

Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 11th June 2015

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Agreeing the Work Programme 2015/16

Lead officer: Rebecca Redman, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Cllr Abigail Jones, Chair of Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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Recommendations:

That Members of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- i) Consider their work programme for the 2015/16 municipal year, and agree issues and items for inclusion;
 - ii) Consider the methods by which the Panel would like to scrutinise the issues/items agreed;
 - iii) Identify a Member to lead on performance monitoring on behalf of the Panel;
 - iv) Identify a Member to lead on budget scrutiny on behalf of the Panel;
 - v) Agree on an issue for scrutiny by a task group and appoint members to the Task Group; and
 - vi) Consider the appointment of co-opted members for the 2015/16 municipal year, to sit on the Panel and/or on the Task Group
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to support and advise Members to determine their work programme for the 2015/16 municipal year.
- 1.2 This report sets out the following information to assist Members in this process:
 - a) The principles of effective scrutiny and the criteria against which work programme items should be considered;
 - b) The roles and responsibilities of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
 - c) The findings of the consultation programme undertaken with Members, senior management, voluntary and community sector organisations, partner organisations and Merton residents;
 - d) A summary of the discussion by councillors and co-opted members at a topic selection workshop held on 19th May 2015; and
 - e) Support available to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to determine, develop and deliver its 2015/16 work programme.

2. **Determining the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Annual Work Programme for 2015/16**

- 2.1 Members are required to determine their work programme for the 2015/16 municipal year to give focus and structure to scrutiny activity to ensure that it effectively and efficiently supports and challenges the decision-making processes of the Council, and partner organisations, for the benefit of the people of Merton.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have specific roles relating to budget and business plan scrutiny and to performance monitoring that should automatically be built into their work programmes. Members are recommended to appoint a Performance Monitoring Lead Member and a Business Plan/Budget Scrutiny Lead Member on behalf of the Panel.
- 2.3 Overview and Scrutiny Panels may choose to scrutinise a range of issues through a combination of pre-decision scrutiny items, policy development, performance monitoring, information updates and follow up to previous scrutiny work. Any call-in work will be programmed into the provisional call-in dates identified in the corporate calendar as required.
- 2.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel has six scheduled meetings over the course of 2015/16, including the scheduled budget meeting (representing a maximum of 18 hours of scrutiny per year – assuming 3 hours per meeting). Members will therefore need to be selective in their choice of items for the Panel's work programme.

Principles guiding the development of the scrutiny work programme

- 2.5 The following key principles of effective scrutiny should be considered when the Panel determines its work programme:
- **Be selective** – There is a need to prioritise so that high priority issues are scrutinised given the limited number of scheduled meetings and time available. Members should consider what can realistically and properly be reviewed at each meeting, taking into account the time needed to scrutinise each item and what the session is intended to achieve.
 - **Add value with scrutiny** – Items should have the potential to 'add value' to the work of the Authority and its partners. If it is not clear what the intended outcomes or impact of a review will be then Members should consider if there are issues of a higher priority that could be scrutinised instead.
 - **Be ambitious** – Panels should not shy away from carrying out scrutiny of issues that are of local concern, whether or not they are the primary responsibility of the council. the Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities the power to do anything to promote economic, social and environmental well being of local communities. Subsequent Acts have conferred specific powers to scrutinise health services, crime and disorder issues and to hold partner organisations to account.
 - **Be flexible** – Members are reminded that there needs to be a degree of flexibility in their work programme to respond to unforeseen issues/items for consideration/comment during the year and accommodate any developmental or additional work that falls within the remit of this Panel. For example Members may wish to questions officers regarding the declining performance of a service or may choose to respond to a Councillor Call for Action request.

- **Think about the timing** – Members should ensure that the scrutiny activity is timely and that, where appropriate, their findings and recommendations inform wider corporate developments or policy development cycles at a time when they can have most impact. Members should seek to avoid duplication of work carried out elsewhere.

Models for carrying out scrutiny work

2.6 There are a number of means by which the Overview and Scrutiny Panel can deliver its work programme. Members should consider which of the following options is most appropriate to undertake each of the items they have selected for inclusion in the work programme:

Item on a scheduled meeting agenda/ hold an extra meeting of the Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Panel can agree to add an item to the agenda for a meeting and call Cabinet Members/ Officers/Partners to the meeting to respond to questioning on the matter ■ A variation of this model could be a single meeting to scrutinise an issue that, although important, does not merit setting up a 'task-and-finish' group.
Task Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A small group of Members meet outside of the scheduled meetings to gather information on the subject area, visit other local authorities/sites, and speak to service users, expert witnesses and/or Officers/Partners. The Task Group can then report back to the wider Panel with their findings to endorse the submission of their recommendations to Cabinet/Council ■ This is the method usually used to carry out policy reviews
Panel asks for a report then takes a view on action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Panel may need more information before taking a view on whether to carry out a full review so asks for a report to give them more details.
Meeting with service officer/partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A Member (or small group of Members) has a meeting with service officers/partners to discuss concerns or raise queries. ■ If the Member is not satisfied with the outcome or believes that the Panel needs to have a more in-depth review of the matter s/he takes it back to the Panel for discussion
Individual Members doing some initial research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A member with a specific concern carries out some research to gain more information on the matter and then brings his/her findings to the attention of the panel if s/he still has concerns.

