Agenda Item 7b

Committee:	Council
Date:	4 February 2015
Wards:	All
Subject:	Strategic Objective Review – Corporate Capacity with a Focus on the Merton Partnership
Lead officer:	Paul Dale, Assistant Director of Resources
Lead member:	Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Leader of Merton Council and Chair of Merton Partnership
Contact officer:	Amanda Roberts, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships Officer
	(020 8545 4685 / amanda.roberts@merton.go.uk)

Recommendations:

A. That Council consider the content of this report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Council at its meeting on 6 March 2013 approved the Business Plan 2013-2016.
- 1.2 The Business Plan represents the way in which the council will deliver the Community Strategy, which is grouped into five strategic themes (sustainable communities, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities, older people, children and young people). Performance against these themes, plus an additional theme of corporate capacity, is monitored by Council. Each meeting of Council will receive a report updating on progress against one of these strategic themes.
- 1.3 This report provides Council with an opportunity to consider progress against the priorities that are to be delivered under the Corporate Capacity theme with a focus on the Merton Partnership.
- 1.4 The report gives a brief overview of the Merton Partnership; its purpose and structure. It also provides an update on a recent review of the structure of the Merton Partnership and feedback from an internal audit of the Partnership.
- 1.5 This report also provides an update from each of the Merton Partnership Thematics on their key achievements over the last year, plans for the future and key challenges.

2 DETAILS

2.1 Background to the Corporate Capacity theme

2.1.1 The Corporate Capacity theme is crucial to our ability to deliver against the business plan. The main work areas that fall under this theme relate to those delivered by the Corporate Services Department.

- 2.1.2 The main priorities under the theme are:
 - our customers: we will engage with our customers to continuously improve and deliver services driven by their need;
 - our people: we will have the right people, in the right job, doing the right things at the right time;
 - our internal processes: we will work smarter to deliver sustainable performance and service improvements in a risk based environment; and
 - our finances: we will manage our financial resources and with integrity.
- 2.1.3 This report broadly focuses on all of these priorities from the perspective of the Merton Partnership.

2.2 **Overview of the Merton Partnership**

- 2.2.1 The Merton Local Strategic Partnership (known as the Merton Partnership) was established in January 2002 as the overarching strategic partnership for the borough. Its aim is to work together with all partners on issues that are key to local people including residents, workers and visitors as reflected in the Community Plan.
- 2.2.2 The Partnership's primary objectives are to deliver the Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, along with other plans and strategies adopted by the Merton Partnership, for example the Community Cohesion Strategy and the Volunteering Strategy.
- 2.2.3 The Merton Partnership agreed the latest refresh of the Community Plan in May 2013. The new Community Plan shows what the Merton Partnership has achieved since the previous plan was updated in 2009, as well as the vision and priorities for the borough going forward.
- 2.2.4 The Community Plan themes can be viewed in the 2013 Community Plan document: <u>http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityplan.htm</u>
- 2.2.5 The Partnership agreed to a review of its governance arrangements to ensure that it is fit for purpose to deliver the refreshed Community Plan. In addition to other structural and operational changes, the membership of the partnership has also been updated to remove any duplication.

2.3 Structure of the Merton Partnership

- 2.3.1 The Merton Partnership consists of senior representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Members are recruited on the basis of their capacity to represent their organisations and not their individual interests.
- 2.3.2 Membership of the Merton Partnership and its Executive Board is regularly reviewed. Invitations for additional representatives to join these bodies are by prior agreement between the existing Members.
- 2.3.3 The Partnership has an 'Executive Board' model, and consists of a number of key groups:
 - Merton Partnership (annual themed conference);
 - Executive Board;

- Thematic Partnerships; and
- ad hoc working groups.
- 2.3.4 A total of 15 INVOLVE Community Engagement Network (CEN) elected representatives sit on the various bodies within the Merton Partnership structure, both to raise and to report back on issues relevant to the voluntary and community sector.
- 2.3.5 There are four thematic partnerships. These bodies are tasked with coordinating delivery of the priorities of the Merton Partnership, as identified in the Community Plan. The main areas of work and responsible thematic partnerships are set out below:

