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COUNCIL

10 SEPTEMBER 2014

(19.15 - 21.55)

PRESENT The Mayor of Merton, Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina,
The Deputy Mayor of Merton, Councillor Laxmi Attawar

Councillors: Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Tobin Byers, Charlie Chirico, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, Stephen Crowe, Mary Curtin, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, 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, Russell Makin, Maxi Martin, Peter McCabe, Oonagh Moulton, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, John Sargeant, Judy Saunders, David Simpson, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford, Linda Taylor, Imran Uddin, Gregory Udeh, Jill West, Martin Whelton and David Williams.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors David Dean and Peter Walker.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No declarations were made.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the Council meeting held on the 9 July 2014 were approved as a correct record.

Councillor Crowe asked that it be noted that he and Councillor Judge had spoken on the Strategic Themes Main Report, Minute 7b on page 3. He asked that in the future that it be recorded when Councillors speak on reports within the minutes. The Mayor confirmed this would happen in the future.

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

The Mayor provided the Council with an update on her recent Mayoral duties and highlighted how a number of her fellow Councillors had been raising money for her Mayor's charities.

The Mayor then invited Councillors Phillip Jones and David Williams to say a few words on the death of Honorary Alderman and former Councillor Bernard Clifford. A copy of their speeches is attached as Appendix A to these Minutes.

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 supplementary question to the appropriate Cabinet Member.

A copy of the supplementary questions and the responses would be included within the 'Public questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

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

The responses to the Members' ordinary priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of those Councillors in turn to ask (if they wished) a further supplementary question to the Cabinet Member.

A copy of the supplementary questions and the responses would be included within the 'Councillors' ordinary priority questions' to cabinet members published document.

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

The responses to the Members' strategic theme priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of those Councillors in turn to ask (if they wished) a further supplementary question to the Cabinet Member.

A copy of the supplementary questions and the responses would be included within the 'Strategic theme: Councillors' questions to cabinet members' published document.

7b STRATEGIC THEME: MAIN REPORT - HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES (WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO EMBEDDING PUBLIC HEALTH - ONE YEAR ON FROM TRANSITION) (Agenda Item 7b)

The report was moved by Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah and seconded by Councillor Maxi Martin.

Councillors Suzanne Grocott and Daniel Holden also spoke on this item

RESOLVED:

That the report is agreed

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

Strategic Theme Motion Agenda – Liberal Democrat Motion Agenda – Item 7c(i)

The motion was moved by Councillor Mary-Jane Jeanes.

The motion was not seconded, and the motion as a result falls.

Strategic Theme Motion Agenda – Conservative Motion – Item 7c (ii)

The motion was moved by Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender and seconded by Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender

The Labour amendment, as set out in item 17 (a) was moved by Councillor Peter McCabe and seconded by Councillor Ross Garrod.

Councillors Andrew Judge, John Sargeant and David Williams also spoke on this item.

A roll-call was called on the Labour motion

Voting in Favour: Councillors: Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Tobin Byers, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, Mary Curtin, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Brenda Fraser, Ross Garrod, Jeff Hanna, Joan Henry, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Maxi Martin, Peter McCabe, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, Judy Saunders, Marsie Skeete, Geraldine Stanford, Imran Uddin, Gregory Udeh and Martin Whelton (33)

Voting Against: Councillors: Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Charlie Chirico, Stephen Crowe, Edward Foley, Suzanne Grocott, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Oonagh Moulton, John Sargeant, David Simpson, Peter Southgate, Linda Taylor, Jill West, and David Williams. (22)

Not voting: Councillors: Agatha Mary Akyigyina and Mary-Jane Jeanes. (2)

The Mayor declared the amendment to be carried.

The substantive resolution was agreed.

