

Committee: Council

Date: 01 February 2023

Wards: All

Subject: Strategic Theme Report: Ensure a clean and environmentally sustainable borough with inclusive open spaces where people can come together and enjoy a variety of natural life.

Lead Officer: Adrian Ash, Interim Executive Director, Environment, Civic Pride & Climate

Lead Members: Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Civic Pride; Councillor Natasha Irons, Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Greenspaces and Climate Change and Councillor Stephen Alambritis MBE, Cabinet Member for Transport

Contact officer: John Bosley, Assistant Director of Public Space

Recommendations:

A. That the Council consider the content of this report

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Council, at its meeting on 2nd March 2022, approved the Business Plan for 2022 - 2026 which sets out five strategic priorities and each meeting of the Council receives a report updating against one of the Council's strategic themes.

1.2. The Business Plan set out how the Council will deliver its ambition with five strategic priorities to shape and guide delivery:

- i. Maintaining excellent education and skills for all ages and needs;
- ii. Promote a dynamic, connected and inclusive community and economy with safe, vibrant high streets and jobs for our residents;
- iii. Support residents who are most in need and promote the safety and wellbeing of all our communities;
- iv. Ensure a clean and environmentally sustainable borough with inclusive open spaces where people can come together and enjoy a variety of natural life;
- v. Work to make Merton a fairer, more equal borough and support those on lower income by tackling poverty and fighting for quality affordable housing

1.3. Performance against these priorities is monitored by Council. Each meeting of Council receives a report updating on progress against one of these priorities.

1.4. The administration has set out its three main strategic priorities:

- Nurturing civic pride
- Building a sustainable future
- Creating a borough of sport

1.5. The achievement of these strategic priorities will have extensive engagement with residents, voluntary groups and businesses at their core, building on our partnerships and alliances to reach a common goal.

1.6. This report provides Council with an opportunity to consider progress against the priorities that are to be delivered, specifically under the priority to “Ensure a clean and environmentally sustainable borough with inclusive open spaces where people can come together and enjoy a variety of natural life”, and how they support the achievement of building a better Merton together.

2 DETAILS / INTRODUCTION

2.1. Section 3 of the body of the report provides an overview of how the Council ensures a clean borough, including contract management and service monitoring arrangements, cleansing data, enforcement initiatives and initial findings from the borough-wide consultation on waste services.

2.2. Sections 4,5 and 6 of the report provides an overview on how the Council is working to ensure an environmentally sustainable borough, including air quality, climate change, carbon reduction, energy savings, sustainable travel, tree planting, management of parks and open spaces, volunteering initiatives and partnership working.

2.3. Sections 7 and 8 of the report provide an overview of how the Council ensures inclusive open spaces that enable people to come together and enjoy a variety of natural life, including biodiversity, ensuring high quality parks through the Green Flag Awards Scheme, nature reserves, ensuring the safety of park users, parks cleanliness, access, sporting and events, walk and talks, Friends groups and volunteering projects.

2.4. Sections 9 to 13 cover, financial, resource, legal, human rights, crime and disorder, risk and Health and Safety implications.

3 ENSURING A CLEAN BOROUGH

3.1. To ensure that we deliver a clean borough and that our service provider delivers improvements to the street environment, the Public Space division manages and monitors the street cleansing, recycling and waste operations across the borough.

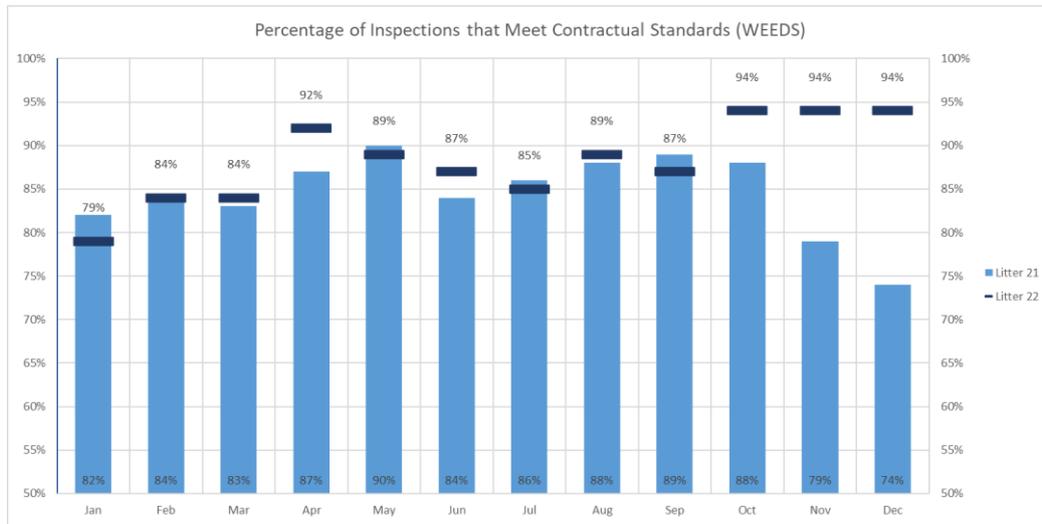
3.2. Monthly contract meetings are undertaken with the service provider and led by the Head of Service to ensure that improvements in outcomes are being implemented across the range of services delivered.

3.3. To support the above, the Public Space Client Officers undertake weekly, monthly and quarterly inspections ensuring that each ward is visited at least once per week in order to assess the level of litter, weeds and detritus separately. In addition to this, known hot spots are inspected daily and all findings' documented, and the appropriate resource deployed to clear any discarded waste.

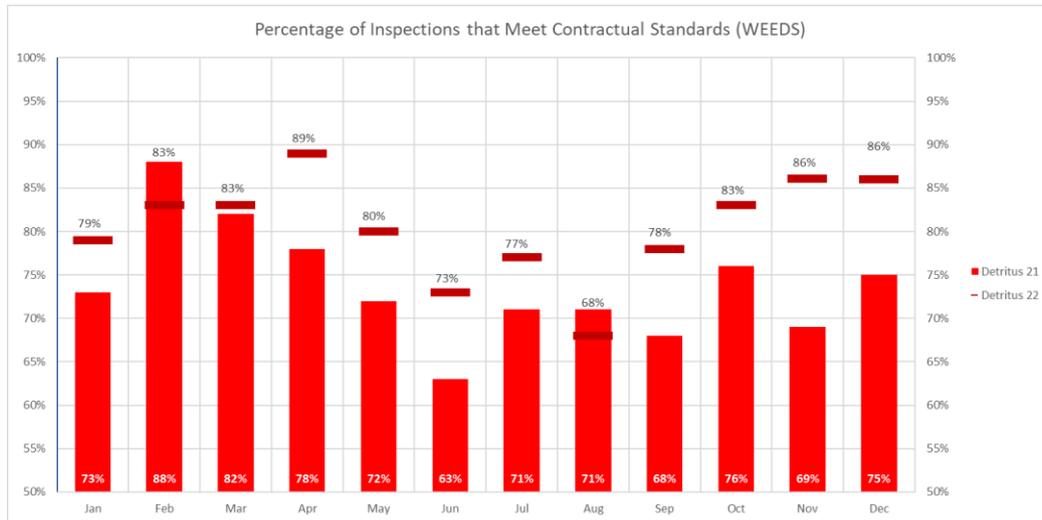
3.4. The data from these inspections provides an insight into the street cleanliness of Merton's roads over time and all trend analysis is documented as part of the department's monthly reporting process.

3.5. The three graphs below illustrate the comparison of grading following these street inspections which meet the required standard for street litter, detritus and weeds in 2022 and the previous year.

Graph 1: Percentage of Inspections that meet Contractual Standards (Litter) 2021/22 Comparison



Graph 2: Percentage of Inspections that meet Contractual Standards (Detritus) 2021/22 Comparison



Graph 3: Percentage of Inspections that meet Contractual Standards (Weeds) 2021/22 Comparison



3.6. Following a review of the street cleansing performance and the quality of service being delivered the waste services team issued Veolia with a Service Improvement Notice (SIN) in February 2022. This required Veolia to undertake a full review of the street cleansing operation and implement agreed workstreams as part of a joint action plan designed to deliver sustainable improvements in the service.

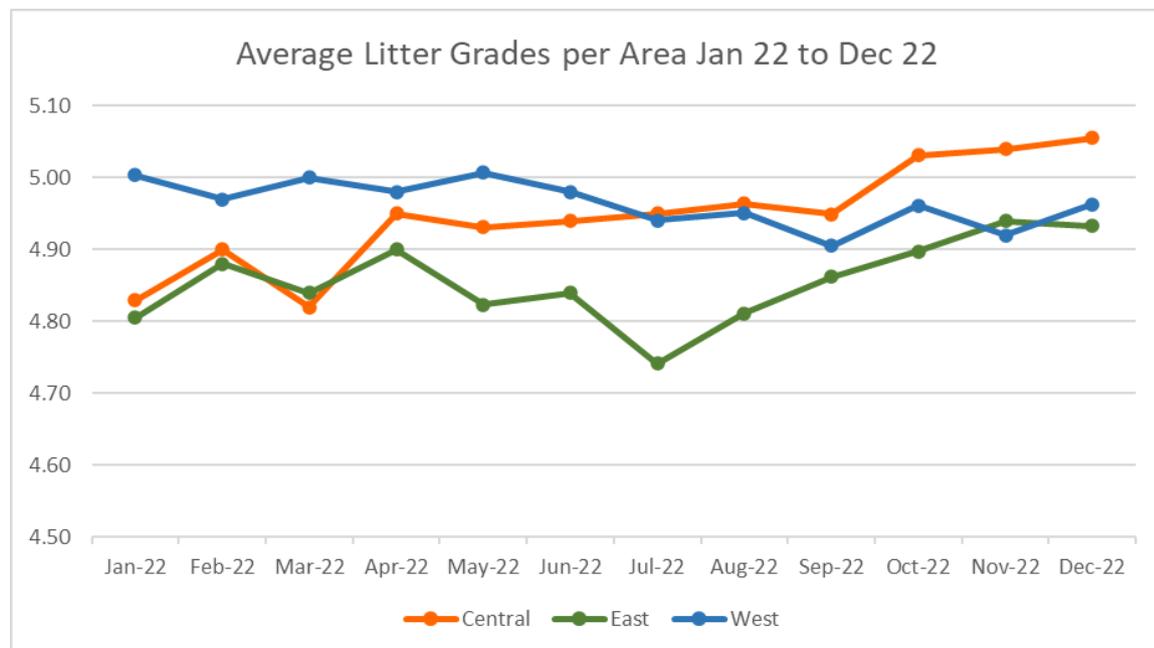
3.7. This included the introduction of an evening economy crew which is deployed in and around our town centres and shopping parades to tackle waste issues associated with our night-time economy. This is waste that otherwise would need to be cleared as part of the core service the following morning before the scheduled sweeping work is undertaken, delaying the morning teams in manual street cleansing operations.

