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COUNCIL

18 NOVEMBER 2015

(19.15 - 22.00)

PRESENT

The Mayor of Merton, Councillor David Chung
The Deputy Mayor of Merton, Councillor Pauline Cowper

Councillors: Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Tobin Byers, Charlie Chirico, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Stephen Crowe, Mary Curtin, David Dean, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, Ross Garrod, Suzanne Grocott, Jeff Hanna, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Maxi Martin, Peter McCabe, Oonagh Moulton, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, John Sargeant, Judy Saunders, David Simpson, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford, Linda Taylor, Imran Uddin, Gregory Udeh, Peter Walker, Jill West, Martin Whelton and David Williams

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

An apology was received by Councillor Dennis Pearce.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No pecuniary declarations were made.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 9 September 2015 were approved as a correct record.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Agenda Item 4)

The Mayor provided the Council with a brief update on his recent Mayoral duties including the success of 'Silver Sunday' afternoon tea event which 120 residents had attended, democracy week with the Borough's primary schools, and the Remembrance Services.

The Mayor also made a presentation of the London in Bloom - Silver and Bronze awards to the Cemetery's manager, as Borough's cemeteries had recently won the awards.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS (Agenda Item 5)

The responses to the written public questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of the questioners in turn to ask (if they wished) a supplementary question to the appropriate Cabinet Member.

A copy of the supplementary questions and the responses will be included within the 'Public questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

6 COUNCILLORS' ORDINARY PRIORITY QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS (Agenda Item 6)

The responses to the Members' ordinary priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of those Councillors in turn to ask (if they wished) a further supplementary question to the Cabinet Member.

A copy of the supplementary questions and the responses will be included within the 'Councillors' ordinary priority questions' to cabinet members published document.

7a STRATEGIC THEME: COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS (Agenda Item 7a)

The responses to the Members' strategic theme priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of those Councillors in turn to ask (if they wished) a further supplementary question to the Cabinet Member.

A copy of the supplementary questions and the responses will be included within the 'Strategic theme: Councillors' questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

7b STRATEGIC THEME: MAIN REPORT - SAFER AND STRONGER WITH A FOCUS ON POLICING. (Agenda Item 7b)

The report was moved by Councillor Edith Macauley and seconded by Councillor Stephen Alambritis.

Councillor David Simpson also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That the Strategic Theme report is agreed.

7c STRATEGIC THEME: MOTIONS (Agenda Item 7c)

The motion was moved by Councillor David Williams and seconded by Councillor Abdul Latif.

The Labour amendment, as set out in agenda item 24 was moved by Councillor Brenda Fraser and seconded by Councillor Imran Uddin.

The Labour amendment was then put to the vote and was carried – votes in favour 38, and votes against 20 with 1 abstention.

The substantive resolution was then agreed.

RESOLVED

This Council notes that Merton's current Community Cohesion Strategy 2012-2015 will shortly come to an end, although it remains fit for purpose under the new statutory PREVENT regime and there is no impediment to it continuing in place whilst a new strategy is developed. The timetable for renewing the Merton Community Cohesion Strategy has slipped due to reduced staff capacity and the need to focus existing capacity on the frontline of actually delivering the community cohesion strategy on the ground, as illustrated by the agenda/minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minorities in July and September 2015. Council acknowledges that it is important to ensure full consultation on the strategy so that we get the aspirations and priorities right and that a rushed strategy with inadequate consultation will not well serve the people of Merton.

The legal and statutory implications in the last report to the JCC remind the Council that under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 it has a duty in the exercise of its functions to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism' and that the strategy will promote inclusion and support local people to get involved in their local community and to continue to build good relations in the borough', which is what the existing strategy was designed to achieve and what the new strategy will build on.

The Council resolves to recommend to the Merton Partnership, which is made up of organisations including the police, the council, the NHS and voluntary sector organisations – as owners of the strategy – to inject a greater degree of urgency into the process of renewal where possible, bearing in mind the need to ensure full consultation and the significant reduction in the capacity of organisations such as the police to undertake partnership work in the light of cuts in their funding from central government, and:

