

Merton Council

Council meeting

Membership

The Mayor: Councillor Gill Manly

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor Martin Whelton

Councillors: Sally Kenny, Agatha Mary Akyigyina OBE, Stephen Alambritis MBE, Laxmi Attawar, Thomas Barlow, Hina Bokhari, Mike Brunt, Billy Christie, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Anthony Fairclough, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Jenifer Gould, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden, Andrew Howard, Natasha Irons, Linda Kirby MBE, Paul Kohler, Edith Macauley MBE, Peter McCabe, Simon McGrath, Nick McLean, Aidan Mundy, Dennis Pearce, Marsie Skeete, Eleanor Stringer, Helena Dollimore, James Williscroft, Sheri-Ann Bhim, John Braithwaite, Michael Butcher, Caroline Charles, Eleanor Cox, Klaar Dresselaers, Chessie Flack, Kirsten Galea, Ross Garrod, Jil Hall, Billy Hayes, Susie Hicks, Dan Johnston, Andrew Judge, Usaama Kaweesa, Samantha MacArthur, Stephen Mercer, Stuart Neaverson, John Oliver, Robert Page, Michael Paterson, Tony Reiss, Slawek Szczepanski, Matthew Willis, Max Austin and Victoria Wilson

Date: **Wednesday 12 July 2023**

Time: **7.15 pm**

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

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

democratic.services@merton.gov.uk or telephone [020 8545 3357](tel:02085453357).

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

Council meeting

12 July 2023

1	Apologies for absence	
2	Declarations of Pecuniary Interest	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 20
4	Announcements by the Mayor, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive	
5	Public questions to cabinet members The questions and written responses will be circulated at the meeting.	
6	Councillors' ordinary priority questions to cabinet members The questions and written responses will be circulated at the meeting	21 - 22
7a	Strategic theme: Main report	23 - 40
7b	Strategic theme: Councillors' questions to cabinet members The questions and written responses will be circulated at the meeting.	
7c	Strategic theme: motions	
8	Report from Community Forum - Raynes Park 25 April 2023	41 - 56
9	Report from Community Forum - Wimbledon 14 June 2023	57 - 70
10	Notice of motion - Liberal Democrat Motion	71 - 72
11	Update on Motions and amendments from Council 2022-23	73 - 94
12	Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer	95 - 96
13	Changes to membership of committees and related matters	97 - 98
14	Petitions	99 - 100
15	Business for the next ordinary meeting of the Council	

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.

Partnership.

Public Information

Attendance at meetings

The public are welcome to attend meetings of the Council. Seating in the public gallery is limited and offered on a first come first served basis.

Audio/Visual recording of meetings

The Council will film meetings held in the Council Chamber for publication on the website. If you would like to film or record any meeting of the Council held in public, please read the Council's policy [here](#) or contact democratic.services@merton.gov.uk for more information.

Mobile telephones

Please put your mobile telephone on silent whilst in the meeting.

Access information for the Civic Centre



- Nearest Tube: Morden (Northern Line)
- Nearest train: Morden South, South Merton (First Capital Connect)
- Tramlink: Morden Road or Phipps Bridge (via Morden Hall Park)
- Bus routes: 80, 93, 118, 154, 157, 163, 164, 201, 293, 413, 470, K5

Further information can be found [here](#)

Meeting access/special requirements

The Civic Centre is accessible to people with special access requirements. There are accessible toilets, lifts to meeting rooms, disabled parking bays and an induction loop system for people with hearing difficulties. For further information, please contact democratic.services@merton.gov.uk

Fire alarm

If the fire alarm sounds, either intermittently or continuously, please leave the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit without stopping to collect belongings. Staff will direct you to the exits and fire assembly point. If you are unable to use the stairs, a member of staff will assist you. The meeting will reconvene if it is safe to do so, otherwise it will stand adjourned.

Electronic agendas, reports and minutes

Copies of agendas, reports and minutes for council meetings can also be found on our website. To access this, click <https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy> and search for the relevant committee and meeting date.

Agendas can also be viewed online in the Borough's libraries and on the Mod.gov paperless app for iPads, Android and Windows devices.

Agenda Item 3

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

COUNCIL
17 MAY 2023
(19.15 -20.50)

PRESENT

(in the Chair), Councillors Joan Henry and Gill Manly
Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina,
Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Councillor Laxmi Attawar,
Councillor Thomas Barlow, Councillor Hina Bokhari,
Councillor Michael Brunt, Councillor Billy Christie,
Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah,
Councillor Anthony Fairclough, Councillor Edward Foley,
Councillor Brenda Fraser, Councillor Jenifer Gould,
Councillor Daniel Holden, Councillor Andrew Howard,
Councillor Natasha Irons, Councillor Linda Kirby, Councillor Sally
Kenny, Councillor Paul Kohler, Councillor Edith Macauley,
Councillor Peter McCabe, Councillor Simon McGrath,
Councillor Aidan Mundy, Councillor Eleanor Stringer,
Councillor Martin Whelton, Councillor Helena Dollimore,
Councillor James Williscroft, Councillor Sheri-Ann Bhim,
Councillor John Braithwaite, Councillor Michael Butcher,
Councillor Caroline Charles, Councillor Eleanor Cox,
Councillor Klaar Dresselaers, Councillor Chessie Flack,
Councillor Kirsten Galea, Councillor Ross Garrod,
Councillor Jil Hall, Councillor Billy Hayes, Councillor Susie Hicks,
Councillor Dan Johnston, Councillor Andrew Judge,
Councillor Usaama Kaweesa, Councillor Samantha MacArthur,
Councillor Stephen Mercer, Councillor Stuart Neaverson,
Councillor John Oliver, Councillor Robert Page,
Councillor Michael Paterson, Councillor Tony Reiss,
Councillor Slawek Szczepanski, Councillor Matthew Willis,
Councillor Max Austin and Councillor Victoria Wilson

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors McLean, Pearce and Skeete.

Councillor Wilson attended remotely.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR 2023/24 AND THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2023/24 (Agenda Item 3)

It was moved by Councillor Usaama Kaweesa and seconded by Councillor Michael Butcher that Councillor Gill Manly be elected Mayor of the London Borough of Merton for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Councillor Daniel Holden also spoke in support of the nomination.

(Copies of their speeches are attached at Appendix A to these minutes)

There not being any other nominations, the Mayor put it to the meeting and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

Councillor Gill Manly signed the statutory declaration of office and was invested with the Mayor's chain and badge of office.

The Mayor announced that her Deputy Mayor for the 2023/24 municipal year would be Councillor Martin Whelton. Councillor Whelton signed the statutory declaration of office and was invested with the Deputy Mayor's badge of office.

The Mayor announced that her consort would be Ann Gillespie. The Mayor's Chaplain would be Father David Pennells.

The Mayor presented badges to the outgoing Mayor, Deputy Mayor and their respective consorts.

The Mayor, Councillor Gill Manly thanked the Council for her election for the forthcoming year and announced that her two Mayoral charities would be the Merton Music Foundation and the National Brain Appeal.

(A copy of her acceptance speech is attached at Appendix B to these minutes)

4 VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING MAYOR (Agenda Item 4)

The Mayor invited Councillor Joan Henry to receive the Council's vote of thanks.

The Leader of the Council Councillor Ross Garrod, moved and the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Anthony Fairclough seconded the vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor.

In doing so, both, along with the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group and the Leader of the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents Group both spoke in praise of Councillor Henry's year in office.

(A copy of these speeches are attached at Appendix C to these minutes)

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Joan Henry for the dedicated manner in which she has served as Mayor of the London Borough of Merton for the year 2022-2023.

5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023 are agreed as an accurate record.

6 CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES (Agenda Item 6)

The report was moved by Councillor Garrod and seconded by Councillor Mundy.

The Conservative amendment as set out in Item 9 was moved by Councillor Barlow and seconded by Councillor Holden.

Councillors Willis, Hicks and Foley also spoke on the item.

The Conservative amendment was put to the vote and fell: Votes in favour – 22, votes against – 28, abstentions – 3.

The substantive report was then put to the vote and carried: Votes in favour 28, votes against – 22, abstentions- 3.

RESOLVED:

That the Council:

- A. i) approves the constitution of committees, sub-committees and scrutiny bodies set out in Appendix A and;
ii) agrees the allocation of seats, chair and vice-chair positions and the appointment of members to those seats;
- B. i) approves the constitution of consultative forums and other bodies set out in Appendix B and
ii) agrees the appointment of members to those seats;
- C. agrees the allocation of seats and appointment to the outside organisations as detailed in Appendix C.
- D. notes the appointments to the Cabinet including their respective portfolios in Appendix D

E. Agrees the amended Terms of Reference for the Planning Applications Committee as detailed at Appendix E

F. agrees that the Council's Constitution be amended to incorporate any changes resulting from the approval of recommendations A to E.

7 RECRUITMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER (Agenda Item 7)

The report was moved by Councillor Garrod and seconded by Councillor Bhim.

Councillor Fairclough also spoke on the item.

RESOLVED:

A That Council agreed (on the recommendation of the Standards and General Purposes Committee) to delegate the appointment of the Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership (who will also be the Council's Monitoring Officer) to the Appointments Committee.

B. That Council agreed that the appointment will be at management grade 5 which currently ranges from £100,218 to £104,637, together with such market supplement as the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Appointments Committee, considers necessary to secure a good appointment.

8 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (Agenda Item 8)

The report was moved by Councillor Christie and seconded by Councillor Stringer.

Councillor Oliver also spoke on the report.

RESOLVED:

A. That Council agreed that the following amendments to the Council's Constitution be authorised:

(i) The amendments to the Pensions Committee terms of reference as detailed in paragraph 2.1 of the report

(i)

That all references to CHAS 2013 Ltd be removed from the Constitution as detailed at paragraph 2.4 of the report

B.

That Council noted that the Monitoring Officer will use her delegated authority under Article 15.2(b) of the Constitution to make consequential amendments to the Constitution to reflect the new Council structure agreed in September 2022.

C.

That Council agreed that changes be made to the Published Pay Policy and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules to clarify the

approval process for making termination payments to officers by making it the responsibility of the Appointments Committee in accordance with Option C set out in paragraph 2.8 of the report.

D. That Council authorised the Monitoring officer to implement Amended versions of the terms of reference of the Appointments Committee, the Pay Policy and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules which reflect Council's approvals set out in paragraphs A to C above.

E.

That

Council agreed that the appointment of the Monitoring Officer be delegated

to the Appointments Committee in respect of the upcoming appointment process only

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix A

Councillor Usaama Kaweesa

Thank you Madam Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Deputy Lieutenant, Colleagues, Officers, Guests. It is with great pleasure that in only my second mayor making, I have the enormous privilege of nominating a fellow ward colleague, a proud Cricket Green Councillor, our very own Gill Manly as first citizen of Merton for the next municipal year. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think it's an extraordinary thing to nominate a Councillor to the position of Mayor in only her second year in public life. But those of us who know Gill will also acknowledge that there's nothing ordinary about her. If there's anyone who can take on this role so early in her political career, who have the confidence and charisma to chair our meetings, to keep us united together and at times handle a room full of larger than life personalities, someone who is ready to represent us in the wider community and raise funds for fantastic local charities, that woman is Gill.

Madam Mayor, in the time I have, I could not possibly do justice to the remarkable life Gill has lived. I can however share the key moments that have shaped who Gill is today and the type of Mayor we all have to look forward to. First thing to know about Gill is that she lives to bring joy to others. She's an entertainer at heart with a remarkable voice and speaking as someone who should never be allowed to sing in public, it makes me admire her talent all the more. Music has been a constant throughout Gill's life, she grew up immersing in her Father's favourite jazz records and began singing at an early age. Little did she know back then that she would one day rub shoulders with the great Eartha Kitt. Aged eighteen, she headed to London to drama school where she began to perform, at first in various fringe musicals in London's West End, however Gill soon discovered that her real love lay in musical theatre and the great Broadway shows. It must have been at that moment the singer we know today was born.

Interesting fact you might not know about Gill, is when Jazz FM radio first came to life, Gill was there to usher it into our lives. She hosted weekly jazz gigs at Smollenskys introducing new acts and established singers live on various broadcasts. A very young Claire Martin performed with Gill on radio, she had been inspired as a sixteen year old by hearing Gill in a local club to then go on and become a jazz artist.

Gill is undoubtedly a jewel in the crown of British jazz having performed across London's greatest venues for over thirty years and since moving to Mitcham she has also shared her vocal talents with our jazz loving residents from some of our very best venues; venues like the Mitcham Parish Church, Vestry Hall, Merton Abbey Mills and many others across the Borough, most notably when she performed for her neighbours at the famous Mitcham Armed houses, this during the lockdown to lift everyone's' spirits.

I don't know about you, but I think Merton is ready for a jazz-singing Mayor. Am I right?

But Madam Mayor, Gill's talents do not stop there. She's also a playwright, an artist and an actress and I had the privilege of witnessing one of her plays just last year which to be honest was quite a scary play actually, a testament to how well written it was and I know other Councillors who were able to see it will attest to that too. It also featured bafta award winner Joanna Scanlan who we're fortunate to have with us tonight among many others who have accompanied Gill on her journey.

A jazz singer, a musician, an actor, a playwright, author, radio broadcaster, fierce champion for the residents of Cricket Green and soon to be the first citizen of our Borough.

Madam Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Deputy Lieutenant, Colleagues, Officers, Guests, I have no doubt, absolutely no doubt that our community will be well served by one of the most creative, hardworking and talented individuals I'm proud to call a friend and a colleague. I therefore nominate Councillor Gill Manly, thank you very much.

Councillor Michael Butcher

I first met Gill Manly at a Cricket Green Branch Meeting in the summer of 2019. As political meetings often do, the order of business had devolved into multiple conversations happening at the same time, across the room. Gill, who had been waiting patiently with her hand raised for some time, firmly announced to the room, 'Excuse me, I believe I have the floor.' I realised then that this was not a person to be trifled with.

Gill Manly can be fierce Cllrs; at various times I have described her as a Battle Axe, a Battering Ram, but also as the hardest working person I have ever met. I am proud to call her a colleague and friend.

You see, Gill never intended to seek public office. She only ever wished to further great causes and champion the arts in Mitcham. She only decided to stand as a Councillor after realising the potential difference she could make in the role. She is the prime example of someone who got into politics not to be something, but to do something. And what amazing things she has accomplished in her first year; from the foundation of the Mitcham Arts Collective, to a work-rate that often leaves Cllr Kaweesa and myself marveling at one another.

Gill has done great work here in the chamber as well; Gill has sat on many committees, and I've had the honour of sitting alongside her at Planning, where woe the Developer who has tried to pull a fast one on Gill Manly. Having experienced losing her own home earlier in life, Cllr Manly has been a champion for housebuilding in Merton, and she will be sorely missed on PAC; but Planning's loss is very much Merton's gain.

Gill's passion for music is well known and her work is grounded in this community - it's for those reasons that there is no better charity she could have chosen than the Merton Music Foundation which aims to advance musical education throughout our Borough.

Cllr Manly's other chosen charity is The National Brain Appeal. This is a charity very close to Gill and many colleagues, and we're extremely grateful to have

Dr Paul Mulholland, an expert in the field of Neurology with us here tonight. The charity continues to drive pioneering clinical research and provide funds for training leading scientists and clinicians.

Now, Gill may be the one with a passion for Broadway musicals, but it is often left to Cllr Kaweesa and I to tell her, in the vein of the musical *Hamilton*, to 'Take a Break'. And when she isn't emulating Alexander Hamilton's work ethic, she can on occasion be seen trying to channel his passion for rap music; her Grime performance with Unorthodox Kings at Croydon Composers 2017 is something to behold. Many politicians joke about being down with kids, but Gill has the credentials to back it up. But it is the title of that Grime track that channels Gill's approach to music but to politics as well; 'Common Ground'. Gill will work with anyone, if it is in the interests of the betterment of the people of Merton. I know this is an approach she will continue to champion as Mayor. Cllrs, it gives me the upmost pleasure to second this nomination.

Councillor Daniel Holden

Thank you Madam Mayor. On behalf of the Conservative Group we welcome the nomination and look forward to supporting Councillor Manly's year as Mayor of Merton.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix B - Mayoral speech
17th May 2023
Council Chamber

Good evening may I welcome The Deputy Lieutenant, honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen of Merton, the Assembly member for Merton, Councillors, officers and of course friends, family and guests.

Goodness me, as I look out before me from this bench, I am delighted to see you all and trust you are well and in fine spirits this evening, despite battling the profusion of roadworks!

Thank you for being here on this special night in the Civic Year. The annual council is a night we look forward to, as it signals the beginning of the newly elected Mayors term of office. As we say thank you to the outgoing Mayor and her Deputy, and look ahead to what's coming next!! A re-dedication of our civic lives and responsibilities.

I take this opportunity to place on record our thanks to Cllr Henry and Cllr Akygina for their commitment, dedication and service to the residents and communities in this Borough. You will be a hard act to follow.

