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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Cabinet

Date: Wednesday, 28th June, 2023
Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor T Cox (Chair)
Councillors M Davidson (Vice-Chair), H Boyd, K Buck, J Courtenay,
D Garston, D Jarvis, J Lamb, J Moyies and D Nelson

In Attendance: Councillors B Beggs, D Cowan, T Cowdrey and M Dent
J Chesterton, C Gamble, M Harvey, N Hoskins, A Keating and
A Richards

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 7.25 pm

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence at this meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

(i) Councillor K Buck – Agenda Item No. 8 (Parking Charges in Parks Car Parks) – Member of Belfairs Golf Club; and

(ii) Councillor D Nelson – Agenda Item No. 10 (Armed Forces Covenant and Defence Employer Recognition Scheme) – Brother is in the Armed Forces.

3 Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, 21 March 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 21 March 2023, be confirmed as a correct record.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 4 April 2023

Resolved

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 4 April 2023, be confirmed as a correct record.

5 Annual Procurement Plan 2023/24

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Annual Procurement Plan for 2023/24, as well as the remaining years of the original 5 Year Procurement Plan for 2022-27.

Resolved:

1. That the Annual Procurement Plan for 2023/24, as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, containing those procurements with a value over £25,000 and where corporate procurement needs to be involved, be approved.
2. That the indicative future plans for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27 and that these will continue to be reviewed against the corporate contract register, be noted.
3. That it be noted that any procurements related to delivery of the capital programme will be added as required and will not require separate approval.
4. That it be noted that once the Government have concluded the Public Procurement Reform (expected in 2024), it is expected that it will be a mandatory requirement for the public sector to publish their future procurement pipeline plans and the 5-year plan will provide the mechanism to publicly report.
5. That it be noted that the Contract Procedure Rules will be reviewed and updated in 2023/24 to reflect that the approved procurement plan will contain all contracts with a value of £250,000 plus (currently £1m plus is the constitutional requirement).
6. That it be noted that following the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee the following updates have been made in relation to:
 - Column for Environmental benefits (The Executive Director (Finance and Resources) has reviewed the procurement plan for 2023/24 alongside the Head of Waste and Climate Change and the plan has been populated based upon the key Carbon impacts in the City (notably Energy and Transport) and those contracts which could contribute to carbon reduction.
 - All tabs of the procurement plan have been reviewed and lead officer names updated.

Reasons for decision:

Approval of the Council's annual procurement plan is required under Part 4g of the Council's Constitution.

Other options:

The Council could decide to just publish an annual plan, but it is felt that the development of a pipeline plan will assist the Council and businesses in their resource and future planning. The move to a 5-year plan (2022-27) also aligns with the anticipated requirements once the UK Public Procurement Reform is finalised by Government.

Note: This is an Executive Function

This matter is not eligible for call-in as the matter has been subject to pre-Cabinet Scrutiny at the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Lamb

6 Council Procurement and Contract Management Strategy 2023-2026

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the revised Council Procurement and Contract Management Strategy 2023-26.

Resolved:

1. That the Council Procurement and Contract Management Strategy 2023-26, set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.
2. That it be noted that once the Government have concluded the Public Procurement Reform (expected in 2024), officers will ensure that any other necessary changes to the Council's procurement processes will be delivered.
3. That it be noted that delivery of this strategy will be through the objectives set within the Corporate Procurement Service Plan which will be revised on an annual basis.

Reasons for decision:

The approval of the Council's Procurement and Contract Management Strategy is required as the current strategy expired in 2020/21. The strategy is one of the key tools to support the delivery of the Council's and city's priorities.

Other options:

1. Continue with the current strategy but this is now out of date and is no longer fit for purpose given the changing priorities and national context the Council is now operating in.
2. Decide to not have a Procurement and Contract Management Strategy but this will have a financial, local economic and environmental impact and create even more pressure on already stretched resources.

Note: This is an Executive Function

This matter is not eligible for call-in as it has been the subject of pre-Cabinet scrutiny by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Lamb

7 Petition/Opposition Business - 85,000 Soil HGV Movements to Gunners Park Development

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting an update on the Opposition Business motion and the petition presented at the meeting of the Council held on 2nd March 2023 relating to vehicle movements on the public highway associated with a development which has been granted planning permission at the site known as 'Land between Barge Pier Road and Ness Road'.

Resolved:

That it be noted that the Head of Civil Engineering and/or Director of Transport and Waste will continue discussions with the developer on the viability of moving earthworks material by means other than by road.

Reasons for decision:

To note that discussions continue with the developer on the viability of moving earthworks material by means other than by road.

Other options:

None

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has been subject to pre-Cabinet Scrutiny at the Place Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Buck

8 Parking Charges in Parks Car Parks

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) responding to the Opposition Business motion referred by Council held on 23rd March 2023 concerning proposed changes to the Council's charging proposals in the city's parks car parks.

Resolved:

1. That the implementation of charging in the following parks car parks, be cancelled:

- Belfairs Park, Chalkwell Park, Priory Park and Southchurch Park in the 2024/25 financial year
- Big Gunners Park, Little Gunners Park and Jones Memorial Ground planned for the 2023/24 financial year.

2. That a policy be produced that makes it clear that the Council's policy is not to charge in the city's Parks Car Parks.

3. That the funding of this proposal, as set out in the submitted report, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

To respond to the Opposition Business Notice of Motion concerning the Council's charging proposals in the city's Parks car parks.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Called-in to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Buck

9 Removal of 6-9pm Parking Charging and Enforcement in Zone 1A

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Environment and Place) presenting information to enable the Council to decide on revoking its decision to charge for parking between the hours of 6pm and 9pm in Zone 1A; which Budget Council took in February 2023.

