

Merton Council Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Date: 19 September 2013
Time: 7.15 pm
Venue: Committee rooms D & E - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

AGENDA

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1	Declarations of interest - see note overleaf	
2	Apologies for absence	
3	Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2013	1 - 6
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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)
Iain Dysart
Samantha George
Suzanne Grocott
Jeff Hanna
Logie Lohendran
Russell Makin
Peter McCabe (Vice-Chair)
Dennis Pearce
Diane Neil Mills

Substitute Members:

John Dehaney
Mary-Jane Jeanes
Oonagh Moulton
Henry Nelless
John Sargeant
Judy Saunders

Co-opted Representatives

Peter Connellan, Roman Catholic diocese
Colin Powell, Church of England diocese
Dr Joanne Sullivan-Lyons, Secondary school parent governors
Vacancy, Primary school parent governor representative

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

16 JULY 2013

(19.15 - 21.45)

PRESENT Councillors Peter Southgate (in the Chair), Iain Dysart, Suzanne Grocott, Jeff Hanna, Russell Makin, Samantha George, Peter Connellan, Logie Lohendran, Peter McCabe, Dennis Pearce and Ray Tindle

Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration), Sophie Ellis (Assistant Director of Business Improvement), Peter Stone (Interim Head of Procurement) and Julia Regan (Head of Democracy Services)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Jo Sullivan-Lyons, co-opted member.

Councillor Diane Neil Mills has been replaced by Councillor Ray Tindle.

The Chair welcomed Peter Connellan, co-opted member, to his first meeting of the Commission.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 2013 (Agenda Item 3)

Agreed.

3 MINUTES OF THE CALL-IN MEETING HELD ON 2 MAY 2013 (Agenda Item 4)

Agreed.

Matters arising – the Director of Environment and Regeneration, Chris Lee, said that Cabinet had discussed the call-in and would receive a report at its meeting in September to address all the issues raised in the call-in report.

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

None.

5 FUTURE OF POLICING IN MERTON - PRESENTATION BY THE BOROUGH COMMANDER (Agenda Item 5)

The Borough Commander, Darren Williams, presented detailed information on crime patterns in Merton. He said that overall, performance is high and Merton has the fifth

lowest level of crime in London. Of the 7 MOPAC (Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime) priority indicators, the only red indicator for Merton is the level of theft from person offences.

Darren Williams reported that he has examined crime patterns forensically and discussed findings with partner organisations in order to identify areas for improvement and to reduce crime still further.

He drew the Commission's attention to some of the key findings:

- Theft, vehicle crime and burglary are the crimes committed most frequently in Merton
- Wimbledon Town Centre is a clear hotspot for all crimes, as are (to a lesser extent) Mitcham and Morden town centres
- Wimbledon Village and West Barnes are hotspots for thefts from cars
- Burglary rates have reduced over the last five years. The peak months for burglary are September to November

In response to a question about the profile of local criminals, Darren Williams said they were mainly male (except for thefts from vehicles) and not young people on the whole.

Darren Williams stressed that reducing crime is a partnership activity and he highlighted the role that the Council and councillors can play in helping to get crime prevention awareness messages across to residents, particularly in relation to burglary and theft from cars.

Commission members described some of the local issues brought to them by residents in relation to drug dealing, gangs, fear of crime and safer neighbourhood policing. Darren Williams said that the police rely on local information to target its activity and he therefore welcomed contact and feedback from residents and councillors.

Commission members asked for information about officer numbers so that they could assess the level of resourcing provided by MOPAC. Darren Williams said that there are currently 328 officers of all ranks in Merton and that this will increase to 351 by the end of 2015. Of these, 216 are constables (233 by 2015) and 45 are PCSOs (40 by 2015). He undertook to provide the number of Safer Neighbourhood Officers as well as a ward breakdown of numbers by officer type. ACTION: Borough Commander.

In response to a question about how many reported crimes are solved, Darren Williams undertook to provide this information. ACTION: Borough Commander.

A Commission member asked whether the buildings no longer used by the Police could be made available for community use. Darren Williams said that those leased buildings were still being used by the Police.

RESOLVED:

- To thank the Borough Commander for the excellent work in keeping crime rates low
- To ask the Borough Commander to provide any future reports or presentations in advance of the meeting so that Commission members can absorb and consider their questions
- To invite the Borough Commander to future meetings (note – under agenda item 8, the Commission agreed to invite him to the meetings on 26 November 2013 and 11 March 2014)

6 CIVIL UNREST CABINET ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TASK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS (Agenda Item 6)

The Director of Environment and Regeneration, Chris Lee, provided an update to the report:

- Recommendation 7 – the peer review went well and an action plan is now in place
- Recommendation 8 – MOPAC (Mayors Office of Policing and Crime) has allocated £32,000 to commission a bespoke service for offenders in the 19-25 age range to help prevent re-offending
- Recommendation 9 – this post is now being recruited and has been funded by MOPAC

Chris Lee made additional points in response to questions:

- Recommendation 3 – the list of drivers is already available and there are operational procedures and guidance for drivers
- Recommendation 5 – access to the contact lists for businesses and community leaders is through the Emergency Planning Team and the officer on duty. The business contacts are maintained by the Chamber of Commerce. Members sought assurance that these would be directly available to the Council in an emergency rather than through the Chamber of Commerce. ACTION: The Director of Corporate Services undertook to check the access arrangements.
- Recommendation 7 – the peer review report will be published in the next 2-3 weeks. Chris Lee undertook to find out whether this will be reported to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel. ACTION : Director of Environment and Regeneration
- Recommendation 8 – the £32k funding is for a fulltime officer (possibly a police officer) to be based in the offender management team for one year. MOPAC will review future funding on basis of “payment by results” before confirming any future funding
- Recommendation 10 – ACTION: the Director of Environment and Regeneration undertook to find out 1) what progress has been made in relation to producing a flyer on stop and search procedures, 2) whether a small number of stop and search will still be needed under sections 60 and 44 or whether these will stop completely 3) detail on composition of the stop and search monitoring group .

- Recommendation 11 – ACTION: the Director of Environment and Regeneration undertook to find out what progress has been made in talking to young people about stop and search.

RESOLVED: To have a further update report at the Commission's meeting on 26 November

7 CUSTOMER CONTACT PROGRAMME UPDATE (Agenda Item 7)

The Commission welcomed the level of new detail provided in the report.

The Director of Corporate Services outlined progress made since 2010 and, with the Assistant Director of Business Improvement and the Head of Procurement, provided further information on issues raised by members of the Commission:

- The Target Operating Model (TOM) is part of the Council's routine approach to service transformation and improvement. Each business has refreshed its TOM recently and these are now being analysed to understand what enabling activity is required in supporting strategies and programmes, including Customer Contact. An iterative process is being adopted to ensure the programme and TOM delivery are designed in tandem to avoid duplication and inconsistency. The process is being led through departmental management teams, the Merton 2015 Board and the corporate management team.
- The three housing workstreams (on page 29) are intended to refine existing processes, particularly in relation to method of contact, and to help people to understand how the housing register works and their likelihood of being allocated housing. The housing allocation policy will not be changed by this work. ACTION: In response to points made by Commission members, the Assistant Director of Business Improvement undertook to review ensure that the Customer Contact programme works with the service lead to ensure that customers can access the service in the most efficient way and as far as possible online and that the process is transparent.
- The Head of Commercial Services confirmed that procurement of the system will be carried out via the EU Competitive Dialogue procedure and described how the process works, through prequalification, dialogue phases and call for final tenders. He agreed that, as in all procurement using Competitive Dialogue, fine judgement will be needed to ensure that the appropriate number of bidders are taken through to each phase. The contract is unlikely to be valued above £2million and so will not need to be approved by Cabinet. ACTION: Assistant Director of Business Improvement will provide timetable to Councillor Samantha George
- Customer data, alongside other sources of information such as the census, will enable the council to understand in more detail customers' motivation and behaviour and to segment customers in order to organise services so that they respond to demand in a more sophisticated way.

