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# Merton Council

## Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Date: 4 July 2019

Time: 7.15 pm

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

### AGENDA

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## Overview and Scrutiny Commission membership

### Councillors:

Peter Southgate (Chair)  
Peter McCabe (Vice-Chair)  
John Dehaney  
Sally Kenny  
Paul Kohler  
Owen Pritchard  
Nick McLean  
Edward Gretton  
Joan Henry  
Natasha Irons

### Substitute Members:

David Williams MBE JP  
Thomas Barlow  
Edward Foley  
Ben Butler  
David Chung  
Simon McGrath

### 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](mailto:scrutiny@merton.gov.uk). Alternatively, visit [www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny)

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# Agenda Item 3

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

24 APRIL 2019

(7.15 pm - 9.45 pm)

**PRESENT:** Councillors Peter Southgate (in the Chair), Peter McCabe, Laxmi Attawar, John Dehaney, Sally Kenny, Paul Kohler, Oonagh Moulton, Owen Pritchard and David Williams

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

Chief Superintendent Sally Benatar (BCU Commander), Inspector Ed McDonagh (Merton Police), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration), Rachael Wardell (Director, Children, Schools & Families Department), Howard Joy (Property Management & Review Manager), Neil Thurlow (Community Safety Manager), Adrian Ruthowski (CCTV Manager) Evereth Willis (Equalities and Community Cohesion Officer) and Julia Regan (Head of Democracy Services)

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Rebecca Lanning and from co-opted members Helen Forbes, Emma Lemon and 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 of the meeting held on 20 March 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

### 4 CRIME AND POLICING IN MERTON (Agenda Item 4)

Chief Superintendent Sally Benatar, the Basic Command Unit Borough Commander, introduced the report and provided an overview of changes since she previously attended the Commission's meeting in September 2018. Sally Benatar said that this has been a busy period operationally, with a lot of prevention activity. Crime figures have been relatively stable with a small increase in the number of crimes solved. Knife crime, domestic violence, theft from motor vehicles and burglary continue to be local priorities. She drew the Commission's attention to two recent stabbings, one in Mitcham and one in Morden, to which there has been a robust police response and a number of knives have been seized.

Members of the Commission expressed concern about the impact of policing the environmental protests in central London on the level of cover and the budget locally. Sally Benatar said that 80-100 officers from the BCU (Merton, Richmond, Kingston and Wandsworth) had been sent each day and that adjustments had been made locally, such as a temporary move to 12 hour shifts, to ensure that there was minimum cover in CID, response teams and ward officers as far as possible.

Sally Benatar, Neil Thurlow (Community Safety Manager) and Councillor Edith Macauley (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities) outlined some of the work that is being done to prevent young people from being drawn into gang culture, including work with schools, school police officers, multi-agency work with voluntary sector, youth offending service and other youth work. Rachael Wardell, Director of Children Schools and Families, provided further detail on the work undertaken by the youth justice team with young people in gangs and problematic friendship groups.

In response to a question about the knife crime action plan, Neil Thurlow undertook to share this private partnership document with members of the Commission on a confidential basis.

**ACTION:** Community Safety Manager and Head of Democracy Services

Sally Benatar provided additional information in response to questions:

- The police are still investigating the two recent knife crime incidents, there does not appear to be a link between the two, nor do they appear to be gang related
- The police are very mindful of the level of public concern and fear of crime, particularly in Mitcham where resources are being deployed accordingly
- All schools have a named police officer and an allocation of police hours. 2 posts are currently vacant.

Commission members asked a number of detailed questions on police resourcing and police stations as planned. Sally Benatar's responses are summarised below:

#### Police resourcing

There are 84 police officer vacancies across the BCU. Recruitment is a priority and the police are actively recruiting at the moment. One of the challenges is that the starting salary of £30k is not attractive compared to some other jobs that candidates could undertake, particularly given the high risk of assault. Merton Council, local MPs and partner organisations have been very supportive in assisting the police to reach out to communities through stalls at events and other publicity.

Once all the vacancies have been filled, Sally Benatar would be happy to have discussions with the council about the potential for the deployment of funded police officers with the council.

#### Police stations

Sally Benatar read out a prepared statement:

*“ The intention set out in our consultation document in 2017 was for Mitcham Police Station to be the 24/7 front counter location and Response parade site for Merton Borough, with Earlsfield Police Station remaining the Response parade site for Wandsworth Borough and with Wimbledon Police Station to be sold.*

*After eleven months’ experience of working at greater scale across the boroughs, it has been identified that there is a need to review the operational implications of continuing to operate with two separate Response parade sites for Merton and Wandsworth, as opposed to having a shared parade site covering both boroughs. This internal review is now taking place.”*

In response to concerns raised by members of the Commission, Sally Benatar said that she had requested this review to investigate the most efficient way of using police resources now that these were deployed at greater scale within the BCU. She stressed that this was a separate matter to the location of the 24/7 front office (police station) and that there would continue to be one of these in each borough, the location of which would be a matter for MOPAC.

The Commission and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities requested further detail of the review to be made available in a briefing to councillors. Members of the Commission said they wished to be fully sighted on decisions that would have an impact on policing in Merton and that there should be a public consultation. Sally Benatar said that there had not been a public consultation when the Kingston and Richmond Response parade sites were merged and there was no plan to have a public consultation on how Response policing is delivered as this is an operational policing decision. The public consultation on front counters was a separate issue. Sally Benatar undertook to take the Commission’s concerns back and said that she would share a briefing note with them as soon as she could.

RESOLVED: the Commission agreed to invite the BCU Commander to a future meeting for an update on police estate matters as well as crime statistics and other policing issues.

## 5 TRAVELLERS UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENT PROTOCOL (Agenda Item 5)

The Property Management and Review Manager, Howard Joy, introduced the report and drew the Commission’s attention to progress made on review of the joint protocol between the Council and the Police, the obtaining and use of both interim and subsequently a long term injunction and the response to recent encampments. Howard Joy said that experience to date is that the injunction is proving an effective deterrent to encampments on council owned land.

In response to questions, Howard Joy said that a likely side effect of the injunction would be increased pressure on privately owned land. He said that private landowners can take out an injunction against encampments and as there is no requirement for them to carry out welfare assessments they can act faster than the council is able to under the Criminal Justice Act. Wimbledon Common Conservators

have taken out their own injunction and Mitcham Common is covered by the council's injunction.

RESOLVED: the Commission thanked the Property and Review Manager for the report and welcomed the progress made in obtaining an injunction.

## 6 SAFER MERTON CCTV SERVICE (Agenda Item 6)

The Community Safety Manager, Neil Thurlow, outlined the contents of the report which provided an update on the CCTV service and future plans. He introduced his colleague Adrian Ruthkowski, the CCTV Manager.

Members asked questions about the budget overspend and plans for income generation. Neil Thurlow and Adrian Ruthkowski explained that the overspend in 2018/19 was due to the income target not being met and that work is in progress to generate increased income next year. The main commercial partner at the moment is Clarion Housing but there is potential to market services, particularly out-of-hours services offering economies of scale and other benefits to industrial units, high street retailers, schools and nurseries.

In response to a question about enforcement of fly-tipping, Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration, said that a separate team is responsible for this and they use covert cameras and work closely with Veolia to capture the evidence required for a prosecution. This evidence includes information on who was responsible for the fly-tipping, what was dumped, when and where. Chris Lee said that every resource available was being used to bring perpetrators to justice.

Neil Thurlow said that the Crime and Disorder Act overrides GDPR requirements so that information collected by CCTV cameras can be shared to prevent or solve a crime.

## 7 SAFETY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN MERTON - RESPONSE FROM CABINET (Agenda Item 7)

The Director of Children Schools and Families, Rachael Wardell, said that the joint scrutiny exercise held during Local Democracy Week had been well received by the young people and by the councillors who were involved. Rachael Wardell added that she hoped the exercise would be repeated this year and said that recommendation 2 would be invaluable in helping to promote the involvement of young people in scrutiny in a wide variety of ways.

RESOLVED : the Commission welcomed the updated action plan and endorsed the involvement of young people in scrutiny in future along the lines set out in the report and in the Commission's work programme report (item 10 on the agenda).



## 8 EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY (Agenda Item 8)

The Equality and Community Cohesion Officer, Evereth Willis, introduced the report and highlighted the progress that had been made over the past year, particularly on narrowing the gap on educational attainment, the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), food poverty and welfare support. Evereth Willis said that work was ongoing to narrow the gap on child obesity, to develop the sustainable communities plan, volunteering and social capital. She was pleased to report that equalities is now more systematically embedded in the day to day work of the council. She stressed that although the strategy is set for four years, the action plan is reactive and can therefore change year on year.

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities, Councillor Edith Macauley, added that voluntary sector groups and the Joint Consultative Committee had been involved in the development of the action plan.

Evereth Willis and Rachael Wardell (Director of Children Schools and Families) provided additional information in response to questions:

- Public Health, Children Schools and Families and the Licensing teams are working together to tackle childhood obesity through a number of work streams including the healthy weight and diabetes strategies and are looking to see what action could be taken to limit the number of fast food outlets around schools
- The council has been working with Transport for London to ensure that traffic junctions are DDA compliant – if councillors have specific examples of where this is not the case these should be sent to Evereth Willis or to the Director of Environment and Regeneration
- The council continues to work with schools to encourage them to sign up to the daily mile scheme

## 9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda Item 9)

The Commission discussed the report and RESOLVED: to approve the annual report for presentation to Council at its meeting on 10 July 2019. The annual report should be updated to include information from the Commission's meeting on 24 April and the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 30 April. The report should also include information from the 2019 annual member survey.

## 10 PLANNING THE COMMISSION'S 2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 10)

The Commission discussed the report and RESOLVED:

1. to re-establish the financial monitoring task group for 2019/20
2. to include the following agenda items on the agenda for its meeting on 3 July as set out in the report – priorities and challenges for 2019/20, Merton

Partnership annual report, analysis of annual member survey, discussion of questions for the Borough Commander

**Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

**Date: 4 July 2019**

Wards: All

**Subject: Merton Partnership Annual Report 2018-19**

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](mailto:john.dimmer@merton.gov.uk); 020 8545 3477

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**Recommendations:**

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission discuss and comment on the progress of the Merton Partnership in 2018-19, as set out in the draft Annual Report at Appendix I
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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The draft annual report of the Merton Partnership for 2018-19 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 2018-19. These updates are published on the Council's website once any comments have been reviewed by the thematic partnerships.

**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 these challenges. It confirmed its core purpose was articulate its ambition for the Borough through the Community Plan; commission Thematic Networks to deliver, and; hold thematic networks to account for delivering the vision.
- 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:
- Budgets: the collective impact of public sector funding cuts, the implications for the next few years and opportunities to work together;
  - The next refresh of Merton's Community Plan in 2019 (see below).
  - How partners could contribute to the final stages of the development of the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-24.
- 2.11 Looking forward, the next Merton Partnership Executive Board members' event will take place on 24 June. The key focus for the day will be on the development of the new Sustainable Communities Plan, with additional partner sessions led by Public Health and the Police, which will focus on strategic, cross-cutting topics. This planning day will shape the future work programme for the Executive Board for the year ahead.

- 2.12 The last Merton Partnership conference took place on 3 July 2018 with over 100 members attending the event, which focused on opportunities to strengthen social capital. The next conference is planned for winter 2019.
- 2.13 Data analysts drawn from the members of the Merton Partnership have overseen the development of a new data hub. [Merton Data](#) has been live since January 2018 and is available publicly enabling voluntary sector groups to have access. Development of the site is managed through an analyst's network which includes representation from MVSC on behalf of the voluntary sector and a representative from MVSC has regularly attended meetings. A presentation of the site was made at a workshop hosted at MVSC on 1 November 2018 for voluntary sector groups. The workshop explored the ways in which the VS can use the site to support their work, most notably in putting together funding bids. It was agreed that a workshop relating to the ways in which community groups can use data and information in their roles is to be held annually.
- 2.14 Updates and future priorities for each thematic partnership are set out in the draft Annual Report 2018-19 – Appendix 1.

### **Sustainable Communities Plan 2019-25**

- 2.15 The Sustainable Communities Plan will set the Merton Partnership's long-term ambition for the borough. It will replace the current Community Plan that was launched in 2013. As well as a final document, the Plan will have an online presence that will evolve alongside its development, and during the lifetime of the Plan. The aim is to provide an online resource for the community that is easily accessible.
- 2.16 The overarching goals of the Sustainable Communities Plan will be to increase social capital in Merton as an underlying driver to improve resilience and wellbeing across the borough, and to understand the ambitions that residents have for their borough and where they live. Social capital can be broadly defined as 'the social networks, exchanges, obligations, and shared identities that in turn provide potential support and access to resources.'
- 2.17 To support development of the Sustainable Communities Plan, an evidence base will collate data from a series of indicators to measure the existing levels of social capital on a ward-by-ward basis and give us a baseline from which to work. This will enable the identification of areas with high social capital as well as existing community assets and good practice that can be tapped into. It will also highlight areas with lower social capital: places where the Merton Partnership can be proactive at trying to develop new projects.
- 2.18 Developing the Plan will be based on a wide range of engagement activity to help ensure the views of as wide a cross section of the community as possible are heard and their ambitions for the borough captured. This will utilise the results of existing engagement work, such as the most recent Residents Survey and Children and Young People's Survey, and more targeted work with 'seldom listened to' groups. The Plan will be co-produced with the wider Merton Partnership (Thematic Networks and sub-groups) with the key priorities from each of the four thematic partnership boards – two from each - forming the eight overarching priorities of the Sustainable Communities Plan.

- 2.19 The plan will include a clear list of ‘you said, we did’ deliverables that can be reviewed during the plan’s lifetime to demonstrate its impact.

### **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 circulated to Merton Partnership Executive Board members for comment ahead of it being published with this report.

### **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 2018-19.

### **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None.

## APPENDIX 1

# MERTON PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

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- 2 PARTNERSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS: 2018-19**
  - 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 2018-19**
- 4 APPENDICES**
  - 4.1. Appendix I – Underperforming measures
  - 4.2. Appendix II – data not measured this period

# 1. THE MERTON PARTNERSHIP

This is the Annual Report for the Merton Partnership 2018/19. 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 important 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.

We are currently working on a new Sustainable Communities Plan that will set the Merton Partnership's long term ambition for the borough to 2025. It will replace the current Community Plan that was launched in 2013. The Plan will be co-produced with the wider Merton Partnership (Thematic Networks and sub-groups) with the key priorities from each of the four thematic partnership boards – two from each - forming the eight overarching priorities of the SCP. The overarching goal of the Sustainable Communities Plan will be to increase social capital in Merton as an underlying driver to improve resilience and wellbeing across the borough.

[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 was how to strengthen social capital in Merton. A further conference is planned for autumn 2019.

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

## **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: 2018-19**

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 2018-19, and key priorities for 2019-20 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: The Wilson Health and Wellbeing Campus**

- The work to develop the Wilson Hospital site as a health and wellbeing campus for east Merton is the overarching, long-term legacy project for Merton Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) with a focus on fairness and as an exemplar for healthy place and a holistic service model. All HWBB partners are involved in, and supporting the work of the CCG. Previous work included HWBB members meeting 'community connectors' (local representatives of community groups) in a wide scale engagement of 'Community Conversations' involving around 450 local people. The purpose was to find out the real local needs and priorities to feed into the co-design and co-development of the campus.
- Detailed planning of the Wilson Health and Wellbeing Campus has been delayed pending adjustment to the national LIFT programme. A Wilson Wellbeing steering group is now being established to bring together community and voluntary sector interests and to consider an interim programme of wellbeing activities, such as community gardening. Plans are for integrated clinical and community facilities at the campus, co-designed with the local community, with social prescribing (see below) as an integral part. The new campus will both help tackle health inequalities and build on the significant assets of the voluntary and community sector in this area.

#### **Outcome 2: Social Prescribing**

- Recognising that people's health is impacted by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, Social Prescribing seeks to address people's needs in a holistic way. Giving GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals the opportunity to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services.
- Social Prescribing (SP) has been championed by HWBB from 2018 with an initial pilot programme provided by Merton Voluntary Service Council. This initially focussed on two GP practices in east Merton, extended to 13 and then, in January 2019, expansion was approved by Merton CCG to cover all 22 practices in Merton with a team of 5 full-time SP Co-ordinators.
- Since the start of the programme, over 900 residents have been supported and outcomes amongst patients include:
  - a statistically significant reduction (33%) in GP appointments (demonstrating improved outcomes for patients and efficiencies for GP practices);
  - a statistically significant improvement in a measure of wellbeing (Wellbeing Star); and,
  - an average reduction of £550 per patient in secondary care costs following the

appointment.

(further information available on request)

- Evaluation of the programme is on-going and the NHS Commissioning Support Unit has been commissioned to better understand the impact and benefits of the programme.
- SP will be an integral part of the Wilson health and wellbeing campus (see above).
- HWBB partners are currently working to better understand the impact this is having on voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. Many VCS organisations are keen to increase their coverage and welcome more referrals, especially if they are not working at full capacity. SP referral pattern can help to better identify need and allows the VCS market to adapt alongside commissioners in the future.

### **Outcome 3: Tackling Diabetes**

- The HWBB has adopted an overarching, whole system approach, across the life course to tackle diabetes as an exemplar for developing holistic care, hand in hand with creating a healthy place. Linking to work on the Wilson health and wellbeing campus and social prescribing, the HWBB has focussed as a partnership on tackling diabetes since 2017 following a presentation to the Board by local GPs highlighting the unabated epidemic and insufficiency of trying to tackle diabetes as a medical problem only.
- The Diabetes Truth Programme ran from January to March 2018 connecting each HWBB member to a local resident who had a lived experience of diabetes. A series of one-to-one conversations, brought to life the challenges that people living with diabetes face on a day to day basis; clearly showing what matters to people and reinforcing HWBB members' commitment to working jointly with residents and communities as an integral part of the solution.
- This insight alongside data analysis (as part of the 2018/19 Annual Public Health Report on Diabetes) and a review of the evidence has informed the development of the Tackling Diabetes Action Plan. This Plan, rather than trying to do everything, includes small number of high value actions that, when delivered together, are expected to have the most impact in Merton. Launched in April, together with the new 'Merton Mile' (a one mile signposted route to support families and residents to be active), it presented an opportunity for HWBB members to share progress, listen to people and join children from a local school to run or walk the Merton Mile. [https://twitter.com/Merton\\_Council/status/1114232256036593664](https://twitter.com/Merton_Council/status/1114232256036593664)

### **Outcome 4: Tackling Childhood Obesity**

- The gap in obesity between the east and the west of Merton is a significant health inequality which impacts on children's health and potentially their life chances. As a priority for the HWBB and with clear links to tackling diabetes, significant work to tackle childhood obesity has taken place set out in The Child Healthy Weight Action Plan. This takes a 'Think Family' approach; recognising the importance of the whole family rather than an individual child or adult in isolation. Work on this priority is on-going and recent actions and achievements include:
  - Merton Council signing the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction.
  - Consultation with East Merton residents, BAME communities, parents and young people.

- Developing the Family Start Service supporting children identified as obese.
- Aligning to the Healthy Schools London programme with Merton School Sports Partnership supporting schools to achieve Healthy School status (14 schools now have the Bronze award; 3 have also achieved Silver).
- Training for 378 school staff to raise awareness of childhood obesity and weight.
- Securing GLA and Sustain funding to develop a Food Poverty Action Plan 2018-20.
- Delivering family learning courses for healthy eating on a budget.
- A Daily Mile in Merton schools, aimed to get children to run or jog for 15 minutes daily.
- Children's Community Services UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative run by UNICEF to support organisations to offer support for families for breast feeding and infant feeding.

