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Merton Council

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

28 April 2021

Supplementary agenda

5 Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy - To follow

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Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 28 April 2021

Wards: All

Subject: Progress report on implementation of the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21

Lead officer: Chis Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration

Lead member: Councillor Marsie Skeete, Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities

Contact officer: Evereth Willis, Equality and Community Cohesion Officer

Recommendations:

1. That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission note and comment on the progress made on the implementation of the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21.
 2. That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission note and comment on the approach to refreshing the Equality and Community Cohesion strategy 2022-26
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Commission with a progress report on the implementation of the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21.

2. DETAILS

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the local authority, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not. “Protected characteristics” are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 also requires the council to publish equality objectives every four years to demonstrate how it will meet the PSED. The Equality Strategy outlines the Council’s ‘Equality Objectives’ as the following six themes:
 - a. To ensure key plans and strategies narrow the gap between different communities in the borough;
 - b. Improve equality of access to services for disadvantaged groups;
 - c. Ensure regeneration plans increase the opportunity for all Merton’s residents to fulfil their educational, health and economic potential, participate in the renewal of the borough and create a health promoting environment;
 - d. Promoting a safe, healthy and cohesive borough where communities get on well together ;
 - e. Encourage recruitment from all sections of the community , actively promote staff development and career progression opportunities and embed equalities across the organisation;
 - f. Fulfil our statutory duties and ensure protected groups are effectively engaged when we change our services.

- 2.3 The objectives aim to narrow the gap in outcomes between residents, in particular between the East and West of the borough. A cross-departmental approach has been taken to deliver some of the commitments such as Hate Crime and Domestic Violence.
- 2.4 Council approved the Equality Strategy 2017-21 in March 2017. The strategy is a four-year strategy that sets out what we will do to tackle discrimination and inequality and promote equal opportunities and community cohesion in Merton.
- 2.5 The accompanying action plan sets out the actions we will take to meet our equality priorities both corporately and departmentally.
- 2.6 The activity in the action plan is closely linked to the council's performance framework as commitments are aligned with departmental service plans. This will ensure the strategy is embedded in service plans across the council to ensure effective implementation. The aim is to set smart targets and, where no baseline information exists, improving data collection and analysis will itself become a target.

Progress on the implementation of the strategy

Overall, the update in Appendix 1 shows good progress has been made to implement the commitments in the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy, in particular key achievements to note include:

1. Merton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024 was agreed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, with a key principle of tackling health inequalities – especially the East/West health divide in the borough that is driven by social inequality and the wider determinants of health.
2. To support the growing number of people including families experiencing food poverty, Merton Community Fridge Network was set up in collaboration with local VCS organisations, Merton Council and London Food Alliance. Led by Merton Council, the Merton Community Fridge Network since the start of pandemic receives food from the London Food Alliance, via UK charity FareShare for redistribution across the borough. Sustainable Merton are now leading the Community Fridge Network.
3. As part of winter grants programme of funding Public Health and Adult Social Care have funded energy efficiency work by Thinking Works, as part of the Borough's 'Warm and Well' scheme. Thinking Works helps vulnerable people save on their energy bills by helping them switch fuel supplier, make cost saving behavioural changes, access grants for heating and insulation, take up benefit checks and reduce debt. Prior to Covid-19 home visits targeted households in the East of the Borough and between February 2019 and December 2020 57% of Thinking Works home visits were in Mitcham.
4. Public Health are working with SW London STP and housing colleagues to improve the health of rough sleepers. Work has included working with housing to make sure all rough sleepers are registered with a GP practice and promoting awareness of and referral routes into commissioned health services such as healthy living, substance misuse and sexual health services.

5. The Connecting Merton project launched via Merton's libraries. The project loans ICT equipment and provides broadband connectivity along with training for vulnerable residents who have limited or no ICT access in their homes.
6. The council has contributed £271k to the Merton Giving Fund to provide small grants to small groups for COVID-19 support. Grants totalling over £400k have been allocated via Merton Giving for a range of projects tackling issues such as food poverty, isolation, mental health, digital exclusion and providing infrastructure support.
7. To date, we have had 591 Merton residents start the Work and Health Programme – Better Working Futures programme and 65% have found employment. As a direct response to COVID-19 the Work and Health programme delivery was moved from face to face engagement to phone calls and online. This seems to be working well as there has been a steady rise in residents entering into employment over the last 6 months.
8. Adult Social Care has continued to develop its performance reporting mechanisms to now include an analysis of safeguarding activity by ethnicity, which will be refreshed on a regular basis and used to inform future commissioning activity as well as helping us to understand where focused work with sectors or individual providers is needed
9. As part of our response to the issues raised by the pandemic we commissioned BAME Voice to undertake research to understand the 'lived experience' of the borough's BAME communities and build resilience and trust. The research findings and recommendations will be published shortly.
10. We are about to launch a new online recruitment and selection course which we will ensure addresses how to avoid unconscious bias in the recruitment process. Managers will be required to refresh this training every 2 years.
11. Mutual mentoring is being introduced and this programme launches in April.
12. Black Lives Matter (BLM) and the impact of Covid was discussed with the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minorities and an action plan developed for BLM as part of the Recovery and Modernisation Programme.
13. In 2020 we launched a Hate Crime Third Party Reporting Scheme so that victims can make a report at various reporting centres in the community if they do not feel comfortable reporting directly to the police. This has switched to an over the phone service during the pandemic. Work is ongoing to expand the Third Party Reporting Scheme to more organisations in the community.
14. During the pandemic we have continued to provide support and community services to victims of Domestic Violence. During the year the One Stop Shop has continued to operate virtually. Regular

communications have continued via social media letting people know how and where to report, or where to seek advice.

15. Merton has been awarded £186,000 PHE section 31 grant designed to increase interventions to reduce drug related harm and offending. This funding will be used to support more targeted and intensive support for some of the most prolific drug related offenders in engaging with recovery focused interventions.
16. Wimbledon Park station has planning permission to become step free (managed by TFL). We continue to press SWT to include Motspur Park step free access in their investment plans.
17. Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans EHCPs have improved their performance in all indicators at all key stages. Whilst there have been some drops in performance for pupils in receipt of SEN support, their performance remains above the national averages for the same group nationally in all indicators, with the exception of writing progress at KS2 which is in line.
18. During the lockdowns, physical attendance at schools was limited to children open to children's social care and/or those with EHCPs. Post lockdown attendance was voluntary and in selected year groups. Some schools also had to close bubbles due to infections. Attendance in all schools was monitored daily throughout the lockdowns and re-opening and schools were supported accordingly. The council put in place robust risk review processes to ensure the attendance of this cohort of children where by all children with a social worker had their attendance reviewed and challenged by a Covid Children Missing Education panel of senior managers. These processes were praised by Ofsted during a focussed visit in October 2020.
19. Despite the challenges, providers of childcare and education for children aged under 5 in Merton have responded well and have met the many demands face-on. 66% of the childcare remained open in the early phase of the pandemic, and there was a loss of 2 nursery providers situated on school sites.
20. Merton has improved from the 12th lowest NEET in England to the 8th lowest. This performance is achieved through daily tracking, targeted key working, holiday activities, Education, Training and Employment workshops, pre-NEET support in Schools, Careers workshops, Work experience programmes and our employability project.
21. All schools are responsible for ensuring that pupils receive remote education should they need to self-isolate. Merton schools have worked hard to develop their remote learning offer, and whilst this has included trying to ensure that all pupils have access to a digital device to be able to access the learning (as appropriate) online, they are very mindful of the need to ensure those pupils who do not have devices can access the learning in other ways (including, of course, though paper copies).
22. To tackle digital exclusion, many schools have devices available for loan to disadvantaged pupils who need them – indeed one secondary

