

JOINT ADMINISTRATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LABOUR, INDEPENDENT AND LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUPS OF SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Preamble

Following the local elections held on 2 May 2024 no party or group achieved an overall majority on the Southend-on-Sea City Council (“the Council”).

The challenges facing Southend-on-Sea and the Council require the Council to have strong leadership and a stable political environment to ensure that we:

- secure the council’s long-term financial future with a priority on transformation;
- invest in a safer Southend with better roads, pavements, street cleaning and policing;
- improve Southend’s environment and biodiversity;
- provide the best adults and children’s services possible;
- promote fairness for all residents and reduce inequalities;
- provide opportunities for economic growth, culture and tourism;
- respect the diversity, culture and heritage of our city

The “Signatories” to this Agreement comprise the Labour, Independent and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council and includes all those who have appended their signatures hereto.

This Agreement sets out broad agreement reached between the Signatories and will form the basis of the Joint Administration and will enable the Signatories to work together as a strong and stable local government administration for Southend-on-Sea City.

Terms of Agreement

Terms of this Agreement. The Signatories agree:

- To form a Joint Administration with a Cabinet of 9 members, which is reduced from the previous Administration’s 10 members, comprising:
 - 7 Labour
 - 1 Liberal Democrat
 - 1 Independent
- That the statutory role of Leader of the Council will be taken by the Leader of the Labour Group, who will provide regular briefings to the Mayor as per Article 5 of the constitution.
- That major decisions within the Joint Administration will be made collaboratively with Cabinet and Signatories to this Agreement.
- To respect each other's commitment to the principles under which they respectively operate.
- To support the Joint Administration on votes of confidence and votes to ensure that a balanced budget is passed.
- To support all nominations submitted by the Joint Administration for appropriate appointments to Council bodies and outside bodies.
- To work together on the basis of the principles of honesty, openness and transparency and in collaboration.
- To promote strong working relationships with Council Officers based on mutual trust and respect and delivery of operational objectives.
- To act in the best interests of the City of Southend-on-Sea and its residents and businesses reflecting their views and with the aim of building a city we can all be proud of.
- To focus on outcome and performance delivery, and progressing the Joint Administration’s policy objectives where practicable, affordable, and in the best interests of the City and to plan accordingly.

Policy Development and Strategic Objectives:

Infrastructure and Corporate Strategy

- Deliver an ambitious programme of investment in improving the safety of our pavements and roads.
- Investigate and progress safety and air quality improvements at Cuckoo Corner.
- Explore traffic calming measures around schools and residential areas such as 20MPH zones, where supported by results of a consultation, looking at known hotspots to include, but not be limited to, the area around Southchurch Park, Burges Estate, and Canewdon Road.
- Progress School Streets from the last tranche at Eastwood Primary, Prince Avenue Academy, and Bournemouth Park Academy where practicable and develop new tranches where practicable to include, but not be limited to, Edwards Hall School, Heycroft School, Darlington School and Eastwood Academy.
- Investigate safety improvements to known hotspots to include, but not be limited to, Whitehouse Road, Elm Road, Wakering Road, Bellhouse Road, Marine Parade, and Cliff Parade.
- Review the parking arrangements across strategic shopping, tourist, and commuter locations to combat parking stress to include, but not be limited to, investigating the addition of a deck at Elm Road, Leigh, Car Park, implementing, seeking additional paid for parking spaces along the Sea Front and progressing sensible parking policies that work for Southend to protect and expand free parking along Eastern Esplanade and Leigh Broadway.
- Seek to enhance or introduce resident parking zones in known stress areas, and improve consultation with residents on parking matters to include the completion of partial Controlled Parking Zones and review of the Educational Permit within these Zones.
- Enhance the Southend Pass offer and proactively promote and advertise its uses and benefits.
- Explore affordable commuter parking along Belton Way (East and West) as part of the expansion of the Southend Pass offer.
- Introduce off-season parking charges and re-evaluate the parking zones to better delineate areas of high visitor demand and areas used more by residents.
- To progress the proposed bus route from Airport Business Park to Leigh following the route agreed by group leaders, portfolio holders, members, and officers.
- To progress Transformation, drive operational performance improvement, and modernise our services to realise savings, increase productivity, and improve the customer experience.
- Progress the CIL upgrade and refurbishment of cycle network as part of the capital programme.
- Progress the rollout of Electric Vehicle charging points in appropriate locations.

Planning and Housing

- Progress the development of a Local Plan with adequate infrastructure.
- Maximise the delivery of genuinely affordable housing.
- Foster community-led regeneration and reduce homelessness numbers.
- Develop a policy to uphold covenants and prevent development in parks without consultation. Removal/ relocation of any unauthorised installation such as at Southchurch Park East.
- Implement a 'majority' process for using CIL money to end the undemocratic process of vetoing.

