

Merton Council

Council

8 July 2015

Supplementary agenda

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ITEM 6 COUNCILLORS' ORDINARY PRIORITY QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND THE RESPONSES

1) From Councillor Peter McCabe to the Leader of the Council

Given the Leader's commitment to retaining services at St Helier Hospital, does he welcome the appointment of a new Chair of the CCG.

Reply

Having publicly called for the previous CCG Chair to stand down due to his support for the downgrading of St Helier Hospital, I welcome the appointment of a new chair. I have already met with Dr Murray and have made clear our continued opposition to any closure or downgrading of our local hospital. He is fully aware of the strength of feeling from local people and the council on this issue and I look forward to an approach where the health needs of local people are prioritised.

2) From Councillor Daniel Holden to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration:

What action is the council taking to alleviate the taxi situation at Wimbledon station?

Reply

There have been reported problems with Taxis queuing at Wimbledon Station (Orinoco Lane) and spilling out onto Alexandra Road, occasionally blocking the bus lane.

One of the contributing factors is that the number of taxi rank licences issued by TFL exceeds the capacity of the Orinoco Lane queue. There is often a high turnover at the rank, but occasionally bottlenecks happen.

The Council has worked with Southwest Trains and Network Rail and secured an agreement that taxis could, at peak times, also queue in the network rail yard at the north end of Orinoco Lane. However, in the past 3 weeks, the yard was closed for resurfacing and maintenance works by Network Rail. This brought the queuing problems back, however the yard is now operational again for taxis.

The Council offered a solution of providing new taxi rank facilities on Queens Road, but this was un-popular with taxi drivers who prefer the station forecourt rank.

Wimbledon Station also has a new manager who we've been liaising with to monitor the situation. We shall continue to do this and take appropriate action where we can to improve the situation.

3) From Councillor Sally Kenny to the Cabinet Member for Finance

Could he update us on progress to date on implementing some of savings agreed at the council's budget meeting in March?

Reply

Initial estimates of progress in delivering savings were made in the first financial monitoring report of the year which went to the cabinet meeting of 29th of July. This was based on initial data. A more comprehensive update will be put to the Financial monitoring task group of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on the 22nd July.

4) From Councillor Suzanne Grocott to the Cabinet Member for Finance:

What steps will need to be taken in respect of HR systems to "de-couple" Merton from Sutton?

Reply

We are working closely with the London Borough of Sutton to understand the detailed contractual and staff implications of the "de-coupling". From a staff perspective we will need to ensure that we comply with TUPE regulations and from the contractual side we are working to understand which contracts can be continued with post the de-coupling and which will need to be retendered, novated or varied in some way. The central IT system within the HR service is ITrent and this is a contract signed individually by Merton; we are currently investigating all potential options for how to provide HR and payroll systems to the council.

Alongside this work we are working closely with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and Wandsworth Borough Council to pursue the potential development of a new shared HR service between the three boroughs. Assuming this goes ahead we will be working with staff to design and implement this model.

We have appointed a project manager to lead this work and are working to ensure continuity of service and at the minimum of disruption whilst also delivering an improved HR service for the borough within the same cost envelope as set out in the MTF5.

5) From Councillor Agatha Akyigina to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

There have been a number of changes to care proceedings and adoption, could she outline how Merton has responded to these changes?

Reply

Taking a child into care is obviously done in exceptional circumstances and when we have worked with the family and exhausted all the alternatives. Once a child enters care we absolutely want to achieve permanency for them with pace. It is right therefore that in recent years, both nationally and locally, higher expectations have

been set to speed up care proceedings and to achieve permanency sooner. An ambitious target of reducing care proceedings from 72 weeks in 2011/12 to a nationally set target of 26 weeks has been set and councils have been challenged to increase the number of adoptions whilst reducing timescales for completion of the adoption process.

These higher expectations have challenged not only children's social care but the courts and we have been working in partnership with all the relevant agencies to streamline processes. Courts now expect assessments on parents and the wider family to be carried out much more speedily and are less inclined to commission "external experts" in addition to the social work assessment. This means we have had to work even harder to ensure our social work assessments are comprehensive and, in relation to care proceedings, that parental assessments have been robust and purposeful. This has meant extra training and development for our lawyers and social workers as well as significant streamlining of processes, careful planning and robust management oversight of both care and permanency proceedings.

