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CABINET

14 OCTOBER 2019

(7.15 pm - 7.57 pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Stephen Alambritis (in the Chair), Mark Allison, Laxmi Attawar, Kelly Braund, Tobin Byers, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Edith Macauley MBE, Eleanor Stringer and Martin Whelton

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Nick McLean (Leader of the Conservative Group) and Peter Southgate (Leader of the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents Group)

Ged Curran (Chief Executive), Hannah Doody (Director of Community and Housing), Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration), Rachael Wardell (Director, Children, Schools & Families Department), Zara Bishop (Communications Manager), Richard Ellis (Head of Adult Commissioning), Roger Kershaw (Assistant Director of Resources), James McGinlay (Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities) and Fiona Thomsen (Head of shared legal services)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for lateness were received from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 10 AND 19 SEPTEMBER 2019 (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 10 and 19 September 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

4 REFERENCE FROM THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – WASTE, RECYCLING AND STREET CLEANING (Agenda Item 4)

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment presented the report and thanked the Chair and Members of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their discussion on the issues. He highlighted the main points made by the Panel for the Cabinet's consideration and advised that the Council would need to continue to engage and work with partners such as housing associations as the Council and Veolia could not address the issues raised alone. A

short update report would be brought to the next meeting of Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Director of Environment and Regeneration confirmed that work on all recommendations was underway and the Scrutiny Panel would receive an update on progress.

The Chair thanked the Scrutiny Panel and the officers for their work and it was

RESOLVED:

That the reference of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel set out in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.18 of the Cabinet report, be taken into account when making decisions on the waste, recycling and street cleaning contract.

The Chair advised that the order of the agenda would be altered to take item 6 before item 5, to allow the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport to present his items when he arrived. For ease of reference, the minutes are listed below as they appear in the agenda.

5 ROAD SAFETY TASK GROUP - OFFICER RESPONSE (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport presented the report which set out a response to the recommendations made by the Road Safety Task Group. He thanked all those involved in the Task Group and highlighted the work currently being done by schools in the Borough in improving road safety around the schools. Much of the work was already undertaken either by the schools or the Council working in partnership with schools and TfL. The Cabinet Member advised that recommendation 16 would need to be undertaken by the schools to consult on any proposal and agree an approach to staggered start times.

The Cabinet Member for School and Adult Education welcomed the report and the recommendations. She advised that recommendation 7, relating to the employment of a school crossing patrol, was not something which the schools were able to do directly.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration advised that evidence showed that road safety around schools Merton was already very good, and the recommendations set out in the report would build on current good practice.

RESOLVED:

That the executive response to the recommendations of the Road Safety Task Group as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the Cabinet report be agreed.

6 COMMUNITY SERVICE MARKET ENGAGEMENT (Agenda Item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment presented the report which set out proposals for an engagement exercise with potential providers of community health and care services. It would be a joint exercise with the Merton and Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group and the CCG would be the

lead commissioner for the project. The current jointly commissioned contract was due to end in March 2021 and the opportunity was being explored to commission integrated community services which would provide an opportunity to be ambitious and shift the focus to a preventative personalised approach; and support the further integration of health, social care and voluntary services.

RESOLVED

That the commencement of a market engagement exercise in November for integrated community health and care services be approved.

7 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport presented the report and placed on record his thanks to the Borough Plan Advisory Committee for their work on the Statement of Community Involvement, which set out a draft statement for involving the community in the development of planning policy documents and planning applications. It was recognised that communications methods have changed since 2006, with the growth in use of the internet and social media; and the ability to respond to consultations online.

RESOLVED

1. That, following the recommendations of the Borough Plan Advisory Committee on 12th September 2019, Merton's Statement of Community Involvement 2006 be revised.
2. That a six week consultation on the new Statement of Community Involvement, to run for six weeks in winter 2019/20 be approved.
3. That approval for the final consultation documents be delegated to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport.

8 MERTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY (2019) (Agenda Item 8)

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport presented the report which set out a draft strategy for current and future provision of playing pitches in Merton and would form part of the evidence base for the Council's new Local Development Plan. The Cabinet Member again placed on record his thanks to the Borough Plan Advisory Committee for looking at the strategy and considering the timetable.

