

Merton Council

Council meeting

Membership

The Mayor: Councillor Mary Curtin

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor Geraldine Stanford

Councillors: Agatha Mary Akyigyina OBE, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Eloise Bailey, Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Hina Bokhari, Kelly Braund, Mike Brunt, Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Anthony Fairclough, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Edward Gretton, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard, Natasha Irons, Mark Kenny, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Paul Kohler, Rebecca Lanning, Najeeb Latif, Edith Macauley MBE, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Simon McGrath, Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Aidan Mundy, Hayley Ormrod, Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, Carl Quilliam, David Simpson CBE, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Eleanor Stringer, Dave Ward, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson and David Williams

Date: Wednesday 3 April 2019

Time: 7.15 pm

Venue: Council chamber - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

This is a public meeting and attendance by the public is encouraged and welcomed. For more information about the agenda please contact

democratic.services@merton.gov.uk or telephone [020 8545 3616](tel:02085453616).

All Press contacts: communications@merton.gov.uk, 020 8545 3181

Council meeting

3 April 2019

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Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that matter and must not participate in any vote on that matter. If members consider they should not participate because of a non-pecuniary interest which may give rise to a perception of bias, they should declare this, withdraw and not participate in consideration of the item. For further advice please speak with the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance.

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Agenda Item 3

BUDGET COUNCIL
6 MARCH 2019

(7.15 pm - 10.11 pm)

PRESENT The Mayor, Councillor Mary Curtin
 The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Geraldine Stanford

Councillors Agatha Mary Akyigyina OBE, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Eloise Bailey, Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Hina Bokhari, Kelly Braund, Mike Brunt, Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Anthony Fairclough, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Edward Gretton, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard, Natasha Irons, Mark Kenny, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Paul Kohler, Rebecca Lanning, Najeeb Latif, Edith Macauley MBE, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Simon McGrath, Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Aidan Mundy, Hayley Ormrod, Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, Carl Quilliam, David Simpson CBE, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Eleanor Stringer, Dave Ward, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson and David Williams

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest made.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS TWO MEETINGS HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2019 (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the ordinary and extraordinary meetings held on 6 February 2019 are agreed as an accurate record.

The Leader of the Council then led a tribute to Councillor Oonagh Moulton, who had stepped down as Leader of the Opposition at the last meeting of the Council. Councillor Nick McLean, Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Anthony Fairclough, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and Councillor Peter Southgate, Leader of the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents all spoke, paying tribute to Councillor Moulton's time as Opposition Group Leader. Councillor Edith Macauley also spoke, giving her thanks.

4 BUSINESS PLAN 2019-23 (Agenda Item 4)

The Mayor outlined the procedure for this Budget Council meeting. She also reminded the Council that all budget related decisions, including proposed amendments, were required to be recorded within the minutes with a list of the names of those who voted for or against the decision or who abstained from voting. To accommodate that, a roll call vote would be taken for the substantive budget motion and any amendments to it.

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Director of Corporate Services presented the Business Plan 2019-2023. The Director then responded to questions from Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, Oonagh Moulton, Simon McGrath, Owen Pritchard, David Simpson, Paul Kohler, Pauling Cowper, Janice Howard, Russell Makin, Brenda Fraser, James Holmes, Abdul Latif and Nigel Benbow.

The Leader of the Council presented the Business Plan 2019-23 and formally moved the recommendations in the report whilst making his budget speech to Council, a copy of which is appended to the minutes as Appendix A.

Councillor Tobin Byers formally seconded the recommendations, and reserved his right to speak.

The Mayor then invited the opposition Group Leaders in turn to respond to the Budget proposal and the Business Plan.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Nick McLean addressed the meeting and his speech is attached to the minutes, as Appendix B. As part of his speech, he presented the proposed amendment to the Business Plan 2019-23.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Anthony Fairclough, addressed the meeting, and his speech is attached to the minutes, as Appendix C. As part of his speech, he presented the proposed amendments to the Business Plan 2019-23.

The Leader of the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents Group, Councillor Peter Southgate, addressed the meeting and his speech is attached to the minutes, as Appendix D.

The following members of the Cabinet addressed the meeting: Councillors Mark Allison, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah and Kelly Braund.

The Mayor then invited members to move proposed amendments to the Business Plan.

Councillor Nick McLean moved the Conservative amendment which was seconded by Councillor David Williams.

Councillor Anthony Fairclough moved the Liberal Democrat amendment 1 which was seconded by Councillor Eloise Bailey.

Councillor Anthony Fairclough moved the Liberal Democrat amendment 2 which was seconded by Councillor Eloise Bailey.

Councillor Anthony Fairclough moved the Liberal Democrat amendment 3 which was seconded by Councillor Eloise Bailey.

Councillor Anthony Fairclough moved the Liberal Democrat amendment 4 which was seconded by Councillor Eloise Bailey.

The Mayor then opened up the general debate on the proposed amendments and on the proposed substantive Business Plan. The following members spoke in the debate: Councillors Billy Christie, Hayley Ormrod, Marsie Skeete, Daniel Holden, Carl Quilliam, Nick Draper, David Dean, Eleanor Stringer, Stephen Crowe, John Dehaney, Edward Gretton, Joan Henry, Adam Bush, Dave Ward, Omar Bush, Hina Bokhari, Rebecca Lanning, Andrew Howard, Sally Kenny, Paul Kohler, Dennis Pearce, Mark Kenny, Natasha Irons, Aidan Mundy, Ben Butler, Laxmi Attawar, Martin Whelton, David Williams and, finally, Tobin Byers.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Mayor called for a roll-call vote on the Conservative amendment to the Business Plan 2019-2023. Voting was as follows:

Votes in favour: Councillors Eloise Bailey, Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Hina Bokhari, Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Anthony Fairclough, Edward Gretton, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard, Paul Kohler, Najeeb Latif, Simon McGrath, Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Hayley Ormrod, Carl Quilliam, David Simpson and David Williams (23)

Votes against: Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Kelly Braund, Mike Brunt, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Joan Henry, Natasha Irons, Mark Kenny, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Rebecca Lanning, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Aidan Mundy, Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Eleanor Stringer, Dave Ward, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson, the Deputy Mayor Councillor Geraldine Stanford and the Mayor, Councillor Mary Curtin (37)

The Mayor declared the amendment to be lost.

The Mayor then called for a roll-call vote on the Liberal Democrat amendment 1 to the Business Plan 2019-2023. Voting was as follows:

Votes in favour: *Councillors Eloise Bailey, Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Hina Bokhari, Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Anthony Fairclough, Edward Gretton, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard, Paul Kohler, Najeeb Latif, Simon McGrath, Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Hayley Ormrod, Carl Quilliam, David Simpson and David Williams (23)*

Votes against: *Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Kelly Braund, Mike Brunt, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Joan Henry, Natasha Irons, Mark Kenny, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Rebecca Lanning, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Aidan Mundy, Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Eleanor Stringer, Dave Ward, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson, the Deputy Mayor Councillor Geraldine Stanford and the Mayor, Councillor Mary Curtin (37)*

The Mayor declared the amendment to be lost.

The Mayor then called for a roll-call vote on the Liberal Democrat amendment 2 to the Business Plan 2019-2023. Voting was as follows:

Votes in favour: *Councillors Eloise Bailey, Hina Bokhari, Anthony Fairclough, Paul Kohler, Simon McGrath and Carl Quilliam (6)*

Votes against: *Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Kelly Braund, Mike Brunt, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Joan Henry, Natasha Irons, Mark Kenny, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Rebecca Lanning, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Aidan Mundy, Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Eleanor Stringer, Dave Ward, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson, the Deputy Mayor Councillor Geraldine Stanford and the Mayor, Councillor Mary Curtin (37)*

Not voting: *Councillors Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Edward Gretton, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard, Najeeb Latif, Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Hayley Ormrod, David Simpson and David Williams (17)*

The Mayor declared the amendment to be lost.

Councillor David Williams advised that, due to the next amendment relating to the establishment of a Landlord Licensing scheme, he would be declaring an interest and leaving the chamber as he was a landlord of a property in the borough.

The Monitoring Officer advised that in his view Councillor Williams had no interest to declare. As with voting on council tax, it was likely there would be a significant number of people affected and he could therefore remain in the chamber and vote.

Councillor James Holmes sought clarification that the same advice applied to him, as a landlord in the borough. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that his view was that there was no interest to declare.

The Mayor then called for a roll-call vote on the Liberal Democrat amendment 3 to the Business Plan 2019-2023. Voting was as follows:

Votes in favour: Councillors Eloise Bailey, Hina Bokhari, Anthony Fairclough, Paul Kohler, Simon McGrath and Carl Quilliam (6)

Votes against: Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Kelly Braund, Mike Brunt, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Joan Henry, Natasha Irons, Mark Kenny, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Rebecca Lanning, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Aidan Mundy, Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Eleanor Stringer, Dave Ward, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson, the Deputy Mayor Councillor Geraldine Stanford and the Mayor, Councillor Mary Curtin (37)

Not voting: Councillors Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Edward Gretton, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard, Najeeb Latif, Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Hayley Ormrod, David Simpson and David Williams (17)

The Mayor declared the amendment to be lost.

The Mayor then called for a roll-call vote on the Liberal Democrat amendment 4 to the Business Plan 2019-2023. Voting was as follows:

Votes in favour: Councillors Eloise Bailey, Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Hina Bokhari, Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Anthony Fairclough, Edward Gretton, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard,

Paul Kohler, Najeeb Latif, Simon McGrath, Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Hayley Ormrod, Carl Quilliam, David Simpson and David Williams (23)

Votes against: Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Kelly Braund, Mike Brunt, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Joan Henry, Natasha Irons, Mark Kenny, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Rebecca Lanning, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Aidan Mundy, Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Eleanor Stringer, Dave Ward, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson, the Deputy Mayor Councillor Geraldine Stanford and the Mayor, Councillor Mary Curtin (37)

The Mayor declared the amendment to be lost.

