

## **Committee: Council Meeting**

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

Agenda item:

Wards: All

**Subject: Strategic Objective Review – Sustainable Communities & Transport - Street Scene**

**Lead officer:** Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration

**Lead member:** Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability & Regeneration, and Cllr Judy Saunders, Cabinet member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking

**Forward Plan reference number:** N/A

**Contact officer:**

---

### **Recommendations:**

A. That Council consider the content of the report.

---

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Council at its meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014 approved the Business Plan 2014 - 2018.
- 1.2 The Business Plan represents the way in which the council will deliver the Community Plan, which is grouped into five strategic themes (sustainable communities, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities, older people, children and young people). Performance against these themes, plus an additional theme of corporate capacity, is monitored by Council.
- 1.3 Each meeting of Council will receive a report updating on progress against one of these strategic themes. This report provides Council with an opportunity to consider progress against the priorities that are to be delivered under the Sustainable Communities theme, with a focus on Street Scene .
- 1.4 The ambition for this theme is to improve sustainable transport provision, support economic growth, increase investment, maintain a clean, green environment and work towards carbon reduction. The key portfolio holders are Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability & Regeneration and Councillor Judy Saunders , Cabinet member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking

- 1.5 The report will focus on the policy context, delivery, challenges, successes and opportunities in relation to Street Scene.
- 1.6 A table of the key Street Scene Performance Indicators is attached at Appendix 1

1.7 **POLICY CONTEXT**

For the purpose of this report Street Scene is defined as the following areas:

- Cleanliness
- Lighting
- Highway and footway condition
- Urban design standards
- Street furniture / fixtures and fittings / de-cluttering
- Street trees
- High St appearance
- Infrastructure including cycle lanes etc.
- Investment in Public Realm

**2.0 CLEANSING**

- 2.1 Maintaining the cleanliness of the street scene is undertaken by Waste Operations within the Street Scene and Waste Division of the Environment and Regeneration Department.

The Street Cleansing service is tasked with 'maintaining a clean and safe public realm; comprising the removal of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly tipping through both manual and mechanical sweeping methods.

Effective street cleansing can impact upon resident and business overall perceptions of the council and clean, clutter-free town centres contribute to the council's overall economic growth agenda by contributing to the vibrancy and attractiveness of our town centres.

The majority of the service is dedicated to the daytime operation, supplemented by an evening and night time service in Town Centres areas

2.2 Current responsibilities

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes duties under section 89 (1) and (2) on landowners and occupiers to keep specified land clear of litter and refuse and on Local Authorities to keep clean public highways for which they are responsible.

Each authority must determine one of four zones for each of its land uses. There are also four different grades of cleanliness, grade A, B, C or D. Where any of these land uses fall below a grade “B” there is a set time by which it must be restored to a grade “A” depending on the allocated Zone. This is also determined by when the issue is reported.

The table below identifies the Land use zones and time frames;

	<b>High intensity of use</b>	<b>Medium intensity of use</b>	<b>Low intensity of use</b>	<b>Special circumstances</b>
Nature of area	Areas which, through intense pedestrian and/or vehicular movements, are prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse and require both high levels of monitoring and frequent cleansing	Areas affected by moderate levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity and therefore less prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse, usually situated outside centres of retail or commercial activity, but used regularly by members of the public	Areas subject to low or infrequent levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity and therefore less prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse, often located in more rural areas	Types of land where issues of health and safety and reasonableness and practicability are dominant considerations when undertaking environmental maintenance work (includes legislative restrictions for all land types)
Maximum response time to restore to grade “A” if it falls below grade “B”	1/2 a day This means by 6pm if reported before 1pm or by 1pm the next duty day if reported between	1 day This means by 6pm the following evening	14 days	28 days or as soon as reasonably practicable

	1pm and 6pm on the previous day			
--	--	--	--	--

Essentially local authorities are governed by this legislation to maintain minimum standards between the hours of 8am to 6pm.

At this time the service is resourced to meet and even exceed the above. The four main town centres are resourced to be cleaned seven days a week between the hours of 06:00 a.m. and 04:00 a.m. Response teams who react to reports either on the day or within 24 hours Monday to Friday are also provided.

### 2.3 Current performance

The cleanliness of the Borough is independently surveyed four times a year under the National Indicator 195 (NI 195). The NI195 survey undertaken is one of the 198 national indicators that are designed to measure Local Environmental Quality as a member of the public would see it, and covers litter, detritus, and graffiti.

The table below shows the outturn of the NI 195 surveys undertaken over the past 5 years. The figures represent the percentage of roads found to be unsatisfactory:

---

NI 195 inspection results: the percentage of transects not deemed to be satisfactory

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Litter</b>	14.74	6.02	5.91%	7.97%	6.49%
<b>Detritus</b>	31	9.47	6.97%	11.8%	6.92
<b>Graffiti</b>	7	6.92	3.81%	4.73%	4.47%
<b>Weeds</b>	Not recorded	Not recorded	5.15%	5.41%	4.08%

Detritus can be defined as dust, mud, grit, gravel, stones, rotted leaf fall and vegetable residues, twigs and other small items.

