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Merton Council

Sustainable Communities

Overview and Scrutiny

Panel



Date: 24 June 2021

Time: 7.15 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Merton Civic Centre, Morden, SM4 5DX

AGENDA

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The meeting room will be open to members of the public from 7.00 p.m.**

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Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Membership

Councillors:

Aidan Mundy (Chair)
Daniel Holden (Vice-Chair)
Laxmi Attawar
David Dean
Nick Draper
Anthony Fairclough
Geraldine Stanford
Dave Ward

Substitute Members:

Ben Butler
Nigel Benbow
Eloise Bailey
Pauline Cowper
Edward Gretton

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. For further advice please speak with the Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership.

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

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

Scrutiny's work falls into four broad areas:

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

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

For more information, please contact the Scrutiny Team on 020 8545 4035 or by e-mail on scrutiny@merton.gov.uk. Alternatively, visit www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny

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Agenda Item 3

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

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

4 MAY 2021

(7.15 pm - 9.10 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Daniel Holden (in the Chair),
Councillor Laxmi Attawar, Councillor David Dean,
Councillor Nick Draper, Councillor Anthony Fairclough,
Councillor Geraldine Stanford and Councillor Dave Ward

John Bosley (Assistant Director Public Space Contracts and Commissioning), Anthony Hopkins (Head of Library, Heritage and Adult Education Services), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration) and James McGinlay (Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Aidan Mundy (Paternity leave) - Councillor Pauline Cowper as substitute.

Councillor Daniel Holden took the role of Chair.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

The Chair welcomed a new member of the committee – Councillor Dave Ward.

4 IDVERDE - VERBAL UPDATE (Agenda Item 4)

The Chair welcomed Richard Burton from Idverde to the meeting.

The Assistant Director of Public Space gave a presentation to feedback on the progress made against the recommendations from September 2020 Panel.

There have been challenges over the last six months which have impacted the service. The Government guidance and restrictions that have been imposed including lockdowns and tier four restrictions have meant we've had to turn off and on different aspects of our parks and green spaces which has caused a further strain on what was our business's normal model in terms of the work undertaken.

Due to the social distancing requirements there have been operational modifications that we've also had to make within the service as a whole i.e. limited number of vehicles and resources, reduced number of operatives in those vehicles doing work.

The AD for Public Space answered Panel Members follow up questions;

With regards to increased littering in parks during busier seasons, we will be looking at ways we can provide more local storage for collected litter and we have also included some improved local signage asking park users to take their litter home with them.

Communications is an identified weakness - we do need to improve upon that and as part of a restructure we will be putting in place a coordinated role which will help in terms of dealing with our street champions and our friends groups and also making sure we keep people informed.

The AD for Public Spaces extended an invite to the Panel to undertake site visits to a sample of green spaces in Merton to understand how the service is monitored.

Action: AD of Public Space and Scrutiny Officer to organise.

Following discussions, the Panel RESOLVED that both Idverde's Annual Report and the IMGSF Annual Report return to the Sustainable Communities Panel once they are signed off.

5 MERTON ADULT EDUCATION - ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Head of Library, Heritage and Adult Education presented the academic year report covering the period from August 2019 to July 2020.

- The service was inspected by Ofsted and achieved a good overall outcome across all grading areas.
- We've been successful in applying for over £540k which is now being invested into looking at the future job market, the future skill needs of residents and adjusting the curriculum provision as a result of that

In response to Panel Members questions;

We'll be investing more in core skills around maths, english and digital literacy and job-ready skills

We've got quite a significant creative arts element within the provision and you'll see from the report that the satisfaction levels of the learners experience means that they really do enjoy the courses and what they're undertaking

We've received feedback from learners that they're interested in courses around construction and building skills so we're looking to commission some new provision in the next academic year.

With regards to key performance indicators, there's a summary of the main KPI's in the report and underneath those sit another tranche of 40-50 separate indicators that support the evidence base around how we're achieving on our objectives. We take those indicators down to a further granular level, particularly around the 8/9 different providers we commission per year, to look at the differences and trends within those.

6 LIBRARIES AND HERITAGE - ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The Head of Library, Heritage and Adult Education presented the annual libraries and heritage service report.

In response to Panel Members questions;

Last year we had 304 active volunteers in our libraries. Numbers have dropped at the moment but what we are starting to see as we recover is a lot of our volunteers are returning and doing new things in terms of online provision and online activities.

With regards to the savings proposal for a staff less environment during off-peak hours - At the moment there's a basic security guard provision, which is supplemented by volunteers and other staff when available, during the lowest demand hours. The savings proposal will seek to remove the security guard provision during those hours.

Using your card and pin number to access the library is increasingly common place technology in public libraries across England and there are a good handful of London boroughs that have already implemented this and we're learning from them around kind of any issues and how they've resolved them. There are many different kinds of CCTV and surveillance systems to monitor safety and a lot of instructions for customers if there are any issues.

The saving isn't due to be implemented until till next April so we're using this time to trial and test to ensure that we iron out any issues prior to that time.

7 GLL LEISURE (Agenda Item 7)

The AD of Public Spaces gave a brief update in terms of the impacts of Covid on GLL and the plans for recovering the business following the lifted restrictions.

After re-opening our leisure centres that have been closed for a significant period, we've had some encouraging signs in terms of memberships and use by our residents, which is travelling in a positive direction.

