

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Southend-on-Sea Forum Management Company Reports for Financial Years 2022 and 2023</b>
<b>Meeting:</b>	Shareholder Board
<b>Date:</b>	27 February 2024
<b>Classification:</b>	Part 1
<b>Policy Context:</b>	Compliance
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Executive Directors:</b>	Joe Chesterton - Executive Director Finance & Resources (S151 Officer), Mark Harvey – Executive Director Adults and Communities
<b>Report Author:</b>	Sharon Wheeler – Head of Libraries and Physical Wellbeing

---

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. To update the Shareholder Board on Southend on Sea Forum Management Limited and present the audited accounts for years ending 31st July 2022 and 31st July 2023.

## **2. Recommendations**

### **It is recommended that the Shareholder Board:**

- 2.1. Note the financial performance and audited accounts of the company for the financial years to 31st July 2022 and to 31st July 2023.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Forum was the country's first combined public and academic library where a local authority and higher education providers joined resources.
- 3.2. The building opened on time and on budget in Elmer Square in 2013 following a £28M capital project managed by Southend on Sea City Council's property team.

- 3.3. In addition to the combined library, the space also houses the Focal Point Gallery, a contemporary arts venue funded by SCC and the Arts Council as one of their National Portfolio Organisations.
- 3.4. Southend-on-Sea Forum Management Ltd (SoSFML) is a zero-profit joint venture between the University of Essex, Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC) and South Essex College (SEC). It was set up to manage the property of The Forum, allowing mutual benefit through sharing of resources.
- 3.5. SoSFML functions by charging the partners three times a year in advance for expected costs, it then makes adjustments in the following invoice for any differences between expected costs and actual costs, thus at the end of the year SoSFML will always net to zero profit.
- 3.6. The financial year of SoSFML runs from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July.
- 3.7. Two SCC councillors are appointed to the board through the annual appointments committee. For the periods reported, the representatives are Cllr Berry and Cllr Thompson (2022), and Cllr Jarvis and Cllr Nelson (2023).
- 3.8. The Council has the largest stake in the company and costs are attributed proportionately based upon space utilisation.
- 3.9. The board meets three times per year to agree strategic activity that involves all partners. Shared operations where representatives from each organisation contribute include an SLA for the library management, a user group, and the big screen management group.

#### **4. Reasons for Decisions**

- 4.1. The financial reporting and auditing is required by law and reporting the audited accounts to the Council's Shareholder Board is in accordance with the Council's constitution.

#### **5. Other Options**

- 5.1. The current arrangements have been in practice since 2013 and work effectively for managing the various stakeholders. An informal partnership was proposed at the outset as an alternative but was not agreed by the University of Essex.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. There is an agreed formula to share costs and provision is made in the annual budget cycle, no issues are reported or anticipated.

**7. Legal Implications**

7.1. None arising from this report.

**8. Carbon Impact**

8.1. None arising from this report.

**9. Equalities**

9.1. None arising from this report.

**10. Consultation**

10.1. None arising from this report.

**11. Appendices**

11.1. Appendix 1 – Directors Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2022

11.2. Appendix 2 - Directors Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2023