

# Merton Council Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Date: 5 April 2016  
Time: 7.15 pm  
Venue: Committee rooms C, D & E - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden  
SM4 5DX

## AGENDA

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2	Declarations of pecuniary interest	
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**This is a public meeting – members of the public are very welcome to attend.  
The meeting room will be open to members of the public from 7.00 p.m.**

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## Overview and Scrutiny Commission membership

### Councillors:

Peter Southgate (Chair)  
Peter McCabe (Vice-Chair)  
Stan Anderson  
Hamish Badenoch  
Brenda Fraser  
Suzanne Grocott  
Jeff Hanna  
Abigail Jones  
Oonagh Moulton  
Katy Neep

### Substitute Members:

David Simpson CBE  
John Dehaney  
Russell Makin  
John Sargeant  
David Williams

### Co-opted Representatives

Denis Popovs, Primary School Parent  
Governor Representative  
Colin Powell, Church of England diocese  
Geoffrey Newman (Co-opted member,  
non-voting)

### Note on declarations of interest

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

### What is Overview and Scrutiny?

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

Scrutiny's work falls into four broad areas:

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

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

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

## **Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

**Date: 5 April 2016**

Agenda item: Customer Contact Programme Update

Wards: All

### **Subject:**

Lead officer: Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement

Lead member: Cllr Allison, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Contact officer: Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Business Improvement

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### **Recommendations:**

- A. That the Commission discuss and comment on the progress of the Customer Contact programme.
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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Commission with a progress update on the Customer Contact programme.
- 1.2. The Commission last received a progress update in September 2015.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The way in which Merton borough residents and service users want to access services is changing. People who routinely buy services and goods over the internet and by phone, and who communicate via SMS (text messaging), Facebook and Twitter increasingly expect the same sort of flexibility when accessing public services. This is reflected in the results from Merton's residents' survey<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.2. Merton's Customer Contact programme is aimed at meeting these changing needs; it supports delivery of the ambition set out in the council's Customer Contact Strategy. This strategy focuses on two key outcomes. Firstly, to improve service users' experience of accessing council services; and secondly to reduce the cost of those services by encouraging people to self-serve where possible and also by responding to as many customer queries as possible at the first point of contact (thus reducing avoidable and repeat contact).
- 2.3. The scope of the programme is to procure and implement the necessary technology to deliver these ambitions. This includes a new website that increases the potential for customers to request and pay for services online; the ability for customers to have an 'account' that allows them to track their queries and interactions in a single place online; and a contact management

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.merton.gov.uk/presentation\\_charts\\_merton\\_residents\\_2014\\_.pdf](http://www.merton.gov.uk/presentation_charts_merton_residents_2014_.pdf)

solution that allows staff to manage and process queries and requests quickly and easily and which is integrated with the relevant back office systems.

- 2.4. In March 2015 the council awarded a contract to General Dynamics IT Ltd (henceforth GDIT) to deliver this technology and support the associated changes in business processes and practices.
- 2.5. Following a period of familiarisation and initiation a final detailed implementation plan for the programme was agreed by the programme board in September 2015.

### **3 ACTIVITY SINCE LAST UPDATE**

- 3.1. The remainder of this section will provide an update on key deliverables, both in terms of key milestones and work to date.

#### **3.2. Technology**

- 3.2.1 This stream of work will implement the underlying hardware (servers etc.) and associated technology (connections to the council's existing systems and networks) to support the new systems being implemented. It also involves configuring the software itself to meet Merton's needs and accommodate our ambitious objectives. It will impact on the experience of both staff and customers as it provides the IT system that contact centre staff will use to record and deal with customer enquiries in person and over the telephone and also makes sure that this is connected to other council systems so that referral of requests can be automated. This is important as it allows us to increase the number of calls where we can deal with enquiries at the first point of contact.
- 3.2.2 This activity commenced immediately post contract award and a major deliverable will be released at the end of March 2016 when the new contact management system will be launched in the Contact Centre, and a new operating system derived from this will be deployed in the Waste service.
- 3.2.3 The connections and Infrastructure between Merton's primary and secondary data centres and the supplier's data centres has been established and access is now available to the pre-production environments for both CRM and EDRMS. The fail-over and business continuity at both ends has been successfully tested.
- 3.2.4 The interface with Merton's electronic payments system has been established and tested as well as integration with Merton's address and property gazetteer. Work is on-going to interface with Merton's mapping solution, financial system, scanning, and other line of business systems on a prioritised basis.

#### **3.3. Website**

- 3.3.1 This stream of work will design and implement a new council website that is both modern and attractive and, more importantly, encourages and allows visitors to resolve more of their queries and requests online.
- 3.3.2 The current website was designed in 2005. Like most local authority websites, it was established before online functionality was an objective of

the organisation and therefore was primarily a place people visited to obtain information, not conduct transactions. The SOCITM survey indicates that user satisfaction for the current website is relatively high; but the lack of a responsive design and online functionality leaves Merton behind in terms of its overall website rating in SOCITM research.

- 3.3.3 Council officers have been working closely with GDIT's experienced and professional designers using a 'User Centred Design' methodology, which means that rather than starting the design process with the structure of other local authority sites, the design of the Merton site has been led by resident demand. This increases the likelihood of the council achieving its goal of channel shift.
- 3.3.4 Elected Members and staff have been consulted about the proposed website, using static copies of the proposed web pages . Following this consultation, the key changes that the new site will introduce are:
- It is less cluttered and more focused on transactions, designed to enable online visitors to quickly and easily conduct business with the council.
  - It is designed to be used on smartphones and tablets – recent research by SOCITM shows that 42% of visits to Council websites are made using a smartphone. However customer's mobile experience of council websites tends to be around 25% worse than on a desktop device and Google rate just 51% of council websites as 'mobile friendly'.
  - It is integrated with back-office-systems so that customers can complete an entire transaction online without having to contact the council in a number of key service areas (see appendix 1).
- 3.3.5 More comprehensive consultation with a range of community representatives is planned as soon as a test version of the working site is made available; this was expected in late March/early April although connectivity issues present some risk to this timescale. In addition, detailed User Acceptance Testing will be undertaken with a group of resident representatives and staff.
- 3.3.6 The transition from the current to the new site will be gradual throughout the remainder of 2016. Copywriters are currently reviewing content to ensure it is appropriate for the new website, and new functionality will be released throughout the summer as business processes are automated and integrated into the website (see item 3.5 below).
- 3.3.7 This workstream will continue to the delivery of the new website, which is anticipated in April 2016. This timeline is subject to feedback following consultation with users throughout the process.
- 3.3.8 The programme will also consolidate a number of micro-sites currently either outside the Council's infrastructure or not integrated into a direct navigation from our website. This will involve close liaison with services to either migrate a technical solution, or build existing micro-sites into our new website. This is a cost effective approach, avoiding separate hosting costs, but also benefits customers who will be able to find the services they want and be assured that they are dealing with the council. The programme is also ensuring that new requests for micro-sites are subject to this process.

### 3.4. **Customer account**

- 3.4.1 This workstream will create the functionality that allows visitors to the website to create an online account. This will allow them to sign into a secure space within the website where they can see their history of interactions with the council, the status of any queries or requests they have raised as well as things like their Council Tax account balance or outstanding library books.
- 3.4.2 This is important because people are increasingly expecting public services to be delivered in an holistic way and that the council is proactive in interpreting their requirements and responding to them swiftly. When someone contacts the council they expect that there is a coherent and complete 'view' of them within the organisation – this is their experience of other organisations so why not the council? Customers do not want to speak to several different departments and service teams about the same issue, which means that services can no longer afford for their business systems and their relationships with customers to exist in isolation. For the sake of good customer experience, and effective and efficient services, a single, comprehensive view of customers across the organisation is needed.
- 3.4.3 Work to design the account function and establish how it relates to and is positioned within the website has already been completed. But the implementation of the account cannot proceed until both the new website and online transactions are available. For this reason, the account function is not anticipated to be launched before the summer of 2016. This will allow time for the appropriate integration to be designed with other council systems (so that information from a range of places can be drawn together and displayed in the customer account page).

### 3.5. **Redesigned business processes**

- 3.5.1 A number of council services have been selected to undergo process redesign. These represent high volume, low complexity transactional services that are most likely to benefit from re-design and automation to produce an 'End to End' online service. These are: Waste, Highways, Parks and Green Spaces, Building Control, Property, Complaints and Freedom of Information requests, and Mayor's Charitable Events. In addition existing portals for Council Tax, Libraries, Planning, and Parking will be linked to the new customer account to allow customers to use a single password to access their information and services.
- 3.5.2 We will be able to provide a significant number of our services to customers through easy to find and use interactive web forms, to the high standard expected from an online service provider. The new process will enable customers to receive information and updates in the way they prefer, perhaps by text message, and through the customer account to record and consolidate all their transactions in one place.
- 3.5.3 The waste service processes have been redesigned and are now in the process of being developed as automated processes. These will be launched in late March/early April and will be accessed through the parallel launch of the new website and webforms.

3.5.4 The current roll-out plan will deploy the remainder of the designated services in two more phases, with Complaints/Freedom of Information requests in May and the remainder in June 2016. This may be subject to change depending upon the complexity of the design and integration with other systems and projects. It will also demand coordinating activity in parallel workstreams that will require increased resources from both the supplier and the council. This is being overseen by the programme board.

### 3.6. **Dialogue with GDIT**

3.6.1 Notwithstanding the progress noted above, the programme has experienced some delays. These are related chiefly to:

- unexpected technical challenges in creating connections to the council's existing systems and networks (related to third party telecom providers);
- difficulty in recruiting and retaining high calibre staff on the part of the contracted provider, GDIT;
- underestimation of the effort and complexity involved to deliver the first phase of the project, involving building the technical and operational infrastructure and specifically to deliver a new operating system for the waste service;
- the need to adjust the roll-out plan to accommodate a very volatile IT environment involving major changes and upgrades, such as for asset management, finance, and mapping.

3.6.2 The council has therefore deployed the mechanisms within the contract to alert GDIT to their concerns over these delays. GDIT have responded positively and submitted a correction plan, which, at the time of writing this report, is being considered by the programme board for approval. This includes revised delivery dates and these will be considered in the context of their impact on the organisation – both financial and reputational.

## 4 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1. Feasible and cost-effective alternatives for the technology have been explored as part of the competitive dialogue process, ensuring the council identified the solution that best meets its requirements in terms of cost and quality.

## 5 **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

5.1. The governance arrangements for the programme are designed to ensure that services across the organisation are fully engaged in the development of the approach.

5.2. Governance for the programme consists of a Programme Board (management and control focus) chaired by Caroline Holland, Corporate Services Director (programme sponsor) and including representation from each of the departments. The programme also reports monthly to the

Merton Improvement Board which draws its membership from across the organisation.

- 5.3. An engagement and communication plan has been developed and service and customer groups are being engaged as part of the programme using a phased approach to ensure any necessary change is well planned, communicated and embedded.
- 5.4. It may be necessary to undertake formal consultation to reflect specific changes to how services are delivered via specific access channels as the programme progresses and the programme will provide regular updates to the Commission in this regard.
- 5.5. A key area for wider consultation is the development of the website and customer account. It is inadvisable to draw customers into the initial design process as they are better engaged in testing concepts once they've been developed. To begin with, therefore, the design process brought together a representative group of officers and asked them to take on customer personas and, later on, test the emerging design. Two sessions were also held in December to seek Member feedback on the proposed functionality and design.
- 5.6. As is noted in item 3.3.5 of this report, customers and external focus groups are being engaged in the process of testing the prototype as it emerges.

## **6 TIMETABLE**

- 6.1. A programme timetable is presented in appendix A.

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

- 7.1. The Customer Contact programme is an important factor in the overarching transformation of the organisation as part of the Outstanding Council Programme. There is a clear commitment to a high standard of professionalism and the streamlining of work processes so that they are efficient and not unnecessarily bureaucratic. It is essential that officers are supported to make this transition and enabled to continue providing high quality services to customers in a constrained economic environment. It is also essential that the organisation is able to respond effectively to the changing needs of service users. Funds have already been earmarked through allocated reserves to facilitate the programme. This planned one-off investment is expected to achieve ongoing revenue savings that will benefit the council each year.
- 7.2. The programme is key to the achievement of planned savings through self-service and channel shift and the aspirations set out in a number of service target operating models (TOMs) are dependent on the technology the programme will introduce. The business case for the programme – in relation to benefits and savings – will be updated once the scope of implementation and cost of technology become clear as part of the procurement exercise.



- 7.3. The initial programme budget of up to £2.3m was approved by Cabinet on 12th July 2012.
- 7.4. Any property implications are likely to come from the assessment of the provision of face-to-face services in specific locations across the borough. It is expected that any such implications will be managed and aligned with any existing property rationalisation plans, e.g. the flexible working programme.

## **8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. The South London Legal Partnership is working closely with the programme team in developing a suitable contract with the chosen supplier.
- 8.2. There may be some impact on the provision of some statutory services, e.g. regulatory services, but this will be established and managed through the engagement of the relevant services and will depend on whether specific processes can feasibly be delivered through different channels and by different means.

