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CABINET

14 JANUARY 2019

(7.15 pm - 8.08 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Stephen Alambritis (in the Chair), Councillor Mark Allison, Councillor Kelly Braund, Councillor Mike Brunt, Councillor Tobin Byers, Councillor Nick Draper, Councillor Edith Macauley and Councillor Martin Whelton

ALSO PRESENT Councillors Peter Southgate, Nigel Benbow, David Williams, Hayley Ormrod, Edward Gretton and Daniel Holden

Ged Curran (Chief Executive), Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services), Rachael Wardell (Director, Children, Schools and Families), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration), Fiona Thomsen (Head of Shared Legal Services), John Morgan (Assistant Director of Adult Social Care), Roger Kershaw (Assistant Director of Resources), Amy Dumitrescu (Democratic Services Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2018 are agreed as an accurate record.

4 REFERENCE FROM SCRUTINY - STRATEGIC APPROACH TO PARKING CHARGES (Agenda Item 4)

Councillor Tobin Byers, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health presented the report, thanking the scrutiny panel for their work and advising that this was one part of the consultation process, with further consultation planned in due course.

Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport reiterated points raised by Councillor Byers and stated that Scrutiny had looked thoroughly at the policy. Noting the reference, Councillor Whelton felt that there was a strong case in terms of air quality issues and that parking charges would play a key role in reducing car usage.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration noted that the reference sought additional evidence and advised that this would be made available as part of the consultation process.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Peter Southgate spoke on the scrutiny reference on behalf of the Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and gave an overview of the discussions which had taken place. The Panel had heard and considered evidence from three representatives who had raised various points and a recommendation had been brought to Cabinet following these discussions.

RESOLVED:

1. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommended that Cabinet take into account its reference set out in paragraph 2.8 of the report when making future decisions on the strategic approach to parking charges and on the associated public consultation.

5 KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE IN MERTON (Agenda Item 5)

Councillor Kelly Braund, Cabinet Member for Children's Services presented the report and thanked the Youth Parliament, the Police and Safer Merton for their hard work. The Cabinet Member noted that the report showed the importance of young people having a voice in every forum.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Peter Southgate addressed the Cabinet and stated that he hoped that the meeting which had taken place in October would be the first of many.

At the invitation of the Chair Beverly Boateng, representing the Youth Parliament, addressed the Cabinet and gave an overview of the findings from the consultation.

The Chair responded that the survey report had been interesting to read and stated that the Cabinet wanted to encourage young people to be more involved with the Council.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet considered the report and recommendations arising from the joint scrutiny exercise with the youth parliament on the issue of keeping young people safe in Merton – attached as Appendix 1;
2. That Cabinet considered the draft officer response set out in Appendix 2
3. That Cabinet agreed to delegate the action plan to the Director of Children Schools and Families.

6 LOCAL DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATE RELIEF SCHEME 2019/20
(Agenda Item 6)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report, thanking officers for their hard work and stating that it was important to support businesses where the Council was able to. The Cabinet Member for Finance advised that business rates are not set by the Local Authority but by Central Government. It was noted that 530 businesses would benefit from the scheme if approved.

The Director of Corporate Services advised the Cabinet that it was anticipated that the scheme would be in place before the bills were sent out to businesses.

The Chair responded that it was positive that the businesses that benefitted did not have to apply for the scheme but would be contacted by the Council.

RESOLVED:

1. For Cabinet to review and agree the Local Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme for 2019/20
2. For Cabinet to agree the new Retail Discount Scheme for 2019/20

7 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION POLICY TO SUPPORT CARE LEAVERS
(Agenda Item 7)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report and thanked officers for their hard work and welcomed the opportunity to give children in care a good start in life.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that recipients would have to apply for the reduction however the Council aimed to make the process as streamlined as possible.

RESOLVED:

1. Cabinet agreed that the Council Tax Reduction policy is amended to support care leavers up to the age of 25 that do not receive maximum help towards their council tax through council tax support or an exemption with effect from April 2019.

