

Committee: Council

Date: 12 July 2023

Wards: All

Subject: Update on Motions and Amendments passed by Council 2022-23

Lead officer: Amy Dumitrescu, Democracy Services Manager

Lead member: Councillor Ross Garrod, Leader of the Council

Recommendations:

- A. That Council notes the updates within the report on motions and amendments passed at Council during the previous municipal year
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Council agreed a motion at its' meeting on 21 November 2021 with the following resolution:

- From this point forward, ask that parties endeavour only to submit motions and amendments which comply with SMART goal principles; and
- Agree to ask officers to table a report at the first business meeting after each Annual Council Meeting documenting the actions taken in response to the motions and amendments passed during the previous civic year.

1.2 This report therefore provides an update on actions taken by the Council resulting from motions agreed at Council during the previous municipal year.

2 DETAILS

2.1. 16 motions were passed at ordinary meetings of the Council during the municipal year 2022-23. The full wording of these motions as passed by Council can be found at Appendix A. The wording reflects the motions as passed, either in their substantive form or as amended as appropriate.

2.2. Actions were also required following an agreed amendment to the Strategic Theme report at Council in July 2023. The response to this is therefore detailed at 3.2 below.

3 UPDATE ON MOTIONS

3.1. Strategic Theme Report Amendment

3.2. A report was considered by Cabinet in June 2023 as requested which can be found [here](#).

3.3. Merton have appointed consultants who will be working with officers to prepare a Walking and Cycling Strategy for Merton. The strategy will review the cycling infrastructure and identify actions to improve cycling in the borough and greater active travel.

3.4. School-run related traffic congestion has significantly eased following the introduction of School Streets across the Borough and this is evidenced in the annual air quality monitoring.

3.5. Motion 1 – Health Inequalities July 2022

As requested by the Motion, Councillor McCabe, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care wrote a letter to the CCG. Merton Council announced in May 2023 that it will commission its own independent assessment of plans to downgrade St Helier Hospital.

3.6. Motion 2 – Motion on behalf of the Wimbledon Community Forum July 2022

A consultation took place in May 2023, which more than 800 residents responded to. The preferred approach from the majority of respondents was to place QR codes on signs allowing people to read a detailed background of the individual and/or family the streets were named after. The council will now create a detailed background on each affected street and provide a page on its website with the information so residents can easily find out more.

The Council ruled out changing street names for a range of reasons, including transparency, cost and the impact on emergency services – set out a range of potential options.

The majority of survey respondents – over 55% – supported recognising the links to slavery of some street names. Among these, the most popular option was for QR codes to be placed on street signs so that those interested could access further information about the individuals and families the streets were named after.

Street names associated with the Burghley, Drax and Marryat families are among those affected. The council is now carrying out further research before implementing the consultation's recommendations, which aim to give a balanced approach, making the information available to those who are interested.

3.7. Motion 3 – Living Wage Accreditation July 2022

Merton Council became a London Living Wage accredited employer in January 2023, and the Council is working towards ensuring all of our suppliers we have contracts with are paying the London Living Wage. This includes the new security services contract anticipated to start in September 2023 which will be one of the first commissioned contracts where paying the London Living Wage is incorporated for commissioned employees.

Additionally, we are making good progress on understanding how many businesses in Merton are London Living Wage accredited so far. We are exploring how best to engage with businesses and support them in gaining London Living Wage employer accreditation – including through highlighting the benefits to businesses such as employee retention.

3.8. Motion 4 – Cost of Living Emergency July 2022

Councillor Billy Hayes was appointed in 2022 as the London Living Wage Champion and was re-appointed to this role at Annual Council in May 2023.

Merton Council is now a London Living Wage employer and is engaging with local businesses to progress plans on becoming a London Living Wage borough.

The Council have run a number of Cost of Living sessions within the Community as well as allocating £2million to the Cost of Living Emergency Support Fund, with the first tranche of funding allocated in Autumn 2022.

In March 2023 Cabinet agreed the [Merton Council Cost of Living Strategy and Action Plan 2023-25](#). The Merton Partnership Summit in November 2022 was centered around how the Council and its VCS partners can work together to tackle the effects of the cost of living emergency. Outcomes directly fed into the Cost of Living Action Plan and have helped inform allocations of the £2million Cost of Living Emergency Fund based on the five key themes of Food Insecurity, Energy Efficiency and Homes, Jobs and Skills, The Next Generation, and Finance, Benefits and Debt.

3.9. Motion 5 – ULEZ September 2022

As requested in the Motion, the Leader of the Council wrote to central government to urge them to fund the most generous scrappage scheme to support residents transition to sustainable transport modes. Additionally, the Leader wrote to the Mayor of London to encourage him to expand the criteria for the scrappage scheme to include more small businesses and parents and carers.

