

Full Council

04 July 2018

Wards: All

Strategic Theme Report: Sustainable Communities

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director for Environment & Regeneration

Lead members: Cllr Nick Draper, Cabinet Member for Community & Culture

Contact officer: Christine Parsloe, Leisure & Culture Development Manager

Recommendation:

A. That Council note the content of this report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Each meeting of Council receives a report updating progress against one of the council's strategic themes. The theme for this report is:

Culture and Sport (with an emphasis on Sport)

1.2. The main portfolio holder is Councillor Nick Draper. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel continues to exercise its statutory function.

1.3. The Environment & Regeneration department provides a co-ordinated approach to managing the public realm. This includes management and operation of the borough's Greenspaces as well as Leisure and Culture Development, both based within the Public Spaces division. These services directly deliver a range of culture and leisure services, including sport, and working in partnership with others to deliver specific projects and initiatives.

1.4. This report summarises the key work being delivered either directly by officers or indirectly where the council is a partner.

1.5. The report provides an overview of the following main areas of work:

- Cultural Services (excluding Library & Heritage Services and Adult Education)
- Leisure Services
- Parks & Open Spaces
- Sports

2 DETAILS

2.1. The ambition for the Sustainable Communities theme is outlined in the council's Business Plan 2016-2020.

"The Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership was established to create a more sustainable borough, one which is less reliant on fossil fuel

and which reduces its negative impact on the environment and climate change. The Partnership promotes investment into the borough in order to create new jobs, improve the skills and capacity of residents and to improve the condition and supply of housing including affordable housing. The Partnership also works to promote the development of sustainable transport including cycling and walking, as well as public transport in and around Merton.”

- 2.2. The council also works in partnership with the community and businesses to deliver Merton’s Community Plan. Culture and Sport are a key contributor to meeting the Community Plan Visions of:
 - 2.2.1. Bridging the Gap - between those people living in the east and the west of the borough.
 - 2.2.2. A healthy and fulfilling life – working with communities and residents to increase opportunities for everyone to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life, as well as reducing health inequalities.
 - 2.2.3. Better opportunities for youngsters – delivering outstanding services which improve outcomes and life chances for all the borough’s children and young people. Also determined to help those facing real challenges to overcome them and narrow the gap in outcomes.
 - 2.2.4. Keeping Merton moving and developing, with a home for all – making the best use of limited resources to deliver nationally and internationally recognised projects and developments through working in partnership. Meeting the needs of our residents and businesses with the aim of securing long-term investment, sustainable travel, an improved physical infrastructure and a vibrant cultural offering.
 - 2.2.5. Being safe and strong – wanting everyone to feel safe in their community so we aim to prevent and reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and misuse of drugs and alcohol. To make our communities strong, also wanting residents to play an active part in the life of the borough and to feel truly valued.
- 2.3. Culture and sports services locally also seek to align themselves with the strategies and visions of the national and London lead agencies where these have the opportunity to deliver make an impact and improve outcomes for Merton’s local people. For sport, this is Sport England’s Strategy – ‘Towards an Active Nation’. In particular activities and initiatives delivered locally contribute towards improving local people’s physical well-being, mental well-being, individual development, social and community development as well as ensuring opportunities exist for volunteering.
- 2.4. From a London-wide perspective Merton works with London Sport and jointly shares the ambition to have 1 million Londoners physically active.
- 2.5. In 2015, the council published its Culture & Sport Framework. It identified that Culture and Sports services have the potential to contribute to Merton’s priorities and wider social outcomes; in particular, programmes to improve health and well-being; learning, skills and employability, economic resilience, positive behaviour and community cohesion. Furthermore, Culture and Sports services have the ability to develop innovative programmes to deliver against a range of outcomes and are an effective tool in promoting and facilitating behaviour change and empowering people, leading to improved

life chances. This approach was not new rather it documented that the council understood the relevance and importance of Culture and Sport within the borough and recognised the wider implementation by many public and voluntary sector agencies, individuals and organisations borough-wide.

- 2.6. Culture and sports services present a uniquely positive and impactful offer on some of the biggest issues local areas are dealing with, such as improving health and well-being and supporting vulnerable people. As such, cultural and sporting opportunities are offered by many groups, businesses, community organisations, etc. across the borough with employed people as well as volunteers.
- 2.7. The performance information contained within this report and appendices provide key facts and figures on culture and sports services, but the impact and outcomes for local people can be much more wide reaching as these services seek to contribute to tackling inactivity; improving health and well-being; opportunities for self-development and achievement; provide opportunities for volunteering; opportunities for continuous learning, opportunities for social interaction, opportunities to participate in regular exercise; etc.

CULTURAL SERVICES

Theatres

- 2.8. The council owns the New Wimbledon Theatre (NWT) and Studio Theatre, both of which are managed and operated on the council's behalf by Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG). Officers have been working for many years with the theatre to deliver an annual performance of the pantomime dedicated to the Mayor of Merton and with collections for the Mayor's chosen charities, as well as considering applications for community lets at affordable prices. ATG have responsibility within their lease to fully repair and maintain the building and everything within it as well as ensuring that the theatre delivers a range of productions and delivers work with schools, etc.
- 2.9. In 2017-18, NWT delivered 72 productions, 263 performances over 44 weeks, benefitting 200,942 people. It also employed 89 staff of which 39 were local residents.
- 2.10. In the coming year the NWT will be planning another year of consistent delivery to ensure the theatre provides an eclectic mix of shows and productions for all the community to benefit from. They will also be developing their long-term strategy for NWT to grow the theatre business to record levels of attendance and engagement. Starting with a vision of what the theatre will be in 2028/2029, the strategy will contain key milestones every year. NWT will be ambitious, brave, entrepreneurial and inclusive.
- 2.11. Their ambition is that New Wimbledon Theatre should be more fully programmed, with top-end quality musicals, dance, opera and plays, first rate 'one-night shows' (especially music and comedy) and locally generated content.
- 2.12. Polka Children's Theatre is to undertake a major £6.5m redevelopment (its first since opening in 1979) from March 2019 to summer 2020, subject to achieving 90% of the required £4m match funding by 1 December 2018 as per the terms

- of its £2.5m Arts Council Large Capital funding award. This project will develop Polka Theatre for future generations as a vibrant hub for the local community.
- 2.13. The project includes establishing a national centre for Early Years theatre, dedicated Creative Learning Studio, an expanded café, new and improved facilities for parents and carers, the opening of Polka's first onsite rehearsal studio, supporting its PolkaLAB professional development programme, improving access throughout the venue to enable greater participation by actors, staff and audience members with mobility impairments, and enhancing the building's environmental sustainability.
- 2.14. Polka will be 40 years old in 2019 and will be celebrating with the new development being underway. The council has committed to contribute £50k of Section 106 monies and £100k capital towards the new development, the latter amount in lieu of a reduction in revenue grant once the building is underway. In 2018-19 the council is supporting the theatre's work with a revenue Arts Grant of £60k, this helps them lever in core funding from the Arts Council of £570,219 per annum.
- 2.15. Polka delivered 94,035 visitors in 2017-18 through its programme of live theatre and creative learning activities and are anticipating an audience of 82,301 in 2018-19 (projected reduction due to planned closure in mid-February 2019 for the start of construction).
- 2.16. Attic Theatre Company are a Mitcham based organisation, who deliver projects and programmes throughout the borough and beyond. The council supports this theatre company with an annual arts grant of £32k, which helps them lever in additional income of around £60,000
- 2.17. In 2017 -18, Attic Theatre Company delivered:
- 20 professional performances of a newly commissioned adaptation of Tolstoy's novella 'The Death of Ivan Ilyich' which included 4 'pop up' community performances throughout the borough
 - 74 older peoples singing workshops and 6 performances to combat isolation and improve health and wellbeing in older people
 - Toured 9 performances of the highly successful Ma Kelly's Doorstep bogus caller roadshow, originally commissioned in 2002 by Merton and toured to over 11,000 people in two thirds of all London Boroughs
 - Piloted a series of drama workshops for older people
 - 31 sessions of drama workshops to support and integrate young refugee and EAL students struggling to enter mainstream school
 - A summer holiday drama scheme boosting confidence and preparing underachieving young people for the move to secondary school
 - Piloted a series of afterschool creative workshops for teenagers in Mitcham Library
 - Hosted the first Creative Networking event for all those working in the arts in the borough which achieved an attendance of over 70 people.
 - Been involved in a live Advent Calendar, Merton Arts Market, a seminar on adapting books at Wimbledon Bookfest, a celebrity Q&A at Wimbledon Library and other library events
- 2.18. For 2018 -19 they are planning to deliver the same community activities with older people and disadvantaged young people and have secured funding from

Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England to stage a newly commissioned piece about the suffragettes of Merton called *'The Rebellious Women of Wimbledon'* which will tour to over 15 venues, schools and community centres in south London, extending beyond the Merton boundaries to Wandsworth, Lambeth, Sutton and Croydon

- 2.19. Other theatres, arts centres and galleries are also open to public and community use including: Colour House Theatre, Lantern Arts Centre, Wimbledon Arts Space, Mitcham Arts Space, etc. as well as facilities within some of the boroughs schools.

Merton Priory Chapter House

- 2.20. The foundations of the Chapter House of Merton Priory, adjacent to Merton Abbey Mills, are all that remains of what was once one of England's most important ecclesiastical centres. It was where the Statute of Merton (1235, the first such statute in English Law.) was signed by Henry III and his barons.
- 2.21. The Priory was demolished by Henry VIII in 1536 and most of the remains are now buried beneath the car park of the nearby Sainsbury's. The Chapter House foundations themselves remained preserved under the A24 Merantun Way - largely unknown and inaccessible except on special occasions when they are displayed to the public by volunteers from Merton Priory Trust.
- 2.22. Merton Priory Trust (MPT), in Partnership with Merton Council and the Living Wandle project represents phase 1 of a 2 phase project to develop this site into an important visitor attraction. Heritage Lottery funds, matched by LBM s106 have delivered capital works including the replacement of the existing south wall with a new glass wall and visitor entrance, plus domestic facilities which will permit more regular opening and its eventual use as a multi-function event venue to ensure its long-term sustainability of the venue.
- 2.23. The project was developed by MPT and LBM has acted as the client, match funding 53% of project value. Construction commenced on-site in November 2017 and was completed in early June 2018, with the visitor centre formal opening being planned for September 2018.
- 2.24. Once complete the cultural impact will be significant as this major archaeological site will be accessible again and more widely known within Merton's heritage. MPT volunteers have continued to open the site to visitors during the build and their activities have received significant publicity. In addition, MPT are coordinating the production of an online teacher resource pack and education film for a younger audience, both of which were funded through HLF volunteer training plan. The film is available at:

<https://youtu.be/OAOUxRFqU4c>

Further information:

<https://wandlevalleypark.co.uk/projects/merton-priory-chapter-house/>

Facebook: @mertonpriory

Commemorative Events

- 2.25. This year the council will be laying the second, of only two, World War 1 commemorative stones for two soldiers, born in Merton, who were awarded the Victoria Cross for their actions in WW1. The commemorative stone to

honour George Edward Cates was laid on 8 Mar 2017 at Wimbledon War Memorial, the one hundred year anniversary of his act of bravery. On 18 September 2018 a commemorative stone to honour William White will be laid at Mitcham War Memorial, the 100 year anniversary of his act of bravery.

- 2.26. There will also be an event to commemorate and celebrate the one hundred year anniversary of the end of WW1 on 11 November 2018. Work on this is underway with the full details to be developed over the coming months and advertised late summer / early autumn.
- 2.27. Many commemorative events take place all the time and are organised and delivered within communities, schools and groups, such as street parties for the recent royal wedding. The council seeks to support these wherever possible and encourages communities to celebrate together in a safe and friendly manner.

Events

- 2.28. One major international event happens every year in Merton with the Wimbledon Tennis Championships. During this time the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) work with the council to deliver the championships, including all the infrastructure to support it, as well as delivering free community tennis sessions for our youngsters at their centre in Raynes Park and a tennis fun day in Wimbledon Park.
- 2.29. During this period officers manage and operate Car Park 10 in Wimbledon Park, working with AELTC to manage the spectator queue and camping arrangements. This also includes any merchandising and charitable bodies, TV - news and weather broadcasters, etc.
- 2.30. Other strategic and significant events include:
- Ride London - an annual cycling event that comes through the borough, via Kingston into Raynes Park, Wimbledon and Wimbledon Village before heading out along Parkside into Wandsworth and onto the finish line in central London. 28,032 riders passed through the borough between nine o'clock in the morning to five o'clock in the afternoon in 2017, only to be swiftly followed by elite cyclists racing through in 'peloton - grand prix style' passing through the borough in a matter of minutes.
 - Eastern Electrics – In 2017, this event welcomed nearly 16,000 guests to enjoy world renowned artists in the beautiful setting of Morden Park. The event was delivered by an external production company, but carefully overseen by council officers from the Greenspaces team together with colleagues from Licensing, Environmental Health, Noise, Car Parking, Safer Merton, London Fire Service and the London Metropolitan Police to ensure the event was safe and secure for visitors and local communities. This event returns for a slightly longer stay this year and officers are working with the production company to determine whether or not this can become a regular event for Merton's calendar.
 - Fireworks Displays – two annual events. Each event hosting two shows – one early show for a younger audience and the later show for an older audience. One event is held in Wimbledon Park and the other in Morden Park. Annual visitor numbers are in the region of 35,000, but this varies

from year to year and numbers are reduced when the weather is not so good.

- 2.31. Community events and activities are a regular occurrence within our parks and open spaces. The council, along with the parks contractors, idverde, provide outdoor space to enable a range of community and public events, which play an important part in supporting community cohesion, individual well-being and local economies. This includes the annual Mitcham Carnival, circuses, fun fairs, etc.
- 2.32. AFC Wimbledon are set to return to the borough at their new stadium in 2019 and this will bring league and cup football back to the borough, thus increasing the number of strategic and significant events.

Canons – Parks for People Project

- 2.33. The council, in partnership with local organisations, has successfully bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Big Lottery Fund to deliver a 'Parks for People' project at The Canons in Mitcham. The lottery award of £4.4 million is to be match funded with £560,000.00 from Merton to regenerate both the historic house and the surrounding open space.
- 2.34. The Georgian façade of the Canons House will be fully restored. The ground and first floors will also be restored to facilitate ten new work spaces and offices, while the original parlour will become a bookable events space for both commercial and community use. The basement will be restored and designed as a heritage interpretation centre intended for use by community groups, schools and other organisations.
- 2.35. The public will begin to see changes at the Canons in the first half of 2019, when the construction phase of the project begins. This includes an exciting restoration of both the Grade II* listed house and Merton's oldest building, the 16th century dovecote. The old toilet block and changing rooms will be demolished and an extensive plan of landscape works to the historic grounds will be undertaken.
- 2.36. A new park café and public toilets will be built in the heart of the open space. The café will be easily accessed from the newly created central walkway which will link Madeira Hall, The Canons House, the new playground, the walled garden and refurbished car park.
- 2.37. The team is currently engaging with the community through events, activities and attending local meetings and organisations. The programme of activities and events will run over the next four years with the intention to create a legacy of community engagement with the Canons House and grounds. Residents can find out about the community activities through Facebook, Instagram, e-newsletter and soon-to-be dedicated website.
- 2.38. Part of the capital works includes an exciting new play area. This will be located within the walled area in the front of the Canons Leisure Centre. The playground designer will engage with the public through an exciting programme of consultation on the design and build of the new play area.