school already has a policy that ensures all pupils have a school device, and some other secondary schools are following suit, introducing devices year by year as pupils come into the school. This is of course dependent on school budgets. We are lucky to have the Wimbledon Dons (and other charities) locally who are also supplying reconditioned devices to schools. The Dons have worked with almost all Merton schools so far, and their plans are to continue to provide devices as and when they become available. In addition, the Government has/had three schemes to enable some disadvantaged pupils to have devices:

- Year 10 scheme – this happened in the summer term of 2020, and all secondary schools had an allocation for their Year 10 students
- Children with a social worker scheme – this took place in summer 2020, allowing the council to allocate to children known to Children’s Social Care
- Current scheme – schools have been able to order devices from the DfE across this year. Merton schools have ordered their full allocation.

The Council has also committed £20,000 to fund devices and Wifi connections for disadvantaged pupils across the Borough.

23. During the first Covid national lockdown school closure period from 23 March 2020 it became clear that children eligible for benefits related Free School Meals (FSM) should receive their entitlement while at home. This was provided through a national voucher scheme that the government temporarily extended to cover the Easter, May half term, and summer holidays 2020. However, the entitlement was not extended to the October 2020 half term. Therefore Merton Council stepped in and provided this entitlement, funding schools to issue a £15 voucher per child for the week.

24. In November 2020 the government launched the Covid Winter Scheme, which was primarily aimed at families with children for support with food costs. This was originally intended for the period up to 31 March but has now been extended to June 2021, and re-branded the Covid Support Scheme. The council has used this funding to provide, through schools, vouchers for all children on FSM during the school holidays. We were also able to extend this to pre-school children for the Christmas and February half terms, and to provide funding to two Local Food banks.

2.7 During 2020/21 in addition to the commitments outlined in the action plan, much of the council’s work has focused on providing targeted support to residents during the pandemic and has involved tackling inequalities. Notably the Covid-19 Community Response Hub Steering group was established to steer the emergency assistance and practical support with Council, CCG and

key voluntary and community partners. The steering group includes small community organisations that provide a food response, information and advice organisations and services to support with wellbeing. This group also oversees the work of the Covid-19 Community Response Hub, commissioned in the voluntary sector. The Hub provides a tiered level of support to people who are vulnerable, isolated or clinically extremely vulnerable.

Next steps

- 2.8 The Equality and Community Cohesion strategy is due to be refreshed and the aim is to launch the revised strategy in April 2022.
- 2.9 The revised strategy will be informed by many of the issues that have been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and through the BLM protests. The council is about to launch its largest ever engagement programme to hold a conversation with communities, businesses and partners to understand the impact of the Pandemic and what people want from their borough in the future. In particular, the council is looking to build on the community response to the Pandemic and to strengthen and support those communities hardest hit. This engagement work will inform the priorities and actions in the new Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy.
- 2.10 Additionally Merton is a pilot site for the Workforce Race Equality Standard and the recommendations and the learning from this piece of work will also contribute to the revised strategy.
- 2.11 The equality objectives will be aligned with departmental service plans to ensure the equalities commitments and considerations are embedded into the council's day-to-day business.
- 2.12 The draft strategy will be brought to the OSC as part of the consultation process.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires the council to prepare and publish equality objectives and subsequently at least four-yearly. Failure to do so would mean the Council is not fulfilling its legal obligations and could be subject to legal action.

5. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 5.1 The Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minorities will be given a progress report on the Equality Strategy. The OSC will be consulted during the development of the refreshed strategy.

6. TIMETABLE

- 6.1 None.

7. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Delivery of the Equality and Community Strategy 2017-21 action plan is within existing resources.

8. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 On 6 April 2011 the Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the Local Authority, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not. “Protected characteristics” are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 8.2 Delivery of the commitments in the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy’s action plan and the publication of an Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy setting out our equality objectives assists with working to fulfil the Council’s on-going legal obligations relating to equalities legislation.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 By setting out its equalities commitments in the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21 the Council is re-affirming its commitment to human rights, equality and community cohesion.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There is a risk of increased hate crime activity directed towards certain groups if there is no commitment to eliminate discrimination and harassment.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There is a risk to the Council’s reputation if it fails to produce and publish equalities objectives. Additionally there is a risk of claims of discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

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

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Progress update of the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21 Action Plan

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21.
[HTTPS://WWW2.MERTON.GOV.UK/COUNCIL/PLANSANDPOLICIES/EQUALITY-STRATEGY.HTM](https://www2.merton.gov.uk/council/plansandpolicies/equality-strategy.htm)

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Appendix 1 – Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21 Action Plan - Year 4 update

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
Equality Objective 1: To ensure key plans and strategies narrow the gap between different communities in the borough				
<p>1. To reduce health inequalities between different communities in the borough: Sustained halt in rise in the gap in life expectancy between least and most deprived areas within Merton, through improving life expectancy amongst the most deprived</p>	<p>Latest available figures for the gap in life expectancy between the least and most deprived areas 2017/19: Males: 7.3 yrs Females: 4.9 yrs Baseline 2011/13 & target Male -7.9 yrs Female- 5.2 yrs</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing strategy (2015-18) NB Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-24 now includes a new set of performance measures.</p>	C&H	<p>Merton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024 was agreed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, with a key principle of tackling health inequalities – especially the East/West health divide in the borough that is driven by social inequality and the wider determinants of health. Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024 Covid-19 and its impact on communities has given new insight and focus to this work.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>2. Halt and then reduce the widening gap in % of obese 10-11 year olds between east & west Merton, through reducing obesity in children in east Merton</p>	<p>Target 2015/16 – 2017/18 9.2% Baseline: 2012/13-2014/15 9.2% gap</p> <p>Latest data 2016/17 to 2018/19 12.2%</p> <p>Latest data: Trend in the gap between east and west Merton is increasing. Stable in West but increase in East</p> <p>East: 26.1% obese West: 13.8% obese</p>	<p>Health & Wellbeing Strategy/ Merton Child Healthy Weight Action Plan 2019 - 2022</p>	<p>C&H</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trend in the gap in obesity between East and West Merton is increasing with some stability in West Merton but increases in East Merton. • Due to the pandemic, the Child Healthy Weight Steering Group has not met for a while however, this group will now be reconvened as we move into recovery. • The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) was paused during the pandemic. There has been good coverage of children's weight and heights measured in 2019/20. For 2020/21 academic year, areas have been asked nationally to measure only 10% of the children in Reception and Year 6 population which will affect how we reporting on this indicator going forward • Bidding for additional national funding to support Tier 2 weight management services and brief intervention jointly across Merton, Wandsworth and Richmond. If successful, this will provide support earlier to 2-5 year olds and their families and enhance the support for 5-18yrs, increase the intensity of support and physical activity for children and their families identified as obese. • Healthy Schools London (HSL) – Schools being supported to completed the award scheme. Currently 18 schools have achieved Bronze, 9 have completed Silver and 3 schools achieved Gold