3.10. Motion 6 – Cost of Living Impact on Schools September 2022

As requested in the Motion, The Leader of the Council wrote to the Secretary of State for Education to press them to immediately provide additional emergency funding for schools.

3.11. Motion 7 – Green Flag Award and Green Spaces September 2022

The Council continue to be proud of the green spaces within Merton and continues to support this motion.

3.12. Motion 8 – Merton Schools September 2022

Merton Schools continue to perform highly and Council continues to support this motion.

Following the pandemic Merton schools have continued to support all pupils, but particularly all those whose achievement was affected by the lockdowns. This has included academic catch up and additional support with their mental health. There have also been specific projects in some schools, for example to support very young children whose communication and language skills were negatively affected by the pandemic.

Last year the high standards achieved by Merton pupils were exemplified by the Progress 8 score where Merton was ranked second highest in the country. Supported by Council officers, schools continue to have the highest aspirations for their pupils, and strive to ensure that all achieve their potential.

3.13. Motion 9 – Waste and Street Cleansing Contract Merton Assembly November 2022

The pre-decision Scrutiny meeting took place on 13 February 2023 where the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the Resident Insight Report and made a number of [recommendations to Cabinet](#) in response.

On 17 May 2023, Cabinet agreed [this report](#) on the proposed enhancements to the waste and recycling service specification, with the proposed enhancements to the specification for the street cleansing service to be reported to Cabinet for decision at a later date.

3.14. Motion 10 – Free Period Products February 2023

The Council's facilities management team has investigated options for providing period products in Council buildings, and the costs and implementation issues of doing so. This is due to be considered in coming weeks and a further update will be provided following this.

3.15. Motion 11 - CHAS February 2023

The sale of CHAS completed in January 2023. To cut costs to residents and create annual income to help offset the impact of annual Government funding cuts, the Council will use around £50million of the money to pay off around half of its debt, mainly in paying off Government loans – which all Councils use to deliver major projects.

In addition, a significant sum will be invested into Government-backed investment schemes – ensuring low-risk, high return investment for residents that will generate another annual income stream.

Around £75m will be used to create a capital investment fund for the borough – allowing the Council to drive forward with an ambitious programme which includes building 400 new homes and investing into improved sports and leisure facilities across the borough.

3.16. Motion 12 – Standing up for Merton Residents February 2023

As requested in the Motion, the Leader of the Council wrote to the Chancellor on this matter.

3.17. Motion 13 – ULEZ Consultation February 2023

The Leader and Cabinet Member have published a response to the ULEZ expansion, seeking a more generous scrappage scheme which TFL have introduced. Publicising the ULEZ scrappage scheme is for the Mayor Office which covers extensive advertising campaigns in the press, tv, radio and online channels.

<https://news.merton.gov.uk/2022/11/25/merton-council-welcomes-help-for-drivers-to-scrap-polluting-vehicles-as-ulez-is-extended-london-wide/>

The Administration have put forward proposals to TFL recommending a range of improvements to bus services in Merton including extensions of routes and covering new areas; linked to the ambition to regenerate Morden which will require a review of routes terminating at Morden (or extending beyond Morden)

to mitigate the congestion and poor air quality created by Morden bus station. The Leader and Cabinet Member have followed this up with officers and TFL to initiate a bus review for Merton.

Officers are in contact with TFL to ensure that any ULEZ infrastructure on LBM assets is licenced and agreed by the Council in advance. We have already fed back to TFL on some locations which the council felt were unsuitable and TFL are actively reviewing these locations. We understand that the vast majority of ULEZ cameras are on existing TFL assets including traffic signals which are outside of the Council's control.

As ULEZ is a Mayoral initiative, we'd expect that TFL will provide regular updates of the operation of their scrappage scheme; we welcome the recent announcement that the TFL scrappage scheme will be opened up to those receiving child benefits which will go further to help more Merton families make the transition to cleaner vehicles.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/scrappage-schemes/car-and-motorcycle#on-this-page-0>

3.18. Motion 14 – Care Leavers April 2023

In relation to to the Merton Graduate programme, the Council will shortly be out to advert and Care Experienced people will be afforded fast track to the assessment phase. Last year £45,000 was provided to CSF 'To introduce an apprenticeship coordinator working with Care Experienced Young People and other vulnerable cohorts (such as children with SEND) with a specific focus of identifying and supporting young adults into apprenticeship with the council. This post is situated within the Towards Employment team within the Children, Lifelong Learning and Families directorate, and work alongside Personal Advisors.

The identification of care experienced young people as having a protected characteristic for equalities purposes will be addressed in the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy due to be considered by Cabinet on the 17th of July 2023 prior to broad ranging consultation and the strategy being presented to Council in November 2023 for adoption.