A Commission member suggested that it would be helpful to have a screen in Merton Link to provide detail on the length of the housing waiting list.

RESOLVED: to receive a further progress report in March 2014.

8 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14 (Agenda Item 8)

RESOLVED: to adopt the draft work programme (in Appendix 1) with the following changes:

- To invite the Borough Commander to the meetings on 26 November 2013 and 11 March 2014 and that this should be the first item of business at each of these meetings
- To receive an update on the customer contact programme at the meeting on 11 March 2014
- To review the information on policy and service developments in response to demographic change (meeting on 19 September) with a view to following up in more depth at particular services
- To remove the gang-call in report as this comes under the remit of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- If there is extensive information available for round one of budget scrutiny (meeting on 26 November 2013) then the report on the shared environmental health service will be deferred to April 2014. ACTION: Director of Corporate Services to advise

The Commission agreed to re-establish the financial monitoring task group for 2013/14 with existing terms of reference and, in addition, to ask the task group to:

- 1) consider the local council tax benefit scheme prior to it being discussed by the Commission on 26 November 2013
- 2) receive a report on commercial waste

The Commission appointed councillors Iain Dysart, Suzanne Grocott, Samantha George, Diane Neil Mills, Dennis Pearce and Peter Southgate to the financial monitoring task group, and agreed to invite the Scrutiny Panel budget leads to join the group

RESOLVED: that future communication with the Borough Commander on behalf of the Commission should be copied to the Chair and forwarded to all members of the Commission for information.

Commission members agreed that it would be helpful to have budget scrutiny training in a similar format to that provided last year. ACTION: Director of Corporate Services

9 MINUTES OF THE FINANCIAL MONITORING TASK GROUP MEETING 25 JUNE 2013 (Agenda Item 9)

RESOLVED: that the minutes be agreed.

Matters arising – the Director of Corporate Services said that the WGA tool had still not been received from HM Treasury

Committee: Overview & Scrutiny Commission

Date: 19th September 2013

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Control of Noise Nuisance

Lead officer: Chris Lee/John Hill

Lead member: Andrew Judge

Forward Plan reference number: 1256

Contact officer: Ian Murrell

Recommendations:

- A. That the Commission note and discuss the formal decision taken by Cabinet at its meeting on 10 June 2013
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To provide the Commission with a formal notification of the decision of the Cabinet taken at their meeting on the 10th June 2013 in respect of options for the provision of a control of noise nuisance service.

2 DETAILS

At the meeting on the 10th of June, Cabinet considered a report (attached as appendix 1) in response to Scrutiny's request, at its meetings of the 8th and 31st January 2013, "to explore options for providing a 24/7 noise service as soon as possible through an 'invest to save' approach that would deal with complaints promptly and further reduce the need for court action as well as sending a message to residents that anti-social noisy behaviour will not be tolerated".

A report in respect of this recommendation was presented at the Council's Cabinet meeting of the 18th February 2013, where Cabinet resolved to formally report back its decision and any agreed action to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

Following consideration of the report at their meeting on the 10th June, Cabinet formally resolved that (see extract from formal minutes of June 10th meeting):

RESOLVED: That recommendation A of the 10th June report (see appendix 1 : ***That, based on the information provided by officers as set out in this report, Members determine whether or not to proceed with the implementation of a 24/7 noise patrol service together with the required investment as specified.***)

be deferred pending a further report to Cabinet discussing the possibility of MASCOT working more closely with the council's noise enforcement service and the potential for a shared service with neighbouring boroughs.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. The progress on the development and implementation of the shared regulatory service between Croydon, Richmond and Merton, will, by the nature and complexity of the project, be protracted and it has been agreed that the report back to Cabinet will be scheduled for April 2014. This report will also include an update on potential use of MASCOT services as a mechanism for addressing concerns regarding noise nuisance.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

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

- **Appendix 1** : Copy of report to Cabinet meeting of 10th June 2013.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None for the purposes of this report.

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 10 June 2013

Agenda item: 7

Wards: All

Subject: Control of Noise Nuisance

Lead officer: Chris Lee

Lead member: Andrew Judge

Forward Plan reference number: 1256

Contact officer: Ian Murrell

Recommendation:

- A. That, based on the information provided by officers as set out in this report, Members determine whether or not to proceed with the implementation of a 24/7 noise patrol service together with the required investment as specified.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report is in response to Scrutiny's request, at its meetings of the 8th and 31st January, "to explore options for providing a 24/7 noise service as soon as possible through an 'invest to save' approach that would deal with complaints promptly and further reduce the need for court action as well as sending a message to residents that anti-social noisy behaviour will not be tolerated".
- 1.2. A report in respect of this recommendation was presented at the Council's Cabinet meeting of the 18th February 2013, where Cabinet resolved to formally report back it's decision and any agreed action to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

2 CURRENT MODEL OF SERVICE PROVISION

- 2.1. Responsibility for the control of noise nuisance rests with the Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing Section. The section comprises five teams:- Trading Standards (including Street Trading); Housing; Commercial; Environmental Protection & Licensing; and Finance & Administration.
- 2.2. The service currently has 4 officers dedicated to Environmental Protection matters, including noise nuisance, and relies on environmental health staff to voluntarily participate in 'out of hours' noise enforcement activities every Saturday night and on Friday nights from June until August.
- 2.3. The service receives in excess of 2400 complaints about noise per year of which approximately 650 are incidents reported and responded to by the out

of hours service operating between 11pm and 4am reflecting the times at which levels of noise complaints are at their highest.