The table below provides details of the numbers of fly tips reported in Merton since 2009/10. There was a significant decline in 2010/11 possibly as a result of the introduction of the free bulky waste collection service. However, there has been a small increase over the following years. Between April and May 2014 there has been a sharp increase in the numbers of fly tips reported (over 700). At the same time there has been a significant increase in the number of requests for bulky waste

collection. In 2013/14 there were over 10,000 requests for this service and in the first two months of this year we have received over 2,600 requests.

The position is continuously monitored and a third collection crew has been put on the bulky collection service to minimise the waiting times between bookings and collections. This growing demand reflects the successful nature of the service and is part of an overall strategy to reduce fly tipping as far as possible.

---

Reported fly tips 2009/14

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Fly tips reported</b>	3297	2280	2526	3096	3064

However despite improvement to NI195 scores in recent years, the Annual Resident Satisfaction Survey shows satisfaction levels for 2013 had reduced to 54% whilst still remaining above the Outer London average. The table below provides performance with respect to resident satisfaction for the past 5 years:

---

Annual Resident Survey: satisfaction with street cleaning

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Net % of Residents satisfied with street cleaning</b>	50%	57%	57%	57%	54%

A review of the street cleaning service by Tidy Britain Group suggested that at least 50% of litter in residential areas results from black sacks torn open by animals and wind blown litter from our current recycling collection methodology.

Whilst the full roll out of food waste collections is viewed as a possible deterrent for scavenging in black sacks, a recent participation survey has shown that only 52.8% of residents use the service (compared to nearly 80% using the dry recycling service), resulting in large amounts of food waste remaining in black sacks (Waste Watch, 2013). High levels of recycling participation, which is to be encouraged nonetheless impacts on the cleanliness of the streets due to the unsuitability of kerbside boxes which were introduced when the council provided a paper only collection. The introduction of a wider range of accepted materials, most latterly extending the range of plastics and beverage

cartons, has led to insufficient capacity for storage and additional wind-blown litter.

The Council secured just over £650,000 from DCLG to fund an incentivisation and encouragement programme for a three year period. On 24 March 2014 Merton's Mega Recycle campaign was launched.

This campaign encourages residents to sign a commitment to recycle both dry recyclables and food waste on an ongoing basis and provides an opportunity for participants to win cash prizes. Prizes are available to individuals and block of flats and estates. Each household registering for the programme are also invited to nominate a local school and the schools with the most nominations have the potential to win cash awards up to £5,000. Full details are available on the council's website at:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/waste/megarecycle/rewards-mr.htm>

The programme also includes waste awareness advisors visiting households across the borough to discuss the services available, encourage participation and to register residents for Mega Recycle prizes. So far over 4,300 residents have signed up to the scheme and over the past couple of months recycling tonnages are starting to increase.

The overall target is to increase the levels of recycling by 2% - 3% over the next two years. However, together with additional marketing campaigns promoting recycling and food waste collections it is unlikely that the council will achieve the national recycling target of 50% recycling by 2020 without further significant interventions.

#### 2.4 PVR resident survey findings

The Street Cleaning Service was reviewed as part of the Council's pilot Public Value Review Programme. The Review commissioned a survey of residents to identify their overall perceptions of the service and their key areas of concern, which was carried out by BMG Research, a leading national Market Research organisation.

The research showed that 72% of residents would describe Merton streets as clean; 71% viewed the boroughs town centres as clean and 67% that their own street is clean.

Of those who felt their street was not clean the key areas of concern identified were general litter (48%), mess after waste/recycling collection (35%) and fly tipping (29%).

Although the reduction in resident satisfaction as demonstrated in the Annual Residents Survey was not statistically significant and did not reflect the findings from the Public Value Review resident survey, the Council embarked on a Cleaner Merton initiative towards the start of this year in response to the concerns raised.

## 2.5 Cleaner Merton Action Plan activities

### 2.5.1 Increased Enforcement

A pilot programme to increase enforcement utilising additional private contractor capacity has been developed and implemented. Kingdom Securities started on 28 April 2014. Following the council's current approach to engage and educate before enforcing, zero-rated FPNs were issued until 1 June. From the 2 June 2014 FPNs are subject to a £75 fine.

Between 28 April 2014 and 1 June 2014 446 zero-rated FPNs were issued. Between 2 June 2014 and 19 June a total of 314 chargeable FPNs were issued.

### 2.5.2 Introduction of new technology

There is an increasing ability for residents to use the internet and smartphones to inform the council about issues or access information about the services provided. With this in mind the council launched the free version of a mobile 'app' (Love Clean Streets) to be used by the public to report issues more easily and to obtain updates on completion, on a trial basis. The trial commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and to date the council has received in excess of 1800 reports, over 90% of which have been completed and resolved in time.

Officers are looking to procure the fully branded version that will improve the management of reports and the reportees overall experience of using the app.

### 2.5.3 Solar powered compactor litter bins

The council has also introduced a trial of five Solar Compactor bins in selected areas. These bins have a much larger capacity than existing bins and have the added benefit of the ability to mechanically squash rubbish within the bin and send a report to confirm when the bins

needs emptying. These bins have reduced the need for a team to visit to empty on a scheduled basis and provided a more efficient service.

