

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

Motion 1: July 2021 – Tenants' Champion

RESOLVED:

Council requests Cabinet establish a Tenants' Champion service, that would:

- Be similar to (the non-stock holding) Richmond Council's Tenants' Champion, a service that that has been in place for more than 10 years;
- Work to support both tenants and leaseholders who rent or lease their properties from a housing association and also private renters in the borough,
- Provide support by giving someone for residents to contact if they had long running, unresolved complaints with their landlord, and by providing relevant information to renters more generally;
- Be trialled for a year and report their work to the Sustainable Communities scrutiny panel.
- Include Councillor Nick Draper being appointed as Merton's inaugural Tenants Champion.

Motion 2: July 2021 – Borough of Sanctuary

RESOLVED:

Council notes:

(1) that in February 2020 Council passed a resolution to become a 'Borough of Sanctuary' and, also resolved to "challenge anti-refugee and anti-migrant attitudes wherever they are found";

(2) The decision passed by Cabinet on 22 June 2021 for LB Merton to join the Lift the Ban Coalition;

3) That the Leader has written to both Stephen Hammond MP and Siobhain McDonagh MP, asking them to lobby the Home Secretary and Government to lift the ban and change the law allowing asylum seekers to work whilst awaiting decision on their asylum claim.

Council therefore resolves to:

1) Endorse the Cabinet decision to join the Lift the Ban Coalition; and congratulate the Leader for writing to both Stephen Hammond MP and Siobhain McDonagh MP, asking them to lobby the Home Secretary and Government to lift the ban and change the law allowing asylum seekers to work whilst awaiting decision on their asylum claim.

Motion 3: July 2021 – Armed Forces

RESOLVED:

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

Council notes, with pride, the many Merton residents whose families have served in our armed forces, and welcomes the borough's support for them at Armed Forces Day on 26 June 2021; recognises the incredible service of men and women from the Commonwealth and Nepal who have served and do serve in the UK Armed Forces, and also notes the unconscionable way so many of them and their families are being treated.

This council agrees with veterans who believe their right to stay in the UK should be awarded automatically on account of their service and notes that the recent government public consultation was insufficient in scope; with the only proposal being to offer a visa fee waiver after 12 years' service – an unduly high threshold that will alleviate costs for only a fraction of service personnel.

This council believes that only meaningful reform will deliver justice, and that means introducing a free and equitable route to citizenship that incorporates families, and – as we as a nation do not know how many have been affected by this injustice – believe that the government should establish a dedicated unit to assist veterans, similar to the Windrush Taskforce.

Council calls upon the Leader of the council to write to the Prime Minister, The Minister of State for Immigration, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence People and Veterans, and our two local MPs, outlining this council's support for Commonwealth and Nepalese veterans, and asking them to press for a change in the legislation that affects those that have served our country so honourably.

Motion 4: September 2021 – Speech and Language and SEND

RESOLVED:

This Council notes:

- Merton's Local Offer provides parents with a range of information on how to access provision for children with additional needs, including speech and language therapy, including on Dyslexia. However, improvements can always be made and the council regularly reviews it with local parents groups.
- Ofsted and CQC's inspection of Merton's SEND services noted that "Children under five with emerging speech, language or communication difficulties have good access to a range of activities tailored to their needs within children's centres. These sessions help to develop children's confidence and help parents to become more confident in supporting their child's development at home."
- Merton schools are well-placed to identify any speech and language needs, and provide their own support where they have the skills (for example, Nuffield Early

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

Language Intervention) and refer children for additional specialist support where required.

-Despite this, some parents and schools experience difficulties in accessing appropriate levels of services for children and young people, in part due to shortages within the profession, exacerbated by shortfalls in funding from central government
This

Council therefore calls on Cabinet to:

- Continue to work with parents and schools to ensure that speech and language needs are identified as early as possible and that where children and young people have an Education Health and Care Plan, to ensure that communication and language development needs are central to these plans where relevant; and
- Continue to share with schools opportunities to train school staff to improve their capability and capacity to identify and intervene with pupils with language needs;
- Continue to lobby and encourage Central Government to invest in more funding for the provision needed to support children with special educational needs, such as speech and language therapists by, for example, writing to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Secretary of State for Education.

