

Merton Council

Cabinet Agenda

Membership

Councillors:

Ross Garrod (Chair)
Eleanor Stringer
Stephen Alambritis MBE
Billy Christie
Caroline Cooper-Marbiah
Brenda Fraser
Natasha Irons
Andrew Judge
Sally Kenny
Peter McCabe

Date: Monday 18 March 2024

Time: 7.15 pm

**Venue: Committee Rooms DE, 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

Cabinet Agenda

18 March 2024

1	Apologies for absence	
2	Declarations of pecuniary interest	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 8
4	Borough of Sport Update	9 - 18
5	Morden Town Centre Regeneration: Placemaking and Public Realm	19 - 26
6	Update on the Introduction of Landlord Licensing in Seven Wards	27 - 32
7	Homelessness and housing needs - update and performance overview	33 - 44
8	Exclusion of the Public To RESOLVE that the public are excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following report on the grounds that it is exempt from disclosure for the reasons stated in the report.	
9	Item 4 - Exempt Appendix	Exempt Pack

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.

Agenda Item 3

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

CABINET

19 FEBRUARY 2024

(7.15 pm - 8.40 pm)

PRESENT Councillors (in the Chair), Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Councillor Billy Christie, Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Councillor Brenda Fraser, Councillor Natasha Irons, Councillor Andrew Judge, Councillor Sally Kenny and Councillor Peter McCabe

IN ATTENDANCE Zara Bishop (Communications Manager), Polly Cziok (Executive Director of Innovation & Change), Hannah Doody (Chief Executive), Dan Jones (Executive Director, Environment, Civic Pride & Climate), Jane McSherry (Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families), John Morgan (Executive Director, Adult Social Care, Integrated Care and Public Health), Asad Mushtaq (Executive Director of Finance & Digital) and John Scarborough (Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership)

ATTENDING ONLINE Lucy Owen (Executive Director Housing and Sustainable Development), Aileen Buckton (Independent Chair), Catherine Dunn (Merton Safeguarding Adults Board Manager), Sarah Slater (Policy & Partnerships Manager)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Ross Garrod, Leader of the Council.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

Councillor Alambritis declared that they had an interest in Item 13 and would leave the room for that section of the meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes and the exempt minute of the meeting held on 15 January 2024 are agreed as an accurate record.

4 MERTON SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD (MSAB) ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 (Agenda Item 4)

At the request of the Chair, the Independent Chair of the Board presented the report, noting this was a statutory report and the work undertaken had been outlined and also highlighted the work of the multi-agency partnership, noting a network of safeguarding champions had now been developed which included 30-40 people who were ambassadors in promoting safeguarding. There was a strong focus on training and learning and examples of these were outlined within the report.

In response to questions from the Cabinet, the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and the Independent Chair advised that in comparison to other Boroughs Merton had a particularly strong record of making safeguarding personal which was reflected in the enquiry data. They were confident that learning had been embedded across a number of agencies.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet noted the content of the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) Annual Report for the period 2022-23.

5 MERTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT
(Agenda Item 5)

At the invitation of the Chair, the Independent Chair of the Partnership presented the report noting the ongoing focus was ensuring the voice of the child was paramount. A new governance structure had been put in place and it was important to test this was working with the structure outlined within the report. A lot of emphasis was on learning and development and learning had come from local reviews and children safeguarding reviews across London and national reviews, with a move towards multi agency training.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked the Independent Chair for her work and noted that strong leadership and partnership was evident in the work that was done.

The Executive Director Children, Lifelong Learning and Families noted that there were different sorts of training and there was focus on how to share practice.

In response to questions from the Cabinet, the Independent Chair and Cabinet Member advised that training programmes were ongoing and would raise issues for new members of staff.

The Chair thanked the Independent Chair and officers for their work and report.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet noted the content of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) Annual Report for the period 2022-23

6 BUDGET 2024/25 AND MTFS 2024-28 (Agenda Item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Corporate Services presented the report which included a balanced budget for the financial year 2024/25 and would be considered by Full Council the next month. The Cabinet Member expressed their thanks to the Executive Director and officers for their work preparing the report and stated it was a robust balanced budget which delivered on priorities. A number of savings were proposed alongside growth and investment into services.

The Executive Director Finance and Digital thanked officers and members for their work on the budget.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member advised that Merton was maintaining a good financial position and that decisions had been taken considering future financial sustainability to maintain services. Cabinet Members spoke on the Budget for their respective portfolio areas.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet considers and agrees the response to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission;
2. That the Cabinet resolved that, having considered all of the information in this report and noted the positive assurance statement given by the Executive Director, Finance and Digital based on the proposed Council Tax strategy, the maximum Council Tax in 2024/25, equating to a Band D Council Tax of £1,521.98, which is an increase of below 5% be approved and recommended to Council for approval.
3. That the Cabinet considered all of the latest information and the comments from the scrutiny process, and makes recommendations to Council as appropriate
4. That Cabinet resolved that the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-28 including the General Fund Budget and Council Tax Strategy for 2024/25, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2024-28 as submitted, along with the draft Equality Assessments (EAs), be approved and recommended to Council for approval subject to any proposed amendments agreed at this meeting;
5. That the Cabinet resolved that, having considered all of the latest information and the comments from the scrutiny process, the Capital Investment Programme (as detailed in Annex 3 to the Capital Strategy); the Treasury Management Strategy, including the detailed recommendations in that Section, incorporating the Prudential Indicators and the Capital Strategy as submitted and reported upon be approved and recommended to Council for approval, subject to any proposed amendments agreed at this meeting;
6. That Cabinet noted that the GLA precept will not be agreed by the London Assembly until the 22 February 2024, but the provisional figure has been incorporated into the draft MTFS
7. That Cabinet requested officers to review the savings proposals agreed and where possible bring them forward to the earliest possible implementation date
8. That Cabinet noted that there may be minor amendments to figures and words in this report as a result of new information being received after the deadline for dispatch and that this will be amended for the report to Council in March.
9. That Cabinet considered and approved the Risk Management Strategy.

10. That Cabinet resolved that the Council's Strategy for the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts 2022/23, as detailed in page 28-29 of the Capital Strategy be approved and recommended to Council for approval subject to any proposed amendments agreed at this meeting.

7 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services presented the report noting that the net position for the current financial year was much closer to a balanced one and thanked officers for their work. It was noted that there were still clear pressures on departmental budgets.

The Executive Director advised that departmental spend controls were having an impact.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet noted the financial reporting data for Quarter 3 (period 9), December 2023, relating to revenue budgetary control, showing a forecast net adverse variance at 31st December on service expenditure of £1.185m when corporate and funding items are included.
- B. That Cabinet noted the contents of Section 5 and appendices 5a to 5c and approve the adjustments to the Capital Programme in the 4 Tables [here](#).
- C. That Cabinet noted the adjustments to the Capital Programme in the table [here](#).
- D. That Cabinet approve the 15 revenue civic pride investing in neighbourhoods and climate action fund bids below as contained in Appendix 5d and summarised in the Table [here](#):

8 FEES & CHARGES REPORT (Agenda Item 8)

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services as part of agenda Item 6.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet approved the proposed fee changes outlined in appendix 1 and appendix 2

9 REVIEW OF PARKING CHARGES (Agenda Item 9)

The Cabinet Member for Transport presented the report, thanking officers and the Executive Director for their work and the report which recommended changes to reflect inflationary pressures noting that these had last been reviewed in January 2020.

In response to questions from the Cabinet, the Cabinet Member advised that amendments had been made having taken account of feedback from the initial consultation including reducing the charge for carer permits. In relation to the supplement this would be expected to be applicable to less than 1000 petrol vehicles.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agreed to:

- A. Consider the outcome of informal consultation, set out in Section 4 of this report, on the proposed revisions to parking charges set out in this report.
- B. Authorise officers to proceed to formal statutory consultation on the Traffic Management Orders required to implement the proposed revised charges for parking recommended in this report.
- C. Delegate authority to the Director of Environment, Civic Pride and Climate, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, to finalise the Traffic Management Orders and the necessary statutory consultation documentation, to consider the outcome of formal consultation, and any operational matters relating to the implementation of the proposals set out in the report.
- D. Subject to the statutory consultation process, Members agree to approve the proposed charges set out in this report, in respect of:
 - Revised charges for Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) Permits, as set out in paragraphs 2.10-2.17
 - Revisions to charges for electric vehicle permits, as set out in paragraphs 2.18-2.20
 - A reduction in the charge for Visitor Permits, as set out in paragraphs 2.21-2.24
 - Introduction of a £10 charge for Carer Permits, as set out in paragraph 2.25
 - Revised charges for CPZ visitors' day/half-day parking, as set out in paragraphs 2.26-2.29
 - Introduction of a £150 supplement on Permits for high CO₂-emission vehicles, as set out in paragraphs 2.30-2.33
 - Revised charges for on-street parking, as set out in paragraphs 2.34-2.36
 - Revised car park (off-street) charges, as set out in paragraphs 2.37-2.38
- E. Officers will undertake within 6 months a review of the eligibility criteria, charging policy and gatekeeping protocols in respect of the Carer permit offer, taking account of the approaches taken by other relevant London boroughs, to be considered by Cabinet.