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Streets pilot projects involving the temporary closing of roads outside schools to motorised traffic during drop-off and pick-up times with the aim of creating healthier, safer and more pleasant environments to encourage children to walk, cycle or scoot to school. 27 schools across Merton are currently involved in the project • To support the growing number of people including families experiencing food poverty, Merton Community Fridge Network was set up in collaboration with local VCS organisations, Merton Council and London Food Alliance. Led by Merton Council, the Merton Community Fridge Network since start of pandemic receives food from the London Food Alliance, via UK charity FareShare's for redistribution across the borough. Sustainable Merton are now leading the Community Fridge Network.
3. Increase usage of public libraries amongst 11 – 16 year olds by undertaking a programme of activities and events with high school pupils and sign every pupil up as a library member.	2019/20: All high schools participate in the libraries and schools membership scheme. 98% of pupils within age group are library members.	Business Plan 2019-2023	C&H	2020/21: Membership numbers have maintained but usage of libraries has declined due to the pandemic. New services are being put in place to encourage usage amongst this age group including the launch of a new online offer for high school pupils.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
4. Promote digital inclusion through activities that support the Customer Contact strategy	Proportion of completed online transactions for available services	Customer Contact strategy	CS	The Connecting Merton project launched via Merton's libraries. The project loans ICT equipment and provides broadband connectivity along with training for vulnerable residents who have limited or no ICT access in their homes.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>5. Produce guidance and training for commissioners on the use of the Social Value Act including the development of a model approach for measuring and evaluating social value.</p>	<p>Quarter 3 2017/18</p>	<p>Corporate Services/Infrastructure & Transactions division/ Commercial services team</p>	<p>CS</p>	<p>Commercial Services have developed a Merton-specific Social Value Charter which uses suggested Themes, Outcomes and Measure (TOMS) from Social Value Portal https://socialvalueportal.com/about/</p> <p>The charter allows for proxy values to be allocated to each prescribed social value element within the charter, allowing bidders to quantify their social value commitment and evaluators on procurement projects to give an objective score rather than a subjective grading.</p> <p>This charter, in turn, will form part of the winning bidder's contract documents and therefore becomes a verified commitment which the LBM contract manager can ensure is carried out before the life of the contract ends.</p> <p>The charter is currently in its pilot phase, it has been used on two projects so far successfully. Feedback from clients and bidders is currently being collated before any suggested modifications can be made, and then the formal adoption of the charter for all projects over £100k will be asked for at Procurement Board.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				By its very nature, the value gained through Social Value Charter commitments can be recorded and therefore reported on to show its ongoing usefulness.
6. Work with MVSC to increase community giving to the VCS, in particular to support smaller groups with low/no income base - working with disadvantage and vulnerable groups.	Report to Compact Board Autumn 2017 with proposals	Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy	CS	The council has contributed £271k to the Merton Giving Fund to provide small grants to small groups for COVID-19 support. Overall, the Merton Giving Fund, with contributions from the council, statutory partners, businesses and individuals, has allocated over £400k to small groups in the borough to support them through the Pandemic. The first round of funding saw £210k awarded to 70 voluntary groups who collectively support around 6,500 vulnerable residents, particularly from deprived and BAME communities.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
7. Review the support offer to Merton's VCS organisations, in particular to smaller and informal groups	Revised commissioning objectives for VCS support in 2017/18	Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy	CS	As part of the Recovery and Modernisation Programme we are looking at how we work with the voluntary sector with a focus on early identification and intervention. The aim is to identify households at risk of needing complex statutory interventions and to work with the VCS to provide early help to these citizens. We are looking at designing a model jointly with the VCS and partners. Local grass-roots organisations have a key role to play in both developing and delivering this model which is based on an asset based approach to working with communities. We have recently commissioned a design partner to work with the council and VCS organisations to help us develop this approach.
8. Financial Inclusion/Welfare Reform	Continue with existing council tax support scheme and local welfare support scheme for 2017/18. The local welfare support scheme will include referrals to the Food bank and continued part funding of a CAB Welfare Disabilities Advisor	% of council tax collection	CS	Council tax support scheme remained the same for 2020/21 Local Welfare Support Scheme continued to be administered Referrals to and funding of the Foodbank has continued. Part funding for CAB Welfare Disabilities Advisor in 2020/21

