

Agenda Item 3

COUNCIL
22 NOVEMBER 2017
(7.49 pm - 10.44 pm)

PRESENT The Mayor, Councillor Marsie Skeete,
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Judy Saunders,

Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina OBE, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Mike Brunt, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Tobin Byers, Charlie Chirico, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, Stephen Crowe, Mary Curtin, David Dean, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Ross Garrod, Suzanne Grocott, Jeff Hanna, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Edith Macauley MBE, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Oonagh Moulton, Ian Munn BSc, MRTPI(Rtd), Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, John Sargeant, David Simpson CBE, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford, Gregory Patrick Udeh, Jill West, Martin Whelton and David Williams

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Braund, Gadzama, Neil and Taylor OBE.

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 13 September 2017 be agreed as an accurate record.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Agenda Item 4)

The Mayor provided a brief update on the forthcoming Mayor's Christmas Meal and thanked those present for their continued support.

There were no announcements from the Leader or the Chief Executive.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS (Agenda Item 5)

The responses to the written public questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of the questioners in turn to ask (if they wished) a further question to the Cabinet Member. A copy of the supplementary questions and responses will be included in the 'public questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

6 COUNCILLORS' ORDINARY PRIORITY QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS (Agenda Item 6)

The responses to the written member ordinary priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of the members in turn to ask (if they wished) a further question to the Cabinet Member. A copy of the supplementary questions and responses will be included in the 'member ordinary priority questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

7a STRATEGIC THEME: COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS (Agenda Item 7a)

The responses to the written member strategic theme priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of the members in turn to ask (if they wished) a further question to the Cabinet Member. A copy of the supplementary questions and responses will be included in the 'member strategic theme priority questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

It was also noted that a copy of the member non priority questions and responses will be published after the meeting, in line with Constitutional requirements.

7b STRATEGIC THEME: MAIN REPORT (Agenda Item 7b)

The Strategic Theme report on Corporate Capacity with a focus on Bridging the Gap was moved by Councillor Allison and seconded by Councillor Alambritis .

Councillor Crowe also spoke on the item.

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Theme report be agreed.

7c STRATEGIC THEME: MOTIONS (Agenda Item 7c)

The motion was moved by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Dean.

The Labour amendment as set out in agenda item 25 of Supplementary Agenda 4 was moved by Councillor Allison and seconded by Councillor Brunt.

The Labour amendment was put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 32, votes against: 19, abstentions: 4.

The substantive motion (as amended) was then put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 32, votes against: 19, abstentions: 4.

RESOLVED:

This Council recognises that at a time of significant government cuts to council budgets and of constrained public spending which has seen local authorities lose at least 40% of their funding from central government, it is inevitable that there will be a reduction in local services as innovation alone cannot fill this massive gap in funding. However it is more important than ever that local authorities should innovate to try to mitigate some of the impact of these government cuts. This is one way they can reduce costs and generate additional income whilst continuing to deliver quality frontline services at a price their residents can afford, although it is acknowledged that the scale of the government's cuts mean that reductions to some services cannot be avoided without increased investment from central government.

This Council is therefore concerned that Merton should innovate successfully in order to save money or generate income and is proud that the recent Annual Residents survey found that a record number of residents said Merton was an efficient and well run council. Our successes in this regard include:

- An innovative four borough waste contract with Conservative Kingston, Liberal Democrat Richmond and Labour Croydon to save Merton in the region of £48m over the lifetime of the contract
- Successfully sharing our legal service and our regulatory services, along with a number of other services, in order to save money whilst also increasing resilience.
- Successfully running a profit making company, CHAS, with dividends ploughed back into council services.
- One of the most efficient library services in London with some of the highest usage levels and customer satisfaction.
- Establishing a property company, Merantun, to maximise the councils' assets to the benefit of council tax payers rather than big developers.
- Contributing to around £1m in savings so far, with more to come, partly linked to implementing a new website that has moved around 200 different sets of transactions online, with up to 70% of service requests now through the website and connecting our website and call centre to back office systems so that we reduce manual handling of requests, customers' requests get referred to the right operative quickly and they can receive better updates on progress.