Thanks also must be made to my political family in the chamber, both elected councillors and branch party members, for trusting me to inhabit this new role and to be a shining example. Cllr Garrod, colleagues, what were you thinking!!!

Mere words will never be sufficient to thank my two Ward colleagues Cllr Kaweesa and Cllr Butcher. We were elected as a team just over a year ago (to my surprise) and we have bonded for the common good of our Ward of Cricket Green. I am extremely fortunate to work with two very bright, energetic, imaginative and caring young men.

Mitcham is my forever home. I came here 5 years ago, a refugee of my sad, beleaguered, but much-loved Croydon. Father David sitting to my right interviewed me, in his role as trustee of the charity that provides Almshouse cottages, and (I hope he does not regret that decision) made me a beneficiary of the magnificent cottages built by the Mitcham benefactress Mary Tate almost 200 years ago.

In Mitcham, I discovered a community of people that is generous, kind, and very forgiving!!! During the pandemic, without the kindness of good neighbours and food parcels from the Dons, the lockdown would have been much harder to endure. It is my privilege to not only live in Mitcham but to be able to serve the very people that have welcomed me, supported me and come to my rescue.

You will have heard in the speech's, stories of some of my endeavours and achievements. 62 years I have plodded this planet and cannot possibly list the multitude of phenomenal people I have met and worked with, nor what seemed at the time most unlikely jobs I have done. I am the mistress of reinvention I am told. And to some, becoming Mayor is yet another in the ever-increasing list of reinventions.

I would argue that what appears to some to be re-invention, I call discovery. With each season that passes, my imagination is re-ignited with ideas and possibilities. I am fundamentally a storyteller. Whether as an actor on stage or film, a jazz singer that improvises at Ronnie Scott's, writing plays, a funeral celebrant that speaks to the lives of those that have left us, to a politician that addresses the chamber.

My life's path provides wisdom and knowledge that enables me to be many things, but fundamentally my core is to speak to people and somehow make a change in them that matters. Perhaps even inspire them to take a leap of faith, to follow their gut instincts, and to remember that perfection is not required, only diligence and a willing heart.

**“All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts” says the great Bard**

In truth, we are in the midst of a political theatre or arena if you will. All of us driven by civic duty, and the desire to make change, to enhance lives, and to provide solutions. Though we may not all share the same philosophies, we are all led by a common goal, to make a difference. Alas, we do and will disagree on ideology, and that's ok!! Good debate is necessary.

I am reminded whenever I question my sanity and decisions to undertake a role or new path that Aristotle said:

"At the intersection where your gifts, talents, and abilities meet a human need; therein you will discover your purpose"

I have found a purpose in this Chamber, and will use all my gifts, talents and abilities.

As your new Mayor, I have nominated two charities for which I will be raising funds. Firstly the Merton Music Foundation. As a child, I was privileged to be able to have free music tuition in violin and recorder and was fortunate that my parents could afford piano and flute lessons. Today's young people are not so lucky, especially in the deprived areas of our borough. MMF's vision is a borough where music resonates along the corridors of every school and echoes throughout the community. A place of aspiration where every child can find their first notes, make progress and flourish as a young musician. I am delighted that we have the Chief Executive of MMF Elisabeth Wigley with us today.

My other charity has a special significance in my life and many of those in the Chamber. The National Hospital for Neurology & Neurosurgery and the UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology – together known as Queen Square. This is one of the world's leading centres for the diagnosis, treatment and care of patients with

neurological and neuromuscular conditions. These include stroke, multiple sclerosis, brain cancer, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, and dementia. I am truly grateful that Dr Paul Mulholland is here this evening, who I am sure will be happy to speak to you at the reception afterwards.

A very dear and wise friend told me once, she has a personal mantra, and I will embarrass her this evening by not only quoting her but, thanking her for her encouragement as I entered into the life of a councillor. We stand on the shoulder of giants, and this woman is surely one of those, Dr Margaret Casely-Hayford, in your words.

**“I can, I will, just watch me”
“I can, I will, just watch me”**

Tonight, I pledge my complete commitment and dedication to a year of spreading peace, fun, love and joy.

A year of embracing every corner of this borough

A year of inspiring activities and events

A year of leadership, balance, and calm during the stormy nights of Full Council

A year of celebrating our heritage, culture and arts

A year of ambition for my beloved Mitcham

A year of just showing up and sharing the love

There will be stories to tell, and dreams to be shared

Children and young people to nurture and encourage

Volunteers to thank

Achievements to be celebrated

Honouring, and remembering

Touching lives

Drinking tea

Eating cakes and leading parades

Cutting ribbons

Waving flags

Applauding success and true grit

Being gracious and showing gratitude

Above all this

Gratitude

I am grateful to you all this evening for your time, your patience, and your love

I end with these thoughts:

“Though she be but little ,she is fierce”

I can, I will, just watch me

I can, I will, just watch me

Thank you.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix C

Councillor Ross Garrod, Leader of the Council

Thank you, Madam Mayor.

I am delighted to be leading this Chamber's vote of thanks to Councillor Joan Henry, who has served this borough with dedication, dignity, and decorum as our first citizen and Mayor over the last twelve months.

Councillor Henry came to London originally from St Thomas in Jamaica, and Merton has been her home, and the home of her three children, for more than three decades now.

And in that time, Councillor Henry has prided herself on working hard for the community that she is a part of.

Her background in nursing, working for organisations such as Marie Curie, more than 15 years as a special constable with the local police and victims support, and almost eight years as an elected councillor has embedded her in the local community as someone people can rely on, and who will look out for those most in need of support.

With all that experience, this was the perfect year for Councillor Henry to take on the role as Mayor of Merton. And what a year it has been.

Not many Mayor's have had to lead the Borough in times of such national celebration, but also sorrow. First marking the late Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and then leading Merton in mourning at the news of her sad passing in September. And since then, working hard with our dedicated team of staff and councillors, as well as our partners in the community to pull together the fantastic Coronation celebrations for His Majesty King Charles just a couple of weeks ago.

With these events, it's a wonder how you managed to do anything else – but you did!

Councillor Henry has helped to raise over £50,000 for her chosen charities – Dons Local Action Group, who do incredible work to support local people with food, technology and other essential items, and the Jimmy Asher Foundation, whose

tireless work supports young people and their parents from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In all of this work, Councillor Henry has been supported by the local community, her family, her consort Floyd Blake, her attendant Carl Brown, her Deputy Mayor Councillor Agatha Akyigyina OBE, and her Mayoral Committee – who have helped the Mayor to attend nearly 500 engagements over the year.

Thank you very much, Councillor Henry, for all your work on behalf of the people of Merton. Your year in office will certainly be one marked in the history books.

Councillor Anthony Fairclough, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

Thank you Madame Mayor, Deputy Lieutenant,

And I too am delighted to be seconding this motion of thanks to the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Henry, and her Deputy Cllr Akyigyina, your consorts and team.

But first I will welcome you to your role Madame Mayor – long may we find ‘Common Ground’

And to Cllr Whelton, as your deputy too.

Madame Mayor, Cllr Henry and Cllr Akyigyina – Joan and Agatha – have really thrown themselves into their mayoral year.

What a fantastic amount raised for the Dons Local Action Group and the Jimmy Asher foundation - well done!

These are two local charities committed to improving people’s life chances – Cllr Henry – as I said when welcoming you to the role last year, your commitment to your residents and ward shines through. I know that the Jimmy Asher Foundation in particular, is very active in Pollards Hill.

With over 500 engagements - I wanted to touch on some of your fantastic Mayoral events, such as your ball and Christmas party.

My group I think excelled at some of the more competitive events you put on – making up both teams in the final of the bowls competition ... and not to mention the safe pair of hands that is Cllr Kohler, goal keeper extraordinaire, at your Cllrs vs officers football match.

Cllr Henry you said at the last full Council meeting, he’s the ‘talk of the town’ – indeed, and not just because he’s all over the leaflets we put out every month!

Although I will make a special mention of Cllr Neaverson and his commitment to “total football” (for any Ted Lasso fans out there) – he was all over the pitch – in a good way.

But the real stars were actually the kids who joined our teams to help us make up the numbers and were pretty much the best players on the pitch.

It's also been an incredibly busy civic and ceremonial year, with the passing of the late Queen and the recent coronation.

You both handled some very demanding events with grace.

Cllr Henry, I hope you're proud of your time as Mayor, you deserve to be.

Councillor Daniel Holden, Deputy Leader Conservative Group

On behalf of the Conservative Group, I too thank the outgoing Madame Mayor Cllr Joan Henry, for her year as 1st Citizen of the London Borough of Merton.

Back in May 2022, many here did not expect this past year to become so ***varied and tumultuous***. It has been some year.

Cllr Henry's year as Mayor has seen the Platinum Jubilee of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and then very sadly the Queen's State Funeral.

At the end of the Mayoral year we had the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, which was a joyous uplifting spectacle. These Royal events resulted in many local events across Merton, which kept Cllr Henry very busy indeed. I hope she enjoyed the various jubilee and coronation street parties.

Cllr Henry as Mayor visited locations throughout the borough, and depending where, bumped into different councillors from across this place. Always bright and bubbly and keen to know more about the people and events she visited.

The mayoral charity ball last month was a particularly good highlight of the year, and well supported by the Labour Group and the Conservative Group. It was a fun evening.

My thanks to the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Joan Henry. We wish you the best for the future, and hope you thoroughly enjoyed your time as Mayor.

Councillor Edward Foley, Leader of the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents Group

Thank you Madam Mayor. It is an honour and a privilege to be here tonight to express my gratitude and appreciation to our outgoing Mayor of Merton, Cllr Joan Henry. Cllr Henry has served our borough with dedication, passion and integrity for the past year. She has been a champion of community engagement, social justice and environmental sustainability. She has also been a generous and supportive patron of many local charities and causes in Merton, including her two chosen charities, The Jimmy Asher Foundation and The Dons Local Action Group.

I am proud to have been asked by Cllr Henry to join her charities events committee team and to organise a successful bowls evening last August. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the talent and diversity of our councillors, as well as to raise funds and awareness for her two chosen charities. I would like to thank Merton Bowls Club for allowing us the use of their facilities.

Cllr Henry, you have been an inspiration and a role model to many others in Merton. You have made a lasting impact on our borough and on our lives. On behalf of everyone here, I would like to thank you for your time, your service and your leadership. Thank you.

Councillor Susie Hicks

Thank you Madam Mayor

This has been quite a year for our first Citizen and her deputy, and I would like to thank them both.

I can't believe it has been a year from those early drinks and nibbles in Civic House (those were the days, I was warned it would not happen often!

Since then Madam Mayor and Madam Deputy Mayor have been everywhere, always friendly and positive, even when carrying a candle in the dark and cold, making speeches (on occasion outside, also in the cold, I can vouch), presiding over meeting after meeting, attending event after event, charming everyone from Ambassadors to football playing children, always with great style.

Madam Mayor has been First Citizen through a momentous year, with the death of Queen Elizabeth and the Coronation of King Charles. She has presided over difficult situations- an angry Piers Corbyn, some fractious exchanges in the chamber, and always in magnificent regalia. Looking at the weighty insignia Madam Mayor has to wear, Penny Mordaunt should be looking to her laurels.

Madam Mayor has also devoted huge time and energy to fundraising for her chosen charities.

And I see she has been thanking Parking Enforcement Officers for their hard work and strong work ethic.

I think we should be saying the same to Madam Mayor and Madam Deputy Mayor.

Thank you for all your very hard work, it is greatly appreciated and you have been tremendous 😊

Councillor John Oliver

Thank you Madam Mayor. When I first came here after being elected in May 2022 I was a bit surprised at what a hostile environment it could at times be, however during your time as Mayor I have felt none of that from you. You always made me feel welcome and valued. My personal highlight was the concert at the Harris Academy when I think all of us present were very moved by the amazing performances by the children and young people and by your emotional speech which stressed your belief that we should as a community be doing all we can to help and support our young people. I think the people of Pollards Hill are lucky to have you as a Councillor and we have been blessed to have had you as a Mayor for the last year.

Councillor Joan Henry, responding to the vote of thanks

Ladies and gentlemen, Deputy Lieutenant, our new Chaplain, my Madam Deputy Mayor, my consort, my two charities I could not have done what I've done without the support that I have behind me, all across the parties. Every single one of you spoke to me.

I came from Jamaica forty three years ago, I had no idea that I would ever become the first citizen of the Borough of Merton. But one person, Councillor Brenda Fraser, you are the person who gave me the opportunity to be standing here today. I hadn't written a speech but having listened to colleagues on this side you made me feel powerful, thank you.

Councillor you always made me feel welcome and so do my other councillors on this side.

In 2010, I was on Figges Marsh doing my police work and I met Councillor Fraser. Having a conversation I said to her I'm going to take early retirement and she said what are you going to do, because I made a pledge and when I make a pledge I carry it through. I made a pledge that I was going to retire at 60, mind you I'm still 60. I said to her I'm coming up to 60 and I've signed all the documents but the Government says I have to reach 67 to get my pension she said what are you going to do and I said I don't know really. She said I've been watching what you've been doing and we need somebody like you. I asked what she did and she said she was a Councillor and invited me to come canvassing.

I went with her a few times and she said I was doing well and could go on my own so I did and she told me to speak to our MP Siobhain McDonagh so this is why I'm here.

When I gave my first speech I said you were the pillar I could lay my head on and I still believe that. Thank you all for your support, my family, I think my Dad may be watching if he's setup his Youtube, he's 95 and I can't wait to go and see him.

Thanks to my Deputy Mayor, we have worked together very closely and my two charities I cannot tell you how much they support me, because even when sometimes I go home and feel a little bit down I can always pick up the phone and give one of them a ring.

I really know they are here for me because I can feel it, so I want to say thank you all.

From Cllr Charles to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Following the recent announcements on the New Hospital Programme, what can the Council do to safeguard the future of St Helier Hospital for all the local people who rely on it?

From Cllr Simon McGrath to the Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage

Would the Cabinet Member please state what consultation there has been - and when - with local and national athletics organisations about the proposed new Running Track in Morden Park?

From Cllr Michael Paterson to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development

When the Labour administration forced the unpopular Local Plan through council, with the assistance of the Liberal Democrats, a major reason given by the administration was that it would provide a five-year housing land supply that would prevent overdevelopment such as at the Burlington Road site.

The Local Plan was due to be adopted in Spring 2022, however, this has not happened, and the council still cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. This led to the Wimbledon Chase site being given permission as the council would not be able to defend a refusal. When does the Cabinet Member expect the Local Plan to be approved by the Planning Inspectorate?

From Cllr Akyigyina to the Cabinet Member for Civic Pride

It was fantastic to be able to attend Mitcham Carnival in June – back for the first time since 2019. How successful was the carnival, and how will be incorporating learnings from this year to make next year even better?

From Cllr John Oliver to the Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage

Would the Cabinet Member please update Council on the outcome of meetings she has had with Wimbledon Tennis and Dean Jeeves to discuss the Junior Golf Programme?

From Cllr Nick McLean to the Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Green spaces and Climate Change

The grass verges in much of the borough are currently in an appalling state and are completely overgrown. Please can the Cabinet Member tell me how frequently the grass verges should be cut and how often the gullies should be cleared?

From Cllr Williscroft to the Cabinet for Civic Pride

I was pleased that our local armed forces community were able to mark Armed Forces Week with two events at the Civic Centre in June, and to see the Council recommit itself to the Armed Forces Covenant. How is the Council supporting serving personnel, reservists, veterans, and military families?

From Cllr Tony Reiss to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Could the Cabinet Member please set out what action the council is taking to address women's health issues?

From Cllr Skeete to the Cabinet for Sport and Heritage

It's fantastic news that we have embarked on one of the largest tennis court refurbishments in the country – how are we making sure these courts are accessible for everyone to get active and use them?

Committee: Council

Date: 12 July 2023

Wards: All

Subject: Strategic Theme: Building a Sustainable Future

Lead officer: Dan Jones, Executive Director: Environment, Civic Pride and Climate
Lucy Owen, Executive Director, Housing and Sustainability

Lead member: Cllr Natasha Irons, Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Green Spaces and Climate Change

Cllr Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development

Cllr Stephen Alambritis, Cabinet Member for Transport

Contact officer: Keith Burns, Interim Assistant Director, Customers, Policy and Improvement

Recommendations:

A. That the Council note and consider the content of this report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The Council, at its meeting on the 19th of March 2023, approved 'Building a Better Merton Together', the Council Plan for 2023 – 2026, which sets out three strategic priorities for the Council. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, delivery against these priorities is monitored by the Council. To facilitate this monitoring role, each meeting of the Council receives a report providing an update on performance against one of the three strategic priorities.

Building a Better Merton Together sets out how the Council will deliver its ambition with three strategic priorities that shape and guide delivery:

- i. Nurturing Civic Pride
- ii. Building a sustainable future
- iii. Creating a borough of sport

1.2. The achievement of these strategic priorities will require extensive engagement with residents, voluntary groups, and businesses, building on partnerships and alliances to reach a common goal.