Theme	Responsible body and work areas	
Sustainable	Sustainable Communities and Transport Board	
communities	 Sustainable housing 	
	 Environment (including street scene) 	
	Transport	
	 The economy (including adult learning and skills) 	
Safer and	Safer and Stronger Strategy Group	
stronger communities	 Preventing and reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse 	
	 Community cohesion and active citizenship 	
	 Public safety (including fire safety, traffic safety and civic contingencies) 	
Healthier	Health and Wellbeing Board	
Communities	 Improving health outcomes 	
	 Reducing health inequalities 	
	 Independent living 	
	 Supported living 	
Children and	Children's Trust	
Young People	Education	
	 Children's social care 	
	 Youth services 	

3 CORPORATE CAPACITY INFORMATION FOR THE MERTON PARTNERSHIP

Performance management

- 3.1.1 The Partnership has agreed a Performance Management Framework that details how performance against the Community Plan will be managed and monitored throughout the year. This is detailed in the Merton Partnership Governance Handbook: http://www.mertonpartnership.org.uk/governance_handbook_2014-15.pdf
- 3.1.2 While the main principles of performance management remain the same, the framework undergoes regular review and updating to ensure that it remains up to date with any changes.

- 3.1.3 Each Executive Board meeting receives a full update from one Thematic Partnership detailing progress on its performance targets and twice yearly action plan updates which monitor the delivery of annual targets.
- 3.1.4 The high level conclusion of the recent internal audit of the Merton Partnership audit was that the Merton Partnership's "new governance arrangements, including a revised structure, are clear and effective in providing a sound basis for co-ordinating the activities of the different partners and reporting them against the priorities of the Partnership." The audit proposed some changes to performance reporting, which are set out in section four below.

Resourcing the Merton Partnership

- 3.1.5 Merton Council provides support services for the Merton Partnership and the Executive Board.
- 3.1.6 Merton Council will meet standard administration and accommodation costs for the Partnerships and their meetings. Any additional work is reliant on Partner contributions to the Merton Partnership budget. In 2014-15 the total Partnership contribution was £6,200.

4 REVIEW OF THE MERTON PARTNERSHIP

- 4.1 The Merton Partnership agreed a refreshed Community Plan at its meeting on 7 May 2013. It also agreed to a review of its governance arrangements to ensure that it is fit for purpose to deliver the refreshed Community Plan.
- 4.2 Members confirmed that the review of the partnership should aim to achieve the following objectives:
 - Build on the ethos of strong partnership working and relationships in the borough;
 - Focus on delivering the Community Plan priorities and monitoring outcomes for the borough; and
 - Reflect the changing landscape for partnership working, including (but not limited to) reduced funding, changes to health and the introduction of welfare reform changes.
- 4.3 It was agreed that the review would cover the following areas for all elements of the Merton Partnership (MP, MPEB, thematic networks and delivery groups):
 - The model for the partnership,
 - Membership,
 - Secretariat,
 - Frequency of meetings,
 - Location of meetings,
 - The role and remit of Boards,
 - Reporting structures (in particular, between thematic and delivery groups across themes), and
 - Agenda setting.

- 4.4 Members agreed that any review of the Thematic Networks and sub-groups would be relatively light touch and that the effectiveness of arrangements at this level was mainly a matter for the individual networks/ boards.
- 4.5 A working group, chaired by Merton Council's Director of Children, Schools and Families, was tasked by the Merton Partnership to review the current Partnership operating model and provide recommendations to the MPEB and MP on how this model might be adapted so as to be fit for purpose in light of the challenges noted above.
- 4.6 The working group included representatives from the Police, Public Health, Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC), Merton Council and Merton Chamber of Commerce.
- 4.7 As part of the review the working group consulted widely with stakeholders. Interviews were held with key partners and all members of the MP, MPEB, Thematic Subgroup and Compact Board were invited to complete an online survey, which received 45 responses – a response rate of 42%.
- 4.8 In order to respond to the issues raised by stakeholders and to ensure that the Merton Partnership is able to effectively deliver on the objectives set out in the refreshed Merton Community Plan, it was proposed that a number of structural and operational changes were made to the existing MP model. These proposed changes are set out at Appendix I.
- 4.9 Reflecting stakeholder feedback and best practice, the working group proposed the MP incorporated changes to implement an 'Executive Board' model.
- 4.10 These proposals were agreed by the Merton Partnership at their final meeting on 11 February 2014 and the changes subsequently implemented.

