

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 16 December 2019

Wards: All

Subject: Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2020-2024: 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

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Recommendations:

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1. That Cabinet, in taking decisions relating to the Business Plan 2020-24, 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.
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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 2020-24 by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Overview and Scrutiny Panels at their November 2019 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 13 November 2019 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 scrutinised the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy in detail, noting the unprecedented level of uncertainty and discussed the current assumptions on inflation, pay provision, reserves, potential adult social care precept and the funding of the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit..
- 2.4. The Commission discussed and asked questions of clarification on the savings and growth items and the future capital programme relating to Corporate Services.
- 2.5. The Commission RESOLVED to send the following reference to Cabinet:
“The Overview and Scrutiny Commission notes the difficulties currently faced by the administration in setting a balanced budget and drafting the medium term financial strategy. The Commission therefore asks Cabinet to join the Local Government Association and London Councils in lobbying the

government to release additional monies to meet the cost pressures faced by local councils (especially in children's services) and to provide a multi-year funding settlement rather than the current, short term approach for the year ahead only".

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 2020-24 Business Plan was undertaken as follows:-

- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 30 October 2019
- Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 5 November 2019
- Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 6 November 2019
- Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 13 November 2019

- 5.2. Comments and recommendations from round one will be reported to Cabinet on 16 December 2019.

- 5.3. Round two of scrutiny of the Business Plan is planned as follows:-

- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 8 January 2020
- Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 15 January 2020
- Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 9 January 2020
- Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 22 January 2020

- 5.4. The responses from round two will be presented to Cabinet on 10 February 2020. A meeting of full Council will then take place on 4 March 2020.

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 14 October 2019.

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. 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 2020-24.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None

References/Comments from Scrutiny Panels to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission 13 November 2019

Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2020-2024

Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel, 30 October 2019

The Panel discussed each of the new savings proposals and asked questions of clarification.

Councillor Daniel Holden raised a motion with regards to ENV1920-01 which is the Parking Services application to change Merton's PCN charge band from band B to band A. The motion was seconded by Councillor David Dean and debated by the Panel.

The Panel unanimously RESOLVED to make the following reference to Cabinet:

“This Panel recommends to Cabinet that the proposed saving of ENV1920-01 be accepted on the proviso that the key locations that give rise to PCN's are checked and reviewed by the Highways inspectors to ensure that the appropriate signage, layout and road markings are clear and therefore not unfairly penalising residents.

Once the review is concluded, the results should be brought to the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel for comment”.

Healthier Communities & Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel, 5 November

The Panel discussed the report and the one proposed saving in relation to its remit. No reference was made to Cabinet.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel, 6 November 2019

The Panel discussed the report and the savings in relation to its remit.

Although the Panel chose not made a reference, it did express concern at the growth on Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) which can be costly and therefore contribute to financial pressures..