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Merton Council

Children and Young People

Overview and Scrutiny

Panel



Date: 10 February 2020

Time: 7.15 pm

Venue: Committee Rooms CDE, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX

AGENDA

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Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel membership

Councillors:

Sally Kenny (Chair)
Hayley Ormrod (Vice-Chair)
Agatha Mary Akyigyina OBE
Omar Bush
Edward Foley
Jenifer Gould
Joan Henry
James Holmes
Russell Makin
Dennis Pearce
Marsie Skeete
Dave Ward

Co-opted Representatives

Emma Lemon, Parent Governor
Representative - Primary Sector
Colin Powell, Church of England diocese

Substitute Members:

Dickie Wilkinson
Thomas Barlow
Billy Christie
Andrew Howard
Hina Bokhari

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.

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Agenda Item 3

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 6 NOVEMBER 2019

(7.15 pm - 9.30 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Sally Kenny (in the Chair),
Councillor Hayley Ormrod, Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina,
Councillor Omar Bush, Councillor Edward Foley,
Councillor Jenifer Gould, Councillor Joan Henry,
Councillor Russell Makin and Councillor Dave Ward

Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services), Jane
McSherry (Assistant Director of Education), Karl Mittelstadt
(Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships) and Rachael
Wardell (Director, Children, Schools & Families Department)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were apologies for absence from Councillor James Holmes (with Councillor Andrew Howard as substitute), Councillor Dennis Pearce (with Councillor Billy Christie as substitute) and Councillor Brenda Fraser.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

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

4 BUDGET/BUSINESS PLAN SCRUTINY (ROUND 1) (Agenda Item 4)

The Director of Corporate Services gave a brief summary of the savings report and explained that the upcoming General Election may cause a slight delay in presenting the figures for the second round of savings. In response to Panel Members questions, the Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Children, Schools and Families responded as follows;

- The initial outcomes of the SEN Transport review are due in February 2020 though there will be further work required as a result.
- The number of EHCP's has increased as has the cost of placements.
- Overspend in the high needs block is driving the deficit of the Dedicated Schools Grant. We are working on a revised DSG recovery plan. We are hopeful for funding and the recovery plan will return to scrutiny in due course.
- CSF2019-04 – We currently have Social Workers in this role working with our care leavers and care experienced young adults, however Personal Advisers are the standard. The work is

personal support, not social work intervention. To maintain quality standards we will utilise our oversight mechanisms including regular supervision, audit work undertaken and external scrutiny through Ofsted.

- CSF02019-06 - Same oversight mechanisms as CSF2019-04 will be used to monitor staff retention and recruitment. We do offer other incentives to work at Merton, such as small numbers reporting to Team Managers, high quality supervision, In house CAMHS team that can offer support to Social Workers, a supportive culture and flexible working. From a more corporate perspective, we offer employee assistance programmes, career breaks, cycle to work scheme and childcare vouchers and a regularly reviewed workforce strategy.
- CSF2019-11 – Redesign of the team has led to closer integration which enables us to reduce this role. We will continue to monitor and take action if detrimental.
- The savings shortfall of 2 million will be addressed in the next budget cycle.
- The Director of CSF agreed to explore the Panel Member’s suggestion of using Cricket Green School (for example) as an agency, by recruiting and employing teaching assistants to support mainstream schools with 1:1 and EHCP, instead of using agency workers.

REMINDER: Budget Scrutiny training is available on 7th January 2020 in Committee Rooms B&C.

5 SEND STRATEGY 2019-23 (Agenda Item 5)

The Director of Children, Schools and Families introduced the report along with the Assistant Director for Education who both clarified;

- The action plan that complements this strategy will include the targets and measures of success.
- Neurodevelopmental Pathway (Diagnosis of Autism) - We have set out to recommission that pathway specifically in order to place support with families before a diagnosis is made.

Action: Scrutiny Officer to circulate Autism strategy from CYP last year to Panel.

6 DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The Director of Children, Schools and Families invited questions on the departmental update. In response;

- 2.79 – There are now almost 2,000 Merton children with an Education Health and Care plan. We are trying to understand why we have higher numbers than our neighbouring boroughs.
- 2.25 – The Panel expressed an interest in scrutinising the level of in-house foster carers. The Director of CSF agreed to return with an update. Update: Added to 12 Feb 2020 agenda

7 CABINET MEMBER PRIORITIES (Agenda Item 7)

CLlr Kelly Braund is currently prioritising the SEND Strategy and budget review.

Cllr Eleanor Stringer is focusing on the Dedicated Schools Grant (specifically High Needs spending). Will be meeting with Merton's Head teachers next week to discuss.

8 TASK GROUP UPDATE: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM (Agenda Item 8)

Cllr Makin summarised the update and discussed the school visits undertaken by the task group so far.

The Panel agreed the terms of reference.

The final report of the task group will be brought to the March 2020 CYP Panel.

9 PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Agenda Item 9)

The Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships brought the Panels attention to the correction of Line 39 - The revised figure for Agency Social Worker rates is 15.1% (not 50% as mentioned in the previous October performance report).

In response to Panel Members questions;

Line 3 EHCP completed within 20 weeks from 35% to 56% - We have made improvements but it is not where we want it to be. There are an increased number of EHCP's but we have SEND case workers working specifically on these assessments/plans.

Line 5 – Child Protection Plans 174 to 106? There were a number of Child Protection Plans that ran for too long due to court proceedings, family members etc. We are more focused on children on plans for more than 2 years, with a sharper focus on whether they are making children safer.

The Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships proposed a few amendments to the index:

- Removal of Line 24 (Children's centres)
- Lines 7 and 15 to be replaced with a combined indicator outlining average caseloads.
- Line 23 to be separated into two sections (23 number of LAC adopted and 23a Special Guardianship)

The Panel agreed to all changes proposed

10 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 10)

Agreed

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Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

6 February 2020

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

10 February 2020

Healthier Communities & Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

11 February 2020

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

12 February 2020

Wards: ALL

Subject: Business Plan Update 2020-2024 (Members are requested to bring the Business Plan Information Pack with them to these meetings)

Lead officer: Caroline Holland

Lead member: Councillor Mark Allison

Contact officer: Roger Kershaw

Recommendations:

1. That the Panel considers the proposed amendments to savings previously agreed set out in the Business Plan Information Pack;
 2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission also consider the Draft Business Plan 2020-24 report received by Cabinet at its meeting on 27 January 2020;
 3. That the Panel considers the draft capital programme 2020-24 and indicative programme for 2024-29 set out in Appendix 9 of the attached report on the Business Plan;
 4. That the Panel considers the draft savings/income proposals and associated equalities analyses set out in the Business Plan Information Pack;
 5. That the Panel considers the draft service plans set out in the Business Plan Information Pack;
 6. That the Panel considers the contents of the information pack circulated;
 7. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission considers the comments of the Panels on the Business Plan 2020-2024 and details provided in the information pack and provides a response to Cabinet when it meets on the 24 February 2020.
-

1. Purpose of report and executive summary

- 1.1 This report requests Scrutiny Panels to consider the latest information in respect of the Business Plan and Budget 2020/21, including proposed amendments to savings previously agreed by Council, the draft capital programme 2020-23, and the draft service plans, and feedback comments to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission will consider the comments of the Panels and provide a response on the Business Plan 2020-24 to Cabinet when it meets on the 24 February 2020.

2. Details - Revenue

- 2.1 The Cabinet of 27 January 2020 received a report on the business plan for 2020-24.
- 2.2 At the meeting Cabinet

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet considers and agrees the new draft growth proposals (Appendix 7), and the new draft savings/income proposals (Appendix 5a) and associated draft equalities impact assessments (Appendix 6) put forward by officers and refers them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in February 2020 for consideration and comment as part of the Member's Information Pack.
2. That Cabinet considers and agrees the growth and savings and the associated draft equalities analyses for the savings noted in October (Member's Information Pack)
3. That Cabinet agrees the latest amendments to the draft Capital Programme 2020-2024 which was considered by Cabinet on 14 October 2019 and by scrutiny in November 2019.(Appendix 9) and refers them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in February 2020 for consideration and comment as part of the Member's Information Pack.
4. That Cabinet considers and agrees the proposed amendments to savings, including the draft equalities impact assessments previously agreed. (Appendices 5b and 5c) and refers them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in February 2020 for consideration and comment as part of the Member's Information Pack.
5. That Cabinet agrees the proposed Council Tax Base for 2020/21 set out in paragraph 2.9 and Appendix 1.
6. That Cabinet considers the draft service plans. (Appendix 8) and refers them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in February 2020 for consideration and comment as part of the Member's Information Pack.

7. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Corporate Services in discussion with Councillor Allison for Merton to enter into a London Business Rates Pool for 2020/21

3. **Alternative Options**

3.1 It is a requirement that the Council sets a balanced budget. The Cabinet report on 27 January 2020 sets out the progress made towards setting a balanced budget and options on how the budget gap could be closed. This identified the current budget position that needs to be addressed between now and the next report to Cabinet on 24 February 2020, prior to Council on 4 March 2020, agreeing the Budget and Council Tax for 2020/21 and the Business Plan 2020-24, including the MTFs and Capital Programme 2020-24.

4. **Capital Programme 2020-24**

4.1 Details of the draft Capital Programme 2020-24 were agreed by Cabinet on 27 January 2020 in the attached report for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission.

5. **Consultation undertaken or proposed**

5.1 Further work will be undertaken as the process develops.

5.2 There will be a meeting on 20 February 2020 with businesses as part of the statutory consultation with NNDR ratepayers. Any feedback from this meeting will be reported verbally to Cabinet on 24 February 2020.

5.3 As previously indicated, an information pack was distributed to all councillors at the end of January 2020 with a request that it be brought to all Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings from 6 February 2020 onwards and to Budget Council. This should maintain the improvement for both councillors and officers which makes the Business Planning process more manageable for councillors and ensures that only one version of those documents is available so referring to page numbers at meetings is easier. It also considerably reduces printing costs and reduces the amount of printing that needs to take place immediately prior to Budget Council.

5.4 The information pack includes:

- Savings proposals
- Growth proposals
- Equality impact assessments for proposals where appropriate
- Service plans (these will also be printed in A3 to lay round at scrutiny meetings)
- Budget summaries for each department

6. **Timetable**

- 6.1 The timetable for the Business Plan 2020-24 including the revenue budget 2019/20, the MTF5 2019-23 and the Capital Programme for 2019-23 was agreed by Cabinet on 14 October 2019 but due to the unexpected calling of a General Election on 12 December 2019 this has been amended to ensure that the Council's business, including Budget and Council Tax setting for 2020/21, is properly dealt with. The agreed key dates are included in the body of this report.

7. **Financial, resource and property implications**

- 7.1 These are set out in the Cabinet reports for 14 October 2019 (Appendix 1) and 27 January 2020. (Appendix 2) and the Information Pack.

8. **Legal and statutory implications**

- 8.1 All relevant implications have been addressed in the Cabinet reports. Further work will be carried out as the budget and business planning process proceeds and will be included in the budget report to Cabinet on the 24 February 2020.
- 8.2 Detailed legal advice will be provided throughout the budget setting process further to any proposals identified and prior to any final decisions.

9. **Human Rights, Equalities and Community Cohesion Implications**

- 9.1 All relevant implications will be addressed in Cabinet reports on the business planning process.
- 9.2 A draft equalities assessment has been carried out with respect to the proposed budget savings where applicable and is included in the Business Plan Information Pack circulated to all Members.

10. **Crime and Disorder implications**

- 10.1 All relevant implications will be addressed in Cabinet reports on the business planning process.

11. **Risk Management and Health and Safety Implications**

- 11.1 All relevant implications will be addressed in Cabinet reports on the business planning process.

Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

Appendix 1 - Cabinet report 27 January 2020: Draft Business Plan 2020-24 (NB: This excludes Savings, Service Plans and Equalities Assessments which are included in the Business Plan Information Pack)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 The following documents have been relied on in drawing up this report but do not form part of the report:

Budget files held in the Corporate Services department.
2019/20 Budgetary Control and 2018/19 Final Accounts Working Papers in the Corporate Services Department.
Budget Monitoring working papers
MTFS working papers

13. **REPORT AUTHOR**

- Name: Roger Kershaw
- Tel: 020 8545 3458

email: roger.kershaw@merton.gov.uk

CABINET

27 January 2020

Agenda item:

Business Plan Update 2020-2024

Lead officer: Caroline Holland

Lead member: Councillor Mark Allison

Key Decision Reference Number: This report is written and any decisions taken are within the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules as laid out in Part 4-C of the Constitution.

Contact officer: Roger Kershaw

Recommendations:

1. That Cabinet considers and agrees the new draft growth proposals (Appendix 7), and the new draft savings/income proposals (Appendix 5a) and associated draft equalities impact assessments (Appendix 6) put forward by officers and refers them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in February 2020 for consideration and comment as part of the Member's Information Pack.
 2. That Cabinet considers and agrees the growth and savings and the associated draft equalities analyses for the savings noted in October (Member's Information Pack)
 3. That Cabinet agrees the latest amendments to the draft Capital Programme 2020-2024 which was considered by Cabinet on 14 October 2019 and by scrutiny in November 2019.(Appendix 9) and refers them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in February 2020 for consideration and comment as part of the Member's Information Pack.
 4. That Cabinet considers and agrees the proposed amendments to savings, including the draft equalities impact assessments previously agreed. (Appendices 5b and 5c) and refers them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in February 2020 for consideration and comment as part of the Member's Information Pack.
 5. That Cabinet agrees the proposed Council Tax Base for 2020/21 set out in paragraph 2.9 and Appendix 1.
 6. That Cabinet considers the draft service plans. (Appendix 8) and refers them to the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission in February 2020 for consideration and comment as part of the Member's Information Pack.
 7. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Corporate Services in discussion with Councillor Allison for Merton to enter into a London Business Rates Pool for 2020/21
-

APPENDIX 1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Cabinet on the Business Planning process for 2020-24 and in particular on the progress made so far towards setting a balanced revenue budget for 2020/21 and over the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-24 period as a whole.
- 1.2 The report provides a summary of the key deadlines which need to be met following the delays in the Business Planning process necessitated as a result of the General Election which was held in December 2019.
- 1.3 An update on the latest information with respect to the Local Government Finance Settlement is also provided. This is a major element in identifying the key constraints (e.g. level of funding and Council Tax referendum principles) within which the Council will have to operate, in order to be able to set a balanced budget.
- 1.4 Specifically, the report provides details of additional revenue growth, savings and income proposals put forward by officers towards the savings/income targets agreed by Cabinet in October 2019.
- 1.5 The report also provides an update on the capital programme for 2020-24 and the financial implications for the MTFs.
- 1.6 This report is one of the budget updates through the financial year and will be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Commission in February 2020 as part of the information pack.

2. DETAILS

Brief recap

- 2.1 Given the delays in the Business Planning as a result of the General Election which took place on 12 December 2019, it is worth briefly summarising the progress that has been made so far towards setting a balanced budget and council tax for 2020/21.
- 2.2 A review of assumptions in the MTFs was undertaken and reported to Cabinet on 14 October 2019. Savings targets were set and some savings proposals were considered and referred to scrutiny panels and the Commission in November 2019 for ratification at a future Cabinet meeting, subject to scrutiny comments.
- 2.3 Taking into account the information contained in the October 2019 Cabinet report, the overall position of the MTFs reported to Cabinet on 14 October 2019 was as follows:-

(Cumulative Budget Gap)	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
MTFS Gap (Cabinet October 2019)	2,860	11,062	14,493	16,226

APPENDIX 1

- 2.4 Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Commission in November 2019 was reported to Cabinet on 16 December 2019.

The report to Cabinet in December 2019 set out the comments made by the Commission and Panels in relation to the first round of budget scrutiny. It was noted that there was a significant level of uncertainty for the Council due to the delay in the funding announcement from central government. The scrutiny members would continue to support the Cabinet in lobbying central government for a more realistic, multi-year funding settlement.

Cabinet resolved:-

That Cabinet, in taking decisions relating to the Business Plan 2020-24, takes into account the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the outcomes of consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

- 2.5 On 29 October 2019 it was announced that a General Election would take place on 12 December 2019 and given the inevitable impact that this would have on Government business including local government (e.g. announcement of Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020/21) it was necessary to amend the Council's timetable.

2.6 Review of Assumptions

Since Cabinet in October, work has been continuing to review assumptions, identify new savings/income proposals, consider further growth proposals, and analyse information which has been received since then.

2.6.1 Pay

The pay and terms of conditions of employment for over 1.4 million local government services' workers is determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. On 24 July 2019 a pay claim for 2020/21 was submitted by the Joint Trade Union Side (UNISON, GMB and UNITE) to the Local Government Association (NJC).

The union's claim is for:-

- A real living wage of £10 per hour to be introduced for NJC scp 1 and a 10% increase on all other NJC/GLPC pay points
- A one day increase to the minimum paid annual leave entitlement set out in the Green Book
- A two hour reduction in the standard working week as set out in the Green Book
- A comprehensive joint national review of the workplace causes of stress and mental health throughout local authorities.

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The current assumptions regarding pay inflation incorporated into the MTFS assume 2% per year.

The latest estimates for pay inflation included in the MTFS are:-

(Cumulative)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Pay inflation (%)	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Revised Estimate (cumulative £000)	1,708	3,416	5,124	6,832

Further details on the pay negotiations for 2020/21 and beyond, and the impact on the MTFS will be reported when they are known.

2.6.2 Prices

The estimates for price inflation agreed by Council in March 2019 have been reviewed and the latest forecast is set out in the following table:-

(Cumulative)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Price inflation (%)	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Revised Estimate (cumulative £000)	2,035	4,069	6,104	8,139

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) 12-month rate was 1.5% in November 2019, unchanged from October 2019. The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) 12-month inflation rate was also 1.5% in November 2019, unchanged from October 2019.

The RPI rate for November 2019 was 2.2%, which is up from the figure of 2.1% in October 2019.

The latest inflation and unemployment forecasts for the UK economy, based on a summary of independent forecasts are set out in the following table:-

Source: HM Treasury - Forecasts for the UK Economy (December 2019)			
	Lowest %	Highest %	Average %
2019 (Quarter 4)			
CPI	1.4	2.3	1.7
RPI	1.8	3.2	2.3
LFS Unemployment Rate	3.8	4.1	3.9
2020 (Quarter 4)			
CPI	1.4	3.3	1.9
RPI	1.8	4.2	2.6
LFS Unemployment Rate	3.8	4.6	4.1

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Clearly where the level of inflation during the year exceeds the amount provided for in the budget, this will put pressure on services to stay within budget and will require effective monitoring and control.

Independent medium-term projections for the calendar years 2019 to 2023 are summarised in the following table:-

Source: HM Treasury - Forecasts for the UK Economy (December 2019)					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	%	%	%	%	%
CPI	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.1
RPI	2.6	2.4	2.7	3.3	3.4
LFS Unemployment Rate	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.0

Details on the outlook for inflation over the MTFs period are provided in Appendix 2.

2.6.3 Inflation > 1.5%:

There is also a corporate provision which is held to assist services that may experience price increases greatly in excess of the 1.5% inflation allowance provided when setting the budget. This will only be released for specific demonstrable demand.

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Inflation exceeding 1.5%	450	450	450	450

The cash limiting strategy is not without risks but if the Government's 2% target levels of inflation were applied un-damped across the period then the budget gap would increase by c. £2.7m by 2023/24.

2.6.4 Income

The MTFs does not include any specific provision for inflation on income from fees and charges. However, service departments can identify increased income as part of their savings proposals.

2.6.5 Taxicards and Freedom Passes

These schemes are administered by London Councils on behalf of London boroughs. Each year, negotiations take place between London Councils Transport and Environment Committee (on behalf of boroughs) and TfL for buses, tubes, DLR, Tram, London Overground and TfL Rail to determine the cost of the scheme on the basis that both parties are neither better nor worse off. This is based on:

- The revenue foregone by the operators i.e. the revenue which if the concessionary fares scheme did not exist would be collected from Freedom Pass holders. This excludes fares income from generated travel; and

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- The additional costs to the operator i.e. generated travel by permit holders for which operators receive no fares revenue but do receive the cost of increasing the service to allow for the extra trips made.

The change in the estimated cost of Taxicards and Freedom Passes from 2019/20 to 2020/21 is summarised in the following table:-

	Current Estimate 2019/20 £000
Freedom Passes	8,968
Taxicards	114
Total	9,082
Estimated Cost in 2020/21	9,174
Increase for 2020/21	92
Provision for increase in MTFS (Cabinet October 2019)	450
Reduction in MTFS in 2020/21	358

The MTFS will be adjusted to reflect these latest estimates.

2.6.6 Revenuisation

In recent budgets it has been recognised that some expenditure formerly included in the capital programme could no longer be justified as it did not meet the definition of expenditure for capital purposes. Nevertheless, it is important that some of this expenditure takes place and the following amounts have been included in the latest MTFS for 2020-24:-

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Revenuisation	582	143	213	213

The expenditure charged to capital during the current year is being closely monitored and is being reported through the monitoring report.

2.6.7 **Budgetary Control 2019/20**

The revenue budgetary control information below summarises the corporate position using the latest available information as at 30 November 2019 as shown in a separate report on the agenda for this meeting. As at 30 November 2019, there is a forecast underspend for the Council of £0.941m.

APPENDIX 1

Although an overall underspend is forecast, there are spending pressures being experienced in the following areas:-

- CS - Infrastructure and Transactions, Human Resources
- CSF - Children's Social Care, SEN transport
- CSF - DSG funded services are forecast to overspend by £10.557m. The DSG had a cumulative overspend of £2.909m at the end of 2018/19. The overspend in the current financial year will be adding to this balance, currently estimated at £13.476m. In light of this and the wider impact on the MTFs over the next four years, there is a separate report on the DSG on the agenda for this meeting.
- E&R – Safer Merton and CCTV, Senior management and support, Future Merton
- C&H – Libraries, Housing General Fund (mainly temporary accommodation)

2.6.8 Growth

The MTFs reported to Cabinet in October 2019 included new provision for growth from 2020/21 to 2023/24 as follows:-

Growth – Cabinet (October 2019)	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
CS - Emergency Planning – Response to Grenfell	150	0	0	0
CS – Microsoft Licences	280	0	0	0
Service Department Growth Total	430	0	0	0
Service Department Growth (cumulative)	430	430	430	430
CSF – New Burdens funding to offset DSG Deficit (Based on October monitoring)*	9,297	(1,297)	726	925
Total – New Burdens Funding	9,297	(1,297)	726	925
Cumulative – New Burdens Funding	9,297	8,000	8,726	9651
Total Growth (October Cabinet)	9,727	(1,297)	726	925
Cumulative Growth (October Cabinet)	9,727	8,430	9,156	10,081

*Current growth to offset 50% of the deficit, with some assumed additional HN Grant funding for 2021/21 only.

Since October, the need for growth has been reviewed and the following changes are proposed:-

- the projected DSG deficit has increased but this is partially offset by the assumption that High Needs grant funding will continue in the future rather than just apply for 2020/21. In the absence of any details from the Government that they are prepared to finance Council DSG deficits, the Council's General Fund contribution in the MTFs to fund the deficit has been increased. This contribution is based on the November 2019 deficit (including brought forward from 2018/19) and a Council contribution of 100% up to and including 2020/21 and 50% thereafter, as the current assumption is that there may be further funding once the outcome of current consultations are known. (See paragraph 5.2 for more details) (See separate report on the agenda and Appendix 7a)

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- the need for some growth to address pressures in Children’s Services (See Appendix 7a and 7b)
- the need for some growth to address pressures in Environment and Regeneration (See separate report on the agenda and Appendix 7a)

If the new growth proposals are agreed, the total growth will be:-

Growth – Total	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
CS	430	0	0	0
CSF	3,847	404	384	390
E&R	937	0	0	0
C&H	0	0	0	0
Total	5,214	404	384	390
Cumulative	5,214	5,618	6,002	6,392
DSG Deficit – GF Contribution (cumulative)	16,014	6,354	7,158	8,130
Total (Cumulative)	21,228	11,972	13,160	14,522

2.6.9 Capital Financing Costs

Revenue Implications of Current Capital Programme

As previously reported the Capital Programme has been reviewed and revised and a draft programme for 2020-2024 was approved by Cabinet on 14 October 2019.

Section 6 of this report sets out an update of progress made towards preparing the draft capital programme 2020-24.

The estimated capital financing costs, net of investment income and based on the latest draft programme, which includes the best estimate of new schemes commencing over the period 2020-24, the effect of estimated government grant funding, estimated funding from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and slippage/reprofiling based on 2018/19 outturn and latest monitoring information, are set out in the following table. This also includes an element of revenue contribution to fund short-life assets:-

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Capital Programme (including slippage)	34,773	29,777	16,960	26,520
Revenue Implications	10,576	11,408	12,618	13,310

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2.6.10 Pension Fund Revaluation

Pensions

By law the Superannuation Fund is valued every 3 years. The new valuation is based on the position at 31 March 2019 and is implemented in the 2020/21 financial year. The fund has shown an increase in funding level to 103%. Discussions during the current financial year have been held with the actuary Barnett Waddingham LLP and they have confirmed that there will be no need to provide for a deficit recovery over the next three years.

Table 18: Pension Deficit Recovery

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
MTFS (Based on 2016 valuation)	3,635	3,718	3,801	3,884
Latest (2019 valuation)	0	0	0	0
Change	(3,635)	(3,718)	(3,801)	(3,884)

Oncost

In addition, the actuary has indicated that the future service contribution rate will be fixed at 17.06% for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23, an increase from 15.2% in the current year. The estimated additional cost in each department's salary costs from 2020/21 is as follows:-

Table 19: Increased oncost contribution rate

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Increased contribution	1,158	1,181	1,204	1,229

The net change in pension costs is therefore

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Net saving to General Fund	(2,477)	(2,537)	(2,597)	(2,655)

2.7 Forecast of Resources and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

2.7.1 Due to the General Election which was held on 12 December 2019, the timetable for announcing the resources that local authorities will receive in 2020/21 was significantly delayed. The Provisional Settlement was eventually announced on 20 December 2019. Details on the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2020/21 are provided in Appendix 3 with the key details relating to Merton's resources summarised in this Section of the report.

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2.7.2 The Provisional Settlement broadly reflects the details set out in the Spending Round 2019. The main details are:-

- a) Settlement Funding Assessment (RSG + Business Rates) allocations have increased by 1.6% nationally and in London. The details for Merton are:-

MERTON	2019-2020 £m	2020-2021 £m	Change £m	Change %
Settlement Funding Assessment	40.460	41.120	0.659	1.6
of which:				
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	-	5.159		
Baseline Funding Level (BFL)	40.460	35.961		
(Tariff)/Top-Up (Included in BFL)	40.460 (1.144)	41.120 9.534		

- b) Core Spending Power will increase by 6.3% nationally and 6.5% in London.

Merton's Core Spending Power is as follows:-

	2019-2020 £m	2020-2021 £m	Change £m	Change %
Settlement Funding Assessment	40.460	41.120	0.660	1.6
Section 31 Grant	1.153	1.441	0.288	25.0
Council Tax Requirement	92.370	97.847	5.477	5.9
Improved Better Care Fund	4.114	4.862	0.748	18.2
Social Care Support Grant	1.278	0.000	(1.278)	(100.0)
Social Care Grant	0.000	4.058	4.058	N/A
Winter Pressures Grant	0.748	0.000	(0.748)	See Improved BCF above
New Homes Bonus	2.108	1.438	(0.670)	(31.8)
Total Core Spending Power	142.231	150.766	8.535	6.0

The provisional Settlement outlined provisional core funding allocations based on Government assumptions. Therefore the figures included above for the Settlement Funding Assessment (Business Rates element) and Council Tax Requirement may differ from the actual amounts eventually calculated on Merton's more up to date information.

Further details on the grants and New Homes Bonus are included in Appendix 3.

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c) Adult Social Care

As indicated in the Core Spending Power Summary, the Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF) has been extended to 2020/21 and Winter Pressures Grant of £0.748m has been incorporated. This is to be welcomed and reduces some of the pressure on the MTFS in which funding had been included to replace IBCF in case the Government no longer provided it. This funding can now be directed to meeting other pressures.

This is summarised in the following table:-

Adult Social Care (IBCF)	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Replacement funding included in MTFS Improved Better Care Fund 2020/21*	3,283 (4,862)	3,326	3,326	3,326
Balance	(1,579)			

* Funding beyond 2020/21 is not assured and is not included in the updated MTFS. However, given the Government's assurances that it is committed to addressing social care pressures, paragraph 6 includes an exemplification of the impact on the MTFS assuming that grant does continue.

d) Social Care Grant

As indicated in the Core Spending Power Summary, Social Care Grant of £4.058m will be received in 2020/21. It will be for local authorities to determine how much of it should be spent on adult social care and how much should be spent on children's social care.

In the first instance it is proposed to apply this grant to fund growth in Children, Schools and Families (paragraph 2.6.8 refers)

Social Care Grant	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
CSF Growth (cumulative) Social Care Grant	2,372 4,058	2,776 *(2,776)	3,160 *(3,160)	3,550 *(3,550)
Balance	(1,686)	-	-	-

* Although funding beyond 2020/21 is not assured it has been assumed that grant at least equivalent to the growth currently provided in the MTFS will be received going forward, given the Government's manifesto commitment.

2.8 London Business Rates 2020-21

2.8.1 In the Spending Round 2019 which was published on 4 September 2019, it was announced that the Government has written to councils announcing that a decision has been taken to delay the implementation of 75 per cent business rates retention and the Fair Funding Review until April 2021.

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2.8.2 The Government also announced that it was ending the 75% pilot pools, including the London pilot pool, for 2020/21. Based on the general arrangement currently in force, central government receive 33% of business rates, the GLA receive 37% and London boroughs receive 30%. London boroughs are still considering introducing a pooling arrangement based on these proportions. Leaders of London boroughs met in October to discuss the pool and agreed to pool in 2020-21. Participating authorities (32 boroughs, city, and the GLA) will have 28 days after the provisional Local government Finance Settlement to withdraw from the pool.

2.8.3 Regardless of whether there is a London pool or not, final projections for Business Rates retention in 2020/21 will be based on London Boroughs NNDR1 returns for 2020/21 which are due to be returned to central government by 31 January 2020.

2.9 Council Tax Base

2.9.1 The Council Tax Base is a key factor which is required by levying bodies and the Council for setting the levies and Council Tax for 2020/21. The council tax base is the measure of the number of dwellings to which council tax is chargeable in an area or part of an area. The Council Tax Base is calculated using the properties from the Valuation List together with information held within Council Tax records. The properties are adjusted to reflect the number of properties within different bands in order to produce the Council Tax Base (Band D equivalent). This will be used to set the Council Tax at Band D for 2020/21. The Council is required to determine its Council Tax Base by 31 January 2020.

2.9.2 Regulations set out in the Local Authorities (Calculation of council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012:2914) ensure that new local council tax support schemes, implemented under the Local Government Finance Act 2012, are fully reflected in the council tax base for all authorities.

2.9.3 The Council Tax Base Return to central Government takes into account reductions in Council Tax Base due to the Council Tax Support Scheme and also reflects the latest criteria set for discounts and exemptions. The CTB Return for October 2019 is the basis for the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2020/21.

2.9.4 Details of how the Council Tax Base is calculated are set out in Appendix 1. A summary of the Council Tax Bases for the Merton general area and the addition for properties within the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators area for 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 is set out in the following table:-

Council Tax Base	2019/20	2020/21	Change
			%
Whole Area	74,951.7	75,989.9	1.4%
Wimbledon & Putney Common Conservators	11,464.4	11,604.6	1.2%

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2.10 Proposed Amendments to Previously Agreed Savings

2.10.1 Cabinet on 14 October 2019 approved some proposed amendments to savings which had been agreed in previous year's budgets and also agreed that the financial implications should be incorporated into the draft MTFS 2020-24.

2.10.2 Some additional changes to existing savings are proposed as follows:-

a) Corporate Services

It is proposed to replace a saving of £30,000 in 2020/21 with an alternative.

It is also proposed to defer three savings previously agreed, totalling £196,000 for 2020/21, until 2023/24.

b) Environment and Regeneration

It is proposed that previously agreed savings amounting to £0.647m be replaced in 2020/21 by alternative proposals.

2.10.2 Details of these further requests to defer and/or replace savings are set out in Appendix 5b for replacement savings and Appendix 5c for deferred savings. Including the changes approved by Cabinet in October 2019, the change over the four year MTFS period resulting from these proposals is set out in the following table:-

Deferred Savings and Replacement Savings (Net impact)	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Total £000
Corporate Services	196	0	0	(196)	0
Children, Schools and Families	0	0	0	0	0
Environment and Regeneration	65	10	(75)	0	0
Community and Housing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	261	10	(75)	(196)	0
Cumulative Total	261	271	196	0	

3. SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2020-24

Controllable budgets and Savings Targets for 2020-24

3.1 Cabinet on 14 October 2019 agreed the rolling forward of the unmet element of 2019/20 savings targets to be identified by service departments over the period 2020-24 as follows:-

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	Savings Targets 2020-24 £'000
Corporate Services	663
Children, Schools & Families	2,627
Environment & Regeneration	2,606
Community & Housing	4,385
Total	10,281

- 3.2 Cabinet on 14 October 2019 also considered some proposed new savings towards meeting these savings targets and referred them to the Scrutiny Panels and Commission. Cabinet agreed to ratify these savings at a future Cabinet meeting subject to scrutiny comments. The savings, considered by Cabinet in October 2019 and scrutinised by panels and the Commission during November 2019 are summarised in the following table:-

SAVINGS (Cabinet 14 March 2019)	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Total £000
Corporate Services	570	(49)	125	0	646
Children, Schools and Families	509	400	0	0	909
Environment and Regeneration	1,240	340	0	0	1,580
Community and Housing	0	500	0	0	500
Total	2,319	1,191	125	0	3,635
Total (cumulative)	2,319	3,510	3,635	3,635	

- 3.3 Feedback on the October 2019 Cabinet proposals from the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Commission which met during November 2019 was reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2019
- 3.4 Further work has been carried out since October 2019 to identify additional savings and details of these proposals are provided in Appendix 5a and summarised in the following table:-

SAVINGS PROPOSALS	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Total £000
Corporate Services	0	0	0	0	0
Children, Schools and Families	1,460	410	0	0	1,870
Environment and Regeneration	40	70	0	0	110
Community and Housing	532	810	60	0	1,402
Total	2,032	1,290	60	0	3,382
Total (cumulative)	2,032	3,322	3,382	3,382	

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3.5 These savings will be scrutinised by Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Commission during February 2020 and will be included in the Member's Information pack that will be despatched to all Members at the end of January 2020.

3.6 If all of these are approved, the total new savings, including those agreed in October 2019, is:-

SUMMARY (cumulative)	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Total £000
Corporate Services	570	(49)	125	0	646
Children, Schools & Families	1,969	810	0	0	2,779
Environment & Regeneration	1,280	410	0	0	1,690
Community & Housing	532	1,310	60	0	1,902
Total	4,351	2,481	185	0	7,017
Net Cumulative total	4,351	6,832	7,017	7,017	

3.7 Assuming that all of the savings proposed so far are accepted the balance remaining is as follows:-

	Targets £'000	Proposals £'000	Balance £'000	Balance %
Corporate Services	663	646	17	2.6
Children, Schools & Families	2,627	2,779	(152)	0
Environment & Regeneration	2,606	1,690	916	35.1
Community & Housing	4,385	1,902	2,483	56.6
Total	10,281	7,017	3,264	31.7

3.8 Draft Equalities Assessments where applicable are included in Appendix 6.

3.9 Where departments have not met their target or put forward options that are deemed not to be acceptable then the shortfall will be carried forward to later meetings and future years' budget processes to be made good.

4. **SERVICE PLANNING 2020-24**

4.1 Draft Service Plans are included in Appendix 8.

5. **USE OF RESERVES IN 2019/20 and 2020-24**

5.1 The application of current revenue reserves in 2019/20 to address any level of overspend will have an ongoing impact on the MTFs going forward.

