

# Merton Council

## JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS AGENDA

### Membership

Councillors Edith Macaulay (Chair), Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Logie Lohendran and Krystal Miller

### Ethnic Minority Organisations

African Educational Cultural & Health Organisation (AECHO)

Deputy

Ahmadiyya Muslim Association

Asian Diabetic Support & Awareness Group

Asian Elderly Group of Merton

Asian Youth Association

Bangladeshi Association of Merton

Deputy

Bengali Association of Merton

Deputy

Bengali Women's Association of Merton

British Muslim Association of Merton

Ethnic Minority Centre

Euro Bangla Federation

Deputy

London South West Chinese Community Association

Merton African Organisation

Merton Somali Community

Merton Unity Network

Mitcham Filipino British Association

Deputy

Morden Citizen's Advice Bureau

Pakistan Cultural Association of Merton & Wandsworth

Pakistan Welfare Association

Deputy

Positive Network

South London Somali Community Association

South London Tamil Welfare Group

Victim Support Merton and Sutton

Wimbledon Mosque

Revd Mrs H Neale

Ms E Idienumah

Mr S Ahmad

Mrs N. Shah

Mr M S Sheikh

Mr T Hassan

Mr. N. Islam

Mr J Choudhury

Mr M Rahman

Mrs M Ahmed

Mr I Rizvi

Mr A Savage

Mr Q Anwar

Ms L Saltoon

Mr C J Lusack

Mr A. Ali

Ms P Anderson

Ms A Colquhoun

Ms C Batallones

Ms F Poku

Mr M A Shah

Mr S U Sheikh

Mr H Ejaz

Ms G Salmon

Mr A Musse

Dr P Arumugaraasah

Ms D Moseley

Mr I Khan

A meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations will be held on **26 September 2012** commencing at **7.15 pm** at **Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, in the Council Chamber.**

This is a public meeting and attendance by the public is encouraged and welcomed. For more information about the agenda and the decision making process contact the Policy, Strategy and Partnerships Team by email at [diversity@merton.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@merton.gov.uk) or telephone 020 8545 3156 / 4637.

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# **JCC with Ethnic Minority Organisations Agenda 26 September 2012**

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1	Declarations of interest (see note1)	-
	Councillors and co-opted members must declare if they have a personal or prejudicial interest in any of the items on this agenda at the start of the meeting, or as soon as the interest becomes apparent to them.	
2	Apologies for absence	-
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10	Any Other Business	-

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Future meeting dates:

### Note1: Declarations of interest

Councillors and co-opted members who have a personal or prejudicial interest in relation to any item on this agenda are asked to complete a declaration form and hand it to the Democratic Services Officer. Forms, together with a summary of guidance on making declarations of interest, will be available around the meeting table. If further clarification is needed members are advised to refer to “The Code of Conduct – Guide for members May 2007” issued by Standards for England, which will be available at the meeting if needed.

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS  
20 JUNE 2012**

**TIME:** 7.15 to 9.15

**PRESENT:** Councillors Councillor Edith Macauley (Chair), Laxmi Attawa, Krystal Miller  
Mr S.U.Sheikh (Vice-Chair), Mr Savage, Mr S Vukalic, Mr Islam, Mr Karim, Dr Arumugarassah, Mr Rahman, Mr Shah, Mr Rizvi

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Agatha Akyigyina  
Evereth Willis, Equality and Community Cohesion Officer  
Chief Inspector Mark Lawrence,  
Ashley Valentine, Eula Valentine  
Mr Hall, Mr Boateng,  
Jenny Shaw NHS Sutton and Merton

**1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from, Councillor Logie Lohendran, Ms Anderson, Mrs Shah, Revd Mrs Neale, Stephanie McGreevie, Abdullah Ali, Abdi Musse, Mrs Ahmed, Ms Yeboah

**3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 01 November 2011**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting are agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**4 MATTERS ARISING**

The following corrections to the minutes were noted:

Page 4 'good mental well needs to be amended to 'wellbeing'.

Page 6 Operation Replay should be changed to 'Reclaim' –.

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS  
20 JUNE 2012**

**RESOLVED:** Evereth to invite Merton Priory Homes to attend to speak about stock investment and the Community Development Fund at the September meeting.

**5 Election of Vice-Chair**

**RESOLVED:** Mr Karim was elected as the Vice-Chair.

**6 NOMINATIONS TO EXTERNAL BODIES**

**RESOLVED:** Mr Sheikh is the JCC representative for the Housing Sub-Committee

**7 CRIME STATISTICS**

Chief Inspector (CI) Mark Lawrence presented the crime statistics for the 2011/12 financial year and went on to give an update of the current crime picture.

The statistics show a reduction in crime over the last seven years. Burglary tends to peak in the winter months. There has been a reduction in racially aggravated (name calling) and motivated (more serious) offences. Harassment offences that are Public Order offences and usually abusive behaviour are also lower.

Three wards have increases:

- Abbey – the High Path area,
- Trinity – Wimbledon Town Centre area where bar staff and security staff have been the victims of crime,
- Merton Park – neighbourhood dispute.

Update for this year:

Overall crime is down by 9% with 300 offences. There have been 30 less robberies, 47 less burglary, 40 less assault, 43 less knife crime and 20 less assaults on young people. One in four suspects have been charged for burglary.

The CI reported that the Olympic period would be a challenge in maintaining Safer Neighbourhood areas. Post Olympics there will be a restructure to respond to the needs of communities that should result in an increase in the numbers.

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS  
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Neighbourhood teams are being recruited to at the moment. Five new PCSOs are coming to the borough in July.

A question was asked about why the crime statistics were showing reductions in overall crime.

The CI replied that there was more targeting of offenders and CID was now working differently and obtaining warrants. The Top 5 Robbers and Burglaries. There are more operations such as one that targets gang members and arrested 43 people for conspiracy to supply drugs.

Concern was expressed that Mitcham is seen as a problem even though a lot of hard work has been done. An example was given about a recent incident where it was reported that there was a riot involving a group of black youths, who were in fact simply having a running race.

There was much discussion about the danger of stereo typing communities and how misconceptions could affect community cohesion in the borough. Councillor Macauley stated that she did not want Black residents to be marginalised. The CI confirmed that the incident in question was not a riot and his staff were present and confirmed that it was just young people enjoying themselves and not causing anti social behaviour.

The CI informed the meeting that the police are looking at issues across the borough. Figges Marsh does have an issue with anti-social behaviour associated with street drinking and the police will develop appropriate tactics.

Further concern was expressed about the areas where the crime statistics had increased. The CI replied that burglary was a problem and that socio-economic factors may be having an impact. Work is being done to target the streets and wards with higher levels of burglary with crime prevention advice. Despite it being challenging times performance is still improving.

Racist and Religious crime has reduced it is more likely that the suspects are White and it could be that Asians report these crimes more. An example was given of a crime hot spot where the staff are Asian and often need to call the police. This may have contributed to the statistics.

When reporting crimes people are asked for their ethnicity.

**RESOLVED:**

**8. SUTTON AND MERTON RESPONSIBILITY DEAL**

Jenny Shaw gave details of the project that encourages organisations to sign up to pledges to encourage healthy living. She is keen to work with organisations to

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promote health in the borough.

The project is funded by the NHS Sutton and Merton, there are no specific funding to give to business, but committing to the pledge is at no cost or marginal cost for the organisations.

The project covers both boroughs and is part of a national strategy. It does not cover drugs and alcohol because these areas are covered by other projects.

There was a question about how proxy sales were going to be recued. Jenny replied that the councils' Licensing section had identified 6 businesses with a proxy sale problem. The problem is being discussed with the businesses and staff are receiving PASS training. The aim is to get at least 6 businesses in the borough that sell alcohol to sign up. Eight food businesses have signed up to the health catering commitment.

There are events such as the 5K run to engage people. The website also contains case studies including food businesses, building companies and Merton Chamber of Commerce.

**RESOLVED:** Encourage member organisations to make pledges to sign up to the Responsibility Deal.

**9. COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY**

Evereth gave an overview of the Community Cohesion Strategy and highlighted the areas within the action plan that the voluntary and community sector would be leading on. It was suggested that heart disease and diabetes be included in the Community Cohesion Strategy. Concern was expressed that Merton sickle Cell group was not receiving sufficient support from the statutory agencies.

**RESOLVED:**

**10. Corporate Equality Scheme**

Evereth presented the update on the delivery of the Corporate Equality Scheme and informed the meeting that new objectives were going to be developed and published in April 2013. Evereth asked for suggestions from the JCC as equality priorities.

It was suggested that capacity building needed to be a priority to support the sector to engage better. Also frustration was expressed that the impact of capacity building is not evident.

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ORGANISATIONS  
20 JUNE 2012**

Concern was also expressed about the lack of BME teachers. Also the leadership team of local schools does not reflect the community and this is an issue because the schools have few positive role models for BME children. The borough only has one BME head teacher.

It was suggested that sickle cell be better supported in the borough.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**RESOLVED:** Health and Community and Housing meet to discuss possible support for Sickle Cell.

## **Committee: Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations**

**Date: 26 September 2012**

Agenda item:

Wards: All

### **Subject: Update on the Crime Statistics April 2012 to August 2012**

Lead officer: Kate Martyn, Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

Lead Partner: Metropolitan Police

Lead member: Councillor Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities

Forward Plan reference number:N/A

Contact officer: Evereth Willis([evereth.willis@merton.gov.uk](mailto:evereth.willis@merton.gov.uk))

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#### **Recommendations:**

#### **That the Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations:**

- A. Notes the crime statistics for the period April 2012 to August 2012 presented by Chief Inspector Mark Lawrence.
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#### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1. To update the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minority Organisations on crime statistics for the period from April 2012 to August 2012

#### **2 DETAILS**

2.1 The JCC has requested regular updates on race, faith and burglary statistics in the borough.

#### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1 Not Applicable

#### **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1. Not applicable

#### **5 TIMETABLE**

5.1 Not applicable

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

6.1 None

#### **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1. None

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

8.1. None



## **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. None

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

10.1. None

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

11.1 Appendix 1 - Crime statistics for the period from April 2012 to August 2012

## **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## **13 CONTACTS**

### **• REPORT AUTHOR**

- Name: Evereth Willis

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- E-mail: [evereth.willis@merton.gov.uk](mailto:evereth.willis@merton.gov.uk)

# Merton JCC police data June 2012

<b>Protective marking</b>	Not protectively marked
<b>Publication scheme</b>	No
<b>Title and version</b>	Merton JCC police data June 2012, V1.
<b>Summary</b>	Merton Police Crime Statistics
<b>OCU</b>	Merton
<b>Author</b>	Merton Police
<b>Date created</b>	June 2012
<b>Review date</b>	June 2013



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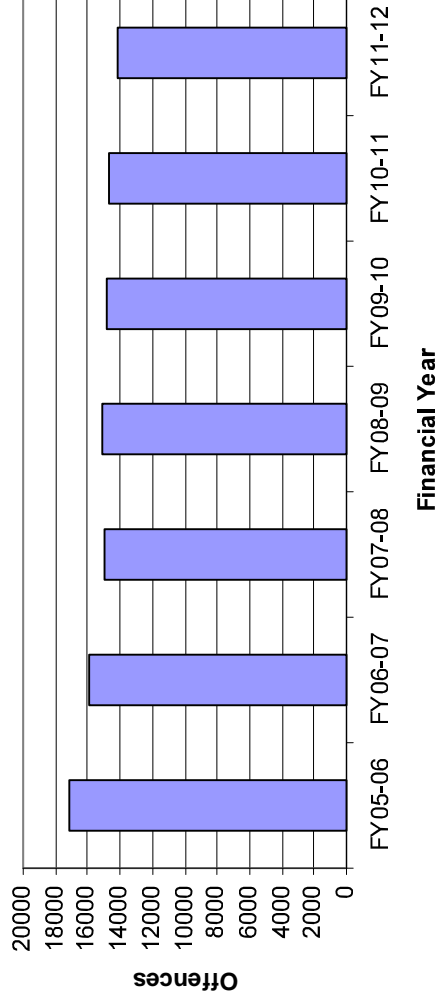
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**Merton Borough**

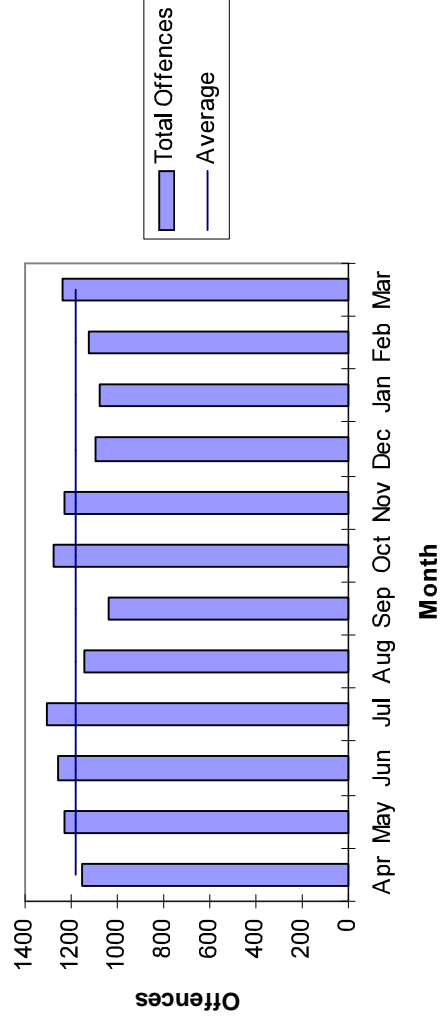
# Merton JCC police data June 2012

Total Offences in Merton by Financial Year



Financial Year	Total Offences
FY05-06	17171
FY06-07	15959
FY07-08	15031
FY08-09	15126
FY09-10	14834
FY10-11	14735
FY11-12	14152

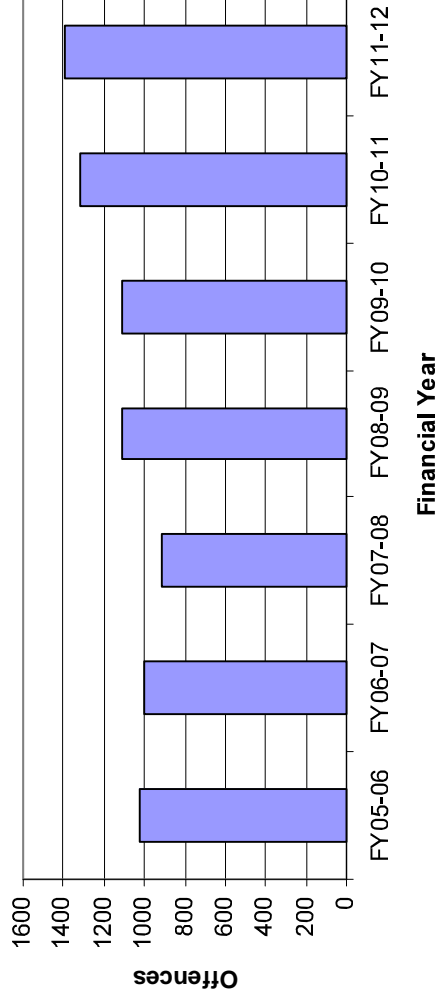
Total Offences in Merton by Month FY11-12



Month	Total Offences
Apr	1150
May	1230
Jun	1257
Jul	1301
Aug	1139
Sep	1036
Oct	1276
Nov	1226
Dec	1093
Jan	1080
Feb	1127
Mar	1237

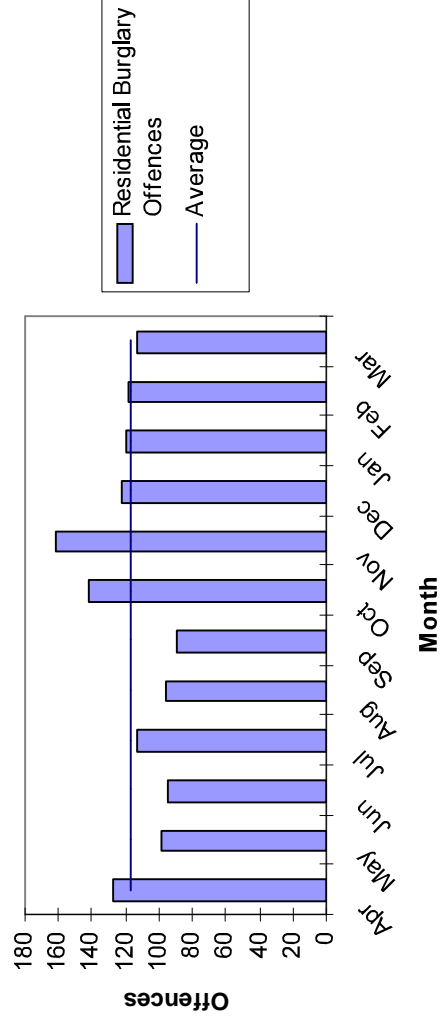
# Merton JCC police data June 2012

Residential Burglaries in Merton by Financial Year



Financial Year	Residential Burglary Offences
FY05-06	1024
FY06-07	999
FY07-08	910
FY08-09	1110
FY09-10	1107
FY10-11	1318
FY11-12	1396

Residential Burglaries in Merton by Month FY11-12



Month	Residential Burglary Offences
Apr	128
May	99
Jun	95
Jul	113
Aug	96
Sep	89
Oct	142
Nov	161
Dec	122
Jan	120
Feb	118
Mar	113

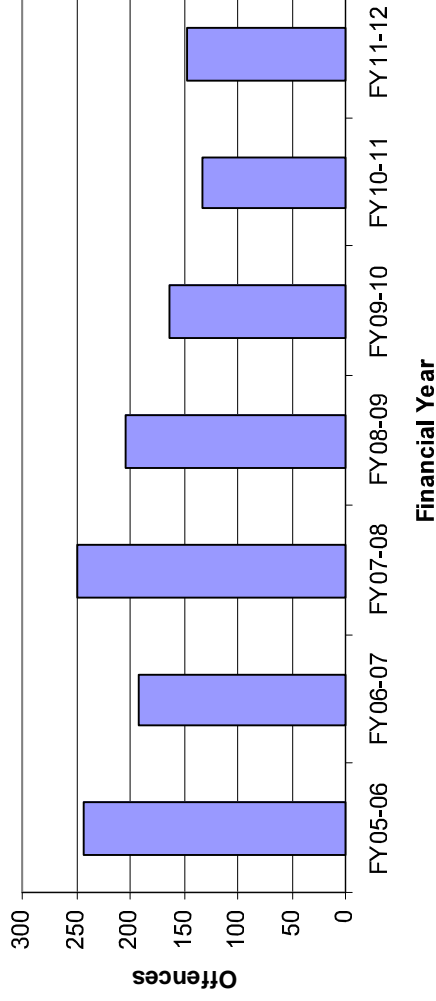


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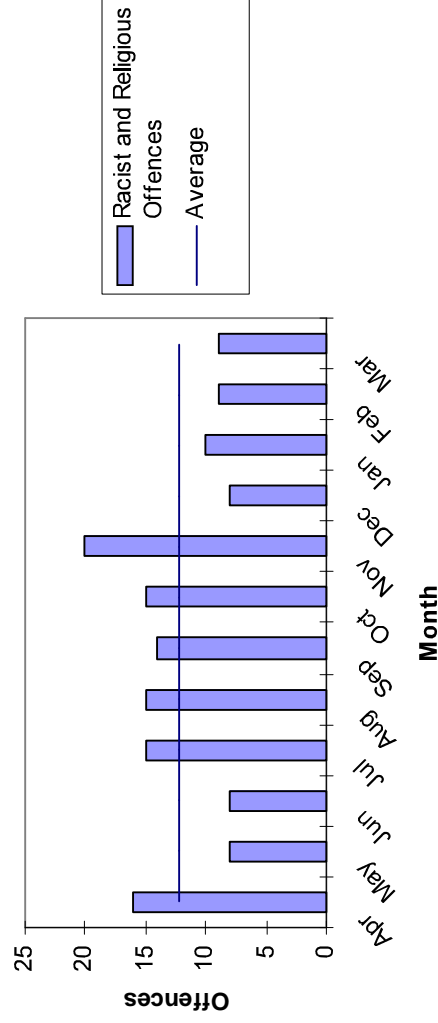
# Merton JCC police data June 2012

Racist and Religious Offences in Merton by Financial Year



Financial Year	Racist and Religious Offences
FY05-06	243
FY06-07	191
FY07-08	249
FY08-09	205
FY09-10	164
FY10-11	132
FY11-12	147

Racist & Religious Offences in Merton by Month FY11-12



Month	Racist and Religious Offences
Apr	16
May	8
Jun	8
Jul	15
Aug	15
Sep	14
Oct	15
Nov	20
Dec	8
Jan	10
Feb	9
Mar	9



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# Racist & Religious Offences FY11-12

Type of Offence	Count	Proportion	Ward	Offences
Harassment	81	62%	Abbey	16
Common Assault	18	14%	Trinity	14
Assault With Injury	10	8%	Merton Park	14
Criminal Damage	8	6%	Colliers Wood	11
Theft From Shops	4	3%	St Helier	11
Grievous Bodily Harm	2	2%	Ravensbury	10
Other Notifiable Offence	2	2%	Dundonald	8
Burglary Non Dwelling	1	1%	Cricket Green	6
Fraud	1	1%	Pollards Hill	6
Offensive Weapon	1	1%	Longthornton	5
Other Violence	1	1%	Wimbledon Park	5
Theft From Motor Vehicle	1	1%	Lavender Fields	4
			Graveney	4
			Figges Marsh	4
			Hillside	3
			Raynes Park	2
			West Barnes	2
			Cannon Hill	1
			Lower Morden	1

# Racist & Religious Offences FY11-12

Victim sex	Count	Proportion
Male	91	62%
Female	56	38%

Suspect sex	Count	Proportion
Male	92	77%
Female	28	23%

Victim ethnicity	Count	Proportion
Asian	61	42%
White	40	27%
Black	36	25%
Middle Eastern	6	4%
Oriental	3	2%

Suspect ethnicity	Count	Proportion
White	87	73%
Black	19	16%
Asian	11	9%
Oriental	3	3%

Victim age	Count	Proportion
Under 20 yrs	17	12%
20-29 yrs	36	26%
30-39 yrs	36	26%
40-49 yrs	29	21%
50-59 yrs	19	14%
Over 60 yrs	3	2%

Suspect age	Count	Proportion
Under 20 yrs	24	20%
20-29 yrs	35	29%
30-39 yrs	26	22%
40-49 yrs	19	16%
50-59 yrs	10	8%
Over 60 yrs	5	4%



# Racist & Religious Offences FY12-13

Racial offences by month	FY11-12	FY12-13	Change
April	16	12	-25%
May	8	8	0%
June	8	9	13%
July	15	12	-20%
August	15	12	-20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>-15%</b>



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## **Committee: Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

Agenda item:

Wards: All

**Subject: Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015**

Lead officer: Director of Community & Housing, Simon Williams

Lead member: Councillor Nick Draper, Cabinet Member for Community & Culture

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officer: Angela Chu, Housing Strategy Manager

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### **Recommendations:**

- A. The JCC with Ethnic Minority Organisations to comment on the revised Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015, following a period of public consultation in July 2012, and consideration by LSG on 6th September 2012 and the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on 18th September 2012.

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report presents the revised Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015 to the JCC with Ethnic Minority Organisations for comments, prior to taking the document to Cabinet and full Council for consideration and formal adoption as a key policy framework document for the council. Details of the proposed objectives and priorities are set out in the Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015 attached as Appendix I to this report.
- 1.2 All local housing authorities, including stock owning authorities, are required to produce a housing strategy that sets out the vision on how identified housing needs in the local area are to be met (see paragraph 7 for statutory requirements). As a non stock-owning housing authority following our stock transfer to Merton Priory Homes in 2010, the council has to rely on registered providers and other local partners to deliver outcomes for our residents. It is therefore more important than ever that the council clearly sets out a strategic vision in our Housing Strategy to ensure that all our partners are working with us to achieve the same goal. Objectives and priorities set out in the Housing Strategy will enable the council fulfil its functions as a strategic housing authority and its role as an 'enabler'.
- 1.3 The Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015 is the first strategy document that Merton Council develops as a non stock-owning strategic housing authority. It sets out local housing needs and housing market conditions, identify gaps in services and provisions, and outlines ways of making best use of scarce resources to meet needs. With drastic cuts in public expenditure and an

increasing number of households affected by the current stagnant economy, it is becoming increasingly challenging for local authorities to meet the housing and support needs of vulnerable households and households on low income, hence strategic planning now plays an even more crucial role.

- 1.4 The policy changes introduced by the Coalition Government will radically change the landscape of housing policies. Over the next few years, local housing authorities will need to respond to these changes, a number of these have been brought in through the Localism Act 2011 and are already in force. Details of others are still emerging and actions have been put in place in the strategy to respond to these. Although it will be challenging to deliver services to meet needs in the next three years due to significant reduction in public expenditure, the radical rethink in policies does present opportunities for housing authorities to think innovatively and seek different models of delivery. The Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015 was formulated with this in mind.

## 2. DETAILS

### Strategy Development Process

- 2.1 A review of the council's strategic housing direction was undertaken in 2011 following the conclusion of Merton's Housing Strategy 2008-2011. The review was timely given the raft of policy changes being brought in by the Coalition government, and presented an opportunity for the council to consider how best to respond to these changes.
- 2.2 A consultation conference took place in September 2011 when over 100 stakeholders took part in shaping our new strategy. Delegates participated in 4 workshops at the event to discuss the following objectives:
- Responding to Social Housing Reform to meet needs
  - Preventing & addressing homelessness
  - Meeting the needs of vulnerable people & minority groups
  - Regenerating housing & shaping neighbourhoods
- 2.3 With the Coalition Government publishing its new Housing Strategy 'Laying the Foundation' in November 2011, and the Mayor of London consulting on his revised London Housing Strategy in December 2011, there followed a period of consolidation when we worked to ensure that the objectives in our local Housing Strategy are be in line with the national and regional strategies. A 3-year Action Plan was also formulated with contributions from our partners.
- 2.4 Public consultation on the Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015 started in May 2012, with the consultation period ending at the end of July. As well as providing us with general comments, respondents were asked to respond specifically to the questions below:
1. Do you think the 4 key objectives cover all key housing and related issues that need to be addressed in Merton?

2. Which of the housing strategy objectives can you help us develop and deliver, and can you help contribute to the Action Plan?
3. We'd welcome examples of any projects / schemes run by your organisation that would contribute to the Strategy's key objectives for inclusion in the Strategy and Action Plan
4. We'd welcome comments on our interim Affordable Rent policy, which stipulates that rent level should not exceed 65% market rent (average across all bedsizes), particularly comments on deliverability versus affordability.
5. The council aims to seek a small proportion of new affordable homes that will be let at social rent level. We'd welcome comments, particularly from registered providers, as to how this can be made financially viable.
6. We'd particularly welcome comments on our Bed Size Policy with its focus on smaller-sized homes within the affordable housing programme.
7. What other measures can Merton Council and its partners adopt in preventing homelessness and to reduce 'repeat' homelessness?
8. Are you aware of other innovative approaches to meeting housing needs that could be adopted in Merton e.g. innovative schemes to increase access to private rented sector supply?
9. Are there other housing and support issues relating to vulnerable people and minority groups that need to be addressed by the Strategy?
10. How can the council and its partners work better together to reduce socio-economic deprivation?

#### Key Issues for BME Communities

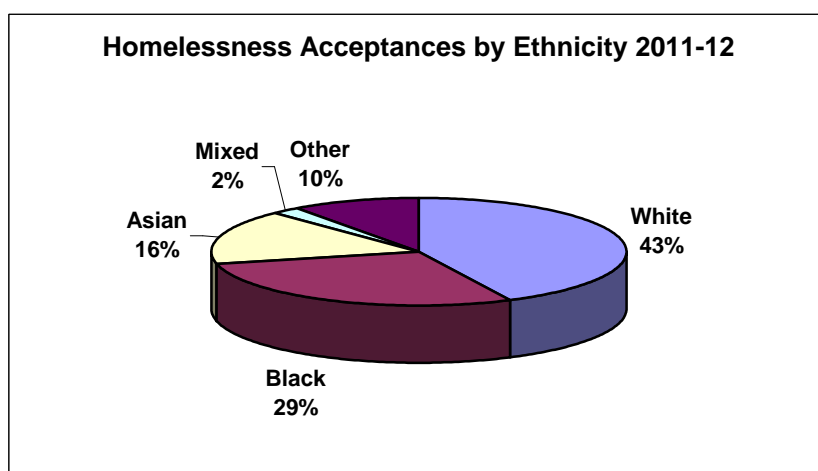
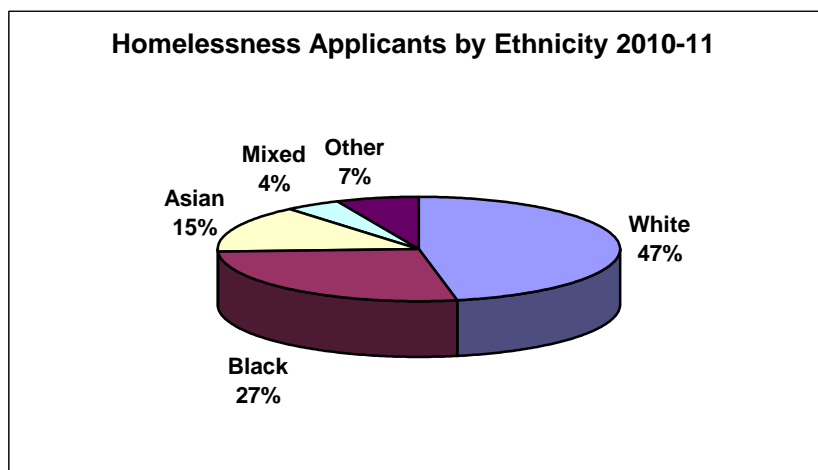
- 2.5 In Merton, we know that BME communities are more likely to be in housing need and are disproportionately affected by homelessness. Housing needs and homelessness in Merton are on the increase, and our records show that BME households particularly affected by the.
- 2.6 The table sets out the ethnicity breakdown of applicants of Merton Housing Register, which shows that in 2010, half of the households on Merton's Housing Register are from BME communities, compared to around an estimate of 20% of BME households in the population (Census 2011 data, when available, is likely to show a significant increase). By 2012, the proportion of households from BME communities on the Housing Register has increased from 50% to 55%.

	<b>Merton Households 2010 (estimates)</b>	<b>Households on Housing Register 2010</b>	<b>Households on Housing Register 2012</b>
White	80%	50%	45%
Black	7%	27%	31%
Asian	8%	15%	15%
Mixed	2%	5%	5%
Other	2%	4%	4%
	80,578	c.5,000	c.7,600

2.7 In relation to homelessness, 279 households approached the council and made a homelessness application in 2011-2012, up from 188 in 2010-11, an increase of 48%. Homelessness acceptances also increased from 89 to 101 over the same period.

	2010-11	2011-12
Accepted Homeless	89	101
Intentional Homeless	17	48
Not In Priority Need	29	60
Not Homeless	39	60
Ineligible	14	10
Total	188	279

2.8 The charts below show the proportion of homelessness applicants from BME communities has increased from 53% to 57% between 2010-11 and 2011-12.



2.9 Merton's Rough Sleepers' Database also shows a third of all rough sleepers are ethnic minorities from eastern European countries. In addition, Faith in Action also assisted 56 clients from A10 countries (mostly from Poland) in 2011-12.

