

Merton Council Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Date: 17 July 2018

Time: 7.15 pm

Venue: Committee Rooms C, D & E - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden
SM4 5DX

AGENDA

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2	Declarations of pecuniary interest	
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**This is a public meeting – members of the public are very welcome to attend.
The meeting room will be open to members of the public from 7.00 p.m.**

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Overview and Scrutiny Commission membership

Councillors:

Peter Southgate (Chair)
Peter McCabe (Vice-Chair)
Laxmi Attawar
John Dehaney
Sally Kenny
Oonagh Moulton
David Williams
Rebecca Lanning
Owen Pritchard
Paul Kohler

Substitute Members:

Dennis Pearce
Eleanor Stringer
Nick McLean
Thomas Barlow
Carl Quilliam
Edward Foley

Co-opted Representatives

Helen Forbes, Parent Governor
Representative - Secondary and Special
Sector
Emma Lemon, Parent Governor
Representative - Primary Sector
Colin Powell, Church of England diocese

Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that matter and must not participate in any vote on that matter. If members consider they should not participate because of a non-pecuniary interest which may give rise to a perception of bias, they should declare this, withdraw and not participate in consideration of the item. For further advice please speak with the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance.

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny describes the way Merton's scrutiny councillors hold the Council's Executive (the Cabinet) to account to make sure that they take the right decisions for the Borough. Scrutiny panels also carry out reviews of Council services or issues to identify ways the Council can improve or develop new policy to meet the needs of local people. From May 2008, the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Panels have been restructured and the Panels renamed to reflect the Local Area Agreement strategic themes.

Scrutiny's work falls into four broad areas:

- ⇒ **Call-in:** If three (non-executive) councillors feel that a decision made by the Cabinet is inappropriate they can 'call the decision in' after it has been made to prevent the decision taking immediate effect. They can then interview the Cabinet Member or Council Officers and make recommendations to the decision-maker suggesting improvements.
- ⇒ **Policy Reviews:** The panels carry out detailed, evidence-based assessments of Council services or issues that affect the lives of local people. At the end of the review the panels issue a report setting out their findings and recommendations for improvement and present it to Cabinet and other partner agencies. During the reviews, panels will gather information, evidence and opinions from Council officers, external bodies and organisations and members of the public to help them understand the key issues relating to the review topic.
- ⇒ **One-Off Reviews:** Panels often want to have a quick, one-off review of a topic and will ask Council officers to come and speak to them about a particular service or issue before making recommendations to the Cabinet.
- ⇒ **Scrutiny of Council Documents:** Panels also examine key Council documents, such as the budget, the Business Plan and the Best Value Performance Plan.

Scrutiny panels need the help of local people, partners and community groups to make sure that Merton delivers effective services. If you think there is something that scrutiny should look at, or have views on current reviews being carried out by scrutiny, let us know.

For more information, please contact the Scrutiny Team on 020 8545 3864 or by e-mail on scrutiny@merton.gov.uk. Alternatively, visit www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Agenda Item 3

All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the committee/panel. To find out the date of the next meeting please check the calendar of events at your local library or online at www.merton.gov.uk/committee.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

21 MARCH 2018

(7.15 pm - 9.50 pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Southgate (in the Chair), Peter McCabe, Hamish Badenoch, Mike Brunt, Brenda Fraser, Abigail Jones, Sally Kenny, Dennis Pearce, Oonagh Moulton and David Williams

Co-opted Member Helen Forbes

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Edith Macauley MBE (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities)

Lyla Adwan-Kamara, CEO, Merton Centre for Independent Living

Chief Superintendent Peter Laverick (Borough Commander), John Dimmer (Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnership), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration), Julia Regan (Head of Democracy Services), Neil Thurlow (Community Safety Manager) and Evereth Willis (Equality and Community Cohesion Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from co-opted member Colin Powell.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 CRIME AND POLICING IN MERTON (Agenda Item 4)

Chief Superintendent Peter Laverick said that he was standing in as Borough Commander on behalf of Chief Superintendent Sally Benatar, probably until mid-May. He provided a response to each of the questions set out in section 2.1 of the report:

1. The start date for the new Basic Command Unit will be 23 May
2. Merton will continue to be policed at full strength with dedicated ward officers and PCSOs

3. The council's wish to keep a police station in Wimbledon is being considered at a senior level within the Metropolitan Police. The front counter in Wimbledon will remain open until Mitcham police station has been refurbished.
4. The Basic Command Unit will comprise five functions – emergency response, neighbourhood policing, CID investigation, safeguarding, and headquarters function. Superintendent Guy Collings will be the lead contact for Merton.
5. There are a number of diversionary projects already in place in Merton and these will continue.
6. The police are committed to enforcing the PSPO to control street drinking and drinking in parks. There has been a focus on hotspots in Mitcham town centre.

In response to additional questions about the operational changes, the Borough Commander said that he would work as effectively as he could with the resources that he was given. He stressed that there would be sharing of good practice across the four boroughs in the BCU.

The Borough Commander undertook to:

- contact the leader of the volunteer police cadets to discuss how they could assist with supporting youth clubs.,
- find out where in Wimbledon the British Transport Police are based
- speak to CI Phil Palmer about the operation of the PSPO in Mitcham town centre and provide the Commission with an update

In response to questions about safeguarding, the Borough Commander said that there would be more officers in the safeguarding function, compared to the other four functions, and that this would be a real increase in numbers. The police places huge emphasis on early intervention and on working in partnership. He suggested that the Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel could meet with CI Rob Applegarth, the lead officer on safeguarding. The Borough Commander has not seen the report that there had been a link to Merton in about 20% of the last 30 stabbings so could not comment at this stage but would be interested to see the analysis.

The Borough Commander introduced the crime figures set out in Appendix 1 of the report. He said that the context for the recent 4.1% increase in total notifiable offences in Merton is one of crime reduction since 2011 and a low base compared to other boroughs. He said that overall Merton remained a low crime area, with reductions in the number of the most serious crimes. He offered to provide crime figures per 1,000 population in future.

The Borough Commander made additional points in response to questions:

- engagement with the local community and publicity for policing successes are key to reducing the fear of crime
- he undertook to investigate the number of rape cases and report back to the Commission

- the police are working with schools, parents and local communities to discourage young people from carrying knives

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission RESOLVED to thank Chief Superintendent Peter Laverick and to invite the new Borough Commander to attend in September.

5 HATE CRIME STRATEGY (Agenda Item 5)

Neil Thurlow, Community Safety Manager, introduced the report and drew the Commission's attention to an updated version of the action plan that was laid round at the meeting and will be published alongside the minutes. He highlighted the long lasting impact that hate crime has on victims and the partnership approach that had been taken to developing the hate crime strategy. He stressed that a hate crime would be categorised as such if the victim or another person perceived it to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic.

Lyla Adwan-Kamara, Chief Executive of Merton Centre for Independent Living, informed the Commission that a survey carried out by Merton CIL and partners during Hate Crime Week had found that 50% of respondents across all protected characteristics had experienced hate crime. Specifically for disabled people, 98% of hate crime against disabled people went unreported and many of the victims knew their perpetrator. The main reasons cited in the survey for not reporting were that victims thought it would not make the abuse stop, fear of reprisals and that they wouldn't be believed.

Lyla Adwan-Kamara added that she hoped that future work would include further training to help service providers and community groups to identify hate crime; also to work with the police to look at reported crimes to identify whether there was a hate crime aspect. Chief Superintendent Laverick, the Borough Commander, said that he would be interested in looking at a sample of reported crime and anti-social behaviour to see if hate crime aspects were being missed; as well as work on encouraging other public authorities to report hate crime.

In response to a question, Lyla Adwan-Kamara said that the reduction in the number of disability hate crime reports was much more likely to be due to under-reporting rather than a reduction in hate crime rates.

In response to a question about conviction rates for hate crime, PC Rhys Cullinane, said that of 19 reports in January 2018 only one had resulted in charges being brought. He said that most were withdrawn due to lack of evidence or were withdrawn by the victim. He undertook to provide a more detailed analysis as part of the Commission's next update on the Hate Crime Strategy.

The Commission RESOLVED to continue to support the partnership work on hate crime.

6 EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY (Agenda Item 6)

The report was introduced by Evereth Willis, Equality and Community Cohesion Officer. She drew the Commission's attention to the significant progress made against wide ranging objectives (set out in paragraph 2.7) plus the high level of commitment that she had received from council officers, thus indicating that the strategy and action plan were being taken seriously.

In response to questions, Evereth Willis said that the action plan on child obesity includes engagement with parents and schools and she undertook to:

- include a percentage change figure to show performance against targets in the next update of the action plan for the Commission
- find out and report back on whether there is a designated "homework zone" in libraries
- find out and report back on what action was being taken to promote community cohesion through the provision of classes to teach English

ACTION: Equality and Community Cohesion Officer

In response to a question, Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration, said that there was no separate budget for this work and that it had been embedded and delivered within existing resources. Equalities objectives had been mainstreamed into service plans and the TOM review included an equalities dimension.

7 COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 7)

The Commission discussed the report and AGREED that it would like to use the Select Committee report and recommendations as an opportunity to review how scrutiny operates in Merton, including whether to recommend its replacement with a committee structure.

ACTION: Head of Democracy Services to add this proposal to the list of work programme suggestions to be considered by the Commission at its meeting on 11 July 2018.

The Commission also AGREED that the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is too large and should be reviewed. ACTION: Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Head of Democracy Services

8 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda Item 8)

RESOLVED: that the Annual Report should be updated to include content from the final Panel and Commission meetings in March 2018 and should then be presented to Council at its meeting on 4 July 2018.

9 PLANNING THE COMMISSION'S 2018/19 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 9)

RESOLVED: that the Commission:

1. Agreed the agenda items for its meeting on 11 July 2018 as set out in paragraph 2.8 of the report
2. Agreed to add youth diversionary projects and support for “carers and cared for” to the list of topic suggestions
3. Agreed that members will email suggestions for agenda items and task group reviews to the Head of Democracy Services
4. Agreed that all councillors should be invited to attend the induction training workshop on scrutiny

10 NOTE OF MEETING OF FINANCIAL MONITORING TASK GROUP 6 MARCH 2018 (Agenda Item 10)

The Commission RESOLVED to note the minute of the task group’s meeting on 6 March 2018 and to thank Councillor Hamish Badenoch for his effective chairing of the task group over the past two years.

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Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 17 July 2018

Wards: All

Subject: Merton Partnership Annual Report 2017-18

Lead officer: Ged Curran, Chief Executive

Lead member: Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Leader of Merton Council and Chair of Merton Partnership

Contact officer: John Dimmer, john.dimmer@merton.gov.uk; 020 8545 3477

Recommendations:

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission discuss and comment on the progress of the Merton Partnership in 2017-18, as set out in the draft Annual Report at Appendix I
-

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The draft annual report of the Merton Partnership for 2017-18 is attached at Appendix I for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. This includes a general update on the progress of the four thematic partnerships against the community plan themes over 2017-18.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Merton Partnership was established in January 2002 as the overarching strategic partnership for the borough. Its aim is to work together with all partners on issues that are key to local people – including residents, workers and visitors – as reflected in the Community Plan.
- 2.2 The Partnership's primary objectives are to deliver the Community Plan along with other plans and strategies adopted by the Merton Partnership such as the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy.
- 2.3 Part of the Merton Partnership's governance is to produce an annual report setting out progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Community Plan. The draft plan is presented to Overview and Scrutiny prior to publication to provide oversight of the work of the Merton Partnership.
- 2.4 One of the recommendations from the LBM Internal Audit of the Merton Partnership, agreed by the Merton Partnership Executive Board in September 2014 was that the "Merton Partnership should produce an Annual Report, as indicated in the Governance Handbook, for review by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and subsequently publish it." Additionally, this report should outline performance over the previous year.

Structure of the Merton Partnership

- 2.5 The Merton Partnership consists of senior representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Members are recruited on the basis of their capacity to represent their organisations and not their individual interests.
- 2.6 The Partnership comprises an Executive Board drawn from the executive leaders for the public sector, business and voluntary and community sector as well as four thematic partnership groups:
- Health and Wellbeing Board
 - Children's Trust
 - Safer and Stronger Strategy Group
 - Sustainable Communities and Transport Board.
- 2.7 The thematic partnerships are tasked with delivering the priorities set out in the Community Plan. The Executive Board is responsible for the Community Plan, the vision for the borough and holds the thematic partnerships to account for delivery.
- 2.8 The voluntary and community sector is represented by 15 elected representatives from INVOLVE, the Community Engagement Network, who sit on a number of the partnership boards.

The work of the Merton Partnership

- 2.9 In May 2017 the Executive Board held an away-day to consider its role and purpose in light of the increasing challenges faced by the public sector, particularly financial and demographic pressures. The Executive Board agreed that the Executive Board was more relevant than ever given this challenges and confirmed its purpose to:
- articulate its ambition for the Borough through the Community Plan;
 - commission Thematic Networks to deliver;
 - hold thematic networks to account for delivering the vision;
 - support the thematic networks, including brokering agreements between members organisations where there are potential conflicts or differing priorities;
 - adjust the approach within their own organisations to reflect agreements reached at the Board;
 - hold each other to account for delivering on partnership commitments;
 - consider how to address so-called 'wicked issues' i.e. challenges with no easy solution that require partners to work collaboratively to address;
 - look for opportunities to trial and develop initiatives as a board utilising collective resources and the funding available directly to the Board through its budget and MP voluntary sector grants fund;
 - work in a collaborative, consensual and mutually supportive way.

- 2.10 As well as its oversight role of the thematic partnerships the Executive Board has also considered a number of cross-cutting issues in relation to:
- the emerging issue of County Lines, gang activity and violence and the risks for young people that this poses;
 - community cohesion, particularly focusing on the wards that border with Sutton;
 - developing a partnership approach to information and advice services for Merton residents;
 - how the individual organisations can support the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2017/18 in particular the focus on diabetes and Health in all Policies;
 - supporting Merton's bid to be London Borough of Culture;
 - supporting the Think Family agenda.
- 2.11 Looking forward, the next meeting of the Merton Partners in September will focus on the collective impact of public sector funding cuts, the implications for the next few years and opportunities to work together. Also on the horizon is the next refresh of Merton's Community Plan in 2019.
- 2.12 The Merton Partnership conference took place on 3 July with over 100 members attending the event which focused on opportunities to strengthen social capital. The feedback from the event will also be considered at the Executive Board meeting in September and at the individual thematic partnership meetings.
- 2.13 Data analysts drawn from the members of the Merton Partnership have overseen the development of a new data hub that was launched earlier this year. [Merton Data](#) brings together all the main data sources about Merton together in one place.
- 2.14 Updates and future priorities for each thematic partnership are set out in the draft Annual Report 2017/18 – Appendix 1.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 We could not produce an Annual Report. However, this would breach the governance for the Merton Partnership as well as the council's own governance framework.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1 Thematic Leads have been consulted on this report. The draft Annual Report was considered by the Merton Partnership Executive Board in May 2018.

5. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal or statutory implications arising from this report.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report. It should be noted that there is a legal requirement to have a Health and Wellbeing Board and a Crime Reduction Partnership Board (the Safer and Stronger Strategy Group fulfils this function). Overall, the work of the Merton Partnership as set out in the Annual Report contributes towards making the borough a fair and more cohesive place.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None for the purposes of this report although the work of the Merton Partnership as a whole contributes towards making the borough a safer place.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Partnership working is one of the corporate risks and the Merton Partnership is a major opportunity for different stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors to come together to consider priorities for joint working and implementation.

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

- 10.1 Appendix I – Merton Partnership Annual Report 2017-18.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None.

APPENDIX 1

**MERTON PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18
(DRAFT)**

CONTENTS

- 1 THE MERTON PARTNERSHIP**
- 2 PARTNERSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS: 2017-18**
 - 2.1. A healthy and fulfilling life
 - 2.2. Better opportunities for youngsters
 - 2.3. Keeping Merton moving
 - 2.4. Being safe and strong
- 3 END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE 2017-18**

1. THE MERTON PARTNERSHIP

This is the Annual Report for the Merton Partnership 2017/18. It provides an overview of the work of the Merton Partnership and its key achievements.

The [Merton Partnership](#) was established in January 2002 as the overarching strategic partnership for the borough. Its aim is to work together with all partners on issues that are key to local people – including residents, workers and visitors – as reflected in the Community Plan.

The Partnership's primary objectives are to deliver the Community Plan along with other plans and strategies adopted by the Merton Partnership such as the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy.