1.3. This report provides the Council with an opportunity to consider progress against the Building a Sustainable Future strategic priority, with a particular focus on:

- (i) The Council's Local Plan policies on sustainable design and energy efficiency.
- (ii) The Council's Tree Strategy
- (iii) Parks and biodiversity

- (iv) Air Quality
 - (v) Climate Action
- 1.4. For each of the above five areas of focus this report provides:
- (i) An overview of the Council’s long-term ambitions.
 - (ii) Progress to date against those ambitions, including any specific decisions made since the Council last met in April 2023 as well as performance against key performance indicators where relevant.
 - (iii) Key deliverables and commitments over the life of the new Council Plan (2023 to 2026) and any identified risks or issues relating to these deliverables and commitments.
- 1.5. For air quality, additional commentary on recent Government announcements is included.
- 1.6. The report also provides an overview of how the various ambitions, commitments and deliverables support the Council’s Health in all Policies approach to improving health and wellbeing in the borough. The report concludes with an overview of ways in which young people in the borough are, and have been, involved in work on climate action.

2 DETAILS

THE COUNCIL’S LOCAL PLAN POLICIES ON SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY.

OVERVIEW OF AMBITIONS

- 2.1. In July 2019, Merton Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed to working towards becoming a net-zero carbon council by 2030 and a net-zero carbon borough by 2050. Merton’s Climate Strategy and Action Plan sets out the pace and scale of change required to achieve these carbon reduction targets and was approved by Council on 18th November 2020.
- 2.2. With circa 80% of greenhouse gas emissions in Merton being generated from the energy used to heat and power our buildings, decarbonising our building stock will be a fundamental step in becoming net-zero carbon¹. All buildings in Merton will need to operate at net zero carbon by 2050. A building which operates at net-zero carbon does not burn fossil fuels, has ultra-high energy efficiency and is 100% powered by renewable energy².
- 2.3. Extensive retrofit will be required to decarbonise Merton’s existing building stock given that low carbon heat solutions require reasonable levels of energy efficiency (at least an EPC rating of C)³, and more than three

¹ Merton Council (2020) Merton’s Climate Strategy and Action Plan (available at: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-emergency>).

² LETI (2020) Climate Emergency Design Guide (<https://www.leti.london/cedg>).

³ Mayor of London (2018) Zero Carbon London: A 1.5C compatible plan (https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/1.5c_compatible_plan.pdf).

quarters of Merton's 88,000 homes have an EPC rating of D or below⁴. The costs of achieving higher standards via retrofit are three to five times higher than for new buildings and the carbon impact of delayed action is significant⁵. Merton's decarbonisation pathways modelling estimated that retrofitting Merton's existing building stock would cost in excess of £2.7 billion⁶.

- 2.4. In order to achieve our carbon reduction target as cost effectively as possible, all new development must be fit for the future (i.e. be ultra-energy efficient and climate resilient, and maximise low carbon and renewable energy)⁷. Any new buildings which are not built to operate at net zero carbon will require expensive retrofit in the next 30 years. Policy must therefore ensure that new development in Merton does not create a legacy of poor performance that will require remedial action in the future and add to Merton's retrofit burden.
- 2.5. Merton's Draft Climate Change Policies are intended to go beyond the national building regulations and London Plan requirements to drive building energy performance which is compatible with our 2050 net-zero carbon target.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.6. The Council has set ambitious Climate Change policies to ensure that from 2025 all new development is compatible with operating at net zero carbon by 2050 without the need for expensive retrofit (i.e. does not burn fossil fuels, has ultra-high energy efficiency and is 100% powered by renewable energy) as set out in Table 1 below.
- 2.7. The new Merton Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public in 2021 and went through two rounds of public hearings in 2022. Officers received post hearing comments from the Planning Inspectors in April 2023 and are working to finalise the proposed modifications to the plan in light of these comments.
- 2.8. In 2022 and 2023, Merton has also been collaborating with a consortium of 19 London boroughs to update the evidence base to support planning policies which deliver Net Zero Carbon developments in light of changes to Part L of Building Regulations which came into force in 2022. This updated evidence base will inform the final modifications to the plan.

⁴ Merton Council (2020) Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan (available at: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-emergency>).

⁵ Currie & Brown (2019) A Report for the Committee on Climate Change – The costs and benefits of tighter standards for new buildings (<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-costs-and-benefits-of-tighter-standards-for-new-buildings-Currie-Brown-and-AECOM.pdf>).

⁶ Aether (2020) London Borough of Merton Climate Action Support (https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/Merton_Support-Climate-Action_v3.1.pdf).

⁷ CCC (2019) UK Housing: Fit for the future? (<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/UK-housing-Fit-for-the-future-CCC-2019.pdf>).

Table 1 Merton's draft Climate Change policies

Policy	Description
Strategic Policy CC2.1 Promoting sustainable design to mitigate and adapt to climate change	This Strategic Policy sets out the overall aims of Merton's climate change policies and the case for going beyond Building Regulations and the London Plan.
Policy CC2.2 Minimising greenhouse gas emissions	This policy aims to drive further carbon savings on site, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending the Mayor's zero carbon target to all minor new build residential development of one or more units and all non-residential development of 500sqm GIA or more. • Increasing Merton's minimum on-site carbon reduction targets; and • Introducing a new approach to carbon offsetting.
Policy CC2.3 Minimising energy use	This policy aims to minimise energy use and carbon emissions through energy efficiency improvements and drive a fabric first approach, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing fabric efficiency targets which will gradually increase over the next five years. • Introducing Energy Use Intensity targets which will be enforced from 2025; and • Requiring increased disclosure of anticipated energy demand and post-occupancy monitoring.
Policy CC2.4 Low carbon energy	This policy aims to drive the decarbonisation of heat and maximise renewable energy generation in the borough, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring developers to use efficient low carbon heat and to maximise renewable energy generation on site.
Policy CC2.5 Minimising waste and promoting a circular economy	This policy aims to minimise waste and embodied carbon, and promote a circular economy, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring all developments to be designed to minimise embodied carbon; and • Requiring all development of 30 or more dwellings and/ or 1,000sqm or more non-residential GIA, and all proposals to demolish and rebuild a single dwelling, to carry out a Whole-Life Cycle Carbon Assessment.
Policy CC2.6 Sustainable design standards	This policy aims to drive higher sustainability standards, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring water use targets for residential developments; and • Requiring BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) 'Excellent' standards for conversions/ change of use resulting in the creation of 10 or more new dwellings, and all new build and change of use non-residential development of 1,000sqm GIA or more.

KEY DELIVERABLES AND COMMITMENTS 2023 TO 2026:

- 2.9. Officers are looking to finalise the proposed modifications to the Plan in June 2023, and publish the final plan for a final round of consultation once these modifications have been approved by the Planning Inspectors.

THE COUNCIL'S TREE STRATEGY

OVERVIEW OF AMBITIONS

- 2.10. The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 10th July 2019, followed by the development of a Climate Strategy and Action Plan, which outlined the Council's response to the declaration and the importance that our trees have in mitigating climate change and shaping a greener future.
- 2.11. Under the Greening Merton element of the Climate Strategy and Action Plan the Council committed to developing and implementing a Tree Strategy for the borough. In addition, the Tree Service was reviewed by Internal Audit in 2020 and it was noted during the audit that there was no Strategy, Policy and Business Plan for the management and maintenance of the Council's tree stock.
- 2.12. To support the Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan, and to respond to the audit report, the Council commissioned the services of specialist arboriculture consultants to undertake the scoping, public consultation and development of a Tree Strategy for the management of council owned trees along with an associated Action Plan.
- 2.13. For the benefit of our local environment and that of future generations of borough residents, the Strategy seeks to achieve an optimised, sustainable Council-owned tree population that enhances our communities and protects the environment that we live and work in. Delivering the Strategy will make a positive contribution towards the London Environment Strategy's existing target of a 10% increase in canopy cover for the city overall. To meet this challenge the Strategy commits the Council to:
- i. Look after our existing trees and hedges well and in a structured and consistent way. This will mean that their benefits are maximised whilst tree-related problems and inconveniences are kept to a minimum.
 - ii. Protect all our trees and hedges to ensure their resilience in the face of many challenges and threats.
 - iii. Plant, establish and cultivate to maturity as many trees and hedges as we can on our land; promoting the need for trees of large mature size to enhance our green infrastructure; contributing to our local ecology; and enhancing the biodiversity of our green spaces.
- 2.14. Achieving these aims this will result in a range of quality-of-life improvements for present and future generations. It will also enable the Council to comply with our legal responsibilities and ensure that as a Council we are managing the risk of litigation.

- 2.15. The borough's trees contribute greatly to the character of Merton and its natural environment. They provide a wealth of benefits which are fundamental to our capacity to adapt to the climate change emergency by counteracting increasingly high summer temperatures; sequestering carbon from the atmosphere; and intercepting rainfall to lower the likelihood of flash flooding.
- 2.16. Beyond this, the Council recognises the principle of 'Biophilia.' This is the innate and intrinsic human need to have proximity to and contact with the natural environment. The hugely positive impact that trees and their many wildlife associations provide to our wellbeing is very widely documented and accepted. Trees are vitally important. We need as many healthy, well-managed trees as we can to make Merton a better place to live.
- 2.17. The final and adopted strategy will also include a dedication page to Dave Lofthouse (Dip. Arb. (RFS), M.Arbor.A.) who worked with the Council for 33 years. Dave was the 'voice of our trees' for all those years, a committed arboriculturist whose legacy is felt all around us through the trees he has planted.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.18. The Tree Strategy is being developed in two parts:
- (i) **Part 1** specifically deals with issues relating to council-owned trees. It sets out a mechanism for how the Council will look after our existing trees and hedges as best we can so that we achieve our vision.
 - (ii) **Part 2** will deal with more wide-reaching issues relating to Merton's Treescape or 'Urban Forest' – in other words, all the trees in Merton, whether publicly or private owned.
- 2.19. Part 1 of the Tree Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2023.
- 2.20. Working with council colleagues in other departments the Greenspaces Team have developed a range of policies to support the delivery of the Tree Strategy. These fall into four categories:
- (i) Tree Research.
 - (ii) Tree Maintenance and Management.
 - (iii) Tree Protection.
 - (iv) Enhancement and Optimisation
- 2.21. Part 1 of the Tree Strategy has an accompanying Action Plan, which will be used to guide the council in achieving the aims laid out in the Strategy.
- 2.22. Following the formal adoption of Part 1 of the Tree Strategy, covering the management of Council managed trees, the Greenspaces Team are currently liaising with colleagues in Future Merton to begin the scoping Part 2 of the Tree Strategy.

KEY DELIVERABLES AND COMMITMENTS 2023 TO 2026

- 2.23. During 2023 the council Greenspaces Team have embarked on an ambitious tree planting program on Merton council owned land. This has resulted in the Council successfully planting 10,000 trees, delivered through a range of external partnerships as well as well as through the councils own New Tree Planting program.
- 2.24. The Council's greenspaces team has also developed a partnership with Trees for Streets '*Sponsor a street tree*' that provides an opportunity for borough residents, businesses, and interest groups to support filling Merton's streets with trees.
- 2.25. Linked to the findings from the Internal Audit referenced at 2.11 above, the Council's Greenspaces Team are currently undertaking a thorough audit of all the 31,000 council owned trees during 2023. To aid progress on this important work two additional tree inspectors have been recruited on an interim basis and the team hope to have surveyed all 31,000 trees by November 2023. The data collected during the survey will be uploaded to the councils cloud-based Tree Database which will put the council in a strong position to progress delivery of Part 1 of the Tree Strategy.

PARKS AND BIODIVERSITY

OVERVIEW OF AMBITIONS

- 2.26. Merton is lucky to have such a diverse range of greenspaces including Commons, Parks, Gardens, Sports Grounds, Nature Reserves, and Green Corridors. Parks and greenspaces are regularly identified by residents as the boroughs number one asset and Merton is one of the greenest boroughs in London.
- 2.27. Financially, green space in the capital is valued at as much as £5bn a year, while it is estimated the city's public parks save the UK £950m every year in NHS costs across physical and mental health services.
- 2.28. To improve the quality of our greenspaces in Merton the Council is currently carrying out an audit of its existing greenspace and undertaking a scoping exercise to develop a Parks and Open spaces strategy for the borough.
- 2.29. The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will guide the ongoing development of our parks and open spaces over the next ten years. The Council will develop a five-year costed delivery plan to set out the key activities to be progressed and this will be sufficiently flexible to reflect upon local need as well as evolving challenges and strategic priorities.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.30. In 2022-23, the brough's parks and greenspaces moved from 25th to 18th place in the Good Parks for London Guide. The Good Parks for London Guide is compiled by Parks for London and assesses participating London

boroughs' parks services each year against the ten Good Parks criteria. These criteria cover: Public Satisfaction; Awards for Quality; Collaboration; Events; Health Fitness and Wellbeing; Supporting Nature; Community Involvement; Skills Development; Sustainability; and Strategic Planning.

- 2.31. The council are working with Parks for London, Keep Britain Tidy, London In Bloom and are reviewing previous awards entries in the Good Parks for London Guide, Green Flag Awards, and London In Bloom with the aim of improving the Council's standings in these National Awards. This work also provides an opportunity to benchmark with other London Authorities and Statutory Consultees to improve our strategic offer.
- 2.32. The council continues to improve its management of greenspaces for nature including the expansion of the 'Wildways' verge management initiative, which aims to increase the number of grass verges managed for biodiversity from 10% in 2022-23 to 20% in 2023-24.

KEY DELIVERABLES AND COMMITMENTS 2023 TO 2026

- 2.33. As noted at 2.28 above, the Council intends developing a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy that will set out key commitments for, and beyond, the period 2023-2026.
- 2.34. In June 2023 the Council, with our contracted grounds maintenance provider Idverde UK; the RSPB; and Friends of Parks groups commenced a program of Phase 1 Habitat Surveys in some of Merton's Green Flag Award Parks and Nature Reserves. This work includes updating the conservation management plans and associated action plans for these spaces in line with Biodiversity Net Gain commitments achieved to date:
- Increased Wildflower Meadow Creation in boroughs Parks and open spaces by 10,000 square meters in 2022-23, adopting Pollinator Parks program
 - Increased Biodiverse machine bulb planting in boroughs parks and open spaces by 250,000 bulbs in 2022-23, adopting Pollinator Parks program.
 - Increased the square meterage of grass in parks under the drip line of trees to be managed as conservation cuts rather than amenity grass by 25,000 square meters.

AIR QUALITY

OVERVIEW OF AMBITIONS

- 2.35. Air Quality in London, as with many cities in the UK and across the world continues to be a major health concern. It is now considered the most significant environmental risk to public health. This has been reinforced by the World Health Organization's (WHO) move to dramatically reduce its own guidance levels for air quality health exposure.
- 2.36. In Merton, like all London Boroughs, air pollution still exceeds the UK National Objectives for air quality in many locations throughout the borough.

These locations are in areas of high traffic and within our Town Centres. The primary cause of pollution in these areas are from combustion engines associated with road traffic. This traffic is responsible for around 60% of Pollution in the borough.

- 2.37. Merton will publish its Annual Status Report 2023 shortly. This will contain a full data summary for 2022 and include achievements against our existing Air Quality Action Plan. In addition, and throughout 2022, Merton Council piloted new innovative low-cost real-time monitors across the borough in partnership with Imperial College, as part of the Breathe London network. This project was funded through the South London Partnership.
- 2.38. This air quality monitoring included the use of the latest technology to review transport movements, by type, and at 68 key locations in the borough. This pilot project will show pollution in the borough at detailed level and help influence our new Air Quality Action Plan for 2023.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.39. The air quality team is currently in the process of delivering its Annual Status Report for 2022. Key activities of the teams work on air quality in 2022 will be reported as will the latest air quality monitoring results.
- 2.40. A peer review of the data captured through the Innovate Breathe London project is currently underway and will include information on ultrafine particulates PM2.5.

NATIONAL UPDATES

- 2.41. In April 2023 Defra announced a formal consultation on what was called it's *Air Quality Strategy*. The description of the consultation stated. *The air quality strategy (AQS) sets out the actions the government expects local authorities in England to take in support of achieving our long-term air quality goals, including our ambitious new PM2.5 targets.*
- 2.42. This consultation ran for a period of 10 days just after the easter holidays. Officers responded to this consultation and remarked that a consultation period of 10 days for a nationally important policy aimed at tackling what is the most significant environmental risk to health is not acceptable. It is understood that the reason for this was to meet a statutory deadline.
- 2.43. It was also noted that many local authorities were not made aware of the work building up to the consultation and found out through informal routes. Some London boroughs have questioned this, but it seems that they were not invited to any workshops nor initial planning for this consultation.
- 2.44. Responses to the consultation indicated that the strategy lacked ambition, it was truncated, it pushed actions to Local Authorities and leaves open many areas of regulation needed to adequately tackle pollution at a local level.
- 2.45. On the 28th of April the government published a strategic framework for local authorities and other partners. This sets out the powers, responsibilities, and further actions the government expects Local Authorities to take.