The Mayor then called for a roll-call vote on the substantive motion for the Business Plan 2019-23. Voting was as follows:

Votes in favour: Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Kelly Braund, Mike Brunt, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Joan Henry, Natasha Irons, Mark Kenny, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Rebecca Lanning, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Aidan Mundy, Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Eleanor Stringer, Dave Ward, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson, the Deputy Mayor Councillor Geraldine Stanford and the Mayor, Councillor Mary Curtin (37)

Votes against: Councillors Eloise Bailey, Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Hina Bokhari, Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Anthony Fairclough, Edward Gretton, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard, Paul Kohler, Najeeb Latif, Simon McGrath, Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Hayley Ormrod, Carl Quilliam, David Simpson and David Williams (23)

RESOLVED:

That the Council agrees the Business Plan 2019-23 including:

- A) the General Fund Budget;
- B) the Council Tax Strategy for 2019/20 equating to a Band D Council Tax of £1,227.82, which is an increase of below 5%, inclusive of 2% Adult Social Care flexibility;
- C) the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2019-2023;

- D) the Capital Investment Programme (as detailed in Annex 1 to the Capital Strategy);
 - E) the Capital Strategy (Section 1, A)
 - F) the Treasury Management Strategy (Section 1, A), including the detailed recommendations in that Section, incorporating the Prudential Indicators as set out in this report;
- and agrees the formal resolutions as set out in Appendix 1 to the report as follows:

Revenue Report:

1. Members consider the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission set out in a separate report on the agenda (Item 6), and approve the proposed budget for 2019/20 set out in Section 2 of the revenue report, together with the proposed Council Tax levy in 2019/20.
2. That it be noted that at its meeting on 10 December 2018 the Council calculated its **Council Tax Base for the year as 74,951.7** in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012(SI 2012: 2914).
3. That it be noted that the Council calculated the **Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators (WPCC) Tax Base for the year as 11,464.4** in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
4. That the Council agrees 4(a) - 4(i) below, which are calculated in accordance with Section 31A to 49B of the Localism Act 2011, amending Section 32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
 - a) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) (a) to (f) of the Act

	£m
Gross Revenue	546.797
Expenditure of Service Committees	(3.777)
Corporate Provisions	0.949
Amounts Payable to the Levying Bodies	(4.186)
Contribution to/(from) Financial Reserves	539.783
Gross Expenditure	

- b) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act

	£m
Gross Income	(447.413)

c) being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year

	£m
Council Tax Requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2017/18 (including special expenses re WPCC)	92.370

d) being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of revenue support grant, and baseline funding (NNDR) to constitute the Council's Settlement Funding Assessment

	£m
Revenue Support Grant including Transition Grant	0
Baseline funding NNDR inc. top-up & Section 31 Grant	(44.026)
Settlement Funding Assessment	(44.026)

e) being the amount at 4(c) above, divided by the amount for Council Tax Base at 2 above, calculated by the Council above, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including special items (WPCC)).

	£
Merton's General Band D Council Tax Levy (including properties within Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators area)	1,232.39

f) being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act

	£
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Special Levy	342,822

g) being the amount at 4(e) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at 4(f) above by the amount of the Council Tax Base at 2 above in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items (WPCC special levy) relates.

	£
Merton's General Band D Council Tax Levy (excluding WPCC)	1,227.82

h) being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(g) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in the area of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators (WPCC) mentioned above at

4(f) divided by the amount at 3 above, calculated in accordance with Section 34(1) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in the area of WPCC.

	£
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators Band D	1,257.72

i) being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 4(g) and 4(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

Part of the Council's Area	Valuation Bands							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
	818.55	954.97	1091.40	1227.82	1500.67	1773.52	2046.37	2455.64
Parts inc. WPCC	838.48	978.23	1117.97	1,257.72	1,537.21	1,816.71	2,096.20	2,515.44

5. To note that the Greater London Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below, and that the Council agrees the Council Tax levy for 2019/20 by taking the aggregate of 4(i) above and the Greater London Authority precept.

Precepting authority	Valuation Bands							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
GLA	213.67	249.29	284.90	320.51	391.73	462.96	534.18	641.02

For information purposes this would result in the following Council Tax Levy for Merton residents:

Part of the Council's Area	Valuation Bands							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
	1,032.22	1,204.26	1,376.30	1,548.33	1,892.40	2,236.48	2,580.55	3,096.66
Parts inc. WPCC	1,052.15	1,227.52	1,402.87	1578.23	1,928.94	2,279.67	2,630.38	3,156.46

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Appendix 1

Speech by Cllr Stephen Alambritis the Leader of Merton to the Council Budget Meeting on Wednesday 06 March 2019 at 7:15pm and in the Council Chamber at the London Borough of Merton being situate at the Civic Centre on the London Road in Morden Surrey SM4 5DX

Madam Mayor,

Tonight I report on an administration on course to be London's best council
I report on our 1,800 employees working across four departments delivering services to 200,000 residents

Tonight I present a budget for Merton's Families

And I confirm Labour in Merton delivering on its manifesto pledges

Madam Mayor,

Merton is stronger because we did not seek short term fixes but pursued a medium term financial strategy

The people of Merton are satisfied because whatever the challenge, however strong the pushback, we have held to our July Principles set out in 2011

Madam Mayor,

I must now tell the Chamber that we face a new challenge

The Tory Government is in free fall over Brexit

Merton is not immune to the Brexit shock and slowdown

But we are not weak

We have a choice

We can choose to buckle under the Brexit uncertainty or we can be a force for local stability

In this Budget we choose to be a force for local stability by putting Merton's families first

Madam Mayor,

Our School Improvement Team continues to work miracles

Good and outstanding Schools

The opening of a new secondary school, with a new building in South Wimbledon on the way

Record numbers of parents getting their first preference in their choice of school

Our Leisure Department

Albeit small in number it delivers big on impact

Like a brand new Morden Leisure Centre in Morden Park nicely nestled between St Helier and Cannon Hill Wards

Merton's children's Services

Rated Good with Outstanding features on Safeguarding on Adoption and crucially in leadership

Keeping all children's centres open

Madam Mayor,

Let me turn to our care for the most vulnerable in Merton

Council tax rebates for low paid families now in their 7th continuous year

Adult Social Care services that are the envy of other boroughs

Opening a new centre for adults with disabilities at Leyton Road in Abbey Ward
A Strategic Partner Programme that has allocated £4m to health and wellbeing groups

A review of the lunch club provision to modernise the offering to residents
Labour in Merton Looking after our young people and looking after our senior citizens

But Madam Mayor,

We need savings to continue to look after young and old alike

We are doing just that with our new waste collection service

The new service is saving us much needed money

While leading to an increase in recycling to over 40% and rising

While leading to a decrease of 330 tonnes per month sent to landfill

Madam Mayor,

We continue to tackle the scourge of fly tipping that is a national crisis with one million fly tips in the UK last year according to DEFRA's own figures

And Merton will be taking part in the biggest mass-action environmental campaign called the Great British Spring Clean promoted by the Keep Britain Tidy group

Madam Mayor,

This Chamber is aware of my pro-development approach

That is why we have a Future Merton Team delivering on housing, on regeneration and on exciting plans for Morden Town Centre

Working on the Wimbledon Masterplan and Rediscovering Mitcham with improvement plans for Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon

Madam Mayor,

The Local Government Association tell us of the 60% cut in local government funding since 2010

And yes, Local authorities are at breaking point and some have gone over like Conservative Northampton

Madam Mayor

I now move to present Labour's 9th budget since we took back the administration in 2010, held it in 2014 held it again in 2018 and in football parlance Madam Mayor that's a hat trick of election victories!

We are tonight presenting an increase in the council tax of below 5% inclusive of 2% to provide for Adult Social Care flexibility.

Madam Mayor,

I therefore move the business plan and the budget proposals as set out in Recommendation 1 with particular reference to the formal Resolutions as set out in Appendix 1 to the Report before us tonight

In doing so I want to single out a few people for special thanks

Mark Allison my deputy leader and cabinet member for finance

All councillors who chair and who sit on our scrutiny panels

Thanks also go to Cllr Peter Southgate the chair of scrutiny

To my cabinet members and to all my councillors on this side of the chamber

To the former leader of the Opposition, Cllr Oonagh Moulton and to the current leader Cllr Nick McLean for stepping up to the plate and congratulations from me on your new position and to all their councillors on that side of the chamber
And can I also thank Cllr Anthony Fairclough and his Liberal colleagues for their contributions
Finally a really big thank you to our Director of Corporate Services Caroline Holland
Madam Mayor,

We always take action for those facing difficulties in every budget we have given

And this Budget is no different

We are exempting care leavers in the borough from paying council tax until age 25
This follows an excellent campaign by the Children's Society
And this is what that Charity says about Merton's Labour policy for our care leavers

*"The Children's Society is pleased to learn that Merton will beexempting care leavers from paying council tax.
This change will make a huge difference to the lives of vulnerable young people....."*

Caring Merton. Labour Merton, Madam Mayor.

Our young people, indeed all people, do not deserve a Tory government wreaking havoc by its appalling handling of Brexit

Let me explain to the Chamber what Brexit means to a Local Authority like Merton
Madam Mayor

Low business confidence especially in the High Street will hurt our business rate potential at a time when we are increasingly reliant on that income stream
Leaving the EU will impact on our ability to deliver care services because of a future lack of care workers due to Brexit
This council is not standing still on Brexit
We have set up a corporate task group with Director and Cabinet Member involvement
We will be on hand to help our EU citizens gain Settled Status Madam Mayor
And we will continue to lobby the Government in defence of our 20,000 EU nationals living in the borough

Madam Mayor,
Whilst this Tory Government is imploding over Brexit its own Ministers are congratulating us
For example, the Conservative Education Secretary Damian Hinds MP has recently written to our schools congratulating them on the very high level of progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
Another Minister is also praiseworthy of our Library service
Conservative Culture Minister, Michael Ellis applauded Merton's award winning libraries during his recent visit, noted the great work being done in Merton and how this should be the blueprint, the blueprint, for libraries across the country

Madam Mayor,
Of equal importance are the views of our residents
The last Annual Residents' Survey revealed record high levels of satisfaction with council services and several "best evers"

Madam Mayor,
Residents also rightly look to the administration to deliver on its manifesto pledges
And we are:
On rolling out a borough wide 20mph speed limit
On air quality by working with the Mayor of London on introducing air quality measures
On bringing home AFC Wimbledon
On completing the new leisure centre
On defending our residents against a Tory hard Brexit
On continuing to offer council tax support
On fighting Tory cuts to schools and care services
On driving up recycling rates
On fighting to save our schools
And on fighting for more bobbies on our streets

Madam Mayor,
Nine years ago we set out a long term business-like plan
Because we wanted to make sure Merton never again was powerless in the face of Tory austerity
Nine years later our borough is safe for residents with strong community cohesion with people feeling proud and not discriminated against
But the Tory Brexit storm clouds are gathering
Our response to this challenge must and can be quick
We act now so our residents don't have to lose out later

And so this is our Budget Madam Mayor
One that leads to an ever safe borough
One that cares for our children
One that looks after the vulnerable
One that gets investors investing in Merton
I commend to the Chamber a Budget that puts Merton's families first
Madam Mayor, thank you.

ENDS

Councillor Nick McLean, Leader of the Conservative Group

Thank you Madam Mayor – I may have been born in New Zealand but Merton is my home – and I care passionately about the community I live in and represent in Cannon Hill.

I am a new Leader, elected in 2018 and the past is behind. Indeed, I make the Leader of the Liberal Democrats look practically establishment.