10 PARKS AND GREENSPACES SERVICE (Agenda Item 10)

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Greenspaces and Climate Change presented the report, outlining the recommendation to agree a short extension with the current provider under the current contract. Future options for the service would be thoroughly assessed.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- A. Noted the potential options for the future delivery of the service and the estimated costs.
- B. Agreed to an extension of the existing contract with idverde by 21 months (till 31 October 2026) to facilitate detailed consideration of all options for the future delivery of the Parks and Greenspace service.
- C. Noted the delegated authority (as per the Contract Award decision 4 July 2016) to the Executive Director - Environment, Civic Pride and Climate (ECPC), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Green Spaces and Climate Change (LEGSCC), to complete negotiations and finalise a contract extension agreement with idverde, in accordance with the terms set out in this report.
- D. Noted the requirement to give both idverde and the London Borough of Sutton (as a joint procurer) notice of any intention not to renew the existing contract for a term of a further eight years – subject to this being waived by the parties

11 CLIMATE DELIVERY PLAN - YEAR 4 (Agenda Item 11)

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Greenspaces and Climate Change presented the report, thanking officers for their work. The report summarised extensive work to decarbonise the Borough and Council and set out the previous twelve months and a summary of progress. The Cabinet Member highlighted a number of initiatives within the report including installation of EV charging points, the Tree Strategy, converting street lights with LEDs, securing bronze carbon literacy and noted that in the upcoming year a HEEL scheme would be launched in conjunction with a retrofit road map and there would be work on decarbonising the fleet.

In response to questions from the Cabinet, the Cabinet Member advised that a tool would be piloted to assess the carbon impact of decisions made and Schools had certain things they had to do in terms of the climate agenda and lots was being done on this.

RESOLVED:

- A. That Cabinet adopted the Climate Delivery Plan – Year 4.
- B. That delegated authority was given to the Executive Director for Environment, Civic Pride & Climate in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Green Spaces and Climate to make minor amendments to the Climate Delivery Plan – Year 4

12 “CIVIC PRIDE INVESTING IN NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND” AND “COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION FUND” BID APPROVALS, AND ALLOCATION OF FUNDING TO DELIVER THE “COUNCILLORS’ WARD ALLOCATION SCHEME” (Agenda Item 12)

The Cabinet Member for Civic Pride presented the report which outlined how just over £1m would be spent. A range of ideas had been attracted and the Climate Action Funding was being launched at the same time. The Cabinet Member thanked all applicants for their submissions and officers who had assessed the bids. 25 new projects would be able to be funded and top up funding provided to previously some supported projects as detailed within the report.

The Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Greenspaces and Climate Change outlined some of the projects and thanked all for the bids.

RESOLVED :

That Cabinet agreed:

1. To allocate £882,210 Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy and £166,000 Community Climate Action Funding, in line with Merton Council's approved criteria, to recommended bids summarised in Appendix A covering: a) 25 bids received through the 2023 Civic Pride - Investing in Neighbourhoods and Community Climate Action Funds bidding round; and
b) two top-up allocations of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Funding to successful bids from the 2021 and 2022 bidding rounds.
2. To approve the award of funding being subject to:
 - a) any conditions shown against each bid recommended for approval in Appendix B; and
 - b) due diligence being carried out to ascertain the appropriateness of grants under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and other relevant powers and policies applicable to the award of funding by the council to external organisations.
3. To delegate authority to the Executive Director, Housing and Sustainable Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Civic Pride to make any amendments to Civic Pride Investing in Neighbourhoods funding bid amounts recommended for approval, in line with Merton Council's approved criteria;
4. To allocate £370,000 Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Funding to support the implementation the Councillors' Ward Allocation Scheme from April 2024 to March 2026.

13 COUNCIL TAX EMPTY HOMES AND SECOND HOMES PREMIUM (Agenda Item 13)

The Cabinet Member for Transport left the room for this item having declared an interest.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services then presented the report noting that they wanted homes to be used and they wished to discourage homes being left empty, with changes in legislation now permitting the changes proposed within the report. The Council would encourage landlords to use properties in a socially responsible way.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care spoke on the important of the issue.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet recommended that Full Council determines that:

1. For any dwelling within the area of the Council if, on any day, there is no resident of that dwelling and it is substantially unfurnished, the following shall apply:

- the discount in s11(2)(a) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 (LGFA) shall not apply to that dwelling; and
- the amount of council tax payable in respect of that dwelling and that day shall be increased by 100 percent, where the dwelling has been empty for more than 1 year on 1 April 2024.

2. Where a dwelling within the area of the Council, if on any day there is no resident, and it is furnished:

- the discount in s11(2)(a) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 (LGFA) shall not apply to that dwelling; and
- the amount of council tax payable in respect of that dwelling and that day shall be increased by an amount up to 100 percent, with effect from 1 April 2025.

14 RESPONSE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S TASK GROUP REPORT - REVIEW OF EATING DISORDERS AND SELF-HARM AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN MERTON (Agenda Item 14)

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services presented the report thanking Councillor Kirby and colleagues for their diligent work on it as well as officers for their work.

The Executive Director Children, Lifelong Learning and Families noted that there were lots of actions being taken forward through CAHMS and the Mental Health Forum.

RESOLVED:

A. That Cabinet noted the information contained in the report

15 CIVIC CENTRE – INSTALLATION SERVICES AND PROJECT MANAGMENT OF A VARIABLE REFRIGERANT FLOW (VRF) SYSTEM AND ELECTRICAL INTAKE WORKS (Agenda Item 15)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development presented the report advising that the boilers within the Civic Centre were 42 years old and a consultant had been engaged on a feasibility study with the best option identified to replace the boilers with a VRF system. Funds had also been set aside for electrical works.

RESOLVED:

A That Cabinet approved that a contract is entered into for the provision of a new VRF system at the Civic Centre, along with remedial works to the electrical power network with the preferred bidder listed in Appendix A

16 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 16)

The meeting proceeded entirely in public and therefore this item was not required.

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 18 March 2024

Wards: All

Subject: Borough of Sport

Lead Director: Dan Jones, Executive Director Environment, Civic Pride & Climate

Lead Member: Cllr Caroline Cooper Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage

Contact Officer: David Gentles, Head of Sport and Leisure

Part 4b Section 10 of the constitution applies in respect of information within appendix 3 and it is therefore exempt from publication:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

Members and officers are advised not to disclose the contents of the Exempt appendix.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet:

- A. Note the good progress in implementing the plans for Merton to become London's Borough of Sport and the actions across 2024.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Becoming London's Borough of Sport is one of the administrations' three strategic objectives, alongside civic pride and sustainable futures. The plans were publicly launched at the highly successful Merton's Big Sports day in September 2023 and are now in full delivery mode. This report provides an update on progress across 2023 and looks ahead to new action in 2024.
- 1.2. Borough of Sport is about: getting more residents, in particular, but not only, 4 to 16-year-olds, the over 65s and the less affluent, physically active; putting Merton on the map for Sport; and celebrating the borough's sporting heritage. It's about sport in its widest sense so includes walking, cycling, dance – anything that gets residents moving. The call to action is to do one, or one more, physical activity session each week, to unlock the health social and economic benefits for individuals and the borough.
- 1.3. The key deliverables in 2023 included:
 - the establishment of an advisory group, public forum and internal council operational group;
 - the creation of a Borough of Sport brand;
 - almost £700,000 of Civic Pride grants shared across eight projects, inward investment of £300,000 from the Department of Education and London Sport for 21 Merton Schools (each school has been offered and additional £2K in 2023-24 and four special schools are able to

apply for additional funding) and there were also 14 Actively Merton Small Grants (funded by Public Health) totalling almost £15,000;

- refurbishment, by Merton Council and the LTA, of 47 tennis courts plus the Council refurbished the beach volleyball court at Wimbledon Park;
- recruitment of a Head of Sport and Leisure (September 2023);
- the public launch of Borough of Sport via Merton's Big Sport Day (September 2023) linked to the extension of the free swimming offer for children and older people, plus 60 minutes free use of Forest e-bikes for all residents aged 18 and over;
- the launch of the Borough of Sport Activity Finder web platform (November 2023); and
- exemplar projects - Beat the Streets, walking netball at Morden Rec and Our Parks exercise sessions at Mitcham Fair Green to catch attention;
- enhanced investment and participation in the London Youth Games leading to Merton winning the most improved borough cup which was celebrated at a community event in December 2023.

1.4. Activity will continue to ramp up during 2024 and includes:

- the 'Find your #Borough of Sport' campaign starting in January 2024;
- launch of Borough of Sport grants fund;
- partnership with London Broncos;
- Safe Spaces investment of £20k from GLA;
- women's running clubs;
- further exemplar projects (Our Parks, ParkPlay, ParkRun); and
- the advisory group, forum and internal council operational group will continue to meet and guide development.

