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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee

Date: Monday, 1st February, 2021
Place: Virtual Meeting via MS Teams

Present: Councillor A Moring (Chair)
Councillors K Buck (Vice-Chair), B Ayling, J Beck, A Bright, L Burton,
A Chalk, 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)
Councillors S Aylen and K Evans
A Lewis, J Williams, J Chesterton, T Forster, S Moore, S Dolling,
C Robinson, P Bates, S Harrington, P Jenkinson, T Saunders, G
Perry-Ambrose, T Row, E Cook and A Wate

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 9.15 pm

758 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

759 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

(a) Councillors I Gilbert, C Mulroney, K Robinson, M Terry 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;

(b) Councillor Buck – Minute 765 (Domestic Vehicle Parking Policy) – Non-pecuniary interest: Has been contacted and spoken to numerous residents regarding the policy;

(c) Councillor Cowan – Minute 763 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes – 2021/22 to 2025/26) – Non-pecuniary interest: Staffing matters are mentioned and is member of the GMB Union;

(d) Councillor Gilbert – Minute 763 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes – 2021/22 to 2025/26) – Non-pecuniary interest: SAVS and the voluntary sector is mentioned in the report and is the Council appointed representative to the SAVS Board and staffing matters are mentioned and is member of the GMB Union;

(e) Councillor Mulroney – Minute 766 (Southend on Sea Borough Council Tree Policy) – Non-pecuniary interest: Member of Leigh Town Council which is mentioned in the report; and

(f) Councillor Woodley – Minute 763 (Draft Prioritising Resources to Deliver Better Outcomes – 2021/22 to 2025/26) – Non-pecuniary interest: Beach huts were mentioned in the report and is a beach hut owner.

760 Questions from Members of the Public

The Committee noted the responses to two questions that had been submitted by Mr Grubb to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Planning. Copies will be forwarded to him as he was not present at the meeting.

761 Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 23rd November, 2020

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 23rd November 2020 be received, confirmed as a correct record and signed.

762 Minutes of the Special Meeting held on Tuesday, 8th December, 2020

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the special meeting held on Tuesday, 8th December 2020 be received, confirmed as a correct record and signed.

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

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

Resolved:-

That the following decisions of 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 16th February 2020 is a Council Function
Cabinet Member: Cllr Gilbert

764 Controlled Parking Zones Policy

The Committee considered Minute 735 of Cabinet held on 14th January 2021, which had been called-in to Scrutiny, together with the report of the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment) proposing a new policy in respect of Controlled Parking Zones.

Resolved:-

That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the new policy for Controlled Parking Zones appended to the submitted report, be adopted.

2. That it be noted that the new criteria will not automatically be applied to existing Controlled Parking Zones, until such time as they are subject to a full, comprehensive review.

3. That it be noted that the financial implications of Controlled Parking Zones will vary depending on wider Council decisions on fees and charges, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.”

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

765 Domestic Vehicle Crossing Policy

The Committee considered Minute 736 of Cabinet held on 14th January 2021, which had been called-in to Scrutiny, together with the report of the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment) concerning the adoption of a new Domestic Vehicle Crossing Policy.

Resolved:-

1. That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the new policy for Domestic Vehicle Crossings appended to the submitted report, be adopted.

2. That it be noted that new enforcement activity will begin once the establishment of the new Highway Enforcement Team is completed.

3. That it be noted that this policy will be utilised by the Traffic Regulations Working Party in its considerations of appeals to rejected applications, as set out in the Council’s Constitution.”

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

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

766 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Tree Policy

The Committee considered Minute 739 of Cabinet held on 14th January 2021, which had been called-in to Scrutiny, together with the report of the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment) presenting the revised tree policy together with the results of the associated public consultation.

In response to questions regarding the policy and the possibility of notifying Ward Councillors of proposed locations of tree planting, the Cabinet Member for Environment & Planning gave her assurances that this would be investigated and included in the policy.

Resolved:-

That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:

1. That the Tree Policy set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be adopted.

2. That the development of a planting strategy that will consider the availability of land, its usage, and tree planting opportunities, be approved.

3. That it be noted that the adoption of the Tree Policy will require ongoing funding to manage the Council's tree stock, which will need to be considered as part of future budget setting.

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

767 Enforcement Review Update & SBC Environment & Regulatory Enforcement Policy

The Committee considered Minute 740 of Cabinet held on 14th January 2021, which had been called-in to Scrutiny, together with the report of the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment) setting out for consideration an Environment & Regulatory Enforcement Policy.

Resolved:-

That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the progress with the enforcement review, be noted.

2. That the Environment & Regulatory Enforcement Policy at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.”

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

Chair: _____