5 LBM INTERNAL AUDIT OF THE MERTON PARTNERSHIP

- 5.1 Merton Council's Internal Audit Team has recently carried out an internal audit review of the Merton Partnership as part of their 2014/15 audit plan. The purpose of the review was to provide assurance that there are sound governance, monitoring and reporting arrangements to ensure that the Merton Partnership's primary objective of delivering the Community Plan is achieved.
- 5.2 The high level conclusion of the audit was that the Merton Partnership's "new governance arrangements, including a revised structure, are clear and effective in providing a sound basis for co-ordinating the activities of the different partners and reporting them against the priorities of the Partnership."
- 5.3 The audit made a number of recommendations for improvement around:
 - Developing greater consistency in the way thematic partnerships structure their action plans and highlight links between their work and the community plan priorities;
 - The production of an annual report for the partnership, including performance data;
 - Demonstrating risk management systems are in place; and
 - Greater consistency and clarity in the way performance in reported.

- 5.4 The Merton Partnership Executive Board agreed the initial audit recommendations at their meeting on 23 September 2014. The Council's Head of Policy, Strategy & Partnerships formally agree the recommendations and was tasked to take them forward, supported by thematic leads where appropriate.
- 5.5 The Council's Policy, Strategy and Partnerships team will be working with thematic leads to ensure that their needs are met in efforts to ensure greater consistency in action planning, risk management, performance management and reporting on these areas.
- 5.6 A new partnership reporting template is in development and will brought back to the next meeting of the Merton Partnership Executive Board. The Merton Partnership Annual Report 2014/15 will be completed following the end of the financial year. This will outline performance over the previous year. The report will be submitted to the Merton Partnership Executive Board and Merton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission in order that the Partnership is held to account. Following this scrutiny, the report will then be completed and published.

6 PERFORMANCE RELATING TO CORPORATE CAPACITY

Sustainable Communities & Transport Partnership (SCTP):

- 6.1 It has been a productive year for SCTP with activities focused around growth, housing provision and economic wellbeing.
- 6.2 Successes in 2014/15 include:

Economic Wellbeing Group

6.3 Employment & Training Action Plan:

Our demand-led pilot to increase access to training for job seekers in Merton is generating good results. The pilot is based in the Wandle Valley Resource Centre; (Worsfold House) and is managed by Grenfell who run training courses for tenants and others in the local community. The centre runs accredited and certificated courses alongside workshops and soft skills training, all designed to help people into work or to improve the skills of those in work. This year 148 people gained qualifications through Grenfell. Of the 100 long term unemployed people who used our service 40 gained sustainable employment.

6.4 Apprenticeships:

The Economic Wellbeing Group has also exceeded its target for creating over 100 apprenticeships through the 'Take-One' initiative. Led by Merton Chamber of Commerce, Take-One encourages employers to take on an apprentice. The programme has helped 150 young people with over 100 apprenticeships being set up in Merton. The London LEP is now looking to roll-out the Take-One model throughout London.

Transport sub-group

6.5 The Transport sub-group has led on a number of high profile consultations in 2014 including the joint Merton-Sutton tramlink consultation in partnership

with TfL; where over 80% of respondents supported the extension of the tram network from Wimbledon to Sutton via Morden.

6.6 The group also provided input to the borough's cycling programme including Mini-Hollands and Quietways which are now being developed further.

