Community Plan 2009-19
Working together to build sustainable communities...

Merton Partnership member organisations:
Welcome to Merton’s refreshed Community Plan, which is also the borough’s Sustainable Community Strategy. Merton’s last Community Plan was launched in 2006, and this plan refreshes the previous Plan to keep it up-to-date and relevant.

The Plan sets out what the Merton Partnership wants to achieve for the local area, based on our knowledge of local issues and the main priorities and concerns identified by local residents. The Merton Partnership brings together all the organisations that provide services or are involved in public life in the borough, working together to achieve our vision of Merton as ‘a great place to live and call home, where citizens take responsibility for their own lives, their neighbours and the environment’.

The Plan is also the borough’s ‘Sustainable’ Community Strategy. The concept of ‘sustainability’ is usually associated with the idea of environmental sustainability and issues such as climate change. However, in this context it has a much wider meaning, to include building places and communities that meet and support residents’ needs and provide a good quality of life, while not compromising the quality of life for future generations.

As a result, this Plan covers a wide range of issues, organised by five themes, the same themes that the Merton Partnership uses:

- Sustainable Communities and Transport
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Healthier Communities
- Older People
- Children and Young People.

The Plan sets out our aspirations for the local area, and is based on a wide range of evidence, data and consultation that has identified the key concerns for residents, and the big issues that the Partnership needs to focus upon to ensure it improves the quality of life for everyone who lives in Merton. The council itself has undertaken a significant consultation exercise with local people, known as the Mission for Merton. The results of this have contributed to the vision and priorities contained within this Plan. The Plan also sets out the key actions the Partnership will be taking to ensure we achieve our vision and priorities.

I hope you enjoy reading Merton’s Community Plan. If you have any comments you would like to make then please let us know by emailing policyandpartnerships@merton.gov.uk. We will be refreshing the Plan again in another three years, and I fully expect that at that point, as now, we can look backwards at the real difference that putting these plans into action has made for local people and in ensuring that Merton is a great place to live and call home.

Councillor David Williams
Chair of the Merton Partnership
and Leader of Merton Council
Chapter 1
What is a Community Plan (CP)?

Introduction
This Plan has been developed by the Merton Partnership, and sets the overall direction and vision for the borough until 2019. It tells the story of Merton, and what we, as a Partnership, want to achieve for the local area and its residents, based on what they have told us is most important to them. It sets out our approach to the main issues that Merton is facing.

The Merton Community Plan covers the period 2009-2019. It is the overall plan for the local area, and sits above each partner’s own business plan.

Sustainability and the CP
The government’s guidance on developing a Sustainable Community Strategy says that it should be ‘a strategy that should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom’. The goal of sustainable development is defined as ‘to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life for future generations’.
For a local priority or policy to be sustainable, it should respect five principles:

- living within environmental limits
- a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting good governance
- using sound science responsibly.

In addition, the Merton Partnership has developed its own sustainability framework, within which the CP was developed. Please see Figure 1 for details.

Figure 1: Merton’s sustainability framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability objectives</th>
<th>Sub-objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To make a safer and stronger Merton</td>
<td>Will it make the borough a safer place, both in terms of actual crime and the fear of crime?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will it work to ensure cohesion between communities and generations?</td>
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<td>To make a more sustainable Merton</td>
<td>Will it protect and improve the local environment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will it protect and improve parks and green spaces?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will it promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production?</td>
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<tr>
<td>To make a more sustainable Merton (continued)</td>
<td>Will it help to tackle and address the impact of climate change?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will it provide access to better local amenities?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will it provide access to better transport?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will it increase housing supply and affordability?</td>
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<td>To make a more enterprising Merton</td>
<td>Will it stimulate enterprise in the borough?</td>
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<td>Will it reduce red tape to support small businesses?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will it promote high-value employment opportunities?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will it help ensure that services offer good value for money?</td>
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<tr>
<td>To make a healthier Merton</td>
<td>Will it enhance the lives of the vulnerable, younger and older residents?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will it help improve health and reduce health inequalities?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will it increase social opportunity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>To increase opportunities in Merton</td>
<td>Will it improve education and skills, from nursery level to adult provision?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will it help to develop local cultural and leisure activities for all?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will it help to bridge the gap in health inequalities between the eastern and western wards?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will it ensure children and young people are able to fulfil their potential?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
delivery of the community plan

the relationship between the CP and the local area agreement (LAA)
merton’s local area agreement (LAA) was approved by central government in June 2008, and is refreshed annually. The LAA covers three years, from 2008 to 2011, and represents the delivery plan for the community plan. The central theme of merton’s LAA is ‘bridging the gap’, which aims to narrow the inequalities between the east and the west of the borough. The development of the LAA is driven by the vision and priorities set out in the CP.

the relationship between the CP and the local development framework
The community plan must also link closely to the area’s local development framework (LDF). While the CP is the overall plan for promoting and improving the well-being of an area, the LDF is the overall framework for development in the borough showing where building can take place. The LDF and the CP must complement one another.

The Core Strategy is the overarching document in the LDF. In merton, the CP and the Core Strategy of the LDF have developed in parallel to ensure that they ‘join up’, with the vision and priorities closely linked. The preparation of the Core Strategy is still underway, subject to further consultation, before it is adopted. It will set out how elements of the CP will be delivered through the LDF, as it is one of the key tools to deliver the CP through a number of spatial and thematic policies. In addition, both documents are subject to an appraisal, which, for the CP, is based on the framework shown at Figure 1, to ensure the Plan is fully sustainable.
Background
Merton’s Community Plan was launched in 2006, covering the period until 2015. The Merton Partnership’s Executive Board agreed that the Plan should be reviewed every three years to ensure that it adapts to changing priorities and needs as well as to reflect progress already made.

It was agreed that a ‘refreshed’ Community Plan should come into effect from June 2009. In 2007 the Sustainable Communities Act became law, which placed a statutory duty upon all local areas to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy. This Plan has therefore been developed by refreshing the current Community Plan, and updating it to cover the period 2009-2019, and it fulfils the government’s requirements for Sustainable Community Strategies. The links with the Local Development Framework have also been strengthened. To ensure continuity, the Plan will continue to be known as the Community Plan.

The process
The work has been led by the Merton Partnership, with each of the thematic partnerships developing its relevant chapter. Each thematic partnership has reviewed evidence and recent consultation results, identified any gaps in this evidence, and
carried out any further consultation necessary to ensure the gaps are filled. The thematic partnerships have also considered any new priorities identified by the LAA, and any issues highlighted by the LDF.

This has led to the development of the Plan, and the actions that need to take place to deliver it. Unlike the previous Community Plan, the CP does not contain targets, as these are now included in the LAA, which acts as the delivery mechanism for the CP.

Details of how the Merton Partnership will monitor performance against both the LAA and the CP are shown in chapter 11.

The future
In three years the Plan will be refreshed again; this will be a more extensive review of the Plan and its vision and priorities.
Chapter 3
The Merton Partnership

The Merton Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership) was set up in January 2002. It co-ordinates the delivery of services and other activities in the borough to improve the quality of life and physical environment experienced by Merton residents and visitors to the borough. It brings together the bodies that have the most spending power in the borough and others such as voluntary sector organisations.

The Merton Partnership consists of a number of groups:

The Merton Partnership – this is the full partnership body that provides the governance – the overall leadership and representation to ensure that the Partnership delivers the community’s priorities. It is chaired by the Leader of the Council, the person with the clearest democratic authority in the borough. It receives reports and briefings on the strategic issues for the borough and co-ordinates the work of the Partnership.

The Executive Board – this is the decision-making body for the Partnership. It is chaired by the Chief Executive of the Council. The Executive Board meets every two months and brings together the organisations with the most significant budgets in the borough. It ensures that the work of the Partnership is given the leadership and capacity it needs to do its job. The Executive is committed to sharing information and resources and
implementing cross-cutting projects to achieve the aspirations set out in the CP.

**Thematic Partnerships** – these partnerships co-ordinate the activities of relevant members of the Partnership to ensure that the strategy agreed by the Executive Board is carried out through the delivery groups. These thematic groups mirror the themes of the community plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Key areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Communities and Transport</td>
<td>Housing, Environment, The economy, Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safer and Stronger Communities (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership)</td>
<td>Preventing and reducing crime, the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse, Community cohesion and active citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthier Communities</td>
<td>Improving health outcomes, Reducing health inequalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older People</td>
<td>Independent living, Supported living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Young People (Children’s Trust Board)</td>
<td>Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution, Achieve economic wellbeing, Commissioning and delivery of integrated children’s services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Delivery Groups**
Delivery groups work with local groups within the community to deliver the priorities identified by the Partnership.

**Members of the Partnership**
The following organisations and staff are members of the Merton Partnership:
- The Leader of Merton Council
- The Chief Executive of Merton Council
- MP for Wimbledon
- MP for Mitcham and Morden
- The Borough Commander of Police
- The Borough Fire Commander
- The Chair of Merton Chamber of Commerce
- The Chair of Merton Voluntary Services Council
- Jobcentre Plus
- The Chief Executive of Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust
- The Principal of Merton College
- London South Learning and Skills Council
- The Interfaith Forum
- Merton Unity Network
- Voluntary and community sector representatives are elected to represent the community on each of the Partnership tiers.
Delivery through the Partnership
The Merton Partnership is responsible for delivering the Community Plan. It monitors the Executive Board, making sure that it delivers the targets in the plan.

The Executive Board makes resources available to the thematic partnerships, which then co-ordinate work with delivery groups to deliver the priorities locally.

The thematic partnerships play a key role in making sure discussions take place at the strategic level and driving action through the delivery groups.

Organisations that are members of the Partnership have aligned their Business Plans to achieve jointly agreed goals. In this way the Partnership works toward delivering the outcomes identified as necessary to improve the quality of life of the residents of Merton.

The arrangements for delivery of the plan will be under constant review as new priorities emerge and the plan is refreshed. The LDF will become a key tool to deliver the CP.

