

Merton Council

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

23 January 2019

Supplementary agenda

- 7 Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2019-2023: comments and recommendations from the overview and scrutiny panels 1 - 6

The Chair has approved late publication of this item so that the references from the Scrutiny panels could be discussed.

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Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 23 January 2019

Wards: All

Subject: **Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2019-2023: comments and recommendations from the overview and scrutiny panels**

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

Contact officer: Julia Regan; Julia.regan@merton.gov.uk; 020 8545 3864

Recommendations:

- A That in determining its response to Cabinet on the business plan 2019-23, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission considers and takes into account the comments and recommendations made by the overview and scrutiny panels.
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the comments and recommendations of each of the overview and scrutiny panels following consideration of the business plan. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is recommended to take these into account when determining its response to Cabinet.

2. DETAILS

- 2.1 On 10 December 2018, Cabinet agreed to forward a draft business plan for consideration by scrutiny, including draft revenue savings proposals, draft service plans, draft equalities assessments and latest amendments to the capital programme.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has a constitutional duty to coordinate the scrutiny responses on the business plan and budget formulation. The outcome of scrutiny by the panels (described in section 3 below) is presented to Commission for this purpose.
- 2.3 The substantive report on the Business Plan 2019-2023 is contained elsewhere on this agenda for the Commission's consideration.

3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

- 3.1 Appendix 1 contains comments and recommendations made by the scrutiny panels.
- 3.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is recommended to consider the comments and recommendations put forward by the scrutiny panels when determining its overall scrutiny response to Cabinet on the Business Plan 2019-23.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to consider the comments and recommendations put forward by the overview and scrutiny panels and to agree a joint overview and scrutiny response. Cabinet is then required under the terms of the Constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny.

5. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 5.1 The Constitution contains the requirements for consulting scrutiny on the budget and business plan. There is an initial phase of scrutiny in November each year, with the second round in January/February representing the formal consultation of scrutiny on the proposed Business Plan, Budget and Capital Programme.

6. TIMETABLE

- 6.1 Round one of scrutiny of the 2019-23 Business Plan was undertaken as follows:-

- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 1 November 2018
- Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 6 November 2018
- Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 7 November 2018
- Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 14 November 2018

- 6.2 Round two of scrutiny of the Business Plan was undertaken as follows:-

- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 9 January 2019
- Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 16 January 2019
- Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 10 January 2019
- Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 23 January 2019

- 6.4 The responses from round two will be presented to Cabinet on 18 February 2019. A meeting of full Council will then take place on 6 March 2019.

7. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 These are detailed in the substantive reports elsewhere on this agenda and in the reports considered by Cabinet in October and December.

8. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The process for developing the budget and business plan is set out in Part 4C of the Council's Constitution. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and panels with regard to the development of the budget and business plan is set out in Part 4E of the Constitution.

- 8.2 The legal and statutory implications relating to the Business Plan are contained in the reports elsewhere on this agenda.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None directly relating to this report.

10. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 These implications are detailed in the reports elsewhere on this agenda.

12. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix 1: comments and recommendations made by the scrutiny panels in relation to the Business Plan 2019-23.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 Minutes of the meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels in January 2019

References/Comments from Scrutiny Panels to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission 23 January 2019

Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2019-2023

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel: 9 January 2019

The Panel discussed each of the new savings proposals and asked questions of clarification on these and on items in the capital programme and the draft service plans. A motion was put forward and lost on one of the proposed savings.

The Panel noted that there was not a savings item in relation to Christmas parking and RESOLVED that “once the Christmas parking analysis is concluded, the results be brought to the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel for comment.”

The Panel was disappointed, but accepted Cabinet’s response to its budget round one recommendation asking Cabinet to “consider increasing the capital spend on street trees and other associated landscaping by 10% to help improve the Borough’s air quality offset by reducing equivalent spend on fleet vehicles”. Cabinet was broadly in support but said that the proposal to use the money saved to increase capital spending on trees would need further work to assess whether that would be an appropriate use of the money as this may generate additional ongoing maintenance costs. The Director of Environment and Regeneration informed the Panel that there may be other ways of delivering additional trees through the planning process by placing an emphasis on landscaping in new applications.

Healthier Communities and Older People O&S Panel: 10 January 2019

The budget discussion at the Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel recognised the need to make savings.

It was acknowledged that saving CH90, Out of Borough Placements, would enable some vulnerable people to move from outside the borough and live in local placements and be closer to friends and family.

In discussion on CH89, Older People Day Activities, some members wanted to recommend that at least one day centre remain open. This was not supported by the majority of panel members who did not wish to pre-empt the outcome of a review of what provision will be required to meet the needs of this group.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel: 16 January 2019

The Panel noted that the budget for the Children, Schools and Families Department was balanced for 2019-20 but that there was a large budget gap of £1.8 million of savings still to find for 20-21. The Director of Children, Schools and Families explained that work was ongoing to consider savings in all areas of the department but she did not believe that any easy savings would be found.

The Panel noted that three (CSF 2018-11, CSF 2018-12 and CSF 2018-07) of the savings had an equality impact assessment of 3, (meaning that they would have a high impact but mitigation may be possible). Regarding CSF 2018-07 the Panel noted that work with young people who were not in education or training (NEET) would continue and there would be a focus on the most vulnerable young people.

The Panel noted the work already done regarding saving costs on School Transport and that ideas will be shared with neighbouring boroughs. Officers were asked if they could bring forward any savings, but replied that they would rather carry out cost cutting in a careful and planned way and not make cuts before they were needed.

Two motions were proposed but both were lost. However the Panel did agree that at the appropriate time a further Task Group on Revenue Generation by Schools could be considered for inclusion in the work programme.

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