

Committee: Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel

Date: 16 October 2013

Agenda item: 9

Wards: All

Subject: Update on Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel task group reviews

Lead officer: Ben Sherlock

Lead member: Cllr Russell Makin

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Recommendations:

- A. That the Panel consider any further performance management they wish to undertake and establish outcomes they wish to note from the reviews.
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1 Purpose of report and executive summary

- 1.1. To provide an update on the progress made on the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny task group review topics since their conclusions in 2011 and 2012.

2 Details

CLEANER TOWN CENTRES (2010-11)

- 2.1 Street Scene and Waste team reported to the Scrutiny panel in April 2012 on the outcomes of this scrutiny review.
- 2.2 The latest version of the action plan (with progress updated as of April 2012) is in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The team has since moved on from the original action plan, although the recommendations have been incorporated into on-going work.

HOUSEHOLD WASTE MANAGEMENT (2010-11)

- 2.4 In August 2013 the head of Street Scene and Waste added comments on the progress made on the action plan that was approved by Cabinet and noted by the Scrutiny Panel in 2011-12.
- 2.5 The approved action plan with comments is attached in Appendix 2.

TREES (2011-12)

- 2.6 In January 2013 Members received the Executive Response and Action Plan for their Task Group Review of Trees undertaken as part of the Panels 2011/12 work programme.
- 2.7 Many actions' timescales do not start until Sep/Dec 2013 or well into 2014 and so there is no formal updated action plan (see action plan attached as Appendix 3).

- 2.8 The Panel agreed in January 2013 to performance manage delivery of the Action Plan every 6-9 months as part of the work programme, so the next update is due in September 2013.
- 2.9 Actions to be completed by end of August 2013:
- Establish a cross-divisional and interdepartmental steering group involving relevant officers and other key stakeholders to oversee production of tree strategy (By April 2013)
 - Identify resources to support process (By June 2013)
 - Corporately, to utilise the improved data and analysis for the better management of the borough's tree assets (From January 2013)
 - Combine benefit and value data with i-Tree canopy assessments (From January 2013)
 - Improve information available to ward members on local tree works in their areas (By March 2013)
 - Ensure that any capital investment in the tree stock does not end with the planting of the tree but that tree establishment costs beyond the first year are integral to the project capital funds or that associated growth in revenue budgets is provided (By April 2013)
 - Ensure that all tree losses are quantified in monetary terms using, at present, the CAVAT method, and that these asset values are utilised in practice (From April 2013)
 - Provide on-going tree asset (total stock) valuations to determine loss/gain in the resource and indicate direction of travel (From April 2013)
- 2.10 The Panel may wish to check up on the above actions at the update.
- 2.11 All other actions are not yet due or were already underway in January 2013.

3 *Alternative options*

- 3.1. To leave the performance management of the task group reviews to officers.

4 *Consultation undertaken or proposed*

- 4.1. Officers approached and asked for progress updates (latest updates attached at Appendix 1 and 2).

5 *Timetable*

- 5.1. To be considered at the Panel meeting on 16 October 2013

6 *Financial, resource and property implications*

- 6.1. None that were not considered at the time of the reviews.

7 *Legal and statutory implications*

- 7.1. None that were not considered at the time of the reviews.

8 *Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications*

8.1. None that were not considered at the time of the reviews.

9 *Crime and Disorder implications*

9.1. None that were not considered at the time of the reviews.

10 *Risk management and health and safety implications*

10.1. None that were not considered at the time of the reviews.

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

1: Action Plan for Cleaner Town Centres

2: Efficient Household waste Management

3: Action Plan arising from the Scrutiny Review of Trees, 2011-12

APPENDIX 1

Scrutiny Task Groups: Cleaner Town Centres Action Plan

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
1	Education is required to alert the public to the nuisance of litter, the cost to the council and local residents of clearing it up and the penalties that can result	The anti-litter campaign has been given Gold campaign status by Merton Communications for 2011-12 within the overarching Cleaner service campaign. These have included 16 public engagement exercises on the street between April through to October 2011 and a prominent poster campaign across the borough. We were a partner with Keep Britain Tidy and The Chewing Gum Action Group for a month long Bin-it campaign targeting chewing gum litter. We received paid for advertising throughout the borough and participated in 5 road shows across the borough. In total 35 public
2	We recommend that following the savings proposal to cut the full-time post to support education programmes in schools, consideration should be given to encouraging schools to run programmes themselves. This should include assessing how effective the lessons are and looking into the most effective format of teaching (i.e. drama groups, junior wardens etc).	A theatre group will visit 43 primary schools between April 2011 to March 2012 to deliver a production that covers enviro-crime issues including graffiti and litter. A golden broom award has been launched in all Merton primary schools in October 2011, rewarding the class, which made the most effort each week, and taking account of an initial assessment of the streets in the local area. 10 schools have signed up to date. Talks are also given throughout the year junior warden groups in schools, raising awareness of local litter, graffiti and recycling issues and arranging community litter picks. Currently working with the schools that have opted in for golden broom and looking to promote to other schools through case studies