#### **Outcome 5: Health and Wellbeing Board Development and Leadership Centre**

- The HWBB, with the support development funding from the LGA, continues to work closely with the Leadership Centre to develop its strategic systems leadership. Through a number of development sessions the HWBB has built strong and resilient relationships and encouraged an honesty and openness helping to deliver effective strategic leadership for health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on healthy place.
- At an early stage the Director of Environment and Regeneration was asked to be a member of the HWBB in recognition of the wider determinants of health and the HWBB has taken an active role in Merton's Local Plan; with health and wellbeing now a 'golden thread' running throughout.
- HWBB continual learning has also involved work to engage and listen to people. Detailed in the examples above, this includes new ways of hearing the voice of local people through 'community conversations' and 'diabetes truth' programme. This dialogue has been continued through engagement on our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 – 2014, to help gain insight into what really matters to people and use that insight to inform priorities and start to co-design solutions.
- The HWBB has also fostered relationships between GPs and local councillors - both HWBB GP members and more widely. Building on the successful Prevention Matters workshop involving GPs and Councillors local Councillors joined a Merton GP Locality Meeting to discuss shared local issues. More recently the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board presented to the South West London Clinical Senate Conference on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board to tackle diabetes as well as Merton CCG Clinical Cabinet.

#### **Priorities for 2019-20**

- Merton HWBB is currently finalising its new Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 – 2024 'A Healthy Place for Healthy Lives'. The vision for the new Strategy is to: Work together to make Merton a healthy place by creating the physical and social conditions for all people to thrive and to complement the provision of holistic health and care services.
- The Strategy is closely aligned to Merton's Local Health and Care Plan and other Council Strategies and plans including the Children and Young People's Plan, Sustainable Communities Plan and Local Plan. The HWBB will continue to determine a rolling

programme of key priorities and is considering an initial focus on workplace health with a focus on mental health and active travel.

- The new Merton Story is currently being produced and will have a greater focus on local assets linking with the social capital theme of the new Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- The HWB will continue to foster relationships between GP clinical leaders and Councillors, building on the strength of the partnership. For example, one local GP will be running his surgery at the same time as offering space in the GP practice for ward councillors running theirs.
- The HWB is continuing to work with the Leadership Centre to capture Merton's story, evaluate impact to date and look at the 'fitness for the future' of the HWB within a changing NHS structural landscape.

#### **Additional information**

- The Merton Story gives an overview of the health and wellbeing of Merton residents.
- The Annual Public Health Report on Tackling Diabetes gives further statistical information supporting the HWBB work to tackle diabetes.

## 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**

- 100% of Merton's children's centres are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. Services have been re-shaped and now deliver additional services within identified areas in the borough where there are high levels of deprivation. Access criteria has been developed that includes families living in low-income households.
- Community Health services staff, including health visiting practitioners, school nursing and the Family Nurse Partnership, are co-located in five children's centres to enable stronger collaborative working. Multi-agency working, particularly with the Health Visiting service, continues to identify families where there are additional needs due to the impact of living in poverty.
- Merton's Local Transformation Plan (LTP) was refreshed for 2018 with aims including increasing access to mental health services, greater support for vulnerable groups and procuring enhanced counselling services for emotional disorders.
- Merton's Single Point of Access (SPA) to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is in place to simplify the referral process and ensure that the appropriate level of service is accessed at the right time and place.
- A number of multi-agency strategies and protocols support practitioners in early identification and addressing need within vulnerable cohorts at risk of or experiencing neglect, child sexual exploitation, mental health issues, parental substance abuse and domestic violence.
- A Young Carers Multi-Agency Strategy for 2018-21 has been developed in consultation with young carers and their families which brings together all agencies in joint actions to prevent young carers being involved in inappropriate caring and to offer the support they need to learn, develop and enjoy positive childhoods and youth.
- The Merton Safeguarding Children's Partnership (MSCP) has prioritised a review of Early Help and Preventative work - in particular, an exploration of models for coordinating preventative and early help across the well-being model.
- Merton's Transforming Families service has achieved some of the highest levels of success in London and has demonstrated excellent progress as an early adopter/pilot for phase two compared to other London boroughs.
- A Multi-Agency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation (MARVE) Panel has been established to coordinate robust responses to high profile cases and identify those at risk of criminal exploitation early to divert the path into serious youth violence.
- Merton is continuing to deliver its 4-year Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)



Strategy which has delivered several awareness-raising campaigns to improve reporting rates in the borough, DV profiles and reviews of less-understood VAWG strands and instated an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

- Improving immunisation uptake rates in Merton is being undertaken by pan-London endeavours as well as local borough partnership work between the CCG, Local Authority, PHE and NHSE London which includes developing local action to address the drop in vaccination rates and, in particular, to support increasing MMR and pre-school booster at age 5. School-aged immunisation providers routinely include information on MMR and administer MMR1 and/or MMR2 to complete the immunisation course.

### **Outcome 2: Children and Young Peoples Plan: Safeguarding children and young people**

- 91% of primary schools and 100% of secondary and special schools are graded 'Good' or better by Ofsted for personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- Anti-bullying guidance templates for schools have been developed and shared which will support them in tailoring their policies in line with their current practice to prevent, report, respond and intervene when bullying takes place and how incidents will be monitored.
- By demonstrating exceptional good practice and progress in tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, Merton's Stonewall rating has improved to 11<sup>th</sup> out of 25. Merton is also making strides in its support for LGBT / transgender pupils through its work with Wandsworth to produce guidance applicable for both boroughs.
- Transition arrangements from the Board to the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) have been successfully completed. Local arrangements are built on the strong foundations already in place.
- A Liaison and Diversion service has been established to provide an early screening and sign-posting service at first point of entry into the criminal justice system to ensure that appropriate interventions are available to meet identified needs and that the 'health offer' underpins the justice response.
- Merton has been successful in a bid for the Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund that will deliver 'Responsive Community Engagement' where there are concerns about anti-social behaviour, 'hot spots' and increasing violence. The team will be co-located in the Adolescent and Family Service and work alongside existing provision to increase capacity to respond swiftly to these concerns and divert young people from the criminal justice system.
- Commissioned specialist substance misuse services continue to be delivered via Catch22 which include brief alcohol interventions, targeted workshops for schools and training to professionals across Merton.

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

- Commissioned the Positive Families Partnership in conjunction with other local authorities to keep vulnerable families together and prevent children from being taken into care. A further partnership arrangement has been established through a Family Drug & Alcohol Court (FDAC) which offers an alternative form of care proceedings for parents and children

in cases where substance misuse is a key factor in the decision to bring proceedings.

- Maintained a strong emphasis on pre-proceedings cases which has contributed to reducing the overall duration of Care Proceedings cases. System improvements are in place and there is increased focus on the interface between key teams and partners.
- Placement stability continues to improve with a downward trend in the percentage of Looked After Children (LAC) with 3+ placements in the year falling to 12% in 2018 from 17% in 2014. Sixty-nine percent of LAC were in stable placements in 2018 compared to 58% in 2014 and 40% in 2015.
- Refreshed the Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children and Care Leavers for 2018-19 which includes in-depth analysis of performance and needs that inform service improvement.
- Merton CAMHS in Social Care provides an integrated mental health service within Children's Social Care. The service provides effective, evidence-based interventions as part of the clinical and social response to meeting the emotional and mental health needs of this cohort and also assists and supports social workers to implement new approaches to their work.
- Adoption performance continues to be a strength in terms of clear planning and management oversight of cases and placements achieved in a timely manner. Merton is set to combine adoption services with other South London boroughs to provide more cohesive, efficient and effective use of resources.
- A new Fostering Recruitment Strategy has been developed with the intention of increasing the number of foster carers recruited and retained by Merton which uses research and evidence-based approaches as well as comprehensive and systematic data to monitor and analyse activity.
- The Children in Care Council continue to seek the views of LAC and Care Leavers through a variety of mechanisms through which they have informed planning on a range of issues such as housing, 'Staying Put', health and emotional well-being.

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

- High-quality education continues to be provided with 88% of primary schools and 100% of secondary and special schools rated 'Good' or better by Ofsted for Overall Effectiveness.
- The latest 2017-18 educational outcomes for Merton schools show that:
  - 74% of all pupils and 64% of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieved a 'Good Level of Development' at Early Years Foundation Stage
  - 69% of all pupils and 56% of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2
  - The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed in the Progress 8 indicator at Key Stage 4.
- Attendance continues to be higher than national and outer London rates. Excellent partnership work between the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and schools has continued to create a culture of good school attendance. There were no permanent exclusions in primary and special schools over 2017-18. The number of permanent exclusions in

secondary schools has decreased significantly and is below the most recent national, London and outer London comparators.

- An effective multi-agency Children Missing Education (CME) panel continues to operate to ensure vulnerable children and young people receive and engage with a suitable education offer.
- Provision of two year-old education places continues to be a key focus. Additional requirements for free early education have included the introduction of a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENI), the Disability Access Fund and roll-out of 30 hours childcare and early education for working parents, which continues to develop. Over half of schools have implemented the 30-hour offer with more planning to do so in the near future.
- A new Early Years Hub has been established and is shared across Merton and Wandsworth to provide opportunities for early years settings, local authorities and other partners to work together to improve outcomes for children by increasing take-up of free early education and improving the quality of early years provision.

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

- There has been downward trend of First-Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System (144 in 2010-11 to 33 at the end of Mar 19). Re-offending cohorts remain small but with increasingly complex needs – many young people have an EHC Plan or LAC status and require multi-agency and cross-departmental responses to manage behaviour.
- NEET and Not Known performance remain in the top quintile in London. Key workers from the My Futures team have continued to provide a range of group and individual 1:1 work as well as various other support through joint working to improve outcomes for at-risk young people and those who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). The team have continued to run a series of successful programmes including a Holiday Programme, Towards Employment Programme and University Programme that enables the most vulnerable young people to access education/work opportunities and improve behaviour, social skills and self-confidence.
- Commissioned services continue to be delivered and focused 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.

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

- Educational outcomes have improved with a 3% rise in children with SEN who achieved a 'Good Level of Development' at the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2017-18 for both those in receipt of SEN Support and those with EHC Plans. Performance of pupils in receipt of SEN Support also improved in all key indicators (except writing progress) at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 4, pupils in receipt of SEN Support maintained a very strong Progress 8 score. Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores for pupils with EHC Plans rose slightly and are above national but below London averages.
- A Post-16 Information, Advice and Guidance Worker within the Merton Information Advice and Support Service supports young people with SEND post-16 transition to adulthood via

further training and towards employment opportunities. Feedback has shown a high level of satisfaction with the service with 92% stating that the information, advice and support given 'made a great deal of difference'.

- Work is continuing to support further increase in provision and sufficiency of local SEN places in special schools, particularly in response to the continued rise in Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.
- There is an established pathway for schools to identify children requiring an EHC assessment. Focus has been maintained on assuring the consistency of SEN identification across all Merton schools with work undertaken around the sharing of good practice, professional and resources development and collaboration between local authority SEN services and the Merton Special Teaching School Alliance.
- Portage has been embedded into the wider Early Years service and includes co-delivery from Children's Centres. The parenting offer for families with children with specialist complex needs continues to develop – the service recently launched the Incredible Years ASD and Language Delay Programme with 25 staff trained in this model.
- There is also growing membership of Kids First – Merton's forum for parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs that address specific local issues. Kids First meets regularly with key senior members of staff to discuss and focus on a broad range of issues raised and areas for improvement.
- A SEND Strategy 2019-22 is currently being refreshed in line with strategic priorities – this will incorporate the recent Higher Needs Funding review and Merton capital SEND expansions projects.
- Merton's Local Offer for SEND is web-based and provides parents with details on all services open to children and young people in the borough and is regularly updated with relevant information.

### **Priorities for 2019-20**

A new draft Children and Young People's Plan has been produced through extensive consultation with children, families and the Children's Trust Board.

Over 1287 pupils responded to a survey on the four-year plan, which was sent out to secondary schools across the borough. Consultation also took place with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities as well as primary aged children and parents of children using Early Years services.

The importance of connectedness to family, friends and the local community and its vital role in wellbeing has emerged as a new priority – named in the plan as 'My Merton'. This sits alongside the following further five priorities: 1. Being Healthy, 2. Staying Safe, 3. Enjoying and Achieving, 4. Getting Involved, Having a Say, 5. Becoming Independent.

The strategy is set to be approved at Cabinet in July 2019 and adopted by Council in September 2019.

## 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

Under Universal Credit a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance.

As Universal Credit Full Service rolled out in particular areas, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count was likely to rise. This has been the case in Merton, initially rising from 1.8% to 2.2% in October 2018 and by February 2019 had risen to 2.4% where it remains as of June 2019.

#### **Outcome 2:** Apprenticeships – placements in year

##### 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 2019 we have had 112 levy-funded apprentice since April 2017 and 93 for the last year.

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

Please note that there is no Economic Development Strategy funding to support apprenticeships employment programmes for businesses in Merton. However the Towards Employment pilot employability support (see outcome 3) did generate 7 apprenticeships in the past financial year.

#### **Outcome 3:** Number of people employed through Employability schemes

The “Towards Employment” programme delivered through the Children Schools and Families division was the only Council funded employability scheme this year using s.106 funding specifically for “skills training”.

The scheme was introduced in August 2018 initially as a pathway programme to support residents aged 16-25 with a focus on vulnerable young people (care leavers, those on the risk register and those known to the Youth Offending Team). However, through support and cooperation this has meant other residents are able to receive employment both in and within

adjoining boroughs, particularly Croydon.

30 plus job starts were created between September and December 2018 and 5 apprenticeship starts.

Between Jan – March 2019 there were a further 2 apprenticeship starts.

Partners reported that through their own employability programmes they have a further 35 residents into employment so a total of 72 people employed through local employability schemes. The other local provider programmes being reported are:

Step Forward - An employment, training, finance & budgeting, information and support programme for people in Merton and Pollards Hill MOAT residents.

Delrose Earle Training – Providers to the private, voluntary and public sector of courses designed to stimulate and equip individuals to make decisions that change their lives and impact their communities.

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

It is not possible to provide a definitive number of residents who have been supported specifically with financial guidance as many of the programmes on offer in Merton will be providing complex needs support and some clients will have been supported by more than one partner.

However, Commonsense Trust deliver the Step Forward Programme, which is specifically providing financial support for residents. They report that 91 residents have been supported in the past financial year:

- APRIL – MAY 2018: 16
- JUNE - AUGUST 2018: 29
- SEPT- DEC 2018: 26
- JAN – MAR 2019: 20

Step Forward provides support to Clarion tenants and resident with financial literacy and running publicity campaigns and workshops. Residents 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. Commonsense also give some advice about training, careers, housing, income maximisation, health, diet etc.

#### **Priorities for 2019-20**

- Volunteering
- Climate change / air quality

## 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:** *To Reduce Theft of Motor Vehicles*

- Met-wide roll out of Operation Venice (Prevention, Protection, Prepare and Pro-active).
- Two call-ins, CPN's issued and targeted, intelligence led patrols in hotspot areas.
- Crime prevention messages and target hardening via the distribution of bike locks.
- Joint operations with neighbouring boroughs.
- Forensics, helicopter days, tagging spray and "Trap" vehicles all utilised.
- Priority for local officers and all offences reviewed daily by Partnership and Prevention Team.

#### **Outcome 2:** *Domestic Burglary and Integrated Offender Management*

- IOM analytical profile was written.
- The IOM panel meetings continue to meet on a monthly basis.
- The Offenders Board is now up and running.
- Neighbourhood Watch continues to promote their service and work is ongoing with local Police teams to set up new watches across the borough.
- Met Trace continues to be rolled out across the borough.
- 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.
- Pro-active patrols and continued use of "cocooning".

#### **Outcome 3:** *To reduce crime in Wimbledon Park Ward*

- A ward profile was written and disseminated
- An action plan for key work was written and a partnership group met
- CCTV has been utilised in key strategic locations.
- Partnership problem solving at key sites
- Neighbourhood Watch has been very active in the area

#### **Outcome 4:** *To participate in the Local Alcohol Action Area Project and Enforcement of the Borough Public Space Protection Order*

##### *Local Alcohol Action Area Project*

- Merton was successful in its bid to become part of the phase two Home Office project.
- A significant number of actions were completed and now the project has concluded, work is being mainstreamed via the Substance Misuse Project Board.
- A final evaluation of the project is complete. The results highlighted improved partnership

working, communication, sharing of intelligence and outcomes in relation to a reduction in the number of incidents of violence with injury (non-domestic).

#### *Public Space Protection Order*

- Work around the enforcement of the PSPO is ongoing – with partnership working between the Community Safety Team, Police and Kingdom Security.
- Engagement with Drug and Alcohol Services to ensure that support is in place for those who need it.
- Work will start imminently to gather intelligence around street drinking on the borough, due to the current PSPO expiring next year. The intelligence will help to inform the decision making around any future orders on the borough.

#### **Priorities for 2019-20**

The Community Safety Partnership will be working on the pan London priorities set in the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan, which are:

- Neighbourhood policing.
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Tackling violence against women and girls
- The criminal justice system that works for London
- Standing together against hate, extremism and terror in all its forms

In addition to the pan London priorities, the Community Safety Partnership will also be undertaking work around the following locally identified priorities (identified via the borough's Strategic Assessment).

- Domestic Burglary (with a focus on Wimbledon Village and Wimbledon Park)
- Theft of Motor Vehicles
- Mitcham Town Centre
- Serious Violence inc. Knife Crime
- Anti-Social Behaviour Enforcement

#### **Additional information**

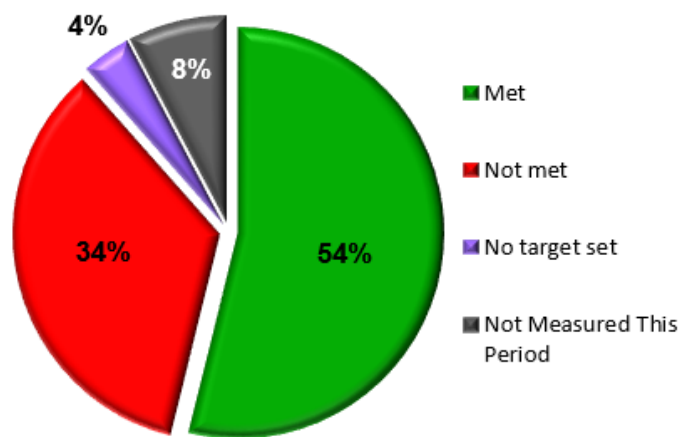
- Ongoing work to establish and maintain positive working relationships in light of the new Policing Structure. Work is also ongoing to mitigate any potential risks the new structure may bring.
- Brexit and the future implications for the borough, particularly in relation to potential increases in Hate Crime.
- Reduction in London Crime Prevention Fund.
- Via the Locations Board and the Safer and Stronger Executive Board, work is ongoing to deliver upon the actions set in the borough's Knife Crime Plan.
- We will further develop new and innovative programmes in offender management utilising community based organisations to assist statutory partners in providing meaningful routes out of crime.



### 3. PERFORMANCE 2018-19

#### Overall Year End Performance 2018-19

- 3.1 Performance for 2018-19 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, and two (8%) are Not Measured This Period. One indicator (4%) reports without a specific target being set because it is measured against the MOPAC/MPS Public Attitude Survey.



#### Comparative year on year performance

- 3.3 The percentage of measures achieving or exceeding their targets, and failing to meet their targets for 2018-19 has remained consistent and stable when compared to 2017-18. The comparative results for the past three years can be seen in the table below.