3.8. The above is also supported with targeted enforcement to minimise further deposits of waste outside of agreed collection times. As outlined below in 3.28, further enforcement will be deployed in areas with time-banded collections to improve compliance and minimise fly-tipping.

3.9. The largest single workstream was the rescheduling of the street cleansing teams and re-scheduling of the beats for both the manual street cleansing service alongside the mechanical cleansing with an increased frequency of cleansing in conjunction with increase management and supervision of the crews. This has been successfully introduced in the areas of greatest need and has increased the frequency of street cleansing operations in approximately 50% of residential roads. The revision of service also utilises mechanical footway sweeping vehicles that has proven to improve the outcomes of detritus and weed removal as demonstrated in graphs 2 & 3 above.

3.10. The graph below illustrates the sustainable improvement delivered in the street cleansing service in the East of the borough following the implementation of supporting Action Plan which was agreed by the service and reviewed fortnightly.

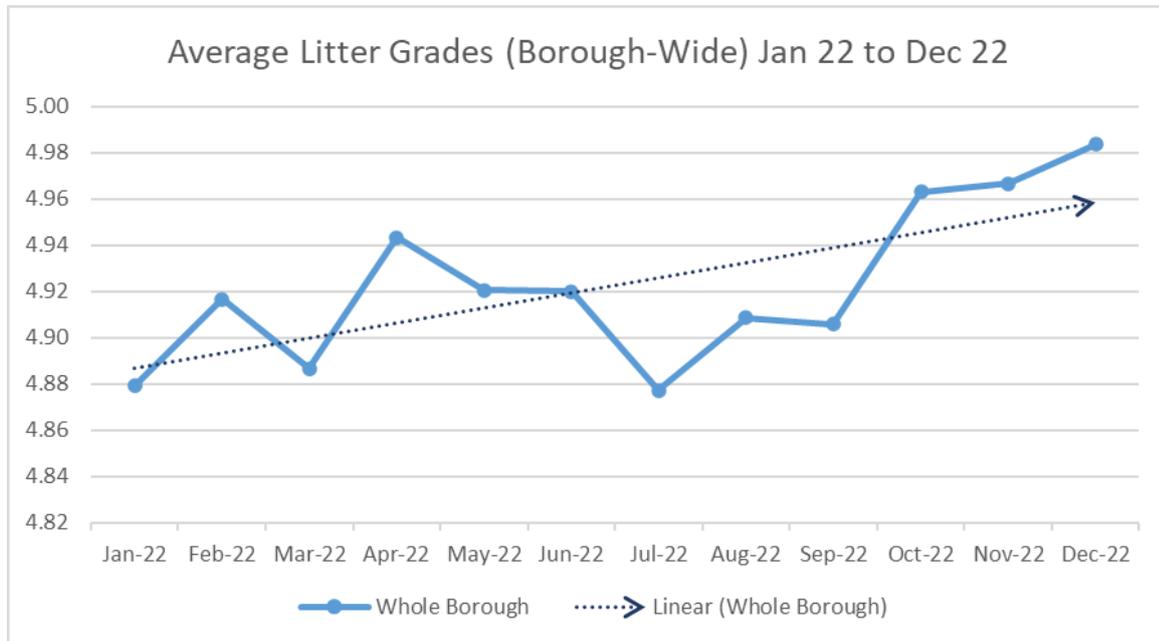
Graph 4: Average Litter Grades by Area: January to November 2022



3.11. Overall and across the borough, progress is being made on improving and ensuring the cleanliness of our communities as detailed in the graph below. Importantly,

the improvements since September 2022 have demonstrated that revisions to our cleansing service have delivered better performance.

Graph 5: Average Litter Grades (Borough-Wide): January to November 2022

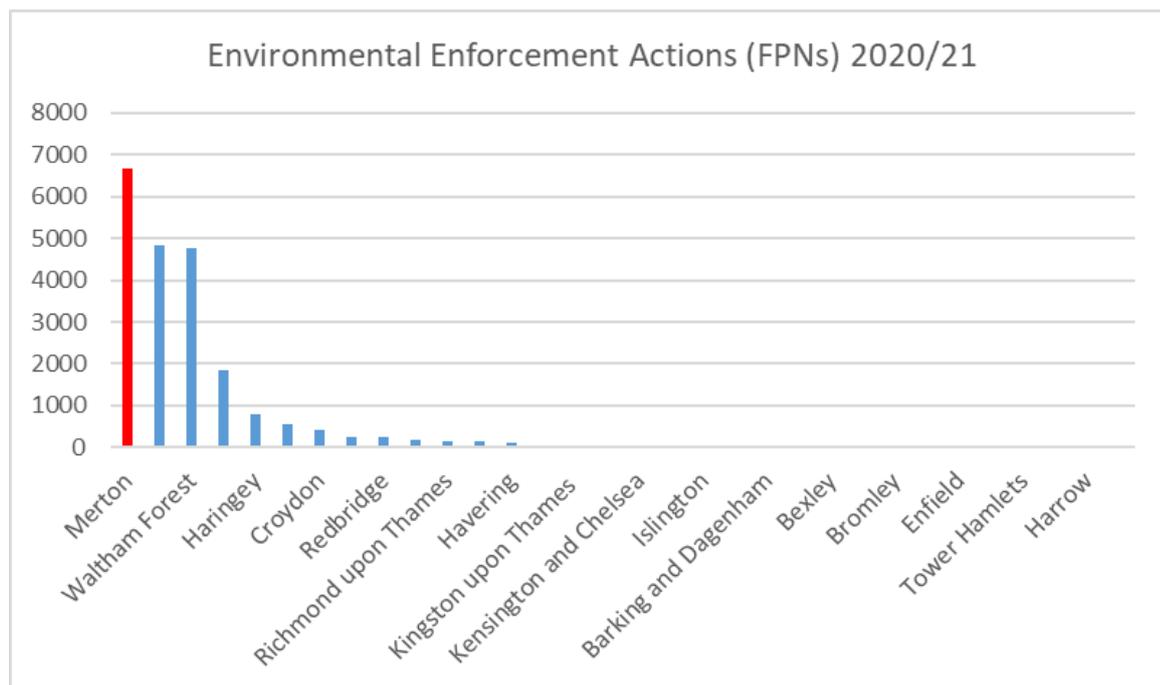


3.12. Fly-tipping continues to be a major area of concern with our service provider clearing in excess of 9,500 fly tips in the first half of the year (2022/23). To address this growing problem, we launched Merton's Wall of Shame and have published our 8th monthly edition. To date this has had a positive impact and has led to five (5) successful prosecutions for fly-tipping. Fly-tipping currently costs the Council £850,000 to clean-up and our success in enforcement assists us in mitigating some of these costs.

3.13. This has been supported by the proactive deployment of Environmental Enforcement Officers in key hot spot areas undertaking regular patrols tasked with investigating incidents along with direct education and engagement with local residents and businesses.

3.14. We continue to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to both littering and fly-tipping and have successfully issued 6,678 Fix Penalty Notices supported by a further 1,052 engagement / warning letters. This is the highest-level activity of all London Boroughs and makes up 24% of all direct engagement activities undertaken by London Boroughs.

Graph 6. Environmental Enforcement Activity London-wide 2020/21



3.15. In addition to the overall success of the work undertaken by our environmental enforcement officers and service provider, we have improved resident awareness to the issue of fly-tipping through the introduction of our ‘Wall of Shame’ videos that highlight ‘hot spot’ locations and fly-tipping occurrences¹. The episodes are highly viewed, and we have undertaken successful prosecutions and issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices through information gained from these videos, shared to our enforcement team by the public.



3.16. In October 2022 Cabinet made the decision not to extend the current Waste collection and street cleansing contract with Veolia. In reviewing the recent improvements and service enhancement currently being delivered the Service is assessing the range of activities and service delivery models including in-house services, Local Authority Trading Company, Commissioned / private sector provider and a possible joint-venture (JV) model.

3.17. The completed Options Appraisal will be presented to Sustainable Overview and Scrutiny Panel in February for discussion and a final report taken to Cabinet prior to progressing the preferred option / recommendations in service design and delivery model.

3.18. To inform the design of the new service, we have undertaken an extensive borough-wide consultation on residents’ views on waste & street-cleaning, which ran from early October to mid November 2023 and generated a successful return-rate of around 2,500 responses.

¹ Merton Council Wall of Shame, Episode 8: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuBMO7wzz9E>

3.19. This comprised a mixed-channel survey – including an online survey (1,900 responses), a paper survey (more than 100 responses) and a telephone survey (more than 400 residents).

3.20. This was supplemented with on-street activity via a series of roadshows in local communities, as well as dedicated focus groups of residents for more in-depth discussion.