RESOLVED:

This Council welcomes the announcement from the NHS that the new Nelson Local Care Centre will open in Spring 2015, providing the following services:

- Two GP practices – Cannon Hill Lane Medical Practice and Church Lane Practice – which will be relocating there
- Outpatient appointments
- Minor surgery and procedures
- X-ray, ultrasound and blood tests
- Physiotherapy
- Pharmacy services
- A range of community mental health services

This Council congratulates everyone involved in the construction of the Nelson Local Care Centre, which is set to be delivered within budget and on schedule, and which will complement the excellent services already provided at the new Raynes Park Health Centre, including antenatal clinics, counselling services, family planning advice and minor surgery.

Council believes that the needs of local residents and quality health outcomes must be at the forefront when taking decisions on how the services offered at the Nelson are developed. Therefore, in choosing a provider for specialist consultation and diagnostic services at the Nelson, Council calls on the local NHS to prioritise the health of local residents over the maximisation of profit for private sector providers. Council notes the significant health inequalities in the borough and regrets that the local NHS has focused on the development of a local care service in the west of the borough whilst neglecting services in the east where the need is greatest. This Council fully supports plans for a facility in Mitcham similar to the Nelson, which would mean residents in the east of the Borough could also benefit from popular, local health services within Merton's own borders but wishes to see greater urgency and importance given to taking this forward by the local NHS.

This Council therefore calls on NHS planners to speed up developing similar new health facilities in Merton for Mitcham-based residents as quickly as possible, including full consultation with the local community. However Council also resolves that local care services should not be used as a reason to close accident and emergency or maternity services at St Helier.

8 REPORT FROM WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 8)

Councillor James Holmes presented the report, which was received by the Council.

He asked that his thanks, on behalf of Wimbledon Community Forum, be recorded to his predecessor, former Councillor Henry Nelless for all the hard work he had put in during his time in the Chair.

9 NOTICE OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE 1 (Agenda Item 9)

The motion was moved by Councillor Najeeb Latif and seconded by Councillor Stephen Crowe

The Merton Park Ward Independent Residents (MPWIR) amendment, as set out in item 16 was moved by Councillors John Sargeant and seconded by Councillor Edward Foley.

The Labour amendment, as set out in item 17 (b) was moved by Councillors Andrew Judge and seconded by Councillor Sally Kenny.

Councillors Oonagh Moulton and David Simpson also spoke on this item.

The MPWIR amendment was then put to the vote and fell – votes in favour 23, and votes against 33 with 1 abstention.

The Labour amendment was then put to the vote and was carried – votes in favour 33, and votes against 19 with 5 abstentions

The substantive resolution was agreed.

RESOLVED:

This Council welcomes the recent consultation on extending Tramlink so that it connects Merton to Sutton via Morden and Wimbledon. Council notes the consultation ended on 17 August and over 10,000 responses from residents were received over the course of the consultation.

Merton Council, in partnership with Sutton Council, put forward the preferred route included in the consultation as follows:

- A link from Sutton to Wimbledon
- An interchange at Morden town centre
- A stop at St Helier Hospital

Additional options of a route via Nursery Road Playing Fields and Abbey Recreation Ground and a route that would by-pass St Helier Hospital were added to the consultation by Transport for London, which is chaired by the Mayor of London.

The final report has now been compiled and has been forwarded to TfL. It will be published tomorrow. The results show that an overwhelming majority of respondents support the extension of the tram along both councils' preferred route from Wimbledon to Sutton via Morden town centre, with a stop at St Helier Hospital. Residents have also backed Merton's position in not supporting any extension via Nursery Road Rec or Abbey Playing Fields.

However, council notes that the Mayor of London's Infrastructure Plan does not envisage an extension to the tram until 2030 at the earliest.

Council reiterates its support for a tram extension along the preferred route as it believes that, whilst the costs of the final route must clearly be affordable and deliver good value for money for the taxpayer, it is vital that the St Helier Hospital loop goes ahead in order to deliver improved access to the hospital for many local families and older residents. Council also calls on the local CCGs to take into account the potential investment in the tram and the confidence this shows in St Helier hospital as a provider of quality emergency, maternity and related services as they continue to consider the future of the hospital. Council further reiterates the administration's position that it is also vital that disruption to residents and local neighbourhoods is minimised and that the option of a route through Abbey Recreation Ground and Nursery Road playing fields is explicitly ruled out by Transport for London and the Mayor of London.

