

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 12 February 2020

Wards: All

Subject: Climate emergency – Cabinet response to joint recommendations from the Youth Parliament and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Lead officer: Director of Environment and Regeneration. Chris Lee

Lead member: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment, Councillor Tobin Byers.

Contact officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services, 0208 545 3864

Recommendations:

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1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission consider Cabinet's response and the action plan setting out how it proposes to implement the recommendations arising from the joint scrutiny exercise with the youth parliament on the issue of what the council is doing to address climate change – attached as Appendix 1;
 2. That the Commission considers how it wishes to involve young people in scrutiny in the coming municipal year.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Since Merton Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, young people have been participating in helping to derive potential actions towards Merton meeting its carbon reduction commitments.
- 1.2. At its meeting on 13th November 2019, the Commission received a report and recommendations arising from a Local Democracy Week event that scrutiny councillors held jointly with youth parliament members in order to give them some experience of the council's scrutiny processes. The theme of the event, chosen by the youth parliament, was *what is Merton council doing to address their responsibilities on climate change in order to secure the future of our young residents?*
- 1.3. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission resolved to forward the recommendations to Cabinet. These recommendations and a draft officer response were considered and accepted by Cabinet at its meeting on 16th December 2019. Cabinet agreed to delegate the development of the action plan to the Director of Environment and Regeneration.
- 1.4. Appendix 1 to this report contains an updated action plan for the Commission's consideration. This incorporates proposed timescales for initiation or completion of those elements where these can be specified. In most cases, the actions are necessarily 'ongoing', for example sharing air quality information with schools and the council's road safety team to embed within school travel plans.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Following the declaration of climate emergency in July 2019, officers reached out via the council's Youth Participation Team to invite young

people to be part of Merton's Climate Change Working Group and contribute to the emerging action plan. Young people have been participating throughout the process. We did this by:

- Organising representatives of Merton's Climate Change Working Group (a group of external volunteers) to attend Youth Parliament and a youth scrutiny event dedicated to climate change.
- Meeting the Youth Parliament and encouraging young people to complete the climate change survey, which was slightly adapted to make it relevant to young people. This resulted in at least 23 responses from young people to the survey and their recommendations have been incorporated into the long list of potential actions for the climate action plan.
- Organising a multi-departmental meeting to understand what the Council is currently doing on youth engagement and education around Climate Change, and to identify opportunities to do more and develop some potential actions to incorporate in the Climate Action Plan. The meeting was held with the chair of the Youth Parliament, Merton's Climate Change Working Group representatives and a range of council departments including schools, youth participation, public health, corporate policy and future Merton. The group made a number of recommendations which have been incorporated in the 'long list' of potential actions for the Climate Action Plan.

2.2. Youth Parliament are meeting on Tuesday 4th February 2020 to consider more activities and potentially a campaign on climate change.

2.3. We would like to thank the young people who participated in Local Democracy Week event on climate change, who participated in Merton's Climate Change Working Group, who completed the climate change survey, who brought copies in to their schools to distribute to their friends and who continue to contribute to devising potential actions to address the climate emergency.

2.4. Appendix 1 to this report sets out the recommendations made by the Youth Parliament and by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission alongside cabinet's initial response and the action planned, together with dates and the responsible officer.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. None for the purposes of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. The Youth Parliament and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held the event on 15th October 2019. As set out in the body of this report, the Youth Parliament were advised of the public consultation on the council's climate emergency; they helped to distribute the survey and complete it. Sustainable Merton also participated in the meeting as a representative of Merton's

Climate Change Working Group. A full report of the meeting is available as appendix A to the Cabinet report on 16th December 2019.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. This is the first formal response from Cabinet following its consideration of the scrutiny report at its meeting on 16 December 2019

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Delivery of these recommendations can either be met within existing budgets or will be the subject of a bid for support through the council's usual financial procedures.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Cabinet is constitutionally required to receive, consider and respond to scrutiny recommendations within two months of receiving them at a meeting.
- 7.2. Cabinet is not, required to agree and implement recommendations from overview and scrutiny. Cabinet could agree to implement some, or none, of the recommendations made in the scrutiny report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None for the purposes of this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

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

- Appendix 1 – executive response and action plan

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet report 16 December 2019

Overview and Scrutiny Commission report 13 November 2019

APPENDIX 1

Executive response to the recommendations of the joint scrutiny exercise on keeping young people safe in Merton

Recommendations	Executive response	Timeline	Decision making body and lead officer
<p>Recommendation 1. That Cabinet should ensure that the council shares air quality street maps with schools so that they could be used to inform the development of school travel plans in relation to identifying cleaner air walking and cycling routes to school</p>	<p>Accepted The council’s road safety and school travel plan team will continue to use the air quality resources and maps from Environmental Health and ensure they are shared with the schools as part of Safer Routes to Schools / Walking Bus programmes. We will also continue to use air quality maps and data to identify Air Quality Focus Areas as set out in Merton’s Air Quality Management Plan 2018-23 and also to lobby Transport for London and the Mayor of London for London-wide solutions</p>	<p>Already underway - Ongoing activity</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Environment and Regeneration; Environmental Health, Road Safety</p>
<p>Recommendation 2. That Cabinet should identify the most appropriate way for the council to facilitate the provision of educational programmes on cleaner air routes for schools and parents.</p>	<p>Accepted Merton’s Road Safety / School Travel Planning team work closely with Environmental Health on both Merton’s Air Quality Management Plan 2018-23 and developing practical educational initiatives for children, parents and others such as the STARS project, Cleaner Air 4 Schools, Safer Routes to Schools (school travel plans), Walk on Wednesdays / Walking Bus</p>	<p>Already underway – ongoing activities delivered during school term times</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Environment and Regeneration; Director of Public Health,</p>

<p>Recommendation 3. That Cabinet should work with commercial providers to ensure there is an adequate supply of dockless hire bikes for use by Merton residents.</p>	<p>Accepted The council will work with commercial providers on ensuring there is an adequate supply of dockless bikes in Merton for residents, visitors, workers and students</p>	<p>Year trial completed. Ongoing contracts with commercial providers</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Environment and Regeneration</p>
<p>Recommendation 4. That Cabinet investigate the feasibility of using an open air Film Merton event as an opportunity to turn all light sources off for a short period of time (perhaps at the start of the event) so that attendees could look at the stars.</p>	<p>Partially accepted Currently the council does not have further proposals for film events in council parks so at this current time there isn't an opportunity to enact this recommendation. However we will consider the opportunity to take forward this recommendation in balance with our community safety priorities</p>	<p>No current timescale – will be investigated when opportunities arise in balance with community safety.</p>	<p>Cabinet, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Safer Merton team, Met Police</p>
<p>Recommendation 5. Cabinet should use My Merton to promote the practice of putting things that you don't need out on a table in front of your home (this should be placed within your property, not on the pavement or road) for others to take – for example fruit, vegetables, books...</p>	<p>Partially accepted The council welcomes the initiative to support reuse and the circular economy and can support this recommendation where usable goods are left just within front gardens or other private space. Leaving goods on pavements or roads may be mistaken for fly tipping and may attract the dumping of other, unusable goods. We are keen to encourage reuse and recycling within our communities in a way that keeps our footpaths and streets clean and clear for people to pass</p>	<p>Will be explored with the MyMerton editorial team</p>	<p>Cabinet, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Public Space team</p>

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