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CABINET
30 JUNE 2014
(19.15 - 20.10)

PRESENT

Councillor Stephen Alambritis (in the Chair),
Councillor Mark Allison, Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah,
Councillor Nick Draper, Councillor Andrew Judge,
Councillor Edith Macauley, Councillor Maxi Martin,
Councillor Judy Saunders and Councillor Martin Whelton

Ged Curran (Chief Executive), Paul Evans (Assistant Director of Corporate Governance), Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration), Paul Ballatt (Assistant Director of Commissioning, Strategy and Performance), Simon Williams (Director of Community and Housing), and Chris Pedlow (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, John Bowcott, David Dean,
James Holmes and Russell Makin.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No pecuniary declarations were made.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 16 June 2014 were approved as a correct record.

4. ADOPTION OF LBM CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY (2014-2017) (Agenda Item 4)

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration presented the report, which included the proposed new strategy that was built on principles of environmental sustainability and on the impressive work achieved under the Council's previous climate change strategy.

The Cabinet acknowledged that a scrutiny review of Climate Change and the Green Deal had thoroughly scrutinised the document as well as coming up with a number of recommendations itself.

RESOLVED

A) That, having noted the recommendations of the scrutiny review of Climate Change and the Green Deal (agenda item 7 of this meeting), Cabinet adopts the council's Climate Change Strategy (2014-2017)

B) That Cabinet agrees to delegate to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet member, the authority to make appropriate amendments/ minor clerical corrections as necessary.

5. FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN DEAL TASK GROUP (Agenda Item 5)

Councillors Russell Makin and James Holmes jointly introduced the report and placed on record their thanks to Kevin Godding, Tom Walshe and Rebecca Redman for their work on the review, especially for their 'big picture' thinking. It was explained that the key finding of the task group was exciting, the possibility of the Council establishing an Energy Services Company (ESCO) to be able provide energy to residents at a cost below market rate. It was acknowledged that there would be a significant cost implication to develop an ESCO but in the long term it would be at least cost efficient, if not income generating.

In response Councillor Judge commented that the findings of the task group were certainly interesting, however the key factor in considering taking them any further forward was ensuring private sector investment in any form of ESCO.

RESOLVED

A). That Cabinet considered and endorsed the report arising from the scrutiny review of Climate Change and the Green Deal.

B). That Cabinet agrees to submit an Executive Response and Action Plan to the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel at their September 2014 meeting outlining their response to the report and decision taken regarding the recommendations made, including actions to be taken to implement the agreed recommendations.

6. FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLANNING TASK GROUP (Agenda Item 6)

Councillor James Holmes introduced the report and placed on record his thanks to Rebecca Redman for her work on the review. He commented that the review was

certainly challenging area to examine and he highlighted two of the key findings, the first being the need to have a mechanism of encouraging BME governors in schools and how do we enable BME teachers to rise to senior roles within schools.

In response Cabinet thanked the task group for their findings especially highlighting the need to ensure that schools had governors that were more representative of the diversity of the pupils.

RESOLVED

A). That Cabinet considered and endorsed the report arising from the scrutiny review of school leadership succession planning.

B). That Cabinet agrees to submit an Executive Response and Action Plan to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel at their October 2014 meeting outlining their response to the report and decision taken regarding the recommendations made, including actions to be taken to implement the agreed recommendations.

7. CONSULTATION ON POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR MERTON'S COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration presented the report, which sought approval to go out to public consultation on Merton's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) strategic infrastructure project list (Reg 123 List) and neighbourhood project lists.

The Cabinet had noted the tabled paper from the Borough Plan Advisory Committee (BPAC), which supported the recommendations contained within the report, and suggested a further recommendation. On the proposed recommendation the Cabinet did not agree it was necessary for the consultation result and draft project list to go to BPAC, before the final decision on the results were taken.

RESOLVED

A). That Cabinet approves a six weeks of public consultation on Merton's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) strategic infrastructure project list (Reg 123 List) and neighbourhood project lists to start in September 2014.

B). That approval of the consultation documents and other matters be delegated to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

8. CONSULTATION ON MERTON'S DRAFT GUIDANCE ON PLANNING OBLIGATIONS (Agenda Item 8)

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration presented the report, which sought approval to go out to public consultation on the revised Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It was noted that the new SPD would be an up-to-date document that would take account of the latest legislation and guidance to ensure the Merton planning obligations are applied to support open spaces, healthcare, education and other infrastructure in the borough.

The Cabinet had regard to the tabled paper from the Borough Plan Advisory Committee (BPAC) and its revised recommendation. On the revised recommendation the Cabinet did not agree it was necessary for Cabinet to approve the consultation documents. Instead they were satisfied with the original recommendation to delegate the approval to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member. The Cabinet were prepared that the Borough Plan Advisory Group be consulted prior to the documents being agreed for public consultation.

RESOLVED

A). That Cabinet approves a six weeks of public consultation on Merton's draft planning obligations supplementary planning document (consultation to start in September 2014).

B). That approval of the consultation documents and other matters be delegated to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member, and that the Borough Plan Advisory Group is consulted prior to the documents being agreed for public consultation.

9. CIRCLE HOUSING MERTON PRIORY: REGENERATION PROJECT (Agenda Item 9)

The Cabinet considered the report which sought to further explore an opportunity with Circle Housing Merton Priory Homes (CHMP) to improvement the levels of housing at three estates within the Borough namely High Path, Eastfields and Ravensbury.

