

Agenda Item 3

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CABINET

17 JULY 2023

(7.15 pm - 7.56 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

ALSO PRESENT Councillor John Oliver

Lewis Addlington-Lee (Head of Leader's Office), Zara Bishop (Communications Manager), Keith Burns (Assistant Director, Commissioning), Polly Cziok (Executive Director of Innovation & Change), Jen Davis (Cabinet Support Officer), Hannah Doody (Chief Executive), Anthony Hopkins (Head of Library, Heritage and Adult Education Services), Nazifa Islam (Cabinet Support Officer), Roger Kershaw (Assistant Director Finance and Digital), Jane McSherry (Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families), John Morgan (Executive Director, Adult Social Care, Integrated Care and Public Health), Asad Mushtaq (Executive Director of Finance & Digital), Lucy Owen (Executive Director of Housing & Sustainable Development), Louise Round (Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership) and Amy Dumitrescu (Democracy Services Manager)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

The Leader of the Council opened the meeting and thanked those in attendance.

The Leader spoke to thank Louise Round, Managing Director South London Legal Partnership at her last meeting of Cabinet for her work and Cabinet Members spoke to express their thanks to Louise.

No apologies were received from members.

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 19 June 2023 are agreed as an accurate record.

4 REVIEW OF BUILDING CONTROL AND PROPOSED INCREASE TO BUILDING CONTROL FEES (Agenda Item 4)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development presented the report noting that fees had not been increased for the service for four years and it was necessary to increase them to ensure they covered the costs of the service and became in line with other London Boroughs. The fees would be reviewed annually in April.

A review of the service had been undertaken with a draft structure devised which would include two trainees for three years at no cost to the Council.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet noted the ongoing Review of the Building Control Service to make it fit for purpose.
- B. That Cabinet approved an increase to Building Control Fees as set out in the report and detailed in the Appendix.
- C. That Cabinet noted the current position with regard to legislative changes affecting the Building Control Service, following the outcome of the investigation into Grenfell and Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.

5 MERTON'S CIVIC PRIDE FUND – INVESTING IN NEIGHBOURHOODS AND MERTON'S COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION FUND (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Greenspaces and Climate presented the report and provided an overview of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet

- 1. Approved the proposed approach to launching and administering Merton's new Community Climate Action Fund alongside Merton's Civic Pride Fund – Investing in Neighbourhoods.
- 2. Approved the amended assessment criterion B set out at para 2.13 for Merton Civic Pride Fund – Investing in Neighbourhoods so that it refers to the Council Plan – "Building a Better Merton Together" which confirms the context for the council's strategic objectives.
- 3. Approved the proposed criteria for Merton's new Community Climate Action Fund.
- 4. Noted the new prioritisation guidance for both funds, as well as the additional information requirements for projects which have already received council funding.
- 5. Approved the proposed timetable set out in Section 5 of the report.

6 THE ROLE OF MERTON'S LIBRARIES AS COMMUNITY HUBS (Agenda Item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage presented the report, noting that there were seven libraries in the Borough which attracted up to 1.1 million visits per year and the intention to increase their offer and improve the current network.

The Cabinet Member gave an overview of the recommendations and thanked officers for their work.

The Leader of the Council thanked the libraries team and the 750 volunteers who work across Merton's libraries for their work.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet noted the progress made with establishing Merton's libraries as community hubs.

B. That Cabinet agreed the direction of travel for Merton's libraries as community hubs and the kinds of services and partnerships that will be provided through them.

7 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development presented the report on the adoption and publication of the policy noting there was a statutory responsibility to award DFGs and to provide a service in this regard to enable persons with disabilities to have adaptations installed within their homes. The Cabinet Member provided an overview of the support included.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care spoke to welcome the report and stated that keeping people in their homes was a key objective.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved the adoption and publication of the Housing Assistance Policy

8 A MODERNISED APPROACH TO ENGAGING RESIDENTS (Agenda Item 8)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Civic Pride presented the report thanking officers for their work. The Cabinet Member gave an overview of the key recommendations including reforming face to face engagement, the proposed changes to Community Fora and improving work with residents associations.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member advised that the proposals had been taken to all Community Forum meetings and some were keen to continue in their own way and they would be supported with this.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet agreed the proposals for a more resident-facing approach to community engagement, through a new model for community forums as well as additional support for resident associations

B. That Cabinet agreed to the proposals to supplement the biennial residents survey with a new digital engagement platform that includes a citizens panel

9 DRAFT EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2023 - 2026 (Agenda Item 9)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Civic Pride presented the report noting that the consultation was starting on the draft strategy and set out how the Council would fulfil a wide range of objectives. The Cabinet Member noted that the consultation would be open until October 2023.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet agreed to go out to public consultation on the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy prior to a final version being presented to Council for adoption in November 2023.
- B. That Cabinet delegated the authority to agree the final version of the Strategy, for submitting to Council, to the Cabinet Member for Civic Pride in order to enable a longer consultation timescale.
- C. That Cabinet noted that in addition to the nine Protected Characteristics defined by the Equality Act the scope of the strategy has been extended to include care experienced young people, armed forces veterans, single parent households and socio-economic status.
- D. That Cabinet noted the proposed consultation timeline.
- E. That Cabinet noted the proposed duration of the Strategy is intended to align both with the end date of the new Council Plan and to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's requirement that Councils publish updated equalities objectives every four years.