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>9. Continue to improve the educational outcomes for disadvantaged groups including children in care, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities; and pupils eligible for Free School Meals or Pupil Premium</p>	<p>Education Outcomes at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years • Key Stage 2 • Key Stage 4 <p>For disadvantaged groups of pupils</p>	<p>Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2023</p> <p>CSF Departmental Equalities and Community Cohesion Annual Plan</p> <p>Annual School Standards Report</p>	<p>CSF</p>	<p>Formal exams were suspended due to the corona pandemic. We therefore do not have data for academic year 19/20.</p> <p>Previous data suggests that the performance of different pupil groups varied across the key stages. The difference between boys' and girls' performance varied, with a narrowing in some indicators but a widening in others.</p> <p>Likewise, for pupils eligible for the pupil premium: whilst there has been a narrowing of the gap at KS1, and with regard to KS2 progress scores in reading and maths, there has been a widening at KS4. There has been some research carried out nationally about the impact of the reformed GCSEs on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils which has found that they are performing less well than their peers, particularly with regard to performance at the strong pass level.</p> <p>Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) have improved their performance in all indicators at all key stages. Whilst there have been some drops in performance for pupils in receipt of SEN support, their performance remains above the national averages for the same group</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				nationally in all indicators, with the exception of writing progress at KS2 which is in line.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
10. Challenge schools to improve attendance and reduce exclusions for all children.	<p>School attendance in primary and secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % attendance • % persistent absence <p>Exclusions in primary and secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of permanent exclusions • % of fixed-term exclusions 	<p>Children and Young People's Plan 2016 -2019</p> <p>CSF Departmental Equalities and Community Cohesion Annual Plan</p> <p>Annual School Standards Report</p>	CSF	<p>During the lockdowns, physical attendance at schools was limited to children open to children's social care and/or those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Post lockdown attendance was voluntary and in selected year groups. Some schools also had to close bubbles due to infections.</p> <p>Attendance in all schools was monitored daily throughout the lockdowns and re-opening and schools were supported accordingly The council put in place robust risk review processes to ensure the attendance of this cohort of children where by all children with a social worker had their attendance reviewed and challenged by a Covid Children Missing Education (CME) panel of senior managers. These processes were praised by Ofsted during a focussed visit in October 2020.</p> <p>Autumn term 2019 attendance data is limited in comparison, but Merton maintained performance of secondary school attendance in the top 10 nationally in secondary schools and improvements in primary schools. Special school attendance continued to have higher Persistent absence (PA) than other boroughs.</p> <p>Secondary School Permanent and Fixed term Exclusions fell significantly in 2019 – 20. This may be</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				<p>in part as schools were closed to some pupils for parts of the year.</p> <p>Main pupil group data is hard to compare as rates are lower this year. However, the gap between genders and disadvantaged is smaller than national or London for previous whole year data. So in this area the pandemic did not exacerbate previous disadvantage.</p> <p>The same is true in terms of ethnicity where the gap between White British and Black Caribbean is smaller this year than national or London. So with lower exclusion levels reduction has been greater for males, those on free schools and Black Caribbean pupils. However, there is still a level of disparity for all three of these groups.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>11. Work with London Councils, as the borough lead for a pan-London employment project to address the following two priorities –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive labour markets 2. Skills for Growth 	<p>Quarterly outputs provided by the contractor on Total participants and including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long term unemployed • over 50's • ethnic minorities 	<p>Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2012</p>	<p>E&R</p>	<p>This London Council's programme of support concluded in March 2019.</p> <p>The Work and Health Programme – Better Working Futures commenced March 2018. To date, we have had 591 Merton residents start on the programme and 65% have commenced into employment.</p> <p>As a direct response to Covid the Work and Health programme delivery was moved from face to face engagement to phone calls and online. This seems to be working well as there has been a steady rise in residents entering into employment over the last 6 months.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that the provider of the WHP, Reed in Partnership are also managing the Government's Job Entry Targeted Support Programme.</p>
<p>Equality Objective 2: Provide equality of access to services for disadvantaged groups</p>				

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
1. Adult Social Care - ensure equality of uptake of social care for all- in line with residents' needs -and take action through commissioning and provision decisions to improve equality of uptake	Annual analysis of pattern of service use by characteristics relating to need- including ethnicity	Commissioning /service plans	C&H	As a significant proportion of our commissioning and delivery activity over the last 12 months has been focused on our response to the Covid-19 pandemic there has been limited opportunity to progress work in this area. We have, however, continued to develop our performance reporting mechanisms to now include an analysis of safeguarding activity by ethnicity, which will be refreshed on a regular basis and used to inform future commissioning activity as well as helping us to understand where focused work with sectors or individual providers is needed
2. Housing –prevention of homelessness through advice and assistance	450 cases annual target	Service plan	C&H	<p>The year-end figure which is 455 against a target of 450. The Council continues to use a variety of tools to prevent and relieve homelessness, such as rent deposits, negotiation and mediation, and advice on tenancy rights and responsibilities. The Council has fully embraced the ethos set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</p> <p>We were able to maintain prevention performance against the backdrop of the challenges of the pandemic, particularly the 'Everybody In' initiative that housed all the rough sleepers in the borough.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
3. Increase course delivery in the east of the borough with a focus on health and employability.	A minimum of 25% of courses to be delivered in priority wards.	Merton Adult Learning Strategy Service Plan	C&H	2020/21: 27% of course provision was delivered for learners in designated wards and this figure is expected to increase this year. The service has been successful in applying for an additional £530k of funding from the GLA to increase course provision for learners in key focus areas.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>4. Disabilities and autism – to assess the need and picture of inequalities and inequity for people with disabilities and autism in Merton, and develop an autism strategy and action plan and Disability profile to tackle gaps in support, provision and access. These will take a pragmatic approach in recognition of existing financial constraints in the statutory sector, looking at optimising existing resources.</p>	<p>Needs assessments profile on autism completed. Strategies and action plans developed for autism (by September 2017) Needs assessment profile on Disability published by 31st March 2018</p> <p>Delivery of Autism Action Plan</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>Merton Autism Strategy 2018-2023</p> <p>Merton Autism Action Plan (August 2018)</p>	<p>C&H</p> <p>CSF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of actions measuring performance on this key activity have been achieved • The outstanding item is implementation of the Autism Strategy Action Plan which is to be implemented between 2018-2023 • Implementation of the Autism Action Plan is through the CAMHS Partnership Board, Mental Health Delivery Board and Preparing for Adulthood Board. These groups feed into the Autism Partnership Steering Group • Due to the pandemic, updates on the action plan have not taken place regularly although within each of the Boards/Groups, work is being taken forward. • Next meeting of the Autism Partnership Steering group is on 29th April where progress will be reviewed in light of Covid.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
5. Provide an assisted collection for residents who otherwise may not be able to present their wheeled bin in accordance with standard policy	100% of those requesting assisted collection who meet the criteria set out in the standard policy to receive assisted collections		E&R	We continue to advise and promote the 'Assisted' collection service for all those who are unable to present their waste in the allocated containers. Each case is treated on its own merit and no medical assessment is required to be undertaken. To date we have 1,625 households registered on the service compared to 544 households registered prior to the introduction of wheelie bins in Oct 2018.
6. Continues to raise the issue of step free access at train stations such as Motspur Park, Rayne Park, Wimbledon Park Stations as opportunities arise	This falls under Network Rails' jurisdiction. However, Merton will continue to raise this at the south London partnership meetings and at other stake holder groups.	Merton Local Plan & Local Implementation Plan	E&R	Wimbledon Park station has planning permission to become step free (managed by TFL). We continue to press SWT to include Motspur Park step free access in their investment plans. Raynes Park is a complex station and investment isn't likely without Crossrail2. Network Rail have plans for 2 new lift shafts at Tooting Station in 2023
7. Work with TfL to ensure that all signalised crossings have the appropriate tactile and audible features & all other controlled crossings have the appropriate tactile paving	All controlled crossings on borough roads adhere to the regulation and are DDA compliant. TfL have recently completed their review and remedial works at all signalised junctions.	Merton Local Plan & Local Implementation Plan	E&R	Compliant, as before.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>8. Where possible, the Council endeavours to make the public realm accessible by:</p> <p>A. ensure that the kerbs are dropped at key locations such as at junctions;</p> <p>B. de-clutter the footways and footpaths to improve accessibility</p> <p>C. ensuring that dropped kerbs at formal crossings and at some informal crossings have the appropriate tactile paving.</p>	<p>Attend quarterly meetings with the sub-regional mobility forums</p> <p>This is also measured through the annual monitoring of the Local Implementation plan</p>	<p>Local Implementation plan (LIP)</p>	<p>E&R</p>	<p>A. This is included in any planned investment from TFL LIP.</p> <p>B. We seek to declutter where possible in new public realm schemes.</p> <p>Similar to Q3 as well as any new or upgraded informal crossings where funds permit.</p> <p>NB: Due to TFL's financial position in 2020/21 due to Covid, available funds have been reduced considerably. Future funding remains TBC.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>9. Continue to work with BAME Voice, Merton Centre for Independent Living, the LGBT and Faith and Belief forums to disseminate and raise awareness in their respective communities of services and support on offer by the council and partners.</p>	<p>Hold regular or quarterly meetings</p>	<p>Voluntary Sector Strategy</p>	<p>CS</p>	<p>We continue to facilitate meetings of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minorities and Faith and Belief Forum with regular meetings held during 2020. We also continue to support the work for the LGBTQ forum and BAME Voice. We continue to work with the LGBTQ forum to seek a sustainable future for the group.</p> <p>We awarded BAME Voice £30k and commissioned the organisation to undertake research into the impact of COVID-19 on the borough's BAME communities. The research findings and recommendations will be published shortly.</p> <p>BAME Voice also received £20k from the Neighbourhood CIL to create a base in the East of the borough to support BAME communities,</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
10. To improve the take-up of child care funding for 2 year-olds as well as funding offer for 3 and 4-year olds offer across the borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of eligible 2 year-olds accessing child-care funding offer • Number and % of children accessing child-care funding offer 	Children and Young People's Plan 2019 -2023	CSF	<p>Merton's annual assessment was completed during the global pandemic - https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/childcare/childcare-sufficiency-assessment</p> <p>Despite the challenges, providers of childcare and education for children aged under 5 in Merton have responded well and have met the many demands face-on. 66% of the childcare remained open in the early phase of the pandemic, and there was a loss of 2 nursery providers situated on school sites.</p> <p>The pandemic has had a negative impact on take-up figures due to some settings being initially closed as well as parents deciding to keep their children at home. There are defined actions in the Childcare Sufficiency Action plan action plan to address gaps in supply and promotion of the early education entitlements.</p> <p>Both universal and extended 3- and 4-year-old take-up remain relatively stable, but providers report that take-up of full day care has reduced as many parents have moved to home working.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				<p>Business support tools have been shared and published to support business sustainability.</p> <p>A key focus for the service has therefore been to increase the take-up of free early education for eligible 2 years olds in Merton, living in households that are eligible for certain benefits or are Looked After by the local authority.</p> <p>Reflecting the importance of accessing high quality early years provision, we have included this as a focus area in our Early Help Strategy which is overseen by the multi-agency Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership.</p> <p>Our local strategies/action to improve take up include a range of actions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through the Children's Centre services, assertive outreach to families where known to be eligible, - partnership working with health visitors, social workers and voluntary sector to promote the offer and encourage take up,

