

Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 9 June 2016

Wards: All

Subject: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2016/17

Lead officer: Annette Wiles, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Cllr Abigail Jones, Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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Recommendations:

That members of Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- i. Consider their work programme for the 2016/17 municipal year, and agree issues and items for inclusion (see draft in Appendix 1);
 - ii. Consider the methods by which the Panel would like to scrutinise the issues/items agreed;
 - iii. Identify a Member to lead on performance monitoring on behalf of the Panel;
 - iv. Identify a Member to lead on budget scrutiny on behalf of the Panel;
 - v. Agree on an issue for scrutiny by a task group and appoint members to the Task Group;
 - vi. Consider the appointment of co-opted members for the 2016/17 municipal year, to sit on the Panel and/or on the Task Group;
 - vii. Consider whether they wish to make visits to local sites; and
 - viii. Identify any training and support needs.
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to support and advise Members to determine their work programme for the 2016/17 municipal year.
- 1.2 This report sets out the following information to assist Members in this process:
 - a) The principles of effective scrutiny and the criteria against which work programme items should be considered;
 - b) The roles and responsibilities of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
 - c) The findings of the consultation programme undertaken with councillors and co-opted members, Council senior management, voluntary and community sector organisations, partner organisations and Merton residents;
 - d) A summary of discussion by councillors and co-opted members at a topic selection workshop held on 25 May 2016; and

e) Support available to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to determine, develop and deliver its 2016/17 work programme.

2. **Determining the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Annual Work Programme**

- 2.1 Members are required to determine their work programme for the 2016/17 municipal year to give focus and structure to scrutiny activity to ensure that it effectively and efficiently supports and challenges the decision-making processes of the Council, and partner organisations, for the benefit of the people of Merton.
- 2.2 The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has a specific role relating to housing, environmental sustainability, culture, enterprise and skills, libraries and transport scrutiny and to performance monitoring that should automatically be built into their work programmes.
- 2.3 The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel may choose to scrutinise a range of issues through a combination of pre-decision scrutiny items, policy development, performance monitoring, information updates and follow up to previous scrutiny work. Any call-in work will be programmed into the provisional call-in dates identified in the corporate calendar as required.
- 2.4 The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has six scheduled meetings over the course of 2015/16, including the scheduled budget meeting (representing a maximum of 18 hours of scrutiny per year – assuming 3 hours per meeting). Members will therefore need to be selective in their choice of items for the work programme.

Principles guiding the development of the scrutiny work programme

- 2.5 The following key principles of effective scrutiny should be considered when the Commission determines its work programme:
- **Be selective** – There is a need to prioritise so that high priority issues are scrutinised given the limited number of scheduled meetings and time available. Members should consider what can realistically and properly be reviewed at each meeting, taking into account the time needed to scrutinise each item and what the session is intended to achieve.
 - **Add value with scrutiny** – Items should have the potential to ‘add value’ to the work of the council and its partners. If it is not clear what the intended outcomes or impact of a review will be then Members should consider if there are issues of a higher priority that could be scrutinised instead.
 - **Be ambitious** – The Panel should not shy away from carrying out scrutiny of issues that are of local concern, whether or not they are the primary responsibility of the council. The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities the power to do anything to promote economic, social and environmental well being of local communities. Subsequent Acts have conferred specific powers to scrutinise health services, crime and disorder issues and to hold partner organisations to account.

- **Be flexible** – Members are reminded that there needs to be a degree of flexibility in their work programme to respond to unforeseen issues/items for consideration/comment during the year and accommodate any developmental or additional work that falls within the remit of this Panel. For example Members may wish to question officers regarding the declining performance of a service or may choose to respond to a Councillor Call for Action request.
- **Think about the timing** – Members should ensure that the scrutiny activity is timely and that, where appropriate, their findings and recommendations inform wider corporate developments or policy development cycles at a time when they can have most impact. Members should seek to avoid duplication of work carried out elsewhere.

Models for carrying out scrutiny work

2.6 There are a number of means by which the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel can deliver its work programme. Members should consider which of the following options is most appropriate to undertake each of the items they have selected for inclusion in the work programme:

Item on a scheduled meeting agenda/ hold an extra meeting of the Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Panel can agree to add an item to the agenda for a meeting and call Cabinet Members/ Officers/Partners to the meeting to respond to questioning on the matter ■ A variation of this model could be a one-day seminar-scrutiny of issues that, although important, do not merit setting up a 'task-and-finish' group.
Task Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A small group of Members meet outside of the scheduled meetings to gather information on the subject area, visit other local authorities/sites, speak to service users, expert witnesses and/or Officers/Partners. The Task Group can then report back to the Commission with their findings to endorse the submission of their recommendations to Cabinet/Council ■ This is the method usually used to carry out policy reviews
The Panel asks for a report then takes a view on action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Panel may need more information before taking a view on whether to carry out a full review so asks for a report – either from the service department or from the Scrutiny Team – to give them more details.
Meeting with service Officer/Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A Member (or small group of Members) has a meeting with service officers/Partners to discuss concerns or raise queries. ■ If the Member is not satisfied with the outcome or believes that the Panel needs to have a more in-depth review of the matter s/he takes it back to the Panel for discussion
Individual Members doing some initial research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A member with a specific concern carries out some research to gain more information on the matter and then brings his/her findings to the attention of the Panel if s/he still has concerns.

2.7 Note that, in order to keep agendas to a manageable size, and to focus on items to which the Panel can make a direct contribution, the Panel may choose to take some “information only” items outside of Panel meetings, for example by email.

Support available for scrutiny activity

2.8 The Overview and Scrutiny function has dedicated scrutiny support from the Scrutiny Team to:

- Work with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel to manage the work programme and coordinate the agenda, including advising officers and partner organisations on information required and guidance for witnesses submitting evidence to a scrutiny review;
- Provide support for scrutiny members through briefing papers, background material, training and development seminars, etc;
- Facilitate and manage the work of the task and finish groups, including research, arranging site visits, inviting and briefing witnesses and drafting review reports on behalf on the Chair; and
- Promote the scrutiny function across the organisation and externally.

2.9 The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel will need to assess how it can best utilise the available support from the Scrutiny Team to deliver its work programme for 2016/17.

2.10 The Panel is also invited to comment on any briefing, training and support that is needed to enable Members to undertake their work programme. Members may also wish to undertake visits to local services in order to familiarise themselves with these. Such visits should be made with the knowledge of the Chair and will be organised by the Scrutiny Team.

2.11 The Scrutiny Team will take the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel’s views on board in developing the support that is provided.

3. Selecting items for the Scrutiny Work Programme

3.1 The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel sets its own agenda within the scope of its terms of reference. It has the following remit:

- Housing, including housing need, affordable housing and private sector housing;
- Environmental sustainability, including energy, waste management, parks and open spaces and the built environment;
- Culture, including tourism, museums, arts, sports and leisure;
- Enterprise and skills, including regeneration, employment, adult education and libraries; and
- Transport.

