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COUNCIL
20 NOVEMBER 2024

(7.16 pm - 9.58 pm)

PRESENT (in the Chair), Councillor Slawek Szczepanski
Councillor Brenda Fraser
Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina,
Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Councillor Laxmi Attawar,
Councillor Thomas Barlow, Councillor Hina Bokhari,
Councillor Michael Brunt, Councillor Billy Christie,
Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah,
Councillor Anthony Fairclough, Councillor Edward Foley,
Councillor Jenifer Gould, Councillor Joan Henry,
Councillor Daniel Holden, Councillor Andrew Howard, Councillor
Sally Kenny, Councillor Linda Kirby, Councillor Paul Kohler,
Councillor Edith Macauley, Councillor Peter McCabe,
Councillor Simon McGrath, Councillor Nick McLean,
Councillor Aidan Mundy, Councillor Dennis Pearce,
Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Councillor Martin Whelton,
Councillor Sheri-Ann Bhim, Councillor John Braithwaite,
Councillor Michael Butcher, Councillor Caroline Charles,
Councillor Eleanor Cox, Councillor Klaar Dresselaers,
Councillor Chessie Flack, Councillor Kirsten Galea,
Councillor Ross Garrod, Councillor Jil Hall,
Councillor Billy Hayes, Councillor Susie Hicks,
Councillor Dan Johnston, Councillor Andrew Judge,
Councillor Usaama Kaweesa, Councillor Samantha MacArthur,
Councillor Gill Manly, Councillor Stephen Mercer,
Councillor Stuart Neaverson, Councillor John Oliver,
Councillor Robert Page, Councillor Michael Paterson,
Councillor Tony Reiss, Councillor Matthew Willis,
Councillor Max Austin, Ofeimu, Councillor Victoria Wilson and
Syeda

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Skeete and Williscroft.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 are agreed as an accurate record.

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

The Leader spoke on a number of matters, passing on the good wishes on behalf of the Council on His Majesty the King's Birthday, speaking of the impact in Merton by Jane Plant who had sadly passed away the previous week, the Remembrance Services in Merton, Councillor Macauley's appointment to the Cabinet, the Conversations with the leader sessions and the Chancellor's Budget.

The Mayor then provided an update on recent and upcoming events.

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 further question to the Cabinet Member. A copy of the supplementary questions and responses will be included in the 'public questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

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

The responses to the written member ordinary priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of the members in turn to ask (if they wished) a further question to the Cabinet Member. A copy of the supplementary questions and responses will be included in the 'member ordinary priority questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

7a STRATEGIC THEME: MAIN REPORT (Agenda Item 7a)

The Strategic Theme report on Nurturing Civic Pride was moved by Councillor Stringer and seconded by Councillor Christie.

The Liberal Democrat Amendment as set out in agenda item 24 was moved by Councillor Fairclough and seconded by Councillor Oliver.

Councillors Christie (on the amendment), Barlow, Galea, Foley, Charles, Reiss, Mercer and Manly also spoke on the item.

The Liberal Democrat Amendment was put to the vote and fell: Votes For – 16, Against – 38, Not Voting – 0.

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Theme report is agreed.

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

The responses to the written member strategic theme priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of the members in turn to ask (if they wished) a further question to the Cabinet Member. A copy of the supplementary questions and responses will be included in the 'member strategic theme priority questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

It was also noted that a copy of the remaining Member questions and responses will be published after the meeting, in line with Constitutional requirements.

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

There were no strategic theme motions submitted to the meeting.

8 REPORT FROM WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM - 9 OCTOBER 2024 (Agenda Item 8)

Councillor Hicks presented the report which was received by Council.

The Motion relating to the forum was then moved by Councillor Hicks and seconded by Councillor MacArthur.

Councillors Austin, Charles, Judge also spoke on the item.

The motion was put to the vote and fell. Votes For – 27, Against – 28, Not Voting – 0.

9 REPORT FROM MITCHAM COMMUNITY FORUM - 10 OCTOBER 2024 (Agenda Item 9)

Councillor Henry presented the report which was received by the Council.

10 REPORT FROM RAYNES PARK COMMUNITY FORUM - 16 OCTOBER 2024 (Agenda Item 10)

Councillor Wilson presented the update which was received by the Council.

11 REPORT FROM MORDEN COMMUNITY FORUM - 23 OCTOBER 2024 (Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Pearce presented the report which was received by the Council.

12 NOTICES OF MOTION - LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MOTION (Agenda Item 12)

The motion was moved by Councillor Gould and seconded by Councillor Wilson.

Councillors Paterson, Charles and Stringer spoke on the item.

The motion was then put to a vote and fell – votes in favour: 27, votes against: 28, abstentions: 0.