1.5. We are also considering how best to build on Merton's Big Sports Day in 2024.

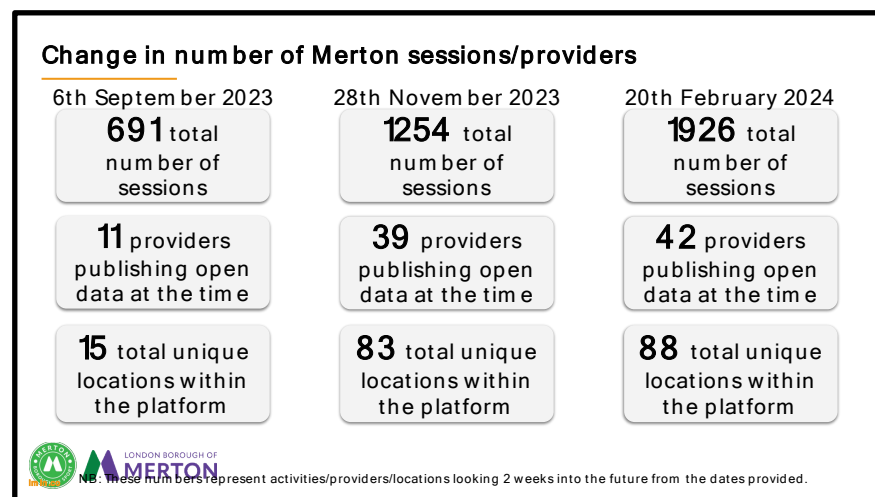
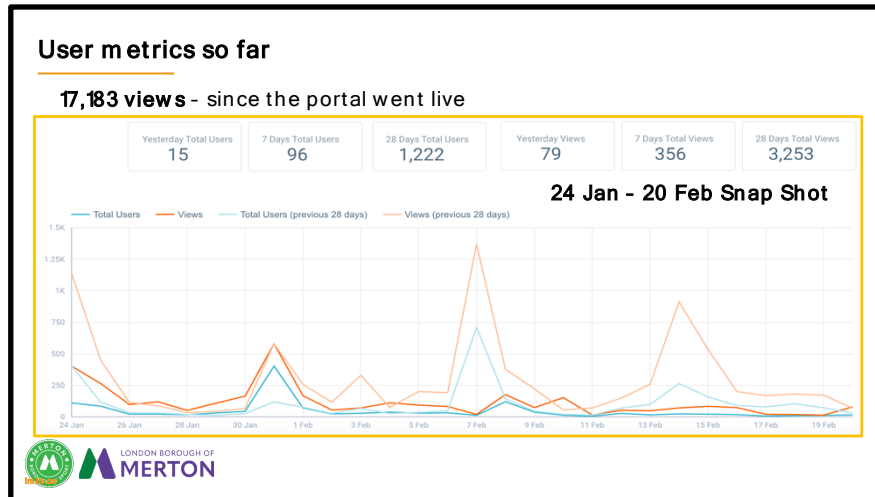
2 DETAILS

2.1. Borough of Sport is a three-year action plan. The diagram at **appendix 1** sets out the headlines of the plan.

PROGRESS IN 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

2.2. **Merton's Big Sports Day** - Borough of Sport was launched publicly on Sunday 24 September 2023. Over 5000 residents attended, almost 60 local groups and clubs run activities across the day and the event was showcased by ITV London News. Engagement via the Council's social channels was also very high. The post event survey found that almost 74% of respondents said they or another family member were very likely or somewhat likely to take up a new sport or activity as a result of Merton's Big Sports Day.

2.3. **Activity Finder** - The bespoke [Borough of Sport Activity Finder](#) went live for at the start of November 2023 and brings together in one place as many as possible of the sport and physical activity opportunities in Merton. It helps providers promote their activities and residents find what they could do. Local groups/clubs continue to be encouraged and supported to use the platform. User data is encouraging. The tables below provide a snap shot. Since it launched and up until 20 February 2024 there have been 17,183 individual views. Providers say the number of people coming to their sessions is increasing and the platform is relatively easy to use.



- ### Provider metrics so far
- **113** - number of activity providers reached out to
 - **56** - number of unique providers who have published open data across the different snapshots.
 - **44** - number of providers we've supported in conversation over phone/em ail.
 - **9** one-to-one Teams meetings conducted with providers.
 - **2** group sessions conducted
- LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON**

- 2.4. **Forum** - The open membership forum, designed to garner support, gather concerns and combine effort, met for the first time via Teams on Tuesday 14 November 2023. Across session 71 people attended from residents to partner organisations. The forum publicly launched the activity finder. The plan is for the forum to meet again in March/April.
- 2.5. **Exemplars** - These are higher profile free initiatives designed to capture attention. In March/April 2023, funded by Public Health, there was the highly successful Beat the Streets (in which 10% or 22,549 residents - young and older - took part), Walking Netball started up in September 2023 and Saturday morning Our Parks exercise sessions at Mitcham Fair Green went live in October 2023 regularly attracting 20 plus people.
- 2.6. **Free Swimming** - Linked to Merton's Big Sports Day (September 2023) the kids free swimming offer was made permanent and a new free offer for the 65s and overs went live in November 2023. Take up is strong. Between July and December 2023 there were 2806 free kids swims and between November and December 2023 (the first available data) 321 free 65s and over free swims. January 2024 figures are not yet available due to technical issues at GLL.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- 2.7. **'Find your #Borough of Sport' campaign (January 2024)** - The campaign runs across January utilising a highly teachable moment - the new year - when many think about making changes to impact on their wellbeing. The diagram below sets out the campaign's aims.



The campaign is about helping residents discover what works for them and promotes further use of the activity finder. It's also about reinforcing that Merton has a strong local sport and activity offer for residents and the Council's ongoing commitment to sport and activity. A key tool is a series of short two minute video stories ([click to view an example](#)):

- 2.7.1 practical tips from in-borough coaches, practitioners and services;

2.7.2 spotlights on notable providers and their offers; and

2.7.3 inspirational stories from practitioners and residents.

The campaign has resonated with residents and driven greater awareness and use of the activity finder as evidenced by the user date set out at paragraph 2.3 above. The table below shows the immediate impact the campaign had.

	Before (1-26 Dec)	After (27th Dec onwards)	% Increase
Users	395	2043	+417%
Views	1257	5926	+371%

The video stories have played particularly well. The most successful spotlight film was Movement Mornings by the Attic Theatre Company ([click to view](#)) where there were 2787 engagements. The emerging learnings are that content featuring Merton residents, dynamic footage of movement performed much better than content which solely featured professionals and outlined service offers. The 'Find your #Borough of Sport' call to action will continue throughout the year as will the use of short films.

2.8. **Recruitment** - Two additional Borough of Sport Officers have been recruited completing the in-Council Borough of Sport Team. A Sports and Leisure Manager (Policy and Strategy) - Roxanne Bennett - started on 19 February 2024. Her role internally focused working across the Council to combine effort. She brings 22 years of sports experience and joins from the Palace for Life Foundation (the Crystal Palace FC charity) and has also worked at the Fulham FC Foundation and the David Beckham Academy. Then a Sport and Leisure Manager (Projects and Partnerships) - Janna Scott - will take up post on 16 April 2024. Her role is focused on supporting stakeholders and partners. Janna has spent the last three years working for London Sport and has also worked at Scope and Swim England.

2.9. **Grants Fund** - The Borough of Sport Advisory Group discussed and agreed plans for the Borough of Sport Grants Fund at its meeting on Wednesday 24 January 2024. The grants fund is a key element of the Borough of Sport plans and will provide small grants funding to support and increase the amount of free and low cost opportunities to get active through sport and physical activity with a particular focus on 4-16 year olds, 65s and over and less affluent groups. The plan is to announce the fund in March 2024 with applications opening in April 2024 and awards in place by June 2024 in time for summer.

2.10. **Stakeholder Event** - This is being held on 5 March at the All England Lawn Tennis Club. This will bring together national stakeholders and potential funders together with local partners.

2.11. **Partnership with London Broncos** - Broncos are the only London based rugby league team that play in the RFL Super League (rugby league's top tier) and are based at the Cherry Red Records Stadium. We are developing a strategic partnership with the Club and they are keen to support and promote Merton's drive to become London's Borough of Sport. The partnership launched on 23 February 2024 at the first home game of the new season. The game was shown live on Sky Sports. The mascots at each home match who

walk out with each player will be drawn from a Merton School in rotation wearing Borough of Sport branded shirts (see pictures at **appendix 1**). The club is giving 50 pairs of tickets to each of Merton's 59 schools for the 23 February match, offering tickets to LBM employees and the Borough of Sport advisory group and key stakeholders. This represents an estimated in-kind sponsorship of Borough of Sport in the region of £300K when the Sky TV coverage is included. In addition, the club are investing £10K (matched funded by the Council) into a schools project which will promote good mental health. The project is in development and will launch later this year.

