

Merton Council Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Date: 8 September 2021
Time: 7.15 pm
Venue: Merton Civic Centre

AGENDA

Page Number

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2	Declarations of pecuniary interest	
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The meeting room will be open to members of the public from 7.00 p.m.**

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Overview and Scrutiny Commission membership

Councillors:

Peter Southgate (Chair)
Peter McCabe (Vice-Chair)
Ben Butler
Billy Christie
Brenda Fraser
Paul Kohler
Nick McLean
Aidan Mundy
Sally Kenny
Thomas Barlow

Substitute Members:

John Dehaney
Edward Foley
Simon McGrath
David Williams MBE JP
Omar Bush

Co-opted Representatives

Mansoor Ahmad, Parent Governor
Representative - Secondary and Special
Sectors
Roz Cordner, Education Co-optee.

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. For further advice please speak with the Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership.

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

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

Scrutiny's work falls into four broad areas:

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

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

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

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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.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

14 JULY 2021

(7.15 pm - 9.20 pm)

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Southgate (in the Chair),
Councillor Peter McCabe, Councillor Ben Butler,
Councillor Billy Christie, Councillor Brenda Fraser,
Councillor Paul Kohler, Councillor Aidan Mundy,
Mansoor Ahmad, Roz Corder, Councillor Sally Kenny and
Councillor Thomas Barlow

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Mark Allison,
Frank Dick (Interim Head of Recovery), Hannah Doody (Chief
Executive) and Chris Lee (Director of Environment and
Regeneration)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Nick McLean (Cllr David Williams as sub).

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising:

Scrutiny Officer circulated the notes from Chris Lee about step free access at Haydon's road and the data from HR on recruitment prior to the meeting.

4 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE - PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR 2021/22 (Agenda Item 4)

The Chair welcomed and congratulated our new Chief Executive Hannah Doody. Both the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council were asked to set out their priorities for Merton in the year ahead.

Leader:

Bridging the gap/levelling up is my top priority.

I recognise that there is still not enough BAME senior managers and that's something I certainly want us to make progress on.

As Leader I have;

- Ensured free school meals continued to be provided
- Re-adopted one of the country's most generous council tax rebate schemes for low-income households
- During the pandemic I helped start a food bank service and implemented the Merton Together initiative, which brings communities together with the Council and voluntary sector to get support to where it's most needed.
- Introduced the Your Merton consultation, which is the biggest community conversation in Merton's history

Chief Exec:

We are still responding to a pandemic so focusing on driving the vaccination rates up in Merton will continue to be a priority.

Alongside this, my priorities will be;

- Comprehensive Spending Review
- Levelling up and improving opportunities
- The Social Care Reform
- Upcoming Children's Services reviews
- Young people's mental health - we're seeing a large surge in demand
- Housing and planning reform
- The work of Your Merton – Understanding that engagement and what really matters to our residents.

In response to Commission Members questions,

- With regards to the Clarion repairs and maintenance issues, the Chief Executive will be undertaking visits to all the Clarion estates with Claire Miller, Clarion CEO. Our power is incredibly limited so resolving these issues has to be about negotiation and working together with Clarion which I will continue to build on.
- Discussions around how to address the challenge of housing supply and increasing the provision of affordable housing in a borough where you've got real site and land challenges are ongoing. We've got to figure out our assets and figure out what we could do with them as our starting point.
- We will use resources like Merton College and the apprenticeship levy to build up skills and employment opportunities for young people of the borough who are leaving school and university.
- A Commission Members concerns were echoed by the Chief Executive who confirmed our school and social work communities have growing concerns about children and young people's mental health in Merton. Merton is served

very well by the Southwest London and St George's Mental Health Trust. There is also access to advice, information and online coping therapies and strategies. Unfortunately we have seen cutbacks to mental health services and resources for a number of years so there is an issue around access to beds and where those beds are if young people need admission. Myself (Chief Executive) and the Leader are talking to our NHS colleagues this week to discuss the backlog of care in the community and mental health but our focus can't just be in the hospitals, it's got to be about our mental health for our young people in our community as well.

- A Commission Member commented on the rise of HMO's in the borough. The Leader agreed it is a growing concern, over the last 16 months in particular, and whilst we do take action against bad landlords when they're identified, proof and evidence render it a hard process.
- The Leader has been working with Thames Water to address the blocked drains and flooding issues. It's clear they need to improve their infrastructure and we've written to them today explaining we feel they need to do more for our residents.
- The Chief Executive thanked Members for promoting and encouraging vaccinations and also wanted to recognize the hard work of those teams under the leadership of Director of Public Health.

5 RECOVERY AND MODERNISATION PROGRAMME - PRESENTATION (Agenda Item 5)

Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration, and Frank Dick, Interim Recovery Manager presented some slides on the origins of the program, which date back to the internal review LGA peer challenge. Both of those reviews informed us about what the council needed to do, particularly around technology, to improve customer contact and the use of digital solutions to improve the efficiency of the organisation as a whole.

The program has these three broad connected objectives;

- Developing and embedding the opportunities and benefits already evident through the experience of responding to the pandemic;
- Reimagining, rethinking and redesigning operating models to...
- Deliver substantial improvements, efficiencies and savings

The pandemic has brought about an awareness of the fact that we can work very differently, not least the working arrangements around staff working from home. Using technology differently and our developing relationship with the voluntary sector has informed a lot of the work that we have within this program.

The immediate shift to hybrid working tested our digital capacity and over the last fifteen months has tested our approach to staff management and health and well-

being, but it has also delivered significant benefits in terms of work-life balance and also the opportunity to realise savings as we reduce our footprint. Not just savings financially but savings in terms of carbon and our commitment to the climate change emergency.

The Chair thanked Chris Lee and Frank Dick for their presentation.

6 IDENTIFY QUESTIONS FOR THE BOROUGH COMMANDER (Agenda Item 6)

The Borough Commander will be joining us in September.

Please can all Members submit your questions by the end of this month so we can reasonably request written answers from the Borough Commander.

A Commission member requested a reminder of the deadline to the group offices - Scrutiny Officer to action.

7 DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 21/22 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chair requested the Commission is given the opportunity to scrutinize the results of the 'Your Merton' consultation.

Scrutiny Officer confirmed discussions have been held with the policy team – the results of your Merton are still being collated and will proceed to LSG in September. Current provisional date of November for presentation to the Commission.

Merton Overview and Scrutiny Pack – July 2021

MPS Daily Dashboard

Offences & SDs									
Crime Category	Sub Category	Offences Previous R12 -1yr	Offences Current R12	Offences % Change	SDs Previous R12	SDs Current R12	SD Rate - Previous R12	SD Rate - Current R12	
TNO	TNO	891,785	775,237	-13.1%	83,710	73,606	9.9%	9.5%	●
	Total	891,785	775,237	-13.1%	83,710	73,606	9.9%	9.5%	●
Burglary	Total	81,647	55,944	-31.5%	3,814	2,898	5.5%	5.2%	●
Robbery	Robbery of Business Property	2,570	2,040	-20.6%	351	261	13.1%	12.8%	●
	Robbery of Personal Property	34,150	21,806	-36.1%	2,252	1,747	7.4%	8.0%	●
	Total	36,720	23,846	-35.1%	2,603	2,008	7.9%	8.4%	●
Robbery - Mobile Phone	Total	10,944	7,487	-31.6%	856	589	8.3%	7.9%	●
Theft Person - Mobile Phone	Total	25,633	21,761	-15.1%	271	201	1.2%	0.9%	●
VWI	VWI - Domestic Abuse	23,774	22,775	-4.2%	4,380	3,464	18.2%	15.2%	●
	VWI - Non Domestic Abuse	53,580	46,237	-13.7%	6,895	5,956	14.3%	12.9%	●
	Total	77,354	69,012	-10.8%	11,275	9,420	15.6%	13.6%	●
Domestic Abuse	Total	88,192	95,091	7.8%	12,959	11,436	14.1%	12.0%	●
Sexual Offences	Rape	8,101	8,228	1.6%	329	352	4.4%	4.3%	●
	Other Sexual Offences	12,242	13,138	7.3%	1,252	1,221	11.2%	9.3%	●
	Total	20,343	21,366	5.0%	1,581	1,573	8.4%	7.4%	●
Total Gun Crime	Total	2,232	1,465	-34.4%	387	335	20.4%	22.9%	●
Lethal-barrelled Gun Discharges	Total	333	236	-29.1%	53	73	17.8%	30.9%	●
Total Knife Crime	Total	14,928	10,540	-29.4%	2,120	1,675	15.6%	15.9%	●
Knife Injury Victims (U25 Non DA)	Total	1,684	1,247	-26.0%	-	-	-	-	●
Covid-19 Flagged	Total	0	1,370	-	-	-	-	-	●
Theft	Other Theft & Handling	129,095	79,918	-38.1%	1,437	954	1.4%	1.2%	●
	Bicycle Theft	21,074	24,123	14.5%	273	275	1.4%	1.1%	●
	Shoplifting	43,971	33,534	-23.7%	4,520	3,124	11.3%	9.3%	●
	Theft from Person	50,439	31,258	-38.0%	569	355	1.4%	1.1%	●
	Total	244,579	168,833	-31.0%	6,799	4,708	3.4%	2.8%	●

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I & S Calls and ASB

	Previous R12	Current R12	Change %
ASB Calls	401,295	413,429	3.0%
ASB Repeat Callers	10,517	13,807	31.3%
I Calls In Target	84.8%	84.3%	
S Calls In Target	72.8%	69.7%	

Offences & SDs										
Crime Category	Sub Category	Offences Previous R12 -1yr	Offences Current R12	Offences % Change	SDs Previous R12	SDs Current R12	SD Rate - Previous R12	SD Rate - Current R12		
TNO	TNO	66,148	61,312	-7.3%	5,924	5,110	9.3%	8.3%		
	Total	66,148	61,312	-7.3%	5,924	5,110	9.3%	8.3%		
Burglary	Total	7,208	5,120	-29.0%	385	188	6.2%	3.7%		
Robbery	Robbery of Business Property	193	149	-22.8%	37	16	19.4%	10.7%		
	Robbery of Personal Property	1,743	1,340	-23.1%	132	106	8.2%	7.9%		
	Total	1,936	1,489	-23.1%	169	122	9.4%	8.2%		
Robbery - Mobile Phone	Total	455	401	-11.9%	65	42	15.4%	10.5%		
Theft Person - Mobile Phone	Total	699	762	9.0%	2	19	0.3%	2.5%		
VWI	VWI - Domestic Abuse	1,851	1,806	-2.4%	369	258	19.0%	14.3%		
	VWI - Non Domestic Abuse	4,054	3,748	-7.5%	488	425	13.5%	11.3%		
	Total	5,905	5,554	-5.9%	857	683	15.5%	12.3%		
Domestic Abuse	Total	7,044	7,294	3.5%	1,028	912	14.1%	12.5%		
Sexual Offences	Rape	634	617	-2.7%	20	38	3.4%	6.2%		
	Other Sexual Offences	1,095	1,197	9.3%	135	129	13.1%	10.8%		
	Total	1,729	1,814	4.9%	155	167	9.6%	9.2%		
Total Gun Crime	Total	130	81	-37.7%	32	19	29.1%	23.5%		
Lethal-barrelled Gun Discharges	Total	19	6	-68.4%	2	3	16.7%	50.0%		
Total Knife Crime	Total	968	642	-33.7%	130	111	16.3%	17.3%		
Knife Injury Victims (U25 Non DA)	Total	109	75	-31.2%	-	-	-	-		
Covid-19 Flagged	Total	0	98		-	-	-	-		
Theft	Other Theft & Handling	7,888	5,824	-26.2%	113	59	1.7%	1.0%		
	Bicycle Theft	2,846	3,157	10.9%	36	26	1.5%	0.8%		
	Shoplifting	3,684	2,744	-25.5%	407	257	13.5%	9.4%		
	Theft from Person	1,752	1,318	-24.8%	13	26	1.0%	2.0%		
	Total	16,170	13,043	-19.3%	569	368	4.3%	2.8%		

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I & S Calls and ASB

	Previous R12	Current R12	Change %
ASB Calls	31,817	33,101	4.0%
ASB Repeat Callers	643	930	44.6%
I Calls In Target	82.1%	82.4%	
S Calls In Target	66.4%	66.6%	

Merton Daily Dashboard

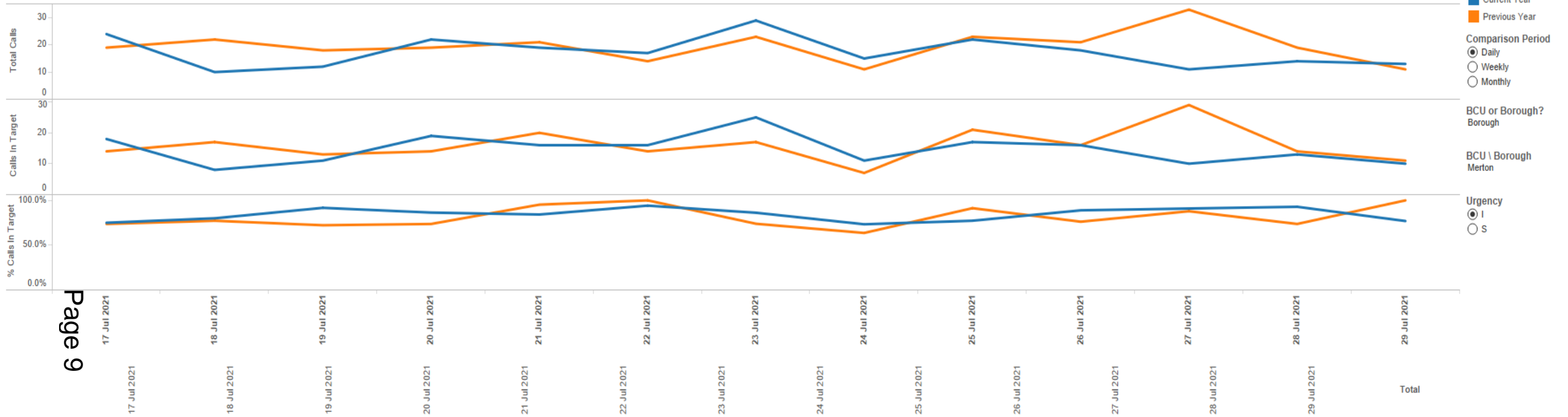
Offences & SDs									
Crime Category	Sub Category	Offences Previous R12 -1yr	Offences Current R12	Offences % Change	SDs Previous R12	SDs Current R12	SD Rate - Previous R12	SD Rate - Current R12	
TNO	TNO	14,280	13,071	-8.5%	1,432	1,189	10.2%	9.1%	●
	Total	14,280	13,071	-8.5%	1,432	1,189	10.2%	9.1%	●
Burglary	Total	1,619	860	-46.9%	99	29	7.8%	3.4%	●
Robbery	Robbery of Business Property	49	38	-22.4%	7	5	13.2%	13.2%	●
	Robbery of Personal Property	338	349	3.3%	28	22	8.4%	6.3%	●
	Total	387	387	0.0%	35	27	9.0%	7.0%	●
Robbery - Mobile Phone	Total	75	104	38.7%	17	7	20.5%	6.7%	●
Theft Person - Mobile Phone	Total	102	94	-7.8%	-	-	-	-	●
VWI	VWI - Domestic Abuse	498	454	-8.8%	106	57	19.4%	12.6%	●
	VWI - Non Domestic Abuse	870	829	-4.7%	127	102	15.9%	12.3%	●
	Total	1,368	1,283	-6.2%	233	159	17.3%	12.4%	●
Domestic Abuse	Total	1,841	1,915	4.0%	275	261	14.3%	13.6%	●
Sexual Offences	Rape	122	109	-10.7%	4	9	3.7%	8.3%	●
	Other Sexual Offences	246	255	3.7%	62	29	32.3%	11.4%	●
	Total	368	364	-1.1%	66	38	22.1%	10.4%	●
Total Gun Crime	Total	37	25	-32.4%	6	9	20.7%	36.0%	●
Lethal-barrelled Gun Discharges	Total	6	4	-33.3%	1	3	20.0%	75.0%	●
Total Knife Crime	Total	243	171	-29.6%	34	26	17.9%	15.2%	●
Knife Injury Victims (U25 Non DA)	Total	27	24	-11.1%	-	-	-	-	●
Covid-19 Flagged	Total	0	25		-	-	-	-	●
Theft	Other Theft & Handling	1,728	1,165	-32.6%	31	9	2.3%	0.8%	●
	Bicycle Theft	351	325	-7.4%	5	3	1.6%	0.9%	●
	Shoplifting	817	691	-15.4%	103	84	15.4%	12.2%	●
	Theft from Person	255	183	-28.2%	1	-	0.4%	-	●
	Total	3,151	2,364	-25.0%	140	96	5.5%	4.1%	●

