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Merton Council

Council

3 March 2021

Supplementary agenda

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BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2021

AMENDMENT – AGENDA ITEM 4

1. Amend recommendation 1A) by adding the following wording:

“subject to the following amendment:

- i) The application of £500,000 from the Balancing the Budget Reserve to create a High Street Recovery and Improvement fund.
- ii) Remove from the 2021/22 Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy the increased income in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and subsequent reduction in income in 2023/24 and 2024/25 of £0.325m in total arising from Ref: ENV2021-04 increase in Emission based Parking Charges.
- iii) Defer saving CH101 Adult Social Care – Direct Provision of £544k in 2022/23 for one year to allow for further consultation and evaluation of the post Covid19 adult care needs.

After Recommendation 1F) to add:

Recommendation 1G):

The Council encourages the Cabinet to embrace a new ambitious vision for Merton that addresses the recovery from the pandemic and the challenges of the 2020's:

- To look into establishing a scheme to incentivise and lessen the financial and administrative license burdens for the operation of pop-up and street market offerings, including considering the suspension of street licence charges for a period;
- Increase support for apprenticeships and encourage businesses to hire new apprentices by actively promoting government apprenticeship support schemes;
- Investing in greener, low carbon and well-designed community infrastructure to improve amenity, green spaces, wellbeing and air quality within the Borough;
- Ensuring the Council prioritises sustainable travel and safe cycling by recognising the need for low carbon provision in future development plans;
- Instructing officers to work on preparing for the introduction of electric bike hire schemes across the borough and to establish an active travel fund to improve walking and cycling routes across Merton, to be funded by non-utilisation of funds over the financial year;
- Invest in innovative and new technology based solutions from departmental underspends to combat the climate emergency and the pollution crisis in Merton, such as green walls and city trees, and also increase funding and take opportunities within new developments to deliver significantly higher levels of tree planting across the borough;

- Accelerate the introduction of electric vehicles charging infrastructure (including fast charging) for residents and those visiting the town centres;
- Invest in children's active sport and fitness and consider opportunities for further use of the borough's greenspace to achieve this goal;
- Focus on children's wellbeing and mental health impacts caused by the Covid19 pandemic and work towards preventative mental health schemes available for all children in Merton;
- To prioritise and ensure the successful management of regeneration opportunities and projects in Morden, Mitcham and Wimbledon, for town centres, green spaces and housing;
- Furthermore, with regard to the above amendment in relation to Recommendation 1.A, to support the borough's recovery from the pandemic and help local businesses and residents by suspending and withdrawing the planned increase in Emission based Parking Charges.

And a review of strategic objectives by:

- Ensuring that the financial strategy is explicit about how it supports strategic priorities vs balancing the council's budget to ensure that resources are in the right place to exploit the opportunities, and meet needs;
- Developing a clear narrative that describes strategic vision to create clarity for planning across the departments;
- Constantly reviewing risk appetite to ensure opportunities that can deliver a transformative council with a wider range of benefits are not missed."

BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2021

AMENDMENT – AGENDA ITEM 4

Amendment 1: London Living Wage

That after Recommendation 1F), new Recommendation 1G) be added:

1G) Welcoming the provision in the MTFs for increased contract costs/LLW for contracts due to be relet 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.

Amendment 2: Helping to address the climate emergency

That after Recommendation 1F), new Recommendations 1G) and 1H) be added:

1G) To report separately the additional parking revenue raised by the new charges in ENV202104, and ensure a portion of it is used to fund the appointment of an officer (at an estimated cost of £58,000) responsible for securing external funding to ensure actions within the Council's Climate delivery plan are taken forward.

1H) To request Cabinet better align the new charges in ENV202104 with their stated aims to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality, by:

- considering the implementation of a low mileage/low use discount or rebate, on the basis that it is the driving of vehicles that reduces air quality and increases carbon emissions. This would encourage less driving, and would particularly mitigate the impact of higher parking costs for those on low/fixed incomes who can't afford to switch to newer and more environmentally friendly vehicles; and
- reconsidering the policy in its application to visitors e-permits and scratch cards, as the 'mechanism' envisaged to reduce the use of higher polluting vehicles (charging a resident based on the vehicle their visitor arrives in) seems ineffective and potentially discriminates against those groups who are likely to need a greater number of visits from care workers and ancillary, often privately engaged, staff.

Amendment 3: Free breakfast club scheme

That after Recommendation 1A, new Recommendations 1B and 1C be added and the following Recommendations be renumbered accordingly

1B) Council recognises the generosity of local residents and businesses who donated time and money to help support Merton's response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Council agrees to establish in 2022/2023 a part-borough pilot scheme to pay for those primary school children eligible for pupil premium, and those children

identified by schools as vulnerable, to attend breakfast clubs for free in term time, to better understand issues around take-up and implementation of a scheme across the borough, funded from the Balancing the Budget Reserve up to £100K and voluntary donations sought from the residents and businesses.

1C) To use the pilot scheme to investigate whether the “free breakfast club” proposal, or some variation of it, would be sustainable going forward. If necessary, such scheme could be managed through a new charity to be registered with the Charity Commission.

Amendment 4: Caring for our communities

That after Recommendation 1F), new Recommendation 1G) be added:

1G) Notes with concern the following new savings:

- 2021-22 CSF02 Rationalisation of children’s centres;
- CH100 Adult Social Care Direct Provision (review of in-house day care provision);
- CH101 Adult Social Care Direct Provision (review of in-house LD residential provision); and
- CH102 Dementia Hub re-commissioning;

And highlights that these proposals require not only the complete re-modelling of vital services but the desire to achieve significant savings by 2022-23. As such, requires implementation plans be considered and agreed by the relevant Scrutiny Panel prior to implementation.

Amendment 5: Supporting our future

That after Recommendation 1F), new Recommendations 1G) and 1H) be added:

1G) To bring a focus on young people, their health and opportunities, during the recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic, to agree to fund, within existing budgets or managed within existing contracts, the following activities within 2021/22:

- a review into whether dedicated Merton-based sexual health and mental health services for vulnerable young people escaping sexual exploitation could and should be introduced;
- a review into the operation and effectiveness of private providers of alternative education places, also known as pupil referral units;
- a review of Merton’s use of the apprenticeships, to ensure the best routes for Merton’s young adults to enter the job market, support local businesses to grow, and to stop the practice of LB Merton returning unused/expired apprenticeship levy (which covers non salary costs) monies to HM Treasury; and
- complete the work necessary to establish a compelling evidence base to help meet the statutory requirements for the introduction of a Selective Licensing scheme to better support private sector renters.