

## **Committee: Council**

**Date: 15 November 2023**

Wards: All

## **Subject: Strategic Theme: Borough of Sport**

Lead officer: Dan Jones, Executive Director: Environment, Civic Pride and Climate

John Morgan, Executive Director, Adult Social Care, Integrated Care and Public Health

Lead member: Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage

Cllr Peter McCabe, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Contact officer: Keith Burns, Interim Assistant Director, Customers, Policy and Improvement

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### **Recommendations:**

A. That the Council note and consider the content of this report.

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

1.1. The Council, at its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, approved 'Building a Better Merton Together', the Council Plan for 2023 – 2026, which sets out three strategic priorities for the Council. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, delivery against these priorities is monitored by the Council. To facilitate this monitoring role, each meeting of the Council receives a report providing an update on performance against one of the three strategic priorities.

Building a Better Merton Together sets out how the Council will deliver its ambition with three strategic priorities that shape and guide delivery:

- i. Nurturing Civic Pride
- ii. Building a sustainable future
- iii. Creating a Borough of Sport

1.2. The achievement of these strategic priorities will require extensive engagement with residents, voluntary groups, and businesses, building on partnerships and alliances to reach a common goal.

1.3. This report provides the Council with an opportunity to consider progress against the Borough of Sport strategic priority, with a particular focus on:

- I. Increasing access to sport and physical wellbeing activities during the cost of living emergency.
- II. Stakeholder engagement in creating a Borough of Sport.
- III. Merton's Big Sports Day outcomes and next steps.

- 1.4. For the first two areas of focus this report provides:
  - I. An overview of the Council's long-term ambitions.
  - II. Progress to date against those ambitions, including any specific decisions made since the Council last met in September 2023 as well as performance against key performance indicators where relevant.
  - III. Key deliverables and commitments over the life of the new Council Plan (2023 to 2026) and any identified risks or issues relating to these deliverables and commitments.
- 1.5. For the third (Merton's Big Sports Day) an update on how the day was received has been provided.

## 2 DETAILS

### INTRODUCTION

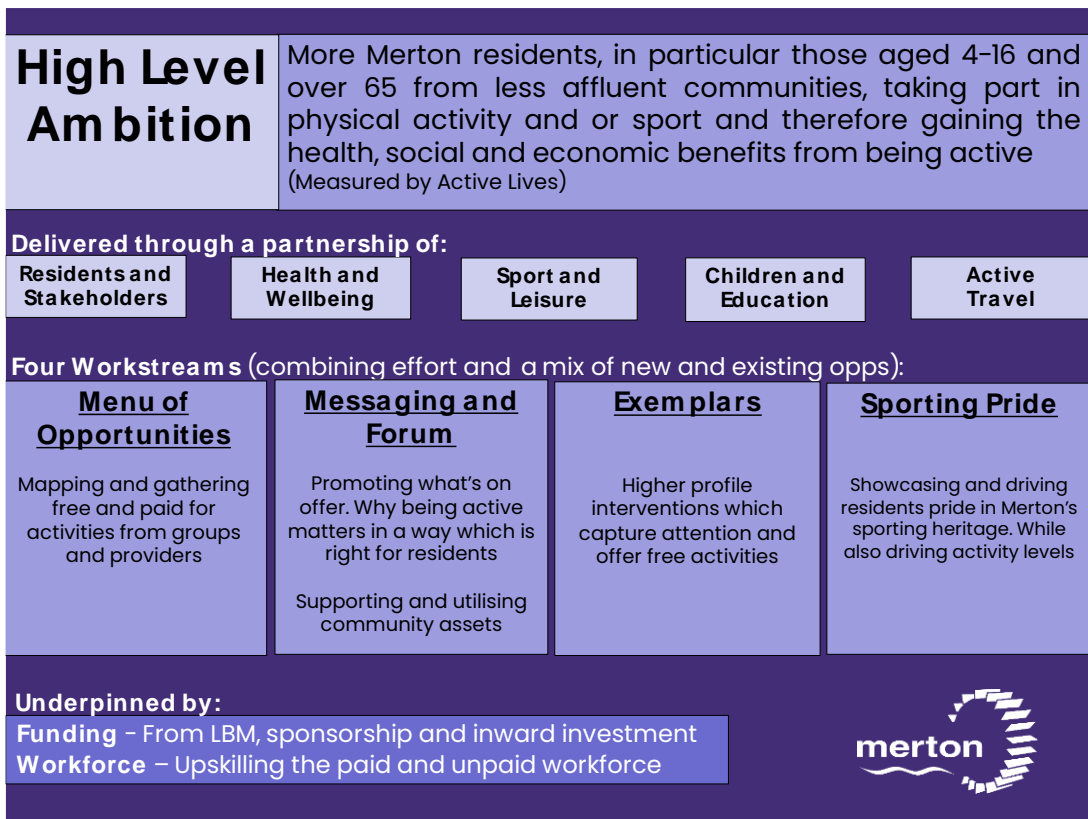
- 2.1. The blueprint – the three year actions – which will ensure Merton becomes London's Borough of Sport were approved by the Cabinet in June 2023. This set the overall ambition to ensure:

***“more Merton residents, in particular those aged 4-16, the over 65s and those from less affluent communities, to be taking part in physical activity and sport and therefore gaining the health, social and economic benefits of being active”.***

The public call to action is to do one, or one more, physical activity session each week. It's about sport and physical activity in their widest sense including team and individual sports – for example football, swimming, tennis – and wider physical activity – walking, jogging, yoga and exercise sessions. Basically, anything that gets you moving and active. Progress will be measured annually through the Sport England Active Lives surveys.

In addition to the above overall ambition, becoming London's Borough of Sport will:

- reduce inactivity by increasing participation in sport and physical activity.
  - widen access to sport and physical activity by under-represented groups by providing more free and low cost opportunities to these residents.
  - engage more children and young people and older people in sport and physical activity.
  - encourage young people and Merton residents to take up volunteering, officiating and or organising roles in sport and physical activity to drive a more vibrant sports sector and develop their potential; and
  - celebrate the rich sporting heritage in Merton and use this as a tool to engage more residents in physical activity and sport.
- 2.2. The following diagram provides and overview of the Borough of Sport plans.



- 2.3. The target audiences – 4-16 years olds, and 65 and over – were selected because the activity levels of these groups in Merton fall below the London and national averages for these groups particularly in terms of the wards in the east of the borough. Less affluent residents are also being given priority because affluence is the single biggest determinate of whether a child or adult is active. Whilst activity levels for most groups have bounced back to pre-covid levels those from lower income households have not.
- 2.4. The ambition to become London’s Borough of Sport should and will reach and benefit all underrepresented groups in Merton<sup>1</sup>. Also, by targeting the less affluent, the high level ambition, will help capture many from these equity groups as a result of intersectionality. However, it will be important to also reach out for example, to more affluent disabled people and others who are more affluent but are also within an under-represented group.
- 2.5. In order to bring together and co-ordinate the various teams and departments within the Council with an interest and contribution to make to the Borough of Sport ambition, an operational group was established in April 2023. This includes representation from: Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces, Public Health, Children’s Services, Transport, the Leader’s Office, Communications, Human Resources, Planning, Community and Housing, and Corporate Services. In the run up to Merton’s Big Sports Day the group has been focused on planning and delivering the event. It is now transitioning its focus back to policy development and implementation. As per the blueprint, a stakeholder advisory group (discussed further at paragraphs 2.39 and 2.41.3 below) has also been established and is helping shape, guide and monitor the Borough of Sport plans.

<sup>1</sup> Girls/women, disabled people, those from Black, Asian and other diverse community groups, the less affluent, LGBTQ+ people and older people

- 2.6. Given the cross-cutting nature of the Borough of Sport agenda, the delivery of the ambitious programme will be resourced by a combination of resources provided from within existing LBM budgets across a number of service areas. This includes Sport and Leisure and Public Health, as well as external sponsorship and partnership funding. There is a commitment of £1.5m in the capital budget from 2024/25 to deliver infrastructure improvements across the borough, which will be informed by the outcome of updating the Playing Pitch Strategy (see paragraph 2.24.4 below) and ongoing dialogue with the sporting community in Merton and key funding partners, such as Sport England, the Football Foundation, the GLA and National Governing Bodies.
- 2.7. Success will be measured by across three key indicators:
- activity levels – an increase in the number active 4-16s and 65 and overs (measured by Sport England’s Active Lives surveys) and a decrease in inactivity.
  - volunteering – an increase in the number of sports and physical activity volunteers (measured by Sport England’s Active Lives surveys); and
  - opportunities – the number of activities on offer with increase and diversify (measured by the Borough of Sport Activity Finder).

