

Committee: Council

Date: 8th July 2015

Agenda item:

Wards: ALL

Subject: Strategic Objective Review – Sustainable Communities with an emphasis on Leisure and Sport

Lead officer: Christine Parsloe, Leisure & Culture Development Manager

Lead member(s): Councillor Nick Draper, Cabinet Member for Community & Culture

Contact officer: Christine Parsloe, Leisure & Culture Development Manager

Recommendations:

- A. That Council consider the content of the report.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Council at its meeting on 4th March 2015 approved the Business Plan 2015-2019.
- 1.2 The Business Plan represents the way in which the council will deliver the Community Plan, which is grouped into four Thematic Partnerships (Children's Trust, Health & Well Being Board, Sustainable Communities & Transport and Safer & Stronger Communities). Performance against these themes, plus an additional theme of Corporate Capacity, is monitored by Council.
- 1.3 Each meeting of Council will receive a report updating on progress against one of these strategic themes. This report provides Council with an opportunity to consider progress against the priorities that are to be delivered under the Sustainable Communities theme with an emphasis on Leisure & Sport.
- 1.4 This report seeks to highlight how the provision of Leisure & Sport in Merton fits in with national, regional and local strategies and how the outcomes and benefits gained by Merton's local residents by taking part in physical activity and recreational pursuits can be far reaching and cut across the other thematic partnerships.
- 1.5 This report does not seek to cover all of leisure and sports services provided within the borough, but rather focus on those recent activities, initiatives and programmes delivered through leisure and culture development services that relate to the wider Community Plan.
- 1.6 The last time Full Council received a report under the Sustainable Communities theme relating to leisure and sport was in February 2011 with a report about Sustainable Communities – Culture & Sport. Council also received some updates on the Council's work on leisure, sport and physical activity as part of the reports on London 2012 – Olympic & Paralympic Games.
- 1.7 The key portfolio holder is the Councillor Nick Draper, Cabinet Member for Community & Culture.

- 1.8 The Business Plan 2014 -18 can be viewed at www.merton.gov.uk/businessplan (2015-19 report is not yet available on line, but will appear at the same link in the near future).

2 DETAILS

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The vision for the Sustainable Communities strategic theme is:

“Our ambition is to promote and support the local economy through the challenge of the current economic downturn, building resilience and stability and at the same time looking for opportunities to prepare for future recovery. We have a role to play in supporting local businesses and encourage entrepreneurs through working with partners to manage town centres, address skills needs, and build on and develop sectors with particular strengths for the future. Our residents will benefit from a cleaner and more attractive physical environment and improved access to good quality housing, leisure and transport facilities and learning and employment opportunities. We have a key strategic role to ‘place shape’ to achieve environmental and economic improvement by the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of communities and their citizens.”¹

- 2.1.2 The Business Plan objectives for the Sustainable Communities strategic theme are:

- Work to support economic growth, by increasing jobs and skills
- Work to increase the supply of housing
- Work towards carbon reduction
- Work to increase investment
- Work to improve sustainable transport provision

- 2.1.3 Performance against key indicators is included in the Environment & Regeneration dashboards. The link to the latest performance is <http://www.merton.gov.uk/perfmanagement.htm>

- 2.1.4 The Sustainable Communities strategic theme is all about building resilience and stability as well as enhancing the quality of life for local people. Cultural services, including leisure & sport, are a key contributor to providing and enhancing the quality of life for local people through ensuring sufficient and appropriate leisure and sports facilities exist that meet the needs of local people and that cultural, leisure and sports activities, events and programmes are in place to provide opportunities for local people to engage with and benefit from. It is also important that these leisure and sports opportunities also deliver on wider social, public health, educational, economic and environmental agendas thus maximising the benefits gained in the best interests of local people in our community.

- 2.1.5 The cross-cutting nature of Culture and Sport is recognised in the refreshed Community Plan, 2013 and is reflected in the recently published Culture & Sport Framework, 2014 (http://www.merton.gov.uk/leisure/arts/culture_and_sports_framework.htm) and the public health agenda as reflected in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

- 2.1.6 Merton’s Culture & Sport Framework, 2014, details how Culture and Sports services deliver and contribute to Merton’s priorities and wider social outcomes; in particular, programmes to improve health and wellbeing; learning, skills and

employability, economic resilience, positive behaviour and community cohesion. Furthermore, Culture and Sports services have the ability to develop innovative programmes to deliver against a range of outcomes and are an effective tool in promoting and facilitating behaviour change and empowering people, leading to improved life chances. Culture and Sports services provide a uniquely positive and impactful offer on some of the biggest issues local areas are dealing with, such as improving health and wellbeing and supporting vulnerable people, which means that cultural and sports services can also help to reduce public expenditure in the longer term.

2.1.7 Merton's Culture and Sports services currently contribute to Merton's priority outcomes in four key areas and these are the main themes of the framework:

- Improving Learning, Skills and Employability
- Improving Wellbeing
- Improving Cultural Facilities and Community Engagement
- Increasing Physical Activity

2.1.8 The national Government body for Sport, Sport England, current strategy, 2012-2017, seeks to have transformed sports participation by 2017, so that it becomes a habit for life for more people and a regular choice for the majority. They are seeking to achieve a year on year increase in the proportion of people who play sport once a week for at least 30 minutes. In particular they focus on raising the percentage of 14-25 year olds playing sport once a week as well as reducing the proportion dropping out of sport. This strategy will:

- See more people taking on and keeping a sporting habit for life
- Create more opportunities for young people
- Nurture and develop talent
- Provide the right facilities in the right places
- Support local authorities and unlock local funding
- Ensure real opportunities for communities.

2.1.9 There is no specific statutory duty on local authorities to provide leisure and sport in their locality; however, schools do have duties in relation to provision of sport and physical activity within and outside of the curriculum. It is recognised that the provision and co-ordination of such services can assist the council in meeting other duties with regards to employment, education, public health and well-being, community cohesion and building safer and stronger communities. The Council does have a legal duty in the manner that it operates the Wimbledon Park Watersports Centre as this facility falls under the Outdoor Adventure & Licensing Act 2004 which requires it to undergo an assessment and licensing process every two years. This has just been completed (June 2015) with a successful outcome and a licence awarded for the next two years of operation.