Referencing section four in the report, Members can see the terms of the agreement and the degree of financial support we have provided Gll during this difficult period. The timetable and summary of the actions provides further assurance that we will be receiving these monies back over the longer contract period.

8 PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Agenda Item 8)

A Panel Member queried why some data sets says 'data only'.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration clarified that some indicators are set in order to collect data for information purposes only rather than setting a target i.e. planning application volume is an interesting indicator to monitor it's a barometer of economic development activity in the borough but it's not appropriate to set a target necessarily because it's more a fluctuation of the economy rather than one that we want to influence either way.

9 TOPIC SUGGESTIONS FOR 2021/22 (Agenda Item 9)

Members suggested looking at;

- Transport measures/ school streets
- Outdoor sporting provision

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

		Date added	Status (BRAG)
IdVerde's contract for greenspaces	The Panel would like to undertake site visits to a sample of green spaces in Merton, with details of the reporting pro forma used by Client Officers when inspecting	01/09/2020	Amber
	The Panel recommended that the Council's Tree Strategy is reviewed and updated to include how new trees are established and how all trees are maintained	01/09/2020	Green
	The Panel recommends that the Council create an overarching Green Spaces strategy in line with the Council's climate commitment and with a focus on community wellbeing.	01/09/2020	Amber
	To display signage in parks informing residents on how to report issues and express their views	01/09/2020	Green
	The Panel recommends to Cabinet that the Council should consider developing a 'One Stop Shop' web based reporting system to make it easier for our residents to report any issues relating to parks, waste and public spaces in one place and bring an update on this to the SC Panel	01/09/2020	Amber
	Both Idverde's Annual Report and the IMGSF Annual Report to be presented when signed off	01/09/2020	Green
	The Panel requested quarterly written updates from Officers providing information and feedback on how the recommendations are being met and evidence that the service is improving.	01/09/2020	Green
	Emission based charging	Request that Cabinet further expand upon their current reporting to show how the surplus money raised from parking revenue has been spent.	08/12/2020
User feedback is collected and this feedback be made visible to the Sustainable Communities Panel at every meeting for a period of two years. Feedback should be provided at a high level with the ability to request further detail if needed.		08/12/2020	Black
The Panel calls on Cabinet to review the impact of Emissions Based Charging on air quality in the borough and that this policy also be reviewed after a two year period		08/12/2020	Black
Roadworks and Utilities	Enhanced information with regards to road and footpath maintenance and repair is added to the Merton website and advertised appropriately	19/01/2021	Black

HGVs	Carry out further work to monitor numbers and emissions, and with an increased focus on those areas outlined by residents as a concern, including Weir Road and Durnsford Road industrial site.	19/01/2021	Black	Green	On track
	An information hub to support residents in dealing with complaints about problems with HGVs is created and added to the Merton website and advertised appropriately	19/01/2021	Black	Amber	Requires monitoring
School Streets	Comms Team to encourage resident feedback and explore expanding the scheme with the support of the schools.	19/01/2021	Black	Red	Not on track
Design Review Panel	Future Merton committed to bringing the DRP review back to scrutiny post consultation.	23/03/2021	Green	Black	Not yet started



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**E&R May performance
Public Protection performance report**





























Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Parking											
Parking	CRP 044 Parking services estimated revenue (Monthly)	1,622,380	1,881,609				2,350,996	3,763,218			
Parking	SP 258 Sickness- No of days per FTE from snapshot report (parking) (Monthly)	1.9	0.66				3.93	1.32			
Parking	SP 509 % of Permits applied/processed online (Monthly)	97%	80%				97%	80%			
Parking	SP 510 % of PCN Appeals received online (Monthly)	85%	65%				83.5%	65%			
Parking	SP 511 Blue Badge Inspections - cumulative (Monthly)	0	20				0	20			
Parking	SP 512 Total cashless usage against cash payments at machines (Monthly)	73%	70%				74%	70%			
Parking	SP 513 Percentage of cases 'heard' and won at ETA	Measured Quarterly					N/A	75%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parking	SP 586 NEW FOR 2021-22 % of ANPR cameras remain working (Monthly)	99.3%	98%				98.9%	98%		N/A	N/A
Regulatory Services											
Regulatory Services	CRP 120 / SP 562 % of Regulatory Services service requests with an initial response within the "defined timescale" (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regulatory Services	CRP 121 / SP 565 Number of monitoring stations that meet annual Particulate air quality objectives (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regulatory Services	CRP 122 / SP 566 Number of monitoring stations measuring below the Nitrogen Dioxide air quality objectives (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	50	N/A	N/A	N/A







Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Regulatory Services	DATA 010 Safeguarding older people - number of cases investigated and intervene in cases of residents being targeted by financial scams and abuse (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	Data	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regulatory Services	DATA 011 Number of new high risk massage and special treatment premises inspections carried out within 20 working days of the premises being ready to trade	Measured Quarterly					N/A	Data	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regulatory Services	DATA 012 Number of Air Quality Audits (using GLA toolkit) of schools, prioritising those in the highest pollution areas (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	Data	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regulatory Services	LER 060 Income generation by Regulatory Services (Monthly)	£32,216	£18,590				£45,057	£47,330			
Regulatory Services	SP 521 Total % compliance of non-road mobile machinery on major construction sites with GLA emissions standards (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	95%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regulatory Services	SP 561 Percentage of alcohol and regulated entertainment licences issued within 10 working days of the conclusion of the 28 day consultation period, excluding those that are subject to a licensing hearing	Measured Quarterly					N/A	95%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regulatory Services	SP 564 High risk A & B and non-compliant C-rated food establishments due for inspection completed (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A