## **COMMUNICATING THE STRATEGY**

2.8. Communicating our ambition to become London’s Borough of Sport is a priority workstream for the Council’s Communications Team. Work to promote Borough of Sport spans the entire communications mix including internal engagement; marketing; PR and digital.

2.9. Successes and achievements to date include:

### **Big Sports Day**

2.10. Efforts in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2023/24 focused on developing a narrative, a clear brand identity and the Big Sports Day community launch event, which attracted more than 5,000 residents and engaged them in physical activity. Communications led the planning and delivery of the day, bringing more than 50 local partners together with regular stakeholder meetings and support on the day as we co-delivered the event with community, volunteer and professional sports organisations. Further detail on the Big Sports Day is provided later in the report.

### **Digital communications**

2.11. In marketing Merton’s Big Sports Day, the Council secured endorsement from West Ham United striker Michail Antonio who started his career with Tooting and Mitcham United FC Juniors, as well as endorsement videos from major local partners including AELTC and AFC Wimbledon.

2.12. More than 5,000 visits to the Borough of Sport webpage, which was created for the launch event, and the Communications Team have received one hundred and sixty one responses to an online survey on what people thought of the event and how it can be improved.

- 2.13. The feedback was broadly very positive. Most importantly in terms of the overall programme aims, 74% of attendees said they or those they attended with were very likely (31%) or somewhat likely (43%) to take up a new sport or activity because of attending. 94% of respondents said were very likely (76%) or somewhat likely (18%) to attend another event like this.
- 2.14. Key Qualitative feedback on what could be improved including: bringing the event earlier in the year, making the event longer or running multiple events, improving parking, and enhancing the food and drink offered at the event.
- 2.15. A series of videos have been released supporting Borough of Sport priorities, including the announcement of Kids Swim Free, and vox pops from residents who attended the Big Sports Day.

#### **A Borough of Sport identity**

- 2.16. Alongside the Big Sports Day, the Council has developed a standalone Borough of Sport brand which has now been launched. This included prize giveaway merchandise at the Big Sports Day, including water bottles, gym bags and t-shirts, of which more than 2,000 items were given away during the launch event. Items were given in return for people completing a number of new activities.

#### **Borough of Sport Activity Finder**

- 2.17. The Communications Team has worked alongside colleagues to develop the Borough of Sport Activity Finder, drafting content, supplying imagery, and advising the leisure team on site user experience in readiness for the formal website launch.

#### **Future communications plan**

- 2.18. Collaboration between the Communications Team, Public Health and the Sport and Leisure team is ongoing, with strategy sessions in place to ensure all work streams are complementary and maximise our impact with residents and stakeholders alike.
- 2.19. Work continues across the full communications mix to continue the narrative development and promote individual exemplars and other activity promotions, including working with sporting partners to cross-promote initiatives digitally and through partners' own unique audiences, particularly the two age groups and under-represented groups targeted.
- 2.20. Development of a New Year participation marketing campaign is now underway for launch in January 2024.

### **INCREASING ACCESS TO SPORT AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING ACTIVITIES DURING THE COST OF LIVING EMERGENCY**

#### **OVERVIEW OF AMBITIONS**

- 2.21. There are three key actions which drive forward the Borough of Sport but also seek to help residents through the cost of living crisis: the creation of a Borough of Sport Activity Finder, exemplar projects, and a grants fund.

#### **Borough of Sport Activity Finder**

2.22. There is a huge amount of sport and physical activity, free and low cost, on offer across Merton, but many people don't know about what is on offer. There is a need to map opportunities and then publicise them via digital and accessible formats. A bespoke Borough of Sport Activity Finder has been developed and will promote what is on offer to the target audiences and drive-up participation. Community, commercial and voluntary providers are being encouraged and supported to upload their offers on the platform. The activity finder will be promoted by front-line staff including the local health workforce (link workers) and amplified by local trusted groups and networks.

**Exemplars**

2.23. Exemplars will be higher profile interventions which capture attention and provide free opportunities. The highly successful Beat the Street, funded by Public Health, NHS South West London ICB and Sport England, which engaged 22,549 (10%) residents earlier this year is a good example of what an exemplar will be. Across the three years the plan is to run around 6 or so exemplars. The advisory group (see paragraphs 2.39 and 2.41.3 below) will help select the exemplars to ensure they meet local needs.