- 2.12. **Safe Spaces Investment** - We have secured £20K inward investment from the Mayor of London's Violence Reduction Unit at the GLA to deliver a Sport Unites Safe Spaces pilot. We are working closely with the Safer Merton Team to develop the pilot which will test finding the right trusted adults (coaches) and places to deliver sport and improve feelings of safety and integration. Local police are part of the pilot as are the Merton Youth Partnership. It will engage at least 10 year 6 and 7 children and run sessions up to twice a week. The proposal is in development and will be signed off shortly by the GLA. This potentially provides a strong foundation for further funding discussions with the Mayor of London.
- 2.13. **Women's Running Clubs** - In partnership with the Safer Merton Team, we are creating women's only running clubs. Women led runs to make women feel safer. A cohort of women run leaders will be recruited and trained in March 2024 with the first clubs scheduled to go live in April 2024. The clubs will empower women to be more active, to have greater control in deciding when and where they run and provide a platform for women to raise issues affecting their safety. Intel gathered via the clubs will be feedback to the Safer Merton's monthly Partnership Tasking meetings and be addressed via a multi-agency approach. Participants will also be able to engage with the Police.
- 2.14. **Exemplars** - Throughout 2024 further exemplar projects will start up. The second **Our Parks** session, targeted at parents who have just dropped their children off at school, started at Mitcham Fair Green on Tuesday 9 January and runs each week. The plan is to start up additional Our Parks sessions at three further locations by the summer. The **Women's Walking Netball** weekly sessions have moved inside (Canons Leisure Centre) and restarted for the winter. Plans are now moving forward for the **ParkPlays**. The first at Canons House will go live on Saturday 20 April 2024 with promotion ramping up from mid-March 2024. The second and third ParkPlays, at Acacia and Phips Bridge, in active development. Canons was picked because of its easy access and also the number of lower income families in the area. The other two venues were chosen as they align to and complement the two most established family hubs.
- 2.15. **Cross Team Working** - The internal Council operational group is now meeting each month and is providing a strong forum to combine effort. In particular really strong and positive cross team working has been forged between Sport and Leisure and Public Health (including co-funding), Children's Services, Planning and Safer Merton. We are also forging strong links with the Police.

OUTCOMES AND MEASUREMENT OF IMPACT

- 2.16. The ambition to increase participation in sport and physical activity will be measured through the Sport England Active Lives adults and children's surveys which report once a year. The two most recent releases set the baseline for future growth:

Children

- 2.16.1 The latest results for the academic year 2022-23 were published in December 2023. We paid Sport England (£2.5K) so every school in Merton could take part and 17 did. This is by far the highest number of schools taking part in London and significantly above the next best borough - Sutton - where 5 schools took part. Overall 55.7% of 5-16 years olds in Merton are active doing on average 60 minutes of physical activity each day, compared to the London average 45.7% and England average 47%. It is important to cavate the Merton score skews starkly to children from more affluent families. The active lives data shows that children from low income families, the disabled and those from Black, Asian and other community groups are more likely to be less active; and

Adults

- 2.16.2 The latest results covering the 12 month period November 2021 to November 2022 were published in April 2023. They show that 63.7% of Merton adults (aged 16 and above) are active doing 150 or more minutes of physical activity each day. This is broadly similar to the England averaged 63.1% but below the London average of 64.2%. Again it is important to cavate that participation in Merton skews starkly to the more affluent. National trend data from Active Lives shows over 65s with low incomes are far more likely to be inactive compared to more affluent older people. The next data set is due to be released by Sport England in April 2024 and will be the first indicator of the impact Borough of Sport is having on adult participation levels.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. Alternative options have not been considered and the plans represent best practice. As action will be delivered across a three-year period 2023-26, plans can evolve and be tweaked to respond to changing needs.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. In drawing up the plans over 100 local groups and individuals have been consulted. The forum and the advisory group are also helping steer the development and implementation and provide for an on-going dialogue with residents and local groups.

5 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Please see **Exempt Appendix 3** for the Financial, Resource and Property implications. There are no new or unfunded financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

7.1. There are no material equalities implications resulting from the recommendation(s) of this report.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are no material crime and disorder implications resulting from the recommendation(s) of this report.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1. The Borough of Sport Operational Group and the stakeholder Advisory Group monitor and track risks.



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

- Appendix 1 - Borough of Sport Headlines On One Page
- Appendix 2 - London Broncos T-shirts
- Exempted Appendix 3 - Financial, resource and property implications

Part 4b Section 10 of the constitution applies in respect of information within appendix 3 and it is therefore exempt from publication:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

APPENDIX 1 - BOROUGH OF SPORT ONE PAGE HEADLINES

<h2>High Level Ambition</h2>	<p>More Merton residents, in particular those aged 4- 16 and over 65 from less affluent communities, taking part in physical activity and or sport and therefore gaining the health, social and economic benefits from being active (Measured by Active Lives)</p>
<h2>Call to Action</h2> <p>Do one, or one more, physical activity each week</p>	
<p>Delivered through a partnership of:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="212 510 456 544">Residents & Stakeholders</div> <div data-bbox="520 510 715 544">Health & Wellbeing</div> <div data-bbox="767 510 927 544">Sport & Leisure</div> <div data-bbox="979 510 1190 544">Children & Education</div> <div data-bbox="1241 510 1385 544">Active Travel</div> </div>	
<p>Four Workstreams</p>	
<p>Menu of Opportunities/ Messaging</p> <p>Mapping and promoting opportunities to get active through Activity Finder</p>	<p>Supporting local clubs and groups</p> <p>Supporting and utilising community assets through the forum and grants fund</p>
<p>Exemplars</p> <p>Higher profile free projects to capture attention - Beat the Street, Our Parks, Walking Netball</p>	<p>Sporting Pride</p> <p>Showcasing and driving residents pride in Merton's sporting heritage.</p>
<p>Underpinned by:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="212 790 818 846"> <p>Funding - From LBM, sponsorship and inward investment Workforce - Upskilling the paid and unpaid workforce</p> </div> <div data-bbox="847 770 1385 846"> <p>Guided by: Stakeholder Advisory Group - which includes representatives from local clubs/ groups</p> </div> </div>	
 	

APPENDIX 2 - LONDON BRONCOS T-SHIRTS



Cabinet

18 March 2024

Wards: Merton Park, St Helier

Subject: Morden Town Centre Regeneration: Placemaking and Public Realm

Lead officer: Lucy Owen, Executive Director for Housing and Sustainable Development

Lead member: Cllr Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development. Cllr Eleanor Stringer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Civic Pride

Contact officer: Paul McGarry, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development

Recommendations:

- A. That Cabinet note the work underway to deliver the longer term vision for Morden town centre regeneration and the proposed activities relating to placemaking and public realm improvements which will commence spring 2024.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Merton Council is committed to building a sustainable future for our residents and business; a future that has civic pride at the heart of what we do. We are working to improve our town centres and support the creation of vibrant spaces where people feel welcome and safe.
- 1.2. Morden town centre regeneration is a key priority for the council. We recognise and celebrate the positive attributes of the wider Morden area including;
- Popular parks, greenspaces and local heritage
 - Great schools and further education provision
 - Excellent connectivity with rail, underground, bus and tram all serving Morden
 - A range of business from major employers to independent business
 - Good quality and much loved neighbourhoods surrounding the town centre
- 1.3. However we are also aware that Morden town centre itself does not meet the aspiration of residents and the quality of environment, town centre offer and residential offer requires investment.
- 1.4. Our vision for Morden town centre is embedded in Merton's new local plan and sets the planning policies to guide our long term regeneration plans.
- 1.5. Major regeneration projects take time to come to fruition and involve a lot of up-front planning and preparation. The Council is actively working on a number of workstreams which together build towards achieving our vision for the town centre.

- 1.6. The main workstreams are
- Long term development and housing delivery
Working with landowners and utilising the Council's land to secure a development partner to bring forward new homes and business space.
 - Public realm and healthy streets
Working with TFL to establish a Healthy Streets vision for Morden's public realm including proposals to rationalise bus standing facilities and create new public spaces at the heart of Morden.
 - Placemaking
Co-designing and delivering a series of 'meanwhile' shorter term improvements to the public realm whilst the longer term plans are being defined.
- 1.7. This report provides an update on an upcoming project to undertake meanwhile public realm enhancements for Morden town centre whilst officers prepare for the longer term regeneration plans for Morden.
- 1.8. The Council have recently appointed a multi disciplinary design team led by Sustrans to co-design with the community, small-scale public realm schemes, such as parklets, seating, planters and public art. This activity will run throughout the summer of 2024 utilising the Community Infrastructure Levy allocation for Morden public realm.
- 1.9. These activities represent the start of Morden regeneration and will be part of an ongoing conversation with residents and businesses regarding the future of Morden town centre and will be an opportunity to co-design and collaborate on short term practical improvements to the town centre.
- 1.10. This report also provides an update on the lettings of vacant units at the base of Merton Civic Centre which will add activity to the street scene and provide new community facilities for the town centre.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Merton Council are fully committed to regenerating Morden into a thriving town centre with new homes, improved transport and public realm, revitalised retail and modern business space.
- 2.2. Our [Strategic Development Framework](#) document illustrates how our vision for the town centre could be delivered and it is captured in the [draft Local Plan](#), which is now in its final stages before adoption in 2024.
- 2.3. The long term vision for Morden town centre is an incredibly complex regeneration scheme. Like any major regeneration scheme across London, it takes time to develop the plan and procure a development partner.
- 2.4. From 2018-2020 the Council was working collaboratively with Transport for London on a joint venture proposal. It has been well documented that TFL faced significant financial pressures as a result of the pandemic. This was also a period of uncertainty in the wider development industry and was not the right time for the Council to progress with the scheme.