- 2.46. It is unclear at this time if there will be further updates on Central Governments overarching Air Quality Strategy.
- 2.47. Merton is an exemplar borough for air quality and complies with the standards set out in this document. Importantly the framework now includes the tackling of Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) on construction sites, this is a project that Merton has been leading on across London on behalf of the GLA and London Boroughs. This provides an opportunity for Merton to showcase this work and perhaps the potential for expanding their London project.
- 2.48. Local Councils cannot resolve the problems of air pollution alone as many levers are outside of our control, that's said we must play an active and leading role.
- 2.49. Air pollution needs to be addressed at all levels of government whilst moving in the same direction. Central government has a role to play in taxation, regulation, objective setting and incentivisation. The GLA continue to play a role in public transport, planning and regional traffic measures.
- 2.50. Local Authorities have a leading role in monitoring, engagement, managing the local environment, local infrastructure, public health and driving behaviour change.

KEY DELIVERABLES AND COMMITMENTS 2023 TO 2026

- 2.51. A key priority for Merton is the commitment to a new Air Quality Action Plan in 2023. This Plan will span the next 5 years and sets out our ambitions, and actions that will be taken to reduce pollution, to lobby where we have no control and influence and raise awareness to enable people to take their own action or reduce their exposure to pollution.
- 2.52. Any new air quality action plan must bring together and capitalise on the co-benefits of climate change, the need for active sustainable travel and objectives for improving public health.
- 2.53. Our Innovate monitoring project has put Merton in an excellent position to use real world data to help shape a new Action Plan.
- 2.54. It is anticipated that the drafting and oversight of the Plan will be by a Cross Party Working Group to deliver the best outcomes for air quality in the borough. A full public and key stakeholder consultation will take place in the Autumn to allow for public feedback, where we welcome ideas for improvements.

CLIMATE ACTION

OVERVIEW OF AMBITIONS

- 2.55. Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan was adopted in 2020 as Merton's response to our declaration of a climate emergency, which set net zero carbon targets of 2050 for the borough and 2030 for the Council.

- 2.56. This 30-year plan sets out our vision for Merton in 2050 and the key actions required to get to net-zero carbon across four thematic areas (the Green Economy, Buildings and Energy, Transport and Greening Merton), as well as how the Council is going to decarbonise its own operations by 2030. Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan were formed by extensive engagement and detailed technical work to identify carbon emissions in Merton and how we can get to net zero.
- 2.57. As set out in Merton's Climate Delivery Plan for Year 3, carbon emissions are everyone's responsibility. Of the borough-wide carbon emissions approximately:
- i. 44% of carbon emissions in Merton are from the electricity and gas used to power resident's homes
 - ii. 30% of carbon emissions are from business premises and other commercial buildings
 - iii. 22% of carbon emissions are from transport, primarily road travel
 - iv. <2% of carbon emissions are from Council activities
- 2.58. Each year the Council publishes a Climate Delivery Plan to set out what has happened in the previous 12 months and what is planned for the next 12 months towards reaching net zero. On 20th February 2023, Cabinet approved Merton's Climate Delivery Plan for Year 3, which included the proposed allocation of £2million in climate reserve funding allocated by Cabinet in June 2022 to increase capacity to deliver the Climate Strategy & Action Plan across the Council.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.59. Merton's Climate Delivery Plans for Years 1, 2 and 3 set out key areas of progress towards Merton's council and borough-wide net zero carbon targets since Merton's declaration of a climate emergency.
- 2.60. To move towards our net zero carbon commitments, the Council is undertaking a wide range of projects with partners, recognising that the majority (98%) of carbon emissions are outside the Council's direct control.
- 2.61. As well as saving carbon, climate actions have fundamental benefits for other Council priorities and services such as public health, greenspaces, active travel and cost of living. Details of these projects are within Merton's Climate Delivery Plans (years 1 to 3) and include:

Council estate

- 2.62. The Council has a long history of retrofitting our operational buildings and community schools to decrease our energy usage, reduce utility bills and lower our carbon emissions, as set out in a paper on retrofit taken to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8th March 2023 (<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=157&MId=4215&Ver=4>).

- 2.63. Work is progressing across our operational and non-operational buildings, and community schools, towards the Council's 2030 net zero target. Recent work includes:
- i. 19 site surveys to identify potential retrofit and behaviour change works.
 - ii. The ongoing recruitment of a Climate Emergency Building Surveyor to oversee survey, planning and retrofit works. This role and the associated work will cover the entire council building portfolio of operational buildings, schools and non-operational buildings, of which the latter falls under the 2050 borough net zero target.
 - iii. Investigations into potential upgrades of catering equipment across the school and operational building portfolio will be undertaken in the coming year.
 - iv. A new retrofit programme for solar panels will be starting in the coming year (2023/24) focusing on identifying remaining roofs with potential for installation across the council's operational buildings and schools.
 - v. LED upgrades for approximately 15 primary schools are planned for the coming school summer holiday.
 - vi. We have successfully bid for approximately £3million of government funding to upgrade the heating of the civic centre and entirely remove gas from the heating and hot water system.
 - vii. Confirmed a commitment to build 400 genuinely affordable council homes, as exemplar zero carbon/passive house homes

Domestic retrofit

- i. Supporting Housing Associations in applying for government funding to retrofit the homes they own, also saving on energy costs for residents.
- ii. Helping Merton's low-income households access available government support to retrofit their own homes. This includes working with the GLA to provide funding to a local organisation, Thinking Works, who support Merton residents in the (sometimes complex) application process for government funding to retrofit their homes. Council officers, Thinking Works and representatives from the GLA have all attended Merton's Cost of Living Events to ensure residents can find out more about the retrofit schemes face-to-face, as well as accessing the support by email or telephone.
- iii. Merton's Climate Action Group (buildings and energy sub-group) providing good practice case studies to inspire other residents to retrofit their homes.
- iv. Recruiting Community Retrofit Officers to produce a Local Area Energy Plan and Retrofit Strategy. This will develop pathways and scenarios for Merton to decarbonise the borough including the upgrade of the power network to supply the additional electricity needed to replace gas use in our buildings and diesel/ petrol use in our vehicles.

Merton's Climate Action Group

- 2.64. Working with and supporting Merton's Climate Action Group of volunteers who play a leading role in the development and implementation of community-led projects, events and knowledge exchange that reduce Merton's greenhouse gas emissions, where joint efforts are more effective than the actions of individuals or the Council alone.
- 2.65. The Climate Action Group is organised into the same themes as the Climate Strategy and Action Plan: Buildings and Energy, Greening Merton, Green Economy and Transport. Climate Action Group projects include:
- i. Merton Garden Streets – a volunteer led project, delivered by Sustainable Merton, planting Merton's streets during summer months. With over 90 streets signing up to planting days over successive summers, community feedback highlighted positive impacts for mental and physical wellbeing, developing a greater sense of community, as well as improving local air quality, biodiversity and climate resilience.
 - ii. Energy matters – energy and carbon saving advice delivered in schools for children and parents
 - iii. The Wheel – a circular economy project bringing together waste reduction, reuse and upcycling projects in the borough under one umbrella brand "The Wheel" to raise awareness and to change consumer behaviour.

KEY DELIVERABLES AND COMMITMENTS 2023 TO 2026

- 2.66. Merton's Climate Delivery Plan for Year 3, approved by Cabinet on 20th February 2023, sets out the key priorities for 2023 and beyond. This is summarized in Figure 1 below.

What the Council is doing

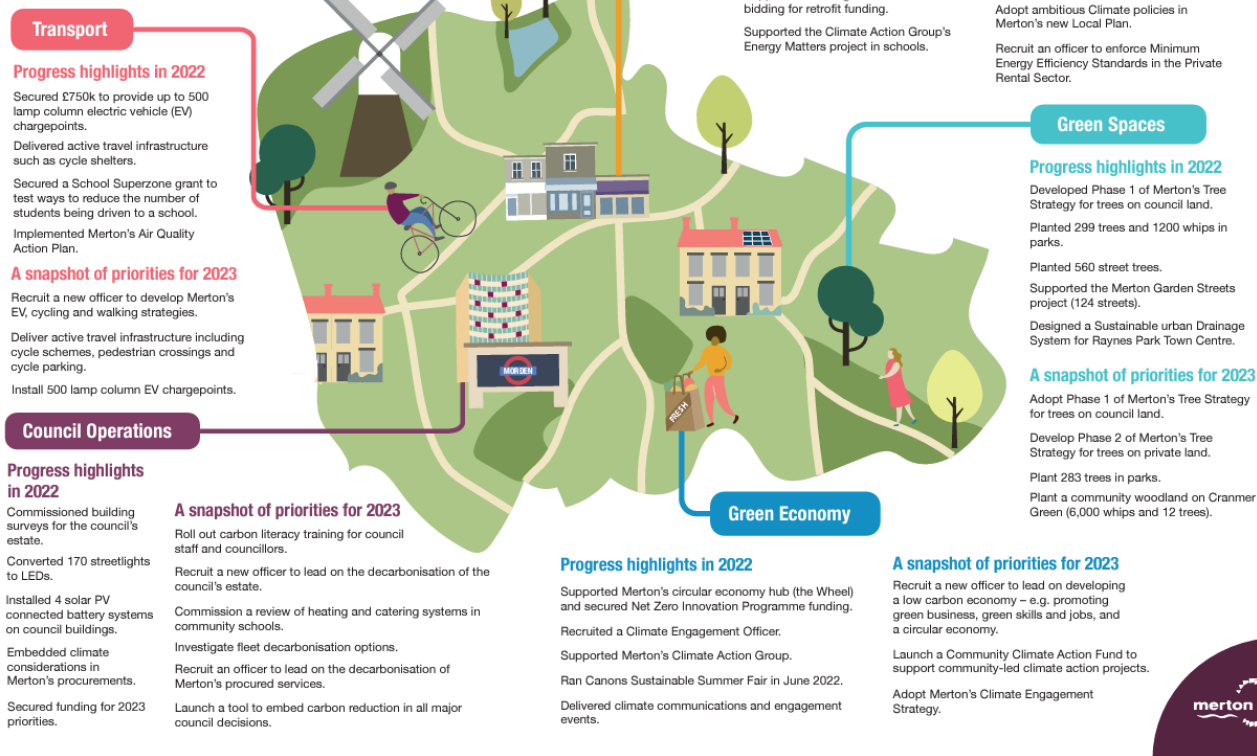


Figure 1 Key areas of progress against Merton's Climate Strategy & Action Plan in 2022 and priorities for 2023.

- 2.67. As part of Merton's Climate Delivery Plan, Cabinet approved the allocation of the latest £2 million in climate change funding for the following activities which will be developed and delivered over the next few years:
- i. **Green economy lead:** Recruiting an additional staff member to lead on the development of a Green Economy in Merton. This new role will enable greater engagement with businesses and Business Improvement Districts to promote low carbon business in Merton, greater support for local circular economy initiatives, as well as supporting the development of green skills and jobs in Merton.
 - ii. **Business retrofit support scheme:** The Climate Team are currently developing a business retrofit support scheme to help businesses in Merton decarbonise and save on their energy bills.
 - iii. **Climate engagement:** The Climate Team are continuing to support and strengthen climate engagement outreach to residents, businesses and community groups by making Merton's Climate Engagement Officer role permanent and securing a climate outreach budget for engagement events and materials.
 - iv. **Community Climate Action Fund:** Continuing to support the development and delivery of community-led climate projects by

committing funding towards a community climate action fund. The intention is to launch this fund in Autumn 2023 alongside the Civic Pride: Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund.

- v. **Community retrofit loan scheme:** The Climate Team are preparing to procure an FCA registered administrator to process loans for local homeowners and small landlords who aren't able to access regional and national funding. The loans are to decarbonise homes and reduce energy bills. Scheduled to launch the loan to the public in Autumn/ Winter 2023.
- vi. **Council rented properties - Legal Review:** Commissioning support to undertake a legal review of the leases for council-owned shops, business and industrial buildings and other non-operational buildings to help inform decarbonisation plans for these buildings. This will also feed into the Council's wider estate review.
- vii. **Council rented properties – EPCs:** Commissioning of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for all the Council's non-operational buildings, to ensure we are legally compliant and planning upgrades where needed. Assessor is due to be in place by end of June.
- viii. **Community schools heating and catering:** Commissioning a review of the catering equipment and heating systems in Merton's community schools to inform decarbonisation plans, future funding bids and future procurement of new catering and heating equipment for community schools.
- ix. **Supply chain decarbonisation lead:** Recruiting an additional staff member to support commissioners and contract managers across the Council in engaging with service providers to understand and reduce the Council's supply chain emissions.
- x. **Climate training for procurement:** Developing and delivering bespoke climate training for key staff involved in contract management and commissioning across the Council. This will build on the general carbon literacy training being rolled out for Council staff in 2023.
- xi. **Carbon in all major Council decisions tool:** Developing and implementing a tool for embedding climate change and carbon reduction in all major Council decisions to ensure that decisions are in keeping with Merton's net zero commitments.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION – THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR RESIDENTS

- 2.49 Merton Health and Wellbeing Board has agreed a [Health in All Policies](#) (HiAP) approach. HiAP contends that by considering health impacts when making policy, including action on sustainability, the overall benefits can be increased. A sustainable future can promote health, equity and sustainability together, building the return on investment and maximizing overall impact. The Health and Wellbeing Board recognises that by working collaboratively,

with partners and residents we can build a sustainable future that has the health of all Merton's communities at its core.

2.50 Building a sustainable future is one of the biggest challenges of our time. Climate change presents a real emergency both globally and locally, with significant impact on residents' health. In March 2023 Merton Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) agreed its core priority for the year ahead as a whole systems approach of tackling air pollution, tobacco, smoking and respiratory disease. This acknowledges that a sustainable future will help to prevent climate related harms to health, including the impact of air pollution, and the resulting disease, deaths and costs for health and care.

2.51 The Health and Wellbeing Board also recently endorsed Merton's Annual Public Health Report 2022/23 on the [Health Co-Benefits of Climate Action](#): recognising how action on climate change can deliver real co-benefits to people's health and help reduce the health inequalities that exist across Merton. The report sets out how more energy efficient healthy housing, increasing access to biodiverse green spaces and improving air quality through promoting active travel, together with wider action, can both tackle climate change and, at the same time, help residents become healthier. Specifically it sets out:

- i. **Local Plan and Energy Efficient Healthy Housing:** Fuel poverty presents a direct risk factor to health including respiratory and cardiovascular conditions aggravated by exposure to cold temperatures and damp, and cold homes put children at over twice the risk of respiratory disease compared to those living in warm homes. Higher summer temperatures can also lead to some homes becoming overheated, itself a risk factor for health. Good retrofit of existing housing will both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and bring health co-benefits to residents. This, alongside the environmental and health considerations of future developments specified in the Local Plan, will help residents experiencing fuel poverty and help mitigate against current inequalities.
- ii. **Access to biodiverse green spaces:** Access to green space enables physical activity and brings the mental health benefits of spending time outdoors. People living closer to green space have been found to have lower levels of anxiety and stress. This is important as it is estimated that over 15% of Merton residents over 16 years have a common mental health disorder, which amounts to over 25,000 residents. Access to green space is important in planning, as is help for people to spend time in green space, especially those living in an area without ready access.
- iii. **Air quality and active travel:** Transport emissions have a direct impact on air pollution which is responsible for health conditions including heart disease, lung disease and cancer. The impact of air pollution on health is not equal. Those living in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods, and neighbourhoods where more than 20% of the population are from ethnic minority backgrounds, experience higher concentrations of air pollution

(whilst having lower levels of car ownership). Active travel refers to modes of travel that involve a level of activity including walking and cycling. This is important because data shows that just over 20% of adults are physically inactive in Merton, which amounts to over 30,000 adults. Promoting active travel as a way of reducing transport emissions can deliver health co-benefits and can be integrated into urban and transport planning to make it as easy and equitable as possible.

