

Merton Council Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Date: 10 March 2015
Time: 7.15 pm
Venue: Committee rooms B, C & D - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden
SM4 5DX

AGENDA

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| 2 | Apologies for absence | |
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| 4 | Call in - adult education in Merton - evidence and options for achieving a value for money service : Appendix 1 – call in request form (page 11) Appendix 2 – call in response (page 17) Appendix 3 – Cabinet report (page 23) Appendix 4 – reference from Sustainable Communities (page 257) | 9 - 260 |
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**This is a public meeting – members of the public are very welcome to attend.
The meeting room will be open to members of the public from 7.00 p.m.**

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Overview and Scrutiny Commission membership

Councillors:

Peter Southgate (Chair)
Peter McCabe (Vice-Chair)
Hamish Badenoch
John Dehaney
Brenda Fraser
Suzanne Grocott
Jeff Hanna
Russell Makin
Oonagh Moulton
Dennis Pearce

Substitute Members:

Abigail Jones
John Sargeant
David Simpson CBE
David Williams
Peter Walker

Co-opted Representatives

Simon Bennett, Secondary and Special
School Parent Governor Representative
Peter Connellan, Roman Catholic diocese
Denis Popovs, Primary School Parent
Governor Representative
Colin Powell, Church of England diocese

Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that matter and must not participate in any vote on that matter. If members consider they should not participate because of a non-pecuniary interest which may give rise to a perception of bias, they should declare this, withdraw and not participate in consideration of the item. For further advice please speak with the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance.

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

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

Scrutiny's work falls into four broad areas:

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

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

For more information, please contact the Scrutiny Team on 020 8545 3864 or by e-mail on scrutiny@merton.gov.uk. Alternatively, visit www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

29 JANUARY 2015

(19.15 - 22.20)

PRESENT

Councillors Councillor Peter Southgate (in the Chair), Councillor Peter McCabe, Councillor Hamish Badenoch, Councillor John Dehaney, Councillor Brenda Fraser, Councillor Suzanne Grocott, Councillor Jeff Hanna, Councillor Russell Makin, Councillor Oonagh Moulton, Councillor Dennis Pearce and Denis Popovs

Sophie Ellis (Assistant Director of Business Improvement), Paul Dale (Assistant Director of Resources), Paul Evans (Assistant Director of Corporate Governance), John Hill (Head of Public Protection and Development, ENVR), Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services), Mark Humphries (Assistant Director Infrastructure & Transactions), David Keppler (Head of Revenues and Benefits) and Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration)

1 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST - SEE NOTE OVERLEAF (Agenda Item 1)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests. Councillor Makin informed the Commission that he is on the Board of Merton Community Transport

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Colin Powell, Simon Bennett and Peter Connellan.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2014 (Agenda Item 3)

Agreed.

4 CUSTOMER CONTACT PROGRAMME - UPDATE (Agenda Item 4)

The Chair pointed out that that officers would not be able to discuss detail about specific companies as it is commercially sensitive information.

The Assistant Director of Business Improvement gave an overview of the report stating that we now have two bidders, both whom could deliver the contract, final tenders will be received shortly then the evaluation process will begin.

Councillor Makin queried what support would be available for residents who do not use the internet.

The Assistant Director of Business Improvement said we will retain other channels of access and people will not be disadvantaged if they do not have on-line access but we will encourage as many people to go on line as possible.

Councillor Moulton asked whether the budget for the customer contact project was set aside in 2012-13, if more money will be required and what will be on the website this year.

The Assistant Director of Business Improvement said the bidders will submit an implementation plan and timescale by September; it will include interactive portals on waste, streets and parking services. By April 2016 we expect further services including those relating to parks and leisure, planning and complaints and freedom of information requests to be on the website. We have scheduled in resources, we have asked bidders to state in their tenders what resources they require and this will be taken into consideration during the evaluation.

The Director of Corporate Services said there is an overall price and bidders must come within that.

Councillor Grocott asked for clarification on how bidders will be incentivised to include the maximum number of services in their integration and the link between department savings and how this will feed into the customer contact programme.

The Assistant Director of Business Improvement said the bidders' quality score is weighted by the number of service integrations they include in their tender.

The Customer Contact programme underpins activity set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. We also looked at the Target Operating Model for each service to determine where services are looking to move customers on line so that the programme helps departments to meet their savings targets.

The Director of Corporate Services said it may not immediately be apparent which savings are linked to the customer contact programme, for example libraries and the on-line booking system will be delivered through the customer contact programme.

Councillor Badenoch asked officers to clarify if we are spending £3.5 million on the customer contact programme, including the electronic document management system, with the savings embedded although we do not know what they are.

The Director of Corporate Services said it was agreed not to build in savings until we are sure what can be achieved. This was agreed in the 2012 Cabinet paper and once the final solution is selected we can state with confidence the expected savings. The basis on which the programme was agreed by Cabinet was that it was part of making the council more business like and efficient and is being funded from reserves earmarked for this purpose.

Councillor Dehaney asked what provision there will be for customers who go on line but English is not their first language.

The Assistant Director of Business Improvement said as part of the specification both officers and customers will be involved in designing and testing the website to ensure that it is designed in a way that customers will understand.

Councillor Hanna asked what safeguards we have to ensure that the contract is open ended so we can make changes to the website if we need to, and if this will incur an additional cost.

The Assistant Director of Business Improvement said the specification within the contract will include details of financial penalties if there is a failure and we will hold contractors to account. We are also negotiating an upfront competitive day rate with contractors should the need to do additional work arises.

RESOLVED

The Commission thanked officers for their report and would like an update on the progress with this work in due course.

5 BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLAN 2015-19 (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair asked the Director of Corporate Services to give a brief overview of the Business Plan highlighting current changes and risk to deliverability of savings.

The Director of Corporate Services said we currently have a budget gap of £15.3 million if all proposals put forward to members are accepted. To put it into context this could mean a loss of 367 posts if the council choose to make the savings through staffing. We have used capital receipts to fund some short term assets, it takes time for these savings to appear in the funding of the programme. The Budget for 2015-16 is balanced. The budget for 2016-17 is balanced at this stage although the assumptions are based on the current Treasury projections. This could change after the general election.

The level of risk for savings is increasing year on year, some details of deliverability of high risk savings for the future need to be finalised and we will do this closer to the time. We have delivered on high reputational risks so far. We are constantly reviewing and challenging managers regarding delivering savings. The Human Resources and Procurement teams are also helping to manage the change. We are also working with councils across South West London who are dealing with similar issues.

Councillor McCabe asked for clarification on what has happened to the council finances and why are we facing this. What has happened to our support from Central Government, what are our boundaries and flexibilities, should we be increasing council tax and are our level of reserves too high.

The Director of Corporate Services said the government grant funding regime has changed; there has been a separation out of the Business Rates. The council has had a 20% reduction in funding since 2010. We have also lost £12 million a year in area based grants.

Increasing Council Tax is an option available to the council, we currently have a council tax freeze grant, this is reducing over time. If we increase council tax above 2%, it would trigger a local referendum, which would cost £300,000. A 1% increase in council tax would yield £800,000. Therefore a council tax increase cannot close the budget gap over a four year period but an increase is still an option for the future.

Our current levels of reserves are not too high. We currently have £14 million in the general fund reserves, after allowing for the current overspend. Some of our reserves are dedicated to schools which cannot be used by us. We also have monies set aside for the Transforming Families and Apprentices Programmes. There are limits on the way we can use capital receipts but we will be using some which will reduce the reserves.

Councillor Grocott said the majority of savings seemed to come from reduction in service rather than making efficiencies.

The Director of Corporate Services said we are constantly ensuring that we focus on efficiency savings, but it is not always possible. Many councils across the country have closed libraries and children's services but we have not done that.

The Assistant Director of Resources drew Commission members' attention to Page 130 of the agenda pack which highlighted that the majority of the savings are efficiencies rather than service reduction.

Councillor Badenoch asked what percentage of savings in 2015/16 is based on failure to deliver pre-agreed savings.

The Director of Corporate Resources said the savings for which alternatives were brought forward is approximately £500,000.

Councillor McCabe asked for clarification on how much 20% of government funding equates to in monetary terms.

The Assistant Director of Resources said the service specific grants are around £20 million.

Councillor Hanna said Stephen Hammond MP had recently given an interview and said the council has been irresponsible in its failure to use its reserves of £100 million. Councillor Hanna asked the Director of Corporate Services to write to Mr Hammond and confirm her advice to the Commission about the actual level of reserves we hold and that they are not excessive.

The Chair confirmed that we currently have general fund reserves of £18.8 million which will reduce to £14 million by the 31st March.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration gave an overview in regards to savings E&R43. Safer Merton had recently cut the Head of Service post which was totally through efficiencies as there was no reduction in service. The department is

now looking for further savings which will save £70,000 in two years in non- statutory services. The detailed proposals will be worked up over the next two years.

The Head of Public Protection said they are looking for opportunities to bring forward efficiencies before 2017-18.

Councillor Southgate said he is concerned about prolific offenders who are small in number but cause disproportionately high social and economic costs.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration said we are working with Mayor's Office of Police and Crime to tackle this issue.

The Assistant Director of Infrastructure and Transactions gave an overview of the saving proposals in his area (CSD1-CDD8)

Councillor Southgate asked why CSD2 has not been extended to 2016-17

The Assistant Director Infrastructure & Transactions said we cannot extend the programme yet as we do not know the level of government funding for the future.

Councillor Badenoch asked if there are any savings for 2015-16. The Assistant Director of Infrastructure and Transactions confirmed that there is a rolling programme of savings.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance introduced the proposed savings in relation to CSD43 - CSD45 highlighting we currently have legal service shared with Richmond, Kingston, and the proposed shared services will allow us to share information across four councils.

The Chair highlighted that the proposed cuts include webcasting costs £15,000 per year and attracts around 1000 views per month. The scrutiny support fund would be cut but training for councillors would be available through the learning and development budget.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance clarified that we currently have around 1,500 views per month and most take place after the event, two hundred for planning with the remaining for Full Council.

Councillor Badenoch asked if the following savings can be brought forward: CSD16, CSD17,CSD22.

The Director of Corporate Services said that further investigations would be required to see if this would be possible.

RESOLVED

The Commission were concerned about the proposed savings and the impact upon vulnerable residents. Officers have been asked to consider which savings can be brought forward and The Financial Monitoring Task Group will consider alternative sources of revenue.

6 SCRUTINY OF THE BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2019: COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS (Agenda Item 6)

The Chair said he is concerned about the savings but has not been able to reject them as it is difficult to find alternative savings. There may be other things we can do and the Financial Monitoring Task Group will be well placed to consider other ideas. Possible alternative sources of funding could include the pension deficit; look at the council's estate, higher values gained from property being converted from office to residential use, inflation, charging a fee for diesel cars. There are some revenue opportunities and if we had had time we could have considered alternative options.

The Director of Corporate Services said we have built in assumptions based on the rise in interest rates. We also need to ensure that we do not reconstitute a housing revenue account if we attempt to change the use of council property.

The Chair asked the Director of Corporate Services to work with the Financial Monitoring Group to look for alternative sources of revenue to fund some of the savings.

Councillor Grocott expressed concern about saving CH13 suggesting that it should be re-considered. Councillor Grocott moved a motion asking for CH13 to be referred back to Cabinet. Councillor Lewis Lavender seconded the motion.

The motion was defeated by 5 votes to 4.

The Commission asked Cabinet to note its concerns in three main areas:
The commission expressed serious concern about the loss of the council's Youth Service. (CSF06)

The Commission had serious concerns about proposed reduction in planning enforcement and ask that officers further develop the proposals and bring back suggestions for further scrutiny. (ER30)

The Commission has serious concerns about the reduction in services in day care centres. (CH13).

Councillor Badenoch said all political parties have said they will maintain the current funding levels for local government after the election. However we do have choices, some councils have cut communications teams to support adult social care. We need to think radically and holistically about changing the way we work to protect services for vulnerable people.

Councillor Badenoch said there were opportunities to bring forward some savings. The Director of Corporate Services said bringing forward savings would only benefit us for one year.

RESOLVED

That a reference is sent to Cabinet highlighting the Commission's areas of concern in regards to the savings.

That the Director of Corporate Services work with the Financial Monitoring Task Group to identify alternative sources of revenue to fund some of the savings.

7 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF PUBLIC SECTOR DELIVERY MODELS - SCOPE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (Agenda Item 7)

The Chair asked Commission members if they wished to join a task group looking at public sector delivery models.

Councillor Makin expressed an interest in joining the task group. Commission members expressed concern that the scope of the work is very broad. It was agreed that a refined scope should be considered at the March meeting.

RESOLVED

That the scope for a possible task group on public sector delivery models should be refined and brought to the Commission in March 2015.

8 WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15 (Agenda Item 8)

The Commission noted the work programme.

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Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 10 March 2015

Wards: All

Subject: Call in of Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service

Lead officer: Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing

Lead member: Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Education

Contact officer: Gareth Young, Business Partner, Community and Housing

Recommendations:

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission consider the information provided in response to the call-in request and decide whether to:
- refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration; or
 - Determine that the matter is contrary to the policy and/or budget framework and refer the matter to full Council; or
 - Decide not to refer the matter back to Cabinet, in which case the decision shall take effect immediately.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides a response to the points raised in the call-in request relating to Cabinet's decision regarding the Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service report, taken on 16 February 2015.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The call in request and documents provided in response to this are appended to this report.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Council's constitution requires the Commission to select one of the options listed in recommendation A.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. None for the purposes of this covering report.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. None for the purposes of this covering report.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None for the purposes of this covering report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. The Council's constitution requires the Commission to select one of the options listed in recommendation A.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purposes of this covering report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purposes of this covering report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purposes of this covering report.

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

- Appendix 1 – call-in request form
- Appendix 2 – Merton Council - Call-in: Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service– Response document
- Appendix 3 - Cabinet Report, 16 February 2015
- Appendix 4 – Reference from Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to Cabinet, 16 February 2015

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. Various relevant e-mails (available from scrutiny team on request)

Merton Council - call-in request form

1. Decision to be called in: (required)

Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service

2. Which of the principles of decision making in Article 13 of the constitution has not been applied? (required)

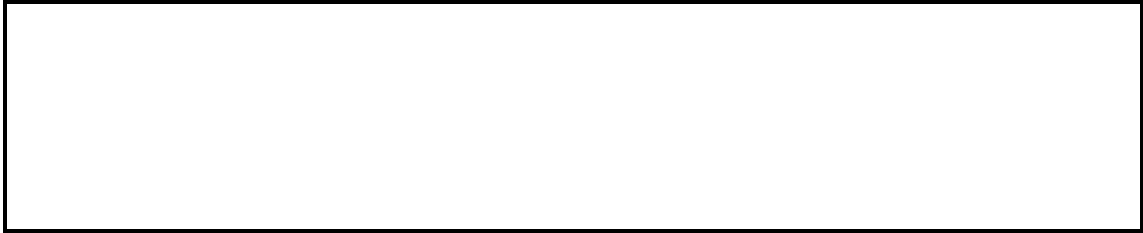
Required by part 4E Section 16(c)(a)(ii) of the constitution - tick all that apply:

| | |
|---|---|
| (a) proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome); | X |
| (b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers; | X |
| (c) respect for human rights and equalities; | X |
| (d) a presumption in favour of openness; | X |
| (e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes; | X |
| (f) consideration and evaluation of alternatives; | X |
| (g) irrelevant matters must be ignored. | |

3. Desired outcome

Part 4E Section 16(f) of the constitution- select one:

| | |
|---|---|
| (a) The Panel/Commission to refer the decision back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns. | X |
| (b) To refer the matter to full Council where the Commission/Panel determines that the decision is contrary to the Policy and/or Budget Framework | |
| (c) The Panel/Commission to decide not to refer the matter back to the decision making person or body * | |
| * If you select (c) please explain the purpose of calling in the decision. | |



4. Evidence which demonstrates the alleged breach(es) indicated in 2 above (required)

Required by part 4E Section 16(c)(a)(ii) of the constitution:

We continue to welcome Cabinet's decision to reject option 6 to cease offering Adult Education services in Merton completely. We also acknowledge and welcome the new set of principles adopted by the Cabinet which will apply to the future of MAE which has addressed a number of important concerns around the learners, particularly those with additional needs.

However, we remain concerned about the premise of this decision and whether it is based on correct financial assumptions. We also have concerns about the quality of the consultation undertaken and the lack of regard that seems to have been given by Cabinet to the consultation results.

a) Proportionality and f) consideration and evaluation of alternatives;

There remain real doubts about whether what have been proposed as options for the future of the MAE service are in fact proportional to the challenges faced.

Figures set out in the Service Plan for MAE indicate that the service generates a gross surplus for the Council and makes a significant contribution to the central corporate overhead. Yet this important point is not considered or addressed in the financial sections of the report before Cabinet which only addresses the inflow of funds and not the outflow. There is still no evidence that this has been taken into account when formulating the options that were presented for consultation.

Similarly, whilst information is provided in the 16th February Cabinet report in response to Scrutiny's request regarding splitting the ASB and CL provision and also regarding the retained costs of each option, this important financial information doesn't appear to have been fed into the development of the initial options that were then put out for consultation. The absence of due consideration to these alternatives casts doubt on the whole rationale for making such drastic changes to a highly valued service.

The consultation also gives a series of seemingly mutually exclusive options rather than allowing for consideration of a mixed approach whereby the core services continue to be delivered at Whatley Avenue whilst, for example, the merits of a back office merger with South Thames College

are considered along with the option for some specialised or less popular courses to be commissioned rather than delivered. Given the important financial information above, it is unclear why this mixed solution does not form part of the council's consultation. As such, it seems Cabinet has not properly evaluated all of the alternatives for delivering the MAE service in the future and thereby residents and users are being denied the opportunity to consider such mixed solutions as part of the consultation. It is also unclear what the property implications of these changes will be for the council.

Once again, the Cabinet report makes very little reference to the wide ranging recommendations from the Adult Skills and Employability scrutiny task group other than to say they will be adopted where possible as part of the alternative model. Yet it is precisely these recommendations that could potentially lead to additional sources of revenue to enable the MAE service to offset any further reductions in funding from the Skills Funding Agency. For example, the report provides no detail of what consideration has been given to proposals for MAE to subsidise courses for local residents by providing professional training courses to local businesses, charged at commercial rates or by linking with a local university to enable residents to study for degrees through evening classes at Whatley Avenue. It is crucial that proper consideration is given to the implementation of these recommendations before the Cabinet's decision in favour of Option 4 is implemented.

Finally, what has been made clear by council officers at scrutiny and other meetings and is strongly inferred as part of this report is that the Cabinet's decision is predicated solely on future risk management. Contrary to how it was initially presented to opposition councillors and residents, it is not in fact about savings (as has been demonstrated in previous paragraphs). Proper risk management is of course important for any organisation and yet, in this case, the council seems to be swapping certain risks for uncertain ones. For example, Cabinet appears to have given no clear consideration to the risk that moving to a commissioning model could pose to future funding for Merton from the Skills Funding Agency. There is presumably a possibility that future available government funding could be lost as a result of this decision but has that been properly assessed and evaluated as part of the financial analysis. This is not clear. In fact, when it comes to Risk Management Implications, the report at section 11.1 states simply 'None' even though in fact this is the crux of the Cabinet's whole decision.

b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;

We have concerns about the quality of the consultation and, in particular, the wording of the consultation documentation and questions which appear to have been worded in such a manner as to arrive at what are presumably a particular set of answers.

With regard to the consultation results, there appears to have been a

disregard by the Cabinet for the views of consultees on the retention of the Whatley Avenue site as a major centre for MAE.

The analysis of the consultation results indicates that location was clearly an important factor for respondents. Almost 50% of respondents preferred Option 1 and when asked why they had chosen their favoured option, 178 respondents (by far the most) said it was because they value the Whatley Avenue facility. Around 65% of respondents said they are satisfied with Option 1. By comparison, Option 4 was consistently only the 4th most favoured option out of the 5 considered.

Whilst this was of course a consultation and not a referendum, nevertheless this raises serious questions as to whether the Cabinet gave full and proper consideration to the results of the consultation in reaching its decision.

The explanatory text in 2.75 and 2.77, which seeks to caveat the clear preference amongst respondents in favour of Option 1, also suggests an inbuilt prejudice against the retention of the Whatley Avenue site.

c) respect for human rights and equalities;

The Equality Impact Analysis provided with the report on the impact of the Cabinet's proposals concludes that various different groups would be adversely affected by the Cabinet's decision. The EIA states that it 'has identified some potential for negative impact or some missed opportunities to promote equality and it may not be possible to mitigate this fully'.

There are clearly serious concerns among adults with disabilities and their carers about this proposal. Whilst we welcome the Cabinet's recognition of these concerns via principle (vi), the fact remains nevertheless that there has been little evidence produced as to how any disadvantage to this group of vulnerable adults could be mitigated in practice.

Furthermore, the EIA states that 38.1% of learners come from BME groups yet the consultation results do not come near to reflecting this. Response rates to the consultation from BME learners however were very low which casts doubt on the effectiveness of the consultation in ascertaining the views of BME learners and therefore reflecting this in the recommendations considered by the Cabinet.

Finally, at 2.90 the report states that '19% of the respondents....came from the 8 deprived wards in the Borough'. Yet, this is meaningless as it suggests that the other 12 wards in Merton have no deprived residents which is clearly not the case and therefore it is impossible to tell what the response to the consultation was amongst residents who suffer from deprivation.

d) a presumption in favour of openness; and e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes;

Considering the potential loss of government grant income that Merton could incur from commissioning out the service, there are serious questions to be answered about the Cabinet's underlying motivation for the changes. The report does refer at 2.113 to the conveniently timed receipt of a letter from the Harris Federation expressing an interest in the Whatley Avenue site for a potential secondary school.

The cited aims of these changes have changed since these proposals were first mooted. As explored above, they were initially claimed to be for the purpose of generating cost savings. When this proved to be untenable, the argument changed to one of levels of affluence in different parts of the borough and finally it became one of risk management. This leads to the concern that, whilst not explicitly stated, the Cabinet's desired outcome all along was in fact vacating the Whatley Avenue site to enable it to be disposed of or leased to the Harris Federation.

This has been hinted at by individual Cabinet members in the local press but at no point was the future of the Whatley Avenue site properly considered as part of this process despite the fact it is clearly integral to it (and indeed enjoys high levels of appreciation and support amongst MAE users as indicated by the consultation results). This lack of consideration is demonstrated further by a lack of consultation and dialogue on the future of the Whatley Avenue site with the governors and head teacher of Joseph Hood primary school, which is located next door, despite the obvious knock on effects that any such disposal or use would have.

5. Documents requested

All papers provided to the Director of Community and Housing/Director of Corporate Services/Director of Environment and Regeneration/Director of Children Schools and Families and relevant Cabinet Members prior to, during and subsequent to the decision making process.

All emails where appropriate and relevant, reports and associated documentation relating to the future of the MAE service provided to the relevant Cabinet Member(s), Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Director of Community and Housing, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Children Schools and Families and other council officers.

All correspondence between the relevant Cabinet Member(s), Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Director of Community and Housing, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Director of Corporate Services, Head of

Community Education and other council officers on the future of the MAE service.

The detailed financial analysis of the projected costs/savings to the Council of disposal of the Whatley Avenue site and/or its lease to the Harris Federation.

The Equality Impact Analysis of the impact on different groups of the disposal of the Whatley Avenue site and/or its lease to the Harris Federation.

All emails where appropriate and relevant, reports and associated documentation provided to the relevant Cabinet Member(s), Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Director of Community and Housing, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Children Schools and Families and other council officers relating to the disposal of the Whatley Avenue site and/or its lease to the Harris Federation.

All correspondence between the relevant Cabinet Member(s), Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Director of Community and Housing, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Community Education and other council officers on the disposal of the Whatley Avenue site and/or its lease to the Harris Federation, including all correspondence with the Harris Federation itself.

6. Witnesses requested

Cllr Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Education

Cllr Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration (as lead on Asset Management)

Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing

Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration

Yvette Stanley, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Yvonne Tomlin-Miller, Head of Community Education

Staffside representative

Representative from 'Save MAE' group

Chair of Governors of Joseph Hood Primary School

Head teacher of Joseph Hood Primary School

7. Signed (not required if sent by email):

Councillors James Holmes, Brian Lewis-Lavender and Linda Taylor

Merton Council - Call-in: Adult Education in Merton: Options Appraisal – Response document

Introduction

On 16th February 2014 the Cabinet agreed to the following recommendations within a Cabinet report entitled Adult Education in Merton – evidence and options for achieving a value for money service:

- A. That Cabinet consider the evidence, including the financial analysis, responses to the public consultation and the equalities analysis
- B. That Cabinet reconfirm their commitment to offering adult education services in the borough and their continued rejection of the previously outlined option 6 to cease offering these services.
- C. That Cabinet approve the recommendation to move Adult Education to a Commissioning model (option 4) for the reasons outlined in 3.9 and based on the financial analysis provided in 2.1 That this is based on a commissioning strategy that seeks to provide courses in a diversity of locations around the borough and to make arrangements with providers that provide a supportive and nurturing environment for learners.
- D. That Cabinet endorse the equalities action plan (appendix H)
- E. That Cabinet adopt a series of core principles to underpin future commissioning of this service, in addition to a phased commissioning timetable (3.14)

The Cabinet report was accompanied by a “Reference from Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel – Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service” after the Panel had conducted pre-decision scrutiny on the above report. This reference contained the following recommendations:

That the Cabinet consider the following recommendations made by the Sustainable Communities O&S Panel further to undertaking pre decision scrutiny of Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service:

- A. That the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel support the recommendation that a commissioning model be adopted for the delivery of an adult education service in Merton; and
- B. That Cabinet communicate their commitment to the commissioning principles outlined within the report at paragraph 3.14, in particular, the retention of staff, where possible, and the development of a nurturing environment for learners.
- C. That Cabinet consult the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel at key stages of the implementation of the commissioning model to enable the Panel to undertake pre decision scrutiny.

Cabinet accepted the recommendations of the Scrutiny panel.

The Cabinet decision on the substantive report was Called-In on the 23rd February.

This short covering note is designed to respond to points raised within that ‘Call-In’ notice and to furnish additional information required by the Call-In.

Issues raised within the Call-In notice

1) Proportionality and consideration and evaluation of alternatives

Budget

The Call-in mistakenly states that the current service 'generates a gross surplus for the Council and makes a significant contribution to the central corporate overhead.'

Whilst it is true that the adult education service contributes to paying for its overheads this is very different to stating that the service generates a gross surplus; a statement which suggests that the overheads are not part of the running costs of the service.

The issue of overheads was explored within the Cabinet report including in Appendix A (1.50-1.55) in response to questions raised by the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel who wanted to understand the difference between the controllable and non-controllable overheads; i.e. those directly related to service delivery and those that are a product of cost sharing across the whole local authority (such as health and safety or data protection). Again, these are detailed in Appendix A.

Splitting Adult Skills Budget (ASB) and Community Learning (CL) funding

Members of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel requested that some work be done about splitting the ASB and CL funding and whether this could be a robust model for the future of the service. This work was done and presented to the Cabinet for their consideration.

The Call-in queries why this information was not presented to the public and argues that this casts doubt on the decision making process.

As the desk-top exercise details this work did not present a viable alternative to the options presented to the public. Nor did any member of the public suggest that as an option in the section of the consultation that requested alternatives. The purpose of the consultation, and indeed or pre-decision scrutiny, is to ensure that the Cabinet are able to make an informed decision and we believe the combination of the consultation and the additional work ensures that this happened appropriately.

Other consultation concerns

The Call-in also argues that the approach within the consultation of presenting a number of mutually exclusive options was misleading.

This does mis-represents the consultation. As outlined in previous reports, the options consulted on included hybrid options. In addition, the consultation was actually far broader than a simple referendum about 5 options; instead it tried to discern from services users and interested residents what they valued about the service and what was important to them as we designed a new service. Presenting additional hybrid options that had already been discounted using the desktop analysis would not have changed that element of the consultation.

Scrutiny Review

The Call-in refers to the recommendations from the Adult Skills and Employability scrutiny task group and argues that these could have allowed the service to return to a break-even position, even in light of future SFA grant cuts.

The recommendations largely focus on income generation. Unfortunately, the evidence so far has not been positive, a position that was once again referenced in the Cabinet report (2.21 onwards) in a detailed discussion of the income needed to bring the College to a break-even position.

With a lack of tangible evidence that this is possible at the level needed by the service and no business case available to back up any claims that this is deliverable it would be highly unlikely that they could deliver the income targets required. Meanwhile, it seems more likely and is more fully evidenced that the council as commissioner will be able to deliver against these recommendations.

Risk management

In 12.13 of the November report to Cabinet it states under option 4:

This option is recommended as it would move financial risk away from the council, make the best use of the local providers in Merton and maximise the benefits to the service users by reducing the amount spent on non-teaching activities. As commissioners the council will be in a position to steer provision and the spread of venues so that the service fully addresses the challenge of “bridging the gap” between east and west. This option is also the most likely to provide long term cost certainty and stability to adult education provision in Merton.

This is the first line of the officer recommendation and has remained consistent throughout.

It was a mistake to not refer to this again in section 17.

2) Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;

Whatley

The Call-in argues that the consultation was leading and intended to get a certain set of answers from residents. This is a position we reject and in fact the report notes that a majority of respondents preferred option 1, no change.

The Call-in then argues that the report ignores the responses of users who value the Whatley site. The responses in favour of this are all presented to Members to consider – indeed, the chart immediately following 2.79 shows that 178 respondents who gave a reason for their preference says that they valued the Whatley site. Indeed, in section 2.116-2.117 the paper reports:

It is clear from the consultation that people value the current service. However they see the service as indistinguishable from the current main delivery site at Whatley Avenue. They value the site as among other things: a nurturing environment, a community asset, an ideal location, providing good facilities and as a good location for adults of all ages, abilities and requirements to learn.

As such, a lot of the opposition to any of the alternative options stems from concern about the future of the Whatley Avenue site and whether the provision provided at that site could be replicated elsewhere.

3) respect for human rights and equalities;

Respondents

The Call-in is concerned about the provision for learners with disabilities. We have committed to working with the learners concerned to develop provision through a gradual implementation process to make sure we get this right.

The Call-in is also concerned that the consultation did not attract a truly representative sample of the Borough. This is true and reflected in the report however we do not believe this devalues the consultation which reached a large population and was accompanied with other consultation feedback.

However, it is worth noting that we did make special effort to engage with ESOL users and learners with disabilities and this was not reflected in the Call-in's reference to a concern about limited response from learners from a BME background. Many of these learners may have used the alternative route.

4) a presumption in favour of openness; and e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes;

The Call-in returns to claiming a changing rationale for the changes and queries the potential future usage for the site. As mentioned above the financial sustainability of the provision and the removal of financial risk has been a key part of the recommendations throughout this process.

The issue of the site has come up many times with respondents concerned about the use of the site for housing or, as referenced within the Cabinet report and the Call-in, as a site for a new school.

The council has been transparent that Harris Federation expressed an interest in the MAE site during the future of adult education consultation period as a possible location for a Free School. Equally, the council has been clear that no decision on possible alternative uses for the site would be taken before the future direction for adult education was known.

No decision on the issue of the site was considered within the report and this discussion will need to follow a final decision on the model of delivery.

Documents supplied

- Cabinet Report and appendices
- Scrutiny panel reference
- Miscellaneous e-mails

Gareth Young 27/2/15

| | RECOMMENDATION | PROPOSED ACTION | LEAD OFFICER | PROGRESS UPDATE NOV 2014 |
|-----------|--|---|----------------------|---|
| 10 | Recommendation 10 That Cabinet, in consultation with local businesses, considers the viability of offering additional courses/training that meet employer demand and may increase the employment opportunities of residents in the borough. The Task Group acknowledges that any delivery model and the courses that will be delivered are part of a wider Cabinet decision on the outcomes of the Public Value Review being undertaken of Merton Adult Education. (MAE) | Business consultation training needs exercise to be undertaken. MAE have engaged with the Tesco South Kensington and New Malden branches regarding IT and ESOL training for staff | Yvonne Tomlin MAE | <p>Much networking has been undertaken to capture some training needs.</p> <p>Survey of local businesses has not yet been completed</p> <p>Have liaised with Wimbletech campus in offering free and reduced rates on room usage at Wimbledon and Whatley site this has resulted in increased requests for room lettings.</p> <p>Room letting promotion has commenced with listings on a number of key sites, in the Google search for venues in Wimbledon MAE is high on the list</p> |
| 11 | Recommendation 11 That Cabinet explore the possibility of offering an enhanced set of courses and qualifications that are more attractive to employers for example, offering bespoke training to local companies or diplomas that enable students to graduate and move into the second year of a degree programme. | <p>Discussion underway with the Higher Education Funding council regarding degree programmes.</p> <p>Consultation on the types of courses required will be integrated in the survey in point 10.</p> <p>Bespoke Adult Social Care courses being developed for launch in the new year. The service has undergone a staffing re-structure whereby new commercially focused sales roles have been established.</p> | Yvonne Tomlin MAE | <p>Discussions with ABE, a business focused examination body, began in March 2014.</p> <p>Two report writing courses have been developed one focused on Social Workers the other a more generic audience. The course has been developed in partnership with 'Create Expectation'. The first course is due to launch in May 2014.</p> <p>Further social media, marketing and business courses under development, with plans to launch in June.</p> |
| 12 | Recommendation 12 That Cabinet support the development of the Merton Adult Education | Development and implementation of commercial business plans. | Yvonne Tomlin | The service has completed the Target Operating Model (TOM) exercise and produced action plans for the |

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---------------|---|
| | service as a commercial brand, alongside longer term work on further developing the reputation and provision of MAE. | | | commercial short courses. Adult Learning Review has resulted in further activity taking place a decision is due to take place in January 2015 regarding the future of MAE |
| 13 | Recommendation 13 That Cabinet consider setting up a virtual Merton Business School that will support Merton residents and existing and prospective businesses. | MAE will develop further for possible implementation in 2015 | Yvonne Tomlin | This is built into the College's future service plans |
| 14 | Recommendation 14 That Cabinet agree to Merton Adult Education (MAE) becoming accredited to deliver higher level qualifications and to engaging local in the delivery of these courses. | Discussion underway with the Higher Education Funding council regarding degree programmes. Currently delivering the CELTA Cambridge higher level qualification | Yvonne Tomlin | MAE is exploring extending the curriculum offer to include Access Courses. ABE offer degree level courses, discussions began in March 2014. ABE Accreditation to deliver Higher Education Qualifications has been prepared, submitted and approved, a range of leadership and marketing courses now on offer. A specifically designed marketing campaign is being developed for launch in 2015 Contacted Kingston University regarding possible partnership working. A successful meeting took place at the university whereby we have agreed enrichment activities for our Early Years programmes as this could result in progression onto the Kingston widening participation degree |

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 16th February 2015

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Adult Education in Merton – evidence and options for achieving a value for money service

Lead officer: Gareth Young

Lead member: Councillor Martin Whelton

Contact officer: Gareth Young (x 4889)

Recommendations:

- A. That Cabinet consider the evidence, including the financial analysis, responses to the public consultation and the equalities analysis
 - B. That Cabinet reconfirm their commitment to offering adult education services in the borough and their continued rejection of the previously outlined option 6 to cease offering these services.
 - C. That Cabinet approve the recommendation to move Adult Education to a Commissioning model (option 4) for the reasons outlined in 3.9 and based on the financial analysis provided in 2.1 That this is based on a commissioning strategy that seeks to provide courses in a diversity of locations around the borough and to make arrangements with providers that provide a supportive and nurturing environment for learners.
 - D. That Cabinet endorse the equalities action plan (appendix H)
 - E. That Cabinet adopt a series of core principles to underpin future commissioning of this service, in addition to a phased commissioning timetable (3.14)
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Due to reductions in government funding, the council needs to make £32m of savings over the coming years. With a pledge to ensure children's services and adult social care take less of a share of the cuts, all areas of the council need to find savings. The adult education service has been subject to over £430k in funding cuts from the Skills Funding Agency over the last few years, with further cuts planned, and is consistently overspending its budget with a cumulative overspend of over £540k over the period. Rather than allow the service to fail financially, Cabinet agreed to look at alternative ways of delivering the service within the reduced national funding envelope for adult education.
- 1.2. Six options were developed for consideration. These were:
 - (i) Option 1: MAE continues as it currently is
 - (ii) Option 2: Merton Council forms a shared service with South Thames College (Merton Campus)
 - (iii) Option 3: Merton Adult Education forms a shared service with another local authority managed college (such as SCOLA)

- (iv) Option 4: Merton becomes a commissioner of Adult Education Services
 - (v) Option 5: Merton ceases to be a provider and instead becomes a commissioner of Adult Education Services; partnering with the London Borough of Wandsworth to deliver this commissioning function.
 - (vi) Option 6: Merton ceases to offer adult education services.
- 1.3. Cabinet ruled out option 6
- 1.4. This report follows an initial report taken to Cabinet on the 10th November. At that meeting the Cabinet agreed that on balance and taking into account all the evidence and the financial pressures, its preferred option is that the council move to a commissioning model for the provision of adult education services. Cabinet also agreed to launch a public consultation to enable the public to input into the model of delivery and the content of adult education courses being offered.
- 1.5. The consultation has now concluded and detailed work on the financial modelling for each of the options for the service has been undertaken. An equality assessment has also been undertaken.
- 1.6. This report details the evidence and options for achieving a value for money adult education service. The report evaluates the options in light of financial/value for money considerations, evidence from the consultation with residents, and other relevant factors and makes a recommendation for decision.
- 1.7. All analysis has been considered in line with the Council's "July Principles", adopted by full council in July 2011 in order to provide a framework within the council can make the difficult decisions required to maintain a level of essential services in the light of ever reducing central government funding. The principles state the following:
- (i) We will continue to provide statutory services
 - (ii) We will maintain services for our older and most vulnerable residents, within limits
 - (iii) We will keep Merton's streets clean
 - (iv) We will keep the council tax affordable
 - (v) We will ensure Merton continues to be a good place for young people to go to school
 - (vi) We will do the best we can for the local environment
 - (vii) Everything else is up for discussion
- 1.8. As such, the report recommends that, having considered all of the options the council opt for option 4 and moves to a commissioning model of delivery.
- 1.9. This option is the most deliverable option which also provides the council with cost certainty, , provides the local authority with the most flexibility to deal with future budget reductions and reductions in grant funding from central government, protects learning, removes financial risk and still provides the council with the ability to steer the provision and the spread of services and venues to help us bridge the gap between the east and west of the borough. As the financial analysis shows just a 10% reduction in the SFA grant would leave the council with a £297,000 additional cost pressure which the commissioning option would allow us to avoid.

2 DETAILS

Financial Considerations

Summary

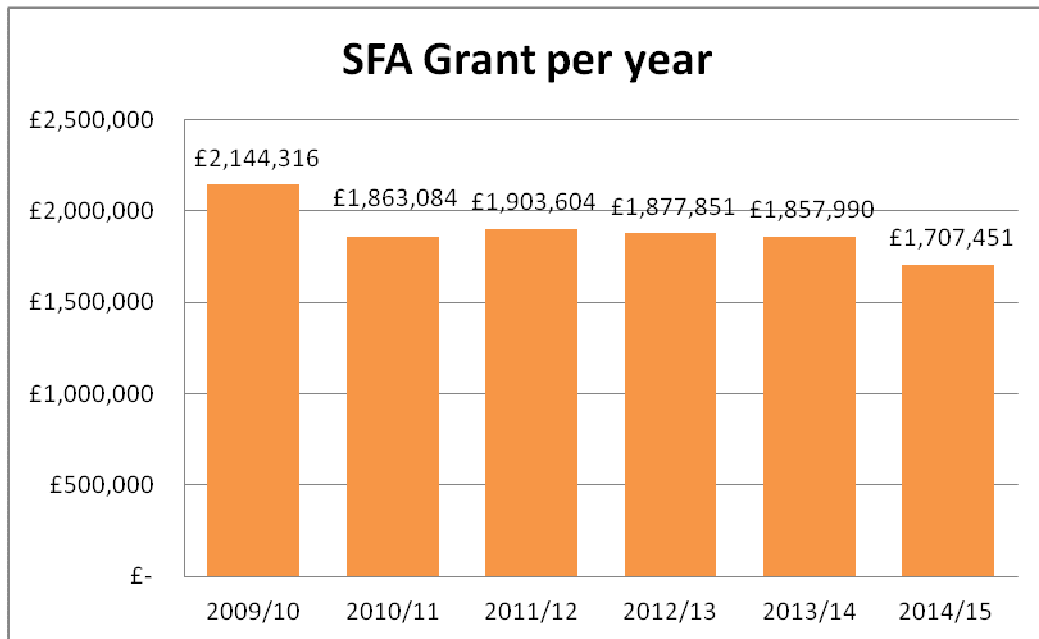
- 2.1. The analysis that follows, allied to appendix A which has more detail within it, shows six conclusions:
- (i) That the financial risk held by the council within option 1 is unacceptably large. If the SFA reduce their grant by 10% this represents a liability of £297k and if the grant is reduced by 20% that liability rises to £415k
 - (ii) That the volatility within the funding has meant that the College has found it difficult to live within its budget over the past five years
 - (iii) That the amount of additional commercial income required by the College to break even is likely unattainable
 - (iv) That the fixed cost base of the current model makes it difficult for the service to adjust its costs in line with funding changes and leaves the College, and the learning provided, vulnerable to further SFA grant reductions.
 - (v) That option 4 and 5 all enable the council to pass the risk to other providers; even as the grant reduces.
 - (vi) That options 4 and 5 offer the greatest degree of financial sustainability for the service and for the council.

Detail

- 2.2. The November Cabinet report made it clear that the purpose of any option was to remove financial risk from the council and to safeguard the service in the light of government funding cuts.
- 2.3. Further detail on the budget position of the college, analysis of the funding, income and expenditure and some modelling of the different options is in Appendix A. This is summarised below.

Quantifying the grant reductions

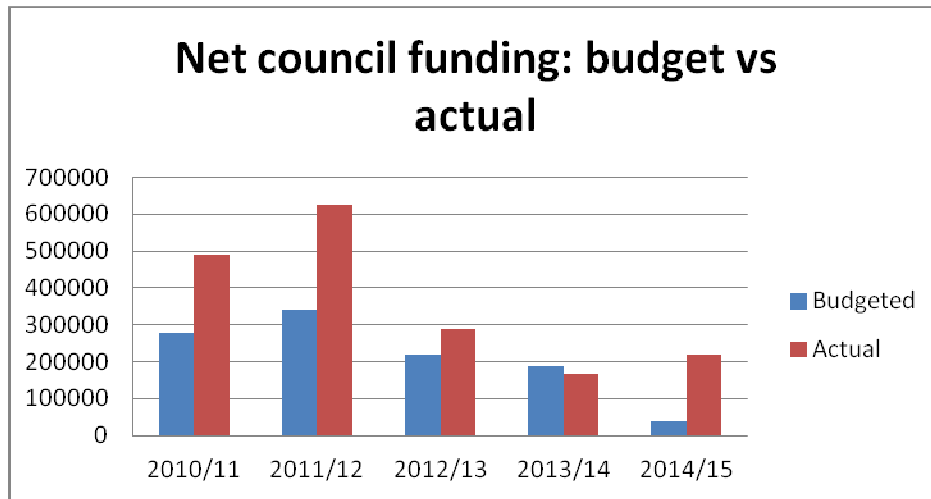
- 2.4. The following chart shows our Skills Funding Agency (SFA) grant per academic year.



- 2.5. This shows that Merton has had a cut in grant of £436,865 since 2009/10 in its grant from the SFA. Furthermore, in the 2013/14 academic year the funding formula has changed impacting on the councils costs as it requires councils to deliver more courses with the same funding. We were also advised by the SFA in December that our grant will be reduced by another £35,000 in year - this will be on top of the above figure.
- 2.6. The next announcement regarding funding changes from the SFA is expected to be made in March 2015. We expect this to signal a further reduction in the grant. This is due to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in which the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) sits being a non-ring-fenced department and therefore being responsible for delivering a large amount of the reduction in Government spending announced in the 2014 budget and autumn statement.
- 2.7. Taken together the grant reductions and the requirement to do more with less have placed additional pressure on the MAE budget. We anticipate this pressure to grow further over the next financial years thus increasing the financial risk to the service and to the council.

Overspend

- 2.8. The following table shows the budgeted and actual net council funding received by the MAE service over the past four years, with projected figures for the current year.



2.9. As can be seen, over the past four years the service has only been able to meet its budget once (in 2013/14) leading to overspends of £209,605, £282,379, £69,388 and then an underspend of £21,196 respectively. In every year the council has committed between £165,000 and £625,000 to the provision of the service. In 2014/15 the current forecast overspend is £181,000.

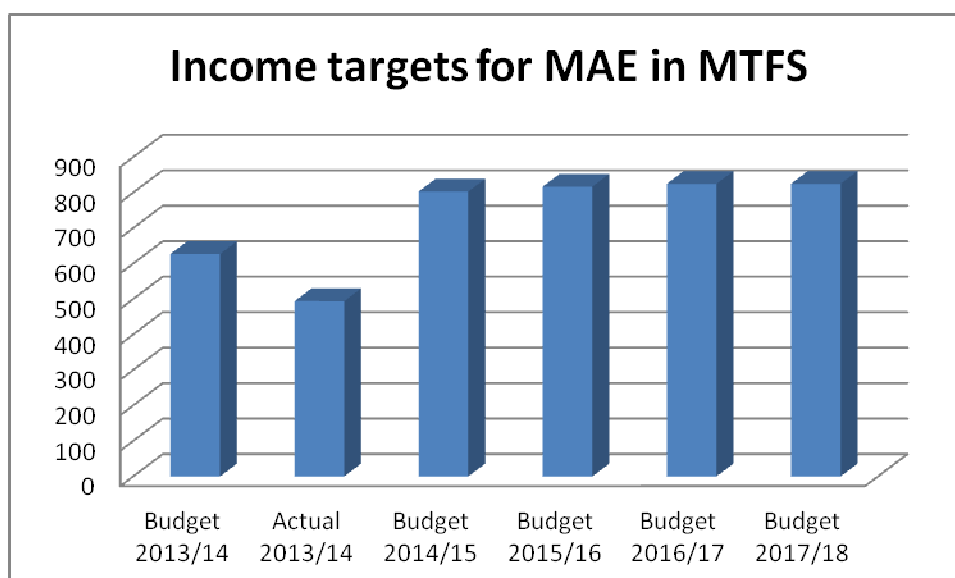
2.10. This is a clear and ongoing overspend.

2.11. Both the consistent service overspends and the on going reductions to the government funding the service relies on have led to a situation where the future of the service is not secure. A decision needs to be taken whether to subsidise the service further, allow the service to fail or to seek ways of making it more financially sustainable so that the service is protected.

Future projections

2.12. The current MTFs has the council contribution to MAE staying roughly at £39,000 per year, however this does not take into account the continued overspend which increases the forecast council cost to £220k in the current year.

2.13. This net liability to the council is based on two additional assumptions – firstly a consistency in terms of the amount of government funding received and secondly an aggressive series of income targets. These income targets are shown below:



2.14. The income targets required simply to meet the £39,000 council contribution, without taking into account any overspend or reduction in grant funding, would require income of between £803,000 and £825,000. This is the size of the challenge that the in house service would face if we opted for option 1. As explained in 2.20 the income gap would require an increase of 1,500% in commercial income achievement – something that is unlikely.

Financially Assessing the Options

2.15. It is challenging to model exactly how the financial risk will be felt by the council and what the potential cuts or savings might be in relation to each of the options. Nonetheless, the table below models various reductions in SFA grant and what would happen with each option to the council bottom line:

| Net cost to the council | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Option 1 | £180,000.00 | £238,875.31 | £297,750.62 | £356,625.93 | £415,501.24 |
| Option 2 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £32,766.10 |
| Option 3 | £0.00 | £35,351.36 | £76,550.99 | £135,426.30 | £194,301.60 |
| Option 4 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Option 5 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |

2.16. The options above are based on a number of assumptions and these are captured in the individual tables in appendix A. In addition, the overhead assumptions are captured within section 2.32.

2.17. As the above makes clear, continuing with the current service risks the cost of the service spiralling to a level where it would no longer be financially viable for the council to continue to offer adult education in the borough.

2.18. It is difficult to allocate this funding as savings due to the uncertainty faced in terms of the grant and the models. However, if we use a conservative 10% SFA grant reduction as a basis for defining the cost avoided the model suggest potential cost avoidance as follows:

2.19.

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Saving through cost avoidance for options 2, 4, 5 with a 10% grant reduction | £297,750.62 |
|--|--------------------|

Additional Information

2.20. Members of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel asked for information relating to the following three additional financial questions:

- (i) What is the size of additional income generation that would need to be delivered to close the financial gap faced by the College?
- (ii) Would it be possible to commission the Adult Skills Budget element of the budget whilst retaining the Community Learning elements in house? What would be the financial impact of this?
- (iii) What are the residual costs left with the council in each of the options?

- Income generation target

2.21. The following assesses whether increasing income generation activities could make the savings and provide the financial security required to protect the service without making any other changes to how it is run.

2.22. We could assume that the £220,000 overspend projected for 2014/15 is a little higher than the structural overspend expected year on year and thus assume that the budget gap is closer to £200,000 (however, this is without factoring in any further grant reduction).

2.23. This means that to be financially viable the service would need to attract income sources that generated a surplus of £200,000. Income generation has been difficult to come by for the college in recent years. Contracts with organisations such as Tesco, Housing Associations and other partners have largely been used to meet grant targets set by the SFA and therefore are already built into the budget.

2.24. However, in the current year the college will be able to generate income of £22,780 from external contracts and £37,876 from room bookings, a total of £60,656.

2.25. The feeling of management is that the room bookings could be further exploited over a period of 18 months but the level of achievable increase is difficult to predict. If we assume a challenging target of doubling room booking income to £80,000, this would leave a gap of £160,000 which would require between £233,000 and £350,000 of additional income to be achieved from these contracts, depending on the net profit. We believe that the £350,000 figure is far closer to the reality of what would be needed. This represents up to a 1,500% increase on current income generation from contracts which officers recommend is not deliverable

2.26. It is clear from the above that additional income generation will not save the service from failing financially or from the council needing to provide additional subsidy.

- Splitting the ASB and CL provision

2.27. The following assesses whether commissioning the Adult Skills Budget courses but retaining the Community Learning and provision for learners with disabilities in house would provide a better option to put the service on a sustainable financial footing.

2.28. This additional option has been modelled as follows:

| Modelling ASB / CL split | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| Service deficit | £220,000 | As at 14/15 period 9 |
| Add SFA funding for ASB | £735,000 | As in 14/15 |
| Minus ASB funding allocated for 'towards independence' | -£120,000 | As at 14/15 allocation |
| Add in fee income not generated | £168,000 | As in 13/14 for remaining ASB courses |
| Minus support / management staff no longer working on remaining contracts | -£313,050 | As per adjusted estimates from MAE management |
| Minus teaching staff no longer required | -£371,258 | As ASB is 48% of grant we assume 48% of tutor costs of £807,803 (which represent 46% of all staff costs) |
| Minus reduction in corporate overheads | -£100,320 | Assumes 44% reduction in the controllable overheads of £228,000 (13/14 figures) |
| Minus reduction in exam fees | -40,000 | Approximate |
| Bottom Line | £178,372 | |

2.29. The model suggests that this option would save roughly £40,000 compared to the current service, without factoring in potential future grant cuts.

2.30. In order to compare this option with the others proposed we also produced an analysis looking at the impact in light of future cuts to the grant – although in this case we were just modelling cuts to CL budget, assuming that the portion of the ASB that we retained would be the last element to be reduced. This modelling looks as follows with the initial deficit based on the analysis above:

| ASB / CL split model | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Current deficit | £178,372 | £178,372 | £178,372 | £178,372 | £178,372 |
| Grant reduction (of just CL) | | £39,418.90 | £78,837.80 | £118,256.70 | £157,675.60 |
| Account for increased income | -£40,000.00 | £40,000.00 | £40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 |

| ASB / CL split model | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Account for reduction in variable costs | | - £12,219.86 | - £24,439.72 | -£36,659.58 | -£48,879.44 |
| Bottom Line for council | £138,372 | £165,571 | £192,770 | £219,969 | £247,168 |

2.31. As is clear from the above, although there is a modest potential saving using this model compared to the current service, the saving is not sufficient to make the service financially viable and the service would become more and more unaffordable in the face of expected grant cuts.

- Retained costs

2.32. The following assesses whether the level of retained costs in any proposals for changes has any significant impact on the options appraisal.

2.33. In general, when we have moved into shared services with other providers we have negotiated to ensure that any retained overheads are captured within that new entity. This allows for some reduction in back office costs but does not leave costs to be redistributed across the rest of the council services that are not involved in the shared service.

2.34. As such, we assume that for option 1 and each of the shared service models (2 and 3) there would be no residual cost for the council.

2.35. For the commissioning options (4 and 5) there are residual overheads that the council would need to decide whether to continue to fund, or to make savings if these corporate items are no longer required. We have calculated this as approximately £72,000. The non-controllable overheads are detailed in appendix A. These overheads would not be releasable immediately and so a decision would need to be made about how to fund them until it is determined whether they can be released.

2.36. The level of residual costs has some impact on the attractiveness of options 4 and 5 however if the council decides to make the required savings to specific corporate functions that are no longer required when the service is commissioned then this could be considerably mitigated. In any event, even with retained costs, options 4 and 5 remain the most financially viable options for the service and for the council.

Financial Conclusion

2.37. It is clear from the above that option 1, no change, will not protect the service from financial failure. Although options 2 and 3 offer some savings, options 4 and 5 offer the greatest level of financial security for the council and in terms of safeguarding the future of the service.

Service Considerations

Summary

- 2.38. The council carried out a wide-ranging consultation with service users and members of the public.
- 2.39. The consultation revealed that respondents prioritised the following elements when designing an adult education service in Merton:
- (i) A supportive and nurturing environment for learners – especially for older learners and those with disabilities
 - (ii) A service that supports wellbeing as well as providing job opportunities
 - (iii) Retention of Whatley Avenue as a site for adult learning
 - (iv) A convenient location and one sited in Merton
 - (v) High quality tutors
 - (vi) Equipment and facilities – especially for arts and crafts courses
 - (vii) Control over the cost of courses
 - (viii) A diversity of courses offered
- 2.40. These elements can be met within the alternative models being proposed, apart possibly from the retention of the site, which may or may not be achievable.

Analysis of the results from the consultation survey

- 2.41. The consultation was designed to give people a number of different means of presenting evidence to the council. This included an online consultation, paper version of that consultation document provided at venues throughout Merton, communication through existing Merton networks, public meetings, specific sessions for learners with learning disabilities and their carers, easy to use surveys for individuals with limited English, special sessions held for staff and a logging procedure for receiving letters, comments, petitions, paintings and other submitted material.
- 2.42. This ensured a large number of respondents.
- 2.43. The aim of the consultation was to consult on both the model and the content of the service so that whatever model we chose to adopt the service delivery would meet the needs of local residents.
- 2.44. As such, we received:
- a) 97 attendees at two public meetings – both held on the 2nd December in the Council chamber and chaired by the Lead Member for Education.
 - b) 838 responses to the consultation survey, including both online surveys and paper consultation forms.
 - c) Over 40 letters and e-mails
 - d) 131 easy-read forms completed by those with disabilities and those with English as a second or other language
 - e) 4 petitions signed by over 2,500 people
 - f) 3 staff meetings, chaired by the Director of Community and Housing, each with 15-40 there.
- 2.45. There may be some duplication and overlap in the numbers quoted above with some respondents using multiple modes of response.

2.46. Full details of the consultation survey responses are contained within appendix B.

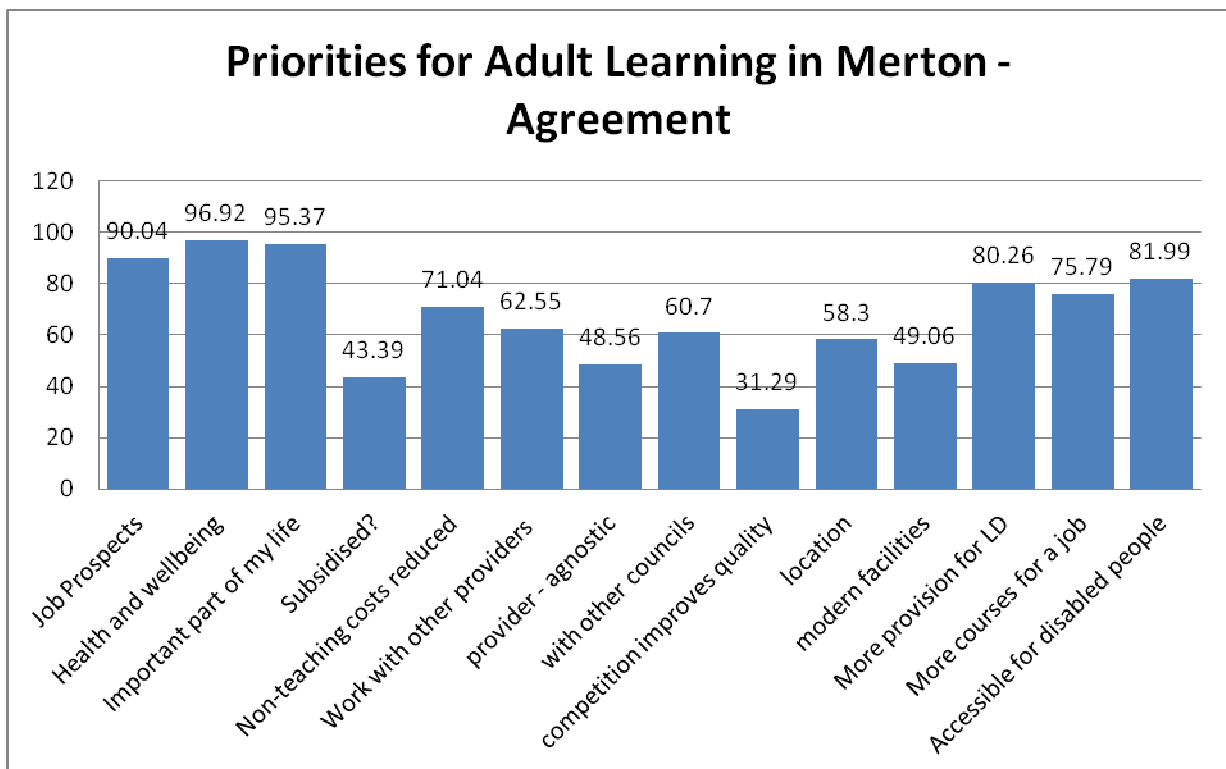
What do people want from their adult education service?

2.47. The survey asked a number of questions designed to get a deeper understanding of what respondents want from their adult education service.

2.48. In the first question we asked respondents to state their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

- (i) Adult learning is important for improving people’s job prospects
- (ii) Adult learning is important for improving people’s health and well being
- (iii) Adult learning opportunities are an important part of my life
- (iv) Adult learning should not be subsidised at the expense of other council services
- (v) It is important to reduce spending on non-teaching costs
- (vi) It does not matter who provides the courses as long as they are good
- (vii) Merton should work with other councils to improve efficiency
- (viii) Competition between providers will improve quality
- (ix) I would take more courses if they were offered in locations closer to me
- (x) It is important that the facilities in which the courses are provided are modern
- (xi) More adult learning opportunities should be available to those with learning difficulties
- (xii) There should be more courses that help people to get a job
- (xiii) More should be done to make sure courses are accessible to disabled people

2.49. The percentage of people who either agreed or strongly agreed with each of these statements is captured below:



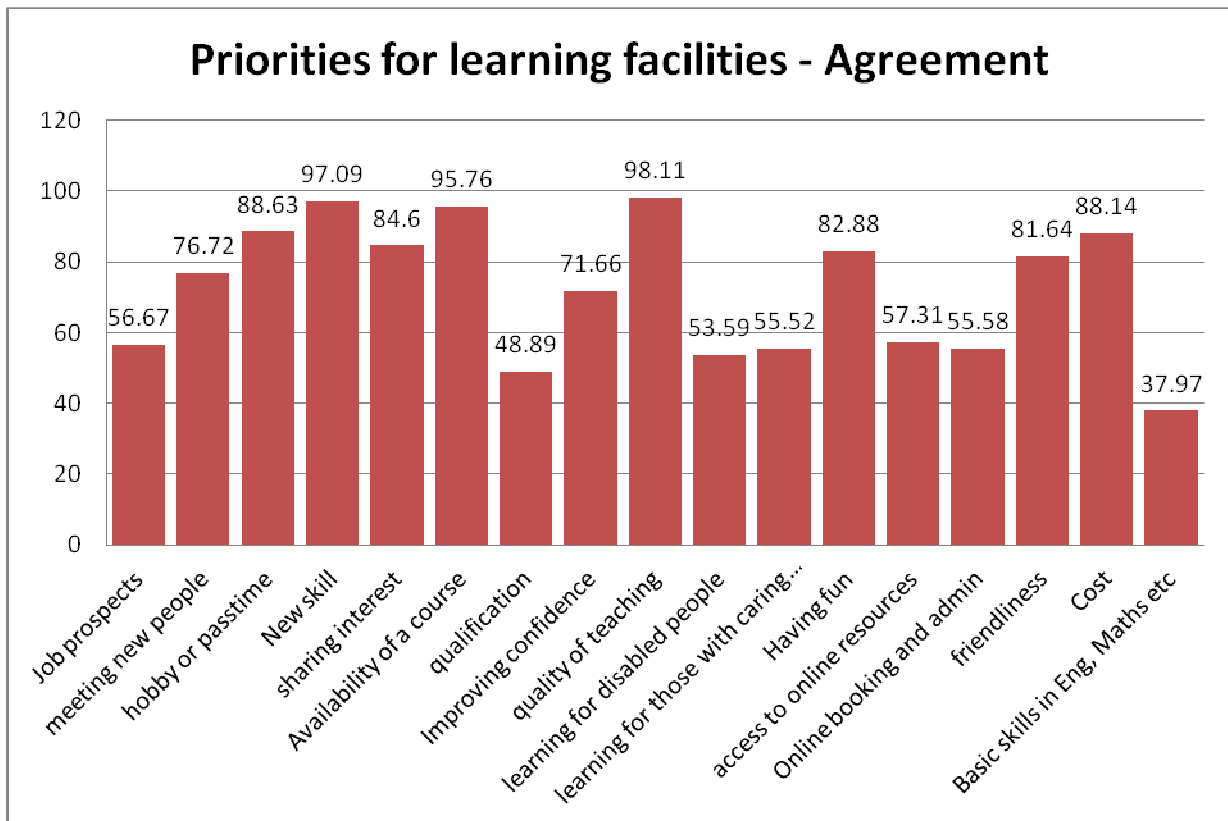
- 2.50. The above is useful in understanding what respondents value about adult education in Merton and what should be prioritised within any model of provision going forward.
- 2.51. In particular respondents viewed the service as equally important both for developing general wellbeing and for their job prospects. Future service provision will need to continue to reflect that.
- 2.52. Access and provision for disabled learners was important to a large number of respondents.
- 2.53. A large majority want to see non teaching costs reduced.
- 2.54. Although a majority of respondents were sceptical about the idea of introducing competition as a means of improving quality, roughly 63% of respondents agreed with working with other providers or other local authorities to improve efficiency and. nearly half were also provider agnostic in that they did not mind who provided the courses as long as they were high quality.
- 2.55. A small majority of respondents agreed that adult education should be subsidised at the expense of other council services, which on the face of it appears to contradict the council's agreed position that it is adult social care and children's services that should be subsidised over all other services.
- 2.56. It is clear from the above that maintaining the current breadth of courses covering both job focused and community learning options is important to respondents. There are some contradictory responses in terms of moving to a new provider but overall it appears that the kind of service offered is more important to people than who the provider is.

Facilities

- 2.57. We also asked respondents for their priorities when it came to the facilities and provision of an adult education service. In particular we asked them: what aspects of an adult learning course are important to you; specifically asking for comments in terms of how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed with each of the following elements being important. These were as follows:
 - (i) Improving my job prospects
 - (ii) Meeting new people
 - (iii) Developing a new hobby or pastime
 - (iv) Developing a new skill
 - (v) Sharing an interest with other people
 - (vi) The availability of a specific course
 - (vii) Getting a qualification
 - (viii) Improving my confidence
 - (ix) The quality of the teaching
 - (x) Learning designed for disabled people
 - (xi) Learning designed for those with caring responsibilities
 - (xii) Having fun
 - (xiii) Access to online resources and learning material
 - (xiv) Online booking and administration
 - (xv) Friendliness of non-teaching staff
 - (xvi) The cost of the course

(xvii) Help to gain basic skills in maths, English and science

2.58. These are captured in the below chart:



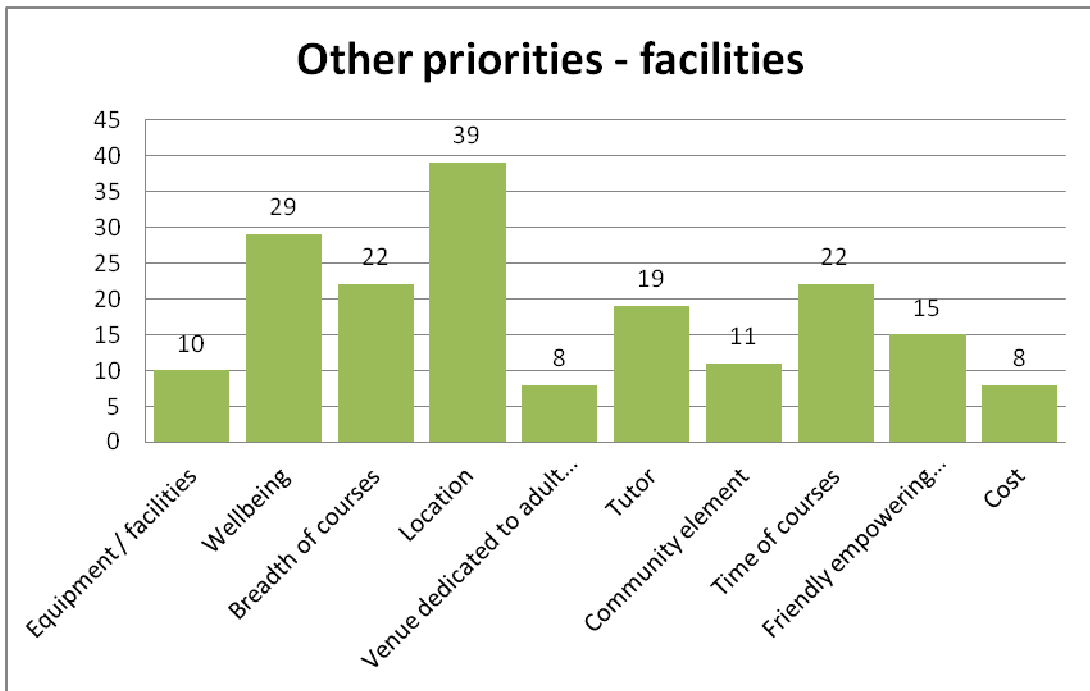
2.59. The most important thing for respondents was the quality of the teaching. Two other key areas of importance to nearly all students were availability of a course and the ability to develop a new skill.

2.60. Likewise, the cost of the course is also very important.

2.61. Friendliness of non teaching staff, the ability to share an interest, meet new people or just to have fun were also important to respondents. Whilst these are not quite as important to as many people as the courses and tutor, it is a big consideration.

2.62. All of these key requirements would be deliverable under any of the options for the service.

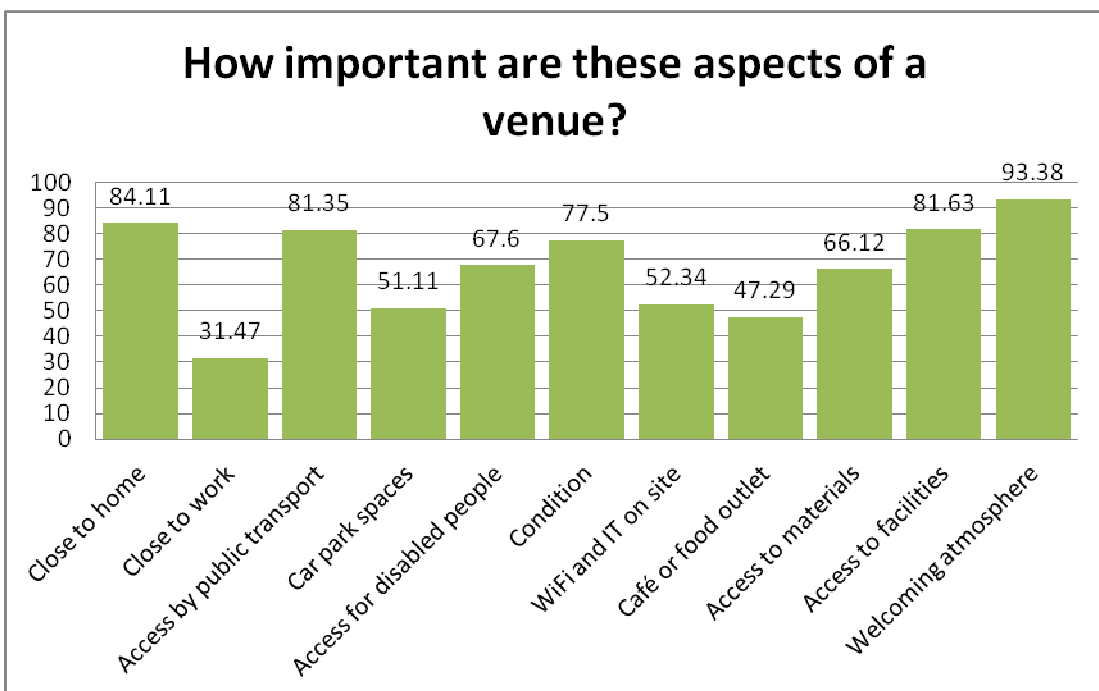
2.63. We also offered people the ability to list other elements they valued within the service. Although not all respondents answered this question, we received a wide diversity of feedback but the following elements can be broadly grouped together:



- 2.64. These are in addition to the selection we offered to people completing the survey.
- 2.65. Location was seen as important to a number of respondents to this question, respondents particularly emphasised a convenient location and courses still being delivered in Merton.
- 2.66. The importance respondents placed on wellbeing, the breadth of courses and the tutors was again emphasised, reflecting other findings.
- 2.67. The timing of courses and the tutors were also important. Some respondents wanted courses during daytime hours some preferred courses that fitted in with work schedules.

Venue

2.68. We asked people what mattered to them about the venue:



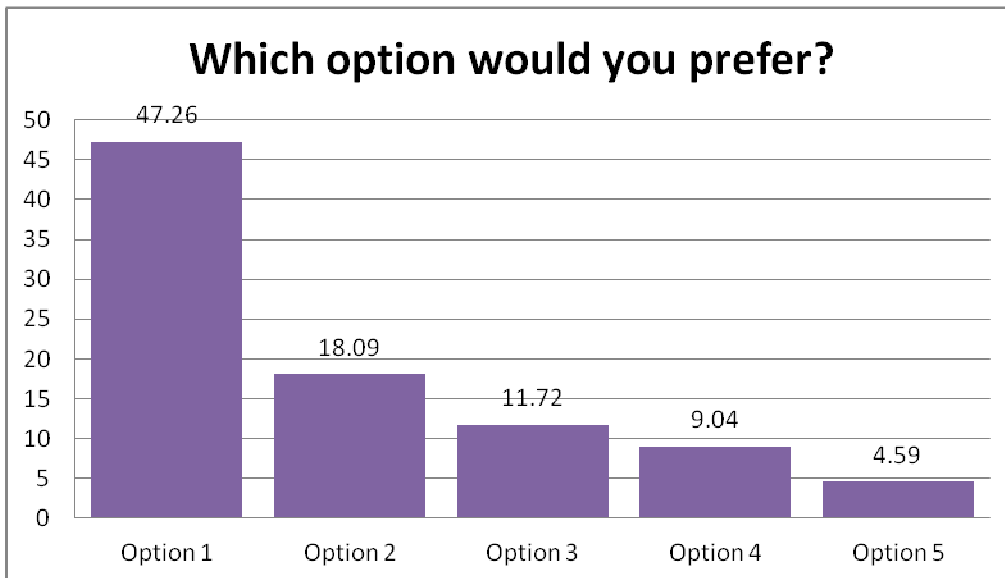
- 2.69. The single most important thing for respondents was that the venue has a welcoming atmosphere.
- 2.70. Access was a major feature of this question with a strong majority wanting the venue to be close to home or accessible by public transport.
- 2.71. The above key priorities could be delivered by any of the options outlined.

Additional elements

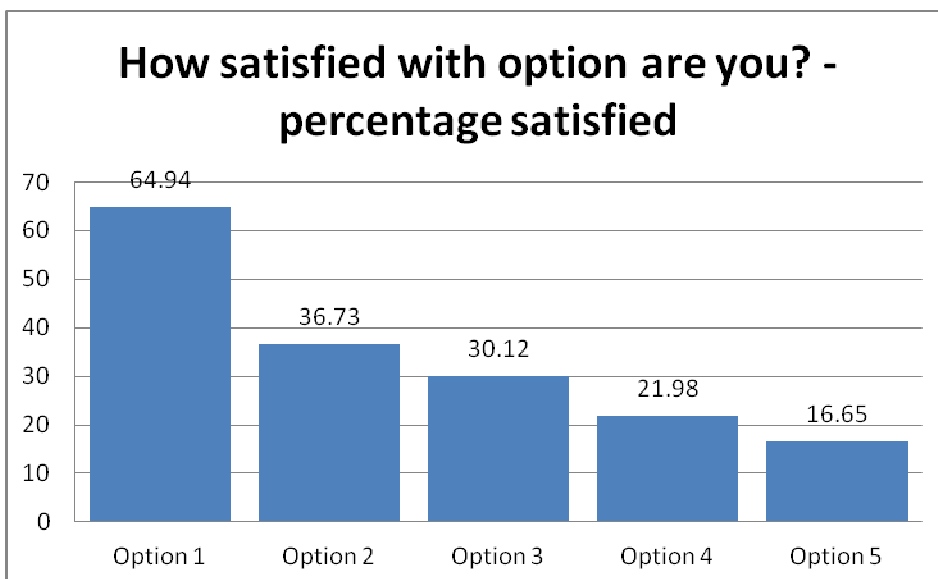
- 2.72. There were other elements reflected within the responses to questions that are not reflected above. Although these are anecdotal in nature these included:
- (i) Users of arts courses were particularly concerned about their provision. This included people who mentioned specific courses such as pottery and stained and fused glass and those who were worried that any commissioning or shared service would lead to a reduction in their art classes.
 - (ii) Linked to this respondents mentioned that one of the attractions of these courses was the provision of facilities not available at home. This included kilns, standing pottery wheels and other specialist facilities.
 - (iii) There was concern that facilities and classes for disabled people would be negatively impacted by any change. This was reflected throughout the different questions.
 - (iv) Similarly, there was a concern about the social services element of the adult education service with some respondents mentioning its role in supporting people with mental health problems and disabilities and suggesting that alternative support might be needed if the service changed.

What did people make of the options

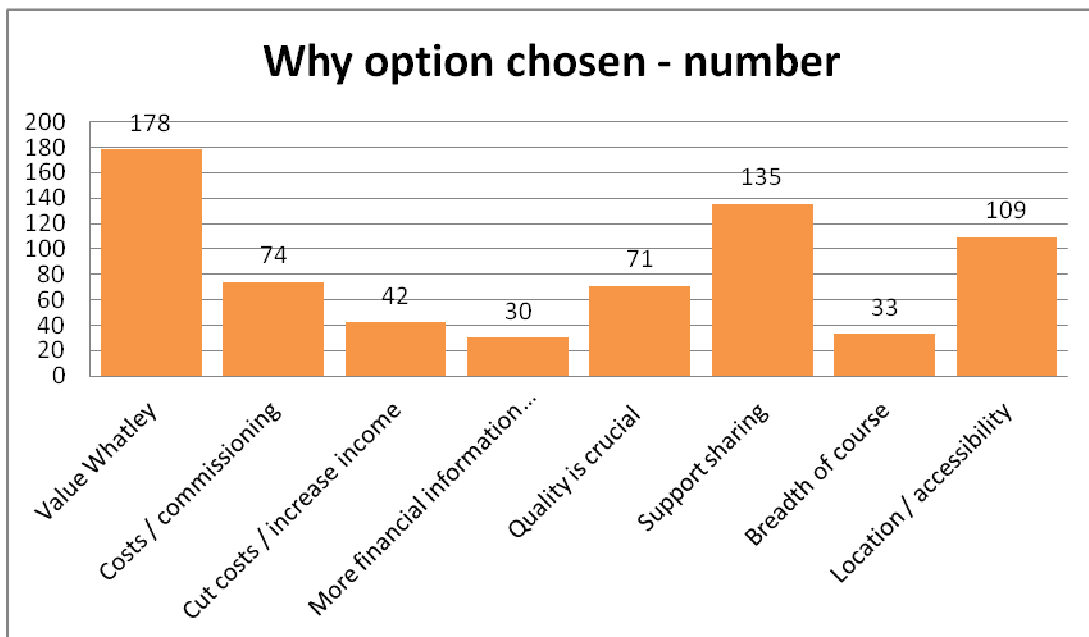
- 2.73. In order to give everyone the opportunity to respond directly to the options being proposed we offered respondents two opportunities; firstly for respondents to choose their preferred option and then to indicate their support for each of the options in turn. The results to these two questions are as follows:
- 2.74. The following chart shows the option the respondents preferred:



- 2.75. The option with the most support was option 1. However it should be noted that respondents choosing the “no change” option were not asked to explain how the service could avoid financial failure in the absence of any changes to the way it is currently delivered.
- 2.76. The following chart shows the support for each option independent of the others:



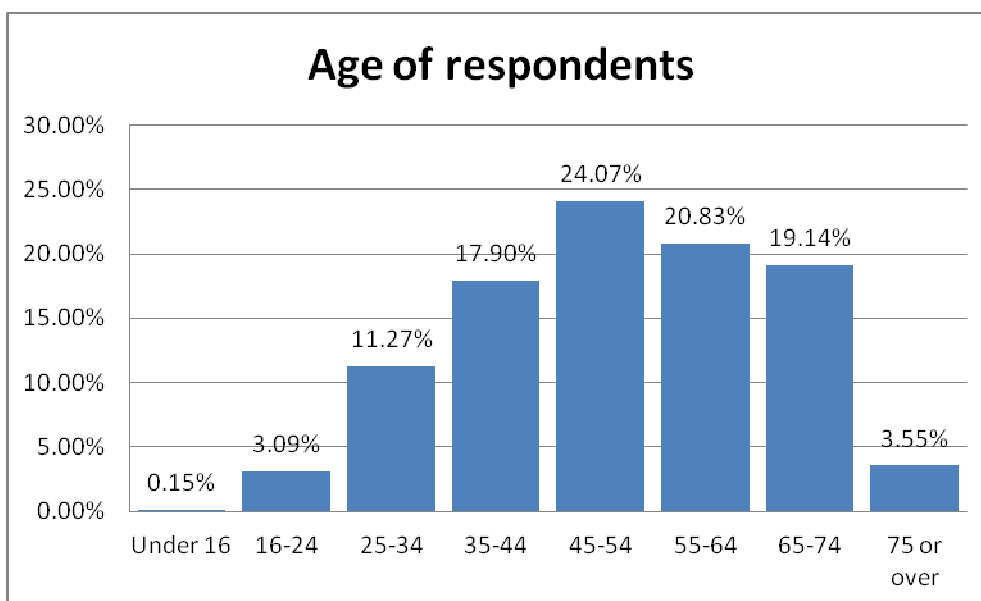
- 2.77. In general respondents were most satisfied with the status quo although it is of course difficult to meaningfully compare satisfaction with actual provision to theoretical models respondents have not yet experienced.
- 2.78. Interestingly, options 2 and 3 which involved sharing responsibility and authority with other parties were more popular than retaining control but developing commissioning relationships with other providers.
- 2.79. When we asked respondents to explain why they chose their preferred option we received a variety of comments which can be grouped into some broad areas as below:



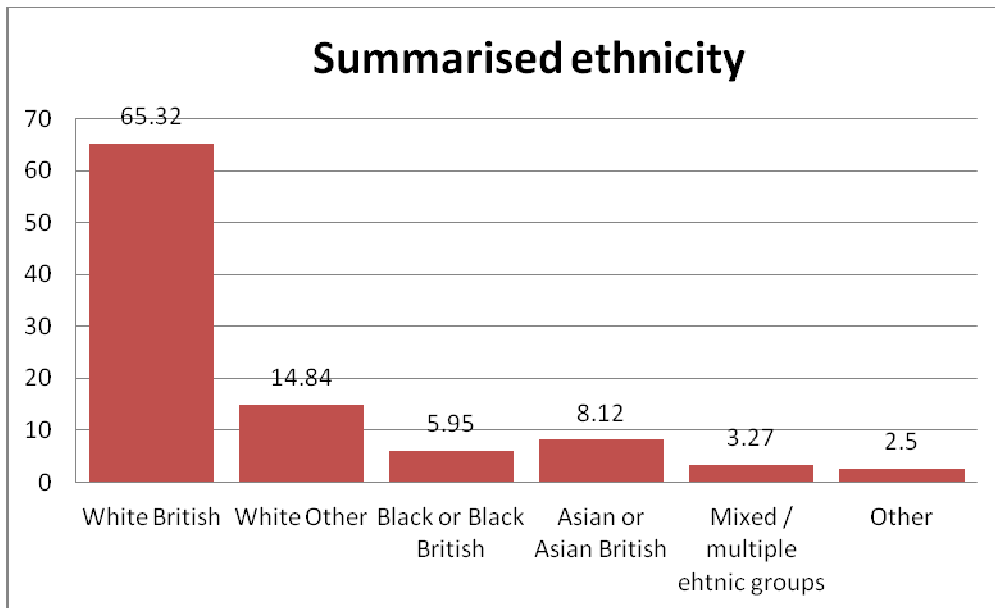
- 2.80. As the above makes clear, the largest motivating factor for choosing one of the options was people valuing the Whatley Avenue site. This may explain why option 1 was the most popular overall, with respondents equating the aspects of the service they value most (breadth of courses, wellbeing, etc) with the physical site.
- 2.81. A large number of respondents also noted their support for further sharing with other providers and expressed a variety of reasons for seeing this as the best approach.
- 2.82. Apart from the site, all of the other aspects of the service that people valued most highly are deliverable within any of the other options.

Who completed the consultation

- 2.83. The survey was completed a large amount of residents. The full detail is included in appendix B.
- 2.84. 74% of respondents were women. The age group spread was as follows:



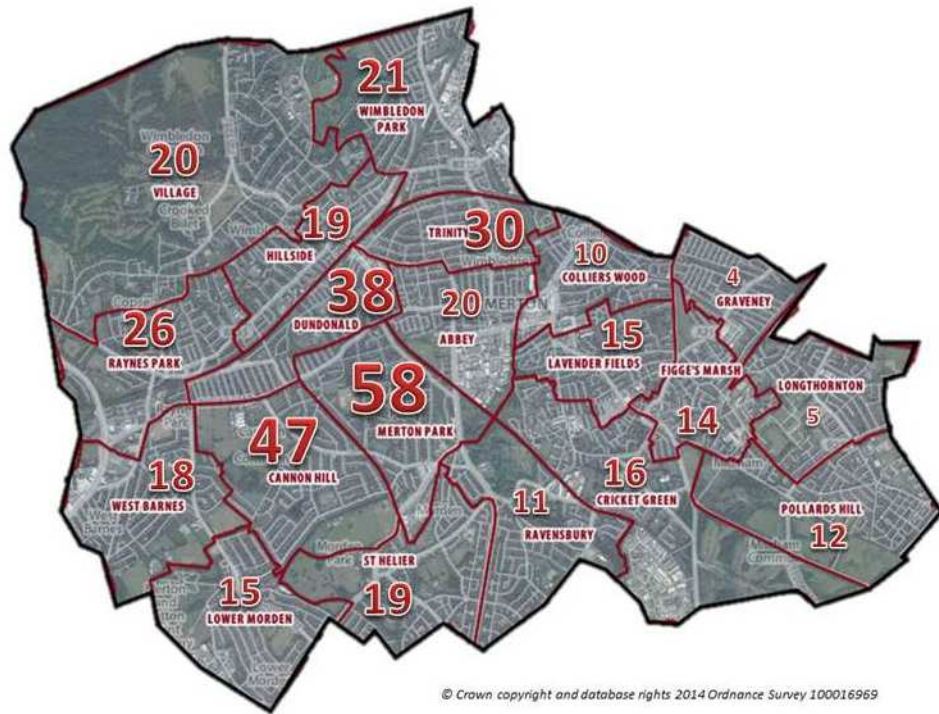
- 2.85. This is an older spread of ages than we would expect from the population of Merton as a whole where the 30-44 age group is the largest group.
- 2.86. The ethnicity of respondents is summarised in the following chart and full details are provided in the appendix:



- 2.87. This response is not closely reflective of the Merton population where the White British category makes up just under 50% of the population.
- 2.88. 15% of respondents have a disability although it should be noted that in both the ethnicity and disability questions additional surveys were carried out with those taking ESOL classes and those with learning disabilities which would have impacted upon those numbers.
- 2.89. In addition, we asked people where in the borough they lived. The following map shows which wards respondents came from. It is clear that the largest number of respondents were people who live near to the service's main delivery site at Whatley Avenue.
- 2.90. 96 (19%) of the respondents who provided their postcode came from the 8 deprived wards in the Borough.