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

- 9.1. There are not expected to be any human rights issues from the programme.
- 9.2. An Equality Analysis has been completed for the programme and will be updated at suitable decision points.
- 9.3. Community and other key stakeholder groups will be engaged as part of the programme and any implications will be managed with the relevant officers in the Council.

## **10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. There are not expected to be any crime and disorder implications.

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

- 11.1. All risks, assumptions, issues and dependencies are being actively managed as part of the programme.
- 11.2. There are not expected to be any Health and Safety implications.

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

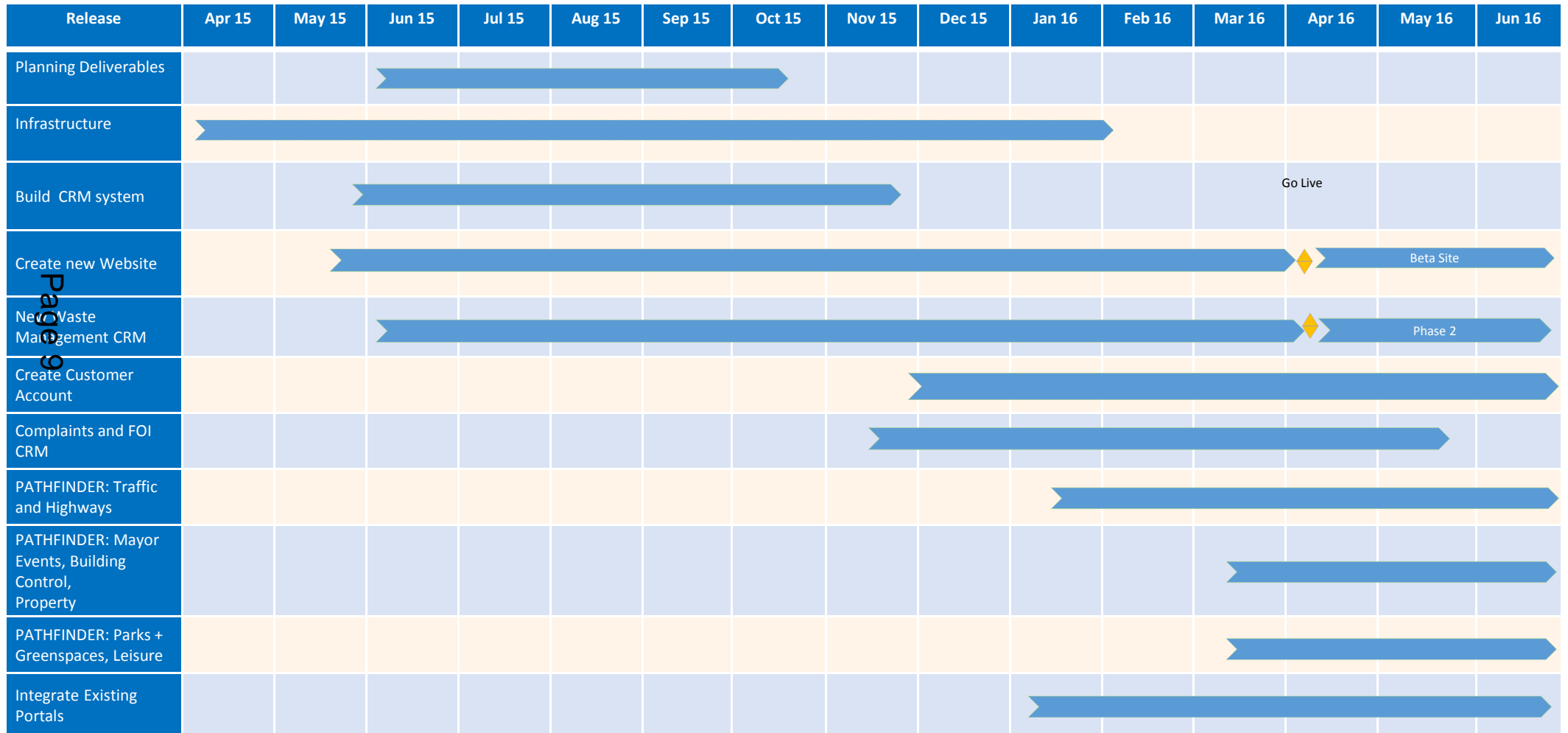
A. Programme Milestones

## **13 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 13.1. Previous Cabinet Reports (for information only; not provided)

13.2. Customer Contact Strategy (for information only; not provided)

# Customer Contact Programme



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<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Commission</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>05 April 2016</b>
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Progress report on implementation of the Equality Strategy 2013-17</b>
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Yvette Stanley, Director Children, Schools and families
<b>Lead member:</b>	Councillor Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Evereth Willis, <a href="mailto:evereth.willis@merton.gov.uk">evereth.willis@merton.gov.uk</a> ; 020 8545 4637

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**Recommendations:** That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

- A. Discuss and comment on the progress made on the implementation of the Equality Strategy 2013-17.
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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Commission with a progress report on the implementation of the Equality Strategy 2013-17.

## 2. DETAILS

### Background

#### Progress on the implementation of the Equality Strategy and action plan

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the local authority, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not. “Protected characteristics” are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 also requires the council to publish equality objectives every four years to demonstrate how it will meet the PSED. The equality strategy outlines the Council’s ‘Equality Objectives’ as the following five themes:
- Tackling Inequality
  - Service Access
  - Improving Engagement
  - Promoting Community Cohesion
  - Workforce Development
- 2.3 Council approved the four-year strategy in February 2013. It sets out what we will do to tackle discrimination and inequality and promote equal opportunities in Merton. The strategy also sets out the council’s equalities objectives as required by the Equality Act 2010.

- 2.4 The Equality Strategy Action Plan sets out the actions we will take to meet our equality priorities both corporately and departmentally.
- 2.5 The approach of the strategy is a departure from the structure of the previous Corporate Equality Scheme. Instead of including objectives against each protected characteristic, generic themes have been identified and they in turn were informed by using available statistical evidence and priorities highlighted in departmental service plans.
- 2.6 Delivery against the Equality Strategy action plan is monitored by the Corporate Equality Steering Group through regular updates from departmental equality representatives, and the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minority Organisations also monitors implementation of the strategy.

### **Progress to date**

- 2.7 The Equality Strategy action plan (attached at Appendix I) includes activities that are linked to departmental service plans.
- 2.8 Key developments to note include:
- **Merton School Improvement (MSI) Service** 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%).
  - **20% of Looked after Children (LAC)** achieved 5 GCSEs A\*-C or equivalent (incl. English & Maths) in 2013-14 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 (PEP) 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.
  - Over 2014-15, A range of commissioned preventative services continue to be available for children and young people with disabilities including family-based overnight **short breaks**, weekend clubs offering activities and excursions, a holiday play scheme for children with complex needs, and a parent carer support service and parent forum. Brightwell Children's Home was judged as providing an 'outstanding' quality of care and as being 'good' overall in its last Ofsted inspection in July 2014 and supported 433 children during the financial year above the target of 372. The **Local Offer** went live on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2014. A Local Offer Steering Group has been set up to ensure that Merton is meeting the requirements in relation to this aspect of work.
  - **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 **Free School Meal (FSM) children** achieved a 'good level of development' (GLD) in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – an 11% increase on last year. 45.8% of boys from deprived areas achieved a GLD - a 7.8% increase compared to last year. The

- 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.
- 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.
  - The '**Your Shout**' group for children and young people with learning disabilities has fed into management discussions around aspects of the C&F 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.
  - At the end of 2014-15, there were 32 Young Advisors and 14 Young Inspectors trained and active. There were 35 members of Merton Youth Parliament (and others).

- There was a 32% reduction of **First-Time Entrants (FTE)** to the Youth Justice System (YJS) compared to last year. The 2014-15 outcome was 60 FTE 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.
- CSF continues to deliver its Equalities and Community Cohesion Action (ECCA) Plan for 2015-16 with an end-of-year report due in June. The ECCA Plan will be refreshed for 2016-17 with new actions stemming from the service planning process currently underway. CSF will continue to plan around and work within the established priorities and corporate activities for the coming year.
- The use of equality analysis is embedded in the service planning process and savings proposals have been accompanied by an assessment of the impact of proposed changes on the protected characteristics.
- **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.
- The Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender Forum has been revitalised and the committee is developing a work programme to progress issues facing the community. The first public meeting will be held on 26 April at Vestry Hall.
- The 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
- We have signed up to **ValueYou**: a new accreditation scheme to recognise individuals who have delivered over 100 hours of volunteering and offer them discount cards at local businesses.
- Public Health has commissioned Merton Chamber of Commerce to deliver support to business in Merton who would like to support their staff, including working towards the **London Healthy Workplace Charter**.
- We currently have **28 Apprentices in Merton**, 60% have either go on to higher education or acquire employment internally/externally.
- The **Schools and libraries Reading initiative** has been implemented in 39 schools with 15,995 children signed up and actively using their local library. Further roll out targeting the final four schools is planned in the coming months.

2.9 The following areas will continue to be addressed in 2016/17:



- Improve outreach to Small/Medium Enterprises and BAME organisations – initial workshops will be held with the voluntary sector in April and May. The learning from these will be evaluated and used to inform SME workshops.
- Maintain focus on raising attainment and narrowing achievement gaps with a focus on vulnerable groups at risk of poorer outcomes.
- Plan and deliver integrated advice and support services for children and young people with SEN and disabilities.
- Continue to emphasise the safeguarding of particular groups of vulnerable children including those at risk of CSE, missing from home/care/education, VAWG and PREVENT.
- Promote stability and permanence for Looked after Children through procurement of sufficient and suitable placement options.
- Continue to develop meaningful engagement opportunities for children, young people, parents and carers to feedback and influence service improvement.
- Increase young people’s engagement in diversionary activities that enable positive outcomes into adulthood.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires the council to prepare and publish equality objectives and subsequently at least four-yearly. Failure to do so would mean the Council is not fulfilling its legal obligations and could be subject to legal action.

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

The Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minorities will be given a progress report on the Equality Strategy.

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

- 5.1 Delivery of the Equality Strategy action plan is within existing resources.

### **6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Delivery of the commitments in the Equality Strategy action plan and the publication of an Equality Strategy setting out our equality objectives fulfil the Council’s legal obligations relating to equalities legislation.

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

- 7.1 By setting out its equalities commitments in the Equality Strategy the Council is re-affirming its commitment to human rights, equality and community cohesion.

**8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There is a risk of increased hate crime activity directed towards certain groups if there is no commitment to eliminate discrimination and harassment.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 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.

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

- Appendix I – Progress update of the Equality Strategy 2013-17 Action Plan

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Equality Strategy 2013-17

[http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/plansandpolicies/equality\\_strategy\\_2013-17\\_final\\_v2.pdf](http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/plansandpolicies/equality_strategy_2013-17_final_v2.pdf)

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
<b>Equality Objective 1- Tackling inequality</b>				
<b>1.1 Schools attainment - improving attainment levels for all and narrowing the gap in achievements for some groups</b>				
1.1.1 Deliver support to schools to narrow gaps in progress and achievement.	Deliver training, and provide support, including pupil tracking, to improve the progress and outcomes of all pupils, including those from target groups: those from Black and minority ethnic groups (BME), Pupil Premium (those eligible for free school meals and Looked After Children), non stated pupils with Special Educational Needs, and LAC.	Key stage progress measures for target groups. Key stage outcomes for target groups.	Children Schools and Families - Merton School Improvement	2014-15 Provisional Data: <b>Key stage 2:</b> - There is a 14-point percentage gap between Disadvantaged pupils (72%) and All Other pupils (86%) reaching the expected benchmark in reading, writing and maths. - Compared to last year’s results, the gap for disadvantaged pupils with regard to expected progress has been closed for writing and narrowed in reading. However, it has widened slightly by 1% in mathematics. - Of the four largest ethnic groups, White British, Asian Other and White Other attained better than All Pupils with regard to reaching the expected benchmark in reading, writing and maths. - SEN pupils’ attainment in terms of both expected levels and progress (with a Statement or EHC Plan) was significantly higher than the same group nationally.  <b>Key stage 4:</b> - 45% of Disadvantaged Pupils achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs (incl Eng & maths) compared to 68% of All Other

