

Merton Council

Council Budget Meeting

Membership

The Mayor: Councillor David Chung

The Deputy Mayor: 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 MBE, Russell Makin, Maxi Martin, Peter McCabe, Oonagh Moulton, Ian Munn BSc, MRTPI(Rtd), Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, John Sargeant, Judy Saunders, David Simpson CBE, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford, Linda Taylor OBE, Imran Uddin, Gregory Patrick Udeh, Peter Walker, Jill West, Martin Whelton and David Williams

Date: Wednesday 2 March 2016

Time: 7.15 pm

Venue: Council chamber - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

This is a public meeting and attendance by the public is encouraged and welcomed. For more information about the agenda please contact

democratic.services@merton.gov.uk or telephone [020 8545 3361](tel:02085453361).

All Press contacts: press@merton.gov.uk, 020 8545 3181

Council Budget Meeting

2 March 2016

1	Apologies for absence	
2	Declarations of interest	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 10
4	Business Plan 2016-20	To Follow

Part 4A, Paragraph 3.3 of the Constitution states that for the Budget

Council meeting shall include –

- receive a presentation of the Budget/ Council Tax report from the relevant officers*
- officers to respond to questions from members via the Ma*
- to receive remarks from the Cabinet on the report*
- Council to debate the report and take any motions or Amendments*

Please note – All decisions relating to either the substantive budget motion/proposal or any amendments to it, will have to be taken via a recorded vote (Roll Call).

Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that matter and must not participate in any vote on that matter. If members consider they should not participate because of a non-pecuniary interest which may give rise to a perception of bias, they should declare this, withdraw and not participate in consideration of the item. For further advice please speak with the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance.

Agenda Item 3

All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the committee/panel. To find out the date of the next meeting please check the calendar of events at your local library or online at www.merton.gov.uk/committee.

COUNCIL

3 FEBRUARY 2016

(7.15 pm - 10.09 pm)

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, Peter McCabe, Oonagh Moulton, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, 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 from Councillor Maxi Martin.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

Councillor Ian Munn requested that in the interest of openness and transparency that it be recorded that he is the secretary of Mitcham Bowls Club. This relates to Item 7a, a Strategic Theme: Councillors' question to Cabinet Member, a question relating to bowling greens, generally and Merton Bowls Club.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2015 were agreed 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 an update on his recent Mayoral duties and also made a presentation of Community Clean Britain Award, which Fieldgate Lane had recently won.

The Leader announced that the Mayor–elect for the municipal year of 2016-2017 would be Councillor Brenda Fraser.

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 - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES (Agenda Item 7b)

The report was moved by Councillor Andrew Judge and seconded by Councillor Nick Draper.

Councillor Daniel Holden also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That the Strategic Theme report is agreed.

7c STRATEGIC THEME: CONSERVATIVE MOTION 1 (Agenda Item 7c)

Councillor Daniel Holden addressed the Council and formally withdrew the proposed Strategic Theme Motion - Conservative Motion 1.

7d STRATEGIC THEME: CROSS PARTY MOTION (Agenda Item 7d)

The motion was moved by Councillor Andrew Judge and seconded by Councillor Oonagh Moulton.

An amendment, as set out in agenda item 20 was moved by Councillor Daniel Holden and seconded by Councillor Abdul Latif.

Councillor John Sargeant also spoke on this item.

The amendment was then put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

The substantive resolution was then agreed.

RESOLVED

Merton Council supports the strategic case for Crossrail 2 and recognises the benefits it would provide to London and could bring to Merton. However, our support for Crossrail2 is not at any cost and the Council has strong reservations about the proposals, which have recently been subject to consultation and have caused considerable concern and anxiety among many residents and businesses in the areas affected.

In particular we are concerned about the impact of those proposals on our town centres and particularly Wimbledon, which is now in a uniquely vulnerable position. These proposals would bring about an unacceptable level of upheaval and disruption to our residents and our business community for an extended period of up to ten years: to a greater extent than we are aware has occurred in any other town centre in recent history.

Residents are understandably particularly concerned about a reduced quality of life as a result of the disruption, noise and increased traffic congestion that such a lengthy redevelopment would bring as well as the apprehension of damaging impacts on residential properties and gardens. This Council also regrets the lack of information provided by Crossrail 2 to residents in Merton about its current proposals – including how compensation for blight will be considered – and in publicising proposals in the recent consultation.