2.1.10 The Council works with key partners nationally, regionally, sub-regionally and locally to maximise the sports and leisure offer locally. In particular key partners include the Department of Culture, Media & Sport, Sport England, Greater London Authority, Chief Leisure Officers Association (CLOA), London Marathon Trust, London and Surrey Cycling Partnership, London Parks and the recently formed London Sport as well as National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB's). Locally we partner with the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC), The Wimbledon Club, Tooting & Mitcham United, St. Marks Academy, Schools in Merton and beyond, Wandle Valley Trust, Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL),

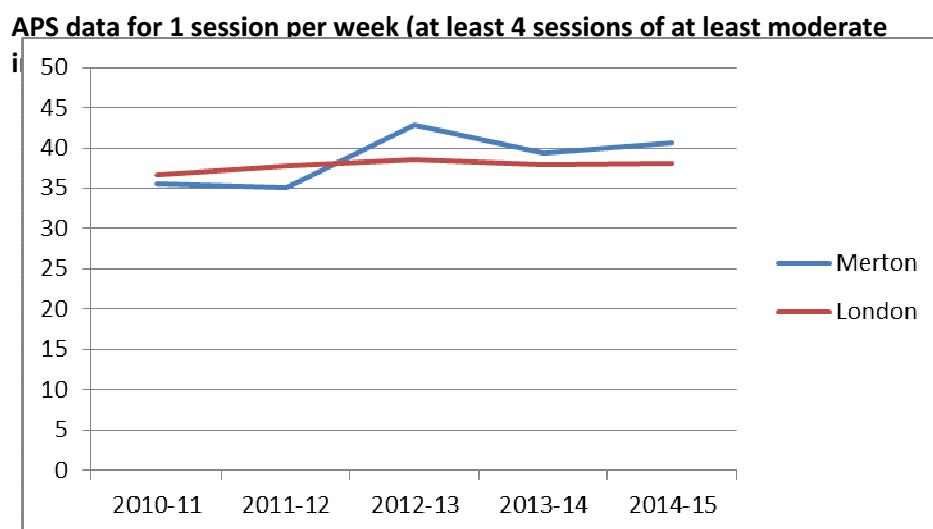
School Sports Partnership, YMCA, Sports Clubs, local organisations, community, businesses and friends groups.

2.1.11 Across Merton, leisure and sport activities and events will also be provided by others including in schools, to meet both curriculum and social requirements for our young people, and through public health interventions, addressing such matters as reducing obesity, improving people’s fitness, health and well-being, etc. or through activities and programmes in care centres, community centres or indeed taking place in our parks and open spaces, libraries and leisure centres. Merton’s Culture and Sport Framework will be able to assist all to make best use of culture and sport interventions and activities to both benefit the users of the services whilst also achieving the council’s strategic outputs and outcomes.

2.2 Performance relating to Sustainable Communities with an emphasis on Leisure and Sport

2.2.1 The primary measure for sport and leisure is determined through the Active People Survey delivered through Sport England. This survey has been in operation since 2005/06 and concerns itself with the adult population. (Note: The age range and parameters of particular interest have changed over the life of the implementation of this survey). Currently Government are particularly interested in participation in Sport & Physical Activity for an average period of 1 x 30mins per week. The Merton results for this are:

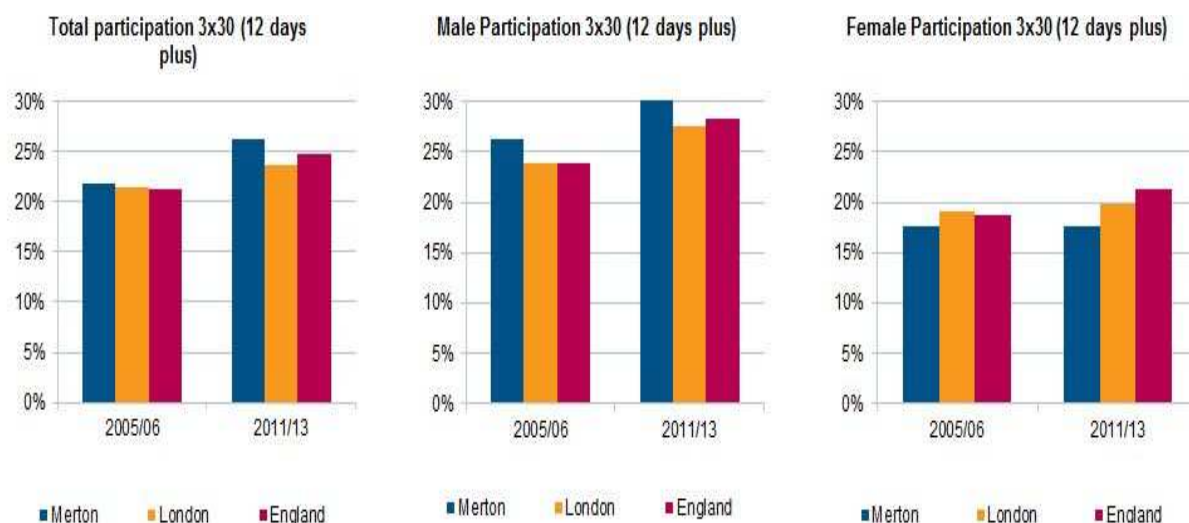
2.2.2 Table 1- Active People Survey – Adult Participation in 1 x 30mins moderate intensity sport.



	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Merton	35.6	35.1	42.9	39.4	40.7
London	36.6	37.8	38.5	38	38.1

2.2.3 Previously, the measure was 3 x 30 mins of sport and physical activity and the results for this measure are:

Table 2 - Active People Survey – Adult Participation in 3 x 30mins moderate intensity sport.



2.2.4 Participation levels for adults in Merton are higher than the London and England figures overall, with the male population showing a significant increase in participation, whilst female participation is slightly lower for Merton when compared to London and England.

2.2.5 Merton’s Annual Resident Survey identifies an area for concern whereby resident satisfaction with leisure and sports has decreased by a noticeable 7% on the previous year and was also 4% and 3% lower than the previous two years; however satisfaction among users of leisure is at an all-time high of 63%.

Table 3 – Annual Resident Survey Results

Service Delivery (perceived good-excellent)			Young people Survey Perceived Service delivery Leisure activity (good to excellent)	
Leisure & Sports facilities	All	Users		
2014-15	44%	63%	2014-15	61%
2013-14	51%	63%	2013-14	63%
2012-13	48%	62%	2012-13	72%
2011-12	47%	61%	2011-12	60%

2.2.6 London Sport has also set a target in their recent strategy to have 1,000,000 people in London more physically active by 2020. The table below shows Merton data.