I am grateful for the courtesies extended to me by Officers and Members from across the Chamber as I embark on this challenge.

Madam Mayor – I did not enter politics to manage lives – I want to make lives better. I do not believe in excessive managerialism and top down bureaucracy – I am resentful of the words tax and ban.

I believe politicians must strive to create an environment where an individual is able to take decisions for themselves and their families,

where family, friends and the community are the support network;

- and the state the safety net.

I am a democrat – it does not matter how you vote, but that your vote matters. I have strong values – Conservative values.

- Opportunity for all;
- In life you should be rewarded for the endeavour you put in;
- And you never pull one person up by pulling another one down.

I reject the politics of envy and class warfare...I believe in aspiration and helping people get on in life – and what's more I am proud of it.

Madam Mayor, Local Government authorities across the UK are facing budgetary restraints. But let us be reminded why those difficult decisions have been necessary – in 2008 the then Labour Government crashed the economy.

Once again a Labour Government had run out of other people's money to spend. Contrast that with the jobs miracle under this Conservative Government

- 32.6 million people in work
- And soon, for each and every one of those people in work, one of the highest minimum wages in the world.

We understand that a dynamic business environment is essential to the vibrancy and growth of the borough – creating the opportunity for the new start-up or budding entrepreneur to succeed – championing business hubs so that residents can work

and live close by – removing the need to travel, reducing air pollution and creating a better work life balance – a sustainable future for Merton.

Conservatives creating jobs for residents of Merton.

For the many – not the few.

Madam Mayor, there is a common theme when it comes to Labour and money – that is mismanagement – and Merton Labour are no different.

This administration has now tottered into its ninth year

- nine years of failing adequately to prepare for grant reductions;
- nine years of failing to maximise innovation and efficiency;
- nine years of failing to make the right decisions for Merton.

And Madam Mayor – it has become quite apparent that without the high quality guidance from the Senior Officer team then things could be so much worse.

Rather than step-up to the challenges this Administration showed a lack of political courage. That is why the Council now faces budgetary headwinds in the years ahead.

For too long Merton Labour have hidden behind and misrepresented the Conservative's deficit reduction programme – refusing to take responsibility for their own budget decisions.

On this side of the Chamber we are all instinctively drawn to living within our means.

Low tax and low spend.

Merton Labour on the other hand are low tax and over spend.

And not only do they run down our finances, they also seem determined to run down our borough.

Madam Mayor, after the Merton hall disgrace you would think that Merton Labour would cease the cultural vandalism – but no they were at it again.

Fortunately, a Conservative led scrutiny revolt stopped the mothballing of Morden Park House – an historic building and the only registry office in the borough.

And when they were asked at Cabinet why it was removed, Cllr Allison mumbled that 'the business case has not been made,' well if it hadn't been made then why did they include it on the first place?

I am a small businessman – not a past spokesman for small business – and I know what 'business-like' really means – and that is not the actions of a business like council.

And Madam Mayor whilst we will support some of the Liberal Democrat amendments in particular tonight we will not support their second amendment the Merton Wellbeing Innovation Fund as the business case has simply not been made – have they been taking advice from Cllr Allison?

The contempt with which Merton Labour seem to hold the Borough's much-loved historic buildings is only matched by the contempt they seem to have for its residents.

This Labour Administration constantly seeks to abdicate responsibility and attempt to shift the blame – well it will not go unchallenged in this chamber anymore.

The deficit we have today has been caused by this administration's financial mismanagement.

Yes Local Government is being asked to do more, with less.

But as countless other local authorities take steps to manage this, this hard-hearted Labour administration tries to balance the books on the back of our children – what a disgrace.

Madam Mayor – our amendment puts the children of Merton first,

It commits £20,000 to improve our air quality around local schools;

Ensures Little Leagues are free at the point of use;

Allows Merton Music Foundation to continue to operate.

Takes genuine steps to improve the air that we breathe – instead of using air quality as an excuse for a stealth tax on those in our borough who don't vote Labour.

Last week I visited Cricket Green School in Mitcham – a fantastic school and rightly held in high esteem by this Council.

The children had recently finished planting new trees – trees which are desperately needed in this area of high pollution.

Today, I visited, with Nigel Benbow, Merton Abbey School – another excellent school – and again located in an area of high pollution.

Now think of the good we could do for Merton's future and the wellbeing of our children if we have this £20,000 to allow local schools to plant trees – it is a ground-breaking policy that should not be kept in the shade. It puts our children first and helps us all.

Last Saturday, along with Cllr David Dean, I met with Little League volunteers and organisers at the Prince Georges Fields to discuss the challenges that they now face because of Cllr Alambritis' indefensible decision to start charging for pitch use – a policy he said he would not do.

Now I appreciate that it is a difficult time for him to talk football.

But just because his beloved Fulham seem destined for the drop.

There is no need to relegate the sporting chances of our Borough.

Which is why we are determined to reverse this policy.

But Merton Labour's desire to end things that local children benefit from and enjoy does not stop there.

Madam Mayor – Merton Music Foundation provide high quality musical education for children throughout the London Borough of Merton.

By cutting their budget, this Labour administration is depriving children of all socio-economic backgrounds the opportunity of an enriched musical experience.

I ask colleagues opposite to think of this, and change their tune.

Madam Mayor – we are also seeking to remove Labour's misguided tax on parked cars – a discriminatory tax that will not improve air quality in this Borough.

Under this Labour Administration there exists an unacceptable and shameful 9 years of healthy living gap between people living in the most and least deprived areas of Merton.

To reduce this gap smarter policies are needed – like Low Emission bus zones as introduced on Putney High Street which has led to a reduction in Nitrogen Dioxide of 87%.

Madam Mayor – if this Council does not pass this amendment, they will be endorsing worse air quality and shutting out children from the pleasure of music and the opportunity to play football with their friends.

It is in the Borough's best interest to have happy, healthy children, with a rounded education who are not learning in schools surrounded by pollution. Conservatives are passionate about equality, protecting the less well off and on the side of young people in Merton

Our amendment puts our children first – we are giving this Council the chance to do the right thing – to change the Administration's mind, so; Councillors – vote with your conscience – and for this amendment, which I so move.

-END-

Cllr Anthony Fairclough, Liberal Democrat group leader, budget speech 6 Mar 2019

Madame Mayor, we were told that austerity was over.

But on all sides of the chamber, we must realise that's not true.

The current and future cuts that Merton needs to make go way beyond what can be delivered through efficiency savings.

So we on the Liberal Democrat benches join others in calling on the Government to reverse its continued underfunding of local government.

And whilst we do not agree with a significant number of the planned cuts in this budget, the constraints of the budget don't offer much in the way of opportunities.

Nonetheless, Madame Mayor, while difficult choices need to be made, the administration can set its priorities within that framework

And so we will propose amendments that reflect clear priorities.

But first I want to turn to the plans of the administration and of the opposition, as Councillor McLean has just so eloquently outlined.

It is regrettable, we think, that some of the situation we find ourselves in has been exacerbated by the administration, sometimes with 'short term fixes'.

The Conservative majority Government didn't continue Coalition policy of giving Merton extra cash to "freeze" the Council Tax, so there are now bigger and faster jumps in Council Tax rises to make up that gap and worse cuts to services.

A lesson for us all there.

There is quite a lot of vagueness in the savings pack. Many of the longer-term savings are "reviews" – meaning future cuts to services that we are being asked take it on trust that the detail can be sorted out later.

Madame Mayor, I think we should ask ourselves whether that's good enough, for us and for our constituents. And then whether there might be a better way?

Looking now to the opposition benches, I have sometimes wondered whether the Conservative group wants its plans implemented.

Their 2018 manifesto would have cost local taxpayers millions extra: often expecting residents to pick up the tab where the Conservative Government rolled back the state.

For example, whatever the Opposition's position on the waste contract and weekly bin collections, breaking the Veolia contract – whether now or in six years – will cost residents dearly.

But they have been really clear about one thing – continuously trying to push cuts onto the most financially vulnerable in the borough, most recently last November in the debate on the Council Tax support scheme when they tried to take away essential Council tax benefits for those on the lowest incomes.

With respect, we demand more and better from the official opposition.

Although we are pleased to see several of our campaign themes reflected in the Conservative budget amendment, looking at the detail they're just kicking the can down the road until next year by draining the reserves. It's quite ironic to hear that our amendment didn't make a business case, when your entire business case is draining down the reserves. As we've already heard, the *Balancing the Budget reserve* will be fully utilised already by 2021, and your plans simply drain that more quickly.

This is not the budget amendment of a Conservative group looking to become the administration.

As we favour open debate, last night I sent all the Group leaders copies of the Liberal Democrat amendments, so hopefully all have had a chance to think about our proposals.

And I welcome that the Conservative group, also shared the text of their proposals this morning.

Cllrs Quilliam, Bokhari and Kohler will talk to our amendments in more detail, but I will outline them briefly here.

Amendments 1 and 2 seek to mitigate some of the worst aspects of cuts to social care.

We would keep two vital support workers for children and their families at the Bond Road Centre.

We believe that the charges for blue badges are both unnecessary and unfair.

Our new Wellbeing Innovation Fund will help establish new ways to continue vital services and promote independence.

Amendment 3 looks at developing some new and interesting ideas around revenue growth, and pushing the Council to rethink previous short-term decisions.

We can learn from other Councils.

Like Stockport, we could create a Strategic Roads Fund to invest in improving our roads now, to save in the long run.

It might not come as any surprise that a Lib Dems group is proposing fixing potholes!

We could look to Westminster or Kensington & Chelsea to set up a voluntary Council Tax donation scheme. Here in Merton we want an Education Innovation Fund from that.

Continuing to let Merton's Little League football charities use local parks for free maintains the fantastic work open to all.

Amendment four is about stepping in to protect community policing. And despite what a former Merton councillor – currently, I think, the Prime Minister, may say about there being no link between police cuts and knife crime, we prefer to stick with evidence.

Together, our four amendments help residents during uncertain times, whilst recognising the difficult financial environment for the Council.

Surely by working together across the chamber, things can only get better ...

Thank you, Madame Mayor

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MPWIR – BUDGET 2019/20

Thank you Madam Mayor. Tonight marks the culmination of a long process of budget scrutiny starting back last November, so in the short time available to me I want to reflect on that process, and to consider whether we can improve on it in future years.

The challenge facing us tonight is that a significant proportion of the savings we are about to approve will fail. In the event we will be unable to implement or deliver them. If you doubt me, take a look at the projected out turn for the current year. Against a target for savings of £6.6m we are on course to deliver £5.4m, a shortfall of £1.2m or 18%. And in the previous year 2017/18 against a target of £10.3m we fell short by £2.4m or 23%.