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Team has undertaken a campaign to gather suggestions for issues to scrutinise either as agenda items or task group reviews. Suggestions have been received from members of the public, councillors and partner organisations including the police, NHS and Merton Voluntary Service Council. Issues that have been raised repeatedly at Community Forums have also been included. The Scrutiny Team has consulted departmental management teams in order to identify forthcoming issues on which the Panel could contribute to the policymaking process.
- 3.2 A description of all the suggestions received is set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The councillors who attended a “topic selection” workshop on 25 May 2016 discussed these suggestions. Suggestions were prioritised at the workshop using the criteria listed in Appendix 3. In particular, participants sought to identify issues that related to the Council’s strategic priorities or where there was underperformance; issues of public interest or concern and issues where scrutiny could make a difference.
- 3.4 A note of the workshop discussion relating to the remit of the Panel is set out in Appendix 4.
- 3.5 Appendix 1 contains a draft work programme that has been drawn up, taking the workshop discussion into account, for the consideration of the Panel. The Panel is requested to discuss this draft and agree any changes that it wishes to make.
- 4. Task group reviews**
- 4.1 The Panel is invited to select an issue for in-depth scrutiny and establish a task group.
- 5. Co-option to the Panel membership**
- 5.1 Scrutiny Panels can consider whether to appoint non-statutory (non-voting) co-optees to the membership, in order to add to the specific knowledge, expertise and understanding of key issues to aid the scrutiny function. Panels may also wish to consider whether it may be helpful to co-opt people from “seldom heard” groups.
- 6. Public involvement**
- 6.1 Scrutiny provides extensive opportunities for community involvement and democratic accountability. Engagement with service users and with the general public can help to improve the quality, legitimacy and long-term viability of recommendations made by the Panel.
- 6.2 Service users and the public bring different perspectives, experiences and solutions to scrutiny, particularly if “seldom heard” groups such as young people, disabled people, people from black and minority ethnic communities and people from lesbian gay bisexual and transgender communities are included.
- 6.3 This engagement will help the Panel to understand the service user’s perspective on individual services and on co-ordination between services. Views can be heard directly through written or oral evidence or heard indirectly through making use of existing sources of information, for example from surveys. From time to time the Panel/Task Group may wish to carry out engagement activities of its own, by holding discussion groups or sending questionnaires on particular issues of interest.

- 6.4 Much can be learnt from best practice already developed in Merton and elsewhere. The Scrutiny Team will be able to help the Panel to identify the range of stakeholders from which it may wish to seek views and the best way to engage with particular groups within the community.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1 A number of issues highlighted in this report recommend that Panel members take into account certain considerations when setting their work programme for 2016/17. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is free to determine its work programme as it sees fit. Members may therefore choose to identify a work programme that does not take into account these considerations. This is not advised as ignoring the issues raised would either conflict with good practice and/or principles endorsed in the Review of Scrutiny, or could mean that adequate support would not be available to carry out the work identified for the work programme.
- 7.2 A range of suggestions from the public, partner organisations, officers and Members for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme are set out in the appendices, together with a suggested approach to determining which to include in the work programme. Members may choose to respond differently. However, in doing so, Members should be clear about expected outcomes, how realistic expectations are and the impact of their decision on their wider work programme and support time. Members are also free to incorporate into their work programme any other issues they think should be subject to scrutiny over the course of the year, with the same considerations in mind.

8. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 8.1 To assist Members to identify priorities for inclusion in the Panel's work programme, the Scrutiny Team has undertaken a campaign to gather suggestions for possible scrutiny reviews from a number of sources:
- a. Members of the public have been approached using the following tools: articles in the local press, My Merton and Merton Together, request for suggestions from all councillors and co-opted members, letter to partner organisations and to a range of local voluntary and community organisations, including those involved in the Inter-Faith Forum and members of the Lesbian Gay and Transgender Forum;
 - b. Councillors have put forward suggestions by raising issues in scrutiny meetings, via the Overview and Scrutiny Member Survey 2016, and by contacting the Scrutiny Team direct; and
 - c. Officers have been consulted via discussion at departmental management team meetings.

9. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the financial, resource and property issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific financial, resource and property implications.

10. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Overview and scrutiny bodies operate within the provisions set out in the Local Government Act 2000, the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 10.2 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific legal and statutory implications.

11. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement. The reviews will involve work to consult local residents, community and voluntary sector groups, businesses, hard to reach groups, partner organisations etc and the views gathered will be fed into the review.
- 11.2 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the human rights, equalities and community cohesion issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

13. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the risk management and health and safety issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific risk management and health and safety implications.

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

- 14.1 Appendix 1 – Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel draft work programme 2016/17
- 14.2 Appendix 2 – Summary of topics relating to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel's remit suggested for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme
- 14.3 Appendix 3 – Selecting a Scrutiny Topic – criteria used at the workshop on 25 May 2016
- 14.4 Appendix 4 – Notes from discussion of topics relating to the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Scrutiny Topic Selection Workshop on 25 May 2016

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 None

Draft work programme 2016/17**Meeting date – 9 June 2016**

Item/Issue
Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing (Cllr Martin Whelton)
Agreeing the work programme
Performance monitoring
Phase C pre-decision scrutiny (inc parks, green infrastructure, street scene and waste management)
Morden Leisure Centre update ¹
Circle Housing: agreement of questions for mergers meeting

Meeting date – 7 September 2016

Cabinet Members for Community and Culture (Cllr Nick Draper) and Cleanliness and Parking (Cllr Ross Garrod)
Performance monitoring (including Circle Housing)
Diesel premium report for pre-decision scrutiny
Draft final report of the commercialisation task group ²
Scoping the task group for 2016/17 (air quality)
Town centre regeneration update report
Circle Housing representatives to discuss merger
Circle Housing: agreement of questions for meeting on repairs and regeneration

Meeting date – 1 November 2016

Budget scrutiny round 1
Performance monitoring
Circle Housing representatives to discuss repairs and regeneration
Housing supply task group six monthly monitoring
Planning shared service pre-decision scrutiny
Highways maintenance contract for pre-decision scrutiny
Crossrail 2 representatives (recommended this happen through a separate meeting)

Meeting date - 12 January 2017 (scrutiny of the budget)

¹ It has been agreed that further updates on the development of the Morden Leisure Centre will be provided at Panel meetings when needed.

² The issues of public toilets and café facilities in parks are to be referred to the commercialisation task group.

Scrutiny of budget
Performance monitoring
Merton Adult Education performance monitoring
ANPR performance monitoring
Environmental health, trading standards and licensing shared service expansion for pre-decision scrutiny

Meeting date - 22 February 2017

Performance monitoring
Town centre regeneration update
Parking update report (including pavement parking and RINGO)
Libraries annual report
Task group update

Meeting date - March 2017³

Performance monitoring (including Circle Housing)
Housing supply task group six monthly monitoring
Review of facilities for physical activity in children's playgrounds

³ There is a proposal to swap the date of this meeting with that of the Children and Young People Panel to optimise phasing.