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5.2 DSG Deficit

The treatment of the forecast Dedicated Schools Grant deficit will be an important factor in this. As reported elsewhere on the January 2020 Cabinet agenda as part of the monthly monitoring report, based on November 2019, DSG funded services are forecast to overspend by £10.557m in 2019/20 bringing the cumulated deficit at year end to £13.466m, although this is expected to increase by year end, and to continue to increase in future years.

Increasing Deficits in DSG is a national issue and the Department for Education issued a consultation paper consulting on changing the conditions of grant and regulations applying to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is designed to clarify that the DSG is a ring-fenced specific grant separate from the general funding of local authorities, and that any deficit an authority may have on its DSG account is expected to be carried forward and does not require to be covered by the authority's general reserves. The consultation period ran until 15 November 2019 and Merton submitted a response.

Whilst it is welcomed that the General Fund is not expected to fund the DSG deficit the issue of how such large amounts can be accounted for is one that needs to be resolved at a national level.

The previous update on the MTFs reported to Cabinet in October 2019 assumed that the General Fund would contribute 50% towards the estimated DSG deficit and this is also the assumption in the growth calculations included in paragraph 2.6.8.

The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement did not include any additional resources to enable local authorities to address the anticipated funding difficulties. This issue is still under consideration by the Government. For the purposes of this report the financial implications of a range of potential outcomes have been assessed:-

- Option 1: As included in the October Cabinet report assuming that the Council's General Fund meets all of the deficit until the end of 2019/20 and 50% of the deficit thereafter (based on November 2019 monitoring in this report)
- Option 2: assuming that the Council's General Fund meets all of the deficit until the end of 2020/21 and 50% of the deficit thereafter (based on November 2019 monitoring in this report)
- Option 3: assuming that the Council's General Fund meets all of the deficit until the end of 2019/20 and the Government meets 100% of the deficit thereafter (based on November 2019 monitoring in this report)
- Option 4: assuming that the Government does not make any contribution towards funding the DSG deficit and the burden falls entirely on the council's General Fund

The impact on the MTFs of each of the options is as follows:-

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	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	TOTAL £000
Cabinet (October)	9,297	8,000	8,727	9,652	35,676
Option 1	10,786	6,354	7,158	8,130	32,428
Option 2	16,014	6,354	7,158	8,130	37,656
Option 3	5,557	0	0	0	5,557
Option 4	16,014	12,707	14,316	16,260	59,297

6. UPDATE TO MTFS 2020-24

- 6.1 The MTFS gap in October 2019 was c. £16m and with additional savings proposals of c. £2.4m, additional service department growth of c. £4.5m and other changes, including revisions to capital financing costs arising from the capital programme, increases in council tax yield arising from the new council tax base for 2020/21, changes arising from the Budget 2019 and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December, and assuming option 2 with respect to the DSG deficit, the latest budget gap forecast is:-

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Budget Gap in MTFS	0	4,239	8,502	10,541

A more detailed MTFS is included as Appendix 4.

- 6.2 As referred to in paragraph 2.7.2 (c), the future related to the Improved Better Care Fund from 2021/22 is not assured and is therefore omitted from the MTFS gap shown above and in Appendix 4. However, if the Improved Better Care Funding continues from 2021/22 the impact of the forecast budget gap is as follows:-

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Budget Gap in MTFS	0	0	3,017	5,679

- 6.3 Draft Service department budget summaries based on the information in this report will be included in the pack available for scrutiny. (Appendix 10)

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7. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020-24: UPDATE**

- 7.1 The proposed draft Capital Programme 2020-24 was presented to Cabinet on 14 October 2019.
- 7.2 The programme has been reviewed by scrutiny panels.
- 7.3 Monthly monitoring of the approved programme for 2019/20 has been ongoing and there will inevitably be further changes arising from slippage, reprofiling and the announcement of capital grants as part of the local government finance settlement.
- 7.4 Further changes that have been made to the proposed capital programme since it was presented to Cabinet in October 2019 are set out in Appendix 5. These include reprofiling of existing schemes and addition of some new bids commencing over the period of the MTFS.
- 7.5 The estimated revenue implications of funding the draft capital programme are summarised in paragraph 2.6.9 and these have been incorporated into the latest draft MTFS 2020-24.

8. **BUDGET STRATEGY**

- 8.1 The council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget.
- 8.2 The MTFS reported to Cabinet in October 2019 assumed a 2% general Council Tax increase in 2020/21. The MTFS in this update assumes a 1.99% general Council Tax increase and a 2% increase for Adult Social Care Precept, as assumed in the Core Spending Power. This keeps the proposed Council Tax increase for 2020/21 within the 4% referendum threshold.
- 8.3 With respect to the DSG deficit, it is assumed that the Council's General Fund will provide for 100% of the estimated deficit (Based on November 2019 monitoring information) up until 2020/21 and 50% thereafter. (Option 2 in paragraph 5.2 refers)

9. **GLA BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING 2020-21**

- 9.1 The Greater London Authority (GLA) sets a budget for itself and each of the four functional bodies: Transport for London, the London Development Agency, the Metropolitan Police Authority, and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. These budgets together form the consolidated budget.
- 9.2 The Mayor published his draft consolidated budget and provisional council tax precept for 2020-21 on 18 December 2019 for consultation. The consultation on the budget proposals will end on Wednesday 15 January 2020.

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- 9.3 The provisional precept on council taxpayers in the 32 London boroughs is £326.92 – a £6.41 or 1.99% increase compared to 2019/20. The proposed precept for council taxpayers in the City of London – excluding the police element – is £79.94 (an increase of 1.99%). It should be noted that the Band D precept is likely to change prior to the Mayor's final budget to reflect the impact of the Home Office settlement for policing including the council tax referendum thresholds for local policing bodies which have not yet been announced for 2020-21.
- 9.4 The Mayor's draft budget is expected to be considered by the London Assembly on 29 January 2020. The final draft budget is scheduled to be considered by the Assembly on 24 February 2020 following which the Mayor will confirm formally the final precept and GLA group budget for 2020-21. The statutory deadline for the GLA to agree the final GLA council tax precept and the Capital Spending Plan is 28 February 2020.
- 9.5 NNDR1 returns will be required to be submitted to the MHCLG by 31 January 2020 and, with the addition of information required for the London pilot pool, it is essential that all authorities meet this deadline for the GLA to be able to achieve its timetable. It is anticipated that the percentage shares for 2020-21 used for the returns for London authorities will be 37% GLA, 33% central government and 30% London boroughs. This has been confirmed in the provisional local government finance settlement.

10. **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 10.1 There will be consultation as the business plan process develops. This will include the Overview and Scrutiny panels and Commission, business ratepayers and all other relevant parties.
- 10.2 In accordance with statute, consultation is taking place with business ratepayers and a meeting will be arranged for February 2020.
- 10.3 As previously indicated, a Member's information pack will be prepared and distributed to all councillors and the revised date for this is 29 January 2020. This can be brought to all Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings from 6 February 2020 onwards and to Budget Council. Despite the delay, this should be an improvement for both councillors and officers - more manageable for councillors and it will ensure that only one version of those documents is available so referring to page numbers at meetings will be easier. It will also keep printing costs down and reduce the amount of printing that needs to take place immediately prior to Budget Council.

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10.4 The pack will include:

- Savings proposals
- Growth proposals
- A draft Equality impact assessment for each saving proposal.
- Service plans (these will also be printed in A3 to lay round at scrutiny meetings)
- Budget Summaries 2020/21

11. **TIMETABLE**

11.1 In accordance with revised financial reporting timetables.

12. **FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 All relevant implications have been addressed in the report.

13. **LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 All relevant implications have been addressed in the report.

14. **HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 Draft Equalities assessments of the savings proposals are included in Appendix 6.

15. **CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 Not applicable.

16. **RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

16.1 Not applicable.

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

Appendix 1: Council Tax Base 2020/21

Appendix 2: Outlook for inflation

Appendix 3: Provisional Local government Finance Settlement 2020-21: Summary

Appendix 4: MTFs Update

Appendix 5: Savings Proposals – January 2020 Cabinet **(Information Pack)**

(a) New proposals

(b) Replacement savings

(c) Deferred savings

Appendix 6: Equalities Assessments - January 2020 Cabinet Savings Proposals (Information Pack)

(a) Savings

(b) Growth

Appendix 7: Growth proposals – January 2020 Cabinet (Information Pack)

(a) Details of growth proposals

(b) CSF growth

Appendix 8: Service Plans 2020-24 **(Information Pack)**

Appendix 9: Draft Capital Programme 2020-24 and Capital Strategy 2020/21

Appendix 10: Budget Summaries **(Information Pack)**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Budget files held in the Corporate Services department.

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Council Tax Base 2020/21**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The council tax base is the measure of the number of dwellings to which council tax is chargeable in an area or part of an area. The Council Tax base is calculated using the properties from the Valuation List together with information held within Council Tax records. The properties are adjusted to reflect the number of properties within different bands in order to produce the Council Tax Base (Band D equivalent).
- 1.2 Since 2013/14 the Council Tax Base calculation has been affected by the introduction of the new local council tax support scheme and technical reforms to council tax. On 30 November 2012, new regulations set out in the Local Authorities (Calculation of council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012:2914) came into force. These regulations ensure that new local council tax support schemes, implemented under the Local Government Finance Act 2012, are fully reflected in the council tax base for all authorities.
- 1.3 Under the regulations, the council tax base is the aggregate of the relevant amounts calculated for each valuation band multiplied by the authority's estimated collection rate for the year.
- 1.4 The relevant amounts are calculated as
- number of chargeable dwellings in each band shown on the valuation list on a specified day of the previous year,
 - adjusted for the number of discounts, and reductions for disability, that apply to those Dwellings
- 1.5 All authorities notify the MHCLG of their unadjusted Council Tax Base using a CTB Form using valuation list information as at 9 September 2019. The deadline for return was 11 October 2019 and Merton met this deadline.
- 1.6 The CTB form for 2019 includes the latest details about the Council Tax Support Scheme and the technical reforms which impacted on discounts and exemptions.
- 1.7 There is a separate council tax base for those properties within the area covered by Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators. The Conservators use this, together with the Council Tax bases from RB Kingston, and Wandsworth to calculate the levy which is charged each year.

2. ASSUMPTIONS IN THE MTFS

- 2.1 Other than changes in the actual council tax rates levied, in producing a forecast of council tax yield in future years, there are two key variables to be considered:-

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- the year on year change in Council Tax Base
- the council tax collection rate

2.2 The draft MTFS previously reported to Cabinet during the business planning process has assumed that the Council Tax Base increases 0.5% per year and that the collection rate is 98.5% in each of the years.

2.3 These assumptions have been reviewed and it is considered that, based on the Council's recent Council Tax collection experience, the collection rate can be raised by 0.25% to 98.75%. The annual increase in Council Tax Base has been maintained at 0.5%. These rates have been applied to the latest Council Tax Base information included on the CTB return completed on 11 October 2019 to produce the Council Tax Base 2020/21.

2.4 Information from the October 2019 Council Tax Base Return

2.4.1 The Council makes two CTB returns, one for the whole area of the borough and the other for the area covered by the Wimbledon and Putney Common Conservators for which an additional levy is applied.

2.4.2 The information in the CTB returns has been used to calculate the council tax bases and these are summarised in the following table compared to 2019/20:-

Council Tax Base	2019/20	2020/21	Change
			%
Whole Area	74,951.7	75,989.9	1.4%
Wimbledon & Putney Common Conservators	11,464.4	11,604.6	1.2%

3. **IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL TAX YIELD 2020/21**

3.1 On a like for like basis (i.e. assuming council tax charges do not change) the estimated income in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 is summarised in the following table:-

Council Tax: Whole area	2019/20	2020/21
Tax Base	74,951.7	75,989.9
Band D Council Tax	£1,227.82	£1,227.82
Estimated Yield	£92.027m	£93.302m
Change: 2019/20 to 2020/21 (£m)		+ £1.275m
Change: 2019/20 to 2020/21 (%)		+ 1.4%

3.2 Analysis of changes in yield 2019/20 to latest 2020/21

3.2.1 There are a number of reasons for the change in estimated yield between 2019/20 and the latest estimate based on the CTB data.

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3.2.2 Over this period the Council Tax Base increased by 1,038.2 from 74,951.7 to 75,989.9 which multiplied by the Band D Council Tax of £1,227.82 results in additional yield of £1.275m.

3.2.3 An exact reconciliation for the change between years is not possible because of changes in distribution of Council Tax Support and discounts and benefits, and premiums between years and bands. However, broadly the changes can be analysed as follows:-

a) Number of Chargeable Dwellings and Exempt Dwellings

Between years the number of properties increased by 490 from 84,805 to 85,295 and the number of exempt dwellings increased by 104 from 794 to 898. This means that the number of chargeable dwellings increased by 386 between years. Based on a full charge, this equates to additional council tax of £0.474m.

b) Amount of Council Tax Support Reduction

Based on October 2018 there was a reduction of 8,177.1 to the Council Tax Base for local council tax support. This has reduced to 7,688.1 in based on October 2019 which is a change of 489 and equates to additional council tax of about £0.600m.

c) Changes in Discounts, Exemptions and Premiums

Overall, the number of properties subject to discounts or exemption increased by 168 and those subject to premiums increased by 7 between October 2018 and October 2019.

d) Change in collection rate

There has been an increase of 0.25% in the estimated collection rate to 98.75% which increases the base by 192.3 and increases the council tax yield by c. £0.236m

Summary

The following table puts the individual elements together to show how the potential council tax yield changes between 2019/20 and 2020/21:-

	Approx. Change in Council Tax Base	Approx. Change in Council Tax yield
		£m
Increase in number of chargeable dwellings	386	0.474
Change in Council Tax Support Reductions	489	0.600
Change in discounts, exemptions, premiums and distribution	(29)	(0.035)
Change in collection rate	192	0.236
Total	1,038	1.275

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3.10 Council Tax Yield 2020/21

3.10.1 Assuming no change in Council Tax for 2020/21 the estimated Council Tax yield for 2020/21 is:-

Council Tax: Whole area	Tax Base	Band D 2019/20	Council Tax Yield 2020/21	Council Tax Yield 2019/20
Merton	75,989.9	£1,227.82	£93.302m	£92.027m
WPCC	11,604.6	£29.90	£0.347m	£0.343m
GLA	75,989.9	£320.51	£24.356m	£24.023m

The amounts collected for the GLA and WPCC are paid over to each of them as precepts.

3.10.2 The updated MTF5 is based on the following assumptions:-

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Increase in CT Base	1.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Collection Rate	98.75%	98.75%	98.75%	98.75%
Council Tax - General	1.99%	2%	2%	2%
Council Tax – Adult Social Care	2.00%	0%	0%	0%

3.10.3 Based on the new Council Tax Base but using the same assumptions as in the MTF5 set out in the table in 3.10.2 above, the change in Council Tax Yield is as follows:-

MTF5 Council Tax Yield (excluding WPCC)	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
CT Yield (Cabinet 14 October 2019)	94,337	96,686	99,084	101,533
CT Yield (New Council Tax Base)	97,025	99,432	101,889	104,398
Change in CT Yield from new Base	2,688	2,746	2,805	2,865

Outlook for inflation:

The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) sets monetary policy to meet the 2% inflation target and in a way that helps to sustain growth and employment. At its meeting ending on 18 December 2019, the MPC voted by a majority of 7-2 to maintain Bank Rate at 0.75%. The Committee voted unanimously to maintain the stock of sterling non-financial investment-grade corporate bond purchases, financed by the issuance of central bank reserves, at £10 billion. The Committee also voted unanimously to maintain the stock of UK government bond purchases, financed by the issuance of central bank reserves, at £435 billion.

In the minutes to its December meeting, the MPC note that “there continue to be some signs that the labour market is loosening, although it remains tight. Employment growth has slowed and vacancies have fallen, but the unemployment rate has remained stable and the employment rate is around its record high. Although pay growth has eased somewhat, unit labour costs have continued to grow at rates above those consistent with meeting the inflation target in the medium term. CPI inflation remained at 1.5% in November and core CPI inflation remained at 1.7%, broadly as expected. The headline rate is still expected to fall to around 1¼% by the spring, owing to the temporary effects of falls in regulated energy and water prices. Monetary policy could respond in either direction to changes in the economic outlook in order to ensure a sustainable return of inflation to the 2% target. The Committee will, among other factors, continue to monitor closely the responses of companies and households to Brexit developments as well as the prospects for a recovery in global growth.”

The latest inflation and unemployment forecasts for the UK economy, based on a summary of independent forecasts are set out in the following table:-

Source: HM Treasury - Forecasts for the UK Economy (December 2019)			
	Lowest %	Highest %	Average %
2019 (Quarter 4)			
CPI	1.4	2.3	1.7
RPI	1.8	3.2	2.3
LFS Unemployment Rate	3.8	4.1	3.9
2020 (Quarter 4)			
CPI	1.4	3.3	1.9
RPI	1.8	4.2	2.6
LFS Unemployment Rate	3.8	4.6	4.1

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Independent medium-term projections for the calendar years 2019 to 2023 are summarised in the following table:-

Source: HM Treasury - Forecasts for the UK Economy (December 2019)					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	%	%	%	%	%
CPI	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.1
RPI	2.6	2.4	2.7	3.3	3.4
LFS Unemployment Rate	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.0

PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2020/21Background – Delay to the announcement

In recent years at the end of November to mid-December, the government has notified local authorities of their Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. This has included the amounts of funding allocated to each local authority in terms of Revenue Support Grant, share of Business Rates and other major allocations of grant. The final Settlement figures are published the following January/February but are generally unchanged from the provisional figures. The total amount of funding available for local authorities is essentially determined by the amount of resources that Central Government has allocated as part of its annual Departmental Expenditure Limit which is set out in the Budget. The Budget usually sets out the government's plans for the economy based on the latest forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR) "Economic and Fiscal Outlook".

The Government originally announced that there would be a Budget on 6 November but due to the delay in Brexit negotiations it was then cancelled and subsequently a General Election was called for 12 December 2019. This has resulted in delays to the Government's publication of key financial information on which local authorities base their budgets and council tax assumptions.

Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) – Publication of Restated March Forecasts

The Chairman of the OBR, wrote to the Treasury on 29 October 2019 concerning the cancellation of the Budget and in the letter indicated that "Following the cancellation of the Budget, we have decided to publish a restated version of our March public finance forecast, incorporating subsequent ONS classification and other statistical changes. Given the importance of these changes for public understanding of the baseline against which the Government will wish to judge its fiscal policy options, we believe that it would be useful to explain publicly the impact that these changes would have had on our March forecast. We have written to the Treasury informing them that we intend to publish our restated March forecast on 7 November at 9.30am."

On 7 November the OBR published the following statement on its website

"As we notified the Treasury and Treasury Select Committee on 29 October, we had planned to publish a technical restatement of our March public finance forecast this morning, bringing it into line with current ONS statistical treatment – for example, the new treatment of student loans implemented in September – but not incorporating any new forecast judgements regarding the economy, the public finances or the impact of Brexit. This will no longer go ahead as the Cabinet Secretary has concluded that this would not be consistent with the Cabinet Office's General Election Guidance."

On 5 November 2019, the Director General, Local Government and Public Services, at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to all Chief Executives and Chief Finance Officers with the following update:-

*“Dear Chief Executive/ Chief Finance Officer,
As you know, the Early Parliamentary General Election Bill recently gained Royal Assent and a General Election will be held on Thursday 12 December. Colleagues in local authorities will naturally be keen to understand how this impacts on funding for local government next year. While we cannot be definitive at this stage, I hope that this letter will give an outline of recent decision taken by this Government and a sense of the outcomes it is seeking to achieve.*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT

As you know, the Government set out its proposals for the 2020-21 settlement in a technical consultation published on 3 October 2019. This consultation has now closed, and I am grateful for your responses. The department is now working through each response and will come back with further proposals, including proposed local authority allocations, at the provisional settlement.

Last year the independent review of local government finance and processes recommended the department issue the provisional settlement around 5 December. This is no longer possible because of the General Election. However, the department anticipates that the provisional Settlement will be a priority for Ministers to consider after the General Election. We will take all possible steps to ensure that the final settlement aligns with local authority budget setting timetables.

In the meantime, local authorities should take account of the proposals the Government has published in the technical consultation in drawing up draft budgets for next year. “

Following the result of the General Election, the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was released on 20 December 2019. A summary analysis on the potential financial impact of the provisional Settlement is included as Appendix 3.

The Provisional Settlement broadly reflects the details set out in the Spending Round 2019. The main details are:-

Overview of the Provisional Local Government Settlement 2020-21

Details of the provisional Local Government Settlement were published on 20 December 2019. There were no significant changes from those included in the Spending Round 2019 and detailed in the Government’s Technical Consultation which was published in October 2019.

This is a summary of the main details included in the Provisional Settlement, with particular emphasis on the implications for Merton.

1. Provisional Local Government Settlement

1.1 Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)

This section sets out the main details included in the Provisional Settlement and assesses the implications for Merton’s finances as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The Settlement outlined core funding allocations (Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) for local authorities for 2020/21.

The Settlement Funding Assessment is the total of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Baseline Funding (BF) from Business Rates. There has been an increase of 1.6% in SFA nationally in 2020/21. Details of changes in SFA for England, London boroughs and in Merton are summarised in the following table:-

	2016/17 Final	2017/18 Final	2018/19 Final	2019/20 Final	2020/21 Provisional
Merton (£m)	55.5	48.5	44.7	40.5	41.1
Annual % Change	-	-12.6%	-7.8%	-9.4%	1.6%
Cumulative % change	-	-12.6%	-19.5%	-27.0%	-25.9%
England (£m)	18,601.5	16,632.4	15,574.2	14,559.6	14,796.9
Annual % Change	-	-10.6%	-6.5%	-6.5%	1.6%
Cumulative % change	-	-10.6%	-16.3%	-21.7%	-20.6%
London Boroughs (£m)	3,398.5	3,078.3	2,901.2	2,713.5	2,757.7
Annual % Change	-	-9.4%	-5.8%	-6.5 %	1.6%
Cumulative % change	-	-9.4%	-14.6%	-20.2%	-18.9%

1.2 Core Spending Power

Core Spending Power is the Government's measure of the resources available to local authorities to fund service delivery. In 2020-21 it includes "roll forward" of core components from 2019-20 and also injects significant new funding into social care

Core Spending Power in 2020-21 is therefore made up of:

- Settlement Funding Assessment
- Estimated Council Tax Requirement excluding Parish Precepts
- Compensation via Section 31 grant for under-indexing the business rates multiplier
- Additional Council Tax revenue from referendum principle for social care
- Potential additional Council Tax revenue from referendum principle for all districts.
- Improved Better Care Fund
- New Homes Bonus and New Homes Bonus Returned Funding;
- Rural Services Delivery Grant
- Adult Social Care Support grant
- Winter Pressures Grant
- Social Care Support Grant

In 2020-21, Social Care Support Grant has been renamed Social Care Grant and Winter Pressures Grant has been rolled into the Improved Better Care Fund.

At the England level since 2016/17 there will be a cumulative increase in spending power of £5.4 billion (12.4% in cash terms) from £43.7 billion to

£49.1 billion. The equivalent figures for London boroughs are an increase of £643.9 billion (9.7%) from £6.7 billion to £7.3 billion.

However, as Core Spending Power includes a number of assumptions, this is unlikely to be an accurate reflection of the actual resources available to local authorities. In particular it assumes:-

- All authorities that are eligible raise the social care precept to its maximum in 2020-21
- All authorities increase overall council tax by the maximum amount (2% in 2020-21)
- Tax base increases at the same average rate for each authority as between 2015-16 to 2019-20
- New Homes Bonus allocations are based on the share of NHB to date

In England the level of assumed spending power will increase by £2.9 billion (6.3%) in 2020-21 from £46.2 billion to £49.1 billion. In London boroughs the assumed increase is £446.1million (6.5%) in 2020/21 from £6.848 billion to £7.294 billion.

A summary of Merton's assumed Core Spending Power from 2016/17 to 2020/21 is included in the following table:-

Detailed Breakdown of Core Spending Power – Merton

	Final	Final	Final	Final	Provisional	Annual Change (19-20 to 20-21)	Cumulative Change (16-17 to 20-21)
	2016-17	2017-18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21		
	£m	£m	£m	£m		%	%
Council Tax	78.920	82.563	87.009	92.370	97.847	5.9%	24.0%
Settlement Funding Assessment*	55.500	48.545	44.662	40.460	41.120	1.6%	-25.9%
Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier	0.476	0.504	0.793	1.153	1.441	25.0%	202.7%
Improved Better Care Fund	0.000	2.746	3.523	4.114	4.862	18.2%	-
New Homes Bonus	4.658	4.068	2.371	2.108	1.438	-31.8%	-69.1%
New Homes Bonus – returned funding	0.076	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.000	-	-100%
Transition Grant	0.567	0.557	0.000	0.000	0.000	-	-100%
Adult Social Care Support Grant	0.000	0.751	0.467	0.000	0.000	-	-
Winter Pressures Grant	0.000	0.000	0.748	0.748	0.000	-100.0%	-
Social Care Support Grant	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.278	0.000	-100.0%	-
Social Care Grant	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.058	-	-
Core Spending Power	140.197	139.815	139.574	143.231	150.766	5.3%	7.5%

* SFA figures do not reflect the London Business Rates Pool

1.3 Council tax referendum principles for principal local authorities

In terms of controlling the level of council tax increases that local authorities can set in 2020-21, without the need for a local referendum, the Government has decided that the core principles to be applied to authorities with social care responsibilities including London boroughs such as Merton are:-

- For 2020-21, the relevant basic amount of council tax is excessive if the authority's relevant basic amount of council tax for 2020-21 is 4% (comprising 2% for expenditure on adult social care and 2% for other expenditure), or more than 4%, greater than its relevant basic amount of council tax for 2019-20

The financial projections in this report are based on the following levels of council tax increase:-

	2020/21 %	2021/22 %	2022/23 %	2023/24 %
Council Tax increase - General	1.99	2.00	2.00	2.00
Council Tax increase - ASC	2.00	0	0	0
Total	3.99	2.00	2.00	2.00

1.4 Special and specific grants

The distribution of a number of grants was published alongside the Provisional Settlement. Within core spending power these include:-

- New Homes Bonus
- Improved Better Care Fund
- Rural Services Delivery Grant (not applicable to London)
- Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier
- Winter Pressures Grant
- Social Care Support Grant

Outside of the Provisional Settlement, allocations of a number of other grants have yet to be published including:-

- Lead Local Flood Authorities funding
- Flexible Homelessness Support Grant
- Homelessness Reduction Act new burdens funding

The provisional schools funding settlement for 2020/21 has been published by the Department for Education. (See Section 2)

1.4.1 New Homes Bonus

The Spending Review 2015 set out the overall envelope for New Homes Bonus payments over the period to 2019-20 as being £1,485 million for 2016-17, reducing to £900 million by 2019-20. £18 million was made available to

maintain the NHB baseline for payments in 2019-20. The Spending Round 2019 maintained the overall funding at £900 million in 2020-21. £7 million will be made available to maintain the NHB baseline for payments in 2020-21.

The Provisional Settlement confirms the proposal set out in the October technical consultation that 2020-21 NHB payments will not attract legacy payments in following years. However, the Government has confirmed it will retain the 0.4 per cent baseline which means local authorities will need to achieve tax base growth of greater than 0.4 per cent before they receive any NHB funding.

New Homes Bonus returned funding: For 2016-17 and 2017-18 any unclaimed New Homes Bonus funding was returned to local authorities based on their share of 2013-14 adjusted Start-up Funding Allowance. In 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21, New Homes Bonus allocations exceed the original funding so there is no returned funding.

1.4.2 Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier: The level of compensation for under-indexing of the business rates multiplier as a result of previous decisions to cap business rates increases by past governments, will increase nationally from £400.0m in 2019/20 to £500.0m in 2020-21 (an increase from £70.9m to £88.6m across London boroughs). Merton's allocation in 2020-21 is estimated to be £1.441m.

1.4.3 Former Independent Living Fund Recipient Grant: The Former Independent Living Fund (ILF) recipient grant funds pre-existing ILF arrangements following the closure of the ILF in 2015. This was intended to come to a conclusion in 2019-20. The Government has decided to continue the grant for a further year at 2019-20 levels of £160.6m, of which London will receive £19.3m. The detail by London borough is to be announced.

1.4.4 Improved Better Care Fund
In England, this represents a total of £1,115 million in 2017-18, £1,499 million in 2018-19, £1,837 million in 2019-20 and £2,077 million in 2020-21. The £2,000 million additional funding announced at Budget 2017 is included in this total. For 2020-21, the existing improved Better Care Fund funding is maintained at 2019-20 levels, and incorporates the £240 million which was allocated as Winter Pressures Grant in 2019-20, allocated using the adult social care relative needs formula.

Merton's allocation is:-

Improved Better Care Fund	2020-21 £m
Merton	4.862

1.4.5 Social Care Grant
The Government introduced a Social Care Support Grant of £410m in 2019-20, covering Children's and Adults social care, distributed according to Adult Social

Services RNF. This has been renamed as the Social Care Grant and will be increased by £1 billion in 2020-21 to £1.41bn, of which London Boroughs will receive £223.1m.

For 2020-21, a £1,410 million Social Care Grant comprised of three elements:

1. Retaining the £410 million in Social Care Support Grant from 2019-20, distributed using the adult social care relative needs formula;
2. An additional £850 million, distributed using the adult social care relative needs formula; and
3. £150 million to equalise the impact of the distribution of the council tax adult social care council tax precept in 2020-21.

Merton's allocation is:-

Social Care Grant	2020-21 £m
Merton	4.058

1.4.6 Winter Pressures Grant

Funding at the same level as 2019/20 has been incorporated with the Improved Better Care Fund

Merton's allocation is:-

Winter Pressures	2019-20 £m	2019-20 £m
Merton	0.748	0.000

1.4.7 Public Health Grant

The Public Health Grant was transferred to Local Authorities in 2013 and has seen a 10% cut over the last four years. Whilst allocations have not yet been published, the government has announced that there would be a "real terms increase" in 2020-21, which London Councils expects to be at least 1.84%. Details will be included in a future report once they are published.

1.4.8 Other grants

Several other grants have not yet been published including the Lead Local Flood Authorities grant, Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, Homelessness Reduction Act new burdens funding. Details will be included in a future report once they are published.

1.5 Provisional Settlement Consultation Response

The Government's consultation period on the provisional settlement figures has a deadline of 17 January 2020.

2. School Funding Announcement

- 2.1 The School Revenue Funding Settlement: 2020 to 2021 was published on 19 December 2019. The distribution of the DSG to local authorities is set out in four blocks for each authority: a schools block, a high needs block, an early years block, and the new central school services block. The main allocations for Merton are:-

Dedicated schools grant (DSG): 2020 to 2021 allocations local authority summary	2020 to 2021 DSG allocations, before recoupment and deductions for direct funding of high needs places by Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)				
	Schools block (£m)	Central school services block (£m)	High needs block (£m)	Early years block (£m)	Total DSG allocation (£m)
	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]
					= [A] + [B] + [C] + [D]
Merton 20/21	129.966	1.016	36.429	16.375	183.787
Merton 19/20	122.978	1.041	33.319	15.571	172.909
Change %	5.7%	-2.4%	9.3%	5.2%	6.3%
2020 to 2021 DSG allocations, after deductions for academies recoupment and direct funding of high needs places by ESFA					
	Schools block (£m)	Central school services block allocation (£m)	High needs block allocation (£m)	Early years block (£m)	Total DSG allocation (£m)
	[F]	[G]	[H]	[H]	[I]
Merton 20/21	129.966	1.016	36.299	16.375	183.657
Merton 19/20	122.978	1.041	33.033	15.571	172.623
Change %	5.7%	-2.4%	9.9%	5.2%	6.4%

DRAFT MTFS 2020-24:				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Departmental Base Budget 2019/20	152,567	152,567	152,567	152,567
Inflation (Pay, Prices)	3,743	7,485	11,228	14,971
Salary oncost increase (15.2% to 17.06%)	695	718	741	766
FYE – Previous Years Savings	(7,307)	(8,723)	(8,828)	(8,828)
FYE – Previous Years Growth	500	500	500	500
Amendments to previously agreed savings/growth	(239)	(229)	(304)	(500)
Change in Net Appropriations to/(from) Reserves	(279)	(306)	(369)	(399)
Taxi card/Concessionary Fares	92	542	992	1,442
Change in depreciation/Impairment (Contra Other Corporate items)	448	448	448	448
Social Care - Additional Spend offset by grant and precept	7,360	5,828	5,824	5,824
Growth	5,214	5,618	6,002	6,392
Provision - DSG Deficit	16,014	6,354	7,158	8,130
Other	(60)	33	122	211
Re-Priced Departmental Budget	178,748	170,835	176,082	181,524
Treasury/Capital financing	10,576	11,408	12,618	13,310
Other Corporate items	(20,153)	(20,600)	(20,178)	(20,527)
Levies	607	607	607	607
Sub-total: Corporate provisions	(8,970)	(8,585)	(6,953)	(6,610)
Sub-total: Repriced Departmental Budget + Corporate Provisions	169,778	162,250	169,129	174,913
Savings/Income Proposals 2020/21	(4,351)	(6,832)	(7,017)	(7,017)
Sub-total	165,427	155,418	162,112	167,896
Appropriation to/from departmental reserves	(1,873)	(1,846)	(1,783)	(1,753)
Appropriation to/from Balancing the Budget Reserve	(7,645)	(999)	0	0
BUDGET REQUIREMENT	155,909	152,573	160,329	166,143
Funded by:				
Revenue Support Grant	(5,159)	0	0	0
Business Rates (inc. Section 31 grant)	(37,402)	(39,978)	(40,837)	(41,714)
Adult Social Care Grants inc. BCF	(4,862)	0	0	0
Social Care Grant	(4,058)	(2,776)	(3,160)	(3,550)
PFI Grant	(4,797)	(4,797)	(4,797)	(4,797)
New Homes Bonus	(1,438)	(1,008)	(800)	(800)
Council Tax inc. WPC	(97,368)	(99,775)	(102,232)	(104,741)
Collection Fund – (Surplus)/Deficit	(825)	0	0	0
TOTAL FUNDING	(155,909)	(148,333)	(151,827)	(155,602)
GAP including Use of Reserves (Cumulative)	0	4,239	8,502	10,541

CAPITAL STRATEGY 2020-24

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2017 local authorities are required to produce a capital strategy.
- 1.2 Merton's Capital Strategy for 2020-24 has been aligned and integrated with the Business Plan for the period 2020-24. The Business Plan sets out how the Authority's objectives have been shaped by Merton Partnership in the Community Plan. The Community Plan sets out the overall vision and strategic direction of Merton which are embodied into five strategic themes:-
- Children's Trusts;
 - Health and Wellbeing Board;
 - Safer and Stronger Communities;
 - Sustainable Communities and Transport;
 - Corporate Capacity
- 1.3 Merton Partnership works towards improving the outcomes for people who work, live and learn in the borough and, in particular, to 'bridge the gap' between the eastern and western wards in the borough.
- 1.4 The financial reality facing local government dominates the choices the council will make for the future of the borough. The development of the Business Plan 2020-24 is therefore based on the set of guiding strategic priorities and principles, as adopted by the council on 13 July 2011:
- Merton should continue to provide a certain level of essential services for residents. The order of priority of 'must' services should be:
 - i) Continue to provide everything that is statutory.
 - ii) Maintain services – within limits – to the vulnerable and elderly.
 - After meeting these obligations Merton should do all that it can to help residents who aspire. This means we should address the following as priorities in this order:
 - i) Maintain clean streets and keep council tax low.
 - ii) Keep Merton as a good place for young people to go to school and grow up.
 - iii) Be the best it can for the local environment.
 - iv) All the rest should be open for discussion.
- 1.5 Merton's scrutiny function reflects the five strategic themes above and the themes have been incorporated into the bidding process for capital funding to ensure that scarce financial resources are targeted towards strategic objectives.