2.7 Note that, in order to keep agendas to a manageable size, and to focus on items to which the Panel can make a direct contribution, the Panel may choose to take some "information only" items outside of Panel meetings, for example by email.

Support available for scrutiny activity

2.8 The Overview and Scrutiny function has dedicated scrutiny support from the Scrutiny Team to:

- Work with the Chair and Vice-Chair of each Panel to manage the work programme and coordinate the agenda, including advising officers and partner organisations on information required and guidance for witnesses submitting evidence to a scrutiny review;

- Provide support for scrutiny Members through briefing papers, background material, training and development seminars, etc;
 - Facilitate and manage the work of the task and finish groups, including research, arranging site visits, inviting and briefing witnesses and drafting review reports on behalf on the Chair; and
 - Promote the scrutiny function across the organisation and externally.
- 2.9 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will need to assess how they can best utilise the available support from the Scrutiny Team to deliver their work programme for 2015/16.
- 2.10 The Panel is also invited to comment upon any briefing, training and support that are needed to enable Members to undertake their work programme. Members may also wish to undertake visits to local services in order to familiarise themselves with these. Such visits should be made with the knowledge of the Chair and will be organised by the Scrutiny Team.
- 2.11 The Scrutiny Team will take the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's views on board in developing the support that is provided.
- 3. Selecting items for the Scrutiny Work Programme**
- 3.1 Each Overview and Scrutiny Panel sets its own agenda within the scope of its terms of reference, with the Overview and Scrutiny Commission taking a coordinating role to ensure that any gaps or overlap in the scrutiny work programme are dealt with in a joined-up way.
- The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has the following remit: -
- Housing, including housing need, affordable housing and private sector housing;
 - Environmental sustainability, including energy, waste management, parks & open spaces and the built environment;
 - Culture, including tourism, museums, arts, sports & leisure;
 - Enterprise and skills, including regeneration, employment, adult education & libraries; and
 - Transport
- 3.1 The Scrutiny Team has undertaken a campaign to gather suggestions for issues to scrutinise either as Panel agenda items or task group reviews. Suggestions have been received from members of the public, councillors and partner organisations including the police, NHS Sutton and Merton and Merton Voluntary Service Council. Other issues of public concern have been identified through the Annual Residents Survey. Issues that have been raised repeatedly at Community Forums have also been included. The Scrutiny Team has consulted departmental management teams in order to identify forthcoming issues on which the panel could contribute to the policymaking process.
- 3.2 A description of all the suggestions received is set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The councillors who attended a "topic selection" workshop on 19th May 2015 discussed these suggestions.

- 3.4 The suggestions were prioritised at the workshop using the criteria listed in Appendix 3. In particular, participants sought to identify issues that related to the Council's strategic priorities or where there was underperformance; issues of public interest or concern and issues where scrutiny could make a difference.
- 3.5 A note of the workshop discussion relating to the remit of this Panel is set out in Appendix 4.
- 3.6 Appendix 1 contains a draft work programme that has been drawn up, taking the workshop discussion into account, for the consideration of the Panel. The Panel is requested to discuss this draft and agree any changes that it wishes to make.
- 3.7 The Panel may also wish to select items for scrutiny from the presentations made by Directors and Cabinet Members (at the Panel's meeting on 11 June 2015) or based on other public priorities of which Members are aware through their ward work.
- 3.8 Items on the Cabinet's forward plan that relate to the remit of this Panel are listed in Appendix 5. The Panel may wish to include one or more of these issues in its work programme.

4. Task group reviews

- 4.1 The Panel is invited to select an issue for in-depth scrutiny and establish a task group.

5. Co-option to the Panel membership

- 5.1 Scrutiny Panels can consider whether to appoint non-statutory (non-voting) co-optees to the membership, in order to add to the specific knowledge, expertise and understanding of key issues to aid the scrutiny function. Panels may also wish to consider whether it may be helpful to co-opt people from "seldom heard" groups.

6. Public involvement

- 6.1 Scrutiny provides extensive opportunities for community involvement and democratic accountability. Engagement with service users and with the general public can help to improve the quality, legitimacy and long-term viability of recommendations made by the Panel.
- 6.2 Service users and the public bring different perspectives, experiences and solutions to scrutiny, particularly if "seldom heard" groups such as young people, disabled people, people from black and minority ethnic communities and people from lesbian gay bisexual and transgender communities are included.
- 6.3 This engagement will help the Panel to understand the service user's perspective on individual services and on co-ordination between services. Views can be heard directly through written or oral evidence or heard indirectly through making use of existing sources of information, for example from surveys. From time to time the Panel/Task Group may wish to carry out engagement activities of its own, by holding discussion groups or sending questionnaires on particular issues of interest.
- 6.4 Much can be learnt from best practice already developed in Merton and elsewhere. The Scrutiny Team will be able to help the Panel to identify the range of stakeholders from which it may wish to seek views and the best way to engage with particular groups within the community.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

7.1 A number of issues highlighted in this report recommend that Panel members take into account certain considerations when setting their work programme for 2015/16. Overview and Scrutiny Panels are free to determine their work programme as they see fit. Members may therefore choose to identify a work programme that does not take into account these considerations. This is not advised as ignoring the issues raised would either conflict with good practice and/or principles endorsed in the Review of Scrutiny, or could mean that adequate support would not be available to carry out the work identified for the work programme.