Background

Review of the Sustainable Communities topic suggestions from the last municipal year (2015/16)

Topic suggestion	What happened
20 mph Zones/Limits	The Panel decided not to include this in the work programme.
Adult Skills and Employability Task Group	Implementation of the task group's recommendations was further monitored by the Panel. It was agreed that there would be no further action and that on-going monitoring would be achieved through the distribution of the minutes of the Economic Wellbeing Group to members of the Panel.
Basement conversions/dwellings	The Panel decided not to include this issue in the work programme.
Climate Change and the Green Deal Task Group	Implementation of the task group's recommendations was further monitored by the Panel. It was agreed that no further action would be taken and outstanding recommendations would be referred to the Commercialisation task group.
Commercial services and the opportunities to maximise resources	A task group has been formed and is currently working on its final report. This will be presented to the Panel at its September meeting before progressing to Cabinet later that month.
Community facilities	The Panel decided not to include this issue in the work programme.
Community transport	The Panel decided not to include this issue in the work programme.
Converting commercial buildings to residential properties	The Panel indicated it wished to receive an update on the number of conversions but it

	is unclear if this was happened.
Creating a tourist industry in Merton	The Panel scrutinised this issue through the provision of a briefing paper.
Creation and maintenance of green spaces	This was looked at as part of the Phase C procurement programme which in addition to waste management also includes parks and grounds maintenance.
Cycle routes	Implementation of the Council's cycling strategy was subjected to scrutiny by the panel through an update report.
Economic Development and Public Health – The Health and Wellbeing strategy	It was agreed this would be considered as part of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.
Fox control	The Panel decided not to include this issue in the work programme.
Highways maintenance – contract renewal	The contract is due for renewal in September 2017. It was envisaged that the Panel would want to review the contract before this occurs. However, it was too early for this to happen in 2015/16 and it has been suggested for this year's work programme.
Housing supply	The final report of Housing Supply Task Group was approved by the Panel and Cabinet with an action plan being presented to the Panel by officers in January 2016. Implementation of the action plan will be monitored through the Panel.
Merton Adult Education	The change to the commissioning model was subject to pre-decision scrutiny through the Panel.
Monitoring the stock transfer of Circle Housing/Merton Priory	Subject to performance monitoring through meeting with the Panel every 6 months and the quarterly presentation of performance data.

Morden Leisure Centre	Included in the work programme and subject to pre-decision scrutiny throughout the year.
Planning	The Panel decided not to include this issue in the work programme.
Public Toilets	It was agreed to include this in the work programme. There was a concern about whether businesses are advertising their membership of the community toilet scheme. It was suggested residents could be engaged as mystery shoppers. However, it was agreed not to progress this at the first Panel meeting.
Public Transport	All topic suggestions were referred to the Public Transport Liaison Committee.
Shared Services	It was agreed that the department would provide a briefing after the shared services task group has reported. This report is being finalised and it is suggested the briefing to the Panel happen as part of this year's work programme.
Street lighting	It was agreed that if this subject appeared on the forward plan the Panel could decide if scrutiny was required. Lighting doesn't appear to have been scrutinised during the last year.
Town centre regeneration	Implementation of town centre regeneration strategies was subjected to scrutiny by the panel through an update report.
Waste management	The panel subjected the results of the wheeled bin pilot to pre-decision scrutiny.

Annual Resident Survey:

The annual survey of Merton's residents did not take place in 2015 (because the contractor withdrew from delivering the Survey of Londoners package). It is currently

unclear whether or not this will happen in 2016. Until this occurs, the most recent resident survey results are from 2014 which are referenced in this paper.

Complaints relating to the remit of this Panel in 2015/16:

With regard to the Council's complaints process, in 2015/16 the Environment and Regeneration Department received 710 complaints (potentially up from 557 in the last reported period although it is unclear whether this is a true comparison). Of these, 577 have been categorised as relating to street scene and waste services (including 164 = refuse, 128 = garden waste and 86 = food waste). A further 78 are categorised under sustainable communities services (including 32 = planning and 25 = traffic and highways).

The Community and Housing Department received 96 (potentially up from 73 in the last reported period although it is again unclear whether this is a true comparison). Of these, 28 were related to housing.

Description of topic suggestions received in relation to the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel 2016/17

The following topics were suggested by residents, members and officers, for consideration by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, for its 2016/17 work programme:

1. Air quality;
2. Automatic number plate recognition project
3. Circle Housing
4. Crossrail2;
5. Green infrastructure;
6. Highways maintenance contract;
7. Housing supply;
8. Libraries
9. Merton Adult Learning;
10. Mitcham Common Conservators;
11. Morden Leisure Centre;
12. Parking;
13. Parks;
14. Public toilets;
15. Public transport;
16. Shared Services:
 - Environmental health, trading standards and licensing
 - Overview and Scrutiny Commission Shared Services task group update
 - Planning shared service
 - South London Waste Partnership
17. Street scene
18. Street trading licenses;
19. Town Centre Regeneration;
20. Transport services for adults with special education needs; and
21. Waste management.

1. TOPIC: Air Quality

Who suggested it?

This is a popular topic having been suggested by the Wimbledon Society, the Environment and Regeneration Department Management Team and Panel members.

Summary of the issue

The report published in February 2016 by the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (*Every Breath We Take*) calculates that 40,000 people in Britain die early each year because of outdoor air pollution, a significant increase on the previous estimate of 29,000. Emissions from factories, power plants and traffic create smog linked to asthma, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and dementia. The authors of the report said progress in some areas had been undermined by the dash for diesel; "In 2000, just 14% of new cars were diesel powered, but today this figure has risen to 50%... Particulates from diesel engines have been poorly controlled and remain a problem". The report found unborn and young children were particularly susceptible to air pollution.

The council is currently exploring a number of options which will deter the use of diesel cars through the application of premiums. Details are still to be finalised although one suggestion is the development of an emissions based charging policy for resident/business permits.

The *Every Breadth We Take* report also highlights the need to understand the link between indoor air pollution and health, including the key risk factors and the effects of poor air quality in homes, schools and workplaces. Local authorities can play an important role in raising awareness of indoor pollutants such as risks from badly maintained gas appliances, radon gas and second-hand tobacco smoke, as well as pollutants and toxins from household cleaning products.

How can scrutiny look at it?

The diesel premium policy needs to be agreed in autumn 2016. It has already been suggested that the Panel subject this to **pre-decision scrutiny**. It is envisaged that the Panel will need to look at this at its September meeting.

The panel could appoint a **task group** to explore other initiatives that might sit alongside a diesel premium policy that would also promote better air quality. Examples include encouraging council staff and local residents to increase their use of public transport, electric cars, car sharing, cycling and walking. The Task Group might consider the role of public health and education in developing awareness and prompting a change in behaviours. (Several residents have suggested more needs to be done to support walking, calling for this to be given great focus and for support to be offered through changes such improved phasing of crossing times at pelican and other pedestrian crossings.)

