

Merton Council

Cabinet Agenda

Membership

Councillors:

Stephen Alambritis (Chair)
Mark Allison
Nick Draper
Caroline Cooper-Marbiah
Edith Macauley MBE
Tobin Byers
Martin Whelton
Katy Neep
Ross Garrod

Date: Monday 20 March 2017

Time: 7.15 pm

**Venue: Committee rooms C, D & E - Merton Civic Centre, London Road,
Morden SM4 5DX**

This is a public meeting and attendance by the public is encouraged and welcomed.
For more information about the agenda please contact 020 8545 3357 or email:
democratic.services@merton.gov.uk

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

Cabinet Agenda

20 March 2017

- | | | |
|---|--|---------|
| 1 | Apologies for absence | |
| 2 | Declarations of pecuniary interest | |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting | 1 - 4 |
| 4 | Report of the Routes into Employment for Vulnerable Cohorts Task Group | 5 - 26 |
| 5 | Equality Strategy 2017-21 | 27 - 56 |
| 6 | Exclusion of the public
To RESOLVE that the public are excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following report(s) on the grounds that it is (they are) exempt from disclosure for the reasons stated in the report(s). | |
| 7 | School Cleaning Contract 2017-20 | 57 - 64 |

Note on declarations of interest

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

Agenda Item 3

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

CABINET

13 FEBRUARY 2017

(7.18 pm - 7.53 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Stephen Alambritis (in the Chair), Mark Allison, Nick Draper, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Edith Macauley, Tobin Byers, Martin Whelton, Katy Neep and Ross Garrod

ALSO PRESENT Councillors Peter Southgate, Oonagh Moulton, Suzanne Grocott, Daniel Holden, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, David Simpson, David Williams, and Najeeb Latif

Officers Present Jane McSherry (Assistant Director of Education), Ged Curran (Chief Executive), Fiona Thomsen (Head of Shared Legal Services), Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration) Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Service), Simon Williams (Director of Community and Housing), and Lisa Jewell (Democratic Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies were received.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2017 are agreed as an accurate record.

4 SOUTH WIMBLEDON BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (SWBA BID) PROPOSAL (Agenda Item 4)

The Cabinet member for Environment, Regeneration and Housing presented the report on the SWBA BID proposal, and stated that he hoped this would attract and encourage small businesses within the Borough. The Director of Environment and Regeneration added that, if successful, the SWBA would prioritise improving safety and security in the area, transport connectivity and Business to Business links.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet Agree:

- A. The South Wimbledon Business Association (SWBA) proposal and timetable to ballot for a new Business Improvement District (BID) and any future decision on a BID renewal is delegated to Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing, Councillor Martin Whelton.
- B. That the Council will charge the BID for the costs for business rates staff in collecting and administrating the levy estimated in the region of £7.50 plus VAT per invoice collected, and the on-going software costs of £1,175 plus VAT annually.
- C. That the Council recover the cost of the BID ballot from the proposers if the ballot is unsuccessful.

5 FINANCIAL MONITORING DECEMBER 2016 (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet member for Finance presented the report which detailed the financial reporting for December 2016.

The Director of Corporate Services asked members to note that the forecast overspend had dropped but might still fluctuate. In answer to a question regarding Community Care debt, she explained that a new working group Chaired by the Director of Community and Housing had been formed specifically to monitor such debt and work to maximise the collection of debt at all stages.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees:

- A. To note the financial reporting data relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net overspend at year end of £6.021 million, 1.1% of the gross budget.
- B. To note the proposals set out in 2.4 to fund this shortfall without any impact on services in the current year.
- C. To approve the virement of £236k from the corporate contingency to Children, Schools and Families for the third and fourth quarters' costs of additional social worker capacity.

6 REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION – PRE DECISION SCRUTINY OF THE BUSINESS PLAN 2017-21 (Agenda Item 6)

Cabinet welcomed Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, to present the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the considerations of the outcomes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Cabinet combined their discussions of items 6,7 and 8 and this is reported under item 7.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet, in taking decisions relating to the Business Plan 2017-21, takes into account the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission (set out in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.12 of the report) and the outcomes of consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (set out in Appendix 1).

7 BUSINESS PLAN 2017-21 (Agenda Item 7)

Cabinet agreed to discuss Items 6,7 and 8 together.

The Cabinet member for Finance presented the report on the Business Plan 2017-21. He then thanked Councillor Southgate for the for all the work done by the Commission and Scrutiny panels in considering the budget savings plan and agreed that the views of Scrutiny Panels and Commission were broadly similar to the Cabinet's thinking. However the Cabinet did not wish, at this stage, to raise the LBM element of Council Tax in the current climate of uncertainty around future maximum Council Tax levels. He agreed with the view that Cabinet should give its full support to the LGA and London Councils in their efforts to secure a properly funded settlement from Government.

Cabinet noted that a proposed saving for the Planning Department to stop sending out consultation letters has been withdrawn and an alternative saving will be considered.

The Director of Corporate Services explained that the Government had not yet given the Council its final settlement figure, this was expected on 23.2.17, without this figure there is uncertainty going forward. She added that; the budget is balanced for 2017-18, but there is currently a £3 million gap in 2018-19, Budget savings that could be brought forward have been identified, and a complete survey of reserves has been made

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees to:

1. consider and agree the response to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission;
2. resolve that, having considered all of the information in this report and noted the positive assurance statement given by the Director of Corporate Services based on the proposed strategy, the Council Tax in 2017/18, equating to a Band D Council Tax of £1,135.31 be approved and recommended to Council for approval.

3. consider all of the latest information and the comments from the scrutiny process, and makes recommendations to Council as appropriate
 4. resolve that the Business Plan 2017-21 including the General Fund Budget and Council Tax Strategy for 2017/18, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2017-2021 as submitted, along with the Equality Assessments (EAs), be approved and recommended to Council for approval subject to any proposed amendments agreed at this meeting;
 5. resolve that, having considered all of the latest information and the comments from the scrutiny process, the Capital Investment Programme (as detailed in Annex 1 to the Capital Strategy); the Treasury Management Strategy (Section 5), including the detailed recommendations in that Section, incorporating the Prudential Indicators and the Capital Strategy (Section 4) as submitted and reported upon be approved and recommended to Council for approval, subject to any proposed amendments agreed at this meeting;
 6. note that the GLA precept will not be agreed by the London Assembly until the 22 February 2017, but the provisional figure has been incorporated into the draft MTFS
 7. request officers to review the savings proposals agreed and where possible bring them forward to the earliest possible implementation date
 8. note that there may be minor amendments to figures in this report as a result of new information being received after the deadline for dispatch and that this will be amended for the report to Council in March
 9. consider and approve the Risk Management Strategy
- 8 SAVINGS PROPOSALS CONSULTATION PACK (Agenda Item 8)

The discussion of this pack was included in the discussion on Items 6 and 7

9 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 9)

RESOLVED: That the public are excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following report on the grounds that it is exempt from disclosure for the reasons stated in the report.

10 AWARD OF ELECTRICITY AND GAS SUPPLY CONTRACTS (Agenda Item 10)

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- A. Agree to the Award of the Contract for The Supply of Electricity to Scottish Power
- B. Agree to the Award of the Contract for The Supply of Gas to Gazprom

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 20 March 2017

Wards: All

Subject: Scrutiny review of routes into employment for vulnerable cohorts

Lead officer: Annette Wiles, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Councillor Dennis Pearce, Chair, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Contact officer: Annette Wiles, Scrutiny Officer (0208 545 4035/
annette.wiles@merton.gov.uk)

Recommendations:

1. That Cabinet considers the report and recommendations (attached in Appendix 1) arising from the scrutiny review of routes into employment for vulnerable cohorts undertaken by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
2. That Cabinet agrees to the implementation of the recommendations through an action plan being drawn up by officers in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member to be designated by Cabinet.
3. That Cabinet decides whether it wishes to formally approve this action plan prior to it being submitted to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To present the scrutiny review report on routes into employment for vulnerable cohorts for endorsement and seek approval to implement the review recommendations through an action plan being drawn up.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel has recognised that if you are a vulnerable person in Merton you are more likely than your peers to not be in education, employment or training (or what is described as 'NEET'). As a result, the Panel decided during the 2015/2016 municipal year to dedicate its task group activity to look at the support provided for vulnerable cohorts to progress into employment.
- 2.2. It was agreed that vulnerable cohorts should specifically mean children and young people in care/care leavers and/or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- 2.3. The report of the routes into employment for vulnerable cohorts task group was presented to the Panel on 8 February 2017 and is attached at Appendix 1 for Cabinet's consideration.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.
- 3.2. Cabinet is constitutionally required to receive, consider and respond to scrutiny recommendations within two months of receiving them at a meeting.
- 3.3. Cabinet is not, however, required to agree and implement recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny. Cabinet could agree to implement some, or none, of the recommendations made in the scrutiny review final report.
- 3.4. If Cabinet is unable to support the implementation of a recommendation, it is expected that a clearly stated reason will be provided for each.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. In carrying out its review, the task group questioned council officers, directors and the Merton Economic Wellbeing Board.
- 4.2. Appendix 1 of the task group report lists the witnesses at each meeting.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. The final report was approved by members of the Panel at its meeting on 8 February 2017 and it was agreed to present the report to Cabinet.
- 5.2. Cabinet is asked to provide a formal response to the Panel within two months.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None for the purposes of this covering report. Any specific resource implications will be identified and presented to Cabinet prior to agreeing an action plan for implementing the report's recommendations.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None for the purposes of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None for the purposes of this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

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

- 11.1. Appendix 1 – task group review report of routes into employment for vulnerable cohorts.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. None



London Borough of Merton

**Report and recommendations arising from the scrutiny
task group review of routes into employment for
vulnerable cohorts in Merton**

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

February 2017

Task group membership

Councillor Katy Neep (Chair until May 2016)
Councillor Dennis Pearce (Chair from May 2016)
Councillor Agatha Akyigyina
Councillor Charlie Chirico
Councillor Joan Henry
Councillor James Holmes
Councillor Linda Taylor

Scrutiny support

Annette Wiles, Scrutiny Officer
For further information relating to the review, please contact:

Democracy Services Team
Corporate Services Department
London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
Surrey SM4 5DX

Tel: 020 8545 4035
Email: annette.wiles@merton.gov.uk

Acknowledgements

The task group would particularly like to thank the council officers and directors who shared their experiences and thoughts with us.

All contributors are listed in Appendix 1.

Index	Page
Task group membership	2
Scrutiny support	2
Acknowledgements	2
Forward by Councillor Dennis Pearce, Chair of the Routes into Employment Task Group	4
Executive Summary	5
List of the task group's recommendations	6
Report of the Routes into Employment Task Group:	7
• Purpose	7
• What the task group did	8
• Data analysis: evidence of need	8
• Fit with existing provision	9
• Adding value to existing provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving access to existing provision ○ Mentor support ○ Work tasters/work experience ○ Case studies 	11
• Engagement and demonstrable commitment	15
• Apprenticeships and careers guidance	16
• Conclusion	18
What happens next?	19
Appendix 1: witnesses at discussion meetings	20

Forward by Councillor Dennis Pearce, Chair of the Routes into Employment Task Group



I've been a Merton Councillor for St Helier Ward for many years. During my time I have worked closely with officers and know first hand the skill and dedication they bring to their roles. I was also lucky to work alongside Councillor Maxi Martin who was a fellow St Helier Ward Councillor and the previous Cabinet Member for Children's Services. We sadly lost Maxi this year, but the insight she provided me with has reinforced that every child is different and needs support and care to achieve, that they don't always make the right choices first time and need more support when faced with failure. It is therefore important that we take this opportunity to reflect on what we are doing right for Merton's most vulnerable children and look at what we can do better to help them into employment.