	<b>Number of rough sleepers</b>	<b>Of which A10 nationals</b>
2009-10	33	9 (27%)
2010-11	49	17 (35%)
2011-12	52	15 (31%)
<b>Total Referrals</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>41 (32%)</b>

2.10 Various steps were taken through our previous housing strategies to address the needs of BME communities. These include:

- A drop in the proportion of BME representation amongst homeless applicants following a successful Peer Education programme to raise awareness of issues associated with homelessness, targeting school children in deprived areas of Merton
- Obtained a £145,000 grant from government with £35,000 match-funding from Thames Valley Housing Association to improve the council-owned Caravan Site for Gypsies & Travellers
- A successful BME Video Research Project involving young people to undertake peer research on housing needs of young people
- The development of a sheltered scheme for African/Caribbean elders
- Support provided to BME housing associations in acquiring and managing homes
- Regular ethnic monitoring of housing services, including reports on the following areas:
  - The council's Housing Register by Band
  - Lettings to council housing and Nominations to Registered Social Landlords by Band, CBL bids and bidders, and direct offers
  - Lettings through the Supporting People Programme
  - The Rent Deposit Scheme
  - Low Cost Home Ownership schemes
  - Housing Advice applicants and preventions, homelessness applicants and acceptances
  - Young Peoples Nomination Panel referrals and outcomes.

2.11 Looking ahead to 2015, key housing policy changes being brought in by the government include the ones set out below. These policies all represent radical departures from past government policies. It will take time for the council and our partners to fully understand the implications of these policies and to monitor their impact on all Merton residents. Over the next few years, the council will assess the impact of these policies on our BME residents.

- Introduction of fixed-term tenancies for social tenants and the requirement for local authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy
- New 'Affordable Rent' investment model which involves RPs (registered providers) increasing rents of new build and some relet homes to up to 80% market rent

- More flexibility allowed for local Allocations policies
- Discharging homelessness duty into the private rented sector

2.12 The Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015 includes a number of specific actions that aim to address the needs of BME residents (see below). It is important to note that other actions in the Strategy that are aimed at assisting all residents should also benefit BME households. Comments on what other actions could be undertaken to address the housing needs of BME households are sought from the JCC with Ethnic Minority Organisations, for incorporation into the final version of the Housing Strategy 2012-2015.

- The Strategy sets out priorities and actions that will have a positive impact on BME communities:
- A specific action to target all homelessness initiatives to BME communities as they are more likely to be in housing needs or be threatened with homelessness
- The A10 Project assists minority groups from Eastern European countries
- Publication of Gypsies & Travellers will benefit the whole of the Gypsy & Traveller community in Merton
- The development of new Agreement for the Caravan Site at Brickfield Road will benefit site residents

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1 The report to LSG July 2011 had set out different policy options for Members to consider, and the policies & objectives set out in the Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015 are in line with the policy direction set by the LSG.

### **4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1 Details of consultation undertaken are set out in the main body of this report under paragraph 2.

### **5. TIMETABLE**

5.1 Following consultation with the JCC with Ethnic Minority Organisations on 26th September, the revised Draft Strategy 2012-2015 will be presented to Cabinet on 22nd October for agreement. It will then be presented to full Council on 21st November, seeking agreement for the Strategy to be formally adopted by the Council as a key policy framework document.

### **6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 With drastic changes made to the investment framework for affordable housing, along with the current economic and housing market conditions, the council will need to consider making contributions through Section 106 Commuted Sums; Cash-in-Lieu receipts; New Homes Bonus or free or discounted council land, to help increase the supply of affordable housing in Merton.

### **7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Local authorities are required to produce housing strategies under the Local Government Act 2003, and are required to ensure that their local housing

strategies are in General Conformity with the London Mayor's Housing Strategy under the GLA Act 2007. Local authorities are also required to produce homelessness strategies and review them under the Homelessness Act 2002, and a Gypsies & Travellers Strategy under the Housing Act 2004. The development of the 2011-2015 Housing Strategy will help fulfil these requirements.

## **8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Housing Strategy 2011-2015 will help promote human rights, equalities and community cohesion by identifying and meeting the needs of minority and vulnerable client groups. This contributes to meeting the council's objectives and helps fulfil the council's obligations set out in equalities and human rights legislation.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Housing management functions play an important role in assisting other agencies in tackling crime and disorder, particularly crime on estates and anti-social behaviour. Various initiatives are being implemented by Registered Providers (RPs) and these will be set out in the draft Housing Strategy 2011-2015.

## **10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 All proposals set out in this report have been developed with the aim of minimising risks to the council by maximising resources available to meet housing needs. There are no direct health and safety implications associated with this report.

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

- 11.1 Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015  
11.2 Equality Impact Assessment for Housing Strategy 2012-2015

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 Localism Act 2011  
12.2 Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England  
12.3 Revised London Housing Strategy March 2012  
12.4 Merton's Response to Social Housing Reform Consultation  
12.5 Merton's Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010  
12.6 Merton's Housing Needs Survey 2005  
12.7 Merton's Core Strategy 2011-2025

# Draft Housing Strategy 2012-2015





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## FOREWORD

*By Cabinet Member for Community and  
Culture*

Nick Draper  
Cabinet Member for Community and  
Culture  
London Borough of Merton

## Introduction

Following the conclusion of Merton's Housing Strategy 2008-2011, a review was undertaken to assess key outcomes delivered over the last 3 years, and to identify key objectives and priorities for the new Housing Strategy 2012-2015. The review is timely given the raft of policy changes being brought in by the Coalition government, and provides an opportunity for the council to consider how best to respond to these changes.

The new Housing Strategy for 2012-2015 outlines local housing needs and demand as well as housing supply, identify gaps in services and provisions, and set out how to make best use of scarce resources to meet needs. With drastic cuts in public expenditure and an increasing number of households affected by the current economy situation in the UK and Europe, it is becoming increasingly challenging for local authorities to meet the housing and support needs of vulnerable households and households on low income, hence strategic planning now plays an even more crucial role.

Although it will be challenging to deliver services to meet needs in the next three years due to significant reduction in public expenditure, the radical rethink in government policies does present opportunities for housing authorities to think innovatively and seek different models of delivery. The Housing Strategy 2012-2015 was formulated with this in mind.

The Coalition Government published its housing strategy, *Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England*, in November 2011. The main focus of the strategy is to get the housing market moving again and to lay foundations for a more responsive and stable housing market in the future. In it, the government

also announced its intention to increase the caps on Right to Buy discounts to enable more tenants to achieve their ambition for home ownership, while ensuring that replacement 'Affordable Rent' homes are built.

Merton's Housing Strategy has been formulated in line with the priorities set out in the government's Housing Strategy. We have also taken into account the statutory requirement for our local Housing Strategy to be in "General Conformity" with the London Housing Strategy. Consultation on the Mayor's Strategy was completed in March 2012. Initiatives and actions included in the strategy include the delivery of 50,000 new affordable homes in London, more resources for the First Steps programme to help low and middle income households to access homeownership.

The Mayor is also taking steps to end rough sleeping in London by end of 2012, address overcrowding and under-occupation, and the introduction of the Pan London Mobility Scheme, which requires boroughs to contribute 5% of their affordable homes available for let to the London pot on a reciprocal basis. As from April 2012, the GLA has taken on the HCA's statutory powers and functions as applied in London.

The Housing Strategy also reflects changes in the council as it progresses towards Merton 2015 and becomes a smaller local authority, and will consider how housing outcomes can be maximised for local people with reducing resources. The Housing Strategy is a key supporting document for Merton's Core Strategy, and helps to influence the future affordable housing build programme by informing and evidencing planning decisions, through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and through the Affordable Housing Policy and housing Bed-size Mix Policy set out under Objective 1 the Strategy.

The research work undertaken on accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers also provide the council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy with evidence required to plan for additional caravan sites over the next 15 years.

The Housing Strategy will also deliver outcomes that contributes to Merton's Sustainable Community Plan 2009-2019, not only towards objectives set by the Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership, which covers housing issues, but also towards objectives set by the other 3 thematic groups of the Merton Partnership, namely the Health & Wellbeing Board, Children's Trust, and the Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership, as the Housing Strategy contains priorities and actions to meet the needs of older and vulnerable people, young people, and has a focus on socio-economic regeneration that will contribute towards safer and stronger communities.

As well as contributing to the Sustainable Community Plan 2009-2019 and the LDF Core Strategy, the Housing Strategy 2012-2015 will also support the delivery of key borough plans such as Merton BME Forum's BAME Strategic Plan, the emerging Regeneration Delivery Plan, and MPH's Community and Economic Development Plan.

## **Housing Needs & Housing Market in Merton**

### **Demographics**

Merton's population is estimated to be 208,000 (Projections based on ONS mid year population estimates 2008) and projected to increase to 223,700 in 2019, with a total of 80,578 households (HSSA 2010). The number of households in Merton is set to increase to 86,800 by 2016 (8%) and 92,400 (15%) by 2016, with much of the increase expected to be of single person households. Single person

households currently make up 36% of all households, but will increase by 7,800 by 2016, making up 42% of all households. Lone parents households are also set to increase by 9%.

### **Housing Stock**

Merton's social housing stock is amongst the lowest in London at 14% of total stock. The London average is around 22% with social housing stock as high as over 59% in large boroughs such as Southwark. The profile of stock differs between owner-occupied and social housing in Merton, with 58% of social housing and 63% of private rented homes being flats compared to only 24% in the owner-occupied sector. Social housing and private rented homes also typically contain fewer rooms than those that are owner-occupied.

### **Housing Tenures**

Of the 80,578 households in Merton at the time of the Census 2001, 70% (56,405) are owner-occupiers, 14% (10,970) are social housing tenants and 16% (12,892) are renting privately. Latest GLA estimates show that in 2010, the number of Merton households has increased to 84,640, with social housing tenants now making up 13% (11,376) of all households.

### **Housing Needs**

There is high level of housing needs amongst Merton residents. Merton's Housing Needs Survey identified a need to develop an additional 1,848 affordable homes per annum between 2005 and 2010 if all housing need in the borough were to be met. The 2010 Merton Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) showed that across Merton, around 17.2% of households are unsuitably housed, equivalent to 13,860 households (including owner-occupiers), with much of the unsuitable housing being in the eastern part of the borough.

There are now nearly 7,500 households on Merton's Housing Register, up from 6,350 in April 2011. Around 42% of households

on the Register fall within the statutory “reasonable preference” categories which councils have to give priority to when allocating social housing.

**Overcrowding and Under-Occupation**

A total of 12.4% of households in Merton lived in overcrowded conditions at the time of the 2001 Census. Merton’s Housing Needs Survey 2005 showed 15% of social rented households being overcrowded compared to 9% in the private rented sector and 2.2% in the owner-occupied sector. GLA estimates that the level of overcrowding has increased approximately a third on the number 10 years ago. Recent Merton figures (2010-11) showed a total of 498 overcrowded households on Merton’s Transfers Register. Of these, 66 were severely overcrowded i.e. lack 2 or more bedrooms.

The Mayor’s Overcrowding Action Plan showed under-occupation of 25% across all tenures in London, far higher than the 6.8% overcrowding. This is also the case in Merton, where 35% of social tenants were under-occupiers compared to 8% who were overcrowded at the time of the Census 2001, and the 2005 Housing Needs Survey showed under-occupation at 30% and overcrowding at 15%. This means that at least 3,500 households living in the social rented sector are under-occupying their homes, many of these are older people households. Between 2008-2011, the council has achieved 53 under-occupation moves, exceeding our target of 30.

**Bed Size Requirements**

In relation to size of homes, although Merton’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2010 indicates a high need for larger homes across all tenures, the most pressing need for affordable housing in is for 1-bed and 2-bed homes. Overall, 3,360 households or 50% of the 6,679 Housing Register applicants (June 2011) require 1-bed homes, while 1,804 or

27% require 2-beds, and 1,514 or 23% needed 3-bed plus homes.

With regards to need for intermediate housing, the HNS 2005 found that only ‘entry-level’ intermediate housing would be affordable to households in housing needs. The SHMA 2010 shows the likely requirement for intermediate housing as between 33% to 57% of the affordable housing programme. The assessment was based on predicted house price trends under a number a scenarios, and estimated that house prices in 2007 were 16.5% above long-term trend, with house prices relative to household incomes likely to fall by 15%-20% to 2021. The assessed need for intermediate housing therefore falls within the target of 40% intermediate housing set out in Merton’s Core Strategy.

**Housing Market Affordability**

For people on low and middle income wanting to purchase their own homes, house prices remain unaffordable in Merton despite the housing market downturn. The average house price in Merton is £412,000 and the average lower quartile price is £231,000, above the London average of £393,100 and £218,200 respectively (Hometrack, June 2011). The table below show average house prices by bedsize.

	Average House price
1-bed flat	£201,800
2-bed flat	£266,900
2-bed house	£340,600
3-bed house	£341,300
4-bed house	£675,100

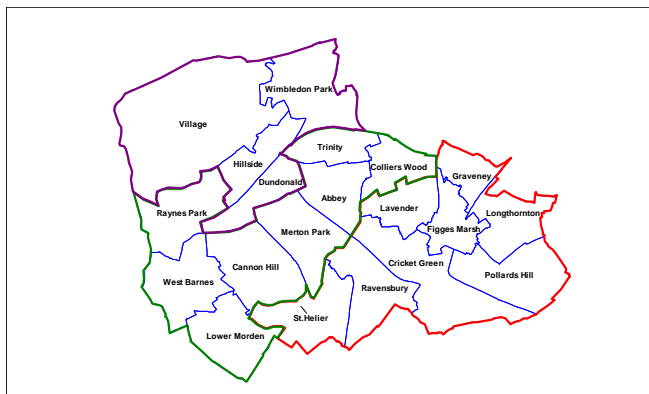
Source: Hometrack June 2011

The average annual gross income for Merton resident in 2011 is £43,931 (CACI) or c. £30,915 net of tax and NI. This is equivalent to a weekly net income of £595. This means that a household on average income could obtain a mortgage of around £154,000 based on 3.5 times annual salary, or £175,000 based on 4 times

annual salary. On this basis, the households will need a 25% deposit or 15% deposit respectively, to be able to purchase a one-bed flat in Merton, although average house prices vary according to locations and cheaper homes could be found in East Merton.

However, affordability analysis based on average income does not show the true extent of difficulties faced by local people, as 61% of households in Merton have an income of below £45,000, 55% have an income of £40,000 or under and 40% have an income of £30,000 or under.

Renting in Merton is also unaffordable to many. Market rents data show that there are broadly 3 rental markets in Merton, as shown in the map below. The market characteristics of these 3 rental markets reflect those shown by socio-economic data, with clear distinctions between the more affluent West and the more deprived East, and with the top end of the market concentrated in the Wimbledon area.



The table below shows average weekly market rents in Merton by bed sizes.

	Wimble- don	West Merton	East Merton	Borough Average
1-Bed	£250.75	£204.13	£167.86	£207.54
2-Bed	£333.75	£260.38	£215.13	£269.75
3-Bed	£449.50	£331.25	£268.88	£349.88

Source: Hometrack Feb 2010 - Jan 2011

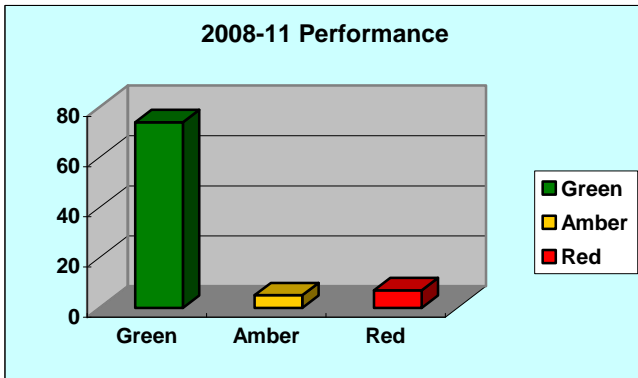
According to the GLA, housing cost is regarded as affordable if it does not exceed 30% of a household's net income. Based on this definition, households with an average income in Merton needing to rent would only have £178.50 to spend on housing cost, therefore could only afford a 1-bed home in East Merton.

**Review of Housing Strategy 2008-2011**

We have reviewed the outcomes of our Housing Strategy 2008-2011 to help inform the development of our new Strategy. The Housing Strategy 2008-2011 set out 2 key objectives focusing on 'People and Places' and identified 11 priorities. The review looked at outcomes for each of these priorities, as well as progress against the 3-year Action Plan.

**Action Plan Progress**

The Housing Strategy for 2008-2011 had set out a total of 86 actions. The review showed that the majority of the actions and targets have been achieved. Of the 86 actions in the Plan, 74 (86%) had been completed and are shown as 'Green', 5 actions were not yet completed and shown as 'Amber' (6%) and the remaining 7 were not met or 'Red' (8%). Amber and Red actions that are considered still relevant and deliverable have been included in the new 3-year Action Plan.



## Key Achievements

This section gives an overview of key achievements against the objectives and priorities set out in our last Housing Strategy, which focused on “People and Places”

## PEOPLE

### Low and Middle Income Households

- Delivered 36% of the affordable housing programme as intermediate housing in 2008-09; 36% in 2009-10; and 60% in 2010-11, exceeding the target of 30%

### Homeless Households

- Secure government funding to deliver homelessness prevention initiatives which included: Homelessness Prevention Fund; £20k for Mediation; £48k BME video project; £15k for a non-priority group Rent Deposit Scheme (mainly rough sleepers); £20k for General Needs RDS in 2009-10; £25k for Under Occupation and over crowding; an additional £20k for Vision Rent Deposit; £10k for A10 Rough Sleeper project; Repossession Mitigation fund and £500k Homelessness Grant in 2010-11.
- Other initiatives include Sanctuary Scheme, Mortgage Rescue Scheme and Tenancy Rescue Scheme.
- The Temporary Accommodation target of 87 was exceeded, as was the Homelessness Prevention Target.

### Older People

- 33 units of Extra Care housing were completed in 2009 for rent and shared equity.
- Merton Priory Home’s re-development programme for sheltered housing and other development opportunities.
- New Handypersons and Gardening Service for older people in operation
- Training events held for advisors through the Advice Network
- 156 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and 93 Small Repairs Grants (SRGs) were approved.
- A new committee system established for the Older People’s Housing Forum

### Ethnic Minorities

- Successful completion of peer research on young people and produced an award-winning video
- Peer Education Programme delivered 18 sessions in schools across the borough, providing information and advice and sought to dispel the myths around homelessness.
- Ran a Youth Forum 2008-2009 and facilitated discussions on housing issues
- Reduced proportion of BME households amongst homeless applicants

### Children & Young People

- No 16-17 year olds in B&B at end of year. The Housing Needs team worked closely with Supported Housing providers through the Young Person Nomination Panel and MYSHF to support this target.
- Over the three-year period 2008-11 61 young people were helped to secure permanent tenancies from temporary supported housing, which exceeded the annual target of 15.

### Other Vulnerable People

- Completed 18 new-build affordable homes for vulnerable people, including 15 homes for people with learning disabilities (Cliveden, Durham &

Meopham Road), and 3-units of move-on accommodation for people with mental health issues at Pavilions.

- Acquired an additional 6 units of move-on accommodation for mental health clients and 4 homes for people with HIV/AIDS.

## **PLACES**

### Balancing Housing Markets

- Make best use of private sector housing by assisting 451 homeless households to access private rented homes through the rent deposit scheme during 2008-2011
- Over the three-year period 53 under-occupation moves had been achieved, exceeding the target of 30 set for this period

### Affordable Housing

- 438 affordable homes were built during 2008-2011, including 208 social rent homes and 230 shared ownership homes. 51 of the 438 homes built are supported housing for vulnerable people

### Decent Homes & Quality Service

- Secured additional financial resources through housing stock transferred to Merton Priory Homes to bring housing stock to beyond Decent Homes standard
- 64 HMO Licenses issued during 2008-11

### Affordable Warmth, Energy Efficiency & Climate Change

- Supported the Coldbusters scheme and between 2006-11 Merton received over £1.5million funding from government; completing over 425 grant applications
- For the period 2009-11, £604,000 were received from the government and 178 grants approved.

### Healthier, Safer & Cohesive Communities

- Developed Sustainability Index to monitor sustainability of local areas such as Phipps Bridge, Pollards Hill and Plough Lane over time.

## **Delivery Mechanism of Housing Strategy 2012-2015**

The priorities set out under the 4 key objectives in Part B of this Strategy will be delivered through corresponding actions and targets set out in a 3-year Action Plan in Part C.

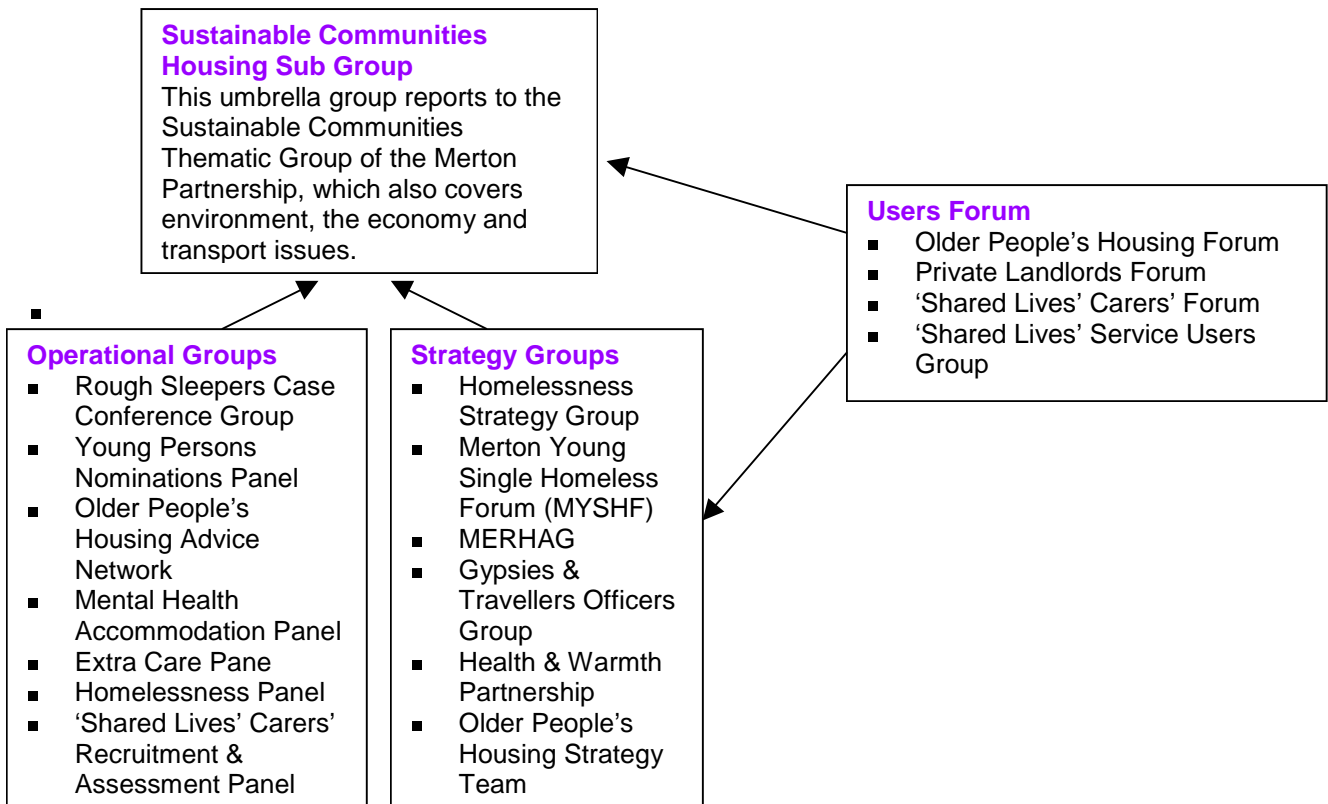
The Action Plan will be monitored every six months and reports will be submitted to the Community and Housing Department's Management Team and to Merton Partnership's Sustainable Communities Thematic Group.

In order to ensure that the Housing Strategy will continue to respond to changes in national, regional and local policies, the Action Plan will be reviewed and revised on an annual basis jointly with partners to ensure its relevance and deliverability.

The council places a strong emphasis on effective internal and external partnership working when developing, implementing and reviewing our Housing Strategy, and will be relying on our key partners to help deliver the actions and targets in the Action Plan.

A number of multi-agencies housing partnership groups have been operating for years and supported the delivering of the objectives in the last Housing Strategy. Housing partnership groups that are currently operating include the umbrella Sustainable Communities Housing Sub Group, and a number of strategy and operational groups as well as user groups, as follows:





The council also contributes to the work of the South West London Sub Regional Housing Partnership and its sub groups, which include working group of homelessness & rough sleeping, allocations, strategy and development.

**Objective 1 - Responding to Social Housing Reform to Meet Needs**

**BACKGROUND**

Over the next few years, local housing authorities will need to respond to the radical changes to housing policy being brought in by the government through the Localism Act 2011, which received Royal Assent in November 2011. The key housing proposals contained in the Act as well as other housing policy changes are set out below.

**Tenure Reform**

As from April 2012, all Registered Providers (RPs) have the option to offer fixed-term tenancies on social rent homes to new tenants, although RPs that have signed funding contracts with the HCA already have the option to offer fixed-term on 'Affordable Rent' tenancies since April 2011, provided that they have published a tenancy policy.

The minimum length of tenancy will be 5 years except in exceptional circumstances where a minimum 2-year tenancy could be offered, but there is no upper limit on the length of tenancy.

Through this reform, the government aims to provide RPs with greater flexibility that will enable them to make better use of their housing stock, while still having the option to offer lifetime security.

Local authorities are required to publish a Tenancy Strategy by 15 January 2013 under Section 150 of the Localism Act, which RPs operating in the area must have regard to when formulating their own policies. This Strategy must be kept under review "from time to time". Before adopting a Tenancy Strategy, local authorities must:

- Send draft strategy or proposed modifications to all RPs who grant tenancies in the area
- Give RPs reasonable opportunity to comment
- Consult the Mayor of London
- Have regard to the authority's Allocations Policy, Homelessness Strategy and the London Housing Strategy

Merton Council has published an Interim Strategic Tenancy Policy Statement in September 2011, to provide RPs with early indication of the council's policy intentions, with the aim of helping RPs shape the development of their own organisational policies and procedures, and to help stimulate discussions and debate to help shape the council's Tenancy Strategy.

Whilst it is important that social housing acts as a transitional tenure or a "springboard" for households who aspire to homeownership until their circumstances improve, the council believes that most vulnerable people in society need a safety net for their housing that can only be provided through a secure and long-term tenancy.

The lack of a stable base for vulnerable households could lead to increased costs in other areas of public expenditure (e.g. social care and healthcare). Requiring the poorest families to move homes constantly will also interrupt the lives of children and young people and affect their life chances.

However, in cases where tenants' circumstances have improved and are in a position to access other housing solutions, then fixed-term tenancies can help release much needed affordable homes.

**Affordable Rent' Tenancies**

Alongside housing policy changes being brought in through the Localism Act, the new 'Affordable Rent' investment regime has also been introduced by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for their

2012-2015 Affordable Housing Programme. With the new 'Affordable Rent' funding model, RPs are expected to offer all new build homes to tenants at up to 80% market rent, and to borrow against the increased income stream to help fund their development programme and reduce the level of HCA grants required.

RPs wanting access to HCA's affordable housing grant are also expected to convert a proportion of their vacant social rent homes or relets into 'Affordable Rent' tenancies in order to raise more cash for their development programme, although the Government has made clear that existing tenancies and rents of secure and assured tenants of social landlords are protected.

### **Allocations Reform**

Merton's Allocations Policy seeks to ensure that those in the greatest need are re-housed first. This is in line with the "reasonable preference" categories as set out by legislation. 64% of all lettings are made available to homeless households. This policy, along with successful Rent Deposit scheme that places homeless households into the private rented sector, has helped Merton meet the target of halving the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation well before the 2010 government deadline, and helped ensure that the number of households in temporary accommodation continue to remain low.

With large number of households waiting for social housing on local authorities' Housing Register, the majority of which have no realistic chance of being allocated a social rent home, the government has introduced changes through the Localism Act 2011 to allow councils to decide who can go on their Housing Register.

Although the government has preserved 'reasonable preference' categories as prescribed in Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, the government has also brought in

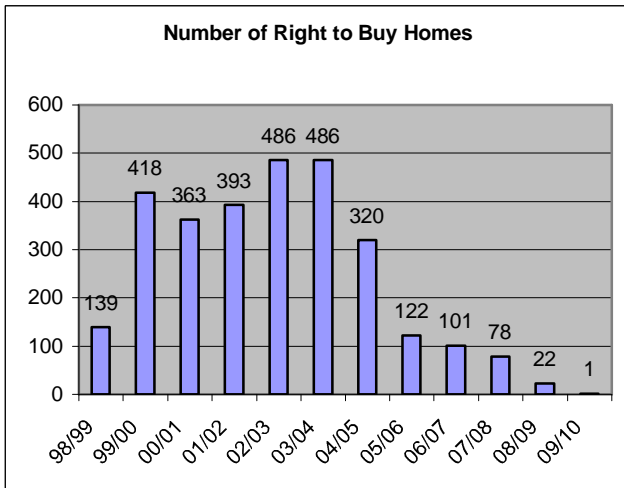
changes that will allow local authorities to give priority to particular groups that fall outside the "reasonable preference" categories, such as low income working families, through their allocations schemes, in order to balance the need of those greatest need, and to respond to demand from working households on low income.

The government has also made clear that members of the armed forces who are returning to civilian life should be given priority access to social housing, and has consulted on new regulations that will place clearer responsibilities on local authorities to give appropriate priorities to service families in need of social housing..

### **Right-to-Buy**

The statutory Right to Buy was introduced on 3 October 1980 in the UK, allowing qualifying council tenants to purchase their homes with discounts on the market value ranging from 33% after 3 years' tenancy to 50% after 20 years. Various changes were subsequently made to the scheme to make it more generous, but limits to cash discounts were introduced in 1999 and again in 2003, when the maximum discounts for most areas of London, including Merton, was capped at £16,000 (c.21% of sales price), following concerns about exploitation of the Right to Buy scheme by private companies in a rising housing market.

Due to the introduction of the discount caps, which had particular impact in London, sales have fallen markedly from 2004-05 in Merton. There were 4,292 sales from 1979-80 to 1997-98, and another 2,929 between 1998-99 and 2009-10. The chart below shows the significant fall in sales from 2004-05, corresponding with the introduction of discount caps in 2003.



In April 2012, the government has introduced a new Right-to-Buy scheme with the aim of “reinvigorating” right-to-buy sales and enable more council tenants to become homeowners, by offering discount up to £75,000 for them to purchase their own home. Although Merton Council no longer owns any housing stock and the scheme is for council tenants only, households who were Merton council tenants at the time of the stock transfer to Merton Priory Homes and still remain a MPH tenant could exercise the Preserved Right-to-Buy, as long as they meet the criteria of the scheme.

Under the new scheme, local authorities are expected to use right-to-buy sales receipts to fund a replacement new ‘Affordable Rent’ home, for every additional home sold due to the increased demand, on a one-to-one basis. In Merton’s case, the council will need to work closely with MPH to explore how replacement homes can be delivered.

### **Ombudsman for Housing Complaints**

The Localism Act 2011 brings changes to the complaints system regarding RPs. Changes will come into effect from April 2013, and involve a new Ombudsman for the area who in turn will take referrals of complaints from designated persons. A designated person is either a member of a tenant panel recognised by the landlord, a member of parliament, or a member of the local housing authority. The role of

designated persons will increase the democratic role in the area of complaints.

### **New build Affordable Housing**

The government has brought in tenure reform with the aim of freeing up some existing supply, however, increasing the number of new build affordable housing remains key to meeting housing needs in Merton. As such, the council and its partners will also need to respond to the challenges posed by and a new ‘Affordable Rent’ investment regime for funding the development of new affordable housing and the current economic climate, in order to maximise supply.