6) From Councillor John Sargeant to the Leader of the Council:

Following announcements in the press that a joint committee has been formed, comprising the leaders of five London boroughs and with the Leader of Merton Council as its Chairman, could he tell members of the council what commitments have been made on behalf of Merton, including financial commitments and our ability to remove Merton from the group at any time in the future if the group decides on any course of action which Merton would not support?

Reply

This Council like our neighbouring boroughs in the South West of London believes in sustainable growth and in driving forward our ambition. Collectively we are stronger and for this reason we have formed a Joint Committee to clarify and deliver our shared objectives. No additional resources outside of those agreed in existing budgets are required. I believe that this is an investment in the economic prosperity of our borough and we are fully committed.

The joint committee deals with matters of common agreement. As Merton chairs the Group, it is highly unlikely that the objectives of the joint committee would not align with our own.

7) From Councillor Linda Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Education:

I was recently reviewing a copy of the Capita Symonds report on potential school sites. On first glance at the cover I thought we were just looking at a site for a single sex boys' school. I counted 12 boys on the cover and one blurred girl. Visual image is very important in matters of promoting equality of the sexes. What message to girls is the administration trying to project with this cover?

Reply

This report was undertaken by an independent consultant and is not a council document. It was initially produced for council officers and was never intended to be a public document. Following an external request for the report, it was released in the spirit of openness and transparency. Colleagues should be reassured that officers are extremely mindful of the importance of imagery and ensure that council publications appropriately reflect the diversity of Merton's population.

8) From Councillor Tobin Byers to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Waste

Could she update me on how many enforcement notices we have issued to people who litter our streets?

Reply

Between 2 June 2014 and 1 July 2015, the council has issued a total of 7176 enforcement notices with respect to litter and waste offences.

9) From Councillor Michael Bull to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration:

Can the Cabinet Member please confirm what the increase in air pollution in Merton will be as a result of the proposed Viridor incinerator on Beddington Lane?

Reply

The Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) in Beddington Lane was considered very carefully as part of Sutton Councils planning regime. As part of the planning process there were some very detailed scientific reports submitted surrounding the potential impact upon air quality and health, these included our borough. These reports and submissions were considered very carefully and were also challenged at a number of stages as part of this process.

It is generally accepted that emissions from the chimney stacks, because of controls and filtration, would have a minimal detrimental impact upon air quality. There were concerns surrounding the number and impact of HGV movements during the construction phase which although unavoidable, can be controlled by good construction logistics planning.

Merton will continue in its commitment to monitor and manage air quality within the borough

10) From Councillor Marsie Skeete to the Cabinet Member for Education

Could the Cabinet Member update me on our primary school expansions?

Reply

The primary school expansions are running very well, with all the schemes therefore running to the critical programme timescales and to the allocated budget.

Poplar and St. Mary's RC were recently successfully completed, and Hillcross is on track to be completed during the summer holidays. Pelham is also on track for the building to be completed during the summer holidays with the external works following in the early autumn. The adaptation to the former Jamia school building has now been completed for the benefit of Singlegate Primary School and by re-tendering we have contracted the final extension phase to budget. Lastly, Dundonald Primary School is progressing well but is not due for completion until next summer. However, the school is providing for the extra reception year pupils this September.

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ITEM 7 COUNCILLORS' STRATEGIC THEME (SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES WITH A FOCUS ON LEISURE AND SPORT) QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND THE RESPONSES

1) From Councillor Fidelis Gadzama to the Leader of the Council

As a former football referee could he update me on how the council is promoting sporting activities for our young people over the summer months?