This Council resolves to take every opportunity that arises:

- a) to use the results of the consultation to lobby TfL to extend the tram from Wimbledon to Sutton via Morden, thus contributing to the regeneration of Morden town centre; and
- b) to continue to press the case for the St Helier Hospital loop with our partners at the London Borough of Sutton, Transport for London and the Mayor of London; and
- c) to continue to strongly resist any alternative route option from TfL and the Mayor of London which would impact adversely on Abbey Recreation Ground and Nursery Road Playing Fields and residents' enjoyment of these open spaces.

Council welcomes the findings of the consultation and has forwarded the results to TfL with a joint letter from both councils supporting the preferred route. Council also looks forward to Scrutiny reviewing the findings of the consultation.

Now that residents have backed the proposals in principle, the next step will be to lobby TfL to fund much more detailed consultation on the preferred route. If TfL agree to fund such a consultation we will be seeking to ensure the following:

- 1) That the consultation is over a suitably long period and at an appropriate time of year so as to ensure maximum feedback from residents;
- 2) That the Scrutiny function of both Council's can fully engage in all stages of the process;
- 3) That any impact on traffic flows into surrounding residential areas is fully explored and the potential for rat running and congestion is minimised; and
- 4) That any changes to bus routes are fully outlined and consulted on; and
- 5) That any agreed extension backed by local people would be prioritised for delivery by the Mayor of London so that residents do not have to wait until 2030.

10 NOTICE OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE 2 (Agenda Item 10)

The motion was moved by Councillor James Holmes and seconded by Councillor Michael Bull.

The Labour amendment, as set out in item 17 (c) was moved by Councillor Martin Whelton and seconded by Councillor Imran Uddin.

Councillor Peter Southgate also spoke on this item.

The Labour amendment was then put to the vote and was carried – votes in favour 34, and votes against 19 with 5 abstentions

The substantive resolution was agreed.

RESOLVED

This council congratulates all of our GCSE and A Level students on their excellent results this year, with record results at GCSE level in particular. Council also acknowledges the hard work of our Governors, Headteachers, Teachers, Teaching Assistants and other school staff in assisting our young people to reach their full educational potential.

This Council notes the opening of Merton's first free school, Park Free School, in September 2014. This Council does not support the current government's free school policy which allows the establishment of unregulated schools with unqualified teachers and unsuitable premises to be established in areas already well served by good schools whilst additional school places for children in areas of scarcity are left unfunded by government.

Whilst wishing the staff and all the pupils at Park Community School a successful future, as we would for all our Merton pupils and schools staff, council deplores the sub-standard accommodation pupils will have to endure and the uncertainty created due to the delay in identifying a site.

Recognising the enormous costs and challenges for the borough in meeting the growing demand for school places among Merton's primary age group as a result of increased birth rates and also recognising the even greater costs to be incurred for when this cohort of children reaches secondary school age, this Council reiterates its decision of 20 November 2013 to look at all options for meeting the need for more school places, including, and in accordance with the wishes of parents, free schools led by parents in areas of school places shortages employing properly qualified teachers and with proper systems of financial accountability and transparency, and academies.

As per the decision of 20 November 2013 full Council, where a free school wishes to set up in the borough, this Council expects that it will adhere to the following principles:

- Agree to be part of Merton's admissions procedures, working closely with officers;
- Employ only qualified teachers;
- Participate fully in the Merton Education Partnership; and
- Demonstrate genuine community support.

Council regrets that these principles are not supported by central government, leaving children at the mercy of unregulated providers who may not have the best interests of our young people at heart.