Motion 5: September 2021 – Dedicated Schools Grant

RESOLVED:

This council recognises that the Conservative Government has failed to fund local authorities across the country to manage the demands on their funding for education, while expanding their responsibilities. This has led to 90% of councils having an overspend in the Dedicated School Grant due to spending on children with special educational needs and disabilities. In Merton, this has built up over the previous four years with a current in year overspend of £12.2million.

Council notes:

1. That the administration had faced difficulties with the management of the Dedicated Schools Grant due to the Government's approach, but has made it a priority and has already taken a number of steps towards reduction of the annual overspend while maintaining services for children and young people.
2. Despite considerable efforts to respond to the Government's approach, financial management of the DSG by the Labour administration remains challenging, due to the lack of additional funding which has led to an increasing overspend of the DSG nationally, and lack of clarity about how the widespread overspends will be handled

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

by the Government which has resulted in having to make provision for overspend, leading to council budget cuts

Therefore, council calls upon the cabinet to continue to implement its management plan and work with the Department for Education to agree a plan for managing the DSG to ensure that it is placed on a sustainable footing without affecting the outcomes of vulnerable learners.

Motion 6: September 2021 – Pension Fund

RESOLVED:

This Council notes that:

- A 'Climate Emergency' was declared by this Council in July 2019.
- Merton Council is a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum which promotes the long-term investment interests of local authority pension funds, maximising our influence as shareholders to promote environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) amongst the companies in which we invest, and holding us to account
- The Merton Pension Fund takes into account all three ESG factors, therefore it does not have a standalone policy on fossil fuels because it is also concerned with working conditions and human rights, for example
- As of June this year our measurable carbon footprint was 30% lower than it was the year before. The Fund's weighted average carbon intensity has reduced by 60% from 219 to 87 between 2018 and 2021. This is 115 lower than the composite Fund benchmark 202.
- Burning fossil fuels poses a serious risk to the stability of the climate upon which our well-being and economy depend, and research demonstrates that up to 80% world's proven fossil fuel reserves will have to remain unburnt if we are to have a reasonable chance of keeping global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius.
- Four London Borough local authority pension funds have committed to full divestment, including: London Borough of Waltham Forest in September 2016; London Borough of Southwark in December 2016; London Borough of Islington in September 2018; and, London Borough of Lambeth in December 2018.

This Council believes that:

- The Council should invest its pension funds in ways that support our Climate Emergency declaration by following its commitment to increase its allocation to sustainable and low carbon assets; and

The Council calls on Merton's Cross Party Pension Committee to continue to decarbonise its assets, and aspire to be at the forefront of responsible investment practice

Motion 7: September 2021 – Flooding

RESOLVED:

This council recognises the repeated failure of Thames Water to protect the borough from flooding. The Labour administration continues to ensure that Veolia is held to account regarding cleaning the drains and gullies of the borough that are in their remit, to reduce the effect of recent flooding in Merton caused by Thames Water failing to unblock and desilt their drains.

Council notes that at the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on 2nd September 2021, a report was presented providing an overview of the recent flooding incidents and actions that the Council is taking, as well as other risk management authorities such as Thames Water and the Environment Agency. The Council pro-actively mitigates flood risk through a programme of high-risk gully cleansing, gully sensors, annual maintenance of drains, implementation of SuDS such as raingardens and is working with Thames Water to unblock and de-silt their drains using CCTV investigations of the infrastructure. In addition, the Council has undertaken flood risk investigations under section 19 of the flood & water management act.

- Council notes that Merton became a lead local flood authority in 2010 and therefore officers are consulted on all flood-related matters in planning;

Therefore, council calls on cabinet to:

- Ensure that Thames Water, which has primary responsibility for the issues that have arisen in recent years, is held to account regarding their drain clearance programme
 - Promote publicity to ensure that residents and businesses are able to claim compensation from Thames Water in future, recognising that the process for reporting flooding and claiming damages has been improved following representations from council officers and cabinet
- Ensure that Veolia is held to the terms of the contract and ensures that all drains and gullies in their remit continue to be cleared;
- Ascertain the resources required for an increase the monitoring of drains and gullies from the current once every three years schedule, and consider invoking the step-in clauses in the contract with Veolia in future if this will ensure Merton has the best protection from flooding, or if in future Veolia fail to live up to their service level agreement;
- Instruct planning officers to ensure that flood prevention continues to be considered in planning decisions, and remains a priority for future developments;
- Instruct planning officers to investigate and report back on promoting permeable surfaces in future parking crossover applications; · Where applicable, increase tree

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

planting or other mitigating measures where they are more appropriate to assist with flood prevention.