The Cabinet Member for Commerce, Leisure and Culture thanked all those involved for their work on the report. She welcomed the opportunity to work in partnership with bodies such as Sport England and the ability to provide open space for residents.

RESOLVED:

That Merton's Playing Pitch Strategy (2019), which will form part of the evidence base for the Council's new Local Development Plan, be adopted.

9 BUSINESS PLAN 2020-24 (Agenda Item 9)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report which set out a draft Business Plan for the next four years. He thanked all those involved in the report and welcomed their hard work and business-like attitude to the financial management of the Council. It was due to this approach that the Council had been able to provide a high level of service which had contributed to a good level of satisfaction and pride in the borough. However, there was currently a period of uncertainty for both the Council and the Country, with a lack of guidance from the government. The United Kingdom's exit from the EU would have an impact on public finances and the ability to deliver public services. The current uncertainty was also impacting on the Council's ability to plan 3 to 4 years ahead. The Cabinet Member highlighted the key points in the report for Cabinet's consideration, including the current estimate of savings required.

The proposed savings set out in the report were subject to equalities impact assessments, which would be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Panels as part of the first round of Budget Scrutiny; and he welcomed the input of the Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities. He advised that it was unlikely that savings would be found that had no impact on residents, however the Council would be focussing on protecting services to children and vulnerable adults and bridging the gap between the east and west of the Borough. It was possible that additional proposed savings would be reported to the December meeting of the Cabinet following the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget announcement on 6 November.

The Director of Corporate Services advised the Cabinet that the figures in the report were likely to change as further information became available. She outlined the key areas for the Cabinet's consideration which were having the biggest impact on the Council's finances. The report outlined some growth items and further details on these would be brought to the December Cabinet meeting for consideration. If the Government called a General Election in early December, this could have an impact on any funding announcement for local government. However officers were working with colleagues across the Council to mitigate any effects.

The Chair echoed the comments made and welcomed the forthcoming budget scrutiny. He thanked all those involved for their work and acknowledged that difficult choices would need to be made across local government.

RESOLVED

1. That the approach to rolling forward the MTFs for 2020-24 be noted.
2. That the latest position with regards to savings already in the MTFs be confirmed.

3. That the approach to setting a balanced budget using the unmet balance of last year's savings targets as the basis for the setting of targets for 2020-24 be agreed.
4. That the proposed savings targets be agreed.
5. That the timetable for the Business Plan 2020-24 including the revenue budget 2020/21, the MTFs 2020-24 and the Capital Programme for 2020-24 be agreed.
6. That the process for the Service Plan 2020-24 and the progress made so far be noted.
7. That the proposed new savings, replacement savings and deferred savings for 2020-24 be noted and referred to the Scrutiny Panels and Commission; and that these savings be ratified at a future Cabinet meeting subject to scrutiny comments. (Draft Equality Assessments (EAs) will be provided for the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission).
8. That the proposed new capital bids and draft capital programme 2020-24 be noted and referred to the Scrutiny Panels and Commission.

10 FINANCIAL MONITORING AUGUST 2019 (Agenda Item 10)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report which set out the financial monitoring information for August 2019; and thanked all those involved for their work. There had been a modest change in the projections to the end of the year and the Council was anticipating a very small underspend, which represented -0.05% of the overall budget.

The Director of Corporate Services drew the Cabinet's attention to progress against savings identified; and the increase in the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit with work continuing to address this with the Director of Children, Schools and Families and colleagues. Officers were in the process of reviewing the boilers in the Civic Centre in light of the climate change declaration and therefore a re-profiling of the budget was proposed.

The Chair thanked all for their contributions and it was

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet note the financial reporting data relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net underspend at year-end of £250k, -0.05% of gross budget.
2. That Cabinet note the contents of Section 4 and the amendments to the Capital Programme contained in Appendix 5b and approve the amendments in the Table below:

Scheme	2019/20 Budget	2020/21 Budget	Narrative
Corporate			

Services			
Civic Centre Boilers	(201,480)	201,480	Scheme slipped to 2020/21
Highways and Footways – Traffic Schemes	100,000		New TfL funding of £100k
Total	(101,480)	201.480	