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CABINET

22 SEPTEMBER 2022

(7.16 pm - 8.07 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Ross Garrod (in the Chair),
Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Councillor Stephen Alambritis,
Councillor Billy Christie, Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah,
Councillor Brenda Fraser, Councillor Natasha Irons,
Councillor Andrew Judge, Councillor Sally Kenny and
Councillor Peter McCabe

**ATTENDING
REMOTELY** Councillor Stephen Alambritis

ALSO PRESENT Adrian Ash (Interim Director, Environment and Regeneration),
John Bosley (Assistant Director Public Space Contracts and
Commissioning), Tim Catley (S106 Monitoring officer), Robert
Cayzer (Interim Head of Cabinet Office), Hannah Doody (Chief
Executive), Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (Assistant Director for
Education and Early Help), Caroline Holland (Director of
Corporate Services), Roger Kershaw (Assistant Director of
Resources), Calvin McLean (Interim Assistant Director Public
Protection), John Morgan (Interim Director, Community &
Housing) and Louise Round (Managing Director, South London
Legal Partnership and Monitoring Officer) and Amy Dumitrescu
(Democracy Services Manager)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies were received. Councillor Alambritis attended remotely.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 July and 31 August are agreed as an accurate record.

4 MERTON'S CIVIC PRIDE FUND - INVESTING IN NEIGHBOURHOODS USING NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDING (Agenda Item 4)

The Cabinet Member for Civic Pride presented the report

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet approve the replacement of the Neighbourhood Fund with a new funding regime called the “Civic Pride Fund – Investing in Neighbourhoods”
2. That Cabinet approve the council’s new overarching priority supported by the three principles set out in paragraph 2.5 as part of bid selection under the new Fund.
3. That Cabinet note the proposed timetable for bidding set out at paragraph 5
4. That Cabinet endorse the heads of terms and note the draft timetable for consideration of priorities and implementation for a new Ward Allocation Scheme set out at paragraphs 2.12 to 2.13 and 5

5 MERTON CIVIC PRIDE FUND: SUPPORTING THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR 2023/26 - COMMISSIONING REQUIREMENTS (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet Member for Civic Pride presented the report and thanked organisations for their collaboration and their work on recent issues including the Covid-19 pandemic and assisting Ukrainian refugees.

The funding would cover multi year grants between 2023-26 and brought several funding streams into one fund. The Council were looking to invest over £5m pounds. Following the consultation process it was noted that smaller organisations had struggled to access some of the funding previously and therefore £50,000 a year had also been put aside for Merton Giving to award grants and Merton Connected has been tasked with assisting with targeted bid help.

The Cabinet Member thanked officers for their work and thanked the independent chair of the group.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet approve the aligning of a range of information, advice and preventative support services into an expanded ‘Supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector’ programme which sits under the umbrella of the Civic Pride Fund (see section 1.2-1.5).
2. That Cabinet approve the Prospectus as the basis on which to fund these services (see section 3.11-3.15).
3. That Cabinet note the funding available for 2023-26 and to approve the proposed allocations against each of the programme themes (see section 7).
4. That Cabinet approve the scoring methodology and weighting to select providers (see section 3.19).

6 COST OF LIVING SUPPORT FUND (Agenda Item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services presented the report which set out the proposed approach to distribution of the first half of the Cost of Living Support Fund and the latest tranche of support fund monies from the Government.

The Cabinet Member gave an overview of the distribution including direct grants of £60 cash payments to residents receiving Council Tax support, Free School Meals vouchers during school holidays including the 2023 Easter Holidays and the Sustainable Merton Fridge network and food poverty action plan. The Council was

also proposing the addition of two additional debt advisors for the Citizens Advice Bureau for a period of two years.

The effectiveness of these measures would be reviewed in January 2023.

Cabinet Members spoke to the report, thanking officers and members for the report.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet agree the proposal to commit £630,000 of the Household Support fund to free school meal vouchers for the period October 2022 to March 2023 (including Easter holidays) as set out in para 2.6.

B. That Cabinet agree the proposal to commit £100,000 of the Household Support fund to be available for application based referrals from residents as set out in para 2.7

C. That Cabinet agree the proposal to commit £454,000 of the Household Support fund and £200,000 of the council's Cost of Living fund to direct grants with individual payments of £60 to residents in receipt of Council Tax Support by Post Office voucher as set out in para 2.8.

D. That Cabinet agree the proposal to allocate £400,000 to initiatives that reduce heating costs as set out in para 2.11.

E. That Cabinet agree the proposal to commit £100,000 to support arrangements in the voluntary and community sector as set out in para 2.16.

F. That Cabinet agree the proposal to commit £200,000 to fund two Debt Advisors for two years for Citizens Advice as set out in 2.15 and 2.17.

G. That Cabinet agree the proposal to commit £100,000 to Sustainable Merton to support the Community Fridge as set out in 2.18 and 2.19.