2 Planning Infrastructure

2.1 Business Plan 2020-2024

2.1.1 The Business Plan sets out the council's vision and ambitions for improvement over the next four years and how this will be achieved. Business Planning and financial planning frameworks are closely aligned and integrated.

2.2 Target Operating Models (TOMs)

2.2.1 TOMs, or Target Operating Models are a series of strategy documents that set out how the organisation will respond to and manage change over the coming months and years. TOMs have been produced for Service Areas or Departments throughout the council.

2.2.2 A TOM is a statement of how an organisation will deliver its services within a certain structure as a future point in time, TOMs are living documents and will change as the organisation develops. There are a number of elements to a TOM, for Merton these are – Customer Segments, Channels, Services, Organisation, Processes, Information, Technology, Physical Location and People

2.2.3 Developing a TOM is about planning and preparing for change and improvement in a given service. Taking the time to prepare/refresh a TOM allows those within a service to consider its many facets and dependencies and determine how these will change over the coming years. Having an ambitious vision for what the future looks like for the service (which is what a TOM provides), ensures that improvement activity will be more disciplined and controlled and therefore more likely to succeed.

2.3 Service Plans

2.3.1 In developing the Capital Strategy, clear linkages have also been identified with not only the Business Plan, TOMs but also departmental service and commissioning plans beneath this. It reflects the capital investment implications of the approved objectives of those plans, which themselves reflect the council's proposals set out in service based strategies such as the Primary Places Strategy, Local Implementation Plan (Transport), and Asset Management Plans. Priorities for the Corporate Services department are based around how the council manages its resources effectively and how it carries out its wider community leadership role.

2.4 Capacity, Skills and Culture

2.4.1 Team planning and staff appraisals highlight staff developmental requirements and monitor their progression. Qualified financial staff meet the continual professional development requirements of their relevant CCAB organisation.

- 2.4.2 Member induction and development is led corporately by the Authority's Human Resources division, this is supplemented, where appropriate, with additional financial briefings.

2.5 Capital Strategy

- 2.5.1 This Capital Strategy is a fundamental component of our approach since it reflects our strategic priorities across the council and endeavors to maximise the contribution of the council's limited capital resources to achieving our vision. We will work closely with residents, community organisations and businesses to focus our resources and those of our partners effectively. The strategy also sets out the management arrangements for allocating resources to individual schemes, establishing funding for projects, monitoring progress, managing performance and ensuring that scarce capital resources are allocated efficiently.
- 2.5.2 Attached as Annex 6 is the Capital Investment Strategy for the investments/loans the Authority will hold/holds primarily to generate financial returns.

3 Accounting Definitions and Practices

- 3.1 The council's approach to Capital Accounting follows the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, which itself is based on the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and guidance issued by CIPFA and professional accounting networks.
- 3.2 As in previous years, there has been continual review of the Capital Programme to ensure that expenditure meets the strict definition and to identify any items which would be more appropriate to be charged to revenue. This has not resulted in any major changes to the future programme.
- 3.3 The de-minimis of capital expenditure for the authority is set at £10,000 per project. This applies to all schemes within our capital programme, however in exceptional circumstances thresholds below this may be considered where specific items of expenditure are below this de-minimis level but meet proper accounting definitions of capital expenditure.
- 3.4 Individual schools may choose to adopt the above de-minimis limit or use the limit of £2,000 as mentioned in some Department for Education and HMRC guidance for various types of school.
- 3.5 IFRS 9 requires that investment in risk capital will need to be valued annually at fair value with any loss or gain being written through the profit and loss account in the year it occurs.

3.6 IFRS 16 will require all but short-term de-minimis leasing rental/leasing arrangements appear on the Authority's balance sheet from the financial year 2020/21.

4 Corporate and strategic capital expenditure appraisal planning and control

4.1 Capital Programme Board

4.1.1 Merton's Capital Strategy is coordinated by the Capital Programme Board. The board, which is effectively a sub-group of the Corporate Management Team (CMT). The Board comprises the Directors of Corporate and Environment and Regeneration Services with selected Level 2/3 managers from each service department.

4.1.2 The Terms of Reference of the Board are:

- Lead on the development and maintenance of the capital investment strategy and ensure it is consistent with the council's strategic objectives, TOMs and service plans.
- Ensure that the capital investment strategy informs and is informed by the asset management plan.
- Ensure there is a transparent and clearly communicated process for allocation of capital funds with clear and well documented criteria and decision making process.
- Monitor progress of capital funded schemes and any other critical schemes as determined by CMT. Receive joint reports from Finance/departmental staff on progress against deliverables, milestones and budget forecasts.
- In conjunction with other governing bodies, consider/approve business cases that involve capital investment.
- Monitor issues arising as a result of changes in accounting treatment of capital expenditure and ensure the organisation responds accordingly.
- Assess capital schemes in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure they are affordable in revenue terms.
- Receive reports from the Property Management and Review Manager relating to capital funds coming from the disposal of property, in collaboration with the Property and Asset Management Board.
- Receive benefits reports from Programme/Project Managers when capital projects/programmes are closed. Monitor key benefits to ensure they are realised for large capital schemes.

4.1.3 The role of the Board is to:

- Set framework and guidelines for capital bids;
- Draft the capital programme for consideration by CMT and Cabinet;
- Review capital bids and prioritise in accordance with the council's strategic objectives;
- Identify and allocate capital funds;
- Monitor progress of capital programmes/projects and key variances between plans and performance;
- Monitor budgets of capital programmes/projects against forecasts;
- Monitor benefits and ensure they are realised. Monitor capital receipts
- Develop and share good practice

4.1.4 The Board will be accountable to the Corporate Management Team who will receive reports and escalated matters from the Board on a regular basis. CMT will set the strategy and direction, the Capital Programme Board will operationalise this and escalate concerns and ideas. The Board will refer to, and take advice from, the Procurement Board on any proposals and/or decisions that have a procurement dimension. The Board will work closely with the Property and Asset Management Board on any property/asset related proposals.

4.1.5 The Board will make agendas and minutes available to the other Governance Boards within 5 working days of the meeting.

4.1.6 During the budget process the Director of Corporate Services recommends to Cabinet an initial view as to how the Capital Programme should be funded. However, this recommendation will be informed by the Capital Programme Board's consideration of the capital receipts available and the forecast of future property disposals and the final funding during the closure of accounts will depend on the precise financial position. At this stage it is intended to utilise internal borrowing, capital grant, direct revenue financing, capital receipts and earmarked reserves. Any capital loans given out by the authority, dependent on the size, will normally be funded from capital receipts as the repayments will be received as capital receipts. It will be reported to Members in advance when it is proposed to use external borrowing.

4.1.7 The council has had a robust policy for many years of reviewing its property holding and disposing of surplus property, this is detailed in the Asset Management Plan (AMP) which also includes policy and procedures for land and property acquisition. All capital receipts are pooled, unless earmarked by Cabinet, and are used either to finance further capital investment or for the payment of premiums on repayment of higher interest loans.

4.2 Capital Programme Approval and Amendment

4.2.1 The Capital Programme is approved by Council each year. Any change which substantially alters the programme (and therefore the Prudential Indicators) requires full Council approval. Rules for changes to the Capital Programme are detailed in the council's Constitution Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures and the key points are summarised here.

4.2.2 For virements which do not substantially alter the programme the below approval limits apply:

- Virements up to £5k can be signed off by the budget manager and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is informed of these changes as part of the monthly financial monitoring
- Virements £5k up to £100k must be approved by the Chief Officer of the area or areas affected along with the Chief Financial Officer, typically this will be as part of the monthly financial monitoring report to CMT however approval can be sought from these officers at any time if necessary
- Virements £100k and upwards go to Cabinet
- Any virement which diverts resources from a scheme not started, resulting in a delay to that scheme, will be reported to Cabinet

(Please note virement rules are cumulative i.e. two virements of £5,000 from one code; the latter would require the approval of Chief Officers)

4.2.3 For increases to the programme for existing schemes up to £100,000 must be approved by the Director of Corporate Services. Increases above this threshold must be approved by Cabinet. In accordance with the Prudential Code if the increase in the Capital Programme will substantially change prudential indicators it must be approved by Council.

4.2.4 For new schemes, the source of funding and any other financial or non-financial impacts must be reported and the limits below apply:

- Budgets of up to £50k can be approved by the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the relevant Chief Officer
- Budgets of £50k up £500k will be submitted to Cabinet for approval
- Budgets over £500k will be submitted to full Council for approval

Approval thresholds are being reviewed as part of the review of processes after the implementation of the new Financial Information System.

4.3 Capital Monitoring

4.3.1 The Council approves the four year Capital Programme in March each financial year. Amendments to the programme are approved appropriately by CMT, Cabinet and Council. Budget managers are required to monitor their budget monthly, key reviews are undertaken in September and November. December monitoring provides the final opportunity for budget managers to re-profile their budgets for the current financial year.

4.3.2 November monitoring information feeds into the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and is used to assess the revenue impact over the period of the strategy with minor amendments in the later months. November monitoring is also used to measure the accuracy of year-end projections.

4.3.3 Councillors receive regular monitoring reports on the overall position of capital expenditure in relation to the budget. They also receive separate progress reports on key spend areas.

4.4 Risk Management

4.4.1 The management of risk is strategically driven by the Corporate Risk Management group. The group collates on a quarterly basis the headline departmental risks and planned mitigation activity from each department, project and partnership. From this information a Key Strategic Risk Register is compiled and presented to CMT quarterly for discussion and onto Cabinet and Standards and General Purposes Committee annually. The Authority's Risk Management Strategy is reviewed and updated annually and presented to CMT, Cabinet and Council.

4.4.2 Risk Appetite - The council recognises that its risk appetite to achieve the corporate priorities identified within its business plan could be described in general as an "informed and cautious" approach. Where significant risk arises, we will take effective control action to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.

5 Revenue budget implications of capital investment

5.1 Revenue cost or savings

5.1.1 The capital strategy recognises that the prudential framework provides the council with flexibility, subject to the constraints of the council's revenue budget. This flexible ability to borrow, either from internal cash resources or by external borrowing, coupled with the revised treatment of finance leases with effect from 1 April 2010, means that prudential borrowing is used for the acquisition of equipment, where it is prudent, affordable and sustainable. Since 2015/16 it has been possible to borrow from internal cash resources rather than external borrowing and it is forecast that this will continue to be the case alongside the use of capital receipts within the current planning period up to 2022/23, from 2022/23 onwards (£8.4 million 22/23 and £34.9 million 23/24) borrowing will be required. Over the period 2020-25 the Authority is scheduled to repay £30.5 million (27%) of long term debt. This will be kept under review as part of general Treasury Management.

5.1.2 The revenue effects of the capital programme are from capital financing charges and from additional revenue costs such as annual maintenance charges. The capital financing charges are made up of interest payable on loans to finance the expenditure and of principal repayments on those loans. The principal repayments commence in the year after the expenditure is incurred and are calculated by the application of the statutory Minimum Revenue Provision. The interest commences immediately the expenditure is incurred. The revenue effects of the capital programme are fully taken account of in the MTFs, with appropriate adjustments for slippage, timing of capital payments and the use of internal investment funds.

The revenue effects of the capital programme are built into the MTFs and are summarised below:

Current Programme	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
MRP	4,874	5,707	6,801	8,592
Interest on Borrowing	6,315	6,315	6,110	6,174
Total Borrowing Costs	11,189	12,022	12,911	14,766
Interest on Investments	(275)	(144)	(23)	0
CCLA Investment Two Loans @ £10m	(322)	(322)	(322)	(322)
Total Borrowing Costs Net of Investment interest	10,592	11,556	12,566	14,444

Proposed Programme Business Plan 2020-24	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
MRP	4,874	5,574	6,850	7,593
Interest on Borrowing	6,315	6,315	6,110	6,038
Total Borrowing Costs	11,189	11,889	12,960	13,632
Interest on Investments	(291)	(159)	(19)	0
CCLA Investment Two Loans @ £10m	(322)	(322)	(322)	(322)
Total Borrowing Costs Net of Investment interest	10,576	11,408	12,618	13,310

Movement in Projected Costs	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
MRP	0	133	(49)	999
Interest on Borrowing	0	0	0	135
Total Borrowing Costs	0	133	(49)	1,134
Interest on Investments	16	15	(4)	0
CCLA Investment Two Loans @ £10m	0	0	0	0
Total Borrowing Costs Net of Investment interest	16	148	(53)	1,134

6 Capital resources 2020-24

6.1 Variety of sources

6.1.1 Capital expenditure is funded from a variety of sources:-

- Grants which are not ring-fenced to be spent on a specific project or service
- Specific grants - earmarked for a specific project or purpose
- Capital receipts from the disposal of surplus and under-utilised land and property and repayment of principal
- Other contributions such as Section 106/CIL
- Council Funding – through revenue funding, use of reserves or borrowing.

6.2 Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

6.2.1 Under guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government, authorities are required to prepare an annual statement on their policy on making MRP. This mirrors the existing requirements to report to the council on the Prudential borrowing limit and investment policy.

6.2.2 The statement is set out in the Treasury Management Strategy.

7 Asset management review

7.1 Capital receipts

7.1.1 Capital receipts generated from the disposal of surplus and under-utilised land and property are a major source of funding and the potential available capital resources are under constant review and revision. The forecast of capital receipts included in this report are based on a forecast of planned land and property disposals. In addition, after the transfer of the housing stock to Merton Priory Homes, the council continues to receive a share of the receipts from Right to Buy applications and through future sharing arrangements, receipts from the sales of void properties, sales of development land and VAT saving on expenditure on stock enhancements.

7.1.2 In December 2017, the Secretary of State announced the continuation of the capital receipts flexibility programme for a further three years, to give local authorities the continued freedom to use capital receipts from the sale of their own assets (excluding Right to Buy receipts) to help fund the revenue costs of transformation projects and release savings. By virtue of his powers under sections 16(2)(b) and 20 of the Local Government Act 2003 (“the Act”), that the local authorities listed in Annex A (“the Authorities”) treat as capital expenditure, expenditure which:

- i. is incurred by the Authorities that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners; and
- ii. is properly incurred by the Authorities for the financial years that begin on 1 April 2016 up to and including 1 April 2021.

7.2 Property as a corporate resource

7.2.1 The council treats its property as a corporate resource, oriented towards achieving its overall goals, underpinned by:

- Clear links to financial plans and budgets.
- Effective arrangements for cross-service working.
- Champions at senior officer and member level.
- Significant scrutiny by councilors.

7.2.2 It ensures that its properties are fit for purpose by making proper provision and action for maintenance and repair. The organisation makes investment and disposal decisions based on thorough option appraisal. The capital programme gives priority to potential capital projects based on a formal objective approval process.

7.2.3 Whole life project costing was used at the design stage for significant projects where appropriate, incorporating future periodic capital replacement costs, projected maintenance and decommissioning costs.

7.2.4 Whole life costing of significant projects, which span more than one year, also forms part of the regular monitoring reports.

7.2.5 The Asset Management Plan is being reviewed and will include greater emphasis on the use of the council's property assets to support the council's Transformation Programme, regeneration and increased income/revenue generation.

7.2.6 The Authority is currently implementing a new IT system for asset accounting and the possibility of this system being used for more widespread asset management will be explored.

8 Summary of estimated disposals 2020-2024

8.1 Projected Capital Receipts

8.1.1 Due to difficulties in the property market since the economic recession a cautious view has been taken of the potential capital receipts identified. Much of the anticipated capital receipts are as a result of the VAT shelter agreement entered into with Merton Priory Homes as part of the housing stock transfer. There are current proposals for some of the properties under this agreement to be redeveloped which could result in a reduction in receipts from the VAT shelter agreement, however a Development and Disposals Clawback Agreement was entered into as part of the same transfer and this could result in a significant capital receipt should these development plans go ahead. The following table represents an estimate of an anticipated cash flow and therefore these future capital receipts have been utilised to fund the capital programme:-

Anticipated Capital Receipts	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Sale of Assets	0	0	0	0
Right to buy/VAT Shelter	900	900	900	900
Repayment of One Public Estate	0	(260)	0	0
Total	900	640	900	900

8.1.2 As there is currently not a need to enter into external borrowing until 2022/23, investment balances will rise with the addition of capital receipts until utilised to fund the capital programme. Average expected interest rates on investments across the years of the capital programme are approximately 1.3%, as such an increase in receipts of £1m would be expected to generate a £13,000 increase in interest in a full year.

8.1.3 The table below shows the funding of the capital programme utilising capital receipts, capital grants and contributions, capital reserves and revenue provisions. Balances held by the authority will generate interest until utilized to fund the capital programme.

Capital Expenditure	2019/20 Estimate £000	2020/21 Estimate £000	2021/22 Estimate £000	2022/23 Estimate £000	2023/24 Estimate £000's
Capital Expenditure	26,875	46,799	26,676	14,020	25,704
Slippage and Underspends	(1,808)	(12,025)	3,101	2,940	815
Total Capital Expenditure *	25,067	34,773	29,777	16,960	26,520
Financed by:					
Capital Receipts * and **	10,128	900	640	900	900
Capital Grants & Contributions	13,325	13,571	9,158	5,343	4,142
Revenue Provisions	1,423	3,999	57	57	30
Net financing need for the year	191	16,303	19,922	10,659	21,447

* Finance lease expenditure is included in the table in Treasury Management Strategy but excluded from this Table

** Includes anticipated in-year capital receipts in the table above

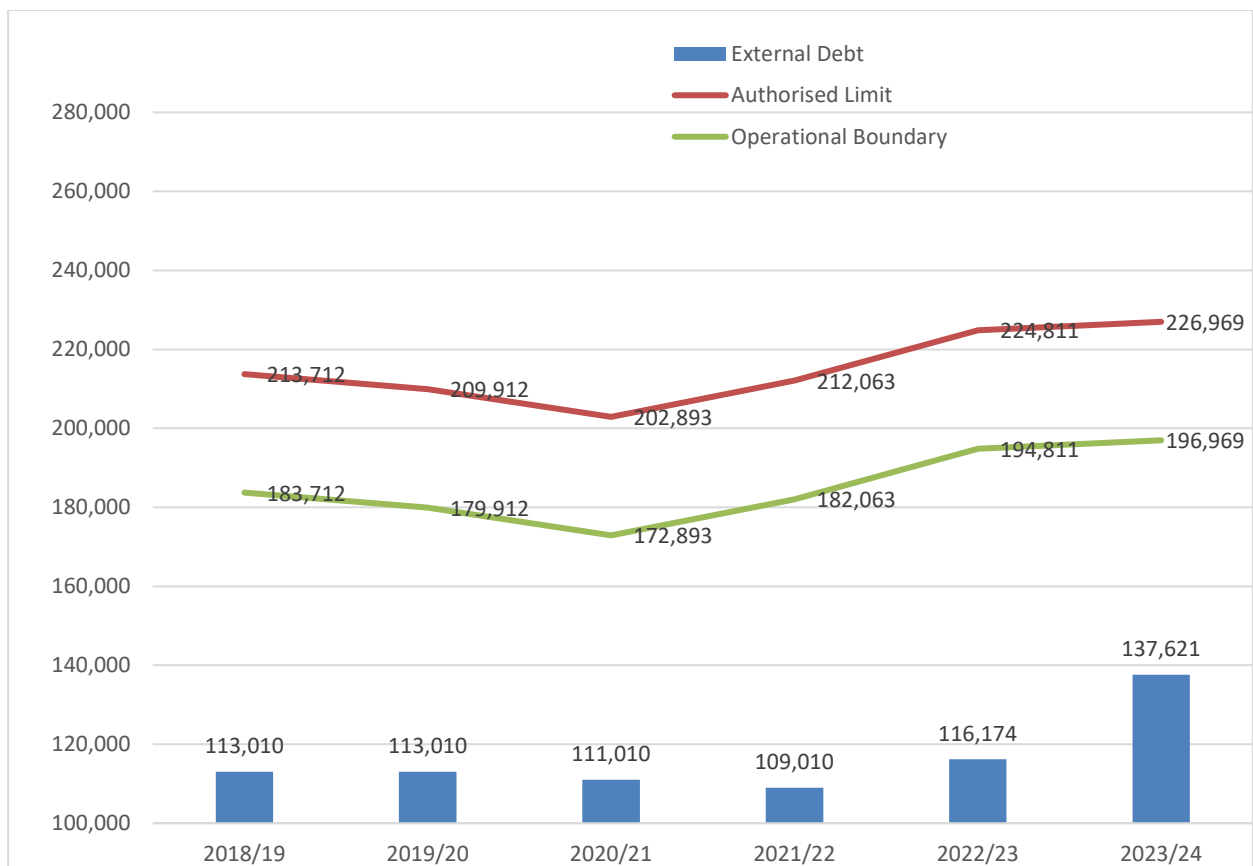
8.1.4 Under the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 parish councils and local voluntary and community organisations have the right to nominate local land or buildings they would like to see included in a list of assets of community value which is maintained by the Local Authority. Once listed the owner must allow community interest groups up to six months to make an offer before the property can be sold to another. It is envisaged that this may lengthen the disposal time for some properties if they are listed as assets of community value by the council.

8.2 Debt repayment

8.2.1 The council has had a strategy to reduce its level of debt when opportunity arises in the market. The average interest payable on outstanding debt is 5.47%. For the period 2020-24, capital receipts may continue to be used to pay the premiums on the repayment of those authority debts which have high fixed interest charges, if the terms offered will result in appropriate revenue savings. Any decision to repay debt early will be considered alongside the funding however, this is unlikely to be the case in the short to medium term requirement of the programme.

8.2.2 The chart below shows the debt related treasury activity limits discussed in detail in 4.4 of the Treasury Management Strategy and incorporates the proposed capital programme and funding strategy contained in this document.

Treasury Management Limits on Activity



8.2.3 The Table below shows the maturity structure of current external debt

	Actual November 2019	Value £'000
less than 1 year	0%	-
1 to 2 years	3.54%	4,000
2 years to 5 years	23.45%	26,510
5 years to 10 years	3.98%	4,500
10 years to 20 years	11.06%	12,500
20 years to 30 years	11.95%	13,500
30 years to 40 years	28.32%	32,000
40 years to 50 years	17.70%	20,000
Total	100.00%	113,010

8.2.4 Section 3 of the Treasury Management Strategy details the Authority's minimum revenue provision policy statement setting out how it intends to fund unsupported capital expenditure over the expected life of assets

8.2.5 Internal borrowing to fund unsupported capital expenditure will reduce the balances available to invest under the treasury management strategy. In contrast, external borrowing will provide additional balance to invest under the Treasury Management Strategy until utilised.

9 Grant and Contributions Funding Capital Resources

9.1 Grant Funding

The Table below summarises the grants being utilised to fund the proposed capital programme over the planning period:

Grants	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Heritage Lottery Fund	81	3,028	712	0	0
Transport for London LIP (earmarked) Capital *	2,825	**1,435	1,300	1,300	1,300
Total: E&R	2,906	4,463	2,012	1,300	1,300
School Condition (non-ringfenced)*	1,915	1,900	1,900	1,900	1,900
Basic Need (non-ringfenced)	446	0	0	0	0
Special Provision Grant	1,520	491	0	0	0
Healthy Schools	159	30	0	0	0
Total CSF	4,040	2,421	1,900	1,900	1,900
Devolved Formula Capital (Earmarked)	348	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
TOTAL: CSF*	4,388	2,421	1,900	1,900	1,900
Better Care Fund incl. Disabled Facilities Grant)**	1,280	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
Total Grant Funding * and **	8,574	6,884	3,912	3,200	3,200

* CSF and TfL Estimated from 2020-21

** Slipped Schemes from 2019/20 and Indicative allocation for 20-21

9.2 Summary of Contributions

9.2.1 The Table below summarises the contributions being utilised to fund the proposed capital programme over the planning period:

Contributions	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy	4,004	7,052	3309	840	0
Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy	478	599	0	0	0
Section 106 Agreements	897	621	633	462	145
Total Used to Fund the Programme	5,379	8,272	3,942	1,302	145

10 Summary of Total Resources 2020-24:

10.1 Summary

10.1.1 The total anticipated resources over the plan period 2019-23, including existing grant funding and anticipated CS&F grants, is summarised in the following table:-

	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Grant & Contributions *	13,571	9,158	5,343	4,142
Council Funding	21,201	20,619	11,617	22,377
Total	34,773	29,777	16,960	26,520

* This table shows the grants and contributions applied to fund the programme allowing for slippage.

10.1.2 Projects for which earmarked resources have been notified have been given authority to proceed, subject to a detailed specification and programme of works being agreed which ensures that the maximum benefits accrue to the council within the overall constraints of the approved funding. Those schemes, on their own, represent a considerable capital investment.

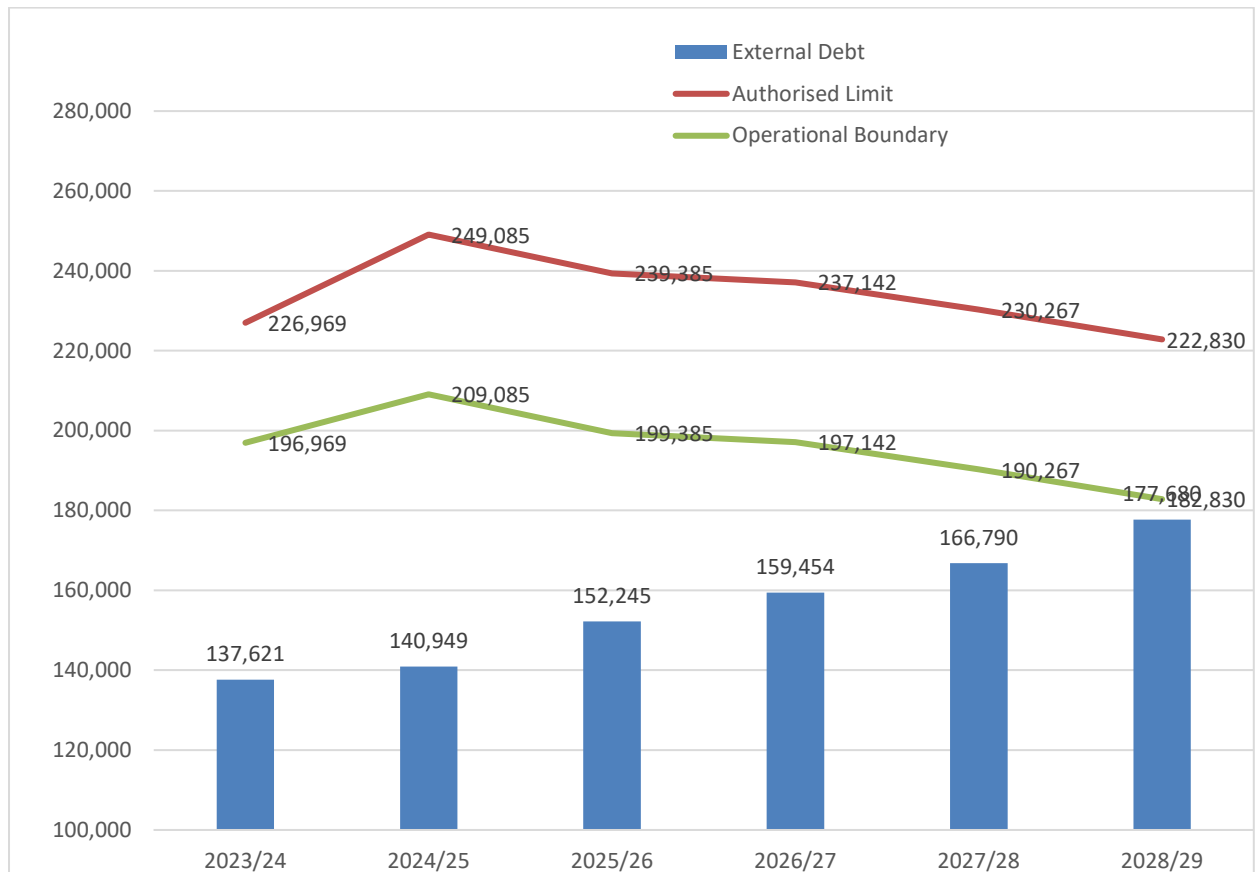
10.1.3 The Table below summarises the Indicative Capital Programme for 2024 to 2029. Additional detail is provided as Annex 5:

Department	Indicative Budget 2024-25	Indicative Budget 2025-26	Indicative Budget 2026-27	Indicative Budget 2027-28	Indicative Budget 2028-29
Corporate Services	3,055	4,186	2,970	3,280	5,670
Community and Housing *	280	630	280	420	280
Children, Schools and Families	1,900	1,900	1,900	1,900	1,900
Environment and Regeneration *	4,039	7,977	4,014	3,979	3,979
Total*	9,274	14,693	9,164	9,579	11,829

* Please note these figures do not include any allowance of grant funding or expenditure for Transport for London and Disabled Facilities.

12.3.1 10.1.4 For every £1 million capital expenditure that is funded by external borrowing it is estimated that there will be annual revenue debt charges of between £219k for assets with a life of 5 years to £51k for an asset life of 50 years.

10.1.4 The Table below shows the impact of the indicative programme 2024-29 on the Authority’s debt:



11 Capital Bids and Prioritisation Criteria

11.1 Prioritisation of schemes 2023/24

The allocation of capital resources, on those schemes to be funded by borrowing, is focused towards the achievement of the council's key strategic objectives as agreed by councillors as highlighted in section 1 of this strategy.

The prioritisation criteria used in respect of growth were 'Statutory', Need (demand and / or priority), attracts match funding and revenue impact (including invest to save). Due to officers' awareness of the need to restrain the capital programme to affordable levels, the revisions put forward over the period 2020-24, on the basis of these criteria by the board to Cabinet was £15 million (including indicative TfL and revised Housing Company Funding) as shown below.

Department	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Corporate Services	(6,823)	6,883	(13,105)	13,579
Community and Housing	0	0	0	0
Children, Schools and Families	200	750	0	0
Environment and Regeneration	3,683	3,231	3,442	1,272
Total	(2,940)	10,864	(9,663)	14,851

12 Detailed Capital Programme 2019-23

12.1 Corporate Services

12.1.1 This department is responsible for the administration of finance and staff, together with the corporate buildings including IT and utility services. The programme is detailed in Annex 3. Its main capital expenditure is on IT software and hardware, and on improvements to buildings (including invest to save schemes). Annual capital allocations are available to meet ongoing capital commitments within property, IT and invest to save. In addition, provision is made for one off projects, business systems and corporate level schemes and contingencies.

12.2 Children, Schools and Families

12.2.1 CSF Capital Programme 2019-23

The requirement to provide sufficient school places is a key statutory requirement and the Authority must also maintain existing school buildings for non-PFI community primary and special schools. The government provides capital grant to meet some of this need. The individual projects for this department are all listed in Annex 3.

12.2.2 Primary schools

No further primary school expansion is planned. From 2019/20 £1.9 million per annum is provided for community and voluntary controlled schools (subject to grant funding) this will be limited to urgent health and safety related needs, with the council expecting schools to fund all works below £20,000. Work for the next few years will be prioritised using a conditions survey undertaken in late 2017.

12.2.3 Secondary school places

The demand for secondary places is monitored regularly and trends in demand are analysed. Following the delivery of the new Harris Wimbledon Academy through the government's Free School programme, no further secondary school expansion is now planned. The capital programme for 2020/24 includes £0.3 million for the final elements of committed schemes.

12.2.4 Special school places

The increase in demand for special school provision is significant and the council has a lower than average proportion of children attending in-borough state special schools. The government's Special Provision Fund only provides a proportion of the investment needed. Capital funding of £5.9 million is provided in the 2020/24 programme for the expansion of SEN provision within the borough. This includes completion of the expansion of Cricket Green School, providing primary provision for pupils with SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health), expansion of ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), and further provision for children with medical needs.

12.4 Environment and Regeneration

12.4.1 This department provides a co-ordinated approach to managing the public realm (all borough areas to which the public has access), as well as the regeneration of our town centres and neighbourhoods. The individual projects for this department are all listed in Annex 3.

12.4.2 Annual capital allocations are available to meet ongoing capital commitments within fleet vehicles, ally gating, street trees, highways and footways, sports facilities and parks. In addition, provision is made for one off projects and regeneration activities including Transport for London schemes.

12.5 Community and Housing

12.5.1 This department aims to provide residents with the chance to live independent and fulfilling lives, in suitable homes within sustainable communities, with chances to learn, use information, and acquire new skills. The departmental Capital Programme for 2020-24 is detailed in Annex 3.

12.5.2 Annual capital allocations are available to meet disabled facility grants and provision is made for one off projects.

12.5 Overall Programme

12.5.1 The approved Capital Programme for 2020/24 follows at Annex 1, Annex 3 provides an additional breakdown detail of the approved schemes. The summary is as follows:

Department	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Corporate Services	22,100	11,128	2,895	18,100
Community and Housing	2,004	913	882	425
Children, Schools and Families	6,166	3,900	1,900	1,900
Environment and Regeneration	16,530	10,735	8,343	5,279
Total	46,799	26,676	14,020	25,704

12.5.2 The funding details for the programme follow at Annex 2

12.5.3 Within the funding details the authority has anticipated some slippage for schemes that require a consultation process or a planning application or where the implementation timetable is not certain. The slippage anticipated reduces the spend in the year it is budgeted but increases the spend in the following year when it is incurred. When slippage from 2019/20 is approved, the 2020/21 Capital Programme will be adjusted accordingly.

