

## **Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Wards: All

## **Subject: Merton as a Borough of Sport**

Lead officer: John Bosley

Lead member: Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage

Contact officer: Francis McParland

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### **Recommendations:**

- A. For Cabinet to note the development of the Borough of Sport undertaken by officers and to be advised of the forthcoming development work with London Sport to create a strategy to deliver the council's ambition for the provision of physical and sporting activities in becoming a Borough of Sport.
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### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. To update members on the ambition to create a blueprint to make Merton the borough of sport, embedding this ambition in every aspect of the council and in every corner of the borough, supported by a new Borough of Sport Strategy.
- 1.2. To update members on recent activities referring to the borough of sport delivered by officers and our service providers.
- 1.3. Since 2019, officers have engaged industry experts to pull together strategies which look at sport and sporting infrastructure. They include, The Playing Pitch Strategy 2019, the Football Facility Plan 2019 and the Indoor Sports Facilities Study 2020. These strategies have informed our current capital bids that have been submitted to develop further opportunities for greater sporting options and to enjoy active lifestyles.
- 1.4. Potential options include a consultation on a possible new sport installation for teenagers at the Canons to broaden the use of the site by teenagers through the availability of new sporting infrastructure and a new sports hall at Morden Leisure Centre. This would make a significant number of different sports available to the public and would increase the viability of our Leisure Centres.
- 1.5. Whilst our plans are ambitious, funding to develop new sporting opportunities can be challenging and we need to capitalise on the benefit of working closely with suppliers and industry leaders to provide these improved services. The Borough of Sport strategy will aid officers in maximising the potential to deliver these objectives.

### **UPDATES**

#### **2.1 Libraries Contribution to the Borough of Sport**

- 2.2 The London Borough has seven public libraries and wherever you are in the borough you are within a mile of one of them. They are very well used with over 1.1 million physical visits per year and over 140,000 residents are library members.
- 2.3 Libraries play a key role in promoting physical activity and health and wellbeing in the borough and have launched several new initiatives. As well as promoting and signposting to the work of our leisure and health services, the following also take place in our libraries:
- a) Over 450 free events take place each month. This includes events such as exercise classes delivered by Greenwich Leisure Limited and yoga classes. A recently developed partnership with Nuffield Health has also increased the number of exercise and wellbeing sessions taking place in libraries. This gives library members free access to a range of digital services, such as blood pressure testing and waist circumference advice,
  - b) Health & Wellbeing zones are in the process of being launched at all our libraries with health monitors and access to a range of digital self-help tools. The zones also provide a wide range of information on how to improve your health and wellbeing.
  - c) In partnership with Sport England and the Premier League, our libraries also loan footballs for free to any resident so that having access to equipment is never a barrier to participating in sport.

### **3.0 Heritage Contribution to the Borough of Sport**

- 3.1 Merton's sporting heritage is rich and vast. The Heritage & Local Studies Centre, situated in Morden Library, provides a wide range of information via its exhibitions, and hosts the Wimbledon FC patrimony. A digital archive has also been produced called 'Merton Memories' that enables residents to access over 15,000 historical pictures of the borough with information on them via a dedicated website. As part of the digital archive there are several sporting images and a dedicated section to our sporting past.
- 3.2 The Heritage Strategy 2021 – 2026 also outlines the borough's commitment to improving our shared understanding of the borough's heritage and includes a number of initiatives to be delivered by our sporting partners.
- 3.3 It is hoped that individuals on seeing the visual representations and memories would be stimulated to participate in some form of physical activity.
- 3.4 Officers have spoken with Youth Charter, they are a registered UK charity who campaign and promote the role and value of sport, culture, arts and digital technology in the lives of disaffected young people. It is hoped they will visit the borough and officers will work with them to aid in providing young people with an opportunity to develop in life.

### **4.0 Adult Learning Contribution to the Borough of Sport**

- 4.1 The London Borough of Merton is committed to providing high quality and sustainable adult learning to improve the social, economic, health and

wellbeing of our residents. This is delivered through a strategic investment approach: commissioning provision to the best providers in the field and by developing sophisticated evidence-based approaches to what we deliver.