- 2.5. The Council commissioned expert advice to re-frame the development costs and viability and to recommend options for the Council to take forward the regeneration project. This work has concluded and options for taking forward the long-term regeneration of Morden are under consideration and will be brought to cabinet in due course.
- 2.6. The Council has also recently consulted on the use of funding generated through the sale of CHAS to create a lasting legacy for the borough. Investing in Morden town centre was a clear priority of this work and the Council is developing proposals to bring additional investment to the delivery of Morden town centre regeneration. The outcome of this work will be brought back to Cabinet in due course.



Vision for Morden Town centre

- 2.7. The project, whilst ambitious in scope, remains one of the priorities for this administration. Not only do we want to see an improved public realm and town centre amenities, Morden, is a significant driver for housing growth and the delivery of affordable housing in the medium to long term. We are also mindful that the process of launching the scheme to the market, identifying a development partner, preparing planning applications and the financial underpinning required is a lengthy process.
- 2.8. Our plans are now firmly embedded in Merton's new Local Plan which sets the vision for Morden and is the foundation of the project. We are aware that residents are keen to see change in Morden and achieving our vision will take time and transcend multiple administration cycles.
- 2.9. In the meantime, the Council has also commissioned a design team to undertake improvements to the public realm around the town centre. Working with key partners and stakeholders, we hope to engage residents and businesses in the coming months, on ideas for improved seating, planting and public art installations that will brighten up Morden in the short

to medium term and be the start of an ongoing conversation on the future of Morden.

- 2.10. In addition, we continue to improve the spaces on the ground floor of the civic centre, and have now let all of the available Council owned spaces. The final empty units are currently being fitted out. One of these will provide affordable workspace, with a new publicly available café during the day, and the space will also provide opportunities for evening events, helping to grow the night time economy in Morden.
- 2.11. **Neighbourhood CIL investment**
- 2.12. We will be investing £300,000 of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) to improve the look and feel of the town centre. Early in 2024, we will be consulting on a Meanwhile-Use Strategy for Morden town centre, which will inform the delivery of a number of projects identified in the strategy.
- 2.13. The first project that the NCIL contributed to, was the Community Garden at Morden Baptist Church on Crown Lane, which opened in 2021. The garden has been successfully delivered and is available for all to access and use as a local daytime green space.
- 2.14. We have also delivered a parklet on Abbotsbury Road which is used by people during their lunch breaks as well as providing a space for local delivery riders to stop and rest between journeys.
- 2.15. **Placemaking and Public Realm interventions and meanwhile use strategy**
- 2.16. In February 2024 the Council concluded a procurement process and have appointed a design team to take forward placemaking and public realm improvements in Morden town centre and to develop a 'meanwhile-use' strategy for the town centre.
- 2.17. [Sustrans](#) and [Lugadero](#), supported by local manufacturers [Firecracker Works](#) are the appointed design team. The project will be co-designed with the local community and will also provide a part-time employment opportunity for local young people as part of the social value attached with the contract.
- 2.18. Sustrans will lead on community engagement and co-design workshops from April 2024 with activities throughout the summer. The programme will involve the design and manufacture of the public realm interventions between Autumn 2024 and spring 2025.
- 2.19. Examples of similar 'meanwhile' public realm projects are highlighted below which are intended to add colour and vibrancy to Morden town centre whilst creating space for engaging residents. The project will also include the creation of a meanwhile use strategy for public spaces and vacant units which will support the longer term regeneration plans for Morden.



2.20. Tooley Street Parklet, seating and planting (Southwark)



2.21. Moor Lane community garden (Barbican, City of London)



2.22. London Bridge, seating and wayfinding

102 London Road (former SoundLounge/HSBC unit)

2.23. The Council has now procured an operator for 102 London Road. The unit is being transformed into a co-working and community social space as part of the Council's collaboration with South London Knowledge Exchange.

2.24. Construction works are well underway with new shopfronts installed and the interior completely refurbished and new kitchen and bar space being installed.

2.25. The operator will be Flex media who will base their own operations at London Road as well as managing the co-working space, community space and bar/café.

2.26. Previous collaborations with FlexMedia have included:

- LBM's Towards Employment Programme
- LBM with the Cultural Impact Award
- St Helier Music & Community Festival
- Croydon Plus Credit Union
- Eastern Electric Festival in Morden Park
- worked with a local charity Celeb FC to raise funds
- free DJ courses for local residents whilst supporting MIND

2.27. 102 London Road will provide for a range of entertainment and cultural activities to support Morden town centre and the evening economy. The proposed programme of activities includes;

- cultural brunches

- stand up comedy
- open mic nights
- charity events
- quiz nights
- cinema nights
- themed nights
- local talent shows
- monthly themed functions
- private hire - birthday/work parties/wedding receptions etc
- Podcast/producer studio for hire and training.

2.28. 102 London Road is planned to open by the end of March 2024 and will be a welcome addition to Morden town centre.

4 Crown Lane (former Met Police unit)

2.29. The Council has also utilised other vacant units underneath the Civic Centre to support local charitable and community organisations. The former police office at 4 Crown Lane; which has been vacant for a number of years has now been let to the Wimbledon Guild.

2.30. The new facility in Morden provides Wimbledon Guild with a greater presence and outreach in the borough and allows for more collaborative working and joined up support with other service providers such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Merton Council by being co-located in the Civic Centre building.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. None for the purpose of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. Community engagement and co-design will be at the heart of the success of the public realm improvements. Our consultant team will undertake a series of community engagement and co-design workshops to determine the location and types of public realm improvements the community and businesses would like to see in Morden town centre. The programme of community engagement will run from April 2024 through the summer period incorporating car-free-day events in September 2024.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. The design team will start community engagement in April 2024 to scope out ideas and co-design a menu of options that can be delivered to brighten up Morden town centre.

- 5.2. The co-design process will run throughout the summer of 2024 with a series of pop-up events and dovetailing with Car Free Day in September 2024.
- 5.3. Manufacture and delivery of the schemes will be from September 2024 to Spring 2025.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Council has allocated £300,000 Community Infrastructure Levy to support public realm improvements in Morden town centre. Some small scale works have already been delivered including a contribution to the Morden community garden open space. £150,000 of the CIL allocation is earmarked for the public realm enhancement projects. Unallocated funds are held back for in-year ad-hoc projects or to match other local initiatives that may arise through our community engagement.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None for the purpose of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The design of any public seating or public spaces will adhere to equalities duties and will also have an emphasis on providing safer public spaces, particularly for women and girls; reflecting the Council's action plan for the safety of women and girls.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None for the purpose of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None for the purpose 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. <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/regeneration-projects/make-more-of-morden#toc-neighbourhood-cil-investment>

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 18 March 2024

Wards: All

Subject: Update on the Introduction of Landlord Licensing in Seven Wards

Lead Officer: Elliot Brunton, Head of Housing Needs and Strategy

Lead Member: Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development

Lead Director: Lucy Owen, Executive Director of Housing and Sustainable Development

Contact Officer: Elliot Brunton, Head of Housing Needs and Strategy

Recommendations:

A. That Cabinet note the contents of the report following the introduction of the landlord licensing on 24th September 2023.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In June 2023 Cabinet approved the implementation of the licensing scheme consisting of Selective Licensing in 4 wards: Figge's Marsh, Graveney, Longthornton, and Pollards Hill; and Additional Licensing in 7 wards: Figge's Marsh, Graveney, Longthornton, Pollards Hill, Colliers Wood, Cricket Green, and Lavender Fields. Selective Licensing and Additional Licensing schemes, require a licence for private rented sector (PRS) properties, and for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) not covered by the mandatory HMO regulations (applicable to properties with 5 or more occupants from two or more households).
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the licensing scheme activity following the implementation of the landlord licensing project and live implementation of the scheme on 24th September 2023.
- 1.3 The number of properties licensable in the current financial year was predicted at 1,866. The current figures indicate that 927 applications (49%) of annual predicted total had been received as of 8th January 2024. The Council is on target for achieving the number of applications predicted for the current financial year.
- 1.4 Income to date is approximately £300,680 (subject to end of period 10 journal adjustments), which is below the financial year projection of around £985,000. This is expected as applicants need only pay Part A of the licence fee (£247.00) on application and the remaining part B when the application has been fully assessed and the Council is satisfied that the conditions for granting a licence have been met.