Reply

We are delivering the annual children's holiday programme Merton Active Plus including football camp, badminton, horse riding, tennis, multisports, etc. A range of activities for all. We are delivering a 3 year externally funded programme – Sports Blast in the east of the borough targeting 14-25 year olds and family activities – this is free to all who access it and is delivered with a range of partners. Tennis Blast took place just last weekend with two days of free tennis coaching at Wimbledon Park. The watersports and outdoor education centre offers a range of activities for all. The strategic themed report gives much greater detail and I would encourage you to look at the leisure and culture pages on the council's website for regular updates of all that is available and also read the recently published My Merton

2) From Councillor David Simpson to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture:

Given the importance of sport and leisure for maintaining a healthy lifestyle, can the Cabinet Member explain why the transfer of responsibility for Merton's parks and open spaces to a third party organisation means that some of the borough's much valued facilities, such as bowling greens, are now under threat?

Reply

I like bowls. It's an intergenerational sport that demands the brain more than it does the body, and as such it can be practised from early youth through to extreme old age. It is expensive to maintain, however, and in our busy capital it has lost popularity for reasons beyond politicians' control. Both Council and private clubs throughout the capital are reviewing whether, and how, they can keep their greens open.

Despite two years of the Council actively promoting bowls in the borough in 2013 and 2014, club membership in Merton has continued to decline overall. It is not cost-effective for Merton Council to be managing 6 separate bowling greens that support low numbers of bowlers when there is playing capacity at each and every club. Such threats pre-dated and are unrelated to the current service re-procurement exercise and discussions with the bowling clubs in relation to the future of their sport have been underway for more than 2.5 years. I have been chairing regular negotiating meetings with the clubs for the past 2.5 years – from long before the current service re-procurement exercise began – and our relationship is realistic and open.

The premise of the question is therefore incorrect. Proposals to out-source the parks and open spaces management are part and parcel of the budget savings exercise in Greenspaces, and experience elsewhere has demonstrated that external contractors can often deliver high quality services at a lesser cost overall through economies of scale : but outsourcing management does not predicate which sports we, as a Council, should or should not support. I want this Council to carry on supporting bowls as practically as it can for as long as it can.

3) From Councillor Stan Anderson to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Could the Cabinet Member update us on progress in relation to replacing Morden Pool?

Reply

The project management company and lawyers have been appointed and the procurement of the design and technical team is imminent. Site surveys and investigations have been undertaken and some ecological surveys are underway. The project plan is still progressing well with a planning application being targeted for the end of this year with construction being on-site this time next year and looking to be in a position to have the doors open for 1st January 2018.

4) From Councillor Janice Howard to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration:

Can the Cabinet Member update me on progress with regard to the Wandle Valley Regional Park?

Reply

The Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust Board which oversees the work and development of the Regional Park, continues to meet on a regular basis, the most recent meeting of the Board of Trustees occurring on the 3rd June 2015.

Progress continues on a number of fronts including the Regional Park's governance arrangements, its funding and in the investment and development of the physical assets of, access to, and awareness of the Wandle Valley.

A number of investment projects are currently underway or have recently been completed within the river corridor, including within Merton borough. These include the Big Green Fund project, valued at over £1 million, which has delivered a number of improvements, principally access improvements to the riverside environment on the Merton-Sutton border in the Watermeads and Poulter Park area, completed in late May.

A number of funding bids have recently been submitted or are currently in the pipeline for the Wandle Valley, including a bid to Sport England for a health initiative aimed at increasing participation by those not currently actively engaged in sport or physical activity. This project is valued at £240,000 overall with match funding already secured from partners.

Other current work priorities at the present time include:

- Additional development of the WVRP website
- Installation of WVRP branding elements in Wandle Park
- New Regional Park "Gateways" in the Colliers Wood area and elsewhere within the river corridor
- Development of a new business plan & strategy document

5) From Councillor Laxmi Attawar to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Could he update us on plans to replace Colliers Wood library?

Reply

Donald Hope Library is scheduled to close for redevelopment on 28 July 2015. In a new chapter for the much-loved library, the current 1970s building on High Street, Colliers Wood, will be replaced with a high quality building constructed from Portland stone, reflecting the stone used for the historically significant Charles Holden Colliers Wood tube station. The new library will open in two years' time and will be spread over three floors. Visitors are set to benefit from more space given over to books, a coffee shop, community meeting rooms, special activity zones and a larger children's area. This has all been enabled through a deal with a developer and provides both significant value for money and real potential for savings whilst ensuring the sustainability of services in the Colliers Wood area.