- 2.4. Officers respond to calls to an emergency number operated by MASCOT and dependent on the nature of the incident officers may require the assistance of police when attending premises out of hours.
- 2.5. Telephone calls made to the out of hours emergency number operated by MASCOT, when the out of hours noise service is not operating, average only 3 calls a night, suggesting that problems suffered due to noise are significantly reduced during these periods.
- 2.6. **Cost of Current Service provision.**
The Environmental Protection function, including the Out of Hours service (£30k), is provided at an approximate cost of £345k per annum. Day to day noise enforcement activity is undertaken by the equivalent of 2.0ftes as the Environmental Protection team is also responsible for issues relating to air quality, the contamination of land, environmental permitting, and general environmental nuisance.
- 2.7. An incremental approach is taken to noise complaints starting with the service of a standard advisory letter that is sent to the person complained of, advising them that a complaint has been received and requesting that they modify their behaviour, as appropriate. If the initial letter does not resolve the problem noise diary log sheets are issued for a short period to identify the days and times when the noise causes disturbance and to allow for the deployment of noise monitoring equipment if needs be. If the noise causes a problem during the day or Friday/Saturday nights the case officer may also visit and witness the noise. Once evidence has been gathered and the case officer is satisfied that the noise is a statutory nuisance a formal notice will be served requiring the person causing the noise to stop and prohibiting them from causing a noise in the future. Failure to comply with a notice can lead to prosecution although the need for such action is minimal in the borough with less than one case being taken to court a year.
- 2.8. The current operating model for noise enforcement is a direct result of the level of demand and available resources, the teams wider range of responsibilities and its retrospective investigation of complaints relating to noise nuisance that occur outside of the current service operation ie weekdays, Saturday nights and Friday nights during the summertime.
- 2.9. As a result a 24/7 service cannot be met by the 2.0fte equivalent that are currently responsible for the task, and similarly the four noise monitoring machines used by the service. Without investment this most certainly will have to be offset by reducing officer time spent investigating other related statutory activities.
- 2.10. However providing an immediate response to all allegations of noise nuisance and/or deploying equipment at an earlier stage could in all probability result in the earlier resolution of noise complaints, reduce the need for legal action (including the service of notices), and thus create a potentially more effective service. However, as highlighted in previous reports, demand for the service outside of its current hours of operation is minimal and this could therefore lead to significant spare capacity in

resource set aside to deal with complaints, thus making the service less efficient.

- 2.11. The table below shows the estimated costs of legal action associated with noise nuisance investigation in 2012/13. In line with the Service's enforcement policy legal action is only taken following a process of escalating actions aimed at ensuring compliance. Exceptions would be where there is a serious risk to public safety or the environment or the offences have been committed deliberately or negligently or involve deception, or where there is a significant economic detriment. In these circumstances the case for an invest to save approach is limited as the potential savings from reduced legal action is minimal when set against the cost of a 24/7 service as detailed in 3.1 below.

Type of Actions	Number of Actions	Estimated Cost (£'s)
Complaint investigation	1960	
Statutory Notice	66	29,700
Fixed Penalty Notice	2	1,500
Proceedings	1	3,900
Total		35,100

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. Current service arrangements provide coverage for about 30% of the week/year. Consequently a minimum of a further 5.0ftes (£198k based upon exiting officer salaries including oncosts), plus related operational expenditure of approximately 40k to meet transport, accommodation and equipment costs will be required to provide a 24/7 service. A structure chart is attached at appendix A to this report and shows (in bold and italics) two new teams of out of hours officers working to pre-determined shift patterns supported by an officer providing cover for leave, absence, etc. The immediate investigation of noise complaints will release 'daytime' officers from out of hours follow up investigations and thus provide efficiency savings equivalent to the cost of the fifth out of hours officer. Separate and specific contracts of employment will be necessary but the skills, knowledge and experience of daytime and out of hours officers will be similar allowing them to undertake the ad hoc of related complaints and enquiries currently undertaken by daytime officers. Management and supervisory arrangements for any extended out of hours service will need careful consideration as it will have to be provided remotely and in retrospect to avoid further cost. The only similar service in operation in London is provided by Westminster Council, at a cost of approximately £1m, however it has to deal with 7-8 times the volume of complaints as compared to Merton given that its night time economy is one of the largest in Europe.
- 3.2. The extension of current arrangements to provide increased Out of Hours provision, typically every Friday and Saturday night through out the year. Estimated cost £20k per annum.

- 3.3. The creation of dedicated 'night time' officers contracted to work at the evenings and weekends only and that are not covered by the out of hours arrangements that are already in place. Equivalent model in Croydon costs approximately £100k per annum but this does not provide for an immediate response to all incidents and still requires the following up of incidents during office hours.
- 3.4. Await the outcome of the ongoing dialogue with neighbouring authorities (Richmond and Croydon) as to the opportunities arising out of sharing 'Regulatory' services. Cabinet approval for which was granted on 11/4/2013 and similarly in Richmond and Croydon on the 18/4/13 and 29/4/13 respectively. Which will offer the opportunity to reduce cost and improve efficiency, resilience and extend the scope of current provision.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. None for the purposes of this report

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. Not Applicable

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing Service is currently tasked with delivering £400k in direct savings by 2014/15. This is intended to be achieved through the sharing of services with Richmond and Croydon Councils.
- 6.2. The provision of a 24/7 noise service is estimated to cost an additional £200k as detailed in section 3 above and will therefore need to be considered in the context of the savings required in 6.1.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There is no statutory requirement to provide an out of hours noise service.
- 7.2. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to investigate complaints of statutory nuisance from people living within its area. A statutory noise nuisance exists when it unreasonably interferes with the use or enjoyment of someone's premises or is prejudicial to health. The Act however does not prescribe how authorities should investigate such incidents.
- 7.3. Limiting an immediate response to incidents of noise nuisance to those affecting several complainants will still increase the retrospective prioritisation and investigation of all other complaints.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Noise is an inevitable consequence of today's society. Noise is subjective and one person's noise is another person's sound. Noise management is a complex issue and at times requires complex solutions. Unlike air quality, there are currently no European or national noise limits which have to be met. Unlike many other pollutants, noise pollution depends not just on the physical aspects of the sound itself, but also the human reaction to it, impacting on 'quality of life' and giving rise to adverse health effects, one of the fundamental rights of every human being.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Any direct investment in the service will allow for an extension of current out of hours arrangements, provide for a greater scope for immediate complaint response with the potential to reduce the demands on the service during normal working hours and reduce the numbers of complaints received and investigated.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None for the purposes of this report