E&R Public Spaces

Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Waste Management and cleansing											
Waste Management &	CRP 097 / SP 065 % Household waste recycled and composted (Monthly in arrears)	41.88%	45%				41.88%	48%			

Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Cleansing											
Waste Management & Cleansing	CRP 103 / SP 454 % of fly-tips removed within 24 hours (Monthly)	94%	95%				93%	77%			
Waste Management & Cleansing	CRP 123 / SP 567 % of sites surveyed on local street inspections for litter that meet the required standard (Monthly) and quarterly in line with NI 195 reporting	91.28%	87%				89.67%	87%			
Waste Management & Cleansing	CRP 124 / SP 568 % of street reports rectified within the contract standard time frame (Monthly)	DNR	90%	DNR			97.4%	90%			
Waste Management & Cleansing	CRP 125 / SP 570 % of sites surveyed that meet the required standard for detritus (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	80%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Waste Management & Cleansing	CRP 126 / SP 573 Number of refuse collections including recycling and kitchen waste (excluding garden waste) missed per 100,000 (Monthly)	75	65				88	65			
Waste Management & Cleansing	DATA 013 Number of street cleansing site inspections undertaken by Client team (target 868 per month, 10,416 per year) (Monthly)	1,113	N/A		N/A	N/A	2,537	N/A		N/A	N/A
Waste Management & Cleansing	DATA 014 Number of waste collection site inspections undertaken by Client team (Monthly)	0	N/A		N/A	N/A	0	N/A		N/A	N/A
Waste Management & Cleansing	DATA 015 Number of spot checks undertaken re Health & Safety compliance (Phase C Lot 1 Services) (Monthly)	0	N/A		N/A	N/A	0	N/A		N/A	N/A
Waste Management & Cleansing	DATA 016 Number of Environmental Enforcement incidents formally (NOT formerly) processed (Monthly)	653	N/A		N/A	N/A	1,116	N/A		N/A	N/A
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 064 % Residents satisfied with refuse collection (Annual) (ARS)	Annual measure					N/A	73%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Cleansing											
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 066 Residual waste kg per household (Monthly in arrear)	44.03	39.5				44.03	39.5			
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 067 % Municipal solid waste sent to landfill (waste management & commercial waste) (Monthly in arrear)	3%	6%				3%	6%			
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 262 % Residents satisfied with recycling facilities (Annual) (ARS)	Annual measure					N/A	72%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 269 % Residents satisfied with street cleanliness (Annual) (ARS)	Annual measure					N/A	57%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 354 Total waste arising per households (KGs) (Monthly in arrear)	75.76	75		N/A		75.76	150			
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 407 % FPN's issued that have been paid (Monthly)	70%	70%				70%	70%			
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 485 No. of fly-tips in streets and parks recorded by Contractor (Monthly)	1,347	1,075				2,878	2,150			
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 569 % of sites surveyed that meet the required standard for weeds (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 571 % of sites surveyed that meet the required standard for graffiti (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	98%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 572 % of sites surveyed that meet the required standard for flyposting (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	97%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Cleansing											
Waste Management & Cleansing	SP 574 Resident satisfaction with the Household Re-use and recycling facility (Garth Road) (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	75%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green spaces											
Parks and Green Spaces	CRP 119 / SP 558 Average Performance Quality Score (Litter and Cleansing Standards) (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 026 % of residents who rate parks & green spaces as good or very good (Annual) (ARS)	Annual measure					N/A	78%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 027 Young peoples % satisfaction with parks & green spaces (Annual) (ARS)	Annual measure					N/A	86%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 032 No. of Green Flags (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 318 No. of outdoor events in parks (Monthly)	0	18				0	32			
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 514 Income from outdoor events in parks (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	£550,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 515 Average Performance Quality Score (Grounds Maintenance Standards) (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 517 Number of street trees planted (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	240	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 557 Average Performance Quality Score (Grass Verge Standards) (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 559 % of tree works commissions completed within SLA (30 days) (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	85%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parks and Green Spaces	SP 560 Number of friends and similar groups volunteering within Merton's parks and open spaces (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	41	N/A	N/A	N/A

Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Transport											
Transport	SP 136 Average % time passenger vehicles in use (transport passenger fleet) (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	85%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Transport	SP 137 % User satisfaction survey (transport passenger fleet) (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	97%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Transport	SP 271 In-house journey that meet timescales (transport passenger fleet) (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	85%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Transport	SP 526 % of Council fleet using diesel fuel (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	80%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Transport	SP 456 Days lost to sickness absence - Transport (cumulative) (Monthly)	2.85	0.75				5.31	1.5			
Leisure											
Leisure	SP 251 Income from Watersports Centre (Monthly)	£21,968	£26,500				£35,048	£42,500			
Leisure	SP 349 14 to 25 year old fitness centre participation at leisure centres (Monthly)	7,293	7,555				10,931	15,355			
Leisure	SP 405 No. of Leisure Centre users (Monthly)	50,670	73,274				73,544	145,777			
Leisure	SP 406 No. of Polka Theatre users (cumulative) (Quarterly)	Measured Quarterly					N/A	22,718	N/A	N/A	N/A