#### 2.5.4 Chewing Gum bins, Gum removal and Graffiti

The council currently employs a two-person team solely attending to graffiti and now chewing gum removal. Graffiti levels in particular are kept low and are attended to rapidly on report within 48hrs of being reported.

Despite recently completing the installation of gum bins, the issue of chewing gum still blights our town centres. In order to tackle this issue of chewing gum within the town centres the council has recently purchased chewing gum removal equipment. The Graffiti crew has recently cleaned a section of Wimbledon Town Centre. We have received positive feedback from Love Wimbledon and staff. Plans are being developed to roll this out to the remaining town centres.

### 2.6 Additional Activities being undertaken/reviewed

#### 2.6.1 Time Banded waste collections

The council introduced time banded waste Collections in Wimbledon Town Centre in September 2013. The primary objective is to reduce street clutter (litter) in town centres during peak periods of high foot fall.

There have been some issues in relation to waste presentation for residents who live in flats above shops and this has been addressed by introducing a second collection for these residents on a trial basis.

Plans are being developed to introduce this initiative to other town centres during 2014/15.

#### 2.6.2 Dog Fouling

Dog fouling is another concern for residents and the service is trialing the “any litter bin will do” idea. This is where properly wrapped dog waste can be deposited into any street litter bin. The trial has been undertaken in the Colliers wood area and has proven to be successful in reducing instances of dog fouling on the street and complaints relation to this. The next step is to expand this Borough wide.

#### 2.6.3 Mechanical sweeping

Service requirements are currently being reviewed with a view to replacing the smaller ride-in vehicles and pedestrianized vehicles with a more flexible fleet of plant and equipment including an electric type vehicle such as the Glutton:



“A glutton is a small hand-pulled electric vacuum cleaner which is particularly effective in town centre areas. It works by sucking up litter, leaf fall, blossom and other detritus as well as cigarette butts. It is particularly effective in town centres as we have the High Street setts where litter can become lodged in between the setts and is difficult and slow to remove using traditional manual techniques. As it is powered it is easier for the operatives to move, especially in hillier areas and it is in operation all the time whilst walking, whereas staff operating with barrows and brooms have to stop to carry out any sweeping. The effect is that it gives a higher quality of clean at a greater speed than traditional cleaning and is very visible to visitors to the town. It is also free from dust and is a much quieter alternative to a diesel engine sweeper.”

It is expected that a more flexible fleet of reliable mechanical equipment will improve reliability and productivity, assisting the service to complete work in accordance to both scheduled and reactive cleansing.

#### 2.6.4 Route Optimisation

Redesigning sweeping schedules is a major task and has historically been achieved through manual means. Routing software has previously been used to produce new waste routes and this is something that is being pursued for street cleaning especially in relation to mechanical sweeping.

#### 2.6.5 Mobile working

Mobile working and the need to link to back offices systems is crucial to providing a real time effective and efficient service to customers. Management need to have the tracking information to redirect vehicles to areas of concern and be able to respond in real time to customers.

It is therefore intended to:

- Modernise the waste operations section through the provision of an appraised Mobile Data and GPS tracking solution.
- Replace the existing paper based route sheets with an Electronic route sheet that is dynamic in nature and can be updated appropriately in real time.
- Provide appropriate in vehicle Satellite Navigation to optimise route planning and service delivery.
- Provide an appropriate vehicle location system in order to effectively manage and control all Operational Resources.
- This will not only achieve savings for the future but will also deliver a more efficient operating model for the Council.

## 2.7 Review of Management Structure

The substantive structure of the Street Cleansing service consists of four Area Managers. This was reviewed to provide additional supervision and support to frontline staff and there is currently a trial management structure in place with two Area Managers and the day to day supervision of frontline staff provided through four Senior Team Leaders.

In addition to the above there has been a recent change in respect of the Community Engagement and Enforcement Team which has now moved to Waste Operations. It is clear that from a strategic perspective these service areas are critical to encouraging appropriate behaviour change to minimise the impact on the cleanliness of our streets and the resource input required to maintain clean streets, that is, prevention over cure.

From June 2014 the Council has taken on the role of Chair of the South London Waste Partnership and officers are undertaking work to explore opportunities for further efficiencies across waste collection and cleansing services through joint working with the partner boroughs.

## 3.0 **FUTURE MERTON AND TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAYS**

The Future Merton and Traffic and Highways Team forms part of the Sustainable Communities Division in the Environmental and Regeneration Department.

They lead on the delivery of regeneration and promotion of growth in the Borough and maintenance of the operational capacity to manage, improve and maintain the boroughs roads and footways, streetlights, non-illuminated street furniture, bridges and culverts; to discharge the Council's responsibilities as a Highway, Traffic and Parking Authority and assist with the Council's duty as a Planning Authority.

Over the next decade we plan to accommodate 20,000 additional residents, built 3400 new homes and create up to 8000 new jobs. Transport Planning has a fundamental role to play in this process and the team has the responsibility for a number of street scene related work streams including the following.