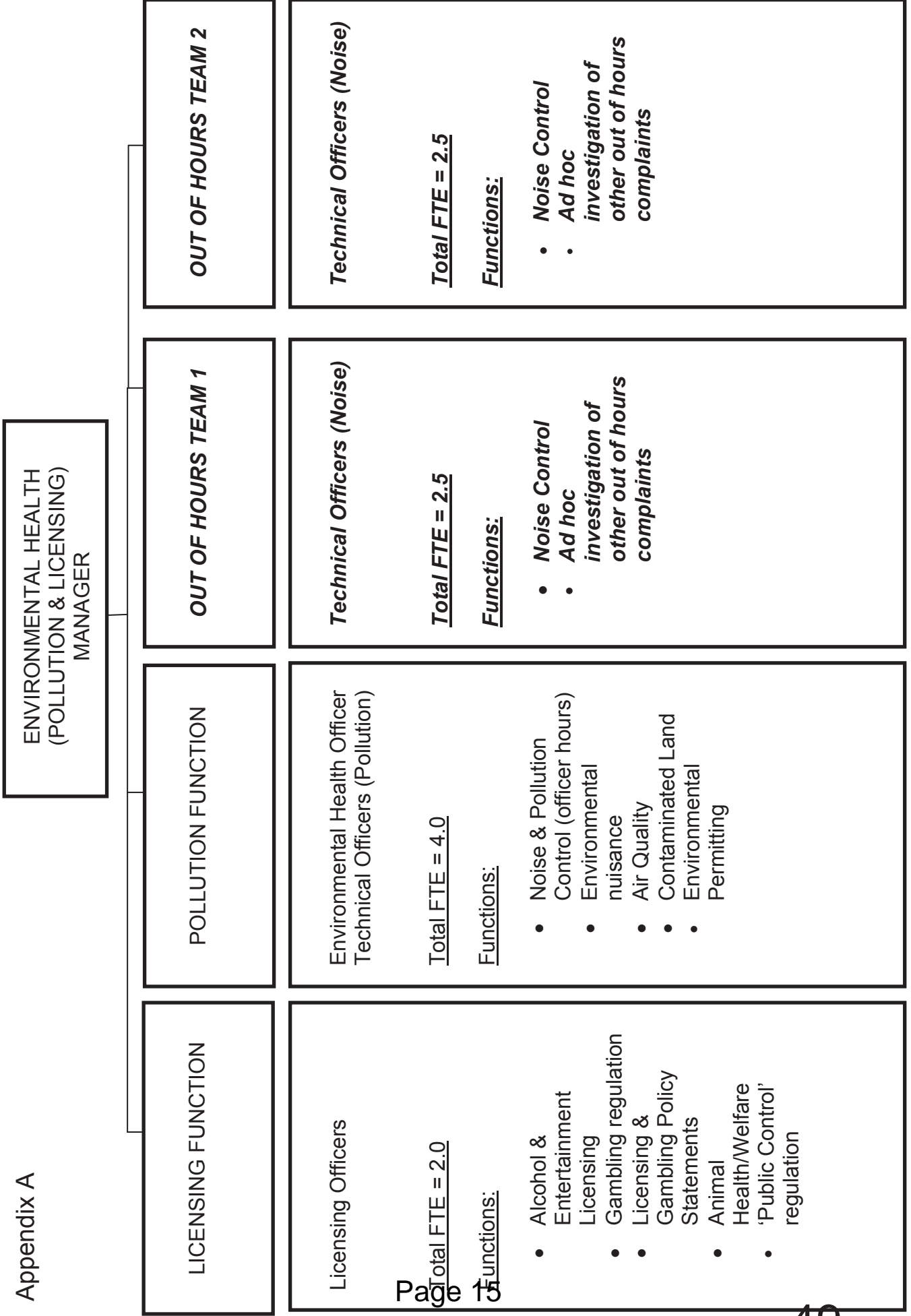
11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix A – structure chart

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. None for the purposes of this report

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Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 19 September 2013

Agenda item:

Subject: Public Value Review Pilots Update

Wards: All

Lead officer: Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement

Lead member: Cllr Mark Betteridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Implementation

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

Contact officer:

It is recommended that the Commission:

- 1) Discuss and comment on the progress of the Public Value Review (PVR) pilots and plans for the review of the process and roll out.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of the Public Value Review (PVR) pilots. It highlights some key lessons learned from the pilots and the proposed process and timescale for the review of the overarching process and rollout programme.
- 1.2 The report also provides a summary of the outcomes to date of the three PVR pilots: Street Cleansing, Merton Adult Education and Communications.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The PVR process was agreed by CMT in May 2012.
- 2.2 The aim of PVRs as laid out in the original guidance is to take a fundamental look at each service that the council provides, asking the following:
 - How does the team provide the service?
 - What are the statutory imperatives?
 - How much does it cost to provide the service?
 - How does the service compare with services provided by similar boroughs or other organisations?
 - How could the service be provided differently in order to save money and be more efficient?

- 2.3 The process was designed to allow the content of the review to vary from service to service, within a defined framework, depending on the scope and previous work that has taken place. Detailed guidance, role descriptions for the Review Lead and Challenger, Meeting Agendas and Key Document Templates were developed.
- 2.4 It was agreed that there would be three pilot PVRs: Communications, Merton Adult Education and Street Cleansing, which were scheduled to take place between October 2012 and March 2013. The aim of these pilots was to test the methodology and process that had been agreed with a view to evaluating and refining it for rollout on the basis of lessons learned.
- 2.5 A draft programme of rollout was developed for all services to receive a PVR – this was planned to run until December 2016. Most services were scheduled to undertake a standard review, lasting 20 weeks from the start of the preparatory period to the closure of the review. This was a speculative programme, pending the outcome of the pilots.
- 2.6 A parallel but connected process is underway to plan for delivery of the refreshed Target Operating Models (TOMs) that were developed by all services last year. Departments are developing comprehensive delivery plans underpinned by strategies that set out how the transformation will be enabled and assured. These are due to be completed early in 2014.

3. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 3.1 At the time of writing final draft reports for each are being finalised and timetables developed for these to be taken through the appropriate governance mechanisms, to include the Merton 2015 Board and CMT. There is an expectation that each will report to CMT with key findings and a proposed implementation plan by the autumn. Recommendations will be subject to the scrutiny process via the relevant scrutiny panels where appropriate to the nature and scale of change proposed.
- 3.2 Section five of this report sets out a summary of the outcomes to date from each of the pilots.

4. KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- 4.1 An evaluation of the process and methodology has been undertaken throughout the delivery of the pilots. Key lessons from the exercise to date have been drawn together and discussed by the Merton 2015 Board. Officers have focused largely on the areas for improvement when drawing together lessons learned and these are set out in more detail below. In

order to ensure a balanced picture, however, this report will first briefly set out the successes of the pilots.

- 4.2 On the whole, the process has allowed service leads to take time out of their day to day business and reflect on end-to-end process and delivery arrangements. Critically it has drawn into the process of reviewing the service operational staff, key stakeholders and senior decision makers so that strategic and operational issues can be considered – and hopefully resolved – in tandem.
- 4.3 Business Improvement Advisors have provided additional capacity to the service to gather and analyse data in a way that might not otherwise have been feasible in order to make decisions about their future delivery arrangements. In the Street Cleansing pilot this incorporated a specially commissioned survey of customers that informed how the service might be constructed to best address the key concerns of residents. Both the Communications and Street Cleansing pilots incorporated an examination of how services are organised in other local authorities and a private sector delivery agent in order to benchmark efficiency and productivity. Both of these reviews have identified options for reducing service delivery costs.
- 4.4 Turning to the lessons that identify how the process could be improved – the main focus of this report – these are summarised below.
- 4.5 **Scope and Content** - the process was designed to provide sufficient flexibility so that scope and content could be determined by each review team. As a result the three pilot reviews are all very different in scope, breadth and structure. Whilst this has the benefit of enabling each review to be ‘bespoke’ for the service, it has, in the pilots, also led to lack of clarity on where the main focus of the review should rest: operational detail or more strategic questions about organisation of delivery. For this reason officers will seek to clarify the drivers for the PVR and develop a series of critical questions or lines of enquiry on which each must focus as a minimum in order to ensure there is continuity and a similar degree of rigour across all reviews.
- 4.6 **Service Ownership** - the process anticipates that the PVR will be owned and led by the service manager, which assumes that managers have capacity to do so. This was aimed at ensuring the outcomes of the review were owned by the service and realistic, raising the likelihood of their being implemented fully. In reality, however, there was limited capacity within services to dedicate to the pilot PVRs, which meant that the pilots were led in practice by the Programme Office. The Business Improvement Adviser (BIA) contribution was greater than originally planned which