E&R Sustainable Communities

Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Development and Building Control											
Development and Building	CRP 045 / SP 118 Income (Development and Building Control) (Monthly)	150,228	163,833				223,467	327,666			

Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Control											
Development and Building Control	CRP 051 / SP 114 % Major applications processed within 13 weeks (Monthly)	100%	80%				50%	80%			
Development and Building Control	CRP 052 / SP 115 % of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks (Monthly)	62.07%	72%				64.15%	71%			
Development and Building Control	CRP 053 / SP 116 % of 'other' planning applications determined within 8 weeks (Development Control) (Monthly)	71.76%	83%				77.2%	82%			
Development and Building Control	DATA 007 /SP 414 Volume of planning applications (Monthly)	373	Data		N/A	N/A	753	Data		N/A	N/A
Development and Building Control	SP 040 % Market share retained by LA (Building Control) (Monthly)	63.69%	54%				64.44%	54%			
Development and Building Control	SP 113 No. of planning enforcement cases closed (Monthly)	8	44				24	88			
Development and Building Control	SP 117 % appeals lost (Development & Building Control) (Quarterly)	Quarterly measure					N/A	35%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Development and Building Control	SP 380 No. of backlog planning enforcement cases (Monthly)	674	490				674	490			
Future Merton											
Future Merton	CRP 096 / SP 020 New Homes (Annual)	Not measured for Months					N/A	918	N/A	N/A	N/A
Future Merton	CRP 101 / SP 389 Carriageway condition - unclassified roads, % not defective (annual)	Not measured for Months					N/A	75%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Dept.	PI Code & Description	May 2021					2021/22				
		Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Future Merton	CRP 108 / SP 475 Number of publically available Electric Vehicles Charging Points available to Merton Residents (Annual)	Not measured for Months					N/A	200	N/A	N/A	N/A
Future Merton	DATA 008 Streetworks - number of utility works overrun incidents (FPN issued) (Monthly)	10	Data				9	Data			
Future Merton	DATA 009 £ fines from Streetworks FPNs (Monthly)	31,940	Data				43,420	Data			
Future Merton	SP 327 % Emergency callouts attended within 2 hours (traffic & highways) (Monthly)	100%	98%				100%	98%			
Future Merton	SP 328 % Streetworks permitting determined (Monthly)	100%	98%				100%	98%			
Future Merton	SP 391 Average number of days taken to repair an out of light street light (Quarterly)	Quarterly measure					N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Future Merton	SP 476 Number of business premises improved (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Future Merton	SP 508 Footway condition - (% not defective, unclassified road)	Annual measure					N/A	75%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property											
Property	SP 024 % Vacancy rate of property owned by the council	Quarterly measure					N/A	3%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	SP 025 % Debt owed to LBM by tenants inc businesses	Quarterly measure					N/A	7.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	SP 386 Property asset valuations (Annual)	Annual measure					N/A	150	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	SP 518 Number of completed Rent Reviews (Quarterly)	Quarterly measure					N/A	70	N/A	N/A	N/A



Scrutiny

Repairs

Within Merton we have traditionally received between 1450 – 1500 new repair requests per month. As lockdown eased in April and May of this year, this has moved to in excess of 1600 new jobs being received by our contact centre due to shortage of operatives in February and March and the intensity of use of the stock during lockdown.

Engie have recruited extra operatives to deal with the additional workload and these staff have been inducted and trained in the last two months and are now out in the field as additions to their workforce.

- KPI performance for Engie Merton is as follows:

KPI No.	Target	KPI Measure	Engie (Mar-21)	Engie (Apr-21)
KPI 3	90%	First Time Fix (Responsive Repairs)	94.37%	94.87%
KPI 4	98%	Responsive Repair Completions Times - Emergency Works	99.40%	100.00%
KPI 5	95%	Responsive Repair Completions Times - Routine Repair Priority Repairs	N/A	80.25%
KPI 6	98%	Communal Repair Completions Times - Emergency Works	100.00%	100.00%
KPI 7	95%	Communal Repair Completions Times - Routine Repair Priority Repairs	N/A	75.26%
KPI 8	95%	Appointments Made & Kept - Property	92.43%	92.20%

The red indicators are due to significant shortage of operatives in February and March which led to staff being moved from communal repairs and routine repair work being rescheduled when staff were not available.

Monthly repairs satisfaction results over the last 12 months are shown below against a target of 85%. No surveys were undertaken in May 2020 due to the Covid-19 outbreak).

May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21
N/A	91.9%	83.5%	85.7%	88.9%	88.6%	86.1%	82.4%	84.1%	85.8%	78.4%	84.3%

Satisfaction levels returned in April to levels seen last year. Performance in March was heavily impacted by staff sickness absence amongst Engie operatives during February and them needing to rearrange works. Analysis of the individual aspects of the repairs experience during April shows significant improvement in the reliability of appointments and the quality of work carried out. Satisfaction with the explanation of the work also increased to its highest level since October 2020. The main areas for improvement remain around expectation setting and meeting the deadline promised for the completion of the repair.

Eastfields Estate

We have had some publicity recently over some of our properties on the Eastfields Estate and their condition with regards to repairs. We want to apologise to these residents understanding that we have fallen short of the standards they have a right to expect.

The homes on the Eastfields Estate are coming to the end of their life and our immediate priority is to dedicate more staff to the estate, to increase the speed at which we complete both communal and individual repairs.