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I & S Calls and ASB

	Previous R12	Current R12	Change %
ASB Calls	6,677	6,882	3.1%
ASB Repeat Callers	133	188	41.4%
I Calls In Target	80.0%	81.2%	
S Calls In Target	61.1%	60.5%	

Daily I Calls and I Calls In Target



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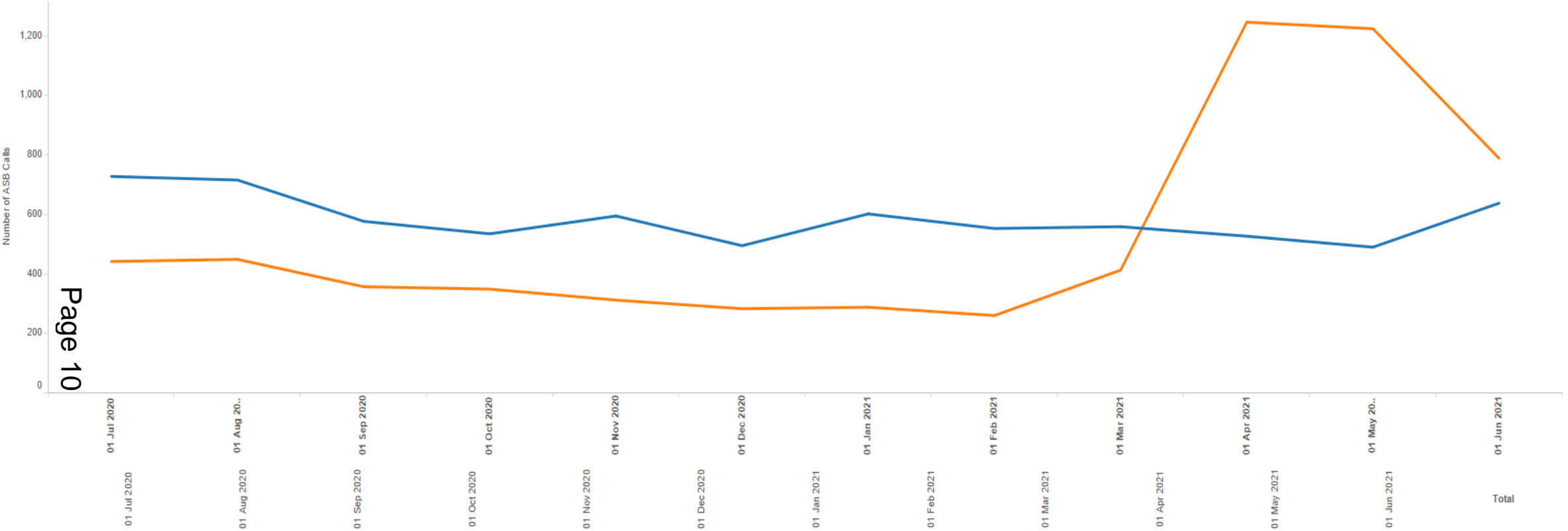
Total Calls Previous Year	19.0	22.0	18.0	19.0	21.0	14.0	23.0	11.0	23.0	21.0	33.0	19.0	11.0	254.0
Total Calls Current Year	24	10	12	22	19	17	29	15	22	18	11	14	13	226
Calls In Target Previous Year	14	17	13	14	20	14	17	7	21	16	29	14	11	207
Calls In Target Current Year	18	8	11	19	16	16	25	11	17	16	10	13	10	190
% Calls In Target Previous Year	73.7%	77.3%	72.2%	73.7%	95.2%	100.0%	73.9%	63.6%	91.3%	76.2%	87.9%	73.7%	100.0%	81.5%
% Calls In Target Current Year	75.0%	80.0%	91.7%	86.4%	84.2%	94.1%	86.2%	73.3%	77.3%	88.9%	90.9%	92.9%	76.9%	84.1%
% Difference	1.3%	2.7%	19.4%	12.7%	-11.0%	-5.9%	12.3%	9.7%	-14.0%	12.7%	3.0%	19.2%	-23.1%	2.6%

[Click here for 52-weeks \ FYTD view](#)



Monthly ASB Calls

- Reporting Period
 - Current 12 Months
 - Previous 12 Months
- Comparison Period
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
- BCU or Borough?
 - Borough
 - BCU \ Borough Merton



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ASB Calls Previous Year	442	449	357	349	312	283	288	260	413	1,247	1,225	789	6,414
ASB Calls Current Year	728	716	577	535	595	495	602	553	559	527	490	638	7,015
Difference	286	267	220	186	283	212	314	293	146	-720	-735	-151	601
% Difference	64.7%	59.5%	61.6%	53.3%	90.7%	74.9%	109.0%	112.7%	35.4%	-57.7%	-60.0%	-19.1%	9.4%

[Click here for 52-weeks \ FYTD view](#)



South West COVID Summary – 12 months



THE DATA OFFICE

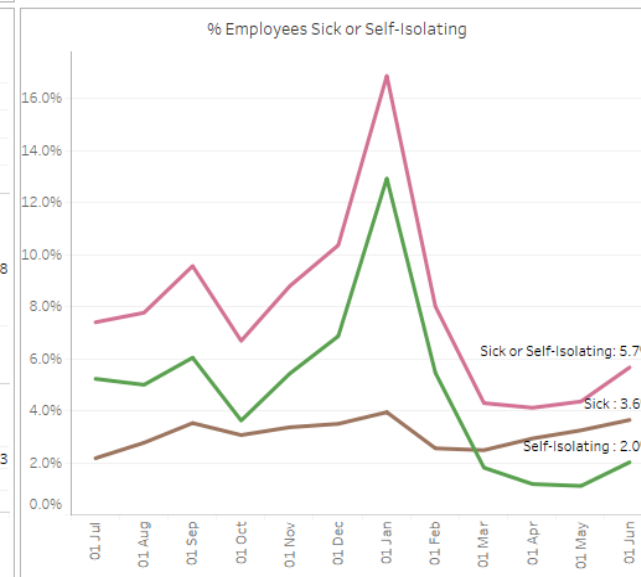
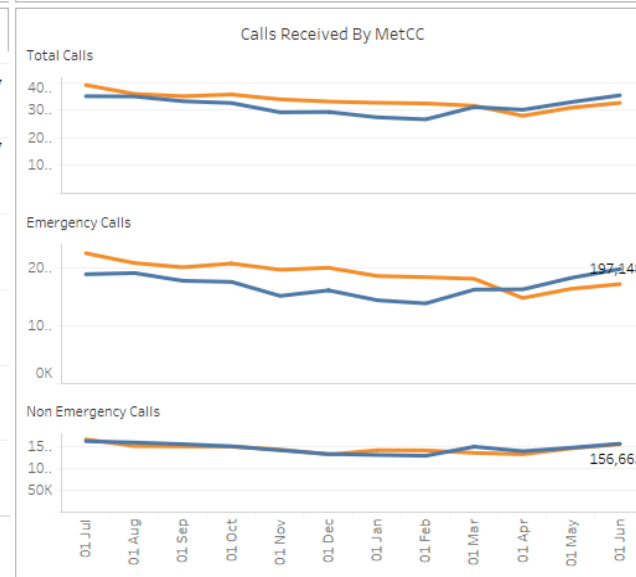
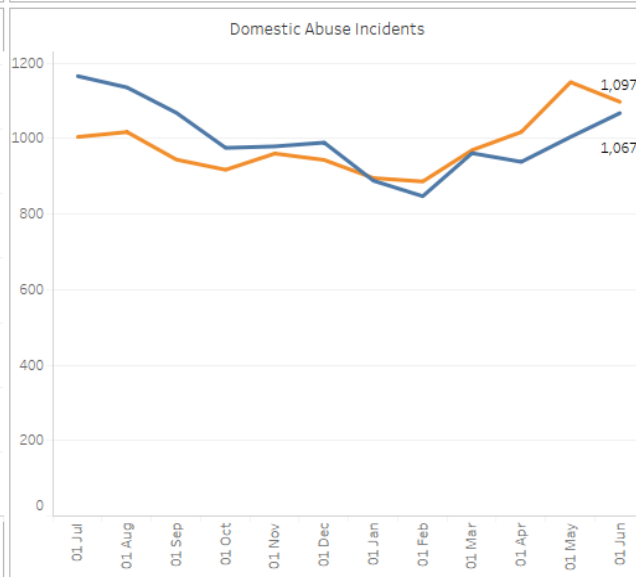
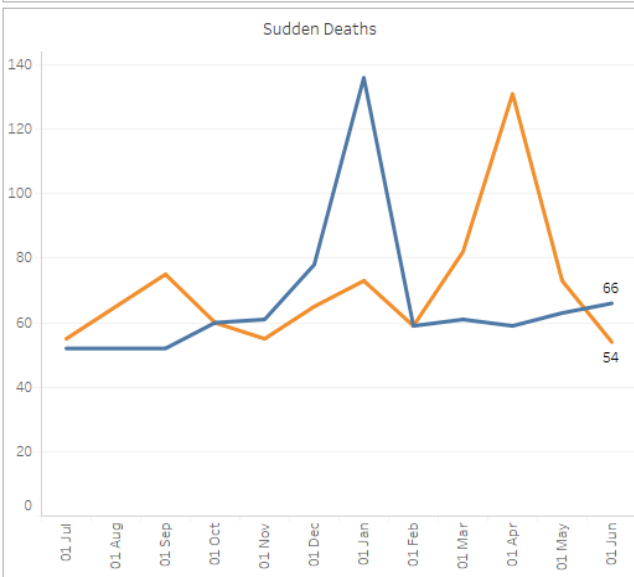
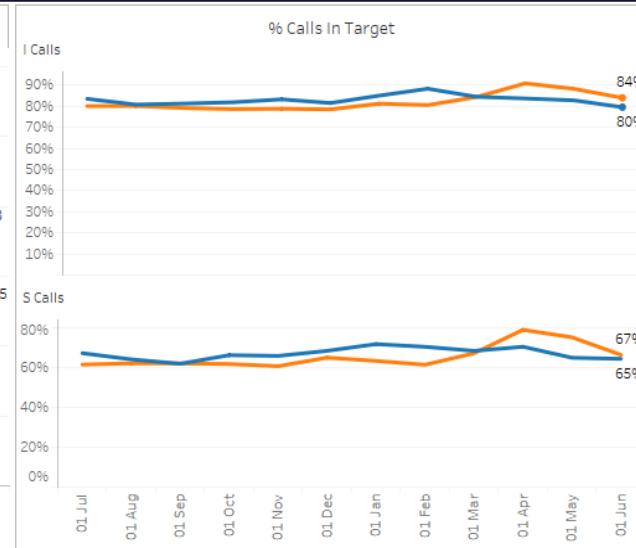
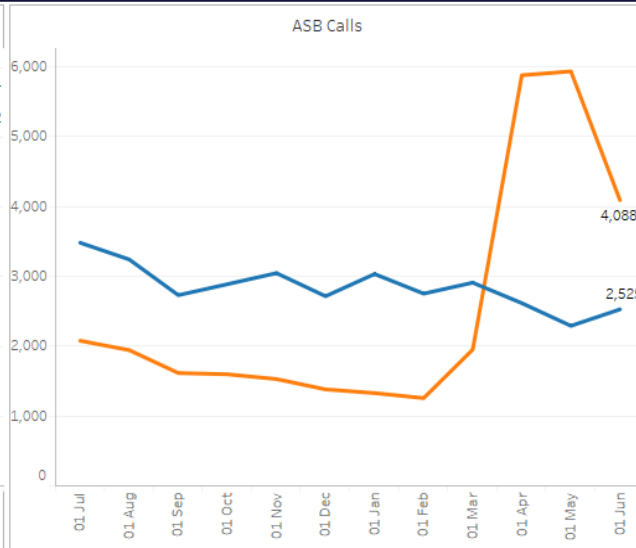
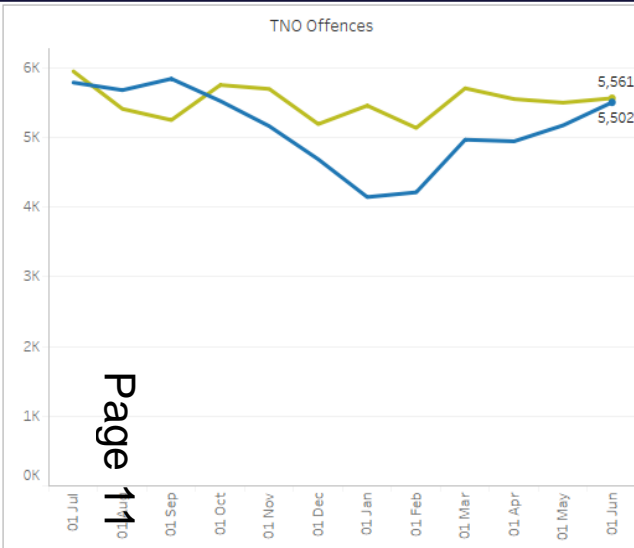
[Read Me](#)

COVID-19 Performance Monitoring Dashboard
Data to 29 July 2021

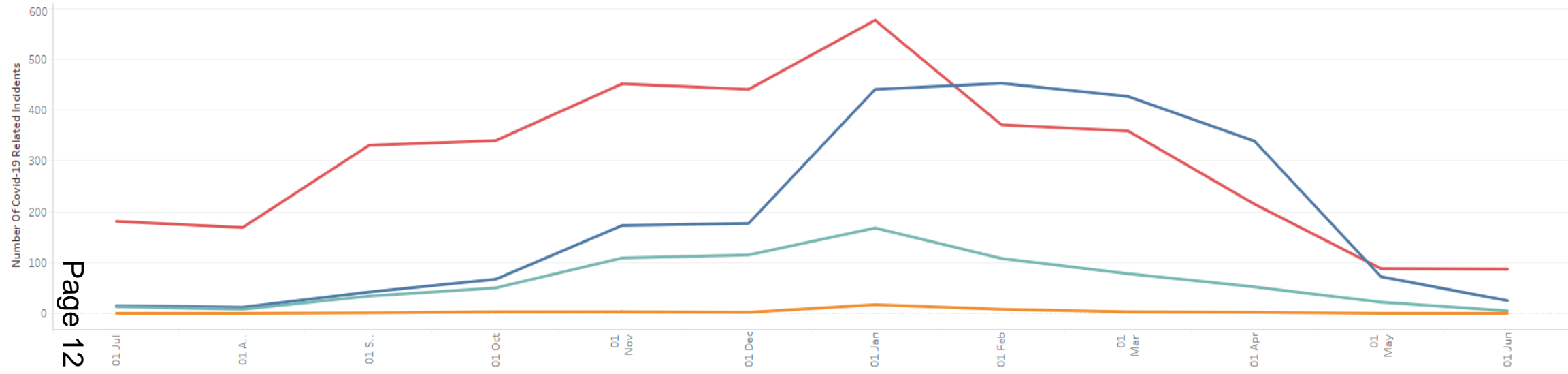
BCU
South West BCU

Date Period
Last 12 Months

■ Current Year
 ■ Previous Year
 ■ Previous Year -1



The Number Of Covid-19 Related CAD Incidents over the Last 12 Months



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	01 Jul	01 Aug	01 Sep	01 Oct	01 Nov	01 Dec	01 Jan	01 Feb	01 Mar	01 Apr	01 May	01 Jun
I	0	0	1	3	3	2	17	8	3	2	0	0
S	13	8	34	50	109	115	168	108	78	52	22	5
E	15	12	42	67	173	177	441	453	427	339	72	25
R	181	169	331	340	452	441	577	371	359	215	88	87
Grand Total	209	189	408	460	737	735	1,203	940	867	608	182	117

Chart Controls

- Compare
- Urgency
- Date Period: Last 12 Months
- Measure: Number

Filter Controls

- BCU or Borough: BCU
- OCU: All
- Incident Category: All
- Incident Description: All
- Urgency: All
- Responded To: All