However, there will always be examples where we could have achieved more and sooner had we had more resources (invest to save), more staff or more expertise and some such attempts have been challenging leading in some cases, although often temporarily, to reduced customer satisfaction and increased costs for council taxpayers in the short term, including:

- Lengthy and ongoing delays by the external provider to the Customer Contact Programme have meant considerable potential savings have still not been

realised, although at least £1m has already been delivered with further savings estimated on full roll out;

- The new waste management and street cleaning contract signed with Veolia and three other boroughs at a net cost of £298,000, but delivering over £2m per annum in savings for Merton alone, initially reported reduced services for some residents and a large increase in complaints and service requests received by the council about the state of local streets and town centres, however we are working hard with Veolia to ensure they deliver the performance standards expected and the implementation of a wheeled bin solution in 2018 will help reduce litter on the streets still further, with Keep Britain Tidy finding that up to 50% of litter on our streets was due to black sacks and open boxes;
- On track for an autumn 2018 opening, despite delays to the new leisure centre in Morden and currently renegotiating a contract with GLL so that Merton taxpayers will benefit from the uplift in revenue and value of this new asset - the increased revenue benefit from this contract is in the draft council budget estimated at £300k per annum;
- Pursuing a much anticipated new secondary school for South Wimbledon, at a significantly reduced cost to the council due to c£35m we have successfully secured from government, and made possible by a sometimes controversial land swap with the Elim Church which is based on compulsory purchase principles and independent valuation advice and supported by government; although it has meant the loss of Merton Hall from full time community use, this is an important asset of considerable heritage, community and monetary value which will still be available for community use outside of the times it is used by the church, the Wimbledon Foodbank and other services the church delivers; and
- Understandable difficulties in maximising ongoing revenue from the P4 site through alternative models put forward by the Conservative group that would have involved the council speculatively investing £50m in the site with no confirmed tenant and in the context of the Conservative government's botched Brexit negotiations that have already impacted on London's commercial property market. This was a model that was clearly reckless and irresponsible and this administration will instead focus on viable, affordable and realistic solutions that would help better deliver what residents wish to see at this location whilst potentially providing an ongoing revenue stream to the council, despite the challenges of the government's failure to allay market fears in relation to Brexit.

This Council notes the significant savings the council has delivered since 2010 through innovation and increased efficiency but regrets that more savings will be required in future years due to the government's austerity agenda and that this persistent failure by government to invest in local services hampers our ability to innovate successfully and is costing the borough significant amounts of money and therefore requests that the Chief Executive undertake a comprehensive review of Merton's performance in this regard in order to identify any systemic weaknesses within the organisation and to bring forward recommendations for improvement to Members for consideration through the Scrutiny process.

8 REPORT OF THE COLLIERS WOOD COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 8)

Councillor Dehaney presented the report which was received by the Council.

9 REPORT OF THE MITCHAM COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 9)

Councillor Munn presented the report which was received by the Council.

10 REPORT OF THE MORDEN COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 10)

Councillor Philip Jones presented the report which was received by the Council.

11 REPORT OF THE RAYNES PARK COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Bull presented the report which was received by the Council.

12 REPORT OF THE WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 12)

Councillor Najeeb Latif presented the report which was received by the Council.

13 NOTICES OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE MOTION 1 (Agenda Item 13)

The motion was moved by Councillor Moulton and seconded by Councillor Holmes.

The Labour amendment as set out in agenda item 26 of Supplementary Agenda 4 was moved by Councillor Macauley and seconded by Councillor Abigail Jones.

The Labour amendment was put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 33, votes against: 19, abstentions: 3.

The substantive motion (as amended) was then put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 33, votes against: 19, abstentions: 3.