Achievements in 2008/09
The Partnership has had a number of achievements in 2008/09, all against the backdrop of a strong working relationship that continues to develop and improve. Particular achievements include:

- The launch of ‘Action in Merton’ weeks, bringing all of our public services together at the same time to resolve a range of issues in a specific area and deliver long-term improvements for our communities. This has been particularly focused on the more deprived areas in the east of the borough.
- The development of plans for the country’s first purpose built intergenerational centre, with Merton successfully bidding for £1.5 million from the London Development Agency.
- Implementation of the first year of the new Local Area Agreement, with the majority of targets on track and being met.
- The Compact (an agreement between local public bodies and the voluntary and community sector) was awarded the new Regional London Award for ‘embedding the compact’.
- The first Third Sector Strategy was launched.
- The ‘Parklife’ project, tackling anti-social behaviour at King George’s Playing Field came third in the 2008 Safer London problem-solving awards, and second in the 2008 national Tilley awards and was nominated for the 2008 international Goldstein Awards.

Future challenges for the Merton Partnership
The Partnership faces a number of major challenges over the coming months and years. The economic downturn and uncertain outlook is likely to lead to major changes within the borough, with higher unemployment, fewer businesses and jobs, and more people struggling to cope with the cost of living. The Partnership will need to provide leadership and solutions to the difficult problems residents will face.
2009 will also see the start of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). This will explore and assess how well local services work together to improve outcomes for local people. The Partnership will need to work hard to ensure it is prepared for this new approach, and able to demonstrate how it is delivering improvements locally.

As part of CAA, the capacity of the Partnership to achieve its priorities and LAA targets will be assessed. The Partnership’s workforce development project will co-ordinate workforce planning and development across partner organisations to help them work more efficiently. This will help to ensure that the Partnership has the capacity to deliver what it has set out to achieve.

The Partnership will also need to continue to grow and develop, building upon the successful relationships that have been forged to date. Partnership working will be an increasingly important theme for all organisations within Merton, particularly as resources are likely to become increasingly scarce. Continuing to build strong relationships, with our residents’ needs at the heart of what we do, will be the key priority, and challenge.

For further information please contact:
Policy and Partnerships: 0208 545 4632
or policyandpartnerships@merton.gov.uk
Structure of the Merton partnership

- **Community Plan**
  - Providing governance and high-level strategic leadership for the work of the Partnership

- **Local Area Agreement**

- **Merton Partnership**
  - Delegated powers from the Partnership to determine delivery arrangements

- **Executive Board**
  - Reports twice a year to the Executive Board

- **Community Engagement representatives**

- **Partner agencies’ Business Plans**

- **Thematic Partnerships**
  - Sustainable Communities
  - Safer and Stronger Communities
  - Healthier Communities
  - Older People
  - Children and Young People

- **Delivery Groups**

- **Improved quality of life for the community**
Chapter 4  
Merton fact file

The London Borough of Merton is an outer London borough, situated to the south-west of the capital. It is suburban in nature, with many residents commuting into and out of the borough to work. 67% of residents work outside the borough, one of the highest figures in London. The borough is, on the whole, well-connected, but transport links are poorer in the east of the borough. It has a population of 199,300 (ONS mid-year 2007 estimate)\(^2\), and the population is younger than the national average with an average age of just under 37.

Like many London boroughs, Merton has experienced high rates of migration and population change in recent years. Between 1992 and 2005 Merton had the largest increase in population of any outer London borough, with the population growing by 13.93%. This growth is predicted to continue, with the population reaching 220,300 by 2025. In particular, the numbers of children and young people and over 85s are predicted to rise.

25% of the population is from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, and this rises to over 50% in Merton schools. This makes Merton the 23rd most diverse local authority nationally. There are significant populations of mixed heritage, Black African, Black

\(^2\)Please note, the Local Development Framework Core Strategy uses a different set of population figures, provided by the GLA, which suggest that Merton’s population is lower, at 192,000 (2006). The GLA figures also predict a slower rate of growth for Merton’s population, with the population increasing to 2011, then declining until 2017, before gradually increasing again to reach 193,700 by 2026.
Caribbean and Asian origins. Recent rises have also been seen in the South Africa and Polish populations. Language data shows Tamil and Urdu speaking populations doubling with more than a 1,000 speakers in each group; the Polish speaking population has increased five fold, to over 400 speakers; Somali and Filipino populations, although small in number, have also doubled.

63.3% of Merton residents are Christian, 5.8% are Muslim, 4.65% are Hindu and 16.55% are not religious. Merton has high levels of community cohesion, with 85% of local residents feeling that their local area is one where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Merton is also consistently one of the four safest London boroughs, and crime has fallen by over 6% in the last 12 months, although it remains a major concern for our residents.

The borough is suburban in character, and has significant amounts of green space, with over 60 parks and open spaces. 18% of the borough area is open space, compared to a 10% London average. Merton is one of the greenest boroughs in London, with extensive parks, green and wild spaces that offer recreation, relief, contrast and structure to the borough’s built environment, and this is one of the major attractions for residents.

A defining characteristic of the borough is the disparity between the more prosperous west and the poorer, more deprived east of the borough. This presents particular challenges for the local area. Bridging the gap between the east and the west of the borough is the main theme of the Merton Partnership’s Local Area Agreement, and of this Community Plan. The following statistics highlight the inequalities between the east and the west:

- Average household income is £31,600 a year, but the difference between the highest and lowest paid wards is £17,521 a year.
- Male life expectancy in Figge’s Marsh ward, in the east of the borough, is only 73 years, compared to a borough average of 79 years.
- The east of the borough has much higher levels of serious illness and early deaths from illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.
- Eight of Merton’s super output areas (SOAs) are in the 25% most deprived nationally, and they are all located in the east of the borough.
- Thirteen of Merton’s SOAs are in the 20% most income deprived nationally, and they are all located in the east of the borough.
- Although unemployment in the borough is below the national average, it rises significantly in some of the eastern wards, and 60% of all benefit claimants live in the east of the borough.
- In some wards in the east of the borough, over a third of the population have no qualifications.
- The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index 2007 shows that of 124 super output areas in the borough 32 are in the least deprived 30%, but 39 are in the 30% most deprived, of which most are in Mitcham; 23 are in the 20% most deprived and five in the 10% most deprived.
Map of Merton
Chapter 5
Vision and priorities

The vision for Merton in 2019

The Merton Partnership’s vision for Merton in 2019 is:

We want Merton to be a great place to live and call home, where citizens take responsibility for their own lives, their neighbours and the environment

Each thematic partnership has also developed a vision:

Sustainable Communities and Transport:

We want the environment, economy and related services to build resilience and stability and enhance the quality of life in Merton

Safer and Stronger Communities:

We want Merton to be a borough where not only has crime fallen, and perceptions of public safety increased, but also where residents are happy to belong to their community, and confident of their role within it

Healthier Communities:

It’s your life – empowering people to manage their own health and well-being
Older People:
The vision for people over 50 can be summed up as positive citizenship. By 2019 the majority of older people will be independent, active in their own lives as well as active contributors to the community.

Children and Young People:
We want all our children and young people to enjoy healthy and rewarding lives in a safe and clean environment and to have fun while they are doing it. We will also encourage them to have higher aspirations and support them in training, employment and education, leading more of them into higher education.

The LDF Core Strategy will build on the CP visions to guide how the Borough and particular places develop by setting out a long-term guiding aspiration, painting the picture of a snapshot as to how the borough will be in 2030.

Priorities and ‘improvement deliverables’
Each thematic partnership has a number of priorities within each of these themes, which are set out in the relevant chapters. To deliver these priorities, each thematic partnership has a set of ‘improvement deliverables’, which are the actions they will take to ensure the vision and priorities are achieved.

The LAA also acts as the medium term delivery plan for the vision and priorities set out in the Community Plan The LAA contains the detailed performance measures and targets that will be used to measure progress towards the vision and priorities.
Chapter 6
Cross-cutting themes

Bridging the gap
‘Bridging the gap’ is the theme of the Partnership’s LAA, and underpins all the priorities of the Community Plan. As chapter four highlights, Merton is a borough of contrasts, with significant differences between the affluent wards in the west (Wimbledon) and the more deprived wards in the east (Mitcham). The differences between the Eastern and Western parts of the Borough are the most marked, however there are also differences evident between Northern and Southern parts, and at a more local level there are pockets of deprivation in the west while places in the east have very positive features.

‘Bridging the gap’ aims to improve the opportunities available to those living in the east, particularly those who live in areas of multiple deprivation, so that they are comparable with those in the west of the borough. It includes tackling issues such as health inequalities, and the major skills gap that exists within the borough and focusing on the causes of inequalities in outcomes connected with child poverty.

The priorities set out in this plan, and the accompanying targets in the LAA, are all directed towards bridging this gap between the east and the west. The Partnership’s vision is that by 2019, the differences between the east and the west of the
borough will either have narrowed or disappeared completely, with opportunities available for all residents regardless of where they live. This theme cuts across all the themes of the CP, and is represented throughout. Merton Council also has a Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, which is focused on the most deprived areas in the east of the borough and, again, contributes towards the overall theme of ‘Bridging the Gap’.

The role of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

Merton has a dynamic and diverse voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) with about 450 independent voluntary organisations and community groups. They provide essential services and many are involved in identifying new needs and managing innovative projects involving self-help, campaigning, lobbying and advocacy.

The VCFS makes a significant contribution to the community by delivering value-for-money services to help achieve a more sustainable Merton, and enabling Merton citizens to get involved and make a contribution as volunteers. VCFS services often relieve pressure on public sector services and reduce overall expenditure. The VCFS has attracted considerable additional money into Merton.

While there are some larger local voluntary organisations, most local groups have fewer than two paid staff or are small and unfunded, relying exclusively on volunteers. Voluntary, community and faith groups of all types involve large numbers of volunteers. A 2005 study found that, in Merton, 40,000 volunteers support organisations and projects in the VCFS and public sector, and 54,000 provide informal support to neighbours or friends. The contribution of volunteering each year is valued at £100 million and, for every £1 invested in organisations or projects that involve volunteers, at least £5 in economic value is added.

There is considerable potential in Merton to expand the contribution of the VCFS by developing partnerships with the public and private sectors. The VCFS brings close links to the community and grassroots organisations and a range of specialist interests and expertise to these partnerships. The VCFS can be supported to extend its contribution through joint planning and commissioning of services, community consultation and supporting Merton citizens to get involved and take responsibility and achieving community cohesion and diversity objectives.