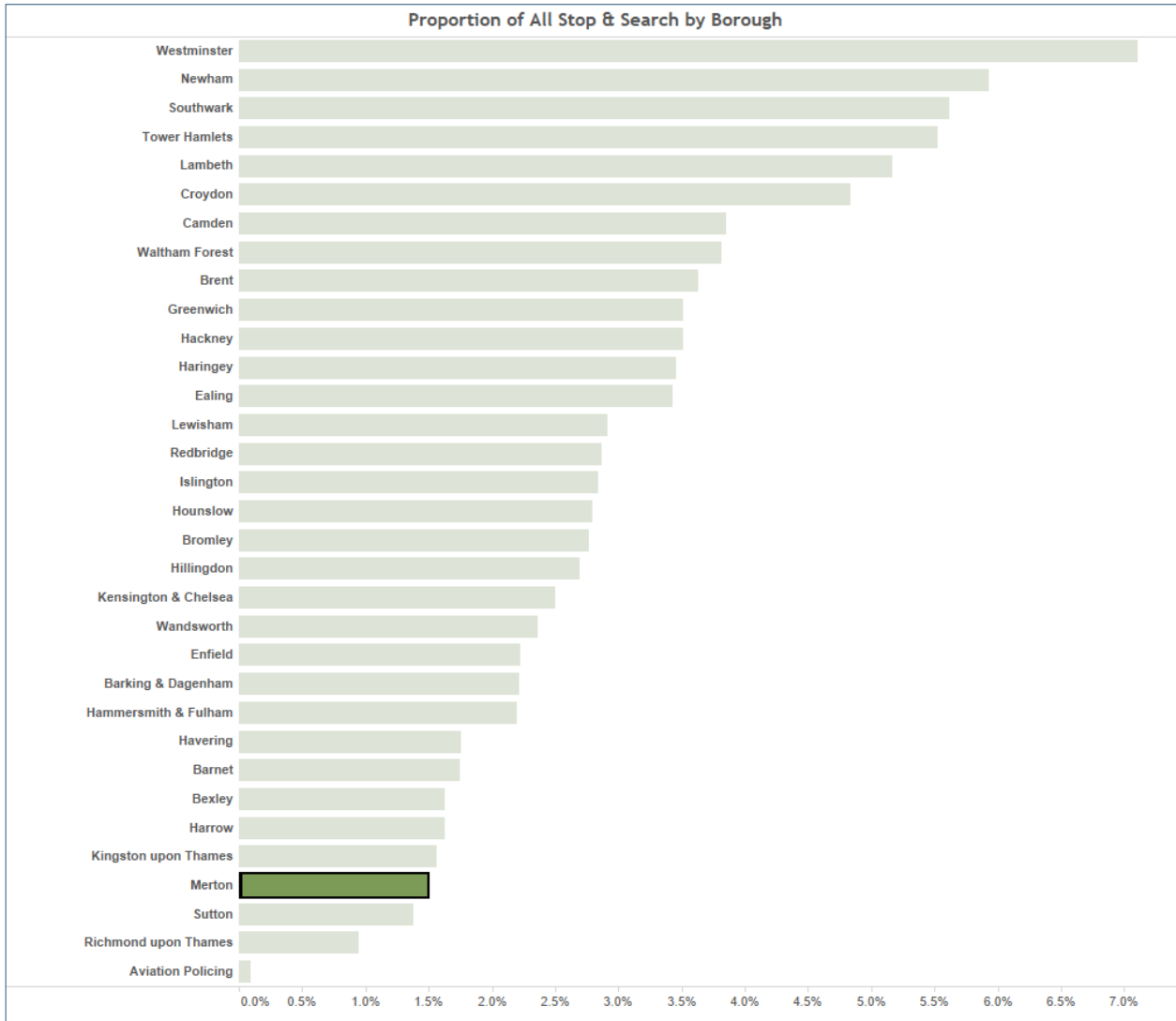
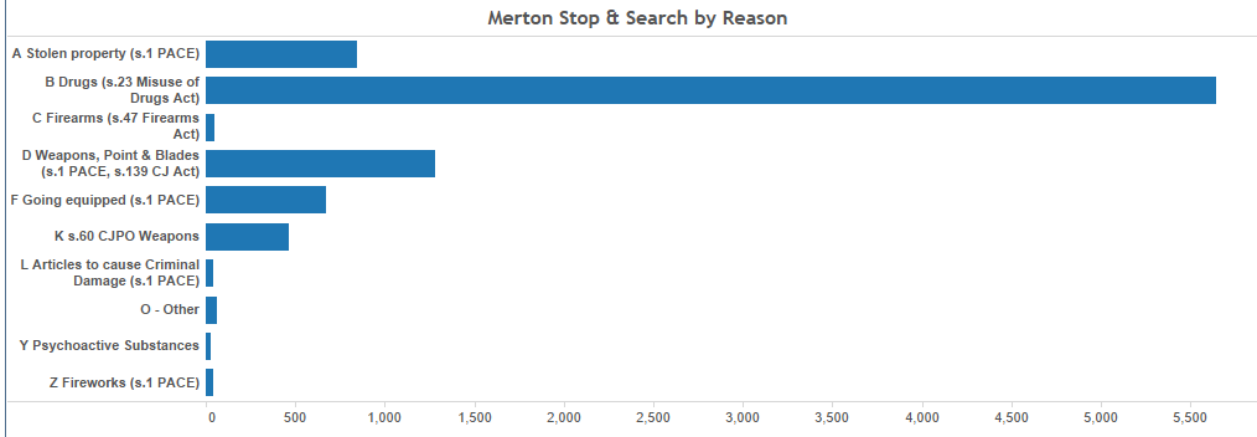
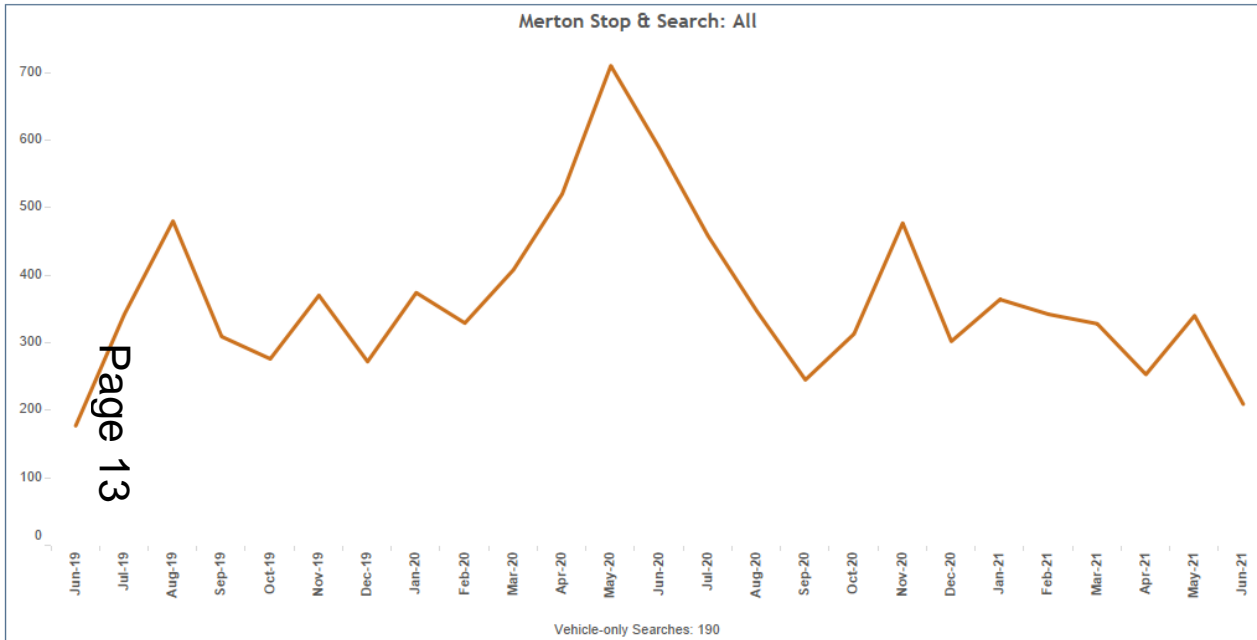
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Merton Search Volume – June 2019 to June 2021

Non-Null Values Only

BCU or Borough
Borough

Search Volumes for Reporting Period: June 2019 to end June 2021



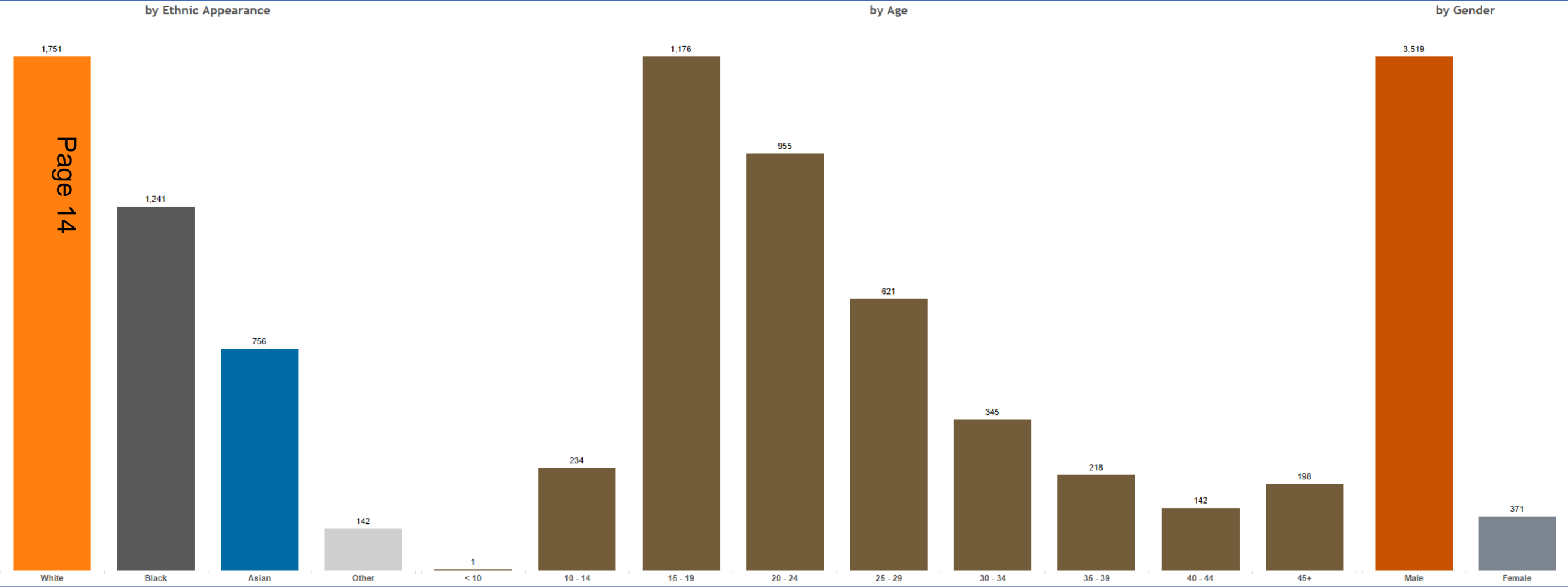
Merton Search Volume by Demographic

BCU or Borough
Borough

BOCU
Merton

Volume or per 1000 pop.
Volume

Search Volumes for the 12 Months: July 2020 to end June 2021



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Demographic	Searches - No Age Recorded
Asian	1
Other	0

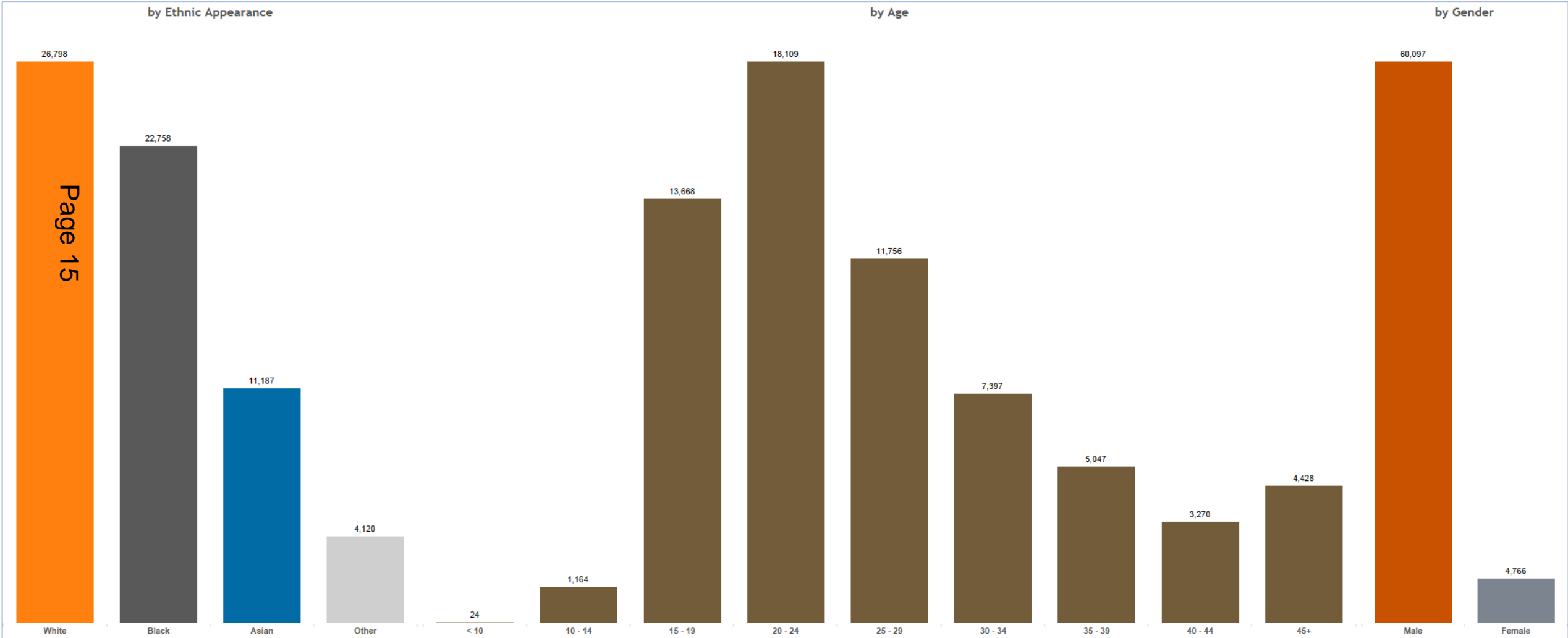
Merton Positive Outcome by Demographic

BCU or Borough
Borough

BOCU
All

Volume or per 1000 pop.
Volume

Search Volumes for the 12 Months: July 2020 to end June 2021



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Questions to and responses from the Borough Commander

- 1. The O & S Commission looks forward to welcoming the Borough Commander on Wednesday 8th September, a few days after the music event promoted by Slammin Events in Morden Park concludes (weekend of 4/5th September). Could members please have your report on the issues encountered in policing the event, including any arrests and crimes reported?***

Not possible to answer the question at the time of submission of this paper. Verbal update to be provided at the meeting.

- 2. ASB is an ongoing concern. Much of the queries I receive are from residents about the thoughtlessness of Neighbours especially in relation to, parking, rubbish and noise. Local police do help but sometimes this does not resolve the issue. What advice and help can you give to Councillors to assist in dealing with this problem and support distressed residents?***

As you will be aware, a number of the issues you mention are well dealt with by Merton Council. Where relevant and possible police work in partnership with the Council. Specifically:

Parking – Councillors should advise residents to report serious contraventions of parking regulations to the police when there is risk to other road users or pedestrians and details should be provided of location, duration and vehicle details. Police intervention will be limited to those cases where there is immediate risk to the public. In other situations the report should be made to the Council who can advise further.

Rubbish – In extreme cases of rubbish such as fly tipping councillors should advise residents to record as much information if they see it happening, taking descriptions of vehicles, registration numbers and who the people are, if known. This information should be reported to Merton Council in most cases, or the police can pass information on. Police intervention and investigation will be limited to aggravated cases only. This could include where there is risk to the public, serious organised criminality, vulnerability around modern slavery.

Noise – Councillors should advise residents to record the type of noise, the duration, any aggravating factors and the number of occurrences. This should then be reported to Merton Council. Situations involving noise disturbance which serves to create significant alarm, harassment or distress could potentially become criminal matters which should be reported to the police.