RESOLVED:

Following publication of the MOPAC/MPS Public Access Strategy on 1 November 2017, this Council condemns the government's £1 billion per year cut in funding for the Metropolitan Police which has led to the Mayor of London's decision to close Wimbledon Police Station, which he has been forced into by this government's year on year £1 billion cuts - which dwarfs the Met's £240 million one off reserves, which represent just 2% of the Met's budget, and which are already allocated for policing in London to provide a buffer, particularly in light of the current terror threat.

14 NOTICES OF MOTION - LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MOTION 1 (Agenda Item 14)

The motion was moved by Councillor Jeanes and seconded by Councillor Southgate.

Councillor Grocott also spoke on the motion.

The Labour amendment as set out in agenda item 27 of Supplementary Agenda 4 was moved by Councillor Byers and seconded by Councillor Curtin.

The Labour amendment was put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 32, votes against: 23, abstentions: 0.

The substantive motion (as amended) was then put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 32, votes against: 0, abstentions: 23.

RESOLVED:

This council acknowledges that there is a crisis in social care. Government has slashed council funding by more than 40% since 2010, much of this agreed under the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition, and as a result adult social care, which is the biggest single area of the council's controllable spending, is inevitably facing significantly reduced budgets. Added to this, although we very much welcome increasing numbers of older people living longer than ever, they often have more complex care needs in later life which require increased spending on more expensive care packages. However, despite the significant financial challenges as a result of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat austerity agendas, this Council is encouraged that in the process of recommissioning home care, the approach of the administration has been benchmarked against Unison's *Ethical Care Charter* www.savecarenow.org.uk/ethical-care-charter

This Council notes:

1. The objective of the Charter is to establish a minimum baseline for the safety, quality and dignity of care by ensuring employment conditions for care workers that a) do not routinely short-change clients and b) ensure the recruitment and retention of a more stable workforce through more sustainable pay, conditions and training levels.
2. Officers assess that the administration's commissioning approach meets all but 2 of the minimum standards set out in the charter and has met both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the charter, with Stage 3 part achieved.
3. The two areas that the administration is not currently able to meet due to a significant funding gap as a result of Conservative and Liberal Democrat cuts are:
 - Coverage by an occupational sick pay scheme (in excess of statutory entitlements) by the external homecare contractor
 - Payment of the London Living Wage by the external homecare contractor, which officers have estimated would increase the cost of the contract by £2.6m per annum, a potential cost to the council of £18m over the lifetime of the contract.
4. There are significant problems nationwide in the recruitment and retention of care workers and the Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments have exacerbated this by cutting council's funding.

This Council believes:

1. Merton's Cabinet agreed to implement a Minimum Income Guarantee based on the London Living Wage in 2013 and to pay all directly employed and agency staff at or above this rate and we should stick to that. The rate that external contractors pay their staff was also looked at when this decision was made and it was agreed at the time that there was insufficient information about the cost to the council of requiring contractors to pay the London Living Wage, however we should keep this matter under review. In line with this, as part of the current home care contracting process officers reviewed the potential cost of requiring external homecare contractors to pay the London Living Wage and estimated this cost at an additional £2.6m per annum in the price of the contract, or £18m over the lifetime of the contract. Council also notes that this is just one of our many external contracts so that the full cost of requiring all contractors to pay the London Living Wage is still unclear and will be significantly more than the additional cost of this one contract.
2. Care workers play a vital role not only in the safety and dignity of clients, but also the independence of their clients; we should value that work and it is shameful that Conservative/Liberal Democrat governments have allowed the crisis in adult social care to develop due to their ideologically-led austerity cuts.
3. The Ethical Care Charter is supposed to be a minimum and we call on the government to properly fund adult social care so at least this level can be achieved by all councils.