Between 2008 and 2011, a total of 438 affordable homes were completed in Merton, far exceeding the target of 315 set in our previous Housing Strategy. The council has worked closely with Registered Providers (RPs) and developers to develop a proportion of these through section 106 agreements to help increase the supply of affordable housing in Merton.

The table below shows a breakdown of affordable housing completions by tenure type, i.e. social rent or shared ownership, and by bedsize. The table shows that 47% of completions were for social rent and 53% for shared ownership. The majority of home completed were smaller 1-bed or 2-bed homes, making up 90% of all completions.

	<b>1-bed</b>	<b>2-bed</b>	<b>3-bed +</b>	<b>Total</b>
Social Rent	66	128	12	208
	32%	62%	6%	100%
Shared Ownership	103	96	33	230
	45%	42%	14%	100%
All completions	169	224	45	438

## **KEY CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES**

The government's tenure reform presents challenges as well as opportunities. Whilst there are opportunities to make more efficient use of their housing stock therefore able to assist more households in the greatest needs, the challenge for both local authorities and RPs is to ensure that vulnerable tenants are not disadvantaged.

The council is now formulating its Tenancy Strategy, to include a number of key policy objectives for RPs to take into consideration and have due regard to when developing their own policies. We will be consulting RPs on these key objectives, to include the following.

### Granting of fixed-term tenancies

- Those living in sheltered / extra care housing should be given lifetime tenancies
- People with a lifelong need for support should be offered lifetime tenancies in both supported & general needs housing e.g. physical disabilities.

### Review

- Review bed-size requirement and support need at least 6 months before the end of fixed-term
- Review household's financial capacity (earned income & entitlement to benefits) to secure alternative market accommodation
- Assist households with Income Maximisation to help reduce Family Poverty

### Renewals or Terminations

- The needs of individual households & the sustainability of the community should come before the efficient use of their housing stock'
- Seek to achieve positive housing outcomes for households at the end of fixed term tenancies

- Decisions not to renew fixed term should not result in tenants becoming homeless as defined under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996
- Provide households with relevant advice and assistance – e.g. LCHO options, renting in PRS, signposting to appropriate advice agencies
- Where under-occupation or overcrowding is identified, seek to grant a further fixed term tenancy for alternative home that is more suitable (size & affordability)
- Work with partners to identify suitable alternative housing options where tenants support need has increased and a move becomes necessary
- Where rent level is found to be no longer affordable to tenants (GLA definition), seek to grant a further fixed term tenancy for an alternative home that is more affordable

### **Affordability of the new 'Affordable Rent' tenancy**

There are concerns amongst many housing organisations that the new 'Affordable Rent' tenure at up to 80% market rent will be unaffordable to households in housing need. A research report called "Mirror, signal, manoeuvre" published recently by Family Mosaic, highlights that even rents at 60% market value would significantly increase the level of housing benefits required by tenants, thus compounding the impact of the 'benefit trap', and would result in more households needing to rely on housing benefit.

Using the average weekly market rent figure of £275.74 (2010) for Merton, 'Affordable Rent' at 80%, or £220.59, would represent a 61% increase from the average weekly 'target' rent of £86.75 charged by RPs for social rent homes in 2010.

While under present housing benefit rules for social housing tenants (this is different from Local Housing Allowance which

covers private sector tenancies only), the increased rent level of the Affordable Rent tenure would be fully covered for households wholly reliant on benefits in most cases, from 2013, the government's proposed Welfare Reform will limit total benefits (such as Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefit) that a household can receive to £350 per week (£18,200 p.a.) for a single person households, and £500 per week (£26,000p.a.) for a family.

Using the GLA's definition of housing affordability that housing cost should not exceed 30% of net income, this means that rents above £105 a week will not be affordable to single households, and rents above £250 a week will not be affordable to a family,

A recent affordable analysis undertaken by the council using local market rent data shows that 'Affordable Rent' homes of all sizes across Merton at 80% market rent will not be affordable to households reliant on benefits when the proposed welfare cap is implemented. If reduced to 65% market rent, 1-bed and 2-bed homes in East Merton would become affordable to single households and small families reliant on HB respectively. However, larger homes with 3 or more bedrooms are not affordable anywhere in the borough even at 65% market rent, so families will have particular difficulties accessing affordable housing options.

### **Impact of Relet Conversions**

The conversion of social rent relets by RPs into 'Affordable Rent' tenancies will also have more of an impact on Merton than on stock-owning authorities that have a large supply of social rent homes. Due to Right-to-Buy and Right-to-Acquire sales, social housing stock in Merton has been decreasing gradually over the years despite the completions of 1,095 affordable homes (2002-2008).

Relet conversions to 'Affordable Rent' tenancies will further reduce the supply of social rent homes available at 'social' rent, and unlike stock-owning boroughs that are not converting social rent homes to 'Affordable Rent' (those that are not developing new homes), Merton will not be able to meet needs through its own social rent homes to meet needs. The conversion of larger social rent homes is likely to have particular negative impact on families needing to access affordable homes due to the proposed welfare cap.

### **Affordable Housing Deliverability**

Merton lacks the large development sites that are available to some other boroughs therefore has limited build capacity for new housing. The borough has a land capacity to build 320 new homes annually between 2011-2021. A 2009 Merton Affordable Housing Viability Study shows it would be feasible to build 40% of these homes as affordable housing. This translates into 128 affordable homes per annum.

The study was carried out prior to the introduction of the 'Affordable Rent' funding model, so it is unclear as to how this new funding model would affect affordable housing development viability in Merton. It should be noted that the Mayor of London no longer sets affordable housing targets at borough level.

Deliverability is another issue that needs to be taken into account, due to changes in development economics brought about by the new funding model, with no grant available for Section 106 sites, and the council has always relied on S106 agreements with developers to deliver a proportion of new affordable housing in Merton.

As such, when planning for the right mix of new housing supply for Merton, it is necessary to consider housing need alongside build capacity, housing affordability, as well as financial viability and deliverability.

The council recognises that HCA/GLA funding now targets ‘Affordable Rent’ homes and no longer funds the development of social rent homes except in exceptional circumstances. The council will work with developers and RPs to maximise development viability and deliverability. Many RPs are now considering funding their schemes through cross-subsidies from sales to meet funding gap. Some also have the option to use surplus resources generated from high rental value areas to subsidise developments in Merton. Where necessary the council will consider making financial contribution, such as cash-in-lieu receipts from housing sites of below 10 units.

**Bed Size Mix Policy**

With regards to size mix, Merton’s affordable housing build programme for 2012-2015 will focus mainly on smaller-sized homes, a sizeable proportion of which should be supported accommodation for vulnerable client groups, in order to make best use of available resources to meet the greatest needs, and taking into account the following factors:

- The need to maximise the number of affordable homes completions as indicated by Viability Study
- The most pressing need of households with the highest priority on the council’s Housing Register is for 1-bed and 2-bed homes.
- Much of the estimated household growth in Merton between 2011 is expected to be single person households.
- Older people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 22% between 2011 and 2025, of which 38% are predicted to live alone
- There is a need to increase the supply of smaller homes that are attractive in designs and are energy efficient, to encourage under-occupiers, particularly older people,

to downsize, thus helping to release family-sized homes.

- Larger ‘Affordable Rent’ homes with 3 or more bedrooms are not affordable anywhere in the borough even at 65% market rent.

**Affordable homes for rent**

1-Bed	40%	2-Bed	40%	3-Bed	20%
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The council’s housing policy gives priority to households in the greatest housing needs, such as homeless households, when allocating affordable homes for rent. The above bed-size mix closely reflects the profile of need of homeless households that the council gives priority through our Allocations Policy. Of the 230 homeless households on the Housing Register (June 2011), 49 or 21% households require 3-bed or larger homes, 93 or 48% require 2-bed homes and 88 or 38% needed 1-bed.

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed +
Housing Register	50%	27%	23%
Homeless Households	38%	41%	21%

This bed-size mix also takes into account the following:

- Current difficulties in procuring 2-bed homes in the private rented sector
- Preference of many under-occupiers’ aspiration to downsize to a 2-bed rather than a 1-bed home

There is a need to develop more family-sized social rent homes. As mentioned above, where possible, family-sized 3-bed plus homes should be developed as social rent homes.

**LCHO**

1-Bed	50%	2-Bed	34%	3-Bed	16%
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The above bed-size mix will be adopted for Low Cost Homeownership units such as shared ownership homes. The 16% target for 3-bed plus homes is in line with the target set out in the London Housing Strategy for intermediate housing.

**Private market housing**

1-Bed	25%	2-Bed	28%	3-Bed	47%
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In relation to private sector housing, Merton’s SHMA 2010 identified the above bed-size mix requirement:

The overall housing bed-size mix for all tenures is therefore as follows:

**All tenures**

1-Bed	33%	2-Bed	32%	3-Bed	35%
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With regards to where in the borough should affordable housing be built, with the introduction of HCA’s new funding regime, along with the current uncertain housing market conditions, the council will consider affordable housing schemes in all parts of the borough to help increase supply, and will discuss affordability with developers and RPs on a scheme by scheme basis to ensure viability and affordability, and to facilitate sustainable communities.

**KEY PRIORITIES**

**1.1 Develop policy responses to legislative changes that are appropriate for Merton**

**Develop Merton’s Tenancy Strategy**

The council will consult RPs on the key objectives to be included in the borough statutory Tenancy Strategy through a series of workshops. Wider consultation with organisations working with tenants and with vulnerable client groups will also

take place. The Mayor of London will also be consulted. The council aims to publish the Strategy by the end of 2012, to include the following topic areas:

- Kinds of tenancies
- Circumstances in which particular tenancies are granted
- Length of tenancies
- Granting of further tenancy at end of fixed term
- Advice & assistance
- Affordability analysis

**Minimise impact of relet conversions**

The Council also recognises the need for RPs to increase their rental stream further to help fund new affordable housing development through conversions of ‘social rent’ relets into ‘Affordable Rent’ homes. While the council will seek opportunities to increase new build ‘Affordable Rent’ homes in Merton, we will negotiate with RPs to ensure that rent levels are affordable to local people.

The council has agreed an Interim Affordable Rent Statement in November 2011, which stipulates that rent levels for ‘Affordable Rent’ homes should not exceed 65% of market rent.

As it is likely that larger ‘Affordable Rent’ homes with 3 or more bedrooms will not be affordable to families in housing need from 2013 with the implementation of the Welfare Reform, larger social rent homes with 3 or more bedrooms should not be included in relet conversions to ‘Affordable Rent’ homes, unless RPs can show that these conversions will be affordable to low-income families, having regard to the proposed welfare cap, and where RPs also have a commitment to include some family-sized social rent homes in their new development programme in Merton.

**Review of Allocations Policy**

The council is reviewing its Allocations Policy, titled the “Housing Register and Nominations Policy”. The review will take



into account the need to continue to give priorities to households that fall within the “reasonable preference” categories as specified in Part VI of the Housing Act 1996; as this statutory requirement has remained unchanged. The council’s annual strategy therefore gives priorities to homeless households, and households who are overcrowded or are under-occupiers amongst others.

The review will also consider the new flexibilities being brought in by the Localism Act, which permits local authorities to give households that fall outside of the “reasonable preference” categories, such as working households on low income, additional priorities in its Allocations Policy. The review will also take into account the new requirement for local authorities to prioritise members of the armed forces returning to civilian life, and will include proposals in relation to the Pan London Mobility Scheme.

### ***Responding to changes to Right-to-Buy***

Local authorities are expected to use right-to-buy sales receipts to fund a replacement new ‘Affordable Rent’ home, for every additional home sold due to the increased demand, on a one-to-one basis. Council tenants transferred to MPH in March 2010 could exercise their “Preserved Right-to-Buy” if they met the scheme criteria, therefore the council will be working closely with MPH to explore how sales receipts can be used to deliver the required replacement homes.

### ***Ombudsman for Housing Complaints***

The council will work with local RPs to map tenant panels in the borough, and to develop a guidance document for Members of Merton Council with regards to managing complaints sent to them in their capacity as a “designated person” under the Localism Act.

### ***Impact Analysis of Universal Credit & Welfare Reform***

In order to gain a better understanding of what impact the Welfare Reform is likely to have on low-income households ability to access affordable housing solutions, and to help inform plans to assist these households, an impact analysis on the proposed Welfare Reform will be undertaken.

## **1.2 Increase supply of new homes that are affordable to Merton residents**

### ***Merton’s affordable Housing Policy***

The council aims to maximise the development of affordable housing in the borough, and will seek to achieve 40% of affordable housing across all new housing development schemes in the borough. The Housing Viability Study has demonstrated the financial viability of seeking 40% affordable housing on new housing schemes, and the 40% affordable housing figure is also set out in Merton’s Core Strategy.

Negotiation on a site-by-site basis for affordable housing will take into account affordability, financial viability and deliverability, when seeking to maximise affordable housing, and in determining bed-size mix and the provision of Lifetime Homes and wheelchair accessible units.

To ensure new ‘Affordable Rent’ homes are indeed affordable to households on low-income, the council will not support proposals of rent levels exceeding 65% of market rent, and will seek larger ‘Affordable Rent’ homes at below 65% market rent level.

### ***Seeking a mix of tenures on new housing schemes***

Within the affordable housing programme, the council seeks a borough-wide 60/40 split i.e. not scheme-specific, of rented homes versus Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO), which includes shared ownership

and the First Steps shared-equity initiative in London. A more flexible approach will be considered for developer-led Section 106 schemes without grant. Targets are to be adjusted if proved to be financially unviable.

***Seek to develop larger homes at ‘social rent’***

The council will work with RPs to seek to increase larger new build homes that are affordable to low-income households, and will explore with RPs wanting to convert social rent relets in Merton opportunities to develop new affordable housing in the borough, including the development of new social rent homes where financially viable.

Within the 60% development programme of affordable homes for rent, a proportion of family-sized (3-bed plus) social rent homes should be sought, particularly where RPs have used relet conversions in Merton to help raise finance for housing developments. In particular, family-sized social rent homes will be sought.

***Ensure affordability of Intermediate Housing***

The council aims to increase the number purchases of new shared-ownership homes built in the borough by Merton residents, therefore will negotiate a sizeable proportion of new intermediate housing to be at prices that are affordable to local people. The latest available Median household income figure, currently £36,700 per annum (CACI), will be used as an indicator of affordability. Priorities for access intermediate housing will be based on household income levels across all tenures.

***Ensure ‘Affordable Rent’ levels are affordable to local people***

The council will negotiate ‘Affordable Rent’ levels of new build homes with developers and RPs, based on most up-to-date local market rents data. The findings of the Impact Analysis on Universal Credit and will also be used to inform negotiations. Local Housing Allowance rates are not

considered appropriate indicators of affordability for social housing as it can be as high as 90% market rent levels when applied at ward level. The council will regularly produce most up-to-date housing market data, supplied to ward level to ensure affordability.

***Implement to Bed –Size Mix Policy for new build housing***

The council will seek bed-size mix as set out in the Bed –Size Mix Policy in this chapter of the Strategy, to reflect the specific requirements set out for the different tenures.

***Use of ‘Cash-in-Lieu’ to support new development***

Merton’s Core Strategy Policy CS8 (e) on Housing Choice sets out the requirement for housing sites of below 10 units to make a financial contribution to the council equivalent to 20% of affordable housing provided on site. The cash-in-lieu receipts, as part of Section 106 Commuted Sum contributions, are earmarked for the provision of additional affordable housing, but cannot be used to subsidise or substitute for the 40% on site affordable housing requirement, where this is demonstrated to be viable.

However, it can be used to facilitate the element of provision above the 40% requirement if the council deem it appropriate taking account of each case on its individual merits, and could be used to target the provision of additional 3-bed social rent homes and affordable supported housing in Merton.

**Objective 2 - Preventing & Addressing Homelessness**

**BACKGROUND**

Merton has the lowest number of accepted homeless households amongst all London boroughs, with 101 acceptances in 2011-12, due to our success in homelessness prevention through housing advice, helping around 500 households at risk of homelessness to find housing solutions every year, and many of these households are given additional priorities for social housing and re-housed through Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.

Homelessness has been on the increase across the UK and homelessness acceptances in Merton had also gone up from 89 in 2010-11 to 101 in 2011-12. Merton has also seen a huge increase in the number of households making homelessness applications to the council. In 2011-12, there were a total of 279 applications, up from 188 in 2010-11, a 48% increase, and from 148 in 2009-10.

Of the 89 accepted households in 2011-12, 50% have dependent children, 6 (5%) were young people aged 16-17, and 39 (34%) were households vulnerable as a result of old age, physical disability, mental health or learning disability etc.

Ethnic minority households are over-represented amongst accepted homeless households when compared to their share in the population. Although this over-representation had decreased from 60% of accepted homeless households in 2006-07 to 50% in 2010-11, there is evidence that this is on the increase again, as 57% of accepted homeless households in 2011-12 were from ethnic minority communities.

Prevention measures undertaken by the council include legal advocacy, nominations to supported accommodation, crisis intervention, mediation & conciliation, Sanctuary scheme and mortgage and rent rescue etc. Nominations to permanent social housing under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 accounted for just under a quarter (24%) of prevention cases, but the most common measure was the use of rent deposit to help households at risk of homelessness to access housing solutions in the private rented sector, which accounted for over a third (34%) of prevention cases.

Merton council has been making best use of the private rented sector through the Rent Deposit Scheme (RDS) since 2003. Between 2008-2011, 451 households at risk of homelessness found private rented accommodation through the scheme, and just over 1,000 households secured a home in the private rented sector since the scheme's inception. There is evidence through housing benefit records showing that the majority of these tenancies were still in place after the initial fixed-term has ended.

The Localism Act has brought in changes to homelessness legislation, although the government has yet to announce when this provision will come into effect. In future, local authorities will be given the option to place homeless households eligible for permanent social housing into the private rented sector without having to seek their consent.

Recognising that the needs of young homeless persons are distinct from homelessness families and older homeless persons, tackling youth homelessness is one of the key objectives of Merton's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013. Following the Southwark Judgement in May 2009 about accommodation for homeless 16-17 year olds, a Protocol was put in place between the council's Housing Division and the Department for Children,

Schools and Families, to ensure homeless children who meet the criteria for section 20 of the 1989 Children Act are assisted as 'looked after children' supported by Pathway Plans. Those who have received support for more than 13 weeks after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday will become entitled to leaving care services until the age of 21, or until age 24 if they are in higher education.

Merton also has a providers' forum - Merton Young Single Homeless Forum (MYSHF), which meets regularly to identify the support and move-on needs of young single homeless people. There is also a monthly Young Persons Nominations Panel that seeks to place young single homeless people into available supported housing units according to their needs.

Over the last three years, Merton Council also worked with key partners to provide support and assistance to rough sleepers in the borough. In 2009, Merton Council undertook an official Rough Sleepers Count on the night of 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> November and found 2 rough sleepers that fitted the definition set out in Government guidance. Following the publication of new government guidance in September 2010 – Evaluating the Extent of Rough Sleeping: A new approach, an estimate in November 2010 identified 6 rough sleepers in Merton using the new wider definition, and a subsequent estimate in November 2011 identified 2 rough sleepers.

In preparing for the 2009 count, a Case Conference Group was established, which consists of the key agencies such as Street Rescue/Thames Reach, Faith in Action, MET Police, and the South West London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust. The group works closely with council officers from Housing and Adult Social Care and Safer Merton to discuss housing and support options for each identified rough sleeper. The group meets every 2 months and has received 130 referrals between April 2009 and March 2012,

including 5 rough sleepers who are 'returners'.

The council has developed a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) with partners, in place since November 2010, to ensure rough sleepers are not at risk of dying on the streets during cold weather. Working with the Case Conference Group and other agencies, all known rough sleepers are placed into temporary accommodation when the temperature is predicted to be zero degree Celsius for the next 3 consecutive nights. The SWEP was reviewed and updated in November 2011, to improve responses to the needs of rough sleepers during extreme weather conditions that do not fit the SWEP's standard criteria.

With evidence showing that the number of rough sleepers from A10 Accession countries<sup>1</sup> were on the increase across London, the council provided Faith in Action, a local faith organisation, with a small grant to start a project that assists people from Eastern European countries to access jobs, with the help of a bi-lingual project worker. The A10 Project compliments Faith in Action's weekly drop-in sessions for rough sleepers.

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<sup>1</sup> A8 nationals from Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, can come to work in the UK but have limited or no access to social provisions and benefits. A2 nationals (Romania and Bulgaria) are subject to further restrictions and require a work permit in order to start work in the UK.

## **KEY CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES**

Changes to homelessness legislation being brought in through the Localism Act is likely to increase the reliance of the private rented sector to meet housing needs, particularly as the impact of the new 'Affordable Rent' funding regime and the challenging economic climate are likely to lead to a reduction on the volume of new affordable housing completions.

At present, placements of homeless households by local authorities into the private rented sector are made with the agreement of the households concerned, as required by Section 208 of the Housing Act 1996. To discharge homelessness duty into the private rented sector, local authorities must also ensure that households are placed into a home that is suitable and meet their composite needs relating to size and affordability (Section 210, Housing Act 1996), and should help them find accommodation in the local area where reasonably practicable under Section 193 7(D) of the 1996 Housing Act.

With the changes to homelessness legislation under the Localism Act, local authorities will be given the option to place homeless households eligible for permanent social housing into the private rented sector without having to seek their consent. Given this new flexibility, it is likely that all local authorities will look to increase placements into the private rented sector, although the increasing gap between rising rents and housing benefit caps (through recent changes in Local Housing Allowance and the Welfare Reform in 2013) would result in local authorities of high rental value areas seeking more affordable placements out-of-borough for clients in receipt of housing benefit.

There have already been reports in the media that several London boroughs are planning to place households in other parts

of the UK with lower rental values. It is likely that inner London boroughs with higher rent levels would also look for more affordable supply in outer London boroughs, including Merton. This is likely to further increase demand and competition for private rented accommodation in the borough.

There are already signs that the supply private rented homes that landlords are willing to make available to households relying on LHA is reducing. 146 homeless households were placed into the private rented sector in 2010-11, compared to 221 in 2009-10. The drop in supply may be due to the fact that rents in the private sector have risen rapidly over the last 18 months because of increased demand from working households unable to obtain a mortgage under the current economic climate to purchase their own homes.

Of more immediate concern is the new 'single room' LHA rate for those aged under 35, the implementation date for which has been brought forward from April 2012 to January 2012. From then on, single people aged under 35 eligible will only receive a housing benefit amount equivalent to the rent for a shared room in a house, rather than that for a self-contained studio or 1-bed flat. This is likely to have an impact on homelessness amongst single people aged under 35.

There is also likely to be pressure on the level of supported housing for single homeless people due to the spending cuts brought in by the Government. The current provisions of supported housing in Merton are therefore subject to continual review.

For young single homeless people already living in supported accommodation, MYSHF has identified a need to increase move-on accommodation for those who are ready for independence. The government recognises the need to support this client group to live independently, and have applied an

exemption to the LHA ‘Shared Room Rate’ for those aged between 25 and 35 who have lived in supported accommodation for a minimum of 12 weeks, to enable them to access one-bed flats in the private rented sector.

Having gained access to move-on accommodation, many vulnerable people still need support to help them maintain their tenancies. People with mental health issues or entrenched rough sleepers often lack the skills to sustain their tenancies, therefore it is important that agencies work together to provide these clients with the necessary support to help prevent homelessness.

Providing support and assistance to rough sleepers will continue to be a challenge for Merton. The Mayor of London has set a target in the London Housing Strategy to end rough sleeping in the capital by the end of 2012, and has set up the London Delivery Board (LDB) to deliver the target. A 6-month ‘No Second Night Out’ (NSNO) pilot was launched in April 2011 in 10 London boroughs (Camden, Islington, City of London, Tower Hamlets, Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Brent & Southwark). This will be rolled out to outer London boroughs in the forthcoming year.

The project works to ensure that no new rough sleepers arriving in London will sleep out for a second night through rapid response, and to prevent someone new to rough sleeping from spiralling downwards into a long-term life on the streets and at high risk of crime, drug and alcohol addiction and serious illness. Assistance is provided through an Assessment Hub that is opened round the clock, helping rough sleepers to reconnect with their local area, and with family and support networks.

The LDB has now agreed to extend the NSNO project to March 2013, with the aim of extending this approach across London. The South-West London Sub Regional

Housing Partnership has also received c. £800k to fund rough sleepers initiatives in the 7 boroughs including Merton. These will present opportunities for Merton council and its partners to further develop support services for rough sleepers.

Many vulnerable families already living in permanent accommodation also often need support to manage their tenancies and remain in their homes. The council will need to work closer with local agencies to ensure that these families receive the necessary support that will prevent them from becoming homelessness.

Other issues that need addressing include youth offending, safeguarding and their interface with homelessness, and the lack of options for homeless people who have no recourse to public funds. Closer working relationships with other statutory services such as the council’s Children, Schools & Families Division will be key to improving outcomes for these very vulnerable client groups.

## **KEY PRIORITIES**

### **2.1 Prevention of homelessness**

#### ***Tenancy Rescue***

13.5% of homeless acceptances were due to termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) in 2010-11. The council therefore aims to maintain current supply in the private rented sector through a Tenancy Rescue Scheme. The scheme provides landlords with financial incentives at the point of tenancy renewals, to ensure they continue to rent their homes to households referred by the council at the reduced LHA rates.

#### ***Homelessness prevention measures***

Merton Council’s Housing Options Team will aim to maintain the current level of homelessness prevention against number of homelessness acceptances over the next 3 years, by continuing to apply

existing prevention measures, and by working with partners to develop other innovative measures.

***Prevent homelessness through floating support***

The council will work with our partners to ensure that vulnerable single people and families at risk of homelessness have access to the necessary support they need, such as the Vulnerable Families Floating Support Service offered by Grenfell Housing & Training and Commonsense Trust, and the floating support service provided by the Sutton & Merton Community Mental Health Teams for mental health clients.

***Maintain Low Number living in TA***

Merton Council aims to maintain the current low number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation, by adopting prevention measures, and by increasing placements into the private rented sector provided that the council were able to find homes that meet their composite needs.

***Improve Multi-Agency Working***

The council will continue to improve our working relationships with partners by further developing multi-agency working groups to help address issues faced by vulnerable single people and families affected by youth offending, safeguarding and other issues that interface with homelessness.

**2.2 Housing solutions through the private rented sector**

***Increase access to private rented homes***

The council aims to increase access to private rented accommodation in Merton for homelessness households through the well-established Rent Deposit Scheme. However, the supply of private rented homes available for households on benefits depends on housing market

factors such as the level of demand from working/professional households.

***Procurement of private rented homes through RPs***

The council will also discuss with RPs any opportunities for them to procure in the private rented properties to be let to homeless households referred by the council, for example, through the HALS Direct Scheme being run by Genesis Housing Association.

***Private Landlord Forum***

The council will continue to engage private landlords through our Private Landlord Forum, held twice a year to provide private landlords with information and advice and to listen to their concerns. Through this Forum, usually attended by over 40 private landlords, the council aims to secure further supply of private rented homes and also to increase the number of accredited landlords through the provision of Landlord Accreditation training. The Forum has helped 114 Merton landlords gain accreditation to date.

***Social Lettings Agency***

The council will explore the option of setting up a social lettings agency. There are already a large number of successful social lettings agencies set up by local authorities, RPs or homelessness charities. One example is the social lettings agency set up by Exeter Council. By offering a professional lettings service at below market rate, and utilising their in-house maintenance team, the council was able to grow their private rented supply.

**2.3 Increase move-on opportunities for the single homeless**

***Move-on quota for social housing***

The council provides long-term housing solutions for vulnerable people needing move-on accommodation from their stay in supported housing, through a quota system set out in its annual Allocations Strategy. In 2008-2011, 61 young people

living in supported accommodation were provided with permanent tenancies. In recognition of the need for more move-on accommodation for young people, the quota for this client group will be increased from 12 in 2011-12 to 20 in 2012-13.

### ***YMCA Redevelopment***

Plans are being put in place to redevelop the YMCA hostel on Wimbledon Broadway, with the aim of providing some second-stage supported accommodation alongside first-stage within the scheme. The YMCA is currently negotiating the Development Agreement with the developer Willmott Dixon, following a financial appraisal to ensure scheme viability. It is envisaged that a phased development programme would take place following the planning application stage in the autumn.

### ***Y:Cube Housing***

The YMCA is in discussion with the council to identify opportunities in Merton for the development of short-term affordable modular “Y:Cube” housing on public or private land that are temporarily vacant, which can be used as move-on accommodation for single people in housing need. There is significant interest from local, regional and national agencies as well as housing providers on adopting this innovative model. The YMCA has already secured a funding partner and the plan is to deliver the initial 3 schemes in the next 18 to 24 months.

### ***MASH (Merton Action for Single Homeless) Hostel***

Following a merger between MASH & SPEAR in June 2011, the council’s emergency direct-access homeless hostel is now managed by SPEAR, an organisation that has extensive experience in providing employment and skills advice as well as training for homeless people. SPEAR has a dedicated Skills Development Officer and will in the coming months be reconfiguring their service to develop a more strategic focus on

supporting young people. Through SPEAR, MASH residents will be equip with the life skills necessary to enable them to make a successful move to semi-supportive or independent accommodation. The government has also awarded £200k capital funding for the council to improve this hostel.

### ***Procurement in the private sector***

The council will work with Vision Housing to procure bedsits for single non-priority homeless people, and has arrangements in place with SPEAR to utilize their Oaks Foundation Resettlement Fund to pay rent guarantee insurance for landlords as an extra incentive for taking on homeless households, in addition to guaranteeing a rent deposit.

### ***Merton Young Single Homeless Forum (MYSHF) & Young Persons Nominations Panel (YPNP)***

The council will continue to work with providers of supported housing to assess the need of young single homeless people for either first-stage or second-stage supported housing, or permanent social rented homes, through the Young Persons Nominations Panel. The Panel will continue to work together to identify suitable supported housing placements for this client group.

The work of the YPNP will help inform the strategic work being undertaken by the Merton Young Single Homeless Forum (MYSHF). MYSHF, represented by providers and agencies working with young single homeless people including the YMCA & SPEAR, will focus on increasing employment and training, for instance through Notting Hill Housing Trust’s Construction Training Initiative, by undertaking a review of initiatives. MYSHF will work towards increasing move-on opportunities for young single homeless people living in supported housing.



***Reduce repeat or sustained homelessness***

To help reduce “repeat” or “sustained” homelessness amongst young people, it is necessary to provide them with tenancy support, and to help them develop a pathway to independence that involves access to training and employment. Working with MYSHF, the council will develop a Pathway Project for homeless young people affected by repeat or sustained homelessness.

***Maximising external funding opportunities***

The council and its partners will continue to work together to identify funding opportunities for local projects. For example, Grenfell Housing and SPEAR had developed complementary proposals to help non-priority homeless people (aged 18-34 year-olds and aged 35 and over respectively) secure a private tenancy and provide pre-tenancy training and support with benefits claims. Funding opportunities being explored include the government’s Homelessness Transition Fund, and Homelessness Prevention funding available through the South West Sub Regional Housing Partnership.

***Training for residents***

The YMCA has secured funding from the HCA’s Empty Homes initiative to bring empty homes back into use, and has partnered with Habitat for Humanity to deliver the improvement work as well as a programme that offers training and construction work opportunities for residents.

The YMCA is also in discussion with the South West London Sub Regional Housing Partnership with regards to delivering part of the sub-regional programme with the aim of increasing the number of properties for single homeless people.