Number of Respondents to the MAE Survey by Ward, 23 January 2015.

Source: London Borough of Merton

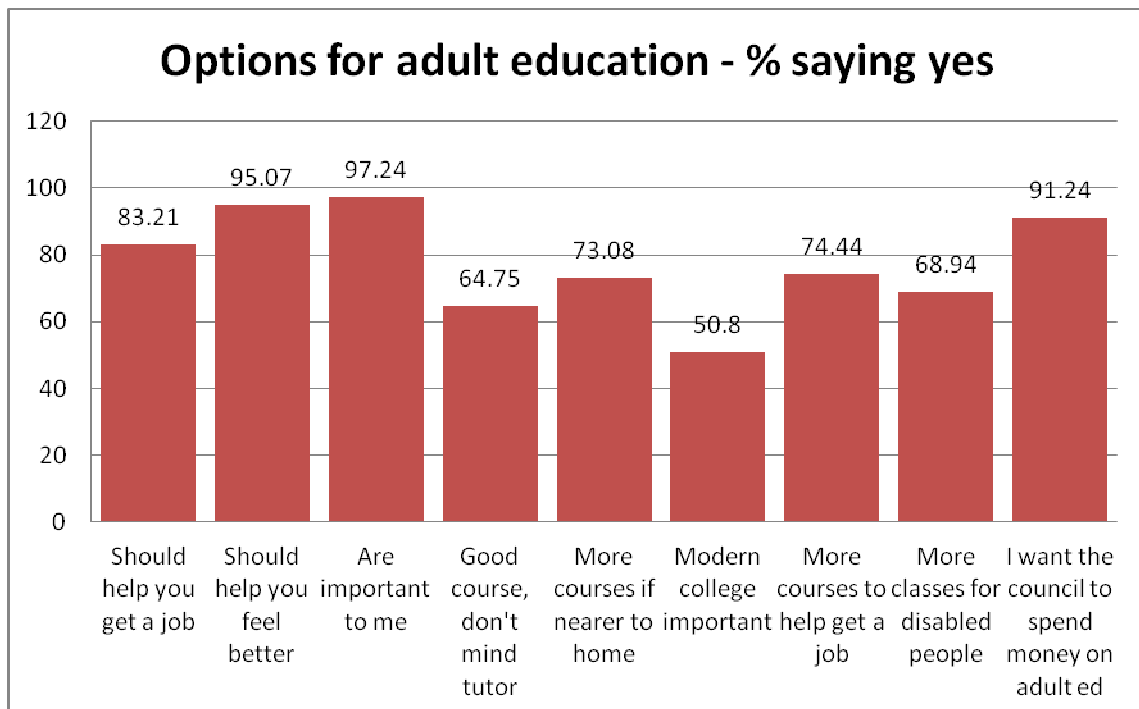


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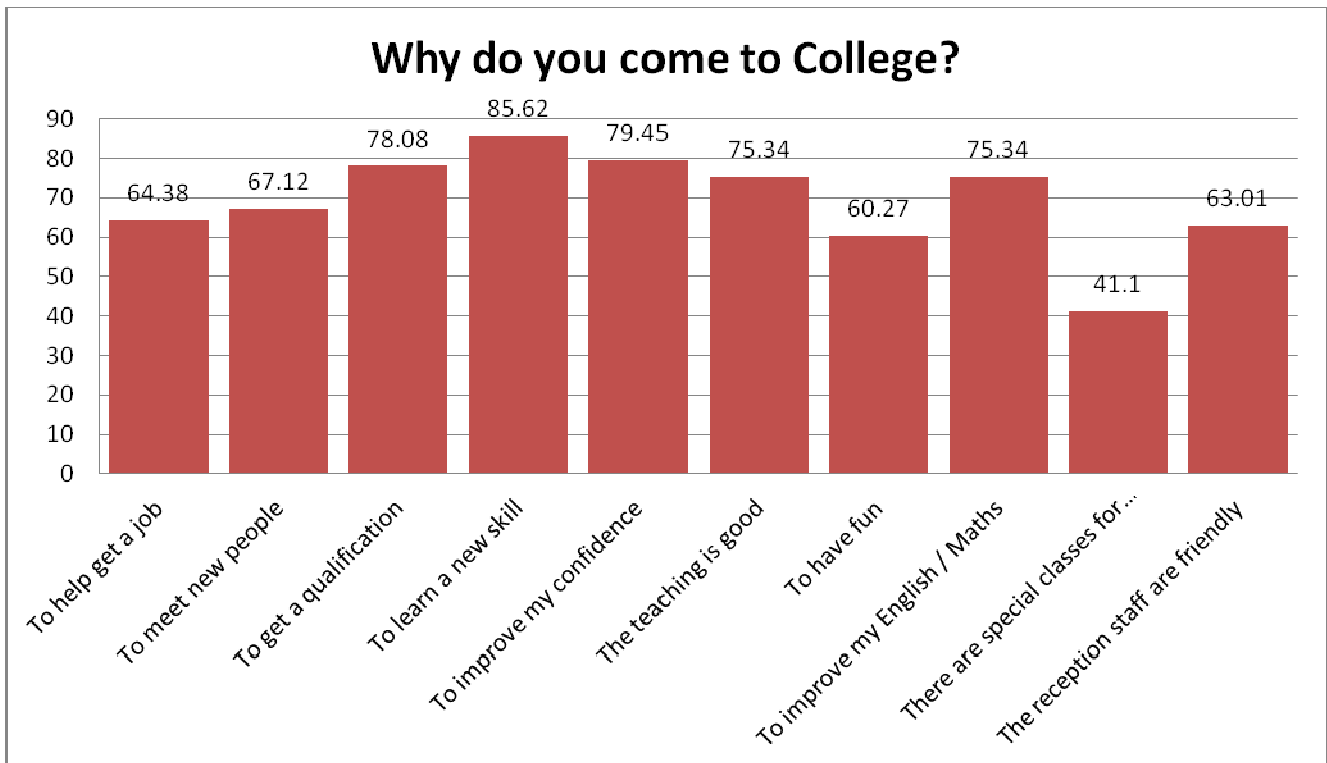
Note: 99 responses were also received from outside Merton.

Additional feedback from the easy read survey

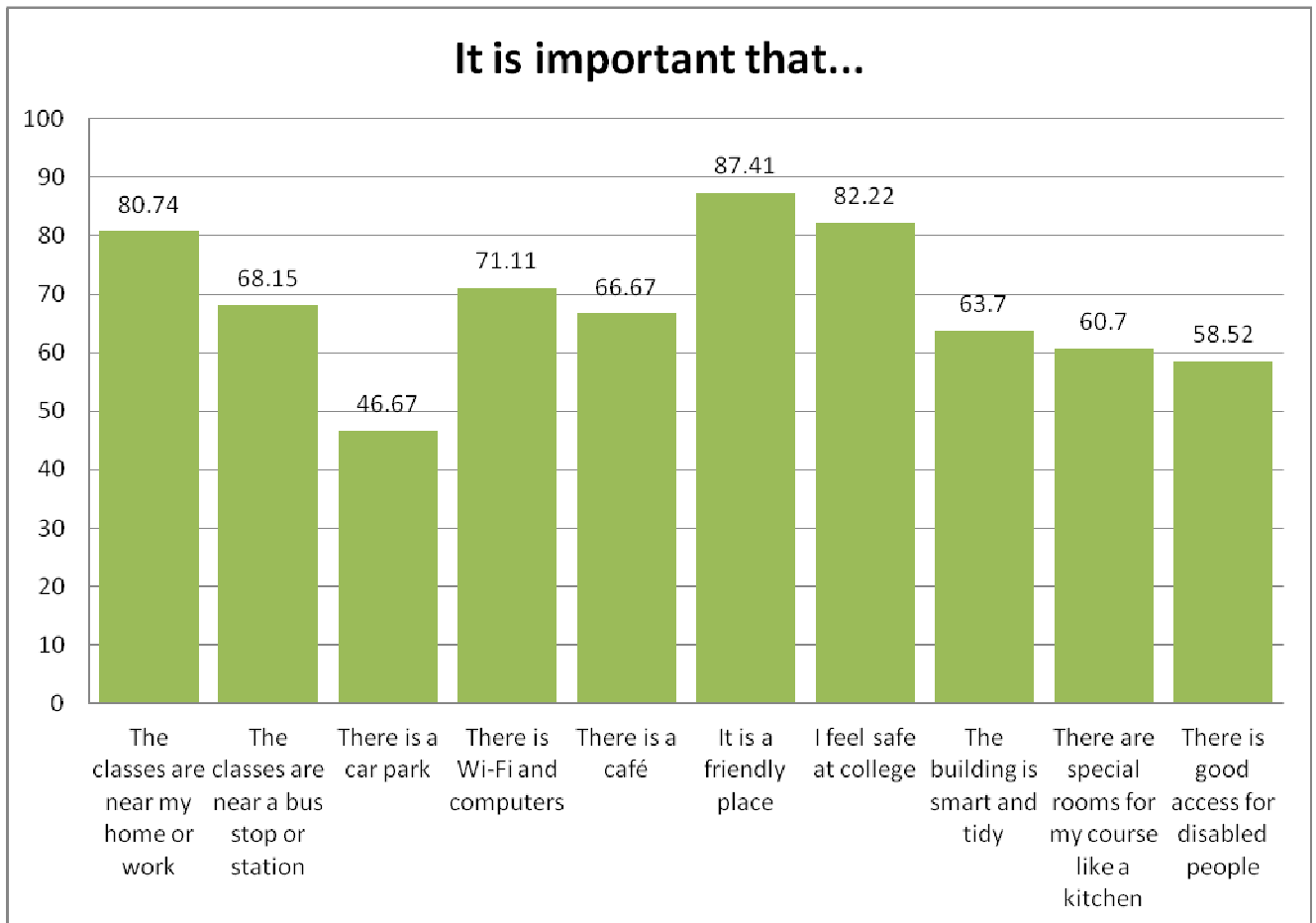
- 2.91. In order to be inclusive we designed an easy to use consultation survey specifically aimed at learners with limited English or disabilities. We provided support for learners to complete this survey and also made it available at the site. Full results of this survey are available in appendix C.
- 2.92. We asked them broadly the same questions as in the main survey and whilst this is presented separately for ease of reporting it is important that this feedback is treated the same as the feedback above.



- 2.93. It is clear, as we expected, that the adult education courses are important to the respondents and that they expect courses to help them feel better and to help them get employment. It is also clear that the people who completed this survey want the council to spend money on the service, although no detailed questions we asked of respondents as to where that money might be found in the context of government cuts and competing, often statutory, services.
- 2.94. Interestingly, 73% of respondents said they would do more courses if they were closer to where they lived.
- 2.95. We asked respondents to indicate why they came to the College. The answers were as follows:



- 2.96. Notable is the priority given to learning new skills, improving confidence and improving Maths and English. The improving confidence element reflects comments received within the main survey.
- 2.97. We also asked respondents what was important to them about the provision:

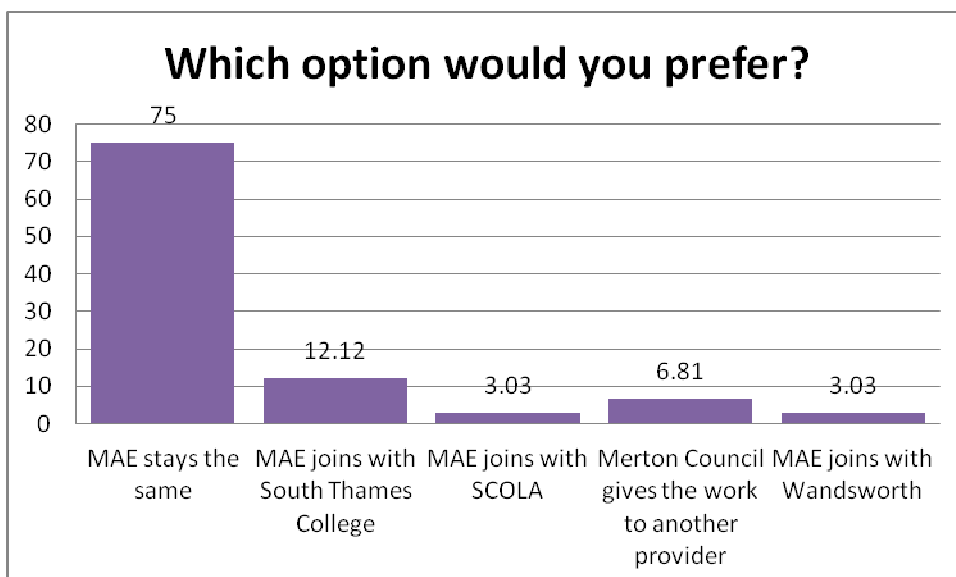


2.98. As in the main survey, respondents felt a friendly atmosphere was the most important thing. Feeling safe, being near to the users home or work, and IT facilities were also important. Proximity to a bus stop or station was also of concern.

2.99. As with the main survey, the areas respondents valued most highly could continue to be delivered under any of the options being considered.

Which option

2.100. We also asked these learners how they felt about the various options on offer. Their response was as follows:



- 2.101. This demonstrated widespread support for option 1.
- 2.102. We also asked respondents for additional comments. There were four broad groupings that were particularly emphasised. These were:
- (i) That respondents did not want the Whatley Avenue site to be closed.
 - (ii) That the ability to develop English skills was very important to people
 - (iii) That the tutors are really important and really valued and
 - (iv) That the adult education, and the safe nurturing venue it is provided in, represents an important part of some of the respondents lives.
- 2.103. As in the main survey, these reasons may explain why so many respondents chose option 1 with many people equating the service with the physical building. Nonetheless, the actual aspects of the service that were valued could also be delivered through the alternative models being considered.
- 2.104. The respondents came from the following wards:

Number of Respondents to the ESOL MAE Survey by Ward, 23 January 2015.

Source: London Borough of Merton



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Note: 26 responses were also received from outside Merton.

- 2.105. As can be seen from the above, and reflecting the main survey, there was a preponderance of responses from people who live near to the main service delivery site of Whatley Avenue.
- 2.106. Full results of this survey are included within appendix C.

Other

Additional feedback from the public meetings

- 2.107. Notes from two public meetings are available as appendix D. Most of the comments reflect the comments provided within the written consultations

and the petitions. However a few points that particularly emphasised or have not been raised elsewhere in this report include:

- (i) A concern from some that the proposed savings are not sufficient to justify the changes.
- (ii) A concern from some about the impact on the Whatley Avenue site; particularly people who lived locally to the site or saw it as a community asset.
- (iii) There was concern from some about the impact the changes would have on specific courses or learners groups. Particular issues raised include arts courses and the impact on users with disabilities
- (iv) A number of attendees urged the council to put up council tax to pay for the protection of the service.

Petitions

- 2.108. In addition to the consultation the council has received four petitions: a petition using the national 38 degrees website and had 1,264 signatures (including 28 from a copy of the same survey submitted by the Stroke Association). However it is likely that at least some of the petitioners will reside outside of the borough.
- 2.109. A further petition of roughly 1,000 people was received protesting cuts or detrimental changes to the Whatley Avenue site and two further petitions from the national Women's Institute (with the same proviso regarding petitioners from outside the borough) entitled 'Save Merton Adult Education' and one entitled #JoHoSaysNo; the latter receiving over 300 signatories and particularly concerned about the impact of any decision on Joseph Hood primary school.
- 2.110. Full details including the text are available in appendix E.

Further responses

- 2.111. We received over 40 letters from residents, sometimes directly and sometimes through their elected representatives. In addition, we received four letters that asked to be treated as complaints. Most of the letters reflected comments also made within the consultation.
- 2.112. The Merton Centre for Independent Living (CIL) also conducted a focus group with 8 learners with disabilities who attended a pottery class.
- 2.113. We also received a letter from Harris Academy which expressed an interest in the Whatley Avenue site for a potential secondary school should the site become vacant.
- 2.114. In addition, a learner event was held at MAE prior to the consultation being launched in November.
- 2.115. These letters, additional details from the pre-consultation session and the art work are included in appendix F.

Staff Consultation

- 2.116. Consultation has also taken place with staff from Merton Adult Education with and a range of responses given. These are available in appendix G

Other analysis and considerations

Whatley Avenue

- 2.117. It is clear from the consultation that people value the current service. However they see the service as indistinguishable from the current main delivery site at Whatley Avenue. They value the site as among other things: a nurturing environment, a community asset, an ideal location, providing good facilities and as a good location for adults of all ages, abilities and requirements to learn.
- 2.118. As such, a lot of the opposition to any of the alternative options stems from concern about the future of the Whatley Avenue site and whether the provision provided at that site could be replicated elsewhere.
- 2.119. It is crucial that any commissioning model is able to not only replicate the learning and courses provided but also provide a welcoming, nurturing and supportive atmosphere for students.
- 2.120. The location of Whatley Avenue was mentioned by some respondents as a positive. Analysis does not suggest this is the case when considering the borough as a whole. Whilst it is within walking distance of Wimbledon Chase and Raynes Park station and on some bus routes these tend to make it more accessible to residents from the West of the borough rather than the south or east. The fact that a large number of respondents lived close to the Whatley Avenue site may explain this response.
- 2.121. In addition, due to the limited parking available on site the location is not ideal for driving either. For many learners who may live nearby Whatley Avenue is in an ideal location – however, that does not mean that alternatives could not be just as good, or even better, for the whole borough.
- 2.122. There was also concern that the site would be sold for re-development, although there are no current plans to redevelop the site.
- 2.123. It is clear from the above that although there is significant affection for the Whatley Avenue site from learners, the elements of the venue that learners value would not prevent us from using different venues in the borough under alternative delivery models that met these needs and priorities.
- 2.124. As part of the consultation, the council also received a letter from Sir Dan Moynihan, the Chief Executive of the Harris Academy. This letter expressed their ‘very strong interest in using the site and building for the free school we have applied for to the DFE to open in Wimbledon.’
- 2.125. Decisions about the site should follow decisions about the model of adult education we wish to pursue.

Arts and Crafts courses

- 2.126. There was some concern that current courses could not be facilitated by South Thames College. Particular issues were raised about stained glass and pottery classes.
- 2.127. These courses are provided under the Community Learning part of the SFA funding and thus will be protected going forward provided there is not a cut in the grant from the SFA.
- 2.128. Any commissioning strategy will need to take due consideration of the fixed equipment and materials that are required to do these courses, including but not limited to a kiln. Nonetheless, all of the options under consideration could potentially deliver on this requirement.

Learning for those with disabilities

- 2.129. Currently about £120,000 of ASB grant, and a small amount of Community Learning grant, is allocated to courses for learners with disabilities under the 'Towards Independence' element of the SFA grant. This is grouped in a category described as non-regulated ASB and is designed to support people towards independence.
- 2.130. This represents the largest element of the ASB grant and in 2013/14 provided courses for 125 learners.
- 2.131. Re-providing this provision in an environment that is supportive, nurturing and safe for these students would be an absolute priority for any commissioning strategy. Officers believe that there are a number of options for how this could be provided.
- 2.132. For example, there is a precedent for MAE tutors running Adult Education sessions in our in-house day centres. These have included Literacy and Numeracy, Cookery, Personal Development, Fitness sessions and Music. The joint working began to address issues such as transport, availability of specialist bathrooms and changing facilities, and the need to provide support staff in some cases. This was particularly helpful in allowing people with more complex needs to have access to these sessions.
- 2.133. We are happy to provide space in our centres both to maintain existing arrangements and to cater for other groups, and if needed provide access to equipment and of course to bathrooms and changing areas. Each centre has a reception area where customers from elsewhere can wait for classes and transport. Tutors can access IT and refreshment facilities.
- 2.134. All centres are available outside of core hours, including evenings and weekends.
- 2.135. This is one option and we believe that other similar arrangements could be developed in partnership with learners, their carers, tutors and our partners. This would include settings that have more mainstream options such as libraries, the intergenerational centre, St Marks and South Thames College and many more – meeting the needs of the wide range of learners.
- 2.136. The changes to this provision would be dealt with sensitively and phased throughout the 18 month implementation period.

How might the options for change fit with what respondents value?

- 2.137. Of the four options that involve changing the way the service is delivered, two primarily involve a shared service approach and two primarily involve a commissioning model, although there is some crossover with hybrid models.
- 2.138. There has been some confusion from respondents as to what commissioning would mean in practice and the following outlines some of the key components of this model and assesses whether it could still allow the council to deliver the kind of services respondents want, within the reduced financial envelope. Some of this will also be relevant to shared service and hybrid models (e.g. option 5).
- 2.139. Commissioning means paying other educational providers to provide a service on our behalf but retaining control over that service. The council would be able to choose that provider based on our needs.
- 2.140. Across London, many boroughs already commission their adult education services to a range of providers.

- 2.141. Under a commissioning model, we would retain a portion of the grant (roughly 15%) to manage the commissioning and would retain responsibility for the diversity and quality of the learning. We are also able to set the fees that will be charged.
- 2.142. As the current provider of the service we would also expect to transfer the tutors who currently work for the service to the new providers; this would keep continuity of provision.
- 2.143. The Skills Funding Agency require councils that commission their adult education services to retain responsibility for the range of courses provided, the quality of the courses provided and other learning elements such as fees charged.
- 2.144. Commissioned services do not have to be at one site. Working with South Thames College, for example, does not mean that every course they provide would need to be at the Morden campus. We could ask them to provide courses in other locations.
- 2.145. As the council retains responsibility and control we can vary the adult education offer every year in line with need.
- 2.146. Commissioned providers will not necessarily have a profit motive; indeed most will not. Many of the potential providers we would work with are educational establishments or social enterprises who do not aim to make profits from their work. However, some providers may seek to make a profit.
- 2.147. Although this is a rule of thumb rather than set terms, in general we would expect to work with providers on the basis of a 60:40 split with at least 60% of the contract being spent on directly on teaching. This would compare favourably to our current model where only 46% of the staffing costs are spent on teaching; not even considering the other costs.
- 2.148. In order to provide diverse input into the commissioning process we would develop a commissioning model that includes mechanisms that allow for the regular input of key stakeholders. This will include learners, council officers and partners. For specialist areas such as the courses for adults with disabilities we would work closely with those learners, and their carers, in developing the provision.
- 2.149. The commissioning process would also seek to commission services that are available at a variety of convenient locations across Merton.
- 2.150. Shared service models would provide many of the above assurances for the council and for learners, in terms of the areas of the service that are valued. However, a key difference with the current service and with a commissioned service would be a reduction in the council's level of control over the diversity and quality of the learning. This is particularly the case if we were to be the minority partner in a far larger organisation, as would be the case in option 2.

South Thames College and other providers

- 2.151. As the largest provider in the borough we anticipate that any commissioning strategy would mean working closely with South Thames College.
- 2.152. Respondents have expressed some concern about the college's capacity and range of courses. As mentioned in the November Cabinet report some

analysis has been carried out with the college to assess their capacity. This can be broken down as follows:

| Courses at MAE | Can be provided same time at STC Merton | Could be provided at STC with some adjustments | Courses already provided at STC (duplicates) |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| 273 | 224 | 49 | 69 |

2.153. It is also worth saying that commissioning a college like South Thames provides an opportunity for a wider course base. An analysis of courses provided by the MAE and STC show that STC currently provide 4 times as many types of courses as MAE. This does not mean we would change the current provision but it does provide potential additional opportunities for our learners.

| Current course types provided by MAE | Current course types provided by STC |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 163 | 652 |

2.154. It is also worth noting that STC Merton is a large modern campus with good transport connections and modern facilities – including art studios, IT suites, performance spaces, professional kitchens, various workshops and specialist facilities.

2.155. In addition, there are a large number of smaller providers who may be interested in providing courses. These include:

- (i) Wimbledon School of Art
- (ii) Grenfell Housing and Training
- (iii) Capital Training Group
- (iv) Commonsides Community Development Trust
- (v) Training and Recruitment Partnership
- (vi) Delrose Earle Training

2.156. There would be many others as well, in addition to independent tutors who we might commission directly, but the above demonstrates some of the partners we could consider working with

Equalities Implications

2.157. A number of respondents raised concerns about the equalities implications of any potential change to the adult education provision in Merton. In line with the council's practice an Equalities Analysis has been produced to accompany this report. It is available as appendix H

2.158. The analysis was informed by the consultation, including specific surveys carried out with learners with disabilities and limited English.

2.159. The EA identifies some potential negative implications of moving to a commissioning model. As such, it has been scored as a level 3 proposal. This means that the EA has identified adjustments to remove negative impact or to better promote equality. These are reflected in the action plan contained within the EA which specifically includes proposals to mitigate the potential impact on learners with disabilities, older learners, learners from

BME backgrounds and those with particular religious beliefs as well as from specific socio-economic groups.

- 2.160. Some of these implications could be positive but in order to protect against potential negative impacts and to make sure the process is as positive as possible it is crucial that the commissioning process is carried out carefully and with due consideration given to how services can be provided that meet the needs of all learners from all backgrounds.
- 2.161. Although the recommendations are varied the most important is probably the proposals around the implementation and phased nature of the roll out of a commissioning model. This will help us work closely with potentially impacted groups to ensure that the provision meets their needs.
- 2.162. It is important that the action plan is implemented as part of any decision. As such, it is recommended that Cabinet specifically endorse the equalities action plan.

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 3.1. Although a majority of consultation respondents preferred no change to the current service, it is clear from the financial analysis that option 1 would not provide the cost savings and financially resilient service that the council needs both to contribute to the overall £32m savings required by the council and to put the service on a sustainable footing in the light of future funding expectations.
- 3.2. The Cabinet has already ruled out ceasing the service (originally option 6).
- 3.3. All of the other options offer some level of cost avoidance for the council and offer greater protection for the service going forward, within a volatile adult learning funding context.
- 3.4. All of the options for change could deliver against much of what respondents to the consultation value about the current service, to greater and lesser extents.
- 3.5. However, options 2, 3 and 5, which all involve a degree of sharing services, would offer the council less control over the breadth and quality of learning, key issues for survey respondents.
- 3.6. Option 4, which is a commissioning model, would allow the council to retain control over the service and to deliver it in line with the elements currently valued by survey respondents.
- 3.7. Overall, options 3, 4 and 5 would, if we received just a 10% reduction in our grant, offer approximately £300,000 in cost avoidance.. However, options 4 and 5 would potentially deliver the greatest level of protection against future funding cuts.
- 3.8. As is clear from the above, Option 4 is the most attractive model in terms of cost and it performs best of all of the options for change in terms of what survey respondents value about the service. This model would potentially allow us to most closely replicate the current service within a more affordable cost envelope.

Recommendation

- 3.9. In light of the additional information and analysis in this report it remains the view of officers that the commissioning model is the most appropriate model for the council. In order to ensure that any potential negative impact on learners is mitigated we would recommend a tailored commissioning approach to ensure that the concerns of learners are addressed.
- 3.10. The specific support for the commissioning model is for the following reasons:
- (i) The financial analysis conducted shows that the financial risk to the council of continuing as an in house provider is still high and that the commissioning model would reduce that risk.
 - (ii) The commissioning model can still meet most of the priorities of learners in Merton as reflected in the consultation.
 - (iii) Adult education is not a service that the council has a statutory duty to maintain. Due to the council's financial position if there is an option for delivery that minimises the cost to the council there needs to be a good reason not to take it; especially as the council is unlikely to be able to increase costs by any subsidy to the service without making service reductions elsewhere .
 - (iv) The commissioning model protects adult education in Merton; this is not a cut to the service beyond any future reduction made by the SFA although this model does not fully protect services from the impact of those cuts.
 - (v) The Skills Funding Agency funding is volatile in nature and if we do not act now we may be forced to take alternative action within a year or two. By taking this decision now we have the opportunity to bed the new delivery model in before any further grant reductions impact on the service.
 - (vi) The commissioning model is used by numerous authorities and works successfully.
 - (vii) Commissioning would allow us to move away from a provider model with high fixed costs and allow us to invest as much of the SFA funding we do receive in the future on learning
 - (viii) As commissioners the council will be in a position to steer provision and the spread of venues so that the service fully addresses the challenge of "bridging the gap" between east and west. This ability will be maintained.
 - (ix) By moving to a sole commissioning model we would keep full control of the commissioning process allowing us to ensure that the needs identified above are fully met – something that might be constrained in the joint commissioning model.
 - (x) Unlike some of the other options considered during the consultation this option is deliverable.
- 3.11. For all the above reasons we recommend to Cabinet that the council opt for option 4 and move to a commissioning model for adult education over the next eighteen months.
- 3.12. However, it is clear from the consultation that a new commissioning model would need to be implemented in a sensitive way and safeguards put in

place to ensure that learners such as those with learning disabilities and older learners are protected in line with the needs identified within this consultation.

- 3.13. As such it is recommended that the Cabinet accept the recommendation along with the following commissioning principles and an implementation plan that reflects this change of approach.

Commissioning principles

- 3.14. The commissioning model also needs to ensure that the newly commissioned service meets the expectations of residents and learners. Officers have therefore developed a series of commissioning principles to underpin future commissioning. These are derived from the consultation and are as follows:

- (i) That commissioning should look to continue the same breadth of courses currently provided. This does not mean that the courses must be the exact same year to year as needs change but that the breadth and variety should be maintained.
- (ii) That courses should continue to be delivered within the borough
- (iii) That the economic development and skills agendas of the council should be prevalent through the commissioning process
- (iv) That TUPE regulations will be followed and every effort made to retain the highly valued tutors.
- (v) That the environment and support of each provider should be assessed as part of the commissioning process
- (vi) That adults with disabilities and their carers should be involved in the commissioning process for courses specifically tailored for them
- (vii) That discussions about the provision of facilities for art and craft courses should involve user representatives from those courses
- (viii) That a focus on wellbeing and aging well and on helping learners to gain employment should be key elements of the commissioning process to go alongside any focus on qualifications and learning
- (ix) That hobbies, crafts and non-vocational skills courses should still be commissioned in line with SFA funding
- (x) That fees should be set by the council as part of the commissioning process and controlled accordingly
- (xi) That effort should be made to ensure provision is spread around the borough and not just located at one site, although quality and cost will remain key considerations.
- (xii) That, where possible, services should be commissioned with not-for profit organisations
- (xiii) That the outcomes for learners should be closely monitored to ensure that job prospects, well-being, support for vulnerable learners and safeguarding aspects are all considered as part of the commissioning cycle.

Implementation process and costs

- 3.15. The implementation process detailed below is designed to ensure that the commissioning can be implemented in a way that protects the services valued by learners and meets the action plan proposed within the Equalities Analysis. As such, the process would be phased over a 18 month period. This would allow us to ensure that the providers we commission with are appropriate, develop in house provision where necessary and provide continuity of the service while the implementation is completed.
- 3.16. We would firstly investigate providers interested in providing the Adult Skills Budget (ASB) element of the service. Our ambition would be to commission this element of the budget by September 2015. We would also look for other services that may be easily commissioned at this time.
- 3.17. We would then work with commissioned providers to develop a commissioning model for the Community Learning and provision for learners with disabilities. This would include specific work looking at arts and crafts courses and older learners.
- 3.18. The work with learners with disabilities would be developed particularly carefully with engagement with learners, carers and tutors designed to shape the commissioning.
- 3.19. This latter commissioning could then take place over the course of the 2015/16 academic year with an ambition that, provided the proposals meet with formal Cabinet approval, every service to be provided on a fully commissioned basis by the summer of 2016.
- 3.20. Broadly speaking, the timetable proposed can be captured as follows:

| Milestone Description | Critical Date |
|--|----------------|
| Commissioning commences | Feb 2015 |
| Consultation with staff commences | April 2015 |
| First stage of TUPE / residual redundancies take place | September 2015 |
| New prospectus published | May 2015 |
| First phase of courses move to new providers | Sept 2015 |
| Second phase of courses move to new providers | Jan / Feb 2016 |
| Third phase of courses move to new providers | June 2016 |

- 3.21. We would work closely with learners and any providers to make sure that the proposals developed have their input and then subsequently that any transition would be as seamless as possible.
- 3.22. Any new provider would be asked if they intended to include the Whatley Avenue site as part of their proposal.
- 3.23. In terms of funding it is anticipated that the transition will incur one of costs of approximately £175,000. These costs would pay for the following:
- A full time project manager for 8 months - <£75k (assume 150 days at £500pd)
 - Support services (HR, procurement) - <£50k (assume input equal to 1 FTE between the services over the 8 months)
 - Additional staff to ensure BAU alongside the implementation - <£100k (assume at 3 additional staff brought in to manage BAU and free up staff to contribute)

- 3.24. These costs would be one of costs with no impact on the council's revenue budget and would be met from the council's transformation fund which is in place to fund efficiency initiatives such as this.

CONCLUSION

- 3.25. The adult education service is valued by learners who would prefer no change to current provision. However the council is facing unprecedented financial pressures and needs to act responsibly by assessing whether there are other ways to deliver the service that could achieve greater financial resilience whilst still delivering much of what residents value in an adult education service.
- 3.26. The recommended plans, in the view of officers, will allow for a more financially resilient service which can withstand the current climate of increasing funding cuts whilst at the same time allowing much of the concerns of survey respondents to be met and for councillors to be reassured that the models being delivered will meet the needs of learners.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1. The consultation considered 5 potential options having previously discounted the option for Merton to cease being a provider of adult education.
- 4.2. Backbench Members also asked us to look at the potential for splitting the ASB and CL provision and analysis of this is provided in section 2.20

5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 5.1. As detailed in section 2.41 a substantial consultation has taken place with Merton residents. The full analysis of this consultation is available as appendix A
- 5.2. In total approximately 3,500 people have been engaged through this consultation process.

6 TIMETABLE

- 6.1. The proposed timetable is outlined in section 3.15 and recommends a phased implementation over an 18 month period.

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. MAE is mainly funded by grant. The net MAE budget including overheads is £39k.
- 7.2. MAE is currently forecast to overspend against the allocated budget by £181k.
- 7.3. The over-spend is mainly due to forecast under-achievement of Income due to changes in the SFA funding regime made after budget setting in previous years and the non-delivery of savings.
- 7.4. There has also recently been a reduction in SFA funding for ESOL Transitional funds.

8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The main statutory basis for the adult education service is section 15B of the Education Act 1996. This section empowers local authorities to secure the provision for their area of full-time or part-time education suitable to the requirements of persons who have attained the age of 19, including provision for persons from other areas. It includes power to secure the provision of training, including vocational, social, physical and recreational training, and of organised leisure time occupation which is provided in connection with the provision of education or training. The authority may do anything which appears to them to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of or in connection with the exercise of their functions under this section. In exercising their functions, the authority must in particular have regard to the needs of persons with learning difficulties or disabilities.
- 8.2. The authority does not therefore have a statutory duty to maintain an adult education service but must in considering whether to provide a service and what service to provide take account in particular of the needs of people with learning difficulties or disabilities.
- 8.3. In considering changes to service provision the council must also have regard to consultation responses and to its Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 8.4. Case law establishes that the Council must not rule out any alternative options prior to consultation and must take the responses to consultation conscientiously into account in finalising any proposals.
- 8.5. The Council's public sector equality duty is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which provides that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low. Relevant protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
- 8.6. To meet the public sector equality duty the authority must assess the risk and extent of any adverse impact of proposals and the ways in which such risk may be eliminated before the adoption of a proposed policy. An equalities analysis has been completed to enable this assessment to be undertaken as referred to in section 2.155 of the report.

9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. An equalities analysis has been completed and is attached as appendix H and referred to in section 2.155 of this report.

- 9.2. From the officer analysis and the consultation undertaken with residents we can see that there is a potential negative impact on a number of groups. In order to mitigate this we would need to ensure that the commissioned services matched the current provision. In addition, we would want to see commissioned services that were able to provide some of the supportive and nurturing elements that the current provision does and also work hard to continue to attract and support learners from protected groups.
- 9.3. The attached action plan is designed to meet these concerns and by taking 18 months to implement we should be able to ensure that the services we commission are specifically designed to meet the need of these residents.
- 9.4. Members are encouraged to review the potential equalities implications and the proposals put in place to mitigate them.

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. None

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

Appendix A –Financial analysis

Appendix B – Consultation survey responses

Appendix C – Easy read consultation survey responses

Appendix D – Feedback from public meetings

Appendix E – Petitions received

Appendix F – Additional submissions

Appendix G – Feedback from staff meetings

Appendix H – Equalities Analysis

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1. Adult Education in Merton: Options Appraisal – Cabinet 10th November.

Equality Analysis



| | |
|---|--|
| What are the proposals being assessed? | Merton Adult Education Options Appraisal |
| Which Department/ Division has the responsibility for this? | Community and Housing / Merton Adult Education |

| Stage 1: Overview | |
|--|---|
| Name and job title of lead officer | Gareth Young; Business Partner – Community and Housing Department |
| 1. What are the aims, objectives and desired outcomes of your proposal? (Also explain proposals e.g. reduction/removal of service, deletion of posts, changing criteria etc) | <p>We are proposing to move to a commissioning model for the provision of adult education in Merton.</p> <p>The aim of the proposed new model is to ensure that we have a long-term financially viable resilient service able to continue delivering high quality adult education to Merton residents. This is in light of current reductions to the Skills Funding Agency grant and potential future reductions.</p> <p>After a consultation with the public and a full financial analysis we are proposing that Merton becomes a commissioner of Adult Education Services and that commissioned services will continue to be delivered in Merton.</p> <p>This means that the vast majority of courses will be provided by providers who are not the LB Merton.</p> <p>This may mean that courses will be provided at an alternative site/sites and the current Whatley Avenue site closed as an adult education facility although this will depend on whether commissioned providers are interested in utilising the site.</p> <p>All courses will continue to be provided in Merton.</p> <p>Staff will be impacted although we would anticipate the majority of staff transferring to new providers under the TUPE provisions.</p> |
| 2. How does this contribute to the council's corporate priorities? | <p>Merton Adult Education contributes to numerous Community Plan priorities; contributing to bridging the gap between the east and west of the borough, supporting ambitions to help residents back into work, assisting them to live a healthy and happy life and contributing to Merton the community. It also contributes to the corporate priority of offering efficient value for money services and in relation to securing the council's financial bottom line.</p> <p>We are committed to continuing with adult education in Merton and the option being recommended is designed to ensure that the service can continue and as much funding as possible spent on learning activity.</p> |
| 3. Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, | <p>The option being proposed would impact on the following groups of people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff at MAE • Learners who currently study at MAE • Residents who may potentially opt to take Merton provided Adult Education courses in the future |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>stakeholders, the workforce etc.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our partners who would be commissioned to provide these services. These include South Thames College and numerous small learning providers within Merton. • Other partners that MAE currently work with • The Skills Funding Agency |
| <p>4. Is the responsibility shared with another department, authority or organisation? If so, who are the partners and who has overall responsibility?</p> | <p>Currently, the service is provided by the in house MAE team although they do partner with a number of other organisations to provide the courses.</p> <p>Merton has overall responsibility and would continue to maintain this responsibility to the SFA if the proposal is implemented.</p> |

Stage 2: Collecting evidence/ data

5. What evidence have you considered as part of this assessment?

Provide details of the information you have reviewed to determine the impact your proposal would have on the protected characteristics (equality groups).

As part of this process we have considered the information we have about the current provision within the MAE service, including funding, demographics and course types and carried out an extensive public consultation. The nature of this consultation and the responses to it are contained within the Cabinet report.

Stage 3: Assessing impact and analysis

6. From the evidence you have considered, what areas of concern have you identified regarding the potential negative and positive impact on one or more protected characteristics (equality groups)?

| Protected characteristic (equality group) | Tick which applies | | Tick which applies | | Reason Briefly explain what positive or negative impact has been identified |
|--|---------------------------|----|---------------------------|----|---|
| | Potential positive impact | | Potential negative impact | | |
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| Age | / | | / | | During the consultation phase some respondents suggested that the impact on retired people would be particularly felt. This was because retired people were less likely to travel further for their courses if they moved from Whatley Avenue and also because it was felt that the Whatley Avenue site was the perfect environment for retired people to study. In addition, the provision of adult education is seen as a key contributor to aging well. If older people stopped attending these courses this would have a negative impact on their ability to age well. It is possible that the commissioned model may lead to an improved service. There also may be an implication for staff if the commissioning process leads to redundancies. |
| Disability | / | | / | | The MAE facility currently provides courses for individuals with learning and physical disabilities with a particular focus on courses for those with learning disabilities. The consultation, particularly the focused consultation with learners with learning disabilities, demonstrated how important people |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | | felt that this provision is. The commissioning model proposed would seek to re-provide these services but there was concern that the environment provided would not be able to match the nurturing environment present at Whatley Avenue. The commissioning process may also lead to an improved service offer but the current users are very satisfied with their current provision. There also may be an implication for staff if the commissioning process leads to redundancies. |
| Gender Reassignment | | / | / | | There also may be an implication for staff if the commissioning process leads to redundancies. |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | | / | / | | There also may be an implication for staff if the commissioning process leads to redundancies. |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | | / | / | | There also may be an implication for staff if the commissioning process leads to redundancies. |
| Race | / | | / | | The MAE facility currently provides courses that are taken by a significant proportion of individuals from BME groups (38.1% of learners). The commissioning model proposed would seek to re-provide these services and it is possible that the services offered could even be improved and the offer enhanced. However, any change in provision may have an impact on this group and thus needs to be monitored closely. Areas that would need to be closely reviewed include ESOL courses which are primarily taken by those from BME backgrounds. In other courses the proportion of BME learners broadly reflects the borough population. There also may be an implication for staff if the commissioning process leads to redundancies. |
| Religion/ belief | | / | / | | During the consultation, the provision of a prayer room at the Whatley Avenue site was raised as a potential detriment for learners if the commissioned providers did not also have the same facilities. Some providers would be able to provide this facility but it is possible that some would be unable to do so, although most would be sited near other religious establishments where prayer could take place. There also may be an implication for staff if the commissioning process leads to redundancies. |
| Sex (Gender) | | / | / | | There also may be an implication for staff if the commissioning process leads to redundancies. |
| Sexual orientation | | / | / | | There also may be an implication for staff if the commissioning process leads to redundancies. |
| Socio-economic status | / | | / | | Adult education has the potential to make a substantial contribution to bridging the gap between the East and the West of the Borough and supporting people into work. The proposed commissioned model needs to consider how opportunities, |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | <p>including courses and facilities, can be made available to all residents and especially to those who would most benefit from these courses.</p> <p>Currently, the service reaches residents in both the East and West of the Borough. If it was not possible to commission services of at least this range with alternative providers then it could have a potentially negative impact on those from certain the socio-economic groups that rely on these courses.</p> <p>The ambition is to re-provide this range of courses and to deliver them around the Borough through the commissioning model and it is possible that the future model, depending on how it is structured, could be offer an improvement for this group.</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|

7. If you have identified a negative impact, how do you plan to mitigate it?

The potential negative impacts all relate to the risk that we will be unable to re-produce the current service provision at the same quality and with the same supportive environment as provided by the current service. In particular, concerns have been raised about the service provision for older learners and learners with disabilities and in particular those with learning disabilities.

We plan to mitigate this by having a more deliberate implementation period, taking our time to develop provision for these groups and by building in strict monitoring procedures into the commissioning process so that we can vary the provision if it is clear that certain groups are being disadvantaged.

The plans are detailed in section 9.

Stage 4: Conclusion of the Equality Analysis

8. Which of the following statements best describe the outcome of the EA (Tick one box only)

Please refer to the guidance for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments is available on the intranet for further information about these outcomes and what they mean for your proposal

- Outcome 1** – The EA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality are being addressed. **No changes are required.**
- Outcome 2** – The EA has identified adjustments to remove negative impact or to better promote equality. **Actions you propose to take to do this should be included in the Action Plan.**
- Outcome 3** – The EA has identified some potential for negative impact or some missed opportunities to promote equality and it may not be possible to mitigate this fully. **If you propose to continue with proposals you must include the justification for this in Section 10 below, and include actions you propose to take to remove negative impact or to better promote equality in the Action Plan. You must ensure that your proposed action is in line with the PSED to have ‘due regard’ and you are advised to seek Legal Advice.**
- Outcome 4** – The EA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. **Stop and rethink your proposals.**

Stage 5: Improvement Action Plan

9. Equality Analysis Improvement Action Plan template – Making adjustments for negative impact

This action plan should be completed after the analysis and should outline action(s) to be taken to mitigate the potential negative impact identified (expanding on information provided in Section 7 above).

| Negative impact/ gap in information identified in the Equality Analysis | Action required to mitigate | How will you know this is achieved? e.g. performance measure/ target) | By when | Existing or additional resources? | Lead Officer | Action added to divisional/ team plan? |
|---|--|---|-------------------|---|--------------|--|
| Potential impact on learners with disabilities | The commissioning process to be carried out over a longer process (up to 18 months) and to involve learner and carer representatives to ensure that the commissioned services meet their needs. Subsequently this will be kept under review and adjusted to ensure needs are being appropriately met. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from learners • Continuing take up rates from users with learning disabilities over a period of time. | Sept '15 onwards | To be pursued within the implementation budget for this piece of work | TBC | To be added to project implementation plan |
| Potential impact on older learners | The commissioning process for the non-qualification Community Learning courses will also be phased over an 18 month period and work done with learners to ensure the commissioned courses meet their needs. We would also monitor closely the take up of courses at the new commissioned providers from older residents and seek to adjust the commissioning strategy if we felt that the new provision was not meeting older learner's needs or providing facilities that enabled them to age well. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from learners • Continuing take up rates from older users over a period of time • Assess in line with the council's aging well programme | Sept '15 onwards | To be pursued within the implementation budget for this piece of work | TBC | To be added to project implementation plan |
| Potential impact on learners based on socio-economic status | The commissioning process to request from providers a diversity of provision across the Borough. This is to be | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning guidelines • Monitoring data | Sept 2015 onwards | To be pursued within the implementation | TBC | To be added to project implementation |

| Negative impact/ gap in information identified in the Equality Analysis | Action required to mitigate | How will you know this is achieved? e.g. performance measure/ target) | By when | Existing or additional resources? | Lead Officer | Action added to divisional/ team plan? |
|---|--|---|---------|-----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| | <p>closely controlled by the commissioning function with particular focus placed on commissioning courses that support transition into employment.</p> <p>Monitoring to be put in place to ensure that learners from lower socio-economic groups are accessing, and importantly also passing, courses. SFA guidelines also require us to check the progress of learners post education and this will also help us assess the learning.</p> <p>As commissioners we will control the fees charged.</p> | | | on budget for this piece of work | | ion plan |

| Negative impact/ gap in information identified in the Equality Analysis | Action required to mitigate | How will you know this is achieved? e.g. performance measure/ target) | By when | Existing or additional resources? | Lead Officer | Action added to divisional/ team plan? |
|---|--|--|---------------------|---|--------------|--|
| Potential impact on learners due to their race | <p>ESOL and other similar courses are specifically aimed at learners whose primary language is not English. We would work with the learners who use these courses to ensure that the courses that they access are re-provided.</p> <p>In part because of the take up of these ESOL courses, 38.1% of learners are currently from BME backgrounds so as well as ensuring the provision of ESOL courses we will need to monitor take-up to ensure that learners are accessing this provision</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with ESOL course users and other interested parties to ensure new provision meets their needs • Monitoring data reviewed | Sept '15 onwards | To be pursued within the implementation budget for this piece of work | TBC | To be added to project implementation plan |
| Potential impact on learners with a specific religion / belief | Some providers may not have a prayer room; as such providers will be encouraged to facilitate prayers where reasonable practicable We will keep this under review and revisit if it proves to be a problem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring data reviewed | Sept '15 onwards | To be pursued within the implementation budget for this piece of work | TBC | To be added to project implementation plan |
| Potential impact on various groups due to staff restructuring | Full EA to accompany any future staff reorganisation in line with corporate policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff consultation EA delivered | April '15 - onwards | To be pursued within the implementation budget for this piece of work | TBC | To be added to project implementation plan |

Note that the full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented; therefore it is important the effective monitoring is in place to assess the impact.

Stage 6: Reporting outcomes

10. Summary of the equality analysis

This section can also be used in your decision making reports (CMT/Cabinet/etc) but you must also attach the assessment to the report, or provide a hyperlink

| This Equality Analysis has resulted in an Outcome | 3 | Assessment |
|---|---|------------|
| <p>From our analysis and the consultation we have done with residents we can see that there is a potential negative impact on a number of groups. In order to mitigate this we would need to ensure that the commissioned services matched the current provision. In addition, we would want to see commissioned services that were able to provide some of the supportive and nurturing elements that the current provision does and also work hard to continue to attract and support learners from protected groups.</p> <p>The above action plan is designed to meet these concerns and by taking 18 months to implement we should be able to ensure that the services we commission are specifically designed to meet the need of these residents.</p> | | |

Stage 7: Sign off by Director/ Head of Service

| | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Assessment completed by | Gareth Young | Signature: | Date: 27/1/15 |
| Improvement action plan signed off by Director/ Head of Service | Simon Williams | Signature: | Date: 28/1/15 |

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Appendix G: Feedback from staff consultation events

- Is there really an “east west” split in terms of deprivation? There are deprived estates in the west of the borough.
- Within this MAE offers something really important to people with learning disabilities, it is somewhere they like to come and they are integrated with the overall college. It is a proper learning environment but also informal enough for them to feel safe. Could anyone else really do this?
- Whatley Avenue performs an important function as a hub for tutors where they can get practical tasks like photocopying done, where they can get practical and prompt help with issues like IT, and where they can offer each other peer support. This could be lost if in the future there was a more dispersed model.
- We should not be too prescriptive about the curriculum mix.
- Be careful about fragmenting adult learning between providers. For example need for exam centres.
- How would commissioning actually work? How many people and where would they sit in the council organisationally? How does the funding work? Would there be any effort to join up the provider learning offers so that prospective learners can go just to one place to find out what is on offer?
- WA as a site has a precious ethos around scale, informality but still being a place of learning, with a variety of type of learners there.
- Merton College campus feels by contrast busy, volatile, with a younger age group. Many learners just won't cope with it. Accept STC want to do their best here, but it's hard to do.
- This is especially important for the LDD group
- Capacity. There isn't really this surplus capacity at STC if you consider time of day as mornings are much more popular.
- ESOL issues. STC already has a backlog. You need to provide a central focus point for them to come to and get advice and guidance before they start their learning.
- Can we justify the backlog maintenance costs?
- They feel misleading information was put out there especially about the mix of learners from across the borough and not acknowledging the progress they have made about quality and about reaching the whole borough.
- They also feel the council has not been honest about its real reason for undertaking this options appraisal and for its preferred option.
- Timescale for implementation. Clear view that you can't do it all by summer 2015, if you take into account issuing prospectus, getting agreements in place with SFA, managing the HR processes, giving staff notice in March/April so they can find jobs for the academic year starting in September 2015.
- Some technical HR points about how redundancy is calculated and what period it's based on due to fluctuating hours through academic year.
- Can specialist facilities like pottery be re-sited? Answer: yes but takes time to plan
- Don't really understand the financial analysis and how it supports the option chosen. Eg why can't MAE get its support services from elsewhere as would be cheaper than council providing. Is there a real saving here? How about the costs of implementation?
- Wanting to understand how commissioning would actually work
- Some issues about the consultation process, eg open text boxes, accessible versions, etc.

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Appendix E – Petitions received as part of Adult Education consultation

NB: We have not included all of the signatures in this appendix but simply listed the number of signatories. Full copies of all the signatures etc are available upon request.

Petition 1 – #SaveMAE via 38 degrees

1,264 signatures (this includes additional signatures collected by the Stroke Association on a petition with the same wording)

For Merton Council to both continue and safeguard the provision of Adult Education in the London Borough of Merton.

To honour the pledge that “all residents should have opportunities for a good life across Merton, including... good skills training, life-long learning and work”.

Not to sell the Whatley Avenue site, which has been used for Adult Education for over 30 years, for re-development, now or in the future.

Petition 2 – Petition to save Merton Adult Education services at Whatley Avenue from cuts and/or detrimental changes

Approx 1,000 signatures

Signatories of this petition are not satisfied that the financial case to close Whatley Avenue Centre for MAE has been presented in an acceptable form, nor that the proper scrutiny process has been followed.

Furthermore, any decision to close the Whatley Avenue Centre would conflict with the council’s own Aging Well Programme which hinges on the availability of suitable venues in the community where elderly, disabled and other vulnerable people can feel comfortable. Without these nurturing environments the epidemic of loneliness and isolation will sky rocket in Merton.

Signatories maintain that other viable solutions could be found that will satisfy current students, and maintain very high standards of care and facilities for elderly people, disabled people and people with learning differences. However, we need to cooperate and goodwill of Merton Council. We urge Merton Council to explore a model similar to that of SCOLA in Sutton.

Petition 3 - #JoHoSaysNo

320 signatures

Merton Council intends to try to cover a predicted £32m deficit by potentially selling off the Merton Adult Education (MAE) site on Whatley Avenue to the highest commercial bidder with no thought of consideration of the impact this will have on the 300 children who attend Joseph Hood Primary School.

Petition 4 – Wimbledon WI

55 signatures

Save Merton Adult Education

NB: A letter from the President of the Wimbledon WI was also sent with the petition and is included with the other letters

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Appendix D: Feedback from public meetings

2pm, 2nd December

Introduction

There were 68 attendees at the first public consultation meeting about the future of adult learning in Merton. The meeting took place at 2pm on the 2nd December in Merton's Council Chamber. In attendance was the Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Martin Whelton and the Director of Community and Housing, Simon Williams.

The following note captures the questions raised and the answers provided. It is a summary rather than a transcript but hopefully captures the points being made by the individuals involved and the responses by Councillor Whelton and Mr Williams.

Presentation

Cllr Whelton introduced the topic presenting the slides available here <http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/adulted/mertonadulthoodeducationfaqs.htm> and then invited the audience to raise any questions. These were as follows:

Questions and comments

Q: There are some classes that it would not be possible to move from Whatley Avenue to another provider; the classes meet multiple needs and would an increase in council tax be a better alternative?

A: Which ever process is taken forward appropriate venues would need to be secured but the consultation is about adult education not Whatley Avenue. We recognise the value of the services and want it to continue to meet those needs. The administration stood for election in May on a manifesto of a freeze in council tax and this commitment will be met.

Q: Savings of £176k are not sufficient to justify the discontent and distress that this is causing.
A To reach the overall savings target of £32m lots of smaller, difficult decisions will need to be taken. There is no silver bullet to make these savings. The prospect of higher deficits in future years also needs to be considered.

Q: Why has there not been an Equalities Impact Assessment

A: The assessment will inform the final decision in January

Q: Whatley Avenue saves money by engaging disabled users

A: Any new model would also need to engage disabled users, be accessible and appropriate for vulnerable users.

Q: Recent investment in Whatley Avenue will be wasted if the site is closed. Will other facilities match these standards?

A: There remains a maintenance backlog to address. Any other provider would need to offer appropriate facilities.

Q: Could Merton follow the SCOLA model with no council funding and a separate governing body?

A: SCOLA is based on a much larger level of activity making it more sustainable. This is not possible to achieve with MAE.

Q: MAE offers a safe place for older people. Could Merton tap into growing market for older people?

A: Any new provider would also need to be successful at attracting older people.

Q: Arts and crafts generates 60% of fees currently, could these be expanded?

A: It would be in the interest of any provider to expand successful courses and we would work with providers to shape the services offered.

Q: Are projected SFA cuts real and what is the cost of a commissioning model?

A: Cuts have been made over the last 4 years and are expected to continue with the government department – BIS – being asked to make a further cut of 60%. Lots of boroughs use a commissioning model, these do incur small costs but pass the risk of further grant reductions from the Council to the provider.

Q: Adults First is concerned about the loss of the friendly and welcoming atmosphere used by 300-400 learners with learning disabilities. This will be made worse by any reduction in day centre provision.

A: Whatever model is used a suitable provider and venue for those with learning disabilities would be found and support would continue.

Q: Previous sites, including some in the East of the borough have been closed and left vacant, will the same happen to Whatley Avenue?

A: Other sites may be empty briefly but are put to other use or disposed of as quickly as possible.

Q: The value of the current services is important, will exactly the same provision be replaced elsewhere?

A: We can't promise it will be exactly the same as the service will always change over time.

Q: There is a level of diversity at MAE that contributes to community cohesion and is not achieved at other sites due to the mix of users.

A: 70% of learners are from the west of the borough so more could be done to support the employability and skills of those in the East. ESOL will remain an essential element whichever model or provider is used.

Q: What safeguards are in place for Joseph Hood Primary School?

A: We take the needs of our schools very seriously and these will be fully considered.

Q: Why is the council not using reserves to protect the services and instead spending them on capital projects like Morden Park Pool and new CCTV?

A: Morden Park pool is in need of replacement otherwise it would close and was a manifesto commitment. This is coming from capital spending not revenue and the reserves are ring-fenced and not spare cash.

Q: Why does commissioning another provider involve the closing of Whatley Avenue?

A: Under commissioning we would work with a new provider to identify appropriate sites to be used.

Q: Why is commissioning the preferred option?

A: Commissioning is the best way of protecting the financial sustainability of the services as the other partnership models does not remove the financial risks to the council.

Q: What are the plans for Whatley Avenue and has the cost of relocating services to another site been considered?

A: The consultation is about the future of the service not the future of the site. If Whatley Avenue is no longer used for adult education services then we would need to consider what other uses there might be. Costs of any relocation would vary depending on capacity within other providers. There is capacity with other providers, for example South Thames College could accommodate 75% if

current MAE activity. This would be a short term cost but could over long term financial sustainability.

Q: Could MAE be expanded to solve the costs issue and run on a more independent model?

A: We have pursued an expansion strategy in recent years and this has not been enough to mitigate against the financial risks.

Q: The staff at Whatley Avenue have been kind and helpful, as they understand learners needs so should not lose their job. It is more difficult for those with learning disabilities to adjust to change.

A: If alternative venues are needed then we would make sure they are appropriate for learners with disabilities.

Q: What else could be cut instead of MAE to avoid the distress to users?

A: We are looking at all services to make savings but based on our manifesto commitments and our 'July Principles' to protect the vulnerable.

Q: The plans and the consultation have been rushed through and should be extended for more people to have their say

A: The decision needs to be made by cabinet at their meeting in January and there has been plenty of time for people to get involved. Simon Williams also offered to meet with any groups that wished to do so.

Q: What are the costs of commissioning the service?

A: We have lots of examples of successful commissioning, such as the leisure services. Costs and risks of change vary and are being considered, both in terms of financial and human impacts. Any cost of commissioning will be short term and one off.

Q: Why was this not mentioned in My Merton?

A: It is not possible to include everything in My Merton.

Q: When will paper copies of the survey be available?

A: Paper copies were delivered to Whatley Avenue on 1 December with more being delivered on 3 December. A simplified version of the survey for ESOL/LD learners was also available at Whatley Avenue and more will be provided as needed. Due to the Christmas post copies returned after 4 January will continue to be processed.

Q: Will commissioning lead to a loss of control in terms of the fees charged to students?

A: It will be in the interest of any provider to set fees at a level that encourages take up of the courses.

Cllr Whelton thanked those who had attended and encouraged everyone to respond to the consultation. He then closed the meeting.

7pm, 2nd December

Introduction

There were 29 attendees at the second public consultation meeting about the future of adult learning in Merton. The meeting took place at 7pm on the 2nd December in Merton's Council Chamber.

The following note captures the questions raised and the answers provided. It is a summary rather than a transcript but hopefully captures the points being made by the individuals involved.

Presentation

Cllr Whelton introduced the topic presenting the slides available here (*insert link*) and then invited the audience to raise any questions. These were as follows:

Questions

Q: Who are the local providers and where are they located?

A: Providers include:

South Thames College (STC) – which is the biggest provider in the Borough - and many other smaller providers (voluntary sector) – an example would be Grenfell.

Q: Can you explain some more about the nature of the term 'provider' – does this include private companies and what are the restrictions on them? The concern is that there aren't enough facilities in the Borough for these courses and that people will have to travel further for them.

A: We would commission from all sectors – this would include public, private and voluntary sector providers. All learning would be regulated by Ofsted and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and we would be accountable to them for this.

We would look to have facilities that are suitable for the learning needed. STC, for example, have capacity for 75% of the learning and other providers already have space in which they provide learning. We would look for the best space to accommodate the learning.

Q: The council hopes to keep similar provision – what about courses that need special facilities such as pottery, stained glass and upholstery.

A: We would look to commission these popular courses and do some work to see who could provide them. We would work closely with other providers to provide them.

Q: Has there been a space and use analysis of Whatley Avenue. Will the new provision match this?

A: We would look to match the current provision through the commissioning model. As part of the review we looked at the quantity of learning that goes on, where it happens and in what facilities and are confident that this can be re-provided.

Q: We would like some more information on the government funding that is provided for Adult Education. My concern is that the funding for provision of creative arts courses would suffer in any new model. The current range of courses is unique in Merton.

A: We currently receive funding in two pots – Adult Skills Budget and Community Learning. The Community Learning pot is available to be spent on creative arts and as long as the funding continues from the SFA in this way then we would be able to spend it on those subjects. If the rules of the grant change then we would have to adjust our provision to match this.

This would be the case regardless of the model chosen.

Q: Will Whatley Avenue still be available for adult learning? And are there any other plans for the site?

A: A new provider may wish to use the site but also may not and currently there are no plans to do anything specific with the site should it be surplus to requirements.

Q: How would stained glass / pottery classes be accommodated if the facilities elsewhere in the Borough are already full?

A: We would have the conversation with providers to make sure the facilities existed – we would either look to commission the service in existing facilities or give providers funding certainty to enable them to invest in the infrastructure – such as kilns.

Q: In the paper it says that the service costs £2.6m but what is the target for reducing the funding of Adult Education. Wouldn't any commissioning model end up costing more due to providers pricing in risk and trying to make a profit?

A: A large part of the budget comes from the SFA – The intention would be to manage the service within the SFA funding, whilst reducing the risk to the future of the service.

Commissioning would be aimed to ensure value for money and whilst some providers would seek to make money we would manage that rate of return. Many providers, such as current FE providers, cannot make a profit and would not seek to do so.

Q: Where does the saving come from?

A: The running costs of the service are high and this would be reduced.

Q: If we go down the commissioning road does this mean that the existing teaching staff would lose their job?

A: Under TUPE the tutors would be transferred to another provider.

Q: Where does the £379k backlog maintenance come from?

A: This is an estimate provided by the facilities team for work that is needed.

Q: Isn't it more expensive to provide services 'here, there and everywhere'? Isn't this just about selling Whatley Avenue?

A: We are focusing on the future of service provision at the moment – we are not planning to sell off the site as part of this consultation. We are focused on the future of adult learning.

Q: The decision is to be taken in 6 weeks – how will an EA be delivered in advance of that decision?

A: An EA will be derived from the consultation and other research and presented to Cabinet at the time of the decision.

Q: Can I ask about the tutors who are highly regarded. Do we know if the tutors would be interested in going?

A: Technically it is up to the tutors. We see the tutors as the asset to the service and the lifeblood of the service and we believe that new providers would want the tutors and that learners would want to follow their tutors. It is up to the tutors to decide where they will go – our aim would be to work with the tutors to ensure continuity of learning.

Q: Is this the same consultation for staff?

A: We have separate consultations with staff. If tutors want a further opportunity to input we will endeavour to make sure that can happen.

Q: What do we have to do to get you to cancel this decision? Especially as the money involved is very small

A: The financial constraints have already been outlined and are detailed in the presentation. We have to make savings and the process of doing so isn't going to get any easier. We value the consultation; we want to talk to learners and staff and come to a decision in the New Year.

Q: Why would other providers want to take on additional staff if the funding is unstable?

A: Many other councils provide successful commissioning models and this is working ok. Colleges are keen to take on these services because they match with the facilities they currently have.

Q: If you want to redress the balance of services across the Borough then isn't there is a risk that you stop using Whatley Avenue as much and that would increase the costs of Whatley.

A: There would be a range of locations and this may or may not include Whatley Avenue – there is a real need in the east of the borough which we want to meet.

Q: Why was Cobham Court and Canons House closed when they are in the East of the Borough?

A: Buildings in the east of the borough were closed due to savings from previous years. We do make use of other locations in the east of the borough – such as Pollards Hill libraries and other shared facilities.

Q: You don't appreciate the uniqueness of the Whatley Avenue – an unusual, unique and important place. How much will you save from this decision – we can't make decisions without knowing how much you would help to save

A: This would save about £300,000 as currently constructed (including the council contribution and our overspend). We are also doing this based on financial risk – the SFA would have less money and would demand more for that money. Any saving of £32m would require lots of small savings.

Q: Why couldn't the council put a capital amount into Whatley Avenue and then commission the whole service and the site?

A: This would be a risky option for any provider – and we need to ask whether a provider want to invest in a service that has risky funding and currently requires a subsidy?

Q: If you sold the site to a developer they would build flats; these would attract families with children that would cost us more in other services than keeping the existing facility. I live in the area and don't want more housing.

A: We are focused on adult learning at the moment and have no plans to build housing on the site.

Q: How much has been spent on updating the site in the previous year?

A: I can provide the exact figures but we can't let previous investments prevent us from ever making any changes to provision. We need to make investments at a moment in time and we can't stop investing in case we need to make a decision in the future. Likewise, we can't ignore options just because we have invested in the past.

Q: Could the site become a shared facility with the local primary school? Would this allow the facility to be kept?

A: We could look at this in the future but we are looking at the structure of the service first

Q: I have concerns that the provision will become really disparate if it is split over multiple sites rather than lifted and placed on another site.

A: We will consider this as part of the consultation.

Q: Question about day centres and the linkage between mainstream community facilities, such as adult learning, and wellbeing for older people.

A: We agree with the general statement as learning is important for wellbeing but do not believe that this can't be delivered on a different site.

Q: Being a good provider for those with Learning Disabilities is about far more than just facilities and is instead about a broader range of provision – such as nurturing environment.

A: We recognise this and would look to commission these services in a way that provided the environment as well as the learning.

Q: The centre provides a facility for a wide range of people – couldn't we have more vision for using the facilities to deliver a wider range of services and serve the community in a wider way? Can't we have more vision for the site?

A: We have a diverse range of services at Whatley Avenue and that is a credit to the service.

We want a sustainable future for adult education and how it should be provided in the Borough. The site is very good and lots of good effort has been made. Despite this the financials are still not sustainable.

We're more interested in a vision for adult learning than a vision for a site. We want excellent providers and to spend any funding we can attain to make that happen. We will look at all the facilities etc to make this happen.

Q: Why can't we be the same as SCOLA?

A: We are smaller than SCOLA and face different challenges

Q: If the services are outsourced where is the accountability?

A: We would be accountable to both the SFA and Ofsted. As a local authority we would have a duty to achieve value for money and monitor the quality of the education.

Q: Would you be relinquishing responsibility for monitoring the quality of the education?

A: No, we would be duty bound to monitor the quality of the teaching. If there are issues with the provider these are managed by the council and we would be responsible for them.

Q: How do you propose to manage the timeframe of the commissioning process which would need to start in January / February?

A: This is why we are planning to make a decision in January

Q: If we can hold the Olympics in Wimbledon why can't we keep the college open?

A: The panel felt this is not a like for like comparison.

Q: This is a short consultation period – the feedback seems to be quite resistant to keeping MAE open. I would urge you to consider delaying the decision for a year and make the decision a year later to give everyone a chance to contribute even more.

A: Thank you for your comment

Cllr Whelton thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Appendix A: Financial Analysis

- 1.1. In order to provide more analysis for Cabinet Members to make their decision this appendix has been prepared. It is structured as follows:
- (i) Explaining the budget
 - (ii) Quantifying the grant reductions
 - (iii) Understanding the over and under spends
 - (iv) The achievability of current income targets
 - (v) Modelling the alternative options
 - (vi) Alternative approaches
 - (vii) Miscellaneous other information
- 1.2. A request for more financial analysis is a clear theme coming from the consultation. Despite the original Cabinet report making it clear that the purpose of any option was to remove financial risk from the council individuals responding to the consultation wanted to better understand the nature of the financial risk and how the other options would be able to reduce that risk.
- 1.3. The first step is to explore further the nature of the financial risk to the current delivery model: Merton Adult Education. To understand this it is best to start with the SFA grant.

Explaining the budget

- 1.4. The following tables are based on the 2013/14 budget:

| Revenue £'000s | Budget 2013/14 | Actual 2013/14 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Expenditure | 2,687 | 2,601 |
| Employees | 1,793 | 1,755 |
| Premises | 173 | 140 |
| Transport | 3 | 3 |
| Supplies & Services | 340 | 317 |
| 3rd party payments | 0 | 0 |
| Support services | 286 | 294 |
| Depreciation | 92 | 92 |
| Income | 2,500 | 2,434 |
| Government grants | 1,873 | 1,907 |
| Reimbursements | 0 | 33 |
| Customer & client receipts | 627 | 494 |
| Recharges | 0 | 0 |
| Reserves | 0 | 0 |
| Capital Funded | 0 | 0 |
| Council Funded Net Budget | 187 | 167 |

- 1.5. The next table shows a breakdown on the expenditure incurred by the council:

| Expenditure Area | Financial Year 2013/14 out-turn |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
|------------------|------------------------------------|

| Expenditure Area | Financial Year 2013/14 out-turn |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Employees | £1,754,529 |
| Premises | £139,999 |
| <i>Includes:</i> | £0 |
| Rent | £35,800 |
| Utilities (including water), | £36,990 |
| Business rates | £38,050 |
| Cleaning | £29,159 |
| Other | |
| Transport | £3,181 |
| Supplies and Services | £317,105 |
| Support Services (Overheads) | £294,025 |
| Depreciation and Impairment Losses | £91,536 |

1.6. And the income of the service can be broken down as follows:

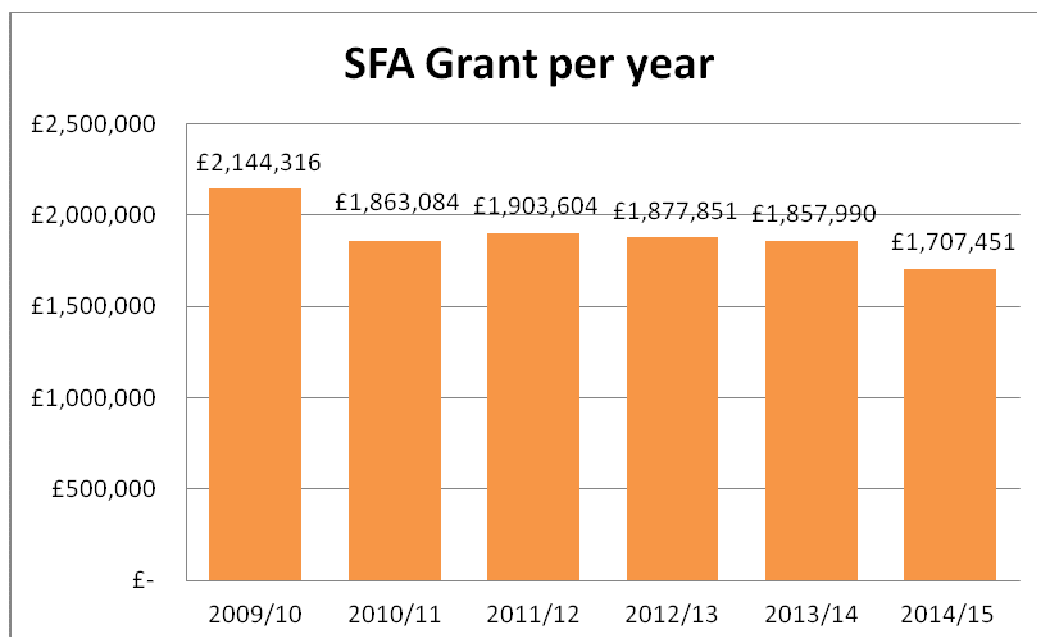
| Funding Source | Financial Year 2013/14 out-turn |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Skills Funding Agency Grant | £1,907,133 |
| Customer and Client Receipts | £494,261 |
| Other Reimbursements and Contributions | £33,227 |

1.7. The remaining costs of the service are represented in the bottom line (£167,000)

1.8. The grant from the Skills Funding Agency has reduced by £156,000 between 2013/14 and 2014/15 with an additional in year reduction of £35,000 being applied in December.

Quantifying the grant reductions

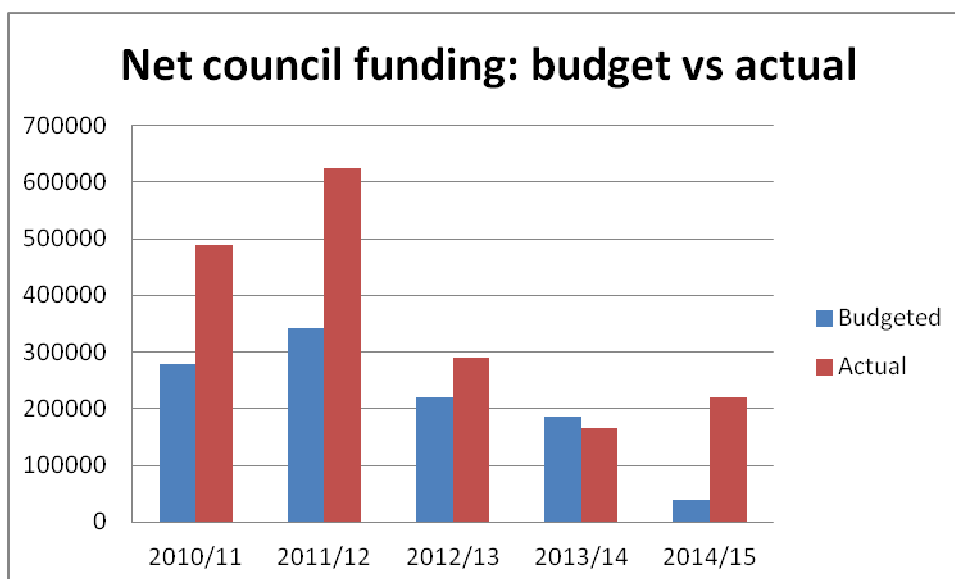
1.9. The following chart shows our Skills Funding Agency (SFA) grant per academic year.



- 1.10. It should also be noted that for the 2013/14 academic year the funding formula changed considerably – this had three major impacts:
- (i) a shift from grant to loans for level 3 upwards (reducing demand),
 - (ii) a shift to payment on outcomes rather than enrolment (requiring more delivery per pound of grant), and ;
 - (iii) a number of re-allocated grants – all of which moved funding away from shorter courses or courses which attracted more fees towards more level 1 and 2 courses which were longer and did not attract the same level of fees (requiring more delivery per pound of grant).
- 1.11. In addition, as mentioned above in December we were informed that the SFA were going to reduce our grant by another £35,000 in year. This £35,000 reduction is still to be fully confirmed but if it is will see a further reduction in the above figure.
- 1.12. The initial reduction in the grant for 2014/15 is due to the 19% reduction to the Adult Skills Budget element of the grant announced in March 2014. The reduction in funding and the running of fewer qualification courses has also impacted on the Fee Income target.
- 1.13. The next announcement re: funding changes from the SFA is expected to be made in March 2015. We expect this to signal a further reduction in the grant. This is due to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in which the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) sits being a non-ring-fenced department and therefore being responsible for delivering a large amount of the reduction in Government spending announced in the 2014 budget and Autumn statement.
- 1.14. However, it is also possible that as the announcement is due in March 2015 (2 months before an election) further reductions will be ‘saved’ until after the 2015 General Election.
- 1.15. Taken together the grant reductions and the requirement to do more with less have placed additional pressure on the MAE budget. We anticipate this pressure to grow further.

Overspending / underspending

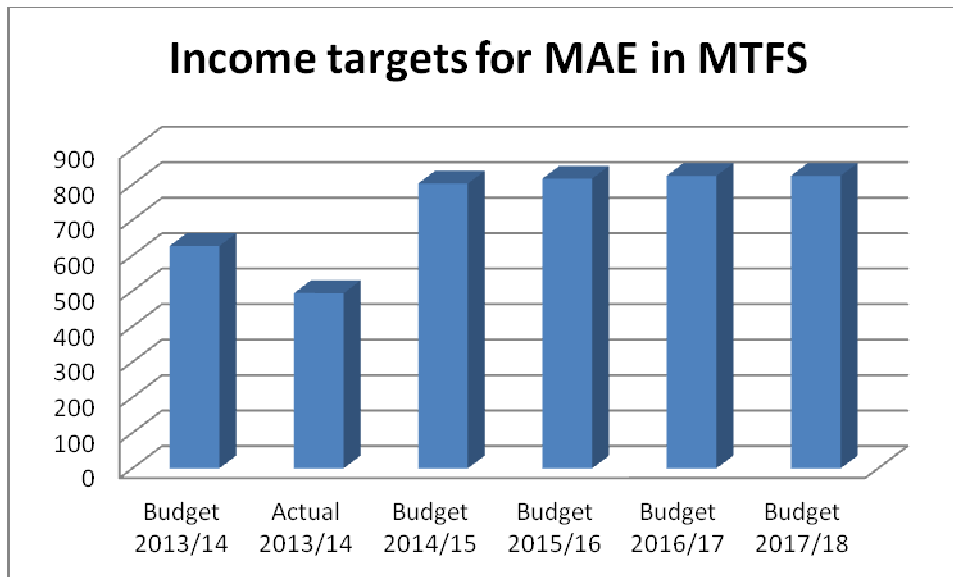
- 1.16. The following table shows the budgeted and actual net council funding received by the MAE service over the past four years.



- 1.17. As can be seen, over the past four years the service has only been able to meet its budget once (in 2013/14) leading to overspends of £209,605, £282,379, £69,388 and then an underspend of £21,196 respectively. In every year the council has committed between £165,000 and £625,000 to the provision of the service. In 2014/15 the budget has been reduced to £39,000 with a current expected overspend forecast of £181,000. This would represent a council contribution of £220,000 in 2014/15; an increase over 2013/14.

Future projections

- 1.18. The current MTFS has the council contribution to MAE staying roughly at £39,000 per year.
- 1.19. However, this is based on two assumptions – firstly a consistency in terms of the amount of funding received and secondly an aggressive series of income targets. These income targets are shown below:



- 1.20. The income targets required to meet the £39,000 council contribution envisaged by the council would require income of between £803,000 and £825,000. When these plans were developed there was hope that these could be achieved but the evidence so far (as shown by the 2013/14 figures) is that the potential to achieve that level of income above and beyond the grant funding is more limited than we had hoped. This is especially the case as reduced grants also have a knock on impact on the fees that can be raised.

Financially Assessing the Options

- 1.21. Many respondents to the consultation wanted to know conclusively what the saving to the council of pursuing the different options would be. The difficulty with this task is not knowing the grant funding allocations we can expect from the SFA and thus being unable to calculate the exact impact.
- 1.22. As such, the below table has been produced to demonstrate a model of each of the options based on a variety of potential grant reductions. It should be emphasised that even the 20% grant reduction used as the maximum cut in this analysis may be low as we do not, as yet, have a sense of what the Government's decision regarding SFA funding will be.

| Net cost to the council | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Option 1 | £180,000.00 | £238,875.31 | £297,750.62 | £356,625.93 | £415,501.24 |
| Option 2 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £32,766.10 |
| Option 3 | £0.00 | £35,351.36 | £76,550.99 | £135,426.30 | £194,301.60 |
| Option 4 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Option 5 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |

- 1.23. All of the modelling is based on the 2013/14 out-turn although option 1 does use the current budgetary forecast as a starting point re: the council's net contribution so as to

capture changes made in year. This includes a £39,000 net budget and a forecast £181,000 overspend.

1.24. The options above are based on a number of assumptions and these are captured in the individual tables shown below.

1.25. In addition, it should be noted that these analyses do not include the following items:

- (i) Implementation costs
- (ii) Any saving based on no longer having to fund the backlog maintenance at Whatley Avenue.
- (iii) One off capital receipts received from any disposal of the Whatley Avenue site (if that was decided subsequently)

1.26. All of the above items would be one-offs and have no further benefit or dis-benefit to the council's ongoing revenue budget although should be considered as part of the decision making process.

1.27. Whilst the above financial modelling does give a sense of the likely financial impact of the options these are subject to a number of external pressures. Amongst them are the following:

- (i) Negotiations with potential partners or providers may lead to different outcomes in terms of financial expectations of the council
- (ii) The above figures make assumptions about council overheads which may not be deliverable, at least in the short term
- (iii) The composition of grant reductions from the SFA can make a large impact on the remaining budget – such as whether it reduces fee income or increases cost pressures elsewhere in the business.
- (iv) Assumptions about increasing fee income are largely dependent on the ability of the service to bring in more fees – this is an unknown and so the forecast is based on estimates.

1.28. Finally, these numbers are for one year only – projecting these models over five years would require us to estimate grant reductions in each year.

1.29. As the above table demonstrates, reductions in the SFA grant make the in-house option expensive when compared to the cost control provided by options 2, 4 and 5.

1.30. Sometimes it is easier to demonstrate this information in terms of savings to the council through cost avoidance. This estimate is difficult as SFA grants and other circumstances vary a lot year to year. However, this can be presented as follows using the conservative 10% reduction as a basis for defining the savings amount.

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Saving through cost avoidance for options 2, 4, 5 with a 10% grant reduction | £297,750.62 |
|--|--------------------|

1.31. The cost avoidance achieved would remove a potential additional pressure from the council's already stretched revenue budget.

The individual options modelled

1.32. The below tables show the methodology used for modelling each of the different options.

1.33. Option 1:

| Option 1 | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction | Notes |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Take grant reduction | | £85,372.55 | £170,745.10 | £256,117.65 | £341,490.20 | |

| Option 1 | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction | Notes |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Add in current net contribution | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | |
| Subtract percentage of grant reduction (due to flexing variable and some semi-variable costs) | | -£26,497.24 | -£52,994.48 | -£79,491.72 | -£105,988.96 | Based on 31% of costs being flexible |
| Account for income increase | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | Generous assumption assuming £100k PH grant continues and that a 10% increase in income whilst grant reduction doesn't damage fee income. NB: Cuts in CL grant have a larger impact on bottom line as more fees attracted |
| Bottom line for council | £180,000.00 | £238,875.31 | £297,750.62 | £356,625.93 | £415,501.24 | |

1.34. Option 2:

| Option 2 | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction | Notes |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Take grant reduction | | £85,372.55 | £170,745.10 | £256,117.65 | £341,490.20 | |
| Add in current net contribution | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | |
| Assume no savings in overheads, transport and variable staff | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | Variable staff are tutors and will be needed regardless and any negotiation of a shared service usually leads to overheads remaining in the short term. |
| Less depreciation | -£91,536.00 | -£91,536.00 | -£91,536.00 | -£91,536.00 | -£91,536.00 | |
| Assume 50% reduction in accommodation | -£69,999.50 | -£69,999.50 | -£69,999.50 | -£69,999.50 | -£69,999.50 | We would use the STC site and contribute to that site (to be verified) |
| Assume 10% saving in supplies and savings | -£31,710.50 | -£31,710.50 | -£31,710.50 | -£31,710.50 | -£31,710.50 | Assumption based on shared IT systems and other joint procurement |
| Assume 20% savings in non-tutor staff | - | - | - | - | - | Assume 20% reduction in non-tutor staff |
| | £189,489.13 | £189,489.13 | £189,489.13 | £189,489.13 | £189,489.13 | |
| Subtract half of grant reduction (due to flexing variable and some semi-variable costs) | | -£26,497.24 | -£52,994.48 | -£79,491.72 | -£105,988.96 | Based on 31% of costs being flexible |
| Account for income increase | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | Generous assumption assuming £100k PH grant continues and that a 10% increase in income whilst grant reduction doesn't damage fee income. NB: Cuts in CL grant have a larger impact on bottom line as more fees |

| Option 2 | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction | Notes |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | | | | | | attracted |
| Savings re-invested into learning | £202,735.13 | £143,859.82 | £84,984.51 | £26,109.20 | £0.00 | Council will re-invest the grant into more learning |
| Bottom line for council | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £32,766.10 | |

1.35. Option 3:

| Option 3 | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction | Notes |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Take grant reduction | | £85,372.55 | £170,745.10 | £256,117.65 | £341,490.20 | |
| Add in current net contribution | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | £220,000.00 | |
| Assume no savings in depreciation, overheads, premises, transport and variable staff | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | Variable staff are tutors and will be needed regardless and working with another Borough means continuing with our own site so those costs stay |
| Assume 10% saving in supplies and savings | -£31,710.50 | -£31,710.50 | -£31,710.50 | -£31,710.50 | -£31,710.50 | Assumption based on shared IT systems and other joint procurement |
| Assume 20% savings in non-tutor staff | £189,489.13 | £189,489.13 | £189,489.13 | £189,489.13 | £189,489.13 | Assume 20% reduction in non-tutor staff |
| Subtract half of grant reduction (due to flexing variable and some semi-variable costs) | | -£26,497.24 | -£52,994.48 | -£79,491.72 | £105,988.96 | Based on 31% of costs being flexible |
| Account for income increase | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | Generous assumption assuming £100k PH grant continues and that a 10% increase in income whilst grant reduction doesn't damage fee income. NB: Cuts in CL grant have a larger impact on bottom line as more fees attracted |
| Savings re-invested into learning | £41,199.63 | £17,675.68 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | Council will re-invest the grant into more learning |
| Bottom line for council | £0.00 | £35,351.36 | £76,550.99 | £135,426.30 | £194,301.60 | |

1.36. Option 4:

| Option 4 | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction | Notes |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Grant | £1,707,451 | £1,622,078 | £1,536,706 | £1,451,333 | £1,365,961 | |
| Cost of commissioning function | £256,439 | £256,439 | £256,439 | £256,439 | £256,439 | Assumes posts as below and council overheads of £50,243 |

| Option 4 | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction | Notes |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Commissioning as % of grant | 15% | 16% | 17% | 18% | 19% | |
| Amount remaining for commissioning | £1,451,012 | £1,365,640 | £1,280,267 | £1,194,895 | £1,109,522 | |
| <i>Council subsidy if commissioning team stayed the same size even whilst grant reduced</i> | £321 | £13,127 | £25,933 | £38,739 | £51,544 | <i>If the commissioning team stayed consistent whilst the grant was reduced</i> |
| Bottom line for council assuming no subsidy | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | Assumes that commissioning team would be reduced to fit the 15% suggested limit. |

1.37. Option 5:

| Option 5 | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction | Notes |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Grant | £1,707,451 | £1,622,078 | £1,536,706 | £1,451,333 | £1,365,961 | |
| Cost of commissioning function | £236,563 | £236,563 | £236,563 | £236,563 | £236,563 | Assumes posts as below and council overheads of £50,234. This has not been negotiated with Wandsworth and due to the fact that they have a larger commissioning team might not be deliverable. However, if this option was selected this would be the direction we would like to see followed |
| Commissioning as % of grant | 14% | 15% | 15% | 16% | 17% | |
| Amount remaining for commissioning | £1,470,888 | £1,385,515 | £1,300,143 | £1,214,770 | £1,129,398 | |
| <i>Council subsidy if commissioning team stayed the same size even whilst grant reduced</i> | -£19,555 | -£6,749 | £6,057 | £18,863 | £31,669 | <i>If the commissioning team stayed consistent whilst the grant was reduced</i> |
| Bottom line for council assuming no subsidy | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | Assumes that commissioning team would be reduced to fit the 15% suggested limit |

1.38. NB: For the commissioning options (4 and 5) there are residual overheads that the council would need to decide whether to continue to fund, or to make savings if these corporate items are no longer required. We have calculated this as roughly £72,000. The non-controllable overheads are detailed below. These overheads would not be releasable immediately and so a decision would need to be made about how to fund them until they can be released.