Table 4 – Active People Survey – Active & Inactive Adults

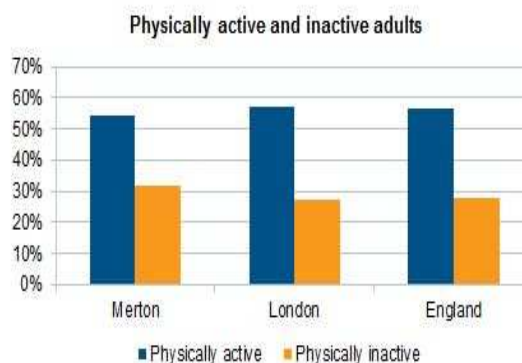
Physically active and inactive adults

Geography	Physically active		Physically inactive	
	No. (000s)	Rate	No. (000s)	Rate
Merton	92.2	54.4%	53.5	31.6%
London	3,652.5	57.3%	1,743.8	27.3%
England	24,101.1	56.6%	11,854.5	27.9%

Source: Public Health England - Public Health Outcomes Framework. Population figures: Annual Population Survey 2012

Year: 2012/13. Measure: Number of adults (16+) doing at least 150 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity per week, and number doing less than 30 minutes per week.

[For more information click here](#)



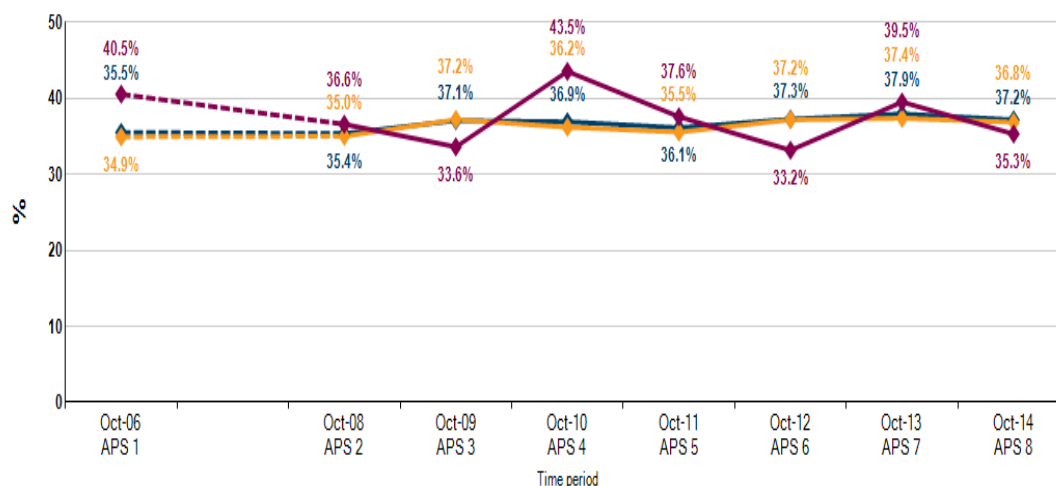
2.2.7 The Active People Survey generates lots of data and information regarding physical activity and the adult population of Merton and we use this along with other data and local knowledge to develop work programmes to address deficient areas. One such area that has arisen in the results is that:

People from black or minority ethnic groups in Merton participating in at least one 30 minute session of sport per week have fallen by 4.2% to 35.3%. This is the boroughs lowest result since October 2013.

Table 5 – Active People Survey – Ethnic Minority Participation in 1 x 30 mins moderate intensity sport

Black and minority ethnic groups

Purple = Merton; Orange = London; Blue = England



Geography	2005/06 – APS1	2012/13 – APS7	2013/14 – APS8
Merton	40.5%	39.5%	35.3%
London	34.9%	37.4%	36.8%
England	35.5%	37.9%	37.2%

This deficiency is being addressed in part by the delivery of a 3 year Sports Blast project in the east of the borough and detailed later in this report.

2.2.8 The Leisure & Culture Development Team are part of the Sustainable Communities division and as such have a number of performance measures to achieve as detailed within the team's annual service plan; some of these are also reported through the monthly council's dashboard. Those with a direct relationship to the provision of sport & leisure are:

Table 6 – Leisure & Culture Development – Sports & Leisure Indicators

Indicator	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 Targets	2015/16*
SP015 Income (£) Merton Active Plus	£42,229	£47,852	£55,000	£13,422
SP251 Income (£) Watersports Centre	£321,101	£346,897	£377,000	£31,375
SP314 External funding (£)	£96,100	£335,202	£100,000	£74,356
SP325 Annual Residents Survey (rating services good- excellent)	51%	44%	45%	N/A
Annual Resident Survey Satisfaction of users of leisure centres	63%	63%	N/A	N/A
SP349 14-25 year old users of leisure centres	98,093	100,891	103,000	18,842
SP405 – Total users of leisure centres	784,591	824,433	832,677	133,607

*2015/16 figures as at end of May 2015.

2.2.9 The targets for 2015/16 is a 30% increase in income for Merton Active Plus and a 17% increase in income for the Watersports Centre over the income achieved in 2013/14. The participation at our leisure centres shows requires an increase of 5% for 14 -25 year olds and 6% for all users in 2015/16 over the participation levels achieved in 2013/14.

2.3 Commentary and key achievements relating to Sustainable Communities with an emphasis on Sports and Leisure

2.3.1 Since the Council reviewed this service area last in 2011 the Leisure & Culture Development Team have lead on the successful delivery of the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games and reported on Merton's successes in that provision under separate reports to Council. Following this the Leisure &

Culture Development Manager was awarded the national Guardian “Public Servant of the Year Award 2013” for her exemplar work on this and other services she delivered for Merton and beyond during 2012.

2.3.2 Officers from the Leisure & Culture Development & Greenspaces Teams have been recognised by the Council for their work in recent annual Employee Awards, with the following achievements:

- Emma Boyd, Leisure Development Officer, E&R Winner – Employee of the Year, 2014
- Charlotte Simm, Parks Community Manager, E&R Highly Commended, Employee of the Year, 2014
- Greenspaces Team – E&R Team of the Year, 2013
- Christine Parsloe, Leisure & Culture Development Manager - Overall Outstanding Employee of the Year, 2012
- Charlotte Simm, Parks Community Manager, E & R Winner - Employee of the Year, 2011

2.3.3 The Wimbledon Park Watersports Centre has recently renewed its licence under the Outdoor Adventure and Licensing Act, as well as being accredited for

- Royal Yachting Association
- Adventure Mark
- Council for Learning Outside the Classroom
- Currently seeking recognition by the Skills Funding Agency for direct funding for local NEETS
- Currently in process of gaining Ofsted recognition

2.3.4 Five of Merton’s Parks & Greenspaces continue to gain Green Flag accreditation for their high standards:

- Colliers Wood Recreation Ground
- Dundonald
- John Innes
- Sir Joseph Hood
- South Park Gardens

2.3.5 Merton’s Culture & Sport Framework has been of interest to other public and voluntary sector bodies, such that Merton was invited to present it at the Houses of Parliament as part of a synopsis of presentations on strategic plans and thinking on Cultural services, in addition we have presented it a number of other regional conferences.