- impacted on the team's work programme. Officers will be reviewing the time commitment and roles and responsibilities for the process in order to ensure that there is sufficient capacity and resources available to complete the PVR within agreed timescales and that sustainable impact is achieved.
- 4.7 **Support Services** – it has become clear from the pilots that in order to ensure a thorough review it is crucial that expertise is provided from support services such as finance, legal, HR etc. These requirements need to be clarified in order that the relevant services can plan the appropriate level of capacity to respond. Officers will be taking this into account when reviewing the roles and responsibilities around the programme in the review. Time commitments will need to be more clearly defined at the beginning of each project so that managers can plan accordingly.
- 4.8 **Timing** – the planned length of the reviews (20 weeks for a standard review) led to a loss of momentum and as a result the pilot PVRs took longer to complete than planned. The process was designed on the assumption that services could more easily commit to shorter periods over a longer timescale; however it might be more appropriate to redesign the PVRs to become more intensive exercises, requiring the same level of capacity from services but over a shorter period of time. This will be addressed within the review.
- 4.9 **Challenger Role** – the process allows for each review to have an independent challenger as part of the team. Through the pilots, however, it has become clear that the task of challenger or critical friend requires a level of expertise in the relevant field and a high degree of credibility if it is to be effective. In each of the pilots such a resource was not easily available either internally or externally – most external 'experts' require a longer term engagement with an organisation than the PVR involves. Officers will therefore be reconsidering how robust and constructive challenge can be applied to the process in a meaningful way as part of the process review.
- 4.10 **Governance** – a clear process was provided for the start-up and closure periods, but there was insufficient clarity around the governance of the review period itself. One pilot implemented a structure of monthly review team meetings, with smaller weekly working group meetings, which worked well. This was not consistent across all pilots. This will need to be addressed by the review; officers believe there is an opportunity to develop a governance framework that also responds to the need for robust challenge as set out in item 4.6 above.

5. REVIEWING THE PVR PROCESS

- 5.1 Work to revise the PVR process, in light of the lessons learned from the three pilot reviews has begun. It is clear, however, that the revised process needs to be informed by and respond to the requirements of departments and services articulated in TOM delivery plans and strategies. This will ensure that the process reflects the current (and to the extent possible future) needs of the organisation, given that the initial process was designed well over a year ago.
- 5.2 A fully revised proposal for the future programme, therefore, will not be available until March 2014. This will capture responses to the lessons learned from the pilots and the emerging demands and needs of services clarified through the TOM delivery planning process. In addition, it will allow officers to ensure the correct sequencing or prioritisation of reviews on the basis of urgency, impact etc.
- 5.3 In order to allow the organisation to continue to respond to changing priorities, it is likely that the proposal will suggest a rolling programme of reviews rather than a fixed three year sequence. This will ensure investment is made in the right service at the right time as organisational priorities alter over time.
- 5.4 Work will continue between now and the end of the calendar year to develop a design that responds to lessons already learned. In particular, officers will be looking to identify how information gaps might be plugged to prepare for rollout in 2014/5.

6. PILOT PUBLIC VALUE REVIEW OUTCOMES

- 6.1 The three pilot PVRs were Street Cleansing, MAE and Communications. A summary of the review outcomes to date is provided below.
- 6.2 Until the recommendations are agreed through the relevant governance processes and implementation plans agreed it is not possible to state with certainty what savings and efficiencies each review has achieved.

Street Cleansing

- 6.3 The review demonstrated the potential to redesign the service within existing resources to more closely address the key resident's concerns of litter and fly tipping. A further reduction in sickness levels would result in significant savings in spend on agency cover, which could be reinvested within the service to deliver a more flexible, responsive and cost effective service. The overall cost of the service can be reduced, without diminishing performance, indeed it is suggested that resident perceptions

of the service should improve through introducing a more reactive service which targets litter, automated reporting methods and better information flows to frontline officers.

- 6.4 The recommendations of the review are to:
- a) redesign the service to address the needs of each location, to deliver a consistent level of cleanliness across the borough,
 - b) review the management structure of the service to deliver reduced spans of control and clear line management responsibilities to improve performance and continue to significantly reduce sickness levels,
 - c) implement a robust, evidenced approach to managing and benchmarking staff productivity,
 - d) realise a shift in the contact channels into the service through development of fully automated e-forms for online reporting,
 - e) explore options for implementation of mobile working within the department for Response Teams and frontline supervisory posts,
 - f) review branding to raise the profile of the service and its staff,
 - g) explore the development of the Garth Road site through the Asset Management Strategy, to improve facilities, maximise capacity and identify the potential to realise a capital receipts / revenue income from land made available.

MAE

- 6.5 The PVR in Merton Adult Education considered three options for delivering the services currently provided by Merton Adult Education:
- a) setting up a business unit where the council would continue to own the service, but it would be managed more autonomously as a separate in-house business unit;
 - b) externalising the service with the council acting as a commissioner, specifying a range of courses and procuring them from relevant providers; and
 - c) rescinding responsibility for adult education altogether, allowing other providers to provide adult education services in the borough if they choose by accessing the SFA (in full) funding direct
- 6.6 The review investigated six strands for each of these three options (some strands may be less relevant to some options):
- Internal Stakeholders
 - Customers
 - Finance
 - Buildings and Assets
 - Financial viability (including funding)
 - Service Outcomes

- 6.7 The PVR found no evidence that moving to a trading unit would benefit Merton Adult Education at this time. Once the service has delivered against its current plans for increased income generation then it is recommended that other models for service delivery should be considered. In-depth analysis of the capacity of other providers in the locality needs to be undertaken by the service in order to determine whether responsibility for provision of service could feasibly be passed to another provider, this will help to determine if consideration of alternative providers is viable.
- 6.8 In order for Merton Adult Education to plan for how they operate in different accommodation models, cost information should be prepared for both the service occupying an unused Merton building, and the service using rented accommodation for every course currently run at the site.
- 6.9 Management information for the service can be improved and will assist in better course planning.
- 6.10 The service will need to continue its work implementing recommendations from this and other reviews to ensure that full value is achieved.

Communications

- 6.11 The scope of the communications service PVR included: press & PR, marketing and graphic design, filming, advertising & sponsorship and community engagement and consultation.
- 6.12 The PVR sought to answer, through analysis of the service, two questions to ensure that the future of the communications service is cost effective and can provide a quality service that meets customer requirements and demand. It is also expected that the review will identify savings of at least 20%. The questions asked were:
- Is there potential to reduce or stop elements in order to reduce costs?
 - What options exist for some or all of the functions to be delivered by an alternative provider in order to reduce costs?
- 6.13 The review investigated the needs of customers and explored levels of customer satisfaction. This evidence, together with the future business drivers for communication services within the public sector, informed the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the following options for future delivery:
- Reducing the in house service to achieve savings
 - Externalising the function to a different provider
 - Segmentation of the service and externalise more specialised functions whilst retaining more generic and less skilled functions.