Could we do more to identify the savings that are going to turn out to be undeliverable? We all understand that savings have to be made, unpalatable as that may be. But are we making the right savings? Have a look at some of the savings that have already been replaced between the first and second rounds of budget scrutiny, consider what we might learn from them. Was it ever realistic to think we could reduce staffing in our assessment and commissioning teams for Adult Social Care?

I know we have faced unprecedented cuts in funding from central government over the last decade. We receive our last direct grant of £5m for next year, after that we're on our own. So I fear there's a tendency to react with resignation, fatalism even, to feel there's nothing we can do but accept the proposed cuts to services. But that would be wrong, indeed it would be an abnegation of our responsibility to our residents to scrutinise the budget in their best interests.

Remember – some of these savings will prove undeliverable, and when that happens users will suffer if less palatable savings have to be substituted. It's incumbent upon us to make sure we fully understand how proposed savings will work out in practice, what the risks are and how they can be mitigated. We know we have to set a balanced budget for the year ahead, we accept that, but the MTFS does allow some flexibility for the years from 2020/21 and beyond.

And in case you think it's all doom and gloom, perhaps we can hope for some relief from the Chancellor's spending review next week. The only benefit from the growing income inequality in our society is that tax receipts from the top quintile of taxpayers

in January this year were much higher than anticipated. Is it too much to hope perhaps that a little of the surplus might be redistributed to the public sector, and to local government in particular?

Cllr Peter Southgate
Leader, MPWIR

Committee: Council

Date: 3rd April 2019

Wards: All wards

Subject: Strategic Objective Review: Children and Young People

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children Schools and Families

Lead members: Cllr Kelly Braund, Cabinet Member for Children Services

Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

Contact officer: Sharon Buckby, Interim Head of Service for Policy, Planning and Performance

Recommendations:

A. That Council discuss and comment on the contents of the report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The report provides Council Members with information on key developments affecting Children and Young People with a focus on Schools.
- 1.2. Council at its meeting in March 2016 approved the Business Plan 2016-2020. Each meeting of the Council will receive an update on progress against one of the strategic themes. The report provides council with an opportunity to consider progress against the priorities under the 'children and young people' theme.

2 DETAILS

2.School Place planning

2.1 Merton in its role as the Local Authority seeks:

- To provide the highest standards of education and ensure all our schools are good or outstanding;
- Results for attainment and progress which compare with the best in London;
- To ensure that all children and young people enjoy learning opportunities, feel rewarded by their experience and achieve their full potential;
- Provision which contributes to the broader well-being of children and families
- Provision which is a positive choice for families

2.2 The following sections consider the school provision in the sectors of mainstream primary, mainstream secondary, and special provision

Primary school places

2.3 With regard to primary school places, the council experienced an exceptional increase in demand for places, which required a substantial increase in reception year (first year of primary school) places from 2008 to 2015. In 2017/18 there were more pupils in Merton primary schools for more than a generation – a rise of 4,367 pupils on roll (34%) compared to 11 years previously.

2.4 However, in 2016/17 there started to be a drop in demand for reception year places that has continued to 2018/19. The GLA forecast is for the reception year roll to now be relatively stable for the forthcoming years (and September 2019 admissions preference data confirms this), but as the lower numbers flow through all year groups there is forecast to be some 1,300 less pupils in primary school than the peak, though still 3,000 more than in 2006/07. Uncertainty over migration patterns and future live births will also impact on demand.

Secondary school places

2.5 With the substantial increase in demand for primary school places starting in 2008, it follows that the increase in demand for year 7 (the start of secondary school) places has followed seven years later. Following the significant increase in demand for reception year places in September 2011, the biggest increase for year 7 places has been, as expected, in September 2018.

2.6 However, the pattern of demand for Merton secondary schools is very different with the families willing to travel much greater distances and parental preference patterns being more significant.

2.7 For many years Merton has been a net 'exporter' of pupils i.e. more Merton resident children travel to out of the borough state schools for their secondary schooling than the other way around, or 'imported'.

2.8 While in the five years from 2010 to 2015 Merton became a greater exporter of pupils, which has reduced the level of increase prior to 2018, this has reversed over the last couple of years, and particularly for the forthcoming September 2019 entry.

2.9 September 2018 saw the largest single year increase in demand for year 7 places in over a generation with the year 7 roll being 217 more than the previous year.

2.10 Although the resident population for 2019 is stable compared to 2018, Admissions offer day information indicates that there will be a 6% increase in Merton residents attending Merton schools. This is a testament to the increase in standards over a number of years. Officers are currently in discussion with secondary headteachers regarding some extra places being provided for September to meet demand.

New School (Harris Academy Wimbledon)

- 2.11 The council was able to facilitate the opening of Harris Academy Wimbledon just when it was needed to meet the increase in demand for secondary school places. After the “pre-opening” status as a Free School was given by the Secretary of State for Education in spring 2015 the council worked closely with the government’s ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) and the Harris Federation as an effective means to ensure the council could deliver the additional school places required.
- 2.12 After extensive site searches by both the council and ESFA it became clear that the only means to ensure the school could be delivered was for the council to work actively with its landholdings, and the complexities to deliver a site are well documented in council papers, including Cabinet in July 2016 and December 2017.
- 2.13 Harris Wimbledon opened in a temporary site provided by the council at Whatley Avenue, SW20 (former Adult Education building) in September 2018. The building is only big enough for some 350 pupils so it is essential for the High Path site to be ready for September 2020. Following approved planning permission we are now on course to do this.
- 2.14 The new school has proved popular with parents, being fully subscribed in its first year and for September 2019.
- 2.15 Since rolls at the other state funded schools have either remained stable or grown in this period the new Harris Academy Wimbledon School is currently meeting the council’s objective of providing additional basic need places, increasing choice, and not adversely impacting on existing schools.

Special school places

- 2.16 LB Merton caters for pupils with SEN (Special Educational needs) through mainstream schools, specialist provision within mainstream schools (“additional resourced provision”), special schools, and use of independent provision. For children with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan which replaced SEN statements) there are three maintained special schools; in addition three primary and three secondary schools provide specialist provision for pupils with ASD (autistic spectrum disorders) and SCLN (Speech, language and communication needs). There is also a Pupil Referral Unit (SMART centre) which operates under the same management as Melrose, our special school for pupils with SEMH (Social, emotional and mental health).
- 2.17 When there is not a suitable placement for a child with an EHCP within the state funded sector the council is financially responsible for commissioning suitable specialist placements within the Independent sector.
- 2.18 The growth in demand for SEN placements has received national attention recently, and the problem is significant in Merton.
- 2.19 The council has been active in seeking special school expansion in recent years, through a new site and then expansion of Perseid School, additional

Resourced Provision (ARP) at Hatfeild, and the previous and present expansion of Cricket Green School. However, this has not stemmed our increased reliance on Independent Schools and as the council's capital programme for 2019/20 and beyond includes funding for further expansion of SEND provision.

Capital works and building condition

2.20 Schools are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of their building but the Responsible Body (The council in the case of Community Schools) is responsible for more significant capital works. The council manages these works with technical staff either in the Corporate Facilities Management team or, for major projects, outside design consultants. To ensure best value, works are procured according to the council's standing orders and for major projects a design team regularly monitors the projects with a professional Quantity Surveyor to monitor value for money.

2.21 From the late 2000s the priority for the council has been to meet the basic need for sufficient school places, but there has been a growing maintenance backlog which was identified in condition surveys completed for all Community Schools in 2018. To address this, the council has increased its annual budget for capital maintenance of Community Schools to £1.9 million. Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies have similar capital programmes for maintenance but the money is held by the DfE.

3. Achievement 2017/18 in Merton Schools ¹ (Standards Report)

3.1 The recently published Standards Report 2017- 2018 clarifies the national and local context for schools in Merton and identifies how the Local Authority (LA) has worked with schools to secure and maintain improvement. The Standards reports are considered a year in arrears due to the national validation and reporting process.

3.2 The proportion of schools judged to be good or better in Merton rose from 88% to 93% over the course of the academic year. This proportion is above the London and national averages. All of the Council's secondary schools continued to be judged to be good, with the proportion judged as outstanding rising to 63% (well above national and local averages). Three of the Borough's 44 primary schools were not yet judged to be good or better as of August 2018. This means that 93% of primary schools were judged to be good or better at that point, which is above the national average of 87% for this educational phase.

3.3 Of the three remaining schools judged to require improvement as of August 2018, all are in the primary phase. All of these schools are receiving intensive support and challenge from Merton officers.

¹ Full standards report can be accessed via the meeting webpage [here](#) (to follow)

- 3.4 With regard to pupil outcomes, national rankings continue to be very strong in the progress measures at KS2 and for GCSE. Merton's performance has improved in comparison with the previous year in most indicators. In the three indicators where there have been drops in comparison with the previous year, these have been very small. The quartile performance in relation to the Borough's statistical neighbours and to other Outer London boroughs identifies that although there have been some improvements, there have also been some relative drops in performance in comparison, identifying where further improvements could still be secured.
- 3.5 In the EYFS, Merton pupils maintained their strong performance. At 73.5%, the proportion of children achieving the GLD remains in line with the London and outer London averages and above the national average. Performance in all areas of learning is above the national averages for 'Exceeding' standard (and in some areas, well above), whilst performance at the expected standard is in line with national averages.
- 3.6 85% of pupils reached the expected standard for phonics decoding in Merton in Year 1, an improvement since 2016 of five percentage points. This maintains the LA's strong performance, which is above the national average, and in line with the London and Outer London averages.
- 3.7 Outcomes at Key Stage 1 have remained in line with or improved on performance last year (with the exception of Greater Depth in reading where there was a drop of one percentage point). In reading and maths, performance is in line with the more challenging Outer London average; in writing, there have been further improvements, and performance is above the national average. Further focus is now required to ensure the performance of Merton's pupils matches that of their Outer London peers.
- 3.8 At Key Stage 2, the progress scores in reading, writing and mathematics, replicating the strong performance with regards to attainment, are above the national and London averages, and rank Merton 8th, 23rd and 6th in the country respectively. The improvement in ranking for the writing progress score is particularly pleasing following focused action by the LA and schools. However, performance in this subject is still not as strong as in reading and maths, and so focused attention will continue to be given to it so that it is closer to the London average. No Merton school is below the Floor Standard this year. No Merton primary school is deemed to be below the 'coasting' standard.
- 3.9 Performance in Merton secondary schools at KS4 remains very strong. At 0.44 the Progress 8 score in Merton is well above national and London averages, and ranks the Borough 9th in the country. In the Attainment 8 indicator, Merton's average (49.6) is above the national and the London averages. The proportion of pupils achieving grades 9-4 in the EBacc subjects, including English and maths

rose by three percentage points this year to 34% which is above local and national averages. No Merton school was below the Floor Standard this year. No secondary school is deemed to be below the 'coasting' standard.