- 3. Local residents in the Wards, surrounding Morden Park, are most concerned about the concert being held there on 4/5th September. They had a great deal of ASB at the last 2 concerts, including defecation, urination in people's front gardens as well as, allegedly, an abundance of drug use. There were also 4 stabbings. What are you doing to ensure local residents do not suffer adversely as a result of some behaviour at this concert? I appreciate that the concert will have been held before our next meeting for you feedback, but input on your strategies is appreciated.***

Police raised a number of issues for consideration at the planning stages of this event based upon the outcome of previous events. All areas specific to the crime and anti-social behaviour matters have been considered by the organisers and they are ensuring mitigation is in place. A proportionate policing plan is in place where police will work with the organisers to ensure a safe and secure event. However, it must be noted the organisers have primacy and responsibility for the event itself.

4. What is the data for knife crime in Merton Borough and what is being done to ensure we keep on top of this devastating issue?

Please see attached spreadsheet for the data.

Preventing violence is the top priority for the Met and enforcement is ongoing. In addition to regular partnership working and the borough violence reduction plan, policing also completes diversion activity for young people – through schools officers and Council provision.

We carry out regular weapons sweeps as the result of intelligence or in the proximity of where people have been seen with weapons or any reported incidents.

We targeting habitual knife carriers and predatory offenders who use or threaten with knives. We seek cooperation from all victims of knife crime to gain evidence to prosecute knife crime offenders. This can be challenging in regards to domestic abuse, gang related attacks where the victims can be uncooperative. Increasing public awareness of police activity around overt police activity knife seizures and charging of offenders to increase confidence.

Knife Crime Prevention Orders are a newly available option too.

5. What is being done to increase Police visibility especially around our open spaces?

Open space violence reassurance patrols

Our first task has been to demonstrate increased visibility in violence hotspots. This is in order to provide reassurance and protect women and girls from becoming potential victims. Enhanced neighbourhood policing activity is critical to building community trust and public confidence. This activity has been overlaid with central resources being available to target violent crime types.

Also, we are:

- Maximising the use of local resources (ERPT default patrols, Parks patrols, Safer Neighbourhood patrols etc.) and *where available* Pan-London Reserve (PIMA patrols) to offer increased coverage in key hotspot locations identified through intelligence.
- Working with Roads Transport Policing Command who prioritise Transport Hubs/Routes (*buses, etc.*) and direct activity in response to the passenger demand profile.
- Involving our Public Protection colleagues to support local activity and put in place appropriate prevention orders in relation to perpetrators.

6. Please provide an update with regard to the future of Wimbledon Police Station?

We do not have a formal update on this yet. However, our understanding from MOPAC (via our property directorate) is that we will be able to retain this important station.

7. Please provide update on the progress in recruiting new officers across the Met and how many for Merton?

The recruitment campaign is proceeding well and in recent months we have been receiving new recruits each month. Recruits are allocated to Basic Command Units as a whole, rather than boroughs. With the inclusion of new recruits, we have been able to keep our response team based in Wimbledon fully staffed. New recruits spend 6 months on response teams and 6 months in neighbourhoods when they arrive. There are some new vacancies in neighbourhoods in Merton, however this is a very low number.

8. Domestic violence – update with regard to increased incidents and what extra measures are being taken?

Domestic Abuse figures have remained high across London in recent months. There has been significant and consistent partner work in this area for some time.

In November 2020 a new Predatory Offender Unit (POU) was set up, and this new unit has identified and arrested 54 of the most dangerous and high harm offenders across the South West, including those committing domestic abuse.

Currently we arrest 80% of suspects on scene arrested and 80% BWV captured and used – these are good figures.

Our Partnership & Prevention Hub has conducted a mapping exercise of all Women's and Girl's groups across the BCU to supplement existing Borough contacts.

We are supporting London initiatives for example working to increase take up of 'Ask Angela' in licensed premises.

9. Please provide an update with regard to the extent of any shortfall in Neighbourhood Policing across the BCU and in particular across the Wards of Merton.

Merton neighbourhoods has a budgeted workforce target of 40 PCs and there are currently two forecast vacancies, which we are recruiting for.

In addition, there are 17 Constables who are training with the Merton neighbourhood teams as part of their probationary period.

10. Can the Borough Commander provide an update with regard to surge capability, the new cluster strategy and how the dedicated ward officers could bid for extra resources if they felt that this was needed? How has this new strategy coped over the past 12 months and what changes have been made to ensure resources can be quickly deployed to problem areas?

The cluster strategy reflects the fact that criminals rarely recognise ward boundaries and a particular crime, such as burglary, which affects one ward may well affect an adjacent ward. It also reflects that ward officers in one ward may well support colleagues in another, particularly when running a particular operation or arrest. Under the strategy each cluster of wards would have one high harm priority, one high volume priority and one individual priority. Despite the challenges of the last 18 months presented by COVID, this strategy has worked well with many examples of success. However, the MPS has recently made a decision to standardise the approach to ward priorities across London. Therefore from September all wards in the BCU will have three priorities, one of which will be violence, the other two will be local.

In terms of extra capacity, the standard practice of flagging issues to the monthly Tactical Tasking and Coordination meeting, where the relevant inspector can bid for extra resources remains unchanged.

11. Please provide an update with regard to bringing more evidenced based policing into the BCU and working with the Neighbourhood Superintendent, what has been the outcome of these discussions?

The Neighbourhoods Superintendent is currently undertaking a Masters Degree in applied criminology which focuses upon Evidence Based Policing. We plan to use these principles in Merton borough.

We already draw on a wide range of professional literature and practice from the College of Policing, Police Foundation, Society of Evidence Based Policing, London Councils, Violence Reduction Unit and international and academic connections.

12. How many people in Merton have been charged, then convicted of hate crime in the borough?

In the last 12 months 27 people were charged for a hate crime offence in Merton with a conviction rate of approximately 80%.

13. Residents have concerns around the use of motorised scooters to commit thefts and other crimes, what action is being taken to prevent this?

As part of Operation Hornet, officers from the Road Traffic Policing Command in collaboration with ward officers are out across the capital on a daily basis engaging with members of the public and taking enforcement action where necessary. This can include a Traffic Offence Report for no insurance which could see the rider pay a fine of £300 and get six penalty points.

We have not yet seen scooters being used in Merton on a regular basis for the commission of offences.

14. Could the Commander confirm, as previously indicated at Locations Board, that local ward teams will be reconfigured to represent the new ward boundaries and what implications this has, if any, for the smaller two member wards?

This is a review led by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and policing will remain largely unaffected. There will be a reconfiguration of the ward panel membership and some administrative changes for police systems based on ward boundaries. The DWO commitment will remain unchanged with a DWO from Hillside/Dundonald ward transferring to the newly formed Wandle ward.

15. What plans the Commander has to encourage ward panel meetings to be held in public at least once a year as required under the ward team handbook?

A local working group has been working closely with the central team to embed the ward panel framework and ensure data sharing prior to panel meetings. This will involve delivering a training package to all neighbourhood sergeants in September, a terms of reference agreed by all Safer Neighbourhood Board chairs and a presentation template showing a minimum standard of data for all ward panels. This piece of work will also involve promoting diversity within ward panel membership. A review process has been scheduled for the autumn to establish the effectiveness of the implementation of these consistent ways of working. Findings of this review will enable a better understanding of how well ward panels are working including outcomes, membership, engagement and confidence.

Ward panels are able to agree themselves how, when and where they wish to convene meetings.

16. What is the current strategy on the retention and/or acquisition of ward team bases with particular reference to wards some distance from both Wimbledon & Mitcham police stations?

Work is underway to assess viable accommodation for hosting displaced Dedicated Ward Officers and PCSOs. Parameters set for workable solutions include proximity to ward, regularity and reliability of public transport to enable patrolling, storage and security for officers' appointments and essential equipment and opportunity to maximise visibility amongst the community. This is an area of live discussion.

17. Can the Commander update the committee on what progress has made in her plan to raise the profile of community policing?

Within policing I have been continuing work to fill vacancies, prioritising this compared with other teams.

We have been reviewing how we can support ward panels to operate in the 'new normal' and to ensure they are representative of their communities.

There are new newsletters (powerpoint and weekly letter) sharing community stories.

I have been looking via our 'Confidence Board' to see how we can encourage more local people to get involved with policing (volunteering, cadets, Outreach, NBW, Ward Panels, the Stop and Search Monitoring Group, the soon to be announced police encounter panels).

Teams are also working with communities for greater involvement, e.g. starting a "street a week" again.

18. Has the Commander undertaken any specific initiatives to address her previously expressed concerns over the potential loss of trust between the Met and women/girls in the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard?

Open space violence reassurance patrols (as above).

We consistently work with Merton Council on this area of work, including external communications.

The BCU has formed a Confidence Board which brings together a number of activities which are seeking to improve the level of engagement internally within the Met amongst our own people and externally with the public to build great trust. Improving accountability through greater transparency and better explanation remains critical for us to achieve what we need.

19. How many s.60 stop and search orders have been separately granted within the constituencies of Wimbledon and Mitcham & Morden in the last 12 months?

7 in the last 12 months.

20. Has the Commander any update on the future of Wimbledon Police Station?

As above

OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime Offs		OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime Offs	Difference against 2018/19		OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime Offs	Difference against 2019/20	Difference against 2018/19
Merton	Aug 2018	23		Merton	Aug 2019	23			Merton	Aug 2020	8		
Merton	Sep 2018	18		Merton	Sep 2019	17			Merton	Sep 2020	15		
Merton	Oct 2018	20		Merton	Oct 2019	21			Merton	Oct 2020	25		
Merton	Nov 2018	21		Merton	Nov 2019	22			Merton	Nov 2020	22		
Merton	Dec 2018	22		Merton	Dec 2019	9			Merton	Dec 2020	9		
Merton	Jan 2019	19		Merton	Jan 2020	12			Merton	Jan 2021	17		
Merton	Feb 2019	18		Merton	Feb 2020	13			Merton	Feb 2021	16		
Merton	Mar 2019	14		Merton	Mar 2020	13			Merton	Mar 2021	17		
Merton	Apr 2019	24		Merton	Apr 2020	8			Merton	Apr 2021	11		
Merton	May 2019	22		Merton	May 2020	10			Merton	May 2021	11		
Merton	Jun 2019	15		Merton	Jun 2020	15			Merton	Jun 2021	11		
Merton	Jul 2019	27		Merton	Jul 2020	28			Merton	Jul 2021	9		
Total		243		Total		191	-21%		Total		171	-10%	-30%

OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime With Injury Offs		OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime With Injury Offs	Difference against 2018/19		OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime With Injury Offs	Difference against 2019/20	Difference against 2018/19
Merton	Aug 2018	6		Merton	Aug 2019	7			Merton	Aug 2020	5		
Merton	Sep 2018	7		Merton	Sep 2019	3			Merton	Sep 2020	4		
Merton	Oct 2018	5		Merton	Oct 2019	5			Merton	Oct 2020	11		
Merton	Nov 2018	2		Merton	Nov 2019	1			Merton	Nov 2020	4		
Merton	Dec 2018	7		Merton	Dec 2019	3			Merton	Dec 2020	4		
Merton	Jan 2019	4		Merton	Jan 2020	3			Merton	Jan 2021	9		
Merton	Feb 2019	4		Merton	Feb 2020	3			Merton	Feb 2021	5		
Merton	Mar 2019	5		Merton	Mar 2020	1			Merton	Mar 2021	7		
Merton	Apr 2019	9		Merton	Apr 2020	5			Merton	Apr 2021	3		
Merton	May 2019	6		Merton	May 2020	2			Merton	May 2021	1		
Merton	Jun 2019	4		Merton	Jun 2020	6			Merton	Jun 2021	0		

Merton	Jul 2019	14	Merton	Jul 2020	8	Merton	Jul 2021	1		
Total		73	Total		47	Total		54	15%	-26%

OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime Robbery Offs	OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime Robbery Offs	Difference against 2018/19	OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime Robbery Offs	Difference against 2019/20	Difference against 2018/19
Merton	Aug 2018	12	Merton	Aug 2019	9		Merton	Aug 2020	4		
Merton	Sep 2018	12	Merton	Sep 2019	13		Merton	Sep 2020	6		
Merton	Oct 2018	11	Merton	Oct 2019	17		Merton	Oct 2020	11		
Merton	Nov 2018	13	Merton	Nov 2019	21		Merton	Nov 2020	13		
Merton	Dec 2018	12	Merton	Dec 2019	6		Merton	Dec 2020	2		
Merton	Jan 2019	12	Merton	Jan 2020	9		Merton	Jan 2021	9		
Merton	Feb 2019	10	Merton	Feb 2020	9		Merton	Feb 2021	8		
Merton	Mar 2019	7	Merton	Mar 2020	10		Merton	Mar 2021	9		
Merton	Apr 2019	10	Merton	Apr 2020	2		Merton	Apr 2021	6		
Merton	May 2019	12	Merton	May 2020	6		Merton	May 2021	4		
Merton	Jun 2019	8	Merton	Jun 2020	9		Merton	Jun 2021	8		
Merton	Jul 2019	11	Merton	Jul 2020	17		Merton	Jul 2021	6		
Total		130	Total		128	-2%	Total		86	-33%	-34%

OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime Injury under 25 (non DA)	OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime Injury under 25 (non DA)	Difference against 2018/19	OCU Name	Month-Year	Knife Crime Injury under 25 (non DA)	Difference against 2019/20	Difference against 2018/19
Merton	Aug 2018	2	Merton	Aug 2019	3		Merton	Aug 2020	3		
Merton	Sep 2018	1	Merton	Sep 2019	2		Merton	Sep 2020	1		
Merton	Oct 2018	4	Merton	Oct 2019	1		Merton	Oct 2020	4		
Merton	Nov 2018	0	Merton	Nov 2019	1		Merton	Nov 2020	1		
Merton	Dec 2018	2	Merton	Dec 2019	2		Merton	Dec 2020	4		
Merton	Jan 2019	2	Merton	Jan 2020	3		Merton	Jan 2021	2		
Merton	Feb 2019	2	Merton	Feb 2020	3		Merton	Feb 2021	3		
Merton	Mar 2019	1	Merton	Mar 2020	1		Merton	Mar 2021	5		
Merton	Apr 2019	3	Merton	Apr 2020	0		Merton	Apr 2021	1		
Merton	May 2019	5	Merton	May 2020	0		Merton	May 2021	0		
Merton	Jun 2019	0	Merton	Jun 2020	1		Merton	Jun 2021	0		

Merton	Jul 2019	5	Merton	Jul 2020	3	Merton	Jul 2021	0
Total			Total			Total		
27			20			24		
			-26%			20%		
						-11%		

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 8 September 2021

Wards: All

Subject: Update on the work of Safer Merton and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Lead officer: Kiran Vagarwal, Head of Community Safety, Merton Council

Lead member: Cllr Agatha Akyigyina, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Public Safety and Tackling Crime

Contact officer: Kiran.vagarwal@merton.gov.uk

Recommendations:

- A. For Overview and Scrutiny Commission to note the update on the work of Safer Merton including the focus on VAWG

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the work of Safer Merton in delivering the following service objectives:

Table 1: Safer Merton service delivery objectives

1	To deliver on the council's statutory duty as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
2	To ensure our local approach to crime prevention and community safety reflects local, regional and national policy and good practice.
3	To develop and implement a partnership approach to responding to Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG).
4	To respond to complaints of Anti-social Behaviour , utilising all the tools and powers afforded to us under the ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014.
5	To Support the Council's ambition to build community resilience by delivering Merton's Neighbourhood Watch Programme, developing and delivering Merton's Hate crime Strategy and supporting Merton Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB).
6	To develop a co-ordinated and partnership response to violence.
7	To manage and deliver an efficient CCTV service.

2 DETAILS

DELIVERING ON THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY DUTY AS SET OUT IN THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT.