Motion 8: November 2021 – Planning Enforcement

RESOLVED:

Council recognises the importance of good town planning and understands that local residents want planning applications that are approved to be adhered to and properly enforced.

Council notes that the building development control function has had an improvement programme underway since 2020, but while many of the improvements have been implemented, some have been delayed due to recruitment issues which the trade magazine UK Construction Excellence describes as a “long-predicted shortfall” in the building control sector across the UK. This in turn has had an impact on the capacity for planning enforcement with the latest statistics showing that the number of planning enforcement cases closed each month are at 46% of their target.

Residents demand and expect that all development in Merton is in accordance with sound planning principles and planning law, and Council notes that the government has failed to prepare for this long-predicted shortfall in the sector, or to fund councils so that they can provide services to the level that residents and councillors would want.

Therefore, council requests that the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate emergency in conjunction with the Director of Environment and Regeneration lobby the government to put in place measures to improve planning enforcement, to prioritise the rolling out of the improvement programme, and seek to tackle the backlog in cases, and report on progress to council in 6 months’ time, and to one meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel in 3 months’ time.

Council expects the following aspects to be included:

- The cost and viability of an online portal for planning enforcement cases which councillors and residents can see;
- Ways to improve reporting of planning breaches on the council website;
- Action plan to tackle the backlog in planning enforcement cases;
- Analysis of how well planning enforcement measures result in appropriate outcomes;
- Continued enforcement of existing planning laws against individuals and developers who break planning rules;

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

- Using public communications to highlight enforcement breaches (including a continued emphasis on those who fell trees in contravention of planning rules);
- Continuing to review the outcome of development following completion to ensure that greening measures have been implemented, including tree planting (in line with the council's Tree Strategy);
- Continued strong protection of existing trees via powers under Tree Protection Orders.
- The importance of good communication between the Planning Dept and the public and councillors;
- A full costing of all the above measures and an outline of the cuts that would have to be made to other services, and the impact of these, if the cost has to be borne in whole by the council rather than from direct additional grant.

Motion 9: November 2021 – Civility in Public Life

RESOLVED:

Council notes the tragic and appalling murder of Sir David Amess MP that was carried out as he performed his public duties.

Council extends its condolences to the family and all Sir David's friends for their loss, and marks the enormous contribution that he has made to politics in this country.

Council calls on the authorities to take great care to protect the safety of public servants, and for everyone to respect the importance of civility in public life.

Motion 10: November 2021 – Clarion Housing

RESOLVED:

Council notes that in September 2014 the Labour administration and Circle Housing Merton Priory (the predecessor of Clarion Housing) agreed the 'ten commitments' that would guide the future regeneration work. The 'ten commitments' are:

1. Circle Housing Merton Priory will consult with residents, consider their interests at all times, and address concerns fairly;
2. Current home owners will be entitled to at least the market value of their homes should they wish to take up the option to sell their homes to Circle Housing Merton Priory;
3. Current tenants will be entitled to be rehoused in a new home of appropriate size considering the number of people in the household;
4. Existing Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants will keep all their rights and have the same tenancy agreement, including rent levels, in the new neighbourhood as they do now;

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

5. All new properties will be more energy efficient and easier to heat than existing properties, helping to keep down residents' fuel bills;
6. Circle Housing Merton Priory will keep disruption to a minimum, and will do all it can to ensure that residents only move once if it is necessary to house residents temporarily while their new home is being built;
7. Circle Housing Merton Priory will offer extra help and support for older people and/or disabled residents throughout the renovation works;
8. Circle Housing Merton Priory will continue to maintain the homes of residents across the three neighbourhoods throughout the planning process until regeneration starts, including ensuring a high quality responsive repairs service;
9. Any growth in the number of homes will be in accordance with the council's own Development Plan so that it is considered, responsible and suitable for the area;
10. As a not for profit organization, Circle Housing Merton Priory will not profit from any regeneration and will use any surplus to provide more housing or improve existing neighbourhoods.