The Merton Partnership agreed the latest refresh of the [Community Plan](#) in May 2013. The Community Plan sets out the vision and priorities for the borough going forward. The current Community Plan runs through until 2019 and developing a new Community Plan is part of the forward work programme for the Merton Partnership.

[Merton Data](#) is a website that pulls together the main datasets about the borough and is used by members of the Partnership for strategic planning purposes.

The Merton Partnership consists of senior representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Members are recruited on the basis of their capacity to represent their organisations and not their individual interests.

The Partnership comprises an Executive Board and four thematic partnership boards. The thematic partnerships are tasked with delivering the priorities set out in the Community Plan. The Executive Board is responsible for the Community Plan, the vision for the borough and holds the thematic partnerships to account for delivery. There are also a number of sub-boards and working group focusing on particular areas of work. The main areas of work and responsible thematic partnerships are set out overleaf. The Executive Board and Thematic Networks generally meet quarterly.

The Merton Partnership also comes together collectively at its annual conference. The last conference took place on 3 July 2018 and was attended by over 100 members of the Merton Partnership. The theme this year was how to strengthen social capital in Merton.

A total of 15 INVOLVE Community Engagement Network elected representatives sit on the various bodies within the Merton Partnership structure, both to raise and to report back on issues relevant to the voluntary and community sector.

Theme	Responsible body and work areas
Sustainable communities	Sustainable Communities and Transport Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainable housing ▪ Environment (including street scene) ▪ Transport ▪ The economy (including adult learning and skills)
Safer and stronger communities	Safer and Stronger Strategy Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preventing and reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse ▪ Community cohesion and active citizenship ▪ Public safety (including fire safety and civic contingencies)
Healthier Communities	Health and Wellbeing Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving health outcomes ▪ Reducing health inequalities ▪ Independent living ▪ Supported living
Children and Young People	Children's Trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving overall outcomes for children and young people • Multi-agency partnership practice ▪ Education including Early Years ▪ Children's Social Care ▪ Youth services including Youth Offending ▪ Children's Community Health

Members of the Merton Partnership Executive Board

The following organisations and individuals are members of the Merton Partnership Executive Board:

- Chair of Merton Partnership / Leader of Merton Council (Chair)
- Chief Executive, Merton Council (Deputy Chair)
- Commander, South West London Basic Command Unit
- Director of Children, Schools and Families, Merton Council
- Director of Public Health, Merton Council
- Chair, Merton CCG
- Sutton and Merton Service Director, South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust
- Borough Commander, Merton Fire (LFB)
- Chief Executive, Merton Chamber of Commerce
- Chief Executive, Merton Voluntary Services Council
- Customer Services Leader, Jobcentre Plus
- Vice Principal, Business and Student Services, South Thames College
- Head of Housing Services (Merton), Clarion Housing Group
- Community Engagement Network (CEN) representative x2

2. PARTNERSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS: 2017-18

The Partnership has presented its achievements under the following four Community Plan themes:

1. A healthy and fulfilling life
2. Better opportunities for youngsters
3. Keeping Merton moving
4. Being safe and strong

Achievements against key outcomes in 2017-18, and key priorities for 2018-19 are set out under each theme.

2.1 A HEALTHY AND FULFILLING LIFE:

Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB)

Health and Wellbeing Boards are statutory partnerships formed to deliver strategic, local leadership in health and wellbeing. The work of the HWBB, focused on addressing health inequalities, is central to informing the commissioning of health and social care services in Merton. It has a core role in encouraging joined up, integrated services across the Council, CCG, acute providers, the voluntary sector and other local partners to improve health and wellbeing across the borough.

Outcome 1: Local Vision programme

- The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) is a statutory body with a duty to encourage integrated working, to develop Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies.
- In 2017 Merton HWBB undertook significant development work as systems leaders. This has successfully strengthened relationships and partnership work and has helped move the HWBB from simply ratifying reports to delivering effective strategic leadership for health and wellbeing.
- The development work, supported by funding secured through the Leadership Centre Local Vision programme, has also involved the HWBB working to engage and listen to people through a 'community conversations'. Recently HWBB members have acted by 'buddying' with expert volunteers to have conversations with people who are experiencing, or at risk of, diabetes; establishing a dialogue to help inform tackling diabetes as an exemplar project.

Outcome 2: The Wilson Health and Wellbeing Campus

The development of the Wilson Hospital site by Merton CCG, as the centre of a health and wellbeing campus for east Merton, is a large-scale, ongoing legacy project for the HWBB, helping to 'bridge the gap' between east and west Merton. Along with the development of a new model of health and wellbeing for the residents of east Merton, it is a key priority of the HWBB and the Council and all partners are involved in, and supporting, the work. The campus will have integrated clinical and community facilities. Actions and progress include:

- Workshops held throughout autumn 2017 to develop the model of health and wellbeing, with a focus on mental health, children and young people, and primary care.
- The Project Initiation Document for the Wilson programme was approved by NHS England's London Capital Pipeline Group on 1 December 2017.
- The 'participant's requirements' for the clinical part of the site is in development, and work has also started on the business plan for the wellbeing and community aspects of the Campus.
- A Communications and Engagement Strategy is in development by Merton CCG and a programme of further engagement events will take place throughout 2018.

Outcome 3: Tackling Childhood Obesity

The increasing gap in obesity between the east and the west of the borough is a significant health inequality which impacts on children's health and potentially their life chances. Tackling childhood obesity was a key HWBB priority for 2016/17 and the work programme continues. [The Child Healthy Weight Action Plan](#) was developed, and the Director of Public Health's Annual Public Health Report for 2016-17, [Tackling Childhood Obesity Together](#), provides an easy reference to

evidence what works. Merton also took part in a pan London Childhood Obesity Peer Review, linked to the London Great Weight Debate, supported by the Chair of the HWBB. We continue to align with London and national priorities including implementing the LA Declaration on Sugar, Sugar Smart and Change4Life campaigns. Actions and achievements in 2017 include:

- 2,100 residents engaged in the Great Weight Debate Merton on childhood obesity, focusing on the east of the borough.
- Promotion of Change4Life national childhood obesity campaigns
- Merton Food Poverty action plan was developed (receiving an award for the most improved borough in London).
- 37 food businesses are now fully signed up to the Healthy Catering Commitment.
- Merton's Local Plan is asking residents their view on limiting hot food takeaways near schools.
- The All England Lawn Tennis Club Early Years Activation Programme pilot was delivered and evaluated in 25 schools. Initially focused on schools in the east, 20 schools are implementing the 'Daily Mile' with further plans to introduce a 'Merton Mile' in a local park.
- 171 teachers benefited from schools staff training on talking about weight and childhood obesity. 5 schools achieved Bronze Healthy Schools London Award and 1 achieved Silver.
- Going forward we aim to further strengthen Merton's 'whole systems approach' to tackling childhood obesity, aligning to national and regional approaches including establishment of a Childhood Obesity Taskforce for London and London Obesity Leads Network.

Outcome 4: Social prescribing

Social prescribing (SP) enables primary care services to refer patients with social, emotional or practical needs to a range of local, non-clinical services, often provided by the voluntary and community sector. Developing a SP pilot in Merton was a key HWBB priority for 2016/17.

- The pilot was based in Wide Way and Tamworth GP practices (population 17,400). A SP Coordinator was appointed based in the practices (and hosted by MVSC).
- Patients with issues relating to social isolation, low level mental health problems and frequently presenting at GPs were involved in the pilot. Over the last 12 months the SP Coordinator has seen over 200 patients for a first appointment and 129 for follow up and these patients are accessing a range of community services.
- An independent evaluation commissioned with funding from the SW London Health Innovation Network has shown an increase in self-reported health gains (shown via the outcomes star) by individuals and a statistically significant reduction in GP visits.
- Following the success of the pilot project, Merton CCG are funding an extension and expansion for another year to allow for further detailed analysis of the benefits.
- This will see every GP in east Merton offering SP, with the aim to roll the scheme to every GP practice across Merton.

Outcome 5: Health in all Policies

Health in All Policies (HiAP) presents potential for strong co-benefits, across the council and partners and offers a way of increasing efficiency of public sector spending. Merton Council participated (as the first London Council) in the LGA's HiAP peer assessment and has committed to an action plan.

In October 2017 a Prevention Matters workshop was held with the LGA attended by over 20 councillors, Healthwatch and, as a first for the Prevention Matters programme, three local GPs. Aimed at improving understanding of health across Merton and encouraging all to become champions of health and wellbeing the LGA facilitators were joined by the Leader and four Cabinet leads, and all committed to actions to take forward. LGA were impressed with participants' knowledge and enthusiasm saying it was one of their most successful sessions. The HWBB provides the governance for HiAP and agree the HiAP action plan priorities to: take forward leadership and advocacy; explore social value in commissioning; promote healthy workplaces; pursue joint work between the Environment Directorate and public health; investigate housing and homelessness; embed Think Family in council working; tackle childhood obesity; and, develop a dementia friendly Merton. Successes to date include:

- A draft Social Value Toolkit: for commissioning and procurement developed by Corporate Services which will be shared to explore opportunities as a template for Merton CCG.
- Environment and Regeneration joint work on health impact assessments focussed on estate regeneration and Morden town centre development to create health promoting environments. Also working jointly on health in the new Local Plan towards 2019, involving the HWBB in the consultation process. Merton participation in national TCPA (Town & Country Planning Association) project and development of the Air Quality Action Plan.
- A Joint Strategic Framework for Prevention of Substance Misuse and related harm 2017-21 developed across partners. Taking a whole systems response to the problems of alcohol and drug misuse, to achieve desired outcomes spanning health, social care, welfare, community safety and criminal justice. The Safer Stronger Executive Board has oversight of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan, to ensure cross council, CCG and partners' ownership and commitment.
- Children's Services 'Crossing Bridges' Think Family training for adult mental health and children's social care professionals is underway. 20 participants in October 2017 and further 20 participants in Feb 2018 together with Parental Mental Health Awareness training.
- [Merton Dementia Action Alliance](#) (DAA) now meets quarterly with thematic meetings based on the lives of people with dementia including culture, sport and leisure and legal and financial planning. Merton's DAA was the fastest growing London alliance during summer 2017 and now has 62 members.

Priorities for 2018-19

- It is a priority for the HWBB to promote health and social care integration to deliver a better experience and outcomes for residents. Significant work has taken place to establish Merton Health and Care Together (MHCT), with representation from the Council, Merton CCG, and

partners, to agree a work plan for delivery.

- Development of the HWBB will continue with a planned seminar on its role going forward, including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (HWBS) refresh, in the context of development of the Local Health and Care Plan and wider SWL plans.
- The refreshed Merton HWBS will, from 2019, focus on the wider determinants of health and embed a health in all policies approach across partners, while the Local Health and Care Plan will focus on health and care service delivery, with the two linking closely and being fully complementary.
- It will also be priority for the HWBB to take forward the diabetes strategic framework, building on the engagement done with volunteers, taking a systems wide approach with partners and acting as an exemplar to the approach to tackling long term conditions.

Additional information

- The [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) gives an overview of the health and wellbeing of Merton residents and informs all that the HWBB does. The JSNA and the Merton Story link to [Merton Data](#), launched in January 2018, which pulls together the key sources of data about Merton into one place. The Merton Story is the annual JSNA summary that sets out the headline health and wellbeing needs for Merton residents.

2.2 BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNGSTERS:

Children and Young People Thematic Partnership (Children's Trust Board)

The Children's Trust Board continues to be the vehicle through which partner agencies share responsibility for delivering services to improve outcomes for children and young people in Merton, particularly those vulnerable to poorer outcomes than their peers. Along with Merton's Safeguarding Children Board and Health and Wellbeing Board, the Children's Trust Board sets priorities for children's services and drives service improvements.

Outcome 1:	Children and Young Peoples Plan: Deliver early help and improve outcomes for those subject to the effects of disadvantage
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- The Ofsted inspection of May 2017 recognised early help services as being outstanding, stating that “Children are protected through an outstanding early help offer and a robust ‘front door’, to consider which intervention would help them best.... Effective intervention at an early stage is having a positive impact on the number of children who require more specialist support.”
- The Children's Trust Partnership has continued to deliver, commission and broker early help services through a range of providers including the voluntary sector, early year's services, schools, CLCH, Merton CCG, the council and other key partners.
- We have launched Merton's Children, Young People and Families Wellbeing Model and partnership approach to promoting and managing the well-being and safeguarding of children and young people with recommendations agreed with Children's Trust and MSCB partnership boards.
- The early help offer provided by Merton's Early Years' service includes strong local partnerships engaging community health services. Our early years provision includes 100% good and outstanding Children's Centres and 97% good and outstanding PVIs. These services have been effective in meeting the needs of the new demands for extended 2, 3 and 4 year old provision.
- Continued to achieve positive progress on outcomes for Theme 1: *Best start in life-early years development and strong educational achievement* within Merton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy including a greater proportion of FSM children achieving a 'Good Level of Development'.
- Continued to deliver the second phase of Merton's Transforming Families programme to support families with multiple and complex needs. Successful working in partnership enabled the turning around of 434 families (achieving Significant and Sustained Progress) as at the end of March 2018. A recent government report placed Merton 7th in London for delivery of the programme, with 36% of families achieving significant and Sustained Progress.

Outcome 2:	Children and Young Peoples Plan: Safeguarding children and young people
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- The Ofsted inspection conducted in May 2017 demonstrated that children's safeguarding services were Good with Outstanding features. The report contained only four recommendations which were built into an action plan to ensure that they are monitored and effectively implemented.
- Following the refresh of the borough's multi-agency Neglect Strategy, developed a Neglect Tool

to support with embedding effective consideration of neglect within the casework of practitioners, ensuring that it is widely understood. This supports its position as a key cross-cutting issue across the MSCB's three priorities of Think Family, Supporting Adolescents and Early Help.

- Further driven forward the CSE agenda informed by case audits, an improved dataset, a range of awareness training and development across the Children's Trust and robust CSE meetings to which the young person and family are invited to attend. The Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel has also strengthened triangulation with children missing from home, care and education.
- Implemented new workflows and processes for MASH, First Response and LAC through the introduction of the MOSAIC case management system, with other processes scoped for future implementation.
- Continued roll-out of the Signs of Safety (SoS) model and other tools to start embedding a new practice model and engage more effectively with children and families.

Outcome 3: Children and Young Peoples Plan: Looked After Children and Care Leavers

- Strengthened processes and procedures in relation to legal planning meetings, in-house parenting assessments, expert assessments and Family Group Conferences. Continued focus on court proceeding timeliness with at the year end only 19 cases exceeding the 26 week timescale (ahead of the national benchmark) whilst continuing to ensure a more joined up approach, clearer accountability and effective working across services and teams.
- Continued to deliver a successful marketing and recruitment campaign to recruit in-house foster carers, along with events and training to support the retention of existing foster carers. This resulted in the recruitment of 11 in 2017-18 within our target groups, with further applications still being processed which will feed through in 2018-19. Timescales have continued to reduce for the assessment of foster carers and applications are being sought for those wanting to foster the increasing number of asylum seekers.
- Sustained significant progress made with regard to the timeliness of adoptive placements as a result of good quality cross service working and increased scrutiny in case monitoring, improving the 3-year rolling average of time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family to 531 days (2013-16) from 685 (2010-13), with a provisional rate of 393 days for 2014-17.
- Following the Ofsted inspection last summer, new processes have been implemented to ensure the timely and effective dissemination of health reviews and information for looked after children and care leavers.

Outcome 4: Children and Young Peoples Plan: Closing the gap in educational outcomes and opportunity

- 93% of all Merton Schools are graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted, this places 95% of all pupils in Merton in good or better schools. This means that no schools inspected over the last year have seen a drop in their rating.
- Continued support, challenge and regular monitoring for individual, identified schools to further

improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEN, to ensure that strategies to raise attainment and narrow the gap are strong and evidence-based, enabling further intensive targeted work to be undertaken where necessary, working closely with the newly established Merton Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership.

- Effective operation of the multi-agency Children Missing Education (CME) panel to monitor both CME and those vulnerable to CME cohorts with the most recent QA report highlighting, that 89% of all cases heard at a CME panel are back on roll within one term.
- Consultation successfully concluded and approval given for the opening of a new secondary school in Wimbledon for Autumn 2018, initially in a temporary site whilst the permanent building is constructed, ensuring sufficient capacity with Merton schools.
- Drafted plans to support the further increase in provision and sufficiency of local SEN places, particularly in response to the continued rise in ASD and SEMH.