- 1.5 As issues relating to the new online application and processing systems have settled, the team will prioritise reducing the timescale between the part A application and Part B approval stages. This will enable earlier collection of the Part B payment receipts.
- 1.6 Recruiting permanent Enforcement Officers has proved a challenge due to sector wide recruitment issues relating to environmental health and enforcement staff across the country, as reported previously. Temporary staff have been utilised where necessary. Recruitment activity is progressing to appoint permanently to the remaining vacant positions.
- 1.7 Some customers experienced technical difficulties with the online application and payment processes, and these have been responded to promptly to resolve the issues.
- 1.8 The scheme continues to be publicised as part of the communications plan and recent social media adverts in December highlighting the approaching end of the discount period resulted in 750 clicks to the website.
- 1.9 The scheme launch featured a grace period where landlords were expected to licence their properties by 31 December 2023. As part of its enforcement role the Council is now following up on suspected licensable properties where no application was made.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1 The Council is committed to improving housing conditions in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and to tackling the many instances of anti-social behaviour and other issues that arise from poorly managed rented properties and in particular HMOs.
- 2.2 The PRS is an important part of our housing stock and has grown rapidly in Merton. Whilst many landlords operate within guidelines, there are also others who do not, often taking advantage of some of the most vulnerable members of our community. This leads to issues affecting health and safety, the wider community, as well as the environment.
- 2.3 The licensing scheme covering seven wards is a key strand in the Council's overarching strategic approach to improving conditions in the PRS. This consists of a range of plans and strategies have been developed to achieve objectives. These include the introduction of an Immediate Article 4 Direction, which requires new small house and flat shares (small HMOs) to seek planning permission instead of being covered by Permitted Development (PD). HMOs of 7 or more people, from more than one household, already require planning permission.
- 2.4 The Council strongly believes that it is necessary to pursue a wide range of measures available to address the many issues and complaints that it receives resulting from the growth of the PRS in Merton and unscrupulous landlords. To this end, a strategic housing policy framework has been developed and will be submitted to Cabinet imminently. This brings together a wide range of existing strategies, policies and plans designed to improve the wellbeing of our communities, including landlord licensing (selective and additional licensing), the Article 4 Direction, Local Plan, Housing Delivery

Strategy, and number of other housing and community safety related strategies and plans.

- 2.5 The number of properties licensable in the current financial year was predicted at 1,866. As of 31st January 2024, 927 applications have been made, 49 % of annual predicted total has been achieved. If the 118 properties of a portfolio landlord for which alternative payment arrangements are currently being made are taken into account, then the annual predicted sum achieved is 56%.
- 2.6 The percentage of licence applications received to date does not impact on the budget, which was not set on this basis. As set out in section 6 of the report the budget is based on the estimated expenditure for the year, and the income is set as the same amount to reflect break even, as the Council must not make a profit on the scheme. We will be able to cover our costs, and there is no predicted overspend on the current numbers. Although our current numbers of licence applications are slightly lower than initial predictions, now that the initial 'grace' period is over, we will work closely with the communications team to communicate to residents how they can let us know about potentially unlicensed properties. We will also communicate to landlords the penalties for not licensing their properties.
- 2.7 Applications data for selective and additional licences (excluding 118 portfolio licences) is shown the table below. These figures indicate that the Council is on target to achieve the target licences for the financial year. Income is currently around a third of the expected financial year income of £985,000. This is not unexpected as the income at this phase of the scheme would be mostly made up of receipt of part A of the licence fee. This is due to an applicant having to pay the Part A licence fee payment of £247.00, and the remaining Part B once the application has been assessed. This is in line with legal requirements. Total Part A and B receipts due on the applications made to date is approximately £686,692, as indicated in the table below.

Predicted Licences 2023-24	Applications at 31/01/24	Total Fees Received £	Total Fees Payable
1,866	927	300,680	686,692

Year	1 (2023-24)	2	3	4	5	Total Licensable Properties
% of Total Licences	40%	50%	5%	3%	2%	100%
Selective Licence	1,643	2,053	205	123	82	4,106
Additional Licence	223	279	28	17	11	557

- 2.8 The scheme has been operational for 3 months and the team's focus has been on processing applications and responding to significant numbers of requests for assistance with the application process from landlords. Considering customer feedback changes have been made to the website and technical elements of the online process. As these issues have largely been resolved the team will prioritise reducing the timescale between the part A application and Part B approval stages. This will enable earlier collection of the Part B payments.
- 2.9 As the scheme is at a very early operational phase, there is no significant information on trends or data in respect of quality profiles of the properties assessed and visited as yet. However, initial indications are that issues being identified relate to Health and Housing Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Category 2 Hazards, associated with damp, mould, excess cold and fire safety.
- 2.10 As the operation activity continues, evaluation of trends and any findings will be reported. The focus going forward is on increasing the number of inspections and maximising the intelligence gathering and stakeholder liaison work to identify unlicensed properties for which applications should have been made. Ensuring effective and timely action including pursuing penalty notices and other enforcement actions where appropriate is a priority for the team.
- 2.11 Some customers experienced application and payment issues and these have been responded to promptly to resolve the issues. Feedback from customers has resulted in various adjustments to the e-form application process have been made to improve the customer experience.
- 2.12 As previously reported ensuring a fully resourced team to operate the scheme represented a risk as a result of sector wide recruitment problems relating to environmental health and enforcement staff across the country. Recruitment difficulties have been encountered and some posts have had to be readvertised due to failure to appoint to two permanent Enforcement Officer and the Team Leader positions in earlier rounds. Temporary staff have been utilised where necessary. A further recruitment round is being progressed to recruit to the remaining permanent staff positions in the team.
- 2.13 The scheme continues to be promoted as part of the communications plan and recent social media adverts highlighting the approaching end of the discount period resulted in 750 clicks to the website.
- 2.14 Promoting the scheme will raise awareness of the licensing requirements for both landlords and tenants. Tenants will be able to check to see if their property is licensed by requesting details from the register of licensed properties. If not registered, tenants will be able to report this to the Council. The register enquiry process is currently a manual one, and the scope for developing a website lookup facility will be explored.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None applicable.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. No consultation required.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1 None applicable

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council must not make a profit from Selective Licensing income. Any excess income received in year will be carried forward/set aside in a holding account and may be applied against future expenditure incurred in running the schemes including staff costs and overheads.

6.2 The annual budgets will be set to balance (net nil) with equal amount of income to expenditure.

6.3 The budget for 2023/24 is £430,580 expenditure and (£430,580) income.

6.4 As at period 10 (31 January 2024), £300,680 income has been received for selective and additional licensing combined (subject to end of period journal adjustments, and refunds to be processed).

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As the report is for noting no legal and statutory implications arise.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None arising from this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None identified in relation to the licensing scheme.

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

None

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Cabinet Report 19 June 2023](#): Proposed Designation of Landlord Licensing Following Review of Consultation Results; Update on Empty Homes Project; and Update on Article 4 Direction.

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 18 March 2024

Subject: Homelessness and housing needs – update and performance overview

Lead officer: Lucy Owen, Executive Director, Housing and Sustainable Development

Lead member: Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable development

Contact officer: Elliot Brunton, Head of Housing Needs and Strategy

Recommendations:

A. That Cabinet note the update contained in the report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To provide an overview of the current situation in terms of homelessness and housing needs in the Borough.
- 1.2. To explain the rise in homelessness on a regional level and in Merton.
- 1.3. To set out the financial impact for the Council of this rise.
- 1.4. To provide an overview of how the housing needs team looks to prevent homelessness, and provide relief as required to homeless households.
- 1.5. To provide an overview of the mitigations in place, both short and long term to try to relieve some of the pressure on the service and provide both more temporary accommodation and long-term homes.
- 1.6. This report also provides a brief update on the empty homes scheme.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. This report provides an update on the current situation in terms of homelessness and housing needs in the Borough.
- 2.2. The update is set against a backdrop of increasing demand in the Borough, across London and across the UK.
- 2.3. Although Merton has historically, and continues to have, the lowest level of residents in temporary accommodation in London, our numbers have risen from 350 in March 2023 to 469 in December 2024.
- 2.4. These rises are mostly due to the following factors, which are explored in more detail in the body of the report:
 - Significant increases in private sector evictions under s21 Housing Act 1996.

- Increases in asylum seekers awarded refugee status being asked to leave home office accommodation, which has meant an increase in homeless applications.
 - Increases in the number of domestic abuse cases applying as homeless.
 - A drop in the number of private sector properties becoming available for rent.
- 2.5. The Council is putting in place a number of actions to try to mitigate these issues, and find sources of both temporary and long term accommodation. There is no one answer to the issue, and all options need to be looked at to find accommodation for residents at risk of homelessness.