London Borough of Culture

- 2.39. Culture and arts can make a valuable contribution towards creating a cohesive, healthy and vibrant society. In February 2018, Merton was one of

just six successful boroughs to be awarded a 'Cultural Impact Award' from the Mayor of London as part of the London Borough of Culture Awards for 2019 or 2020.

- 2.40. The award was for Merton's FilmMerton project. FilmMerton is designed to support the long held community ambition to see a cinema in Mitcham, a core element of regeneration plans for the Town centre. This has always proved difficult, not least because cinema operators take the view there is no audience in the area. The programme therefore aims to:
- Build and demonstrate that audience for film in the area through running film seasons in a range of pop-up venues
 - Empower and engage local communities across the borough through curation of film seasons, commissioning new short films and augmented reality and participation in related events
 - Commission new work which is deeply rooted with local people and meets high standards of artistic excellence
 - Position Mitcham, and Merton more broadly, as an area open to and excited about emerging immersive technologies through *Mitcham Reality*, a festival showcasing public access to virtual and augmented reality as well as the public participation in the programme, which will take place at the end of the programme.
- 2.41. The process of bidding for the London Borough of Culture Award has generated considerable cultural enthusiasm and leadership in the borough, with the creation of a new Cultural Advisory Group. This group was brought together and is led by a range of creative businesses in the borough, mostly SME's, ranging from music studios to software and tattoo design, and practitioners, including photographers and actors.
- 2.42. The aim will be to work with and through the new Cultural Advisory Group to harness the energy, skills and talents of community organisations and cultural institutions to deliver FilmMerton and future cultural projects that will be a catalyst for change across Merton.

LEISURE SERVICES

- 2.43. 'Leisure' incorporates all those things that people like to do in their spare time. The council's leisure services seeks to ensure that sufficient facilities and spaces exist so that a range of opportunities are available for local people, not necessarily all in council ownership / operation and not always within the borough boundaries but are within reach for the community within a reasonable time and /or distance. For strategic planning purposes this is normally a 20 minute drive time; 20 min public transport route and 30 min walking time.
- 2.44. Leisure can be activities range from arts activities, to gardening, to walking, to play activities, to organised and informal sports, etc.
- 2.45. The council has previously commissioned strategic facilities planning models for swimming pools and sports halls. These were still considered valid during the planning of the new Morden Leisure Centre. The council has recently commissioned a Playing Pitch Strategy. Work commenced on this at Easter

2018 and the research takes 12 months to complete in order to get the seasonal variations, hence this will be reporting in the summer of 2019. This will ensure a planned approach to outdoor sport and physical activity facilities in the medium term working towards achieving high quality facilities for local people.

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Green Flags

2.46. The Greenspaces ground maintenance contract was awarded in February 2017 to idverde. The council works towards achieving excellence in its parks and open spaces and measures this through Green Flag Awards. In 2017, five Green Flags were awarded to:

- Colliers Wood Recreation Ground
- Dundonald Recreation Ground
- John Innes Park
- Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields
- South Park Gardens

2.47. All five of these sites were resubmitted for the 2018/19 Green Flag Awards, additionally, an application was submitted for Abbey Recreation Ground in January 2018 following commitment by the Council, the Wilmore End Residents' Association, idverde and others, in partnership, to improve the quality and standards at this open space in order to secure its very first such award.

Facilities

2.48. Parks and open spaces provide venues for many leisure opportunities ranging from a seat to dwell on taking time for contemplative moments, sharing time with friends or just watching the world go by enjoying the flora and fauna, etc.; to places for walking, jogging, running or spending time with family and friends; to places for activities and exercises such as dog walking, buggy exercises, orienteering, etc.; to more formal sports activities.

2.49. Our first park being developed to be 'Dementia Friendly' is nearing completion and plans will follow for other parks in the future.

2.50. Within the parks there are formal sports facilities to use via pay and play or to book in advance especially for more organised activities and team sports. These include bowls, cricket, football, rugby, tennis, beach volleyball, adventure golf; etc.

2.51. Some parks have paddling pools; some have cafés; some have green gyms and some have table tennis tables.

2.52. **Table 1 - Locations of Facilities**

| Facilities | No sites | Locations |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Adventure Golf | 2 | Sir Joseph Hood; Wimbledon Park. |
| Athletics Track | 1 | Wimbledon Park. |

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Beach Volleyball | 1 | Wimbledon Park. |
| Bowls | 6 | Canons Rec; Haydons Rd; John Innes; Joseph Hood; Raynes Park; Wimbledon Park. |
| Croquet Green | 1 | John Innes Park. |
| Multi-Use Games Area (MUGAs) | 22 | Armfield Crescent; Canons Rec; Colliers Wood Rec; Donnelly Green; Dundonald Rec; Durnsford Rec; Edenvale Open Space; Garfield Rec; Haydons Rd; Joseph Hood Rec; King Georges Playing Fields; Lavender Park; Lewis Rd Rec; Morden Rec; Mostyn Gardens; Oakleigh Way; Pollards Hill Rec; Raynes Park; Rock Terrace; Rowan Rd Rec; Sir Joseph Hood; Tamworth Rec. |
| Paddling Pools | 8 | Colliers Wood Rec; Joseph Hood Rec; King Georges Playing Fields; Morden Park; Rowan Rd Rec; Sir Joseph Hood; Tamworth Rec; Wimbledon Park. |
| Playgrounds | 43 playgrounds across 36 sites | Abbey Rec; All Saints Rec; Armfield Cres; Brenley Playing Fields; Canons Rec; Colliers Wood Rec; Cottenham Park; Donnelly Green; Dundonald Rec; Durnsford Rec; Edenvale Open Space; Garfield Rec; Haydons Road Rec; Joseph Hood Rec; King George's Playing Fields; Lavender Park; Lewis Rd Rec; Long Bolstead Rec; London Rd Playing Fields; Miles Rd; Morden Park; Morden Rec; Moreton Green; Mostyn Gardens; Oakleigh Way; Pitt Crescent; Pollards Hill Rec; Ravensbury Park; Rock Terrace; Rowan Rd Rec; Sherwood Rec; Sir Joseph Hood; Stanford Rd; Tamworth Rec; Wandle Park; Wimbledon Park. |
| Orienteering | 1 | Wimbledon Park |
| Outdoor Gym | 12 | Canons Rec; Donnelly Green; Dundonald Rec; Figges Marsh; King George's Park; Morden Park; Morden Rec; Mostyn Gardens; Oakleigh Way; Pollards Hill Rec; Ravensbury Park; Sir Joseph Hood. |
| Skate Park / Facilities | 2 | Pollards Hill Rec; Charnwood Square; |
| Table Tennis | 7 | Colliers Wood Rec; Donnelly Green; Figges Marsh; Holland Gardens; Joseph Hood Rec; Morden Rec; Sir Joseph Hood. |
| Tennis | 63 courts across 16 sites | Collier Wood Rec; Cottenham Park; Dundonald Rec; Durnsford Rec; Holland Gardens; John Innes; Joseph Hood Rec; King Georges Playing Field; Lavender Park; Morden Rec; Nursery Rd Playing Fields; Oakleigh Way; Sherwood Rec; Sir Joseph Hood; Tamworth Rec; Wimbledon Park. NB Some are MUGA's and used also for tennis |
| Trim Trail | 1 | Brenley Playing Fields. |

SPORTS

- 2.53. Sports and physical activity opportunities are provided by many groups and organisations across the borough and beyond the borough boundaries and local people seek out and take part in those activities that they wish to do during their leisure time. These are provided in the community, education and private sectors as well as public facilities.