3.21. The full report has been submitted for discussion at the Sustainable Communities Panel in February, however early indicators show some emerging trends:

3.22. Satisfaction with waste collection services was high among those we contacted via telephone (75% satisfied), but this dropped significantly in the online survey (19%) and in the paper survey (31%) - the latter channels are more likely to be used by residents who have experienced an issue with services. Satisfaction is also higher in the east of the borough.

3.23. A similar trend occurred in when we asked about satisfaction with street cleanliness – the telephone survey showed 83% of residents agree that streets are clean; however, this drops to 24% in the online survey and 34% in the paper survey. The most common causes of dissatisfaction with street cleaning are full litter bins and on-street fly-tips.

3.24. The full report, plus analysis of the qualitative data and focus groups, will be available in the Cabinet report, and to the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting.

3.25. Looking forward in 2023, the waste service will also be commencing two work streams to provide better benefit to local residents and to improve the cleanliness of our local communities.

3.26. In September 2022 Cabinet welcomed the recommendations from Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to consider ways of bringing the collection of waste closer to the community in order to support the reduction in the growing increase in fly tipping, while noting that the lack of access to disposal facilities may contribute negatively to the local environment, especially for those that do not drive.

3.27. Officers have worked with the service provider to develop a trial service to provide a series of localised collections that operate in pre-determined areas. The proposed solution will utilise two different types of vehicles, one to collect large bulky items, such as mattresses, textiles, waste electrical & electronic equipment (WEEE) and white goods, while the other vehicle can collect general waste. The service is planning to implement the pilot service in March 2023.

3.28. In addition, the service is currently working on a refined and improved service to commence in Spring of this year across the borough to improve the regularity and reliability of waste and recyclables from properties that are above shop parades.

3.29. The revised service has been designed to deliver an increase in collection frequency to twice-weekly with collections occurring in the evening, outside of normal business hours, with the aim to provide cleaner streets.

4 AIR QUALITY

4.1. Air quality in London, as with many cities in the UK and across the world continues to be a major health concern. It is now considered the most significant environmental risk to public health. This has been reiterated by the World Health Organization's (WHO) move to drastically reduce its guidance levels for air quality health exposure. These are set out in appendix A.

4.2. It is known that air pollution has negative impacts on health across the whole of our life course, from the developing foetus, childhood, into adulthood and old age. Its impact is more severe on people already suffering from pre-existing health conditions, such as respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

4.3. Research commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2019, estimated the equivalent of 3,600 to 4,100 deaths (or 61,800 to 70,200 life years lost) were attributable to air pollution across London. The urgent need to tackle air pollution was recently highlighted by the death of a nine-year-old girl in South London.

4.4. Merton has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), which means it must take steps to tackle air pollution. This includes producing and delivering an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). These duties fall under the London Local Air Quality Management (LLAQM), a statutory process in recognition of the legal requirement on Local Authorities to work towards air quality objectives under Part IV of The Environment Act 1995.

4.5. Each year the Council must produce an Annual Status Report (ASR). This is submitted to the governing body for air quality (GLA & Defra) for assessment and approval and is then published on our website. The ASR outlines the air quality monitoring regime in the borough, trends in measured pollution over periods of time and the actions taken by the local authority to tackle air pollution in line with the national objective levels.

4.6. Merton's Air Quality Team forms a part of the Regulatory Services Partnership, sharing services across three London boroughs, including, Wandsworth and Richmond.

- The work of the Air Quality Team is nationally recognised and delivers a number of significant regional air quality initiatives across London.
- The Team has attracted and continues to win awards for their innovative and ground-breaking work. In 2020 the Team won the LGO National Award for Environmental Team of the year. In 2021 the Team won The Sustainable Cities Award for Changemakers of the Year, and in 2022 the Team were a finalist in the National Highways Award for their innovative work on traffic and air quality monitoring as part of the South London Partnership InnOvaTe (Internet of Things) Project.



- As well as providing business as usual statutory functions of the Regulatory Services Partnership, the team deliver a number of grant funded initiatives, aimed

at innovation in tackling air pollution, some of which are beyond the borough's boundaries.

4.7. NRMM Cleaner Construction: this project is funded by the Mayor of London and London boroughs and is currently delivering the world's first low emission zone for construction (CLEZ). Construction site equipment, also known as Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) has been unregulated for a number of years. This means that there are no national, local or regional controls to restrict the type of equipment on construction and demolition sites, no matter how dirty the engine is. In 2015 the GLA proposed, as part of its planning conditions, controls for sites to introduce restrictions based upon EU engine category. Between 2016 and 2019 Merton's Air Quality Team piloted a project in south London to work with constructors to deliver the Mayor of London's ambitions.

- This project was so successful it was expanded to cover the whole of London and is redefining construction emissions in the capital. London is now able to claim it has the cleanest construction fleet in the world. This is a national and international beacon project for other cities and countries to follow.
- As well as bringing in significant grant funding, this self-funding project has helped generate green jobs and upskill a new generation of air quality officers to add future resilience to the industry.

NRMM Inspection:



- The emissions saved by this project over London are considerable, with current plans to extend the project to capture non construction site engines, generators used at events, road work equipment and waste site equipment. See table below:

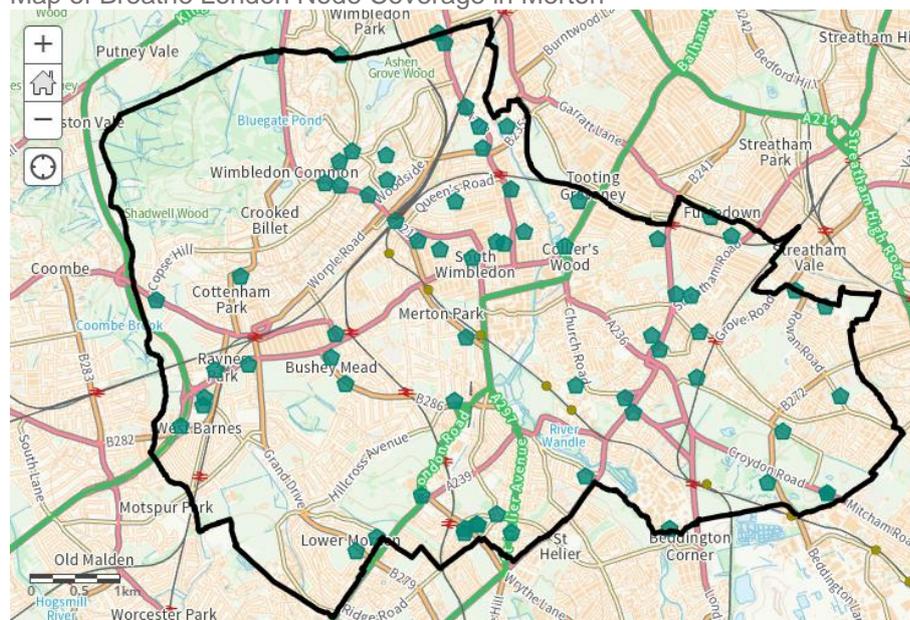
Table 1: Emission Savings Central Values, NRMM Project (April 2016 - March 2022)

Pollutant	Savings (Tonnes)	Reduction as a percentage
Particulates (PM ₁₀ + PM _{2.5})	72	41.66%
Oxides of Nitrogen (NO _x)	1639	35.55%
Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂)	80679	11.50%

4.8. **InnOvaTe (Internet of Things) Project:** throughout 2022 the Air Quality Team received funding through the South London Partnership to look at how information and technology can be used in the borough to improve outcomes for its residents.

- One project delivered by the Air Quality Team included the installation of transport monitoring in the borough capable of counting the most common forms of transport including, vehicles by type, as well as active travel. These were located in key areas in the borough and at the borough boundary.
- Overlaid on top of this transport monitoring was the use of new air quality monitors sourced through Imperial College's Breathe London project.
- The air quality monitoring was located at 68 locations in the borough and included schools, High Streets and Focus Areas.
- We are currently working with world-wide recognised data specialists to consolidate this data in usable form on an interactive dashboard and start to use this information to help shape and influence policy making and assessment in the borough.
- This data will also allow us to shape and assess our new Air Quality Action Plan for 2023.

Map of Breathe London Node Coverage in Merton



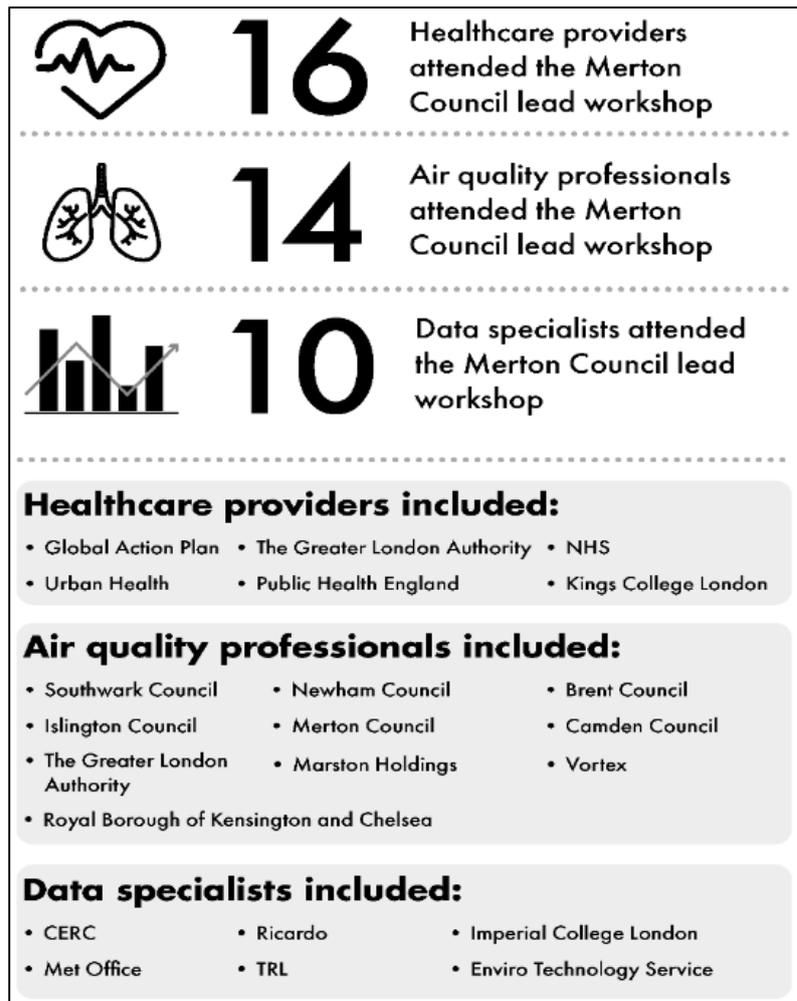
4.9. **Weir Road Waste Sites:** as part of another InnOvaTe project, the Air Quality Team is working with three waste transfer sites in Weir Road around monitoring and tackling pollution using new technology.