Alternative approaches

1.39. In consultation with some backbench councillors we agreed to look at the following three additional questions:

- (i) What is the size of additional income generation that would need to be delivered to close the financial gap faced by the College?

- (ii) Would it be possible to commission the Adult Skills Budget element of the budget whilst retaining the Community Learning elements in house? What would be the financial impact of this?
- (iii) What are the residual costs left with the council in each of the options?

- Income generation target

- 1.40. As with a lot of the analysis contained within this work it is based on financial models and the ability to make reasonable, transparent assumptions. The following analysis does the same:
- 1.41. We could assume that the £220,000 overspend projected for 2014/15 is a little higher than the structural overspend expected year on year and thus assume that the budget gap is closer to £200,000 (without any further grant reduction).
- 1.42. This means that to bring the budget back into surplus the college would need to attract income sources that generated a surplus of £200,000. Income generation has been difficult to come by for the college in recent years. Contracts with organisations such as Tesco, Housing Associations and Other partners have largely been used to meet grant targets set by the SFA and therefore are already built into the budget.
- 1.43. However, in the current year the college will be able to generate income of £22,780 against external contracts and £37,876 against room bookings.
- 1.44. The feeling of management is that the room bookings could be further exploited to achieve income of £100,000 pa within 18 months. This would leave a gap of £140,000 which would, assuming a 40% marginal profit on the additional income generation work, require about £350,000 of additional income to be achieved from these contracts. This would be a very large increase (1,500%) on what is currently achieved. Assuming a 60% marginal profit would improve this target to £233,000 which is still a huge increase on the current achieved levels and it is questionable how achievable that margin would be.

- Splitting the ASB and CL provision

- 1.45. Backbench members also asked for a model that demonstrated the impact of commissioning the ASB courses but retaining the Community Learning and provision for learners with disabilities at Whatley Avenue.
- 1.46. The model looks like this:

| Modelling ASB / CL split | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| Service deficit | £220,000 | As at 14/15 period 9 |
| Add SFA funding for ASB | £735,000 | As in 14/15 |
| Minus ASB funding allocated for 'towards independence' | -£120,000 | As at 14/15 allocation |
| Add in fee income not generated | £168,000 | As in 13/14 for remaining ASB courses |
| Minus support / management staff no longer working on remaining contracts | -£313,050 | As per adjusted estimates from MAE management |
| Minus teaching staff no longer required | -£371,258 | As ASB is 48% of grant we assume 48% of tutor costs of £807,803 (which represent 46% of all staff costs) |
| Minus reduction in corporate overheads | -£100,320 | Assumes 44% reduction in the controllable overheads of £228,000 (13/14 figures) |
| Minus reduction in exam fees | -40,000 | Approximate |
| Bottom Line | £178,372 | |

- 1.47. The model suggests that the deficit would be reduced by roughly £40,000. It is also possible that after removing the contract it would be possible to remodel the service to further reduce this number.
- 1.48. In order to compare this option with the others proposed we also produced an analysis looking at the impact in light of future cuts to the grant – although in this case we were just modelling cuts to CL budget, assuming that the portion of the ASB that we retained would be the last element to be reduced. This modelling looks as follows:

| ASB / CL split model | With no grant reduction | With 5% grant reduction | With 10% grant reduction | With 15% grant reduction | With 20% grant reduction |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Current deficit | £178,372 | £178,372 | £178,372 | £178,372 | £178,372 |
| Grant reduction (of just CL) | | £39,418.90 | £78,837.80 | £118,256.70 | £157,675.60 |
| Account for increased income | -£40,000.00 | £40,000.00 | £40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 | -£40,000.00 |
| Account for reduction in variable costs | | £12,219.86 | £24,439.72 | -£36,659.58 | -£48,879.44 |
| Bottom Line | £138,372 | £165,571 | £192,770 | £219,969 | £247,168 |

- 1.49. A few things should be noted:
- (i) This model assumes that a provider would take on the staff we wish to move with the grant. The grant transferring would be approx. £780,000 (remaining grant plus fee income) and the staff liabilities we have identified are approximately £680,000. This might reduce the market of interested providers.
 - (ii) The Whatley Avenue site would now be under occupied. This may provide an opportunity but also represents a risk factor.

- **Retained costs**

- 1.50. The following assesses whether the level of retained costs in any proposals for changes has any significant impact on the options appraisal.
- 1.51. In general, when we have moved into shared services with other providers we have negotiated to ensure that any retained overheads are captured within that new entity. This allows for some reduction in back office costs but does not leave costs to be redistributed across the rest of the council services that are not involved in the shared service.
- 1.52. As such, we assume that for option 1 and each of the shared service models (2 and 3) there would be no residual cost for the council.
- 1.53. For the commissioning options (4 and 5) there are residual overheads that the council would need to decide whether to continue to fund, or to make savings if these corporate items are no longer required. We have calculated this as roughly £72,000. The non-controllable overheads are detailed below. These overheads would not be releasable immediately and so a decision would need to be made about how to fund them until they can be released.
- 1.54. The level of residual costs has some impact on the attractiveness of options 4 and 5 however if the council decides to make the required savings to specific corporate functions that are no longer required when the service is commissioned then this could be considerably mitigated. In any event, even with retained costs, options 4 and 5 remain the most financially viable options for the service and for the council.

Miscellaneous other information

Non-controllable overheads:

| |
|--------------------------------|
| Policy & Performance |
| Risk Management |
| Director of Corporate Services |
| Commercial Advisors |
| AD Resources |
| Budget Management team |
| Security |
| AD I&T |
| PDC |
| Health & Safety |
| Data Protection |
| AD Corporate Governance |
| Health & Safety |
| AD Customer Services |
| Communications |
| Human Resources |
| Staff Side |
| AD Business Improvement |

Detailing the funding in more detail

MAE receives two distinct ring fenced grants from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Adult Skill Budget (Qualification Courses) and Community Learning (CL). Both have a distinct set of criteria and are not interchangeable due to strict logging of course details on the Management Information System, where returns are submitted to the Skills Funding Agency on a monthly basis

Adult Skill Budget

Qualification courses from a range of SFA approved qualifications allocated a different funding value depending on level and course weighting.

The Management Information calculates the value of this qualification in relation to a particular learner to further ascertain the value of that learner. If a learner lives in a disadvantage ward their formulae is uplifted. If the Learner lives in a disadvantaged ward their formulae is uplifted. Once the learner has successfully completed the course and achieved the qualification the success payment is generated. A provider rating is allocated to this mix based on our provider locality. In the 2013-2014 academic year funding for courses at level 3 and 4 was removed and a student loan facility put in place for qualification at level 3 and 4. If an individual did not want to take out the loan the course cost was doubled. In addition to the grant allocation students have access to a range of support funds to assist with childcare, travel and other relevant resources. In addition MAE is able to fund specialist 1-1 support, dyslexia assessment and support.

| | |
|---|------------|
| • Accredited learners (ASB) | 1736 |
| • New accredited learners | 1032 |
| • Student Loan facility | £93,000 |
| • Fees generated from ASB | £177352.31 |
| • Number of ASB courses run | 211 |
| • Number of ASB guided learning hours generated | 156,062 |

ASB Qualification Student Profile

- 47.4% of our learners live in a Merton disadvantaged ward
- 45.3% of our learners are from ethnic minority communities

- In 2005 17% of our learners were from ethnic minority communities
- In 2005 only 17% of our learners on qualification courses were from an ethnic community. As a result of MAE's widening participation strategy this has increased by 30%

ASB Fee Concessions

- Course is free if actively seeking work, on employment based benefits
- Overseas students have no re-course to public funds and have to pay double the published fee
- Students over 25 enrolling on a level 3, 4 or 5 course have to pay double the published fee as no longer subsidised by the government
- Adults with Learning Disabilities are charged £19 per course

ASB – Qualification Courses

| Curriculum Area | Number of Learners | Funding Generated against SFA contract | Fee Income from students |
|--|--------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Crafts - Horticulture | 23 | £26970.03 | £7,917.40 |
| English | 166 | £98,198.70 | £334.20 |
| ESOL | 530 | £234,885.71 | £64,792.07 |
| Childcare Young People and Education | 132 | £193,273.33 | £35,826.81 |
| Information Technology | 59 | £25,436.94 | £9,269.63 |
| Maths | 103 | £60,792.39 | 0 |
| Beauty Specialist and Complementary Therapy | 52 | £64741.22 | £8,447.84 |
| Modern Languages | 111 | £29,898.92 | £4,931.00 |
| Management, CIPD, Health and Social Care, Teacher Training, Apprenticeships, Traineeships | 154 | £150,241.31 | £36,926.86 |
| Adults with Learning Disabilities range of courses – Computers for visually impaired, Makaton, Lipreading, cookery, Art and Craft, Social Skills, IT etc | 125 | £124,726.62 | £8,906.50 |

Education Funding Agency

- MAE receives an allocation for learners aged 16-18 £24,000
- Number of 16-18 Learners 44

| Curriculum Area | Number of Learners | Funding Generated against SFA contract |
|---|--------------------|--|
| English | 5 | £3445.24 |
| ESOL | 5 | £4707.62 |
| Childcare Young People and Education | 1 | £2402.02 |
| Maths | 3 | £1665.63 |
| Beauty Specialist and Complementary Therapy | 7 | £5128.40 |
| Modern Foreign Languages | 1 | £525.99 |
| Management, CIPD, Health and Social Care, Teacher Training, Apprenticeships, Traineeships | 12 | £2673.75 |
| Adults with Learning Disabilities range of courses | 10 | £3936.18 |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Computers for visually impaired, Makaton, Lipreading, cookery, Art and Craft, Social Skills, IT etc | | |
|---|--|--|

Community Learning

A specific grant is allocated by the Skills Funding Agency for use on non-qualification courses MAE is not authorised to use this funding on qualifications, course details and information is put onto the management information system and returns submitted to the SFA on a monthly basis. The government has made the decision to continue these types of courses and a decision regarding the provision type cannot be made at a local level. However there is some flexibility within the various Community Learning streams. The following configuration has been based on maximising fee income generated from PCDL courses

Community learning is comprised of the following

- Personal Community Development Learning (PCDL)
- Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities (NLDC)
- Family English and Maths (Parents or carers learning with children) (FE&M)
- Wider Family Learning – art, craft, languages, fitness etc (WFL)

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Non accredited learners | 3198 |
| New non accredited learners | 1874 |

New Learners were 59% of total learners in 2013/14

| Curriculum Area | Number of Learners | CL Stream | Fee Income |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Creative Arts | 1019 | PCDL | £185,909.29 |
| Creative Arts | 12 | NLDC | 0 |
| Creative Arts | 37 | Family Learning | 0 |
| Careers and Employability | 80 | PCDL | 0 |
| Early Years | 53 | PCDL | £2,619.00 |
| Early Years | 26 | Family Learning | 0 |
| Fitness | 192 | PCDL | £17,423.37 |
| Information Technology and Computers | 176 | PCDL | £5,425.30 |
| Information Technology and Computers | 12 | Family Learning | 0 |
| Beauty Specialist and Complementary Therapy | 157 | PCDL | £14,561.51 |
| Beauty Specialist and Complementary Therapy | 11 | Family Learning | 0 |
| Modern Foreign Languages | 280 | PCDL | £56,082.50 |
| Modern Foreign Languages | 5 | Family Learning | 0 |
| Health and Social Care | 64 | PCDL | £703.40 |
| Business Start up | 93 | NLDC | 0 |
| Adults with Learning Disabilities range of courses | 133 | PCDL | £3,643.08 |
| English | 15 | PCDL | 0 |
| ESOL | 162 | PCDL | 0 |
| ESOL | 16 | Family Learning | 0 |
| Wider Family Learning | 260 | Family Learning | 0 |
| Family English and Maths | 395 | Family English and Maths | 0 |
| | 3198 | | £286,367.45 |

Family Learning includes

- 47 11 – 15 year olds
- 346 under 10's

Number of Community Learners by funding stream

- Personal Community Development Learning (PCDL) - 2331
- Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities 105
- Family English and Maths 367
- Wider Family Learning 395

Partnerships

Robust partnership working has been key to progressing our learners from community learning courses into qualification courses then onto employment

| Partner Type | Number of Partners | Number of Courses | Number of Enrolments |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Primary schools | 13 | 26 | 344 |
| Harris Academy | | 8 | 95 |
| Cricket Green School | | 2 | 26 |
| Children's and Family centres | 7 | 31 | 427 |
| Libraries | 5 | 13 | 132 |
| Community centres- Commonsense Trust, St Marks Family Centre, Vestry Hall | 4 | 22 | 224 |
| Adult Social Care Day centres | 3 | 8 | 63 |
| Tesco, Baitul Futuh Mosque, The Ghurka Association, | 6 | 9 | 95 |
| Total | 40 | 119 | 1406 |

Appendix C – Full responses to easy read survey primarily used by learners with limited English or disabilities

Introduction

What follows is the unedited survey data in the form it was received.

Section 1

| Step 1:1.00-1:What would you prefer | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| This single response question was answered by 132 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| MAE stays the same | 99 | 75% |
| MAE joins with South Thames College | 16 | 12.12% |
| MAE joins with SCOLA | 4 | 3.03% |
| Merton Council gives the work to another provider | 9 | 6.81% |
| MAE joins with Wandsworth | 4 | 3.03% |
| Step 1:2.00-1:Agree or disagree (Adult classes should help you get a better job) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 137 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 114 | 83.21% |
| No | 13 | 9.49% |
| Not sure | 8 | 5.84% |
| Step 1:2.00-2:Agree or disagree (Adult classes should help you feel better) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 142 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 135 | 95.07% |
| No | 6 | 4.22% |
| Not sure | 1 | 0.7% |
| Step 1:2.00-3:Agree or disagree (Adult classes are important to me) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 145 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 141 | 97.24% |
| No | 1 | 0.69% |
| Not sure | 3 | 2.07% |
| Step 1:2.00-4:Agree or disagree (I want a good course, I don't mind who teaches me.) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 139 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 90 | 64.75% |
| No | 24 | 17.27% |
| Not sure | 25 | 17.99% |
| Step 1:2.00-5:Agree or disagree (I would take more courses if they were nearer to my home) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 130 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 95 | 73.08% |
| No | 23 | 17.69% |
| Not sure | 12 | 9.23% |
| Step 1:2.00-6:Agree or disagree (I would like to go to an up to date/modern college) | | |

| This single response question was answered by 124 respondents. | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 63 | 50.8% |
| No | 26 | 20.97% |
| Not sure | 35 | 28.22% |
| Step 1:2.00-7:Agree or disagree (I want more courses to help me get a job) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 133 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 99 | 74.44% |
| No | 22 | 16.54% |
| Not sure | 12 | 9.02% |
| Step 1:2.00-8:Agree or disagree (I want more classes for disabled people) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 132 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 91 | 68.94% |
| No | 15 | 11.36% |
| Not sure | 26 | 19.7% |
| Step 1:3.00-1:Choose one | | |
| This single response question was answered by 137 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| I want the council to spend money on adult classes | 125 | 91.24% |
| I don't want the council to spend money on adult classes | 12 | 8.76% |
| Step 2:4.00-1:Studied at MAE | | |
| This single response question was answered by 144 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 116 | 80.56% |
| No | 28 | 19.44% |

What courses do you take?

| Response | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| Art, pottery, numeracy, literacy. | 1 |
| Arts and craft | 1 |
| Arts and crafts | 2 |
| Business Enterprise | 1 |
| Cache, Children & Young people level 2 | 1 |
| childcare L1, L2, ESOL L1, L2, First aid | 1 |
| Childcare level 1, ESOL level 2, STLA level 2 | 1 |
| Computers Dance and drama | 1 |
| Computers Introduction | 2 |
| Cookery | 3 |
| Cookery and adult skills | 1 |
| Cookery, IT Dance, talking about ourselves | 1 |
| Cookery, Photography, art, keep fit, computer | 1 |
| Cooking and art | 1 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Cooking and Computers | 1 |
| Cooking, ASDAN module | 1 |
| Cooking, enterprise | 4 |
| Cooking, enterprise. | 1 |
| Cooking, maths | 1 |
| Cooking, pottery, computers, photography | 1 |
| Cooking, tai chi, Art | 1 |
| creative arts, computing | 1 |
| Creative enterprise | 2 |
| Drama | 2 |
| Dance | 2 |
| E1, E2 | 1 |
| English | 3 |
| English entry 2 / listening/ speaking | 1 |
| English ESOL entry 3 | 1 |
| English language | 1 |
| English level 1 | 2 |
| English, cooking and art | 1 |
| English, exercise, IT money | 1 |
| Enterprise | 1 |
| Entry 1, 2 | 5 |
| Entry 1, Entry 2 | 1 |
| Entry 1,2 | 1 |
| Entry 2 | 1 |
| Entry 2, 3 | 1 |
| Entry 2, childcare level 1 | 1 |
| Entry 3 | 1 |
| Entry Level 1 and 3 maths | 1 |
| Entry level 1 ESOL | 1 |
| Entry level 2 | 1 |
| ESOL | 10 |
| ESOL 1 | 1 |
| ESOL 1,2,3 | 1 |
| ESOL 2, 3 | 1 |
| ESOL 3 | 1 |
| ESOL and childcare | 1 |
| ESOL English | 3 |
| ESOL English, ICT, Maths. | 1 |
| ESOL Entry 1 | 2 |
| ESOL Entry 1, 2 | 1 |
| ESOL Entry 1,2,3 | 1 |
| ESOL Entry 3 | 1 |
| ESOL L1 | 1 |
| ESOL level 1-2 | 1 |
| ESOL level 3 | 1 |
| ESOL, maths and childcare | 1 |
| GCSE English and maths | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| GSCE English and Certificate in supporting teaching and learning. CACHE level 2. | 1 |
| GSCE maths and English | 1 |
| History of Art | 1 |
| I want to go back to Merton Adults next year | 1 |
| It Level 1 and 2 | 1 |
| ITC Computer | 1 |
| Level 2 ESOL and Level 1 ICT | 1 |
| Life skill | 1 |
| Life skills | 1 |
| MAE | 1 |
| Maths, creative | 2 |
| Meal prep, dance | 1 |
| MENCAP Inspire course | 1 |
| Photography, cooking, pottery | 1 |
| Pottery | |
| Pottery, At, glasses | 1 |
| Pottery, photography, cooking, ASDA, Computer | 1 |
| Spanish, Tai Chi, Pilates | 1 |
| Work skills | |
| Towards independence | 1 |

Where do you study?

| Response | Number of Respondents |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| All Saints Day Centre | 1 |
| English course | 1 |
| Here | 1 |
| JMC | 2 |
| MAE | 32 |
| MAE at Whatley Ave | 1 |
| MAE Whatley Ave | 2 |
| Merton | 1 |
| Merton Council | 1 |
| Whately Avenue | 3 |
| Whatley | 1 |
| Whatley Ave | 19 |
| Whatley Ave, JMC | 5 |
| Whatley Avenue | 15 |
| Wimbledon MAE | 1 |

Have you used another college as well as MAE?

| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|----------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Yes | 31 | 25% |
| No | 93 | 75% |

Which college?

| Response | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| Brentford | 1 |
| Carshalton College | 1 |
| Croydon College | 1 |
| East London Long | 1 |
| JMC | 1 |
| Kingston | 1 |
| Kingston College | 2 |
| Lambeth | 1 |
| MAE | 1 |
| Malden Centre | 1 |
| Merton, Carshalton | 1 |
| NASH House, Bromley | 1 |
| NESCOT | 2 |
| NESCOT, SCOLA | 1 |
| SCOLA | 5 |
| SCOLA, Orchard Hill Old Town Hall, St Joseph's Cranleigh | 1 |
| SCOLA, South Thames | 1 |
| South Thames | 4 |
| South Thames College | 2 |
| South Thames College Richmond College | 1 |
| South Thames in Merton and Wandsworth | 1 |

Section 2

| Step 2:9.00-1:Why do you come to college | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| This multiple response question was answered by 146 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| To help get a job | 94 | 64.38% |
| To meet new people | 98 | 67.12% |
| To get a qualification | 114 | 78.08% |
| To learn a new skill | 125 | 85.62% |
| To improve my confidence | 116 | 79.45% |
| The teaching is good | 110 | 75.34% |
| To have fun | 88 | 60.27% |
| To improve my English / Maths | 110 | 75.34% |
| There are special classes for disabled people | 60 | 41.10% |
| The reception staff are friendly | 92 | 63.01% |
| Step 2:10.00-1:It is important | | |
| This multiple response question was answered by 135 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| The classes are near my home or work | 109 | 80.74% |
| The classes are near a bus stop or station | 92 | 68.15% |

| | | |
|--|-----|--------|
| There is a car park | 63 | 46.67% |
| There is a Wi-Fi and computers | 96 | 71.11% |
| There is a cafe | 90 | 66.67% |
| It is a friendly place | 118 | 87.41% |
| I feel safe at college | 111 | 82.22% |
| The buidling is smart and tidy | 86 | 63.7% |
| There are special rooms for my course like a kitchen | 82 | 60.7% |
| There is good access for disabled people | 79 | 58.52% |

Other important elements for you (open text)

| |
|---|
| All classes are in school time, it is good as a mother. |
| Am studying teaching assistant course MAE but I couldn't find a placement in schools. So pls college email and find the place more support to me. |
| Classes would have to be downstairs |
| Cost. Teachers skill. |
| Course timing is very convenient for working people |
| Development of civilised and caring attitudes to improve standards of every-day life |
| Do not close Whatley |
| Don't spend money on roads, spend on education. |
| Enjoyed the classes |
| Familiar people, local - in walking distance |
| for improe english, better job, better language |
| For me it isimportant in speaking English, learn in English |
| For my speak |
| Good teacher |
| Good teachers |
| Honest, friendly, teachers, and helpful. |
| I am a single mum and I do not enough money to pay for courses so i had an opportunity to study English for free. It was very helpful |
| I can feel free to study and limited student. It's very comfortable to study. |
| I don't like changes, changes in places and people scare me. |
| I have a learning disability. These courses are very important to me for social integration, learning new skills and my general well being. |
| I have CSW |
| I have just started at the college and don't want to stop going. |
| I have studied in 2 other colleges but Merton Adult is fabulous because thet guided me the proper way for getting skill and knowledge but others didn't |
| I like it here - wi-fi and computer |
| I love going to Merton Adults |
| I speak English its important |
| I think not enough the teaching hours. I would like more hours for ESOL. |
| I think you should in my opinion. Perhaps you could have better teachers. |
| I used to go and loved it. I wanted to start back next year. |
| I want some training course for ESOL. Helps do job and training course for immigration matters |
| I will not see a lot of my friends if Merton Adults closes down |
| I would like to move to level 2 in both English and Maths |
| Important for me is good time of courses. Afternoon classes are only that I can join. |
| In this college I felt what is important is the class of a subject tat was picked for me. |
| Is important for me it is. two days of the week |
| It is important for me to have a course I can do on my own. |
| It is important to me that it is two days a week |
| It is important to me to learn English |
| It is important to use English |
| It will be important to me that the courses are affordable and there is a choice of morning courses. |
| Learn English |

| |
|--|
| Learn English to me |
| Level of teaching |
| Not yet |
| Nothing else, everything is good |
| Small building that it's easy to find your way round. Experienced and friendly staff. |
| The college classes time is good because we can come to study then we go back and pick up children. |
| The important to use or speak English |
| The prices are better as another college |
| The room is warm |
| The room is warm and clean. |
| The room is warm and clean. Public events program varied. Good IT systems (whiteboard) |
| The teachers are very good to me. They teach very well to my understanding. |
| There should be more courses that help people to get a job. |
| They have deaf aware The always provide CSW |
| To get access around the building i.e. the lift is not working to go to cooking class ad because of that I can't attend my favourite lesson. |
| To keep this place |
| Varied public events, varied family events program, good IT systems. |
| very good teachers |
| Help us to learn |
| Whatley Ave makes me feel safe |
| Keep it open and not spend money on anything else |
| Should be close to Mitcham, Morden and Raynes Park |
| Meeting old and new friends |
| Important to get along with people and make friends |
| Read and write so I can do things by myself |
| To have computers |
| Want somebody to help us as we have difficulties in learning |
| Have some classes in a Library |
| I would like classes at my centre |
| I would like to come to classes closest to home |
| To have a car/taxi drop off point |
| We deserve the best teachers |
| I want to come on a course |
| Important there are not crowds at lunchtime |

Other comments

| |
|--|
| Adult education for people with learning difficulties is very important so that they can continue to learn and grow. |
| Adult education that supposed to be free to enhance people ability. So there should not be high prices. |
| Could you please add more courses |
| Do not want college to move to Tooting or Wandsworth - too far. |
| don't close college |
| Don't close the college |
| Easier access around the building (ramps instead of stairs), more toilets in the building, toilets upstairs |
| I can compare two colleges and I feel nicer and more comfortable in MAE then in STC. |
| I don't want it to close |
| I don't want it to close. |
| I don't want MAE closed down. If you close it down I won't be able to come to MAE college to learn new skills. |
| I hope it carries on with English courses |
| I live in Merton and prefer my courses to be in Merton. |
| I want to keep coming to Whatley Ave |
| I will like Whatley Avenue to stay open. If there are areas of the bulding which aren't used renting them to someone or using them in a different way could be a solution. |
| I would be very disappointed if this centre would be closed as I would love to get a qualification in AAT course. |
| I would like adult education in Merton to stay |
| I would like to add please do further planning to give best standard but emerge or stop. |
| I would like to do more course here |
| I would like to more hours for ESOL. |
| I would like to save MAE because it is near to my house and I feel confident on it. |

| |
|--|
| I'm worried that there may cut service |
| Improve the canteen |
| Imr wohthtoathirag cvit ervice |
| It is the best college |
| It is valuable and important to maintain and develop the knowledge and skills of Merton citizens |
| It should continue and get better. |
| It's really important to keep this option going as it meets the needs of lots of adults with a learning disability, both in terms of the courses and the venue. |
| Job |
| MAE is good opportunity for everyone bacuase they can come study and find a job. |
| MAE should remain open and the council should save money in a different way. |
| Merton adult educatoin is very good school. |
| Merton college should stay open as it helps us develop a new skill and get a better job. |
| Merton should keep it open. |
| More adult education courses wil benefit the people of Merton by increasing individuals confidence, creating oportunities for them and providing adults to gain more through their new qualifications. |
| More deaf and CSW and BSL interpreter |
| More should be done to make sure courses are accessible to disabled people and more adult learning opportunities should be available to those with learning difficulties. |
| Please don't close the college |
| Please keep the college open |
| Please save it for the future. |
| Students can take limited free print-outs or scanner. |
| The college is very nice. There are friendly |
| The college should stay |
| The future holds for adult education more then a symbol, it is based on future of all adult college. |
| There should be more adult education classes |
| This college is near my house. staff are friendly, teachers are good. |
| This is a unique college which is great for people with learning disability. |
| Very polite staff, the staff make me laugh. |
| We need MAE in Merton |
| Will be nice two or three time English lessons per week |
| Yes continued help on new courses and start training clases. |
| Yes, there are lots of facilities for adult and new course, help for our assignment. We can feel free to ask anything. |
| You should not close college. Don't close the college please. |
| You should not close the college |
| You shouldn't close this college please. |

Demographics

| Step 3:14.00-1:Gender | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| This single response question was answered by 131 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Male | 48 | 36.64% |
| Female | 83 | 63.36% |
| Step 3:15.00-1:Age | | |
| This single response question was answered by 132 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| 15 or under | | |
| 16 - 24 | 11 | 8.33% |
| 25 - 34 | 46 | 34.85% |
| 35 - 44 | 46 | 34.85% |
| 45 - 54 | 19 | 13.39% |
| 55 - 64 | 7 | 5.19% |
| 65 - 74 | 3 | 2.27% |
| 75 or over | | |

| Step 3:16.00-1:Ethnicity | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| This single response question was answered by 114 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British | 26 | 22.81% |
| White – Irish | | |
| White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 2 | 1.75% |
| White - Any other White background | 23 | 20.18% |
| Black or Black British - Caribbean | 5 | 4.39% |
| Black or Black British - African | 10 | 8.77% |
| Black or Black British - Any other Black background | 1 | 0.88% |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 7 | 6.14% |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 6 | 5.26% |
| Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi | 3 | 2.63% |
| Asian or Asian British - Chinese | 1 | 0.88% |
| Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background | 15 | 13.16% |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean | | |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African | | |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian | | |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - Any other Mixed background | | |
| Other ethnic group - Arab | | |
| Other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group | 15 | 13.16% |
| Step 3:17.00-1:Disability | | |
| This single response question was answered by 108 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 38 | 35.19% |
| No | 70 | 64.81% |

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Appendix B – Full responses to consultation survey

Introduction

What follows is the unedited survey data in the form it was received.

Section 1

| Step 1:1.00-1:Agree or disagree (Adult learning should help improve people's job prospects) | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| This single response question was answered by 813 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 519 | 63.84% |
| Slightly agree | 213 | 26.2% |
| Slightly disagree | 61 | 7.5% |
| Strongly disagree | 13 | 1.6% |
| Don't know | 7 | .86% |
| Step 1:1.00-2:Agree or disagree (Adult learning should help improve people's health and well being) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 813 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 647 | 79.58% |
| Slightly agree | 141 | 17.34% |
| Slightly disagree | 14 | 1.72% |
| Strongly disagree | 4 | .49% |
| Don't know | 7 | .86% |
| Step 1:1.00-3:Agree or disagree (Adult learning opportunities are an important part of my life) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 820 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 630 | 76.83% |
| Slightly agree | 152 | 18.54% |
| Slightly disagree | 21 | 2.56% |
| Strongly disagree | 8 | .98% |
| Don't know | 9 | 1.1% |
| Step 1:1.00-4:Agree or disagree (Adult learning should not be subsidised at the expense of other council services) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 802 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 161 | 20.07% |
| Slightly agree | 187 | 23.32% |
| Slightly disagree | 217 | 27.06% |
| Strongly disagree | 177 | 22.07% |
| Don't know | 60 | 7.48% |
| Step 1:1.00-5:Agree or disagree (Spending on non teaching costs should be reduced as much as possible) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 801 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 229 | 28.59% |
| Slightly agree | 340 | 42.45% |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Slightly disagree | 118 | 14.73% |
| Strongly disagree | 78 | 9.74% |
| Don't know | 36 | 4.49% |
| Step 1:1.00-6:Agree or disagree (Merton Council should work with other education providers to improve efficiency) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 801 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 241 | 30.09% |
| Slightly agree | 260 | 32.46% |
| Slightly disagree | 114 | 14.23% |
| Strongly disagree | 127 | 15.86% |
| Don't know | 59 | 7.37% |
| Step 1:1.00-7:Agree or disagree (It does not matter who provides the courses as long as they are good) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 801 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 192 | 23.97% |
| Slightly agree | 197 | 24.59% |
| Slightly disagree | 156 | 19.48% |
| Strongly disagree | 212 | 26.47% |
| Don't know | 44 | 5.49% |
| Step 1:1.00-8:Agree or disagree (Merton should work with other councils to improve efficiency) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 799 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 208 | 26.03% |
| Slightly agree | 277 | 34.67% |
| Slightly disagree | 141 | 17.65% |
| Strongly disagree | 117 | 14.64% |
| Don't know | 56 | 7.01% |
| Step 1:1.00-9:Agree or disagree (Competition between adult learning providers will improve quality) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 799 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 90 | 11.26% |
| Slightly agree | 160 | 20.03% |
| Slightly disagree | 186 | 23.28% |
| Strongly disagree | 293 | 36.67% |
| Don't know | 70 | 8.76% |
| Step 1:1.00-10:Agree or disagree (I would take more courses if they were offered in locations closer to me) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 801 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 267 | 33.33% |
| Slightly agree | 200 | 24.97% |
| Slightly disagree | 152 | 18.98% |

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Strongly disagree | 117 | 14.61% |
| Don't know | 65 | 8.11% |
| Step 1:1.00-11:Agree or disagree (The facilities in which the courses are provided should be modern) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 799 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 118 | 14.77% |
| Slightly agree | 274 | 34.29% |
| Slightly disagree | 264 | 33.04% |
| Strongly disagree | 99 | 12.39% |
| Don't know | 44 | 5.51% |
| Step 1:1.00-12:Agree or disagree (More adult learning opportunities should be available to those with learning difficulties) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 800 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 397 | 49.63% |
| Slightly agree | 245 | 30.63% |
| Slightly disagree | 69 | 8.63% |
| Strongly disagree | 20 | 2.5% |
| Don't know | 69 | 8.63% |
| Step 1:1.00-13:Agree or disagree (There should be more courses that help people to get a job) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 797 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 347 | 43.54% |
| Slightly agree | 257 | 32.25% |
| Slightly disagree | 130 | 16.31% |
| Strongly disagree | 22 | 2.76% |
| Don't know | 41 | 5.14% |
| Step 1:1.00-14:Agree or disagree (More should be done to make sure courses are accessible to disabled people) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 805 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Strongly agree | 398 | 49.44% |
| Slightly agree | 262 | 32.55% |
| Slightly disagree | 70 | 8.7% |
| Strongly disagree | 10 | 1.24% |
| Don't know | 65 | 8.07% |
| Step 1:2.00-1:Preferred option | | |
| This single response question was answered by 785 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Option 1: Continue the current arrangements and Merton Council bears the financial risk | 371 | 47.26% |
| Option 2: Create a shared service with South Thames College. | 142 | 18.09% |

| | | |
|--|----|--------|
| Option 3: Share with another local authority | 92 | 11.72% |
| Option 4: Commission other providers to deliver adult education in Merton | 71 | 9.04% |
| Option 5: Jointly commission other providers in partnership with LB Wandsworth | 36 | 4.59% |
| Don't know | 73 | 9.3% |

Why do you prefer your chosen option?

| |
|---|
| - |
| It will reduce expenditure without changing to a profit based provider. |
| A bigger pool of resources/budget but the separate sites should be kept. I would happily attend Mae but wouldn't want to go to South Thames campus. |
| Adult learning is essential in society. It provides meaning and opportunities for adults that are offered to younger learners as a matter of right. Such equality of opportunity builds on the good practice of diversity and inclusion. The students come from diverse backgrounds and their specific needs are catered for by the college courses, facilities, tutors and administration staff. Without Merton Adult Education at Whatley Avenue the London Borough of Merton will be a socially poorer borough. Council leaders need to invest in residents well-being and not simply follow a financial agenda. |
| . |
| 1. I think adult education should be local. 2. By combining with any other borough or college will ultimately reduce choice of venue and times of the courses. 3. It will also reduce the number of places available making it more difficult to get on a course. |
| 1. The current arrangements are good. MAE offer a very good, well attended variety of courses. I have a disabled husband and am a full time carer. If these facilities were moved further away, I would not be able to attend. I need to know I can get home quickly if I were needed. This offers me some 'me' time and is beneficial to my health and well being. 2. This is a very busy college for young learners. It is not the correct environment for older adults who may be of a gentler disposition, who may need a calmer learning environment to regain skills and confidence. 3. Further distances are going to be difficult to travel to in limited time frames. 4. This is just privatising an already good service that works well. You have a lot of skilled, dedicated teachers and support staff that will be lost to this essential form of further education. 5. Spreading the cost but making the services less viable for the participants. |
| a basically local in house solution I disagree with option 4, there will be no Merton control of future costs |
| A full audit of the current facilities and the whole life costing of alternatives has NOT been done, so the financial case for change is weak. The Council needs firm robust financial data and not just a "gut feeling" that outsourcing is a lower cost long-term alternative. |
| A Merton location means that adult education is more accessible to Merton residents. The teaching and administrative expertise which now exists can continue to inspire and instruct. Janine Howard is our pottery teacher with years experience. Such leadership needs to be retained. Her students are enthused. I am sure many of your adult education teachers are the same. Merton offers quality services. |
| A proper consultation would allow courses to be refined and improved. This can easily be done internally within Merton. Once we lose buildings we will never get them back. |
| A third party provider would be motivated by cutting costs only and it would be difficult to monitor quality and service provision once a contract is signed with them. It is also likely that they would provide the bare minimum service at the maximum cost, which would not benefit students. Complaints would be difficult to manage. I doubt there would be a claw-back clause or a service delivery mandate that would be enforceable. Trying to improve or change or add or amend course provision would not be done quickly. The Council would be the third party's main customer rather than the student, which would not necessarily improve student experience or course offering as they would be slow to react to student feedback and less likely to change or improve knowing that they already have their "money in the bag". If the third party can't deliver a course which is required then you will have direct competition and a conflict of interest as the Council tries to deliver the course through another provider or on its own. Sharing services with a local authority such as Sutton or Wandsworth would reduce back office costs, but still keep the customers happy and keep quality and costs at a reasonable level. The councils can adapt to change quicker and won't be totally motivated by low offerings at maximum costs. |
| A variety of learning providers would force the competition to improve the services they deliver. |
| Admin costs do have to be saved but the breadth and quality of courses is paramount. |
| Adult Education and learning are an essential part of life for many in Merton and contribute to the cohesion of our community. Whilst I might consider the option of a Shared service with South Thames college as an option - no detail is given on how this would be implemented and structured and I feel could be misleading. So until full details can be supplied I would suggest in the interest of all concerned it would be best to stick to the current arrangements. Lastly the question must be asked - why is this consultation being rushed through - is there a forthcoming election???? |

| |
|--|
| Adult education courses are the only way out of poverty for millions of working class people. You want to close this college and not subsidise courses. Your motto is "let's keep working class people in the gutter". |
| Adult education is an essential part of a community, offering job opportunities and continued health and wellbeing for individuals. Downsizing these opportunities (whether through location, or facilities, or prioritising efficiency gains over services provided) will simply result in the majority of people losing this essential service |
| Adult education needs to be located conveniently for older people & provide courses applicable to them. |
| Adult education should not be privatised as would be the case if the administrations preferred option is realised. It is important that Merton Council retains control of the service and that it remains local. Courses would be rationalised if there were shared services with another local authority or another local authority managed college or commissioned services in partnership with another local authority. |
| Adult learning is very important part of every day's life as the society getting older generation increasing every year for the future, particularly many older people are stay alone and detached from society where learning circle is important part of well being and create happy society in order to stands healthier. I do not know the exact costs of details but I do certainly believe the adult learning will off setting costs against unhealthier increasing older generation without learning center circles. |
| AE needs a flourishing main centre as a focal point, and one which provides specialist rooms and facilities for those with a disability. Whatley Avenue does this, while smaller centres provide local facilities. |
| After reading everything i agree that we need to consider education provision in the East Side of the borough. I was lucky enough to undertake my GCSE English course at Cannon's House. The building was vey conducive to learning and i live in the East Side of the borough. The most important are disabled and disadvantged people. |
| Against 2 -may become 'poor relation' but finances would be secure. Option 3 would depend on the management of the service - if Merton has equal say could be a good option. Option 4 - least favourite as many of these 'other providers' have financial difficulties themselves and the quality of the staff and courses are not properly regulated - prices often go soaring and the providers 'get out when the going gets tough' Option 5 - isn't this the same as Option 3? I have chosen option 1 until we get more information about the other options in terms of management, length of contracts/partnerships, accountability etc. |
| All learners need a choice of subjects, location and culturally suitable environment. |
| All local authorities are in a similar position so it would not make sense to join with them when their situations are just as precarious. an established serve such at STC has experience to meet a diverse range of students needs |
| All of the Options except Option 1 makes sense. I'm not sure what are the costs involved. However, the Council's choice of Option 4 is probably the strongest contender. |
| All options except Option 1 mean a sell off of the main site and that would mean that the services would be much poorer and less accessible to people who feel safe at Whatley and have classes that they enjoy in good facilities |
| all options have good and bad points. a solution which maintains pr improves provision is ok.. |
| An existing college such as South Thames will have the required expertise in delivering courses and a sharing of tasks may reduce costs. |
| Another LA would have more experience of Adult Learning |
| Any of these options which maintains the current service or improves range of courses is welcome. |
| Any shared service must be cost saving |
| Are there any other options that could save the Council Â£32m? I'm not convinced that any of the options given above would save the council Â£32m. |
| As an adult mental health service user the current arrangements are fantastic many adult mental health service users agree...the support is fantastic |
| As I do not know the financial implications this s a question I cannot answer. I can say that the centre at Whatley provides subjects that are not available elsewhere. Such a the excellent pottery studio. It would be tragic to lose this. |
| As I looked at courses with thames and the fact that there are two options near me means that I can find a course and time that suits. It encourages more people to study. I also looked at private providers and the value for money was nowhere near as good as council run courses. |
| As it is understood we should not put merton council at finance risk and may be another coucil coild have good facilities and ideas for share... so sharing is caring!! |
| As long as MAE is not closed down/Privatized, then let Merton council decide the option. |
| As long as services are similar (which they must be) then this is the best option. People working with the same aims under one roof must be most efficient and cost-effective model to work to. |
| As long as there are courses available for people with learning difficulties - which are easily accessible from Roehampton then needs can be met. Sutton is too far. |
| as long as there are improvements on course quality, teaching and costs any of the those options are ok |
| As Merton Council seems hell bent on getting rid of paying for adult education, it might be an idea to commission other providers to deliver adult education in Merton. |
| As the college is near my house and most accesable |
| At the moment, Merton Adult Education is bringing money to Merton Finances- Courses are top quality- Worried that Wandsworth will privatised, then forcing Merton to go along if they are joint, and by this, making courses unaffordable. |

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| At the moment, the wide offer of courses that are not simply getting people to find employment, is a great way to offer people the occasion to mix with other people for different backgrounds. Only seen it in one course but I imagine it's going on in most of them. Good for the soul and saving on mental health later. |
| Based on information provided, this appears the most cost effective option, ie I think cost efficiency should be a driver in the decision. |
| because i can walk from home.it has parking for those who drive .it has good transport links and it is safe for disabled people to get to.iv'e been coming to that collage for 22 years now. |
| Because I do not have a problem with the current way the courses are run. |
| Because I know from extensive experience and research that the present arrangements deliver excellent value for money as well as quality. There is also an excellent ethos of service "added value" which is rare in the private/semi-private sector. |
| Because I live in Merton and I travel on buses in my wheelchair. |
| Because I strongly do not believe in using private companies to enhance their profits when providing education |
| Because I'm concerned there would be a lack of responsibility from other suppliers and that the quantity and quality of courses would suffer |
| because it could reduce administrative costs. however i do not believe that all courses should be free. e.g. ESOL because it means that there is a lack of commitment for many students to continue unless they have something to lose. |
| Because it could remain within the locality. |
| because it is based in this area. The other options would either increase the cost or take the courses away from this locality |
| Because it is not making a loss, it serves a local community and if you keep selling off our land, there will be nothing left. |
| Because it makes geographical and economic sense, in addition to keep learning suited to the local community needs |
| Because it needs to meet people's needs |
| Because MAE has helped people like me get my confidence back and my concentration is coming back to normal after a very abusive long time relationship. Meeting people and sharing experiences as well as emotional well being. |
| Because MAE serves many adults in Merton. Helps them educationally, socially, mentally. There will be more mental health problems if MAE Whatley Ave closes. |
| Because Merton must be responsible and accountable. The current service is working well. |
| Because of the existing studio space, pottery kilns etc which may not be available in a shared service with South Thames College. Sharing with another local authority could mean longer journeys for some vulnerable adults. Other providers may turn out to be more expensive (also option 5). |
| Because of the personality and uniqueness of MAE |
| Because South Thames Coll has a campus nearby making co-ordinating easier. |
| Because South Thames College has branches in different areas therefore, it will be easily accessible to everyone. |
| Because South Thames is an education provider therefore has the expertise. I'm in favour of co-operation with other authorities but Wandsworth already runs TOO MANY services for other boroughs so should be avoided! On no account allow the service to be PRIVATISED as this only results in cuts in order to make profits. |
| Because the campus at the moment is in a good location for me and if the college was merged it might not be able to offer the courses that I would like due to space restrictions and the equipment needed. |
| Because the current provision is excellent and constantly improving. |
| Because the environment currently provided by Merton Adult Education is appropriate and relevant to Adult Learners. Where is Merton is this type of environment and facilities available that would provide opportunities for the diverse range of learners currently attending the college. South Thames College is not appropriate because of their customer group and environment which is perfect for younger people and learners. Adult Learners will find this environment intimidating and will present further barriers to learning. South Thames College does not provide an environment which is appropriate for MAE's learners with disabilities whose curriculum offer would be provided within a lockdown area and only promotes segregation, whereas MAE provides inclusion. Dilution of the offer will make the council vulnerable and not able to meet funding contractual requirements. |
| Because the environment in Whatley Ave is so friendly, especially for people with special needs, it makes them feel happy and secure. Also the courses offered in art and crafts are very good for older people to learn new skills. |
| Because the service at MAE is well used and highly regarded. The knock on effect to Joseph Hood Primary that selling off the MAE building in Whatley Ave will be devastating. How on earth in an already stretched to capacity site is a High School going to work? Why has this not been shared transparently with the residents and the school? It is an absolute disgrace and reeks of underhanded decision making and hidden agendas! |
| Because the services provided currently are excellent, why interfere with something that is working well in my view. As a council tax payer, this is one of the few services that accommodate my needs. |
| Because then this will have the least disruption and not compromise what is needed |
| Because there are many students who have learning and physical disabilities and changing venues to them is going to be a not necessary challenge. They are used to this venue and it should continue the way it is. Also it is a valuable place that has been a college for adults for many years so it should carry on being it. The change of venue is going to be a challenge for many students and for Merton Council. |

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| Because this is the only way you can continue to provide classes for all those students who currently learn with MAE. If you "commission" them, and get rid of Whatley Centre, most daytime classes will cease as there will be no venue to accommodate them DURING THE DAY. Those who attend daytime classes either do not, or cannot attend at night. |
| Because thousands of people rely on the current service and if this is moved hundreds of the local people who are older and/or have learning difficulties will be unable to benefit from the classes they currently attend. For some people their weekly visit to the college is the only social interaction they have - it would be a travesty to remove the current facility. |
| Because to me in Merton there is not as much adult learning for what I would prefer. For example, I have been trying to enter on an adult course for many years now and have not got this specific opportunity. But I am now pleased to be in one of your main courses. |
| Because to share, will halve the costs. South Thames has a site in Merton, so why not share?! |
| Because venues will be more accessible to people who live locally. |
| Because Wandsworth normally know what they are doing! |
| Because Whatley Avenue provides excellent teaching and learning facilities, it would be a shame to see the closure of a well established adult education site. Adult learning is a vital place for retired people to meet and find people with shared interests. |
| Because Whatley Avenue/Marlborough Hall etc provide a comfortable and safe environment for MAE learners, no matter their ability/disability. The environment at South Thames College (Merton campus) would intimidate the most vulnerable students. Leave MAE alone BUT put in a new and effective principal and management team. |
| Because Whatley Road college is a centre of excellence that I do not believe could be successfully replicated elsewhere. |
| Because when we finish our levels we don't get a graduation programme. When you combine with South Thames college we get that as well. |
| BENEFITS Sharing services with another borough will allow increased breadth of courses by giving both boroughs a wider pool of potential students in all areas. It will offer increased economies of scale by enabling courses to be merged. It will mean that the cost of maintaining duplicate facilities and staff can be scaled back, and the better facility for the course chosen between the two boroughs without need for divided investment. A contract for two boroughs will attract more competition between providers to provide a good service than one alone. Running a single tender should also mean less duplication of procurement process and associated costs. Public transport links between Wandsworth and Merton are excellent. |
| better to keep services local and in the borough |
| Better to share with another local authority but deliver locally. Wandsworth is not a good match for Merton. |
| Both are local and there are similarities in what they offer. |
| Brings learning together, and gives economies of scale while retaining local control of AE |
| Cannot rely on quality with the private sector. Making a profit usually drives down quality. |
| Clearly continuing as we are is not a viable option, but Adult Education in Merton should remain locally delivered and independent. |
| combining services always ends up with a reduction of services and a lower quality of service. we need places like Whatley Avenue to stay where it is and continue to provide what it does so well. |
| Continue with local classes and adult education in Merton. Merton Council needs to maintain and protect Merton Adult Education services from threatened cuts and/or closure. It is not feasible for certain groups, such as those like myself with limited mobility, travelling miles from the part of the borough (i.e. SW20 or SM4) that borders Surrey into the inner city in Wandsworth for adult education classes if the borough merges with another borough, as it would take 2 or 3 buses to get there, plus the extra time needed for travelling. Local adult education needs to stay accessible to everyone in the locality. |
| Cost-efficient ways must be explored and wide range of courses offered. |
| Costs need to be minimised but the services need to be accountable to the local authority. Other providers working only for profit would gradually reduce services and increase fees to an unacceptable level. The Whatley Avenue site must be retained. MAE is now self-funding and will tailor their courses in line with funding cuts. |
| Council should provide essential service to any people who pays tax. Adult learning service is one of most important services. |
| Council tax, increased if necessary, subsidised by the considerable reserves, should fund all necessary services. There are plenty of Brownfield sites on which money could be raised. |
| Courses should be provided in local centres, close to good bus connections or have adequate parking. |
| Current MAE provision overlaps highly with other local providers. It is far more efficient to increase numbers on courses already run by other providers than to try to replicate or duplicate provision separately. |
| Current provision appears to be too management heavy |
| Depends on how good the service is. |
| Do not believe any of the options would benefit Merton residents. |
| Do not like the idea of outsourcing |
| Economic sense to keep admin costs to a minimum. Scola for example has got very good purpose built facilities and it would be a shame if all these services cease to exist. |
| Education should be a key plank in the Council's economic and social plans. Commissioning out or sharing services would |

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| mean the Council loses control. |
| Education should be local so as not to exclude the poorer sectors of the community. Privatisation of provision will impact on the quality, as seen in other areas such as prisons, cleaning contracts etc. Costs are reduced and quality suffers. |
| Education should be the responsibility of councils as they are the people invested in education, not money. Were other providers to be used, they would only be interested in money. There is a reason children's education is not done in the private sector. |
| Either 2 or 4. South Thames is well-established and as a teacher in adult education and HE, lots of my learners think MAE is part of South Thames anyway. There is not enough adequate promotion of courses to adult learners who are hungry to learn - both for business & pleasure. Option 2 would make best use of shared administration & facilities and leave the focus on teaching in the classroom. Several colleges I have worked at seem to forget the students are their clients and have become apathetic with regard to student care and customer service. There seems to have been a skewed focus on unnecessary and inefficient bureaucracy which has cost colleges dearly in student retention & satisfaction surveys. Colleges have to see themselves as businesses of education and their staff members should share these values. Overall, option 4 sounds the most sensible in the climate, but there is not enough information given on who these providers will be and how their quality will be ensured. It would be helpful to have more details in this regard to make a well-informed decision. |
| ensures quality and relevance |
| Ensures taking advantage of some economies of scale whilst retaining a local offering. |
| Exorbitant wages of council staff should be cut and efficiencies in administration should come before cutting Adult Education services. Adult Education services should be a priority for the council. |
| Experienced provider. |
| Fairly local to me |
| Financial risk is minimal. Distorted figures produced. Not accurate reflection on college costs. College is used by all sections and areas of the borough. |
| For me personally, Option 4 appears to be the best option, but the commission of alternative providers may make the cost of the courses I attend prohibitive or providers may not be found. I have therefore ticked the 'Don't know' option. |
| From all that I have seen and read I'm not sure the Council does bear much in the way of financial risk. Commissioning would undoubtedly cost considerably more, decrease choice and increase costs to students. Sharing the provision with another Borough provides no guarantee of courses continuing, being accessible or affordable. Many people would no longer be able to attend courses if they were to re-locate due to financial, travel and time constraints. Commissioning other providers to do the same is like reinventing the wheel, paying to reinvent it, and no doubt delaying delivery of said wheel. Why not look at cutting some of the admin spend - the ratio of staff compared to that of teaching staff seems high. I can't imagine that commissioning in any form could save money in the short or longer term. |
| From what I know SCOLA seems to be very good. |
| FYI |
| Good work so far....so why not keep on going??? |
| Having attended courses in Merton for many years I feel the council has at least a measure of interest in it's students. Spreading the courses among several agencies or putting them in the control of strangers would negate that making us all small insignificant fish in a large pool. |
| how can you possibly answer this with no facts or figures. Costs, accommodation, population, parking, staff. each area will want the best selection of courses, leaving the students further to travel |
| However, I think there is still a role for MAE. Only some courses (Apprenticeships) should be commissioned |
| I am an existing adult student (languages) and I am greatly impressed by the teaching |
| I am enjoying my Italian course at the moment, but if the location and my teacher change I would consider quitting it. |
| I am happy with the experience I have of MAE. I think any change of funding or financial interest will change its nature as a community service provider. |
| I am hoping MAE will stay open and continue provide such excellent classes. For many years I have done evening classes, mostly to learn new skills to improve my employability yet it wasn't until I did a creative class that I really developed and grew as a person. Before then my life was all work and no play. Since taking up my class I have learned to de-stress, relax and be a calmer, happier person. I now have more confidence and am better able to express myself and to be myself. I am convinced the fun and joy I have has improved my well being and is building towards a more fulfilled and more satisfied life. Any niggles or anxieties are quickly forgotten once I am in my class. I actually miss my class when it is not on. I will miss it even more if it stops altogether. Please keep up the good service at Whatley and if possible offer more courses and choices. Life in the city can feel like a rat race and I think everyone deserves some relief. |
| I am involved in pottery and wish the current arrangements to continue. Specialist facilities are essential. Our students develop unique creative skills and confidence. This has a positive effect on the lives of working adults, retirees, the disabled, those with learning difficulties and carers. |
| I am not cognisant of the pros and cons of each option. It is vital that Merton residents should not have to travel to another authority. |
| I am unsure of the gains from the other options and don't agree with the principle of cutting adult education. Are options 2,3,4,5 the thin of the wedge to close down adult education in a staged manner. We need more not less life long learning to 1) drive community spirit 2) promote well being for a growing population to avoid isolation 3) to ensure people are |

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| able to change career/prolong their careers. |
| I am very happy with Merton Adult Education as it is. |
| I am worried that by commissioning other providers to deliver adult education in Merton, it will become less accessible to the people who really need and regularly use the facilities. |
| I appreciate that MAE currently provide quality adult education courses to everyone. Any change in location, cost and structure of running the course would give me a re-consideration to continue my pursuit in adult learning. |
| I attend the stained and fusing glass course at Whatly Ave and greatly enjoy the course. Before joining this group of students i looked for other places to do fusing glass and was unable to find other oportunities. the class and the tutor are excellent with many of the class returning term after term. we would be devistated to loose our weekly class. |
| I attended a course at MAE Whatley Ave today. Having never been to the site before, I was delighted to discover what seems to be a rather hidden gem. I have lived in Merton for over 20 years and have to say that this is the very first time I have discovered somewhere that seems to understand what the word 'community' truly means. What a sad surprise to discover that the council is considering 'other options' - true enough that adult education would still be available in Merton - but having visited Whatley Ave today, having met the staff and regulars, I am far from convinced that that is the actual point. |
| I believe it would enable courses to continue to be available in locations convenient to me. |
| I believe life-long learning is everyone's right and it is society's duty to provide it at local and national level. I know from experience that adult learning can and does transform people's lives. Merton Adult education is a valuable local service and the benefits and results cannot always be measured or quantified but this does not mean they are insignificant. Courses in a huge range of subjects can help develop students' confidence and social skills and give those who are disadvantaged a second chance. |
| I believe MAE provides a good service and range of courses which are used by all ethnicities, ages, socioeconomic groups and abilities from across the borough, as evidenced by OFSTED. Instead of commissioning services which will incur significant costs and likely reduction in quality and types of courses offered, I feel MAE should be looking to increase courses and bid to provide courses to neighbouring boroughs By doing this they would reduce overheads and secure funding. Better advertising, improved administrative systems and streamlining paperwork would bring in more learners, including those from neighbouring boroughs where courses have been slashed. We should look at Merton libraries which were under great threat but now, by working in different ways, are open longer, providing excellent services and are award winning. Merton has invested significant amounts of money in the facilities at Whatley Avenue and it would be wasteful to sell them off to a developer or worse give them to Harris Academy. |
| I believe selling off the MAE site on Whatley Ave & providing adult learning from outside the borough will not provide Merton residents with the level of service required. Shortsightedly selling off this asset to the highest bidder, with seemingly no thought for or consultation with the Centre's neighbours on Whatley Ave, including Joseph Hood Primary School who share an access road, may help fill a budgetary hole, but it is nothing more than an ill thought out quick fix. The MAE site can never be replaced, once it's gone it will be the end of adult learning in the Borough. |
| I believe that in the case of Whatley Avenue, the council incurs very little cost. Many of the courses are independently funded and most of the runnin costs are recuped that way! |
| I believe that local services should be delivered by local providers who have greater knowledge of local needs and are more committed to serving the needs of local people and communities. |
| I believe that Merton could encourage more users with better advertising etc. and could within a reasonable period not be a drain on the Councils funds |
| I believe that since Wandsworth and Merton are neighbored boroughs, we should make the opportunity to work side by side to ensure opportunities for adult learning as well as further options. And it also helps making less cost to cover the course expense as merton had to sort out the MAE's budget. |
| I believe that the utmost should be done to ensure good course ranges are offered at a reasonable price to encourage people as the current courses do (currently doing my second course which is local and a good price). Local services are important in an economic climate where people still want to try new hobbies and learn new skills. |
| I believe the college should continue at the current venue, with the same, or better, provision. I do not think any classes should close if they are currently well attended. |
| I believe the other options would result in a reduction of services and are purely based on saving money. My course is very well taught and local and the college supportive. I don't see why any of this should be changed and worry for my future (I hoped to pursue the next level of my vocational course next Sept but this is only practical if the college remains here) |
| I believe, along with some of the current providers, Merton has within its onlwn borough the businesses and skilled individuals to make this work more cost effectively. |
| I cannot envisage another provider running the particular courses that I take. |
| I choose this option because the Whatley Road Centre provides a centre of excellence that I do not believe could be equalled anywhere else. Teachers, administrators, canteen staff, etc all contribute to a safe, caring, exciting and excellent learning environment. I think that commissioning out means the Council would lose control, which would inevitably be detrimental to MAE. I believe that the Council contribute so little to the Whatley Road centre, which is virtually self-funding, that little financial saving would be made in moving classes elsewhere and much would be lost. |
| I disagree with selling an asset that can provide the opportunity for adult learning over the coming decades. I would like |

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| to see the council make the service more cost effective and more self-funding instead. |
| I do not believe that Merton Council has to run courses which lose money. This is just a lack of proper business like management surely? There are already other private providers of adult education, Merton has a responsibility to run different kind of adult education courses and be a source and focal centre of education in the community. Obviously they need to choose and run them more efficiently so they don't lose money. That just requires good management because the classrooms and capital assets are all in place. What is the remit for a private /other provider of adult education, how can they provide a community service ? This would be my second choice if Merton are confessing to the fact that they cant make it work. |
| I do not have enough information to make a choice. I prefer the option which will provide the best quality education in accessible locations for those who live in Merton. The venue should be considered by all likely users to be a in safe location and be reached in short time from their home by public transport. Adequate disabled parking should be available |
| I do not have the time to research which option is better, but what I expect is a partnership that improves the quality and the diversity of education possibilities to Merton Residents at a cost which is lower than current costs due to sharing. I do not think that cut-price courses necessarily offer quality and ultimately could destroy the attraction of adult education if the standard of delivery drops. |
| I do not know the difference between 2 and 3, both seem sensible options. |
| I do not know the risks - how people will be affected. I did not have an education and cannot access adult education because as a vulnerable autistic adult, there is no support... I do not have friends or supportive family. I have never had any support and do not believe I ever will. Life is hell I would be better off dead. |
| I do not see why current arrangements can't be made to work. |
| I do not trust the Council with the other alternatives and enough of local tax payers' money has already gone to pay for the new buildings which were moved from the school next door to the site. |
| I do not trust the Council with the other options. |
| I do not use the adult education system, but do feel it should be available to those who need it not those who want to take up a hobby. I do not feel that the residents of Merton who pay their council tax should pay for this service, it should be paid for by the end user. |
| I do not want to travel to Wandsworth and further to attend courses...I want them based in Merton. |
| I don't agree with private providers being used for this kind of service and would expect it to have a detrimental effect on the quality of services. I'm indifferent as to which other authority/college Merton shares its services with. |
| I don't have a lot of faith in Merton Council leadership, sadly. I have good knowledge of S Thames College management, and I would trust them to administer adult education well for Merton. |
| I don't have enough information about the implications of each model to make an active preference. |
| I don't know what the implications are of the above options with regards to where the adult services will be held. Whatley Avenue site should not be closed, South Thames and SCOLA sites are not close by and distance to travel to these other sites will be a huge hindrance and in many case will make taking up of the courses offered impossible |
| I don't know which would be best to keep Whatley Avenue open. Not happy with commissioning other providers. |
| I dont particularly have a preference between option 2,3 and 4 as its impossible to really have a preference without any facts- how does one choose between south thames, anothe LA or other providers. Ultimately my preference would be the option that delivers the best quality courses most efficiently. |
| I don't really know. May be financially better off. |
| I don't think we should aim to tie ourselves down to one solution or another at this stage. The option I've chosen gives us the greatest freedom to choose what's best for Merton. |
| I don't trust the other options to allow me to continue my french lessons as they currently stand |
| I feel continued attempts by merton to reduce budget at the expense of residents are counterproductive MAE has always provided me with high quality training & education and should be allowed to continue |
| I feel I do not know enough about how the money is spent -eg premises - staff etc to make an informed decision but Option 1 is currently working followed by possibly option 4.If venues are closed they will not be replaced like for like. New sheltered housing on Nelson site, increased population, need to keep Whatley Ave going with all its specialist resources. In big scheme of expenses 2.5 million is not much for a service which can be used by all the community. Just because it is in the west area if Merton is not a reason to close it. People here also get old, need to gain new skills, are disabled, want to make friends, improve quality of life. This service does more than just give people jobs - it supports quality of life do not destroy it for short term gain. |
| I feel it is up to you, LBM, to decide on the best option. I can' judge the merits of South Thames College, LB Wandsworth or other providers. |
| I feel that Merton Adult College has helped improve and better the lives of many service users that I have got enrolled on various different courses. I feel that it would have a very bad impact on many people's lives if things were to change. |
| I feel that the current arrangements offer a wide range of high quality courses delivered by excellent tutors. The facilities at Whatley Avenue are of a high standard, reflecting the investment made in previous years. |
| I feel the service is unique - its small size is an asset, many students attend because of this, having tried bigger colleges, one student told me about MAE 'here they actually care about you', 'here no one teases me'. Many students with |

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| <p>learning disabilities find a bigger college to noisy and crowded. I agree that the admin spend is too high at the moment - but this is because all of the reviews have always been done by the college management, and they have never made any of the top level managers redundant - always only admin assistants at first, and then latterly some middle managers. Deal with the top heavy structure by slimming it down, don't take away a very well run college. You have a unique group of tutors at the college, particularly in the Learning Disability department - representing some 30 years + in teaching adults with learning disabilities, a very specialised task. Don't lose this!</p> |
| <p>I feel working together is a better option. Competition doesn't always provide a better service and often results in a dog-eat-dog situation.</p> |
| <p>I find that by sharing with another authority will help the collage the cost of running and more beneficial finically. It's like the bank merging with another bank to reduce the cost</p> |
| <p>I have been a student a MAE for 3.5 years. It has been instrumental in my mental welfare over this time. My personal circumstances have meant MAE has literally been a lifeline to me. I am largely tied to home and if the courses run elsewhere I will not be able to make it there on time using public transport and at considerable expense whereas currently it is free for me. Equally the standard of teaching is exemplary and I fear if MAE closes this wealth of knowledge and talent might not be able to relocate with them.</p> |
| <p>I have been attending Whatley Ave for over 14 years and there is a real sense of community there. Many learners are vulnerable yet they feel at home and cared for in this environment - this would be lost if courses were spread out all over the borough. I also suspect that the course that I am enrolled on - stained glass would not be able to continue elsewhere.</p> |
| <p>I have been attending Whatley Avenue Education Centre for 16 years. During that time I have undertaken computer courses, languages and health and well-being classes. I go there because I can walk from home so do not need to use my car and find the courses well-organised, efficient and informative. I rely on them to maintain my health and fitness (I'm 60 years' old) and thus helping to save the NHS an extra burden in related treatments.</p> |
| <p>I have been told Merton Council has Â£106M in reserve. Why can't some of this money be used without compromising other services in the borough? Hopefully the SFA will continue to provide the same level of service.</p> |
| <p>I have no objection to MAE being administered by another authority to save money by sharing office staff. What is crucial is to maintain a building at or near Whatley Avenue as the other providers are too far away to travel to. Your survey above does not give that information. It implies that classes would carry on at Whatley with new management.</p> |
| <p>I have not completed Question 2 as I really do not mind which option is chosen as long as Whatley Avenue remains open and provides the excellent courses it currently offers for all sections of the community. Whatley Avenue is a unique asset as it provides a safe, nurturing environment for the elderly, those with learning difficulties and the vulnerable members of our society. I do not believe that any other venue would be able to match what Whatley Avenue has to offer.</p> |
| <p>i have only done a blind survey on merton adult colloge they could be in the same boat when it comes to money but grouping the same course could benefit and save money as if you get 3 persons from merton and 4 persons from other areas that would mean 7 person in one class instead of opening 2 classes and useing to tutors</p> |
| <p>I have used the Whately Avenue site for yoga for several years and found it very convenient with good tutors. My husband has also attended oil painting classes. I think adult education is about expanding your horizons not necessarily about job training - i already know how to be accountant but don't know much about yoga.</p> |
| <p>I hope it is the easiest way to continue providing services and to minimize the costs</p> |
| <p>I know that there is a co-operation between Merton and South Thames College already and it has made a good effort.</p> |
| <p>I live in Merton, and thanks to Dial-a-Ride, I am able to attend college. If it goes out of the area, I would have to give up my three classes and my heart would break. This is my life blood to the community. I have lived in my flat for four years and know no one. At college I have lots of friends.</p> |
| <p>I live in Mitcham Sutton would be more accessible for me than Wandsworth or South Thames. I feel Mitcham does not have good access to any of the Adult classes</p> |
| <p>I prefer public services to be provided by and for the public, not commissioned out to private sector providers who seek profits as well as efficiencies.</p> |
| <p>I prefer this option because I don't want Merton to loose control of Adult Education and for it to get diluted down by other parties.</p> |
| <p>I realise that there has to be some change to make savings so this would be my preferred option if merton cannot continue as sole providers.</p> |
| <p>I retired in 1999 and attended Merton College on Saturday before. From 1985 - my dream was to learn how to paint and draw - I used to dream about it. I have attended Whatley Avenue all this time. I am now 78 years old - my only form of contact with meeting people and do the thing I love most. I am now disabled and need an outlet - I would miss my art class very much - my art teacher is the best.</p> |
| <p>I strongly believe that a joint endeavour with SCOLA (my preferred partner) would improve the quality and breadth of courses open to Merton residents. Scola provide a higher calibre and wider range of courses. In particular, they offer A'Level Courses, which MAE currently does not. I believe MAE should offer courses in A'Level English Language and Literature and Maths. These courses would allow residents the opportunity to improve their skills set, thereby allowing them to contribute and provide further added value to society thus benefiting the country and the economy.</p> |
| <p>I strongly believe this kind of provision is best in the hands of a local, not for profit organisation.</p> |
| <p>I studied at Merton adult education and it changed the way I used to live. I tried in South Thames college and it was spencive for me in that time but when I went to MAE I could get that for free and it allows me to get a new perspective</p> |

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| of my working life. It was a great opportunity and I believe other people should have the same opportunity that I have once. However, it would be great if the council could invest more in education. Investing in education is the single most effective way of reducing poverty. |
| I think it is a good idea to share and work together with other adult education providers. But I think the location should be kept and it should be within Merton. I am attending an evening course with a lot of other local people and know, that traveling 30min is fine, but not more than that and therefore location is an important factor. |
| i think it is good idea to make two authorities to work together. They can share knowledge, experience and ideas to improve the service. |
| I think it is important that a dedicated building be kept - specifically designed rooms with equipment are part and parcel of the right attitude to learning. only recently attended a course at Whatley Avenue and was amazed by the great facilities. |
| I think it is important to keep the focus on LA provision to ensure links with LEA's can be enhanced to ensure smooth transitions and shared resources for the benefit of students and reducing non teaching costs. The ethos and ethics of Adult education should be on not for profit provision. |
| I think it is wrong to reduce the number of centres providing adult education. They will become less accessible and quality of teaching will inevitably reduce with increased class sizes. |
| I think MAE is very important place for people who has problems to communicate, who find hard to find friends, has difficulties to coop with everyday life. This adults very likely to have mental problems. |
| I think Merton has a duty to provide opportunities in education or learning to all. Taking a course, learning a new skill and meeting new people is a great way of boosting ones confidence. Many of the courses I did included single parents or stay at home mums and networking with new people can fend off feelings of isolation and low self-esteem. I met two of my good friends on my Spanish class many years ago. |
| I think not enough people take courses which are on offer. There could be more takers in one borough and less in others so some form of bonding should be done to keep courses open. |
| I think shareing with another ocal authoriy is the best option because they can support eachother. They maybe can manage finances better. Also they can share good experiences and learn from it. |
| I think that local authorities should offer course opportunities to people residing in their borough. |
| I think that minimising the admin costs is essential to reduce the overall cost of providing the service. This could be done by sharing a back office function - but am not sure that it should be just considered with South Thames College or another local authority - could the admin/back office be outsourced? My concern with the preferred option is that it may reduce costs in the short term but longer term will increase costs, leading to a reduction in the service. I understand the need to reduce the risk of volatility in funding to the Council, but this is no doubt the case in other areas, where this risk is managed. I do think that the fees charged could be raised for the vast majority of participants with means testing/other concessions identifying those that should be allowed to participate for a lower fee. |
| I think that the current education sites provide a unique and excellent mix of courses and a very good level of facilities. Many of the courses available are not available in adjoining boroughs. Cost savings can be made in many ways, and in all the literature I have read it not at all clear what the annual shortfall is in the running costs. Some courses could cope with price rises and I am sure they would still be fully attended. I am also sure that cost savings could be made without sharing services or selling it off to an outside interest. |
| I think the adult education centre is a great space, location is accessable and prices are competitive. I would probably not use it so much if it were moved to another campus. |
| I think the council has little business running these servicesandshould leave it to the private sector except in the case of those with learning difficulties. There the council might only subsidize courses offered by the private sector. |
| I think the current provision is excellent and the Whatley Avenue site a well used building, with the ability to over a range of courses and suitable areas for storage etc for the more vocational courses. Given the vague nature of the other options - eg who exactly would these 'other providers' be and what facilities and range of courses would they offer - it seems impossible to actually express a preference for these options when the current provision is very good. |
| I think the existing courses at MAE are excellent and change will mean moving these courses to locations outside the borough |
| I think this would help keep costs down and also They have the facilities to offer more. |
| I think this would provide links with the east of the borough if the courses are also available to Merton residents at South Thames College. I do not know if it is intended to provide a brochure showing a wider range of courses for both areas as Merton's has been restricted in lots of ways and has not appealed to me in recent years. |
| I think this would reduce admin costs. |
| I think this would save a lot of money as you could get providers into a bidding war and go for the lowest price. |
| I think Wandsworth is the ideal partner for Merton as it is geographically close. I have attended courses there when similar courses have not been available in Merton. |
| I think we should join venture with other establishments to further the general public. |
| I took few courses in the current location and I found it a very good experience |
| I want a venue that I can walk to and if Whatley Avenue closes S Thames college is about the same distance from me. |
| I work in wandsworth as a support worker and ofte come to use south thanes college for adult courses and the offer a |

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| good service it would be beneficial to unite the two and have a wider service |
| I worry that costs, locations and quality may change to my detriment. |
| I would hate to see Whateley Avenue used for any other purpose. I do think that the ratio of funds teaching to admin needs looking at. I believe that may well be where the council could save money. Having said that, repairs on the building will need to be managed carefully. I also believe that more use of technology i.e. up to date phone and messaging systems would prove more cost effective than people!! |
| I would have chosen Option 4 if it were certain that South Thames College would be the commissioned provider as I believe overall this is the best option. It uses an existing Merton adult learning infrastructure, the STC premises are well located near bus and train communications, provide accessible facilities and are near to Morden Town Centre. Your information provided (thank you -it was very helpful) indicates that STC could take on approx 75% of the provision so this seems to offer a cost effective and minimal disruption to transfer of services. I feel very strongly that the commissioned provider should be a Merton based provider and contributing directly to the Merton economy as much as possible. Option 4 indicates that the commissioning would be tendered and so I assume would not guarantee STC being awarded. I have chosen Option 2 as my preferred option. I have done courses at both Whately Ave and STC and have greatly valued the learning experiences provided by both sites. |
| I would hope this option would aim to continue to supply the current level of service of adult education at relatively easily accessible centres. |
| I would like courses to remain in Merton as this is convenient for me and I would hope those running the courses would be under obligation to provide efficient, modern, well resourced classes. |
| I would like MAE to continue. It is the only real thing of value that is useful for me from the council as it offers great affordable courses near me for which I am happy to pay |
| I would like the classes to be kept fairly local and I know there are good classes at South Thames college |
| I would need to now more about the above options before committing to a response. Partnerships where financial, strategic, and governance is shared can provide viable options as long as it is well managed and supported. |
| I would not trust private sector providers to give a service that was good value for money as they have not done so in other outsourced areas. I would not wish to travel far outside the borough to attend courses. |
| I would rather have Merton bearing the responsibility for Adult Education. However, having recently studied at MAE I feel they are neglecting the Whatley Avenue site and that certain courses are therefore not as great as they could be because of the poor facilities and equipment available. I feel that South Thames college has good facilities and that these could provide a better environment for courses such as the beauty and massage courses. Also on a purely selfish level Merton campus of South Thames college is closer to where I live than MAE. |
| I would really prefer option 1 but if this is not feasible then option 2 appears to be the one most likely to provide services run and managed locally. |
| I would say that a provider specifically for the Merton area should be able to provide more Merton-relevant courses. On the other hand, there might be synergies to partner with other boroughs or South Thames College. |
| I'd much prefer to see Merton link with a college which already operates in the borough. I have little faith in Wandsworth's ability of committment to invest in adult education. Also Adult Education should not be purely focused on providing skills to improve job prospects. There are many vocational and interesting courses offered which are not linked to jobs but do significantly improve people's health and mental well being. |
| If by sharing facilities with other local authorities you are able to reduce non-teaching overheads and improve amenities and the quality of courses then it would be a good course of action but not this turns out to be a surreptitious means of cutting back in the future. |
| If cost effective , it should be done. |
| If financial issues are the problem, maybe a partnership with another college would help and maybe give more people options to access different courses. |
| If it's shared with South Thames the campus is still accessible within the borough and travel can be done locally. I am a student at MAEC and my courses are all evening and I use public transport. I wouldn't be able to access some courses if they were out of borough. I did a course with SCOLA last year and the time it took in traveling was longer than the session. It was actually counter productive. I feel it would be a great loss to adult learners and the borough if we lost this service. |
| If Merton can control the courses they run locally, at a more cost effective way, it would be more beneficial to Merton residents |
| IF other providers can maintain the range and quality of courses in a more efficient manner (because of experience or economies of scale), then everybody will benefit. |
| If the council uses an outside provider it puts the service in a weaker position to future cuts. If I wanted another borough to provide my course I would already go to it. |
| If the level of savings necessary are to be made we need to think more radically I would be happy to pay if a private company took over the provision or if indeed a co-operative were allowed to run courses using current sites and facilities |
| If the responsibility goes outside the borough there is a danger of the providers not having ownership of the services and thereby not provide the best service for Merton residents. |
| If the services are all under councils then there are fewer other agencies involved so less likelihood of poor communication between them, gerater efriciency if less councils and council should take full responsibility for what |

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| they provide |
| If there is a financial risk its relative to services they offer. |
| If this helps to prevent redundancies within the Council it would be better to share but my overall preference would be to keep as it is at present. |
| If this means saving Whatley Avenue then it is |
| If this would save administration costs this would be a better option than outsourcing which can be more costly in the end. It's important that people should not have to travel too far to attend courses, especially for older people. |
| If you want to provide more career- and vocation-orientated courses they why not tie adult education more closely into FE? It doesn't make sense to switch to an alternative, commercial provider if this is your stated aim. Merton College could offer good efficiency savings and facilities, and has an already established profile in the borough (which could be raised further). |
| I'm a student at MAE currently it is local to me and is convenient times for me as I'm a single mum with 2 children at school the hours are perfect to work around the children if the college was somewhere else I would never be able to do the course I'm doing at fit it around the children. |
| I'm currently taking course at Scola,MAE should learn from Scola how to provide high quality courses |
| I'm not sure about what is the best as I don't have enough information. |
| I'm really happy with the courses offered by MAE. |
| Important for local people to be able to access local college that is not FE. Adults can often be put off attending a college with 16-19 years olds |
| Important for Merton to provide and have control over adult education for its own residents. A facility that improves the lives and mental health of residents. Learning is for life - council best placed to provide courses that benefit people's lives in many ways - new skills acquired, providing opportunities for people to get out and meet others, improve health through exercise - and council is an institution that can influence people to expand their horizons. Merton's adult education classes provide opportunities for learning not provided by neighbouring boroughs. |
| Improved choices |
| In order to continue to provide excellent educaiton services sharing teh admin costs seems the most appropraie solution in my limited knowledge. |
| Increased scale of operations, efficiency and reduced costs whilst combining resources, keeping control and not using money to create profit in a 3rd party organisation (Not entirely sure of conceptual distinction between option 3 and 2 - possibly to do with how South Thames college is run, not LA funded?) |
| Insufficient financial information and particularly in regard to the use of the site, if retained, or the use of the funds if sold. |
| Interlinking and networking with other places who already provide the education and resources creates efficiency and streamlines the sevice. |
| It allows for greater efficiency with little or do degradation in quality and range of available courses. The only concern is the jobs of those delivering the supporting services. There is only so much to be gained by leveraging off shared services and facilities. |
| It allows MAE to provide unique, highest quality and speediest response to customer needs. |
| It appears that the current service works well, although costs could be cut in the administrative and management jobs. consideration could also be given to increasing the fees for classes slightly, but with some subsidised places. |
| It can be daunting for people to go to these big college. Local services are more user friendly. |
| It could increase the courses available. |
| It has a community atmosphere. You will destroy Wimbledon Chase Community Centre. |
| It is a high quality service |
| It is accessible to the disabled. It is near my home. |
| It is already a hassle getting to Whatley for people who work. Trekking to South Thames or Wandsworth, after work on a dark Winter evening is out-of-the question. I think Merton needs to cater for people who pay council tax not just the people who are receiving benefits or are retired. Teaching venues need to be close to stations. I would definitely NOT go to an out-of-borough centre. |
| It is clearly a facility that is well used and does not cost the Council any money. |
| It is far from clear which is the best value option from the information provided. Is Option 4 preferred because it makes the greatest saving? Will it respond best to local needs? Or will it mean that Merton has to "take it or leave it" from an outside provider in future? Superficially at least, Options 2 and 3 would appear to offer the Council greater control over the future direction of policy. |
| It is important for a wide varierty of reasons that the council supports local, cost efficient leanring for adults. To reduce this service deprives people within the area of valuable opportunities both to better and amuse themselves. Addressing the provision of English Language teaching specifically, I think it is imperative that Merton continues to offer a local service to learners that requires them to mix with people from across the community. This helps to create effective communities and breaks down the barriers that exist in our community because of a lack of shared language. |
| It is important for LBM to be in control of its Adult Education Offering; we must be one of the wealthiest Local Authorities in the country (albeit not necessarily the best managed) and for the Council to be considering not being in |

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| charge of its own AE offering is a dereliction of civic duty in a developed country. |
| It is just as important WHERE the courses are taught and the atmosphere of the establishment can be a large factor in whether someone makes that daunting decision to sign up to a course. Being an adult educational establishment and not of a daunting size it allows mature students to feel at ease and also those with special needs. For some people, coming here is not only to gain knowledge but it is a life line socially and personally. |
| It is not a bad idea to team up with another institution to deliver an improved service |
| It is the option which is proven to work and work well. Continuity is especially important for those with learning difficulties, as is a familiar environment. |
| It is the problem for Merton to solve and bringing in others is not a solution. |
| it is unclear what financial risk is being referred to, but back office savings may be made to keep the facility at the current location serving the local population |
| It is unclear with the other options which courses would be axed & which saved |
| It is very important that Merton continues to provide Adult Education in the Borough or gets some other body to do this. It is so important to adults that there is the facility to learn and improve. It is a fantastic way of getting folk together from different ethnic and social backgrounds regardless of ability/disability, sexual orientation and age. My particular class certainly mirrors all these different groups and we all get on together. |
| It makes sense to combine services and save money by rationalising back offices. |
| It may save money by sharing STC Merton Campus, such as classrooms, facilities, etc to deliver the necessary courses that Merton residents need. |
| It offers most flexibility |
| It really doesn't matter what I, or anyone else, thinks. The decision has already been made and it is a done deal! |
| It remains local and Scola have a good reputation for delivering courses |
| It saves money without the risk of privatising the service to private learning organisations, which has more risk of poor service, not being scrutinised properly and a service motivated by profit rather than for the benefit of students themselves. |
| It seems this not about the Merton Council bearing Financial risk...but Merton council are in need of LAND for development |
| It seems to me that most of these options mean Whatley Ave would close (possibly be sold). This is my closest and preferred site for MAE. I would not like to see the site close. |
| It should be possible to run adult education without risking losses if it is done efficiently, which has not been the case for many years. |
| It should not go to private companies it should stay in local authority-of the people for the people |
| It should stay as it is.Maybe updated a bit but This is a perfect college for many people for many reasons. If it wasn't for MAE I wouldn't be on the road to where I want to be. |
| It the provider is already experienced in the area of adult education it saves duplication of courses and concentrates the best tutors to a provider. |
| It will minimise job loss and create a greater skills mix. |
| It will reduce administrative costs and Wandsworth is a big council with a diverse population and within easy access of Merton. |
| It will save money |
| It works as it for students. A small increase in fees could help. |
| It works satisfactorily and it is understood that MAE is not as unprofitable as has been suggested. The Council also has ample reserves that could be used. |
| It works well, the facilities are excellent, the staff are knowledgeable, it would be stupid to merge with other providers or externalise as you lose control of the quality as if you don't care about adult education as you want to sell off the sites and focus on what is statutory its short sighted and stupid as in the future the NEETs and vulnerable adults will suffer. |
| It would allow the current services provided by MAE to continue but with some efficiencies. |
| It would be better to be in a college environment with proper facilities for teaching |
| It would mean the location doesn't move too far and south Thames college must have existing abilities to run educational services. Assuming they don't already hold these in evenings it would seem like a good use of space |
| It's a difficult decision to make - being swallowed up by a large fe college (opt 2) or dictated to by another borough (opt 3 and 5) or privatising an education facility (opt 4). Option 1 isn't really an option as it's not the council but the council tax payers (including myself!) who stand to suffer the loss. |
| It's important that night school facilities are protected in case ONE of the providers becomes bankrupt or can no longer work in this field |
| It's important that the accessibility in terms of the number of locations doesn't go down. |
| Its well placed and has over the years provided a good level of education for a wide variety of people..eg myself.After attending only 1 course i was able to obtain a much better position at my place of work..i have recently enquired about a further course and was a little upset that there was talk that the facility may close.A shame if it does. |
| I've used South Thames and they use unsuitable venues and make it hard to enrol. No facilities for people with learning disabilities |