H. That Cabinet agree the proposal to keep back £1 million to enable a further review in January 2023 and to implement further initiatives as set out in 2.20

7 LIVING WAGE EMPLOYER ACCREDITATION (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services presented the report which outlined the timeline and plan for the Council to achieve Living Wage Employer Accreditation by the end of January 2023. All in-scope contracts would be included with the exception of care homes which would be addressed at a later date.

It was noted that the proposal included appointing a Living Wage Champion and this would be Councillor Billy Hayes.

The Chair thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for their work.

RESOLVED:

A. Cabinet notes what is required for the Council to achieve accreditation as a Living Wage Employer from the Living Wage Foundation; and

B. Cabinet notes the indicative cost implications of rolling out the Real Living Wage (RLW) and London Living Wage (LLW) across all Merton 'in-scope' contracts; and

- C. Cabinet approves Merton seeking accreditation as a Living Wage Employer and agrees to introduce the Real Living Wage into Merton contracts - as and when the contracts come up for re-tendering (excluding Care Home contracts) – Phase I
- D. Cabinet agrees that more work be undertaken to ascertain a more realistic cost for implementing the LLW across Merton’s Care Home contracts and that this work is carried out after Merton has achieved its Living Wage Employer accreditation – Phase II.
- E. Cabinet agrees the appointment of Cllr Billy Hayes as the Living Wage champion so that the Council may build on its status as a Living Wage Employer and become a Living Wage Borough

8 REFERENCE FROM THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – HOUSING ENFORCEMENT (Agenda Item 8)

The Chair advised that apologies had been received from the Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel who was attending Planning Committee at the time of the Cabinet meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development gave an overview of the recommendations put forward by the Scrutiny Panel and advised that the Cabinet would consider how best these could be supported and report back later in the Autumn.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet noted the reference set out in paragraphs 2.6 to 2.21 of the report and would respond within two months.

9 REFERENCE FROM THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL - COMMUNITY WASTE COLLECTIONS (Agenda Item 9)

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Green Spaces and Climate Change thanked the panel for their work and advised the Cabinet would be looking at the recommendation within the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet noted the reference set out in paragraph 2.7 of the report and would respond within two months.

10 AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR ARBORICULTURE SERVICES (Agenda Item 10)

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Green Spaces and Climate Change presented the report, noting that the proposed company had served in the Borough during Storm Eunice and provided an offer on social values including apprenticeships and work with local schools.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet agreed to award a new contract for the provision of arboriculture services across the Council's administrative area to Barkland Tree Specialists for a period of three (3) years (from 01 November 2022) with potential extensions of up to 36 months (three years). The contract value is set out in Appendix A.

B. That Cabinet delegate the decision to award an extension of the awarded contract to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member, for any period up to 3 years in accordance with CSO 27

That the recommendations within the Exempt Appendix were approved.

11 VAWG STRATEGY (Agenda Item 11)

The Cabinet Member for Civic Pride presented the report.

The strategy had been recently scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Cabinet Member thanked them for their input. An action plan would be developed which would outline how the strategy would be delivered.

The Cabinet Member thanked officers for their work and Cabinet Members spoke to the report.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet note the update on the work on the VAWG agenda and agree the new VAWG Strategy 2022-2025 - Merton's Ending Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy 2022–2025.

12 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (Agenda Item 12)

The Cabinet Member for Civic Pride presented the report. The current Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was due to expire and therefore following a consultation, it was proposed to extend the current PSPO and to include better enforcement as well as agreeing to consult on extending the PSPO Borough-wide.

The Cabinet Member thanked officers for their work, all those who had responded to the consultation and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission who had recently reviewed the proposal.

In response to questions from Cabinet Members, officers advised that there were a number of workstreams including work within schools on substance misuses and noting that other tools such as dispersal orders can be used in conjunction with PSPOs where these are required.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet note the contents of the Evidence Report, the Public Consultation Findings and the Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendices 1-3).

B. That Cabinet agree the proposal to extend the existing PSPO for alcohol related ASB for a further three years.

C. That Cabinet agree conduct a further consultation, on whether to make Merton a responsible drinking borough and to making a borough wide PSPO for alcohol related ASB

13 JUNE FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 13)

The Chair advised that agenda items 13 and 14 would be presented together.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services presented the reports, noting some adjustments to the Capital Programme. The projected overspend was currently £5.4m at the end of the year, this was largely due to lower than anticipated parking income.

The Director for Corporate Services advised that the outstanding debt analysis had worsened and work was progressing on that.