- 6.14 The recommendations being taken forward are:
- The development of a digital newsroom.
 - Implementation of a reduced 'in house' delivery framework deleting two posts within Press & Marketing.
 - Reduction of the council's centralised marketing budget along with training for Communications Staff ensuring PANACEA, a self-service marketing tool, is being utilised fully.
 - A review of internal communications processes to ensure they are lean and adhere to good practice.
 - Development and implementation of a social media strategy to ensure the organisation is fully aware of the social media tools available and that they are used to the full.
 - Altering the size of My Merton to A4 in order to realise financial savings.
 - Keeping Advertising and Sponsorship in house and develop internal delivery and management arrangements to ensure financial income targets are met.
 - Explore the opportunity to externalise the filming function.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1 The PVR programme alone will not deliver the savings required to balance the budget and so a process of departmental targets will need to continue. The PVR programme will give departments part of the measures required to meet their targets. The council could decide not to continue with PVRs, instead delivering savings solely via the annual budget round. However, this process may not deliver some of the longer term savings and service improvements that that need to be made.
- 7.2 The council could replace PVRs with a process focused solely on exploring alternative delivery vehicles and potential procurement savings. This would give a view of the commercial options for providing a service, but without a wider look at the whole service and would not therefore be suitable for all services and may miss important delivery improvements outside such a narrow scope. By incorporating explicitly the question of delivery vehicles into the PVRs officers can ensure that a relevant, comprehensive view is taken of each service.

8. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 8.1 Lessons learned have been reported to the Merton 2015 Board and draw on extensive consultation with the pilot stakeholders.

8.2 The following Boards will be formally consulted as part of the development of a revised process:

- Merton 2015
- DMTs
- CMT

We propose that OSC are also consulted on the draft process before its implementation. This is likely to be in early 2014.

9. TIMETABLE

9.1 Organisational requirements of the process and early prioritisation of services for review drawn from the TOM delivery planning process – January 2014.

9.2 Data gathering and collation in preparation for service reviews – now to March 2014.

9.3 Finalise process review drawing on lessons learned and TOM delivery planning outputs – February 2014.

9.4 Consultation with appropriate governance boards on proposed process – March 2014.

9.5 Planned implementation – April 2014.

10. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The pilot PVRs have identified the need to focus the programme on those areas where efficiency savings are most likely to be generated or where alternative patterns and levels of service delivery can be modelled.

11. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific legal implications to the overall programme. Implications for individual services will be considered as part of each review.

12. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific human rights or community cohesion implications to the overall programme. Implications for individual services will be considered as part of each review.

13. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications to the overall programme. Implications for individual services will be considered as part of each review.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Each PVR has a risk log and an overarching risk log for the programme as a whole is also in place to pick up any cross cutting issues.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- PVR Guidance

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 19th September 2013

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Cabinet response to the recommendations of the volunteering scrutiny task group

Lead officer: Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing, LBM

Lead member: Councillor Mark Betteridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Implementation; and Councillor Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community Safety Engagement and Equalities

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officer: Hayley James, Volunteering Strategy Programme Manager, Merton Voluntary Service Council

Recommendations:

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission note the action plan in respect of recommendations made by the volunteering task group.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. A task group was set up in order to review involving volunteering in Council services. During the review the scope widened to consideration of volunteering across Merton as a whole. This report is the response to those recommendations and includes an action plan.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The volunteering task group's review complements other volunteering-focussed work that is underway.
- 2.2. In March 2012, Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC) recruited a Volunteering Strategy Programme Manager to deliver the Merton Partnership Volunteering and Community Action Strategy. A key objective of the strategy was to "identify new and continue to support existing volunteering opportunities to engage individuals, groups and organisations in shaping and delivering public services".
- 2.3. This has led to a report being developed between MVSC and LBM, which was discussed in March and July at LBM's CMT. Progress is now underway with a various projects.
- 2.4. Other objectives in the strategy have focussed on the culture of volunteering in Merton and communications which will lead to change in how volunteering is described and delivered in the borough.

MVSC, as the lead infrastructure body, received a Transforming Local Infrastructure Grant to merge some of the function of MVSC, Volunteer

Centre Merton (VCM) and Merton Unity Network (MUN). MUN have refocused and are no longer an infrastructure organisation and are being supported by MVSC. Following Due Diligence, MVSC and VCM are considering a formal merger.

- 2.5. The recommendations from the volunteering task group underpin and complement an ongoing commitment to involving local residents in their communities, along with a change in how volunteering infrastructure will look in the foreseeable future.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to implement the action plan would be against the commitment shown across the Merton Partnership to enabling all Merton residents to contribute to their community in some way.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. The Cabinet endorsed the recommendations in April 2013.
- 4.2. As some recommendations are progressed, consultation will be undertaken as required.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. See action plan in the report

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no property or resource implications at this time.
- 6.2. Many of the actions will be absorbed within current staffing i.e. primarily the Volunteering Strategy Programme Manager and staff across LBM.
- 6.3. As some actions are progressed, there may be budget implications which MVSC are exploring.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None .

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The implementation of the action plan does not discriminate and will seek to build relations between local residents and partner organisations. This will improve community cohesion.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purpose of this report. Safeguarding will be considered as actions are progressed.

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

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. Appendix 1 – Merton Partnership Volunteering and Community Action Strategy 2012-2014

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Response to the scrutiny task group review of volunteering in Merton

It is welcomed that the volunteering scrutiny panel made recommendations to ensure that volunteering is recognised as a key component of a healthy and successful community.

A particular highlight of the report is that through the various meetings the review was broadened to volunteering outside of the Council and that some recommendations refer to those who give their time in Merton as a whole.

Please note that throughout the report the terminology is 'involving volunteers', not using volunteers.

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 residents 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 Following the Commission's recommendation, the Consultation and Community Engagement Team were approached to include the questions in 2013, however, the deadline for the survey had passed and the survey was at capacity.</p> <p>1.3 Questions can be submitted for inclusion alongside other demands on the survey in June 2014 for the ARS 2014 survey.</p> <p>1.4 Staff survey The same volunteering questions are included in the 2013 staff survey which takes place at the end of the year.</p>	<p>Hayley James (MVSC) and Community and Engagement Team (LBM)</p> <p>John Dimmer (LBM)</p>	<p>May 2014</p> <p>September 2013</p>	<p>November 2014</p> <p>December 2013</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. We would, however, recommend that the Mayor has a simple set of criteria for giving out these badges.</p>	<p>2.1 The current Mayor supports the recommendation.</p> <p>2.2 The challenges of defining ‘significant contribution’ and possible inconsistency with the annual change in Mayor are noted.</p> <p>2.3 To consider whether the Council’s website will set out a simple criterion and individuals will be invited to email or write to the Mayor’s office, describing why an individual should receive the Mayoral crest pin badge.</p> <p>2.4 To consider as part of the Mayor’s attendance at events, the Mayor’s Office will promote the opportunity of receiving a Mayoral crest pin badge.</p>	<p>Hayley James (MVSC) and Mayor’s Office (LBM)</p> <p>Mayor’s Office (LBM)</p>	<p>August 2013</p> <p>August 2013</p>	<p>October 2013</p> <p>October 2013</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>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>Hayley James (MVSC)</p> <p>Hayley James (MVSC)</p> <p>Hayley James (MVSC) and Mayor’s Office (LBM)</p>	<p>December 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p>	<p>January 2014</p> <p>October 2013</p> <p>October 2013 (late notice and so possibly</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>3.7 To investigate with LBM's CMT the possibility of including a volunteering award in LBM's Staff Excellence Awards.</p>	<p>Hayley James (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>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>November 2013</p>	<p>2014)</p> <p>October 2013</p> <p>March 2014</p>
<p><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</p>	<p>4.1 Note that voluntary groups carry out this service e.g. Grenfell.</p> <p>4.2 A list of organisation's with this offer to be compiled and circulated to LBM and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>4.3 Investigate possible volunteering accreditation / qualification options for further discussion.</p>	<p>Hayley James</p> <p>Hayley James</p>	<p>December 2013</p> <p>December 2013</p>	<p>February 2014</p> <p>February 2014</p>