- 4.2 The aim is to reduce inequalities across the borough by focussing a significant proportion of our investment on those most socially and / or economically disadvantaged whilst providing a broad range of learning opportunities to develop the skills residents have. This investment includes providing a number of health and wellbeing classes including courses focussed on fitness and healthy living.
- 4.3 Linked to the Merton Carers Strategy, Public Health and Leisure are exploring opportunities to support carers, across the life-course, to be more physically active e.g. increasing access to our Leisure Centres
- 4.4 The 'Try 22 in 2022' campaign is on-going which aims to increase awareness of the range of opportunities to be more active in Merton, including active travel, sport and fun activities and games. Developed as part of the whole system approach to tackling diabetes, 'Try 22 in 2022' has five sets of resources for key groups such as children and young people, older people and pregnant women; each with a list of 22 things to take part in to be more physically active. For more information see [Merton Can: tips to get active | Merton Council](#)

## **5.0 Actively Merton (a Health in All Policies exemplar).**

- 5.1 Approved by the Merton Health and Wellbeing Board, Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a collaborative approach focusing on health, equity and sustainability. By putting health, equity and environmental sustainability at the centre of all policy decisions, HiAP can deliver benefits for a wide range of stakeholders – and most importantly can reduce inequalities while improving residents' lives. As part of the refreshed HiAP action plan a small number of exemplars are being identified for collaborative action and shared learning.
- 5.2 The first exemplar is Actively Merton, that will support residents to be more physically and socially active, in the way that they want it (giving agency/control to residents). Led by Merton Health and Care Together, working closely with the Health and Wellbeing Board, the approach will increase (social and physical) activity levels by;
  - raising awareness of existing activities and sporting assets through the development of a menu of activity, expansion of existing opportunities e.g. [walk and talk](#) (green social prescribing), plus some new highly visible say evidence based interventions including a Live Longer Better programme for older people and bringing '[beat the street](#)' to Merton; an exciting activity programme for children and young people (and their families) to create a social norm around walking and cycling through the 'gamification' of the local area.
  - connecting residents to activities through the development of a movement? and building on digital and existing face to face connectors in the community e.g., front-line staff, such as primary care, social prescribers, adult social care staff and health visitors.

- a communication and engagement plan across all Merton Health and Care Together partners to promote the benefits and opportunities of being more physically and socially active in Merton.
- Actively Merton dovetails strongly with the borough of sport programme. The political support, aligned with the focus from the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) and Merton Health and Care Together will bring additional partnership opportunities and investment into the Actively Merton programme.

## **6 DETAIL**

- 6.1 Since the last report on Borough of Sport, in July 2022, officers and the Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage, have been active in meeting grassroots community sport providers to understand their needs and any issues to their promoting and helping provide healthy lifestyles.
- 6.2 The multi-use –sports-area (MUSA) at Haydons Road is almost complete. This was previously an area for motorbike training and will now become a state-of-the-art facility for residents.
- 6.3 Both Colliers Wood and Morden Recreation ground MUSAs will be renovated in the spring of 2023.
- 6.4 Our Leisure Provider Greenwich Leisure Limited have, alongside Wimbledon Guild brought walking tennis for 60+ to the Canons.
- 6.5 The Ethnic Minority Centre at Vestry Hall are bringing 30 people a week for 30 weeks to do swimming at the Canons, lots of non-swimmers are signed up.
- 6.6 Officers are working on a bid to the Football Foundation for a multi-use Play zone at Lavender Park.
- 6.7 Members and officers are meeting the Merton Saints BMX club to discuss bids for track renovations.

### **Youth Charter**

- 6.8 Officers and Members are working on a borough tour for Professor Geoff Thompson who is a renowned expert in sports development and founder and executive chair of the Youth Charter and former world Karate Champion.
- 6.9 The Charter is a registered UK charity launched in 1993 and over the last 29 years has campaigned and advocated and promoted the rise and value of sport, culture, arts and digital technology in the lives of disaffected young people.
- 6.10 Lorna Boothe MBE, who is a double Olympian, Commonwealth Gold and Silver Medallist for England in 100mt Hurdles and a resident of Merton will also be accompanying the tour .
- 6.11 The tour will include Merton School Sports Partnership activities and in addition, Health colleagues will be joining Leisure Officers and Members.
- 6.12 Officers have supported bids for Park Run to come to Morden Park and Mitcham Common, both for adults and children.