**2.4 Support rough sleepers to find long-term housing solutions**

***Rough Sleepers Case Conference Group (RSCCG)***

The council will further develop our work with partner organisations through the Rough Sleepers Case Conference Group, to respond to government-led initiatives, such as the possible roll-out of the ‘No Second Night Out’ (NSNO) pilot across London. The group will also continue to build networks with support organisations in order to help meet rough sleepers’ housing and support needs, and to help them stay off the streets. Where appropriate, the group will also help rough sleepers reconnect to their local area.

***SWEP***

During the cold weather periods in early 2012 when Merton’s multi-agency Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was triggered, a total of 24 homeless people were referred to the council for placements. Learning from this experience, the council will work with the RSCCG to review the SWEP, and to increase awareness of movements of rough sleepers in and out of Merton, to help ensure that appropriate responses are developed to meet changing demands in future.

***Winter Night Shelter***

12 rough sleepers benefited from the Winter Night Shelter opened in Merton for over 4 weeks in January and February 2012. The Shelter was developed by the YMCA and involved 7 faith-organisations in the borough, each providing food and shelter for the rough sleepers for one night of each week. Following the successful pilot, the YMCA is now leading the Winter Night Shelter Consortium, and is planning to run a Shelter again for up to 3 months next winter. The consortium is also seeking participation from additional faith organisations so that more rough sleepers could be catered for.

### ***Homelessness Change Programme - Hostel Improvement***

Working with SPEAR, an organisation with years of experience supporting homeless persons that in June 2011 had merged with our local organisation Merton Action for Single Homeless (MASH), the council has successfully obtained £200k capital funding through the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) Homelessness Change Programme, to improve the council-owned direct-access hostel for homeless young people in Colliers Wood managed by SPEAR.

The Homelessness Change Programme is one of the key deliverables in the Mayor's London Housing Strategy. The funding will enable the council to turn the existing 9 bed-spaces in shared rooms into self-contained bedrooms, and to provide additional communal facilities such as an IT Suite. A Project Group has been set up to oversee the delivery of this programme, and to maximise potential opportunities such as the building of an Annexe to the main building that could offer an independent service to older rough sleepers.

As part of this programme, SPEAR will also put in place training and personal development sessions for young people to help them move towards independence. The council will also work closely with Homeless Link and the Greater London Authority, which has taken over the HCA's functions in London from April 2012, on this project.

### ***A10 Project***

The council will provide continuation funding for Faith in Action in 2012-13 to deliver the A10 Project through a bilingual project worker. The project worker will assist rough sleepers from A10 Ascension countries to obtain documents required for work, identify their housing and support needs and make appropriate referrals. The Project will also assist A10 rough sleepers

to reconnect with their home countries where appropriate.

### ***Faith-Based Group Co-ordination Project***

The council aims to broaden its network across London through the CLG's Faith-Based Group Co-ordination Project delivered by The Passage, a Catholic church organisation. Through this project, the council and our partners will build our capacity in responding to the need to help rough sleepers get off the streets and find longer-term solutions, including reconnections to their local areas.

### ***Outreach Project for Rough Sleepers***

The council is supporting SPEAR in its development of an Outreach Project for rough sleepers, and in its bid for sub-regional funding for the project. If successful, this project will add capacity to the existing outreach resources in the borough provided by London Street Rescue. The project will also link rough sleepers to SPEAR's existing training and development programme for single homeless people.

### ***Assessment Beds***

The South West London Sub Regional Housing Partnership has made available £35k of funding for each of the 7 boroughs in the sub region to purchase assessment beds for rough sleepers. This will enable Merton to place rough sleepers in a place for safety, allowing sufficient time for comprehensive assessments of the clients' housing, support and training needs to be undertaken.

**Objective 3 - Meeting the Needs of Vulnerable People & Minority Groups**

**BACKGROUND**

One of the key roles of local authorities is to provide assistance to the most vulnerable people in society, such as older people, people with physical disability, dementia, learning disability or mental health problem.

In 2001, 16.8% (31,515) of Merton’s total population were people aged 60 and over, and 13% were aged 65 and over (24,288 persons), of these 15% were ethnic minorities. 14,990 (19%) Merton households were pensioner households, and of these, almost 7 in 10 (68%) were lone pensioner households (10,119 households). Merton’s Housing Needs Survey published in 2005 showed that single pensioner households in Merton had increased to 10,442 by 2004, a 3% increase in 3 years.

67% of all older person households in Merton were owner-occupiers and 21% live in social rented housing. Another 10% were tenants in the private rented sector. More than 600 Merton residents aged 65 and over lived in residential care or nursing homes in 2001.

In Merton, it is estimated that in 2010 there were 9,873 adults (aged 18-64) with a moderate physical disability; 2,714 with a severe physical disability; 4,402 with a sensory impairment; 3,473 with learning disabilities; and 22,817 with mental health problems (POPPI & PANSI).

As of March 2010, the council funds approximately 1,200 units of supported accommodation for vulnerable client groups.

90% of Merton’s 1,333 designated older people’s homes are sheltered homes, with only 128 extra care homes which cater for older people with higher support and care needs. In addition, 385 vulnerable people receive floating support and 59 vulnerable clients are placed into ‘Shared Lives’ accommodation in the private sector, where support are provided by their landlords acting as their carers.

Older people make up the biggest client group living in supported housing (55%), followed by homeless people with support needs (14%) and people with mental health problems (9%). Other client groups living in supported accommodation include ex-offenders; people with physical disabilities and sensory impairment; people with learning disabilities; people with alcohol problems or HIV/AIDs, and people experiencing domestic violence.

Between 2008-2011, an additional 51 supported housing units were completed in Merton, including a 33-unit extra care housing scheme for older people; 15 units for people with learning disability at Cliveden Road, Durham Road and Meopham Road; and 4 new units for people with HIV/Aids. In addition, 9 move-on units were also secured for people with mental health problems who are ready for more independent living.

The council also provide permanent housing solutions for a number of vulnerable people needing move-on accommodation, through a annual quota system set out in our Allocations Policy, as shown in the table below.

Mental health	11
Learning disabilities	8
Substance Misuse	2
Young people / move-on	12
Ex offenders	2
Children leaving care	11
Children special	5
Total	51

The council's Adult Social Care teams provided support to 1,674 people aged 65 and over between 2008-2011, to enable them to live independently at home. The council also works closely with other statutory agencies and voluntary sector organisations to provide low-level support that promote independence living. Over a three-year period, the following outcomes were achieved:

- 95% of OT equipment delivered within 7 days
- 181 clients assisted in home improvement
- 1,772 handypersons jobs completed
- 34 loft clearance completed
- 170 home safety checks completed
- Funded a pilot garden clearance project
- Home Visiting Schemes - funded an additional 100+ households to access grants, energy schemes and have benefits checks
- Set up Housing Advice Network & provide talks and training for advice workers
- Annual Energy Advice Days

The council also administers grants and support other initiatives that help improve the condition and energy efficiency of housing, targeting vulnerable client groups.

- Approved 156 disabled facilities grants (DFG) worth £1m & 93 small repairs grant (c. £500k) between 2008-2011
- 178 Coldbusters grant totalling £604k approved in 2009-11, and 247 (£1m) approved in 2006-09
- Provided advice to nearly 3,000 older people on repairs & grants
- c. 2,000 households benefited from grant work

In relation to the needs of minority client groups, the council is reviewing the needs of the BME community in Merton. Following the successful completion of Merton's Ethnic Minority Housing Strategy in 2006, the council continues to work with

partners to implement an annual Action Plan. Outcomes achieved through this work included the development of a sheltered housing scheme for African/Caribbean elders; a homelessness prevention BME video project involving young people undertaking peer research; a Peer Education programme targeting Merton schools in deprived areas; and a subsequent drop in the proportion of BME representation amongst homeless applicants. However, with a rise in homelessness, there is evidence that the proportion of BME homeless applicants is increasing again.

Following the completion of a Pan London Gypsies & Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) in 2008, the Mayor of London is now seeking additional local evidence from boroughs to inform pitch targets. This approach is set out in the recently published government document on Planning for Travellers Site.

The council works closely with Planning colleagues and partners such as the Sutton Traveller's Education Service; Merton Priority Homes; the Health Service and the Police through a Gypsies & Travellers Group with users representation. The group has developed a draft Gypsies & Travellers Strategy covering not just housing issues, but also health, education, community safety etc. A Protocol on Unauthorised Encampments for partners has also been signed off by the Merton Partnership in 2010, and it was reviewed in 2011.

The council also worked closely with Merton Priority Homes, the managing agent of the council-owned Brickfield Road Caravan Site, to implement Section 318 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 by the statutory deadline of 28 May 2011, by providing residents of the site with a Written Statement to ensure that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the MHA 1983. Section 318 extends the definition of a protected site in the

Mobile Homes Act 1983 to include local authority owned Gypsy & Traveller site, bringing the rights and responsibilities of residents living on LA sites into line with those in other park home sites. A statutory Written Statement was issued to residents of the Brickfield Road Caravan Site in April 2011 to inform them of their new rights and responsibilities.

## **KEY CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES**

The council faces the challenge of meeting the needs of an ageing population in Merton. Population projection shows that older people aged 65 and over in Merton will see a 22% (5,200 households) increase between 2011 to 2025, with the over 85 age group increasing by 34%. The projected 30% increase in the 65-69 age-group is above the London average increase of 34%. The number of older people with illnesses and disabilities is also projected to increase over the next 5 years (Source: POPPI):

- People aged 65 and over with a limiting long-term illness to increase by 23% from 10,841 to 13,294, and will make up 46.5% of this age-group
- For people aged 85 and over, as high as 70% will have a limiting long-term illness
- People aged 65 and over with dementia increase by 25% from 1,812 to 2,259
- People aged 65 and over with learning disability to increase by 24% from 488 to 603

There are over 600 older person households currently on Merton's Housing Register, of which nearly 500 do not own or rent their own home, so there is a clear need to increase the provision of affordable designated older people's housing for renting.

It is also necessary to increase housing choice for older people who are owner-occupiers, as 67% of all older people households in Merton are owner-occupiers, but at present, 79% of designated older people homes are for social rent, with only 21% catering for older owner-occupiers. We also know that in Merton, there are fewer extra care homes and leasehold sheltered homes per 1,000 pensioner households compared to the London average (EAC Database 2010). The 'Pantiles' extra care scheme completed in 2009 included 10 shared ownership homes (33%) that cater for owner-occupiers.

Increasing the availability of attractive and well-designed older people's homes will also encourage under-occupiers to downsize. At the time of the Census 2001, 65% of Merton households were under-occupying their homes. In the social housing sector, encouraging under-occupiers to downsize helps release much-needed larger accommodation for families in housing need. An estimated 30%-35% of social housing tenants are under-occupiers.

This means that at least 3,500 households living in the social rented sector under-occupying their homes in Merton, many of these are older people households. In 2008-11, there were a total of 53 under-occupation moves for social tenants in Merton. This shows that a lot more will need to be done to encourage more under-occupiers to move to smaller homes. It is therefore important that smaller-sized homes should be maximised within the affordable housing new build programme.

The number of adults with disabilities is also projected to increase between 2010 and 2015:

- People with a physical disability to increase by 560 or 5%
- Young adults aged 25-34 predicted to have a learning disability set to

rise by 1,076 or 8% from 2010 to 1,163 in 2015

- Adults (aged 18-64) with a learning disability to increase by 213 or 6% to 3,686
- People with a mental health problem to rise by 1,352 or 6% from 2010 to 24,169 in 2015.

There is also a need to provide more supported living options for people with physical and / or learning disabilities, and people with mental health problems. Historically, a higher proportion of Merton expenditure goes towards residential care for adults with physical disabilities and learning disabilities. More than half (51%) of the 600 adults with a learning disability aged 18 and over registered with the council had to rely on residential accommodation in 2007 ('Fit for the Future in Merton' 2007), with only 8% living independently and 41% lived with their families.

With more and more people with a learning disability living longer, families and carers are less likely to be willing or able to take on a lifetime of commitment of care. There are also more single parent families who cannot care for their child due to work commitments. Although more provisions for these client groups have since been developed,

There is also a need to focus on prevention. Merton's Joint Local Adult Services Commissioning Strategy 2010-2013 sets out the case for a shift in resources to prevention and help improve health and well-being of older people and other clients with disabilities, and supported housing plays an important role in delaying or preventing the needs for residential or nursing care.

For clients who have gained the necessary independent-living skills while living in supported housing, more move-on accommodation and owner-occupation

options will need to be identified or developed.

Given the limited build capacity, we will need to prioritise the type of housing for older and vulnerable people that is most needed when planning for new provisions. Merton already has an above London average proportion of social rented sheltered housing per 1,000 pensioner households, while the provision of leasehold sheltered schemes as well as extra care housing scheme are below the London average.

With the projected increase in older people with limiting long-term illness, dementia and learning disability, as well as an increase in lone pensioner households, we need more housing that will meet the changing needs of the population. On the one hand, housing needs to play a part in promoting the independence and well-being of older people and people with learning disability, helping to prevent or delay the need for more intensive support and care, while on the other hand also offering non-institutionalised home for life for many older and other vulnerable people who may otherwise require residential or nursing care.

The extra care housing model fulfils both these functions and caters for a much wider range of needs than the traditional sheltered housing model, through its design, layout, facilities, and the support and care services provided. It is recognised by the Department of Health as a model of housing that "promotes well-being, choice, dignity and quality of life for older and other vulnerable people with disabilities and long-term conditions".

However, the same issues of viability and affordability relating to general needs housing also apply to supported housing schemes though, therefore cross-subsidies and contributions from developers, RPs and the council are likely to be necessary.

As well as the issues concerning capital funding, the viability and affordability of these schemes are also dependent on revenue funding sources. The public funding for the care and support is undergoing significant changes, with the implementation of Personal Budget and Direct Payment, the introduction GP Commissioning, and plans to reform how care and support should be paid for in future.

The Commission on Funding of Care and Support set up by the government in late 2010 has examined the funding streams via adult social care; the NHS and the benefits system, and has published its report in July 2011 on how to achieve an affordable and sustainable funding system for care and support, both in the homes and other settings. The report recommends that lifetime contribution to adult social care costs should be capped at £35k, with means tested support for those with assets of below £100k. However, the government has yet to announce their responses to these recommendations.

The Department for Work and Pensions has also consulted on proposed changes in the way housing benefit assists those living in supported housing in the social and voluntary sector, through their consultation paper "Housing Benefit Reform – Supported Housing". Details of the changes are only just emerging and these need to be fully understood to help inform our Housing Strategy.

Vulnerable people are also particularly at risk of fuel poverty. Building Research Establishment carried out a research which showed 5% of households in Merton (c.4,000) spent more than 10% of their income on heating, therefore within the government's definition of fuel poverty. Wards most affected are Wimbledon Park (7%), Graveney (7%), Trinity (6%), Dundonald (6%) and Hillside (5%). With reduction to grant funding such as the Small Repairs Grant (SRG) and the

closing of the Coldbusters scheme, local authorities will need to identify new funding sources that can provide assistance to households who are 'fuel poor'.

There is also evidence that vulnerable people in Merton are more likely to be affected by excess winter deaths. Between 2006-09, there was on average 101 excess winter deaths in Merton per annum. Further breakdown shows an average of 90 deaths per month in the summer, but 115 deaths per month in the winter, which is higher than the number of deaths in Sutton in the corresponding periods. As such, the council's Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has tasked the Health and Warmth Partnership to develop measures to address this.

## KEY PRIORITIES

### 3.1 More supported housing provision for vulnerable people

#### *Redevelopment of MPH sheltered schemes*

The council is working with MPH on its project to redevelop 3 existing sheltered homes to eradicate shared facilities and provide fully self-contained homes for rent. The redevelopment of Gresham House, The Oaks and Doliffe Close will result in better-designed homes with modern facilities that have incorporated the key design principles as recommended in the HCA's "HAPPI" report. However, it will not result in many additional homes, although many existing residents will be taking up re-housing options offered by MPH and will not return to the new schemes, hence there will be re-housing opportunities for many older and vulnerable households.

#### *Provisions for young adults with learning disability*

The MPH sheltered housing redevelopment programme will also deliver a separate wing for young adults with

learning disabilities at Doliffe Close. In addition, the council will work with providers to develop another 8 1-bed units for people in learning disability, and to identify further development opportunities for new schemes.

### ***Provisions for people with mental health issues***

The council will work with the PCT and the Community Mental Health Teams to ensure clients with mental health issues can access the right support. Support available includes a high level supported scheme for 15 forensic mental health people at Burntwood Villas, a training recovery college at Springfield Hospital to help clients gain skills and qualification, and Community Mental Health Team support workers who help clients acquire independent-living skills.

### ***Additional supply of supported housing***

The council will seek further opportunities to increase the supply of supported housing, such as extra care housing, that will meet the needs of older people as well as other client groups such as people with dementia, learning disabilities or mental health issues under the age of 55, to include rented homes, shared ownership/shared equity and private leasehold sales, where necessary with contributions from the council to ensure viability and affordability. This will help meet the needs of older and vulnerable people, and help address under-occupation.

### ***Shared Lives***

The council is further developing its Shared Lives service through an Optimisation Programme to provide supported living for more vulnerable people and to help them gain more independent living skills, as the 'Shared Lives' service has proved to be a cost effective way in supporting people towards independent living. The council will seek to move residential care homes residents

who will benefit from more independent living to the 'Shared Lives' scheme.

### ***Explore other revenue funding options***

The council will work with partners to identify any revenue funding opportunities for supported housing that may be offered through government policy changes such as the changes in housing benefit for people living in supported housing, GP commissioning, personal budget & direct payment, and any changes that the government may bring in with regards to funding care and support.

The council will also examine other market options such as 'Immediate Care Plans' that can be arranged through private insurance companies. For a fixed sum paid upfront, depending on the person's level of needs, the plan would cover a person's care costs for life. This option is available to older people with sizeable amount of savings, or those who are willing to sell their homes to release funds for the plan.

## **3.2 Increase housing options for older owner-occupiers**

### ***Rental Model for Owner-Occupiers***

Older owner-occupiers with care and support needs have in the past been accepted onto extra care housing schemes in the past on a case-by-case basis. The council aims to make sheltered or extra care accommodation owned by RPs available to more owner-occupiers who need them but have difficulties accessing private sector options. We will seek to develop a rental model for older owner-occupiers with care and support needs, where these clients would be let a home in an extra care housing scheme.

In return, the clients would allow the council to let their homes to homeless households through the Rent Deposit Scheme, for the duration for their stay in the extra care homes, The owner would enter into an Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement with the households nominated



by the council, and could use the rents collected to pay for their housing and care costs.

### ***Address under-occupation and improve health***

This initiative should help release much needed larger homes for those in housing need as many older people are under-occupiers, and would provide housing solutions for those who are too frail to deal with repairs and maintenance of their large homes, and/or lack sufficient income to keep their homes warm. This option should also help improve the health of older people by moving them into a modern and well-designed scheme, as we know that 52% of vulnerable households in the private sector are living in 'non-decent' homes, often due to a lack of thermal comfort.

### **3.3 Support vulnerable households to live independently in their own homes**

#### ***Move-on quota for social housing***

The council provides long-term housing solutions for vulnerable people needing move-on accommodation from their stay in supported housing, through a quota system set out in its annual Allocations Strategy. The council will increase the quota for vulnerable client groups including people with mental health, learning disabilities and substance misuse issues in 2012-2013, and will review the quota annually.

#### ***Lifetime Homes & Wheelchair Standard***

The council seeks to increase the supply of new homes that can cater for the needs of people as they age and those with physical disabilities. In line with the London Housing Strategy and Merton's Core Strategy, the council seeks all new homes to be built to Lifetime Homes Standard, and 10% should be wheelchair accessible subject to suitability of sites.

### ***Services to support people to live at home***

The council's Adult Social Care teams will continue to provide care and support for vulnerable people, including support by the Occupational Therapy Service (OT); the MASCOT Telecare community alarm service; and community-based services such as home care, professional support, day care and direct payment etc.

### ***Grant resources to adaptations***

The council will continue to maximise spend of grant funding such as Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), and will assist RPs with the Landlord Application Procedures, where RPs could make collective applications on behalf of their tenants for funding without the need for individual means testing. Work that has been initiated included application by Haig Homes to access 70k of CLG funding for adaptation for ex-service personnel, and Wandle Housing Association's plan to apply for landlord funding to adapt homes for rehabilitation, thus helping to reduce hospital bed blocking.

### ***Adaptations for MPH Tenants with Disabilities***

MPH will undertake adaptations for tenants with physical disabilities to make their homes more suitable to their needs, with a £500k budget set aside for this purpose as part of the Stock Transfer Agreement.

### ***Address Excess Winter Deaths***

Health and Warmth Partnership is working with stakeholders to review activities in the winter period with the aim of reducing excess winter deaths through the production of a Winter Plan, and reporting to the council's Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

### ***Gardening Service***

The council has provided Age UK Merton with seed funding to provide a Gardening Service for older and vulnerable people in Merton, assisting at least 100 households per annum. The council will work with Age

UK Merton to fully develop this project with the aim of moving it on to a self-financing model by 2015.

### **3.4 Identify housing and support needs of minority groups**

#### ***Ensure synergy with other local BME Strategic Plans***

The council will review the housing and support needs of minority client groups, such as the needs of the BME community, working with other agencies and organisation, to ensure synergy with their BME strategies. For example, the council will work closely with the Merton Unity Network, to seek added value from their recently launched BME Strategy.

#### ***Target homelessness initiatives to BME communities***

As households from BME communities are over-represented in homelessness applications and acceptances (57% applicants compared to 32% in the population in 2012), the council will target BME communities when delivering all homelessness initiatives set out under Objective 2.

#### ***Ensure Fair Access to Services***

The council undertakes annual equality monitoring of all housing services and projects, to include homeless cases, housing advice, nominations to general needs housing, nominations to supported housing through panels (young persons, mental health & older people), and projects such as the A10 Project and Gardening Project. The monitoring includes analysis of take-up and outcomes by ethnicity, age and disability, as well as by gender where appropriate, in order to identify any gaps in take-up or access to services by different client groups, and to make adjustment where necessary to ensure fair access for all.

#### ***Publish Gypsies & Travellers Strategy***

Having held a successful research event involving over 150 people from the Gypsy

& Traveller community, the council will work with representatives of the community to finalise the draft Gypsies & Travellers Strategy, the publication of which had been deferred pending the findings of this research. The Strategy will take into account the Government's recent consultation on "A Better Deal for Mobile Home Owners" (April 2012), and the findings of the Ministerial Working Group's report on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers.

#### ***Review of Protocol of Unauthorised Encampment***

Although there may not be an immediate need to review the 2010 Protocol on Unauthorised Encampment, given that a light-touch reviewed was completed in 2011, it is likely that the Protocol will need to be reviewed again within the period covered by this Strategy, i.e. before March 2015.

#### ***New Agreement for Caravan Site Residents***

Having issued a Written Statement to residents of the Brickfield Road caravan Site, to inform them of their rights and responsibilities following a change in the law, Merton council will work with MPH, to consult residents of the Brickfield Road Caravan Site on the development of a new 'Tenancy' agreement that will reflect their additional rights and responsibilities brought about by the extension of the Mobile Homes Act 1983 to council-owned caravan sites.

**Objective 4 – Regenerating Housing  
& Shaping Neighbourhoods**

**BACKGROUND**

**Physical Regeneration**

In March 2010, Merton Council transferred its housing stock of over 6,000 homes to Merton Priory Homes (MPH), a newly created subsidiary of Circle (then known as Circle Anglia), following a ‘yes’ vote by tenants. The transfer helped bring about a programme of investment to improve the condition of stock previously owned by the council, which makes up about 58% of all social housing stock in Merton. Properties will be improved to the Merton Standard, which is over and above the Decent Homes standard, developed with the help of the Residents.

MPH also planned to improve the attractiveness and facilities on the 22 key estates through a £1.25m two-year investment programme, and through an ongoing £325,000 neighbourhood improvement annual budget. MPH has consulted tenants and residents on the improvements they want for their estates through a Consultative Group. The priorities identified by tenants are included in the major works program to be carried out over a 2-year period.

The delivery of new build housing schemes also contributes to the regeneration of an area. A total of 438 affordable homes were built in Merton between 2008-2011, and an additional 348 affordable homes were completed in 2011-12 due to the development of 2 large sites, Windmill and Brenley, both located in the less affluent part of East Merton. This means a total of 786 affordable homes were built over the last 4 years.

**Private Sector House Condition**

Local authority strategic housing role plays a key part in maintaining standards in the private sector. The 2004 Housing Act reflects this and brought in a range of measures for local authorities to enforce standard and protect the most vulnerable residents. The main elements of the Act include a new Health & Housing Rating System (HHSRS), which replaces the housing fitness standard, powers to require landlords to take action to rectify hazards in their property; mandatory licensing for larger higher-risk HMOs and discretionary powers to licence smaller HMOs. It is estimated that there are about 5,000 HMOs in Merton, although the number of verifiable HMOs is around 123. During 2008-2011, the council had issued a total of 64 HMO Licenses.

A BRE Survey on private sector condition completed in 2008 showed that around 38% (24,100) of Merton’s private sector homes do not meet the decent homes standard. The main reason for homes not meeting the standard was inadequate thermal comfort. This was the case in 66% of properties. Of the non-decent private sector homes in Merton, private rented dwellings are most likely to be non-decent homes, especially ones that do not have modern facilities.

**Vulnerable Households and Non Decent Homes**

The survey also showed that vulnerable households are more likely to be living in homes that do not meet the decent homes standard. There are nearly 7,000 vulnerable households occupying private sector homes, of which 3,360 (48%) live in homes that met the decent homes standard, and 3,640 (52%) live in non-decent homes. 486 private sector homes occupied by vulnerable people were made ‘decent’ through direct action by the council over a 3-year period. We achieved this through targeting grants, such as Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Small Repairs Grant, to vulnerable people and

focused on making homes more energy efficient.

### **Empty Homes**

According to Council Tax records, there are 1,550 empty homes in the private sector in Merton (April 2011). The records show that of these 1,003 have been vacant for more than 6 months. The council has started an audit programme of all empty homes, and more than 600 have already been audited. The majority of these were found to be occupied, and only a third (about 200 homes) were found to have been vacant for more than 6 months. The council was awarded Empty Homes Grant funding through the sub-regional Targeted Funding Stream, and to date around £300k have been given to owners of long-term empty homes to bring their properties up to decent-homes standard, in return for letting the homes to households in need nominated by the council for 3 years

### **Energy efficiency**

Private sector housing stock in Merton has an average SAP rating of 52 (rating of 1-100 used to measure energy efficiency, with the rating of 1 being the poorest), close to the London average rating of 53. However, 16% private sector homes in Merton have a SAP rating below 35, the third poorest figure amongst London boroughs. Social housing stock in Merton has a better average of 66, although the average rating for ex-council stock now transferred to Merton Priory Homes is slightly lower at 60.

One initiative that has result in improved energy efficiency in social housing stock is the creation of a Low Carbon Zone area around Phipps Bridge, covering a small number of social housing (around 1,000 homes) on the Cherry Tree Estate and in New Close, one of 10 Low Carbon Zones across London. The initiative, which has just been successfully completed, aimed to reduce the area's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by over 20% as well as reducing energy bills, by inspiring residents to lead a greener life

and installing energy saving devices in homes, businesses and schools through advice, support and training.

The London-wide “NEW” scheme which aims to support households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, was also operating in the Cricket Green and Pollards Hill wards of Merton, although not including the Low Carbon Zone at Phipps Bridge in the Cricket Green ward. The Gravney ward, which has a high proportion of private housing, was also covered by the scheme. Energy experts working on the scheme planned to visit 1,600 homes in these 3 Merton wards to advise on behavioral changes and to provide easy installations, such as free energy meters and shower heads, as well as loft insulations which are provided free to those aged 70 and over.

Merton, along with other boroughs in SW London, was awarded funding from the London Housing Board for energy efficiency grants. A total of 425 vulnerable households benefited from loft and cavity wall insulation through the Coldbusters scheme between 2006-11 amounting to £1.5m resources harnessed from the government. Other energy efficiency schemes supported by the council included Warm Front, Heat Streets (replaced by Warm Zones). The council also commissioned the Creative Environment Network (CEN) to run Home Visiting services to provide energy advice and assistance to people in their own home. 340 households have been visited by CEN in 2008-2011, and received help to access free and discounted energy efficiency grants.

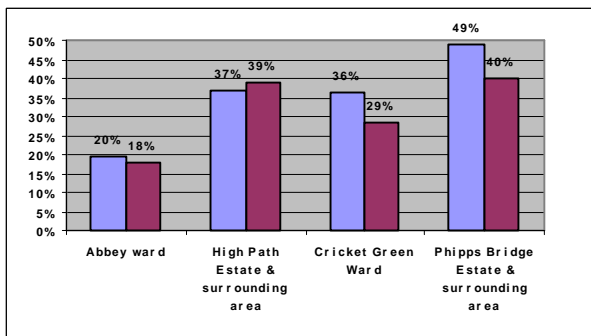
### **Socio-economic regeneration**

Small area analysis undertaken by the council on areas such as Phipps Bridge and High Path, where a high proportion of social housing are located, show particularly high level of socio-economic deprivation. These areas are found in the most deprived wards in Merton, but the

level of deprivation within these neighbourhoods is well above the average of those wards.

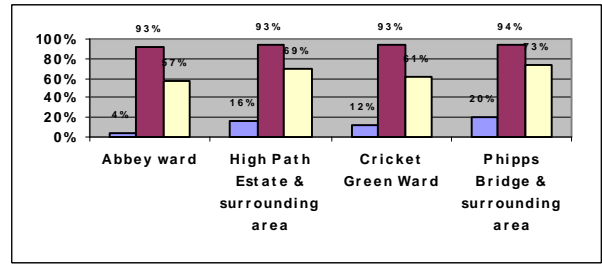
There is a high level of family poverty in these areas, with a high proportion of households with dependent children and lone-parent households with no adult in employment:

- Nearly half (49%) of the households in the Phipps Bridge area and 37% of households in the High Path area have dependent children<sup>3</sup>, much higher than the averages for the 2 wards and the borough average of 29%
- 4 in 10 of households with dependent in the Phipps Bridge and High Path areas have no adult in employment, compared to averages for the 2 wards and the borough average of 16%



% Households with dependent children  
 % Households with dependent children with no adult in employment

19.6% of households in Phipps Bridge and its surrounding area and 16.3% in the High Path area were lone parent households, compared to the borough average of 6%. Of these, 73% and 69% in the Phipps Bridge and High Path areas respectively were not in employment, compared to the borough average of 51%.



% Lone Parent Households  
 % Female Lone Parent Households  
 % Lone Parent Households not working

In order to help social housing residents overcome worklessness in these deprived areas, the council organized a Jobs Fair in 2009, bringing employers and training institutions, as well as advice agencies, to the Phipps Bridge estate, one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Merton. Over 200 residents from the estate attended the Fair with a number securing employment and training opportunities. In 2010, the council hosted its first annual Housing Fayre, targeting residents from across the borough, providing them with a range of housing related advice and assistance. Employment and training opportunities

Many registered providers (RPs) operating in Merton have strong track records in developing community development initiatives, particularly larger RPs such as L&Q, Moat Housing Group, Wandle Housing Association and Thames Valley Housing Association.

Merton Priory Homes is delivering a £1m community fund between 2010 and 2015 to build the capacity of local community groups for the benefit of its residents and the wider community. The Neighbourhood Regeneration Strategy was refreshed in April 2012.

Merton Partnership's Sustainable Communities Housing Sub Group, reporting to Merton Partnership's Sustainable Communities & Transport Thematic Group, has developed a Sustainability Index to monitor outcomes of community development initiatives, focusing on deprived neighbourhoods,

<sup>3</sup> A dependent child is a person aged 0-15 in a household (whether or not in a family) or aged 16-18 in full-time education and living in a family with his or her parent(s). This is a change from the 1991 definition which was a person aged 0-15 in a household or a person aged 16-18, never married, in full-time education and economically inactive.

which include Phipps Bridge, Pollards Hill and Plough Lane.