- Project management and delivery of major regeneration / public realm projects, with a particular focus on town centres
- Rediscover Mitcham £6m scheme which will improve the look and feel of the town centre and improve accessibility and journey times for public transport users and cyclists. Through the Outer London Fund we have also delivered physical improvements and business support to

over 60% of Mitcham's high street shops and market stalls, leading to jobs (both secured and created) and increases in town centre satisfaction scores.

- Connecting Colliers Wood £3 million project that will overhaul Colliers Wood's street scene with the creation of a new public space; rationalised road junctions which will reduce travel and waiting time for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Securing transport related funding, including the annual LIP submission, Transport for London Major Schemes submissions, European bids and negotiations with developers which accounts for c£5m per year investment in Merton's street scene.
- Promotion of sustainable transport, in particular walking and cycling- cycle trained circa. 1000 children and 100 adults in 2013/14 complimented by various initiatives to promote safe and sustainable travel
- Promotion of public transport, including improving bus services and longer term strategic improvements to the rail and tram network- funding has been secured for the next 2 years to make all of Merton's bus stops fully accessible. Ongoing work taking place associated with Tram extensions, Crossrail2 and rail improvements.
- Senior level engagement with key stakeholders and partners, including Transport for London
- Transport policy monitoring Assessing the transport related impacts of planning applications
- Road Safety Education, Cycle Training and School Travel Plans.

All work is undertaken in-house, other than when specialist services are required.

The following section focuses on the specific areas within the Traffic & Highways and Future Merton service to illustrate the nature of the work and associated challenges.

### **3.1 Lighting, Highways and Footway Condition, Urban Design standards, Street Furniture**

Responsibility for the delivery of the council's Street Scene related functions sits with Street Scene and Waste and the Sustainable Communities Divisions. Whilst the teams have distinct roles and responsibilities, they work closely together, particularly with respect to major regeneration / public realm projects.

Recent changes to the Sustainable Communities Division has seen the incorporation of the Traffic and Highways Team and the Development Control/Building Control and Planning Enforcement functions to support the Council's growth agenda.

The Traffic and Highways and Future Merton Teams are responsible for the delivery of –

- Lighting
- Highway and footway condition
- Urban design standards
- Street furniture / fixtures and fittings / de-cluttering
- High St appearance
- Infrastructure including cycle lanes etc.

### 3.2 Lighting

Traffic and Highway Services has responsibility for the maintenance of all highway street lighting and illuminated street furniture. This consists of the following:

- 13,500 Lighting Columns & Lanterns
- 3,500 Illuminated street furniture
- 50 Belisha Beacons and flood lights at Zebra crossings

In addition, the service also maintains lighting assets in parks and open spaces and car parks on behalf of Green Spaces and Parking Services, Safer Merton and Future Merton.

On average the Council receives approximately 182 Emergency Call Outs per year and a further 4,300 general lighting faults, of which approximately 75% (3,160 jobs) generate some maintenance or repair activity under the Street Lighting Term Maintenance contract. This is in addition to the core cyclical maintenance activities to maintain and manage approximately 13,500 lighting columns, 1,000 solar and reflective bollards 2,000 illuminated signs, and 50 zebra crossings.

The team has a very large cyclical maintenance work programme. Annual cyclical scheduled maintenance activities consist of:

- Approximately 4,300 lighting column lamp bulk changes
- 2,000 illuminated sign lamp bulk changes
- 5,000 bollard washes
- Electrical testing of approximately 2,700 units
- Non destructive structural testing of approximately 2,500 columns.

The Capital allocation for Street Lighting work in 2013/14 was £534,000 and the revenue allocation was £330,000. Current street lighting capital expenditure is driven by (a) the need to replace

Merton's ageing street lighting stock, much of which is nearing the end of its useful life and (b) the need to reduce the total amount of energy and related costs in operating the borough's lighting and illuminated street furniture

Much work has recently been done to reduce the Council's energy bill. These include the replacement of all internally illuminated "Keep Left" bollards to solar powered bollards. A key project aimed at reviewing and updating our Street Lighting inventory was completed in early 2013. This project has resulted in a reduction of the Council's illuminated street furniture energy consumption by 23%.

The revenue budget for 2014/15 is £335,380 which is primarily used for cyclical maintenance such as lamp bulk changes, electrical testing, bollard washes, non destructive structural testing and to undertake repairs (out of light columns) which are reported by members of the public or night scouts. The Capital allocation of £410,000 will be used to replace concrete lamp columns that have reached the end of their useful life. We have already replaced approximately 400 concrete lamp columns across the borough. We are due to replace a further 500 over the next 2 years. We are also taking the opportunity to upgrade the lighting to LED as part of this programme of work. A business case for longer term investment is being prepared. Measured Performance Indicators for 2013/14 showed that 99% of the street lighting stock was in light at any one time and the average time taken to repair a street light was 2.7 days.

### **3.3 Highways and footway condition**

The Council's highway network plays a major role in the economic growth of the borough through increased mobility for citizens and goods, and from building and maintaining infrastructure. The local road network also affects broader quality of life, not least providing access to local services and having a direct link to the safety of people using the highway network. The Highway network is the Council's single biggest asset with a Gross Replacement Cost (GRC) of in excess of £700m. It is therefore vital that this asset is maintained. To this end the Council invests £2.5m annually in the maintenance of both the carriageway and footway network.