7.2 A range of suggestions from the public, partner organisations, officers and Members for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme are set out in the appendices, together with a suggested approach to determining which to include in the work programme. Members may choose to respond differently. However, in doing so, Members should be clear about expected outcomes, how realistic expectations are and the impact of their decision on their wider work programme and support time. Members are also free to incorporate into their work programme any other issues they think should be subject to scrutiny over the course of the year, with the same considerations in mind.

8. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

8.1 To assist Members to identify priorities for inclusion in the Panel's scrutiny work programme, the Scrutiny Team has undertaken a campaign to gather suggestions for possible scrutiny reviews from a number of sources:

- a. Members of the public have been approached using the following tools: articles in the local press, My Merton and Merton Together, request for suggestions from all councillors and co-opted members, letter to partner organisations and to range of local voluntary and community organisations, including those involved in the Inter-Faith Forum and members of the Lesbian Gay and Transgender Forum;
- b. Councillors have put forward suggestions by raising issues in scrutiny meetings, via the Overview and Scrutiny Member Survey 2015, and by contacting the Scrutiny Team directly; and
- c. Officers have been consulted via discussion at departmental management team meetings.

9. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the financial, resource and property issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific financial, resource and property implications.

10. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Overview and scrutiny bodies operate within the provisions set out in the Local Government Act 2000, the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

10.2 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific legal and statutory implications.

- 11. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**
- 11.1 It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement. The reviews will involve work to consult local residents, community and voluntary sector groups, businesses, hard to reach groups, partner organisations etc and the views gathered will be fed into the review.
- 11.2 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the human rights, equalities and community cohesion issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications.
- 12. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**
- 12.1 In line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police and Justice Act 2006, all Council departments must have regard to the impact of services on crime, including anti-social behaviour and drugs. Scrutiny review reports will therefore highlight any implications arising from the reviews relating to crime and disorder as necessary.
- 13. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**
- 13.1 There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the risk management and health and safety issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific risk management and health and safety implications.
- 14. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**
- 14.1 Appendix 1 – Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel draft work programme 2015/16
- 14.2 Appendix 2 – Summary of topics relating to this Overview & Scrutiny Panel’s remit suggested for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme
- 14.3 Appendix 3 – Selecting a Scrutiny Topic – criteria used at the workshop on 19th May 2015
- 14.4 Appendix 4 – Notes from discussion of topics relating to the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Scrutiny Topic Selection Workshop 19th May 2015
- 14.5 Appendix 5 – Extract from Forward Plan
- 15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**
- 15.1 None

One item may be selected for a full task group review. The topic (suggested at the topic selection evening on 19th May 2015) identified that may be suitable for a task group review was:

- Creating a tourism industry in Merton

Draft Work Programme for Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel meetings

Meeting date – 11th June 2015

Item/Issue
Priorities for 2014/15 – Cabinet Member/Director presentation
Agreeing the 2014/15 work programme - Report
Verbal Update – Morden Leisure Centre
Presentation – Circle Housing Merton Priory (Performance Monitoring)
Performance Reporting

Meeting date – 2nd September 2015

Item/Issue
Creating a Tourist Industry in Merton – Briefing Report (possible task group review)
Draft Final Report – Housing Supply Task Group
Commercial Services and opportunities to maximise resources – Briefing Report
Public Toilets – Briefing Report
Climate Change and Green Deal Task Group – Performance Monitoring
Adult Skills and Employability Task Group - Performance Monitoring
Performance Reporting(including focus on waste management and street scene)
Work Programme 2015/16

Meeting date – November 2015

Item/Issue
Pre decision - Scrutiny of the budget and business plan
Merton Adult Education – pre decision scrutiny (dates to be determined)
Shared Services – Briefing Report
results of the wheelie bin pilot - pre-decision scrutiny (dates to be determined)
Executive Response and Action Plan – Housing Supply Task Group
Verbal Update – Morden Leisure Centre
Performance Reporting
Work Programme 2015/16

Meeting date – January 2016

Item/Issue
Pre decision - Scrutiny of the budget and business plan
Executive

Performance Reporting
Work Programme 2015/16

Meeting date - February 2016

Item/Issue
Town Centre Regeneration – Performance Monitoring
Cycle Routes – Briefing Report
Phase C regeneration programme (including parks, grounds, maintenance and waste)
Performance Reporting
Work Programme 2015/16

Meeting date - March 2016

Item/Issue
Highways maintenance – contract renewal (pre decision)
Performance Reporting
Work Programme Planning

Description of topic suggestions received in relation to the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The following topics were suggested by residents, Members and officers, for consideration by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, for their 2015/16 work programme.

Complaints relating to the remit of this Panel in 2013/14:

With regard to the council's complaints process, in 2013/14 the council received 473 complaints relating to the Environment and Regeneration Dept. which related to policy regarding planning, enforcement, tree cutting and CCTV and waste management and parking. The Community and Housing Department received 94 complaints that related to service delivery and policy.

1. Topic: Highways maintenance – contract renewal

Who suggested the topic?

Environment and Regeneration DMT suggested that the Panel may wish to undertake pre decision scrutiny on the renewal of the highways maintenance contract. Residents also submitted topic suggestions that related to the quality of roads and pavements and maintenance of highways in specific areas of the borough.