Diversifying tenures in deprived areas such as increasing the number of low-cost homes for sale, resulting more working households moving in these areas, often contributes to their socio-economic regeneration. Developing LCHO such as shared ownership in these areas also results in more affordable housing options for households on middle and low income. The Windmill and Brenley Road housing developments that include shared-ownership options in the Mitcham area are good examples of this.

## **KEY CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES**

Opportunities for physical regeneration through new build housing is limited in Merton because of the lack of large sites for market and affordable housing development, and a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identified a capacity for only 320 additional homes per annum over the next 10 years, to include both market and affordable housing.

The present uncertain economic climate, along with the limited build capacity, has also had an impact of housing completions in Merton, with affordable housing completions dropping to only 50 homes in 2009-10 from 327 homes in 2008-09, before increasing to 121 in 2010-11. There was a large number of affordable housing completions in 2011-12, with a total of 348 homes built, of which 235 were social rented homes and 113 were for shared-ownership sales. It should be noted that this large number of completions was the result of 2 large sites - Windmill and Brenley in Mitcham, becoming available for development last year. We are not currently aware of any other large site that will be available for housing development in the near future, although the 'Call for

Sites' work of the Planning Division may present new opportunities.

CO2 emissions from domestic housing account for c.27% of the UK's total CO2 emissions (Energy Saving Trust). With limited opportunity to re-develop existing housing in Merton, housing providers will need to look at retrofitting options to help improve the energy efficiency of their stock, thus helping to reduce CO2 emissions.

The government's spending cut also has a big impact on energy efficiency measure, with the Coldbusters scheme now closed after 6 years, and the council has seen huge reduction to our Small Repairs grant funding. It is therefore essential that the council develops innovative approaches.

Identifying long-term empty homes (vacant for more than 6 months) and to identify the best course of actions for bringing these empty homes back into use, have been a key priority for the council for many years and continues to be the case. Measures available include the award of Empty Homes Grant to homeowners to bring their empty properties back into use, and the option to utilise these homes for households in housing needs through the Rent Deposit Scheme.

The Welfare Reform and Universal Credit to be introduced by the Government in 2013 is likely to reduce the amount of housing benefit available to low-income households, particularly larger households, due to the benefits cap of £350 for single households and £500 for families. This will affect many social housing tenants. It is therefore of paramount importance that physical regeneration is linked to socio-economic regeneration to ensure that new developments will result in sustainable communities. The challenge for the council and our RP partners and other stakeholder organisations is to improve joint working and pool resources to help reduce the high level of deprivation and family poverty in

areas with high proportion of social housing.

## **KEY PRIORITIES**

### **4.1 Contribute to regeneration through the improvement of housing stock condition**

#### ***Decent Homes programme for housing stock transferred to MPH***

MPH will deliver its promise to bring 100% of housing stock transferred to their ownership from the council in March 2010, to 'Beyond Decent Homes' standard.

#### ***Identifying opportunities for improving social housing stock***

The Housing division will continue to work with the 'Future of Merton' project and with RPs to bring social housing in Merton up to a decent standard either through refurbishment of existing homes or re-development. Aligning with Merton's emerging Regeneration Delivery Plan, this will include opportunities identified through Masterplans for the Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon areas, those identified in the London Plan as Area for Intensification, and any opportunities that arise may through Morden town centre and other priority areas.

MPH will deliver its promise to achieve the Government's 'decent Homes' Standard by 2015 and carry out all improvements to its homes to the higher Merton Standard.

#### ***Identifying additional housing development opportunities***

Increase supply of new build affordable housing is key to meeting the high level of housing needs in Merton. However, the new HCA 'Affordable Rent' funding (2012-2015) for RPs was allocated on a Pan London basis, therefore it is not possible to accurately predict the level of affordable housing development opportunities in Merton over the next 3 years. The council will however actively negotiate with RPs

that have signed development contracts with the HCA (now managed by the GLA) to develop homes in Merton, ensuring that the proposed 'Affordable Rent' reflects local housing market rents while taking into consideration the viability of schemes. The council will also actively identify housing development opportunities through the Planning Division's 'Call for Sites' work.

#### ***Improve private sector house condition***

In relation to the private sector, the council will continue to use statutory powers to improve the condition of private sector housing in Merton, through the removal of hazards, enforcement actions and the licensing of HMOs.

#### ***Bringing empty homes into use***

The council will continue with the active identification of empty homes that have been vacant for more than 6 months, and will utilise part of the £2.4m sub-regional funding provided by the HCA to bring some of these empty homes back into use. In addition, the council will also seek opportunities to work with RPs and other organisations e.g. YMCA, that have been granted HCA Empty Homes funding to turn more empty homes into accommodation for people in housing need.

### **4.2 Innovative solutions to improve energy efficiency of housing stock**

#### ***Improve sustainability of new homes***

The council's Planning Policy stipulates that all new homes in Merton should be developed to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. The council will seek a higher level of sustainability in new schemes where possible, and has already been successful in negotiating 2 housing schemes to Level 4 of the Code – A Wandle Housing Association affordable housing scheme of 9 houses, and the Rowan High School scheme with a mix of market and affordable housing, to come on stream in 2013-14.

### ***Energy Efficiency Initiatives***

Other initiatives being developed include the use of the reduced Small Repairs Grant to help maintain the London Warm Zones initiatives, to be supplemented by household contributions. Merton has also been given £178k to run a new 2-year scheme where every home can have an energy and a water system assessment, as part of a Pan London scheme.

### ***Revolving Loan for Home Improvement & Energy Efficiency***

The council is also introducing a “Revolving Loan”, a pool of money totaling £100k available which is available as a loan at below market interest rate, for households who are not eligible for the Small Repairs Grant, but need small domestic repairs such as rewiring, damp proofing, solid wall insulation, provision of energy efficiency etc.

### ***Low Carbon Initiatives***

Following the successful completion of the Low Carbon Zone initiative, which focused on reducing CO2 emissions from social housing stock in and around the Phipps Bridge area, the council and its partners on the Health & Warmth Partnership will contribute to the development of future schemes in Merton.

### ***‘Green’ Private Landlords***

The council will also explore the development of a ‘Green Landlord’ initiative through our Private Landlord Forum, with the aim of improving the energy efficiency of private rented accommodation. The idea is to develop incentives to encourage landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, either by using their own resources or through government initiatives such as the Green Deal.

## **4.3 Socio-economic regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods**

### ***Reduce Family Poverty***

The council will seek to ensure that RPs assist their tenants to manage their budgets and rent payments through income maximisation, in particular following the introduction of the Universal Credit. This objective will be set out in Merton’s Tenancy Strategy.

### ***Neighbourhood Renewal***

The council will seek to ensure that new housing development will be sustainable, by linking physical regeneration with the improvement of socio-economic conditions. Merton Priory Homes provides neighbourhood regeneration services for wards in the east of the borough. Four neighbourhood regeneration partnerships have been established: Mitcham Central, Morden, Merton Central and East Mitcham. The neighbourhood regeneration partnerships have budgets to support projects in their area that meet their agreed criteria and priorities.

### ***Review of community development initiatives***

The council will work with partners through the Sustainable Communities Housing Sub Group, to develop a strategic overview of the effectiveness of community development and funding initiatives put in place by the council and RPs, and to assess progress against initiatives put in place to help reduce socio-economic deprivation such as unemployment and family poverty.

### ***Maximise resources through joint working***

The council will also look to add value by dovetailing the partnership’s work with community development initiatives undertaken by RPs. This will include the following:

- MPH’s Community & Economic Development Plan (2010-2015),



which sets out actions to improve the life chances of its residents and the wider community

- Moat Housing Group's Residents Involvement Strategy and a Socio-Economic Strategy for the Pollards Hill estate.

This is one of the priority areas identified by the Sub Group, and a case study will be conducted for the area using the Sustainability Index, and the mapping work on community projects to be undertaken by Moat.

***Widening engagement with partners***

Over the next few years, the Housing Sub Group will look to widen engagement with other Merton Thematic Partnerships, including the Children's Trust, Safer Merton, and the Healthier Citizens partnerships, to broaden our understanding of linkages between housing, education, health and crime, in order to inform the development of joint initiatives to bring about socio-economic regeneration on deprived social housing estates.

No	Action	Monitoring Timescale	Lead	Success measure / Desired outcome
<b>Priority 1.1</b>				
<b>Develop policy responses to legislative changes that are appropriate for Merton</b>				
1.11	Undertake consultation with RPs and other relevant organisations on the key objectives of Merton's Tenancy Strategy	By June 2012	Housing Strategy	Gain good understanding of RPs' perspective on the council's Tenancy Strategy objectives, to help ensure that they are deliverable
1.12	Publish Merton's Tenancy Strategy	By January 2013	Housing Strategy	Tenancy Strategy published and sent to all RPs operating in the borough
1.13	Negotiate with RPs with regards to 'Affordable Rent' relet conversions	6-monthly	Housing Supply & Development	Ensure rent levels of relet conversions do not exceed 65%, and family-sized homes are not included
1.14	Complete review of the council's Allocations Policy	By July 2012	Housing Needs & Enabling	Seek to provide working households on low income are given additional priorities
1.15	Work with MPH to explore how replacement homes following 'additional' right-to-buy sales can be delivered	Annually	MPH / MPH Relationship Manager	Build replacement homes for 'additional' right-to-sales to maintain social housing supply
1.16	Map RPs tenants' panels and their planned response to changes to complaints	6-monthly	Housing Strategy / RPs	Gain understanding of the impact of changes in the Localism Act RE complaints on the local authority
1.17	Produce guidance document for councillor on handling complaints from social housing tenants	By March 2013	Housing Strategy	Ensure councillors adopt a consistent approach in dealing with complaints from social housing tenants in their capacity as a "designated" person
1.18	Undertake Impact Analysis of Universal Credit & Welfare Reform	By March 2013	Housing Strategy	Gain better understanding of the impact of Welfare Reform on low-income households' ability to access affordable housing solutions
<b>Priority 1.2</b>				
<b>Increase supply of new homes that are affordable to Merton residents</b>				
1.21	Seek to achieve 40% of affordable housing across all new housing development schemes in the borough.	Annually	Housing Supply & Development	Maximise the development of affordable housing in the borough
1.22	Proposals of rent levels exceeding 65% of market rent will not be supported, and larger 'Affordable Rent' homes will be sought at below 65% market rent level.	Annually	Housing Supply & Development	Ensure new 'Affordable Rent' homes are indeed affordable to households on low-income
1.23	Seek a mix of tenure on new housing schemes	Annually	Housing Supply & Development	Help develop balanced and diverse communities through mixed tenures
1.24	Seek to develop some larger homes at 'social rent'	Annually	Housing Supply & Development	Increase supply of affordable homes for low-income families
1.25	Ensure a proportion of	Annually	Housing	Increase the number of

No	Action	Monitoring Timescale	Lead	Success measure / Desired outcome
	intermediate housing are affordable to middle income Merton residents, using the Median household income figure for assessments		Supply & Development	purchases of new shared-ownership homes built in the borough by Merton residents
1.26	Negotiate 'Affordable Rent' levels of new build homes with developers and RPs, based on most up-to-date local market rents data, taking into account the findings of the Impact Analysis on Universal Credit.	Annually	Housing Supply & Development	Ensure new 'Affordable Rent' homes are affordable to local people
1.27	Produce regular briefings of up-to-date house prices, rents and income down to local area level where available.	Quarterly	Housing Strategy	Inform negotiations with developers and RPs to ensure new 'Affordable Rent' homes and intermediate housing are affordable to local people
1.28	Implement Bed-Size Mix Policy	Annually	Housing Supply & Development / Planning	Deliver new housing that meet the needs of local people
1.29	Use of "Cash-in-Lieu" to support much needed new development	Annually	Housing Supply & Development / Planning	Enable the delivery of much needed homes such as larger social rent homes or supported housing that would otherwise not be financially viable
<b>Priority 2.1</b>				
<b>Prevention of homelessness</b>				
2.11	Maintain current private sector rented supply through and to reduce the percentage of homelessness acceptance due to termination of AST	6-monthly	Housing Options	Run a Tenancy Rescue Scheme to increase tenancy renewals for Rent Deposit Scheme placements
2.12	Continue to assist households at risk of homelessness through prevention measures	Annually	Housing Options	Achieve 500 homelessness prevention cases per annum
2.13	Minimise the number of homeless households placed in temporary accommodation	6-monthly	Housing Needs & Enabling	To have no more than 87 homeless households placed in temporary accommodation at any one time
2.14	Develop closer working relationships with other agencies with regards to housing issues related to children, families and young people	Annually	Housing Needs & Enabling / Education & Youth Inclusion	
<b>Priority 2.2</b>				
<b>Increase access to the private rented sector</b>				
2.21	Continue to run the successful Rent Deposit	Annually	Housing Supply &	Increase the number of private rented homes at LHA

No	Action	Monitoring Timescale	Lead	Success measure / Desired outcome
	Scheme and to identify and negotiate further supply of affordable private rented homes		Development	rates that are available to Merton homeless households
2.22	Work with RPs to identify opportunities for them to procure private sector properties to be let to homeless households	Annually	Housing Supply & Development	Increase the number of RPs managed private rented homes to meet housing needs in Merton
2.23	Engage private landlords and to organise Accreditation training through the Private Landlord Forum, to be held twice a year	6-monthly	Housing Strategy	Maintain level of participation from existing members of the Forum and to engage new landlords, and to increase the number of accredited landlords
2.24	Learn from best practice and initiatives in other parts of the UK in growing the supply of private rented homes for households in housing need	By March 2015	Housing Strategy	Explore the feasibility of setting up a social lettings agency for the Merton area
<b>Priority 2.3</b>				
<b>Increase move-on opportunities for the single homeless</b>				
2.31	Increase move-on quota for young people in Allocations Strategy for 2012-13, and to review this for subsequent years with the aim of maintain the increased quota or further increase it	Annually	Housing Needs & Enabling / Housing Strategy	Increase long-term move-on provisions for young homeless persons
2.31	Finalise plans to redevelop the YMCA hostel in Wimbledon Broadway, and to complete redevelopment once planning permission has been granted	By March 2015	YMCA / Planning / Housing Needs & Enabling	Provide quality supported accommodation for young single homeless people and to increase the number of second-stage supported housing
2.32	Explore the feasibility of delivering short-term modular Y:Cube housing for single people in housing need in Merton	By March 2014	YMCA / Planning / Housing Needs & Enabling	Increase the number of move-on accommodation for young single homeless people living in supported housing who are ready for more independent living
2.33	Work with Vision Housing to procure bedsits in the private sector for single non-priority homeless people, supported by a rent deposit and where available, rent guarantee insurance	6-monthly	Housing Needs & Enabling / Vision Housing / SPEAR	Increase the supply of private rented homes for single non-priority homeless people
2.34	Support the work of the Young Persons Nominations Panel in assessing the housing and support need of young single homeless people and make appropriate referrals through	6-monthly	Housing Strategy / YPNP	Ensure appropriate referrals are made to either first-stage or second-stage accommodation, or to permanent social rented homes

No	Action	Monitoring Timescale	Lead	Success measure / Desired outcome
	monthly meetings			
2.35	Undertake a review of employment and training initiatives being run by housing providers and training organisations and to refer young single homeless people to appropriate schemes	6-monthly	Housing Strategy / MYSHF	Increase the number of young single homeless people signing up to employment and training initiatives
2.36	Work with MYSHF to develop a Pathway Project by assisting young homeless people affected by "repeat" or "sustained" homelessness on a pathway to independence through training and work placement	By March 2014	Housing Strategy / MYSHF	Reduce "repeat" or "sustained" homelessness amongst young people, particularly ethnic minority young people
2.37	Work with partners to identify funding opportunities and to submit bids to run homelessness projects	Annually	Housing Strategy	Increase resources available for homelessness initiatives in Merton
2.38	Utilise Empty Homes funding to bring empty homes back into use and to provide single homeless people with training and construction work opportunities	By March 2015	YMCA	Reduce number of empty homes, and to provide training and employment opportunities for single homeless people
<b>Priority 2.4</b>				
<b>Support rough sleepers to find long-term housing solutions</b>				
2.41	Work with partners through the Rough Sleepers Case Conference Group through 6-weekly meetings to assist rough sleepers to stay off the streets, and to respond to Government initiatives	6-monthly	Housing Strategy / RSCCG	Assist more rough sleepers to stay off the streets and find longer-term solutions
2.42	Review the SWEP annually with the RSCCG	Annually	Housing Strategy / RSCCG	Put in place appropriate responses from various agencies to meet changing demand
2.43	Engage more faith organisations and volunteers in providing a Winter Night Shelter for rough sleepers	By March 2013	YMCA / Winter Night Shelter Consortium	Increase emergency provisions for rough sleepers during cold weather periods
2.44	Improve MASH hostel for young single homeless people as part of the GLA's Homelessness Change Programme	By March 2014	Housing Strategy / SPEAR	Improve quality of hostel accommodation and increase communal facilities
2.45	Provide training and personal development sessions for young people as part of the GLA's Homelessness Change Programme	Annually	SPEAR	Assist more young single homeless people to move towards independence

No	Action	Monitoring Timescale	Lead	Success measure / Desired outcome
2.46	Provide assistance to homeless persons from A10 countries through the "A10 Project"	6-monthly	Faith in Action	More homeless persons from A10 countries are able to access work, as well as housing and support service
2.47	Broaden existing network of organisations that assist rough sleepers by developing links through the CLG's Faith-Based Group Co-ordination Project run by The Passage	Annually	Housing Strategy / The Passage	Increase the capacity of the council and the RSCCG in finding longer-term solutions for rough sleepers
2.48	Develop outreach project and obtain funding from the South West Sub Regional Housing Partnership	6-monthly	SPEAR	More rough sleepers will be linked up with statutory and voluntary services and receive appropriate assistance
2.49	Provide assessment beds for rough sleepers using sub-regional funding	6-monthly	Housing Needs & Enabling	More comprehensive assessments of rough sleepers need are undertaken
<b>Priority 3.1</b>				
<b>More supported housing provision for vulnerable people</b>				
3.11	Deliver 3 new housing schemes as part of the sheltered housing development programme	By March 2014	MPH	Increase the quality of accommodation for older people with additional support and facilities available
3.12	Deliver an independent wing at Doliffe Close for young adults with learning disabilities	By March 2014	MPH	Increase housing provisions for young adults with learning disabilities
3.13	Seek further opportunities for new build supported housing, including extra care housing for rent, shared ownership or leasehold sales, where necessary with contributions from the council e.g. Cash-in-Lieu funding	By March 2015	Housing Supply & Development / Housing Strategy / Planning	Increase housing options and choice for older people, people with dementia, learning disabilities or mental health issues across all tenures
3.14	Increase the number of clients placed with 'Shared Lives' carers through the Optimisation programme	Annually	Shared Lives / Adult Social Care	Provide supported living for more vulnerable adults and to help them gain independent living skills
3.15	Identify revenue funding opportunities for supported housing by analysing details of government policy changes and other market options	By March 2013	Adults Social Care / Housing Strategy	Improve understanding of revenue funding options to help inform and plan future provisions
<b>Priority 3.2</b>				
<b>Increase housing options for older owner occupiers</b>				
3.21	Introduce a Rental Scheme that enables owner-occupiers with support	Annually	Housing Needs & Enabling /	Improve housing options for older owner-occupiers with support needs

No	Action	Monitoring Timescale	Lead	Success measure / Desired outcome
	needs who are under-occupying their own homes to move into sheltered or extra care accommodation, and in return their homes will be let to families in housing need		Housing Strategy	
3.22	Address under-occupation and help improve help of older people through the Owner-Occupier Rental Scheme	Annually	Housing Needs & Enabling / Housing Strategy	Reduce under-occupation and increase supply of family-sized homes for households in housing need, and improve health of older people living in non-decent homes in the private sector
<b>Priority 3.3</b>				
<b>Support vulnerable households to live independently in their own homes</b>				
3.31	The council will increase the move-on quota for vulnerable clients in supported housing from 51 to 75 in 2012-13, and to review the quota in subsequent years	Annually	Housing Needs & Enabling	Increase move-on opportunities for vulnerable people living in supported housing, and free up supported housing for others in need
3.32	Negotiate with developers for 100% of new homes to be built to Lifetime Homes standard and 10% to be wheelchair accessible subject to the suitability of sites	Annually	Planning / Housing Supply & Development	Increase the supply of housing suitable for people with physical disabilities and can meet people's changing needs over time
3.33	Provide support services such as OT, MASCOT Telecare & community alarm, home care, day care, direct payment etc.	Annually	Adult Social Care	Enable more vulnerable people to remain living independently in their own homes
3.34	Develop winter activities and a Winter Plan to address excess winter deaths	Annually	Health & Warmth Partnership / Housing Strategy	Improve health of older and vulnerable people and help reduce excess deaths in winter
3.35	Undertake adaptation to homes of tenants with physical disabilities to meet their needs	Annually	MPH	Provide tenants with physical disabilities with a home that is suitable for their needs
3.36	Work with Age UK Merton to further develop the Gardening Project into a self-financing project, and to assist at least 100 vulnerable households per annum until March 2015	By March 2015	Age UK Merton / Housing Strategy	Provide a support service to enable vulnerable households to remain in their own homes, and to ensure the long-term viability of the project
<b>Priority 3.4</b>				
<b>Identify and meet housing and support needs of minority groups</b>				
3.41	Energy synergy between the Housing Strategy and other	Annually	Housing Strategy	Improve joint working with local BME organisations and

No	Action	Monitoring Timescale	Lead	Success measure / Desired outcome
	local BME plans such as the Merton Unity Network BME Strategic Plan			improve effectiveness of actions
3.42	Target all homelessness initiatives to BME communities	Annually	Housing Strategy	Address over-representation of BME communities in homelessness applications & acceptances
3.43	Undertakes annual equality monitoring of all housing services, to include homeless cases, housing advice, nominations to general needs housing, nominations to supported housing through panels, as well as projects such as the A10 Project and the Gardening Project,	Annually	Housing Strategy	Ensure fair access to services by all client groups, through the identification of any gaps in take-up or access to services by different client groups, and by making adjustments to services where necessary
3.44	Finalise and publish Gypsies & Travellers Strategy taking into account local research and latest government reports	By March 2013	Housing Strategy / Gypsies & Travellers Officers Group	Clearly set out the commitment of the council and its partners in addressing the needs of the Gypsies & Travellers community
3.45	Review Protocol on Unauthorised Encampments	By March 2015	Environment & Regeneration / Housing Strategy	Update protocol to ensure that it is up-to-date with latest legislative requirements, and that it reflects the latest best practice and lessons learnt from its implementation
3.46	Develop new agreement for Brickfield Road Caravan Site residents following changes in the law	By March 2013	Housing Strategy / MPH	Produce a new agreement that clearly reflects the new rights and responsibilities of residents following a change in the law
<b>Priority 4.1</b>				
<b>Contribute to regeneration through the improvement of housing stock condition</b>				
4.11	Improve housing stock owned by the council prior to the 2010 stock transfer to beyond Decent Homes standard	By March 2015	MPH	Improve over 6,000 social rented homes and improve the quality of lives of MPH tenants
4.12	Identify opportunities through the 'Future of Merton' for improving social housing stock through either refurbishment or redevelopment	By March 2015	Housing Supply & Development / Planning Division	Improve social housing stock condition in Merton
4.13	Work with RPs contracted to the HCA/GLA to develop 'Affordable Rent' homes to identify opportunities for developing new homes in Merton	Annually	Housing Supply & Development	Increase affordable housing



No	Action	Monitoring Timescale	Lead	Success measure / Desired outcome
4.14	Identify additional housing development opportunities through the 'Call for Sites' work	By March 2013	Planning Division / Housing Supply & Development	Increase housing building capacity in Merton
4.15	Use statutory powers to remove hazards in private housing, licence HMOs, and to undertake enforcement actions where necessary	Annually	Environmental Health	Improve condition of private sector housing stock
4.16	Make use of new HCA Empty Homes funding to increase the number of empty homes brought back into use	Annually	Environmental Health	Increase supply of housing to include additional homes for households in housing need
<b>Priority 4.2</b>				
<b>Innovative solutions to improve energy efficiency of housing stock</b>				
4.21	Negotiate new housing developments to achieve over and above the Code for Sustainable Homes required in Planning policy	Annually	Planning Division / Housing Supply & Development	Improve sustainability of new homes, help reduce carbon emissions and help reduce energy & utility bills for the occupiers
4.22	Work with housing providers to maximise new funding opportunities such as ECO and the "Green Deal"	Annually	Housing Strategy / Climate Change	Increase funding resources available to improve energy efficiency of housing stock
4.23	Maintain the London Warm Zone initiatives by utilising Small Repairs Grant	Annually	Environmental Health	Enable more households to benefit from energy efficiency measures such as loft insulation
4.24	Undertake energy and water system assessments	By March 2014	Environmental Health	Assist more households in reducing energy and water usage and reduce fuel and utility bills
4.25	Provide loan for households to undertake home improvement and energy efficiency measures through a £100k 'Revolving' pot	Annually	Environmental Health	Enable more households to benefit from energy efficiency measures such as loft insulation
4.26	Develop future Low Carbon schemes in Merton learning from the scheme successfully completed at Phipps Bridge	By March 2015	Planning Division / Housing Strategy	Reduce CO2 emissions from social housing stock
4.27	Explore the development of a 'Green Landlord' initiative with incentive to encourage landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their homes by taking up government initiative such as the 'Green Deal'	By March 2015	Housing Strategy / Private Landlord Forum	Improve energy efficiency of private rented homes and reduce fuel bills for tenants
<b>Priority 4.3</b>				
<b>Socio-economic regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods</b>				
4.31	Include an objective in the	Annually	Housing	Help reduce Family Poverty

No	Action	Monitoring Timescale	Lead	Success measure / Desired outcome
	Tenancy Strategy for RPs to assist households to budget, particularly following the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013.		Strategy / RPs	amongst social tenants
4.32	Provide 'Community Fund' for local organisations to run projects that help improve the quality of lives of people in the most deprived areas	Annually	MPH	Contribute to Neighbourhood Renewal through the reduction of deprivation in local areas
4.33	Review local community development initiatives undertaken by RPs and voluntary sector organisations through the Sustainable Communities Housing Sub Group	Annually	Housing Strategy / Sustainable Communities Housing Sub Group	Improve understanding of outcomes of local community development initiatives, to help inform development of future initiatives
4.34	Establish links with local plans put in place by RPs and voluntary sector organisations to facilitate joint work	Annually	Housing Strategy / Sustainable Communities Housing Sub Group	Maximise resources to help reduce socio-economic deprivation such as unemployment and family poverty
4.35	Widen engagement with a range of partners to broaden linkages between housing with education, employment, health and crime etc. and to develop more joined up solutions	Annually	Housing Strategy / Sustainable Communities Housing Sub Group	Improve collaboration between housing and other agencies to maximise resources for and effectiveness of measures to reduce socio-economic deprivations

## Request for document translation

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**Albanian**

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**Arabic**

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باللغة التي تتكلمها،الرجاء اختيار مربع اللغة المناسب،كتابة عنوانك ورقم التلفون في الجانب الايسر من اسفل الصفحة وارسال هذه الاستمارة الينا على العنوان الموجود في الاسفل .

**Bengali**

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের

কোন অংশ আপনার নিজের ভাষায় ব্যাখ্যা করতে চান, তাহলে ভাষার বাক্সে টিক দিন। আপনার ঠিকানা ও ফোন নম্বর নীচে বাম দিকের কোনায় লিখুন। নিম্নে প্রদত্ত আমাদের ঠিকানায় এই ফর্মটি ফিরিয়ে পাঠিয়ে দিন।

**Farsi**

اگر خواهان توضیح هر بخشی از این نوشته

به زبان خودتان هستید، لطفا جدول مقابل زبان را علامت بزنید. ادرس و شماره تلفن خود را در گوشه سمت چپ پایین بنویسید. این فرم را به ادرس ما که در پایین آمده است، پست کنید.

**French**

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**Polish**

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**Somali**

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**laguugu sharxo luqaddaada, fadlan sax ku calaamadee sanduuqa luqadda. Cinwaankaaga iyo lambarkaaga telefoonka ku qor koonaha hoose ee bidix. Foomkan noo soo celi adigoo isticmaalaya cinwaankayaga hoose.**

**Spanish**

Si necesita que cualquier parte de este documento

se explique en su idioma, le rogamos que marque la casilla de idiomas. Escriba su dirección y su número de teléfono en la parte de abajo a la izquierda. Envíenos este formulario a la dirección que se indica más abajo.

**Tamil**

**இந்தப் பத்திரத்தின்**

எந்தப் பகுதியும் உங்களின் மொழியில் விளக்கப்படுவதை நீங்கள் வேண்டினால், மொழிக்குரிய பெட்டியில் தயவுசெய்து அடையாளமிடவும். அடிப் பகுதி இடது பக்க மூலையில் உங்களின் முகவரியையும் தொலைபேசி இலக்கத்தையும் எழுதவும். கீழுள்ள எங்களின் முகவரியைப் பயன்படுத்தி, இந்தப் படிவத்தை எங்களுக்குத் திருப்பியனுப்பவும்.