2.3.6 External funding and inward investment is an ongoing target for the Leisure & Culture Development Team. In recent years the team has managed to successfully bid for external funding towards the sports and leisure facilities and services for Merton as well as advise other Merton partners on their funding bids. Those that benefit sport and leisure and meet the Sustainable Communities vision for a more attractive physical environment include:

Table 7 – Leisure & Culture Development – External Funding

FUNDING LOG			
YEAR	SOURCE	AMOUNT	PROJECT
2011	Mayors Legacy Fund – Play Sport	£47,800	BMX track, Mitcham

2011	St Marks	£ 50,000	BMX track, Mitcham
2011	Section 106	£ 55,000	BMX track, Mitcham
2011	GLA	£ 700,000	Olympic funding
2011	GLA	£ 50,000	Look and feel funding, Olympics
2012	London Marathon Charitable Trust	£ 60,000	BMX track, Mitcham
2012	Private contribution	£ 200	Queens Diamond Jubilee, Mitcham
2012	Sport England	£ 95,000	Canons Multi-Use Games Area, Mitcham
2012	London Marathon Charitable Trust	£ 80,000	Canons Multi-Use Games Area, Mitcham
2012	S106	£ 40,000	Canons Multi-Use Games Area, Mitcham
2012	Balfour Beatty	£ 2,000	London Youth Games grant
2013	Public Health	£ 25,000	Canons Multi-Use Games Area, Mitcham
2013	Mayors Participation Fund	£ 10,000	BMX track, Mitcham
2014	Sport England	£ 75,000	St Marks tennis courts, Mitcham
2014	London Marathon Charitable Trust	£ 35,000	St Marks tennis courts, Mitcham
2014	S106	£ 52,000	St Marks tennis courts, Mitcham
2014 - 17	Sport England	£ 120,000	Community Sport Activation fund – Sports Blast – Mitcham, Morden & Colliers Wood
2014 - 16	Circle Housing	£ 90,000	Contribution to Sports Blast
Total external funding since 2011		£1,587,000	

2.3.7 A legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games was two new beach volleyball courts for Wimbledon Park using sand and equipment from the Olympic beach volleyball competition venues. This is frequently used by local residents and the home for Wimbledon Volleyball Club, as well as being developed for Beach Tennis in conjunction with the LTA.

2.3.8 We have also installed a regional standard floodlit BMX track in partnership with, and on land belonging to, St. Mark's Academy in Mitcham. The full detail of the ongoing sporting legacy that this is generating is contained later within this report. Following this development we sought out further external funding to improve other sports facilities on the St. Mark's Academy site developing the partnership approach we have with them and seeking to develop more

community use opportunities in that location. This is aligned to, and ahead of, the latest Sport England strategic direction of trying to open up more schools for community sports and leisure.

- 2.3.9 A further legacy from the London 2012 Inspired Facilities fund from Sport England as well as public health and London Marathon Trust funding, has assisted with the development of two floodlit multi-use games areas (MUGAs) at the rear of Canons Leisure Centre in Mitcham. These now form part of the much improved facility mix at the leisure centre and is managed by our contractor Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) as part of the recently negotiated contract change orders.
- 2.3.10 More medium to long term development of sports and leisure facilities are planned within the borough, whether that be improvements to the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) facilities in both Wimbledon and Raynes Park, the redevelopment of the Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium with the potential to return AFC Wimbledon to the borough or other projects directly developed and delivered local sports clubs and other leisure providers in the borough. All of which have the potential to increase the sports and leisure opportunities and benefits for local people.
- 2.3.11 Funding has been allocated to build a new family friendly leisure facility in Morden Park to replace the ageing Morden Park Pools.
- 2.3.12 Finally, Merton is embarking on a master planning exercise in relation to Wimbledon Park. In recent years there have been increasing demands on this the borough's most popular park, so much so that not all demands, needs and wishes can be accommodated in the way the council and local people might wish for. The project scope is in development and consultants will be appointed later this year with the whole master planning project expected to be complete in the autumn of 2016.

2.4 Sustainable Communities – Sports & Leisure – Operational Detail

2.4.1 Merton's Leisure Centres

- 2.4.1.1 Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) was awarded a 15 year contract to manage the three Merton owned leisure centres in December 2010. Since the award of the contract GLL have invested over £1 million in capital funding improving the leisure centres whilst Merton has met its contractual obligations with capital improvements costing circa £2 million. Recently the contract was varied to secure £120,000 of savings for the Council. This was possible through changes to the way in which utilities are provided and procured, pensions changes through auto-enrolment legislation and the addition of two flood-lit multi-use games areas.
- 2.4.1.2 GLL continue to invest in the facilities and are already in the processes of finalising the plans for improvements to the wet-side changing rooms at the Canons Leisure Centre in 2015, whilst Merton are in the process of installing Combined Heat and Power Systems into the plant rooms at Wimbledon and Canons Leisure Centres, as well as rolling out the final phase of LED lighting across these two centres. More recently Merton has replaced air handling units whilst GLL and the Council entered into a partnership agreement to refurbish the main pool, teaching pool and wet side areas at Wimbledon Leisure Centre. A new look and feel for GLL was brought into Wimbledon Leisure Centre and following the positive feedback and huge success from the point of Merton's users is now being rolled out across the GLL partnership. GLL have also

invested £360k over the past year improving the gym areas and upgrading the equipment at both Canons and Wimbledon.

2.4.1.3 GLL and Merton are rightly proud of their partnership working approach to this contract, whereby all parties seek to improve and develop the offers available, some of which include:

- Subsidised memberships for young people referred via the Looked After Children Team. Prizes for Foster Carers fortnight and other celebratory, charity and local authority key activities
- Discounted prices for staff memberships when they show their staff badge
- The development of the MUGA at Canons and a shared approach to capital improvements thus minimising the disruption to customers and the local area
- Development of a local weight-lifting club who have then represented Merton in the London Youth Games and gone on to compete in NGB competitions, etc. With a membership of 25 strong they have recently joined with Rutlish School for increased development of this sport.