- 2.1 The council has a statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to:
- Have in place a Community Safety Partnership (CSP)
 - Establishing a local crime, disorder and substance misuse strategy
 - Follow an evidence based approach and assess performance
 - Conduct an annual community safety consultation
 - Implement a partnership process to share information to prevent, detect and deter crime (Section 115, information sharing)
- 2.2 Safer Merton continues to co-ordinate and manage the Safer and Stronger Executive Board (SSEB: the CSP of Merton Borough) which meets quarterly to provide strategic oversight and direction across the partnership and monitor the quarterly performance of the partnership in responding to crime and disorder. The SSEB is made up of the responsible authorities¹. Appendix 1 of this report provides a summary of the crime data and performance for 2020/2021.
- 2.3 In February 2021, following the annual strategic crime needs assessment, (ensuring we meet the statutory requirement of the evidence-based approach) the SSEB agreed the following strategic partnership priorities:

Table 2: Refreshed SSEB Strategic priorities (February 2021)

	Priority	Description
1	High Volume Crime	Domestic Burglary and Robbery
2	Anti-social Behaviour	Multi-agency response, neighbourhood problem solving in locations experiencing persistent ASB, enforcement, supporting victims.
3	Violence (Excluding Domestic Violence)	Co-ordinated approach to drug and fire arm related violence, serious youth violence, knife crime, gangs, organised criminal networks, robbery, night time economy and public disorder, threats to life, criminal exploitation linked to gangs and county lines.
4	Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)	Direct support to victims, safeguarding children affected, bringing perpetrators to justice, raising confidence in reporting.
5	Reduce re-offending	Delivering the integrated offender management approach targeting the most prolific and persistent offenders.
6	Support the boroughs approach to building community resilience, maintaining community cohesion and increasing confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent – Counter Terrorism and radicalisation • Hate Crime • Supporting and developing Neighbourhood Watch • Supporting the Safer Neighbourhood Board

¹ Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, Public Health, Probation Service, Local Authorities

2.4 Safer Merton conducts a bi-annual public community safety consultation to ensure the SSEB considers the community voice as part of its assessment of local crime and disorder priorities and meets the statutory duty of the Crime and Disorder Act. The 2021 consultation went live in June 2021 and closed September 2021. The results will be analysed alongside the annual strategic crime needs assessment and presented to the SSEB in February 2022 as part of the annual refresh and review of the SSEB strategic priorities.

2.5 The SEEB also considers other council and partnership consultations including the annual resident survey, the police public attitude survey, Young Advisor's Consultation and the Children and Young People's Staying Safe Survey. Moving forward the SSEB will consider the findings of the Your Merton Survey as part of the SSEB 2021 annual strategic priority review.

ENSURING OUR LOCAL APPROACH TO CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY REFLECTS LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICY AND GOOD PRACTICE.

2.6 Safer Merton continues to work with partners and across the council to reviewing our local approach to ensure it is in line with and responding to the new and emerging strategies, policies and legislation on crime and disorder. This includes the following:

- The new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the statutory guidance issued
- The MOPAC Crime Strategy – due to be published December 2021
- The Home Office – Beating Crime Plan (2021)
- The Home Office - Violence against Women and Girls Plan (2021)
- Our response to the Safety of Women and Girls – Following the council motion in April 2021
- Probation reunification
- London Repository of Practice on Violence Reduction (Good Practice)
- London data base on information sharing agreements
- Conducting a self-assessment on our DV MARAC², to ensure we are delivering good practice
- Developing our knife crime action plan to a violence plan to be in line with the London framework led by the London Violence Reduction Unit

² Domestic Violence Multi-agency Risk Assessment meetings, responding to high risk DV cases, taking place every 3 weeks

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG).

2.7 Safer Merton continues to co-ordinate the partnership approach to respond to VAWG. This includes:

- The management of the VAWG Strategic Board (Quarterly meetings).
- Developing and delivering the annual VAWG action plan.
- Developing a new VAWG strategy (to be launched in April 2022).
- Running the three weekly DV MARAC³ meetings.
- Continuing to raise awareness of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) and VAWG across the council, partnership and community.
- Ensuring we meet the policy and statutory requirements, specifically conducting Domestic Homicide Reviews (2 active at present) and co-ordinating the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Responding to the member's motion on the Safety of Women and Girls following the murder of Sarah Everard. Safer Merton has established a task group to consider how we develop safe and confidential opportunities for women and girls to share their experience with the Council and partners, providing insight and informing our work on reducing VAWG, addressing male behaviour and exploring the use of restorative justice as part of our response to VAWG.
- Commissioning and managing the delivery of front line services for victims of Domestic Abuse:
 - The Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVA)
 - Running virtual weekly One Stop Shop drop in surgeries
 - Joint Commissioning of the complex needs IDVA service and refuge with Wandsworth, Kingston and Richmond
 - Refuge provision – 17 beds provided through Hestia
- Identifying and bidding for new funding opportunities

Table 3: Funding bids submitted and funding secured to support our approach to VAWG

Fund Name	Description	BID Amount	Result
Perpetrator Fund Home Office (September 2020)	Funding for perpetrator programmes across Merton, Kingston, Richmond and Wandsworth	£500k	Unsuccessful.
London Crime Reduction Fund MOPAC (2021/2022)	Funding until March 2022	£23,406	Secured funding for a support officer for the DV MARAC until March 2022.
Safer Streets Round 3 Home Office (July 2021)	Targeting Safety of Women and Girls MOPAC gatekeepers of the bids to the Home Office.	£109,060	Unsuccessful. Three London Boroughs were successful.
Safety of Women at Night funding Home Office (August 2021)	Preventing crime that effects women at Night. November successful bids announces, funding has to be spent by March 2022	TBC	<i>Drafting bid at the time of writing this report.</i>
Covid Recovery Fund (2021/2022)	Secure an additional IDVA due to the increase in referrals	£45k	Additional IDVA secured from 3.5 to 4.5 IDVA's for Merton.
IDVA uplift Ministry of Justice April 2021	Submitted bid for 2 IDVA's to work in BAME and Health settings		Not successful.
IDVA MHCLG (2021/2022)	Complex needs IDVA, cross borough with Wandsworth, Kingston and Richmond	£100k across 4 boroughs	Secured additional funding for 2021/2022.
Domestic Abuse Act MHCLG (2021/2022)	Funding to support local authorities to implement part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021	£35,693	Successful Domestic Abuse post will be funded to focus on the housing duty in the DA Act 2021.
Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme Home Office (June 2021)	Funding to support work on perpetrators for 2021/2022	£290k	Unsuccessful September 2021 was bid deadline, funds were required to be spent by March 2022.

RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, UTILISING ALL THE TOOLS AND POWERS AFFORDED TO US UNDER THE ASB ACT 2014.

2.8 The Merton Community Plan (2020-2026) sets out a commitment that Merton Council together with its partners will:

- Promote awareness of ASB, addressing complaints, informing residents of how to report ASB issues and provide evidence of their complaint
- Review and respond to every complaint
- Work with partners to support victims
- Take enforcement action where appropriate

2.9 Safer Merton continues to lead on the co-ordination and delivery of the multi-agency response to ASB, supporting the commitment set out in the Community Plan, this includes:

- Implementing the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), ensuring that the PSPO is monitored and a balanced approach to enforcement and engagement is in place. Appendix 1 of this report provides further details of the PSPO.
- Delivering a targeted multi-agency response to locations in the borough subjected to persistent ASB. The Locality Board meets every two months and oversees this. The locations that are overseen currently by the Locality Board are Mitcham, Graveney, Wimbledon, Morden Town Centre, and Raynes Park.
- Investigating reports received by the council, supporting victims of ASB and resuming site visits post the lock down. During the 12 months to September 2020, the Safer Merton team received an average of 124 reports per month, up from an average of 97 per month during 2018/19 and 65 per month during 2017/18. This higher level of demand on the ASB team has continued through 2021/22 quarter 1 with an average of 126 ASB reports per month during this period – with the month of June being as high as 149 reports.
- The Community MARAC⁴ meets monthly to discuss high risk and persistent ASB cases. Since April 2021, the Community MARAC has discussed 30 cases.
- Working closely with the Rough Sleepers Group to ensure a coordinated response to rough sleeping (Merton's rough sleeping team has supported over 130 rough sleepers of which six are currently believed to be rough sleeping).
- Managing the partnership response to the Community Trigger⁵. During 2020/21 Safer Merton received nine Community Trigger applications. During the first five months of 2021/22 (April – August) nine applications have been received – equating to an annualised rate of 21 per year (an increase in the rate of Community Trigger applications of over 200%).

⁴ Multi-agency risk assessment case conference for high risk ASB cases

⁵ Process under the ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014, which allows members of the community to ask the Community Safety Partnership (SSEB) to review their responses to complaints of ASB, Safer Merton manage this process.

- Working closely with our partners in public health to address street drinking with a focus on supporting the PSPO, engaging with street drinkers and delivering a balanced approach that includes support, diversion and enforcement. Work is currently underway to identify the individuals involved in persistent and Anti-social street drinking across the borough as well as the locations and times where anti-social street drinking is taking place most frequently.
- Holding multi-agency task and finish groups (TFG) to respond to complex and ongoing cases of ASB. At the time of writing this report Safer Merton have ten TFG's active.

SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL'S AMBITION TO BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BY DELIVERING MERTON'S NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH PROGRAMME, DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING MERTON'S HATE CRIME STRATEGY AND SUPPORTING MERTON SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD (SNB).

- 2.10 Safer Merton continues to support the co-ordination of Neighbourhood Watch, the Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB) and the partnership and community response to Hate Crime.

Merton Neighbourhood Watch

- 2.11 Safer Merton dedicates two officer days per week to manage Merton Neighbourhood Watch. A committee made up of four Neighbourhood Watch coordinators and a police officer oversee the scheme.
- 2.12 Regular crime figures and crime prevention advice is provided to the Neighbourhood Watch coordinators. There are currently 463 coordinators and approx. 21,499 members in our scheme. Appendix 3 of this report provides a list of the Neighbourhood Watches in Merton by ward.
- 2.13 A Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) funded project led by Merton Police Cadets to door knock to increase coverage in the borough in areas most affected by burglary will resume following delays due to lockdowns.
- 2.14 Merton Neighbourhood Watch Association have submitted a further bid to MOPAC for funding to replenish Merton's stock of bike marking kits following an increase in bike thefts during the pandemic.
- 2.15 Following the increase in scams over the pandemic, a scams talk was held online in February 2021 in partnership with Trading Standards. The talk was well attended by Neighbourhood Watch coordinators.
- 2.16 Key aims over the coming year are to maintain the breadth of the scheme and increase the number of watches in wards with less coverage, with door knocking by the police Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) resuming as lockdown restrictions ease. We also hope to relaunch the Junior Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Merton primary schools, a five-week programme teaching Year 5 pupils about community safety issues.
- 2.17 We continue to maintain links with the National Neighbourhood Watch Association, sharing best practice.

Merton Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB)

- 2.18 SNBs are community based primary borough level engagement and oversight mechanism enabling communities to hold their local police services to account. The meeting takes place quarterly and chaired by a representative from the community. Senior members of the police, council officers and key community organisations attend the meetings.
- 2.19 MOPAC have confirmed SNB Community Engagement funding of £19,079 for 2021-2022. This funding will support small-scale community based projects to help cut crime and increase community confidence. The SNB will review the bids before the submission of the final application to MOPAC. Funding for 2020-21 supported six community based projects tackling crime, including a hate crime, Third Party Reporting Centre for Polish and Eastern Europeans and a Karate Club (youth project) in the Mitcham area.
- 2.20 One of the key functions of SNB is to ensure the borough delivers a stop and search community-monitoring function. The chair of Merton's Stop and Search Community Monitoring Group is a member of the SNB and provides an update on the work of the group.

Hate Crime

- 2.21 Merton's Hate Crime Strategy Group continues to meet quarterly. The chair of the group is now a member of the Safer and Stronger Executive Board.
- 2.22 The Hate Crime Strategy Group have finalised their work plan for 2021-2022 and are looking to develop a new Hate Crime Strategy for 2022-2026.
- 2.23 The work plan is based around the following themes:
- **Coordination** - *Ensure that the response to Hate Crime is shared by all stakeholders, embedded into service plans, and coordinated effectively*
 - **Prevention** - *Preventing Hate Crime through a change of people's attitudes and proactive policing*
 - **Provision** - *Improve provision of specialist support and reporting centres*
 - **Protection** - *To provide effective response to perpetrators outside of and within the criminal justice system*
- 2.24 We continue to raise awareness that Merton is no place for hate and hate in any form will not be tolerated, this is done through regular community reassurance messages, articles in My Merton and social media.
- 2.25 The work to expand Merton's Third Party Reporting⁶ scheme continues. This year AFC Wimbledon, Tooting and Mitcham FC and 10 Coaching Academy have signed up this year.

⁶ <https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-prevention-and-community-safety/hate-crime>



2.26 Hate Crime Advise Surgeries take place monthly. The community and voluntary sector including Tell MAMA, Polish Family Association and Merton CIL continue to provide their support.

2.27 The key work areas for hate crime in the year ahead includes:

- Hate Crime Awareness Week 2021 (9th-15th October 2021).

There will be a mix of online events and engagement stalls. The Hate Crime launch event will take place on Monday 11th October 2021 and will focus on Transgender hate crime – *'Challenging Transgender Hate Crime – Free to Be'*

- Delivering a social media campaign based around pledging to lend your support for Hate Crime Awareness Week
- Continue to expand our 3rd party reporting scheme and support those organisations taking part
- Following an amendment to the DV Bill, Police nationwide have been asked to trial recording Misogyny as a hate crime

DEVELOPING A CO-ORDINATED AND PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE.

2.28 In September 2020, Safer Merton worked with partners to review Merton's Knife Crime Action Plan and transition the plan to a broader plan on violence, following the London Violence Reduction framework. The Safer and Stronger Executive Board, as part of their annual review of priorities (2021) added 'violence' as a strategic priority and agreed a local definition. The violence objective will include:

- Drug related violence
- Serious youth violence
- Fire arms related crime
- Gangs and organised criminal networks
- Robbery
- Night time economy and public disorder
- Threats to life
- Criminal exploitation linked to gangs and county lines

2.29 A panel of officers from the London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), London Councils and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), reviewed all the plans across London including Merton’s plan and provided some positive feedback under the following themes:

Table 4: Feedback provided by the London VRU on Merton’s Violence Reduction Plan

Theme	Feedback
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong multiagency working • Good reference to the cross borough violence reduction steering group • Strong cross borough working across the SWBCU
Analysis and Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights varied work being undertaken by the borough • All essential actions complete
Reducing Access to Weapons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive and outstanding multi-agency work being undertaken, particularly with external contractors, Veolia and ID-Verde • Actions are very detailed.
Safeguarding and Educating Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of good practise around NEETs • Balance between Police/enforcement and Education/Social Care
Working with Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive representation of young people on the Stop and Search Panel • Good linkages between Youth Centre staff and the Police
Supporting victims of violence and vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good reference to the Trauma A&E Suites
Positive Diversion from Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great diversionary activity • Some multi agency collaboration • Good Gang Exit Schemes

2.30 The London Violence Reduction Unit provided £50k funding in 2019/2020, £50k in 2020/2021 and a further £50k for 2021/2022. This was funding agreed annually. The key projects funded were:

- Designing out Crime improvements in Phipps Bridge
- Contribution to Contextual Safeguarding Lead based in Children and Family Services
- Analytical Support
- Crimestoppers Fearless Campaign – social media, partner toolkit, partner training sessions and schools work.

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLC-TA0Z0JPa3ATCkz3XW_jF4kSZ-mtaKf

(link to the fearless campaign)

2.31 Partners provide quarterly updates on actions, with 6 monthly updates provided to the SSEB. The following high-level indicators have been agreed for reporting to the SSEB and the Locations Board:

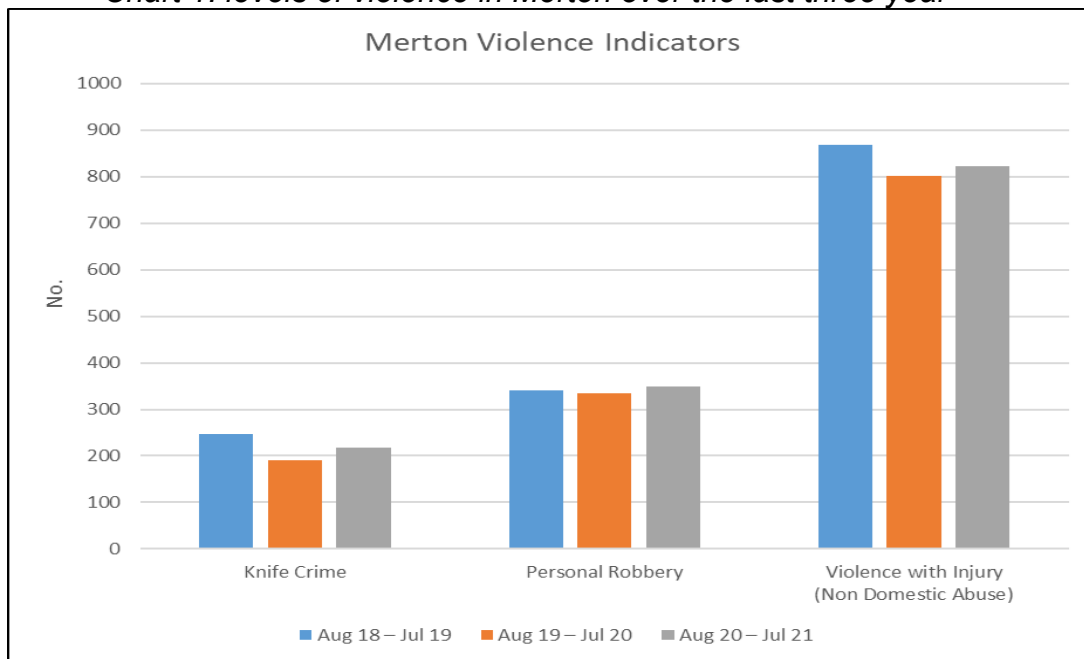
- To see a reduction in violence with injury (non-domestic)
- To see a reduction in personal robbery
- To see a reduction in knife crime

2.32 Like with many crime figures over the last 18 months, Covid and the associated restrictions and lockdowns have had some bearing on levels, particularly due to less people being out in public areas. We have therefore provided the last three years figures to show some levels of comparison. We will continue to monitor figures via the boroughs Locations Board and Safer and Stronger Executive Board as restrictions continue to ease.