When thinking about those in our care who need our support most, it is easy to think big. However, throughout our work, the task group has been mindful of two key issues: the council is operating in a period of unprecedented budget reductions and given our focus on vulnerable groups, there is a need for us to act quickly and effectively. The work of the task group has therefore been focused on how to add value to and develop the impact of existing services. We have been mindful to make all our recommendations realistic and achievable without significant cost implications.

The task group has received support from officers who have kindly shared their knowledge of children in and coming out of care and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. They have also helped us examine our current provision and have highlighted opportunities for improvement. I would like to thank them all for their time and help. Lastly, I would like to make special mention of Councillor James Holmes, whose concern for the most vulnerable children in Merton has made him a very active member of the task group and who has offered me great support in my role.

Executive Summary

Evidence clearly demonstrates that if you are a vulnerable young person in Merton you are more likely than your peers to not be in education, employment or training or what is described as 'NEET'. As a result, the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Commission decided during the 2015/2016 municipal year to dedicate its task group activity to look at the support provided for vulnerable cohorts to progress into employment. It was agreed that this should specifically mean children and young people in care/care leavers and/or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Throughout our work, we have been very mindful of operational realities namely unprecedented budget reductions but also given our focus on vulnerable groups, the need to act quickly and effectively.

We have been grateful for the advice of the Economic Wellbeing Group, which is the key forum operating within Merton coordinating interventions to reduce unemployment and increase economic wellbeing. As a result, we have accepted that there are sufficient local employment programmes and instead have focused on how we can add value to this to make it more effective. We have looked at a variety of successful initiatives to inform our recommendations on what might be done to add value to this existing provision. Our recommendations are summarised below.

Our thanks to all those that have supported us in conducting our work. We know that officers are increasingly stretched and therefore the good will, support and time that they have given to us is greatly appreciated. It is our greatest wish that our recommendations are successful in helping vulnerable young people in Merton achieve employment, economic wellbeing and ultimately a better start in life.

List of the task group's recommendations

	Responsible decision making body
<p>Recommendation 1 We recommend exploration of how to audit, keep updated and make accessible (to residents and all those working with vulnerable cohorts) information on current provision to support progression into employment.</p>	HR/ <i>futureMerton</i> /CSF team
<p>Recommendation 2 We recommend that in order to better support target groups¹, work taster/work experiences be provided. This should include extending the work of the Merton Employment Team in offering work taster/work experiences through the Council's contractors and other services providers (with exploration of how to build this as a requirement into standard contract terms and conditions). How these work taster/work experience opportunities are best delivered should be explored including consideration of the Traineeship framework, the <i>Work Experience Quality Standard</i>, the emerging Apprenticeship Strategy and the provision of a mentor to support each participant.</p>	HR/procurement/ <i>futureMerton</i>
<p>Recommendation 3 To reflect that the aim of improving routes into employment for vulnerable cohorts requires the involvement of teams across the Council (including HR, Children, Schools and Families and <i>futureMerton</i>), we recommend that the Economic Wellbeing Group continue and be supported to be the main focus for reducing unemployment and increasing economic wellbeing in Merton. Attendance at the Economic Wellbeing Group for all appropriate departments, divisions and teams should be reinforced by making this a key performance indicator.</p>	HR/CSF/ <i>futureMerton</i> teams
<p>Recommendation 4 We recommend how to engage target groups and demonstrate the Council's commitment to their employment be explored. This might be included in the <i>LAC/Care Leaver Pledge</i>.</p>	CSF team
<p>Recommendation 5</p>	HR/Economic Wellbeing

¹ The Panel agreed that target groups should specifically mean children and young people in care/care leavers and/or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

<p>We recommend that Merton Council actively supports the target groups through traineeships and apprenticeship opportunities that are advertised by the Council. It is proposed that a percentage of appropriate opportunities for our target groups is embedded in the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy and reflected in Merton's contribution to the Greater London Assembly Public Sector Apprenticeship target.</p>	<p>Group</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 As recommended in previous task groups², the Council should build a requirement for its contractors and other service providers to offer apprenticeships for Merton residents in its standard contract terms and conditions. How to promote apprenticeships to the target groups should be explored including use of <i>London Ambitions</i>.</p>	<p>Procurement/futureMerton</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 We recommend that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel continues to receive data annually on the number of apprenticeships achieved through the Council. This is to demonstrate impact but also to inform practice in the future provision of apprenticeships. Reporting should include the number of apprenticeships achieved, completed and the destinations of those achieving apprenticeships directly through the Council (and in the future its contractors/service providers). Subset data on those from our target groups undertaking apprenticeships should also be provided.</p>	<p>HR</p>

Report of the Routes into Employment Task Group

Purpose

1. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel has recognised the need to bring scrutiny focus to the outcomes of the most vulnerable children and young people in Merton. The Panel agreed to achieve this during the 2015/2016 municipal year by dedicating its task group activity to this purpose.
2. Initially, the Panel took a broad approach considering:
 - a. The housing and health offer for care leavers and looked after children to prevent homelessness and unemployment; and
 - b. Educational attainment for disabled children and young people.

However, the Panel, as a result of its initial research, determined that the task group should focus more specifically on the support provided for vulnerable cohorts to progress

² Adult Skills and Employability 2013, Recommendation 3 ([here](#)) and Post 16 Career Pathways 2012 ([here](#))

into employment. By vulnerable cohorts the Panel agreed that this should specifically mean children and young people in care/care leavers and/or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (the target groups).

3. The task group operated under the following terms of reference:
 - a. To understand how the Council is currently supporting these vulnerable cohorts to gain access to employment;
 - b. To evaluate the effectiveness of this offer in supporting vulnerable cohorts to gain access to employment;
 - c. To consider how any weaknesses in provision might realistically be addressed; and
 - d. To research the approaches taken by other councils to provide vulnerable cohorts with routes into employment and consider how these approaches might inform Merton's practice.
4. Throughout its operation, the task group has been mindful of two key issues:
 - a. The council is operating in a period of unprecedented budget reductions. As a result there is a need to be realistic about the costs of any task group recommendations; and
 - b. Given the focus on vulnerable groups, there is a need to be able to implement recommendations quickly and effectively.

What the task group did

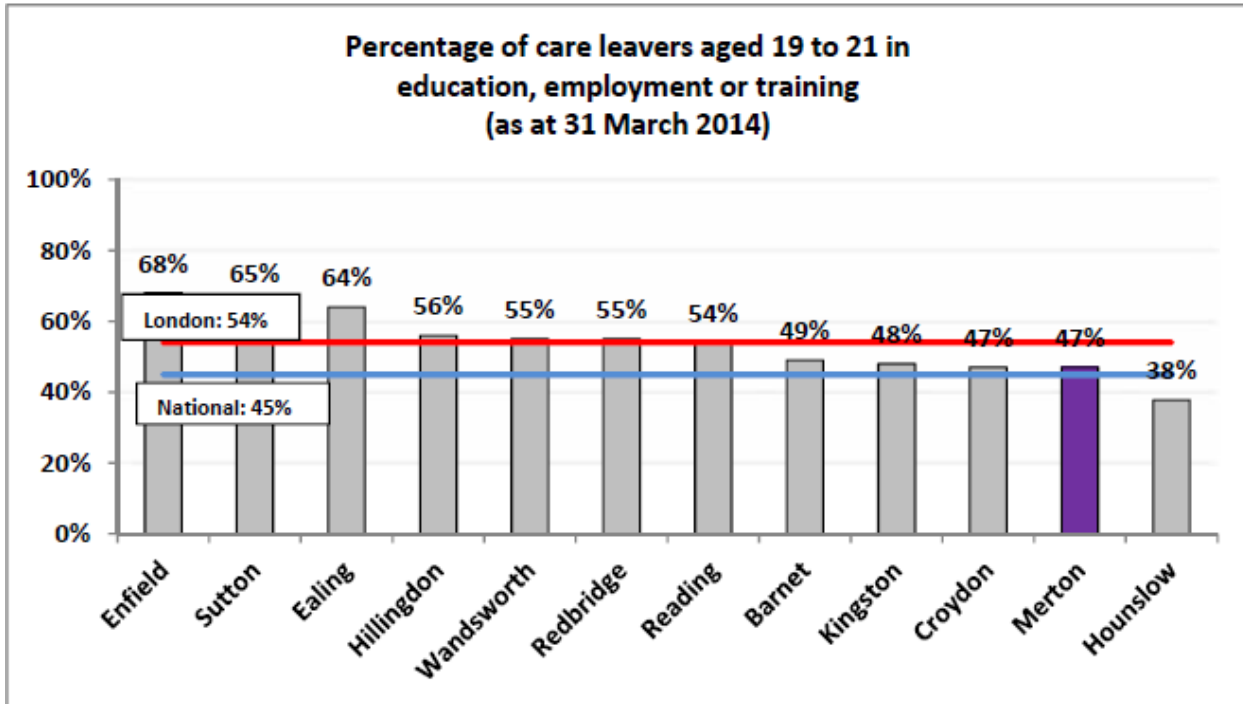
5. The task group has had four formal meetings plus a number of discussions with service managers, heads of service and directors. Having established that services to support vulnerable cohorts into employment are delivered by all departments in the council, the task group undertook to map current provision to inform its work.
6. Appendix 1 lists the written evidence received by the task.
7. We established that the Merton Economic Wellbeing Group is a key forum with which to consult. This is part of the Merton Partnership and brings together a range of local organisations to coordinate interventions to reduce unemployment and increase economic wellbeing. We consulted with the group through our attendance at its meetings in November and December 2016. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the group for its support and for allowing us to consult it and receive its endorsement of our key recommendations.
8. This report sets out the task group's findings, conclusions and recommendations. The task group's recommendations run throughout the report and are set out in full in the executive summary at the front of this document.

Data analysis: evidence of need

9. The Children, Schools and Families Department presented the latest annual schools standards report in February 2016 ([here](#)). This highlighted:

- a. There has been a 27% rise in the number of young people with SEND in the 16 – 18 cohort and a rise in the number of them who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)³; and
- b. Those most at risk of being NEET have had support with their SEND at school, are known to social care and/or are also known to youth offending teams. The largest group (77%) received support with their SEND in school but did not have a statement of special education need⁴.

10. The Care Leaver Strategy 2015 – 2018 identifies that 38%⁵ of the 19 – 21 years cohort are not in employment, education or training and provides comparative data for our statistical neighbours:



Source: DfE SFR – Children looked after in England, including adoption (Dec 2014)

11. The July 2015 report on Looked After Children, identified the number of care leavers who are not engaged in education, employment or training as an area of focus following a year-on-year decline in performance. In total, 82 out of 140 young people in the care leaver cohort (59%) were engaged in employment, education or training, with a remaining 41% or 58 young people in the looked-after children/care leaver cohort therefore defined as NEET⁶.

Fit with existing provision

12. With the focus on routes into employment, we wanted to understand how the Council’s provision of apprenticeships is helping these vulnerable cohorts gain employment. We

³ Celebrating Success: Achievement in Merton Schools 2014 – 2015 (p 45).- [here](#)
⁴ Celebrating Success: Achievement in Merton Schools 2014 – 2015 (p 46) - [here](#)
⁵ Care Leaver Strategy 2015 – 2018 London Borough of Merton (p18) - [here](#)
⁶ LAC & Care Leaver Cohort Review July 2015, London Borough of Merton (p19) - [here](#)

heard from officers in the Children, Schools and Families Department and HR that apprenticeships do not provide a good solution for our target groups for a number of reasons:

- a. It was identified that the minimum academic level required to access an apprenticeship programme is often prohibitive for those in these groups;
- b. With complex needs, these cohorts often require additional help and support to sustain their involvement on any programme (drop out rates are higher for the target groups than their peers); and
- c. The Council needs to do more to provide entry level positions which would lend themselves well to apprenticeships and progression for these cohorts (for example, with teams in waste management, green spaces and customer contact).