- 1). Ensure that full consultation with all relevant partners and groups in the borough is undertaken prior to the implementation from February 2016.
- 2). Continue to encourage meaningful dialogue between the key stakeholders (i.e. Thematic Partnerships; Safer Stronger Group/Executive Board; JCC and Faith

and Belief Forum and the Executive Board itself) that includes and goes beyond the aspirations consulted on and agreed by the partnership outlined in the identified seven key priorities (ie improving engagement with minority and new communities, monitoring community tensions, continuing inter-faith dialogue, supporting and engaging with the voluntary sector, supporting employment and economic development opportunities, encouraging and supporting children, young people and families, and improving health outcomes)

- 3). Acknowledging that “community cohesion” is a broad concept and that rigid measurements of levels of cohesion are not always possible, continue to include a detailed action plan and to impose where appropriate and helpful a rigour with targets and expectation of outcomes that are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely)
- 4). Continue to support the promotion of the use of the English language by all established groups receiving public funding, bearing in mind the requirements of the Equality Act.

8 REPORT FROM COLLIERS WOOD COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 8)

Councillor Greg Udeh presented the report, which was received by the Council.

9 REPORT FROM MITCHAM COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 9)

Councillor Ian Munn presented the report, which was received by the Council.

10 REPORT FROM MORDEN COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 10)

Councillor Philip Jones presented the report, which was received by the Council.

11 REPORT FROM RAYNES PARK COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Michael Bull presented the report, which was received by the Council.

12 REPORT FROM WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 12)

Councillor James Holmes presented the report, which was received by the Council.

13 NOTICE OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE 1 (Agenda Item 13)

The motion was moved by Councillor Hamish Badenoch and seconded by Councillor Daniel Holden.

The Labour amendment, as set out in agenda item 25 was moved by Councillor Judy Saunders and seconded by Councillor Tobin Byers.

Councillor Ed Foley also spoke on the item.

The Labour amendment was then put to the vote and was carried – votes in favour 34, and votes against 24 with 1 abstention.

The substantive resolution was then agreed.

RESOLVED

Merton Council listens to residents and resolves to engage with their concerns in better ways than just Twitter #Mertonlistens

Council notes the significant investment Merton is making into listening and responding to our residents as part of the new Customer Contact Programme which is focused on offering our customers quick and easy access to information and services online, providing a more efficient and responsive service for residents.

Merton's website is being redesigned so it is much easier for residents to "report", "say", "pay" and "apply" for Merton's services. In addition, residents will be able to set up their own website "personal account" which will be personalised to their (or their households) interests, bringing together, into one place, all of their interactions with the council. As a result of this project, the council will:

- be able to keep residents informed of the progress being made with their enquiry
- have more time to spend with customers who need specialist, expert advice
- waste less time responding to complaints or repeat requests for services

Council notes that Merton also listens to residents via regular consultations including the Annual Residents Survey, strategic and budget consultations, traffic and parking consultations and consultations via area forums. The council also offers a dedicated contact centre for telephone enquiries and the LoveCleanStreets smart phone app to allow easier reporting of street scene issues.

Council further notes that local authorities have spent millions on social media since the start of the government's austerity programme. However social media networks, such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter, may not always be the most efficient or effective method of interacting with residents and not all councils would want to spend precious resources employing officers specifically to monitor and respond to social media. In a time of government cuts, councils such as Merton have endeavoured to focus spending on front line services, including refuse collection and social services, rather than on staff employed to monitor social media, and to invest in comprehensive online customer relationship management (CRM) solutions that can be used more effectively and efficiently to give a consistent service to residents without impacting on the frontline.

Council therefore agrees to continue to use Twitter where it is appropriate, but to direct residents to more effective and efficient methods which will ensure their issues are comprehensively addressed.

14 NOTICE OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE 2 (Agenda Item 14)

The motion was moved by Councillor Suzanne Grocott and seconded by Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender.

The Labour amendment, as set out in agenda item 26 was moved by Councillor Mark Allison and seconded by Councillor Katy Neep.

Councillor Peter Southgate also spoke on the item.

The Labour amendment was then put to the vote and was carried – votes in favour 34, and votes against 20 with 5 abstentions.

The substantive resolution was then agreed.

RESOLVED

Noting the current budget process is already well under way with savings targets for the Medium Term Financial Strategy from 2016/17 to 2019/20 already scrutinised by each of the scrutiny panels in October and November this year with no changes agreed, this Council resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to review, in line with its usual practice of scrutinising all aspects of the budget proposals including deliverability and risk, the weightings used to determine departmental savings targets and their appropriateness in relation to the previously approved “July principles” which were voted for by all parties on the council with the exception of the Conservative Group - bearing in mind that the weightings have been agreed by Council in each of the past five years and that, unless the council tax is increased, reductions to savings in one area will mean more cuts are needed in other areas, particularly environmental services - in detail at a date after its next meeting on 24 November 2015, and thereafter as is usual on an annual basis as part of the usual scrutiny process regardless of which administration is in office.