Result	2016-17	%	2017-18	%	2018-19	%	Trend
Target achieved	12	46%	14	54%	14	54%	→
Target not achieved	7	27%	9	34%	9	34%	→
Not Measured This Period	3	12%	2	8%	2	8%	→
Data Not Received	4	15%	1	4%	0	0%	↑
No target	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	↓
Total Number of Indicators	26	100%	26	100%	26	100%	

#### Underperforming measures

- 3.4 Details of the nine underperforming indicators together with Management Action commentary, where provided, can be found in Appendix I

### **Data Not Received/Not Measured This Period**

- 3.5 Details of the two measures which are not measured this period can be found in Appendix II. There were no Data Not Received indicators.



### **Performance Measures for 2019-20**

- 3.6 The proposed indicator set for 2019-20 has yet to be agreed.



**Merton Partnership ~ underperforming measures 2018-19 Year End**

Thematic Partnership		2018/19			Supporting commentary where provided
		Value	Target	Status	
Children & Young People	MP 050 % of total 0-5 year population from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) whose families have accessed children's centre services (Quarterly)	56%	60%		
Health & Wellbeing	MP 056 Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth (Female) (Annual, two years in arrears)	65.3%	65.4%		
Health & Wellbeing	SP448 Reduce gap in age 10-11 obesity between East & West Merton (Annual)	11.5	9.2		This figure covers the period 2015/16 to 2017/18
Sustainable Communities & Transport	MP 065 % of Merton residents 16-64 claiming out-of-work benefits (Quarterly)	2.3%	1.7%		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.
Sustainable Communities & Transport	MP068 No. of clients accessing employment and skills initiatives who have received financial guidance (Quarterly)	91	112		It is not possible to provide a definitive number of residents who have been supported specifically with financial guidance as many of the programmes on offer in Merton will be providing complex needs support and some clients will have been supported by more than one partner. The figure provided relates to just one programme which specifically supports financial inclusion.
Sustainable Communities & Transport	MP 69B Number of Merton's CYP (up to age 15) participating in scooter training (Quarterly)	606	1500		The main reason for less training is the reduced officer hours but also the growing demand on school's curriculum timetable. We offer a wide range of cycle training for all ages and this tends to be given higher priority by schools. We are trying to introduce yearly diarised scooter training to ensure session levels are maintained.
Safer & Stronger	MP 074 % of "i" calls responded to within 15 mins (Monthly)	83.3%	90%		This indicator was included in light of the changes to the Policing structure in the Met. Merton is now part of the South West Borough Command Unit alongside Kingston, Richmond and Wandsworth. Due to these changes the partnership wanted to monitor response times to ensure that the changes did not have a negative impact. Whilst the target has not been met, continual

Thematic Partnership		2018/19			Supporting commentary where provided
		Value	Target	Status	
					dialogue is taking place at the Safer and Stronger Executive Board and feedback from the Police is that things are improving.
Safer & Stronger	MP 076 No increase in residential burglary (Quarterly)	17.4%	0		There has been an increase in residential burglaries over the period, and as such it has been agreed by the Safer and Stronger Partnership that it will be one of the partnership's strategic priorities for the forthcoming financial year. A partnership wide action plan has now been set up and will be monitored by the Location's Board going forward. Over the year Met Trace continued to be rolled out, crime prevention messages were delivered, and analytical profile was produced and work continued around Neighbourhood Watch. This work will all continue this year.
Safer & Stronger	SP 078 Reduction in theft of Motor Vehicles (Quarterly)	6.3% reduction	10% reduction		Whilst there was a reduction of 6.3% unfortunately we did not achieve the 10% reduction target that was set. It has been agreed by the Safer and Stronger Partnership that it will be one of the partnership's strategic priorities for the forthcoming financial year. A partnership wide action plan has now been set up and will be monitored by the Location's Board going forward. Work over the year included targeted operations, crime prevention messaging, analytical profiling and the Met Police wide roll out of Operation Venice.

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**No target assigned but performance identified as declining:**

Thematic Partnership		2018/19			Supporting commentary if applicable
		Value	Target	Status	
Health & Wellbeing	MP 075 Public perception of the police	65.3%	N/A	N/A	This indicator has no target. It is measured against a tracker ie the MOPAC/MPS Public Attitude Survey <a href="https://maps.london.gov.uk/NCC/">https://maps.london.gov.uk/NCC/</a> Whilst we do not have a target set for this indicator – we have noted a downward trend over the year. This is being picked up and monitored by the Safer and Stronger Executive Board.

Merton Partnership ~ Data Not Measured by Year End 2018-19

Thematic Partnership	Performance Indicator Code & Description	2018/19	Management Comment
Health & Wellbeing	MP 057 % of adult carers who have as much social contact as they would like (annual, one year in arrears)	Not Measured This Period	No carers survey was carried out during 17/18, this takes place every two years. The results of the latest survey are not yet published.
Health & Wellbeing	MP 058 % of adults in contact with secondary mental health services who live in stable and appropriate accommodation (Annual)	Not Measured This Period	Year End data not yet available

## **Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Commission

**Date:** 4 July 2019

**Subject:** Analysis of the Annual Member Scrutiny Survey 2019

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

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

Contact officer: Rosie Mckeever; Rosie.Mckeever@merton.gov.uk; 020 8545 4035

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### **Recommendations:**

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission considers the findings arising from the 2019 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 2019 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 positive:
  - Overall effectiveness: Regarding the overall effectiveness of scrutiny, 62% of respondents rated scrutiny as completely or somewhat effective
  - Task groups: Task group work was once again rated the most effective element of scrutiny with 76% rating it as completely or somewhat effective
  - Scrutiny team: Satisfaction with the team and each aspect of its work remained positive with respondents giving the team an overall satisfaction rating of 93%.
- 2.3. However, on each measure the figures are lower than last year and the comments provided by respondents (set out in full in Appendix 2) indicate some feeling that scrutiny has become stale and requires fresh impetus. The planned review of our scrutiny function by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and the recent publication of new statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny are therefore very timely and will assist the council in identifying appropriate action to improve performance over the coming year. Members will be interviewed as part of the review and the Commission will

receive results at its meeting in September, alongside a draft action plan that it will be able to shape.

### **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 previous years and to develop actions 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 2019 – analysis and detailed findings
- 11.2. Appendix 2: Verbatim comments from Members
- 11.3. Appendix 3: List of proposed action points



## Member Survey 2018

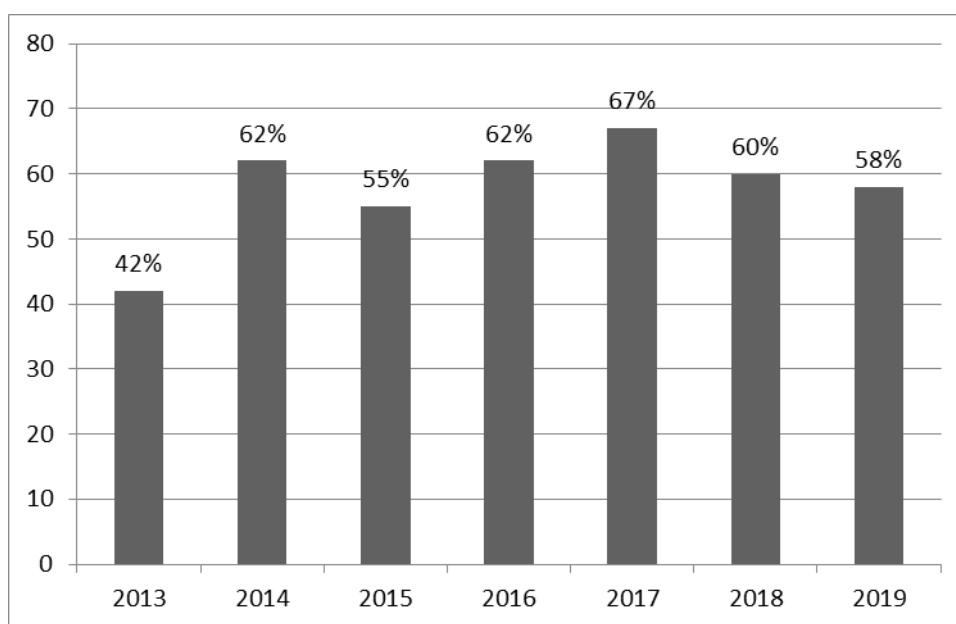
### Survey respondents

1. The 2019 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 37 councillors but no co-opted members, giving an overall response rate of 58%. In 2018 the survey was completed by 35 councillors and three co-opted members, giving an overall response of 60%.
3. The response rate has fluctuated in previous years with a dip in the year following local elections, with subsequent increases in years 3 and 4:

Diagram 1: Member survey response rate

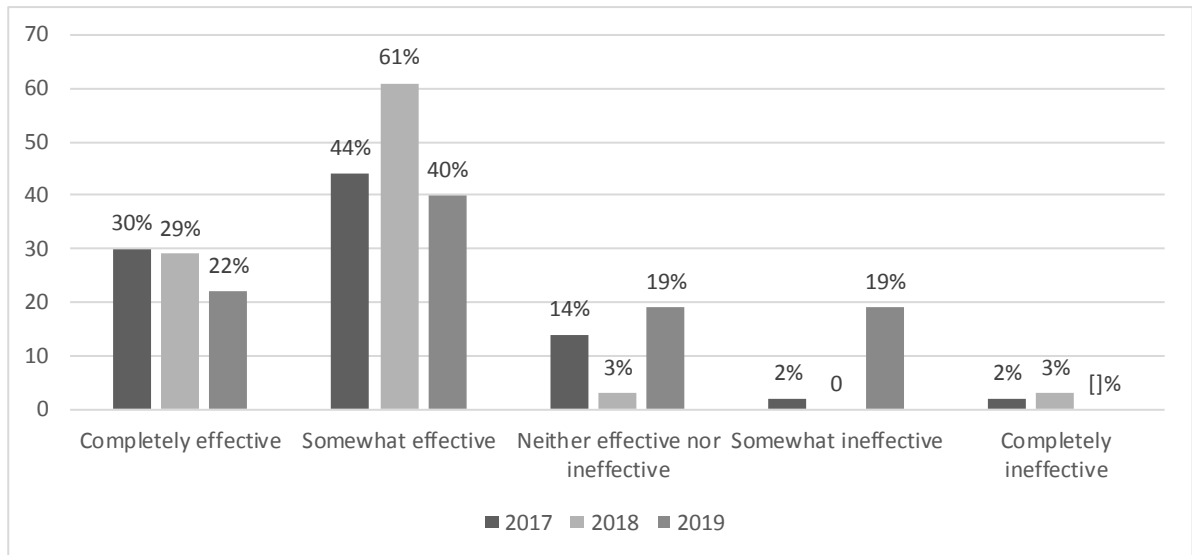


4. The majority of respondents have been actively involved in the scrutiny process over the past year:
  - 24 are members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission or a scrutiny panel
  - 9 are 'other non-executive members'
  - 4 are Cabinet Members
  - 41% of respondents have sat on a Task Group
  - 55% have attended a scrutiny meeting as a visiting member to observe/make a contribution
  - 9 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 the results from the last two years shows that the proportion of respondents who consider scrutiny to be effective overall has decreased in 2019:

Diagram 2: The overall effectiveness of scrutiny



6. The increase in the proportion of respondents rating scrutiny as “somewhat ineffective” is notable and warrants further investigation. A number of the comments made on the survey form indicate that members feel that the current culture around scrutiny needs to be challenged and refreshed, for example comments on how scrutiny could be improved included these responses:

*“A difficult one, but there needs to be a wider cultural change; scrutiny should be genuine. As an opposition councillor it doesn’t feel to me that all majority party councillors are particularly interested in scrutinising and challenging the work of the administration. And that indeed, democracy needs scrutiny to make better decisions.”*

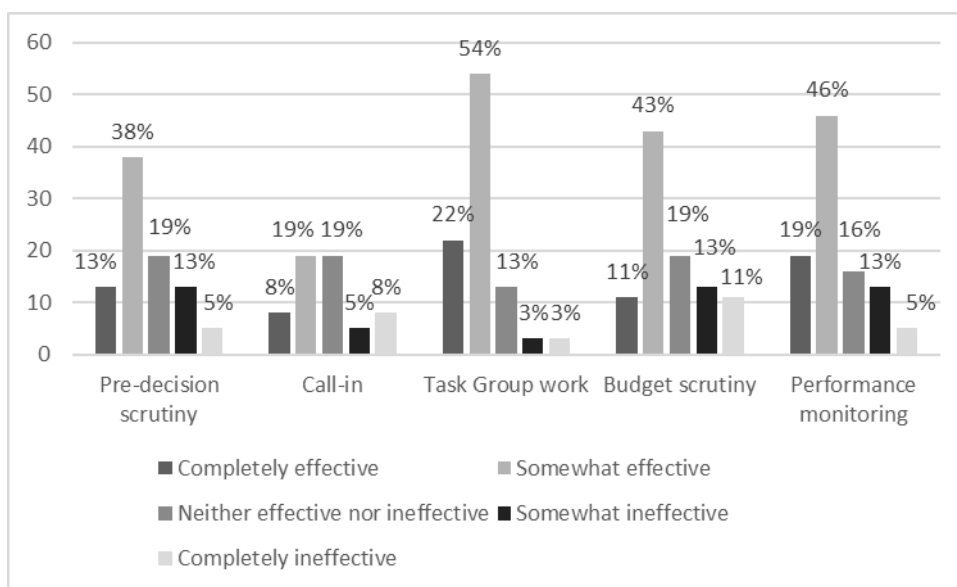
and

*“Based on my experience, I believe a refresh is needed of Scrutiny with a full review to explore all possible options of improvement. There are too many Councillors not able or prepared to pay an active role in scrutinising decisions that are made. It can often feel like a tick box exercise. Steps should be taken to empower more councillors from all parties to play an active and leading role in scrutiny.”*

### ACTION POINT

7. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has been asked to address organisational and member culture within its review of the scrutiny function. In particular, the discussions with members will seek to clarify the points raised through the member survey, seek to understand why those points were made and what action can be taken to address and improve the effectiveness of scrutiny in Merton.

**Diagram 3: The effectiveness of the different aspects of scrutiny in 2018/19**



### Pre-decision scrutiny

- 51% rated the effectiveness of pre-decision scrutiny as completely or somewhat effective in 2018/19. This is a steep fall from the 82% of respondents who rated pre-decision scrutiny as completely or somewhat effective in 2017/18. Comments made by respondents indicate a lack of awareness of the extent of pre-decision scrutiny that is carried out and a dissatisfaction with the way that pre-decision scrutiny is managed:

*“As a member of the Commission I am unaware of any pre-decision scrutiny save for vague comments to it occurring. I have a vague feeling that the Cabinet is influenced by what the Commission says but can’t point to specifics”*

and

*“I managed to make a recommendation on a pre-decision scrutiny issue. This was passed only because the wording had been agreed with the cabinet member and Director in advance, and this “bought” the support of majority group councillors on the Panel”.*

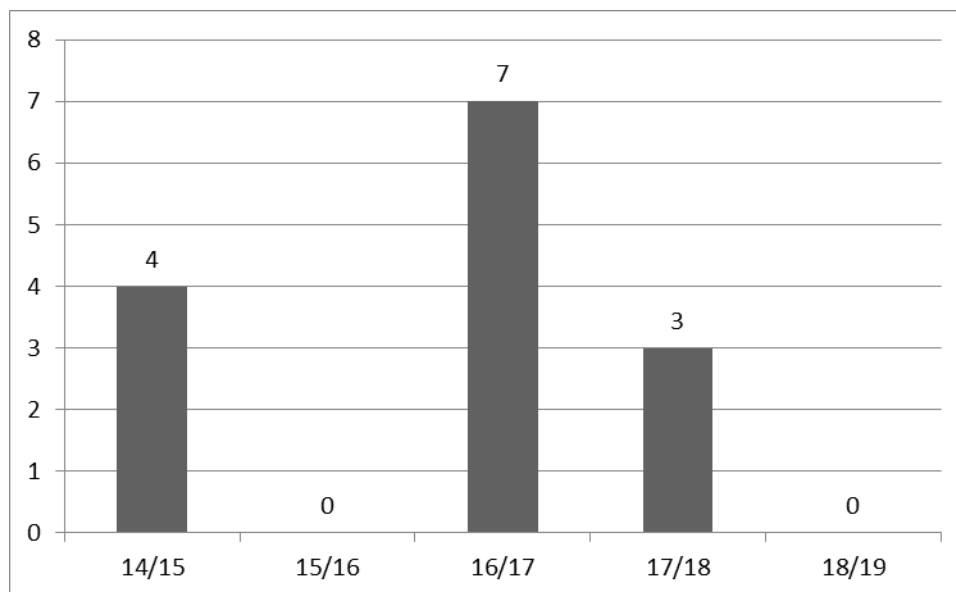
### ACTION POINT

- To use the Centre for Public Scrutiny review as an opportunity to discuss whether pre-decision scrutiny, when it occurs, is clearly recognised as such and whether the impact of scrutiny on Cabinet decisions through pre-decision scrutiny should be publicised.
- To use the CfPS review and subsequent action plan to identify how the processes through which pre-decision scrutiny is undertaken could be improved.

## Call-ins

11. Call-in continues to be an area with the lowest rates of satisfaction. It is the most political element of scrutiny and does not usually result in a request to Cabinet to review its decision. There were no call-ins in the last municipal year.

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. The overall ratings for task group work declined compared to last year with a fall from 85% to 76% of respondents considering task group work to be completely or somewhat effective, with a corresponding increase from 3% to 13% selecting the neither effective nor ineffective rating.
13. Comments made by respondents indicate both perspectives:

*“The Air Quality findings and Scrutiny task group team were able to look at support needed for people with dementia or early stage of dementia , the outcome of the finding shows that more funding was one of the main concern for appropriate services to be delivered . that was influenced by Cabinet-decision as a good cause for funding and better service for people with Dementia.”*

and

*“The task groups work well but make little progress in panels that are loaded with administration back benchers”.*

## Budget scrutiny

14. The effectiveness of budget scrutiny continues a slight downward trend with a rating of 54% (compared to 69% in 17/18 and 72% in 16/17). This may reflect the realities of such tight budgets giving scrutiny little opportunity for influence.
15. Two members cited budget scrutiny as an example of where scrutiny has had an impact on decision making by Cabinet, including the agreement to reconsider proposed savings relating to the registry office building.

## Performance monitoring

16. The effectiveness of performance monitoring has also slightly decreased since last year, with 65% respondents agreeing that it was completely or somewhat effective this year compared to 68% last year and 77% in 2017.
17. Two of the panels (Children & Young People and Sustainable Communities) have appointed performance monitoring leads and receive regular data reports at their meetings.