**Grant Fund**

2.24. A Borough of Sport Grants Fund, guided by the Borough of Sport Advisory Group, will be created to support local and grassroots providers, clubs, and community groups. The aim of this fund will be to help transform the sporting and physical activity offer in Merton and help more people, particularly children and young people and older people, to get active locally.

**PROGRESS TO DATE**

2.25. Considerable progress has been made during the first year of Borough of Sport in the lead up to the community launch – Merton's Big Sports Day (see paragraphs 2.45 to 2.50 below). This includes:

- The highly successful Beat the Streets programme which engaged 10% (22,549) of the Merton population who clocked up 250,636 miles with 28% of players from Index of Multiple Deprivation groups 1 to 4<sup>2</sup>.
- Almost £700,000 of Civic Pride grants shared across eight projects including Merton Saints BMX Club, the Merton School Sport Partnership and Morden Park Playground.
- Free swimming for under 16s trialled over the summer which saw a significant increase in uptake over July and August compared to the previous year when swimmers had to pay. Our Kids Swim Free initiative has now been made permanent with expanded hours during term time in the week and on weekends, and during school holidays; (see chart below)

Canons	Morden	Wimbledon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every weekend: 1.30-3.30pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every weekend: 1-3pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every weekend: 1-3pm</li> <li>• Term time: Fridays 4-6pm</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The Index of Multiple Deprivation, commonly known as the IMD, is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England. IMD 1-4 are the least affluent groups of society.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term time: Wednesdays 4-6pm</li> <li>• School holidays and public holidays: Monday-Friday 9-10am and 1-3pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term time: Monday-Friday 4-5.30pm</li> <li>• School holidays and public holidays: Monday-Friday 9-10am and 1-3pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School holidays and public holidays: Monday-Friday 9-10am and 1-3pm</li> </ul>
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- Following the success of Kids Swim Free, we launched (1 November 2023) our Over 65s Swim Free initiative which provides regular free swimming slots at all three of our leisure centres in the borough.

Canons	Morden	Wimbledon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term time: Monday 10am-12pm 3 lanes</li> <li>• School holidays and public holidays: Monday 10am-12pm 3 lanes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term time: Thursday 10am-12pm whole pool</li> <li>• School holidays and public holidays: Thursday 10am-12pm whole pool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term time: Wednesday 10am-12pm whole pool</li> <li>• School holidays and public holidays: Wednesday 10am-12pm whole pool</li> </ul>

- The refurbishment, funded by the LTA, of 42 tennis courts across the borough on 12 sites of which 39 have been completed to date, and we are exploring introducing a number of pickleball courts to provide more accessible options for people to get involved. We have also protected free play at all the sites where it already exists.
- The beach volleyball court in Wimbledon Park has been refurbished.
- Almost £300,000 from the Department of Education and London Sport secured for 23 Merton schools to help them open up their facilities beyond the school day for use by the local community, with additional funding to come in 2023/24.
- Merton's young people winning the Most Improved Cup in this year's London Youth Games by moving up 18 places to 11<sup>th</sup>.
- GLL has doubled the staff discount for council employees at their gyms to 20%.
- Forest e-bikes came to Merton in May 2023 and support both the Borough of Sport and the Council's Active Travel and Cycling Accessibility plans. Users get 10 free minutes per day. In the run up to Merton's Big Sports Day Forest gave all Merton Residents an additional 60 minutes of free use; and
- Free Walking Netball sessions, delivered by England Netball, started up at Morden Rec on 28 September 2023. After the initial 12 weeks its hoped that they will become self-sustaining through a number of the women attending also taking up free training to deliver the sessions going forward.

2.26. Turning then to the three key actions:

- The activity finder is now live in soft launch mode whilst we work with local providers and clubs to upload their activities on the portal with a particular

focus on free and low cost opportunities. So far, there are more than 900 activities available on the activity finder across the borough. We plan to launch the activity finder publicly soon and promote it to residents between now and Christmas to raise awareness and encourage usage.