Summary of the issue

The council aim to maintain all footpaths and roads in a safe condition, and ensure they make a positive and attractive contribution to the appearance of the borough. The Panel receives regular performance information regarding the maintenance of highways as part of their 2014/15 work programme.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members may wish to undertake pre decision scrutiny of the renewal of the highways maintenance contract at the appropriate time (**pre decision scrutiny**).

2. Topic: Morden Leisure Centre

Who suggested the topic?

Members of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel asked to be kept informed and engaged at pre decision stages of the project to develop the new Morden Leisure Centre and restore the former site of the centre.

Summary of the issue

The Panel undertook pre decision scrutiny and heard a call in on the proposals for the development of Morden Leisure Centre, and use of the site of the former centre, as part of its 2014/15 work programme.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members asked to be engaged at the appropriate intervals in the programme of redevelopment of the leisure centre and former site to enable them to undertake pre decision scrutiny and maintain an overview of the project.

3. Topic: Commercial services and opportunities to maximise resources

Who suggested the topic?

This topic was proposed by E&R DMT.

Summary of the issue

The Panel may wish to seek advice from the Director of Environment and Regeneration on opportunities for scrutiny to add value.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Panel could appoint a task group to review the opportunities for the council to deliver and develop commercial services that would enable the authority to maximise resources and generate an income.

4. Topic: Housing supply

Who suggested the topic?

Residents suggested that the lack of affordable housing in the borough should be investigated by the Panel. Members of the Wimbledon Society also proposed that scrutiny look at how effective the process of establishing viability of developments to generate the greatest percentage of affordable housing.

Summary of the issue

Lack of affordable housing is a concern for 21% of residents within the Annual Residents Survey 2014. There is also significant press coverage of the housing crisis which has highlighted the need to make provision to allow new homes to be built, and existing homes to be refurbished. In recognition of this, the Panel appointed a Task Group as part of its 2014/15 work programme, to investigate housing supply in the borough. The review has the following terms of reference:

- To understand housing market characteristics and the level of housing need in Merton;
- National and local policy context surrounding the provision of affordable housing;
- Data on housing need in Merton;
- The role of the local authority and partners (i.e. Registered Providers, private landlords and private developers) in ensuring good quality housing;
- An overview of what affordable housing is being built in Merton;

- To review the councils existing housing strategy with a view to strengthening/developing this policy in light of the reviews findings;

- To determine how the council might support and encourage the production of new affordable homes in Merton and what land is available for development; and

- To determine what good practice exists elsewhere that might be utilised in responding to the demand for affordable housing

The Task Group have explored a number of models for housing provision and have met with housing associations, other local authorities, the GLA and NHS to enable them to determine feasible models for Merton to meet housing need. The Task Group is due to report to the Panel and Cabinet in September 2015.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel receive and then monitor delivery of the agreed recommendations resulting from the task group review of housing supply (performance monitoring).

That the Panel engage in any pre decision scrutiny of suitable models that may be taken forward resulting from the task group review, for example, the Housing Development Company model or mixed use sites and use of NHS surplus land, dependent upon Cabinet agreement to the recommendations made by the task group (pre decision scrutiny).

5. Topic: Climate Change and the Green Deal Task Group

Who suggested the topic?

The Scrutiny Officer proposes that the Panel continue to performance monitor delivery of the agreed recommendations resulting from their task group review of Climate Change and the Green Deal.

Summary of the issue:

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel undertook a task group review of Climate Change and the Green Deal as part of its 2013/14 work programme and has received updates from the department on delivery of the recommendations from the review.

How scrutiny could look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel continue to performance monitor delivery of the action plan at six monthly intervals until all of the recommendations have been delivered (**performance monitoring**).

6. Topic: Merton Adult Education

Who suggested the topic?

A resident proposed that the Panel look at the Merton Adult Education service and how it will be delivered in the future.

Summary of the issue:

The Panel undertook pre decision scrutiny, received private briefings and heard a call in on the options for achieving a value for money adult education service and on the proposed commissioning model of delivery.

How scrutiny could look at it?

Members may wish to maintain an overview of the effectiveness of a commissioning model of delivery and comment, as appropriate, on any proposals for development or change to service provision at pre decision stage (pre decision scrutiny).

7. Topic: Monitoring of stock transfer to CHMP and Regeneration Programme

Who suggested the topic?

Members request that the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel receive regular updates on the success of the housing stock transfer to CHMP and on the regeneration and repairs and maintenance programmes every six months.

Summary of the issue

The ownership of all 9,000 Merton Council homes was transferred to the housing association Merton Priory Homes (MPH) in March 2010. The stock transfer to Merton Priory Homes, a newly-formed subsidiary of Circle Anglia was based on a vote in favour of the transfer by 53% of tenants. The organisation committed to invest £129 million in improvements to their homes to 2020, with a planned £383 million being invested in the stock over 30 years. It also set up a £1 million community fund to invest in projects across the borough.

Panel members have considered the benefits that have resulted from the transfer as part of its 2013/14 and 2014/15 work programmes and delivery against the promises contained within the transfer.

In addition, the progress and fulfilment of the CHMP promises made at the time of the housing stock transfer is regularly monitored by the housing team and presented in a quarterly report to Cabinet and via email to the Panel.

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel also receives pre decision reports at appropriate intervals on the CHMP Regeneration programme of its three estates.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel continue to receive six monthly updates on progress with implementation of the commitments within the housing stock transfer document and on associated benefits to residents (**performance monitoring**).

