

## **Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 10 December 2018**

Wards: All

**Subject: Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2019-2023: comments and recommendations from the overview and scrutiny panels**

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

Contact officer: Julia Regan; Julia.regan@merton.gov.uk; 020 8545 3864

### **Recommendations:**

- 
1. That Cabinet, in taking decisions relating to the Business Plan 2019-23, takes into account the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the outcomes of consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.
- 

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. To inform Cabinet of the recommendations and comments resulting from pre decision scrutiny of the Business Plan 2019-23 by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Overview and Scrutiny Panels at their November 2018 meetings.

## **2 DETAILS**

- 2.1. Each of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission has examined the budget and business plan proposals relating to the service areas within their remit. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has also received the findings of the Panels.
- 2.2. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission met on 14 November 2018 and RESOLVED to forward to Cabinet the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. These are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.3. The Commission discussed and RESOLVED to endorse the two proposed savings relating to Corporate Services - CS01 discretionary rate relief policy and CS02 charge for Blue Badges.
- 2.4. The Commission also RESOLVED to express disappointment that Cabinet was not further advanced in identifying proposed savings for future years. However the Commission also recognised the difficult situation that Cabinet faces in relation to the size of the budget gap.

## **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1. Cabinet is required under the terms of the constitution to receive, consider and respond to recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny.

## **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 4.1. The Constitution contains the requirements for consulting scrutiny on the budget and business plan. There is an initial phase of scrutiny in November each year, with the second round in January/February representing the formal consultation of scrutiny on the proposed Business Plan, Budget and Capital Programme.

## **5 TIMETABLE**

- 5.1. Round one of scrutiny of the 2019-23 Business Plan was undertaken as follows:-
- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 1 November 2018
  - Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 6 November 2018
  - Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 7 November 2018
  - Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 14 November 2018
- 5.2. Comments and recommendations from round one will be reported to Cabinet on 10 December 2018.
- 5.3. Round two of scrutiny of the Business Plan is planned as follows:-
- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 9 January 2019
  - Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 16 January 2019
  - Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 10 January 2019
  - Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 23 January 2019
- 5.4. The responses from round two will be presented to Cabinet on 18 February 2019. A meeting of full Council will then take place on 6 March 2019.

## **6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. These are detailed in the substantive reports elsewhere on this agenda and in the reports considered by Cabinet on 15 October 2018.

## **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The process for developing the budget and business plan is set out in Part 4C of the Council's Constitution. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and panels with regard to the development of the budget and business plan is set out in Part 4E of the Constitution.
- 7.2. 8.2 The legal and statutory implications relating to the Business Plan are contained in the reports elsewhere on this agenda.

## **8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None directly relating to this report.

## **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. None directly relating to this report.

## **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1. None directly relating to this report.

**11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

- Appendix 1: comments and recommendations made by the scrutiny panels in relation to the Business Plan 2019-23.

**12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1. None

**References/Comments from Scrutiny Panels to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission 14 November 2018**

**Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2019-2023**

**Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel: 1 November 2018**

The Panel discussed and commented on the report and PASSED the following motion:

“This Panel recommends to Cabinet to consider increasing the capital spend on street trees and other associated landscaping by 10% to help improve the Borough’s air quality offset by reducing equivalent spend on fleet vehicles. “

In introducing the motion, Councillor Daniel Holden said the purpose of the motion is to meet aspirations of Mayor of London which is to reduce the number of vehicles and increase trees to improve air quality.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Russell Makin.

The Panel took a recorded vote on the motion. 4 members voted in favour (Councillors Laxmi Attawar, Nick McLean, Daniel Holden and Russell Makin); 2 voted against (Councillors Ben Butler and Joan Henry) and there were 2 abstentions (Councillors Anthony Fairclough and Stan Anderson).

**Healthier Communities and Older People O&S Panel: 6 November 2018**

The Panel heard concerns expressed by disability groups in the borough about the impact that the proposed savings would have in the medium term upon people who are already at a disadvantage. The Panel felt a great deal of sympathy but were also aware of the extent of the predicted budget gap and the need to make savings.

**Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel: 7 November 2018**

The Panel had raised concerns about the impact that cuts in services would have on vulnerable young people. The Panel noted that there were a growing number of referrals across children’s services nationally, including safeguarding and special educational needs, and the Panel have concerns about the impact this may have locally.