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				<p>Pupils, which is above the national average for this group. The attainment gap of 23% is lower than the national gap of 28%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 69% of Disadvantaged Pupils made the expected progress in English – the gap with All Other Pupils is narrower than that seen nationally.</li> <li>- 57% of Disadvantaged Pupils made the expected progress in maths – the gap with All Other Pupils is only 1% larger than nationally.</li> <li>- Students receiving SEN support and those with a Statement/EHC Plan outperformed their comparator groups both in London and nationally with regard to both end of key stage attainment and expected progress.</li> </ul>
<b>1.2 Improving outcomes - targeting services to improve the outcomes for those most in need.</b>				
<p>1.2.1 Continue to develop a spectrum of short break provision for children and young people with SEND/challenging behaviour.</p>	<p>Continue to commission and contract manage service providers ensuring that provision has the capacity to meet the range of needs of Merton’s disabled children and young people, from moderate to severe.</p>	<p>Take up of short breaks.</p>	<p>Children Schools and Families Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Integrated Service.</p>	<p>Over 2014-15, a range of commissioned preventative services continued to be available for children and young people with disabilities including family-based overnight short breaks, weekend clubs offering activities and excursions, a holiday playscheme for children with complex needs, and a parent carer support service and parent forum.</p> <p>The Local Offer went live on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2014. A Local Offer Steering Group has been set up to</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				<p>ensure that Merton is meeting the requirements in relation to this aspect of work. The next phase of consultation and testing with parents and young people was scheduled for Autumn 2015 and will be reported on through the ECCA group end-of-year report.</p> <p>Brightwell supported 433 children during the 2014-15 financial year – this was above the target of 372.</p> <p>A project is scheduled to commence in Q3 of 2015-16 to explore the use of Personal Budgets for short-breaks.</p>
<p>1.2.2 Monitor data to improve inclusion or performance of specific groups of learners.</p>	<p>Review data on achievement and provide support to under-performing groups in order to bridge the gap.</p> <p>Review data on protected characteristics that are collected and reported on and measure against targets set. Address any imbalance.</p>	<p>Successful outcome of enrolments and courses running</p>	<p>Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE)</p>	<p>For the 2014-2015 academic year One of our key priorities over the years has been to widen participation amongst the more disadvantaged learners, in effect bridging the gap between the east and west of the borough. The strategy centres on building effective partnerships in order to gain access to excluded communities. Much progress has been made over the past 10 years in the 2004/2005 academic year ethnic minority students amounted to only 17% of our overall student base. However due to the successful implementation of the strategy over</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				<p>69% of our learners on qualification courses and 46% on non qualification courses are from ethnic minority groups. This has resulted in a truly diverse intergenerational student profile.</p> <p>A key area for development relates to our gender profile, with 74% of ASB and 83% of students being female and 26% ASB and 17% Community Learning being male. Equality and diversity is celebrated at MAE and displays of learners work are used effectively to promote this. Policies and procedures to include the promotion of fundamental British values have been revised and will be introduced in 15-16. A diversity calendar showing a range of cultural events was provided to tutors, this led to many celebrations taking place in lessons exposing students to the different backgrounds of learners within MAE.</p>
<p>1.2.3 Discuss community issues / relations in respect of harassment and hate crimes in safeguarding</p>	<p>Discuss the gathering of information for those protected characteristics currently not recorded and identify the best way forward.</p>	<p>Successful outcome of enrolments and courses running</p>	<p>Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE)</p>	<p>MAE has established a safeguarding team responsible for implementation of the PREVENT strategy; good progress has been made as reflected in the recent Ofsted Inspection.</p> <p>I counter poll in reception indicated that of the 211 students that participated in the survey 100% felt</p>

Equality Strategy Action Plan – Appendix 1

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
meetings.				safe at MAE.
1.2.4 Develop courses to challenge typical stereotyping and market appropriately i.e. Men in the Kitchen – encouraging men to take up childcare courses and women into woodwork etc	<p>Monitor support (ALS or other) provided for learners and measure impact through learner achievement.</p> <p>Set challenging goals across departments and monitor results.</p> <p>Review Census results data and how our community is reflected.</p> <p>Discuss performance in equality meetings and action plan for renewed activity if not being met.</p>	Successful outcome of enrolments and courses running	Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE)	<p>Support funds have been fully allocated this year as a result of increased signposting at the advice and initial assessment stage of student recruitment.</p> <p>The move towards commissioning will present further opportunities to develop courses to attract more men.</p>
1.2.5 Collection of customer profile data (e.g. ethnicity) at point of referral	Inputting appropriate information onto initial contacts and analysis of information	Numbers and profiles of customers being referred for assessments will be known and inequalities	Community and Housing – Access and Assessment	A baseline for current performance is to be established and monitoring will be put in place to demonstrate improvement.

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Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
		highlighted		
1.2.6 Merton Employment team to undertake some equality analysis of referrals for the past 12 months. Especially with regard to age, gender and race.	The analysed data will be used to identify groups that are currently being underrepresented or not being referred for employment opportunities	Increased marketing and referral for employment opportunities, for the identified groups.	Community and Housing - Direct Provision	Initial indications show an under-representation of females and BME groups. Update February 2015; Referrals from April 2014 to date show female referrals remaining constant (10 out of 38 referrals, up from 10 from 41 the previous year) BME referrals have increased from 7 out of 41 to 17 from 28 in the year to date.
1.2.7 Assess extent to which providers meet the requirements of customers from all equality groups	Use of contract monitoring tools (such as audit visits and customer surveys) to evaluate contract compliance and implement provider improvement plans where necessary.	Appropriate services are available to all customers including those from specific equality groups	Community and Housing - Commissioning /Procurement	This is done as part of the contract monitoring process
1.2.8 Ensure that equality issues are appropriately considered in each tender evaluation process	Assessment of bidders for minimum compliance to equalities requirements at the evaluation stage.	Compliance to minimum tender equality evaluation requirements.	Community and Housing - Commissioning /Procurement	This is done as part of the commissioning and procurement process
1.2.9 An Equality Analysis (EA) to	If appropriate, a Method Statement to	Method Statement	Community and Housing - Commissioning /Procurement	This is done as part of the contract monitoring process



Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
be completed for all procured services	be devised specifically to the service relating to the outcomes of the EA and this to be evaluated according to an agreed evaluation criteria	submission to be evaluated in line with the pre-determined tender evaluation matrix.		
1.2.10 Improve availability of specialist providers for complex and challenging customers	Identify providers who can meet the needs of customers, conduct a market research/development exercise, with possibility to move to contracted services	Create own local indicators to measure improved service to complex and challenging customers	Community and Housing – Commissioning Brokerage	As part of the ASC Redesign Programme, the service is undertaking a review of how the support needs for this client group can be better met in Merton both in the short term and in the longer term
1.2.11 Standardise charges for day services between Direct Payments and commissioned day services for BME customers	Brokerage to enter into negotiations with providers to establish a consistent tariff for this service	A single tariff for day services for BME customers, whether they are council commissioned or Direct Payments	Community and Housing – Commissioning Brokerage	Negotiations completed with BME day services to reduce daily rate to £31.37 for commissioned service only. Providers currently not willing to honour reduction via Direct Payments.
1.2.12 Tackle inequality through organisational commitment and responsive services	Equality objectives to be included in new Homelessness Strategy.  Meet the required standard for the Customer Service	Equality objectives set  CSE standard met	Community and Housing - Housing	Equality objectives included in Draft Homelessness Strategy to 2020.  Achieved CSE Accreditation in 2013 but no further assessment planned.  Outcomes of strategies monitored

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Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
	<p>Excellence (CSE) Accreditation's equality strand                      Monitor equality outcomes of Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, and other strategy action plans e.g. Affordable Warmth, Older People                      Monitor equality outcomes for projects – MASH and A10 Project                      Maximise development of wheelchair accessible units and Life Time Homes                      Record all RDS viewings by equality categories to enable equality monitoring of RDS outcomes</p>	<p>Equality outcomes highlighted in action plan monitoring reports                       Project outcomes analysed by equality categories                      Monitor completions                       RDS viewings monitored by equality categories</p>		<p>annually, 2014-15 completed.                       Monitoring of projects for 2014-15 completed.                       All housing developments met targets of 100% Life Time Homes &amp; 10% wheelchair accessible.                       Completed.</p>
<p>1.2.13 Improve reading attainment levels for all Merton Primary School children</p>	<p>Roll out the Schools and libraries Reading initiative to all schools by July 2014.</p>	<p>95% of children in Merton Primary Schools are active users of their local library</p>	<p>Community and Housing - Libraries and Heritage Service</p>	<p>Implemented in 39 schools with 15,995 children signed up and actively using their local library. Further roll out targeting the final four schools is planned in the coming months.</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
1.2.14 To develop a Healthy Schools Programme targeting school clusters in the East of the borough [area of highest deprivation]	To produce a report identifying areas and schools with highest need based on a schools audit Develop a targeted Merton Healthy Schools programme and provide support to schools to implement the offer	To develop and commission a programme of practical support to schools in East Merton to deliver a range of Healthy Schools prevention activities.	Community and Housing – Public Health	Two School Clusters commissioned to co-ordinate for 2014-16, schools audit undertaken, and range of pilot programmes commissioned and delivered providing practical support to schools to address health improvement priorities, in particular obesity for example through funding projects to encourage increasing physical activity, healthy eating diet and nutrition, gardening and food growing. It is a targeted programme for 20 schools in the east for the borough, where levels of obesity and health inequalities are higher  Evaluation report currently being produced. Sustainability plan to be developed for 2016/17.
1.2.15 To ensure National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data is used to inform and target resources for tackling obesity	To ensure that commissioned services and other programmes to reduce obesity are effectively targeting those in need To produce a report identifying areas and schools with highest need	Monitor uptake of weight management services amongst those families with highest need	Community and Housing – Public Health	NCMP data has been used to inform services including Children’s Weight Management services, School Nursing Service , targeted Healthy Schools programme. Data has been reported to Primary School head teachers, Children’s Trust Board and Health and Wellbeing Board
1.2.16 NB this has been	Commissioning the delivery of drugs services and ensuring	As defined in quarterly	Public Health (previously Safer Merton)	Services continue to be delivered to a high standard and perform within the top quartile of comparator areas for

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
moved to Public Health from Environment and Regeneration- Safer Merton.	high quality Interventions	DOMES report		relevant Public Health Outcome Framework (PHOF) outcomes. Currently reviewing overall service structure and delivery. Procurement to be completed in early 2016/17 and new service in place by October 2016.
1.2.17	Ensuring equal access and services for those experiencing domestic abuse	As defined in the Domestic Violence (DV) action plan for the SM partnership	Environment and Regeneration - Safer Merton	Needs Assessment carried out, there is a new VAWG strategy that has been published and the VAWG strategy Board is currently working on an action plan for themselves and the practitioners group.
1.2.18 increase the independence and mobility of disabled people by improving accessibility in the public realm in Merton	Progress issues identified by the Corporate Public Transport Liaison Group meetings Ensure that all new development complies with mobility requirements in respect of Planning and Building Control	Monitored at the Corporate Public Transport Liaison Group meetings and by monitoring relevant planning appeals.	Environment and Regeneration - Future Merton	<p>a) The council is delivering a works programme to bring 95% of bus stop up to accessible standards by 2016. In particular, work on the stop outside the Waitrose store in Raynes Park is expected to commence shortly</p> <p>b) The Council raises the issue of step free access for both Motspur Park and Rayne Park Stations as opportunities arise. However, should Crossrail 2 move forward then pressure to upgrade stations facilities will increase as both stations are likely to be served by Crossrail 2 services.</p> <p>c) Where possible, the Council endeavours to ensure that the</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				<p>kerbs are dropped at key locations such as at junctions; de-clutter the footways and footpaths to allow for those with mobility scooter and the visually impaired. We also ensure that dropped kerbs at formal crossings and at some informal crossings have the appropriate tactile paving.</p> <p>d) We work with TfL to ensure that all signalised crossings have the appropriate tactile and audible features</p> <p>e) We are very proactive in terms of providing disabled parking bays at key locations such as in Car parks, Town Centres, transport hubs, public buildings as well as outside individual residential properties.</p>
<b>1.3 Anti-poverty initiatives</b>				
1.3.1 Increase take up of children's centre services by families (with 0-4 year olds) from 30% most deprived areas.	-Improve completion of parenting programmes, and take-up of children's centre services and early years provision, by the most needy families through targeted outreach.	-Increase take up of children's centres services by target families.  -Increase the proportion of parents	Children Schools and Families - Early Years and Children's Centres Service.	In 2014-15, take-up of Children's Centre services by families from deprived areas was 77.7% and met 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

