

Agenda Item 3

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CABINET

10 OCTOBER 2022

(7.16 pm - 7.44 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

Adrian Ash (Interim Director, Environment and Regeneration),
Robert Cayzer (Interim Head of Cabinet Office), Roger Kershaw
(Interim Executive Director of Finance and Digital), Paul McGarry
(FutureMerton Manager), John Morgan (Interim Director,
Community & Housing), Tom Procter (Head of Contracts &
School Organisation) and Louise Round (Interim Executive
Director of Innovation and Change)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies were received.

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 22 September 2022 are agreed as an accurate record.

4 WASTE AND STREET CLEANSING CONTRACT (Agenda Item 4)

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Green Spaces and Climate Change presented the report, thanking officers for their work on the report, which recommended the current Waste and Street Cleansing Contract not be extended. This followed lengthy conversations with the contractor and noted that an extension would lead to an increase in costs and risks for the Council.

It was noted that the break clause had always been in place within the contract and the Council would ask residents what they wished to see in a future service and consider how to move forward.

The Interim Director Environment and Regeneration advised that the legal advice received by the partner Boroughs was that the contract extension as proposed would leave Councils open to legal challenge and the Boroughs would benefit from a new specification reflecting local priorities.

If the recommendations were agreed, a 6 week consultation would follow including pop-up high street sessions, focus groups, phone interviews and online Q&As.

The Leader of the Council thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for their work on the report.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet agree not to extend the current waste collection and street cleansing contract, following a review of the proposed requirements by the contractor to support an extension of the current contract.

B. That Cabinet agree to not jointly procure with the SWLP and therefore require officers to develop and manage a new Service Delivery Strategy for the waste collection and street cleansing services while coordinating with the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) boroughs.

C. That Cabinet note and agree the resourcing and co-ordination function of the SLWP. The SLWP will coordinate the partnership and help ensure compliance with the London Environment Strategy (LES), while providing technical, financial, and strategic advice.

D. That Cabinet note the powers held by the Mayor of London under the GLA Act to issue directions to London boroughs in relation to waste management procurement and encourage the project team to develop a working relationship with the GLA Borough Liaison Team to ensure service specifications are in general conformity with the LES.

E. That Cabinet note the proposed timetable and budget implications

5 SELECTIVE AND ADDITIONAL LICENSING AND ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS - CURRENT PROPOSALS (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development presented the report, noting that Merton had over 29,000 rented properties within the Borough, above the national average and providing an overview of some of the issues within this sector.

The Cabinet Member gave an overview of the measures proposed within the report. These would all require consultation and a robust evidence base as well as consideration of the geographical areas these measures would be applied to. The data provided had highlighted certain wards and therefore having reviewed this data the proposed recommendations were set out.

If the Consultation results were in favour, the Article 4 direction would be immediately applied to those particular wards set out in the recommendations. Selective licensing could be introduced by September 2023 and an Article 4 direction by May 2023.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their work and it was RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet approve Consultation on the proposed introduction of Selective Licensing to Figge's Marsh; Graveney; Longthornton; and Pollards Hill Wards
2. That Cabinet approve Consultation on the proposed introduction of Additional Licensing to Figge's Marsh; Graveney; Longthornton; Pollards Hill; Colliers Wood; Cricket Green and Lavender Fields Wards
3. That Cabinet approve an Immediate Article 4, noting the possible financial risk to the Council
4. That Cabinet approve Consultation on the introduction of an Immediate Article 4 Direction for small HMOs in Figge's Marsh; Graveney; Lonthornton; Pollards Hill; Colliers Wood; Cricket Green and Lavender Fields Wards
5. That Cabinet note that following the consultation exercise, which is scheduled to run from November 2022 to January 2023, a further report will be brought back to Cabinet to agree the way forward following consideration of representations received
6. That Cabinet note the report on Empty Homes which is for information only
7. That Cabinet agree that the additional cost of £134k be funded by a transfer from the corporate contingency fund

6 HOUSING DELIVERY OPTIONS (Agenda Item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development presented the report and provided an overview of the series of options within the report.

The proposal included the recommendation not to dispose of four council sites and allocate them instead for affordable homes, these being 21 homes at the Elm Nursery car park site, 36 homes at Raleigh Gardens car park, 18 homes at the Canons Madeira Road and 18 homes at Farm Road, with 93 homes in total. It was noted that £300,000 had already been allocated for the necessary architectural work.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet notes the options appraisal setting out how the Council can achieve its strategic ambition to deliver affordable housing on council owned sites.
- B. That Cabinet agrees not to dispose of the first four sites for private sale and instead allocates the sites for affordable homes, delivered either by the Council or a Registered Provider (Housing Association).
- C. That Cabinet note the implications for the Council of Merton re-establishing a Housing Revenue Account should it decide to be the direct provider of social needs housing.
- D. That Cabinet note the finance, timescale and officer resource implications for the programme.

7 CLIMATE ACCREDITATION: EMBEDDING MERTON'S CLIMATE COMMITMENTS THROUGH SENIOR STAFF AND COUNCILLOR TRAINING (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Green spaces and Climate Change presented the report which outlined the Council's plan to achieve climate accreditation within the Council through training the Chief Executive, Directors and Cabinet Members to become climate literate. The report also outlined

recommendations to train commercial services staff and to approve literacy training for officers who work with volunteers.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet approves the commitment of senior council staff and cabinet members to undertake carbon literacy training provided by APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence). Training undertaken by the Chief Executive and Directors will enable the council to achieve 'Bronze Level Carbon Literacy Accreditation'.
- B. That Cabinet approves the commitment of Commercial Services staff and those most involved in contract management and commissioning to undertake procurement specific carbon literacy or climate change training.
- C. That Cabinet approves volunteering officers to achieve carbon literacy accreditation.

8 BUSINESS PLAN 2023-27 (Agenda Item 8)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services presented the report, thanking the former Director of Corporate Services Caroline Holland for her years of service to the Council.

The report set out an initial review of the Medium term financial strategy including the capital programme, noting the impact of rising inflation for which an additional £6.5m had been allocated in next years budget. The Cabinet Member was working with officers to revise the MTFS and to identify initial savings and income targets for departments to consider.

The Interim Director Finance and Digital advised that there were still a number of unknown factors including the settlement and grants from central government and Cabinet would continue to be updated on progress. In relation to the pay award, this required two of three unions to accept the proposal and currently one had rejected and one accepted the offer, with the third union expected to relay a decision at the end of October.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet notes the approach to rolling forward the MTFS for 2023-27.
- 2. That Cabinet confirm the latest position with regards to savings already in the MTFS
- 3. That Cabinet agrees the approach to setting a balanced budget outlined in Section 4 as the basis for the setting of targets for 2023-27
- 4. That Cabinet agrees the proposed savings targets based on a standstill position.
- 5. That Cabinet agrees the timetable for the Business Plan 2023-27 including the revenue budget 2023/24 the MTFS 2023-27 and the Capital Programme for 2023-27.