12.5.4 Annex 1	Capital Investment Programme - Schemes for Approval
Annex 2	Funding the Capital Programme 2020-24
Annex 3	Detailed Capital Programme 2020-24
Annex 4	Analysis of Growth/(Reduction) from current approved programme
Annex 5	Indicative Capital Programme 2024-29
Annex 6	Capital Investment Strategy

Capital Investment Programme - Schemes for Approval**Annex 1**

Department	Scrutiny	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Corporate Services		22,100	11,128	2,895	18,100
Community and Housing		2,004	913	882	425
Children, Schools and Families		6,166	3,900	1,900	1,900
Environment and Regeneration		16,530	10,735	8,343	5,279
Total		46,799	26,676	14,020	25,704

Department	Scrutiny	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Corporate Services					
Customer Policy and Improvement		1,350	1,900	0	0
Facilities		1,311	1,250	950	1,675
IT Infrastructure		1,892	1,095	1,245	3,420
Resources		0	0	700	0
Corporate		17,546	6,883	0	13,005
Total Corporate Services		22,100	11,128	2,895	18,100
Community and Housing					
Adult Social Care		39	0	0	0
Housing		1,415	913	742	425
Libraries		550	0	140	0
Total Community and Housing		2,004	913	882	425
Children, Schools and Families					
All Sectors		1,900	1,900	1,900	1,900
Secondary		300	0	0	0
Special		3,966	2,000	0	0
Total Children, Schools and Families		6,166	3,900	1,900	1,900
Environmental and Regeneration					
Public Protection and Development		1,104	1,254	480	0
Street Scene and Waste		737	330	670	330
Sustainable Communities		14,689	9,151	7,193	4,949
Total Environmental and Regeneration		16,530	10,735	8,343	5,279
Total Capital		46,799	26,676	14,020	25,704

Please Note

1. Excludes budgets relating to future year announcements of Better Care Fund
 2. Includes indicative budgets relating to future year announcements of Transport for London Grant
- OSC = Overview and Scrutiny, CYP = Children and Young People, HCOP = Heathier Communities and Older People
and SC = Sustainable Communities

FUNDING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019-24**Annex2**

Merton	Capital Programme £000s	Funded by Merton £000s	Funded by grant and capital contributions £000s
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2019/20 Current Budget	26,875	12,686	14,189
Potential Slippage b/f	0	0	0
2019/20 Revised Budget	26,875	12,686	14,189
Potential Slippage c/f	(1,276)	(562)	(714)
Potential Underspend not slipped into next year	(532)	(384)	(150)
Total Spend 2019/20	25,067	11,742	13,325

2020/21 Current Budget	46,799	30,716	16,083
Potential Slippage b/f	1,276	562	714
2020/21 Revised Budget	48,075	31,278	16,797
Potential Slippage c/f	(11,196)	(8,383)	(2,813)
Potential Underspend not slipped into next year	(2,105)	(1,692)	(413)
Total Spend 2020/21	34,773	21,201	13,571

2021/22 Current Budget	26,676	18,543	8,134
Potential Slippage b/f	11,196	8,383	2,813
2021/22 Revised Budget	37,872	26,926	10,946
Potential Slippage c/f	(6,492)	(4,950)	(1,543)
Potential Underspend not slipped into next year	(1,603)	(1,357)	(246)
Total Spend 2021/22	29,777	20,619	9,158

2022/23 Current Budget	14,020	9,238	4,782
Potential Slippage b/f	6,492	4,950	1,543
2022/23 Revised Budget	20,512	14,189	6,325
Potential Slippage c/f	(2,217)	(1,481)	(735)
Potential Underspend not slipped into next year	(1,336)	(1,090)	(246)
Total Spend 2022/23	16,960	11,617	5,343

2023/24 Current Budget	25,704	22,079	3,625
Potential Slippage b/f	2,217	1,481	735
2023/24 Revised Budget	27,921	23,561	4,360
Potential Slippage c/f	(1,002)	(892)	(109)
Potential Underspend not slipped into next year	(399)	(290)	(109)

Total Spend 2023/24	26,520	22,377	4,142
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Detailed Capital Programme 2020-24**Annex 3**

Department	Scrutiny	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Corporate Services					
<u>Customer Policy and Improvement</u>					
Customer Contact Programme	OSC	1,350	1,900	0	0
<u>Facilities</u>					
Other Buildings - Capital Building Works	OSC	650	650	650	650
Civic Centre Boilers	OSC	201	0	0	0
Civic Centre Lighting Upgrade	OSC	0	300	0	0
Combined Heat and Power (CHP) System Rep.	OSC	0	0	0	450
Absorption Chiller Replacement	OSC	0	0	0	275
Civic Centre Cycle Parking	OSC	60	0	0	0
Invest to Save schemes	SC	400	300	300	300
<u>IT Infrastructure</u>					
Aligned Assets	OSC	0	75	0	0
Environmental Asset Management	OSC	0	0	240	0
Revenue and Benefits	OSC	400	0	0	0
Capita Housing	OSC	100	0	0	0
ePayments Project	OSC	157	0	0	0
School Admission System	OSC	125	0	0	0
Planning&Public Protection Sys	OSC	200	0	0	550
Kofax Scanning	OSC	0	0	0	0
Spectrum Spatial Analyst Repla	OSC	165	0	0	0
Ancillary IT Systems	OSC	0	50	0	0
Youth Justice IT Systems	OSC	85	0	0	0
Replacement SC System	OSC	0	0	0	2,100
Project General	OSC	390	870	705	770
Data Centre Support Equipment	OSC	150	0	0	0
Network Switch Upgrade	OSC	0	0	200	0
IT Equipment	OSC	120	100	100	0
<u>Resources</u>					
Financial Systems	OSC	0	0	700	0
<u>Corporate</u>					
Acquisitions Budget	OSC	0	0	0	6,985
Capital Bidding Fund	OSC	0	0	0	1,186
Multi-Functioning Device (MFC)	OSC	600	0	0	0
Westminster Coroners Court	OSC	455	0	0	0
Housing Company	OSC/SC	16,491	6,883	0	0
Corporate Capital Contingency	OSC	0	0	0	4,834
Total Corporate Services		22,100	11,128	2,895	18,100

Please Note

1. Excludes budgets relating to future year announcements of Better Care Fund
 2. Includes indicative budgets relating to future year announcements of Transport for London Grant
- OSC = Overview and Scrutiny, CYP = Children and Young People, HCOP = Heathier Communities and Older People and SC = Sustainable Communities

Detailed Capital Programme 2020-24 Continued.....**Annex 3**

Department	Scrutiny	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Community and Housing					
<u>Adult Social Care</u>					
Telehealth	HCOP	39	0	0	0
<u>Housing</u>					
Disabled Facilities Grant	SC/HCOP	927	280	280	280
Learning Dsbility Aff Housing	SC/HCOP	488	633	462	145
<u>Libraries</u>					
Library Self Service	SC	350	0	0	0
West Barnes Library Re-Fit	SC	200	0	0	0
Library Management System	SC	0	0	140	0
Total Community and Housing		2,004	913	882	425

Department	Scrutiny	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Children, Schools and Families					
<u>All Sectors</u>					
Unallocated - Schools Capital maintenance	CYP	1,900	1,900	1,900	1,900
<u>Secondary</u>					
Harris Academy Wimbledon New School	CYP	300	0	0	0
<u>Special</u>					
Perseid - Schools Capital maintenance	CYP	8	0	0	0
Cricket Green School Expansion	CYP	100	0	0	0
Melrose Primary SEMH annexe 16	CYP	1,550	0	0	0
Melrose Secondary SEMH 14 Places	CYP	200	750	0	0
Harris Morden Sec Autism Unit	CYP	1,360	0	0	0
Further SEN Provision	CYP	288	0	0	0
Primary ASD base 1-20 places	CYP	100	0	0	0
Secondary SEMH/medical PRU	CYP	80	800	0	0
New ASD Provision	CYP	250	450	0	0
Melbury College - Healthy Schools	CYP	30	0	0	0
Total Children, Schools and Families		6,166	3,900	1,900	1,900

Please Note

1. Excludes budgets relating to future year announcements of Better Care Fund
 2. Includes indicative budgets relating to future year announcements of Transport for London Grant
- OSC = Overview and Scrutiny, CYP = Children and Young People, HCOP = Heathier Communities and Older People and SC = Sustainable Communities

Detailed Capital Programme 2020-24 Continued.....**Annex 3**

Department	Scrutiny	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Environmental and Regeneration					
Public Protection and Development					
P&D machines for emission-based charging	SC	500	0	0	0
Car Park Upgrades	SC	464	520	0	0
CCTV cameras and infrastructure upgrade	SC	140	699	480	0
Public Protection and Developm	SC	0	35	0	0
Street Scene and Waste					
Replacement of Fleet Vehicles	SC	584	300	300	300
Envir. Imps - Mechanical Street Washer	SC	75	0	0	0
Alley Gating Scheme	SC	30	30	30	30
Waste SLWP IT & Premises	SC	18	0	0	0
Waste Bins	SC	30	0	0	0
Replacement of Fleet Vehicles	SC	0	0	340	0
Sustainable Communities					
Street Tree Programme	SC	60	60	60	60
New street tree planting programme	SC	50	50	0	0
Street Lighting Replacement Prog.	SC	290	290	290	290
Casualty Reduction & Schools	SC	70	0	0	0
Traffic Schemes	SC	250	150	150	150
Surface Water Drainage	SC	69	69	69	69
Repairs to Footways	SC	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Maintain AntiSkid and Coloured Surface	SC	70	70	70	70
Borough Roads Maintenance	SC	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Highways bridges & structures	SC	480	260	260	260
Culverts Upgrade	SC	250	250	0	0
Unallocated TfL	SC	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300
Cycle access/parking	SC	10	0	0	0
Lost Rivers Repairs	SC	100	100	100	0
Mitcham Town Centre	SC	382	0	0	0
Figges Marsh	SC	55	0	0	0
Regeneration - Canons - Parks for People	SC	2,244	533	0	0
Wimbledon Public Realm Implementation	SC	500	500	500	0
Crowded Places-Hostile Vehicl	SC	268	0	0	0
Transportation Enhancements	SC	0	0	0	0
Morden TC Regeneration Match Funding	SC	2,000	2,500	1,500	0
Haydons Road Shop Front Improvement	SC	204	0	0	0
Christmas Lighting	SC	95	0	0	0
Vacant Premises Upgrade	SC	25	0	0	0
Wimbledon Park Lake Reservoir Safety	SC	1,318	0	0	0
Leisure Centre Plant & Machine	SC	250	250	250	250
Parks Investment	SC	300	300	300	300
Parks - Canons - Parks for People	SC	1,188	179	0	0
Merton Park Green Walks	SC	38	0	0	0
Abbey Recreation Ground	SC	40	0	0	0
New interactive water play feature at Wimbledon Park	SC	226	0	0	0
Wimbledon Park Surfacing of top entrance car park	SC	40	0	0	0
Paddling Pools (borough wide) OPTION 1	SC	90	90	90	0
Paddling Pools (borough wide) OPTION 2	SC	226	0	0	0
Mortuary Provision	SC	0	0	54	0
Total Environmental and Regeneration		16,530	10,735	8,343	5,279
Total Capital		46,799	26,676	14,020	25,704

Please Note

1. Excludes budgets relating to future year announcements of Better Care Fund
 2. Includes indicative budgets relating to future year announcements of Transport for London Grant
- OSC = Overview and Scrutiny, CYP = Children and Young People, HCOP = Heathier Communities and Older People and SC = Sustainable Communities

Annex 4

Growth/(Reductions) against Approved Programme 2020-23 and Indicative Programme 2023-24

Department	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Corporate Services	(6,823)	6,883	(13,105)	13,579
Community and Housing	0	0	0	0
Children, Schools and Families	200	750	0	0
Environment and Regeneration	3,683	3,231	3,442	1,272
Total	(2,940)	10,864	(9,663)	14,851

Department	Proposed Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22	Proposed Budget 2022-23	Proposed Budget 2023-24
Corporate Services				
Facilities	60	0	0	725
IT Infrastructure	0	0	(100)	(151)
Corporate	(6,883)	6,883	(13,005)	13,005
Total Corporate Services	(6,823)	6,883	(13,105)	13,579
Children, Schools and Families				
Special	200	750	0	0
Total Children, Schools and Families	200	750	0	0
Environmental and Regeneration				
Public Protection and Development	1,104	1,219	480	0
Street Scene and Waste	75	0	0	0
Sustainable Communities	2,504	2,012	2,962	1,272
Total Environmental and Regeneration	3,683	3,231	3,442	1,272
Total Capital	(2,940)	10,864	(9,663)	14,851

Indicative Capital Programme 2024-29**Annex 5**

Department		Indicative Budget 2024-25	Indicative Budget 2025-26	Indicative Budget 2026-27	Indicative Budget 2027-28	Indicative Budget 2028-29
Corporate Services						
Customer Contact Programme	OSC	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	0
Other Buildings - Capital Building Works	OSC	650	650	650	650	650
Invest to Save schemes	OSC	300	300	300	300	300
Aligned Assets	OSC	0	0	0	75	0
Environmental Asset Management	OSC	0	0	0	250	0
Revenue and Benefits	OSC	0	400	0	0	0
Capita Housing	OSC	0	100	0	0	0
ePayments Project	OSC	0	125	0	0	0
School Admission System	OSC	0	125	0	0	0
Planning&Public Protection Sys	OSC	0	0	0	0	550
Kofax Scanning	OSC	0	100	0	0	0
Spectrum Spatial Analyst Repla	OSC	0	200	0	0	0
Parking System	OSC	0	126	0	0	0
Ancillary IT Systems	OSC	0	0	50	0	0
Youth Justice IT Systems	OSC	100	0	0	0	0
Planned Replacement Programme	OSC	1,405	1,060	970	1,005	770
Financial Systems	OSC	0	0	0	0	700
Multi-Functioning Device (MFC)	OSC	600	0	0	0	600
Total Corporate Services		3,055	4,186	2,970	3,280	5,670
Community and Housing						
Disabled Facilities Grant	SC/HCOP	280	280	280	280	280
Library Self Service	SC	0	350	0	0	0
Library Management System	SC	0	0	0	140	0
Total Community and Housing		280	630	280	420	280
Children, Schools and Families						
Unallocated - Schools Capital maintenance	CYP	1,900	1,900	1,900	1,900	1,900
Total Children, Schools and Families		1,900	1,900	1,900	1,900	1,900
Environmental and Regeneration						
Pay and Display Machines	SC	60	0	0	0	0
Public Protection and Developmnt	SC	0	0	35	0	0
Replacement of Fleet Vehicles	SC	300	300	300	300	300
Alley Gating Scheme	SC	30	30	30	30	30
Waste SLWP IT & Premises	SC	0	42	0	0	0
Replacement of Fleet Vehicles	SC	0	3,956	0	0	0
Street Tree Programme	SC	60	60	60	60	60
Street Lighting Replacement Pr	SC	290	290	290	290	290
Traffic Schemes	SC	150	150	150	150	150
Surface Water Drainage	SC	69	69	69	69	69
Repairs to Footways	SC	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Maintain AntiSkid and Coloured Surface	SC	70	70	70	70	70
Borough Roads Maintenance	SC	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Highways bridges & structures	SC	260	260	260	260	260
Leisure Centre Plant & Machine	SC	250	250	250	250	250
Parks Investment	SC	300	300	300	300	300
Total Environmental and Regeneration		4,039	7,977	4,014	3,979	3,979
Total Capital		9,274	14,693	9,164	9,579	11,829

Capital Investment Strategy

ANNEX 6

1. Overview

This annex is new to the Capital Strategy and details the approach adopted in non-core investment activity and sets out how this will help the Authority to deliver its core functions. The definition of Investment covers all financial assets of a local authority as well as non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily to generate financial returns, such as investment property portfolios.

The annex will detail the security, liquidity and yield of investments and consider risk management and capacity, skills and culture.

2. Detail

During the 2020-21 financial year the Authority is planning the following investment activity:

- i) Section 5 of the Treasury Management Strategy sets out the Authority's short to medium term Investment Strategy. This strategy focusses on short to medium term low risk investments.
- ii) To complement the Authority's investment activity it has established a Wholly Owned Housing Company (Merantun) to provide an investment opportunity for the Authority. This longer term investment strategy is of higher risk, will contribute towards the regeneration and affordable housing activity of the Authority and provide higher returns.
- iii) The Authority has also undertaken a long term investment in CHAS 2013 via the purchase of a £1 share, which generates considerable returns via dividend payments.

From 1 April 2018 (financial year 2018/19) the International Financial Reporting Standard 9 (Financial Instruments) came into force. Its purpose was to make accounting for financial instruments more transparent. By the end of financial year 2019/20 the Council will have a financial investment in the wholly owned housing company of £1.91 million. This investment will appear in the Council's accounts but will not appear in the Group Accounts (i.e those for the Council and its two subsidiaries) as it will be eliminated through the consolidation process which will offset the investment by the Council against the share capital in the Housing Company. There will however be an explanatory note added as part of documentation and this will consider the risk involved in such an investment.

3. Security

The activity in Section 2 of this Annex have and will result in:

- i) Short to Medium Term investment of available cash resources in low risk low return investment.
- ii) Financial limits have been set on the Maximum sums currently available to the Housing Company:
 - a. Loan to the Wholly Owned Housing Company up to £13.766 million combined, with

- b. Equity estimated circa £12.41 million (£8.413 Land Equity and £4.0million Working Capital - funding currently under review)

The Authority utilised two externally developed models and a detailed business case to underpin the proposals to assess the financial viability. Legal documentation requires that all assets are returned to Merton at the cessation of the company.

Sensitivity analysis has been undertaken and vulnerability has been identified in respect of the RPI for housing rentals and house prices – these market factors will be monitored closely.

- iii) The £1 investment in CHAS 2013 provides continued secure returns to the authority from this wholly owned organisation.

4. Liquidity

- i) Short to medium term cash investments can be liquidated easily.
- ii) Investments are held in CHAS 2013 Limited and Merantun. It is not currently envisaged that these investments need to be redeemed in the short to medium term. If such a need did arise the following example demonstrates the flexibility available to the council:
- iii) Merantun – the following three approaches are possible:
 - a. Sites could be sold by the company at a profit once planning permission has been obtained
 - b. the business model proposed development of housing on four sites within the first three years, at this juncture housing can be sold at any time to generate receipts through to the Council
 - c. The Housing Company itself could be sold

The authority has a loan with MSJCB and intends to enter into a loan with Merantun, should the Authority need to liquidate these, loans could be sold.

5. Yield

5.1 Expected yield:

- i) Section 5 of the Treasury Management Strategy details the yield expected from short to medium term cash investments
- ii) Detailed financial modelling has been undertaken for Merantun as part of Capital forecasting and the use of specialised models have evaluated the impact on and return to the Authority. The following return is currently anticipated:
 - a. The Loan to Merantun will be made at a rate 6.5+% (*loan amount, timing/flexibility and interest rate are currently under review*)
 - b. The Model Assessed the Internal Rate of Return as 6.39% (*currently under review*)
- iii) Revenue returns from dividends and use of intellectual property from CHAS 213 are built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In assessing whether investment assets retain sufficient value to provide security of investment officers will be mindful of the fair value model in the International Accounting Standard 40: Investment Property.

6. Borrowing in Advance of Need

- 6.1 Section 4.2 of the Treasury Management Strategy details the current and future level of under borrowing by the Authority and sets out the Authority's borrowing strategy linked to this and internal borrowing.
- 6.2 Current indications are that interest rates are likely to rise making it more expensive to borrow. Consideration will be given to the timing of required borrowing to minimise the cost to the Authority and with regard to the current debt portfolio (detailed in Section 4.5 of the Treasury Management Strategy)

7. Risk Assessment

- 7.1 The council recognises that its risk appetite to achieve the corporate priorities identified within its business plan could be described in general as an "informed and cautious" approach. Where significant risk arises, we will take effective control action to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.
- 7.2 It is also recognised that a higher level of risk may need to be accepted, for example, to generate higher returns from loans and investment. To offset this there are areas where the council will maintain a very cautious approach for example in matters of compliance with the law, and public confidence in the council, supporting the overall "informed and cautious" position on risk.
- 7.3 Within its portfolio of risk Merton has:
- i) Short to medium term low return, low risk cash investment
 - ii) Medium to long term investment in CHAS 2013 which is providing sizeable dividends and returns for use of intellectual property, and
 - iii) Medium to long term higher risk investment in a wholly owned housing company. Stress testing has identified the sensitivity around increases in rental income and house prices. The length of time investment is required for also enhances risk, flexibility is available in the timing of site and property disposal, but decisions by the company would be made on a commercial basis.

The greatest risk exposure to the Authority is when the sites are being developed after obtaining planning permission. The enhanced value of the site will not be realisable until the housing units are completed as the greatest value added will be from completed site. Once units are built there is flexibility over those sold and those retained for rental. Rental units present a longer term business model which should provide dividend income. Early marketing and sales coupled with progressing rent guarantees will be used to minimise the risk to the company and the council

8. Capacity, Skills and Culture

The Authority will where appropriate, buy in expertise to progress loan and investment activity. It is also appropriate in some cases to develop expertise internally.

Within the Business model for Merantun it is recognised that the company may set up joint ventures with trusted partners for the development of some larger sites that would require specialist land assembly skills and larger sums of cash to assist with delivering the development if this is deemed to be appropriate and support the business case. It would contract with construction specialists and construction companies for the development of sites – this should minimise the risk exposure during site development. It is not envisaged that this approach will be adopted for the four sites currently being progressed.

Committee: Children and Young People OSC

Date: 10 February 2020

Wards: All

Subject: Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) Annual Report 2018/19

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member: Cllr Kelly Braund, Cllr Eleanor Stringer

Contact officer: Joanna Georgiades

Recommendations:

- A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides members of the panel with an overview of performance of the Merton Safeguarding Children Board for the year 2018-9 as contained within the annual report.
- 1.2 The (MSCB) is set up under the Children Act 2004 and has the following main objectives:
- To coordinate what is done by each agency represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Merton; and
 - To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by those agencies for that purpose.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The report, contained as Appendix 1, presents an annual update on what is going well, the key challenges and the actions that we will take to address these challenges.
- 2.2. The vision of the MSCB is that the Board works to ensure that *Everyone in Merton Council does Everything they can to ensure that Every Child is Safe, Supported and Successful*. This annual report is an evaluation of our progress towards achieving this aim as well as an assessment of the overall impact of the Board especially with regard to our key priorities.
- 2.3. This report presents activity and performance data from 2018/19 around the identified priorities of:

- **Managing the arrangements for the transition from MSCB to the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership.**
- **Think Family** – to support children and adults in our most vulnerable families to reduce risk and ensure improved outcomes.
- **Supporting Vulnerable Adolescents** – adolescence is a time of significant change for all young people.
- **Early Help** – To develop an early help system that is responsive and effectively prevents escalation of concerns.

2.4. Underpinning these four priorities for the MSCB is the crosscutting theme of **Neglect.**

2.5. The annual report recognises that the partnership has continued to drive improvement in practice through the delivery of the MSCB Business Plan 2018/19, whilst overseeing the development of new partnership arrangements for safeguarding children and young people in Merton.

2.6. Partners have worked together to agree an approach that places children, young people and families at the centre of safeguarding.

2.7. A mature relationship of respectful challenge between agencies continues to drive improvement in quality of services, and the lived experience of service users.

2.8. Key achievements of the MSCB include:

- Joint working with *Safer Merton* to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach in response to domestic abuse in Merton.
- The approval of a Parental Mental Health Protocol, recognising the impact of parental vulnerability on children and young people and the need for effective support.
- The pilot of a neglect identification and assessment tool to support professionals identify and assess children at risk of, or experiencing, neglect. The screening tool was well received and will be rolled out within the 2019-20 business plan.

2.9. The MSCB has also continued to build on achievements from the previous year in the support of vulnerable adolescents with a Multi-agency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation Protocol to embed a robust approach to the identification and response to children, young people and families affected by exploitation.

3 CHILDREN, SCHOOLS & FAMILIES

4 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 No specific implications arising from this report.

5 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. For the period of the annual report: Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for their area and specifies the organisations and individuals

(other than the local authority) that should be represented. The statutory objectives and functions of the LSCB Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 are:

(a) to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and

(b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

5.2. It is the statutory responsibility of the Independent Chair of the MSCB to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles. The report should also be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the health and well-being board.

5.3. The report should provide;

- A rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services
- Identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action.
- Include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period
- Information on the outcome of assessments on the effectiveness of Board partners' responses to child sexual
- An analysis of how the LSCB partners have used their data to promote service improvement for vulnerable children and families, including in respect of sexual abuse.
- Appropriate data on children missing from care, and how the LSCB is addressing the issue.
- Contributions made to the LSCB by partner agencies and details of what the LSCB has spent

6 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No specific implications arising from this report.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No specific implications arising from this report.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No specific implications arising from this report.

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

9.1 Appendix 1: Annual report of Merton Safeguarding Children Board 2018/19.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1. None

Annual report of the
Merton Safeguarding Children Board
2018/19



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1.0

Chair's Introduction

2018-2019 has been a time of considerable change for Merton. In May 2018 we welcomed Rachael Wardell as the new Director of Children, Schools and Families, following the departure of her predecessor Yvette Stanley. We also saw the reorganisation of Merton Clinical Commissioning Group so that they are now part of the South West London Alliance which includes Merton, Wandsworth, Richmond and Kingston. In addition, our colleagues in the Metropolitan Police moved into Basic Command Units, so that Merton is part of a four-borough command structure which includes Wandsworth, Richmond and Kingston.

I am pleased to say that our partnership remains strong and that we are all committed to the key tasks of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare, as well as being assured of the quality and effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding practice across Merton.

The Board's strengths are identified as follows:

- The MSCB is a mature partnership that is open to learning and challenge
- There is senior representation and engagement from agencies
- The MSCB continues to have a relentless focus on working together to keep children safe
- Excellent multi-agency representation at the Annual conference and comprehensive multi-agency safeguarding training programme.
- The Board has clear priorities with an aligned work programme that supports their delivery.

The areas identified for additional attention are as follows:

- We need to strengthen our focus on performance, ensuring that we are able to monitor our progress against key performance areas
- To strengthen our ability to evidence the impact of our work on the lived experience of children and young people. In order to address this, the MSCB will review and refresh its quality assurance and performance framework.
- Embedding the new Partnership arrangements.

Our agreed areas of focus during 2018-2019 were:

1. Managing the arrangements for the transition from Merton Local Safeguarding Children Board to the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership

Across England, local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) will undergo the most significant change since their inception. Following on from the Wood Review and the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Board will see the dissolution of LSCBs and the establishment of Safeguarding Children Partnerships. In addition to reviewing the progress that the Board has made to date, we will need to develop clear plans about the future shape and direction of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership. To achieve this, a multi-agency task and finish group was established. The purpose of this group is to develop proposals for the new arrangements for the formation of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership, in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017. We provide a statement regarding the work of the Partnership task and finish group in section 2.1 of this report.

2. Think Family - to support children and adults in our most vulnerable families to reduce risk and ensure improved outcomes.

The Board is seeking to drive improvements in our practice with vulnerable families so that stigma is reduced and families with poor mental health and substance misuse issues will feel confident in seeking help and support. We are also seeking assurance that practitioners are supported with the skills and confidence required to engage with all types of families. This work includes

- Up-skilling practitioners so that they are able to use a range of strategies and techniques to effectively engage children and families; including demonstrating an understanding of the barriers to effective engagement and work with families to overcome these.
- Ensuring, that practitioners are alert to practitioner biases related to social class, affluence, ethnicity and other factors so that all families receive a child-centred proactive response.

The Board is also seeking to further strengthen the role of education as a critical part of the team around the family.



3. Supporting Vulnerable Adolescents - developing a strategic response to adolescent risk and vulnerability.

We know that, for some young people, adolescence is a time of particular vulnerability. We are determined to support adolescents who are at risk of:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE),
- Children who go missing from home/school/care
- Children and young people who are at risk radicalisation and violent extremism,
- Children at risk of serious youth violence and gangs
- Children at risk of criminal and other forms of exploitation including county lines, peer on peer abuse and harmful sexual behaviour.
- Self-harm and poor mental health including risk of suicide

The Board is seeking to develop a strategic response to Contextual Safeguarding. In particular we are seeking to develop a coordinated response to adolescent risk/harm which occurs outside of the family home in spaces such as the neighbourhood, school, community centres and housing estates.

The Board would also like to be more systematic regarding its work in listening to children and allowing them to shape the services that are provided to them. The Merton User Voice Strategy outlines the variety of ways in which the views and opinions of children and young people are collected and responded to. The Board wants to ensure that children's voice and experience is an integral part of its quality assurance activities so that the impact of our work with children, young people and their families is measured effectively.

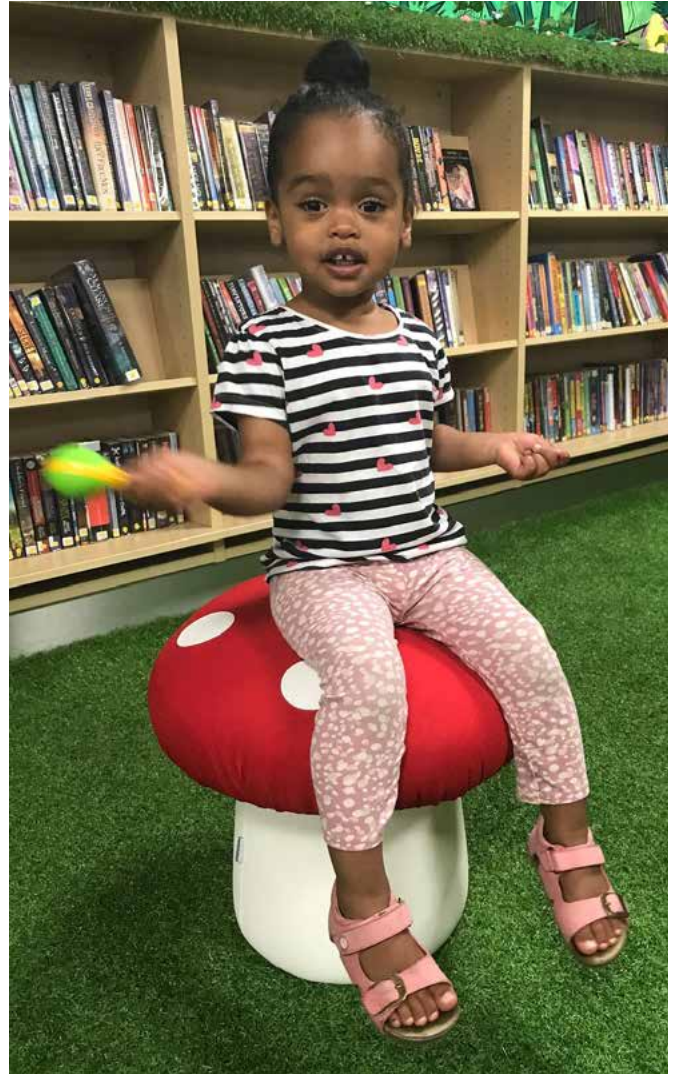
4. Early Help - To develop an early help system that is responsive, and effectively provides help to prevent the escalation of concerns.

Merton has reviewed its Children Young People and Families Well-Being Model. We are now reviewing our Early Help and Preventative work; in particular we are exploring models for coordinating preventative and early help across the well-being model. As part of our review we will:

- Consider the interface between our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Early Help arrangements
- Review our service offer at all levels of the Model and Engage partners in discussions on thresholds,
- Clarify Step-Up Step Down processes and the tools to support early help assessments and interventions (including alignment with Signs of Safety/signs of well-being and the Merton Practice Model)
- Review our partnership quality assurance of early help.

I would like to thank all of the MSCB partner agencies for their hard work and continued commitment to making a difference for Merton's children, young people and their families.

Keith Makin
MSCB Chair
January 2020



2.0

Progress of MSCB Business Plan 2018-19

This section is a progress update regarding what has been achieved so far, as well as, an indication of the work that still needs to be done in relation to the Business Plan.

2.1 Managing transition arrangements from the Merton Local Safeguarding Children Board to the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership

A task and finish group was established by the Business Implementation Group and commissioned to consult with members of the MSCB and key stakeholders to agree proposals for the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Agreement.

Between April 2018 and January 2019, the task and finish group met five times with membership including representation from:

- The London Borough of Merton
- Merton Clinical Commissioning Group
- The Police,
- Education
- Housing
- Public Health
- Voluntary organisations



The MSCB sought to build on an established track record of an outstanding Local Safeguarding Children Board and determined the following vision for the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership:

- Decisive strategic leadership provided by an independent person who will serve as the chair for the partnership
- The needs of children and their families to remain at the very centre of its work. This means that the Partnership will be intentional about listening to the voices of children, young people and their families; and, where appropriate, allowing their needs and concerns to inform service design and delivery. A young Independent scrutineer will be appointed to ensure effectiveness of this work.
- A strong culture of accountability and challenge that results in increased understanding across the partnership and measurable improvements in the quality of practice. This will be assured by the commissioning of an independent scrutineer who will review the performance of the partnership and its impact.
- A commitment from Statutory Partners Relevant Agencies and Co-opted members to the priority of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare, evident in their contribution to the work of the partnership
- Effective and consistent engagement by senior strategic leaders, who are able to influence safeguarding in their individual agencies
- Collaborative and effective working relationships between partners and relevant agencies with strong evidence of this at both strategic and operational levels
- Valued contributions and participation by voluntary sector and lay/co-opted members
- The work and priorities of the partnership is relevant and is informed by a detailed analysis of local need, to target and support the most vulnerable children

- The delivery of tangible, positive outcomes for children and their families
- A learning and improvement framework is committed to and underpinning continuous improvement in the quality of safeguarding practice

The final draft of the Partnership Agreement was presented to the Board for approval in March 2019. The agreement was approved by the Board and then submitted to the three Statutory Safeguarding Partners (the London Borough of Merton, Merton CCG and the Police) to be approved through their governance procedures between April and June 2019.

The Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership is ambitious to continue as a robust multi-agency partnership that enables all children and young people to be safe in their homes and communities, and to fulfil their potential. The new Partnership will coordinate the work of all agencies and ensure that this work is effective in achieving the best outcomes for Merton's children and young people.

2.2 Think Family – to support children and adults in our most vulnerable families to reduce risk and ensure improved outcomes.

The Board's second priority for 2018-2019 was to support families with particular vulnerabilities such as:

- families facing domestic violence and abuse (DVA),
- mental health issues that impact on parenting,
- parents whose substance misuse put their child at risk of abuse or neglect
- parents whose physical or learning disabilities impact on their ability to effectively care for their children

The Board has also agreed that there will be a focus on neglect as a cross-cutting theme.

a) Domestic Violence and Abuse

The Board approved and published guidance to professionals regarding domestic violence and abuse in June 2018 which aims to:

- Protect children who are at risk of harm from witnessing and experiencing DVA
- Support the victims/survivors to assist them to protect themselves and their child/ren; and
- Hold the abusive partner accountable for their violent and coercive behaviour and to provide them with opportunities to change.

The agreed guidance is for use by all practitioners who have contact with children and with adults who are parents / carers, and who therefore have responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The MSCPB works closely with Safer Merton in order to ensure that our response to DVA is joined-up and represents a genuinely think family approach.

b) Parental Mental Health

To improve the way that we work with families with parents whose poor mental health adversely affects their ability to care for their children, the MSCB approved a Parental Mental Health Protocol. This protocol was drafted jointly by Merton Safeguarding Children Board, Merton Safeguarding Adults Board, and includes Merton Clinical Commissioning Group, and South West London and St Georges Mental Health Trust.

The protocol promotes good multi-agency working; including appropriate information sharing, joint assessment of need through the use of the Merton Child, Young Person and Family Well-Being Model and making effective use of Team Around the Family (TAF). The aim is to provide effective support for those parents with mental health problems, who are in need of additional help in caring for their children and young people. This work should be underpinned

by working in partnership with parents and children and applying a 'Think Family' approach.

The Parental Mental Health protocol is supported by an implementation plan which is monitored by the Board's Quality Assurance Sub-Group.

c) Work on Neglect

As part of the implementation of the MSCB's Neglect strategy, the MSCB's Training Officer developed a tool to assist multi-agency practitioners with the identification and assessment of neglect. In order to improve the effectiveness of our joint work in cases of neglect, it was agreed that the developed Evidence Based Neglect Screening Tool be piloted across Merton's safeguarding system.

The purpose of the pilot was to:

- test the effectiveness of the tool in deepening the understanding of multi-agency practitioners' understanding of neglect.
- test the effectiveness of the tool supporting practitioners in identifying and assessing child neglect.
- test the effectiveness of the tool in supporting the referral and escalation of cases to Children's Social Care
- test the effectiveness of the tool in discussing concerns about neglect with parents and carers
- test the 'usability' of the tool and to learn from practitioners how the tool can be improved.

The Quality Assurance Sub-group agreed that the tool would be piloted in the early help/preventative services, in accordance with the Merton Child and Family Well-being Model 2017, during the first part of 2018.



The Pilot included teams from the following service areas:

- Early Years overseen by the Early Years' Service Manager
- Community Health Services overseen by the Named Nurse CLCH London
- Transforming Families and family support service overseen by the Assistant Team Manager,
- An identified primary school namely Abbotsbury Primary School.

The feedback from the pilot was very positive.

The Evidence Based Neglect Screening Tool is not a tick-box process. Practitioners are required to evidence their concerns as well as providing evidence for what is working well for the family. Professionals can rate their concerns in each area but the strength of the rating sits with the evidence. The feedback from the pilot of the tool has demonstrated this strength.

Practitioners found the tool to be user-friendly, and for those who had the opportunity, a good communication tool that can be used when discussing concerns about neglect with families, which also supports the basis of a child centred intervention.

The tool has shown a number of benefits:

- Capturing the complex nature of neglect, giving practitioners the opportunity to focus and evidence specific areas of strengths and need.
- Effective for use with both children and young people.
- Useful in a multi-agency setting (Team Around the Child/Family, Child In Need, etc.) as a common framework for discussion.
- Highlights the different experiences of children in the same family, and the meaning of those children in the context of their own home.
- Valuable as a supervision tool to discuss in detail cases, particularly those cases where practitioners get stuck, as it helps highlight, with the aid of chronologies, the cumulative nature of neglect and its intrusive and pervasive impact on the lives of children.