**Urdu**

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تو براہ مہربانی زبان کے خانے میں صحیح کا نشان لگائیے پھر نیچے بائیں جانب دئیے گئے خانے میں اپنا پتہ اور ٹیلیفون نمبر درج کیجئے اور یہ فارم ہمیں نیچے دئیے گئے پتے پر بھیج دیجئے۔

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# Equality Impact Initial Assessment Form

<b>Division</b>	Community and Housing / Housing Division
<b>Name of assessor</b>	Angela Chu Housing Strategy Manager
<b>Date of assessment</b>	18th May 2012
<b>Title function/policy/service to be assessed</b>	Housing Strategy 2012-2015

<b>1. Describe the aims / objectives and purpose of the function or policy</b>	The Housing Strategy 2011-2015 outlines local housing needs and demand as well as housing supply, identify gaps in services and provisions, and set out how to make best use of scarce resources to meet needs.
<b>2. Are there any other functions, policies or services, which might be linked with this one</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Merton's Housing Strategy 2011-2015 is linked to other supporting strategies such as the Homelessness Strategy and Gypsies &amp; Travellers Strategy</li> <li>▪ The Housing Strategy also contributes to other local plans such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LDF Core Strategy</li> <li>▪ The Housing Strategy also links to the council's Allocations / Nominations Policy and the emerging Tenancy Strategy</li> <li>▪ It is a requirement in the GLA Act 2007 that local housing strategies of London boroughs must be in "General Conformity" with the London Housing Strategy</li> <li>▪ The Housing Strategy also takes into account proposals set out in the government's Housing Strategy "Laying the Foundation"</li> </ul>
<b>3. Who will benefit from this policy / service /function</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Merton residents in housing need such as homeless households or low and middle income households unable to afford market housing</li> <li>▪ Vulnerable people needing supported housing, move-on accommodation, or support to enable them to live independently</li> </ul>

## COMMUNITY AND HOUSING

<b>4. Who was consulted</b>	The LSG was consulted on the key issues and principles to be set out in this Strategy in July 2011. The Strategy was then released for public consultation through a Housing Conference attended by over 100 delegates in September 2011.
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	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neither	Reason / Comment / Evidence
<b>Age</b>	✓			<p>Objective 2 of the Strategy sets out priorities and actions that will have a positive impact on Young People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More move-on accommodation for young single homeless people through increased quota for permanent housing</li> <li>▪ Improvements of YMCA &amp; MASH hostels for young single homeless people</li> <li>▪ Pathway project to independence for young people affected by “repeat” or “sustained” homelessness.</li> </ul> <p>Objectives 3 &amp; 4 of the Strategy set out priorities and actions that will have a positive impact on Older People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More new build housing options for older people</li> <li>▪ Rental scheme for older owner-occupiers with support needs</li> <li>▪ Rental scheme for older owner-occupiers will contribute to improvement their health</li> <li>▪ Services to support older people to remain living in their own home.</li> <li>▪ Grant resources to install adaptations for older people with disabilities</li> <li>▪ Improving condition of homes to Decent Homes standard in the social and the private sector will help improve the health of older people</li> </ul>
<b>Disability</b>	✓			<p>Objective 3 of the Strategy sets out priorities and actions that will have a positive impact on People with Disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More supported housing provision for people with learning disabilities</li> <li>▪ Placements with ‘Shared Lives’ carers will provide supported living for people with learning disabilities and mental issues, and will help</li> </ul>

## COMMUNITY AND HOUSING

				<p>them gain independent living skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More move-on accommodation for people with special needs through increased quota for permanent housing</li> <li>▪ Services to support people with disabilities to remain living in their own home</li> <li>▪ More homes to be built to Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Accessible standard</li> </ul>
<b>Gender</b>		✓		The Housing Strategy does not contain initiatives or actions that target either male or female.
<b>Race</b>		✓		<p>Objectives 2, 3 &amp; 4 of the Strategy sets out priorities and actions that will have a positive impact on BME communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A specific actions to target all homelessness initiatives to BME communities as they are more likely to be in housing needs or be threatened with homelessness</li> <li>▪ The A10 Project will assist minority groups from Eastern European countries</li> <li>▪ Publication of Gypsies &amp; Travellers will benefit the whole of the Gypsy &amp; Traveller community in Merton</li> <li>▪ The development of new Agreement for the Caravan Site at Brickfield Road will benefit site residents</li> </ul>
<b>Religion / belief</b>			✓	No data is available to enable the analysis of possible impact of this Strategy on Religion and Belief
<b>Sexuality</b>			✓	No data is available to enable the analysis of possible impact of this Strategy on Sexuality
Please give a brief description of how this policy benefits the equality target groups identified in the above table ie promotes equality?		The Housing Strategy 2012-2015 helps promote equality through the specific objective developed to "Meet the needs of Vulnerable People and Minority Groups" (Objective 3). Priorities and actions are set out under this objective to improve services and provisions for these equality client groups. In addition, Objective 2 on "Preventing & Addressing Homelessness" also involves priorities and actions that will benefit young people and BME groups. Details on how this Strategy will benefit the equality target groups are set out above.		
If there is a negative impact on any equality target group, is the impact		No.		

**COMMUNITY AND HOUSING**

target group, is the impact intended or legal? <i>If no, then full Equality Impact Assessment should be completed.</i>	
What actions could be taken to amend the policy/service to minimise the low negative impact?	None required
If there is no evidence that the policy/service promotes equality, equal opportunities or improves relations within equality target groups, what amendments could be made to achieve this?	N/a

**Recommendation**

Full Equality Impact Assessment required:      No

Signed by Manager of assessor *SF Langley.*

Equality Group scrutiny date

Equality group recommendation



# *The Community Fund*



*Enhancing Life Chances*

## The Promise

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### **The Community Fund Promise:**

- £1 million over 5 years
- Ends in 2015
- To serve MPH residents and the communities they live in

### **Community Fund Grant Programmes:**

- Creating Sustainability
  - Annual Grant for up to 3 years
  - Grants available up to £10,000
- Empowering Communities
  - Small grants programme up to £3,000
  - Twice a year – May and September
- Legacy Programme
  - Working towards 2015

## **Community Fund Objectives**

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### **Developed with residents and stakeholders**

- Children and Young People
- Economic Well-Being
  - Jobs and Training
  - Financial Inclusion
- Local Environment
- Community Cohesion or “Bringing People Together”
- Neighbourhood Working
- Health and Well-Being

## **Our Grants Process**

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- Application forms submitted
- Forms are scored by a panel
- Additional financial and criteria checks
- Recommendations are made to our Community Development Steering Group, made up of:
  - MPH residents
  - MPH Board Member
  - Council / Health Sector reps
  - MVSC rep
  - Other voluntary sector reps
- Larger grants also go to our board for final decision

## The Support We Offer

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- Pre-application support by phone, email or one-to-one meetings:
  - To develop partnerships for un-established groups
  - To go over project plans for applications
  - To go through draft applications
  - To ensure all supplementary paperwork meets requirements
  - To signpost for more in-depth advice/support
- 45 Groups given pre-application support since March 2012
- Workshops in October
- Pre-grant meetings / further support for successful groups
- Lessons learnt for unsuccessful groups

## Community Fund Numbers

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### **Since 2010, the Community Fund has:**

- Given 80 Grants to 68 different organisations
- 25% were to BAME specific organisations
- 12% were to Disability specific organisations

### **In 2011/12:**

- 6572 people accessed Community Funded projects
- From our end-of-year monitoring:
  - 41% of participants indicated their ethnicity to be BAME
  - 10% of participants said they had a disability
  - 31% of participants were children or young people
  - 28% of participants were older people

## **Committee: Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations**

**Date: 26 September 2012**

Agenda item

Wards: All

### **Subject: Implementing Merton's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Strategic Plan 2010-13**

Lead officer: Kate Martyn, Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

Lead Partner: Merton Unity Network (on behalf of Merton's BME Forum)

Lead member: Councillor Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

Contact person(s): Patricia Anderson Merton Unity Network

#### **Recommendations:**

#### **That the Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations:**

- A. Considers the selection of key priorities and actions (and for regular monitoring) for 2012-13 at Appendix A.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To inform members of the progress made with the development and implementation of the BAME Strategic Plan (2010-13) and to seek their consideration of the priority actions for 2012-13, which are submitted below. Members are reminded that the process for consideration can involve using workshops on occasions, to gain a better awareness or understanding of the issues and how they should be resolved. It will also give JCC members the opportunity to take a lead in choosing the priorities they need to call in for consideration and in discussion with key officers of the Council and other partner agencies.

#### **2 DETAILS**

##### **2.1 Background & Developments**

- 2.1.1 The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) received its first report on the refresh of Merton's BAME Strategic Plan (2010-2013) on the 21 October 2009, from which followed a series of consultation events and individual interviews held with partners from the voluntary, statutory and private sectors. The BAME Strategic Plan 2010-13, which is recorded as a deliverable within Merton's Community Plan 2009-19, was successfully launched on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010 in the presence of approximately 120 people. Those present included partners from local, sub-regional and regional organisations within the voluntary, statutory and private sectors. Those participating included the Minister for Communities and Local Government and local lead politicians such as the Leader of Merton Council (Chair of Merton Partnership).

2.1.2 The Executive Board of Merton Partnership, at its meeting on 25 January 2011, and again on the 24 July 2012, agreed that it would play a key leadership (and coordinating) role in ensuring that the priorities of the BAME Plan becomes an integral part of the policy decisions that are carried out on its behalf by the thematic partnership boards. To date, each of the four thematic partnership boards have received, annually, a set of priority actions, from the BAME Strategic Plan, for consideration and to effectively implement alongside each Board's priorities and targets; using the delivery structures and processes which currently exist. The report to the Executive Board on 24 July 2012 is attached at Annex A.

### 2.1.3 Key Priorities for 2012-13

One of the key outcomes of the Seminar on the 26 March 2012 was to identify a new set of key priorities for 2012-13 for each of the BAME Plan's theme – see Appendix A. In addition, a few new emerging issues, which were discussed at the Seminar, are appended for information, where applicable. The main purpose of Appendix A is to focus on the key priority issues that have been selected; using what lessons have been learned (from the previous years) to make significant progress and the journey more meaningful and worthwhile. Most of the key priorities within the BAME Strategic Plan can be achieved through improved access to information and services that support community development and cohesion on multiple levels. The priority actions will therefore require regular monitoring to measure progress and ensure development. **Progress/achievements will need to be substantiated (ie clear evidence of activity) for the result in the 'traffic lights' rating to be revised.**

The Joint Consultative Committee is therefore requested to consider the selection of key priorities and actions for 2012-12 from the full list attached at Appendix A.

3.0 **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED** – None at this stage.

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

The Council's financial constraints may impact on the implementation of the BAME Strategic Plan.

### 5.0 **LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

The BAME Strategic Plan will contribute to the Council meeting its legal obligations relating to equalities and localism legislation.

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

The BAME Strategic Plan contributes to the Council meeting its statutory duties set out in the Corporate Equality Scheme and the proposed requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### 7.0 **CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

None specific

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

There is a risk to the Council's reputation if it fails to support the Plan.

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

Annex A – Report to the Executive Board of Merton Partnership – 24 July 2012  
Appendix A - BAME Strategic Plan Progress Schedule at March 2012.

### 10.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Merton's BAME Strategic Plan 2010-13 (Summary)

[http://www.mertonunitynetwork.org.uk/Docs/MUN%20summary\\_final%20\(190111\).pdf](http://www.mertonunitynetwork.org.uk/Docs/MUN%20summary_final%20(190111).pdf)



**Merton Partnership Executive Board****Date: 24 July 2012****SUBJECT: Merton's BAME Strategic Plan (2010-13)****LEAD CONTACT: Patricia Anderson, Director Merton Unity Network; Chair Merton BME Forum****RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That the Executive Board notes progress with the BAME Strategic Plan (at Appendix B) and receive the priority actions for 2012-13 (Appendix A); subject to further consideration by the respective Thematic Boards.**

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to galvanise Merton Partnership pledged support in the delivery of Merton's BAME Strategic Plan as a deliverable in the Community Plan 2009-19; in ensuring that the key priority needs and actions identified receive the attention necessary to bring about meaningful engagement and change. It is essential that Merton Partnership (through its Executive Board) continues to play a key leadership (and coordinating) role in ensuring that the priorities of the BAME Plan becomes an integral part of the policy decisions that are carried out on its behalf by the thematic partnership boards.
- 1.2 The report and appendices are hereby presented to the Executive Board for information regarding progress, since the Plan was reviewed and successfully launched in December 2010 – see Appendix B. The report also includes a new set of key priority actions for 2012-13, which were selected from several themes of the BAME Strategic Plan; by key partners at the BME Forum's Seminar - '**Influencing Change: Empowering Communities**' – which was held on 26 March 2012. See Appendix A.

**2. BACKGROUND DETAILS**

- 2.1 The BAME Strategic Plan 2010-13, was successfully launched on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010 at which approximately 120 people attended. Those present included partners from local, sub-regional and regional organisations within the voluntary, statutory and private sectors. Those participating, and who offered their support, included the Minister for Communities and Local Government and local lead politicians such as the Leader of Merton Council (Chair of Merton Partnership) and Chief Executive Officers of .

**2.2 Key Priorities**

- 2.2.1 It is generally recognised that most of the key priorities within the BAME Strategic Plan can be achieved through meaningful partnership and community engagement; with access to appropriate information and services which support community development and cohesion on multiple levels. Support is therefore continually being sought in the implementation of the priorities within the Plan. The level of support received can be evidenced by partners' response to the key priorities of the BAME Plan through the respective thematic Merton Partnership Boards and their engagement with the annual seminars of the BME Forum.

### 3. General Overview on Progress with the BAME Strategic Plan since its re-launch

Over the last 18 months (since the Plan was re-launched), the responses from key partners to the priority actions within the BAME Plan have in the main been positive, though it took quite a while to obtain the 'buy in', at an operational level; an understanding of this new concept of a community led Plan; through which communities are empowered to effectively engage in helping to shape the processes and outcomes for their development and general well being".

An assessment of partners' responses to the priority actions were undertaken throughout February and March 2012 - using 'traffic lights' signal (green, red and amber) to indicate progress – See Appendix B. These assessments were also considered by key partners (in respect of each Thematic Board priorities) and were the topic of debate at the seminar ('Influencing Change: Empowering Communities') on the 26 March 2012.

Some of the priority actions with red signals have been carried forward into 2012-13 and others will be followed through with the respective thematic Boards.

### 4. Key Priorities for 2012-13

One of the key outcomes of the Seminar on the 26 March 2012 was to identify a new set of key priorities for 2012-13 for each of the BAME Plan's theme – see Appendix A. These priorities need to be considered in more depth by the relevant thematic groups and partners. In addition, a few new emerging issues, which were discussed at the Seminar, are appended for information, where applicable. The main purpose of Appendix A is to focus on the key priority issues that have been selected; using what lessons have been learned (from the previous years) to make significant progress and the journey more meaningful and worthwhile.

## 5. **APPENDICES & BACKGROUND PAPERS**

5.1 Appendix A - Key Priority Actions for 2012-13.

5.2 Appendix B - Progress on the BAME Strategic Plan – March 2012

5.3 Merton's BAME Strategic Plan 2010-13 <http://www.mertonunitynetwork.org.uk/bme.html>

## 6. **AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

6.1 Patricia Anderson, Director, Merton Unity Network; Vestry Hall, 336-338 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3UD. E-mail: [patricia@mertonunitynetwork.org.uk](mailto:patricia@mertonunitynetwork.org.uk); Tel/Fax: 0208 648 9551/07903843135

1.1 The Partnership Processes and Structures identified for the delivery of Merton’s BAME Strategic Plan (2010-13) are as follows:

Related Themes and Processes – Cross-cutting issues		Structures/Partnership	Frequency of engagement/ consideration
<b>BAME Plan priority themes</b>	<b>MP Community Plan priority themes &amp; partnerships</b>		
➤ Children and Young People	} > Children Trust Board	1. BME Forum	Quarterly (and when necessary), also annual reviews
➤ Education and Learning.	} > Sustainable Communities & Transport	2. Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minority Organisations	Quarterly
➤ Unemployment, Skills and Enterprise	} > Safer & Stronger Communities	3. Corporate Equalities Group	Quarterly
➤ Housing and Regeneration	} > Health & Well-being	4. Thematic Partnership Boards	Bi-annual and as deemed necessary
➤ Safer, Stronger and Sustainable Older People		5. Executive Board (Merton Partnership)	Annual review and as deemed necessary
➤ Health and Well-being			

1.2 The partnership structures used in aligning the priority actions of the BAME Strategic Plan are outlined as follows and in the templates/appendices attached:

Structures/Partnership	Related Priority Actions within the BAME Plan
1. Children Trust Board	Appendices A & B – sections: 1 & 5 of the BAME Plan
2. Sustainable Communities & Transport Partnership Board	Appendices A & B – sections: 1, 3 & 6 of the BAME Plan
3. Health & Well-being Board (incl. older people)	Appendices A & B – sections: 2 & 4 of the BAME Plan
4. Safer & Stronger Partnership Board	Appendices A & B – section 7 – of the BAME Plan

1.3 The Key Priorities for 2012- 13 are attached at Appendix A, below

The following priorities were selected for 2012-13 and include some that have emerged or extended over the last year. Progress on these priorities will be reported by autumn 2012

1. Children and Young People & Education and Learning themes	BAME Plan Reference	Comments
<p><b>a. Increase positive representation and action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target greater recruitment and support for BAME teachers.</li> <li>• Cultural competency training for teachers, governors to include:</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.1.8 (ii) b</b> <b>6.1.8 9ii) c</b></p>	<p>Recruitment and support for teachers are still felt to be a priority which needs to be carried forward to 2012/13 – See Appendix B for related response to these thematic issues - pages 10-18.</p>
<p><b>b. Improve educational attainment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguard and increase materials for BAME teaching resources.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Materials to be readily available in libraries and be improved in schools.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Improve outcomes for black boys – extensive further conversation needed.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do more with black entrepreneurs, inspirational figures, role models.</li> <li>○ Arrange work experience/ shadowing/ mentoring</li> <li>○ Find other groups for boys to become involved in, other than negative peer groups available in their local community.</li> <li>○ BTEG have put a call out for mentors – MUN to tap into the project.</li> <li>○ Create opportunities for women and girls from some communities to act as role models in schools.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>6.1.8 (iii) c-i</b></p>	<p>These priorities remain a high priority and a partnership discussion is welcomed (on receipt of relevant CSF data) as to how these issues can be dealt with, effectively.</p>
<p><b>c. Improve access to learning, information support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase cross borough communication, e.g. share information re what is going on in other boroughs, what works etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.1.8 (iv) b,c</b></p>	
<p><b>d. Bridging gap between generations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Development of opportunities for intergenerational support (see also Older People and Intergenerational work). Joint bids to be established.</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.5.8 (i) b</b></p>	
<p><b>e. Involvement in democratic process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Young people to be more involved in decision making</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.5.8 (iii) b,c</b></p>	
<p><b>f. Remove barriers to development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improve cohesion between young people from different cultures and backgrounds.</li> <li>○ Issues of growing up and development work needs to be done in areas of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LAN</li> <li>○ Domestic violence</li> <li>○ Sexual behaviour</li> <li>○ Effective use of role modelling</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>6.5.8 (iv) b,c,f</b></p>	

2. Housing and Regeneration, Unemployment, Skills and Enterprise	BAME Plan Reference	Comments
<p><b>(a) Housing</b></p> <p><b>(i) Improved access to housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Improve housing advice.</li> <li>(ii) Provide outreach services e.g. going into schools to inform young people about long term housing solutions.</li> <li>(iii) Increase cross borough cooperation to increase housing solutions [large waiting list in Merton, shortage of brown field sites].</li> <li>(iv) Bring current stock up to standard.</li> </ul> <p><b>(b) Unemployment, skills and enterprise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Improve information, support and guidance.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Need more comparative data to analyse success - successful outcomes, evidence such as numbers of business start ups, what works what doesn't, what projects have been commissioned, what funding has been delivered.</li> <li>o Improve information re what training etc is available locally.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(ii) Improve promotion and value of volunteering as a route to employment [need to ensure employers and job centre value and respect volunteering experience]</li> <li>(iii) Establish an intergenerational employment legacy, linking young people with those leaving the workforce to enable transfer of skills and knowledge</li> <li>(iv) Acknowledgement of voluntary sector as a real source for employment. [Expectation is generally for services and activities to be delivered voluntarily.]</li> <li>(v) Create opportunities for work experience                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Encouragement to work in voluntary sector.</li> <li>o Tangible job outcomes. Need to see "off- flows from benefit/ Job Centre Plus"</li> <li>o ESOL classes</li> <li>o Provide comprehensive information of availability of ESOL classes to be shared with BAME organisations [feeling that there are opportunities available but confusion about where BAME organisations should refer people on].</li> <li>o Simplify process for enrolment in ESOL. Support groups to support communities to enrol [forms are complicated to complete].</li> </ul> </li> <li>(vi) Access to, and initiatives for community investment e.g. Dragons Den, corporate investment.</li> <li>(vii) Increase capacity of BAME organisations to deliver. [encourage corporations to make use</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.3.8 (iv) a, b, c</b></p> <p><b>6.6.8 (i) a-f &amp; 6.6.8 (iii) a-e</b></p>	<p>See Appendix B for related response to these thematic issues - pages 19-25.</p> <p><b>Regeneration:</b> The protection of employment land in the east of the borough vs housing development remains a key issue, e.g. planning control restrictions needed on 'change of use' to safeguard local jobs.</p> <p>In addition, the effective use of CIL (formerly Section 106) for economic and sustainable development particularly in Mitcham and Morden.</p>

	BME Plan Reference	Comments
<p>of BAME organisations...invest in them, provide infrastructure and resources, enable them to deliver]</p> <p><b>3. Health &amp; Well-being (including older people)</b></p> <p>(a) <b>Provide coordinated service planning and delivery</b></p> <p>(i) Improve coordination. [To support the vulnerable we need to work together. We need to agree who is the lead person, and share information across multi-agency partnerships with that person -"We must coordinate better, none of us know what the other is doing".]</p> <p>(b) <b>Provision of information that is widely disseminated and acted upon:</b></p> <p>(i) Improve signposting, communication and advertising. ["There are lots of services people don't know about".] Improve communication and awareness of what work is already taking place in the borough, what services are already available, what community groups are doing etc. [how the larger picture comes together].</p> <p>© <b>Effectively challenge health inequalities to ensure services are inclusive and policies representative of the local communities</b></p> <p>(ii) Reduce health inequalities - Actions to reduce health inequalities are not making an impact. Introduce process that will improve dialogue between groups, and statutory partners and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Create innovation within current decision making tables</li> <li>o Broaden out CEN representative forums</li> <li>o Provide support to groups and individuals to enable meaningful access and dialogue.</li> <li>o Invest in building community champions</li> <li>o Tailor services to community needs; take services into communities (mobile services)</li> <li>o Cultural competency/ community awareness training, delivered by community groups</li> </ul> <p>(iii) Bring together aspects of care around physical and mental health - Poor physical health can lead to poor mental health and those with poor mental health often have worse physical health. These two aspects of health care need to come together more effectively.</p> <p>(iv) Improve information re conditions, leading to early access, prevention and diagnosis e.g. Lupus [BAME communities access services very late]</p> <p>(v) Improve outcomes for sickle cell patients and families</p> <p>(vi) Improve cultural competence amongst service delivery staff</p>	<p><b>6.2.8 (ii) a-e</b></p> <p><b>6.2.8 (iv) a-d</b></p> <p><b>6.2.8 (iv) d</b></p>	<p>See Appendix B for related response to these issues. Pages 26-33.</p>

Health and well being - Older People and Intergenerational work	BME Plan Reference	Comments
<p>(c) <b>Improve health and social care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Culturally appropriate food in care homes and hospitals</li> <li>(ii) Improve information and access to advice.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple information and advice to be made available via one central mechanism...Online information portal (?) covering what is available locally (specialist services, social and leisure groups, activities etc).</li> <li>• Language must be culturally appropriate and kept simple so that it is accessible.</li> <li>• Development of, or support for, a network that can support older people to access the information/ portal. [LBM is developing an information portal covering...?]</li> <li>• Early advice regarding power of attorney</li> <li>• Dementia                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Awareness campaign raising awareness of the signs and symptom, enabling people to plan ahead, seek early diagnosis and deal with it as a family/supportive unit.</li> <li>○ Finding innovative ways to open out discussions (it is not discussed within family units)</li> <li>○ Information regarding what care and support is available regarding Dementia (this could tie in with information portal ?).</li> <li>○ Funding to BAME groups to enable information provision and support to community members.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>(iii) Intergenerational work.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bring together of intergenerational work...Development of strategic focus and direction and joined up activities - “there are lots of itty bitty initiatives that need to come together”.</li> <li>○ Support grandparents to support grandchildren and families.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>6.4.8 (i) a-b 6.4.8 (i) a-c</p> <p>6.4.8 (i) e1-e4</p> <p>6.4.8 (ii) a-b</p>	<p>See Appendix B for related response to these issues - pages 26-33.</p> <p>A general consensus that a shared information portal should be of benefit to all.</p>

4. Safer, Stronger and Sustainable	BAME Plan Reference	Comments
<p>(a) <b>Improve community engagement</b></p> <p>(i) Deliver neighbourhood Action Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure MUN and BAME groups are part of Neighbourhood partnerships and are involved in putting together the localised neighbourhood action plans.</li> <li>b. Support groups to participate and deliver actions</li> </ul> <p>(ii) Deliver Community Cohesion Strategy</p> <p>(iii) Work in partnership to support BAME VCOs in their delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase support for the BAME voluntary sector (not just £); e.g. the capacity (ie resources) of the BAME sector so that they can engage effectively not only in policy decision making but also in the delivery of well needed ‘specialist’ services.</li> <li>a. Provide expertise and skills to assist organisations to develop and prevent them from slipping away.</li> <li>b. Advocacy activity</li> <li>c. Create ambassadors and community champions</li> <li>d. Communication and promotion work – sharing information.</li> <li>e. Increase capacity for engagement in local decision making</li> <li>f. BAME organisations to be supported to put in successful grants bids and influence service delivery</li> </ul> <p>(iv) Coordinate BAME groups and get them involved in participating in civic life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Introduce measures to improve participation in civic life. Support groups to participate (training, mentoring process, qualification)</li> <li>b. Increase communication between statutory agencies and BAME community groups, utilising MUN [“Council to communicate to MUN the various opportunities for BAME organisations to take up”].</li> <li>c. Find more imaginative ways of engaging people and communities</li> </ul>	<p>Emerging issue for Plan</p> <p>Emerging issue for Plan</p> <p>6.7.8 (i) a-e</p> <p>6.7.8 (1) g</p>	<p>See Appendix B for related response to these issues - pages 34-40.</p>



Safer, Stronger and Sustainable continues	BAME Plan Reference	Comments
<p>(b) <b>Improve effectiveness and access</b>                      (v) BAME VCOs to work collaboratively to become more astute about gaining funding.                      a. Improve equality of access (e.g. ensuring good/shared knowledge, communication and contacts across the sector)                      b. Provide greater information regarding funding opportunities</p> <p>(c) <b>Reduce fear of crime and tackle race crime effectively</b>                      (vi) Increase and improve information provision especially around hate crime. [Hate crime figures in Merton is incredibly low – this is a cause for concern and perhaps indicates under-reporting]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Figures and information needed for each ward. Information to be provided to Joint Consultative Committee -(with Ethnic Minority Organisations (JCC)</li> <li>o Create 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting service. Support an organisation to provide this service</li> <li>o Safer Merton and Merton Connected to promote awareness</li> </ul> <p>(vii) Improve information, support and guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Need more comparative data to analyse success - successful outcomes, evidence (number of start ups, what works what doesn't, what projects have been commissioned, what funding has been delivered.)</li> <li>o Improve information re what training etc is available locally</li> </ul> <p>(viii) Improve promotion and value of volunteering as a route to employment [need to ensure employers and job centre value and respect volunteering experience]</p> <p>(ix) Establish a intergenerational employment legacy, linking young people with those leaving the workforce to enable transfer of skills and knowledge</p> <p>(x) Acknowledgement of voluntary sector as a real source of employment. [Expectation is generally for services and activities to be delivered voluntarily.]</p> <p>(xi) Create opportunities for work experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Encouragement to work in voluntary sector.</li> <li>o Tangible job outcomes. Need to see "off- flows from benefit/ Job Centre Plus"</li> </ul> <p>(xii) Access to, and initiatives for community investment e.g. Dragons Den, corporate investment.</p> <p>(xiii) Increase capacity of BME organisations to deliver. [encourage corporations to make</p>	<p>6.7.8 (ii) d</p> <p>6.7.8 (iii) and 6.7.8 (ii) d</p> <p>6.7.8 (iii) d &amp; and 6.7.8 (v) a, b, c.</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>See Appendix B page 37-39 for the latest update on progress with these issues.</p>

use of BME organisations...invest in them, provide infrastructure and resources, enable them to deliver]		
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## 1. Plan's Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 5): CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEMES

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### Assessment of 2011-12 Key Priorities

2. The Children Trust Board received, on **25 March 2011 (AOB)** the following priorities and actions which were selected from the '*Children and Young People and Education and Learning* themes' of the BAME Strategic Plan; by key partners at a BME Forum's Seminar 'Resourcing Change' held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011. Those priorities agreed by key partners for 2011/12 are listed below and also shaded grey within Appendix A; which outlines all the related priorities and actions within the BAME Plan:
  - a. **Improve educational attainment: [BAME Plan: Incorporating 6.1.8 (iii) c-d:**
    - Integrate BAME perspectives, histories, heritage, faith education, authors, etc., into mainstream curriculum.
  - b. **Increase positive representation and action: [BAME Plan: Incorporating 6.1.8 (ii) b,c,d]:**
    - Target greater recruitment and support for BAME teachers
    - Cultural competency training for teachers, governors and
    - More racially diverse school governing boards, etc.
    - Ensure any pupil premium, disadvantage subsidy distribution data is broken down into pupil ethnicity and is easily accessible. Aim is to get the right allocation for Merton's pupils.
3. **Progress at March 2012** – In evaluating the actions taken to respond to 2011-12 priorities (above), the BME Forum decided to take the opportunity to review progress with other related priorities within the BAME Strategic Plan. This is to ensure there is a holistic approach in tracking change and impact in respect of the inter-related issues outlined in the Plan.
4. **The response to the priority actions relating to 'Children and Young People and Education and Learning' themes has been quite positive, particularly from LBM Children Schools and Families Department. However, it is recognised from the template below that there is room for further developments in respect of improved dialogue, through more joined up partnership working, particularly with key BAME sector agencies.**

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BAME: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic; BMEF: Black and Minority Ethnic Forum; MPH: Merton Priory Homes; MUN/PSN: Merton Unity Network/Peer Support Network; LBM: London Borough of Merton; CSF: Children Schools and Families; CEQS: Corporate Services; MVSC: Merton Voluntary Service Council; SWLNHS: South West London National Health Service; VCM: Volunteer Centre Merton

1. Plan’s Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 5): CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEMES

EDUCATION & LEARNING

(i) Reduce the level of exclusion and fixed term and permanent exclusion

	Priority Action Reference: 6.1.8 – (i); a-e	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
	<p><b>a</b> Reduce the high exclusion and expulsion rates among BAME children, for example, use of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Curriculum.</p> <p><b>b</b> Create opportunities at community centres to integrate excluded children.</p> <p><b>c</b> Provide awareness training in exclusion procedures to governors and teachers and encourage active membership of parents as governors.</p> <p><b>d</b> Provide projects for young people which encourage and inspire higher education.</p> <p><b>e</b> Create more advocacy groups, such as the Communities Empowerment Network, to assist parents whose children are going through the school exclusion process.</p>	<p>(a)-(b) Merton Council has been actively working with its schools to raise attainment, narrow the gaps in outcomes for pupils (including for BAME groups), to reduce exclusions and improve attendance. Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) training and programmes has been promoted to schools with positive effects and the Council’s Bullying Strategy has been refreshed.</p> <p>There has been a Scrutiny Review on exclusions and alternative education with a view to ensuring best practice in reducing numbers but also offering quality alternative education to pupils who need it. A more robust quality assurance process has been put in place for commissioned provision. [Y.Stanley/LBM/SCF]</p> <p>© Training is provided on exclusions policy and good practice to governors and school staff. The LA Virtual Behaviour Service offers training to schools on meeting the needs of YP with behavioural problems.</p> <p>(d) Merton council’s annual School Standards will be available at the end of February and will report on outcomes for the 10/11 academic year. Schools are responsible for leading their improvement, but the LA provides very detailed information on the performance of year groups, boys, girls, BAME pupils and pupils with special educational needs and through our challenge work with schools we expect them to analyse their “gaps” and take action to address them. When schools have made particular progress, their good practice is shared through school to school collaboration.</p> <p>Merton Council has opened sixth forms in 4 Community schools: offering Merton young people better pathways at Key Stage 5 (16-19) and schools are actively promoting pathways to further and higher education. Targeted Youth Support service offers support to YP identified as needing additional support in staying in education, employment and training. [Y.Stanley/LBM/SCF]</p> <p>(e) -</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p>

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1. **Plan’s Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 5): CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEMES**