Outcome 5: Children and Young Peoples Plan: Engage and enable young people to achieve better outcomes

- Continued to reduce numbers of First-Time Entrants and improve the rate of re-offending, whilst also getting 80-90% of young people into Employment, Training or Education at the end of their order (compared to 40-50% in London or nationally).
- Continued delivery of the NEET / RPA action plan and coordinated work across services such as My Futures, Transforming Families and the YOT to increase the economic prospects for vulnerable groups. Proportions of young people who are NEET, or whose status is not known, fell again in 2017-18 and continue to be better than national averages.
- Implemented new commissioned services during the year, focusing on the priority groups of: children missing from home or care; children at risk of sexual exploitation; advocacy for children on CP Plans / LAC / Care Leavers; young carers; and children with disabilities.
- Increased the focus on Gangs and County Lines to have robust analysis / mapping, raise awareness and create a whole partnership response linked to our contextual safeguarding, CSE and VAWG work.

Outcome 6: Children and Young Peoples Plan: Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

- The Local Offer has been refreshed with input from parents to ensure that it meets their needs, is easy to navigate and contains the correct information. It also incorporates the CAMHS Local Offer and signposts to other public and voluntary sector provision.
- Sustained a focus on achieving greater independence for young people with SEN or disabilities through early planning for transitions, including those who will not meet thresholds for adult services, to ensure effective preparation for adulthood.
- Reconfigured roles, increased capacity and streamlined business processes through use of the SEN Implementation Grant to ensure that SEN Statements were converted to EHC Plans within the timescales, resulting in all except 19 being converted ahead of the 31st March 2018 deadline, despite a large increase in the number of EHCPs (over 1,500 throughout the fourth quarter).

- Established a multi-agency SEN Reforms Implementation Group and refreshed the SEN Needs Analysis to ensure that statutory partners are working collaboratively on implementation of the reforms and to oversee development of a self-evaluation against new Ofsted multi-agency inspection framework.
- Supported health colleagues with the development and engagement around Merton's Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASDA) strategy, taking a holistic approach, gaining the views of children, young people and families where ASD is a part of their lives.

Priorities for 2018-19

- Refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan for the period 2019-22, ensuring that it reflects current and emerging priorities, drives innovation, efficiency and productivity through working effectively across the partnership and has the voice of the child at the centre of its development and priorities. Supporting a review and development of the Children's Trust User Voice Strategy for 2019-22 to continue to promote and embed the views and participation of service users in future working practices and priorities.
- Develop plans and get agreement for the new partnership to be successor to the MSCB, ensuring that it is ready for implementation from 1st April 2019; to lead implementation and embedding of the Think Family approach across the borough, making full use of the wider partnership membership; maintaining and enhancing a multi-agency focus on neglect.
- Continue to embed the Merton's Practice Model aligned with the Think Family approach using collaborative tools to provide holistic and responsive services, effectively assessing and managing risk to improve outcomes for our children and families underpinned by new working practices and robust reporting and case management following implementation of Mosaic.

Additional information

- Over the course of the next year, much of the activity will be around refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan, to create a new plan for the period 2019-22 and establishment of new partnership arrangements to succeed the MSCB from April 2019. Both of these are large pieces of work of huge strategic importance in continuing to deliver for and improve the opportunities for children and young people within the borough.

2.3 KEEPING MERTON MOVING:

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES & TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

The purpose of the Sustainable Communities and Transport Theme Group is to work in partnership to create a more sustainable borough, one which is less reliant on fossil fuel and which reduces its negative impact on the environment and climate change in particular. The Board promotes investment into the borough to create new jobs as well as looking to improve skills levels and the capacity of residents to benefit from these jobs and those across the region. The Board seeks to improve the condition and supply of housing including affordable housing. The Board works to promote the development of sustainable transport particularly active transport [cycling and walking] as well as public transport in and around Merton.

Outcome 1: % reduction in number of JSA Claimants at Mitcham JCP

Merton's Jobseekers allowance (JSA) claimant count is 1.8% as of April 2018 compared to 1.7% in March 2017 (Source – DWP claimant count). Comparable data for London: 2.2% in April 2018; 2.0% March 2017).

% is the number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of area aged 16-64. Under Universal Credit a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. As Universal Credit Full Service is rolled out in particular areas, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count is therefore likely to rise.

Outcome 2: Apprenticeships – placements in year

The Economic Development Strategy Refresh has been delivered. No funds have been agreed for activities this year and there is no planned skills and employment support for Merton businesses going forward.

Merton - the Employer

The Government has set public sector targets for apprentice "new starts" based on 2.3% of the workforce over the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021. Based on April 2017 workforce data this equates to 38 for Merton Council and a further 61 in our schools - total 99 new apprentices on average over the 4 year period. Up to May 2018 we have had 23 levy-funded apprentice "new starts" (in addition to 19 existing apprentices at the beginning of the period) with a further 35 advertised to start within the next two months.

Merton Council's HR division manages the LBM employed apprenticeships program.

Outcome 3: Number of people employed through Employability schemes

The Economic Development Strategy Refresh has been delivered. No funds have been agreed for activities this year and there is no planned skills and employment support for Merton businesses going forward. However, the Economic Wellbeing Group maintains a record of programmes being delivered via an Indicator Set.

Outcome 4: No. of clients accessing employment and skills initiatives who have received financial guidance

The partners of the SCTP's Economic Wellbeing Group provide information on employment and skills programmes being delivered. It is not possible to provide a definitive number of residents who have been supported specifically with financial guidance as many of the programmes will be providing complex needs support and some clients will have been supported by more than one partner. There are a number of programmes on offer with specific activities around finances including:

Citizens Advice Merton and Clarion supported 18 Clarion residents with financial advice/support.

Money Buddy: An online e-learning course modelled on digital champions. Learners are led by a Money Buddy narrator. There are 6 x 30 mins modules covering subjects such as savings, budgeting, how to get financial advice. The programme is for 18-64 year olds who want to improve their money skills. It is about to relaunch but will be targeted at residents who are going through moments of change that impact their finances, e.g. starting a new job, or moving house. It is not suitable for residents already in financial crisis.

Guideline: Previously provided by Affinity Sutton now Clarion. This is a helpline for all residents with questions and needs around support toward employment

Better Working Futures: The Work and Health Programme (replacing the work Programme) WHP commissioned via SLP to Reed in Partnership. Employment Advisers helping people into work. Also provides personal advice and guidance, skills training and health support. 1. People with a disability and/or health condition (voluntary) 2. Early Access Disadvantaged Groups (voluntary) 3. Long-term Unemployed (mandatory).

Prevista: Deliver an ESF match funded (via London Councils) employability programme supporting economically inactive. Providing support through 6+ hours of engagement (IAG, job search, mentoring, training) undertaking a work placement / volunteering. Prevista was awarded the contract in December 2017 and began delivering from January 2018. Support is provided for 19-25 year olds unemployed for more than 6 months and for over 25 year olds unemployed for 12 months. Figures are still being collected but as of May 2018:

- 40-45 enrolments
- 10 have passed work focused qualifications (forklift licenses, SIA badges, CSCS cards)
- 9 into employment (Primark, McDonalds, M&S, V&A Museum)
- 0 sustained for 6 months so far. The first ones are due in July

Commonside financial support programme: aiming to support 40 Clarion tenants and resident with financial literacy. This complements the Money Buddy tool. Currently supported 2017/18: Q1 3 people; Q2 4 people; Q3 6 people; Q4 2 people: Total 15 residents supported.

These clients are referred by Clarion course organisers and rent officers, with their agreement, to

sort urgent and not so urgent financial issues connected to: Housing Benefit, JSA, Universal Credit, health-related benefits. Commonsides also give some advice about training, careers, housing, income maximisation, health, diet etc.

Confidential face to face support meetings offered. Clients are then signed up to the Step Forward programme so that we can store their data safely, and see them for 2 or three sessions.

When needed, clients are referred to South West London Law Centres for free legal advice (e.g. relating to debt, housing) – legal advisers visit the Commonsides Trust monthly to offer this additional advice by appointment. Overall the aim of the Commonsides support is to get these people out of immediate difficulties and to a point where they can manage their own finances without our help. Commonsides are successful in approx. 80% of cases (within three months).

Merton Centre for Independent Living (MCIL): Offers an accredited advice and advocacy service to local Deaf and Disabled People on:

- Benefits, including representation
- Budgeting and basic money advice
- Community Care
- Health
- Housing

Expected to deliver over 1,000 sessions of 1:1 Advice and Advocacy in 2017/18 supporting financial resilience, improving quality of life and increasing choice and control. Services are free.

Pollards Hill Regeneration: United Living Group has been appointed by Moat to deliver a £35m regeneration and development scheme at Pollards Hill. The proposal includes a social impact commitment to up-skill and employ local people. **London Youth Support Trust** is involved in the refurbishment of 10 garages at Pollards Hill, providing affordable space to set up businesses and support with business management.

Priorities for 2018-19

- Development of new homes
- Bids for external funding support to benefit Merton's residents and businesses (for all matters connected to sustainable communities)
- Additional priorities may be added once formal agreement of the Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership review recommendations are discussed at the next Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership meeting on 07/06/2018.

Additional information

In December 2017, the Sustainable Communities and Transport Board of the Merton Partnership, agreed to undertake a review of its operations. Sarah Tanburn Associates was commissioned to

undertake this project.

The Board's commitment to collaboration and partnership informed the review and from this presented recommendations for the future ways of working to:

- Prioritise the work of the Board and review annually
- Adopt four priorities till May 2019
- Value and be effective at networking
- Adopt clear ways of working and formalities
- Take specific reports at the next meeting of the Board

The Board agreed that the criteria will be reviewed regularly but for the coming year 2018/19 these were set as:

- National/regional context and targets
- Challenges that keep getting left on the 'too hard' pile
- Only solved by collaboration and dismantling barriers
- Joint impact across sectors (exemplified by more active transport)
- Good timing and opportunities
- Actions which really bridge the gap
- Deliverability and alignment with other work within a reasonable timescale

The review has recommended priorities for 2018-2019 are:

1. Increase the supply of jobs and improve skills
2. Promote a cleaner environment and reduce waste consigned to landfill
3. Increase the use of public and active transport in the borough
4. Build social capital, connecting neighbourhoods and communities to grow resilience and self-reliance

2.4 BEING SAFE AND STRONG:

SAFER STRONGER STRATEGY GROUP

The Safer and Stronger Strategy Group performs the role of the community safety partnership for Merton and leads on the community safety and community cohesion agenda on behalf of the Merton Partnership.

Outcome 1: Domestic Burglary and IOM – Burglary remains one of the single biggest concerns for our residents and as such will remain as a strategic priority.

Burglary

- A challenging year caused by Home Office counting laws changing bringing non burglary dwelling i.e. shed burglary, into the same criteria as residential burglary. However much has been done to tackle this issue over the year
- Neighbourhood Watch continues to promote their service and work is ongoing with local Police teams to set up new watches across the borough. We have in excess of 30,000 watch members currently signed up to Merton's neighbourhood watch scheme
- Met Trace continues to be rolled out across the borough. Police, to the highest burglary areas (not necessarily wards but super output areas), deliver met Trace. Challenges have been faced with residents taking up the offer of this free service
- Super Cocooning is taking place following burglaries where 10 properties (either side of that burgled) are leafleted and crime prevention advice provided
- Crime prevention messages from across the partnership have been distributed to help inform residents as to how they can keep them and their property safe.

IOM (Integrated Offender Management)

- A snap shot analytical profile was written based on the IOM cohort in March 2017. The aim of the profile was to assess the needs of the cohort. Ongoing monitoring of the IOM cohort continues.
- The IOM panel meetings continue to meet on a monthly basis.
- The Merton Offenders Board has now been established which looks at how the partnership manages all offenders 18yrs+ and looks at transition issues (i.e. those moving from youth offending cohort to adult offending cohorts)
- Merton maintains its cohort size to a maximum 40 clients due to resource and capacity challenges. The work on IOM will change in the next few months due to the Police merger.

Outcome 2: Local Alcohol Action Areas (LAAA's) and Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's). PSPO's will replace the current controlled drinking zone in October. The LAAA is a two year Home Office pilot scheme to look at partnership work to tackle alcohol related crime

Public Space Protection Orders

As of the 21st of October, PSPOs replaced the borough wide controlled drinking zone and have incorporated additional powers including dog control orders. The prohibitions for street drinking will remain as they currently are with police having the powers to cease, confiscate or direct the draining of alcohol vessels where ASB is, or is likely to be, present. The powers to enforce are at officer's discretion that means that we can intervene to those in most need of behaviour change.

We are currently in the process of establishing a performance framework for the PSPO. This framework will allow us to capture both qualitative and quantitative outcomes to ensure we can evidence the enforcement levels, resident perception levels and health related impacts on those whom have alcohol dependency needs which result in them drinking to excess in the public domain.

Local Alcohol Action Areas

Merton was successful in its application to become a phase two area, in the Home Office's LAAA Programme. The aims of the programme are to prevent alcohol related crime and disorder, reduce alcohol-related health harms and to generate economic growth by creating a vibrant and diverse night-time economy. The LAAA areas in Merton are focused around Wimbledon and Mitcham Town Centres and the main driver is to "prevent alcohol-related crime and disorder". An action plan has been established and work is ongoing. Key achievements from this work:

- 100% of all on-license premises in Wimbledon now signed up to Ask Angela
- 95% of all on-license premises across the borough signed up to Ask Angela
- Street pastors more engaged and tasked
- Christmas pilot saw improved, and subsequently sustained, conversations and information sharing between CCTV, Police and Wimbledon night time economy businesses whom use the radio scheme
- Visit by Amy Lane, MOPAC night time tsar.

Outcome 3: Theft of Powered Two Wheelers.

Met-wide roll out of Operation Venice, which focuses on "Prevention" through crime prevention messages, "Protection" through ANPR operation and social media campaigns, "Prepare" through reassurance to the local community and work with the manufacturing industry to improve security measures and Pro-active through collecting intelligence, evidence and offender management.

Rolling 12 months data saw reductions in theft of powered two wheelers by some 43% in Merton. This was achieved by working to the London wide plans as well as local interventions:

- Locally there have been two call-ins and CPN's have been issued as well as targeted, intelligence led patrols and operations in known hotspot areas.
- Joint operations with neighbouring boroughs.
- CCTV tasking's
- Collaborative purchases and distribution of crime prevention tools i.e. bike locks
- Increased crime prevention messaging via targeted intervention.

Outcome 4: Priority Areas – Work to address geographically based challenges via formal problem solving approaches. **Wimbledon Park Ward**

- A ward profile was written and disseminated amongst key partners working on the ward.
- An action plan of key work was written and a partnership group set up to action and monitor the work contained in the plan. The action plan is a two-year plan that seeks to improve engagement with the local community including identifying vulnerable residents and offering crime prevention advice, audit CCTV in the ward, develop links with contractors to protect council assets, actively target offenders and to work in partnership with statutory partners and businesses to design out crime on the ward.

- Neighbourhood Watch have actively worked in the area and with the local Police team in the ward to increase watches in the area.
- CCTV has been utilised in key strategic locations, this will continue to be monitored for the next six months and then an evaluation will be undertaken.
- Partnership problem solving at key sites.

Outcome 5: MOPAC (Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) priorities that we will need to address in partnership at a borough level

- Neighbourhood Policing
- Safeguarding children and young people
- Improving criminal justice system for victims
- Violence against women and girls
- Tackling hate crime and extremism in all its forms

• **Neighbourhood Policing**

Oversight of rollout of 2x DWOs and 1x PCSO per ward

Oversight of neighbourhood policing priorities

Working with Police and partners to “manage” consultation in regard Wimbledon Police station closure

Working to empower and support communities to hold police to account c/o Safer Neighbourhood Board

• **Safeguarding children and young people**

Work within the community safety partnership arena included significant investment, with CSF colleagues, around Serious youth violence including knife crime and gangs

Work with the partnership to raise awareness of county lines has been undertaken with discussions at SSE, MSCB and the Merton Partnership Exec. More work is required in the coming year

• **Improving criminal justice system for victims**

An emerging area of work. Head of Safer Merton sits on a London wide, MOPAC managed Victims Board which is looking at this element of work

The role for the HoS is to represent all 32 London borough Community Safety Partnerships

• **Violence against women and girls**

Continued delivery of four year strategy

Several large scale communications campaigns

Deep dive review into how LBMs commissioned services meet the needs of victims (within domestic violence)

• **Tackling hate crime and extremism in all its forms**

Year one of hate crime strategy delivered

Third sector continue to support and lead in hate crime work

Presentation of hate crime work to O&S panel

Redesign and relaunch of hate crime webpages, hate crime information and service leaflet

Delivery of successful community engagement week in Autumn 2017 c/o hate crime awareness week.