Children, Young People and SEND

- Drive improvements in Children's services in a family centred way.
- Maintain our commitment to school improvement.
- Explore the creation of a fully accessible playground and continue the upgrade and expansion of accessible play equipment in all parks and play area.

Regeneration, Major Projects, and Regulatory Services

- Progress the Fossetts Farm development in a way that protects the council's long-term financial interests whilst delivering much needed new homes.
- Progress a workable plan for the Better Queensway regeneration scheme. This is to include all Council owned neighbouring sites.
- Deliver on major regeneration projects to support jobs, growth and opportunity.
- Progress a constitutional review to align with modern authorities and remove conflicts and contradictions to ensure effective and efficient governance.

Culture, Tourism, and Business

- Promote the cultural and tourism life of the City, developing an events programme with an objective of reaching 20 weeks of events on the pier each year and at least 6 major events across the city, beaches, and parks each year.
- Explore the possibility of a seafront outdoor gym.
- Promote the use of commercial spaces for community benefit such as Age Concern's bid to purchase Havens and community interest company ventures such as the Ironworks.
- Work towards the reopening of the Kursaal and a sustainable future for the building.
- Work towards reintroducing modern versions of permanent attractions such as the Illuminations and seasonal events such as Southend in Bloom, and increase support for business-led events such as the Fireworks and council-led events such as the park concerts.
- Support and sustain the Museum Service, to realise its potential as a regional centre.

Climate, Environment, and Waste

- Introduce a free bulky waste collection service, looking to authorities like Medway for examples.
- Resolve the inherited waste contract issues to ensure an effective, efficient, and quality service.
- Introduce and expand on a 'cut and collect' method of verge management.
- Explore better uses of the Parks Nursery site.
- Deliver on the aims of the Better Play Motion (2022) to improve play equipment across parks and play areas across the city, including those on the foreshore such as East Beach.
- Complete the overdue upgrade of parks and play areas such as, but not limited to, Milton Gardens with a view to making spaces dual purpose for multi-sports.
- Explore alternatives to the use of herbicides in public spaces as soon as possible.

Social Care and Healthier Communities

- To provide an integrated and efficient, caring, safe and collaborative social service, accessible to all.
- Prioritise and deliver the long-awaited Health Centre in Shoebury.

Finance, Assets, and Investments

- Introduce zero-based budgeting and make this standard practice within the organisation.
- Explore investment opportunities to enhance public assets such as Gypsy Bridge, Belvedere Shelter, and Sun Shelter in Leigh-on-Sea.
- Explore the potential for the development of a multi-use community space on the site of the demolished cricket pavilion in Southchurch Park and future community use of the former Leigh Police Station.
- Guarantee the retention of Southend-on-Sea City Council ownership of Leigh Library and Gardens, and Leigh Community Centre.
- Seek to increase grants awarded to Southend.

Community Safety

- Improve delivery of CCTV, increase investment in the Community Safety Team, and to continue to press for greater policing resources in the City.
- Explore the potential to increase public toilet provision around Southend, including along Eastern Esplanade and the Sea Front.

3.1 It is agreed by the Signatories that:

(a) they will support all nominations submitted by the Joint Administration for appointments to Council bodies and outside bodies

(b) they will support the Joint Administration in respect of its Budget proposals and on any confidence motion

(c) this Agreement shall constitute the whole agreement between the Signatories and will form and be informed by the Council's strategic plans and objectives

(d) this Agreement shall be reviewed on an annual basis

(e) this Agreement will allow other Signatories to join the Agreement, if the majority of the then current Signatories agree. Should this be a tied decision, the then current Leader will have a casting vote.

This Agreement has been signed by all individual members of the Signatories to confirm their agreement, this 17th day of May 2024.

Signatories from the Labour Group –

Daniel Cowan
Anne Jones
Sam Allen
Martin Berry
Margaret Borton
Laurie Burton
Matthew Dent
Madison Faulkner-Hatt
Irene Ferguson
Ian Gilbert
Lydia Hyde
Pam Kinsella
Gabriel Leroy
Shahid Nadeem
Cheryl Nevin
Jane Norman
Mandy O'Connor
Donna Richardson
Kevin Robinson
Maxine Sadza

Signatories from the Independent Group –

Susan Badger
Martin Terry
Steve Wakefield
Nick Ward

Signatories from Liberal Democrat Group –

Paul Collins
Rob McMullan
Carole Mulroney
Dave Poulton