13. We were interested to hear that difficulties faced in accessing apprenticeships have been reviewed by a Department for Business and Innovation and Skills (BIS) through its *Apprenticeships: improving access for people with learning disabilities task force*⁷. This was established because 'although rates for disabled apprentices have improved recently and more disabled people are employed than ever before, there is still work to be done in both areas. Employment rates for people with learning disabilities hover around 6.8% and the lifelong costs of economic inactivity are considerable'. The task force has recommended 'BIS investigates potential changes to the method of assessments for English and Maths for targeted groups as some people with learning difficulties may be able to demonstrate the minimum requirements in the workplace, but be unable to complete a formal assessment'.
14. We are mindful of the Council's responsibilities especially when it comes to those in care/care leavers, for whom the Council is also their Corporate Parent. Officers were at pains to highlight the need to act swiftly to provide a solution for those that are currently in the NEET cohort as would any other parent.
15. *Project Search* ([here](#)) was recommended by officers as a scheme operating locally which has successfully demonstrated its ability to support vulnerable cohorts into employment. This is an initiative developed in the USA and provides a school-to-work transition programme that takes place entirely within the work place. St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Cricket Green School and Action on Disability to give young adults aged 18 – 24 years with learning difficulties the chance to gain valuable work experience.
16. There are currently six trainees based at the hospital for one academic year, where they gain 30 weeks of placement experience in different hospital departments, such as medical records, medical staffing, logistics, catering, the sterile services department and the post room. The trainees are matched to their placements in terms of skills, abilities and interests, and this differs for each student. The trainees are supported by their job coach and their tutor to learn the skills required in each placement, until they can perform the tasks independently. They receive additional support from their mentors who work alongside them in each department.

⁷ Apprenticeships: improving access for people with learning disabilities, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (July 2016) [here](#)

17. The trainees also receive classroom based learning, supported by their tutor. They learn about social skills, employability skills and health and safety in the hospital. The trainees receive training from Mitie, a sub-contracted company within St George's Hospital that provides soft and hard facilities management services including catering, domestic cleaning, vending and a help desk. All trainees who complete a two day Health and Safety in the Workplace course with Mitie pass and received a Level 1 qualification.
18. We are impressed by the *Project Search* model. Councillor Neep met with Celia Dawson, Headteacher at Cricket Green School, and established that 75% of the participants in *Project Search* have gained employment which is significantly larger than the national average for those in this cohort (around 6.8%).
19. The costs of *Project Search* became a focus for the task group. These were reported by officers to be prohibitive especially at the current time with a background of budget cuts and efficiency savings required across the Council.
20. *Ready for Work* ([here](#)), delivered by Business in the Community, is another programme that the task group considered. This has been successful in providing two week placements for disadvantaged young people (ie: those who have experienced homelessness). An individual mentor then provides help with on-going job search activities. The success of the programme is demonstrated by the Bristol based scheme where within three months of completing their work placements, 60% of participants have gained paid work.

Adding value to existing provision

Improving access to existing provision

21. Whilst it is tempting to recommend additional/new provision aimed at the target groups, we listened carefully to the advice of the Economic Wellbeing Group that this is not required. The group feels that there is plenty of existing provision which is appropriate for the target groups but which isn't sufficiently utilised including apprenticeships. As a result, it has become our objective to ensure the Council can add value to this provision.
22. The Economic Wellbeing Group has also strongly advised us that access to existing provision needs to be achieved through a client centre approach, with each individual being supported to find and enrol on the training that best supports their needs. Despite cuts in provision, we are aware that there are a number of providers in Merton that can give this support and have client centred expertise. An example is those providers that are being funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) up until summer 2018. It is therefore important that all those inside the Council that interact with these vulnerable cohorts are aware that they should be signposting to these experts as is deemed appropriate based on individual need.
23. **We recommend exploration of how to audit, keep updated and make accessible (to residents and all those working with vulnerable cohorts) information on current provision to support progression into employment. (Recommendation 1)**

Mentor support

24. The Economic Wellbeing Group agreed that as provided by both *Project Search* and *Ready for Work*, those in the target groups receiving employment training should benefit from a mentor. It was thought such a mentoring scheme would lend itself to an employee volunteering programme. To offer something back to the employee, these mentor opportunities could be offered to new and developing managers as the chance to enhance skills and experience. Linking this to graduate training schemes and higher level management and leadership apprenticeship frameworks might also be explored.
25. We are also interested in schemes such as that run by the City of London which give rewards to volunteers to thank them for their contribution: time credits can be earned by anyone who contributes their time to the City of London community and spent on various activities including access to the Council's fitness facilities and hiring CDs and DVDs at any community library.



Time credits Share [Twitter] [Facebook] [Email]

CITY OF LONDON

1 TIME CREDIT

“I dedicated an hour of my time to help my community”

CITY OF LONDON

The City of London Time Credits are a way of thanking those who give their time to their local community.

They can be earned by anyone who contributes their time to the City of London community and spent on various activities, including swimming at [Golden Lane Sport & Fitness](#), and also to hire CDs and DVDs at any of the [City of London community libraries](#).

Time Credits can then be spent in places such as Lord's Cricket Ground, St Paul's and the Tower of London.

For full details on how time credits work, where you can earn and spend them, see the [London Time Credits Menu](#)

26. We think it likely that any mentoring scheme will require initial formal training provided with on-going opportunities offered for mentors to continue to network, share experiences and support each other. We are aware that there are other such schemes running locally which might prove informative such as *Inspire* ([here](#)) and organisations like CIPD ([here](#)) provide training on how to establish mentoring programmes.
27. The voluntary sector representatives on the Economic Wellbeing group have indicated that they have expertise that can support the development of a mentoring scheme. There

is also potential to seek external funding with voluntary sector partners for example through the forthcoming round of funding from the Mayor of London's mentoring fund.

Work tasters/work experience

28. The Economic Wellbeing Group agreed it would be advantageous for the Council to make a greater number and wider range of work tasters/work experiences available to provide those in the target groups with opportunities to develop work readiness. These would act as a bridge into longer term training opportunities (such as L1-3 Apprenticeships). The aim of this approach would be to prevent dropout which has been identified as an issue.

29. We have heard from local training providers that these work tasters/work experience opportunities might sit within the framework of formal Traineeships ([here](#)). These are targeted at those who are not currently in a job and have little work experience, are focused on work or the prospect of it; are aged between 16-19 and qualified below Level 3 or 19-24 and have not yet achieved a full Level 2, and providers and employers believe they have a reasonable chance of being ready for employment or in order to move onto an Apprenticeship within six months of engaging in a Traineeship. However, we have also noted that these are not intended for the most disengaged young people, who require very intensive support.

30. We became aware of the *Work Experience Quality Standard* ([here](#)). This is operated by Fair Train and is a national accreditation which provides external quality assurance for high quality work experience and employability programmes. This appears a good route by which to ensure work taster/work experience opportunities provide the best possible experience for participants. We particularly like that this requires regular opportunities for review of progress during the work taster, including praise for achievement and feedback on areas for improvement.

31. We have heard there is much benefit in being able to give our target groups the breadth of experience that other young people typically gain through their family and friends. This needs to involve supporting access to a range of work tasters/work experiences across a number of sectors.

32. We also feel it is important to consider what happens after a young person has completed their work taster/work experience. This should include a range of opportunities for progression including Apprenticeships where appropriate.

Case studies

33. We have been impressed by the work of Nottingham City Council and its innovative Care Leavers scheme:

Nottingham City Council Care Leavers scheme – case study

In recognition of the fact not all young people leaving care feel prepared to make the step into a full time Apprenticeship, training or employment, the Leaving Care Service has launched a new in-house employability programme that supports Nottingham's

most disadvantaged and vulnerable care leavers to make positive steps towards training and employment. The DWP now recognises this programme as a valid contribution to the claimant commitment for Job Seekers.

The programme provides bespoke opportunities that aim to build a young person's confidence and give them the support that they need to develop the good habits and skills that are essential to sustaining mainstream training or employment. Young people are involved in all aspects of planning their programmes, ensuring that they are created around their individual interests, level of commitment and readiness.

Each bespoke programme gives young people the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience under the guidance of a mentor, provided by an ever increasing network of community partners and internal Nottingham City Council services. In addition, the *Leaving Care Service* has become an approved centre for the delivery of ASDAN courses and all young people have the opportunity to achieve employability qualifications (entry to level 2) by participating. Young people undertaking work experience with not for profit organisations are further acknowledged and rewarded via links to national volunteering schemes (e.g. WWV).

The programme strives for a holistic approach to supporting young people to progress. Those facing multiple barriers to entering or sustaining training and work are provided with a tailored resilience coaching and counselling service through a partnership with Lasting Differences (CIC). Further barriers to engagement that young people may experience such as the cost of travel and work clothing are also removed. Preparation and progression are at the heart of the programme and detailed transition planning takes place with each young person to ensure they are supported to continue their positive momentum towards regular training or employment.

34. We have also heard that the Community and Housing Department, through its Merton Employment Team, is already providing work experience/work readiness schemes for people in Merton with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and sensory impairment including working with local employers. This includes work placements with the Council itself and its contractors. The Employment Team has highlighted to the task group how it has worked with the Council's cleaning contractors to provide work placements which have proved a popular choice for the individuals it supports.
35. The aim of the team is to support suitable applicants into paid employment and provide on-going support in the workplace as required to achieve independence. It works with clients by getting to know them, learning about their experience and skills, making sure they have a current CV and providing a benefits check. It offers training and advice in applying for jobs and interview skills. It provides a regular job club to help with job searches and how to fill out job applications. It will accompany participants to meet employers and job interviews, providing support throughout the recruitment process and then help with learning the route from home to a new job or work training. It will also regularly visit participants in their new roles.
36. In our view, there has not been enough recognition of the work of the Merton Employment Team and its expertise in making placements available and successful for vulnerable

cohorts even though there is an overlap in provision given it works with young people from the age of 18 years. Whilst the team has emphasised it does not have resources to expand its scheme, it is willing to share its expertise.

37. We also feel that the work of the Merton Employment Team is important because it is unlikely that the Council can by itself provide sufficient quantity or range of work taster /work experience opportunities. There is potential to learn from the team and its engagement of local employers. The task group thought larger employers would be more suitable as they have sufficient size and resources to make their involvement realistic.
38. **We recommend that in order to better support target groups, work taster/work experiences be provided. This should include extending the work of the Merton Employment Team in offering work taster/work experiences through the Council's contractors and other services providers (with exploration of how to build this as a requirement into standard contract terms and conditions). How these work taster/work experience opportunities are best delivered should be explored including consideration of the Traineeship framework, the *Work Experience Quality Standard*, the emerging Apprenticeship Strategy and the provision of a mentor to support each participant. (Recommendation 2)**
39. **Additionally, to reflect that the aim of improving routes into employment for vulnerable cohorts requires the involvement of teams across the Council (including HR, Children, Schools and Families and *futureMerton*), we recommend that the Economic Wellbeing Group continue and be supported to be the main focus for reducing unemployment and increasing economic wellbeing in Merton. Attendance at the Economic Wellbeing Group for all appropriate departments, divisions and teams should be reinforced by making this a key performance indicator. (Recommendation 3)**

Engagement and demonstrable commitment

40. We acknowledge the difficulties of engaging young people in the target groups. This is something to which the task group has given consideration and whilst it acknowledges that there is no quick fix, members do feel that those that have successfully participated in a work taster/experience may provide the best route through which to promote this opportunity to potential future participants. There is also potential for those that have been mentored to progress to become mentors themselves. This provides another opportunity for skills development.
41. Thought should be given to how this promotion should happen. This might include the development of printed promotional materials and asking young people to talk about their experiences to their peers for example, through opportunities such as the *Your Shout Group*. However, we feel that social media is probably the most important channel by which young people should be encourage to talk about their experiences to their peers. Social media channels such as *YouTube* are possibly the most appropriate.
42. As part of its work the task group has reviewed the Merton Council *Looked After Children and Care Leavers Pledge*, the pledge the Council makes to children in care and care

leavers. We note the pledge lacks specific reference to employability skills ([here](#)). Members of the task group consider that it is important for the Council to signal to those in care and care leavers, that it will provide practical support into employment. As a minimum, members of the task group feel it is important that vulnerable cohorts are supported to develop a skills profile. For example, (under 'Achieve economic well-being /Support for your future') include a promise to 'Help you develop a skills profile that can be used to gain access to a work experience opportunity'.