Table 5: Police recorded incidents for knife crime, robbery and Violence with Injury (VWI) non-domestic abuse

	Aug 18 – Jul 19	Aug 19 – Jul 20	Aug 20 – Jul 21
Knife Crime	247	190	217
Personal Robbery	340	334	349
VWI – Non DA	869	801	823

Chart 1: levels of violence in Merton over the last three year



- Knife crime increased by 14.2% when compared to the previous 12 months, but did see a reduction of -12.1% when compared to two years ago.
- Personal Robbery has remained relatively stable over the last three years.
- Violence with Injury (Non Domestic) showed a 2.7% increase when compared to the previous 12 months however saw a -5.3% reduction when compared to two years ago.

2.33 In July 2021 the London VRU announced the availability of further funding for the sum of £31,250 for boroughs to choose one intervention from the violence

reduction plan to undergo an evaluation. Following consultation with partners Merton have agreed to evaluate the designing out crime improvements in Phipps Bridge.

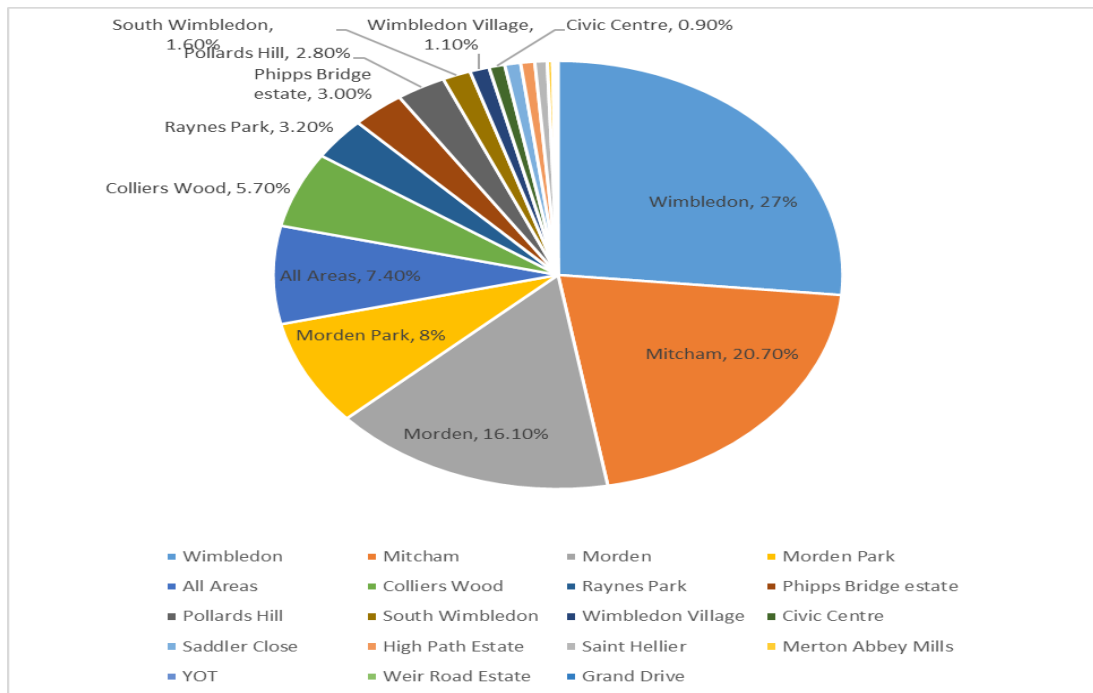
- 2.34 In July 2021 the London VRU invited boroughs to apply for a preventative critical incident grant to the amount of £5,000. We were successful in our application and we hope to use the funds to enhance our work with Crime Stoppers and look to purchase a deployable CCTV camera to use in violence hotspots.

MANAGING AND DELIVERING AN EFFICIENT CCTV SERVICE.

- 2.35 Merton CCTV service, based within Public Protection and Safer Merton service, operates 24 hours a day every day of the year. The service commenced in 1994 with a mere four cameras and one operator and operational 14 hours a day.
- 2.36 In 2021, we now have some 212 public space cameras. Seven CCTV operators proactively monitor the cameras, supported by a CCTV Manager. All operators work shifts to ensure that the service is covered 24/7. All of our cameras are overt⁷ as the service has no covert asset within it.
- 2.37 Operating the CCTV suite is a complex process. The operators can view between 48 and 96 cameras at any one time on the monitor wall as well as nine on the desktop monitors.
- 2.38 Each camera is constantly recording footage onto council servers where imagery is stored for 31 days before being written over. Images across the borough are sent to the Civic Centre via two modes of communication – broadband cable, and wireless technology.
- 2.39 We continue to enhance the functionality and reliability of CCTV across the partnership, building on the relationships with all partners and other council departments, especially those working in enforcement.
- 2.40 Work with Neighbourhood Watch and other key community groups is also essential to increase engagement and awareness of CCTV within our communities as we know that, CCTV presence can assist in providing reassurance and decreasing fear of crime.
- 2.41 The Synergy 3 CCTV system allows us to closely monitor the types of incidents, by day of the week, time of the day, location, and many other indicators that help us to determine where to deploy the cameras in the most efficient manner.
- 2.42 Between 1st of April 2021 and 23rd of August 2021, the CCTV service has captured 1,909 incidents. Chart 1 below shows a breakdown of where these incidents captured took place.

⁷ Overt – the public are cameras in place and recording

Chart 2: Location of incidents captured by Merton CCTV between April 2021 and 23 August 2021



2.43 The council has agreed an investment of over £1million from Merton CIL and Capital to, further upgrade the CCTV system, network and cameras. This upgrade will take place from 2022 to 2024 and includes the upgrading of 150 CCTV public space cameras from analogue to High Definition (HD) quality and upgrading the transmission method by introducing a hybrid fibre-wireless solution that will reduce the dependence on BT and Virgin Media fibre rental and provide savings.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. There are no alternative options as this report is for information and update only

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. Not applicable

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. Not applicable

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report as this report is for information and update only.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. No specific matters relating to this as the report is for noting.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Domestic violence and abuse and hate crime can have major implications on community cohesion and equalities. One in 20 residents are affected by domestic abuse. The partnerships work in supporting victims, taking action against perpetrators, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and ensuring that our communities understand the work we are doing on this subject is vital in achieving our ambitions for more victims to report and for more friends, family and/or neighbours to report matters of concern. Hate crime remains under reported therefore; our work to raise awareness and encourage reporting remains a priority.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report. Safer Merton in partnership with all council departments, continue to ensure that the council remains compliant with our duties under the Crime and Disorder Act.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. As a response to the ongoing Covid-19 concerns, Safer Merton and our partners, have evolved organisational business, continuity plans to cope with the challenges, which this virus and the lock down has placed us under.
- 10.2. There will be a continuous review of the services provided as lock down eases with the aim of re-instating face-to-face support.

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

- 11.1 Appendix 1 : 2021/2022 Crime Performance
- Appendix 2: Further information on Merton’s Public Space Protection Order
- Appendix 3: Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators and membership by ward

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

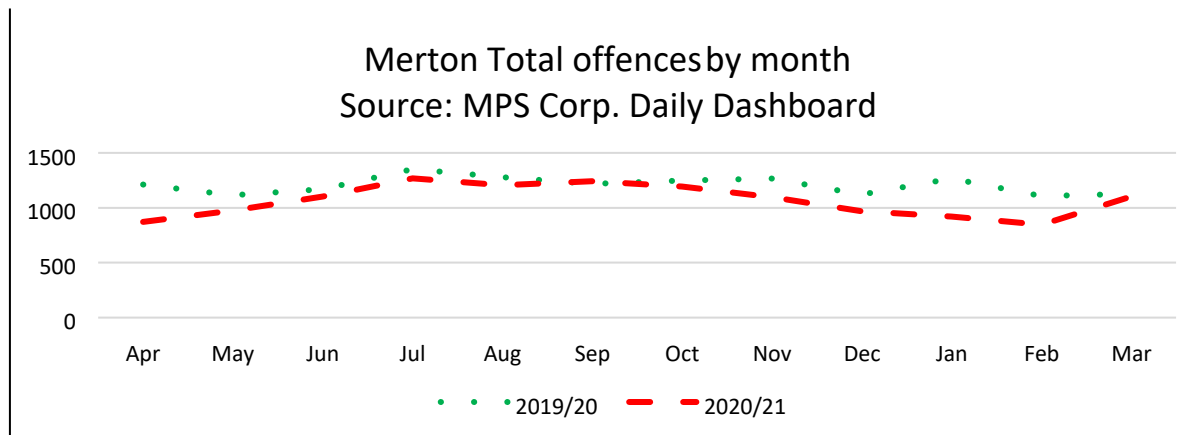
APPENDIX 1 2020/2021 CRIME PERFORMANCE

Source: <https://www.met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/year-end-crime-statistics-20-21/>

Overall crime

Various stages of the lockdown over the year affected crime in Merton like everywhere else. Overall crime was down 11% at 12,903 offences. Figge's Marsh, Cricket Green and Colliers Wood had the highest levels of offences. The bulk of the reductions occurred during lockdown 1 in April/May 2020 and the further restrictions imposed at the start of 2021.

Graph 1: Merton total notifiable offences recorded by the police per month



Merton Crime rates compared to other London Boroughs

For the 12 months to the end of July 2021, the Metropolitan Borough Command Unit dashboard shows Merton as being the:

- 4th lowest out of 32 London boroughs for total notifiable offences (1.99 per 1,000 population).
- 4th lowest out of 32 London boroughs for violence with injury (0.17 per 1,000 population)
- 5th lowest out of 32 London boroughs for violence without injury (0.4 per 1,000 population)
- 3rd lowest out of 32 London boroughs for residential burglary (0.09 per 1,000 population)
- 7th lowest out of 32 London boroughs for robbery (0.05 per 1,000 population)

Strategic Priority 1: Volume Priorities of Burglary and Robbery

Of our two volume crime priorities, Personal Robbery was down 6% whilst Residential Burglary was down by 46% with five wards seeing reductions greater than 60%. These five wards were Cricket Green, Graveney, Longthornton, Merton Park and Lower Morden. Personal robbery decreased by 6%. Figge's Marsh the highest ward averaged three robberies per month.

Strategic Priority 2: Anti-social Behaviour

The pandemic also had a large impact on demand in respect of ASB for both police and the council ASB team. The police received more than 7,500 ASB related calls double

the previous year's total. A great many of these related to perceived breaches of covid19 regulations. The Merton Council ASB team saw new cases rise 49% to over 1650.

Graph 2: Number of ASB cases responded to by Safer Merton – annual comparison

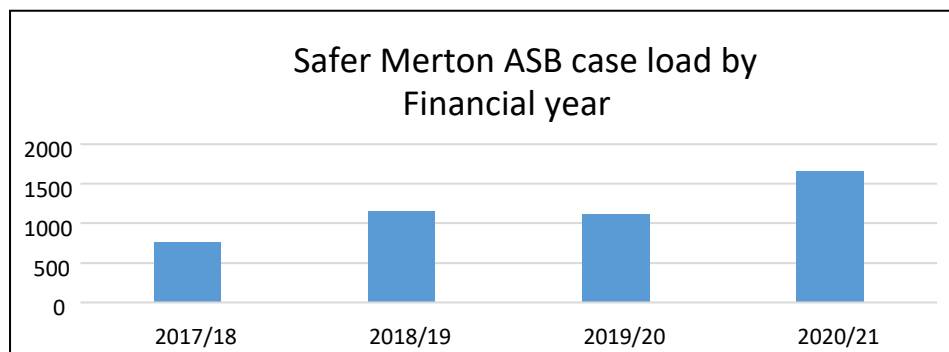


Table 1: Break of ASB reports received since April 2021⁸ by ward.

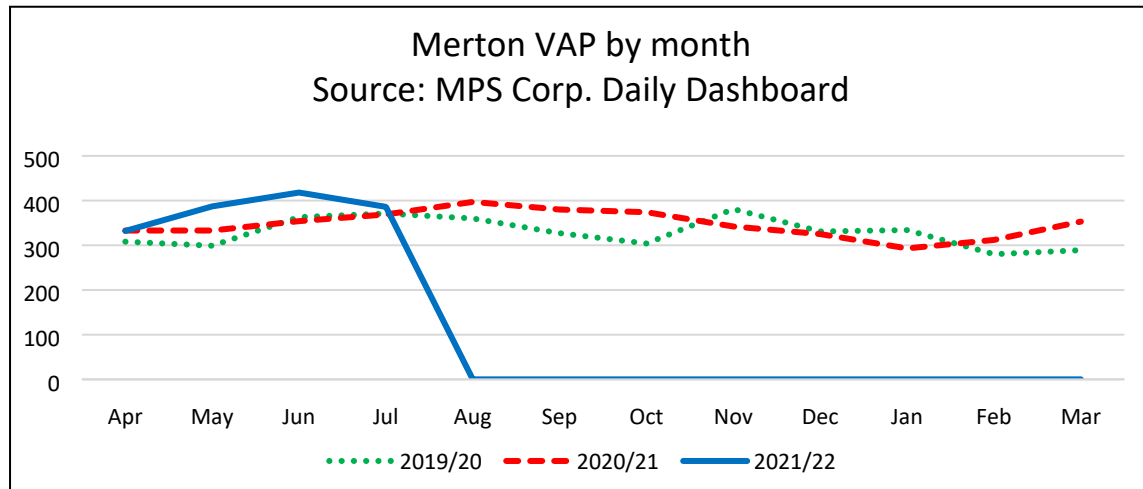
Ward	ASB reports
Hillside	58
Cricket Green	47
St Hellier	42
Graveney	40
Merton Park	39
Ravensbury	38
Lower Morden	36
Trinity	34
Figges Marsh	33
Cannon Hill	31
Longthornton	27
Colliers Wood	25
Raynes Park	23
Wimbledon Park	23
Abbey	22
Pollards Hill	21
Merton	19
West Barnes	19
Lavender Fields	16
Dundonald	15
Village	12

⁸ Up to 22nd Aug 2021

Strategic Priority 3: Violence against the Person (VAP)

The broad violence against the person category was up by 6% compared to the previous year. Low-level, non-injury reports drove up the reports for violence.

Graph 3: Number of Violence against Person reports recorded by the police



Theft

There was a reduction of all forms of theft, however, with the exception of pedal bike thefts that rose by 10%. Overall, the theft category was down 29% and vehicle crime was down 22% compared to the previous year.

Strategic priority 4: Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence related crimes were up by 6% compared to the previous year.

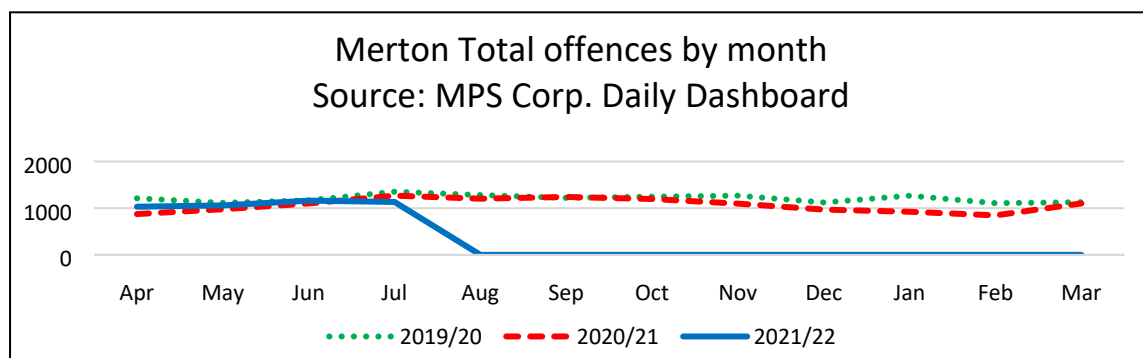
Strategic Priority 6: Hate Crime

Hate crime flagged reports increased by 9% over the financial year driven mainly by a surge in reports following the George Floyd murder in late May 2020.

