

**Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

**Date: 17 July 2018**

Wards: All

**Subject: Merton Partnership Annual Report 2017-18**

Lead officer: Ged Curran, Chief Executive

Lead member: Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Leader of Merton Council and Chair of Merton Partnership

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**Recommendations:**

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission discuss and comment on the progress of the Merton Partnership in 2017-18, as set out in the draft Annual Report at Appendix I
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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The draft annual report of the Merton Partnership for 2017-18 is attached at Appendix I for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. This includes a general update on the progress of the four thematic partnerships against the community plan themes over 2017-18.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Merton Partnership was established in January 2002 as the overarching strategic partnership for the borough. Its aim is to work together with all partners on issues that are key to local people – including residents, workers and visitors – as reflected in the Community Plan.
- 2.2 The Partnership's primary objectives are to deliver the Community Plan along with other plans and strategies adopted by the Merton Partnership such as the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy.
- 2.3 Part of the Merton Partnership's governance is to produce an annual report setting out progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Community Plan. The draft plan is presented to Overview and Scrutiny prior to publication to provide oversight of the work of the Merton Partnership.
- 2.4 One of the recommendations from the LBM Internal Audit of the Merton Partnership, agreed by the Merton Partnership Executive Board in September 2014 was that the "Merton Partnership should produce an Annual Report, as indicated in the Governance Handbook, for review by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and subsequently publish it." Additionally, this report should outline performance over the previous year.

## **Structure of the Merton Partnership**

- 2.5 The Merton Partnership consists of senior representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Members are recruited on the basis of their capacity to represent their organisations and not their individual interests.
- 2.6 The Partnership comprises an Executive Board drawn from the executive leaders for the public sector, business and voluntary and community sector as well as four thematic partnership groups:
- Health and Wellbeing Board
  - Children's Trust
  - Safer and Stronger Strategy Group
  - Sustainable Communities and Transport Board.
- 2.7 The thematic partnerships are tasked with delivering the priorities set out in the Community Plan. The Executive Board is responsible for the Community Plan, the vision for the borough and holds the thematic partnerships to account for delivery.
- 2.8 The voluntary and community sector is represented by 15 elected representatives from INVOLVE, the Community Engagement Network, who sit on a number of the partnership boards.

## **The work of the Merton Partnership**

- 2.9 In May 2017 the Executive Board held an away-day to consider its role and purpose in light of the increasing challenges faced by the public sector, particularly financial and demographic pressures. The Executive Board agreed that the Executive Board was more relevant than ever given this challenges and confirmed its purpose to:
- articulate its ambition for the Borough through the Community Plan;
  - commission Thematic Networks to deliver;
  - hold thematic networks to account for delivering the vision;
  - support the thematic networks, including brokering agreements between members organisations where there are potential conflicts or differing priorities;
  - adjust the approach within their own organisations to reflect agreements reached at the Board;
  - hold each other to account for delivering on partnership commitments;
  - consider how to address so-called 'wicked issues' i.e. challenges with no easy solution that require partners to work collaboratively to address;
  - look for opportunities to trial and develop initiatives as a board utilising collective resources and the funding available directly to the Board through its budget and MP voluntary sector grants fund;
  - work in a collaborative, consensual and mutually supportive way.

- 2.10 As well as its oversight role of the thematic partnerships the Executive Board has also considered a number of cross-cutting issues in relation to:
- the emerging issue of County Lines, gang activity and violence and the risks for young people that this poses;
  - community cohesion, particularly focusing on the wards that border with Sutton;
  - developing a partnership approach to information and advice services for Merton residents;
  - how the individual organisations can support the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2017/18 in particular the focus on diabetes and Health in all Policies;
  - supporting Merton's bid to be London Borough of Culture;
  - supporting the Think Family agenda.
- 2.11 Looking forward, the next meeting of the Merton Partners in September will focus on the collective impact of public sector funding cuts, the implications for the next few years and opportunities to work together. Also on the horizon is the next refresh of Merton's Community Plan in 2019.
- 2.12 The Merton Partnership conference took place on 3 July with over 100 members attending the event which focused on opportunities to strengthen social capital. The feedback from the event will also be considered at the Executive Board meeting in September and at the individual thematic partnership meetings.
- 2.13 Data analysts drawn from the members of the Merton Partnership have overseen the development of a new data hub that was launched earlier this year. [Merton Data](#) brings together all the main data sources about Merton together in one place.
- 2.14 Updates and future priorities for each thematic partnership are set out in the draft Annual Report 2017/18 – Appendix 1.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 We could not produce an Annual Report. However, this would breach the governance for the Merton Partnership as well as the council's own governance framework.

### **4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 4.1 Thematic Leads have been consulted on this report. The draft Annual Report was considered by the Merton Partnership Executive Board in May 2018.

### **5. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no legal or statutory implications arising from this report.

**7. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report. It should be noted that there is a legal requirement to have a Health and Wellbeing Board and a Crime Reduction Partnership Board (the Safer and Stronger Strategy Group fulfils this function). Overall, the work of the Merton Partnership as set out in the Annual Report contributes towards making the borough a fair and more cohesive place.

**8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 None for the purposes of this report although the work of the Merton Partnership as a whole contributes towards making the borough a safer place.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Partnership working is one of the corporate risks and the Merton Partnership is a major opportunity for different stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors to come together to consider priorities for joint working and implementation.

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

- 10.1 Appendix I – Merton Partnership Annual Report 2017-18.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None.