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CABINET

6 DECEMBER 2021

(7.15 pm - 7.52 pm)

PRESENT Councillor Mark Allison (in the Chair), Councillor Tobin Byers, Councillor Natasha Irons, Councillor Rebecca Lanning, Councillor Eleanor Stringer and Councillor Brenda Fraser

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Nick Draper
Councillor Peter Southgate
Councillor Aidan Mundy

John Morgan (Interim Director Community and Housing), Chris Lee (Director Environment and Regeneration), Louise Round (Managing Director South London Legal Partnership) and Amy Dumitrescu (Democracy Services Manager)

ATTENDING REMOTELY Councillor Agatha Akyigyina, Councillor Owen Pritchard, Councillor Marsie Skeete and Councillor Martin Whelton

Hannah Doody (Chief Executive), Caroline Holland (Director Corporate Services), Jane McSherry (Director Children, Schools and Families), James McGinlay (Assistant Director Sustainable Communities), Jacquie Denton (Principal Estates Surveyor) and Octavia Lamb (Policy and Research Officer – Labour Group).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies were received. Councillors Akyigyina, Pritchard, Skeete and Whelton attended the meeting 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 8 November 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 recommendations from the panel.

Councillor Irons responded to thank the Chair of the Panel, noting that Merton was currently 8th of the London Boroughs for recycling rates.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration spoke to thank Scrutiny for their focus on the topic and noting that the aim of waste minimisation would continue to be focused on.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet agreed to implement the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommendations as set out in paragraphs 2.6 to 2.9 below and agreed to report back to the Panel with an update in six months' time

2.6 The Panel RESOLVED (six votes for, one abstention) to send the following recommendation to Cabinet;

2.7. The Sustainable Communities Panel recommends Cabinet look at the feasibility of offering discounted access to our paid for waste services, to those residents on council tax support, in order to incentivize take up of these services and further increase the rate of recycling. This should include garden waste collection.

2.8. Furthermore the Panel recommended (five votes for, two abstentions) that as a Council we lobby the government to accept central responsibility for producing effective policy and legislation to deter and deal with fly tipping.

2.9. Lastly, all seven voting Members of the Panel agreed to recommend that the Council, over a suitable time frame, proactively writes to all those blocks of flats with communal recycling, with details on how to recycle correctly and avoid waste contamination.

5 BUSINESS PLAN 2022-26 (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report, thanking officers for their work. The proposed savings were included within the report which would balance the budget for 2022/23 and reduce the budget gap in 2023/24, however the gap would still currently remain at £13m for that year. It was noted that the Equality Impact Assessments and draft list of unachievable savings would be included within the member information packs due to go through the Scrutiny process in January 2022.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet considered and agreed the draft unachievable savings/income proposals (Appendix 4) put forward by officers and referred them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in January 2022 for consideration and comment.

2. That Cabinet considered and agreed the new savings proposals for 2022/23 to 2025/26 (Appendix 3) and referred them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in January 2022 for consideration and comment.

3. That Cabinet considered and agreed the draft Capital Programme 2022-2026 (Appendix 5) and refers it to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in January 2022 for consideration and comment.

4. That Cabinet agreed the proposed Council Tax Base for 2022/23 set out in paragraph 2.7 and Appendix 1.

5. That Cabinet noted the opportunity set out in the Spending Review 2021 to enable social service authorities to apply an Adult Social Care Precept in 2022/23 and, subject to confirmation of this when the Referendum Principles are announced in the

Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23, agrees to incorporate this into the MTFS for 2022-26.

6. That Cabinet noted that Equalities Impact Assessments for each saving, where applicable, will be included in the Member's Information Pack for consideration in future meetings.

6 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 7 OCTOBER 2021 (Agenda Item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report, noting that without Coronavirus costs there would have been a net positive variance of £1.9m, however with Coronavirus costs included there was currently a net negative variance of £8.5m. No further Coronavirus related support funding was anticipated.

In relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant, discussions with the Department for Education continued, however resolution was not expected until late January 2022.

The Director of Corporate Services noted that the situation continued to be closely monitored.

The Cabinet Member for Finance thanked officers for their work on the report and on managing budgets across the Council.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet noted the financial reporting data for month 7, October 2021, relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net adverse variance at year end on net service expenditure of £5.732m, increasing to £8.534m, an increase of £847k over last month when corporate and funding items are included.

B. That Cabinet noted the contents of Section 5, Appendix 5b and 5d of the report and approved the adjustments to the Capital Programme in the Table below:

	Budget 2021-22	Budget 2022-23	Narrative
Corporate Services	£	£	
Compulsory Purchase Order - Clarion	(721,730)		No CPOs Required for Ravensbury
Customer Contact Programme	(200,000)	200,000	Re-profiled in line with projected spend
Westminster Coroners Court	(400,000)	400,000	Re-profiled in line with projected timing of spend, liaising with WCC
Children, Schools and Families			
West Wimb. - Capital Maintenance Budget	(65,000)	65,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Hillcross - Capital Maintenance Budget	(63,000)	63,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Joseph Hood - Capital Maintenance Budget	(45,000)	45,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Dundonald - Capital Maintenance Budget	(20,000)	20,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Pelham - Capital Maintenance Budget	(30,000)	30,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Wimb. Chase - Capital Maintenance Budget	(35,000)	35,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Bond - Capital Maintenance Budget	(30,000)	30,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Cranmer - Capital Maintenance Budget	(45,000)	45,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Links - Capital Maintenance Budget	(20,000)	20,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
St Marks - Capital Maintenance Budget	(55,000)	55,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Lonesome - Capital Maintenance Budget	(30,000)	30,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Harris Academy Merton - Community Sport Pitch	(65,000)	65,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Rutlish - Capital Maintenance Budget	5,000		Virements - projected spend capital maintenance
Perseid - Capital Maintenance Budget	(45,000)	40,000	Virements - projected spend capital maintenance
Whately Avenue Expansion	(30,000)	30,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Unallocated SEN Expansions	(30,000)	30,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Environment and Regeneration			
Highways & Footways - Highways bridges & structures	105,000		Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Highways & Footways - Salt Barn	(23,600)		Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
On Street Parking P&D - Pay and Display Machines	(303,000)	303,000	Re-profiled in line with projected spend

Off Street Parking P&D - Car Park Upgrades	(465,530)	465,530	Re-profiled in line with projected spend
Wimbledon Area Regeneration - Crowded Places-Hostile Vehicle	(180,000)	180,000	Re-profiled in accordance with projected Spend
Mitcham Area Regeneration - Canons Parks for the People	590,000		Additional SCIL Funding
Parks Investment - Canons Parks for the People	150,000		Additional SCIL Funding
Parks Investment - Sports Drainage	150,000		New SCIL Funding
Total	(1,901,860)	2,151,530	

7 DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS PROPERTY ASSETS (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report and thanked officers and Councillor Whelton for their work.

The report sought to declare the sites listed within the appendix as surplus and available for housing and put in place a mechanism for disposal. Each site would have to be determined how to be disposed of on a site-by-site basis and it was envisaged that this would be assessed by a wider project team.

The sites formerly owned by the Merantun Local Authority Property Company would be the first tranche of sites to be disposed of and to seek to achieve 100% affordable housing on these sites.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency thanked officers and noting that a number of additional housing units would be provided as part of the plan. The report also set out the intention to look at the introduction of an Article 4 direction in parts of Merton for homeowners wishing to convert residential properties into HMOs (houses of multiple occupation), whereby Planning permission would be required to be sought for these conversions.

An evidence base was also being built on the possible introduction of a selective landlord licensing scheme, with a further report due to Cabinet in March 2022.

RESOLVED:

- A. That the properties listed in the appendix be declared surplus to council requirements.
- B. That the properties listed in the appendix be marketed for housing as soon as they are ready for sale provided the Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, considers that the market is favourable.
- C. That authority was delegated to the Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to determine which of the properties listed in the appendix be sold on one or more of the following terms:
 Option 1. Disposal to maximise capital receipt; or
 Option 2. Disposal to provide redevelopment with 50% affordable Housing; or
 Option 3. Disposal to provide redevelopment with 100% affordable housing.
 And on such other terms as he considers are prudent and in the best interests of the Council in concluding a disposal of the properties.
- D. That the Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, is authorised to use delegated powers to make any other decisions that are required to facilitate the conclusion of the disposal of the properties.

E. That members noted that work is underway on wider housing matters including selective licensing and an Article 4 Direction requiring planning permission for smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation set out in paragraphs 2.16-2.22.

8 AWARD OF TERM BUILDING SERVICES CONTRACTS FOR THE PLANNED PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE AND REACTIVE REPAIRS OF BUILDING SERVICES, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (Agenda Item 8)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report thanking officers for their work. The report proposed the award of the contract for maintenance of the Council's buildings, commencing from April 2022 once the current contracts expired. 5 contracts would be appointed across 6 lots.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet agreed to award new term contracts for the maintenance of the council's buildings for a period of 4 years to the contractors listed in Appendix A with potential extensions of 2 years plus one, starting from 01 April 2022.

B. In accordance with Contract Standing Orders (CSO 24.3) authority was delegated to the Director of Corporate Services to exercise, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, the council's option to grant the extension of the contract term for any period up to three further years beyond the expiry of the initial contract term on 31 March 2026

9 SUPPLY OF POWER (Agenda Item 9)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report, thanking officers for their work.

The report proposed to award the contract for a 4 year period with the option to extend for a further year with the contract commencing in April 2022. The contract covered the supply of power to all council buildings including any schools which had opted-in.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet agreed to award a 4+1 year contract for the supply of power to Bidder A.

B. That authority to take up the optional 1 year extension on the contract was delegated to the Chief Officer & Director of Corporate Services.

C. That Authority to take up the option to purchase Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin Certificates (REGOs) via this contract was delegated to the Director of Corporate Services.

10 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 10)

RESOLVED: That the public were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following report (Item 10) on the grounds that it is exempt from disclosure for the reasons stated in the report.

13 UPDATE ON CHAS - APPOINTMENT OF FINANCIAL ADVISERS (Agenda

Item 13)

The report was discussed within closed session.

RESOLVED: The recommendations within the report were agreed.