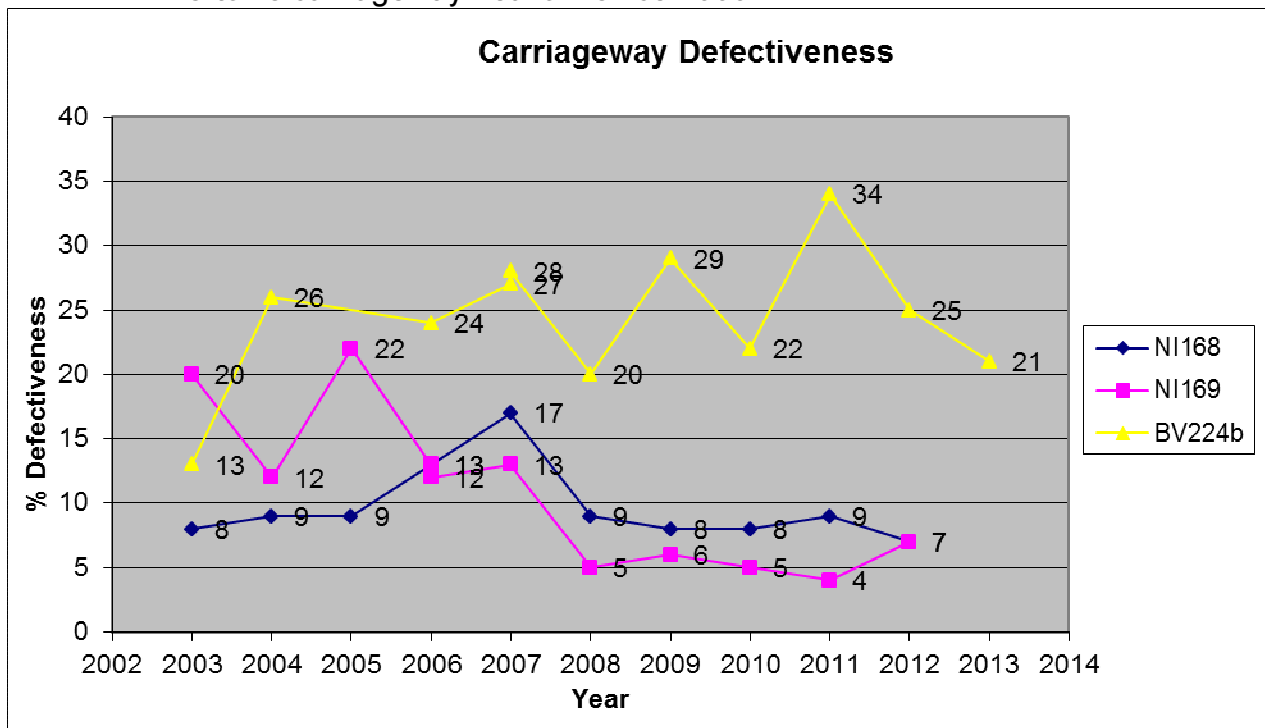
The Council currently invests over £3.0 million per annum via capital and revenue in the maintenance and improvement of carriageways and footways across the borough. The majority of roads are unclassified and whilst the general trend was one of deterioration up until the recent past we have seen an improving picture for the past 2 years. This has also been reflected in reduced insurance claims and settlements arising from highway defectiveness. Highway investment is prioritised according to an annual assessment of condition alongside other factors including location.

## HIGHWAY CONDITION

### *Carriageway Condition*

All Local Authorities are required to report the condition of both its Principal Carriageway Network (A Roads) (NI 168) and Non-Principal Classified Roads (B&C Roads) (NI 169). In addition, Merton continues to record the condition of its Unclassified Road Network (Local Residential Roads) even though this indicator (BV224b) was abolished in 2008.

The graph overleaf shows the current and historical condition of Merton's carriageway network since 2003.



The Council currently invests over £3.0 million per annum in capital and revenue for the maintenance and improvement of carriageways and footways across the borough. Additional council revenue spend on pothole repairs of £100k was made in spring 2014 and dealt with several thousand minor highway defects. The majority of roads are unclassified and whilst the general trend was one of deterioration up until the recent past we have seen an improving picture for the past 2 years. This is also borne out by the level and value of insurance claims relating to the highway condition which has reduced over recent years.

The strategy used in Merton over the years has been to maintain a steady state by targeting resources to repair roads in already poor condition and preventing more roads reaching this state. This method attempts to hold the percentage of defective roads at a steady state but does not improve the overall condition of the network. Therefore the backlog of repairs cannot be reduced with current funding levels.

The vast majority of our capital funding is absorbed by Planned Carriageway and Footway maintenance works. This is to ensure that the highway network is safe, serviceable and sustainable. It also offers the Council a defence against any third party insurance claims and compensation for damages. There is however no targets set currently to improve the defectiveness condition indicator of each of the road category described above. A clear long term investment strategy aimed at developing an acceptable service level and adopting a Whole Life Costing approach to treat roads before they deteriorate is required going forward.

