

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 12th October, 2021

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor A Moring (Chair)
Councillors D Jarvis, K Buck, A Bright, D Cowan, M Dent, T Cox*,
M Davidson*, K Evans, S George, K Mitchell, J Moyies*, D Nelson*,
K Robinson, I Shead*, N Ward and P Wexham
(*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.)

In Attendance: Councillors I Gilbert, C Mulroney and R Woodley (Cabinet Members)
A Lewis, J Chesterton, A Richards, A Barnes, E Cooney, N Hoskins,
G Gilbert, A Grant, Mr G Pearce (Swan Housing) and T Row

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 10.55 pm

402 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F Evans (substitute: Councillor Moyies), Folkard (substitute: Councillor Davidson), Wakefield (substitute: Councillor Shead), Walker (substitute: Councillor Cox) and Warren (substitute: Councillor Nelson).

403 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

(i) Councillors Gilbert, Mulroney and Cox - Interest in Minute No. 405; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19th July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011; and

(ii) Mr A Lewis and Mr A Richards – Minute No. 405 (Internal Audit Report: Better Queensway Highways Scheme) – Non-pecuniary interest: Member of the Board of Porters Place LLP.

404 Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

405 Internal Audit Report: Better Queensway Highways Scheme

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director (Finance & Resources) that presented the findings from the internal audit work in relation to the questions and concerns raised by a group of Councillors about the highways scheme element of the Better Queensway regeneration development and the options for the underpass and roundabout. This had recently been considered by the Council's Audit Committee at its meeting on 22nd September 2021 (Minute 359 refers). The Scrutiny Committee also had before it a copy of the draft Minutes of that meeting.

The Committee debated the matter in detail and asked a number of questions which were responded to by the Leader of the Council, relevant officers and Mr Pearce, Chief Executive of Swan Housing.

In response to a question regarding the viability and potential costs of a highways scheme retaining an underpass in line with the 2018 highways design, the Leader of the Council undertook to re-circulate the financial details to all Councillors that had been previously provided in this regard within the next two weeks.

The Committee took the opportunity to thank the Head of Internal Audit for his engagement and the hard work undertaken by his team in preparing a comprehensive report.

Resolved:-

1. That the findings of the internal audit work (outlined at Section 4 of the report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) and reported in full at Appendix A of the submitted report), be noted and that the recommendations set out in the internal audit report at Appendix A, be endorsed.

2. That the recommendation in Minute 359(4) of the Audit Committee should not be agreed. Recommendation 4 was “that the powers delegated to officers by Cabinet in relation to Better Queensway regeneration project should cease (although for the avoidance of doubt powers delegated to officers in Part 3 Schedule 3 of the Constitution and the SO46 procedure in Part 4a shall continue to apply in appropriate circumstances”).

3. That, in accordance with Standing Order 39, the matter be referred to full Council for decision. ||

Note:

Resolution 1 above is a Scrutiny Function.

Resolution 2 above is an Executive Function.

Chair: _____