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CABINET

7 MARCH 2016

(7.15 pm - 7.49 pm)

PRESENT Councillor Stephen Alambritis (in the Chair),
Councillor Mark Allison, Councillor Nick Draper,
Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Councillor Andrew Judge,
Councillor Edith Macauley, Councillor Judy Saunders and
Councillor Martin Whelton

Ged Curran (Chief Executive), Mark Humphries (Assistant
Director Infrastructure & Transactions), Chris Lee
Director of Environment & Regeneration), Fiona Thomsen
(Head of Shared Legal Services), Simon Williams (Director of
Community and Housing), and Chris Pedlow (Senior
Democratic Services Officer).

ALSO PRESENT Councillors Michael Bull, David Dean and Peter Southgate.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

An apology was received from Councillor Maxi Martin.

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 15 February 2016 were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment of item 5 Business Plan 2016-20; that the 8th paragraph be revised accordingly:

Councillor Southgate then presented to Cabinet some options to potentially mitigate the cost of reconsidering those savings. The options included lowering the assumed rate of inflation for the forthcoming year from 1.5% to 0.5%, which he suggested would be worth £1million. Another option would be the use of the adult social care precept. Councillor Southgate said that a 2% precept would increase Band D council tax by £22 but that, as the GLA was cutting its precept by £19 for a band D, that would result in a net rise of £3. He added that a 1.7% precept would result in no change to council tax levels but would raise an extra £1.35million for adult social care on an ongoing basis.

4 PLANNING SHARED SERVICE - OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE (Agenda Item 4)

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration presented the report which sort approval to explore more in-depth options for a shared service between the London Boroughs of Merton and Sutton and the Royal Borough of Kingston for specific elements of the planning service. It was explained that there were a number of reasons for the proposed investigation including that across local government planning services, they were all struggling to keep staff as the private sector were paying more and were headhunting staff as a result. A further reason was as a result of the Planning and Housing Act 2015, it had potential to open up the opportunity that planning applications processing be opened up to the commercial market place. Therefore the report proposes that work be undertaken to evaluate an approach for the service going forward such as a shared service across the three Boroughs or even the creation of a Local Government company.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agrees that:

- 1) two options for a shared approach are followed up in detail:
 - i) a traditional shared service where one of the Councils is the employing authority, and
 - ii) a shared service provided through a shared delivery company
- 2) a full business case recommending the best delivery model is agreed through a Joint Member Board with Sutton and Kingston and presented to members by September 2016. Details of the financial figures will emerge as the result of developing options (a) and (b) in more detail. It was noted that the benefits of adopting a shared approach include: delivery of more resilient services; the ability to compete with the private sector as the market opens up; improvement in the quality of services; financial savings and income growth.

5 LOVE WIMBLEDON BALLOT RENEWAL (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration presented the report which sort Cabinet endorsement for the continuation of the Love Wimbledon Business Improvement District (BID). It was detailed that the Love Wimbledon BID had run for 5 years and has proved to be a real success and was supported by the businesses within the area. Members noted the report proposed a slight change to the Bid's current boundary. The report also sought that the Council as landlord of rated properties within the BID voted in support of its continuation, with the vote being delegated to Director of Environment and Regeneration.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet

- 1) endorses the Love Wimbledon Business Improvement District (BID) proposal for renewal of the BID ballot and any future decision on the BID renewal is delegated to Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member Councillor Andrew Judge.
- 2) agrees that the Council will charge the Love Wimbledon BID board for the costs for business rates staff in collecting and administrating the levy estimated in region of £7.50 plus VAT per rateable charge and the on-going software costs of £2,350 plus VAT annually.
- 3) agrees that the Council should recover the cost of the BID renewal ballot from the proposers if the renewal ballot is unsuccessful.
- 4) agrees that the Council will vote in support of the BID renewal for its own rated properties in the BID area and that the voter will be Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration.

6 LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE AND ACTION PLAN (Agenda Item 6)

The Leader presented the report to his Cabinet that detailed the finding from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge held in October 2015 and an action plan to tackle the recommendation arising from the challenge. The Leader commented that he was happy with the positive feedback that came out of the review and was confident that the action plan would help the Council improve and meet its new vision. It was confirmed that a further report would be coming back to Cabinet on in the Spring 2017 providing an update on the action plan.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet

1. notes the findings and key recommendations from the recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.
2. agrees the draft action plan that addresses the key recommendations set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

7 HOMELESS PLACEMENT POLICY (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration presented the report which was informing Cabinet of the need to introduce an interim Homeless Placement Policy, which would replace the current policy. The change was required, the Cabinet noted, following a recent judgement by the Supreme Court and Westminster Council. The Cabinet considered in detail the changes contained within

the proposal and confirmed that in light of the recently ruling, they supported the need for those changes being made.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet notes the content of this report.

8 RESPONSE TO REFERENCE FROM SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – RESULTS OF WHEELED BINS PILOT (Agenda Item 8)

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking presented the report which provided the Cabinet response to the reference from Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel (SCOSP) on the results of the wheeled bin pilot. She commented that following an independent survey of the pilot ward, the large majority of residents were happy with wheeled bins and felt they were an improvement on the standard collection process. SCOSP reviewed the result of the survey and highlighted 4 areas that they suggested be further considered by the Cabinet, should the pilot be rolled out across the Borough. The Cabinet member, in addressing the area identified by Scrutiny, firstly thanked them for their feedback and commented that those areas, of size of the wheeled bins, the cost of rolling it out compared to the saving envisaged, impact of the bins on the street scene and the impact of the bins for disable residents, were certainly areas that they would be looking at further when considering the benefits of any further roll out of the service.

Councillor Macauley, commented as the ward Member for Lavender Ward, that at her last ward surgery resident feedback to her on the scheme stating that they were really pleased with the scheme. They also noted how much cleaner the streets were as a result.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1) notes the details contained within the report
- 2) agrees the recommendations made by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

9 FINANCIAL MONITORING JANUARY 2016 (Agenda Item 9)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report which provided the regular monthly financial monitoring update for January 2016, in respect of the 2015/2016 financial year. It was noted that the net overspend expected at the year-end was £1.6million, under 0.3% of the gross budget, which had decreased by approximately £1million since the previous month's report.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet

- 1) notes the financial reporting data relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net overspend at year end of £1.6million, 0.3% of the gross budget.
- 2) notes the adjustment to the Capital Programme contained in Appendix 5b of the report.

10 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 10)

RESOLVED

That the public were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following reports on the grounds that they were exempt from disclosure for the reasons stated in the reports.

11 AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR SCHOOL MEALS CATERING SERVICE 2016 (Agenda Item 11)

The Cabinet Member for Education presented the report which sought approval for the awarding a contract for the School meals catering service for a three year period commencing August 2016. In presenting the report it was noted that the proposed provider recommended as a result of the tender exercise, would result in a reduction in the cost per meal. It was noted that the proposed provider was also going to be paying the living wage.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1) approves the award to Contractor B, as defined within the report, a contract for provision of the school meals catering service at Merton primary and special schools for a period of 3 years from 1 August 2016, with an option to extend for up to two further years at the discretion of the council.
- 2) delegates to the Director of Corporate Services to exercise, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and the Director of Children, Schools and Families, in accordance with Contract Standing Orders (CSO 37.6) that authority be, the Council's option to grant one or more extensions of the contract term for any period up to two further years beyond the expiry of the initial contract term on 31 July 2019.
- 3) note that as a result of the award the price per meal will reduce, as detailed in the report.