Additionally, the planned maintenance programmes will no be aligned with other capital investment (such as cycling provision, homezones etc.) in neighbourhoods to deliver a place based approach to the development of our street scene projects. A four year delivery plan is being prepared for this investment and it is intended that councillors in eachward affected by this investment will be consulted on the proposals on a rolling basis throughout late summer / early autumn of 2014.

In order to reduce vehicle speeds, improve road safety and enhance the overall quality of the public realm environment, the council is in the process of adopting 'homezone principles' in certain locations.

Such measures are intended to be an effective, low-cost measure. Examples of such measures may include the use of natural features, trees and planters to provide 'visual cues' to help reduce vehicle speeds and improve the overall quality of the environment.

Projects have currently taken place in locations within the Colliers Wood / South Wimbledon area, with the intention of rolling out further projects in future years.

#### **3.4 Street Furniture / Fixtures and Fittings / De-cluttering**

In line with National and Regional policies to eliminate street clutter and bring about a transformation in the quality of the streetscene, the Council has agreed a de-cluttering policy, which includes guardrail removal. Guard rails contribute to visual clutter, are unattractive and can create a caged environment for pedestrians. They can also encourage higher vehicle speeds and improve the environment for wheelchair users by improving their sightlines.

Too many signs can become ineffective and distract drivers. They can also obstruct pedestrians if inappropriately located. Therefore de-cluttering, including the removal of unnecessary or redundant signs, is considered as an integral part of new highway / regeneration schemes to enhance the appearance of the street scape and reduce the burden on the maintenance budget. Examples of the impact of de-cluttering can be seen at the junction of Alexandra Road / The Broadway in Wimbledon (as part of the Destination Wimbledon Project) and more recently in West Barnes Lane opposite Waitrose in Raynes Park.

The 2014/15 revenue budget for the maintenance of signs is £50,750. This budget is primarily used to maintain and replace damaged or missing regulatory and essential signs such as Give Way signs, No Entry signs, Ban Turn signs and directional signs.

TfL's Guardrail Removal Programme will see a further 200m of pedestrian guardrails removed from London Road in the heart of Morden this summer; following the successful trial of selective guardrail removal in 2010.

The initiative is welcomed by policy makers in Future Merton who believe the railings are an unnecessary obstruction to movement, a visual blight on our town centres and can provoke un-safe behaviour. The claustrophobic sensation of feeling "penned in" by railings is too great, according to official TfL guidance, and our own consultation on Morden town centre by Living Streets. Guardrails often have the opposite of their intended purpose and often encourage people to rebel by vaulting across them or to jaywalk outside the guardrail.

TfL have undertaken a safety audit as justification for the programme added that removing guardrails "can reduce community severance" and that the railings "can also be a barrier to movement, which can discourage walking and cycling".

### **3.5 Urban Design Standards and High Street Appearance**

Urban design and quality of the public realm has come to the fore in recent years and is central to how we improve streets and spaces in Merton.

Merton's Public Realm Strategy and Street Design Guide provide the background strategy and design parameters for investment in residential streets and main road corridors in the borough. Raynes Park Local Centre, Merton High Street, Wimbledon Chase and Leopold Road are all examples of the Merton standard, as are the new home-zone pilot streets in South Wimbledon.

For our town centres; there guidance is less specific, allowing for individual projects to assess the qualities and characteristics of an area and design to a higher specification to fit in with an area's character. Wimbledon, Mitcham and Colliers Wood now have distinctive design



pallets developed through major projects (Destination Wimbledon, Rediscover Mitcham and Connecting Colliers Wood; respectively) For Morden town centre, we have developed a vision for the public realm but await funding to develop the scheme further.

The council also makes use of the Urban Design London and Mayor of London's streetscape design review panels, as well as Merton's own Design Review Panel for major public realm schemes.

## 4. SUCCESSES

4.1 Merton has unprecedented success in the last few years with respect to securing funding and delivering transport and public realm improvement projects. This is principally due to the adoption of a multi-disciplinary project management and delivery structure that has enabled resources to be pooled efficiently and projects to be delivered effectively. Successful projects have increased external confidence in Merton's ability to deliver, which has enabled significant levels of external funding to be secured, principally via Transport for London.

4.2 Examples of projects that have been delivered in the last 3 years include the following:

### *Destination Wimbledon*

4.3 A major public realm improvement project in Wimbledon Town Centre to significantly improve the pedestrian environment prior to the Olympics. Key aspects of the project include the pedestrianised station forecourt and the introduction of a diagonal junction crossing. The project won the London Transport Award for 'Excellence in Walking & Public Realm' in 2013. Improvements have continued with renewed paving and tree planting installed at Broadway and Queens Road in 2014.

### *Raynes Park Public Realm Enhancements*

4.4 The Council has worked closely with the Raynes Park Community to agree a programme of sensible, incremental improvements which are collectively regenerating Raynes Park local centre which was voted London's most successful High Street in 2012.