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
		to encourage other schools to sign up for school year 2012/13.

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
3	<p>We recommend that use of the NI195 (Detritus Measure) is reviewed – chasing a further improvement in this measure has, it is felt, led to an unnecessary diversion of resources away from litter collection etc. Consideration should be given to what is a good score in this measure rather than necessarily seeking to be ‘best in class’. This will provide more resources for other more visible street cleansing issues.</p>	<p>We no longer have to report NI195 results to Central Government. However we have opted to continue to measure our performance in conjunction with The Tidy Britain Group. The targets set are local targets to ensure we maintain a good standard of cleansing. Dealing with litter is a priority for residents and this is where the main resource will be committed. We continue to use the Local Environmental Quality Survey (LEQS) to monitor our cleanliness levels and this will enable Merton to compare our standards to other Local Authorities. However we do use additional information to direct our resources to areas that need attention particularly in relation to litter which remains a priority for our residents.</p>
4	<p>We recommend that Cabinet review the specification of vehicles such as the Mini Johnson, so that items that are rarely used are not routinely provided.</p>	<p>We had delivered four new compact mechanical sweeper vehicles during the summer. These vehicles will be fitted only with the necessary equipment. We have retained four small vehicles which are fitted with appropriate equipment, the vehicles are a mix of two slightly smaller vehicles so they have better access to areas where pavements are narrower.</p>

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
5	Street cleansing waste needs to be collected when seen. Too often it is left in a green bag for days waiting to be collected and acts as a source for other rubbish and fly tipping	We introduced as from 1 April 2011 a new street cleansing strategy which included new response teams; one of their responsibilities is to clear the green sacks produced by the solo sweepers which are left at specific drop off points. The introduction of the dedicated response teams has improved our ability to collect green sacks produced on the same day.
6	We recommend that more solo cleaners should be introduced in residential streets. This should be in conjunction with better promotion of who the 'local street sweeper' is. Businesses should also be provided with their street cleaner contact details so that they can contact them (where possible) whilst on their round. This will improve the community value of the street cleansing team. Matching the skills of the solo cleaners to the 'patch' would enable those with excellent interpersonal skills to improve communication between business owners and council officers.	As part of the new operational strategy introduced from 1 April 2011 we have increased the number of solo sweepers from 22 to 48. It would not be practicable for Businesses to contact the street cleaning staff direct as this could put undue pressure on the operative. All staff have undertaken customer service training and refresher training is being organised. Businesses can contact Merton via the Contact Centre or on line for local issues. The solo sweepers introduced have daily interaction with Businesses and local residents. We have received a number of compliments from residents about the good work our staff are doing.

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
7	<p>We recommend that more consideration needs to go into planning approval for the '90 degree' shop signs and uneven shop frontages as they cause street fronts to look untidy when in large numbers. This issue could be resolved via the enforcement function/Core Strategy and specific planning policies.</p>	<p>Would need to be considered as part of review of town centres as development occurs. Many non-illuminated 90 degree shop signs do not actually require approval (advert consent) and this makes it impossible to control the proliferation of such signage. Shop front design guidance exists, and could be refreshed as part of the Design SPD. The SPD will be presented to Cabinet on 16th January 2012 and a consultation will follow where this proposal can be presented for consideration. The SPD is anticipated to be ready late 2012. It wont resolve any existing signage issues until shop owners renew their signage, or as part of a targeted</p>
8	<p>We recommend that work should be undertaken with the borough's larger retailers and Chamber of Commerce to see if training could be given to smaller retailers on shop window dressing. A pilot partnership scheme could be set up with the larger retailer working with small businesses from other parts of the borough (to avoid competition).</p>	<p>There have been a number of attempts and programmes that have sought to address the training of retailers. Could be considered as part of the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy (under town centre management) subject to funding being available. It is unlikely that there will be general funding under town centre management for window dressing but Merton is submitting a bid to the Mayor's Outer London Fund R2 for support to regenerate Mitcham town centre. Part of the bid proposal is to work with the London Sustainability Exchange who provide point of sale support and time-</p>