15 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME (Agenda Item 15)

The report was moved by Councillor Mark Allison and seconded by Councillor Stephen Alambritis.

Councillor Suzanne Grocott also spoke on this item.

A roll-call was called for the vote on the substantive motion

Voting in Favour: Councillors: Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Tobin Byers, Caroline Cooper- Marbiah,

Pauline Cowper, Mary Curtin, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, Ross Garrod, Jeff Hanna, Joan Henry, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Maxi Martin, Peter McCabe, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Judy Saunders, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford, Imran Uddin, Gregory Patrick Udeh, Peter Walker, and Martin Whelton. (37)

Voting Against: Councillors: Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Charlie Chirico, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Suzanne Grocott, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Oonagh Moulton, David Simpson, Linda Taylor, Jill West, and David Williams. (20)

Not Voting: Councillors: David Chung and John Sargeant. (2)

RESOLVED

That Council agrees

1. to the uprating changes for the 2016/17 council tax support scheme detailed in this report in order to maintain low council tax charges for those on lower incomes and other vulnerable residents.
2. the adoption of the new 2016/17 scheme

16 REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES (Agenda Item 16)

The report was moved by Councillor Mark Allison and seconded by Councillor Stephen Alambritis.

Councillor Janice Howard also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That Council agrees

1. to the designation of Christ Church as the polling place for polling district KB in Village Ward and polling district LA in Raynes Park Ward.
2. to make no change to the polling place for polling district SD in Cannon Hill Ward.

17 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT 2005. (Agenda Item 17)

The report was moved by Councillor Nick Draper and seconded by Councillor Stephen Alambritis.

Councillor David Simpson also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That the Council agrees to adopt the revised draft Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005, which had been endorsed by Members of the Licensing Committee on the 20 October 2015.

18 LICENSING POLICY 2016-2021 - (UNDER LICENSING ACT 2003) (Agenda Item 18)

The report was moved by Councillor Nick Draper and seconded by Councillor Stephen Alambritis.

Councillor David Simpson also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That the Council agrees to adopt the new draft Statement of Licensing Policy and a Cumulative Impact Zone (CIZ) for Mitcham Town Centre and the surrounding area, which had been endorsed by Members of the Licensing Committee on the 20 October 2015.

19 CHAS2013 LTD - APPROVAL OF SALARY RANGE FOR MANAGING DIRECTOR (Agenda Item 19)

The report was moved by Councillor Mark Allison and seconded by Councillor Stephen Alambritis.

Councillor Hamish Badenoch also spoke on this item.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and was carried – votes in favour 36, and votes against 21 with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED

That Council agrees to approve an appointment to the post of Managing Director of CHAS 2013 Ltd on a salary not exceeding £120,000 per annum.

20 THE USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY FOR A KEY DECISION - THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION SERVICES (HALL PLACE) (Agenda Item 20)

The report was moved by Councillor Stephen Alambritis and seconded by Councillor Mark Allison.

RESOLVED

That the Council notes the taking of an urgent key decision and the waiving of the Call-in procedure.

21 CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND RELATED MATTERS (Agenda Item 21)

The report was moved by Councillor Stephen Alambritis and seconded by Councillor Mark Allison.

RESOLVED

That Council notes the changes to the membership of Committees that were approved under delegated powers since the last meeting of the Council.

22 PETITIONS (Agenda Item 22)

The report was moved by Councillor Stephen Alambritis and seconded by Councillor Mark Allison.

RESOLVED

That Council

1. notes the update on the petition received at the last meeting,
2. accepts receipt of the following five petitions presented by:
 - Councillor David Dean, relating to 'improving the local shops at Martin Way parade
 - Councillor Daniel Holden relating to 'the parking restriction in Garth Close'
 - Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender relating to 'an increasing K5 bus service'
 - Councillor Oonagh Moulton relating to 'Safer crossings on Durnsford Road'
 - Councillor John Sargeant relating to 'a requesting for a CPZ for Cannon Hill Lane.'

23 BUSINESS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda Item 23)

That the Strategic Theme for the next ordinary meeting of the Council to be held on 3 February 2016 shall be Sustainable Communities.