2.4.1.4 GLL is required to undergo an external assessment every year with alternate years requiring different assessments. The two assessments are known as Quest – an independently operated industry Quality Assurance Scheme and the National Benchmarking Service (NBS) audit, which compares and scores how well or otherwise a facility, is performing when set against other similar facilities in the country (NB The latest NBS audit findings are still to be received). All three centres have scored highly in their recent assessments:

Table 8 – Leisure Centres - External Assessments

Centre	Category	Year	Result
Canons LC	Quest (Quality Standard)	2013	Good
Wimbledon	National Beauty Awards – Day Spa of the Year	2015	Finalist
Wimbledon LC	UKactive Flame Awards – Best Leisure Centre	2015	Stage 2
Wimbledon LC	Quest (Quality Standard)	2015	Excellent
Wimbledon LC	UKactive Flame Awards – Best Leisure Centre	2014	Stage 2
Wimbledon LC	Quest (Quality Standard)	2013	Excellent
Morden PP	Quest (Quality Standard)	2014	Good

2.4.1.5 GLL have been finalists in the industry Flame Awards for the last two years for the excellent operation and vastly improved facilities at Wimbledon Leisure Centre. This included the redevelopment of the old slipper bath area which had not been used since the 1980s, to transform it into a state of the art Spa and Wellness Centre achieving a National Beauty Awards Final in 2015.

2.4.1.6 GLL reports their performance in real time via a shared operational management portal and meet with the client team formally once a quarter, producing a quarterly report of their performance against the contract. As well

as this the Council has set GLL some challenging targets for the council's dashboard - to increase the number of 14-25 year olds using the facilities and more recently to increase the total number of users through the three centres. GLL ended the year on target with 100,891 users in the 14-25 year old age group against a target of 100,000 for the year. In 2015/16, GLL are also reporting against the total number of users across the facilities with a target for the year of 832,000. To date (May 15) attendance figures have grown 4% since the same time in the 2014 contract year based on their system's data.

2.4.2 Wimbledon Park – Watersports Centre

2.4.2.1 Wimbledon Park Watersports Centre has grasped the opportunity to become a more commercial centre by developing Merton Outdoor Education Centre to allow more specific professional development of adults in both the leisure industry and in Teacher training and CPD. They now offer outdoor education training to schools both at Wimbledon Park and within their own schools, as well as training teachers to gain specific outdoor education skills to enhance their curriculum delivery abilities.

2.4.2.2 Further to this the staffs have developed, in conjunction with the department for Children, Schools and Families, a new service to develop learners who would not necessarily achieve within academic settings and/or are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. The Wimbledon Park Technical Marine College has attracted interest from education settings as it offers learning through alternative education. The centre has taken on its first apprentice who is working towards his instructor qualification. This will allow him to become employed within the industry. In a recent progression meeting he quoted:

“... this has been a strange but exciting move from main stream college. I could not stand being in a class room all day. Being outside learning how to teach people is great I wish I found the opportunity sooner.”

2.4.2.3 The centre is now able to offer the Btec Sailing and Watersports level 2 and 3 qualifications, which will become the Marine Studies qualification in September 2016. This new direction is supported by the Ministry of Shipping as a stepping stone to careers in the whole Maritime industry. Staff at the centre have been asked to assist in developing the new syllabus, which highlights the standards and creativity of the work being developed by the Merton staff. The Marine College is being operated out of what was previously a Women's only Gym. The outdated equipment and the development of new gyms in the area drove down members to unsustainable levels. This allowed the centre to close one facility down and to re-generate the room into a sustainable facility with media screens and meeting facilities.

2.4.2.4 The Watersports and Outdoor Centre at Wimbledon Park also sub-contract out its instructors to other Boroughs, allowing them to offer outdoor education to their residents. This activity has increased by 27% year on year over the 3 years we have been contracted and generates additional income for the centre.

2.4.2.5 In line with the Leisure & Culture Development Team's transformation plans (TOM) the centre has identified gaps in the adult professional market for providing professional qualifications to those who want to be a Thames Boatman, Yacht Skippers, Crew and Cruise Liner staff, etc., all who require specific qualifications to be able to work professionally at sea. The centre is believed to be just one of 2 establishments in London able to offer this service. This addition to our product range has been embraced under the Wimbledon

Park Marine Technical College remit and evidences the continuous improvement and diversification into more commercial activities as identified and expanded upon within the Team's TOM.

2.4.2.6 The introduction of Multi Media and Micro Marketing has increased online courses we offer. The centre predicts the growth in this area to continue. This year to date (End May 2015) the centre has already recorded increased numbers of completed courses from 946 in 2014 to 1110 over the same period in 2015.

2.4.2.7 The increase in demand has also provided pressure on the training of instructors to allow the expansion of the business. To assist in this development, the centre has developed a volunteering scheme whereby young people volunteer for us during their school holidays. Once they have completed 4 weeks on the job volunteering they are offered an assistant instructor course. On successful completion of the course we are then in a position to offer them work, which in turn allows us to offer more courses to the public, schools and contractors.

2.4.3 Sports Blast

2.4.3.1 This Sports Blast programme takes place across 9 of Merton's most disadvantaged wards in the east of the borough. The project is delivered through two strands: The Urban Hub, delivering an "all year round" inclusive physical activities and wellbeing programme in 8 housing estates, while the Family Hub, located in the Figges Marsh, Longthornton wards area, delivers a variety of family orientated sports and physical activities.

2.4.3.2 The project has been put together by our key partners – Tooting & Mitcham United, LTA, Fulham Football Foundation, St Marks Academy, Merton Saints BMX Club, England Netball, YMCA, Circle Housing, MOAT and London Sport and by using Merton's Culture & Sport Framework we have successfully secured £120,000 of external funding from Sport England to increase participation in sport and active recreation, making more inactives – active, particularly in the 14-25 year old age range.

2.4.3.3 The project has just completed its first year of a 3 year programme, seeking to achieve local outcomes in:

- Improving learning, skills and employability
- Improving Wellbeing
- Improving cultural facilities
- Improving community engagement
- Increasing Physical Activity.