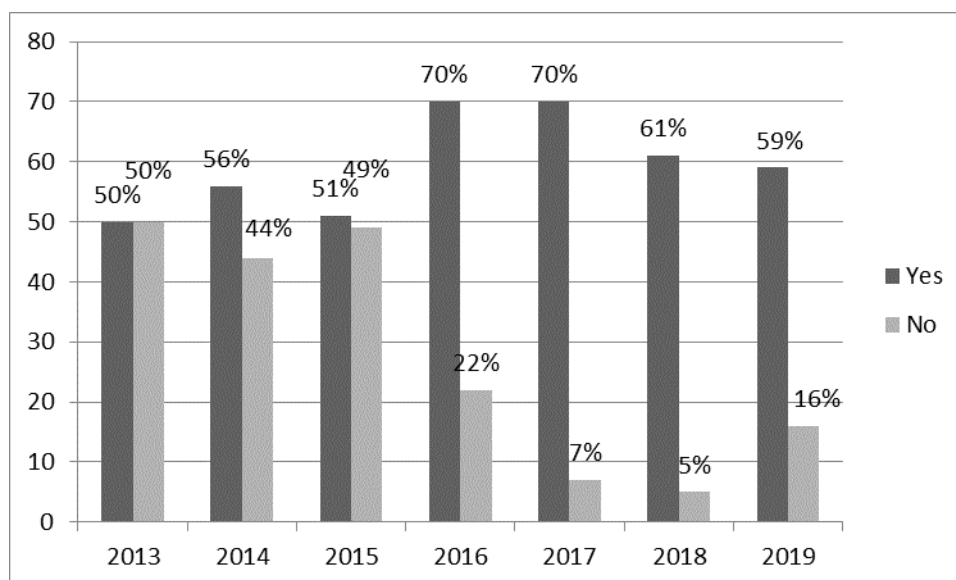
### ACTION POINT:

18. For the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Head of Democratic Services to use the CfPS review as an opportunity to explore why overall satisfaction levels are down.

## Scrutiny Agendas/Workload

19. Only 59% of respondents agreed that Commission/Panel agendas are the correct length. This is the second year running in which this measure has been below the 70% target set for scrutiny, which is disappointing.

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



20. The pressure of work on the Sustainable Communities Panel has resulted in lengthy agendas and an additional meeting being required in this and previous years.
21. The topic suggestion process and subsequent informal workshops to prioritise selection of agenda items are intended to help members to select those items that are of importance to the public, related to underperforming service area or issues on which scrutiny can have an impact. This should result in manageable workloads. One member's comment has summed this up:
22. *"Choose the priority topics and do them well rather than selecting too many".*

## Development of the Commission/Panel Work Programmes

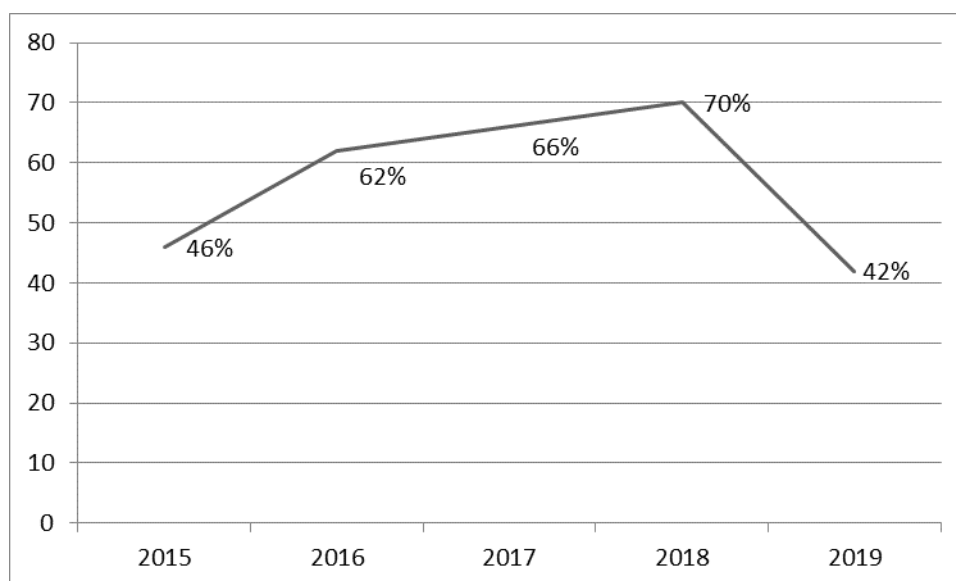
23. This year 70% of respondents agreed they have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Commission/Panel work programmes. A lot of effort is put in to encouraging all members to participate in making topic suggestions and attending the topic selection workshops so it is good to see this reflected in a high score, though this has fallen from an even higher 79% in 2018 (but 70% in 2017).

## Scrutiny impact on decision making by the Cabinet

24. This year councillors feel decision-making by the Cabinet has been influenced to some extent by comments from the Commission and Panels; 43% (with 19% strongly) for the Commission and 41% (with 19% strongly) for the Panels. This gives an average rating of 42% of members agreeing scrutiny has had a positive impact on decision making by the Cabinet. This is a decline on last year's rating of 70% and the reversal of a five year trend – is this a real change in scrutiny's influence on decision making by Cabinet or a change only in members' perception of scrutiny's influence?

### Diagram 6: Has scrutiny had an impact on Cabinet decision-making?

(% saying it has had a positive impact)



25. In their comments, members have cited a number of instances of impact on Cabinet including budget scrutiny, diesel levy, climate change, air quality and terms of the parking consultation. There was also one general positive comment – “*they have listened to discussions especially on the budget and have revisited their ideas.*”
26. A number of the comments indicated frustration with both the operation of scrutiny and the response by Cabinet:

*“In my experience I have seen little evidence that Scrutiny has any impact on Cabinet decisions. I am not confident that the commission or Panels make sufficiently radical recommendations to the Cabinet, or apply pressure to ensure their recommendations are adopted”*

27. In particular there is a belief that scrutiny is stale and that it needs a shake-up and that this could be achieved through greater sharing of scrutiny chairs across the four political groups and by scrutiny councillors stepping up to take a more active role in providing critical friend challenge to Cabinet:

*“Scrutiny needs a shake up. It is too comfortable. The allocation and appointment of committee chairs should follow the Select Committee procedures to ensure that there is 'new blood' with an appetite for change and challenge. If their policies are good and well thought through the Administration should have nothing to fear and a lot to gain from answering difficult questions eg consideration of alternative options and evidential base for drawing logical conclusions”*

**ACTION POINT**

28. To use the Centre for Public Scrutiny review as an opportunity to discuss the views that scrutiny is stale and needs a shake-up as well as considering how scrutiny chairs are allocated, appointed or elected.

**Better organisation**

29. The survey provided a list of actions that could be taken to improve the organisation of scrutiny business and respondents were asked to tick all the items that they supported:

Diagram 7: In what ways do you think scrutiny business might be better organised?

	2019	2018
More use of external experts to provide context and challenge	73%	50%
Background policy guidance provided	73%	41%
Cross-party pre-meetings to agree lines of questioning for some agenda items	49%	38%
Councillors supported to conduct their own individual reviews	38%	18%
Commission/Panels to be more selective when setting agendas	32%	44%
Guidance provided on possible questions to be asked at meetings	27%	44%
More meetings to accommodate all the items	19%	21%

30. Almost three-quarters of respondents agreed that they would like to see more use of external experts and to receive background policy guidance. It is interesting that this has increased considerably since last year, perhaps in response to the invitation of more external speakers and links to background documents circulated by the scrutiny team in the past year, as well as an increased number of visits arranged for scrutiny members.

31. There is also a clear wish from respondents for more thought to be given to lines of questioning on some agenda items in advance of meetings, either through cross-party pre-meets, guidance provided by scrutiny officers or questions being

discussed at the previous meeting (as the Commission does for the Borough Commander).

- 32. An increased number of respondents this year expressed interest in councillors being supported to carry out their own reviews. Actioning this will require careful thought to ensure the subject selected is appropriate, that the councillor has the necessary skills and time and that the scrutiny team has the capacity to provide support.

**ACTION POINT**

- 33. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Head of Democracy Services should review previous experience of individual councillor reviews in Merton and elsewhere and draw up guidance for the use of this method of scrutiny.

**34. Quality of evidence presented to overview and scrutiny**

- 35. 62% of respondents said that the evidence presented to overview and scrutiny has been good and meets the needs of the session. The 87% recorded in 2018 was the highest rating for four years and it is therefore disappointing to see this dip again. It would be helpful to know if respondents had specific instances in mind and if they have any suggestions for how this could be improved.

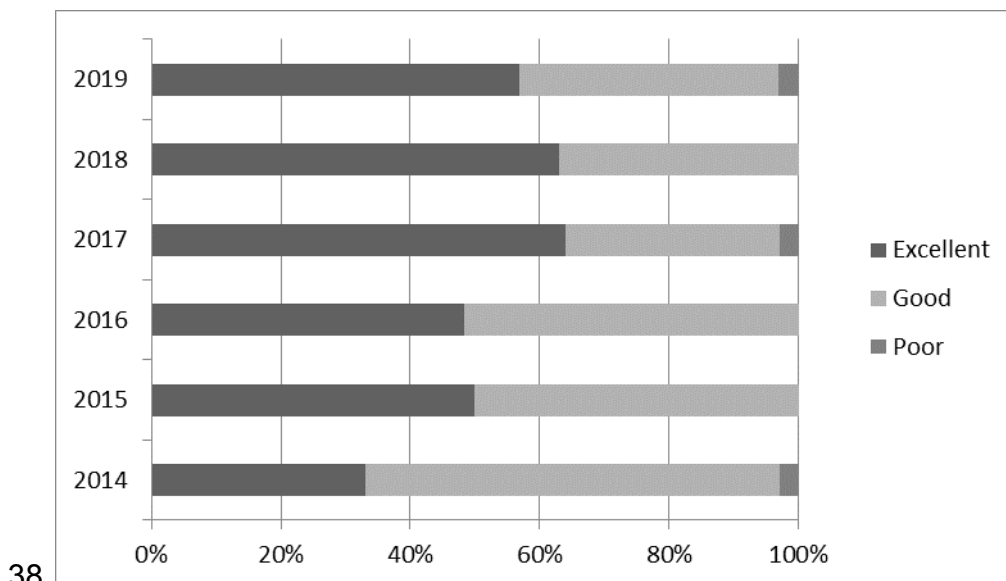
**ACTION POINT**

- 36. Members of the Commission to be asked to suggest ways in which the quality of evidence presented to scrutiny could be improved.

**Support from the Scrutiny Team**

- 37. Satisfaction levels remain high, with 92% of respondents rating the support provided by the scrutiny team as excellent(54%) or good (38%). There were a number of positive comments made about the team including “ *Merton is fortunate in having one of the best scrutiny teams in London*”.

Diagram 8: Satisfaction with scrutiny team



38.



39. Members were also invited to rate their level of satisfaction with different aspects of the scrutiny team's work:

- Speed of responses to enquiries = 81% (84% in 2018)
- Quality of response to enquiries = 78% (84% in 2018)
- Quality of email communications = 79% (90% in 2018)
- Quality of verbal communication = 79% (84% in 2018)
- Quality of task group reports = 80% (84% in 2018)

40. The ratings are all slightly down on last year but still very positive overall. Hopefully this is a corollary of the decline in satisfaction with the scrutiny function as a whole rather than with the performance of the team. It may also be a consequence of having carried a vacancy from September to December 2018.

#### ACTION POINT

41. Any specific feedback from members on how the performance of the scrutiny team could be improved would be gratefully received by the Head of Democracy Services.

### **Members' training and development needs**

42. 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:

Diagram 9: Demand for member training

Budget scrutiny	59%
How to monitor performance and interpret data	52%
Questioning skills	38%
Chairing and agenda management skills	31%
Report writing	14%

#### ACTION POINT

43. The Head of Democracy Services will work with the new Head of HR to ensure training is provided to scrutiny councillors and to bring proposals to the Commission. Some dates have already been identified:

- budget scrutiny  
The Director of Corporate Services will provide a briefing prior to the November and January rounds of budget scrutiny meetings. Dates are 7 January 2020 and a late October date to be confirmed.
- how to monitor performance and interpret data  
A training session will be designed in consultation with the scrutiny chairs.

- questioning skills

A training session with an external provider was held in October 2018. The Head of Democracy Services will write to members to find out what their current needs are and will report back to the Commission with proposals to address those needs.

- chairing and agenda management

A training session with an external provider will be held on 2 July 2019.

**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):

- Actively including borough residents in the process (particularly task groups) has enabled them to feel more involved in and understand decision-making, even if recommendations are not subsequently adopted
- Panels can sometimes get wider public impact by going directly to people and having big public meeting, 'house select committee' style reviews in key topics affecting the public.
- Allowing reasonable discussion across all parties.
- HCOP - taking evidence from CIL to hold benefits assessors to account
- Scrutiny of the property portfolio and tenancies
- I struggle on this although I don't want to blame Peter. The system is inherently flawed in my view as the leader of the council clearly has far too much influence on the appointment of scrutiny chairs. I also understand that, on some scrutiny panels at least, some parties whip which seems wholly contrary to the ethos of scrutiny.
- When substituting on the Commission, I have always found that officers take the process seriously and engage positively. I am not confident however that what is said in meetings necessarily influences officer work.
- Agreed to reconsider looking at the Registry Office in Morden Park to see if it could be used for income generating venue.
- The budget planning process
- I struggle to think of good examples as Scrutiny in Merton is currently ineffective at holding the administration to account
- N/A - Cross-party support would ideally give a demonstrable impact, but never is the case due to the dominant administration's Councillors.
- Performance monitoring & bringing important items onto the work agenda.
- Holding outside bodies to account e.g. DWP.
- The road safety programme is having a demonstrable effect on road users, however, methods has been implemented for safer roads and Air quality performance.

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

- Vice-chairs receiving the same briefing that goes to the chairs of the committee. involvement in reviewing external speakers rather than just the chair's discretion. more opportunity for non-committee members to give a verbal statement to the committee on subjects featuring on the agenda
- Needs to be more challenge. If Councillors are not participating in discussions at OSC or panels why be there? Smaller panels, more task groups and rapporteurs. Apart from a token non Administration Chair (in post for 13 years) there is no fresh approach and panels are chaired by Administration 'old lags'! Can't be effective on that basis, it's a delusion
- There needs to be an overhaul of the appointment of chairs and members which should be by secret ballot of backbenchers as per Parliamentary select committees
- To take a select committee approach
- Less cllrs from the administration  
More cross party chairs
- Given that I don't sit on any it is difficult to comment - but that in turn is part of problem as I don't really know how to get involved or get questions placed by colleagues or even what I should be asking them!?!
- More opportunities for Councillors to follow up on lines of questioning  
Greater influence for back benchers in choosing chairs

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

- Julia is a real asset to the Merton team. She always produces excellent reports and often provides useful insight.
- Julia does very well in leading her team and preparing the chairs of the committees
- Merton is fortunate in having one of the best scrutiny teams in London
- The team are very professional but they are constrained by limitations of scope and enthusiasm of Councillors to engage proactively.
- They are hardworking and committed but need councillors to show the same tenacity
- The task groups work well but make little progress in panels that are loaded with administration back benchers
- Excellent support from scrutiny officers
- Again - any doubts in my mind are simply from my not fully understanding the processes yet. But overall my dealings with scrutiny have always been fantastic (this relates more to Q11, where I feel I should say why good and not excellent)
- Sometimes scrutiny meetings are deliberately rushed when the opposition councillors/public residents are given the opportunity to question/speak.
- The team are good but clearly more resource is needed to be more effective  
Reductions in funding mean council decisions often need more scrutinising not less

**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.

- A difficult one, but there needs to be a wider cultural change; scrutiny should be genuine. As an opposition councillor it doesn't feel to me that all majority party councillors are particularly interested in scrutinising and challenging the work of the administration. And that indeed, democracy needs scrutiny to make better decisions.
- I have found it a steep learning curve!
- A new way needs to be found to encourage the administration to not put 'yes men' on the panels or have chairs who try to shut down debate. Possibly even consider rotating the chairs of committees to other parties or having a members election (select committee style) to get on to the committee. Too often administration cllrs ask daft and meaningless questions and the only members doing their job is the opposition parties.
- In the final analysis, scrutiny depends on the willingness and capacity of members to determine the agenda and deliver outcomes that add value for Merton residents
- Scrutiny needs a shake up. It is too comfortable. The allocation and appointment of committee chairs should follow the Select Committee procedures to ensure that there is 'new blood' with an appetite for change and challenge. If their policies are good and well thought through the Administration should have nothing to fear and a lot to gain from answering difficult questions eg consideration of alternative options and evidential base for drawing logical conclusions
- I have high hopes for the forthcoming review and am happy for my comments to NOT be given prominence if it is thought they will be counter-productive in achieving long term reform.
- It would be useful and more open if all parties were represented at all panels
- On occasions a speaker needs to be time bound. Even when told of this, prior to the meeting by the scrutiny officer, they want to read the document/report that they are presenting. This can be a difficult matter to deal with, without offending the guest. Perhaps Chairs need guidance on the most appropriate manner in which to tackle this without offending outside speakers.
- Based on my experience, I believe a refresh is needed of Scrutiny with a full review to explore all possible options of improvement. There are too many Councillors not able or prepared to play an active role in scrutinising decisions that are made. It can often feel like a tick box exercise. Steps should be taken to empower more councillors from all parties to play an active and leading role in scrutiny.
- Scrutiny in this borough is stale, not refreshed since 2008. The Chair is complacent
- Choose the priority topics and do them well rather than selecting too many.
- A proper review of our scrutiny function by an independent expert such as Prof Leach

- Scrutiny in Merton needs to be invigorated – it gives the feeling of going through the motions. Therefore, it is my belief that after 13-years that a change in the lead of scrutiny is required as there is a feeling of a "token" non-Administration Cllr in charge. There is no innovation and most of the administration Cllrs don't contribute. There should be more cross-party Chairs to make scrutiny more robust - there is lack of real challenge, evidenced by little acknowledgement by Cabinet of the need to make changes
- Not re scrutiny - but just soooo much more training please! As a 'new councillor' even one year on, no other job would require to know everything from day one yet not really tell you how to do it!?!
- Honestly, I am still on the learning curve, but would welcome more training where needed.

**List of proposed action points**

1. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has been asked to address organisational and member culture within its review of the scrutiny function. In particular, the discussions with members will seek to clarify the points raised through the member survey, seek to understand why those points were made and what action can be taken to address and improve the effectiveness of scrutiny in Merton. (paragraph 7)
2. To use the Centre for Public Scrutiny review to discuss whether pre-decision scrutiny, when it occurs, is clearly recognised as such and whether the impact of scrutiny on Cabinet decisions through pre-decision scrutiny should be publicised. (paragraph 9)
3. To use the CfPS review and subsequent action plan to identify how the processes through which pre-decision scrutiny is undertaken could be improved. (paragraph 10)
4. For the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Head of Democratic Services to use the CfPS review as an opportunity to why overall satisfaction levels are down. (paragraph 18)
5. To use the Centre for Public Scrutiny review as an opportunity to discuss the views that scrutiny is stale and needs a shake-up as well as considering how scrutiny chairs are allocated, appointed or elected. (paragraph 28)
6. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Head of Democracy Services should review previous experience of individual councillor reviews in Merton and elsewhere and draw up guidance for the use of this method of scrutiny. (paragraph 33)
7. Members of the Commission to be asked to suggest ways in which the quality of evidence presented to scrutiny could be improved. (paragraph 36)
8. Any specific feedback from members on how the performance of the scrutiny team could be improved would be gratefully received by the Head of Democracy Services.(paragraph 41)
9. The Head of Democracy Services will work with the new Head of HR to ensure training is provided to scrutiny councillors and to bring proposals to the Commission. (paragraph 43)

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## **Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

**Date: 4 July 2019**

Wards: All Wards

## **Subject: Scrutiny review of road safety around schools in Merton**

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

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

Contact Officer: Julia Regan; [julia.regan@merton.gov.uk](mailto:julia.regan@merton.gov.uk); 020 8545 3864

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### **Recommendations:**

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission considers and endorses the report arising from the scrutiny review of road safety around schools in Merton, attached at Appendix 1; and
  - B. That the Commission agrees to forward the review report to Cabinet for approval and implementation of the recommendations, by means of an action plan to be drawn up by officers working with the Cabinet Member(s) to be designated by Cabinet
- 

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To present the combined scrutiny review report on road safety around schools in Merton to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for endorsement and to seek agreement to forward to Cabinet for its consideration

### **2. DETAILS**

- 2.1 The task group was established by the Commission at its meeting on 17 July 2018 in response to suggestions made during the scrutiny topic suggestion process in spring 2018, whereby two school governors and a resident asked scrutiny to review the safety of pupils crossing roads whilst walking to and from school.
- 2.2 The task group's terms of reference were:
  - To scrutinise the road safety measures that are already in place in the vicinity of local schools and receive information about the alternatives that are available;
  - To identify existing best practice in Merton and elsewhere that could inform the council's future approach to road safety around schools;
  - To consider how road safety measures impact on wider environmental and public health issues, including air quality and childhood obesity;
  - To make recommendations that will help create a safer walking environment in the vicinity of Merton schools during school run periods.