In 2008 Merton Council developed a Third Sector Strategy aimed at developing the relationship between the council and local voluntary, community and faith organisations, bringing a new consistency to commissioning and setting new standards of involvement.

Merton’s Compact with the Voluntary and Community Sector

Merton has a strong Compact that has won awards and commendations. The Compact Board has a strategic governance role to ensure that the Merton Compact is implemented. It has representatives from the voluntary sector and police, council, fire,
health and further education. It is represented on, and reports directly to, the Merton Partnership Executive Board and has made many positive contributions and interventions.

INVOLVE – Merton’s Community Engagement Network
The Community Engagement Network (CEN) was established in 2006 and is a network of community and voluntary sector groups involved in all areas of life in Merton, including social and health care, education, housing, childcare and support, families and older people, the environment and community development. The CEN enables them to make their views heard and to have an influence on the plans and decisions of the Merton Partnership.

In April 2007, 17 representatives of the CEN were elected to the Merton Partnership for a three-year term. The representation is distributed as follows:

- five members on the Merton Partnership
- two members on the Executive Board
- two members on each of the five thematic partnerships.

CEN representatives attend meetings and have been successful in feeding in views from the wider community, acting as advocates for the voluntary and community sector and as critical friends of the Partnership. This contribution has brought real benefits, for example in the development of the LAA and individual thematic strategies.

Culture and the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games
The London Olympic Games will start on Friday 27 July 2012 and run until Sunday 12 August, followed by the Paralympic Games from Wednesday 29 August until Sunday 9 September.

Merton’s benefit from the London 2012 Games stems from the Olympic tennis event taking place at the All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon. In addition, the borough wishes to reflect the potential and the ideals of the Olympic and Paralympic Games through a comprehensive programme of art, cultural and sporting events in the years leading up to the Games. As a host Olympic borough, Merton, is already involved in the Cultural Olympiad, a four-year celebration which started at the handover ceremonies in Beijing in 2008 and ends at the closing ceremonies in London in 2012.

The Merton Cultural Olympiad will showcase Merton talent and innovation and will reflect the key themes of the London 2012 Games:

- celebrating Merton and welcoming the world
- inspiring and involving young people
- generating a positive legacy.

It will inspire people who visit, work and live in the borough to participate in a range of cultural activities, which will reflect and celebrate our diverse communities.

The Merton Cultural Olympiad will maximise and promote the
sporting and cultural traditions of the borough under the four strategic themes of the Cultural Strategy 'A Better Future for All'.

**Learning**
- Raising awareness of and creating opportunities to experience the diverse cultures of the borough.
- Increased holiday and out of school programmes for young people.
- Ensuring cultural activity is a regular feature of everyone’s life.
- Intergenerational learning.
- Providing opportunities for volunteering.

**Things to do**
- Music, dance, drama, and art and forms representing cultural diversity.
- Community festivals.
- Encouragement of physically active lifestyles including team sports.
- Provision of activities for young and old.

**Places to go**
- Improved theatres, libraries and learning venues.
- New and improved sports and leisure facilities, parks and open spaces.
- Increased access to facilities.

**Cultures and communities**
- Community based creative projects.
- Support for people with disabilities, older and young people and BME groups.
- Celebrating the Cultural Olympiad 2008-12, ensuring a legacy for the Merton community.

Merton’s Cultural Olympiad will embody the three principles of the Cultural Strategy: Affordability, Accessibility and Communication. This will ensure that the delivery of the strategy maximises the existing funding and resources within the borough. It will also ensure that that the activities and initiatives it supports are available to and known by everyone in the borough. This will lead to wider participation and enable all those who visit, live or work in Merton to benefit from the Olympic experience and the borough’s involvement in the Games.

**Resources and value for money**
As an area Merton receives limited funding from central government, despite the high levels of deprivation in the east of the borough. The council receives one of the lowest levels of funding in London, and other partners also face challenging financial situations. The Partnership has never received Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, but despite this has managed to build and develop a strong and successful partnership.

This lack of funding and resources means that the Partnership is constantly aware of the financial constraints it operates within
and is always looking to improve and deliver value for money. Effective use of our resources and the provision of value for money services cut across all of the CP’s themes, and represent a priority for everyone involved in the Partnership and the delivery of the CP.

“bridging the gap between the east and west of the borough...”
Chapter 7
Sustainable Communities and Transport

Introduction
This chapter focuses on the local economy and workforce (particularly people aged 19 and over), housing, the environment and transport. It takes account of the needs of individuals and the wider community in the short and long term.

Work and learning opportunities, housing, the local environment and the ability to move about in and around the borough all contribute to the quality of life for Merton citizens. The provision of services such as shops, schools, health and leisure facilities either locally or within easy reach is also important.

Since 2006 the world has changed significantly, with volatile fuel prices as demand starts to outstrip supply and global economic problems adding to increasing uncertainty about the future. We are only just beginning to recognise the potential impact and it will take time to work out realistic responses to achieve our aspirations for Merton.

The impact of climate change has come into even sharper focus and we all need to be aware of, and take responsibility for, the impact of our activities on the local and global environment now and for future generations. Minimising our use of energy and the
amount of waste we create, making good transport choices and protecting and enhancing the natural environment are particularly important environmental and urban regeneration issues.

These economic and environmental challenges may mean that we need to identify local opportunities for work and leisure activities and reduce our need to travel in order to support sustainable communities. This will include taking a sustainable approach to the regeneration of Mitcham and Morden in the emerging Local Development Framework; maintaining and enhancing Wimbledon as the borough’s main centre; supporting the role of local centres such Raynes Park in the local economy; realizing the potential of Colliers Wood, South Wimbledon and the Wandle Valley corridor; and valuing local neighbourhoods. Key to the success of each is a sense of place and distinct identity, yet maintaining strong links to other localities. The regional and sub-regional context in London is also important.

The vision for 2019 is for the environment, economy and related services to build resilience and stability and enhance the quality of life in Merton. This will include:

- increased economic resilience in Merton through:
  - improved average levels of productivity, gross value added and pay for jobs in Merton, and higher average household income for residents in the borough
  - a diverse local economic base which does not rely too heavily on any one sector for its continued success
  - building on Merton’s strengths in location, attractiveness, safety and expertise to promote its economy
  - enhanced skills for Merton residents through increased access to learning opportunities
- Merton as a clean and green place to live, work and visit
- sufficient and affordable housing of good quality
- ease of movement within the borough, and to and from surrounding areas particularly by methods of transport other than the car, with reduced levels of congestion and pollution
- communities which are resilient to dwindling resources, climate change and economic restructuring

The role of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector
Merton’s voluntary, community and faith sector plays a vital role in local sustainability, with a variety of groups working in complementary ways. Supported housing projects, homelessness action groups and housing associations are all active in the borough’s housing sector. Residents’ associations, sustainability groups, recycling projects and environmental organisations contribute to improving and sustaining Merton’s environment. In addition, community transport services are a vital part of Merton’s transport infrastructure.

Furthermore, the voluntary, community and faith sector is a significant part of the local economy: in addition to the 40,000 people who volunteer, almost 2,500 work full-time for local groups. The sector is also valued and respected for its work
developing skills and delivering training, formal and informal learning, particularly with marginalised communities.

Housing

What has happened since 2006

Achievements and emerging trends
Local authorities are increasingly required by the Government to strengthen and extend their strategic housing role. The Housing Strategy 2008-2011 sets out how Merton will achieve this. ‘Place-shaping’ is one of two key objectives of the strategy, as a better mix of housing is needed, particularly intermediate and social rented homes, in order to provide more choice for those who cannot afford market housing. The second is ‘Empowering people’, which focuses on supporting vulnerable people and preventing homelessness.

Two new national agencies were launched in December 2008. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is a new housing and regeneration agency for England, whose aim is an integrated approach to improving delivery of new housing and the creation of sustainable communities, by bringing together the regeneration and investment functions of English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation. The Tenants Services Authority (TSA) is a new watchdog for social tenants, which will regulate social landlords and set high standards for housing management services.
The London Mayor’s Draft Housing Strategy 2009, aims to increase the supply of new homes to meet the demand and needs for housing in London, with greater emphasis on the provision of affordable family homes and low cost home ownership. It proposes greater use of the private rented sector to house vulnerable and homeless people, and for local authorities to be permitted to discharge their homelessness duty to place accepted homeless households in settled accommodation, where there is an accredited landlord and a minimum two years’ tenancy.

The boroughs in south west London have formed a Housing Partnership, developing a strategy with four main aims:

• to set out the evidence of housing need, the priorities for action, and the available resources and opportunities
• to provide a clear plan of action for the future
• to put the case to the London Housing Board for investment in south-west London
• to promote cross-borough working at a strategic and operational level

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment has informed the Local Development Framework and the Housing Strategy by identifying housing needs and demand in the borough. Reviews of Merton’s Housing and Homelessness Strategies were completed in 2008/09, and supporting housing strategies, for older people, ethnic minorities and affordable warmth, are also under review. Housing strategies for children and young people and for vulnerable people are being developed.

Merton is on target to provide 315 new affordable homes between 2008 and 2011 through its housing association partners; 30% of these will be available for households on low and middle income to purchase on a shared equity basis. The agency Tower Homes, helps households on low and middle income to access new build shared-ownership homes, as well as to purchase homes in the open market with low cost home ownership loans.

The council opened the ‘property shop’ in Morden to improve access to the private rented sector for households at risks of homelessness. Merton has been provided with a Homelessness Grant of £120,000 a year for three years, for prevention initiatives such as: rent deposits to help homeless households rent homes in the private sector, a sanctuary scheme to assist people at risk of domestic violence, and a mortgage rescue scheme. In addition, a £100,000 grant was awarded to Merton to reduce overcrowding and £36,000 for Merton and Sutton councils jointly to run a homelessness mediation scheme. However, this grant funding is time-limited and continued funding is crucial to the future delivery of prevention initiatives.

Empowering people and helping them to stay independent and in their own homes, avoiding costly residential placements – especially for older or vulnerable people - is at the forefront of the Supporting People programme of support services in the borough, and an objective of Merton’s Older People’s Housing Strategy. The Ethnic Minority Housing Strategy sets out to improve
the responsiveness and sensitivity of housing provision for black and minority ethnic communities in Merton, and aims to further strengthen partnership working and understanding of needs.