accredited qualification in community volunteering.				
<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 prices for some library and leisure services.	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.	Hayley James (MVSC) and Joseph Dance (LBM)	February 2014	
<u>Recommendation 6</u> 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.	6.1 As part of the Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy and merger discussions between MVSC and VCM, one access point for volunteering in Merton will emerge. 6.2 There is a move to less-reliance on paid staff given the need for savings across all sectors. This coincides with a cultural shift that is about enabling people to be involved in their community with fewer barriers and without creating dependency. 6.3 Supported volunteering and volunteering for young people continue to receive separate funding for more focussed support. 6.4 The online presence will have clear contact information for those requiring face-to-face support.	Hayley James (MVSC)	October 2013	April 2014
<u>Recommendation 7</u> We recommend that Volunteer Centre Merton and the Council encourage volunteers to use social media (such as Twitter and Facebook) to share their	7.1 As part of the Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy and merger discussions between MVSC and VCM, volunteering communications will become increasingly more co-ordinated. 7.2 MVSC recruited a Marketing Communications Manager in April 2013 who has developed a MVSC	Communications Team (LBM)	Ongoing	

<p>experiences of volunteering in order to raise public awareness and to encourage a wider range of people to become volunteer</p>	<p>Facebook page and increased tweets to engage more followers. Conversations between MVSC and LBM through social media are underway and will continue to engage more followers.</p> <p>7.2 For information, the Council and MVSC have previously discussed a volunteering specific Facebook page and it was decided this was not currently the way forward.</p> <p>7.3 January 2013's SHOUT ABOUT YOUR VOLUNTEERING encouraged those featured to talk about their volunteering on their personal social media. It was met with resistance by some volunteers.</p> <p>7.4 Encouraging volunteers to talk about their volunteering is part of the ongoing communications of the MP volunteering strategy.</p>	<p>and Sophie Matthews (MVSC)</p> <p>Hayley James (MVSC)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<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>Chris Frost (MVSC)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation 9</u> We recommend that Merton</p>	<p>9.1 Merton Connected is MVSC's website.</p>			

<p>Voluntary Service Council provide information (or a link) on its Merton Connected website to help local volunteering groups make contact with other groups within the borough, to encourage them to share experiences and for advice and support.</p>	<p>9.2 MVSC are currently redeveloping their website which will include opportunities to be more interactive. Making links, advice and support are key functions of MVSC and this will improve further with the new website.</p> <p>9.3 In response to demand, MVSC are also producing a new printed edition of the Directory of Community Organisations which will also aid communication between groups,</p>	<p>Jon Stone (MVSC)</p> <p>Jon Stone (MVSC)</p>	<p>July 2013</p> <p>July 2013</p>	<p>Stage 1 – September 2013</p> <p>December 2013</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 10</u> We recommend that councillors should get involved with volunteering groups in their wards, promoting the work that the groups do and helping them to forge links with other groups doing similar work.</p>	<p>10.1 In the review of the Councillor Handbook, consider including a guide on how a Councillor can support voluntary groups.</p>	<p>Chris Frost (MVSC) and John Dimmer (LBM)</p>	<p>September 2013</p>	<p>May 2014</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 11</u> <i>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.</i></p>	<p>11.1 It is positive that the Council's Communications Team will support U3A.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>11.2 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.</p> <p>11.3 Whilst recognising the high demand for space in</p>	<p>Abby Burford (LBM)</p> <p>Bec Yusuf (MVSC)</p> <p>Hayley James</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>September</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p>February</p>

	<p>My Merton, the volunteering communications group is to consider a proposal to dedicate space in each issue highlighting volunteering.</p> <p>11.4 This will be done in partnership with the Compact team are considering a proposal to have dedicated space for the voluntary sector.</p> <p>11.4 Communications will continue be a key part of the Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy and volunteering infrastructure. This will include broadening communication channels.</p>	(MVSC)	2013	2014
		John Dimmer (LBM) and Chris Frost (MVSC)	September 2013	February 2014
		Hayley James (MVSC)	Ongoing	
<p><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 it built up which can then be used to give grants to local good causes.</p>	<p>12.1 United Way London was launched in May 2013 at the Tower of London and Merton is one of 6 founding boroughs.</p> <p>12.2 A Community Fund was launched on 17th May and contributions are being regularly made and the aim is to increase this and continue with publicity.</p> <p>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.</p>	John Dimmer (LBM)	July 2013	
<p><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 Community Action Strategy 2012-2014 and beyond.</p>	<p>13.1 The Volunteering Strategy Implementation Group currently consisting of Simon Williams (LBM), John Dimmer (LBM), Chris Frost (MVSC) and Hayley James (MVSC) meet quarterly to monitor progress.</p> <p>13.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission are welcome to receive copies of the reports provided by Hayley James if required.</p>	Julia Regan (LBM)	As required	
<p><u>Recommendation 14</u></p>	<p>14.1 Hayley James (MVSC) met with all Directors in</p>			

<p>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>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.</p>	<p>Simon Williams (LBM) and Hayley James (MVSC)</p> <p>LBM Departments</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</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 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</p>	<p>15.1 Agreed.</p> <p>15.2 Hayley James (MVSC), as lead for strategy delivery on behalf of the Merton Partnership will attend also.</p>	<p>Simon Williams (LBM) and Hayley James (MVSC)</p>	<p>April 2014</p>	

Conclusion

Merton is at an interesting time in relation to volunteering. MVSC and VCM will be making a decision regarding the Transforming Local Infrastructure (TLI) merger by the end of September.

The above recommendations and resulting changes to involving volunteers in Merton will have a positive impact on residents and communities.

Author: Hayley James

Lead Director: Simon Williams

Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy Manager
Merton Voluntary Service Council

Director of Community and Housing
London Borough of Merton

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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

4 SEPTEMBER 2013

(19.00 - 20.30)

PRESENT Councillors Peter Southgate (in the Chair), Dennis Pearce

Paul Dale (Interim 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 Councillors Iain Dysart and Suzanne Grocott.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR (Agenda Item 2)

Councillor Southgate was elected to chair this meeting.

3 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1 (Agenda Item 3)

The Director of Corporate Services, Caroline Holland, briefly introduced the report. She drew the task group's attention to the forecast year end underspend of £1.2m, adding that it is still early in the financial year so the position is likely to change. She highlighted the mixed position in relation to departmental spend as set out in section 3 of the report, and the forecast underspend on corporate items shown on page 12. She said that regular updates on the capital programme would be provided and that the accuracy of predicted capital spend is continuing to improve.