Given the impact on health the Panel could also consider the strength of the partnership approach between public health, environmental health and Merton Clinical Commissioning Group to address these issues.

2. TOPIC: Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) project

Who suggested the topic?

Scrutiny of the ANPR project has been suggested by the Environment and Regeneration Department Management Team. The Council has been successful in lifting an injunction brought by the unsuccessful bidder. As a result, work is on-going with the preferred bidder for the scheme to go live in June 2016.

Summary of the issue

The objective of the ANPR project is to greatly improve the Council's ability to manage traffic flows, congestion, and traffic pollution, improve the free flow of all vehicles including buses and emergency vehicles as well as ensuring increased safety for pedestrians, particularly around schools. Motorists who do not comply with the moving traffic regulations will receive a Penalty Charge Notice.

Resident surveys have listed traffic congestion as one of the top three concerns in the borough and it has increased as a concern in the recent past. During summer 2014 surveys were carried out at different locations within the borough with the aim of identifying how efficient and effective the existing enforcement methods are for capturing moving traffic contraventions and testing the technology available. These surveys clearly showed that the current methods of enforcement are not as efficient as they should be.

How can scrutiny look at it?

The Panel could look at the implementation of the ANPR scheme following its go live date in June 2016. Members could ask officers for a report on the implementation of the scheme and what affect this has had (**performance monitoring**). It has been suggested performance monitoring happen six months after launch and therefore during the early part of 2017.

3. TOPIC: Circle Housing

Who suggested the topic?

This has been suggested by Panel members, the Environment and Regeneration Departmental Management Team and Stephen Hammond MP.

Summary of the issue

The ownership of all 9,000 Merton Council homes was transferred to the housing association [Circle Housing Merton Priory Homes](#) (CHMP) in March 2010. This was based on a vote in favour of the transfer by 53% of tenants. The organisation committed to invest £129 million in improvements to their homes from the point of the transfer up until 2020, with a planned £383 million being invested in the stock over 30 years. CHMP also set up a £1 million community fund to invest in projects across the borough.

Panel members have considered the benefits resulting from the transfer and delivery against the promises contained within the transfer agreement as part of its 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/2016 work programmes. This is achieved through the quarterly CHMP report to Cabinet being shared with Panel members and by inviting CHMP representatives to six monthly meetings with the Panel.

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel has also received pre-decision reports at appropriate intervals on the CHMP Regeneration programme of its three estates.

A merger between Circle Housing and Affinity Sutton is progressing. Concern is being expressed about what this means for tenants, lease holders and freeholders and whether this will add to difficulties residents have expressed about repairs and communications with Circle. Councillors and at least one local MP report these difficulties are already causing a considerable case load.

The Panel has also raised concerns about the progress of repairs through its regular performance monitoring. It has already been suggested by the Panel that it invite the tenants' scrutiny group to attend alongside Circle representatives.

How could scrutiny look at it?

In addition to having oversight of quarterly performance reports, it is suggested that the Panel continue to receive six monthly updates on progress with implementation of the commitments within the housing stock transfer document and on associated benefits to residents. This could be achieved by continuing to ask a CHMP representative to attend the Panel (**performance monitoring**).

Based on the experience gained in the last municipal year, it will be important for the Panel to develop an agenda for these sessions to ensure they provide valuable insight. Asking the tenants' scrutiny group to attend one or both of these sessions during the municipal year may prove informative in understanding the perceived gap between reported performance and councillors' casework. However, it has also been highlighted by the Director of Community and Housing, that with the fifth anniversary of the transfer approaching, it will need to be agreed with CHMP that the Panel will continue to have oversight of its work.

To help provide additional insight into this topic, it has also been suggested that one panel meeting at which this topic will be discussed during this year, could take place in a community venue co-located with CHMP property.

4. TOPIC: Crossrail2

Who suggested the topic?

Interest in this topic is broad. It has been suggested by the Sustainable Communities panel itself, the Environment and Regeneration Department Management Team and residents. On the one hand, there is concern to fully exploit the potential offered to Merton by the Crossrail2 development, whilst on the other there is concern about the potential disruption caused by the development. The high level of interest is demonstrated by the large number of responses to the recent Crossrail2 consultation from Merton (1,979).

Summary of the issue

Crossrail2 is a proposed new railway serving London and the wider South East. It would connect the National Rail networks in Surrey and Hertfordshire via new tunnels and stations between Wimbledon, Tottenham Hale and New Southgate, linking in with London Underground, London Overground, Crossrail 1, national and international rail services. Currently, it is only proposed; the formal decision to proceed will require primary legislation, with construction projected to happen from the early 2020s until the early 2030s. It has therefore been suggested that the focus for scrutiny over the next period should be on ensuring the Council look long term at the opportunity provided by the development and to integrate this into regeneration and development happening now. Additionally, there is a need to ensure residents' concerns continue to inform the Council's response to Crossrail2.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Given how long it is likely to take for this development to come to fruition and the level of impact it will have on the borough, this could become a standing item for the Panel which could be reviewed at least once every six months. This could be achieved through a separate report and by considering how Crossrail 2 is integrated into other development initiatives already happening (**executive accountability**).

It may be appropriate for Panel to invite representatives from Crossrail 2 to present to members. This would provide the opportunity for the Panel to directly question those responsible for the development.

5. TOPIC: Green infrastructure

Who suggested the topic?

This topic has been raised separately from and in connection to the outsourcing of parks and grounds maintenance that is part of the Phase C procurement. Residents and members have questioned whether enough is being done to sustain Merton's green infrastructure through activities such as tree watering and tree preservation orders. The link between this and air quality is highlighted. It has also been suggested by the Environment and Regeneration Department Management Team in the context of the masterplanning activity underway to regenerate Merton's town centres; the need to ensure this includes sufficient emphasis on green infrastructure has been highlighted.

Summary of the issue

Merton is rich in green spaces, with over [60 public parks](#). The council has a number of duties to maintain parks and green spaces and a dedicated service for this purpose with a range of specialists in arboriculture etc.

The Panel undertook a [review](#) of Parks and Open Spaces as part of its 2009/10 work programme. In addition, the Panel undertook a Task Group [review](#) of trees as part of the 2011/12 work programme.

The Annual Resident Survey 2014 found that 72% of residents felt that the standards of parks and green spaces were good. Satisfaction has increased on the previous year.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Panel, having already undertaken in-depth scrutiny reviews of this topic, could receive a briefing report and performance information on how the department is performing in this area. This could look at how it is envisaged performance will be sustained/enhanced through the Phase C procurement (**performance monitoring**).

The Panel has already indicated its desire to undertake on-going **pre-decision scrutiny** of the procurement of the waste management contract and Phase C including outsourcing of parks and grounds maintenance.

6. TOPIC: Highways maintenance contract

Who suggested the topic?