During the closure period a temporary library will be open in MertonVision at the Guardian Centre, Clarendon Road, Colliers Wood. The temporary facilities will be open from 30 July 2015 and library users will be able to enjoy all the facilities provided in Donald Hope Library but in a slightly reduced format. The temporary facilities will maintain the same opening hours currently available at Donald Hope, and will be run within existing budgets.

6) From Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture:

Please can the Cabinet Member provide the latest figures on the uptake of competitive sport among young people in Merton following the success of the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics?

Reply

No national data is collected with regards to uptake of competitive sport for young people, however the Merton School Sports Partnership annual report notes a record

number of schools entering the Primary Borough Athletics (28 in total), the introduction of new events for young people with competitions in Handball and Ultimate Frisbee. Merton's Leisure & Culture Development Team provide wider borough representative competitive opportunities in the London Mini Marathon and the London Youth Games which includes the Mini Games, delivered by the Merton School Sports Partnership. Local sports clubs, schools and individuals work with the team to enter as many events as possible as far as resources allow. This year's finals concluded this last weekend, but as we went into the finals weekend Merton had already achieved:-

Judo	- Samuel Petgrav	- Gold
BMX (Junior Female)	- Mia Jacobs	- Gold
Kayak Slalom (Senior Female)	- Phoebe Walder	- Silver
BMX (Senior Male)	- Nico Satchell	- Bronze
Water Polo (U16 Female)	- Merton Team	- Silver
Water Polo (U19 Male)	- Merton Team	- Bronze
Schools:		
Best Football	- Bishop Gilpin	- Gold
Football Y5/6 Open	- Merton Team	- Gold
Mini Tennis	- Bishop Gilpin	- Gold
Badminton Y9 (Boys)	- Hall	- Silver

7) From Councillor Russell Makin to the Leader of the Council

With the football season now over, would he join me in hoping that it will be one of AFC's last seasons outside of Merton?

Reply

I know AFC Wimbledon and their supporters very much hope that the club can return to their roots and origin in the borough. We welcome and support this ambition. The planning application for the redevelopment of the Greyhound stadium into a football ground and housing is due to be considered by the Planning Committee after the summer break. We wish AFC Wimbledon well both on and off the pitch and look forward to them returning to the borough one day soon.

8) From Councillor Daniel Holden to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health:

Can the Cabinet Member tell me how many people the council has signed up for its latest healthy living initiative, "Merton on the Move", as part of Public Health England's 'Everybody active, every day' campaign?

Reply

Merton on The Move was launched at Mitcham Carnival on the 13th June and aims to build collective growth in physical activity levels in the borough through encouraging, supporting and raising awareness of active travel (walking, running and cycling) and the role that it can have in good physical and mental health.

Increasing physical activity levels, and reducing inactivity, is an important component of Merton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2018. Although only recently launched, Merton on The Move already

Has 81 users registered; 46 female and 35 male; 30 teams taking part including GP practices, MVSC, Age UK Merton, Merton CCG, Love Wimbledon and teams from Merton Council; and logged 1,078 activities by users, which equates to 3,200 miles of the way to the moon.

Future plans include engaging businesses through the Merton Chamber of Commerce, working with schools in Merton to support their staff and families to take part and perhaps councillors would join me in a team of elected members?

9) From Councillor Katy Neep to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Given that it's Wimbledon fortnight, could the Cabinet member outline how the council is working to increase participation in tennis?

Reply

We continue to work with both the All England Lawn Tennis Club and the Lawn Tennis Association to increase tennis participation in the borough. We have the Tennis Blast annual event in Wimbledon Park linked to The Championships – two free days of tennis coaching and activities with some of the professionals from The Championships dropping in to show off their skills. We have holiday programmes and an annual all-year round coaching programme for youngsters. The Wimbledon Junior tennis Initiative visits a school in Merton every week of term time working with pupils and teachers to develop tennis and selects some of the most talented to join their tennis development programmes. Sports Blast includes the development of Family Tennis at St Mark's School, where we have just refurbished and floodlit the courts with LED lighting.