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
9	<p>There is a rather fragmented approach to interaction between the council and local businesses at present. If the council were seen to have clear responsibilities that were efficiently carried out, businesses could then be encouraged to take more pride in their area and become involved in local initiatives.</p>	<p>Business Forums in Mitcham, Morden, Colliers Wood and Raynes Park are now being facilitated by the Chamber on behalf of the Council. The Wimbledon Business Forum continues as part of the Wimbledon Town Centre Management initiative and the vote for WTC to be established as a Business Improvement District (BID). The proposal was successful and the BID was officially launched on 1 April 2012 for a five year period. Merton is looking to introduce a Street Champion scheme across the borough to encourage both residents and businesses to maintain and take pride in and ownership of the local environment. Street Champion scheme launched March 2012 - already gained 50 members. A high profile campaign will look to increase the number of street champion volunteers. Officers will work with these volunteers to arrange community clean ups etc. Will work with the newly formed Wimbledon BID to encourage businesses to come on board. Merton has commissioned the Merton Chamber of Commerce to manage "Merton Means Business". This service is to aid, assist and support businesses at any stage and is free of charge. There are both one-to-one and networking sessions with an accredited business advisor. In November 2011 the council recruited a dedicated Business Growth Officer whose role includes networking businesses to get involved locally, especially in town centres and industrial estates.</p>

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
10	<p>We recommend that consideration be given to a civic award for Best Shop Premises to be run at times of local/national celebration, where residents can vote for their favourite in each town centre. On consultation, business representatives felt that this would be better than an annual 'forced' competition in the first instance.</p>	<p>Under consideration as part of the Merton Business Awards. The next round of Awards will take place in September 2012.</p>
11	<p>We recommend that in future, (dependent on funding) the design and running of capital assistance grant schemes should be run working closely with the chamber of commerce and other small and local business groups.</p>	<p>Detailed criteria will be developed and consultation will be undertaken with business groups and the Town Centre Business Forums. There are 11 categories including "Best Independent Retailer" and "Merton's Favourite Business". Residents are able to nominate in any category. This concept could also be built into marketing and promotional activity in our town centres, particularly Mitcham and Colliers Wood where specific funding has been earmarked for regeneration.</p>
12	<p>We recommend that when litter/recycling bins are ordered in the future, the design should have a much larger hole to allow pedestrians to place refuse fully in the bin.</p>	<p>This has been done. The first batch of 76 dual litter and recycling bins for Mitcham had the smaller apertures. Since then all procurement 100 bins for Colliers Wood, Morden and Wimbledon have the larger apertures. Further to the new bins with the larger apertures being located in Colliers wood and Morden we are now locating these bins in</p>

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
13	<p>We recommend that as the current time between reporting a problem and its being acted on appears somewhat slow, an investigation should be carried out into the different communication systems in place and consideration given to the investment of technology which will allow street sweepers to quickly report issues. All members of the team need to be given the role of 'eyes and ears' of the council, doing more than just street sweeping but also reporting fly tips, pot holes, uncollected street cleansing waste etc. A link also needs to be established from when a report of waste, dirty streets etc is recorded to action being taken.</p>	<p>Currently each member of staff has been allocated with a mobile phone and are able to report issues immediately they are seen. We are investing in enhanced IT support for the CRM system to enable mobile working and messages being passed directly to and from frontline teams. The current plan is that the new technology will become available to Merton staff from mid-2012. The Council is reviewing its Customer management systems with a view to improve communication flow and the recording and response to customer concerns. The project will involve improved links between the back office and frontline services and the use of mobile working.</p>
14	<p>We recommend that consideration should be given to putting in additional conditions in the commercial waste contracts stating when commercial waste should be collected, or instead promote the idea that shops in an area coordinate their commercial waste arrangements to minimize disruption on the footways.</p>	<p>The existing Commercial contracts include the agreed day or days of collection and timings. Businesses should only present their waste on the agreed days and ensure that the waste does not cause disruption on the footways. This is actively encouraged by the Councils Commercial Waste Officers and Enforcement team. We are developing a new street cleaning strategy which will consider time bandings for the presentation of commercial waste in town centres and lead to</p>

