the draft Section 151 Officer's statement on the robustness of the proposed budget, the adequacy of the Council's reserves and the Council's Reserves Strategy (Appendix 2 to the report), be noted.
3. That the appropriation of the sums to earmarked reserves totalling £3.625M (Appendix 3 to the report), be endorsed.
4. That the appropriation of the sums from earmarked reserves totalling £6.218M, which includes £2.500M to cover the remaining estimated budget gap for 2021/22. (Appendix 3 to the report), be endorsed.
5. That a General Fund Budget Requirement for 2021/22 of £133.423M and Council Tax Requirement of £87.712M (Appendix 4a) and any required commencement of consultation, statutory or otherwise, be endorsed.
6. That it be noted that the 2021/22 revenue budget has been prepared on the basis of using £1.5 million from accumulated Collection Fund surpluses for the core budget to allow for a smoothing of the budget gap across the next four financial years.
7. That a Council Tax increase of 3.99% for the Southend-on-Sea element of the Council Tax for 2021/22, being 1.99% for general use and 2.0% for Adult Social Care (Paragraph 10.16), be endorsed.
8. 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
 - Leigh-on-Sea Town Council – proposed precept increase of 3.02%;
9. That no Special Expenses be charged other than the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council precept for 2021/22, be endorsed.
10. That the proposed General Fund revenue budget investment of £8.122M (Appendix 5 to the report), be endorsed.
11. That the proposed General Fund revenue budget savings and income generation initiatives for 2021/22 of £4.155M (Appendix 6 to the report), be endorsed.
12. That the proposed future outline Budget Transformation Programme 2022/23 – 2025/26 (Appendix 7 to the report), be endorsed.
13. That the proposed range of fees and charges for 2021/22 (Appendix 8 to the report), be endorsed.
14. That the Dedicated Schools Grant budget and its relevant distribution as recommended by the Education Board (Appendix 9 to the report), be endorsed.
15. That the Capital Investment Strategy for 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Appendix 10 to the report) and the Capital Investment Policy (Annex 1 to Appendix 10 to the report), be endorsed.
16. That the new schemes and additions to the Capital Investment Programme for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26 totalling £21M for the General Fund and new schemes subject to viable business cases (Appendix 11 to the report), be endorsed.
17. That the proposed changes to the current Capital Investment Programme that were considered for approval as part of the Resourcing Better Outcomes – Financial Performance Report – Period 8 (Appendix 12 to the report), be noted.

18. That the proposed Capital Investment Programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26 of £168.6M for 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Appendix 13 to the report) of which £25.6M is supported by external funding, be endorsed.

19. That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2021/22 (Appendix 14 to the report) and the prudential indicators (Appendix 15 to the report), be endorsed.

20. That the operational boundary and authorised limits for borrowing for 2021/22 are set at £375M and £385M respectively (Appendix 15 to the report), be endorsed”.

Note: This is an Executive Function, save that approval of the final budget following Cabinet on 16 February 2021 is a Council function.

Cabinet Member: Councillor I Gilbert

Chair: _____