However, in order to ensure that Merton's education system is able to offer local families both quality and choice, this Council resolves to continue to support all of our local schools, and where there is an identified need, to consider supporting providers with a proven track record of success who are willing to adopt the aforementioned principles and where the Council is confident that the standard of education offered is comparable with the best schools in the borough.

11 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT: 2013-2014
(Agenda Item 11)

The report was moved by Councillor Peter Southgate and seconded by Councillor Peter McCabe.

Councillor Oonagh Moulton also spoke on this item

RESOLVED:

That the Council notes the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report.

12 CALL-IN AND URGENCY (Agenda Item 12)

RESOLVED:

That Council noted the taking of an urgent key decision and the waiving of the call-in procedure.

13 CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND RELATED MATTERS
(Agenda Item 13)

RESOLVED:

That Council:

A). noted the changes to the membership of Committees approved under delegated powers since the last meeting of the Council.

B). endorsed the establishment of the new South West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee along with its Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure.

C). appoints Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender and Councillor Greg Udeh to the South West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Brenda Fraser and Councillor Suzanne Grocott as substitutes.

D). appoints Councillor Andrew Judge to the Groundwork London's Local Authority Strategic Input Board.

14 PETITIONS (Agenda Item 14)

Petitions were presented by Councillors Mary-Jane Jeanes and Andrew Judge.

15 BUSINESS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
(Agenda Item 15)

RESOLVED:

That the Strategic theme for the next ordinary meeting of the Council to be held on 19 November 2014 shall be Safer and Stronger Communities.

TESTIMONIES FOR ALDERMAN BERNARD CLIFFORD

Councillor Philip Jones:

I first met Bernard Clifford about half a century ago, but even then he was an established, municipal figure. I think he was probably the last surviving member of the urban district council, where he ran for a seat in West Barnes for Labour the first time and so far for the last time, although we're still working on it. After that he was elected for Graveney Ward in 1964 and carried on to 1986, this meant that after the landslide in 1968 he was one of only 4 labour members on the council. The highlight of his municipal career was in the first labour administration 1971 - 1974 where he was chair of the Education Committee. After that he was the then youngest Mayor from 1974-75. His period on the education committee was at a time when the newly introduced comprehensive system was to settle in and he had to do a lot of work on that. I think he thought that his main achievement was establishing residential Surrey Centre in South Wales which was a valuable facility much appreciated by several generations of Merton school children even though it eventually fell victim to changes in education funding in 1990s. A more lasting memorial to him is the old people accommodation at The Oaks, where he initiated the start of the development at The Oaks for sheltered accommodation and a day centre. Outside the council his job was a Fleet Street printer, and was very active in his union. This was at the time when the union had a reputation for trigger happy bloody mindedness. It is difficult to think of anyone more opposite than Bernard who was sensible, cautious and conscientious. He was so popular that he actually got on with Rupert Murdoch, not one of my favourite characters. Bernard made a very valuable contribution to the life of Merton and I am sure we will all want to send his widow, Iris, our deepest sympathy.

Councillor David Williams:

Councillor Jones and I are the only members of the council to serve with him although Bernard did serve until 1986. He joined the council when he was 25 in 1959, but he became Mayor in 1974 which was when I joined the council and he was the Labour Mayor under the conservative administration, and fulfilled that role honourably and with distinction. It's perhaps just thinking back that it was only after the elections in 1974 that any sort of allowances were introduced, and there was a maximum of £4 per day or £10 per week, and as Mayor Bernard had been working for Bradley Wilkinson who had their site in New Malden where Tesco is (there is a plaque in Tesco near the tills), but Bernard lost his job because he was mayor. His company said they couldn't possibly afford to him taking all the time off. Again, the legislation wasn't there to force them to keep him in employment. Although most of you didn't know him, he gave 37 years in public service, most of that time without ever being able to claim a penny for it, and his family suffered, but he contributed immensely to the council, that's why his name appears on the board as honorary alderman and former mayor.