Subject to approval from the council, our long-term regeneration programme will see the area transformed. Clarion will invest £1.3billion across three estates and build more than 2,500 new homes, including at least 700 for social rent.

In the meantime we have put the following actions into place on the Eastfields Estate to improve communication, responsiveness and deliver the appropriate responses to issues that arise:

1. We have set up a dedicated contact email address Eastfieldsrepairs@clarionhg.com for our Eastfields residents to report repairs, monitored by a local team. We have published this email address to our residents directly and hand delivered letters to each of our Eastfields homes over the weekend. We are encouraging any residents with issues with their homes, to email us with their details and we will contact them immediately. This new email address will ensure these issues are prioritised. So far we have received 3 emails over the weekend.
2. We have set up an office on the Eastfields estate in the caretakers' office located next to block 33-36 Clay Avenue which will be open from Wednesday 16 June this week, where residents will be able to drop in and report any repairs they have and we will endeavour to manage these cases swiftly.
3. An estate day for the Eastfields estate will take place on 25th June, where Clarion staff will knock on the door of every single resident. For any residents, we don't manage to speak to on the day, we will make sure we phone them. We hope that by doing this we can give our residents confidence that we are committed to resolving their issues.
4. To tackle the pest control issue we will be expanding our existing baiting policy and working with our contractor to develop a more rigorous intervention, this includes offering baiting to some leaseholders and freeholders as well as our social residents to ensure the operation is optimised.

5. We will be distributing a newsletter this week to all residents to advise them of this action plan and to encourage residents with any issues to contact us directly on the new email address above or to drop into our local office.

6. We now have 2 additional staff from Engie and 4 from Clarion on site to be available to manage repairs as swiftly as possible.

7. We have requested quotes for additional refuse collection to ensure that we can implement twice weekly collections, minimising waste and to give us the best possible chance to keep the pest problems under control.

We will continue to do all we can to manage the issues on the Eastfields Estate. Clarion's purpose is to provide good homes for those who need them and to maintain them as well as we possibly can. Almost all of these homes on the Eastfields Estate are beyond the time they were ever designed for and many of the problems are just not possible to solve without significant intervention such as regeneration. However, we are committed to doing the very best we can.

Review of Planned Programme

- **Component Replacement and Project Work**

2020/21 Programme

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that we did not start on site until June to complete external work begun the previous year, and internal installs did not commence until late July/August. Other factors affecting the delivery of components were the problems gaining access to carry out work and shortages of materials. However we still managed to deliver a programme of £9.5m in the London Borough of Merton on components and projects, with resident satisfaction of 88%.

This programme of works includes 197 roofs to street properties; 73 kitchens/bathrooms; 49 external wall insulation; and 117 doors.

2021/22 Programme

We are in year three of a five year major works programme within South London. The works are split by post code within the region (see appendix A) and we have an ongoing programme of property surveys in the region to validate the programme in preparation for 2022/23.

This year we are concentrating on component renewals within the SW postal area of the Borough, whilst our projects are throughout the Borough and include.

- Harlands Estate, Mitcham – completion work works started Spring 21
- Ravensbury Court, Mitcham – completion of project

- Glebe Estate, Mitcham - completion work works started Spring 21
- South View Estate, Wimbledon – Upgrade of electrics, communal redecorations, communal ventilation and roof repairs
- Sadlers Estate, Mitcham – renewal of door entry systems and communal ventilation.
- Eastfields Estate, Mitcham – redecoration of blocks in later phases
- High Path Estate, South Wimbledon - redecoration of blocks in later phases.
- Lingfield Rd, Wimbledon – Roof and window renewal and redecorations

Current Disrepair cases

There are currently 73 Disrepair cases in Merton at various stages of the process. Of these, 28 have come in this calendar year. The vast majority involve damp/mould issues. Geographically the majority are on the regeneration estates and also Sadler Close. There are a small number on Phipps Bridge and Watermeads.

Clarion is actively addressing this sector wide concern and developing processes across the organisation to improve how we identify, address and proactively reduce such issues occurring.

Planned Works in Merton for 2021 - 22 by Component and Location

Appendix A

The tables below show the Merton programme this for this year. We anticipate spend of circa £3.6m on component renewal. A further £4.675m will be spent on major projects. The planned works and expenditure earmarked for the three regeneration estates is also detailed.

COMPONENTS	
Kitchens	137
Bathrooms	130
Roof Replacements	72
Boiler	152
Windows	87
Doors	278
EWI	20
Total Components	£3,600,000
MAJOR ON-SITE PROJECTS	
Sheldrick and Brangwyn (Harlands Estate)	£250,000
South View + ventilation	£1,250,000
Ravensbury	£400,000
Glebe Phase 1	£375,000
4 Acres	£200,000
Total projects on site	£2,475,000
NEW MAJOR PROJECTS	
Glebe Estate phase 2	£400,000
London Rd 376 - 380	£150,000
SW19 block roofs	£550,000
Rickards Way	£250,000
Eastfields Merton - decs	£200,000
High Path Merton - decs	£200,000
Minor works	£450,000
Total of new projects	£2,200,000
	£8,275,000

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Outstanding Clarion Repair Work. Updated 16.06.2021.

Ongoing and Recurring Leaks

Ms N (SI50497)

Glebe Court, London Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3NY

- Ongoing leak entering in through her property's fuse box.
- First contacted Clarion on 11 May 2021.
- Most recently chased Clarion on 28 May 2021.