Priorities for 2018-19

Strategic assessment priorities (local priorities)

- Theft of Motor Vehicle
- Burglary

MOPAC priorities

- Neighbourhood policing [Crime Dashboard](#)
- Keeping children and young people safe [Gang Crime and Serious Youth Violence Dashboard](#)
- Tackling violence against women and girls [Domestic and Sexual Violence Dashboard](#)
- The criminal justice system that works for London [Criminal Justice Timeliness Dashboard](#)
- Standing together against hate, extremism and terror in all its forms [Hate Crime Dashboard](#)
- ASB

Additional information

Over the next 12 months the key challenges and changes which the Community Safety Partnership, and Safer Merton service, will work to oversee include

- **Police Borough Command Unit (BCU) merger.**

Going live on 23 May the boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton, Kingston and Richmond will merge for police colleagues creating the South West BCU. There is much work to be completed in readiness for this merge, throughout the transition period (until 31 August) and beyond to ensure that there is no negative impact seen on Merton's residents.

- As part of the BCU merger the community safety partnership will monitor two key PIs:
 - 1) Police response times
 - 2) Community confidence levels

The rationalisation for choosing such priorities is that these two areas of concern saw the biggest negative impacts in the two pathfinder areas

- **Police station closure (Wimbledon)**

Currently subject to judicial review proceedings the closure, if JR fails, will need to be managed carefully with communities as the Police 24/7 front counter service moves to Mitcham. This closure is a result of the Met Police needing to make some £400m of savings and MOPAC engagement strategy consultation

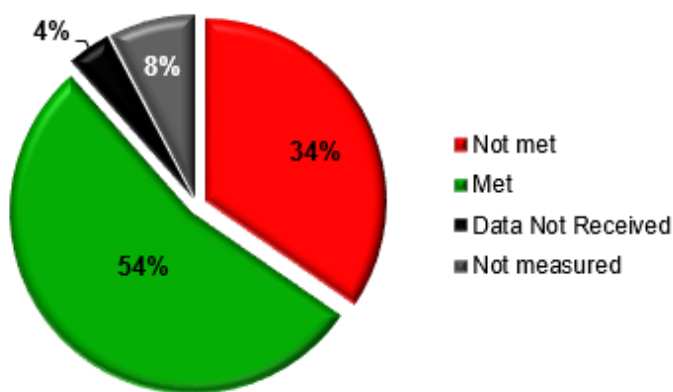
- **CCTV move to Safer Merton**

Summer 2018 will see the councils public realm CCTV service move back to Safer Merton. The move will bring CCTV back into the Community Safety Partnership which will provide additional capacity, tasking ability to the partnership assisting the continued work, and investment, in crime prevention and identification.

3. PERFORMANCE 2017-18

Overall Year End Performance 2017-18

- 3.1 Performance for 2017-18 has been reviewed against the Merton Partnership’s agreed suite of 26 performance indicators.
- 3.2 Of the 26 indicators, 14 (54%) met their target, nine (34%) did not meet their target, two (8%) are Not Measured This Period, and one (4%) has not provided Year End data.



Comparative year on year performance

- 3.3 Measures achieving or exceeding target for 2017-18 increased by 8% overall compared to 2016-17, while measures not achieving their targets increased by 7% overall. There was an decrease in the number of indicators which were recorded as Not Measured This Period” (from 12% to 8%) and a decrease in the number of Data Not Received indicators (from 15% to 4%). Overall, there has been a sustained improvement in overall performance.

Result	2016-17	%	2017-18	%	Trend
Target achieved	12	46%	14	54%	↑
Target not achieved	7	27%	9	34%	↓
Not Measured This Period	3	12%	2	8%	↑
Data Not Received	4	15%	1	4%	↑
No target for this measure	0	0%	0	0%	-

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 17 July 2018

Subject: Analysis of the Annual Member Scrutiny Survey 2018

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead Member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Contact officer: Annette Wiles; annette.wiles@merton.gov.uk; 020 8545 4035

Recommendations:

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission considers the findings arising from the 2018 Member Survey.
 - B. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission agrees the proposed actions to be taken forward to improve the effectiveness of scrutiny (actions run throughout the report and are listed in Appendix 4).
-

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. For the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to consider the findings from the 2018 Member Survey and the proposed actions to be taken forward to improve the scrutiny function.

2. DETAILS

Background

- 2.1. Each year the scrutiny team carries out a survey to collect the views of Merton councillors and co-opted scrutiny members about how scrutiny is working - where things work well, where things do not work quite so well, and how they can be improved. The survey also evaluates the effectiveness of the scrutiny function as a whole and with the different workstreams that make up overview and scrutiny.

Key findings

- 2.2. Overall, the results from this year's survey are very positive for scrutiny at Merton:
- 2.3. Overall effectiveness: There has been a noticeable positive shift in perceptions regarding the overall effectiveness of scrutiny with an 11% increase in those that think it is somewhat effective and a corresponding decline in those that think it is neither effective nor ineffective. This means that overall, 90% of respondents think scrutiny is effective.
- 2.4. Task groups: Task group work was once again rated the most effective element of scrutiny with a slight rise from 82% to 85% effectiveness rating (a combination of completely and somewhat effective). As a result, there was a continued decrease in the number that reported task groups as somewhat ineffective: down from 9% last year to 3%.
- 2.5. Scrutiny team: Satisfaction with the service remained overwhelmingly positive with respondents giving the team a satisfaction rating of 100%. In total, 63% of

respondents rated the support provided as excellent (this is on par with last year that was the highest rating ever received). A further 37% rate the team as good.

2.6. Satisfaction with scrutiny: Members were also invited to rate different aspects of the scrutiny team's work. These results are all positive.

2.7. Methodology: The survey was initially conducted online using a bespoke (and free) online survey tool. Towards the deadline for completion, it was distributed in paper format in order to capture additional responses. The 2018 member survey was sent out to sixty councillors and four co-opted members giving a survey cohort totalling 64 members. In total, 38 responses were received giving a response rate of 60%.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. Whilst there is no statutory requirement to undertake an annual member survey, the findings enable members' satisfaction with the scrutiny process at Merton to be measured against agreed annual targets and actions to be taken to improve the scrutiny process year on year.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. The member survey is conducted for a minimum of three weeks each year.

5. TIMETABLE

6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. None directly relating to the member survey itself. However, some actions arising from the findings of the survey year on year may have resource implications that need to be taken into consideration. The cost of this would be met from existing budgets.

7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None relating to this report.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement. The findings of the member survey are reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission that is open to the public.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None relating to this report.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None relating to this report.

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

11.1. Appendix 1: Member Survey 2018 – analysis and detailed findings

11.2. Appendix 2: Methodology

11.3. Appendix 3: Verbatim comments from Members

11.4. Appendix 4: List of proposed action points

Member Survey 2018

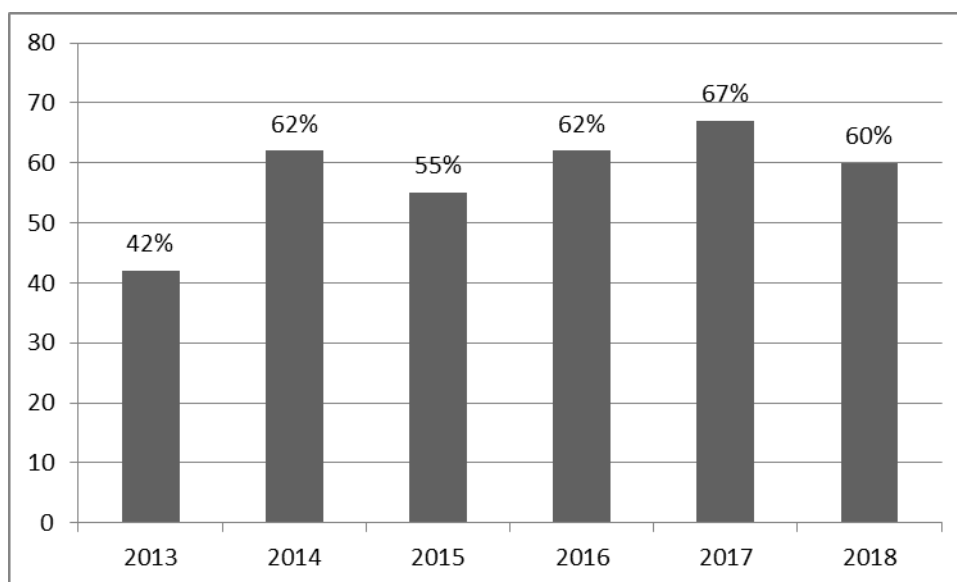
Survey respondents

1. The 2018 member survey was sent out to sixty councillors and four co-opted members giving a survey cohort totalling 64 members.

Response rate

2. The survey was completed by 35 councillors and three co-opted members, giving an overall response rate of 60%. This is a decline on the response rate achieved in the previous two years but this is by no means the lowest recorded. It is assumed that this will have been affected by the survey being conducted in the lead-up to the local elections when members were busy with canvassing and/or about to step down.
3. There were seven incomplete responses made online. If all were indeed additional then the response rate would have peaked at 70%.

Diagram 1: Member survey response rate



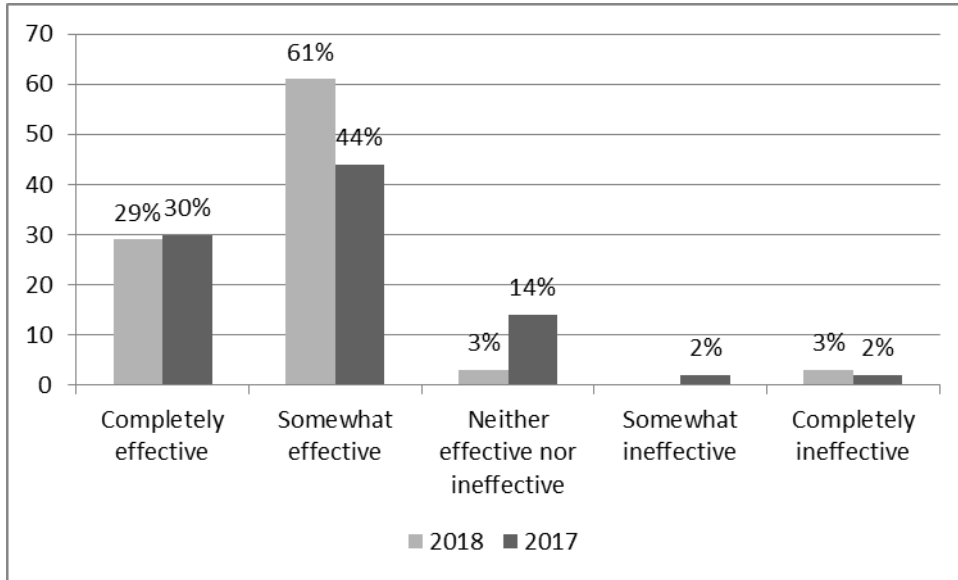
4. The majority of respondents have been actively involved in the scrutiny process over the past year:
 - 25 are members of the Overview Scrutiny Commission or a scrutiny panel
 - 5 are 'other non-executive members'
 - 5 are Cabinet Members
 - 3 are co-opted members
 - 33% respondents have sat on a Task Group
 - 27% have attended a scrutiny meeting as a visiting member to observe/make a contribution

- 5 respondents have had no involvement with scrutiny this year (nonetheless, their contribution is welcome)

Effectiveness of the scrutiny function

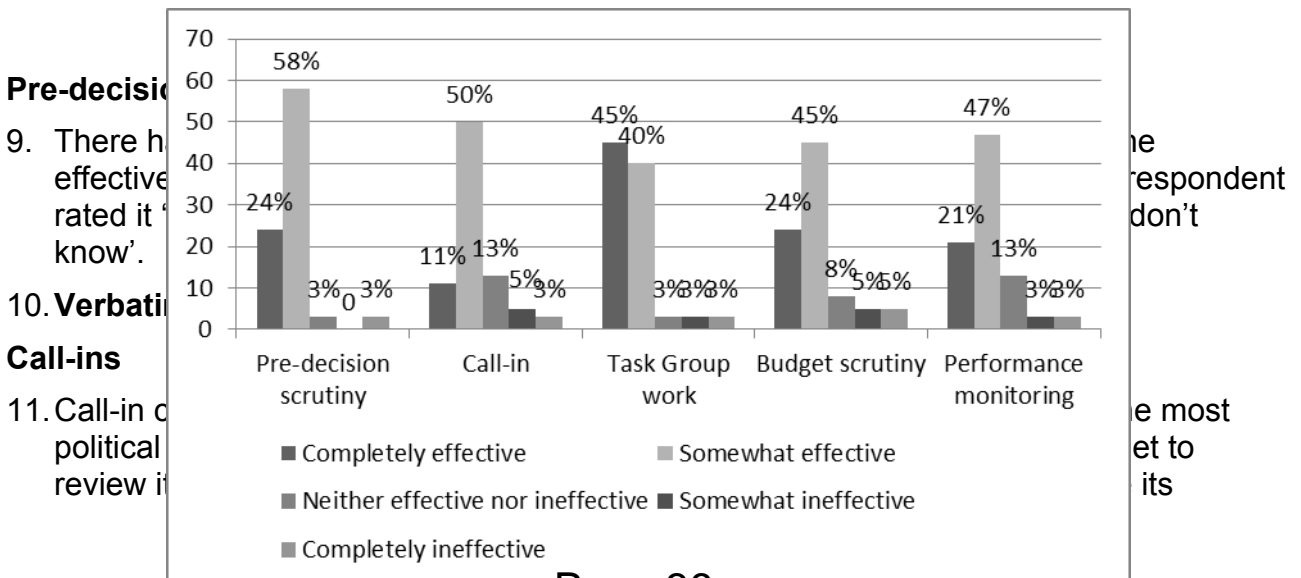
5. The survey asked respondents to consider the overall effectiveness of scrutiny. A comparison with last year’s results is illustrated below:

Diagram 2: The overall effectiveness of scrutiny in 2017/2018



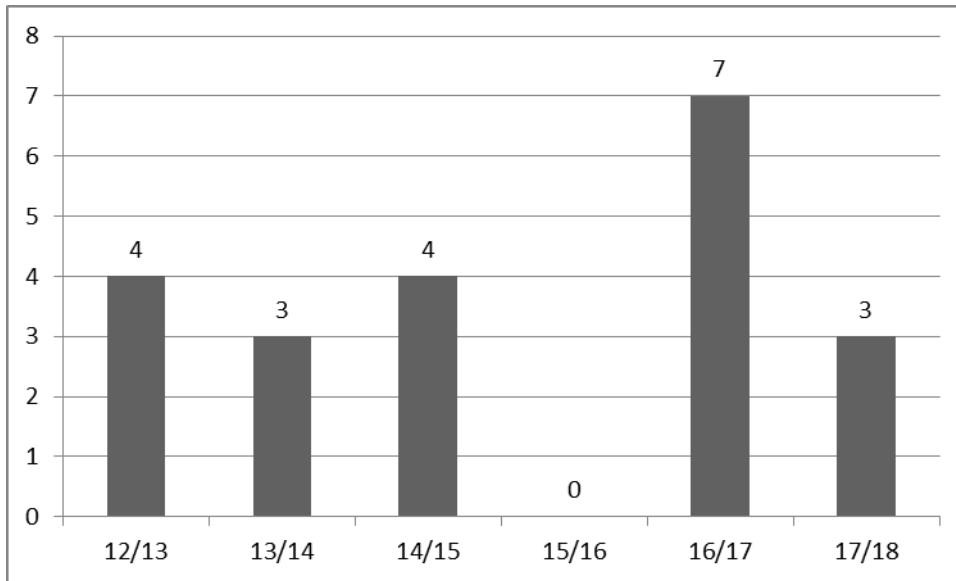
6. There has been a noticeable positive shift in perceptions regarding the overall effectiveness of scrutiny with an 11% increase in those that think it is somewhat effective and a corresponding decline in those that think it is neither effective nor ineffective. This means that overall, 90% of respondents think scrutiny is effective.
7. **Verbatim comment:** *“I believe the Overview and Scrutiny function gives me the opportunity to learn from others by way of practice, policy, communication and link working”.*
8. Given the decline in respondents, one person now represents three percentage points. Therefore, only one respondent in each case thinks that scrutiny is neither effective nor ineffective, or completely ineffective.