- The project involves using onsite and off-site monitoring which provides a trigger alert system to the businesses when pollution reaches a certain level. This enables the businesses to identify the causes of pollution and if within their control, take steps to mitigate this.
- Over time the causes and solutions to the site-based pollution become established and their controls become embedded into day-to-day operational processes.

- Through this project we have seen significant reduction in site pollution and taken the opportunity to work in partnership with the boroughs businesses to help them better understand their impact on emissions and take steps to control this.

4.10. **Health Messaging:** Merton's Air Quality Team lead a review of health messaging around air quality in London. The project explored the way in which information on local poor air quality is delivered to those that are the most vulnerable in the community, and how steps can be taken to reduce its impact or the use of pre-emptive medication. This project also included air pollution generated within the home.

4.11. On the back of this work Merton has submitted a bid to Defra's Air Quality Grant Fund to pilot a new project on behalf of 15 London boroughs.



4.12. The Air Quality Team is delivering a number of local initiatives and projects aimed at understanding and tackling pollution at a local level.

- Citizen Science Projects: Citizen science projects supported and AQ officers provide training and resources including funding additional diffusion tubes and handheld monitors. Collaborative working continues between the Council and Sustainable Merton.
- School Air Quality Audits: Air quality is monitored at several schools that are near areas of poor air quality or



main roads, these schools are also offered an AQ Audit. This audit includes all aspects of air quality and climate change, including travel, heating, green planting and anti-idling. Audit recommendations include emission and exposure reduction measures and mitigation where necessary. Breathe London & Vivacity monitors have also been installed in Schools Streets within the borough to monitor travel and air quality.

- Anti-idling: Anti-idling signage review completed, resulting in the installation of an additional 44 signs. Idling events are delivered by AQ Officers monthly at key locations such as level crossings where typically around 300 drivers are engaged over a 2-hour period. A total of 9 events were delivered in 2022.
- Behavioural Insights Project: Funding awarded from the Local Government Association: Behavioural Insights programme with additional funding from the Council's Public Health Team. LED sign installed at West Barnes Lane Level Crossing to encourage drivers to switch off their engines while waiting at the barrier. The intervention was assessed for efficacy before and after installation.
- Clean Air Villages: A project spanning multiple London Boroughs with the aim to improve air quality in different London 'villages', where both air pollution and population density levels are high. Funding awarded by Defra and in-kind match funding by the Council.
- Clean Air Villages 4 (CAV4): Active dates May 2021 – June 2022. Building on the business engagement exercise during CAV3 in 2020/21 a cargo bike courier service was procured for delivery of a free 120-hour trial for businesses in Wimbledon.



- Air Quality News newsletter – The AQ Team produce a quarterly newsletter on actions and campaigns across the three borough partners. The newsletter is shared internally and externally with interested parties such as the GLA.
- Campaign Days – Public facing events with AQ stall to provide information and freebies to residents for Clean Air Day 16th/18th June 2022, Car Free Day 22nd/23rd September 2022, and Cost of Living event 26th November 2022.

4.13. **Air Quality in Merton:** In August 2022 Merton published its 2021 Annual Status Report (ASR). This report provides a detailed overview of monitored air pollution in the Borough during 2021. It has been produced to meet the requirements of the London Local Air Quality Management (LLAQM) statutory process.



- As well as the results of air quality monitoring in the borough, this report provides an update on the Council's AQAP and outlines the steps that are being taken throughout the many council departments to tackle air pollution.
- Although the borough's air is improving, there are still exceedances of the current UK national objectives for NO₂. If we consider the application of the new WHO guidance then the whole of London, even within our parks and green spaces would likely be non-compliant, this highlights the scale of the problem of air pollution in London.
- The data in **appendix 1** shows annual trend in NO₂ measured at our diffusion tube monitoring locations; this shows exceedances of the UK emission objectives. The trend in this pollutant has been steadily reducing for a number of years. 2020 during lockdown did show a specific slight dip during this year.
- Sources of air pollution in the borough are estimated by the London Atmospheric Emission Inventory (LAEI) which is produced by Transport for London and the Greater London Authority with input from project partners at Imperial College London, Aether, Ricardo, Heathrow Airport and the Port of London Authority.
- The data from the LAEI is publicly available on the London Data Store and is used as an evidence base for air quality policy work and helps inform key focus areas in our Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). Source apportionment graphs for key pollutants NO_x, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ are provided in **appendix 2** to this document. For all pollutants road transport is the largest contributor.

4.14. **New Air Quality Action Plan 2023:** The Council is committed to renew its Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in 2023 to ensure the plan is fit for the next five years. It will be the opportunity for the Council to focus on the boroughs priorities to deliver cleaner air. The plan will be delivered through a full public consultation that will likely run in the summer of 2023. The plan will bring together a number of key partners to help shape the action plan and put measures in place to ensure it is delivered.

- This consultation will include stakeholders and community groups in the borough, with an opportunity to learn from the good work delivered elsewhere in the UK.
- The responsibility for delivering cleaner air sits at every tier of government. National government determine the regulator and statutory framework including taxation and financial incentivisation. Regional government, in the case of London sits with the GLA who have responsibilities for transport, regional planning, air quality coordination and initiatives such as the ULEZ.
- Merton Council has a responsibility to monitor and report on air quality and have an action plan aimed at the steps that the Council can take to reduce pollution and protect communities at a local level.

4.15. Air Quality Policy Links: Any new Air Quality Action Plan must link into and harness the co-benefits of a number of key strategic policy ambitions.

- There are clear joint benefits that sit across a number of priority themes that that the Plan will need to support, these include clean & active travel, climate change, public health and the local environment.
- We now see that Climate Change and Air Quality are closely aligned sharing similar ambitions albeit aimed at different types of pollutants. Actions to move towards active sustainable travel, cleaner heating sources and thermal insulation all have a direct impact on reducing local toxic pollution as well as CO2.
- As a consequence of climate change, an increase in air pollutants (including CO2, black carbon particulates and methane) severely impact both public health and the earth's climate and ecosystems globally. Emissions of greenhouse gases contribute to climate change and ozone-depleting substances create larger holes in the ozone layer.
- This type of pollution also increases the acidity of rain, which causes damage to buildings, land, fresh water and sea water, wildlife and plants. Air pollution is created from a multitude of sources including burning fossil fuels for power generation, manufacturing processes, ICE diesel / petrol vehicles and air travel.

5 ENSURING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE BOROUGH

5.1. Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan was adopted in 2020 as Merton's response to our declaration of a climate emergency, which set net zero carbon targets of 2050 for the borough and 2030 for the Council.

5.2. This 30-year plan sets out our vision for Merton in 2050 and the key actions required to get to net-zero carbon across four thematic areas (the Green Economy, Buildings and Energy, Transport and Greening Merton), as well as how the Council is going to decarbonise its own operations by 2030. Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan were formed by extensive engagement and by detailed technical work on identifying carbon emissions in Merton and how we can get to net zero.

5.3. As set out in Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan, and in common with many other places, carbon emissions are everyone's responsibility. Of the borough-wide carbon emissions approximately:

- 46% of carbon emissions in Merton are from the electricity and gas used to power resident's homes.
- 34% of carbon emissions are from business premises and other commercial buildings
- 18% of carbon emissions are from transport, primarily road travel
- 2% of carbon emissions are from Council activities

5.4. Each year the Council publishes a Climate Delivery Plan to set out what has happened in the previous 12 months and what is planned for the next 12 months towards reaching net zero. Later this month, at their meeting on 20th February 2023, Merton's Cabinet will be considering Merton's Climate Delivery Plan - Year 3. This includes the proposed allocation of £2million in climate reserve funding allocated by Cabinet in June

2022 to increase capacity to deliver the Climate Strategy & Action Plan across the Council.

5.5. Officers have been developing a suggested programme of work in order to utilise the climate reserve funding to help decarbonise the Council's own activities over the next few years as set out in table 2 below. These proposals will be presented to Cabinet on 20th February to approve funding support for these project streams.

