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CABINET

8 NOVEMBER 2021

(7.15 pm - 7.53 pm)

PRESENT Councillor Mark Allison (in the Chair), Councillor Tobin Byers, Councillor Rebecca Lanning, Councillor Eleanor Stringer and Councillor Martin Whelton

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Nick Draper
Councillor Aidan Mundy

Hannah Doody (Chief Executive), Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services), John Morgan (Interim Director, Community & Housing) and Amy Dumitrescu (Democracy Services Manager)

ATTENDING REMOTELY Councillor Agatha Akyigyina, Councillor Brenda Fraser, Councillor Natasha Irons, Councillor Owen Pritchard and Councillor Marsie Skeete.

Louise Round (Managing Director SLLP), James McGinlay (Assistant Director Sustainable Communities), Tom Procter (Head of Contracts and School Org), Tim Catley S106/External Funding Officer and Octavia Lamb (Research and Policy Officer – Labour Group)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies were received. Councillors Akyigyina, Fraser, Irons, Pritchard and Skeete attended remotely.

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 October 2021 are agreed as an accurate record.

4 REFERENCES FROM SCRUTINY PANELS (Agenda Item 4)

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Aidan Mundy, Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel spoke on the item and gave an overview of the ongoing work of the Panel working with Clarion Housing and of the panel's reference.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency thanked Councillor Mundy and the Panel for their work. Councillor Whelton noted this was a complex regeneration scheme and that this would continue to be scrutinised.

The Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities noted that work was ongoing on the reporting matrix and once further clarification had been obtained between the Council and Clarion this would be fed back in due course.

RESOLVED :

That the Cabinet noted the reference of the The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel set out in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.12 below.

2.7. The Panel RESOLVED (five votes for, two against, one abstention) to send the following recommendations to Cabinet;

2.8. Amend the Stock Transfer Agreement between Clarion and Merton Council for the principles of:

2.9. Suspending the council's clawback until the programme reaches breakeven; publishing, through the performance management item of the Sustainable Communities Panel, the status of profitability;

2.10. Requiring Clarion to commit to delivering Decent Homes if Clarion fails to reach deadlines for delivering regeneration, while agreeing category 1 faults without fail and category 2 faults as per health and safety assessments are repaired;

2.11. Agreeing monthly business plan and risk management monitoring, open book approach and reporting back to the Sustainable Communities Panel at every meeting as part of performance monitoring. Clarion to fund all. Metrics to be agreed between Chair and Council Officers before calendar year end 2021.

2.12. Council will continue with 100% nomination rights to true voids as per the 2010 Nomination Rights Deed.

5 BUSINESS PLAN 2022-26 (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair announced that items 5 and 10 would be taken together at this stage of the meeting. For the purposes of the minutes these are minuted separately and in the order of the published agenda.

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report, thanking officers for their work. The Business Plan had been brought to the three scrutiny panels and was due to be taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission during the upcoming week along with the draft Capital programme if approved by Cabinet, with the next substantive update on the Business Plan due at the December meeting of Cabinet which would include savings proposals.

It was noted that the final settlement from Central Government would not be known until mid-December 2021, however the Council had already been advised that it would be able to levy a 1% Adult Social Care precept and it was expected that the Council Tax threshold would remain at 2%.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet considered and agreed the draft Capital Programme 2022-2031 and referred it to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in January 2022 for consideration and comment.
2. That the Cabinet noted the details set out in the Government's Autumn Budget 2021 and Spending Review 2021.

6 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022/23 (Agenda Item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report and thanked officers for their work. The annual report recommended that the scheme be retained and uprated to keep it in line with Government provided scheme and if agreed would proceed to Full Council for a decision later in November.

RESOLVED:

1. That the uprating revisions for the 2022/23 council tax support scheme detailed in the report were agreed, in order to maintain low council tax charges for those on lower incomes and other vulnerable residents
2. That Cabinet recommended to Council that it adopts the proposed revisions to the 2022/23 scheme.

7 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Children and Education presented the report, thanking officers for their work. The consultation would seek to discuss whether the existing policy was appropriate and cost efficient and whether any changes could be made to benefit young people and to become more efficient, with a range of suggested options provided for discussion.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet agreed to commence a consultation as outlined in the paper to consider changes to the council's Home to School/College Travel Assistance policy for providing travel support from September 2022, and particularly the discretionary policy.

8 SECONDARY SCHOOLS CATERING CONTRACT AWARD DECISION (Agenda Item 8)

The Cabinet Member for Children and Education presented the report, thanking officers for their work. The report followed a previous Cabinet decision to remove catering from the PFI contract which covered a number of schools and therefore this report sought to award a contract for the provision of school meals catering to these schools following a bidding process to identify a supplier.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet agreed to award to Bidder A (as detailed in the Confidential Appendix to this report) a contract for provision of the school meals catering service at Merton PFI secondary schools for a period of 3 years from 1 January 2022, with an option to extend for up to two further years at the discretion of the Council.

B. In accordance with Contract Standing Orders (CSO 24.3) that authority was 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 December 2025.

9 NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND BID APPROVALS 2021 (Agenda Item 9)

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency presented the report, thanking officers for their work.

Following a consultation earlier in the year, project bids totalling £1.78m had been received and the Cabinet Member thanked all those who had submitted a bid to the fund. The report proposed the approval of £1.275m covering 22 of the projects and 2 top-ups of previously successful bids, based on criteria previously agreed by Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Education spoke on the number and breadth of bids that had been approved that would benefit children and young people.