Diagram 3: The effectiveness of the different aspects of scrutiny in 2017/2018



decision and only one reference back to Cabinet with comments on the issue under discussion.

Diagram 4: The number of call-ins each year for the last five municipal years



Task groups

12. Task group work was once again rated the most effective element of scrutiny with a slight rise from 82% to 85% effectiveness rating (a combination of completely and somewhat effective). As a result, there was a continued decrease in the number that reported task groups as somewhat ineffective: down from 9% last year to 3%.
13. This indicates that members continue to find task groups a productive and effective way to contribute to policy development and have a tangible impact on decision-making.
14. Verbatim comment: *“The air quality task group work has led to early wins in getting more air-quality monitoring”*.

Budget scrutiny

15. The effectiveness of budget scrutiny is down slightly on last year (69% effectiveness compared to 72%). This may reflect the realities of such tight budgets giving scrutiny little opportunity for influence. However, it should be noted that this shift only represents one respondent.

Performance monitoring

16. The effectiveness of performance monitoring has also slightly decreased on last year (68% effectiveness compared to 77%). This is the biggest drop and it is hard to discern from verbatim comments any rationale.

Action point:

17. To verify with all Panels and the Commission that they feel they are able to undertake appropriate performance monitoring; that they have sufficient time, information and guidance.

Scrutiny Agendas/Workload

18. Only 61% of respondents agreed that Commission/Panel agendas are the correct length of which 18% strongly agreed. This is below the target set for scrutiny (70%), which is disappointing. However, at the same time those that feel scrutiny agenda are

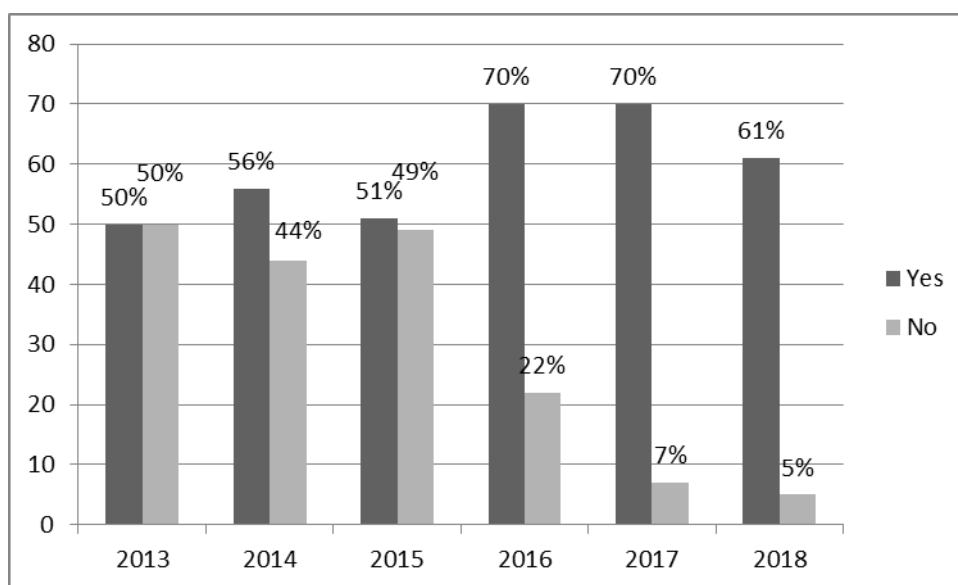
too long has also decreased. The number of respondents who do not know if scrutiny agenda are the correct length increased. If these are removed from the analysis, 92% of respondents agree that the Commission/Panels have the correct length agenda compared to 8% that disagree.

19. **Verbatim comment:** “Do not over load agendas, or request last minute Items”.

Action point:

20. For the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Head of Democratic Services will review the wording of this survey question, its construction and the performance target for next year.

Diagram 5: Are Commission/Panel agendas the correct length?



Development of the Commission/Panel Work Programmes

21. This year there has been a slight increase in the numbers that agree they have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Commission/Panel work programmes (up from 70% to 79%).

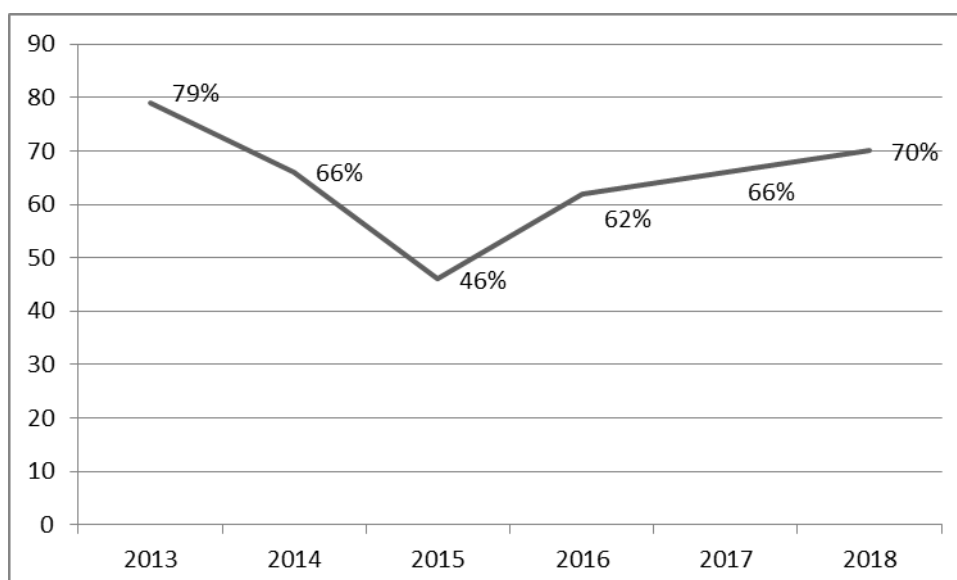
Scrutiny impact on decision making by the Cabinet

22. This year councillors feel decision-making by the Cabinet has been influenced by comments from the Commission and Panels; 66% (with 26% strongly) for the Commission and 74% (with 26% strongly) for the Panels. This gives an average rating of 70% of members agreeing scrutiny has had a positive impact on decision making by the Cabinet. This is an improvement on last year’s rating and continues a four-year positive trend.

23. Interestingly, the relative position of the Commission and the Panels has been reversed this year with the Panels being seen as more impactful in their influence on Cabinet.

24. **Verbatim comment:** “SC [Sustainable Communities] Panel sessions with Veolia and Clarion focussed attention on problems. Time will tell if this has a significant, sustained impact”.

**Diagram 6: Has scrutiny had an impact on Cabinet decision-making?
(% saying it has had a positive impact)**



Better organisation

Diagram 7: In what ways do you think the Commission/Panel business might be better organised? 2017/18

More use of external experts to provide context and challenge	50%
Commission/Panels to be more selective when setting agendas	44%
Guidance provided on possible questions to be asked at meetings	44%
Background policy guidance provided	41%
Cross-party pre-meetings to agree lines of questioning for some agenda items	38%
More meetings to accommodate all the items	21%
Councillors supported to conduct their own individual reviews	18%

25. These results are remarkably consistent with last year's findings. Half (50%) of respondents would like to see more use of external experts to provide context. Additionally, 40%+ of respondents want to see more selective agenda setting, guidance on questioning and background policy information provided.

26. Demand for individually led scrutiny reviews continues to fall and is now at 18%. However, this still reflects that one in five members are interested in this approach and this does provide a useful additional approach to fulfilling the scrutiny role.

Action point:

27. For scrutiny officers to continue to work on greater use of external experts, being more selective in the setting of agenda, provision of guidance on questioning and background policy information. Additionally, for next year's survey to feature a question to see if this has had any impact.

28. The scrutiny team will continue to offer support for any Councillor who is interested in conducting a rapporteur review if endorsed by the relevant scrutiny Panel or the Commission.

Quality of evidence presented to overview and scrutiny

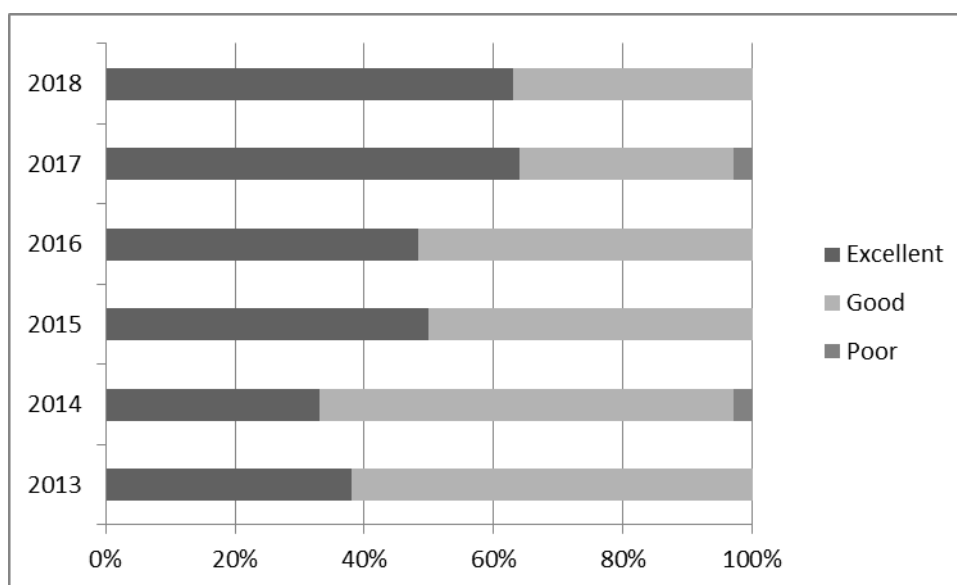
29. The vast majority of respondents (87%) said that the evidence presented to overview and scrutiny has been good and meets the needs of the session. This is the highest rating received for four years and has stopped a three-year decline in its tracks. Potentially, this is linked to the work the scrutiny team has already undertaken to leverage in external expertise to support the scrutiny process.

Support from the Scrutiny Team

30. Satisfaction with the service remained overwhelmingly positive with respondents giving the team a satisfaction rating of 100%. In total, 63% of respondents rated the support provided as excellent (this is on par with last year - the highest rating ever received). A further 37% rate the team as good.

31. **Verbatim comment:** *“Excellent support provided by the scrutiny team”*.

Diagram 8: Satisfaction with scrutiny team



32. Members were also invited to rate different aspects of the scrutiny team’s work. These results were all positive:

- Speed of responses to enquiries = 84% (77% in 2017)
- Quality of response to enquiries = 84% (82% in 2017)
- Quality of email communications = 90% (80% in 2017)
- Quality of verbal communication = 84% (87% in 2017)
- Quality of task group reports = 84% (87% in 2017)

33. There were no responses of somewhat or completely dissatisfied with any aspect of the scrutiny team’s work.

Members’ training and development needs

34. The skills and knowledge, which members bring to the overview and scrutiny process, are crucial to its effectiveness, so the survey asked what scrutiny related training and

development opportunities they would like to have provided in the coming year. This year, we took the opportunity to seek the views of existing councillors on both their training needs and what they considered might be the training needs of newly elected councillors.

35. Based on those who responded, there is a high level of demand for all the core training and development areas specified in the questionnaire:

18. Diagram 9: Demand for member training

	New Cllrs	Returning Cllrs
Principles of effective scrutiny	60%	40%
Questioning skills	55%	45%
How to monitor performance and interpret data	51%	49%
Budget scrutiny	57%	43%
Chairing and agenda management skills	51%	49%

36. Member training on the principles of effective scrutiny has already been provided as part of the member induction training. This was well attended and received. Training for new chairs is in the process of being organised.

Action point:

37. How to fulfil the request for training on questioning skills and budget scrutiny needs to be considered. How to monitor performance and interpret data might be dealt with at the level of individual Panels/the Commission.

Public awareness questionnaires

38. In addition to the member survey, the scrutiny team has also been issuing questionnaires to members of the public attending scrutiny meetings. Whilst only a small number have been returned (13 in total), these have established that:

- Accessing the building, finding the meeting room and following scrutiny Panels meetings is positive. Members of the public are able to do all without difficulty being reported;
- There is work to do in terms of communicating how to register for Panel meeting updates and requesting to make representations at Panel meetings;
- Members of the public are undertaking activity as a result of attending Panel meetings which should be helping to raise public awareness of scrutiny and how it works; and
- Work need to continue on increasing public engagement in scrutiny with a focus on increasing the diversity of those that attend scrutiny Panel meetings.

Action point:

39. For the scrutiny team to:

- continue to issue public awareness questionnaires at Panel meetings;
- consider how to improve the communication of registering for Panel meetings updates and requesting to make a representations;

- work with voluntary sector partners to raise awareness of scrutiny and how to participate; and
- work with their colleagues in Democracy Services to rollout this public awareness questionnaire to other council committees and meetings.

Methodology

1. The survey was initially conducted online using a bespoke (and free) online survey tool. Towards the deadline for completion, it was distributed in paper format in order to capture additional responses.
2. Less than half of responses were made online which is down on last year (over half were received online previously). The overall response rate is down on last year which may have affected the numbers using the online survey tool. However, there is still advantage to using the online version. It forces respondents to answer all questions before submission. It also provides a good tool for the addition of paper based responses and is significantly easier to use for the manipulation of data compared to using a package such as MS Excel.
3. Duplicate responses were thought to be an issue last year. It was suspected that some respondents who had completed the survey online also completed the paper-based version. As the survey was anonymous, it was hard to be certain whether this had occurred. This year, it was made explicit on the paper-based version that it was not to be used if the survey had already been completed online.
4. Seven online responses were abandoned before submission. Sadly, not having a paid for version of the survey tool means these cannot be accessed. Whilst it is not possible to say with certainty whether these are additional responses there is a strong probability that this is the case.

Action point:

5. The scrutiny team will continue to improve both the content and delivery of the survey to maximise completion online, reduce the potential for inputting errors, and duplicate responses. With the new intake of members, it is hoped that increasingly this will be seen as the norm for completion of the survey with paper-based responses the exception.
6. Additionally, the scrutiny team will explore the costs of using a paid for online survey in order to capture incomplete responses.

Five point scale

7. In 2015/16 the opportunity was taken to test use of a five point response scale which is the market research industry standard. This gave respondents the opportunity to indicate that they neither agree nor disagree with the statements made in the survey in order to capture their views. This was continued for all questions in this year's survey.
8. The addition of a neutral midpoint option has resulted in an increased number of fully completed questionnaires.
9. With two or three years of data in this new format, the opportunity has been taken to reconfigure how some responses are reported.

Analysis

10. Responses from Councillors and co-opted members have been analysed together. This was the approach taken previously with only 2015/2016 being the exception. This was due to the marked variation in response from co-opted members such that these warranted being dealt with separately.

Verbatim comments from members

Question 7: Please give examples of where the Commission and/or Panels have had a demonstrable impact (other than on Cabinet decision-making):

- Task group recommendations
- NONE
- We are experiencing difficult time where homelessness is concern and due to financial constraints, there is a larger demonstrable impact nationwide where affordable housing is concerned.
- Budget scrutiny
- The air quality task group work has led to early wins in getting more air-quality monitoring. The performance review monitoring has highlighted some new learning and questioned which measures are needed or not and dug into long term trends. The select-committee style grilling of external service providers is quite good here.
- Visiting schools re Prevent assessment
- None. It's smoke and mirrors; an affront to democracy
- Recommendations of task group reviews are almost always accepted by Cabinet
- FMTG enquiry into performance of Merton's property portfolio improved quality of information provided
- SC Panel sessions with Veolia and Clarion focussed attention on problems. Time will tell if this has a significant, sustained impact
- Performance monitoring of Veolia contract
- Supporting officers giving presentations in various means of services delivery.
- Applying its role in working with all the scrutiny teams for the benefit of the residents of Merton.
- Finance task group.
- Holding Veolia to account.

Question 9. In what ways do you think the Commission/Panel business might be better organised?

- Discussions and seeking agreement rather than voting
- Stop Committees being dominated by the Chair or ruling administration
- Finish a little earlier - before 9:30pm as officers have to work early the next day, as do some Councillors.
- Scrutinising Veolia, ID Verde, Clarion Housing Group.

Question 10. A number of scrutiny-related training sessions have been provided over the past four years. For example, seminars on questioning skills, chairing meetings, budget scrutiny and service plans. Thinking ahead, what training and development do you think would be useful for NEW and/or RETURNING Councillors following the May 2018 election?