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
15	We recommend that better publicity of the success of enforcement of littering/flytipping should be encouraged via My Merton as we acknowledge that local media is unlikely to cover this. More publicity to residents on the number of fines issued and the amount of money collected should be conveyed to reiterate the point that littering is an offence.	The summer 2011 edition of My Merton featured an article on enforcement prosecutions. There have been recent success in gaining coverage in the local press and radio media resulting from Merton press releases. We continue to promote enforcement prosecutions

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
16	<p>We recommend that enforcement of Aboards and Newspaper Stands should be increased – shops increasingly encroach the pavement with several A- boards and other stands selling fruit, newspapers etc outside their shop. Retailers need to be informed that it is not acceptable to let these encroach onto the pavement, especially where there are several outside of the same business.</p>	<p>It is not clear what is meant by Newsstands and this would need to be defined clearly. If they are the actual holders of the papers/magazines then they are regulated by street trading legislation. It is often the case that slim stands are located within 300mm of a shop window and they tend not to encroach on the footway. Outside of that they are subject to the same licensing conditions as other forecourt licences. There are exemptions for certain types of newsstand and vendors. Advice would need to be sort from Legal Services on interpretation of the legislation and the individual circumstances of each case considered. Similarly the London Benchmarking Group on Street Trading would need to be consulted to ensure a joined up approach to enforcement across London and also for their views on the legal position. All forecourt trading on the public highway is subject to licensing, many premises however have private forecourts that may appear to be part of the highway when in fact this is not the case. Street Trading Service is comprised of one officer and he is already working to capacity 6 days per week.</p>

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
17	<p>We recommend that, to assist with the problem of cigarette and chewing gum litter, all office premises and bars should be requested to attach a cigarette bin to their buildings and should inform their staff to use it. Particular areas, such as Hartfield Road, have a particular problem with this. The chewing gum boards on lampposts should be replaced with the attachable boxes for both gum and cigarette ends. Regard should be given to the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Act legislation and further education campaigns. Investigation is also needed to review special coatings for pavements to reduce chewing gum nuisance.</p>	<p>Businesses are encouraged by the Engagement & Enforcement Team to deal with cigarette ends more responsibly, under their “duty of care”. The Chewing Gum Action Group – a national body promoting good practice on chewing gum disposal – in conjunction with Keep Britain Tidy has chosen Merton as a partner for their 2012 campaign starting next Spring. Trials are taking place nationally on biodegradable chewing gum. The replacement of the boards on lampposts for chewing gum with boxes, requires further investigation. Considerations include: _ In 2012 we have the Queen’s Jubilee and the Olympics - security consideration. _ Consultation with residents _ Product trials _ Financial feasibility study _ Budget _ Operational management Pavement coatings to prevent chewing gum sticking to pavement costs in the region of £6 per sq m. In particularly problematic areas this will be factored into the costs of the public realm improvements. In Wimbledon town centre an extra strong bedding material was used for the pavements. This provides better cleaning potential, such as the ability to jet wash. At the end of Destination Wimbledon project a deep clean will take place.</p>

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
18	We recommend that a better form of partnership needs to be established with commercial property agents so that they provide comprehensive information to new leaseholders on what is expected of them, contact numbers for assistance and details of their town centre manager etc.	Will be considered as part of the Council's Inward Investment programme / Economic Development Programme if funding is allocated towards town centre management in the future. Cabinet decision in 2010 led to the cessation of town centre management in Morden, Mitcham and Colliers Wood.
19	We recommend asking officers to review the system of checking staff performance.	Staff performance is managed in line with the Council's performance management framework which includes regular 1to1s, and appraisals. This is supported by regular checks on day to day performance outcomes. Supervisors have undertaken Street Cleansing and Street Scene Supervisory skills. A number of team leaders are also undertaking this training. We continue to manage staff performance in line with the Councils performance management framework. The day to
20	We recommend that consideration needs to be given to whether the current location of the market is the best place or whether other locations such as 'on-street' would be more successful.	The Mitcham Market was relocated to the newly created market square following wide consultation with local residents and businesses including the market traders. The Market Square enables the market to function as a market. There is no evidence that the relocation of the market to the market square affected trade neither is there evidence to return on on-street trading would boost trade. Merton is submitting a bid to the Mayors Outer London Fund R2 for regeneration and public realm improvements to Mitcham. Part of the proposal is funding to enhance the market place by providing additional stall, better facilities for the stall holders and a project co-ordinator