**(ii) Increase positive representation and action**

Priority Action Reference: 6.1.8 – (ii); a-e	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Address issues of gang culture/activities. Colleges should work with recognised voluntary sector to help young people deal with issues of growing up and anger management, etc.</p> <p><b>b</b> Greater recruitment of BAME teaching staff within schools in Merton and support of staff once recruited.</p> <p><b>c</b> Establish cultural competence training of teachers and improve cultural understanding of governors and a more racially diverse board to reflect % of BAME children in schools; to help reduce the high exclusion rate of black children within schools.</p> <p><b>d</b> Provide black representatives in schools as role models, i.e. as teachers, board of governors and mentors.</p> <p><b>e</b> Improve educational prospects for Gypsy and travelling children.</p>	<p>(a) Great deal of work already going on to further build relationships between police and other public sector partners and young people. Many voluntary groups receive specific funding for this issue. [C.Frost, MVSC]</p> <p>LBM has a wide ranging programme working with schools, the police and young people in our youth provision to address the issue of criminal behaviour and gangs. We promote anti-gang programmes to schools and other initiatives. Work in this area is currently being refreshed in the light of a small number of serious crimes. More dialogue on this with the BME Forum is welcomed. [Y.Stanley, LBM/SCF]</p> <p>(b) LBM’s workforce census showed 16-19% of its school staff is from BME communities. LBM’s challenge is to increase the numbers of senior BME leaders – although at middle manager level progress has been made. [Y.Stanley/LBM/SCF]</p> <p>© LBM has had success in recruiting community governors and would see this as an area for continued work with the community and would be happy to facilitate BAME governors’ meeting to get feedback on their challenges, support needs or successes. [Y.Stanley/LBM/SCF]</p> <p>(d) Volunteer Strategy delivery includes highlighting opportunities for people to be school governors, magistrates, mentors, etc [C.Frost/MVSC]</p> <p>(e) LBM has a Gypsy and Traveller Education Service and programme of work. [Y.Stanley/LBM/SCF]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p>

1. Plan’s Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 5): CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEMES

(iii) Improve educational attainment

	Priority Action Reference: 6.1.8 – (iii); a-i	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
	<p><b>a</b> Provide and promote supplementary education; encourage educational ethos among BAME communities, e.g. support for the establishment of BAME Saturday schools.</p> <p><b>b</b> Provide specialist and innovative activities to improve attainment for young people.</p> <p><b>c</b> Provide teaching materials and activities that represent and promote culturally diversity, for example, visits of role models and ethnic minority elders to school (to share experiences of history and heritage).</p> <p><b>d</b> Greater use of teaching materials with BAME perspective.</p> <p><b>e</b> Provide workshops, sessions and activities in schools to support BAME males in dealing with issues of self-worth and masculinity which is especially important in Key Stage 3 and 4.</p> <p><b>f</b> Review programmes such as Black Boys Can and Generating Genius to disseminate lessons learnt.</p> <p><b>g</b> Ensure any pupil premium, disadvantage subsidy distribution data is broken down into pupil ethnicity and is easily accessible.</p> <p><b>h</b> Ensure that the target to reduce gap in attainment between lowest 20% and the median is met</p> <p><b>i</b> Ensure reporting in schools of racial incidents.</p> <p><b>NB:</b> books written by BAME writers, inclusion of BAME efforts in historical events such as WWI and WWII; that reflects BAME experiences and build self esteem. This would reduce feeling of marginalisation of BAME children; which leads to frustration, poor behaviour and disengagement in mainstream education.</p>	<p>(a)-(b) Merton Council has been actively working with its schools to raise attainment, narrow the gaps in outcomes for pupils (including for BAME groups). Local schools now have access to a rich source of resources to promote diversity and engage BAME young people. This includes a wealth of material through the London Grid for Learning which provides on line curriculum material across London. Merton council’s annual School Standards (expected end of February 2012) should report on outcomes for the 10/11 academic year. Schools are responsible for leading their improvement, but the Local Authority (LA), ie LBM, provides very detailed information on the performance of year groups, boys, girls, BAME pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Through challenge work with schools the LA expect schools to analyse their “gaps” and take action to address them. When schools have made particular progress, their good practice is shared through school to school collaboration. [Y.Stanley/LBM/CSF]</p> <p>©-(i) - ] these issues and responses (above), are to be further explored by the BME Forum/YP Sub-group and key partners, e.g. LBM/CSF on receipt of the relevant data. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(d) - ]</p> <p>(e) - ]</p> <p>(f) - ]</p> <p>(g) - ]</p> <p>(h) - ]</p> <p>(i) - ]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p> <p><b>f</b></p> <p><b>g</b></p> <p><b>h</b></p> <p><b>i</b></p>

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Revised: 11.07.12

1. Plan’s Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 5): CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEMES

(iv) Improve access to learning information and support

	Priority Action Reference: 6.1.8 (iv) a-e	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
	<p><b>a</b> Improve access to information, such as ethnicity breakdown of school admissions and pupil survey.</p> <p><b>b</b> Improve health awareness training in schools on condition such as Sickle Cell, and Lupus and support of teachers towards pupils with life limiting illnesses, and pupils as child carers; who fall behind with studies because of persistent absence.</p> <p><b>c</b> Use of local town and community centres and business establishment to disseminate information and provide support.</p> <p><b>d</b> Provide outreach work to ensure engagement and access to learning resources, for example for those not in employment, education and training (NEET).</p> <p><b>e</b> Encourage 'learning for life', through appropriate agencies</p>	<p>(a) LBM(CSF) has detailed pupil information which they supply to schools to benchmark themselves to ensure they are targeting students effectively for resources and appropriate interventions. [Y.Stanley/LBM/CSF]</p> <p>(b)-(e) Statistical data in respect of ethnicity breakdown to be shared with the BME Forum to enable them to work in partnership to support communities, e.g. assist Merton Sicklecell and Thalasaemia Group to promote health awareness in schools. [P.Anderson/BMEF]</p> <p>(d)-(e) Several voluntary and community groups are working with MPH to ensure outreach, e.g. Merton Unity Network is working in partnership to develop and run a Community Leaders Programme for 2 years from April 2012. [Patricia Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p>

1. Plan’s Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 5): CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEMES

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

(i) Bridge the gap between generations and community, and reduce the intergenerational cycle of poverty

	Priority Action Reference: 6.5.8 (i) a-f	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
	<p><b>a</b> Develop relations between MUN’s Peer Support Network Young People &amp; Older people sub-groups through joined up work programmes and related activities.</p> <p><b>b</b> Develop media project for young people that involves heritage/ bridging the age/geographical gap.</p> <p><b>c</b> Create education initiatives to raise awareness about young people issues/services.</p> <p><b>d</b> Develop Peer/Family Learning Projects.</p> <p><b>e</b> Create and promote opportunities for intergenerational interaction and engagement through use of local community centres.</p> <p><b>f</b> Develop initiatives to impact upon child poverty, e.g. employability schemes, housing and environment improvement, benefits advice, parenting skills.</p>	<p>(a) BMEF/PSN is engaging with existing initiatives such as the various inter generational programmes, e.g. the Ageing Well programme which is to extend its remit to include a young people workshop. [Patricia Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(b) MUN will be working with partners to pursue funds for a potential heritage media project with partners. [Patricia Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>©-(d) Such initiatives are already taking place in centres and the aim is to extend the existing Ageing Well programme to include young people. There are various existing (funded) schemes run by voluntary sector organisations (including BAME groups) and partners, e.g. MPH funded parenting projects. [C.Frost/MVSC]</p> <p>(e) LBM - There are intergeneration programmes operating in a number of schools and through Merton Council’s Intergeneration Centre, but they would welcome organisations coming forward which would be willing to work in partnership with Council’s schools and children’s centres. [Y.Stanley/LBM/CSF]</p> <p>(f) LBM carried out a recent needs analysis on family poverty and will be working with partners on a strategy in response. The BMEF’s input is welcomed. LBM Performance Reward Grant to support over over100 families is one initiative. [Y.Stanley/LBM/CSF]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p> <p><b>f</b></p>



1. Plan’s Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 5): CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEMES

(ii) Support the management of the asylum process

Priority Action Reference: 6.5.8 (ii) a	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Work with/support South London Refugee Association and other BAME VCOs to develop their programme for support to young people.</p>	<p>Work with young asylum seekers has been noted as a particular strength by Ofsted in its recent report at February 2012. [Yvette Stanley/LBM/CSF]                      MVSC Youth Groups Development Worker has been involved in this from the outset and has specific targets for work with BME Refugee communities [C.Frost/MVSC]                      MPH has reported that they have supported SLRA. However, SLRA like many other BAME VCOs are currently struggling to be sustainable [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p>

(iii) Widen and promote Youth Parliament representation; involvement in democratic process

Priority Action Reference: 6.5.8 (iii) a-f	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Ensure full representation of BAME communities, for example, ensuring that young asylum seekers are not excluded.</p> <p><b>b</b> Young people to know more about their rights and how to ensure they are supported by legislation.</p> <p><b>c</b> Work with/support LB Merton to develop engagement and mentoring programme for Youth Parliament, seeking representatives from currently unrepresented socio-economic, ethnic, geographical groups.</p> <p><b>d</b> Produce incentive/development packages for representatives to encourage involvements -e.g. volunteering to gain experience.</p>	<p>(a)-(b) Merton’s Youth Parliament (YP) is vibrant and is ethnically diverse. BAME representation is higher than would be expected given the local population. Merton Council (CSF) has recruited and trained a group of young advisors (YA) who look at issues in greater depth. Their latest piece of work was on safeguarding, faith and cultural which involved their working with a number of community groups reflecting the diversity of the borough. They have produced a DVD of their work which has received recognition at London level and with our Ofsted Inspectors. [Y.Stanley/LBM/CSF]                      LBM/CSF would be keen to promote both the YP and YA programmes through BAME organisations. [Y.Stanley/LBM/CSF]</p> <p>©</p> <p>(d) CSF has a very active strand of activity re volunteering; through schools; youth centres and the Duke of Edinburgh programme. Also have young volunteers who are now on accredited programmes to be youth workers. [Y.Stanley/LBM/CSF]                      Volunteer Centre Merton also works to encourage involvement. A total of 1,256 BAME volunteers (51%) were recruited in 2010/11 and in the first 3 quarters of 2011/12 a total of 1,258 (46%). [S.Hannigan/VCM]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p>
		<p><b>b</b></p>
		<p><b>c</b></p>
		<p><b>d</b></p>

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1. **Plan’s Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 5): CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEMES**

(iv) Remove barriers to development	Priority Action Reference: 6.5.8 (iv) a-f	Progress at midMarch 2012	Traffic lights
	<p><b>a</b> Race equality to be a target against which outcomes are measured.</p> <p><b>b</b> Map English as second language (across the borough) and ESOL provision. Develop cross-borough partnerships to ensure full language/translation support services are available to statutory bodies and services etc</p> <p><b>c</b> Support community-led campaigns to challenge inequalities and raise awareness, for example teaching and research in regard to heritage, intergenerational work, ethnic group inequalities.</p> <p><b>d</b> Work in partnership to develop recreational activities, which allows participation and enables inclusion.</p> <p><b>e</b> Cultural appropriate projects aim to develop job skills, bring language support into homes, develop parenting skills, counselling, help with homework, etc.</p> <p><b>f</b> Court diversion schemes, establish for young people.</p>	<p>(a) – (e) A range of partners have agreed to improve dialogue with BAME VCOs and through MUN/BME Forum, e.g. LBM(CSF) has promised to do more work together with MUN/BME Forum on issues which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support for parenting (behaviour, exclusions, crime etc);</li> <li>○ Tackling gangs and youth crime;</li> <li>○ Intergenerational bridge building;</li> <li>○ Promoting participation opportunities for young people.</li> </ul>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p> <p><b>f</b></p>

1. **Plan’s Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 5): CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEMES**

(v)	<b>Improve central networking</b>	<b>Progress at mid March 2012</b>	<b>Traffic lights</b>
	<p><b>Priority Action Reference: 6.5.8 (v) a-c</b></p> <p><b>a</b> Provision and sharing of ethnicity data to effectively identify needs and make meaningful change to improve the life chances of BAME young people.  <b>b</b> Develop MUN’s Peer Support Network                      Young People sub-group to improve networking and sharing of information, resources, knowledge, skills, expertise etc.  <b>c</b> Develop buddying/mentoring programme for refugees/ asylum seekers and other young people or young and old people. Big brother and Big Sister type project.</p>	<p>(a)-(b) In respect of engagement and development, for BAME VCOs there is a lack of (or considerable gap in) ethnicity data to accurately/effectively identify needs and evaluate impact of services (if any) to BAME communities. MUN/BMEF/PSN will continue to pursue relevant information through the BME Forum and Peer Support Network sub-groups. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>© MUN/BMEF with work with LBM/CSF to explore possibilities. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p>

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## 2. Plan's Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 6): HOUSING, REGENERATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND ENTERPRISES THEMES

3.1 Merton Partnership's Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership Group received, in **March 2011 (Item X)** the following BAME priorities and actions which were selected from the '*Unemployment, Skills and Enterprise and Housing and Regeneration* themes' of the BAME Strategic Plan; by key partners at the Seminar held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011. Those BAME priorities agreed by key partners are listed below and also shaded grey within Appendix A; which outlines all the related priorities and actions within the BAME

- (a) **Improve support to BAME organisations: [BAME Plan - 6.6.8 (i) a]:**
  - Greater support to BAME start up businesses (adding 'and social enterprises'), through training, sign posting to relevant statutory bodies, businesses and organisations that can assist.
- (b) **Improving training and development: [BAME Plan - 6.6.8 (ii) a, e]:**
  - Provision of training to address skills imbalance and reduce skills gap so that BAME communities can compete.
  - Provide skills session to develop soft skills, which 'open doors'.
- (c) **Improve access to housing: [BAME Plan – 6.3.8 (i) a,c]**
  - Develop MUN's Peer Support Network Housing sub-group, ie establish BAME VCO Housing Partnership with LBM Housing Association representatives and BAME VCOs.
  - Develop cross-borough partnerships to enhance asylum housing options/systems; undertake needs analysis, research to get a clearer understanding of the numbers and issues
- (d) **Improve information systems: [BAME Plan – 6.3.8 (iv) b]**
  - Create education initiatives to raise awareness about issues/services, e.g. choice based lettings system, domestic violence, disability housing options, housing options for elder ethnic groups, housing issues affecting young ethnic minority groups.
- (e) **Improve issues of migration, community cohesion: [BAME Plan – 6.3.8 (v) b]**
  - Awareness training: communities to know more about their rights and how to ensure they are supported by legislation.

3.2 Progress at March 2012 – In evaluating the actions taken to respond to 2011-12 priorities (above), the BME Forum decided to take the opportunity to review progress with other related priorities within the BAME Strategic Plan. This is to ensure there is a holistic approach in tracking change and impact in respect of the inter-related issues outlined in the Plan.

The response to the priority actions relating to this theme has been quite positive. However there are disproportional socio-economic gaps across different local communities. It is a well known fact that in general Merton's residents are better qualified than Londoners as a whole. However, the recent commissioned work carried out by the Institute of Communities and Cohesion (iCoCo) - '*The Merton Story*'- identified that the overall picture on skills and unemployment within Merton conceals some large differences geographically and across different ethnic groups and that action to address skill levels is not a strong focus of the local Economic Development Strategy. In addition, there appears to be '*no understanding of the structure and trading relations of ethnic minority businesses*'. It is important to note that because of the current austere economic measures many BAME Voluntary and Community groups have considered and/or established Social Enterprises and therefore this lack of understanding will no doubt impact on their development as businesses.

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Revised: 11.07.12

## 2. Plan's Thematic Reference (1, 3 &amp; 6): HOUSING, REGENERATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND ENTERPRISES THEMES

## Assessment of 2011/12 priorities

## HOUSING

## (ii) Improve awareness of domestic violence and disability housing options.

Priority Action Reference: 6.3.8 (ii) a	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
a Create education initiatives to raise awareness about issues/services such as domestic violence, and disability housing options, e.g. Sickle cell and Thalassaemia (MSCTG).	(a) Response from MPH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Domestic Violence Mentor Support Commissioned for women and families</li> <li>- MSCTG supported through social enterprise course and grant 2012/13</li> </ul>	a

## (iii) Improve access to employment and reduce social exclusion

Priority Action Reference: 6.3.8 (iii) a-e	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
a Regeneration: Protection of employment land in the east of the borough and housing; for example, planning development control restriction on 'change of use' to safeguard local jobs.	(a) <b>Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan</b> is being reviewed. Projects arising from the Strategy will ensure that BAME, especially BAME's experiencing disadvantage in skills, employment and business will be targeted and supported. [J.McGinlay/LBM/Regen] <p><b>Merton Shopfront improvement grant:</b> a grant to businesses to improve shopfronts where they are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have significant improvement on the appearance, image and footfall of a Town Centres, High Street and local shops</li> <li>• bring vacant shops back to use by refurbishing and starting a business from the premises</li> <li>• BAME businesses, particularly in the Mitcham area are benefiting from this scheme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mitcham Town Centre Regeneration:</b> £1.3m programme covering business support, skill, education &amp; employment, physical regeneration and inward investment. Given that Mitcham has a high proportion of BAME residents and businesses, the programme will ensure that</p>	a

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2. Plan's Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 6): HOUSING, REGENERATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND ENTERPRISES THEMES

Priority Action Reference: 6.3.8 (iii) a-e	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>b</b> Support for workforce/jobless: establishment of similar scheme to Merton Home Start. To include possible variations of childcare pooling, mentoring and buddying, skills development, development of job sharing partnerships between individuals who can jointly apply for roles; back to work schemes, etc.</p> <p><b>c</b> Evaluate the proportion of BAME children living in poverty.</p> <p><b>d</b> Increase opportunities for parents/carers to gain employment</p> <p><b>e</b> Effect use of Section 106 (replaced by CIL) for economic and sustainable development in Mitcham and Morden.</p>	<p>this group is targeted for support.</p> <p><b>Collier Wood Town Centre Regeneration:</b> Merton Council has won £3.7 million from the Mayor of London for Collier Wood. The money will be used to improve Colliers Wood Town Centre and Merton and Collier Wood High Streets- and will include a package of support for small independent businesses. Work will start in 2012/13. [J.McGinlay/LBM/Regen]</p> <p>(b) Economic Well-Being is a key objective in the MPH Community and Economic Development and Strategic Plan and local Neighbourhood Action Plans (Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social Enterprise and Business Start Up courses provided, to date between 50 to 80% of participants were BAME and/or representing BAME community groups</li> <li>- Targeted Youth Employment Support including Mentoring</li> <li>- 7 Community Fund grants given to local projects to provide training / into-work support during 2011/12</li> <li>- 10 Community Fund grants agreed for 2012/13 to support Economic Well-Being [S.Neville/MPH]</li> </ul> <p>© LBM/SCF has made some attempts to address this issue, by targeting a specific area within the east of the borough where a considerable number of BAME children live, ie the 100 families' PB project. However, the proportion of BAME children living in poverty data is still not known. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(d)-(e) To be further explored in respect of the initiatives referred above at (a).</p>	<p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p>

2. Plan's Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 6): HOUSING, REGENERATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND ENTERPRISES THEMES

(iv) Improve information systems

Priority Action Reference: 6.3.8 (iv) a-c	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Develop regular housing allocation 'Learn How it Works' workshops/training sessions to ensure realistic expectations and understanding of the system.</p> <p><b>b</b> Create education initiatives to raise awareness about issues/services e.g. choice based lettings system, domestic violence, disability housing options, housing options for elder ethnic minority people, housing issues affecting young ethnic minority people.</p> <p><b>c</b> Establishment of (mobile) one-stop-information-shop, for advice, helpline, one-to-one support for housing issues. Outreach work. Information in different languages.</p>	<p>a. The Housing Advice Team provides talks at BME / faith organisations on request. Talks held at Faith in Action, Asylum Welcome &amp; Somali group in the past.</p> <p>b. Merton Housing Services has initiated a Peer Education programme at school to raise awareness amongst school children on housing and homelessness issues. 15 sessions have been completed since the project started.</p> <p>c. Merton Housing Services hold an annual Housing Fayre which acts as a one-stop-information-shop for all Merton residents, involving organisations that provide housing services, advice as well as support. The 2011 event was held in November at the Morden Baptist Church, and benefit well over 200 Merton households. All Housing customers have the option to request information in the standard community languages offered by the council.</p> <p>[Response above provided by A.Chu/LBM Housing]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p>

(v) Address issues of migration, community cohesion

Priority Action Reference: 6.3.8 (iv) a-c	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Support community-led campaigns to challenge inequalities and raise awareness.</p> <p><b>b</b> Awareness training: communities to know more about their rights and how to ensure they are supported by legislation.</p>	<p>(a)-(c) Community Cohesion is a key objective in MPH Community and Economic Development and Strategic Plan and local Neighbourhood Action Plans (Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Citizen Advice Bureau project to support MPH residents with debt and wider legal advice</li> <li>- "Money Tuesdays" – Credit Union outreach worker and Money Advice service offered to MPH residents and wider community.</li> </ul>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p>

## 2. Plan's Thematic Reference (1, 3 &amp; 6): HOUSING, REGENERATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND ENTERPRISES THEMES

Priority Action Reference: 6.3.8 (iv) a-c	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
c Carry out work to understand the tensions from the perspective of different communities to help devise ways of diffusing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 23 small Community Fund grants given to projects to support Community Cohesion aims</li> <li>- Agreed funding for Merton Unity Network to develop and run Community Leaders Programme for 2 years from April 2012 [S.Neville/MPH]</li> </ul>	c

## Assessment of 2011/12 priorities

## UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND ENTERPRISE

## (i) Improve support to BAME organisations

Priority Action Reference: 6.6.8 (i) a-f	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
a Greater support to BAME start up businesses, through training, sign posting to relevant statutory bodies, businesses and organisation that can assist.	<p>(a) <b>Business Support for small businesses (including BAME-owned businesses):</b> Merton Council provide funding to Merton Chamber of Commerce to provide a range of business support service to small businesses including generic and specialist advice, workshops, seminars, network events and a library of training and advice publications.</p> <p><b>The Generator Business Centre:</b> this business centre offers affordable high quality serviced office and light industrial space with technical infrastructure- plus – a hub for support, information and business activity, including virtual office, conference and meeting room hire and networking events. <i>Some BAME businesses and employees are beneficiaries of the Generator.</i></p> <p><b>Business Loan Fund:</b> £600,000 Loan Fund to provide loans of between £10,000 and £20,000 to viable and established SMEs with growth and job creation, that are unable to loans from High Street Banks and other financial sources – due to combination of factors including lack of collateral, track record and the current bank business lending</p>	a

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2. Plan's Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 6): HOUSING, REGENERATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND ENTERPRISES THEMES

Priority Action Reference: 6.6.8 (i) a-f	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>b</b> Provide more business support from professionals (i.e. from 5 yrs onwards in business).</p> <p><b>c</b> Provide more and effective partnerships; lobbying for more support for smaller organisations such as advice on how to win council contracts and where to receive loans with reasonable interest rates.</p> <p><b>d</b> Interest free loans set up to curb economic issues.</p> <p><b>e</b> BAME VCOs to be supported to research and analyse the gap left by the closure of BAME organisations</p>	<p>restriction. Loans will be available in June/July 2012. Businesses in Mitcham and other areas of high BAME businesses will be targeted. [J.McGinlay/LBM/Regen]</p> <p>(a) Merton Chamber of Commerce (MCC) reports that 68% of start ups supported under Merton Means Business (MMB) were BAME. [Diana Sterk/MCC]</p> <p>(b) MCC reports that 58% of businesses who received a 1:1 under MMB were BAME</p> <p>(a)-(b) MPH response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Social Enterprise and Business Start Up courses provided, to date between 50 to 80% of participants were BAME and/or representing BAME community groups</li> <li>o One-to-one support provided to small groups to assist in completion of Community Fund grant applications.</li> </ul> <p>©-(e) MUN/BME Forum will on behalf of BAME VCOs continue to pursue relevant resource and data (e.g. from LBM/Regen) to access commissioning and contracts to ensure effective outreach of services to communities. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p>
<b>(ii) Improve training and development</b>		
Priority Action Reference: 6.6.8 (ii) a-f	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic Lights
<p><b>a</b> Provision of training to address skills imbalance and reduce skills gaps so that BAME communities can compete.</p>	<p>(a) <b>Skill Strategy and Action Plan:</b> This is being developed. Evidence base relating to BAME skills&amp; unemployment levels will be determined - and appropriate schemes will be targeted at these groups (particularly the BAME NEETS) working with key employment agencies such as Job Centre Plus, Work Programme, National Apprenticeship Service, Merton Priory Homes and local training providers. [J.McGinlay/LBM/Regen]</p> <p>(a) MPH response [S.Neville/MPH]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One-to-one support provided to small groups to assist in completion of Community Fund grant applications.</li> </ul>	<p><b>a</b></p>

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2. Plan's Thematic Reference (1, 3 & 6): HOUSING, REGENERATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND ENTERPRISES THEMES

Priority Action Reference: 6.6.8 (ii) a-f	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic Lights
<p><b>b</b> Develop and promote training opportunities – awareness of commissioning events and training</p> <p><b>c</b> Develop training and comprehensive support systems specific to clients' needs. Open invitations to wider groups and networking.</p> <p><b>d</b> Training provided for trainers</p> <p><b>e</b> Provide skills session; to develop soft skills, which "open doors".</p> <p><b>f</b> Work in partnership to produce and utilise a programme of social enterprise support targeted at the most deprived communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of Community Fund involved high number of small BAME groups to inform future development of grants programmes.</li> <li>- Agreed funding for Merton Unity Network to develop and run Community Leaders Programme for 2 years from April 2012</li> </ul> <p>(b) - ditto –</p> <p>(c) – ditto –</p> <p>(d) – ditto –</p> <p>(e)-(f) MPH through funding (to support local groups) is currently enabling this issue to be addressed, for example, their Social Enterprise and Business Start Up courses provided, to date between 50 to 80% of participants were BAME and/or representing BAME community groups. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">b</p> <p style="text-align: center;">c</p> <p style="text-align: center;">d</p> <p style="text-align: center;">e</p> <p style="text-align: center;">f</p>

### 3. Plan's Thematic Reference (2 & 4): HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (Including Older People)

- 4.1 Merton Partnership's Health and Well-being Board received, in March 2011, the following BAME priorities and actions which were selected from the '*Health and Well-being*' theme' of the BAME Strategic Plan; by key partners at the Seminar held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011. Those BAME priorities agreed by key partners are listed below and also shaded grey within Appendix A; which outlines all the related priorities and actions within the BAME:
- 4.1.1 **Develop cultural competence. Ensuring that services reflect the demographics of the borough. Effectively challenge health inequalities to ensure services are inclusive and policies representative of the local communities:** [BAME Plan - 6.2.8 (iv) e]
  - 4.1.2 **Provide coordinated service planning and delivery:** [BAME Plan - [6.2.8 (i) c]
  - 4.1.3 **Improve health / social care:** [BAME Plan: 6.4.8 (i) a]
  - 4.1.4 **Provision of culturally appropriate intergenerational services:** [BAME Plan: 6.4.7 (ii) a]
  - 4.1.5 **Greater opportunities for socialising – particularly among peers:** [BAME Plan: 6.4.7 (iii) a]
- 4.2 Progress at March 2012 – In evaluating the actions taken to respond to 2011-12 priorities (above), the BME Forum decide to take the opportunity to review progress with other related priorities within the BAME Strategic Plan. This is to ensure there is a holistic approach in tracking change and impact in respect of the inter-related issues outlined in the Plan.
- 4.3 **The response to the priority actions relating to this theme has been quite positive. However, it is recognised from the template below that there is room for further developments in respect of improved dialogue, through more joined up partnership work, particularly with key agencies across the wider BAME sector. It is anticipated that the recent government initiative relating to the Equality Delivery Scheme should assist the process of identifying gaps and making meaningful change for the legislated 9 equality protected groups.**

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3. Plan’s Thematic Reference (2 & 4): HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (Including Older People

(i) Provide coordinated service planning and delivery

	Priority Action Reference: 6.2.8 (iv) a-e	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
	<p><b>a</b> BAME VCOS to work in partnership to promote a more joined up working approach to service planning and delivery and to health promotion and prevention.</p> <p><b>b</b> Develop Merton Unity Network’s (MUN) Peer Support Network (PSN) Health sub-group to improve support to BAME VCOS and their clients.</p> <p><b>c</b> Establish and develop meaningful health partnerships with regional and national agencies. Lobby to raise awareness of BAME health inequalities and to remove barriers to a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p><b>d</b> Establish a BAME VCO ‘Health Partnership’ with SWLNHS to jointly undertake health education and prevention workshops, disseminate information, and support health events, e.g. annual health days.</p> <p><b>e</b> Establish meaningful working relationships within a local ‘health partnership’; with BAME VCOS effectively utilised and supported, as partners, to:</p> <p><b>e1</b> Promote healthier lifestyles.</p> <p><b>e2</b> Facilitate health training and services, e.g. develop Health Centres and other health training resources into complete ‘Cultural Competency’ training programme or toolkit to be produced jointly by BAME VCOS and NHSSM and delivered by BAME VCOS and BAME NHSSM staff (who may have inside knowledge where there is lack of</p>	<p>(a)-(b) Ongoing with BAME VCOS via BME Forum &amp; PSN Health sub-group - working in consultation with a range of partners. In addition, service planning through the BAME Strategic Plan, seminars and other events, e.g. Happy Soul Festival. PAnderson/MUN/BMEF <b>Sutton and Merton Public Sector Equality Duty report</b> highlights the progress made in service planning and delivery. Appendix 2 highlights key public health initiatives which raise awareness of health inequalities and remove barriers to a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p><b>Duty to Involve report</b> describes the engagement activity that has been undertaken. WShahain/SWLNHS</p> <p>(c) Fanon/Kiara College/EMC/MUN, etc. working in partnership with neighbouring network (WandsworthCEN) to form a sub-regional health consortium to lobby on BAME health inequalities.</p> <p>(c)-(e) These issues and initiatives are to be evaluated by the BME Forum, regional health consortium and key partners for their effectiveness in respect of outreach and in addressing BAME health inequalities. PAnderson/MUN/BMEF</p> <p>(e1-2) NHS SW London has commissioned ‘<b>LiveWell</b>’ service; providing personalised support for healthy lifestyles. This includes providing accredited training for community advocates and champions. An EIA on delivery was undertaken on the service to inform future development.</p> <p>Merton Health Diversity Project delivers ‘Help Yourself to Health’ courses to diverse and <b>seldom heard communities</b>.</p> <p>NHS SW London has trained 34 <b>weight management</b> Advisors who have delivered 15 ten-week adult Weight2Go programmes across Sutton &amp; Merton. Sessions are delivered in areas identified in the JSNA with high ethnically diverse populations.</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e1</b></p> <p><b>e2</b></p>

3. Plan’s Thematic Reference (2 & 4): HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (Including Older People

<p>knowledge in some areas).  <b>e3</b> Develop and sustain local specialist health services, e.g. Merton’s Drug Education/Culture Project and the Mental Health awareness project (eg Happy Soul Festival).</p>	<p>(e3) The BME Forum and BAME health consortium will explore these issues with SWLNHS and other key partners in order to ensure outreach to (and real impact is achieved for) communities. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p>*e3</p>
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(ii) Provision of information that is widely disseminated and acted upon

Priority Action Reference: 6.2.8 (ii) a-i	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Improve ‘local health data sharing’ and obtain a continual dialogue between BAME organisations and health agencies, through MUN/PSN and other ‘Health Partnerships’.  <b>b</b> BAME VCOs to host regular joint health workshops and adopt a joined up working approach to health promotion and prevention.  <b>c</b> Create education initiatives to raise awareness of conditions/ diseases  <b>d</b> Create education initiatives to raise awareness of services and assist engagement processes e.g. clarity of service procedure, time scales, transparency, what to expect, timely points in calendar to submit views (key decision making, strategic review etc).  <b>e</b> NHSSM to provide health data and statistics broken down by different ethnic groups and needs, e.g. mapping of disease impact (top 10); most prevalent across ethnic groups.  <b>f</b> NHSSM to provide in JSNA data an analysis of needs of individual communities in local areas.  <b>g</b> NHS Sutton and Merton Patient Advice and</p>	<p>(a) – The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment provides data on ethnicity and health where this is available. It highlights implications for commissioners for BAME communities. [J.Groom/W.Shahain/SWLNHS]                      (b) – Hosting of health events by BAME VCOs is carried out sparsely because of the lack of funds within the BAME sector, e.g. the externally funded Happy Soul Festival which focuses on mental health has reduced substantially. [J.Groom/W.Shahain/SWLNHS]                      © - (d) The Merton Health Diversity Project provides support to new migrant communities to access health services and improve their health via Tamil and Polish health advocates.                      (e) The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED report summarises information held by Sutton and Merton Borough Team around data collection and monitoring.                      (f) The implementation of the Equality Delivery System (EDS) within the NHS will focus strongly on data collection and analysis, highlighting gaps for action. A documents list has been collated which brings together the rich data available. [W.Shahain/SWLNHS]                      (g) Link to PALS/Complaints report broken down by age, disability, gender and ethnicity is</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p> <p><b>f</b></p>