It is also suggested that the Panel consider future proposals for MPH's regeneration programme and undertake **pre decision scrutiny** when appropriate to enable them to make any recommendations to MPH.

8. Topic: Shared Services

Who suggested the topic?

Environment & Regeneration Departmental Management Team (DMT) asked that the Panel consider the councils plans for expanding regulatory shared service arrangements.

Summary of the issue

The Environment and Regeneration Department have expressed a commitment to developing a shared regulatory service with Merton, Richmond and Croydon which would cover Licensing,

Trading Standards, Environmental Health (Commercial, Environmental Protection), together with providing administrative support. There have been a number of areas of risk that have been identified which include the potential inability to achieve savings targets. These risks also concern the resilience and robustness of the shared service being properly assessed.

Successful shared services are in operation at Merton which involves working with other councils to share resources and make associated efficiency savings. For example, the South London Partnership. The South London Partnership encompasses five South London boroughs: Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Sutton. Its aim is to promote the south London sub-region, particularly in matters relating to economic development and transport planning.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel undertake pre decision scrutiny of proposals relating to the development of regulatory shared services at appropriate intervals (**pre decision**).

9. Topic: Adult Skills and Employability Task Group

Who suggested the topic?

The Scrutiny Officer proposes that the Panel receive regular progress updates on the implementation of the agreed recommendations resulting from the task group review of adult skills and employability.

Summary of the issue:

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel established a task group as part of its 2012/13 work programme to undertake a review of adult skills and employability. The review focused on 3 key areas: reducing unemployment, attracting inward investment and improving the quality of adult education. The Panel has received progress updates on the recommendations agreed by Cabinet during its 2014/15 work programme.

How scrutiny could look at this?

It is suggested that Members add this as a standing six monthly item on their work programme to **performance monitor** implementation of their recommendations resulting from this review.

10. Topic: Public Toilets

Who suggested the topic?

A topic suggestion was received from a resident regarding the availability of public toilets in Merton.

Summary of the issue:

The council has a community toilet scheme which was launched in 2009. The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel considered the scheme as part of their 2009/10 work programme.

The scheme enables the public to use toilets in facilities in the borough such as shops, pubs, restaurants etc. where that business has signed up to the scheme. Public toilet buildings that the council previously ran were closed due to funding issues some time ago and there are no proposals to reinstate them.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members may wish to receive an update on the Community Toilet Scheme (**performance monitoring**).

11. Topic: 20 mph Zones/Limits

Who suggested the topic?

A resident suggested that the implementation of 20mph zones and limits in Wimbledon would be worth investigating by the Panel. In particular, how they are enforced.

Summary of the issue

A 20mph limit or 20mph zone is a dedicated area where improving safety and maintaining the quality of life for local residents takes precedence over the general objective to ease traffic movement. Traffic speed within this area is not to exceed 20mph.

For a 20mph zone, traffic calming features in the form of road humps; speed cushions; road closures; one way systems; pedestrian refuge islands and road narrowing's would have to be introduced at the appropriate distance to achieve a legal and self-enforceable zone. A 20mph limit does not require any traffic calming features as part of the legal requirements except for the introduction of the appropriate signs and road markings which will be located at all the entry points into the area.

Like a number of other London Boroughs, there is a combination of roads with 20 mph limits and 20 mph zones in Merton. The Council commissioned an analysis of the effectiveness of the current schemes that have been implemented. This analysis has focused on a comparison of before and after accident data at each of the individual limits and zones, along with before and after traffic flow and vehicle speed data at each of the individual limits and zones.

The Sustainable Communities Panel considered 20 mph zones as part of its 2013/14 and 2014/15 work programmes and the outcomes of an independent consultant report into the roll out and effectiveness of 20 mph zones and limits across London, which made recommendations on how Merton might take this forward. In particular, the Panel commented on whether 20mph zones and limits should be rolled out in the borough and if a blanket approach borough wide 20mph zone was more appropriate.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel undertake a performance monitoring role in this area if they wish to do so, on the roll out of 20 mph zones and limits in specific areas across Merton and their effectiveness (**performance monitoring**).

12. Topic: Creation and maintenance of green spaces

Who suggested the topic?

Environment and regeneration DMT proposed that the Panel undertake pre decision scrutiny of the Phase C procurement in relation to parks and grounds maintenance. Residents have also suggested that a review of the management of parks and open spaces be undertaken by the Panel.

Summary of the issue

Merton is rich in green spaces, with over 60 public parks. The council has a number of duties to maintain parks and green spaces and a dedicated service for this purpose with a range of specialists in arboriculture etc.

The Panel undertook a review of Parks and Open Spaces as part of its 2009/10 work programme. In addition, the Panel undertook a Task Group review of Trees as part of the 2011/12 work programme.

The Annual Residents Survey 2014 found that 72% of residents felt that the standards of parks and green spaces were good. Satisfaction has increased on the previous year.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Panel, having already undertaken in-depth scrutiny reviews into this topic could choose to receive a briefing report and performance information on how the department are performing in this area (**performance monitoring**).

The Panel may wish to undertake pre decision scrutiny of the procurement of the waste management contract and Phase C.

13. Topic: Street Lighting

Who suggested the topic?

The Environment and Regeneration DMT proposed that the Panel undertake pre decision scrutiny of the renewal of the council's street lighting policy (**pre decision scrutiny**).