Leisure Centres

- 2.54. The existing council owned leisure centres are operated by Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) under a 15 year contract which commenced 1st December 2010. The leisure centres have a range of sports, health and fitness facilities allowing for pay and play activities, taught sessions, sports clubs, etc. In the last year 974,015 users have visited the Merton leisure centres with 92,736 of them being 14-25 year olds using the fitness facilities.
- 2.55. GLL also work with other community organisations and on other public sector agendas where sport, physical activity and health can be of benefit. These include Dementia Action Alliance, Love Wimbledon, School Sports Partnership, Merton Mencap, etc. GLL recognise the significant impact they can have by supporting people at risk of obesity and preventing further incidence of weight related ill health. GLL's strategic approach for healthy weight and diet focuses on raising awareness of the health benefits of healthy weight and diet, prevention of excess weight through physical activity and lifestyle programmes and rehabilitation and management of individuals with excess weight.
- 2.56. GLL invest considerable time and resources in the training, development and motivation of their staff and this reflected by their Investors in People Silver Accreditation and the Sporta Workforce Development Award 2017. In March 2018 staff in Merton received Dementia Awareness Training, which ensures that they are trained and ready for customers with dementia using the leisure centres as well as GLL being able to deliver specialist programmes for people living with dementia and their families across the centres.
- 2.57. GLL hold Main Provider Status on the Register of Apprenticeship Training which has helped 8 lifeguards complete their apprenticeships in Merton leisure centres within the last 18 months. They also work in partnership with Volunteering Matters to support the management and opportunities of volunteers.
- 2.58. The council is responsible for replacement of plant and machinery in the leisure centres as well as the fabric of the buildings. Recent investment includes a new lift at Canons Leisure Centre and phases 1 and 2 of external windows and doors replacements at Canons Leisure Centre, whilst a new building management system is being installed at both Canons and Wimbledon which will ensure plant and machinery can be better aligned and co-ordinated generating energy savings in what are high energy using facilities.
- 2.59. GLL are required to ensure our leisure centres undertake external assessments using a variety of measures which include Quest (Quality Assurance Assessment in Leisure Industry); Customer Service Excellence and Investors in People. Their most recent results are:

Table 2 – Leisure Centres – External Assessments

| Award | Standard | Date Achieved |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Quest | Very Good | 2016/17 |
| Annual User Survey | 86% Satisfied | May 2017 |
| Investors in people | Silver | 2017 |

Morden Leisure Centre

- 2.60. In 2014 the council announced it would commence the works to bring about a new ‘family friendly’ leisure centre in Morden to replace the ageing Morden Park Pools. At the outset a public consultation was carried out to determine the facilities priorities for inclusion in the new building. Since that time much work has been done and the new centre is due to be completed in September 2018. The operator Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) will then have 4-6 weeks to furnish the building and prepare to open to the public. Public opening is expected late October / early November 2018. Following this the existing Morden Park Pools will be demolished and the land reinstated to public open space.
- 2.61. The new centre will include:
- Café
 - Large Secondary Pool which accommodates Diving
 - 25m x 6 lane swimming pool with Pool Pod platform entry for ease of disability access
 - Health & Fitness facility with 100 stations
 - Large studio / community space for a range of activities.
- 2.62. The facilities at the new centre will help support a fully accessible and inclusive programme of activities which will include:
- Club Programme – series of programmes and activities to encourage older people to become more active and to highlight the mental, social and physical benefits that sporting activities can bring
 - Disability Swim Programme – dedicated swimming sessions and learn to swim lessons for disabled people
 - Specialist Disability Sessions - sessions similar to the dry side sports programme GLL currently deliver in partnership with Merton Mencap
 - Better Inclusive Membership – gives disabled people full, anytime access to our gyms, swimming pools and fitness classes across all Better leisure centres for a discounted price
 - Junior Gym Sessions – allow 11-15 year olds to enjoy cardiovascular equipment in a safe and structured environment while achieving a fulfilling workout
 - IFI gym sessions with qualified gym instructors.

Wimbledon Park Watersports & Outdoor Education Centre

- 2.63. The watersports and outdoor education centre at Wimbledon Park operates under the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. It provides a range of programmes catering for children over the age of eight and adults of all ages from the local area.
- 2.64. Activities include sailing, kayaking, windsurfing, bell-boating, raft building, etc. Activities can be booked as groups or as individuals using the council's online booking and payment systems. Groups booking include schools, uniformed organisations, businesses, children's parties, etc. Some of the classes lead to qualifications in watersports and first aid.
- 2.65. All of the groups and individuals are asked if there is any additional information they need to share with us to aid their bookings. Most groups will bring some participants with additional needs such as ADHD or others on the autistic spectrum. They usually alert us to the needs at the time of booking and then share the specific detail on arrival at the centre. With roughly 1 percent of the population currently diagnosed on the autistic spectrum the staff are trained and ready to include participants in the most beneficial way possible for the individual. Some of the groups, such as The Smart Centre, will bring groups with higher ratios of children with additional needs, but the centre is aware of this and works with the client to ensure all their needs are best accommodated to provide a fun and educational experience for the participants.
- 2.66. During the school holidays, within each and every week there will be young people with additional needs taking part in the holiday courses programme. The majority will not need any specialist equipment, but if they do then the staff will organise that for them. The staff incorporate all additional needs, wherever possible, into the mainstream activities.
- 2.67. The centre has a range of boats that are particularly suitable for people with disabilities and also has a hoist, should that be required. The yellow powerboat has a drop down front to allow access for wheelchairs, as not all wheelchair users wish to get out of their chairs. We are able to accommodate a large range of disabilities with the usual equipment adapted as needed such as rafting together 2 Canadian Canoes for increased stability and using the outdoor beanbags to support those people who cannot self-support out of their chairs. Children with disabilities from our local schools are regular users and some come back during their own leisure time on the courses and activities programmes.
- 2.68. The centre runs a young person's volunteering programme. Taking on some 20-30 young volunteers during the summer period. The volunteers must already be able to swim and ideally have some experience of watersports, so that during the course of their volunteering the staff can coach and mentor them in improving their watersports skills and using their experience to upgrade their qualifications. Some of these young volunteers will be the centre's casual staff in the future.
- 2.69. Many of the volunteers and staff at the centre have dyslexia, working outside and with people is a skillset that appeals to people who often struggle with written communication. The core staff team at the Watersports Centre offer a

supportive and nurturing environment for all the young and not so young volunteers and staff. Over the past 7 years the volunteer scheme has catered for over 170 volunteers, 42 have gone on to gain either their dinghy instructor or their level 1 kayaking instructor qualifications, 3 have become qualified in both.

Merton Active Kids

- 2.70. This holiday courses programme has been operating for many years and during all that time has changed to meet different local needs. The children's holiday courses, activities and programmes market is now very competitive and includes childcare providers. This programme is not childcare, but rather offer educational activities and short courses in culture, arts and sports activities. In the last year one of the local major providers for horse riding advised that they were no longer able to continue to deliver activity programmes for Merton Active Kids and although other stables have been approached no replacement has been found, hence alternative courses and activities are being sought. The council links with local providers and then advertises their activities to our local people. It is increasingly becoming a year round programme with peaks in school holiday times.