This item is remaining from the work programme for the last municipal year. The Environment and Regeneration Department Management Team suggested that the Panel may wish to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the renewal of the highways maintenance contract. However, the timing of the contract renewal was such that it wasn't right for scrutiny to consider this last year and it remains for consideration in 2016/2017. Residents have also submitted relevant topic suggestions specifically about the quality of pavements in the borough.

Summary of the issue

The Council aims to maintain all footpaths and roads in a safe condition and ensure they make a positive and attractive contribution to the appearance of the borough. The Panel receives regular performance information regarding the maintenance of highways as part of its work programme.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members may wish to undertake **pre-decision scrutiny** of the renewal of the highways maintenance contract at the appropriate time. The renewal is scheduled for Autumn 2016 and therefore this needs to be addressed at either the June or September meetings.

7. TOPIC: Housing supply

Who suggested the topic?

A resident has suggested housing supply as a topic. Additionally, it has been raised in the context of the welfare issues resulting from homelessness and by the Director of Community and Housing as a key and pressing issue for the borough.

Summary of the issue

Lack of affordable housing is a concern for 21% of residents within the 2014 Annual Resident Survey 2014. London's housing crisis can be put simply; for years, the Greater London area has been failing to generate the numbers of new homes it needs to house a population that has been growing fast. According to the last census, London needs at least 40,000 new homes every year just to keep pace but this isn't being achieved. In Merton, this means there are over 8,000 people on the housing register, with housing prices rising by 42% and private rents rising by 22% in the last three years.

In recognition of this, the Panel appointed a Task Group as part of its 2014/15 work programme, to investigate housing supply in the borough. The review had the following terms of reference:

- To understand housing market characteristics and the level of housing need in Merton;
- The national and local policy context surrounding the provision of affordable housing;
- Data on housing need in Merton;
- The role of the local authority and partners (i.e. Registered Providers, private landlords and private developers) in ensuring good quality housing;
- An overview of what affordable housing is being built in Merton;
- To review the Council's existing housing strategy with a view to strengthening and/or developing this policy in light of the review's findings;
- To determine how the Council might support and encourage the production of new affordable homes in Merton and what land is available for development; and
- To determine what good practice exists elsewhere that might be utilised in responding to the demand for affordable housing.

The Task Group explored a number of models for housing provision and met with housing associations, other local authorities, the GLA and NHS to enable them to determine feasible models for Merton to meet housing needs. The Task Group [reported](#) to the panel in September 2015 with an [action plan](#) for the implementation of the Task Group's recommendations being presented in January 2016.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel monitor every six months the delivery of the agreed recommendations resulting from the task group review of housing supply (**performance monitoring**).

This on-going agenda item will allow the Panel to provide on-going scrutiny of the housing supply issue in general as has been requested by the Director of Community and Housing. It also gives the opportunity to be kept informed of policy developments and how this issue is being addressed by other Councils.

8. TOPIC: Libraries

Who suggested the topic?

This has been suggested by the Director of Community and Housing based on it being a standing agenda item for the Panel.

Summary of the issue

Libraries in Merton have undergone a complete change in their delivery model. This has been driven by a significant reduction in Council funding which has been replaced by external funding and delivery through volunteers. The Panel has taken a role in scrutinising this changing services which was judged to be highly successful in 2015/2016 (five out of the six key performance indicators for the service were achieved at record levels).

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Panel could continue to have oversight of the performance of the libraries service and receive the libraries annual report for review (**performance monitoring**).

9. TOPIC: Merton Adult Education

Who suggested the topic?

A focus for scrutiny on Merton Adult Education has been suggested by residents, Panel members and the Community and Housing Department Management Team. Members have specifically suggested the need to consider the future of adult education in Merton in the light of changes to how the service is delivered and how skills, identified as needed by local employers, will be provided. A resident has questioned the provision of courses for adults with learning difficulties.

Summary of the issue:

Merton is in the process of shifting to a commissioning model for its provision of Adult Education. New providers are being selected and courses commissioned.

South Thames College has been selected to provide the lion's share of adult education courses in areas such as English for Speakers of Other Languages, English and Maths, Creative Arts, Modern Foreign Languages, Information Technology and vocational courses.

Employability skills such as CV writing and job interview techniques and family learning courses such as English and maths and healthy living, will be provided by [Groundwork London](#), a charity that has been delivering accredited skills training in London for over 10 years, often to those who face the greatest barriers to employment.

Officers are working with new providers to finalise the courses that will be on offer for the academic year 2016/17. The curriculum will be published in the late spring/early summer.

The next phase of discussions is taking place with the staff of the current service so transition to the new service is as smooth as possible.

Many of the adult learning courses which Merton has traditionally offered will still be available and, as the new curriculum is developed, there will be a range of new courses on offer.

When the new providers were announced, it was noted that they were chosen for their individual areas of expertise and their ability to provide adult learners with a comprehensive range of courses and great facilities. Also, that the new contract for adult learning in Merton allows the continuation of a rounded and quality adult learning service that is good value for taxpayers in the context of the reduced funding of £500,000 from the government's Skills Funding Agency in the past five years.

It is also noted that a Merton is currently supporting a pan-London review of skills on which the Director of Environment and Regeneration is the lead.

How scrutiny could look at it?

During the last municipal year, prior to going to Cabinet for decision, the Panel reviewed proposals to move to a commissioning model for adult education services. Whilst the new service is now being commissioned, delivery won't commence until September 2016. However, there is still a potential role for scrutiny. The Community and Housing Department Management Team has already signalled the importance of scrutiny oversight of Merton's adult learning provision. This is in the context of the service being subject to inspection by Ofsted which has previously been critical ([here](#)).

The panel could request a report from officers to establish how the new provision responds to Ofsted's criticism and to scrutinise targets for the new service (**performance monitoring**). The Director of Environment and Regeneration could also be asked to update the Panel on the pan-London skills review on which he is leading for Merton.

To support Panel members in knowing the new providers and the service they offer, it has been suggested that the Panel meeting covering this item take place in the premise of one of the new providers. This would allow members to benefit from a tour and to question the provider directly.

10. Mitcham Common Conservators

Who suggested the topic?

[Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage](#) has suggested the need for the effectiveness of [Mitcham Common Conservators](#) to be independently reviewed. It states that this is long overdue and feels it is necessary based on its belief that the Conservator's representations at planning do not appear to have the best interests of the Common at heart.

Summary of the issues

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage has suggested that one example of the need for a review is that Mitcham Common's Management plan, which expired in 2012, is not available on its website and there has been no public notification of a review.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Panel could request a report from the conservators on their activities and plans for it to review its management plan (**performance monitoring**).

11. TOPIC: Morden Leisure Centre

Who suggested the topic?

Members of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel have asked to be kept informed and engaged at pre-decision stages of the project to develop the new Morden Leisure Centre and restore the former centre site.

