

Merton Council

Council meeting

Membership

The Mayor: Councillor David Chung

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor Pauline Cowper

Councillors: Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Tobin Byers, Charlie Chirico, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Stephen Crowe, Mary Curtin, David Dean, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, Ross Garrod, Suzanne Grocott, Jeff Hanna, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Edith Macauley MBE, Russell Makin, Maxi Martin, Peter McCabe, Oonagh Moulton, Ian Munn BSc, MRTPI(Rtd), Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, John Sargeant, Judy Saunders, David Simpson CBE, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford, Linda Taylor OBE, Imran Uddin, Gregory Patrick Udeh, Jill West, Martin Whelton and David Williams

Date: Wednesday 6 April 2016

Time: 7.15 pm

Venue: Council chamber - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

This is a public meeting and attendance by the public is encouraged and welcomed. For more information about the agenda please contact

democratic.services@merton.gov.uk or telephone [020 8545 3361](tel:02085453361).

All Press contacts: press@merton.gov.uk, 020 8545 3181

Council Meeting

6 April 2016

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2	Declarations of Pecuniary Interest	
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6	Councillors' ordinary priority questions to cabinet members The questions and written responses will be circulated at the meeting	
7a	Strategic theme: Councillors' questions to cabinet members The questions and written responses will be circulated at the meeting.	
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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.

Agenda Item 3

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.

COUNCIL

2 MARCH 2016

(7.15 pm - 10.20 pm)

PRESENT

The Mayor of Merton, Councillor, David Chung
The Deputy Mayor of Merton, Councillor Pauline Cowper

Councillors: Agatha Mary Akyigyina Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Tobin Byers, Charlie Chirico, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Stephen Crowe, Mary Curtin, David Dean, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, Ross Garrod, Suzanne Grocott, Jeff Hanna, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Oonagh Moulton, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, John Sargeant, Judy Saunders, David Simpson, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford, Linda Taylor, Imran Uddin, Gregory Udeh, Peter Walker, Jill West, Martin Whelton and David Williams.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

An apology was received from Councillor Maxi Martin.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No declarations were received

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 3 February 2016, were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment of item 18 Petitions, that Councillor David Dean's name be replaced with Councillor Brenda Fraser.

4 BUSINESS PLAN 2016-20 (Agenda Item 4)

The Mayor briefly explained procedure for this Budget Council meeting. He also reminded the Council that all Budget related decisions, including proposed amendments, were required to be recorded within the minutes with a list of the

names of those who voted for or against the decision or who abstained from voting. To accommodate that, a 'Roll Call' would be used for each of the votes relating to the substantive budget motion or any amendments to it.

The Mayor invited the Director of Corporate Services to present the Business Plan 2016-20 to the Council. The Director of Corporate Services then responded to questions on the report from Councillors Fidelis Gadzama, David Simpson, Greg Udeh, Stephen Crowe, Peter Southgate, Katy Neep, Charlie Chirico, Stan Anderson, Daniel Holden, Joan Henry, Jill West, Peter Walker, Suzanne Grocott and Laxmi Attawar respectively.

The Leader of the Council then addressed the Business Plan 2016-20. Councillor Stephen Alambritis moved the recommendations as detailed in the report whilst making his budget speech to Council, a copy of which is appended to the minutes as Appendix A.

Councillor Tobin Byers formally seconded the recommendations. The Mayor then invited the oppositions Group Leaders in turn to respond to the Budget proposal and the Business Plan.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Oonagh Moulton addressed the meeting and her speech is attached to the minutes, as Appendix B.

The Leader of the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents Group, Councillor Peter Southgate, addressed the meeting and his speech is attached to the minutes, as Appendix C.

Members of the Cabinet were then invited to address the meeting. The following took that opportunity:

- The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Mark Allison
- The Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities, Councillor Edith Macauley
- The Cabinet Member for Community and Culture, Councillor Nick Draper.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah

The Mayor then invited any Councillors to move proposed amendments to the Business Plan.

Councillor Oonagh Moulton moved the Combined Opposition Budget Amendment, (which can be found as Agenda Item 5), which was seconded by Councillor Peter Southgate

Councillor Suzanne Grocott moved the Conservative Amendment 1, (which can be found as Agenda Item 6), which was seconded by Councillor David Williams

Councillor James Holmes moved the Conservative Amendment 2, (which can be found as Agenda Item 7), which was seconded by Councillor David Dean.

The Mayor then opened up the general debate on the three proposed amendments and on the proposed substantive Business Plan. Councillors Jeff Hanna, Suzanne Grocott, Peter Walker, David Williams, Ross Garrod, James Holmes, Abigail Jones, David Dean, John Dehaney, John Sargeant, Mary Curtin, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Sally Kenny, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Martin Whelton, Judy Saunders, Adam Bush, Imran Uddin, Agatha Akyigyina, John Bowcott, Marsie Skeete, Ed Foley, Brenda Fraser, Najeeb Latif, Dennis Pearce, Hamish Badenoch and Tobin Byers, all spoke in the general debate. Following the conclusion of the general debate, the Mayor called for the Council to vote on each of the amendments in turn via a roll-call

- **Combined Opposition Budget Amendment (Agenda Item 5)** that had been moved by Councillor Oonagh Moulton and seconded by Councillor Peter Southgate

Voting in Favour: Councillors: Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Charlie Chirico, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Edward Foley, Suzanne Grocott, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Oonagh Moulton, John Sargeant, David Simpson, Peter Southgate, Linda Taylor, Peter Walker, Jill West, and David Williams. (25)

Voting Against: Councillors: Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Tobin Byers, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, Mary Curtin, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, Ross Garrod, Joan Henry, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, Judy Saunders, Marsie Skeete, Geraldine Stanford, Imran Uddin, Gregory Patrick Udeh, and Martin Whelton. (33)

Not Voting: Jeff Hanna (1)

The Mayor declared the amendment to be lost.

- **Conservative Amendment 1 (Agenda Item 6)** that had been moved by Councillor Suzanne Grocott and seconded by Councillor David Williams.

Voting in Favour: Councillors: Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Charlie Chirico, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Edward Foley, Suzanne Grocott, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Oonagh Moulton, John Sargeant, David Simpson, Peter Southgate, Linda Taylor, Jill West, and David Williams. (24)

Voting Against: Councillors: Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Tobin Byers, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, Mary Curtin, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, Ross Garrod, Jeff Hanna, Joan Henry, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones,

Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, Judy Saunders, Marsie Skeete, Geraldine Stanford, Imran Uddin, Gregory Patrick Udeh, and Martin Whelton. (34)

Not Voting: None (0)

The Mayor declared the amendment to be lost.

- **Conservative Amendment 2 (Agenda Item 7)** that had been moved by Councillor James Holmes and seconded by Councillor David Dean

Voting in Favour: Councillors: Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Tobin Byers, Charlie Chirico, David Chung Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper Stephen Crowe, Mary Curtin, David Dean, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, Ross Garrod, Suzanne Grocott, Jeff Hanna, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Oonagh Moulton, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, John Sargeant, Judy Saunders, David Simpson, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford, Linda Taylor, Imran Uddin, Gregory Udeh, Jill West, Martin Whelton and David Williams. (58)

Voting Against: None (0)

Not Voting: None (0)

The Mayor declared the amendment to be carried.

Following the end of the voting on the amendments, the Mayor invited the Leader to formally move the Business Plan 2016-20 report.

- Councillor Stephen Alambritis moved the **Substantive Motion** as amended which was seconded by Councillor Tobin Byers.

A roll-call was called on the **Substantive Motion** as amended.

Voting in Favour: Councillors Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Tobin Byers, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, Mary Curtin, John Dehaney, Nick Draper, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Fidelis Gadzama, Ross Garrod, , Joan Henry, Abigail Jones, Philip Jones, Andrew Judge, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Ian Munn, Katy Neep, Dennis Pearce, John Sargeant, Judy Saunders, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford, Imran Uddin, Gregory Patrick Udeh, and Martin Whelton (36)

Voting Against: Councillors: Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Charlie Chirico, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Suzanne Grocott, Daniel Holden,

James Holmes, Janice Howard, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Oonagh Moulton, David Simpson, Linda Taylor, Jill West and David Williams (20)

Not Voting: Jeff Hanna and Mary-Jane Jeanes (2)

RESOLVED

That the Council agrees the Business Plan 2016-20 including:-

- 1) the General Fund Budget;
- 2) the Council Tax Strategy for 2016/17 equating to a Band D Council Tax of £1,102.25, which means no change in Merton's Council Tax.
- 3) the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2016-2020;
- 4) the Capital Investment Programme (as detailed in Annex 1 to the Capital Strategy);
- 5) the Capital Strategy (Section 4 of the report)
- 6) the Treasury Management Strategy (Section 5 of the report), including the detailed recommendations in that Section, incorporating the Prudential Indicators as set out in this report, and agrees the formal resolutions as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.(Also detailed as Annex 1 to these minutes)
- 7) that officers be asked to actively to explore and report back to Council on the Government's offer of a 4 year financial settlement, and in particular how this could provide certainty on future funding for both Merton residents and staff, assist with forward planning and help avoid short term decision making.

Revenue Report:

1. Members approve the proposed budget for 2016/17 set out in Section 2 of the revenue report, together with the proposed Council Tax levy in 2016/17.
2. That it be noted that at its meeting on 18 January 2016 the Council calculated its **Council Tax Base for the year as 71,327.0** in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012(SI 2012: 2914).
3. That it be noted that the Council calculated the **Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators (WPCC) Tax Base for the year as 11,127.2** in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
4. That the Council agrees 4(a) - 4(i) below, which are calculated in accordance with Section 31A to 49B of the Localism Act 2011, amending Section 32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
 - a) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) (a) to (f) of the Act

	£m
Gross Revenue Expenditure of Service Committees	512.373
Corporate Provisions	6.895
Amounts Payable to the Levying Bodies	0.928
Contribution to/(from) Financial Reserves	1.693
Gross Expenditure	521.889

- b) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act

	£ m
Gross Income	442.969

NB: The final analysis of gross expenditure and income may vary from the figures shown above as a result of some minor changes in allocations e.g. overheads

- c) being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year

	£m
Council Tax Requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2016/17 (including special expenses re WPCC)	78.920

- d) being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of revenue support grant, and baseline funding (NNDR) to constitute the Council's formula grant

	£m
Revenue Support Grant including Transition Grant	(23.156)
Baseline funding NNDR & Section 31 Grant	(35.052)
Formula Grant	(58.208)

- e) being the amount at 4(c) above, divided by the amount for Council Tax Base at 2 above, calculated by the Council above, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including special items (WPCC)).