2021/2022

The first 3 months of the new financial year have seen offence levels chart a course above those of pandemic affected 2020 but below those of 2019.

Graph 4: Merton total notifiable offences recorded by the police for 2021/2022



Community Consultation

It is worth noting that the majority of surveys are over a year old and we will await the findings of both the 2021 Safer Merton and Merton Annual Residents Survey as well as the Your Merton Survey that will be available later this year. For the purposes of this report, we have used the last available consultation data.

Encouragingly, the majority of residents feel safe in their local areas. However, both the community safety survey and the Annual Residents Survey (ARS) carried out in 2019 highlighted the differences in perceptions between wards in the borough.

The ARS survey highlighted that that people felt less safe in the east of the borough. The ARS survey also highlighted that ASB related issues as well as drug dealing and groups hanging around were a problem for those living in the Ravensbury ward. Ravensbury was also top for ASB in the 2017 survey.

Interestingly both our survey and the ARS highlighted that burglary was of concern for residents in the borough, as it has been for many years.

The survey also raised violent crime as a problem potentially influenced by the increasing media coverage of knife crime across London.

Source: <https://www.met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/year-end-crime-statistics-20-21/>

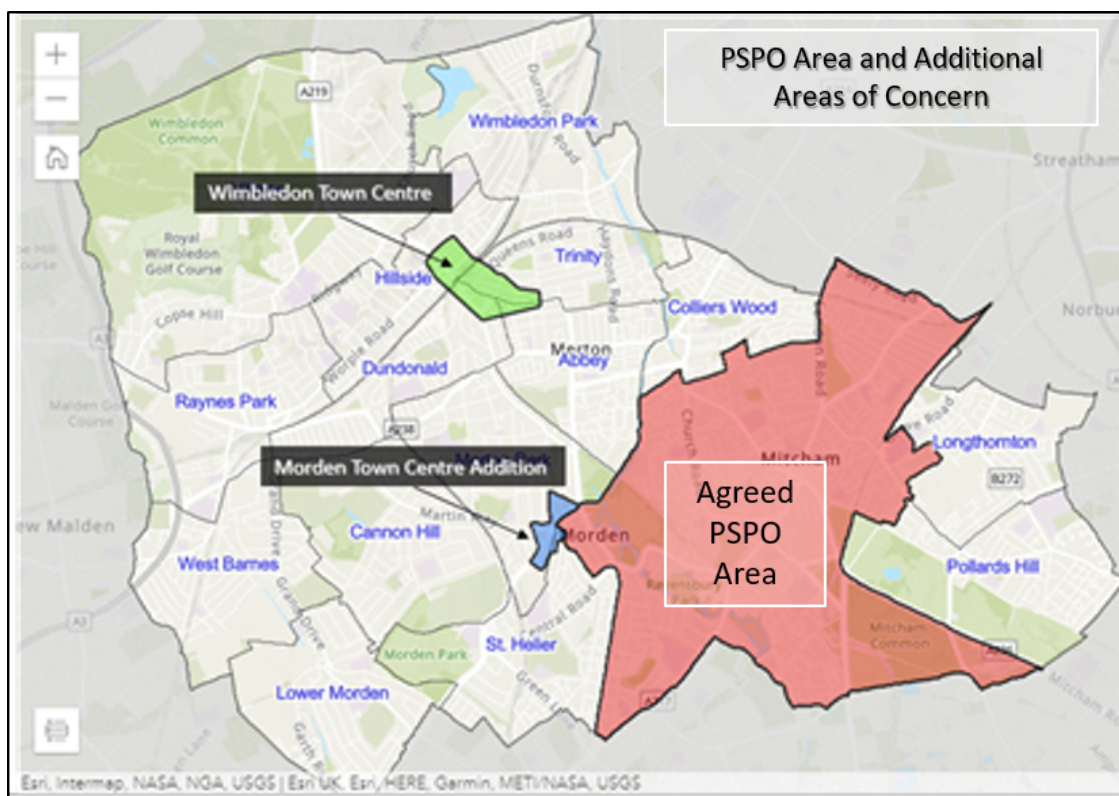
APPENDIX 2 Key points of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

Merton has one PSPO in place targeting street drinking related anti-social behaviour in the wards of Cricket Green, Figges Marsh, Graveney, Lavender Fields and Ravensbury (see map 1 below for details). The order was made on 13/10/2020, with the PSPO coming into force at 0001 hours on 21/10/2020. It will remain in place for two years until October 2022. The PSPO will continued to be monitored by Safer Merton.

Work to review anti-social behaviour data to identify further areas where a PSPO can be considered or the expansion of the current PSPO continues. The figures are relatively low so we are working to increase input from partnership agencies as well as looking for additional quantitative and qualitative data sources to provide the level of evidence required to support a PSPO.

The PSPO Engagement and Enforcement Group meets regularly to ensure an evidence based and coordinated partnership approach to tackling anti-social behaviour linked to street drinking is in place and there is a clear balance across engagement, support and enforcement.

Map1: Areas covered by Merton's Public Space Protection Order



For additional information on the PSPO please see:
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-prevention-and-community-safety/public-space-protection-order>

APPENDIX 3: Neighbourhood watches and number of members per ward (August 2021)

	Number of members	Number of watches
Abbey	993	24
Cannon Hill	1871	67
Colliers Wood	656	13
Cricket Green	1294	23
Dundonald	800	12
Figges Marsh	1564	26
Graveney	1598	26
Hillside	746	24
Lavender Fields	691	18
Longthornton	925	17
Lower Morden	1916	66
Merton Park	783	19
Pollards Hill	699	14
Ravensbury	1548	27
Raynes Park	479	13
St Helier	405	13
Trinity	1746	17
West Barnes	1641	18
Wimbledon Park	450	7
Wimbledon Village	694	19
Total	21499	463

Committee: Overview & Scrutiny Commission

Date: 8 September 2021

Wards:

Subject: Mental Health and Wellbeing at London Borough of Merton

Lead officer: Caroline Holland

Lead member: Tobin Byers

Contact officer: Barbara Bachelor (presented by Liz Hammond)

Recommendations:

- A. To keep Mental Health and Wellbeing of staff at London Borough of Merton as a key priority as we move to a hybrid model.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Mental Health and Wellbeing offer to Merton staff. The Council is committed to ensuring that all staff have access to resources and training that supports their mental health and allows them to thrive in the workplace.

The provision of Mental Health and Wellbeing is managed within the HR OD & Strategy Team and through collaboration with the Remote Working Programme and for accredited Mental Health training with Public Health.

2 DETAILS

2.1 Background

The Staff Survey (December 2020) results showed declining Mental Health was the single highest deteriorating variant from 2018. The analysis showed the highest deteriorating response from 2018 to 2020 across the whole Council was Mental Health by 5%. It is not possible however, to tell whether this deteriorating response is caused by a work or home situation.

Sickness figures however show that absence due to mental health stayed consistent at 2 days

- (2018/19) 2.30 days - (pre pandemic)
- 2019/20) 2.03 days
- 2020/21) 2.05 days)

Overall sickness went down from:

- 9.52 (2018/19) - (pre-pandemic)
- 9.44 days (2019/20)
- 8.02 days (2020/21).

The mental health and wellbeing of the nation has achieved much media focus with claims that the nation faces a mental health crisis in the wake of COVID -19 pandemic with more people than ever needing Mental Health & Wellbeing support.

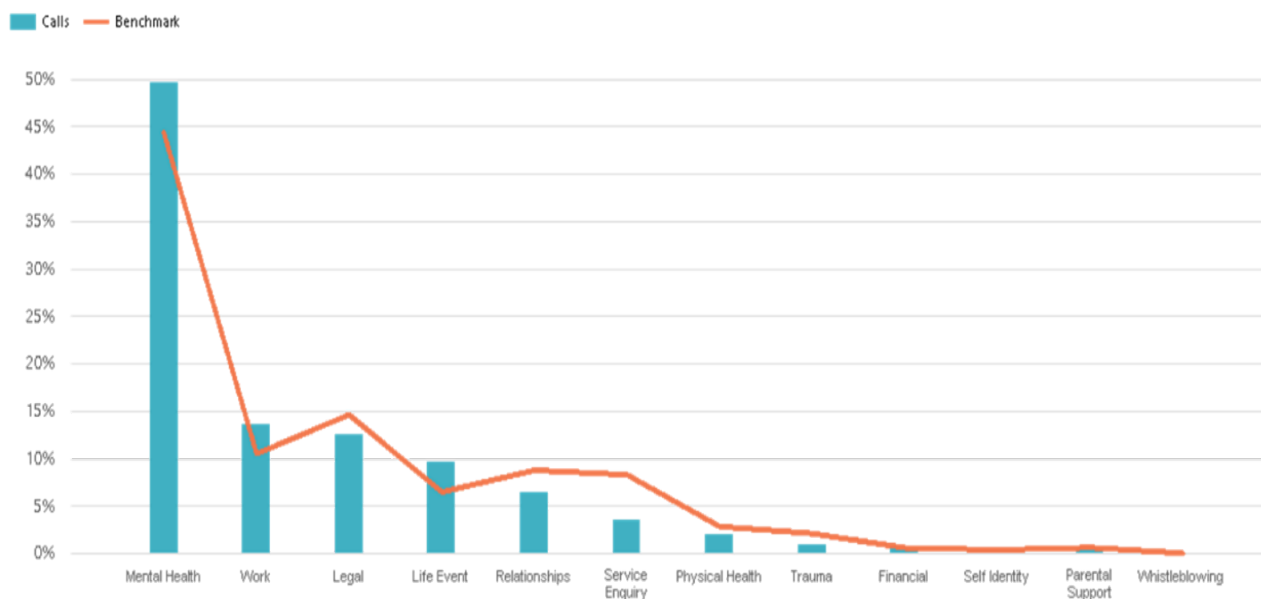
Research from The Centre for Medical Health (an independent UK charity, predicts that up to 10 million people will need support as a result of the COVID-19 Crisis and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) states that 19 million (37%) people in the UK are now suffering from high anxiety.

Our commissioned EAP provider has reported that the EAP helpline received 310 calls from Merton employees across the last 12 month period (01/07/2020 – 30/06/2021) with Anxiety being stated as the main reason for the call. This was consistent across their portfolio of clients (public and private sector) where year on year they have seen an increase of calls by 44% relating to anxiety and stress. This is supported by Merton’s EAP referrals of which Mental Health equated to 50%.

Table 1: EAP Data by Department & Reason (01/07/2020 – 30/06/2021)

	London Borough of Merton - Community and Housing	London Borough of Merton - Corporate Services	London Borough of Merton - CSF	London Borough of Merton - Environment and Regeneration	London Borough of Merton - Schools	Total
Mental Health	33	28	30	19	44	154
Work	5	11	8	3	15	42
Legal	10	5	2	2	20	39
Life Event	3	14	0	0	13	30
Relationships	0	7	1	1	11	20
Service Enquiry	2	1	1	1	6	11
Physical Health	1	4	0	0	1	6
Trauma	0	3	0	0	0	3
Financial	0	0	0	0	2	2
Self Identity	0	2	0	0	0	2
Parental Support	0	0	0	1	0	1
Whistleblowing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	54	75	42	27	112	310

Table 2: EAP Benchmarking Data by Month & Reason (01/07/2020 – 30/06/2021)



	Jul 2020	Aug 2020	Sep 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021	Jun 2021	Total	Split by %	Benchmark
Mental Health	10	12	18	24	24	8	5	8	2	9	29	5	154	50%	44%
Work	3	2	1	7	3	7	2	4	5	1	2	5	42	14%	11%
Legal	3	3	1	9	2	3	0	4	4	3	2	5	39	13%	15%
Life Event	0	3	1	7	2	2	3	0	7	3	0	2	30	10%	7%
Relationships	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	6	1	5	0	2	20	6%	9%
Service Enquiry	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	5	11	4%	8%
Physical Health	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	6	2%	3%
Trauma	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	1%	2%
Financial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1%	1%
Self Identity	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1%	0%
Parental Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0%	1%
Whistleblowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
Overall	17	21	22	49	36	21	12	22	21	26	36	27	310	100%	100%

The benchmark group are an average of all organisations (both private and public) that the EAP provider serves.

Table 3: Occupational Health referrals for Mental Health and Wellbeing

	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Total	Percentage of wellbeing referrals from total
Total wellbeing referral	11	11	11	11	10	8	12	15	14	10	9	12	134	37%
Total referral per month	30	30	30	30	20	29	28	42	24	30	34	34	361	
	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Total	Percentage of wellbeing referrals from total
Total wellbeing referral	14	12	8	9	13	5	7	15	16	15	8	14	136	29%
Total referral per month	46	44	35	41	34	30	33	54	36	36	30	43	462	
	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Total	Percentage of wellbeing referrals from total
Total wellbeing referral	3	12	2	9	3	8	9	5	15	8	9	9	92	29%
Total referral per month	23	22	17	33	24	23	19	24	40	34	29	25	313	

*Data for figures in red were not available (as this was with a previous Occupational Health provider), so an average of the referrals across the rest of the year of were used to make a comparison with the next two years.

Occupational data shows that occupational referrals decreased during the pandemic with monthly referrals dropping to just over 20 where previously this had been in the 30's and 40's as shown in the table. However, mental health referrals were at their highest in 2018 /19, making up 37% of the referrals made. The following year 2019/20 and 2020/21 there was a consistent reduction with mental health referrals making up 29% of all referrals.

Merton's data through sickness absence and Occupational Health referrals does not support the % drop indicated through the bi-annual staff survey and the national media hype that mental health is a significant issue. However, at Merton we have sought to pay great attention to the health and wellbeing of our staff due to the fact that lockdown and enforced confinement at home and working from home would naturally be taking a toll on how our staff are feeling.

3. MERTON'S RESPONSE

Two dedicated resources were appointed in April 2021 to support Mental Health and Wellbeing at Merton. This included one L&D Advisor and one Admin Assistant for a fixed time period of 1 year.

3.1 Training

To support employee's mental wellbeing, L&D have delivered 129 training courses to date this year with c.1300 delegates having attended training. 15 of these courses have not appeared previously and have been commissioned directly as a result of COVID-19 (See Appendix 1). Mental Health Awareness training was offered to Councillors and attended by 7.

3.2 Mental Health Policy

In the summer of 2020 CMT approved a Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Procedure and Guidance document which was fully consulted on with the Unions and DMT's before sign off.

3.3 Wellbeing initiatives

In addition to the formal training, Wellness Policy, Procedures and Guidance have been developed and publicised and delivered a series of less formal staff engagement programmes/initiatives designed to alleviate stress and support Mental Health. These have included though not limited to: -

- Healthy Workplace Market days with over 25 stalls/exhibitors and c.300 staff attendees of which 80% rated the event as "Excellent"
- Advice on managing Zoom fatigue (HUB)
- Support to the BAME Forum delivering a programme of anti-racism training across the council. During Race Equality Week delivered a daily programme of activity over the week.
- Mental Health England - Kindness Week (May 2020) in which a programme of activities was delivered every day of the week
- Wellbeing Wednesdays - lunchtimes sessions available to all staff delivered
- Singing from Home Mondays – uplifting singalongs throughout the summer, and supporting specific calendar events such as Kindness Week, Black History Month. A Christmas special has been planned for 22nd December.
- Financial Fridays – providing financial support across focused topics

3.4 Staff Surveys

3.4.1 Bi-Annual Staff Survey

HR undertook a qualitative analysis from the large bi-annual Staff Survey of Q13 "*Health and Work Life Balance*" which covered five areas

- Work-life balance

- Workload
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Merton cares about my health and wellbeing

The analysis showed the highest deteriorating response from 2018 to 2020 across the whole Council was Mental Health by 5%. In response to this L&D:

- Undertook a deep dive analysis of the five component elements by Team Level within each of the Departments.
- These granular findings have been shared with each of the Directors and their DMT's
- 12 departmental engagement workshops for staff and managers have taken place throughout July to really "get under the skin" of these quantitative responses. The main themes coming out of this engagement have been:
 - Relentless workload (stopping staff taking leave and engaging in training)
 - Manager support inconsistent – wellbeing should be as important as service delivery
 - Staff not taking breaks/lunch
 - Staff working what would have been their commute time

3.4.2 Pulse Surveys

Two pulse surveys have also been completed, one in May 2020 and one in May 2021.