3.19. Motion 15 – Policing

The Leader as requested within the motion sent a letter from the Leader of the Council to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police calling for the full implementation of all recommendations set out in Baroness Casey's review. Since the publication of The Casey Review, the Cabinet Member and relevant council officers have been working with SW-BCU on what a local engagement plan looks like. In the meantime, work continues to enhance engagement through the existing forums we already have such as the Safer Neighbourhood Board, ward panels and the strengthening of the Community Monitoring Group to monitor issues like stop & search.

3.20. Motion 16 – St Helier Hospital

Merton Council announced in May 2023 that it will commission its own independent assessment of plans to downgrade St Helier Hospital. As requested within the motion, the Leader of the Council wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and the CEO of St George's and St Helier Trust and the CEO of the South West London Integrated Care Board.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. The original motion requesting to present this report to Council on an annual basis was agreed by Full Council by a unanimous vote in November 2021.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. As agreed in November 2021, this report will be an annual report brought to the first meeting of the Council following the Annual Council meeting each year.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Financial implications of this report are embedded within the text of the report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Nothing specific for the purposes of this report

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purposes of this report

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purposes of this report

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purposes of this report

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

- Appendix A – Full wording of motions agreed at Council 2022-23

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None

APPENDIX A – Motions as passed 2022/23

July 2022 – Strategic Theme Report as Amended

RESOLVED:

A. That the Council notes the progress in relation to the contents of this report

Council also:

b) requests a report be sent to Cabinet within the next 12 months setting out a comprehensive engagement plan, with targets and deadlines for improvement aimed at:

- Increasing uptake of Breast cancer screening services by women across the borough;
- Increasing uptake of Childhood immunisations, particularly pre-school boosters and MMR vaccinations;
- Reducing the incidence of self-harming by young people.

c) requests Cabinet to undertake a review of the borough's cycling and walking infrastructure aimed at increasing the number of children cycling and walking thereby reducing school-related traffic congestion and resulting air pollution

1, July 2022 – Health Inequalities

This Council notes the enormous health inequalities, exacerbated by inequalities in access to healthcare, between the East and West of the borough. Council notes that according to Public Health Outcomes Framework data, the slope index of inequality (an overarching measure of the life expectancy inequality gap which represents the gap in years of life expectancy at birth between the most deprived and least deprived communities), from 2018 to 2020 in Merton the gap was 5 years for females (95% CI 3.3-6.6) and 7.7 for males (95% CI 6-9.4). Council notes the proposal to move services to Belmont will increase these inequalities and reduce access to healthcare for the people of Merton. Council notes the cuts to funding and delays to the programme of hospital-building in Belmont that have already been seen, and believes them to be a matter of concern to people throughout South West London. This Council has a long-standing commitment to ensuring that the residents of Merton have access to a full range of NHS acute services on the St Helier Hospital site, including a blue light A&E and consultant-led maternity service. Any attempt to relocate acute services away from an area of relative deprivation in St Helier in favour of a more affluent area such as Belmont would be incompatible with the statutory duty on the Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to have regard to the need to tackle health inequalities because it would make accessing acute health services significantly more difficult for those in our population who suffer the greatest level of inequality. Instead, council supports the previous strategy to re-build St Helier hospital on its current site with its full range of services intact. It is the firm belief of this Council that the retention of all services at St Helier is the very best way to ensure equality of healthcare provision for the residents of Merton, and ensure that those in the east do not further lose out. The Council notes that the Leader of the Council has written on 15th June 2022 to the Chief Executive Officer designate for the South West London ICS to ask for an explanation of any reassurances she has received that the hospital-building programme in South West London will not suffer from further delays or cuts to funding.

Council calls on the CCG to publish the new business plan and explain the reason behind residents not being consulted on it, and for information about the business of the Strategic Executive Group and the Strategic Oversight Group.

Council resolves to: Write a letter to the CCG and other affected local authorities requesting that, in the ongoing spirit of cooperation identified by an independent review panel to the Secretary of State in October 2020 as essential to identifying the best possible outcomes for the whole population being served, they support the retention of all services at St Helier

2. July 2022 – Motion on behalf of the Wimbledon Community Forum

The Wimbledon Community Forum notes that some roads in Wimbledon are named after former residents who were slave owners.

The Forum calls on Merton Council to:

· consider including historical information in the vicinity of such road signs including the fact they are named after slave owners

3. July 2022 – Living Wage Accreditation

Council Notes:

- 1) That low pay still affects many people in Merton and that the Cost-of-Living crisis is making their situation worse
- 2) That Merton Council is a London Living Wage direct employer

3) The amendment to the Budget resolution passed by Council in March 2021:

"G) welcoming the provision in the MTFs for increased contract costs/LLW for contracts due to be re-let in 2022/23 onwards, requests Cabinet make real movement towards paying the London Living Wage to care workers employed by outside contractors as and when each contract comes up for retendering and/or renegotiation."