43. By a skills profile we envisage a proforma should be developed based on existing best practice including information on qualifications, skills, competencies, experiences, likes and ambitions (this reflects the framework used by *Project Search* for placement matching). We think that this might be provided through an online form with accompanying support.

44. We recommend how to engage target groups and demonstrate the Council's commitment to their employment be explored. This might be included in the LAC/Care Leaver Pledge. (Recommendation 4)

Apprenticeships and careers guidance

45. Whilst it was not our primary objective to consider the Council's existing provision of Apprenticeships, this naturally arose during our work. It is apparent that the Council has provided Apprenticeships over the last three years but the number is limited by the Council's own capacity.

46. We are interested that other councils (such as Southwark) are working effectively through their contractors:

Southwark Council: Apprenticeship champion - case study

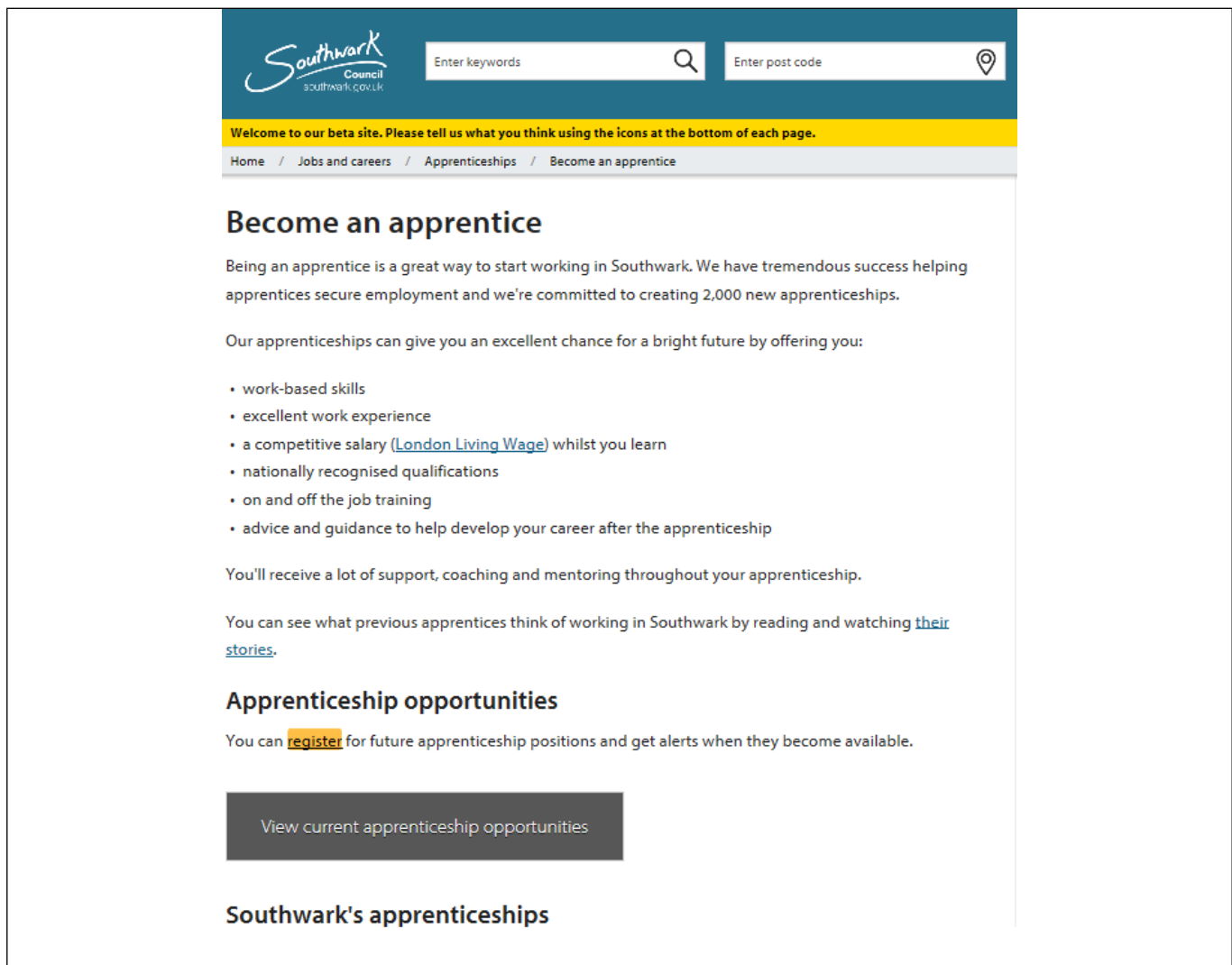
Southwark champions Apprenticeships during procurement to build targets into key council contracts. Last year contractors took on 92 new Apprentices across administration, IT, customer support and technical roles. The borough's employment programmes created 52 more with local employers and partners. And through S106 commitments 107 Apprentices started in construction. The Southwark Apprenticeship Standard continues to set the standard for quality local Apprenticeships with employers like PWC, the GLA, Essentia and smaller employers too.

In November 2015, the borough celebrated 23 signatories to the Apprenticeship Standard ([here](#)); these partners created over 100 Apprenticeships last year, offering the best in secure employment, a fair wage, Apprentice support and quality training to their Apprentices. Southwark's borough-wide approach focuses on sustained impact. Building on 412 Apprenticeships across some 60 employers, this year the borough is ramping up Apprenticeship promotion with a two year campaign in partnership with schools and colleges.

The London Borough of Southwark recently won a London Borough Apprenticeship Award for the best work with supply chains and/or small business to create new

Apprenticeships. The judges selected Southwark due to the innovative work it has undertaken to increase both the quantity and the quality of Apprenticeships. The judges felt Southwark is forward looking and always trying to generate new, high quality, opportunities for local residents.

47. As for work tasters/work experiences, we have also heard that there is high value for our target cohort in Apprenticeship opportunities that provide a range of experiences across a number of sectors (ie: public, private, charitable etc) to give our target groups and others a breadth of opportunities to inform their life choices.
48. We were told by officers that there is evidence Merton residents are taking up Apprenticeships outside of the borough, with some travelling a considerable distance all of which will add to the costs and difficulties of undertaking an Apprenticeship. Again, the task group found other councils (for example, Southwark) that are taking a strong role in promoting local Apprenticeships.



The screenshot shows the Southwark Council website page for 'Become an apprentice'. The header includes the Southwark Council logo, a search bar with the text 'Enter keywords', and a location bar with the text 'Enter post code'. Below the header is a yellow banner with the text 'Welcome to our beta site. Please tell us what you think using the icons at the bottom of each page.' The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / Jobs and careers / Apprenticeships / Become an apprentice'. The main heading is 'Become an apprentice'. The text below the heading states: 'Being an apprentice is a great way to start working in Southwark. We have tremendous success helping apprentices secure employment and we're committed to creating 2,000 new apprenticeships. Our apprenticeships can give you an excellent chance for a bright future by offering you:' followed by a bulleted list: '• work-based skills', '• excellent work experience', '• a competitive salary ([London Living Wage](#)) whilst you learn', '• nationally recognised qualifications', '• on and off the job training', and '• advice and guidance to help develop your career after the apprenticeship'. Below the list, it says 'You'll receive a lot of support, coaching and mentoring throughout your apprenticeship.' and 'You can see what previous apprentices think of working in Southwark by reading and watching [their stories](#).' The next section is 'Apprenticeship opportunities' with the text 'You can [register](#) for future apprenticeship positions and get alerts when they become available.' At the bottom of this section is a dark grey button with the text 'View current apprenticeship opportunities'. The page ends with the heading 'Southwark's apprenticeships'.

49. We feel there are extensive opportunities for promoting Apprenticeships include regular features in *MyMerton*, in local media, on social media and promotion through libraries, youth centres, clubs etc. Information available through the Council's website could be improved to support those that are interested to register their data so they can be regularly sent information on new opportunities provided by the Council. Case studies could be provided and the Council could actively support *National Apprenticeship Week* ([here](#)) and promotion through schools and colleges at the point in the academic year when young people are considering their career choices. Parents are important too and they could be provided with information about Apprenticeships (and other choices information) through opportunities such as at parent evenings etc.
50. We took the opportunity to again look at *London Ambitions* ([here](#)) which aims to provide a successful careers offer for all young Londoners. This comprises personalised information, advice and guidance, 100 hours of experience of the world of work, a careers policy and curriculum, governors ensuring all students are supported, user friendly labour market intelligence, development of 'careers clusters' and use of the *London Ambitions* portal. We feel this is a strong offer that would benefit Merton's young people.
- 51. We recommend that Merton Council actively supports our target groups through traineeships and apprenticeship opportunities that are advertised by the Council. It is proposed that a percentage of appropriate opportunities for our target groups is embedded in the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy and reflected in Merton's contribution to the Greater London Assembly Public Sector Apprenticeship target. (Recommendation 5)**
- 52. As recommended in previous task groups⁸, the Council should build a requirement for its contractors and other service providers to offer apprenticeships for Merton residents in its standard contract terms and conditions. How to promote apprenticeships to the target groups should be explored including use of *London Ambitions*. (Recommendation 6)**

Conclusion

53. This has been an interesting and useful task group and we have learned a lot about routes into employment for vulnerable cohorts, some of which has overlapped with consideration of Apprenticeships.
- 54. We recommend that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel continues to receive data annually on the number of Apprenticeships achieved through the Council. This is to demonstrate impact but also to inform practice in the future provision of Apprenticeships. Reporting should include the number of Apprenticeships achieved, completed and the destinations of those achieving Apprenticeships directly through the Council (and in the future its contractors/service providers). Subset data on those from our target groups undertaking Apprenticeships should also be provided. (Recommendation 7)**

⁸ Adult Skills and Employability 2013, Recommendation 3 ([here](#)) and Post 16 Career Pathways 2012 ([here](#))

What happens next?

55. This task group was established by the Council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel and so this report will be presented to its meeting on 8 February 2017 for the Panel's approval.
56. Once approved by the Panel, it will go to Cabinet which will be asked to provide a formal response to the Panel within two months.
57. The Cabinet is asked to respond to each of the task group's recommendations, setting out whether the recommendation is accepted and how and when it will be implemented. If the Cabinet is unable to support the implementation of the recommendation, then it is expected that a clearly stated reason will be provided for each.
58. The lead Cabinet Member (or officer to whom this work is delegated) should ensure that other organisations to whom recommendations have been directed are contacted and their response to those recommendations is included in the report.
59. A further report will be sought by the Panel six months after the Cabinet response has been received, giving an update on progress with implementation of the recommendations.

Appendix 1: witnesses at meetings

- Paul Angeli, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion
- Kim Brown, Head of Organisation Development and HR Strategy
- Sarah Daly, Head of Service LAC, Permanency and Placements
- Celia Dawson, Head, Cricket Green School
- Clive Duke, Employment Adviser
- Karla Finikin, Services Manager, SEN Disabilities Integrated Service
- Anthony Hopkins, Head of Library and Heritage Services
- Jill Iliffe, Service Manager Adult Learning
- James McGinlay, Head of Sustainable Communities
- Jane McSherry, Assistant Director of Education
- Keith Shipman, Education Inclusion Manager
- Mellisa Stewart, Commissioning Manager Alternative Provision
- Sara Williams, Programme Manager Economy

Additionally, the task group met with the members of the Economic Wellbeing Group.