Following the successful pilot of the tool, it was recommended that the Evidence Based Neglect Screening Tool, is adopted across agencies and practitioners working in Universal Services with children and families, Early Intervention and statutory intervention. The MSCB agreed with this recommendation and decided that the current MSCB Neglect Strategy be revised to include use of the neglect tool.

It is expected that the neglect strategy will be revised in 2019-2020.

2.3 Supporting Vulnerable Adolescents – developing a strategic response to adolescent risk and vulnerability.

As part of its work to support vulnerable adolescents, the MSCB approved a Multi-agency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation Protocol (MARVE). The MARVE Protocol sets out the multi-agency arrangements for identifying and responding to children, young people and families affected by exploitation in the London Borough of Merton. This protocol builds on the significant work already taking place within Merton and sets out how all agencies will work together to ensure the most effective and coordinated response to exploitation of children. The document draws from a number of current protocols and strategies to combine and integrate these into one Exploitation Protocol.

The protocol mandates the development of a MARVE Panel which will be a Multi-Agency Operational Panel responsible for coordinating information sharing and multi-agency interventions to disrupt and respond to child



sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence. The MARVE Panel Meeting has been established to provide a comprehensive approach to tackling issues of exploitation and harm of or by children and young people across the Merton area. The MARVE Panel Meeting is the key mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations will co-operate and work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in effectively tackling exploitation, vulnerability and risk. It is co-chaired by the Police and the Head of the Adolescent and Family Service within Children's Social Care.

The Panel combines the previous adolescent panels operated in the borough:

- Multiagency Child Sexual Exploitation (MASE)
- Persons of Concern (POC)
- Young Offender Management (YOM)
- Gangs Multi-agency Panel (GMAP)
- Transforming Families

The aim is to ensure a joined-up, multi-agency approach to all forms of child exploitation.

2.4 Early Help - To develop an early help system that is responsive and effectively prevents escalation of concerns.

Merton is committed to providing help to children and families at the earliest opportunity: early in the life of the problem and early in the life of the child. A great deal of work has been undertaken to ensure that our early help offer is responsive and effectively prevents the escalation of safeguarding concerns. In the summer months of 2019, Merton will be reshaping the Children, Schools and Families' early help work and service offer. A project board has been set up and a range of task and finish groups have been commissioned to steer our work over the next few months.

Throughout 2018 and early 2019, Merton has been reviewing the current early help offer for children and young people aged between 0 to 25 and their families, and how this is delivered and managed.

It is expected that the culmination of this this work will result in:

- An improved early help offer for families with children and young people age 0 – 25 which evidences outcomes and impact
- a proposed new Family Wellbeing Service which will bring together a range of functions from across different teams including : 0 to 5s Supporting Families Team, Bond Road, Transforming Families, the Short-breaks Service, Early Years and Common Assessment Practice Development, Family Information/Local Offer, Early Years Business Support and the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Advisor function for schools

The proposed new Family Wellbeing Service will have its own "front door" and receive referrals as well as enquiries. The service will have a navigation function within the MASH and there will be close liaison to ensure best practice and robust decision making around the application of thresholds.

Merton is very excited to be developing and enhancing our current early help offer which represents a very ambitious transformation programme and will involve several teams and functions across the Department. This significant shift means early help will be the forthcoming Merton Safeguarding Children's Partnership's first priority for 2019-2021.

3.0

Local context and need of the childhood population for Merton¹

3.1 Merton the place

Merton is an outer London borough situated to the south west of central London, neighbouring the boroughs of Croydon, Kingston, Lambeth, Sutton and Wandsworth. The London Borough of Merton is comprised of 20 wards and covers an area of approximately 14.7 square miles and at 2018, has a population of just over 209,000 residents living in 84,000 properties.

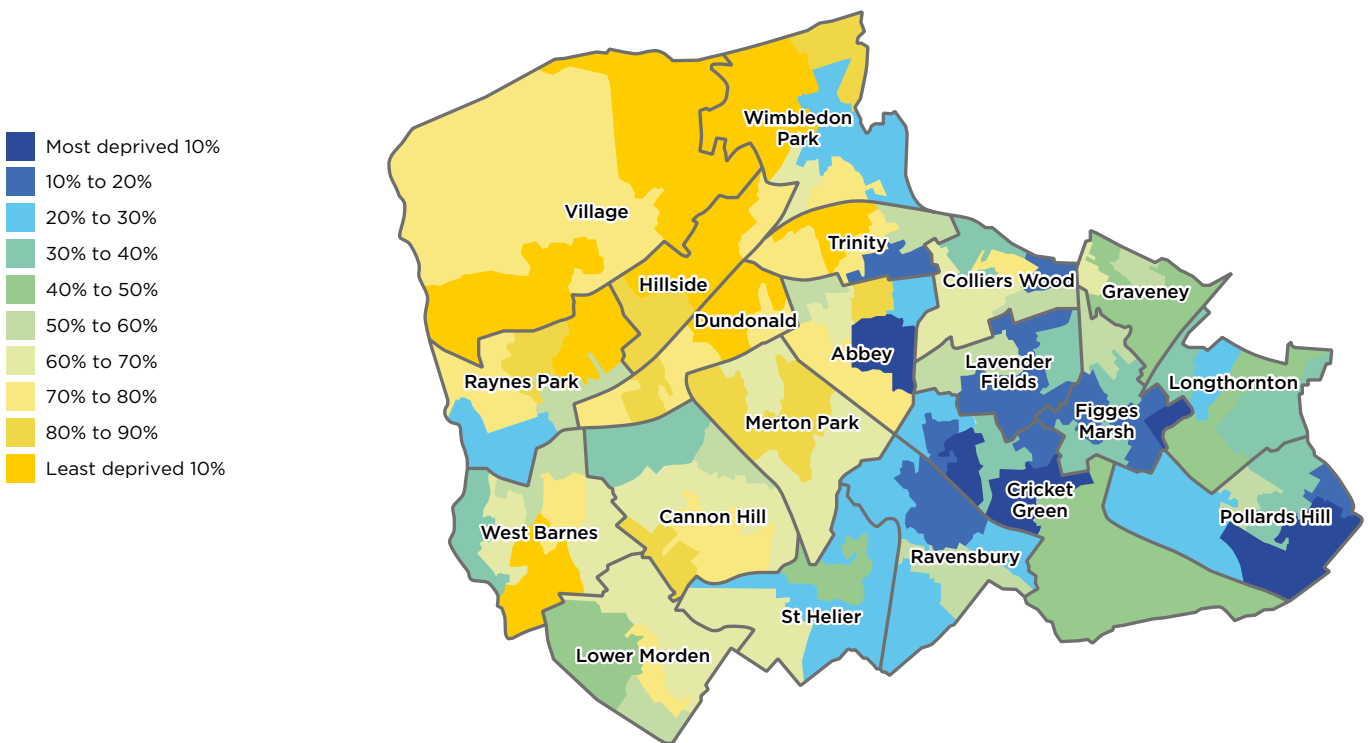
- Primary school children aged between 5 and 10 will have increased by 20%,
- Secondary school children, aged 11 to 15 will have increased by 13%.

Historically there was a 40% net increase in births from 2,535 in 2002 to a peak of 3507 in 2012 and is approximated to be at 3178 by 2020. The birth rate, together with other demographic factors such as migration of families into the borough,

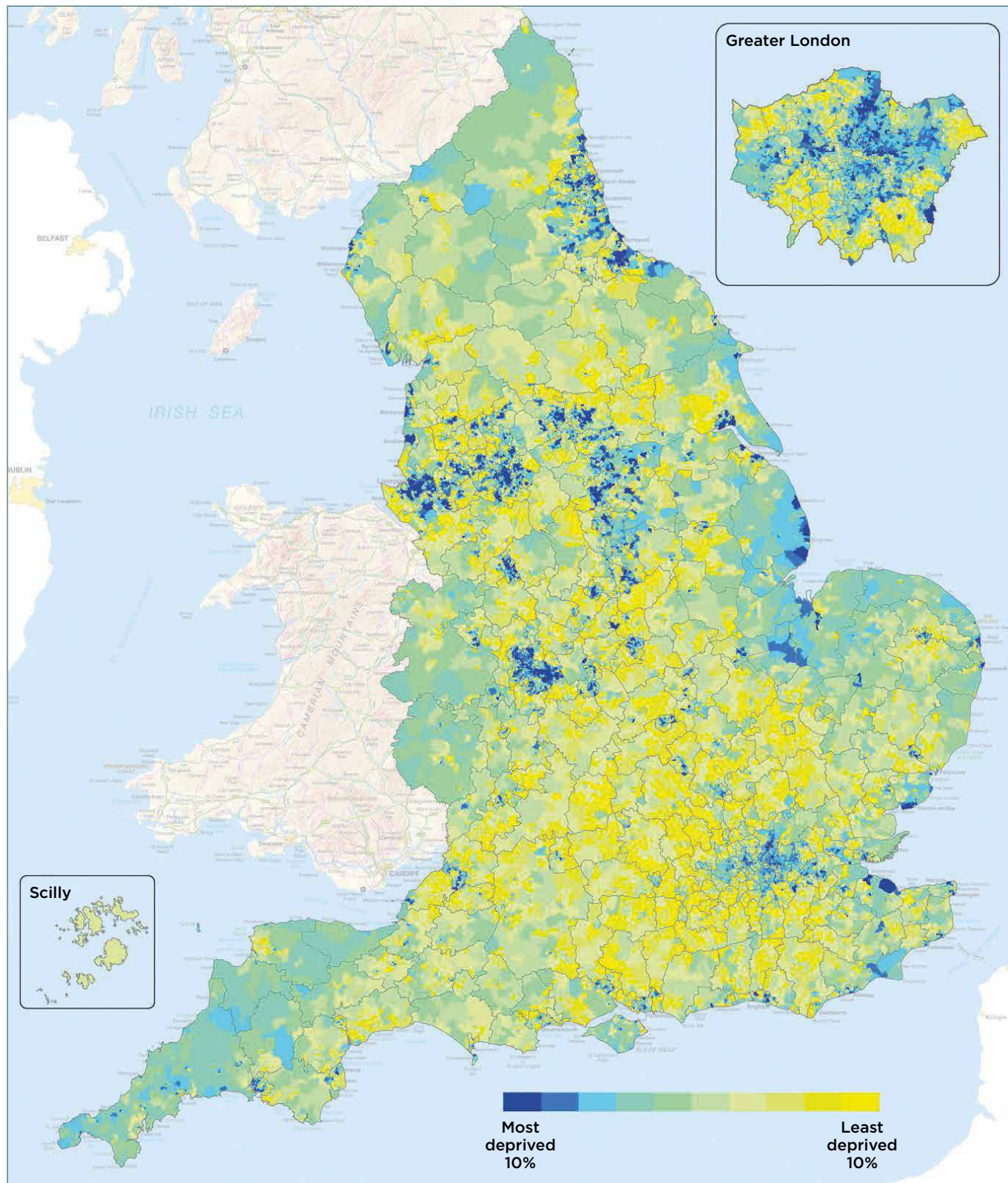
has already created the need for more school places, and puts pressure on early years and pre-school services, children’s social care and early intervention.

Predominantly suburban in character, Merton has three main town centres; Wimbledon, Mitcham and Morden. There are pockets of deprivation within the borough mainly in the eastern wards and some smaller pockets in the central wards (Mitcham and Morden towns). These wards have multiple deprivations, with high scores on income deprivation, unemployment and limited educational attainment. Five of Merton’s 20 wards are amongst the 30% most deprived areas across England for children. This means 37% of Merton school pupils are living in an area of deprivation (30% most deprived, IDACI 2015). Since 2010 we have seen an increase of 32% of children who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) (2010, 2881 children, 2016, 3817 FSM children).

Merton Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index 2015



UK Indices of Deprivation



Merton has a rich mix of ethnicity, culture, and languages. GLA data at 2018 puts Merton's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population as 76,800, meaning BAME groups make up just under 38% of the population

Like many councils across the country, over the past few years the council has experienced a significant increase in EHCPs (Education and Health Care Plans) for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) children and related placements. The number of Merton pupils with an EHCP has grown over the last five years at a faster rate than London, Statistical Neighbours and National averages. In January 2018, there were 1490 pupils attending Merton Schools with an EHCP; as at January 2019 this number increased to 1769, representing an increase of 279 EHCPs.

Table 1: Number of Recorded EHCPs - Merton Residents

Jan' 2016	Jan' 2017	Jan' 2018	Jan' 2019
1075	1242	1490	1769

3.2 Merton's Children in Need, Children with a Protection Plan and those Looked After

3.2.1 Children In Need

Merton's Child in Need (CIN) rate per 10,000 as at the 31st March 2019 is 287.7; this is lower than the London average of 350.7 and is also lower than the National average of 334.2. We are also lower than our statistical neighbours (SN)² who are at 299.33. See table 2 below

Table 2: Increases in CIN rate between 2013 and 2018

Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Merton 2018-19	SN 2018-19	London 2018-19	National 2018-19
CIN Rate	355	338	411	287	439	288	299	351	334

Source: LAIT Characteristics of Children in Need, 2018-2019 Main Tables



² According to the Children's Services Statistical Neighbour Benchmarking Tool, Merton's statistical neighbours are Barnet, Ealing, Enfield, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Reading, Redbridge, Sutton and Wandsworth.

3.2.2 Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan

Rates of Children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Merton in 2018-2019 is slightly higher than the London rate which is 84.1; the Merton rate is 84.4. Merton remains lower than the national rate which is 99.3. Merton is higher than the rates of our statistical neighbours who are at 76.8. Please see table 3 below.

Table 3: Rate of Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan

Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Merton 2018-19	SN 2018-19	London 2018-19	National 2018-19
Rate per 10,000	29.9	27.2	53.8	84.4	76.8	84.1	99.3

Source: LAIT Characteristics of Children in Need, 2018-2019 Main Tables

As at 31st March 2019, the number of children subject to a child protection plan in Merton was 220. The number of children who started on a plan during the year 2018-2019 was 202. The number of children subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time was 35.

3.2.3 Looked After Children

Merton continues to have a population of looked after children with a high proportion of adolescent young people. Whilst a high number of these young people are unaccompanied asylum seekers, factors such as housing and anti-social behaviour are also impacting on the number of adolescents in our care.

On 31st March 2019, there were 157 looked after children. This compares to 154 looked after children in 2018. In the year 2018-19 there were 72 new admissions into care. This represents a 19% decrease on 2017-18. A large proportion of starters (48) were aged 16 and over. This is double the national proportion of starters in this age range. Merton's rate per 10,000 population remains stable and we continue to have one of the lowest population rates nationally (here are only six (four in London) local authorities with a rate per 10,000 less than Merton).



Table 4: Numbers and rates of children looked after as at 31st March

England and London totals are rounded to the nearest 10.

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Rate per 10,000	Number	Rate per 10,000	Number	Rate per 10,000	Number	Rate per 10,000	Number	Rate per 10,000
Merton	156	34	163	35	152	33	154	33	157	15
London	9,980	52	9,860	51	9,900	50	9,890	49	5,480	27
National	69,470	60	70,400	60	72,590	62	75,420	64	31,680	27

Table 5: Number of Children who started to be Looked After during the year ending 31st March

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Merton	107	122	100	86	72
% increase / decrease year on year	-6%	14%	-18%	-14%	-16.3%

Source: SSDA 903. 2018-2019

In 2019 there were 324 placements. Children are looked after in a variety of settings; foster care, children's homes, residential special schools, and a small number are in hospital settings. Some children in our care are placed in secure settings. At 31 March 2019, 72% of looked after children were placed in foster care. This is just below the national figure of 73%. 44% children were placed with in house foster carers, representing 144 placements. This is a decrease on the previous year. This continues to be an area of scrutiny for us due to the impact on budget, but also due the fact that agency placements are often outside of the borough. The most common use of agency placements is for adolescents, as a number of our in house carers are approved to take foster children up to the age of 10 years only. The Access to Resources Service is committed to targeted recruitment of foster carers who are approved to care for teenage children. However, this is a pan-London issue, with many agencies and Local Authorities competing for a small number of eligible carers.

The DfE SSD903 return gathers 'in touch' information for all care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 years. For this return the definition is that there is 'contact' between your local authority and the young person eligible for care leaver support around 3 months before and one month after the young person's birthday.

Table 6: Care Leavers in Touch

Merton	Number	%	%
Yes	110	86%	88%
No	5	4%	7%
Service No Longer Required	12	9%	2%
Young Person Refuses Contact	1	1%	3%
Young Person Returned Home	0	0%	Not available

Source: SSDA 903. 2018-2019

Table 7: Percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

The percentage of care leavers who were in education, employment or training

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Merton	44%	58%	60%	45%	79%
National	Not Available	49%	50%	51%	59%

Source: SSDA 903. 2018-2019

The number total number of care leavers in Merton as of 31st March 2019 was 33 young people. The number of these young people who were engaged in employment, education or training is 26 representing approximately 79% of care leavers. This represents a significant increase which is partly due to the relatively low numbers of young people involved; as table 7 shows, this is a national trend.

Care Leavers in Suitable accommodation

Accommodation is to be regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people.

Table 8: Percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Merton	66%	80%	91%	87%	88%
London	83%	82%	79%	81%	83%
National	81%	83%	84%	84%	85%

Source: SSDA 903. 2018-2019

3.3 Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation: Summary Activity to address CSE in 2018 and 2019

In early 2018, a review of Adolescent Panels was undertaken to consider opportunities for streamlining the attendance and potential duplication across the partnership. This review incorporated interviews of chairs and scrutiny of membership and case lists across Multiagency Sexual Exploitation, Missing, Children Missing Education, Youth Offender Management, Gang Multiagency, Transforming Families, Looked After Children and Antisocial Behaviour panels. The review supported an integration of most of the panels overseeing adolescent risk, vulnerability and exploitation.

Furthermore, PPYP commissioned the Board Manager and the CSE Lead to undertake a piece of work to help the Sub-Group to understand why there are so few boys identified as being at risk of CSE. This found that vulnerable boys experience multiple forms of exploitation that does not readily 'fit' into the CSE framework. The mapping identified that groups of boys are exposed to multiple forms of harm and exploitation. Our current responses look at these boys as perpetrators but not as victims.

In addition, these young people are considered at a range of different panels which review part of the risk (normally around offending) but not the

whole risk (especially not victimisation). When this group of boys are considered as victims of multiple forms of exploitation, it is clear that their needs, as vulnerable boys, are not currently being fully assessed or met. There is a need for early intervention when these children are younger. There is strong evidence that targeting begins when children are of primary school age.

Also in 2018, Children's Social Care and the MSCB were asked to review a number of cases where there had been sexual assaults on girls, perpetrated by girls. It became clear that the current harmful sexual behaviour protocol was not understood by all professionals in contact with these cases. It is believed that as a result of gender-bias the oversight of the risks posed by the girls that caused the harm was potentially missed.

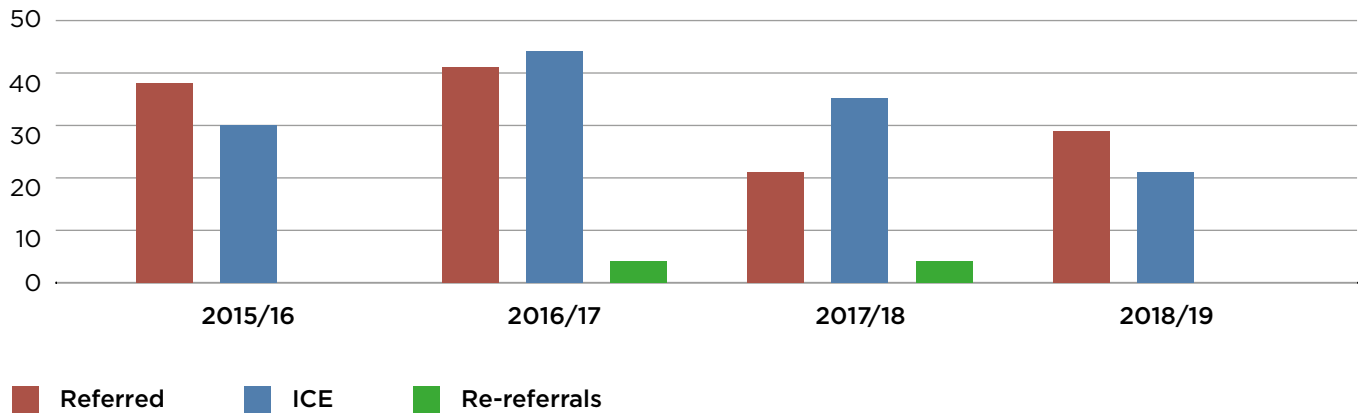
The analyses of these activities lead to an Exploitation Paper being presented to PPYP and the MSCB and the development of the Multiagency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation (MARVE) Protocol and Panel, endorsed by the MSCB Business Implementation Group.

Over the past 4 years we have maintained an average of 32 referrals in regard to child sexual exploitation. Last year's referrals have increased compared to the year before but not as high as those prior. Positively there were no re-referrals. Last year has seen a lower rate of ICE (closed) cases, which may be due to a vacancy with a CSE worker and the case remaining open for the new worker to complete the work and some cases requiring monitoring at 'Low' having reduced from higher levels.

Numbers of referrals for child sexual exploitation:

- In 2015/16 referrals totalled 38 – the total iced cases was 30, re-referrals 0
- In 2016/17 referrals totalled 41 – the total iced cases was 44, re-referrals 4
- In 2017/18 referrals totalled 21 – the total iced cases was 35, re-referrals 4
- In 2018/19 referrals totalled 29 – the total iced cases was 21, re-referrals 0



Table 9: Child Sexual Exploitation Figures

The majority of referrals are girls with an average age of 14 years. However, last year saw the youngest being only 10 years old. Also 2018-2019 saw the highest number of boys referred (n4), which could be as a result of a focus on sexual exploitation in boys.

- In 2015/16 the average age was 14 years, ranging from 8 years to 17 years with 3 male victims identified
- In 2016/17 the average age was 14 years, ranging from 9 years to 17 years, with 2 male victims identified
- In 2017/18 the average age for victims remained 14 years, ranging from 12 years to 17 years, with 0 male victims identified.
- In 2018/19 the average age of victims was 14.4 years, ranging from 10 years to 17 years, with 4 male victims identified.

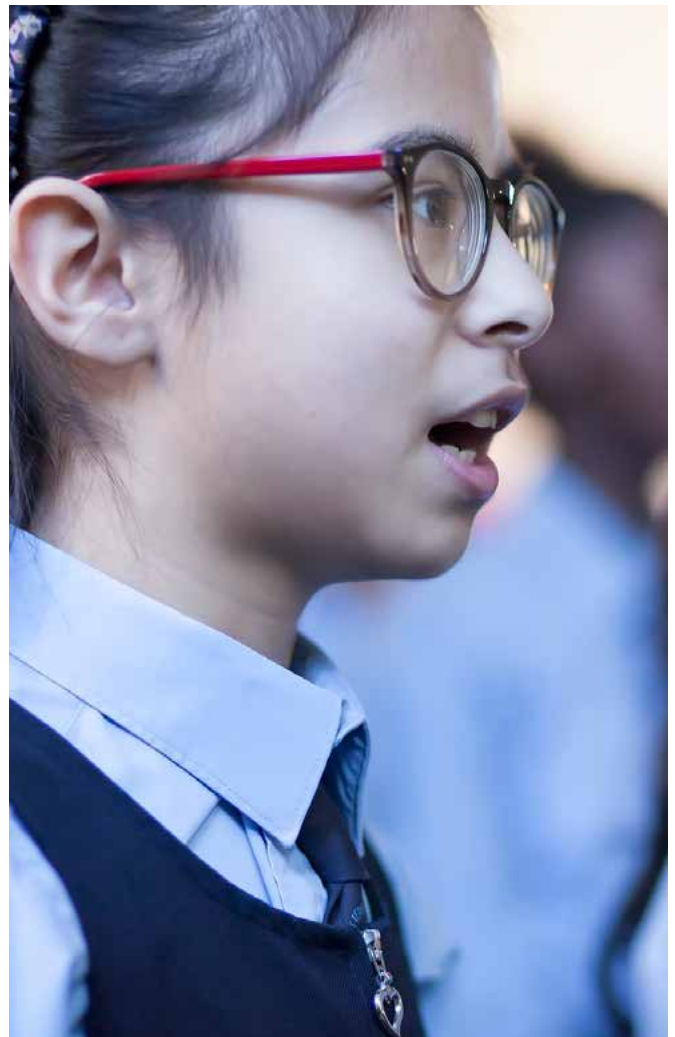
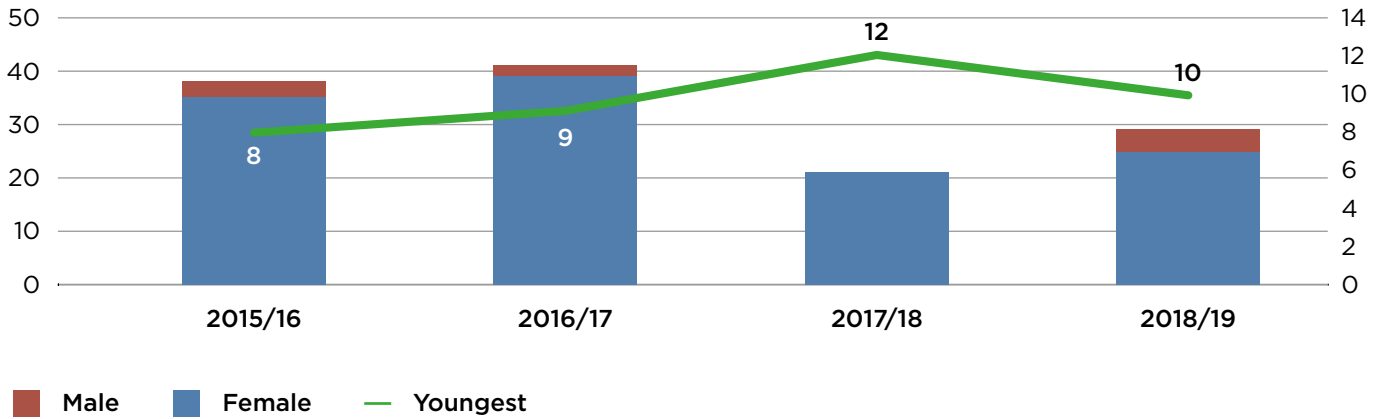
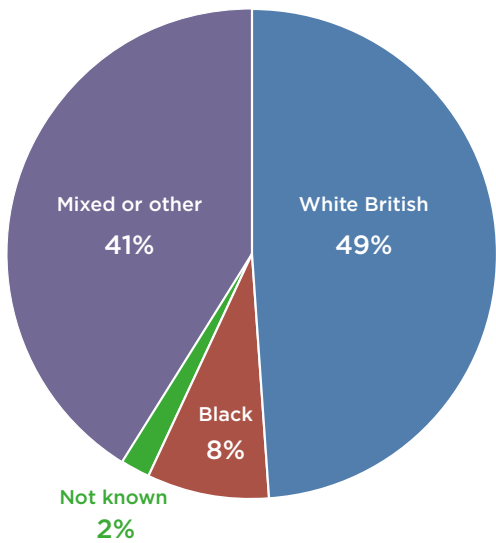


Table 10: CSE - Gender and Youngest Age of Referral



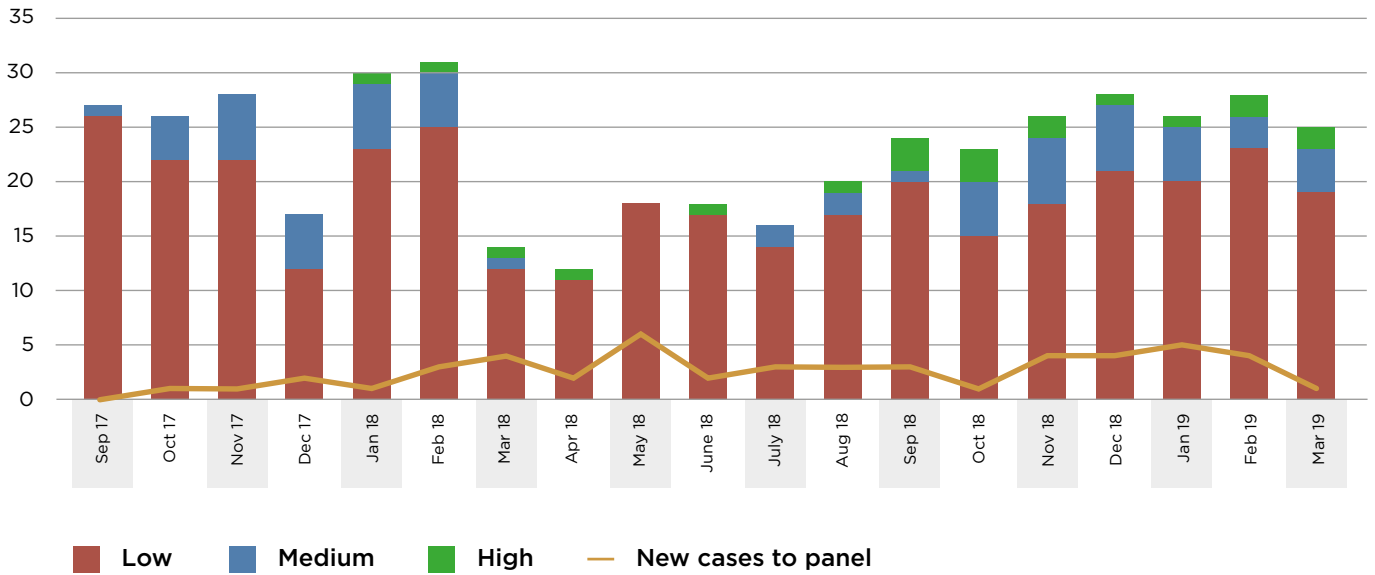
The majority ethnicity is White British (49%) with 48% of the cohort identified as BAME / other.

Table 11: CSE and Ethnicity



All Medium and High risk cases are discussed at the MARVE panel with a less frequent discussion for Low cases, usually on a dip sample basis. New cases are presented by the Exploitation manager and will return to panel for discussion if Medium or High risk. At the time of establishing the panel the number of cases were relatively few and with not many Medium to High cases. However, since its commencement in September, the proportion has risen and therefore panel meetings have been extended from a half-day to almost a full day.

Table 12: CSE Panel Cases



3.3.1 CSE and Looked After Children

As noted above, in early 2018, a review of Adolescent Panels was undertaken to consider opportunities for streamlining attendance and potential duplication across the partnership. As a result of this review, the MARVE Panel now oversees our work regarding child sexual and criminal exploitation, gangs, serious youth violence, sexually harmful behaviour and other overlapping forms of adolescent risk.

The most recent ‘Dashboard’ in regard to CSE outlines all those referred to MASE (now MARVE) during 2018 and of the 32 children referred, the following had Social Care involvement:

- 18.7% (6) were Looked After
- 18.7% (6) were on a Child Protection Plan
- 21.8% (7) were on a Child in Need Plan
- 0.31% (1) was a Care Leaver

In 2018-2019 6 looked after young people were identified as being at risk of CSE. Current open cases are tracked each month at the MARVE Panel meeting.

3.3.2 CSE and Out of Borough Looked After Children Cases

Whilst the desire is normally to keep young people in the local area, in some cases we have placed young people away from the borough because of our concerns about the individual. For some young people placements away from their home community is a key part of the care plan as a result of their vulnerability to exploitation in this borough or neighbouring boroughs. The needs of some the young people are such that they require specialist placements which are not available in Merton or surrounding boroughs. For all children being placed outside of the borough the Director of Children, Schools and Families is required to sign off agreement for the placement. Care plans for these children and young people are reviewed to ensure that where possible they are supported to return to their home community at the earliest opportunity. These cases are all held open to the CSE Operational Lead and monitored for a period of time while the placement settles and the CSE is deemed to no longer be a risk. If CSE is considered to remain a risk whilst the young person is in placement, the case will remain open and monitored with a plan in place to ensure appropriate support for the young person.

3.4 Children Missing from Home and School

In 2018-2019 there were 357 episodes of children going missing from home or care.

Catch22 provides the local Return Home Interviews for missing young people. They attend the weekly missing and monthly meetings to ensure any crossover is picked up at the earliest opportunity. The Young Women and Girls worker attends the weekly missing meeting and is a navigator in the MASH to ensure a coordinated approach. The Police present a summary of missing CSE cases at the MARVE Panel to ensure that there are no gaps.

Actions to Address Children Missing from Home and Care

- Ongoing strengthening of 'multi-agency Missing from Care and Home Panel' supported by a 'Missing dataset' which identifies other vulnerabilities including CSE and CME.
- 'Weekly Missing Meeting' established in April 2016 and embedded in response to a need to strengthen multi-agency operational working to ensure that children receive timely support from appropriate services including a return home interview.
- Policies and procedures in place to deliver a well-coordinated response to children reported as missing from home or care. This was refreshed and approved by the Board in September 2018
- Ongoing use of Police Missing Person Co-ordinators' analysis of repeat locations and individuals for missing persons meetings.
- Independent organisation (Catch22) commissioned to work as part of a wider interagency team to provide practical and emotional support and to prevent and reduce episodes of going missing. Catch22 also provide 'return home interviews'.
- With regards to children/young people known to Children's Social Care, case management of CIN/CP children and young people going missing from home/care is improving and recording and case management of Looked after Children missing or absent has improved over the last 12 to 18 months.
- All in-house foster carers have received 'missing and absent' procedure training.
- 'Children Missing' policies and procedures are checked as part of the placement commissioning process.
- Agency foster carers and residential placements are required to report missing episodes in a timely way to the Council and Police and are required to support the Council to implement safety plans.

Action Taken to Address Children Missing from School

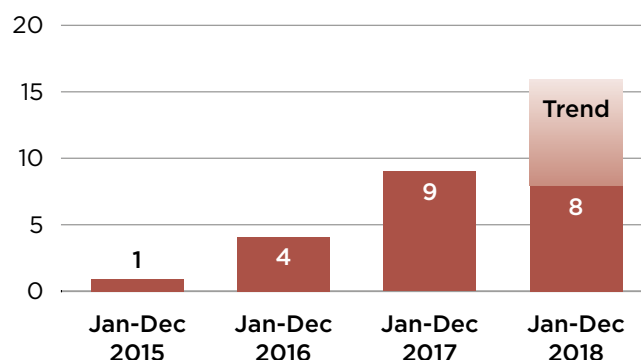
- A strong partnership approach of the multi-disciplinary Hard to Place and CME Panels
- Maintained our strong performance with low levels of NEET and achieved significant reduction of numbers of young people in the “Not Known” category.
- CME/PA protocols between Education and Social Care services strengthened with regular reporting to CSF Continuous Improvement Board.
- Briefings provided to Primary and Secondary School head teachers on safeguarding risks associated with absence from school and reinforced as appropriate in termly designated teachers’ events.
- Specific guidance provided to schools on forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child trafficking and Prevent.
- Continued to improve school attendance and maintained our strong focus on preventing permanent exclusions
- Adopted a vigilant approach to the quality of alternative education provision in the borough and the identification and notification of unregistered schools.
- Strengthened Education Welfare Service focus on the home education process where families opt to educate children other than at school (EOTAS).
- Action is taken by the authority in relation to unregistered schools, we are actively monitoring and liaising with Ofsted where necessary
- Ongoing commitment to Schools Police Officers with a proactive prevention programme and key link role.
- Rolled out changes in relation to Pupil Registration Regulations 2016 regarding on and off rolling
- Further developed the CME panel dataset and intelligence analysis

- Consolidated school partnerships and further developed the Merton Education Partnership,
- Used forums to highlight Safeguarding.
- Developed schools and early years Safeguarding audit tool and guidance (In early years all funded support and targeted support settings).