3 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1. Homeless legislation has existed in varying forms since 1977 with a significant update occurring with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 3.2. Where a resident makes a homeless application to the Council the law says that we must look into their circumstances to find out what type of help we can provide.
- 3.3. Firstly, we have to investigate:
- **If they are eligible for help.** This is a complex area of law and will be decided according to an individual's nationality, immigration status and residency. If someone is not eligible, we can only provide basic advice and assistance.
 - **Whether it is reasonable for a resident to return to their last address, or to continue living there.** We need to be sure that someone is actually homeless or threatened with homelessness. Someone is regarded as being statutorily threatened with homelessness if this is within 56 days.

If we are satisfied that a resident is eligible and homeless (or threatened with homelessness), we have a duty to work with them to draw up a '**Personal Housing Plan**', listing the steps both the Council and the resident can take to solve their identified needs.

- 3.4. However, we will have further duties to "priority need" homeless applicants Priority need is a legal term set out in the Act. To establish a "priority need" we will look at the following:
- Do they have dependent children, or are (or a household member) pregnant? and/ or
 - Are they vulnerable, for example because of age, mental health or disability? and/ or
 - Are they 16 or 17 years old or a care leaver under the age of 20 and / or
 - Have they lost your home because of an emergency such as a fire or flood?

- 3.5. If a resident is in a “priority need” group, have lost their home and they need temporary accommodation, we will provide this for them, while we work together on a solution.
- 3.6. Regardless of whether an applicant is in priority need, we will try and prevent homelessness for a 56-day period. This is called **the prevention duty**. If we fail to resolve their homelessness during this time and/or they become actually homeless, then we have a further 56 days to relieve their homelessness. This is called **the relief duty**.
- 3.7. If the relief duty is owed, we will also look at whether they have local connection with Merton Council, and this is defined in the law and is based either on residence, employment, or close family members living locally. We may refer a resident to another council for more help, if it is safe to do so & there is insufficient local connection with Merton.
- 3.8. If a resident does have a local connection with Merton, are in priority need and our work with them has failed to relieve their homelessness after 56 days, we will consider whether they have lost their home because of something they have deliberately done (or because of something they have failed to do). This relates to whether or not an applicant is regarded as being “intentionally homeless”. This is a very complex area of law, and every case will be considered on its individual merits. This will affect whether the Council owes a resident a long-term duty to make a final offer of accommodation.

4 PREVENTION AND RELIEF OF HOMELESSNESS

- 4.1. Under the Homelessness Reduction Act there are a number of specified circumstances where the prevention and relief duties come to an end. The Council records the reasons that the prevention and relief duties end against each separate homeless case.
- 4.2. If the duty ends due to the applicant being able to stay in their current home for 6 months, or because they have found alternative accommodation that is available for at least 6 months, this is recorded as either a positive prevention or relief outcome. It is the case that prevention and relief activities mean the individual’s housing crises are resolved far quicker than those cases who go beyond the 56-day duty. Prevention and relief activities have a cost benefit for the Council in that where this is achieved the Council does not have a long-term duty to provide temporary accommodation with the associated general fund costs.
- 4.3. When the Council devises a personalised housing plan it will set out what options and action will be taken to prevent and relieve homelessness. These are called **reasonable steps**.
- 4.4. The Council can prevent and relieve homelessness in a variety of ways such as-
 - Advice on security of tenure.
 - Advice on Protection from Eviction.

- Legal Advocacy on tenant’s behalf with private landlords.
- Negotiating with hosts to allow clients to continue to stay with them.
- Offering incentives to Landlords to renew tenancies.
- Increasing the security of the homes of the victims of domestic violence via the sanctuary scheme to allow them to stay.
- Home visits to confirm the circumstances of the client.
- Rent and mortgage rescue scheme to pay arrears where clients meet the criteria.
- Increased priority on the Council’s waiting list where the requirements of the Council’s Housing Allocations and Nominations Policy are met.
- Offers of accommodation from the Council’s Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Arranging local supported housing / hostel places for single people.

5 PERFORMANCE – NUMBER OF POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- 5.1. Performance in relation to the number of positive outcomes is recorded below. As the table below sets out, the number of homelessness preventions have remained fairly consistent over the previous years. Merton has historically had the lowest number of cases in temporary accommodation in London and these activities contribute directly to this achievement.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Preventions	465	504	480	455	452	461	338 (to Dec)

6 ROUGH SLEEPING OUTREACH & OTHER SERVICES

- 6.1. Since 2019, the Council has secured over £3 million of grant funding to develop a range of services specifically for rough sleepers. This group has specific needs above and beyond the provision of accommodation alone. The services include: day-time outreach provided by a team of in-house staff with night-time outreach covered by Thamesreach; emergency accommodation; and day-to-day support and tenancy sustainment for clients. The service has established an accommodation pathway for clients to enable them to move on to more sustainable housing depending on their needs, including shared housing with support in the private rented sector, supported housing, or tenancies of self-contained accommodation in the private rented sector.
- 6.2. In the month of November 2023, there were 100 referrals during the month concerning 44 known individuals. Although the number of referrals

dropped to 73 in December 2023, the number of known individuals had increased to 46. Some of these referrals concern rough sleepers already accommodated by the council but continued to stay out, or who have refused multiple offers of accommodation. The council continues to try and work with entrenched rough sleepers alongside other agencies, with the aim of helping them move away from their chaotic way of life, and start engaging meaningfully with support services that will help them overcome trauma, to stabilise and recover, then move on to live more independently.

6.3. Below is a summary of the rough sleeper cases currently accommodated by the Council as of December 2023.

In Accommodation	No of Clients	Of which recourse to no public fund
Nightly Paid Temporary Accommodation	19	3
PRS Shared Housing	25	5
Supported Housing	38	0
Total	80	13

6.4. It is evident that the number of rough sleepers in Merton is on the increase. The chart below shows the number of referrals of rough sleepers to our Outreach Team had more than doubled between April and August 2023 and stayed high through October and November. Although the number of referrals then dropped in December, the number of individual rough sleepers we dealt with that month was the highest ever.



6.5. The official annual single night count/estimate figure has also gone up significantly to 13 from 6 in 2022. All except one of the 13 clients were known to the outreach team. Below is a summary of why they remain on the streets:

- Had accommodation arranged by the council available on count night but chose to sleep rough = 3
 - Refused to engage = 3
 - Refused offer of accommodation = 2
 - Abandoned or evicted from accommodation = 2
 - NRPF = 2
 - New client = 1
- 6.6. The increasing demand for our services has put a strain on our limited grant funding, and it has become increasingly challenging to meet the multiple needs of the growing number of clients we support. To mitigate this, we have tapped into sub-regional and Pan London resources, such as move-on accommodation through Clearing House, the Pan London Substance Misuse Service, support for clients with immigration issues through the South London Refugees Association and Street Legal etc..
- 6.7. We have successfully bid for £40k funding for 2023-24 through DLUHC's Move-on and Prevention Funding to cover additional accommodation cost, and have just submitted a bid through DLUHC's Winter Pressure Fund for up to £11k to help pay for SWEP accommodation this winter. We are also awaiting to hear the outcome of a capital bid to the GLA for a supported housing scheme with intensive one-to-one on-site support for our 'Target 1000' clients – the most entrenched rough sleepers on the GLA Target 1000 list.

7 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

- 7.1. As noted above when residents make homeless applications, in some circumstances the Council has a legal duty to provide temporary accommodation, typically during the relief period if someone is actually homeless. Not all individuals are entitled to temporary accommodation.
- 7.2. As noted above where people appear to be (a) eligible for assistance; (b) homeless; and (c) in priority need of accommodation, they are owed what is known as the 'interim' duty. This duty provides them with temporary accommodation pending more detailed enquiries into their application and actions taken by the authority to relieve their homelessness.
- 7.3. Where on conclusion of those enquiries, (and assuming it is not possible to prevent or relieve homelessness) if officers within the Housing Department are satisfied that the homeless person is eligible; homeless; is in priority need and did not become intentionally homeless; and has a local connection, then they are owed what is known as the 'full' or the 'main' duty.
- 7.4. This is a duty to continue to provide them with suitable temporary accommodation, without limit of time, until the duty is brought to an end in a limited number of prescribed circumstances, most commonly via a

reasonable offer of accommodation. This offer is from a registered social landlord or via a private sector landlord.