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| Keeping courses local encourages people to take courses locally - more travel puts people off courses and doesn't help traffic. |
| Keeping local services local means it is accessible to the people of Merton making people travel further and further will hinder access. |
| Knowledge from other learning providers is always positive. |
| Last time I looked at adult education courses in merton there was little of interest to me with far too many alternative health courses. They should provide more courses which help people back into employment also give life skills. This would be helped by linking with another organisation . |
| LB Merton probably lacks the expertise to go it alone. South Thames College has provided acceptable adult learning courses. |
| LB Wandsworth is our neighbouring borough and has a proven record of providing cost savings and successfully streamlining services. |
| Learnign opportunities should continue to be provided by local providers who are privvy to the needs of the local community. |
| Like schools, adult learning centres should be local and be part of the local community. They should be in walking distance thus reducing the problem with parking. It should remain part of our local cultural feature. |
| Local adult education college provides best service for the local community as it is best informed of what is needed here. Shared service will put Merton learners at a disadvantage. |
| Local authorities are committed to their communities and have substantial experience in meeting their adult and further education needs. They are not motivated by profit or the need to undercut competitors and are directly accountable to residents/service users. |
| Local college locally run for local people will best address what MERTON people need. It's local, accessible and relevant. |
| Local community |
| Local people need local facilities - transport, established places for activities. If it ain't broke why fix it. Examine other activities of local council which are more general political activity and reduce them. Education is a continuing need and should be provided. |
| Location and quality of the course as well as a range on offer is important. But, I have previously travelled to central London for courses if they are what I am looking for as a local borough cannot be expected to provide everything. |
| Location is very important as people want to be able to access services easily. Merton appears highly inefficient with a very high proportion of non-teaching costs. |
| Location of the college is quite convenient to students and teachers. All students and teachers live local. In addition, this is the only decent adult learning college available in the area. |
| MAC costs Merton Council very little. However, what it does offer is a friendly, resourceful environment that caters for all learners regardless of their capabilities and choice of learning. |
| MAE and SCOLA should work together to service the adult learning needs of the local community. LBS and LBM already work together so it is logical to increase this. It will decrease expenses and increase unity and help to stop duplication. Courses could be run in one or other borough to decrease the chances of wasted time and resources due to courses having to be cancelled due to lack of students as drawing from both boroughs would mean that was less likely to happen. |
| MAE at Whatley Avenue and Wimbledon are in purpose-built, modern accommodation - would be wasteful to abandon these buildings. Another service provider would use facilities profitably one hopes! |
| MAE currently offers an excellent service, the college at Whatley Avenue is welcoming and friendly. The atmosphere is extremely inclusive and I believe that this is A huge benefit to all learners. The courses on offer are varied and taught by excellent tutors. |
| MAE has a successful track record, a unique identity and breaks even. Dismantling it would result in high hidden costs with some learners left with nowhere to go. |
| MAE have a great site at Whatley with specialist teaching rooms. ie Pottery , Kitchen, Art , IT and woodwork what other venue could boast such great facilities |
| MAE IS dedicated to provide adults with opportunities beyond vocational needs which are catered for very well At other colleges in the borough. MAE Whatley Avenue is a unique environment a calm truely special place where amazing learning takes place To split adult learning bits and pieces allover the borough would be appalling. Where Would all the mature students and special needs go? Mixed up with other unsuitable learners at colleges dedicated to youngsters preparing for the workplace. The simply would not mix Successive have promised LEARNING FOR LIFE. Closing MAE Whatley would be throwing out the BABY with the bath water PLEASE OPT TO KEEP MAE WHATLEY OPEN |
| Mae is a consistently good and well-established provider of adult education services. It has particular expertise in providing educational provision to those with learning difficulties and to adults from other countries who wish to obtain educational qualifications in English ESOL. Furthermore it has thriving classes in arts courses of all kinds and in foreign language teaching. It would be counterproductive to close or move MAE elsewhere because it is vital to provide services locally, within the borough's main residential areas without requiring students to travel long distances. |
| MAE is a successful and popular institution with its own ethos and atmosphere. It has a strong student base and tutors who are not just there in the short term hence the good relationship and understanding between students and tutors. MAE is a local community which provides more than just learning. If it is broken up all this will be lost and I for one will be bereft and quality of life impoverished for local people |

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| MAE is a unique place for people to learn in. A college where people with a learning disability can learn in the mainstream. It gives them the independence to move forward and progress in life. Many courses that are at MAE are specialist where they may not be able to integrate elsewhere. |
| MAE is a well established institution providing a variety of courses at different levels to adults, thus enabling them to develop their careers, future professions. The building has adequate space to provide a teaching environment and ethos for a number of different weekly and weekend courses with transport links nearby. I believe Merton Adult Education college should continue to function as it is. If course fees need to be increased to balance and smooth financial stress then Merton local authority should be open to discuss the same. Has Merton Local authority been reviewing this problem over a period of time and decided to open its doors to public discussion now or yet another excuse to sell up another of Merton's prime building sites? |
| MAE is in a fantastic location to me as I live in Raynes Park. It is unlikely I would travel far to access adult education. Has MAE college been given the opportunity to present a business case to keep the college open? Is there capacity to increase the number of courses it offers, increase the course fees and reduce back office costs to make the provision of adult education more sustainable? MAE provides courses for many older and more vulnerable people; the benefits are difficult to evaluate. A reduction in spend in adult education may well result in higher costs for the council elsewhere. |
| MAE is run in an old and inefficient way, it needs a radical change to improve services. |
| MAE offers so much to the wider community. I have always felt privileged that such a range of courses were available to me that fitted round my working day. I was therefore saddened to hear that MAE college is under threat of closure. I personally feel this would be a great loss to our community. I originally joined the college as I have an interest in foreign languages and wanted to learn a basic level of Spanish. However, I have continued as I found that not only did I enjoy the academic aspect and learning a subject that was not available to me when I was at school but I got to meet and spend time with people in my community that I would not necessarily have had the pleasure to meet otherwise. Furthermore, it has encouraged me to make better use of the fantastic libraries we have in Merton and I have a much better sense of what's going on in the wider community both from other students and just being involved with MAE. I never underestimate the many benefits the availability of adult education offers to our community. A great example is my Grandfather. My Grandmother was terminally ill and in hospital then a hospice for the last 18 months of her life. My Grandfather, then in his late 70s, travelled to the hospital by bus everyday throughout this time to spend time with her and this left no time for anything else. After her passing he was left feeling a bit lost with lots of time on his hands that he wasn't used to. He enrolled for two classes at his local Adult education centre and it was a great way for him to reengage with his community by meeting new people and just having a focus away from a very difficult time in his life. Another good example is my Mother in Law who has recently retired from a 40+ year career as a midwife. Having always wanted to develop her artist skill but never having had the time previously she has enrolled in a foundation class and is thoroughly enjoying the experience in a welcoming and age appropriate environment that |
| MAE provides a really good service. Commissioning other would just allow them to make a profit and there would be no quality to courses. |
| MAE WHATLEY is Merton's flagship and well-respected throughout London. It must be one of the reasons for the award of "Best Borough"! For it to vanish would be a public disgrace. |
| MAE works well as it is: it provides excellent education opportunities with first class, dedicated teachers and comfortable classrooms and studios. Please explain 'Merton council bears the financial risk'. A risk is not a certainty so it would be good to see the figures behind this statement. |
| MAEC is a valuable community resource with a proven record of providing good quality courses to all sectors of the local community. The model works and should be left alone in my opinion. |
| MAEC is a valued community resource with a proven model that works. It must be left to continue. |
| Maintain as many staff from MAE however, oncosts should be reduced using this method. |
| Maintains Council management - i.e. not for profit. Economies of scale for management and back office functions. |
| Majority of the level 3 courses in the college are now offered as student loans not impacting on Merton's budget. Selling it to developers will make millions for the council, I suspect this is the option they would prefer, or due to the over population of the area the school may require the grounds. Both would be a great loss for the adult community as a whole, adults are less likely to attend the larger colleges, reducing the chances of some adults ever getting back into work. |
| Makes more sense to share the costs with another college from another council. |
| Many of the students at Merton Adult College at Whatley Avenue are disabled and or learning difficulties and or retired people who spend the afternoons or evenings there. If their college changes location to them would mean loads of changes that a lot of them would not cope very well, bringing more expense to the council. I believe that not only MAE should suffer financially cuts. Other sectors in Merton should suffer financially cuts as well and Whatley Avenue should be saved. |
| May get more variation of courses. |
| MEA at Whatley Ave is a precious resource for people with special needs and learning difficulties. It should remain on or near this site to be in borough, but there is no reason why efficiencies should not be made with other providers eg back office services |
| Merton adult education currently provides an excellent service in a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment. |
| Merton Adult Education deserves praise, support and the commitment of the Council. I am a Wandsworth resident who |

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| <p>came to MAE because of the shoddy state of adult education offered in my own borough (cramped room, old equipment in a poor state of repair - was not repaired or replaced in 18 months I attended) I STRONGLY DISAGREE that a shared service with Wandsworth or South Thames College would benefit teaching and learning. The course at Whately offers excellent teaching in a modern purpose built room - for the same price to students as the dire Wandsworth course. My feeling is that there are efficiency savings that could be made on administration but closing teaching centres and especially commissioning other providers is not the way to improve things for learners. Please remember that adult education is not JUST about getting a job, it is also about nurturing the abilities that don't get used in the workplace but keep us happier, healthier and ultimately more productive individuals.</p> |
| <p>Merton Adult Education has allowed me to continue my education when I was given no other support. I suffer from severe anxieties and panic attacks, I feel able to enjoy my learning in a safe environment where the staff, teaching and otherwise continue to make me feel comfortable. Thanks to MAE I now have a GCSE in English and Maths, Grade B and I am currently taking GCSE French and an ICT course. MAE has given me the confidence to be able to achieve more. For these reasons I believe that the council should bear the financial risk as MAE has been such a fundamental place for me and I am sure many others, and it would be a great shame to see it changed and costs that allow it to be a great place cut.</p> |
| <p>Merton adult education is an extremely important resource for the community. If there are savings then these could be found through new cost effective ways of running the centre perhaps by charging more for some courses or using the facilities more to bring in more revenue.</p> |
| <p>Merton Adult Education makes money for the Council, you should develop this business model and use this service for its uniqueness</p> |
| <p>Merton Adult Education needs to stay in Merton to meet the needs of the local residents and community. South Thames college is the best option as it not only is a grade 2 provider with excellent resources, but has a campus in Merton, which means that adult education will get to stay in the London Borough of Merton.</p> |
| <p>Merton Adult Education offers an excellent service to a wide range of Merton residents in a safe, friendly environment. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are able to interact with a wide range of people from the community... And vice versa. The curriculum offers something for everyone, leisure courses that help people express their creativity, helps with mental health. Fitness courses help keep people active, and vocational courses and literary / numeracy courses give adults a second chance in an environment they find encouraging without feeling embarrassed or intimidated by younger learners. This is an essential service if you want a happy, healthy, enriched & employable borough.</p> |
| <p>Merton Adult Education provides a very caring and supportive learning environment which may get lost in a reorganisation. Because it provides a variety of courses at one site, it is a place where diversity and community cohesion are experienced and not just taught. It is particularly good for ESOL students to see what else is on offer and to see how we value adults with learning difficulties. A scattered service will not expose people to the rich array of courses and there is a danger that there will be less integration across communities. I am also concerned that the greatly valued arts and crafts courses will not be rehoused and they will be permanently lost. These courses not only enrich our lives but also directly and indirectly lead to greater employability. People learn skills that allow them to set up their own business or through improved mental health they are able to return to work. Mental Health is one of the big issues and there is much talk of mindfulness particularly in relation to manual activities. These create new neural pathways and are often the best way out of mental illness. Merton may regret axing a service that is crucial to an issue that may be near the top of a new government's agenda. Finally a lot of money has been spent on refurbishing Whatley Avenue. This has led to an improved OFSTED rating. The service was criticised in the past for a lack of IT stimuli when it was delivered in a more basic environment.</p> |
| <p>Merton campus would be accessible to me. It has good facilities already</p> |
| <p>Merton College offers excellent courses for adult education locally and to help with employment but more importantly offers disabled people and people with special needs a chance for employment and a feeling of self worth.</p> |
| <p>Merton Council does a good job currently, why change what works well.</p> |
| <p>Merton Council should be able to budget and manage its finances without detriment to adult learning services. However, if necessary, the shared service option could be a good idea. Sharing with another local authority will just spread the issue and add extra bureaucracy to matters, without providing an effective resolution.</p> |
| <p>Merton Council should be in control of financing Adult Education in this borough to provide adequately for its older and disadvantaged citizens. It is their duty of care to the community.</p> |
| <p>Merton council should provide relevant services for the demographic of the residents of Merton. Not anyone else</p> |
| <p>Merton Council should retain hand-on control. Outsourcing is a disaster in every part of govt and local activity.</p> |
| <p>Merton Council waste of trivial things and takes away service tat are needed</p> |
| <p>Merton currently offers an excellent adult education service in welcoming and inclusive premises, I believe that they should continue with and develop this service.</p> |
| <p>Merton decides on who to commission.</p> |
| <p>Merton has stated its intention to support adult social care. MAE provides this (as well as opportunities for continuing education).</p> |
| <p>Merton is very good area and provides easy access for many people The facilities are very good and provide some of the best teachers.</p> |

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| Merton need to take responsibility for Adult Learning within the community and not cut services so to fund other operations within the borough that carry heavy costs with no value attached to them. Its obvious that all they want to do is cut the service & sell off the land for development like they are elsewhere within the borough. |
| Merton should be able to provide skill, learning and life enrichment courses for its own residents and be able to respond to the particular needs of its own residents, rather than having to seek a compromise arrangement with neighbouring boroughs. |
| mertons obsession with reducing expenditure at the expense of local residents is wholly counterproductive and does much to undermine our local community |
| Merton's provision of present adult education and learning courses are very good, therefore it would be a great loss if the council could not find a way of working around and managing financially, providing the courses in their present form. |
| might be the best option to continue |
| More direct control over management and costings and tailored to specific needs of Borough residents etc and not influenced by other areas as a result of any "sharing" arrangements. Too much money is being expended on other non essentials in the Borough. Merton's Contingency Plan is exactly that - to help and be used to assist in times of financial restraint towards essential and important services. It is useless to have contingency money sitting for years not achieving anything and no doubt not generating much real interest on the capital sums (so not adding substantially to the capital itself) in the current financially difficult times in the UK. Use some of it now! |
| More efficient and the new provider will be held accountable to provide high standards by the two councils |
| More efficient, keeps it local |
| My concern with the other options is that learning centres would be further away from my home and more crowded |
| My experience is that the college as it works well and is well integrated with the community it serves - to lose the college would harm delivery and Merton Councils prestige and recognition |
| My preferred option is that Whatley Avenue is kept open, but this is clearly prohibitive for the Borough in the economic climate, and this Option of teaming-up with South Thames College seems to make the most practical sense. |
| My son feels safe in Whatley College, he does not mix easy, but there he comes home and says what happened during the lesson. Also they understand his needs there and support him while he attends. To travel further then Whatley College would be quite a worry to me. Please, please see your way to keep this college open. Thank you, a parent. |
| near home, excellent teaching, pleasant surroundings |
| Need support if take on commissioning model and commissioning seems most viable option given public spending outlook |
| No case has been made for these changes. The "consultation" period is too short and some decisions have been taken already without consultation. The Council must provide details of expenditure and income: exactly how much would such changes save? How much do fees contribute to running the centre? We need more transparent information and the Council's vision of adult education. Without these it is impossible to support any other model of adult education in Merton. The survey contains biased questions and does not allow respondents to express their full concerns about the proposed actions. The option of sharing administrative arrangements might be considered if it does not affect educational provision; please demonstrate. The "commissioning model" cannot be supported without knowing what is involved, who would deliver, how it would be more economical? Concrete figures and plans are needed. The Council refers to Whatley Road as an out-of-the-way location. A central location would be more, not less, costly. While most of the 5000 users are Merton residents, others find their way to this excellent facility from other parts of South London. Serving a wider community is an important function of adult education in London. This facility is well used by the elderly and retired; people with mental and physical disabilities; those recovering from mental stress, physical illnesses or isolation; those seeking to improve employment opportunities; and residents in Merton and South London looking to enhance their quality of life. MEA Whatley Road already delivers an excellent adult education service to an important constituency. At a recent packed public meeting there was a high level of stress among locals and the adjacent primary school at the number of flats constructed nearby and fear that the Council plans to sell the site. What are the plans? Rather than attack MEA, Councillors could demonstrate their commitment existing adult education services equal to any in Lo |
| No continuity of teaching. Outsourcing is inefficient and ineffective |
| No cost to tax payer and some interesting new ideas could come forward. |
| No robust case has been made for these changes. The "consultation" period is too short and decisions appear to have been taken without a true consultation. The Council must provide details of expenditure and income (including the proportion covered by students' fees), more transparent information and a vision of adult education in the Borough. Without this it is impossible to support any other model of adult education in Merton. The survey does not allow respondents to express their full concerns. Some questions are biased. The option of sharing administrative arrangements might be considered if this can be done without affecting educational provision; please demonstrate. The other option of a "commissioning model" is unclear. This cannot be supported without knowing what is involved, who would deliver, how it would be more economical. Concrete figures and plans are needed before any alternative is considered. The Council refers to Whatley Road as out-of-the-way. Over 5000 students attend. People will travel to adult education classes. While most users are local, serving a wider community is an key function of adult education in London. Moving classes to a more central location would, of course, be more, not less, costly. This facility attracts a wide range of students from all walks of life. It is well used by the elderly and retired, people with mental and physical disabilities; |

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| people recovering from mental stress, physical illnesses or countering isolation; the local community; those seeking to improve employment opportunities; and residents in Merton and South London looking to enhance their quality of life. At a recent packed public meeting there was a high level of stress among residents and the adjacent primary school at the number of flats being constructed nearby and fear that the Council plans to sell the site. Councillors could promote MEA as an outstanding example of its ability to deliver high quality adult |
| None of the above. The people with learning disabilities would hate South Thames College and would not want to travel further afield. There are many cuts and savings in the borough that could be made. Everyone at Whatley Avenue loves going there and enjoys courses they don't put on anywhere else. We are talking education here. |
| not sure about Other Providers ! |
| Not sure how it is cheaper to Commission other providers when they will want to make a profit, surely it's better for the council to make that profit. |
| Not sure that sharing responsibility with other organisations works. It may mean that people have to travel further for classes. As long as other providers are monitored for quality. I also worry about where classes would be held eh I attend Whatley Avenue which has a dedicated art area which is custom built for arts and crafts study. Would anyone else be able to provide such great facilities. |
| Offsetting or reducing risk invariably costs money! A commercial provider will need to make a profit and will not really be able to deliver equivalent quality at lower cost than a non profitmaking in house service. If they do take any risk from Merton, they will require compensation. They have a duty to their shareholders to get a return for any risk they take. Procurement systems such as PFI have been shown to incur massive long term liabilities which are out of all proportion to the (political) benefit of appearing to reduce current revenue costs and risks. It is irresponsible of politicians to secure their own short term popularity by balancing current finances at the electorate's very considerable long term expense. |
| Often with outsourcing there comes a lack of quality control, as the low cost becomes the sole motivation, and then changing providers becomes a huge problem. So you keep on with the old contract even though neither the client nor the user is satisfied with the service. By keeping control of the actual management, you would be able to ensure good service - and change when change is needed more easily. |
| On being widowed at the age of 52 I attended the college, had it not been local I would not have gone. The course gave me confidence, a feeling of belonging again and enable me to get employment in a new field that before the course I would not have felt adequate. I have so much to thank the college for. |
| Once MAE has gone it will be gone forever. The Council has enough money in its slush fund to cover the £32 m deficit it claims and MAE returns a profit. This is a smokescreen and I believe money has been offered for the MAE site. It is important to keep MAE to allow local residents access to adult education without having to travel far which at best is inconvenient and at worst impossible for some. Leave our community services alone!!! |
| Option 1 - financial risk I would say NO to this option. Options 2 and 3 either of these 2 options could work if properly managed and the quality of courses don't suffer as a consequence. Option 4 - Merton's preferred option - who are the "other providers"? How would this work? ie do the others have complete contact? How does this work financially? Do they understand the needs of local people? Option 5 - DITTO 4. Commissioning other providers could perhaps not be financially viable? As I'm not a business person and not a financier I can't properly answer this question. As an academic I feel adult education is very important and should continue, and the quality of teaching should be excellent, unfortunately I'm not an economist. It depends who the other providers are. |
| Option 1 is my preferred option as it works with skeleton staff already and is popular, relevant and financially affordable. |
| Option 1 is not worded correctly. Where is the option to continue current arrangements without the council bearing the financial risk? |
| Option 1 preferred as it is currently running reliable services. Adult education in Merton should be run by the council that knows and understands the region and its population's needs. |
| Option 1, because all the other options will either be expensive, less available or not in easy reaching distance for people who are not able to travel. |
| Option 3 has the advantage that a local authority understands that the unique role of adult education is to contribute towards the social and psychological well-being of the community, as well as providing vocational skills. |
| Other providers will presumably be able to offer an equal or improved quality of service. Payments for the contract will presumably be ring fenced for each agreed period i.e. cannot suddenly remove funding without contractual penalties being applied. |
| Other providers would give more range and scope to types of courses offered. |
| Other ways it may become more confusing and complex and may involve some staff losing their jobs which is not good. |
| Our college does not have any financial risk to the government all courses that are run are well attended and necessary to help people move forward in their lives |
| Outsourcing may be cheaper initially, but long term. Sharing with another local authority means costs are lowered and quality is maintained. |
| Over the years I have seen 2 teaching venues in the North of the borough which is more deprived closed. I think that liaising with another college would put more venues at risk and MAE would be subsumed. |
| Ownership is still within the confines of Merton borough. The identity of adult education is therefore still local to the borough. |
| People with learning difficulties are supported at MAE and will get care. They will focus on money not care. |

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| Pooling requirements with another Borough is likely to offer a wider range of courses, venues and teachers, with potential cost advantages |
| Preferred option would be SCOLA which runs efficiently and resources could be shared. |
| Preferred to go for work and improve my knowledge |
| Presumably Merton Council has explored all these options at length and decided that option 4 is the most appropriate. It would need to provide a cost effective service for the long term. However option 2 might also be considered. As an established Education College facilities and staff would be in place already. The sites chosen to run the courses would however need to be easily accessible to all Merton residents. |
| Presumably the Council has looked into other options and concluded that Option 4 is the best. However Option 2 may also be a consideration. |
| Presumably the council has looked into the other options carefully and in depth and found that Option 4 makes the best financial sense for the long term continuance of Adult Education provision in the Borough. However Option 2 might also be a consideration. |
| Private providers will charge more and limit the courses to what are the most profitable. |
| Private services often do not provide the service they are commissioned to provide due to rising costs, offering the service too cheaply, needing to make profit etc. |
| process of elimination applied to my choice. I do not like options 4 and 5, which bring in commercial providers who will take a profit. Limited experience with carers is frightening. I do not understand Council funding, but if RISK IS INVOLVED IT IS BETTER SHARED WITH ANOTHER AUTHORITY. South Thames College may be that other "authority". My overall view is that the general public at large,i.e.borough residents, do not have the competence to choose an option on other than emotional grounds |
| Protects quality of teaching while reducing running costs. Retains central location in the borough. |
| Proven track record Experienced provider Existing pool of resources Good choice of courses |
| Provides services in the Morden area rather than at Whatley Avenue - easily reached by bus and train. |
| Providing administration & HR with another local authority is coordinated sensibly & effectively this option would mean that costs may be sensibly cut without affecting services and existing courses and staff. However, it is critical that the council investigate this solution in advance prior to committing to demonstrate to residents & to ensure it is a viable solution where both authorities are in agreement & that they benefit & understand the strategic approach for oncoming years. Unless this is done resources are at risk of not being used effectively using this approach. |
| Question 2 does not give a complete or balanced range of choices |
| Reduces financial risk for Merton, avoids having to travel long distances to courses if we merge with another borough and using other providers may increase competition and reduce costs |
| Saves money, even when it comes to basics like heating and paper towels. |
| SCOLA in Sutton |
| SCOLA is really good. |
| Seems to make financial and logistical sense... |
| Sensible option given financial restrictions. |
| Share back room functions save money but continue current provision |
| Share services has been a model followed in the private sector for many years allowing the core functions (in this case teaching) to receive the majority of the funding and reduce the cost of non core, support functions. Share services also allows for more balanced standards across local authorities and hopefully the reduction of accusations such as nepotism. |
| Share the costs (mainly administrative) |
| Shared costs and knowledge amongst boroughs enhances the boroughs' ability to improve all services and serve as a pan-London service. |
| Shared services risk cutting provision. Strength in the service and control over spending in a single borough will avoid competition for adult ed places between boroughs. |
| Shared services will reduce the accountability of the course providers. Shared services will inevitably be harder to reach. Specialised needs of local communities will not get the same attention. Commissioning other providers will introduce a project motive and would only make sense if you aimed to reduce the number of courses. |
| Sharing back office service provides opportunities for efficiency improvements, but adult learning must not be privatised/commissioned off to other providers to retain social policy and benefits |
| Sharing means both parties can pool resources and still remain run by the public sector. |
| Sharing obviously allows the colleges to share facilities and administration and should reduce costs. I know teachers who have worked at South Thames College, and the comments they made were not at all positive. Would therefore prefer a service shared with someone else. |
| Sharing service with other colleges are options which have not been explored properly and are totally unrealistic as they already have their own provision. Courses should be provided in Merton. Once this valuable facility has gone it would be lost forever. There are many many benefits oof Ad Ed. which are not fully taken account of and it would be a false economy. |
| Sharing services with other providers would limit courses on offer & reduce local accessibility. Outsourcing to a privatised provider would result in a reduced service. The council surely believes in the ethos: ' an educated society is a civilised |

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| society', and learning should be accessible to all at any age Denmark may be a country to look at. |
| Sharing the burden with Wandsworth may make access easier for those in the east of Merton Borough |
| Sharing the service could mean less overlap in courses |
| Sharing with another college or local authority would help defray costs, but would not risk courses that are an important lifeline to so many. Loss of adult education would be highly detrimental to the local community - it is important for morale and well being of people in the Borough, providing important educational and cultural depth |
| Since 1986, I've completed a countless number of courses in MAC, I started with English as a foreign language, different levels, GCSE, English language and literature ! Various computer courses...which all lead to me continuing with my education and subsequently lead to improvement of my career . I also attended other courses that improve my other skills, such as computer skills, not to mention fun, social courses such as picture framing, upholstery... I attended all the courses because they were LOCAL I will be retiring in a few years and have a long list of courses that I will be attending as long as they are in Wimledon! Don't forget, we are becoming an aging population and if u remove a valuable centre like this from the local environment you will have to provide support for lots of lonely people who use MAC not just as a learning centre but as a social place |
| Some costs must be reduced. So all options should be looked at to see who can offer best value for less money. |
| Some of the courses are free. A small contribution could be made. Most courses are very low in prices. One would pay more privately. Some/most of the lessons could be raised in price. Why is the council considering selling the building when more schools are needed? It could be a school by day with classes in the evening. |
| Sounds sensible. |
| South Thames already has merged with Merton Colleges to keep services and courses that way the Whatley campus can access a pool of funding. |
| South Thames already providing education and back office support staff already in place. Might have chosen option 4 but know nothing about other providers who might deliver the adult education in Merton. |
| South Thames and MAE together could deliver a range of courses in a number of locations, it could reduce the risk of duplication |
| South Thames college already has the expertise required to make a shared service work. Plus they have sites already available and satisfied students. Where as commissioning other providers means just a change of administration not an improvement to the present service. |
| South Thames college has good reputation |
| South Thames College has many facilities around the borough and in London, so it would be good for MEA to share costs and facilities with them. MEA should work independently as it currently does because it has not pressure from private shareholders towards certain areas of education, which is fundamental for this institution in order to offer a wide option of courses without the pressure of private sector looking after profits. If this option 2 fails in future due to more cuts, then option 4 would become the best option. |
| South Thames College has more spaces to accommodate more students. |
| South Thames College have the experience to provide the courses |
| South Thames College have the facilities, resources, experience and accommodation to cater for the types of learners at MAE. I think the commissioning model advocated by the council will provide adult education on the cheap, will not meet the needs of many current MAE learners and will drive standards down. |
| South Thames College is already an Education provider. I think you need to be careful about providing services only in the East of the Borough, as you could lose a significant number of students-you would just be moving the problem, not solving it. |
| South Thames College is already great and would only improve MAE courses, plus it already runs vocational courses for adults, courses for those with learning disabilities and Prince's Trust courses. It would lower risk of MAE having to close down. Its facilities are great and in Merton and easily gotten to. |
| South Thames College is already linked to Merton College and provides excellent education and self-improvement courses for adults. Therefore I'm confident that South Thames college and Merton education would be a good partnership.. |
| South Thames College is an academic institution. Sharing with another LB will create discord. |
| South Thames College is an established and excellent provider of work related and helping to get job courses. Having a Merton Campus would be an excellent way to extend their expertise to LB Merton |
| South Thames College is fairly local to me. |
| South Thames college is slightly nearer to where I live and i would rather attend the college then not to go to any courses. However I do not feel happy parking my car in the car park at night. i need my car as I have heavy equipment to carry. |
| South Thames College provides a good service. |
| South Thames is a known, proven and able provider of further education which closely matches the 'style' of many courses provided by MAE |
| South Thames is a well established organisation, therefore would have the facilities and experience and personnel to provide such courses. Also has various sites. |
| South Thames Merton is local and has modern facilities. Other FE colleges provide for adult learners as well as 16-19 |

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| learners. |
| Specialist organisations are more likely to be commercially successful than a local authority |
| STC already has sites in Merton and this would merely extend their existing services. |
| STC already present in the borough and an experienced education provider. Am strongly against an external provider being commissioned; their focus will be on finance/profit and not quality of service. |
| Stop wasting money on other things like producing the magazine My Merton (which no one reads) and translating all other council literature into so many foreign languages. If people come to live in this country they should be encouraged to learn the language - at MAE. |
| Sutton and Merton already work together in a number of ways and it would seem sensible to combine adult education as well. |
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| That in my view might make it affordable to everyone.Thank you. |
| The |
| The adult education service for students with a learning disability is a unique service where adults with a learning disability are integrated, not segregated, with the whole community. There is a shared cafe and eating space, where these students are able to make choices, learn to be in a mixed environment on the road to being a part, not apart from, the 'general public'. Because the service is small it is able to get to know the individual student, working with their unique challenges, providing a personalised educational service. You have something wonderful here - don't lose it! |
| The adult education service needs to be put on a long-term stable financial footing if it is to continue. The service is currently heavily subsidized and I understand runs at a considerable loss for the council. With further cuts likely to happen as a result of the Conservative-led government cuts it places the service in a precarious position. |
| The arguments set out in the paper are robust |
| The arrangements existing are fine as they are and should be confirmed. |
| The art courses I attend are well subscribed and we have been told they more than pay for themselves. Being taken over by another agency would probably involve an increase in our already expensive fees and moving from our purpose built venue at Whatley Avenue to other premises within a huge area. |
| The best college I have been to! |
| The building of Whatley Avenue is great for Adult Education. It would not be any good for a school (primary or secondary) because it has no outdoor space. The college should be much more ambitious in the courses it offers. We should have courses in history, economics, literature, history of ideas, history of art... Students in these sorts of classes would pay fees that would help keep the whole thing going. |
| The central location of Whatley Avenue is ideal for all Merton residents. It doesn't have to be ultra-modern or slick. The teaching is good, facilities adequate for coursework and it gets many repeat-students who like the collegiate atmosphere and have an interest in all the courses and output from other students, not just from the course they are doing as an individual. |
| The college gives an excellent service. It's a local community college where people from all walks of life can 'mix'. Why are you sending this service to a large, threatening organisation where everyone is just a 'stat'? At Merton Adult Education everyone is friendly and it's very welcoming. As I understand it, Merton Council's financial contribution minimal so the financial risk is not great. |
| The college is established, it is convenient to get to and park, the facilities are spot on. It is local. Traffic is never an issue. The size of the site helps it to be more friendly and personal. The space for my upholstery course is acceptable and there is always a friendly atmosphere with staff and students. This may or be the same in a more modern building with smaller rooms and therefore smaller squashed in classes. The building is fit for purpose and it is easy to get from one area to the next. Staff were happy working there and would continue to be without any joyous cloud hanging over them and their jobs. The course is outstanding and another provider would not have the specialist knowledge that keeps me signing up for it and paying to do it. |
| The college is in the business of education, securing funding and providing a range of courses for all abilities. Working with another LA whose demographic is different from Merton's and who also have to find multi million pound savings could be a short term solution only. |
| The college needs to be locally situated for the convenience of local residents. |
| The college offers excellent learning opportunities for all. The benefit of having a base for the courses brings the communities together. If adult learning is within a FE environment adult learners will not feel part of a community. Commissioning (with or without Wandsworth) classes across the borough will separate learning opportunities which enables adult learners create a pathway for learning. Working with another adult education provider would create a full learning experience for students. The best option would be to keep the college as one entity. If as the report says the building is too expensive why not relocate to another building or move the facilities from the Chaucer Center. |
| The college provides a service to the community which would disappear. MAE provides a sense of community in an urban environment. It supports vulnerable adults locally. Moving the service for vulnerable adults further away will increase their stress and vulnerability traveling further. MAE provides skills which lead to employment close to the local school - a key factor for many mum's trying to get back into work |
| The college provides an enormously valuable service to the community.This ranges from the disadvantaged, disabled,the elderly,people wanting to go back to work, people who come for hobbies and have done for years, it is a life line to |

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| <p>1000's of students.False economy-people will end up back on benefits as a result, costing the borough more money.Additional funding will need to allocated for the disabled adults in other areas.We have made a profit over the last year with the huge efforts form its staff.The most vulnerable are always easy targets.Efforts should be put into recovering fraudulent benefit and housing claims that cost the borough millions.Voters have already stated they will not be voting for the party responsible for the closure of MAE, this a large proportion of voters that could have an impact on the outcome of the election.In addition,the staff that will be hugely affected, their jobs, careers, more people joining the benefit system. How is that going to save money in the long term?It will cost the borough more.Sometimes common sense should be used,all decisions should not be made on just financial reasons but community, personal worth and the long term issues affecting the local community.</p> |
| <p>The commissioning option may be good for Merton as it will shed responsibility for the service. However it may not be good for users of the service as far as quality, cost and convenience goes. My experience of South Thames college is that they're only interested in young learners who attract high funding. I am a retired teacher who would like to develop skills I've never before had an opportunity to learn.</p> |
| <p>The council has a duty of care to deliver adult education and the costs to deliver adult education in the Borough are minimal in terms of the council budget.</p> |
| <p>The Council have given no indication of the financial risk and completely lacks transparency in the way it has handled the matter. It appears to have its own hidden agenda and this volte face of offering consultation has exposed this. They need to give facts. The people on the ground, who are the ones who matter, have been providing an excellent service for and to the community. To destroy this is contemptible.</p> |
| <p>The council is able to react to local communities wishes better than those not involved with the local area. Thus the provision of courses will reflect the communities wishes and needs.</p> |
| <p>The council is always boasting about having frozen council tax - why not put it up. You can't get something worth having on the cheap.</p> |
| <p>The council needs to fulfill it's obligations to the community. If necessary, raise the course fees a little.</p> |
| <p>The Council should prioritise funding for the education of adults and young people in the communnity. As they have done so many years.</p> |
| <p>The Council should think of ways of use the Whatley avenue building more efficiently. Maybe renting some of it to other business related to the education provided.</p> |
| <p>The courses and setting of the provision at Whatley Avenue seem to me to be valuable and unique. It is hard to make a choice between the above options when there is no information as to which of these could continue to make the provision on offer there.</p> |
| <p>The courses are central within the borough meaning they are easily accessible to many people. Centralising them in one place with eating facilities, means there is a sense is camaraderie, which is particularly important for those with learning/physical disabilities, but also for those out of work and disaffected. The costs are very generic and it is easy to book onto them.</p> |
| <p>The courses that you run are 1. very good 2. at convenient locations 3. provide other health and wellbeing benefits apart from learning something new.</p> |
| <p>The current arrangements meets the adult educational needs of disabled students and adults with learning disabilities. If the current system is changed, some students with learning disabilities will no longer have access to adult education due to reasons such as: distance from home, problems with travelling to and from college, less courses that will meet their learning needs, costs of available courses and less days in college to name a few. They will end up spending more time at home with lack of stimulations activities and more time vegetating in front of the television.</p> |
| <p>the current college finances itself and the public are being deliberately mislead</p> |
| <p>The current college is easily accessible by most people in the borough and should be kept in Wimbledon. The teaching is excellent and also moving elsewhere would make it very difficult for elderly and disabled to attend.</p> |
| <p>the current facility is fantastic</p> |
| <p>The current location at whatley is perfect for me</p> |
| <p>The current option works fine for a majority including me, and the problem that should be fixed is the efficiency within adult education and not the closing down off all colleges.</p> |
| <p>The current provision of services from MAE is already excellent from my perspective, and as a user I see no need to change what is already a well-structured operational model. As a student (past and present) of many of the courses available, I've greatly benefited from the variety, the quality of teaching, the resources available, the location of the college and the fee structure. I have always been in full time employment so have always paid the fees in full therefore with regards the financial considerations for the consultation, I would have liked to see a breakdown of how many students are self-financing, part-financing or fully funded by the council. As I have participated mostly in lifestyle and hobby classes I don't think I will have been exposed to a reasonable cohort of students who are funded by the council. Can these figures be shared? I understand that the council wish adult learning services to be financially resilient however I foresee the proposals to merge with another council or a third party provider to be in potential conflict with this objective as the council will lose independence in decisions and be at the will and influence of external parties who will likely be focused on their own priorities than those of Merton's or Merton's students. Please don't decry the impact on personal quality of life that ongoing adult learning and diversity of interests has. Partaking in stained glass making at the college removed my need for mental health services for clinical anxiety. The gives me a complete break</p> |

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| away from my professional working life and I do not state this to solicit a reaction, this is true. I chose not to attend the mental health support services that had been offered to me in favour of this class therefore in your consideration of whether adult learning should be subsidised at the expense of other council services, this objectively demonstrates an example of when other services weren't utilised due to the benefits of MAE. |
| The current provision proves an excellent and diverse range of courses in a friendly, caring and inclusive environment. |
| The current service provided by Merton Adult Education is fantastic and inclusive. Providing excellent courses across the board for a wide selection of learners, some with learning difficulties and disabilities. |
| The current set-up provides a broad range of classes, not all about improving job prospects, e.g. the arts classes. These may not make someone more employable but can help build confidence and give a people from a wide variety of backgrounds and ages a chance to interact. This type of social benefit should not be underestimated. Options 2-5 would clearly result in classes being cut and it is mostly that arts subjects would be lost, over adult literacy or maths skills. Arguably this would be the correct priority but why should it be a choice? Keep things as they are, they work and provide a valuable resource for community. |
| The current situation works well. The issues are finance not the way the service functions. |
| The current system is providing a surplus to Merton Council and is a priceless commodity. |
| The facilities at Whately avenue are superb, especially in the Pottery suite. I have a physical disability and the pottery wheels at Whately Avenue are the only ones I can use standing up (Putney and Morley College do not have these - Morley has one but it is very out of repair and not really usable). I also do stained glass at Whately and, whilst the room is old, the teaching more than makes up for it. |
| The important thing is that there is high quality affordable adult education in Merton. I do not have the information to judge which of these options will deliver this. While clearly the council needs to ensure value for money it should not just go for the cheapest option, regardless of quality. It should identify which option can deliver a high quality, comprehensive service and only then assess which of these would be most cost-effective. |
| The investment in facilities at Whatley Ave recently have been considerable and greatly appreciated. The building offers a great variety rooms and equipment suitable for a wide range of courses accessible by bus and Train for Merton residents. Will venues be better and more accessible? Finding other suitable venues will create confusion for students and managers. Will there be an identifiable centre where student can seek advice on what, where and when courses are available? |
| The learners at MAE benefit from the current learning environment which is small and friendly. Many of the learners would not want to attend classes at another much larger venue. |
| The level and variety of courses currently offered by LBM is brilliant - I wish there were more. I believe that many of the classes operated could be operated at schools or colleges rather than at the MAE specific locations. This way the back office staff could be shared. Option 3 would be my next best option. |
| The link with a local provider, and assisting young people in particular. Sharing with other local authorities risks dilution of local priorities and needs. |
| The local area has increased in population over the last few years and with more housing being built it is the local authority who needs to meet the needs of their local people and provide a community environment in all areas that is inclusive of all residents. |
| The local council must be responsible for keeping and enhancing the quality of life of local inhabitants. This is a moral responsibility if nothing else. |
| the location is excellent for disabled people. It is small enough for students with learning difficulties to be looked after in a way that they deserve. |
| The MAE has made a complete difference to my son who has special needs. He attends a course 1 day a week and loves the feel and friendliness of the college which may be lost if another company takes over the running. He has met new friends and gained confidence. With all the rest of the cuts that have been imposed on the more vulnerable sections of our community, please don't take the MAE away as well |
| The main hub of MAE at Whatley Avenue greatly contributes to the sense of community in the borough - bringing together faiths, ages and abilities. If lost in this adult education review it will never be regained. Dilution of the provision across a number of providers may only seek to isolate many users. There are no guarantees that other providers will offer a service within the borough. |
| The Merton Adult Education Centre is the heart of our community where there are family festivals, evening classes, etc. MAE gives the area a positive feel because of its many opportunities. It was one reason of moving into our house, because I knew I could quickly pop over for a class to the MAE in the evening after my child care duties during the day. |
| The Merton AE campus is an excellent site offering a wide variety of courses and ideally located in the borough to be accessible to a wide range of people from different backgrounds. I would like to see the campus continue to operate from here and would be willing to pay more for courses as I believe them to be very good value for money. |
| The Merton brand and the South Thames College brand are both strong in Merton; trusting the brand is important to anyone booking the course. |
| The more organisations that offer adult education will be beneficial to learn new skills and educate one's self further. |
| The other options appear not to have been fully explored by the Council. They are not clearly explained and it is not clear that they will provide an acceptable level of service, provision for equalities, opportunities to sustain and develop. |
| Merton should provide itself, be responsible, accountable and committed to adult education. The financial risk discussed |

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| is not fully demonstrated in information provided with this survey. Good planning will in any case avoid financial risk. |
| The other options are not clearly explained. The financial picture is unclear. What efficiencies could be made with the existing set up? Does it make sense to scrap these facilities which the council have fairly recently invested so much money in? How much would the other options cost/save? Is there a plan to conduct research into demand at other locations? My preference would be to keep the current location as it's convenient for me and the building and the facilities are great. The questions in the survey were badly worded i.e. 'Should the courses help people get jobs' and 'should they be there to help mental health and well being' - I would argue not all courses have to fit into one of those two options. A mix may be optimal. What is the demand for vocational courses? Is their evidence for specific skills gaps in the area which the college could fill? |
| The particular Tutor (Angela) is fantastic ALL the courses are full and very well attended (especially the art courses) This site is very convenient. It would be totally inconvenient to have to travel further and prohibitive to travel out of the borough. I was under the impression that LEARNING FOR LIFE was supposed to be the attitude of today. Closing Whatleys Avenue would be totally disastrous for the very local community and totally devastating for people with learning disabilities. |
| The pooling of resources would hopefully secure funding for the future. Commissioning other providers will make a variety of courses more widely available. |
| The present adult ed at Whatley Ave is of such high quality, it is a jewel in the crown of Merton's provision. To dismantle the facilities, equipment and expertise that has been built and tested over years would be utter folly - an act of vandalism! Ed. is far more efficient and cost effective if delivered in one comprehensive site than a little here, a bit there or another 'provider' using what premises, where? |
| The present arrangements work perfectly well. |
| The provision is mostly excellent and should be continued |
| The provision might be more efficient and modern. |
| The quality and standard of the current arrangements are excellent. They are at a good standard, financially viable for most residents and also an excellent variety to suit all needs ages and requirements. While courses to improve job prospects are necessary it is not the only requirement especially for individuals who are retired, highly stressed or need social component to their lives, hence courses on Tai Chi, Yoga, pottery etc. allow individuals to explore other skills release necessary creative energies, and become more active. With obesity an issue fitness classes are essential. |
| The quality of the current offer should not be compromised. There is very little adult provision in South London. |
| The quality will not be upheld for those with learning difficulties. |
| The service and location are good and ethos fantastic |
| The service as is has served local people very well. I do not want to see it changed. Other providers/locations can not do the excellent job the current service does. |
| The service could best be run by an efficient contractor with excellent links with private, public and third sectors. The procurement process can be designed to probe whether the contractor will make real links with local groups and businesses and has real commitment to people who are disadvantaged. |
| The service provides so much to the community. There isn't anywhere within the borough that gives people with learning disabilities the freedom that Whatley Avenue does. |
| The services offered have evolved to suit the clients that use the centre. This is important and valuable to these service users whose needs may not be met by a more corporate approach which will cater for a wider client base with different needs to those of the local community. Merton Council needs to look at ways of increasing income by additional services which would support the less financially lucrative services, whilst improving management of costs and improving efficiency. I appreciate MAE because of the service users i know who use it and value its services. They would be lost without this. Having said that, i know little about its services and perhaps if Merton Council raise the profile of the centre and its services it would get wider involvement and in turn financial input from a wider audience. I doubt that another provider will cater for existing local community needs. |
| The tutors will remain in post and sharing behind the scenes admin and management should be easier to reconfigure, and lead to less disruption to the courses |
| The Whatley Avenue site is a good site and the service is well liked and used. |
| There are plenty of opportunities to make the existing services more efficient, without the need to close excellent facilities at Whatley. Locations could be much more rationalised without undermining quality of provision and overheads would reduce dramatically. |
| There are excellent facilities and expertise at SCOLA which isn't far away. They have already reduced their costs and could make a difference to the planning of MAE |
| There is a crying need to cut backroom costs by working with other local authorities. I imagine that you have suggested Wandsworth as a partner because they have a good AE service? |
| There is a massive concern that the Council's proposals will see adult education move out of the borough. Secondly, adult education courses should not just be limited to those that can make a profit, but based on what people need and want. |
| There is already a working partnership between South Thames college and the Merton College site. I believe this is the best way to safeguard the positive elements of the current MAE offer. |
| There is no evidence that the other options will save significant costs while maintaining the quality of the service. |

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| There is no financial risk to the government. The college is always full. |
| There isn't enough evidence that the other options will genuinely take the needs of disadvantaged groups into account and continue to meet their needs in the way MAE currently does. |
| There needs to be a hub where people can learn, make new friends, be part of the community and be valued. MAE is a safe place to learn for all students from the moment they enter the college. We meet people from different communities across the borough, make friends and share experiences. Larger colleges can not offer the environment for bringing communities together, the other options will not bring wider communities together as they will be pockets of learning. |
| there should be greater economies of scale |
| They are both in the borough, which will not bring about so much change. Within the reach from my home area. |
| They are both in the same borough. Think it should move into one big courses. |
| They are similar establishments, offering similar courses, are not too far away from each other, and I think, would correspond and work well together. |
| this would minimise the financial risk forecasted |
| This could be a joint partnership with a private company |
| This facility is really good as it is not too big and can therefore offer a more personal support intervention - really important for someone with a learning disability. |
| This faculty is a unique, individual, integrated service. I have had the opportunity to use this facility myself for evening class as well as organising a work program with Adult Ed for people with Learning Disabilities. You have not really provided enough information about the other options to guide. |
| this gives a chance for means testing for payment for courses. So those who can afford the course pay the full amount and those who cannot are subsidised |
| This is a good service. The college results are good as is the teaching |
| This is a great service and helped me get employed. |
| This is a local facility. This is particularly important for Towards Independence |
| This is a unique college where adults feel that they are not being sidelined, and the teaching they receive is intelligent and not dumbed down, as in so many places where there is a mixed range of ages and abilities. I think this college's uniqueness deserves to be more widely advertised and seen as an asset rather than an liability |
| This is about local community and access. It is fundamentally important to learn with people in the same area to be able to set up study groups and support and ensure its available to everyone in the community whether you have access difficulties or not. Equal opportunities and localism. Do not lose a successful service for shortsighted reasons |
| this is an excellent service! |
| This is correct option providing the council properly manages the finances with Whatley Avenue and does not incur extra costs. |
| This is local college, with large campus. Location is also quite convenient. |
| This is my preferred option as it appears to be the only option where Whatley Ave remains open. This is a valued local facility that many people enjoy and rely on. |
| this is my preferred option because Merton Council has not given specific details about the other options i.e. cost to student, location, what courses will be offered what will be cut. Also i don't want to travel to another borough to do my course. |
| This is the only outcome that will ensure services are retained and continue to provide for adults with disabilities and older people. Everything else is a big risk and very shortsighted of the council. There is little risk to the council as the service can be adjusted according to the available budget. Lose this service and it will be impossible ever to re-establish it. Why should we always be the poor relation borough and have no services of our own? MAE is the envy of other areas and should be retained by the borough. |
| This maintains greater control whereas Merton could be disadvantaged when facilities are controlled from outside! Overhead costs will still have to be paid for, possible with some savings of scale , but against that, tutors and students could suffer other disadvantages. These would include the "casual" use of inferior venues and inferior teaching resources and transport difficulties to parts of the borough with problems of poor access and poor parking facilities. |
| This option completely makes sense. This is about adult education and not further education. Aligning with a sixth form college and the level of training provision this would imply will put many off and not denote quality. A collaboration with other local authorities using people like scola would mean shared cost, shared resources and a better monitor of quality rather than employing freelancers with little assessment process. |
| This option would help provide a good service but would reduce the costs by sharing administrative tasks |
| This question will be answered only if you tell us why you've selected your option already. |
| This will enable you to access the wealth of experience and range of courses, and you will be able to maintain the local provision at Whatley Avenue providing greater opportunities for this community now and in the future. |
| This will help with funding. |
| This would allow a range of specialist voluntary and business providers: eg Mencap commissioned to offer courses for disabled people; Mind offer job-seeker courses for people with mental health issues; U3A offer more courses for older people; |
| This would be my preferred option because Whatley Avenue provides good learning facilities and space, and is easily |

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| <p>accessible. If my course were to be moved to to a location other than this campus it would be too far for me to travel to attend. As an adult learner who works full time, it is important to me to be able to access education provision that is within reasonable distance from my place of work and living - moving provision to outside Merton would mean that many adult learners would also no longer be able to access this provision, particularly the considerable number of students with physical disabilities and learning difficulties who rely on this location for it's ease of access and proximity. Furthermore, past experience of provision at South Thames College has proved very disappointing: the level of service and quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. As a teacher myself, I place high value on quality of provision and would be put off enrolling for courses associated with this provider.</p> |
| <p>This would limit duplication of back office duties and perhaps also the upkeep of the buildings</p> |
| <p>THIS WOULD ONLY WORK IF THERE WERE CAST IRON GUARANTEES THAT THE MONEY WOULD REMAIN AVAILABLE AND THAT COURSES WHICH DO NOT ATTRACT SUCH A HIGH PROFILE REMAIN AVAILABLE. DRESS MAKING FOR EXAMPLE MAY NOT LEAD TO WORK BUT IT PROVIDES A HAVEN FOR PEOPLE WHO NEED A BREAK FROM BEING A CARER, FROM STRESSFUL JOBS ETC. COURSES PROVIDE MANY DIFFERENT REASONS FOR BEING ATTRACTIVE TO PEOPLE AND THE COUNCIL MUST NOT LOOSE SIGHT OF THAT PRINCIPLE.</p> |
| <p>This would provide some control on vested interests. It is wrong to suppose that "better off" parts of the borough are full of rich people. Many people are asset rich, and cash poor. this goes particularly for the elderly residents who really value the camaraderie which classes bring, and minimises Council costs on e.g. treating depression caused by loneliness.</p> |
| <p>To be able to offer/receive a good education opportunity , not influenced by commercial or economic principals.</p> |
| <p>To continue as it is, MAE, as it supports local people and works well.</p> |
| <p>to cut the cost of running the courses</p> |
| <p>to improve quality of courses and reduce costs.</p> |
| <p>To move to a shared or commissioning model will mean the end of the creative arts courses currently offered at Whatley Ave. Keeping Whatley Ave is essential as it provides specialist teaching facilities not found elsewhere. Students with learning disabilities need the small centralised community feel Whatley Ave provides. To say it is in the "wrong" location is simply an excuse to sell the land for a quick fix which will not solve the budget deficit. It provides a vital community hub. Once it is gone, it is gone forever. Merton Council has enough of a surplus to keep this college going. The majority of students study at this site. Gaining qualifications is important but some of the courses offered there don't have qualifications we can work towards, but are still vital to students' sense of well being, continuing education and providing opportunities for future employment.</p> |
| <p>Too many social services have been savagely cut. Merton Council have provided adequate arrangements and as a ratepayer in Merton, the college has been modernised using some of this money. In the last four years, the art and pottery facility has been moved and modernised. To close this facility would be yet another nail in the coffin of activities available for students who need to get out of their houses in order to stimulate their minds. Seeing as Merton Council has already shut down Merton Mind, the Beehive Centre, Maple Orchard, devastated the carers centre at Vestry Hall.</p> |
| <p>v</p> |
| <p>Very difficult to reach a conclusion when all the facts are not known, eg how would a shared service work and what are the pros and cons for each option.</p> |
| <p>Very happy to be joint with Wandsworth</p> |
| <p>Wandsworth is our nearest LONDON borough and runs an efficient council. We are a london Borough with needs most similar to those in Wandsworth.</p> |
| <p>Wandsworth seem to be good at managing their finances and the cost to their residents in terms of council tax appears lower</p> |
| <p>We already work with South Thames. I think they will provide a good service. The location is good for our tenants. They are similar to MAE in that they offer a variety of life skills courses, they are deaf aware and provide communication for our deaf tenants. We want to keep the service and joining South Thames may reduce the risk of losing it.</p> |
| <p>What matters is courses and locations. No info on consequences of these choices.</p> |
| <p>Whatley Ave College has +5000 students, and provides excellent facilities and learning. The Council's costs in running the venue are minimal, in terms of what the SFA contributes, what students contribute, and the charge that the Council makes to the college each year. It makes no financial sense to outsource AE to Wandsworth providers as the cost of diligence and proper governance of their performance and cost to students will be far more than current the outlay. To say that the SFA fund is too uncertain is immaterial. To also say that there is a divide between affluent west and eastern sections of the borough is specious. If Whatley Ave was in the far east of Merton, we'd still all go as there are so few AE colleges in SW London and NONE OTHERS IN MERTON.</p> |
| <p>Whatley Avenue is a profitable, beneficial adult learning centre that many of my family have benefited from. Losing it would deprive many local people of the ability to continue their education and self improvement, not least a large number of disabled residents, as well as those with learning difficulties. The nakedly political "affluent area" agenda being prosecuted by Labour councillors is a disgrace.</p> |
| <p>Whatley Avenue provides a great environment for adult learning and is a very safe place for the disabled in the borough to access. there is no other facility in the borough offering these services and I strongly agree that Merton college would not be the correct environment for the adults with learning difficulties.It would be a huge loss to remove the building in Whatley Ave and would create a very built up area with the primary school and local residents in mind in respect to overpopulating and parking and traffic problems.</p> |

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| Whatley Avenue provides a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment for all learners. There is a real cross section of learners interacting and benefitting from the excellent courses available which are constantly being improved and developed to meet the needs of those learners. The college provides a centre which serves the community and provides opportunities not just for learning but for social interaction, physical and mental well being |
| Whatley is very close to me so I can walk to courses. I do not want it to close |
| Whatley Merton Adult education has proved to be profitable and there has been many occasions when my course has been full up. I do not believe the threat of closure has anything to do with the profit margins of the college but how much profit the closure would put into the pockets of the government. |
| Wheatley Avenue has superb facilities for all students. The range and quality of classes has developed over the years to provide an excellent service for all the residents |
| When I worked in Wandsworth, adult education was very good. |
| Whilst I don't disagree with any of the other options per se I think the borough and it's residents should value the facility and maintain control to enable it to meet the needs of all it's residents not just those seeking training for job opportunities. The need for somewhere to socialise and enjoy new activities is every bit as important as learning for jobs and supports people who are lonely also and for whom creative and non formal courses provide a significant social service. To focus only or even mainly on training for jobs is too limiting and many other colleges meet that need. Creative and relaxation courses have been dwindling and it becomes even more difficult for people to access. Whatley serves that need and even with a subsidy it should be valued and the council should be proud to support those courses |
| Widen the base of experienced teachers |
| Will build resilience and offer more opportunity |
| With option 2 (or option 3) a shared service provides opportunities for adults, whilst lowering costs, and may provide a broader range of services. |
| Without financial analysis of the options, no option appears more attractive than any other. |
| without my own opportunity of further ed. after "failing" the 11+, I would not now have a degree from Kingston University (a 2.1), it has improved my own self esteem and has broadened my outlook on life and its opportunities. It is good for the country to have a well education people. |
| Working with a close local authority will help spread the cost at the same time keeping cost to clients low and providing value for money. |
| Working with other local authorities should help to make greater efficiencies and economies of scale than commissioning services alone. |
| Working with other providers will in itself create more layers of bureaucracy and thus dilute the funding for the courses |
| Would like MAE to stay as it is to support local people |
| Would offer more possibilities |
| Would prefer for adult ed to remain in direct council control rather than outsourced; that leaves options 1 and 3, and possibly 2 depending on how it was constituted. Of these, I'd prefer 3 over 1 as this is a responsibility that doesn't necessarily need to be a purely local matter (so long as my elected representatives have genuine influence over the resulting body's decision-making). Option 2 could also be acceptable, but ONLY if the council retains genuine influence within the new relationship with South Thames College AND it would allow users to make use of all of STC's campuses - because their Merton campus has rather poor access for anyone not driving - by public transport or walking it would take me as long to reach STC's Merton campus from my home in South Wimbledon as it does to get to my office in central London. |
| You haven't explained if MAE is running at a loss. If it is breaking even the council could continue whilst exploring options to share services. The courses are not well advertised. |
| You only want to move the services because you want to sell the land |

Which option?

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| Step 1:4.00-1:Satisfaction with options (Option 1 Continue the current arrangements and bear the financial risk) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 730 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very satisfied | 333 | 45.62% |
| Satisfied | 141 | 19.32% |
| Neither satisfied or dissatisfied | 104 | 14.25% |
| Dissatisfied | 81 | 11.1% |
| Very dissatisfied | 35 | 4.79% |
| Don't know | 36 | 4.93% |

| Step 1:4.00-2:Satisfaction with options (Option 2 Create a shared service with South Thames College) | | |
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| This single response question was answered by 727 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very satisfied | 82 | 11.28% |
| Satisfied | 185 | 25.45% |
| Neither satisfied or dissatisfied | 127 | 17.47% |
| Dissatisfied | 173 | 23.8% |
| Very dissatisfied | 105 | 14.44% |
| Don't know | 55 | 7.57% |
| Step 1:4.00-3:Satisfaction with options (Option 3 Share with another local authority) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 727 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very satisfied | 57 | 7.84% |
| Satisfied | 162 | 22.28% |
| Neither satisfied or dissatisfied | 134 | 18.43% |
| Dissatisfied | 192 | 26.41% |
| Very dissatisfied | 122 | 16.78% |
| Don't know | 60 | 8.25% |
| Step 1:4.00-4:Satisfaction with options (Option 4 Commission other providers to deliver adult education in Merton) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 728 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very satisfied | 50 | 6.87% |
| Satisfied | 110 | 15.11% |
| Neither satisfied or dissatisfied | 117 | 16.07% |
| Dissatisfied | 216 | 29.67% |
| Very dissatisfied | 176 | 24.18% |
| Don't know | 59 | 8.1% |
| Step 1:4.00-5:Satisfaction with options (Option 5 Jointly commission other providers in partnership with LB Wandsworth) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 727 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very satisfied | 38 | 5.23% |
| Satisfied | 83 | 11.42% |
| Neither satisfied or dissatisfied | 106 | 14.58% |
| Dissatisfied | 242 | 33.29% |
| Very dissatisfied | 187 | 25.72% |
| Don't know | 71 | 9.77% |

Other options?

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| 1. Expand the courses provided by MAE to increase income. 2. Liaise with TfL to improve public transport in the area of Whatley Avenue. |
| 1. Have a root and branch review of where current expenditure on administration could be pruned across the whole council - make economies in all departments but protect services at point of delivery. If commissioned provision would |

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| <p>be cheaper for Merton, what lessons could the borough learn from that to apply to the provision it makes itself? 2. Offer MAE services to local businesses (esp in light of recent award to Merton as small business friendly borough) and run them at a profit. Work with Love Wimbledon to develop this. 3. Explore links with universities and schools so that courses can be run at Whatley Avenue eg does Merton have links with Roehampton or Kingston to provide MA (Ed) courses for teachers? Whatley Ave could be a venue for taught sessions. 4. Provide exam intervention and revision courses for GCSE and A level students at Whatley Avenue - twilight and/or holiday courses. Students or parents would pay. Or schools could pay cost price in order to save their staff time. This is a huge market. 5. Look for opportunities to develop provision at Whatley Ave by scrutinising changes/new pressures on the education service eg get awarding bodies to run local briefing sessions to save staff travelling into London and taking more time away from classes. 6. Remember the value of the service to vulnerable people and develop it. Remember how big and hostile S Thames College could appear to them compared with the friendly environment at Whatley Avenue. 7. Offer the hall and café at Whatley Avenue to community groups for meetings and other events at weekends. The hire charge would need to cover the costs of using the centre and could generate some profit eg one evening's hire would cover costs and pay for one day's normal caretaking. 8. Remember that if you are prepared to commission a profit-making organisation to provide this service to the community, you will have no moral qualms about offering some MAE services for profit (hire/business use/exam re</p> |
| <p>1. Raising course fees to improve 2. Raising council tax to provide additional support for adult education 3. Cancel unnecessary council projects such as a new swimming pool</p> |
| <p>1. Sponsorship? From big business. Museums and galleries get sponsors to back their temporary exhibition. 2. Collaboration with big businesses for those courses designed to teach people skills to improve their chances of getting jobs or back into work - some sort of "shared apprenticeship" scheme on these courses. 3. Collaboration with other educational bodies within the borough (UAL, Merton Abbey Mills, Wimbledon Theatre) to stage events that attract funding - fairs exhibitions???</p> |
| <p>A mixed approach would be better than commissioning.</p> |
| <p>Adult education covers a wide range of courses with very different characteristics. What suits one might not suit another. So it could be that a combination of these options e.g. the council might continue to provide itself the least risk courses while using other providers to provide those with greater financial risk or where there would be economies of scale in working with others.</p> |
| <p>Adult education should be sited in existing schools. The facilities are there, the administration is there. There would be a healthy interchange, perhaps between adults and children teachers. There could be opportunities for adults and children to learn from each other, be it art IT pottery, whatever.</p> |
| <p>Again, very difficult to say as not all factors are known.</p> |
| <p>Apply for charitable status</p> |
| <p>As stated previously. Review and shake up current methods. You do not state who other providers might be...</p> |
| <p>AS suggested on previous page, think creatively about a range of providers for specialist courses, including South Thames College. A risk with commissioning external providers is ensuring quality of service and strong track record as well as cost.</p> |
| <p>Ask those who can afford it to pay more for courses (I would be willing to do so). Would any employers be interested in sponsoring courses?</p> |
| <p>Because it is Merton Adult Education, not Wandsworth Adult Education. It is important to the Borough to maintain its adult education in the building it is now and it has been for many years.</p> |
| <p>Both colleges to merge - Merton Adult Learning and South Merton College.</p> |
| <p>Can the present site continue current provision and have other provision moved to it to maximise usage?</p> |
| <p>commission other providers</p> |
| <p>Could any further reductions in costs be made to enable the service to continue as it is? Is having another partner now inevitable for its survival?</p> |
| <p>Council should try to keep the courses that are helping or appealing to more people and advertise them in order to get more enrolments to keep the cost down.</p> |
| <p>Cut down on admin staff at MAE and keep the courses run. Offer non vocational courses at higher fees: smaller groups, higher fees.</p> |
| <p>Cut down on all administration and in courses that are for leisure like art etc we do NOT NEED OR WANT to fill in the evaluation documents. Adults should be able to make valid comments about the learning and complaining if they have any issues about the course. Filling these forms in and tutors having to spend time completing them is totally unnecessary for adult leisure learning.</p> |
| <p>Cutting costs on benefits & misuse of benefits will save a lot more money for many facets of the Merton council business. Additionally it will promote sustainable growth and prosperity for individuals and the community. Cutting costs on education counteracts sustainable growth.</p> |
| <p>Decentralise the training to keep building costs down and keep administration</p> |
| <p>Develop a consortium approach to delivery with a college and a range of community providers.</p> |
| <p>Develop the centre with a community focus.</p> |
| <p>Diversify. Building on the existing oversubscribed classes.</p> |
| <p>Do not lie to people. You know the decision has been made.</p> |

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| Dont just accept that the government is making these cuts!! All councils should PROTEST most strongly against this political manoeuvring. The current gov believes that the state should provide the minimum so that their wealthy business friends can make bigger profits. PROTEST!!! |
| dont know |
| Don't know |
| don't know enough on the subject to think about any other options |
| Don't try and mend what isn't broken. |
| Dramatically reduce administration costs and unnecessary paperwork. Keep day centres separate for those with learning difficulties for example where they are safe and properly cared for. Check on actual costs of repair etc of building at Whatley Ave. Running costs seem exorbitant. |
| E-learning courses that could be done as/when students want to do them and college could provide a tutorial/group session once/twice a term to check progress and help students with queries/issues. |
| Empower the local management team of MAE to self-manage and set its own budget and be creative to reduce its own cost every year, until it can be self-funding, cover it's own costs, without Council cross subsidising costs. |
| Enable other Council services/departments to access funds to deliver courses that best address the needs of their service users. |
| empower teaching staff to carry out more of the management |
| ESOL evening classes are vital to immigrants. It would be quite difficult for the young ladies to attend evening ESOL classes if you moved the college from its current location. Most of the ESOL students speak very little English and therefore it would be extremely difficult for them to travel around London in the evening. |
| Explore links with Croydon and Sutton |
| Follow Option 1, raising council tax & course fees |
| Form partnerships with other types of learning providers e.g. HE - all ages, U3A (for older people). |
| Further develop the existing provision in order to create more revenue. |
| Further develop the site at Whatley Avenue in order to provide more courses and generate more income |
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| General suggestions for MAE: Improvement and retention as is; commercial sponsorship; competitions; best practice innovation from every single LAE provider in the UK. |
| Given the good work MAE does, the council could create an additional hub in Mitcham. |
| Hopefully our elected politicians have put before us all feasible options. Most certainly Adult Education Services must continue to be provided, and more efficiently where possible. |
| How about extending Whatley College, more classes, more subjects. |
| How about looking at the Chaucer Centre if Merton want Whatley Avenue why cant MAE move into the Chaucer centre. What revenue does Chaucer produce that Whatley doesn't? |
| How can you consider sharing further education with Tory Wandsworth, they would cancel them at the first opportunity. Higher education for the working class is not on the government's agenda. Do not deny young and older people the opportunity to improve their education and job opportunities. |
| I believe that it would be economically beneficial to expand the courses offered by MAE to include more vocationally driven ones. This does not mean eliminating those that currently exist but to draw in new students from other parts of South London so that MAE can be a beacon and centre of Adult education. |
| I believe this time of change needs a different framework, the question is not how can we cut what we currently do? but what does the council of the future provide? The later is critical in an increasingly 'cash strapped' society and may only be possible using a shared services model. Finally, have the teachers been asked for creative solutions as what they provide is the product people are prepared to pay for. |
| I cannot answer this question as I do not know the financial implications. |
| I think a soft federation with another college like SCOLA would work as long as Whatley Ave stayed open as a separate facility. This would allow shared back office facilities ie HR, IT, finance etc. Other cost saving and revenue creating options should then be implemented. |
| I think adult education ...delivered properly, could be a real money maker. I have done 3 courses in Merton...German, Photography and Maths. German was very good...very interested adults attending, the other 2 courses I am not satisfied with...they could be done better. Word of mouth makes courses popular. Why not do adult courses geared at helping our school children with homework...especially Maths and English..as these are essential subjects...I think parents would pay for these courses instead of employing tutors. I certainly would and I think you are missing a trick here...it would be a goldmine. |
| I think the aspects of focusing on health benefits should sit with local health providers or as a minimum as shared commissioning in order to get the expertise of health providers. Particularly with hard to engage groups such as those with Mental Health needs |
| I think the council should look at other opportunities for efficiency gains within the current environment. Heating for example - the college is always ridiculously hot (to the extent that windows have to be opened). |
| I think you should look elsewhere for cuts. There are many more people living in our borough. In my road alone in excess of 500 flats. So a lot more council tax in the coffers. Too much middle management not producing anything. And how |

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| much council tax debt is there in Merton? |
| I understand that Merton Council has nearly Â£100m in unspent monies so I see no reason to cut this valuable and appreciated facility. |
| I understand the need to sell off the premises to use the funds for more important benefits, but why cannot the facilities just be moved. Merton were threatening to close the library recently - why can't Wimbledon library be used for night school facilities |
| I want Merton to control the providers. Different councils have different budgets etc. |
| I would like to understand why the council feels it needs to be so involved in this service. Why did you reject getting out of it all together? |
| If fewer courses and for fewer options per subject were offered and the number of non-teaching and administrative staff was reduced would it be possible the current albeit modified system to be brought nearer to budget. |
| If the beauty/therapy suite was updated at MAE then I feel that money could be made at this facility as it is in colleges such as NESCOL and Croyden college. |
| If the focus is financial, can you limit the number of funded places on certain courses that attract fee-paying students, e.g. limit council funded cases to 20% of students per lifestyle or hobby course? I wouldn't want funded places to be removed completely, this would be unacceptable also, but maybe support those courses available during the day more than those in the evening when people who work are more likely to wish to attend. |
| If the maintenance of the building is where the cost lies, perhaps the college could apply for lottery funding as the college in many ways provides a service for the elderly, unemployed and remedial learning. Could the fees be means tested as students come from all areas of Merton and some students may be happy to pay more for their courses as they represent good value compared to similar part time courses in mainstream universities and colleges. |
| If the site is so important to Merton Council what are the opportunities for continuing at an alternative site? |
| If the Whatley ave site is difficult to reach is it possible to talk to bus service to run small bus like one to KU at key points in the day? |
| If there could be a link up with another college (option 2) BUT whatley avenue must remain OPEN and ONLY back office admin should be shared this might work. |
| If you have concerns about the amount of money spent on administration rather than teaching, you could hire a private consultation firm for an one-off study of the administrative processes currently delivered by MEA management with their recommendations in order to make it more efficient. You could also organise meetings between the management of MEA with similar institutions in LB Wandsworth as well as in other boroughs, in order to get ideas of how to manage administrative costs more efficiently. I suggest not to work in partnership with LB Wandsworth because they probably have more expenses to cover in other areas, leaving a heavy weight of their education costs on LB Merton, and this is not good for us! However, our staff should be able to meet with their staff in order to improve operations and processes. |
| If you have to move the facility then retain the building for other educational uses and don't knock it down |
| I'm happy about everything and love to study here. Only when we finish our course. Please arrange graduation programme please. |
| Improve the efficiency and profitability of the present arrangements: Reduce non teaching staff, increase utilisation of the premises, perhaps increase fees. (A commercial provider would definitely have to charge more to deliver their shareholders a profit) |
| In conjunction with other options make courses more useful |
| Increase the price of some courses |
| Increase council tax to meet the deficit |
| Increase fees for non job related or special needs classes. Separate vocational training from 'hobby training' and fund accordingly. I do art classes. If these were offered at Wimbledon Art College I would go there (if Whatley Avenue closed). I attend classes for pleasure and would pay a commercial price. For basic skill and vocational training I suspect would require government funding. |
| increase places and give to the primary school at the back - Joseph hood to address shortage of primary school places in Merton |
| Increase the amount of commercial courses/lettings in order to maximise income where it can be viable. I have been looking for a touch typing course and I know several friends also that would be interested, so continue to develop curriculum. |
| Invest to further improve the current provision to create more revenue |
| Investment from leading Merton companies that would benefit from a skilled employment opportunities, as well as increasing their commitment to social well being. |
| It is critical that Merton provides an adult education centre as it should be a central tenant of any 'beacon' council. Indeed, the number of residents in Merton is increasing thus the income/revenue stream the council receives increases. As a result there is no excuse for not having a superior service that all are proud to be associated with. Indeed, the reason I have suggested a collaboration with SCOLA is because I believe this will result in MAE having to harmonise upwards in order to be on par with SCOLA's exemplary service. |
| Join with SCOLA. You could still commission course from private providers as well. |
| Just keep MAE working!. Council has already taken away a lot of things I used- and I pay a heavy council tax |

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| Keep the existing arrangement and facility. |
| Keep the existing provision and develop it further to create more courses and revenue income. |
| Keep Whatley Avenue as it is. Use as a model and roll out other adult education facilities across the borough!! |
| Keep Whatley Avenue as main site and offer more courses and more options with local community support. |
| Leave well alone as the numerous number of people i have come into contact with have been more than satisfied with the courses they have attended.. |
| Link up with providers in the Kingston borough |
| Look again on how to make Merton prosper and expand the facilities they have. Not many other colleges offer what Merton does and if marketed aggressively I don't see why there shouldn't be an increase in uptake and surely then you could improve the facilities instead of losing them completely |
| Look carefully at the range of courses being offered and perhaps reduce the number of subjects and/or the category options currently available per subject. |
| look to make all marketing and feedback material online only to significantly reduce printing costs. Online course booking rather than via telephone for manual inputting by staff Reduce energy bills by only having rooms and equipment at MAE in use lit and/or on. |
| Lottery funding? |
| MAE could be moved to Canterbury Road Chaucer Centre as MMF is moving out |
| Maintain the present system, having spent on improving its resources, and re-introduce a reasonable scale of fees to most students on courses which are free at present. For example, Â£100 per student would almost pay the tutor's fee for a class of average size. 15 students there would contribute Â£1500 of an annual fee of approx. Â£2000 to the tutor. That amount saved would go towards the over head costs which are very high. Access to remote maintainance facilities will always be inferior to having on-site help available. That would reduce the standard of provision for the students. Whatley Avenue does focus the provision of student support and dispersing this all over the borough (or outside) would be a disaster. The Council could consider the reduction of the bureaucracy used to run the service. There is something of an over-management and over administration in education in general! |
| Maintain Option 1, but examine ways of saving money an innovating delivery by comparing MAE with similar local authority providers and also for-profit companies. e.g. is there a role for part online delivery - via a local MOOC equivalent. |
| Make MAE operate without Council funding as SCOLA does. There is no reason why MAE should require council funding if it had a good/proper management and a governing body to challenge the running and admin of the college. |
| Market Whatley Ave College properly and expand the facilities. It is a unique facility and should be a source of civic pride, not financial gain. It is clear that when the site is under occupied or utilised the Council will propose its sale. |
| Maybe more use could be made of the college during holiday periods to bring in extra revenue. |
| Maybe those with greater financial means could pay more to help those less well off. Call for volunteers - there are plenty out there |
| Merton Adult Education could source funding from the private sector, e.g. Barclays Bank, Sainsbury's, Prudential Insurance. |
| Merton and Wandsworth AE classes under one roof would be good - more efficient/streamlined? |
| Merton could keep control over the courses but just use alternative venues. Schools of an evening? Local gyms? Hire a room over a pub? |
| Merton Council should offer MAE facilities to other areas. Other boroughs could offer MAE courses. There are frequent buses from Wimbledon station and Morden. We have students in our pottery class from a wide area because nowhere else offers the same quality provision. Why not offer courses to 16+ students? Schools would no doubt be happy to avail themselves of the facilities and teaching at Whatley Avenue. |
| Merton should cost out how it loses money at the moment at Whatley Avenue and think of ways of increasing the revenue through increased use of the facility or charging more for certain courses. It is an extremely important resource. If it is possible to share some management functions that do not directly affect delivery then this would be acceptable. |
| Money - need to maintain buildings - lottery, charity e.g. football clubs. Lose people who are not essential to activities. |
| n/a |
| Nil |
| No |
| No, but I strongly agree that the course should continue, rather than staying in my flat looking at four walls all day long. |
| No,certainly not. |
| None |
| None. |
| Not strictly another option, but I wonder why so many courses are subsidised or free (eg GCSE maths & English) when I'm sure most students would happily pay for these courses. |
| Offer courses in other council properties- even taster classes- Libraries, etc- Open pop-up class-rooms in empty shops- this will regenerate the high street- provide jobs .Keep the expertise in Adult education- build up communities. |
| Offer some courses at slightly higher rates, or consider offering courses at different times to take advantage of those parents who want to study but can't fit the times in around the school runs, as this might increase course take-up. More |

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| Saturday courses and course starting after 7:30pm would be good too. Hiring other venues, even in Sutton could help with cheaper venues, as could maximising room usage in the current Education Centers used. Perhaps some local groups could make use of the venues and run their own courses from the empty rooms at a fee, and schools could make use of the venues too. After school Pottery and Art classes for local schools, etc, could make good use of these facilities when they are not in use during part of the day. Combining Adult and Child Education to allow parents to attend a class while their children attend another class at the same time in a nearby venue is a sure winning combination and would improve take up and revenue substantially. |
| only people on income test should be exempt from paying the fees on any courses, educational or non educational |
| Open local high schools to adult learners in the evenings, using their teachers. |
| Option 3 would be as good as option 2. |
| Option 4 does not say where the courses would be situated. If they are too far away from the current site, learners would not enrol and travel and then you could close them giving insufficient enrolment as the reason. |
| Outsourcing the admin function to achieve economies of scale. Considering the property strategy separately for the provision of MAE - Whatley Avenue seems to be relatively cheap although not that accessible. The Council should continue to be the provider of education rather than outsourcing this - as that will drive up costs ultimately. |
| Perhaps the council should look at the opposite side of the coin by promoting its adult education services to other boroughs, thus earning money to offset the cut in funding. Otherwise Option 3 would have my preference. |
| Personally I believe a modest rise in Council Tax would solve most of the financial problems facing the Council. We can't just keep cutting services. Additionally fees for course could be tiered to reflect the learner's income. Could income be received from hiring out space at Whatley Avenue to local businesses? |
| Please consider your options carefully. I am enjoying my courses at Whatley. It will be a shame to see it go. I hope you can find a way to make the building work harder, by maybe sharing the facilities with other business. |
| please leave as it is |
| Pooling resources with other boroughs could be an option but unless you offer detail to your proposal on what this would entail and how it would be implemented I don't see how people can make informed decisions. |
| Possibly sharing the use of existing buildings or amalgamating with others in the same building |
| Provide more courses which people want to come to. If you make the college a centre of excellence it will attract more students. The college could then provide commissioning services to other councils. |
| Raise the rates. Ridiculous to think that services can be maintained at a satisfactory or excellent level without increasing rates. |
| Reduce admin staff by making it easier to enrol online. Increase charges for oversubscribed courses for employed people |
| Reduce back office and administration costs. Try to reduce number of centres and make better use of existing ones. |
| Replace the current MAE management with efficient and effective leadership. |
| Request could be made to present and former students, including myself, for contributions of approx Â£100 if possible to prevent closure of Adult ed at Whatley. Perhaps local business would be willing to contribute. Outside providers deliver at a profit, so why can't Merton?? |
| Retain the MAE site for adult education, and review the courses offered at the site. |
| Retain Whatley Avenue and MAE to prevent additional demand on social/health services from disabled and elderly adults. Make more effort to let out spare rooms to community groups and clubs to increase income. Encourage London Transport to look at bus routes to address cross borough transport. |
| Review current back room functions and use technology to improve efficiency |
| Run courses in a school to save money on running and maintenance of a separate building |
| save whatley collage |
| SCOLA IN SUTTON |
| scola model |
| Scrap the Morden Leisure Centre at Â£11.5m and use the money on MAE. There are already two excellent leisure centres in the borough but no other adult education college. |
| Services that are available for the adult learners with learning difficulties, of which in years to come the numbers have risen. |
| Share admin costs with another borough? |
| share back office facilities but keep front line teaching facilities |
| Share with the Open University for online learning to replace the need for physical locations |
| Shared services will inevitably result in less options being available. Accessibility will be harder for many and there will be an increase in class sizes which will affect students ability to learn. |
| Sharing cost is more advantage rather than getting rid of MAE. |
| So long as the high quality of courses is maintained, the location is convenient and the choice of courses remains at least as it is (or wider), I do not feel strongly about who provides the courses. However, I think sharing with another local authority would be best as the issues faced by both would be similar |
| Sponsorship from Private companies |
| Sponsorship from successful companies who will benefit |
| Stop wasting money on stupid unnecessary things and people that don't deserve it. |

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| Streamline adult education at the top. |
| Streamline the service so only courses which have a high attendance rate are offered. |
| Survey local people. Develop the courses to suit Merton people. |
| The Arts and Creative courses could be offered and managed potentially by established colleges in the Borough including Wimbledon College of Art |
| The college should remain at it's present venue. |
| The college was a lifeline for me and helped me overcome a lot of issues. I have enjoyed many courses there. I have been unable to attend this year (2014) because of health but was hoping to start again in January. For my health I cannot afford private lessons, health clubs etc and the college is a great help. |
| The council has decided to sell Whatley Avenue and at the next council elections will crow about the amount they made! |
| The Council must provide more transparent details of what it means by 'other providers', and 'sharing'. If this means closing Whatley Road and moving classes elsewhere it cannot be acceptable. If the Council provides more transparent information on savings related to each of its proposals, and on the current costs of the service, it would be possible to discuss other options. |
| The only option is to keep Whatley Ave open. |
| The only option is to keep Whatley Avenue open and not put the staff out of work and displace the students who rely on the college for so many reasons. |
| there is no other option this survey is biased |
| There is so little detail accompanying these options. How can you possibly expect to receive any meaningful results and feedback from the community when you ask them to consider options full of jargon? What does option 4 mean? What assurances are there of how the handover to a 'provider' would be managed and measured? Where would the service be provided in Merton, how could MAE's current facilities be matched? |
| There seems to have been no consideration of alternative revenue streams - indeed, expansion of the services in profitable ways could increase revenue above increase in costs. Could other elements of the budget be drawn in - for example, the massive, regular underspend on adult social care, given that adult education plays a big role in this (or can, or should). These things may have been considered, but there is not enough information in this consultation. |
| They need to totally re-think the senior management at MAE - it is poor and THAT is why you are currently in this position - despite warnings from students and staff alike. It needs a governing body to CHALLENGE the senior management team on ALL aspects of running the college - SCOLA has the right set-up - they could advise and help to improve the set-up and gain more students. MAE has been badly run for many years and has been allowed to go its own way with no intervention from anyone. |
| This should be made an election issue. Then closure would be out of the question. |
| Tightening the administration costs, reduce the many that do the jobs. I sent one email requesting information, and received 2 or 3 replies - all differing in their answers too! This is extremely inefficient. |
| To keep the Whatley site and bring in other services for example MMF, Libraries & outreach services. |
| To merge the use of the Chaucer Center. Using Whatley site for staff training and conference events in Merton. |
| Transfer as much of the current services as possible to South Thames College without going through a tender process. Only tender the 25% that STC is not able to take on. |
| Trim all unnecessary wastage in offices and council offices and other unnecessary projects |
| Two is best option I guess. |
| Under Option 1 the council could possibly consider charging non-borough residents a SMALL course fee premium to attend courses at MAE. If it can be made to work without complications at enrolment, it would bring in an additional revenue stream. |
| Use existing community and social housing venues - this is how you get to the so-called 'hard to reach'. |
| Use existing secondary schools facilities to deliver courses. |
| Use local schools - like you used to. You used to hold classes in Richards Lodge in the evenings. |
| Use Morden libraries as alternative facilities for courses. |
| Use Whatley's facilities more - such as for Merton staff training and council events |
| Using facilities at MAE Wimbledon to host courses. |
| Utilise the facilities at the MAE college more. Although the classes are well attended, publicise the classes more, fill the classrooms, use the facilities, develop the service. Do not just cut it and give up, improve and expand to bring further development and resident satisfaction and sense of belonging and pride. |
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| Well designed commissioning process using all the flexibility allowed to the LA by the European Commission (and there is plenty if we do our research well). In this way, local groups and energies will also be involved in delivery. The important thing is to make the process as transparent as possible. |
| Why can't Merton have the same success as other centres. Build on the college strengths. |
| Why don't you encourage volunteers to come forward and help at any means!! |
| Why not partner with the Borough of Kingston. Their variety on offer at the New Malden Leisure Centre alone is more attractive than anything I have seen in Merton. The building is of course more vibrant with so many leisure facilities, but it seems to be an extremely busy, dynamic centre with a lot to offer its community. |

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| Why not work with the bus company to ensure better transport links from other parts of the borough. And maybe find a good satellite venue/s for other parts of the borough. A few vocational courses will be fine, but not at the expense of the arts! |
| With the way the country is at the moment there are people who are really struggling to feed, cloth and provide for their immediate families. They want to study to get a better job. So is very necessary MAE remains accessible for these individuals by offering free courses to them. |
| Yes - all students should pay for lessons - maths, English etc. This way the college benefits would improve 50%. I pay full payment on my pension |
| yes Option 1 but with a better management of costs |
| You could explain the options a bit better. I understand as I have inside knowledge but don't know if Joe public would. Also, you don't make clear what the financial burden is. |
| You have a fantastic opportunity with the primary school next door. You have a captive market of over 300 children and their parents. I would like to see the adult education provision and the fantastic resources made available to the school community (A charge to help reduce the financial shortfall could then be agreed). |
| You should keep things as they are! |
| You should set up an intervention team with specialist skills that can help people with SEN to go from school to further education or apprenticeships. This should be in a position to have contacts with employers all ready to go. |

Any other comments?

