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## CABINET

16 DECEMBER 2019

(7.15 pm - 7.40 pm)

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

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Daniel Holden and Peter Southgate

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), Fabiola Hickson (Manager business improvement law), Zara Bishop (Communications Manager), John Bosley (Assistant Director Public Space Contracts and Commissioning), Roger Kershaw (Assistant Director of Resources), Octavia Lamb (Policy and Research Officer (Labour Group)) and Louise Fleming (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment; and the Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education.

### 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 11 November 2019 are agreed as an accurate record.

### 4 REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION - CLIMATE EMERGENCY (Agenda Item 4)

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, presented the reference report. He sent apologies on behalf of the Youth Parliament representative who had been unable to attend due to illness.

The theme of the Local Democracy Week event had been chosen by the youth parliament and the objectives were to both give young people some experience of the Council's scrutiny process; and to reach agreement on recommendations for future action on the climate change action plan, which he then outlined for the

Cabinet. Councillor Southgate thanked the Cabinet Member for setting out the Council's work in this area and the officers and young people involved in the event. He thanked the Leader and Cabinet Member for their support to the youth parliament and advised that the Youth Parliament was now sending representatives to the Climate Emergency Working Group.

The Chair thanked Councillor Southgate for his presentation and welcomed the report and the work of the youth parliament. It was also noted that representatives of the youth parliament had been invited to attend the Sustainable Communities Panel in February. The Director of Environment and Regeneration also thanked the young people for their hard work; and suggested a minor change on the wording of Recommendation 5, to avoid any confusion and clarify that items should be left out within the curtilage of the property and not on the public highway.

Cabinet Members welcomed the work of the youth parliament; their contributions at a successful event; and the opportunity to work with young people to help shape their future. Subject to the clarification on the wording of Recommendation 5, the Cabinet were happy to support and look into further.

The Chair welcomed the report and that Merton had come joint second out of the London boroughs in the Friends of the Earth local authority league table on tackling climate change.

## RESOLVED

1. That the report and recommendations arising from the joint scrutiny exercise with the youth parliament on the issue of the climate emergency, attached as Appendix A to the Cabinet report be noted.
2. That, subject to clarification on the wording of Recommendation 5, the recommendations be responded to through an action plan to be drawn up by officers in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member.
3. That the action plan be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for consideration.

## 5 SCRUTINY OF THE BUSINESS PLAN 2020-2024: COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS (Agenda Item 5)

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Peter Southgate Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission presented the report which set out the comments made by the Commission and Panels in relation to the first round of budget scrutiny. It was noted that there was a significant level of uncertainty for the Council due to the delay in the funding announcement from central government. The scrutiny members would continue to support the Cabinet in lobbying central government for a more realistic, multi-year funding settlement.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance thanked Councillor Southgate and the scrutiny panels for their work on the first round of budget scrutiny; and for accommodating the change in the timetable due to the delays caused by the General Election. In respect of the recommendation from the Sustainable Communities Panel, he wished to reassure Members and residents that the locations where moving traffic offences are monitored are checked regularly to ensure that they comply with regulations. The Cabinet would continue to lobby central government, as it was the consensus across local government that it was not being funded properly by central government. However there would still be a need to produce a balanced budget and therefore savings would need to be made which would have some impact on residents using those services. He looked forward to working with scrutiny in the second round to make the savings as least damaging as possible.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that due to the delays in the government's funding announcement, the timetable set out in the report had changed and the Business Plan would now be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Cabinet meetings on 12 and 24 February 2020.

The Chair thanked the scrutiny panel members and chairs for their work.

#### RESOLVED

That in taking decisions relating to the Business Plan 2020-24, the Cabinet take into account the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the outcomes of consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

#### 6 FINANCIAL MONITORING OCTOBER 2019 (Agenda Item 6)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report and thanked the officers involved for their work. The headline figures were good and the Council was projecting a small underspend at year end, however the pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant was a serious concern and the government needed to address the underfunding of local authorities. A report setting out the implications of the DSG on the MTFs would come to the January Cabinet meeting for consideration.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and the Director.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the financial reporting data for month 7, October 2019, relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net underspend at year-end of £1,068k, -0.2% of gross budget be noted.
2. That £165,620 from the Outstanding Council Programme Board (OCPB) Reserve relating to the Children, Schools and Families Merton Improvement Board (MIB) project bid for the scanning and digital archiving of files be approved.
3. That the contents of Section 4 be noted and the amendments to the Capital programme contained in Appendix 5b and in the Table below be approved.

4. That there will be a separate report on the wider impact of the DSG on the MTFS to the January 2020 Cabinet meeting.

Scheme	2019/20 Budget	2020/21 Budget	2021/22 Budget	2022/23 Budget	Narrative
Business Systems – Capita Housing	(100,000)	(100,000)			Reprofiled in accordance with projected spend
Customer Contact	(150,000)	150,000			Reprofiled in accordance with projected spend
Library Enhancement Works – West Barnes Library Re-fit	(200,000)	200,000			Reprofiled in accordance with projected spend
Disabled Facilities Grants	100,000	647,100			Additional budget funded by grant
Unallocated Primary School Project	(157,000)				Proposed Virement to fund projected costs
Morden Area Regeneration – Transportation Enhancements	(500,000)			500,000	Reprofiled in accordance with projected spend
<b>Total</b>	<b>(1,007,000)</b>	<b>1,097,100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>500,000</b>	

#### 7 STREET CLEANSING LOCALISED IMPROVEMENT PLAN (Agenda Item 7)

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the report, which had been brought forward by Veolia following issues raised at the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel meeting in August; and subsequent joint site inspections with the Directors of Veolia and the Cabinet Member. It had been acknowledged by Veolia that they were not meeting some service standards, particularly in the east of the borough and therefore they agreed to bring forward an improvement plan. The

current contract with Veolia was based on an output specification, which therefore meant that Veolia was responsible for inputs, allocation of resources and processes to achieve those outputs. The Council would continue to work closely with Veolia and monitor performance against their improvement plan, and there would be an expectation that Veolia would make necessary adjustments to the improvement plan in the event that any of the services standards were still not being met.

The Chair welcomed the report and it was

#### RESOLVED

1. That the Cabinet note the contents of the local improvement plan prepared by Veolia, the Council's street cleansing service provider.
2. That the Cabinet requests the improvement plan, focused on improved street cleansing outputs, be supported by the Council's client monitoring team through enhanced Officer monitoring of Veolia's service deliverables.
3. That officers work collaboratively with Veolia to identify areas of improved service delivery as outlined in the improvement plan in the future initiatives section.
4. That officers regularly review the progress and delivery of the local improvement plan until completion.