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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 11th October, 2022

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor L Salter (Chair)
Councillors N Folkard (Vice-Chair), M Berry, T Cowdrey, T Cox, A Dear, K Evans, J Harland, L Hyde, B Hooper, D Jones, J Moyies*, M O'Connor, I Shead, M Stafford and A Thompson

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: Councillors L Burton, K Mitchell and S Wakefield (Cabinet Members), J Burr, G Bloom, N Hoskins, B Leigh, M Marks and S Tautz
G Shuttleworth (Vecteo)

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 8.50 pm

345 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B Beggs (Substitute: Councillor J Moyies) and Councillor K Murphy (no substitute).

346 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

- (a) Councillors L Burton, K Mitchell and S Wakefield (Cabinet Members - Interest in the referred items; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19 July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- (b) Councillor T Cowdrey – Minute 350 (Resourcing Better Outcomes - Finance and Corporate Performance Report 2022/23) - Member of Southend Fostering Panel.
- (c) Councillor T Cowdrey – Minute 351 (Options for the Procurement of the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Contract) - Practice educator for social work student at Citizen's Advice.
- (d) Councillor T Cowdrey – Minute 355 (SEND Peer Review) and Minute 356 (Passenger Transport Services - Performance Monitoring) - Practice educator for social work student at St. Nicholas Special School.
- (e) Councillor K Evans – Minute 351 (Options for the Procurement of the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Contract) - Family member employed by the Trust Links mental health and wellbeing charity.
- (f) Councillor B Hooper - Minute 355 (SEND Peer Review) - Director of Blade Education, a not-for-profit company that works with local SEND children and MENCAP.
- (g) Councillor L Burton (Cabinet Member) - Minute 356 (Passenger Transport Services - Performance Monitoring) - Employed as a teacher at a school outside Southend-on-Sea that has pupils that are resident within the City.

(h) Councillor K Mitchell (Cabinet Member) - Minute 351 (Options for the Procurement of the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Contract) – The Council's appointed representative on the Southend Association of Voluntary Services Board and the Chair of the 'Hamlet Court Road in Harmony' group that has received Community Investment Board funding.

347 Essex Partnership University NHS Trust

With the agreement of the Chair, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration advised the Committee of the action taken to address concerns about mental health services provided by the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) following the broadcast of the Channel 4 'Dispatches' programme on 10 October 2022 and the publication of articles in the press.

The Cabinet Member reminded members that the Integrated Care System (ICS) for Mid and South Essex commissioned mental health services for residents of Southend-on-Sea from EPUT and that in her capacity as Portfolio Holder and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, she had written to the Chief Executive of the ICS Board to seek details of the formal response of the ICS to the risks identified by the media, the assurance processes that EPUT had put in place and action to be taken should the quality of care not improve.

The Cabinet Member assured the Committee that she would keep members updated on this matter as appropriate.

348 Questions from Members of the Public

The Committee noted the response of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration and the Cabinet Member for Children, Learning and Inclusion, to questions presented by Mr D Webb.

349 Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 August 2022

Resolved:

That subject to the inclusion of Councillor B Hooper (no substitute) in the report of members presenting apologies for absence, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31 August 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

350 Resourcing Better Outcomes – Finance and Corporate Performance Report 2022/23 – Period 4

The Committee considered Minute 314 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29 September 2022, which had been referred directly to each of the scrutiny committees, together with a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) reviewing the Council's financial performance.

The relevant Cabinet Members undertook to provide written responses to questions raised by members of the Committee with regard to the following:

- The forecast overspends on Adult Social Care for 2022/23 and whether the budget is on-track for the year.
- The composition, work programme and reporting arrangements of the Council's Workforce Transformation Panel, including the delivery of the 'Service Delivery Change Programme.'
- The effect on relevant service provision of the nationally agreed increases in allowances and annual leave entitlement for local government officers.

Resolved:

That the following recommendations of the Cabinet be noted:

“That, in respect of the 2022/23 Revenue Budget Performance as set out in appendix 1 to the submitted report:

1. That the forecast outturn for 2022/23 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as at 31 July 2022, be noted.
2. That the management action taken and to be taken to reduce the forecast overspend of the Council’s revenue budget for 2022/23, be noted.
3. That the transfer of £500,000 from HRA reserves to support the increase in repairs and maintenance costs, be approved.
4. That the planned budget transfers (virements) of £2,327,766 from earmarked reserves, as set out in the report, be approved.