2.4.3.4 As part of the project, local participants will be recruited and given full support and training to obtain coaching qualifications, so they can eventually lead the project and make it sustainable.

2.4.3.5 Funding over the life of the project is: £236,640.00 in cash, with a further £44,700 received in-kind, making a total of £281,340 for the three years.

2.4.3.6 The project has met its year one target of 1165 new users.

2.4.3.7 Sports Blast is going some way towards increasing the participation and wellbeing targets with those in ethnic minority groups, who according to the Active People survey are decreasing in their engagement in sport and physical activity in Merton.

2.4.4 Merton Active Plus

2.4.4.1 Merton Active Plus is the product whereby leisure development creates, coordinates and offers holiday courses for children and young people, primarily aged 8-16 years. In doing this they are seeking to encourage engagement in healthy living and lifestyle changes through increased involvement and participation in sports, arts, cultural and physical activities and events.

2.4.4.2 The Development Officer works with partners to provide activities and events that not only provide coaching and learning experiences, but also increase participation and let our young people have fun. The programmes make use of local facilities and they seek out both innovative and traditional programmes available in the borough and beyond for our youngsters. New partners for 2015 include Be Creative and Dundonald Development Football

2.4.4.3 All courses, activities and events are done through the online booking and payment system which is in line with the Leisure & Culture Development Team's TOM plans seeking to modernise service provision, improving ease of access and use for our customers, whilst generating efficiencies within our day to day operations.

2.4.4.4 This service falls into the commercial part of the team's business as detailed in the team's TOM and service plan and as such it has increasing income targets year on year and a direction of travel that will encourage participants from outside the borough to use and benefit from our services thus adding to our income levels.

2.4.4.5 In support of this commercialisation agenda officers are increasingly using social media and online tools such as Mailchimp, websites, Facebook, twitter, etc. to meet customer needs as well as constantly researching and marketing with our customers and residents to provide what they want.

2.4.4.6 This programme works across the themes of Merton's Culture & Sport Framework particularly contributing to the Children & Young People's Plan in areas such as:

- Increase the proportion of people achieving a healthy weight and participating at the recommended levels of physical fitness.
- Promote positive contribution of children and young people
- Increase the cultural offer for young people
- Develop (where appropriate) user friendly feedback systems for customers to use as part of online bookings

2.4.4.7 Table 9 – Income from Merton Active Plus

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16*	2016/17*	% Increase Target 2016/17 on 2013/14 actual
£ 42,229	£ 47,854	£ 55,000	£ 60,000	42%

* Targets for these years.

In years where the income target was not quite achieved the expenditure was contained to ensure that the project budget returned a correct net position.

2.4.5 Leisure Services - Online Booking & Payment System

2.4.5.1 The Leisure & Culture Development Team have been rolling out an online booking and payment system as part of the transformation plans (TOM) for both

their own services and some provided for within the Greenspaces Team. Initially the Merton Active Plus and Sports Pitch Bookings were rolled out and these were followed by further developments to do online event ticketing and watersports activities and events. This system will be replaced as part of the council wide Customer Contact Programme.

2.4.5.2 The system has been a big success, when a payment is made the income is collected directly through the council's payment system, Civica, and thus the income is immediately accounted for correctly in the general ledger. This has improved our income collection, reduced bad debts and made back offices efficiencies freeing up staff time to carry out other duties generating more business and developing more products.

2.4.5.3 Examples of the products added to the online booking and payment system include advance tickets for Fireworks and Tennis Car Parking as well as the staff tennis ticket draw.

- Fireworks Displays – The Leisure & Culture Development Team delivered pre-purchasing of tickets and payments online which then ensured that those with advance tickets could get faster direct access into the event, easing crowd control and improving public health and safety. They also significantly improved the cash handling processes on the sites as well as reducing the need to collect the cash that had already been taken online. It is noted that all expectations of advance sales on this event were exceeded for this first year of operation.

Table 10 – Firework Ticket Sales

	Online Pre Paid	Manual	Total
Net Sales	£42,712.50	£114,301.67	£157,014.17
Percentage	27% *	73%	100%

* 2,562 transactions

- Wimbledon Tennis Championship – Car Park 10 – Following the success of the Fireworks Tickets sold on line the system has been set up to offer advance booking and pre-purchasing of car parking spaces in Wimbledon Park – Car Park 10 for the Wimbledon Tennis Championships. Bookings have come from as far away as Australia, evidencing how we are able to transform our services not only for our local people but for tennis fans from around the world.

2.4.6 BMX Track

2.4.6.1 Merton BMX Track, Mitcham, opened in 2013 following successful funding bids from London Marathon Trust, Mayors Legacy Fund, St Marks Academy and LB Merton Section106 Funding.

Table 11 – BMX Track - Project Funders

London Marathon Charitable trust	£ 60,000	74.2%
PlaySport London – Mayors Legacy Fund	£ 47,800	
St Mark's Academy School	£ 50,000	
London Borough of Merton	£ 55,000	25.8%
Total	£ 212,800	

2.4.6.2 The track is Regional standard which allows high profile BMX events to be held, all top UK riders must compete and win in a regional event in order to take part in the National Event and then the World series.

2.4.6.3 Since opening the track 20 primary schools and 3 secondary schools have benefited from the use of the track. St Marks, Lonesome and Harris Morden all have after school clubs running from the track each week. Melrose and the Smart Centre are also at the track weekly with their pupils. Eagle House School Mitcham are also attending weekly in the spring term as an alternative class for selected pupils.

2.4.6.4 Out of borough schools have booked coaching at the track. Two Cycle clubs have a regular event at the track Sutton CC and Big Foot Cycle club, both road cycle clubs offer the BMX as an alternative to their riders annually.

2.4.6.5 The track is open most days for community use and each School break activities are run for LB Merton Active Plus holiday programme. We have seen over 500 riders join in an activity since the track opened during the school holidays. The activities are low cost at just £2.50 or £5 for two hours. Other community sessions include the Sports Blast programme where we have exceeded our target of 50 new 14-25 year olds visiting the track from July 2014 to date; the sessions are grant funded and thus free to any eligible user.

2.4.6.6 Social media is used for the BMX Track population and since starting we have seen 3809 “likes” to our Facebook page; this is a high number in a very short time.

2.4.6.7 Quotes from users

“Hi, yes we did come along and both our kids had an awesome time thank you so much!! We will be back very soon.”

“The boys had a ball! I've had lots of nice messages to say how much they enjoyed it.”