- 6.13 brought in a wide screen to the Canons to show the Women's Euro final. This was very well received, and officers and members are looking at wide-screen options for future sporting events.
- 6.14 The All England have once again offered a wide screen, this time for the duration of the 2023 championships.

### **London Sport**

- 6.15 Members and officers have recently met with London Sport, their aim is to achieve a happier and healthier city through access to physical activity and sport, they work in partnership with London's authorities and other organisations to provide opportunities for less active adults to be active and for young people to develop a positive physical activity habit for life.
- 6.16 A blueprint for a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy will be developed and a London Sport officer will commence work on the strategy, working closely with Merton Officers. The process for developing the strategy will commence on 21 November 2022 and will have an expected completion date of 31 March 2023.

The blueprint for the strategy includes:

- Promote and increase sporting and physical activity amongst all our residents and council employees to help them lead healthy and enjoyable lifestyles.
- Focussing on those from under- represented communities who face the most barriers to participation.
- Tackling inequalities in terms of access and opportunity in physical activity and sport but also bringing physical activity and sport as part of the solution to the wider societal inequalities
- Permeating sport into the DNA and culture of residents with a particular focus on providing the opportunity for all 4–16-year-olds and all over 65s to participate in at least one free sporting/physical activity each week. Removing barriers for participation and deploying methods to encourage regular participation that will help build a sustainable sporting legacy.
- Working with departments across the council, residents, the NHS, public bodies, grassroot sporting organisations, voluntary sector, businesses, and larger sporting organisations to support the delivery of this ambition; and for the community to be the guardians of the legacy of the programme.
- Identify and bring together funding, grants and other financial contributions into Merton that can bring the programme to life and build a financially sustainable future for sport and physical activity in the borough.
- To raise awareness of the rich sporting heritage of the borough and the opportunities to be active e.g., active travel and sporting opportunities already available, whilst also identifying opportunities for the Council to provide sporting excellence.

- 6.17 The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy will be developed by London Sport and officers who will set-up a steering group to ensure milestones are met and progress is made.
- 6.18 To ensure Members are regularly updated, officers will provide regular project updates to ensure progress is being made on agreed priorities.

## **7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **8.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 8.1 None for the purposes of this report

## **9.0 TIMETABLE**

- 9.1 The work on the Sport Strategy will commence on 21 November and is due to be completed by the end of the financial year.

## **10.0 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None for the purposes of this report

## **11.0 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 None for the purposes of this report

## **12.0 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

How active is Merton?

- 12.1 In general, Merton's residents lead more active lives than the London and national average.
- 12.2 At first glance Merton performs well, with activity levels performing well against London and England averages:
- 67% of adults are active enough to benefit their health compared to 65% in London.
  - 20% of adults in Merton are classed as inactive (not taking part in 30 mins of activity per week, in bouts of 3 x 10 mins), compared to 24% in London.
  - 50% of children and young people in Merton are active enough to benefit their health, compared to 46% in London.
- 12.3 However, looking a little closer this means that c33,000 adults in Merton are inactive and c10,000 children and young people are not active for 1 hour per day; missing out on the mental, physical and social benefits but also not developing physical literacy and a lifelong love for being active.

12.4 Biggest gain will be moving those inactive residents to being active, rather than moderately active residents to very active. Keep message simple - move more and sit less.

12.5 Equity lens

- We become less active as we age, impact of frailty and functional decline.
- White groups are more active than some ethnic minority groups
- Disabled people are less active than non-disabled people.
- Women and girls are less active than men and boys.
- Residents in areas of deprivation are less active.

### **13.0 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 None for the purposes of this report

### **14.0 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 None for the purposes of this report

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

15.1 None for the purposes of this report

### **16.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16.1 Cabinet report - [Merton as a Sporting Borough](#) (18 July 2022)

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