- 2.52 In this way, building a sustainable future helps to deliver Merton [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) and its commitments to promote mental health and wellbeing, make healthy choices easy and protect residents from harm.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND CLIMATE ACTION

- 2.53 Climate and the environment are key issues for young people both locally and nationally. Our survey of the impact of COVID-19 on young people *The impact of COVID-19 on young people in Merton, 2021* highlights the importance of green spaces for young people in Merton.
- 2.54 Merton's Youth Parliament have an established sub-group working on climate action, with a particular focus on a campaign to reduce young people littering in our parks and green spaces.
- 2.55 Merton's Young Inspectors have been involved in contributing views on a range of climate and environment related programmes, including the 2021 iteration of the Air Quality Action Plan referred to earlier in this report.
- 2.56 The Council is facilitating a Green Schools Network, which started this year and is focussed on supporting schools in working towards fulfilling their sustainability duties.
- 2.57 Additionally, the Children's Trust Board has an outcome area titled 'My Merton' and 'Being Healthy' where Young Inspectors hold decision makers to account based on what young people have said and the actions taking place in response.
- 2.58 The current Children and Young People's Plan strategy is being refreshed via consultation with children and young people, which will include a refresh to the Children's Trust Board outcome areas referenced above.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. This report is for noting and discussing only, so alternative options are not being presented.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Any relevant consultation undertaken or proposed is referenced in the body of the report.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. The body of the report includes details on a range of planned deliverables and commitments over the period 2023 to 2026.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The cost implications for the initiatives outlined in this report are covered within the current MTFS. Any further spending required beyond existing budgets will be reported to Cabinet.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report has been prepared as required by part 4A, paragraph 2.3 (g) of the Constitution and there are no legal implications arising out of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None immediately arising

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None immediately arising.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. A robust process for monitoring delivery of the Council Plan, including many of the commitments and deliverables referenced in this report, is being put in place to minimise the risk of non-delivery.

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

- None

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. None

Agenda Item 8

RAYNES PARK COMMUNITY FORUM
25 APRIL 2023

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Chessie Flack (in the Chair),

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library and chaired by Councillor Chessie Flack with Chris Edge from the Raynes Park Association (RPA). Around 30 residents and three councillors attended. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 2)

A resident asked about parking by Zip cars, after several had been left for weeks before company was asked to move the cars and wanted to know if Zip cars were affected by controlled parking zones. FOLLOWING THE MEETING – [guidance to users](#) of Zip cars in Merton confirms that they can be left in Permit Holder bays.

A resident asked about poor quality telephone network in the town centre. Another resident said this was possibly due to lack of 5G masts in the area after planning applications were objected to.

A residents asked about theft on the Apostles including theft from cars, and parcels stolen from front doors. Cllr Stringer said there are lots of changes with the police with more officers on Safer Neighbourhood Teams and a new Superintendent in charge of community policing. Cllr Stringer will be raising with the police the need to address these issues and reminded residents they can [report crimes online](#). Residents can also feedback to their local Safer Neighbourhood team through their Ward Panels. Cllr Stringer also said that Merton Council is renovating its CCTV to install HD cameras and suitable broadband.

3 MERTON CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (Agenda Item 3)

Estifanos Habtesellasie (Vice Chair) and Pippa Maslin (Case Worker) from the [Merton Centre for Independent Living](#) highlighted the work of the organisation. A Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation's model means that services are run by deaf and disabled people for deaf and disabled people. There is an important role to play in supporting deaf and disabled people to live independently according to the social model of disability. COVID had a significant impact on disabled people, and

this is still ongoing. They have three main areas of work: providing information/advice; challenging discrimination; and achieving change locally.

They have five caseworkers for the information/advice service. Councillors can signpost deaf and disabled people and residents can contact MCIL themselves. Caseworkers help service users with a raft of issues, from benefits applications to Care Act Assessments, which include a financial assessment, and from concessionary travel applications to housing problems like unsuitable accommodation due to lack of accessible housing.

MCIL have received extra funding from Civic Pride fund for their information/advice service. They are also piloting an advocacy service. MCIL have met with the developers of Centre Court to discuss their plans and accessibility. MCIL has been working with other disability organisation in London and has been campaigning on national issues like the cost of living. They are also trying to build a productive relationship with Merton Council on a range of issues and are working with other disability groups to challenge national policy. MCIL hosts a monthly craftivism and chat session (craft + activism = craftivism). MCIL is working on a strategic review to identify the need for future services. There is the potential to work with young people in the future.

Pippa added that the benefits system is complex and often hostile so it can be vital to support people with the appeals process up to tribunal level. MCIL has a 100% success rate in getting people the benefits they are eligible for. The shortage of affordable housing is an issue as is the availability of accessible housing. MCIL is training up Access Champions to encourage better accessibility across the borough and volunteers are welcome. Pippa said that if residents know of anyone who is deaf and disabled and could use help please get in touch.

4 FRIENDS OF RAYNES PARK STATION (Agenda Item 4)

Elizabeth Lane provided an update on the communities attempt to improve Raynes Park Station. The Friends group has been officially registered and recognised by Network Rail (NR) and South Western Railway (SWR) after a year on developing the group. They now have a community licence agreement with NR to access the north side embankment to make improvements.

The group's volunteers have started clearing some of the undergrowth, ivy and brambles, and more volunteers are welcome. Once the area is cleared the group can start to look at planting options. They will need professional advice on how to maintain the embankment and will need funds for this. The group is looking at funding from the Civic Pride Fund and Department of Transport community rail funding. NR has offered volunteers from their staff as part of their community days.

The group will need a long-term solution for rubbish collection, green waste included. The group is usually on site on Tuesday mornings

The Friends group is also looking at creating wildflower garden on platform 4 if NR agree. They will also try to replace the bookshelves in the book swap project. SWR will hopefully offer a poster site for the Friends group. Elizabeth will be speaking with the Friends group at Hampton Court to get ideas.

A resident asked what progress is being made on the South Side embankment as the overgrown vegetation is obstructing the highway. Elizabeth said the group can raise this issue with NR and Cllr Flack said she can also raise with Merton Council.

5 GENERAL UPDATES (Agenda Item 5)

Chris Larkman and Tony Edwards from the Raynes Park Association gave an update on local issues.

Kiss and Ride – Stephen Hammond MP has been speaking with Workspace to encourage them to enforce the parking restrictions.

Land Transfer – the small piece of land on the south side will hopefully be transferred to Merton Council in the next month or so

Parklet – the Experimental Traffic Order has been reviewed and they have been successful it is likely to be renewed. Lime and Thyme will be looking after their parklet

Tree Strategy – the Tree Strategy will go for adoption by [Cabinet in June](#) and then it will be available on the council's website and Tony hopes it will give more power to Merton to enforce tree care.

Flooding – Thames Water's review is due to report in July. A small rain garden has been installed as a trial but there are plenty of good locations for additional rain gardens. Cllr Flack said the leak on Durham Road has had work on it and seems to be ok.

A resident asked about pollarding and if this will be included in the strategy. Tony said he expected this to be part of the strategy with guidance on managing trees. Cllr Flack said it was also worth [reporting problem trees](#) to the Council

6 PLANNING UPDATES (Agenda Item 6)

The Development Control team had provided an update that Kris Witherington shared.

- The Planning Applications Committee is due to consider a major planning application for residential development at Wimbledon Chase station next

Wednesday 25 April. The agenda is online which also includes a letter from the Cabinet Member to the Secretary of state regarding the LESSA site asking for the case to be expedited

- 23/P0455 (565 Kingston Road, PAG Batteries site) - Demolition of three single storey light industrial units to enable redevelopment to provide nine residential units; school (ages 9-13) with pupil capacity of 180; teaching college; workspace; community centre; amended access; and associated car parking. This application is under assessment
- 23/P0869/NEW (579-589 Kingston Road, former Manoplastics site) – Redevelopment of site to provide class E(G)(I) (office), CLASS E(G)(III) (light industrial) and class B8 (self-storage) uses, including use of part first floor for class E(G)(I) (office) and/or class B8 use (self-storage), in a building of up to six floors, provision of car and cycle parking, vehicle access, landscaping, plant and associated works. This has not yet been validated and will go 'Live' in the next 2 weeks

A resident asked if there was any news on the Aviva plans for the Pets at Home site on Bushey Road. FOLLOWING THE MEETING – the Development Control Team confirmed that the application (22/P3021) is still under assessment. It is possible that a decision may be taken under delegated powers, or it may progress to committee.

7 FUTURE ENGAGEMENT IN MERTON (Agenda Item 7)

Kris Witherington, Engagement and Consultation Manager at Merton Council, gave a presentation on proposals to improve resident engagement across Merton.

Kris said that the changes were focused on the work of the corporate engagement team rather than work done by many services with specific audiences and service users. The team had learnt a lot from changing approaches during COVID and from the feedback from residents on the Community Forums in 2022. They had identified three areas where improvements needed to be made and how this would be resourced through increased capacity.

The first area was face-to-face engagement, including the Community Forums. Kris said the current approach was not working as well as it should be, and instead the plan is to hold two events in each area per year. One would be a large-scale question-time event involving local services leaders, including the Leader of the Council, and the second would be more of a workshop format for residents to work together rather than a presentation and question approach. The Engagement team would also support local arrangements, working with local groups and councillors ensuring that solutions are right for each area rather than a one-size fits all approach.

The second area to improve is engagement with Civic Society, meaning resident groups, both formal organisations and informal arrangements like WhatsApp groups.

The Engagement will look to map what work is taking place, offer a point of contact, provide an e-newsletter and host an annual event that brings these groups together.

The third area was the way residents can engage with the council digitally. Currently the Council has an online consultation hub and design tool for online survey but there are new tools available like mapping, discussion boards and an online resident's panel.

These changes will be delivered by recruiting a new Events Officer post to manage the meetings, a Community Development Officer to work with the Civic Society and an Engagement Officer to work on digital engagement and support departmental consultations.

Cllr Stringer said that the administration wants to massively increase the ways we can hear from residents. In Raynes Park residents are welcome to continue with the current format for the forum but in other areas we will have more flexibility.

A resident asked how the selection for a Residents Panel would be representative. Kris explained that we can use address files to send out random invitations and can skew the numbers in different areas where the response rate is likely to be lower. The responses will then show how representative the Panel is demographically and if needed weighting can also be applied.

Tony Edwards asked about consulting businesses and Cllr Stringer said this was a fair challenge and an area where the Council could do more. The Council is working with Merton Chamber of Commerce to support engagement and is recruiting a town centre manager for Mitcham where the engagement is much lower than in Wimbledon and Raynes Park. Business groups can also be captured as part of the community group mapping. Cllr Stringer also said the Council will be investing in supporting culture on the high streets.

Chris Larkman said the benefit of the Forum was that it could focus on the town centre and this benefit should continue in some format but recognised that attendance was lower since COVID. Chris Edge asked that attendees could speak with their resident association and discuss whether they would like to keep the current format and what frequency they would like to see and report back to the RPA. Most attendees agreed they would like to keep the current format going and have at least two meetings a year in addition to Council events.

Tony said that he was concerned that with larger scale meetings a few voices could dominate but Kris said there are ways to manage the meeting to mitigate that risk.

A resident asked about promoting the Forum to new people, and Chris Edge said that resident associations play a key role in sharing the information, not just sending representatives.

Cllr Flack said that Raynes Park generally has a higher level of engagement and should be able to experiment and find a solution that is right for the local community.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 8)

Cllr Flack thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 28 June 2023, at 7.15pm in Raynes Park Library

Any issues or questions can be emailed to getinvolved@merton.gov.uk

Future Engagement in Merton

Page 47

Raynes Park Community Forum meeting
25 April 2023

**Kris Witherington, Engagement
and Consultation Manager**



Minute Item 7

Reasons for change

- Lessons from lockdown / Your Merton
 - Review of community forums
 - Analysis of approaches in other boroughs
- How We Work with Communities Programme

What are we proposing?

- Changes to face-to-face engagement
- Engaging with Civic Society
- Upgrading our digital offer
- Increasing our capacity

Face-to-face

- Community Forums too big and too small
- Higher profile events
- Support for more local activity
- Different arrangements in different areas to reflect local needs

Civic Society

- Building trust and communications
- Mapping coverage and reach
- Designated contact
- E-newsletter
- Annual meeting

Digital offer

- Hub / survey tool
- Mapping / dialogue functions
- Residents panel

Page 58

Increase in capacity

- Events Manager
- Community Development Officer
- FTE Engagement officer

Decision making process

- Overview and Scrutiny 25 January
- Community Forum meetings in Feb-April
- Recruitment and procurement begins
- Cabinet in June
- New structure in place for the autumn

Pages 8

Any Questions?

This page is intentionally left blank

WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM
14 JUNE 2023

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Paul Kohler (in the Chair),

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held at the Arts Space, Wimbledon Library and chaired by Councillor Paul Kohler. 12 residents and 6 councillors attended with 96 additional views on YouTube. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained how the meeting would work.

2 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 2)

A resident asked about the extension of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone and support for vehicles that were not compliant at manufacture but have since been modified. The resident also said that he thought Merton Council could communicate the plans more effectively. Information about ULEZ is available from [Transport for London](#).

A resident about reducing plastic use in Merton and suggested the Council works with Love Wimbledon, Supermarkets and others to reduce use. This could include avoiding using wire ties to put up notices and not re-using them. Cllr Kohler said this could be raised around new waste collection contract and can raise with Love Wimbledon.

A resident asked about COVID booster clinics as they have found a shortage of appointments in Wimbledon. Kris Witherington said that have been [walk-in clinics](#) in Wimbledon, and the final one is on 23 June in Wimbledon Library.

A resident said that the bins in Dundonald Rec are not fit for purpose, often overflowing and damaged. Cllr Kohler said in South Park Gardens they are putting signs up to say take rubbish home if the bin is full. A resident said that in Morden Hall Park the National Trust removed bins and that has reduced. A similar experiment was tried in Wandle Park but this did not work and the bins were restored. A resident said solar bins have worked well but can get grubby which puts people off using them. Cllr Fairclough said contract for parks is up for renewal so can be raised as part of that process and in Dundonald Rec domestic waste also being left causing a problem. Cllr Holden said more enforcement in parks would be welcome.

A resident asked about tree management as some trees have been pruned but others not. Cllr Stringer said Cabinet is reviewing a new [Tree Strategy](#) on Monday 19 June, which includes maintenance of council trees. Cllr Fairclough said Merton Council has just finished this year's window for pollarding having had to catch up from COVID staff shortages. Residents can report specific problems to [Merton Council](#) and their local Cllrs. There is also a list of scheduled tree work on the [council website](#).

A resident said that the roundabout at top of Kingswood Road was not being looked after, this will be raised with the Highways team.

A resident asked what Merton Council's policy on potholes and road repairs was. Cllr Fairclough said there is a ranking for roads to be resurfaced and a set depth for potholes before they are repaired. Residents said that [reporting potholes](#) usually resulted in prompt action.

A resident asked about the health implications of mobile phone usage and offered to provide information leaflets to anyone who was interested.

A resident said the issue of the fire in Wimbledon town centre and damage to a restaurant. Cllr Stringer said the council is working with the owners to resolve the issue.

3 UPDATE ON STREET NAMES CONSULTATION (Agenda Item 3)

Kris Witherington, Engagement and Consultation Manager for Merton Council gave an update on the Street Names consultation which is attached to this report. Kris explained that there had been 833 responses to the report that most respondents were not previously aware of this issue, and a majority were in favour of acknowledging the history.

A resident asked if some people really strongly objected to making changes, and Kris some had done so.

Peter Walker, who had originally raised this issue, criticised consultation due to ruling out changing names outset and that the council had not shared the actions of the families involved with residents. He said that he feared that the council will not take any action. Cllr Kohler said that this was clearly a divisive issue but thought the community could come together to find a solution. It would be up to the Forum to hold the council to account.

Cllr Stringer said it was clear from consultation that most residents are in favour of acknowledging the history and the Council will be looking at how to do this and hope

to announce something soon. Cllr Stringer also said the [75th anniversary](#) of Windrush being celebrated next week.

4 FUTURE OF WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM (Agenda Item 4)

Kris Witherington summarised planned changes discussed at last meeting, with new style sessions based on Question Time and Citizen Assembly formats being delivered by the council but meetings in the current format can continue if residents want. There is a date in the council calendar for the next meeting in Wimbledon of Wednesday 20 September, so it was up to residents and councillors if they wanted to meet on that night.

Cllr Kohler said he thought meetings should continue and asked attendees for their views. resident asked about promoting the meetings another asked about signing up for information. Kris explained there is an automated system for [signing up for alerts](#) for all council meetings.

A resident pointed out that there was a significant event at All Saints Church this evening and often other community groups don't attend these forums.

It was agreed to go ahead with a meeting on 20 September 2023.

5 WIMBLEDON PARK (Agenda Item)

Jeremy Hudson, from Wimbledon Society, shared an update on plans from the All-England Lawn Tennis Club for the planning application being considered by Merton and Wandsworth Councils.

Jeremy said that the plans would be impacted by a Supreme Court decision on a case called Day v Shropshire Town Council. The court decided that when a council sold land in public use it should first consult and seek a fair price and as the council didn't take these steps when the land was sold, the land was held in trust and the planning application they had granted was quashed.

Jeremy said that as Merton Council did not take these steps in 1993 when land was sold it meant a Trust is still attached to the land that means the freehold is only for public and recreational use. AELTC said that this case does not apply as land has been in private use as a golf club. Merton Council is seeking legal advice which may hold up the application process.

A resident asked if the use of the golf course by the public was specific to Merton or anyone else and Jeremy said it was for Merton residents only.