3.5 Child Criminal Exploitation

The MARVE Protocol provided the following data in regard to Criminal Exploitation numbers on a calendar basis:

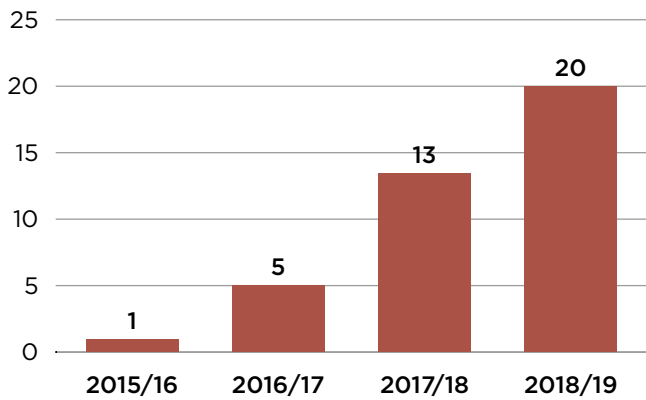
Table 13: CCE Cases Annually



The data above is in regard to confirmed county lines cases. The trend prediction was accurate with a further 9 cases referred since May 2018. This is also in line with the new protocol and a broader spectrum of criminal exploitation being experienced. The rise is possibly due to an increased awareness of criminal exploitation, in particular county lines; in addition, one of the MOPAC workers’ job description has been developed to include work with young people exploited into criminal behaviour.

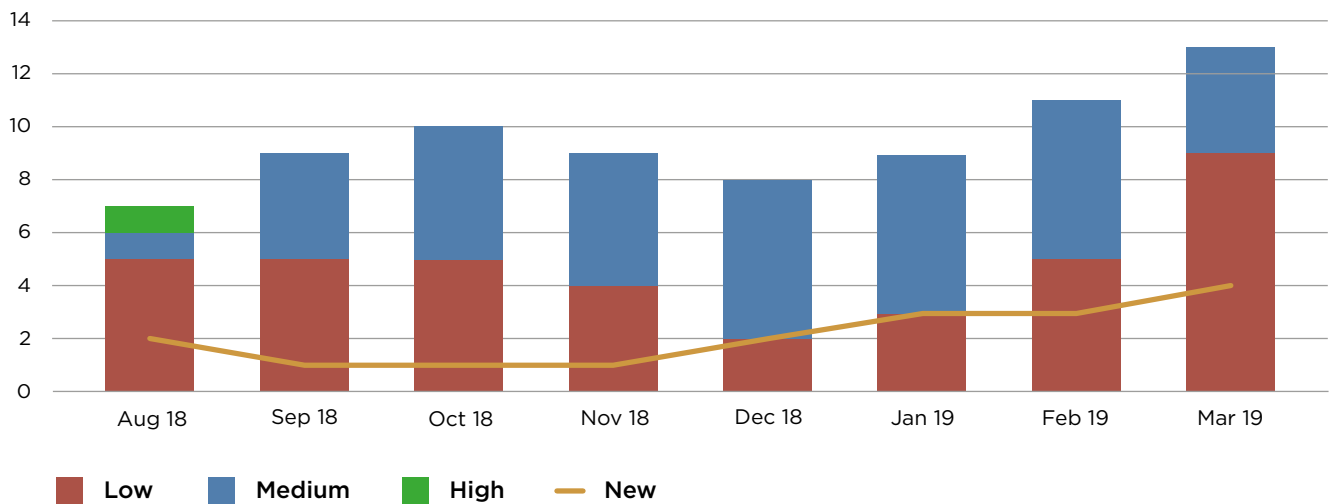
In order to align CSE and CCE data this will now be tracked on a financial year basis.

Table 14: CCE Referrals



The CCE cases have also been tracked in regard to the number of Low, Medium or High each month. There has only been one High case, discussed in the first MARVE panel. The increase in referrals is seen since Dec 2018 and the proportion is beginning to mirror that of CSE cases.

Table 15: CCE Panel Cases



3.6 Prevent

The Board's Promote and Protect Young People Strategic Sub-Group works with Safer Merton to ensure that there is a strong grip and clear oversight of all Prevent cases involving young people. The MSCB has worked hard, along with Safer and Stronger, to achieve strong engagement with the 'Prevent' agenda involving key partners including police, schools, early years settings and with faith, voluntary sector and wider community groups. Merton has not been identified as a Prevent Borough.

There is comprehensive Prevent Guidance available to staff via the MSCB and a programme of training for staff and external stakeholders in the borough.

CSF supports schools to deliver the Prevent Duty which is evident by:

- The provision of Governor training;
- Annual training for all staff at every school;
- The use of Head Teachers meetings to discuss Prevent matters;
- Schools undertake IT monitoring and the London Grid for Learning is in place in all schools;
- Schools are teaching British values and there are a range of curriculum projects to support this; and
- The borough operates a strong Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) with involvement from Prevent and Counter Terrorism Police.

Prevent referrals are all managed through the MASH. This ensures safeguarding measures to be put in place from the start of a referral. The Channel Panel has representation from the MASH and enables appropriate case discussion to implement appropriate safeguarding measures.



An area for development is to ensure that Prevent concerns about cases discussed at other panels, such as MAPPA or Offender Management, are shared with the Channel chair (either informally or via a referral). In 2018-2019 there were no referrals relating to Prevent; of these referrals none were Merton children.



3.7 Female Genital Mutilation

The Board has refreshed its multi-agency guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The Board provides multi-agency training on FGM, which is well attended. The Board also provides 'red alert' briefings to Merton schools around Easter and Summer holidays, which have been identified as key risk periods for FGM due to the length of the holiday period.

4.0 Statutory and Legislative Context

Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) is the Local Safeguarding Children Board for Merton. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) have a range of roles and statutory functions.

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board for their area and specifies the organisations and individuals (other than the local authority) that the Secretary of State may prescribe in regulations that should be represented on LSCBs.

The Children Act 2004 Section 14 sets out the objectives of LSCBs, which are:

- (a) to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
- (b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

The LSCB is not an operational body and has no direct responsibility for the provision of services to children, families or adults. Its responsibilities are strategic planning, co-ordination, advisory, policy, guidance, setting of standards and monitoring. It can commission multi-agency training but is not required to do so.

The delivery of services to children, families and adults is the responsibility of the commissioning and provider agencies, the **Partners**, not the LSCB itself.

Regulation 5 of the **Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006** sets out LSCB duties as:

- 4.1 (a)** developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:
 - (i) the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
 - (ii) training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
 - (iii) recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
 - (iv) investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
 - (v) safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;
- 4.1 (b)** communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;
- 4.1 (c)** monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve
- 4.1 (d)** participating in the planning of services for children

Regulation 5 (2) relates to the LSCB Serious Case Reviews function and regulation 6 relates to the LSCB Child Death functions.

Regulation 5 (3) offers that an LSCB may also engage in any other activity that facilitates, or is conducive to, the achievement of its objectives.



These duties are further clarified in the statutory guidance: *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, 2018, Chapters 3, 4 and 5* (Working Together 2018)

The responsibilities and duties of safeguarding partners are specified in Working Together 2018, Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Partners have a responsibility to have oversight of single agency and multi-agency safeguarding and promotion of children's welfare (under Children Act 2004, section 11,) as set out in Working Together chapters 1 and 2.

The Children and Social Care Act 2017 received Royal Assent on 27th April 2017. The Act abolishes LSCBs in summer 2019, replacing them with Safeguarding Partnerships. The *Children and Social Work Act 2017* amends the Children Act 2004 and creates Safeguarding Partners

According to the 2017 Act, a *safeguarding partner* in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the *Children and Social Work Act 2017*) as:

- (a) the local authority
- (b) a clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area
- (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area

A revised Working Together to Safeguard Children and statutory regulations was published in July 2018.

5.0

MSCB Inter-relationships and Influence with other Key Partners

This year the Board operated a 12-month Business Plan, to be refreshed each March for the business year starting each April. The update of the MSCB Business Plan for 2018-2019, agreed by the Board in June 2018, is attached as Appendix 1. The Business Plan outlines the Board's priorities for 2018-2019 and was agreed by the Board at its annual Away Day in March 2018. Priority items can be added within the year.

The MSCB meets three times per year in half-day business meetings; and in a Business Planning Away Day once per year, in March. The Business Implementation Group of the Board meets four times per year. The progress of the actions agreed in the Business Plan is reviewed at each meeting. Each Sub Group has an agreed Work Plan and each Sub Group reports to the MSCB at each Board meeting.



Membership of the Board included the following statutory partners

- The London Borough of Merton
- the Metropolitan Police Service, Borough Commander;
- the National Probation Service and London Community Rehabilitation Companies;
- the Youth Offending Team;
- NHS England and Merton Clinical Commissioning Groups including representation from commissioned Health Services;
- CAFCASS³;

Membership of the Board also included

- Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion
- Assistant Director of Education
- The Director of Public Health, Merton
- Representation from the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Adult Social Care
- Representatives from Housing, including Housing Associations

There is also strong partnership and influence between the MSCB and the following strategic partnerships and their Sub-Groups

- The Health and Well-Being Board
- the Corporate Parenting Board
- the Children's Trust
- the Safer and Stronger Partnership
- The Youth Crime Executive Board

6.0 MSCB Sub-Groups

The work of the MSCB is delivered and overseen through each of its Sub-Groups.

6.1 Quality Assurance Sub-Group

The purpose of the Quality Assurance (QA) Sub-Group is to ensure children and young people are safeguarded and protected by overseeing the quality of single and multi-agency work carried out in partnership across the children and young people sector.

The QA Sub-Group undertook the following activities in 2018-2019

- Oversaw the Child D Local Child Safeguarding Review (to be published in autumn 2019)
- Undertook two multi-agency audits: one on the theme of physical abuse and the other on the theme of working with fathers
- Reviewed the Merton Safeguarding Children quality assurance and performance framework.

6.2 Promote and Protect Young People Sub-Group

The Promote and Protect Young People (PPYP) Sub-Group met 7 times in 2018-2019. The purpose of the PPYP is to take overall lead responsibility on behalf of the MSCB to ensure that there are effective and up-to-date multi-agency policies, protocols and procedures to ensure children and young people are safeguarded and protected and their welfare is promoted; *concentrating on extra-familial* abuse where there is *risk of abuse outside the family*. PPYP is responsible for policies relating to issues like CSE, child criminal exploitation, children missing from home, care or education, child on child abuse, other forms of exploitation (such as radicalization), e-safety, trafficking, abuse by those in a position of trust or in institutions – including faith organisations and community organisations; and policies and procedures in relation to allegations against those in a position of trust (Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referrals).

Actions of the Sub-Group in 2018-2019 included:

- Oversight of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Oversight of Child Criminal Exploitation
- Oversight of work to address gangs and serious youth violence
- Oversight of the MOPAC⁴ Knife Crime Action Plan
- Oversight of children going missing from home, school and care
- Oversight of commissioned services addressing adolescent vulnerability
- Approval of the MARVE Protocol and oversight of the work of the MARVE panel

6.3 Learning and Development Sub Group

The Learning and Development Sub-group takes overall lead on behalf of the MSCB to ensure that there are effective arrangements to inform and keep up-to-date the multi-agency and multi-disciplinary workforce knowledge and skills for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The Learning and Development Sub-Group met four times in 2018-2019.

6.3.1 MSCB Annual Conference

Part of the responsibility of the Learning and Development Sub-Group is to oversee the delivery of the MSCB Annual Conference. This year the Conference was held on the 19th March 2019. The title of the Conference was *Fight, Flight or Fright* with a focus on stakeholders' involvement in crime prevention, including contextual safeguarding and trauma informed practice. We were particularly pleased to have as our keynote speaker, Dr Carlene Firmin, MBE, who is the Principal Research Fellow, The International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Trafficking at the University of Bedfordshire. Dr Firmin challenged us to think about context – spaces and places, highlighting the need for the Board and partners to develop systems and processes to safeguard older children as they move away from their family homes into their neighbourhoods, schools,

on public transport, in local parks and at local shopping centres.

133 professionals/practitioners attended the conference from a range of agencies including:

- Education (primary, secondary and special schools)
- the Police
- Adult Social Care
- Children’s Social Care
- Early Years
- Health including Merton CCG, Central London Community Health Care, Epsom and St Helier Hospital Trust, South West London and St Georges Mental Health Trust and Public Health
- Housing including Merton Housing Needs and Registered Social Landlords
- Youth Inclusion including Youth Justice Teams
- Safer Merton
- A range of voluntary organisations including MVSC, Merton Carers, the Inner Strength Network



6.3.2 MSCB Training

The MSCB offers an extensive training programme that is aligned to the Board’s priorities. The training programme also provides briefings on learning emerging out of learning reviews and SCRs, audit activity and significant developments in safeguarding.

The conference was well received with an overall rating of excellent.

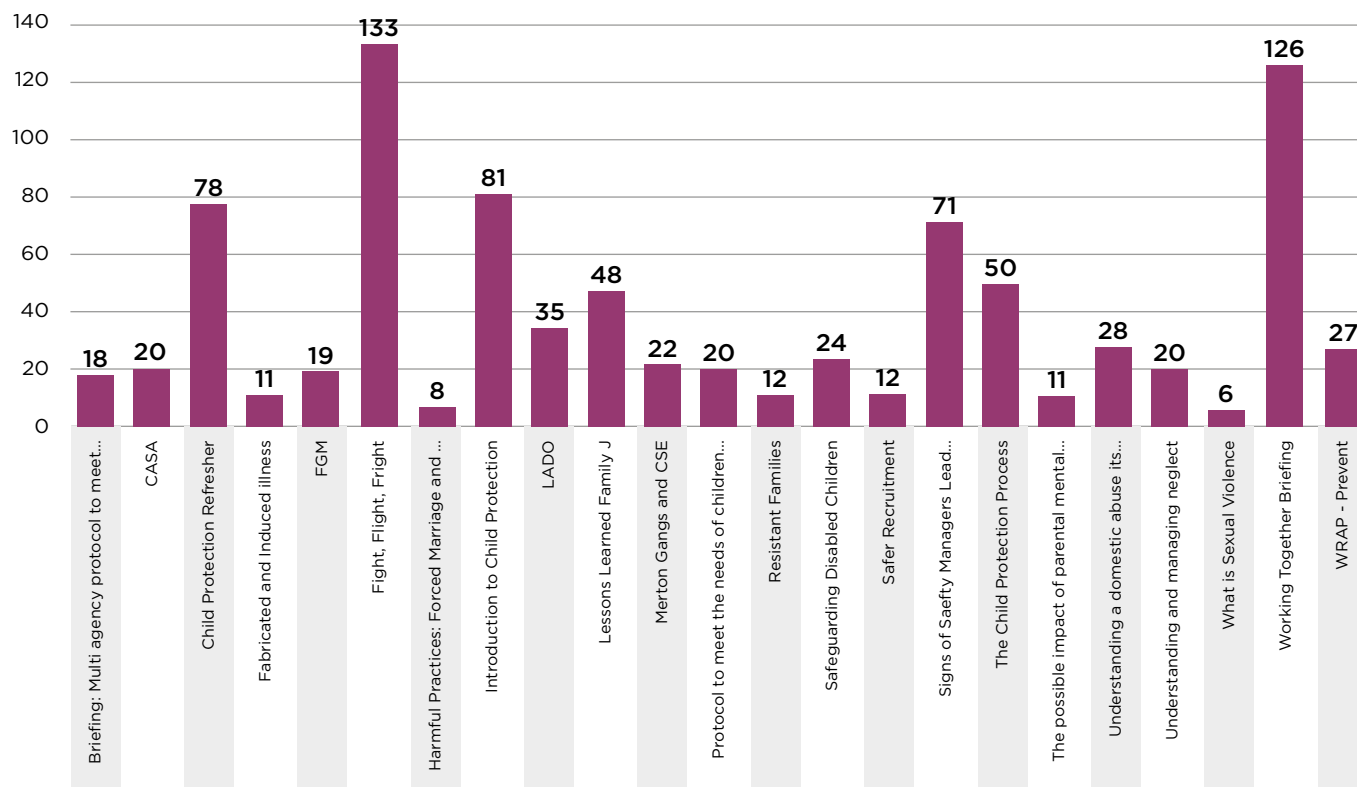
The table below show details of MSCB training activity in 2018-2019

Table 16: MSCB training activity in April 2018- February 2019

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Planned events	3	8	5	5		4	3	6	2	1	2
Added events	1	3	5	2		5	4	5	0	3	5
Cancelled events	2	4	2	3		2	4	4	0	2	4
Actual events	2	7	8	4		7	3	7	2	2	3
Booked	29	102	150	70		157	136	97	38	19	54
Cancellations	0	8	17	9		13	15	16	6	0	4
DNAs	4	17	38	13		30	24	21	6	1	9
Extras	0	21	32	4		18	14	5	0	4	3
Number attended	25	98	127	52	0	132	111	65	26	22	44

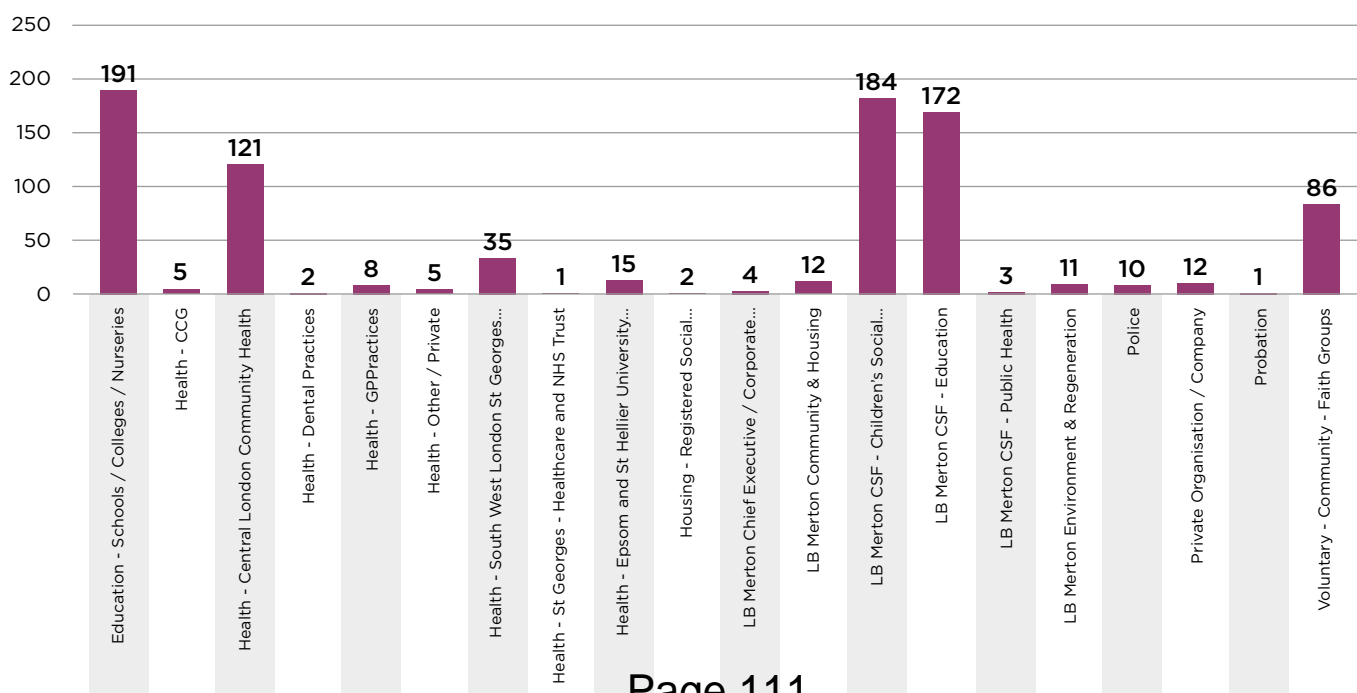
The table below indicates attendance per course.

Table 17: MSCB Training Attendance per Agency



The table below indicates attendance per agency.

Table 18: Attendance per Agency



6.4. Policy Sub-Group

The purpose of the Policy Sub-Group is to take overall responsibility on behalf of the MSCB to ensure that there are effective and up-to-date multi-agency policies, protocols and procedures⁵ to ensure children and young people are safeguarded and protected and their welfare is promoted. In the business year 1 April 2018-31 March 2019 the Policy Sub-Group met 4 times.

The Policy Sub-Group drafted or refreshed the following policies/strategies/protocols for approval by the Board:

- Mental Health Protocol
- Parental Substance Misuse Protocol
- Guidance to Practitioners regarding Domestic Violence and Abuse
- The Bruising in Pre-mobile Babies Protocol
- The Young Carers Strategy

6.5 Merton Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is an inter-agency forum which meets regularly to review the deaths of all children usually resident in Merton. It is a statutory body and is accountable to the Merton Safeguarding Children Board.

The purpose of CDOP is to collect and analyse information about all children who die in England, from birth to the day before their eighteenth birthday. This is with a view to providing a complete and thorough picture of the cause of death, identifying any matters of concern affecting the safety and welfare of children in the area, and any wider public health or safety concerns arising from a death or pattern of deaths.

The number of child deaths in Merton is relatively small. However, it is helpful to understand wider data on infant and child deaths, which should inform local strategic planning:

- Neonatal mortality rate measures deaths under 28 days, per 1,000 live births.
- Infant Mortality rate measures deaths in infants aged less than 1 year per 1,000 live births.
- Child Mortality rate measures deaths in children aged 1-17 years per 100,000 children.
- Data is measured over a three-year period because of the small numbers involved. Latest published data available from the Office for National Statistics is for 2017, which was released on 17th June 2019.

In 2018-19 two meetings of CDOP were held, and the panel reviewed the following cases:

Table 19: CDOP meetings and No. of Cases Reviewed 2018-19

	9th July 2018	11th March 2019
Number of cases	5	7

The organisation of the CDOP is the responsibility of the Single point of Contact for Child Deaths/ Safeguarding Manager. Merton CDOP is fully operational and has all case reviews up to date. In previous years the panel has had four to five meetings per year. As a result of fewer child deaths, two meetings scheduled for October 2018 and January 2019 were postponed as there were too few cases for review. The Merton CDOP Panel will continue to function in compliance with pan-London and national guidance, and report to Merton LSCB on a quarterly basis through the MSCB reporting process, and the CDOP Annual Report

For the period 2010-19 a total of 132 child deaths were reported to Merton CDOP. In 2018-2019 there were 10 child deaths reported to the Merton CDOP.

Table 20: Child Deaths reported to Merton CDOP, 2010-11 to 2018-19

Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
Cases	21	20	18	12	15	12	16	8	10	132

There were 12 cases reviewed by CDOP for Merton in 2018-19. Of these, 5 cases were related to a child death in 2017-18. Seven cases were related to child deaths in 2018-19. There are no child death reviews outstanding for previous years.

Table 21: Merton CDOP cases reviewed 2018-19 and open cases remaining at 31st March 2019

	Total number of cases reviewed 2018 - 2019 (year of death)	Number of open cases to be reviewed 2018 - 2019 (year of death)
Case by Year	5 (2017-18) 7 (2018-19)	1 (2017-18) 3 (2018-19)
Total	12	4

6.6 Youth Crime Executive Board (YCEB)

The Youth Crime and Prevention Executive Board (YCPEB) is chaired by the Director of Children's, Schools and Families. Membership includes senior representatives from Police, Children's Social Care (CSC), Education Inclusion, Probation, Housing, Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The YCPEB is the governance structure for Merton in relation to the work of the Youth Justice Team (the local Youth Offending Team), including production of the Annual Youth Justice Plan, performance management and quality assurance. It also oversees the partnership response to serious youth violence, gangs and the "Troubled Families" programme (known locally as Transforming Families) (TF). The YCPEB reports to the MSCB and the Safer and Stronger Partnership, which has wider oversight of crime issues in the borough.

The YCPEB's key priorities over the past year have involved maintaining and monitoring the team's performance against the Youth Justice Board's three key performance indicators of reducing first time entrants to the Youth Justice system, sustaining low numbers of young people who are sentenced to custody and reducing the number and rate of young people who reoffend. The YCPEB priorities have also been in regard to delivering the TF programme and reducing the serious youth violence and gang activity in the borough. Therefore the YCPEB contributes to all three of the MSCB priorities in regard to Think Family, Early Help and Vulnerable Adolescents.

Following a restructure in April 2018, the Youth Justice Team, Transforming Families Teams and newly established Tackling Exploitation Team (managed by the CSE Lead) have been placed into a new service, which the staff renamed as the Adolescent and Family Service. The YJT Manager's post has been deleted and assimilated into the Head of Service post, which sits within the Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion senior leadership team. The YJT is a multi-agency service with seconded staff from Police, Probation, Education, CAMHS, Catch22, Nursing and Social Care. The YJT undertakes assessments and delivers interventions with young people receiving a formal disposal from either the Police (pre-court outcomes) or the courts (statutory orders) and also has a bespoke specialist offer for parents. The Transforming Families team delivers targeted interventions with families aiming to intervene effectively before problems escalate within a family. This involves working closely with schools, academies, the Police and the Education Welfare Service. The team has a targeted parenting officer who provides group work. The MOPAC funded gangs' worker in TF delivers both group work and individual interventions with young people involved in gangs and/or serious youth violence.

The YCPEB oversees Merton's response to new legislation, the inspection regime, its local crime reduction and prevention initiatives, monitors issues concerning risk and safeguarding and ensure staffing and resourcing levels are in place to maintain performance and effectiveness within the delivery of the youth crime and prevention services.

The YCPEB monitors performance through quarterly 'dashboard' reports, summaries of the highest risk young people monitored at the Youth Offender Management and Gang Multi-Agency Panel, receiving notifications from partners and the Youth Justice Board in regard to national changes and developments and through audit reports.

The YCPEB is preparing for a new inspection framework from HMIP, which includes a casework audit but has been extended to include an assessment of the governance and leadership of youth justice and the pre-court work carried out by both Police and the YJT. The Board members have attended a 'visioning event' with the YJT staff to understand the work undertaken by all the team members, which was presented through a role-play and 'interesting facts' handout. This was followed by roundtable discussions to allow both board members and YJT staff to discuss examples of good practice and any barriers to achieving positive outcomes.

The focus for the YCPEB in the next year will be to improve performance in regard to re-offending and use of custody, consider avenues for sustainable services in light of the funding for TF ending in 2020 in parallel to reductions in YJB Grant and MOPAC funding, supporting the integrated management of exploitation and harm, ensuring high quality services and staffing are in place for the most high risk and vulnerable adolescents, be 'inspection-ready' and confidently sharing good practice.

6.7 Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Sub-Group

The MSCB is committed to addressing the violence against women and girls. The strategic aims outline four priority areas in tackling VAWG and domestic abuse, which are:

1. Providing accessible, evidence-based, holistic support to people who have experienced or are at risk of VAWG
2. Implementing effective systems and interventions for working with perpetrators.
3. Fostering an integrated and coordinated approach to tackling VAWG.
4. In order to deliver the four strategic aims this action plan is split into four priority themes;

1. Coordination: to develop a coordinated multi-agency approach by ensuring that the response to VAWG is shared by all stakeholders, embedded into service plans and coordinated effectively.

2. Prevention: to change attitudes and prevent violence by raising awareness through campaigns; safeguarding and educating children and young people; early identification, intervention and training.

3. Provision: to improve provision and specialist support services which are essential in enabling people to end violence in their lives and recover from the damaging effects of abuse by providing a range of services to meet the needs of victims and survivors; practical and emotional support, emergency and acute services; access to legal advice and support, refuge and safe accommodation.

4. Protection: to provide effective response to perpetrators outside of and within the criminal justice system through effective investigation; prosecution; victim support and protection; perpetrator interventions.

Key achievements and highlights for 2018-2019.

The Merton VAWG board oversaw a range of work during 2018-19:

- Work undertaken through the campaigns resulted in some increases in reports for quarters 1-3 however reporting in quarter 4 reduced. The reduction may coincide with there being no sustained promotion during these months. The seasonal peaks for DV reporting for August and December have changed slightly with August still being a peak month but December reports had lowered and as such we now ensure that services are ready for these profiled seasonal increases
- The partnership agreed to commence work on a sexual violence profile. This work is underway and the report is due to be completed September 2019.
- Delivered a full programme of activities for the 16 Days of Activism 2018. This included a learning day, a cake sale, an event at Merton College and a tweet a day via Twitter and Facebook.
- Continued providing training support to the MSCB
- Looked at the Pan London Housing Reciprocal protocol that has been rolled out across London to determine how Merton can be involved.
- Completed the commissioning of the IDVA and Refuge contract

Figures for this year:

- Merton's Police achieved a 21% successful detection rate (July 2018 – August 2019) for Violence with Injury,
- Overall DVA Sanction Detection rate was 17%.
- There has been a 19% increase in DVA reports up to the last financial year (April 2018 – March 2019).
- For the last financial year (2018-19) Sexual offences represented less than 3% of all reported crime in Merton. The overall level of sexual offences in Merton fell by 5% (20 offences) from the previous financial year.
- Sanctioned detections of sexual offences have fallen again in the last year. The overall rate for all sexual offences is 8% and for rape 5%. Investigative resources for this offence type moved from a centralised team to resources based on the 4 borough BCU as of February 2019.

As we move forward through 2019-2020 we will continue to build on this work by:

- Re- writing the VAWG strategy and business plan; the current plan will end March 2020.
- Completing the Sexual Violence Profile and considering how the outcomes of this will change operational delivery and strategic commissioning
- Conduct a light review and update of the DVA profile in advance of the 2019-20 full review
- Continue to build on our successes of the NO MORE and Ask Angela campaigns to further improve reporting rates within the borough
- Develop and deliver an improved programme of events during the 16 Days of Activism campaign 2018, deliver a robust programme of events for NO MORE week 2019 and ensure that the VAWG partnership acknowledge all international, national and/or local days around VAWG

6.8 Structure and Effectiveness of the MSCB

The MSCB has clear thresholds which are understood throughout the safeguarding system. This is known locally as the Merton Young Person, Child and Family Well-Being Model.

The Board works in cooperation with neighboring children's services including peer reviews; contributing to SCRs and learning (Croydon, Wandsworth, Kingston, Richmond and Sutton)

6.9 MSCB Budget

MSCB Budget for the financial year 2018-2019

Agency Contributions

CAFCASS	£550
London CRC	£1,000
London Probation Service	£1,000
London Borough of Merton	£142,030
Merton CCG	£55,000
Metropolitan Police	£5,000

Sub - total **£204,580**

Total **£204,580**

Expenditure

Staffing	£131,711
Premises	£2,000
Supplies and Services	£69,737
Transport	£1,132

Total **£204,580**



7.0 Sub-Group Task and Finish Group Summary Reports/Effectiveness

7.1 The Young Carers Strategy Task and Finish Group

The Young Carers Task and Finish Group comprised of colleagues in Children's Social Care, Health, the Mental Health Trust, Adult Social Care, Merton Carer Support and other voluntary organisations. The proposed Young Carers strategy sets out how the MSCB, Merton council, and its partners will bring about improvements in the way services work together to identify, assess and improve outcomes for young people with caring responsibilities. This strategy aims to build on the priorities of the Merton Safeguarding Children's Board, to 'Think Family' in its collective partnership approach to fostering positive outcomes for children and young people. It also forms our collective response to lessons drawn from Serious Case Reviews, including our own local example.

The priorities for change, identified within this strategy, have been developed through listening to the voice of our local young carers and are agreed by the range of agencies and professionals that work with children and families across the health, education, social care and voluntary sector. The strategy sets out what actions will be taken to achieve our priorities and identifies the resources needed to meet these. The Young Carers' Strategy was approved by the Board in January 2019.

7.2 The LSCB to Partnership Transition Task and Finish Group

As noted in section 2.1 of this report, the Partnership Transition task and finish Group was established by the Business Implementation Group, and commissioned to consult with members of the MSCB and key stakeholders in order to agree proposals for the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Agreement.

Between April 2018 and January 2019, the task and finish group met five times.

The final draft of the Partnership Agreement was presented to the MSCB at its away day in March 2019; the Agreement was approved by the Board and submitted to the three Statutory Safeguarding Partners (the London Borough of Merton, Merton CCG and the Police) for final approval through each Partner's governance processes by June 2019. The proposed structure and membership of the new Partnership are included in this report as appendices 2 and 3.

7.3 Learning and Improvement Reviews (LiR) and Serious Case Reviews (SCR)

The Child D Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (a local learning and improvement review)

In November 2017, a Merton child, known as Child D, was murdered by her father. The MSCB commissioned a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review to look at how agencies worked with Child D and her family, to identify key learning and to make recommendations for improvements in multi-agency safeguarding practice. The Independent Author's review is due to be shared in winter 2019/2020.

8.0

Agency Effectiveness in Safeguarding – reports for each key agency drawing on Section 11 and QA and Challenge Meetings

8.1 Section 11

The Board holds partners to account through its Section 11 Quality Assurance and Peer Challenge Process. The Board also receives annual reports from the Children's Trust, the VAWG Group and Public Health.⁶

In February 2018, the Board's Business Implementation Group agreed that the Section 11 process for 2018-2019 would involve a review and update of each agency's Section 11 Self-Audit for 2018-2019. A Quality Assurance and Peer Challenge meeting would also be held with key agencies.

The Board agreed to use the Pan-London Section 11 Audit Tool, developed by the London Safeguarding Children Board. The audit tool allows each agency or organisation to assess the quality of its safeguarding practice against eight agreed safeguarding standards providing supporting evidence where appropriate. These standards are as follows:

STANDARD 1 – Senior management have commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare

STANDARD 2 – There is a clear statement of the agency's responsibility towards children and this is available to all staff

STANDARD 3 – There is a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting welfare

STANDARD 4 – Service development takes into account the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children & families

STANDARD 5 – There is effective training on safeguarding & promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or, depending on the agency's primary functions, in contact with children & families

STANDARD 6 – Safer recruitment procedures including vetting procedures and those for managing allegations are in place

STANDARD 7 – There is effective inter-agency working to safeguard & promote the welfare of children

STANDARD 8 – There is effective Information Sharing

Agency Returns

The MSCB has received completed returns from the following agencies:

1. Aspen Cancer Centre
2. Clarion Housing
3. LBM Adult Social Care
4. LBM Community and Housing (Housing Needs)
5. LBM Children Schools and Families (CSF provided a departmental return including Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion, Education and Early Years including commissioning)
6. LBM Public Health
7. LBM Safer Merton
8. LBM Youth Justice
9. London CRC (Probation, a Regional Return)
10. Metropolitan Police Borough and CAIT
11. National Probation
12. NHS Central London Community Health Care London

⁶ Evidence includes minutes of Board Meetings, the notes of the Section 11 Challenge Meetings, Section 11 Returns, QA Minutes, notes of multi-agency audits, the Board's Business Plan

14. NHS Merton Clinical Commissioning Group
15. NHS St George's Hospital Trust
16. NHS South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust
17. Parkside Private Hospital
18. British Transport Police (a Pan-London Return)

In addition to these returns the MSCB received section 11 Audit returns from 9 Independent Schools. These are listed as follows

1. Date Valley School Trust
2. Donhead School
3. Kings College School
4. The London Acorn School
5. The Norwegian School
6. The Study Preparatory School
7. The Rowan's School
8. Ursuline Preparatory School
9. Wimbledon College Preparatory School

In addition to the completed self-audit, the Board held a series of challenge meetings with key agencies to seek further assurance regarding their work to safeguard Merton's children and promote their welfare. Challenge meetings were held with the agencies grouped as follows:

- LBM Children Schools and Families (held on 22nd November 2018)
- NHS Epsom and St Helier and St George's Hospital Trusts (held on 5th December 2018)
- NHS Merton CCG and LBM Public Health (Held on 14th December 2018)
- NHS South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (held on 15th January 2019)
- Police and Public Protection including LBM Safer Merton, and Probation Services (held on 23rd November 2018)
- A challenge meeting was also held with Central London Community Health Care

As a result of the analysis of the section 11 returns coupled with the challenge process, the Board is assured that there is compliance with the standards outlined in Working Together 2018. Overall, the Section 11 returns and challenge meetings provide the Board with good assurance regarding the quality of safeguarding practice across the MSCB multi-agency partnership.