Summary of the issue

The Panel undertook pre-decision scrutiny of the development of Morden Leisure Centre, and use of the site of the former centre, as part of its 2015/16 work programme.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members asked to be engaged at the appropriate intervals in the programme of development of the leisure centre and restoration of the former site. This is to enable them to undertake **pre-decision scrutiny** and maintain an overview of the project.

12. TOPIC: Parking

Who suggested it?

Parking control in town centres and other shopping areas has been suggested by the Wimbledon Society and the St John's Area Residents Association.

Summary of the issue

The Panel has previously received a report on Town Centre Parking and Parking at Neighbourhood Shopping Parades that contributed to the town centre parking review undertaken by the Panel in February 2015. This report highlighted that parking is at a premium. There is high level of demand from all user groups – passing trade; local residents; businesses; workers and commuters. This is being addressed through a range of initiatives such as parking/loading provision; electronic parking signs; cashless parking; simplification of tariff structures and the introduction of a free 20 minute parking period. The Council is currently campaigning to stop pavement parking.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Panel may wish to receive a progress report on parking in town centres (**performance monitoring**).

13. TOPIC: Parks

Who suggested it?

The facilities available in Merton's parks have been raised by a number of residents with specific focus on children's playgrounds, provision of places to eat and drink and some park areas where all dogs must be on a lead.

Summary of the issues

- **Children's playground facilities** in local parks and green spaces provide an important role in creating healthy spaces in local neighbourhoods. This can help to support children's learning and mental wellbeing. It can also promote physical activity tackle other local authority objectives such as reducing childhood obesity. With the current budget reductions many local authorities are no longer able to invest in these facilities;
- **Café facilities** can attract residents to their local park as well as provide essential facilities such as toilets. The Commercial Services task group, set up by this panel has identified that there may be opportunities for Merton parks to increase their commercial role and generate additional income for the council; and
- **Dogs on leads** provides reassurance to those who are uncomfortable around dogs and will alleviate the difficulties faced by dog owners when they need to prevent them interacting with other dogs.

How can scrutiny look at it?

- **Children's playgrounds:** the Panel could look at the level of investment in Merton's playgrounds and the options available to improve children's play areas (**Executive Accountability**);

- **Café facilities:** the panel could review the current facilities in parks and consider how this provision could be expanded either through the council or private ownership (**task group**); and
- **Dogs on leads:** the Panel could request a report on Council policy in relation to dogs in parks (**Executive Accountability**).

This topic also links to consideration of Merton's green infrastructure.

14. TOPIC: Public toilets

Who suggested the topic?

A topic suggestion was received from a resident regarding the availability of public toilets in Merton.

Summary of the issue:

The council has a [community toilet scheme](#) which was launched in 2009. The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel considered the scheme as part of their 2009/10 work programme.

The scheme enables the public to use toilets in facilities in the borough such as those in shops, pubs, restaurants etc. where that business has signed up to the scheme. Public toilets that the council previously ran were closed due to funding issues some time ago and there are no proposals to reinstate them.

Currently, the community toilet scheme has seven members across the whole of the borough comprising a number of restaurants and the Council's Civic Centre premises.

How could scrutiny look at it?

This topic was suggested last year and it appears it was agreed that it would be included in the work programme. However, it was agreed not to progress this at the first Panel meeting.

Members may wish to receive an update on the Community Toilet Scheme (**performance monitoring**). Alternatively, (or possibly in addition) Panel members may want to undertake a survey of the scheme in their wards to understand if it is being adequately advertised to residents and if there are other local premises owners who are willing to participate.

15. TOPIC: Public transport

Who suggested the topic?

A number of topic suggestions were received from residents in relation to public transport.

Summary of the issue:

The council is not responsible for providing public transport but does work with Transport for London (TfL) and other providers to ensure that any proposals to expand or improve public transport provision are commented on, opportunities for partnership working are established and income streams to fund related projects are identified.

The council is also responsible for ensuring the correct infrastructure is in place for public transport.

The council administers a [Public Transport Liaison Committee](#) (PTLC) that provides a mechanism by which residents can raise issues about public transport with TfL and other providers.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel refer these issues to the PTLC and for it to respond; issues raised fall within its remit and may be more effectively dealt with in this forum in discussion with TfL. The Panel and Committee chair are one and the same which will further aid communication.

16. TOPIC: Shared Services

- **Environmental health, trading standards and licensing**

Who suggested the topic?

Environment and Regeneration Departmental Management Team (DMT) has asked the Panel to continue to provide scrutiny of the expanding regulatory shared service.

Summary of the issue

A shared regulatory service was established with Merton and Richmond Councils in 2014 covering Licensing, Trading Standards, Environmental Health (Commercial, Environmental Protection), including administrative support. Expansion of the service to include another Council is now being tentatively considered.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The scrutiny of the service in all respects, but particularly performance, is already provided by the Joint Regulatory Committee which is made up of elected Members from both Richmond and Merton. This meets on a quarterly basis and was established at the outset in order to provide scrutiny of the shared service.

It is suggested that the Panel undertake **pre-decision scrutiny** of proposals relating to the expansion of regulatory shared services at appropriate intervals. It is envisaged this will be achieved through the receipt of a progress report on the development of the service.

- **Overview and Scrutiny Commission Shared Services task group update**

Who suggested the topic?

The Scrutiny Officer suggests the panel receive a presentation on the findings and recommendations from the Shared Services review recently conducted by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

Summary of the issue

Against a background of reduced funding, the Council has explored a range of ways to continue to deliver core services whilst cutting costs and maintaining quality standards. This includes sharing services with other local councils. Many of these arrangements are within the remit of Environment and Regeneration, with the Sustainable Communities Panel providing pre-decision scrutiny and performance monitoring for these arrangements. As a result, the findings and the recommendations of the Shared Service review conducted by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission seem particularly pertinent for members of the Panel.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Panel could invite members of the Commission to present the findings and recommendations of their review and to receive regular updates on the resulting action plan and its implementation.

- **Planning shared service**
Who suggested the topic?

A number of topic suggestions have been received in relation to planning processes and planning law. Further topic suggestions have also been received in relation to planning and enforcement. Notably, Mitcham Cricket Green and Community Heritage has questioned the process for public consultation on planning applications and has called for more openness with regard to planning enforcement. Similarly, the Wimbledon Society has questioned if enough is done through the public consultation element of the planning application process to achieve the Government's objective of bringing the local community into the planning process at an early stage. Members have asked for a review of planning enforcement with an emphasis on the expectations of residents and that 'de minimis' variations to approvals already granted should not be agreed as a matter of course. Residents have questioned if enough is being done to resist pressure from powerful developers whilst others highlight the detriment caused to local residents whilst developments are on-going.

Summary of the issue:

Planning is underpinned by the [Local Plan](#) (formerly known as the Local Development Framework) which encompasses a number of policies that support it including:

- [The Core Planning Strategy](#);
- [Sites and Policies Plan](#); and
- [Sustainable Transport and Local Implementation Plan](#).