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| The council should cut down some of the non-teaching positions and continue the current arrangements. |
| 1. You should stick with the provision you make now, especially at Whatley Avenue and Marlborough Hall. Check that the other venues are fit for purpose. 2. Consider re-opening the previous Mitcham adult ed centre that is boarded up and empty, to close the east/west gap you are concerned about since you closed it. 3. Consider carefully that commissioned providers are unlikely to have specialist facilities for creative arts courses and there are equality concerns if you take the commissioned option, because people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities use these courses. 4. Scrutinise what Merton Council pays annually to Conway. Stop paying Conway for unnecessary cosmetic street work, pay only for what is required to ensure health and safety and vire the excess to community services like social care, adult education and children's education. 5. The Council should choose option 1 because it is not clear how the other options could work, create economies and serve various stakeholder priorities. The the lack of detail and of transparency is one factor that is alarming. |
| a choice should be made that provides the most cost effective provision of education without impairing quality. it should also provide a wide range of topics. Not just vocational & language courses but also courses that provide interest e.g. photography, stained glass furniture restoration ,literature appreciation, gardening etc. |
| A private provider will gradually increase costs and reduce service. |
| A very careful research must be made of what can be offered either by other bodies or in cooperation with others. |
| Access to funding for learning providers should be simple to enable grass root trainers to access funds. They are the ones that can reach the residents that need the support - such as those based in Mitcham. In addition grass root groups might not be able to afford to compete with Private Enterprises in terms of writing bids and accreditation for their course or venues. |
| Add to poll tax across the borough. |
| Adult education in Merton is a very valuable resource and needs to continue offering these services to Merton residents. The option that the council ultimately chooses must ensure that it is both cost effective and efficient and accessible to all Merton residents for the long term. |
| All the borough should suffer financial cuts not only MAE |
| An option which doesn't close MAE Whatley Avenue |
| Any option other than number one (retain present service) will be irreversible and this council will be remembered as the council that killed adult education in the borough. |
| As I have already stated, my life would be a lot less fulfilled without all the help Merton College gave me. |
| As I said, your evening classes would be more profitable if they were held close to a station because it would be easier for people commuting from London to get to on their way home. Also you charge by the year. Working people (perhaps in and out of jobs) don't always want to commit for a year and therefore go to private providers for a term instead. |
| As we are a provider of service it would have been good to get involved with this consultaiton months ago |
| Be honest about why the council is doing this! They want to sell Whatley. |
| Care should be taken when looking at external providers as an option or combining efforts with another local authority to avoid courses being cut back at the Merton sites (to then be on offer further from our borough) or prices escalating |
| Classes in lots of different community centres would not work for staff or tutors due to not having adequate facilities and the continuity of a college environment |
| Commissioning the services is the best way forward. |
| continue with the arrangements and take risk |
| Conversly, I think in fact adult education in the borough has always been undersold. It could be marketed much better |

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| and more widely and the council should think about investment in adult education rather than a scale-back. It is short-sighted to try and make savings from such a valuable and unappreciated council asset. |
| Council members should consider how much social inclusion and education in arts and leisure activities they are leaving in tact for their loved ones and relatives in the borough and how much respect for selling off the family silver they will receive for becoming just like money grabbing bankers. |
| Council should provide costed models for each of the alternatives so we can see where the savings are or are not. So far these have not been available. |
| Council should take into account the possibility of raising course fees, for those that can afford them, to boost income. |
| Councils are always looking to cut services (I worked for a council for 32 years). This is not always the answer. Services can be improved and costs reduced without cutting the service. Ask the staff and attendees how costs can be reduced without sacrificing the service. We on the outside have no idea of running costs or productivity. Ask those you employ, small cost cuts mount up. |
| Courses for Merton residents should be provided within the Merton area. |
| cut down on number of courses, that would save money. |
| Cutting costs in a sustain all manner is paramount. |
| Decide how to keep Whatley Avenue site and then explore other financial models and partners. |
| Definitely option 1. More should be done to increase revenue and reduce costs. Whatley Avenue is a valued local facility that is very important to local people within Merton. |
| Deliver courses that appeal to people and at an appropriate level. I think courses need to be more specific...and advertised better. |
| Don't know |
| Either keep MAE Whatley Ave open or move to Chaucer Centre where MMF have met for years. It will be an empty building there. |
| Ensure decisions are not made purely to enable re-deveopment of site, or use it as a school - it was purpose built. |
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| Give MAE time, say 5 years to cover it's own costs by empowering the local management team of MAE to self-manage and set its own budget and be creative to reduce its own cost every year, until it can be self-funding cover it's own costs, without Council cross subsidising costs. |
| Go into partnership with U3A (University of the Third Age). |
| Has a survey been commisioned to obtain the views of those in the east of Merton borough |
| I am not sufficiently well-informed to comment. I do think democracy is overstretching itself with consultations of this nature. It is for the politicians to make the decisions, without having the fall-back defence of saying "this is what the public wanted" when things go wrong. |
| I AM ON MY FIRST COURSE AT THE CENTRE AND WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH THE ART CLASS ROOM AND THE WHOLE BUILDING A WONDERFUL FACILITY, PLEASE KEEP IT OPEN |
| I am still strongly in favour of continuing with MAE but I believe there must be ways of reducing costs for this that should be looked at - I'm surprised that this hasn't featured as one of the choices. |
| i am very concerned that Whatly will close and no other venue will be found for fusing glass as it needs specialised space and equipment. |
| I believe all councils are under similar financial pressure and therefore trust there is significant discussion regarding shared solutions and best practice. I have experience exception teaching at Merton (upholstery - Sarah Bolton) and fear that commissioning other providers to deliver the service will not only sacrifice quality, in addition, the procurement process will get bogged down by bureaucracy and won't be as 'cost effective' as originally predicted. Change is costly and if unsuccessful is particularly damaging. |
| I believe that the council should continue to provide the services in a modern management structure |
| I believe the most vulnerable people should be considered within this consultation. Large college environments are not suitable for everyone and Merton needs to ensure that classes are also delivered in environments that are suitable for those with disabilities. - e.g. small groups within libraries, inclusive friendly environments such at Whatley Avenue college. |
| I believe the Whatley centre should be saved. |
| I cannot tell, without further information. |
| I do not believe the council's preferred option is viable. Merton Council have provided no cost analyses and I do not believe any suggested option could save any substantial amount and certainly not provide a better service. |
| I don't see enough evidence that commissioning services would save money. I think it would just be a cheaper and worse service |
| I don't think it should be with a provider of sixth form/teenagers/young adults education as the atmosphere could be intimidating for older/learning difficulties people. |
| I feel the council should do what it can to keep Adult Education in Merton. I don't think joining forces with another borough should be an option. Also can the council specify what they mean by option 4? What other providers? The council is not being clear on exactly what options and providers they are considering. |
| I find the phasing of Option1 extremely leading and believe the use of the term 'financial risk' inflammatory. While I |

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| <p>accept that council cuts mean that difficult decision will need to be raised the implication that retaining current service would in some way harm other services unfair. This is obviously not what LB Merton want to do, but there should be more fair and transparent wording. Implying that options 2-5 would solve everything and there would be no longer any financial risks is unfair. Option 2-5 would result in poorer adult education services but not solve the problem that the council is keen to suggest exists.</p> |
| <p>I have been a student at various times in the last 14 years. I have gained a teaching assistant qualification and both my NVQ 2 and 3 in Teaching through MAEC. It has also been my lifeline in terms of making friends and finding a hobby. I think it should be kept within the community. Sharing with South Thames means that the campus is still local and that's important to me.</p> |
| <p>I have heard that there is an option that this site becomes a Harris Secondary School. I am strongly opposed to this option. There is a healthy and improving cluster of secondary schools in the area and I think the borough would best invest its resources in the continual improvement of these. In addition it could have knock on effects for Joseph Hood Primary school and if this becomes linked to the Harris chain, reduces any choice of primary provision for local parents.</p> |
| <p>I have no idea whether South Thames or SCOLA or sharing with Wandsworth Borough is more cost efficient and wiser and more beneficial from a high quality of delivery perspective. But you have to find a balance of courses that will attract people who can afford the full price of courses eg a selection of music, singing, art, pottery, cookery (exciting non basic) in order to perhaps subsidise those courses which are essential for people seeking work eg English, Maths, Business & IT skills. I do not think this is addressed well enough in the curriculum on offer.</p> |
| <p>I have no objection in principle to MAE being "privatised" but it is important that an organisation taking on the task should be properly qualified/experienced in the education field. We do not want duplication of the ludicrous situation where parks and gardens will/may be run by South London Waste Partnership.</p> |
| <p>I have said enough above. I expect a degree of intelligence from whoever set the questions, but possibly that person is in real need of education</p> |
| <p>I have worked in partnership with local and out of Borough providers and found a vast difference in the quality of services and the level of commitment from out of Borough providers.</p> |
| <p>i hope you do not close any of the centre especially Whatley Avenue. i am sure you can find ways to produce more income from all the sites.</p> |
| <p>I know that the council has difficult decisions to make in the light of financial constraints. However it is my opinion that Merton Adult Education should be valued as a flagship service that is worth continuing support rather than something that represents "financial risk" to the council. There is an undercurrent of speculation that there are plans to sell Whatley Avenue for redevelopment; if this is the case, I feel that it would be a tremendous waste of a really good educational facility.</p> |
| <p>I live in Norbury and attend pottery in Merton with my daughter, a Wimbledon resident. I am impressed by Merton Council which adjoins Croydon. Mitcham Conservation signs, neat pathways in Northborough Road, SW16, for example. Please keep what you have built up in adult Educational expertise. Flaunt it, sell it, run seminarsto finance it. Be flexible. Guard this good institution. See how adult education can serve our children in the borough, which should be a consideration. Motivated and imaginative adults can better guide the young.</p> |
| <p>I prefer to be as close to home as possible (Grand Drive) but would go to another borough if the venue was to close.</p> |
| <p>I realise it is a very hard decision to make financially. I would just ask that the needs of all young, the unemployed, and the elderly, [to keep them mentally fit and active] - all are considered and provided for as education provides the key for the mental and physical well-being of the people of Merton. Thank you. If Whatley Ave is not used how will Merton be able to maintain it as part of Joseph Hood School if it cannot when used as for MAE?</p> |
| <p>I really don't think we should partner up with other councils, It is already a large and unwieldy beast, I find the bureaucracy too much, as a user AND as a teacher of adult education in Merton. Why make it even larger and more chaotic and bureacratic.? The adult education needs a clearer remit and less paperwork. If another provider can reduce bureacraucy and simplify the delivery, then that is an option, But not more council quality frameworks and paperwork...not a good idea.</p> |
| <p>I really hope Merton council makes an important decision to ensure the continuation of adult education. Opportunities like this don't come around this often in London.</p> |
| <p>I strongly feel that we can learn from the way Wandsworth Borough manage their budget and commission providers.</p> |
| <p>I study in the evening, not just for work but as a hobby, an opportunity to switch of and meet others. To extend my self and experience, to have a work life balance. The venue, character, atmosphere and environment created by staff students and facilities keeps me coming back. This is not something I could see replicated elsewhere especially of the service was split or shared. With other providers. Merton adult education at Whatley road is not just for people with learning needs but caters for whole other sections of society (elderly, working, mums, hobbyists, EAL) and all these sections of society should be considered, moving provision elsewhere takes it away from those who need it. Keep MAE as it is. How could they guarantee that slipping current courses into others provision is going to provide th current numbers of places available? It cannot be guaranteed. Keep it as and where it is!</p> |
| <p>I think in recent years there has been too much emphasis on 'measurable outcomes' - the original purpose of Adult Ed has been lost in this</p> |
| <p>I think one of the main things that the council should do is keep the provision as is, possibly with a little fine tuning - but categorically promise to students, local residents and the adjoining school that it will NOT sell Whatley Avenue. And that</p> |

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| <p>Whatley Avenue will continue to function as the main site for adult education in the Borough. WA is an easy to get to location. It is easily accessible for students with disabilities and it is familiar to students with learning difficulties - something that should not be under-estimated. Additionally a considerable amount of money has recently been spent on the site in terms of energy saving and the creation of the art block.</p> |
| <p>I think South Thames and MAE should be put together and it looks good for the student's further education and meet more people. Further activities to put together.</p> |
| <p>i think that what isn't written anywhere is that you are looking to sell off the site on Whately Avenue to developers and thereby plug reduced council funding with selling an asset which is very valued in the wider community. there are probably a whole stack of back office council jobs which could go! Or you can always just issue more parking tickets - that must rake in millions.</p> |
| <p>I think the council should continue with the current arrangements as it is working especially for adults with learning disabilities. The current arrangements have motivated adults with learning disabilities to stay in college to learn new skills, integrated with other people that are more able than themselves, gain certificates, work towards independence, gain self confidence and self worth, work towards finding a job and continue to be life long learners. The current system provides a variety of courses for people with learning disabilities to choose from according to their abilities. This will be lost if things change.</p> |
| <p>I think the council should bare in mind the importance of life long learning within the community and value it as highly as it does providing services for children. It is a lifeline for many older people to socialise and keep mentally and physically active.</p> |
| <p>I think the council should look at offering more rather than trying to offer less at a cheaper cost and absolving their responsibility to a third party supplier. Working in Partnership with other Councils while still maintaining overall responsibility for Adult Education is a much better option for all concerned.</p> |
| <p>I think the mix of students at Whatley Avenue could not be recreated if provided by a FE college like South Thames whose main focus is young adults. The current mix to me is an important and attractive element of the provision.</p> |
| <p>I think the priority for Adult Education (AE) should be for the provision of courses/activities that are not otherwise provided by local clubs/societies/groups. Schools should ensure that pupils leave with appropriate qualification/skills for future employment and not rely on AE for this.</p> |
| <p>I think there needs to be clarity about the funding situation, and also of the potential savings offered by each of the options. What are the real practical differences between options 2-5? Why is only LB Wandsworth a possibility for option 5? The consultation seems lacking in detail about what the 5 options mean. This hardly seems to meet the recent "Moseley" requirements on consultation.</p> |
| <p>I think what makes MAE special is because it is local and accessible. It being an adult only college means it is less busy, noisy and students are engaged and motivated. I particularly like the fact that it is a residential area and I enjoy the work there. It has a friendly staff. People with disabilities are catered for and I'm sure benefit from a non-hectic environment.</p> |
| <p>I think you have to make sure that the disabled and people that have learning difficulties have a say in this as well as this will affect them in a big way. We have to modernise the courses that will help with people getting jobs or need extra training as there are going to be a lot of redundancies for adults and there is not enough help for them to get back into the job market if you are of an older age.</p> |
| <p>I will be satisfied with any of the options as long as it works and the transition doesn't end up costing more than we can afford. I would like the whatley to stay open it is very close to my house.</p> |
| <p>I would be very disappointed if the council goes ahead with commissioning services to private education providers. Whilst it might save money in the short term, it is very short sighted of the council as it will cost more money later on because of poor service to students and cost cutting which leads to the council picking up greater financial cost later on. I urge the council to please reconsider its preferred option and choose one of the others to keep services in house.</p> |
| <p>i would like the collage to stay open so my son who has downs syndrome can use the collage when he is older and have independents to walk there.</p> |
| <p>I would wish Merton Adult Education to do what it says on the tin and be provided by Merton.</p> |
| <p>Ideally the offer should be at more locations across the borough as Whatley - the main centre - is difficult to get to on public transport.</p> |
| <p>If any money can be saved by partnering, then it is even better than cutting funding to save money in areas like youth and community activities.</p> |
| <p>If continuing with current arrangements, consider moving more services to the central Wimbledon building, this being readily accessible from all parts of the Borough, unlike Whatley Ave., which is not, as well as being some distance on foot from nearest public transport links - particularly inconvenient and unappealing on dark Winter evenings! That site could then potentially be sold for affordable & other housing, blending with the surrounding residential area.</p> |
| <p>If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Change can prove more expensive and less satisfactory. The Whatley Avenue Centre has good office facilities, good specialist rooms, and good facilities for those with a disability</p> |
| <p>If the council should join with wandsworth then many training services could be out of borough. Elderly, disabled, poorer, unemployed, those with out cars, those with family responsibilities (either of the young or elderly) would not be able to travel to these venues. Distance, cost of transport plus travelling to unknown venues are all barriers to many people.</p> |

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| If the council tax were raised a bit every year you wouldn't have to cut services so much - too many services are reduced or cut that should be maintained. |
| If the courses I do were not provided locally and easy to get to I would not continue. |
| I'm hoping that the council will go with Option 1 as many local residents I believe feel the same and have enjoyed the benefits of MAE, being a source of education and employment and great ethos that it stands for and hopefully will continue to stand for in the future. |
| Important to have more than one location where services are offered. |
| Important to keep the facility at Wimbledon Library for ease of access to those living in Wimbledon |
| In looking at how other boroughs provide adult ed services, it is impossible to compare the college at Whatley Ave with anywhere else, as what we have there is truly unique. With its specialist teaching facilities for the creative arts, it is a vital centre for learning many dying crafts and skills. There is nowhere else one can learn many of these skills in the area. The fact that many of these courses are fully booked well ahead of time and are bringing in fees bears this out. |
| Is it possible to find other venues eg schools for evening classes. Most facilities would be available on site. |
| It doesn't matter. Anyone completing this is simply going through the motions. |
| It is imperative that this resource is kept it works extremely well in the area and is a good safe environment for people to get to and is easily accessible. |
| It is key that education is provided near to people's homes otherwise those in most need and with other responsibilities will not be able to access it. |
| It must stay in the public domain. |
| It will be best if Merton continues to control adult education in borough, but sharing services and buying power with other colleges and boroughs - it is clear savings have to be made and the focus should be on maintaining services to the user and building on the quality of existing provision. |
| It would be better to share provision with more than one local authority. |
| It would not be an appropriate site for a secondary school. Space is limited and so there would be inadequate outside space for pupils. Road access is stretched already with the existing primary school which i imagine causes local residents currently many problems with parking and access at school opening and finish times and gives parents of the primary school significant difficulty in delivery and collection of their children which would be compounded with another school on the same site |
| It's not always about the money or savings. It's about the quality and depth of the courses offered. |
| It's very difficult to be 100 pct of any of the options. Merton should look through EVERY opening |
| Just don't sell this building for another block of flats. Keep it as it is as much as you can. People come from far and wide. It would be such a loss. |
| Keep control over the provision and maintain high standards rather than outsourcing which would only lead to profit being made by profit making providers. minimise |
| KEEP MAE AS IT IS REDUCE COSTS IN OTHER WAYS FO INSTANCE NOT KEEPING WORK EXPERIENCE COURSES OPEN WHEN THESE ARE PAID FOR BY THE COUNCIL HALF THE TIME STUDENTS. DO NOT BOTHER TO TURN UP. |
| Keep our college open. |
| Keep the first option but totally re-organise MAE's management team - get rid of the current people and employ those who know and understand adult education provision and how to manage it in a sensible and cost-efficient way. |
| Keeping Merton Adult Education open is the best option and provides good value for money, relying primarily on skills funding agency and fee income. |
| LBS and LBM both need to save money, and the councils need to remember they are there to provide for the needs and interests of the local community, promoting greater unity will not only save money but encourage integrated working which is of benefit to all . |
| Leave it as it is and invest in it. |
| Like schools, adult learning centres should be local in order to encourage residents to attend without too much journey time and with the healthy option of being actually able to walk there. Local adult learning centres also provide and widen the learning horizon for its adult citizens and enhance pride and the feeling of belonging in the local community. |
| MAE has been here successfully for decades - you are just trying to save money by causing problems and issues for the local community. Adult education is so important - you do not make is very clear in this survey which appears to be worded in a confusing way obviously so you will get the answers to suit your needs. This should be investigated by the Market Research Society. |
| MAE has been mismanaged for years, but the tutors are excellent despite the poor treatment they receive from senior management. |
| MAE is a valuable asset to the council. Many learners have gone into full time employment and part time. Adults want to learn in a mature environment with peers. |
| Mae needs to continue as is. It is vital for many of its students. Merging with other large colleges that have younger students will discourage mature students and those with special needs and may lead to them retracting in their confidence and sociable skills gained through attending Merton adult education. |
| Maintain option 1. Several millions of points was spent recently in the past few years on building new facilities at Whatley Avenue. If this centre is sold off to developers, then this investment will be lost. What guarantees does the |

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| council give to ensure that equivalent facilities can be found at alternative venues without the need to spend similar amounts on new venues? |
| Make sure all facilities are within the borough of Merton and easy to access by public transport |
| Many of your questions have no unless we are told, say, which other council services should bear the brunt of subsidies if not adult learning. What is the competition proposed and are they good or bad providers? These questions can't be answered without at least examples. Many of the questions leave no value as the data is presented. |
| Merton Adult College is an excellent college. It provides very useful courses for young and older people. The teaching standard are very high and hundreds of students use this college. We don't want it to be closed. My job prospects have improved because of this college. |
| Merton Adult Education did help lots of local residents in many ways during all these years. Please continue the current arrangement if possible. |
| Merton Council needs to maintain and protect the current Merton Adult Education services from threatened cuts and/or closure. The facilities and buildings already in place need to be kept in ownership/stewardship of the local council and not sold for profit. Once they are gone they are gone for ever. And replacing facilities/buildings in the future will be more costly. Therefore maintain the current facilities and buildings - be innovative and use people doing "community service" to update/ refurbish them and then maintain them. |
| Merton has many fully subscribed classes which more than pay for themselves. Certain councils such as Wandsworth have a reputation for cutting essential services to vulnerable people and I would not feel secure being "handed over" to them. The saving on local health services should also be a consideration. Where people, especially older ones like myself are happy and feel they have a purpose in life they are less likely to become ill. |
| Most of the care provision resources are in Mitcham which is too far for carers in Raynes Park. MAE offers respite from caring. It also provides many specialist courses for the disabled and those with learning disabilities. These people would be devastated if MAE were to close. MAE is a social service. |
| My main concern is that Arts and Crafts subjects which need specialist equipment are facilitated. The present site has several rooms with essential equipment. I would like to know how the council would ensure these subjects continue in another venue. |
| My main concern is what would happen to the current site on Whatley Avenue. There is a school next door and it is set in a residential area. Adult education in our Merton community. |
| My main concerns as a close resident/Adult Ed user/parent of a child at Joseph Hood are: Where will the new courses be, will they be suitable for me and what are the costs going to be. What will happen to the site afterwards bearing in mind the 300+ primary aged children that are basically enclosed in a tight site with no vehicular access except through the Adult Ed |
| My Merton continues to provide an inefficient means of communication for the council. Today's IT environment will be the best way to a bigger audience, lower costs and as paperless will be more sustainable for low carbon footprint. These savings can be re-directed to MAE. |
| n/a |
| Nil |
| No |
| No but social services is much more important than classes for those in employment, with reasonable incomes, not looking for classes to improve their job opportunities. I'm taking a class and as far as I can see we all fall into the categories I have just mentioned; I enjoy the course but am shocked if it is subsidised by the council |
| No privatisation of education. |
| No, because there aren't any other than keeping MAE available to the community and supporting it fully. It could become a flagship and an example of excellence to other educational institutions if promoted and supported properly. Its diversity an example of what can be achieved when managed well and helping so many individuals with their personal and academic goals. Priorities should be to help people to improve their quality of life whether its is to better their employability or achieve something new, help people to be independent and survive in the real world...there are many more reasons to keep the college accessible to so many people than there are to close it. |
| Not getting rid of Whatley Rd if possible- be imaginative for its use. Maybe get good architects to maximise the space. Get Ambassadors who will advertised the undersubscribed classes in local communities- |
| Not really. AN observation. Living in Wimbledon is increasingly bland. It is all new blocks of flats, a highstreet full of supermarkets and restaurants (also bland). Please. Don't take any more life out of the borough. I know finances are hard but please don't lose adult education or dilute to do much that nobody wants it. |
| Once a decision is made a thorough review of the new arrangement should be undertaken to ensure it is fit for purpose and value for money. |
| Once closed, it would be most unlikely that such effective and useful services could ever be provided locally again. In a time where the population is ageing increasingly, i.e. the number of old people rises, it is vital to ensure that stimulating and socially cohesive services are provided and that those with English as a second language should be catered for locally. However, youth/younger people's engagement is certainly lacking in all adult education. |
| Option 1, plus improve the already excellent teaching by properly supporting the staff and students. |
| Option 4 could be more expensive and bureaucratic. Options 2,3 & 5 will not be focused on Merton residents who may have no access to crucial courses. |

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| Other providers will be financially motivated and arts and creative and relaxation courses don't deliver financial gain they are a social need as stated previously |
| parking, overpopulating the area and removal of the original site would be a travesty ! |
| Perhaps charge a little more, encourage more to attend the courses, especially those who pay, putting info in Floodlight is no longer good enough, you have to go out and grab the users, good publicity would help. You must not let this wonderful resource end, it would be a tragedy for all the potential and future users. |
| Perhaps reduce some of the more obscure leisure type classes in Adult Education. This could save on teaching costs etc. Change the minimum numbers in classes to be viable. There seem far too many gardening and painting/drawing classes on offer for example. Fitness classes could be reduced (as there are many other centres around the Borough where these activities are offered incl organisations using church halls etc - just look at notices in all the supermarkets offering these opportunities!). You could do this at least as a temporary measure until financial climate improves. By "sharing" services with other organisations it would be more difficult to revert back to fully Merton controlled in the future as organisation and funding would have completely changed. More money would then need to be spent on renewing control etc by Merton itself. And no doubt some of the centres would have been sold (as yet more ways to get money into the Council's coffers) so meaning a lack of suitable venues available to use when they might then be needed! |
| Please keep these services local and council run. I know you need to balance your books but in this day and age any opportunities to get a wide range of people from different ages, sexes, economic and social backgrounds together and to give people the opportunity to learn new things and widen their horizons are invaluable. |
| Please see above. |
| Really examine whom is employed, why? Political, social, nepotical. Why external planners for services are needed when we already have departments/establish these. They can't do it so why are they there? The bureaucracy. |
| Retain the MAE site for adult education, and review the courses offered at the site and look at ways of offering services jointly. The MAE offers an invaluable service and the current site is well used and should be retained. |
| SCOLA are a leader and I believe through partnering and collaborating with them MAE will grow stronger and stronger. MAE should bear the financial risk as no other council of repute does anything to the contrary. |
| Sharing with another college or authority is likely to increase the complexity of decision making and administration, and therefore should only be pursued if the higher utilisation of fixed costs- accommodation and administration really delivers a significant benefit. |
| Should take a decision that is cost effective and provides high quality service. |
| So far the questions in this consultation survey relate to organisational and financial means of achieving an objective without having properly defined the objective in question. At the public meeting I attended on 2 December it was clear that there was an overwhelming consensus in favour of retaining Whatley Avenue as a resource. How that is achieved was clearly less important to those present and in any event is a decision that should be made by the council's officers not the users of MAE. |
| stop rail roading your hair brained schemes onto the residents of wimbledon chase |
| Stop spending a huge amount on gardening, yes it looks pretty but when you say you have to cut back that's a start. Making Merton College look pretty, forget it. People are there to learn not relax and sunbathe. |
| Strongly request that Merton choses an option which benefits the Merton economy, not just a short term financial savings. |
| Suggest present MAE buildings with efficient provider to run classes within these accessible venues. |
| Support loc people. We pay the tax and deserve a good service from you |
| Support the MAE and all who use it |
| That what is best Merton Adult continues but accepts the reality of the financial situation that the council faces. |
| The above would solve money problems |
| The choice should depend on quality of service provided and value for money, not who is doing it. |
| The college at it's present venue is successful. I believe the council should keep the college at the present site. |
| The council need to consider the impact of the changes they prefer to the impact on the community. As a student I have made friends with people from other communities which would not be possible in any other environment. |
| The council should choose to recognise the true value of what they already have, instead of rushing to dismantle a treasure, for dubious gain. It would seem, from the public meetings, that Whately Ave, Adult Ed, more or less pays its own way and is not such a financial burden as is made out, nor would it make much difference to 32 million saving, if disbanded. |
| The Council should clarify the implications of the currently preferred option |
| The council should continue to provide the excellent facility at Whatley Ave. The local people deserve this wonderful centre. I do think that course costs could be increased in line with other adult ed courses. |
| The council should ensure that they continue to decide on aspects such as fees payable, location and type of courses provided. |
| The council should keep the MAE colleges as they are. They meet the needs of the Merton community. |
| The council should not dilute the quality ofvtheoffer |
| The current service is excellent and offers the people of Merton the chance to access adult education in an environment which has been created for this purpose. This is a service which should kept and developed. |

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| The current service provided at MAE is excellent and yet still improving. I believe Merton should continue to develop the fantastic service we have |
| The existing provision is successful, inclusive, well run and welcoming. These qualities have been achieved over time through the hard work of staff and tutors. Because of this I believe it would be hard to continue providing adult education of such high quality if it were commissioned out to different sites and providers. |
| The figures and statements about participation and finance within the college which are being presented by the council and councillors are completely inaccurate and aim to show the college as inefficient. This flies in the face of all the good work that MAE does in the community as well as the hard work and commitment of the staff and learners. OFSTED and the Skills Funding Agency recognise it, why can't the council. This whole process has been mishandled and rushed through and the lack of clarity has only made Merton as an organisation and cabinet appear untrustworthy. Stop the spin and be honest about the ulterior motives and plans for the Whatley Ave site |
| The first priority of any Council should be to conduct meaningful consultations about these important issues. |
| The Labour councillors lie all the time. This survey is a waste of time as the decision is made. |
| The location of services has a significant impact on ability to utilise the service therefore remaining at MAE would be the favoured option, supported by shared services with South Thames College (Merton Campus). The other locations are likely to be unmanageable by a large number of current users. |
| The main concern I would have with partnership working and commissioning is quality control of the service delivered. |
| The main problem is the loss of the Whatley Avenue site. There is a pottery studio and workshop spaces that will be difficult to provide in any other site. |
| The option chosen should keep the facility at the Whatley Road site. |
| The preferred option is to keep this centre open. It provides a valuable service to the local community. South Thames is on a large campus which some adult learners would find very threatening. |
| The present location is ideal for most people in the borough to reach easily. |
| The size and location of college is important. MAE is local to me - big enough to provide a range of classes but not so large as to become anonymous. |
| There is no doubt that MAE offers high-quality courses. Perhaps put the fees for the courses up a bit (the more recreational ones, such as language courses, or art classes). Merge MEA premises? |
| There should be a governing body for the college, the role of which would be to ensure effective management for the community. |
| There should be an adult provision in Merton for the residents. This is provided, in the main, by MAE at its existing sites. |
| This is pointless without idea of consequences |
| To develop existing services and courses to create more revenue. |
| To just take responsibility to deliver adult education in the borough and invest in the community & their training needs. |
| To repeat, maximise the outputs the current option 1 provides. Look at the OFSTED report. Support your own BOROUGH, that is to say, Merton, not Wandsworth... |
| Two is best option I guess. |
| Two main criteria should be: Retention of high quality teaching staff Location(s) in the borough accessible to all. Either a single central location or dispersed - but not all in north or south of borough |
| unclear in any choice if will have specialist physical site requirements for courses such as woodworking/carving, clay glass work upholstery etc that Whatley Avenue site has |
| v |
| vital to keep the range of courses offered. There is great danger of courses which require more than a desk and a whiteboard being lost |
| We need to defend education for all the reasons that have been said before. Once it's gone, it will not be resumed when the 'austerity' has ended. There is money in London and it is not being used to educate the poor towards more opportunity. We must defend education. |
| Whatever option is chosen the back office overhead has to be significantly reduced. |
| whatever option is chosen, the council must be aware of, and take into account, the needs of adult learners, eg easy to get to, easy access to buildings. |
| Whatever option/s the council chooses please consider and analyse the the practicalities and effects carefully and please let adult education continue and thrive. Difficult times. Good luck. |
| Whatley Road provides a safe and caring environment for the vulnerable, the elderly and the disadvantaged. The teachers at Whatley Road are passionate and dedicated. Collectively they motivate and build confidence in all students. Following my retirement from a responsible position, I became depressed and lost confidence. The "family" feeling and caring attitude of the tutors at Whatley Road encouraged me to join classes there. I love the glass and pottery classes I attend. Using my hands in that way has improved my arthritis and dexterity and the friends I have made and the tutors have changed my life infinitely for the better. I am considering a dance class and Tai Chi for next term and I would not attempt that elsewhere. I tried South Thames College previously and felt lost in that large, faceless environment. I do not believe any other venue could provide the nurturing and caring environment achieved at Whatley Road. |
| Whichever option is chosen must be the most beneficial for Merton and ensure that Adult Education can continue in the Borough. |

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| Whichever option is chosen the service provider should be given clear quality criteria to meet, which should be assessed at the end of the first year. The contract should allow the council to change provider if these are not met. |
| Whichever option we choose, I think it's essential we look at existing available resources eg our libraries as delivery points. Whatever we choose we need to get away from subsidized flower arranging etc & move to courses which help those who need it. |
| Why destroy a good college which has been helping Merton students? They provide everything in one college there would be the joined up thinking if you did commissioning. |
| Why don't you encourage the college to bid for this service. |
| With numerous petitions against the proposed changes, I feel that the council must listen to the local community & leave MAEC well alone to continue its valuable role. |
| Yes. There are so many services and benefits for the people who currently use MAE at Whateley it would be a tragedy to close it. MAE is a well used and known part of the current community it would detract from the quality of life of the current 5000 students. The teachers deserve recognition for their services! |
| You can not put a price on bringing communities together in a mutually respectful environment, respite for cares who attend courses, prevention & recovery from illnesses, the confidence people gain, to improvement in their employability. |
| You can't just keep cutting everything a bit. You must cut out whole services if your budget is significantly cut. |

Section 2

| Step 2:7.00-1:Used MAE | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| This single response question was answered by 716 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 562 | 78.49% |
| No | 144 | 20.11% |
| Don't know | 10 | 1.4% |
| Step 2:8.00-1:Types of courses | | |
| This multiple response question was answered by 543 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Beauty & Complementary Therapy | 18 | 3.31% |
| Business and Training | 49 | 9.02% |
| Careers Information | 16 | 2.95% |
| Childcare and Education | 33 | 6.08% |
| Cooking and Catering | 40 | 7.37% |
| Creative Arts | 273 | 50.28% |
| English | 40 | 7.37% |
| English as a second or other language | 23 | 4.24% |
| First Aid | 29 | 5.34% |
| Fitness and Wellbeing | 82 | 15.1% |
| IT and Computing | 79 | 14.55% |
| Languages | 137 | 25.23% |
| Maths | 33 | 6.08% |
| Towards Independence | 14 | 2.58% |
| Step 2:9.00-1:Course venue | | |
| This multiple response question was answered by 544 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Whatley | 447 | 82.17% |
| MAE Wimbledon | 160 | 29.41% |
| St Marks Family Centre | 5 | .92% |
| Vestry Hall | 8 | 1.47% |
| Merton Primary Schools | 5 | .92% |
| Harris Academies Merton and Morden | 4 | .74% |

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|--------------------|----|-------|
| Job Centre Mitcham | 3 | .55% |
| Merton Libraries | 24 | 4.41% |
| Other | 17 | 3.13% |

Other?

| Response | Number of Respondents |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| All Saints Day Centre | 1 |
| Cannon House | 1 |
| Cannons | 1 |
| Canons | 2 |
| Canons House | 2 |
| chaucer centre | 1 |
| church road children's centre | 1 |
| Community centre | 1 |
| Family Learning | 1 |
| kingston | 1 |
| Mitcham Canons | 1 |
| Mitcham Common House | 1 |
| Morden Campus | 1 |
| South Thames College | 2 |

Section 2 contd

| Step 2:10.00-1:Other providers used | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| This single response question was answered by 714 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 273 | 38.24% |
| No | 432 | 60.5% |
| Don't know | 9 | 1.26% |
| Step 2:11.00-1:Who was other provider | | |
| This multiple response question was answered by 247 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| South Thames College (Merton Campus) | 21 | 8.5% |
| South Thames College (Wandsworth Campus) | 31 | 12.55% |
| SCOLA | 47 | 19.03% |
| Wandsworth Lifelong Learning | 5 | 2.02% |
| Richmond Adult Community College | 7 | 2.83% |
| Kingston Adult Education | 26 | 10.53% |
| Other | 136 | 55.06% |

Other

| Response | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| - | 1 |
| ACT TOO - one to one computer literacy | 1 |
| another provider in yorkshire | 1 |
| CALAT | 2 |
| Cannot remember | 1 |

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|--|----|
| Carers Association | 1 |
| Carshalton College | 2 |
| CASS short course | 1 |
| Cerebra charity | 1 |
| cherry pie music school, and common runners | 1 |
| Church | 1 |
| CIMA | 1 |
| City Lit | 10 |
| City Lit, University of Dundee (distance learning) | 1 |
| CityLit | 2 |
| Compass education & training | 1 |
| Corporately run seminars | 1 |
| course not available | 1 |
| Croydon | 1 |
| Croydon Adult Learning Services | 1 |
| Croydon College | 1 |
| Croydon council | 1 |
| Denman College Abingdon | 1 |
| Do not live in Merton | 1 |
| East Surrey College | 2 |
| esher college | 1 |
| First Aid for Life | 1 |
| first aid with React First | 1 |
| From Canadian provider | 1 |
| H&F courses | 1 |
| hadlow college | 1 |
| Havering College | 1 |
| Independent exercise classes | 1 |
| in-house | 1 |
| Italian Institute | 1 |
| JJAADA | 1 |
| Kensington & Chelsea | 1 |
| Kensington & Chelsea Adult Ed. College and City Lit. | 1 |
| kensington and chelsea college | 1 |
| Kings College University | 1 |
| Kingston College | 1 |
| Kingston uni | 1 |
| Kingston University | 1 |
| Lambeth | 1 |
| Lambeth college | 1 |
| LGIU | 1 |
| London Language Centre | 1 |
| Malden Centre | 1 |
| Mary ward | 1 |
| Mary Ward + Morley | 1 |
| Mary Ward Centre | 2 |
| Mary Ward Centre, Queens Square | 1 |
| Mary Ward, City Lit | 1 |
| Me | 1 |
| Merrist wood | 1 |
| Merton Chamber of Commerce, | 1 |
| metropolitan university | 1 |
| Morley | 1 |
| Morley College | 3 |
| National Extension college (NEC) | 1 |
| NESCOT | 2 |
| Newport Open College | 1 |
| NHS | 1 |
| On line training and First Aid instructor training from a private provider | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| online | 3 |
| Open University | 5 |
| Open University and City Lit | 1 |
| orpington college | 1 |
| Oxford University Department of Continuing Education | 1 |
| Paid for by work | 1 |
| Pottery - Privat tutor | 1 |
| previous tutor at MAE when the course closed | 1 |
| Prince2 Practitioner- TheKnowledgeCentre | 1 |
| private | 5 |
| Private college London School of Jewellry | 1 |
| Private companies | 1 |
| private company | 1 |
| Private course,can't remember provider | 1 |
| Private courses | 1 |
| Private individual | 1 |
| Private Practitioner | 1 |
| private provider | 2 |
| Private tuition | 1 |
| Privately run exercise classes | 1 |
| product use | 1 |
| Professional development provider related to job | 1 |
| Putney School of Art | 1 |
| QKL | 1 |
| Roehampton | 1 |
| SOAS | 1 |
| Southfields | 1 |
| St Mary's college, twickinham | 1 |
| St Xavier college | 1 |
| STC - Roehampton | 1 |
| Surrey Adult Education | 1 |
| Sutton adult education | 1 |
| training throught the school | 1 |
| UAEA Wandsworth | 1 |
| U3A | 1 |
| UEL | 1 |
| Unison | 1 |
| University of East Anglia | 1 |
| University of Surrey (part-time MSc) | 1 |
| V & A Museum | 1 |
| Various | 1 |
| Wandsworth employees | 1 |
| Workers Education Association | 1 |
| YMCA | 1 |

Step 2:12.00-1:Why other provider

This multiple response question was answered by 255 respondents.

| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| They provided the course I wanted, Merton did not | 163 | 63.92% |
| More convenient for travel | 42 | 16.47% |
| More convenient for timing | 43 | 16.86% |
| Cheaper fees | 16 | 6.27% |
| Better facilities | 21 | 8.24% |
| Other | 55 | 21.57% |

Other

| Response | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1:1 Tuition. | 1 |
| A personal connection put me onto the courses I am doing | 1 |
| Availability. | 1 |
| Because the Campus now is South Thames College in Merton | 1 |
| Began there before merton | 1 |
| Bespoke course | 1 |
| Better reputation | 1 |
| better reputation for chosen course | 1 |
| chosen by the school | 1 |
| Classes ran all year, not just term time | 1 |
| Couldn't get into the course at MAE | 1 |
| course not available | 1 |
| Course specific to church | 1 |
| Didn't know about MAE course at the time | 1 |
| Do not live in Merton, but work here | 1 |
| employer send me there | 1 |
| Flexibility | 1 |
| For work | 1 |
| I didn't know about MAE, otherwise I would have come here | 1 |
| I didn't live in the borough | 1 |
| I had no idea about MAE by then | 1 |
| I lived in that area at the time | 1 |
| I lived there | 1 |
| I made a complaint about a course and didn't feel it was addressed seriously by Head of Languages. | 1 |
| I wanted to explore other options but preferred the teaching at Whatley so returned. | 1 |
| I was not aware of the MertonAdult Education | 1 |
| I went with my daughter who lives near SCOLA | 1 |
| Job Centre sent me there | 1 |
| Jobcentre provided no choice | 1 |
| Kingston adult education centre in North Kingston now closed | 1 |
| Merton's website didnt specify the course. South Thames college's ebsite had more details so i was able to decide quicker | 1 |
| More flexible course & access. | 1 |
| More flexible days I could attend | 1 |
| my employer chose | 1 |
| My old university | 1 |
| My work place send me there | 1 |
| on- line learning with OU; professional body provision at SCOLA | 1 |
| one to one instruction | 1 |
| Postgraduate academic study | 1 |
| Postgraduate qualification therefore not applicable or in scope of MAE's service provisions | 1 |
| postgraduate study | 1 |
| Required for work | 1 |
| selected by employer | 1 |
| shopping | 1 |
| specialist professional | 1 |
| Specific Accounting | 1 |
| Specific to job | 1 |
| Specific to my needs | 1 |
| The client needs an evening activity | 1 |
| The company I work for chose the provider | 1 |
| The merton course was full | 1 |
| This course was prior to moving closer to merton | 1 |
| This was a residential course | 1 |
| This was not a good place to learn | 1 |

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| University degree | 1 |
|-------------------|---|

| Step 2:13.00-1:Importance of aspects (Improving job prospects) | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| This single response question was answered by 667 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 235 | 35.23% |
| Important | 143 | 21.44% |
| Unimportant | 209 | 31.33% |
| Very unimportant | 73 | 10.94% |
| Don't know | 7 | 1.05% |
| Step 2:13.00-2:Importance of aspects (Meeting new people) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 683 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 224 | 32.8% |
| Important | 300 | 43.92% |
| Unimportant | 128 | 18.74% |
| Very unimportant | 24 | 3.51% |
| Don't know | 7 | 1.02% |
| Step 2:13.00-3:Importance of aspects (Developing a new hobby or pastime) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 686 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 364 | 53.06% |
| Important | 244 | 35.57% |
| Unimportant | 62 | 9.04% |
| Very unimportant | 10 | 1.46% |
| Don't know | 6 | .87% |
| Step 2:13.00-4:Importance of aspects (Developing a new skill) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 686 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 495 | 72.16% |
| Important | 171 | 24.93% |
| Unimportant | 16 | 2.33% |
| Very unimportant | 2 | .29% |
| Don't know | 2 | .29% |
| Step 2:13.00-5:Importance of aspects (Sharing an interest with other people) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 688 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 332 | 48.26% |
| Important | 250 | 36.34% |
| Unimportant | 91 | 13.23% |
| Very unimportant | 10 | 1.45% |
| Don't know | 5 | .73% |
| Step 2:13.00-6:Importance of aspects (The availability of a specific course) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 683 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 453 | 66.33% |
| Important | 201 | 29.43% |

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|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Unimportant | 19 | 2.78% |
| Very unimportant | 3 | .44% |
| Don't know | 7 | 1.02% |
| Step 2:13.00-7:Importance of aspects (Getting a qualification) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 677 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 189 | 27.92% |
| Important | 142 | 20.97% |
| Unimportant | 254 | 37.52% |
| Very unimportant | 81 | 11.96% |
| Don't know | 11 | 1.62% |
| Step 2:13.00-8:Importance of aspects (Improving my confidence) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 681 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 251 | 36.86% |
| Important | 237 | 34.8% |
| Unimportant | 143 | 21% |
| Very unimportant | 46 | 6.75% |
| Don't know | 4 | .59% |
| Step 2:13.00-9:Importance of aspects (The quality of the teaching) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 686 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 511 | 74.49% |
| Important | 162 | 23.62% |
| Unimportant | 6 | .87% |
| Very unimportant | 3 | .44% |
| Don't know | 4 | .58% |
| Step 2:13.00-10:Importance of aspects (Learning designed for disabled people) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 670 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 207 | 30.9% |
| Important | 152 | 22.69% |
| Unimportant | 187 | 27.91% |
| Very unimportant | 75 | 11.19% |
| Don't know | 49 | 7.31% |
| Step 2:13.00-11:Importance of aspects (Learning designed for those with caring responsibilities) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 670 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 203 | 30.3% |
| Important | 169 | 25.22% |
| Unimportant | 178 | 26.57% |
| Very unimportant | 73 | 10.9% |
| Don't know | 47 | 7.01% |
| Step 2:13.00-12:Importance of aspects (Having fun) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 666 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 259 | 38.89% |

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|--|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Important | 293 | 43.99% |
| Unimportant | 87 | 13.06% |
| Very unimportant | 18 | 2.7% |
| Don't know | 9 | 1.35% |
| Step 2:13.00-13:Importance of aspects (Access to online resources and learning materials) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 677 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 142 | 20.97% |
| Important | 246 | 36.34% |
| Unimportant | 219 | 32.35% |
| Very unimportant | 54 | 7.98% |
| Don't know | 16 | 2.36% |
| Step 2:13.00-14:Importance of aspects (Online booking and administration) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 680 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 131 | 19.26% |
| Important | 247 | 36.32% |
| Unimportant | 235 | 34.56% |
| Very unimportant | 55 | 8.09% |
| Don't know | 12 | 1.76% |
| Step 2:13.00-15:Importance of aspects (Friendliness of non-teaching staff) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 681 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 234 | 34.36% |
| Important | 322 | 47.28% |
| Unimportant | 97 | 14.24% |
| Very unimportant | 19 | 2.79% |
| Don't know | 9 | 1.32% |
| Step 2:13.00-16:Importance of aspects (The cost of the course) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 683 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 300 | 43.92% |
| Important | 302 | 44.22% |
| Unimportant | 73 | 10.69% |
| Very unimportant | 7 | 1.02% |
| Don't know | 1 | .15% |
| Step 2:13.00-17:Importance of aspects (Help to gain basic skills in maths, English and science) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 669 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 156 | 23.32% |
| Important | 98 | 14.65% |
| Unimportant | 240 | 35.87% |

| | | |
|------------------|-----|--------|
| Very unimportant | 145 | 21.67% |
| Don't know | 30 | 4.48% |

Other important aspects of courses

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| 1. Some of the courses for disabled and care providers seem to be more social services than adult education. The cost of courses is important but just needs to provide value - it's ok to charge enough to cover the delivery costs. It doesn't need to be subsidised. |
| a comfortable place to learn new skills not necessarily academic which is safe and inclusive environment to learn regardless of sexuality and gender |
| A high percentage of those on mine and other courses are retired, unemployed and suffering from depression and other conditions. These courses play a large part in our mental and physical well being. What is saved on the courses could be spent many times over on medical and social services if they are withdrawn. |
| A professional service |
| A sense of pride to secure a qualification within the local borough where I live and being able to use that qualification to improve my employment status and to better my life. |
| A shared desire to learn a new skill. |
| Ability to walk to the venue at Whatley |
| Above answers pertain to me and my circumstances but for unemployed people or others wanting to gain further qualifications or improve those extant already, "Very Important" submissions would be more accurate answers in this section. For people from overseas for instance, quality and the sustained and adequate teaching of English language and pronunciation etc is vital if they are to fully participate in and contribute to UK life. |
| Access to equipment not available at home. |
| Accessibility |
| Accessible local adult education classes are important for people like myself with limited mobility. It is not feasible for some people to travel long distances on public transport to attend classes, both the time and effort involved in getting on and off public transport would be a deterrent to travelling from SW20 to classes in Putney or Wandsworth. |
| Activities to promote well being hugely important! |
| AE courses are an important part of living and learning in a community giving learners a sense of wellbeing, improving confidence, providing skills and ability. To take these away is heartless and shortsighted. |
| Affordable local courses- breadth of courses - getting to know people in the community I live in |
| All I have achieved by going to college will go to waste. |
| All of these aspects are important. Night schools have been around for decades and we in Britain have been well known for it. Can Merton justify paying for an incongruous sculpture at Wimbledon station and then take out evening classes??? |
| Although I have not taken a course in the last 3 years I have done so previously and I am booked on two computer courses in Jan and Feb 2015. The fact that the courses are available when needed is very reassuring even though they may not be required on an ongoing basis every year. |
| Although not important to me personally I work with SEN and the training provided by Merton has helped both people and families I know improve quality of life and also has provided skills for carers and professionals employed to support SEN. |
| As I have to use public transport, ease of getting to and from the centre by bus etc is important |
| As the retired population increases there should be more courses of interest to those who are retired and at reasonable cost. |
| Assurance of safe practices in the pottery workshop which may not be so in unsupervised courses. |
| At the time I was extremely pleased to have passed GCSE German aged 60, catching up on my teenage years. Qualifications are not everything, but for younger people they are important. Some courses do not need to be driven by Ofsted requirements of the acquisition of a certificate. |
| Attending a venue dedicated to adult learning. An atmosphere that supports those with disabilities and additional responsibilities. Dedication to lifelong learning and continuing independence. |
| Availability of specialist courses - advances languages, technical courses etc. |
| Awareness of health and well being issues. |
| Being able to go somewhere local to get out of the house and do something creative |
| Being able to have flexibility with courses due to demands in work/being a carer and raising a family. |
| Being able to study a course to develop an interest or hobby, it does not have to have a certificate at the end. Being able to speak face to face with someone easily when it comes to administration. Having a highly experienced tutor to lead the course. |
| Being local and in person to help with issues 1 on 1 |
| Being part of my local community. |
| Being part of the community of Merton irrespective of ability, education, or financial situation. |
| Being to access a course locally. |
| Breadth of courses. E.g. Carpentry |
| Classes can contribute to the sense of a community spirit. However if the classes are not attractive to a wide spectrum of the |

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| community, then this will not be achieved. |
| Clean safe environment |
| Closeness to home. Daytime courses |
| Continue to learn in later years. To keep occupied and use your brain. |
| Continuity of leisure and arts at Merton Adult Education very important. |
| Convenience |
| Course specific to my needs are provided that are otherwise unavailable locally. |
| Courses and learning should inspire creativity. |
| Courses at a variety of times. Courses in appropriate accommodation. |
| Courses should be offered at times to allow parents and those with caring responsibilities to take part. |
| Creativity Lifelong learning Getting out in retirement Working alongside some students with special needs in my mainstream class. Specialist facilities Centre that provides a range of courses because I will learn a language next year and being in the Centre gives me immediate access to education. |
| Creche facilities |
| Dates and times of courses are very important. |
| Deaf awareness |
| Doing a course stimulates the mind, helps keep the body active and probably saves social services and the NHS considerable amounts of money |
| Don't think so |
| Ease of access to an excellent course with an excellent tutor |
| Ease of booking Friendliness of staff Place to eat |
| Ease of travel to and from Whatley Centre in relation to having to travel further afield to centres in other boroughs. |
| Ease of travel to place of study |
| Easy access to venue - which Wimbledon MAE most definitely provides. |
| Education - learning about the world, culture, history, literature. |
| Education is a right for all people. It's a basic need for the local population. It should not be compromised. |
| Excellent teaching and friendly environment |
| exercise courses to keep you fit and well including reducing back problems etc e.g Pilates |
| Extending my knowledge. Making me think. |
| Financial help and creche services for those who need the service the most-low paid/disabled/disadvantaged. |
| Fluency in a foreign language |
| Gets me out of the house! After retirement it is very easy to live in isolation. |
| Getting help purchasing the best courses. |
| Getting the results back in time to re-enrol. |
| Good courses which provide the opportunity to develop skills to high standards. Using specialist equipment with experienced tutors. |
| Good quality support and guidance throughout |
| Good specialist facilities for painting, my current interest |
| Happy and well supported teaching staff. If Whatley Avenue is closed, where will daytime classes that have special equipment be run? This venue is a vital community asset! |
| Having a break from life's other responsibilities and having a chance to think about and do something different |
| Having a course that helps me recover after a MS Relapse. |
| Having courses on a variety of days is important to make sure that there will be a day that I can attend. |
| Help and options of courses for people with mental health problems. |
| Help to maintain an active mind in retirement and maintain lifelong learning and self-development. |
| I am interested in vocational, practical courses that would increase the likelihood of me finding a job. Also financial help in achieving the qualification |
| I am not disabled but feel strongly that education should support the needs of disabled adults. |
| I am studying upholstery which is a trade rather than creative arts and this should be highlighted. |
| I attend a yoga class. There are many other yoga classes available privately but there are too expensive and I very much value the wide social mix in my class which I would not benefit from elsewhere. |
| I believe that Adult education is a great way of enabling people to socialise and interact with others. |
| I do ballroom dancing at Merton and when I get home after the class, I look at myself in the mirror and I am smiling and my face and eyes are bright and happy and my skin is rosy. Dancing makes my blood circulation work, I become more flexible, fit and laugh a lot especially when i make mistakes with my dancing steps - I enjoy being with other people who share my interest in dancing |
| I firmly believe that local courses benefit people of all ages and circumstance. I retired 18 months ago and the current YOGA course is a life skill I intend to carry on come what may and the teacher at Whatley is gifted!! I previously did a gardening course there that I speak of so highly and use the skills learnt there frequently in my garden and allotment. The special needs and language and maths courses at Whately have helped so many folk get jobs. Please leave it alone..... |
| I found all these aspects at Whatley Avenue. So when will be a time to go? |

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| I gained interview skills for employment. |
| I had to give up a good management job to care for my husband when he became severely disabled. This time out to participate in an enjoyable, stimulating activity, close to home, enables me to bring some quality and variety to my altered life, to benefit my health and well being. |
| I have answered this section as if I personally was taking a course and as I am fit and able I have not shown interest in the questions that effect those disabled or with caring responsibilities. This may not be the correct interpretation for the questions above. |
| I have attended courses for different reasons - to gain an interest, to improve health and fitness and to gain work related qualifications. Reasons can change. The disempowered - those with learning difficulties, disabilities should be a top priority. Work is not always a realistic short term goal for them but there are many ways adult education can help to enrich lives. |
| I have indicated which criteria affect me personally - I recognise that certain criteria are important for other students. |
| I think adult learning promotes a sense of community. |
| I think affordability is key. |
| I wish there wre more courses held locally. These were all taster courses...excellent.... but the cost of courses is just too much for pensioners, and if it is in the evening, traveling at night is not to be relished |
| I would like there to be more courses offered in areas such as graphic design, web design & search engine optimisation. |
| If I attending a course for a qualification or skill I would only do it if it gave me access to an apprenticeship, trainee position or network leading to possible work. |
| Improvement in my health and well being. |
| Informal and adult education is less daunting than a more formal teaching academy |
| Integration of class members, particularly those from other countries |
| It gives a great feeliing of self worth to find you can actually achieve something, especially if older, disabled or unemployed. and the importance of this and regular social contact in helping to alleviate depression cannot be stressed to strongly. |
| It is a bit of an anti-climax when a course finishes and there is no follow on course. |
| It is important that the adult education we benefit from and enjoy, is not being delivered to us at the expense of future generations. Any procurement system that appears to be cheaper than the true cost can only be achieved by deferring the cost using complex fiancial instruments. The savings are illusory and the true overall cost is far far higher. |
| It is important the environment and culture of the college encourages and inspires learning which happens at MAE. |
| It is important to me that courses run in the daytime and especially in the afternoons. |
| It is more about developing a craft rather than a hobby or a job prospects for me |
| It is not important to have a flash venue it is the people that are important and MAE staff and tutors are brilliant |
| It is very important for my mental health to be able to develop my creative talents at a pottery course. |
| It stops be being a couch potato. It keeps my physically and mentally active |
| It would be good to widen the type of course offered to older people to include early art history as well as modern art developments. |
| Its all important |
| Knowing that our tutor is appreciated and well treated by college staff |
| Learning in a friendly environment |
| Learning languages in Merton |
| Learning new skills and having better qualifications will enable of better career path. |
| Learning new skills, meeting new people, social outlet, enjoyment |
| Learning with a respected institute who I can reference in interviews. |
| Lifelong learning to promote good mental health and well being into older life - learning new skills and keeping active mentally and physically |
| Local college, good teachers, reliable and friendly staff |
| Local facility that I can get to easily. Community feel of the centre. |
| local provision is very important that oaps can get to on foot and others |
| Local, available, good value |
| Local, trusted provider |
| Locality!!!!!! |
| Location |
| Location - would have liked to have done several adult ed courses in the last few years but the locations were not compatible with my life Also specific dates of courses will play a big part - my work and personal schedule is fairly erratic |
| Location and access (public transport or car) |
| Location and access. Timing of courses (to fit around work). Number of classes (some classes are very popular therefore are fully subscribed quickly so a number of classes are required to meet demand). Variety of unique offerings available. |
| Location and transport links |
| Location close to home. |
| Location of provider |
| Location should be on good transport links for people who do not have cars. |
| Location, courses on offer, timings for working people and those that do not. |

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| Locations that have good public transport links. |
| Lower costs of the courses for people who are not on benefits but at the same time cannot afford to pay higher fees. It is important to have different courses for people with learning disabilities locally and that meets their needs. |
| Maintain developed / developing skills |
| Many adults who have been working or raising a family look forward to the opportunity of learning a new skill when they have time to do so. It may be something in the arts or sciences and is often something they have always wanted to learn. For others it is a crucial way to gaining employment. It would be a backward step for Merton to stop offering these opportunities. |
| Meeting a broad range of people from different backgrounds and ages. |
| Most of these are important to me, but not necessarily important for me. |
| My course which I attend with my married daughter offers a wonderful opportunity to be creative together. The joy of making something to be proud of can be thanks to LB Merton. |
| My overall wellbeing as a result of taking part in something alongside others with similar interests |
| My son wants to read and write, he can do basic but this year he was able to get into Whatley with English, now to be told this college may close. |
| n/a |
| No |
| Not sure |
| Now that the tutors in the pottery and glass classes have built up my confidence I feel that I would like to try to increase my physical activity with a Tai Chi and/or dance class. I would not attempt that anywhere other than the Whatley Road Centre. I know that if I cannot find the class one of the reception staff will take me where I want to go, the canteen staff will make sure they have food that caters for my diet and the tutors will encourage me and not make me feel old and useless. |
| Offering the ability to expand my mind and to live better. |
| Only that I would be looking to avail myself of a course or courses later this year. |
| Option for more advanced courses. |
| Parking facilities |
| Paying per lesson |
| Pleasant studying environment. I am happy with Whatley Av and MAE Wimbledon |
| Professional experience of tutors and possibility of progression towards the next level |
| Providing a blended learning experience and a good student experience |
| Proximity to my home. |
| Proximity to where I live as I do not have time to travel far. |
| Quality and quantity of the resources and not having too many students in the class. |
| Quality of care and support for those with disabilities etc |
| Quality of provision |
| Quality of teaching staff |
| Quality of the overall course |
| Quality of venues and they environment it is very important |
| Range of courses. |
| Read the history of the working class in this country, the only chance of improving their lives after possibly failing at school is to give them a second chance, one that most would grab with both hands is HIGHER EDUCATION, a chance to move up the social ladder, get a better job, improved salary opportunity, more tax for the government, IT IS NOT ROCKET SCIENCE, give it a try sometime. |
| Realistic timing for commuters - which is difficult, as too early/too late means it doesn't work for many people. Weekend courses would help. Merton is heavily a commuter borough, so it's a big factor. |
| Reasonable location. |
| Reputation of teaching and college. Price. Specialist courses. |
| Second chances for those who had difficulties with learning in their school days. |
| See above answers |
| Self development |
| Should keep adult education in order to give older people the incentive to go out and communicate. |
| Some courses are better than TEFL course for some ladies who would not go out of the home if it were not for sewing classes- For some other people is a good as respite care- Maybe is cost money but it makes masses of savings in the long term. |
| Specialist equipment in teaching room, good resources for creative class, good friendly atmosphere. Facilities that are appropriate for the purpose and well maintained. Knowledgeable teaching staff who encourage all students. |
| Specialist facilities e.g. Pottery kilns |
| Specifically I want to learn in an adult class |
| Support for those who are socially isolated |
| Support if find difficulty completing the course. |
| Support! |
| Supportive, inclusive, non threatening environment |
| That courses are inclusive and accessible to people of all ages, ethnicity, background & economic circumstances. |

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| That it is close by, and I can get there quickly. |
| That the equipment students use is updated frequently and kept well maintained |
| That there are robust feedback systems in place for participants. The current ones could do with improvement! |
| The accessibility is important |
| The arts enable people with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, in work or out to have a safe and supportive environment to explore their feelings and to express themselves non-verbally and creatively. It is the room of mindfulness and helping people through difficult times. The teaching staff are VITAL in this area, being sensitive to the needs of learning a new skill and being able to express profound feelings in a constructive and creative way, developing confidence, friendships and rekindling social interaction and reducing anxiety. Arts are essential for many life skills not just job skills. |
| The atmosphere of the learning centre is important. I found both South Thames and SCOLA cold and non-teaching staff uninvolved and unhelpful. I would not return to either college and did not finish my courses at either college. |
| The availability of my course is the most important of all the above. There is simply nowhere else in the near vicinity where I can study my particular course. |
| The centre should not be too big as this overwhelms people. |
| The chance to relax and enjoy a course enabling me to manage stress levels as I have a high pressured job. |
| The chance to see those disadvantaged by life learning as equals with the mainstream population. |
| The close proximity to my home. Because I am a full-time carer, I cannot travel far from home: I have to be able to return quickly if necessary. |
| The college is not only fundamental in furthering students future prospects but is essential in providing independence and mental well being for all. |
| The collegiate atmosphere of a campus where other courses that interest me are taking place and where I see and meet people from my own neighbourhood where I couldn't meet them elsewhere. |
| The comfort that the intimacy of a smaller establishment brings. A sense of community and caring nature rather than being just a number in a mix of such a large group of students like in most colleges. |
| The continuation of the existing courses. |
| The course having a teacher who can explain problems is very important rather than just offering an online course |
| The course I attended was extremely vocational, which has made it one of the most useful I've ever done. Although it is classified as 'creative arts' and may therefore seem as though it is less likely to help people find work there are at least two people I know who went on to set up small businesses using the skills learnt on the course. My main concern is that the other options available will essentially mean losing the range of courses available and the flexible times eg evenings. I do work but the opportunity to expand my knowledge is really important to me, so having evening classes is key. |
| The educational side is most important but I also enjoy the social side of adult learning |
| The environment. Whatley Avenue provides a unique environment. |
| The learning environment that is appropriate for adults of all abilities |
| The learning support staff. |
| The location of Whatley as I am a local resident |
| The opportunity to interact with different types of people. |
| The opportunity to meet people from all walks of life. Retired people who are keeping themselves active, carers there for respite, people who work and enjoy the relief from their daily lives. People with needs. Adult ed enables people to meet through a shared interest. |
| The opportunity to select from a wide range of arts and crafts courses that include ceramics |
| The pivotal aspect is stretch ie stretching ones brain and improving ones physical wellbeing. On the latter, I think MAE should offer more/different types of courses to improve fitness levels across the Borough. |
| The quality of care that Merton Adults provide is outstanding. |
| The quality of the facilities is very important. |
| The quality of the teaching meant that I learnt to a professional standard and then sold the work that I produced from one of the courses |
| The sense of community that Whatley provides |
| The sheer joy that all courses are under one roof and in walking distance from my home are a crucial deciding factor in the choice of my courses. |
| The so called Creative Arts are always the soft options for budget cuts or fee escalation because 'bean counters' see these as having little or no commercial use. However, skills learnt create self-employment, networking and empowerment. We are not all accountants... |
| The teaching of the French course I attend is very good indeed. My main concern with these possible cuts is it affecting the brilliant work Merton does for those with learning disabilities - these classes, as long as they are well attended, should be ring-fenced, I feel. |
| the time it take to get to the causes as i am a carer and my free time is important to me |
| The variety of courses |
| The variety of courses should be both academic and non academic. |
| There needs to be a good art studio, which there is at Whatley Ave. |
| Though not in the past 3 years, I took an Italian language course with MAE for four consecutive years which I found to be |

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| excellent. |
| Through attendance at college and getting an updated qualification, I was more confident in applying for jobs. |
| Time and day of course. |
| Times - some courses are run during the day when normal mortals have to work |
| Times of courses (ie) in school hours |
| Timing (evening is better) |
| Timing on evenings and weekends |
| Timings around school time/terms and flexible payment plan |
| To be able as an elderly member of society to continue throughout the rest of my life to have a choice of being able to continue leisure activities near home |
| To feel part of the community |
| To me personally? A wider choice of creative courses but to people generally - a choice of courses that improve their job prospects and give them support in learning if they are disabled. |
| Transport links |
| Tutors who are accustomed to teaching adults. |
| up to date courses |
| v |
| Variety of the offering |
| Variety of courses & especially the quality, enthusiasm & dedication of the teacher |
| Variety of courses on offer which have sadly diminished in recent times. Value for money is also very important. |
| Venue must be nearby or local a) to reduce travel cost b) for convenience to encourage participation, keep time-commitment to manageable level and any costs relating to time like childcare. |
| We are a partner and will deliver what the community wants. |
| Whatley is like any other school - it's full of people with different interests and specialities, not just in the subject you have chosen. I'm studying pottery but I enjoy seeing what other people are doing too. |
| Whatley Avenue campus is well located and offers good facilities for creative arts. |
| Yes - it is important to keep the body supple as one gets older to minimise ailments. Social contact is also necessary. |
| Yes, the honesty and professionalism of the teaching staff and their ability to understand their students' strengths and needs in order to provide a comprehensive education. This ability was shown to me by the teaching staff in my courses taken there! |

Elements of the venue that are important

| Step 2:15.00-1:Venue importance (Being close to my home) | | |
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| This single response question was answered by 686 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 298 | 43.44% |
| Important | 279 | 40.67% |
| Unimportant | 104 | 15.16% |
| Very unimportant | 3 | .44% |
| Don't Know | 2 | .29% |
| Step 2:15.00-2:Venue importance (Being close to my work) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 645 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 68 | 10.54% |
| Important | 135 | 20.93% |
| Unimportant | 317 | 49.15% |
| Very unimportant | 108 | 16.74% |
| Don't Know | 17 | 2.64% |
| Step 2:15.00-3:Venue importance (Access by public transport) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 681 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 293 | 43.02% |
| Important | 261 | 38.33% |
| Unimportant | 109 | 16.01% |

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| Very unimportant | 15 | 2.2% |
| Don't Know | 3 | .44% |
| Step 2:15.00-4:Venue importance (Car parking spaces) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 677 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 130 | 19.2% |
| Important | 216 | 31.91% |
| Unimportant | 242 | 35.75% |
| Very unimportant | 80 | 11.82% |
| Don't Know | 9 | 1.33% |
| Step 2:15.00-5:Venue importance (Good access for disabled people) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 676 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 261 | 38.61% |
| Important | 196 | 28.99% |
| Unimportant | 147 | 21.75% |
| Very unimportant | 38 | 5.62% |
| Don't Know | 34 | 5.03% |
| Step 2:15.00-6:Venue importance (The condition of the facility) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 680 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 160 | 23.53% |
| Important | 367 | 53.97% |
| Unimportant | 133 | 19.56% |
| Very unimportant | 14 | 2.06% |
| Don't Know | 6 | .88% |
| Step 2:15.00-7:Venue importance (Access to Wi-Fi and IT on site) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 682 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 150 | 21.99% |
| Important | 207 | 30.35% |
| Unimportant | 250 | 36.66% |
| Very unimportant | 63 | 9.24% |
| Don't Know | 12 | 1.76% |
| Step 2:15.00-8:Venue importance (Having a caf  or food outlet) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 683 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 84 | 12.3% |
| Important | 239 | 34.99% |
| Unimportant | 273 | 39.97% |
| Very unimportant | 76 | 11.13% |
| Don't Know | 11 | 1.61% |
| Step 2:15.00-9:Venue importance (Access to books, materials or other resources) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 682 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 150 | 21.99% |
| Important | 301 | 44.13% |

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| Unimportant | 190 | 27.86% |
| Very unimportant | 32 | 4.69% |
| Don't Know | 9 | 1.32% |
| Step 2:15.00-10:Venue importance (Facilities specific to my course, for example kitchens) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 677 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 319 | 47.12% |
| Important | 233 | 34.42% |
| Unimportant | 87 | 12.85% |
| Very unimportant | 16 | 2.36% |
| Don't Know | 22 | 3.25% |
| Step 2:15.00-11:Venue importance (A welcoming atmosphere) | | |
| This single response question was answered by 680 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Very important | 347 | 51.03% |
| Important | 288 | 42.35% |
| Unimportant | 32 | 4.71% |
| Very unimportant | 11 | 1.62% |
| Don't Know | 2 | .29% |

Other

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| +having to travel by bus will put people off |
| A big enough room for my course to be run in so a good range of people are in the group |
| A friendly and inclusive atmosphere. |
| A good range of classes. |
| A library and on-line teaching material |
| A non threatening inclusive atmosphere. |
| A relaxed and good working/learning environment. Not all new purpose-built venues offer the best facilities. It is nice to be surrounded with history and culture and a venue adapted for the needs of the service. |
| A sense of community. The facilities do not have to be exceptional - the teaching staff and carers more than supplement that. |
| A warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. |
| A welcoming and non threatening atmosphere. |
| A well resourced studio. I refer to pottery, which is excellent at Whatley avenue. |
| Adequate light and space for art equipment, a comfortable temperature. Our current premises at Whatley were purpose built and equipped for art and pottery only a few years ago. |
| Again the sense of community |
| All courses done at MAE. Â£1000s spent on new pottery / at unit building. |
| Although I do not currently need facilities for the disabled, I enjoy a venue that mixes people of all abilities, both physical and mental and I believe that this is very important. I know that as I age if I needed more assistance, I would be able to get it from the tutors and staff at the Whatley Road centre. |
| An ADULT focussed enviroment |
| As above: classes should not be over full/cramped. There should be enough space for students to work without having to double up with others. So classes should have limit numbers to achieve this. Equipment/tools/resources must be adquate in amount and condition. |
| As I mature, so I find Whatley out on a limb, and with no parking |
| As long as it's fit for purpose I don't mind what it is like |
| as long as the building functions and is not freezing cold, then it is fine |
| As long as the building is sound it doesn't matter as its the people who are important. |
| Being a friendly and welcoming space, not too big |
| Being near transport hubs, not just general public transport - Wimbledon, Clapham Jcn etc - places you can get to on your way home, or it's hard to motivate yourself to go out |
| Being part of a local community |
| Cater more for deaf people by providing BSL, CSW or interpreter. |

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| Central location in borough |
| Class times |
| Clean and safe, walking distance/in wimbledon |
| Clean, quiet |
| Cleanliness Fit for purpose Security |
| Community focus |
| Community focus / not corporate. |
| Creche facilities |
| Currently adult ed courses are easily accessible to me as I live locally, I would probably not choose to travel further than 2 miles from my home (morden/Wimbledon or Raynes park) |
| Decent toilets not too far from the classrooms! Lifts for disabled people and good teaching equipment such as smart boards and good projectors. |
| Dedicated studio with facilities to create and produce works of 'art', be they hard, soft, two or three dimensional. |
| Dedicated to adult education. |
| Easy to bike to and with bike lock up facilities. |
| Equipment that is always well maintained and in workkng order. Whatley Avenue has equipment for woodworking, sewing and cooking: there is no other daytime venue in the area. |
| Excellent, covered bicycle parking. |
| Facilities of woodwork workshop are vital. Most people don't have these facilities at home and couldn't access them in any other way |
| Familiarity. I attended courses with my children (now adult) and always felt welcome and comfortable. |
| For my chosen course at the moment (stained and fused glass) I find it hard to believe that you will find another site that will have or take our glass kiln or allow our teacher access to said kiln during the day, even when a class is not running. |
| For people like my nephew - they can't manage without places where they can further their education. Whatley offers everything within a safe and secure environment. Keep it open please. |
| Friendly people |
| Good quality tools and materials appropriate to course are available. |
| Good range of opening hours and freedom to access resources |
| Good, clean amenities. |
| Ground floor classroom / facilities, such as a Whatley MAE, as I have limited mobility and find stairs difficult. |
| Having books, materials and other resources that I can borrow from libraries and welcoming atmosphere is not very important if it helps to save money because I would prefer to have range of courses on offer. |
| Having the facilities is key. Merton only recently spent a considerable sum on the excellent art and pottery block - this is a fantastic resource which is rare in London. |
| I cannot answer most of these questions as it depends on the course. I haven't needed WiFi or any 'nice to have', however I did need parking and the ability to get a hot or cold drink and sufficient space to work for upholstery and desks & chairs for language. I have attended Merton & Richmond for language and preferred Richmond and Merton & Kingston for upholstery (same tutor) and preferred Kingston for parking and ease of access. |
| I do pottery classes and having the facilities at Whatley are very important - they are excellent and other providers do not have the same facilities. |
| I enjoy a venue where classes are properly resourced and equipped |
| I strongly believe that no alternative venue can provide the safe nurturing environment that Whatley Avenue can. For example I live near South Thames college (Merton) and in my experience they are not geared up to accommodating the needs of the elderly and vulnerable adults. If this is the chosen option I would be reluctant to attend even though this is my local college. |
| I welcome te new lift and toilet for the disabled. |
| I would not mind the venue being further from my home (currently a 5 minute walk) if there was sufficient car parking. |
| If car parking facilities are not available passenger drop off needs to be available. |
| If parking onsite is unavailable, being able to park close by in residential roads free of charge. |
| In a safe area |
| In an area where I feel safe to walk about - both day and in the evenings. |
| It doesn't have to be modern, it just has to be serviceable. It seems Merton is obsessed with pushing 'modern' as better, and that is a poor excuse for knocking down decent buildings. |
| It doesn't have to state of the art.If running cooking courses means that expensive equipment needs to be bought where the costs are unrecoverable, then dont run the courses, or do it somewhere where there is a kitchen/computer room already in place and maximise usage. |
| It is a nice old building that has been well adapted and is perfectly suitable for its purpose without being an extravagant fancy modern facility that my grandchildren will still be paying for. |
| It is local to my home and a suitable venue for the courses on offer. |
| It is no use offering classes that have "tatty" facilities. Why should people pay to learn in places that are old, scruffy, with smelly buildings with horrible toilets, or facilities that is out of date. Young people expect decent quality, why not provide it. |

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| You can get away with "scruffy" for immigrant learners perhaps in the short term, because perhaps they do not have such high expectations, but not for youngsters born in the UK. It is patronising to offer "rough" premises, just because people wish to improve their lives. |
| It should be in an environment that is conducive to learning without distractions. |
| It should be non- threatening and pleasant. I have found the presence of some of the mentally disabled people there rather threatening at times. Not the right venue for them. |
| Light and airy. warm in winter and cool in summer |
| Local and friendly |
| local, ease of access by public transport, well laid out, artistic facilities, linguistic training facilities |
| Locality |
| location |
| MAE has all of these things |
| Merton Adult Education is a venue that is not overrun with teenagers intimidating the older generation. Used by older students willing to learn. |
| Modern toilet facilities that flush well/speedily [needed when a lot of people are going to use them] |
| More parking if possible for disabled people. |
| n/a |
| Needs vary. As an art student my basic requirements would be adequate light and space a reasonable temperature and the provision of equipment that is too large or heavy for the bus! |
| No |
| No. |
| No. I felt as regards facilities for language learners Merton was excellent. |
| No. The current facilities are more than adequate. |
| Nostalgia |
| Not sure |
| Opening hours. If the centre/classes were only available in the day or if the course was only offered on one day I could not attend. |
| Pilates and yoga facilities are excellent. |
| Pleasant atmosphere with sufficient space and not too many people on the course |
| Professional teaching staff. Not having a tick box mentality or too many evaluation exercises. These are irritating and not always useful. |
| Quality and inspired teaching... |
| Quality of teachers |
| Quality of teaching and assessing staff |
| quality of teaching is more important than modern facilities |
| Quiet space to study |
| Safe both on campus and the surrounding environs |
| Safe, well maintained and comfortable room temperature. |
| Safety of venue |
| Security, personal safety. |
| See previous answers |
| Sense of community |
| Smaller venues, as at MAE, create a greater aspect of care and intimacy for hesitant or disabled learners. |
| Somewhere to get a coffee when doing evening classes (eg at Whatley Avenue). |
| Somewhere to study away from home. |
| Spacious classrooms and lounge hall. |
| Special equipment such as correct height tables and good quality kilns |
| Staff - The staff at Whatley Avenue know the needs of the students. Who they are travelling home with and what there courses are. They are extremely welcoming. |
| Sufficient space in classroom for all pupils |
| That it is clean and comfortable |
| That it is well maintained and kept at an acceptable temperature (as opposed to overheated until you open a window - when you freeze) |
| That it provides for the local community |
| That my chosen subject is well resourced. |
| That the facility is clean, and warm (which reminds me the MAE is always TOO hot - perhaps you could save money here?) |
| That the physical size of the teaching space is appropriate for the type of class being taught. It would be nice to have some kind of storage facilities for specialist classes e.g. woodwork and upholstery |
| That the venue is more accessible to the east of the borough. For those who have greatest need for education, most of the courses are provided in Raynes Park; they should have more in Mitcham. I would certainly be more inclined to take up further courses if that was the case. |

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| The above covers it. Some of the above I regard as important but they don't affect me personally (e.g. access for disabled people). |
| The atmosphere there is so friendly and conducive to return weekly. The fact that it is not huge and impersonal is actually fantastic. |
| The cafe and hall where it is possible to socialise with fellow students. |
| The journey time is sensible |
| The large spacious, bright and airy rooms. Less noise from traffic because it's on a side road, residential area. Quiet surroundings make it an adequate location for learning. |
| The learning environment provides safety and a personal approach which is inspiring and gives me a sense of achievement in a supportive and friendly venue. |
| The locality is extremely important as it enables me to walk to venue, which is a bonus in keeping healthy and fit. |
| The pottery room was built in the last few years and it would be ridiculous to stop using such a great facility. |
| The quality of the courses |
| the staff at whatley in the canteen have been very helpful to myself and others making sure there is wheat and gluten free food for myself and others |
| The staff know me by name, rather than a number. |
| The unique Whatley Ave building has some historic and aesthetic appeal which adds greatly to the learning experience. |
| The venue needs to be well lit, warm and clean with enough places and hooks to put coats and bags down - this is missing from some of the rooms and is a big problem in the colder months. The toilet doors need to be easier to open - the doors are far too heavy to push open and they must have door hooks for coats and bags behind all cubicle doors. |
| The venue should be conducive to learning and teaching with adequate facilities for all students with different abilities. |
| The whole feel of Merton Adults is personal and friendly. |
| To be as clean as possible and continue supplying good services. |
| To have volunteers around to help in some aspects of my ability. |
| v |
| Venue expenses should be reasonable. |
| Venue for adults, not predominantly young people |
| Warm in cold weather |
| Warm, especially at this time of year. |
| Welcoming and safe |
| Welcoming atmosphere- generally it's the people who makes it and this doesn't cost money |
| Whatley Avenue and Marlborough Hall are good for me (public transport). |
| Whatley Avenue is a small, friendly environment. I can go confidently to my class and around the building. When I wish to take other courses offered by MAE, they will be in the same building, which will be convenient and help my confidence. I value the diverse community of learners. I appreciate the significant investment by the Council in improvements to the building in recent years. |
| Whatley Avenue is a wonderful venue - fantastic teaching kitchen, cafe, shared eating space, car parking. |
| When I went to Whatley for the first time the classroom was very difficult to find. The building is strangely organised and signs would have helped especially as all staff seemed too busy to assist me. |
| Wimbledon is a fantastic venue, but if cuts have to be made, I would say that the IT room could be cut to one person (I've never seen anyone on them) and the kitchen is incredibly well appointed. I know we pay for our tea, but I would rather have more affordable lessons for the sake of those on lower incomes, than better amenities. With coffee shops just around most corners these days, students can bring in their own; others can bring drinks from home. |
| Yes |
| Yes, at the end of my class I can go to visit a friend who lives bear by. She used to live next door to me in Streatham before she moved to Merton. I had not seen her for years until I enrolled for the dancing course at Merton AE. |

Any other comments

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| A lot of investment has been made at Whatley Avenue and it would be a shame not to remember that. |
| A solution that will benefit the balance books in the short term (ie selling Whatley Avenue) will have serious repercussions across the borough and will make it a less attractive place to live. The Council should strive to maintain its own adult education facility and promote and measure the benefits of doing so more effectively that it has done to date. Have the qualitative and quantitative benefits of MAE been measured? Please remember that the people MAE supports (disabled and foreign) are going to be the hardest hit by the changes to the provision, sadly they are those least able to articulate why they need the college and its facilities. For them, it is further evidence that they don't matter or belong here; and it is damaging to us all. |
| A vital service for adults of all ages, whether for ongoing vocational or personal development reasons. I have noticed, though, that participants in my current and past courses have by and large been older, female, savvy and middle class. Nothing wrong with any of those characteristics but, if my experience is typical, could indicate the need to increase uptake by other sections of the community. |