Number	Recommendation	Action and Timescales
21	The electronic notice board needs to be repaired and moved as it cannot be seen at its current location.	There is a continuing IT problem with the notice board which has meant that the notice board cannot be used. Therefore there is an argument that the notice board should be removed. Investigate ownership of the Board (think this is the Met Police) and if the Board is ever in use. The Chamber have asked if it is possible to reinstate following interest from Mitcham Community Forum.
22	We recommend that consideration should once again be given to the outsourcing of the town centre manager role. Outsourcing to a professional provider may yield dividends which are greater than the cash cost. The Town Centre Manager should be a more clearly defined co- ordination/hub role. A sense of teamwork needs to be fostered between the Town Centre Manager and the Street Cleansing Team and contact details for all parties should be shared.	The contract for Town Centre Management was market tested but due to the Council's overall financial position Cabinet decided not to proceed with the letting of the contract. The future of any Town centre Management post would be subject to the Council's overall financial position and is not seen as a high priority. As part of the Outer London Fund bid for Mitcham the Council is proposing a sum be allocated

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23	We recommend that residents should be asked if they want to get involved in improving their local town centre. Town centre residents groups could be set up with the support of the council and town centre manager.	It is considered that there are sufficient resident groups in existence covering the town centers that no action needs to be taken to form new groups give the Council's limited resources. Some community groups are setting up their own replacements for Community Forums and the Localism Bill encourages the introduction of neighbourhood forums/groups to get local people involved in planning matters. See Street Champion initiative above.
24	We recommend that town centre regeneration needs to set realistic short, medium and long-term objectives, which are more imaginative than massive capital investment.	Town centre regeneration proposals were set out in the Regeneration Strategy, presented and approved by to Cabinet on 28 November 2011. We have already delivered projects over the last 2 years: _ Mitcham (St Marks Road, Market Sq) Morden (Abbotsbury Road re-paving and de-cluttering. Morden News refurbishment) _ Raynes Park (Enhancement Plan) _ Wimbledon (Destination Wimbledon) _ Colliers Wood (re-paving and cycle hub at CW tube station) _ Leopold Road (Re-paving and Shopfront improvements) _ Grand Drive (Re-paving and de-cluttering) _ Wimbledon Chase (re-paving and decluttering) _ Borough-wide pedestrian wayfinding signage Morden and Mitcham are restricted due to
25	We recommend that a schematic diagram of all the different groups should be produced, showing the link from the decision makers to the forums and, if necessary, rationalisation needs to happen	To take this forward an officer will need to be allocated this role. It would need to be led by Corporate Services who already have established links with the thematic partnerships and subgroups.

APPENDIX 2

Scrutiny Review on Efficient Household Waste Management and the Environment – Updated Action Plan

No.	Recommendation	Action	Comment
1	We recommend that the Director of Environment and Regeneration review how the refuse collection and street cleaning crews communicate with each other in order to ensure that street cleaning takes place immediately after refuse collection.	Agreed on need to ensure a high standard of internal communications between refuse/recycling collection and street cleansing teams, particularly since street cleansing is no longer scheduled to automatically occur after collection. See 19 September 2011 report to Cabinet detail, also on IT developments.	Ongoing. Picked up as part of Service Transformation Plans relating to mobile working.
2	We recommend that waste minimisation should be one of the guiding principles to be taken into account by Cabinet when taking decisions about the collection, management and disposal of household waste	Agreed. The waste hierarchy is detailed in the 19 September 2011 report to Cabinet and will continue to be adhered to when Cabinet are making waste management decisions.	Considered as part of any proposed service change.
3	We recommend that the Council should more actively encourage the re-use of household items in order to reduce waste. The Council could advertise the local “freecycle” website at the recycling and re-use centre and in council communications such as My Merton and the council tax leaflet.	Agreed. The Council pro-actively encourages re-use of household items, making use of its own publicity media and working closely with community groups to raise awareness.	Ongoing