- 2.3 The task group's findings and recommendations are set out in a report for the Commission's consideration, attached at Appendix 1. The Commission is requested to consider and endorse the report for submission to Cabinet.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.

### **4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 4.1 In carrying out its review, the task group consulted local parents and residents, headteachers and school governors and questioned council officers. Appendix 1 lists the written evidence received by the task group and Appendix 2 contains a list of witnesses at each meeting.

### **5. TIMETABLE**

- 5.1 The task group was established by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission and so this report will be presented to its meeting on 4 July 2019 for the Commission's approval, with a view to presenting to Cabinet at its meeting on 15 July 2019.

### **6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None for the purposes of this covering report. Any specific resource implications will be identified and presented to Cabinet prior to agreeing an action plan for implementing the report's recommendations.

### **7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None for the purposes of 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 engaging with local partners in scrutiny reviews. Furthermore, the outcomes of reviews are intended to benefit all sections of the local community.

### **9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### **10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None for the purposes of this report.

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

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – task group review report on road safety around schools in Merton

### **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 Notes of task group meetings.



London Borough of Merton

# **Report and recommendations arising from the scrutiny task group review of road safety around schools in Merton**

## **Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

**June 2018**

### **Task group membership**

Helen Forbes, Parent Governor Representative (Chair)  
Councillor Joan Henry  
Councillor Daniel Holden  
Councillor Rebecca Lanning  
Councillor Peter Southgate

### **Scrutiny support:**

Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services  
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### **Acknowledgements**

The task group would particularly like to thank the local residents, parents, headteachers, chairs of governors and council officers who shared their views and experiences with us.

All contributors are listed in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.

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## **Chair's foreword**

Thousands of children make the journey to and from Merton's schools daily.

As a Council, Merton has existing road safety measures in place to facilitate those journeys.

This review aimed to scrutinise those measures and to look at information on best practice and alternative measures used elsewhere that could inform the Council's future approach to road safety around schools.

Road safety is one important aspect of the school journey. Our review also considered the impact of school journeys and road safety in the context of wider environmental and public health issues.

The Task Group heard from schools, parents and local residents as well as Council Officers and Members. Information from other authorities was considered together with background policy documents.

Thank you to all those who participated in our research and informed our recommendations. We are indebted to Julia Regan our Scrutiny Officer for all she has done.

I hope that our recommendations add to the existing move towards improving the school journey for the pupils of Merton.

**Helen Forbes**  
**Parent Governor Representative, Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

## **Executive Summary**

The task group was set up in order to review the safety of pupils crossing roads whilst walking to and from school. It has investigated the aspects of road design, personal behaviour and enforcement activities that are currently affecting road safety in the vicinity of schools.

The report is evidence based, drawing on and reflecting the wide range of written and oral evidence received. In particular, the task group has taken into account the experiences and views of more than 750 local parents and residents as well as headteachers and school governors. Task group members also visited two schools, spoke to council officers and received information from other councils.

The task group found that the council already undertakes a lot of activities to improve road safety, promote sustainable travel and enforce parking regulations. The consultation undertaken by the task group highlighted the necessity of a two-pronged approach to improving road safety around schools through encouraging a greater number of parents and children to walk or cycle rather than using the car, and to ensure there is effective traffic calming measures and enforcement of parking regulations. This has been reflected in the task group's recommendations.

In carrying out this task group review, the task group has been mindful of the wider policy context of public health concern about child and adult obesity and air quality, to which the recommendations of this task group will also contribute.

In making its recommendations, the task group has tried to strike a balance between individual choices and the wellbeing of the community as a whole. The task group has also made every effort to ensure that its recommendations will not lead to an increase in the number of car journeys on the school run. The task group has also made recommendations intended to support schools to develop and maintain STARS travel plans within existing resources and for the council to provide schools with an information sheet for parents rather than expecting each school to produce its own.

The task group's recommendations run throughout the report and are listed in full overleaf.

## List of task group's recommendations

	Responsible decision making body
<b>Recommendation 1</b> (paragraph 15 )	
We recommend that the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel should receive progress updates on the Local Implementation Plan at key points so that members can champion this work.	Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel
<b>Recommendation 2</b> (paragraph 48)	
We recommend that Cabinet agree to continued work by the Traffic and Highways team to provide road safety training to pupils, support schools to join the Transport for London STARS accreditation programme and to develop STARS travel plans.	Cabinet
<b>Recommendation 3</b> (paragraph 49)	
We strongly recommend that all schools should have up-to-date STARS travel plans and that where possible, these should include the provision of space for the safe storage of pupils' bicycles and scooters.	Schools
<b>Recommendation 4</b> (paragraph 50)	
We recommend that Cabinet ask the Traffic and Highways team to: 1) investigate an initiative taken by a school in Hillingdon whereby the STARS accreditation data collection is led by pupils, which has made the process less onerous for school; 2) discuss with the Head of Parking Services the feasibility of using parking enforcement officers to assist with a light touch data collection method that would complement their role when they are working in the vicinity of a school.	Cabinet
<b>Recommendation 5</b> (paragraph 51)	
We recommend that Cabinet investigate the most effective way to enable one or two council officers to work directly with schools on setting up, implementing and monitoring the STARS accreditation scheme. This may be possible within existing resources or it may be through the use of some of the monies raised from the new parking charges scheme.	Cabinet



	Responsible decision making body
<b>Recommendation 6 (paragraph 54)</b>	
<p>We recommend that that Cabinet should produce an information sheet for parents to encourage a reduction in the use of cars for the school run. This sheet should be no longer than two sides of A4 and should be sent to all schools in the borough. The information provided should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context – admissions data shows that 80% of primary school pupils live within a 20 minute walk to school; research on the impact on air quality of leaving the engine idling; health benefits of walking and cycling</li> <li>• Safer walking and cycling routes – links to websites and Apps that help parents identify walking route away from main roads that is less busy and less polluted</li> <li>• Being visible – advice on high visibility clothing and other safety equipment for pedestrians and cyclists</li> <li>• Other options– links to websites on local public transport to and Apps such as “lift angel” to promote car sharing</li> </ul>	Cabinet
<b>Recommendation 7 (paragraph 61)</b>	
<p>We recommend that Cabinet should provide advice to schools on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) how to set up a walking bus, including information on the legal situation in the event of an accident</li> <li>b) what steps the school could take to “employ” a school crossing patrol (lollipop man/woman).</li> </ol>	Cabinet
<b>Recommendation 8 (paragraph 73)</b>	
<p>We recommend that Cabinet ask the Traffic and Highways Team to give careful consideration on a school by school basis of the feasibility and benefits of creating or enlarging a “drop and go” area to decrease traffic congestion and enable pupils to dismount from cars safely. Drop and go areas should be viewed as a last resort when all other options for that school have been considered and this has been identified by the Traffic and Highways team to be the best solution to reduce traffic congestion and promote road safety for that school.</p>	Cabinet

	Responsible decision making body
<b>Recommendation 9</b> (paragraph 77)	
We recommend that Cabinet ensure that the effectiveness of the “remote officer observed camera enforcement” project is closely evaluated to identify the locations at which it is most beneficial; the safety, environmental and financial outcomes at each location and whether there is a sound business case for the purchase of additional cameras.	Cabinet
<b>Recommendation 10</b> (paragraph 78)	
We recommend that Cabinet provide a report to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the “remote officer observed camera enforcement” project outcomes. (recommendation 10)	Cabinet  Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel
<b>Recommendation 11</b> (paragraph 81)	
We recommend that Cabinet undertake publicity to draw local residents’ attention to the steps they can take to request enforcement action when a car is parked across their dropped kerb.	Cabinet
<b>Recommendation 12</b> (paragraph 84)	
We recommend that Cabinet should ensure that the existing arrangements for the temporary suspension of resident parking permit bays within the vicinity of the school to facilitate drop off and pick up should be publicised to councillors.	Cabinet
<b>Recommendation 13</b> (paragraph 94)	
We recommend that the report on the evaluation of school super zone pilot should be received by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in due course.	Overview and Scrutiny Commission
<b>Recommendation 14</b> (paragraph 105)	
We recommend that Cabinet should ensure that any temporary road restrictions around schools should be piloted in the first instance and should then be carefully evaluated. Consideration should be given to the likely impact on nearby roads and other local schools. If a decision is then taken to extend to other schools, we recommend that a borough wide strategic approach should be developed.	Cabinet

	Responsible decision making body
<b>Recommendation 15</b> (paragraph 106)	
We recommend that Cabinet should give consideration to alternative approaches to temporary road restrictions, such as designated one way streets at peak times.	Cabinet
<b>Recommendation 16</b> (paragraph 107)	
We recommend that, where there are a number of schools in close proximity, they should give consideration to staggering the school start and finish times in order to improve road safety in the vicinity of their schools	Schools

## **Report of the Scrutiny Task Group Review of Road Safety Around Schools in Merton**

### **Introduction**

#### *Purpose*

1. During the scrutiny topic suggestion process in spring 2018, two school governors and a resident 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 and a 20mph borough wide scheme was suggested as a means of addressing this issue.
2. The Commission, at its meeting on 17 July 2018, agreed to set up a task group to consider the aspects of road design, personal behaviour and enforcement activities that were currently affecting road safety in the vicinity of schools and to make recommendations that would help to create a safer walking environment during school run periods and a change in behaviour.
3. The task group's terms of reference were:
  - To scrutinise the road safety measures that are already in place in the vicinity of local schools and receive information about the alternatives that are available;
  - To identify existing best practice in Merton and elsewhere that could inform the council's future approach to road safety around schools;
  - To consider how road safety measures impact on wider environmental and public health issues, including air quality and childhood obesity;
  - To make recommendations that will help create a safer walking environment in the vicinity of Merton schools during school run periods.
4. The task group agreed to expand its terms of reference to include consideration of recommendations that would help to create a safer cycling environment in the vicinity of Merton's schools. This was in response to points made by parents and headteachers during the course of consultation by the task group. Cycling has therefore been taken into consideration as a more sustainable mode of transport than driving and the task group has examined suggested measures to encourage the take-up of cycling.

#### *What the task group did*

5. The task group has had five formal meetings, including discussion of emerging results and recommendations with the Director and Cabinet Member. Task group members also sent a questionnaire to headteachers, attended a meeting of primary headteachers and visited one primary and one secondary school to see the issues from the schools' perspective.

6. The task group sought the views of local residents and parents through an online questionnaire that was publicised through the council's website, social media and via schools. 754 responses were received. Those who indicated interest in attending a meeting with the task group to discuss their views were invited to a consultation event which 14 people attended. This enabled the task group to better understand the complexity and range of views expressed and to discuss what the school, council and parents could do to improve road safety around local schools. Task group members were clear that this meeting would not discuss specific locations.
7. The task group has received information from other boroughs plus a number of background policy documents.
8. Appendix 1 lists the written evidence received by the task group and Appendix 2 contains a list of witnesses at each meeting.
9. This report sets out the task group's findings, conclusions and recommendations. The task group's recommendations run throughout the report and are set out in full in the executive summary at the front of this document.

## The national and London policy context

10. In carrying out this review, we have been very aware of the wider policy context of public health concern about child and adult obesity and air quality. Nationally, in London and locally there are numerous policy initiatives designed to improve air quality and to encourage increased use of sustainable transport methods such as cycling and walking. All of these will contribute in some way to improving road safety around schools. This task group review is therefore particularly timely and in many ways we have found ourselves pushing at an open door in terms of policy direction.
11. Healthy Streets for London, part of the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy, sets out how the Mayor and TfL will help Londoners to use their cars less and walk, cycle and use public transport more. It outlines some practical steps to achieve this, including:
  - improving local environments by providing more space for walking and cycling, and better public spaces where people can interact;
  - prioritising better and more affordable public transport and safer and more appealing routes for walking and cycling;
  - planning new developments so people can walk or cycle to local shops, schools and workplaces, and have good public transport links for longer journeys.
12. Furthermore, Transport for London's Liveable Neighbourhoods programme gives boroughs the opportunity to bid for funding for long-term schemes that encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The programme supports the aims of the Mayor's Transport Strategy by funding local schemes to reduce car trips and improve neighbourhoods for walking, cycling and public transport. Grants of between £1m and £10m will be provided for a wide range of community-supported projects. These could include creating green spaces and cycling infrastructure and redesigning junctions. The programme can also fund the widening of walking routes to improve access to local shops, businesses and public transport.
13. The Liveable Neighbourhoods programme will continue until 2021/22 and boroughs can submit bids at any time. The winning bids for 2018/19 were announced in February 2019. The closing date for bids in the 2019/20 funding round will be announced later in 2019.
14. We were pleased to hear that the council's Traffic and Highways team are planning to meet with TfL to discuss the bidding process. The team will seek views and commitment to the programme from councillors and residents. This work will be aligned to the Merton Local Implementation Plan and will require a commitment for change that will support more sustainable methods of travel, for example by reducing the number of

parking spaces in order to design in more space for cyclists and pedestrians.

**15. We recommend that the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel should receive progress updates on the Local Implementation Plan at key points so that members can champion this work. (recommendation 1)**

16. In March 2019 Public Health England (PHE) published a report calling for cars to be banned around schools and for congestion charges to be introduced in cities across the country as well as tough measures to get polluting vehicles off the road to improve child health. Other measures proposed by PHE to tackle air pollution include car pool lanes, more deliveries at night, lorry bans in city centres and priority parking for electric cars. The PHE report says public transport should be more heavily subsidised and commuters should be encouraged to work from home, alongside national and local road pricing.

#### **Views of parents and local residents**

17. 754 responses to the questionnaire were received from residents and parents of nursery, primary and secondary aged children. The results are summarised below and are provided in full in Appendix 3.

18. 95% of respondents were parents of primary school aged children. 80% of respondents live within a 20 minute walk to school. 75% of respondents have children who walk to school, 20% travel by car, 3% take a bus and 2% cycle.

19. The finding that 80% live within a 20 minute walk to school is in line with data provided to us by the council's school admissions team on the distances from home to school for pupils allocated to start Reception and Year 7 in September 2018. The data showed that 79% of Reception pupils lived within 1km of their primary school. For secondary schools, the data showed that 21% of Year 7 pupils lived within 1km of their secondary school, a further 28% lived between 1 and 2km and 19% lived between 2 and 3km from the school.

20. Respondents indicated the following order of traffic problems affecting drivers, cyclists and pedestrians in the school drop off and pick up area:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Inconsiderate Parking                           | 19% |
| • Congestion                                      | 16% |
| • Illegal Parking                                 | 16% |
| • Children crossing road to cars on opposite side | 15% |
| • Lack of parking in areas around the school      | 13% |
| • Other issues*                                   | 12% |

(\* these included speeding cars, lack of regulation or enforcement, cars mounting the pavement and lack of safe crossing areas. 9% of respondents identified U-turns in front of the school as a problem)

21. Additional measures that respondents said they would like to see put in place are;

- Enforcement 36%
- Zebra crossing, speed cameras, traffic wardens 30%
- More parking spaces available 10%
- Lollipop ladies 8%
- One way system 7%
- 20 mph zone 5%
- Speed bumps 4%

22. Further comments and suggestions to help create a safer walking environment for pupils during school run periods were made by 101 of the respondents:

- Parents attitudes are a problem 39%
- Idling cars need to be addressed 19%
- Road closures around the school would help 17%
- More safety signage is needed 14%
- Supervised drop off point 12%

23. These views were discussed more fully at the public consultation event and the views and suggestions provided have informed the recommendations that we have made in later sections of this report.

### **Views of headteachers and chairs of governors**

24. Headteachers were consulted through a questionnaire sent to all maintained primary, secondary and special schools and through a subsequent discussion with primary headteachers. One private school requested and completed the questionnaire and attended a meeting of the task group.
25. The Head of Democracy Services attended a meeting with the chairs of governors on behalf of the task group. The chairs of governors were interested in and supportive of the work of the task group and expressed concern regarding the impact of traffic pollution on health. They also expressed concern about the knock on effect of road closures around schools and said that a borough wide strategy would be needed rather than looking at each school separately.
26. Questionnaire responses were received from 9 primary, 2 secondary and 1 special school. The level of concern about road safety around their



school was reported to be medium for primary heads, low for secondary heads and high for the special school (all ages).

27. Headteachers reported that a variety of traffic calming measures were already in place and they made a number of specific requests for further traffic calming measures which will be passed on to the council's traffic and highways team.
28. Headteachers cited traffic, parking and parental behaviour as the main challenges to improving road safety around schools. 7 of the 12 schools had school travel plans in place and the headteachers said that these had had some impact on road safety. Headteachers also agreed that the road safety programmes provided by the council were useful.
29. We attended a meeting of primary headteachers to discuss the questionnaire results with a larger number of headteachers. They agreed that the questionnaire findings accurately reflected their concerns but that the extent of the impact would depend on the location of the school.
30. In particular they were concerned about inconsiderate parking and the impact this has on road safety and the inconvenience caused to local residents (which occasionally leads to confrontation). One headteacher said that residents had leafleted parked cars – headteachers agreed that it would be difficult for the school or pupils to do this.
31. Headteachers stressed the importance of educating parents (as well as pupils) on safe parking and on crossing the road safely. One suggested that they could produce a poster and/or flyers to give out at parents evening. Another suggested that the school could show children how to cross the road safely so they could influence their parents.
32. We heard that finance was an issue of concern for headteachers – one said that the school would like to be able to afford a “green screen” to filter some of the pollutants. Another headteacher said they used to have a walking bus but can no longer afford to staff it. Another said they'd like to be able to afford a school crossing patrol (lollipop man/lady). They asked whether volunteers could assist with this.
33. There was a consensus that enforcement through fining and use of the CCTV car has made a difference. There were concerns that temporary road closures at the start and end of the school day might displace the problem and wouldn't be suitable for all locations, particularly for schools on main roads. A borough wide strategy would be required. Headteachers also suggested that a boroughwide project to co-ordinate walking buses would be helpful.
34. We visited two schools - Raynes Park High and Joseph Hood Primary – at the request of the Chair of Governors. Although we could not take action in relation to an individual school's circumstances, these visits

were helpful in bringing the issues to life and illustrating the problems faced.