Table 2 - 2022 Climate Funding Allocation Proposal

	Project	Description
1	Green economy lead	Recruiting an additional staff member to lead on the development of a Green Economy in Merton. This new role will enable greater engagement with businesses and Business Improvement Districts to promote low carbon business in Merton, greater support for local circular economy initiatives, as well as supporting the development of green skills and jobs in Merton.
2	Business retrofit support scheme	Developing a business retrofit support scheme to help businesses in Merton decarbonise and save on their energy bills.
3	Climate engagement	Continuing to support and strengthen climate engagement outreach to residents, businesses and community groups by making Merton's Climate Engagement Officer role permanent and securing a climate outreach budget for engagement events and materials.
4	Climate Action Fund	Continuing to support the development and delivery of community-led climate projects by committing funding towards a community climate action fund.
5	Community retrofit loan scheme	Establishing a community retrofit loan scheme for homeowners in Merton who are not eligible for national and regional funding.
6	Council rented properties - Legal Review	Commissioning support to undertake a legal review of the leases for council-owned shops, business and industrial buildings and other non-operational buildings to help inform decarbonisation plans for these buildings. This will also feed into the Council's wider estate review.
7	Council rented properties - EPCs	Commissioning of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for all the Council's non-operational buildings, to help inform the Council's decarbonisation plans and wider estate review.
8	Community schools heating and catering	Commissioning a review of the catering equipment and heating systems in Merton's community schools to inform decarbonisation plans, future funding bids and future procurement of new catering and heating equipment for community schools.
9	Supply chain decarbonisation lead	Recruiting an additional staff member to support commissioners and contract managers across the Council in engaging with service providers to understand and reduce the Council's supply chain emissions.
10	Climate training for procurement	Developing and delivering bespoke climate training for key staff involved in contract management and commissioning across the Council. This will build on the general carbon literacy training being rolled out for Council staff in 2023.

11	Carbon in all major Council decisions tool	Developing and implementing a tool for embedding climate change and carbon reduction in all major Council decisions to ensure that decisions are in keeping with Merton's net zero commitments.
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5.6. To move towards net zero, the Council is undertaking a wide range of projects with partners, recognising that the majority (98%) of carbon emissions are outside the Council's direct control. As well as saving carbon, climate actions also have fundamental benefits for other Council priorities and services such as public health, greenspaces, active travel and cost of living. Details of these projects are within Merton's Climate Delivery Plans (years 1 to 3 – see links in Section 13 of this report) and include:

5.7. Working with and supporting Merton's Climate Action Group of volunteers who play a leading role in the development and implementation of community-led projects, events and knowledge exchange that reduce Merton's greenhouse gas emissions, where joint efforts are more effective than the actions of individuals or the Council alone. The Climate Action Group is organised into the same themes as the Climate Strategy and Action Plan: Buildings and Energy, Greening Merton, Green Economy and Transport. Climate Action Group projects include:

- Merton Garden Streets – a volunteer led project, delivered by Sustainable Merton, planting Merton's streets during summer months. With over 90 streets signing up to planting days over successive summers, community feedback highlighted positive impacts for mental and physical wellbeing, developing a greater sense of community, as well as improving local air quality, biodiversity and climate resilience.
- Energy matters – energy and carbon saving advice delivered in schools for children and parents
- The Wheel – a circular economy project bringing together waste reduction, reuse and upcycling projects in the borough under one umbrella brand "The Wheel" to raise awareness and to change consumer behaviour.

5.8. Mitcham Community Orchard, which was created in partnership with Sustainable Merton as part of the Dig Merton initiative, inspired 200 residents and 12 local partners and businesses to help transform a derelict area of spare land into an award-winning community orchard with 30 different varieties of fruit trees, seven (7) raised beds, ponds, a soft fruit collection and a wildflower meadow. The site has received the following acknowledgements: London in Bloom, Merton in Bloom, the national LGC award for community gardens, and a Team London Award.

- The site's development continues, and it has been used for numerous barbecues and parties by local residents and groups. The orchard is a community and educational resource to be enjoyed by everyone and with the help of local volunteers, it continues to grow strong.



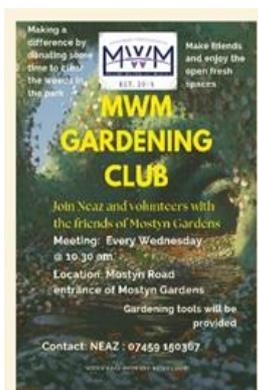
5.9. Creating more comfortable homes and businesses, saving carbon and reducing energy bills:

- Supporting Housing Associations in applying for government funding to retrofit the homes they own, also saving on energy costs for residents.
- Helping Merton's low-income households to access available government support to retrofit their own homes. This includes working with the GLA to provide funding to a local organisation, Thinking Works, who support Merton residents in the (sometimes complex) application process for government funding to retrofit their homes. Council officers, Thinking Works and representatives from the GLA have all attended Merton's Cost of Living Events to ensure residents can find out more about the retrofit schemes face-to-face, as well as accessing the support by email or telephone.
- Merton's Climate Action Group (buildings and energy) providing good practice case studies to inspire other residents to retrofit their homes.
- Recruiting two Community Retrofit Officers to provide additional support, including working with UK Power Networks (UKPN) and other power providers to produce an energy masterplan for Merton to ensure the power supply can support decarbonised building energy and electric vehicles.
- Over the next 12 months we will develop a project to help businesses reduce their carbon emissions from energy.
- Driving low carbon development through ambitious climate change policies in Merton's Draft Local Plan.

5.10. The Greenspaces Team continues to work with its network of Friends of Parks and local interest groups to improve the Environmental Sustainability and Greening Merton agendas in the borough's parks and open spaces.

- Adoption of the Merton "Wildways" initiative as we look to relax the current intensive management of our highways verges. This is linked to our ambition to use less carbon, become more sustainable and improve local greenspaces and enhance biodiversity. Currently 11% of Merton's highways verges are managed as Wildways [WildWays: boosting biodiversity on grass verges | Merton Council](#).
- Adoption of the Merton "Pollinator Park" initiative as look to enhance the biodiversity in our parks and open spaces through the machine planting of bulbs and wildflowers in Merton greenspaces to provide nectar sources for bees and butterflies while providing visual interest and colour to our parks and open spaces. In 2022 over 250,000 machine bulbs and 20,000 square meters of wildflower meadow were planted in Merton's parks and open spaces.
- Working with service providers (IdverdeUK), partner organisation (RSPB) and Friends of Parks to provide targeted management and maintenance plans for Merton's Parks and nature reserves through the adoption of Green Flag Award [Green Flag Award](#) the international mark of quality. In 2022 the borough will be submitting three (3) new Green Flag Awards writing plans with Friends of Parks Groups.
- Continue to provide opportunities for community and corporate volunteering in our parks and open spaces and record the added value that Friends of Parks groups bring to the borough through recording and putting a monetary value

against this input. In 2022 we have 25 regular Friends of Parks groups volunteering in Merton Parks and generating over 5000 hours of volunteering per year in Merton's Parks



Regular Friends volunteering in Merton parks and open spaces

5.11. The Tree Team continues to plant trees annually as well as investigate and submit applications for external funding to increase sustainable tree planting in the borough's park and streets, recent successful funded initiatives are outlined below.

- **Annual Street Tree Replacement Program:** In 2022-23 the team planted **480** standard trees in highways locations to replace trees lost due to health or insurance issues.
- **Annual Street Tree New Planting Program:** In 2022-23 the team planted **110** standard trees in new highway locations.
- **CIL Funded Tree Planting:** Through a range of Neighbourhood CIL projects and planning agreements the Tree Team will continue to sustainably increase canopy cover in borough greenspaces
- **Urban Tree Challenge:** Between 2021-23 the Council has successfully bid for three (3) rounds of Urban Tree Challenge Funding
 - Round 1: **1200** tree whips in Merton parks including 800 Morden Park and 400 Pollards Hill Park, investment of £1,500
 - Round 2: **194** standard trees across 10 Merton Parks, investment of £61,817.00
 - Round 3: **283** standard trees across 28 Merton Parks, investment of £83,125.00
 The funding secured paid for the supply, planting and maintenance for 3 years to establishment of the above trees. [Urban Tree Challenge Fund](#)
- **Trees for Cities:** In 2023 the Tree Team will embark on its first Trees for Cities Community Woodland Creation Project on Cramner Green which will see the planting of **6000** tree whips, **12** standard trees and **400 square meters** of underplanting of woodland bulbs, investment of £48,000.00 [Trees for Cities](#)
- **Trees for Streets:** In 2023 the Council will join the National Street Tree sponsorship scheme [Trees for Streets](#) offering residents, groups and business to support increasing canopy cover on Merton's Streets.



Urban tree challenge whip planting Morden Park and Pollards Hill Spring 2022

5.12. Merton's Local Plan recognises over 50 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance in the borough. These range from large areas such as the Mitcham and Wimbledon commons to small parcels of land such as Myrna Close Local Nature Reserve in Mitcham. The Council's adopted policies aim to protect and enhance these sites for future generations and also seek opportunities to create new wildlife habitats and thus expand the boroughs biodiversity.

5.13. Merton Greenspaces Team are currently working with Service Providers at Idverde and its partnership with RSPB "Creating Nature Positive Communities" reviewing the current Nature Reserve Management Plan - [see Nature Reserves](#).

6 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

6.1. The Council recognises the importance of sustainable travel in delivering a clean and sustainable borough. Road transport is responsible for 18% of carbon emissions and a significant amount of the air pollutants in Merton. Addressing these issues will require a shift from car journeys to walking, cycling and public transport, alongside a transition to low emissions vehicles for essential car trips.

6.2. The Mayor's Transport Strategy set a target for 73% of all trips in Merton to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041 and the Government's decarbonising transport strategy sets out an ambition for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030. Achieving this increase in active travel will require significant investment in improved walking and cycling infrastructure in the borough.

6.3. Merton's Transport Strategy (LIP3) set out a delivery plan for the installation of cycle routes for the plan period up to 2025. The allocation of TfL LIP funding was severely impacted during the Covid pandemic. In October 2022 TfL allocated funding to Merton for the remainder of 2022/23 and 2023/24 which is reduced by around a third compared to pre covid levels.