National or regional services (such as, CAFCASS and Probation) who submitted more 'global' self-assessments were asked to ensure that there was an addendum which gives assurance for Merton.

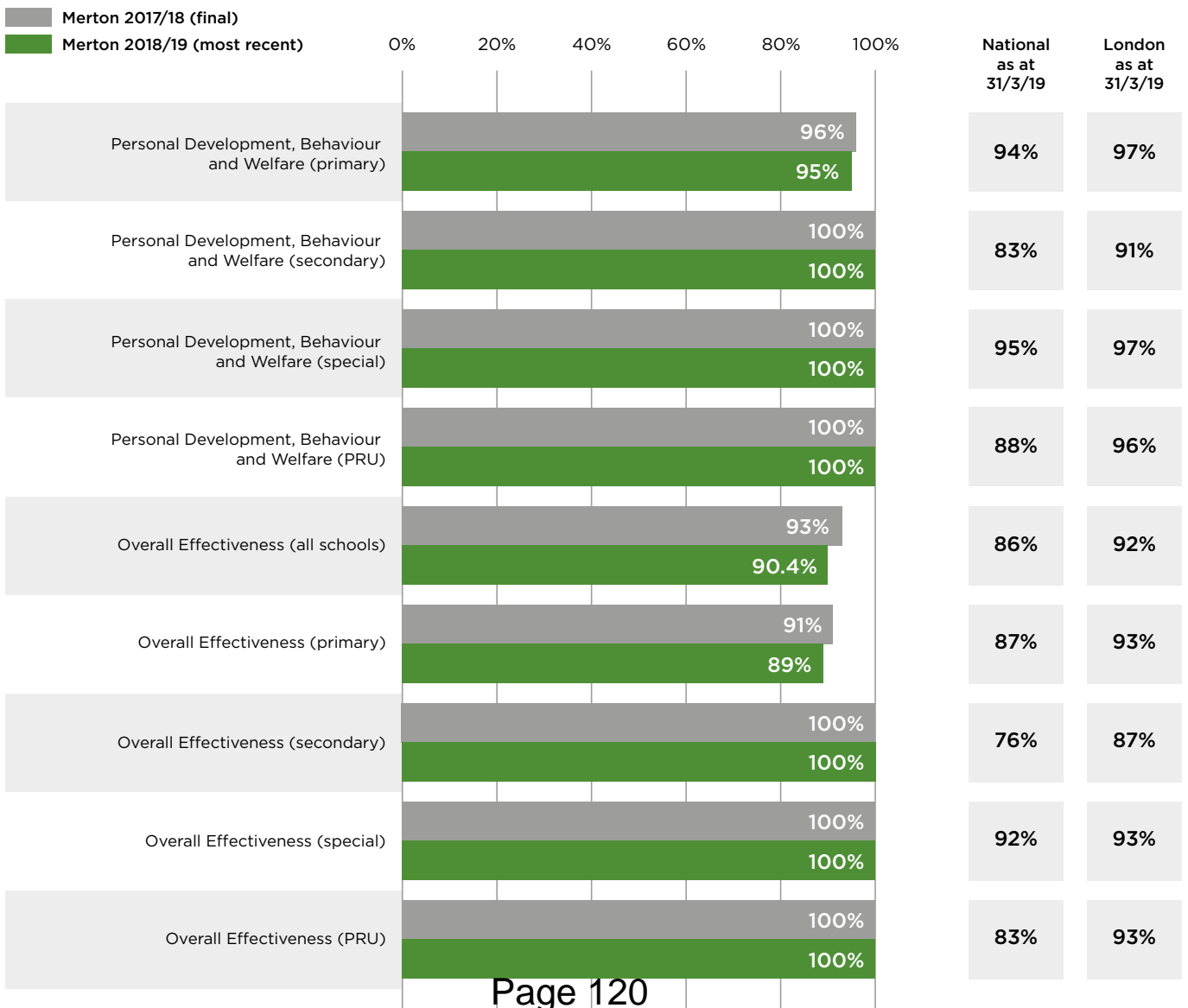
8.2 Schools

The MSCB has a strong relationship with Merton Schools. Schools and education providers are represented on the Board. We currently have:

- An FE College Representative
- A Secondary School Representative
- A Primary School Representative
- A Special School Representative

8.2.1 Schools' Ofsted Inspection Outcomes

Ofsted outcomes rated good or better



8.3 Children, Schools and Families (CSF) Department

Merton CSF department are a committed partner to the Board. There is robust and conspicuous political and professional leadership of children's services. Merton's Chief Executive, with the Director of Children Schools and Families, the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion and the Assistant Director for Education has overall responsibility for safeguarding. All senior managers within CSF take Safeguarding Responsibilities seriously and reinforce issues through their links to schools, early years and other settings.

Merton's latest Children and Young People's plan (2016-19) specifically prioritises the needs of more vulnerable children and young people in the borough through the provision of both specialist services and more sharply targeted early intervention/help. The plan acknowledges the wider context of austerity and demands on children's services including the impact of the Children and Families Act 2014, and as in previous years safeguarding children and young people is identified as one of 6 key priorities. The absolute priority of safeguarding children and young people is reflected in all corporate plans. CSE, Missing children and vulnerable adolescents are particular priorities in Merton's planning. CSF completed their Section 11 return.

8.4 CCG and Acute Trusts

Merton does not have an acute trust located in the Borough however there is an effective relationship with acute trusts in the neighbouring boroughs of Sutton, Wandsworth, Croydon, Lambeth and Kingston.



8.4.1 NHS Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

The Merton CCG has completed a Section 11 Self-audit and has attended Quality Assurance and Challenge meetings which gave the Board assurance that the CCG is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. As a commissioner of health services, Merton CCG also formed part of the MSCB's QA Challenge Panel.

8.4.2 Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust

The Trust and the service provider completed a Section 11 Self-audit and attended Quality Assurance Challenge meetings, which gave the Board assurance that the Trust is fulfilling its statutory duties under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

8.4.3 SW London & St George's Mental Health Trust

South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust completed their Section 11 Self-audit; this was undertaken at a time of considerable organisational change due to a major transformation programme. The Trust's section 11 return and participation in the challenge process provided the Board with assurance that the Trust is fulfilling its statutory duties under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

8.4.4 St George's Hospital NHS Trust

The Trust completed a safeguarding survey as part of their Section 11 submission to the Board. The Trust also provided a range of supplementary evidence which gave the Board assurance that the Trust was fulfilling its statutory responsibilities in relation to Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

8.4.5 Central London Community Healthcare (CLCH) NHS Trust

CLCH trust completed their Section 11 submission to the Board for 2018. The Trust also provided supplementary evidence, including good practice examples and patient stories, which gave the Board assurance that the Trust was fulfilling its statutory responsibilities in relation to Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.



8.4.6 Public Health

The Director of Public Health sits on the Board and is a strong partner. The Director of Children, Schools and Families is also a member of the Health and Well-being Board. The JSNA also informs the priorities of the Board's Bi-Annual Business Plan. Public Health completed a Section 11 Self-audit that gave the Board assurance that the Public Health is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities in relation to Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

8.5 Community and Housing Dept. - London Borough of Merton

Community and Housing Department completed Section 11 Audits for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Housing and participated in the Quality Assurance Challenge Meetings. Representatives of the Housing Needs team and the Safeguarding Manager of Clarion Housing, Merton's largest Registered Social Housing provider, attends meetings of the Board and, where appropriate, its Sub-Groups.

8.6 Metropolitan Police/Probation/CAFCASS

Regional Section 11 returns have been completed by the South West London Basic Command Unit. The Police have included local information and analysis. The Police continue to be strong partners in the work of the Board and its Sub-Groups. The Board received regional Section 11 Returns from London CRC Probation and the National Probation Service; we have also received a regional return from CAFCASS. The Police, probation and public protection services participated in the section 11 QA and challenge process.



9.0

Views of Children and Young People and the Community

9.1 Merton's Children's Trust User Voice Strategy

The department's 'user voice' framework has been in place since 2014 and states our commitment to ensuring that children, young people and families have a key role in influencing the design and delivery of children's services. The framework is underpinned by an annual action plan, which sets out the significant amount of engagement with children, young people and their families that is conducted across the department.

Commitment One - Delivering on our Participation Promise: providing opportunities for all children and young people to influence Merton the place.

Notable activities and impact this year included: Youth forums (including pupil voice) and youth driven activities. Merton Youth Parliament (MYP) implemented a manifesto based on the top concerns of local young people - delivered a gangs 'think tank' event on crime prevention and gang awareness, a young lifesavers training event, and a 'Student Day of Action' enabling local pupils of all ages to discuss improvements to health and well-being, local environment, and crime prevention. MYP members said their involvement in the forum enabled them to develop teamwork, leadership and communication skills, confidence and self-esteem.

Pupil voice - review processes in schools are informed by pupil voice and have led to a range of developments in individual schools including, the implementation of a whole school survey, and a review of the costs of after school clubs. Feedback from LGBT+ pupils informed the development of a Trans Inclusion toolkit for schools in Merton and Wandsworth. My Futures ETE team facilitated youth led summer activities - one young person said "I really appreciate how understanding you are, it makes a change from all the other adults who just get angry with me all the time about stuff like this, thank you."

Consultations to inform the development of priorities and actions in key strategies. Young Carers Multi-Agency Strategy; the Autism Strategy; and the Great Weight Debate 31

recommendations. Activities which support the community. Merton Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) are a uniformed youth group which supports the community in a broad range of events and activities "This is one of the best days in Cadets, everyone pulling together to help each other, and it's been great to cheer on the runners, they're amazing!" (Young cadet who supported the London Marathon).

Commitment Two - Child focused: enabling children and young people who are service users to influence improvements to our systems, services and processes.

Notable activities and impact this year included: Consultations to inform the development of priorities and actions in key strategies. Merton Looked After Children (LAC) strategy consultation report states that the majority (94%) of children and young people said they felt safe in their homes 'all or most of the time', compared to 75% in the general population. Children's views on all areas of their lives - home, school, activities, health and well-being, and relationships with carers and friends - have been used to develop the new LAC Strategy. User forums for vulnerable children in receipt of services. Children in Care Council informed discussions on a range of issues - housing, homelessness, budgeting, Staying Put in foster care, growing up undocumented, health, emotional well-being, LAC reviews, and Independent Reviewing Officer service.

Transforming Families youth forum said they would like more access to positive activities and the team organised a go-karting trip. Young people placed Transforming Families as 8/9 on a scale of 1-10.

The Youth Justice Youth Board (forum for young people) requested a range of developments - organising home visit, timings of youth board meetings, and access to the youth justice service building, these have been implemented by the Youth Justice Team. Recruitment and training. Care Leavers delivered workshops for prospective foster carers during the assessment process.



Learning from serious case reviews. Part of our response to the expressed views of Child B was the development and implementation of a new Young Carers Multi-Agency Strategy and protocol.

Commissioned and partner services ensuring effective youth participation. Commissioned services facilitated, user-led activities - service evaluation, planning and improvement; decision making about finances and strategy; recruitment; publicity; and the development of web based information and advice. One young person supported by the Catch22 risk and resilience commissioned service said, *"[C22 workers] listened to me and believed I could change...being positive and helpful and never judging me...I now have a course I enjoy at college."* Uptown Youth Service set up a new 'Saturday Step Up' inclusive session supported by peer mentors, in response to requests from its young people.

Commitment Three - Delivering on Merton's approach to casework practice: Putting the wishes and feelings of children and young people who are subject of a plan, at the centre of decision making and planning.

Notable activities and impact this year included: Child centred practice approaches for assessment, planning and review. Child's participation in their child protection (CP)

conference - Twelve children attended their CP conference, and 8 gave feedback. The majority said they were happy or very happy with their conference, scaling at 9/10 or 10/10 for all aspects. Views expressed by children after their conference led to improvement actions including ensuring that the child's feedback goes immediately to the Chair of the conference and is actioned before the next meeting, finding child and family friendly conference venues.

Child's participation in their Looked after Children review - Ninety nine percent of reviews for looked after children were conducted within the statutory timescale, 99% of Looked after Children participated in their review, and 68% of these attended the meeting and spoke for themselves. Foster Carer Review - views expressed by foster carers' children during this process led to a number of improvement actions to ensure that carers are meeting the needs of their own children. Let's Talk - views expressed to foster carers by their looked after child during this process were shared with the children's social workers to inform individual casework.

Young people's youth justice self-assessment - views expressed by a young person during this process enabled the Serious Organised Crime project team to identify a suitably engaging work experience placement.

Advocacy support for children and young people in care or on a child protection (CP) plan. Jigsaw 4u commissioned advocacy service supported 53 children on a CP plan and 45 looked after children. One young person said: 'My advocate got my opinions out loud, made people listen to me and got what I asked for'.

'User voice' included in case audit process. Bi monthly audit of children's plans June 2018 ('Stepdown'; CIN, CP, LAC and 'pathway' audits) identified very good evidence of children and families' engagement in the development of the plan. For example, in response to a child's views, their plan was escalated to the CP process, and in another a CP plan remained in place because a parent said that her family needed more support. As part of the audit process, a young person fed back that she is aware of the LAC plan and is happy with it, her social worker listens to her and she feels she can always speak to her if she is not happy about any aspect of her care plan. Audit of casework of the 0-5 Supporting Families Team identified good evidence of 'persistence in engaging families in the intervention'. It also identified an improvement action to ensure that actions set during supervision are shared with parents.

Commitment Four - Think Family: enabling families, parents and carers to influence change, which empowers them to manage their own affairs, impact decisions about their children and ultimately deliver better outcomes.

Notable activities and impact this year included:

Families influencing casework and case reviews. Signs of Safety child and family centred casework practice approach enabled a parent to use 'words and pictures' to explain to her children how her mental health had impacted on her ability to be a parent. The parent initially said the process was 'a waste of time', but now she sees 'what a difference it has made'.

Parent participation in CP Conferences Twenty two of the 27 parents who gave feedback on their initial or review CP conference rated their level of satisfaction as 8/10 or above, regarding



how well their child's views informed the meeting. Actions are in place to collect samples of qualitative feedback after conference especially to investigate reasons for low satisfaction.

The Foster Carers Survey 2018 highlighted a number of recommendations for improvements to our fostering service related to training for children's social work teams, fostering payments, placements, and carer retention.

Feedback from users on their level of satisfaction with services: Central London Community Health Care 'patient reported experience measures' show that 99% of patients said they were treated with respects, and 94% would recommend the service.

Early Years, childcare and children centres service review states that 95% of families said they had experienced improved outcomes after attending a service or programme. 100% reported improved

outcomes after attending a parenting programme. 'I feel comfortable sharing my worries and it made me feel more confident as a parent'.

Adoption and Permanence Team bi-annual report states that adopters are positive about their experience of each stage of the adoption process – 'we were allowed to progress at our own pace with a great deal of support and clarification'.

The Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub received positive feedback from professionals during this year's MSCB conference who said that the service is available, supportive, clear on thresholds, and gives feedback on the outcome of the referral.

Commitment Five – Building capacity across the Children's Trust to engage in good quality, ethical and impactful 'user voice' activity, the learning from which is shared with all stakeholders, including participants.

Notable activities and impact this year included:

Processes in place to support meaningful and ethical participation in commissioned and partner services Kids First forum has refreshed its good practice guidance which clearly states its role to independently represent the voice of children with SEND and their families.

The EHC plan process has been reviewed to ensure that it captures the views of children and families.

Commissioned services contract monitoring processes collects quarterly information from services on their user voice activity and impact; this is reported annually.

Outcome of user voice activity communicated within organisations, across the Children's Trust, and to participants. Central London Community Health Care put together 'patient stories', the key learning from which is shared at senior management meetings. In response to one patient story the children and young people's occupational therapy (OT) team are taking forward actions to raise awareness of children's OT needs in schools.

Newsletters – a number of service areas share information with users via a regular newsletter, this includes South West London Adoption Consortium (SWLAC), and Kids First parent forum. Young Merton Together termly online magazine shares 'user voice' good practice articles across the Children's Trust.

Whilst the summary above gives a brief overview of much of the activity undertaken throughout the year, it is not possible to include everything, or the level of detail about some of the engagement that has been undertaken.

What we hope this demonstrates is Merton's commitment to listen, learn from and respond to the voice and experiences of children and their families across all agencies that work with children and their families.

10.0

Conclusions and Priorities for 2019–21 Business Years

In June 2019, the MSCB will be dissolved and will be replaced by the Merton Safeguarding Children's Partnership. In Merton, Partners see this development as an opportunity to work together more effectively in very challenging contexts. We face a number of significant challenges going forward, these include having to manage increasing demands on services with reducing budgets; managing significant organisational change, as well as responding to national issues such as Brexit. As we make the transition from a LSCB into a Statutory Safeguarding Children Partnership, Merton is in a strong position to provide leadership and assurance in high quality, child and family-centred safeguarding practice across all agencies, whilst being focused on achieving excellence through partnership.

The forthcoming Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership's agreed priorities for 2019-2021 business years are outlined as follows:

1. Early Help

Early Help: is part of a whole system approach and is based on a clear understanding of local need. Good early help will mean that children and their families will experience a high quality and coordinated service that meets their assessed needs and prevents issues from escalating into a safeguarding risk. The Partnership's priority is to ensure that there is clear coordination and quality assurance of early help; with effective integration between the Early Help and the MASH and First Response services with a shared focus on the journey and experience of the child and family.



2. Think family: Domestic Abuse and Neglect

'Think Family' represents our joined up approach to working with families, both children and adults, so that families' needs are assessed holistically and there is a coordinated response to assessed needs. We ask colleagues in adult services to 'See the Adult; See the Child', understanding that adults in need of support, who are also parents, may need specific support to parent well. We ask colleagues in children's services to understand that the solutions to our concerns about children's wellbeing may lie in ensuring that adult services are meeting the needs of their parents. Our work in relation to Think Family covers a broad range of issues that impact on family life, but for the purposes of this business plan is focused on effectively responding the following two forms of harm:

- a) Think Family: Domestic Abuse:** our priority is to protect children who are at risk of domestic abuse by working effectively with families, including victims and perpetrators of abuse to create and sustain a safe parenting environment. The MSCP will monitor, coordinate and evaluate the work of partner agencies to help and protect parents and children at risk of domestic abuse. This work includes effective coordination of the work with other multi-agency groups that have responsibility for responding to domestic abuse.
- b) Think Family: Neglect:** our priority is to help children who are at risk of being neglected by their parents or carers. The partnership will monitor, coordinate and evaluate the work of all agencies to ensure that children at risk of neglect receive help and protection and that parents and carers are supported to meet children's needs.

3. Contextual Safeguarding

The Partnership will work with all agencies to ensure that there is a highly coordinated multi-agency and whole-council approach to a range of adolescent risks that occur in contexts beyond the family home (e.g. neighbourhood, schools, local shopping centres, youth venues etc.). These risks include child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, serious youth violence, peer on peer abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and other overlapping forms of harm. The Partnership is aware of the risks of exploitation in their local area.

This Business Plan contains the MSCP priority actions. The on-going work of the MSCP and its Sub-Groups and Task Groups continues alongside it and will be incorporated into the Sub-Groups' annual work plans and reporting cycle to the MSCP.



Appendix 1

Merton Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan 2018-19

Progress of this Plan is updated monthly & monitored at each MSCB Meeting

Introduction

Merton Safeguarding Children Board aims to ensure that local services work knowledgeably, effectively and together to safeguard children and young people and to support their parents.

As part of our continuous improvement approach the Board has identified some key development priorities for 2016/17, these have been extended to 2018 and 2019. These are linked to our business as usual work plan undertaken by the MSCB and its sub groups. Alongside these priorities we are also seeking to improve our Quality Assurance and Learning and Improvement System to ensure that there is clear understanding of the complexity of work to protect children at the frontline. The Board continues to seek to improve its links to practitioners and their managers as part of our quality assurance processes to inform service improvement and development as well as maintaining our strong focus on the Voice of the Child/Young person.



Priorities for this business year are:

1 Managing the arrangements for the transition from Merton Local Safeguarding Children Board to the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership

In 2019 the Board will see the dissolution of LSCBs and the establishment of Safeguarding Partnerships. In addition to reviewing the progress that the Board has made to date, we will need to develop clear plans about the future shape and direction of the Board.

The MSCB is Outstanding with no recommendations regarding improvements. Building from a secure base, the Board has agreed not to radically change its constitution but to use the Children and Social Care Act 2017 as an opportunity to strengthen our partnership to ensure that safeguarding children remains a priority for all partners in our safeguarding system and to ensure that there is the most effective representation from statutory and other key partners in the work of safeguarding Merton's children and families and promoting their welfare.

At the Board's Away day it was agreed that a task and finish group would be established to propose the arrangements for the establishment of Safeguarding Partnership.

2 Think Family - to support children and adults in our most vulnerable families to reduce risk and ensure improved outcomes.

A great deal of work has been undertaken to embed Think Family as an approach to interventions with children and families across both adults and children's services. We are making good progress in ensuring that our partnerships enable the most vulnerable families to be supported; that vulnerable parents are enabled to care for their children and children are in turn receive the care they need to thrive and achieve their potential.

Evidence from local and national research tells us that our most vulnerable parents/families are those who:

- Experience poor mental health
- Struggle with substance misuse
- Are affected by domestic abuse
- Parents with learning difficulties that may affect their ability to respond to the changing needs of their children

The evidence nationally and locally also shows that vulnerable families are best supported when there is effective joint working between adult and children facing services. When professionals understand the underlying causes of issues like neglect and other form of abuse and offer effective support early before these problems get worse.

Building on this work, the Board is seeking to drive improvements in our practice with vulnerable families so that stigma is reduced and families with poor mental health and substance misuse issues will feel confident in seeking help and support. We are also assure ourselves that practitioners are supported with the skills and confident to engage with all of families including:

- Families who are difficult to engage
- Families who are challenging (for a variety of reasons including social class – evidence from practice and SCRs show that affluent families can pose distinct challenges to multi-agency safeguarding systems resulting in harm to children; families who present as ‘powerful’ etc.)

The Board is also seeking to further strengthen the role of education, as they are a critical part of the team around the family.

3 Supporting Vulnerable Adolescents – adolescence is a time of significant change for all young people.

We know that, for some young people, adolescence is a time of particular vulnerability. We are determined to support adolescents who are at risk of:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE),
- Children who go missing from home/school/care
- Children and young people who are at risk radicalisation and violent extremism,
- Children at risk of serious youth violence and gangs
- Children at risk of criminal and other forms of exploitation including county lines, peer on peer abuse and harmful sexual behaviour.
- Self-harm and poor mental health para-suicide

The Board is seeking to develop a strategic response to Contextual Safeguarding. In particular we are seeking to development a coordinated response to adolescent risk/harm which occurs outside of the family home in spaces such as the neighbourhood, school, community centres and housing estates.

The Board would also like to be more systematic regarding its work in listening to children and allowing them to shape the services that are provided to them. The Merton User Voice Strategy outlines the variety of ways in which the views and opinions of children and young people are considered. The Board would like this to be more coordinated so that the impact of our work with children, young people and their families can be measured more effectively.

4 Early Help – To develop an early help system that is responsive and effectively prevents escalation of concerns.

Merton has reviewed its Children Young People and Families Well-Being Model. We are now reviewing our Early Help and Preventative work; in particular we are exploring models for coordinating preventative and early help across the well-being model. As part of our review we will:

- Consider the interface between our MASH and EH arrangements
- Review our service offer at all levels of the Model and Engage partners in discussion on thresholds, clarify Step-Up Step Down processes and the tools to support early help assessment CASA and intervention (Signs of Safety/signs of well-being)
- Review our partnership quality assurance of EH

Addressing the incidence and impact of neglect is a cross-cutting theme that runs across the work of the Board and each of our priorities.

This Business Plan contains the MSCB priority actions. The on-going work of the MSCB and its Sub-Groups and Task Groups continues alongside it and will be incorporated into the Sub-Groups' annual work plans and reporting cycle to the MSCB.

New priorities may be added during the year, including any identified risks which will be monitored in the confidential risk log below.

The Plan will be updated and presented to each MSCB meeting by the Board Manager for monitoring and exception reporting.



Objectives		Outcomes	Actions (who and what)		Resources	
					Governance/oversight	When?
1.1	The purpose of this task and finish group is to draft a constitution/ partnership agreement for the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership and to propose a partnership agreement which will form the legal basis for the partnership.	<p>The new partnership to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Partners b) Relevant agencies • Geographical Footprint • Leadership and governance? • Independent Scrutiny • Quality Assurance • Training and Practice Development • Funding • Dispute Resolution • Listening and responding to children 	<p>The Independent Chair</p> <p>Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion</p> <p>The Director of Education</p> <p>Senior Representative from the Police</p> <p>Senior Representative from the CCG</p> <p>Senior Representation from Housing</p> <p>MSCB Business Manager</p>	<p>A task and finish group comprised of key partners are to explore options and propose a draft partnership agreement to the Board for sign off</p>	<p>The MSCB partnership and Strategic Boards</p> <p>CCG Rep</p> <p>MPS BCU Rep</p> <p>Education Rep</p> <p>CSC Rep</p> <p>Housing Rep</p> <p>HWBB Rep</p> <p>Lead Member</p>	<p>January 2019; with a view to the Board being dissolved 31st March 2019 and constituted as a safeguarding partnership from 1st April 2019</p>

Objectives		Outcomes	Actions (who and what)		Resources	
					Governance/oversight	When?
2.1	To embed the Think Family Approach across the multi-agency partnership	<p>We want to make it easier for all types of families to access help and support without stigma or blame.</p> <p>Especially families experiencing DVA, mental health, substance misuse, disability</p>	<p>To approve the DVA Strategy</p> <p>To Implement the Mental Health Protocol</p> <p>To approve and implement a Parental Substance Misuse Protocol</p> <p>To approve Protocol for Supporting Parents with disabilities</p>	<p>The Think Family Strategic Board to further embed multi-agency work across adult and children's services</p> <p>Think family Coordinator</p> <p>Policy Sub-Group</p> <p>Substance Misuse Commissioned Service</p>	Policy Sub-Group	January 2019
		<p>We want all our practitioners to be skilled at working with all types of families and are positive at engaging with them</p>	<p>To review our training offer to ensure that practitioners have access to appropriate training</p> <p>To seek assurance from agencies that supervisory arrangements provide support with regard to authoritative practice with families</p>	<p>Learning and Development Sub-Group</p> <p>Section 11 and challenge Process</p>	Learning and Development Sub-Group	<p>January 2019</p> <p>May – June 2018</p>
		<p>We work well with schools and educational institutions as they are a key part of the team around families</p>	<p>To work with schools and educational establishments to ensure that they have the capacity and confidence to lead preventative multi-agency safeguarding</p>	Schools Representatives	<p>Learning and Development Sub-Group</p> <p>Policy Sub-Group</p> <p>PPYPS</p>	January 2019

Objectives		Outcomes	Actions (who and what)		Resources	
					Governance/oversight	When?
2.2	The MSCB is assured of the multi-agency awareness of neglect and its impact and the quality of frontline practice in cases of neglect	For the MSCB to undertake a re-audit of neglect	What	Who	QA Sub-Group and BIG Head CSC & YI QA Chair Paul Angeli	March 2018
		To feedback key practice lessons from the audit	QA Sub-Group and MSCB partners to conduct a multi-agency audit of neglect cases	All relevant MSCB partners including Health (CCG, CLCH, acute trusts, Mental Health Trust), Education, Police, CSC, Voluntary Orgs.		
		To integrate these lessons into current training and practice development initiatives	To add Neglect to the Section 11 Self-audit			
		To have in place a range of approved practice tools to address the incidence of neglect	MSCB to adopt and promote a range of practice tools to address neglect	Carla Thomas CSC Health Police Education Early Years	Policy and Learning and Development Sub-Groups MSCB BSU	March 2018
		For the Board to be assured that there is a clear link between the work on neglect including the trigger trio and Think Family	Multi-agency partners to demonstrate an understanding neglect as an effect, with the trigger trio, in many cases, being the cause	MSCB partners including, SAB Health (CCG, CLCH, acute trusts, Mental Health Trust), Public Health Education, Police, CSC, Voluntary Orgs.	Policy and Quality Assurance Sub-Group Chair	March 2018

Objectives		Outcomes	Actions (who and what)		Resources	
					Governance/oversight	When?
3.1	Listening and responding to the voices of children and young people	<p>We listen to young people and their lived experience</p> <p>We will identify coordinate the various ways in which we hear from young people and ensure that the Board has oversight. We will also ensure that the voice of the child and the family is heard in the commissioning and delivery of services</p>	The BIG	<p>To review the user voice strategy</p> <p>For the Board to agree on-going ways to secure the voice and experience of the child in the work of the Board</p>	MSCB	January 2019
3.2	We understand ASD and social communication disorders and provide appropriate support to children and families and practitioners	To ensure that the Board is sighted on the Implementation of the ASD Strategy	CAMHs Transformation Group	To ensure that the risks to children and young people with ASD are managed effectively	PPYPS	January 2019
3.3	Promoting Good Mental Health for Adolescents (12-18 year-olds)	<p>We support good adolescent mental health and emotional well-being - we are clear on the difference between 'normal' adolescent behaviour, inappropriate behaviour needing a parental response and adolescent mental health</p> <p>We want to strengthen the link between commissioned services, schools and families (where appropriate)</p>	<p>All agencies</p> <p>Commissioners and commissioned services</p> <p>Secondary Schools</p>	<p>Promote good mental health to more children and young people across the safeguarding system.</p> <p>Champion the voices of Merton young people and parents to influence mental health policy and practice.</p> <p>To work with commissioners and commissioned services to ensure effective, integrated services</p>	PPYPS Sub-Group	
3.4	Reducing Incidents of Self-harm and preventing adolescent suicide	We prevent self-harm and suicide	<p>CAMHs</p> <p>PPYPS</p> <p>Acute Trusts</p> <p>Red Thread</p>	<p>To review the implementation of the Self-harm Protocol</p> <p>To develop a Suicide Prevention Strategy</p>	PPYP and Policy Sub-Groups	

Objectives		Outcomes	Actions (who and what)		Resources	
					Governance/oversight	When?
3.5	Developing a Strategic response to Contextual Safeguarding	<p>We have an effective contextual safeguarding response to adolescent risk including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSE • gangs and county lines, serious youth violence • peer on peer abuse • harmful sexual behaviour • adolescent substance misuse 	PPYPS YJT Transforming Families MPS	<p>To develop a contextual safeguarding strategy</p> <p>To ensure that the strategy is underpinned by a process to manage and review adolescent risk related to peers, space and place</p>	PPYPS	January 2019

Objectives		Outcomes	Actions (who and what)		Resources	
					Governance/oversight	When?
4.1	Skilled and coordinated Prevention at all levels of need	Effective coordination and QA of early help	Early Help Task and Finish Group	To propose a model for adoption by the Board	BIG	March 2019
		Aligning assessment tools	Early Help Task and Finish Group	To develop a multi-agency assessment and intervention tool that is aligned to the MWBM and the Social Work Practice Model	BIG	March 2019
		Integrating signs of safety as a part of a preventative response (a shared language and approach for families, professionals and services)	Signs of Safety Steering Group	To develop a multi-agency assessment and intervention tool that is aligned to the MWBM and the Social Work Practice Model	BIG	March 2019
		Ensuring effective preventative services at all levels of the MWBM	Early Help Task and Finish Group	To develop a multi-agency assessment and intervention tool that is aligned to the MWBM and the Social Work Practice Model	BIG	March 2019

Appendix 3

Proposed Membership

Executive Group Membership	
The Independent Person (Attends as required by Statutory Partners)	
SP	The Accountable Officer of Merton Clinical Commissioning Group - (or their delegated representative)
SP	BCU, Commander Metropolitan Police (or their delegated representative)
SP	Chief Executive, London Borough of Merton (or their delegated representative)
SGC	Sub Group Chairs may be asked to attend the Executive Group if the business of their sub group is on the agenda.

Relevant Agencies	
Agency	Representative
Acute Trust/Health Provider	Director of Nursing, SW London & St George's Mental Health Trust
Acute Trust/Provider	Chief Nurse, St George's Healthcare NHS Trust
Acute Trust/Provider	Chief Nurse, Epsom & St. Helier NHS Trust
Acute Trust/Provider	Clinical Director, SW London & St Georges CAMHS service
Community Health Service	Director of Nursing, Community Health Services
Housing	Registered Social Landlord Representative
London Borough of Merton (Housing)	Housing Needs Manager, Community & Housing
London Probation - Community Rehabilitation Company	Assistant Chief Officer, The London Community Rehabilitation Company Limited (or their delegated representative)
Merton Education	Primary School Representative
Merton Education	Special School Representative
Merton Education	Secondary School Representative
Merton Education	Independent Sector School Representative
Merton Education	Further Education College Representative
National Probation Service	Regional Safeguarding Lead
NHS Merton CCG	Named General Practitioner for Child Protection, Merton CCG
NHS Merton CCG	Designated Doctor for Child Protection, Merton CCG
NHS Merton CCG	Designated Nurse Safeguarding, Merton CCG

Co-opted Members	
Agency	Representative
London Borough of Merton	Lead Member Children's Services
London Borough of Merton	The Head of Community Safety
Community Representative	Lay Members (Two)
Department for Work and Pensions	Representative
London Borough of Merton	Director of Public Health
London Borough of Merton	Head of Service, Policy, Performance and Partnership
London Borough of Merton (Adults)	Safeguarding Adults Manager, Community & Housing
London Borough of Merton	Assistant Director of CSC & YI, CSF
London Borough of Merton	Assistant Director of Education
NHS England (to be sent papers for information and consultation)	Head of Quality (South London) and Safeguarding (London)
BS, A	MSCP Policy and Development Manager
BS	MSCP Administrator/s

Statutory Partners will ensure that the voice and concerns of schools, colleges and other educational providers are taken into account, as appropriate, at Executive meetings of the Partnership.

Contact Details

Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership

Email: MertonLSCB@merton.gov.uk

Supporting Schools to Improve to be Good and Outstanding

Introduction

1. The Merton School Improvement Strategy for 2019/2020 sets out the Local Authority’s (LA’s) principles, aims, priorities and mechanisms to ensure that all Merton schools are supported and challenged to continue to improve, to be judged at least good by Ofsted, and for an increasing proportion to be judged as outstanding.
2. As schools are supported to improve, the Ofsted definitions of ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ are used to ensure broad common understanding about the meaning of these terms. The current Ofsted framework (as of September 2019) focuses very much on the curriculum, judgements about which are made in a sub-judgement called ‘Quality of Education’. Schools are also judged in relation to the other sub-judgements of ‘Personal Development’, ‘Behaviour and Attitudes’ and ‘Leadership and Management’. Headline criteria for these sub-judgements are:

Outstanding schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of education provided is exceptional. • Pupils behave with consistently high levels of respect for others. They play a highly positive role in creating a school environment in which commonalities are identified and celebrated, difference is valued and nurtured, and bullying, harassment and violence are never tolerated. • The school consistently promotes the extensive personal development of pupils. The school goes beyond the expected, so that pupils have access to a wide, rich set of experiences. Opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests are of exceptional quality. • Leaders ensure that teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development. Teachers’ subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge consistently build and develop over time. This consistently translates into improvements in the teaching of the curriculum.
Good schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. This is either the national curriculum or a curriculum of comparable breadth and ambition. • The school has high expectations for pupils’ behaviour and conduct. These expectations are commonly understood and applied consistently and fairly. This is reflected in pupils’ positive behaviour and conduct. Low-level disruption is not tolerated and pupils’ behaviour does not disrupt lessons or the day-to-day life of the school. Leaders support all staff well in managing pupil behaviour. Staff make sure that pupils follow appropriate routines. • The curriculum extends beyond the academic, vocational or technical and provides for pupils’ broader development. The school’s work to enhance pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high quality. • Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education to all pupils. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice.
Schools judged to require improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of education provided by the school is not good. • Behaviour and attitudes in the school are not good. • Personal development in the school is not good.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management are not good.
Inadequate schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's curriculum has little or no structure or coherence, and leaders have not appropriately considered sequencing. Pupils experience a jumbled, disconnected series of lessons that do not build their knowledge, skills or understanding. • Leaders are not taking effective steps to secure good behaviour from pupils and a consistent approach to discipline. They do not support staff adequately in managing behaviour. • A significant minority of pupils do not receive a wide, rich set of experiences. • Leaders are not doing enough to tackle weaknesses in the school.