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
	<p>-Continue to roll out strategy for funded childcare places for identified 2 year olds</p>	<p>completing parenting programmes.</p> <p>-Ensure good take up of 2 year old places.</p>		<p>antenatal as well as targeted home visiting services.</p> <p>In Q3 of 2015-16, take-up of Children’s Centre services stood at 62.4%. It is anticipated that the target of 75% will be reached by the end of this financial year.</p> <p>Over 2014-15, 917 children accessed the two year-old funding over the year. 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.</p> <p>Take-up of two year-old funding at the end of Q3 of 2015-16 stood at 540 (data covering autumn term) which lagged against the target of 751.</p> <p>At the end of Q3 of 2015-16, there were 105 providers against an end of year target of 118. It is anticipated that this target will be exceeded</p> <p>2014-15 provisional education outcomes shows a 14-percentage point gap between Free School Meal (FSM) pupils (55%) and All Other</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				Pupils (69%) achieving a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). 74% of White British children achieved a GLD. For White Other and Asian Other, the two largest ethnic minority groups, 61% and 67% achieved a GLD, respectively.
<b>1.4 Health inequality - reducing health inequality and the issues affecting particular communities</b>				
1.4.1 Develop a network of community champions who will work within existing voluntary sector groups (with a focus on the East) to support residents to lead healthy lifestyles.	Work with HRCH (LiveWell provider) to commission Merton Voluntary Services Council to deliver health champion programme, train 25 health champions and increase the number of residents from East Merton accessing health improvement services.	Contract signed 25 health champions in place and number of residents engaged.	Community & Housing -Public Health	<p>Community Health Champions have been trained and are now delivering support to their members.</p> <p>A review of the whole LiveWell service including the Health Champions was undertaken in Q3 2015, which has informed future work including the planned re-commissioning of the healthy lifestyles services in 2016/17.</p>
1.4.2 Introduce a more targeted approach to the NHS Health Check programme which gives priority to vulnerable groups	Procuring a software solution which will identify and invite eligible patients from vulnerable groups to have a check first over a rolling period	<p>Software with this capacity procured and installed onto Providers systems</p> <p>GPs prioritise and provide NHS</p>	Community and Housing – Public Health	<p>The new QMS software has been procured and implemented in all partner GP Practices (23 practices). Patients are now being prioritised by vulnerability of cardiovascular risk.</p> <p>As 90% of the checks are by invitation, going forward in 2016/17, GPs are first checking Merton residents who are likely to benefit</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
at increased risk of cardiovascular disease.		health checks for residents who meet prioritisation criteria		most.
1.4.3 To develop a Healthy Schools Programme targeting school clusters in areas of highest deprivation	To develop and commission a programme of practical support to schools in East Merton to deliver a range of Healthy Schools prevention activities.	Monitor uptake of weight management services amongst those families with highest need	Community and Housing – Public Health	Agreed to commission to co-create with schools and partners a programme for 2014/15. Commissioning an obesity prevention programme for 20 schools in East Merton.
<b>1.5 Economic development – supporting business during the economic recession and encourage economic growth</b>				
1.5.1	Implement the Economic Development Strategy	As defined by the action plan referenced in the Economic Development Strategy	Environment and Regeneration – Future Merton	The Economic Wellbeing Group (EWG) continues to provide quarterly updates on progress to the Sustainable Communities and Transport thematic partnership. The Economic Development Strategy Refresh was proposed for 2012-2015 and much of the agreed programmes of activities are due to complete at the end of this financial year. However, some programmes, including employment and skills provisions delivered through the EWG will continue to run for the next financial year. It is proposed that a new economic development programme is



Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				implemented for 2017-2020.
<b>1.6 Access to employment - developing the Employment and Skills plan</b>				
1.6.1	Implement the Employment Skills Plan	As defined by the action plan referenced in the Employment Skills Plan	Environment and Regeneration – Future Merton	The EWG implemented the first Employment and Skills Action Plan in 2014 as a 12 month programme. A new plan is now in place for 2015-17. The update on actions are reported to SCTP quarterly.
<b>Equality Objective 2 - Service Access</b>				
<b>2.1 Undertaking Equality Analysis (EA) and targeting the gaps identified</b>				
2.1.1 Increase the number and range of in house local foster carers, as identified by the LAC sufficiency assessment (2012-15).	<p>Increase capacity and local placement choice to meet the needs of older children and teenagers.</p> <p>Target recruitment of carers from an Asian background.</p>	<p>Recruit 3 x carer households for target group per year</p> <p>Recruit at least 1 x Asian carer household per year.</p>	Children Schools and Families - Access to Resources Team.	<p>Recruitment of suitable in-house foster carers remains a key priority for the department. A Sufficiency assessment is refreshed annually to target our understanding of types of cares needed for our looked after children. In line with our continuous improvement principles, the LAC Sufficiency Statement for 2016-17 has been refreshed with a new approach agreed to support a greater understanding of placement needs.</p> <p>In 2014-15, 10 foster carers were recruited of which 6 were from target groups. 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</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				<p>internal recruitment streams. All three campaigns had a strong message in accordance with the need for carers for the 11+ age group.</p> <p>At the end of Q3 of 2015-16, 10 foster carers had been recruited. Seven of these are approved foster carers for target groups.</p>
2.1.2	All Heads of Service will ensure that EAs lead to equality of service delivery	All reviews to be held at DMT each October prior to the new savings code commencement	All departments - Heads of Service across	Savings proposals are accompanied by EAs where appropriate.
2.1.3 Explore setting up service level agreements to secure regular placements with child minders, nurseries and other childcare providers to support learners with childcare needs.	Discuss with childcare settings who supply work experience placements for our existing courses	Achievement and completion of learners	Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE)	<p>In communication with one local nursery and in process of contacting NCMA for contact details of local childminders.</p> <p>Have built good relationships with local child minders and nurseries who have expressed requests to work with MAE again.</p> <p>Dyslexia tutor has identified different resources to be used in classroom. i.e. materials to use for learners with dyslexia – different coloured card slide rules etc.</p> <p>Formal Dyslexia assessments carried out to identify degree of Dyslexia and recommended methods of support</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
2.1.4 Promotion and awareness raising of equipment and resources available to support additional learning needs	Practical demonstration and Classroom observations Promote in staff briefing (newsletter)	Increased use of resources and learner success.	Community and Housing – Merton Adult Education (MAE)	Increased use of resources and learner success. New posters, visits to classes, information included in Advice and Guidance, informal discussions on demand have been implemented
2.1.5 Collection of customer profile data re those receiving social care assessments	Analysis of numbers of assessments carried out for different groups of clients (e.g. BME, different parts of the borough)	Increased assessments of the harder to reach client groups/parts of the borough	Community and Housing - Access and Assessment	The commissioned research from Public Health re the assessment of inequalities from an ethnicity perspective of Adult Social Care (ASC) data, to gain a better understanding of whether there were any differences in service provision experienced by the different ethnicity groups is now complete and findings under consideration
2.1.6 Analyse outcomes of all nomination panels by equality client group for Supported Living service.	The outcomes for the past 12 months need to be collated.	The outcomes for the past 12 months need to be collated.	Community and Housing – Direct Provision	Nominations from April 2014 to date; 1 female, 8 male, all from white backgrounds.
2.1.7 Ensure that services are accessible to all customers from different equality groups	Review of any formal & informal complaints received related to equalities and implement provider improvement plans	Increased uptake of services by customers from all equality groups	Community and Housing – Commissioning	The commissioned research from Public Health re the assessment of inequalities from an ethnicity perspective of Adult Social Care (ASC) data, to gain a better understanding of whether there were any differences in service provision

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	where necessary			experienced by the different ethnicity groups is now complete and findings under consideration
2.1.8 Monitor service access to help ensure equality of outcomes	<p>Produce annual equality monitoring report - lettings, supported housing, intermediate housing, homelessness, RDS, rough sleepers, affordable warmth, and develop actions to address any issues highlighted</p> <p>Analyse outcomes of all nomination panels by equality client group</p> <p>Complete analysis of housing-related Census 2011 data</p> <p>Include equality monitoring of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in annual monitoring report</p>	<p>Annual report completed and considered by Housing Needs Management Team (H</p> <p>Annual monitoring report completed</p> <p>Analysis completed</p> <p>DFG outcomes added to annual monitoring report</p>	Community and Housing - Housing	<p>Annual monitoring report completed and considered by HNMT</p> <p>Outcomes for Young Persons Nominations Panel completed. Analysis of other panels yet to be completed.</p> <p>Analysis completed</p> <p>Age &amp; gender data for DFG being added to spread sheet. Ethnicity data still to be captured. Will be added to annual monitoring report once data are inputted.</p>
2.1.9 Increase access to libraries among older	Consult with older people and the working age	To increase access to library services among	Community and Housing - Libraries and Heritage Service	Target not yet achieved but consultation has been completed and action plan presented to Sustainable

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
people and the working age population.	population to ascertain how we can improve services and better engage with underrepresented audiences.	under-represented target groups by 10%		Communities Scrutiny Panel.
2.1.10 Gain a greater understanding of the current use and future needs of pharmaceutical service in Merton.	Commission a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) that drives service improvement in Merton pharmacies, including public health commissioned activity e.g. stop smoking services and Emergency Hormonal Contraception and Chlamydia	PNA published by April 2015	Community and Housing – Public Health	The PNA has now been completed and agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board for their comments. This was published by the statutory deadline of 1st April 2015.
2.1.11 Development and expansion of existing sexual health service in community pharmacies in Merton. Pharmacies will be selected based on their location in	Commission 2 pharmacies as a pilot to provide a sexual health suite of services to include Emergency Contraception, Chlamydia testing, Chlamydia treatment and condom provision.	PNA published by April 2015	Community and Housing – Public Health	<p>Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC) Patient Group Directions (PGD) developed and approved.</p> <p>Chlamydia treatment Patient Group Directions (PGD) developed and approved.</p> <p>Introduction of Chlamydia treatment cancelled due to budget constraints. Healthy Living Pharmacy (HLP)</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
the deprived wards.				model being developed – anticipated April 16. Further enhanced services aimed at HLPs may be considered at a later date.
2.1.12 Development of Contraception and Sexual Health Service (CASH) provision in Merton.	The service is now providing opt out HIV testing and Chlamydia treatment, thereby offering more patient choice and access.	Increase provision and access of sexual health services in the community and offer more patient choice.	Community and Housing – Public Health	Review of CASH (Contraception and Sexual Health) alongside other sexual health services completed. .  CASH service carried out a STI testing pilot for over 25's in 2015/16 which has now been incorporated into the new service model – due to commence 01st April 2016
2.1.13 Review of school nursing service	To ensure the service specification for school nursing services reflects the needs identified in the review		Community and Housing – Public Health	School Nursing Service (5-19 healthy child) specification was revised to include a requirement to undertake school health profiles to inform prioritisation of resources based on defined school needs in 2015. Service has been re-commissioned with health visiting services and will be delivered by Central London Community Health from April 2016.
<b>2.2 Business Planning</b>				
2.2.1	Savings all have Equality Analysis	100%	Corporate Services – Business Planning	Savings proposals are accompanied by Equality Analysis.
<b>2.3 Prevention and independence (Direct payments)</b>				
2.3.1 Expand the Direct Payment Scheme to include Health Funding	A short life joint health and social care project group will implement personal health budgets via the	Numbers of Merton residents receiving health funding via a personal budget	Community and Housing – Access and Assessment	A health and social care project group has been established. This is work in progress.

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
	Merton Direct Payments Team			
<b>2.4 Building equality considerations into Public Value Reviews (PVRs)</b>				
2.4.1	PVRs all have Equality Analysis	100%	Corporate Services – Business Improvement	PVRs have been developed into a targeted tool that we will use where it adds value to more routine service reviews and the regular TOM exercise. Where it is deployed Equalities Analysis will still be an important element to any resulting implementation plan.
<b>2.5 Building equality considerations into the Commissioning process</b>				
2.5.1 Equality proof Contracts	The evaluation process includes an assessment of equalities	100%	Corporate Services - Commercial Services	All contracts include equalities considerations where appropriate and these are assessed at tender evaluation.
2.5.2 Improve outreach work	Hold workshops with Small/Medium Enterprises and BAME organisations to advise on the borough's commissioning process	1 annual event	Corporate Services - Commercial Services	Initial works are being held with the Voluntary Sector on the 21st April and the 4th May 2016. The feedback from these meeting will be used to develop SME workshops.
<b>Equality Objective 3 – Improving engagement</b>				
Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	
<b>3.1 Young people – to ensure that the needs of all young people are represented.</b>				
3.1.1 Continue to support and develop participation/	-Continue to support Merton's Youth Parliament and Young Advisors to	No of young advisors trained and active.	Children Schools and Families - Youth Inclusion	Our use of 'User voice' customer feedback continues to be a key focused for the department. The department's young people's

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
governance opportunities for young people age 13-19.	input into the planning and governance of services for children and young people.	No of members of Merton Youth Parliament.		<p>participation and engagement functions a key area of focus following the publication of a new strategy for youth participation last year.</p> <p>At the end of 2014-15, there were 32 Young Advisors and 14 Young Inspectors trained and active. There were 35 members of Merton Youth Parliament (and others).</p> <p>Over 2014-15, a range of groups continued to provide children and young people with participation opportunities and the chance to effect service development and delivery. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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.</li> </ul> <p>See below for Your Short (Children with disabilities group) and Children in</p>



Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				<p>Care Council for engagement with looked after children.</p> <p>Progress in Q2 of 2015-16 included:                      -Work underway to set up Youth Parliament elections in secondary schools.                      -In response to identified need and requests from pupils an LGBT group has been set up at Ricards Lodge High School.                      -Young Inspector recruitment process underway.</p> <p>DMT continue to receive quarterly 'User Voice' summary reports of all feedback activity taking place across the department.</p>
3.1.2	Support delivery and development of the Your Shout Group and its contribution to the work of the Transition Partnership Board (TPB).	Your Shout to be represented at all Transition Partnership meetings.	Children Schools and Families - Youth Inclusion	In 2014-15, the 'Your Shout' group for children with learning disabilities has fed into management discussions around aspects of the C&F 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.
3.1.3	Establish clear and age appropriate material and accessible media to	Improved levels of participation in Merton's Children in Care	Children Schools and Families - Permanency, Placements and LAC	In 2014-15, the Children in Care Council (CICC) were involved in helping to refresh the Children in Care and Care Leavers charter,