- 3.10 When considering post 16 outcomes for all Level 3 qualifications together, students in Merton perform above the national and the London averages, and the national rank in this indicator has improved from 50th to 29th. When looking separately at the A level, Academic and Applied General groups within the Level 3 cohort, performance is also above national and local averages. This is an improvement on performance last year. The very small group of Tech level students perform above the London averages, but just below the national average. In particular it should be noted that the average grade for Applied General students is a 'Distinction –' which is above the London and national averages of 'Merit +'.
- 3.11 Attendance in Merton is above the most recent national and London comparative data for secondary and special schools, and in line with these averages for primary schools. The persistent absence figure has risen by 0.5 percentage points. However, based on 2017 performance we predict that Merton will continue to be better than national and London averages.
- 3.12 There were no permanent exclusions in primary and special schools during 2017-2018. The number of permanent exclusions in secondary schools has decreased significantly to be below the most recent national, London and outer London averages This is against a national rising trend of permanent exclusions. The number of fixed term exclusions has fallen in primary, secondary and special schools (significantly so for secondary schools), and are below London and national averages.
- 3.13 The number of CME off roll cases has remained static as the school population has risen. The clear up rate in 2017-18 improved again to 95% within one month. However there were less cases closed at the end of the year. This was due to some admissions cases being opened at the last panel of the year and some SEN cases awaiting placement for the start of the autumn term in a new school. The numbers of pupils vulnerable to becoming CME has risen again for the third year. More cases were closed despite the volume being higher. 61% were actioned within 3 months which is an improvement. We have seen a rise in the number of children within the vulnerable cohort who have EHCPs from 22 in 2016-17 to 41 in 2017-18. This will be investigated but is related in part to demand exceeding provision.
- 3.14 The rise is due to a complex range of factors and there are few clear trends. There is a rise in primary and secondary with the highest levels in KS4. We have looked by school in and out of borough and the increase is not related to any schools in particular other than the poor Ofsted outcome at an Independent School

and any alternative faith based schools out of borough being full. Other wider trends relate to child mental health, issues not being resolved with the school, parents waiting for a school to have vacancies, wanting a form of curriculum not available in the state system and parents are more aware of their rights to EHE and are choosing this option.

4 Ofsted

4.1 Ofsted have published a proposed new Inspection Framework and Handbook for schools, for implementation from September 2019. The new Framework and Handbook are currently being consulted upon, but some significant changes can be expected. These could include:

- A new sub-judgement for the 'Quality of Education' which will look at a school's curriculum, how it is taught and assessed and the resulting outcomes for pupils.
- Inspectors continuing to focus on published outcomes from points of statutory assessment (eg end of key stages) but not looking directly at schools' own in year data.
- A separate sub-judgement for pupils' 'Personal Development' to 'bring greater attention and focus to what education providers do to educate learners in the broadest sense, including the development of character and preparing them for life in modern Britain'.
- An extension for Section 8 inspections (currently commonly called 'short' inspections) from one to two days.
- On-site preparation by the lead inspector prior to an inspection, effectively meaning that there will be at least one inspector on site for a total of two and a half days.
- A focus on ensuring leaders are engaging with teachers meaningfully to manage workload.
- A focus on inclusion so that 'the system can accommodate, and cater for, the needs of all learners of all ages', and to ensure that 'schools do not remove, or lose, pupils from their roll for reasons other those in the best educational interests of those pupils'.

4.2 Senior inspectors from Ofsted (HMI) have presented to Merton schools about these proposed changes. Schools have also received a briefing from Merton School Improvement to enable them to gain a more detailed understanding of the handbook, and to support their response to the consultation process about the proposed changes. Further support will be provided when the Framework and Handbook are published in their final forms.

5. School Funding

5.1 Schools across the country are experiencing pressures on their budgets. This is exemplified in Merton by the fact that 14 schools approached the Council to set deficit budgets in 2018/2019.

5.2 This has resulted in schools needing to look very carefully at their budgets to ensure that they are achieving best value for their pupils. Some schools have restructured staff, particularly support staff to find necessary savings whilst being very mindful of the need to continue to provide pupils with the support they need. For example, in a primary school, this could take the form of the work of teaching assistants being clearly focused towards classes in the school where there are higher levels of need, and moving away from the model of each class having its own teaching assistant.

5.3 Schools are working together to try to find financial efficiencies through shared working, particularly through the school clusters. The Merton schools' partnership 'Attain' has financial stability as one of its main priorities and is looking to identify projects to support schools with this issue, for example through the development of peer review of finances.

6. Elective Home Education

6.1 There has been a 19% increase in children being electively home educated from the previous year. The numbers being home educated has risen steeply in comparison with the general school population increase. Between 2008 and 2016, the Merton school population grew by 16.8 %, while the numbers being electively home educated rose by 174%. From 2014/15, there has been a jump in secondary numbers. This has continued. There are equal numbers of boys and girls home educating. During 2017– 2018 there were an additional 52 (up from 45 in 2016-17) enquiries by parents about home education who subsequently chose not to. We are seeing a rise in EHE in primary and secondary school and in particular in year 8, 9 and 10.

6.2 These rises are similar to those seen nationally where there was a 40% rise between 2014/15 and 2016/17. The figures for Merton over this same period showed a rise of 26%

6.3 Parents have the right to electively home educate their children. Parents have cited a range of reasons for choosing to home educate, ranging from those that want this philosophically for their child, to situations where they are not happy with the education their child is receiving in school. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) and School Improvement team track these cases and ensure that education is being provided. In agreement with schools, the EWS has now provided schools with a parent clarification sheet which parents are asked to sign so it is clear to parents what they are committing to when they choose to home educate.

6.4 On registering a child as being home educated, checks are made so we are aware if there are any safeguarding concerns. If this is the case the lead professional is informed of this change in education provision and we liaise with them during the process. 6.5% (13 – a rise from 6 in 2016-17) of children who are home educating are or were subject to CIN or CP plans in 2017/18.

7. Virtual School

7.1 The core purpose of The Virtual School, Merton is to ensure that there are high aspirations for all children and young people in public care and to support and challenge all those who work with them to promote their educational achievement and make sure they reach their potential. This includes children looked after by Merton wherever they access education but also those children looked after by other boroughs attending schools and educational settings in Merton. Whilst the majority of the data included in this report focuses on the outcomes of children looked after by Merton, the Virtual School's support for those children looked after by other boroughs is considerable and includes:

- work with the Designated Leads for LAC in Merton schools to ensure their work with all LAC is as strong as possible;
- work with the Merton School Improvement Team to ensure that Merton Schools are working to narrow the gap between the educational attainment of all Looked After Children and their non-looked after peers
- ensuring that continuity of education for looked after children from other boroughs is achieved by prompt admission to Merton Schools.

7.2 In addition, The Virtual School has responsibility for the distribution of the Pupil Premium Grant for Looked After Children to remove barriers to learning and ensure that pupils make accelerated progress.

7.3 In addition, and in compliance with The Children and Social Care Act 2017 and publication of The Statutory Guidance for the promotion of Education for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Care Leavers for Local Authorities, February 2018, The Virtual School now has the responsibility to ensure that children who have left care by an Adoption Order, Special Guardianship, or Child Residence Order and are educated in Merton, are supported in their school or setting.

7.4 The work of the Virtual School is overseen by the Virtual School Steering Group which is chaired by the Head of School Improvement, and attended by the Heads of Education Inclusion, Early Years, SENDIS, Looked After Children, Permanency and Placement, and the Access to Resources Team, as well as the Headteacher of the Virtual School. This governance group receives reports from the Headteacher on a termly basis, and scrutinizes and provides challenge and support the range of work undertaken by the Virtual School.

7.5 The Department for Education (DfE) collects information on the educational outcomes of LAC in Annex A of the SSDA903 return. This information is collected annually for the children who have been continuously looked after for at least 12 months on 31st March. The data for this cohort of LAC, identified as the 903 cohort, is used in the achievement and other relevant sections to allow valid comparisons with the national dataset.

7.6 The Virtual School Merton collects, analyses and evaluates data but cohort sizes can be very small and so trends in such data should be viewed with caution. It is therefore important to note that a personalised approach to ensuring that each and every child and young person, in every year group succeeds, underpins the strategies and actions of the Virtual School.

7.7 During 2017-18 a total of 129 school aged children were, or became looked after as of 29th June 18, the point of reference for year on year comparative purposes. This includes 51 new children. This is a significant increase from 16-17 when there had been 117 school aged children on or joining the school roll.

7.8 At the end of 2017/18, no child at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage had achieved a Good Level of Development. There is no comparative data at this stage but the results are not surprising since achieving this assessment requires a competence in literacy and numeracy, areas which may have been affected by poor early experience prior to becoming Looked After. The Virtual School will ensure challenge and support is provided to these children's schools to ensure they are given every opportunity to achieve at age related expectations as soon as possible.

7.9 The academic outcomes for Merton LAC were below the 2017 averages for LAC (the latest national comparators available) at KS1 and KS2 in maths, but at the end of year 6 performance in reading and writing was strong.

7.10 There was a significant increase in the year 11 cohort over the academic year, many of whom did not sit GCSEs. However of the thirteen 903 cohort, eight sat GCSE English and maths with 23% achieving English and Maths at grade 4 and above. This is higher than the most recent national average of 17.5 % for LAC. Attainment and progress scores for KS4 pupils are pending

7.11 61 young people were aged 16 to 18 during the academic year 2017 -18. 48 of the young people have pursued and were successful in a range of courses, from Entry Level to Level 3, suitable to their needs and ambitions. Of the 13 young people not in education or training, extensive efforts were made to keep in touch with the young people and support them into appropriate provision. In higher

education 15 care leavers studied for degrees, with two graduating at the end of the academic year.

7.12 This year the average attendance of LAC decreased slightly by nearly two percentage points, largely as a result of a very small group of school refusers. The figure of 91.2% remains below the national average for LAC of 95.7%, and the attendance of LAC remains a priority for the Virtual School.

7.13 There were, again, no permanent exclusions for Merton LAC. This year, however, although the percentage of children receiving fixed term exclusions reduced slightly, and is aligned with national figures, more sessions were missed than in the previous year and so the reduction in sessions missed because of exclusion remains a priority for The Virtual School.

7.14 The Virtual School is ambitious to ensure that all its pupils achieve the best possible outcomes, and that these are reflected in improved outcomes against the national benchmarks. In order to achieve improving outcomes the school will robustly and energetically address the priorities identified at the end of this report through the School's Improvement Plan, in partnership with key stakeholders, the young people and their carers. In the coming year, these priorities will focus in particular on the performance of students with SEN, outcomes at Key Stages 1 and 2 where, although there are no national comparisons yet available for LAC, and the cohorts were small, Merton LAC did not appear to perform well against national averages with regard to attainment and progress.