Cllr Hall said that the AELTC had announced that they have received 1500 signatures in support of the application, collected by a marketing company, whereas the Save Wimbledon Park campaign has received 11,000.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 5)

Cllr Kohler thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The next meeting will be 7.15pm Wednesday 20 September 2023, venue to be confirmed

Street names with historic links to the slave trade

Page 01

Wimbledon Community Forum

14 June 2023



Minute Item 3

Who responded

- 833 responses
- 91 said they lived on one of the streets
- Two responses from local organisations
- Most (72%) responses from those aged over 45
- More than two-thirds said they were White British
- More women responded than men

Awareness

60% said they were not aware of the links;
40% were aware

Acknowledging the history

	%
Strongly agree	28.1%
Agree	27.5%
Disagree	13.4%
Strongly disagree	21.7%
Don't know	9.2%
NET agree	55.6%
NET disagree	35.1%

Approaches

	Net agree %	Net disagree %
A detailed description of the history of the individual, displayed on the street	35.5%	61.4%
A short statement and a QR code linking to a website for further information, displayed on the street	52.9%	44.8%
A booklet and website that sets out the facts behind the naming of these streets	47.4%	48.1%
An exhibition setting out the history of those individuals in libraries or other public places	54.7%	40.9%

Preferred approach

	%
A detailed description of the history of the individual, displayed on the street	17.2%
A short statement and a QR code linking to a website for further information, displayed on the street	25.9%
A booklet and website that sets out the facts behind the naming of these streets	12.1%
An exhibition setting out the history of those individuals in libraries or other public places	14.7%
None of the above	30.1%

Alternative suggestions

352 comments were made including:

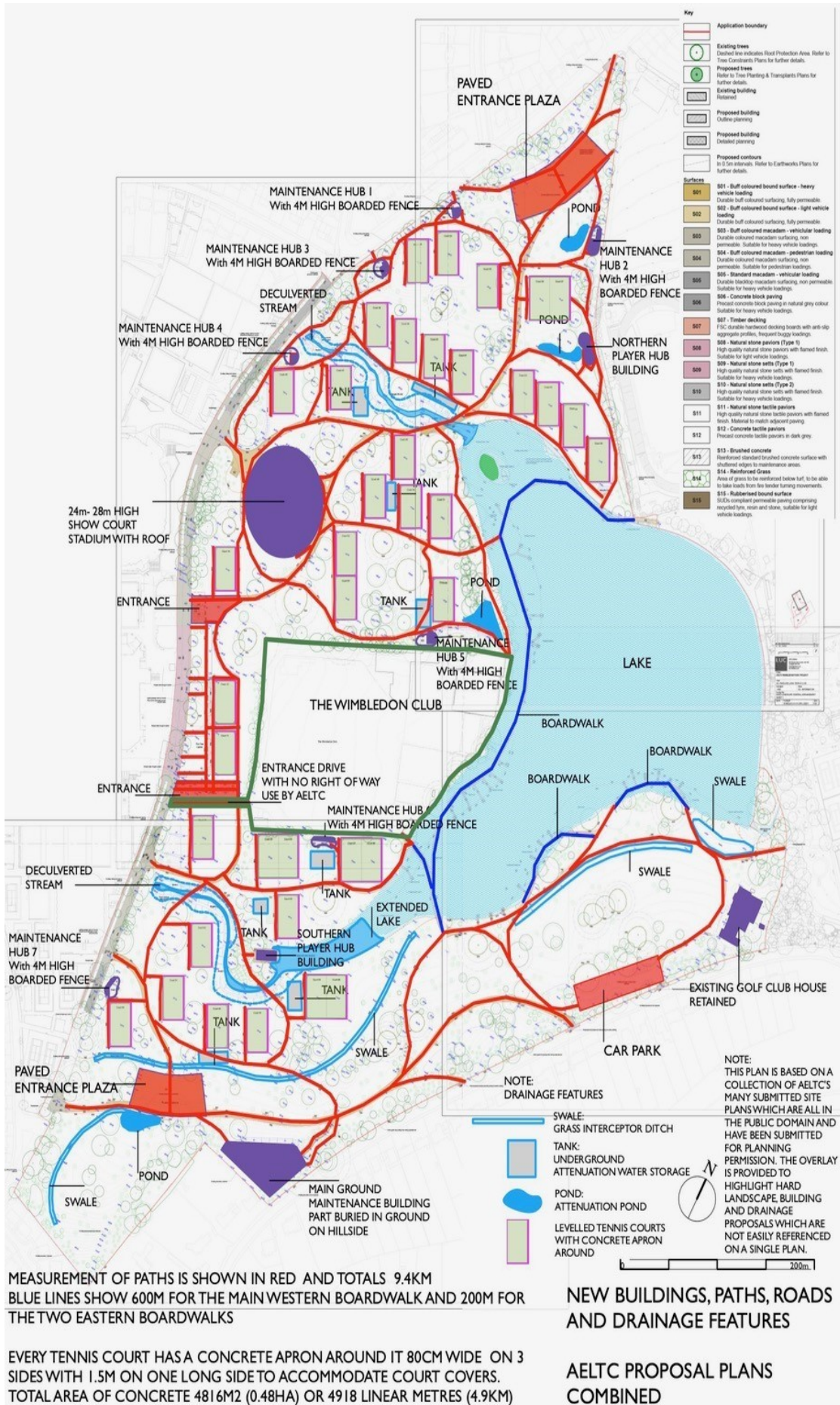
- Changing street names
- Working with schools
- A remembrance day
- A monument or mural
- Combined approaches
- Do nothing

Other comments

348 comments including:

- Change the names
- Do not do anything
- Take a balanced approach

Page 68



This page is intentionally left blank

Strategic Theme Motion from the Liberal Democrat Group – Climate and Pollution – Disposable Vapes

Proposed by: Cllr Jenifer Gould

Seconded by: Cllr Victoria Wilson

Council is concerned at the health and environmental harm caused by the increasing use, particularly by young people, of Disposable Nicotine Vapour Products (DNVPs / vapes).

Council notes:

1. that according to research by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). Use of e-cigarettes (vapes) among young people in Great Britain. 2023. there is increasing e-cigarette use amongst young people – in 2023, 20.5% of 11-17 year olds had tried vaping, rising to 34% of 16-17 year olds and 38% of 18 year olds;
2. that disposable vapes have the potential to create a whole new generation of young people addicted to nicotine products – since 2020 current vaping among never smokers is more common among children than adults 18+ and the difference is continuing to grow, with 2.3% of child never smokers currently vaping in 2023, compared to 1.1% of adult never smokers; and,
3. that over 1.3 million vapes are discarded in the United Kingdom every week (which are not able to be recycled) and consequently the equivalent of 10 tonnes of lithium reaches landfill or incinerators each year (enough to make batteries for 1200 electric cars) and would cover 22 football pitches.

Council therefore requests that Cabinet undertake an urgent piece of work, by December 2023 to:

1. assess issues which educational establishments are currently experiencing with vaping, the actions which the Council and its partners are taking and could take to reduce the use of vaping products amongst children and young people and the potential of a communications campaign to raise awareness of such issues; and
2. assess the environmental impacts being experienced with vaping, the actions which the Council and its partners are taking and could take to reduce the impact of vaping on the environment and the potential of a communications campaign to raise awareness of the measures retailers and purchasers can take to mitigate some of that damage.

Councillor Jenifer Gould Councillor Victoria Wilson Councillor Robert Page

Committee: Council

Date: 19 July 2023

Wards: All

Subject: Update on Motions and Amendments passed by Council 2022-23

Lead officer: Amy Dumitrescu, Democracy Services Manager

Lead member: Councillor Ross Garrod, Leader of the Council

Recommendations:

- A. That Council notes the updates within the report on motions and amendments passed at Council during the previous municipal year
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Council agreed a motion at its' meeting on 21 November 2021 with the following resolution:

- From this point forward, ask that parties endeavour only to submit motions and amendments which comply with SMART goal principles; and
- Agree to ask officers to table a report at the first business meeting after each Annual Council Meeting documenting the actions taken in response to the motions and amendments passed during the previous civic year.

1.2 This report therefore provides an update on actions taken by the Council resulting from motions agreed at Council during the previous municipal year.

2 DETAILS

2.1. 16 motions were passed at ordinary meetings of the Council during the municipal year 2022-23. The full wording of these motions as passed by Council can be found at Appendix A. The wording reflects the motions as passed, either in their substantive form or as amended as appropriate.

2.2. Actions were also required following an agreed amendment to the Strategic Theme report at Council in July 2023. The response to this is therefore detailed at 3.2 below.

3 UPDATE ON MOTIONS

3.1. Strategic Theme Report Amendment

3.2. A report was considered by Cabinet in June 2023 as requested which can be found [here](#).

3.3. Merton have appointed consultants who will be working with officers to prepare a Walking and Cycling Strategy for Merton. The strategy will review the cycling infrastructure and identify actions to improve cycling in the borough and greater active travel.

3.4. School-run related traffic congestion has significantly eased following the introduction of School Streets across the Borough and this is evidenced in the annual air quality monitoring.

3.5. Motion 1 – Health Inequalities July 2022

As requested by the Motion, Councillor McCabe, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care wrote a letter to the CCG. Merton Council announced in May 2023 that it will commission its own independent assessment of plans to downgrade St Helier Hospital.

3.6. Motion 2 – Motion on behalf of the Wimbledon Community Forum July 2022

A consultation took place in May 2023, which more than 800 residents responded to. The preferred approach from the majority of respondents was to place QR codes on signs allowing people to read a detailed background of the individual and/or family the streets were named after. The council will now create a detailed background on each affected street and provide a page on its website with the information so residents can easily find out more.

The Council ruled out changing street names for a range of reasons, including transparency, cost and the impact on emergency services – set out a range of potential options.

The majority of survey respondents – over 55% – supported recognising the links to slavery of some street names. Among these, the most popular option was for QR codes to be placed on street signs so that those interested could access further information about the individuals and families the streets were named after.

Street names associated with the Burghley, Drax and Marryat families are among those affected. The council is now carrying out further research before implementing the consultation's recommendations, which aim to give a balanced approach, making the information available to those who are interested.

3.7. Motion 3 – Living Wage Accreditation July 2022

Merton Council became a London Living Wage accredited employer in January 2023, and the Council is working towards ensuring all of our suppliers we have contracts with are paying the London Living Wage. This includes the new security services contract anticipated to start in September 2023 which will be one of the first commissioned contracts where paying the London Living Wage is incorporated for commissioned employees.

Additionally, we are making good progress on understanding how many businesses in Merton are London Living Wage accredited so far. We are exploring how best to engage with businesses and support them in gaining London Living Wage employer accreditation – including through highlighting the benefits to businesses such as employee retention.

3.8. Motion 4 – Cost of Living Emergency July 2022

Councillor Billy Hayes was appointed in 2022 as the London Living Wage Champion and was re-appointed to this role at Annual Council in May 2023.

Merton Council is now a London Living Wage employer and is engaging with local businesses to progress plans on becoming a London Living Wage borough.

The Council have run a number of Cost of Living sessions within the Community as well as allocating £2million to the Cost of Living Emergency Support Fund, with the first tranche of funding allocated in Autumn 2022.

In March 2023 Cabinet agreed the [Merton Council Cost of Living Strategy and Action Plan 2023-25](#). The Merton Partnership Summit in November 2022 was centered around how the Council and its VCS partners can work together to tackle the effects of the cost of living emergency. Outcomes directly fed into the Cost of Living Action Plan and have helped inform allocations of the £2million Cost of Living Emergency Fund based on the five key themes of Food Insecurity, Energy Efficiency and Homes, Jobs and Skills, The Next Generation, and Finance, Benefits and Debt.

3.9. Motion 5 – ULEZ September 2022

As requested in the Motion, the Leader of the Council wrote to central government to urge them to fund the most generous scrappage scheme to support residents transition to sustainable transport modes. Additionally, the Leader wrote to the Mayor of London to encourage him to expand the criteria for the scrappage scheme to include more small businesses and parents and carers.

3.10. Motion 6 – Cost of Living Impact on Schools September 2022

As requested in the Motion, The Leader of the Council wrote to the Secretary of State for Education to press them to immediately provide additional emergency funding for schools.

3.11. Motion 7 – Green Flag Award and Green Spaces September 2022

The Council continue to be proud of the green spaces within Merton and continues to support this motion.

3.12. Motion 8 – Merton Schools September 2022

Merton Schools continue to perform highly and Council continues to support this motion.

Following the pandemic Merton schools have continued to support all pupils, but particularly all those whose achievement was affected by the lockdowns. This has included academic catch up and additional support with their mental health. There have also been specific projects in some schools, for example to support very young children whose communication and language skills were negatively affected by the pandemic.

Last year the high standards achieved by Merton pupils were exemplified by the Progress 8 score where Merton was ranked second highest in the country. Supported by Council officers, schools continue to have the highest aspirations for their pupils, and strive to ensure that all achieve their potential.

3.13. Motion 9 – Waste and Street Cleansing Contract Merton Assembly November 2022

The pre-decision Scrutiny meeting took place on 13 February 2023 where the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the Resident Insight Report and made a number of [recommendations to Cabinet](#) in response.

On 17 May 2023, Cabinet agreed [this report](#) on the proposed enhancements to the waste and recycling service specification, with the proposed enhancements to the specification for the street cleansing service to be reported to Cabinet for decision at a later date.

3.14. Motion 10 – Free Period Products February 2023

The Council's facilities management team has investigated options for providing period products in Council buildings, and the costs and implementation issues of doing so. This is due to be considered in coming weeks and a further update will be provided following this.

3.15. Motion 11 - CHAS February 2023

The sale of CHAS completed in January 2023. To cut costs to residents and create annual income to help offset the impact of annual Government funding cuts, the Council will use around £50million of the money to pay off around half of its debt, mainly in paying off Government loans – which all Councils use to deliver major projects.

In addition, a significant sum will be invested into Government-backed investment schemes – ensuring low-risk, high return investment for residents that will generate another annual income stream.

Around £75m will be used to create a capital investment fund for the borough – allowing the Council to drive forward with an ambitious programme which includes building 400 new homes and investing into improved sports and leisure facilities across the borough.

3.16. Motion 12 – Standing up for Merton Residents February 2023

As requested in the Motion, the Leader of the Council wrote to the Chancellor on this matter.

3.17. Motion 13 – ULEZ Consultation February 2023

The Leader and Cabinet Member have published a response to the ULEZ expansion, seeking a more generous scrappage scheme which TFL have introduced. Publicising the ULEZ scrappage scheme is for the Mayor Office which covers extensive advertising campaigns in the press, tv, radio and online channels.

<https://news.merton.gov.uk/2022/11/25/merton-council-welcomes-help-for-drivers-to-scrap-polluting-vehicles-as-ulez-is-extended-london-wide/>

The Administration have put forward proposals to TFL recommending a range of improvements to bus services in Merton including extensions of routes and covering new areas; linked to the ambition to regenerate Morden which will require a review of routes terminating at Morden (or extending beyond Morden)

to mitigate the congestion and poor air quality created by Morden bus station. The Leader and Cabinet Member have followed this up with officers and TFL to initiate a bus review for Merton.

Officers are in contact with TFL to ensure that any ULEZ infrastructure on LBM assets is licenced and agreed by the Council in advance. We have already fed back to TFL on some locations which the council felt were unsuitable and TFL are actively reviewing these locations. We understand that the vast majority of ULEZ cameras are on existing TFL assets including traffic signals which are outside of the Council's control.

As ULEZ is a Mayoral initiative, we'd expect that TFL will provide regular updates of the operation of their scrappage scheme; we welcome the recent announcement that the TFL scrappage scheme will be opened up to those receiving child benefits which will go further to help more Merton families make the transition to cleaner vehicles.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/scrappage-schemes/car-and-motorcycle#on-this-page-0>

3.18. Motion 14 – Care Leavers April 2023

In relation to the Merton Graduate programme, the Council will shortly be out to advert and Care Experienced people will be afforded fast track to the assessment phase. Last year £45,000 was provided to CSF 'To introduce an apprenticeship coordinator working with Care Experienced Young People and other vulnerable cohorts (such as children with SEND) with a specific focus of identifying and supporting young adults into apprenticeship with the council. This post is situated within the Towards Employment team within the Children, Lifelong Learning and Families directorate, and work alongside Personal Advisors.

The identification of care experienced young people as having a protected characteristic for equalities purposes will be addressed in the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy due to be considered by Cabinet on the 17th of July 2023 prior to broad ranging consultation and the strategy being presented to Council in November 2023 for adoption.

3.19. Motion 15 – Policing

The Leader as requested within the motion sent a letter from the Leader of the Council to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police calling for the full implementation of all recommendations set out in Baroness Casey's review. Since the publication of The Casey Review, the Cabinet Member and relevant council officers have been working with SW-BCU on what a local engagement plan looks like. In the meantime, work continues to enhance engagement through the existing forums we already have such as the Safer Neighbourhood Board, ward panels and the strengthening of the Community Monitoring Group to monitor issues like stop & search.