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
	<p>promote membership and attendance of Merton’s Children in Care Council.</p>	<p>Council.</p>		<p>inputting into the Care Leavers Strategy 2015-18, reviewing the LAC Pack and identified specifications for a new information website.</p> <p>CICC also took part in reviewing the LAC review forms and ‘Let’s Talk’ booklets.</p> <p>The Participation Apprentice currently working within the 14+ team is involved alongside the MSCB in participation work being led by South Bank University. The apprentice is meeting throughout the year with the MSCB Chair to ensure that the voice of the LAC young person is represented on the Board.</p> <p>A project is being led jointly by an Independent Reviewing Officer and the Participation Apprentice which involves consultation with LAC to feed into practice development. A thematic CICC meeting was held in September 2015 with the older LAC cohort and a further session was planned for October half-term with younger LAC.</p>
<p>3.1.4 Increase take up of learner support fund to support childcare costs</p>	<p>Schedule mini open days taster sessions and engagement in events in communities with under</p>	<p>Spending childcare support fund</p>	<p>Community and Housing - MAE</p>	<p>To arrange text message to all eligible learners to inform them of support with childcare costs.</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
Meeting the needs of learners with childcare needs via the discretionary learning support grant.	represented			<p>Availability of Ad Hoc discussions regarding eligibility for childcare support</p> <p>New claims being processed due to promotion of childcare support in recent advice and guidance sessions.</p> <p>The allocation has been fully committed this year due to the additional promotion</p>
3.1.5 To proactively engage young people in the shaping and delivery of library services.	<p>To develop key volunteering roles for young people.</p> <p>To develop and deliver a programme of events for young people.</p>	<p>Ten young volunteers support the delivery of events in libraries.</p> <p>Eight young people events are hosted in libraries across Merton.</p>	Community and Housing – Libraries and Heritage Services	Over 150 young people contributed time to Merton’s libraries in the last year. Both performance measures have been well exceeded.
<b>3.2 Disabled people</b>				
3.2.1 All Saints Day centre to undertake an analysis of the stakeholders who use the premises	Collation of the types of activity and the stakeholders using the centre.	Opportunities could be identified for wider engagement and involvement in	Community and housing – Direct Provision	As at February 2015 31 different groups use All Saints. Of these, 2 are statutory agencies, 5 are charities, 1 is a church, 3 are community network groups and the rest are a range of small community groups or start up

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
for community events.		activities for hard to reach groups.		businesses (Yoga group, Acupuncture Clinic)
3.2.2	Conduct a survey of disabled clients' use of transport services, analyse the results to produce an action plan	Annual survey	Environment and Regeneration – Transport Services	A further survey is being circulated shortly; this time with specific transport related questions. SEN lead on this, so that we do not swamp the families with multiple surveys. Results of this one should be available around the end of April.
<b>3.3 Carers/Links and other groups, Older People</b>				
3.3.1	To ensure that Healthwatch which started in April 2013 reflects the diverse population of Merton	Contract award and specification 2012-13.	(Commissioned by MVSC)	Health Watch to help engage residents on a consultation.
<b>3.4 BAME engagement e.g. BAME Governors</b>				
3.4.1	Work in partnership with MUN to ensure BAME engagement embedded in service improvement	BAME Plan link in thematic partnership plans	All Departments – Heads of Service	BAME Voice was launched on 4 February 2016 and will develop priorities to discuss with the Council and partner agencies
<b>3.5 Voluntary and Community Sector support for engagement</b>				
3.5.1 Ensure that any forum or consultative group has a true representation of the local community	Review membership of all existing customer forums	Representation of all groups in the local community within customer forums	Community and Housing - Commissioning	A Customer Engagement Framework has not been developed. However, customer forums are facilitated / hosted by voluntary sector partners e.g. Healthwatch, CIL, MVSC, Carers Support Merton etc. to ensure all sectors of the local community are represented.
3.5.2 Establish an Adult Social Care Customer	Detail all customer forums, frequency, membership, aims &	More effective and equitable customer	Community and Housing - Commissioning	This is part of the ASC Redesign Programme. A Customer Engagement Framework is being

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
Engagement Framework	objectives, communication channels e.g. social networking	engagement		developed for implementation in 2015/16  This has taken longer than expected so delayed to 16/17.
3.5.3 Ensure actions from the consultation and Engagement Strategy is implemented		Monitored via the Departmental Equalities Group	Community and Housing - Commissioning	This is done
3.5.4 Improve engagement through user consultations & satisfaction surveys	<p>Continue engagement with older people through the Older People's Housing Forum</p> <p>Identify housing and support need of older people</p> <p>Collect equalities data for all satisfaction surveys</p> <p>Analyse Housing Options Survey by equality categories</p> <p>Visit one new housing schemes a year after completion to assess satisfaction</p>	<p>Forum meetings held</p> <p>Needs assessment completed</p> <p>Survey analysed by equality categories</p> <p>Evidence obtained from providers</p> <p>Satisfaction survey completed</p>	Community and Housing - Housing	<p>Forum meetings once a year. Next Forum to take place in March 2016.</p> <p>Research completed on 01/10/2014 with over 70 responses. Analysis completed in 2014-15</p> <p>Data collected for 2013-14. Satisfaction surveys will only be undertaken periodically from now on, and surveys not completed in 2014-15 or 2015-16.</p> <p>2013-14 Survey analysed by equality categories</p> <p>Evidence obtained from providers</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
3.5.5 Forge new partnerships within the community to meet the needs of our learners.	<p>Enhance 'wider participation' and 'bridging the gap' plans to keep abreast of our changing community and their requirements.</p> <p>Gather feedback from partnerships and action / implement changes where needed.</p>	<p>Capture progress via the termly self assessment review process and detail key finding within the annual self assessment report</p>	Community and Housing - MAE	<p>Good partnerships exist with many local groups within our community. MAE responds promptly to specific needs identified by partners and implements well received courses to meet the needs of local learners. 14-15 saw a 22% increase in FEML (Family English, Maths and Language) courses, all working with partners in family centres and schools. Employability courses, including for the potential self employed, using NLDC funds were also delivered, and a specialised art course for clients of the Stroke Association.</p> <p>Learners at MAE feel safe and effective processes and procedures are in place. The college single central record is managed and updated, and good arrangements are in place for DBS checks to be carried out and monitored. Learner responses taken from the evaluation questionnaires show that 99.7% of learners agree that MAE is a safe place to learn. Significant Safeguarding and Prevent training took place in summer 2015 policy and action plan will be implemented at the beginning of 15-16 with tutor training taking place in the tutor conference.</p>
3.5.6 Provide	Support a wide range	Capture progress	Community and Housing - MAE	Established a new CV Fresh start

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
<p>updates on the diversity of learners and staff for those protected characteristics currently recorded.</p>	<p>of local community events that bring people from different backgrounds together. Eg Mitcham carnival. Celebrate and inform on a range of subjects in respect of equality and diversity.</p> <p>Improve evidence gathering on partnership work and community cohesion and document in SAR appendices.</p> <p>Gather evidence on balancing diverse and sometimes conflicting interests.</p> <p>Enhance communication of how different groups of learners are able to access learning.</p> <p>Finance work already being done in line with Neighbour Learning for Disadvantaged</p>	<p>via the termly self assessment review process and detail key finding within the annual self assessment report</p>		<p>employability project supporting young people living in disadvantaged wards back into work. Since commencement in early Feb have signed up 34 young people, many of whom have secured interviews.</p> <p>Diversity data captured in the annual self assessment report 12-13 academic year report due for completion in March 2014</p> <p>We have collated the equality profile for our learners relating to ethnicity, age, disability, disadvantaged ward and employment status and there are no achievement issues in relation to particular ethnic groups, age or disability. Ofsted require us to assess these types of issues.</p> <p>New ESOL and Health courses being developed due to be launched in April with courses taking place out in the community including at the Morden Mosque.</p> <p>ESOL and Health continue to progress well.</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
	<p>Communities grant funding guidance.</p> <p>Display posters and informative information across college, and within briefings on subjects such as Black History Month, LGBT week etc.</p>			
<p>3.5.7 Work with Health Watch to consult on all Public Health work, especially Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)</p>	<p>Public Health uses consultations (e.g. focus groups) to ensure that needs/public health services reflect different communities</p>	<p>All needs assessments incorporate feedback from consultation exercises and used in service design</p>	<p>Community and Housing – Public Health</p>	<p>HealthWatch to help engage residents on a consultation of the refresh of the Health and Well-being Strategy April 2015</p>
<p>3.5.8 Improve engagement with the community and the work delivering crime and disorder interventions.</p>	<p>Setting up new partnership engagement methods</p>	<p>Number of meetings number of attendees</p>	<p>Environment and Regeneration – Safer Merton</p>	<p>The local Safer Neighbourhood Board in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the Mayors Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) is now established and meets quarterly. Social media and twitter accounts are used to disseminate domestic violence</p>



Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				information and to engage with the community raising awareness regarding the public consultation for the strategic assessment.
<b>3.6 Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community</b>				
3.6.1 Increase the civic participation of the LGBT community	Regular consultation and involving the LGBT forum in discussions about strategies and changes to council policy.	Quarterly meetings to be attended by officers cross the council to consult service issues	All departments – Heads of Service	<p>The LGBT forum has been re-launched. The group held a series of films for LGBT History Month.</p> <p>The Forum is developing a work programme, has launched a new web site and is trying to encourage more community members to get involved with the work of the forum.</p> <p>A public meeting will be held on 26 April at Vestry Hall.</p>
<b>Equality Objective 4 – Promoting Community Cohesion</b>				
Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	
<b>4.1 Celebrating diversity</b>				
4.1.1	To ensure that all local demographic changes are fed into the service plans, user surveys and customer charters to improve service delivery		All Departments – Heads of Service	Detailed analysis of the census data has fed into the Policy Network and departments are being given information to support service planning.
4.1.2 Use locality structure as a springboard for	Maximise social capital, informal networks, focus on	Reduced reliance on funded statutory services	Community and Housing – Access and Assessments	This is part of the ASC Redesign Programme and is part of our Promoting Independence Strategy

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
adopting a community outreach/asset based approach to supporting customers	<p>strengths and abilities of customers</p> <p>Promote connectedness through the Ageing Well Programme and locality based social work and occupational therapy teams</p>	<p>Positive outcomes from the Ageing Well Programme</p> <p>Reduced customer isolation</p> <p>Increase in signposting, information and advice</p>		
4.1.3 Increase opportunities for integration	<p>Work with Faith in Action to improve engagement with people from A10 countries</p> <p>Publish Merton's Gypsy &amp; Traveller Strategy</p> <p>Promote employment and training opportunities for young people through MYSHF</p>	<p>A10 Project outcomes monitored</p> <p>Strategy published</p> <p>Mapping of schemes completed</p>	Community and Housing - Housing	<p>The A10 Project had assisted 362 clients over a 4-year period (2011-12 to 2014-15)</p> <p>The number of clients assisted had increased by 130% between Year 1 and Year 4 of the Project</p> <p>The proportion of A10 clients assisted who were rough sleepers had gone up from 13% in 2011-12 to 93% in 2014-15</p> <p>The Project helps people from A10 countries to integrate through assistance with housing, applications for work licence / ID documents, referrals to support services etc.</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				Strategy to be updated and published  Mapping of schemes completed
4.1.4 To develop and deliver a programme of activities that promotes community cohesion and interfaith dialogue and engage underrepresented groups.	Celebrate diversity by supporting a range of key initiatives such as Black History Month and Celebrating Age.	30 events held in libraries across Merton to promote community cohesion	Community and Housing - Libraries and Heritage Service	Target exceeded. Annual marketing and events plan ensures that these elements are covered and performance is tracked throughout the year.
<b>4.2 Maximising the opportunity to work in partnership with each other in the community</b>				
4.2.1 Continue work to prevent First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice system.	Implement diversionary programmes and out of court disposals.	-Reduction in FTE to the Youth Justice system. -No of out of court disposals.	Children Schools and Families - Youth Justice Service	Good progress continues to be made in reducing the numbers of First Time Entrants into the Young Justice System.  2014-15 data showed a 32% reduction of First-Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System (YJS) compared to last year. The rate of re-offending remained in line with the national average.  At the end of Q3 of 2015-16, there were 33 FTEs against a target of 80.  Over 2014-15, work on youth crime prevention concentrated on early intervention and prevention methods

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				<p>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 has included a focus on parenting capacity, mental health and other environmental factors.</p> <p>This year, the Youth Justice Team have utilised the Breaking Free group (a commissioned service facilitated by ex-offenders) which allows young people to explore the journey to offending and pathways out of offending to consider long-term consequences and opportunities for ‘breaking free’. Other programmes delivered are: All Calm group to support stress management, Tightrope Tool to engage in self-assessment and identify areas of resilience, Jigsaw4U and Teentalk (CBT) exercises and embedding Motivational Interviewing techniques.</p> <p>Although young women remain a low percentage of the FTE cohort (and of the overall YOT cohort), numbers have been recently increasing. The recent spike can be linked to some of the issues (MISPERS and CSE) and council’s priorities such as the Violence Against Women and Girls</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				strategy.
4.2.2 Develop a network of community champions who will work within existing voluntary sector groups (with a focus on the East) to support residents to lead healthy lifestyles.	Engage community groups to work with community members as health champions	Contract signed, 25 health champions in place and number of residents engaged.	Community a Housing - Public Health	The first cohort of groups are now being approached to take part in the programme, with training due to take place before the end of March 2014.
4.2.3 To support communities to take greater control over their lives, to include an understanding of key health issues.	8 additional ESOL classes with health messages will be offered in the community	Uptake of ESOL classes	Community a Housing - Public Health	8 ESOL classes delivered in community settings during Q1 & 2. A further 8 classes are being offered in Q3 & 4.
4.2.4 Work with Alzheimers Society and Imagine to ensure they are promoting community cohesion	Via Contract monitoring and commissioning	Reduced reliance on funded services and increased partnerships between provider organisations and the local community	Community and Housing - Commissioning	This is done as part of the contract monitoring process.

