

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 24 February 2020

Wards: All

Subject: Reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission – pre decision scrutiny of the Business Plan 2020-24

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission

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Recommendations:

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1. That Cabinet, in taking decisions relating to the Business Plan 2020-24, takes into account the recommendation made by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission (set out in paragraph 2.4 below) and the outcomes of consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (set out in Appendix 1)
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To inform Cabinet of the recommendations and comments resulting from pre decision scrutiny of the Business Plan 2020-24 by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Overview and Scrutiny Panels at their meetings in February 2020.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Each of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission has examined the budget and business plan proposals relating to the service areas within their remit, as well as scrutinising the draft service plans. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has also received the findings of the Panels.
- 2.2. The Commission RESOLVED to forward to Cabinet the comments and recommendations made by the overview and scrutiny panels. These are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.3. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has received and discussed the findings of the Panels and has discussed the savings proposals and the draft service plans relating to its remit. The Commission has made a recommendation to ask Cabinet to keep it informed regarding the outcome of government reviews and decision on a number of funding streams that currently remain uncertain. These include decisions on business rates, the fair funding review, financing of adult social care, addressing the deficit in the dedicated schools grant and the outcome of the comprehensive spending review.
- 2.4. The Commission RESOLVED to note that central government is undertaking a number of strategic reviews that will have a direct impact on the funding of Merton Council and therefore asks that Cabinet keep the Commission

informed upon the outcome of each one, as and when it arrives, with a view to its impact on the council's medium term financial strategy.

- 2.5. It is anticipated that Cabinet would provide this information to the Commission through the quarterly financial monitoring reports.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. Cabinet is required under the terms of the constitution to receive, consider and respond to recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 5 The Constitution contains the requirements for consulting scrutiny on the budget and business plan. There is an initial phase of scrutiny in November each year, with the second round in January (February this year due to the General Election) representing the formal consultation of scrutiny on the proposed Business Plan, Budget and Capital Programme.

6 TIMETABLE

- 6.1. Round one of scrutiny of the 2020-24 Business Plan was undertaken as follows:-

- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 30 October 2019
- Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 5 November 2019
- Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 6 November 2019
- Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 13 November 2019

- 6.2. Round two of scrutiny of the Business Plan was undertaken as follows:-

- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 6 February 2020
- Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel: 10 February 2020
- Healthier Communities & Older People Scrutiny Panel: 11 February 2020
- Overview and Scrutiny Commission: 12 February 2020

- 6.3. The responses from round two will be presented to Cabinet on 24 February 2020. A meeting of full Council will then take place on 4 March 2020.

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. These are detailed in the substantive reports elsewhere on this agenda.

8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The process for developing the budget and business plan is set out in Part 4C of the Council's Constitution. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and panels with regard to the development of the budget and business plan is set out in Part 4E of the Constitution.

- 8.2. The legal and statutory implications relating to the budget and business plan are contained in the reports elsewhere on this agenda.

9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

9.1. It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement.

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1. None for the purposes of this report.

12 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Appendix 1 – Comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels at meetings in February 2020

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1. None

References/Comments from Scrutiny Panels to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission 12 February 2020

Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2020-2024

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel: 6 February 2020

The Panel discussed each of the new savings proposals and asked questions of clarification about the growth proposals.

The Panel further discussed and commented on the report and RESOLVED (six votes for, none against and one abstention) to make the following reference to Cabinet;

“That Cabinet note the excellent work of the Merton Finance Team in managing the pension fund and the resulting benefits to the people of Merton of over £2.4 million per year for the foreseeable future”.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel: 10 February 2020

The Panel discussed the report and the savings and growth item in relation to its remit. No reference was made to Cabinet.

Healthier Communities and Older People O&S Panel: 11 February 2020

The Panel discussed the report and the savings and growth item in relation to its remit. No reference was made to Cabinet.