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CABINET

22 MARCH 2021

(7.15 pm - 8.08 pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Mark Allison (in the Chair), Agatha Mary Akyigyina OBE, Mike Brunt, Tobin Byers, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Rebecca Lanning, Owen Pritchard, Marsie Skeete, 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), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration), Louise Round (Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership and Monitoring Officer), Murray Davies (Contracts and procurement manager CFSF), David Keppler (Head of Revenues and Benefits), Roger Kershaw (Assistant Director of Resources), Barbara Batchelor (Head of Organisational Development and HR Strategy), Tara Butler (Programme Manager - Strategic Policy and Research), James Pierce (Learning and Development Adviser), Octavia Lamb (Policy and Research Officer (Labour Group)) and Louise Fleming (Democracy Services Manager)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies were received.

The Chair noted that Councillor Irons was currently on maternity leave and would be returning after the AGM. He thanked Councillor Brunt for providing maternity cover in her absence and announced that Councillor Brunt had been nominated as Mayor elect for the 2021/22 municipal year.

Councillor Brunt thanked the Leader for the opportunity to serve on the Cabinet and for his nomination as Mayor elect.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS (8 AND 22 FEBRUARY 2021) (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 8 and 22 February 2021 are agreed as an accurate record.

4 REFERENCE FROM THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL: HGV'S (Agenda Item 4)

The Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel presented the report which set out recommendations relating to the management of HGVs in the borough, roadwork maintenance, sustainable travel and school streets.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency thanked the Scrutiny Panel for their discussion and the residents groups who had made submissions to the Panel. Work had already been carried out in this area, and where resources were available, further work would be carried out although there would need to be a London-wide approach. He thanked the officers involved in the successful roll out of the School Streets programme which had made the environment outside schools safer and he would be working with other schools who had requested to be included in the programme going forward.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration advised that there was a great deal of activity across London to tackle air quality and road safety and his officers would consider positive ways to respond to the recommendations of the scrutiny panel within existing resources and utilising new emerging technology, with a further paper to Cabinet in due course.

The Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities addressed the effects of air pollution on health of the under-privileged in the borough.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health thanked the Scrutiny Panel for their discussion and addressed the HGV issue. HGVs were not the biggest contributor to air pollution in the borough and therefore it was important to retain a focus on all vehicle emissions.

The Chair thanked all for their contributions and it was

RESOLVED:

That the reference of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel be taken into account its reference set out in paragraphs 2.6 to 2.13 of the Cabinet report when making decisions on changes to Merton's road networks and associated resident communications.

5 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED PLANWIMBLEDON NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA AND FORUM (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency presented the report which set out the statutory requirement to consult on proposal by PlanWimbledon to be designated as a Neighbourhood Forum for Wimbledon. A further report would be brought to Cabinet following the consultation in June, with a final decision being taken by the Council in July.

The Chair stated the importance of any successful designated Neighbourhood Forum to support the growth agenda and the Government's targets for new homes and the Cabinet Member advised that any plan submitted by the Forum would need to be in accordance with the London Plan and national planning policies and it was

RESOLVED:

1. That, considering the recommendations of the Borough Plan Advisory Committee (4th March 2021), the contents of the report be considered and that six weeks of public consultation can take place on PlanWimbledon's proposal to be designated as the Neighbourhood Forum for their proposed Neighbourhood Area of Wimbledon.
2. That approval for any amendments proposed to the consultation documents prior to the start of public consultation are delegated to the Director for Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency.

6 ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT (DISCRETIONARY SCHEME) POLICY (Agenda Item 6)

At the invitation of the Chair, Bryan Raven, Managing Director of White Light Ltd, a local business in the borough, addressed the Cabinet on the difficulties faced by his business in the pandemic. He welcomed the support already received from the Council however was disappointed to not meet the criteria for the second phase and asked the Cabinet to make the proposed grant available to all businesses in the borough.

The Chair thanked Mr Raven for his contributions.

The Cabinet Member for Finance also thanked Mr Raven for his contributions and acknowledged the difficulties he and other businesses had experienced throughout the pandemic. He thanked the officers for their work on distributing the grants in phase one and presented the report which set out proposals for phase two. It was noted that there were insufficient funds to support all businesses in the borough and therefore it was felt that the grants should be focussed on those businesses where it could have the most impact. There would be two funding streams in phase two and it would be possible to redirect funding from one stream into the other if required to ensure all the money was allocated.

The Joint Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance, Recovery and the Local Economy added that it had been a difficult policy to draft and the focus had been to keep people in jobs to aid the economic recovery following the pandemic with a limited sum of money by focussing on small and micro business and those businesses employing Merton residents.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits advised that there could be further funding from the Government available if the Council could evidence that it had allocated the funding from the second phase by the end of June 2021.