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 20 March 2017

Subject: Draft Equality Strategy 2017-21

Lead officer: Ged Curran, Chief Executive

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

Contact officer: Evereth Willis, Equality and Community Cohesion Officer
(evereth.willis@merton.gov.uk/ 020 8545 4637)

Recommendations: That Cabinet recommends to Council that the draft Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2021 be endorsed and adopted.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council's Community Cohesion Strategy 2012-15 has expired and the Equality Strategy 2013-17 will expire in March 2017. The Equality Act 2010 requires the council to publish equality objectives every four years to demonstrate how it will meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 1.2 The new strategy combines equality and community cohesion objectives, reflecting the synergies between the two.
- 1.3 This report sets out a refreshed Equality Strategy and Action Plan for 2017-21 and asks Cabinet to recommend to Council that these documents be endorsed and adopted. This will ensure the council continues to meet its duties under the legislation. The report also summarises consultation feed back.

2. DETAILS

- 2.1 The refreshed strategy stating the council's equality objectives meets legislative requirements to publish equality objectives every four years. Following the agreement of Corporate Management Team (CMT) the refreshed strategy combines equality and community cohesion commitments.
- 2.2 The equality objectives have been developed through discussion with community representatives, the Corporate Equality Steering Group, Collective DMT and the Senior Leadership Team. Five of the objectives relate to service provision and are outwardly focused and one of the objectives is internally focused relating to staffing matters.
- 2.3 Outlined below are the six draft equality objectives:
 - a. To ensure key plans and strategies narrow the gap between different communities in the borough;
 - b. Improve equality of access to services for disadvantaged groups;

- c. Ensure regeneration plans increase the opportunity for all Merton's residents to fulfil their educational, health and economic potential, participate in the renewal of the borough and create a health promoting environment;
 - d. Promoting a safe, healthy and cohesive borough where communities get on well together ;
 - e. Encourage recruitment from all sections of the community , actively promote staff development and career progression opportunities and embed equalities across the organisation;
 - f. Fulfil our statutory duties and ensure protected groups are effectively engaged when we change our services.
- 2.4 The objectives aim to narrow the gap in outcomes between residents in the East and West of the borough. A cross-departmental approach will be needed to deliver some of the commitments such as Hate Crime and Domestic Violence.
- 2.5 The draft Equality Strategy 2017-2021, attached at Appendix I, is a four-year strategy that sets out what the council will do to tackle discrimination and inequality and promote equal opportunities and community cohesion in Merton.
- 2.6 The accompanying Action Plan (the delivery vehicle for the draft strategy attached at Appendix II), sets out the actions we will take to meet our equality priorities both corporately and departmentally
- 2.7 In this new draft strategy the activity in the action plan are closely linked to the council's performance framework as commitments are aligned with departmental service plans. This will ensure the strategy is embedded in service plans across the council to ensure effective implementation. The aim is to set smart targets and, where no baseline information exists, improving data collection and analysis will itself become a target. The actions will be reviewed annually and reported on to Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Ethnic Minorities and CMT.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 As a public authority the council has a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people of different backgrounds. The publication of an Equality Strategy setting out our equality objectives fulfils the Council's legal obligations relating to equalities legislation. Failure to do so would mean the Council is not fulfilling its legal obligations and could be subject to legal action. Not having an Equality Strategy would put the Council at risk of legal challenge and potentially damage the council's reputation.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1 Extensive consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders which included meetings with user groups and a web based survey. Consultation feedback is outlined in Appendix III. Public consultation ran from 26 January to 10 March and outlined below are the questions in the online survey:
- 4.1.1 Do you think we have set the right priorities for Merton Council to focus on over the next four years? If not what should our priorities be?

- 4.1.2 Are there any other issues you think should be included in this Equality Strategy?
- 4.1.3 The aims of the strategy will be delivered through the activity in the Action Plan – do we have the right actions?
- 4.1.4 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about this draft Equality Strategy?
- 4.2 The draft strategy was well received and it was felt that we are focusing on the right things.
- 4.3 A number of consistent themes emerged with concerns expressed about:
 - 4.3.1 The need to improve engagement and do more outreach work, especially with User groups. In particular managers should engage with residents at the start of service reviews and not just at the end.
 - 4.3.2 The need for ambitious targets and clear success criteria in the action plan.
 - 4.3.3 The need for more diversity in leadership roles.
 - 4.3.4 Respondents with hidden disabilities felt that some officers displayed a lack of sensitivity in their approach.
 - 4.3.4 Disabled residents are willing to work with officers to deliver disability equality training.
 - 4.35 A more pro-active community cohesion approach is needed through a publicity campaign to educate the public about diversity and how we can more effectively live together and behave towards each other.
- 4.4 The emerging issues will be discussed with departments and responses included in the final version of the draft strategy presented to Council

5. TIMETABLE

Action	Date
Document to be presented to Council for adoption	12 April 2017
Launch and publicity for new objectives	April 2017

6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Failure to implement equality legislation could result in the cost of discrimination claims being incurred.
- 6.2 The activity in the action plan is linked to departmental service plans and will be delivered within existing resources.

7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 On 6 April 2011 the Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the Local Authority, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful 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 and, in relation to the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination only, marriage and civil partnership.
- 7.2 With effect from 12 April 2012 the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulation 2011 requires the council to prepare and publish equality objectives and subsequently at least four-yearly. The objectives must be specific and measurable.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 By developing and producing a new Equality Strategy, the Council is re-affirming its commitment to human rights, equality and community cohesion. Merton’s approach to equality and diversity is driven by its overall vision of Merton – a great place to live, work, learn and visit. The draft strategy will encourage a wider public debate about equalities in Merton and the actions needed to address inequality.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There is a risk to the Council’s reputation if it fails to produce and publish equalities objectives. This can also increase the risk of legal challenge against the council’s decisions. Additionally there is a risk of claims of discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

11. APPENDICES – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

- Appendix I: Draft Equality Strategy 201-2021
- Appendix II: Draft Equality Strategy 2017-2021 Action Plan
- Appendix III: Comments and feedback from Consultation

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Merton’s Equality Strategy 2013-17
- 12.2 http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/plansandpolicies/equality_strategy_2013-17_final_v2.pdf

APPENDIX I - DRAFT EQUALITY STRATEGY

Merton's Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21

1. Introduction

The Equality Strategy sets out the council's equality objectives in one document and outlines how we will embed equalities considerations into our day-to-day business.

Under the Equality Act 2010 Merton has a Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure that in exercising our functions and delivering services and partnership work we:

1. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
2. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share a protected characteristic
3. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Act also introduced nine 'Protected Characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.

At the decision-making stage councils are required to assess how changes to policies and service delivery will affect different people. Therefore the Act requires that we provide accessible services to all our customers.

We acknowledge that the Council has a key role to play to promote a fair and more equal society by putting equalities considerations central to the decisions we make about service delivery, contract arrangements and employment.

In producing this strategy we have developed objectives that promote equality and promote community cohesion in Merton by addressing issues of concern in the borough.

The Equality Act underpins the strategy and the objectives apply to all the protected characteristics. Therefore, we will not tolerate discrimination and will endeavour consider all the protected characteristics in the delivery of our services.

We recognise that some people share more than one protected characteristic and as a result may face multiple disadvantage.

2. **Merton the place**

Merton's population, according to Greater London Authority (GLA) 2016 projections, is 207,141 people, living across 83,446 occupied households. The population density of the borough is higher in the wards of the east compared to the wards that are in the west. Just over half of the borough is female (51%).

The average age of residents in the borough is 36.6, this is just above the London average of 35.9. GLA 2013 round population projections records Merton's BAME population as 74,971, meaning Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups make up around 36.7% of the population. This is lower than the London average of 42.5%.

Based on GLA trend-based projections, Merton's population is projected to increase by 13,245 between 2014 and 2020. During this time the boroughs age profile is also projected to change, with the most notable growth coming in the numbers of those aged under 16 and those over 50. This will be set against a projected decline in the proportion of people aged 25-35. Merton's ethnic composition is also forecast to change, with the BAME proportion set to increase to 40%

The borough's growing diversity shows the number of people that live in the borough that come from different backgrounds. According to data collected from the 2011 Census the three largest migrant populations by country of birth are Polish (3.5%), Sri Lankan (3.2%) and South African (2.8%). 34.9% of school pupils in Merton have a first language known or believed to be other than English.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) sets out a relative position for each local authority in the country, giving an overall score for each area. The indices were updated in September 2015 and ranks Merton as 7th least deprived out of the 33 London boroughs and 212 out of 354 local authority areas (where 1 is the most deprived) for the rest of England. This overall lack of deprivation does, however, hide stark inequalities in the borough between deprived wards in the east of the borough (Mitcham) and the more affluent wards in the west (Wimbledon).

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Merton highlights health inequalities that are based on gender, ethnicity and where people live. Health outcomes in Merton are generally better than those in London, and in line with or above the rest of England, however, there is a difference between the most and least deprived areas within the borough for life expectancy of 7.9 years for men and 5.2 years for women. Linked to deprivation, those in the east of the borough have a much higher chance of serious illness and early deaths from illnesses such as cancer and heart disease. In 2015 13.5% of residents in Merton that are of a working-age were recorded as having a disability or long-term health condition.

Merton residents who are in active full-time employment are distributed all over the borough, however, unemployed residents are concentrated towards the east of Merton, and self-employed residents are concentrated toward the west. Although unemployment in the borough is below the national average, it rises significantly in some of the eastern wards, and 63% of all benefit claimants live in the east of the borough. There are also significant differences in skill levels between residents in the Wimbledon area, with higher numbers of people in the east of the borough in receipt of benefits such as Job Seekers Allowance. The GLA Pay-check 2011 dataset illustrates the large disparities in the distribution of income within Merton. In general the west of the borough is more affluent, notably Wimbledon Park, Village, and Hillside wards. These wards have a median income range of £41-£50,000. By comparison wards in the east such as Figge's Marsh, Pollards Hill, St. Helier, and Cricket Green have a median income range of £24-28,000.

3. Our achievements

Over the past three years progress has been made towards embedding equality practice throughout the Council and promoting community cohesion. Outlined below are some of our successes:

- **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.
- **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%.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- We worked with key community representatives to support the development of Black, Asian and Minority Voice to provide a strategic voice for the borough's BAME community.
- The council has also worked with community representatives to revitalise the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender Forum to progress issues facing the community.
- Volunteer Merton, a new online portal that seamlessly links up volunteers with volunteer opportunities through a digital platform has been launched. 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.

4. Key issues we want to tackle

The aim of the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21 is to address key issues such as:

- bridging the gap between the levels of deprivation and prosperity in the borough particularly focusing on:
 - raising educational attainment for all children and young people and reduce attainment gaps for target groups including children with special education needs or disabilities, those who are looked after in care, specific BAME groups, specific groups of White boys and those who are excluded from school
 - tackling rising unemployment particularly among young BAME communities and disabled residents and supporting those who are long term unemployed back into work
 - Reducing health inequalities particularly the issues affecting some BAME communities, disabled and older residents.
 - Support residents who may be affected by mental illness or dementia
 - increasing education and economic opportunity in the east of the borough
- Improving understanding of the borough's diversity and foster better understanding between communities.
- Improving understanding of 'hidden' disabilities and the challenges that disabled residents face in all aspects of their lives. We aim to work in a cross-cutting way and take a holistic approach to more effectively address the needs of disabled residents.
- supporting those who do not usually get involved in decision-making to better understand how they can get involved and get their voices heard
- Supporting residents to access on-line access services
- Providing services that meet the needs of a changing population.
- employing staff that reflect the borough's diversity

5 Objectives and Indicators

Not everyone receives the same start in life and this can significantly shape their opportunities in life. As a council we recognise that understanding this difference is key to addressing some of the complex issues that create barriers and exclusion for some of our residents. Therefore we are committed to working toward:

- Everyone having an opportunity to fulfil their potential

- Individuals having choice and control to improve life chances and outcome¹
- Everyone having ways to tackle the barriers that lead to inequality

It is evident² that some families experience inter-generational disadvantage that results in individuals experiencing inequality throughout their lives. Some disadvantaged people often lack basic information and skills. The challenges of disadvantage is felt by a range of people including teenage pregnancy, those who experience difficulty in the transition from being a young people to adulthood, gypsies and travelers, the long-term unemployed, disabled people and young adults leaving care.