This Council requests Cabinet to:

1. Build on its 2013 decision to pay all directly employed staff and agency workers a minimum income guarantee based on the London Living Wage and to continue reviewing the cost to the council of requiring our external contractors to pay the London Living Wage and to report back to Council in setting each year's budget the affordability of implementing it with regards to care workers in particular; and
To ask the Overview & Scrutiny panel to look into what additional savings could be made in order to find the additional £18m required to pay for this at a future date, bearing in mind that any changes to the contract tender documents at this stage (the contract is due to be awarded in January) would require the council to re-start the tender process at an estimated delay of at least a year (plus the cost in officer time) and would require us to continue with our current contract which is not satisfactory and does not require payment of the National Living Wage which the new contract would do.
2. Ask external contractors to publish the costs of agency staff cover for and recruitment of care workers, acknowledging that they may have issues of commercial confidentiality with this request.
3. Monitor and report back on the impact of the Ethical Care Charter criteria adopted in the appropriate Strategic theme reports.

15 NOTICES OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE MOTION 2 (Agenda Item 15)

The motion was moved by Councillor Holden and seconded by Councillor Dean.

Councillor Sargeant also spoke on the motion.

The Labour amendment as set out in agenda item 28 of Supplementary Agenda 4 was moved by Councillor Garrod and seconded by Councillor Macauley.

The Labour amendment was put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 32, votes against: 19, abstentions: 4.

The substantive motion (as amended) was then put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 32, votes against: 19, abstentions: 4.

RESOLVED:

This Council recognises that the government has cut council budgets by over 40% since 2010 and that millions of pounds have had to be saved by local councils up and down the country, of all political flavour. The level of cuts required in Merton would have affected front line services and forced the council to reduce essential services for our residents. Merton Council therefore took an innovative approach to making the savings required by working with three of our neighbouring boroughs, Labour Croydon, Liberal Democrat Sutton and Conservative Kingston, to agree a joint contract with Veolia to save an estimated £48m over the lifetime of the contract whilst still delivering a comprehensive service vice to residents. As with any significant change of this type, there have been initial difficulties in bedding down the new system across four boroughs and some residents are frustrated where local streets, parks and town centres have overflowing bins, fly tipping, graffiti, un-swept streets and missed rubbish collections. Nonetheless, our missed refuse collections are still very low at 0.1%.

The results of the most recent Residents' Survey, which showed street cleaning and litter as residents' top concern, and by the 6 month performance review of the new Veolia contract considered by the Sustainable Communities scrutiny panel earlier this month, which included a number of worrying findings:

- Bin collection target just missed for each of the last 4 months but stands at 0.1%; Street litter target initially missed but independent inspections for litter on Merton's roads have now found that the management of litter since Veolia began the contract is improving and for the last two months has been better than the standards previously maintained;
- Increased detritus in the first four months which has since improved and for recent months the performance is better than last year;
- Green sacks left uncollected after the street sweeping which Veolia have agreed to address. Two additional mobile response crews are now operational to deal with this workload and we are seeing improvements already and are continuing to monitor the situation;
- Some Bins not being emptied frequently enough, which are being addressed by the two additional mobile response crews;
- Failure to remove fly tips within 24 hours due to an increase in the number of recorded instances. However due to the innovative nature of the contract

which is based on outcomes and not inputs, Veolia is still required to pick up these fly tips and we will be continuing to press them on how they intend to address this issue;

- Initial Backlog in clearing graffiti from public land while a new bespoke graffiti removal vehicle and team was being put in place, and has now been in place since August and the backlog is being cleared; and
- The £410,000 cost of implementation of the new contract which was part funded by the government's "Transformation Challenge" programme so the net cost to Merton was £293k, within the budget agreed by council, and which will achieve an estimated £2m in savings a year .