35. The visit to Joseph Hood Primary School demonstrated the extent to which a narrow residential street becomes over-crowded with cars during school drop off and pick up times. We observed extensive pavement parking and parking on both sides of the road so that there was space for just one car to get through. Alarming, children were seen getting out of two cars directly into the road rather than on to the pavement. Some of the cars were parked for a lengthy period and other parked cars were clearly not associated with the school – the area does not have a CPZ and is in walking distance of Wimbledon Chase Station.
36. Raynes Park High School has two entrances. The main entrance is on Bushey Road which is a busy and noisy dual carriageway with a 40mph speed limit and complicated pedestrian crossing arrangements that do not lend themselves to road safety. The other entrance is on West Barnes Lane which was quieter but with a steady flow of traffic when the task group visited mid-afternoon. The bus stop is at some distance on the other side of the road and there were no pedestrian barriers between the narrow pavement and the road. We were told that staff are on duty at both entrances before and after school to assist with road safety.
37. The task group's discussion with the Bursar at Willington School highlighted the congestion that arises around private schools due to the larger catchment area which results in a higher proportion of pupils being driven to school. The school communicates regularly with parents to encourage them to walk, cycle or scoot instead of driving, and also promotes car sharing and public transport. The school timetable is currently being reviewed to see if the end of the school day could be staggered for different year groups to ease congestion
38. Willington School is not on a main road and although it is not a through road, lots of drivers think the road is a potential "rat run" and then have to turn around when they can't get through at the end. Clear signage at the start of the road would be helpful. It would also be helpful to identify a safe drop-off point for pupils.

## **Merton council's role in relation to road safety**

39. The 1988 Road Traffic Act, Section 39 states that: "each local authority must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of the roads, the giving of practical training to road users.....and consider other measures taken in the exercise of their powers for controlling, protecting or assisting the movement of traffic on roads."
40. Case law provides that all road users have a responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others by acting safely and complying with the restrictions - the law and road users must use the road as they find it.
41. The council already provides a number of services that contribute to road safety around schools – road safety training, school travel plans, physical design, adaptation to roads and signage, enforcement of parking, plans to gradually roll out a borough wide 20mph speed limit.

### Sustainable travel

42. Merton council is committed to road safety and the promotion of sustainable travel, which includes walking, cycling and the use of public transport on the school journey. This is being done through the development of STARS school travel plans, highway improvements for pedestrians and cyclists and in the school curriculum through pedestrian training and cycle training as well as walking buses and participation in "walk to school" promotions.
43. At the public consultation event we discussed the respective roles of the council, parents and schools in relation to travelling to school sustainably and safely. Participants made a number of helpful suggestions that we have captured in our recommendations.
44. There was general agreement amongst participants at the consultation event on the desirability of children walking, cycling or scooting to school rather than travelling by car whenever possible. However, it was also recognised that there are circumstances in which driving is the best option for an individual family, for example when a parent is pressed for time and has to continue to work, when the walk is greater than 20 minutes or when a parent or child has mobility or other difficulties, and there was concern to respect individual decisions and not to demonise people for choosing to travel by car. We noted that parents are more likely to drive to private schools as they tend to be further away.
45. The council encourages schools to develop STARS school travel plans for pupils and staff. The STARS accreditation scheme was developed by Transport for London. The aim is to inspire young Londoners to travel to school sustainably, actively, responsibly and safely by championing walking, scooting and cycling. In Merton, STARS participation is a pre-

condition for the issue of teacher parking permits and parents' use of a 10 minute dispensation to park in a CPZ bay.

46. We were informed that the council's Traffic and Highways team approach each school every year to encourage them to join the STARS accreditation scheme. We were disappointed to learn that 43 of our schools have chosen not to participate in the scheme.
47. We heard that the main reason given by schools for not participating is an overall lack of resources and the many other competing demands on the schools' budget. We also understand that participation in the STARS scheme can be time consuming for schools, particularly in relation to collecting the required evidential data about modes of transport, and that this is a factor in schools choosing not to participate or having to withdraw from the scheme.
48. **We recommend that Cabinet agree to continued work by the Traffic and Highways team to provide road safety training to pupils, support schools to join the Transport for London STARS accreditation programme and to develop STARS travel plans. (recommendation 2)**
49. **We strongly recommend that all schools should have up-to-date STARS travel plans and that where possible, these should include the provision of space for the safe storage of pupils' bicycles and scooters. (recommendation 3)**
50. **We further recommend that Cabinet ask the Traffic and Highways team to: 1) investigate an initiative taken by a school in Hillingdon whereby the STARS accreditation data collection is led by pupils, which has made the process less onerous for school; 2) discuss with the Head of Parking Services the feasibility of using parking enforcement officers to assist with a light touch data collection method that would complement their role when they are working in the vicinity of a school. (recommendation 4)**
51. **We also recommend that Cabinet investigate the most effective way to enable one or two council officers to work directly with schools on setting up, implementing and monitoring the STARS accreditation scheme. This may be possible within existing resources or it may be through the use of some of the monies raised from the new parking charges scheme. (recommendation 5)**
52. It is clear that many schools are working very hard to improve road safety in the vicinity of their school and have used a wide range of approaches to promote road safety. The head teachers who replied to our questionnaire cited examples including holding road safety and public transport safety sessions, travel surveys, encouraging children to walk, newsletters to parents and the appointment of junior travel ambassadors. Many schools deploy teachers outside the school at the

start and finish of the school day in order to assist pupils to enter and exit safely.

53. We believe that the council could take further steps to support schools to improve road safety and to encourage walking and cycling to school. One way to do this would be to produce a template that schools can easily use to communicate with parents on these issues rather than relying on each school to develop its own.
54. **We recommend that that Cabinet should produce an information sheet for parents to encourage a reduction in the use of cars for the school run. This sheet should be no longer than two sides of A4 and should be sent to all schools in the borough. The information provided should include:**
- **Context – admissions data shows that 80% of primary school pupils live within a 20 minute walk to school; research on the impact on air quality of leaving the engine idling; health benefits of walking and cycling**
  - **Safer walking and cycling routes – links to websites and Apps that help parents identify walking route away from main roads that is less busy and less polluted**
  - **Being visible – advice on high visibility clothing and other safety equipment for pedestrians and cyclists**
  - **Other options– links to websites on local public transport to and Apps such as “lift angel” to promote car sharing (recommendation 6)**

#### School Crossing Patrols

55. School Crossing Patrols, or Lollipop Men/Ladies as they are affectionately called, have designated power to cross children and adults safely across roads. Merton Council took over this service from the Met Police in 2000, at which time 22 Patrols were employed. Over the years, due to natural wastage and controlled crossings installed, the number has dropped to just 6 Patrols (currently 4 in post and 2 vacancies which it is hoped to fill in September. We were informed that Merton and other London boroughs have found it difficult to successfully recruit new Patrols, reasons may be that the few hours of employment do not generate a high income.
56. Patrols operate outside one or more school premises. Merton has Patrols at The Priory, Hatfeild, Malmesbury and Dundonald Schools, crossing pedestrians from these and other nearby schools. The council occasionally receives requests from schools for a Patrol to operate at their site, but employing a Patrol has to meet criteria such as traffic and pedestrian numbers. The council also has to ensure the site is safe for the Patrol to operate effectively.
57. Patrol sites are formally risk assessed twice yearly but regular contact between Patrols and the Road Safety Officer means any traffic or

parking issues or concerns about aggressive drivers can be promptly dealt with. Patrols have the opportunity to attend training courses and are included in the council's appraisal process.

58. London Boroughs such as Brent and Lambeth no longer employ Patrols as part of their structure. Instead school clusters share one Patrol, paying their wage and that of the Road Safety Officer who manages this service. Patrol rates of pay vary slightly between boroughs but it is around £4,000 per annum to employ a Patrol. It seems to work well as Councils can continue to provide a duty of care to children and ensure safe working conditions for the Patrol.
59. Volunteers are not designated Patrols or traffic officers, so they do not have the power to stop traffic. There is a duty of care to ensure they are operating safely and that they receive the appropriate training. A volunteer injured on site could bring manslaughter charges against an organisation culpable of neglect. Training and risk assessments are the most basic steps to take if a volunteer is used.
60. If a school wished to employ its own Patrol they would need to work with the Traffic and Highways team to seek advice. The council would continue to manage, train and monitor the Patrol, with the school paying associated costs such as uniforms, training courses etc. The council would need to be remunerated for supplying this service to the school.
61. **We further recommend that Cabinet should provide advice to schools on:**
  - a) **how to set up a walking bus, including information on the legal situation in the event of an accident**
  - b) **what steps the school could take to “employ” a school crossing patrol (lollipop man/woman).  
(recommendation 7)**

#### Highway improvements

62. The council's Future Merton (Traffic and Highways) Team, in partnership with Transport for London and schools work to improve road safety in the vicinity of schools. The management of road safety is in line with the Mayor of London's strategy for healthy streets. The team has a rolling programme of works with individual schools that includes engineering measures as well as localised 20mph speed limits to make the area outside the school safer; support the school with their travel plans; and to provide soft measures such as cycles and scooter training.
63. Some of the landscaping and design measures outside / on route to schools are:
  - Localised 20mph speed limits with associated traffic calming such as speed tables
  - School Keep Clear Zig Zag Markings

- Other parking restrictions
  - Flashing signs to show speed of car
  - Street furniture such as bollards and guard railings
  - Planting trees
  - Footway widening / build outs
  - Formal and informal crossings
64. The council has a number of other initiatives that facilitate walking and cycling as well as the use of public transport. These include provision of cycle lanes, cycle parking facilities, better footways, improved public realm; decluttered footways; safe pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities; cycle training; improved street lighting, crossing facilities, localised 20mph speed limits and overall environmental improvements.
65. The council receives a small amount of funding through the Local Implementation Plan which is fully committed for 2018/19. Work must be in line with the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy and, given the limited available funding, is prioritised according to the number and severity of personal injury accidents, areas outside schools, areas where the highway may not be fully accessible to people with disabilities, and in areas with high footfall.
66. We were told that accident information is analysed to identify contributory factors when someone has been injured and physical changes are made to the location when appropriate. We have requested sight of the accident data but this has not been provided to date.
67. Schools, parents and residents have urged us to consider increased use of road markings and physical traffic calming measures in the vicinity of schools to make crossing the road easier and safer for pupils.
68. We saw evidence of the improvements that have already been made outside some schools but it was clear from our discussion with headteachers and parents that there are several schools that would benefit from a review from the Traffic and Highways Team. We will pass on all the site-specific information that we have received from schools and the public so that the team can follow these up in a timely manner, bearing in mind the financial and workload constraints.
69. Drop and Go
70. A "drop and go" area is a safe space that has been designated so that cars can stop briefly to let school children get out. A responsible adult (teacher or volunteer parent) will then walk the children into the school. Depending on the location of the drop and go area and the level of usage, several adults will be required to ensure that there is always someone in place to receive the children.
71. We recognise the policy tension inherent in creating drop and go areas. On the one hand they promote road safety through reducing traffic

congestion and dangerous parking outside schools thus enabling parents and children to cross the road safely. On the other hand they may also provide an incentive for parents to continue to drive their children to school!

72. We therefore would only wish to see drop and go areas created or enlarged as a last resort when all other options for that school have been considered and this has been identified by the Traffic and Highways team as the best solution to reduce traffic congestion and promote road safety for that school.
73. **We recommend that Cabinet ask the Traffic and Highways Team to give careful consideration on a school by school basis of the feasibility and benefits of creating or enlarging a “drop and go “ area to decrease traffic congestion and enable pupils to dismount from cars safely. Drop and go areas should be viewed as a last resort when all other options for that school have been considered and this has been identified by the Traffic and Highways team to be the best solution to reduce traffic congestion and promote road safety for that school. (recommendation 8)**
74. Enforcement
75. The Head of Parking Services provided us with an update on the automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) project that is aimed to increase the council’s ability to enforce “keep clear” markings outside schools at the start and end of the school day. A rolling programme of foot patrols and ANPR camera vehicles has commenced that will provide coverage for each school for at least two weeks during the school year.
76. During the first school year the cameras will be deployed to every primary school in the borough following the planned rotation schedule. This will help the council to determine which schools have the lowest compliance and then to focus enforcement of those areas during the second year of the scheme.
77. **We welcome the “remote officer observed camera enforcement” project and recommend that Cabinet ensure that its effectiveness is closely evaluated to identify the locations at which it is most beneficial; the safety, environmental and financial outcomes at each location and whether there is a sound business case for the purchase of additional cameras. (recommendation 9)**
78. **We further recommend that Cabinet provide a report to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the project outcomes. (recommendation 10)**
79. Participants at the public consultation event were in favour of enforcement to deter illegal and inconsiderate parking. We also considered the viability of school staff, parents or pupils leafleting badly



parked cars. We have not made a recommendation on this as there is potential for such action to create or inflame conflict between parents or between parents and local residents.

80. We heard from the Head of Parking Services that there are two ways in which residents can get enforcement assistance when a car is parked across their dropped kerb. The first is to phone the Parking Services team to report the parking incident. The second is to register the dropped kerb with the council so that there will be an automatic enforcement action taken if a Civil Enforcement Officer is in the area. We had previously been unaware of these provisions and believe that this would be useful information to share with councillors and local residents.
81. **We recommend that Cabinet undertake publicity to draw local residents' attention to the steps they can take to request enforcement action when a car is parked across their dropped kerb. (recommendation 11)**
82. We were informed that there is a dispensation to park in a parking bay in 19 of the borough's CPZ zones for 10 minutes for the purposes of dropping children off at school. This affects a total of 22 schools and is only provided if the school has a STARS travel plan. Parents must apply to the school for a "permission to park" letter that can be displayed in their car.
83. We discussed whether this provision should be more widely advertised because, as with the drop and go bays, this would be counterproductive in terms of discouraging parents from driving their children to school. We were however mindful that during our discussions with parents, they asked us to be aware that there are circumstances in which some parents have no choice but to use their car for the school run.
84. **We therefore recommend that Cabinet should ensure that the existing arrangements in some controlled parking zones for the temporary suspension of resident parking permit bays within the vicinity of the school to facilitate drop off and pick up should be publicised to councillors. (recommendation 12)**

Borough wide 20mph speed limit

85. To improve the general road safety environment and in line with the Mayor of London's transport priorities which has been adopted within the Borough's Local Implementation Programme, it is proposed to introduce a borough wide 20mph speed limit. It is hoped this will impact not only on road safety but also on air quality and pollution. This is currently being implemented gradually and there are already a number of areas subject to a 20mph speed limit across the borough.
86. The objective is to change behaviour – that is to say to encourage drivers to travel at a consistent lower speed not just throughout the borough but from borough to borough as the borough limit will work

alongside neighbouring boroughs' 20mph speed limits. This is expected to bring about a culture change so that it will become socially unacceptable to drive over 20mph in London.

87. The council has started its programme for rolling out a borough wide 20mph speed limit and has provisionally secured funding through its Local Implementation Programme for next financial year which will be utilised to continue the roll out of the borough wide 20mph speed limit.
88. Given the limited available funding this financial year, the council has started the introduction of 20mph limits from the borough boundaries where neighbouring boroughs have already introduced this. Also, due to the extremely limited funding, we were informed that the council currently does not intend to introduce any physical measures such as traffic calming.
89. A research study by Atkins, AECOM and University College London in 2018 evaluated the impact that the introduction of 20mph zones had on traffic speed, public perception and accidents. The study found that median speed decreased by 0.7mph in residential areas and 0.9mph in city centre areas and that the overall decrease was greatest in areas where speeds were faster before the introduction of the 20mph limit. Overall, 20mph limits were perceived to be beneficial for cyclists and pedestrians and there was a small increase in walking and cycling. There was insufficient evidence to draw conclusions about collision and casualty rates, except in Brighton where there were significant reductions.

School super zones (school neighbourhood approach pilot)

90. The "school super zones pilot" is the name used for the London-wide pilot being co-ordinated by Public Health England. This project is working with local authorities to test out new approaches to improving the urban environment around schools. Merton is one of 13 pilot boroughs. Locally, Merton has renamed its pilot project the "School Neighbourhood Approach Pilot".
91. The programme will be piloted at Merton Abbey Primary School. The school was chosen because it topped the list of schools on an index of indicators including air pollution, child obesity and level of deprivation in the local area.
92. The pilot phase will run from March to June 2019 and will be evaluated in June and July. It will be evidence based and the data captured will help to identify outcomes over the short, medium and long term. It is hoped that the pilot will also identify barriers faced that could not be addressed at a local level.
93. There will be 5 workstreams - the food around us; places and spaces; moving around; feeling safe; communications and enablers. This pilot work will not include any road restrictions but these may be considered

in future as part of the development of an action plan to improve the environment around the school.

- 94. We were very interested to hear about the school neighbourhood approach pilot and recommend that the review report is received by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in due course. (recommendation 13)**

### **Temporary road restrictions outside schools**

95. We received information from other London boroughs who have started to introduce temporary road restrictions outside schools during the peak pre and post school periods. During the restricted period non-resident motorists are prohibited from entering the affected roads. Residents are provided with a special permit that will enable them to enter and exit. Enforcement is usually carried out by a camera.
96. The temporary restriction operates during school days only and the hours are generally no more than one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. The aim is to improve air quality and the environment whilst improving safety, prevent illegal and obstructive parking and encourage more active transport.
97. Croydon's School Streets Programme started with a three school pilot. Subsequently the council contacted all of the 93 primary schools in Croydon and from this they received 31 requests for road restriction schemes.
98. Croydon council then applied selection criteria to rank these schools. Key criteria included risk to children and public order; no impact on public transport routes; local catchment area; air quality and obesity. Twelve schools were selected for the first phase of road restrictions.
99. Consultation with local residents in Croydon found that objections were primarily received from residents immediately outside the zone, who feared the displacement. Several objectors from outside the proposed zone stated they would support the scheme if the zone was extended to also include their address. Residents want less traffic/pollution and wish the best for the children, as long it doesn't affect access to their own driveway. Concerns of those inside the proposed zones are associated with receiving visitors and home deliveries – although many acknowledge this is also practically impossible under present conditions, with the road being inaccessible due to the school run traffic.
100. Hackney Council has taken a leading role in sharing their learning with other London boroughs through the production of a soon-to-be-released toolkit. They have also organised workshops for officers from other boroughs to exchange knowledge as they start to implement their own School Streets Schemes.

101. Islington Council now has eight schools with road restrictions and have estimated that costs for a scheme would be in the region of £60,000 – for two cameras, installation costs, signage, TMO costs, consultation costs and other stakeholder engagement. Bollards cost £10-20k.
102. Camden Council has three 3 'school street closures' – two managed by ANPR and one with retractable bollards. Schools were selected through suggestions from councillors, previous concerns raised regarding road safety and STARS status. Participating schools have to already have STARS accreditation or agree to sign up that academic year.
103. We understand that Merton council is considering trialling a temporary road restriction scheme around three or four schools from September 2019.
104. We discussed temporary road restrictions with participants at the public consultation event and with the primary school headteachers. The idea was cautiously welcomed in principle but there were concerns that traffic and parking problems might just be displaced to neighbouring streets and that there may be other unintended adverse consequences. It was felt that solutions should be identified on a school by school basis but with impact on the wider area taken into account, particularly if restrictions were to include a number of schools. We have also suggested that restriction schemes should be trialled before permanent decisions are made.
- 105. We recommend that Cabinet should ensure that any temporary road restrictions around schools should be piloted in the first instance and should then be carefully evaluated. Consideration should be given to the likely impact on nearby roads and other local schools. If a decision is then taken to extend to other schools, we recommend that a borough wide strategic approach should be developed. (recommendation 14)**
- 106. We also recommend that Cabinet should give consideration to alternative approaches to temporary road restrictions, such as designated one way streets at peak times. (recommendation 15)**
- 107. We further recommend that, where there are a number of schools in close proximity, they should give consideration to staggering the school start and finish times in order to improve road safety in the vicinity of their schools. (recommendation 16)**

## Concluding remarks

108. In the absence of road accident data we have been unable to uncover factual evidence on whether there is a road safety issue in Merton. Instead we have taken evidence from parents, local residents and headteachers to hear their views on factors such as poor driver behaviour and inconsiderate parking that impacts on road safety. We have also listened carefully to suggestions for action that would improve road safety around schools.
109. We heard that the perception of parents and schools is that there is inconsiderate parking by a minority of drivers and this needs to be addressed through nudges to change behaviour plus enforcement.
110. We know that parents have good intentions and want to keep their own and other children safe. However fears for road safety and stranger danger coupled with pressures on time and the practicalities of taking children to school and continuing to their workplace can combine to make the car the easiest option. Our key challenge is therefore to help to make other transport options equally desirable.
111. Each school is unique so it would not be appropriate for us to make generalised recommendations on cameras, crossing patrol officers and so on. Instead, we have drafted recommendations that will provide a framework but will also assist the council and its partners to determine the right approach for each school.
112. The Merton Health and Wellbeing Strategy, led and owned by Merton Health and Wellbeing Board, seeks to create a healthy place that enables people to start well, live well and age well. Whilst health and care services are a partner in this strategy, it focuses on making significant improvements to those things that create good health and wellbeing such as the built environment, green spaces, and supporting healthy lifestyles. This over-arching strategy is mirrored and complemented by many other Council, Merton Partnership and NHS strategies.
113. In carrying out this task group review, we have been mindful that the measures that we have considered to improve road safety around schools will also impact positively on work being carried out to address wider public health issues, in particular air quality and child obesity.
114. Improving road safety around schools will hopefully encourage more parents and children to walk, cycle or scoot to and from school rather than travelling by car. Given that Transport for London found that 25% of traffic in the morning peak in London is the school run, this should ease traffic congestion which in turn will improve road safety and air quality.