A women's only tennis Tuesdays takes place in Wimbledon Park getting women back into sport through tennis. We also have a good number of Tennis Clubs in the borough and 'Tennis for Free' at Tamworth Recreation Ground, and Joseph Hood in Morden. Merton does have a range of tennis opportunities borough-wide.

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Committee: Council

Date: 8 July 2015

Agenda item: 13

Wards: All

Subject: The addition of Rediscover Mitcham to the Capital Programme in 2015/16 (*Correct Version*)

Lead officer: James McGinlay, Head of Sustainable Communities

Lead member: Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration

Contact officer: Zoe Church

Recommendations:

- A. That Council approve a new Capital Scheme “Rediscover Mitcham” totalling £507,290 funded by Section 106 contributions as detailed in Appendix A

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to approve a new capital scheme in excess of £0.5 million to the capital programme for “Rediscover Mitcham” the scheme is funded as detailed in Appendix A.
- 1.2. In accordance with the Authority’s Financial Regulations any addition of £500,000 or more to the Capital Programme for a new scheme must be authorised by decision of Council.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) permits Local Planning Authorities to enter into agreements with applicants for planning permission to regulate the use and development of land. This may involve the payment of a financial contribution for off-site works.
- 2.2. The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 require that a planning obligation must be Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- ii Directly related to the proposed development
 - iii Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development
- 2.3. It is Council procedure that any new capital scheme £500,000 or more must be approved by Council. This report includes one new scheme in excess of £500k and new Section 106 funding in excess of £500,000, these items both require Council approval.

Rediscover Mitcham

- 2.6. List the Section 106 funding available that can be appropriately combined under “Rediscover Mitcham” are shown in Appendix A. The Appendix also indicates when original cabinet approval was given to their use. These sums remain unspent and have now been reconfigured into one new scheme. This scheme is now in excess of £500k and requires Council approval for use of section 106 monies and for its addition to the capital programme.
- 2.7 Any alternative allocation of the monies would result in an overspend on the current programme and would be running the risk of expenditure failing to accord with the reasons for which the funding was secured in accordance with the Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. As set out in paragraphs 2.7

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. None for the purposes of this report

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. Will be added to the Capital Programme immediately

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Section 106 funds referred to in this report have been received by London Borough of Merton and are available to be spent in the manner agreed by Council, subject to any restrictions contained in the agreements.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. As stated within the body of the report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The planning application was considered in the light of the Human Rights Act. The Section 106 contribution was secured towards community benefits to mitigate the impact of the development granted planning permission. The proposed allocations would be in strict accordance with the terms of the Section 106 Agreement. As a consequence, equalities and community cohesion implications are taken into account.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There would be no crime and disorder implications associated with the allocation of the above contribution.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The proposed expenditure of the Section 106 monies is towards the general purposes specified in the respective Section 106 agreements and would enable effective schemes to be progressed. Therefore this proposal is considered sound from a risk management perspective. There are no health and safety implications.

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

Appendix A - Rediscover Mitcham Section 106 Funding 2015/16

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. Background papers held within the Resources Division of Corporate Services.

Appendix A

Rediscover Mitcham Section 106 Funding 2015/16

Bid approved 23rd May 2012

B639a	Fair Green (Originally £42,600)	32,372
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Approved bids as per cabinet report 24th Sept 2012

B657a	James Estate, Bond Rd (Smythe's Toys)	71,550
B657b	James Estate, Bond Rd (Smythe's Toys)	183,988
Total		<u>255,538</u>

Approved bids as per cabinet report 9th Dec 2013

B667a	Tooting & Mitcham Football Ground	5,000
B667b	Former Segas site, Western Rd	65,000
B667c	Former Segas site, Western Rd	36,000
B667d	Land Nw side of Batsworth Rd	7,000
B667e	Former Rowan School Site	15,000
B667f	Former Rowan School Site	45,688
B667g	Former Rowan School Site	45,688
Total		<u>219,375</u>

Total for Rediscover Mitcham		<u>507,285</u>
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