8. SEN/D

8.1 The SEND Strategy 2019- 2022 is currently being refreshed in line with strategic priorities. The Strategy will incorporate the recent Higher Needs Funding review and the Merton capital SEND expansion projects. In addition, the recent EHCP Audit and introduction of POET (Person Outcome Evaluation Tool) will contribute to the development of the Strategy, which will be finalised by March 2019. The most recent SEND needs analysis will also contribute to the content of the SEND Strategy.

8.2A significant part of the Strategy is evaluating and developing the support and training offer for Merton Schools in order to improve the identification and outcomes for pupils at SEN Support. The Merton School Improvement Team has a dedicated inspector for SEND and a newly appointed part-time SEND Advisor that work closely with the SENDIS to continue the work of the SENCO working groups. These groups are developing specific guidance and tools to support progress measurement for pupils with SEND, moderation meetings for the identification of pupils who require SEN Support and developing quality first teaching strategies that support the different primary needs of pupils with SEND.

- 8.3 Portage has been embedded into the wider Early Years service and includes co-delivery from Children's Centres (CC) in partnership with CC and 0-5 Supporting Families staff. The parenting offer for families with children with specialist complex needs continues to develop and more recently, the service has launched the Incredible Years ASD and Language Delay Programme with 25 staff trained in this model. To date, there have been two cohorts of families participating with two programmes scheduled for January 2019 due to high demand.
- 8.4 The additional requirements for free early education have recently included the introduction of a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF), the Disability Access Fund and the roll-out of 30 hours childcare and early education for working parents. To date, 50 settings have received SENIF to support 84 children in their provision. Take up of the 30 hour entitlement continues to develop with 960 families accessing this new offer in May and a further 705 in September this year. This data is measured at a point in time and thus each term, the baseline varies because of children moving in and out of eligibility criteria. Due to this, the September cohort data is lower than in May.
- 8.5 The provision of two year-old places continues to be a priority and a key area of focus in the newly established and shared Early Years Hub across Merton and Wandsworth. The Wandle Early Years Hub is funded by the Greater London Authority and aims to provide opportunities for early years settings, local authorities and other partners to work together to improve outcomes for children by increasing take-up of free early education, improving the quality of early years provision and promoting early years as a career choice. Included in the work of the Hub, Merton's Open College Network Early Years College has successfully achieved Level 3 accreditation for the writing of a 'Working with Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)' training programme. External evaluation of the Hub activity is being carried out and feedback will be shared once published.
- 8.6 There are currently 1800 Education Health and Care plans maintained by the Local Authority and we continue to agree to undertake approximately 30 new EHC needs assessments a month. There are 13 full time equivalent staffing within the SENDIS team. There are three staff undertaking new assessments, six staff working 0-14years and four staff working with pupils aged 15-25years. The average caseload for staff within the casework teams is 176 pupils per staff member.
- 8.7 The EHC data shows that 91% (Jan 2019) of requests for plans reach panel in 2 weeks. 57% (YTD in Jan19) of new plans were issued within the 20-week timescale. There is currently a business case being considered for the SEND Integrated Service to procure the EHCP Hub which is an IT portal which should improve transparency and timeliness while clearly tracking progress in regards to timeframes. It is hoped that the EHC Hub will be in place by April 2019. There continues to be positive engagement with children and young people

8.8 Merton is continuing to monitor the progress and implementation of SEN reforms. A SEND dashboard is being developed that draws together a range of SEN indicators and compares Merton's performance against its statistical neighbours and national outcomes as well as showing trends over time. This will help with identification of strengths and weaknesses in performance, support the planning and setting of targets and demonstrate impact and effectiveness, giving a sharper line of sight on practice.

8.9 The views of parents and carers are central to ensuring that Merton is complying with the spirit of the Code of Practice 2014. We gain the views of parents and carers in multiple ways. As part of the continuous improvement agenda within SENDIS we have parental and carer representation on the following:

- SEND Implementation Focus Groups x 7
- Kids First SEND Implementation Group
- Patient Engagement Group (CCG)
- Merton Information Advice and Support Steering Group
- Transport Assistance Working Group
- EHCP Quality Assurance Working Group
- Autism Strategy Steering Group
- Preparation for Adulthood Board

8.10 In addition to seeking the views of parents/carers from the above groups, the Head of SENDIS attends regular sessions with Kids First Parent Forum to answer specific questions raised by parents and to hear feedback on areas for development across the SEN process. Although Merton has low Tribunal rates (four Tribunals lodged with the Tier 1 Tribunal in 2018 academic year), we take the lessons learnt from this to amend our practice.

8.11 Positive feedback from parent/carers included that Merton SEND was reported to be accessible and available to parents if they had questions or concerns pre or post EHCP process. Specific case officers were supportive and explained the EHC needs assessment and Annual Review processes well, and were knowledgeable regarding local resources available to parents. There was evidence of collaborative working during the EHC needs assessment including health and education professionals. The referral process was clear and the decision about whether the LA would take an EHC needs assessment were made in a timely manner. There is also evidence of clear communication between allocated workers within SEN and parent's/carers

8.12 The areas for development include the timeliness of undertaking an EHC needs assessment and issuing a Final Plan within the 20-week timescale, which is currently at 57%. The capacity of partner agencies to meet their 6-week deadline for providing professional advice is impacting on the timescales which parents are understandably concerned about. This is particularly in relation to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) and Occupational Therapy (OT). There is an active recruitment drive to employ qualified SALT and OT to meet the demand for assessment and provision delivery. Parents/Carers have

understood the delays and some have chosen to wait to receive the professional advice rather than issuing a plan within 20 weeks that does not clearly outline the necessary outcomes and provision.

- 8.13 Parents reported that there was variable advice from Social Care and Health colleagues and identified the need for outcomes training as part of workforce development, particularly in relation to specificity of provision and Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) outcomes. We are addressing this through additional training for Social Care and Health teams and support in understanding their role in co-producing EHCP's and in providing clear outcomes and provision for their relevant sections of the Plan. A dedicated social worker is to be allocated to coordinate work across Education and Social Care.
- 8.14 Parents/carers stated that the S.19 principle "supporting and involving children and young people" required further development. Children and young people should be contributing at the point of referral for an EHC needs assessment and during the assessment process and any subsequent reviews of the plan. Contribution from parents is stronger than contribution from young people at this time.
- 8.15 Parents/Carers expressed some concerns about the Annual Review process and stated they would like to support the development of Annual Review Guidance and a review of the current Merton Annual Review documentation to ensure that schools and parents/carers understand the purpose of the meeting and the statutory timescales for the Annual Review. Parents/Carers would like to see further embedding of the person-centred approach to Annual Reviews. The EHCP Quality Assurance group which is being established and will include parental/carer representation, will undertake this development work in the coming term
- 8.16 A few parents identified the need for a Q&A handout and guidance for parents regarding the EHCP process. Initial work has already begun on this and will be published on the Local Offer. Identification from parents/carers of need for training in relation to the EHCP processes.
- 8.17 To address this we are enhancing information on journeying through the SEN support and EHCP process with an online route map and toolkit for parents and carers.
- 8.18 In line with parental/carer feedback it has been agreed that the LA needs to implement a consistent and robust process for gathering the views of parents/carers and young people going through the assessment process and at annual reviews. The LA commenced using the Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool in January 2019. POET has been designed to capture the views of children and young people, parents/carers and practitioners so that results can be triangulated to establish the key process conditions associated with positive outcomes. Testing has already demonstrated that POET has the potential to provide a straightforward and powerful way of finding out about the experience of obtaining an EHCP and in some cases a personal budget and related outcomes.
- 8.19 The Children and Young People's POET has been developed by In Control and the Centre for Disability Research at Lancaster University with

funding from the Department for Education (DfE). Children and young people, parents/carers and practitioners from six local authority areas volunteered to work on the development of the tool. Please find included in this report the POET parent/carer questionnaire.

8.20 Parents were surveyed as part of the Higher Needs Funding Review and were concerned about the amount of local specialist provision which resulted in pupils accessing schools out of Borough. Perseid school has recently been expanded and a successful capital bid will mean that the LA will be expanding Cricket Green School in addition to adding numbers to the Additionally Resourced Provisions in local schools with 136 places.

8.21 In response to the feedback from parents that the LA has received over the last year a number of actions have been taken which include:

- Training programme implemented for SCO's regarding annual review processes and requirements
- The Designated Medical Officer has developed a standardised template for professional advice from paediatricians to improve health input to EHCP's
- Established working group with SENCO's to develop outcome tracking tool
- Introduction of the Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool to ensure regular views are sought from parents/carers/young people and professionals.
- Established regular working group to review Parent/Carer involvement
- Parent/carer membership of the Preparation for Adulthood Board
- Capital bid for expansion of local provisions. Including expansion of Cricket Green and a new Additionally resourced provision. We hope to expand the local offer by 156 school places.

8.22 Future developments directly resulting from parental feedback include the review of EHC documentation (referral, EHC Needs assessment, EHC Plan and Annual Review documentation) as part of the implementation of the EHC Hub. In addition a training program will be developed and delivered to health and social care colleagues to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and to ensure that the provision outlined in the professional advice are clear and specific.

8.23 The LA will work with schools on a robust planned phase transfer process for nursery to reception, primary to secondary and post 16+ to ensure that all pupils have a named placement by the Feb 15/31 March deadline. The timetable will be communicated to the parent carer forum and circulated to all parent/s/carers and young people in phase transfer cohorts in October/November 2019 to ensure that the LA has parental and young person preferences by December 2019 for consultation.

9. Participation of 16-18 year olds

9.1 The proportions of young people who are Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET), or whose status is not known, have again fallen and are significantly better than national averages. Performance in all three indicators continues to place Merton in the top quintile of performance nationally. Merton NEET and not known combined score is the 10th lowest of all authorities nationally.

9.2 The latest NEET figure (January 2019) stands at 1.6% - this is presently lower than England (2.4%) and only slightly above London (1.5%). Overall, the male gender group has a higher rate of young people within the NEET group and is marginally over-represented when compared against the cohort percentage. Others over-represented within the NEET group include the White ethnic group, young people with SEN, LAC, teenage mothers and those supervised by the YOT.