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				- Childcare Care Brokerage service for families that guides them in the process of sourcing a provider and borough-wide promotion.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
11. Ensure the timely delivery of Education, Health and Care Plans for children with special educational needs and disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Education, Health and Care Plans completed within timescale Development and publication of SEND Strategy	Children and Young People's Plan 2019 -2023 SEND Strategy – forthcoming	CSF	<p>The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities integrated service saw a decrease of the number of EHC Plans completed within 20 weeks during the Pandemic due to the difficulties in professionals being able to provide their professional advice within the 6 week timescales however following this delay the last 2 months have seen an improvement in the timeliness of EHC Needs assessments being completed within 20 weeks with February showing 100% issued within 20 weeks. 80% of EHCP's are issued within 24 weeks.</p> <p>The department and partners continue to implement the actions outlined in the Written Statement of Action – Action Plan. This has included training to health partners to improve the quality of the professional advice received by SENDIS. We continue to undertake audits of EHC Plans and have received support and training from the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) to address the quality of input into the EHCP planning and review process.</p> <p>In March 2021, there were 2356 Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP) and the authority was undertaking 149 EHC Needs assessments.</p> <p>There has been a particular focus in the last term on the annual review processes and SENDIS has</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				reviewed the annual review paperwork following feedback from partners. The new paperwork and system reforms will be finalised this term and implemented in the new academic year (September 2021). This will ensure that the Annual Review meetings and subsequent actions required from the Annual Review meetings meet with statutory timescales and improve the quality of the plans. We are currently writing training documents for SENCO's and SEN Leads in Schools and Colleges to ensure that they understand the annual review process and statutory requirements.
Equality Objective 3: Ensure regeneration plans and activities increase the opportunity for all Merton's residents to fulfil their educational, health and economic potential, participate in the renewal of the borough and create a health promoting environment.				