Planning is a controversial issue; the Council's planning committee evaluates requests for significant changes to properties/in the borough. Major alterations, new buildings, changes in the use of buildings and land, the enlargement of existing buildings are all defined as development and therefore require planning permission.

In the 2014 Annual Resident Survey, only 29% of residents said that they feel that planning services are good.

Additionally, the Government is consulting on the commercialisation of council planning services (on which the Panel has already received a [briefing](#) from the Director of Environment and Regeneration) whilst Merton is in the process of developing a shared planning service with Sutton and Kingston councils which it is thought will launch in April 2017.

How should scrutiny look at it?

The Panel can provide **pre-decision scrutiny** of the on-going development of the shared planning service whilst placing emphasis on the feedback made through the topic suggestion process. It has been indicated that pre-decision scrutiny will be needed during Autumn 2016.

- **South London Waste Partnership**
Who suggested the topic?

The Environment and Regeneration Department Management Team have requested the Panel provide pre-decision scrutiny once the preferred bidder has been identified prior to this being taken to Cabinet for decision in July 2016.

Summary of the issue

In November 2014, Cabinet agreed to procure jointly with the Authorities of the South London Waste Partnership an integrated contract for waste collection, street cleaning, winter maintenance, commercial waste and vehicle maintenance as the main group of services (LOT1), with a separate contract for Sutton and Merton only for grounds maintenance (including parks, arboriculture and grass verges and Cemeteries) (LOT2).

The programme was last reviewed by the Sustainable Communities Panel in Feb 2016.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Pre-decision scrutiny of the identified preferred bidder will be required at the June 2016 Panel meeting.

17. TOPIC: Street scene

Who suggested the topic?

Residents have raised a number of issues in relation to street scene including graffiti, spitting and the disposal of chewing gum.

Summary of the issue

Along with partners, (CHMP and Railtrack), the Council offers a graffiti removal service whilst ten dual cigarette and chewing gum bins have recently been piloted in the borough. Both graffiti and littering with chewing gum can be the subject of enforcement orders issued by Waste Operations.

How should scrutiny look at it?

The Panel could seek clarity on how these services will be affected by the South London Waste Partnership (Phase C), the shared outsourced service currently being developed. Consideration of the issues raised by residents should inform the Panel's **pre-decision scrutiny** of the preferred supplier and on-going **performance monitoring** once the shared service is established.

18. TOPIC: Street trading licenses

Who suggest the topic?

This has been suggested Wimbledon East Hillside Residents' Association which has expressed a concern that too many street trading licences are being granted without fair consultation with local residents. There is a belief that this detrimental to the local area.

Summary of the issue

A business in Merton, not contained within a building, is highly likely to be street trading. Under the London Local Authorities Act 1990 street trading is defined as:

- (a) the selling or the exposure or offer for sale of any article (including a living thing); and
- (b) the purchasing of or offering to purchase any ticket; and
- (c) the supplying of or offering to supply any service, in a street for gain or reward (whether or not the gain or reward accrues to the person actually carrying out the trading);

A Street Trading Licence is required to operate. These licences cover market stalls, food vans, shop forecourts and tables and chairs placed on the public highway. A fee is payable

depending on the type of licence requested and the size of the pitch involved. A Street Trading Licence means a licence for specified goods, location and time period. Licences run for not less than six months and not more than three years.

Temporary Street Trading Licences can be granted for a single day or for such a time period as specified in the licence. A temporary licence may not exceed six months in duration.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Panel could request a report from officers to understand the process for granting Street Trading Licences, including how consultation with the public is achieved and how decisions whether or not to grant a licence are made. This could also detail the number of licences and how these are clustered. This meeting could invite the Wimbledon East Hillside Residents' Association (and potentially other resident associations) to attend and express their views (**performance monitoring**).

19. TOPIC: Town Centre Regeneration

Who suggested the topic?

This is one of the most suggested topics this year with this being raised by residents and members. We have received general requests to better understand what is planned for town centre regeneration as well as those that are more specific including use of vacant buildings, improvements to shopping parades, whether there is sufficient hotel and office space provided throughout Merton in addition to masterplanning the regeneration of Morden and Wimbledon town centres.

Summary of the issue

Merton's Regeneration Programme is rooted in the Local Development Plan [Core Planning Strategy](#) vision for the Borough (2011). The programme sits alongside Merton's [Economic Development Strategy](#) and, Transport for London's [Local Implementation Plans](#).

Regeneration is planned and managed by the FutureMerton team. At present the council is working on town centre regeneration programmes across the borough.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel has maintained an overview of the progress being made on the Council's regeneration programme by receiving regular progress reports and presentations from the FutureMerton Team. It is suggested that the Panel continue to receive progress and performance reports at six monthly intervals on the regeneration programme as a standing item on the work programme (**performance monitoring**).

The Panel may also wish to build some flexibility into the work programme to accommodate any **pre-decision scrutiny**.

20. Transport services for adults with special education needs

Who suggested it?

This has been suggested by the Environment and Regeneration Department Management Team.

Summary of the issue

Panel members have signalled their interest in exploring ways to reduce the cost of travel for adults with special educational needs and to look at ways of ensuring efficiency and greater value for money.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Commission is looking at this topic through its finance committee (in conjunction with consideration of similar services for children and young people). Any Panel members wishing to explore this further are welcome to attend the relevant Commission meeting(s).

21. TOPIC: Waste management

Who suggested the topics?

This is the most suggested topic again this year. In fact, there has been a local campaign by residents to increase the number of waste management topic suggestions made. This is also reflected in the complaints data and the number relating to street scene and waste services.

The topics received in relation to this area are:

- the effectiveness of street cleaning;
- fly tipping; and
- getting street cleaners to place items that can be recycled into the recycling bins available on their routes.

Summary of the issue

An increase in concerns regarding litter and dirt on Merton's streets makes this a top concern for residents as noted in the 2014 Annual Resident Survey.

Work has been on-going in this area. The Environment and Regeneration Department have undertaken [a Public Value Review \(PVR\) of Street Cleaning](#). The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel were engaged in the PVR from the outset and have commented on the scope of the review and received regular updates on progress and outcomes from the review as part of its 2012/13 and 2013/14 work programmes.

Furthermore, as part of the Panel's 2011 work programme an in-depth task group [review](#) of cleaner town centres was undertaken. The Panel continues to monitor implementation of the action to achieve the task group's cleaner town centre recommendations.

The council has a system for reporting any issues or concerns regarding street cleaning and have introduced an app called, 'Love Clean Streets'.

It should be noted that this topic suggestion obviously strongly links to the formation of the South London Waste Partnership (Phase C) which includes an integrated contract for waste collection, street cleaning, winter maintenance, commercial waste and vehicle maintenance as the main group of services.

