DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
SUBJECT:	RESPONSE TO THE ACCESSIBLE SOUTHAMPTON SCRUTINY INQUIRY
DATE OF DECISION:	18 OCTOBER 2022 (POSTPONED FROM 13 SEPTEMBER 2022)
REPORT OF:	**COUNCILLOR KEOGH** **CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT & DISTRICT REGENERATION**

		CONTACT DETAILS		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None

BRIEF SUMMARY
The Accessible Southampton Scrutiny Inquiry was undertaken by the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel from October 2021 to April 2022. The remit of the Inquiry was to identify whether the physical infrastructure of the city creates barriers for disabled people to access all that Southampton has to offer, and if so, to determine what we can do as a city to address this.
The Inquiry final report and recommendations were approved by the Inquiry Panel on 28 April 2022 and subsequently presented to Cabinet in June 2022. Following consultation, attached as Appendix 3, is an Action Plan outlining the proposed response to the inquiry recommendations that Cabinet are recommended to approve.
A recommendation was to establish an Accessibility Forum for Southampton to ensure that disabled people, along with those cycling and walking, are included in participation of transport scheme and policy development. A decision is required to approve the establishment of the Forum, to replace of the existing, but dormant, Cycle Forum.

RECOMMENDATIONS:		
	(i)	To approve the response to the Accessible Southampton Scrutiny Inquiry, and accept recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 as set out in the Action Plan as attached as Appendix 3.
	(ii)	To delegate authority to Executive Director of Growth to progress the recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 identified in the Action Plan following consultation with the Cabinet Member for

		Transport and District Regeneration and the Executive Director Finance and Commercialism.
	(iii)	To note that external funding and resource opportunities will be identified to progress on recommendations 4. 8, 14, 15, 16 & 17 contained within Action Plan, following consultation with the Executive Director of Growth and the Executive Management Team, reporting back on whether to accept or reject these recommendations at a future Cabinet meeting.
	(iv))	To approve the establishment and Terms of Reference of the Southampton Accessibility Forum, to part action the recommendation to establish a Disability Access Forum, replacing the Cycle Forum, and delegate authority to Executive Director Growth, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, to administer the Forum in line with the Terms of Reference attached in Appendix 4.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	Overview and Scrutiny rules in part 4 of the Council's Constitution requires the Council to consider all inquiry reports that have been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC), and to submit a formal response to the recommendations within them.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
2.	Do Nothing. Not recommended as this as this would contravene the requirement in the Council's constitution to consider the inquiry report.
3.	<u>Reinstatement of Cycle Forum</u> Under this option, the Council could resume Cycle Forum activities using the already existing Terms of Reference, however the Cycle Forum only addresses one mode of transport, rather than considering schemes from the perspective of multiple users, inclusivity, and how schemes would be used by people using multiple transport modes at one time.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
4.	From October 2021 to April 2022 the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel conducted the Accessibility Southampton inquiry. The inquiry focused on looking at opportunities to improve the accessibility of Southampton.
5.	The set objectives of the inquiry were: • To identify whether the physical infrastructure of the city creates barriers for disabled people to access all Southampton has to offer; • To identify good practice being employed to improve the accessibility of towns and cities elsewhere; and • To identify what initiatives and approaches could work well in Southampton to improve the accessibility of the city.
6.	The Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertook the inquiry over 5 evidence gathering meetings. The Panel received presentations summarising feedback from Accessible Southampton focus group meetings convened by Spectrum CIL and attended by disabled people.

7.	In addition to hearing the views of disabled people, the Panel received information from Spectrum CIL, AccessAble, Liverpool City Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Derby City Council, The Rose Road Association, Go! Southampton, SO:Let's Connect, transport operators in Southampton, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust as well as officers from Southampton City Council.
8.	The final report was approved by the Inquiry Panel on 28 April 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 9 June 2022 and was presented to Cabinet for response on 14th June 2022. This report provides the Executive's response to the recommendations contained within the inquiry final report.
9.	The Inquiry contains 17 recommendations with implications for the Growth Directorate service areas of Planning, Leisure Services, Green City and Infrastructure as well as proposed changes of approach to communications and information sharing with customer users. Reflecting the evaluation criteria utilised for the EU Access City Award, the inquiry report identifies areas for improvement against the following key areas of accessibility: • Accessibility to the built environment and public spaces, • Accessibility to transportation and related infrastructures, • Accessibility to information and communication, • Accessibility to public facilities and services, and • Ownership and culture of accessibility. The overall recommendations from Accessible Southampton Inquiry can be accessed in Appendix 2.
10.	The response to the recommendations is set out as an Action Plan in Appendix 3. The responses are set out in the Action Plan with responsible service area, outcomes/timescales and resources required to implement. A proposed response of identifying whether to: • accept the recommendation, • further work is required on it before accepting/rejecting (e.g. to identify resources, or • to reject the recommendation. Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 are proposed to be accepted. Recommendations 4. 8, 14, 15, 16 & 17 require further work to identify and conclude as they have identified gaps in provision which will require either further investigation to identify a lead officer or service or additional funding resource . Progress on the investigation of these will be reported back at a future Cabinet meeting.
11.	*Accessibility Forum* Representations to the inquiry from disability lobby groups on the themes of 'Accessibility to transportation and related infrastructures' and 'Accessibility to the built environment and public spaces' indicated that the Council currently has no appropriate mechanism to engage with people with disabilities apart from the statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process on transport infrastructure schemes.