- A further exemplar project started up in October. **Our Parks** – free exercise classes – started up on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October at Fair Green, Mitcham Market. The Beginners Bootcamp is a 60-minute workout using body weight exercises suitable for all of the family each week on Saturdays. A second weekly exercise session will target parents on the way home from dropping off their children at school and is due to go live soon. Other exemplar projects are in development and will go live over the coming year.
- The **grants fund** is in development and is schedule to go live in Spring 2024. The development of the fund is being guided by the Borough of Sport Advisory Group (see paragraphs 2.39 and 2.41.3 below). Their initial steer is that the fund should support both individuals and groups and could pay for training and qualifications, coaching, equipment, facility hire and marketing. It was also agreed that the focus of the fund should be on providing free and low cost activities to the target audiences.
- The existing **Playing Pitch Strategy** will be updated during 2023/24. Initially the focus will be on updating the facilities assessment for the Morden Park area.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND ACTIVELY MERTON**

- 2.27. The Public Health and Borough of Sport Teams are working closely together and combining efforts and collaborating on joint projects. The highly successful Beat the Street initiative was developed as part of Actively Merton and essentially became the first Borough of Sport exemplar project. The teams of course share an objective – helping Merton residents get active so they can benefit from the health gains this will deliver.
- 2.28. Another positive example of how Actively Merton, a place priority for the Merton Health and Care Committee, is complementing and supporting Borough of Sport, during the cost of living crisis, is this summer's **Actively Merton small grants programme**. Developed to maintain the momentum built up from Beat the Street and to extend opportunities, the programme awarded 14 grants to local organisations totalling £14,948. For example, Commonsense Community Development Trust received £980 for a 'Day of dance' attended by 50 people and the Ethnic Minority Centre got £996 to deliver a six-week talk, coffee and indoor bowling programme aimed at ethnic minority communities, the over 50s and, disabled people. The grants increased local affordable opportunities for physical activity between July and September while also gathering insights on the barriers to being more active. These insights will be critical to the next steps of both Actively Merton and Borough of Sport.
- 2.29. Further planning is in development for the next phase of Actively Merton, including training front line staff, for example those working in primary care, to deliver brief interventions around physical activity and to promote the activity finder so that residents can find and participate in sport and physical activity sessions.



- 2.30. The '**Merton Moves**' scheme (funded by Better Care Fund/Improved Better Care Fund or IBCF) is also supporting the ambitions of Borough of Sport. It's a small scale but innovative programme delivered by Wimbledon Guild providing older people with six weeks of support to engage in physical activity. The project provides practical solutions. Between March 2022 and 2023 105 older people were supported and signed up to the Merton Moves pledge.
- 2.31. Commissioned by Public Health and funded by IBCF, '**Get up and Go**' is run by Everyone Health and is a programme of physical activity for residents and patients in East Merton and Morden Primary Care Networks to address mild frailty, with a focus on strength and balance activities. It works with community organisations and includes seated exercise classes, Pilates, seated yoga, dancing, Zumba Gold and New Age Kurling. Organisations including Attic Theatre and the Dementia Hub, Ethnic Minority Centre and New Horizons Centre are part of the programme which currently is funded to run until end of March 2024.
- 2.32. Merton Public Health are also working to increase activity levels of people living with dementia and their carers, using '**Feel Good Folders**'. This is a national project developed by the Alzheimer's Society and Sport England to encourage people living with dementia to be physically active. We will be working with the Dementia Hub, libraries and healthcare partners to deliver the folders from November 2023.

### **WALKING AND CYCLING STRATEGY**

- 2.33. There are also important links and synergies to be made between Borough of Sport and the Council's planned new Walking and Cycling strategy. The strategy is being developed by Project Centre with consultation underway. This will update plans for promoting sustainable and active travel and set the vision to 2030 and set the foundations for what needs to be done to improve conditions and safety for all those who wish to walk or cycle in the borough.

### **LIBRARY & HERITAGE SERVICE**

- 2.34. Merton's seven public libraries and Heritage Centre play a crucial role in supporting the Borough of Sport aims. As the high street presence of the Council they attract over a million physical visits per year and deliver over 650 events per month.
- 2.35. Improving the health and wellbeing of Merton residents is a key objective of the service and they work with a range of groups and services that support our communities, including health and wellbeing services covering subjects such as healthy eating, sexual health, diabetes, mindfulness and smoking cessation. A year-round approach to promoting healthier lifestyles through libraries is in place and links in with national and local initiatives.
- 2.36. Via external funding Merton's libraries have made adaptations to the buildings and purchased new equipment to create a multi-sensory experience that enhances resident's digital, education and health outcomes. Each library has a designated Health & Wellbeing Zone. As well as books and information the Health & Wellbeing zones provide facilities to assist residents to better manage their health including technology to support relaxation like massage chairs and weight, height and blood pressure monitors that will record a resident's figures and load directly into a customer's GP records should they request this. Bounce pads

provide access to a range of high quality and NHS approved apps to support health and wellbeing and links to sporting and fitness organisations.