115. We wish to ensure that the council has a clear vision for where it wishes to be in 10 years' time in relation to these issues. A number of policy developments that are already planned will have a positive effect on road safety – for example, we expect that 20mph limits will become the norm and engines idling in stationary cars will become unacceptable across London before long. We also expect that enforcement is likely to have the biggest impact in the same way as the smoking ban did in reducing the number of smokers.
116. Finally, it is crucial that different parts of the council work together on these issues – in particular that traffic and highways, parking and public health will work holistically with schools. We were pleased that the Director of Environment and Regeneration has confirmed that he will be the Corporate Management Team's lead to facilitate this work.

### **What happens next?**

117. This task group was established by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission and so this report will be presented to its meeting on 4 July 2019 for the Commission's approval.
118. The Commission will then send the report to the Council's Cabinet on 15 July 2019 for initial discussion.
119. Once Cabinet has received the task group report, it will be asked to provide a formal response to the Commission within two months.
120. The Cabinet will be asked to respond to each of the task group's recommendations, setting out whether the recommendation is accepted and how and when it will be implemented. If the Cabinet is unable to support and implement some of the recommendations, then it is expected that clearly stated reasons will be provided for each.
121. The lead Cabinet Member (or officer to whom this work is delegated) should ensure that other organisations to whom recommendations have been directed are contacted and that their response to those recommendations is included in the report.
122. 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.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: written evidence**

20mph Research Study, November 2018, Atkins, AECOM and Professor Mike Maher (UCL)

Road safety and schools – a briefing note from Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration, 20 November 2018

Merton School Neighbourhood Approach Pilot, presentation from Philip Williams and Natalie Lovell, Merton Public Health

Emails from local residents October – March 2019.

Questionnaires received from headteachers of 10 primary, 1 special school, 2 secondary and 1 private schools in Merton

Questionnaires received from 754 local residents and parents.

Information received from Islington, Camden, Croydon and Hackney councils

Catchment area data provided by Merton School Admissions team, November 2018

Presentations to the London Road Safety Council – Croydon, Hounslow, Islington, Hillingdon, Junior Roadwatch

Desktop research – BRAKE, Public Health England, Healthy Streets for London, Liveable Neighbourhoods

### **Appendix 2: list of oral evidence**

Public consultation event, 11 March 2019

Visit to Joseph Hood School, 15 March 2019

Discussion with primary headteachers, 19 March 2019

Visit to Raynes Park High School, 20 March 2019

Ben Stephens, Head of Parking Services, 20 November 2018, 11 March, 9 April and 4 June 2019

Mitra Dubet, Commissioning Manager, Future Merton, 20 November 2018 and 9 April 2019

Natalie Lovell and Phil Williams, Public Health Merton, 5 February 2019

Peter Luard, Bursar, Willington School, 9 April 2019

Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration, 4 June 2019

Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing, 4 June 2019

Carol Douet, Healthy Places Officer, 4 June 2019

## Appendix 3: analysis of public consultation responses

1. School				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Primary		94.8%	640
2	Secondary		5.2%	35
			100.0%	675

2. Are you a parent of a child/children at that school?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		85.3%	616
2	No		14.7%	106
			100.0%	722

Q3. Age/s of children				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Primary (5 to 11)		92.7%	772
2	Nursery (2 to 4)		5.9%	49
3	Secondary (12 to 16)		1.4%	12
			100.0%	833

3a. How do they travel?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Walk		75.0%	462
2	Car		19.8%	122
3	Bus		3.4%	21
4	Cycle		1.8%	11
			100.0%	616

4. Do you live in the same street as the school?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	No		13.7%	623
2	Yes		86.3%	99
			100.0%	722



**5. If you answered no, how long would it take you to walk to the school?**

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	5-9 minutes		22.1%	179
2	Less than 5 minutes		27.9%	142
3	10-14 minutes		21.2%	136
4	30+ minutes		8.6%	69
5	20-29 minutes		9.5%	61
6	15-19 minutes		10.8%	55
			100.0%	642

**6. Are there any traffic problems affecting drivers, cyclists and pedestrians in the school drop off/pick up area? (tick as many as apply)**

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Inconsiderate parking		19.1%	523
2	Congestion		16.3%	447
3	Illegal parking		15.9%	436
4	Children crossing road to cars parked on opposite side of road		14.9%	407
5	Lack of parking in the area around the school		13.0%	356
6	Other (please specify): Speeding cars. No regulation or enforcement, Cars mounting the pavement, Lack of safe crossing areas		11.9%	325
7	U turns in front of the school		8.9%	243
			100.0%	2737

**7. What traffic calming or other measures are currently in place in the vicinity of the school?**

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	None		54.0%	299
2	Speed bumps		18.4%	102
3	Zig zags		16.6%	92

4	20mph zone		11.0%	61
			100.0%	554

**8. Have you previously raised any road safety concerns with the school or with the council?**

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	No		66.8%	340
2	Yes		33.2%	169
			100.0%	509

**9. What additional measures would you like to see put in place?**

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Enforcement		36.1%	137
2	Zebra crossing	(Speed Cameras/Traffic Wardens etc)	30.5%	116
3	More parking spaces available		9.7%	37
4	Lollipop Lady		7.6%	29
5	One way system		6.8%	26
6	20mph zone		5.5%	21
7	Speed bumps		3.7%	14
			100.0%	380

**10. Please use the space below for any other comments you wish to make or any suggestions that will help create a safer walking environment for pupils during school run periods?**

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Parent attitudes are a problem		38.6%	39
2	Idling cars needs to be addressed		18.8%	19
3	Road closures around the school would help		16.8%	17
4	More safety signage is needed		13.9%	14
5	Supervised drop off point		11.9%	12
			100.0%	101



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**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Commission

**Date:** 4 July 2019

**Wards:** All

**Subject:** Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2019/20

**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

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## **Recommendations:**

That members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

- i) Consider the proposed work programme for the 2019/209 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 17 July, 29 August, 12 November 2019 and 24 February 2020;
  - 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 2019/20 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 21 May 2019; and
  - e) Support available to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to determine, develop and deliver its 2019/20 work programme.

## 2. Determining the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Annual Work Programme

2.1 Members are required to determine their work programme for the 2019/20 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 forthcoming 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 2019/20 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 question 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"> <li>■ 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</li> <li>■ 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.</li> </ul>
Task Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 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</li> <li>■ This is the method usually used to carry out policy reviews</li> </ul>
Commission asks for a report then takes a view on action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 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.</li> </ul>

Meeting with service Officer/Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A Member (or small group of Members) has a meeting with service officers/Partners to discuss concerns or raise queries.</li> <li>■ 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</li> </ul>
Individual Members doing some initial research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 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.</li> </ul>

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. 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 21 May 2019 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.

#### **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 Attendees at the May topic workshop shortlisted two potential issues for a task group review:

##### Tackling modern slavery

4.3 Members had a wide ranging discussion of this hidden crime and what part the council could play in taking action to tackle it. Members accepted that any work on this would need to focus on something tangible and specific.

4.4 Members agreed that the task group review work should start by receiving data and information on what is already being done and then to focus on the council's supply chains and make recommendations to ensure that these are kept clear of modern slavery.

4.5 The task group could draw on guidance for councils that was published by the Local Government Association in conjunction with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and find out what action the council has taken in response.

4.6 Proposed terms of reference for the task group:

- To investigate what action has been taken by Merton Council to identify and eliminate modern slavery in its supply chains;
- To review the operation of the council's regulatory services (Environmental Health, Planning and Licensing) to establish where they might encounter modern day slavery, what training they have to detect it and what resources and powers they have to deal with it;
- To make recommendations on future action, including education of staff, to ensure that the council's supply chains are kept free of modern slavery and that the council's regulatory functions are equipped to deal with this issue.

##### Commercialisation, revenue generation and income maximisation

4.7 Attendees at the topic workshop noted the previous work that had been done by the commercialisation task group and the financial monitoring task group. They agreed that any new task group work should start by receiving information on what is already being done within the council and what the options are for the future. The task group could look at best practice elsewhere in terms of innovative and creative ways of raising revenue.

4.8 Proposed terms of reference for the task group:

- To research new and innovative approaches to commercialisation, revenue generation and income maximisation being developed by other councils;
- To discuss these with the corporate management team and take a view on whether there are aspects that Merton Council can learn from and/or seek to undertake.

## **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 2019 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:
- budget scrutiny

The Director of Corporate Services will provide a briefing prior to the November and January rounds of budget scrutiny meetings. Dates are 7 January 2020 and a late October date to be confirmed.
  - how to monitor performance and interpret data

A training session will be designed in consultation with the scrutiny chairs.
  - questioning skills

A training session with an external provider was held in October 2018. The Head of Democracy Services will write to members to find out what their current needs are and will report back to the Commission with proposals to address those needs.
  - chairing and agenda management

A training session with an external provider will be held on 2 July 2019.

### 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; 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 2019/20
- 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 21 May 2019
- 14.4 Appendix 4 – Notes from discussion of topics relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Scrutiny Topic Selection Workshop on 21 May 2019
- 15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**
- 15.1 None

**Draft work programme 2019/20****Meeting date – 4 July 2019**

Item/Issue
Leader and Chief Executive – vision, key priorities & challenges for 2019/20
Merton Partnership annual report
Analysis of annual members' scrutiny survey
Road safety around schools – scrutiny task group report
Discussion of questions for the Borough Commander

**Meeting date – 11 September 2019**

Borough Commander – crime and policing in Merton
Safer Merton – update report – ASB, knife crime, street drinking
Review of the overview and scrutiny function – CfPS to present results
Annual residents survey – results relating to Safer and Stronger strategic themes
Road safety around schools – Cabinet initial response to task group report

**Meeting date – 13 November 2019**

Demographic profile of councillors and senior council officers
Shared services – updated list of services
Universal Credit – position statement
Budget scrutiny round 1
Review of the overview and scrutiny function – action plan

**Meeting date 22 January 2020 – scrutiny of the budget**

(and identification of questions for Veolia)

**Meeting date 18 March 2019**

Veolia contract – street cleaning – case study approach to contract management
Accessibility of services on the council's website
Restorative Justice
Discussion of questions for the Borough Commander

**Meeting date 2 April 2020**

Borough Commander – crime and policing in Merton
Safer Merton – update report – domestic violence
Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy – action plan
Road safety around schools – updated Cabinet action plan
Overview and scrutiny annual report and member survey results

### **Description of topic suggestions received in relation to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission 2019/20**

The following topics were suggested by residents, local groups, councillors and officers, for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, for their 2019/20 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.

A resident has raised concerns about blatant drug dealing in their area and suggested that the Commission should look at street drug dealing.

##### **Summary of the issue:**

Merton is part of the south west London Basic Command Unit (BCU), alongside Kingston, Richmond and Wandsworth. This is the only four borough BCU in London.

In 2018/19 the BCU Commander attended two meetings of the Commission to provide the latest crime data and answer questions on a wide range of issues. She was asked detailed questions on levels of crime, how BCU police resources are deployed in Merton and the future of Wimbledon and Mitcham police stations.

##### **What could Scrutiny do?**

At its meeting on 24 April 2019 the Commission agreed that it should continue to question the BCU Commander on:

- the impact of the four borough merger on policing levels
- an update on police estate matters following an internal review of the option of reducing to one shared parade ground for Merton and Wandsworth
- an update on MOPAC decision making in relation to the location of the Merton front office police station.

It is recommended that the Commission should continue to invite the BCU Borough Commander to attend twice yearly. The issue of street drug dealing that was raised by a local resident should be included in the questions put to her and the resident who made the suggestion should be invited to attend and contribute.

#### **SAFER MERTON**

##### **Who suggested this issue?**

The Community Safety Manager has suggested that the Commission receive an update on the work of Safer Merton.

Through the annual member survey, a councillor has suggested street drinking as a topic for scrutiny.

## **Summary of the issue**

Safer Merton is responsible for developing and implementing strategies to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in Merton. The team works 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.

In 2018/19 the Safer Merton Manager reported twice on work being undertaken by Safer Merton and the Community Safety Partnership, including detailed information on the CCTV service, anti social behaviour, victim support and hate crime. A report was also received on how the police and the council respond to Traveller encampments.

The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) that is currently in place to prohibit street drinking will come to an end in October 2020. The council will consult with residents to ascertain if there are still concerns around street drinking, if so where these concerns manifest and also whether the community believe that a PSPO is a useful tool to enforce against problematic street drinking behaviour and whether there are other issues which residents would like to see enforced within a PSPO.

This consultation, together with a partner consultation and analysis of evidence collated about the impact of the PSPO, will be used as a basis for recommendations on the future of PSPOs in Merton.

## **What could scrutiny do?**

It is recommended that the Commission receive two updates on the work of Safer Merton during 2019/20. As this work relies on partners, including the police, it is recommended that these reports should coincide with the next meeting attended by the BCU Commander.

The Community Safety Manager has suggested that the first update (in September) could be used as a means of seeking the Commission's views on the public space protection order, alongside the public and partner consultation on this issue, before making a decision on any future action. This would address the wider matter raised through the topic suggestion process on how street drinking is dealt with.

The September report could also include an update on work on anti-social behaviour and a report back from the knife crime event held on 18 May.

The second report (in March) could provide an update on the work of the domestic violence service that will go live with new providers on 1 July. The providers could also be invited to attend.

Information on restorative justice and trafficking could be included in one of these reports if these are not the subject of separate reports to the Commission (see below).

## **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

The Liberal Democrat Group have suggested that Commission could scrutinise restorative justice – to identify how the council and its partners can strengthen restorative justice in Merton giving victims of crime the chance to meet perpetrators and cut both fear of crime & reoffending.



## **Summary of the issue**

Restorative Justice is an approach used alongside criminal justice to help victims gain a sense of closure, help offenders recognise the impact of their crime and reduce the chance they will re-offend.

Restorative justice gives victims the chance to meet or communicate with their offenders to explain the real impact of the crime – it empowers victims by giving them a voice. It also holds offenders to account for what they have done and helps them to take responsibility and make amends.

Government research (cited by the Restorative Justice Council) demonstrates that restorative justice provides an 85% victim satisfaction rate, and a 14% reduction in the frequency of reoffending.

In London the Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime leads on restorative justice for adults through the MOPAC Victims Board. In Merton the lead for this is within Safer Merton. The level for uptake of restorative justice has been low across London.

The council's Youth Justice Service is responsible for restorative justice when the perpetrator is a young person. The service attempts to contact all victims of young people subject to out of court disposals, Referral Orders, Youth Rehabilitation Orders and Custodial sentences. Those harmed are given information about the sentence or out of court disposal imposed on the young person and restorative justice options are explained and discussed. Information is also given on other services, which may be of assistance such as Victim Support or the Jigsaw Project, which provides support for young victims.

The Youth Justice Service also provides training to a wide range of professionals, including police officers, on restorative justice techniques. This work has been funded by MOPAC.

## **What could scrutiny do?**

It is recommended that the Commission receive a report setting out work being done by the council and its partners to promote and strengthen the operation of restorative justice in Merton. This report would include information from Safer Merton and from the Youth Justice Service. Victim Support and the Jigsaw Project could be invited to attend to join in the discussion.

## **MODERN SLAVERY**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

The Liberal Democrat Group have suggested that Commission could scrutinise modern slavery – scrutiny could assist with work to eliminate all forms of modern slavery in Merton by reviewing council policies and procedures, and considering best practice and a joined-up approach to the issue given the different services that may come into contact with potential modern slavery.

### **Summary of the issue**

The Home Office estimates that up to 13,000 people in the UK are living in slavery.

The Local Government Association produced a guide for councils in 2018 which has defined modern slavery as follows:

Modern slavery is an umbrella term, encompassing human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour. Someone is in slavery if they are:

- forced to work through mental or physical threat
- owned or controlled by an ‘employer’, usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse
- dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as ‘property’
- physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom.

There are a number of different types of exploitation that victims of modern slavery may be subjected to, and victims may experience more than one type of exploitation at the same time. The most common forms of exploitation are:

- Sexual exploitation; Labour exploitation; Forced criminality; Organ harvesting; Domestic servitude

Councillors and council officers, through their day-to-day activities, may encounter victims of modern slavery and uncover activities linked to modern slavery crime. For example, officers may come across potential victims living in substandard accommodation when inspecting houses in multiple occupancy (HMOs), councillors may hear concerns from residents about particular businesses or houses in their area, and children’s safeguarding services may come across children who have been trafficked or exploited.

Human trafficking is a hidden crime in many ways so any figures will be an under-representation of the extent of the issue. Safer Merton has reported that there have been at least three cases of adult trafficking in the last 12 months in Merton.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

This is a sensitive, complex and cross-cutting issue that impacts on all of the council’s departments. It is therefore suggested that this would be a suitable issue for examination by a scrutiny task group.

Any work on this issue would need to be supported by the three strategic lead officers who work on human trafficking – the victims champion in Safer Merton, the Head of Safeguarding in Adult Social Care and the designated safeguarding lead with Merton CCG (NHS). Children’s safeguarding services would also need to be involved as would the Salvation Army as they work with Safer Merton to support victims of trafficking. Background information would include

evidence given to the Home Affairs Select Committee on Modern Slavery and a research report by Hestia, as well as information from Merton Against Trafficking.

This is potentially a very wide area for scrutiny so if members wish to carry out a task group review of modern slavery, it would be helpful to have a steer on what the focus of attention should be so that draft terms of reference could be drawn up for consideration by the Commission at its meeting on 4 July.

## **JOINT SCRUTINY WITH YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

### **What could scrutiny do?**

Following the success of the joint scrutiny exercise on the safety of young people in Merton, held during Local Democracy Week 2018, the Commission agreed at its meeting on 24 April that it would hold a similar event during LDW in 2019.

It is recommended that the Youth Parliament should be invited to select a topic for the exercise.

## **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 2020.

## **BREXIT UPDATE**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

The Corporate Services Departmental Management Team have suggested that the Commission could receive an update report setting out progress made by the corporate working group that has been looking at the implications of Brexit for the council and local residents and directing action.