Summary of the issue

Resident satisfaction with street lighting remained stable at 70% satisfaction according to the Annual Residents Survey 2014.

There is no statutory requirement on highway authorities to provide public lighting but the Council has a statutory duty to improve road safety and combat crime. Therefore street lighting is provided to ensure the safety of all road users, reduce the fear of crime, increase the feeling of security when it is dark, support the 24 hour economy by promoting economic development, and support social inclusion by facilitating the use of the road network at night. The majority of Merton's street light meets current lighting standards.

Merton Council aims to provide street lighting that has a positive effect on the appearance, environment and general security of roads in the borough. The council notes that it aims to keep all street lighting equipment functioning properly and safely. Merton aims to use lighting that is environmentally friendly, and states that it regularly inspects lighting equipment in streets and car parks. This is managed by the Traffic and Highways team within the Environment and Regeneration Department.

In 2010 the Panel received a report about the street lighting service, including the development of a Street Lighting Policy that was adopted in 2012. The Panel also undertook pre decision scrutiny as part of its work over a number of years, in particular on the establishment and renewal of the council's street lighting contract in January 2014 and as part of their 2014/15 work programme they received an update on changes in technology and proposals for roll out across the councils street lighting stock.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel undertakes pre decision scrutiny on the renewal of the council's street lighting contract (**pre decision scrutiny**).

14. Topic: Fox control

Who suggested the topic?

The issue of urban foxes was raised by residents.

Summary of the issue

The council's policy is not to take any action on urban foxes. The council does not carry out a treatment or service for foxes. This policy has been in place for many years and is in line with neighbouring local authorities in that it follows the guidance laid out by central government.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel responds to the individual/group that raised the topic and provide details on the council's policy on foxes and pest control.

15. Topic: Town Centre Regeneration

Who suggested the topic?

A resident expressed concerns about the use of space in Rayne's Park town centre to provide a more attractive amenity area and to improve town centre spaces generally.

Summary of the issue

Merton's Regeneration Programme is rooted in the LDF Core Strategy vision for the Borough (2011). The programme sits alongside Merton's Economic Development Strategy, Transport for London LIP, and funded projects like Outer London Fund and the Mayor's Regeneration Fund.

Regeneration is planned and managed by the Future Merton team. At present the council continue to work on town centre regeneration programmes across the borough.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel has maintained an overview of the progress being made on the councils regeneration programme by receiving regular progress reports and presentations from the Future Merton Team. It is suggested that the Panel continue to receive progress and performance reports at six monthly intervals on the regeneration programme as a standing item on the work programme (**performance monitoring**).

The Panel may also wish to build some flexibility into the work programme to accommodate any **pre decision scrutiny** items on proposals for specific regeneration programmes, for example, the Rediscover Mitcham programme or MoreMorden programme.

16. Topic: Planning

Who suggested the topic?

A number of topic suggestions have been received in relation to planning processes and planning law. Further topic suggestions have also been received in relation to planning and enforcement.

Summary of the issue:

Planning is underpinned by the Local Plan (formerly known as the Local Development Framework) which encompasses a number of policies that support it including:

- The Core Planning Strategy;
- Sites and Policies Plan;
- Sustainable Transport and Local Implementation Plan

Planning is a controversial issue, and the borough's planning committee evaluates requests for significant changes to properties/in the borough. Major alterations, new buildings, and changes in the use of buildings and land are defined as development; as is the enlargement of existing buildings and therefore require planning permission.

In the 2014 annual resident's survey, only 29% of residents said that they feel that planning services are good.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members should be mindful that some of the issues raised fall within the remit of the Planning Committee and therefore it may not be appropriate for the Panel to undertake a Scrutiny Review in this area. The issues raised could be forwarded to the department to respond to.

Alternatively, the Panel could ask the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration to attend a Panel meeting to answer any questions they may have in this area.

17. Topic: Public Transport

Who suggested the topic?

A number of topic suggestions were received in relation to public transport.

Summary of the issue:

The council is not responsible for providing public transport but does work with TfL and other providers to ensure that any proposals to expand or improve public transport provision are commented on and opportunities for partnership working established, as well as identifying income streams to fund related projects.

The council is also responsible for ensuring the correct infrastructure is in place for public transport.

The council also administers a Public Transport Liaison Committee which provides a mechanism by which residents can raise issues about public transport with TfL and other providers.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel refer these issues to the **PTLC** to respond to as they fall within the remit of that Committee and may be more effectively dealt with in this forum, in discussion with TfL.

18. Topic: Waste Management**Who suggested the topics?**

A number of suggestions have been raised that fall under the waste management and street scene service areas.

The topics received in relation to this area are:

- street cleaning;
- wheelie bins;
- dog waste bins

These issues were raised by residents and E&R DMT.

Summary of the issues that fall under waste management:*Street Cleaning:*

An increase in concerns regarding litter and dirt in the streets makes this a top concern for residents as noted in the 2014 Annual Residents Survey.

Work has been on-going in this area. The E&R Department have undertaken a Public Value Review of Street Cleaning. The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel were engaged in the PVR from the outset and have commented on the scope of the review and received regular updates on progress and outcomes from the review as part of its 2012/13 and 2013/14 work programmes.

Furthermore, as part of the Panels 2011 work programme an in-depth task group review of cleaner town centres was undertaken by the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel and

updates on progress with implementation of the action plan have been received at regular intervals.