Community Sports

- 2.71. The council continues to pay the annual entry fee for the London Youth Games and links interested team managers to London Youth Games directly so that teams can be entered by local volunteers. The council also provides T shirts for the competitors.
- 2.72. Recent years has seen an increase in provision of competitive sport provided by the sports' national governing bodies. Sport is also more buoyant in schools, so much so that young people and the local sports clubs are no longer rushing to represent the borough in the London Youth Games. The council continues to support in a limited way within the resources available.
- 2.73. This year the watersports regatta took place at Royal Docks Adventure on Saturday 17 May and the finals weekend is at Crystal Palace on Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 July with the schools mini-games taking place on Thursday 5 July.
- 2.74. The London Mini Marathon is an annual event which takes place as part of the London Marathon event. An officer co-ordinates the Merton team primarily comprised of young people who have represented the borough in the London Youth Games. In 2018 we had 28 competitors across 6 teams and the borough's best individual came 44 in the under 17 boy's race with the best placed team in the London Borough's competitions being Merton's U15 girls.
- 2.75. The Wimbledon Foundation is the charity of the All England Club and the Tennis Championships. In 2017 they reached a milestone of having donated over £1million to projects in the communities of Merton and Wandsworth over the first four years of operation. This contribution is wider than sports and includes arts & community engagement as well as health & well-being and getting active. An officer supports this work by being involved in the evaluation process and offering advice and guidance when requested so to do. More details on this programme can be found at www.wimbledon.com/foundation

London Sport

- 2.76. Merton works in partnership with London Sport across the physical activity and sport sector with the overarching aim of getting Londoners more active. Within the borough London Sport work with community organisations; sports clubs; public health; voluntary sector; etc. as well as working with and through officers.



Performance Information






- 2.77. Merton carries out residents' surveys on a regular basis, included within that survey local people are asked about their satisfaction with leisure facilities and parks and open spaces. The satisfaction trends have previously been compared with London-wide and outer-London boroughs where these are available. The last time comparisons were available was in 2014. The full satisfaction trend graphs are attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.78. Merton last carried out a resident satisfaction survey in 2017. In summary, results are:

Table 3 – Residents' Survey – Satisfaction Results 2017

| Category | % Saying Excellent / Very Good / Good |
|--|--|
| Leisure & Sports Facilities (all adult respondents) | 63% |
| Leisure & Sports Facilities (adult users only) | 68% |
| Leisure & Sports Facilities (young people) | 68% |
| Parks, Playgrounds & Open Spaces (all responses) | 75% |
| Parks, Playgrounds & Open Spaces (users only) | 79% |
| Parks, Playgrounds & Open Spaces (young people) | 56% |

- 2.79. Table 4 - Merton Performance Management Dashboards, 2017-18

| PI code and description | Q1 2017/18 | Q2 2017/18 | Q3 2017/18 | Q4 2017/18 | YTD result | Annual YTD Target | Current YTD status |
|---|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|---|
| | Value | Value | Value | Value | | | |
| SP 015 Income generated - Merton Active Plus activity | £14,049 | £19,087 | £1,885 | £2,065 | £37,068 | £60,000 |  |
| Reason for Red Status | Part way through the year the provider of horse riding sessions withdrew from the programme and no replacement provider could be found. Also there is increased competition in the holiday and short course provision market. | | | | | | |
| SP 032 No. of Green Flags | | | | | 5 | 5 |  |

| PI code and description | Q1 2017/18 | Q2 2017/18 | Q3 2017/18 | Q4 2017/18 | YTD result | Annual YTD Target | Current YTD status |
|--|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|---|
| | Value | Value | Value | Value | | | |
| SP 251 Income from Watersports Centre | £67,362 | £138,470 | £20,935 | £3,460 | £376,165 | £397,000 |  |
| Reason for Red Status | During the year two of the core staff were unfortunately taken seriously ill, which resulted in the programme being offered needing to be curtailed. Also there is increased competition in the holiday and short course provision market. | | | | | | |
| SP 318 No. of outdoor events in parks | 53 | 67 | 5 | 5 | 130 | 130 |  |
| SP 349 14 to 25 year old fitness centre participation at leisure centres | 30,259 | 30,914 | 22,744 | 26,322 | 110,239 | 106,000 |  |
| SP 405 No. of Leisure Centre users | 269428 | 247882 | 226897 | 253148 | 997,355 | 878,105 |  |
| SP 406 No. of Polka Theatre users | 23,639 | 17,212 | 11,993 | 41,191 | 94,035 | 94,600 |  |
| Reason for Red Status | This target was only just missed by 1%. This occurred due to one particular show not attracting as large an audience as was expected. | | | | | | |

- 2.80. Sport England have carried out 'Active People Surveys' for a number of years, during which time the methodology of counting has changed, so current results are not able to be directly compared with some of the early surveys. A good comparison within any survey publication is how Merton compares against London and England. A summary of how Merton compare in the most recently fully published information is detailed below.
(The source for this is Sport England – Active People Survey 10 - 2015/16.)

MERTON

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT

AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (AGED 16+)

SOURCE: SPORT ENGLAND ACTIVE PEOPLE SURVEY 10/2015/16

MERTON **40.3%**

LONDON **37.8%**

ENGLAND **36.1%**



MALE
46.2%

FEMALE
34.6%



BY GENDER

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SOURCE: PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK K 2015

ACTIVE RESIDENTS



HIGHER THAN:

| | |
|---------|-------|
| ENGLAND | 57.0% |
| LONDON | 57.8% |

INACTIVE RESIDENTS

| | |
|---------|-------|
| ENGLAND | 28.7% |
| LONDON | 28.1% |



SPORTS PROVISION

SOURCE: SPORT ENGLAND ACTIVE PEOPLE SURVEY 10/2015/16



OF SPORTING FACILITIES ARE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE

SOURCE: ACTIVE PLACES POWER



OF SPORTING FACILITIES ARE OWNED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

HIGHER THAN:

| | |
|---------|-------|
| ENGLAND | 62.1% |
| LONDON | 57.6% |

VERY / FAIRLY SATISFIED WITH LOCAL SPORTS PROVISION



66.1%

OF ADULTS WANT TO DO MORE SPORT

SOURCE: SPORT ENGLAND ACTIVE PEOPLE SURVEY 9/2014/15

41.8% OF ACTIVE ADULTS WOULD LIKE TO DO MORE SPORT
27.8% OF INACTIVE ADULTS WOULD LIKE TO DO MORE SPORT

Summary Key Decisions since last Council Meeting

- 2.81. Leisure Management Agreement - Cabinet – 19 Feb 2018
- 2.82. Allocation of Merton's Neighbourhood Fund – Non-Key Decision – 06 April 2018
- 2.83. Cultural Advisory Group: London Borough of Culture and the Community Infrastructure Levy – Non-Key Decision – 30 April 2018

Overview and Scrutiny Panel / Commission

- 2.84. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny has continued to review performance monitoring data at every meeting for leisure services. This focuses on income, usage figures and satisfaction ratings. In March 2018, Panel members noted the increase in fitness centre participation by 14 to 25 year olds. Previously, members were advised that the closure of Ridgeway Stables had reduced the income of leisure service. Also, that there has been a decrease in visitors to the Polka Theatre due an unpopular show.
- 2.85. At its meeting in July 2017, the Panel received an update report on facilities for physical activity in children's playgrounds. This focused on how the public health and greenspace teams are working together to maximise the potential offered by Merton's greenspaces. Members heard how with 42 separate playgrounds, the borough ranks 15th highest in London for the utilisation of outdoor space for health and exercise. Panel members were pleased to hear how the public health and greenspaces teams will work more closely to ensure better use of the facilities available based on evidence, best practice and resident feedback

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None for the purpose of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Consultation is undertaken during specific projects and officers attend public community forums and meetings to provide updates and consult on any specific items as and when required.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. None for the purpose of this report.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None for the purpose of this report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None for the purpose of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purpose of this report.