2.4.6.8 A new BMX club was formed in 2013, Merton Saints BMX Club the committee of 7 (all volunteers) were quickly recruited and club sessions started each Saturday morning with numbers increasing rapidly they now boast around 100 members including children and Adults. The club has 6 Voluntary Club Coaches and 2 youth coaches. The club has its own identity and races in competition on a regular basis also hosting events at the Merton Track.

- BMX Regional race 2013-15
- London Youth Games BMX Event 2014
- London Series Track event 2014/15

2.4.6.9 Merton enter the London Youth Games event annually with the support of Merton Saints BMX Club this year's competition has just completed and Merton were in the top ten which is a great result for a fledgling club.

2.4.6.10 The project is now moving into its final development stage with a transfer of operation to the Merton Saints BMX Club. A phased hand over has commenced.

2.4.7 St. Mark's Academy

2.4.7.1 The Leisure & Culture Development Team have been working with St. Mark's Academy for a number of years, developing and improving the sports and

leisure facilities as well as introducing community activities and programmes for the local community and schools benefit. Developments have included the installation of the floodlit BMX track, the development of the Merton Saints BMX Club, the redevelopment and upgrading of the tennis courts for netball and tennis with LED floodlighting for all year round use and the introduction of the Sports Blast programme.

2.4.7.2 Sports Blast partners now provide fitness, tennis, BMX and netball sessions

2.4.7.3 Quotes from users:

“We had a great night. It was kicking”

“Absolutely wonderful, motivational, active, positive, fun with pain and gain... I thank you for working my butt so hard.”

2.4.8 Netball & Tennis Development Initiatives

2.4.8.1 Partnership working with England Netball since late 2014 has resulted in 5 new weekly Netball sessions running in Merton for women over 16 years of age. This will improve the results for female participation in 1x30 minutes of exercise per week. This is an area where Merton performance has fallen by 6.3% to 30.5%, slightly below the London average.

2.4.8.2 Over one hundred women have attended to date and the first team has now entered into a league. A recent Guardian article quoted:

http://www.wimbledonguardian.co.uk/yoursay/news/12923947.Over_100_women_get_Back_to_netball_in_Wimbledon/

2.4.8.3 Some of the reactions from these sessions include:

“Back to Netball has made a big impact on my life, from not playing for 20 years, I now play twice a week and have a wonderful new set of friends.”

“It is an excellent and affordable way of keeping fit and meeting new people. I really enjoyed it and recommend it to lots of my friends.”

2.4.8.4 Links with AELTC continue as does the work of their Wimbledon Junior Tennis Initiative. WJTI tennis coaches visit one school a week and deliver a day of Tennis for pupils and working with the teachers to help them to continue to deliver tennis in their schools. The WJTI also offers some talented pupils free coaching sessions in Wimbledon.

2.4.8.5 The Tennis Blast, two days of community tennis will take place again for 2015 at Wimbledon Park on 3rd & 4th July. Ten schools including Perseid will receive tennis coaching on the Friday, whilst the Saturday will be an open tennis fun day for all the community with an expectation of circa 300 young people attending. This event is delivered in partnership with the AELTC and the LTA.

2.4.8.6 In 2014, the Tennis Blast also provided the ideal event for Merton to award Freedom of the Borough to former Wimbledon Tennis Championships Singles Winners. Virginia Wade (Winner, 1977), Ann Haydon-Jones (Winner, 1969) and Angela Mortimer (nee Barrett) (Winner, 1961) all received their awards from the Mayor of Merton, Councillor Agatha Akyigyina accompanied by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis and Chief Executive, Ged Curran. Prior to this event, the Mayor and Leader met Andy Murray (Winner 2012) at the All England Club to also bestow on him the Freedom of the Borough. The Leisure & Culture Development Team ensured that all the planning, approvals and delivery of this event was carried out in an exemplary manner.

2.4.8.7 Links with the LTA has resulted in a Social tennis session starting at Wimbledon Park – Tennis Tuesdays. Just three weeks into the scheme and 8-10 people have taken part in an informal tennis session on a weekly basis. These are male and female residents who had previously not been part of a group, community or club. The LTA are also a partner in the Sports Blast programme delivering family tennis on the newly refurbished courts at St. Mark's Academy.

2.4.9 Community Events & Activities

2.4.9.1 Every year Merton enters teams in the London Youth Games. The following year's competition commences almost as soon as the last one finishes, with competitions spread throughout the year, but with the bulk in the summer months and the grand finals in July each year. In 2014 Merton entered 33 sports with over 400 young people. The highest placing was 5th place which was achieved by teams for BMX, angling and female football. Our overall placing was 28th with 777 points.

2.4.9.2 All of our team managers and coaches are volunteers. We have a small budget of £11,000, which includes the £7,400 entry fee. The remainder covers Merton team 'T' shirts, travel and some sports specific sundry items that are required.

2.4.9.3 Merton also sends a representative team to take part in the annual London Mini Marathon. The event is open to 11-18 year olds, who live or attend an educational establishment within the borough. The children are split into age groups as well as boys and girls to provide 6 smaller teams of 8 each team for the category races. We recruit an additional dozen volunteers to help on the day and the whole group of some 60-70 people travel up to the start by tube.

2.4.9.4 Participation in these events contributes to the council's strategic outcomes of:

- Promote the positive contribution of children and young people
- Meet the wider needs of children and young people
- Improved skill and attainment

2.4.9.5 Community Sport & Physical Activity Network (CSPAN) – Merton operates a local CSPAN at two levels. For those local people employed locally in the delivery of community sport for the people of Merton we host a regular termly forum to exchange knowledge, ideas and plans with regard to sport and physical activity in the borough. It is through this group that the Sports Blast programme was developed and the successful bid written. It is some of these partners that are also delivery partners for the Sports Blast programme.

2.4.9.6 Representatives on this partnership include Merton School Sports Partnership, YMCA, GLL, Tooting & Mitcham United, Fulham FC, AFC Wimbledon, The Wimbledon Club, Wimbledon Squash & Badminton Club, Surrey County Cricket, LTA, England Netball, Public Health, London Sport, etc.

2.4.9.7 The other level is where the engagement with community sports clubs, volunteers and other organisations and individuals with an interest in sport and physical activity takes place. This is done through two public meetings a year at which there is always an update on activities in the borough as well as funding updates and advice on accessing external funding. There is also a chance for participants to share information and network.