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
<b>4.3 Community Cohesion Strategy</b>				
4.3.1	Monitor the delivery of Community Cohesion Strategy action plan	Achieve annual targets	Corporate Services - Policy, Strategy and Partnerships	The strategy is being refreshed.
<b>4.4 Using the Annual Residents Survey (ARS) results to inform service delivery and improving perceptions</b>				
4.4.1	Analyse ARS results to inform publicity campaign	Report produced and made available on the intranet	Corporate Services - Communications	Due to the withdrawal of our longstanding contractor it was not possible to deliver an annual residents survey in 2015. We are currently exploring options for gathering the views of residents in the future.
<b>4.5 Addressing demographic change</b>				
4.5.1	Ensure Census 2011 information is made available locally	Briefings provided internally and to partners.	Corporate Services - Communications	The Policy, Strategy and Partnerships team has undertaken detailed analysis and produced Ward Profiles that are available on the Intranet.
<b>4.6 Equal access to volunteering opportunities</b>				
4.6.1	Promote volunteering opportunities using a variety of media	Quarterly	All Departments - Heads of Service	<p>There is on going discussion within the Target Operating Model work stream about how volunteering can improve service delivery across departments.</p> <p>The council continues to work with Merton Voluntary Services Council to promote volunteering to residents and staff through various media e.g. the Employee Volunteering Scheme.</p> <p>VolunteerMerton launched. This is a new online portal that seamlessly links up volunteers with volunteer</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
				<p>opportunities through a digital platform.</p> <p>The Merton Partnership has signed up to ValueYou: a new accreditation scheme to recognise individuals who have delivered over 100 hours of volunteering and offer them discount cards at local businesses.</p>
<b>Equality Objective 5 – Workforce Development</b>				
Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	
<b>5.1 Be an employer that recognises diversity and the talents that being different brings to the organisation and service delivery</b>				
5.1.1	Implement and utilise the self service element of Learning and Development module	<p>Mini survey issued to the workforce to gather feedback on how the organisation utilises the skills they possess</p> <p>Relationship to results from Staff Survey on Question 65 (It's your ability that counts)</p>	Corporate Services - Human Resources	<p>The section in I-Trent has been developed where staff are able to list their skills. The staff survey (2014) has taken place but the analysis of the report is not yet available. Report due to go to CMT 3 March 2015.</p> <p>Bringing On Talent programme designed and to be launched in May 2015.</p> <p>Managers have supported a local Secondary School – by providing interview skills workshops as well as leading sessions about their roles and the qualifications needed.</p>
5.1.2 Establish a diverse workforce that is fair,	Monitor workforce profiles	Evidence of completion (e.g certificate, staff	Community and Housing - MAE	Moodle training to be organised with the Head of Support Services.

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consistent and supports equal opportunities.	Set up training modules on MOODLE to make it accessible to all staff regardless of the working arrangements	records) ensuring staff compliance		<p>Compiling an Equality and Diversity resource folder on MOODLE for tutors to use. Tutors sharing resources that have been used in class.</p> <p>E&amp;D posters around the building continuously updated.</p>
5.1.3 Ensure staff understand how to apply equality responsibilities to their day-to-day work	Arrange equality & diversity training / talk for all HN&E staff through team meeting	Staff completed training	Community and Housing - Housing	Session to be arranged for 2015 – part of on-going training.
5.1.4 Develop and deliver equality and diversity training for library volunteers.	Equality and diversity training rolled out to all library volunteers.	100% of library volunteers receive training in equality and diversity.	Community and Housing - Libraries and Heritage Service	All volunteers receive equality & diversity training as part of their induction and this is topped up when any new policies and procedures are rolled out. The focus at the moment is in ensuring the training also incorporates in Prevent and CSE elements.
5.1.5 Establish a diverse workforce profile that is reflective of the local community it	Set up systems and processes to identify gaps of inequality and disadvantages between local	Detailed analysis of workforce profile	Community and Housing – Adult Social Care Commissioning	This is embedded within the TOM and ASC Re-design Programme and is on-going.



Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
<p>serves in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010</p>	<p>communities and the social care workforce</p>			
<p>5.1.6 Develop an inclusive learning and development action plan</p>	<p>Develop or adapt competency framework to ensure workforce’s thorough understanding of equality and diversity and it’s application in service delivery</p> <p>Raise the standard of care and support in the sector by ensuring that care and support workers keep their skills up-to-date</p> <p>Build managers’ confidence and skills in managing a diverse workforce</p>	<p>Measurements against competency framework post training and evaluation, robust supervision sessions and annual appraisals</p> <p>Data on uptake and post-programme evaluation</p> <p>Increased confidence for managers when seeking advice and guidance</p>	<p>Community and Housing – Adult Social Care Commissioning</p>	<p>A specific L&amp;D plan has not yet been developed, but there has been progress, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two equalities and diversity training sessions have been provided to managers by an external provider, focussing on the application of equality and diversity in service delivery and also in managing staff – this has led to increased confidence in managers managing a diverse workforce; and</li> <li>• Staff continue to upskill in service specific areas e.g. British Sign Language in the Sensory Impairment team.</li> </ul> <p>The Head of Direct provision sits on the Workforce Development Group.</p> <p>Learning and development continues to form part of staff’s appraisal, 1:1 and supervision.</p>
<p>5.1.7 To support</p>	<p>Train fire-fighters,</p>	<p>Number of staff who are trained</p>	<p>Community and Housing – Public Health</p>	<p>All fire fighters in Merton have now been trained and referral pathways</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
front line staff from a range of services to support health improvement agenda.	gym staff and council staff to be able to identify and signpost those residents that may want support to lead healthy lifestyles e.g. stop smoking.	in Merton.		<p>are now being finalised. Training for library staff, gym staff and other front line staff has also taken place or is now being planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 LBM Workplace Health Champions trained in Sept 2015</li> <li>• 24 Children’s Centre staff trained in HENRY (workforce development to give staff more confidence in tackling child obesity) in Autumn 2016.</li> <li>• 10 Outdoor gym instructors interviewed in Feb 2016 and accepted for 8 month training programme commencing March 2016</li> <li>• RSPH awarded contract in February 2016 to train 100 frontline staff – training to commence in April 2016</li> <li>• Training session scheduled for all 60 Councillors on 01 March 2016 to signpost how they can access Health Champion training themselves.</li> </ul>
5.1.8 To support front line staff from a range of services to support health improvement	Train fire-fighters, gym staff and council staff to be able to identify and signpost those residents that may want support to lead healthy lifestyles	Number of staff who are trained in Merton.	Community and Housing – Public Health	<p>All fire fighters in Merton have now been trained and referral pathways are now being finalised.</p> <p>Training for library staff, gym staff and other front line staff is now being planned.</p>

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division	Update
agenda.	e.g. stop smoking.			
5.1.9 To create a healthy work environment for staff	To promote and provide opportunities for staff (internal and external) to become healthy through understanding challenges staff faced and development of programmes to meet this need.	Number of workplaces working towards London Healthy Workplace Charter.  Number of activities provided for staff  Uptake to activities	Community and Housing – Public Health	Merton Council has achieved commitment level of the London Healthy Workplace Charter, which included the development of a steering group and action plan.  Public Health has commissioned Merton Chamber of Commerce to deliver to support to businesses in Merton who would like to support their staff, including working towards the London Healthy Workplace Charter.
<b>5.2 Learning and Development - developing staff from under-representative groups into senior management roles</b>				
5.2.1	To ensure recruitment strategy has strong focus on delivering staff profile more reflective of the communities we serve at all levels.	Short and long lists that are representative of all the equality strands where possible	Corporate Services - Human Resources	Departments need to look at their workforce profile to identify under representation and Recruitment and HR managers can insert a welcome clause that encourages application from the particular group.
5.2.2	To deliver equalities training to all staff	Annual Training Report	All Heads of Service	Online diversity training available for managers and staff.
<b>5.3 Pathways into employment for disabled residents i.e. work experience/ mentoring</b>				
5.3.1	Work with partners and disabled residents to raise	Taster sessions to be run in February 2013.	Corporate Services - Human Resources Chair of Disability Employees Forum,	Create opportunities where participants can have 'real'

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	awareness of employment pathways across all directorates	Success of taster sessions evaluated and action plan developed and in place	All Heads of Service	experience – built into recruitment training programme.
<b>5.4 Apprenticeships for young people (e.g. looked after children, those with mental illness, young offenders)</b>				
5.4.1	Increase the number of young people in apprenticeships with sustainable jobs	Work with both internal and external partners to ensure recruitment processes are effective and efficient  Incorporate evaluation from apprentices, partners and appointing managers to develop an action plan to support the sustainability of the programme.	Corporate Services - Human Resources	We currently have 28 Apprentices in the council. 60% of apprentices either go on to higher education, acquire employment internally/externally.
<b>5.5 Raising awareness of mental illness</b>				
5.5.1	Raise awareness of mental health issues	Bite-size sessions	Corporate Services - Human Resources	Workshops took place in May - 20 managers attended. Will be rolling out

Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division		Update
	to ensure all employees and managers have an understanding of the impact in the workplace	<p>established to raise awareness for managers and employees</p> <p>The feedback from managers and employees incorporated into a programme that meets the needs of the organisation.</p> <p>Evaluation to take place up to and including Level 3</p>	Chair of Disability Employees Forum		<p>6 sessions.</p> <p>Regular articles circulated to managers from the Employee Assistance Programme and HML on issues relating to stress and mental health.</p> <p>Support the rollout of Dementia Friends in the Council.</p>
<b>5.6 Valuing staff diversity / staff appreciation of diversity in the community</b>					
5.6.1 Improve capacity of managers to operate effectively as leaders of a diverse workforce, delivering services to a diverse customer base.	Deliver values driven leadership programme to managers.	Completion of programme	Children, Schools and Families - Commissioning, Strategy and Performance.	<p>This was completed in 2012/13.</p> <p>The Workforce and Practice Development Team have overseen delivery of mandatory training around ethnicity and diversity for permanent and agency staff, Frontline participants and as optional for students. Information on impact will be reported on at the end of 2015-16.</p> <p>CSF has launched its Social Work</p>	

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Priority Area	Key activity	Performance Measure	Department/Division		Update
					<p>Academy which is part of the London's Best Council work programme (Feb 2016).</p> <p>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.</p>
5.6.2	Develop a programme to give all staff diversity training.		Evaluate the impact of the diversity training	Environment and Regeneration -Merton Transport Services	Diversity workshops have been delivered in Transport Services at Garth Road and were well received. Further sessions are being undertaken in partnership with HR for new employees.

## **Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

**Date: 5 April 2016**

**Subject: Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16**

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Contact officer: Julia Regan; Julia.regan@merton.gov.uk; 020 8545 3864

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### **Recommendations:**

- A. That, subject to any changes agreed by the Commission at its meeting on 5 April, the Commission approves the Annual Report to be presented to Council at its meeting on 13 July 2016.
- 

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

- 1.1 Members are invited to consider and agree any changes it wishes to make to the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16.

### **2. DETAILS**

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is required to produce an Annual Report outlining the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function over the course of the municipal year.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is asked to consider the draft report, identify any changes it wishes to make and approve the Annual Report to be presented to Council at its meeting on 13 July 2016 in order to update all Members on the delivery and outcomes of the scrutiny annual work programme for 2015/16.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is required to produce an annual report outlining the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function over the course of the municipal year to present to the full Council. The Commission would be in breach of the constitution if it did not do this.