This Council believes that despite the government's funding cuts and the resulting impact on council budgets, residents deserve cleaner streets, parks and town centres of which we can all be proud and that is why a more affordable joint borough contract makes sense in the financial circumstances. Therefore, in order to continue to clean up the borough, this Council calls on the Cabinet to:

- a) Continue weekly street cleaning of residential roads and ensure street sweepers follow after the refuse vehicle on the same day where this is required, bearing in mind the outcomes-based nature of the contract which specifies the level of cleanliness required, and which may require more than weekly sweeps in some streets;
- b) Continue to Protect the weekly bin collection and continue to review and refine plans to move to a wheeled bin service from October 2018, with food waste and recycling continuing to be collected on a weekly basis and landfill waste collected on alternate weeks in order to drive up recycling levels;
- c) Consider Increasing the use of mobile CCTV where appropriate and where resources can be identified to crack down on graffiti and fly tipping; and
- d) Regularly review the four borough contract with Veolia, keeping all financially viable options open, and to demand action as part of the contract service level agreement with regard to performance failures experienced so far but without incurring further financial cost to the Council for doing so.

16 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2018/19 (Agenda Item 16)

The report was moved by Councillor Allison and seconded by Councillor Alambritis.

The Conservative amendment as set out in agenda item 29 of Supplementary Agenda 3 was moved by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Grocott.

The Monitoring Officer advised that, in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 10.4 of the Constitution, a recorded vote would be taken.

The Conservative amendment was then put to a vote and was lost –

Votes in favour: Councillors Badenoch, Bowcott, Bull, Bush, Chirico, Crowe, Dean, Grocott, Holden, Holmes, Howard, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Moulton, Simpson, West and Williams (19)

Votes against: Councillors Akyigyina, Alambritis, Allison, Anderson, Attawar, Brunt, Byers, Chung, Cooper-Marbiah, Cowper, Curtin, Dehaney, Draper, Foley, Fraser, Garrod, Hanna, Henry, Jeanes, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Judge, Kenny, Kirby, Macauley, Makin, McCabe, Munn, Neep, Pearce, Sargeant, Saunders, Skeete, Southgate, Stanford, Udeh and Whelton (37)

Not voting: (0)

The substantive motion was then put to a vote and was carried –

Votes in favour: Councillors Akyigyina, Alambritis, Allison, Anderson, Attawar, Brunt, Byers, Chung, Cooper-Marbiah, Cowper, Curtin, Dehaney, Draper, Foley, Fraser, Garrod, Hanna, Henry, Jeanes, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Judge, Kenny, Kirby, Macauley, Makin, McCabe, Munn, Neep, Pearce, Sargeant, Saunders, Skeete, Southgate, Stanford, Udeh and Whelton (37)

Votes against: (0)

Not voting: Councillors Badenoch, Bowcott, Bull, Bush, Chirico, Crowe, Dean, Grocott, Holden, Holmes, Howard, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Moulton, Simpson, West and Williams (19)

RESOLVED:

1. That the uprating changes for the 2018/19 council tax support scheme detailed in the report be agreed, in order to maintain low council tax charges for those on lower incomes and other vulnerable residents including not to implement restricting personal allowances for households with more than two children; and
 2. That Council adopts the new 2018/19 scheme.
- 17 THE ADDITION OF SCHEMES TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PROPOSED CHANGE TO MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY 2017/18 (Agenda Item 17)

The report was formally moved by Councillor Allison and formally seconded by Councillor Alambritis.

The Monitoring Officer advised that, in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 10.4 of the Constitution, a recorded vote would be taken.

Votes in favour: Councillors Akyigyina, Alambritis, Allison, Anderson, Attawar, Badenoch, Bowcott, Brunt, Bull, Bush, Byers, Chirico, Chung, Cooper-Marbiah, Cowper, Crowe, Curtin, Dean, Dehaney, Draper, Foley, Fraser, Garrod, Grocott,

Hanna, Henry, Holden, Holmes, Howard, Jeanes, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Judge, Kenny, Kirby, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Macauley, Makin, McCabe, Moulton, Munn, Neep, Pearce, Sargeant, Saunders, Simpson, Skeete, Southgate, Stanford, Udeh, West, Whelton, and Williams (56)