Merton Partnership Growth Conference

- 6.7 2014's Merton Partnership Conference was focused on growth.
- 6.8 As London reaches its peak population; the partnership considered the elements of growth that need to be managed to ensure Merton is a good place to live and work; and how the borough could benefit from London's growth.
- 6.9 The conference covered four key growth areas:
 - Housing
 - Transport
 - Economic Growth & Jobs
 - Employment and Skills
- 6.10 Challenges included:
 - Traffic congestion
 - Public transport capacity
 - Provision and affordability of housing
 - Access to jobs for younger people
 - Public health and life chances
- 6.11 The conference set the agenda for what will become Merton's growth strategy which will focus many of the Council's regeneration activities towards accommodating growth and securing more jobs and a more attractive built environment.
- 6.12 Looking towards 2015/16; a project group has been established, chaired by Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration; supported by futureMerton to explore further, what Growth means for Merton and how the Council and Partnership will respond to challenges.

Safer and Stronger Strategy Group

- 6.13 The Safer and Stronger Strategy Group performs the role of the community safety partnership for Merton and leads on the community safety and community cohesion agenda on behalf of the Merton Partnership.
- 6.14 Key achievements:
 - A new Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Board has been set up to improve the governance and partnership working across all areas of Domestic Violence.
 - The 2014 Annual Residents' Survey shows a decrease in concern about crime to 28% and shows a steady decrease since 2008.

- 100% of Anti Social Behaviour level 1 & level 3 cases have received first contact within the agreed timeframe and 98.13% at level 2 cases against a target of 95%. This is in the context of increasing numbers being reported to the Council.
- Neighbourhood Watch schemes now cover just over 39% of the borough. 579 Coordinators are involved across the 30,000 + homes. Recent changes in the way scheme are implemented will further increase coverage. This follows analysis from burglary reassurance visits carried out by the police and the opportunity to engage and involve more residents in the scheme.
- A CCTV Steering Group is now established. The group is already overseeing the commissioning of the new CCTV maintenance contract, significant capital investment in the infrastructure and the implementation of an action plan to respond to the findings of the review of CCTV.
- The 2013/14 target for the percentage of residents who agree that their local area is a place where people of different backgrounds get on well together was met, with 90% of respondents agreeing with this statement. We await the outturn for the 2014 Annual Residents' Survey. Activities in 2014/15 to increase community cohesion and integration have included a range of events taking place across the borough to commemorate the start of World War I and the Council leading a partnership project on financial resilience and financial capability of local people.
- Merton Partnership celebrated ten years of the Merton Compact in November 2014. A celebratory event took place on 4 November to recognise the impact the 'compact way of working' has had in the borough and the value it has added both to partnership working and outcomes for local residents.
- 6.15 Key plans for the future:
 - Work on the Strategic Assessment is currently underway and this process will inform the Borough's Community Safety Partnership Plan and help to determine the priorities that the partnership will focus on for the financial year 2015/16. The Partnership Plan will be in place for the 1st of April 2015.
 - The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Board will ensure the operational delivery of the recommendations from the VAWG Needs Assessment and develop an outcome focused strategy for VAWG.
 - Implementing changes in the way we tackle ASB following the enactment of the Anti Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 6.16 Challenges:
 - The changes to the new ASB legislation will need considerable work around partnership delivery and negotiating new partnership processes.
 - The Government's changes to the probation service are yet to embed down with the creation of the National Probation Service and the awarding of the new Community Rehabilitation Company contract to MTCNovo. This together with the new statutory rehabilitation

requirement being extended to all offenders sentenced to less than 12 months in custody taking effect in 2015 will all impact on offender management going forward.

