

## COUNCIL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 2 APRIL 2014

### MOTION - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES WITH A FOCUS ON PUBLIC HEALTH

This Council continues to welcome the transfer of Public Health functions to local authorities such as Merton.

A year on from this change, this Council recognises the opportunities and benefits for the health of the borough's residents of having the Director of Public Health in a senior managerial role within the council. Since the transition of Public Health to local authorities in April 2013 and the visible involvement of the Director of Public Health and her team across council departments, the profile of Public Health has been raised and is beginning to have an influence on how council services could be delivered or targeted to improve health outcomes.

However, this Council notes that, despite strong and clear recommendations from the government and organisations such as the Faculty of Public Health, Merton's Director of Public Health reports partly to the Director of Community and Housing rather than solely to the Chief Executive and is not a permanent member of the Corporate Management Team. Yet this is not the arrangement in the vast majority of councils.

This Council believes that, in order to maximise the potential of the changes to Public Health, it is important to ensure greater influence is exerted by the Director of Public Health, particularly given that, according to the latest Annual Residents' Survey, the vast majority of Merton residents (87%) are unaware of the Council's new responsibilities.

Therefore this Council resolves to reaffirm its strong commitment to improving the health of Merton residents, and especially of those in the east of the borough who often suffer more greatly from health inequalities and therefore a lower life expectancy, by requesting that the Cabinet and Chief Executive adopt best practice and make the Director of Public Health solely accountable to the Chief Executive with a permanent place on the Corporate Management Team, as happens in most other local authorities.

**Councillor Margaret Brierly**

**Councillor Suzanne Grocott**

**Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender**

**Councillor Debbie Shears**

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