- 3) The ongoing work to negotiate new contracts with service providers who pay the London Living Wage, most recently (27th June) Cabinet approving a contract for Supported Living Services for Adults with a Learning Disability which pays London Living Wage to its staff

Council requests that Cabinet present a paper to on the costs, implications and timescale for Merton being accredited by the Living Wage Foundation in recognition of its status as a Living Wage Employer.

4. July 2022 – Cost of Living Emergency

This Council notes that:

- The Royal College of Psychiatrists has reported that the cost-of-living crisis “poses a threat of pandemic proportions” to the nation’s mental health.
- On 1st April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy cap by 54%. For a typical household paying by direct debit it's now £1,971/year – up by a massive £693/year, from its previous level. Those on prepay, the price cap has also increased by 54%, from £1,309/year to £2,017/year on typical use – a rise of £708/year.
- Workers have seen their National Insurance contributions increased from 12% to 13.25% on 6 April to fund the response to the Covid NHS backlog and new investment in adult social care.
- Additionally – and in this same timeframe – food prices and fuel are rising caused by global inflation post-pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine.

This Council recognises the unprecedented financial pressures that all our residents will face in the coming year, and notes with serious concern, that for those with low or insecure income, these pressures could prove overwhelming.

The Council, therefore, declares a ‘Cost of Living Emergency’. Recognising that it has a part to play in response, this Council has:

- Established a £2 million Cost of Living Emergency Fund to target support to residents and voluntary organisations to alleviate the financial burden facing our residents.
- Set up a series of Cost of Living events across the borough to reach those most in need to inform them of resources and support available
- Maintained one of the country’s most generous Council Tax Support schemes for residents on low incomes
- Created a ‘Cost of Living’ Hub on our website to help residents find services that can support them through financial difficulty
- Pledged to continue provision of Free School meals to those eligible throughout the school summer holidays

In addition, this Council will:

- Build on its status as a London Living Wage employer to ensure Merton becomes a London Living Wage Borough
- Appoint a London Living Wage Champion to drive forward this work
- Convene a summit of voluntary organisations to discuss how best to provide support to those most in need The work of alleviating the Cost of Living crisis is not the Council’s alone.

Therefore, this Council calls on the Government to:

- Continue funding the provision of Free School Meals during school holidays
- Extend support to schools and sporting facilities to mitigate against the increase in energy prices, so that children and families will not miss out on crucial education and exercise opportunities

- Extend to Merton the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) pilot which joins up the mental health sector with debt advice services for people in mental health crisis to avoid spiralling debt.

5. September 2022 – ULEZ

Council notes that on 4th March the Mayor of London announced his plan to expand the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from its current boundary of the North and South Circulars to cover almost all of Greater London, including Merton. These plans could see the ULEZ expanded by 29th August 2023, subject to the current consultation which Merton Council has formally responded.

Council notes that although Merton enjoys high levels of transport connectivity, there are some lower income areas, particularly in the eastern edge of the Borough that are affected by poorer transport accessibility and do consequently have relatively higher levels of car ownership. TfL figures show that 64 per cent of Merton households own a car and ONS figures show that 60 per cent of London households earning between £23,192 and £29,546 own a vehicle.

Council notes that expanding the ULEZ to Merton will impact residents facing economic hardship, particularly low income residents in areas with poor public transport accessibility that are more dependent on a private vehicle.

Therefore, Council welcomes the response to the proposed extension of ULEZ submitted jointly by the Leader of the Council and by the Cabinet member for Transport where:

- The Council recognised the importance of tackling the challenges of toxic air pollution, the climate emergency, traffic congestion but thorough consideration should also be given to the cost-of-living crisis.
- The Council considered supporting measures including a more generous scrappage to mitigate the impact of switching to electric vehicles or retrofitting to become ULEZ compliant. An enhanced scrappage scheme should only be made available to residents in the expanded zone and not offering those in the existing ULEZ zone a second chance of funding.
- The Council noted that the proposals include considering a large-scale and targeted vehicle scrappage scheme to support Londoners, including, for example, those on low incomes, disabled people, charities and businesses. It is therefore disappointing that the consultation does not provide a firm commitment or adequate details to assess the adequacy of any scheme. The scrappage scheme has to go further and consider retrofit options to save embodied carbon and consideration given to extended measures such as annual travel cards and bike ownership for those who wish to scrap their car.
- The Council requested further details that demonstrated the adequacy of the proposed scrappage scheme and mitigating measures on mitigating the impact on all

residents including those on low income and other vulnerable groups, particularly those in areas with poor public transport options. The Council also wanted TfL to go further and plan for active travel and public transport enhancements in low PTAL areas.