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

- 4.1 The Chairs of each of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels have been consulted on the draft text relating to the undertaken by that Panel.

### **5. TIMETABLE**

- 5.1 Any additions/amendments as agreed by the Commission at its meeting on 5 April 2016 will be included in the final version of the Annual Report to be presented to full Council at its meeting on 13 July 2016.

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

- 6.1 There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the financial, resource and property implications of any recommendations to Cabinet, including specific financial, resource and property implications.

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

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny operates within the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, Health and Social Care Act 2001 and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 7.2 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory implications of any recommendations to Cabinet, including specific legal and statutory implications.
- 7.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is legally required to produce an Annual Report outlining the work of Overview and Scrutiny during the municipal year. Overview and Scrutiny would be in breach of the constitution if it did not do this.

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

- 8.1 It is a fundamental aim of Overview and Scrutiny to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement.
- 8.2 The reviews involve work to consult local residents, community and voluntary sector groups; businesses, hard to reach groups etc and the views and evidence gathered are fed into the review.
- 8.3 Scrutiny work involves the consideration of the human rights, equalities and community cohesion issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Scrutiny work also needs to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications.

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

- 9.1 In line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police and Justice Act 2006, all Council departments must have regard to the impact of services on crime, including anti-social behaviour and drugs. Scrutiny review reports will therefore highlight any implications arising from the reviews relating to crime and disorder as necessary.

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

- 10.1 Scrutiny work involves the consideration of the risk management and health and safety implications relating to the topic being scrutinised. Scrutiny work also needs to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific risk management and health and safety implications.



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

11.1 Appendix 1 - draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None

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# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16

London Borough of Merton

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16

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**Foreword**

**Councillor Peter Southgate  
Chair, Overview & Scrutiny Commission**

## What is overview and scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000. Merton operates a Leader and Cabinet model, where the Cabinet makes the executive decisions of the authority on behalf of local residents.

Overview and Scrutiny's main roles are:

- holding the Cabinet to account
- improving and developing council policies
- examining decisions before they are implemented
- engaging with members of the public
- monitoring performance of the council and its partners

Scrutiny can look into services provided by other agencies and other matters of importance to the people of the borough. Scrutiny has legal powers to monitor and hold to account local health services (Health and Social Care Act 2001) and to scrutinise crime reduction and community safety issues (Police and Justice Act 2006).

### **Principles**

Overview and Scrutiny at Merton is:

- open to the public
- informed by methodically gathered evidence
- based on careful deliberation and discussion
- conducted in an appropriate manner

### **How Overview and Scrutiny works in Merton**

Merton Council has an Overview and Scrutiny Commission, which acts as a coordinating body supporting three Overview and Scrutiny Panels with individual areas of responsibility:

- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Sustainable Communities

Commission and Panel meetings take place throughout the year and members of the public are welcome to attend. Dates, agendas and minutes for these meetings can be found on the council website: <http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/committee.htm>.

More information about Scrutiny at Merton can be found at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny.htm> or by phoning the scrutiny team on 020 8545 3864 or emailing [scrutiny@merton.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@merton.gov.uk).

## Scrutiny achievements 2015-2016

We were very pleased that so many members of the public and local organisations have also been involved in scrutiny this year, sending in suggestions of issues to scrutinise, attending meetings and taking part in task group reviews.

The Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel has been able to draw on representations made by individuals and organisations representing adult social care users and carers in order to impact on the council's decision making in respect of adult social care savings:

- The Panel examined the results of the consultation 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 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.
- The Panel therefore asked Cabinet to reconsider a number of the proposed adult social care savings. Cabinet responded to this by agreeing to continue the funding for the service provided by Crossroads into 2016/17 and undertook to work with them to re-focus their service from 2017.
- Cabinet further responded to the Panel, and to a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to consider levying an adult social care precept, 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

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission, mindful of the difficult financial decisions facing the council, scrutinised how an adult social care precept would work, the basis on which the local government settlement was made and assumptions behind the council tax collection rate. Cabinet, in putting forward budget proposals to Council, took into account the Commission's recommendations to review the assumptions made in the Medium Term Financial Strategy on inflation and on the council tax revenue base.

It has been a busy year in which scrutiny councillors have carried out four in-depth task group reviews, details of which can be found under the relevant Panel headings:

- Shared and outsourced services – Overview and Scrutiny Commission
- Supporting vulnerable young people into employment – Children and Young People Panel
- Diabetes - Healthier Communities and Older People Panel
- Commercial services - Sustainable Communities Panel

## Overview and Scrutiny Commission

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is responsible for the scrutiny of cross cutting and strategic issues, crime and disorder and issues relating to the council's "corporate capacity". The Commission acts as a coordinating body in supporting the three Overview and Scrutiny Panels and has responsibility for developing and keeping scrutiny under review.

## Scrutiny reviews

### Shared and outsourced services

The Commission established these two task group reviews to examine how different models of service delivery work and made recommendations to stimulate a more consistent and rigorous approach to selecting delivery models and challenging officers on the most appropriate model for each service. A combined report will be received by the Commission in July 2016.

### Immunisation of children aged 0-5

The Commission received the report of this cross-cutting review and agreed to forward it to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The review made recommendations aimed at increasing uptake rates in local communities. The review was welcomed by the Board and recommendations will be implemented through an action plan that will be monitored by the Commission.

## Strategic issues and pre-decision scrutiny

The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive attended to set out their priorities for 2015/16 and the financial challenges facing the council. The Commission asked them questions on issues including public health, Crossrail 2 and Merton's ambition to be the best council in London.

The Commission received a presentation setting out the current framework for the delivery of enforcement activity, reviewed the establishment of a shared service and recommended that the council continue to explore new ways of delivering these services and, subject to the availability of alternative sources of funding, consider having additional officers to carry out enforcement work.

The Commission has continued to scrutinise the customer contact programme by receiving updates at critical points in the project. The most recent update contained information on the new website, customer accounts, technological infrastructure and redesigned business processes. *Add any further info once Commission discussed at April meeting*

The second annual update on volunteering was welcomed by the Commission who praised Merton Voluntary Service Council and council officers for the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy.



The Chief Executive of Merton Voluntary Service Council attended in March 2016 to discuss funding of the voluntary sector. He highlighted the benefits that voluntary organisations bring in terms of service delivery and the ability to attract additional external funding to the borough. The Commission recorded its thanks and support of the voluntary sector.

### **Policing in Merton**

The Commission has examined crime data and was pleased that crime rates continue to remain low in Merton and are on a par or better than most neighbouring boroughs. It has questioned the Borough Commander on two occasions and welcomed the approach taken to the deployment of police officers within the borough.

The Chair of Merton Independent Stop and Search Monitoring Group provided data on how stop and search operates in Merton, answered questions about how they monitor complaints and described their work with young people.

The council's anti social behavior service was examined and its work was praised. The Commission requested an update with more detailed trend analysis next year.

### **Call-in**

No call-in requests were received by the Commission in 2015/16.

### **Finance and performance monitoring**

The financial monitoring sub-group has continued to monitor quarterly reports. In particular, it has scrutinised the forecast overspend, capital programme and lack of progress on achieving savings in some service areas. It has scrutinised a number of areas in depth including staffing vacancies, commercial waste, transport services, council tax recovery and estate management.

### **Scrutiny of the budget**

The draft business plan, medium term financial strategy and proposed budget savings proposals were examined in detail, alongside equality impact assessments for each of the savings. The Commission recommended that Cabinet should bring forward elements of the energy invest to save initiatives where feasible.

The Commission scrutinised how an adult social care precept would work, the basis on which the local government settlement was made and assumptions behind the council tax collection rate. The outcome of this is reported in the achievements section on page 5 of this report.

## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

This Panel has responsibility for the scrutiny of issues relating to children and young people. This includes education, children's social care, child protection and youth services.

**Councillor Katy Neep, Panel Chair said –** “ During this year, my first as chair, we've looked at different ways of working to make sure scrutiny of Merton's services for children and young people is as effective as possible. Importantly, we are starting to leverage in external expertise to help us inform and improve the quality of our scrutiny work.”

## Scrutiny reviews

The Panel set-up a task group to look at support for more vulnerable school leavers to move into employment. This has specifically focused on the progression of those with *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)* and young people in or leaving care. The task group has examined what support is provided for these groups and how it is already planned to provide additional support. The task group is in the process of hearing from stakeholders; young people and those that care and work with them, as well as local employers and the council's own apprenticeships team. The Panel will produce a report of its findings and recommendations in June 2016.

## Strategic issues and pre-decision scrutiny

At its first meeting of the municipal year (June to May), the Panel received presentations from those delivering services to children and young people on the key challenges being faced and the priorities for the year ahead. These included:

- School expansion;
- Continuing the focus on school standards;
- Changes to care proceedings and adoptions; and
- Reducing the time taken for children being adopted.

Throughout the year, the Panel has considered a number of strategic issues including:

- The post adoption support offer;
- Child sexual exploitation;
- Female Genital Mutilation;
- The 'Prevent' Agenda and tackling radicalisation; and
- School admission arrangements for summer born children.

## Performance monitoring

At each of its meetings, the Panel receives a performance monitoring report from the Department for Children Schools and Families (CSF). This reviews progress against agreed targets or Key Performance Indicators and is supported by an update report on developments affecting the Department.

The panel also receives an annual report to provide greater detail on performance measures relating to education, including test and examination results, information on absence and persistent absence from schools, exclusions, children with *SEND* and as well as the progress of Looked-After Children and those that are '*Not in Education, Employment or Training*' (NEET).

Members also received progress updates on the following:

- The work of the Corporate Parenting Board including the participation of Looked-After Children and those leaving care;
- The Transforming Families Programme;
- The provision and take-up of apprenticeships through the council;
- The take-up of free schools meals and the associated link to claiming Pupil Premium funding;
- Child protection meetings;
- Support for homeless families; and
- The operation of the Schools Standards Committee.

## External expertise

Nick Berbiers, Head Young People's Services at The Who Cares? Trust presented to the panel on scrutiny of the corporate parenting role. Nick focused on the key issues for authorities in fulfilling this role and what scrutiny of corporate parenting should look like. To support this, Nick also provided examples of best practice in corporate parenting. Panel Members then participated in two workshops, giving them the opportunity to have detailed discussions of Merton's services for Looked-After Children.

## Financial monitoring

The Panel scrutinised the proposed budget for 2016/2017 in November 2015 and January 2016. This included understanding how proposed cost savings to the budget for the CFS Department would be distributed; how many families would be affected by a withdrawal of services and how the Department works with colleagues in the voluntary sector to access alternative funding.

## Call In

No call-in requests were received by the Panel in 2015/16.

## Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

This Panel has responsibility for the scrutiny of issues relating to health, public health and adult social care. This includes promoting good health and healthy lifestyles, mental health issues, and reducing health inequalities for people of all ages.

Councillor Peter McCabe said *“This year our role in engaging with local people and reflecting the concerns of the public has been stronger than ever before. We have had representation from local organisations, service users, carers and the public, who have attended the panel and shared their personal experiences of local services. It is this input which has helped shape our recommendations to the Council, Merton Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Trusts. “*

### Responding to local issues

As is typical with health scrutiny, a number of local issues arose that were time sensitive and required an urgent response. Flexibility is built into the agendas so the Panel can deal with issues of this nature as they arise.

#### **Epsom and St Helier University NHS Trust Hospital**

The Chief Executive and Director of Communications at Epsom and St Helier attended scrutiny to outline proposals for their Estates Strategy. The Panel were informed that the current hospital sites are old, not fit for purpose and generating high maintenance costs. As a result the Trust will be consulting with all stakeholders to develop proposals for the future and find out people’s priorities for a 21 century hospital. An update on this process was given to the March meeting and the Panel were told that the Trust will now begin consultation on the criteria that should be used and they hoped to have developed an option for a preferred hospital site by June. The Panel made it clear that they will be supporting the local community who want to retain a district general hospital on the St Helier site.

#### **Transfer of 0-5 Healthy child services to Public Health Merton**

In September, the panel conducted pre-decision scrutiny on the process of transferring services for children aged 0-5, including school nurses and health visitors to the public health team at the council. The Panel were keen to ensure that service users would not experience an adverse change in the services they receive. The Consultant in Public Health informed the panel that the transfer will result in an integrated seamless 0-19 children service and the transfer would not result in any additional financial costs to the council.

#### **Change of location for Urogynaecology Subspecialty Service.**

The panel were contacted by patient representatives in relation to moving a Urogynaecology clinic from St George’s to Croydon Hospital. The Public were

concerned about the lack of consultation and the additional burden caused by the extra traveling time. Senior representatives from the Trust attended the Panel in February and apologised for the flaws in the consultation process to date but stated that they were still seeking views and final decision was yet to be made. The clinic was moved to Croydon due to safety concerns and the Trust is considering the options to make it viable for the future. The Panel unanimously resolved to ask the Trust to re-open the clinic at St George's as a priority.