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 purpose of this report.

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

Appendix 1 - Annual Residents Survey – Satisfaction Trends

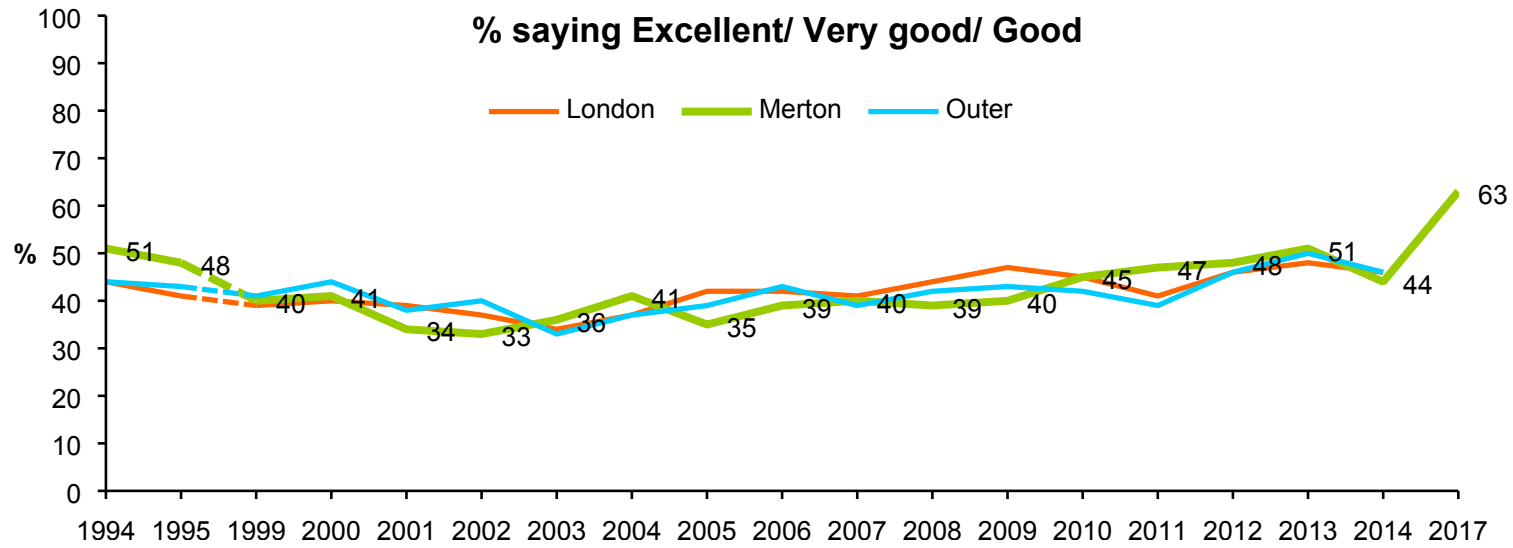
12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None for the purpose of this report.

Appendix 1

Annual Residents Survey – Satisfaction Trends

Leisure and sports facilities (all adult respondents)

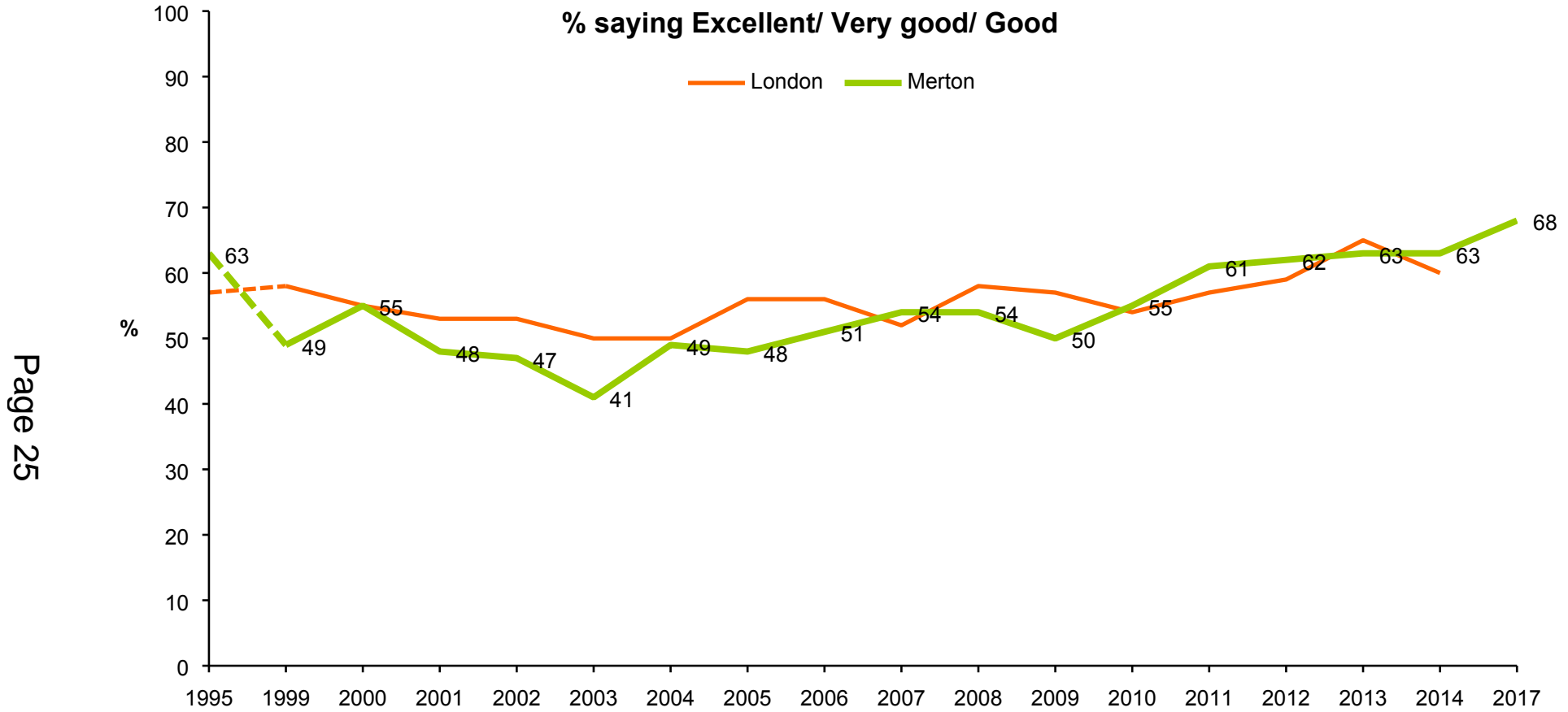


2017 base 1020

Leisure and sports facilities (adult users only)