6.4. TfL funded schemes that are proposed for implementation in 2022/23 and 2023/24 include:

- A permanent segregated cycle scheme on Merton High Street
- Continuation of improvements to the Wandle trail
- Pedestrian crossing and junction improvements at a number of locations
- A major healthy Streets scheme on Streatham Road to Mitcham Town Centre comprising improvements for cyclist, pedestrians and bus priority.
- Commonsides West Shared Cycle Path and improvements to the junction with Madeira Road to provide a toucan crossing phase.
- Improvements to the Morden Road and Dorset Road Junction

- Provision of a Toucan Crossing on Bushey Road
- Secure residential and school cycle parking.

6.5. A number of additional schemes were also delivered during the pandemic through emergency Covid streetscape funding including five (5) new Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), 28 school streets and segregated cycle lanes on Haydon's Road bridge and Church Road. Cycling improvements were also made to Plough Lane with funding contributions from the stadium development and on Bishopsford Road, London Road and Mitcham Bridge as part of the emergency replacement of Mitcham Bridge.

6.6. Whilst there have been a number of improvements in recent years it is recognised that pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in Merton is not of adequate standard in many areas and there is further work to do to create a coherent, safe and comprehensive cycle and walking network.

6.7. To inform the long-term development of Merton's cycle and walking infrastructure, the Council proposes to develop a detailed cycling and walking strategies for publication in 2023. The strategies will identify gaps in the network and develop detailed feasibility options for schemes. This will involve an updated assessment of existing routes in accordance with latest design standard and identify where improvements are needed. Potential schemes will be costed and prioritised to better enable the Council to make future bids for available funding from TfL or Government or to seek funding contributions from developers.

Dockless e-bike hire schemes

6.8. Dockless electric bike hire is a service in which bikes can be located, hired and unlocked using a smartphone app. Dockless e-bike hire schemes are not subject to any legal framework, and are therefore able to operate without agreement from the Council. The schemes have become increasingly widespread and popular across London, including in Merton over the last year.

6.9. The schemes provide a sustainable travel option for some residents, particularly in areas of the borough that lack public transport options or where residents do not have space to store their own bicycles. However, the schemes are currently operating on a free-floating parking model which has resulted in some issues with pavement parking creating obstructions for pedestrians. To mitigate this the Council is seeking to engage with operators to enter into formal agreements to ensure schemes meet minimum standards and provide designated parking areas.

6.10. In December 2022 the Council entered into a formal agreement with Human Forest to provide e-bike hire services which will cover all areas of the borough. Human Forest's pricing model offers the first ten minutes of travel per day free and no unlocking fee. Human Forest instead charge a trip ending fee which incentivises good practice parking practice by offering a reduced trip end fee of only 50p for parking in a designated "green bay" (compared to £2 for free floating parking). The Council have worked with Human Forest to identify up to 100 "green bays" that will be geo-fenced for user on their app. In the coming months, more bays will be identified, which may include some bays that are marked on street and converted car parking bays. Human Forest currently have an agreement in place with Kingston and Sutton, so this will enable cross boundary trips in areas to the south of the borough with lower public transport accessibility levels.

6.11. The Council has also proactively engaged with other e-bike hire schemes currently operating in Merton and agreed procedures to manage parking including

parking wardens in busy areas, education for users on safe parking and fines and bans for users not complying with parking rules.

6.12. Council officers also continue to engage regularly with TfL, London Councils and neighbouring boroughs to share best practice and work towards a more consistent London wide approach to dockless e-bike hire schemes.

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

6.13. The Council will develop an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure delivery plan for publication in 2023 that will set out how it will deliver the charging infrastructure necessary to support the projected transition to electric vehicles.

6.14. Preliminary work has begun on the development of the EVCI delivery plan, including continued engagement with Government, TfL and London Councils on strategy and policy and seeking input from Councillors via the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny and Overview Committee EV Task Group.

6.15. In early 2022, the Council made a successful bid to the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) for £750k of funding under the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) to provide lamp column charge points. Through the procurement process the Council was able to more than double the amount of charge points proposed to be provided to over 500. This will enable the Council to meet Merton's projected requirements for the amount of slow public charge points needed by 2025.

6.16. Extensive survey work has been conducted to identify suitable lamp columns and a consultation process is ongoing. Installation of the first EVCPs is due to start by the end of January 2023 with full rollout of all chargepoints is expected to take until at least end of March 2023.

6.17. To ensure that EV owners can access the lamp column EVCPs and they are not blocked by other vehicles, the Council will also be commencing work in early 2023 to provide dedicated EV only parking bays adjacent to existing and proposed lamp column EVCPs. Where we seek to create EV only bays in residential CPZ areas, use will only be permitted by resident EV permit holders in that specific CPZ. This is to prevent potential misuse by non-local EV owners parking for free in residential areas near to town centres or stations. Wherever possible, the Council has identified locations for lamp column EVCPs at the end of roads and adjacent to flank walls to minimise impact on other residents in the street. All proposed dedicated EV only bays will be subject to a full statutory consultation process.

6.18. In addition to the above, the Council's new planning policies require developments of new homes to provide electric charging connectivity to 100% of parking spaces for site, so that in the future, EV chargepoints can be installed easily for all parking spaces without major disruption. At least 20% of those on-site car parking spaces must have active EV chargepoints. The Council is also supportive of EV chargepoints being installed in supermarket car parks and is encouraging the petrol stations in the borough to consider installing rapid EV chargepoints in their parking areas.

7 ENSURING INCLUSIVE OPEN SPACES

7.1. Fair and equal access to public open spaces is not just good practice but is governed by law, namely the Equality Act 2010. This legislation aims to prevent

discrimination and place the responsibility with councils and service providers to make reasonable adjustments to provide access for people with disabilities.

7.2. In order to optimise use for people, greenspace must be both accessible and worth visiting. Good accessibility is fundamental although there has, in the past, been a tendency towards an exclusive focus on one or two forms of disability (for example wheelchair users) and the physical aspects of site design (ramps and paths). However, accessibility is also to do with other factors such as distance from home and sociocultural factors - do people want to go there and do they feel safe and comfortable there?

7.3. Social factors are sometimes overlooked but are often very significant in making people with disabilities feel excluded from landscape. [How to make greenspaces more inclusive \(sensorytrust.org.uk\)](https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk)².

7.4. The protection of Merton Parks and Nature Reserves is achieved through:

- Developing robust Park and Reserve Management and Maintenance Plans, using nationally recognised parks quality marks like Green Flag Award.



- Managing secure park perimeters through fencing or bunding. In 2022 the Greenspaces team have carried out a range of projects to secure park perimeters through Greenspace Capital, Ward Allocation Scheme and other external funding.



Woodmanstrane Nature Reserve secured after arson attack Nov 2022 Merton Green Walk sympathetically secured Nov 2022 part of Green Flag Action Plan

² <https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/guidance/inclusive-greenspace>



Soil bunding created at Figges Marsh September 2022



Soil bunding with Wildflower Seeding Wimbledon Park June 2022

7.5. Enhancing the Biodiversity of the boroughs Parks and Open Spaces: Merton's greenspaces contain an array of habitats and associated species of plants and animals. Regional priority habitats such as the meadowland and veteran trees of Morden Park and Cannon Hill Common, the acid grassland of Mitcham Common, will all continue to be managed so as to maintain and enhance their biodiversity. Funding streams will be explored to undertake restoration works to lakes and seasonal ponds, for example Wimbledon Park and Cannizaro waterbodies. Management plans for wildlife sites will be updated.



Wildflower and Bulb Planting Gap Rd Pocket Park, Reed and Tree Planting Wimbledon Park Lake Safety Project 2022

7.6. The deculverting and river restoration of Wimbledon Park Brook was funded through grant funding in summer 2021, using £204k of Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid from the Environment Agency and Defra. This scheme was identified on the opportunities register carried out as part of the wider Wimbledon Park Lake reservoir safety works (funded and managed by London Borough of Merton with a budget of £1.3 million).

7.7. The scheme included opening up a new section of the brook through Ashen Grove and the public park. The scheme reduced flood risk to five (5) residential

properties and reduced flood risk to the park. This was achieved by the increase in storage for water through the new channel capacity and by adding scrapes to create a two-stage channel.

7.8. The design of the scheme has been carried out to maximise the biodiversity potential of the site. The banks have planted with native marginal and aquatic species and further planting and enhancement will be undertaken by the Friends of Wimbledon Park and local volunteers in spring 2023. As well as habitat creation this also gives an opportunity for education, teaching members of the public about natural flood risk management. The use of aquatic vegetation and reeds will have a positive impact on water quality leaving the park, before flows enter the River Wandle main channel.



Wimbledon Park Brook River Restoration and Deculverting Project, Wimbledon Park 2022

7.9. Managing fly-tipping and litter in 2022: Strategic CIL Projects to clear litter and fly-tipping and design out opportunities for people to commit offences moving forward. Allowing the team to follow-up with enforcement.

Table 3: Strategic CIL Projects to Improve Cleanliness and Enforcement Capabilities

Project Name	Summary	Start-Up Date	Completion Date	Milestones / Commentary
Brangwyn Crescent / Commonside East Improvements	Clearance of existing fly-tipping on Council owned land and installation of 2x fixed CCTV units in each location, to provide greater resilience in monitoring of antisocial behaviour/fly-tipping. Clearance of fly-tipped material will be covered by waste services budgets.	01/04/2022	01/03/2022	<p><u>Brangwyn Crescent:</u> Jul 2022 – 1x CCTV camera installed. Sep 2022 – 1x CCTV camera removed for repairs following damage due to vandalism. Jan 2023 – replacement camera to be installed to improve enforcement.</p> <p><u>Commonside East:</u> Jul 2022 – 1x CCTV camera installed. Aug 2022 – Vegetation cutback and waste clearance completed.</p>

Willow Lane Bridge Improvements	Install permanent CCTV, remove fly-tipped waste from Mitcham Common and install fence.	01/04/2022	01/08/2022	<p>Feb 2022 – Temporary CCTV camera installed.</p> <p>May 2022 – Short term waste clearance.</p> <p>Jul 2022 – Full vegetation cutback and waste clearance.</p> <p>Aug 2022 – New fence installed.</p> <p>Sep 2022 – CCTV cameras repositioned to provide better enforcement capabilities following waste removal.</p>
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Willow Lane improvements and fly-tipping removal undertaken.