No.	Recommendation	Action	Comment
4	We recommend that the Council should advertise local reuse services such as companies that collect used light bulbs, batteries, small electrical goods etc.	Agreed. The Council publishes information about re-use companies/charities to inform residents and offer them a choice, making use of its own publicity media.	ongoing
5	We recommend that the Council investigate ways of promoting the re-use of items of bulky waste, including the possibility of a third party taking over the collection in order to increase the level of re-use.	Agreed. Reuse and recycling a larger proportion of the bulky waste stream is a South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) priority. However trials involving collection via a local charity have proved disappointing. The sorting of the waste stream, rather than collection, is key. See 19 September 2011 report to Cabinet detail.	We are currently looking into options for a collection service to be provided by a third party. In the interim arrangements have been made to separate potential reusable and recyclable items from bulky waste collected by in-house service
6	We recommend that Cabinet receive and carefully examine costings before taking any decision to complete the roll out of the food waste collection to the remaining 30,000+ households in Merton.	Agreed. This will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.	Completed. Roll out agreed by Cabinet.
7	We recommend that the Council work in partnership with Merton Priory Homes to continue to explore ways of maximising the collection of food waste from flats.	Agreed. The Council will continue to carry out the food waste collection trial which includes 360 properties managed by Merton Priory Homes. See also recommendation 6 above.	Ongoing work with MPH

No.	Recommendation	Action	Comment
8	Given our current rate of recycling, we recommend that the Council should continue to have a co-mingled recycling collection service in order to drive up the recycling rates.	Agreed	We continue to provide a commingled service. This will be reviewed following the revised EU Waste Framework Directive and associated government guidance on commingling.
9	We recommend that the Council should keep the recycling collection methods under review in order to identify the point at which the separate collection of individual components becomes financially advantageous. The Council should then change the service accordingly and should provide clear communication to residents, setting out the reasons for the change as well as the new collection requirements.	The SLWP continues to monitor the recyclables market, working with its recycling processing contractor (Viridor) to maximise value. Other recyclables not included in the SLWP contract are for example collected separately, such as textiles, for which the Council earns a direct income. See 19 September 2011 report to Cabinet detail on the risks here.	Ongoing
10	We recommend that the Director of Environment and Regeneration should continuously monitor the market and provide regular reports to the relevant Cabinet Member on the value of the raw materials obtained from the recycling collection.	Agreed. The SLWP Management Group will continue to monitor this and provide reports to the Joint Waste Committee (JWC). The relevant Merton Cabinet Member is a member of the JWC.	This is carried out as part of the SLWP functions. Regular review has resulted in commercial terms being renegotiated, delivering significant savings to the partner boroughs over the next 7 years.
11	We recommend that Cabinet should ensure that future contracts relating to the collection, management or disposal of waste are sufficiently flexible to enable the council to benefit from changing market conditions in relation to the value of raw materials.	Agreed. The Council will continue to work with the SLWP on these matters. See also 19 September 2011 report to Cabinet detail.	This is being developed as part of a revised SLWP commercial Strategy

No.	Recommendation	Action	Comment
12	We recommend that the Council work with local supermarkets to encourage the stocking of clear plastic refuse sacks with a view to making the use of clear sacks a future requirement for the collection of landfill waste.	Not Agreed Members will need to consider the implications of this carefully. The price of available clear sacks is generally several times that of black sacks. Waste can also be hidden within other sacks or bags within a clear sack. Such a requirement may also not be enforceable. Not recommended in the current economic environment.	Not agreed
13	We therefore recommend that Cabinet should work towards establishing a common approach to the range of materials which can be recycled among the authorities within the South London Waste Partnership.	Agreed. The SLWP worked towards this approach in awarding its 2008 recyclable contract and will continue to do so in examining a future collection contract.	Ongoing
14	We recommend that the Council, Merton Priory Homes and other registered social landlords provide information to residents who live in flats with communal recycling bins telling them that they can put their recyclables in to an ordinary plastic bag and then throw the recycling bag into the bin.	Agreed. The Council will continue to provide information to residents that live in flats regarding what they can deposit in the recycling bins provided by the Council. See also 16 below.	Ongoing
15	We recommend that the Director of Environment and Regeneration keeps abreast of technological developments in order to identify opportunities for changing waste collection and disposal methods so that greater value for money may be achieved, as well as meeting environmental and waste minimisation objectives.	Agreed. The Council will continue to work closely within the SLWP on these matters.	Ongoing. Responsibility rests with the SLWP.