% saying Excellent/ Very good/ Good

London Merton



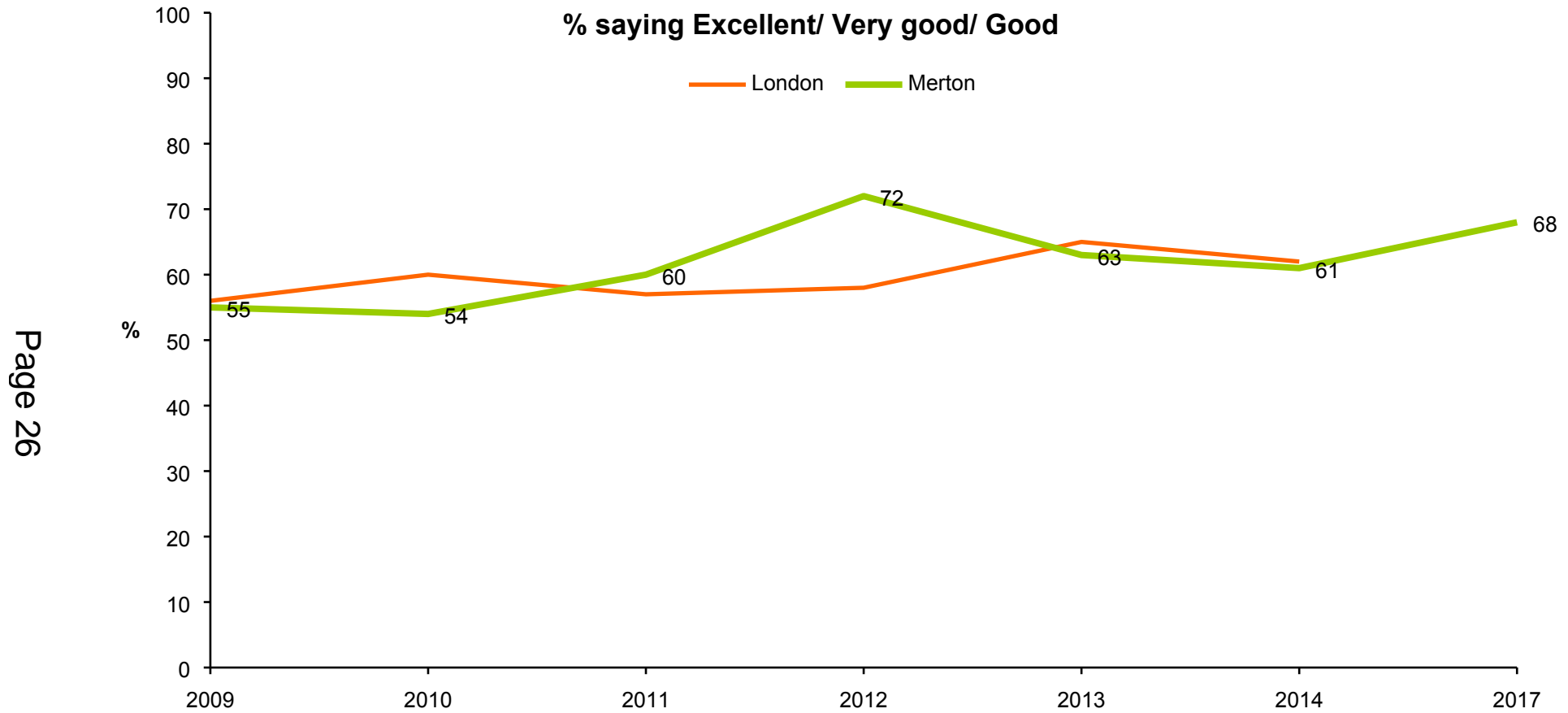
Page 25

2017 User base 352

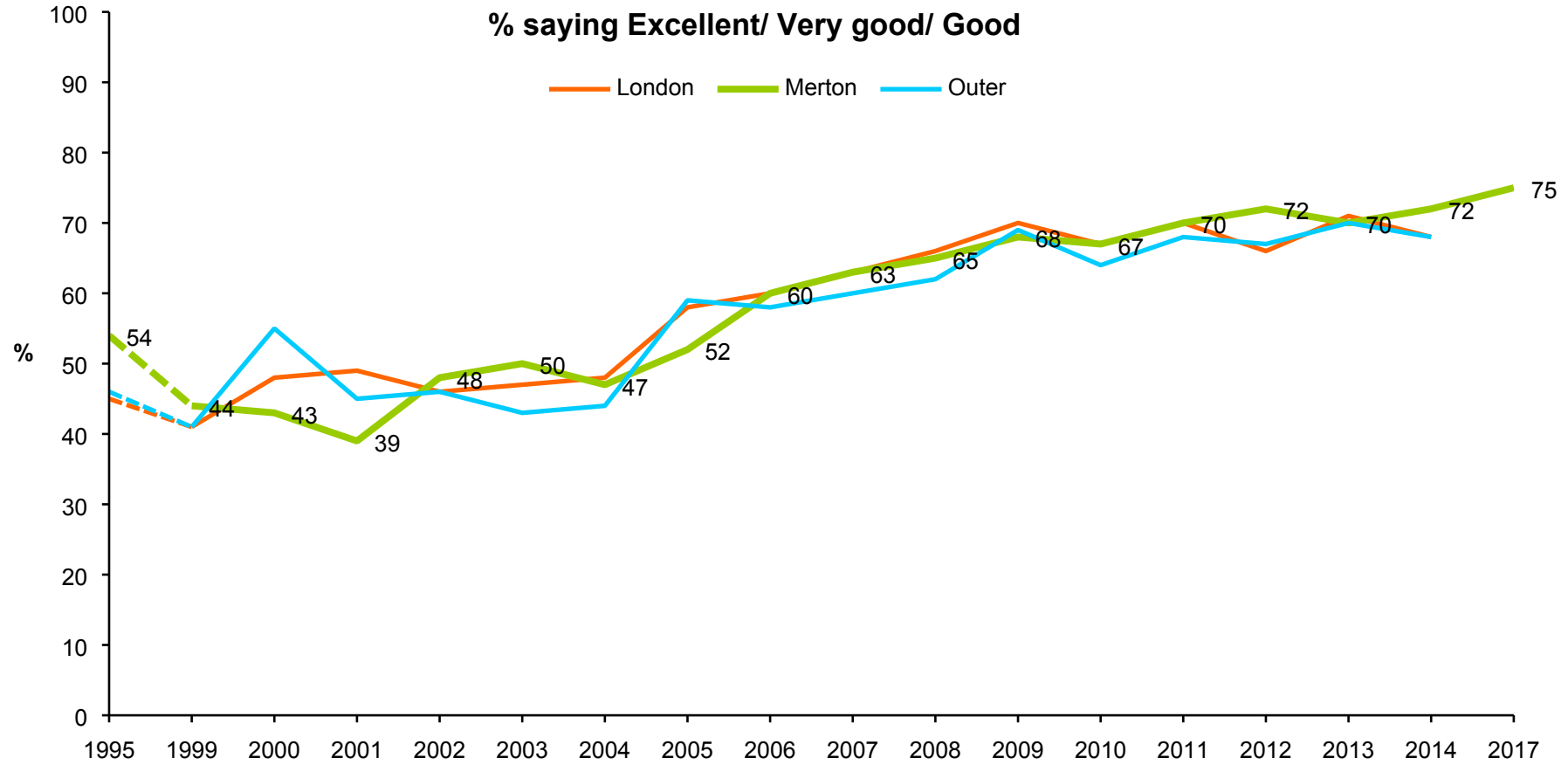
Leisure and sports facilities (young people)