Ms B (SI50704)

Goldcliff Close, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey, SM4 6PJ

- Ms B's door does not lock properly; ongoing leak to bedroom ceiling.
- Cllr Helena Dollimore first contacted Clarion on 10 May 2021.

Mr B (SI50532)

Paxton Court, Armfield Crescent, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2JZ

- Large crack to Mr B's ceiling and without electricity following leak from flat above.
- First contacted Clarion on 7 May 2021.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 21 May 2021.

Ms A (SI50750)

Rawnsley Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4BX

- Severe ongoing leak at Ms A's property; outstanding management transfer request due to historic domestic violence.
- First contacted Clarion on 26 May 2021.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 16 June 2021.

Ms B (SI50744)

Saxonbury Close, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3QL

- Significant damage to property due to persistent leak.
- First contacted Clarion on 26 May 2021.

Mr and Mrs L (SI50442)

Cranleigh Court, Phipps Bridge Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3PB

- Ongoing leak to the bathroom toilet and related mould growth.
- First contacted Clarion on 23 April 2021.

Mr and Mrs B (SI47982)

Carshalton Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4HJ

- Delays to Clarion investigating a leaking roof and subsidence.
- First contacted Clarion on 17 March 2021.

Ms G (SI49969)

Thrupp Close, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 1BZ

- Longstanding leak and fungi growth in the bathroom of Ms G's property.
- First contacted Clarion on 24 January 2017.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 1 June 2021.

Mrs E (SI50516)

Gladstone House, Sadlers Close, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3EL

- Leak outside of Ms E's property ongoing for over three years and severe mouse and bed bug infestation.
- First contacted Clarion on 5 May 2021.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 1 June 2021.

Damp and Mould

Ms F (SI32920)

Woodstock Way, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 1BF

- Severe mould at the property is impacting Ms F and her family's health.
- First contacted Clarion on 23 February 2017.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 11 May 2021.

Ms P (SI42472)

Ewhurst Court, Phipps Bridge Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3PL

- Severe damp and mould due to an external leak that started in 2019.
- First contacted Clarion on 10 January 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 21 February 2021; Unhelpful response 22 April.

Mr and Mrs O (SI50766)

Kimble Road, Colliers Wood, London, SW19 2AU

- Severe damp and mould following accidental damage caused by Clarion scaffolding works.
- First contacted Clarion on 27 May 2021.

Mr W (SI50671)

Singleton Close, London, SW17 9JZ

- Severe damp and mould ongoing for the past three years.
- First contacted Clarion on 19 May 2021.

Ms M (SI46331)

St. Helier Avenue, Morden, Surrey, SM4 6LA

- Longstanding severe mould of over five years made worse by delays to roof repairs.
- First contacted Clarion on 8 February 2021.
- Case raised to LBM Environmental Health in April 2021.

Ms C (SI42067)

Acacia Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 1ST

- Severe disrepair, damp, mould, and bad smell owing to recurring leaks from upstairs flat.
- First contacted Clarion on 29 October 2019.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 18 May 2021 and raised to LBM Environmental Health.

Ms G (SI49992)

Woodstock Way, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 1BF

- Longstanding rising damp issue at the property.
- First contacted Clarion on 13 May 2021 but Ms G had copied us into correspondence from March.

Ms S (SI45914)

Frensham Court, Phipps Bridge Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3PG

- Extensive damp problem in Ms S' flat.
- First contacted Clarion on 30 December 2020.
- Copied into an email on 28 April suggesting that Ms S would be attempting to resolve this issue privately due to lack of support from Clarion.

Formal Disrepair Cases

Mr T (SI45678)

Acacia Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 1SF

- Extensive disrepair made worse following removal of ceilings at property containing asbestos.
- First contacted Clarion on 25 November 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 22 May 2021.
- Clarion have declined to respond due to open legal proceedings.

Mr D (SI50511)

Mainwaring Court, Armfield Crescent, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2JW

- Leak from the roof of Mainwaring Court ongoing for over four years.
- First contacted Clarion on 30 April 2021.
- Clarion have declined to respond due to open legal proceedings.

Pest Infestations

Ms W (SI45773)

Octavia Close, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4BY

- Severe rat and mouse infestation ongoing since 2019.
- First contacted Clarion on 2 December 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 27 May 2021.

Ms B (SI46190)

Langdon Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 6HA

- Ongoing mouse infestation and damp at the property.
- First contacted Clarion on 2 February 2021.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 23 March 2021

Ms H (SI46540)

Canterbury Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 6QP

- Clarion have refused to treat severe bed bug infestation at Ms H's property.
- First contacted Clarion on 22 February 2021.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 26 April 2021.

Mr H (SI50623)

Goldcliff Close, Morden, Surrey, SM4 6PJ

- Pidgeon infestation due longstanding damage to the property's brickwork first brought to Clarion's attention in 2018.
- First contacted Clarion on 14 May 2021.

Interim and Hotel Accommodation

Mr A (SI42216)

Moore Close, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 1BW

- Severe leak from flat above ongoing for more than three years; Mr A placed in interim accommodation in November 2020 and is still there.
- First contacted Clarion on 21 November 2019.
- Mr A contacted us once again last week.

Ms R (SI44583)

Abbotsbury Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5JX

- Ms R and her family have been in interim hotel accommodation since a fire at their address in July 2020.
- First contacted Clarion on 23 July 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 30 April 2021.