-As an employer, the Council also stated its concern about the negative impact identified in the IIA on employees working in social and health care, who rely on a vehicle for essential work journeys. The Council strongly urged TfL to give particular consideration to how the scrappage scheme and wider support measures could be extended to key workers such as nurses, doctors, teachers, police, ambulance and fire brigade workers, as well as those on low to modest incomes who require a vehicle to perform essential work duties or those working shifts at unsociable hours.

-The Council went on to state that the impact on small businesses requires deeper consideration and greater support needs to be offered to small businesses and the self-employed where cars or vehicles are an essential part of the trade and their jobs can't be undertaken by bike or public transport; for example construction workers, tradespeople, delivery drivers.

Furthermore, the Council recognises that the administration is also working with TfL on a faster upgrade to a zero-emission bus fleet in Merton and on increasing the roll out of rapid charging points in the borough.

Given the need for measures to counter the cost-of-living impact on low-income households, small businesses, charities and disabled residents:

- Merton Council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to central government to urge them to fund the most generous scrappage scheme to support residents transition to sustainable transport modes, should ULEZ be Page 4 expanded, to improve air quality and support residents through the cost-of-living emergency.

6. September 2022 Cost of Living – Impact on Schools

Council notes:

The deleterious effect of the Cost of Living emergency on the borough as a whole and welcomes the administration's response in establishing a £2million Cost of Living Emergency Fund, maintaining one of the country's most generous Council Tax Support schemes, continuing the provision of Free School meals to those eligible during school holidays, setting up a series of Cost of Living events across the borough and building on its status as a London Living Wage employer to ensure Merton becomes a London Living Wage accredited authority;

The failings of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition Government that, according to research undertaken by Carbon Brief, has made energy bills in the UK nearly £2.5 billion higher than they would have been if climate policies had not been scrapped;

Since 2011 London Borough of Merton has invested nearly £2 million installing nearly 1.5MWP of solar panels at 29 of the borough's schools; and since 2013 the Council has worked with our schools to promote energy saving, including through loft insulation in 19 schools and upgrading to LED lighting at 4 high schools and a number of primary schools.

Schools across the UK are facing increased energy, staffing and maintenance costs;

The lack of Government support in helping schools address these cost increases;

The likelihood that, without additional funding from central Government, schools will have little choice but to deal with these additional costs by cutting back on teachers & support staff, teaching hours and/or other cuts that will adversely affect the education of children across the UK.

Council Requests :

The Leader of the Council to write to the new Secretary of State for Education to press them to immediately provide additional emergency funding for schools;

Relevant Cabinet members and Officers work with local schools to improve all schools' energy efficiency.

7. September 2022 – Green Flag Award and Green Spaces

Council Notes:

The successful achievement by six of the borough's fantastic parks and open spaces in being re-awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award.

The annual Green Flag Award is an international mark of quality which recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, and is the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the UK and around the world.

The success of Abbey Recreation Ground, Colliers Wood Recreation Ground, Dundonald Recreation Ground, John Innes Park, Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields, and South Park Gardens is a huge testament to the Council's Parks and Green Spaces team and the friends' groups in the borough who work tirelessly year round to ensure these parks are attractive places that people love and enjoy visiting, that support their health and wellbeing, and support biodiversity and the environment. Our

excellent parks and open spaces are a source of pride for the Council and for Merton residents.

This Council notes that Merton residents are no further than 250 metres from their nearest park or playing field and looks forward to more of our great parks and open spaces right across the borough achieving Green Flag Award recognition in years to come.

8. September 2022 – Merton Schools

Council Notes:

That this Council notes and congratulates all Merton students who have recently received A-Level, Applied General and Technical, GCSE, and vocational results. This Council also congratulates Merton's schools, colleges and teaching staff on their students' achievements.

This cohort of students were significantly affected by the pandemic so these results are an incredible achievement. Early figures show that 32% of students in Merton schools received the top grade of A/A* AND 61% at A*-B. On Applied General courses, the average point score for students was 38.69, and above the national and Merton 2019 outcomes. For GCSE's, early figures show that 80% of students achieved at least a pass grade (4-9) in GCSE English and Maths, which is well above the very early national average of just over 70%.

Merton has some incredible schools and colleges and these results demonstrate their continued excellence, in spite of such hurdles. This Council believes education and lifelong learning have a crucial impact on the quality of people's lives. These results are a great milestone in the lives of these Morden residents

9. November 2022 – Waste & Street Cleansing Contract – Merton Assembly

This Council recognises that despite fortnightly wheeled bin collections driving Merton's recycling rate to 7th highest in London and improvements delivered through the Labour administration issuing Veolia with a service improvement notice, the current contract has not performed to the standard we want.