Health and Wellbeing Board

- 6.17 Health and Wellbeing Boards have been created to deliver strategic, local leadership in health and wellbeing. The work of HWB, focused on addressing health inequalities, is central to informing the commissioning of health and social care services in Merton. It has a core role in encouraging joined up, integrated services across the Council, CCG, acute providers, voluntary sector and other local partners to improve health and wellbeing across the borough.
- 6.18 Merton Health and Wellbeing Board's full statutory responsibilities have now been in place since April 2013. Our statutory duties include producing a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) the evidence from which informs the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 6.19 Key achievements in 2014/15 have included:
 - Approval by NHS England of the Merton Better Care Fund plan, and recognition of the Plan as good practice by NHS England, as part of wider work on the integration and transformation of health and social care.
 - Revised successfully the Section 75 partnership agreement with South West London and St Georges Mental Health NHS Trust.
 - Building a strong partnership committed to tackling heath inequalities as a core goal, evidenced by the Annual Pubic Health Report which seeks to develop an appropriate model of care for the more deprived parts of Merton and the joint work with community groups developed from the Merton Partnership conference on health inequalities.
 - Working together to identify needs, develop plans and a business case for the care centre for East Merton.
 - Focusing on prevention including the launch and work of Merton Dementia Hub and the pilot of the Proactive GP scheme
 - A strong established HealthWatch working effectively in partnership across the HWB.
- 6.20 Key plans for the future include:
 - Strategic oversight of delivery of the Better Care Plan and wider integration and transformation of health and social care.
 - Agree a refresh of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to focus on specific outcomes across the five themes that make a good life in Merton.
 - Increase priority for prevention and ensure that Council services that influence health have a positive impact on health.
 - Conduct development funded by London Councils to support the HWB to work effectively at strategic level.

- 6.21 Our key challenges going forward include:
 - Financial pressures on all partners in the face of increasing demands on health and social care.
 - Developing greater understanding between partners, and maintaining strong joint working, at a time of transformational change.
 - Ensure that Merton HWB has a robust governance and strategic role in Merton to improve health and wellbeing across the borough.

Children and Young People Thematic Partnership (Children's Trust Board)

- 6.22 During 2014-15, the Children's Trust Board has continued to oversee implementation of Merton's multi-agency Children and Young People's Plan. With Merton's Safeguarding Children Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Children's Trust Board has been focused on ensuring partner engagement in improving services and outcomes for children and young people vulnerable to poorer outcomes than their peers. Key areas of progress have included:
 - Embedding the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Merton, achieving improved information sharing across agencies and a more coordinated response to safeguarding referrals and concerns about children's welfare.
 - Quickly establishing a multi-agency action plan arising from a detailed review of our response to child sexual exploitation following national concerns in respect of practice in some council areas.
 - Establishing a project to address persistent school absence which is enabling earlier identification of chronic non-attendance and more robust multi-disciplinary intervention.
 - Implementing central government's Troubled (Transforming) Families agenda and achieving one of the highest ratings in London for numbers of families 'turned around' through this initiative.
 - Implementing the requirements in the 2014 Children and Families Act in publishing a local offer of services available for children with disabilities and their families and establishing a multi-agency education, health and care assessment and planning framework for these children.
- 6.23 In 2015-16, key plans for the children's services partnership include:
 - Refreshing Merton's Children and Young People's Plan for 2015-18 retaining a focus on narrowing gaps in outcomes for more vulnerable children and young people.
 - Jointly commissioning new community health services for children and young people including health visiting, school nursing and therapies ensuring synergy across local authority and Clinical Commissioning Group priorities.
 - Establishing more routine examination of performance data on children's services at Merton's Health and Wellbeing Board.

- Ensuring inspection readiness across all key children's services for the proposed new Ofsted, CQC and HMIC/HMIP Integrated Inspection Framework.
- 6.24 Major challenges for the children's services partnership are to ensure continuing multi-agency ownership of the borough's key priorities for children; ongoing engagement of all relevant services in our ambition for continuous improvement and continuing to deliver safe and effective services in the context of significant funding pressures across public services.