- 2.37. A range of fitness and wellbeing events and activities are delivered in libraries including fitness classes and yoga sessions delivered by partners such as Nuffield Health and GLL. Sporting equipment is loaned for free via our libraries enabling residents access to footballs, netballs, and basketballs. The service continues to enhance its health and wellbeing offer in close alignment with the Borough of Sport objectives and recently installed an interactive projector that provides game based physical activities for all ages to use at Mitcham Library.
- 2.38. Merton's Heritage Service plays a key role in promoting and telling the story of the borough's rich sporting heritage and is continuing to enhance its physical and digital collections. Merton Memories is a unique web portal that hosts over 17,000 images of the borough online and enables residents to add content to the resource with significant sections on the borough's sporting history. Walk and talk events are supported by the Heritage Centre and they have also created unique sporting trails around the borough so that all residents can get involved.
- 2.39. Merton libraries provide high quality information and digital support. Libraries enable individuals and communities to develop learning skills to find answers and to inform life choices. The offer helps children and adults to engage and feel safe online. It ensures resources and opportunities are accessible and embraces creative and innovative technology. The service focusses its support on those most in need who potentially have limited access or knowledge of the Internet and other IT applications. In order to support residents, it provides a broad range of one to one and group IT support along with providing general information and signposting towards a range of services including a range of sporting and fitness services.

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN CREATING A BOROUGH OF SPORT**

### **OVERVIEW OF AMBITIONS**

- 2.40. There are four key actions: creating a Borough of Sport logo, dedicated staffing to support stakeholders and drive the Borough of Sport, a stakeholder advisory group and an open community forum.
- 2.41. Ahead of drawing up the Borough of Sport plans there was engagement with over 100 local groups and individual stakeholders. This wasn't a formal Council consultation but rather informal stakeholder engagement. A list of the stakeholders who were engaged during the development of the plans is attached at **appendix 1**. It was important to take time to listen to local groups and hear what they need. It means the plans are rooted in the realities of what people are facing. Where actions are parachuted into communities without their involvement or agreement, they are unlikely to work. Whilst Borough of Sport will be led by the Council it will only be realised through partnership working and the combining of effort.

### **Logo**

- 2.42. A simple and easily recognisable logo which can be used widely by the council and partners to badge and promote the Borough of Sport, something akin to the

hugely successful 'Inspired by 2012' logo. This is designed to drive buy in and create a sense of ownership of Borough of Sport for the whole community.

### **Dedicated Staffing**

2.43. The Head of Leisure Role at the Council has been replaced by a new Head of Sport and Leisure. Open recruitment was undertaken during the summer and the successful candidate took up the post at the start of September. There will then be two additional Council roles:

- The first will be primarily inward facing and their key tasks will include: working across the Council to combine effort and ensure Borough of Sport is a priority, ensuring alignment with other corporate Council agendas, supporting the operational group, Leader and Cabinet Member, overseeing the small grants fund and some key stakeholder relationships, and maintaining the overall work plan and risk register.
- The second role will be primarily outward community facing and key tasks include: building and maintaining relationships with the stakeholders, supporting local groups to take advantage of funding and other opportunities, building the number of activities on the Activity Finder and supporting the advisory group and forum.

2.44. We are also exploring options for hiring community activators based within a community organisation host. These would not be council roles, rather roles within the community, with the hosts and council agreeing their work programmes. They will help support community groups and assets, seek to garner support, and also help local groups apply for funding and combine effort with others.

### **Advisory Group**

2.45. In order to further garner support and ensure plans are guided by what is needed and work for local communities an advisory group has been created to help guide actions. The group has a regular membership, though others will be able to join, meet every other month and bring key partners including around the same table.

### **Forum**

2.46. A public forum will be created to bring a much larger number of partners and potentially residents together to drive the plans. Membership will be open, so anyone can attend. Non-sporting groups will be encouraged to join. The forum's purpose is to explain the Borough of Sport concept, garner support, gather questions, concerns and gaps and then combine effort. The forum will be used to keep local groups informed of developments and opportunities.

### **PROGRESS TO DATE**

2.47. The following progress has been made against the above four key actions:

- The **Borough of Sport Logo** was launched at Merton's Big Sports Day on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September and is now being actively used. The logo will be deployed as widely as possible with community and commercial providers, within the borough, able to access and use it easily.