This Council believes that residents must have confidence in any new arrangement that the Council enters into. The future contract must deliver:

- A specification that gives clear performance standards that officers, Councillors and our community can hold to account.
- A waste collection service that responds to the concerns of residents.
- A service that Keeps Merton clean.
- On time collections for all property types.
- Removal of fly tipping within an agreed timeframe.
- Continued increases in recycling rates for all parts of the borough

- The flexibility to deliver a great service for all parts of the borough.
- Digital innovation to make the service more responsive and transparent.

Council notes plans to take proposals for the future waste and street cleaning service to a special pre-decision Scrutiny meeting, where Councillors and members of the public can scrutinise any future plans, and that this special meeting will be live streamed on Merton Council's You Tube channel.

Therefore, Council calls upon the Cabinet to take account of the outcome of the current resident engagement and consultation in shaping the future waste and street cleaning service.

10. February 2023 – Free Period Products

1. Council notes that:

- In June 2022, a Plan International UK survey found that nearly one in four girls in London were unable to afford period products since the start of the year, which was higher than the national rate.
- The charity found that girls across the country were cutting down on food and school supplies in order to afford period products.
- Surrey County Council, Oxford City Council and Southwark Council have all set up or agreed to schemes to provide free period products.
- In a YouGov survey undertaken last year two thirds of Britons supported making it a legal requirement for local authorities to provide free period products.

2. Council believes that:

- No-one should experience period poverty.

3. Council resolves to: a. Ask Cabinet to look at ways to provide free, and where possible sustainable, period products in all the council's public accessible toilets and buildings including the civic centre, libraries and community centres.

11. February 2023 – CHAS

1. Council congratulates Labour administrations past and present, as well as the hard-working, dedicated officers who, over the years, have contributed to building the CHAS 2013 Ltd business into such a substantial asset for the benefit of the residents of Merton.

2. Council notes:

- That the Labour administration was re-elected in May 2022 on the basis of a strong track-record of successful, business-like management of the Council's finances;
- The sale of the CHAS 2013 Ltd business on 6 January 2023, following a rigorous marketing exercise which included substantial cross-party scrutiny of the process;
- That the report to Cabinet on 16 January 2023, "Business Plan Update 2023-2027", which includes details of how the Labour administration has projected a balanced budget for the next two financial years, says (Section 5.1) that following the sale "to

ensure maximum benefit to the Council's financial position the proceeds were immediately invested in treasury instruments". The report goes on to say that "for the purposes of the MTFS it has been assumed, given current market conditions, that the return to the Council over the Medium Term will be approximately £5.25m. This has been built into the MTFS and will be refined in line with the forthcoming Investment Strategy."

d. That the final sale price is commercially sensitive, and according to the Share Purchase Agreement signed by the Council, is not able to be disclosed without the agreement of the buyer.

e. That an external investigation has been instigated into the apparent leaking of commercially sensitive information relating to the sale.

3. Council believes that:

a. The Labour administration's forthcoming budget and capital programme represents a very significant opportunity to improve the lives of residents and narrow inequalities in the Borough;

b. The Labour administration was recently re-elected by Merton residents to oversee the Council's financial management, and will continue to engage residents in discussions about how the Council's financial resources are used, as they do every year.

4. Council requests Cabinet to continue developing a comprehensive Investment Strategy that seeks to maximise the value of all the Council's assets, and to bring this to the relevant scrutiny panel for further discussion once finalised.

12. February 2023 – Standing up for Merton Residents

Council notes that:

- The Conservative government crashed the UK economy, and they now want to make Merton residents pay for it by forcing councils to consider drastic savings and cuts to crucial services that residents rely on to pay for Conservative incompetence.
- Twelve years of Conservative austerity, supported by the Liberal Democrats in coalition, has decimated funding for local councils – with the real terms equivalent of 60p out of every £1 being slashed from council budgets since 2010.
- Despite the cuts which have been imposed on us by central government over the last twelve years, our fantastic and hardworking council staff, working together with our partners and our incredible Voluntary and Community Sector, have remained completely committed to delivering for the residents of Merton and helping the most vulnerable.
- When Labour took control of Merton in 2010 the council faced an immediate budget gap of £70 million, and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition took away half of our grant funding. Despite twelve years of austerity, sound financial management from Labour has allowed this council to pass a balanced budget each year, and kept council tax lower than all of our neighbouring outer-London boroughs.
- Conservative economic mismanagement, soaring energy costs, rising bills and inflation reaching a 41 year high, mean Merton is now under unprecedented pressure to balance our budget. This is on top of a significant loss of income from fees and

charges since the pandemic, and yet another real-terms cut in funding by the Conservative government.