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3. Plan’s Thematic Reference (2 & 4): HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (Including Older People

<p>Liaison Service (PALS) and Complaints Department to provide breakdown of statistics and data across geographic regions and ethnic groups to MUN/PSN to enable BAME VCOs to work effectively as partners to improve access to better health care.</p> <p><b>h</b> Specialist health check/screening days/weeks for different conditions to take place at various locations at borough hotspots. Mobile health checks clinics/Outreach work; provision of transport.</p> <p><b>i</b> Set milestones to considerably decrease racial health inequalities.</p>	<p>available in Appendix 1 of the PSED report. [J.Groom/W.Shahain/SWLNHS]</p> <p>MUN/BMEF/PSN have over the years made attempts to obtain relevant BAME data and to engage with partners on specific issues, such as mental health, Sicklecell and Thalasemia and will continue to work collaboratively to pursue improvement in specialist service delivery. Agencies such as MPH recognise the gap in provision and have provided support to BAME VCOs through their funding regime. [Patricia Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(h) This issue could be considered as part of the investment to establish a new health centre in Mitcham. [Patricia Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(l) The new Equality Delivery Scheme if used effectively, as an evaluation tool, should be able to highlight health inequalities and achieve positive change. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p><b>g</b></p>
		<p><b>h</b></p>
		<p><b>i</b></p>

(iii) Develop cultural competence. Ensuring service provision reflect the demographics of the borough

Priority Action Reference: 6.2.8 (iii) a-e	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Map, demographically, health care provision to show, geographically, the distribution of health care services throughout the borough, for the purpose of bridging gaps and targeting disproportionality; to enable access to all local communities.</p> <p><b>b</b> Create education initiatives to raise awareness of cultures/ communities; in particular, understanding the implications for those who rely on their own communities for care.</p> <p><b>c</b> Establish a pool of trained cultural health advisers; educating local individuals for outreach into diverse communities</p> <p><b>d</b> Support local groups to act as a bridge to</p>	<p>(a) The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment includes demographic data on new migrant communities by geography, and health data mapped by geography where available. Sutton and Merton Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) report highlights the progress made in service planning and delivery. Appendix 2 highlights key public health initiatives which raise awareness of health inequalities and remove barriers to a healthy lifestyle. Duty to involve report describes the engagement activity that has been undertaken. [NHSSWLondon]</p> <p>(b)-(c) The Merton Health Diversity Project has delivered training for primary care staff on registering new patients and cultural awareness. [J.Groom/SWLNHS]</p> <p>(d) MPH, has made some attempt through their funding streams. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p>

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3. Plan’s Thematic Reference (2 & 4): HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (Including Older People

<p>improve access to services; ensure outreach in certain geographical areas.  <b>e</b> Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to ensure that commissioned services are tailored to local demographic needs.</p>	<p>(e) NHS SW London commissioned Insight research into health behaviours which included focus groups with South Asian communities, and African Caribbean, males. This has informed commissioning of health improvement services. [J.Groom/SWLNHS]</p>	<p><b>e</b></p>
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(iv) Effectively challenge health inequalities to ensure services are inclusive and policies representative of the local communities

<p><b>Priority Action Reference: 6.2.8 (iv) a-e</b></p>	<p><b>Progress at mid March 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Traffic lights</b></p>
<p><b>a</b> Lobby and support community-led campaigns to challenge health inequalities and raise awareness.  <b>b</b> Inform communities about their rights and how to ensure they are supported by services and legislation, e.g. Community Development Health Courses by NHSSM.  <b>c</b> Challenge through legal duty; the use of Equality Impact assessments; Equality Schemes, relevant policies and procedures.  <b>d</b> NHS Joint Commissioning to give due regard to the adverse impact of costly medical treatments/bills, which prevent access to health care, for example, establish partnerships that can offer facilities locally; outreach pay, GPS/Clinics, etc.  <b>e</b> Race equality to be a target against which outcomes are measured.</p>	<p>(a) There is an ongoing commitment from MUN/BMEF/PSN to challenge health inequalities through several streams, which include the BAME Strategic Plan. [PAnderson/MUN/BMEF]                      (b) NHS South West London continues to deliver the Community Development and Health Course, which is accredited by the Open Learning Network. [NHSSW/london]                      © The Equality Analysis framework has been revised to include the requirements of the Equality (2010) Act. NHS South West London leads are working to further embed this new tool. Documentation is available on request. [NHSSW/london]                      Objectives relating to Older people are being delivered through the Corporate Equality Scheme. [EWillis/LBM/CS]                      (d)-(e) The new Equality Delivery System (EDS) will highlight areas for action in relation to BAME outcomes. An action is to be developed by the internal EDS steering group by March/April 2012, and input from Merton Unity Network and other BAME organisations has been sought. This links with the BAME Strategic Plan where applicable. [W.Shahain/SWLNHS]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p>

(i) Improve health/social care – Older People

<p><b>Priority Action Reference: 6.4.8 (i) a-g</b></p>	<p><b>Progress at mid March 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Traffic lights</b></p>
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3. Plan’s Thematic Reference (2 & 4): HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (Including Older People

	Priority Action Reference: 6.4.8 (i) a-g	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
	<p><b>a</b> Tailored appropriate care such as care homes; catering specifically for the BAME community.</p> <p><b>b</b> Ensure the myth that the BAME community always takes care of its elderly independent of statutory support is not adopted as a basis for commissioning and that appropriate support and respite are provided for those who choose this option.</p> <p><b>c</b> Information:</p> <p><b>c1</b> Greater effort to communicate sources of support, for example, to BAME carers.</p> <p><b>c2</b> New Deal for carers to be written in simple everyday language and the process to access this benefit is not surrounded by red tape.</p> <p><b>c3</b> Advice on ‘Power of Attorney’ to be distributed at local BAME organisations and clubs, leaflets to be distributed through schools (for children to pass on to parents and grandparents)</p> <p><b>d</b> Provide targeted health screening sessions to the BAME elderly communities at their various organisations and clubs.</p> <p><b>e</b> Dementia:</p> <p><b>e1</b> Ensure outreach work to local BAME VCOs and businesses organisations to disseminate information on dementia.</p> <p><b>e2</b> Address issue of BAME dementia sufferers being misdiagnosed or diagnosed late due to misunderstanding of patients and failure of patients to see GPs when systems first appear.</p> <p><b>e3</b> Ensure occupational therapists are recruited to perform assessments on an individual basis; as caring for a dementia sufferer at home is not always</p>	<p>(a) – (b) LBM/Adult Social Care services are commissioned to deliver culturally appropriate services. This is monitored through the LBM Adult Social care contract monitoring process. [RAhmed-Man/LBM/ASC]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p>
	<p><b>c1</b> Greater effort to communicate sources of support, for example, to BAME carers.</p> <p><b>c2</b> New Deal for carers to be written in simple everyday language and the process to access this benefit is not surrounded by red tape.</p> <p><b>c3</b> Advice on ‘Power of Attorney’ to be distributed at local BAME organisations and clubs, leaflets to be distributed through schools (for children to pass on to parents and grandparents)</p> <p><b>d</b> Provide targeted health screening sessions to the BAME elderly communities at their various organisations and clubs.</p> <p><b>e</b> Dementia:</p> <p><b>e1</b> Ensure outreach work to local BAME VCOs and businesses organisations to disseminate information on dementia.</p> <p><b>e2</b> Address issue of BAME dementia sufferers being misdiagnosed or diagnosed late due to misunderstanding of patients and failure of patients to see GPs when systems first appear.</p> <p><b>e3</b> Ensure occupational therapists are recruited to perform assessments on an individual basis; as caring for a dementia sufferer at home is not always</p>	<p>(a) – (c) LBM/Adult Social Care has commissioned an Information Web Portal to hold care and support information. This will ensure that people have access to information and signposting through one place whether or not they access the web by themselves or go to GPs, voluntary sector staff, health and social care professionals for information. [RAhmed-Man/LBM/ASC]</p> <p>(c1-3) MUN/BMEF will work with LBM and MVSC to ensure these issues are addressed using whatever channels, e.g. the proposed new Web Portal, etc. [PAnderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(d) No comments received from SW London NHS] This issue need to be explored further. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(e)-(g) LBM/Adult Social Care, with MVSC, will be organising a workshop in May/June 2012 with family carers of people with dementia and people who have just received a diagnosis of dementia to review the local dementia strategy implementation plan and agree the care and support outcomes carers and people with dementia want locally. [RAhmed-Man/LBM/ASC]</p> <p>There is a considerable gap in provision in respect of this health issue. Collaborative support (which includes outreach work to local BAME VCOs) in responding to this area is long overdue. [PAnderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p><b>c1</b></p> <p><b>c2</b></p> <p><b>c3</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e1</b></p> <p><b>e2</b></p> <p><b>e3</b></p>

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Revised: 11.07.12



3. Plan's Thematic Reference (2 & 4): HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (Including Older People

Priority Action Reference: 6.4.8 (i) a-g	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p>the safest options.</p> <p><b>e4</b> Ensure that current publicity and promotional materials are culturally sensitive and appropriate. BAME VCO's to be supported to assist in this endeavour.</p> <p><b>f</b> Support to be given to MUN/BME Forum to work with BAME VCOs to deliver a health awareness day.</p> <p><b>g</b> Ensure that a dementia strategy is delivered and implemented.</p>		<p>e4</p> <p>f</p> <p>g</p>

(ii) Provision of culturally appropriate intergenerational services

Priority Action Reference: 6.4.8 (ii) a-d	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Provision of activities that ensure the participation of young and older people</p> <p><b>b</b> Provision of activities that encourage better communication and understanding between older and younger generations</p> <p><b>c</b> Encourage engagement of BAME older people through school activities; passing on historical and cultural information, teaching skills such as embroidery and having a visible face at schools.</p>	<p>(a) – (c) Intergenerational bridge building is needed, particularly among some BAME communities.</p> <p>LBM - There are intergeneration programmes operating in a number of schools and through Merton Council's Intergeneration Centre, but CSF would welcome organisations coming forward which would be willing to work in partnership with Council's schools and children's centres. [Y.Stanley/LBM/CSF]</p> <p>MUN/BMEF is currently pursuing fund with BAME partners to ensure development in this area.</p>	<p>a</p> <p>b</p> <p>c</p>

(iii) Greater opportunities for socialising – particularly among peers

Priority Action Reference: 6.4.8 (iii) a-c	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Ensure the provision and sustainability of day centres which promotes culturally sensitive and appropriate facilities, such as Taylor Road.</p> <p><b>b</b> Develop and promote collaborative working in the</p>	<p>(a) – (c) Adult Social Care is intending to continue with its existing day centre services that it provides directly in 2012/2013. These are culturally appropriate services. Any re-modelling and re-provision of services whether directly commissioned or provided through the voluntary sector grants programme will be culturally appropriate. The</p>	<p>a</p> <p>b</p>

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3. Plan’s Thematic Reference (2 & 4): HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (Including Older People

	Priority Action Reference: 6.4.8 (iii) a-c	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
	<p>development of joint activities for older people.  <b>c</b> Develop cross-cultural activities to promote cultural heritage and community cohesion.</p>	<p>direction for social care services is to move away from services which institutionalise and make people more dependent than they need to be to enabling people to live as independently as possible in their community. [RAhmed-Man/LBM/ASC]</p>	<p>c</p>
(iv)	<p><b>Recognition of older people contribution</b></p>		
	<p><b>Priority Action Reference: 6.4.8 (iv) a-b</b></p>	<p><b>Progress at mid March 2012</b></p>	
	<p><b>a</b> Ensure support is given to older people towards their assistance in developing the family structure, ie caring for grandchildren.  <b>b</b> Campaign and lobby for financial assistance to be given to grandparents to provide childcare for their grandchildren.</p>	<p>(a) – (b) This is not a LBM/Adult Social Care issue but a universal issue. [RAhmed-Man/LBM/ASC]</p>	<p>a</p>
		<p>MUN/BME Forum/PSN will need to work with partners re developments. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p>b</p>

#### 4. Plan's Thematic Reference (6 & 7): SAFER, STRONGER AND SUSTAINABLE

- 4.1 Merton Partnership's Safer and Stronger Group received, on **30 March 2011 (Item 8)** the following BAME priorities and actions which were selected from the '**Safer, Stronger and Sustainable** theme' of the BAME Strategic Plan; by key partners at the Seminar held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011. Those BAME priorities agreed by key partners are listed below and also shaded grey within Appendix A; which outlines all the related priorities and actions within the BAME Plan.
- 4.1.1 **Reduce fear of crime:** To avert any possible risk, for example, of heightening negative perceptions and low reporting, measures should be taken to ensure better understanding and improve community engagement. This can be achieved through initiatives such as the Stop Hate Line and the Council's Communications Strategy/Plan.
- 4.1.2 **Improve effectiveness and access: influencing change:**
- VCOs to work collaboratively to become more astute about gaining funding
- 4.1.3 **Improve community engagement:**
- Support for BAME VCOs to provide capacity to identify better ways of involving communities in local decisions.
  - Encourage communities to participate in national census 2011
- 4.2 Progress at March 2012 – In evaluating the actions taken to respond to 2011-12 priorities (above), the BME Forum decide to take the opportunity to review progress with other related priorities within the BAME Strategic Plan. This is to ensure there is a holistic approach in tracking change and impact in respect of the inter-related issues outlined in the Plan.
- 4.3 **The response to the priority actions relating to this theme has been quite positive. However, it is recognised from the information presented below that there is room for further developments in respect of improved dialogue, no doubt through more joined up partnership working, particularly with key BAME sector agencies.**

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4. Plan’s Thematic Reference (6 & 7): SAFER, STRONGER AND SUSTAINABLE

(i) Improve community engagement

	Priority Action Reference: 6.7.8 (i) a-h	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic Lights
	<p><b>a</b> Statutory agencies to engage with BAME groups and involve them in developing policies; a duty to involve.</p> <p><b>b</b> Co-operation among voluntary groups; in understanding how best to consult with and seek the opinions of BAME communities and respond to the information gained.</p> <p><b>c</b> Partnership working in getting people involved in decision making processes.</p> <p><b>d</b> Provision of language skills for BAME groups to help them participate and to compete.</p> <p><b>e</b> Support for BAME VCOs to provide capacity to identify better ways of involving communities in local decisions.</p> <p><b>f</b> Encourage communities to participate in national census 2011.</p> <p><b>g</b> Co-ordinate BAME groups and get them involved in participating in civic life, e.g. Overview &amp; Scrutiny Group.</p> <p><b>h</b> Support multi-cultural activities and promote multi-faith dialogue in schools and colleges.</p>	<p><b>(a)-(b)</b> The ‘Duty to Involve’ has now been rescinded by the government and replaced by a new Best Value duty to consult. However Merton Council still regards community engagement as a priority. The <b>Joint Consultative Committee</b> (with Ethnic Minority Organisations) provides a bespoke mechanism for BAME groups to engage with the council. All council consultations and engagement activities are expected to understand the stakeholders involved and use appropriate mechanisms. [K. Witherington/LBM]</p> <p>© <b>Merton Partnership</b> has held two summit events in 2011 including a budget planning event in June 2011 [K. Witherington/LBM]. Through volunteering, a total of 1,256 BAME volunteers (51%) were recruited in 2010/11 and in the first 3 quarters of 2011/12 a total of 1,258 (46%). [S. Hannigan/VCM]</p> <p>(c), (d), (e), (h) – MPH Community Fund objectives include skills development and bringing people together which can include to influence change in their neighbourhood. [T. Cort/MPH].</p> <p>(c)/All consultations should consider what support would be required to ensure stakeholders can engage in the process. [K. Witherington/LBM].</p> <p>(e) MUN/BME Forum acts as a conduit to raise awareness of existing policy decision making structures, for example, through regular meetings of the BME Forum, Peer Support Network/Sub-groups, annual seminars and specific events. Despite specific coverage and articles regularly posted on Merton Connected, BAME VCOs are still not engaging with current mainstream engagement structures, such as Involve (CEN) and the MPA funded Police engagement group. MUN/MVSC/VCM need to work collaboratively to provide capacity (or improve approach) to encourage involvement in decision making. [P. Anderson/MUN]</p> <p>(f) K. Witherington (LBM) attended the BME Forum along with the ONS Regional Manager to encourage participation in 2011 Census. Results from the 2011 census will not be available until June 2012. Indications during the data collection period indicated that Merton had a substantially higher response rate than in 2001.</p> <p>(g) The Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations provides the gateway to participation. For more in-depth engagement such as to ‘call up’ priority issues then access could be through the Overview &amp; Scrutiny process which can be further explored through the BME Forum [P. Anderson/BMEF]</p> <p>(h) Rickards Lodge received Preventing Violent Extremism funding to promote community cohesion work in schools. Secondary Schools conference held Oct 2010 and Primary Schools Conference held Oct 2011 to discuss equalities and faith issues. [E. Willis/LBM]</p>	<p><b>a-b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p> <p><b>f</b></p> <p><b>g</b></p> <p><b>h</b></p>

4. Plan’s Thematic Reference (6 & 7): SAFER, STRONGER AND SUSTAINABLE

(ii) Improve effectiveness and access

a. Influencing change

Priority Action Reference: 6.7.8 (ii) a-c	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic Lights
<p><b>a</b> MUN/BME Forum to explore the statistical data presented to date to identify hidden communities; who are not included in deprivation indices and not accessing services.</p> <p><b>b</b> VCOs to work collaboratively to become more astute about gaining funding.</p> <p><b>c</b> BAME VCOs to plan for a move from grant based to commissioned services.</p> <p><b>d</b> Hold a series of roundtable meetings (eg hate crime); the LSP and thematic groups to address issues relating to barrier of access.</p>	<p>(a) MUN thought the iCoCo ‘community mapping’ commissioned work, by LBM, should have identified hidden communities. Earlier research exercise ‘Emerging Communities’ carried out by LBM (in 2006) identified new/emerging communities (using GP listing, National Insurance data). It is unfortunate that a review of the 2006 in-depth work has not been achieved. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(b) MUN works collaboratively with BAME VCOs in designing and developing ‘fundraising’ courses as part of its annual DRIP ‘capacity building’ training Programme, which to date has supported over 60 groups and a number receiving 1:1 support. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]. MVSC Community Accountant and Development Workers supported over 30 BAME groups to access funding, many groups benefitted from 1:1 and/or group training on various aspects of fundraising and financial management. [C.Frost/MVSC]</p> <p>(b) MPH Community Fund welcomes partnership bids and encourages bids from new and unincorporated VCOs in partnership with established VCOs. [T.Cort/MPH]</p> <p>© Though brief discussions have been had between LBM/MVSC/MUN. Commissioning work for BAME VCOs (to deliver services), needs to be further explored. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(d) Issues relating to barrier of access have (indirectly or directly), been brought to the attention of Merton Partnership thematic groups through the BAME Strategic Plan, e.g. <b>hate crime</b>, the exclusion and isolation of young and older people and lack of access to health services. Further work is needed to specifically explore and address specific barriers of access. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p>

b. Mapping of activities

Priority Action Reference: 6.7.8 (i) a-h	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic Lights
<p><b>e</b> Work in partnership with LBM, MVSC, etc., to improve collection of data to ensure differing service needs are met.</p> <p><b>f</b> BAME VCOs to be supported to research and analyse the gap left by the closure of BAME</p>	<p>(e) MUN/MVSC/VCM through the Transforming Local Infrastructure Fund will be supported for 18 months as from April 2012 to work in partnership to pool databases and hence improve collection of data and thereafter work collaboratively to identify and respond to differing and specific needs. [P.Anderson/MUN/BMEF]</p> <p>(f) There is a distinct role required in ‘supporting’ groups who face closure. [C.Frost/MVSC] A commissioned piece of work is needed to assess the impact of closures of BAME VCOs on communities. [P.Anderson/MUN/Forum]</p>	<p><b>e</b></p> <p><b>f</b></p>

4. Plan’s Thematic Reference (6 & 7): SAFER, STRONGER AND SUSTAINABLE

Progress at mid March 2012		Traffic Lights
<p><b>Priority Action Reference: 6.7.8 (i) a-h</b></p> <p>organisations.  <b>g</b> VCOs to map services and position themselves so that they can highlight which of their existing services align with statutory priorities. For example, cultural and social organisations should emphasise their role in promoting community cohesion which can bring people together and reduce isolation.  <b>h</b> Improve service co-ordination and planning for BAME VCOs.</p>	<p>(g) MUN/BMEF has already begun to map BAME services (and as included in BAME Strategic Plan), but more work is needed to assess impact of service delivery through a centralised mapping partnership database which enables aligning with statutory service priorities, e.g. through a joint partnership Information Web Portal. [P.Anderson/MUN/Forum]</p> <p>- ditto -</p>	<p><b>g</b></p> <p><b>h</b></p>

(iii) **c. Marketing initiatives**  
**d. Capacity building**  
**J Applicable to VCOs**  
**J**  
**Reduce fear of crime and tackle race crime effectively**

Progress at mid March 2012		Traffic lights
<p><b>Priority Action Reference: 6.7.8 (iii) a-c</b></p> <p><b>a</b> VCOs to work in partnership to assess the impact of anti-social behaviour, understand and tackle gang culture; including inter-ethnic through community participation and support.  <b>b</b> VCOs to be supported in their</p>	<p>(a) MUN/BMEF tried to enter into dialogue with the appropriate agencies to explore this issue and have been told that “Monthly Community Tension Monitoring meetings (with the Police and LBM) are held to assess activity that may contribute to tensions in the borough and that the Community Mapping report (by iCoCo) will further highlight challenges for the borough. [P.Anderson(MUN/BMEF)]</p>	<p><b>A</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p>

4. Plan’s Thematic Reference (6 & 7): SAFER, STRONGER AND SUSTAINABLE

Progress at mid March 2012		Traffic lights
<p><b>Priority Action Reference: 6.7.8 (iii) a-c</b></p> <p>diversion work.  <b>c</b> Promote ‘Hate Line’ and encourage BAME VCOs to keep and forward data to appropriate bodies.  <b>d</b> Improve through training, the knowledge base of BAME organisations in order to tackle race crime effectively.  <b>e</b> Create a systematic approach involving statutory organisations to tackling race crime.  <b>f</b> Ensure impact assessments are key aspects of Merton Community Cohesion strategy.  <b>g</b> Monitor and assess services that inadvertently reduce cohesion, eg land use, transparent use of Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy.</p>	<p>(b) MPH Community Fund objectives include bringing people together / community cohesion. [T.Cort/MPH] VCOs projects like ‘Streetwise’ are examples of diversion work undertaken. [D.Hobday/MVSC]</p> <p>© – (d) Stop Hate is still being promoted but not particularly via BAME organisations. Stop Hate (UK) are running training for Safer Merton soon but not fully agreed. Safer Merton is happy for MUN/BME Forum to lead on this. As Hate Crime isn’t a strategic priority for Safer Merton they no longer run a strategic response or co-ordination role around this. [A.Elliott/Safer Merton LBM]</p> <p>(d) MPH Community safety team will be moving toward a more neighbourhood focused approach – including an awareness of ward make up. Knowledge of where BME groups are will help to tailor service to the needs of those who find it difficult to access services. [T.Cort/MPH]</p> <p>(e)-(g) MPH weekly Case review meetings help to identify where race/hate crime is occurring and therefore to respond more effectively. [T.Cort/MPH] Monthly Community Tension Monitoring meetings (with the Police and LBM) are held to assess activity that may contribute to tensions in the borough. The Community Mapping report will further highlight challenges for the borough. The Community Cohesion Strategy is being refreshed and will include actions to tackle these issues. Partnership working is essential to the delivery of the strategy. [E.Willis/LBM/CE]</p>	<p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p> <p><b>f</b></p> <p><b>g</b></p>

4. Plan’s Thematic Reference (6 & 7): SAFER, STRONGER AND SUSTAINABLE

(iv) Address the concerns that some BAME communities do not feel that people are getting on together

Priority Action Reference: 6.7.8 (iv) a-f	Progress at mid March 2012	Traffic lights
<p><b>a</b> Carry out work to understand the tensions from the perspective of different communities to help devise ways of diffusing these difficulties.</p> <p><b>b</b> BAME VCOs to be supported to develop interventions and group activities that can bring communities together.</p> <p><b>c</b> Develop opportunities for people to discover positive aspects of fellow communities. e.g. VCO mentoring schemes support across ethnic groups</p> <p><b>d</b> Support community activities that allow groups to work together to meet pressing needs and put aside historical tensions.</p> <p><b>e</b> VCOs to be supported so they can continue day to day social cohesion work, building social capital which helps communities help each other.</p> <p><b>f</b> BAME VCOs to work collectively, across communities; sharing resources to strengths and overcome issues.</p>	<p>(a) The Community Tension Monitoring meetings and Local Multi Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) process are already in place to address these issues. [E.Willis/LBM/CE]</p> <p>(a)-(f) MPH Community Fund objectives include bringing people together / community cohesion. [T.Cort/MPH]</p> <p>(b)-(f) The Community Cohesion Strategy is being refreshed and will include actions to tackle these issues. Partnership working is essential to the delivery of the strategy. [E.Willis/LBM/CE]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>e</b></p> <p><b>f</b></p>



4. Plan’s Thematic Reference (6 & 7): SAFER, STRONGER AND SUSTAINABLE

(v) Work to assess and fill the gap in specialist service provision for BAME communities

Priority Action Reference: 6.7.8 (v) a-c	Progress at mid March 2012	
<p><b>a</b> Research and analyse gap left by the closure of BAME organisations and identify capacity to address these, e.g MREP.</p> <p><b>b</b> Identify gaps in local specialist service, for example, for supporting BAME victims and witnesses; dealing with racial harassment and discriminatory casework, advocacy and education about equality law.</p> <p><b>c</b> Promote the work of Recommendation 61: Stop and Search Monitoring Group.</p>	<p>(a) – (c) With support of appropriate funding streams, MUN/BMEF will work in partnership to identify capacity to address the gap in BAME specialist services. [P.Anderson/MUN/Forum]</p>	<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p>

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BAME: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic; BMEF: Black and Minority Ethnic Forum; MPH: Merton Priory Homes; MUN/PSN: Merton Unity Network/Peer Support Network; LBM: London Borough of Merton; CSF: Children Schools and Families; CEQS: Corporate Services; MVSC: Merton Voluntary Service Council; SWLNHS: South West London National Health Service; VCM: Volunteer Centre Merton

**Committee:** Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minority Organisations  
**Date:** 26 September 2012  
Agenda item:  
Wards: All

**Subject:** Equality Objectives – Refresh of the Equality Strategy  
Lead officer: Kate Martyn, Head Policy, Strategy and Partnerships  
Lead member: Councillor Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities  
Forward Plan reference number: N/A  
Contact officer: Evereth Willis (evereth.willis@merton.gov.uk)

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**Recommendations:**

That the Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations (JCC) notes:

- A. The details of the report and the proposed timetable to develop the council's Equality Objectives 2013/14.
- B. Nominates representatives to attend a focus group to contribute to the development of the Equality Objectives.

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. To update the JCC on the development of Equality Objectives for 2013/14 and seek input on the development of the council's refreshed Equality Strategy.

**2. DETAILS**

- 2.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) 2010-2013 is a three-year strategy that sets out how we will tackle discrimination and inequality and promote equal opportunities in Merton. The CES also sets out the council's equalities objectives as required by the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires local authorities to publish equalities objectives every four years. As our current equality strategy is about to expire, we are required to review the council's equality commitments, develop new objectives and publish them by April 2013.
- 2.3 The Corporate Equality Steering Group (comprised of staff and voluntary and community representatives) met on 12 September and proposed the following high level priorities;
  - 2.31 Improving engagement and empowerment
    - Young People engagement
    - Black and Minority Ethnic engagement
    - Voluntary and Community Sector support for engagement
    - Carers/Links and other groups
  - 2.32 Promoting community cohesion
    - Community Cohesion action plan

- Celebrating diversity
- Responding to the residents' survey
- Partnership work with the community
- Addressing demographic change

#### 2.33 Tackling inequality

- Health inequality
- Achievement and employment
- Economic development
- Anti-poverty work

#### 2.34 Service access and opportunity

- Prevention and independence
- Public Value Reviews ensuring equality built in
- Savings all have thorough Equality Analysis
- Commissioning services improved by equalities needs analysis
- Contracts equality proofed

#### 2.35 Workforce Development

- Being a best practice employer
- Developing staff from under-represented groups
- Apprenticeships for under-represented groups (Looked After Children, mental health, Young People, offenders)
- Valuing staff's diversity / staff appreciation of diversity in the community

2.36 The priorities were identified from departmental priorities, statistical data and other sources such as the results of the Annual Residents Survey. They will be developed into the council's Equality Objectives and accompanied by actions with measurable outcomes.

2.37 The JCC is invited to nominate representatives to attend a focus group to contribute to the development of the Equality Objectives.

### 3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1 As this report is for information only, alternative options have not been provided.

### 4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1 Extensive consultation will be undertaken with the voluntary and community sector and partner agencies, details of which are outlined in 5.1 below.

### 5. TIMETABLE

5.1 The consultation timetable is outlined below:

Action	Date
General communications: articles on Merton Connected and Merton Together, press release, Merton website	

Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minority Organisations	12 September 2012
Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Forum	3 October 2012
Document to go to Leaders Strategy Group	29 October 2012
Draft document out for public consultation	1 November 2012 – 31 December 2012
Document to go to go to Overview and Scrutiny Commission	28 November 2012
Safer and Stronger Strategy Group	28 November 2012
Interfaith Forum	5 December 2012
Childrens Trust	7 December 2012
Sustainable Communities and Transport Board	6 December 2012
Health and Wellbeing Board	To be confirmed
Updated document to be presented to Corporate Equality Steering Group meeting.	12 December 2012
Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minority Organisations	12 December 2012
INVOLVE	To be confirmed
Black and Minority Ethnic Forum	December 2012
Citizenship and Inclusion Board	20 November 2012
Make changes to document in light of public consultation process	January 2013
Document to go to CMT	8 January 2013
Document to go to Leaders Strategy Group	5 February 2013
Final draft document to Cabinet as a key decision	18 February 2013
Document to be presented to Council for adoption	27 March 2013
Launch and publicity for new objectives	April 2013

## 6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is envisaged that identified priorities will be undertaken within existing resources.

## 7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 On 6 April 2011 the Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the Local Authority, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not. “Protected characteristics” are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.2 Developing and publishing Equality Objectives setting out the council’s equality commitments will support the council to meet the PSED.

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## 8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION

## **IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 By setting out its equalities commitments and publishing Equality Objectives the Council is re-affirming its commitment to human rights, equality and community cohesion.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None

## **10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Failure to publish Equality Objectives is a breach of the Equality Act 2010.

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

- 11.1 None

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme 2010-13

[http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/plansandpolicies/corporate\\_equality\\_scheme\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/plansandpolicies/corporate_equality_scheme_pdf.pdf)

## **13. CONTACTS**

### **13.1 REPORT AUTHOR**

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