The current national context and expectations of school improvement

3. The national educational context provides the backdrop and framework within which this Strategy operates. This has continued to present change and challenge for schools nationally. In Merton, ATTAIN (the partnership of Merton schools working with the Local Authority), has begun to address some of these challenges, perhaps most significantly those associated with recruitment and retention, with finance, and importantly with regard to the continued challenge to ensure that the outcomes for Merton pupils continue to improve and remain within the top rankings of Local Authorities nationally.
4. Within the Partnership, Merton continues to have its strong school improvement team.
5. Despite changes nationally, LAs continue to have key statutory functions in relation to the education of children and young people, and hence to securing the improvement of all schools. These include ensuring that 'education functions are exercised with a view to promoting high standards ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and learning, and promote the fulfilment of learning potential'.
6. In addition, when delivering their school improvement function, local authorities must have regard to the Schools Causing Concern statutory guidance (September 2019). This guidance provides clarity about the role of local authorities in delivering school improvement for maintained schools and for academies. The guidance notes that local authorities have considerable freedom as to how they deliver their statutory responsibilities. Most importantly it notes that LAs should act as champions of education excellence across their schools and the importance of early intervention and swift and robust action to tackle underperformance in maintained schools. In summary, local authorities which champion educational excellence are expected to do the following:
 - understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress;
 - work closely with the relevant Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and other local partners to ensure schools receive the support they need to improve;
 - where underperformance has been recognised in a maintained school, proactively work with the relevant RSC, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices and using intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards; and
 - encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to: take responsibility for their own improvement; support other schools; and enable other schools to access the support they need to improve.
7. Academies are accountable to the Secretary of State, and therefore LAs are directed to focus their school improvement activity with the schools they maintain. LAs are directed to raise any concerns they have about an academy's standards, leadership or governance directly with the Regional Schools' Commissioner.

8. It should also be noted that local authorities are discharging their duties within the context of increasing autonomy and changing accountability for schools, alongside an expectation that improvement should be led by schools themselves.

The principles and aims of School Improvement in Merton

9. In this national context, Merton carries out its school improvement functions using the following principles:
 - All children and young people in Merton deserve to receive education that is at least good, and which they enjoy.
 - Much of the expertise which ensures schools are good or better is located in schools already. This expertise needs to be maximised and shared, building strong working relationships with education leaders in the area.
 - Partnership working should explicitly ensure that all education professionals working in Merton, both in schools and the LA, work together for the benefit of all children and young people.
 - Support and challenge for all Merton schools is provided on the basis of the rich information gathered from schools themselves, and using the resources available to the Local Authority, including the work of Merton Education Partners and Advisors, and of other LA officers, with Merton Schools.
 - Support and challenge is provided to schools in proportion to need. Where concerns are identified, both the support and challenge increase responsively.

Priorities for improvement

10. The challenge for Merton can be captured in these overarching priorities:
 - Ensure a good or outstanding school for every child and young person;
 - Maintain at least good outcomes for all pupils and specifically to improve outcomes for pupil groups, where they are vulnerable to under achievement (for example those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND); pupils that are eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG); pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL); and higher attaining pupils.).
11. The impact of the School Improvement Strategy is measured by:
 - The proportion of Merton schools judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted;
 - Improvements made and validated in relation to the Ofsted judgement criteria between Ofsted inspections;
 - The extent to which gaps are reduced between underachieving groups and their peers;
 - The proportion of children and young people attending a school which is good or better.

Partnership working

12. Collaboration between Merton schools is strong, and Merton recognises that building on this strength is of paramount importance in seeking to secure the best outcomes for Merton's children and young people. The following are key existing mechanisms for collaboration and partnership working within Merton:
 - The majority of Merton schools are members of local school clusters. These are organised as follows:
 - East Mitcham
 - Mitcham Town
 - Morden
 - West Wimbledon
 - Wimbledon

In addition, there is a cluster of Catholic schools, and a secondary phase cluster. Many schools will use not just the cluster relationships, but links with other schools both within Merton and beyond to share and gather best practice.

- The schools' partnership, ATTAIN, is made up of members from primary, secondary and special schools across the Borough, as well as members of the Education Department of the Local Authority. It aims to

improve the quality of learning and teaching through collaborative expertise; to share best practice in order to secure high quality provision in a cost effective way; and to develop Merton schools' collective ability to inspire, and support and challenge each other to enrich Merton schools and Merton communities.

- Merton Leaders in Education (MLEs) provide school level support for leadership. This is a local programme, based on the local leaders in education programme. Working within a local programme, MLEs are able to bring a local knowledge of systems and of high expectations for Merton children and young people.
- Primary Expert Teachers (PETs) come from Merton's pool of excellent teachers, and provide hands on support for primary teachers in the classroom, focusing in particular on English and mathematics.
- The Merton Special Teaching Alliance (MSTA) provides support for schools including coaching and leadership development programmes. This offer complements and enhances the local offer of support for Merton schools. The MSTA also offers a Schools' Direct programme to maximise the new to teaching recruitment opportunities for Merton Schools.
- Teach Wimbledon is an alliance of local schools which, in partnership with the Local Authority, runs another Schools Direct new teacher training programme, again strengthening recruitment options for Merton schools.
- A number of schools (19 at present) are engaged in a peer review process, guided by Merton inspectors.

Merton also seeks to develop collaborative relationships beyond its boundaries.

- The South West London School Effectiveness Partnership (SWLSEP) takes partnership working for the LA and Merton schools beyond the Borough border. Best practice and expertise is shared through joint programmes of professional development, focusing in particular on leadership, governance and curriculum development.
- Where expertise is not yet available locally, Merton looks to draw on the expertise of education professionals further afield. These include National Leaders in Education (NLEs), National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) and Teaching School Alliances located outside Merton.

Merton School Improvement

13. Merton continues to:

- Support and challenge schools to remain good or outstanding;
- Support and challenge schools to improve from an Ofsted 'requires improvement' judgement as soon as possible;
- Support schools in responding to national policy changes and government initiatives.

14. The Merton School Improvement (MSI) team works with schools, providing the support and challenge required. The team comprises inspectors (known as Merton Education Partners, MEPs) and advisors who work with schools, providing both in school support and challenge, and universal, central support, (mostly through continuing professional development opportunities).

15. The MSI team works closely with a range of other LA teams and services which contribute to the wider school improvement agenda in Merton. These include:

- Virtual School for Looked after Children

- Schools' Management and Information Service Support Team (Schools' IT support)
- Governor Services
- Equalities and Diversity Team
- SEN and Disabilities Integrated Service
- Virtual Behaviour Service
- Language and Learning Support Team
- Vulnerable Children's Team
- Supporting Families Team
- Education Welfare Service
- Traveller Education Service
- Continuing Professional Development Team
- Early Years' Service
- Admissions Team
- Research and Information Service

Monitoring, challenge and support, and intervention

16. All schools are linked to a MEP, and receive at least two visits a year. During these visits, MEPs seek to work as closely as possible with school leaders in the individual context of each school. Leaders and governors are challenged and supported, particularly with reference to the areas covered by the Ofsted framework, including safeguarding. Advisory support is also available for all schools from the MSI team.
17. Where schools are evaluating themselves to be less than good, or where there are concerns about performance, support from the MEP increases. Advisors offer targeted support for identified schools, focusing on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching with regard to English, mathematics, equalities (including for those pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium), assessment, the curriculum and Early Years. Schools where concerns are identified are also asked to work with the LA through Support and Challenge Groups. Further detail about the increase in support and challenge in proportion to need can be found below.

Universal offer for schools

18. The universal offer for all schools, including central training, is also devised based on the knowledge of local school needs and in the context of the national education agenda. The MEP programme provides a framework for school self-evaluation, and a quality assurance function, giving external verification to self-evaluation for all schools. In general, the MSI team can offer support with:
- updates on national changes and developments;
 - a quality assurance and accreditation programme for NQTs;
 - guidance on assessment, and the collection, presentation and analysis of pupil achievement data;
 - identification and sharing of local and national good practice;
 - guidance in identifying, analysing, planning for and monitoring required improvements;
 - preparation for Ofsted;
 - advice and guidance to ensure any priorities identified in inspection are addressed;
 - training, coaching and advice on the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and teaching and learning; and
 - general support for leadership.
19. Many of the services listed in the section above ('Merton School Improvement') also offer a buy back service through service level agreements for all Merton schools to support school improvement.

School categories and levels of support

20. Support and challenge for schools is targeted towards those that require it most drawing on the range of information available, including:
- Schools' own self-evaluation based on the current inspection framework;

- Schools' most recent Ofsted inspection outcome;
- Pupil outcomes (using performance information both at statutory points of assessment and schools' own); and other data including that relating to: exclusions, admissions, staff turnover and vacancies, governor vacancies and financial issues; and
- Schools' leadership capacity (bearing in mind new appointments etc).

21. For the majority of schools, this information is gathered through the MEP programme. Where this is not the case, for example in some academies, judgements are made through desk top exercises looking at the latest data alongside Ofsted reports in order to assess school performance and detect any signs of decline. The information is considered in the round at the end of the summer term/beginning of the autumn term, and a school category and level of support is suggested, and contact is made with the Headteacher to discuss this. The agreed category is formally shared with schools by letter.

22. The following criteria are used as a guide when agreeing the categories.

Green	Schools performing well, which may include those that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'good' or 'outstanding' as recently judged by Ofsted; • with strong pupil outcomes (attainment and progress).
Yellow	This could include schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'good' or 'outstanding' as recently judged by Ofsted; • with an uncharacteristic drop in performance (attainment and progress); • which have been making improvements but are not yet consistently performing well across the school; • where leadership is vulnerable; • recently moved from RI; • where an Ofsted inspection is expected.
Amber	This could include schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • judged as 'requires improvement'; • where current performance could result in the school being judged as 'requires improvement' when next inspected; • with a decline in performance over time; • where there are serious financial concerns; • where leadership is vulnerable.
Red	Schools of concern, which may include schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in an Ofsted category; • where current performance could result in the school being judged as inadequate when next inspected; • with complex weaknesses; • requiring significant improvement with limited capacity to improve; • where there are other serious concerns which will affect outcomes for children.

Levels of support from the MSI team

23. Following an initial in-depth analysis of the information and deployment of resources at the beginning of the school year along the following lines, support is offered to schools on the following basis and continues to be adapted throughout the year as situations change.

Level of support		Nature of support
(i)	Green and some yellow category schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two MEP visits and reports per year. • Advisory and other support available through the MSI service level agreement.
(ii)	Some yellow category schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four MEP visits and three reports per year. • Advisory and other support available through the MSI service level agreement.
(iii)	Some amber category schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six MEP visits per year. • Three reports per year. • Some free advisory support available following discussion with the MEP, and supplementary support available through the MSI service level agreement.
(iv)	Some amber category schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine MEP visits per year. • Three reports per year • Free advisory support available in line with the school's improvement priorities. • Support and Challenge Group
(v)	Red schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine MEP visits per year. • Three reports per year • Free advisory support available in line with the school's improvement priorities. • Support and Challenge Group

24. In addition, all 6th forms receive two days of MEP support across the year. This is in addition to the days allocated to the school as outlined above.

Support and Challenge Groups

25. A Support and Challenge Group may be given to schools causing concern in any area of the Ofsted framework for the inspection of schools related to the Quality of Education, Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes and Leadership and Management. The LA will use the most robust intelligence available to determine whether a school might be causing concern.

26. Support and Challenge Groups are set up in partnership with the school, through first approaching the Headteacher, with the expectation that each school will engage in the process in the context of the LA duty as outlined at the beginning of this paper.

27. Support and Challenge Groups:

- challenge and hold the school to account for improvements required in line with the school's action plan/development plan;
- monitor and evaluate progress towards those improvements;
- provide the leadership of the school with an opportunity to rehearse key messages about the progress the school is making;
- ensure support for the school is effectively co-ordinated, and broker additional support where needed;
- provide advice and guidance to the school from a range of school improvement experts; and

- enable the LA to get a better understanding of the school.
28. The meetings will usually be convened and chaired by the Head of School Improvement. Support and Challenge Groups will always involve the Headteacher, members of the senior leadership team as appropriate, and at least one member of the Governing Body (usually the Chair). The LA will also be represented by the relevant Merton Education Partner. Where appropriate to the particular issues in a school, other senior LA officers will also attend. Other representatives from the LA or school may be invited to attend for particular meetings.
29. At the inaugural meeting the group agrees the terms of reference incorporating the:
- Main areas for improvement required before the Support and Challenge Group disbands. This includes criteria which would indicate that the school would be judged at least good the next time it is inspected;
 - Timescale for improvements (normally at least a year);
 - Schedule of meetings (at least once per term); and
 - Membership of the group.
30. It is expected that the school drives the discussion under each agenda item of the meeting. This is an opportunity for the senior leaders in a school to demonstrate leadership in a forum where it can contribute to the evidence for the overall effectiveness of the school for Ofsted, as well as rehearse key messages in advance of inspection or monitoring visits where the presentation of information can be supported by the LA. The school is expected to either provide documentation in advance or table relevant reports that address each area of the agenda during the meeting. The Support and Challenge Group gives the school an opportunity to refine its presentation, and reports should not necessarily create additional paperwork. Schools should be prepared with at least an overview of the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum. It is expected that the school will provide any additional analysis as required or agreed at each meeting.
31. At the end of the agreed timescale, the group reviews the key areas for agreed improvement and determines whether the school has made sufficient progress and/or has sufficient capacity to address the areas in order to disband. In some instances it may be appropriate to agree a slightly extended timescale, or to agree new arising areas for improvement.
32. Following the end of the Support and Challenge Group, the school is supported in the same manner as other Merton schools in line with its needs, and is able to access a range of services to ensure they continue to improve.

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 10 February 2020

Wards: All

Subject:

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member: Cllr Kelly Braund, Cllr Eleanor Stringer

Contact officer: Karl Mittelstadt, Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report summarises the performance information for quarter 3 2019/20 as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2019/20.

2 DETAILS

Exception Report

2.1. The table below summarises changes to ratings, or other significant changes in performance since the last meeting.

Indicator Number	Descriptor	Rating Change	Comment / Action
3	% of Education, Health and Care Plans issued within statutory 20 Week timescale (including exceptions)	G to A Target 55% (min)	Year to date performance had been improving month to month through to October (58%) but saw a decline through November and December to 53%
11	% of children that became subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time	G to R (range 12 – 20%)	The year to date rate rose to just above the target range in December (21%)
16	Average number of weeks taken to complete care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks (Data source CAF/CASS)	Q2 Remains R Target 26 week (max)	The average number of weeks rose to 39 during Q2, from 28 in Q1. The national average rate was 33 weeks in both Q1 and Q2 (Q3 data is published in February).

31	% of secondary school (year 7) surplus places	Red (5-10% range introduced)	<p>The council has planned its secondary school expansion programme carefully in partnership with our schools in the knowledge that after a rapid rise, demand for Year 7 places will drop in 2023/24.</p> <p>Following the opening of the new Harris Academy Wimbledon School, we have agreed to avoid further secondary school expansion, and schools have committed to provide bulge classes only when strictly necessary.</p>
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Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats

2.2. As agreed by the Panel on 6 November 2019 the following indicators have been replaced, amended or removed:

Indicator Number	Descriptor	Changes made
7	Average Caseload for workers for Children subject of a Child Protection Plan	Replaced – see indicator 40
15	Average Caseload for workers for Looked after Children	Replaced – see indicator 40
40	<p>New Indicator replacing 7 & 15 Average Caseload for social workers.</p> <p>DfE Benchmark data is available on average caseloads of all social workers at 30 September.</p>	New / Replacement indicator. Reports on average of overall caseloads for case holding social workers.
23	Number of Looked after Children who were adopted and agency Special Guardianship Orders granted	Amended to be two indicators 23 (adopted) and 23a (SGO)
24	% outcome of all Children Centre Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness)	Removed

2.3. In addition, we have made the following changes:

Indicator Number	Descriptor	Changes made
22	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	The target for this measure has been amended from 15 to 20. This is to align performance reporting across a range of meetings and audiences.
30	% of reception year surplus places	Introduced target range 5-10%
31	% of secondary school (year 7) surplus places	Introduced target range 5-10%

2.4. Indicator 1 (Number of Common and Shared Assessments undertaken): The Q1 and Q2 data has been updated as seven assessments had previously been reported in the wrong quarter.

2.5. Indicator 2 (% of Single Assessments authorised within the statutory 45 days) data caveat: we are aware of some data anomalies in relation to the correct recording of assessment authorisation dates. We are investigating this further at the spring performance clinics.

2.6. Indicator 8 (% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences); performance information has been unavailable since the Mosaic upgrade in July. The bespoke report is currently being reviewed and the relevant data field re-mapped to resolve this issue and we hope to provide Q2 and Q3 data to the March panel.

2.7. Indicator 18 (% of children participating in reviews in month – Year to Date): the methodology, and therefore the data, has been amended to ensure that: only reviews for looked after children aged five and above are included; that the percentage given relates to the number children in care who have had reviews undertaken in period rather than the total number of all children looked after; and that the data is year-to-date at each month end. In some instances, information on participation is missing. This impacts the data at present and will be addressed through the spring programme of performance clinics.

2.8. Indicators 19 and 20 (Stability of placements of looked after children). We are, at this point, reporting Q1 – 3 as not available whilst a full review is undertaken of recording practice. The data integrity has been impacted as changes of placement are currently not recorded consistently in a child's case record. This is being addressed with the service teams at the performance clinics.

We have updated the 2018 and 2019 annual rates to those submitted to and published by the Department for Education from the annual Children Looked After Census. Whilst some work was undertaken to ensure data accuracy for the annual submission, we would still advise caution.

- 2.9. Indicator 21 (% of looked after children placed with agency foster carers) data caveat. Data for this indicator is impacted by similar recording issues identified for indicator 19 and 20. We have therefore sourced the data from finance data which gives us a rate of 37% of all looked after children at 31 December being placed with agency providers. For comparison, current mosaic reports give us 39% of all those in care on 31 December being in agency foster provision, and 51.8% of all those in foster care being in agency provision but the data for these latter two figures are reliant on any placement changes being recorded in the correct form in the client's record.
- 2.10. Indicator 23 (new indicators 23 and 23 a) data caveat: we are aware of data quality issues in regard to adoptions and special guardianship orders and a review is underway.
- 2.11. Indicator 28 (Number of Secondary permanent exclusions). The data has been amended using the official data submitted retrospectively to the DfE via the termly school census. Please note that both indicator 27 and 28 relate to pupils educated in Merton schools (primary or secondary), including those in special schools.
- 2.12. In the previous report to Panel Indicator 38 (% of commissioned services for which quarterly monitoring was completed) was reported as Red (0%). This has been corrected to 100%, therefore performance has been maintained at 100% for three quarters
- 2.13. Where available, benchmarking data (England and London performance) has been updated throughout the data index to the most recent published figures, and Merton's previous annual data has been updated to reference data published by the Department for Education. Please note that some published data relates to a snapshot date, or to the academic year, and therefore may not align the figures previously reported.

3 FOR DECISION

- 3.1. Indicator 6 (below). Performance information continues to be unavailable. As reported to the Panel in March 2019 (agenda item 9, 2.6) development of the group work function in Mosaic was planned for autumn 2019. This project has now been stopped.
- 3.2. Consequently, we are proposing to remove this indicator.

6	Number of family groups subject of Child protection plans
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COMMITTEE DECISION: To remove indicator 6

- 3.3. Indicator 21 (% of looked after children placed with agency foster carers): We would propose inverting this indicator for 2020/21 to show the proportion of in-house foster placements. In addition, we propose clarifying that we are reporting on the proportion of children in foster care who are placed with in-house foster carers (rather than as a proportion of all looked-after children).

3.4. The replacement indicator would read as follows.

21	% of looked after children in foster placements who placed with in-house foster carers.
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COMMITTEE DECISION: To agree inverting this indicator.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1. No specific implications for this report

5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

5.1. None for this report

6 TIMETABLE

6.1. Not applicable for this report

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None

8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None

9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1. None

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

- Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2019/20

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1. None

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Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Performance Index 2019/20



No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2018/19	Benchmarking and trend				BRAG rating	Merton 2018/19 performance									Notes
				Merton 2018/19	Merton 2017/18	England	London		Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19 / Q1	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19 / Q2	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19 / Q3	
Assessments																		
1	Number of Common and Shared Assessments undertaken (CASAs)	Quarterly	Not a target measure			No benchmarking available	No benchmarking available	Not a target measure			30			34			19	Quarterly / Year to Date (Time lag in collating CASAs from partner agencies)
2	% of Single Assessments authorised within the statutory 45 days	Monthly	93%	84%	89%	83.1% (DfE 2018/19)	83% (DfE 2018/19)	Green	90%	92%	92% (435/471)	93%	94%	94% (781/829)	94%	94%	95% (1146/1208)	Year to Date (Of stated YTD, no. in 45 days)
3	% of Education, Health and Care plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale	Monthly	55%	58%	51.4% (DfE: 2018 calendar year)	58% (DfE: 2018 calendar year)	54.6% (DfE: 2018 calendar year)	Amber	35%	40%	47.5% (47/99)	53%	55%	56% (119/212)	58%	57%	53% (158/296)	Monthly / Year to Date
Child protection																		
4	Child Protection Plans rate per 10,000	Monthly	Not a target measure	38.9	41.7	43.7 (DfE 2018/19)	36.7 (DfE 2018/19)	Not a target measure	36.8	34.5	29.4	23.8	23.8	22.6	23.6	22.6	22.6	Monthly - as at the end of the month
5	Number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan	Monthly	Not a target measure	184	196	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	173	162	138	113	118	99	111	106	106	Monthly - as at the end of the month
6	Number of family groups subject of Child protection plans	Monthly	Not a target measure	n/a	n/a	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Monthly - as at the end of the month
8	% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences	Quarterly	95%		n/a	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available				93%			N/A			N/A	Quarterly
9	% of reviews completed within timescale for Children with Child Protection Plans	Monthly	96%	90.4% (DfE 2018/19)	82%	91.8% (DfE 2018/19)	95.7% (DfE 2018/19)	Green	100%	100%	100%	100%	95% (112/118)	107% (106/99)	100%	100%	100%	Monthly - as at the end of the month
10	% of Children subject of a CP Plan who had a CP visit within timescales in the month	Monthly	Not a target measure	77%	n/a	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	99%	94%	76%	82%	72%	86%	84%	78%	80%	Monthly - as at the end of the month
11	% of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time	Monthly	range 12-20%	17.2% (DfE 2018/19)	13%	20.8% (DfE 2018/19)	17.5% (DfE 2018/19)	Red	17%	18%	19%	19%	19%	20%	17%	19%	21%	Monthly / Year To Date (NI 65)
Looked After Children																		
12	Looked After Children rate per 10,000	Monthly	Not a target measure	33	33	65 (DfE 2018/19)	50 (DfE 2018/19)	Not a target measure	32.8	31.5	33.6	34.7	35.5	34.9	34.3	36.2	35.7	End of the month snapshot
13	Number of Looked After Children	Monthly	Not a target measure	157	155	78,150 (DfE 2018/19)	10,030 (DfE 2018/19)	Not a target measure	154	148	157	162	167	164	161	170	168	End of the month snapshot
14	Number of UASC children and young people (PROPOSED)	Monthly	Not a target measure	32	23	5070 (DfE 2018/19)	1740 (DfE 2018/19)	Not a target measure	33	29	29	32	33	36	34	36	38	End of the month snapshot
16	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks	Quarterly	26 weeks	33	31	31 (CAFCASS 2018/19)	No relevant benchmarking available	Red (Q2)			28			39				CAFCASS data published Feb 2020 Quarterly - (CAFCASS methodology, number of applications)
17	% of Looked After Children cases which were reviewed within required timescales	Monthly	96%	88%	88%	Not published	Not published		90%	92%	72%	93%	80%	94%	89%	99%	92%	Monthly - as at the end of the month
18	% of Looked After Children participating in their reviews in month (year to date) (excludes LAC aged 0 - 4)	Monthly	Not a target measure	95%	99%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	75%	84%	86%	86%	86%	87%	88%	89%	82%	Monthly / Year to Date
19	Stability of placements of Looked After Children - number of moves (3 moves or more in the year)	Quarterly	11%	8% (DfE 2018/19)	12% (DfE 2018/19)	10% (DfE 2018/19)	11% (DfE 2018/19)	n/a			n/a			n/a			n/a	Quarterly / Year To Date (NI 62)
20	Stability of placements of Looked After Children - length of placement (in care 2.5years, placement 2 years)	Quarterly	65%	73% (DfE 2018/19)	69%	69% (DfE 2018/19)	67% (DfE 2018/19)	n/a			n/a			n/a			n/a	End of the month snapshot (NI 63)
21	% of Looked After Children placed with agency foster carers	Quarterly	40%	46%	n/a	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Green			34%			38%			37%	Quarterly
22	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	Quarterly	20	13	11	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Amber			3			5			11	Quarterly / Year to Date
23	NEW Number of Looked After Children who were adopted	Monthly	Not a target measure	4 (6% of those leaving care 2019, DfE data)	9 (11%)	3570 (12% of those ending care, DfE 2019)	300 (6% of those leaving care, DfE 2019)	Not a target measure	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	Monthly / Year to Date
23a	NEW Number of Looked After Children for whom agency Special Guardianship Orders were granted	Monthly	Not a target measure	9 (13% of those leaving care 2019, DfE data)	0%	3840 (13% of those leaving care, DfE 2019)	480 (9% of those leaving care, DfE 2019)	Not a target measure	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	Monthly / Year to Date

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No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2018/19	Benchmarking and trend				BRAG rating	Merton 2018/19 performance									Notes
				Merton 2018/19	Merton 2017/18	England	London		Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19 / Q1	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19 / Q2	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19 / Q3	
Childrens Centres and Schools																		
25	% of total 0-5 year estimated Census 2011 population from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) whose families have accessed children's centre services	Quarterly	Not a target measure	56%	58%	89% (31/08/2017)	94% (31/08/2017)	Not a target measure			25%			37%		47%	Year to Date Cumulates (Target 19% per quarter)	
26	% outcome of School Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness)	Quarterly	91%	95% (AY year-end 31/08/2019)	93%	86% (31/08/2019)	93% (31/08/2019)	Green			90%			95%		95%	Year to Date. National and London Comparitors as at 31/08/2019.	
27	Number of Primary* permanent exclusions (Number YTD Academic year)	Monthly	Not a target measure	1	1 (DfE AY 2017/18)	1210 (DfE AY 2017/18)	69 (DfE AY 2017/18)	Not a target measure	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	August End of Acad. Yr. YTD (August data interim until November).
28	Number of Secondary* permanent exclusions (Number YTD Academic year)	Monthly	Not a target measure	21	8 (DfE AY 2017/18)	6612 (DfE AY 2017/18)	960 (DfE AY 2017/18)	Not a target measure	11	16	17	22	22	4	5	5	6	August End of Academic Year. - YTD.
29	Secondary persistent absenteeism (10% or more sessions missed)	Annual	Not a target measure	TBP	10% (DfE AY 2017/18)	13.9% (DfE AY 2017/18)	12% (DfE AY 2017/18)	Not a target measure					AY 2019/19 TBP March 2020					Annual Measure 6 half-terms DfE Published SFR all secondary maintained and academies
30	% of Reception year surplus places	Annual	Range 5 - 10%	13.3% (AY2017/18)	7.7% (AY 2016/17)	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Green		11.2% May census					6.4% @ October census			Termly
31	% of Secondary school (Year 7) surplus places	Annual	Range 5 - 10%	11.7% (AY2017/18)	9.6% (AY 2016/17)	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Red		2.4% May census					1.3% @ October census			Termly
Young People and Services																		
32	Youth service participation rate	Annual	1800		1,967	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available											Annual Measure
33	% of CYP (16 - 17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Monthly	Not a target measure	1.6%	1.6%	2.6% (DfE 2018/19 based on Dec - Feb average)	1.7% (DfE 2018/19 based on Dec - Feb average)	Not a target measure	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	N/A	1.5%	1.6%	Published February 2020	Monthly (totals are adjusted) - reported a month in arrears. Annual rates are Dec- Feb average
34	% of CYP (16 - 17 year olds) education, employment or training status 'not known'	Monthly	Not a target measure	0.6% Q4 (0.8% DfE benchmark data)	0.9 Q4 (1% DfE benchmark data)	2.9% (DfE 2018/19 based on Dec - Feb average)	3% (DfE 2018/19 based on Dec - Feb average)	Not a target measure	1.1%	1.2%	1.0%	1.3%	1.0%	N/A	7.6%	2.9%	Published February 2020	Monthly (totals are adjusted) - reported a month in arrears. DfE benchmark rates are Dec- Feb average
35	Number of First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17	Monthly	50	33	54 (published rate per 10k: 211)	224 (rate per 10,000, 2019)	260 (rate per 10,000, 2019)	Green	7	10	12	18	19	21	23	26	26	Monthly / Year to Date
36	Rate of proven re-offending by young people in the youth justice system	Quarterly	Not a target measure	0.68	0.7	3.92 (2017)	3.8 (2017)	Not a target measure			1.63			1.10			1.10	Quarterly (NI 19)
37	TF: Number of Families engaged for Expanded Programme	Quarterly	Not a target measure	320	320	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure			56			47			60	Quarterly
38	% of commissioned services for which quarterly monitoring was completed	Quarterly	100%	100%	100%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Green			100%			100%			100%	Quarterly (Time lag in collating from partner agencies)
39	% agency social workers (New)	Quarterly	New	18.9% (DfE Sept 2018 Census)	23.1% Year-end (25.7% DfE Sept 2017 census)	15.4% (DfE Sept 2018 Census)	25.7% (DfE Sept 2018 Census)	Green			15%			15%			13%	Quarterly (Aligned with HR reporting)
40	NEW Average caseload for social workers (working with looked after children and/or children subject of child protection plans) (total caseload including non LAC and CP cases). Combines and replaces previous indicators 7 and 15	Monthly	New	17.7 (DfE Sept 2018 census - average caseload of <u>all</u> caseholding SWs)	23.1% Year-end (25.7% DfE Sept 2017 census)	17.4 (DfE Sept 2018 census - average caseload of <u>all</u> caseholding SWs)	15.8 (DfE Sept 2018 census - average caseload of <u>all</u> caseholding SWs)		13	13	15	13	12	14	15	15	14	Monthly - as at the end of the month
Indicators 27 & 28 : * all pupils educated in Merton Schools (including special schools)																		

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Children and Young People Work Programme 2019/20



This table sets out the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel work programme for 2019/20; the items listed were agreed by the Panel at its meeting on 26 June 2019. This work programme will be considered at every meeting of the Panel to enable it to respond to issues of concern and incorporate reviews or to comment on pre-decision items ahead of their consideration by Cabinet/Council.

The work programme table shows items on a meeting-by-meeting basis, identifying the issue under review, the nature of the scrutiny (pre-decision, policy development, issue specific, performance monitoring, partnership related) and the intended outcomes.

Chair: Cllr Sally Kenny

Vice-chair: Cllr Hayley Ormrod

Scrutiny Support

For further information on the work programme of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel please contact: -

Rosie McKeever, Scrutiny Officer

Tel: 020 8545 4035; Email: rosie.mckeever@merton.gov.uk

For more information about overview and scrutiny at LB Merton, please visit www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Meeting date: 26 June 2019 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm, 17 June 2019)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Holding the executive to account	Cabinet Member priorities	Verbal update	Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education; Cabinet Member for Children's Services	To understand current priorities and consider these in relation to Panel work programme.
Holding the executive to account	Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Written report	Dagmar Zeuner, Director of Public Health; Clarissa Larsen	
Scrutiny reviews	Children's mental health task group	Written report	Stella Akintan , Scrutiny Officer	Final report (Moved to Oct)
Holding the executive to account	Departmental update report	Written report	Director of Children, Schools and Families	Update report
Performance management	Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To highlight items of concern
Setting the work programme	Work programme 2019/20	Written report	Rosie Mckeever, Scrutiny Officer	To agree the work programme and select a subject for task group review.

Meeting date: 7 October 2019 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm, 27 September 2019)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Standing items	Cabinet Member priorities	Verbal update	Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education; Cabinet Member for Children's Services	To understand current priorities, policy development and performance indicators.
Holding the executive to account	School maintenance costs	Written report	Tom Procter, Head of Contracts and School Organisation; Rachael Wardell, Director of CSF	Information report itemising the council's spending on school maintenance and how this is prioritised.
Holding the executive to account	Troubled families	Written report	Roberta Evans, YOT Team Manager;	Scrutinise performance and comment on options for the future.
Scrutiny reviews	Children's mental health task group	Written report	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer	Final Report
Holding the executive to account	Departmental update report	Written report	Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families	Update report
Performance management	Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To highlight items of concern
Setting the work programme	Work programme 2019/20	Written report	Rosie Mckeever, Scrutiny Officer	To review the work programme and agree any changes

Meeting date: 6 November 2018 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm, 25 October 2019)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Holding the executive to account	Departmental update report	Written report	Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families	Update report
Standing items	Cabinet Member priorities	Verbal update	Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education; Cabinet Member for Children's Services	To understand current priorities, policy development and performance indicators.
Budget scrutiny	Budget/business plan scrutiny (Round 1)	Written report	Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services	To discuss and refer any comments to the O&S Commission
Pre Decision scrutiny	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2019-23	Written report	Lisa Deer; Jane McSherry	Draft strategy and consultation results
Scrutiny reviews	Digital Technology in the classroom task group	Written report	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer	Update report
Performance management	Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To highlight items of concern
Setting the work programme	Work programme 2019/20	Written report	Rosie Mckeever, Scrutiny Officer	To review the work programme and agree any changes

Meeting date: 10 February 2020 (*Deadline for papers: 12pm 30 January 2020*)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Budget scrutiny	Budget/business plan scrutiny (Round 2)	Written report	Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services	To discuss and make recommendations to forward to Cabinet
Holding the executive to account	Departmental update report	Written report (to include scrutiny request of Harris Wimbledon update)	Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families;	Update report
Standing items	Cabinet Member priorities	Verbal update	Cabinet Members for Schools and Adult Education; Children's Services	To understand current priorities
Health scrutiny	Merton Safeguarding Children Board	Written report	Rachael Wardell; Paul Bailey; Keith Makin	Annual report
Holding the executive to account	In house/independent foster carers	Written report	David Michael, HoS for Children in Care & Resources	
Holding the executive to account	Support for schools to become good or outstanding'	Written report	Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Jane McSherry	Receive info on the work of the school improvement service
Performance management	Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Karl Mittelstadt, Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To highlight items of concern
Setting the work programme	Work programme 2019/20	Written report	Rosie Mckeever, Scrutiny Officer	To review the work programme and agree any changes

Meeting date: 11 March 2020 (*Deadline for papers: 12pm 2 March 2020*)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Holding the executive to account	Departmental update report	Annual report	Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families	Update report
Standing items	Cabinet Member priorities	Verbal update	Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education; Cabinet Member for Children's Services	To understand current priorities
Holding the executive to account	Corporate Parenting	Annual report	EI Mayhew, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion	To provide comments on annual report
Holding the executive to account	Schools Standards Annual Report	Written report	Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families	To scrutinise attainment information
Performance management	Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To highlight items of concern
Setting the work programme	Topic suggestions for 2020/21	Written report	Rosie Mckeever, Scrutiny Officer	