The Chair welcomed this further announcement although noted that it would still be insufficient to support all businesses in the borough and it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the Additional Restrictions Grant Policy for Phase two be agreed.
2. That the Expanded Retail Relief Policy for 2021/22 (1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021) be agreed and authority to agree any future Section 47 business rates discretionary policies be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance.

7 CONTRACT AWARD - SCHOOL MEALS CATERING SERVICE 2021
(Agenda Item 7)

The Joint Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Education presented the report which set out a proposal to award a contract for the provision of school meals at Merton's primary and secondary schools.

In response to a Cabinet Member question, the Contract Manager advised that schools had been encouraged to purchase vouchers rather than food parcels to support low income families in the school holidays.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their contributions and it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the council award to Bidder A (as detailed in the Confidential Appendix to the Cabinet report) a contract for provision of the school meals catering service at Merton primary and special schools for a period of 3 years from 1 August 2021 with an option to extend for up to two further years at the discretion of the council.
 2. That authority be delegated to the Director of Children, Schools and Families to exercise, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Education, the council's option to grant one or more extensions of the contract term for any period up to two further years beyond the expiry of the initial contract term on 31 July 2024.
 3. Members are asked to note the new price charged for a school meal from 1 September 2021 will be £2.23 (currently £2.18) so that the estimated total value of this contract over the initial three year term will be approximately £11.5 million and over the extended term up to £19.2 million.
- 8 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2020/21 - JANUARY 2021 (Agenda Item 8)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report which set out the financial monitoring information for January 2021 thanking the officers for all their work on the report and officers across the Council in their efforts to manage their budgets during

a difficult period. There had been a slight reduction in the adverse variance however the report set out the difficulties brought about by the pandemic and the impact would be felt into the following financial year.

The Assistant Director for Resources drew the Cabinet’s attention to the recommended amendments in the report and the announcement by the government that the Council would be allowed to spread the losses of business rates over a three year period, which would be reflected in the outturn report.

The Chair thanked all for their contributions and it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the financial reporting data for month 10, January 2021, relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net adverse variance at year-end of £2.6m be noted.
2. That the contents of section 4 of the report be noted and the adjustments to the Capital Programme in Appendix 5b be approved.

That the contents of Section 4 and Appendix 5b of the report be noted and the amendments to the Programme contained in the table below be approved:

	Budget 2020- 21	Narrative
	£	
<u>Corporate Services</u>		
FM Works to Other Buildings - De-Carbonisation Scheme	497,240	Grant Funded Scheme
<u>Environment and Regeneration</u>		
Cycle Route Improvements - Cycle access/parking	40,000	TfL/Dft Grant
Total	537,240	

3. That a £1.386m transfer from non-staffing budgets to staffing budgets within the Children’s Social Care and Youth Inclusion division of CSF for the financial year 2021/22 be approved. This will facilitate the smooth implementation of the restructure within this division.
- 9 PROCUREMENT OF MULTIPLE APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS (Agenda Item 9)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report which set out a proposal to award contracts for multiple apprenticeship standards and thanked the staff involved for their work. The proposals would enable the Council to meet its target of 2.3% of its workforce being made up of apprentices.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Skills welcomed the report and the contribution the proposals would make as part of the economic recovery from the pandemic by improving the skills of residents.

The Chair welcomed the report and it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the award of the contracts for Multiple Apprenticeship Standards across Lots 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 & 12 to Suppliers E, H, J, K, N, O, Q, S, AB, AD, AE, AF, AH & AK, on an initial 3 year term from 31 March 2021, with extension provisions of up to a further 1 year be approved. The identities of the preferred and unsuccessful bidders are set out in Appendix A to the Cabinet report. The contract values for the proposed term are set out in Appendix D.
2. That the authority to exercise the extension provision is delegated to the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, and subject to continued funding and satisfactory supplier performance.

10 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 10)

The Cabinet agreed not to refer to the exempt information contained in items 11 and 12 during consideration of items 7 and 9 and therefore the meeting remained in public.

11 CONTRACT AWARD - SCHOOL MEALS CATERING SERVICE 2021 - EXEMPT APPENDIX (Agenda Item 11)

The Cabinet did not refer to the exempt information contained in the exempt appendix and therefore the meeting remained in public. The minute is set out at item 7 above.

12 PROCUREMENT OF MULTIPLE APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS - EXEMPT APPENDICES (Agenda Item 12)

The Cabinet did not refer to the exempt information contained in the exempt appendix and therefore the meeting remained in public. The minute is set out at item 9 above.