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
1. Merton Partnership to look at opportunities through the One Public Estate (OPE) programme to review how the public sector collectively uses its public estate and supports the VCS to deliver increased social value.	Report to Merton Partnership on OPE opportunities Autumn 2017	One Public Estate programme	CS/ER	<p>OPE work is ongoing to realise new sites for development – dependencies with NHS Wilson Hospital.</p> <p>LBM have secured additional OPE resources to undertake feasibility work / scoping to create additional voluntary sector space in the Civic Centre</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>2. Continue to support young people into Education, Employment and Training with a focus on children with special educational needs or disabilities.</p>	<p>Reduce the % of Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) young people (incl. children with SEND)</p> <p>Reduce the % of “not known” NEET(incl. children with SEND)</p> <p>Reduce the % of Care Leavers NEET (incl. children with SEND)</p> <p>Number of apprenticeships offered to children with SEND</p>	<p>Children and Young People’s Plan 2019 -2023</p> <p>Looked after Children and Care Leavers Strategy</p> <p>SEND Strategy (forthcoming)</p>	<p>CSF</p>	<p>Nationally, Merton has one of the lowest levels of young people who are NEET or whose status is unknown.</p> <p>Merton has improved from the 12th lowest NEET in England to the 8th Lowest.</p> <p>This performance is achieved through daily tracking, targeted key working, holiday activities, Education, Training and Employment (ETE) workshops, pre-NEET Support in Schools, Careers workshops, Work experience programmes and our employability project.</p> <p>The work with South Thames College to develop supported internships had to be postponed due to pandemic rules in FE colleges.</p> <p>In February 2021 Merton’s NEET group was 16 – 18 54 young people. On this group 15 were formally on send support and 6 have EHCPs. This is disproportionate for both groups; however, the overall figure is very low. The NEET cohort as a whole is disproportionately White British.</p> <p>There are 30 young people whose status is not known group; there are no young people with EHCPs, but 5 were formally on send support. Again, overall levels are very low. The Not known group is 70% male.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
3. Housing needs for vulnerable people and families to be considered as part of the affordable housing proportion of all planning applications (planning conditions s106)	Affordable housing supply and nominations policy between LBM and RPs.	Housing Strategy & Merton's Local Plan	E&R	<p>This work is being explored outside of Planning as s106 schemes don't provide specialist housing facilities. The vast majority of planning applications are for sites of less than 10 units and don't attract s106 affordable units.</p> <p>This is to be addressed in the new draft Housing Strategy 2021 which is nearing completion of final draft.</p>
4. We will work with Clarion-Latimer to promote access to local employment and apprenticeships opportunities via planning conditions and for Clarion's procurement for re-building the estates.	To be determined and monitored as planning conditions of the regeneration.	Merton's Local Plan & Estates Local Plan	E&R	<p>Merton's existing Local Plan contains a policy requiring all substantial developments to employ apprentices and others from the local area. In addition Clarion maintains an apprenticeship strategy to benefit its tenants.</p> <p>This work is underway with Clarion Futures on the High Path and Ravensbury regeneration projects.</p>
Equality Objective 4: To encourage recruitment from all sections of the community, actively promote staff development and career progression opportunities and embed equalities across the organisation				

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
1. Monitor progress with respect to the recruitment of apprenticeships as required through the Waste Collection and Environmental Services Contract	% of apprentices as a proportion of the total workforce operating on this contract within Merton. In total the Lot 1 contractor has committed to 25 apprenticeship placements being made across the contract for all SLWP boroughs.		E&R	<p>No new apprenticeships commenced in 2020 due to the restriction of the Corona virus. Veolia have remained committed to recruiting new starters local from within Merton.</p> <p>Council has worked with the Chamber of Commerce and others to promote the Kickstart Programme.</p>
2. Ensure that the procurement of Environmental services contracts, allow for the recognition of social value through the employment of special needs, apprenticeships and local long term unemployed	A commitment to implement the Contractors Voluntary Work Placement Programme (Veolia Re-start) is contained within the contract. This programme is run in conjunction with JobCentre Plus and Welfare to Work partners.		E&R	Veolia have continued to retain staff members with Learning Disabilities and continue deploy this team with daily supervision.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>3. Access to Apprenticeships:</p> <p>1. Departments will work with HR to create opportunities for apprenticeships.</p> <p>2. HR will work with managers to get maximum benefit from the Apprenticeship Levy by developing existing workforce.</p> <p>3. The Council will continue to work closely with CSF to prioritise apprenticeships for its Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>	<p>HR will host quarterly apprenticeship awareness workshops for managers.</p> <p>% of apprenticeship levy accessed per workforce.</p> <p>Provide regular apprenticeship news stories and plan activities for Apprenticeship Day</p> <p>Set up quarterly meetings with Head of service to establish which young person/s would benefit from participating in an apprenticeship scheme and determine the support needed to ensure the young</p>	Workforce Strategy	CS	<p>1. L&D have been engaging with Departments and Schools to create opportunities for apprenticeships aligned to recruitment of new posts.</p> <p>2. We have recently undertaken a tender exercise and have appointed 14 new suppliers offering training over 38 Apprentice standards. Over the coming months HR will host awareness workshops for staff and managers to maximise the apprenticeship levy through the targeted commencement of c90+ new apprentice starts per annum.</p> <p>3. L&D are working with managers to get maximum benefit from the Apprenticeship Levy by promoting professional development of existing staff across all levels and all departments and schools (that buy in to HR payroll). We have developed Apprentice videos and blogs promoting our Apprenticeship Standards</p> <p>We will shortly be engaging with Head of Service to establish which young person/s who would benefit from participating in an apprenticeship scheme and determine the</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
	person fulfils their potential			<p>support needed to ensure the young person fulfils their potential</p> <p>The Council are currently working closely with CSF to develop Social Care Worker Apprenticeships as part of the CSF restructure.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>4. Increase the diversity of Senior Leadership Team:</p> <p>1. We cannot positively discriminate however we will ensure that our recruitment processes are adhered to for senior roles including the appointment of the best candidate for the role.</p> <p>2. HR will ensure that the Council's Executive search consultants and recruitment team advertise the vacancies widely.</p> <p>3. HR will monitor equal access to Learning and development</p>	<p>Monitor recruitment on quarterly basis and report findings to CMT as part of the HR metrics report.</p> <p>Provide CMT with the end of recruitment summary</p> <p>Provide participation rate on a quarterly basis to identify trends and respond to these as appropriate.</p> <p>Increase rating by 5% in the staff survey in relation to development</p>	Workforce Strategy	CS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a council requirement that all panel members and chairs who take part in the recruitment and selection process must have undergone the relevant recruitment and selection training; regularly refreshing their skills every 2 years. It is the responsibility of the 'chair' of the panel to check that all panel members have attended such training. In the case of member-level appointments (Director and Chief Executive posts) training is provided to all panel members. • We are about to launch a new on line recruitment and selection course which we will ensure addresses how to avoid unconscious bias in the recruitment process. Managers will be required to refresh this training every 2 years. • Mutual mentoring is being introduced and this programme launches in April. • Career pathways are now in place for existing staff so that they can clearly see the Core, Optional and Specialist training required by department. These are available for staff on the HUB. • The L&D pages detailing the full suite of training programmes has been refreshed and can also be accessed within Courses, Events and Seminar pages • HR continue to ensure that when appointing agencies for senior recruitment that we ask them to demonstrate their track record in producing BAME candidates and

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>opportunities including management and leadership development.</p> <p>4. For an organisation to have a healthy, harmonious culture it needs a mission that unifies its diverse stakeholder community. Therefore, engagement with the relevant diversity interest group: customers, staff and partners.</p>				<p>the number of successful BAME appointments. This is a practice that will continue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample checks will be introduced to ensure all shortlisting and interview panel members have up-to-date recruitment and selection training. This check will be undertaken in all cases for appointments at MGC and above. This training will include awareness of unconscious bias in the recruitment process. • In addition to actions being developed at departmental level, L&D have developed a training programmes to support diversity and cultural awareness programme including “Unconscious Bias”, Anti-Racism training and have recently engaged 10 pairs of mentors/mentees supporting a 6 months pilot programme of Mutual Mentoring with the aim to achieve a more cohesive workforce able to serve our communities better • Where external recruiters are used for senior appointments – they are instructed to conduct additional searches and through their channels encourage applications from BAME candidates. • The Council have committed to diverse panels for Senior Recruitment. • The Council is currently reviewing its leadership development offer and will explore adopting cultural competency as an element within the programme.