- **Dedicated Staffing** – At the time of writing this report the job description and person specifications are with HR for grading and we envisage recruitment of the two council roles starting soon.
- The **advisory group** met for the first time on Thursday 14 September. It is chaired jointly by Cllr Caroline Cooper–Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage, and Jackie Watkins, the CEO of Tooting and Mitcham Community Sports Club, who was elected by the other members of the group. The table below sets out the group’s remit and membership.

<p><b>Advisory Group Remit</b></p> <p>The Advisory Group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guide decisions on the strategic direction, design, development, promotion and implementation of the Borough of Sport plans.</li> <li>• guide the focus and allocation of the Borough of Sport small grants fund.</li> <li>• guide the focus and choice of exemplar projects.</li> <li>• monitor the strategic performance, effectiveness and impact of the Borough of Sport</li> <li>• help ensure any learnings are built into future phases of the Borough of Sport plans; and</li> <li>• monitoring strategic risks and opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advisory Group Membership</b></p> <p>Co-Chairpersons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah</b> , Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage</li> <li>• <b>Jackie Watkins</b>, Tooting and Mitcham Community Sports Club</li> </ul> <p>Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Naomi Martin</b>, Commonsense Community Development Trust</li> <li>• <b>Nicola Ryan</b>, Merton School Sport Partnership</li> <li>• <b>Tony Molloy</b>, Merton Connected</li> <li>• <b>Taki Hussain</b>, Young Inspector</li> <li>• <b>Jen Goddard</b>, Age UK Merton</li> <li>• <b>Helen Duckworth</b>, Wimbledon Guild</li> <li>• <b>Ulrika Hogberg</b>, Wimbledon Foundation/AELTC</li> <li>• <b>Andrew Whittington</b>, Merton Mencap</li> </ul>

- **Gemma Dawson**, NHS South West London
- **Philip Rudling**, AFC Wimbledon
- **Matthew Parsonage**, Clarion Housing Group
- **Lorna Boothe**, Olympian/Commonwealth Games Medallist
- **Daniel Leggett**, London Sport
- **James Brackenborough**, GLL
- **Dan Jones**, Exec Director Environment, Civic Pride and Climate, LBM
- **David Gentles**, Head of Sport and Leisure, LBM
- **Hannah Neal**, BAME Voice

In addition, a GP representative is being recruited and three clubs will be recruited via the first forum.

- 2.48. The **forum** which will be delivered via Teams will meet up to four times a year. Plans for the first forum are being finalised and will take place in November 2023.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH AND ACTIVELY MERTON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 2.49. Public Health and Actively Merton are also supporting and amplifying Borough of Sport's stakeholder engagement. They have helped reach underserved and less active groups to hear their voices, benefit from understanding their lived experience and ensure we take the community with us, rather than doing to them. For example, a community event in late June 2023, brought providers, partners, and organisations from across Merton together. This workshop shared and discussed the learning from Beat the Street, considered a framework for action developed by London Sport, and was a show case for Borough of Sport. The workshop discussed assets and the barriers to activity the key groups that are less physically active (women and girls, older people and residents with a disability) face. The insights gained is informing the development of the Borough of Sport Activity Finder, helping connect underserved groups through existing networks to physical activities and driving awareness of the benefits of physical activity.
- 2.50. Other Public Health funded physical activity programmes include Frailty, Merton Moves, promoting of physical activity as part of the work of the Dementia Action Alliance (feel good folder) and contributing to the funding of Merton School Sport Partnership (MSSP). MSSP have supported schools to achieve Healthy Schools London accreditation with 50 schools currently registered (19 have achieved the bronze standard, 11 silver and 3 gold).

### **KEY DELIVERABLES AND COMMITMENTS 2023 TO 2026**

- 2.51. The key deliverables and commitments are:
- the creation of the Borough of Sport logo – completed.
  - recruitment of dedicated staffing – about to commence.

- the creation and operation of the advisory group – the first meeting has taken place and meetings are scheduled for November 2023, January, March, May, July 2024 after which the frequency of meetings will be reviewed.
- the creation and operation of the forum – in development.