Merton Council is proposing to transfer its housing to a new landlord in order to secure the investment to improve existing council homes to beyond the Decent Homes Standard by 2015. The stock transfer model, recommended by a steering group of councillors, officers, tenants and leaseholders, was agreed in April 2008. Circle Anglia has been selected as Merton’s housing partner and a new local housing association will be created within Circle Anglia’s existing group structure if tenants opt for stock transfer in the ballot planned for Spring 2009.

What Merton is like now
There is still a shortage of affordable housing – both rented and for ownership. This is exacerbated by the continuing growth of new households, many of whom cannot afford local housing costs. First-time buyers and people on low or middle income are still experiencing difficulties getting on the housing ladder because of house price increases since the early 1990s. Although prices are now falling, mortgages are difficult to secure due to the ‘credit crunch’.

The number of homelessness acceptances in Merton is among the lowest in London, and the long-term trend in homelessness acceptances in Merton reflects the downward national trends. The quality of temporary accommodation, and the support provided to homeless households, will need to be improved to help ensure a better quality of life.

Overcrowding is increasing, particularly in the poorest areas of the borough and in social housing, many homes do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. At the same time many larger homes are under-occupied and there is a significant number of empty homes in the private sector that need to be brought back to use. Good quality family housing has a positive influence on the development of children, sustaining families and healthy communities. The link between good health and suitable housing is well established.

Vulnerable people are very likely to have housing problems and need support. Supported housing for people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions and people with physical or sensory impairment needs to be incorporated into the borough’s overall housing programme. Merton’s changing population profile over the next decade and beyond, especially the growing number of older people, should lead to more efforts to keep older people independent in their own homes and the development of more housing choices for older people.

Some supported housing is provided by voluntary housing organisations for vulnerable groups, such as young and/or homeless people. Voluntary groups have an important role in the development and delivery of housing strategies – for example in housing for older people or supported housing. There are about 25 voluntary organisations offering housing related services and more than 80 tenants and residents associations.
Funding is available for specialist agencies to provide energy advice and assistance to Merton residents, particularly vulnerable households. Energy efficiency schemes are promoted and administered to help Merton residents experiencing fuel poverty, and to provide information to residents on energy efficiency.

Green space in Merton is valued and there is public concern that increased housing development in the borough may reduce this. For communities to be sustainable, it is important to have a mix of local housing, open space, jobs and services. Leisure and other facilities need to be readily available to local residents including young people.

What Merton will be like in 2019
The council will strengthen its strategic housing role by addressing demand for all types of housing as well as needs for affordable housing. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be updated every year to show housing needs and demand in Merton. This will help plan future provision of a good balance of market and social housing in local areas, and will help build mixed communities. Planning issues will be addressed in the Local Development Framework in response to local needs: housing densities, setting design standards and providing guidance on the provision of land for housing, employment and other purposes.

Housing associations and private developers will work with the council to provide and promote a range of affordable housing to those who cannot enter the housing market, such as first-time buyers and households on low and middle incomes. The supply of affordable homes will be increased, particularly family homes, including social rented and intermediate housing.

The annual target for new homes in Merton is set out in the London Plan. This is currently for a minimum of 370 homes, subject to review for future years. Merton will maximise affordable housing delivery in the borough by building 315 new affordable homes between 2008-2011, and will work with the Mayor of London to set affordable housing targets for subsequent years, contributing to housing targets set out in the London Plan – 50% of all housing will be affordable (60% social rented and 40% intermediate homes); 42% of social rented homes and 16% intermediate homes to have three or more bedrooms.

A range of housing will be also be developed for vulnerable people, including older people, young people, people with physical and learning disabilities and people with mental health problems. A more even distribution of affordable housing will be promoted within the borough, by encouraging more developments in areas with existing low social housing.

With a shortage of affordable homes in Merton, it will be important to work with private landlords to increase the supply of homes for residents, both for family housing and for supported housing. Help will be given to the private sector through renovation grants and by working with landlords to
improve housing conditions (for example, through enforcement action on unfit and vacant homes).

Merton will continue to deliver homelessness prevention initiatives and will seek to maximise the use of grant funding for homelessness prevention.

Merton aims to minimise the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households. Where there are no alternatives to placing households in temporary accommodation, the quality of the accommodation will be of a suitable standard with appropriate level of support. Support will also be extended to those households recently moved into permanent accommodation. In addition, Merton will seek to address the issue of lack of move-on accommodation for young people in temporary accommodation.

If council tenants opt for stock transfer in spring 2009, the new landlord will be engaged in sustainable communities initiatives such as landscaping and the delivery of other environmental benefits, and in ensuring continued community involvement and the delivery of quality housing management services. The provision of quality housing management across all tenures will be ensured through work with registered social landlords. Issues to be addressed include stock rationalisation, performance of housing management functions and tackling anti-social behaviour.

All new homes provided by housing associations will be built to the Code of Sustainable for Housing Level 3 as a minimum.

To help vulnerable households and those on low incomes who are fuel poor, energy advice and assistance will continue to be provided, targeting areas with the highest levels of fuel poverty. Energy efficiency initiatives will also help reduce CO₂ emissions across all tenures, and help contribute towards tackling climate change.

To help narrow the gap between east and west Merton, we aim to target resources to the more deprived eastern wards, particularly areas with high proportions of social housing. Parents with children under five living in Hall Place temporary accommodation, as well as those living in the most deprived areas in Merton (Pollards Hill, Figges Marsh, Longthornton, Cricket Green and Lavender), will be assisted to overcome ‘barriers to employment’.
### Housing improvement deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: Update Merton’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment annually to inform future provision of housing and ensure a good balance of market and social housing in local areas</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Merton Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: Achieve the minimum housing targets, for both private and affordable housing, as set out in the Local Development Framework following its formal adoption</td>
<td>2010 - 2015</td>
<td>Merton Council, developers, RSLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Achieve no more than 87 homeless households in temporary accommodation</td>
<td>Annually until March 2010</td>
<td>Merton Council with RSLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4: Develop a project proposal for a Foyer housing and training scheme for young people with learning disabilities</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Merton Council, Voluntary Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5: Assist a minimum of 80 homeless per year households to access the private rented sector through the rent deposit scheme, subject to continued Government funding for the scheme</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Merton Council, private sector landlords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6: Subject to a positive vote for housing transfer, improve the attractiveness and facilities on the 22 key estates through a £1.25m two year investment programme, and through an ongoing £325,000 per year neighbourhood improvement budget</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Merton Priory Homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7: Subject to a positive vote for housing transfer, achieve the Decent Homes Standard for all the existing council stock</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Merton Priory Homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8: Rationalise Residential Social Landlord (RSL) stock to improve efficiency of social housing management functions whilst still ensuring responsiveness to user needs</td>
<td>By March 2010</td>
<td>Merton Council, RSLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H9: Measure reduction of CO2 emissions in housing stock and continue measures to improve energy efficiency and address fuel poverty</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Merton Council / CEN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Environment

What has happened since 2006

Achievements and emerging trends
A Climate Change Strategy has been produced that maps out the response in Merton to climate change across eight separate areas from energy and waste to biodiversity and procurement and lists actions with timescales.

The influential Merton Rule has resulted in proposed/installed renewables in six more developments that will save nearly 200 tonnes of CO\textsubscript{2} each year.

In November 2007 Merton Council signed the Nottingham Declaration, a voluntary pledge to address the issues of climate change. Doing so signals a commitment to a range of actions, from working with central government to deliver the UK Climate Change Programme to monitoring the progress of its own plans and publishing the results.

There is a commitment in the Local Area Agreement to a number of environmental performance targets including CO\textsubscript{2} emissions reduction, decent homes standards and reducing waste generated and sent to landfill.

Merton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise Agency has run a project funded by the London Development Agency which has assisted 135 businesses to improve their
environmental performance. On average £471 cost savings have been identified for each business, 2.7 tonnes of CO$_2$ for each business has been saved on average through resource reduction, particularly in electricity and 6.8 tonnes waste for each business on average has been diverted from landfill to recycling.

It is recognised that a certain degree of climate change is inevitable however quickly we reduce our own CO$_2$ emissions. In line with the Mayor of London’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, we are identifying the areas of vulnerability within the borough and establishing plans for building in resilience to our infrastructure and communities.

Partners (including neighbouring councils, the South London Partnership, the National Trust and Groundwork) have been working to designate the historic Wandle Valley corridor as a Regional Park that will bring benefits to the area – access, economic, recreation, management and nature conservation.

Through the South London Waste Partnership we have joint waste management arrangements with the neighbouring boroughs of Croydon, Sutton and Kingston. This has delivered a number of benefits for Merton including access to a 10,000 tonnes a year energy from waste facility along with 30,000 tonnes a year of Anaerobic Digestion capacity, both of which will maximise value from waste.

The range of materials accepted through the current green and purple box scheme has been extended and recycling facilities have been introduced for flats. This has helped levels of recycling to increase to 30%. A commercial waste recycling service has been introduced for businesses within the borough.

Management of the household recycling and reuse centres has been externalised. This has led to an increase in recycling rates at Garth Road from approximately 45% last year to 70% since the new contract commenced in September 2008.

Character appraisals and Management Plans have been prepared for a further nine of the borough’s 28 Conservation Areas, bringing the total to 20.

Merton’s parks have enjoyed the benefit of more than £2 million capital investment since 2006, with access, signage and children’s play improvements being especially prominent. Biodiversity enhancements have focused upon heathland re-creation and pond restoration works. Some 2,500 new trees have been planted in local open spaces and along the borough’s highways. Multi-sport areas have been provided in some parks.

Merton’s residents’ satisfaction rates for parks has increased from 60% to 65% during the past two years and, in part, this improvement has been due to the valuable contribution of a network of 24 parks friends groups who are involved in management, development and fund raising activities. All of Merton’s key parks have an up-to-date and comprehensive
management plan and this has enabled the authority to secure Green Flag Awards for two parks in the past two years.

**What Merton is like now**
Approximately 25 local voluntary groups provide services such as enhancing spaces and recycling, re-using and repairing items, and they also campaign and raise awareness about environmental issues.