Vulnerable Groups	Totals	%	Yearly Change	Cohort		
SEN						
EHCP + Historic Statement	5	8.3%	-4.8%	↓	231	5.9%
Looked After/In Care	1	1.7%	-3.3%	↓	20	0.5%
Teenage Mother	3	5.0%	3.4%	↑	4	0.1%
Pregnancy	0	0.0%	-4.9%	↓	0	0.0%
Supervised by YOTS	0	0.0%	-8.2%	↓	16	0.4%
Care Leaver	1	1.7%	1.7%	↑	2	0.1%
Substance Misuse	0	0.0%	0.0%	↔	0	0.0%
Carer	0	0.0%	0.0%	↔	1	0.0%
SEN Support (no EHCP)	19	31.7%	N/A	N/A	401	10.2%

South London CCIS Service February 2019

9.3 The My Futures Team are continuing to run a series of successful programmes to support vulnerable young people that are education-based and serve to develop personal skills including:

Holiday Programmes (Summer and October half-term) – Holiday programmes engage the most vulnerable Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) and pre-NEET young people and are aimed at inspiring, educating, promoting appropriate behaviour and improving social skills and self-confidence. Activities have ranged from white water rafting, photography workshops, employment workshops and creating business plans. The programme has been successful in giving disadvantaged young people opportunities that they normally would not be able to access and has grown significantly in the last year.

Towards Employment Programme – This programme offers a chance to acquire work experience for a young person to get their foot in the door of a company with the view of gaining an apprenticeship there. The My Futures service works closely with other teams across the Council, focusing on young people who are NEET, looked after or working with the YOT. Many have been offered

employment/apprenticeships at the end of a successful work placement. This programme continues to grow with the My Futures team continually building links with new businesses keen to work in partnership to offer real job opportunities to NEET young people.

University Programme – This is open to academically able young people who cannot afford university and those with no family history of university attendance. Due to a successful programme last year, the My Futures service were able to support two young people into courses this past September along with a further two planning on applying next year. This was achieved via attending workshops at Kingston University, identifying grants and available funding and breaking down many myths around student life and costs involved in gaining a degree. The same programme is scheduled to run again in January 2019.

Social Media – The My Futures service has recently launched social media platforms on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to enable the wider Merton community to access ETE opportunities as many young people do not meet the threshold for a referral for direct keywork. The team can now signpost the same ETE opportunities to all young people in Merton as well as being able to remain connected with young people once cases are closed.

NEET operational group meetings in relation to looked after children have been taking place every 3 weeks since September 2018 with the aim of increasing EET opportunities, identifying relevant and realistic plans and reviewing support provided. The group tracks the action plan for each young person and ensures management oversight of cross-departmental agencies which evidences EET care planning. A dedicated worker is in place within the Virtual School who works directly with this cohort

10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No specific implications for this report

11. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

No specific implications for this report.

12. TIMETABLE

No specific implications for this report.

13. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

None

14. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

None

15. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

None

16. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None

17. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

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

19. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Agenda Item 8

MITCHAM COMMUNITY FORUM
27 FEBRUARY 2019

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors (in the Chair), Councillor David Chung

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held at Pollards Hill Library, and chaired by Councillor David Chung. 10 residents attended, as well as five other Councillors, and officers of the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 LONDON ASSEMBLY UPDATE (Agenda Item 2)

Leonie Cooper, Assembly Member for Merton and Wandsworth provided an update on issues being dealt with by the Mayor of London. Leonie said that since being elected in 2016 to scrutinise the new Mayor of London the first year had seen a lot of consultation on new plans/strategies, the second year had seen those policies began to be implemented and now the Assembly is mainly focused on monitoring performance against those strategies. The Mayor has a £18bn budget covering the Met Police, London Fire Brigade, Transport for London as well as issues like housing, environment, health and regeneration.

The Mayors 2019/20 budget was agreed this week, and for the first time with a majority of votes after the Green members abstained. The budget included extra provision to tackle air quality including £48 million for a diesel scrappage scheme aimed at micro-businesses, charities and residents on low incomes. Information on the scrappage scheme can be found at <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/scrappage-scheme>. This comes on top of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone that begins on 8 April and will charge additional fees for the most polluting vehicles going into the Congestion Charge Zone. To find out if your vehicle would be subject to the additional charge go to <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/vrm-checker-ulez>

After more than £1bn has been removed from the Policing funding from Government the Mayor is increasing the precept to try and maintain police numbers. There will also be additional funding going to the Fire Brigade with work on building inspection a priority following the Grenfell tragedy. Some of TfL's larger projects will be delayed, partly due to the delay in the completion of Crossrail and partly due to reduced Government support. However, cleaning up the bus fleet remains a priority and

where this has been done, such as Putney High Street we've seen a 99% decrease in particulates.

A resident asked where the revenue raised from the ULEZ would be spent. Leonie said this would be spent on schemes to reduce pollution such as cleaner buses and a scrappage scheme for taxis. However, the scheme is designed to be a deterrent that changes behaviour rather than revenue raising. Leonie said that the most polluted routes were being targeted first for the Low Emission Bus Zone whilst there was a much larger programme of refitting older buses with new exhaust systems that scrub the emissions. Details on this programme can be found at <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/buses/improving-buses?intcmp=42923c>. Information on Air Quality monitoring can be found at <https://www.londonair.org.uk>.

Asked about Mitcham Police Station Leonie said the Deputy Mayor is still considering their response to the Judicial Review brought on the closure of Wimbledon station but hopefully an outcome will be announced shortly.

3 WILSON HOSPITAL AND SOCIAL PRESCRIBING UPDATE (Agenda Item 3)

Dr Doug Hing from Merton Clinical Commissioning Group explained that the CCG is responsible for improving delivery of healthcare across the borough including access and quality of services. There has long been a plan to build a health centre in the east of Merton in order to improve access to diagnostic and clinical services and the Wilson has been identified for this site. Services would include X-rays, blood tests, ultra-sound and clinics on complex issues. Currently the CCG is waiting for financial confirmation and then they will begin the process of co-creating design plans with the local community. At the moment the plan is still to open the new facility by the end of 2022.

However, it was also critical to do more to address the social healthcare issues as well to ensure health and well-being promoted. Social prescribing helps patients address issues which affect their health but cannot be addressed by healthcare services. Working alongside GP surgeries in the East of Merton the social prescribers are experts on accessing a range of other services in the community, such as training, employment, benefits advice, volunteering opportunities and activities that reduce isolation.

In response to a question about closing down the GP and Walk-in services at the Wilson Dr Hing said one aspect regarding this involved an analysis which showed much of the use of the walk-in were for minor ailments which would be better off managed elsewhere, also capacity in other local GPs had been increased. As a result, the closure had not seen any increase in A&E attendance. Nationally, walk-in centres are expected to turn into Urgent Treatment Centres or be closed down.

Furthermore, without access to patient records, they are not able to provide continuity of care unlike extended hours GP surgeries.

In response to questions about the Wilson, Dr Hing said there are no plans from the CCG for social housing on the site (as it is not in the CCG's remit), and that as the centre is designed to address well-being a café and facilities to make it welcome for children and families on site was important, and this had been a high priority for residents in the earlier consultations. The CCG will be responsible for commissioning the clinical services on site but will work with local community organisations to support provision of well-being services.

Residents asked about funding for the community services that the Social Prescribers refer people too. Dr Hing explained that MVSC manage the Social Prescribers and understand the pressures on local voluntary organisations. If they identify pressures on a particular service they can distribute patients to other organisations, and if they identify gaps they can feed this back to the CCG. Naomi Martin from Commonsense Trust says that the pilot has seen additional pressures on some local groups and they have raised this issue with the CCG.

4 WARM AND WELL IN WINTER CAMPAIGN (Agenda Item 4)

Catherine Kiernan, Winter Warmth Engagement Officer at Wimbledon Guild and Dominic Regan, Adviser at Age UK Merton gave a presentation on the new Warm and Well in Merton programme. Their presentation slides are attached. The programme is partnership between Merton Council, Wimbledon Guild, Age UK Merton and Thinking Works and will run from January 2019 to March 2020. The project will involve providing advice and support to residents initially in Cricket Green, Pollards Hill and Figges Marsh to help them stay warm through winter. This includes Welfare Grants of £40-200 available via Wimbledon Guild, information and advice from AgeUK and energy saving advice from Thinking Works. The project is looking for local organisations and community centres to host talks and advice clinics.

In response to questions Catherine and Dominic explained that Thinking Works was already working in several London boroughs including Merton, but is now working with the Winter Warmth Campaign. They understand that switching energy suppliers can be daunting but Thinking Works has had success in saving residents money and in accessing grants for new boilers. Referral can be from another organisation or direct from residents. Age UK is also able to provide a benefits check for residents and so far Wimbledon Guild has issued 27 grants.

Catherine and Dominic agreed to provide an update to a future meeting.

5 COMMONSIDE TRUST UPDATE (Agenda Item 5)

Naomi Martin from Commonsense Trust said that they have been running the New Horizon Centre for 10 years and they hold a huge range of activities. Best known are the Lunch Club, markets, Avanti Club for those with Mental Health issues and Playgroup but they also have a range of exercise, faith, health and social groups. For more on what activities are taking place please see <http://www.commonside.net/whats-on/>

Naomi also highlighted a number of important partnerships that the Trust is involved with:

- MVSC: working together to identify how smaller groups can make better use of community centres
- Merton Council: working together on how to improve the lunch club
- Better Mitcham: staff from the Canons Leisure Centre looking to provide taster sessions at New Horizon
- Merton CCG: Evidence so far is that the CCG has saved around £9m so far through social prescribing and Expert Patient Programme, so we want to see how the CCG can support the 45 patients referred each quarter to Commonsense
- Local business: working with local companies, including a football coaching company and providing space for start-ups including an accountant, beautician, and media.
- Pollards Hill Safer Neighbourhood Team: regular contact with the Met Police SNT who engage with residents, especially young people. The SNT run football coaching sessions in conjunction with Fulham Foundation at Harris every Monday evening for young people identified as at risk by the police or Youth Offending Team. The Under 15 team has made the final of their competition.

Councillor Joan Henry congratulated Naomi on how well the Trust has developed and become a rock for the local community.

6 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 6)

Councillor Brenda Fraser said that the Safer Neighbourhood Panels for Pollards Hill and Longthornton have been involved in Speedwatch, monitoring speeding on key roads.

Cllrs Fraser and Henry had met with Wideway Medical Practice and would be arranging for Councillor Surgeries to take place there.

Cllr Henry said that Idverde had given over two plots at New Bourne Allotment for a community garden. Volunteers have cleared the land but more are needed to help with planting organic food. To find out more please email Joan.Henry@merton.gov.uk, or CouncillorBrenda.Fraser@merton.gov.uk

Residents expressed concerns about the reintroduction of charges for bulky waste collection and about changes to refuse collection on the Pollards Hill estate.

A resident asked about the Burn Bulloch and another explained that the owners, Phoenix, are in negotiations with the Cricket Club over the ownership of the Pavilion.