Ms B (SI40535)

London Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3PW

- Ms B has been one-bed hotel accommodation for eight weeks with a further eight weeks to come.
- First contacted Clarion on 5 May 2021.

Delays to Repairs and Recurring Issues

Mr B (SI26441)

Ravensbury Court, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4DU

- Mr B has been waiting over five years for his leaking windows to be replaced.
- First contacted Clarion on 5 June 2014.
- Mr B contacted the office once again over the weekend.

Ms P (SI50488)

Bayham Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5JH

- Ms P has been without a functioning toilet for more than three months.
- First contacted Clarion on 24 April 2021.

Miss S (SI44061)

Flanders Crescent, London, SW17 9JB

- No repair works raised following major leak in August 2019 due to outstanding asbestos survey.
- First contacted Clarion on 14 June 2021.

Mrs N (SI48942)

Sheldrick Close, Colliers Wood, London, SW19 2UG

- Outstanding essential repair and renewal works following a leak from upstairs neighbour's property in August 2020.
- First contacted Clarion on 24 March 2021.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 9 June 2021.

Ms W (SI50517)

Fitch Court, Laburnum Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2ND

- Without use of washing machine or sink due to corrosion to her stack pipe.
- First contacted Clarion on 4 May 2021.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 11 May 2021.

Ms S (SI50884)

Leominster Walk, Morden, Surrey, SM4 6HB

- Outstanding repair to section of bedroom ceiling collapsed on 24 February 2021; Ms S not informed until June that there was an asbestos risk.
- First contacted Clarion on 14 June 2021.

Ms C (SI45809)

Cranmer Farm Close, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4LP

- Lasting disrepair to Ms C's property as a result of a severe leak.
- First contacted Clarion on 7 December 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 18 May 2021.

Ms T (SI50839)

Morden Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4DJ

- Front door has been broken since an attempted break-in in November 2019.
- First contacted Clarion on 9 June 2021.

Ms N (SI44658)

Belgrave Walk, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3QB

- Outstanding essential repair and renewal work following repeated and severe leaks to property's cold water tank.
- First contacted Clarion on 4 August 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 9 June 2021.

Ms P (SI46014)

Gladstone House, Sadlers Close, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3EJ

- Extensive disrepair to property and communal areas, and recurring issues with her boiler.
- First contacted Clarion on 16 December 2021.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 23 April 2021.

Ms H (SI40535)

Abbotsbury Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5JS

- Delay to Ms H's kitchen being renewed; current electrics are unsafe.
- First contacted Clarion on 14 October 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 30 March 2021.

Mr G (SI50835)

Mainwaring Court, Armfield Crescent, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2JW

- Repeated delays to Mr G's kitchen being renewed; works began in September 2020 but remain unfinished.
- First contacted Clarion on 9 June 2021.

Mr and Mrs M (SI46589)

Lavender Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3HL

- Longstanding request that the dilapidated rear extension be demolished.
- First contacted Clarion on 16 March 2021.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 18 May 2021.

Mrs A (SI44709)

Mount Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3EZ

- Clarion have refused to carry out repairs to Mrs A's rear extension which predates her tenancy but is not part of the original deeds.
- First contacted Clarion on 7 August 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 14 May 2021.

Mr S (SI45881)

Saxonbury Close, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3QL

- Longstanding fault to Mr S' electronic rear gate; Mr S has secondary progressive MS.
- First contacted Clarion on 11 December 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 1 June 2021.

Ms D (SI45393)

Ravensbury Court, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4DW

- Recurring issue leading to failure of pressure on cold water tap.
- First contacted Clarion on 13 October 2020.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 13 May 2021.

Mrs E (SI10741)

Borough Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3DX

- Regular breakdowns to Mrs E's stairlift.
- First contacted Clarion on 14 January 2019.
- Most recently contacted Clarion on 19 May 2021.

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Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 24 June 2021

Subject: Housing update

Lead officer: Steve Langley, Head of Housing Needs

Lead member: Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Climate Emergency.

Contact officer: Steve Langley, Head of Housing

Recommendations:

A. No decision will be required as the report is for information only

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on some of the measures already in place to manage a possible increase in homelessness services following the lifting of the eviction ban on the 1st June 2021.

2 DETAILS

2.1. The Council continues to perform well in the management of homelessness. This is despite the additional requirements set out in the Homelessness Act 2017 and the Covid 19 pandemic.

2.2. The Council continues to maintain its position on having the lowest number of homeless households in temporary accommodation of any London borough (197 as at March 2021).

2.3. The Council has successfully prevented a significant increase of households in temporary accommodation by maintaining its focus on the prevention of homelessness and by working with private sector Landlords to increase housing supply.

2.4. Following the adoption of the “everyone in” principle in March 2020 the Council and its partners have reduced the number of known rough sleepers to one.

2.5. Table A sets out performance against homeless prevention.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Preventions	465	504	480	455

2.6. Table B sets out performance against increasing housing supply in the private rented sector.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
RDS Lettings	70	45	41	71

2.7. Table C sets out performance against the number of households in temporary accommodation.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Temporary Accommodation	165	174	199	197

2.8. Whilst temporary accommodation performance remains strong and is due to the ongoing focus on homeless prevention changes to housing law and the return to pre pandemic possession arrangements may see an increase in homelessness activity over the coming months.