	£
Merton's General Band D Council Tax Levy (including properties within Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators area)	1,106.45

- f) being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act

	£
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators Special Levy	300,042

- g) being the amount at 4(e) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at 4(f) above by the amount of the Council Tax Base at 2 above in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items (WPCC special levy) relates.

	£
Merton's General Band D Council Tax Levy (excluding WPCC)	1,102.25

- h) being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(g) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in the area of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators (WPCC) mentioned above

at 4(f) divided by the amount at 3 above, calculated in accordance with Section 34(1) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in the area of WPCC.

	£
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators Band D	1,129.22

- i) being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 4(g) and 4(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

	Valuation Bands							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Part of the Councils Area	734.83	857.31	979.78	1,102.25	1,347.19	1,592.14	1,837.08	2,204.50
Parts inc. WPCC	752.81	878.28	1,003.75	1,129.22	1,380.16	1,631.10	1,882.03	2,258.44

5. To note that the Greater London Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below, and that the Council agrees the Council Tax levy for 2016/17 by taking the aggregate of 4(i) above and the Greater London Authority precept.

Precepting Authority	Valuation Bands							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
G L A	184.00	214.67	245.33	276.00	337.33	398.67	460.00	552.00

For information purposes this would result in the following Council Tax Levy for Merton residents:-

Part of the Council's Area	Valuation Bands							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Part of the Council's Area	918.83	1,071.98	1,225.11	1,378.25	1,684.52	1,990.81	2,297.08	2,756.50
Parts inc. WPCC	936.81	1,092.95	1,249.08	1,405.22	1,717.49	2,029.77	2,342.03	2,810.44

Speech by Councillor Stephen Alambritis, the Leader of Merton Council, to the Budget/Council Tax Full Council Meeting on Wednesday 02 March 2016 at 7:15pm and in the Council Chamber at the London Borough of Merton, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5DX

Mr Mayor

Last year's budget was about providing hope while taking tough decisions

This year's budget is about protecting vulnerable residents while keeping the promise made to all our residents that we would freeze their council tax

Protecting vulnerable people be they our senior citizens or our newly born

They both need a Labour council that is true to its values on looking after those in need of our services

And a Labour council that keeps its promises to those on low pay

Mr Mayor

I therefore move the business plan and the budget proposals as set out in Recommendation 1 with particular reference to the formal Resolutions as set out in Appendix 1 to the Report before us tonight

In doing so I want to single out a few people for thanks

Thank you to Cllr Mark Allison my deputy and to my cabinet

Thank you to my councillors and to Councillor Peter Southgate chair of scrutiny

To Councillor Oonagh Moulton and to her small band of earnest councillors

And to our very one and only Liberal, Cllr Mary-Jane Jeanes

We are also deeply indebted to Caroline Holland the director of corporate services

Mr Mayor

Each year we have a duty to balance the budget

We have done so in the past and will continue to do so in the future

Because we are a best achieving council

Because we are a business friendly council

Because we are a caring, listening, innovative council

Mr Mayor

We councils get most of our funding from central government and the nasty Tories have cut funding to local authorities by as much as 50 per cent since 2010!

But Mr Mayor

Because we are well run and businesslike we can still report tonight on good things coming to our residents

A brand new family leisure centre is on course

Two new libraries are also on the way

And we are on target to create 4,000 extra places in our best primary schools by 2018

This budget will make us even more attractive to the business community bringing more business start up's

Mr Mayor

It is a truth universally acknowledged that residents expect politicians to keep their promises

And on that score Mr Mayor I can say tonight that we are on course to keep our tax promise with our sixth year in a row council tax freeze

Mr Mayor

People wonder why no one trusts politicians

It is because they don't keep to their word

But in Merton that is not the kind of politics we do

In Labour we believe in straight talking, honest politics

Some people think we should try and weasel our way out of it but that is not the new politics we practice here

We made a promise and we are sticking to it

Mr Mayor

In sticking to our promises we also have to deal with the impact of a Tory government every day

With our funding slashed again, we need to strike a balance so we do our best to look after all our residents whether they need a school place , adult social care, their street swept or just do not want to pay more council tax

So we are staying true to our “July Principles”

These Principles make sure adult social care and children’s services have less of a share of the cuts than other areas

We have also used our good financial management to add an extra £12m to the adult social care budget over the last few years.

That is how we have been able to keep the adult social care budget constant since 2010, despite the pressures

Given these pressures and the reference back from scrutiny I am pleased to say Cabinet have listened

And at the 15 February cabinet meeting two new additional recommendations were agreed as a result in this budget

The first of these is a new £1.3m fund for vulnerable people

This funding will be used to reduce the impact of the government’s cuts on vulnerable people, covering all social care including children

And officers have been asked to seek to identify similar significant funding for future years

We are committed to ensuring that the particular demands faced by well-run adult social services are met

We are also committed to ensuring we cover the costs where demand exceeds this

Indeed in the current year adult social care spent more than its allocated budget

But we ensured that we used some of the underspend from previous years that we kept to one side to make sure we could continue to deliver important social care services

Mr Mayor

Our new fund is at least equal to the sums that would be generated by a 1.7% increase in council tax but, crucially, because we are a buinesslike council we are

able to do this without breaking our solemn promise to local residents to freeze Merton's council tax

Mr Mayor

The second of these recommendations is an additional £164K for Crossroads

So the total additional funding following scrutiny input comes to £1.464m for local care services

And so we in Labour Merton are doing all we can given our limited resources to fund local care services

But Mr Mayor

There is a national crisis in Adult social care

And George Osborne is refusing to both tackle the scandal of bed blocking and inadequate funding for local care services

Instead he wants local residents to pay more in council tax and he bounces a change in government policy with little if any notice triggering increases in council tax

A tax that is a grossly unfair tax and a cruelly regressive one at that

Mr Mayor

This is typical of a Tory party that cares more about millionaires than hard working families

So we are not going to let George Osborne force us to break our promise because he refuses to fund adult social care properly

Funding that care, resolving the issue of 8,500 patients trapped in expensive bed blocking hospital stays, is a national problem and will take billions to sort out

It will not be fixed by forcing Merton's pensioners and hard working families on fixed incomes to pay more in council tax

That is why Merton Labour intends to work with other local authorities such as Hammersmith and Fulham who are also freezing their council tax

And with the Leaders and Chairs of the South West London boroughs and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's)

And with the NHS and care providers

To unlock this funding so that we can ensure a long term sustainable future for adult social care that does not let George Osborne off the hook!

Now, if residents tell us they want to pay more council tax I am happy to go along with that. For me it is what the residents want that counts.

I will be fully consulting residents on next year's budget and if they tell me they want to pay more, in the light of demographic changes, then I will follow their lead

I was elected to serve local residents and that is what I will do

But oh what irony we have with conservative councillors and their protestations tonight!

Conservative councillors who promised to cut council tax by 10% are now intent on increasing council tax so Merton residents have to pay for their own government's catastrophic mismanagement of our NHS

Would it not have been better to go to their own darling George to sort out the crisis in adult social care?

Instead they are colluding with him about his own leadership aspirations

Mr Mayor

Making people pay more and covering up the mess in the NHS the Tories have created is all about Osborne taking over from Cameron and nothing at all to do with helping elderly people in need of social care

Conservative councillors should be lobbying the Chancellor to use his Budget next month to bring forward the £700m of new funding earmarked for social care through the Better Care Fund. That is what I am doing

They should not be lobbying for a council tax increase for Merton's hard pressed working families on low pay struggling with tax credit changes and cuts

Confused Conservatives Councillors in Merton should also be listening to the Local Government Association (LGA)

This influential body is Chaired by one of their own in Lord Porter. It says that council tax rises will not fix the social care crisis

Mr Mayor

Now everyone knows that I used to be a football referee

My sporting question to Conservative Councillors tonight is are you sure you know which way you are playing?

Are you for cutting the council tax by 10% or for increasing the council tax-which is it to be?

Well we on this side in the red kit we know which way we are playing

We are on the side of Merton's residents

This is a budget for them. Help for the vulnerable and low taxes for the hard pressed.
More libraries and a new leisure centre.

AFC Wimbledon coming home

We are on your side

I move!

**BUDGET SPEECH BY COUNCILLOR OONAGH MOULTON
LEADER OF MERTON CONSERVATIVE GROUP
WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH 2016**

Thank you, Mister Mayor

If only this council had received a pound for every time the administration shirked their responsibilities and blamed the government for their own dire straits. They'd have enough money to make up the shortfall in the council's finances....and we wouldn't need to be here until 10 o'clock tonight!

There are many things that Cllr Alambritis and his Cabinet are not good at but clearly they excel in self promotion. The Leader has already regaled us with how business-like he thinks this council is and I'm sure there's more to come from Cllr Allison.

Reality however paints a different picture. A picture of an uncaring, financially illiterate administration that's out of touch with local residents. Cllr Cooper-Marbiah's recent press comments about sticking plasters and elephants showed this all too clearly.

She may regard the opportunity for sustainable funding as a mere sticking plaster but for the thousands of Merton residents who rely on Adult Social Care services the precept is much more than that.

Perhaps the sticking plaster was in fact meant for her own Leader? He is certainly in dire need given the gaping, self-inflicted political wound he has suffered in recent weeks!

It's hard to be sympathetic to Cllr Alambritis and Cllr Cooper-Marbiah though when we consider who are the real victims of the cuts they are proposing to Adult Social Care:

- The vulnerable residents no longer able to attend the local day care centre because of a lack of volunteers to cover posts deleted last year.
- The older people who won't be able to rely on meals on wheels to provide them with a hot meal every day
- Grandma or grandpa stuck in hospital simply because there is such a backlog of day care assessment requests

- And not to forget the families and carers of all of the above who just need the odd break from looking after their loved one. As a former carer myself, I know how crucial it is to be able to recharge ones batteries now and then. Yet under this Labour administration, that is for the chop too.

I fully accept Cllr Alambritis is unlikely to heed warnings about all this if it was just from the Leader of the Opposition.

I would hope that he would listen to the concerns of some of his own Labour councillors and to colleagues on Scrutiny.

And I would certainly expect that he would pay attention to the outcry from all those vulnerable residents, their families and the community groups who are bearing the brunt of these unnecessary cuts.

Whatever the July principles may say on paper, he and Cllr Allison need to realise those words are meaningless if they don't translate into protecting services for the most vulnerable.

This council is developing a real problem with how it is viewed by the very people we were all elected to protect. I spoke this time last year about the extremely worrying trend in Merton of falling levels of satisfaction with the Council among disabled residents.

It seems unlikely that this important group views the council any more highly today...although of course we can't possibly know for sure because there has been no Annual Residents Survey this year. And most conveniently for the administration, webcasting was scrapped by Labour last month too so now these residents can't even watch their fate online. They and the various community organisations working hard on their behalf – are denied the opportunity to see their elected representatives taking crucial decisions here tonight that will fundamentally change their everyday lives.

