

Merton Council

Council

26 February 2025

Supplementary Agenda

8 Amendments

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Amendments to Item 4 – Budget 2025/26 and MTFS 2025-29

- Liberal Democrat Amendments (3)
- Conservative Amendment (1)

Amendment to Item 7 – Changes to the Constitution

- Cross-Party Amendment (1)

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Budget Amendments 2025 – Liberal Democrat Group

Amendment	Cost	Funded by
Amendment 1: Working to build sustainable communities		
That after Recommendation A, new Recommendations AA-AD would be added:		
AA) Council requests that Cabinet consider updating the Capital Programme 2025-2029 to bring forward the expenditure of £4m on Morden regeneration from 28/29 to 26/27 and accelerate future spending accordingly, subject to a work plan.	Nil additional capital but with potential related revenue costs of bringing forward capital spend	TBD subject to work plan and funded from the “For use in future year’s budget” reserve
AB) Noting the budget deficits caused by the high cost of providing temporary accommodation to those entitled to receive it, as adjusted by commissioning a feasibility study to identify sites on which 100 housing units could be constructed (perhaps using modular construction) to improve the quality, availability, and proximity of temporary accommodation, and to reduce future expenditure on temporary accommodation.	£100K	Funded by up to £100k on a one-off basis from the “For use in future year’s budget” reserve or another appropriate reserve.
AC) Noting that some residents endure substandard accommodation, requests Cabinet to consider ways in which assets that would be beneficial to the Council could be purchased from Registered Providers on the basis that the funds would be used by Registered Providers for necessary maintenance, subject to business cases and funding.	Nil at this stage (subject to business cases)	N/A
AD) Recalling the successful provision of a new library at Colliers Wood at minimal cost to the Council, requests that Cabinet considers adjusting the Capital Programme 2025-2029 after investigating partnerships with developers to build flats above a new West Barnes Library and to replace	Nil at this stage (subject to business cases)	N/A

Morden Assembly Hall with a modern structure creating new community spaces, subject to a business case and funding.		
Amendment 2: Improving air quality, public transport and helping to address the climate emergency		
That after Recommendation A, new Recommendations AA-AD would be added:		
AA) As adjusted by commissioning feasibility studies on the improvement of transport links to the east of the borough, in recognition that growth and opportunity is currently limited by poor public transport connectivity. This may include investigations relating to Very Light Rail and a new railway station on the Thameslink route to benefit the residents of Colliers Wood and the staff at, visitors to, and patients of St George's hospital.	£100k	Funded by up to £100k on a one-off basis from the "For use in future year's budget" reserve or another appropriate reserve.
AB) As adjusted by restoring the Street Trees budget to £60k for the year 25/26 to support increased tree planting.	£28K	Funded by up to £28k on a one-off basis from the "For use in future year's budget" reserve or another appropriate reserve.
AC) As adjusted by implementing the Air Quality Action Plan with funded measures, noting the recommendation of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on 27.01.25 to ask Cabinet to fund this.	£100K	Noting officers' comments that the decision could possibly attract external funding, to fund from existing budgets so far as necessary, or from an appropriate reserve.
AD) As adjusted by reviewing the feasibility of accelerating the road safety programme to address road	Nil at this stage	n/a

safety in high priority locations across the borough, subject to funding		
AE) Council requests that Cabinet considers investigating updating the Capital Programme 2025-2029 to include an upgrade of The Wandle trail to provide a safe, accessible off-road walking route throughout the Merton part of its length as recommended by the Project Centre feasibility study, subject to funding	Nil at this stage	n/a
Amendment 3: Improving health, social care and the cost of living emergency		
That after Recommendation A, new Recommendations AA-AF would be added:		
AA) Given the shortage of social workers, as adjusted by delaying saving 2025-26 CLLF S05 retaining social workers in schools for one year only, in recognition of the important service this provides and until we fully understand the outlook for DSG and National Insurance and other relevant matters.	£357k	Funded by up to £357k on a one-off basis from the "For use in future year's budget" reserve or another appropriate reserve and requesting Cabinet consider continuing funding across the MTFS
AB) As adjusted by reversing the 2024 pavement licence charges increases to bring pavement licenses back down to £100/business for a new application or renewal (the same level as the original statutory cap), to support small businesses and a thriving high street. This would reverse the 2024 increase to £500/business for a new application, and £350/business for a renewal	£15K	This is to be funded by up to £15k on a one-off basis from the "For use in future year's budget" reserve or another appropriate reserve, with a request to examine ways to fund this element in future years
AC) As adjusted by deleting saving 2025-26 ECPC S02 to allow for greater investment in street lighting across the borough and requesting that Cabinet	£50K	This is to be funded by up to £50k on a one-off basis from the "For use in future year's budget" reserve or another