The task group noted the £222k transfer to the capital programme. Members requested more detail on the two Transport for London Biking Borough Schemes and noted that the borough has passed stage one of the shortlisting process for a Mayor of London cycling funding scheme. ACTION: Head of Democracy Services to ask Director of Environment and Regeneration for the details of these schemes.

In response to a question on corporate items, the Director confirmed that the line "investment inc" on appendix 2 refers to investment income, which is predicted to be higher than in the original budget and is greater than the re-profiled cost of borrowing. The task group welcomed the more finely tuned approach to profiling investment income and the cost of borrowing.

Members asked a number of questions in order to understand the background to the financial decisions that they are required to make at Council. The responses of the Director and the Assistant Director of Resources, Paul Dale, are set out below:

Departmental summary

- The performance of the new Local Welfare Support discretionary scheme is being closely monitored and all claims are thoroughly checked. The underspend is partly due to applicants who want cash rather than the food and other vouchers offered under the scheme. This has also been experienced in other parts of London. The uptake on furniture and white goods offered under the Scheme has also been lower than expected.
- Vacant posts are kept under review and deleted if not needed.
- Shared services have released savings but this is not always the primary motivation behind the shared services approach, for example resilience and quality are often main drivers. Existing shared services are kept under review in terms of both service performance and costs. The Director emphasised the importance of choosing partners carefully so that they could work together in a compatible way and also to make sure tools are in place for continuous improvement.
- The underachievement of income in corporate communications has been included in the public value review. There will be an update on the pilots to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 19 September 2013.
- The Council is working closely with the Citizens Advice Bureau on the use of bailiffs and has found that current practice is already in accordance with forthcoming government regulations. Income expectations will be re-set to reflect current costs.
- The level of pressure on the Children, Schools and Families budget is not unusual for this service and is indicative that the budget is about right.
- The budgets for public health, new to the Council, are being checked carefully in order to align to need and some aspects are subject to ongoing discussion with the Clinical Commissioning Group.

ACTION: The Head of Democracy Services undertook to ask the Director of Environment and Regeneration what the Council's financial position is in relation to targets on waste and recycling.

Task group members noted that the review of the commercial waste service would be reported to a future meeting of the task group.

Capital programme 2012-16

- Modelling of demand for school places has become more sophisticated and the numbers predicted for secondary schools has reduced compared to initial estimates

Savings 2013-14

- The savings in adult social care (page 31) that have been flagged as "red" are at risk of not being achieved due to a combination of factors. Some of these will be deferred and other options brought forward to address the budget gap

Miscellaneous debt update

- Members commented that Table 2 on page 39 shows a steady rise in the level of miscellaneous debt over the past four years. The Director replied that a significant part of this is due to housing benefit debts and that this will continue to grow. In response to a question, she added that the responsibility for dealing with the most complex housing benefit claims is likely to remain with the Council rather than pass to government and these claimants are the most likely to incur debts. She asked Members to note that more than £1.6m has been recovered from ongoing benefit (page 41, paragraph 4.5).
- In response to a comment about how provision is made for bad and doubtful debts (Table at paragraph 6.3), the Director offered to include in future reports the level of debt that is written off. ACTION: Director of Corporate Services

Reserves

Members noted that revenue reserves will decrease and some of the capital reserves will increase.

Cash flow

Members noted the cash flow statement that was circulated by email. The Director said that officers are still working to make the statement easier to understand.

4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - PLEASE BRING YOUR DIARIES (Agenda Item 4)

ACTION: Julia Regan to email all task group members to arrange the dates of the next two meetings.

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Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2013/14



This table sets out the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's Work Programme for 2013/14 that was agreed by the Commission at its meeting on 16 July 2013. 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 – 19 September 2013

Scrutiny category	Item/Issue	How	Lead Member/ Lead Officer	Intended Outcomes
Holding the executive to account	Leader and Chief Executive – vision, key priorities & challenges for 2013/14	Presentation	Leader of the Council Chief Executive	To take a view on whether to make changes to scrutiny work programme
	Cabinet response to request for options appraisal of 24/7 noise control service		Cabinet Member for Env. Sustainability and Regeneration John Hill, Head of Public Protection & Development	To formally receive & discuss response from Cabinet
Policy development	Public value pilot reviews	Report	Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration	To review with a view to follow up in more depth for particular services
Holding the executive to account	Cabinet response to recommendations of the volunteering task group	Report	Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing	To monitor implementation of task group recommendations
Scrutiny reviews	Financial monitoring task group	Minutes of meeting	Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan	To note minutes of meeting on 04.09.13

Meeting date – 26 November 2013

Scrutiny category	Item/Issue	How	Lead Member/ Lead Officer	Intended Outcomes
Budget scrutiny	Business Plan 2014/18 - information pertaining to round one of budget scrutiny	Report	Cllr Mark Allison Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services	To send comments to Cabinet budget mtg 9 December
Scrutiny of crime and disorder	Borough Commander	Presentation/report and in-depth discussion	Borough Commander	Update on policing issues
Policy development	Local council tax benefit scheme	Report	David Keppler, Head of Revenues and Benefits	Update on current scheme, other councils' changes & full costings of options for future years
	Policy and service developments in response to demographic change		John Dimmer, Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnership	To review with a view to follow up in more depth for particular services
Holding Executive to account	Action plan for recommendations of the civil unrest task group	Progress report	Annalise Elliott, Head of Safer Merton	To monitor implementation of task group recommendations
Scrutiny reviews	Financial monitoring task group	Minutes of meeting	Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan	To note minutes of meeting held on 29.10.13

Meeting date – 30 January 2014 – scrutiny of the budget

Scrutiny category	Item/Issue	How	Lead Officer	Member/Lead	Intended Outcomes
Budget scrutiny	Business Plan 2014/18	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 20 January incl update on balances and reserves	Report	Cllr Mark Allison, Cabinet Member for Finance Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services		To report to Cabinet on budget scrutiny round 2
Performance management	Draft Service Plans 2014-18	Report – common pack for Panels and Commission	Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services		To comment and make recommendations for changes to the draft service plans

Meeting date – 11 March 2014

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
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	Customer contact programme	Report	Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement	Progress report for comment
Performance management	Members' Survey 2013 - analysis	Report	Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan	Discuss findings and agree action plan for 2014/15
Scrutiny reviews	Financial monitoring task group	Minutes of meeting	Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan	Note minutes of meeting held on 18.02.14

Meeting date – 30 April 2014

Scrutiny category	Item/Issue	How	Lead Officer	Member/Lead	Intended Outcomes
Policy development	Single fraud investigation service	Report	Christine Bidwell, Head of Investigations		To discuss and comment on government proposals and the impact on the Council
	Development of shared environmental health service	Report	John Hill Head of Public Protection & Development,		To comment and make recommendations in relation to progress made and future plans
Performance management	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	Report	Cllr Peter Southgate Julia Regan		To approve and forward to Council
Holding the executive to account	Volunteering	Report	Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing		Update on implementation of task group recommendations, implementation of Merton Partnership Volunteering & Community Action Strategy and annual update from lead CMT member.