Cllr Alambritis cannot simply blame the Government for his current woes because just as with webcasting, there are clear and fully costed alternatives available to Labour. He and his Cabinet are just choosing not to take them. **This is a situation of their own making!**

This administration has been given the power to fix their own financial mess but they are refusing to do so. Instead of ensuring adequate funding for the most vulnerable, they just congratulate themselves for being 'business-like', when in reality Labour's financial incompetence is harming those residents in Merton who are most in need.

In recent times, they have:

- Continually made the wrong choices for the people of Merton;
- Demonstrated a lack of innovation, leadership and vision for our borough;
- And consistently failed to deliver on the savings and past efficiencies that would now be delivering financial benefits.

This year alone the council is predicted to overspend by £2.6million whilst simultaneously stashing away £1.7million in reserves.

If this is how Labour run Merton, just imagine what would happen if they were in charge at City Hall....let alone Downing Street:

- A £1.9billion black hole in the finances under Sadiq Khan
- And borrowing more not less in order to fund a £55 billion spending splurge under Jeremy Corbyn.

And yet still Cllrs Alambritis and Allison claim to run a 'business-like' council.

Surely a business-like council would focus on ensuring that all possible efficiencies and savings are driven out of the back office in order to protect budgets for the frontline services that residents rely on?

Yet this council has failed to deliver over £5million of savings that they themselves have agreed in previous years.

A business-like council would get on and use the millions of pounds put aside for Morden Park Pool to deliver the new leisure centre promised to residents.

Yet this council dithered and delayed for 4 whole years whilst the build costs escalated and thousands of pounds of additional potential revenue were lost in the process.

And a business-like council would sweat the council's property assets and maximise long term returns for the taxpayer by investing the proceeds of any sales in future property.

Yet this council just can't wait to flog off the family silver in the form of the P4 site without considering more innovative options.

But sometimes the solution can come from the most unlikely of places!

Yes, Mister Mayor, this administration has been thrown two lifelines to help them out of the financial hole they've dug: one from George Osborne and one from Boris Johnson.

Late last year the Chancellor announced that the Government would give councils the power to raise a precept of up to 2% to help fund Adult Social Care where there is local need and demographic pressures.

And then, as a result of his careful management of the City Hall finances, the Mayor of London has been able to reduce his share of council tax once again this year.

So whilst we most certainly do not have a business-like council, we do at least have both a business-like government and a business-like Mayor.

After all that's why the country elected a Conservative government in May last year. Economic competence under the Tories compared to Labour's record of financial mismanagement.

Of course reducing the deficit, building a stronger economy and providing security for working people all require some tough choices for local government. Yet, that's no excuse for bad decisions.

Tonight we are presented with a unique opportunity. A combination of new powers from the Government and the London Mayor's prudence means £1.355million of crucial extra funding to protect the vulnerable can be raised at no additional cost to the Merton taxpayer. That's right, residents won't see a single penny extra on their council tax bills with this Opposition amendment.

One might have expected the Leader to jump at this get out. After all it's what Scrutiny recommended.

It's what many of his own councillors wanted.

And it's what 9 out of 10 councils nationwide are doing. Plus it would still allow him to plaster the whole borough with his favourite council tax freeze posters at public expense!

Yet this heavy handed Labour Cabinet flatly refuses to levy the precept. Instead it is choosing to persist with cuts to vital services such as meals on wheels, day care centres and care support packages.

Let me be clear: my group and I are entirely committed to low taxes in Merton. Needless to say, we would have made some very different choices had we been running the Council in the last 2 years. I am pleased that my colleagues will be outlining some of these in our second amendment.

However, Merton is where it is. As an opposition, we recognise the real demographic pressures facing Adult Social Care and the need for a sustainable funding solution. After all, by 2020 demand for the borough's services is due to increase by 23% for older people aged over 90, by 13% for people with dementia and by 6% for adults with learning disabilities.

What is needed is security for the vital services on which vulnerable residents rely .The Cabinet's conjuring trick of £1.3million from a Government housing fund is no more than a short term fix.

A sticking plaster solution that leaves holes elsewhere in the budget and is for one year only.

Merton residents deserve better and here this evening all councillors will get to make their **own** choice. Members opposite may differ on the reasons for raising the precept. However, I hope that tonight people will put aside any differing views on each other's motivation and instead come together to deliver a better outcome for all those older and disabled residents we represent.

I am moving this amendment tonight because it is the right thing to do for the people of Merton. The most vulnerable in our community shouldn't have to suffer as a result of financial mismanagement and poor choices. We on this side know it and I suspect many Labour colleagues do too.

I therefore call on councillors from all parties to support the amendment.

**BUDGET SPEECH BY COUNCILLOR PETER SOUTHGATE
LEADER OF MERTON PARK WARD INDEPENDENT RESIDENTS
WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH 2016**

Budget Council – MPWIR speech

In the ten years I've been commenting on the budget as Leader of the Merton Park Independents, I don't think there's ever been a year when we haven't been looking to save money somewhere. But that process has become progressively harder over the years, kicking in with a vengeance with the introduction of austerity in 2010.

In my opinion, Labour made a decent fist of managing the finances during that first administration from 2010 to 2014. It would have been easy to respond to the cuts in central government funding by slashing services, all the while passing the blame back to the Chancellor. But Labour in Merton didn't do that, instead they took a pragmatic, businesslike approach, and played the hand they had been dealt to the best of their ability. We can see the results in the steady upward trend in satisfaction from the Annual Residents' Survey, on measures such as value for money.

So for example when the DCLG under Eric Pickles imposed an effective freeze on increasing council tax, Labour didn't challenge that, instead they took advantage of the council tax freeze grant, initially worth £2m a year to us, and managed within those limitations.

But now we have a new government, and a new minister, Greg Clark at the DCLG – and a complete 180° turn in policy. Anyone who heard Tony Travers speaking at the recent Merton Partnership conference will understand the full significance of this shift. So the council tax freeze grant ends, and instead local authorities are encouraged to increase council tax – “encouragement” taking the form of assuming we will increase council tax and cutting central government funding accordingly. In particular the looming crisis in Adult Social Care is acknowledged with the introduction of a dedicated precept of up to 2% on council tax.

Now I realise it is galling to be told by the Chancellor that adult care is in a mess, and he is graciously allowing you to tax your own residents to pay for it. But let me turn to the Bible for a word of warning against fighting this policy. “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 26.14) – tempting as it may be to do so. In other words, railing against the government for its heartless cuts gets us nowhere, and will achieve nothing for those who depend upon us most – the elderly and vulnerable.

For their sake I urge the administration to rediscover its former pragmatism, its ability to make the best of the hand it has been dealt, and to raise the revenues we need

within the new rules now before us. We have to bring in new money – there is no alternative

At this point I will segue (I hope seamlessly) into the Combined Opposition amendment you have before you. But can I preface this by thanking Cabinet for their willingness to listen to scrutiny's concerns about the impact of the proposed cuts to adult care, and for doing something about it in the form of the Savings Mitigation Fund? It does prove that the effort that goes into scrutiny in Merton is worthwhile, and that backbench members can make a real difference to the lives of our residents. I wouldn't want us to lose sight of that.

But the basis for funding the proposed Savings Mitigation Fund does depend on a one-off injection from reserves already allocated to meet budget shortfalls, and there is no guarantee of continuity for future years.

Levying the precept at even the lower rate of 1.7% will bring in £5.4m for adult care over the next four years, and moreover will put that funding on a sustainable footing. It would be a tragedy if this opportunity were to be lost.

The amendment sets the precept at 1.7% rather than the maximum 2% allowed because that exactly equates to the reduction in the GLA precept, resulting in no net change in the tax paid to the council. In so doing it acknowledges the administration's manifesto commitment not to increase council tax. Let me spell it out – residents will pay the same amount in tax to the council next year (2016/17) as they have paid this year (2015/16). And yet we bring in £1.35m of new funding for adult care – what's not to like?

And yet in a fundamental sense this misses the point. If we listen to our conscience, it's telling us we should do this because it's the right thing to do – we don't really need any other justification. So let's show some moral leadership on behalf of the elderly and the vulnerable, and vote for the precept.

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Committee: Council

Date: 6th April 2016

Wards: All

Subject: **Strategic Theme report - Safer and Stronger with a focus on equalities**

Lead officer: Ged Curran, Chief Executive

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

Contact officer: John Dimmer: john.dimmer@merton.gov.uk

Recommendations:

A. That Council consider the contents of the report

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Council at its meeting in March 2016 approved the Business Plan 2016-2020.
- 1.2. The Business Plan represents the way in which the council will lead the delivery of the Community Plan via a number of thematic partnerships and strategic themes. Performance against these themes, plus an additional theme of corporate capacity, is monitored by Council.
- 1.3. Each meeting of Council will receive a report updating on progress against one of these strategic themes. This report provides Council with an opportunity to consider progress against the priorities under the “Safer and Stronger” theme with a focus on equalities.

The Business Plan can be viewed at www.merton.gov.uk/businessplan.

2 DETAILS

- 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.

Merton’s Equality Strategy – key aims

- 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. Merton’s 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 four-year strategy 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 an annual update to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, through 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.

Merton's Community Cohesion Strategy

- 2.7. The results of the 2011 Census show that Merton's population has increased by 6.3% since 2001. A significant demographic change emerging from the Census 2011 is the overall increase in the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population and increases in the proportion of younger and older residents in the borough. In recent years the borough has seen the arrival of new migrant communities from Eastern Europe and an increase in the Tamil community.
- 2.8. The refreshed Merton Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy was endorsed by Merton Partnership in February 2012 and contains priorities that respond to the challenge to sustain the progress made on community cohesion and continuing to embed its principles into all aspects of service delivery.
- 2.9. To ensure the effectiveness of the refreshed Community Cohesion Strategy the development of its priorities were cross-referenced with the priorities identified in other strategies, such as the Community Plan. The learning from the Prevent projects was also incorporated. The priorities of the strategy are outlined below:
- Improving engagement with minority and new communities
 - Supporting and engaging with the Voluntary and Community Sector
 - Supporting employment and economic development opportunities
 - Engaging and supporting children, young people and families
 - Continuing interfaith dialogue
 - Improving health outcomes
 - Monitoring community tensions and maintaining community cohesion

- 2.10. The Community Cohesion Strategy is being refreshed and will continue with a similar focus. It is anticipated that the refreshed strategy will be approved by Merton Partnership Executive Board in Summer 2016.