- The cross-party Local Government Association has long highlighted that council tax rises, particularly the adult social care precept, have never been the solution to the long term pressures faced by councils.

Council welcomes:

- The work of councillors and officers to identify the necessary savings to bridge the funding gap Merton Council is facing, while protecting service delivery. And that these proposals have been produced in line with our values. • That the Autumn Statement from government in November last year went some way to plugging budget holes, but not nearly far enough, and lacked the long-term sustainable funding plan local government needed.

- The increase in local government core spending power announced in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24, which will help to alleviate the pressures put on council finances by the government's failure to properly tackle rising inflation, growing demand for social care, and the cost of living emergency. However, this government's funding plans expect councils to raise council tax by the maximum amount permitted without a referendum in order to meet the gaps in funding, effectively forcing councils to raise tax during a cost of living emergency to cover the government's unwillingness to fund councils properly.

- The support this Labour Council is giving Merton residents, including one of the most generous council tax support schemes in the UK, a £60 cost of living voucher for 10,000 residents in receipt of council tax support, paid from the Council's £2 million Cost of Living Fund, and the proposed 1% discount on council tax bills for council taxpayers living in Bands A-D. • The recommendations of Labour's Commission on the UK's Future, chaired by Gordon Brown, that decisions should be taken as close as meaningfully and practicably possible to the people affected by them and with longer-term financial settlements for local government, in order to provide certainty and move away from the model of ad hoc bidding for central government funding pots.

Council resolves:

- That the Leader of the Council should write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and call on the government to take responsibility for their reckless mismanagement of the economy, to stop taking it out on Merton residents, and to provide the long-term sustainable funding that councils so desperately need to deliver the vital services and support that people in our communities, especially the most vulnerable, rely on.

- To ensure that measures taken in Merton Council's budget process prioritise the protection of service delivery, in particular those which support the most vulnerable in our communities and support our residents through the cost of living emergency.

- To ensure that Merton maintains comprehensive council tax support provision to assist those households who cannot afford to pay.

13. February 2023 – ULEZ Consultation

This Council notes:

- That the Mayor of London has led a concerted campaign to tackle toxic air pollution, to protect Londoners, including residents in Merton, from diseases due to air pollution over the next 30 years;
- The Mayor of London's laudable aim to drastically reduce the cost to the NHS and the social care system of air pollution currently running at £10.4 billion;
- The Mayor of London has already taken ground-breaking action with his support for ULEZ in central London and this has reduced harmful pollution levels by almost a half and because of this, 4 million Londoners are now breathing cleaner air; and

Whereas:

- The Mayor of London has listened to Merton Council during the comprehensive consultation over the expansion of ULEZ to outer London and has provided more help for residents during this Cost of Living emergency;
- The Mayor of London has introduced the most generous scrappage scheme yet - £110 million – to support Merton residents on lower incomes, disabled residents, micro businesses and charities to scrap or retrofit their non[1]compliant vehicles;
- The Mayor of London has repeatedly kept the GLA Assembly, London boroughs, including Merton, and the press informed about the ULEZ consultation and noted that the consultation was hijacked by Fair Fuel UK, a vested interest group using tactics to manipulate the results of a fair consultation;
- 59% of responses to the Mayor's consultation on ULEZ expansion agreed that more needed to be done to tackle toxic air.

Therefore:

This Council calls upon the cabinet to:

- Work with the Mayor of London and TfL so that the ULEZ expansion is supported by a wide-ranging engagement with residents on the detail of the scrappage scheme and on the exemptions for disabled drivers and community transport, meaning no impact from ULEZ as a result of these exemptions until 2025 and 2027 respectively;
- Write to TfL with their suggestions for bus route extensions as part of the Mayor of London's plans, announced in November 2022, for improving the bus network in outer London, with over 1 million kilometres added to the network through planned new routes and improvements.
- Work with TfL to understand any requirements for the installation of any ULEZ infrastructure in outer London;
- Support regular review and monitoring into the operation of the scrappage scheme so that it is sensitive to the impact of the Cost of Living emergency on Merton's residents.

14. April 2023 – Care Experience

Council understands that:

1. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics.

Council notes that:

2. Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives;
3. Despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account;
4. Care experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system;
5. As corporate parents, Councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority.

Council agrees that:

6. The work done to further strengthen the role of corporate parenting in Merton is helpful and that all corporate parents should consider acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked after children and young people and to reflect their needs in any aspect of council work.
7. Councillors should be champions of our looked after children and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society wherever and whenever possible.

