

SOUTHEND ON SEA CITY COUNCIL
Policy & Resource Scrutiny Committee Meeting
15th February 2024

Question 1. From Mr Webb for Cllr Nelson (Economic Growth & Investment)

What strategies and steps will be put into place to use the council's spending power to support economic growth and regeneration and improve what specific skills base of the city's workforce and we will do our best to support the Southend pound.

Response:

The council's Economic Inclusion Service is focused on supporting the economic growth of the city and improving the skills base of its workforce. This includes the preparation of a new Economic Growth Strategy for Southend which will be considered by cabinet in March. This document sets out that the council will use its spending power to increase the sourcing of goods and services locally and to support capital infrastructure projects which benefit our businesses to improve the opportunities for economic growth and regeneration. It also identifies that the council will work with partners in the education sector and across our communities to improve the skills base of the city's workforce, address skills gaps, assist people in achieving secure and stable jobs and enable businesses to grow.

The vision within the council's procurement and contract management strategy (2023-26) is to ensure 'The very best for the Southend £'. The ways in which we aim to achieve this are through a continued focus on spending with local suppliers (as far as UK legislation allows) as well as ongoing training and education of the local business sector in Southend around how they can source and successfully bid for public sector contracts. The council's social value policy also looks at how through our suppliers and contractual spend we can maximise the added benefits to the local community, environment and economy.