Community plan – work of the Merton Partnership

The Community Plan was refreshed in 2013 and this underpins the work of the Merton Partnership. The Borough is defined by pockets of deprivation in the east and relative affluence in the west, e.g. female life expectancy is significantly lower in the east of the Borough than the west. Commitments in the Community Plan support the Partnership's continued commitment of 'Bridging the Gap' across the borough.

Performance relating to Children, Schools and Families

- 2.11. Merton School Improvement service continued its programme of support and challenge to schools to identify, track and accelerate progress made by individual pupils from target groups. Identified secondary schools have been supported to implement English support targeted to Bangladeshi and Asian-Other pupils. The achievement of Bangladeshi and Asian Other pupils improved in the 2014 outcomes - there is a three year upward trend in outcomes at KS2 and at KS4 which are well above national averages. Expected progress made by Bangladeshi pupils in English rose from 63% in 2013 to 92% in 2014; similarly 'Asian Other' pupils expected progress improved from 76% to 87%. These two cohorts achieved higher levels of expected progress in English between KS2 and KS4 compared to all Merton pupils in 2014 (81%).
- 2.12. In 2013-14 20% of Looked after Children (LAC) achieved 5 GCSEs A*-C or equivalent (including English and Maths) which is above the national LAC average of 15%. The Virtual School for LAC continues to monitor pupil level progress on an at least termly basis through the collection of data and attendance at Personal Education Plan meetings. The service has started to analyse the impact of its 1:1 funded tuition to ensure that resources are maximised to improve pupil outcomes.
- 2.13. Children's Centre services showed good take-up by families from deprived areas (77.7%) exceeding the 75% minimum target. Families from the target areas engaged with a wide range of activities including access to play and stay and early education groups, job club, child health services, midwifery and antenatal as well as targeted home visiting services. Over 2014-15, 917 children accessed the central government funding for disadvantaged 2 year-olds. This significantly exceeded the target of 705 with the steady increase a result of assertive outreach and targeted campaigns. The Early Years service's work with providers increased the number delivering funded 2 year-old places to 98 at the end of the year. The Early Years service also continued to work with nurseries in target schools to implement strategies to support boys and children from deprived areas to improve outcomes, maintain improvements and further close gaps in attainment. Results for 2013-14 (reported in 2014-15) showed that 44% of children eligible for free school meals achieved a 'good level of development' in the Early Years Foundation Stage – an 11% increase on last year. 45.8% of boys from deprived areas achieved a 'good level of development' - a 7.8% increase compared to last year.

- 2.14. The Recruitment and Assessment Team recruited 10 in-house foster carers in 2014-15 of which 6 were from target groups. The largest need for carers centred on teenagers and siblings. The carers recruited for teenagers were directed to the service through three targeted recruitment campaigns including a demographically targeted door drop, print advertising and the use of internal recruitment materials. All three campaigns had a strong message in accordance with the need for carers for the 11+ age group. During the year, an analysis of LAC placement stability identified that boys aged 10–15 of white British heritage were most likely to disrupt in their placements. Learning from this report was cascaded to continuously improve practice.

The 'Your Shout' group for children and young people with learning disabilities has fed into management discussions around aspects of the Children and Families Act including the Local Offer and preparation for adulthood. The group also made a short-film to show people what it is like to be a young person with a disability for which they won a 'Positive for Youth' award.

Performance relating to Health and Wellbeing

- 2.15. The Health and Wellbeing Board has decided as a priority to focus its efforts on reducing the stubborn health inequalities that are persisting between west and east Merton. The project is called the East Merton Model of Health and Wellbeing, in recognition of the importance of non-medical factors in reducing health inequalities. An essential feature of the work is community engagement, i.e. solutions to the persisting challenges are co-produced with the community instead of expert led/imposed and the whole model relies on mobilising and making best use of the wide range of existing community assets.
- 2.16. The East Merton Model will be used as a blue-print of transformation for the whole of the Merton health and care system to make it more sustainable. A priority for the Health and Well Being Board for 2016/17 to translate the vision of the East Merton Model into reality is to develop 'social prescribing' - a means where primary care professionals are connecting patients with existing non-medical support.
- 2.17. Developing a facility on the Wilson site is also part of the project but it is important to stress that the model will determine the facility rather than the other way round. However, we are excited to work with NHS property developers to explore options of an innovative and creative use of the site that fully embraces and is owned by the community and reflects the vision of the model of health and wellbeing.
- 2.18. Progress has been made in reducing the 'gap in readiness for school'- a measure of the quality and combined impact of services supporting early years development (including children's centres, health visiting, and early education). 2015 data shows a reduction in the gap from 18% (2014) to 14% (2015) in achieving a good level of development among pupils eligible for free school meals compared to their peers at 5 years of age.

Actions to reduce the gap in alcohol related harm between east and west Merton include proposed changes to the Statement of Licensing Policy, based on a Public Health review. Mitcham Town Centre is recommended to

be a Cumulative Impact Zone giving greater scrutiny and control on the availability of alcohol.

Performance relating to crime and anti-social behaviour

- 2.19. Neighbourhood Watch - currently the areas being concentrated on are mostly in Mitcham where residents' fear of crime is higher than other parts of the borough. The Safer Neighbourhood Watch Board has funded two youth projects, one on the High Path Estate and one in Pollards Hill, both to reduce the risk of offending in young people at risk. Funding was also given to Woman's Aid for outreach work in the community around domestic violence.
- 2.20. In respect of Neighbourhood Watch the total number of properties now covered by NHW in borough is recorded at 36.3%. This represents a slight drop of 2% in overall coverage when compared to the same quarter for the previous year. However, there has also been a large increase in the number of email contacts following successful door-stepping operations which is expected to result in an increase of new schemes and numbers of co-ordinators by end of quarter 4.
- 2.21. Domestic Violence (DV) - this includes: Stalking, Harassment, Honour Based violence and Forced Marriage. For the 12 month period from January 2015, 274 cases presented to the DV One Stop Shop. On average 6 cases per week attend the One Stop Shop for support and advice. Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is the government's overarching strategy to tackle these forms of violence. Within Merton this will include male victims of domestic violence.
- 2.22. In the last 12 months the borough has implemented a VAWG strategy and the VAWG strategic board continues to work through a work plan. The VAWG practitioner's group main theme was to have training so they fully understood the other subjects within VAWG (see above).
- 2.23. Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) – The ASB team and Police are in the process of implementing a Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), this is designed to help and support those individuals whose mental illness may impact on alcohol consumption, drugs, rough sleeping and their general behaviour.
- 2.24. There was a 32% reduction in First-Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System compared to last year. The 2014-15 outcome was 60 First Time Entrants against an anticipated number of up to 80. The rate of re-offending remains in line with the national average. Work on youth crime prevention concentrated on early intervention and prevention methods centred on working in a more holistic way addressing both young people's and families needs. This was delivered through a range of group and 1:1 interventions which included a focus on parenting capacity, mental health and other environmental factors. The work within Transforming Families and the Youth Justice Team, in particular, meant that interventions could be provided as early as possible in order to ensure that escalations in a young person's behaviour and/or offending are dealt with as quickly as possible. Geographically, there has been a focus on areas in the East of the borough which are generally more deprived.

2.25. The Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB) has successfully engaged with local representative groups to seek co-opted members to increase the diversity across the board. To date the SNB has representation from Merton CIL, the Interfaith Forum, the BAME community, and Youth Parliament/ Youth ambassadors.

Employment

Unemployment - the rise in employment has been accompanied by falls in unemployment and this trend has continued in recent months. The unemployment rate for those aged 16 and over in England is 5.4% (LFS, February to April 2015), lower than the overall UK rate of 5.5% and lower than the EU average of 9.7%. The fall in unemployment is happening alongside welfare reform, where some claimants are being moved off 'inactive' benefits (with no requirement to seek work) and moved onto 'active' benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance (where they are obliged to seek work). Employment is lower among groups at a disadvantage in the labour market, including young people, disabled people, people from some ethnic minorities and older people.

2.26. The table below shows Merton's unemployment benefit figures:

Merton's Unemployment Figures				
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Claimants			Employment Support Allowance (ESA)/Incapacity Benefits (IB) claimants	
January 2016	January 2014		August 2015	August 2013
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) count 2,055 (1.5%) of the working age population 18-24 year old equate to 14.8% on JSA claimants (310)	JSA count 3,070 (2.2%) of the working age population 18-24 year old equates to 20.4% of JSA claimants (635)		ESA/IB claimants – 5,180 1,190 lone parents on income support	ESA/IB claimants – 5,130 1,350 lone parents

2.27 Outlined below are key performance indicators from the Employment Skills action plan:

- To reduce the number of JSA claimants at Mitcham JCP: target of 1.7% by March 2017 (¹average for most deprived wards is 2.77%)

¹ NOMIS June 2015 Figges Marsh 3.1%, Cricket Green 2.8%, Pollards Hill 2.8% and Ravensbury 2.4% JSA claimants

- Apprentices: 100 placements in Year 1 (April 2015-March 2016)
- Employment: 58 through employability schemes in Year 1 (April 2015-March 2016)
- Number of residents receiving financial guidance in Year 1 (April 2015-March 2016): 70% of clients accessing employment and skills initiatives

2.28 Many residents in the east of the borough have complex needs and need pre-employment support before being ready to apply for a job. The Economic Welfare Group priorities are to try and work with those hardest to reach residents such as lone parents, over 50's, care leavers, ex-offenders and long-term unemployed. Many of these groups are claiming ESA. Merton has in place programmes aimed at supporting residents into employment:

- Employability Programme; currently there are 4 employability programmes running focusing on the hardest to reach target groups. The groups receiving support; Care leavers, ex offenders, lone parents, carers, long term unemployed and the over 50s. These programmes are due to finish in June 2016 and to date has produced 21 sustainable job outcomes.
- London Councils ESF programme (Pending EU sign off to start); this programme will work with 200 residents to up skill and promote work experience and volunteering opportunities. In addition to the soft skills training, initial advice and guidance and basic skills, the project will look at producing a number of employment outcomes including 70 apprenticeship outcomes.
- Take One: this programme has been extended beyond just young people to encouraging local businesses to take one Merton resident for work experience, an apprenticeship or employment. The Merton Chamber of Commerce have a business engagement officer who meets local businesses and matches a suitable person to their needs. This is funded through a grant from the council.

2.29 There is further embedding of employability within the Adult Education provision. Groundwork will be leading the specific employability programmes including family learning and the neighbourhood learning for deprived communities grant.