- I think it is very important when setting training to ensure that dates and times doesn't clashes with Councillors allocated duties, for e.g. Council meetings, committee meeting etc.
- Many times training has been missed due to clashes with meetings.
- Briefings where appropriate
- Limiting the number & length of questions asked by one person
- Training doesn't seem to work for most councillors on the Labour side. They don't ask effective questions, they don't make proposals; they stick to the party line. It's awful to watch. It's excruciating. I get a far better discourse from a group of 9-year-olds.

Question 12. How satisfied are you with the various aspects of the scrutiny team's work?

- I will say I am still learning and a slow learn, having not done anything like this before. I would like to thank everyone in the Scrutiny team for their support and time. I would like to say a special thank you to Annette for all her support throughout the Prevent Task Group findings and presentation.
- Julia, Annette and Stella have been excellent and a pleasure to work with.
- All good
- Any failings lie with members, not the scrutiny team
- The task group reports in themselves are fine, it is the reluctance to put in recommendation that some officers don't like and do not wish to take forward that disappoints me
- Excellent support provided by the scrutiny team
- All 3 do a really thorough and professional (job?).
- The scrutiny team are very well organised and very helpful.
- I rarely make enquiries.
- I think Annette Wiles is an excellent support to our committee.

Question 14. Please use this box for any further comments/suggestions you have about the overview and scrutiny function, including how it can be improved:

- I feel that to avoid any political bias that the Chair of the Scrutiny panel should be an opposition Councillor.
- I believe the Overview and Scrutiny function, gives me the opportunity to learn from others by way of practice, policy, communication and link working. It also gives an opportunity to identify where changes need to be made and practice and habits need to be change.
- Thanks to the team
- Possible selection of chair by secret ballot of the committee members (like in Select Committees)

- more use of external expert witnesses (not just our own internal heads of service)
- better rules and guidance of decorum for executive members attending scrutiny (know their place)
- scrutiny report/feedback to full council (so we all have brief outline of what is going on)
- I really like our scrutiny. As a Cabinet member I often have to bite my tongue when the obvious isn't asked, and some of the politically motivated questioning remains puerile, but occasionally, a topic soars. When that happens it reminds me of why I'm a Councillor.
- The function cannot be improved until Labour and their mates in Merton Park begin to respect democracy. Highly unlikely.
- Perhaps we should reduce the items on the agenda.
- Pre-decision scrutiny not used enough.
- Do not overload agendas or request last minute items.
- Cllr Pearce is a very fair and effective chair.
- Members should follow conscience (not party lines).
- Thank you for all your assistance in 2017/2018

List of proposed action points

1. To verify with all Panels and the Commission that they feel they are able to undertake appropriate performance monitoring; that they have sufficient time, information and guidance.
2. For the Chair the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Head of Democratic Services will review the wording of this survey question, its construction and the performance target for next year.
3. For scrutiny officers to continue to work on greater use of external experts, being more selective in the setting of agenda, provision of guidance on questioning and background policy information. Additionally, for next year's survey to feature a question to see if this has had any impact.
4. The scrutiny team will continue to offer support for any Councillor who is interested in conducting a rapporteur review if endorsed by the relevant scrutiny Panel or the Commission.
5. How to fulfil the request for training on questioning skills and budget scrutiny needs to be considered. How to monitor performance and interpret data might be dealt with at the level of individual Panels/the Commission.
6. For the scrutiny team to:
 - continue to issue public awareness questionnaires at Panel meetings;
 - consider how to improve the communication of registering for Panel meetings updates and requesting to make a representations;
 - work with voluntary sector partners to raise awareness of scrutiny and how to participate; and
 - work with their colleagues in Democracy Services to rollout this public awareness questionnaire to other council committees and meetings.
7. The scrutiny team will continue to improve both the content and delivery of the survey to maximise completion online, reduce the potential for inputting errors, and duplicate responses. With the new intake of members, it is hoped that increasingly this will be seen as the norm for completion of the survey with paper-based responses the exception.
8. Additionally, the scrutiny team will explore the costs of using a paid for online survey in order to capture incomplete responses.

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Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 17 July 2018

Wards: All

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2018/19

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Cllr Peter Southgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Contact officer: Julia Regan: Julia.regan@merton.gov.uk 020 8545 3864

Recommendations:

That members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

- i) Consider the proposed work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year, and agree issues and items for inclusion (see draft in Appendix 1);
 - ii) Discuss and comment on how they wish to draw on external experts this year and how the quality of evidence provided to scrutiny meetings could be improved.
 - iii) Appoint members to the financial monitoring task group, to meet on 30 August 2018, 13 November 2018 and 25 February 2019 plus a further date in July 2019 to be determined by the task group;
 - iv) Consider whether they wish to establish a task group review this year;
 - v) Consider whether they wish to make visits to local sites; and
 - vi) Identify any training and support needs.
-

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to support and advise Members to determine their work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year.
- 1.2 This report sets out the following information to assist Members in this process:
 - a) The principles of effective scrutiny and the criteria against which work programme items should be considered;
 - b) The roles and responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission;
 - c) The findings of the consultation programme undertaken with councillors and co-opted members, senior management, voluntary and community sector organisations, partner organisations and Merton residents;
 - d) A summary of discussion by councillors and co-opted members at a topic selection workshop held on 5 June 2018; and
 - e) Support available to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to determine, develop and deliver its 2018/19 work programme.

2. Determining the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Annual Work Programme

- 2.1 Members are required to determine their work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year to give focus and structure to scrutiny activity to ensure that it effectively and efficiently supports and challenges the decision-making processes of the Council, and partner organisations, for the benefit of the people of Merton.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has specific roles relating to budget and business plan scrutiny and to performance monitoring that should automatically be built into their work programmes.
- 2.3 Since 2012/13, the Commission has agreed each year to establish a financial monitoring task group to lead on the scrutiny of financial monitoring information on behalf of the Commission, with the following terms of reference:
- To carry out scrutiny of the Council's financial monitoring information on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission;
 - To advise on other agenda items as requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission;
 - To report minutes of its meetings back to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission;
 - To send via the Commission any recommendations or references to Cabinet, Council or other decision making bodies.
- 2.4 Members who attended the scrutiny topic workshop agreed that they wished to re-establish this task group for the 2018/19 municipal year. The Commission is therefore requested to re-establish and appoint members to the group. It is proposed that the task group will meet four times during 2018/19 to enable the financial monitoring information to be examined on a quarterly basis as well as scrutinising a small number of budget areas in-depth and reporting back any recommendations to the Commission. The meetings will be held in public and the agenda and minutes will be published on the Council's website, alongside those of the Commission.
- 2.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission may choose to scrutinise a range of issues through a combination of pre-decision scrutiny items, policy development, performance monitoring, information updates and follow up to previous scrutiny work. Any call-in work will be programmed into the provisional call-in dates identified in the corporate calendar as required.
- 2.6 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has six scheduled meetings over the course of the municipal year, including the scheduled budget meeting (representing a maximum of 18 hours of scrutiny per year – assuming 3 hours per meeting). Members will therefore need to be selective in their choice of items for the work programme.

Principles guiding the development of the scrutiny work programme

- 2.7 The following key principles of effective scrutiny should be considered when the Commission determines its work programme:
- **Be selective** – There is a need to prioritise so that high priority issues are scrutinised given the limited number of scheduled meetings and time available. Members should consider what can realistically and properly be reviewed at each meeting, taking into account the time needed to scrutinise each item and what the session is intended to achieve.

- **Add value with scrutiny** – Items should have the potential to ‘add value’ to the work of the council and its partners. If it is not clear what the intended outcomes or impact of a review will be then Members should consider if there are issues of a higher priority that could be scrutinised instead.
- **Be ambitious** – The Commission should not shy away from carrying out scrutiny of issues that are of local concern, whether or not they are the primary responsibility of the council. The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities the power to do anything to promote economic, social and environmental well being of local communities. Subsequent Acts have conferred specific powers to scrutinise health services, crime and disorder issues and to hold partner organisations to account.
- **Be flexible** – Members are reminded that there needs to be a degree of flexibility in their work programme to respond to unforeseen issues/items for consideration/comment during the year and accommodate any developmental or additional work that falls within the remit of this Commission. For example Members may wish to questions officers regarding the declining performance of a service or may choose to respond to a Councillor Call for Action request.
- **Think about the timing** – Members should ensure that the scrutiny activity is timely and that, where appropriate, their findings and recommendations inform wider corporate developments or policy development cycles at a time when they can have most impact. Members should seek to avoid duplication of work carried out elsewhere.

Models for carrying out scrutiny work

2.8 There are a number of means by which the Overview and Scrutiny Commission can deliver its work programme. Members should consider which of the following options is most appropriate to undertake each of the items they have selected for inclusion in the work programme:

Item on a scheduled meeting agenda/ hold an extra meeting of the Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Commission can agree to add an item to the agenda for a meeting and call Cabinet Members/ Officers/Partners to the meeting to respond to questioning on the matter ■ A variation of this model could be a one-day seminar-scrutiny of issues that, although important, do not merit setting up a ‘task-and-finish’ group.
Task Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A small group of Members meet outside of the scheduled meetings to gather information on the subject area, visit other local authorities/sites, speak to service users, expert witnesses and/or Officers/Partners. The Task Group can then report back to the Commission with their findings to endorse the submission of their recommendations to Cabinet/Council ■ This is the method usually used to carry out policy reviews
Commission asks for a report then takes a view on action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Commission may need more information before taking a view on whether to carry out a full review so asks for a report – either from the service department or from the Scrutiny Team – to give them more details.

Meeting with service Officer/Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A Member (or small group of Members) has a meeting with service officers/Partners to discuss concerns or raise queries. ■ If the Member is not satisfied with the outcome or believes that the Commission needs to have a more in-depth review of the matter s/he takes it back to the Commission for discussion
Individual Members doing some initial research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A member with a specific concern carries out some research to gain more information on the matter and then brings his/her findings to the attention of the Commission if s/he still has concerns.

2.9 Note that, in order to keep agendas to a manageable size, and to focus on items to which the Commission can make a direct contribution, the Commission may choose to take some “information only” items outside of Commission meetings, for example by email.

Support available for scrutiny activity

2.10 The Overview and Scrutiny function has dedicated scrutiny support from the Scrutiny Team to:

- Work with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission to manage the work programme and coordinate the agenda, including advising officers and partner organisations on information required and guidance for witnesses submitting evidence to a scrutiny review;
- Provide support for scrutiny members through briefing papers, background material, training and development seminars, etc;
- Facilitate and manage the work of the task and finish groups, including research, arranging site visits, inviting and briefing witnesses and drafting review reports on behalf on the Chair; and
- Promote the scrutiny function across the organisation and externally.

2.11 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission will need to assess how they can best utilise the available support from the Scrutiny Team to deliver their work programme for the coming year.

2.12 The Commission is also invited to comment upon any briefing, training and support that is needed to enable Members to undertake their work programme. Members may also wish to undertake visits to local services in order to familiarise themselves with these. Such visits should be made with the knowledge of the Chair and will be organised by the Scrutiny Team.

2.13 This year, in response to the results of the scrutiny annual survey, the Scrutiny Team will also explore with chairs and vice chairs the use of external experts and the quality of evidence provided to Panels to understand what else might be done to meet members’ needs. In order to progress this, it is recommended that the Panel spend some time discussing this as part of the development of the work programme if these issues have not already been addressed at the topic workshop.

3. Selecting items for the Scrutiny Work Programme

3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission sets its own agenda within the scope of its terms of reference. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission undertakes a coordinating role to ensure that any gaps or overlap in the scrutiny work programme are dealt with in a joined-up way.

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has the following remit: -

- Formal crime & disorder scrutiny
- Safer communities: the role of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, safer neighbourhood teams, anti-social behaviour, drugs & alcohol treatment, domestic violence and road safety
- Stronger communities: community leadership, voluntary & community sector, public involvement & consultation; community cohesion, service delivery diversity & equalities
- Cross-cutting & strategic matters, inc. scrutiny of the budget & business plan and the approach to partnership arrangements
- Corporate capacity issues – communications, legal, human resources, IT, customer service
- The performance monitoring framework
- Financial monitoring
- Responsibility for keeping scrutiny under review

3.1 The Scrutiny Team has undertaken a campaign to gather suggestions for issues to scrutinise either as agenda items or task group reviews. Suggestions have been received from members of the public, councillors and partner organisations including the police, NHS and Merton Voluntary Service Council. Other issues of public concern have been identified through the Annual Residents Survey. Issues that have been raised repeatedly at Community Forums have also been included. The Scrutiny Team has consulted departmental management teams in order to identify forthcoming issues on which the Commission could contribute to the policymaking process.

3.2 A description of all the suggestions received is set out in Appendix 2.

3.3 The councillors who attended a “topic selection” workshop on 5 June 2018 discussed these suggestions. Suggestions were prioritised at the workshop using the criteria listed in Appendix 3. In particular, participants sought to identify issues that related to the Council’s strategic priorities or where there was underperformance; issues of public interest or concern and issues where scrutiny could make a difference.

3.4 A note of the workshop discussion relating to the remit of the Commission is set out in Appendix 4.

3.5 Appendix 1 contains a draft work programme that has been drawn up, taking the workshop discussion into account, for the consideration of the Commission. The Commission is requested to discuss this draft and agree any changes that it wishes to make.

- 3.6 The Commission is also requested to consider a late suggestion received from a local resident asking the Commission to receive an update on the customer contact programme. The Commission is asked to note that the customer contact programme has been extensively scrutinised in previous years and that a report on access to services through the council's website, a major plank of the customer contact programme, is scheduled in for 20 March 2019 in the draft work programme. The Commission may consider that this is sufficient or it may request a wider report or may refer this matter to the financial monitoring task group.
- 3.7 The resident has also requested that this question be asked on his behalf at the Commission's meeting on 17 July – *“Why has the Customer Contact Programme never been audited and when will it be audited against Internal Audit Strategy areas (Transformation, ICT and Information Governance, Contracts, Procurement and Major Projects) to identify corrective actions, in light of the continued delays and repeated failures to deliver the programme, systems and benefits?”* The Commission is asked to note that this matter has been raised as a freedom of information request and the head of Audit and Investigations has replied.

4. Task group reviews

- 4.1 The Commission is invited to select an issue for in-depth scrutiny and establish a task group in order to carry out the review. The task group will subsequently meet to scope the review and draft the terms of reference that will be reported back to the next Commission meeting for approval.
- 4.2 Possible topics identified at the June workshop for task group review are:
Knife crime and gangs
- 4.3 Members who attended the scrutiny topic workshop agreed that when the Borough Commander attends the Commission meeting in September she should be questioned about what action is being taken to deal with knife crime and what progress has been made against the knife crime action plan. The Commission would then be able to decide whether it wishes to establish a task group to review this issue in more depth. Any such task group would be in conjunction with members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel who have expressed an interest in working on youth violence.
Council support to EU nationals
- 4.4 The topic workshop considered a late suggestion that the Commission should investigate how the council can support its residents from other EU countries during Brexit.
- 4.5 Members at the workshop asked the Head of Democracy Services to obtain further information so that the Commission could decide whether this would be appropriate for a task group or as an issue for pre-decision scrutiny prior to a report being taken to Cabinet when the government's proposals are known.
- 4.6 The 2011 census provides residents' country of birth. This shows that there were 18,690 EU nationals resident in Merton (9.3% of total resident population in 2011). This data is also available at ward level and shows a variation from 5.6 % in Lower Morden to 15.46% in Graveney ward.

4.7 The council's Equality and Community Cohesion Officer has recently attended an event organised by London Councils, hosted by the Greater London Authority, at which there were presentations from the Home Office about the implementation of the registration scheme and from the Migration Observatory to outline statistics and issues facing EU nationals, as well as information on the approach being taken by other London boroughs. This information could be provided in a report to the Commission or to a task group review.

5. Public involvement

5.1 Scrutiny provides extensive opportunities for community involvement and democratic accountability. Engagement with service users and with the general public can help to improve the quality, legitimacy and long-term viability of recommendations made by the Commission.

5.2 Service users and the public bring different perspectives, experiences and solutions to scrutiny, particularly if "seldom heard" groups such as young people, disabled people, people from black and minority ethnic communities and people from lesbian gay bisexual and transgender communities are included.

5.3 This engagement will help the Commission to understand the service user's perspective on individual services and on co-ordination between services. Views can be heard directly through written or oral evidence or heard indirectly through making use of existing sources of information, for example from surveys. From time to time the Commission/Task Group may wish to carry out engagement activities of its own, by holding discussion groups or sending questionnaires on particular issues of interest.