Council therefore requests Cabinet:

8. Treats care experience as an additional local equality strand alongside the existing protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010;
9. To proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views and reflect these in Equality Impact Assessments;
10. To continue to build on the existing ringfenced apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced people by committing to an agreed appropriate number of apprenticeships places each year delivered through the Council's levy funding.
11. To support care experienced people into career opportunities available in the Council and borough more widely, including through Merton's own graduate development programme places.

15. April 2023 – Policing

Council notes:

- Merton residents and all Londoners expect and deserve a Police Service they can trust, not fear, which responds to the needs of the communities it serves and is accountable to the community for the decisions it makes.
- With deep concern the appalling findings of Baroness Casey's independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service, including the findings of institutional racism, sexism, misogyny, and homophobia in the Met, and the failure to implement operational, cultural, and systemic change that is so desperately needed.
- That the deeply troubling failures highlighted in the Casey review are overwhelmingly due to a longstanding failure of culture within the force. However, the review also highlights that government cuts to funding for the Met have exacerbated some problems.
- And welcomes the commitment from the new Met Commissioner to major reform of the Metropolitan Police Service and to rebuilding trust amongst Londoners.
- The strong and positive working relationship that Merton Council and Merton Police maintain, which is focused on keeping our borough one of the safest anywhere in London.
- The administration's response to the Turnaround Plan which expresses our wish to work with the Police to develop and support the aims of the plan, and ensure our local priorities are achieved alongside the changes that need to be seen in the Met.

Council believes:

- That to see any progress towards rebuilding trust and confidence in the police, the Metropolitan Police must fully follow the recommendations of the Casey review and work with our communities in a genuine and meaningful way.
- That the example of effective relationships with police partners here in Merton demonstrates that there is a way forward for the Metropolitan Police Service.
- That a local, neighbourhood policing presence and effective engagement with local communities is essential to people being able to feel safe in their communities and to building trusting relationships with the Police Service.

Council resolves:

- To send a letter from the Leader of the Council to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police calling for the full implementation of all recommendations set out in Baroness Casey's review.
- For the Cabinet Member for Civic Pride to work with the Police and residents to ensure that voices of local people are included in the way that their community is policed.
- Campaign with other London Boroughs and the Mayor of London for the government to fully reverse their damaging cuts to our Police Service, and to keep our local Police Stations in Mitcham and Wimbledon open.

16. April 2023 – St Helier Hospital

Council notes:

- In 2020, a joint meeting of NHS Surrey Heartlands and NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning groups approved plans to close the emergency, maternity, and children's in-patient services at both Epsom and St Helier Hospitals and to build a new facility for the provision of these services in Belmont.
- That since this decision was taken, the health landscape has changed dramatically because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the increasing demand on health services, and the cumulative effects of underfunding of the NHS by successive governments since 2010.
- That Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on ethnic minority groups, those living in areas of deprivation, those with underlying health conditions, older people, and residents with a learning disability. And that hospitalisation and mortality rates during the pandemic have been disproportionately higher among Black, Black British, Asian, and Asian British communities.

Council further notes:

- That St George's Hospital in Tooting is struggling to cope with local demand, with the Integrated Care Board consistently describing the pressures on the hospital over the most recent winter period as unprecedented. • With concern, that pressures are also being experienced at Epsom and St Helier's hospitals, where bed occupancy levels have continued to increase over the last year, and that reducing provision at St Helier will also impact St George's and neighbouring hospitals in South West London.
- The serious issues which exist at St Helier Hospital with disrepair and decline, and the backlog of much needed maintenance throughout parts of the site, which were highlighted in a recent report by ITV News.

Council believes:

- That decisions taken in 2020 on the proposed downgrading of St Helier Hospital need to be urgently reviewed so that they can be taken with a fuller understanding of the impact of the post-Covid-19 pandemic healthcare landscape.
- That the proposed downgrading of St Helier hospital will have a detrimental impact on the residents of Merton, taking services that the most vulnerable rely on further away from where they are needed.
- That our dedicated and hard-working healthcare staff deserve better, to be paid a decent wage, and to be able to work in appropriate environments which keep themselves, patients, and visitors safe.

Council resolves:

- To support the formal request of the Leader of the Council for a new Impact Assessment pursuant to the Public Sector Equality Duty is completed before any decision is taken to proceed with the planned downgrading of St Helier Hospital.

- To write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to demand that the government provides the necessary capital funding to the address disrepair at the St Helier Hospital site.
- To write to the CEO of St George's and St Helier Trust and the CEO of the South West London Integrated Care Board to demand that they maintain all existing services on the St Helier site and outline their planned investment in the site over the next few years in light of the delay to the future hospital programme to ensure that the hospital provides an appropriate environment for local people

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