

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 20 March 2023

Wards: All

Subject:

Lead Director: Louise Round, Executive Director of Innovation and Change

Lead member: Councillor Ross Garrod, Leader of the Council

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Recommendations:

That Cabinet

- A. Review and approve the draft Council Plan – Building A Better Merton Together for submission to Council for adoption at its meeting on the 19th of April 2023
- B. Note the proposed approach to internal and external communications to launch and communicate the plan with staff, residents and partners
- C. Review and approve the accompanying Corporate Performance Framework 2023/24

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The proposed new Council Plan ‘Building a Better Merton Together’ sets out the overarching strategic objectives to guide the work of the administration and council over the coming years to 2026. It sets out a vision for how we can build a better Merton together with our partners, residents and wider communities, informed by feedback from residents through recent borough engagement.
- 1.2. ‘Building a Better Merton’ outlines the ambition of the administration and what residents can expect from the Council. Our priorities for delivery are set out across the three core strategic objectives. Cabinet is asked to review and approve the draft Plan included in Appendix A for submission to Council for adoption at its meeting on the 19th of April 2023.
- 1.3. A coordinated internal and external communications plan will accompany the launch of Building a Better Merton Together which is outlined in section 3 alongside the timetable.
- 1.4. The Corporate Performance Framework has been reviewed and redesigned to align closely with the Council Plan and support effective delivery. The proposed new list of corporate indicators is included in Appendix B as an accompanying document to the Council Plan for review and approval by Cabinet

2 BUILDING A BETTER MERTON – OVERVIEW

- 2.1. The overarching ambition of the administration is to 'Build a Better Merton Together' with a focus on three strategic objectives:
 - **Nurturing Civic Pride;**
 - **Building a Sustainable Future;**
 - **Creating a Borough of Sport.**
- 2.2. 'Building a Better Merton Together' puts forward our plan for delivering against these three strategic objectives - what they mean to Merton and what we will be doing to deliver alongside our partners. It sets out our ambition for the borough and situates it within a wider context of the current challenges facing our communities, like the cost-of-living crisis, and the aspirations of our residents.
- 2.3. We have heard from residents that they are ambitious for the borough and want to feel proud about their local area, communities and town centres. The delivery outlined in Building a Better Merton Together has been informed by this feedback and shaped through detailed work carried out between the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chief Executive and Directors across each Cabinet Portfolio.
- 2.4. The delivery plan in Building a Better Merton Together focuses on what the council and partners will be doing in the coming financial year to achieve this ambition, with a longer-term view to what we hope to achieve by 2026. Some deliverables will be achieved within the coming financial year, others might be at an earlier stage in year one, such as scoping or consultation. The full plan is set out in Appendix B.
- 2.5. Sitting alongside the Business Plan 2023-26, the Council Plan 'Building a Better Merton Together' will inform the future workplan, resource allocation and performance management for the council, providing a clear and simple framework to focus delivery and communicate priorities across the organisation and with our partners and communities.
- 2.6. We will review and refresh the Council Plan on an annual basis to allow for emerging new priorities and deliverables and to keep the council accountable for progress. To monitor progress and impact, we will produce an annual State of the Borough report to give a snapshot of where Merton stands in key areas, drawing on a set of key indicators for each strategic objective as set out in the draft plan. We have also reviewed our corporate performance framework to align with the new strategic objectives and ensure the Council is delivering effectively.

3 COMMUNICATING TO STAFF, RESIDENTS AND PARTNERS

- 3.1. Following adoption by the Council, Building a Better Merton Together will be launched and made available to staff, residents and partners with content, design and communication channels adjusted to reflect the different audiences. A dedicated section of the website and intranet will be set up to make the details of the plan widely available to the wider public, partners and Merton Council staff.
- 3.2. A coordinated internal and external communications plan will support the publication of the plan so that residents, partners, and Merton Council staff are

engaged on our new strategic priorities and how we will deliver for the borough. It is anticipated that Executive Directors for the new directorates will be key to driving the communication and delivery of the new plan internally into their respective service areas across the council.

3.3. Timetable for approval and publication:

Approval at Cabinet	March 20th 2023
Adoption at Full Council	April 19th 2023
Formal launch to staff, partners, and the public	From April 20th 2023

4 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2023-24

- 4.1. With the introduction of the Council Plan, the Corporate Performance Framework has been reviewed and redesigned to support the delivery of the Building a Better Merton Together. The proposed new corporate indicator list is included in Appendix B and, following approval, would come into effect from Q1 2023-24.
- 4.2. A more streamlined set of metrics has been selected and structured to align with the new strategic objectives, enabling the council to track progress against the Council Plan priorities. We will also continue to monitor our performance on areas critical to our core statutory duties, financial sustainability, and organisational health ('Core Service Areas').
- 4.3. As noted above in 2.6, the Council Plan itself sets out a wider basket of indicators which will be used to track our progress through an annual State of the Borough report. The Corporate Performance Framework, however, contains only those key performance indicators where the council is in direct control of performance.
- 4.4. Further work is underway to improve our approach to our corporate performance monitoring and reporting, including how we can make better use of technology and analytical tools to improve our insights.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1. Cabinet could choose to require that further work be undertaken on priorities and / or Plan content. Given the extensive evidence base underpinning the Plan, and the breadth of engagement through the development of the Plan this is not a recommended option.

6 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 6.1. Extensive internal consultation has been undertaken through Directorate Management Teams, the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet Member briefings. The development of the plan has also been informed by a resident

engagement programme carried out over 2021 and collaborative engagement work with our voluntary sector and community groups.

7 TIMETABLE

7.1. The proposed timetable is set out above.

8 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Business Plan agreed at Cabinet on the 1st of March 2023 includes the financial and other resources necessary for delivery of the Plan

9 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None directly arising from this report

10 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

10.1. The priorities set out in the Council Plan and the new approach to community engagement mentioned in the plan should have a positive impact on these considerations. Many of the priorities should reduce inequalities in particular building new affordable housing, improving housing conditions in the private sector, becoming a London Living Wage employer and encouraging others to do so, ensuring equal access to health services, improving air quality and increasing civic participation through volunteering.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

11.1. These are set out in the Nurturing Civic Pride section of the Council Plan.

12 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1. None directly arising from this report.

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

12.2 Appendix A– Council Plan – ‘Building a Better Merton together’.

12.3 Appendix B – Corporate Performance Framework

14 BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1. Report to LSG ‘Developing a Corporate Plan’ 21 November 2022.