10 THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON (Agenda Item 10)

The Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning presented the report, thanking officers for their work. The Cabinet Member gave an overview of the report and the Executive Director for Children, Lifelong Learning and Families advised that the report recommendations were within part of the plan to have more children educated in provision in Merton and expanding therapy provision to meet the needs of those children.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That Cabinet approved the award of the contract for Educational Occupational Health Services, (Ed OT), for the initial contract term of four (4) years, with the option to extend for up to two (2) years for Merton children and young people with Education, Health and Care plans, (EHCP). The identities of the preferred and unsuccessful bidders are set out in Appendix A
- 2 That Cabinet noted the spend for the Educational Occupational Therapy services for an initial term of four (4) years, with the option to extend for two (2) years, with a total contract value as shown in Appendix A for the full six years.
- 3 That Cabinet delegated the authority to approve the two (2) extension to the Executive Director of CLLF Department.

11 QUARTER 1 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 11)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services presented the report, thanking officers for their work including reformatting the reports to separate figures into the six new directorates. It was noted that the Council was currently projecting a net unfavourable variance of just over £8m, and members were working closely with officers to ensure the budget was monitored to work towards a more balanced net position by the end of the financial year. It was noted a number of changes to the capital programme were also included.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet noted the financial reporting data for quarter 1, June 2023, relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net adverse variance at 30th June on service expenditure of £8.186m when corporate and funding items are included.
- B. That Cabinet noted the contents of Section 5 and Appendix 5b of the report and approved the adjustments to the Capital Programme in the Table below:

	Budget 2022-23	Budget 2023-24	Budget 2024-25	Budget 2025-26	Narrative
	£	£	£	£	
<u>Children, Lifelong Learning & Families</u>					
Hillcross - Capital Maintenance	1,950				Virement from the Unallocated Capital Maint. Budget
Wimbledon Park - Capital Maintenance	(67,850)				Virement to the Unallocated Capital Maint. Budget
Abbotsbury - Capital Maintenance	96,980				Virement from the Unallocated Capital Maint. Budget
Malmesbury - Capital Maintenance	(1,990)				Virement to the Unallocated Capital Maint. Budget
Liberty - Capital Maintenance	(430)				Virement to the Unallocated Capital Maint. Budget
St Marks Primary - Capital Maintenance	(650)				Virement to the Unallocated Capital Maint. Budget
Sherwood - Capital Maintenance	(17,200)				Adjustment to Budget as Lighting Scheme not progressed and school contrib reduced
Unallocated - Capital Maintenance	(28,010)				Virement to Various Capital Maint. Schemes
Raynes Park - Capital Maintenance	(36,790)				Virement to the Rutlish Capital Maint. Budget
Rutlish - Capital Maintenance	36,790				Virement from the Raynes Park Capital Maint. Budget
Perseid School Expansion	(50,000)	50,000			Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Second school ARP expansion 4	(20,000)	20,000			Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Second school ARP expansion 3	(20,000)	20,000			Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Primary school ARP expansion	(10,000)	10,000			Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Ricards Lodge - 6th Form Expansion(a)	50,000	3,550,000			DfE Post 16 Capacity Funding £3,235,706 and School Contrib £364,294 match funding
<u>Environment and Regeneration</u>					
Parks Investment - New Green Flag	12,000				New Grant from GLA for Schools Suprezones
Sports Facilities - Tennis Big Screens	60,000				Funded from Reserves
Morden Leisure Centre - New Running Track	(350,000)	350,000			Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Parks Investment - Abbey Recreation Ground	(7,210)				£7,210 Spent in Revenue
CCTV Investment - CCTV cameras & infrast upgrade	(439,730)	439,730			Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Raynes Park Area Roads - Raynes Park Station Pub Realm	5,870				Additional S106 Funding
Highways and Footways - Casualty Reduction & Schools	(9,100)				TfL budget reduced as moved to Revenue Budgets
Parks Investment - Tennis Court Major Resurfacing	185,590	(35,590)	(75,000)	(75,000)	Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend

Housing & Sustainable Development					
Major Projects - Affordable Ho - Affordable Housing Fund	(4,522,490)	4,522,490			Re-profiled in accordance with projected spend
Mitcham Area Regeneration - Knowledge Exchange Mitcham	266,500				Funding from South London Partnerships
Wimbledon Area Regeneration - Wimbledon Hill Rd	92,000				Virement between interlinked schemes
Wimbledon Area Regeneration - Wimb Public Realm Implement	(92,000)				Virement between interlinked schemes
Total	(4,865,770)	8,926,630	(75,000)	(75,000)	

(a) Requires Council Approval

C. That Cabinet recommended to Council to approve Ricards Lodge Sixth Form Expansion scheme of £3,600,000 noting the information contained in 5.2b(ii)

12 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 12)

The meeting proceeded entirely in public and therefore this item was not required.