The council has a system for reporting any issues or concerns regarding street cleaning and have introduced an app called, 'Love Clean Streets'.

Wheelie Bins:

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel set up a task group in 2011 at the request of Cabinet in order to investigate the proposed use of wheeled bins for the collection of household waste. Members agreed a broader remit to cover all aspects of domestic waste collection in this review and made a number of recommendations to Cabinet in this area.

The Panel also scrutinised the decision to implement a pilot wheeled bin scheme, which involved the provision of a weekly collection of general waste and dry recycling, as part of its 2014/15 work programme. This pilot will cover a sample of 1200 households within the Lavender Fields Ward, to be carried out over a period of six months commencing in April 2015, in order to test the benefits or otherwise of this method of collection. The Panel agreed to undertake pre decision scrutiny of the outcomes of the pilot in due course to take a view as to where and if wheeled bins should be rolled out.

The Panel also undertook an in-depth task group review of household waste management and the environment as part of their 2011 work programme and have subsequently received updates and performance managed implementation of the action plan resulting from the review.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel deal with each individual topic separately in the following ways:

Street cleaning: Undertake pre decision scrutiny of the procurement of waste management services at the appropriate time.

Wheeled bins: Undertake pre decision scrutiny upon completion and analysis of the wheeled bins pilot that is underway.

Dog waste bins: The Panel could receive a briefing report on the roll out and effectiveness of dog waste bins in Merton (**scrutiny review**).

19. Topic: Cycle Routes

Who suggested the topic?

It has been suggested by residents that scrutiny look into cycling provision and the expansion of the cycle network in Merton.

Summary of the issue

Merton aims to significantly improve the conditions for cycling, which it has acknowledged requires significant investment and improved co-ordination across the sub region, to increase the cycle modal share in the borough to 6% by 2031.

A variety of funding sources have been identified to improve cycling facilities in the borough for example, through the councils town centre regeneration programme. Furthermore the additional

funding received from the Mayors office will enable Merton to expand and improve its cycling provision.

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel has reviewed cycling provision as part of its 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 work programmes.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel monitor implementation of the improvements to cycling provision in Merton funded by the grant received by the council from the Mayor of London (**Performance Monitoring**).

20. Topic: Basement conversions/dwellings

Who suggested the topic?

Members of the Wimbledon Society. They suggested that scrutiny look into what policy is in place to manage these developments and to consider the impact of these developments, for example, flood risk, effects on nearby houses of construction process etc.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members may wish to refer this issue to the Planning Committee to consider and respond to (**referral**).

21. Topic: Converting commercial buildings to residential properties

Who suggested the topic?

Members of the Wimbledon Society.

Summary of the issue

It was suggested that the Panel look into recent legislation that allows the conversion of commercial properties into residential properties and the negative impact on small businesses if this goes ahead. The Panel received a presentation as part of its 2014/15 work programme on government legislation to enable the development of commercial into residential properties and considered local policy and the approach to be taken by the council on this.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is suggested that the Panel does not review this item again as any applications for conversion would be considered by officers and the Planning Committee, if appropriate (**referral**).

22. Topic: Climate Change

Who suggested the topic?

Members of the Wimbledon Society.

Summary of the issue

Question raised about how the council are addressing climate change. The Panel established a task group on Climate Change and the Green Deal as part of its 2013/14 work programme. The Panel have subsequently received updates on the delivery of the recommendations resulting from the review.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is proposed that the Panel continue to maintain an overview of the delivery of the action plan outlining how the agreed recommendations will be delivered (**performance monitoring**).

23. Topic: Community Facilities

Who suggested the topic?

Members of the Wimbledon Society.

Summary of the issue

A resident raise the topic of how the council can continue to provide adequate community services and facilities, such as educational, cultural and community use, that add to the wellbeing of the community and quality of life in the borough. Members of the Wimbledon Society also queried the possible construction of a community centre in Wimbledon to replace the one that was in place on Drake Road.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members may wish to receive a briefing report at a future meeting on how the council is continuing to provide important community facilities and services in times of austerity and what regeneration proposals are in place that supports the future development of these cultural, leisure and community facilities across the borough (**briefing report**).

24. Topic: Community Transport

Who suggested the topic?

A councillor.

Summary of the issue

Merton Community Transport (MCT) is a not for profit charity which has been providing transport solutions for the community in and around the London Borough of Merton since the year 2000. The service is open to any individual and their carer in the borough of Merton who joins the service and has mobility need.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members may wish to receive a briefing report on the delivery of community transport services and any proposals for future changes or developments to the service.

25. Topic: Creating a tourist industry in Merton

Who suggested the topic?

Cabinet Member.

How could scrutiny look at it?

Members may wish to undertake a review of the tourist industry in Merton by receiving a presentation from officers (**briefing report**) or establish a **task group** to explore models and options for creating a tourist industry in Merton.

26. Topic: Economic Development and Public Health – The Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Who suggested the topic?

The Director of Public Health.

How could scrutiny look at it?

The public health functions that the NHS was previously responsible for have been transferred to local authorities. A public health team has been established and a Director of Public Health appointed. The council now work more closely in partnership with the support of Merton Clinical Commissioning Group, which works with local health practitioners including GPs and nurses.