Equality Objectives

We have developed 6 objectives that aim to improve the life chances of our residents and create a more level starting point for all. The objectives are outlined below:

1. To ensure key plans and strategies narrow the gap between different communities in the borough
2. Improve equality of access to services for disadvantaged groups
3. Ensure regeneration plans increase the opportunity for all Merton's residents to fulfil their educational, health and economic potential, participate in the renewal of the borough and create a health promoting environment.
4. Encourage recruitment from all sections of the community , actively promote staff development and career progression opportunities and embed equalities across the organisation
5. Promoting a safe, healthy and cohesive borough where communities get on well together
6. Fulfil our statutory duties and ensure protected groups are effectively engaged when we change our services.

¹ Dimensions of equality as defined by the Equality Review published in 2007: longevity, health, physical security, education, standard of living, productive and valued activities, and individual and family life, participation, influence and voice, identity, expression, and self-respect, legal security.

² Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), (2010) How fair is Britain? equality, human rights and good relations in 2010: the first triennial review.

Marmot (2010). The Marmot Review: Fair Society, Healthy Lives. Strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010

6. Equality Analysis

An Equality Analysis (EA) is an assessment and improvement process that helps us to determine how the Council's policies, procedures, services, practices, or new proposals will impact on or affect different communities – especially those groups or communities who experience inequality, discrimination, social exclusion or disadvantage.

In Merton Equality Analysis is generally used to inform and or support the following:

- Savings proposals
- Growth
- Major policy changes around service access
- Service cessation
- Restructuring

DMTs are responsible for identifying which proposed changes require an Equality Analysis. This will ensure that the EA becomes embedded in all our processes.

Additionally officers are required to provide Cabinet Members with sufficient evidence about who the stakeholders are and how they will be affected by proposed changes.

7. How will performance be measured?

Leadership – responsibility and accountability

Merton's elected members have overall responsibility for the Council's Equality Strategy. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Equalities and Engagement has the executive responsibility for promoting equality and diversity across the partnership and all council services, including those delivered on its behalf by businesses, voluntary, community and faith organisations.

Our Corporate Management Team and Departmental Management Teams will have responsibility for the strategic implementation of the strategy. This includes making sure that equalities is central to all work done by the council, communicating and promoting the strategy to others inside and outside the council, setting out what we aim to achieve in terms of equality and diversity, and holding departments to account through performance reviews.

All managers must be familiar with the strategy and be responsible for ensuring equality and diversity is an integral part of any policy development, service design and delivery, employment practices; and procuring and commissioning of goods and services.

All staff including those we work in partnership with, and who are contracted or commissioned to work on our behalf, have a responsibility to promote equality, eliminate discrimination in their day-to-day work, and recognise and respect the different backgrounds and circumstances of people.

The strategy will be monitored through the governance structure outlined below:

Corporate Equality Steering Group is comprised of the CMT Equalities Champion (the Director of Children Schools and Families) and departmental representatives. The group will

take the lead in monitoring the delivery of the strategy's commitments and where necessary highlight issues of concern and make recommendations to CMT for further improvements.

Departmental Equality Steering Groups - each department has a steering group comprised of representatives from across the department. They will be responsible for local delivery of the corporate objectives and will review and revise the priorities based on assessment of service need

Departmental Management Teams - will be responsible for the delivery of the strategy through service, teams and personal development plans.

Corporate Management Team - will receive progress reports twice a year.

Overview and Scrutiny Commission - will receive an annual update on our progress towards achieving the priorities identified in the strategy.

8. Implementation Plan

We will develop a range of robust equality and diversity related performance indicators that we will use to help us monitor our performance. These will be outlined in an action plan outlining the priorities for each objective and the performance measures

APPENDIX II ACTION PLAN

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
Equality Objective 1: To ensure key plans and strategies narrow the gap between different communities in the borough			
1. To reduce health inequalities between different communities in the borough: Sustained halt in rise in the gap in life expectancy between least and most deprived areas within Merton, through improving life expectancy amongst the most deprived	2012/14 Male -6.8 yrs Female-5 yrs Baseline 2011/13 & target Male -7.9 yrs Female- 5.2 yrs	Health and Wellbeing strategy (2015-18)	C&H
2. Halt the widening gap in % of obese 10-11 year olds between east & west Merton, through reducing obesity in children in east Merton	Target 2015/16 – 2017/18 9.2% Baseline: 2012/13-2014/15 9.2% gap Trend in the gap between east and west Merton is increasing East: 23.6% obese West: 14.4% obese	Health & Wellbeing Strategy/ Merton action plan to prevent childhood obesity 2016	C&H

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
<p>3. Reduce gap in % of obese 10-11 year olds between east & west Merton, through reducing obesity amongst children in east Merton</p>	<p>target 2016/17 – 18/19 8% Baseline: 2012/13 – 14/15 9.2% gap</p> <p>Trend in the gap between east and west Merton is increasing</p> <p>East: 23.6% obese West: 14.4% obese</p>	<p>Health & Wellbeing Strategy/ Merton action plan to prevent childhood obesity 2016</p>	<p>C&H</p>
<p>4. Increase active usage of libraries by 5% in the east of the borough amongst 11-16 year olds.</p>	<p>2015/16: 2270 active library users aged 11-16 years in the CR4 postcode.</p>	<p>Business Plan 2016-2021</p>	<p>C&H</p>
<p>5. Increase course take up by 25% in deprived wards by delivering a focussed employability and family learning offer.</p>	<p>2015/16: 52% of adult learners on employability and family learning courses were from deprived wards in academic year 2015-16.</p>	<p>Merton Adult Learning Strategy</p>	<p>C&H</p>
<p>6. Promote digital inclusion through activities that support the Customer Contact strategy</p>	<p>Proportion of completed online transactions for available services</p>	<p>Customer Contact strategy/Business Improvement</p>	<p>CS</p>
<p>7. Produce guidance and training for commissioners on the use of the Social Value Act including the development of a model approach for measuring and evaluating social value.</p>	<p>Quarter 3 2017/18</p>	<p>Corporate Services/Infrastructure & Transactions division/ Commercial services team</p>	<p>CS</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
8. Work with MVSC to increase community giving to the VCS, in particular to support smaller groups with low/no income base - working with disadvantage and vulnerable groups.	Report to Compact Board Autumn 2017 with proposals	Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy	CS
9. Review the support offer to Merton's VCS organisations, in particular to smaller and informal groups	Revised commissioning objectives for VCS support in 2017/18	Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy	CS
10. Financial Inclusion/Welfare Reform	Continue with existing council tax support scheme and local welfare support scheme for 2017/18. The local welfare support scheme will include referrals to the Food bank and continued part funding of a CAB Welfare Disabilities Advisor	% of council tax collection	CS
11. Continue to improve the educational outcomes for disadvantaged groups including LAC; SEN; and pupils eligible for Free School Meals or Pupil Premium	Education Outcomes at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years • Key Stage 2 • Key Stage 4 For disadvantaged groups of pupils	Children and Young People's Plan 2016 -2019 CSF Departmental Equalities and Community Cohesion Annual Plan Annual School Standards Report	CSF

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
<p>12. Challenge schools to improve attendance and reduce exclusions for all children.</p>	<p>School attendance in primary and secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % attendance • % persistent absence <p>Exclusions in primary and secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of permanent exclusions • % of fixed-term exclusions 	<p>Children and Young People's Plan 2016 -2019</p> <p>CSF Departmental Equalities and Community Cohesion Annual Plan</p> <p>Annual School Standards Report</p>	<p>CSF</p>
<p>13. Work with London Councils, as the borough lead for a pan-London employment project to address the following two priorities –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive labour markets 2. Skills for Growth 	<p>Quarterly outputs provided by the contractor on</p> <p>Total participants and including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long term unemployed • over 50's • ethnic minorities 	<p>Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2012</p>	<p>E&R</p>
<p>Equality Objective 2: Provide equality of access to services for disadvantaged groups</p>			
<p>1. Adult Social Care - ensure equality of uptake of social care for all- in line with residents' needs -and take action through commissioning and provision decisions to improve equality of uptake</p>	<p>Annual analysis of pattern of service use by characteristics relating to need- including ethnicity</p>	<p>Commissioning /service plans</p>	<p>C&H</p>
<p>2. Housing –prevention of homelessness through advice and assistance</p>	<p>450 cases annual target</p>	<p>Service plan</p>	<p>C&H</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
3. Engage BAME groups to inform adult learning and library service development, tailored to their needs.	A range of services are currently provided. Workshops will be used to direct where some of our future resources are placed. Run 2 workshops each year.	Merton Adult Learning Strategy	C&H
4. Disabilities and autism – to assess the need and picture of inequalities and inequity for people with disabilities and autism in Merton, and develop autism and disabilities strategies and action plans to tackle gaps in support, provision and access. These will take a pragmatic approach in recognition of existing financial constraints in the statutory sector, looking at optimising existing resources.	Needs assessments on autism and disabilities completed. Strategies and action plans developed for autism (by September 2017) and disabilities (by 31 March 2018).	Health and Wellbeing Strategy Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19	C&H CSF
5. Provide an assisted collection for residents who otherwise may not be able to present their wheeled bin in accordance with standard policy	100% of those requesting assisted collection who meet the criteria set out in the standard policy to receive assisted collections		E&R
6. Continues to raise the issue of step free access at train stations such as Motspur Park, Rayne Park, Wimbledon Park Stations as opportunities arise	This falls under NetworkRail's jurisdiction. However, Merton will continue to raise this at the south London partnership meetings and at other stake holder groups.	Merton Local Plan & Local Implementation Plan	E&R

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
<p>7. work with TfL to ensure that all signalised crossings have the appropriate tactile and audible features & all other controlled crossings have the appropriate tactile paving</p>	<p>All controlled crossings on borough roads adhere to the regulation and are DDA compliant. TfL have recently completed their review and remedial works at all signalised junctions.</p>	<p>Merton Local Plan & Local Implementation Plan</p>	<p>E&R</p>
<p>8. Where possible, the Council endeavours to make the public realm accessible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. ensure that the kerbs are dropped at key locations such as at junctions; B. de-clutter the footways and footpaths to improve accessibility C. ensuring that dropped kerbs at formal crossings and at some informal crossings have the appropriate tactile paving. 	<p>Attend quarterly meetings with the sub-regional mobility forums</p> <p>This is also measured through the annual monitoring of the Local Implementation plan</p>	<p>Local Implementation plan</p>	<p>E&R</p>
<p>9. Continue to work with BAME Voice, Merton Centre For Independent Living, the LGBT and Faith and Belief forums to disseminate and raise awareness in their respective communities of services and support on offered by the council and partners.</p>	<p>Hold regular or quarterly meetings</p>	<p>Voluntary Sector Strategy</p>	<p>CS</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
10. Continue to target families living in areas of deprivation to utilise children's centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of total 0-4 year estimated Census 2011 population from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) whose families have accessed children's center services 	Children and Young People's Plan 2016 -2019	CSF
11. Ensure that looked after children achieve long-term stability and permanency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of children adopted or subject of a special guardianship order • % of LAC in placement for at least 2 years • % of LAC at the end of the month with 3 or more placements 	Children and Young People's Plan 2016 -2019 Looked after Children and Care Leavers Strategy	CSF
12. Ensure the timely delivery of Education, Health and Care Plans for children with special educational needs and disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Education, Health and Care Plans completed within timescale 	Children and Young People's Plan 2016 -2019	CSF
Equality Objective 3: Ensure regeneration plans and activities increase the opportunity for all Merton's residents to fulfil their educational, health and economic potential, participate in the renewal of the borough and create a health promoting environment.			

