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COUNCIL

6 APRIL 2016

(7.15 pm - 9.11 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, Gregory Udeh, Jill West, Martin Whelton and David Williams

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Maxi Martin and Imram Uddin.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No declarations of pecuniary interest were received.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2016 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 including commenting on the success of the Mayor's Annual Charity Ball which had been held on 2 April 2016, at the All England Lawn Tennis Club. He also made a presentation to the South London SEN Commissioning Programme, which had recently won the LGC Award 2016 in the Efficiency Category.

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 (Agenda Item 7b)

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

Councillor Charlie Chirico also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That the Strategic Theme report is agreed.

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

The Strategic Theme motion was moved by Councillor David Williams and seconded by Councillor David Simpson.

An amendment, as set out in agenda item 16 was moved by Councillor Mark Allison and seconded by Councillor Brenda Fraser.

Councillor Peter Southgate also spoke on this item.

The Labour amendment was then put to the vote and was carried – votes in favour 32, and votes against 24 with 1 abstention.

The substantive resolution as amended was then put to the vote and was carried – votes in favour 32, and votes against 24 with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED

This Council welcomes the decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to consider the funding formula share between departments of the Council and its endorsement of the principle underlying the budget process since 2011 of ensuring less cuts to services for vulnerable people.

Council continues to endorse the "July principles" that it introduced in 2011 on a cross-party basis (albeit they were not supported by the Conservative group), and notes that at the time of their introduction the council was facing significant cuts in revenue funding from the government. However, it was hoped that such cuts would be time limited as the then Chancellor, George Osborne had stated that his intention was to clear the country's deficit by 2015.

Council is very disappointed that the Chancellor failed to clear the deficit by 2015, meaning that large cuts to Merton's funding have continued long beyond what could have been anticipated, and recognises that this means the Council faces some very difficult decisions in future in order to deal with further government spending cuts. Council also notes that the Chancellor has been criticised by colleagues such as Iain Duncan Smith, who said the Government "is in danger of drifting in a direction that divides society rather than unites it. And that I think is unfair." Council recognises that, in order to combat this division locally it will need to continue to play a role in tackling that unfairness.

This Council resolves to instruct the Cabinet to continue to review its approach to its budget making in framing the 2017/18 Budget - and associated implications for the Medium Term Financial Strategy - continuing to maintain the principles of equality; in particular between age, gender, religion/belief, disability and race, as has been comprehensively undertaken as part of every budget setting exercise since 2010 using detailed equality assessments, and to continue to access all available funding streams to meet actual and perceived needs.

8 REPORT FROM MITCHAM COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 8)

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

9 REPORT FROM MORDEN COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 9)

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

10 REPORT FROM RAYNES PARK COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 10)

Councillor Adam Bush presented the report, which was received by the Council.

11 REPORT FROM WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 11)

Councillor James Holmes presented the report, which was received by the Council. In doing so Councillor Holmes highlighted the two proposed motions arising from the Forum.

Councillor Judge in response confirmed that he would attend the next meeting of the Wimbledon Forum and update them on both issues as requested.

12 NOTICES OF MOTION - CONSERVATIVE 1 (Agenda Item 12)

The motion was moved by Councillor David Dean and seconded by Councillor Daniel Holden.

The Labour amendment, as set out in agenda item 17 was moved by Councillor Martin Whelton and seconded by Councillor Ross Garrod.

The Labour amendment was then put to the vote and was carried – votes in favour 32, and votes against 20 with 5 abstention.

The substantive resolution was then agreed.

RESOLVED:

This Council notes the importance of London's transport system to Merton's residents, many of whom commute into central London every day, paying exorbitant amounts on fares which are some of the most expensive of any major city. Council notes that:

- The current Conservative Mayor has increased fares every year since his election in in 2008, with a 42% increase overall

- Since 2008, under Boris Johnson, the cost of a return tube journey from Morden to central London in peak hours is now £7.80, a 56% increase since 2008
- The cost of a weekly zone 1-4 travelcard has increased by £11.90 or 34%
- The cost of a monthly travel card from Morden to Zone 1 has increased by 34% to £178.60 – a £45.70 rise since 2008 - and an annual season ticket from Morden to Zone 1 now stands at £1,860
- In addition, bus fares have risen from 90p to £1.50, a 67% increase, with weekly bus passes increasing by 63% from £13 to £21.20.
- Council is concerned that the Conservative candidate for Mayor of London, Zac Goldsmith, intends to continue his predecessor's policy of increasing tube, train, tram and bus fares.

In contrast, Labour's mayoral candidate Sadiq Khan has promised to freeze fares and to bring in a new one hour "hopper" bus ticket which will help low paid workers who need to take two buses to get to work. TfL Commissioner Mike Brown has publicly stated that the fares freeze will not damage TfL's investment programme and Sadiq has confirmed it will cost £465m, to come from increased efficiencies in Transport for London as follows:

- Merge engineering functions within TfL ensuring shared procurement and office functions save millions each year
- Halving the £383m TfL spent on consultancy and agency staff last year
- Seeking to establish a trading arm to sell TfL's expertise to other organisations both at home and abroad
- Generating revenue by developing spare TfL land
- Ending Conservative mayor's practice of spending Londoners money on expensive vanity projects such as the Greenwich cable car and the failing "new Routemaster" buses, neither of which bring any tangible benefit to over-charged Merton commuters.

We therefore call on all mayoral candidates to confirm how much extra Merton's residents will have to pay in tube, train and bus fares if they are elected. In particular we call on Zac Goldsmith to confirm that he is proposing a 17% increase in fares if elected, costing an extra £862 for commuters in Morden, for example.

13 CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND RELATED MATTERS (Agenda Item 13)

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

A point of order was raised regarding the validity of one of the delegated changes in membership. It was confirmed by the Monitoring officer that the process had been followed correctly in line with the constitution.

RESOLVED

1. That the changes to the membership of Committees that were approved under delegated powers since the last meeting of the Council are noted.
2. That Councillor Agatha Akyigyina be appointed as the Chair of Licensing Committee.

14 PETITIONS (Agenda Item 14)

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 petition presented by Councillor Judy Saunders relating to 'Amending the Cricket Green Conservation Area'.

15 BUSINESS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda Item 15)

That the Strategic Theme for the next ordinary meeting of the Council to be held on 13 July 2016 shall be Older People with a focus on Adult Social Care.