Additionally, during the last municipal year, the Panel has undertaken a [review](#) of the wheeled bin pilot which found that this 'allowed a significant improvement in street cleanliness'.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It has already been suggested that the Panel need to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the procurement of waste management services at the June 2016 meeting. This could

provide the opportunity to look at how the issues raised by residents regarding street cleaning will be addressed through the new service.

Selecting a Scrutiny Topic – criteria used at the workshop on 26 May 2016

The purpose of the workshop is to identify priority issues for consideration as agenda items or in-depth reviews by the Panel. The final decision on this will then be made by the Panel at its first meeting on 9 June 2016.

All the issues that have been suggested to date by councillors, officers, partner organisations and residents are outlined in the supporting papers.

Further suggestions may emerge from discussion at the workshop.

Points to consider when selecting a topic:

- Is the issue strategic, significant and specific?
- Is it an area of underperformance?
- Will the scrutiny activity add value to the Council's and/or its partners' overall performance?
- Is it likely to lead to effective, tangible outcomes?
- Is it an issue of community concern and will it engage the public?
- Does this issue have a potential impact for one or more section(s) of the population?
- Will this work duplicate other work already underway, planned or done recently?
- Is it an issue of concern to partners and stakeholders?
- Are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?

Note of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel topic selection meeting on 24 May 2016

Attendees:

Councillors Abigail Jones (Chair), Stan Anderson, David Chung, Daniel Holden, Janice Howard, Philip Jones, Najeeb Latif, Imran Uddin,
Councillor Nick Draper, Cabinet Member for Community and Culture
Councillor Martin Whelton for Regeneration, Environment and Housing
Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration
Anthony Hopkins, Head of Library & Heritage Services
Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services (note taker)

Apologies:

Councillor John Sargeant

Air quality

AGREED to receive a report on the diesel premium policy at the September 2016 meeting as a pre-decision item so that the Panel can input prior to the strategy being signed off by Cabinet.

AGREED to start a task group review of air quality once the commercialisation task group has finished its work. Members wish to finalise the terms of reference for the review once the report on diesel premium policy has been received. It was suggested that information from the Mayor of London's approach to air quality should also inform the terms of reference and/or the work of the task group.

Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR)

Noted that the ANPR scheme will go live in June 2016 in 41 locations across the borough.

AGREED to request a report on the implementation of the scheme, in particular whether it has delivered the expected outputs as well as information on cost and income generated. This report should be received at least 6 months after the go-live date.

Circle Housing

Members expressed concerns at the impact that the merger with Affinity Sutton may have on Merton tenants. Members believe that the repairs service had deteriorated in recent years and a desire to hold Circle Housing to account on this as well as in relation to their handling of complaints.

AGREED to have items at three of the panel's meetings during 2016/17 – two six monthly performance reports as previously (in September and March), with a focus on the merger at the Panel's meeting in September 2016 and on repairs and regeneration at the November meeting.

Also AGREED that members would like an opportunity to plan their lines of questioning in advance of these meetings – either by identifying questions at the previous meeting so that the scrutiny officer can send these to Circle Housing (as the Overview and Scrutiny Commission has done in relation to questioning the borough Commander) or by having a sub-group that meets prior to the Panel meeting to agree questions.

Crossrail2

AGREED to invite representatives from Crossrail2 to a Panel meeting in the autumn, timed so that the Panel can input into the consultation. If necessary this may need to be done at a special meeting of the panel. Resident groups and other stakeholders should be invited to give their views at the meeting.

Phase C, including Green infrastructure, Parks, Streetscene and Waste management

Noted that the Panel had already indicated a wish to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the procurement of the waste management contract and Phase C, including outsourcing of parks and grounds maintenance.

AGREED that the pre-decision report on Phase C should be received at the Panel's meeting on 9 June and that the related issues on green infrastructure, parks, streetscene and waste management should be addressed within the report. This will be the main item at that meeting.

Highways maintenance contract

The Director of Environment and Regeneration advised that if the Panel wish to carry out pre-decision scrutiny on whether to renew the current contract, expiring in September 2017, it would be timely to consider the matter in November 2016.

AGREED to receive a report at the Panel's meeting in November 2016.

Housing supply

AGREED that the Panel should continue to monitor implementation of the task group's recommendations every six months until it is satisfied that they have been fully implemented.

Libraries

AGREED that the Panel should continue to scrutinise the libraries annual report.

Merton Adult Education

AGREED that the Panel should receive a report early on 2017 that would include early information on how the new model of service provision is working. Members noted that data for the first full year would not be available until September 2017.

Mitcham Common Conservators

Members noted that the Mitcham Common Conservators was set up by Statute and that primary legislation would be required in order to change how it works. It also noted that the public may attend its Board meetings.

AGREED that this issue is not a priority for scrutiny in the coming year. Suggested that the Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage could write to the Mitcham Common Conservators' Board to raise issues of concern.

Morden Leisure Centre

AGREED that it would be helpful for the Panel to continue to receive brief verbal updates at appropriate intervals.

Parking

AGREED that the Panel should receive a progress report on parking in town centres and that this should include information on the impact of changes to pavement parking, RINGO as well as performance information on parking enforcement.

Parks

AGREED to refer the issue of café facilities to the commercialisation task group to consider in relation to opportunities for income generation.

Members discussed and expressed a wish to encourage the provision of facilities for physical activity in children's playgrounds. They noted that residents are interested in this issue and could be invited to take part in scrutiny discussions. AGREED to request a report on this issue so that scrutiny would have an opportunity to debate, hear from the public and make suggestions. The issue is not time sensitive so could be received at any meeting where there was space on the agenda.

Dogs on leads – noted that the council has policy on this and AGREED that it was not a priority issue for scrutiny in 2016/17.

Public toilets

AGREED to refer the issue to the commercialisation task group to consider if it feels that it is relevant to their remit.

Public transport

AGREED that the Chair should ask the appropriate officers to organise a meeting of the Public Transport Liaison Committee to deal with the topic suggestions that relate to public transport.

Shared services

AGREED to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the on-going development of the shared planning service in autumn 2016.

Discussed the concerns that had been raised around building control and planning enforcement and AGREED to refer the matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to consider whether to carry out a review of enforcement.

Also suggested that there could be discussion at Community Forum meetings of what the most common complaints are and whether these are actual breaches of planning conditions as only a small proportion are found to be.

AGREED to provide pre-decision scrutiny of plans to expand the environmental health, trading standards and licensing shared service.

Street trading licences

This was considered by members to be primarily an enforcement issue. AGREED to refer to Licensing Committee or to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

Town centre regeneration

AGREED to continue to receive progress and performance reports at six monthly intervals

Transport services for adults with special educational needs

Noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's financial monitoring task group will be scrutinising this issue and that panel members could attend the relevant meetings.
AGREED no further action by the Panel.

Cabinet Member attendance at Panel meetings

Agreed that the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing should be invited to attend the Phase C discussion on 9 June and that the Cabinet Members for Community and Culture (Nick Draper) and for Cleanliness and Parking (Ross Garrod) should be invited to the Panel's meeting on 7 September.