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| Adult ed opportunities are vital for the mental and physical well-being of residents, and have major benefits especially for people who are isolated, or have special needs. The needs of the east of the borough must be addressed as a broad long term strategy not as an add-on |
| Adult ed. in Merton is already of a high standard and the fracturing proposed in the future will be entirely detrimental. Refusal at the public meetings to discuss the Whatley Ave site or recognise the value the building brings to the learning experience, makes the council's so call concern for adult ed, totally disengenous. The only real interest is in freeing up the site. |
| Adult Ed. is very important especially for people with special needs, ESOL, and retired people so I earnestly hope a way can be found to continue the excellent work MAE has done over many years. |
| Adult education classes need to remain local and accessible in the Borough of Merton. I not sure the people of Putney and Wandsworth would be prepared to travel to Whatley MAE, so why should I be expected to do the journey to the their "local" adult education classes. Merton Council has a responsibility to maintain and protect the services already in place and not sell them off for profit. |
| Adult education in Merton has been running for many years. It is very important for our community. We need to invest wisely within it, or face losing it. I thoroughly enjoyed the Makaton course which I took, and am considering further courses. Please Merton Council, do not jeopardise its future! |
| Adult Education is a very valuable resource in Merton and every effort must be made to ensure it continues. Although I have not attended a course in the last 3 years I am booked on 2 courses in January & February 2014 and greatly appreciate the fact that I have this option. |
| Adult Education is a vital resource and appreciated very much by many people in the borough. It would be good to see it go from strength to strength and more people taking part in a wider variety of courses offered across the borough at a wider variety of times and venues. |
| Adult education is a wealth of the community. Culture should not be killed by short sighted economic reasons. |
| adult education is an extremely important part of the community life of many people.It provides a stepping stone into improving one's life whether that be work, well being, creativity, fun. This is essential to providing quality of life for those who want to make the best of their lives. I don't think merton council have managed to embrace that spirit in adult education, it has lost its way under quality benchmarking, paperwork, and possibly poor direction..It needs to reevaluste what its there to do, and to listen to its teachers about what's wrong, as they are at the coal face too. I couldn't bear the bureaucracy and impersonality of the management when i was a teacher, it took the joy out of the job. There needs to be adeidcated team of adult education organisers who don't work in the day time as well- because adult education seems to get 2nd rate attention and not give it the rpriority it needs. |
| Adult education is an extremely important part of the community. Close it at your peril - there will be a huge knock on effect. Think about all the mental health issues, depression and low key problems. Think carefully. |
| Adult education is for people from all walks of life who share a common interest. The centre at Whatley is well attended, especially in arts and crafts. Pottery is well attended and I sincerely hope Merton Council will retain it. It concerns me that, after the decision is made in February, there is no time to implement courses before the next academic year. I sincerely hope the council will keep Whatley, at least for the next year, so the courses there are not lost. |
| Adult Education is important at many stages of life -preparation for work, enhancing employment skills, developing stimulating interests and being able to take the opportunity to develop new interests throughout life. |
| Adult education is not an add on luxury service - although many courses are creative these are so important to peoples quality of life. We will all reach pensionable age and to take up a new skill or longed for occupation should remain available; not everything in life should be utilitarian. The council should be striving to make this service better - looking at the university of the 3rd age, classes for adults with learning difficulties, support for parenting etc. It needs to be in venues where people feel safe to come and go and have nearby transport. Whatley ave could do with a bus shuttle to near by stations and tram stops. |
| Adult education is not just about getting a job. It is about adults learning more than they did before, and that is an end in itself. Merton should not reduce this. |
| Adult education is very important in an ageing population because it keeps the brain stimulated. If we wish to avoid burdening the National Health Service, we need to keep offering education for adults. From what I have heard, MAE is more or less self-funding, and is prepared to make any necessary savings to keep the courses going. |
| Adult education is very important to the local peple of Merton. I think if Merton wants to improve their economy they should invest in the education. If their adult population. This is very important for adults who have missed out on education at some point in their lives for one reason or the other and now want to turn their lives round by gaining a qualification or a career to be able to contribute to the economy of Merton. |
| Adult education must be continued, for the benefit of the individuals and their quality of life, the wider community and the NATION |
| Adult education needs to be nurtured and cherished it provides the key/solution to so may issues such as: - jobs/careers - well being through hobby/crafts - Physical - through exercise classes. It is the vital glue that allows society to function, recreate and renew itself and prosper. It is a stewardship for now and future generations and is a jewel that should be well-guarded and revered. |
| Adult Education provides an opportunity for learning, socialising and improving for all over the age of 16 to the very old. This is hugely important and should not be given up lightly for short term gain. The decisions should be very carefully thought |

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| through and evaluated, and the views of local residents taken into account. |
| Adult education services are used not only for education. For many they are a lifeline to get out and do something with other people (particularly for hobbies and crafts). I feel there is scope for creating facilitated group activities, possibly with partner voluntary sector organisations which could fulfil this need and would be less expensive to deliver. |
| Adult education should be a priority in Merton, and the way Merton Council has conducted this review about Merton Adult Education feels heavily biased and if you had conducted an open and honest consultation without your misleading "facts" about the service and the council's agenda which is little to do with cost to the council and virtually 100% to do with the Whatley site people would have had time to try find the best way to find a solution to ensuring Merton Adult Education was able to continue to meet the needs of adults in the borough and safeguard the importance of lifelong learning. This process has left me unbelievably disillusioned with the political process on a local and national level and with Merton Council itself. |
| Adult education should be encouraging and motivating, giving good sense of satisfaction to the students. I had three classmates that were working for Merton Council. They were happy and motivated and their jobs benefit our community. There was another student working for the NHS in a private firm, a working single mother, a very talented student improving his skills to get a new job in the private sector and I was a disabled student trying to find a different path in my working life due to my new limitations. I saw disabled people with mental issues trying to improve their lives and eventhough the institute physical place didn't look nice (Whatley Avenue), it provided enough support for their students to achieve something new and this should continue! |
| Adult education should enable people's job prospects, however students attend for many reasons. Retirees who wish to remain active, carers who need respite, working people who gain relaxation and those with disabilities whose lives are enhanced. The current venue at Whatley provides all this and more. |
| Adult education should not just be about getting a qualification. A variety of courses should be offered to suit a wide range of learning needs and interests. |
| Adult education, especially for the retired, is hugely important for stimulation and challenge - thus promoting well being and lasting independence and new friendship groups. These factors match your community aims for the ageing population of Merton |
| Again, this depends on economics - a good variety of courses catering for the needs of all people within the borough who are committed to learning and improving their quality of life - to match all abilities and improve career prospects, develop skills. |
| Although I've not studied at MAE in the past three years I have taken several courses there in the past including Greek, Yoga and Horticulture. I think it is particularly important to cater for people's wider interests as well as providing courses which improve job prospects |
| any service needs to be accessible to all and value for money and not close halfway through |
| As a retired social worker, and having lived in Merton for some 34 years, I have found adult education invaluable. In doing British Sign Language Course Stage 1 and 2, it helped me in my career in working with deaf service users. Also doing pottery, learning to play the guitar and learning French all help in developing my creative side. As a widow, these services keep me active. |
| As long as a range of courses are made available, and are accessible to the demand, then the service can change. Please do not value property over the life chances and development of people. |
| As people in general are living longer, adult education classes have an important part to play in keeping people healthy and lively and interested in life. |
| As you've highlighted it's not always a means to an end. Sometimes people choose courses based on better health and lifestyle or to improve themselves. To think only about employability is a narrow view in my opinion. |
| Change is normality - don't break the eggs, once destroyed never the same. They may/will produce wonderful results, not financial but social, the objects of a civilised society. For the the politicians beware the dangers of an adverse grey vote. |
| Communal community educational and social services such as MAE are vital to many, many people. They have been vital for many years and must not be degraded or taken for granted. In the scale of things, cut other expenditure before considering closing/relocating/degrading the service - the top quality service - provided by MAE. Once these facilities are gone, they are GONE FOREVER! Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. |
| Consolidating premises to save money is likely to be more successful than outsourcing courses to a third party. Consolidating with other public organisations may also be worthwhile |
| Continue as now, funded by increased council tax and /or reserves and sale of derelict or unused sites. |
| Courses needed are: first aid; how to use computers (IT); ESOL; useful crafts e.g gift-making, knitting etc; basic DIY; diet and nutrition guidance; essential exercise advice; parenting skills. |
| Discussion on future of Whatley Ave site and in particular how to provide its specialist facilities or alternatives is missing in consultation documents |
| Do not cut back on these important services |
| Don't break what isn't broken. Don't be shortsighted in making this decision. |
| don't close it!!!! |
| Don't lose it |
| Don't put it out to commissioning you only get people that are driven by financial motives that way and then the standards and care drop. |

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| Don't sacrifice the future for short term savings |
| Don't throw away a facility that is 'as good as it gets'! Merton has plenty of flats now and you only want to save face for the promises you made in order to get elected! No one expected you to keep the promises anyway, so what is your point!!? |
| Education and further education is an important part of all people's lives. Just because you leave compulsory education, does not mean you should not continue to learn and stimulate one's mind. This has to be available to suit the community's needs to keep a healthy and progressive environment, which in turn helps other local and essential services. Don't just cut it, utilise and develop the service. |
| Education is not just about jobs, it is about a holistic approach to people and helping them develop whatever skills and talents they have, not just about getting jobs. There are so many people suffering mental health issues who benefit from the arts, and mental health is not something you want to discuss on a job application. |
| Education is the key to future success in our borough. It helps keep down mental illness especially amongst the ethnic population and it would be very short sighted to cut it. |
| Education, education, education. Life-long learning, the liberal arts - Merton seems to have forgotten about these. |
| focus on business related courses |
| Focus on social services not courses for those who are taking them just for fun/a hobby/out of interest when course is not taken for getting a job or health |
| For the last 17 years I have always off and on been attending some Merton Adult education course. The quality is far better than the private sector provides. If courses were advertised properly they could be more profitable. Due to the way Merton promotes them (and the location of Whatley) I think classes are dominated by people who pay concessionary rates and therefore it is a costly service to provide. |
| For the wellbeing of our community in an open and fair society for adults of all abilities, I feel it is crucial to continue with this service. |
| For years both students and staff have been concerned about the poor leadership of MAE. The current leadership needs to be replaced by people with understanding and experience of education for adults and with good people skills. SCOLA - which receives NO council funding - provides an excellent example of how adult education should be run. |
| From my limited experience, attendance levels at Whatley Avenue are persuasive evidence of its popularity with a wide demographic. |
| Go to classes gets me out of the house and meeting other people. It gave me a break when my husband was ill (he died last year) and now I get out and don't get stuck at home and alone. |
| Hang on to it, a community needs this facility. |
| Have used MAE facilities on and off for the past 30 years. Would be sad to see it go. I am a senior citizen now wanting to learn new skills and meet like minded people more than ever. |
| Having adult education facilities in the heart of the community is important to developing the skills, confidence and qualifications levels of local residents and helping their families and wider society. These learners may have serious barriers to accessing education in a large FE college, which is not as welcoming. The staff at MAE know their business and client groups and have created a service rated 'good' by Ofsted. They have changed my life by giving me transferable skills which I have taken to the workplace and increased my earnings |
| Hope MAE Whatley Avenue will continue to provide wide variety of courses, including availability to people with learning difficulties, disabled and elderly people |
| I am appreciative that Merton Council is still investing in adult education - and hope that this investment continues. |
| I am concerned that quality, choice and accessibility particularly for the most disadvantaged in our community will be compromised. |
| I am concerned that the social benefits of adult education are being overlooked. Not everyone goes to classes to improve their job prospects, sometimes it is to escape and relax away from work. The potential merge of services means that specific facilities, such as kilns for pottery, would be lost. It is possible to merge Maths GCSE classes, this can be taught anywhere, but where could pottery be done? |
| I am devastated - have no idea how I will socialise and make friends if the facility disappears. |
| I am lucky to be in employment, but I know many for whom the courses run by Merton, specifically the ones run at MAE have resulted in them obtaining jobs that they love, some in fact at the MAE itself. Many of the courses are hugely worthwhile, many recently retired people find the hobbies that they take up there to enhance their life and health. |
| I am pleased that the Council has rejected the option of discontinuing adult education in Merton. Adult education is very important for many reasons |
| I am so shocked at hearing of its closure. Disappointed. Where will we be able to go? Wandsworth? Ewell? Where? Seems to me the council not willing to spend on anything for the public. Cuts, cuts. So where's the money going? |
| I am strongly under the impression that LEARNING IS FOR LIFE |
| I am very concerned that this is the beginning of the end for MAE. Once nameless providers or other boroughs get involved I sense that many courses will no longer be available, the cost of courses will skyrocket and also will start to move out of the borough. I fear, as with most of these types of consultations, this may already be a done deal. |
| I believe it is important to have a facility like the MAE in Merton as adults are never too old to learn new skills in order to improve their lives. A skill or qualification they may not have gained as a school leaver or due to personal reasons the adult education college provides. Adults are able to gain confidence in themselves to feel proud of their achievements and for |

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| employers to see the dividends an adult education brings to their business, employment etc. |
| I believe strongly that facilities for Lifelong learning are crucial to the health and well being of the residents of Merton, regardless of age and ability. |
| I believe that education is important at all times of life, it helps in employment but also in mental and physical health for the disabled and elderly. |
| I believe that it is vital to keep a local service for local people local! |
| I believe that Merton has an excellent Adult Education service that should be preserved. It provides an excellent service and creates a great sense of community it a totally inclusive way. |
| I can see that cuts have to be made. Please ring-fence the great work you do for learning disabled people, and perhaps put up the fees for recreational courses. Can means testing be introduced, somehow? (Special rate for those on income support, etc) |
| I cannot stress how strongly I feel about the dismantling of MAE esp since we now have to pay for FE. The council could easily find the money by shelving certain regeneration projects (turning Wimbledon Library into an evening performance space for example?). Are these pet projects absolutely vital? I think the council needs to examine it's priorities. A society is measured by the value it places on Education and the Arts and whether these are now to be the preserve of the rich and privileged few? |
| I care passionately about adult education. I am most concerned about the Whatley Road site. I am now 69 and have some experience of many sites delivering adult education since leaving school. This small but varied and well-equipped site is an excellent example of how to deliver adult education. |
| I did not vote Labour for them to close colleges and not do anything about St Helier's Hospital. If that's what I wanted, I would have voted Conservative. |
| I do not believe that the cost of delivering adult education is anything near a figure that would make a dent in the 32 million needed. It is currently run on a shoestring- it is clear that the only interest the council has is in the net worth of the land MAE sits on. That that is more important to the council than a provision that provides valuable provision to the community just shows how appalling the councils policy making decisions are. Perhaps if the council spent less on consultants, reviews and navel gazing there might be some money left from our council tax to help the Merton residents. |
| I don't believe adult education can be viewed in isolation without reviewing the strategy for Merton Council and I wish you well in your task. |
| I don't want it to be closed.. it's playing very important role for my career. I will try my best to save it. |
| I fear Merton Council wants to sell Whatley Avenue college buildings for gain and will not replace the courses that operate at present. |
| I feel it is very short sighted of the council to consider commissioning the service out of borough as it makes it vulnerable to further costs at a later date. Closing the Whatley Avenue will also mean the closure of very specialised courses such as pottery where students are provided with excellent facilities irrespective of their abilities. |
| I feel strongly that whatever happens Whatley Avenue should continue to be used, considering money already spent on it. |
| I feel that adult education is very important and that it should recieve more funding than it does at the moment. It seems that adult education is the last in the que when it comes to receiving funding and that it is danger of being lost altogether. I feel this would be disasterous for many people in the comunity. |
| I feel that if adult education is run down Merton would be building itself a great deal of trouble for the future. In the long term mental and physical health would suffer as would behaviour amongst under fulfilled younger people. |
| I feel that it will be very unlikely that the same range and quality of courses will be able to be provided by other providers in the borough for the same cost. One only has to consider the range of people affected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who wish to return to part time education to improve their skills e.g. take English, Maths or other GCSEs which they may have failed or not had the opportunity to take earlier in life in order to obtain employment or a better job • Older people who attend courses, especially during the day, which enable them to learn new skills and socialise. For some, their physical health and mental wellbeing is greatly enhanced by having this interaction. The knock on effects and costs to the local health service, should their course be withdrawn, could soon outweigh any savings made. • People who access ESOL classes. Much is made in the press about the number of immigrants who come here and don't try to assimilate with the community. However Merton Adult Education runs excellent courses across the borough to help such people including parents who are then better able to support children's education in our schools. It is unlikely that affordable or subsidised courses would be provided without the council adding a significant amount of funding. • Young school leavers who are not work ready have attended courses to help them with their CVs, presentation, interview technique and general life skills, enabling them to apply for apprenticeships or other work. • Adults with learning disabilities find a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment at Whatley Avenue where they can learn new skills and their carers can be confident that they are safe. Given that, I believe, the council has to make provision for these young people until they are in their mid 20s, is it likely that an external provider will be able to provide as good a service at a lower cost? • There is a huge range of creative courses that I believe are very well attended. Many people, apart from |
| I feel that site based learning is important as it gives the learner additonal benefits. Whilst i appreciate that in this day and age, with busy lives and an increase in unconventional working hours or flexible working it is important to improve access to learning by providing on-line access or on-line components to learning. I believe that some part of a course should be on site. Learning with others gives the learner some perspective on their progress, allows sharing of experience and knowledge. It increases confidence and so provides additional skills valuable in life and also transferable to the work environment. It also |

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| provides companionship and networking opportunities |
| I feel that the consultation process has not been run fairly. I have attended the council's consultation meeting where I did not feel people's comments were listened to. I also attended the so-called scrutiny panel meeting which was a waste of everyone's time as the four Labour councillors did not scrutinise the decision and would have voted against asking the panel to look again at the decision, no matter what had been said. The process was not fair. |
| I feel welcomed at Merton Adult Education. All my tutors have been really supportive. |
| I felt that a great deal of misleading information has been made about the future of Merton Adult Education. This has especially been the case from Stephen Hammond MP and Cllr David Dean who has been spreading all kinds of misleading stories about what is happening. The real reason behind the changes is that thanks to their government, it had led to huge public expenditure cutbacks which they seem to be oblivious to the facts and seek to blame the council for making the necessary changes. Merton faces a hugely challenging financial situation over the next four years and adult education should not be provided at the expense of services to vulnerable people. Also the facilities at South Thames College are far superior to those at Whatley Avenue; sadly I think some see it as a service that should be protected at all costs. I also think that there is an element who see it as serving the 'affluent' west of the borough rather than the east where the challenges are that much greater. |
| I have accessed Adult Education in both Merton and Sutton (over 3 years ago). While Sutton provided a good level of education I found it impersonal and rather intimidating. Merton Adult Education was friendly, supportive and gave me the confidence to pursue a change in career. |
| I have attended courses at MAE regularly for the last 7 years. I have learnt many new skills and been inspired by my excellent teachers. The courses offered are wide ranging and encompass a variety of subjects and a student support service. The efficiently run college has a friendly atmosphere, the perfect environment for learning. Not only do they run courses with a qualification, there are services for the vulnerable and needy in our community. Can the council still provide these very important services for the borough without huge disruption and I guess many job losses?? |
| I have been coming to courses in Merton because excellent courses are offered which are either not available or in the same sort of welcoming environment anywhere else in this part of London. It would be a great pity to lose this provision which I see as something of which the council should be proud. |
| I have been unable to return to MAE since my recent stroke. My granddaughter is helping me with this form. My needs may change in the future. What will happen if you close Whatley Avenue and other providers fail to deliver adequate services? Total withdrawal of adult education in the borough? |
| I have enjoyed taking many different courses over the last 15 years and hope to continue to do so with Merton. I will be extremely disappointed if this facility is axed by the council in favour of other services less important to me. Merton could do so much more to increase attendance levels by encouraging learners to sign up for another course at the end of one they are attending. Perhaps by offering an 'early bird' discount. |
| I have found this college to be fantastic in terms of my needs. The staff at the Centre are both very efficient and caring, I love it that I have access to a small local community college that caters for everyone's needs, I did have access to the Canons but that was closed down. |
| I have really benefited from the French conversation class and would hope to continue for a long time. |
| I have used Merton Adult Education over the years (less in last few due to having small children!!) but have enjoyed many courses and my father taught a class. It is a wonderful and varied service which Merton should be incredibly proud of and it would be an immense shame if we lost it! |
| I hope it can continue but more efficiently than before. |
| I hope Merton Council can find a way to continue providing this service in the borough. However I feel that schools now have the responsibility for ensuring that pupils leave full time education with adequate skills and qualifications to enter the job market rather than being a role undertaken by the adult education service. I see adult education as providing opportunities for developing new interests and skills over and above people's existing education and work qualifications. |
| I hope the process is transparent. |
| I just started my course a few months ago and love it! The teaching quality is amazing and the atmosphere within the course too. A lot of people kept coming for the last 30 years and it's an integral part of their lives and gives them much more than just a new hobby. It is life quality and enriches it! |
| I just wish I could have an education. |
| I like going to Merton College as I have friends there and it all works for me. (dictated by my daughter) |
| I passionately believe that it would not be possible to provide anything like the Whatley Road site anywhere else. I have attempted classes at South Thames College and in some schools in the past but did not complete the courses as I did not feel comfortable in such a large, faceless environment. I am a council tax payer in the borough of Merton and I would certainly be happy for my council tax to be increased if it were to enable the council to keep the Whatley Road site as an excellent adult education centre. I do not believe that the small saving made from closing Whatley Road would be in any way worthwhile. |
| I really hope it continues. My art class is tremendous, not just for the art tuition but also because the class contains a fine mix of people both able bodied and disabled, people from all over the World, different ages, different ethnic origins, but we all get on and are very supportive of each other. If the class stops then this will all be broken up. What a tragedy! For my part, I have friendship plus I gain tremendous peace whilst doing something very creative. |
| I suffer with ADHD and struggle with most things. If the college shuts there is nowhere else I can go as I don't like and |

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| struggle with having to relocate. It upsets me and affects my mental health. |
| I think it is a valuable asset and the Borough would be the poorer for its absence |
| I think it is really important to offer adults the opportunity to learn otherwise people's well being will be affected by loss of confidence and loneliness |
| I think it is sad that Merton can't balance the budget, and yet manages to find Â£10 million on a brand new swimming pool near the Civic Centre. There wasn't even any debate about the pros and cons of this huge expenditure at the Cabinet Meeting! |
| I think it is such a great thing that we have the MAE - however, not enough people are aware of it. Course start dates could be more flexible. I am living just around the corner and I didn't realise it was there. As soon as I found out that it is there I enrolled for 3 classes and both got cancelled because there weren't enough people. I think MAE needs some strong marketing support and it could be a great place to learn & have fun. |
| I think it is such a shame that as you talk about council cuts that it is adult education that has to suffer. My main concern is for the people who attend the class I attend who are older and have learning difficulties - they will be devastated if MAE changes and Whatley closes. It is a cruel reflexion on this country if we can't endeavour to help these people and closing a facility that they rely on is a travesty. I feel very sad that this is even being considered and I feel that this is a sad reflexion on Merton Council. |
| I think it needs advertising more, e.g. primary schools, clubs, so people are aware of MAE and range of courses on offer. I probably wouldn't have known if I didn't attend library on regular basis. Please advertise more and MAE could be more cost effective with courses being full. |
| I think it only proper that some of our Labour councillors be asked to attend a few courses as they seem to merit some adult education. |
| I think it provides a valuable service for the practical improvements of people's skills for work but also for people's positive mental health in a positive and progressive social environment. |
| I think it would be a crying shame to change things. I would happily pay an extra Â£10 council tax to fund the shortfall. Accessibility is vital and I think the venue of MAE is ideal. If services would move I think it would make a great difference as to whether I did an evening course at all. |
| I think it would be a sham if the Council closed MAE |
| I think it would reflect badly on Merton if adult education was to cease. It would appear that continuing education and development is not important to the leaders of the Borough. |
| I think it's a very useful function that you can't find anywhere else |
| I think Merton offers some really useful courses with facilities that aren't available across a lot of London and it would be a real shame to lose them. |
| I think that selling off council property (like Whatley Avenue) is a short term gain with a long term loss and shouldn't be used as a quick fix. This is as bad as closing libraries ! |
| I think that the current arrangements work just fine and help a great number of people. |
| I think you should think again before closing down Whatley Avenue, as you will upset a lot of people. |
| I thought MAE's provision was far too bureaucratic, though they said it had to be to maintain funding. Nevertheless, all the form-filling and box-ticking distracted from the course provision. I no longer use the services, though mostly because there are no longer courses I would be interested in attending. |
| I value being educated by the council over other institutes because it is a public body, truly invested in my education, not just how much money they can make from me. |
| I will be sad to see it go as it has been very useful for me being local. I hope you make the right choice for the local people as there seems that Merton park residents get a bad deal. Most money is spent in Wimbledon or Mitcham very little here. |
| I would be concerned with an aging population if courses were reduced or Adult education vanished from our lives |
| I would be extremely sad to see it go |
| I would be very disappointed if MAE would disappear as we just moved here knowing that MAE and some evening classes are right around the corner. |
| I would like it continued and provide more courses and less red tape to filling in forms. We pay a subsidised fee and don't want the hassle of completing unnecessary forms etc we are doing some of these courses for fun and leisure not to be too serious. |
| I would like the facility to stay as it is as I think it is of great value to the local community. |
| I would like to learn languages in Merton. |
| I would like to see more academic courses and less of the 'flower arranging' type. For example, a greater variety of intermediate + language classes, history and politics. |
| i'd like to see more varied courses that expand interests |
| If adult education were to remain in Whatley avenue, then someone would need to sort out the parking situation, which is bad enough when parents collect from the primary school. |
| If it changes other than to improve even more then that will be a terrible loss to the community |
| If Merton Adult Education were to close, it would be one more less learning facility for people over fifty who need a good and safe environment to be with other people and distract themselves from isolation and loneliness. There is an aging population who is fighting to stay healthy and involved with life and do not like to sit and at home and watch tv all the time. |

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| If services are going to be shared in the future, then perhaps the council could look at providing a wider range of classes/courses in particular languages. Also would like a broader range in the evening. Also there should be encouragement to get young people i.e. under 30 years to take classes. |
| If the council let Whatley become other than what it is today it will have lost a gem in the community that it will never recover. I know that public transport is limited but people who have a real desire to help themselves will cope with transport issues. |
| If the management actually had any idea how to market the courses MAE would not have to get together, make a decision, then ask people to complete a survey. |
| If the process is managed well, we can all benefit from a fresh approach and no one need suffer. But this will require clarity and bravery as well as non-partisan professionalism from all those involved in the process. |
| If this facility is closed by Merton it will be a very sad loss as it is something that makes a huge difference to peoples lives. |
| If Whatley does close and if my son can get into another college (SCOLA and Merton) what guarantee have we got that he can do his English for a man of 37 years being told sorry you cannot do English or any other lesson, his confidence would plummet. |
| if you close whatley you will change the surrounding area for the worse we can not take more flats more car parking .there is the school to consider you can not hem in the children it would be unsafe for there well being |
| I'm really pleased the council has explicitly ruled out ending adult education provision. This is a reassuringly clear commitment. |
| In addition to my own personal needs Whatley Ave has a 45% learning support / difficulty base who rely on the college to provide essential life skills for people to live an independent life. Shutting the college would be utterly devastating to these people. |
| In addition to my remarks about the quality of Merton's services I would like to emphasize the learning from aunty aspect. Bringing aunty or more likely grannies and grandpas nearer to children could be of immense benefit. These generations are increasingly separated in culture and often geographically. Perhaps not too close some would say, I want my space, but getting on with a child is heaven. |
| In recent years there has been upgrading at Whatley Avenue. i.e. a new purpose-built art block and a new entrance with disabled access. it would be a pity if these resources were wasted. |
| In the past I have been a student at MAE learning the skill of teaching. I now work as a teacher for them and I am teaching body movement skills to people with disabilities. Their needs are not being considered in this action to close this site. Furthermore, ongoing study and learning is important to the individual and society as a whole. Adult education should be treated as a necessary service and for the well-being for all, as an ideal. |
| Incredibly important to keep to a higher standard as possible. |
| It a vital service in the Community, one which needs investment and better marketing. It caters to such a diversity of students and works in tandem with other important council services such as employment, care, the elderly, education, sport and many more. |
| It brings tears to eyes knowing the Whatley Avenue venue might be closed down. I think it will be a great loss to Merton Borough |
| It feels very much that the administration has made its mind up already. With issues like this, a change in mindset might be needed. Why not consult first, with a genuinely open mind, and then make the decisions on how to move forward? Instead, the administration makes a decision then seeks whatever validation it can find. Indeed, a different approach could be taken to the question of the whole budget, rather than just asking people on how to make specific pre-determined cuts to a specific service. |
| It has completely changed my life. I am happily self employed in my new career. |
| It is a very important service that provides training & support needs in the community to all of its learners |
| it is a vital resource and merton will be a poorer place without it |
| It is a vital resource for the people of Merton specifically so keep it and consider funding arrangements in another way |
| It is a vital service for adults with learning disabilities. Important for the elderly |
| It is an essential public resource |
| It is an important service to people living here. |
| It is crucial for adult education to continue in Merton. Classes in other boroughs are already over-subscribed and if Merton ceases provision it would be more difficult for people to enrol. Vocational courses are essential for those seeking employment and other courses fulfil learning needs of others. The concept of Life Long Learning for everyone is vitally important! |
| It is essential that it provides a mix to support those wishing to extend their education, gain a new interest/hobby and to support those for whom this is a transition from schooling. It is also essential to provide courses for the "elderly" or unemployed to avoid loneliness and the depression that his brings. |
| It is essential that the Council to not whitewash over this. They have a bad reputation for making their decision, taking advice/representations and then totally ignoring them and doing what they wish to do. I hope this will not be the case with Adult Education but somehow I doubt it. |
| It is helping me to change my career at a difficult time. I am very grateful. |
| It is important for many people who do not have academic skills, that they have an outlet in practical and artistic ones. this |

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| enables them to feel individuals. Computing studies are also important. Physical education - e.g. tai chi - keeps people fit. the social aspects help to keep people happy. Happy people do not suffer from clinical depression. |
| It is important that the Council continue to take on this responsibility. It would be criminal to sell Whatley Avenue site to potential developers or faith schools as is the current threat. The site is a wonderful place for people from all walks of life and much appreciated. Please do not take the 'easy way out'. |
| It is important to continue the service so that adults can improve their qualifications, skills and hobbies. |
| It is important to continue to provide AE in Merton. |
| It is really crucial to keep the interest in people when they retire. They must not stay at home becoming a vegetable and getting bored. |
| It is vital for the employment, social and psychological well-being of the community. |
| It is vital that Merton continues to provide adult education in the future whether it is for those who are keeping their mind occupied or for those that need to learn new skills to enhance their work/life. |
| It must be maintained, and at all costs, accessible to all. |
| It must stay and the Council should cease being pathetic and ensure that the much valued adult education is continued. Once destroyed it will not be replaced |
| It should be continued |
| It should be kept by the council and not farmed out to organisations whose prime motivation is profit. Merton Council should stop paying lip service to what already exists and should have a great and more intimate knowledge of what is already provided under difficult circumstances (budget cuts, etc.) and properly understand the needs of learning disabled adults. You cannot make decisions if you don't know the implications for them. You have a moral as well as a legal responsibility to take care of the less advantaged. The Council seems to be motivated by selling and developing the land - redistributing the service elsewhere is just a smokescreen. This has been borne out by the fact that The Council had not properly costed the other options and could not demonstrate figures when challenged: this is appalling. |
| It should be kept in Wimbledon itself where it is and certainly not moved outside Wimbledon. |
| It should be maintained "in house" otherwise the whole ethos will "fall apart" and the provision be reduced in its effectiveness. |
| It should continue to provide education for adults!!!! |
| It should exist and be of good quality. |
| It should not be decided upon in a rushed manner, but needs careful consideration. If Merton does not provide suitable & appropriate adult education within the borough it will be failing in its obligations to its citizens. If people find other providers, they will not return to Merton. |
| It should not be undervalued in regard to the social benefit it provides to people who might otherwise not interact with others. |
| It should stay as it is. It has done and is continuing to do a great job. |
| It was a facility that I much enjoyed 10 years ago and think it is v important for our community that it should be available today. |
| It will be a shame if the collage ceased and I will have to look for other places |
| It will be a very great shame to reduce Adult Education in Merton just because of a short-term shortfall in funding. |
| It would be a disaster if Merton Adults was to close. |
| It would be a great loss to shut down MAE it ha offered great opportunities to adults who were vulnerable and those who are disabled |
| It would be a real shame if Merton Council were to close Whatley Ave (presumably so it could sell the site) and loose this valuable facility that a high number of local people rely on and enjoy. |
| It would be an absolute tragedy if Merton decided to no longer offer adult ed. courses either for self improvement or for people like me to enjoy doing Pilates classes to get a healthy body, both of these are always being promoted by the government and NHS. CARRY ON THE GOOD WORK. Do not be tempted to "cut and run". |
| Items like cheese and wine tasting should have a lower priority when focusing on funding - greater emphasis should be made on English and Maths, health and job-related training and improvement. |
| It's an excellent facility and I hope staff, officers and Councillors will fight hard to retain it. |
| It's an excellent facility which I've used many times in the past and which I will continue having an interest in. The teachers are a highly influential element of the centre therefore it's extremely important to support & ensure good quality staff are employed to drive the centre & continue attracting interest. |
| It's my wish to maintain the learning courses at Whatley because am yearning for more courses in future. |
| It's so important to keep Merton Adult Education going! Education is such a important think, we should not allow to Merton became borough without such facilities. |
| Keep it in-Borough with a partnership agreement |
| Keep it as and where it is! |
| Keep it as it is. |
| Keep it as it is. Reduce spending on other services |
| Keep it at Whatley Avenue please |
| Keep it in Merton - keep a facility in this area. |

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| Keep MAE within Merton Borough control. Outsourcing may cost more long-term and the course quality control would be difficult. |
| Keep MAE. Don't choose a worse option. |
| Keep up the quality of good teachers. Do a thorough survey to see where costs be cut in existing set-up. You are offering a quality of life that is vital to preserve. We don't want to lose it. |
| Keep your pledge and maintain Adult Education as is, in our Borough. It is an investment in the people of this Borough; their health, well-being, economic power, future potential, health and well-being. The value adult education provides to many is huge. The wide variety of students who attend are testament to that; ranging from those with disabilities, carers, those looking to return to work, who are lonely, those in need of new skills or training in order to start, or get back into work etc. These benefits are hard to quantify in terms of financial cost but the cost of not having them in terms of unemployment, community care, loneliness and healthcare probably far outweighs the cost of keeping it going. To break up, move, alter or lose this provision would be such a big mistake. |
| Learning is our future because we are looking for jobs and it is really helping me and my friends who are learning MAE. After I learn English, I built my confidence and I don't need any one to translate when I go to my GP. I like to continue other courses from MAE. |
| leave it alone, it is providing an excellent service and you do not have to fix something that is not broke! |
| Life long learning is v important for everyone. Course fees should enable all residents to access courses, concessions should not rely on receiving Benefits. |
| Local adult learning forms such an important part of our borough. It enhances the pride in one's own borough and the feeling of community. Having attended various course over the last three decades, the gradual emergence of more and more administration staff and administration requirements have really astounded me. I am convinced that a number of excellent teaching staff feel this burden and are actually leaving. Reducing costs in the admin area should be looked at seriously. Art courses spring to my mind: Most adults who attend do this as a hobby, not to gain a certificate. They do it to meet other people and to widen their horizon without the need for a proof. It is unnecessary and almost makes a mockery for a teacher having to write individual learning reports. Adult learning is not just learning a specific subject but also, importantly, keeping adults open to new ventures and pastimes. |
| Losing Whatley Avenue would mean losing a trusted and valuable local community base |
| MAE has a unique delivery of adult education. Going for the commissioning model would only lead to the fragmenting of the provision and loss of control over quality. Even quality assurance processes would not prevent a disjointed approach and the fact that people answering bids are only do so for their own profit making/ income generation. |
| MAE in Wimbledon is a great place to learn. Teaching is in really high standard, and i'm very happy about it. Also the fact that English course is for free is extremely important for me. I wan't be able to pay for it. |
| MAE is a full and lively college, people of all ages and abilities are under one roof aiming to learn something they either need or want to learn. |
| MAE is a good adult learning centre |
| MAE management needs immediate replacement at senior level. They need an effective and challenging governing body. Talk to SCOLA's principal to see how it's done. Retire Simon Williams. |
| MAE should continue to provide a range of leisure courses. I am 71 years old and retired, so I am not interested in vocational courses. |
| Make no change! |
| Make sure it continues to be just that, Adult Education and in Merton. |
| Make sure that there is an enthusiastic supporter of local education in an influential position on the council. |
| Many people take adult courses for social interaction and to have somewhere to go. Loneliness and isolation are huge problems for people and a burden on other services. Maintaining a good selection of adult courses goes far beyond qualifications. |
| Merton Adult Education is a valuable asset to the Merton community. |
| Merton Adult education must remain. Just a few years ago a new complex was built for the art section. Why should this go to waste? I have been attending classes for many years and gradually noticed more and more administration creeping in which does not have the slightest benefit to the courses. Savings should be carried out in that area in the first instance. This area is where the hidden costs lie. |
| Merton adult Education should remain exactly as it is. |
| Merton needs an Adult Education provider which is hub where people from all communities can come together to learn. |
| Merton should have adult education centres no matter who the provider is |
| Merton should NOT let itself down by closing further education lessons, especially for ESN young adults and others with learning difficulties. Inexcusable!! |
| Modernizing the facilities and quality of teaching staff. |
| More focus on skills, especially IT. |
| More job related qualification courses |
| My middle-aged neighbour suffers from autism and regularly uses your facilities to improve his quality of life i.e. learning to use a computer and socialising. He would be absolutely devastated if access to courses in Whatley Avenue was removed. |
| n/a |

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| Need to know on a year by year basis what the actual demand is for courses and if there is preference for a particular course |
| Needs to be cost effective and of a high standard. |
| No |
| no courses should be totally free for students as it lessens the incentive to attend and complete the course. likewise none should be prohibitively expensive to exclude. |
| No point, is there? |
| Not only is adult education important to develop hobbies interests and skills it also forms a basis to link community in Merton. |
| On a personal basis I have benefitted considerably by attending MAE courses over several years, ranging from sports, cookery, languages, photography and art. I am impressed by the high standard of teaching and good facilities. From a wider perspective, I strongly feel that it would be particularly disruptive for the students with learning difficulties, disabled students and ESOL students if Whatley Avenue closes. There is concern about other providers having sufficient resources, for example, South Thames College has waiting lists for ESOL students. |
| Once MAE is gone it can never be replaced. The council seem to have forgotten that Adult Education was set up in more austere times than now. Please be mindful of what you are destroying. |
| only that the future of adult education in Merton should receive priority. |
| Our current adult education service in Merton is a fantastic resource that should be saved and built upon. |
| Our libraries have been closed - put down to build flats - more money to councils. I pay my rates, which is over Â£100 per month. As said this is my only way of socialising and pleasure. Good for my well being. |
| Over the years I have taken several courses at MAE, some of them have been for relaxation and pleasure and some have improved my career and led directly to employment. All of my experiences have been extremely positive, this has been made possible by the expertise of the tutors and friendliness and knowledge of the non teaching staff. The centre at Whatley provides a supportive and inclusive atmosphere that I have not encountered at other colleges. |
| Pensioners have paid their taxes and should not be seen as irrelevant apart from voting... |
| perhaps not revelent, but PLEASE could the classes start on time. If most of the class have arrived on time, why should we give the late commers "just another ten minutes" ? It puts up the price per hour of tuition considerably, and also you lose a couple of hours or so over a term |
| Please do not close it down. It is a very important part of my life. I have been coming here to do a course for the last 10 years. I am wheelchair-bound and find getting out of my house to learn new techniques very important to my well-being. |
| Please do not underestimate the value of the classes that are not obviously work related. I have been doing adult education classes for years and started my own business using the skills I learnt there - I still use the techniques today but these were not 'hard' skills or courses with certificates attached. My learning has helped me pay the bills and I have helped others along the way. The value of adult education to the community is hard to measure - not all it's successes are apparent or measurable, but we must protect them before they are starved out of existence. |
| PLEASE DO YOUR UTMOST TO PRESERVE ADULT EDUCATION AS IT HAS GENERALLY, IN ALL BOROUGH, BEEN WHITTLED DOWN OVER THE YEARS. IT CAN ASSIST EOPLE IN WORK AND IS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN MAINTAINING THE EMOTIONAL AND ALSO PHYSICAL HEALTH OF ELDERLY PEOPLE. IN THE LONG TERM IT SAVES MONEY. |
| please don't destroy adult education centres now as then they will be lost forever. we need to have adult centres throughout our community to keep us united and physically and mentally healthy |
| Please don't get rid of this facility. It's an amazing place to learn. They don't blow their own trumpets often enough. |
| Please don't lost this service! You have very committed tutors who go above and beyond for their students. We have a huge amount of experience with a very large range of disabilities who are part of the community. |
| Please don't underestimate the personal impact the removal or change of the current system will have on students. There are many quality of life measures that are used in healthcare cost analyses that could be applied to this consultation to help with overall cost calculations. This will help make the assessment more objective than subjective. These include values that NICE utilise in appraising medicines and health technologies. I'd be happy to provide further comment on this if you wish as it's related to my profession (caroline.kelly18@gmail.com). |
| Please ensure that there is a future for Adult Education in Merton. |
| Please ensure that this continues. Personally as I am in full time employment and able to absorb extra costs in order to maintain quality and diversity of courses available, but would hope that concessionary places could be preserved at similar cost. |
| Please keep. |
| Please leave it as is and look elsewhere to make your budget cuts..... |
| Please make sure this service is continued for the whole of the community. I feel that all ages can benefit from different activities which can connect all members of our borough and encourage understanding. |
| Please regard it highly |
| Please remember those who need this most - the people with learning difficulties and disabilities, mental health problems and those who would otherwise be isolated in their homes. |
| Please retain Whatley Avenue centre - essential to foster local community spirit. |
| Provide mind-stretching courses aimed at the retired eg. philosophy |
| Publicising the courses is important. |

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| Quality of teaching is most important but there needs to be some support when new students arrive i.e. someone to direct them to correct room. |
| Retain and look after your current outstanding language teachers! You won't know the quality of what you've got 'til they're gone. (To paraphrase Joni Mitchell....) |
| Save MAE - once gone it will be gone forever and local people will lose out. |
| Should continue |
| Some courses take too long to come back or the class numbers is too small,so the spaces are limited. |
| Someone needs to overhaul the current set-up - fast - and recruit a whole new management team to take it over. |
| South Thames college are not really interested in the sort of classes that MAE offers - these classes would die |
| Thank you for discounting option 6. |
| That it should encourage people in the more deprived part of the Borough to participate, instead of just being a subsidised social club for lampshade makers in the village |
| The availability of support during week to help with the course. |
| The benefits of adult education include better health, less isolation, improved quality of life and a sense of community. |
| The Council has a duty to provide adult education- without providing this invaluable service, financial costs on other services such as social care are very likely to increase. The current service is used by a wide range of people including vulnerable and disabled adults as well as carers and the elderly. |
| The council provides a much needed service, outsourcing has shown to be inefficient, quality decreases almost immediately and the persons who lose out are the ones who need it most. |
| The current provision is good, but could be better. |
| The decision to close Merton Adult college is being pushed through in an election year so as the decision can be blamed on the deficit the rest of the country is in. To obscure the fact that the site is to be sold off as so much of the council housing already sold off. |
| The excellent provision for adult education that we currently have in the borough is something that has been built up through the years. We should value this resource and strive to keep it. Adult education provides a lifeline for many people such as the elderly, people with mental health issues and many others. |
| The future must not die. |
| The initial consultation report issued by the council was filled with a number of significant inaccuracies on areas such as ;how MAE is funded, disparities with the deprived areas in the borough and the cost of the service. If the drive to support the commissioning process is based on the desire to sell off the Whatley Avenue site the council should be honest enough to admit it rather than create a veil of lies denigrating MAE in order to justify their decisions. |
| The lack of a return address on this consultancy form raises questions about its legitimacy. The timing of this consultation is inappropriate given that MAE sites are closed for the festive period and many students will be away. |
| The merton adult education wimbledon should not be closed |
| The mix of ages, gender and ability in the same venue is part of the quality of the learning experience. |
| The overwhelming view of the residents who attended the 2 December meeting was that without Whatley Avenue, MAE would be a far less attractive provider of courses to students and prospective students in the London Borough of Merton and neighbouring areas. It is therefore essential to preserve it as a resource and the officers of Merton should proceed with whichever of the five options that is most likely to achieve this outcome. |
| The present provision is excellent, and if it makes a small loss, then it should be fined tuned and the charges and some of the operating costs adjusted. It is much more high risk to switch to an untried new arrangement than to refine and adjust the existing one. |
| The review is an important opportunity to set the best long term path for adult education in Merton. While value for money is important, the key criterion must be securing the right provision for the people of Merton. The chosen path must also be one that has the flexibility to meet future needs. This means ensuring there is enough flexibility in any legal arrangements to adapt the service provision to changing requirements. |
| The service is a community asset. Whatley Avenue is a community asset. Options 2 to 5 represent a reduction in services by the Council to the community. The Durham Adult Education Service documents on commissioning suggest that the cost of quality assurance and quality control of commissioned services would be prohibitive. I would like to feel proud of my Council's stance on adult education rather than worried that it is going to reduce the service to the community and neglect its (admittedly non-statutory) responsibility for provision |
| The service is good as its delivered in a small venue , its approachable for those lacking confidence and returning to study |
| The site is right in front of Joseph Hood Primary School. A school with no street frontage is very vulnerable if the site right at their entrance is sold for commercial or residential use. This should be seriously considered in any planning and the school consulted at every stage. |
| The teachers that I have come across at MAE on four different courses over the last 10 years have been very dedicated and go above and beyond what would normally be expected. I suspect that they could earn more teaching elsewhere, but choose to provide their services to the Council for Adult Education. They may not choose to work for an outsourced provider and hence the quality of teaching in a Council environment may fall. Any outsourced provider will want to make a profit on the teaching contract as they are in business to do so. MAE is not - it is there to be a non-profit making provider of services (admittedly not to run at a loss) - the two models are in direct conflict. |

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| There has been much talk of bridging the gap between the east and the west of the borough. Whilst this is laudable in principal, it's unfair to use this as an argument now when adult ed facilities in the east of the borough have already been closed by the council. |
| There has obviously been large sums of money spent on the building and equipment which would have been wasted if the facility were to close. Please try to keep the courses running and cut down on administration staff |
| There is a lack of interest in this consultation regarding the content of the classes the ability of lecturers. The course "London through the eyes of ten artists" is interesting, with excellent teaching. Will it continue. |
| There needs to be a provision that is regulated correctly and provides the facilities that are currently available. |
| They are doing very well. I'm happy about my tutors. I'm happy to study here. I'm totally enjoyed and learn a lot from here. |
| They are selling off merton property, soon they will be nothing to sell off |
| This centre has bettered my health, job prospects and has helped me get back into the workforce. |
| This is a basic necessity available to all but especially for those with a learning disability. |
| This is a service/facility that once gone will never be replaced and current users will find their lives diminished as a result. It is a service that most users find is a life line at some point in their lives. |
| This is a vital service that needs continue being offered |
| This is a well run, stimulating AE college which provides both recreational and vocational courses to a wide ranging number of people. It enriches lives and certainly means a lot to the learners of all ages who attend classes. They come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and all ages integrate well with one another. |
| This is an important service for now & the future. Once lost it would be very difficult to re-establish |
| This offers a lifeline to people with disabilities, special needs and financially disadvantaged and for those who have missed out on a basic education |
| To help ease the funding shortfalls, suggest that the better off be invited to pay higher fees for the courses. To avoid applying unavoidably unpopular means testing, a voluntary contribution above the minimum specified fee should be requested. |
| Too many course seem pitched at a very low level and aimed at non-native speakers of English. |
| v |
| Very valuable to the community, not just economically but socially and cultural. Accessibility important - timing of courses, transport options. |
| Vital that adult education continues. The present format is not a bad model but could be improved by having staff and student input into governance |
| Vital that the council has its own strong presence in SW London. This is a no-brainer, and how the council can be thinking of outsourcing, downsizing and selling Whatley Ave is a matter of grave concern to any thinking, dare I say, sentient, rate payer in the Borough. IF THEY WERE TOLD. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS HAS BEEN LESS THAN OPEN, HASTY, and thoroughly undemocratic. |
| Whateley avenue school is a purpose built learning centre with every facility..close to public transport and well thought of and known by locals as far away as Surbiton, Tolworth,Kingston....if i have any comment it should be advertised better and please don,t pull it down and turn it into accommodation. |
| whatley shutting doesnt stop college courses happening in Merton so will not have a massive impact. However if this stays open it may mean somewhere else has to shut. |
| Whatley's students and tutors live local and therefore it would be extremely difficult for students to travel a long distance to attend evening classes. ESOL evening classes are mainly for immigrants who work during the day and need to improve their English in order to progress and contribute in the economy. |
| When making the final discission Cabinet need to consider Customer Service Strategy: Putting our customers at the heart of our business. Is this what your customers want? Providing services that meet our customersâ€™ needs. Will the customers needs be met through the commissioning model? Making services and information accessible to everyone. Understanding our customersâ€™ needs and wants. Communicating clearly and openly. Dealing with complaints proactively. Keeping our customers informed. Treating everyone with dignity, respect and courtesy. Will customers opinions be taken into account or are they following party lines? |
| Where are the A level courses part-time or evening for adults or intending uni entrants who want to improve their grades. No where for adults to do these in Merton, Sutton, Croydon, Richmond, anywhere. MAE is useless; beauty, childcare, cookery, creative arts etc not serious. And note that IT is just using programmes, and it aint computing - waste of time. There isn't any serious academic qualification based A level study available for adults in Merton, it's a joke. MAE? If only it were. |
| Whilst it is clearly important to have vocational training available to help people into work there are thousands of people for whom work is less important either because they are caring for others or retired, and probably other reasons. A rich variety of courses is required to enrich the lives of all the residents in a borough. |
| Why is a proposed new leisure centre more important than Adult Education in Merton Borough Council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee? |
| With an ageing population Adult Education courses are a vital resource for those who are retired and want to stay active in the community. |
| Working class people can only survive by gaining education. Please don't close our college! |

| |
|---|
| Would be helpful if teachers did not openly discuss and talk about any student to another student, which is of a personal nature, which does happen within MAE, Whatley Avenue. |
| Would like to have more GCSE English class and Science class in the future. |
| Yes KEEP IT. Don't go to commissioning as that will make it something that is only bound by monetary considerations and not the real interests and needs of the people |
| Yes, it is important to young and old and should be kept local for local people and as broadranging as possible. It is essential to some for jobs, others for company, for skills for personal development. All sorts of things. |
| You will make money out of Merton AE if you provide courses that private providers make money out of ..such as cooking courses (other than catering)...like Thai, Chinese, Indian, Italian. Or compact refresher courses for parents to help their kids either at 11+ or at GCSE. I could never get a place in the history of Art class...so if its that popular why don't you increase the fees or double the times its run. If you are not making money as you currently are then you need to rethink your client base. |

Demographics

| Step 3:19.00-1:Gender | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| This single response question was answered by 630 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Male | 161 | 25.56% |
| Female | 469 | 74.44% |
| Step 3:20.00-1:Age group | | |
| This single response question was answered by 648 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Under 16 | 1 | .15% |
| 16-24 | 20 | 3.09% |
| 25-34 | 73 | 11.27% |
| 35-44 | 116 | 17.9% |
| 45-54 | 156 | 24.07% |
| 55-64 | 135 | 20.83% |
| 65-74 | 124 | 19.14% |
| 75 or over | 23 | 3.55% |
| Step 3:21.00-1:Ethnicity | | |
| This single response question was answered by 640 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British | 418 | 65.31% |
| White – Irish | 31 | 4.84% |
| White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 2 | .31% |
| White - Any other White background | 62 | 9.69% |
| Black or Black British - Caribbean | 20 | 3.13% |
| Black or Black British - African | 9 | 1.41% |
| Black or Black British - Any other Black background | 9 | 1.41% |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 15 | 2.34% |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 6 | .94% |
| Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi | 2 | .31% |
| Asian or Asian British - Chinese | 18 | 2.81% |
| Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background | 11 | 1.72% |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean | 5 | .78% |

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African | 2 | .31% |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian | 7 | 1.09% |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - Any other Mixed background | 7 | 1.09% |
| Other ethnic group - Arab | 1 | .16% |
| Other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group | 15 | 2.34% |
| Step 3:22.00-1:Disability | | |
| This single response question was answered by 645 respondents. | | |
| Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
| Yes | 96 | 14.88% |
| No | 549 | 85.12% |

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Appendix F – Additional submissions



8 December 2014

Yvette Stanley
Director of Children, Schools and Families
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX

SPONSOR
Lord Harris of Peckham
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Dr. Daniel Moynihan *B.A., M.A., D.Sc. (Econ)*

Dear Yvette

Harris Free School Wimbledon

I understand that you are consulting on the future of the adult education service and a proposal to move to a service that is commissioned from others to provide the courses. I also understand that if this policy is adopted the Adult Education Centre at Whatley Avenue will be surplus to requirements. I would like to confirm our very strong interest in using the site and building for the Free school we have applied to the DFE to open in Wimbledon. The geographical location works well providing good transport links from and to the area we seek to serve.

We will, if you are content with that, now begin work with the Education Funding Agency to establish the feasibility of opening the Free School at that site and the budget required to adapt the buildings to meet our brief.

Yours sincerely

Sir Dan Moynihan
Chief Executive

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
9th Jan 2015

Geed Curran
Chief Executive
LBM



Dear Mr. Curran,

I am one of the many people who attend the over 150 courses offered by Merton Adult Education, mainly at Whatley Avenue.

As a pensioner I love the opportunity of joining one of their excellent Adult Education Aot classes which caters for all ages. You name a Creative Aot and you will find a course and premises equipped for it at Whatley Avenue.

The thought of the young of working age and mature students in Merton being denied the opportunity to extend their education and gain qualifications and expertise to help their employment prospects is really depressing. The attendees with special needs or learning disabilities who feel so at home at Whatley Avenue would be devastated if it were to close.

Disrupting all these good things in favour of uncertain and possibly inferior alternatives is not worthy of Merton Council and I ask you to rethink your proposal to close Merton Adult Education.

Yours faithfully,
Page 185

October 24, 2014.

[REDACTED] /CR69N

Stained + Fused Glass

Although I was unable to attend the meetings this week, I have been informed of the details & would like my comments to be included in the concerns of many regarding the closure of Whalley Avenue College.

As a self-employed Mum, leisure time is scarce & my stained glass class provides a very important creative outlet for artistic productivity. I have always aspired to study stained glass but was unable to when in full time employment.

I have now enjoyed this unique course for 3 years, where all aspects of stained glass, fused glass, copper foiling & design can be explored + studied. Our teacher, Mona Fagan is supportive, outstanding & highly creative + the location is ideal with limited time to spend of travel.

Additionally, my fellow class-mates + working environment on the course provide an invaluable source of support, insight + inspiration. It is a community, enjoyed by a wide range of individuals with a common interest, unified by our tutor & a class that is truly edifying & enjoyable, promoting great personal achievement.

Please do not take this from us.

Yours faithfully,



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

28th October 2014

Mr G Curran,
Chief Executive,
London Borough of Merton,
Civic Centre,
London Road,
Morden,
Surrey SM4 5DX.

Dear Mr Curran,

Re Merton Adult Education

I understand that Merton Adult Education (MAE) is currently under review by Merton Council with the possibility of closure, or a significant reduction in the courses that it offers. I am writing to urge you to support MAE in maintaining its current service.

I have been a Merton resident for twenty five years and consider the MAE to be a key asset of the Borough. I have attended several courses with MAE in a variety of subjects. In particular, I learnt Spanish from beginners level and was proud eventually to be awarded a GCSE.

I have been struck by the number and variety of Merton residents who attend courses, including adults of all ages and backgrounds. In particular, I have been impressed by the MAE's support for those with disabilities.

The tutors I have had the privilege to be taught by have all been unfailing patient and supportive. They often go above and beyond what is expected to help their students succeed. One tutor was so keen that we do well in our course that she ran extra classes at weekends, without any extra remuneration.

I am currently attending a guitar class for beginners with other enthusiastic Merton residents ranging in age from those in their twenties to some long past retirement. It would be a great shame if, due to the possible closure of the MAE or a significant reduction in the classes it can offer, we were never to progress beyond the beginners level! More importantly, Merton residents generally would cease to have access to the opportunities that the MAE brings and I believe that the Borough would be educationally and culturally poorer for it.

I ask that you and your colleagues support the continuation of MAE in its provision of a wide range of courses for the residents of Merton.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

cc. Mr S Williams, Director of Community & Housing, London Borough of Merton.



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Curran

Merton Adult Education

I realize this will not be your first and doubt very much if will be the last regarding the M.A.E Centre.

What a shock our class received when we were told that the above centre in Whatley Avenue has been threatened with closure, where next.

As you are know doubt fully aware this facility caters for numerous adults from many walks of life, the under privileged, adults with disabilities, retarded, deaf to name but a few.

Many attend to gain qualifications to enable them to get employment, others are learning to cook plus being taught how to look after themselves. When I retired I started attending classes and it has given me a new lease of life, I'm certainly not the only one to have done this. These new interests keep me busy doing things that I never had time for when I was working full time, plus doing voluntary work in the community.

Recently there have been numerous reports in the press, on television and on the radio, encouraging the older members in our communities to get out and mix with others, so keeping themselves busy physically and mentally.

I really think that people in your position don't look ahead, especially as people are living longer. Put the boot on the other foot, think about the future when you and your nearest and dearest retire, where will they go. So if you close down M.A.E there will be no where for us to go and will have to stay at home twiddling our thumbs, watching TV and vegetating.

So why, why, why do you want to deprive adults from improving themselves by learning new skills and stop going gaga.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

21st October 2014

Ged Curran
Chief Executive
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX



Dear Sirs

Re: Merton Adult Education – Possible Closures.

I have just begun another term in Mrs J Hannah's pottery class, at the Whatley Avenue, SW20, Centre.

I do hope that this college will not be closed, and would highlight some reasons for not doing so.

1. The tuition is very good. Demonstrations are clear, and plenty of guidance and encouragement is given. Mrs Hannah loves her job, and endeavours to give as much individual attention as possible.
2. Although a beginners' class, many students return year after year, and their expertise is often shared, with a word here and there, with newcomers such as myself.
3. I am proud of the work that I have produced, which is partly because I am being well taught. We are encouraged to view the works of famous potters, and to incorporate our own ideas in new projects, and to explore and try new techniques, which have been demonstrated first.
4. Each session is a creative couple of hours. It is very satisfying to come home with something to show and hopefully please.
5. I believe my self-confidence has improved as a result.
6. The class is a happy class, bringing contentment to a number of people, which in turn can have a ripple effect. We may not all start our own businesses, but at least we can speak of the virtues of making pots, not least to the younger generation.
7. This course and other Adult Education courses which Merton provides, provide the seeds for many Cottage Industries, which could be a blueprint for teaching our children. They could well benefit, becoming more self-reliant, and, who knows, self-employed.

Yours Faithfully

[REDACTED]

cc Simon Williams, Director of Community & Housing



[Redacted]

Ged Curran,
Chief Executive,
London Boro of Merton,
Merton Civic Centre,
London, Rd. SM4 5DX
Morden, SM4 5DY

1st November, 2014

Re MERTON ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE REVIEW

Whately Avenue London SW20 9NS

Dear sir/madam

We were shocked to discover that there is very good chance MAE will be closing and that our Adult Education Art class will cease.

All art classes at Whately Avenue are well subscribed and cater for all sections of the community, including special needs, learning disabilities and rehabilitation, and age groups from 18 to 80 and beyond.

We are all devastated and disillusioned and think this is unfair and unnecessary.

This also goes against the principles of LEARNING FOR LIFE advocated by successive political parties.

Where are all these people to go?

The proposed alternatives are grossly unsuitable for MAE students for various reasons.

MY MAIN CONCERNS ARE

I am 83 years old and I have attended the Art classes at Whately Avenue, London, S.W.20 9NS for 26 years. During my years of retirement I have enjoyed and learnt a lot from these classes. We have an excellent teacher, Mrs. Angela Lukaszewicz. I think it is important that the more mature students should have the use of local facilities to improve their skills and enjoy their hobbies, to keep their minds alert.

I would ask you please to use your influence to keep our College open for us and future students.
We ask you to reconsider this dreadful proposal.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature]

Mature Student.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

January 15th 2015

Kris Witherington
London Borough of Merton
Council Offices
Morden SM4 5DX

Dear Mr Witherington,

Re Consultation on the future provision of Merton Adult Education

STROKE SURVIVOR GROUP MEMBER VIEWS

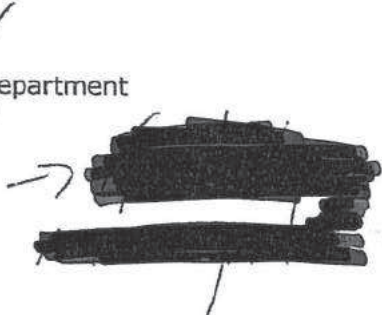
As I mentioned in my recent email, I am now enclosing communications from the Stroke Survivors Group that meets at MAE. This material (it includes a letter, signatures to the SaveMAE petition and art work created by group members) is submitted as part of the current public consultation on the future of Merton Adult Education.

You will see that the art work expresses the importance for the stroke survivors of the art class that they attend (some mention other classes they attend also). I would be very grateful if you would ensure that the art work is seen by the Cabinet members considering views expressed during the consultation. To help with this, I will also email PDFs of the art work to you.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]

Simon Williams
Community and Housing Department
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden SM4 5DX



20 December 2014

Dear Mr Williams

Merton Adult Education

I am writing to you because Wimbledon WI are very concerned about the threat to close Merton Adult Education. We would like you to make sure that our concerns are taken into account during consultations, discussions and decisions.

This service has been providing excellent courses across the borough for many years. The council's consultation paper states "The MAE college is a successful service delivering high quality education to the people of Merton and contributing to the council's economic development priorities." It has an OFSTED rating of 'Good' and "has delivered savings whilst improving outcomes for learners and broadening the learner base; including groups that were previously under-represented in adult learning."

It provides quality courses and services that are used by people of all ages, abilities, ethnicities and socioeconomic groups from across the borough.

Adult education reaches many people, enriching their lives and has a positive impact on many families and communities. As well as direct educational benefit to individual learners, adult education involves people in community activities, improves mental and physical health, raises aspirations within families and helps people to adapt better to economic and social change. Its role in society is particularly important at these times of recession and economic recovery. It is especially important to protect the strong community networks that exist around adult education. It would be very difficult to replace these practical and effective partnerships if they were broken down by the closure of Merton Adult Education Service.

I am the president of Wimbledon WI, which is part of the National Federation of Women's Institutes which is the largest women's organisation in England and Wales with some 215,000 members. It is an educational charity, committed to the wellbeing of women, their families and communities. The NFWI has been campaigning since 1922 for the continuance and development of adult education. The WI organisation has continually supported lifelong learning since its inception nearly 100 years ago.

Our members are concerned not just for the creative courses that many of us attend. Adult education is an important part of our lives and we feel that, against a challenging economic backdrop, the role of adult education in society will become increasingly important in helping people to develop new skills. The closure of Merton Adult Education will impact on the most disadvantaged learners. It is an important part of all our lives, either personally or as a means to improve the wellbeing and aspirations of the whole community and we hope that you will listen to our concerns. Please find enclosed a petition signed by many of our members.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR JAMES HOLMES
(Conservative, Trinity Ward)



London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden SM4 5DX

Tel: 020 8545 3396 (Civic Centre)
Email: james.holmes@merton.gov.uk

Date: 10 November 2014

Dear Cabinet Member

MERTON ADULT EDUCATION

I am writing to you and your colleagues in advance of the Cabinet meeting this evening to urge that further work is done by the Council on the Merton Adult Education (MAE) service proposals before they go to consultation.

I note that it is not proposed that the service be discontinued and this is welcome. The report sets out as the background a requirement by the Council to find £32million of savings over the next four years. Putting aside whether this figure is accurate, I am concerned that the wider issue is whether the whole premise of the proposed consultation is correct.

It appears that MAE not only breaks even but produces a surplus of up to £124,000 for the Council as set out in the service plan which is a public document. This document suggests that the service meets its own overheads and also makes a significant contribution to the central corporate overhead. I would urge that this matter is fully and properly investigated before instigating a consultation which will have cost implications and cause angst for both staff and students that could be avoided if the reasons for the proposed review are as set out in the report you will consider tonight.

Secondly, I am concerned that the consultation proposal gives a series of seemingly mutually exclusive options rather than allowing for consideration of a mixed approach whereby the core services continue to be delivered at Whatley Avenue whilst, for example, the merits of a back office merger with South Thames College are considered along with the option for some specialised or less popular courses to be commissioned rather than delivered. I believe this mixed solution should form part of the consultation.

Thirdly, I am concerned that it is only a relatively short time ago that the Cabinet endorsed the recommendations of the Adult Skills and Employability task group. The report makes reference to the implementation of the task group's recommendations but it seems that not enough time is being given to see whether these changes will indeed lead to additional sources of revenue for the MAE service to offset any further reductions in funding by the Skills Funding Agency.

In summary, I am asking you to consider a delay in commencing the consultation whilst its premise is established as being correct and until alternatives already endorsed by the Cabinet are allowed to be implemented.

Yours sincerely

Cllr James Holmes
Conservative Education Spokesman

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

October 14th 2014

Yvonne Tomlin
Principal, Merton Adult Education,
Whatley Centre,
Whatley Avenue
London SW20 9NS

Dear Ms Tomlin,

RE: MERTON ADULT EDUCATION and the WHATLEY CENTRE

I have learnt that Merton Council is considering proposals for changes to the provision of Merton Adult Education, or, indeed, for ceasing to provide adult education in the Borough for its residents. I understand that these proposals include the possible sale of the Whatley Avenue site and/or the provision of adult education in conjunction with SCOLA, Wandsworth Adult Education Service or South Thames College.

I would like to register my gravest concern about these. MAE in its present location provides a wealth of learning opportunities and social benefits to those who use its facilities. I am a student in a pottery class and am hoping also to study Italian at MAE. MAE is a central part of my life-long learning in retirement and is therefore beneficial to me as a resident. I stress that for me and for fellow learners, it is not just about learning a subject or some techniques, it is about the enrichment of human experience and quality of life.

I know that all those who attend classes at MAE benefit enormously.

- What they learn may have a direct, positive impact on their employment/employment prospects,
- or may provide challenges and stimulation in retirement,
- some students in 'mainstream' classes are adults with special needs and their MAE class is an important opportunity for them to go out and integrate with other people
- there is provision for classes of learners with special needs
- some students are carers who enjoy a few hours' respite when they attend their MAE class.

The Council is threatening to impose significant educational, creative and social losses on residents. Many of these people will not be able to write themselves to register their objections.

If Merton Council closes the Whatley Avenue centre, it will abandon a significant specialist resource:


- There are specialist creative arts facilities, provided as a result of significant investment by the Council itself;
- There is provision for access, made after the DDA was enacted, at significant expense;
- The Centre is a social hub for people, some of whom are disadvantaged, before and after class.

The Whatley Avenue centre is an asset, and it is one that should continue to be used to serve the community by providing education for adults and making beneficial provision for residents. It is not an asset that should be sold to a private developer so that the capital can contribute to the overall Council budget. I wonder also whether the amount a developer would pay for the site would make such an impact as to justify even in the crudest numerical terms the loss of the site.

I would be very grateful if you would let me know your position on the future of MAE, and any detailed information you are able to share about how SCOLA, LB Wandsworth or South Thames College would provide Merton-based adult education for the residents of Merton.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A large, solid black rectangular redaction covers the signature and any text that might have been present below it.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

22 October, 2014

Dear Mr. Curran,

Re : Proposed closure of Merton Adult Education Centre in Whatley Road, Merton

I was shocked to hear that our college is under serious threat of closure at the end of 2014!!

I am a retired school teacher who has recently rejoined the college's pottery classes run by Karen Tooth and would like to express my dismay regarding the proposed closure of this college. I currently travel from my home to Rayne Park every Thursday to attend a mixed ability class which enables a wide range of people to share a morning of informative and creative dialogue and making in a purpose built specialist room with specific equipment and enthusiastic and experienced teacher.

The classes the college currently offers are excellent and varied and run by highly professional tutors who have dedicated their energy in delivering a lifeline to many different local people. The elderly, the disabled and mentally handicapped as well as young people who are retraining or gaining new qualifications for work are all benefitting hugely from attending these classes. If this college closes it will cause great distress to its current students as Merton will cease to deliver its current adult education classes returning the funding to the Skills Funding Agency or merging with South Thames College by becoming a commissioner of adult education services with Wandsworth.

I personally would like to express my surprise and disappointment if this college's services are curtailed or closed as it is currently delivering a very high standard of education to a cross sector of local people.

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

20 OCT 2014

Merton Adult Education
Whateley Avenue
SW20 9NS

15/10/2014

Dear Sirs,

Having heard of the proposed changes to MAE, I would like to make the following comments.

There is a growing number of adults in the area who would like to continue making good use of their spare time and are willing to pay a significant fee for the opportunity. The feeling generally among the population is that people should be encouraged to continue learning throughout their life. There is also a growing need to provide for people who need to change their career.

The present staff at are consistently helpful and encouraging to people wishing to join classes or indeed just needing directions on the corridors and always offer greetings when they pass you about the building. The two classes I have joined have given exceptional teaching. It would be a tragedy to lose this place.

Therefore I am strongly in favour of MAE continuing as it is, making whatever changes are needed to fit in with immediate needs.

Yours faithfully,

Susan Flatau

[REDACTED]

Yvonne Tomlin,
Head of Community Education, MAE
Whatley Avenue
Morden
Surrey

With reference to: MAE Closure

Dear Yvonne Tomlin,

I am writing to you to express my concern about the MAEC closure and how it will affect me and my tutors.

I have studied at the college for the last thirteen years and during that time I have got eight NVQ's, this has made me more confident in myself and has helped me to act as a carer for my younger sister.

The college benefits me and my husband and sister in helping us to learn English, Math's and different skills. I would like it to stay open so I can learn more skills and pass my level 2 English course with the help of my tutor, Kathryn. I am also learning a lot and doing very well in pottery and stained glass.

I wouldn't want any of my tutors to lose their jobs because of the college closing and I would miss being here in the college and getting to know new students in my different classes from different countries. Coming to college helps me to keep busy and communicate with other people from different communities.

I hope you will stand by me and my college,

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

LOGGED
LETTER SENT

[REDACTED]

28.10.14

Re – Possible Closure of MAE

Dear Ged Curran

It is outrageous to even consider closing Whatley Avenue Adult Education facility!
I am struggling to find any justification that could be offered to support a plan to save money by cutting this vital service.

I have been using Whatley Avenue Centre for many years. I have learnt a great deal and continue to do so. The range and quality of courses there is excellent and I can think of a great number of friends and neighbours in the Borough over the years who have enjoyed the right to improve a skill needed for career purposes or to further an interest by learning more.

For many people attending MAE it is a lifeline and for others, their only outlet. There are older people who need to meet somewhere on a regular basis, socialise with others and spend some time for themselves. There are those who care for an elderly relative for whom it is their only social activity of the week. No price can be put on this – these are people who have worked and paid taxes over decades and who now, need to receive this service in return.

Similarly, there are the special needs students who rely on Whatley Avenue for classes, social interaction and a hot meal at lunchtime. I would welcome any councillor to witness these students at Whatley Avenue on any day of the week with their amazing, patient and skilled teachers and then say that this service should cease.

It is important that there is a college within the Borough where all kinds of people with different needs can meet and interact together.

How could saving money possibly compete with this vital service? It is **our** money from Council Tax and our taxes, which has been given to Merton to spend wisely. I would be surprised if any cuts to this service would meet many Merton Residents' approval.

We can only hope that Merton Council will be swamped with letters against this ludicrous proposal and that public opinion will persuade them to see sense.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ms Yvonne Tomlin
Head of Community Education,
Merton Adult Education at Merton Council
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
London SM4 5DX

18 October 2014

Dear Ms Tomlin

THE FUTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN MERTON

I was appalled to hear at my regular painting lesson last Friday that Merton Adult Education and Whatley College are under serious threat of closure. Whatever has happened to the public declaration that learning should be for life?

I have been a student at Whatley College for the past 17 years, when I retired from full-time employment. I have studied a variety of different topics, sometimes two subjects per term, although now I can only afford to study one subject at time, as the costs have risen far beyond my pension capabilities.

I was under the impression that adult education, for ALL age groups, was a desirable thing, particularly for older people, who need to keep active and socially engaged for their own welfare and to lessen pressure on our increasingly beleaguered National Health Service. Everyone knows that modern health treatments and better living conditions mean that we all have a longer life expectancy: surely it is commonsense to ensure that those older people have facilities provided to keep them active and engaged, and able to play a part in the life of their community. And what about people with special needs and younger people who need to retrain for a new career?

I understand that some of the options under consideration include forming federations with outside adult learning facilities, and tendering the business to an external provider, or allowing another council to take over. All these options are bound to have financial implications, and those of us who are involved in any way with adult education need to be kept closely informed in order to make informed judgments about the best way to proceed – after all, the finances come from us, the council tax payers, and we should at least have a say in how our money is spent.

I think I am not alone in feeling this way. We need to retain a full adult education service in the borough. Please do not allow it to be removed, or curtailed.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Scanned + response sent 4/11/14.

[REDACTED]

23rd October 2014

Chief Executive,
London Borough of Merton,
8th Floor Civic Centre,
London Road,
Morden,
SM4 5DX

Dear Mr Ged Curran,

I have been made aware that it is the council's intension to close the Merton Adult Education centre at Whatley Avenue, Morden.

I have been attending courses there since 2007, shortly after a relapse & diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis. The various courses I have attended have helped me to recover both mentally & physically from these debilitating relapses & ultimately find employment. I now attend courses to maintain my health & for social & recreational purposes. This centre is local to where I live & if it closes the alternatives (ie Scola, South Thames College) would mean additional travelling & parking costs which I can ill afford as I am on a low income & ultimately would mean that I have to give up something that I feel is keeping me well & that I enjoy. Also, there is no guarantee that these alternative centres would run the courses I have enrolled on at an affordable cost & at a convenient time & venue; they may not run them at all. The possible loss of employment of talented personnel & the enrichment that this college gives me, others & the local area should not be ignored just for the short term profit the council would get from selling the property for re-development.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CC: Simon Williams (Community & Housing Dept)
Edward Foley (Councillor-Merton Park)
John Sargeant (Councillor-Merton Park)
Peter Southgate (Councillor-Merton Park)
Siobhan McDonagh (MP Mitcham & Morden)
Yvonne Tomlin (Head of Community Education, MAE)

Scanned + response sent 4.11.14

YVONNE TOMLIN,
HEAD OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION
MAE
WHATLEY AVENUE
LONDON SW20 9NS

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

28th OCTOBER 2014

Dear Ms Tomlin,

Following a current Council review of Merton Adult Education I have been informed the college I attend is under serious threat of closure. I wholeheartedly support our student campaign to ensure the borough retains a full adult education service.

Since retiring I have been enrolling at MAE College in Whatley Avenue for seven years. I have learnt many new skills and been inspired by my tutors in the Creative Hand Embroidery and Drawing To Painting classes.

The tutors are excellent, highly qualified and experience in their subjects, Always encouraging, making lessons interesting and exciting, Giving students confidence and a sense of achievement. I would definitely recommend studying with MAE.

I have made friends and enjoy the companionship. It is very important to keep mind and body active keeping Alzheimers at bay. In some cases helping in the fight to combat isolation and loneliness.

1 of 2.

2.

Many students enrol to acquire a qualification progressing to degree courses and employment. This is essential for the future of our society.

MAE is efficiently run and offers a wide range of courses encompassing a variety of subjects and a student support service. The college has a friendly atmosphere and is the perfect learning environment.

I trust the Council will consider their decision carefully and not close a much needed Adult Education College at Whatley Avenue. It would be a tragedy for all concerned. I do hope you will support our campaign.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction mark covering the signature of the sender.

Scanned and response sent 4/11/14

To ; Yvonne Tomlin, Head of Community Education.
[REDACTED]

31st October, 2014.

Dear Yvonne Tomlin,

As a retired person and as someone who has attended various art class at Merton Adult Education for many years, I would go for option 1. This is providing the changes are not too severe. I hope the changes do not include Art and Craft classes being cut or the prices being too exorbitant. As already stated I am a retired person so I am certainly not taking any courses that entail sitting an exam at the end. My days for taking exams are over. We are always being told that older people should keep their minds active. This is why, as well as younger people attending classes there is a large number of middle aged and older people. Most people who go to Art and Craft classes go for the pleasure of creating something.

What will happen to classes that have people with Special Needs? Also what about the tutors and administration staff. I hope we get some answers soon?

Yours sincerely, [REDACTED]

Copies sent to: Merton Council Members: Ged Curran, Chief Executive, Simon Williams, Head of Community and Housing Services, Paul Ballatt Head of Commissioning Services Merton Mayor, Agatha Akyigina, Councillors : Tobin Byers, Pauline Cowper, and Fidelis Gadzama

London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden,
SM4 5DX



4th November, 2014

Dear Cllr Stephen Alambritis,

Re: changes to Merton Adult Education

I was highly disappointed to hear of the changes being considered in adult education provision in Merton. I am a tutor at the college and would like you to consider these issues.

It is evident there is a widening disparity in the local community and Merton Adult Education has always endeavoured to provide services to close the gap. As well as providing access to learning, MAE supports those seeking employment via training for work, careers advice, and by offering employment within the organisation. MAE has a history of providing education for the whole community ranging from family courses for the under fives through traditional adult education and on to leisure activities for the retired. In addition, MAE takes pride in the social benefits it offers, including crucial support for those with disabilities and informal monitoring of those facing social exclusion and mental health problems in the community.

At the least, the changes will result in diminished services, if not their complete cessation, and further impoverishment. A way to preserve the current institute must be found or jobs and services will be available only to those who can afford to access them privately, or can travel to find them.

MAE is a key provider for those seeking to improve their life chances, and for the most vulnerable in society who require a safe and supportive environment. Evidence of this is found in the number of students enrolled every year and the progress they make. The loss of MAE in its present form, in this vicinity, will be a devaluing of services and detrimental to the local community.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Also emailed via Geal Curran ✓

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
12.11.2014

Dear Ms. Tomlin,

The threatened closure of Merton Adult Education at Whatley Avenue

It will cause sadness to me if closure happens.

I attended the Joseph Hood primary school here during World War II and remember sheltering in the air-raid shelters which surrounded the sports ground during the blitz.

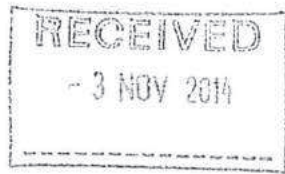
I have attended MAE regularly since retirement and since then have been awarded Celebration of Achievement certificates for stained glass in 2005 and water colours in 2013.

I find it convivial to share classes with other natives of this area, some of whom are pensioners like me, and it is stimulating for my mental activity. (I have sadly witnessed the decline of my deceased sister's mental capacity over 10 years. During that time, Sutton Social Services were deeply involved).

This term's fee for me was £100. There are about 20 students in my class, so I would have thought the total income for the class was sufficient to pay for the tuition.

I know, in my case, the courses I attended were not "vocational", but there are other functions performed by MAE which are beneficial to society.

Yours sincerely,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



[Redacted]

24 October 2014

Mr S Williams
Director of Community and Housing
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX

Dear Mr Williams

Whatley Avenue Adult Education Centre

I recently enrolled at Whatley Avenue Adult Education Centre. I have been waiting to continue my arts and crafts education since I left school over forty years ago. I recently retired and was finally able to enrol in classes. You can imagine how disappointed I was to hear that Whatley Avenue is now under serious threat of closure in 2015. I am sure that Merton Council would agree that opportunities for learning are essential for all age groups and that the closure of this excellent centre would be a great loss to many people.

I have lived in Merton all my life and have seen many changes to the detriment of the community. Please do not add another one.

I hope that the Council are looking at creative ways to keep Whatley Avenue open. It really is a valuable asset.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

have always been his greatest assets and are: his sociability; his knowledge of his own self-worth; and a likeable personality. The M.A.E. has enabled [redacted] to display these characteristics admirably and grow further because of the opportunities that are provided there.

As [redacted] cannot read or write well, it is necessary for me to write on his behalf against the closure of Merton Adult Education but he very much wants to be involved and the following points ^{are comments} that [redacted] has made:

- 1/ I have made friends in the class as well as with many of the staff and I may not see them again if the college closes.
- 2/ I can walk to and back from the College on my own.
- 3/ I feel independent and I know a lot of the staff as well.
- 4/ Angela is a good Teacher and very kind.
- 5/ I want to be a good and better artist.

We ask that you reconsider the proposal of the closure of M.A.E. at Whatley Avenue
Yours faithfully,

cc. Simon Williams,
Yvonne Tentin,
Mr. Stephen Alamburis
Mr. Tobin Byers

Councillor Stephen Alambritis

From: Lucy Hayes - Lucy.Hayes@stroke.org.uk
Sent: 10 November 2014 17:31
To: Councillor Stephen Alambritis
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:- For consideration for your meeting regarding Merton Adult Education
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Importance: High

Dear Mr Alambritis,

I work for the Stroke Association in Merton and Sutton and manage a service which supports stroke survivors with aphasia via 5 groups in the community and 1:1 home visits.

We are all so sorry, shocked and saddened to hear about the possible threat of closure and ceasing of adult education services at the Whatley Centre.

One of our popular and loved groups is our monthly art class at Merton Adult Education. This group has 10 – 12 members and provides such a sense of success, peace, enjoyment and is a source of creative expression and communication. Some members who have severe expressive aphasia and are unable to verbally communicate thrive in having the space to feel confident in creating a piece of work that allows them to express themselves, their personality and creativity.

Our link with Merton adult education started in 2013 when head of art Jill Illife and I discussed having an art teacher to run some art sessions at one of our old group venues in Mitcham. This group was so well attended and popular and had such a therapeutic and positive effect that Jill and I forged a longer-term link and she supported my plan to have an ongoing art group by allowing us to use the art room at the College. It is such a perfect environment for my group members, accessible, safe, supportive and also allows group members to decide if they may like to join another class at the College independently – pottery for example. Group members all have a love of art, some may have lost confidence to try art after their stroke and after the loss of function of one side of their body, and one art group member was of professional artist standard and so was initially unsure about coming along to a group. However, once at the class everyone feel comfortable to try some art and express themselves, try new techniques and creating a picture of their interpretation and personality and often using modern and classic artists. It is also such a supportive and friendly group and everyone encourages each other and especially at the end of class when all can see what everyone else has created and in the interim weeks before a class everyone practices art at home to then bring along to show the group.

Enclosed(attachment above) is a photo of 2 art group members proudly standing by their art work which is still displayed currently in the College's main hall. Raquel was our teacher last year into this year July time, and from September we have had Calvin as art tutor. Both art tutors have a real empathy and skill in how they run the art classes and every single person in the class is made to feel proud of their achievements at each session.

Please consider this email as an initial sign of how important it is for the College to continue offering art and classes to stroke survivors and other people with additional support needs. I will be getting my group members to express how much art group and the College means to them and also asking my volunteers.

Thanks very much for your time and please let me know if you need any further information,



RAYNES PARK AND WEST BARNES
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1928

Ms. Yvette Stanley
Director of Education
London Borough of Merton
Civic Hall
London Road
Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX

2nd February 2015

Dear Ms Stanley,

Re: Whatley Avenue Adult Education Centre

I write to advise you that many of our Members have contacted us in dismay at the proposal to close the Whatley Avenue Adult Education Centre.

We are very concerned about this proposal and simply cannot understand the thinking behind it. Why close a popular Centre which is not losing money - and impel people to travel from this area to Merton College, which is vast and impersonal - and likely to intimidate the many special needs residents who are used to the current Centre and would much prefer to stay there. They feel much more comfortable in a smaller spaces that are familiar and make them feel safe.

Additionally Merton College is less well served by public transport.

We would urge you to advise against this proposal which is presumably financially lead, and for which any 'saving' will be non-existent.

Yours faithfully,

Co-Secretary, for and on behalf of the Raynes Park & West Barnes Residents' Association.

Please Reply to:

LOGGED
LETTER SENT

Sapphira van Assema

From: Chief Executive
Sent: 28 October 2014 15:15
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Save MAE

[REDACTED]
Executive Assistant to Ged Curran, Chief Executive
(Monday and Tuesday)
Merton Council
020 8545 3332
[REDACTED]
www.merton.gov.uk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 October 2014 14:22
To: Chief Executive
Subject: Save MAE

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

28th October 2014

Dear Mr Curran,

I am writing to you to express my serious concern that MAE college will be closed down.

I have lived in Wimbledon for majority of the last ten years and have attended MAE Spanish courses since 2009. I have always felt privileged that such a range of courses were available to me that fitted round my working day. I was therefore saddened to hear that MAE college is under threat of closure. I personally feel this would be a great loss to our community.

I originally joined the college as I have an interest in foreign languages and wanted to learn a basic level of Spanish. However, I have continued as I found that not only did I enjoy the academic aspect and learning a subject that was not available to me when I was at school but I got to meet and spend time with people in my community that I would not necessarily have had the pleasure to meet otherwise. Furthermore, it has encouraged me to make better use of the fantastic libraries we have in Merton and I have a much better sense of what's going on in the wider community both from other students and just being involved with MAE.