5.4 Much can be learnt from best practice already developed in Merton and elsewhere. The Scrutiny Team will be able to help the Commission to identify the range of stakeholders from which it may wish to seek views and the best way to engage with particular groups within the community.

6. Training and visits

Training

6.1 The annual member survey (March 2018) asked what scrutiny related training and development opportunities councillors and co-opted members would like to have provided in the coming year.

6.2 A majority of respondents agreed that there was a need for training and development opportunities in each of the core areas specified in the questionnaire. These are listed below, together with proposals to address the training need:

- principles of effective scrutiny

This was covered by the "introduction to overview and scrutiny" training session on 15 May 2018, delivered as part of the induction programme for new councillors. The session was attended by 20 new councillors and their feedback indicated that they found it useful.

- questioning skills

A training session with an experienced external provider has been arranged for 16 October 2018

- how to monitor performance and interpret data

This will be addressed by each of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels as part of their 2018/19 work programmes.

- budget scrutiny

The Director of Corporate Services will provide a briefing prior to the November and January rounds of budget scrutiny meetings. Dates to follow.

- chairing and agenda management

A training session is planned for 8 May 2019 – this will be open to chairs, vice chairs and prospective chairs of all the council's committees

Visits

- 6.3 Commission members are asked to identify any visits that they would find helpful to provide a context for scrutinising service delivery or policy changes.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1 A number of issues highlighted in this report recommend that Commission members take into account certain considerations when setting their work programme. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is free to determine its work programme as it sees fit. Members may therefore choose to identify a work programme that does not take into account these considerations. This is not advised as ignoring the issues raised would either conflict with good practice and/or principles endorsed in the Review of Scrutiny, or could mean that adequate support would not be available to carry out the work identified for the work programme.

- 7.2 A range of suggestions from the public, partner organisations, officers and Members for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme are set out in the appendices, together with a suggested approach to determining which to include in the work programme. Members may choose to respond differently. However, in doing so, Members should be clear about expected outcomes, how realistic expectations are and the impact of their decision on their wider work programme and support time. Members are also free to incorporate into their work programme any other issues they think should be subject to scrutiny over the course of the year, with the same considerations in mind.

8. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 8.1 To assist Members to identify priorities for inclusion in the Commission's work programme, the Scrutiny Team has undertaken a campaign to gather suggestions for possible scrutiny reviews from a number of sources:
- a. Letter to partner organisations and to a range of local resident groups, voluntary and community organisations, including those involved in the Inter-Faith Forum and members of the Lesbian Gay and Transgender Forum;
 - b. Councillors have put forward suggestions by raising issues in scrutiny meetings and via the Overview and Scrutiny Member Survey 2018; and
 - c. Officers have been consulted via discussion at departmental management team meetings and through an item in the Staff Bulletin.

9. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the financial, resource and property issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific financial, resource and property implications.

10. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Overview and scrutiny bodies operate within the provisions set out in the Local Government Act 2000, the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 10.2 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific legal and statutory implications.

11. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement. The reviews will involve work to consult local residents, community and voluntary sector groups, businesses, hard to reach groups, partner organisations etc and the views gathered will be fed into the review.
- 11.2 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the human rights, equalities and community cohesion issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police and Justice Act 2006, all Council departments must have regard to the impact of services on crime, including anti-social behaviour and drugs. Scrutiny review reports will therefore highlight any implications arising from the reviews relating to crime and disorder as necessary.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the risk management and health and safety issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific risk management and health and safety implications.

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

- 14.1 Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Commission draft work programme 2018/19
- 14.2 Appendix 2 – Summary of topics relating to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission's remit suggested for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme
- 14.3 Appendix 3 – Selecting a Scrutiny Topic – criteria used at the workshop on 5 June 2018

14.4 Appendix 4 – Notes from discussion of topics relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Scrutiny Topic Selection Workshop on 5 June 2018

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 None

Draft work programme 2018/19**Meeting date – 17 July 2018**

Item/Issue
Leader and Chief Executive – vision, key priorities & challenges for 2018/9
Merton Partnership annual report
Analysis of annual members' scrutiny survey
Discussion of questions for the Borough Commander

Meeting date – 19 September 2018

Borough Commander – crime and policing in Merton
Safer Merton – update report
Recruitment and retention of teachers – Cabinet response and action plan

Meeting date – 14 November 2018

Target Operating Model (TOM)
Business rates retention
Budget scrutiny round 1

Meeting date 23 January 2019 – scrutiny of the budget**Meeting date 20 March 2019**

Review of the overview and scrutiny function
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
Access to services through the council's website
Recruitment and retention of teachers – action plan update
Discussion of questions for the Borough Commander

Meeting date 24 April 2019

Borough Commander – crime and policing in Merton
Travellers unauthorised encampment protocol
CCTV service update
Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-20 – action plan
Overview and scrutiny annual report

Description of topic suggestions received in relation to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission 2017/18

The following topics were suggested by residents, local groups, councillors and officers, for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, for their 2018/19 work programme.

POLICING IN MERTON

Who suggested this issue?

In previous years the Commission has received regular updates on crime and policing from the Borough Commander as a standing item. This has included the latest crime figures for Merton and comparative data for neighbouring boroughs.

Residents have suggested the following issues relating to policing:

- Burglaries – resident is concerned about the rise in the number of burglaries in Merton and the impact this has on residents not feeling safe in their own homes
- Community safety-resident is concerned about crowds and aggressive begging in Wimbledon station and the Broadway, including rowdy drunken people and a lack of community police patrols in the area. The resident wants Wimbledon Police Station to remain open

Summary of the issue:

The Mayor of London's Police and Crime Plan 2017 sets out the crime reduction strategy for London for the next four years. The Plan's five top priorities are:

- A better police service for London
- A better criminal justice service for London
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls
- Standing together against hatred and intolerance

All boroughs have high volume crime, anti social behaviour and high-harm crime as priorities. High-harm crimes are sexual violence, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, weapon-based crime and hate crime.

In addition, each borough has selected two local priority crimes, based on local knowledge, crime data and police intelligence. Merton's local priority crimes are burglary and theft of a motor vehicle.

In 2017/18, the Commission questioned the Borough Commander on two occasions, examining crime data in depth and asking questions about operational changes and how the new 4-borough Borough Command Unit would work. The Commission also sent a response to the MOPAC Public Access and Engagement Strategy in order to express its support for the retention of a front office in Wimbledon, agreeing the need to debate the best way to resource policing in the borough but questioning the wisdom of such large cuts to police budgets at a time of increasing terrorism and civil unrest.

What could Scrutiny do?

It is recommended that the Commission should continue to invite the Borough Commander to attend twice yearly. The issues that have been raised by residents should be included in the

questions put to him and the residents who made the suggestions should be invited to attend and contribute.

It is recommended that the impact of the four borough merger should be discussed with the Borough Commander later in the year once it has become fully operational.

SAFER MERTON

Who suggested this issue?

The Community Safety Manager has suggested that the Commission receive an update on the work of Safer Merton at the same meeting that the Borough Commander attends as the work of Safer Merton is delivered in partnership with the Police and other organisations. This update would include information on the work on anti-social behaviour, violence against women and girls and domestic violence.

Summary of the issue

Safer Merton is responsible for developing and implementing strategies to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in Merton. They work in partnership with the police, probation service, health agencies and other organisations as part of the Safer Merton partnership, aiming to reduce crime, fear of crime and to improve the quality of life in Merton.

Anti social behaviour

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is a broad term used to describe the day-to-day incidents of crime, nuisance and disorder that makes many people's lives a misery – from litter and vandalism, to public drunkenness or aggressive dogs, to noisy or abusive neighbours.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Police and Crime Act 2014 provided the council with new duties and responsibilities to tackle ASB, working co-operatively with the police, social landlords and other agencies.

Violence against women and girls

The Home Office define violence against women and girls (VAWG) as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.

Merton's work on VAWG acknowledges and includes men and boys as victims as well as perpetrators. This is because, whilst VAWG crimes disproportionately affect females, men and boys, especially those with vulnerabilities, can also be victims of some of these crimes.

In Merton VAWG work is led by a partnership board that develop and deliver a four year strategic work plan. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission last had a report on this work in July 2017.

Domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence is defined as any incident(s) of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. It includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

People who are at risk from future harm from domestic violence may be referred to a domestic violence multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) that will draw up an action plan to help manage the risk.

The Commission last had an update on the incidence of domestic violence and MARAC work in July 2017. It also heard from the Manager of the Merton Refuge and subsequently carried out a visit to the Refuge to talk to the women and children resident there.

What could scrutiny do?

It is recommended that the commission receive an update on the work of Safer Merton. As this work relies on partners, including the police, it is recommended that this report should coincide with the next meeting attended by the Police Borough Commander.

The update could also include a progress report from the Community Safety Manager on his work on the newly formed MOPAC Victims Board. His role on the Board is to represent local authorities as well as all 32 Community Safety Partnerships. By working with the Board, Merton will be able to shape the early intervention offer which councils can offer victims of crime in the earlier stages i.e. when they're victims of matters such as ASB, low level harassment etc. The role positions Merton favourably to assist influencing real change for all of London's residents and victims of crime

KNIFE CRIME AND GANGS

Who suggested this issue?

The Community Safety Manager suggested that the Commission could review the Police's four borough knife crime strategy to identify the impact of this in Merton.

Summary of the issue

The crime figures produced by the Metropolitan Police include information on knife crime. In the 12 month period ending 1 March 2018, there were a total of 187 knife crime offences recorded, this compares to 173 in the previous 12 months. Figures for neighbouring boroughs for the 12 months ending 1 March 2018 were 624 in Croydon, 85 in Kingston, 130 in Richmond and 204 in Sutton.

The knife crime action plan has three strands of work – to increase protection against knife crime, to reduce the impact of knife crime and to disrupt and prosecute the perpetrators.

What could scrutiny do?

Next time the Borough Commander attends a meeting of the Commission he could be questioned about what action is being taken to deal with knife crime and what progress has been made against the action plan.

Alternatively, the Commission could establish a task group borough-wide review of knife crime and gangs. These are complex issues that cut across the remit of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel as well as the Commission and so a joint task group would be appropriate.

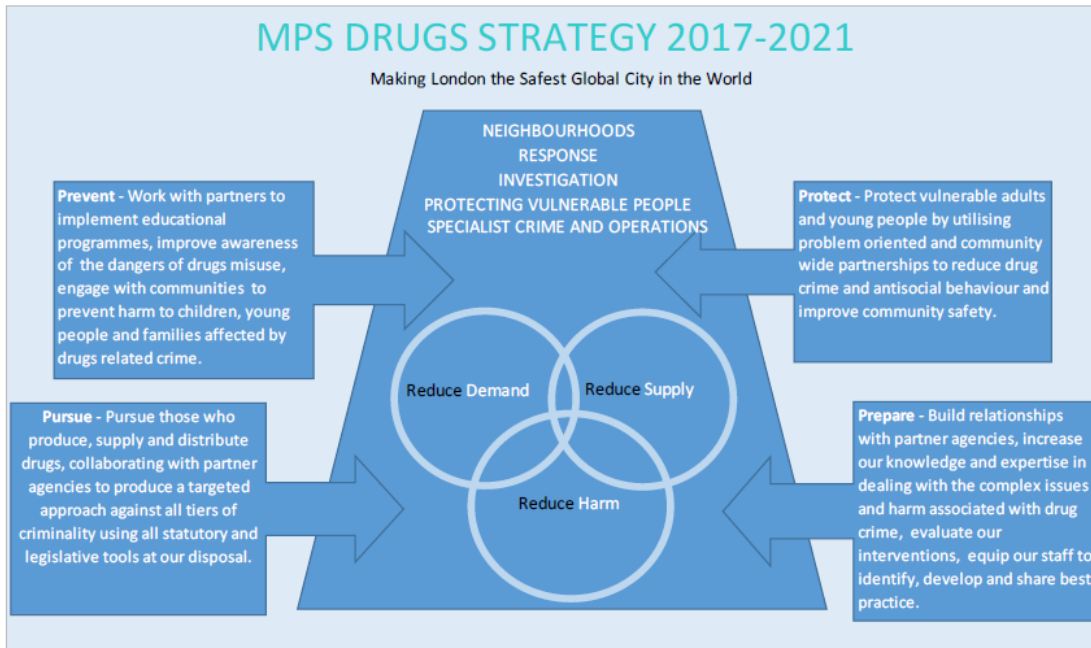
DRUGS STRATEGY

Who suggested this issue?

The Community Safety Manager suggested that the Commission could review the impact that the Metropolitan Police Service's drug strategy is having in Merton and to provide an input to the four borough drug strategy due to be drafted this summer.

Summary of the issue

The MPS drug strategy has three strands of work, set out pictorially below:



What could Scrutiny do?

It is recommended that the Commission receive a draft of the four borough drug strategy at a point in time when it is possible to make a meaningful contribution to its development.

CCTV

Who suggested this issue?

The Community Safety Manager has suggested that it would be timely to provide an update on the CCTV service later this year.

Summary of the issue

CCTV in Merton is a staffed service run by the Parking Service within the Department of Environment and Regeneration, led from a secure control room. The cameras are run solely by the council, but often the council will work with partner organisations such as the police to provide footage of criminal activity.

Direct links are live between the CCTV Control Room and the borough police operations room. Police officers are contactable by radio, and town centre shops are part of the Retail Radio Scheme, which means they can be alerted to any criminal activity.

CCTV staff support the monitoring of criminals through RIPA legislation and can identify known offenders if needed as well as locating lost and vulnerable individuals.

Nationally CCTV is a politically sensitive issue, with civil liberties organisations such as Liberty and Big Brother Watch leading campaigns centred on people's right to privacy.

What could Scrutiny do?

The CCTV strategy has previously been scrutinised by the Commission in 2016-17.

It would be timely to review the CCTV service later in 2018 as the management of the CCTV service will return to Safer Merton on 1 July. Also, a review of CCTV provision and operation in Merton is due to take place in Autumn 2018 and the results of a Londonwide review undertaken by Capita on behalf of MOPAC are expected in the near future.

Scrutiny of the service will need to consider residents' fear of crime and the role of CCTV for our residents in relation to the need for the council to meet savings targets.

TRAVELLERS UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENT PROTOCOL

Who suggested this issue?

A councillor suggested that the Commission should review what action was taken by the council and its partners in relation to recent unauthorised encampments in the borough.

Summary of the issue

A joint protocol agreement was agreed between the Police and the Council in 2010 and is published on the council's website.

The protocol outlines the policy and operational response to unlawful encampments within the borough. It acknowledges the status and rights of Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers as distinct ethnic groups and the Council's duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act to positively promote good race relations. The protocol complies with the Human Rights Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Children's Act.

Each case of unauthorised encampment is individually considered on its merits, before any decision on police response is made. This includes an evaluation of the impact any decisions may have upon any children or young people present and

what action needs to be taken to promote their welfare.

What could scrutiny do?

The Commission last looked at this issue in 2009/10 in response to concerns raised by a ward councillor relating to an unauthorised encampment in 2009. Much of the discussion, and the recommendations, related to communication with residents – one of the councillor’s principal concerns was the way in which the council had communicated with local people while the encampment was in place. The meeting resulted in specific recommendations being made to strengthen the protocol for multi-agency working and a commitment to review a redrafted protocol.

The Commission then discussed the draft protocol in March 2010, recommended a number of changes to be incorporated, recommended that funding is made available for security measures at vulnerable sites; and requested that further reviews of the protocol (expected annually) be sent to members of the Commission for their individual comments. No reviews have been circulated to Commission members.

If members agree that this is a priority area for review, it is recommended that the Commission should receive a report setting out the response to recent encampments and the timeline for review of the protocol. The Commission could also take evidence from residents affected by recent encampments.

MONITORING THE EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2017-21

Who suggested this issue?

For many years this has been a standing item whereby the Commission receives an annual update on the Equality and Community Strategy Action Plan, which sets out the actions the council will take to meet the equality priorities both corporately and departmentally. Each time the strategy has been reviewed, the Commission has received a draft so that its comments and recommendations could be included in the final strategy.

Summary of the issue:

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. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

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 and is delivered through an action plan setting out actions to address the six themes within the strategy.

What could scrutiny do?

It is recommended that the Commission should receive a progress report so that it can scrutinise the implementation of the action plan at its meeting in March 2019.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

Who suggested this issue?

The Corporate Services Departmental Management Team suggested that the Commission would find a briefing useful in order to inform Members of the requirements of the legislation and the action taken by the council to comply with this.