12.	The Action Plan recommends the establishment of 'Southampton Disability Access Forum' to ensure disability groups are consulted with at the design stage of transport projects, although the proposed Disability Access Forum will have a wider purpose to consult people with disabilities on a wide range of council service areas, including Leisure Services, Planning and Business Services. The Accessibility Forum will establish a feedback mechanism for disability groups which can lead the way for other service areas to adopt.
13.	It is proposed that a Southampton Accessibility Forum is created, replacing the currently dormant Cycle Forum. This would provide the remit for the Council to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including disabled, cycling and walking groups and those involved in Child Friendly City, on transport and other areas schemes and policies. This would enable these groups to be proactively involved in scheme and policy development at an early stage.
14.	The administration of the Accessibility Forum would be within the Transport Policy & Sustainable Travel Team of Green City & Infrastructure Service Area in consultation with other service areas and the Cabinet Member.
	The Terms of Reference for the proposed forum are in Appendix 4.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

15.	There are resource requirements for the delivery of the 17 recommendations in the Action Plan.
	For those recommendations proposed to be accepted costs will be absorbed through existing staff capacity, projects and existing capital programme. The recommendations identified as possible to take forward at this time have already been identified as priority within existing workstreams and already have progress logged against them i.e. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13
	Recommendations identified as requiring further work will need further resource planning and identification before reporting back if they are accepted.
	Recommendations 3, 10 and 16 of the Action Plan are to be delivered with or by external partners such as Go! Southampton.
16.	For the accepted recommendations, a budget allocation of £10,000 within the current approved capital programme from the annual Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block funding has been earmarked for prioritised installation of minor accessibility improvements supporting accessibility.
17.	The administration of the Accessibility Forum will be carried out by existing officers within the Transport Policy & Sustainable Travel Team of Green City & Infrastructure Service Area.
18.	As recommended, the Executive Director of Growth will be the delegated authority for taking forward the Inquiry recommendations, including seeking external funding/resource where required (in consultation with the Executive Director – Finance and Commercialisation), e.g. Recommendations 8, 14 and 17 on Action Plan, and to bring forward further recommendations to either accept or reject Inquiry recommendations based on these investigations.

Property/Other	
19.	Governance arrangements: the oversight of the implementation of this Action plan is provided by Growth Directorate initially, with consideration given to overall governance with other service areas that are contributing or have been identified as key to form joint governance.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:	
20.	Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
Other Legal Implications:	
22.	Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149 Equalities Act 2010) - requires public bodies to consider the impact on any protected characteristics and designing services and functions having regard to the need to eliminated discrimination, harassment and victimisation when making decisions about policies and services. That includes but is not limited to: - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of those without protected characteristics. - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in and improve accessibility to public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low. .
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
23.	Some elements of Action Plan require external funding to progress. While this could be considered achievable, it cannot be guaranteed and without this Action Plan may not achieve its goals. External funding will be important as internal budget pressures will not allow for progress against certain recommendations e.g.8, which recommends the employment of a dedicated Access Officer. This cannot be actioned until the council exits the current period of restricted spending and/or external funding opportunities are identified.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
24.	Implementing the recommendations from the Accessible Southampton inquiry would support the delivery of the following objectives within Southampton City Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2025 and the Southampton City Strategy 2015-25: - Wellbeing - people can start well, live well, age well, and live happy and fulfilling lives…. A city that prevents and intervenes early, promotes wellbeing, and allows people to live independently for longer. - A council that works for and with you - grow and deliver a great customer experience, opening doors and "minds" to working with partners across the city and the globe to solve the great challenges our city faces.

KEY DECISION?	Yes	
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All	

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<tr><td colspan="3" align="center"><u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Appendices</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td colspan="2">Scrutiny Inquiry Panel Final Report June 2022</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td colspan="2">Scrutiny Inquiry Conclusion and Recommendations</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td colspan="2">Scrutiny Inquiry Executive Response & Action Plan</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td colspan="2">Accessibility Forum Terms of Reference</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Documents In Members' Rooms</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td colspan="2">None</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Equality Impact Assessment</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.</td><td>Yes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Data Protection Impact Assessment</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.</td><td>No</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Other Background Documents
Other Background documents available for inspection at:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Title of Background Paper(s)</td><td>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>None</td><td></td></tr>
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