Merton has the second lowest CO\(_2\) emissions per head in London and the fourth lowest in the UK. Nonetheless nearly five tonnes of CO\(_2\) is emitted for each Merton resident every year. Most of this CO\(_2\) comes from our buildings: 45% from our homes with another 28% from offices and industry. The remaining 27% comes from transport.

While some people feel that there are too many new buildings being built in some parts of Merton, others believe that some areas are in need of regeneration and would benefit from new buildings. New development is being built to ever improving standards of sustainability and design quality, with commercial development also being required to provide sources of renewable energy on site. Work is also being done to the existing buildings that make up the vast majority of Merton’s built environment, but there is huge potential for improvement in this area.

Merton is very dependent on external sources for energy and food supplies making residents vulnerable to rises in food and energy costs. The food producing potential of Merton’s green spaces is currently under developed as is the potential for district heat and power schemes and energy from renewable sources and our waste streams.

Despite recent droughts, Merton residents and businesses are still not very water efficient. This is partly due to leaks in the mains but, while there is a programme of works to address this issue, more needs to be done to encourage businesses and residents to reduce their water usage.

The Mayor of London has set up a scheme to establish 10 Low Carbon Zones, which will explore ways in which London boroughs can lower their carbon footprint. It is planned that Mitcham will become one of the 10.

It is important that the most vulnerable groups have affordable warmth and fuel to help end fuel poverty and reduce health inequalities.

**Waste**
Merton produces around one tonne of domestic waste for every household. The aim is to reduce this figure to ensure zero growth in total waste processed despite an increase in population.

There is a kitchen waste collection trial in Ravensbury and results so far have been encouraging. Plans are being drawn up to extend the kitchen waste scheme to the rest of the borough.
Merton is currently the 10th most successful London borough for dry waste recycling and 15th for combined recycling and composting. The introduction of kitchen waste collections would improve these figures significantly.

Engaging with the community is an important aspect of the waste strategy, with a waste road show visiting the borough’s town centres and an extensive schools’ waste education programme. Over the past two years we have knocked on more than 40,000 doors and talked directly with nearly 15,000 residents informing and consulting them on collection arrangements for waste and recycling. Working with local groups on waste reduction schemes such as Sustainable Merton’s ‘Bag for Life’ project is another way that we can connect with residents on this issue.

Built environment and heritage
Our Public Realm Strategy will provide a framework to guide the design of Merton’s streets and spaces including street furniture, paving and so on. The Strategy also aims to reduce clutter, improve the pedestrian experience and promote distinctiveness in areas such as town centres. Consideration will be given to the use of sustainable materials. Key to the success of the strategy will be maintenance of street furniture through regular cleansing and enforcement action where required. It is important to maintain and enhance the quality of the natural and built environment and local heritage in order to promote local tourism.

Street cleaning
Improving the cleanliness of the local environment can have an effect on perceptions of crime and personal safety. Satisfaction with street cleaning improved by 5 per cent this year and further improvements are being made to tackle the problem of detritus and fallen leaves.

As the economic downturn takes effect there is a possibility that more sites will become derelict and that development sites where work cannot be completed will be mothballed. Such sites will require monitoring to ensure landowners take responsibility for their areas, and that they do not become an attraction for anti-social behaviour. There may be scope for temporary community use of some sites.

Green spaces and biodiversity
Merton is one of the greenest boroughs in London with 18% of its land being open space. However, some residents feel that these spaces are disappearing. The borough supports a good range of habitats from grassland and heathland to woodland and wetland areas that include ponds and the River Wandle. Together with the borough’s gardens these green spaces support considerable biodiversity, though there is a need for more green corridors to allow the movement of species between sites, into and through the borough. Improving access to and safety within green spaces is important for older and disabled people and to promote community cohesion.
Merton’s community facilities and green spaces provide the opportunity for people to engage in sport and benefit from the Olympic legacy.

**What Merton will be like in 2019**

**Resilience**
In the 10 years up to 2019 Merton will have been moving steadily towards becoming both a more environmentally friendly place to live and a more resilient community. By 2019 we will use less energy in our homes and businesses and so emit less CO$_2$.

**Energy/CO$_2$**
Merton will be generating a large proportion of its energy needs from renewable sources. The resources available in the borough will have dictated the make up of this generating capacity. District Heat and Power (DHP) networks will link major energy users in all appropriate areas, such as Mitcham and Morden Town Centres, and are fuelled, wherever possible, by biogas generated from Merton’s waste stream. In areas not suitable for DHP, levels of onsite renewable energy generation will have increased dramatically both in new development and on existing buildings.

By compiling a detailed database of Merton’s existing building stock, we will have been able to target our energy efficiency programmes to the worst performing buildings. At the same time exemplar Eco-refurbishment of the different house types in the borough will demonstrate the best solutions to each type’s particular problems. The combination of these two schemes, together with continued use of robust planning controls, will have led to a dramatic reduction in CO$_2$ from our existing stock.

Reducing energy bills for local businesses, households and community groups will have brought economic benefits.

**Sustainable development**
All development in the borough will be built to the highest sustainable standards and, since 2016, will have been zero carbon in use. New development will also be required to contribute to climate change adaptation by enhancing the biodiversity and water management aspects of the site as well as adding to Merton’s tree canopy wherever possible.

**Food**
As well as being more energy independent, Merton will be far less reliant on external food supplies. Many more residents will have access to land upon which to grow food for their own tables or to sell in the numerous local produce markets around the borough resulting in the community being better able to cope with global food price rises. Opportunities will also be taken to encourage the use of school and community sites for growing food as food is a focus for community cohesion and important for health.

**Green spaces and biodiversity**
Merton’s abundance of green spaces will have become an even more important asset for the borough and will be managed in
a sustainable way. Tree canopy will have been increased by a comprehensive tree planting programme to provide shading to help combat the increasing danger of heat stress from long periods of hot weather. Trees and other plants will be used as part of the sustainable urban drainage systems developed to address flooding risks whilst the design will seek to maximise access and health benefits and minimise personal safety concerns. Planting programmes will have resulted in the plant life of Merton being less water intensive and more drought resistant. Green corridors will have been set up throughout the borough to encourage the movement of species and help conserve biodiversity as the climate changes and contribute to the green infrastructure of the borough.

Built environment and heritage
Pressure from the development industry, especially in the context of the economic downturn, to accept lower quality development will have been resisted. Character appraisals and Management Plans will have been completed for the remaining eight of the borough’s 28 Conservation Areas. A sustainable approach will be taken to the use of materials and maintenance.

Water
Water shortages in the summer months will have become a permanent feature of life in the south east of England. A combination of water efficiency measures and increased rainwater harvesting along with a comprehensive programme of water main replacement will have resulted in a significant drop in Merton’s water needs, ensuring the community is better prepared to cope with periods of drought.

Waste
Waste will be seen as a commodity rather than a necessary evil. Over 50% of waste will be recycled with all homes, including high and medium-rise flats, having a collection service nearby. Businesses will also have a comprehensive recycling service available to them.

Merton, in conjunction with its South London Waste partners, will have established a network of waste treatment facilities that will have reduced our dependence on landfill while at the same time maximising the value from our residual waste.

Despite the increase in Merton’s population, the actual tonnage of waste handled will have reduced as national policies on packaging and local initiatives on waste reduction have altered perceptions and behaviour.

Innovation in delivering environmentally sustainable products and services will have increased local job opportunities. Joint procurement will have lead to economies of scale and stimulated the market for recyclable materials.

How local people can help to achieve the vision

Help in the home
- Replace appliances and light bulbs with energy efficient models.
- Turn off lights on leaving room and don’t leave appliances on standby.
• Be sure to reply to any home energy surveys we send you.

Help save water
• Take short showers instead of baths.
• Fix leaky taps.
• Low flow taps and low flush toilets.
• Install a water butt.

Help reduce waste
• Recycle wherever possible.
• Shop with reusable bags.
• Promote recycling opportunities to businesses.

Help in the garden
• Turn over a portion of your garden to food.
• Support any local produce markets.
• Plant trees.
• Water local street trees.
• Start a tree nursery in your garden.
• Create and manage wildlife areas within gardens.
Environment improvement deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **E1:** Lower the CO2 emissions of the borough and reduce Merton’s dependence on external energy by:  
- Measures to reduce energy consumption and use  
- Installing District Heat and Power networks where appropriate and in accordance with good design principles  
- Continuing to promote installation of renewable energy systems  
- Extending home and business energy efficiency programmes | Ongoing projects delivery 1-5 years | Merton Council  
GLA  
Developers  
EST  
Carbon Trust  
Merton Chamber – Go Green |
| **E2:** Require increasingly high standards of sustainable design and construction in new developments by using robust sustainable planning policies to drive improvements in construction standards and promote healthy and safe environments | 2010-11 linked to LDF delivery schedule | Merton Council Developers |
| **E3:** Minimise the amount of derelict land and mothballed sites through use of planning policies and consider the scope for the temporary use of sites | Ongoing | Merton Council Developers |
| **E4:** Manage the public realm to a high and sustainable standard  
- Public Realm Strategy  
- Planning policies | Ongoing | Merton Council  
TfL  
Developers |
| **E5:** Reduce Merton’s water usage and adapt infrastructure to cope with periods of intense rainfall by:  
- Water efficiency measures in homes and businesses including the use of grey water.  
- Rain water Harvesting and appropriate planting | Ongoing  
2009 | Merton Council  
Water companies  
Environment Agency  
Merton Chamber – Go Green Plus  
Natural England |
| **E6:** Increase recycling rates to 50% and maximize value from residual waste:  
- Encourage reductions in waste generation  
- Increase types and amount of waste being recycled.  
- Establish treatment facilities generate value from waste | 2020  
Ongoing  
2014 | South London Waste Partnership  
Merton Council  
Merton Chamber – Go Green |
| **E7:** Build food growing capacity across the borough:  
- Bring more of Merton’s green spaces under cultivation.  
- Promote local produce markets. | Ongoing | Merton Council  
National Trust  
Sustainable Merton  
Groundwork |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E8: Increase tree canopy and manage green spaces to maintain local biodiversity: • Implement a programme of tree planting. • Create green corridors. • Use appropriate planting to help adapt local green spaces to changing weather patterns</td>
<td>Ongoing annual programme</td>
<td>Merton Council, Groundwork, National Trust, Sustainable Merton, Natural England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E9: Provide a complete framework for the borough’s Conservation Areas by completing character appraisals and Management Plans for the remaining 8 Conservation Areas</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Merton Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E10: Manage parks and gardens to protect and enhance local biodiversity by integrating biodiversity management methods into parks management plans</td>
<td>29 plans to be managed (Green Flag plans updated annually; others every 5 years subject to funding)</td>
<td>Merton Council, London Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Mitcham Common Conservators, Groundwork, Natural England</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Local Economy – Enterprise and Skills

What has happened since 2006

Achievements and emerging trends
In 2008, as the credit crunch struck, Merton’s economy was a part of the national picture – the result of a 10-year consumption boom fuelled by falling interest rates, a strong pound and low fuel prices because of the supply of North Sea oil. Closer to home, it was influenced by its geographical relationship to the world’s most important financial services centre.