Council commends the Labour administration for signing up to these commitments and for ensuring that the pledges have been predominantly implemented, notes the recent concerns about Clarion's repair service and the administration's determination for Clarion to maintain homes effectively as well as undertaking regeneration. It calls upon the cabinet to declare its commitment to these principles in working with what is now Clarion Housing, alongside continuing engagement with residents of the estates to develop policies that local people can have confidence in.

Council also supports the determination of the administration and Clarion to regenerate the three estates despite the scheme being in deficit due to economic factors, and welcomes the proposal to use up to £72million by reinvesting money which would be due to the Council from private sales which will enable the estates to be rebuilt, provide additional social homes, and help deal with overcrowding issues.

Motion 11: November 2021 – Climate

RESOLVED:

Council notes that:

- Approximately 230 councils have declared a Climate Emergency, including Merton Council in July 2019. As part of our Climate Emergency declaration, we pledged to support Merton to become a carbon neutral council by 2030.
- Local government is an indispensable partner in achieving net zero, because of our insight into our communities and local circumstances, our service delivery and regulatory functions, and our ability to join up emissions reductions with other pressing priorities, from public health, to inequality to economic development.
- Without direct financial support from the Government and an acknowledgement of the pivotal role they play in tackling climate change, local authorities will struggle to

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

achieve these vital targets Council welcomes: The actions Merton Council has already taken to tackle the climate and biodiversity crisis including, by way of example:

- approving Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan, including the key actions required to become a carbon neutral council by 2030.
- setting up and supporting the volunteers in the Climate Action Group to develop community-led projects to reduce everyone's emissions, recognising that joint efforts are more effective than individuals' or the Council's alone.
- putting £2 million of reserves towards actions in the Climate Strategy and Action Plan so far
- supporting Merton Garden Streets, a volunteer-led initiative to make our streets greener, and holding Car Free Day events.
- installing 68 innovative Breathe London air quality and traffic sensors – more than any other London borough.
- installing low-energy LED lighting in our buildings and investing £2m in LED streetlights.
- putting in place over 50 PV panel systems on 44 Council buildings, generating 1,000,000 kWh every year, and 100% of the council's energy supply now coming from renewable sources.
- introducing more School Streets than any other London borough per capita, to lower pollution outside schools
- having over 200 electric vehicle charging points, 20 cycle hangars, 10 parklets, and 11 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
- Drafting a Local Plan that sets ambitious targets for new development so that new development is net-zero by 2050.

Council resolves:

- To continue to support Merton's communities including the Climate Action Group in their lead and delivery of projects across the borough, recognising that 97% of carbon emissions in Merton are outside Merton Council's control.
- To continue to work with employers in the borough, including businesses, the third sector, charities and the public sector to encourage them to take steps to reduce their carbon emissions and operate in a more sustainable way, and learn from any best practice that they have already put in place.
- To work with the third sector, charities, businesses, and residents across the borough to continue to meet targets set in the Climate Action Plan.
- That the Leader will write to Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Michael Gove MP to make the case for:
 - Acknowledging local government's pivotal role in tackling climate change, and to share examples of the work already done by Merton Council.
 - To call on the government to agree to a national framework and strategy with local government and business, that provides certainty of funding to enable local government to leverage its unique role and influence and maximize its potential in tackling climate change in the UK.

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

Motion 12: November 2021 - Motions and Amendments

RESOLVED:

This Council recognises that the best way for ideas to turn into action for the benefit of the residents is to table motions in council that refrain from political point scoring and instead are focussed on viable, cost-effective initiatives. For motions to be 'business-like' this Council suggests that they are to be based on SMART goals; thereby making them specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. In addition, despite the effort that does go into drafting motions and amendments, currently the Council lacks a mechanism to monitor the resulting outcomes. As a Council which prides itself on its transparency this Council believes in being openly held accountable for the decisions it makes on behalf of the residents we represent.

Therefore, this council resolves to:

- From this point forward, ask that parties endeavour only to submit motions and amendments which comply with SMART goal principles; and
- Agree to ask officers to table a report at the first business meeting after each Annual Council Meeting documenting the actions taken in response to the motions and amendments passed during the previous civic year.