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
1. Merton Partnership to look at opportunities through the One Public Estate programme to review how the public sector collectively uses its public estate and supports the VCS to deliver increased social value.	Report to Merton Partnership on OPE opportunities Autumn 2017	One Public Estate programme	CS/ER
2. Continue to support young people into Education, Employment and Training	<p>Reduce the % of NEET young people</p> <p>Reduce the % of "not known" NEET</p> <p>Reduce the % of Care Leavers NEET</p>	<p>Children and Young People's Plan 2016 -2019</p> <p>Looked after Children and Care Leavers Strategy</p>	CSF
3. Housing needs for vulnerable people and families to be considered as part of the affordable housing proportion of all planning applications (planning conditions s106)	Affordable housing supply and nominations policy between LBM and RPs.	Housing Strategy & Merton's Local Plan	E&R
4. We will work with Clarion-Latimer to promote access to local employment and apprenticeships opportunities via planning conditions and for Clarion's procurement for re-building the estates.	To be determined and monitored as planning conditions of the regeneration.	Merton's Local Plan & Estates Local Plan	E&R
Equality Objective 4: To encourage recruitment from all sections of the community, actively promote staff development and career progression opportunities and embed equalities across the organisation			

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
<p>1. Monitor progress with respect to the recruitment of apprenticeships as required through the Waste Collection and Environmental Services Contract</p>	<p>% of apprentices as a proportion of the total workforce operating on this contract within Merton. In total the Lot 1 contractor has committed to 25 apprenticeship placements being made across the contract for all SLWP boroughs.</p>		E&R
<p>2. Ensure that the procurement of Environmental services contracts, allow for the recognition of social value through the employment of special needs, apprenticeships and local long term unemployed</p>	<p>A commitment to implement the Contractors Voluntary Work Placement Programme (Veolia Re-start) is contained within the contract. This programme is run in conjunction with JobCentre Plus and Welfare to Work partners.</p>		E&R

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
<p>3. Access to Apprenticeships:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Departments will work with HR to create opportunities for apprenticeships. 2. HR will work with managers to get maximum benefit from the Apprenticeship Levy by developing existing workforce. 3. The Council will continue to work closely with CSF to prioritise apprenticeships for its Looked After Children and Care Leavers. 	<p>HR will host quarterly apprenticeship awareness workshops for managers.</p> <p>% of apprenticeship levy accessed per workforce.</p> <p>Provide regular apprenticeship news stories and plan activities for Apprenticeship Day</p> <p>Set up quarterly meetings with Head of service to establish which young person/s would benefit from participating in an apprenticeship scheme and determine the support needed to ensure the young person fulfils their potential</p>	Workforce Strategy	CS

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
<p>4. Increase the diversity of Senior Leadership Team:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We cannot positively discriminate however we will ensure that our recruitment processes are adhered to for senior roles including the appointment of the best candidate for the role. 2. HR will ensure that the Council's Executive search consultants and recruitment team advertise the vacancies widely. 3. HR will monitor equal access to Learning and development opportunities including management and leadership development. 4. For an organisation to have a healthy, harmonious culture it needs a mission that unifies its diverse stakeholder community. Therefore, engagement with the relevant diversity interest group: customers, staff and partners. 	<p>Monitor recruitment on quarterly basis and report findings to CMT as part of the HR metrics report.</p> <p>Provide CMT with the end of recruitment summary</p> <p>Provide participation rate on a quarterly basis to identify trends and respond to these as appropriate.</p> <p>Increase rating by 5% in the staff survey in relation to development</p>	<p>Workforce Strategy</p>	<p>CS</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
5. In developing HR policies and procedures – statutory requirement and best practice is incorporated	<p>Policies are agreed and staff are briefed and made aware of the new policies.</p> <p>Measure take up of briefing sessions.</p> <p>Ensure the policies are compliant with Equalities Act 2010.</p>	Workforce Strategy	CS
Equality Objective 5: Promoting a safe, healthy and cohesive borough where communities get on well together			
1. Increase the confidence of victims to report Hate Crime and Domestic Violence	<p>The performance measures remain tbc until year 1 priorities are confirmed and the strategic assessment is completed in January 2017</p> <p>Current performance is designed to increase reporting by 20% year on year for 2016-17. This will be subject to review in the new year when the strategic assessment is finalised and the MOPAC police and crime plan performance is confirmed</p>	Hate Crime Strategy Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy	E&R
2. Working in partnership to deliver the Prevent Duty and keep Merton a safe and cohesive borough	Hold monthly Prevent Case Management meetings	Prevent Delivery Plan	CS Lead

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
3. Working in partnership to reduce alcohol-related harm	Baseline Admission episodes for alcohol related conditions (broad)-1,858 rate per 100,000 population	Strategic Framework for prevention of substance misuse (September 2017) Local Alcohol Action Area	Public Health & E&R
4. Continue to celebrate diversity by promoting community cohesion activity such as Black History Month and LGBT History Month	Hold annual civic event for Holocaust Memorial Day and promote LGBT History Month and Black History Month events	Equality Strategy	CS/ER
5. Continue to work collaboratively to reduce bullying in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of primary and secondary schools graded 'Good' or better for personal development, behaviour and welfare by Ofsted 	CSF Departmental Equalities and Community Cohesion Annual Plan	CSF
6. Continue to work in partnership to reduce the number of First-Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice system and undertake targeted work to identify and support those at risk of offending and re-offending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of FTE to the YJS aged 10-17 Rate of proven reoffending in the YJS 	Children and Young People's Plan 2016 -2019	CSF
Equality Objective 6: Fulfil our statutory duties and ensure (relevant stakeholders are consulted) protected groups are effectively engaged when we change our services.			
1. Equality Analysis routinely undertaken to support the decision making process	Savings, growth and service reviews to include EAs	Equality Strategy	All

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
<p>2. Refresh User Voice Strategy and ensure children, young people and families continue to impact continuous improvement for all services across CSF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each CSF service commit to User Voice activity in annual Service Plans. • Report quarterly to Director's management team on annual action plan and programme of User Voice activity. 	<p>CSF User Voice Strategy 2017 -2019</p>	<p>CSF</p>
<p>3. Continue to consult with children, young people and parents in the development of services for children with SEN and disabilities in line with the expectations of the Children and Families Act 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report quarterly to Director's management team. 	<p>CSF User Voice Strategy 2017 -2019</p>	<p>CSF</p>

Key activity	Performance Measure	Key strategy/Plan	Department/ Division
<p>4. Polling station review to be undertaken ahead of the council elections in May 2018</p>	<p>Seek to ensure that all electors in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.</p> <p>Seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled.</p>	<p>Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Returning Officers</p>	<p>CS</p>
<p>5. Target particular communities who have not responded or registered to vote:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to collect council tax and housing benefit data on a monthly basis in order to identify new electors, plus student data at the beginning of each academic year. Expand data mining in an attempt to gain access to registrars, blue badge, and libraries data to identify new citizens/residents. 2. Compare non responding properties to mosaic data in order to identify if there are particular communities under represented on the electoral register. 	<p>50% of all new monthly registrations through data mining.</p>	<p>Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Electoral Registration Officers</p>	<p>CS</p>

APPENDIX III – COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION

Source	Comment	Response (in progress)
Corporate Services Equality Steering Group	HR should consider producing recruitment metrics to inform discussions with CMT and DMTs.	Incorporated into the action plan.
Overview and Scrutiny Commission	Narrowing the gap – we have to be careful here. The gap is widening and what is required is improving outcomes for the most deprived.	Noted and will be discussed with officers.
	Tackling Child Obesity is a complex area and an ambitious aim – how can we realistically make a difference? The home environment is important.	Noted and will be discussed with officers.
	Be cautious when looking at the gaps.	Noted and will be discussed with officers.
	Will our planning decisions ensure that we use sec 106 funding to encourage contractors to employ local people?	Noted and will be discussed with officers.
	Social Value Act – how realistic is it to have actions around this and we need performance indicators	Guidance to provide a framework for officers is being developed. Performance Indicators to be added.
	Is the action plan an ambitious wish list? How will the actions be monitored?	Action plan is linked to departmental service plans and will be monitored via CMT, OSC, JCC and DMTs.
	Add Wimbledon Park station on the list of stations for discussion with TFL for step-free access – as that station lost out to Southfields before the Olympics.	Noted and will be discussed with officers.
Compact Board	Report well received – strategy has the right balance.	
	How will managers across the organisation ensure that they engage with residents at the start of changes to service delivery and not at the end? The report was well received	Feedback to be provided to CMT
INVOLVE Leaders		
	The report was well received.	

Source	Comment	Response (in progress)
Strategy Group	It is important to have success criteria for the activity in the action plan.	Performance Indicators do have success measures
	Need to ensure that young people get to comment on the strategy.	Participation Manager will be discussing the strategy with members of the Youth Parliament.
Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minorities	The strategy is good but what will be different this time? How will the outcomes be monitored?	Monitoring will be done as outlined in the strategy; JCC will also receive regular updates and have the opportunity to monitor progress.
	Concerns expressed about the lack of BAME staff senior manager roles.	CMT to receive a report from HR
Faith and Belief forum	The draft was well received.	
	"Key activity 3 about celebrating diversity is fine as far as it goes. However, a more pro-active approach in the way of more of a public education campaign about diverse groups, how we can more effectively live together and behave towards each other.. the counter argument will be, 'but that costs money.' But maybe it would save money on Key activities 1 and 2 which could be considered as 'locking the door after the horse has bolted'".	A way forward is to put out positive messages in 'My Merton' and talk about diversity, focusing on the contributions of various communities.
Merton Centre for Independent Living	Can 'My Merton' be used to publicise Nisa-Nashim? (Jewish Muslim Women's Network).	Evereth Willis to meet with representatives to develop the new item for a future edition of My
	Planning and design of refurbishment/development to include disability considerations from the outset.	Feed back to be given to Planning and Development Control officers.
	More effective and regular involvement of groups and engagement with residents required.	Feed back to be given to managers.
	Housing advice not always given in a sympathetic manner. A more sensitive approach is needed to understand their issues and anxieties.	Comment to be given to Head of Housing Needs and Strategy.
	The east of the borough receives a poor level of service, e.g. the streets are cleaner in Wimbledon than in Mitcham.	Efforts are being made to bridge the gap between the East and the West.
	Disability is 'invisible'	Noted and will be discussed with officers.