These factors drove a growing dependence by Merton’s residents on employment in central London and the City. Growth in financial services jobs in the centre drove demand for housing, and that demand (and the consequential increase in the value of residential land) has led to the displacement of jobs from the borough.

Merton’s dependency on service and retail industries and commuting outside the borough has increased, while production industries have departed to cheaper locations. Between September 2004 and September 2007 the number of jobs in the borough fell by approximately 5,000. Although jobs grew by 600 in 2007, the opportunities were in sectors offering low wages such as retailing, hotels, restaurants, transport and communications, public and other services. Financial services and manufacturing employment continued to fall. The number of firms (workplaces) in the borough grew by 62 in the year to September 2007, but the net increase was largely among firms employing fewer than
10 employees which account for about 85% of the borough’s businesses. This net growth in small workplaces disguises the fact that there was a loss of 23 retail and motor repair firms and 46 manufacturing firms. The growth in the very small firms category (with fewer than 10 employees) was almost entirely in the real estate and renting and financial mediation sectors.

Although the local economy is relatively diverse compared with many of its neighbours, and although (in May 2008) Merton had the fourth lowest rate of unemployment of all the London boroughs, Merton is a low pay economy relative to its neighbours.

Since 2006 partners have introduced a series of initiatives designed to assist Merton’s economy:

- Mitcham Means Business (funded by the London Development Agency) has provided business and employment support (including volunteering in preparation for work and to enhance skills and experience).
- Town centre management in Wimbledon (led by Merton Chamber of Commerce), Mitcham, Morden and Colliers Wood has addressed day to day operational issues and encouraged collaborative working with businesses.
- Co-operation has also been promoted on industrial estates, especially through the LDA funded Estates Excellence project led by the Society of Manufacturers leading to the possibility of Business Improvement Districts on two industrial estates.
- Business start up support using LDA funding is provided by Merton Chamber which has also assisted 135 businesses to address the environmental impact of their activities through the LDA funded Go Green project.
- A guide to supplying to the council has been published for businesses and partners have been encouraged to consider local sourcing.
- A worklessness consortium with partners has been set up to help people move off incapacity benefit into work and a Merton Credit Union has been initiated.
- A council volunteering scheme has been introduced – an example of valuing volunteering as an opportunity for staff development.
- In 2006/07 there were 9,511 Merton Resident enrolments on courses funded by the Learning and Skills Council; 7,373 (77%) completed of which 6,394 (86%) achieved an accredited qualification. In 2007/08 the number of enrolments fell to 8,799 (outcome figures are not yet available). In 2007/08, 2,027 Merton residents enrolled on Adult and Community Learning.
- Merton is now a Fair Trade borough

What Merton is like now
Merton’s economy is in a state of uncertain transition. The borough’s claimant unemployment has risen by 26% in the five months to November 2008.
The macro-economic framework within which Merton’s economy will have to operate in the future will be very different from that which led to the current structure of the borough’s economy. Key changes are significantly affecting the economic prospects of the borough and its residents. Some of these are possibly temporary: rationing of credit; loss of confidence in the City of London; widening of the Government’s budget deficit; decline in the global demand for goods and services. Others appear to be more permanent: a lower exchange rate for sterling; withdrawal of sovereign wealth funds; decline of North Sea Oil production; more serious decline in UK demand for goods and services; changes in social welfare entitlements; the impacts of climate change.

The local economy will face challenges as a result of a decreased consumer base and consumer spending, with people spending less on discretionary items and choosing cheaper products, increases in the cost of supplies, a weak pound making imports harder, and a slowing down of development.

Larger businesses based in Merton report that, overall, the borough is a good place to do business. With excellent transport links and access to a well qualified pool of labour for those that recruit people at the professional level. However, 2003/04 data suggests that employees working in Merton businesses have lower qualifications, on average, than across London: 36.61% (about 24,089) of employees had at best only a level 1 qualification compared to 25.7% across London; 27.52% (about 18,108) of employees had a level 4 qualification or better compared to 38.7% in London overall.

Merton residents on average appear better qualified than counterparts in many parts of London. The percentage of residents that had no qualifications in 2007 was less than half that of London as a whole. Merton was ranked the 12th best London borough in terms of the percentage of the working age population that was qualified to at least Level 2; 13th in terms of the percentage of the working age population qualified to at least Level 3; and 12th in terms of the working age population qualified to at least Level 4. This overall picture, however, hides a number of worrying trends:

- A decline in the percentage of the population qualified to level 2, level 3 and level 4 since 2004 (4%, 6%, 4% respectively).
- A stark difference in qualifications held by residents of different wards with a significant proportion of residents in 10 wards having high qualifications while a significant proportion of residents of the remaining wards having low or no qualifications.
- By 2007 the average proportion of Merton residents with at best only a level 1 qualification had risen.

People from BME groups are disproportionately disadvantaged by their lack of skills and qualifications, particularly in east Merton. There is scope for more businesses to recognize the value of a diverse workforce and to connect more with their local communities, although many are already good at providing opportunities for work experience and contributing to local networks and partnerships. The employment needs of people with
physical and sensory impairments, learning difficulties, mental health issues and carer responsibilities need to be addressed including consideration of volunteering as a route to work.

**What Merton will be like in 2019**
At the start of the economic downturn it is difficult to predict the nature and extent of the resulting changes on the structure of the local economy and the extent to which it will be possible to mitigate the impact and at the same time take advantage of opportunities.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) will contain a range of policies that will aim to strengthen the economic base of the borough and support its comparative advantage in south west London. It will also support the corporate aims of partners in order to improve the skills and abilities of our population. In order to help the local economy be more resilient, valued and appropriate sites for employment uses will be protected, particularly to support and revitalise the commercial viability of our town centres and employment sites.

An Economic Development Strategy will identify core sectors and strategies for supporting them. It will include measures to improve the operational and environmental quality of the borough’s stock of business premises. This will include supporting the establishment of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to improve the day-to-day management of the area and lead to greater self-reliance and investment on the part of local businesses in their immediate environment.

Wimbledon Town Centre will benefit from support to maximise the legacy of 2012 with a wider range of services, events and environmental enhancements all of which will have a significant effect on visitor numbers. Partners will continue working together to physically regenerate Mitcham and Morden town centres and implement programmes of complementary initiatives.

Partners will draw up and implement an employment and skills development strategy to improve the skills of residents and workers, particularly where there are imbalances between east and west Merton, and aiming to increase employment of local people. This will include close working with voluntary sector groups who have an important role to play in assisting people in preparation for work and widening skills and experience. Localised employment initiatives including social enterprise and the Merton Credit Union will be promoted.

Business advice and support will continue, aiming to increase the survival rate of new businesses and support existing businesses, especially small, independent businesses. This will include promoting local procurement among partners and supporting businesses to address the environmental impact of their activities, initially through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) project led by Merton Chamber. Town centre businesses, both office and retail, will be supported through effective town centre management.

With the availability of a competitive offer to business investors both in terms of land and premises and skilled labour, the
borough will be marketed strongly to investors. Programmes will be designed to promote entrepreneurship and promote growth in particular sectors, possibly including the opportunities offered by environmental industries, manufacturing and the cultural, creative and tourism sector. It will be important to focus on opportunities which provide high value and sustainable jobs and to provide local people with skills to enable them to benefit from these opportunities.

Overall the aim of these strategies and actions will be to ensure that the local economy is better balanced, more diverse and robust, that there is an increase in the average gross weekly income associated with jobs in Merton, that there are more jobs in Merton, reducing travel to work journeys and that the opportunities for redressing imbalances between east and west Merton are maximised. The strategies will also address the needs of older people, parents (in relation to child care), people with physical and sensory impairments, learning difficulties, mental health issues and carer responsibilities including considering volunteering as a route to work.
The Local Economy (Enterprise and Skills) improvement deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LE1: Develop LDF Core Strategy and associated policies to determine future land use</td>
<td>2009/10 – 2010/11</td>
<td>All statutory agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE2: Develop and implement Economic Development Strategy including an Economic Assessment (required from 2010) incorporating sustainability principles</td>
<td>2009 – 5 year strategy</td>
<td>Merton Local Economy Sub-Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE3: Develop and implement Employment and Skills Strategy</td>
<td>2009 – 3 year strategy</td>
<td>Council, Merton College, LSC and other training providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE4: Progress the regeneration of Mitcham Town Centre and associated complementary initiatives including consideration of green infrastructure principles</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Council, TfL and other partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE5: Progress the regeneration of Morden Town Centre and associated complementary initiatives including consideration of green infrastructure principles</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Council, TfL and other partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE6: Wimbledon Going for Gold Programme</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Merton Chamber of Commerce, Wimbledon Town Centre Management, Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE7: Implement programme to support local businesses through the economic downturn</td>
<td>Annual programme</td>
<td>Council, Merton Chamber and Enterprise Agency, Business Link, Soloman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE8: Increase volunteering (recognising that it is a route to work and enhances skills and experience) taking advantage of the opportunities offered by 2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>All partners and the voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE9: Develop initiatives to encourage local procurement and support local supply chains</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>All partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transport

What has happened since 2006

Achievements and emerging trends
The transport infrastructure in Mitcham has been significantly improved through the provision of a new railway station, Mitcham Eastfields, with fast, reliable access to central London, helping to improve accessibility in this area of Merton.

