

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 8 June 2015

Wards: All

Subject: Reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission: Call in of Cabinet decision on Merton Adult Education – evidence and options for achieving a value for money service

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

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Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission recommends that Cabinet:

- A. ensures that Joseph Hood Primary School is kept fully informed of the decision process regarding any plans for the future use of the Whatley Avenue site
 - B. takes account of the views of staff working for the adult education service, as set out in the consultation results and expressed at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 10 March 2015, and works with staff in a positive and constructive manner, in accordance with the HR procedures of the council.
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At its meeting on 10 March 2015 the Overview and Scrutiny Commission received a call-in relating to the Cabinet decision taken on 16 February 2015 to move the Merton Adult Education Service to a commissioning model.
- 1.2 The Commission resolved not to formally refer the matter back to Cabinet but to make a reference asking Cabinet to consider two recommendations when making further decisions relating to the adult education service.

2. DETAILS

Scrutiny process

- 2.1 The documentation received by the Commission at its meeting on 10 March 2015 comprised:
 - The call-in form, setting out the reasons for the call-in and additional information requested
 - Response to the call-in
 - Cabinet report
 - Reference from Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- 2.2 Councillor James Holmes outlined his reasons for calling in the decision. The Commission also heard from the Chair of the Governing Body of Joseph Hood Primary School, a staffside representative and a representative of Save Merton Adult Education. Details of their contributions are set out in the minutes of the meeting.
- 2.3 Commission members asked questions and sought responses to these concerns. Responses were provided by:
- Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration
 - Cabinet Member for Education
 - Director of Community and Housing
- 2.4 The Commission discussed the issues raised at some length before determining its response.

Scrutiny response

- 2.5 The Commission agreed not to refer the decision back to Cabinet but felt that two recommendations should be made for Cabinet to consider, as set out below:
- that Cabinet ensures that Joseph Hood Primary School is kept fully informed of the decision process regarding any plans for the future use of the Whatley Avenue site;
 - that Cabinet takes account of the views of staff working for the adult education service, as set out in the consultation results and expressed at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 10 March 2015, and works with staff in a positive and constructive way, in accordance with the HR procedures of the council.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 None - Cabinet is required under the terms of the constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1 At its meeting on 10 March 2015 the Overview and Scrutiny Commission heard from:
- Councillor James Holmes, signatory to the call-in
 - Posey Furnish, Chair, Governing Body, Joseph Hood Primary School
 - Isabelle McGrath, staffside representative
 - Gay Bennett Powell, Save Merton Adult Education
 - Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Education
 - Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration
 - Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing

5. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 These are included in the report to Cabinet on 16 February 2015 and the officer response to the Commission on 10 March 2015.

6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Cabinet is required under the terms of the constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires Cabinet to respond to reports and recommendations made by scrutiny committees within two months of written notice being given.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

7.1 These are included in the report received by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 10 March 2015.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 These are included in the report received by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 10 March 2015.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 These are included in the report received by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 10 March 2015.

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

10.1 None

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting 10 March 2015

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