No.	Recommendation	Action	Comment
16	<p>We recommend that the Council develops a communication strategy to encourage the public to re-use and recycle. This should be a complex strategy that targets different messages to different groups, based on the typologies identified by WRAP in its “barriers to recycling” report. Communication should include information on what happens to recyclable materials after collection and cost savings achieved through reducing the amount sent to landfill. Publicity and clear signage should also be put on containers, including cost information. Every opportunity should be taken to communicate re-use and recycling messages, including each issue of My Merton and the council tax leaflet.</p>	<p>Agreed. The SLWP’s first comprehensive Communications Strategy, and supporting Joint Waste Committee (JWC) in December 2009. A 2011-12 Communications Strategy, taking into account the results of local SLWP research conducted by Ipsos MORI in summer 2010, was agreed at the 24 March 2011 JWC meeting. As well as examining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, it looks at target audiences, generic messages, communication channels, branding and protocols. Within this framework, Merton officers agree with the relevant Cabinet Member targeted local campaigns and content. A copy of Merton’s 2011-12 Recycling communications plan is enclosed at Appendix 2. This encompasses best practice and guidance from WRAP and maximises the use of available media.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>2012 – Metal matters campaign with funding from Viridor (waste disposal contractor), Alupro and LWaRB. Planned campaign for this Autumn being developed.</p> <p>Separate Incentivisation and Encouragement Programme being developed with funding provided by DCLG. To be launched later this eyar.</p>
17	<p>We recommend that all communication with the public should use words that are in common use. Communication materials from Kingston provide a good example of this approach.</p>	<p>Agreed. See 16 above. Kingston provide the SLWP communications lead for the Partnership.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

No.	Recommendation	Action	Comment
18	<p>We recommend that the Council continue to work with Merton Priory Homes, other registered social landlords, WRAP and other expert organisations to identify the most effective way of communicating messages to encourage their tenants to recycle and re-use.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Council will continue to work with the SLWP, Merton Priory Homes, other social landlords, WRAP and other expert organisations in identifying the most effective ways of communicating re-use and recycling messages to residents. See also 14 and 16 above.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
19	<p>We recommend that strong links should be developed between the waste collection service and the communications team so that communications becomes an integral part of the service. We would prefer this to be provided by a designated officer in the communications team. Alternatively work could be kick-started by buying-in expertise, for example from the Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames who provide the communications lead for the South London Waste Partnership.</p>	<p>Strong links agreed. Waste communications budgets transferred to central Communications Team from late 2010-11. Aim is to enhance further the Waste Operations and Waste Services communications linkages by co-location of the relevant staff. See also 16 above for the Communications Lead for the SLWP provided by Kingston. Kingston chair the SLWP communications forum of partnership communications officers.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Full involvement with corporate communications</p>

No.	Recommendation	Action	Comment
20	<p>We recommend that the Director of Environment and Regeneration considers the best way in which to use the collection crew as ambassadors for recycling. This would include identifying and leafleting households that are not participating in recycling (or only putting out small quantities). Leaflets could be left for those who mix recycling and landfill waste. A stepped approach could be taken whereby reminders at first and then warning leaflets are left, leading ultimately to non-collection when recyclable materials are put in with landfill waste. Results from the current trial of yellow and red cards to encourage residents to present their landfill waste sacks correctly should help to design the scheme.</p>	<p>Recycling crews carry contamination cards to encourage recycling and these have recently been improved. We also provide workshops for collection crews, to give staff the knowledge and ownership of their service with residents. Separately the Council provides house to house communications through My Merton, the annual waste 'Christmas Card', with the 6-monthly re-supply of food waste bags to 50,000 households, and door-knocking when resources allow. As a Waste Collection Authority, Merton has a duty to collect household waste and the aim is recycling through encouragement.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Linked to above Incentivisation and Encouragement programme</p>
21	<p>We recommend that the Council continues to collect landfill waste from plastic sacks and provides boxes for the collection of dry recyclables</p>	<p>With the scale of budget savings required, Members will wish to keep under review the options for waste collection, including waste containerisation requirements linked with any potential move to fortnightly collection (a potential suggested by the Task Group but not the policy of the current administration) and the implications of decisions on food waste collection (see 6 above) and future SLWP developments (see 15 above).</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

No.	Recommendation	Action	Comment
22	<p>We recommend that Cabinet investigate the feasibility of buying lids for the recycling boxes and running a trial in one part of the borough in order to evaluate whether this makes a difference to the quantity and quality of recycling material collected and to the amount of litter on the street. the feasibility of buying lids</p>	<p>Not Agreed. See 21 above. Apart from additional operational costs and envisaged replacement costs, the provision of lids limits the capacity of the boxes. This does not confirm to agreed objectives of increasing recycling and minimising waste to landfill.</p>	<p>Not agreed</p>

APPENDIX 3

Action Plan arising from the Scrutiny Review of Trees, 2011-12

Recommendation 1 (para 56)

That Cabinet lead on the development of a Tree Strategy for the Council. The Strategy should be aligned to the Borough's development aims, Local Development Framework, Core Strategy etc and Duty of Care consideration.