Road safety has improved through a range of engineering and educational activities, and the London and national targets for casualty reduction by 2010 have been achieved. The number of severe casualties recorded for children has dropped from 15 recorded incidents in 2006 to just one in 2007. Safer routes to schools have been achieved through the school travel planning process. A programme of 20mph limits and zones is being implemented.

An increasing number of people are using sustainable forms of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport. This has been achieved by providing new transport infrastructure and progressing travel plans. 61 out of 66 (92%) schools in Merton now have a travel plan in place helping to reduce congestion caused by the school run. Cycle training days are provided for school students and adults.

Bus facilities have been improved by improving bus stops and reducing bus waiting times. Bus passenger journeys have increased
from 33% in 2006 to 38% in 2008. By March 2008, 35% of Merton bus stops were Disability Discrimination Act compliant and this figure is expected to rise to 50% by the end of 2008.

Car clubs were introduced in Merton in September 2003. There are now 25 vehicles in 20 locations. There is great potential for expansion with one operator showing an overall utilisation rate of 84.52%. A further five locations were approved for implementation in 2008.

The Merton Scooter Mobility Scheme was established in July 2008. The scooter loan scheme is delivered in conjunction with Merton Community Transport and Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust.

Tramlink has continued to make a significant difference enabling greater access to employment and other opportunities particularly for East Merton residents.

**What Merton is like now**

There are still significant differences between the east and west of the borough but local people have said that initiatives such as the new Mitcham Eastfields station are much appreciated and are helping to close the gap. The west generally has good public transport, particularly in the Wimbledon area, with a comprehensive network of bus and rail services including fast trains to central London and the Tramlink to Croydon. However, many areas in the east of the borough are still poorly served by public transport.

Parts of the borough (most notably Mitcham, South Wimbledon and Colliers Wood) remain congested at certain times of the day and out of town shopping facilities add to congestion. However, latest statistics indicate that the situation is slowly improving.

Residents have said that some of our town centres (in particular Mitcham and Morden) are severed by major traffic routes and could be more pedestrian friendly. In some cases pedestrians have to wait a long time to cross the road or have to take an inconvenient route to reach their destination.

Residents are concerned about road safety problems including parking and cycling on pavements, speeding traffic in some areas and inconsiderate parking in residential streets. Additional safer routes to schools are needed and the maintenance of pavements is a particular issue for the elderly. Cyclists would like better cycle parking and improvements to cycle lanes.

There is scope for improved integration of public transport including enhanced interchanges and improved cycle parking closer to stations. Existing services could be more reliable, tubes could run later at the weekends and some stations could be more inviting. Transport is important in encouraging visitors to Merton’s tourism attractions and cultural events and residents working outside the borough. Late night transport is also important for the evening economy in Merton’s town centres.

Voluntary groups have a role in campaigning for and promoting improved public transport schemes, car clubs, cycling and
walking. Several voluntary organisations and individual volunteers have an important role providing transport for individuals and specific client groups.

The provision of better public transport which is accessible and more cost effective is important in increasing the independence of disabled people and also benefits older people and those on low incomes. Safety of public transport, particularly at night, is important for disadvantaged groups and in promoting community cohesion. Increased walking and cycling bring health benefits.

**What Merton will be like in 2019**

New facilities for pedestrians, including people with disabilities, will include crossings and improved pavements. Existing paths and pavements will be maintained to a high standard. Walking routes will be implemented and cycle routes will be extended in and around town centres while cycle parking will also be improved at key destinations. Merton’s residents will help by identifying areas for improvement.

Improvements for pedestrians and enhanced access to the station in Wimbledon town centre related to the 2012 Olympics will hopefully result in lasting benefits.

Improvements will continue for pedestrians and access to rail and underground stations including that for disabled persons following audits and consultations. Pedestrian audits have already been completed in the Pollards Hill area, Wimbledon Town Centre and Morden Town Centre. Further audits are scheduled for Mitcham Town Centre, Mitcham Eastfields, Mitcham Junction, Raynes Park and Wimbledon Olympic Links.

Further improvements to public transport will help to make key destinations more accessible and should relieve the pressure further. Providers of bus services will be encouraged to introduce new services to industrial areas and improve interchange with underground and rail services. Measures to reduce traffic congestion will help businesses.

More travel plans will be introduced through work with schools, developers and existing employers to encourage use of alternatives to the car to reduce energy consumption, CO₂ emissions, air pollution and traffic noise. Parking provision in new developments will aim to reduce car use and measures will be put in place to encourage smarter travel options. Transport links will be included in the planning of key new facilities. Where appropriate, expanded or new controlled parking zones will be supported.

In consultation with local people, car clubs will be implemented across the borough and a regional initiative to install electric car points will be supported. A review will be undertaken of commercial vehicle and loading issues across the borough to identify improvements in locations such as town centres. We intend to review existing controls in town centres and local centres to ensure they meet the current needs of local businesses without compromising traffic flow or increasing congestion.
Partnerships will be developed with Transport for London, public transport operators, the Police and others to improve safety on public transport and our streets. There will be integration of transport fleets serving the local community and public transport. The implementation of 20mph limits and zones will be supported.

Highway works and new schemes to manage traffic will be co-ordinated to minimize congestion and roads suffering congestion will be identified and action taken to ease bottlenecks. We will work towards meeting national air quality standards and comply with the requirements of the London Low Emission Zone.

Improvements to non-road transport infrastructure (underground, heavy and light rail) will continue to be supported. These and road based measures will be identified in the emerging Local Development Framework.

Work will continue to improve transport links to and around Mitcham, including provision for pedestrians, cyclists, children, older people and those with a range of disabilities and signage. The opportunities (for example for business location) arising from the Mitcham Eastfields station will be promoted more widely to increase the benefits to the town. East Merton residents will benefit from improved transport access to jobs and other facilities. Improvements to public transport will include enhanced interchange facilities in the town centre.

Local groups and Transport for London will be involved to take forward a range of highway improvements in Morden with the aim of redistributing traffic and creating an improved environment in the town centre to bring about significant improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and the users of public transport.
Transport improvement deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1: Work with schools, developers, employers, TfL and other boroughs on a range of initiatives with the aim of encouraging the use of alternatives to the private car, raising awareness and promoting smarter travel options specifically targeting excluded groups</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Merton Council, TfL, schools, developers, employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2: Work with partners to implement a range of measures in Mitcham to support the new railway station. This will include a new home zone and measures which help connect the railway station to the town centre, raise awareness and address barriers to use</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Merton Council, TfL, Network Rail, Police, local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3: Work with partners to provide borough-wide transport improvements for pedestrians, cyclists, children, older people and those with a range of disabilities</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Merton Council, Police, TfL, MCC, Living Streets, Mobility Groups etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4: Continue to enhance road safety in the borough for all users through a range of educational, engineering and enforcement programmes. Work with external organisations to ensure compliance with national and regional casualty reduction targets including for cyclists and motorcyclists and raise the profile of road safety across the borough</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Merton Council, LAAU, Police, schools, TfL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5: Work with TfL and other partners to progress a range of transport improvements in key town centres. In particular, to enhance the environment and bring about significant improvements for all road users</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Merton Council, Police, TfL, and bus operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6: Work with key partners and lobby appropriate bodies to improve off-road transport infrastructure (underground, heavy and light rail)</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Merton Council, TfL, South London Partnership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 8
Safer and Stronger Communities

Introduction
Safer and stronger communities are key to the wellbeing of our residents, the success of our businesses, and the enjoyment of visitors to the borough. A sense of safety and strong relationships across communities are vital to establishing a sense of place in which residents have pride, businesses wish to invest, and people want to visit.

The vision for a safer and stronger Merton in 2019 is a borough where not only has crime fallen and perceptions of personal safety increased, but also where residents are happy to belong to their community, and confident of their role within it. There will be strong and positive relations between people of different backgrounds and a voluntary and community sector that is playing a full part in tackling social problems.

In a safer Merton people will be able to exercise their right to live and work in a secure environment free from the fear of crime. As part of a stronger Merton, people will respect the rights and social customs of others, will share a greater sense of social responsibility, will feel more valued, and will be willing and able to play a part in the life of the borough.

Merton is a borough where recent changes in population,
long-standing inequalities in income and health, and central government targets for reducing crime and disorder combine to present challenges and opportunities in delivering a safer and stronger Merton. At the same time, there are examples of significant improvements taking place that are creating a solid foundation on which to deliver the actions necessary to achieve the vision of 2019.

The role of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector
Merton’s voluntary, community and faith sector makes a vital contribution towards building safer and stronger local communities. Local groups are involved in delivering vital services – for example, providing information, help and support for victims of crime.

Voluntary, community and faith groups also play a key role in bringing people together: a multitude of faith and BME groups in Merton play a vital role in fostering community cohesion. All groups are essential to community involvement, enabling people to volunteer, participate in decision making and, increasingly, help shape the delivery of local services.

Safer Merton

What has happened since 2006?
There has been considerable progress made since the 2006 Community Plan. The section below identifies the concerns identified by the public and what has happened since 2006 to tackle them. (Changes in Legislation now mean that we consult on an annual basis with our communities (not every 3 years), through the Strategic Assessment, to identify priorities this will direct the work of the Safer Merton Partnership from now on).

People were worried by the high incidence of petty crime and wanted to see more people in uniform patrolling their streets. To tackle this Merton was one of the first boroughs to have a full complement of Safer Neighbourhood Teams, one for every Ward. These teams are embedding themselves into their communities, working with local people to tackle local issues. The Wardens work closely with neighbourhood policing teams.

People in Merton wanted violent crime (which includes gun and knife crime) to be tackled, whether on the streets or in the home, reductions in binge drinking and the violence and general disorder that are associated with it. They also wanted racist crime to be dealt with.

Violent crime is tackled case-by-case. However, preventative work has also been successful, such as Operation Blunt, a knife crime initiative to arrest offenders and those carrying knives, which has reduced the number of knives on our streets. This, together with the use of knife arches in our train stations, and having knife and gun amnesties, are all working to reduce violent crime.