Performance relating to community cohesion and integration

- 2.30 The borough has numerous consultative mechanisms to engage with young people and the voluntary and community sector many of who represent minority communities. These include:
- Youth Parliament
 - Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minorities
 - Faith and Belief Forum
 - Compact Board
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) Forum
- 2.31 Activities to support and develop participation and governance opportunities continued to take place over 2014-15 to enable children and young people to have a voice in service delivery and design. Some highlights included:
- A group of young people from a range of youth forums and the youth service were supported to take part in the re-commissioning process for the new risk and resilience service by visiting providers and interviewing young people, users and adults. This influenced contracts and fed back into the decision-making process and is an excellent example of services shaped with reference to young people's views.
 - The Children in Care Council (CiCC) were involved in helping to refresh the Children in Care and Care Leavers charter, inputting into the Care Leavers Strategy 2015-18, reviewing the LAC Pack and identified specifications for a new information website. CiCC also took part in reviewing the LAC review forms and 'Let's Talk' booklets.
- 2.32 The LGBT Forum has recently been revitalised and officers are working with the committee members to produce a work programme that priorities the key issues for the community. The Forum celebrated LGBT History Month (in February) by holding a series of Film Nights and a Sunday Brunch to round off the month.
- 2.33 The Faith and Belief Forum continues to promote community cohesion and integration in the borough. Faith representatives came together to deliver events in Inter Faith Week. The events brought people of different backgrounds together and helped to highlight the similarities between the faiths of Islam and Judaism. The Winter Night Shelter has been supported by the inter faith communities in the borough to provide venues and volunteers to work with Faith in Action and the YMCA to assist those faced with homelessness in Merton. The Faith and Belief community also continues to support Food Banks in the borough.
- 2.34 Black, Asian and Minority Voice was launched on 4 February and will provide a strategic voice for the borough's BAME community. The organisation is developing priorities to discuss with the council and partner agencies. BAME Voice representatives are also members of the JCC and will work with officers to ensure that service development and commissioning decisions adequate

consider BAME issues and concerns. The Council has supported the development of BAME Voice.

2.35 Promoting volunteering opportunities is a commitment in the community cohesion strategy. Key performance highlights this year include:

- The development and launch of Volunteer Merton, a new online portal that seamlessly links up volunteers with volunteer opportunities through a digital platform. This will make it much simpler and quicker to link volunteers to actual volunteering opportunities;
- Identifying and developing a wider range of more informal and 'light touch' volunteering opportunities for citizens who want to volunteer but perhaps have more limited time and availability;
- Identifying and advising 2,203 new volunteers;
- Assisting 850 volunteers who require specialist support to enable them to volunteer;
- A new quality standard, Youth Approved Volunteering Award (YAVA), to improve the standard of volunteering opportunities and experience for young people;
- Value You: a new accreditation scheme to recognise individuals who have delivered over 100 hours of volunteering and offer them discount cards at local businesses;
- An on-going joint programme to promote volunteering which will culminate in National Volunteers Week and Merton's Volunteering Awards in June 2016.

Performance relating to workforce development

2.36 The Workforce and Practice Development Team have overseen delivery of mandatory training around ethnicity and diversity for permanent and agency staff, Frontline staff s and as optional for students. Information on impact will be reported at the end of 2015-16.

2.37 Children, Schools and Families has launched its Social Work Academy which is part of the London's Best Council work programme. CSF also participates in the Bringing on the Talent programme to support motivated and talented people within the department to develop their potential as future managers and leaders.

2.38 Much work has been done to support local residents into work and this reflected in the following targets:

- Promote and provide a work experience programme for vulnerable and local young people - 50 per year
- Promote and manage traineeships within the Council – 50 per year

2.39 HR will be supporting managers to ensure the development of apprenticeships is considered as part of their workforce planning process. The Bringing On Talent Programme has mentoring as one of its elements. This is to ensure that

talent is developed in the organisation and will assist with retention. The Council is committed to retaining the two tick symbol and continues to provide appropriate support to disabled staff.

- 2.40 Consideration is being given to refreshing the Disabled Staff Forum and initiating others such as BAME and LGBT forums.

Challenges ahead

- 2.41 Merton's Welfare Reform and Financial Resilience Group continues to monitor the impact of policy and legislative changes impacting residents in receipt of welfare benefits. The group is composed of representatives from council departments and relevant partners agencies. The group has met quarterly since 2012 and has developed an action plan which will next be refreshed in Spring/Autumn 2016. Key objectives in the current action plan include:

- Support households affected by the benefit income cap – Housing staff continue to visit households affected by the cap with an emphasis on debt advice, homelessness prevention, and helping tenants to maximise their income and looking into their personal finances.
- Prepare and support new claimants of Universal Credit – the Department of Work and Pensions started to roll out Universal Credit in Merton from January 2016. The council's welfare benefits team are working proactively with Mitcham Job Centre and Merton & Lambeth Citizens Advice Bureau to ensure clients have access to effective budgetary advice. Merton Library Staff and other frontline staff have also been trained to support residents in managing their UC claims online.
- Under-occupancy Tax – Revenues and Benefits and Housing Need staff continue to monitor households affected by the 'under-occupancy tax' with a view to minimising the likelihood of homelessness. Circle Housing Merton Priority tenants account for over half of all households affected by the under occupancy tax, and the council continues to work closely with CHMP and other RSLs to ensure appropriate support is delivered to vulnerable households.

Feedback from OSC

- 2.42 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has continued to monitor the Council's equalities commitments through scrutinising the equalities action plan and priorities for the coming year. In addition it has focussed on equalities as part of its work on a number of issues including:
- Policing – when questioning the Borough Commander about policing, the Commission asked for information about training that the police receive on issues such as mental illness and questioned him about the ethnic profile of the police compared to the local community. The Commission also examined data from the Chair of Merton's Independent Stop and Search Monitoring Group and asked a number of questions about their work with young people.

- Violence Against Women and Girls – update and discussion of work carried out by the Strategic Board and progress made to improve performance of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference.
- Traveller protocol – reviewed the draft protocol and recommended that a number of changes be made, such as including the responsibility to provide regular updates to ward councillors about unauthorised encampments as well as explaining the council’s responsibilities in regard to safeguarding the welfare of Travellers. These changes were subsequently agreed by Cabinet.

2.43 As part of the budget scrutiny process, equality impact assessments were provided for all proposed savings and were carefully considered by the Commission and the three Overview and Scrutiny Panels at both rounds of budget scrutiny meetings.

2.44 The Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the results of the consultation on adult social care savings and was addressed by speakers from Adults First, Carers Partnership Group, Merton Centre for Independent Living and South Thames Crossroads, an individual service user and a carer. The Chief Executive of Merton Voluntary Service Council spoke at the subsequent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny commission.

2.45 The speakers all expressed concern at the proposed savings in adult social care and gave examples of the impact that these would have on vulnerable older people and disabled service users and their carers.

2.46 The Panel therefore asked Cabinet to reconsider a number of the proposed adult social care savings. Cabinet responded by:

- setting up a Savings Mitigation Fund of £1.3m to enable it to offset the effects on the most vulnerable people in the borough
- finding £164,000 to fund South Thames Crossroads for Carers for 2016/17.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

2.47 In addition to the overall progress and achievement in Merton’s schools, the Panel continues to have regard to educational outcomes for individual cohorts of children. This is scrutinised through the annual schools report which provides detailed information by criteria such as gender, disadvantage, attainment levels, ethnic groups and special educational need. Comparison is made for each group against national and London averages, allowing discrepancies to be highlighted and become a focus. This year’s scrutiny review highlighted two points; 1) there is a need to continue to work on the inclusion of black Caribbean children; and 2) there is a correlation between special educational

need and subsequently becoming classified as not in education, employment and training.

- 2.48 Children in care are a specific focus for the Panel with outcomes scrutinised through the annual corporate parenting report. In addition to focusing on placement provision, educational progress and achievement is reviewed as well as levels of participation.

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- 2.49 The Panel works to ensure the borough is a good place to live for all its residents. Over the last year, it has focused on providing access to affordable housing through its Task Group review. This made recommendations on how to free up much needed social housing and encouraging private landlords to let to residents on the Housing Register and in receipt of Housing Benefit. Additionally, it continues to monitor the performance of Circle Housing Merton Priory and this year has looked at the repairs and maintenance service provided to residents.
- 2.50 Its role in pre-decision scrutiny has allowed the panel to ensure the needs of residents are considered before any change in service provision. With regard to the move to a commissioning model for the provision of adult education services, the Panel recommended to Cabinet the need to ensure all user groups are appropriately consulted during the commissioning process. In response to the wheeled bins pilot, the Panel highlighted consideration of the needs of disabled residents in its reference to Cabinet.

Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- 2.51 The Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel maintain a keen interest in work to reduce the health inequalities between the East and West of the borough. The public health team attended a meeting to discuss the projects they have put in place to promote healthier lifestyles. These include; cookery classes, healthy schools initiatives, smoking cessation and healthy weight programmes. The Panel will continue monitor the progress with this work.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. Not applicable – this report is for information only.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. None for the purposes of the report

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. N/A

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no direct financial implications from this report

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.

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

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

None

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. Business Plan - 2016-20
- 12.2. Equality Strategy 2013-17
http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/plansandpolicies/equality_strategy_2013-17_final_v2.pdf
- 12.3. Community Cohesion Strategy 2012-15
http://intranet/120612_community_cohesion_strategy_v13.pdf

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Mitcham Community Forum 15 March 2016 Chair's Report

The meeting was held at Vestry Hall, and chaired by Councillor Ian Munn. 15 residents attended, as well as four other Councillors, and officers of the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Police update

Sgt Steve Dorrington from the Mitcham Sector team updated the meeting on local crime and community safety issues. There had been a spike in burglaries before Christmas but this has now reduced. Long Thornton was an area of particular concern and has been targeted by officers with prevention work including handing out 500 smart water packs to residents. Officers have also conducted Victim Visits to give prevention advice to burglary victims and their neighbours.

A seventh individual has been charged with the murder of Neel Croos in Mitcham town centre last November. The investigation is continuing. In response to this and other issues Sgt Dorrington is setting up a Tamil Forum to help build relations with the Tamil community. This has proved difficult to date and Sgt Dorrington will be working with Siobhain McDonagh MP and targeting local Tamil businesses to encourage the community to get involved.

In Pollards Hill the local team has been working to reduce burglaries targeting gold in the Asian community. Officers have been providing advice to residents and raising awareness of the issue.

Car meets on the Willow Lane Industrial Estate are continuing to cause problems for businesses and residents including damage to property and noise. Officers have targeted Friday and Saturday nights, and have issued more than 40 warning letters as well as banning one driver.

The Mitcham Town Centre team has been working on the street drinking issue by targeting the ten most regular offenders. They have used a range of powers including immigration, community protection notice and confiscating alcohol under the Controlled Drinking Zone powers. They have also offered outreach services and will be relaunching the responsible retail scheme. Those in breach of the community protection orders can be issued with Acceptable behaviour agreement (ABA).

