

COUNCIL MEETING – 2 FEBRUARY 2022 NOTICE OF MOTION

Lavender Nursery Motion

Council recognises that ever since the Outturn report of 2017/18 the overspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant has been growing out of control and is set to reach £56 million by 2026/27.

The failure to control the overspend has led to:

- Millions of pounds being held in reserves to balance the overspend, money that could be used for other priorities;
- The Labour administration making unnecessary cuts to local services, as well as deeply damaging cuts to important educational and sporting programs such as Deen City Farm, Little Leagues, Merton Music Foundation, and many other worthy organisations that provide huge benefits to Merton residents.

Council also recognises that the decision to repurpose Lavender Nursery was the correct one, albeit a decision that was made too late, and that the decision of the Labour group to vote down a Conservative motion in 2019 to keep the Whatley Avenue site for educational provision was a missed opportunity to increase in-borough educational provision.

However, council notes with dismay that the repurposing of Lavender Nursey was opposed by a vocal minority of residents led by the Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden. This delay not only cost the council significant sums of money but has also prevented children with special educational needs being offered the standards of care and tuition that they deserve.

Council further notes:

- That increased in-borough education provision for children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) is still needed;
- That the influence of the Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden over the Labour group is undemocratic and is damaging to the borough;
- That future campaigns led by a sitting MP cannot, and must not, be allowed to hinder the life chances of children with special educational needs in Merton again.

Therefore, council resolves to request:

- The Cabinet Member for Children and Education to expedite plans for increasing the level of in-borough educational provision for children with EHCPs;
- The Leader of the Council to write to the Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden to demand that she cease her campaign against improved care and educational provision for children with special educational needs.

Cllr Nick McLean

Cllr Hayley Ormrod

Cllr James Holmes

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