The councils Health and Wellbeing Strategy seeks to reduce the gap in life expectancy of residents between the East and the West of the borough.

How could scrutiny look at it?

It is proposed by the Director of Public Health that the Panel receive a briefing on the delivery of the health and well being strategy in relation to the areas that fall within the Panels remit. It is also proposed that the Panel request an overview of how the Environment and Regeneration and Community and Housing Departments are making health a focus when developing policies and programmes of work to ensure that they are addressing current and potential health inequalities.

Selecting a Scrutiny Topic – criteria used at the workshop on 19 May 2015

The purpose of the workshop is to identify priority issues for consideration as agenda items or in-depth reviews by the Scrutiny Panels and the Commission. The final decision on this will then be made by the Panels/Commission at their first meetings.

All the issues that have been suggested to date by councillors, officers, partner organisations and residents are outlined in the supporting papers.

Further suggestions may emerge from discussion at the workshop.

Points to consider when selecting a topic:

- Is the issue strategic, significant and specific?
- Is it an area of underperformance?
- Will the scrutiny activity add value to the Council's and/or its partners' overall performance?
- Is it likely to lead to effective, tangible outcomes?
- Is it an issue of community concern and will it engage the public?
- Does this issue have a potential impact for one or more section(s) of the population?
- Will this work duplicate other work already underway, planned or done recently?
- Is it an issue of concern to partners and stakeholders?
- Are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?

Notes from discussion of topics relating to the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Scrutiny Topic Selection Workshop 19 May 2015

Attendees:

Present: Councillor Abigail Jones, (Chair), Councillor Stan Anderson, Councillor Daniel Holden (substitute). Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah (Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Health)

Also present: Simon Williams Director of Community and Housing, Kay Eilbert, Director of Public Health, Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration and Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer.

The Chair said in developing the work programme members may wish to make some changes, to ensure that scrutiny continues to add value and responds to the concerns of the public. Panel members agreed that appointing champions is one approach that can help to achieve this aim. The Chair also said the annual scrutiny survey highlighted that levels of satisfaction have decreased in some areas including Performance Management. The panel members agreed that performance management could be scrutinised more effectively if it was looked at towards the beginning of the agenda with an exception report providing context on the indicators.

Dr Eilbert highlighted that improving health outcomes falls within the remit of this panel. There was some discussion about how to embed health considerations across all the scrutiny panels. One possibility included all reports to include a summary on how the work links to the health and wellbeing strategy and a summary of the health impact. Councillor Southgate suggested that the Commission as the overarching scrutiny body should lead on embedding health across all panels. Dr Eilbert and Councillor Southgate agreed to hold a separate discussion on this issue.

	Topic	Decision
1.	Highways maintenance – contract renewal	The contract is due for renewal in September 2017. A report can go to the Panel around March/April 2016 or June/July 2016.
2.	Morden Leisure Centre	To be included in the work programme
3.	Commercial Services and opportunities to maximise resources	Panel to receive a briefing at June meeting.
4.	Housing Supply	This topic to be considered as part of the task group review
5.	Climate Change	To monitor the implementation of the task group recommendations
6.	Merton Adult Education	To be included in work programme as pre-decision scrutiny. The contract for MAE will be awarded in the autumn and there will also be a decision on the

		location. Scrutiny officer to follow up on timescales.
7.	Monitoring of stock transfer to CHMP and regeneration programme	Panel to receive a briefing in June
8.	Shared Services	Department to provide a briefing after the shared services task group has reported in the autumn.
9.	Adult Skills and Employability Task Group	To monitor the implementation of the task group recommendations
10.	Public Toilets	To be included in work programme. There is concern that businesses are not advertising their membership of the community toilet scheme. Panel could engage residents to do some mystery shopping on this issue.
11.	20 mph Zones/Limits	Panel members decided not to include this issue in the work programme
12.	Creation and maintenance of green spaces	This can be looked at as part of Phase C regeneration programme, which includes parks, grounds, maintenance and waste. Scrutiny Officer to liaise with Department over timescales
13.	Street Lighting	This topic will appear on the Forward Plan and the Panel can decide if further scrutiny is required.
14.	Fox control	Panel members decided not to include this issue in the work programme
15.	Town Centre Regeneration	This Topic will be included in work programme
16.	Planning	Panel members decided not to include this issue in the work programme
17.	Public Transport	Topic to be referred to the Public Transport Liaison Committee
18.	Waste Management	Panel to consider the results of the wheelie bin pilot as pre-decision scrutiny.
19.	Cycle Routes	To be included in the work programme. The council has received 'quiet ways' funding from the Mayor's office. A briefing will go to the Panel once the money has been received.
20.	Basement conversions and dwellings	Panel members decided not to include this issue in the work programme
21.	Converting commercial buildings to residential properties	Panel can receive an update on the number of conversions if required.

22	Climate Change	This topic was considered in a recent task group
23.	Community Facilities	Panel members decided not to include this issue in the work programme
24.	Community Transport	Panel members decided not to include this issue in the work programme
25.	Creating a Tourist Industry in Merton	Panel members would like a briefing on this issue. It could be suitable for a task group review as it involves looking at how to attract more investment into the borough.
26.	Economic Development and Public Health	To be considered as part of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

The Chair thanked Panel members and officers for attending and said the work programme would be flexible and respond to issues as they arise.

The workshop finished at 8.15pm

Forward Plan items relating to the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

None.

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