

Budget Amendment 6 March 2024 – Conservative Group

Amend recommendation 5 by adding the following wording: “subject to the following amendment:

Use £1,001,000 from the “For use in future years’ budgets” on a one-off basis to:

Provide a 1% Council Tax rebate to all Band A-E Council Taxpayers in LB Merton.
After Recommendation 5 to add:

Recommendation 6:

To request Cabinet to prepare future budgets on the basis of the following principles:

- To prioritise and ensure the successful management of regeneration opportunities and projects in Morden, Mitcham and Wimbledon, for town centres, green spaces and housing;
- To develop new planning policies that local residents can have confidence in;
- To look into establishing a scheme to incentivise and lessen the financial and administrative license burdens for the operation of pop-up and street market offerings, including considering the suspension of street licence charges for a period;
- Increase support for apprenticeships and encourage businesses to hire new apprentices by actively promoting government apprenticeship support schemes;
- Investing in greener, low carbon and well-designed community infrastructure to improve amenity, green spaces, wellbeing and air quality within the borough;
- Ensuring the council prioritises sustainable travel and safe cycling by recognising the need for low carbon provision in future development plans;
- Invest in innovative and new technology based solutions to combat the climate emergency and the pollution crisis in Merton, such as green walls and city trees, and also increase funding and take opportunities within new developments to deliver significantly higher levels of tree planting across the borough;
- Invest in children’s active sport and fitness and consider opportunities for further use of the borough’s greenspace to achieve this goal;
- Focus on children’s wellbeing and mental health and work towards preventative mental health schemes available for all children in Merton;
- Develop a new partnership with business to support youth clubs across the borough;
- Formally reject the Labour and Liberal Democrat policy of expanding the Ultra Low Emission Zone to Merton;

- Oppose Mayor Khan’s decision to close Wimbledon Police Station and campaign to keep all Police Stations in Merton open;
- Welcome the investment into St Helier Hospital and the wider government backed investment into healthcare for Merton residents;
- Develop a future Council Tax Support Scheme based around the premise that all who receive council services should contribute towards the cost;
- Commission an independent analysis to identify the social determinants of health inequalities that are specific to Merton;
- Continue to support dementia day-care centre provision, including the Eastway Centre, across the borough;
- Keep under review the conditions in Morden and Wimbledon that would allow the expansion of the Article 4 Direction to prevent the spread of HMOs should the evidence base change;
- Work towards a multi year funding settlement for the Faith in Action Drop-in for homelessness support in Merton;
- Scrap the planned increase in Parking Charges;
- Conduct a review of the potential impact on the borough’s state schools if the damaging Labour Party policy of charging VAT on private school fees is enacted;

And a review of strategic objectives by:

- Ensuring that the financial strategy is explicit about how it supports strategic priorities vs balancing the council’s budget to ensure that resources are in the right place to exploit the opportunities, and meet needs;
- Developing a clear narrative that describes strategic vision to create clarity for planning across the departments;
- Constantly reviewing risk appetite to ensure opportunities that can deliver a transformative council with a wider range of benefits are not missed.”