8 DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2019-23 (Agenda Item 8)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report and thanked officers for their work, noting that the estimates about the budget gap had been correct with a gap of £20million and that recommendations for addressing half of that figure had been suggested so far. The situation was being monitored and scrutiny were currently providing feedback on the proposed savings.

The Chair echoed the points raised and advised that financial strategies were in place however there were difficult decisions being made.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet noted the financial information arising from the Provisional Settlement 2019/20 and that the financial implications will be incorporated into the draft MTFS 2019-23 and draft capital programme 2019-23.
2. That Cabinet noted the latest update of the draft MTFS for 2019 – 23

9 FINANCIAL REPORT 2018/19 – NOVEMBER 2018 (Agenda Item 9)s

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report, thanking Finance staff for their highly valued work and advising that the latest update was relatively positive with the budget projected spend close to being achieved, with a slight overspend of 0.04%.

The Director for Corporate Services noted that there had been progress in addressing the overspend in the Community and Housing Budget however this was being closely monitored.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet noted the financial reporting data relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net overspend at year end of £0.215 million, 0.04% of gross budget.
- B. That Cabinet noted the adjustments to the Capital Programme contained in Appendix 5b and approved the items in the Table below:

Scheme	2018/19 Budget	2019/20 Budget	Narrative
<u>Corporate Service</u>			
Housing Company	(439,000)	439,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Parking System	(106,000)	106,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
<u>Community and Housing</u>			
Disabled Facilities Grant	102,320	0	2018-19 Budget based on projected spend at year end
<u>Children, Schools and Families</u>			
Healthy Schools	(188,630)	188,630	Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Harris Academy Wimbledon	(209,500)	209,500	Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Capital Loans to Schools	(108,900)	108,900	Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
<u>Environment and Regeneration</u>			
Wimbledon Lake De-Silting	(73,500)	117,290	Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend

Morden Leisure Centre	(338,830)	338,830	Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Waste Bins	(789,270)	789,270	Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Highways bridges & structures	(310,000)	310,000	Funding no longer required, residual spend in revenue
Total	(2,461,310)	2,607,420	

10 FORMER VIRGIN ACTIVE PROPERTY, BATTLE CLOSE, SW19 1AQ
(Agenda Item 10)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report and thanked officers for their work, adding that it was unfortunate that Virgin Active had closed and that given the provision of leisure facilities in the Borough it was clear that housing is a use for the site which could be supported. The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to place on record his thanks to everyone involved with the newly opened Morden Leisure Centre.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration provided an update to Paragraph 2.8, advising that a consultation response had been received from Sport England and their comments would be taken into account.

RESOLVED:

1. That the demolition of the former Virgin Active Health Club, Battle Close, SW19 1AQ is authorised subject to confirmation of prior approval under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015.

11 LONDON COUNCILS GRANTS SCHEME SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2019/20
(Agenda Item 11)

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities presented the report, noting the proposed contribution increase on the previous year.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet approved the council's contribution to the London Councils Grants Scheme 2019/20 as per the subscription set by London Councils Leaders' Committee on 4 December 2018.

12 NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY WARD
ALLOCATION SCHEME (Agenda Item 12)

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport presented the report, thanking officers and the Future Merton team for their work.

The Cabinet Member advised that following the pilot scheme the previous year, lessons had been learned and the proposal was now included within the report of £15,000 per ward over three years. It was noted that a full briefing would be provided to all Councillors in advance of April 2019.

The Chair welcomed that wards would be able to work together and pool their resources if they wished to.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet consider the outcome from the £5k per ward pilot project carried out in 2018

B. The Cabinet approve the ward allocation scheme including £15k per ward as set out at paragraph 2.17

C. That Cabinet note that the second bidding round for the Neighbourhood Fund will be carried out early in 2019 separately from the ward allocation scheme in accordance with the governance and allocation arrangements approved by Cabinet in 2017, as set out at paragraph 2.19.