That, in respect of the 2022/23 Capital Budget Performance as set out in appendix 2 of this report:

5. That the expenditure to date and the forecast outturn as at 31 July 2022 and its financing, be noted.
6. That the requested changes to the capital investment programme for 2022/23 and future years, as set out in section 4 of appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
7. That the Corporate Performance Report as at 31 July 2022 set out in appendix 3 to the report, be noted.”

Note: This is a Council Function

Cabinet Members: Councillors S George and P Collins

351 Options for the Procurement of the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Contract

The Committee considered Minute 319 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29 September 2022, which had been referred directly to the Committee for scrutiny, together with a report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) presenting options for the re-procurement of the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Contract.

Resolved:

That the matter be referred back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, with a request to address the concerns of the Committee in regard to the possible impact of the proposed financial envelope for the Southend Infrastructure Service on the local community and voluntary sector .

Note: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Member: Councillor K Mitchell

352 School Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools 2024/25; the Coordinated Admission Scheme for Academic year 2024/25; and Review of the relevant area

The Committee considered Minute 323 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29 September 2022, which had been referred directly to the Committee for scrutiny, together with a report of the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) presenting the admission arrangements for Community Schools for the academic year 2024/25 and the Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2024/25.

Resolved:

That the following decisions of the Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the proposed Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools for the academic year 2024/25, set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

2. That it be noted that consultation with governing bodies of Community Schools takes place on the published admission number (PAN) for community infant, junior and primary schools for September 2024, as set out in the Admission Arrangements in Appendix 1 to the report.

3. That the proposed Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2024/25 onwards, as set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the report, be approved.

4. That any minor changes after School Governor consultation be ratified by the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) in December 2022 for publication as required by law on 1 January 2023.

5. That the relevant area for schools as follows: Southend, Castle Point and Rochford for 2025 and 2026, be approved.”

Note: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Member: Councillor L Burton

353 SO46 Report

The Committee considered Minute 326 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29 September 2022, which had been referred directly to the relevant scrutiny committee, together with a report setting out action that had been taken by the Director of Regeneration and Growth 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: As appropriate to the item

354 Community First Responder Volunteer Programme

The Committee received a brief presentation from Dr Else Desmond and Carl Carrington of the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust, on the Community First Responder Volunteer Programme.

The Committee also received a demonstration of the Raizer 2 Emergency Lifting Chair utilised by Community First Responders as part of the Trust's Falls Response initiative.

Resolved:

That the appreciation of the Committee for their informative presentation and demonstration, be conveyed to Dr Desmond and Mr Carrington.

355 SEND Peer Review

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Children and Public Health), setting out current progress on the delivery of the Implementation Plan arising from the findings and recommendations identified by the Local Government Association in its Independent Peer Review of the Council's provision of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Children with Disability services.

The Executive Director (Children and Public Health) undertook to provide a written response to a question raised by a member of the Committee, with regard to the current level of completion of training by councillors in respect of the challenges of working with residents with SEND issues and awareness of the Education, Health and Care Plan process.

The Executive Director (Children and Public Health) also agreed to provide all members of the Committee with a copy of the current version of the 'Threshold of Need' pathway document that was being updated in response to the recommendations arising from the Peer Review.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Note: This is a Scrutiny function

356 Passenger Transport Services - Performance Monitoring

The Committee received a report in relation to the ongoing monitoring of the performance of the Vecteo Joint Venture Company established for the provision of passenger transport services.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Note: This is a Scrutiny function.

357 In-Depth Scrutiny Project 2022/23 - 'Providing First Class Services for Families with Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities'

The Committee received an update on progress with regard to the in-depth scrutiny project for 2022/23.

It was reported that an initial meeting of the Project Team for the in-depth scrutiny project had recently been held, to identify the scope of the project and to develop an achievable project plan and work programme for the remainder of the year. The Committee was advised that Councillor T Cox had been appointed as Chair of the Project Team.

Resolved:

That the project plan and work programme for the in-depth scrutiny project be agreed.

Note: This is a Scrutiny function

Chair: _____