Results from the May 2020 survey summary findings are below:

- **Stress:** of the 770 respondents, 32% said it was the same, 19% said it was better and 22% said it was much better. Although 19% said it was worse.
- Of the 746 respondents, 23% strongly agreed and 55% agreed that they ***can maintain good mental health while working from home.***
- **Support:** Overwhelmingly, many of the respondents felt they either had the help and support or did not require any more to manage their health and wellbeing while working from home. Those that do asked for more contact and support from managers, the right equipment, the need to take regular breaks and, by far the most significant, more informal, and social interaction with colleagues

May 2021 Smart Working pulse survey results from 781 responses:

- **Working from home preferences** - 92% want to work from home in some capacity going forward
- **Part time preferences** - 70% of those who want to work part time wish to work between 2-3 days in the office each week
- **Reasons for coming back in the office** – 69% social interaction with colleagues, 58% - printing/ photocopying and 30% meetings and calls
- **Ability to maintain good physical health** - 75% of staff agree that they can maintain good physical health
- **Ability to maintain good mental health** - 75% of staff agree that they can maintain good mental health.

An analysis of all the free fields within the survey were collated and the themed responses can be found in the table below.

Q7. Ideas to support health and wellbeing	Q9. Biggest challenges of remote working	Q 12. Suggestions for improving support whilst WFH
Appropriate ergonomic desk/ chair (140)	Social isolation/ missing team contact (124)	Providing desks and chairs to suit individual working space (45)
Taking regular breaks without the expectation of always being available. (39)	Training from peers day-to-day (66)	Regular support and supervision from managers (40)
Availability of desk equipment (risers, wireless keyboard, and mouse, monitor stands, footrest, docking stations for laptops, desk lamp, gel wrist pads) (34)	IT system issues (59)	Improve IT response time (38)

3.5 Mental Health First Aiders

Between November 2020 and March 2021 c.34 staff across the Council and Schools were trained to become fully accredited Mental Health First Aiders. Details of these staff are available [on the Hub](#). All MHFAers have been issued with a green lanyard so they are visible to staff when walking around the building.

In February 2021, CMT agreed to appoint an Executive Sponsor for Mental Health and to provide accredited Mental Health Awareness training to all Managers.

The Director of Children, Schools and Families was selected to be the Executive Sponsor and over 20 Assistant Directors/ HOS/ Managers have volunteered to become Mental Health First Aid Champions.

In July 2021, Mental Health Mondays were introduced, with a focus on a key wellbeing topic every first Monday of the month. Mental Health Mondays provide information, resources, support, and a virtual session on the specific topic. We also ask staff to wear the Mental Health Matters t-shirt which is available to staff. As part of Mental Health Awareness Week in May 2021, t-shirts were designed and worn by directors and staff around the civic centre, Merton sites including the libraries to reduce the stigma and start the conversation around mental health.

3.6 Available Resources for Staff

We have been promoting our support resources to staff via a variety of ways. A sample of resources available are included below:

- **Employee Assistance Programme** - a confidential employee benefit designed to help staff deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health, and general wellbeing. The service provides a Free 24-Hour Confidential Helpline: 0800 030 5182
- **Able Futures** - can offer nine months advice and guidance from a mental health specialist to help staff learn coping mechanisms, build resilience, and access therapy to help them with their mental health at work. Call free from 8am-10.30pm, Monday – Friday 0800 3213137
- **Occupational Health** – concentrates on preventing work related illness, improving health and wellbeing and supporting people back to work after absence from illness.
- **Good thinking** – supports Londoners to look after their mental health and wellbeing by providing digital resources. Available 24/7 on any device and completely anonymous.
- **Flu Clinics** - historically, HR's OD & Strategy Team have managed an in-house flu clinic during October/November each year for all front-line staff. Due to COVID-19, the practicalities and risks of administering this in 2020 were deemed too high. However, to ensure sickness levels were minimised during the winter of 2020/21 and to ensure business continuity of essential services and schools, a CMT report was developed recommending that all staff (including schools, agencies, and bank) who were not eligible to be vaccinated under the NHS scheme would be able to claim up to £10 per person to receive the vaccine at a pharmacy of their choice. 200 staff (including schools) took up this offer.

3.7 Appraisals

Appraisals have been reviewed and now include an area to review how managers have been managing their teams. Merton's appraisal period runs from April to May and in 2020 during the crisis of the pandemic and lockdown the requirement to complete appraisals was relaxed in order to enable Managers and Staff to focus on the many requirements of the pandemic.

To compensate for this Managers were provided with a Remote Working Framework for their 1:1 conversation with staff, which when followed would direct the manager to focus on the wellbeing of staff as a main focus of the 1:1 conversation. We now need to readdress the balance and ensure regulars 121's and supporting staff are part of the expected management behaviours. Appraisals also need to be seen as a valuable tool in developing a culture where staff have clear objectives that their performance can be measured effectively by outcomes, as opposed to presentism. In July 2020, when we introduced the Remote Working framework, this also helped to ensure that objectives were set.

3.8 Induction

The corporate Induction Programme has been reviewed and developed to support managers bringing staff on-board in a COVID world. We now offer a new online experience allowing staff to become knowledgeable about Merton without visiting the offices or needing to meet staff face to face. New induction checklists for managers have been developed to help support new staff joining Merton to have a consistent approach with everything about induction all in one place on the Hub. We have also created a full suite of training on the learning zone.

Additionally, we have undertaken workshops with "pandemic new starters" to understand the challenges they have faced in joining Merton in a COVID-19 world. The results have been categorised into HR, IT and Managers actions and responsibilities identifying several further improvements that could be made e.g., Full Joining Instructions covering some of the basics that a new starter might need to know, Improved structure charts on the HUB clearly identifying who's who etc. L&D will therefore be working with IT and Managers across the business to deliver these initiatives.

4. UPDATE ON CURRENT PRIORITIES

4.1 Current Priorities

We are currently working on a number of areas to improve mental health and wellbeing, these include:

- All managers to be trained in Mental Health Awareness to understand the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues. A dedicated £32k budget has been identified to support this and support Wellbeing and Remote working training required by staff.
- Developing an updated wellbeing communication area on the Hub. New look pages will be easier to navigate and offer more resources.

- Offering a tailored L&D offer working with managers in specific areas of the council to support the training requirements of their teams.
- Training Wellbeing Champions across the directorates to support the embedding of Mental Health and Wellbeing across the organisation. The nominated Wellbeing champions are individuals who have influence, knowledge and confidence to advocate Mental Health awareness within the directorate and support positive wellbeing in the workplace.

4.2 **SMART Working**

In order to embed the new hybrid way of working we are working closely with the SMART Working programme to put in place FAQ's, quick guides and training to support the Smart Working offering as staff get ready to return to the offices on 6 September. Training / engagement is planned on the following subjects:

- Returning to the office – how to handle anxiety
- Leading Hybrid teams (for managers)
- Masterclasses: working in a hybrid model (for staff)
- Supporting the digital adoption delivering Teams / Outlook training
- Engagement sessions on the new Smart Working model

4.3 **Plans for the future**

From the pulse survey and engagement session feedback we plan to put in place a Wellbeing Commitment / Strategy with clear areas we intend to develop. We also plan to develop an action plan to address the issues arising from the deep dive / pulse survey analysis.

Gaining the London Healthy Workplace Award - Taking into account the work that has been delivered over the last year, we plan to start the application process to apply for Merton Council to receive foundation level accreditation of the Healthy Workplace Award.

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1 The alternative option would be to do nothing
- 5.2 Make wellbeing roles permanent as such a fundamental area of work

6. **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

It is proposed that we continue to make improvements and understand needs by regular engagement with staff and CMT.

7. TIMETABLE

Accredited Mental Health Awareness for all managers (300) shall start in September 202.

8. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Wellbeing resource to carry on this work after March 2022 would be required as currently being carried out by fixed contract staff. The cost of resources would be L&D Advisor Circa £40k and Admin Assistant Circa £25k per year plus add on costs of 29%.
- 8.2 Delivery of current activities will be completed using existing resources.

9. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific legal implications arising from the report.

10. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The way we look after the mental health and wellbeing of our staff will reflect on the way we provide services to our communities in Merton.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None

12. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Without a key focus on wellbeing and mental health, the council would risk:

- Sick absence increase
- The cost of Occupational health and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to increase
- Reduction of output by workforce due to lack of motivation and unhappiness at work.
- High turnover, staff moving to organisations where wellbeing and mental health are a priority

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

- APPENDIX 1 – Wellbeing Training plans 2018 – 2021

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDIX 1 – WELLBEING TRAINING PLANS 2018 -- 2021

Year	2018 - 19 *(F2F courses titled differently)		2019 - 20 *(F2F courses titled differently)		(2020 – 10/8/21)		Average Attendance
	Count of Courses	Sum of Delegates Booked	Count of Courses	Sum of Delegates Booked	Count of Courses	Sum of Delegates Booked	NB – Figures rounded up/down
Appraisal Training for Employees					8	83	10
Appraisal Training for Managers					7	79	11
Being a Manager in Merton	4	30	3	17	4	36	9
Bereavement - Webinar					1	12	12
Dignity in Care - Webinar					1	4	4
Building Personal Resilience and Beating Stress					3	26	9
End of Life - Webinar					1	15	15
First Aid at Work 3 Day	2	19	1	10	3	25	8
First Aid Refresher	3	13			3	22	7
Fostering Motivation and Resilience in Time of Change					1	5	5
Mental Health Awareness - Webinar					10	83	8
Mental Health First Aid - First Aider					5	34	5
Mindfulness - Webinar					2	38	19
Microsoft Teams					8	92	12
Microsoft Outlook					4	25	6
Microsoft Excel					1	10	10
Microsoft Word					1	4	4
Paediatric First Aid			1	11	7	58	8
Personal Safety & Lone Working - Webinar			4	51	1	5	11
SharePoint					2	14	7
Stress Management - Webinar	3	41	3	41	4	56	14
Suicide Awareness					5	18	4
Supporting People with Dementia Webinar					1	8	8
Supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of your Team					4	38	10
Talent Management			1	16	5	54	11
The Road to Resilience - Webinar	3	41	3	41	3	49	16
Virtual Able Futures					3	22	7
Virtual Able Futures - Managers					3	20	7
Virtual Autism Awareness	2	17	4	45	2	26	11

Virtual Equality, Dignity, Privacy & Diversity - Adult Social Care	1	12	3	27	2	22	10
Virtual Infection Control	3	40	4	42	3	25	11
Virtual Leading Remote Teams					3	41	14
Virtual Managing Diversity & Inclusion - Managers					3	23	8
Virtual Managing Performance and Difficult Conversations Remotely			2	29	4	46	12
Virtual Safeguarding - COVID-19-19					2	21	11
Virtual Working with Diversity & Inclusion	4	55			3	28	14
Virtual Working with Unconscious Bias					4	70	18
What is trauma? - Webinar					2	39	20
Zoom Training					2	25	13
Grand Total	25	268	29	330	129	1301	10

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Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2021/22



This table sets out the draft Overview and Scrutiny Commission's Work Programme for 2021/22 following discussions at the topic workshop on 9 June 2021.

The work programme will be considered at every meeting of the Commission to enable it to respond to issues of concern or to request new pre-decision items ahead of their consideration by Cabinet/Council.

Chair: Cllr Peter Southgate
Vice-chair: Cllr Peter McCabe

Scrutiny Support

For further information on the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission please contact: -
Rosie McKeever, Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 020 8545 4035; Email: rosie.mckeever@merton.gov.uk

For more information about overview and scrutiny at LB Merton, please visit www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Meeting date: 14 July 2021 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm, 6 July 2021)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Holding the executive to account	Questions to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive - priorities and challenges for 2021/22	Discussion	Cllr Mark Allison, Leader; Hannah Doody, Chief Executive	
Holding the executive to account	Recovery and Modernisation Programme	Presentation	Chris Lee, Director of E&R Frank Dick, Head of Recovery	
Scrutiny of crime and disorder	Identify questions for the Borough Commander	Discussion	Cllr Peter Southgate, Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Commission	Plan line of questioning for 8 September meeting
Performance management	Overview and Scrutiny Commission work programme 21/22	Report	Cllr Peter Southgate, Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Commission	Discuss and approve work programme and re-establishment of the FMTG

Meeting date: 8 September 2021 (*Deadline for papers: 5pm, 31 August 2021*)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Scrutiny of crime and disorder	BCU Commander – crime and policing in Merton	Report and in-depth discussion	BCU Commander	To hold BCU Commander to account on crime and disorder
Scrutiny of crime and disorder	Safer Merton Update	Report	Kiran Vagarwal, Community Safety Manager	Report to focus on domestic violence and gender based violence
Holding the executive to account	Merton Council as an Employer	Report	Liz Hammond?	Review of Mental Health support for employees
Setting the work programme	Work programme 2021/22	Written report	Rosie McKeever, Scrutiny Officer	To agree the work programme.

Meeting date: 10 November 2021 (**Deadline for papers: 5pm, 1 November 2021**)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Holding the executive to account	Business Plan - budget scrutiny (round one)	Report	Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services	To send comments to Cabinet budget meeting 6 December
Holding the executive to account	Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy	Report	Evereth Willis, Equality and Community Cohesion Officer	Progress report
Holding the executive to account	Council's Communications Service	Report or verbal update	Matt Burrows, Interim Head of Customer Experience & Communications	To review communications service; including complaint handling and digital access and inclusion for all
Holding the executive to account	Your Merton		John Dimmer, Catherine Dunn	
Setting the work programme	Work programme 2021/22	Written report	Rosie McKeever, Scrutiny Officer	To agree the work programme.

Meeting date: 19 January 2022 (**Deadline for papers:** 5pm, 10 January 2022)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Budget scrutiny	Business Plan Update – budget scrutiny (round two)	Report – common pack for Panels and Commission	Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services	To report to Cabinet (7 Feb) on budget scrutiny round 2
Budget scrutiny	Scrutiny of the Business Plan; comments and recommendations from the overview and scrutiny panels	Report	Cllr Peter Southgate Scrutiny Officer	To send comments and recommendations from the overview and scrutiny panels to Cabinet on 7 Feb
Scrutiny Review	Universal Credit	Report and discussion Invite Mitcham Job Centre and CAB	David Keppler, Head of Revenues & Benefits	
Holding the executive to account	Climate Change?			
Scrutiny of crime and disorder	Identify questions for the Borough Commander	Discussion	Cllr Peter Southgate	Plan line of questioning for meeting on 16 March
Setting the work programme	Work programme 2021/22	Written report	Rosie McKeever, Scrutiny Officer	To agree the work programme.

***Additional* Meeting date: 26 January 2022 (*Deadline for papers: 5pm, 17 January 2022*) HOLD FOR EXTRA BUDGET INFO?**

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Budget scrutiny	Business Plan Update	Report	Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services	To report to Cabinet on any additional savings
Holding the executive to account	Voluntary sector- How can the community and volunteerism that developed in the pandemic be preserved and enhanced?	Report and discussion Invite CE of Merton Connected to speak at meeting	John Dimmer, Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships	Consider also how businesses and charities can be encouraged to continue supporting their communities
Setting the work programme	Work programme 2021/22	Written report	Rosie McKeever, Scrutiny Officer	To agree the work programme.

Meeting date: 16 March 2022 (**Deadline for papers: 5pm, 7 March 2022**)

Scrutiny category	Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Scrutiny of crime and disorder	BCU Commander – crime and policing in Merton	Report and in-depth discussion	BCU Commander	To hold BCU Commander to account on crime and disorder
Scrutiny of crime and disorder	Safer Merton Update		Kiran Vagarwal, Community Safety Manager	Report to focus on ASB and designing out crime
Holding the executive to account	Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2022-26	Report	Evereth Willis, Equality and Community Cohesion Officer	Comment on the refresh of the next plan, using learning from scrutinising Covid 19 and other items
Performance management	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	Report	Cllr Peter Southgate	To approve and forward to Council
Performance management	Planning the Commission's 2022/23 work programme	Report	Cllr Peter Southgate	To review 2021/22 and agree priorities for 2022/23

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