Successes include:

- Renewed streetscape and de-cluttering in Coombe Lane, Lambton Road, West Barnes Lane and the Bellmouth
- Cattle Arch feature lighting
- Tree planting (Lambton Rd & West Barnes Lane)
- Grass verge re-instatement (West Barnes Lane)
- Removal of redundant posts, bollards and signage

- Rail Embankment planting (with Network Rail)
- Raynes Park Health Centre
- Sainsbury's Local / Costa development
- Waitrose & Trinity Place
- Former pine shop re-development
- Removal of 14 embankment billboards
- Evening Standard: Best High Street 2012.

Our investment has also created a lively public space at the Bellmouth which hosted Raynes Park's first Christmas light switch on event in 2013. As one resident tweeted: "its not Trafalgar Square, but its ours... Thank you"

Further details are online at [www.merton.gov.uk/raynespark](http://www.merton.gov.uk/raynespark)

#### *Be a Brighter Biker Project*

- 4.5 There is also a number of less high profile, but equally important and effective projects, that have been delivered by traffic and transport officers. One such example is the 'Be a Brighter Biker' project, a safety education project which focuses on improving the safety of motorcyclists, one of the most vulnerable road users. Merton's innovative approach to tackle the issue has been recognised with 2 recent awards, the Laurie Bunn Road Safety Award and the Prince Michael of Kent International Road Safety Award.

## **5 OPPORTUNITIES**

- 5.1 Moving forward, there are a number of street scene related projects that the council will be taking forward, in order to build on previous success and meet the challenges discussed in the report. Key projects and associated areas of work are as follows:

### **Town Centres**

#### *Mitcham Town Centre*

- 5.2 The council has pooled a variety of funding streams, including TfL LIP, TfL Major Schemes, S106, Outer London Fund and Merton Capital funding, with a project value of approximately £6m, to regenerate the town centre and improve public transport facilities. Officers have been in the process of working with Transport for London to finalise the changes to the highway network and finalising the detailed design for the works to the Fair Green area. Works are anticipated to start in late Summer 2014.

Further details are online at [www.merton.gov.uk/rediscovermitcham](http://www.merton.gov.uk/rediscovermitcham)

#### *Colliers Wood & South Wimbledon*

- 5.3 To complement the significant improvements to the Brown and Root Tower the council has pooled a variety of funding streams, including TfL LIP, S106, Mayor's Regeneration Fund and Merton Capital funding,

to enable the delivery of a £3 million public realm scheme. This project will be delivered in partnership with TfL and the GLA, with a particular focus on enhancing the quality of the public realm and improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists by reducing the feeling of traffic dominance in the area. We will create a new town square at Colliers Wood station; a new Homezone street in Baltic Close; more open park edge at Wandle Park, with furniture inspired by William Morris and a new promenade on Merton High Street overlooking the Wandle at Sainsbury's M&S. We will also be trialling new 'glow-in-the-dark' paving on the Wandle Path towards Deen City Farm to improve visibility and way finding for walking and cycling on the Wandle trail. Works are anticipated to start in Winter 2014.

Further details are online at

[www.merton.gov.uk/connectingcollierswood](http://www.merton.gov.uk/connectingcollierswood)

#### *Morden Town Centre*

- 5.4 Merton has ambitious, but realistic plans, to comprehensively redevelop Morden Town Centre. The borough is working collaboratively with TfL on changes to the public realm and a Planning Brief has been adopted for the regeneration of Morden Station, which is intended to act as the catalyst for future public realm and regeneration activities in the town centre. We are actively working with TfL to secure a development partner for the station site and will follow with a masterplan for Morden in the following year.

Further details are online at [www.merton.gov.uk/moreMorden](http://www.merton.gov.uk/moreMorden)

### **Infrastructure including cycle lanes etc**

#### *Cycling & "mini Hollands"*

- 5.5 As stated in 3.6, significant increases in cycling will be required in order to achieve the Mayor's target of a 400% increase in cycle trips by 2031. The borough considers that the ambitious target provides an opportunity to create a cycling 'lift off' in the borough.
- 5.6 Merton is working closely with other boroughs across the south sub-region to take forward a co-ordinated approach to cycle improvements. It is considered that such an approach will increase the ability to leverage in further investment in infrastructure, which will be essential to increase cycle trips on the network.
- 5.7 Merton continues to prioritise cycling investment via the LIP, both in terms of physical improvements and cycle training. It had 'Biking Borough' status for the last 3 years, and has utilised this additional funding to improve cycle facilities between South Wimbledon and

Colliers Wood, providing a connection to Cycle Superhighway 7. The borough is also a partner in a European project over known as CycleCities, which focuses on sharing best practice with respect to cycling across Europe. As part of this work, Merton hosted a European Partners' Meeting in December 2012.

- 5.8 Recent investment in cycle related infrastructure investment in the borough is focused on improvements from Colliers Wood to South Wimbledon, Raynes Park to Wimbledon via railside path and Worcester Park to Morden via Green Lane. Current plans include a cycle improvement scheme along Beddington Lane, with future complimentary extensions intended to provide a route from Beddington to Colliers Wood via Mitcham. Cycle related improvements are also being incorporated into the borough's highway maintenance schemes. In addition, the cycle related work being undertaken as part of the town centre projects in Mitcham and Colliers Wood will open up opportunities for new cycle routes and links.