### **Closure of Mental Health 'step down' accommodation**

The Service Director for South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust attended the Panel to discuss the reasons for the closure of mental health 'step down' accommodation. This raised significant concern amongst the public, given the support this type of supportive accommodation provides to this vulnerable group. There were also concerns that the voluntary sector may not have been sufficiently consulted to ensure that alternative provision was put in place to support this work. The Service Director informed the Panel that the accommodation was not fit for purpose, as it is not suitable for mixed gender accommodation and does not have en-suite bathrooms. However approximately £650,000 has been ring fenced for step down mental health services which will provide more services than the current provision with Norfolk Lodge. However concern was expressed that the ring fenced funding was not set at the level that it should be.

The Panel recommended that there should be full consultation on the long term plans for step down accommodation. Also there needs to be clarification on what level of provision will be available for this service.

## **Strategic issues and pre-decision scrutiny**

### **The Prevention agenda**

The Panel is committed to the prevention agenda and emphasis is placed upon this in all issues that are scrutinised. Councillors believe that preventing illness before it occurs is preferable for the individual and reduces the financial burden on the NHS. The Director of Public Health, Consultant in Public Health, A healthy Schools Development Manager and the Head of Merton's Live Well programme attended the Panel to talk about the work that had been taking support local residents to be as healthy as possible. Programmes include smoking cessation, healthy weight and alcohol consumption awareness.

The Director of Public Health said that it can be difficult to make a case for prevention as the evidence of its success is the absence of ill health and there is a significant period before the benefits of prevention programmes become apparent.

Members asked about the role of the planning departments in public health considerations and how to support GP's. They were informed that the Public health team are leading on a wide range of initiatives such as holding locality meetings with GP's where these issues are discussed. They also can provide evidence to planning

committees about the links between unhealthy food outlets and proximity to schools. The Panel requested further updates on the work to imbed prevention.

### **Making Merton a Dementia Friendly Borough**

Community Dementia nurses, Transport for London and Merton Public Health Team attended the panel to discuss this issue. The panel found that a wide range of initiatives are in place to help residents in Merton who have dementia. Merton also has a flagship dementia hub which provides a wide range of support to those with a diagnosis and their carers. The Panel found there are a number of organisations working to support this group however the work may benefit from being integrated and resources pooled together. The panel asked for a further update in six months time.

## **Scrutiny reviews**

### **Preventing incontinence amongst women of child bearing age**

In 2012/3 the Panel conducted a review on how to reduce the number of people affected by incontinence. The review adopted a preventative approach and focussed on women of child bearing age with the view to prevent it in older age where it is currently more prevalent. The panel received an update from a senior Commissioner at Merton Clinical Commissioning Group on their progress with implementing the recommendations.

Panel members asked what changes had been made to date and what success in this area will look like. The Senior Commissioner reported that the review has raised the profile of this issue and the foundations have been laid for implementing many of the recommendations. The Panel felt that senior officers should be responsible for implementing the recommendations and asked for continence issues should be included in the reporting requirements to their clinical reference groups. The panel also asked for further clarification about their timetable for implementing the recommendations.

### **Preventing diabetes in the South Asian Community**

This year a task group review has focussed on how to prevent diabetes in the South Asian community as this group are six times more likely to be diagnosed with the condition than their white counterparts. The task group has spoken to a wide range of witnesses including the South Asian Health Foundation, Merton Clinical Commissioning Group and Asian Elderly. The final report and recommendations will go to the panel in June 2016.

## **Call In**

No call-in requests were received by the Panel in 2015/16.



## **Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

This Panel has responsibility for the scrutiny of issues relating to housing, environmental sustainability, culture, enterprise and skills, libraries and transport.

Councillor Abby Jones, Panel Chair said “The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel continues to play a strong role in scrutinising issues before they are subject to council decision; through this we ensure the Council is making the best possible decisions for residents.”

### **Scrutiny reviews**

#### **Housing Supply Task Group**

The Panel have completed their Task Group review examining how to increase the supply of affordable housing in Merton. This was achieved by looking at other Local Authority good practice, engaging stakeholders such as Housing Associations, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the NHS, and gathering research and guidance from organisations such as Shelter, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the National Housing Federation.

Recommendations included that a report is presented to the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel in anticipation of the proposed ‘Pay to Stay’ policy on how residents might be incentivised to move on to alternative forms of affordable housing, to free up much needed social housing. Also that Cabinet work with the private rented sector to encourage landlords to let properties to residents on the Housing Register and in receipt of Housing Benefit.

All the recommendations were accepted by Cabinet. The Panel received an update in January 2016. The Task Group chair was pleased with the progress to date

#### **Commercial Services task group**

The Panel has agreed to set up a Task Group looking at the Council’s approach to commercial services and areas that can be commercialised to generate revenue. It will focus on opportunities within FutureMerton, property, leisure and culture departments.

The review will look at what the Council has achieved to date in pursuing commercial opportunities and how to further utilise Council assets to develop commercial services. Work will also focus on identifying the risks and governance arrangements required to enable the Council to charge for services. The review will identify the barriers to maximising commercial income within the Council, including culture, skills systems and processes.

The Task Group will look at good practice and determine what models have been successfully taken forward in the private and public sectors and how Merton might benefit from lessons learned. The review will conclude its work in September 2016.



## Strategic issues and pre-decision scrutiny

The Panel has undertaken pre-decision scrutiny on a range of strategic issues and Council priorities. This includes:

**Community and Housing Department Priorities:** the Panel reviewed the priorities for community and housing as set for the next four years.

**Merton Adult Education:** prior to going to Cabinet for decision, the Panel reviewed proposals to move to a commissioning model for the provision of adult education services. Commenting on the proposals to Cabinet, the Panel recommended considering all options including maintaining the Whately Avenue site and ensuring user groups are appropriately consulted during the commissioning process.

**Morden Leisure Centre:** The Panel has continued to be involved in the development of Morden Leisure Centre including monitoring the appointment of relevant experts, understanding how the Centre will relate to other local community providers, checking how residents are being consulted on the development and reviewing designs from first concept stage.

**Phase C procurement programme (including parks, grounds, maintenance and waste):** progress on establishing the procurement programme has been monitored by the Panel including hearing representations from staff and unions. Phase C will return to the Panel for pre-decision scrutiny in June 2016.

**Tourism strategy:** the Panel received a report and briefing on the development of Merton's tourism strategy in anticipation of the review being conducted by the GLA that is anticipated in 2016.

**Wheeled Bins Pilot:** the results of a pilot scheme involving over a thousand properties in the Lavender Fields ward were presented to the Panel and the opportunity was given for residents to express their views on the scheme. As a result, the Panel made a reference to Cabinet recommending the need for a more detailed analysis of costs and projected savings prior to any decision being made. The Panel also made a number of recommendations about the rollout of the scheme should this decision be made including considering the needs of disabled residents.

## Performance monitoring

The Panel regularly undertakes a performance monitoring role by reviewing outcomes against agreed key targets (Key Performance Indicators) and making recommendations to the appropriate service:

**Circle Housing Merton Priory (CHMP):** CHMP manages nearly 9,500 homes across Merton on behalf of the council. As part of its on-going monitoring of CHMP's

performance, this year the Panel has focused on the repairs and maintenance service provided to residents. The Panel received regular performance updates including resident satisfaction ratings and met with CHMP every six months. During the next municipal year, the Panel plans to engage with the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel and examine case studies on the resolution of long standing issues.

**Cycle routes:** The Panel has monitored the development of cycle routes working towards the vision of making the borough into Little Holland.

**Libraries annual report:** a significant success for Merton, the Panel continued to monitor the performance of the library service which this year saw five out of the six Key Performance Indicators being achieved at record levels.

**Outcomes of Task Group reviews:** The Panel continued to oversee the delivery of the recommendations and action plans resulting from the following Task Group reviews:

- Adults Skills and Employability; and
- Climate Change and Green Deal (with the support of the Member Champion, Councillor James Homes).

Town regeneration: the Panel monitored progress with the implementation of actions plans resulting from earlier reviews. The impact of the proposals for Crossrail 2 on Wimbledon and Raynes Park are a key focus for scrutiny going forward.

### **Financial monitoring**

The Panel scrutinised the proposed budget for 2016/2017 in November 2015 and January 2016, including receiving reports from the Directors of Corporate Services and Environment and Regeneration.

### **Call In**

No call-in requests were received by the Panel in 2015/16.

## Get involved

The involvement of local residents, community organisations and partners is an important part of the scrutiny process and councillors are committed to responding to the views and concerns of residents.

Getting involved in scrutiny is one of the best ways to influence decision making at the council, as councillors will hear your experiences first hand. There are a number of ways you can get involved in the work of scrutiny at the council:

### Suggesting an issue for scrutiny

The council's website contains an online form which can be used to make suggestions on issues and topics for future scrutiny:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/scrutiny/scrutiny-getinvolved.htm>

Suggestions may also be made in writing, by email or by phone to the Scrutiny Team – contact details overleaf.

All suggestions received will be discussed by the relevant scrutiny Panel and the person who made the suggestion will be contacted to let them know what has happened to it.

### Attending meetings

All scrutiny meetings are open to the public except where confidential information has to be discussed. A list of meeting dates and agenda items can be found on the council's website. <http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/committee.htm>

If you would like to attend a meeting simply come along to the meeting venue or, if you want more information, contact the Scrutiny Team – details overleaf.

### Providing information and views

Members of the public can send in written views or speak on issues that are under discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Commission or one of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Information on current task group reviews and any deadlines for submission on information can be found on <http://www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny> or by contacting the Scrutiny Team – details overleaf.

## Contact the Scrutiny Team

The Scrutiny Team provides independent and professional support and advice to the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the three standing Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

You can contact the Scrutiny Team using one of the following methods: -

In writing:

Scrutiny Team  
Corporate Services  
Merton Civic Centre  
London Road  
Morden  
Surrey SM4 5DX

By emailing:

[scrutiny@merton.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@merton.gov.uk)

By phoning:

Julia Regan – Head of Democracy Services  
020 8545 3864

Stella Akintan –Scrutiny Officer  
020 8545 3390

Annette Wiles – Scrutiny Officer  
020 8545 4035

For further information about overview and scrutiny at Merton please access our web pages using the following address <http://www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny>

**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Commission

**Date:** 5 April 2016

Wards: All

Subject: Review of the recruitment of co-opted members to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Cllr Peter Southgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Contact officer: Julia Regan: Julia.regan@merton.gov.uk 020 8545 3864

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## **Recommendations:**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission consider how its co-option arrangements for 2015/16 have worked and decide whether it wishes to recruit any non-voting co-opted members for 2016/17.

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

- 1.1 The Commission, at its meeting on 7 October 2014, discussed and agreed proposals for a formal process for the appointment of non voting co-opted members, drawing on procedures that the Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel had put in place. The intention was to attract co-opted members from across the community through an open and transparent recruitment process. The Commission agreed to make a maximum of two appointments for a period of 12 months and to review thereafter.
- 1.2 The Commission agreed a recruitment process to attract applications from people who have a particular interest or experience of crime and community safety issues or financial expertise. Shortlisted applicants attended an informal interview with the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Officer. Subsequently one appointment, of Geoffrey Newman, was made for a 12 month period ending 31 March 2016.
- 1.3 Note that the arrangements for appointing the statutory co-opted members (the Diocesan Board and Parent Governor representatives on the Children & Young People Panel and on the Commission) are not within the control of the council and are therefore not addressed in the report.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Co-opted members can provide scrutiny committees or task groups with outside knowledge, experience and skills that can inform the work of scrutiny and complement the role of councillors. Co-opted members can be particularly helpful in representing community perspectives, contributing a wider perspective and encouraging public engagement.
- 2.2 The Commission and its associated task groups may also call upon expert witnesses to present information and ask/answer questions for particular agenda items or meetings – this may be a more effective use of that person’s time given the wide remit of the Commission.

- 2.3 Co-opted members should be invited to join any training that is provided to scrutiny councillors.
- 2.4 Non-voting co-opted members are not paid an allowance but travel and any reasonable subsistence expenses that are incurred whilst fulfilling duties as a co-opted member will be re-imbursed.
- 2.5 The Commission is asked to discuss and agree whether it wishes to appoint one or more non-statutory co-opted members for the 2016/17 municipal year.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Commission is requested to advise on the arrangements, if any, it wishes to make for the appointment of one or more non-statutory co-opted member.

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

- 4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

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

- 5.1 The cost of recruitment and support of co-opted members would be met within existing budgets.

### **6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Local Government Act 2000 provides for the formal co-option of a person onto a committee to occupy a non-voting position.

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

- 7.1 It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement. The proposed approach for a widely advertised and clear process will enable local residents and community and voluntary sector groups to apply for these positions and to engage with scrutiny.

### **8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Police and Justice Act 2006 allows crime and disorder committees (the Commission has this role in Merton) to co-opt additional members with particular expertise in crime and disorder issues. Co-optees must be employees, officers or members of one of the responsible authorities. Cabinet Members may not be co-opted.

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

- 9.1 There are none specific to this report.

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

- 10.1 None

### **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None