2.9. Sadly it is not possible to accurately predict the number of homeless episodes that may arise due to evictions increasing as there are a number of unknown factors involved in the equation. This view is supported by the research from LSE London which in summary tells us that the position going forward is unclear, but likely to be undesirable. A summary of the research:

- One of the most obvious concerns arising from the COVID-19 crisis was the fear that there would be mass evictions in the face of rent arrears. The government responded with suspensions of notice and eviction which still continue. There is thus a backlog of people under threat.
- Around 6–7% of tenants appear to be in arrears– around twice the ‘normal’ proportion. Some 10% of private tenants are thought to be unemployed, about double the average rate.
- Given projections of unemployment and the relationship between unemployment and rent arrears, over 400,000 tenant households might be expected to be in significant arrears at the end of the year.
- In many cases landlords and tenants have found ways of coping. But the longer tenants remain in accommodation where they can’t pay the rent, the higher their future debts will be and the greater difficulties facing both tenant and landlord.
- Perhaps most importantly, the courts will face major difficulties in coping with any significant increase in landlord claims. As a result, the time taken to get an order, let alone to gain possession will almost certainly increase significantly - implying that most cases now entering the system will not be completed until well into 2022.
- What impact this will have on the private rented sector into the medium term is unclear – but almost certainly undesirable

2.10. We have no way of knowing how many Landlords (social and private) will evict their tenants. Grounds for possession are extensive and include rent

arrears, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, false statements, breach of immigration rules (i.e. Right to Rent) and Death of a tenant.

- 2.11 In addition, pre Covid 19, the biggest cause of homelessness in Merton was the ending of Assured Shorthold Tenancies (often referred to as no fault evictions). It's impossible to predict with any degree of accuracy how many no fault evictions will take place over the coming months and years.
- 2.12 During the period 19/20 and pre the covid 19 pandemic, the Council received 281 homeless applications because of the ending of Assured Shorthold tenancies. We may wish to assume that similar numbers will occur going forward, but this cannot be assured.
- 2.13 As well as demand from private sector tenants and evictions there could be pent up demand from those who have had to remain longer in accommodation and those likely to face eviction later. For example those living in overcrowded situations where family / friends have agreed for family / friends to live with them pending finding long term accommodation.

2.14 What has changed in regarding evictions

From the 1st June 2021 Landlords will have to give four months notice (England only). The eviction ban also came to an end on the 31st May 2021 meaning that the bailiffs can restart the enforcement of possession warrants.

The four month notice period is expected to remain in place until 30 September 2021, when this will drop to two months' notice in England only. There will be exceptions to this for the most serious of cases which includes anti-social behaviour, accumulated rent arrears, false statements, Domestic abuse, breach of immigration rules and Death of a tenant

It is important to mention however that bailiffs have been asked not to carry out an eviction if anyone living in the property has Covid 19 symptoms or is self isolating.

2.15 Homeless Prevention Activities

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 ("the 2017 Act") which was implemented on 03 April 2018, placed new duties on the council to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants and this duty extends to those who are not in priority need of housing under the Act.

The 2017 Act did not replace the earlier legislation, but it created several new duties and gave additional rights of review to housing applicants. In particular, the 2017 Act created a new prevention duty requiring the council to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for any eligible applicant at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days.

The 2017 Act also introduced a new "relief" duty which requires the council to take reasonable steps to help housing applicants to secure suitable accommodation. The new duties created by the 2017 Act remain unchanged and as such, the Council will continue to deal with any new homeless cases as before the Covid 19 pandemic and after the lifting of the eviction and as per the requirements of the 2017 Act.

Examples of Prevention Activity include:

- Providing Personalised Housing Plans
- Securing Alternative Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector
- Negotiating to keep people where they are pending an offer of accommodation from the Housing Register
- Providing advice on security of tenure and defending possession action
- Preventing illegal eviction
- Signposting to other agencies
- Advice on the government's Debt Respite Scheme

2.16 Temporary Accommodation and the relief of Homelessness

The Councils duties' and the use of temporary accommodation are set out in the Housing Act 1996 Part 7, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the associated Homeless code of guidance. The Act places a duty on local housing authorities to secure permanent accommodation for unintentionally homeless people in priority need. Authorities do not have a duty to secure accommodation for all homeless people. If an applicant has become homeless unintentionally the authority must assess whether they, or a member of their household, falls into a 'priority need' category.

2.17 The Council has a homeless placement policy which takes regard of the judgement *Nzolameso vs Westminster City Council*. There is however a limited supply of suitable affordable accommodation within Merton, but the aim is to provide accommodation in Merton wherever reasonable and practicable. Sadly whilst this is not always achievable the policy seeks to prioritise placements for in borough rehousing.

2.18 The Council takes reasonable steps to ensure that the dwelling is suitable for occupation and this includes ensuring that the property has:

- Gas Safety Certificates
- Electrical Safety Certificates
- Smoke detectors
- CO2 detectors

Currently, visits to the accommodation are carried out either by Zoom or Skype and personal visits are also undertaken but this are currently only in exceptional circumstances and following Covid 19 risk assessments.

2.19 As highlighted elsewhere in the report, the council performs well in the administration of homeless services with 197 households in temporary accommodation at end of March 2021. This compares well with circa 60,000 London households in temporary accommodation at the present time.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

None for the purposes of this report

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. None for the purposes of this report

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. None for the purposes of this report

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. None for the purposes of this report as information only

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None for the purposes of this report as information only

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purposes of this report as information only

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purpose of this report

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purposes of this report as information only

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

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12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None

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