- 7.5. Accommodation offered under the Act is required to be suitable for homeless households and this is set out in the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012. When securing accommodation in relation to either the “interim” or “main” homeless duty, s208(1) of the Housing Act states, so far as reasonably practical, the authority must secure this accommodation in its own area. This was reinforced in the Supreme Court judgement handed down in the case of *Nzolameso v Westminster* 2015.
- 7.6. Central government policy has restricted the types of temporary accommodation that can be seen as suitable in the discharge of these duties. With effect from 1st April 2004, the use of bed and breakfast for families with children was made unlawful over a 6-week period and the use of this accommodation for persons aged 16 or 17 years old is likewise discouraged.
- 7.7. Merton Council has the lowest number of households in temporary accommodation of any London Borough. However, there has been a significant increase in numbers going into temporary accommodation across 2022/23, which has increased even further in 2023/24. The LGA reports that the number of households living in temporary accommodation has risen by 89% in the last decade to the highest number nationally since records began in 1998.
- 7.8. These increases are due to a number of factors-
- Significant increases in private sector evictions under s21 Housing Act 1996. This is driven in part by the end of the moratorium on evictions under the pandemic and increases in mortgage interest rates causing Landlords to increase rents that tenants cannot afford or forcing Landlords to sell. End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (end of AST) is the largest cause of homelessness in Merton and London as a whole. Research from Shelter in February 2023 showed that evictions by s21 notice were up 143% in one year.
 - Increases in asylum seekers awarded refugee status being asked to leave home office accommodation. In Merton the Holiday Inn in Colliers Wood holds up to 240 asylum seekers. From September last year the Home Office has been clearing the backlog of asylum cases and this has meant an increase in homeless applications. The majority of cases have nowhere to live when the Home Office makes a positive decision, and this therefore leads to homeless applications. In some cases the Council only had 7 days’ notice of eviction.
 - Increases in the number of domestic abuse cases applying as homeless.
 - There has been a drop in the number of private sector properties becoming available with research by London Council’s showing a 41% reduction in the number of properties available for private rent since the pandemic.

- 7.9. All homeless activity is recorded in the HCLIC homelessness statistics which are completed quarterly. The most recent published quarter is for April to June 2023. London Council's also collect statistics quarterly for the region and have just released data for July to September 2023.
- 7.10. The most recent returns showed the following statistics and trends across London-
- Homelessness presentations in June 2023 were 22.1% higher than a year earlier, while the number of households owed a prevention or relief duty was up 12.7%. In September the increase was 14.5%
 - The number of households living in Temporary Accommodation in June 2023 has increased 6.6% in comparison to June 2022. In September the numbers increased by 7.3%.
 - In May 2023 there were a reported 64,003 households in Temporary Accommodation in London (105,750 household in temporary accommodation nationally).
 - The data continues to show a rise in the number of London households living in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation, including for greater than six weeks. 27 authorities reported 1,674 families living in B&B accommodation in June 2023, up 375.6% on a year earlier. Over the same period 26 authorities report 989 families living in B&Bs beyond the six-week limit, an increase of 710.7% from 122 the year before (an additional 867 families).
 - 23 authorities report average weekly Temporary Accommodation rates were 13.2% (£37.76) higher in June 2023 compared to June 2022. The average weekly temporary accommodation rates reported by 30 authorities for May 2023, compared to the same month of 2022, were 8.6% (£25.10) higher. By comparison, 23 authorities reported the average weekly TA rates were 1.8% (£5.21) higher in January 2023 compared to January 2022.
 - Data from 26 boroughs showed a net deficit on homelessness service spending as of September 2023 is projected to be 48.5% (£123.1m) higher in 2023/24 than it was in 2022/23. When adjusting for General Fund Transfers, 24 boroughs report the net deficit for the same period is projected to be 47.1% (£116.7m) higher in 2023/24 than in 2022/23
- 7.11. The numbers in temporary accommodation for neighbouring local authorities published in June 2023 is as follows-more on other London boroughs.

Authority	Number in TA in June 2023	Number per 1000 households
Sutton	895	10.62
Kingston	939	13.39
Croydon	No published figure	No published figure
Lambeth	No published figure	No published figure
Wandsworth	3,248	23.58
Richmond	521	6.11
Bromley	1,587	11.10
Merton	380	4.76

7.12. **Merton numbers in Temporary accommodation snapshot at year end**

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
174	199	197	230	350	469 (to Dec)

7.13. The Council has a legal duty to find accommodation in borough 'so far as reasonably practicable'. In practice, we try to find temporary accommodation in Borough or as close to Borough as possible, and if this is not possible, within 90 minutes of the Borough. However, this is not always possible, and the demand for temporary accommodation in London is significant. We are competing for the same spaces with other boroughs and the Home Office across the capital as well. We would generally only place households outside of London when these are neighbouring authorities, or the applicant voluntarily agrees to such a move. Any applicant to whom the main duty is owed has a statutory right to request a review of the suitability of their temporary accommodation.

7.14. The Council does have to use Bed & Breakfast if not other suitable accommodation is available, but use is generally low and not over the 6-week legal limit. At the time of writing only 3 cases are in B&B and no of these are over 6 weeks.

7.15. **Numbers in temporary accommodation, and location of placements (as of end December 2023)**

Local authority	Family	Single/Couple	Total
Merton	102	18	120
Bexley	4	1	5
Brent	2		2
Bromley	9	3	12
Croydon	122	59	181
Ealing	1	2	3
Enfield	2		2
Greenwich	4	1	5
Harrow		1	1
Hillingdon	1	1	2
Hounslow	4		4
Kensington and Chelsea		1	1
Kingston upon Thames	1		1
Lambeth	29	17	46
Lewisham	12	2	14
Redbridge	2		2
Richmond upon Thames	1		1

Southwark	7	4	11
Sutton	20	3	23
Waltham Forest	5		5
Wandsworth	7	4	11
Aylesbury Vale	1		1
Dartford	1		1
Epsom and Ewell	2	1	3
Leicester	1		1
Medway		1	1
Mole Valley	3	1	4
Runnymede	1		1
Slough	2		2
Tandridge	1	1	2
Total	347	122	469

8 ACTIONS TO FIND FURTHER TEMPORARY AND LONG TERM ACCOMMODATION

8.1. The Council is carrying out a number of actions to mitigate or respond to the rise in temporary accommodation by doing the following-

- Working with Clarion to acquire some right to buy buy-back properties for use as temporary accommodation under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF).
- Working with L&Q to acquire some void properties in Merton to use as temporary accommodation. This is being done under the 'Project 123' process announced by the G15 Housing Associations to assist with the current rise in homelessness. Merton is one of the first authorities to use the scheme.
- Continuing to be part of Capital Letters in relation to private sector procurement. Whilst there has been a significant drop in such procurement across the capital in 2023, the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) increase announced in the budget to 30% percentile of local rents will likely mean a more favourable market for local authorities go forward. Proposed figures have been released in January 2024.
- Investigating potential to work with Capital Letters to acquire a lease on a temporary accommodation block in the borough to ensure more residents can be housed temporarily in borough rather than elsewhere. There are current discussions around a 72-unit site in Wimbledon.
- The Council chairs a monthly meeting on the Holiday Inn in Colliers Wood which includes representatives from the Home Office, Ready Homes, health

and children's and adult social care. This group is provided with a monthly update on numbers in the hotel broken down by household type.

- The Council has launched an empty homes scheme and a permanent officer is in post as of January 2024 and is part of the Council regulatory services team which manages existing empty homes schemes for Richmond and Wandsworth. The officer will use a variety of approaches to bring properties back into use, including a grants scheme which require the Landlords who benefit from it to offer such homes to clients nominated by the Council.
- Continuing work with London Housing Directors and housing needs group to share good practice.
- The Council has set ambitious affordable housing targets seeking to build 400 new affordable homes on Council own land.

9 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

None for the purposes of this report

10 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

10.1. None for the purposes if this report

11 TIMETABLE

11.1. None for the purposes if this report

12 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

12.1. The current net budget for temporary accommodation/homelessness is £990,230.

12.2. The forecast net spend is £2.365m with a net overspend forecasted of £1.375m

12.3. If numbers in TA continue to rise steadily the number in TA at end of March 2024 is estimated to be approximately 500 compared to 350 at end of March 2023.

12.4. Based on this, the number in TA by the end of 2024/25 could be in excess of 650 with average spend per number in TA at £5,000 per annum, the estimated net spend could be in excess of £3m for temporary accommodation/homelessness and the estimated overspend could be in excess of £2.26m.

13 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

13.1. None for the purposes if this report

14 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

14.1. Following commitments made by the Government to reduce the Asylum back log there has been an increase in the number of asylum seekers granted status whilst living in the Colliers Wood Holiday Inn which is hotel accommodation (HA). Previously, cases were moved on to dispersed

accommodation (DA) before receiving decision, and whilst this continues to occur many more are now receiving decisions in hotel accommodation and subsequently make homeless applications.

- 14.2. Local authorities are being consulted on plans to determine an annual cap on the number of refugees resettled in the UK each year, based on the UK's capacity to accommodate and support people coming to the UK via safe and legal routes.

15 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1. As noted above the Council chairs a monthly meeting on the Holiday Inn in Colliers Wood and there is a standing Agenda Item on community safety. To date we can say that there have not been no major issues, but the Council continues to monitor and work with partners in relation to this.

16 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1. None for the purposes of this report as information only

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

18 NONE BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1. None