7 REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS/PANELS

- 7.1 In July 2014 the Commission received a presentation from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to set out the Council's priorities for the year ahead. Members asked a number of questions relating to corporate capacity, including questions about the council's asset management strategy, potential for welcome packs for new residents and progress on the council's transformation programme.
- 7.2 In the past year the Overview and Scrutiny Commission has scrutinised a number corporate capacity issues, including:
 - customer contact programme the Commission has continued its scrutiny by receiving regular updates. At its meeting in October 2014, it welcomed the progress made and the cautious approach that had been taken to this ambitious programme. Further updates are scheduled for January and March 2015.
 - single fraud investigation service the Commission commented on forthcoming changes and referred concerns to the Cabinet Member for Finance so that these could be taken into account
 - cost and distribution of My Merton magazine
- 7.3 The Commission has also received a detailed report on predicted demographic changes to 2017 and the implications for council services, community cohesion and borough infrastructure. This information provided the context for budget scrutiny discussions last year and for selection of topics for inclusion in the 2014/15 scrutiny work programme.
- 7.4 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission has noted that the recent internal audit review of Partnerships found that an annual report had not been produced at the time. He looks forward to the annual report being produced and presented to the Commission for discussion at a future meeting, in line with the recommendations of the audit review.

8 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

8.1 Thematic Leads have been consulted on this report.

9 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

10 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

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

11 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

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

14.1 Appendix I – 2014 Merton Partnership Review Proposals.

15 BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 None.

Issue Proposal Efficacy of Merton Merton Partnership Partnership and the Retains role to set the strategic direction of the Merton • Merton Partnership Partnership Executive Board, Formal meetings replaced by an annual themed conference especially: which would provide a platform for a wider range of • Concerns about stakeholders – some of which do not have the capacity to MP duplicating engage in regular formal meetings - to address a key issue of information heard concern for the borough. elsewhere Community Plan continues to be refreshed every three years. MP not fully able to In a planning year the partnership would hold a second address strategic conference to enable the partnership to shape the new issues **Community Plan** Merton Partnership Executive Board MPEB remains responsible for delivery of Community Plan • and associated commitments and will provide a mechanism for flagging future challenges for the partnership and coordinating work to develop options to address these issue MPEB will also have a responsibility for highlighting and addressing cross-cutting issues as a whole partnership MPEB will continue to meet six times per year The Leader of the Council will chair the MPEB, with the • Council's Chief Executive and the Police Borough Commander acting as deputy chairs. Membership to be revised to reflect changes in Health, etc. • Improved More frequent use of Merton Together e-bulletin to ensure • communication and timely communication of key updates and information between information sharing the MPEB and subgroups between all levels of • All MPEB and subgroup representatives reminded that their the partnership role requires them to regularly share information and feedback from meetings with their wider group Structure of Safer and Reduced frequency of S&S Strategy Group (SSSG) meeting • Stronger thematic to twice a year subgroup encouraging Revised membership of SSSG to take into account changes • duplication and statutory responsibilities Reduced frequency of S&S Executive Board (SSEB) meetings • to four times a year Revised membership of SSEB to take into account changes • and statutory responsibilities For both SSSG and SSEB to present the attendance list on agendas as set out in Appendix II to ensure clarity about who formally sits on the board and who else is invited to attend/ support the board Stronger Communities Board would be dissolved to reduce duplication. We will continue to report into SSEB on stronger communities issues

Appendix I – 2014 Merton Partnership Review Proposals

Issue	Proposal
Partner representatives attending meetings/ engaged in planning process not having the authority to make decision/ commit resources	• Refreshed MPEB governance handbook and subgroup terms of reference to specify that representatives attending meetings have the requisite knowledge/ authority to speak on behalf of their organisation and commit resources as required
	 All partner organisations to review their appointed representatives to ensure that they are able to perform their roles fully.
Lack of clarity on role of members on MPEB, thematic subgroups	 Agenda front pages to list members of the body/ meeting in such a way to give clarity regarding the capacity in which those present are attending the meeting
	This to be reflected in the Governance Handbook
Poor attendance at some partnership meetings	Group/ body secretariat to keep attendance record and chair to review attendance regularly
	This to be reflected in the Governance Handbook