The Cabinet was informed that the wording in paragraphs 2.6 and 5.3 of the submitted report was incorrect. The revocation of the hours of enforcement related to the pay and display bays in Zone 1A only and that other contraventions would still be enforced.”

With reference to the proposed introduction of the on-street parking bays in Hartington Road, Pleasant Road, Beach Road and Burdett Road, the Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Parking gave assurances that the proposals were to introduce additional shared use bays and that there would be no loss of the existing capacity for residents in those roads. The Ward Councillors would also be consulted on the proposals prior to the statutory consultation process.

Resolved:

1. That the decision made at Budget Council in February 2023 be revoked and that charging for parking in Zone 1A between the hours of 6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. be removed, taking into consideration the financial implications as set out in the submitted report.
2. That the temporary cessation of charges between the hours of 6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. during the summer school holidays, pending the relevant activity required by the service, as set out in the submitted report, be approved.
3. That the proposals for the new parking bays as set out in the report be progressed, on the basis that there would be no loss of existing parking capacity from the resident parking scheme in the roads affected.
4. That a one-off budget of £40k be allocated to the parking service for the required changes to be implemented and initially funded from the Business Transformation Reserve and then reimbursed from the additional parking income.
5. That it be noted that there will be capital investment of circa £175k and initially funded from reprioritised highways schemes and then reimbursed by the additional parking income.

Reasons for decision:

To remove the parking charges between the hours of 6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Other options:

Not to remove the parking charges and continue with the decisions made by the previous administration.

Note: This is an Executive Function/Council Function

Called-in to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Buck

10 Armed Forces Covenant and Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance) setting out the provisions of the Armed Forces Act 2021 for public bodies to have due regard to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Resolved:

1. That the Council sign the updated Southend Armed Forces Covenant with relevant pledges.
2. That the Council sign up to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

Reasons for decision:

1. The signing of the covenant shows the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Community by further embedding the 'due regard' duty of the Act to help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing healthcare, education and housing services.
2. By joining the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme at the entry Bronze Level the Council will show its commitment to the Armed Forces Community by ensuring it follows best practice in regards to the recruitment and employment of currently serving and ex-service personnel. As a benefit to the Council it will be more likely to be an employer of choice for members of this community, bringing with them a variety of skills and experiences.
3. Being a signatory and member of regional networks will strengthen the Council's compliance, provide the Council with access to additional advice and resources and help align policies and communication with good practices listed in the pledges increasing the positive outcomes for the Armed Forces community.

Other options:

None. It is a statutory requirement to be compliant with the Armed Forces Act 2021 and accompanying guidance as otherwise the Council runs the risk of a legal challenge.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has been the subject of pre-Cabinet Scrutiny by the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Lamb

11 **Debt Management - Position to 31st March 2023**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) setting out the corporate debt management position to 31 March 2023.

Resolved:

1. That the finalised outstanding debt position as at 31 March 2023 and the position of debts written off to 31 March 2023, as set out in Appendices A and B to the submitted report, be noted.
2. That the six write-offs for debts that exceed £25,000, as set out in Appendix B, be approved.
3. That the existing Debt Collection and Recovery Policy approved in November 2017, as set out at Appendix C, be noted and that a refresh of the policy be undertaken, and any proposed changes be brought back to Cabinet on 18 September 2023 for approval.

Reasons for decision:

1. Debt collection is conducted independently by each department in accordance with the Council's Debt Collection and Recovery Policy to ensure a fair and consistent approach is applied to each case, and to maximise collection for the Council.
2. Each write-off is considered on an individual basis to assess the viability of collection and via the Council's Debt Collection and Recovery Policy to ensure a standard consistent approach.

Other options:

None.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has been the subject of pre-Cabinet scrutiny by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Cox

12 **Petition - Save the Jazz Centre UK**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) setting out the Council's response to the petition: 'Britain's first-ever cultural centre for jazz opened in 2016 at Southend's Beecroft Art Gallery is facing eviction on August 1st, 2023. If you oppose this decision by Southend City Council, please sign below to help us fight this decision.'

Resolved:

That the decision to service notice on JCUK be reverted and a new service level agreement for the organisation to remain within its current position at the Beecroft Museum, be approved.

Reasons for decision:

To revert the decision to service notice on JCUK and agree a new service level agreement for the organisation to remain within its current position at the Beecroft Museum.

Options:

1. To continue with the current notice period.
2. To continue with the current notice but retain occupancy until a viable alternative can be found with the support of SCC.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter has been subject to pre-Cabinet Scrutiny by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Jarvis

13 Recommendations of the Shareholder Board held on 22 February 2023

The Cabinet received the Minutes of the Shareholder Board held on 22nd February 2023.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Shareholder Board held on 22nd February 2023 (items 1-9) be noted.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call-in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Cox

14 SO46 Report

Resolved:

That the submitted report, be noted.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matters are urgent key decisions

Cabinet Member: Cllr Buck

15 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below, on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

16 SO46 Report Confidential Sheet

Resolved:

That the confidential sheet, be noted.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Not eligible for call-in as the matter is an urgent key decision

Cabinet Member: Cllr Buck

17 Recommendations from the meeting of the Shareholder Board held on 22nd February 2023

Resolved:

1. That the progress undertaken towards the aim of the Council becoming the sole shareholder of Vecteo, be noted.

2. That the new company board structure and appointees be not accepted.

3. That the recommendation to make an appointment to the position of Executive Chairman of the Board of Vecteo on an interim basis only is not accepted and that the Directors of Vecteo be requested to prepare a report for submission to a future meeting of Cabinet on proposals for the structure of the Board of the company.

Note: This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call-in to: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Cllr Cox

Chair: _____

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