<p>considers using the funding to investigate ways to improve lighting.</p>		<p>appropriate reserve, with a request to Cabinet to consider examining ways to fund this element in future years</p>
<p>AD) As adjusted by updating the Capital Programme 2025-2029 fund new adventure playground equipment for children 10+years in areas across the borough.</p>	<p>£250k (split across 4 years)</p>	<p>This is to be on a one-off basis from the “For use in future year’s budget” reserve or another appropriate reserve, with a request to examine ways to fund this element in future years</p>
<p>AE) Council requests that Cabinet considers establishing a pilot “baby box” scheme (similar to that established in Wandsworth) to support families with babies under 1 years old and living in Merton temporary accommodation – by providing essential items to ensure babies’ healthy development in their first year.</p>	<p>£25k</p>	<p>This is to be funded by up to £25k on a one-off basis from the “For use in future year’s budget” reserve or another appropriate reserve, with a request to examine ways to fund this element in future years</p>
<p>AF) Council requests that Cabinet considers establishing a pilot for a more generous Council Tax Support Scheme in 2026-27, for example giving £100 to each Housing Benefit claimant above state retirement age, as a contribution towards their winter heating costs.</p>	<p>£125k preparation costs. £250K to run a pilot scheme in 2026-27</p>	<p>Noting this pilot scheme is to be implemented in 2026-27, if able to be brought in earlier/to fund preparation of the scheme, this is to be funded by up to £125k on a one-off basis from the “For use in future year’s budget” reserve or another appropriate reserve as well as the £250k cost of the pilot, with a request to examine ways to fund</p>

		this element in future years.
Totals:	Revenue £962.5K in 2025/26. £437.5k in future years	

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CONSERVATIVE BUDGET AMENDMENT 26TH FEBRUARY 2025

Amend recommendation E by adding the following wording: “subject to the following amendment:

Use £1,000,000 from the “For use in future years’ budgets” to:

Provide a 1% Council Tax rebate to all Band A-E Council Taxpayers in LB Merton.

After Recommendation E to add:

Recommendation F:

To request Cabinet to prepare future budgets on the basis of the following principles:

1. To prioritise and ensure the successful management of regeneration opportunities and projects in Morden, Mitcham and Wimbledon, for town centres, green spaces and housing.
2. To invest in low carbon community infrastructure, active and sustainable travel, and new technology-based solutions to combat the climate emergency and the pollution crisis in Merton, such as green walls and city trees.
3. To improve the lives of children in Merton by partnering with business to improve local education and youth clubs, as well as enhancing children’s mental health and active sport and fitness programmes.
4. Oppose the introduction of any pay per mile scheme into Merton.
5. Oppose Mayor Khan’s decision to close Wimbledon Police Station and campaign to keep all Police Stations in Merton open as well as establishing a new police base in Morden.
6. Oppose the Labour government’s delay in providing funding to improve St Helier Hospital and continue to support dementia day-care centre provision, including the Eastway Centre and across the borough.
7. Develop a future Council Tax Support Scheme based around the premise that all who receive council services should contribute towards the cost.
8. Keep under review the conditions in Morden and Wimbledon that would allow the expansion of the Article 4 Direction to prevent the spread of HMOs should the evidence base change.

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.”

Cross party amendment to Agenda item 7 - Changes to the Constitution

To amend Recommendation A to read:

That Council approve the amendments to the Constitution as detailed in Appendix A and summarised at para 4.2 below, save that the following additional amendment should be made so that Article 6.2 (f) in Part 2 of the Constitution reads as follows:

“Exercise the right to call-in for reconsideration of decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive/Cabinet and officers in the case of key and non key executive decisions which are likely to be significant in terms of their effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards or electoral divisions in Merton”. This is because Council believes the scope of call-in should only be significantly changed with cross-party consensus.

Cllr Anthony Fairclough

Cllr Edward Foley

Cllr Nick McLean

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