Source	Comment	Response (in progress)
	Lack of awareness and understanding of 'hidden disability' such as chronic illnesses.	Evereth to speak to HR to liaise with MCIL to arrange staff briefings.
	Disability is not celebrated in the same way as LGBT History Month and Black History Month.	Council will support voluntary sector groups to promote community cohesion events in the borough.
	Child obesity will be difficult to achieve because of complex issues such as culture and too many fast food shops (in the east).	Considerations already incorporated in to the brief for the company conducting research.
	The website to access council tax reduction is not helpful and is cumbersome.	Comments to be passed onto officers.
	Will patients of the Wilson be able to register with G.P.s after the redevelopment?	Comment to be passed to the Director of Public Health.
Merton Centre for Independent Living	The Disability Health Needs Assessment needs to be added to the action plan and a Disability Strategy is needed.	Comment to be passed to the Director of Public Health.
	Disability issues are wider than social care and economic factors, e.g. transport, leisure and adult learning are also considerations.	Noted and will be discussed with officers.
	An Access Officer is needed to tackle cross-cutting issues.	The council does not have the resources for an Access Officer however officers will work in a cross-cutting way to deal with issues.
	Equality Impact Assessments are often flawed. Service reduction tends to affect groups that are already receiving targeted services. Engagement with residents is required at an early stage and not just once savings have already been identified.	Noted and will be discussed with officers.
	Health inequality – do we know what the gap is between disabled and non-disabled people?	Comment to be passed to the Director of Public Health.
	Adult Education – poor service provision for adults with learning disability	Comment to be passed to Head of Library & Heritage Services.

Source	Comment	Response (in progress)
	<p>Voluntary sector organisations are not supported to find suitable accommodation. These groups are informed that they need to pay commercial rents, but they are then not supported with funding to meet these costs. A proper strategy is needed.</p>	<p>Noted and will be discussed with officers.</p>
	<p>Merton is the 2nd lowest in London for accepting homeless cases. This is because the borough takes a hard line and is not as proactive as other boroughs with preventative measures.</p>	<p>Comment to be given to Head of Housing Needs and Strategy.</p>
	<p>A disability audit of the Civic Centre is required.</p>	<p>Comment to be given to the Head of Facilities.</p>
<p>Youth Parliament</p>	<p>Participation Manager to meet with members of the Youth Parliament to get their views.</p>	
<p>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum</p>	<p>Strategy well received. Thanks expressed for the council's support in refreshing the forum.</p>	
<p>Public consultation - IConsult</p>	<p>Same two comments also submitted via the Faith and Belief Forum.</p>	

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 20 March 2017

Wards: All

Subject: Contract Award - School Cleaning Contract 2017-2020

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley - Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member: Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah – Cabinet member for Education

Contact Officer: Murray Davies, murray.davies@merton.gov.uk, 020 8545 3069

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to approve the following recommendations:

- A. That the council award to the organisation identified as Contractor C in the Confidential Annex to this report a contract for provision of the school cleaning service at Merton primary, secondary and special schools and other education buildings for a period of 3 years from 5 June 2017, with an option to extend for up to two further years at the discretion of the council.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of Cabinet for the award of the contract for the provision of cleaning services for schools and other education buildings including the council's Professional Development Centre to Contractor C following a two stage restricted tender process.
- 1.2. This new contract will be for an initial period of 3 years from 5 June 2017, with an option at the discretion of the council to extend the term for a further period or periods of any duration up to a maximum two years in total.
- 1.3. The value of the contract which initially covers 28 school sites, 4 children centres and 3 other buildings is in excess of £1,000,000 per year, so in excess of £3,000,000 over the minimum contract term with the potential to rise to over £5,000,000 if extended to the full five years. The total value will fluctuate according to the specific requirements from schools for additional services over and above the standard weekly cleaning provision.
- 1.4. In the tender documentation and the OJEU notice advertising this contract opportunity, the council retained the option to add up to a maximum of 23 further identified school sites should they wish to join the council's contract in future.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The school cleaning contract provides a cleaning service for a range of Merton primary, special and secondary schools – in total, 26 school (covering 28 sites)

expressed an interest in participating in the council's centrally organised cleaning contract. The contract also includes the cleaning service for some further education sites most adjacent to schools – these include the Professional Development Centre and South Wimbledon Community Centre buildings along with children centres at Aragon, Bond Road, Ivy Gardens and the Avenues. A full listing of the schools and other sites is set out in the schedule at end of this report.

- 2.2. The existing contract was awarded by Cabinet in January 2014 for three years with an option to extend until 2019 if desired. Following discussions with schools, a decision was taken not to extend but instead to re-tender this contract in order to test the market and ensure value for money.

Tender Process

- 2.3. The two-stage restricted procedure, as set out in the Public Contract Regulations 2015, was used for the purpose of this tender exercise.
- 2.4. In accordance with the requirements of that procedure, potential contractors were requested to express an interest in the proposed contract following the publication of a Contract Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union. The tender opportunity was also advertised to interested bidders through the London Tenders Portal.
- 2.5. Interested contractors were invited to submit requests to be selected to tender and to complete a Selection Questionnaire. Over 50 organisations expressed an interest in Merton's contract of which 14 submitted completed selection questionnaires to the council.
- 2.6. At the first stage, potential contractors were assessed based on their selection questionnaire submissions according to their financial standing and technical capability and using references obtained from existing clients.
- 2.7. Following assessment of those who expressed an interest, the council drew up a shortlist of five potential contractors to be invited to tender
- 2.8. Those organisations invited to bid were asked to submit a price proposal for the provision of school cleaning along with detailed statements explaining how they would deliver the cleaning service. The price proposal required potential contractors to provide a breakdown of their costs and prices for each of 35 sites with options for additional chargeable periodic and ad hoc cleaning tasks.
- 2.9. These organisations were advised that the contract would be awarded in accordance with the criteria and weightings detailed in Table 1 overleaf – equal emphasis was placed on cost and quality in light of discussions with schools about their priorities.

Published Award Criteria	Weighting
Qualitative Criteria Organisational Capacity (17%), Quality of Service (17%), Performance Management (16%)	50%
Price Total Cost (12.5%), Total Hours v. Benchmark (12.5%), Hourly Rate (12.5%), Ratio of Wage Cost to Charge (7.5%), Variation Rates (5%)	50%
Total Quality & Price Scores	100%

Table 1 - Contract Award Criteria

- 2.10. The qualitative elements of the tender submissions which were assessed included bidders' proposals in relation to staffing, training and recruitment (including safeguarding arrangements), quality assurance, management of the contract and the provision of equipment.
- 2.11. The financial element of the bids were assessed based on the overall price, average cost per cleaning hour, ratio of overheads to wages and the charge rates for additional works.
- 2.12. All bidders were provided details of the evaluation methodology to be employed in assessing each element of their bids.
- 2.13. Contractors were also advised that in the event of a tenderer other than the current contractor being awarded this contract, the terms of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment/Regulations 2006) were likely to apply and that employees of the current contractor could be the subject of a TUPE transfer. Approximately, 140 employees of the current contractor could be the subject of a TUPE transfer.
- 2.14. All bidders were required to set out their experience of handling transfers of staff under TUPE provisions in the past and proposals for successfully dealing with the transfer of the existing contractor's workforce.
- 2.15. The return date for tenders was 22 February 2017. Four of the five organisations invited to bid submitted tenders.

Tender Evaluation

- 2.16. An evaluation team was established for the assessment of bids consisting of:
 - CSF Contracts & Procurement Manager
 - CSF Principal Contracts Officer
 - CSF Contracts Officer

The evaluation process was supported by a Commercial and Procurement Advisor from the council's Corporate Procurement team who acted in a quality assurance role to ensure EU procedures were being fully complied with, and that the approach of the team to scoring against the evaluation criteria was consistent for all elements of the tender. A moderation review of the scores was undertaken to ensure the integrity of the scoring process.

- 2.17. The council is seeking to appoint the bidder with the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (as opposed to lowest price) based on the assessment of both price and quality in accordance with the published criteria
- 2.18. Based on the combined qualitative and pricing scores, Contractor C (as detailed in the confidential appendix to this report) achieved the highest overall score and is recommended for the award this contract.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The making of arrangements for school cleaning is a matter for schools as budgets are delegated to them. It is not essential that there is a borough-wide contract. However, the schools who were consulted have indicated a wish to be part of a council organised contract. A centrally managed contract avoids the necessity for a school to spend extensive amounts of time making their own arrangements. It also allows them to engage with the council to monitor the service to ensure consistency of service across different school sites.
- 3.2. An extension of the existing contract for a further year was considered but, following consultation with schools, the decision was taken to re-tender the service.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Schools currently within the council's central contract were consulted in relation to their views about the school cleaning service and were invited to indicate their preference in regard to the continuation of the council's contracting arrangements. All agreed that they were satisfied with the current service but a significant proportion (approximately half by contract value) wished the council to re-tender to ensure that the service continues to provide value for money.
- 4.2. The Corporate Procurement Team and Legal Services have been consulted throughout the process to ensure probity existed at all times and to ensure we are able to fulfil our obligations at a later date in the event of a Freedom of Information Enquiry. Legal Services advised in detail on the drafting of the tender documentation.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. It is anticipated that the new contract which will commence on 5 June 2017 after the end of the summer school half term holiday.
- 5.2. Approval of the award of this contract to the selected provider is required to be made subject to observing a compulsory 'standstill' period of a minimum of 10

days from notification to all tenderers of the council's intention to award to the successful tenderer. Provided no legal objection to the intended award is formally commenced or raised with the council by any unsuccessful tenderer during this standstill period the contract may be sealed.

- 5.3. Following the formal award of the contract, officers will work with the successful contractor to manage the implementation of the new contract.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Full details of the financial implications of the contract award are set out in the confidential appendix to this report.
- 6.2. The council has in retendering the service transferred the cost of its management of the school cleaning service from schools to the cleaning contractor. Under the new contract terms, the contractor will pay the council a sum of £30,000 for the council's costs in procuring, managing and monitoring this contract. Under the previous contract, schools had been required to contribute to the council's cost through the schools' Service Level Agreement.
- 6.3. The cost of the cleaning service is recharged by the contractor directly to the schools and other sites on a monthly basis.
- 6.4. The contract provisions allow for a modest increase in rates charged during each year of the contract term to allow for a rise in cleaners' wage costs. This allowance has been made because the majority of the staff engaged in delivering this service are paid at the National Living Wage. As their wages account for 70% or more of the cost of the cleaning provision, an increase in line with the rise in living wage will be necessary.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The procurement process has been undertaken in accordance with Contract Standing Orders, formal UK and EU procurement guidelines. Legal Services and Corporate Procurement have been consulted at various stages throughout to comment and add input where necessary.
- 7.2. The contract terms for the tender have been prepared by the council's Legal Services team
- 7.3. Legal Services advised in relation to the remainder of the documentation contained with the council's Invitation to Tender

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no substantive human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.
- 8.2. The tender documentation required all tenderers to demonstrate that they comply with current equalities legislation.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no substantive crime and disorder implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. All organisations that are awarded contracts must have a health and safety policy that compliments the council's corporate procedures for effective health and safety and risk management. Tender documentation submitted by all tenderers included their health and safety documentation and practical arrangements for the safe delivery of the cleaning service.

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

- Confidential Appendix

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Contract Standing Orders](#)

Schedule of Schools and other sites

Cleaning Contract Premises List	
Bond Road Family Centre	Merton Professional Development Centre
Aragon Children's Centre	South Wimbledon Community Centre - Merton Hall
The Avenues Children's Centre	South Wimbledon Community Centre - Paterson Annexe
Ivy Gardens Children's Centre	
Abbotsbury Primary School	SS. Peter & Paul (RC) Primary School
Aragon Primary School	St. Mary's (RC) Primary School
Beecholme Primary School	St. Matthew's (CofE) Primary School
Dundonald Primary School	St. Teresa's (RC) Primary School
Garfield Primary School	St. Thomas of Canterbury (RC) Primary School
Gorringe Park Primary School	Stanford Primary School
Harris Primary Academy	Wimbledon Park Primary School
Holy Trinity (CofE) Primary School	Ursuline High School (RC)
Joseph Hood Primary School	Cricket Green School
Lonesome Primary School	Melrose School
Merton Park Primary School	Perseid School (Primary)
Morden Primary School	Perseid School (Secondary)
Pelham Primary School	Smart Centre - Main Building
Sacred Heart (RC) Primary School	Smart Centre - Annexe

This page is intentionally left blank