CHMP were required to meet Decent Homes Standards (DHS) on the three estates by March 2015. Following an evaluation by CHMP of what was required to meet DHS it was deemed not financially or practicably feasible to raise them to the required standards, partly to the nature of the buildings. Instead a regeneration project had been proposed with the potential to provide much needed, higher quality housing as well as reduce the maintenance liability and long term burdens for leaseholders.

The report also provided further information including the proposed current offer to residents, how the Local Plan links to the estates regeneration, the housing supply and the property type, size and layout.

Councillor Judge emphasised that the Council has not made a decision on the regeneration project. There was a need however to temporarily suspend the decent homes standards for a period of 18 months for the three estates, whilst the further investigation work takes place. Once that was completed the Council would then make its decision as to whether to co-operate with the regeneration. If the Council decides not to support the regeneration, the decent homes standards obligations would immediately be reintroduced.

Ms Hays-Robinson, (a resident of High Path), addressed the Cabinet on the proposal. Her comments included that she and a number of other residents had grave concerns over the proposals, which were unwelcome. They had little faith in Circle housing, and felt they would be unable to deliver any improvements, and that there was no value in destroying the lovely red brick buildings in High Path for the sake of it.

The Leader addressed the concerns raised by saying that no final decisions on the regeneration proposal had been taken, and what was being proposed currently was simply to approve further explorations. He also stated that he was in talks with CHMP to gain 10 signed commitments for how CHMP would be supporting residents during the process.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommends that Council (09 July 2014):

- 1). Are updated on due diligence undertaken over the past six months by the London Borough of Merton (LBM) and Circle Housing Merton Priory (CHMP) officers working together.
- 2). That Council notes the significant opportunity this project represents to improve housing conditions for tenants, leaseholders and freeholders and the potential contribution to addressing wider housing provision pressures in Merton and London.
- 3). Agrees to proceed with exploration of estate regeneration schemes for Eastfields, High Path and Ravensbury via:
 - (a) Preparation, in partnership with Circle Housing Merton Priory of a statutory Estate Regeneration Local Plan Document setting out the strategic planning framework to guide any estate regeneration proposals;
 - (b) Consideration of the Council's statutory powers where appropriate, to help deliver the proposed Estates Regeneration Local Plan.
- 4). Adopts revisions to Merton's Local Development Scheme as the project plan and timetable to prepare the proposed Estates Regeneration Local Plan, subject to the Mayor of London's approval.

5). Resolves to suspend the obligation in the Stock Transfer Agreement dated 22 March 2010 ("Transfer Agreement") on the part of CHMP to carry out the Qualifying Works (as defined in the Transfer Agreement) at High Path (South Wimbledon), Eastfields (Mitcham) and Ravensbury (Morden) to comply with the Decent Homes Standard for a period of up to 18 months subject to there being no legal objection or obstacle, to enable CHMP to explore the viability of estate regeneration schemes for the above estates, an agreed programme to regenerate the subject properties and the planning position being concluded including the formulation of an Estates Regeneration Local Plan. The period of suspension will commence from the date of 9th July 2014 and will also have regard to the date upon which the Deed of Variation is completed.

6). Resolves that the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration be authorised to approve consultation documents prior to public consultation, publish the Local Development Scheme (subject to its approval by the Mayor of London and other consequential matters in accordance with the appropriate Regulations).

10. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2013-14 REPORT (Agenda Item 10)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report, which provided the provisional out-turn position for 2013/14 financial year. In guiding the Cabinet through the report he highlighted that the general underspend had reduced compared to previous years and that for the first time the report contained a specific breakdown of the Parking Accounts. It was also noted that the request for virements were contained within section 8 of the report, whilst section 7, provided information on the capital outturn and section 6 summarised the reserves position.

Cabinet noted that the report had previously been considered by the General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- A). noted the draft provisional revenue outturn for 2013/14
- B). considered the issues around the quality of revenue budget monitoring and agrees that the areas highlighted in the report should be the subject of particular focus in 2014/15.
- C). approves the virements, new funding and adjustments contained in Appendix 4
- D). approves the requests for revenue virement contained in Section 8

11. ADOPTION OF MERTON'S SITES AND POLICIES PLAN AND POLICIES MAPS AS PART OF MERTON'S LOCAL PLAN (Agenda Item 11)

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration presented the report which detailed the proposed sites and policies, and policies Maps as part of Merton's Local Plan. That document would replace the policies contained within the Merton's Unitary Development Plan and Proposals Map 2003. In presenting the report it was highlighted that the proposal had incorporated the 11 changes, recommended by the Inspectors in their final report, which also confirmed that the proposed Plan was sound.

The Cabinet had regard to the tabled paper from the Borough Plan Advisory Committee (BPAC) which advised that the proposed recommendations be taken forward by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet asked that their thanks be recorded for Tara Butler, and Paul McGarry for all their hard work on such an important document for the future of Merton.

RESOLVED

A). That, Cabinet recommends the adoption of Merton's Sites and Policies Development Plan Document and Policies Map to the meeting of Council (09 July 2014), replacing the remaining policies in Merton's Unitary Development Plan and Proposals Map 2003.

B). That Cabinet delegates to the Director of Environment and Regeneration to deal with all the necessary adoption documents and other consequential matters in accordance with the appropriate Regulations.

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