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR will continue to remind and encourage staff twice yearly to update their personal equality data on the online system i-Trent so that our monitoring can be 100% accurate.
<p>5. In developing HR policies and procedures – statutory requirement and best practice is incorporated</p>	<p>Policies are agreed and staff are briefed and made aware of the new policies.</p> <p>Measure take up of briefing sessions.</p> <p>Ensure the policies are compliant with Equalities Act 2010.</p>	<p>Workforce Strategy</p>	<p>CS</p>	<p>HR have committed to reviewing policies, including from an equality perspective with policies such as recruitment, re-organisation, disciplinary, grievance being addressed first. In addition to working with the Unions on any policy changes we are also consulting with Merton's Race Equality Network. The Recruitment Policy, procedure and guidance has already gone through this process and we are currently working on the Re-organisation Policy.</p>
<p>Equality Objective 5: Promoting a safe, healthy and cohesive borough where communities get on well together</p>				

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
1. Increase the confidence of victims to report Hate Crime and Domestic Violence	<p>The performance measures remain tbc until year 1 priorities are confirmed and the strategic assessment is completed in January 2017</p> <p>Current performance is designed to increase reporting by 20% year on year for 2016-17. This will be subject to review in the new year when the strategic assessment is finalised and the MOPAC police and crime plan performance is confirmed</p>	Hate Crime Strategy Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy	E&R	<p>In relation to Hate Crime we do not have a specific target, but do have an overall objective to try to increase confidence in reporting.</p> <p>Key areas of work over the last year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019 we launched our Hate Crime Advice Surgery, the first of its kind in south London, a drop in service for hate crime victims to get advice and support from local organisations. During the pandemic this has switched to an over the phone service. • In 2020 we launched a Hate Crime Third Party Reporting Scheme so that victims can make a report at various reporting centres in the community if they do not feel comfortable reporting directly to the police. Again, this has switched to an over the phone service during the pandemic. Work is ongoing to expand the Third Party Reporting Scheme to more organisations in the community. • Each October during National Hate Crime Awareness Week, we hold a full programme of community engagement events in partnership with the police and community organisations, to raise awareness of the different forms of hate crime and encourage victims to come forward and get the support they need. • We continue to promote the support services available to victims on a regular basis via the Council's social media channels.

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				<p>In relation to Domestic Violence, as a partnership we currently have an indicator to monitor the levels of Domestic Violence over the year 2020/21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the year the One Stop Shop has continued to operate albeit virtually. • Support and community services have been maintained during the year. • Regular communications via social media letting people know how and where to report, or where to seek advice. • 16 Days campaign took place in November 2020.
2. Working in partnership to deliver the Prevent Duty and keep Merton a safe and cohesive borough	Hold monthly Prevent Case Management meetings	Prevent Delivery Plan	CS Lead	<p>Monthly Prevent Case Management and Channel Panel meetings are held to discuss referrals.</p> <p>Meetings are attended by a SO15 (Counter Terrorism) Police Officer, and representatives from the CCG, Mental Health Trust and Adult and Children Safeguarding staff.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
3. Working in partnership to reduce alcohol- and drug-related harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission episodes for alcohol related conditions (broad)- (Baseline – 1,858 for 2014/15) <p>Hold quarterly Substance Misuse Partnership Board meetings with representation from those working across the life course of drug and alcohol misuse (including service users)</p>	Strategic Framework for prevention of substance misuse (September 2017)	Public Health & E&R	<p>In 202/21 a key priority for the borough's adult substance misuse treatment service has to been maintain access to those in- need, in the context of Covid-19 restrictions. This has included promoting the use of and access to digital technology for many whilst maintaining Covid-19 safe contact for those who are most vulnerable and at risk. This has ensured that that positive referral and access rates have been maintained throughout the pandemic. We continue to monitor referral to treatment and representation rates on a monthly basis. We are also working with CCG colleagues to monitor any trends in alcohol admissions and deaths.</p> <p>Public health is working with a number of partners to identify possible increases in harmful drinking linked to both lockdown and the socio economic consequences of Covid-19, including increases in housing instability and joblessness. This will inform a local strategy to increase awareness of risk where necessary access to advice or more structured interventions.</p> <p>Merton has been awarded £186,000 PHE section 31 grant designed to increase interventions to reduce drug related harm and offending. This funding will be used to support more targeted and intensive support for some of the most prolific drug related offenders in engaging with recovery focused interventions. Priority</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				<p>criteria will defined by the boroughs integrated offender management and probation services. The funding also supports a FTE post to focus on diverting young adults who are in the early stages of drug misuse and criminality.</p> <p>The Substance Misuse Partnership Board has not met since the start of the pandemic but meeting will be scheduled for June 2021. This meeting will agree the priorities for 2021.</p> <p>Safer Merton and Public Health are working across the partnership particularly in relation to our work around the borough's Public Space Protection Order and anti-social behaviour. Updates from Public Health will come to the Safer and Stronger Executive Board.</p>
4. Continue to celebrate diversity by promoting community cohesion activity such as Black History Month and LGBT History Month	Hold annual civic event for Holocaust Memorial Day and promote LGBT History Month and Black History Month events	Equality Strategy	CS/E &R	<p>The Faith and Belief Forum continues to promote community cohesion and integration in the borough. For interfaith week the Shree Ganapathy Temple held a virtual interfaith service with contributions from other faith groups.</p> <p>The Faith and Belief forum worked with officers to plan and organise the Holocaust Memorial Day commemorative event. This year the theme was 'Be the light in the darkness'.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
5. Continue to work collaboratively to reduce bullying in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of primary and secondary schools graded 'Good' or better for personal development, behaviour and welfare by Ofsted 	CSF Departmental Equalities and Community Cohesion Annual Plan	CSF	Our work with Merton schools remains strong. The second cohort of anti-bullying alliance all together programme is being delivered in Merton. 20 more schools have engaged. Due to the pandemic not all schools were able to continue with the quality assurance programme but 2 more primary schools did achieve Gold Award.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>6. Continue to work in partnership to reduce the number of First-Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice system and undertake targeted work to identify and support those at risk of offending and re-offending.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of FTE to the YJS aged 10-17 • Rate of proven reoffending in the YJS 	<p>Children and Young People's Plan 2016 -2019</p>	<p>CSF</p>	<p>Merton's rate of first time entrants per 10,000 compares favourably with our national and London rates. In addition, this rate has been falling in the last two years.</p> <p>However, our rate of proven re-offending, whilst comparing favourably to national and regional benchmarks, has seen an increase.</p> <p>A range of services are in place to provide preventative interventions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The council's Transforming Families Team which receives referrals for families who are experiencing crime and antisocial behaviour, poor health, domestic violence and abuse, children in need, poor school attendance and adult unemployment. Turnaround. - Catch22 commissioned to deliver the current Risk and Resilience Service, which has priorities in regard to reducing first time entrants and reoffending. - The My Futures team, within the Education Inclusion service, which provides a universal service for young people who are NEET and which continues to deliver family therapy sessions for children and families open to the YOT.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				<p>- Jigsaw for you – a MOPAC funded victim support service for young people who have been a victim of serious youth violence.</p> <p>In addition, there are three MOPAC funded workers, each with a specific remit in regard to Young Woman and Girls, Criminal Exploitation and Gangs. The workers liaise closely with each other in regard to the overlapping needs of this cohort and co-deliver training to the borough.</p> <p>Data from the Youth Justice and Crime Prevention Plan for 2020/21 show a slight shift in First Time Entrants (FTE) with more young people who are White ethnicity and less who are Black or Black British; However, it is important to note that this is based on a small sample.</p> <p>Merton has furthermore been successful with an Early Intervention Youth Fund bid and are delivering a Responsive Community Engagement Team within hotspot areas, based on referrals from the ASB Team, Safer Neighbourhood Police, MARVE.</p> <p>Merton has also successfully joined the Innovation Project with Hackney Council in regard to Contextual Safeguarding. Which resulted in receiving additional</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				<p>funding (via the Bedfordshire University's 'Scale Up' programme).</p> <p>Merton has in place a Liaison and Diversion system. Most recently, Merton YOT Partnership has introduced prevention panels which are chaired by the police which continue to strengthen Merton's prevention and diversionary systems.</p> <p>The Youth Crime Prevention Executive Board continues to actively monitor all of the above.</p>
Equality Objective 6: Fulfil our statutory duties and ensure (relevant stakeholders are consulted) protected groups are effectively engaged when we change our services.				
1. Equality Analysis routinely undertaken to support the decision making process	Savings, growth and service reviews to include EAs	Equality Strategy	All	As part of corporate business planning and budget setting activity, departments completed comprehensive equality analyses to understand any adverse consequences on protected groups.

