COUNCIL MEETING 6 FEBRUARY 2013

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE MOTIONS

Motion 1 (Labour)

Submitted by Councillors Dennis Pearce, John Dehaney and Agatha Akyigyina

"Council notes the investment both the current and previous administrations have made into self service technology in our libraries.

This investment, along with a hugely successful and nationally recognised volunteer programme, has ensured that, unlike many other councils facing reductions in their government funding, in Merton we have been able to:

- keep all our libraries open
- increase opening hours overall
- achieve the highest performing library service in London on cost versus performance.

However, council notes that we must continue to invest in new technologies if our libraries are to remain relevant to the needs of our residents and if we are to continue to protect them from the impact of reduced council funding.

In this context, the following recent developments in our libraries service are to be welcomed:

- new automated 24/7 telephone renewal line and access to over 6 million items of stock through the London Libraries Consortium
- new email system for overdue books reminders
- new ebooks and emagazines initiative which gives free access to over 8,000 epublications
- free web access to subscription services including Encyclopaedia Britannica and other reference and study resources
- free wifi to be available in all libraries by March 2013
- development of a libraries "app" for smartphone and ipad users to be launched later this year.

Council believes that the above initiatives, along with the decision to roll out automatic membership of our libraries to all school children in Merton, will ensure that our libraries are enjoyed by a new generation of users.

Council commends staff and volunteers on the transformation that has taken place in our libraries service and asks the Cabinet Member to continue to prioritise investment in appropriate new technologies where this will help secure the long term future of our libraries in a time of austerity."