Summary of the issue

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 is new legislation which will replace the 1998 Data Protection Act (DPA), on 25 May 2018.

GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 is designed to build on the existing requirements of the DPA, with an increased focus on transparency; evidencing how organisations use and share information; and the measures taken to do this fairly and lawfully.

The council has an action plan in place to demonstrate how it will become compliant and ensure continuing compliance.

What could scrutiny do?

The Commission could receive a briefing that would set out the requirements of GDPR, what the new provisions are and what steps the council has taken to ensure that it is compliant. This would include the use of personal information, privacy notices, the “right to be forgotten” and the circumstances in which this applies.

TARGET OPERATING MODEL (TOM)

Who suggested this issue?

The Corporate Services Departmental Management Team suggested that the Commission would find a briefing useful in order to develop its understanding of the target operating model approach and the expectations for improving service delivery.

Summary of the issue

The council has used the development of series of strategy documents known as Target Operating Models (TOMs) to plan for service improvement and development. These provide a consistent framework for each service to articulate how it envisages the service operating at a future point in time – the organisation usually uses a 5-year horizon but updates these every two years.

The framework requires services to think about their services from a number of different dimensions to ensure they take an holistic view of how they will shape improvement. These are – customers, channels, services, organisation, processes, information, technology, physical location and people. The council has used the TOMs as a key way of encouraging service managers to consider, evaluate and plan for different ways of providing services.

Each departments must produce at least one TOM to cover their services, although some departments choose to produce TOMs at the division or service level instead.

Draft TOMS were prepared in Spring 2018; the final documents are anticipated in late Summer 2018.

What could scrutiny do?

The Commission could request a briefing that would provide an overview of the target operating model process, some of the key themes emerging and the skills and development senior management will need to successfully deliver the TOMs.

CONSULTATION

Who suggested this issue?

A councillor has suggested that public engagement and consultation, including via digital means, should be scrutinised because the councillor's view is that some departments are very poor at this.

Summary of the issue

In March 2017 the Commission received a report on consultation and community engagement in response to a request made at Council on 23 November 2016. This report provided information on Merton Partnership's community engagement strategy, the online consultation hub, residents survey, community forums and the e-petition system.

What could scrutiny do?

The Commission could receive an update on consultation and public engagement with specific reference to digital means if members thought that this should be a priority for inclusion in the Commission's 2018/19 work programme.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Who suggested this issue?

A former councillor has suggested that scrutiny could do a piece of policy development work to assist the council to formulate an overarching set of policy principles to guide the selection of potential partners so that the council did not partner with organisations that would be detrimental to policies agreed by the council, for example the food policy action plan. This would involve drawing up a statement of the council's values and a set of principles for any partnership working or funding by the council.

What could scrutiny do?

The Commission could establish a task group to work on this issue if members thought it should be a priority area of work for 2018/19.

ROAD SAFETY AND SCHOOLS

Who suggested this issue?

Two school governors and a resident have asked scrutiny to review the safety of pupils crossing roads whilst walking to and from school. Specific concerns were raised in relation to individual schools. A 20 MPH borough wide scheme was suggested as a means of addressing this issue.

Summary of the issue

The council's Traffic and Highways Team, in partnership with Transport for London, work to improve road safety in the vicinity of schools.

What could scrutiny do?

The Commission could receive a report setting out the council's prioritisation model and its rolling programme of road safety schemes outside schools. This could include information on the approach being taken to the adoption of 20MPH schemes in the borough.

If the Commission wished to explore this further it could establish a task group to look at examples of best practice in the vicinity of schools in Merton and elsewhere and make recommendations to embed this across the borough. It could also examine the effectiveness of 20MPH zones elsewhere and the advantages and challenges that would be posed by the adoption of a borough wide 20MPH zone.

REVIEW OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION

Who suggested this issue?

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission agreed at its meeting on 21 March 2018 to refer the matter to the incoming Commission.

Summary of the issue

In December 2017 the Communities and Local Government Select Committee published a report entitled "effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees". This is the first national assessment in many years to consider how scrutiny committees operate. The report looks at why scrutiny is important and the role it should play in local authorities.

The report contains a number of recommendations to strengthen the scrutiny function, enhance its independence and legitimacy, improve transparency and public involvement and consider the allocation of resources allocated to overview and scrutiny.

What could scrutiny do?

The Commission discussed the report at its meeting in March 2018 and agreed that it would like to use the Select Committee report and recommendations as an opportunity to review how scrutiny operates in Merton. Members also wished the review to consider whether to recommend the replacement of the cabinet and scrutiny model with a committee structure.

If members agree to prioritise this work, it is recommended the work should be carried out through the establishment of a task group review.

BUDGET SCRUTINY

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has a constitutional duty to coordinate the scrutiny responses on the business plan and budget formulation.

Budget scrutiny includes consideration of the revenue and capital budgets, the Medium Term Financial Strategy, savings and growth proposals and the Treasury Management Strategy. Contextual information, such as service plans and equality impact assessments, are provided alongside savings proposals.

It is recommended that, as in previous years, the Commission should put aside some time in its meeting in November and prepare to devote the whole of its January meeting to budget scrutiny.

The Chief Executive Officer of Merton Centre for Independent Living has expressed an interest in working with the Commission to explore how to make budget-setting and the MTFs more accessible and based on consultation. If the Commission wished to take this further, it is suggested that initial work could be carried out by the financial monitoring task group (if one is set up) in order to identify the parameters and scope of the exercise.

FINANCIAL MONITORING

Summary of the issue

In previous years the Commission has established a financial monitoring task group in order to scrutinise the quarterly financial monitoring reports and related work delegated to it by the Commission. As with all task groups, recommendations must be endorsed first by the Commission before being forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

The financial monitoring task group has also carried out in-depth work (“deep dives”) on a small number of service areas. In 2017/18 it examined asset management, the Wimbledon tennis championship, the council’s approach to commercialisation, and the service and financial position of the council’s CHAS company.

The financial monitoring task group has suggested the following areas for review in 2018/19 (these could be carried out by the task group or by the Commission itself):

- update on Phase C costs and savings - this should include a statement from partner boroughs on whether their predicted savings are being realised.
- review of the treasury management strategy
- review of the capital programme - this should include information on the principles behind which items are capitalised and plans for future capital spend.
- review of the council’s progress in adopting commercial best practice as an item for its 2018/19 work programme.

The Corporate Services Departmental Management Team has also suggested the client financial affairs service as an area to review with a view to exploring the scope for savings.

What could scrutiny do?

Members are asked to decide whether they wish to re-establish a financial monitoring task group for 2018/19 or whether this function should be carried out at meetings of the Commission.

BUSINESS RATE RETENTION

Who suggested this issue?

The Corporate Services Departmental Management Team suggested that the Commission could receive an update on the Londonwide business rate retention pilot and consider the financial implications for the council’s medium term financial strategy.

Summary of the issue

In October 2015, the Government announced its intention that proposals whereby local authorities will be able to keep 100 per cent of the business rates they raise locally - a fundamental change to in the way local government is financed.

A number of pilots have been set up from 2017/18, including one with all London authorities from 2018/19, to trial the principles of 100% retention and will see RSG (and rural services grants in two tier areas) given up for higher retained business rates. The 2018/19 settlement

consultation also commits the Government to continue to pilot future reform of the system in 2019- 20, with further details to be provided in 2018.

The Provisional Settlement also included an announcement that the government intends to move to a system of 75% business rates retention across local government in 2020-21. This will coincide with the start of the new funding baselines that the Fair Funding Review will establish (a consultation on that was been also published on 19 December 2017). This will include rolling in RSG, Rural Services Grant, GLA Transport Grant and Public Health Grant into Business Rate Retention, but did not mention any transfer of any other new responsibilities/grants.

What could scrutiny do?

The Commission could receive a report, either separately or as part of the business plan report in November, on the government's proposals, the operation of the pilot and what the implications would be for the council's medium term financial strategy. Alternatively, the Commission could delegate consideration of this issue to the financial monitoring task group.

FOLLOW UP ON PREVIOUS SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REVIEWS:

Recruitment and retention of teachers in Merton

The report of this task group review will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 25 June 2018. Cabinet will be asked to provide a formal response to the Commission within two months.

A further report will be sought by the Commission six months after the Cabinet response has been received, giving an update on progress with implementation of the recommendations.

ANNUAL REPORTS RECEIVED BY THE COMMISSION IN PAST YEARS:

- Analysis of Members' survey – an annual survey of all councillors and co-opted members to collect views about how scrutiny is working and how it can be improved. The survey also evaluates satisfaction with the scrutiny function as a whole and with the different workstreams that make up overview and scrutiny. This will be reported to the Commission at its meeting on 6 July 2017
- Overview and Scrutiny annual report – the council's constitution requires the Commission to submit to Council an annual report outlining the work of the overview and scrutiny function over the course of the municipal year. This report is drafted by the scrutiny team in conjunction with the scrutiny chairs and is brought to the Commission in March/April each year for approval prior to submission to Council in July.

Selecting a Scrutiny Topic – criteria used at the workshop on 5 June 2018

The purpose of the workshop is to identify priority issues for consideration as agenda items or in-depth reviews by the Scrutiny Commission. The final decision on this will then be made by the Commission at their first meeting.

All the issues that have been suggested to date by councillors, officers, partner organisations and residents are outlined in the supporting papers.

Further suggestions may emerge from discussion at the workshop.

Points to consider when selecting a topic:

- Is the issue strategic, significant and specific?
- Is it an area of underperformance?
- Will the scrutiny activity add value to the Council's and/or its partners' overall performance?
- Is it likely to lead to effective, tangible outcomes?
- Is it an issue of community concern and will it engage the public?
- Does this issue have a potential impact for one or more section(s) of the population?
- Will this work duplicate other work already underway, planned or done recently?
- Is it an issue of concern to partners and stakeholders?
- Are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?

Note of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission topic selection meeting on 5 June 2018

Attendees:

Councillors Peter Southgate (Chair), Laxmi Attawar, John Dehaney, Daniel Holden, Sally Kenny, Paul Kohler, Rebecca Lanning, Russell Makin, Simon McGrath, Oonagh Moulton, Owen Pritchard and Marsie Skeete,
Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services
Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration
Neil Thurlow, Community Safety Manager
Cathryn James, Interim Assistant Director of Public Protection
Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services (note taker)

Policing in Merton

AGREED:

- to continue to invite the Borough Commander to attend twice yearly to provide a regular update on crime and policing, including the provision of the latest crime figures for Merton and comparative data for neighbouring boroughs.
- Commission members will continue to outline questions at the meeting prior to that attended by the Borough Commander so that these could be sent and responses included in the agenda for the meeting.
- Commission members to develop a thematic basis to the questions so that an issue could be pursued in depth (eg anti social behaviour, CCTV, knife crime...).
- All councillors to be invited to contribute questions.

ACTION:

- the Chair and Head of Democracy Services should meet with the BOCU Sally Benatar to ensure that an officer of the appropriate level of seniority attends the Commission meetings.
- Community Safety Manager to provide police structure chart so that the appropriate person could be invited when particular theme is due to be discussed.

Safer Merton

AGREED:

- to receive an update on the work of Safer Merton at the same meeting that the Borough Commander attends
- that this update should include information on restorative justice
- that Commission members should be able to indicate in advance which issues they are interested in – suggested having an in-depth report on one issue and a brief update on the others

ACTION:

- Head of Democracy Services to send new Commission members a link to previous reports from Safer Merton so they can familiarise themselves with the background to issues for 2018/19

Knife crime and gangs

AGREED that members would question the Borough Commander about what action is being taken to deal with knife crime and what progress has been made against the knife crime action plan. The Commission would then be able to decide whether it wishes to establish a task group

to review this issue- any such task group would be in conjunction with members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel who have expressed an interest in working on youth violence.

Drugs strategy

AGREED to take this as an item for pre-decision scrutiny so that the commission could make a meaningful contribution to the development of the drugs strategy (timeline to be confirmed). Members expressed interest in exploring how the drugs strategy fits in relation to other strands of work such as knife crime and anti social behaviour, where the hotspots are and what is being done on prevention and early intervention.

CCTV

AGREED to receive an update on the CCTV service later in the year (Community Safety Manager to advise on the timeline)

ACTION: Head of Democracy Services to work with Community Safety Manager to arrange for members of the Commission to visit the CCTV control room

Travellers unauthorised encampment protocol

AGREED to receive a report on arrangements under the current protocol and how the council and its partners could respond to the recommendations in the report shortly expected from government. This report should include information on arrangements for welfare checks as well as enforcement action plus detail of costs incurred (serving notice and cleaning up afterwards). Members suggested that it would be useful to include a case study of one encampment, setting out what happened, how the various authorities worked together and what can be learned from the experience.

Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy

AGREED to receive an annual progress report on implementation of the action plan for the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy (at meeting in March 2019). This should also address Councillor Bailey's suggestion that the Commission should review the council's strategy on diversity to develop a strong vision for a more open, tolerant and united Merton.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

AGREED to receive a briefing that would set out the requirements of GDPR, what the new provisions are and what steps the council has taken to ensure that it is compliant. This would include the use of personal information, privacy notices and the "right to be forgotten".

Target Operating Model (TOM)

AGREED to receive a briefing to provide an overview of the TOM process, some of the key themes emerging and the skills and development senior management will need to successfully deliver the TOMs. This should be received at the November meeting and linked to the budget setting process.

Consultation

AGREED that this was not a priority for inclusion in the 2018/19 work programme as the Commission had received a thorough report on these issues in March 2017.

Partnership working

AGREED that this was not a priority for inclusion in the 2018/19 work programme as much of the work suggested is being done through other means.

Road safety and schools

Members discussed the suggestion and agreed that their concerns were primarily to do with safety in the immediate vicinity of schools rather than with 20 MPH zones more generally. They noted that ward councillors are already involved in road safety issues relating to schools in their wards and so were unsure as to what scrutiny could achieve in addition to what is already being done, other than encouraging a more co-ordinated approach across the borough.

Members noted that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel would be considering school travel plans as a potential issue for a task group review.

AGREED that this was not a priority for inclusion in the Commission's work programme but , if the Children and Young People O&S Panel established a task group on school travel plans, then some members of the Commission may be interested in joining this.

Review of the overview and scrutiny function

AGREED:

- to take a report later in the year on the recommendations of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee so that these could be used as an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the scrutiny function in Merton.
- that a review to consider whether to recommend the replacement of the cabinet and scrutiny model with a committee structure was not a priority for inclusion in the Commission's 2018/19 work programme.

Budget scrutiny

AGREED that the Commission should continue to put time aside at its November meeting and devote the whole of its January meeting to budget scrutiny. Noted that the Director of Corporate Services would be providing a briefing session to which all councillors would be invited prior to each round of budget scrutiny.

Financial Monitoring

AGREED that the Commission should re-establish the financial monitoring task group and ask it to continue to carry out in-depth work ("deep dives") on a small number of service areas as well as continuing to receive quarterly financial monitoring reports.

ACTION: Head of Democracy Services to identify meeting dates

Business rate retention

AGREED to receive a report at the budget scrutiny meeting in November on the government's proposals, the operation of the pilot and what the implications would be for the council's medium term financial strategy.

Access to council services through the website

This was a suggestion laid round at the meeting. Councillor Quilliam suggested that the Commission should investigate how the council's website can be made easier to use by residents.

There was general agreement that residents are finding the website difficult navigate and to use for tasks such as reporting missed bin collections and purchasing parking permits. Members were concerned that this might be leading to under-reporting of problems.

The Director of Corporate Services accepted that the website was not functioning at the level that the council had envisaged at present but that, due to contractual negotiations, there was limited scope for change at present. The council has various feedback mechanisms and is making changes wherever it can.

AGREED:

- to receive a report on the current and planned status of the website
- to seek resident views prior to report being written so that officers can respond to these within the report

Council support to EU nationals

This was a suggestion laid round at the meeting. Councillor McGrath suggested that the Commission should investigate how the council can support its residents from other EU countries during Brexit.

AGREED to ask the Head of Democracy Services to obtain further information so that the Commission could decide whether this would be appropriate for a task group or as an issue for pre-decision scrutiny prior to a report being taken to Cabinet when the government's proposals are known.

ACTION: Head of Democracy Services to :

- get background data on number and location of EU nationals resident in the borough
- find out what other boroughs are doing in preparation for Brexit

Recruitment and retention of teachers in Merton

AGREED to receive Cabinet's response to this scrutiny task group review and to monitor implementation of the recommendations.

Annual reports

AGREED that the Commission should continue to receive the analysis of the Members' survey and the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.