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>2. Refresh User Voice Strategy and ensure children, young people and families continue to impact continuous improvement for all services across CSF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each CSF service commit to User Voice activity in annual Service Plans. • Report quarterly to Director's management team on annual action plan and programme of User Voice activity. 	<p>CSF User Voice Strategy 2017 - 2019</p>	<p>CSF</p>	<p>We are currently in the process of refreshing our 'User Voice' strategy. This was previously overseen by the department's Policy Team. Responsibility for the update has now transferred to the 'Participation Team'. This will allow much closer alignment with wider participation work – including young inspectors, the care council and the Youth Parliament.</p> <p>In February 2020, the participation team organised a residential with children and young people to develop new practice standards.</p> <p>The forthcoming Merton Partnership Meeting will focus on engagement with children and young people and will be led by children and young people. The Participation Team will be supporting this.</p> <p>The Youth Parliament was due for re-election which has been slowed by the pandemic, new elections underway</p> <p>Young Inspectors has been expanded with current 4 young inspector funded and co-located to Public Health due to the impressive contribution of their work. 4 new inspectors have been recruited and will wait for one more to act as a young scrutineer for the Merton Safeguarding Children's partnership. Young Inspectors</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				<p>have taken a range of roles as Challengers in the young people's plan to setting up Covid work with young adults and videos for school children to understand the Covid rules.</p> <p>Participation Team lead a co-delivered Covid response detached service during the first lockdown, this multi-agency approach whilst capturing the voice of young people proved beneficial in understanding the broader concerns for our young residents.</p> <p>Young Inspectors have been involved in the regeneration application for a disused space in Pollards Hill.</p> <p>Online engagement has continued with meeting with the outgoing youth parliament and "Cooking with Friends" has been a virtual engagement tool with young residents who are care experienced.</p> <p>Young people with care experience have worked with the participation team to contribute to a number of meetings, this work has mostly been conducted through one – one. This work has contributed to OFSTED visits, Corporate Parenting Board, Local Offer/ pathway planning forums, Youth Justice Planning.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>3. Continue to consult with children, young people and parents in the development of services for children with special educational need and disabilities in line with the expectations of the Children and Families Act 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMT to review at monthly performance meetings. 	<p>SEND Strategy – forthcoming</p>	<p>CSF</p>	<p>Merton’s most recent SEND inspection report comments favourably about parent/carer involvement, stating that: ‘The parent carer forum, Kids First, understands the main concerns and positive views of parents in the area. It provides a strong voice and important challenge to area leaders. It is trusted by the parents who use its service’.</p> <p>Kids First directly contributed to the response to the Written Statement of Action, and are active participants at the monitoring visits with the DfE and NHS England.</p> <p>In 2019, these routine engagement processes were supplemented with one-off consultations. As part of the development of a revised SEND strategy, a range of stakeholders (including children, young people and their parents) were consulted. The purpose of the consultation was to discuss and draw out stakeholders’ key issues and concerns, and to address these in the strategy.</p> <p>Consultation on the draft version involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 100 parents of children with SEN and/or disabilities and professionals/ parents who work with them, made a full response to the Merton SEND Strategy consultation September/ October 2019

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 70 children and young people aged from 9-18 were involved in discussion groups across six Merton primary, secondary and special schools. The children and young people involved represented those supported at SEN support, and those with an EHC plan • Discussions with parents and professionals/ staff via a number of our regular meetings and SEND governance focus groups <p>Post the relaxation of rules for physical youth work meetings a joint MENCAP/ participation group will be set up to involve young people with special educational needs and disabilities.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
4. Polling station review to be undertaken ahead of the council elections in May 2018	<p>Seek to ensure that all electors in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.</p> <p>Seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled.</p>	Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Returning Officers	CS	<p>Polling district review undertaken in 2019, focusing on replacing schools that are used as polling places with other venues.</p> <p>Another full polling district review is planned for 2021 to redraw polling district boundaries taking into account new ward boundaries that are due to come into force for the 2022 local elections.</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/ Plan	Department / Division	Departmental update
<p>5. Target particular communities who have not responded or registered to vote:</p> <p>1. Continue to collect council tax and housing benefit data on a monthly basis in order to identify new electors, plus student data at the beginning of each academic year. Expand data mining in an attempt to gain access to registrars, blue badge, and libraries data to identify new citizens/residents.</p>	<p>50% of all new monthly registrations through data mining.</p>	<p>Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Electoral Registration Officers</p>	<p>CS</p>	<p>Currently 75% of all new monthly registrations (outside of the canvass and electoral events) are through data mining. Data received from council tax and housing benefit forms bulk of new registrations through data mining.</p>