*"Mini Hollands"*

- 5.9 All 20 outer London boroughs were invited by the Mayor of London to bid to become "mini-Hollands", which is a project designed to focus a very high spend on cycling, concentrated over a relatively small geographical area. The funding is designed to achieve transformational change for those living and working in the area, with the projects intended to act as cycling exemplars for other towns and cities to aspire to in the future. Up to four boroughs are expected to be successful, with overall funding within the region of £100million.
- 5.10 All 20 boroughs had the opportunity to submit an 'Expression of Interest' application, in order to make the case for why their borough should be considered for the money.
- 5.11 While Merton made it to the final stage of the assessment process, we were not one of the 3 boroughs to receive full "mini-Hollands" status. However, the bid received positive comments and it is hoped that funding will be secured via the programme to deliver a substantial proportion of the schemes put forward. The Council's meeting with the GLA's Cycling Commissioner in July to progress on our proposals and to clarify the funding we will receive.

## **6.0 Street Trees**

- 6.1 Street trees are managed by the Greenspaces Team within Sustainable Communities Division. The council remains committed to retaining and improving the environmental quality of the street scene

across the borough through a programme of management and investment in its highways trees.

- 6.2 More than 200 street trees were planted during the winter of 2013/14 as part of the Council's own annual capital investment programme and a further 230 trees were planted as part of the London Mayor's Street Tree Initiative.
- 6.3 Investment of a similar magnitude is currently anticipated in the forthcoming 2014/15 winter season with a emphasis being placed upon street trees that were lost as part of the series of winter storm events that occurred between October 2013 and February 2014.
- 6.4 The Council has recently commissioned a tree strategy for the borough, a key recommendation arising from a review of the management of the borough's trees undertaken by the Council's Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel in the period 2011-12. The borough's street trees are a key element with its tree assets overall and will undoubtedly be at the core of the borough's strategic approach to tree management and green infrastructure investment in the future.
- 6.5 The enhancement of the borough's street scene is an integral component of Dig Merton, a new community food growing initiative involving a range of partners and local residents that is being supported by the Council. In addition to "edible gardens" on the roadside, this project has also successfully planted a number of fruit trees. Additional town centre and other strongly urban locations will be planted up as the project gathers further momentum over the course of the current year.

## **7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 Not applicable – this report is for information only.

## **8 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 8.1 N/A

## **9 TIMETABLE**

- 9.1 Performance information is monitored annually as a requirement of TfL.

## **10 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no financial, resource or property implications arising from this information report. All related services are delivered within existing resources.

## **11 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 This report is for information only.

**12 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no specific human rights, equalities or community cohesion

**13 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this information report.

**14 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 There are no risk management or health and safety implications arising from this information report.

**15 APPENDICES** – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report.

**16 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

London Borough of Merton Participation Monitoring project 2013 Final report (Waste Watch, July 2013)

Review Of Street Cleansing & Development Of A Public Service Cost-Effectiveness Model (Tidy Britain Group, 2010)

Street Cleanliness Survey 2013 (BMG Research, 2013)

## Appendix 1

### Street Scene indicators 2013-14 Outturn and current 2014-15 performance

PI code and description	2013/14 performance outturn		2014-15 YTD Current performance	2014-15 Current Target	Current YTD status
	Value	Status			
<b>Street cleansing</b>					
CRP 048 % of sites surveyed on local street inspections for litter that are below standard	5.84%	✓	4.55%	8.50%	✓
CRP 049 / SP 059 Number of flytips reported in streets and parks	3,072	✓	701	532	●
SP 058 % of sites surveyed on local street inspections for litter that are below standard (KBT)	6.29%	✓	6.29%	8.50%	✓
SP 061 Days lost through sickness per FTE (street cleaning)	12.31	●	2.06	1.7	●
SP 062 % Sites surveyed below standard for graffiti	4.47%	✓	4.47%	5.50%	✓
SP 063 % Sites surveyed below standard for flyposting	0.91%	✓	0.91%	1%	✓
SP 139 % Sites surveyed below standard for weeds	4.08%	✓	4.08%	14.50%	✓
<b>Highways</b>					
SP 260 % Streetworks inspections completed	33.67%	✓	33.67%	32%	✓
SP 269 % Residents satisfied with street cleanliness (annual)	54%	●	<b>N/a Annual Return</b>		
SP 327 % to Emergency callouts within 2 hours (traffic & highways)	99.44%	●	100%	100%	✓
SP 328 % Streetworks permitting determined	99.83%	✓	98.50%	98%	✓
SP 329 Percentage of Condition Surveys completed on time (traffic and highways) (annual)	92%	✓	<b>N/a Annual return</b>		
SP 045 % of out of light lamp columns under LA control repaired within 3 working days	87%	✓	87%	87%	✓
<b>Others</b>					
SP 263 % modal share for walking and cycling in the borough (annual)	35.7	●	<b>N/a Annual Return</b>		
SP 065 % Household waste recycled and composted	38.34%	●	38.80%	42%	●

This page is intentionally left blank