Commonside East before and after pictures.



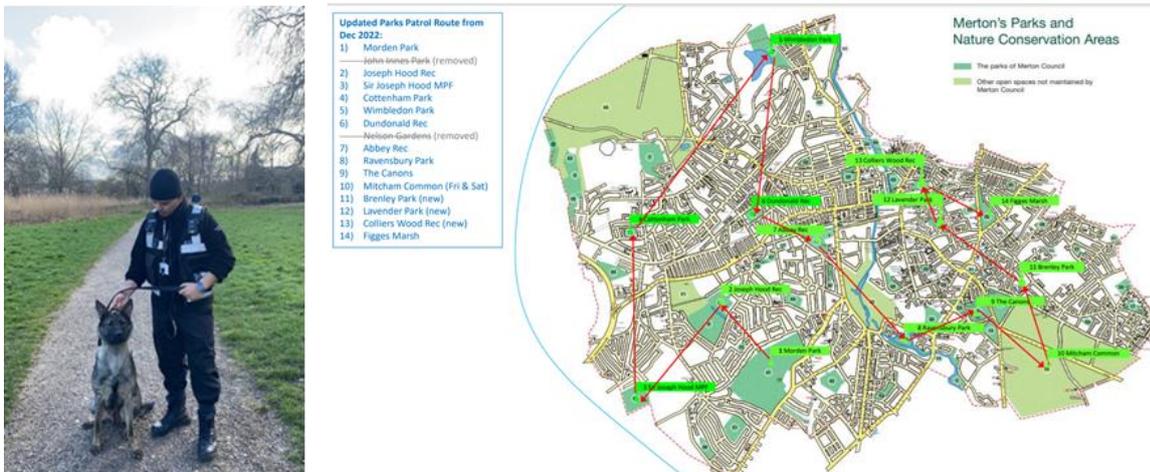
7.10. The Equality Act 2010 aims to prevent discrimination and place the responsibility with councils and service providers to make reasonable adjustments to provide access for people with disabilities.



DDA 1:12 access ramps to all 6no Paddling Pools in Merton Parks June 2022

7.11. Linked to Cleaner and Greener Funding secured in 2022, the Greenspaces Team established a Park Ranger Pilot with current environmental enforcement providers Kingdom. The pilot project took learning from the Metropolitan Police “Ask Angela Campaign” [Ask for Angela | Metropolitan Police](#) to ensure people feel safer when using Merton’s Parks.

- Officers have an established beat route around the borough and sites are added based on intelligence provided by Safer Merton, Service providers at Idverde and Veolia, Friends of Parks groups to target issues of anti-social behaviour, environmental crime.
- The two (2) person team includes trained enforcement officer and trained dog handler. Although the pilot was established with education in mind, teams are able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for littering and dog fouling.



7.12. Safer Merton continues to work to ensure our parks and open spaces are a place where residents can enjoy a safe environment free from anti-social behaviour:

- In October 2022 the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) currently covering five wards in the borough (Cricket Green, Figgess Marsh, Graveney, Lavender Fields and Ravensbury) was extended for a further three years. As per the recommendation approved by Cabinet in September 2022, work is currently underway to consult with partners and the public on views to extend the PSPO borough wide, with the aim of making Merton a responsible drinking borough that does not prohibit the drinking of alcohol in public but reflects a decision to control ASB linked to alcohol consumption.
- In terms of reducing violence, work is underway with the police and partners to have a coordinated approach to weapons sweeps which will involve parks staff and members of the community linked to parks being trained by the police in following the correct procedures to identify weapons and report.
- Safer Merton is working with the National Trust at Morden Hall Park with a view to implementing designing out crime initiatives, including CCTV and links to the Council’s CCTV control room. We are also working with Canons Park in Mitcham and exploring the possibility of linking their CCTV to the control room. In addition, a working group has been established to explore the possibility of a Town Link radio for Morden Town Centre, which could be extended to local park staff in the area.

- Merton Council became White Ribbon accredited in October 2022, demonstrating our commitment to taking a stand against violence inflicted by men against women and girls by encouraging our staff to make the White Ribbon promise. During 2023, we will roll out the campaign to our partner organisations, encouraging their staff to make the promise. This work will include reaching out to our parks staff and contractors such as Idverde and Veolia.
- The 'Ask for Angela' initiative, whereby those who feel threatened or vulnerable can ask for help, will also be explored.

7.13. The Public Space team manage events within our parks and open spaces. We are committed to enabling events within these spaces and recognise that a diverse programme of varied and well-managed events and activities contributes to the promotion of a vibrant cultural community, while also providing a economic boost to the local area. We work throughout the year, proactively and reactively to deliver exciting opportunities for local residents, while also being a attraction regionally. The current larger events that are confirmed to deliver in 2023 are as follows.



- Zippo Circus
- Pub in the Park – food festival and live entertainment
- Bottons Children's Funfair
- Luna Cinema
- Tough Mudder and:
- The Borough Firework shows at Morden and Wimbledon Parks



7.14. Officers from both Leisure and Parks are talking with various event organisers to ensure a varied event programme in 2023. Discussions are ongoing with event providers for further music events, food focussed activities (i.e. a Caribbean food day) and an event at Cannizaro Park focused on mindfulness and sustainability, which will also involve commercial providers for the eco-sector.

7.15. The Mayhem Theatre group are regulars at Cannizaro Park, this year they have been asked to put on a further free show in the Canons in a bid to share cultural events throughout the borough.

7.16. A working group of Councillors and officers will be considering Mitcham Carnival options. The Canons is fully booked with events for the year and our usual community events will be returning, including the very popular Morden Family Fun Day.

7.17. Officers have received an application from the Windrush Generation Legacy Association for an event in Morden Park on 1 July. The application is for 5,000 attendees. Officers from the Windrush Steering Group will make contact to see if we can support in any way.

7.18. Merton Council is the licensing authority under the Licensing Act 2003 and is required to ensure that its functions are carried out and the four licensing objectives are promoted these objectives are:

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- The prevention of public nuisance
- The protection of children from harm

7.19. The Licensing Act 2003 requires certain activities to be licenced. Licensable activities include the provision of alcohol, the exhibition of film and the provision of live or amplified music (dependent on operational times and attendee numbers). When applications are received for events and activities taking place within public spaces liaison takes place with responsible authorities and organisers to ensure that appropriate conditions are applied to any premises licences ensuring the four (4) licensing objectives are met.

7.20. Additionally, the licensing team review and respond to street trading application, reviewing and assessing applications to allow public spaces to be used for markets and other specified activities.

7.21. The service will continue to meet their statutory responsibilities and work alongside agencies for licensable activities in public spaces.

7.22. Currently the partnership working arrangements linking both internal departments and external agencies together relating to events are being reviewed. This will define events and work to promote the spaces that the area available for use. It will ensure that all events in parks, open and public spaces are safe, are appropriate for the location and will aim to reduce the impact on residents and park users. The process will ensure that productive planning meetings are held and a Safety Advisory Group is convened when appropriate.

7.23. We have a fabulous number and range of successful sporting facilities in Merton. [Merton's Playing Pitch Strategy 2019](#) and [Merton's Indoor Sports Study 2020](#) consider the supply, quality, quantity, and future demand the wide range of sports in the borough. In Merton, on average, you are no further than 250m from the nearest park or playing field, which is amongst the top 5 most accessible in London.

7.24. Our partners Idverde facilitate sports bookings for the Council, which sees sport played all over the borough's parks and open spaces

7.25. There are;

149 football teams in Merton (men's, women's, boys, girls and mini soccer) play on 104 grass pitches. Two thirds of the pitches are owned by the Council or on community school or Academy school sites.
39 cricket pitches of which about half are local authority owned; 13 formal cricket clubs are based in Merton, totalling 96 teams.
There are 46 grass rugby pitches in Merton; a third of which are owned by the local authority. 11 community rugby union clubs are based in Merton hosting 84 teams (adults and juniors).
There are 8 pitches suitable for hockey in Merton, of which 7 are of a size and quality suitable for competitive hockey. All pitches are on school sites. Four hockey clubs operate in Merton, supporting 45 hockey teams (adults and juniors)

There are a total of 69 courts at 15 parks tennis venues in the borough.

8 ENABLING PEOPLE TO COME TOGETHER AND ENJOY A VARIETY OF NATURAL LIFE

8.1. Merton is lucky to have over 25 active Friends of Parks groups, who support a wide range of activities that not only improve the boroughs parks but also provide vital opportunity for individuals to benefit from the wellbeing created when you are out in nature.



8.2. Walk and Talk Movement: For the past year, 10.30am on a Saturday has been a regular date for hundreds of Merton residents, who head for their local park and join the borough's flourishing Walk and Talk Movement.

8.3. Canons House and Grounds Walk and Talk: From the courtyard of the idyllic Canons House and Grounds (www.thecanonsmitcham.co.uk), with its 500+ year old dovecote and secret walled garden. Plenty of great walks, sights to see and activities to enjoy in the local area.



Canons House & Grounds Walk and Talk

8.4. Wimbledon Park Walk and Talk: Our original and popular Walk and Talk in the famous Wimbledon Park starting from the big Walk and Talk banner near the cafe next to the tennis courts in the park³.



Wimbledon Park Walk and Talk

³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wimbledonparkwalkandtalk>

8.5. Colliers Wood and River Wandle: Join us for walks up and down the Wandle Valley every Saturday at 10.30am - from the coffee bike next to Colliers Wood Tube Station⁴.