% saying Excellent/ Very good/ Good

London Merton



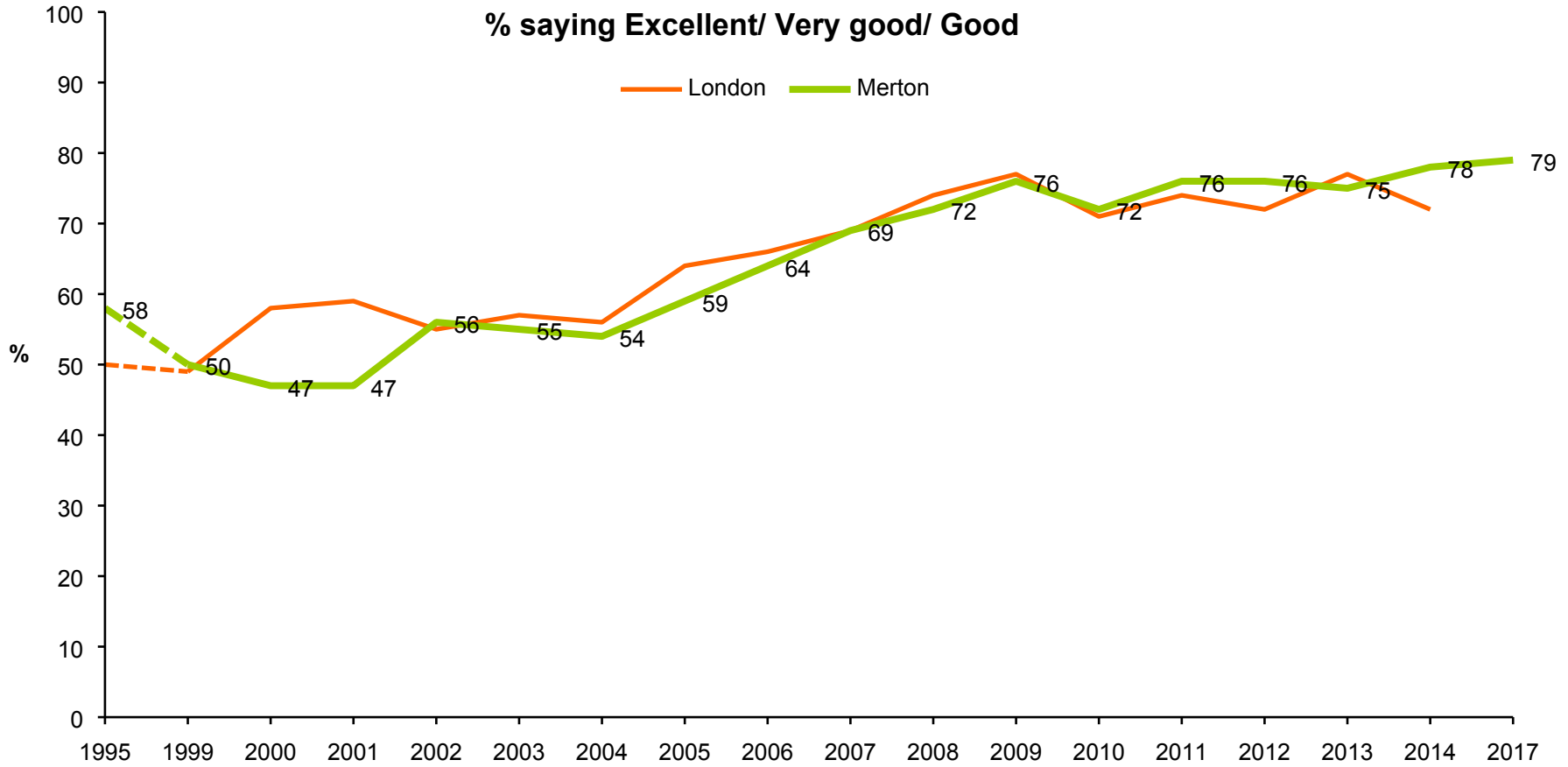
Parks, playgrounds and open spaces (all responses)



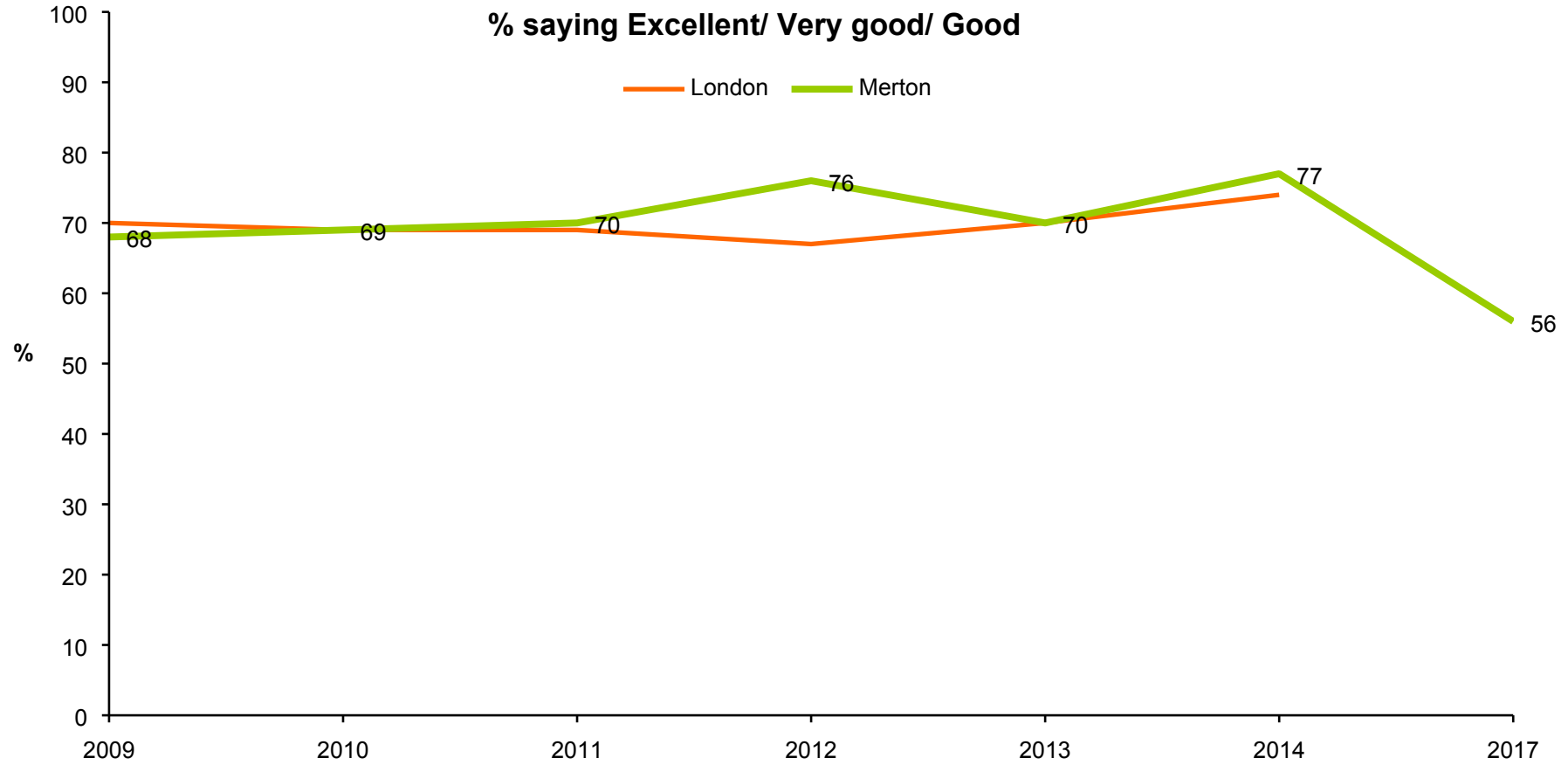
Parks, playgrounds and open spaces (users only)

% saying Excellent/ Very good/ Good

London Merton



Parks, playgrounds and open spaces (young people)



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