Motion 13: February 2022 – AELTC

RESOLVED:

Council Notes:

The assurances given by the AELTC and Merton Council when the Freehold of the land occupied by the Wimbledon Golf Club was sold to the AELTC by Merton Council The statement in the Wimbledon Informer on 24 September 1993 by the then Leader of Merton Council that:

“The golf course land will be retained as open space. The whole stretch has been designated Metropolitan Open Land. We have declared it a conservation area and placed strong covenants on the sale.”

The statement in the Wimbledon Informer on 24 September 1993 by the Chairman of the All England Lawn Tennis Club that:

“We completely understand and support everyone’s determination to keep the land open and we have purchased the land on that basis.”

Council therefore reiterates that, while the land has in fact never been freely open to residents, covenants over this land held on behalf of the residents of Merton will need to be respected henceforth.

Council also notes that the covenant is a legal issue separate to the consideration of the AELTC Planning Application 21/P2900 and any future similar applications.

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

Motion 14: February 2022 – Covid Regulations

RESOLVED:

Council Notes:

The sacrifices made by Merton residents to comply with the rules during the pandemic and help make everyone safer.

That in order to be effective, there needs to be a feeling that the rules – and penalties for breaking them – will be applied fairly.

Council believes

- Government at all levels, local and national, needs to provide leadership.
- That in Merton councillors and officers have worked together to help make our Borough safer.
- That the recent reported potential breaches of the rules undermine public confidence, especially when not investigated properly.
- That Sue Gray's findings that there were "failures of leadership and judgment" in No. 10 resulting in gatherings that "should not have been allowed to take place or develop in the way that they did" make the Prime Minister's position untenable.

Therefore Council calls on the Leader to write to the Borough's two MPs to ask them if they agree with this, and request that they call publicly for Boris Johnson to resign as Prime Minister.

Motion 15: February 2022 – Transport

RESOLVED:

Council recognises that since 2018 the Labour administration has considered a range of new parking charges that:

1. Encourage all residents to use more sustainable travel;
2. Highlight the role that car use has on climate change and air pollution;
3. Recognise that, though they are least likely to be car owners, price rises could hit those on low incomes the hardest at a time when they are also those hit hardest by the government's cost of living crisis;
4. Reflect that air pollution has a negative impact on children, families, the elderly and those who need care;

APPENDIX A – Wording of Motions as passed at Council meetings 2021-22

5. Has not, on its own, led to a reduction in emission levels in Merton, but has contributed towards this, alongside measures such as school streets and additional walking and cycling infrastructure which has seen Merton achieve the second highest score of all Outer London boroughs on the Healthy Streets Scorecard.

Council is therefore deeply concerned about suggestions that due to the loss of income to TfL there will be proposals from the Mayor of London to:

6. Expand the ULEZ to all of Greater London;
7. Introduce a compulsory daily clean air charge for all petrol and diesel vehicles in Greater London;
8. Introduce a new boundary charge on vehicles travelling into Greater London.

Council recognises that as government is failing to fund TfL for the losses it has made during the pandemic as it has other transport providers, they are forcing TfL to consider new proposals which – without appropriate mitigation measures – will risk:

- Hitting the residents with the lowest incomes the hardest;
- Threatening Merton's economic recovery from the pandemic by unnecessarily harming businesses;

Council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to the Department of Transport to request that the government abandons their approach to TfL funding that could lead to damaging new proposals to unnecessarily tax Merton residents and harm the borough's economic recovery.

Motion agreed at Extraordinary Council meeting April 2021 – Violence against Women and Girls

RESOLVED:

- A. That Council considered and noted the content of the report
- B. Recognising that misogyny is systemic, and acknowledging the hurt and anger expressed more recently by women and girls in response to the murder of Sarah Everard, which was in part calling for their lived experience to be listened to and real action taken to address their concerns, Council calls on Cabinet to:

- (1) develop safe and confidential opportunities for women and girls to share their experiences with the Council and other appropriate authorities to inform their work in changing male behaviour to reduce VAWG; and
- (2) to explore how restorative justice processes might be utilised to provide victims with an additional form of support and means of reducing VAWG.