In Longthornton there has been a recurring issue of anti-social driving of mopeds and quad bikes on Rowan Road. Chasing can be risky and whilst police take action if they can see a license plate it is difficult to deal with once these have been removed. Colleagues from Traffic are targeting this issue.

Rediscover Mitcham update

James Geeson from the Future Merton team, Merton Council, updated the meeting on the works in Mitcham Town Centre. Plans for the works shown at the meeting are available from our website at

Fair Green

Most of the works on the Fair Green have now been completed with the following items still outstanding:

- Faults with some of the LED lights need to be repaired
- Four new lanterns for the clock tower are being manufactured based on photos of the surviving lanterns. These are due for completion and installation in May
- Lighting on the curved wall will be installed over the next couple of weeks
- Uplighters in the market will be installed and new power supply for stall holders
- Lights on some of the existing mature trees are being considered
- During the spring grass areas will be re-seeded to repair damage done during construction work. Other landscaping will also be completed

The planned water feature will not be going ahead due to cost implications. Art installations will be considered instead. Other works will be held back until later phases of development.

Majestic Way

Repaving has started from the Upper Green East end of the road. This will include informal guidance to cyclists to use the central part of the path but this will not be designated cycle space or enforceable. New street furniture including five street lights and six benches will be installed. The junctions at either end of the road will be raised.

Three Kings Pond

Work has started on clearing the pond and improving the area. The water will be pumped out of the pond so that the polluted silt can be removed. The silt will need to be drained before it can be transported off site. At the in-flow new filtering will be installed to reduce pollution going into the pond. At the out-flow the drains have been cleared and a new trash screen will be installed to improve the flow and make it easier to remove litter and detritus. This will also make it possible to raise or lower the level of the pond

New planting and reed beds will also help keep the water cleaner and encourage biodiversity. To protect the current wildlife an aquadam has been created to store fish during the works whilst the terrapins have been removed.

The works in the pond will take around six weeks and then ground works and landscaping around the pond will be completed. The timing has been chosen to avoid the mating season for ducks and geese as well as avoid too much heat getting on to the silt whilst it drains. The duck feet benches have been placed in storage and will return to Three Kings Pond once the works have

been completed but the exact location to be agreed with community representatives.

Bus Street

Planning for the bus street has taken much longer than expected due to the requirements of Transport for London (TfL). Signalling and traffic modelling has been present to TfL as part of a comprehensive business plan. The new street should improve journey times for all services apart from the 152 as there will be an additional stop for that service.

The project was considered by the TfL Surface Transport Board today and we are awaiting notification of the outcome. Feedback to date has been positive so there is confidence that the main parts of the project will be approved.

Once approval has been given the scheduling of works will be agreed. Work is likely to start in July 2016 with the bus street and the works on Upper Green East starting first and taking around four months. The whole project will take until winter 2017 to complete.

In response to questions James said that the bus street will be at least 6.5m wide with room for buses to pass each other along the entire route. At some points in both direction the road will be widened with laybys to allow buses to pass should there be any issues with buses remaining stationary at the stops. The road will be at least 0.5m deep of new construction but it might be possible to make use of the existing concrete base from the previous road, as has happened elsewhere. Drainage from the road will make use of new gullies and existing storm drains. During the works access to local businesses will be maintained with works conducted outside of business hours if needed. Green space will be removed from the Fair Green for the bus line but there will be new green space created elsewhere in the project.

Soapbox

The Burn Bullock: Work is ongoing to comply with Listed Building repairs notice, which was due to be completed by 5 March. The Enforcement Team are not considering taking action against a failure to fully comply with notice at this moment as work is progressing. The Conservation officer is satisfied that the owner is taking action that will make the building weatherproof and will prevent further deterioration.

It was asked if there are any plans for introducing a cycle route through Cramner Road and the Cricket Green. This will be checked with officers.

A resident raised the issue of traffic offence enforcement at Broadway Gardens, and Bond Road. This will be checked with officers and brought back to the next meeting.

Road gully clearing was also raised. If areas of specific concern can be sent to councillors and officers then these will be investigated.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 5 October 2016 at 7.15pm, at Age UK.

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LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON	
	<u>NOTES OF MEETING</u>
	Subject: Morden Community Forum
	Date: 4th February 2016 Time: 19.15
Action Needed By:	
	<p>1. <u>Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>1.1 Cllr. Philip Jones welcomed everybody to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 Approximately 30 residents attended, as well as 13 councillors, and officers from the council and its partners.</p>
	<p>2. <u>Police update</u></p> <p>2.1 PC Mark Belcher updated residents on crime in Morden, informing them that it is a safe borough, with 2,803 crimes in the last 12 months compared to 7,462 in Lambeth.</p> <p>2.2 The areas suffering from crime the most in Morden are Hillcross Avenue and the St Helier Estate, though crime levels here are still fairly low.</p> <p>2.3 There have been problems with Asian youths in Morden town centre dealing drugs and stealing from local shops. The police are working on dealing with this as well as on problems with in-fighting between Tamil groups in Mitcham.</p> <p>2.4 Morden is still a controlled drinking zone.</p> <p>2.5 There has been a slight rise in cold calling, with callers especially targeting vulnerable people. PC Belcher advised the best approach is not to engage with such callers.</p> <p>2.6 People gathering out-of-hours in the Sainsbury's car park are being moved on.</p> <p>2.7 The police have arrested and charged someone for the murder that took place in Morden a couple of weeks earlier.</p> <p>2.8 There are no budget cuts taking place this year to the Met Police, and PCSOs will be kept in place.</p>
	<p>3. <u>Scrutiny topics for 2016-17</u></p> <p>3.1 Stella Akintan, a Scrutiny Officer at the council, explained that the Overview and Scrutiny committee in Merton exists to look at the services the council provides and how these might be improved.</p> <p>3.2 The Scrutiny team is currently looking at which services should be investigated over the coming year by the Overview and Scrutiny committee</p>

	<p>3.3 Topics for investigation have to be borough-wide, not matters that might affect only individuals. Previous topics that have been explored include Cleaner Town Centres, Housing, Childhood Immunisation, and Outsourcing.</p> <p>3.4 Residents can recommend topics to the team by contacting scrutiny@merton.gov.uk or 020 8545 3390.</p>
	<p>4a. <u>Morden Town Centre update</u></p> <p>4.1 Future Merton manager, Paul McGarry, presented on the results of the consultation that the council undertook about the regeneration of Morden Town Centre http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityforums/mordencommunityforum.htm</p> <p>4.2 In April 2016, the council will receive money to start re-designing Morden's roads. This will be a three-year project, from the initial phase of modelling what's happening now through to designing a new road scheme, obtaining TfL's approval, and building the new road layout.</p> <p>4.3 In response to questions, Paul McGarry explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Retail Gateway New Homes bonus is funding the council receives for building new homes. It is a grant to help boost the local economy. • The council will not be becoming a social landlord again. • It's not yet known which types of retail units will be part of the regeneration scheme. The council will work with a development partner to look at what shops could go where. • The council is not responsible for black metal balconies that have been erected on Morden's art deco building. These appeared without planning permission. The council is however looking to improve the building. • There are two proposed tramlink schemes: the council is still looking at how it might deliver the Morden Road to Sutton scheme; the other scheme is for a link between Morden Road and South Wimbledon. The council is currently exploring where this link could go. Neither link would impact upon Crossrail 2. <p>4b <u>Regeneration of Eastfields, Ravensbury and High Path</u></p> <p>4.4 Paul explained that the council is currently carrying out a consultation on the Estates Local Plan for Eastfields, Ravensbury and High Path. This entails putting planning policies in place for the three estates, which will be applicable for 10 years for any development on the estates. The consultation is separate to a consultation run by Circle Housing, which is also about development on the estates.</p>

	<p>4.5 Residents are encouraged to respond to the council's consultation, which runs until 18th March, by visiting www.merton.gov.uk/estatesplan.</p>
CJ	<p>5a. <u>Morden Leisure Centre Update</u></p> <p>5.1 Christine Parsloe, the Leisure and Culture Development Manager at Merton Council, and Christopher Jones from Sweett (UK) Ltd, the principal designers for the proposed new leisure centre, presented an update on the plans http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityforums/mordencommunityforum.htm. These plans will appear on the council's website in March 2016 once the planning application is in and the designs have been amended to take account of public consultation comments.</p> <p>5.2 Further consultation is now taking place with residents, users of the leisure centre and sporting groups. Residents can drop in to the civic centre (11.30am - 2pm) or the leisure centre (4.30pm - 7.30pm) on 11th February to find out more</p> <p>5.3 The new centre will be fully accessible and DDA-compliant. The team is also consulting with Merton's Centre for Independent Living to get its views on accessibility requirements. It is hoped the centre will have a pool pod, which serves like a lift, to help people get into the pool. There will also be a moveable floor to assist with entering the pool.</p> <p>5.4 The new pool will be ASA-compliant, 25m long, with six lanes and wider than the current pool. There will be room for spectators, but the provision of timing facilities is budget-dependent. Consultation is taking place with swimming and diving clubs to find out their requirements. Sport England have informed the council that a 50m pool is not needed in Morden and there would not be demand for it.</p> <p>5.5 An extra £1.7-1.9m is needed for the sport hall that could be built within the new centre.</p> <p>5.6 The new centre will be as sustainable as possible and has to meet renewable energy requirements. There will be solar panels on the roof and the building fabric will be sustainable. Air from the fitness suite will be used to heat the swimming pool. Chris Jones agreed to look into ground source heating for the pool.</p> <p>5.7 The budget for demolition of the existing leisure centre is included within the current cost plan, and the demolition will be submitted within the same planning application as the new development. The existing leisure centre site will be turned into natural landscape.</p>

	<p>5b <u>Morden Park Playing Fields</u></p> <p>5.8 Ray Skinner from the Morden Park Playing Fields Community Trust explained plans for developing the playing fields, including a pavilion. The trust has tried to come up with a scheme that complements the new leisure centre proposals.</p> <p>5.9 It was acknowledged that parking could become problematic in the park and that this was an issue that would need further exploration.</p> <p>5.10 In dry weather, the football pitches could all be used together, but in winter, usage would need to be rotated.</p> <p>5.11 Councillor Stephen Alambritis welcomed the Trust's plans and thanked the Trust for working to complement the leisure centre proposals.</p>
PM	<p>6. <u>Soapbox</u></p> <p>7.1 Local resident Gillian Clarke gave thanks for the organised litter picking that volunteers did in Morden Park and the playing fields.</p> <p>7.2 In response to whether the council could repair the area behind the Registry Office that leads to the park, which has been damaged by bad weather and vehicles driving over it, it was noted that Doug Napier from the council's parks and greenspaces has said that his team will look to repair the damage. However, the site will need to be allowed to dry out first.</p> <p>7.3 A local resident commented that some street signs in the borough might be too low and below the recommended levels as he hit his head on one by St Helier Station. Paul McGarry agreed to report the matter to Highways.</p>

Raynes Park Community Forum Thursday 3 March 2016 Chair's Report

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library Hall, and chaired by Councillor Adam Bush. More than 70 residents attended, as well as seven other Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Crossrail 2

Stephen Hammond MP updated the meeting on Crossrail 2. Prior to the consultation Crossrail 2 had been considering a number of different options for Wimbledon and Raynes Park but the consultation only offered one choice, with huge implications for both town centres. The proposals for Raynes Park were still vague and not clear on the impact for areas like the Rainbow Estate. The consultation generated more than 2000 responses from Wimbledon, more than any other part of the route. This included a response from Stephen <http://www.stephenhammond.net/news/my-response-crossrail-2-consultation> and a cross party response from Merton Council <http://www.merton.gov.uk/transport-streets/public-transport/crossrail2.htm>. Both these responses supported the principle of Crossrail 2 but not at the expense of viable local town centres and communities.