3.20. Motion 16 – St Helier Hospital

Merton Council announced in May 2023 that it will commission its own independent assessment of plans to downgrade St Helier Hospital. As requested within the motion, the Leader of the Council wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and the CEO of St George's and St Helier Trust and the CEO of the South West London Integrated Care Board.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. The original motion requesting to present this report to Council on an annual basis was agreed by Full Council by a unanimous vote in November 2021.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. As agreed in November 2021, this report will be an annual report brought to the first meeting of the Council following the Annual Council meeting each year.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Financial implications of this report are embedded within the text of the report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Nothing specific for the purposes of this report

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purposes of this report

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purposes of this report

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purposes of this report

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

- Appendix A – Full wording of motions agreed at Council 2022-23

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None

APPENDIX A – Motions as passed 2022/23

July 2022 – Strategic Theme Report as Amended

RESOLVED:

A. That the Council notes the progress in relation to the contents of this report

Council also:

b) requests a report be sent to Cabinet within the next 12 months setting out a comprehensive engagement plan, with targets and deadlines for improvement aimed at:

- Increasing uptake of Breast cancer screening services by women across the borough;
- Increasing uptake of Childhood immunisations, particularly pre-school boosters and MMR vaccinations;
- Reducing the incidence of self-harming by young people.

c) requests Cabinet to undertake a review of the borough's cycling and walking infrastructure aimed at increasing the number of children cycling and walking thereby reducing school-related traffic congestion and resulting air pollution

1, July 2022 – Health Inequalities

This Council notes the enormous health inequalities, exacerbated by inequalities in access to healthcare, between the East and West of the borough. Council notes that according to Public Health Outcomes Framework data, the slope index of inequality (an overarching measure of the life expectancy inequality gap which represents the gap in years of life expectancy at birth between the most deprived and least deprived communities), from 2018 to 2020 in Merton the gap was 5 years for females (95% CI 3.3-6.6) and 7.7 for males (95% CI 6-9.4). Council notes the proposal to move services to Belmont will increase these inequalities and reduce access to healthcare for the people of Merton. Council notes the cuts to funding and delays to the programme of hospital-building in Belmont that have already been seen, and believes them to be a matter of concern to people throughout South West London. This Council has a long-standing commitment to ensuring that the residents of Merton have access to a full range of NHS acute services on the St Helier Hospital site, including a blue light A&E and consultant-led maternity service. Any attempt to relocate acute services away from an area of relative deprivation in St Helier in favour of a more affluent area such as Belmont would be incompatible with the statutory duty on the Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to have regard to the need to tackle health inequalities because it would make accessing acute health services significantly more difficult for those in our population who suffer the greatest level of inequality. Instead, council supports the previous strategy to re-build St Helier hospital on its current site with its full range of services intact. It is the firm belief of this Council that the retention of all services at St Helier is the very best way to ensure equality of healthcare provision for the residents of Merton, and ensure that those in the east do not further lose out. The Council notes that the Leader of the Council has written on 15th June 2022 to the Chief Executive Officer designate for the South West London ICS to ask for an explanation of any reassurances she has received that the hospital-building programme in South West London will not suffer from further delays or cuts to funding.

Council calls on the CCG to publish the new business plan and explain the reason behind residents not being consulted on it, and for information about the business of the Strategic Executive Group and the Strategic Oversight Group.

Council resolves to: Write a letter to the CCG and other affected local authorities requesting that, in the ongoing spirit of cooperation identified by an independent review panel to the Secretary of State in October 2020 as essential to identifying the best possible outcomes for the whole population being served, they support the retention of all services at St Helier

2. July 2022 – Motion on behalf of the Wimbledon Community Forum

The Wimbledon Community Forum notes that some roads in Wimbledon are named after former residents who were slave owners.

The Forum calls on Merton Council to:

· consider including historical information in the vicinity of such road signs including the fact they are named after slave owners

3. July 2022 – Living Wage Accreditation

Council Notes:

- 1) That low pay still affects many people in Merton and that the Cost-of-Living crisis is making their situation worse
- 2) That Merton Council is a London Living Wage direct employer

3) The amendment to the Budget resolution passed by Council in March 2021:

"G) welcoming the provision in the MTFs for increased contract costs/LLW for contracts due to be re-let in 2022/23 onwards, requests Cabinet make real movement towards paying the London Living Wage to care workers employed by outside contractors as and when each contract comes up for retendering and/or renegotiation."

- 3) The ongoing work to negotiate new contracts with service providers who pay the London Living Wage, most recently (27th June) Cabinet approving a contract for Supported Living Services for Adults with a Learning Disability which pays London Living Wage to its staff

Council requests that Cabinet present a paper to on the costs, implications and timescale for Merton being accredited by the Living Wage Foundation in recognition of its status as a Living Wage Employer.

4. July 2022 – Cost of Living Emergency

This Council notes that:

- The Royal College of Psychiatrists has reported that the cost-of-living crisis “poses a threat of pandemic proportions” to the nation’s mental health.
- On 1st April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy cap by 54%. For a typical household paying by direct debit it's now £1,971/year – up by a massive £693/year, from its previous level. Those on prepay, the price cap has also increased by 54%, from £1,309/year to £2,017/year on typical use – a rise of £708/year.
- Workers have seen their National Insurance contributions increased from 12% to 13.25% on 6 April to fund the response to the Covid NHS backlog and new investment in adult social care.
- Additionally – and in this same timeframe – food prices and fuel are rising caused by global inflation post-pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine.

This Council recognises the unprecedented financial pressures that all our residents will face in the coming year, and notes with serious concern, that for those with low or insecure income, these pressures could prove overwhelming.

The Council, therefore, declares a ‘Cost of Living Emergency’. Recognising that it has a part to play in response, this Council has:

- Established a £2 million Cost of Living Emergency Fund to target support to residents and voluntary organisations to alleviate the financial burden facing our residents.
- Set up a series of Cost of Living events across the borough to reach those most in need to inform them of resources and support available
 - Maintained one of the country’s most generous Council Tax Support schemes for residents on low incomes
- Created a ‘Cost of Living’ Hub on our website to help residents find services that can support them through financial difficulty
 - Pledged to continue provision of Free School meals to those eligible throughout the school summer holidays

In addition, this Council will:

- Build on its status as a London Living Wage employer to ensure Merton becomes a London Living Wage Borough
 - Appoint a London Living Wage Champion to drive forward this work
- Convene a summit of voluntary organisations to discuss how best to provide support to those most in need The work of alleviating the Cost of Living crisis is not the Council’s alone.

Therefore, this Council calls on the Government to:

- Continue funding the provision of Free School Meals during school holidays
- Extend support to schools and sporting facilities to mitigate against the increase in energy prices, so that children and families will not miss out on crucial education and exercise opportunities

· Extend to Merton the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) pilot which joins up the mental health sector with debt advice services for people in mental health crisis to avoid spiralling debt.

5. September 2022 – ULEZ

Council notes that on 4th March the Mayor of London announced his plan to expand the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from its current boundary of the North and South Circulars to cover almost all of Greater London, including Merton. These plans could see the ULEZ expanded by 29th August 2023, subject to the current consultation which Merton Council has formally responded.

Council notes that although Merton enjoys high levels of transport connectivity, there are some lower income areas, particularly in the eastern edge of the Borough that are affected by poorer transport accessibility and do consequently have relatively higher levels of car ownership. TfL figures show that 64 per cent of Merton households own a car and ONS figures show that 60 per cent of London households earning between £23,192 and £29,546 own a vehicle.

Council notes that expanding the ULEZ to Merton will impact residents facing economic hardship, particularly low income residents in areas with poor public transport accessibility that are more dependent on a private vehicle.

Therefore, Council welcomes the response to the proposed extension of ULEZ submitted jointly by the Leader of the Council and by the Cabinet member for Transport where:

- The Council recognised the importance of tackling the challenges of toxic air pollution, the climate emergency, traffic congestion but thorough consideration should also be given to the cost-of-living crisis.
- The Council considered supporting measures including a more generous scrappage to mitigate the impact of switching to electric vehicles or retrofitting to become ULEZ compliant. An enhanced scrappage scheme should only be made available to residents in the expanded zone and not offering those in the existing ULEZ zone a second chance of funding.
- The Council noted that the proposals include considering a large-scale and targeted vehicle scrappage scheme to support Londoners, including, for example, those on low incomes, disabled people, charities and businesses. It is therefore disappointing that the consultation does not provide a firm commitment or adequate details to assess the adequacy of any scheme. The scrappage scheme has to go further and consider retrofit options to save embodied carbon and consideration given to extended measures such as annual travel cards and bike ownership for those who wish to scrap their car.
- The Council requested further details that demonstrated the adequacy of the proposed scrappage scheme and mitigating measures on mitigating the impact on all

residents including those on low income and other vulnerable groups, particularly those in areas with poor public transport options. The Council also wanted TfL to go further and plan for active travel and public transport enhancements in low PTAL areas.

-As an employer, the Council also stated its concern about the negative impact identified in the IIA on employees working in social and health care, who rely on a vehicle for essential work journeys. The Council strongly urged TfL to give particular consideration to how the scrappage scheme and wider support measures could be extended to key workers such as nurses, doctors, teachers, police, ambulance and fire brigade workers, as well as those on low to modest incomes who require a vehicle to perform essential work duties or those working shifts at unsociable hours.

-The Council went on to state that the impact on small businesses requires deeper consideration and greater support needs to be offered to small businesses and the self-employed where cars or vehicles are an essential part of the trade and their jobs can't be undertaken by bike or public transport; for example construction workers, tradespeople, delivery drivers.

Furthermore, the Council recognises that the administration is also working with TfL on a faster upgrade to a zero-emission bus fleet in Merton and on increasing the roll out of rapid charging points in the borough.

Given the need for measures to counter the cost-of-living impact on low-income households, small businesses, charities and disabled residents:

- Merton Council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to central government to urge them to fund the most generous scrappage scheme to support residents transition to sustainable transport modes, should ULEZ be Page 4 expanded, to improve air quality and support residents through the cost-of-living emergency.

6. September 2022 Cost of Living – Impact on Schools

Council notes:

The deleterious effect of the Cost of Living emergency on the borough as a whole and welcomes the administration's response in establishing a £2million Cost of Living Emergency Fund, maintaining one of the country's most generous Council Tax Support schemes, continuing the provision of Free School meals to those eligible during school holidays, setting up a series of Cost of Living events across the borough and building on its status as a London Living Wage employer to ensure Merton becomes a London Living Wage accredited authority;

The failings of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition Government that, according to research undertaken by Carbon Brief, has made energy bills in the UK nearly £2.5 billion higher than they would have been if climate policies had not been scrapped;

Since 2011 London Borough of Merton has invested nearly £2 million installing nearly 1.5MWP of solar panels at 29 of the borough's schools; and since 2013 the Council has worked with our schools to promote energy saving, including through loft insulation in 19 schools and upgrading to LED lighting at 4 high schools and a number of primary schools.

Schools across the UK are facing increased energy, staffing and maintenance costs;

The lack of Government support in helping schools address these cost increases;

The likelihood that, without additional funding from central Government, schools will have little choice but to deal with these additional costs by cutting back on teachers & support staff, teaching hours and/or other cuts that will adversely affect the education of children across the UK.

Council Requests :

The Leader of the Council to write to the new Secretary of State for Education to press them to immediately provide additional emergency funding for schools;

Relevant Cabinet members and Officers work with local schools to improve all schools' energy efficiency.

7. September 2022 – Green Flag Award and Green Spaces

Council Notes:

The successful achievement by six of the borough's fantastic parks and open spaces in being re-awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award.

The annual Green Flag Award is an international mark of quality which recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, and is the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the UK and around the world.

The success of Abbey Recreation Ground, Colliers Wood Recreation Ground, Dundonald Recreation Ground, John Innes Park, Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields, and South Park Gardens is a huge testament to the Council's Parks and Green Spaces team and the friends' groups in the borough who work tirelessly year round to ensure these parks are attractive places that people love and enjoy visiting, that support their health and wellbeing, and support biodiversity and the environment. Our

excellent parks and open spaces are a source of pride for the Council and for Merton residents.

This Council notes that Merton residents are no further than 250 metres from their nearest park or playing field and looks forward to more of our great parks and open spaces right across the borough achieving Green Flag Award recognition in years to come.

8. September 2022 – Merton Schools

Council Notes:

That this Council notes and congratulates all Merton students who have recently received A-Level, Applied General and Technical, GCSE, and vocational results. This Council also congratulates Merton's schools, colleges and teaching staff on their students' achievements.

This cohort of students were significantly affected by the pandemic so these results are an incredible achievement. Early figures show that 32% of students in Merton schools received the top grade of A/A* AND 61% at A*-B. On Applied General courses, the average point score for students was 38.69, and above the national and Merton 2019 outcomes. For GCSE's, early figures show that 80% of students achieved at least a pass grade (4-9) in GCSE English and Maths, which is well above the very early national average of just over 70%.

Merton has some incredible schools and colleges and these results demonstrate their continued excellence, in spite of such hurdles. This Council believes education and lifelong learning have a crucial impact on the quality of people's lives. These results are a great milestone in the lives of these Morden residents

9. November 2022 – Waste & Street Cleansing Contract – Merton Assembly

This Council recognises that despite fortnightly wheeled bin collections driving Merton's recycling rate to 7th highest in London and improvements delivered through the Labour administration issuing Veolia with a service improvement notice, the current contract has not performed to the standard we want.

This Council believes that residents must have confidence in any new arrangement that the Council enters into. The future contract must deliver:

- A specification that gives clear performance standards that officers, Councillors and our community can hold to account.
- A waste collection service that responds to the concerns of residents.
- A service that Keeps Merton clean.
- On time collections for all property types.
- Removal of fly tipping within an agreed timeframe.
- Continued increases in recycling rates for all parts of the borough

- The flexibility to deliver a great service for all parts of the borough.
- Digital innovation to make the service more responsive and transparent.

Council notes plans to take proposals for the future waste and street cleaning service to a special pre-decision Scrutiny meeting, where Councillors and members of the public can scrutinise any future plans, and that this special meeting will be live streamed on Merton Council's You Tube channel.

Therefore, Council calls upon the Cabinet to take account of the outcome of the current resident engagement and consultation in shaping the future waste and street cleaning service.

10. February 2023 – Free Period Products

1. Council notes that:

- In June 2022, a Plan International UK survey found that nearly one in four girls in London were unable to afford period products since the start of the year, which was higher than the national rate.
- The charity found that girls across the country were cutting down on food and school supplies in order to afford period products.
- Surrey County Council, Oxford City Council and Southwark Council have all set up or agreed to schemes to provide free period products.
- In a YouGov survey undertaken last year two thirds of Britons supported making it a legal requirement for local authorities to provide free period products.

2. Council believes that:

- No-one should experience period poverty.

3. Council resolves to: a. Ask Cabinet to look at ways to provide free, and where possible sustainable, period products in all the council's public accessible toilets and buildings including the civic centre, libraries and community centres.

11. February 2023 – CHAS

1. Council congratulates Labour administrations past and present, as well as the hard-working, dedicated officers who, over the years, have contributed to building the CHAS 2013 Ltd business into such a substantial asset for the benefit of the residents of Merton.

2. Council notes:

- That the Labour administration was re-elected in May 2022 on the basis of a strong track-record of successful, business-like management of the Council's finances;
- The sale of the CHAS 2013 Ltd business on 6 January 2023, following a rigorous marketing exercise which included substantial cross-party scrutiny of the process;
- That the report to Cabinet on 16 January 2023, "Business Plan Update 2023-2027", which includes details of how the Labour administration has projected a balanced budget for the next two financial years, says (Section 5.1) that following the sale "to

ensure maximum benefit to the Council's financial position the proceeds were immediately invested in treasury instruments". The report goes on to say that "for the purposes of the MTFS it has been assumed, given current market conditions, that the return to the Council over the Medium Term will be approximately £5.25m. This has been built into the MTFS and will be refined in line with the forthcoming Investment Strategy."

d. That the final sale price is commercially sensitive, and according to the Share Purchase Agreement signed by the Council, is not able to be disclosed without the agreement of the buyer.

e. That an external investigation has been instigated into the apparent leaking of commercially sensitive information relating to the sale.

3. Council believes that:

a. The Labour administration's forthcoming budget and capital programme represents a very significant opportunity to improve the lives of residents and narrow inequalities in the Borough;

b. The Labour administration was recently re-elected by Merton residents to oversee the Council's financial management, and will continue to engage residents in discussions about how the Council's financial resources are used, as they do every year.

4. Council requests Cabinet to continue developing a comprehensive Investment Strategy that seeks to maximise the value of all the Council's assets, and to bring this to the relevant scrutiny panel for further discussion once finalised.