Votes against: (0)

Not voting: (0)

RESOLVED:

1. That Council approve the following Capital Schemes to be included in the Capital Programme:

Scheme	2017/18 Budget	2018/19 Budget	2019/20 Budget	Funding/Re-profiling
Canons Parks for the People				
Capital Bidding Fund	(560,100)	0		Virement
Parks - Canons Parks for the People	180,450	1,117,470	195,540	HLF Funding
Mitcham Area Regeneration - Parks for the People	638,780	2,032,100	301,040	HLF Funding & Virement
Collier Wood Library				
Finance Lease	500,560			
Total	759,690	3,149,570	496,580	

2. That in respect of capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008, Council revise the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy to read:

“For capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008 or by Supported Capital Expenditure, the MRP policy will be the equal annual reduction of 2% of the outstanding debt at 1 April 2017 for the subsequent 50 years”

The remainder of the MRP Policy Statement will remain as approved by Council on 1 March 2017.

- 18 REVISIONS TO THE COUNCIL’S CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS (Agenda Item 18)

The report was formally moved by Councillor Allison and formally seconded by Councillor Alambritis.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed revisions made to the Council's Contract Standing Orders, effective from 1 December 2017 and for the Council's Constitution to be amended accordingly, as recommended by Standards and General Purpose Committee on 7 September 2017 be adopted.

Changes made are in response to the implementation of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and to drive greater compliance overall with procurement governance and best practice.

19 REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES (Agenda Item 19)

The report was formally moved by Councillor Allison and formally seconded by Councillor Alambritis.

RESOLVED:

1. That the designation of the Acacia Adventure Playground building as the polling place for polling district HD in Figges Marsh Ward be agreed, and the use of the Acacia Centre for polling district IE in Longthornton Ward be retained.
2. That Dundonald Recreation Group Pavilion replace Dundonald Primary School as a polling place for polling district PA in Dundonald Ward.
3. That Joseph Hood Primary School replaces Merton Adult College as a polling place for polling district SA in Cannon Hill Ward.

20 CHANGES TO THE JOINT REGULATORY SERVICE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 20)

The report was formally moved by Councillor Draper and formally seconded by Councillor Garrod.

RESOLVED:

1. That the amended Terms of Reference for the Joint Regulatory Services Committee (JRSC) as set out in Appendix 3 of the report be agreed; and
2. That the Chair of the JRSC rotates on an annual basis between Merton, Richmond and Wandsworth.

21 RECRUITMENT FOR DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES (Agenda Item 21)

The report was formally moved by Councillor Allison and formally seconded by Councillor Alambritis.

RESOLVED:

1. That a recruitment campaign be commenced for the post of Director of Children, Schools and Families in accordance with Section 6A (1) of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 as the current post holder will be leaving by April 2018.

2. That appointment to the post of Director of Children, Schools and Families within the current Merton Director salary range of £121,564.09 to £137,713.09 be approved. As the Directors' salaries exceed £100,000 per annum, under the Localism Act approval has to be sought from full Council.

22 CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 22)

The report was formally moved by Councillor Alambritis and formally seconded by Councillor Allison.

RESOLVED:

That changes to the memberships of committees approved under delegated authority since the last meeting of the Council be noted.

23 PETITIONS (Agenda Item 23)

The report was formally moved by Councillor Alambritis and formally seconded by Councillor Allison.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following petitions be received in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 18.1 of the Council's Constitution:
 - i. Councillor Abdul Latif – Petition on the Virgin Active Gym at Battle Close
 - ii. Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender – Petition on the early opening hours of Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields
2. That the responses to the petitions submitted at the meeting held on 13 September 2017 be noted.

24 BUSINESS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda Item 24)

Councillor Moulton announced that the Strategic Theme for the next ordinary meeting of the Council, being held on 7 February 2018, shall be Sustainable Communities.

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