A resident asked about electric charging points, Councillor Martin Whelton replied that Blue City have been installing new points across the borough and these would be promoted when they were finished.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 7)

Thursday 10 October 2019 at 7.15pm, Vestry Hall
Thursday 27 February 2019 at 7.15pm, Vestry Hall

Councillor Chung thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting

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MORDEN COMMUNITY FORUM
28 FEBRUARY 2019

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors (in the Chair), Councillor Pauline Cowper

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held at the Civic Centre, and chaired by Councillor Pauline Cowper. 17 residents attended, as well as four other Councillors, and officers of the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 HEALTHWATCH MERTON (Agenda Item 2)

Erin Cowhig Croft, Information and Outreach Officer for Healthwatch Merton gave a presentation on the role of Healthwatch and the local issues they are currently working on. The presentation is attached to this report.

Locally the main issues Healthwatch are currently looking at:

- Wilson Health Centre
- Local Health and Care Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Improving Healthcare Together 2020-30
- Enter and View on the mental health step-down service
- NHS Long Term Plan

A resident asked about public involvement in a consultation on assisted dying. Erin said she was not aware of any current consultation on this issue but any proposed change in services should result in a public consultation. Erin was also asked about pollution and air quality and explained that Healthwatch's remit covers health and social care services so this would be outside their area but air quality does feature as an important issue for Public Health and will be in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Erin also explained that Enter and View visits were usually prompted by reports from service users or carers, for example at Springfield the visit was in response to concerns raised by charity Rethink, the local branch of the national schizophrenia society.

Erin was also asked about Healthwatch's role on the Health and Wellbeing Board. Erin explained that Healthwatch is there to represent the views of residents and service users, not to take a view of their own. The Chair and Manager of Healthwatch attend the Board.

3 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 3)

A resident raised the issue of Thames Water Smart Meters and if they result in increased costs. Kris Witherington said that Thames Water had attended the Wimbledon Forum in the past and that they offered advice on how to reduce water usage and therefore costs.

A resident raised concerns about reduced central government support for local authorities and in particular the increased pressure on social care.

A resident asked how residents would be able to find out about decisions taken by Magistrate Courts as these are not covered by local newspapers. It was agreed to approach the Magistrate Court to ask them to attend a future meeting.

A resident asked if anyone else had noticed a strong smell locally and asked if it was associated with the Beddington Energy Recovery Facility. Other residents had noticed a smell.

A resident asked about an unoccupied house on Canon Hill Lane. Councillor Nick McLean said he had been in discussion with officers about this site. The Council has tracked down the company undertaking building works and enforcement action was taking place against a gate built without planning permission.

A resident asked about Crossovers having had a neighbour been given permission to install a crossover at an inappropriate site. It was agreed to check with officers if there was pre-inspection of sites, why the cost of applications had increase significantly as well as a specific issue about a business on Central Road crossing the pavement to park.

A resident said they felt the Diesel Levy was unfair to those in Controlled Parking Zone areas.

A resident asked if the Council had responsibility for enforcing overgrown gardens. Councillor Mark Kenny said the Council would take action if the public highway was affected. Obstructions can be reported to the Council at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/streets-and-pavements/obstructions>. It is also possible to complain about high hedges and this can be done at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/high-hedges-complaints>.

A resident asked if it was compulsory for councillors to attend community forum meetings. Councillor Cowper said it was not compulsory and sometimes the meetings clashed with other events.

4 FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND CONSULTATIONS (Agenda Item 4)

Kris Witherington, Merton Council highlighted a number of consultations and events taking place over the next few months

Heathrow Airport Consultation: Proposed changes to airspace and operations that would result from expanding the airport with an extra runway. Closes 4 March.

<https://afo.heathrowconsultation.com/>

Merton's Transport Plan (LIP3): The plan is in response to the Mayor of London Transport Plan with a focus on improving health, and improving public transport experiences. Consultation from 1 March to 12 April. Details at

<https://www2.merton.gov.uk/transport-streets/transportplanning/lip3.htm>

Morden Leisure Centre: Grand opening 30 March 2019, details to be announced soon.

Morden Morden Regeneration programme: Merton Council are still currently in discussions with the GLA and TfL. The responses to the draft Local Plan, which includes the proposals for the regeneration of Morden town centre, will be published on the council's website by the end of next week. We are also preparing the findings from the public pop-up events and focus groups, which included local primary schools, for publication. Residents can contact the Future Merton team directly or email more.morden@merton.gov.uk with any specific queries.

Social Prescribing: Merton Clinical Commissioning Group is inviting residents and local organisations to celebrate Social Prescribing Day at a free event on Thursday 14 March - 1.30pm - 4.30pm. Find out more about the success of social prescribing in Merton and Wandsworth at Transformation House, 66 St John's Hill, London SW11 1AD. See website for details <https://www.mertonccg.nhs.uk>

Boundary Review: The number of Councillors, Wards and ward boundaries will be reviewed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2019/20 for the new arrangements to be in place by the 2022 local election. They will be holding a public meeting in Merton to explain the process to resident's groups and voluntary sector organisations on Tuesday 2 April at 7.15pm in the Council Chamber.

Community Infrastructure Levy Ward allocations: Every electoral ward in Merton is to be given a grant of £15k for neighbourhood projects which enhance the local area.

The application process will begin by 1 April and all projects will need to be endorsed by local councillors. <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/community-infrastructure-levy/spending-the-levy>

Eastern Electrics: Following the approval for the event license covering 3 and 4 August 2019 they were invited to attend the Community Forum. EE felt the meeting came to soon for them as they haven't sufficiently developed their plans for the event yet. They will be organising their own public meeting in March/April and this will be shared as soon as a date is confirmed.

Antiques Roadshow at Morden Hall Park: On Sunday 2 June Antiques Roadshow will be filming at Morden Hall Park. Entry to the show is free, everyone is welcome, and

no tickets or pre-registration is required. Car parking will be for pre-selected participants only.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park/features/antiques-roadshow-is-coming-to-morden-hall-park>.

5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 5)

Thursday 10 October 2019 at 7.15pm, Vestry Hall

Thursday 27 February 2019 at 7.15pm, Vestry Hall

Councillor Cowper thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

Motion to Council – Wednesday 3rd April 2019

This Council condemns the horrific attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, on Friday 15th March 2019, and stands in solidarity with the people of New Zealand and the worldwide Muslim population. This terrorist hate crime was Islamophobic, and the Council extends its condolences to all the victims and their families. Donations to victim support can be made <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/christchurch-shooting-victims-fund>

This Council:

1. Reaffirms its commitment to the Hate Crime Strategy and its support for the borough's Muslim communities, who contribute so much to making Merton a great place to live and work
2. Will continue to work with all the borough's Muslim groups to identify concerns and reaffirm Merton's zero tolerance approach to Islamophobia in all its forms
3. Welcomes the work done by the APPG to combat Islamophobia by investigating the forms, manifestations and extent of prejudice, discrimination and hatred against Muslims in the UK, while reviewing legislation and policy, the recording and prosecution of hate crimes, the role of the media, and the use of social media platforms as a means for spreading hatred
4. Will write to the borough's MPs to urge them to work with the government to produce an internationally recognised definition of Islamophobia to be adopted by the government, which will then be formally adopted by this Council

Cllr Stephen Alambritis Cllr Anthony Fairclough Cllr Nick McLean Cllr Peter Southgate

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Motion to Council – Wednesday 3rd April 2019

This Council recognises the importance of a vibrant and ethical private rented sector and supports the Generation Rent campaign for an end to No Fault evictions under Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988.

Cllr Eleanor Stringer Cllr Natasha Irons Cllr Owen Pritchard

Cllr Dennis Pearce Cllr Edith Macauley Cllr Laxmi Attawar

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Committee: Council

Date: 3 April 2019

Subject: Changes to Membership of Committees and related matters

Lead officer: Ged Curran, Chief Executive

Contact officer: Louise Fleming, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Democratic Services 020 8545 3616 - democratic.services@merton.gov.uk

Recommendations:

1. That the Council notes the changes to the membership of Committees that were approved under delegated authority since the last meeting of the Council.
2. To appoint Councillor Ed Gretton as Vice-Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report asks Council to note the changes made to committee membership under delegated authority since the publication of the agenda for the last ordinary Council meeting on 6 February 2019

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The following membership changes have been made by the Chief Executive under his delegated authority in accordance with section 1.4 of part 3F of the Constitution:

Committee	Member resigning	Replaced by	Date
Planning Applications Committee	Laxmi Attawar	John Dehaney	1 February 2019
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel	Ed Gretton	Nigel Benbow	11 February 2019
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel	Nigel Benbow	Ed Gretton	18 February 2019
Planning Applications Committee	John Dehaney	Laxmi Attawar	5 March 2019
Standards and General Purposes Committee	Joan Henry	Mark Kenny	8 March 2019
Standards and General Purposes Committee	Pauline Cowper	Rebecca Lanning	12 March 2019
Standards and General Purposes Committee	Rebecca Lanning	Pauline Cowper	20 March 2019
Standards and General Purposes Committee	Mark Kenny	Joan Henry	20 March 2019

- 2.2 The appointments to Committees and other bodies, including the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of those committees and other bodies, were agreed at Council on 23 May 2018.

3 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. None for the purposes of this report.

5 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The information regarding membership changes in this report complies with legal and statutory requirements. Council is required to accept nominations made by political groups.
- 5.2. The Housing and Local Government Act 1989 contains provisions relating to the political balance on committees, the duty to allocate seats to political groups and the duty to give effect to allocations.
- 5.3. The Council has a statutory duty to review the representations of different political groups on the Council in order to ensure that a political balance is secured on council committees so as to reflect the overall political composition of the council.
- 5.4. The requirement to allocate seats must be made in accordance with the following statutory principles:
- a) All of the seats are not to be allocated to the same political group.
 - b) The majority of the seats must be allocated to the political group with a majority on the Council.
 - c) Subject to the two principles listed above, the number of seats on the total of all the ordinary committees of the Council allocated to each political group must bear the same proportion to that on full Council.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None for the purposes of this report.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None for the purposes of this report.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. N/A

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

- 9.1 None.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Documents from the authorised officer confirming approval of the membership

changes agreed under delegated authority.

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Committee: Council

Date: 3 April 2019

Subject: Petitions

Lead officer: Paul Evans, Assistant Director, Corporate Governance.

Lead member: Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis.

Contact officer: Democratic Services, democratic.services@merton.gov.uk

Recommendation:

1. That Council receive petitions (if any) in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 18.1 of the Council's Constitution.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report invites Council to receive petitions in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 18.1 of the Council's Constitution.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1 Members are invited to present petitions at this meeting, and a response will be provided to the next ordinary Council meeting on 10 July 2019.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None for the purposes of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. None for the purpose of this report.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. None for the purpose of this report.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None for the purpose of this report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None for the purpose of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None for the purpose of this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None for the purpose of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11 APPENDICES

- 11.1. None

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. None.

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