I never under estimate the many benefits the availability of adult education offers to our community. A great example is my Grandfather. My Grandmother was terminally ill and in hospital then a hospice for the last 18 months of her life. My Grandfather, then in his late 70's, travelled to the hospital by bus everyday throughout this time to spend time with her and this left no time for anything else. After her passing he was left feeling a bit lost with lots of time on his hands that he wasn't used to. He enrolled for two classes at his local Adult education centre and it was a great way for him to reengage with his community by meeting new people and just having a focus away from a very difficult time in his life.

Another good example is my Mother in Law who has recently retired from a 40+ year career as a midwife. Having always wanted to develop her artist skill but never having had the time previously she has enrolled in a foundation class and is thoroughly enjoying the experience in a welcoming and age appropriate environment that wouldn't be available to her in any other guise.

I understand that there is a possibility that MAE maybe absorbed into South Thames College and I personally think this would be a bad move. As a further education college South Thames College focus, is quite rightly, on predominantly young adults and their academic needs aswell as preparing them for life after they finish compulsory education, eg. UCAS forms, vocational work experience. This focus is at odds with what the majority of people are looking for when signing up to adult education courses. Furthermore, vulnerable members of the community, such as people with learning difficulties or the elderly may find it intimidating attending courses in large college environments with teenagers and has the potential to exclude them from accessing such courses when these are the very people that benefit most.

I urge you to do all you can to keep MAE college in operation as this will be a massive loss to our community in the event a closure is agreed. I hope this letter has conveyed exactly why it is so important from an academic, personal and community that MAE college remains in operation.

Yours Sincerely



London 20/10/2014

CLASS IS OFF

Dear Mr Williams,

Please don't close my school

Yours Sincerely

[Redacted signature]

Dear

Mr. Williams,

Please don't close

my school.

Yours sincerely, Simon

Highman

20-10-2014

[Redacted signature]

[redacted] 20th October 2014

Dear

Ms Williams

Please don't close my school

Yours sincerely

[redacted]



Stop
closing
adult
education

We have
strong feelings
for
adult education



P. Keef





Education.



NOT WAR

MAKE ART

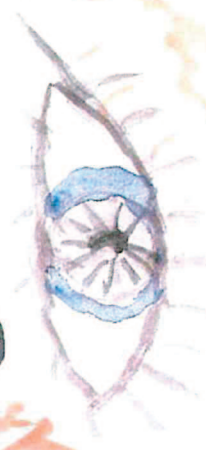


Art gives me peace

Art helps me

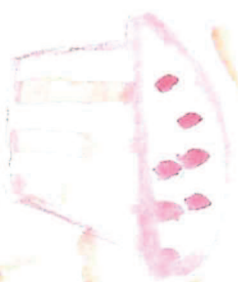
I need my chrs

I m my chrs



YES

WIMBLEDON



123

CAREERS

COLLEGE



SAVE

OUR

FUTURE

COACCENTRATE



BRILLIANT

Work

Save the Students!

As you probably know, Western Adult Education (WAE) is shutting down. This is because of reasons. Somehow more important than an individual's future. You may also know that this college has a mix of students of all abilities. In my opinion, this is lovely. I believe anyone has the freedom to communicate with others. However, this soon may not happen. I am sure you are aware it is only up to you to decide what is best for **EVERYONE**.

Where are they going to go?

What ^{is} ~~is~~ ^{are} you ~~are~~ planning to do - the greater good?

I hope you will keep these important questions in mind as they will help change the lives of others. Please make the correct decision.

From



**Merton Home
Tutoring Service**

For adults who want to learn English
and tutors who want to teach it.
Reg: 1139126

Guild House, 30/32 Worples Road,
Wimbledon SW19 4EF
Mertonhometutoring@gmail.com Tel: 07855 163 498

12 December 2014

Councillor Alambritis,
Merton Council, Crown House,
London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX

Dear Mr. Alambritis,

We would like to bring to your attention the very cost effective service that we run for adults who cannot speak English and wish to do so, although unable to attend English classes at college.

For six years we have obtained grants to pay our modest costs. However, we are in a difficult position now as we have been unable to obtain funding to meet the salary costs of our Coordinators from April 2015, despite a number of applications to grant making bodies. In these austere times, our client group is not seen as being of high need, migrants are not popular and added to this, many funders will only consider new projects, and many will not meet core costs. Without this funding we are in grave danger of having to curtail or cease our service.

We provide English classes for about 125 adults annually. These consist of

- 8 ESOL Stepping Stone classes, about 50 students at Acacia Intergenerational Centre, St. Marks Family Centre and Hall Close Homeless families' hostel] and in 2015, a further class at Abbey Children's Centre [including a new one starting in January]
- 25-30 one to one tuition in the home and in the Asian Women's Refuges

We are keen to meet with Merton Council to discuss ways in which you may be able to help us to continue to provide the service. In particular, we are anxious to find a stable way of paying for our part time Co-ordinators, who are key people in the service and ensure that volunteers are supported and retained. Our volunteers currently provide over 6,000 hours of service.

Our charity has been highly commended by Mayors of Merton who have attended our AGM; the manager was made Volunteer of the Year in 2013. A number of our learners have gone on to jobs and further education, and one is employed to carry out administrative duties in our office for a few hours.

We contribute to the Social Value Act duty on local councils, as well as the education offer, thereby increasing educational and employment potential of adults in addition to the health of their families.

I attach further details of our service.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Ruth Dawson, MSc. P.D.E.S.L. [Dip.Ed] Trustee, Manager and Founder.

Details of our service.

How we do it

- We employ two very able and qualified teachers as Co-ordinators of the service. They provide assessment of learners in the home and in Stepping Stone classes, match volunteers to learners, monitor lessons, assess learner progress and analyse annual questionnaires by participants
- We provide a resource library and write Information readers in simplified English on topics relevant to adults with families
- We recruit volunteers, almost all with degrees, and then provide initial volunteer tutor training [18 hours], & ongoing training as well as weekly advisory sessions.

Costs

The teaching is free of charge, achieved through trained volunteers [home tuition] & qualified teachers [Stepping Stone classes] who provide 6000 hours to the charity. We are supported through grant giving bodies, donations, through donations in kind from the Wimbledon Guild and Merton Children's Centres, and through our own fundraising via events and the marketing of the information readers.

The two Co-ordinators receive a modest salary, term time only, part-time; the Manager is unpaid.

The people we teach

The Merton residents we teach [adults 20 – 60 years] come from Africa, Eastern Europe, the Indian subcontinent, and a few from the Middle East and South America, many of them women with young families from 'hard to reach' communities. These adults cannot attend formal classes for a variety of reasons: e.g. because no crèche is available, they cannot afford course fees, travel with small children makes it very difficult, they may be disabled, very under-confident and families may disapprove of mixed classes. In addition, we have a number of people who have never had the chance of education, and consequently need assistance with literacy and study skills.

We teach everyday English, to enable people to participate as parents in providing for their children. Beginners' English is virtually unavailable in Merton, and we are able to provide this. We enable people to function independently, no longer needing interpreters in visiting the doctor, the clinic, teachers, council officers and Job Centres. We have a number of people now who have progressed from home tuition to Stepping Stones and thence to further education and jobs.

Trustees & Tutors

As a Registered charity, we have a lively Board of Trustees, chaired by a lawyer, a business woman as Secretary, a chartered accountant as Treasurer and a qualified teacher specialising in evaluation as manager, an entrepreneur, a retired high level civil servant and current tutors. The Trustees come from Ghana, Australia, Scotland and England all of whom have experienced living in other countries. Our tutors are from a greater range of countries, with overseas experience.

Subject: 5. Response by Merton Home Tutoring Service
Response by Merton Home Tutoring Service

From: mertonhometutoring@gmail.com [mailto:mertonhometutoring@gmail.com] On
Behalf Of Merton
Home Tutoring Service
Sent: 15 January 2015 16:49
To: Simon Williams (Director)
Subject: Response by Merton Home Tutoring Service

Dear Mr Williams,
Thank you for your letter of 19th December 2014, which I received today, 15th
January, at the
Wimbledon Guild, where Merton Home Tutoring Service has its resource room. I
was there at
the Guild last week also, and so I am puzzled why I have received it so long
after you wrote the
letter.
You ask whether I have any objections to our letter being included as part of
the responses
received during consultation. I can see no objection. Please use it.
I do hope it won't be used to argue for the closure of the Merton Adult
Education service,
because that service is so very valuable for our clients. The South Thames
College has a long
waiting list, and the fees are costly for our clients. It has a stern attitude
towards those who
cannot pass exams in the required time.

Many of our clients, with family responsibilities, and sometimes limited
education find it
impossible to achieve exam success in that timescale. Beginners' classes are
very limited in
number, so our clients value MAE classes very much, and it is the next step up
for many of our
clients. There are going to be a lot more isolated families, excluded from
participation, with all
the health and community safety consequences that also entails.

MAE also makes a considerable difference to the retired people in the borough,
keeping them
alert and lively. There is nothing of this range, cost and quality available
elsewhere. U3A is a
useful organisation, but does not have qualified teachers, and these are key to
learning new skills
.

Times change, and unless we can somehow find a way of enabling this organisation
to survive,
until we do have more money to run it at a higher level, the teachers, structure
and goodwill will
all have vanished. It is easy enough to destroy gems like this, and much harder
to set them up
again, involving the purchase of costly buildings etc.,
Ruth Dawson,
Dr. Ruth Dawson, Manager, Merton Home Tutoring Service

--
Dr. Ruth Dawson, B.A. MSc, P.D.E.S.L.
Manager, Merton Home Tutoring Service,
30/32 Worple Road,
Wimbledon SE19 4EF.

RECEIVED
14 JAN 2015

[REDACTED]

12TH JANUARY 2015

**MR SIMON WILLIAMS
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY & HOUSING
LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
CIVIC CENTRE
LONDON ROAD
MORDEN
SM4 5DX**

SIR,

MAE—LIFE OR DEATH

I am a ratepayer of the Borough. I have attended for some 12 years the adult education French courses and also I did attend for some years the Italian courses. I have benefitted greatly from the opportunity to participate and especially from the high level of tutorship.

I am horrified that the Council (or certain elements in it) should see fit to destroy adult education in Merton. I have submitted responses to the consultation document, but as it appears not to be independently structured, I would wish to add my dissatisfaction with the actions being pursued by the Council (or elements).

1. On 3 October 2014 I received an email from MAE that there was be a Learner Consultation Week to seek views on a range of topics and what was wanted of MAE. No mention of cuts or cessation of adult education.
2. Barely 3 days later you make your appearance with a brief email indicating cutting of costs and services is planned with options being explored, but with no details being provided. You would welcome "ideas for reducing costs". How trite! What are you paid to do?
3. Fortunately, the truth emerged that the Council (or elements) were actively looking at 6 options, including the cessation of the provision of adult education.
4. Only then, with the ensuing outcry, did the Council accept, no doubt very reluctantly, that there needed to be consultation and it withdrew the 6th option.
5. At a Council meeting on 2 December, I am told, the Council said there was no detailed analysis of the 5 options. Totally incredible and scandalous. The shareholder of a public company would not tolerate this, so why should ratepayers.
6. Clearly there has been a total lack of transparency and one is left to believe there might be a hidden agenda.
7. The results of the responses to the consultation document need to be independently analysed and a detailed cost analysis of the options properly prepared, with both to be published so there is complete transparency.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

CC. Mr Stephen Hammond MP
Cllr David Williams
Shas Sheehan

Adult Education complaints

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Complainant | [REDACTED] |
| Reference | [REDACTED] |
| Date received | 22 December 2014 |
| Deadline | 23 January 2015 |
| Complaint | <p>I am writing to raise my concerns over the review of the provision of adult education here in Merton and to formally complain about the process that has been followed by the Council.</p> <p>Lack of Robust Information As residents of the borough and users of the adult education service, we are being asked to give opinions and views without sufficient information. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there have been several figures circulating regarding the actual cost to the borough of adult education. Every time a figure is requested, it seems to change; • how can anyone respond to the statement "There should be more courses that help people to get a job", without knowing how many courses there are at present that support job seekers, or how successful they are. <p>It is apparent that the whole process is being very rushed, even though the Council has been aware of the need to cut spending for several years. It seems the decision has already been made to out-source courses to other providers (the Councils preferred option), but there appears to be no robust comparative costings or indeed scrutiny of the quality of provision in councils where this has happened. There is no guarantee that whoever ends up providing the services will offer the same courses and there may be increased fees once the private sector becomes involved.</p> <p>Lack of Thorough Preparation</p> <p>There are many questions that have to be answered before councillors can make well-considered decisions about the future of adult education in Merton These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What would be the cost of regulating and monitoring the cost of out-sourcing courses? 2. Who will oversee issues and monitoring related to equality and human rights? 3. What monies will be set aside to support learners from lower incomes who will be unable to afford courses run by private providers? Merton will lose any flexibility it has in supporting more expensive or less popular courses through funding from full classes. 4. How will the council ensure that the needs of all learners are catered for, including the growing number of healthy, |

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| | <p>motivated, retired people?</p> <p>5. What reliable evidence have councilors used to support their claims that provision is in the wrong part of the borough, which is the main rationale for selling the Whatley Avenue site?</p> <p>The process of consultation has been very flawed; the council appears to be unprepared for such radical change and for making a decision that will be impossible to reverse.</p> <p>I look forward to receiving a considered and substantive reply from you within 15 days, after which time I will consider making a complaint to the Ombudsman for local authority misadministration.</p> |
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| Complainant | [REDACTED] |
| Reference | [REDACTED] |
| Date received | 30 December 2014 |
| Deadline | 28 January 2015 |
| Complaint | <p>I am writing to you both to express my strong reservations and doubts about the conduct of the council in looking at alternative financial methods of providing adult education in Merton to all age groups and learning aptitudes.</p> <p>Partial or absent Financial information</p> <p>In my opinion, we have been given varying figures relating to the SFA allocation. The Actual Income of all fee-paying students has been either hidden in text or absent in council documents. Have the Council's auditors scrutinized and verified the so-called ongoing maintenance cost?</p> <p>The Actual HR Cost to LBM of Whateley Avenue College in relation to the fee income of the student body has not been presented against fee income.</p> <p>I am no accountant and unable to understand the exact significance of all the figures that the council has offered in the open democracy meeting in November and the scrutiny meeting in early December.</p> <p>But figures do not add up nor make sense as a basis for rushing to a commissioning model.</p> <p>You have not indicated which courses will remain, at what cost, and where. It's simply not a fair basis upon which the students, staff and local residents can possibly make an informed decision to support the council.</p> <p>Of course the council needs to make significant cuts, but to present a pre-chosen form of AE to 'shift financial risk' (Cllr Williams's</p> |

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| | <p>phrase, scrutiny meeting, 2nd Dec), with the real prospect of the Whatley Ave site being sold off because the building is under-occupied and under-resourced for £X million to reduce the £32m target would be shameful.</p> <p>Outsourcing itself carries a significant cost and level of expertise. Has this been properly costed and the provider(s) scrutinised for quality delivery equal to MAE?</p> <p>Will outsourcers offer the same degree of quality we receive at Whatley Ave College? Which courses will be cut?</p> <p>Further questions regarding due diligence in selecting the commissioning model as choice of Council.</p> <p>Your own councillors, if they are acting on behalf of residents' needs and not voting practices, must surely have more answers to the questions above, and those that follow:</p> <p>What independent evidence is to hand to suggest that the Whatley Avenue site contributes to an 'impoverished east and affluent west' when the council has itself closed AE sites in the east?</p> <p>Who has undertaken a costing of the commissioning model, its regulation and oversight, and the courses themselves, if not the council?</p> <p>Are there guarantees in place relating to learner income support and special-learning students?</p> <p>What guarantees are in place that the cost of courses will not escalate if the commissioning model is run by private enterprises?</p> <p>What guarantees are in place to maintain Whatley Avenue College as a prime AE site in the borough?</p> <p>Finally, why has the student paper and internet consultation been undertaken in the last two weeks of term before the council decides in early January?</p> <p>Regarding the last point, I know that the decision has been delayed until February. This in no way invalidates any of the questions above.</p> <p>I will look forward to receiving a detailed and full response from you within 15 days, and if that is not forthcoming, I shall be writing to the Ombudsman for local government.</p> |
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| Complainant | [REDACTED] |
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| Reference | [REDACTED] |
| Date received | 22 December 2014 |
| Deadline | 22 January 2015 |
| Complaint | <p>I write to complain formally about the conduct of the review and consultation on the future provision of Merton Adult Education.</p> <p>Firstly, I submit that the consultation is fundamentally flawed because there is insufficient information about current costs to Merton Council and insufficient information about the costs and savings possible if any of the other options were to be selected. This was observed at the Scrutiny Call-In meeting of December 4th, and disregarded by the Labour members on the panel.</p> <p>Throughout the consultation, the Council has been unwilling to publicise the true net cost to it of MAE provision and has thus deliberately mis-led residents.</p> <p>When the Cabinet meets to decide on the option it will use, it will be unable to make an informed decision. This does not represent responsible local government.</p> <p>Secondly, the Council selected a 'preferred option' before opening the public consultation, and the wording of parts of the consultation documents steered respondents towards certain answers.</p> <p>Thirdly, the consultation questionnaire provided for LDD learners (who are important, but vulnerable users of MAE provision) is inappropriately worded and is therefore inaccessible to some. The higher order questions are conceptually inaccessible to some.</p> <p>I look forward to your response to this complaint, each element of which, I believe, can be addressed by the Council and Cabinet, if only they were willing to take the time necessary to communicate clearly and respectfully with residents and to provide clear information about costs and the future of Joseph Hood School.</p> <p>If I do not receive a constructive response from you within 15 working days, I shall consider taking my complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman</p> |

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| Complainant | [REDACTED] |
| Reference | [REDACTED] |
| Date received | 15 December 2014 |
| Deadline | 15 January 2015 |
| Complaint | <p>I have just completed and returned the consultation form regarding this issue.</p> <p>I feel I have to complain about the consultation, both with regard to</p> |

the content of the consultation form and the manner in which the consultation process is being managed. The following are my personal comments but are, I believe, shared by many of the students and staff involved in adult education in Merton, especially at the Whatley Avenue site.

Regarding the consultation form itself:

(i) The form has no return address. Unless a return envelope was collected with the form (the form I collected at the public meeting on 2 December did not include a return envelope), an onus is put upon the person completing the form to make investigations as to where the completed form should be returned. The failure to include a return address on the form raises questions as to the legal legitimacy of the consultation.

(ii) The consultation form includes questions which are impossible to answer. For example, one is asked if the Council should give priority to adult education over other services. Clearly there are some council services which will have a higher priority than adult education, but there will also be some services which have a lower priority. How then is one expected to answer this question?

Regarding the consultation process:






(i) The Council have identified a preferred option for adult education in the borough without having carried out a financial analysis of the options. How then can one option be said to be preferred over another? Will the preferred option result in any savings? How can the Council answer this without having carried out a financial analysis?







(ii) The identification of a preferred option before consulting students, staff and other interested parties is illogical. How can the Council form a view on what nature of service needs to be provided without first consulting those involved in delivering and receiving that service?

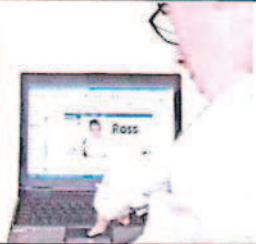




(iii) The consultation is being rushed and its timing is inappropriate. The College is largely closed for the Christmas period. Students and staff are no longer in regular contact with each other. The Council intend to make a final decision on the future of adult education in the borough on 19 January 2015, very close to the beginning of the spring term. Have the Council chosen this timing in order to reduce the number of received objections? Will the Council point to the low number of objections as evidence that their plans are generally supported?







I would ask:






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| | <p>(i) That the Council respond to the questions raised above and to do so in time to allow a complaint to be filed with the Local Authority Ombudsman before 19 January, should such action appear to be appropriate.</p> <p>(ii) That the Council agree not to make a final decision on the future of adult education in Merton until a financial analysis of the options has been carried out.</p> <p>(iii) That the Council delay its final decision on the future of adult education, planned for 19 January, until at least well into the Spring Term, to allow sufficient time for students, staff and others to make representations on the issue.</p> <p>I look forward to the receipt of your early reply.</p> |
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|  | <p>Consultation</p> <p>We talked to 8 students in the Monday Pottery Class about possible changes to Merton Adult Education</p> |
|  | <p>What do the students think about their pottery class?</p> <p>They said:</p> |
|  | <p>"10 out of 10"</p> <p>"I do like college, it is nice"</p> <p>"I like it so much"</p> |
|  | <p>"I like achieving things and getting certificates"</p> |
|  | <p>"I like mixing with other people"</p> <p>"I have good friends here"</p> |

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|  | <p>"It is very hard to find educational centres like this"</p> |
|  | <p>"I make things" "I like using my hands"</p> |
|  | <p>What other classes do the students do at Merton Adult Education?</p> |
|  | <p>"I like cooking too" "I made a Shepherd's Pie and had it for lunch"</p> |
|  | <p>"I do photography"</p> |
|  | <p>"I exercise"</p> |

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|  | <p>"I have a computer class"</p> |
|  | <p>"Maths and money!"</p> |
|  | <p>How would students feel if classes were in a different building?</p> |
|  | <p>"I hate the idea"</p> <p>"I don't want to go somewhere else"</p> <p>"No, no, no"</p> |
|  | <p>"I would get lost"</p> <p>"It is hard to find my way round SCOLA"</p> <p>"It is easier to find my way round here [at Whatley Avenue]"</p> <p>"I would have to start all over again and learn different rules and routes"</p> |

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|  | <p>"What about my friends?"</p> <p>"I would want to have the same teacher and friends"</p> <p>"I have lots of friends here [at Whatley Avenue]"</p> <p>"The teachers are kind here [at Whatley Avenue]"</p> |
|  | <p>"My driver can't take me to another college"</p> |
|  | <p>"It would be boring if I have to stay at home"</p> |
|  | <p>What if classes moved to a day centre?</p> |
|  | <p>"Day centre is like a prison"</p> |
|  | <p>"At the Day Centre you sit around for a long time with nothing to do. I want to do things"</p> |

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|  | <p>"You just sit around like old people"</p> |
|  | <p>"There are no certificates in Day Centres"</p> |
|  | <p>"There are no kilns in Day Centres"</p> |
|  | <p>Recommendations</p> |
|  | <p>Listen to the students and keep classes at Whatley Avenue</p> |

Learner Consultation Feedback Log

20 October 2014

| Topic – MAE Review | Learner Name |
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| <p>Learner Comment</p> <p>What will happen to the 5000+ learners if they lose their classes? Adult education – life long learning is a basic right of us all.</p> | |
| <p>Who's going to look after the LLD and ESOL learners? Our classes help us to get employment – so less money paid out in benefits.</p> | |
| <p>Short term view not economic in the long run will have to pay more on services stopped.</p> | |
| <p>MAE is an invaluable resource for adults who wish to learn new skills & also a place where learning disabled people can be together and learn new life skills. Where will they go if it closes down? I'm taught by an incredibly well qualified professional teacher. I wouldn't get this level of tuition anywhere else. Please don't close us down.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Upholstery Class</p> |
| <p>So many needs of the mature students who are facing more and more restrictions in their income and working choices. Educational facilities like these help students to develop skills they perhaps didn't feel confident in and open working . In view of the current economic issues we are all facing. Although I appreciate the financial restrictions the college needs to address. My personal opinion is that more of these educational facilities are needed not less. They address opportunities making income for themselves and helping the economy & also helping to keep active and healthy as we are living longer. Less of a burden on the state.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Upholstery & woodwork classes</p> |
| <p>Short term savings = long term losses eg social exclusion, mental health issues, NHS costs.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Woodwork classe</p> |
| <p>I hope MAE is not going to close. So many people benefit from its classes. What about young people who need a second chance. Another go at getting an education - leads to employability</p> | <p>[REDACTED] French Advanced</p> |
| <p>PLD services provided by MAE are vital for maintaining and increasing independence & life skills in the community. It would be short sighted to remove these as it will lead to demand in other areas e.g health, care at home etc. Better to consider other efficiency savings e.g in HR / back office functions by combining these with other sites.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Upholstery</p> |

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| Topic – MAE Review | |
| Learner Comment | Learner Name [Redacted] Upholstery class |
| Outsourcing of services does not necessarily bring savings. Private companies must make profits somehow! Suggest outsourcing of facilities may offer more long term savings. Private companies may be able to offer cheaper more efficient premises. Courses on offer are invaluable to students like me seeking new skills for a second career. | |
| LDD students will have nowhere to go. | |
| I am currently taking part in the upholstery class. I thoroughly enjoy it. I have been taking classes for a number of years such as French, Pottery, Pilates, Upholstery. I have really enjoyed every single minute of it and I will be devastated if these opportunity of classes and activities disappear. Please take this into consideration and how important this is for the community. | [Redacted] Upholstery class 4.9 |
| Cost / benefit analysis. How much council saves by enabling over 60's persons coming to classes. If not for these classes council will need to spend on alternative home based care. Young persons activities, disabled student, ESOL – who is going to look after them? | [Redacted] Upholstery |

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| Topic – Curriculum Development | |
| Learner Comment | Learner Name |
| Vegetarian cooking with a healthy food focus | |

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| Topic – Use of ILT in classrooms | |
| Learner Comment | Learner Name [Redacted] |
| Our French tutor recently used the whiteboard to show us information as part of Black History month. I think the interaction on the use of the whiteboard to show us clips, ask us to write things and so on is really good. | |

21 October 2014

| Topic – MAE Review | Learner Name |
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| Learner Comment | Pottery student |
| Selling the Whatley Rd premises is a short term measure. What happens next to get finances? | |
| We need financial information re viability of MAE | |
| Is there any consideration given to students who have learning difficulties and their educational needs. | Pottery |
| Value of MAE – promotes employability, creativity, integration of those with special needs, life long learning. | |
| Information on potential savings would be helpful but can savings really be so significant. MAE not a big spender | |
| This college is local to me. It fits in with school hours to suit my needs as I wouldn't be able to go to another main stream college. I'm a single mum and this college is very helpful to me as an adult learner. I have never found another college to suit these needs in Merton | Beauty |
| Do not close the college. MAE is the best, we love to learn. | |
| MAE here is very important as locally provided and LA is accountable for it. | |
| Value of MAE for learners cannot be exaggerated. Carers get a break, special needs students get out and learn and gain independence. People get qualifications, employability and more. | |
| MAE we need you. Don't close down the college. For me as a foreign student is a good college and it has a lot of courses and good prices. I will like in future to study more and more in this college. | Beauty |

| Topic – MAE Review | Learner Name |
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| Learner Comment | |
| MAE is a local and convenient learning resource, recommended highly and should not close down. | Beauty |
| Very helpful to learn and work around my children. | |
| This college has offered 100% support to me. It has great hours that fit into my life as being a lone parent, and it has given me a future to look forward to. No other college do such hours like these. | |
| This is perfect for people who want to get back into education as adults with people of all age and disability. | |
| Adult education is valuable even if not accredited. | Woodwork & upholstery |
| Adult education needs to be kept local. | |
| Adult education promotes mental wellbeing, return to work, confidence and gaining skills. | |
| Ideal for adult learners who do not have time for mainstream colleges. | Beauty |
| Adult education is vital. | |
| MAE has wide range of courses at realistic prices accessible to all. Don't jeopardise this. | |
| I am concerned as to where people in this local community will be able to go for adult education without having to travel too far. Learning at this college is inclusive and welcoming. Will a different venue be able to offer this. Special needs should be considered as should individual needs. Time, travel & cost. | Early Years |
| Being able to attend for courses as well as part time working is essential and sometimes only opportunity to create new role for you. I am very grateful for what MAE is doing here for me and others. | |

| Topic – MAE Review | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Learner Comment | Learner Name |
| <p>People find employment via these courses. These courses give you confidence to tackle jobs in their own home. This college is the 'jewel in the crown' of merton. Not only does it educate people for work, disabled and learning difficulty persons have education and a place to go. Many people come from the other side of the borough to attend classes so there is no other adult college like this Whatley Avenue college.</p> | <p>Woodwork</p> |
| <p>More courses and dates wanted. Currently I'm attending this course in this centre which is convenient for me. I would like to do my advanced courses here soon.</p> | <p>[Redacted]</p> |
| <p>The college has helped me progress rapidly for the first time I have confidence and knowledge to do the work I am applying for. I have been able to find a placement who will give me a good reference based on my work. I would not have had the opportunity because no other college near me was running the course. MAE is the only place that offers adult education which really delivers quality teaching, quality tracking and advice. Mixing with younger teenagers makes it very uncomfortable.</p> | <p>[Redacted] .Early Years</p> |
| <p>I want the college same as now please. The adult education system is really nice and very supportive to me in person. I don't want to go with younger students.</p> | <p>[Redacted]</p> |
| <p>I love the college. I did intro to teaching assistant course here. I really love the college environment, tutors and everything. I want the college forever to continue to support the community to develop in education for the adults.</p> | <p>[Redacted] Early Years</p> |
| <p>Whatley Avenue is a wonderful facility that will hopefully enable me to find a job when I finish the course.</p> | <p>[Redacted] Early Years</p> |
| <p>Adult education is important to give us a better career later in life. Gives adults a chance to succeed in life.</p> | <p>[Redacted] Early Years</p> |

| Topic – MAE Review | |
|---|------------------------|
| Learner Comment | Learner Name |
| We need adult education. It is important to have adult education because lots of people are gaining importance towards it. As an individual I gain more benefit from adult education. Teach adults, they teach their children. | [REDACTED] Early Years |
| All learners appreciate the hard work everyone puts in. If the college closes people will not be able to train and get a job / career. It will lead to the benefit system being abused! It is important for people to learn for people who can't speak English. It gives them a chance. | [REDACTED] Early Years |
| New exciting equal opportunities for adults. | |
| We are learning new things every time we are in college. We gain new experience. | |
| MAE is for adults not children. We feel more comfy with adults not teenagers. | |
| Has given me another chance to get back on my feet and make something of my life. | |
| A great place for learning. Please do not make it disappear. Please. We love MAE. | [REDACTED] |
| Topic – Use of ILT in classrooms | |
| Learner Comment | Learner Name |
| Pottery equipment needs updating. IT not really relevant in class. We can use IT at home for research. | Pottery student |

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| Topic – Equality & Diversity | |
| Learner Comment | Learner Name [Redacted] |
| As a disabled learner I am offered extra assistance to ensure I can attend college. | Early Years |
| Good equality in my class. Students of all abilities & needs well taught & integrated. A strength to protect. | |

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| Topic – Progression | |
| Learner Comment | Learner Name [Redacted] |
| I don't take my course for a qualification or employment but I benefit enormously. I'm retired & it enriches my life. | Early Years |
| This centre is really very helpful when I came here I had nothing and in 8 months I have finished 4 courses. | [Redacted] Early Years |
| Easy progression & great support. Would have been lost without it. | |

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| Topic – Curriculum Development | |
| Learner Comment | Learner Name [Redacted] |
| Barbers courses | Early Years |
| Spray tanning. | |

22 October 2014

| Topic – MAE Review | Learner Name |
|--|---|
| <p>I've been coming here for 21 years. This is what keeps me sane. Pottery for the last 18 years. I've spent hundreds of pounds over the years coming to college, I've done pottery, art, dance, English, maths, lip reading, music, tai chi.</p> <p>Why are you thinking of closing it, is it all about money?</p> <p>I can walk here anywhere else you would need to drive where is there to park for the old? Buses are not good for disabled to use.</p> <p>What are you going to do for the likes of my son who has a disability. I hope he would be able to come to learn living skills.</p> <p>We the carers of merton save the council lots of money each year. You need somewhere for us to go and have time out.</p> <p>Where are you going to send us all or do you <u>not</u> care for people who are disabled?</p> <p>Why are you thinking of closing something that works? Why fix something that's not broken? It's the only time carers have time to do what they want for themselves.</p> <p>I would not meet people with the same disabilities as me elsewhere.</p> <p>I am against closure, only local place to get to that does lip reading, can't travel to Richmond for it. I've been coming here for 10 years. Done my NVQ2 course here, makaton. The tutors are great, helpful to people with learning difficulties and hard of hearing. They cater for all needs.</p> <p>Great place for learning and socialising. Fantastic for people with diversity needs.</p> <p>No-one here takes the mickey out of you or people that are different like other places. Also other colleges during the day are more 16+ not mature like people at Whatley.</p> <p>I have learnt more here than anywhere.</p> <p>Where are all the people with diversity needs and learning difficulties going to go?</p> <p>If MAE closes my entire life would be totally devastated. As a carer for my disabled mother for 20 years my only highlight of the week is my stained glass class. Being creative in a safe environment brings me so much joy in an otherwise stressful life. Many other students also find MAE a life line especially those with special needs and are trying to live independently. This college is so important to so many I cannot overstate the devastation it would cause in so many peoples lives. Please, please think again.</p> | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Pottery & Lipreading</p> |
| <p>[REDACTED]</p> | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Lipreading</p> |
| <p>[REDACTED]</p> | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Stained Glass</p> |

| Topic – MAE Review | | Learner Name |
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| Learner Comment | | |
| <p>This college has been very beneficial to many people with learning difficulties and handicapped people. A way of keeping in touch with the outside</p> <p>This college has given me a skill for life that enables me to stay sane. A way of getting out of the house to see a way of being independent.</p> <p>What will happen to older people that use the college as a way to meet people and keep active?</p> | <p>Stained Glass</p> | <p>Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>Against closure of Whatley Avenue college.</p> <p>Whatley college also involves students and their families in fun days which would be lost.</p> <p>Only local college for people with learning disabilities.</p> <p>Has a good variety of courses for disabled people to do.</p> <p>Would be hard for people who have trouble travelling and are used to one place.</p> <p>Find it a disgrace the way people with learning disabilities are treated if the college is closed.</p> | <p>Stained Glass</p> | <p>Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>This site not only provides important recreational activities for an increasingly elderly population but also is a means for people to further their careers and gain necessary life skills. I cannot think how any alternative can provide the same facilities.</p> | <p>Stained Glass</p> | <p>Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>I attend lip reading and art. Without these classes I would be lost. I am not confident to travel far due to dizzy spells (meniere's) and suffer from depression.</p> <p>Why are Merton closing Whatley when L/B Richmond can offer so many courses for its learners. I believe from the papers that Merton has lots of taxpayers money in the bank.</p> <p>Lip reading is essential for us who are hard of hearing to be able to communicate and not become isolated. It is also sociable and an opportunity to get out. Whatley is so convenient and friendly.</p> <p>Knuston Hall Wellingborough was threatened with closure but was saved by offering rooms for conferences, one day courses with meals etc. Now the college is doing very well.</p> <p>Benefits to keep the college – disabilities - much better to keep people in the borough. Need courses for older people to avoid depression & isolation.</p> <p>What about all the people with carers & wheelchair users. At the moment they have good access to courses on the ground floor. They all appear to enjoy being at Whatley.</p> | <p>Lip reading</p> | <p>Lip reading</p> |

| Topic – MAE Review | | Learner Name |
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| Learner Comment | | |
| <p>This college has been a sanity saver for me. It has helped me overcome debilitating panic attacks for several years and enabled me to develop a love of my craft which has had a huge effect on my confidence and allowed me to feel a worthwhile member of society. Earning a small amount of money to continue my passion and donate to charity. What will happen to others who have diversity needs who feel safe and loved here. Change is not good for them either. Please, please re-consider.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>Merton Adult Education is an important part in my life. Getting out, meeting people, improving skills in upholstery & stained glass, gaining in confidence. Learning to live independently is an important part of college life. The impact of losing this facility will increase costs in other help with community. This is an extremely important function and outlet, respite etc. The college is funded by the Skills Funding Agency not the council. Classes like stained glass, upholstery, pottery, woodwork bring in an extremely important revenue which allows college to support these less fortunate. Important to learn new skills to gain employment in a challenging world e.g. childcare, literacy, English as a second language.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Upholstery & Stained Glass</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Upholstery & Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>I have been coming here for over 25 years. I have learned counselling, psychology, keep fit, singing, pottery, lip reading – please don't close the college. This school is one of the most useful places in the community. It's close by and does not need long bus or train to get here. It becomes a socially & learning essential, specially in the young & older generation.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Lip reading</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Lip reading</p> |
| <p>I have been coming to adult education Whatley Avenue, Merton now for the past 6 ½ years since I've retired. I've been having cookery, pottery, computer, photography courses etc and I find all the staff concerned very kind and helpful and it's a very relaxed atmosphere and it's close to home and within walking distance. Your idea to close this place down is disgusting. Can't you people whoever responsible just leave things as is. I feel it's a cheek. You think more of lining your pockets than you do of peoples lively hoods. I'm a student and I'm very close with all the co students and tutors and I enjoy coming here. I don't want the likes of you people blighting our lives in that regard. If you have to make savings financially make them elsewhere, but please don't cut back on our services.</p> | <p>[REDACTED]</p> | <p>[REDACTED]</p> |

| Topic – MAE Review | Learner Name |
|---|--|
| <p>Learner Comment</p> <p>I have only started back at adult education classes since I lost my employment and became a full time carer to my paralysed husband. My life has taken a total turnaround and my health & wellbeing has suffered. I was encouraged to enhance my life by finding 'me' time and turned to MAE to support me in this. I enrolled in this class as it was at a convenient time to suit my caring commitments and I have benefited from finding time for myself in a very busy & stressful daily routine.</p> <p>Whatley Avenue is near enough to my home for me to return in an emergency.</p> <p>The college has a calming and inspiring atmosphere that lends itself to the focus of the courses. Most participants are here for a reason not just for pleasure.</p> <p>Attending has restored some of my self esteem and beneficial to meet like minded students. I understand most classes are full so there is a 'need' for the college in this location.</p> <p>Amalgamating the adult college with a student college will be intimidating.</p> <p>The council should continue to support the attendees of the college.</p> <p>If the college were to close it would be detrimental to the borough.</p> <p>I retired earlier this year and find the level of teaching provided at the art class I attend at MAE is excellent. The tutor has given me great encouragement and I would greatly miss the classes if MAE closes.</p> <p>I have attended MAE for a variety of classes including Italian, German, photography and cooking over the years and feel that MAE is a fine provider of life long learning.</p> <p>I think that MAE provides a valuable community resource reaching people with disabilities and other special needs including ESOL. It makes a huge difference to peoples lives.</p> <p>The photography classes at MAE enabled me to gain a City & Guilds qualification. I am sure that many other students have achieved a wide range of qualifications through MAE.</p> <p>I cannot envisage that any transfer to 'alternative suppliers' as part of a cost cutting exercise would result in the high standard and wide range of courses provided by MAE.</p> <p>Since when has a reduction of educational provision for adults been Labour Party policy? Merton council, why threaten a well established provider that always delivers high quality courses.</p> | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>[REDACTED]</p> | <p>[REDACTED]</p> |

23 October 2014

| Topic – MAE Review | Learner Name |
|--|---|
| <p>Learner Comment</p> <p>How much do students fees add up to per annum? What is the funding of Merton Council to Whatley Avenue? Why has there been no consultation with a) students & b) residents? Why are no council leaders present at this review? Why is there no transparency at decision level? Who will make the final decision: the council cabinet or the politicians in the borough? Has the decision to close the college actually been taken because there is no time before mid Jan decision! Explain! Leaders must surely talk to the student body to remain credible. Have you considered the hidden costs to the community (abled and disabled)</p> <p>What the closure means to me:- Prevent my skills base in becoming commercially viable Loss of incredibly scarce facilities in SW London Throw a spanner in my career development Force me to go outside the borough for learning Lose contact with a highly skilled tutor & colleagues who like me appreciate what Whatley Avenue represents in the community</p> <p>MAE Maintains levels of craftsmanship Bringing the community together Community cohesion Wellbeing Hobbies Personal development Health – improvements, mental health, confidence</p> | <p>██████████ Potter</p> |

| Topic – MAE Review | Learner Name |
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| <p>Learner Comment</p> <p>Please would it be possible for us all to have a meeting with the 'decision makers' before January. January will be too late.</p> <p>The school that surrounds the building needs to be informed – maybe they would like the opportunity to come to the next meeting.</p> <p>The local residents need the chance to be able to attend a meeting too. They have the right to know what will be happening to this building if it closes.</p> <p>I think we should have been informed, as students, a lot earlier in the day rather than leaving it this late.</p> <p>If this college was to close, will all courses run somewhere else? If so, this will still cost money so nothing will be saved if they have to run somewhere else and if the courses here are then crammed into another college, either more classes will have to be run to accommodate the people here to somewhere else or somewhere else will have to open to accommodate. This seems a waste of time & effort.</p> <p>What happens to all of the special needs / learning difficulties adults if this centre closes? Coming from someone who has special needs adults in their family, I would like to think that there are centres like this to help our family and give the special needs adults somewhere to learn and socialise.</p> <p>I have been coming here for many years, to varied courses. I gained 2 signing exams and now attend a lip reading course. There are not many other places that run these courses and I don't have a car and would find it hard to go anywhere else.</p> <p>I think it was unfair that not one 'decision maker' attended the meeting today which left the poor staff in the firing line – this seems wrong. They should have more support.</p> <p>After losing confidence in the workplace from being made redundant, the courses here have given me the confidence back and has given me the confidence to work again.</p> | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Lip reading & employability</p> |
| <p>As an over 60 yoga has helped me enormously with mobility. Cannot praise what is taught at Whatley enough.</p> <p>The commitment of the teachers is amazing, professional.</p> <p>Closure would leave a massive hole in my life.</p> <p>The class is close by and affordable.</p> | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Yoga</p> |

| Topic – MAE Review | Learner Name |
|--|---|
| <p>Learner Comment</p> <p>The vocational courses are very accessible for people changing careers and therefore would be best to maintain this eg. Cache</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Early years</p> |
| <p>The college is very well located, accessible and I am considering to take more classes as the quality of teaching and other support is very good.</p> <p>Has the council commissioned a recent valuation of this site?</p> <p>Why has news of the MAE review only just broken when a decision is to be reached as early as January 2015.</p> <p>Does the council have any regard at all to the views of the student body or is this last minute consultation simply a cosmetic exercise?</p> <p>What will happen to the Towards Independence students, the most vulnerable of the whole student body and the ones least able to mount a protest?</p> <p>Have the local residents been consulted?</p> | |
| <p>January – can this be changed?</p> <p>Students want to speak to decision makers!</p> <p>It's important that adults can learn with other adults – learning alongside young people could put older learners off.</p> <p>Wanted to enrol on a course locally to juggle childcare.</p> <p>Joined college to continue to next level currently offered here. So after completing TA level 2 could do next years level 3.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Early Years</p> |
| <p>As a mature student and a mother, MAE has offered me support and convenience on getting back onto a course and back to work in a career path I have chosen. MAE should re-locate if need be.</p> <p>I have been attending classes at MAE for over 25 years. It has greatly enhanced my life and wellbeing. I hope to be able to continue coming here for a long time to come. IT MUST NOT CLOSE.</p> <p>How are the council going to save money on this when they only provide a small subsidy to Skills Funding agency? Very short-sighted as other budgets will have to increase e.g. social services, mental health, facilities for disabled.</p> <p>If the council's financial responsibility is minimal for the MAE centre. Is the need for closure related to what they will gain from selling the site? I have just started attending a class and feel very sad at prospect of this being short lived.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Early Years Pottery</p> |

| Topic – MAE Review | Learner Name |
|--|---|
| <p>Learner Comment</p> <p>After retirement I was depressed until I started a glass class. I was given confidence and made to feel worthwhile. I then took up pottery and had the same experience.</p> <p>Not only is MAE important to people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities, it covers a whole spectrum of people that could only be catered for at a site in Merton. For many travel to Sutton or South Thames colleges would be impossible for a variety of reasons. Whatley Avenue college provides a safe, nurturing environment. The tutors are committed, dedicated, passionate and caring people who are exceptional examples of their profession. If I had encountered such tutors at school my life may well have taken a better course.</p> <p>What about courses that require specialist equipment to run, such as stained and fused glass, pottery, woodwork – how could these be re-sited?</p> <p>The building & staff provide an invaluable resource for supporting vulnerable students.</p> <p>Moving the adult education facilities outside the borough would mean many Merton residents would no longer be able to use them.</p> <p>Merton is a relatively well off borough. It would be an admission of failure to not continue to provide adult education in the borough.</p> <p>We hear the college is substantially self funded. The courses are often oversubscribed, why not increase the charges to increase the revenue stream?</p> <p>Selling off the building may raise funds this year, but what happens in following years when that resource has gone?</p> <p>I cannot believe that this vital local college that supports so many residents through a wonderful range of vocational, practical, technical courses is under threat of closure. This is the only college in our borough offering adult education, helping people on jobseekers to gain skills & get back to work – helping many people with learning disabilities, giving carers a break – courses for the elderly, such as silver surfer computer courses.</p> <p>There is nothing else in our area. Where all these poor people going to end up?</p> <p>Surely the benefits that MAE offers far outweigh the closure of MAE.</p> <p>I have been coming to these classes for the past 3 years. Merton Adult Education is one of the few colleges to offer this class across South London. I've found both the evening classes and the summer school very rewarding. Classes such as this enable adults to explore their creative side, & enables them to meet like minded individuals. It's a welcome relieve from the working week! Myself and I know many other students will be very sad if MAE has to shut.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Glass & Pottery</p> |
| | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |
| | <p>[REDACTED] Pottery</p> |
| | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |

| Topic -- MAE Review Learner Comment | Learner Name |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <p>The withdrawal of funding & the proposed closure of Merton Adult college will be a huge loss, educationally and socially to the community.</p> <p>I have been a student at various times at the college since 1992 and during that time, I have taken a diversity of courses. I have learnt new skills and have also enjoyed the social advantages.</p> <p>I have attended this course for 14 years and am still learning a lot from it. Closing MAE Whatley Avenue would be a real shame. An awful lot of people enjoy the facility whether they attend in order to obtain formal qualifications or just to enjoy an evening learning with others.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>Happiness is leaving the stress of work behind and being creative.</p> <p>Happiness is making Halloween decorations and crafts with my son.</p> <p>Happiness is making something. Developing a skill. Admiring others creativity.</p> <p>Happiness is watching a challenged learner develop her literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>Happiness is watching her thrive and be happy having a break away from her caring duties.</p> <p>Happiness is being inspired by the enthusiasm of a talented tutor.</p> <p>Happiness is cups of tea. Building friendships. Being part of a community.</p> <p>Happiness cannot be measured in pounds.</p> <p>Happiness is about community</p> <p>Happiness is MAE</p> <p>Please save our college</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>I am greatly disturbed to hear of plans to close Merton College. This isn't purely for selfish reasons as I'm really enjoying my class working with glass but it will be almost impossible to find another, at a reasonable price, near me as most places only do stained glass while I'm principally interested in slumping & fusing.</p> <p>Putting my personal life to one side, Merton college has a fine reputation for pastoral care and enabling young people to gain confidence to go out into the world.</p> <p>Its work in the arts is of great importance for those who aren't interested or able to study academic subjects, allowing us to find hidden talents or just enjoying the company of others with similar interests.</p> <p>I sincerely hope you will consider closing the college as an absolute last resort.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>It would be a great loss to the community if MAE were to close. It is an excellent facility, offering a wide range of courses. A broad section of the community use the college for learning and pleasure.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |

| Topic – MAE Review | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Learner Comment | Learner Name |
| <p>I am currently a student at MAE Whatley Avenue. I enjoy one class a week (in the evening) where I work on projects in glass. If this facility were to close the leaded glass students may possibly be accommodated elsewhere but my interest is in fused glass. This requires firing in a kiln. I wonder if any of the suggested alternative sites will be willing to take on a kiln & provide the conditions for me and my fellow fused glass students to continue with this type of work?</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>I have attended courses at MAE over a number of years and have gained a number of new skills, including learning a new language. I have always felt that MAE provides a safe, friendly and supportive atmosphere in which to learn. I am currently attending stained & fused glass and have recently started beginners Spanish. I would be immensely disappointed if it was not possible to continue due to the closure of the college.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |
| <p>I have only just started my second term of fusion glass course at MAE and have become slightly addicted. The mixture of local people from various walks of life and the friendly accepting nature of this local creative outlet has been a joy so far. The course and the location is brilliant. As a single lady and someone who uses public transport getting to MAE feels safe and easy. There is so much more I want to learn and develop that I'm already thinking of the follow on courses after this. What a unique place this is.</p> | <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> |

| Topic – Curriculum Development | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Learner Comment | Learner Name |
| <p>Family Tree courses Alternative therapies, NLP, Reike, Iyengar Yoga Taster courses or introductory in care worker</p> | <p>[REDACTED] [REDACTED]</p> |

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 16th February 2015

Wards: All

Subject: **Reference from Sustainable Communities
Scrutiny Panel – Adult Education in Merton:
evidence and options for achieving a value for
money service**

Lead officer: Rebecca Redman, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Councillor Russell Makin, Chair of Sustainable Communities
Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Contact officer: **Rebecca Redman, Scrutiny Officer;** 020 8545 4035;
Rebecca.redman@Merton.gov.uk

Recommendations:

That the Cabinet consider the following recommendations made by the Sustainable Communities O&S Panel further to undertaking pre decision scrutiny of Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service:

- a) That the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel support the recommendation that a commissioning model be adopted for the delivery of an adult education service in Merton; and
 - b) That Cabinet communicate their commitment to the commissioning principles outlined within the report at paragraph 3.14, in particular, the retention of staff, where possible, and the development of a nurturing environment for learners.
 - c) That Cabinet consult the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel at key stages of the implementation of the commissioning model to enable the Panel to undertake pre decision scrutiny.
-

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet the recommendations of the Sustainable Communities O&S Panel further to undertaking pre decision scrutiny of Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service.

2. DETAILS

- 2.1 At its meeting on 3rd February 2015, the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertook pre decision scrutiny of Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service and considered officer's advice and recommendations.

- 3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**
- 3.1 The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel received a report detailing officer's recommendations on Adult Education in Merton: evidence and options for achieving a value for money service, as well as hearing representations from the Cabinet Member for Education.
- 3.2 Members wished to make the following recommendations for Cabinet consideration:
- a) The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel supports the recommendation that a commissioning model be adopted for the delivery of an adult education service in Merton;
 - b) That Cabinet communicate their commitment to the commissioning principles outlined within the report at paragraph 3.14, in particular, the retention of staff, where possible, and the development of a nurturing environment for learners.
 - c) That Cabinet consult the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel at key stages of the implementation of the commissioning model to enable the Panel to undertake pre decision scrutiny.
- 4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**
- 4.1 Cabinet is required under the terms of the Constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny.
- 5. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**
- 5.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 6. TIMETABLE**
- 6.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 7. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**
- 7.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 8. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**
- 8.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**
- 9.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 10. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**
- 10.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 11. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**
- 11.1 None for the purposes of this report.
- 12. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**
- None for the purposes of this report.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None for the purposes of this report.

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Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 10 March 2015

Wards: All

Subject:

Lead officer: Simon Williams, Director of Communities and Housing

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

Contact person: Khadiru Mahdi khadiru@mvsc.co.uk; 020 8685 1771

Recommendations:

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission discusses and comments on the report and the updates on actions to implement the recommendations of the Scrutiny Task Group's Review of Volunteering in Merton.
- B. That the Commission provides advice and guidance on any other issues that would help improve volunteering in Merton.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Commission with updates on actions to implement the scrutiny task group's fifteen recommendations.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has agreed the recommendations detailed in appendix A following a task group investigating this subject and tasked relevant Council officers and their strategic partner, Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC), with the responsibility to implement the recommendations and report progress to elected members.
- 2.2. Appendix A outline the progress and issues to date.
- 2.3. It is suggested that a review of the Action Plan for the Volunteer Strategy 2015/16 would build on the reported successes and provide strategic direction for the next three years. This will build on the existing strategy and will incorporate the agreed actions arising from the recommendations of the Commission

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. A review of the Action Plan for the Volunteer Strategy 2015-16. Given the financial challenges faced by the Council and the reduction in the provision of non-statutory services by the local authority, volunteering is a key strategy available to the Council to help boost community involvement in the delivery of public services.

- 3.2. No review of the Action Plan for the Volunteer Strategy 2015/16. This would result in not fully benefiting from the many initiatives detailed in the documents accompanying this report. It would also limit the Council, MVSC and other partners' ability to explore opportunities to be derived from 3.1 above.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. It is proposed that consultation on the review of the Action Plan for of the Volunteer Strategy 2015/16 be undertaken with the Council's strategic, community and business partners through the Merton Partnership and its other multi agency bodies.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. It is suggested that the review of the Action Plan for the strategy take place during 2015. Existing work will continue while this takes place.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. MVSC's Chief Executive and Head of Volunteering will work closely with the Director of Communities and Housing, LBM, to develop and implement the review of the Action Plan for the Volunteer Strategy. It is expected that it can be done within the existing resources between the council and MVSC.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Promotion of volunteering will assist the council in delivering statutory functions to a higher standard, and also supports the council's overall wellbeing duties.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Volunteering is an important aspect of community cohesion

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None specific.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None specific

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

- Appendix A. Recommendations of the scrutiny commission and actions against these recommendations

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

VOLUNTEER STRATEGY 2012-14

Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC)
Update on the response to the scrutiny task group review of volunteering in Merton

Action Plan

| Recommendation | Response and Action | Who | Timescale start | Timescale end |
|--|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| <p><u>Recommendation 1</u> We recommend that data on volunteering, collected in 2012 from the annual resident's survey and the council's staff survey, should be analysed to plot variations in volunteering and to build a more detailed profile of volunteering activity in Merton.</p> | <p>1.1 Annual Residents Survey (ARS) It was proposed in the Merton Partnership's Volunteering Strategy that the ARS would include volunteering questions biennially.</p> <p>1.2. Volunteering questions were submitted in the November 2014 Annual Residents Survey (ARS)</p> <p>Q12 During the last 12 months, have you undertaken any unpaid activity/voluntary work in your local community to help local groups, clubs, organisations or individuals?</p> <p>Q13. Why do you think you have not participated in any community activity in the last 12 months?</p> <p>Base: All adults (1084)/ All adults who have not done any voluntary work in the last 12 months (856)</p> <p>20% of Merton residents have done voluntary work within the past 12 months. Of the 80% that have not, the most common reason given is that they do not have time to volunteer (68%), with 10% saying that it had never occurred to them.</p> | <p>Sarah Hannigan, MVSC, LBM</p> | | <p>November 2014</p> |

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| | <p>This indicates that approximately 40,000 Merton residents give their time in some way.</p> <p>In November 2012, 19% of adults said they had undertaken voluntary work, with 81% saying not. Of the 81% who said not, 69% did not have enough time; 8% said it had never occurred to them.</p> <p>In January/Feb 2013, 'Help shape the future of volunteering', an online survey, was distributed across Merton via Merton Connected and other channels. Main findings were that 51% of respondents would give more of their time to opportunities that are flexible around their time commitments; 45% would give more time to one-off events, once or twice a year; 38% would give more time if they were made aware of what they could get involved in locally.</p> | | | |
| <p>11 February 2015 Update:</p> <p>Both the ARS and the 'Help shape the future of volunteering' survey, indicate that more people would volunteer if they had flexible volunteering opportunities; one-off volunteering opportunities; easy access to finding out what was happening locally.</p> <p>Response to these findings in 2014/15 has been the development of more flexible, 'lighter touch' volunteering opportunities, such as 'Neighbour to Neighbour', 'Out and About' and one-off opportunities such as Team Merton, which have been able to support events over the year e.g. Legends Rugby Festival, Free the Children WE Day, Mitcham Carnival, Wimbledon Village Fair, Merton Partnership Volunteer Awards, Ride London, Bonfire Night Fireworks, Light up Morden, Winter Wonderland; in addition, Team Merton Volunteers have been involved in one-off community action opportunities, such as litter-picking and neighbourhood clean-up campaigns, yarn-bombing on Phipps Bridge and other neighbourhood support.</p> <p>In February and March 2015, Merton residents will have an exciting opportunity to be selected as Team London Ambassadors to provide support at tourist venues around London, including Gatwick airport. Volunteers can sign up for particular dates and shifts, working around their other commitments.</p> | | | | |

February 2015 also sees the launch of the Merton Befriending Service pilot, funded by Public Health and a partnership between Age UK Merton, Wimbledon Guild, Carers Support, MVSC and Positive Network. Volunteer befrienders are asked to give up an average of 1 hour of their time per week for face-to-face befriending. They can also get involved in telephone befriending, again giving them more flexibility around their other commitments.

Other recommendations from 'Help shape the future of volunteering survey' were targeted recruitment campaigns, on-going focus on communications and one-stop shop into volunteering.

Action taken in 2014/15

- National Volunteers' Week, 1-7 June 2014:
¼ page in My Merton to promote and celebrate volunteering
16 SHOUT ABOUT YOUR VOLUNTEERING stories
Merton Partnership Volunteering Awards – 11th June. Developed to include a volunteer recruitment 'marketplace' in addition to the awards. Over 200 people attended event, with 25 organisations at the marketplace. Food was donated by a local church. Event was supported by Team Merton volunteer stewards.
- Volunteering projects, Neighbour to Neighbour, Out and About and Manage Your Money were launched.
- Volunteer recruitment fair held at the Ahmadiyya Mosque, 6th June. 60 women attended and all stalls reported it as a success.
- Volunteer networks set up in Morden Primary school, Priory, St Peter and Paul. Work being done with Gorrington, Abbotsbury and Merton Park Primaries.
- Trustees Week Networking event held in November 2014 at Geeks, Morden. Publicised widely to voluntary, public and private sectors through Merton Connected, LBM and Chamber of Commerce. Representatives from all sectors attended, with over 20 voluntary organisations seeking trustees. A lawyer from Morrisons solicitors spoke about being a trustee of a voluntary sector organisation. Feedback from the event was that organisations and prospective trustees found it very useful and there were at least 4 successful 'matches' made. To be repeated in November 2015.
- January 2015: Outreach volunteer recruitment sessions held at 'Coffee in the Wood' Colliers Wood and MVSC's Fayre and Square shop in Centre Court, Wimbledon. Aim is to build on the regular bi-weekly group recruitment sessions currently held at Vestry Hall and to offer a variety of venues and recruitment options.
- One-stop shop for volunteering: This is an objective of the Volunteering and Community Strategy 2013/14. New portal in late

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| <p>stages of development to combine MVSC and VCM websites, with 'Call to Action' boxes on front page, one of which is 'I want to volunteer'. By clicking on this box, people will be able to access local volunteering opportunities in Merton and apply for them instantly.</p> | | | | |
| <p><u>Recommendation 2</u> We recommend that future Mayors consider continuing to give out a Mayoral crest pin badge to residents and staff who have made a significant contribution to the community, including those who have made a significant impact through volunteering. Clearly this will be at the discretion of the Mayor.</p> | <p>2.1 The current Mayor supports the recommendation.</p> | | | |
| <p>11 February 2015 update:</p> <p>Mayoral pins were distributed to award-winning volunteers at the Merton Partnership Volunteer Awards, June 2104 and at the Mayoral thank you to Team Merton Volunteers in January 2015. They are much appreciated by volunteers.</p> | | | | |
| <p><u>Recommendation 3</u> We recommend that the Cabinet consider the provision of a certificate to recognise the volunteer's service to the Council and to provide a form of reference for prospective employers. It is proposed that there would be regular award ceremonies at which these certificates would be given out by the Mayor.</p> | <p>3.1 Volunteers involved in Council services References are good practice and will need to continue to be promoted as such to Council staff who are involving volunteers.</p> <p>3.2 A brief guide about involving volunteers to be designed and circulated to LBM staff as part of the shift to involving volunteers in adding value to public services.</p> <p>3.3 To investigate a 'thank you' certificate for Council volunteers that will be signed by the Chief Executive of LBM and the Mayor.</p> | <p>Head of Volunteering (MVSC)</p> <p>Head of Volunteering</p> | <p>December 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p> | <p>January 2014</p> <p>October 2013</p> |

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| | <p>3.4 To investigate an annual 'thank you' evening to which all Council volunteers will be invited and will receive the certificate and the Mayoral crest pin badge. The current Mayor supports this recommendation.</p> <p>3.5 Note that the deadline of October in the above two recommendations is to coincide with Compact Week.</p> <p>3.6 Volunteers in Merton A 'thank you' certificate for volunteers giving the time in Merton will signed by the Chief Executive of LBM, the Mayor and the Chair of Merton Voluntary Service Council.</p> <p>3.7 There are the Mayor's Civic Awards (April) and the Merton Partnership Volunteering Awards (June) each year. A Mayoral crest pin badge will be given to the winners and highly commended in each category.</p> <p>3.8 The voluntary and public sector will be encouraged to nominate volunteers.</p> <p>3.9 To investigate with LBM's CMT the possibility of including a volunteering award in LBM's Staff Excellence Awards.</p> | <p>(MVSC)</p> <p>Head of Volunteering (MVSC) and Mayor's Office (LBM)</p> <p>Head of Volunteering (MVSC) and Joseph Dance (LBM)</p> <p>Mayor's Office (LBM)</p> <p>Sophie Matthews (MVSC) Abby Burford (LBM)</p> <p>Simon Williams (LBM)</p> | <p>September 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>November 2013</p> | <p>October 2013 (late notice and so possibly 2014)</p> <p>October 2013</p> <p>March 2014</p> |
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| 11 February 2015 update: | | | | |
| 3.3 Head of Volunteering at MVSC recommends that 3.3 and 3.4 be amalgamated with 3.6 and 3.7. | | | | |
| 3.4 Merton Libraries hold an annual 'Thank You' event for all library volunteers. | | | | |
| 3.7 Mayoral pins were distributed to award-winning volunteers at the Merton Partnership Volunteer Awards, June 2104 and at the Mayoral thank you to Team Merton Volunteers in January 2015. They are much appreciated by volunteers. | | | | |
| 3.8 Merton Partnership Awards in June 2014 saw a record number of nominations from the public and voluntary sectors, including Merton Libraries, the Met Police and the CCG, and a new award for Employee Volunteering Team of the year. Awards ceremony was attended by more than 200 people. Aim for June 2015 Awards is to build on this and introduce some new awards categories. | | | | |
| <u>Recommendation 4</u> We recommend that Cabinet give consideration to the provision of an offer from Merton Adult Education for those volunteers who need support with CV writing and interview skills, as well as the opportunity to gain an accredited qualification in community volunteering. | 4.1 Note that voluntary groups carry out this service e.g. Grenfell. | | | |
| | 4.2 A list of organisation's with this offer to be compiled and circulated to LBM and the voluntary sector. | Head of Volunteering | December 2013 | February 2014 |
| | 4.3 Investigate possible volunteering accreditation / qualification options for further discussion. | Head of Volunteering | December 2013 | February 2014 |
| 11 February update | | | | |
| 4.2 Volunteers seeking support with CV skills is embedded in the culture of volunteer-involving organisations. Support is available from , Grenfell, Young Advisors, YMCA, JobCentre Plus, Merton Adult Education and others. Should the council adopt the commissioning model for adult education, opportunities will be sought to get providers to offer this support. | | | | |
| 4.3 Post-merger, MVSC is investigating possible options for volunteering accreditation/qualifications, including ASDAN and City and Guilds. | | | | |
| <u>Recommendation 5</u> We recommend that Cabinet should investigate the costs and benefits for volunteers who make a significant contribution to council services receiving reduced | 5.1 The challenges of defining 'significant contribution' and the administrative resource required to deliver this recommendation are noted. | | | |
| | 5.2 Investigate the feasibility of this recommendation. | Head of Volunteering (MVSC) and Joseph Dance | February 2014 | |

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| prices for some library and leisure services. | | (LBM) | | |
| <p>07 April 2014 update</p> <p>5.2 Consideration has been given to this recommendation. The cost of investment in setting up and administering the scheme, for a fairly low number of volunteers, means that taking forward this recommendation is not advised.</p> | | | | |
| <p><u>Recommendation 6</u></p> <p>We recommend that the web-based approach to advertising volunteering opportunities should be complemented by the use of My Merton and other low-tech mechanism for those who do not access the internet, including banners and touch points.</p> | <p>6.1 Low-tech mechanisms e.g. My Merton and printed materials will be used to promote volunteering opportunities across the borough.</p> <p>6.2 Please note the remaining points for information: as part of the Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy and merger discussions between MVSC and VCM, one online access point for volunteering in Merton will emerge.</p> <p>6.3 The online presence will have clear contact information for those requiring face-to-face support.</p> | Head of Volunteering (MVSC) | October 2013 | April 2014 |
| <p>07 April 2014 update</p> <p>6.1 There have been ongoing discussions about including volunteering in My Merton. Although It is a challenge with the requirements for space, there have been pieces on volunteering in every edition over the past year, and there is a logo which highlights all articles with an impact on volunteering.</p> <p>11 February 2015 update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.3. New online portal in late stages of development, which will combine MVSC and VCM websites, with 'Call to Action' boxes on front page, one of which is 'I want to volunteer'. By clicking on this box, people will be able to access local volunteering opportunities in Merton and apply for them instantly. They will also be provided with clear information on how to obtain face-to-face support, where required (e.g. those with disabilities, mental health issues, vulnerable young people and others who would like to speak to someone from the Volunteering Team to help them find a suitable volunteering opportunity.) They will be able to make an appointment with the Supported Volunteering Team, or book on to one of MVSC's bi-weekly Group Volunteer Recruitment sessions. This will be supplemented by regular volunteering presence (leaflets, banners etc) at public and community events around the borough. | | | | |
| <p><u>Recommendation 7</u></p> <p>We recommend that</p> | 7.1 As part of the Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy and merger discussions between MVSC and | | | |

7.4 SHOUT ABOUT YOUR VOLUNTEERING was run again in June 2014 as part of National Volunteers' Week celebrations. In addition to the online promotion, volunteers' stories were displayed in the libraries, Centre Court Shopping Centre Wimbledon and at Merton Link.

The new MVSC volunteering portal will include a regular page of 'Get inspired by other volunteers' stories'. We are also encouraging our YAVA volunteers (Youth Approved Volunteer Awards) to do short interviews on ipads about their volunteering experiences, particularly with a view to improving volunteering opportunities for young people.

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| <p><u>Recommendation 8</u> We recommend that the Council work with Merton Voluntary Service Council to continue to support voluntary sector groups' volunteering activities by identifying and signposting potential sources of funding</p> | <p>8.1 It is testament to the successful Compact that a grants system has been retained, administered in partnership and the amount has been increased during austere times.</p> <p>8.2 Funding opportunities in and outside of the Borough are promoted on Merton Connected and support available if required. This will continue.</p> <p>8.3 MVSC are committed to identifying new sources of funding for the voluntary sector, are founder members of United Way London and have recently launched the Merton Community Fund (see response to recommendation 12).</p> | <p>Khadiru Mahdi (MVSC)</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | |
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11 February 2015 update
8.2 Each Merton Connected e-bulletin from MVSC includes funding opportunities which stay live on MVSC's website.

In October 2014, MVSC brought together a consortium to apply for Public Health funding. Age UK led on the bid to fund a Merton Befriending Service pilot for 2 years from February 2015. Other partners are Wimbledon Guild, Carers Support, Positive Network and MVSC.

The Community Fund continues to be promoted widely and a high-profile 'Stop Start' campaign took place in January 2015 to raise funds and awareness.

MVSC's Head of Development and Funding Advice gives tailored support to small and emerging groups on applying for appropriate funding. We also plan to provide partnership and consortia support to voluntary and community organisations to enable them to bid successfully to deliver public services.

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| <p><u>Recommendation 11</u> We recommend that the Council's Communications Team contact Merton University of the Third Age to discuss how they can help with publicity. Options to consider should include My Merton, resident association magazines and ward newsletters.</p> | 11.1 It is positive that the Council's Communications Team will support U3A. | Abby Burford (LBM) | Ongoing | |
| | 11.2 U3A will continue to be supported by the Ageing Well Community Connector at MVSC to promote its activities and to develop in the east of the borough. | Bec Yusuf (MVSC) | Ongoing | |
| | 11.3 There is a volunteering communications group which meet regularly and includes voluntary and public sector partners. The aim is to co-ordinate communications to raise the profile of volunteering and ultimately encourage more individuals to give their time. | | | |
| | 11.4 Whilst recognising the high demand for space in My Merton, the volunteering communications group is to consider a proposal to dedicate space in each issue highlighting volunteering. | Head of Volunteering (MVSC) | September 2013 | February 2014 |
| | 11.5 This will be done in partnership with the Compact team are considering a proposal to have dedicated space for the voluntary sector. | Kate Martyn (LBM) and Ian Beever (MVSC) | September 2013 | February 2014 |
| | 11.6 Communications will continue be a key part of the Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy and volunteering infrastructure. This will include broadening communication channels. | Head of Volunteering (MVSC) | Ongoing | |
| <p>07 April 2014 update 11.1 and 11.2 U3A continue to get supported. 11.4 and 11. 5 A dedicated space is difficult given the demands for space. Conversations continue.</p> <p>11 February 2015 update Development of one-stop shop plus alternative to do-it website are priorities for MVSC's Head of Volunteering. Communications and promotion of volunteering have taken place via campaigns on Merton Connected e.g. Trustees Week and</p> | | | | |

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| supported by recruitment and promotional events. | | | | |
| Aim in 2015/16 is for the Volunteering Communications Group to meet regularly and implement a programme of volunteering campaigns to maintain the profile of volunteering in Merton. Head of Volunteering and Marketing Officer at MVSC to lead. | | | | |
| <u>Recommendation 12</u> We recommend that Cabinet support work to explore the feasibility of developing a "United Way" in Merton so that there is one-stop-shop approach to making charitable donations, whereby a fund is built up which can then be used to give grants to local good causes. | 12.1 United Way London was launched in May 2013 at the Tower of London and Merton is one of 6 founding boroughs. 12.2 A Community Fund was launched on 17 th May and contributions are being regularly made and the aim is to increase this and continue with publicity. 12.3 LBM are supportive of the Community Fund. All staff received an e-bulletin in June/July with an e-form so that they could sign up to donate. | Kate Martyn (LBM) | July 2013 | |
| 07 April 2014 update 12.1 United Way is progressing. | | | | |
| 11 February 2015 update 12.2 The United Way has undergone some changes since the end of the Cabinet Office Transforming Local Infrastructure (TLI) funding. United Way London has been set up as a charity and affiliated to United Way UK, led by London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC). A payroll giving campaign has been launched with Costco to raise revenues for local charities. A process will start soon to agree priorities for London, linked to the United way priorities of income, health and education. 12.3 The Community Fund has currently raised almost £5000 with a mix of regular and one-off donations. MVSC has launched the first round for applications with the deadline on 9 th March 2015. | | | | |
| <u>Recommendation 13</u> We recommend that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission continue to monitor the implementation of the Merton Partnership's Merton Volunteering and | 13.1 The Volunteering Strategy Implementation Group currently consisting of Simon Williams (LBM), Evereth Willis (LBM) Khadiru Mahdi (MVSC) and Sarah Hannigan (MVSC) meet quarterly to monitor progress. 13.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission are welcome to receive copies of the reports provided by | Julia Regan (LBM) | As required | |

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| Community Action Strategy 2012-2014 and beyond. | Sarah Hannigan, Head of Volunteering, if required. | | | |
| <p>07 April 2014 update See volunteering strategy update paper</p> <p>11 February 2015 update See volunteering strategy update paper</p> | | | | |
| <p><u>Recommendation 14</u> We recommend that the Council's Corporate Management Team continue to look for new and innovative ways to involve volunteers in order to supplement service provision. Progress on this should be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on a regular basis.</p> | <p>14.1 Hayley James (MVSC) met with all Directors in February/March 2013 to discuss adding value to public services by involving volunteers.</p> <p>14.2 A report drafted by Simon Williams (LBM) and Hayley James (MVSC) has been discussed on two occasions at CMT in March and July 2013.</p> <p>14.3 Progress is underway across the council with a selective list of initiatives. <i>Good progress with Merton Council with involving volunteers in adding value to public services.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Cross-directorate "Neighbour to Neighbour" project underway with a focus on loneliness, working with Public Health. £3k has been agreed. LBM are offering up to 30 DBS checks as 'gifts in kind' to the project for 2014/2015.</i> ✓ <i>Neighbour to Neighbour: several public meetings have been held to encourage residents to share ways of being more neighbourly. Has merged with MVSC's Good Neighbours scheme, where a task force of volunteers is available to carry out one-off tasks for isolated residents. First tasks have been carried out.</i> ✓ <i>February 2015 also sees the launch of the</i> | <p>Simon Williams (LBM) and Head of Volunteering (MVSC)</p> <p>LBM Departments</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | |

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| | <p><i>Merton Befriending Service, funded by Public Health and delivered by a consortium including MVSC, Age UK and Wimbledon Guild. Volunteer befrienders are asked to give up an average of 1 hour of their time per week for face-to-face befriending. They can also get involved in telephone befriending, again giving them more flexibility around their other commitments</i></p> <p><i>Mitcham Head Teachers – progressing with 5 primary schools.</i></p> <p><i>Morden held a one-off day which 5 non-school volunteers got involved for. They linked with local bank Handelsen for Enterprise Week. They have currently recruited 6 Maths Mentors.</i></p> <p><i>Priory Church of England have finalised their volunteer handbook and are about to start recruiting reading mentors.</i></p> <p><i>Gorringe and Peter and Paul are drafting their volunteer handbook. Abbotsbury have shown an interest.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Linking with Direct Provision, ‘Out and About’ is a project to link adults with social needs to go out in the community with resident who is already doing the activity e.g. going to football is underway. 4 volunteers recruited for buddying. Most volunteers coming forward for role are female and most of the adults with support needs male, which has proved a barrier in some cases.</i> ✓ <i>Financial capability volunteers – linking with LBM and MLCAB a project called ‘Manage your Money’ is a volunteer-delivered workshop to support people who are not meeting their requirement to pay Council Tax. Due to be</i> | | | |
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| | <p><i>piloted in June. 9 volunteers have been recruited Workshops delivered with volunteers and facilitated jointly by LBM/MVSC. Low take-up by clients.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Volunteer-involvement to support a Customer Contact piece of work over the next 2 years is being developed. Currently 3 volunteer roles will be available.</i> ✓ <i>“Dig Merton” is underway with Sustainable Merton taking the lead.</i> ✓ <i>Dignity in Care is being delivered into a number of care homes. 11 volunteers undertook the training and five visits have been undertaken. A review is due later in the year and sustainability will need to be considered.</i> ✓ <i>Merton Memories successfully included volunteers in archiving local history. Merton Heritage Centre has asked for help with recruiting volunteers for new funded project, ‘Carved with Pride’, recording contribution of Merton residents during WW1.MVSC Volunteering Team working with them.</i> | | | |
| <p>07 April 2014 update See volunteering strategy update paper, objective 4</p> <p>February 2015 update. Simon Williams and the then project manager for the volunteering strategy met with every member of CMT in the first half of 2014 and this has generated a list of what is going on in each department. This is updated with directors and reported back to CMT on an occasional basis.</p> | | | | |
| <p><u>Recommendation 15</u> We recommend that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission should take an ongoing interest in progress on volunteering and should</p> | <p>15.1 Agreed.</p> <p>15.2 Sarah Hannigan, Head of Volunteering (MVSC), as lead for strategy delivery on behalf of the Merton Partnership will attend also.</p> | <p>Simon Williams (LBM) and Sarah Hannigan (MVSC)</p> | <p>April 2014</p> | |

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| ask the lead Director (currently the Director of Community and Housing) to bring an annual update on behalf of the Council's Corporate Management Team and the Merton Partnership | | | | |
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Author: Sarah Hannigan
 Head of Volunteering
 Merton Voluntary Service Council

Lead Director: Simon Williams
 Director of Community and Housing
 London Borough of Merton

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| Equality Objective 1- Tackling inequality | | | | |
| 1.1 Schools attainment - improving attainment levels for all and narrowing the gap in achievements for some groups | | | | |
| 1.1.1 Deliver support to schools to narrow gaps in progress and achievement. | Deliver training, and provide support, including pupil tracking, to improve the progress and outcomes of all pupils, including those from target groups: those from Black and minority ethnic groups (BME), Pupil Premium (those eligible for free school meals and Looked After Children), non statemented pupils with Special Educational Needs, and LAC. | Key stage progress measures for target groups. Key stage outcomes for target groups. | Children Schools and Families - Merton School Improvement | <p>2013-14 Provisional Data:</p> <p>Key stage 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress in maths by Black pupils has increased to 89% from 87% and has met target. - Progress in writing by Pakistani pupils has increased to 100% from 91% and is above target. - Pupil premium gap in writing progress has reduced to 1% but increased to 5% and 4% in reading and maths, respectively. - SEN gap in expected progress from KS1 to KS2 in writing has reduced from 11% to 9% but has risen to 12% from 8% in reading and to 17% from 16% in maths. <p>Key stage 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress in maths by Black pupils has remained stable at 73%. - Progress in English by Bangladeshi pupils has increased to 92% from 78% and is above target. - Pupil premium gap has increased from 13% to 16% in English and 18% to 25% in maths. <p>The 2013-14 provisional results show that the Merton School Improvement</p> |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | | | | <p>Service (MSI) continued programme of support to primary and secondary schools to identify, track and extend the progress made by individual pupils from target groups in key subjects has impacted positively on outcomes. The MSI Service will continue supporting schools in using pupil premium funding to deliver targeted support for individual needs. MSI are also investigating gaps at secondary level and formulating an approach for improvement, this forms part of a normal annual process of assessing evidenced based needs and formulating a response</p> <p>The CSF departmental Equalities plan for 2015/16 is being drafted and will include areas for focus to continue to narrow the gap.</p> |
| 1.2 Improving outcomes - targeting services to improve the outcomes for those most in need. | | | | |
| 1.2.1 Continue to develop a spectrum of short break provision for children and young people with SEND/challenging behaviour. | Continue to commission and contract manage service providers ensuring that provision has the capacity to meet the range of needs of Merton's disabled children and young people, from | Take up of short breaks. | Children Schools and Families Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Integrated Service. | <p>Ensuring suitable provision and capacity to meet the range of needs of Merton's disabled children and young has been at the core of the role out of the Children and Families Act in relation to children with disabilities.</p> <p>Part of the work has involved developing a 'Local Offer' under a programme of consultation and engagement of families with children</p> |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | moderate to severe. | | | <p>with SEN and disabilities, this has been underway since October 2013, to ensure that service options meet the needs and requirements of children with SEN and disabilities and their parents. Results of this work are concluding that parents have felt meaningfully involved by the local authority and that their views have been listened to and used to inform developments. The Local Offer went live on 1st September 2014, and in order to continue this positive engagement of families, two information sessions were delivered to parents about the Local Offer and the provisions of the C&F Act overall.</p> <p>It should be noted that Merton’s Brightwell Children’s respite care home continues to be a good quality short breaks provider. The last Ofsted inspection judged the Brightwell as providing an ‘outstanding’ quality of care and as being ‘good’ overall. Take up of provision for disabled children and young people across all short breaks this year has totalled 388 in the first quarter and 404 in quarter 2.</p> |
| 1.2.2 Monitor data to improve inclusion or | Review data on achievement and provide support to | Successful outcome of enrolments and | Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE) | Data will be captured within the end of academic year self assessment report. |

Equality Strategy Action Plan – Appendix 1

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| performance of specific groups of learners. | <p>under-performing groups in order to bridge the gap.</p> <p>Review data on protected characteristics that are collected and reported on and measure against targets set. Address any imbalance.</p> | courses running | | |
| 1.2.3 Discuss community issues / relations in respect of harassment and hate crimes in safeguarding meetings. | Discuss the gathering of information for those protected characteristics currently not recorded and identify the best way forward. | Successful outcome of enrolments and courses running | Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE) | MAE support service group to discuss /capture at monthly meetings. |
| 1.2.4 Develop courses to challenge typical stereotyping and market appropriately i.e. Men in the Kitchen – encouraging men | <p>Monitor support (ALS or other) provided for learners and measure impact through learner achievement.</p> <p>Set challenging goals across departments and monitor results.</p> | Successful outcome of enrolments and courses running | Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE) | Two courses were run both of which went |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| to take up childcare courses and women into woodwork etc | <p>Review Census results data and how our community is reflected.</p> <p>Discuss performance in equality meetings and action plan for renewed activity if not being met.</p> | | | |
| 1.2.5 Collection of customer profile data (e.g. ethnicity) at point of referral | Inputting appropriate information onto initial contacts and analysis of information | Numbers and profiles of customers being referred for assessments will be known and inequalities highlighted | Community and Housing – Access and Assessment | A baseline for current performance is to be established and monitoring will be put in place to demonstrate improvement. |
| 1.2.6 Merton Employment team to undertake some equality analysis of referrals for the past 12 months. Especially with regard to age, gender and race. | The analysed data will be used to identify groups that are currently being underrepresented or not being referred for employment opportunities | Increased marketing and referral for employment opportunities, for the identified groups. | Community and Housing - Direct Provision | <p>Initial indications show an under-representation of females and BME groups.</p> <p>Update February 2015; Referrals from April 2014 to date show female referrals remaining constant (10 out of 38 referrals, up from 10 from 41 the previous year) BME referrals have increased from 7 out of 41 to 17 from 28 in the year to date.</p> |

Equality Strategy Action Plan – Appendix 1

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| 1.2.7 Assess extent to which providers meet the requirements of customers from all equality groups | Use of contract monitoring tools (such as audit visits and customer surveys) to evaluate contract compliance and implement provider improvement plans where necessary. | Appropriate services are available to all customers including those from specific equality groups | Community and Housing - Commissioning /Procurement | This is done as part of the contract monitoring process |
| 1.2.8 Ensure that equality issues are appropriately considered in each tender evaluation process | Assessment of bidders for minimum compliance to equalities requirements at the evaluation stage. | Compliance to minimum tender equality evaluation requirements. | Community and Housing - Commissioning /Procurement | This is done as part of the commissioning and procurement process |
| 1.2.9 An Equality Analysis (EA) to be completed for all procured services | If appropriate, a Method Statement to be devised specifically to the service relating to the outcomes of the EA and this to be evaluated according to an agreed evaluation criteria | Method Statement submission to be evaluated in line with the pre-determined tender evaluation matrix. | Community and Housing - Commissioning /Procurement | This is done as part of the contract monitoring process |
| 1.2.10 Improve availability of specialist providers for complex and | Identify providers who can meet the needs of customers, conduct a market research/development | Create own local indicators to measure improved service to complex and | Community and Housing – Commissioning Brokerage | As part of the ASC Redesign Programme, the service is undertaking a review of how the support needs for this client group can be better met in Merton both in |

Equality Strategy Action Plan – Appendix 1

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| challenging customers | exercise, with possibility to move to contracted services | challenging customers | | the short term and in the longer term |
| 1.2.11 Standardise charges for day services between Direct Payments and commissioned day services for BME customers | Brokerage to enter into negotiations with providers to establish a consistent tariff for this service | A single tariff for day services for BME customers, whether they are council commissioned or Direct Payments | Community and Housing – Commissioning Brokerage | Negotiations completed with BME day services to reduce daily rate to £31.37 for commissioned service only. Providers currently not willing to honour reduction via Direct Payments. |
| 1.2.12 Tackle inequality through organisational commitment and responsive services | <p>Equality objectives to be included in new Homelessness Strategy.</p> <p>Meet the required standard for the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Accreditation's equality strand</p> <p>Monitor equality outcomes of Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, and other strategy action plans e.g. Affordable Warmth, Older People</p> <p>Monitor equality</p> | <p>Equality objectives set</p> <p>CSE standard met</p> <p>Equality outcomes highlighted in action plan monitoring reports</p> <p>Project outcomes analysed by equality categories</p> <p>Monitor</p> | Community and Housing - Housing | <p>Review of Homelessness Strategy currently underway and equality objectives being developed.</p> <p>Achieved CSE Accreditation in 2013 but no further assessment planned.</p> <p>Outcomes of strategies monitored annually, 2013-14 completed.</p> <p>Monitoring of projects for 2013-14 completed.</p> <p>All housing developments are required to meet targets of 100% Life Time Homes & 10% wheelchair accessible.</p> <p>Completed.</p> |

Equality Strategy Action Plan – Appendix 1

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | outcomes for projects – MASH and A10 Project Maximise development of wheelchair accessible units and Life Time Homes Record all RDS viewings by equality categories to enable equality monitoring of RDS outcomes | completions RDS viewings monitored by equality categories | | |
| 1.2.13 Improve reading attainment levels for all Merton Primary School children | Roll out the Schools and libraries Reading initiative to all schools by July 2014. | 95% of children in Merton Primary Schools are active users of their local library | Community and Housing - Libraries and Heritage Service | Implemented in 39 schools with 15,995 children signed up and actively using their local library. Further roll out targeting the final four schools is planned in the coming months. |
| 1.2.14 To develop a Healthy Schools Programme targeting school clusters in the East of the borough [area of highest deprivation] | To produce a report identifying areas and schools with highest need based on a schools audit Develop a targeted Merton Healthy Schools programme and provide support to schools to implement the offer | To develop and commission a programme of practical support to schools in East Merton to deliver a range of Healthy Schools prevention activities. | Community and Housing – Public Health | Report from consultants to inform development of work completed. Support/coordination for school clusters being commissioned. Schools audit template developed to assess and identify needs and inform commissioning of further practice support to 20 schools in the East of the Borough |