Analysis of the consultation is currently taking place and results should be published in the spring. Crossrail 2 will then return with further proposals in the summer and more consultation later in 2016. They are being encouraged to consider further tunnelling to reduce the local impact. Another option could be to tunnel South West Trains fast line to Motspur Park which would free up space for Crossrail 2 as described at <http://ukrail.blogspot.co.uk/>. They could also look at phasing the construction work in Wimbledon to make sure sufficient retail space was retained throughout the work.

In response to questions Stephen said there had been opportunities to object to the principle of Crossrail 2 in two previous consultations but his view was that the project was essential for improving capacity for south west London and presented an opportunity to improve Raynes Park station. The new services would result in changes to South West Trains to Waterloo with possible reduction but it is too early to know to what extent. Crossrail 2 is also waiting to hear if funding will be made available in the upcoming budget announcement to continue the planning and development of the project.

It is likely that Crossrail 2 will have an impact on other local projects, in particular the Rainbow Estate, but no safeguarding has taken place in Raynes Park as yet. There are a number of other large scale public transport projects being considered but none would benefit south west London or have the impact of Crossrail 2. Stephen is meeting with Council officers to discuss the development of a Master Plan for Wimbledon and will raise the suggestion that officers speak with LB Newham to benefit from their experience of managing larger scale development.

Raynes Park Christmas and Summer Festivals

David Hurst said that more than 800 people attended the Festival that took place on Friday 4 December. A summer arts festival will be taking place from 18 – 24 June 2016 and details of events can be found at <http://www.myraynespark.co.uk/>. As the event coincides with National Refugee week the theme will be the positive contribution made by refugees. Most events will be free thanks the support of Merton Council and local businesses.

The 2016 Christmas festival will be on 2 December and organisers are looking for more businesses to get involved. They will also be looking for more volunteers to help, especially with being stewards for the large crowd.

Local Health Matters

Bal Chohan, Primary Care Liaison Manager, Kingston Hospital introduced the new glaucoma and medical retinal clinics being delivered at Raynes Park Health Centre. Dr Shervin Lari from the Ophthalmology team said that clinics were held on Wednesdays Thursdays and referrals can be made by any GP practice. Diagnostic and treatments can be delivered on site but surgery still takes place at Kingston Hospital.

Bal was asked about the possibility of having x-ray facilities at the Health Centre. Bal explained that the space needed for X-ray machines make it too difficult to install.

Current and anticipated planning applications

Neil Milligan, Development Control Manager, Merton Council updated the meeting on local planning issues.

- Travelodge works are ongoing and the hotel is likely to be opening in summer 2016.
- 1 Durham Road – officers have concerns about enforcement issues on this site and will look into the fencing as raised by residents.
- The proposed new cycle route between New Malden, Raynes Park and Wimbledon – consultation has take place with streets that adjoin the route. There are still concerns about the impact of Thames Water pipes on the scheme.
- The bins south of the Skew Arch will be removed in April to reduce the incidence of fly tipping. Further tidying up of the area will follow.
- Albany Close – consultation currently take place
- Lower Downs Road / rear of Bronson Road – existing office building is being converted to flats
- Former Barclays Bank site – no interest in this site as yet
- Burlington Road, New Maldon – application for McDonalds drive through has received lots of objections and these will need to be reviewed.
- Former Emerald Service Station – applicant received approval for minor variation to move plant room and create an additional flat.

Neil also explained that the Government is currently consulting on introducing private market into planning, allowing private contractors to compete to process planning

applications. Merton Council is currently working with Sutton and Kingston to develop a shared planning team across the three boroughs.

Raynes Park Station tidy up

Tony Edwards from the Raynes Park Association (RPA) said they are looking for simple, cost effective ideas to help improve the area. Some examples were shown to the meeting and can be found on the Council's website at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityforums/raynesparkcommunityforum.htm>

Volunteers will be getting training from Network Rail that will enable them to enter the embankments with permission in order to help tidy them. The RPA will look to set up a point of contact for so residents can submit ideas and volunteer but in the meantime local Residents Associations are able to feed these into the RPA.

Capital Clean Up Bid

There is a 16 March deadline for bids to this fund. The RPA will be asking for £1500 and toolkits.

Open Forum

Residents asked about the Council's budget meeting on Wednesday 2 March. The Cabinet had recommended a budget with a freeze in Council Tax; opposition Councillors had proposed an amendment with a 1.7% increase, in the form of a precept to spend specifically on Adult Social Care. The amendment was unsuccessful and the budget was passed as proposed. Further detail is available from the Council's website:

<https://mertonintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=142&MIId=2271&Ver=4>

Merton Bowling Club has reached an agreement with the Council to take on the maintenance of their bowling green.

Dates of future meetings all at 7.15pm, in the Library Hall:

22 June 2016 – Chaired by Councillor Stephen Crowe

29 September 2016

30 November 2016

8 March 2017

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Wimbledon Community Forum 14 March 2016 Chair's Report

The meeting was held at the Mansel Road Community Centre, and chaired by Councillor James Holmes. Approximately 50 residents attended, as well as Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Wimbledon Masterplan update

Paul McGarry, Head of future Merton at Merton Council, and Sally Warren from Love Wimbledon Business Improvement District gave a presentation, introducing the Future Wimbledon masterplan and timescales for community participation in the project. The presentation is available to view at http://www.merton.gov.uk/wimbledon_masterplan.pdf.

Residents expressed concern about the long-term disruption that Crossrail 2 would bring, as well as the impact on property owners of potential CPO by TfL. Councillor Andrew Judge responded that, whilst it seemed that the Crossrail 2 scheme would go ahead, TfL had recognised that their most recent proposals were not fitting for Wimbledon. TfL are now exploring alternative options for Wimbledon Station, taking into account feedback from residents and the council, and they will consult on any new proposals in due course. Councillor Judge added that the Labour and Conservative groups in Merton are working together to make the Council's views on Crossrail 2 known and to represent the local community over the proposals, for example, it has been suggested that TfL look at tunnelling the south west trains fast-lines as an alternative to the loss of homes, retail and office in Wimbledon. Paul McGarry added that Crossrail 2 have a property team for anyone concerned about CPO to speak to: <http://crossrail2.co.uk/faq/> and https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/crossrail2/october2015/user_uploads/g9.pdf

In response to residents' concerns that they have not been involved so far in the Masterplan consultation, Paul McGarry explained that the project hasn't started yet as there are no plans to consult on. The council is still drafting the brief. Tonight's presentation to the forum is to introduce the project. There will be plenty of opportunity for community involvement from mid-2016 through to 2017.

Other than a few workshops with key community groups, 2014's Future Wimbledon ideas competition winners to shape the brief and meetings with a few landowners, so far most of the community engagement has been through the community forums. A team will be in place to run the masterplan process by May-June, led by the Council's futureMerton team and will be looking to engage with as many residents, community groups and landowners as possible over the next year. The masterplan will be working along themes such as heritage, public realm, traffic, buildings and branding. The consultation will have a greater online presence and the council will refresh www.futurewimbledon.com to be the main hub for information.

A resident commented that Wimbledon needs big stores and that the closure of Waterstones, WH Smiths and Next was not welcomed by locals. Sally Warren responded that these stores are actively looking for new sites within the town centre. Paul McGarry added the Waterstones / WHSmith situation was a private landlord issue. Residents also asked what the Council could do to attract more independent businesses. Paul McGarry said

that through the masterplan, the Council would like to explore the creation of new affordable workspace policies for new developments in order to attract independent traders to the town centre.

In response to a question about what kind of utilities infrastructure would be put in place to deal with new planning projects, Paul McGarry explained that infrastructure would be looked at as part of the masterplan. Though at the macro scale, the borough's 15 year infrastructure needs are regularly reviewed as part of the plan-making process, last undertaken in the Core Strategy 2011.

The issue of traffic flow will be examined through the masterplan, for example, whether street calming measures can be taken and if additional infrastructure, such as bridges could be a viable solution to ease traffic in the town centre.

The future Merton team is responsible for regeneration, highways, economic development, strategic planning, sustainability, and place-making. To deliver the masterplan, outside expertise will be needed as the team is not big enough to deliver all of the work itself. The expertise will be drawn from consultancies, including those on procurement framework panels that the Mayor of London has put together.

Resolutions to Council

The Council's Constitution provides in Part 4A, paragraph 2.3(h) that a motion relating to the report (notably the referral of any recommendations) can be submitted in accordance with the timescales provided for in the Constitution.

Based on the recommendations of the Wimbledon Community Forum, it was agreed that Councillor James Holmes would put forward resolutions to Council in accordance with the Council's constitution as follows:

- Office lights - The Wimbledon Community Forum is concerned about the environmental impact of office lights being on all night. The Forum notes the number of lights left on in the Broadway and town centre offices all night and questions whether this is required. The Forum notes energy and climate change legislation and Merton Council's "Brighter Business" initiative which offers local businesses expert energy efficiency advice and support. The Forum is aware that the purpose of the initiative is to reduce running costs and environmental impact.

The Forum has resolved to request Merton Council to ask the Cabinet and Cabinet member responsible, Councillor Andrew Judge to consider any additional measures that he believes appropriate and can be taken to encourage businesses to switch off lights at night. The Forum would welcome additional interventions, contact, publicity and other methods which the Cabinet member deems appropriate and feasible. The Forum notes that the Cabinet is best placed to determine what additional measures may be appropriate.

The Forum would be grateful to receive an update from the Cabinet member personally or in writing in due course.