It was noted that the Month 3 report would be considered by the upcoming Financial Monitoring Task Group. The increase in interest rates may have an impact on investments and this would be monitored.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet note the financial reporting data for month 3, June 2022, relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net adverse variance at 30 June on service expenditure of £5.444m when corporate and funding items are included and £3.412m of reserves assumed to be used as agreed at last month's Cabinet
- B. That Cabinet note the contents of Section 5 and Appendix 5b of the report and approve the adjustments to the Capital Programme in the Table below

	Budget 2022-23	Budget 2023-24	Narrative
	£	£	
Raynes Park – Capital Maintenance	14,500		Vired from the Unallocated Budget
Unallocated Capital Maintenance	(58,250)		Allocation to Lonesome, Melbury and Raynes Park
Lonesome – Capital Maintenance	28,720		Vired from the Unallocated Budget
Merton Abbey – Capital Maintenance	(8,610)		Vired to the Unallocated Budget
Melbury – Capital Maintenance	23,640		Vired from the Unallocated Budget
Medical PRU	(60,000)	60,000	Reprofiled in line with projected spend
Total	(60,000)	60,000	

C. That Cabinet ask CMT to investigate and report back on measures to reduce the adverse variance, recognising that CSF have set some actions out already in Section 4

14 JULY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 14)

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet note the financial reporting data for month 4, July 2022, relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net adverse variance at 31 July on service expenditure of £5.448m when corporate and funding items are included and £3.412m of reserves assumed to be used as agreed at the Cabinet meeting on the 18 July.

B. That CMT note the contents of Section 5 and approve the adjustments to the Capital Programme contained in Appendix 5b
That Cabinet note the contents of Section 5 and Appendix 5b of the report and approve the adjustments to the Capital Programme in the Table below:

		Budget 2022-23	Budget 2023-24	Budget 2024-25	Narrative
		£	£	£	
Corporate Services					
Customer Contact - Fix My Streets	(1)	50,000			Priority project from IT Implementation List
Business Systems - Parking System	(1)		95,110		Funded by the OCPB Reserve
Children, Schools and Families					
Joseph Hood - Schools Capital Maintenance	(1)	(66,120)	66,120		Reprofiled in line with projected spend
Dundonald - Schools Capital Maintenance	(1)	(12,000)			Reprofiled in line with projected spend
Raynes Park - Schools Capital Maintenance	(1)	12,000			Reprofiled in line with projected spend
Perseid Lower School - School Expansion	(1)	100,000	1,500,000	2,516,860	Splitting Perseid Lower Expansion from Perseid Upper
Perseid School - School Expansion	(1)	(100,000)	(1,500,000)	(2,516,860)	Splitting Perseid Lower Expansion from Perseid Upper
Mainstream SEN (ARP) - West Wimbledon ARP	(1)	40,000	(40,000)		Reprofiled in line with projected spend
Environment and Regeneration					
On Street Parking - P&D - Pay and Display Machines	(1)	(200,000)			As Emissions based Charging is not being progressed unspent budget being vired back to Car Park Upgrades
Off Street Parking - P&D - Car Park Upgrades	(1)	260,000			Virement of projected unspent budget back to Car Park Upgrades from Pay and Display Machine Upgrade
Off Street Parking - P&D - Peel House Car Park*	(2)	700,000			Funding Required to undertake structural works
Off Street Parking - P&D - Pay and Display Machines	(1)			(60,000)	Reprofiled in line with projected spend pattern and vired to Car Park Upgrades
Highways and Footways - Bishopsford Bridge	(1)	35,000			Virement from Cycleway scheme to fund projected outturn on the

					scheme
Highways and Footways - Cycle Lane Roadway Bishopsford Bridge	(1)	(47,000)			Virement to main Bishopsford Bridge Scheme and relinquish projected underspend
Mitcham Area Regeneration - Pollards Hill Bus Shelter	(1)	(100,000)	100,000		Reprofiled in line with projected spend
Morden Area Regeneration - Morden Town centre Imp	(1)	(200,000)	200,000		Reprofiled in line with projected spend
Parks - New water play feature wimb pk	(1)	(226,000)	226,000		Reprofiled in line with projected spend
Parks - Multi Use Sports Areas	(1)	175,000		(175,000)	Reprofiled in line with projected spend
Parks - Figges Marsh Ward Allocation - Figges Marsh	(1)	10,020			Table Tennis Table funded by NCIL
Parks - Graveney Ward Allocation - Edenvale Rec	(1)	10,020			Table Tennis Table funded by NCIL
Parks - Lavender Fields Ward Alloc - Lavender Park	(1)	10,020			Table Tennis Table funded by NCIL
Parks - Longthornton Ward Alloc - Long Bolstead Rec	(1)	10,020			Table Tennis Table funded by NCIL
Parks - Colliers Wood Rec Playground	(1)	2,190			Additional NCIL Funding
Total		463,150	647,230	(235,000)	

C. That Cabinet ask CMT to investigate and report back on measures to reduce the adverse variance.

15 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 15)

The meeting proceeded entirely in public and therefore this item was not required