

Liberal Democrat Amendments to the Strategic Theme Report **Council 7 February 2024**

Amendment 1: cost of living emergency - scrap the two-child benefit cap to help build a sustainable future

To add a new Recommendation B:

B. Council notes that child poverty has a significant impact on children and young people's mental health and wider-health outcomes. For example, according to research noted by the Mental Health Foundation, children living in the lowest 20% income bracket are 2 or 3 times more likely to develop mental health problems. Council further notes that according to CPAG, removing the two-child benefit cap would lift 250,000 children out of poverty and result in 850,000 children living in less deep poverty.

Therefore, Council recommends that Cabinet consider:

- a. Calling on the UK Government to scrap the two-child benefit cap, asking the Council Leader to write to Merton's Members of Parliament expressing the Council's support for the scrapping of the two-child benefit cap to request they vote for removal of the cap in any votes in the House of Commons; and
- b. investigating how Merton's Council Tax Support Scheme can be used to provide additional support to families affected by the cap if they do not otherwise qualify now or in the future, or other equivalent measures.

Cllr Anthony Fairclough

Cllr Jenifer Gould

Amendment 2: investing in our young people – outdoor residentials

To add a new Recommendation B:

Recommends that Cabinet consider ways to support the Outwardbound Trust's Campaign by working with schools and other relevant partners so Merton's children have more opportunities to experience the great outdoors during their education, helping young people leave formal education feeling more capable, curious and resilient – ready for the challenges of life.

Cllr Anthony Fairclough

Cllr Jenifer Gould

Amendment 3: investing in our young people – reducing the incidence of eating-disorders

To add a new Recommendation B:

Recommends that Cabinet consider producing a report within the next 12 months setting out a comprehensive plan, based on Merton-specific analyses, with targets and deadlines for improvement aimed at reducing the incidence of eating-disorders in young people.

Cllr Anthony Fairclough

Cllr Jenifer Gould