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces spoke on bids which improve the local environment.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet agreed to allocate CIL Neighbourhood Fund money to individual projects received through the 2021 Neighbourhood Fund consultation in line with Merton Council's approved Neighbourhood Fund criteria as set out in Appendix A
2. That delegated authority was granted to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency and Transport to make any amendments to funding bid amounts received through the recent Neighbourhood Fund consultation, in line with Cabinet's agreed Neighbourhood Fund criteria

10 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 6 SEPTEMBER 2021 (Agenda Item 10)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report, thanking officers for their work, noting that the forecast net variance had increased from the previous report, with the cost of Covid remaining the primary factor for this.

In regards to the Dedicated Schools Grant, the Council continued in discussions with the Department for Education but was unlikely to have any resolution on those discussions until early 2022.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the report would be discussed by the Financial Monitoring Task Group at their next meeting and noted that an invoice recently paid by the CCG had improved the position.

The Chair thanked the officers for their work and it was RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet noted the financial reporting data for month 6, September 2021, relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net adverse variance at year end on net service expenditure of £6.197m, increasing to £7.687m when corporate and funding items are included.

B. That Cabinet approved a draw down of £250k from the Your Merton reserve to E&R revenue budgets to fund a series of street and parks improvement projects within the department.

C. That Cabinet noted the contents of Section 5 and Appendix 5b of the report and approve the adjustments to the Capital Programme in the Table below:

	Budget 2021-22	Budget 2022-23	Budget 2023-24	Budget 2024-25	Narrative
	£	£		£	
<u>Corporate Services</u>					
Invest to Save – General	(473,690)	273,690			Re-profiled in line with projected spend
Invest to Save - Photovoltaics	(50,000)	50,000			Re-profiled in line with projected spend
<u>Community and Housing</u>					
Disabled Facilities Grant	262,410		220,000	440,410	Grant for 2021-22 Applied to Prog.
<u>Children, Schools and Families</u>					
West Wimbledon Capital Maintenance Budget	75,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Hatfeild Capital Maintenance Budget	60,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Hillcross Capital Maintenance Budget	105,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Joseph Hood Capital Maintenance Budget	37,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Dundonald Capital Maintenance Budget	(1,990)				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Merton Park Capital Maintenance Budget	50,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Pelham Capital Maintenance Budget	35,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Wimbledon Chase Capital Maintenance Budget	40,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance

Abbotsbury Capital Maintenance Budget	18,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Malmesbury Capital Maintenance Budget	13,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Bond Capital Maintenance Budget	35,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Cranmer Capital Maintenance Budget	50,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Haslemere Capital Maintenance Budget	90,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
St Mark's Capital Maintenance Budget	65,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Lonesome Capital Maintenance Budget	35,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Sherwood Capital Maintenance Budget	30,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Unallocated Capital Maintenance Budget	(786,010)				£xk virement to specific schemes
Perseid Capital Maintenance Budget	50,000				Virements-projected spend capital maintenance
Unlocated SEN – Medical PRU Expansion	(300,000)	300,000			Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
<u>Environment and Regeneration</u>					
SLWP – General	(8,080)	8,080			Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
SLWP – Waste Bins	(13,350)	13,350			NCIL Capital Bidding 2021-22
Mitcham Area Regen – Pollards Hill Bus Shelter		150,000			NCIL Capital Bidding 2021-22
Highways & Footways – S Wimb Bus Area Wayfinding		135,630			NCIL Capital Bidding 2021-22
Highways & Footways – Street Lighting Wimb	(261,680)	261,680			Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Cycle Route Imps – Cycle Lane Plough Lane	(120,000)	120,000			Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Wimb Area Regen – Wimb Public Realm Implement	(401,190)	401,190			Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Wimb Area Regen – Haydons Rd Public Realm Imps	(300,000)	300,000			Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Total	(1,665,580)	2,013,620	220,000	440,410	

D. That Cabinet approved the Revenue NCIL Bids below as contained in Appendix 5d – these are summarised below:

<u>Revenue Schemes</u>	Budget 2021- 22 £	Budget 2022- 23 £
The Small Quarter: Community growing and culture space		38,914
The Mitcham Colour Way		3,500
Attic's Creative Community Engagement Programme		42,549
Sherwood Park Café and Mini Golf		60,000
Uptown Youth Services		30,000
Martin Way – Greener, Brighter & Revitalised		27,335
Merton Garden Streets 2022		31,288
Museum of Wimbledon Refurbishment Project (Grant)		50,000
Energy Matters: Building the next generation of energy champions		88,823
There's More to Morden		35,000
20mph banners		35,000
Community Champions 2022: Building social capital in Merton's journey towards net zero	57,600	6,400
The Wheel – A Circular Economy for Merton		75,000
Parade Programme Management top-up		27,500
Total Revenue Schemes	57,600	551,309

E. That Cabinet approved the use of £802,000 of the Climate Change reserve for carbon reduction and the delivery of Merton's Climate Action Plan across 2021/22 (£20k) and 2022/23 (£782k). Further allocations for future years will be required and will be built in to the business plan.

11 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 11)

The Cabinet agreed not to refer to the exempt information contained in Item 8 during consideration of the items and therefore the meeting remained in public.