## **MERTON'S BIG SPORTS DAY**

- 2.52. Borough of Sport was formally launched via **Merton's Big Sports Day** on Sunday 24 September 2023 at Canons House and Grounds. The community fun day, where children and adults could try out sports and activities, was a resounding success and was the longest feature on **ITV London News** that night.
- 2.53. We are delighted that around **5000 residents attended**. Feedback of how the day felt for residents has been collected via a survey which closed on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
- 2.54. Almost **60 local groups and clubs were part of the day** providing a great range of activities including Yoga, Football, Dance, Tennis, athletics, climbing, BMXing and many more. The clubs and groups are being encouraged and supported to promote their activity offers via the Borough of Sport Activity Finder.
- 2.55. Quotes from those who attended include:
- **Sheila White, Hercules Wimbledon Athletics Club:** Just to say congratulations on a great event yesterday! Certainly on the West Lawn it was full on all day, and fantastic to meet so many whole families out enjoying themselves and trying different sports.
  - **Dickie Wilkinson, Merton RFC:** Massive well done to you all today! Such a fun day and genuinely helpful in connecting clubs and people!
  - **Dee Soul, Salsa Got Soul:** Just wanted to personally say how impressed I am with the day yesterday!!! The attention to detail and the execution of the day was excellent!! We thoroughly enjoyed the day, we had a good footfall and interest. Thank you again for having me join the day and I would love to be involved in future events if the opportunity arises.
- 2.56. The event also drove strong digital and social engagement with residents and the headlines are:
- Engagement with E-News Stories**
- **670** views of the Sports Day webpage via the pre-event e-news; and
  - At the time of writing this report **230** views of the post event survey.
- Social Media Reach**
- X (formerly Twitter) **20,000** views of Merton Council posts and reposts including **4500** views of the morning post; almost **6000** of the repost of AFC Wimbledon's post; **1700** views of the Michael Antonio's video post and **100** views of Jah Wobbles video post.
  - Facebook – **10,000** views.

- Instagram – **1000** views.
  - Web-Page – **5,200** with an average time spent on page of **5m 30s**.
- 2.57. Once the attendee feedback has been analysed, we will take stock of the event and consider if it should become an annual event. An alternative might be a series of smaller events across the entire borough bigraded as Merton’s Big Summer of Sport. We are also at the early stages of scoping a Borough of Sport Celebration and Awards event.

### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1. This report is for noting and discussing only, so alternative options are not being presented.

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

- 4.1. Any relevant consultation undertaken or proposed is referenced in the body of the report.

### **5 TIMETABLE**

- 5.1. The body of the report includes details on a range of planned deliverables and commitments over the period 2023 to 2026.

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

- 6.1. The cost implications for the initiatives outlined in this report are covered within the current MTFs. Any further spending required beyond existing budgets will be reported to Cabinet.

### **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 This report has been prepared as required by part 4A, paragraph 2.3 (g) of the Constitution and there are no legal implications arising out of this report.

### **8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None immediately arising beyond those covered in the body of the report.

### **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. None immediately arising.

### **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. A robust process for monitoring delivery of the Council Plan, including many of the commitments and deliverables referenced in this report, is being put in place to minimise the risk of non-delivery. The Borough of Sport Advisory Group will also monitor and review the strategic risks.

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

- Appendix 1 – List of stakeholders engaged in developing the Borough of Sport plans.

### **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1. None

## **APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED IN DEVELOPING THE BOROUGH OF SPORT PLANS**

In drawing up the plans for Merton to become London's Borough of Sport the London Sport consultants spoke with and discussed the emerging plans with the following club and community groups:

- AFC Wimbledon
- Age UK Merton
- AELTC
- Balham Boxing Club
- Baitul Futuh Mosque
- Canons House and Grounds
- GLL
- Merton Connected
- Merton Dementia Hub
- Merton Health
- Merton Health Leaders Board (GP Forum)
- Merton Mencap
- Merton School Sport Partnership
- Motspur Park FC
- Commonside Community Trust
- Sean McInnes Sports Coaching
- South West Runs Basketball Club
- Surrey FA
- Awing Fitness
- The Active Merton Steering Group
- Together We Ride
- Tooting and Mitcham Hub
- Wimbledon Guild
- Wimbledon Parkrun
- Wimbledon Rugby Club
- Wimbledon Sporting History

Within the council they spoke to:

- Corporate Comms
- Children Services
- Finance
- Leisure
- HR
- Merton Libraries
- Planning
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Public Health
- Transport
- Youth Service



Beyond Merton they also spoke to:

- England Netball
- Football Foundation
- Fulham FC Foundation
- Intelligent Health
- London Sport
- NHS South West London
- Our Parks
- ParkPlay
- Royal Mencap
- Sport England
- Stormbreak UK
- Sutton Mencap
- The Outdoor Classroom

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