Wimbledon is a very successful business centre with a low vacancy rate and a current unmet demand for modern office accommodation. We believe that it is vital that the vibrancy and quality of Wimbledon town centre is maintained before, during

and after Crossrail2 works. We note that more than 3000 jobs are at stake and considerable amounts of commercial floor space.

Wimbledon SW19 is a globally recognised brand that has enormous potential for the future. This Council believes that Crossrail2 must fulfil that potential and not damage it. We understand that the consultation scheme is an early concept design. However, if the current proposals are not changed, we would be forced to reconsider our support for the project.

This Council believes that the options for delivering Crossrail2 through the Borough should be reassessed fundamentally with a view to minimising disruption to residents and ensuring that businesses continue to prosper in a high quality town centre that retains the heritage and essential qualities and character of Wimbledon that we all cherish.

We are also concerned at the potential negative impacts on Raynes Park and Motspur Park. Changes to these stations will be required and there need to be viable alternatives to the level crossings. We note that "diversions" as quoted as one option put forward seems to mean "close the level crossing and expect all vehicles to find alternative routes" which would lead to increased traffic congestion in the Raynes Park / West Barnes area. Closure of the level crossing at Motspur Park could result in many of the local businesses leaving.

This Council rejects the decimation of Wimbledon and potential damage to other affected town centres and wishes to see Crossrail 2 engaging with residents, businesses, councillors and other elected representatives in the areas affected at the earliest opportunity. We therefore invite Crossrail2 to join the Council, Love Wimbledon, landowners and our residents as soon as possible in a comprehensive master-planning process to create a framework for the future of Wimbledon based on the principles set out in this motion.

8 REPORT FROM RAYNES PARK COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 8)

Councillor Jill West presented the report, which was received by the Council.

9 REPORT FROM WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 9)

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

10 NOTICE OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE 1 (WEBCASTING) (Agenda Item 10)

The motion was moved by Councillor Hamish Badenoch and seconded by Councillor Adam Bush.

The Labour amendment, as set out in agenda item 21 was moved by Councillor Abigail Jones and seconded by Councillor Stan Anderson.

Councillor Edward Foley also spoke on this 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

This Council believes that webcasting, amongst the council's varied ways of communicating with residents, has had a part to play in ensuring greater openness and transparency of decision making in Merton; enhancing democracy; and increasing accountability to the residents it is elected to serve, although viewing figures are relatively low, with the annual residents survey demonstrating that My Merton is the number one choice of residents to keep informed about the council.

Council notes that in 2014 the then Secretary of State Eric Pickles introduced a new law giving residents and the media the right to film, blog or tweet council meetings. In light of the significant cuts the government have made to local government budgets, spending money on unnecessarily filming and broadcasting meetings (at 80p a view and an average of 2,500 views a quarter, although the cost per individual viewer is likely to be significantly higher as some will be views by the same individual or repeat views of the same segment), to a much lower audience than that reached by My Merton (at 12p a copy and reaching 80,000 households every quarter), is not a good use of council taxpayers money.

This Council notes the decision taken as part of last year's Budget setting process to discontinue the webcasting service as from February 2016 and recognises that other models of delivery, such as sponsorship have been investigated and will continue to be kept under review, and notes that an in house service as happens in Wandsworth would cost at least as much as the current service.

Given that a proportion of the costs of the quarterly publications of many local authorities including My Merton are partly covered by advertising revenue, this Council requests Cabinet to keep under review and continue exploring alternative low cost ways of providing a fully sponsored webcasting service and ways of increasing advertising in My Merton where possible.

11 NOTICE OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE 2 (HEALTH CHAMPIONS) (Agenda Item 11)

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

The Labour amendment, as set out in agenda item 22 was moved by Councillor Sally Kenny and seconded by Councillor Joan Henry.

The Labour amendment was then put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

The substantive resolution was then agreed.

RESOLVED

This Council notes that, as part of Merton's Workplace Health programme, a network of volunteer Health Champions has been introduced to help their colleagues to lead healthy lifestyles by raising awareness of activities that are available to support healthy living. This is part of Merton's broader programme of developing Health Champions in the community which has been in operation since early 2014 and is run in partnership with Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC) and LiveWell Merton, training and supporting people who live, work or volunteer in the borough to volunteer their time motivating other residents to make realistic health changes to benefit their long term health.