13 ADOPTION OF MERTON'S LOCAL PLAN (Agenda Item 13)

The report was moved by Councillor Judge and seconded by Councillor Neaverson.

The Liberal Democrat amendment was moved by Councillor Willis and seconded by Councillor Fairclough.

Councillor Holden also spoke on the item.

The amendment was put to the vote and fell: Votes in favour – 27, Against – 28, Not Voting – 0.

The original report was then put to the vote and was agreed: Votes in favour: 31, Against – 7, Not Voting – 17.

RESOLVED:

That, considering the Cabinet recommendation on 4th November 2024 and the Development and Planning Applications Committee recommendations on 14th November 2024 that full council resolved to:

- A. Adopt Merton's Local Plan and Policies Map, replacing Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.
- B. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Housing and Sustainable Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development to approve all the necessary adoption documents and other consequential matters in accordance with the appropriate Regulations.

14 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT 2005 (Agenda Item 14)

The report was moved by Councillor Macauley and seconded by Councillor Stringer.

Councillor Kohler also spoke on the item.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- A. Adopted the Council's Statement of Principles 2025-2028 as required under Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 as approved by Members of the Licensing Committee on 8th October 2024 to come into effect on the 31st January 2025;
- B. Resolved not to issue a Casino Premises Licence or allow operators to make application for premises licences for casinos, as approved by Members of the

Licensing Committee on 8th October 2024, to come into effect on the 31st January 2025

15 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS (CSOS)
(Agenda Item 15)

The report was moved by Councillor Christie and formally seconded by Councillor Garrod.

Councillor Fairclough spoke on the item.

RESOLVED:

A. That Council approved the amendments proposed to the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) which facilitate compliance with the Procurement Act 2023.

B. That Council approved reference changes within the CSOs that relate to internal role and departmental changes.

C. That Council approved use of email for quotes below £5,000 in place of using the Council's e-procurement portal for all procurements, irrespective of value.

D. That Council approved the changes to internal procurement governance including increasing internal thresholds from £100,000 to £170,000 and when procurement projects must be supported by Commercial Services.

E. To include the provision in the CSOs that all quotes under £170,000 must include, where possible, a quote from a local provider or a local SME, who can meet due diligence requirements.

F. That Council approved the recommendation for Procurement Strategies (Gateway 1s) over £3 million to go to Cabinet for approval, with Contract Awards (Gateway 2s) over £3 million to be routinely delegated to the relevant Executive Director/s in consultation with the relevant Lead Member/s, whilst ensuring the right to Call-in a decision remains.

G. That Council approve the recommendation to increase the threshold by which procurement reports go to Cabinet from £2 million to £3 million.

H. The CSOs form part of the Council's Constitution thereby we are seeking agreement to amend the Constitution accordingly.

16 CHIEF OFFICER RECRUITMENT (Agenda Item 16)

The report was moved by Councillor Christie and formally seconded by Councillor Garrod.

Councillor Fairclough also spoke on the item.

RESOLVED:

A. That Full Council approves the recommendations from the Appointments Committee that the salary package for the role listed in section 2 of the report should be agreed in accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement.

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

The report was formally moved by Councillor Bhim and formally seconded by Councillor Garrod.

RESOLVED:

A. That Council noted the changes to the membership of Committees that were approved under delegated authority since the last meeting of the Council

B. That Council approved the changes to Committees and outside bodies detailed at 4.2 of the report and within Appendix B

C. That Council noted the changes to Cabinet members and portfolios detailed in Appendix A

18 PETITIONS (Agenda Item 18)

There were no petitions submitted to the meeting.

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, being held on 22 January 2025, shall be Borough of Sport.

20 AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME – FIRST 93 UNITS ACROSS 4 SITES (Agenda Item 20)

The report was moved by Councillor Judge and seconded by Councillor Christie.

The meeting moved into exempt session as a member indicated they wished to refer to the exempt appendix in their speech.

The Liberal Democrat Amendment as set out in agenda item 26 was moved by Councillor McGrath and seconded by Councillor Willis.

Councillor McLean also spoke on the item.

The Amendment was put to the vote and fell: Votes For – 27, Against – 28, Not Voting – 0.

The original report recommendations were put to the vote and carried: Votes For – 48, Against – 7, Not Voting – 0.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- A. Note the progress on the programme for the delivery of 93 new affordable homes.
- B. Note the contents of Section 4 of the report with the financial detail set out in Exempt Appendix A summarising the financial impact of the revised scheme and approve the increase to the capital programme and its funding totaling £27.87m

21 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC (Agenda Item 21)

The Council RESOLVED that the public were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following report on the grounds that it is exempt from disclosure for the reasons stated in the report(s).

The meeting moved into private session as a member indicated they wished to discuss the contents of the exempt appendix.