Proposed and Current Actions:

Task	Timetable
Establish a cross-divisional and inter-departmental steering group involving relevant officers and other key stakeholders to oversee production of tree strategy	By April 2013
Identify resources to support process	By June 2013
Agree timetable, scope and themes	By September 2013
Commission strategy	By October 2013
Progress review	From November 2013
First draft report	By March 2014
Final draft report	By June 2014
Report sign-off by key stakeholders and members	By October 2014

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- Recommendation 2 (para 60)
- That existing data collection and analysis should be established and strengthened.
- Proposed and Current Actions:

Task	Timetable
Implement 3-year cyclical inspection cycle within parks and open spaces	Current & ongoing

Task	Timetable
Implement 2-year cyclical inspection cycle for schools and other non-highway Council trees	Current & ongoing
Implement 3-year inspection cycle for Highways trees	Current & ongoing
Liaison with other London boroughs and partners, including via London Tree Officer's Association, to share information and data	Current & ongoing
Corporately, to utilise the improved data and analysis for the better management of the borough's tree assets	From January 2013
Conduct i-Tree canopy assessments for the borough.	Current & ongoing
Combine benefit and value data with i-Tree canopy assessments	From January 2013

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- Recommendation 3 (para 62)
- That Planning and Enforcement procedures are clarified and more effectively enforced.
- Proposed and Current Actions:

Task	Timetable
Adopt and implement recommendations of borough tree strategy in respect of planning and enforcement issues	From October 2014
Improve skills and knowledge of planning enforcement officers in relation to the identification of dead and diseased trees on development sites	By December 2013
Summary information on Tree Preservation Orders to be available online	By March 2014
Increased cooperation and liaison between the intradepartmental tree officers in relation to planning issues.	Current & ongoing
Provide online advice to encourage developers and applicants to seek and secure competent professional arboricultural advice where necessary	By April 2014
Review policies and procedures in relation to trees and crossover applications and amend as necessary.	By September 2013

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- Recommendation 4 (para 63)
- That the local community are encouraged to become involved in caring for the Borough's trees.
- Proposed and Current Actions:

Task	Timetable
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Task	Timetable
Support and promote Merton Tree Wardens and residents and friends groups on tree related matters	Current & ongoing
Support learning and development needs of tree wardens and friends on relevant tree matters	Current & ongoing
Improve the understanding of the public and local authority officers on the value, benefits and needs of trees via the Council website	By December 2013
Improve information available to ward members on local tree works in their areas	By March 2013
Instigate educational outreach work with local schools on trees and tree planting projects	From September 2013

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- Recommendation 5 (para 64)
- That accessible information is provided.
- Proposed and Current Actions:

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Task	Timetable
Provide better information on trees, tree works and tree planting projects on the Council website and to local community forums	By December 2013
Provide summary of tree strategy and key Council policies and procedures in relation to trees online.	By December 2014

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- Recommendation 6 (para 66)
- That Cabinet review how tree planting and maintenance is financed.
- Proposed and Current Actions:

Task	Timetable
Commitment to woodland creation and improvement of the urban forest via an ongoing capital input: annual tree planting programme in open spaces and street scene	Current & ongoing
Ensure that any capital investment in the tree stock does not end with the planting of the tree but that tree establishment costs beyond the first year are integral to the project capital funds or that associated growth in revenue budgets is provided	By April 2013
Ensure that all tree losses are quantified in monetary terms using, at present, the CAVAT	From April 2013

Task	Timetable
method, and that these asset values are utilised in practice	
Provide ongoing tree asset (total stock) valuations to determine loss/gain in the resource and indicate direction of travel	From April 2013
Continue to support and participate in the training, information exchange and networking activities available through the London Tree Officers' Association and other professional organisations	Current & ongoing
Encourage participation and maximise contribution of trained community volunteers in field survey in respect of biosecurity threats, including Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)	Commenced July 2012 and ongoing as required
Consider what additional resources may be required to extant and future biosecurity threats and secure these where necessary	Currently under review; actions ongoing in relation to OPM and likely to remain so in the foreseeable future

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