Given that responsibility for Public Health has moved from the NHS to Merton Council, it is important that the local authority sets a strong example in promoting preventative health measures in areas of concern such as smoking, obesity, diabetes etc. and this Council congratulates all those staff members, Councillors, and volunteers, residents and GP practices in the community, who have so far signed up to become Health Champions.

This Council recognises that residents and local community leaders have an important role to play in taking forward the prevention agenda here in Merton, particularly given the ongoing demand for local health services.

This Council therefore congratulates those Councillors who are already Health Champions, notes that there will be training for Councillors who are interested in becoming Health Champions, and resolves to urge all councillors to help promote preventative solutions to the health issues facing local communities in Merton by attending this training where possible and becoming Health Champions and by encouraging other community leaders and interested residents across the borough to continue to do the same.

12 NOTICE OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE 3 (ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRECEPT) (Agenda Item 12)

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

The Labour amendment, as set out in agenda item 23 was moved by Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah and seconded by Councillor Tobin Byers.

Councillors Peter Southgate and Peter McCabe also spoke on this item

A roll-call was called for the vote on the Labour amendment 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, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, Ross Garrod, Jeff Hanna, Joan Henry, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, Judy Saunders, Marsie Skeete, Geraldine Stanford, Imran Uddin, Gregory Patrick Udeh, Peter Walker, and Martin Whelton. (34)

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, Edward Foley, Mary-Jane Jeanes, John Sargeant and Peter Southgate. (5)

The Labour amendment was carried – votes in favour 34, and votes against 20 with 5 abstention.

The substantive resolution was then agreed.

RESOLVED

This Council believes that a civilised and prosperous society should support its most vulnerable and elderly citizens and is therefore disappointed that since 2010 the government has failed to adequately fund social care.

Given the demographic pressures faced by the borough's adult social care services in light of the government's 40% reduction in local government funding since 2010 (source: Local Government Association) with further government cuts announced and the projected 9% increase in the older population of Merton between 2015 and 2020, this Council notes :

- * A £1.5billion expansion of the Better Care Fund to support better health and social care integration by 2020, although significantly more will be required to properly fund social care; and
- * local authorities responsible for social care can choose to levy a new social care precept of up to 2% on council taxpayers, provided the money raised is spent exclusively on adult social care, although this ring-fencing contrasts with the government's previous policy, which the Conservative Secretary of State boasted was to have "Significantly reduced the ring-fencing of local government grants, giving councils power and discretion to focus their resources on frontline services"; and

- * the administration's promise to freeze council tax, a regressive tax that disproportionately impacts residents on lower incomes; and
- * the opposition's pre-election promise of "A council tax reduction of 10% on the Merton element" which would lead to swingeing cuts in adult social care and across the council.

and welcomes the continued examination of these issues through Merton's Scrutiny process.

13 REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES (Agenda Item 13)

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

Councillor Janice Howard also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That the council agrees the designation of Elmwood Tennis Club as the polling place for polling district IB in Longthornton Ward and polling district JB in Pollards Hill Ward.

14 APPROVAL OF PAY POLICY STATEMENT AND RE-ADOPTION OF THE MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME (Agenda Item 14)

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

Councillor Suzanne Grocott also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That Council

1. approves publication of the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17.
2. reconfirms the Members' Allowances Scheme with no change for 2016/17, with effect from 1 April 2016

15 COUNCIL CALENDAR 2016/17 (Agenda Item 15)

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

Councillor David Simpson also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That Council approves the Calendar of meetings for 2016-17.

16 THE USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY FOR A KEY DECISION -
PROCUREMENT FOR INTEGRATED HEALTH IMPROVEMENT (Agenda
Item 16)

The report was moved by Councillor Stephen Alambritis and seconded by Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah.

Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

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

17 CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND RELATED MATTERS
(Agenda Item 17)

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

RESOLVED

That Council notes

- 1 the changes to the membership of Committees that were approved under delegated powers since the last meeting of the Council.
2. that the Executive Leader has made an amendment to his Cabinet and their respective portfolios.

18 PETITIONS (Agenda Item 18)

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 two petitions presented by:

- * Councillor David Dean, relating to on – ‘Rowan Road Traffic Consultation’
- * Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender relating to ‘Save Merton Bowls club’.

19 BUSINESS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
(Agenda Item 19)

That the Strategic Theme for the next ordinary meeting of the Council to be held on 6 April 2016 shall be Safer and Stronger with a focus on equalities.