2.4.9.8 One of the funding pots that our local sports providers regularly bid to is the small grants Sportivate Fund operated by London Sport and is aimed at increasing participation by 14-25 year olds. The Leisure & Culture Development

Team support groups to access this funding and the main CSPAN reviews all applications and prioritises them to best meet local needs.

Table 12 – Sportivate Funding

	Funding Received	Completed Participants
2012 -13	£ 22,980.00	1,199
2013 - 14	£ 22,719.37	940
2014 -15	£ 26,753.00	935

2.4.9.9 There are many partners with whom we work, both within the council and across the borough. Without these people and organisations the breadth and depth of the sports, leisure and physical activity benefits to our residents and schoolchildren would not be possible. The Leisure & Culture Development Team co-ordinate, guide and work in partnership to facilitate, empower and deliver with these services.

2.4.10 External Funding / Facility Developments

2.4.10.1 Recent external success has seen awards for development of a Floodlit Multi-Use Games Area at Canons Leisure Centre. Funding from London Marathon Charitable Trust - £80,000; Sport England - £95,000; Public Health - £25,000 and S106 - £40,000. This funding has enabled us to build on a previously derelict tennis court area and construct a high quality facility. The £25k Public Health investment has secured some free court use for local primary schools for 3 years

2.4.10.2 In addition in 2014, we were successful in bids to Sport England - £75,000; to London Marathon Charitable Trust - £35,000 and to S106 - £52,000 for refurbishment of tennis courts and installation of LED floodlights at St Marks Academy. This funding has enabled us to refurbish the courts to LTA standards and ensure courts are open to the public outside of school hours. The LED lights are amongst the first in the country to be installed on tennis courts.

2.4.10.3 The Heritage Lottery Funded project at South Park Gardens was completed in February 2015 and although it was not a specific Leisure and Sport initiative, it has an indirect benefit to the Leisure and Culture Development work stream in that the improved building and facility has enabled new and existing groups to carry out a diverse range of leisure and fitness activities.

2.4.10.4 There are further plans to develop The Canons as part of a major £4 million Heritage Lottery Fund bid which is currently being developed through Stage 2 of the bid process. The impact of this on leisure and sport in the area will be through consultation with local partners such as GLL, who manage the leisure centre in the bid area.

2.4.10.5 All of this work and the continuing drive to refurbish, upgrade and develop new sports and leisure facilities in the borough is aligned to the boroughs strategic vision of 'Bridging the Gap' across the east – west divide as well as meeting the Sustainable Communities Thematic Vision with improved physical environments and access to leisure opportunities. It also meets the service outcome in the Cultural & Sport Framework whereby development of cultural activities in the east of the borough leads to a service outcome of opportunities more accessible to all, a strategic outcome of sustainable growth and benefits of improved image and identity.

2.4.11 Morden Leisure Centre

2.4.11.1 The work to replace Morden Park Pools with a new Family Friendly Morden Leisure Centre in Morden Park is well underway. Various land and site surveys have been undertaken and key consultants have been appointed. Cabinet have agreed the preferred location and the core components for the scope of the facility.

2.4.11.2 This is a very exciting project which will see a new leisure centre built and open by early 2018. Alongside this work, we are working with the local Morden Park Playing Field Community Trust (MPPFCT) to ensure that plans they have for sports & leisure developments within Morden Park can be jointly planned and developed for mutual advantage.

2.4.11.3 The next steps include appointment of the technical team, production of the concept designs for consultation and approvals, tendering for the main contractor and progress to a planning application by the year end.

2.4.11.4 Regular updates on the progress of this can be found at:
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/leisureformorden>

2.4.12 Wimbledon Park Masterplan

2.4.12.1 The early development of the project scope is underway and discussions have already been held with The Wimbledon Club regarding their proposals for the park. We will shortly be going out to tender to procure a specialist master planning company to assist us with this work and will then undertake further discussions with key stakeholders as the process gets underway. Surveys and site investigations will follow and early in the New Year some emerging proposals will be available for wider discussion and public consultation.

2.5 Reports of Overview and Scrutiny Commission/Panels

2.5.1 The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, as part of its 2014/15 work programme, has scrutinised the project plan for the development of the new Morden Leisure Centre site. The Panel have continued to receive updates on the delivery of the project and will continue to oversee the delivery of this development as part of its 2015/16 work programme.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1 Not applicable – this report is for information only.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1 Consultation and feedback on our service provision is undertaken at every possible opportunity and where it adds value to the service provision. On major pieces of work that we deliver such as the Morden Leisure Centre and Wimbledon Park Masterplan there will be ongoing discussions, consultation and partnership working. These dates and details will be published as they become available and updates will be provided at Community Forums when that is also appropriate.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1 Performance information is published on the dashboard each month and is available to view via the Intranet and Internet.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial, resource or property implications arising from this information report. All related services are delivered within existing resources or are only delivered once external funding is secured.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal or statutory implications arising from this information report any legal or statutory implications which are project related are dealt with under those specific project management and reporting processes.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no specific human rights implications arising from this information report; however leisure and sport services and opportunities available through sport & leisure do contribute to addressing inequalities and community cohesion issues.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this information report however leisure and sport services and opportunities available through sport and leisure do contribute to addressing crime and disorder issues.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are currently no risk management or health and safety implications arising from this information report, however as the major projects develop any risk management and health and safety implications will be picked up through those project management and council processes

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

Appendix I: Table of Sustainable Communities with an emphasis on Sports & Leisure Performance Indicators – performance for year to end March 2014 and April, May 2015

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13 REFERENCES

1. Community Plan, 2009 - 19

14 BACKGROUND PAPERS

2015-19 Council Business Plan

**Leisure and Culture Development Performance Indicators – Performance for 2014-15
and 2015 -16 to end May 2015**

PI Code & Description	May-15					YTD Result	Annual YTD Target	YTD Status
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend			
SP 015 Income generated - Merton Active Plus activity	£3,724	£4,000				£13,422	£12,000	
SP 251 Income from Watersports Centre	£21,085	£20,260				£31,715	£30,890	
SP 314 External funding and internal investment £	Quarterly measure						£100,000	
SP 325 % of residents rating Leisure & Sports facilities Good to Excellent (annual)	Annual measure						51.50%	
SP 349 14 to 25 year old fitness centre participation at leisure centres	9,427	8,310				18,842	16,740	
SP 405 Total number of users of Merton's leisure centres	64,084	64,690				133,607	129,920	
SP 406 Total number of users of Polka Theatre	Quarterly measure							