### **Summary of the issue**

The Commission received an initial report on this issue in November 2018 detailing how the council was preparing for Brexit, including contingency plans in the event of a 'no deal', and how the council could support EU residents to secure their rights around settled status. The Commission agreed with Cabinet's proposed approach for how the council can support EU residents, particularly those in hard to reach and vulnerable groups, with information and support to secure their rights around settled status. The Commission requested that councillors be provided with information so they could encourage EU residents within their wards to apply for settled status.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

The Commission could receive an update report and invite local voluntary sector groups who have been engaged in helping EU citizens to gain settled status to attend to share information and join in the discussion. This would include Merton and Lambeth Citizens Advice Bureau, Commonsense Trust, South London Law Centre and the Association of Polish Families.

## **INVOLVING MUSLIM WOMEN IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

The Vice Chair of the Muslim Women of Merton has suggested that the Commission could examine the representation of Muslim women in local politics and senior leadership across the Council and public sector.

### **Summary of the issue**

Information provided by the Vice Chair of the Muslim Women of Merton:

In 2017, Citizens UK published a report called 'Missing Muslims' based on a national commission investigating the under-engagement of Muslims in public life. The commission, chaired by the Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP, took evidence from faith and non faith leaders/groups, councillors and politicians across the United Kingdom. It found that discrimination, and fears of being discriminated against actively discourage participation and contribute to disillusionment with the political process amongst young British Muslims.

The report recommended that the public appointments' unit, Cabinet Office develop a comprehensive online platform that explains the civic engagement opportunities available at a local level as well as nationally. Information should be provided on standing as a school governor, to how to be part of a Safer Neighbourhood team, serving as a magistrate, being elected as a councillor (with a breakdown and explanation of the party system).

However this recommendation has yet to impact Muslim communities, especially women in Merton.

In 2018, Councillor Hina Bokhari was elected as the first Muslim female councillor in Merton. Given that there are 60 councillors in Merton and a total Muslim population of 10.4% (annual population survey data) it is particularly surprising in 2018 that this should be a first.

Muslim Women of Merton (MWM) are concerned by the under-representation of Muslim women in local politics and senior leadership. Not only do Muslim women appear to be under-represented in post as councillors and MPs, but also under-engaged with democratic processes and consultations. Muslim women are often perceived as a 'hard to reach group'. Attempts to

engage with women via mosques, and Muslim voluntary organisations may not have been fully explored and thus opportunities are lost to seek the views of this important part of the electorate.

Open access equality data on gender, race and religion of Merton Council employees, councillors and MPs would provide a helpful baseline, and to monitor the impact of future actions. MWM has made contact with the Faith and Belief forum, Democratic Services and HR and established that equality data is not currently collected in Merton on elected councillors and that there are currently no plans to do so. Data is held on gender and race of council employees but not on religion

If the council is truly committed to equality and honouring its equality objectives, as laid out in Merton's Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21, namely:

Equality Objective 4: To Encourage recruitment from all sections of the community , actively promote staff development and career progression opportunities and embed equalities across the organisation

Key Activity 4: Increase the diversity of the leadership team

collecting this data is surely essential. How will Merton council know that it has been successful in 'increasing the diversity of the leadership team' if there are no measures of diversity or SMART objectives in place?

The Equality Framework for local government sets out responsibilities under the equality act for involving communities in public life and a skilled and committed workforce with workforce monitoring. Engaging diverse populations in public life will enhance the quality of services provided, provide intelligence that will shape public policy and practice and create relationships of trust between citizens and public institutions.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

Muslim Women of Merton would like the council to commit to reviewing the representation of Muslim women in local politics and senior leadership across council life following the lines of enquiry that MWM have suggested below:

- 1) How many female, Muslim council employees at team leader/manager grade are there at present and how has this fluctuated over the past 10 years? Is this figure representative of the local population?
- 2) Will the council commit to collecting ethnicity and faith data of their councillors on an ongoing basis in future?
- 3) How does the council currently measure engagement with the Muslim community and is it regarded to be adequate?
- 4) How might the council improve engagement and consultation with the Muslim community on the above issues and how could Muslim organisations assist this process?

The council's Equalities and Community Cohesion Officer has reported that this lack of diversity affects the wider BAME community and has suggested that any scrutiny of representation in local politics and/or senior council management, should gather information on all faith and ethnic groups and then focus follow up scrutiny work on any groups that are particularly under-represented.

The Commission could seek to carry out this initial data gathering through a report to the Commission and the follow up work by setting up a task group review. The task group could undertake a programme of engagement with community groups to encourage greater involvement in local democracy, gather information and look at best practice in the borough and elsewhere. Muslim Women of Merton would be invited to contribute either through attending a meeting of the Commission or participating in the task group review. BAME Voice and other organisations representing ethnic minority and faith communities in the borough would also be invited to contribute.

## **ROAD SAFETY**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

Edge Hill Area Residents' Association have raised concerns about speeding on residential roads and lack of enforcement of 20mph limits.

A resident has expressed concern about motorcycles driving through cycle only barriers in the South Wimbledon area and thus posing a risk to pedestrians, especially school children.

Another resident has asked the Commission to risk assess the Durnsford Road road crossing, outside Sainsbury's particularly during school drop off and pick up times.

### **Summary of the issue**

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

In 2018/19, in response to concerns raised by two school governors and a local resident, the Commission established a task group to review the aspects of road design, road user behaviour and enforcement activities that are currently affecting road safety in the vicinity of schools. The task group heard from more than 750 parents and residents, head teachers and council officers as well as examining information about initiatives in other boroughs and Londonwide.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

The task group is in the process of reviewing all the evidence received and will submit its findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 4 July and to Cabinet on 15 July 2019. The Commission will be monitoring the implementation of the task group's recommendations during 2019/20.

It is therefore suggested that no additional action is required from the Commission at the moment.

The specific concerns raised by residents in relation to Edge Hill, South Wimbledon and Durnsford Road have been passed to the Traffic and Highways team for consideration.

## **REVIEW OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION**

### **What could scrutiny do?**

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission agreed at its meeting on 20 March 2019 to carry out a review of the overview and scrutiny function in Merton and to develop an improvement programme, with assistance from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, funded by the Local Government Association.

The long awaited Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny has just been published by the government and will be taken into account as part of the review.

The review is currently being scoped by the Centre for Public Scrutiny in discussion with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Head of Democracy Services. It is expected that the research, including interviews with executive and scrutiny councillors, officers and partners, will take place in June/July. The Director of Research at the Centre for Public Scrutiny would be able to present the report and draft action plan to the Commission's meeting in September. This will enable the Commission to discuss and agree amendments to the action plan before it is finalised.

The findings of the review and consequent action plan will be made available to the LGA Corporate Peer Review that is anticipated to take place towards the end of 2019.

## **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.

## **FINANCIAL MONITORING**

### **Summary of the issue**

At its meeting on 24 April 2019 the Commission agreed to re-establish the 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.

In 2018/19 the financial monitoring task group also scrutinised a number of budget areas and related issues in depth – budget forecasting, financial risk management, use of contingency funds and reserves, debt management, financial aspects of the Veolia and Ideverde contracts, learning from Lean reviews and a progress update on Merantun Development Ltd.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

The Commission has already agreed to delegate two items of business to the task group:

- a deep dive review of the future capital programme (agreed by Commission at its meeting on 23 January)
- a report on lessons learned from the customer contact contract (agreed by the Commission at its meeting on 20 March)

The financial monitoring task group has identified allocation of grants through the voluntary sector strategic partners programme as a priority area for a deep dive approach during 2019/20 and the Environment and Regeneration Departmental Management Team has suggested that the task group could scrutinise the review of the council's passenger transport service.

Following the task group's discussion on debt management, Merton Centre for Independent Living have requested further work and engagement on social care charging, in particular the development of stronger protocols and protections for disabled people being pursued by debt recovery for social care debts.

The Conservative Group have made a number of suggestions for items that could be considered for a deep dive approach:

- Review of Merantun performance to date and its current and mid-term Plan.
- Housing - review of Clarion performance against contract service levels with financial review also.
- Financial Monitoring Task Group: full review of Veolia and Idverde every six months.
- Review of Borough's school PFI contracts and performance vs contract service levels plus financial review.

It is recommended that all these suggestions are passed to the financial monitoring task group to take into account when determining its work programme for 2019/20.

## **COMMERCIALISATION, REVENUE GENERATION AND INCOME MAXIMISATION**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

The Liberal Democrat Group have suggested that the Commission could scrutinise the council's potential for maximising its income from a range of different sources.

The Conservative Group have made the following suggestions:

- Look at assets / land use to maximise income for the council with focus on long term revenue generation.
- Review partnership working with other bodies with a view to maximise revenue generation.
- Review of further revenue opportunities to sell services against best practices of other Councils.
- Progress report and update on Commercialisation

### **Summary of the issue**

A scrutiny task group review of commercialisation reported to the Sustainable Communities Panel in November 2016. The task group considered commercial opportunities across the areas within the Panel's remit, focussing on parks and green spaces; property, the regeneration of Morden Town Centre and exploiting the "Merton Brand".

The Panel has continued to review implementation of the recommendations, the most recent report was in January 2019.



The financial monitoring task group has also scrutinised the council's approach to commercialisation through a report and through some of its deep dive reviews, in particular on the commercial property portfolio, events in parks and debt management.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

The Liberal Democrat group has suggested that scrutiny of income maximisation could include best practice/learning from other local authorities in innovative ways to grow council revenue. This would include information from councils that are experimenting with establishing charitable funds to manage revenue coming from an additional voluntary council tax.

At its meeting in April, Council resolved to "call on Cabinet to look at ways in which a charitable fund could be established to manage revenue coming from an additional voluntary council tax from Band H properties, based on the models used by some other Councils. These monies could be used to establish a charitable fund, to help support the council and partnership's ambition of bridging the gap in the borough, to help mitigate some of the cuts in national education funding since 2010, subject to consultation."

In the expectation that Cabinet will take this issue forward, it is suggested that no further action on additional voluntary council tax is required from scrutiny at this point in time.

In relation to wider issues around income generation, the Commission could receive a report on what the council is currently doing to maximise income from a wide range of sources as well as providing best practice information from other local authorities. Alternatively the Commission could establish a task group to carry out research and visit other authorities.

## **CONTRACT MANAGEMENT**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

The Liberal Democrat Group have suggested that, in the light of local authorities delivering fewer direct services and commissioning more through third parties, the Commission could consider what measures the council could take to become London's best contract management council.

### **Summary of the issue**

The council's approach to commissioning is led by the Procurement Board, guided by the Procurement Strategy (2018) and underpinned by Contract Standing Orders, which forms part of the constitution.

Contract management is devolved in Merton and is the responsibility of departmental contract managers.

The Commercial Services Team provides advice and guidance to all departments on their commercial and procurement activity, including tender processes, contract management, supplier relationship matters, savings and benefits capture and compliance with procurement legislation, regulations and the Council's own procurement governance.

A Procurement Toolkit, updated in 2018, provides officers with clear guidance on the correct procurement route depending on contract value thresholds. There has been a recent Internal Audit review of procurement which found that improvements were required on the use of the e-tendering portal Pro Contract system, updating the contract register and ensuring that forward plans are up to date and reasons for extensions are clear.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

The Commission could receive a report setting out the council's current approach to contract management, providing examples of recent contracts and information about the approach taken by other councils.

Alternatively, the Commission could delegate consideration of this issue to the Scrutiny Panels as part of their performance management role on individual contracts; or to the financial monitoring task group to examine how major contracts are monitored, alongside the review of lessons learned from the customer contact contract.

## **ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES ON COUNCIL'S WEBSITE**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

The Liberal Democrat Group has suggested that the Commission could investigate how the council's website can be made easier to use by residents.

A member of staff (who is also a local resident) has made a similar suggestion, asking the Commission to review the increase in web based services and reporting systems and to consider whether more vulnerable people are properly equipped to deal with public services that are increasingly being digitised. Also concerned that people who don't use digital media are missing out on important communications and consultations.

### **Summary of the issue**

At its meeting on 20 March 2019, the Commission received a report on the customer contact contract that included information about the availability and take-up of online services. The Assistant Director of Customers, Policy and Improvement assured the Commission that face-to-face services would continue to be available for those who needed them.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

A report could be provided later in the year to update the Commission on what methodology has been used to identify the changes that are required, how feedback from customers is collected and used, and what action has been taken to make improvements to the website and what else is planned.

## **COUNCIL'S COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

Through the annual member survey a councillor has suggested that the council's communications service, both internally and externally, is a weak area and should be reviewed by scrutiny.

### **Summary of the issue**

The Assistant Director of Customers, Policy and Improvement is in the process of recruiting a new head of the communications service and this process will include some amendments to the structure and function. The new arrangements are expected to be in place by the end of the financial year. Scrutiny would therefore be more appropriate once these are in place. The new head of service could present the service plan and respond to feedback from the Commission on the ongoing improvement plan.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

It is suggested that the Commission could receive a report early in the 2020/21 municipal year on the objectives, structure and work programme of the communications service.

## **SHARED SERVICES**

### **Who suggested this issue?**

The Conservative Group has suggested that the Commission could carry out a review of further shared service opportunities against best practice of other councils to save costs.

### **Summary of the issue**

Two task group reviews in 2016-17, one on shared services and the second on outsourced services, examined how different models of service delivery work and made recommendations to stimulate a more consistent and rigorous approach to selecting delivery models and challenging officers on the most appropriate model for each service.

The task group received information on existing shared services and had in depth discussion with a number of service managers to understand the issues involved in deciding whether a shared service approach would be the optimum for the service.

In response to a specific recommendation on shared services, the council developed a toolkit for officers to use when considering whether to move to shared service arrangements, signposting to existing resources and expertise within the council and externally. This was shared with the Commission at its meeting in February 2018.

### **What could scrutiny do?**

The Commission could request an updated list of shared services to be circulated to members by email or reported to a meeting of the Commission. The Commission could then decide whether it wished to pursue the matter through a formal report or delegation to the financial monitoring task group.

## **FOLLOW UP ON PREVIOUS SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REVIEWS:**

### **Road safety around schools in Merton**

The report of this task group review will be considered by the Commission at its meeting on 4 July and by Cabinet at its meeting on 15 July 2019. 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 work streams that make up overview and scrutiny. This will be reported to the Commission at its meeting on 4 July 2019.
- 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 21 May 2019**

### **Attendees:**

Councillors Peter Southgate (Chair), John Dehaney, Natasha Irons, Sally Kenny, Paul Kohler, Najeeb Latif, Nick McLean and Owen Pritchard  
Roger Kershaw, Assistant Director Resources  
Neil Thurlow, Community Safety Manager  
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 other BCU 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 and these questions will be asked first. The Borough Commander will be asked to provide brief responses and to bring a relevant expert with her
- A question on street drug dealing will be included at the September meeting.

### **Safer Merton**

#### **AGREED:**

- to receive two updates on the work of Safer Merton, preferably at the same meeting that the Borough Commander attends
- that the first update should include information on anti-social behaviour, knife crime, street drinking and seek members' views on the public space protection order
- that the second update should include information on the domestic violence service (service providers to be invited to attend)
- one of the updates should include information on trafficking if this is not taken forward as a task group review

### **Restorative justice**

AGREED to receive a report setting out the work being done by the council and its partners to promote and strengthen the operation of restorative justice in Merton. Members expressed an interest in looking at how funding is accessed and why the approach is underused. The report would include information from Safer Merton and from the Youth Justice Service. MOPAC would be invited to provide a presentation/report. Victim Support and the Jigsaw project would be invited to attend to join in the discussion.

### **Modern slavery**

Members had a wide ranging discussion of this hidden crime and what part the council could play in taking action to tackle it. Members accepted that any work on this would need to focus on something tangible and specific.

AGREED that modern slavery would be a suitable issue for a task group review – work to start by receiving data and information on what is already being done and then to focus on the council's supply chains and make recommendations to ensure that these are kept clear of modern slavery. ACTION: Head of Democracy Services to draft terms of reference for consideration by the Commission at its meeting on 4 July.

### **Joint scrutiny with Youth Parliament**

AGREED to hold a joint scrutiny exercise with members of the Youth Parliament during Local Democracy Week on a subject to be chosen by the Youth Parliament.

### **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 2020).

### **Brexit update**

Noted that the Commission had received a report on this in November 2018 and that the work currently being done by the officer working group is considered to be best practice. AGREED that this was not a priority for inclusion in the 2019/20 work programme at the moment. Also AGREED to keep an eye on the national situation with a view to requesting an update report if and when appropriate.

### **Involving Muslim women in local democracy**

Welcomed this suggestion received from the Muslim Women of Merton and noted the advice from the council's Equalities and Community Cohesion Officer that the lack of diversity in local politics and senior leadership at the council affects the wider BAME community.

AGREED to receive a report setting out the demographic profile of councillors, council employees and senior management. The Commission would compare this data with data on the local population and consider what steps it wished to take – recommendations to Cabinet, further report, task group review... Local BAME organisations, including Muslim Women of Merton, would be invited to join in the discussion.

Also AGREED that the Commission should review how scrutiny reaches out to get views from BAME communities and how this could be improved. This will be included in the review to be undertaken by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

### **Road safety**

AGREED that this was not a priority for inclusion in the 2019/20 work programme as the Commission had carried out a task group review of road safety around schools in 2018/19 that would report its findings and recommendations to the Commission on 4 July and to Cabinet on 15 July.

### **Review of the overview and scrutiny function**

NOTED that a review would be carried out by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and that findings and a draft action plan would be reported to the Commission at its meeting on 11 September. REQUESTED that the analysis of the 2019 member survey should present views of Cabinet members separately. ACTION: Head of Democracy Services

### **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. The Assistant Director of Resources advised that much of the detail in relation to government funding would not be available until

later on in the year, including whether there will be a new funding formula, what the settlement will be and for how many years, pension fund revaluation and whether there will be a Green Paper on funding adult social care.

### **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 forward the relevant topic suggestions to the task group so that it can consider them when agreeing the 2019/20 work programme at its meeting on 17 July.

### **Commercialisation, revenue generation and income maximisation**

AGREED to consider as a potential task group review for 2019/20 – work to start by receiving information on what is already being done and what the options are for the future. The task group would look at best practice elsewhere in terms of innovative and creative ways of raising revenue. ACTION: Head of Democracy Services to draft terms of reference for consideration by the Commission at its meeting on 4 July.

### **Contract management**

Discussed the council’s approach to contract management and agreed to conduct scrutiny of this through a case study approach so that learning could be identified and shared.

AGREED to receive a report on the street cleaning aspect of the council’s contract with Veolia subsequent to Veolia’s next report to the Sustainable Communities Panel. Also AGREED that the Commission would agree lines of questioning and prepare and share questions in advance of the meeting with Veolia.

### **Accessibility of services on the council’s website**

AGREED to receive a report later in the year to update the Commission on what methodology has been used to identify the changes that are required, how feedback from customers is collected and used, and what action has been taken to make improvements to the website and what else is planned.

### **Council’s communications service**

AGREED to receive a report on this early in the 2020/21 municipal year once the new head of service is in post. The report would set out the objectives, structure and work programme of the communications service.

### **Shared services**

AGREED to receive an updated list of shared services so that the Commission could decide whether it wished to take further action.

### **Universal Credit**

This matter had been referred to the Commission at the workshops on 20 May for the Children and Young People Panel and the Sustainable Communities Panel. The Assistant Director of Resources advised that Universal Credit is a highly rules based national scheme, though the council does have a small discretionary hardship fund.

AGREED to receive a position statement report from the Head of Revenues and Benefits to set out what is happening in Merton and the impact this has had on claimants and their families.

**Road safety around schools 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.