Equality Strategy Action Plan – Appendix 1

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| 1.2.15 To ensure National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data is used to inform and target resources for tackling obesity | To ensure that commissioned services and other programmes to reduce obesity are effectively targeting those in need To produce a report identifying areas and schools with highest need | Monitor uptake of weight management services amongst those families with highest need | Community and Housing – Public Health | Reports to Children’s Trust Board and Health and Wellbeing Board. Data used to target Healthy Schools. Data also to be used to prioritise re-commissioning of Children’s Weight Management Services 2014/15 |
| 1.2.16 NB this has been moved to Public Health from Environment and Regeneration-Safer Merton. | Commissioning the delivery of drugs services and ensuring high quality Interventions | As defined in quarterly DOMES report | Public Health (previously Safer Merton) | Services continue to be delivered to a high standard and perform within the top quartile of comparator areas. Currently reviewing overall service structure and delivery |
| 1.2.17 | Ensuring equal access and services for those experiencing domestic abuse | As defined in the Domestic Violence (DV) action plan for the SM partnership | Environment and Regeneration - Safer Merton | Currently there is an audit commissioned to review services to DV victims across the council and partnership this in turn will improve the offer of services to victims. |
| 1.2.18 increase the independence and mobility of disabled people by improving accessibility in the public realm in Merton | Progress issues identified by the Corporate Public Transport Liaison Group meetings Ensure that all new development complies with mobility | Monitored at the Corporate Public Transport Liaison Group meetings and by monitoring | Environment and Regeneration - Future Merton | a) The council is delivering a works programme to bring 95%of bus stop up to accessible standards by 2016. In particular, work on the stop outside the Waitrose store in Raynes Park is expected to commence shortly |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | requirements in respect of Planning and Building Control | relevant planning appeals. | | b) The Council raises the issue of step free access for both Motspur Park and Rayne Park Stations as opportunities arise. However, should Crossrail 2 move forward then pressure to upgrade stations facilities will increase as both stations are likely to be served by Crossrail 2 services. |
| 1.3 Anti-poverty initiatives | | | | |
| 1.3.1 Increase take up of children's centre services by families (with 0-4 year olds) from 30% most deprived areas. | <p>-Improve completion of parenting programmes, and take-up of children's centre services and early years provision, by the most needy families through targeted outreach.</p> <p>-Continue to roll out strategy for funded childcare places for identified 2 year olds</p> | <p>-Increase take up of children's centres services by target families.</p> <p>-Increase the proportion of parents completing parenting programmes.</p> <p>-Ensure good take up of 2 year old places.</p> | Children Schools and Families - Early Years and Children's Centres Service. | <p>We are on target for 'take-up of children's centres by children living in areas of deprivation. (Q2 55.7% and on target to reach 77.7% by the end of the year). A key contributing factor is the quality of services provided, it should be noted that Acacia Children's Centre was judged as 'outstanding' in all areas in its recent Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>Take up of funded childcare places for identified 2 year olds is also on target to meet expectations this year and exceeding performance this time last year (380 children by June 2014 against a target of 522 by year end). Work is on-going to engage eligible families and raise awareness of the programme.</p> <p>In relation to proportion of parents</p> |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| | | | | completing parenting programmes we are performing below target, 61.5% (Q1) and 56.3% (Q2) of parents completed evidence-based parenting courses – against a target of 78%. Work is now focusing on pre-course preparation to promote successful completion. |
| 1.4 Health inequality - reducing health inequality and the issues affecting particular communities | | | | |
| 1.4.1 Develop a network of community champions who will work within existing voluntary sector groups (with a focus on the East) to support residents to lead healthy lifestyles. | Work with HRCH (LiveWell provider) to commission Merton Voluntary Services Council to deliver health champion programme, train 25 health champions and increase the number of residents from East Merton accessing health improvement services. | Contract signed 25 health champions in place and number of residents engaged. | Community & Housing -Public Health | The first cohort of groups have been trained and are now delivering support to their members. A review of progress will be undertaken in Q3 2015, which will inform future work. |
| 1.4.2 Introduce a more targeted approach to the NHS Health Check programme which gives priority to | Procuring a software solution which will identify and invite eligible patients from vulnerable groups to have a check first over a rolling period | Software with this capacity procured and installed onto Providers systems | Community and Housing – Public Health | Appointed a new IT call/recall system (QMS) for the programme and are due to award the contract in 2014/15 Quarter 3. The lead in for implementation is due to commence in the same quarter. |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| vulnerable groups at increased risk of cardiovascular disease. | | GPs prioritise and provide NHS health checks for residents who meet prioritisation criteria | | |
| 1.4.3 To develop a Healthy Schools Programme targeting school clusters in areas of highest deprivation | To develop and commission a programme of practical support to schools in East Merton to deliver a range of Healthy Schools prevention activities. | Monitor uptake of weight management services amongst those families with highest need | Community and Housing – Public Health | Agreed to commission to co-create with schools and partners a programme for 2014/15. Commissioning an obesity prevention programme for 20 schools in East Merton. |
| 1.5 Economic development – supporting business during the economic recession and encourage economic growth | | | | |
| 1.5.1 | Implement the Economic Development Strategy | As defined by the action plan referenced in the Economic Development Strategy | Environment and Regeneration – Future Merton | Reviewed at the Economic Wellbeing Group of the Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership |
| 1.6 Access to employment - developing the Employment and Skills plan | | | | |
| 1.6.1 | Implement the Employment Skills Plan | As defined by the action plan referenced in the Employment Skills Plan | Environment and Regeneration – Future Merton | Reviewed at the Economic Wellbeing Group of the Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership |
| Equality Objective 2 - Service Access | | | | |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| 2.1 Undertaking Equality Analysis (EA) and targeting the gaps identified | | | | |
| 2.1.1 Increase the number and range of in house local foster carers, as identified by the LAC sufficiency assessment (2012-15). | Increase capacity and local placement choice to meet the needs of older children and teenagers. Target recruitment of carers from an Asian background. | Recruit 3 x carer households for target group per year Recruit at least 1 x Asian carer household per year. | Children Schools and Families - Access to Resources Team. | Recruitment of suitable in-house foster carers remains a key priority for the department. A Sufficiency assessment is refreshed annually to target our understanding of types of cares needed for our looked after children. In this year we have delivered 8 new foster carer approvals of these one was from a 'targeted group', with a further 17 potential carers in assessment at the end of Q3. Against benchmarking available to us (this data is not readily published) we are doing well, the West London Consortium (consisting of 10 Boroughs) recruited 34 foster careers between them during 2013/14, in Merton we recruited 15 in the same period. As well as continuing with our recruitment strategy, there are new initiatives being pursued with Merton churches and other faith groups. From within existing resources, we have now created a dedicated management structure to drive forward our recruitment strategy for 2015/16. |

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| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| 2.1.2 | All Heads of Service will ensure that EAs lead to equality of service delivery | All reviews to be held at DMT each October prior to the new savings code commencement | All departments - Heads of Service across | EAs are being undertaken where appropriate. |
| 2.1.3 Explore setting up service level agreements to secure regular placements with child minders, nurseries and other childcare providers to support learners with childcare needs. | Discuss with childcare settings who supply work experience placements for our existing courses | Achievement and completion of learners | Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE) | <p>In communication with one local nursery and in process of contacting NCMA for contact details of local childminders.</p> <p>Have built good relationships with local child minders and nurseries who have expressed requests to work with MAE again.</p> <p>Dyslexia tutor has identified different resources to be used in classroom. i.e. materials to use for learners with dyslexia – different coloured card slide rules etc. Formal Dyslexia assessments carried out to identify degree of Dyslexia and recommended methods of support</p> |
| 2.1.4 Promotion and awareness raising of equipment and resources available to support additional | Practical demonstration and Classroom observations Promote in staff briefing (newsletter) | Increased use of resources and learner success. | Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE) | <p>Increased use of resources and learner success.</p> <p>New posters, visits to classes, information included in Advice and Guidance, informal discussions on demand have been implemented</p> |

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| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| learning needs | | | | |
| 2.1.5 Collection of customer profile data re those receiving social care assessments | Analysis of numbers of assessments carried out for different groups of clients (e.g. BME, different parts of the borough) | Increased assessments of the harder to reach client groups/parts of the borough | Community and Housing - Access and Assessment | The commissioned research from Public Health re the assessment of inequalities from an ethnicity perspective of Adult Social Care (ASC) data, to gain a better understanding of whether there were any differences in service provision experienced by the different ethnicity groups is now complete and findings under consideration |
| 2.1.6 Analyse outcomes of all nomination panels by equality client group for Supported Living service. | The outcomes for the past 12 months need to be collated. | The outcomes for the past 12 months need to be collated. | Community and Housing – Direct Provision | Nominations from April 2014 to date; 1 female, 8 male, all from white backgrounds. The previous year showed 5 female, 6 male referrals, 4 from BME backgrounds. Work will continue with referring agencies to examine the referral process. |
| 2.1.7 Ensure that services are accessible to all customers from different equality groups | Review of any formal & informal complaints received related to equalities and implement provider improvement plans where necessary | Increased uptake of services by customers from all equality groups | Community and Housing – Commissioning | The commissioned research from Public Health re the assessment of inequalities from an ethnicity perspective of Adult Social Care (ASC) data, to gain a better understanding of whether there were any differences in service provision experienced by the different ethnicity groups is now complete and findings under consideration |
| 2.1.8 Monitor service access to | Produce annual equality monitoring | Annual report completed and | Community and Housing - Housing | Annual monitoring report completed and considered by HNMT |

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| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| help ensure equality of outcomes | <p>report - lettings, supported housing, intermediate housing, homelessness, RDS, rough sleepers, affordable warmth, and develop actions to address any issues highlighted</p> <p>Analyse outcomes of all nomination panels by equality client group</p> <p>Complete analysis of housing-related Census 2011 data</p> <p>Include equality monitoring of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in annual monitoring report</p> | <p>considered by HNMT</p> <p>Annual monitoring report completed</p> <p>Analysis completed</p> <p>DFG outcomes added to annual monitoring report</p> | | <p>Outcomes for Young Persons Nominations Panel completed. Analysis of other panels yet to be completed.</p> <p>Analysis completed</p> <p>Age & gender data for DFG being added to spreadsheet. Ethnicity data still to be captured. Will be added to annual monitoring report once data are inputted.</p> |
| 2.1.9 Increase access to libraries among older people and the working age population. | Consult with older people and the working age population to ascertain how we can improve services and better engage with | To increase access to library services among under-represented target groups by 10% | Community and Housing - Libraries and Heritage Service | The consultation is now live with the survey and focus group activities open until 15 March 2015. The results will be analysed and an action plan will be drawn up by the end of April 2015. |

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| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | underrepresented audiences. | | | |
| 2.1.10 Gain a greater understanding of the current use and future needs of pharmaceutical service in Merton. | Commission a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) that drives service improvement in Merton pharmacies, including public health commissioned activity e.g. stop smoking services and Emergency Hormonal Contraception and Chlamydia | PNA published by April 2015 | Community and Housing – Public Health | The PNA has now been completed in final draft form and has been sent to the Health and Wellbeing Board for their comments. This will be published by the statutory deadline of 1st April 2015. |
| 2.1.11 Development and expansion of existing sexual health service in community pharmacies in Merton. Pharmacies will be selected based on their location in the deprived wards. | Commission 2 pharmacies as a pilot to provide a sexual health suite of services to include Emergency Contraception, Chlamydia testing, Chlamydia treatment and condom provision. | PNA published by April 2015 | Community and Housing – Public Health | Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC) Patient Group Directions (PGD) developed and approved. Chlamydia treatment Patient Group Directions (PGD) developed and approved. Introduction of Chlamydia treatment delayed to allow incorporation into Healthy Living Pharmacy model – anticipated April 15. |
| 2.1.12 | The service is now | Increase | Community and Housing – Public | Conducting a review of CASH |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| Development of Contraception and Sexual Health Service (CASH) provision in Merton. | providing opt out HIV testing and Chlamydia treatment, thereby offering more patient choice and access. | provision and access of sexual health services in the community and offer more patient choice. | Health | (Contraception and Sexual Health) alongside other sexual health services in Merton to inform future commissioning. 2014/15 CASH specification has been agreed with the provider & the CCG including pilot to extend STI testing to over 25s. |
| 2.1.13 Review of school nursing service | To ensure the service specification for school nursing services reflects the needs identified in the review | | Community and Housing – Public Health | An action plan for current service is being implemented, including undertaking school health profiles and prioritising resources based on defined school needs. Service to be re-commissioned for 2016 which will include revised specification. |
| 2.2 Business Planning | | | | |
| 2.2.1 | Savings all have Equality Analysis | 100% | Corporate Services – Business Planning | Savings proposals accompanied by Equality Analysis. |
| 2.3 Prevention and independence (Direct payments) | | | | |
| 2.3.1 Expand the Direct Payment Scheme to include Health Funding | A short life joint health and social care project group will implement personal health budgets via the Merton Direct Payments Team | Numbers of Merton residents receiving health funding via a personal budget | Community and Housing – Access and Assessment | A health and social care project group has been established. This is work in progress. |
| 2.4 Building equality considerations into Public Value Reviews (PVRs) | | | | |
| 2.4.1 | PVRs all have Equality Analysis | 100% | Corporate Services – Business Improvement | PVRs have been developed into a targeted tool that we will use where it adds value to more routine service |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | | | | reviews and the regular TOM exercise. Where it is deployed Equalities Analysis will still be an important element to any resulting implementation plan. |
| 2.5 Building equality considerations into the Commissioning process | | | | |
| 2.5.1 Equality proof Contracts | The evaluation process includes an assessment of equalities | 100% | Corporate Services - Commercial Services | All contracts include equalities considerations where appropriate and these are assessed at tender evaluation. |
| 2.5.2 Improve outreach work | Hold workshops with Small/Medium Enterprises and BAME organisations to advise on the borough's commissioning process | 1 annual event | Corporate Services - Commercial Services | The proposed Autumn 2014 event has been delayed to take account of the new procurement regulations and the implementation of social value. An event is planned for September 2015. |
| Equality Objective 3 – Improving engagement | | | | |
| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | |
| 3.1 Young people – to ensure that the needs of all young people are represented. | | | | |
| 3.1.1 Continue to support and develop participation/governance opportunities for young people age 13-19. | -Continue to support Merton's Youth Parliament and Young Advisors to input into the planning and governance of services for children and young people. | No of young advisors trained and active. No of members of Merton Youth Parliament. | Children Schools and Families - Youth Inclusion | The department's young people's participation and engagement functions have been reviewed and a new strategy for youth participation prepared, including a model for engagement with the MSCB. Training for a new group of Young Inspectors took place in November and recruitment and training of a new |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | | | | <p>cohort of Young Advisors complete.</p> <p>Youth Parliament contributed to work programme planning of the council's Scrutiny Panels at the start of the year. In late October, four young people carried out a programme of interviews to inform review of the proposed new risk and resilience service</p> |
| 3.1.2 | Support delivery and development of the Your Shout Group and its contribution to the work of the Transition Partnership Board (TPB). | Your Shout to be represented at all Transition Partnership meetings. | Children Schools and Families - Youth Inclusion | <p>The Your Shout group continues to meet quarterly. This year's key development has been the production of a DVD which outlines issues and challenges faced by disabled young people. This film can be viewed on line here: http://www.fixers.org.uk/fixers/9581-11312/your-shout-group.php</p> |
| 3.1.3 | Establish clear and age appropriate material and accessible media to promote membership and attendance of Merton's Children in Care Council. | Improved levels of participation in Merton's Children in Care Council. | Children Schools and Families - Permanency, Placements and LAC | <p>Our looked after children continue to be represented by the Children in Care Council (CICC) which is regularly consulted on how to improve the support they receive. CICC continues to meet monthly and report to the Corporate Parenting Board, agenda items this year have included – developing the new website for children in care and care leavers; buddy scheme; housing; gym membership; Jigsaw 4U advocacy service and discussions on 'what</p> |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | | | | <p>makes a good [social work] visit'. In addition two representatives from the Children in Care Council made a presentation to the Merton Safeguarding Children Board in May. This is part of an initiative to strengthen links to enable looked after children's voices to inform the work and priorities of senior managers and executive leads.</p> <p>An advert has been developed to encourage membership – work to engage younger members will be a priority for 2015-16.</p> |
| <p>3.1.4 Increase take up of learner support fund to support childcare costs</p> <p>Meeting the needs of learners with childcare needs via the discretionary learning support grant.</p> | <p>Schedule mini open days taster sessions and engagement in events in communities with under represented</p> | <p>Spending childcare support fund</p> | <p>Community and Housing - MAE</p> | <p>To arrange text message to all eligible learners to inform them of support with childcare costs.</p> <p>Availability of Ad Hoc discussions regarding eligibility for childcare support</p> <p>New claims being processed due to promotion of childcare support in recent advice and guidance sessions.</p> |
| <p>3.1.5 To proactively</p> | <p>To develop key volunteering roles for</p> | <p>Ten young volunteers</p> | <p>Community and Housing – Libraries and Heritage Services</p> | <p>New marketing and events volunteer</p> |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| engage young people in the shaping and delivery of library services. | young people. To develop and deliver a programme of events for young people. | support the delivery of events in libraries. Eight young people events are hosted in libraries across Merton. | | roles have been created for young people. We now have a group of 20 young people that meet weekly in the library to help shape, plan and deliver events for young people. The group have delivered 5 YP events to date and have published their first book. |
| 3.2 Disabled people | | | | |
| 3.2.1 All Saints Day centre to undertake an analysis of the stakeholders who use the premises for community events. | Collation of the types of activity and the stakeholders using the centre. | Opportunities could be identified for wider engagement and involvement in activities for hard to reach groups. | Community and housing – Direct Provision | As at February 2015 31 different groups use All Saints. Of these, 2 are statutory agencies, 5 are charities, 1 is a church, 3 are community network groups and the rest are a range of small community groups or start up businesses (Yoga group, Acupuncture Clinic) |
| 3.2.2 | Conduct a survey of disabled clients' use of transport services, analyse the results to produce an action plan | Annual survey | Environment and Regeneration – Transport Services | Annual surveys are being undertaken, and the learning points built into strategic plans for future operations. |
| 3.3 Carers/Links and other groups, Older People | | | | |
| 3.3.1 | To ensure that Healthwatch which started in April 2013 reflects the diverse population of Merton | Contract award and specification 2012-13. | (Commissioned by MVSC) | Health Watch to help engage residents on a consultation. |
| 3.4 BAME engagement e.g. BAME Governors | | | | |

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| 3.4.1 | Work in partnership with MUN to ensure BAME engagement embedded in service improvement | BAME Plan link in thematic partnership plans | All Departments – Heads of Service | Where appropriate the priorities identified in the BAME plan have been embedded in partnership plans. Work has started to strengthen BAME voice and representation in Merton by developing a strategic BAME Voice organisation. |
| 3.5 Voluntary and Community Sector support for engagement | | | | |
| 3.5.1 Ensure that any forum or consultative group has a true representation of the local community | Review membership of all existing customer forums | Representation of all groups in the local community within customer forums | Community and Housing - Commissioning | This is part of the ASC Redesign Programme. A Customer Engagement Framework is being developed for implementation in 2015/16 |
| 3.5.2 Establish an Adult Social Care Customer Engagement Framework | Detail all customer forums, frequency, membership, aims & objectives, communication channels e.g. social networking | More effective and equitable customer engagement | Community and Housing - Commissioning | This is part of the ASC Redesign Programme. A Customer Engagement Framework is being developed for implementation in 2015/16 |
| 3.5.3 Ensure actions from the consultation and Engagement Strategy is implemented | | Monitored via the Departmental Equalities Group | Community and Housing - Commissioning | This is done |
| 3.5.4 Improve engagement through user consultations & | Continue engagement with older people through the Older People's Housing | Forum meetings held Needs | Community and Housing - Housing | Forum meetings held. Next Forum in May 2015. Research completed on 01/10/2014 |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| satisfaction surveys | <p>Forum</p> <p>Identify housing and support need of older people</p> <p>Collect equalities data for all satisfaction surveys</p> <p>Analyse Housing Options Survey by equality categories</p> <p>Visit one new housing schemes a year after completion to assess satisfaction</p> | <p>assessment completed</p> <p>Survey analysed by equality categories</p> <p>Evidence obtained from providers</p> <p>Satisfaction survey completed</p> | | <p>with over 70 responses. Analysis being undertaken</p> <p>Data collected for 2013-14. Satisfaction surveys will only be undertaken periodically from now on</p> <p>2013-14 Survey analysed by equality categories</p> <p>Evidence obtained from providers</p> |
| 3.5.5 Forge new partnerships within the community to meet the needs of our learners. | <p>Enhance 'wider participation' and 'bridging the gap' plans to keep abreast of our changing community and their requirements.</p> <p>Gather feedback from partnerships and action / implement changes where needed.</p> | <p>Capture progress via the termly self assessment review process and detail key finding within the annual self assessment report</p> | Community and Housing - MAE | Reviewed current widening participation strategy. |
| 3.5.6 Provide | Support a wide range | Capture progress | Community and Housing - MAE | Established a new CV Fresh start |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| <p>updates on the diversity of learners and staff for those protected characteristics currently recorded.</p> | <p>of local community events that bring people from different backgrounds together. Eg Mitcham carnival. Celebrate and inform on a range of subjects in respect of equality and diversity.</p> <p>Improve evidence gathering on partnership work and community cohesion and document in SAR appendices.</p> <p>Gather evidence on balancing diverse and sometimes conflicting interests.</p> <p>Enhance communication of how different groups of learners are able to access learning.</p> <p>Finance work already being done in line with Neighbour Learning for Disadvantaged</p> | <p>via the termly self assessment review process and detail key finding within the annual self assessment report</p> | | <p>employability project supporting young people living in disadvantaged wards back into work. Since commencement in early Feb have signed up 34 young people, many of whom have secured interviews.</p> <p>Diversity data captured in the annual self assessment report 12-13 academic year report due for completion in March 2014</p> <p>We have collated the equality profile for our learners relating to ethnicity, age, disability, disadvantaged ward and employment status and there are no achievement issues in relation to particular ethnic groups, age or disability. Ofsted require us to assess these types of issues.</p> <p>New ESOL and Health courses being developed due to be launched in April with courses taking place out in the community including at the Morden Mosque.</p> |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | <p>Communities grant funding guidance.</p> <p>Display posters and informative information across college, and within briefings on subjects such as Black History Month, LGBT week etc.</p> | | | |
| 3.5.7 Work with Health Watch to consult on all Public Health work, especially Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) | Public Health uses consultations (e.g. focus groups) to ensure that needs/public health services reflect different communities | All needs assessments incorporate feedback from consultation exercises and used in service design | Community and Housing – Public Health | HealthWatch to help engage residents on a consultation of the refresh of the Health and Well-being Strategy April 2015 |
| 3.5.8 Improve engagement with the community and the work delivering crime and disorder interventions. | Setting up new partnership engagement methods | Number of meetings number of attendees | Environment and Regeneration – Safer Merton | The local Safer Neighbourhood Board in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the Mayors Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) is now established and meets quarterly. Social media and twitter accounts are used to disseminate domestic violence |

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| | | | | information and to engage with the community raising awareness regarding the public consultation for the strategic assessment. |
| 3.6 Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community | | | | |
| 3.6.1 Increase the civic participation of the LGBT community | Regular consultation and involving the LGBT forum in discussions about strategies and changes to council policy. | Quarterly meetings to be attended by officers cross the council to consult service issues | All departments – Heads of Service | The LGBT forum is being refreshed but representatives on the distribution list continue to receive items to consult on, most recently Scrutiny panel review topic suggestions. |
| Equality Objective 4 – Promoting Community Cohesion | | | | |
| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | |
| 4.1 Celebrating diversity | | | | |
| 4.1.1 | To ensure that all local demographic changes are fed into the service plans, user surveys and customer charters to improve service delivery | | All Departments – Heads of Service | Detailed analysis of the census data has fed into the Policy Network and departments are being given information to support service planning. |
| 4.1.2 Use locality structure as a springboard for adopting a community outreach/asset based approach to supporting | Maximise social capital, informal networks, focus on strengths and abilities of customers Promote connectedness | Reduced reliance on funded statutory services Positive outcomes from the Ageing Well Programme | Community and Housing – Access and Assessments | This is part of the ASC Redesign Programme and is part of our Promoting Independence Strategy |

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| customers | through the Ageing Well Programme and locality based social work and occupational therapy teams | Reduced customer isolation Increase in signposting, information and advice | | |
| 4.1.3 Increase opportunities for integration | Work with Faith in Action to improve engagement with people from A10 countries Publish Merton's Gypsy & Traveller Strategy Promote employment and training opportunities for young people through MYSHF | A10 Project outcomes monitored Strategy published Mapping of schemes completed | Community and Housing - Housing | A10 Project outcomes for 2013-14 monitored Strategy to be updated and published Mapping of schemes initiated and will be shared with Merton Young Single Homeless Forum (MYSHF) once completed |
| 4.1.4 To develop and deliver a programme of activities that promotes community | Celebrate diversity by supporting a range of key initiatives such as Black History Month and Celebrating Age. | 30 events held in libraries across Merton to promote community cohesion | Community and Housing - Libraries and Heritage Service | Extensive events programme delivered including: 19 BHM events 24 Celebrating Age events 12 events for the blind and partially sighted |

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| cohesion and interfaith dialogue and engage underrepresented groups. | | | | 3 LGBT events 11 celebratory events to bring together the local community. |
| 4.2 Maximising the opportunity to work in partnership with each other in the community | | | | |
| 4.2.1 Continue work to prevent First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice system. | Implement diversionary programmes and out of court disposals. | -Reduction in FTE to the Youth Justice system. -No of out of court disposals. | Children Schools and Families - Youth Justice Service | <p>We continue to show good progress in reducing the numbers of First Time Entrants into the Young Justice System. Q2 data shows 34 first time entrants to the youth justice system against a maximum entrance target of 80 at year end.</p> <p>Data on out of court disposals have shown an upward trend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15 out of courts disposals in Q1 (2 Caution, 13 Triage Outcome) - 33 out of Court disposals in Q2 (10 Cautions, 22 Triage Outcome, 1 Youth Conditional Caution) - 37 out of court disposals in Q3 (8 Caution, 28 Triage Outcome, 1 Youth Conditional Caution) <p>Work has maintained a focus on early intervention and prevention. This year, the Family & Adolescent Service (FAS) have continued to implement a range of projects including gangs prevention/exit work, employment of a dedicated gangs</p> |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | | | | worker, and the Phipps Bridge Project to keep the rate of re-offending low. |
| 4.2.2 Develop a network of community champions who will work within existing voluntary sector groups (with a focus on the East) to support residents to lead healthy lifestyles. | Engage community groups to work with community members as health champions | Contract signed, 25 health champions in place and number of residents engaged. | Community a Housing - Public Health | The first cohort of groups are now being approached to take part in the programme, with training due to take place before the end of March 2014. |
| 4.2.3 To support communities to take greater control over their lives, to include an understanding of key health issues. | 8 additional ESOL classes with health messages will be offered in the community | Uptake of ESOL classes | Community a Housing - Public Health | 8 ESOL classes delivered in community settings during Q1 & 2. A further 8 classes are being offered in Q3 &4. |
| 4.2.4 Work with Alzheimers Society and Imagine to ensure they are promoting community cohesion | Via Contract monitoring and commissioning | Reduced reliance on funded services and increased partnerships between provider organisations and the local | Community and Housing - Commissioning | This is done as part of the contract monitoring process. |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
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| | | community | | |
| 4.3 Community Cohesion Strategy | | | | |
| 4.3.1 | Monitor the delivery of Community Cohesion Strategy action plan | Achieve annual targets | Corporate Services - Policy, Strategy and Partnerships | Implementation of the strategy is well underway. A progress report will be made to the Merton Partnership Executive Board on 31 March 2015. |
| 4.4 Using the Annual Residents Survey (ARS) results to inform service delivery and improving perceptions | | | | |
| 4.4.1 | Analyse ARS results to inform publicity campaign | Report produced and made available on the intranet | Corporate Services - Communications | The ARS 2014 results have been analysed and a report produced that is available on the council's web site. |
| 4.5 Addressing demographic change | | | | |
| 4.5.1 | Ensure Census 2011 information is made available locally | Briefings provided internally and to partners. | Corporate Services - Communications | The Policy, Strategy and Partnerships team has undertaken detailed analysis and produced Ward Profiles that are available on the Intranet. |
| 4.6 Equal access to volunteering opportunities | | | | |
| 4.6.1 | Promote volunteering opportunities using a variety of media | Quarterly | All Departments - Heads of Service | There is on going discussion within the Target Operating Model work stream about how volunteering can improve service delivery across departments. The council continues to work with Merton Voluntary Services Council to promote volunteering to residents and staff through various media e.g. the Employee Volunteering Scheme. |
| Equality Objective 5 – Workforce Development | | | | |
| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| 5.1 Be an employer that recognises diversity and the talents that being different brings to the organisation and service delivery | | | | |
| 5.1.1 | Implement and utilise the self service element of Learning and Development module | <p>Mini survey issued to the workforce to gather feedback on how the organisation utilises the skills they possess</p> <p>Relationship to results from Staff Survey on Question 65 (It's your ability that counts)</p> | Corporate Services - Human Resources | <p>The section in I-Trent has been developed where staff are able to list their skills. The staff survey (2014) has taken place but the analysis of the report is not yet available. Report due to go to CMT 3 March 2015.</p> <p>Bringing On Talent programme designed and to be launched in May 2015.</p> <p>Managers have supported a local Secondary School – by providing interview skills workshops as well as leading sessions about their roles and the qualifications needed.</p> |
| 5.1.2 Establish a diverse workforce that is fair, consistent and supports equal opportunities. | <p>Monitor workforce profiles</p> <p>Set up training modules on MOODLE to make it accessible to all staff regardless of the working arrangements</p> | Evidence of completion (e.g certificate, staff records) ensuring staff compliance | Community and Housing - MAE | <p>Moodle training to be organised with the Head of Support Services.</p> <p>Compiling an Equality and Diversity resource folder on MOODLE for tutors to use.</p> <p>Tutors sharing resources that have been used in class.</p> <p>E&D posters around the building continuously updated.</p> |
| 5.1.3 Ensure staff understand how to apply equality responsibilities to their day-to-day | Arrange equality & diversity training / talk for all HN&E staff through team meeting | Staff completed training | Community and Housing - Housing | Session to be arranged for 2015. |

Equality Strategy Action Plan – Appendix 1

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| work | | | | |
| 5.1.4 Develop and deliver equality and diversity training for library volunteers. | Equality and diversity training rolled out to all library volunteers. | 100% of library volunteers receive training in equality and diversity. | Community and Housing - Libraries and Heritage Service | Volunteer E&D training scheduled for July 2015. All staff have received Mental Health Awareness training. |
| 5.1.5 Establish a diverse workforce profile that is reflective of the local community it serves in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 | Set up systems and processes to identify gaps of inequality and disadvantages between local communities and the social care workforce | Detailed analysis of workforce profile | Community and Housing – Adult Social Care Commissioning | This is embedded within the TOM and ASC Re-design Programme and is on-going. |
| 5.1.6 Develop an inclusive learning and development action plan | Develop or adapt competency framework to ensure workforce’s thorough understanding of equality and diversity and it’s application in service delivery Raise the standard of | Measurements against competency framework post training and evaluation, robust supervision sessions and annual | Community and Housing – Adult Social Care Commissioning | This is part of the ASC Redesign Programme – a learning and development action plan is being developed for implementation in 2015/16. This will be integrated within the Corporate Learning and Development Plan |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| | <p>care and support in the sector by ensuring that care and support workers keep their skills up-to-date</p> <p>Build managers' confidence and skills in managing a diverse workforce</p> | <p>appraisals</p> <p>Data on uptake and post-programme evaluation</p> <p>Increased confidence for managers when seeking advice and guidance</p> | | |
| <p>5.1.7 To support front line staff from a range of services to support health improvement agenda.</p> | <p>Train fire-fighters, gym staff and council staff to be able to identify and signpost those residents that may want support to lead healthy lifestyles e.g. stop smoking.</p> | <p>Number of staff who are trained in Merton.</p> | <p>Community and Housing – Public Health</p> | <p>All fire fighters in Merton have now been trained and referral pathways are now being finalised.</p> <p>Training for library staff, gym staff and other front line staff is now being planned.</p> |
| <p>5.1.8 To support front line staff from a range of services to support health improvement agenda.</p> | <p>Train fire-fighters, gym staff and council staff to be able to identify and signpost those residents that may want support to lead healthy lifestyles e.g. stop smoking.</p> | <p>Number of staff who are trained in Merton.</p> | <p>Community and Housing – Public Health</p> | <p>All fire fighters in Merton have now been trained and referral pathways are now being finalised.</p> <p>Training for library staff, gym staff and other front line staff is now being planned.</p> |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| 5.1.9 To create a healthy work environment for staff | To promote and provide opportunities for staff (internal and external) to become healthy through understanding challenges staff faced and development of programmes to meet this need. | Number of workplaces working towards London Healthy Workplace Charter. Number of activities provided for staff Uptake to activities | Community and Housing – Public Health | Merton Council is working towards commitment level of the London Healthy Workplace Charter, which included the development of a steering group and action plan. Public Health will be commissioning an organisation to deliver to support to businesses in Merton who would like to support their staff. |
| 5.2 Learning and Development - developing staff from under-representative groups into senior management roles | | | | |
| 5.2.1 | To ensure recruitment strategy has strong focus on delivering staff profile more reflective of the communities we serve at all levels. | Short and long lists that are representative of all the equality strands where possible | Corporate Services - Human Resources | Departments need to look at their workforce profile to identify under representation and Recruitment and HR managers can insert a welcome clause that encourages application from the particular group. |
| 5.2.2 | To deliver equalities training to all staff | Annual Training Report | All Heads of Service | Online diversity training available for managers and staff. |
| 5.3 Pathways into employment for disabled residents i.e. work experience/ mentoring | | | | |
| 5.3.1 | Work with partners and disabled residents to raise awareness of employment | Taster sessions to be run in February 2013. Success of taster | Corporate Services - Human Resources Chair of Disability Employees Forum, All Heads of Service | Taster session took place in October 2014 – 6 participants. A mentoring programme will be developed to support participants. |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| | pathways across all directorates | sessions evaluated and action plan developed and in place | | Create opportunities where participants can have 'real' experience – built into recruitment training programme. |
| 5.4 Apprenticeships for young people (e.g. looked after children, those with mental illness, young offenders) | | | | |
| 5.4.1 | Increase the number of young people in apprenticeships with sustainable jobs | Work with both internal and external partners to ensure recruitment processes are effective and efficient Incorporate evaluation from apprentices, partners and appointing managers to develop an action plan to support the sustainability of the programme. | Corporate Services - Human Resources | We have currently have 51 Apprentices in the council (an extra 20 in the last 12 months) |
| 5.5 Raising awareness of mental illness | | | | |
| 5.5.1 | Raise awareness of mental health issues to ensure all employees and | Bite-size sessions established to raise awareness | Corporate Services - Human Resources Chair of Disability Employees Forum | Workshops took place in May - 20 managers attended. Will be rolling out 6 sessions. |

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | | Update |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| | managers have an understanding of the impact in the workplace | for managers and employees The feedback from managers and employees incorporated into a programme that meets the needs of the organisation. Evaluation to take place up to and including Level 3 | | | Regular articles circulated to managers from the Employee Assistance Programme and HML on issues relating to stress and mental health. Support the rollout of Dementia Friends in the Council. |
| 5.6 Valuing staff diversity / staff appreciation of diversity in the community | | | | | |
| 5.6.1 Improve capacity of managers to operate effectively as leaders of a diverse workforce, delivering services to a diverse customer base. | Deliver values driven leadership programme to managers. | Completion of programme | Children, Schools and Families - Commissioning, Strategy and Performance. | This was completed in 2012/13. The focus of continued work is to deliver individual coaching to key managers. | |
| 5.6.2 | Develop a programme to give all staff diversity training. | Evaluate the impact of the diversity training | Environment and Regeneration -Merton Transport Services | Diversity workshops have been delivered in Transport Services at Garth Road and were well received. Further sessions are being | |

Equality Strategy Action Plan – Appendix 1

| Priority Area | Key activity | Performance Measure | Department/Division | Update |
|---------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|
| | | | | undertaken in partnership with HR for new employees. |

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 10 March 2015

Wards: All

Subject: Progress report on implementation of the Equality Strategy 2013-17

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley, Director of Children, Schools and Families

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

Contact officer: Evereth Willis, evereth.willis@merton.gov.uk

Recommendations:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission discusses and comments on the progress made on the implementation of the Equality Strategy 2013-17.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Commission with a progress report on the implementation of the Equality Strategy 2013-17.

1.2.

2 DETAILS

Background

Progress on the implementation of the Equality Strategy and action plan

2.1. 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.

2.2. The Equality Act 2010 also requires the council to publish equality objectives every four years to demonstrate how it will meet the PSED. The equality strategy outlines the Council’s ‘Equality Objectives’ as the following five themes:

- Tackling Inequality
- Service Access
- Improving Engagement
- Promoting Community Cohesion
- Workforce Development

- 2.3. Council approved the Equality Strategy 2013-17 in February 2013. The strategy is a four-year strategy that sets out what we will do to tackle discrimination and inequality and promote equal opportunities in Merton. The strategy also sets out the council's equalities objectives as required by the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.4. The Equality Strategy Action Plan sets out the actions we will take to meet our equality priorities both corporately and departmentally.
- 2.5. The approach of the strategy is a departure from the structure of the previous Corporate Equality Scheme. Instead of including objectives against each protected characteristic, generic themes have been identified and they in turn were informed by using available statistical evidence and priorities highlighted in departmental service plans.
- 2.6. Delivery against the Equality Strategy action plan is monitored by the Corporate Equality Steering Group through regular updates from departmental equality representatives, and the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minority Organisations also monitors implementation of the strategy.

Progress to date

- 2.7. The Equality Strategy action plan (attached at Appendix I) includes activities that are linked to departmental service plans.
- 2.8. Key developments to note include:
 - Merton School Improvement (MSI) Service's continued programme of support to primary and secondary schools to identify, track and extend the progress made by individual pupils from target groups in key subjects (maths, writing and English) has had a positive impact on outcomes. Provisional results from 2013-14 show that at Key Stage 2, progress made in maths by Black pupils has increased to 89% from 87% in the previous year and has met the target. The progress made by Pakistani pupils in writing has increased to 100% from 91% and is above the target. Progress at Key Stage 4 in maths by Black pupils has remained stable at 73%, and the progress made by Bangladeshi pupils in English has increased to 92% from 78% and is above the target set.
 - As part of the work to develop a Local Offer under the Children and Families (C&F) Act, a programme of consultation and engagement of families with children with SEN and disabilities has been underway since October 2013. Results of this work were reported in June and concluded that parents felt meaningfully involved by the local authority and that their views have been listened to and used to inform developments. In order to continue the positive engagement of families two information sessions were delivered to parents about the Local Offer, which went live on 1st September 2014, and the provisions of the C&F Act overall. Brightwell Children's Centre continues to be a good quality short breaks provider as the recent Ofsted inspection showed. The service was judged as providing an 'outstanding' quality of care and as being 'good' overall.
 - Children's Centre services continue to show good take-up by families from deprived areas and is on course to achieve the 77.7% target by end of the year.

Recent Ofsted inspection of the Acacia Children's Centre service judged it to be 'outstanding' in all areas. The report highlighted its success rate in helping parents into employment and also emphasised the very positive user feedback about the centre. Take-up of 2 year-old funding is on target and the service is progressing its work on engaging with eligible families, and with practitioners who work with families, in order to raise awareness of the programme. This year's results show that 43% of our FSM children achieved a 'good level of development' (GLD) in the Early Years Foundation Stage - an increase on last year (33%). Work is continuing with nurseries in target schools to maintain improvements seen and to further close gaps in attainment seen between FSM and non-FSM pupils and other children from deprived areas.

- Recruitment of suitable in-house foster carers remains a key priority for the department. A Sufficiency assessment is refreshed annually to target our understanding of types of cares needed for our looked after children. This year, we have delivered 8 new foster carer approvals - of these, one was from a 'targeted group' with a further 17 potential carers in assessment at the end of Q3. As well as continuing with our recruitment strategy, there are new initiatives being pursued with Merton churches and other faith groups. Within existing resources, a dedicated management structure has been created to drive forward the recruitment strategy for 2015/16.
- Activities to support and develop participation and governance opportunities for young people continue to take place. The department's young people's participation and engagement functions have been reviewed and a new strategy for youth participation prepared, including a model for engagement with the MSCB. Youth Parliament contributed to work programme planning of the council's Scrutiny Panels at the start of the year - in late October, four young people carried out a programme of interviews to inform review of the proposed new risk and resilience service.
- The Children in Care Council (CICC) continue to meet monthly and report to the Corporate Parenting Board. Agenda items this year have included – development of a new website for children in care and care leavers, buddy scheme, Jigsaw 4U advocacy service and discussions on 'what makes a good [social work] visit'. In addition, two representatives from the Children in Care Council made a presentation to the Merton Safeguarding Children Board in May as part of an initiative to strengthen links to enable looked after children's voices to inform the work and priorities of senior managers and executive leads. An advert has been developed to encourage membership – work to engage younger members will be a priority for 2015-16.
- Good progress is being made in reducing the numbers of First Time Entrants into the Young Justice System with Q2 data showing 34 first time entrants to the youth justice system against a maximum entrance target of 80 at year end. Data on out of court disposals have shown an upward trend. Work has maintained a focus on early intervention and prevention. This year, the Family & Adolescent Service (FAS) have continued to implement a range of projects including gangs prevention/exit work, employment of a dedicated gangs worker, and the Phipps Bridge Project to keep the rate of re-offending low.

- To ensure that Community and Housing managers and staff are confident in their ability to meet the requirements of the equality act, the department has undertaken additional training with an external consultant in order to raise awareness and understanding.
- Community and Housing believes equality impact assessments should be robust and fit for purpose and as such has requested further training on this particular area. As well as building in a scrutiny process amongst the community and housing equality group whereby equality impact assessments can be assessed early on in the savings process.
- Member development has included briefings to members of the Leader's Strategy Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on the need to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The briefings included information on the importance of members understanding the equalities implications of proposals that they are making decisions on and the need to consider Equality Analyses.
- Senior managers received a briefing on equality analysis from the Equality and Community Cohesion Officer on the role of equality analysis in managing risk around decision making. The session was very well received
- The use of equality analysis is embedded in the service planning process and savings proposals have been accompanied by an assessment of the impact of proposed changes on the protected characteristics.
- An audit to review the services to Domestic violence victims has been commissioned across the council and partnership. The review aims to improve the offer of service to victims.
- Annual surveys of disabled clients' use of transport services are being undertaken, and the learning points built into strategic plans for future operations.
- There has been an increase in the number of young people in apprenticeships (the council currently employs 51 apprentices). This has had an impact on the workforce profile and supported some of Merton's vulnerable residents into sustainable employment.

2.9. The following areas are a key focus for the remainder of 2013/14 and will continue to be addressed in 2015/16:

- Improve outreach to Small/Medium Enterprises and BAME organisation by holding an event in Autumn 2015
- Delivering a programme to bring 95% of bus stops up to accessible standards by 2016.

- Continue to raise the priority for disabled access to Raynes Park and Motspur Park stations with Network Rail. (Should Crossrail 2 move forward, pressure to increase these station's facilities will increase as both stations are likely to be served by Crossrail 2 services).
- Strengthen Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Voice and representation by supporting the development of a new organisation
- Refresh the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) Forum, by identifying and supporting new community representatives to rebuild a strong forum.
- Encourage staff to update their equalities data, this will enable the council to have more accurate information on the workforce profile.
- Refresh of the equality and diversity training across the organisation with a specific focus on mental health in organisational change. There is a need to raise awareness of mental health issues to ensure all employees and managers have an understanding of the impact in the workplace.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Equality Act 2010 requires the council to prepare and publish equality objectives and subsequently at least four-yearly. Failure to do so would mean the Council is not fulfilling its legal obligations and could be subject to legal action.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. The Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minorities will be given a progress report on the Equality Strategy.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. N/A

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Delivery of the Equality Strategy action plan is 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. Delivery of the commitments in the Equality Strategy action plan and the publication of an Equality Strategy setting out our equality objectives fulfil the Council's legal obligations relating to equalities legislation.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

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

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There is a risk of increased hate crime activity directed towards certain groups if there is no commitment to eliminate discrimination and harassment.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There is a risk to the Council's reputation if it fails to produce and publish equalities objectives. Additionally there is a risk of claims of discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

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

- Appendix 1 – Progress update of the Equality Strategy 2013-17 Action Plan

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. Equality Strategy 2013-17

http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/plansandpolicies/equality_strategy_2013-17_final_v2.pdf

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 10 March 2015

Wards: All

Subject: Scrutiny review of public sector delivery models – scope and terms of reference

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Contact officer: Julia Regan; Julia.regan@merton.gov.uk; 020 8545 3864

Recommendations:

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission agree to set up a series of task group review to increase its knowledge of different models of service provision and the associated implications for scrutiny;
 - B. That the Commission discuss and approve the terms of reference and scope for the first of these reviews, to focus on shared services, set out in paragraph 2.3-2.6 below;
 - C. That the Commission appoint members to the task group.
-

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Further to discussion at the Commission's meeting on 29 January 2015, the purpose of this report is to present the amended draft terms of reference and scope of the public sector delivery models task group to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for approval.

2. DETAILS

- 2.1 The Commission and the Scrutiny Panels will increasingly be scrutinising services that have been provided or commissioned through a wide range of different mechanisms, as well as proposals to move to alternative delivery arrangements. There are a number of different models, including but not exclusively:
 - shared service provision
 - commissioning from private or voluntary/community sector
 - joint commissioning with other public bodies
 - joint venture companies
 - transfer to social enterprises or trusts
 - arms-length trading companies
- 2.2 In order to carry out effective scrutiny, it is recommended that the Commission undertake a series of task group reviews that will help scrutiny members to understand the different models of service provision and to identify the best approach to scrutinising each model.

- 2.3 As the council already has a number of shared service arrangements, it is proposed that this should be the focus of the first task group. Proposed draft terms of reference:
- to examine a range of examples of shared service provision in Merton and elsewhere;
 - to identify the potential advantages and challenges of shared service provision for the council, its partners and local residents;
 - to identify the best approach to scrutinising shared services to ensure that the council is receiving value for money and effective service provision
- 2.4 Much of the work would therefore be done through site visits plus a small number of task group meetings to scope the work, plan visits, reflect on findings and agree recommendations.
- 2.5 An initial work planning meeting will be held prior to the pre-election period so that task group members can begin visits from week beginning 11 May. The task group would produce a report for the Commission's meeting on 14 July 2015 so that its findings could inform the Commission's work programme for 2015/16.
- 2.6 Support would be provided by the Head of Democracy Services.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

None for the purposes of this report.

5. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None for the purposes of this covering report. Any resource implications will need to be taken into account when drawing up & approving specific review recommendations

6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are none specific to this report.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are none specific to this report.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none specific to this report.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none specific to this report.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 None

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION - FINANCIAL MONITORING TASK GROUP

5 NOVEMBER 2014

(19.00 - 20.05)

PRESENT: Councillor Suzanne Grocott (in the Chair),
Councillor Peter McCabe, Councillor Dennis Pearce and
Councillor Peter Southgate

ALSO PRESENT: Paul Dale (Assistant Director of Resources), Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services) and Julia Regan (Head of Democracy Services)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Hamish Badenoch.

2 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 JULY 2014 (Agenda Item 2)

Agreed.

3 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2 (Agenda Item 3)

Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services, introduced the report. She said that the forecast overspend of £4.37m had decreased by £0.9m since the previous month. Mitigating action taken by officers should lead to further decreases but there is likely to be a small overspend at year end. She drew the task group's attention to the recommendations made to Cabinet and to information that had been provided, including on capital virements, progress on previous savings and the miscellaneous debt update.

Councillor Suzanne Grocott asked to be sent further detail of the charges and work done on the item "rebuild unsafe wall" (page 17). ACTION: Director of Corporate Services.

In response to a question about the virement for the procurement strategy, Paul Dale, Assistant Director of Resources, explained that the additional staff would enable efficiency savings to be made.

Revenue budget 2014/15 (pages 18-37)

Task group members expressed concern at the projected overspend and asked what was being done to address this. Caroline Holland said that officers had been required to be much more rigorous and to control spend where possible. She added that the decrease between months 5 and 6 demonstrated that this action was beginning to take effect and that officers were taking the projected overspend seriously.

Paul Dale, described the work that he was carrying out to establish which aspects of the overspend were one-off items, which were ongoing cost pressures and which were caused by failure to deliver on previously agreed savings. He said that there were different factors in different areas.

Caroline Holland and Paul Dale provided further detail on some of the departmental items was provided in response to task group members' questions:

- Human resources (page 22) – the contract for the WCN recruitment system will last a further 18 months
- Childrens social care (page 25) has an ongoing overspend on social workers due to difficulties of recruiting and retaining permanent staff. A variety of measures have been put in place to address this but it is a regional issue and success so far has therefore been limited
- South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) overspend (page 34) is being investigated by Paul Dale
- Greenspaces (page 35) budget is being reviewed to address the mismatch between service activity and the base budget
- Building and development control (page 35) – the enhancement of the service was actioned in response to a recommendation from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Paul Dale undertook to ensure that acronyms would be set out in full in future reports.
ACTION: Assistant Director of Resources

Savings progress 2014/15 (pages 58-72)

Task group members noted that the 30% shortfall in the delivery of savings was an improvement on the 47% reported at the last meeting and asked whether further improvement was expected. Caroline Holland confirmed that further progress was expected.

In response to questions about lack of progress on some of the community and housing department savings, Caroline Holland said that the Director was reviewing the adult social care service to identify what is required to drive these savings forward.

Miscellaneous debt update (pages 80-87)

Task group members noted that the level of housing benefit debt had stabilised but that for community and housing was rising. Paul Dale explained that the community and housing debts included debt secured against property whilst the owner was in residential care. This would eventually be recouped.

Caroline Holland added that debt is reviewed regularly and written off if deemed to be unrecoverable.

Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2014/15



This table sets out the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's Work Programme for 2014/15 that was agreed by the Commission at its meeting on 8 July 2014. This work programme will be considered at every meeting of the Commission to enable it to respond to issues of concern and incorporate reviews or to comment upon pre-decision items ahead of their consideration by Cabinet/Council.

The work programme table shows items on a meeting by meeting basis, identifying the issue under review, the nature of the scrutiny (pre decision, policy development, issue specific, performance monitoring, partnership related) and the intended outcomes. The last page provides information on items on the Council's Forward Plan that relate to the portfolio of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission so that these can be added to the work programme should the Commission wish to.

The Commission is asked to identify any work programme items that would be suitable for the use of an informal preparatory session (or other format) to develop lines of questioning (as recommended by the 2009 review of the scrutiny function).

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has specific responsibilities regarding budget and financial performance scrutiny and performance monitoring which it has delegated to the financial monitoring task group – agendas and minutes are published on the Council's website.

Scrutiny Support

For further information on the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission please contact: -
Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services, 0208 545 3864, Julia.regan@merton.gov.uk

Meeting date – 7 October 2014

| Scrutiny category | Item/Issue | How | Lead Member/ Lead Officer | Intended Outcomes |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Scrutiny of crime and disorder | Borough Commander | Presentation/report and in-depth discussion | Borough Commander | Update on policing issues |
| Holding the executive to account | Customer contact programme | Report | Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement | Progress report for comment |
| Policy development | CCTV review | Report from external consultant | Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration | To review with a view to follow up through task group review |
| Scrutiny reviews | Review of use of co-option and expert witnesses in scrutiny | Report | Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan | To discuss and agree policy in relation to recruitment of co-opted members |
| | Financial monitoring task group | Minutes of meeting | Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan | To note minutes of meeting held on 22.07.14 |

Meeting date – 25 November 2014

| Scrutiny category | Item/Issue | How | Lead Member/ Lead Officer | Intended Outcomes |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Budget scrutiny | Business Plan 2015/19 - information pertaining to round one of budget scrutiny | Report – to include safer Merton service plan | Cllr Mark Allison Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services | To send comments to Cabinet budget meeting 8 December |
| Policy development | Financial resilience project | Update report | Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing | To impact on emerging recommendations and/or the action plan |
| | Domestic violence audit | Report on findings and outcome of the audit and update on discussions regarding location of DV services | Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration | To discuss and comment |
| | My Merton | Short briefing report on circulation and distribution, to include results from annual Residents Survey in relation to readership | Sophie Poole, Head of Communications | To discuss and comment |
| Scrutiny reviews | Financial monitoring task group | Minutes of meeting | Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan | To note minutes of meeting held on 05.11.14 |

Meeting date – 29 January 2054 – scrutiny of the budget

| Scrutiny category | Item/Issue | How | Lead Member/Lead Officer | Intended Outcomes |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Holding the executive to account | Customer contact programme | Report | Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement | Progress report for comment |
| | | | | |
| Budget scrutiny | Business Plan 2015/19 | Report – common pack for Panels and Commission | Cllr Mark Allison, Cabinet Member for Finance Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services | To report to Cabinet on budget scrutiny round 2 |
| | Business Plan update - latest info from Cabinet 19 January (if any) | Report | Cllr Mark Allison, Cabinet Member for Finance Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services | To report to Cabinet on budget scrutiny round 2 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Meeting date – 10 March 2015

| Scrutiny category | Item/Issue | How | Lead Member/Lead Officer | Intended Outcomes |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|--|
| Call-in | Adult education in Merton – evidence and options for achieving a value for money service | | Cllr Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Education Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing | |
| Scrutiny of crime and disorder | Discussion of questions for the Borough Commander | Discussion | Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan | Discussion to plan line of questioning for meeting on 25 March |
| | | | | |
| Policy review | Monitoring the Council's equalities commitments | Report | Yvette Stanley, Director, Children Schools and Families | To comment on annual action plan update |
| | | | | |
| Holding the executive to account | Volunteering | Report | Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing | Update on implementation of Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy |
| | Customer contact programme | Report | Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement | Progress report for comment |
| | | | | |
| Scrutiny reviews | Financial monitoring task group | Minutes of meeting | Cllr Peter Southgate | Financial monitoring task group |

Meeting date – 25 March 2015

| Scrutiny category | Item/Issue | How | Lead Member/Lead Officer | Intended Outcomes |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Scrutiny of crime and disorder | Borough Commander | Presentation/report and discussion | Borough commander | Update on future of policing in Merton |
| | Rehabilitation strategies | Information and data on how rehabilitation (probation) services are delivered and anticipated changes in line with the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 | John Hill Head of Public Protection | To assess the impact that the Act will have in Merton & whether it wishes to make any recommendations about ways of working locally |
| Holding the executive to account | CCTV update | Report from CCTV steering group | Paul Walshe Parking Services Manager Claire Cuffie Anti-Social Behaviour Supervisor & temp CCTV Mgr | Update on implementation of action plan |
| | | | | |
| Performance management | Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report | Report | Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan | To approve and forward to Council |
| | | | | |
| Scrutiny reviews | Report of the Immunisation task group review | Report | Cllr Brenda Fraser Stella Akintan | To agree final report and recommendations |
| | | | | |
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Forward plan items relating to remit of the Commission

Asset management plan

Details - Update current Asset Management Plan 2011-2015 to include Transformation, latest MTFs, Asset Review, economic growth, regeneration and Community Right to Bid.

Decision due: 14 September 2015 by Cabinet

Items for Commission meetings in 2015/16

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--------|--|--|
| July 2015 | Analysis of Members' annual scrutiny survey 2015 | Report | Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan | Discuss findings and agree action plan for 2015/16 |
| Sep 2015 (or July if ready?) | Update on work of the violence against women and girls strategy group | Report | Yvette Stanley, Director of Children, Schools and Families | To review progress |

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Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 10 March 2015

Agenda item: Customer Contact Programme Update

Wards: All

Subject:

Lead officer: Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement

Lead member: Cllr Allison, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Contact officer: Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement

Recommendations:

A. That the Commission discuss and comment on the recommendations associated with the award of the Customer Contact contract.

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Commission with an update on the Customer Contact programme and enable discussion of any further details in relation to the recommendations made to Cabinet relating to the award of contract.
- 1.2. The Commission last received an update on the programme in January 2015.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. On 9 March Cabinet considered a report and recommendations relating to the award of a contract as part of the Customer Contact programme. The report is appended to this report as Confidential Appendix A.
- 2.2. The Commission are asked to discuss and comment on the report and associated recommendations

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. See appended Cabinet report

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. See appended Cabinet report

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. See appended Cabinet report

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. See appended Cabinet report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. See appended Cabinet report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. See appended Cabinet report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. See appended Cabinet report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. See appended Cabinet report.

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

A. Cabinet report 9 March 2015.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

See appended Cabinet report.

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 9 March 2015

Agenda item: Customer Contact Programme Contract Award

Wards: All

Subject:

Lead officer: Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Resources

Lead member: Cllr Mark Allison, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Contact officer: Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement

Exempt or confidential report

Recommendations:

- A) That Cabinet approves the award of a contract to Organisation A for the provision of:
- a. technology and associated services for the Customer Contact Programme, incorporating:
 - i. a refreshed website and content management system that facilitates an increase in online self-service transactions;
 - ii. a customer account facility that facilitates easier online, face to face and telephone interaction between customers and the Council;
 - iii. an upgraded contact management solution, including appropriate integration with existing line-of-business systems, to allow more customers to complete their transaction in a single visit and reduce avoidable contact.
 - b. a replacement electronic document management system and associated services.

The contract will commence on the 2 April 2015 and be for a period of three years with the option to extend (exercisable at the Council's sole discretion) by three further increments of 12 months each. The maximum possible contract period would be no more than six years.

- B) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Corporate Services to procure additional services offered within the contract.
- C) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Corporate Services to approve any final amendments to the Customer Contact contract as may be agreed during the Preferred Bidder stage.
- D) That Cabinet delegates to the council's Director of Corporate Services the decision to extend the contract by three further increments of 12 months each as detailed in recommendation A.

- E) That Cabinet approves the procurement of scanners in accordance with the council's Contract Standing Orders as part of the programme as set out in item 10.10.
 - F) That Cabinet approves the procurement of system integrators (APIs) in accordance with the council's Contract Standing Orders as part of the programme as set out in item 10.11.
-

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of Cabinet to award a contract for the provision of technology and associated services as part of the Customer Contact Programme.
- 1.2 The contract comprises two overarching elements:
 - a) Technology and associated services that enable the council to realise the aims of the **Customer Contact programme**, namely:
 - i. increase the potential for customers to request and pay for services through a refreshed website;
 - ii. allow customers to have their own online 'account' so they can track their queries and interactions in a single place; and
 - iii. permit staff to manage and process queries and requests quickly and easily.
 - b) A replacement for the Council's current **electronic document management system** (EDMS), SMART, and associated implementation and data migration services.
- 1.3 This report makes a recommendation that Cabinet agrees to the award of contract to Organisation A.

2. Executive summary

- 2.1 In July 2012 Cabinet approved a programme of work to pursue a channel shift strategy and implement and promote customer self-service.
- 2.2 In March 2013 Cabinet approved Merton's Customer Contact Strategy which articulates the council's intention to increase online access to services, encouraging customers to self-serve where possible, and reduce avoidable and repeat contact by responding to as many customer queries as possible at the first point of contact. This will not only improve customer experience, it will allow the organisation to operate more efficiently – critical in the face of a reducing financial envelope.

- 2.3 In February 2013 Cabinet approved a project to replace the council's existing electronic document management solution as the existing legacy system is not fit for purpose. The aim of the replacement system is to ensure the council meets its requirements under the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts, reduce the risk of data loss and misuse (and thus fines from the Information Commissioner), to support shared working and remote working initiatives by making data and documentation available virtually, and to automate business processes to increase efficiency.
- 2.4 It was agreed that both solutions should be jointly procured; the council's Procurement Board determined that a competitive dialogue procurement exercise would be appropriate given the complexity of the solution and the maturity of the market. This procurement procedure comprises of a number of stages whereby bidders put forward increasingly detailed submissions for evaluation following meetings (or 'dialogue') with the procuring agent to refine their understanding of the requirements. Bidders are deselected through the process at each stage.
- 2.5 Whilst this is a longer procurement process than others it ensures that the procuring agent benefits from market intelligence and expertise in the refinement and development of their requirements and for bidders to fully understand the outcomes that the procuring agent is looking to achieve.
- 2.6 The competitive dialogue process began with an advert in the Official Journal of the European Union in July 2013 and concluded with the submission of two final tenders on 10 February 2015. The evaluation at each stage is set out in this report.
- 2.7 Approval from Cabinet is sought to proceed to Preferred Bidder stage and award a three-year contract to Organisation A.
- 2.8 The contract will provide the council with a refreshed website that increases the potential for customers to request and pay for services online; the ability for customers to have an 'account' that allows them to track their queries and interactions in a single place online; and a contact management solution that allows staff to manage and process queries and requests quickly and easily and which is integrated with the relevant back office systems.
- 2.9 The contract will also introduce a replacement corporate electronic document management solution to be implemented in the service areas set out in item 4.6 of this report.
- 2.10 This is recognised as a significant investment for the council.
- 2.11 Research undertaken in 2014 into the preferences of Merton's service users indicates that Merton residents have a high propensity for online access and self-service and a preference for online transactions. The introduction of the technology incorporated in this contract, therefore, responds to the desire of many Merton residents to access services via the internet. For those who still wish to use other forms of contact, the ability to have their query dealt with at the first point of contact will improve their experience of public services.

2.12 Equally importantly, the technology and services this contract procures are important enablers for achieving the ambitions set out in service target operating models (TOMs) and underpin a number of savings already set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. These are set out in more detail in Appendix A of this report.

3. Background and context

3.1 The way in which Merton borough residents and service users want to access services is changing. People who routinely buy services and goods over the internet and by phone, and who communicate via SMS (text messaging), Facebook and Twitter increasingly expect the same sort of flexibility when accessing public services.

3.2 Our residents' survey demonstrates that Merton's residents already use a range of different access routes into council services and the preference for online access is increasing year-on-year. Younger residents in particular no longer want to come to council offices but instead prefer to use the web, e-mail and SMS when contacting the council.

3.3 People are also increasingly expecting public services to be delivered in an holistic way and that the council is proactive in interpreting their requirements and responding to them swiftly. When someone contacts the council they expect that there is a coherent and complete 'view' of them within the organisation – this is their experience of other organisations so why not the council? Customers do not want to speak to several different departments and service teams about the same issue, which means that services can no longer afford for their business systems and their relationships with customers to exist in isolation. For the sake of good customer experience, and effective and efficient services, a single, comprehensive view of customers across the organisation is needed.

3.4 In parallel with this, and in the context of a very difficult financial climate, local authorities in general are having to find ways to spend less money on service delivery and be more efficient – especially at the point of contact with the customer. Two effective ways to reduce the cost of services are firstly to resolve queries and requests from service users first time round (to reduce unnecessary officer time spent revisiting the same query); and secondly to help people do what they need to do quickly online or, if they have one, through their smartphone so they don't have to contact the council at all.

3.5 It is in this context that Cabinet approved, in July 2012, a programme of work to pursue a channel shift strategy and implement and promote self-service.

3.6 The report that Cabinet considered in 2012 and which proposed the programme of work included a recommendation to procure and implement a specific Customer Relationship Management product. A number of factors subsequently led officers to revisit this particular recommendation, having concluded that the stated product would not meet the council's needs.

- 3.7 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission met and considered the proposal shortly after the Cabinet decision and raised a number of concerns, including that there was insufficient justification for moving to the product proposed in the report and that it would be inappropriate to use a sole supplier without a formal tender exercise. The Commission also asked officers to ensure adequate attention was given to managing the cultural change that the programme of work entailed.
- 3.8 In response to the concerns raised by the Commission, the Procurement Board reviewed the proposed approach and, in October 2012, determined that a full OJEU procurement process would be required. Following a period of market engagement the procurement board agreed, in February 2013, that a competitive dialogue process should be undertaken, with a gateway review after an initial market engagement day in order to validate the approach.
- 3.9 This change in procurement approach required that the council articulate in much finer detail its requirements in terms of technology (i.e. produce a tender specification). This provided the council with a welcome opportunity to test the outcomes it wished to achieve through any new technical solution and avoid the inherent danger of being IT-solution-led in its approach to what is, in effect, a cultural and service transformation programme. One of the outputs of this work was the development of the Merton's Customer Contact Strategy, approved by Cabinet in March 2013.
- 3.10 The Customer Contact Strategy cements the council's approach to meeting the changing needs of residents and service users. It focuses on increasing online access to services, encouraging customers to self-serve where possible, and reducing avoidable and repeat contact by responding to as many customer queries as possible at the first point of contact. This will not only improve customer experience, it will allow the organisation to operate more efficiently – critical in the face of a reducing financial envelope.
- 3.11 The strategy provides a set of clear outcomes and it is these that underpin the requirements that the technology to be delivered through this contract will meet. As noted above, this incorporates a refreshed website that increases the potential for customers to request and pay for services online; the ability for customers to have an 'account' that allows them to track their queries and interactions in a single place online; and a contact management solution that allows staff to manage and process queries and requests quickly and easily and which is integrated with the relevant back office systems.
- 3.12 For clarity, Cabinet will want to note that the technology and services this contract will secure are critical to the realisation of its Customer Contact Strategy.

4. Electronic document management (EDM)

- 4.1 In February 2013 Cabinet approved a budget of £1.2m for a replacement electronic document management system (EDMS) and agreed that it would be procured as part of the Customer Contact competitive dialogue exercise. This was felt to offer a procurement route that would ensure best value to the authority.

- 4.2 The EDMS currently used by the council (SMART) fails to meet business need due to a number of chronic issues relating to functionality, compliance with relevant legislation and ease of use. Whilst the council has the option to upgrade to a later version, there is no indication that this would resolve these issues and the upgrade would be more costly than the replacement solution that is proposed as part of this contract award.
- 4.3 In making the decision to replace the current solution (rather than simply retire the existing solution and operate without any corporate EDMS) Cabinet will recall that they took account of the following business benefits a corporate EDMS brings to the authority:
- 4.3.1. More responsible ownership of information: reducing the risk of lost and mislaid documents – and the consequent likelihood of a fine from the Information Commissioner – and enabling the organisation to meet its requirements under the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.
 - 4.3.2. Improved version control and automated document deletion/retention: reducing the level of duplicated documentation currently stored on the Councils servers and in storage facilities and office space (and costs associated with these).
 - 4.3.3. Automatic redaction functionality ensuring personal data is not displayed publicly and thereby protecting the council from a fine by the Information Commissioner.
 - 4.3.4. Improved e-mail management: making visible a wealth of council owned data that is currently stored in, what are effectively, stand-alone Outlook folders to which only individuals have ready access. This is a critical consideration in relation to data transparency and evidence-led business execution.
 - 4.3.5. Improved support for collaborative working and multi-location initiatives, such as shared services: by allowing documentation to be accessed from any physical location.
 - 4.3.6. Quicker identification, location and retrieval of documents, ensuring that the council makes full use of data as assets to enable sound business execution and decision making.
 - 4.3.7. Automated workflow management to speed up business processes and enable cost efficiencies to be realised.
- 4.4 Perhaps even more critically, however, the absence of document imaging and electronic storage would inhibit the ability of the council to transform its services and deliver the necessary efficiencies and financial savings that it needs to achieve in the future. An EDMS is a critical dependency to at least two of the council's highest priority improvement programmes:
- 4.4.1. Flexible and mobile or remote working: alongside the planned changes to equipment and working culture, it will be necessary to implement the technology needed to enable officers to access and update information necessary to their function from any location electronically.
 - 4.4.2. Customer Contact: enabling resolution to customer issues at the first point of contact will require quick and easy access to a range of documentation across a range of services. Migration to self-serve will demand that customers themselves also have similar access.

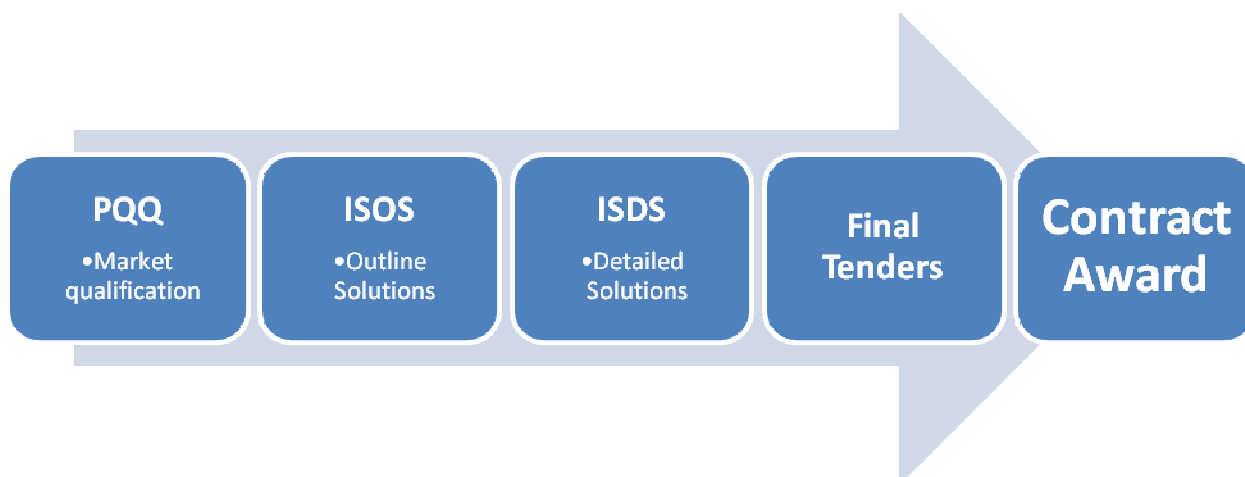
- 4.5 Finally, but significantly, the availability of EDMS is an important factor in the overarching transformation of the organisation as part of the Outstanding Council Programme. There is a clear commitment to a high standard of professionalism and the streamlining of work processes so that they are efficient and not unnecessarily bureaucratic. It is essential that officers are supported to make this transition and enabled to continue providing high quality services to customers in a constrained economic environment. It is also essential that the organisation is able to respond effectively to the changing needs of service users.
- 4.6 The proposed contract therefore incorporates the technology and associated services to implement a replacement EDMS (MS Sharepoint) that meets the council's requirements. The scope of implementation of the new solution under this contract will extend to the following service areas:
- All services currently using the existing SMART system:
 - HR
 - Pensions
 - Post Room
 - Transport and Infrastructure (i.e. Parking)
 - Ad hoc improvement projects(Note that SMART also holds CSF social care documents but these are to be migrated to the new social care information system).
 - Service areas that are within scope for implementation of the Customer Contact solution where this is required for self-service.
 - Housing
 - Planning
 - IT support and service teams
- 4.7 Wider implementation of the solution into other service areas will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis and based on robust business cases that demonstrate measurable financial and business benefits.

5. Procurement Process

- 5.1 As noted in item 3.8 above, the council's Procurement Board determined that the most appropriate procurement approach was competitive dialogue.
- 5.2 The tendering process was carried out strictly in accordance with the council's Contract Standing Orders and in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and the EU Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC, using the competitive dialogue procedure. This process focuses on intense engagement with providers, i.e. "dialogue". There is a policy of reducing the number of providers through the various stages of procurement.
- 5.3 Whilst this is a longer procurement process than others it provides a framework for the procuring organisation to enter into dialogue with a small number of providers who qualify to provide the relevant services. This enabled the council to develop their requirements iteratively in consultation with these specialist bidders, resulting in a solution that delivers well developed outcomes for the council and benefits from the expertise and experience of market experts.

5.4 The tender was managed via the council's web based Electronic Tendering System Pro-Contract. The exercise was carried out and supported throughout by the Corporate Procurement Team with additional external expert support and advice to ensure a robust approach that adopted good practice. Advice was also provided by the Council's Legal Services as needed.

5.5 The competitive dialogue process is comprised of the following stages:



5.6 **Stage 1 (Pre –Qualification Questionnaire):** Organisations who express an interest are invited to submit a completed Pre-Qualification Questionnaire and supporting documents. Evaluation selects an agreed number of candidates (the highest scoring) to proceed to the next stage.

5.7 **Stage 2 (Invitation to Submit Outline Solutions):** The organisations selected at stage 1 are invited to submit an outline proposal for the service which is subsequently evaluated against pre-determined method statement questions. There is no financial evaluation apart from a requirement that bidders confirm they are able to meet the specified affordability requirement. Evaluation selects an agreed number of candidates (the highest scoring) to proceed to the next stage.

5.8 **Stage 3 (Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions):** The organisations selected at stage 2 are invited to submit detailed solutions, including financial information for evaluation. Evaluation selects an agreed number of candidates (the highest scoring) to proceed to the next stage.

5.9 **Stage 4 (Call for Final Tenders (CFT)):** This is the final stage of the process and is the point at which the Council receives tenders which are capable of acceptance. All legal, technical & financial matters have been dealt with.

5.10 **Stage 5 (Contract Award):** A preferred bidder is appointed to deliver the Services.

5.11 In between stages two and five, bidders within the process engage in dialogue with the procuring agent. This takes the form of pre-arranged, confidential meetings between individual bidders and the procuring agent to discuss both the requirements and the solutions that bidders are developing. The outcome is that the requirements are refined and clarified through these discussions (in the context of current market developments) and bidders' proposals are more responsive.

6. Evaluation of Customer Contact bids

6.1 See additional information in Confidential Appendix C.

7. Alternative Options

7.1 This procurement exercise followed an independent appraisal of options and technology review undertaken by BDO Ltd upon which the Cabinet report in July 2012 was based, and therefore the decision by Cabinet to pursue a channel shift and self-service strategy.

7.2 Feasible and cost-effective alternatives for the technology have been explored as part of the competitive dialogue procurement process, ensuring the council is able to identify the solution which best meets its requirements in terms of cost and quality.

7.3 Should Cabinet decide not to award the contract, the implications are as follows.

7.4 Firstly the ambitions of the Customer Strategy agreed by Cabinet in March 2013 could not be realised.

7.5 Secondly, the issues relating to the management of documents as set out in item 4 above would not be addressed, and this would have further implications for the Council's Flexible Working programme and associated savings, since this relies on the availability of data and documents for remote staff working. The council would need to explore an alternative document management solution as upgrading the current SMART solution would not meet its requirements.

7.6 Thirdly, the realisation of a number of service target operating models (TOM) are dependent upon the availability of the technology and services offered through this contract – in particular those in Environment and Regeneration and the customer facing elements of Corporate Services where channel shift is a significant element of the future operating mode. In other areas of the council, this relates more to mobile and flexible working, which will be enabled through mobile technology and electronic document management.

7.7 Finally, and linked to the previous point, the technology and services offered underpin the Medium Term Financial Strategy since a number of agreed savings are either directly or indirectly dependent upon the infrastructure it offers. For clarity Appendix A identifies some of these.

8. Consultation undertaken or proposed

- 8.1 Comprehensive research was undertaken in 2014 into customer interaction and preferences in Merton in order to determine the appetite amongst Merton residents and service users for self-service.
- 8.2 The results of this research indicates that Merton residents have a high propensity for online access and self-service, with 66% of the local population having a high likelihood to self-service which can be contrasted with only 5.9% stating they are actively non-receptive to the internet. The analysis pointed towards a preference for transactions online as opposed to face to face, with 24.3% of Merton's residents actively preferring the internet as a service channel.
- 8.3 The preferred bidder has undertaken within their tender to ensure that residents and end users continue to shape and influence the development of the technology.
- 8.4 The governance arrangements for the programme are designed to ensure that services across the organisation are fully engaged in the development of the approach.
- 8.5 Governance for the programme consists of a Programme Board (management and control focus) chaired by Caroline Holland, Corporate Services Director (programme sponsor) and including representation from each of the departments. The programme also reports monthly to the Merton 2015 board which draws its membership from across the organisation.
- 8.6 A draft ownership and communication plan has been developed and service and customer groups will be engaged as part of the programme using a phased approach to ensure any necessary change is well planned, communicated and embedded.
- 8.7 It may be necessary to undertake formal consultation to reflect specific changes to how services are delivered via specific access channels as the programme progresses and the programme will provide regular updates in this regard.
- 8.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission asked to be kept closely involved in the programme. Following the call-in of the original Cabinet decision on 25 July 2012, further update reports were presented to the Commission on 20 January 2013, 16 July 2013, 11 March 2014, 7 October 2014 and 29 January 2015; and the draft Customer Contact Strategy was presented to the Commission for consultation on 28 February 2013. The programme is next expected to report to the Commission on progress in March 2015.

9. Timetable

- 9.1 The timetable for contract signature (which is subject to democratic procedures) is as follows:

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Cabinet Decision | 9 th March 2015 |
|------------------|----------------------------|

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Call-In deadline | 17 th March 2015 |
| Notification of Preferred Bidder | 17 th March 2015 |
| End of 10 day stand still period | 27 th March 2015 |
| Contract Signature | 2 nd April 2015 |

9.2 The preferred provider has submitted as part of their bid a detailed implementation plan and timetable, but this will need to be ratified as part of contract initiation and is therefore not included in this report.

10. Financial, resource and property implications

10.1 In July 2012 Cabinet awarded £1.589m investment costs to pursue channel shift funded from the Outstanding Council Programme, plus the following running costs that were built into the MTFS:

Annual Running Costs

| | £ |
|-----------------|---------|
| 2012/13 | 39,750 |
| 2013/14 | 159,000 |
| 2014/15 | 205,250 |
| 2015/16 onwards | 344,000 |

10.2 Cabinet should note that these costs were based on the purchase of the technology solution recommended within the report and prior to the decision to undertake a full competitive OJEU procurement process against more detailed requirements.

10.3 In February 2013 Cabinet awarded £1.3m from earmarked reserves for an electronic document management system to replace the existing solution and this has been built into the budget for this project.

10.4 Officers have been cautious in articulating anticipated savings against the Customer Contact programme; this is for two principal reasons.

10.5 Firstly, it has been difficult to state with certainty the nature and extent of savings until the nature of the chosen solution and scope of implementation was clear. Now that a detailed description of the solution is available and the pathfinder services in which it will be implemented defined, officers can begin to baseline the cost of contact in these service areas in order to both estimate and track realistic savings.

- 10.6 Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the savings that the programme will enable will be delivered by the service areas that deploy the technology to bring about a shift in customer contact to online channels and thus realise staff efficiencies through a reduction in customer contact. This presents a real threat of double counting savings, that is to say that a single expected saving is counted within the budget twice: once for the relevant service area and once by the programme, but only realised once.
- 10.7 The programme is therefore better understood as an enabler that underpins a new way of operating across the authority that will allow individual service areas to realise efficiencies that enable them to achieve savings. The savings already agreed that will be enabled by the technology and associated services that this contract secures have been identified in Appendix A of this report. The appendix gives a sense of the extent to which the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is dependent upon this technology and the level of savings that would be put at risk should Cabinet decide not to award the contract.
- 10.8 The anticipated expenditure associated with both the contract award and associated internal implementation can be contained within the available budget.
- 10.9 The replacement of existing scanners was agreed by Cabinet as part of the EDMS project approved in February 2013. During the early stages of dialogue, bidders indicated that it would present better value for the council to secure these through a separate procurement exercise. This report therefore requests approval to undertake an appropriate procurement exercise to secure this equipment; the costs to be met from the agreed programme budget. Cabinet will want to note that as part of the contract, the preferred bidder has undertaken to integrate and support the scanning hardware to ensure there is alignment and any interdependencies are effectively managed.
- 10.10 In order to integrate both the customer contact and electronic document management elements of the solution to the council's existing back-office systems, system integrators – or APIs – will be required. An API (**application programming interface**) is code that allows two software programmes to communicate with each other. The preferred bidder has included within their Tender the cost of the API for their solution; however APIs will also be needed for the council's existing line-of-business systems. Through dialogue with bidders it has become apparent that it is most cost effective for the council to purchase these separately with existing suppliers, albeit with the support and advice of the preferred bidder. It is therefore a recommendation of this report that Cabinet authorise the purchase of APIs as required through appropriate procurement procedures; the costs to be met from the agreed programme budget.
- 10.11 A number of existing systems will be decommissioned by this project. The preferred bidder has undertaken to work with officers to maximise these in line with the council's IT Strategy. Based on an initial review, the systems that will be decommissioned currently attract annual costs in the region of £121.86k. This will be reviewed and confirmed during project inception.

- 10.12 There are likely to be further phases of roll out, especially in the case of EDRMS. These will need to be justified on a case by case basis.
- 10.13 Further information is contained within Confidential Appendix D.

11. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 11.1 The procurement process has been undertaken in accordance with the council's Contract Standing Orders, the council's Procurement Strategy, the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and the EU Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC.
- 11.2 In accordance with Regulation 18(24) of the Public Contracts Regulations the council concluded dialogue on the basis that it had identified one or more solutions capable of meeting its needs. The Call for Final Tender ("CFT") was issued on 26 January 2015 and final tenders received on 10 February 2015. The council proceeded to assess the tenders received and identified the bidder who had submitted the most economically advantageous tender on the basis of the award criteria specified.
- 11.3 As stated in paragraph 6.30 of this report the council will issue an Alcatel letter to the unsuccessful Bidder to commence the Alcatel standstill period.
- 11.4 The legal submission was evaluated as very good.
- 11.5 The council is proceeding in line with Regulation 18(28) to clarify, where necessary, aspects of the preferred bidder's tender and confirm commitments contained in the tender.
- 11.6 Legal Services have been consulted and provided advice and assistance, where necessary, throughout the tendering process.
- 11.7 There are no TUPE implications relating to this service.

12. Risk Management and Health and Safety implications

- 12.1 All risks, assumptions, issues and dependencies are being actively managed as part of the programme.
- 12.2 There are not expected to be any Health and Safety implications.

13. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

- 13.1 There are not expected to be any human rights issues from the programme.
- 13.2 An Equality Analysis has been undertaken for the programme and was presented to the Corporate Equalities Steering Group on 12 February. The analysis will be continually revisited and updated throughout the programme and especially at suitable decision points.

- 13.3 Community and other key stakeholder groups will continue to be engaged as part of the programme and any implications will be managed with the relevant officers in the Council.

Background Papers – the following documents have been relied on in drawing up this report but do not form part of the report

- The Council's Contract Standing Orders
- The Council's Procurement Strategy
- Merton Customer Contact Strategy
- Customer Contact Strategy report to Cabinet 11 March 2013
- Customer Contact Options Appraisal report to Cabinet 12 July 2012
- Electronic Document Management System report to Cabinet 18 February 2013
- Merton Customer Insight Programme Board presentation 9 January 2014 by Red Quadrant
- Customer Contact Programme Equalities Analysis
- Evaluation criteria

14. Contacts

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15. Useful links

- 15.1 Merton Council's Web site: <http://www.merton.gov.uk>

15.2 Readers should note the terms of the legal information (disclaimer) regarding information on Merton Council's and third party linked websites.
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/legal.htm>

15.3 This disclaimer also applies to any links provided here.

16. Appendices

A. Agreed Savings Associated with Customer Contact/EDMS.

17. Confidential Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report.

B. Organisation to whom it is recommended to award the contract

C. Evaluation of Customer Contact bids

D. Financial implications

Appendix A – Agreed Savings Associated with Customer Contact/EDMS

| Ref | Description of Saving | 2014/15 £'000 | 2015/16 £'000 | 2016/17 £'000 | 2017/18 £'000 |
|-----------------------|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 2013/17 Budget | | | | | |
| CH04 | Staffing restructure to deliver efficient processes, and building on planned shift of some customers to manage their own processes | 148 | 0 | 100 | |
| CS17 | Reduction in paper invoices through scanning and deletion of scanning role | | 30 | | |
| CS35 | Closure of cash office and resulting staff savings | 30 | | | |
| CS39 | Implementation of Channel shift strategy and customer services review | 30 | 30 | 30 | |
| EN14 | Mobile technology delivering efficiencies through reduced paperwork | | 100 | | |
| 2014/17 Budget | | | | | |
| CS63 | Reorganisation of systems development and support arrangements | | | 88 | 74 |
| 2015/18 Budget | | | | | |
| CSD3 | Rationalise IT support and delivery | | | 86 | |
| CSD5 | Increased external bookings at Chaucer Centre | | | 40 | |
| CSD7 | Restructure Post and Print Section | | | 40 | |
| CSD8 | Restructure IT Service Delivery | | | 40 | |
| CSD13 | Reduce Customer Access Points | | 15 | | |
| CSD14 | Further automation to reduce need for Revenues Officer | | | 30 | |
| CSD36 | Business Systems re-structure following rationalisation of IT systems Phase 1 | | 10 | | |
| CSD39 | Business Systems re-structure following rationalisation of IT systems Phase 2 | | | 50 | |
| CSD41 | Consolidation of Systems Support | | | 20 | |
| CSD43 | Shared service for FoI and Information Governance | | | 40 | 40 |

| Ref | Description of Saving | 2014/15 £'000 | 2015/16 £'000 | 2016/17 £'000 | 2017/18 £'000 |
|-------|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| E&R 3 | Improve on-line Booking functions | | | | 16 |
| E&R10 | Back-office re-organisation | | | 80 | |
| E&r34 | Alternative delivery model of Highways Inspection Team | | | | 30 |

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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