Colliers Wood Walk and Talk

8.6. The Merton Greenspaces Team and Friends Network have a good working relationship with the South East Rivers Trust. Including SERT training friends' groups to get actively involved in the management of the River Wandle including litter picks and management of invasive vegetation like Pennywort.



8.7. In 2022 The Council's Greenspaces Team established a working relationship with the environmental charity Groundwork London through Idverde UK contract and set up a corporate volunteering program in Merton Parks. Working with Park Friends to establish an annual volunteering plan for key sites with a view to targeting corporate volunteering.

Event 1: Lacoste @ Wimbledon Park Wimbledon Championship plant re-use SCHEME

- Team of 25 staff
- £500 income
- £2500 worth of plants donated and planted
- 500 spent at council cafe



⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/collierswoodwalkandtalk>

Event 2: Lacoste @ Cannizaro Park Wimbledon Championship plant re-use scheme

- Team of 25 staff
- £500 income
- £1000 worth of plants donated and planted
- £500 spent at council cafe



Event 3: Price Waterhouse Cooper @ Canons House & Grounds Biodiversity Area

- Team of 10 Staff
- £250 income
- £500 worth of materials donated for bug hotels



8.8. In 2022 the Council’s Greenspaces have been working with Public Health on a number of park-based interventions. The first project “Beat the Street” physical activity intervention with Merton Schools, Beat the Street infrastructure will be installed into eight (8) Merton Parks during Spring 2023.

9 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1. The projects will be supported by a combination of Environment, Civic Pride and Climate Change funding streams.

9.2. Current approximate budgets are:

Service Area	Budget (£000’s)
Civic Pride	£2,000
Air Quality	£100
Street Cleansing & Fly-tipping	£3,418
Parks & Open Spaces	£2,122
Climate Change	£3,885

10 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

11 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

11.1. The delivery of effective cleansing services and safe and accessible parks and open spaces provides innumerable opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy our public spaces, improving community cohesion and providing vital health and wellbeing activities to our communities.

11.2. As outlined in 7.3 above, we have undertaken recent improvements to our paddling pools across the borough to ensure that they are accessible and useable by a wide array of park users, ensuring better access to our open space activities.

11.3. With specific reference to our environmental enforcement activities, the Council's Overarching Enforcement Policy states 'Regard shall be given to the relevant legislation, codes and policies which protect the rights of the individual and guide enforcement action, (These include the Human Rights Act 1998, Code for Crown Prosecutors, Corporate Customer Services Strategy and the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy).

12 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

12.1. None for the purposes of this report.

13 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1. None for the purposes of this report.

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

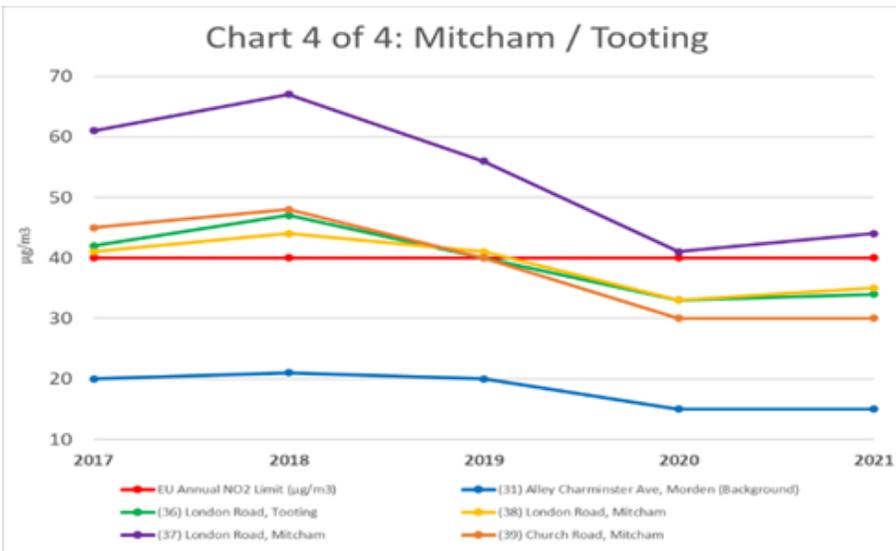
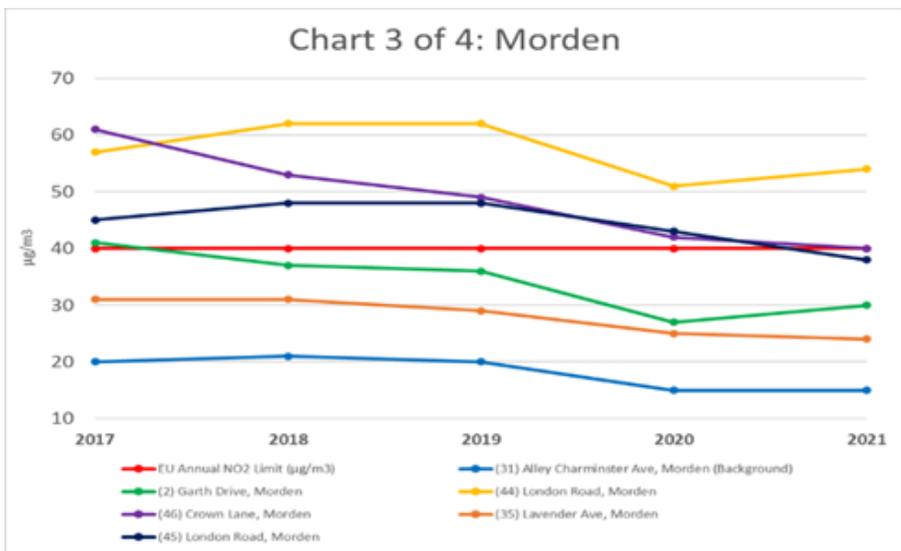
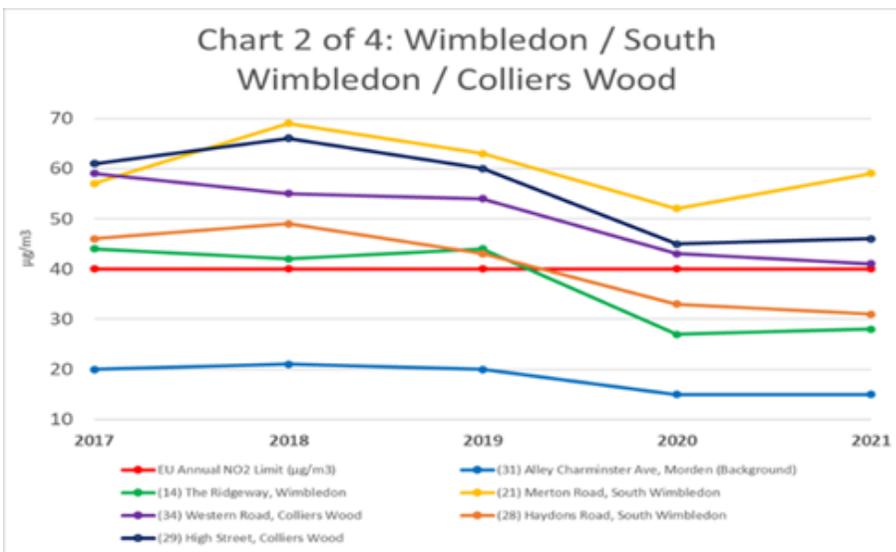
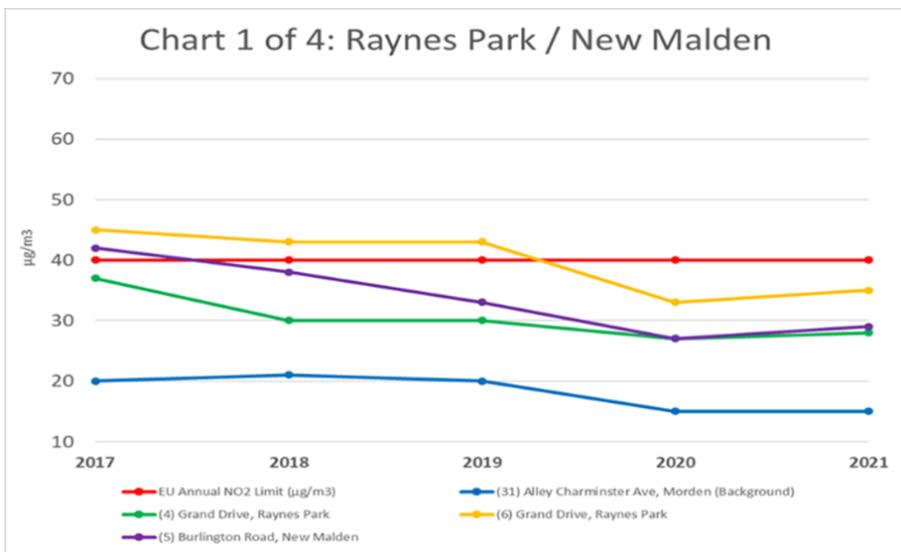
Appendix 1: Annual Trend in NO₂ Measured at our Diffusion Tube Monitoring Locations

Appendix 2: Source Apportionment Graphs for Key Pollutants NO_x, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ (London Atmospheric Emission Inventory (LAEI))

15 BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1. Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan and Merton's Climate Delivery Plan year 1 to 3 - [Climate change : Climate Strategy and Action Plan | Merton Council](#)

APPENDIX 1: ANNUAL TREND IN NO2 MEASURED AT OUR DIFFUSION TUBE MONITORING LOCATIONS



APPENDIX 2: SOURCE APPORTIONMENT GRAPHS FOR KEY POLLUTANTS NOX, PM2.5 AND PM10 (LONDON ATMOSPHERIC EMISSION INVENTORY (LAEI))

