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## CABINET

15 JANUARY 2024

(7.15 pm - 7.50 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 Councillor Sally Kenny and Councillor Brenda Fraser  
ONLINE

ALSO PRESENT Hannah Doody (Chief Executive), Fabiola Hickson (Manager business improvement law), Dan Jones (Executive Director, Environment, Civic Pride & Climate), Jane McSherry (Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families), John Morgan (Executive Director, Adult Social Care, Integrated Care and Public Health), Asad Mushtaq (Executive Director of Finance & Digital) and Lucy Owen (Executive Director of Housing & Sustainable Development), Lewis Addlington-Lee (Head of Leader's Office), Keir Lewis (Labour Group Assistant), Zara Bishop (Communications Manager) and Richard Seedhouse (Democratic Services Officer)

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies for absence were received.

Councillors Fraser and Kenny attended online.

### 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 December 2023 are agreed as an accurate record.

### 4 BUDGET 2024/25 AND MTFS 2024-28 (Agenda Item 4)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services introduced the paper, a further update to the budget paper, subsequent to papers brought in November. The Cabinet Member noted that the cost of services has risen significantly and advised that Council tax would have to increase next year. The Cabinet Member

stated that it is disappointing to pass costs onto tax payers however it was necessary and members would continue to lobby for the long term funding that councils need.

The Cabinet Member noted that the budget is balanced and met obligations and would go through a second round of scrutiny later this month.

In response to questions Cabinet Members stated the following:

- 7000 households that receive Council Tax relief will be protected from council tax rises. We also have the cost of living fund, financial advice days (which include a £10 voucher for weekly shop for attendees), we are also helping young people develop saving habits among other initiatives.
- Adult social care is an area that puts notable strain on the budget due to increased volumes of more complex work. We have creative senior officers who find ways to save money while providing an excellent service.
- We are proud of our safety record in the Borough. Keeping people safe is a strategic priority, the cctv network is being updated, new cameras, and which need monitoring and therefore £365,000 has been allocated for staffing.
- A budget is being put forward which is balanced and delivers on value for money while protecting the front line services.

The Leader thanked officers and cabinet members for their work.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet agreed the proposed Council Tax Base for 2023/24 set out in paragraph 2.7 and Appendix 1.
2. That Cabinet considered and agreed the second tranche of draft growth proposals for 2024/25 to 2027/28 (Appendix 5) put forward by officers and referred them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in January 2024 for consideration and comment.
3. That Cabinet considered and agreed the amendment to the savings 2024/25 with the removal of saving ECPC 2425 S02

## 5 FINANCIAL APPROVALS - JANUARY (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services introduced the paper, which detailed the amendments to the capital programme due to changes in the timeline of expected expenditure.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet noted the contents of Section 5 and appendices 5a to 5c and approved the adjustments to the Capital Programme in the [table](#)
- B. That Cabinet noted the adjustments to the Capital Programme in the [table](#)
- C. That Cabinet noted the items which are envisaged will impact on the Capital Programme:

- a) Amenity Way – Officers are currently compiling the works required to this site for the new waste collection and street cleansing service – it is currently envisaged that this will be funded from SCIL and the mobilisation fund.
- b) The Authority is currently undertaking a review of its transportation provision to become carbon neutral. In the short term there are a number of vehicles that need to be replaced either by leasing/rental/purchase as they are non-ULEZ compliant (21 vehicles) and are rented/leased under a framework agreement that ceases in September 2024 (6 vehicles). Procurement documentation will progress options to rent/lease and purchase, once the method of procurement is established budgetary provision will be made.
- c) The Authority has just been successful in a Stage One bid for financial resources for the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure from the Department of Transport – this was a joint bid from Hounslow, Richmond and Wandsworth (Stage Two submission by 30 November 2023) – as additional information becomes available it is envisaged that the tranche applicable to Merton will be added to the Capital Programme for 2023-24
- d) Draft Terms – AFC Wimbledon Library and Community Hub - This is a variation on proposals previously considered by the Authority – the changes compared to the previous proposal are:

- Lease term changed from 25 years to 99 years.
- No break clause
- 10 years of running costs covered by club sponsorship thereafter full cost will fall on LBM.

## 6 WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTIONS SERVICE PROCUREMENT (Agenda Item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Greenspaces and Climate Change introduced the report providing an update on progress on the contract and providing clarity to bidders and an update on the timeline.

The Cabinet Member noted that the invitation to tender would be published that month, with a contract intended to be awarded by September 2024.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet noted the progress to date on the Waste and Recycling Collections Service procurement process;

- B. That Cabinet noted and agreed to the clarification around employee terms and conditions as set out in the report.

## 7 MENTAL HEALTH SOCIAL WORK S75 AGREEMENT (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care introduced the paper which detailed the proposal to end the s75 agreement with St Georges Mental Health Trust.

In response to questions the Cabinet Member confirmed:

- The council was keen to work with colleagues in health, in a way that was to the benefit of residents of Merton.
- Other Boroughs had already withdrawn from s75 agreements.
- By ending the arrangement, Adult Social Care workers would become part of a wider multi-agency arrangement and be more involved with colleagues working in the sector. Data collection and use would be significantly improved.

RESOLVED:

- A. That notice be given on the current Section 75 agreement with South West London and St Georges Mental Health Trust with social workers and support staff returning to Council service line Management.
- B. Authorised the Executive Director: Adult Social Care, Integrated Care & Public Health, and the Executive Director, Innovation & Change, to take all actions needed, including any employment matters, to give effect to this resolution

## 8 CIVIC CENTRE – INSTALLATION SERVICES AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT OF A VARIABLE REFRIGERANT FLOW (VRF) SYSTEM, ELECTRICAL INTAKE AND REPLACEMENT LIGHTING. (Agenda Item 8)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development introduced the report which detailed that the Civic Centre gas boilers were now 42 years old and beyond their estimated lifespan. A 2020 feasibility study had said that the best option for reducing carbon emissions was to replace the boilers with VRF, which would allow heating in winter and cooling in summer with little impact on carbon emissions during the summer. £3million grant had been received to replace the boilers.

At the same time the electrical switch gear needed replacing and the works will be completed in conjunction with the VRF installation.

The Cabinet Member provided an overview of the procurement process.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet approved that pre-construction negotiations are concluded into for the provision of a new VRF system at the Civic Centre, along with remedial

works to the electrical power network and partial lighting replacement, with the preferred bidder listed in Appendix A.

- B. That Cabinet delegated authority to the Executive Director of Housing and Sustainable Development to exercise, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development, approval to award a contract to the preferred bidder on completion of a successful value engineering exercise to bring costs within budget.

## 9 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 9)

RESOLVED: That the public are excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following report(s) on the grounds that it is (they are) exempt from disclosure for the reasons stated in the report(s).

## 11 ST MARKS ROAD CAR PARK, MITCHAM (Agenda Item 11)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development introduced the report.

The report was noted and discussed. The recommendations were approved as outlined within the exempt minute.