12. February 2023 – Standing up for Merton Residents

Council notes that:

- The Conservative government crashed the UK economy, and they now want to make Merton residents pay for it by forcing councils to consider drastic savings and cuts to crucial services that residents rely on to pay for Conservative incompetence.
- Twelve years of Conservative austerity, supported by the Liberal Democrats in coalition, has decimated funding for local councils – with the real terms equivalent of 60p out of every £1 being slashed from council budgets since 2010.
- Despite the cuts which have been imposed on us by central government over the last twelve years, our fantastic and hardworking council staff, working together with our partners and our incredible Voluntary and Community Sector, have remained completely committed to delivering for the residents of Merton and helping the most vulnerable.
- When Labour took control of Merton in 2010 the council faced an immediate budget gap of £70 million, and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition took away half of our grant funding. Despite twelve years of austerity, sound financial management from Labour has allowed this council to pass a balanced budget each year, and kept council tax lower than all of our neighbouring outer-London boroughs.
- Conservative economic mismanagement, soaring energy costs, rising bills and inflation reaching a 41 year high, mean Merton is now under unprecedented pressure to balance our budget. This is on top of a significant loss of income from fees and

charges since the pandemic, and yet another real-terms cut in funding by the Conservative government.

- The cross-party Local Government Association has long highlighted that council tax rises, particularly the adult social care precept, have never been the solution to the long term pressures faced by councils.

Council welcomes:

- The work of councillors and officers to identify the necessary savings to bridge the funding gap Merton Council is facing, while protecting service delivery. And that these proposals have been produced in line with our values. • That the Autumn Statement from government in November last year went some way to plugging budget holes, but not nearly far enough, and lacked the long-term sustainable funding plan local government needed.

- The increase in local government core spending power announced in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24, which will help to alleviate the pressures put on council finances by the government's failure to properly tackle rising inflation, growing demand for social care, and the cost of living emergency. However, this government's funding plans expect councils to raise council tax by the maximum amount permitted without a referendum in order to meet the gaps in funding, effectively forcing councils to raise tax during a cost of living emergency to cover the government's unwillingness to fund councils properly.

- The support this Labour Council is giving Merton residents, including one of the most generous council tax support schemes in the UK, a £60 cost of living voucher for 10,000 residents in receipt of council tax support, paid from the Council's £2 million Cost of Living Fund, and the proposed 1% discount on council tax bills for council taxpayers living in Bands A-D. • The recommendations of Labour's Commission on the UK's Future, chaired by Gordon Brown, that decisions should be taken as close as meaningfully and practicably possible to the people affected by them and with longer-term financial settlements for local government, in order to provide certainty and move away from the model of ad hoc bidding for central government funding pots.

Council resolves:

- That the Leader of the Council should write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and call on the government to take responsibility for their reckless mismanagement of the economy, to stop taking it out on Merton residents, and to provide the long-term sustainable funding that councils so desperately need to deliver the vital services and support that people in our communities, especially the most vulnerable, rely on.

- To ensure that measures taken in Merton Council's budget process prioritise the protection of service delivery, in particular those which support the most vulnerable in our communities and support our residents through the cost of living emergency.

- To ensure that Merton maintains comprehensive council tax support provision to assist those households who cannot afford to pay.

13. February 2023 – ULEZ Consultation

This Council notes:

- That the Mayor of London has led a concerted campaign to tackle toxic air pollution, to protect Londoners, including residents in Merton, from diseases due to air pollution over the next 30 years;
- The Mayor of London's laudable aim to drastically reduce the cost to the NHS and the social care system of air pollution currently running at £10.4 billion;
- The Mayor of London has already taken ground-breaking action with his support for ULEZ in central London and this has reduced harmful pollution levels by almost a half and because of this, 4 million Londoners are now breathing cleaner air; and

Whereas:

- The Mayor of London has listened to Merton Council during the comprehensive consultation over the expansion of ULEZ to outer London and has provided more help for residents during this Cost of Living emergency;
- The Mayor of London has introduced the most generous scrappage scheme yet - £110 million – to support Merton residents on lower incomes, disabled residents, micro businesses and charities to scrap or retrofit their non[1]compliant vehicles;
- The Mayor of London has repeatedly kept the GLA Assembly, London boroughs, including Merton, and the press informed about the ULEZ consultation and noted that the consultation was hijacked by Fair Fuel UK, a vested interest group using tactics to manipulate the results of a fair consultation;
- 59% of responses to the Mayor's consultation on ULEZ expansion agreed that more needed to be done to tackle toxic air.

Therefore:

This Council calls upon the cabinet to:

- Work with the Mayor of London and TfL so that the ULEZ expansion is supported by a wide-ranging engagement with residents on the detail of the scrappage scheme and on the exemptions for disabled drivers and community transport, meaning no impact from ULEZ as a result of these exemptions until 2025 and 2027 respectively;
- Write to TfL with their suggestions for bus route extensions as part of the Mayor of London's plans, announced in November 2022, for improving the bus network in outer London, with over 1 million kilometres added to the network through planned new routes and improvements.
- Work with TfL to understand any requirements for the installation of any ULEZ infrastructure in outer London;
- Support regular review and monitoring into the operation of the scrappage scheme so that it is sensitive to the impact of the Cost of Living emergency on Merton's residents.

14. April 2023 – Care Experience

Council understands that:

1. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics.

Council notes that:

2. Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives;
3. Despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account;
4. Care experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system;
5. As corporate parents, Councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority.

Council agrees that:

6. The work done to further strengthen the role of corporate parenting in Merton is helpful and that all corporate parents should consider acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked after children and young people and to reflect their needs in any aspect of council work.
7. Councillors should be champions of our looked after children and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society wherever and whenever possible.

Council therefore requests Cabinet:

8. Treats care experience as an additional local equality strand alongside the existing protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010;
9. To proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views and reflect these in Equality Impact Assessments;
10. To continue to build on the existing ringfenced apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced people by committing to an agreed appropriate number of apprenticeships places each year delivered through the Council's levy funding.
11. To support care experienced people into career opportunities available in the Council and borough more widely, including through Merton's own graduate development programme places.

15. April 2023 – Policing

Council notes:

- Merton residents and all Londoners expect and deserve a Police Service they can trust, not fear, which responds to the needs of the communities it serves and is accountable to the community for the decisions it makes.
- With deep concern the appalling findings of Baroness Casey's independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service, including the findings of institutional racism, sexism, misogyny, and homophobia in the Met, and the failure to implement operational, cultural, and systemic change that is so desperately needed.
- That the deeply troubling failures highlighted in the Casey review are overwhelmingly due to a longstanding failure of culture within the force. However, the review also highlights that government cuts to funding for the Met have exacerbated some problems.
- And welcomes the commitment from the new Met Commissioner to major reform of the Metropolitan Police Service and to rebuilding trust amongst Londoners.
- The strong and positive working relationship that Merton Council and Merton Police maintain, which is focused on keeping our borough one of the safest anywhere in London.
- The administration's response to the Turnaround Plan which expresses our wish to work with the Police to develop and support the aims of the plan, and ensure our local priorities are achieved alongside the changes that need to be seen in the Met.

Council believes:

- That to see any progress towards rebuilding trust and confidence in the police, the Metropolitan Police must fully follow the recommendations of the Casey review and work with our communities in a genuine and meaningful way.
- That the example of effective relationships with police partners here in Merton demonstrates that there is a way forward for the Metropolitan Police Service.
- That a local, neighbourhood policing presence and effective engagement with local communities is essential to people being able to feel safe in their communities and to building trusting relationships with the Police Service.

Council resolves:

- To send a letter from the Leader of the Council to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police calling for the full implementation of all recommendations set out in Baroness Casey's review.
- For the Cabinet Member for Civic Pride to work with the Police and residents to ensure that voices of local people are included in the way that their community is policed.
- Campaign with other London Boroughs and the Mayor of London for the government to fully reverse their damaging cuts to our Police Service, and to keep our local Police Stations in Mitcham and Wimbledon open.

16. April 2023 – St Helier Hospital

Council notes:

- In 2020, a joint meeting of NHS Surrey Heartlands and NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning groups approved plans to close the emergency, maternity, and children's in-patient services at both Epsom and St Helier Hospitals and to build a new facility for the provision of these services in Belmont.
- That since this decision was taken, the health landscape has changed dramatically because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the increasing demand on health services, and the cumulative effects of underfunding of the NHS by successive governments since 2010.
- That Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on ethnic minority groups, those living in areas of deprivation, those with underlying health conditions, older people, and residents with a learning disability. And that hospitalisation and mortality rates during the pandemic have been disproportionately higher among Black, Black British, Asian, and Asian British communities.

Council further notes:

- That St George's Hospital in Tooting is struggling to cope with local demand, with the Integrated Care Board consistently describing the pressures on the hospital over the most recent winter period as unprecedented. • With concern, that pressures are also being experienced at Epsom and St Helier's hospitals, where bed occupancy levels have continued to increase over the last year, and that reducing provision at St Helier will also impact St George's and neighbouring hospitals in South West London.
- The serious issues which exist at St Helier Hospital with disrepair and decline, and the backlog of much needed maintenance throughout parts of the site, which were highlighted in a recent report by ITV News.

Council believes:

- That decisions taken in 2020 on the proposed downgrading of St Helier Hospital need to be urgently reviewed so that they can be taken with a fuller understanding of the impact of the post-Covid-19 pandemic healthcare landscape.
- That the proposed downgrading of St Helier hospital will have a detrimental impact on the residents of Merton, taking services that the most vulnerable rely on further away from where they are needed.
- That our dedicated and hard-working healthcare staff deserve better, to be paid a decent wage, and to be able to work in appropriate environments which keep themselves, patients, and visitors safe.

Council resolves:

- To support the formal request of the Leader of the Council for a new Impact Assessment pursuant to the Public Sector Equality Duty is completed before any decision is taken to proceed with the planned downgrading of St Helier Hospital.

- To write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to demand that the government provides the necessary capital funding to the address disrepair at the St Helier Hospital site.
- To write to the CEO of St George's and St Helier Trust and the CEO of the South West London Integrated Care Board to demand that they maintain all existing services on the St Helier site and outline their planned investment in the site over the next few years in light of the delay to the future hospital programme to ensure that the hospital provides an appropriate environment for local people

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee: Council

Date: 12 July 2023

Subject: Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer

Lead Director: Polly Cziok, Executive Director Innovation and Change

Lead member: Billy Christie, Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services

Contact officer: Louise Round, Managing Director South London Legal Partnership

Recommendations:

- A. That Council approve the appointment of the Head of Law, Fabiola Hickson to be designated as the Monitoring Officer from 28 July 2023 until the permanent appointee begins in post on 6 September 2023 and agrees that she be authorised to carry out any actions delegated to the Managing Director, SLLP during that time.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report seeks Council approval that the Head of Law, Fabiola Hickson be appointed to the role of Monitoring Officer on an interim basis, pending the permanent recruitment to the role of Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership which includes the statutory role of Monitoring Officer.

2 DETAILS

2.1. The Council's constitution designates the post of Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership as the Council's Monitoring Officer.

2.2. The current monitoring officer Louise Round leaves the authority on 28 July 2023. The appointments committee met in May 2023 and appointed John Scarborough to the role of Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership.

2.3. John Scarborough is due to begin in post on 6 September 2023, and therefore there would be an interim period between permanent postholders where the authority would be without a Monitoring Officer.

2.4. The Council is required under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint an officer to act as Monitoring Officer.

2.5. Fabiola Hickson is currently the Deputy Monitoring Officer for the authority and has been in this role for the past three years. Fabiola is a very experienced Lawyer and therefore it is considered that she is the most appropriate and experienced officer to undertake the role on an interim basis.

2.6. Should Council approve the appointment, then Byron Britton, another head of law employed in SLLP will undertake the role of Deputy Monitoring Officer (the role currently held by Fabiola Hickson) until 6 September 2023.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. There is no legal requirement that the Monitoring Officer should be a qualified lawyer. Any suitable officer could be appointed to the role.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. None for the purposes of this report. Fabiola Hickson has been informed of the proposals.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. Subject to the approval of Council, the role of Monitoring officer will pass to Fabiola Hickson immediately following the current postholder leaving the authority on 28 July 2023.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. None for the purposes of this report

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. The Council has a statutory responsibility under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint a Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer cannot be the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) or the Section 151 officer (Executive Director Finance and Digital).

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purposes of this report

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purposes of this report

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purposes of this report

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

None

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None

Committee: Council

Date: 12 July 2023

Subject: Changes to Membership of Committees and related matters

Lead officer: Hannah Doody, Chief Executive

Contact officer: Amy Dumitrescu, Democracy Services Manager

Recommendations:

That the Council:

1. Notes the changes to the membership of Committees that were approved under delegated authority since the last meeting of the Council.
2. Agree the changes to the membership of Committees put forward by the groups for Council approval as detailed at paragraph 2.3

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report asks Council to note the changes made to committee memberships under delegated authority since the publication of the agenda for the last ordinary Council meeting on 19 April 2023.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The following membership changes have been made by the Chief Executive under their delegated authority in accordance with part 3E of the Constitution:

Committee	Member resigning	Replaced by	Date
JHOSC	Cllr Peter McCabe	Cllr Agatha Akyigyina	19 May 2023
Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Commission	NA	Cllr Laxmi Attawar - Substitute	19 May 2023
Appointments Committee	Cllr Natasha Irons	Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah	6 June 2023

Appointments Sub-Committee - MD SLLP	Cllr Ross Garrod	19 May 2023
Appointments Sub-Committee - MD SLLP	Cllr Billy Christie	19 May 2023
Appointments Sub-Committee - MD SLLP	Cllr Sheri-Ann Bhim	19 May 2023
Appointments Sub-Committee - MD SLLP	Cllr Tony Reiss	19 May 2023
Appointments Sub-Committee - MD SLLP	Cllr Nick McLean	19 May 2023

2.3 The Conservative group have put forward a number of proposed changes to Committee memberships for Council approval, those being:

Committee	Member resigning	Replaced by
Standards and General Purposes Committee	Cllr Michael Paterson	Cllr Andrew Howard
Standards and General Purposes Committee	NA	Cllr Michael Paterson – Substitute
JCC	Cllr Nick McLean	Cllr Eleanor Cox

3 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

4.1. None for the purposes of this report.

5 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

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

5.2. The Housing and Local Government Act 1989 contains provisions relating to the political balance on committees, the duty to allocate seats to political groups and the duty to give effect to allocations.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

6.1. None for the purposes of this report.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None for the purposes of this report.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. N/A

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

9.1 None.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Committee: Council

Date: 12 July 2023

Subject: Petitions

Lead officer: Louise Round, Managing Director South London Legal Partnership

Lead member: Leader of the Council, Councillor Ross Garrod

Contact officer: Amy Dumitrescu, Democracy Services Manager

Recommendation:

1. That Council receive petitions (if any) in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 18.1 of the Council's Constitution.
 2. That Council notes the responses provided to the petitions submitted at the meeting held on 19 April 2023.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. At the meeting held on 19 April 2023, the petition listed below was submitted and the response is set out below. Any petitions received by Council are referred to respective departments with responsible officers asked to advise the presenting member in each case of the way in which the petition is to be progressed.

Petition One

A petition was submitted by Councillor Max Austin entitled "Help Save Wimbledon Village Flower Stall" with an accompanying letter outlining reasons to support The Stand.

Officer Response

The Licensing team has received a copy of the petition for The Stand Flower Stall in Wimbledon Village. This was received from multiple sources and we provide our response following submission of the petition by Cllr Austin.

By way of background, the Licensing team received complaints regarding The Stand Flower Stall and breaches of their Street Trading Licence conditions. The complaints related to the non-removal of the trailer/kiosk used as part of the business. Under Section 28 of the London Local Authorities Act 1990 (as amended) and conditions under Section 9 (d) of our own street trading policy, all receptacles must be removed from the licensed site unless prior consent has been given for them to remain. No authorisation had been given at this site.

The Licensing Officer investigated the complaint received. After investigation the complaint was upheld and the trader informed of the need for compliance. Dates for the removal of the damaged trailer were agreed upon but the trader did not comply with the timeframe given. They were therefore given notice to

remove by the end of February 2023. This notice was complied with, and the matter drawn to a close in regards to their licence breaches.

Whilst this was underway the trader engaged with both Licensing and Planning, through pre-application advice, to submit a planning application to allow the permanent placement of the trailer. They also sought to vary the street trading licence to remove the condition. At the time of writing the planning permission has been granted and the variation of the street trading licence is underway.

Although we received the petition, at no point can it have an impact on the agreed licensing conditions for the site and the need to comply. This is a strict enforcement issue, and as pointed out on the petition header, all that was sought was compliance. With both permissions in place the trader will be able to recommence their business practices but in full compliance with the law.

- 2.6 Members are invited to present petitions at this meeting, and a response will be provided to the next ordinary Council meeting in September 2023.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None for the purposes of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. None for the purpose of this report.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. None for the purpose of this report.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None for the purpose of this report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None for the purpose of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None for the purpose of this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None for the purpose of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11 APPENDICES

- 11.1. None

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. None.