- Increasing cycling opportunities - The Wimbledon Community Forum would like there to be increased cycling opportunities available in the Borough. The Forum notes the

environmental, congestion and health benefits of cycling. The Forum welcomes the support of the Council for these principles.

The Forum notes and welcomes the Cycling Quietways initiative funded by Transport for London and implemented by Merton Council. The Forum also notes that the possible advent of Crossrail 2 makes additional measures challenging at this time.

The Forum has resolved to request Merton Council to ask the Cabinet and Cabinet member responsible, Councillor Andrew Judge to keep the Forum updated on the Quietways initiative and where both appropriate and possible to consult with the Forum on any Council involvement with its development and roll out in Wimbledon. The Forum further requests that the Cabinet member continue to explore and develop appropriate and affordable cycling opportunities in Wimbledon and to update the Forum in writing or in person in due course on this work.

Smart Metering Risks

Local resident and Electromagnetic Pollution Consultant, Ingrid Dickenson, gave a presentation in response to Thames Water's presentation on Smart Meters at the previous Wimbledon Community Forum meeting. Ms Dickenson's presentation is available to view at http://www.merton.gov.uk/response_to_thames_water_smart_meters.pdf.

Ingrid Dickenson BRCP EMR, Energy Medicine Practitioner and Electromagnetic Pollution Consultant, is a local resident who presents peer reviewed scientific evidence on the health risks of smart meters. She also urges people to consider other associated risks such as their impact on privacy, hiked energy bills and house fires as experienced in the US, where smart meters have been in use for some time. She also provides important weblinks for public information.

Further information related to the presentation can be found at the following websites:
<http://smartgridawareness.org/2015/02/13/how-smart-water-meters-invade-privacy/>
www.stopsmartmeters.org.uk
<https://takebackyourpower.net/>
www.bemri.org
<https://www.emfanalysis.com/tedx-wireless-wake-up-call/>

Soapbox

Responding to a question about whether there would be parking included with the new hotel on the Jimmy Beans site, Councillor Judge said that the plan was for only a small number of disabled parking spaces. He added that local councillors would work to prevent extra vehicles parking on Griffiths Road as a result of the limited on-site parking.

A resident commented that consultation with residents on planning applications should be more extensive. She also asked for feedback from the Leader of the council on a presentation that residents gave about establishing the branding and identity of Wimbledon.
Action: Leader of council

A resident asked if a public notice had been put up to inform residents that the Pinnacle House building on Hartfield Road was going to be constructed, as residents had been unaware of the construction.

Action: Planning department

Councillor Judge explained to residents that if there are works or improvements that they would like to see carried out in the borough, they should inform the council of them. Whilst budget restrictions mean not everything can be done and matters have to be prioritised, the Community Infrastructure Levy allows the council to pay for some things.

A resident complained that the waste collection team has been damaging residents' bins, such as the food waste bins, and that rubbish is being dumped on Palmerston Road and on the Broadway, but not being picked up by street cleaning. It was also mentioned that litterbins on Dundonald Road and Sheridan Road are overflowing. Residents also commented that waste vehicles' engines are left running even when the vehicles are idle, instead of being switched off. These matters have all subsequently been fed back to the Waste team at the council.

Paul McGarry agreed to feedback residents' concerns about air pollution to TfL. He explained that the council does try to keep air pollution down, where it reasonably can; for example, taxi and bus drivers are requested to turn their engines off when their vehicles are idle. The Council is also undertaking projects to improve air quality in Weir Rd and Willow Lane industrial estates. The council has some air quality monitoring stations.

Action: Further information on air quality monitoring stations to be provided

A resident asked if the council's Overview and Scrutiny committee could look at how much is spent on various traffic calming schemes and whether they are good value for money or serve much purpose. There were also concerns over the severity of street tree-pruning within the borough. These suggestions have been fed back to the Scrutiny team for consideration.

Paul McGarry undertook to speak to Highways about a reported water leak on Plough Lane and report to Thames Water.

Action: Paul McGarry

A resident asked if the restoration of an electricity substation at the end of Sunnyside could be sped up. Paul McGarry responded that a conservation officer in the futureMerton team is looking into the matter; however the substation is not a council structure, therefore is not something the council can put money into. Since the meeting, feedback has been received from the futureMerton team stating that it's a decommissioned sub-station of heritage value and is in the Council's ownership. Funding would need to be sought for its restoration.

The hygienic safety of the 'Any bin will do' policy for dog litter was questioned.

Action: Waste team to provide a response

Paul McGarry noted residents' request for a say in any changes made to St Mark's Place and how the place should be used. Councillor David Simpson commented that he has taken up the issue of antisocial behaviour in St Mark's Place with The Alexandra pub.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 8 June 2016 at The Mansel Road Centre, Trinity United Reformed Church,
Mansel Road, London SW19 4AA.

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COUNCIL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL 2016

NOTICE OF MOTION

This Council notes Transport for London has confirmed that mayoral candidate Sadiq Khan's proposal to freeze fares will cost £1.9 billion. It therefore calls upon Sadiq Khan to confirm what consequences this experiment will have for Merton. He will have to either:

- Hit local families with a £175 Mayoral Council Tax hike;
- Hit local public services by halving the amount of Mayoral Council Tax going to the police and fire service;
- Hit the transport network by scrapping vital planned investment on road, rail and town centre regeneration projects – causing delays, overcrowding and congestion;
- Hit veterans, the elderly and most vulnerable by cutting the Freedom Pass and Veterans Travel; or
- Hit drivers by bringing back the western extension of the Congestion Charge Zone – costing motorists up to £650 extra a year.

We therefore call on Sadiq Khan to confirm the costs of his experiment for residents in Merton and set out which of the following investments for Merton would be scrapped:

- Improvements to the District line. The planned improvements will deliver better signaling and create 24 per cent more capacity– meaning 10,000 more passengers can use the line each hour.
- Improvements to the Northern line. After signaling upgrades to the Northern and Jubilee lines, TfL are in the process of procuring up to 63 extra trains for both lines. These new trains will increase capacity in central London on the Northern line by 25 per cent.
- TfL's £148 million investment in local transport and town centre improvements. This means Merton could miss out on £3.3 million which includes £100,000 to help transform Morden Town Centre, which may include the removal of the main road gyratory.
- The Night Tube. TfL estimated that the Night Tube will create 1,965 permanent jobs and Londoners support the Night Tube: 78 per cent believe it will be good for the capital. Khan has already come under pressure from union donors to cancel plans for a night service. He accepted the loan of offices and a staff member from the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA), who said the Night Tube 'isn't going to happen', and was endorsed by ASLEF and Unite – the unions behind anti-night tube strikes.

Cllr Hamish Badenoch

Cllr David Dean

Cllr Daniel Holden

Cllr James Holmes

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Cllr Oonagh Moulton

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Committee: Council

Date: 6 April 2016

Subject: Changes to Membership of Committees and related matters

Lead officer: Ged Curran, Chief Executive

Contact officer: Chris Pedlow, Senior Democratic Services Officer, (020 8545 3616)

democratic.services@merton.gov.uk

Recommendations:

- A. That the changes to the membership of Committees that were approved under delegated powers since the last meeting of the Council are noted.
 - B. To appoint Councillor Agatha Akyigyina as the Chair of Licensing Committee.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report asks the Council to appoint a member of the Standards Committee and note the membership changes made under delegated powers since the publication of the agenda for the Council meeting held on 3 February 2016.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The following membership changes have been made under delegated powers in accordance with section A4 of part 3F of the Constitution:
- 2.2.

Committee	Member resigning	Replaced by	Date
Merton and Sutton Joint Cemetery Board	Councillor Joan Henry	Councillor Philip Jones	10 February 2016
Standards Committee	Councillor John Dehaney	Councillor Russell Makin	23 February 2016
Standards Committee	Councillor Russell Makin	Councillor John Dehaney	15 March 2016
Sustainable Communities OSP	Councillor Russell Makin	Councillor John Dehaney	15 March 2016
Healthier Communities and Older People OSP	Councillor Mary Curtin	Councillor John Dehaney	15 March 2016
Licensing Committee and Licensing Sub Committee	Councillor Jeff Hanna	Councillor Agatha Akyigyina	21 March 2016

Merton and Sutton Joint Cemetery Board	Councillor Philip Jones	Councillor Joan Henry	21 March 2016
Sustainable Communities OSP	Councillor John Dehaney	Councillor Russell Makin	21 March 2016
Healthier Communities and Older People OSP	Councillor John Dehaney	Councillor Mary Curtin	21 March 2016

3 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

3.1. N/A

4 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

4.1. None for the purposes of this report.

5 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The information regarding membership changes in this report complies with legal and statutory requirements. Council is required to accept nominations made by political groups.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

6.1. None for the purposes of this report.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None for the purposes of this report.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. N/A

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

None.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1. Documents from the authorised officer confirming approval of the membership changes agreed under delegated powers.

Committee: Council

Date: 6 April 2016

Subject: Petitions

Lead officer: Paul Evans, Assistant Director, Corporate Governance.

Lead member: Leader of the Council, Stephen Alambritis.

Contact officer: Democratic Services, democratic.services@merton.gov.uk

Recommendation: That Council

- 1) receives petitions (if any) in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 18.1 of the Council's Constitution; and
 - 2) note the response given by officers in respect of the petitions presented to the 3 February 2016 Council meeting.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report invites council to receive petitions in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 18.1 of the Council's Constitution

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. At the meeting held on 3 February 2016, Council received two petitions as detailed below. Any petitions received by Council are referred to respective departments with responsible officers asked to advise the presenting member in each case of the way in which the petition is to be progressed.

- 2.2. Petition – '*On Rowan Road Traffic Consultation*' submitted by Councillor Brenda Fraser.

In response to the petition officers confirmed that Rowan Road had been added to our list for analysis. The feedback will be analysed and a decision regarding the next course of action, if any, will be made and you will be informed accordingly. Please note that due to the current programme and available resource, no assessment will be made until after June 2016 at the earliest.

- 2.3 Petition – 'Save Merton Bowls club' submitted by Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender.

In response to the petition officers has met with representatives of the bowls club to discuss the future of the bowling green at Joseph Hood Recreation Ground, the current home location of the club.

The bowls club has agreed, as a consequence, to pursue a self-management model for the green, and, with some transitional support in kind from the Council, the green will continue to operate during the forthcoming 2016 bowls season.

The Council has been encouraging this management model to its local bowls clubs for a number of years and therefore welcomes the fact that Merton Bowls Club is now actively pursuing this opportunity.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. None for the purpose of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. None for the purpose of this report.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. None for the purpose of this report.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. None for the purpose of this report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None for the purpose of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purpose of this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purpose of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11 APPENDICES

11.1. None.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None.