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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 1st September, 2022

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor D Garston (Chair)
Councillors D Nelson (Vice-Chair), M Borton, H Boyd, M Davidson,
M Dent*, L Hyde*, A Jones, A Line, R McMullan, J Moyies*, M Sadza,
M Stafford, C Walker and P Wexham

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: Councillors S George, P Collins, I Gilbert and S Wakefield (Cabinet Members), Councillor K Evans, J Burr, J Chesterton, S Newman, A Richards and S Tautz

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 8.05 pm

258 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Cowan (Substitute: Councillor L Hyde) Councillor T Cowdrey (Substitute: Councillor M Dent), Councillor F Evans (Substitute: Councillor J Moyies), Councillor J Lamb (no substitute), Councillor I Shead (no substitute) and Councillor M Terry (Cabinet Member).

259 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

- (a) Councillors S George, P Collins, I Gilbert and S Wakefield (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.
- (b) Councillor L Hyde - Minute 265 (Fees and Charges Update) - Voluntary youth group leader within Southend-on-Sea.
- (c) Councillor L Hyde - Minute 266 (Association of South Essex Local Authorities - Joint Committee) - Employer involved with Freeports.
- (d) Councillor A Jones - Minute 266 (Association of South Essex Local Authorities - Joint Committee) - Partner employed by a member organisation of the ASELA partnership.
- (e) Councillor R McMullan and Councillor P Collins (Cabinet Member) - Minute 265 (Fees and Charges Update) - Lobbied by residents with regard to the introduction of charges for Zone 3 car park within ward.

260 Questions from Members of the Public

The Committee noted the responses of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Matters and Performance Delivery and the Cabinet Member for Public Protection, to questions presented at the meeting by David Webb.

261 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 July 2022

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

262 Corporate Plan

The Committee considered Minute 190 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 July 2022, which had been called-in for scrutiny, together with a report of the Interim Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance) presenting the Council's draft Corporate Plan for 2022 to 2026.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Matters and Performance Delivery undertook to provide a written response to a question raised by a member of the Committee with regard to arrangements available at libraries within Southend-on-Sea offering support to residents in engaging with the Council, where digital systems might otherwise exclude service users.

In response to questions from members of the Committee, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Matters and Performance Delivery confirmed that he would be willing to review the text of the draft Corporate Plan around population and diversity (using data from the 2011 Census), the commitment of the Council to the enhancement and protection of the environment in the delivery of housing, and the recent declaration of a Cost of Living Crisis, to ensure that such matters were prominently reflected within the Corporate Plan.

Resolved:

That the following recommendation of the Cabinet be noted:

“That the draft Corporate Plan 2022-26, set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved and the responsibility for any final changes prior to publication be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.”

Note: This is a Council Function
Cabinet Member: Councillor S George

263 Corporate Risk Register

The Committee considered Minute 191 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 July 2022, which had been called-in for scrutiny, together with a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the updated summary Corporate Risk Register.

Resolved:

That the following decision of the Cabinet be noted:

“That the updated summary Corporate Risk Register and the position at July 2022, outlined in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be noted.”

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Councillor P Collins

264 In-Depth Scrutiny Project - 'Enabling Councillors to be Effective' Final Report

The Committee considered Minute 193 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 July 2022, which had been called-in for scrutiny, together with a report of the Interim Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance) presenting the final report and recommendations of the joint In-Depth Scrutiny Project for 2021/22.

Resolved:

That the following decisions of the Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the recommendations arising from the in-depth scrutiny project, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

2. That the budget implications arising from the recommendations of the in-depth scrutiny project be considered as part of current and future years’ budget processes prior to implementation.”

Note: This is an Executive Function
Cabinet Member: Councillor S George

265 Fees & Charges Update

The Committee considered Minute 197 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 July 2022, which had been called-in for scrutiny, together with a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting a selected range of new fees and charges, together with some targeted increases above the Consumer Prices Index, which were outside the scope of the Council’s delegated fees and charges policy.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Parking undertook to provide a written response to a question raised by a member of the Committee, with regard to the service provided by the Council pursuant to the current and proposed fee for vehicle access onto a pedestrian zone.

In response to questions from members of the Committee, the Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Inward Investment confirmed that he would be willing to reconsider the proposed increases in group ticket prices for Southend Planetarium.

Resolved:

(1) That the following recommendations of the Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the new fees and charges proposed for property and legal services, set out at Appendix 1a and the revisions to fees and charges shown in the schedule, set out at Appendix 1b to the submitted report, be approved.

2. That it not be the Council’s policy to introduce charging in the following very small car parks in Zone 3:

- Eastwood Boulevard Car Park (Blenheim Park Ward).
- Pargat Drive Car Park (Eastwood Park Ward).
- Sutherland Boulevard Car Park (West Leigh Ward).

3. That any decision to implement charging in the Rayleigh Road Car Park in Eastwood, as set out in the submitted report, will only occur after the appropriate governance process is followed.”

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

Note: This is a Council Function
Cabinet Members: Councillor S George and Councillor P Collins

266 Association of South Essex Local Authorities - Joint Committee

The Committee received the draft minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA), held on 14 July 2022.

In response to a suggestion from a member of the Committee, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Matters and Performance Delivery confirmed that he would be willing to consider the provision of a briefing for councillors around the benefits that the introduction of the Thames Freeport could bring to Southend-on-Sea.

Resolved:

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities held on 14 July 2022, be noted.

Note: This is a Scrutiny function

267 In-Depth Scrutiny Project 2022/23 - 'Developing Strong Governance & Strengthening Joint Working between Councillors and Officers'

The Committee was reminded that, at its last meeting, it agreed that an in-depth scrutiny project be undertaken for the 2022/23 municipal year, on the theme of 'Developing Strong Governance and Strengthening Joint Working between Councillors and Officers.'

It was reported that officers were currently developing the possible scope of the in-depth scrutiny project, so that this could be considered by the Project Team appointed by the Council for the project alongside the preparation of an appropriate project plan and work programme, which would be presented to the Committee in October 2022 for agreement. Members were advised that an initial meeting of the Project Team had been arranged for 28 September 2022.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Note: This is a Scrutiny function

Chair: _____