Alcohol-related crime is still being tackled and the ‘Merton Alcohol Forum’ has been set up to deal with specific issues, including young people and the misuse of alcohol. This, coupled with additional police patrols in town centre areas, is helping to reduce alcohol-related violence.
Racist crime is dealt with by the police and through reporting mechanisms within statutory agencies. Training has been given to front line staff so that they understand and recognise the issues. Remits for this work have expanded to cover all hate crime, including homophobic and religious crime.

A significant amount has been achieved to deal with violence in the home, particularly where it occurs in family or close personal relationships (known as domestic violence). Enhanced services are now offered and front-line staff have access to additional training and resource around the issue.

The Prolific and Other Priority Offenders Unit works with prolific offenders using a multi-agency partnership approach preventing and deterring people from becoming career criminals, working on the principle that a relatively small number of offenders are responsible for a large number of crimes such as burglaries, robberies and thefts.

Merton residents said they wanted safer roads, with fewer casualties, particularly among young people. When road safety was examined, it was seen to encompass wider transport issues. With this in mind, Merton had one of the first safer transport teams committed to making people feel safer on public transport and has been given additional resources to enhance this service. A major drink driving campaign is undertaken every year.

The Fire Authority works in partnership with other agencies to support action to increase safe driving amongst young drivers and secondary school children and our ‘Debra the Zebra’ delivers road safety advice to junior school children. CCTV monitors the roads and assists the council in its road enforcement duties, including tracking fly-tippers, as well as helping the Police by recording dangerous driving.

Residents identified young people as a potential source of crime and criminality, but also identified them as vulnerable and in need of support. Youth crime in Merton is low. The number of first time entrants into the Criminal Justice System rose in 2007, but has since fallen again. On the other hand, violent crime including robbery appears to be rising in line with the rest of London. But overall the proportion of young people involved in crime in Merton is low, for example as measured by the number on community orders.

Being in education, employment and training helps to reduce youth crime. Merton has consistently had a higher than national figure for the number of young offenders in training, education and employment. We have developed a preventative strategy targeting young people at risk of offending in schools. This has been achieved through partnership working by the youth inclusion support panel, behaviour services, youth service and schools. All of Merton’s secondary schools have School Police officers. Merton has piloted the London-wide Schools Safety and Cohesion Audit to promote the safety of young people. All Merton’s primary schools are delivering a crime prevention programme called ‘Miss Dorothy’. The Youth Justice Service
has developed innovative programmes to engage young people in restorative community-based panels, involving trained volunteers reflective of the local community.

Achievements and emerging trends
The trend in reported crime over the last few years has been a gradual decrease in offences, but yearly fluctuations demonstrate that achieving sustained reductions remains challenging. The Public Service Agreement (2004 to 2007) between central government and the local area required us to reduce overall crime by 17.5%; we exceeded this target, with a 22.5% reduction in crime.

In particular, the 2007/08 financial year showed a 7% reduction in the number of crimes as compared with the 2006/07 financial year, making us one of the safest boroughs in London. This included significant reductions across many of the British Crime Survey crime types, most notably:

- 19% reduction in robbery;
- 9% reduction in domestic burglary;
- 10% reduction in motor vehicle crime;
- 3% reduction in wounding;
- 3% reduction in assault without injury.

We have been successful in winning two awards (one regional and one national) for the work that we have done in partnership with the community. The work that we, including the local residents, did in King George’s Playing Field in Lower Morden saw a 21% reduction in fear of crime in the ward – calls to the Police in the area dropped by 16.8%, and calls to the Graffiti Removal Team reduced by 39%. Neighbourhood Watch in the area became very active and all 331 properties surrounding the park are now members.

In 2007/08 the Anti-social Behaviour Team, in partnership with the Police and Youth Justice Service, arranged four action days, targeting young people who had come to our attention through their links with gangs in the area. Actions included 24 interviews in schools, 46 home visits, which included serving warning letters, Acceptable Behaviour Agreements, and Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). This was highly successful with most of the young people never coming to our attention again. Further initiatives are in place for 2009.

Emerging trends
A Strategic Assessment of the needs of the borough is undertaken every year. This is the best way to ensure that we meet the ever changing needs and aspirations of our communities. Five or six priorities are chosen every year to focus on and action plans are created and delivered against to see these action plans (with clear deliverables and outcomes) please go to the Safer Merton web site.

Merton’s status as an Olympic borough in 2012 will bring many additional tourists and competitors to the borough, which in turn will require additional work and policing to ensure the safety and
security of our residents, visitors and international competitors.

Fear of crime is particularly affected by issues reported nationally and regionally, especially violent crime, for example involving guns and knives. We will always be mindful of these trends and fears in our planning.

Alcohol-related disorder is an emerging issue, specifically in regards to the night time economy, and it is perceived that this will continue to be an issue. Therefore, we will continue to work hard on prevention, treatment and enforcement.

We aim to build respect and resilience with young people in order to lessen future crime trends. This work will be delivered in conjunction with the Children’s Trust, and will focus on young people as victims, witnesses and perpetrators.

What Merton is like now
Safer Merton undertakes a yearly strategic assessment to direct work around crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and drugs. Each year the process of assessing the needs of our communities, coupled with information on crime trends, is used to direct priorities for the forthcoming year. In this way residents’ views are taken into account every year in helping to direct Safer Merton’s priorities.

Priorities for 2009/10 will be alcohol-related issues, anti-social behaviour, residential burglary, domestic violence, youth violence and hate crime. There are a number of themes that have been agreed as cross cutting: youth related crime (where young people are victims, perpetrators and witnesses) substance misuse and fear of crime. These themes will run through all of our strategic priorities. (Action plans and strategies for these can be found on the Safer Merton website).

Fear of crime remains one of the top concerns for local people, as measured through our Annual Resident’s Survey. It has also been the highest concern for young people in the Young Residents Survey for the past five years, but young people also report feeling ‘quite safe’ or ‘very safe’ in their local area and feeling safer than the national average when in school. There is also currently a scrutiny review of the fear of crime taking place, and the outcomes from this review will be considered and taken forward where possible.

Some of the work that is undertaken looks at bridging the gap between our more deprived and our more affluent areas. Results from Merton’s Annual Residents Survey show that the gap between the east and west of the borough in relation to fear of crime and concern about drug users in their areas have reached their 2008 targets.

Overall crime across the borough has also dropped for example, for this year to date (April 2008 – October 2008) overall crime is down by 1% on last year. Most notably, for the same period, theft from a motor vehicle is down by 26%, theft from the person is down by 10%, wounding is down by 7%, and robbery from the person is down by 8%.
The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) has recently been aligned with the Community Plan to contribute more effectively to ‘Bridging the Gap’ issues, including targets to reduce ‘antisocial behaviour’ and the ‘fear of crime’. The action plan also includes a target to address financial inclusion through the development of a Credit Union.

Through the NRS action plans are developed in areas of multiple deprivation, developing specific projects working in partnership with local residents to address local issues, such as arts projects to reduce fear of crime, engagement with young people with the introduction of a junior warden scheme, and the development of intergenerational projects to promote community cohesion. Localised plans provide opportunities to develop innovative approaches to address crime and disorder while enhancing community cohesion linkages at the local level.

Differing Safer Merton themes tackle specifically excluded groups by working to reintegrate them into the mainstream (e.g. ex drug users and ex offenders) and by supporting them to challenge inequality in order to have access to the same standards of service as everyone else (e.g. those who are victims of race, homophobic, disphobic and religious hate crimes as well as those facing domestic violence).

Trends up to 2019
When looking at crime trends we need to recognise that there are traditional crimes, such as burglary, and new and emerging crimes, such as cyber crime. Disorder (as opposed to crime) affects more people and can be very damaging, whereas personal crime affects fewer people but tends to have more impact on the individual. Crime and disorder work needs to balance these, often competing, needs. With this in mind the annual Strategic Assessment will track trends to determine priorities, and tackle them year-on-year.

A relatively small hard core of offenders is behind much of the criminality in Merton. The prolific and priority offenders’ team (a partnership between the council, police and other criminal justice agencies) will focus on an identified number of prolific offenders. For these offenders, breaking the cycle of crime is often difficult, and the PPO team will offer them support and training opportunities in order to assist ex-offenders in changing this will be coupled with robust enforcement action for those who do not change their behaviours.

Drug use lies behind much of the acquisitive offending and we will continue to use our three main tools in tackling this issue - treatment, education and enforcement. We will support individuals in changing harmful patterns of behaviour and offer advice to them, their carers and families, which is of paramount importance in delivering these changes.

Experience in Merton has shown that changes to the landscape encourage more people to use areas in a variety of ways helping the community to police much of the everyday criminality itself. The LDF Core Strategy will seek to create places and spaces that are safe, sympathetic to the environment and designed to
reduce the fear of crime, tackling crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour as well as creating clear and safe access routes.

In relation to young people, action will focus on meeting local needs to support young people and reduce the chances of them becoming either victims or perpetrators of crime. A programme aimed at getting young people involved in activities will be developed further, and will be tailored to recognise and respond to the varying needs of people of different faith, cultural and religious groups.

What Merton will be like in 2019
Safer priorities will be driven by the annual strategic assessment and will potentially change each year, to reflect emerging issues and the changing views of our residents. These priorities will be set in consultation and conjunction with our communities, the voluntary sector and strategic partners.

But our underlying approach will remain that of:
• continuing to tackle all crime in order to reduce the overall number of offences
• focusing on anti-social behaviour and disorder in order to make our communities stronger and more cohesive
• working to reduce the fear of crime to make our communities feel safer
• commissioning services that tackle substance misuse.
Safer Merton improvement deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safer Communities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.1 Undertake and deliver the Strategic Assessment priorities, outcomes and action plans making them available to our communities</td>
<td>Ongoing and Annually</td>
<td>Safer Merton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.2 Create an adult treatment plan to tackle misuse of drugs (and the effects of this on both users, careers and families)</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Substance Misuse Management Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.3 Develop Safer Neighbourhood initiatives, through the Joint Tasking Group, to offer Multi-agency targeted strategies to reduce crime and fear of crime</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Joint Tasking Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.4 Support safer neighbourhood teams (SNT) to be more responsive to their communities needs, across the borough, by ensuring that 80% of their time is spent on their Ward.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Metropolitan Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.5 To continue to work with and across partner organisations, and departments, to tackle anti social behaviour (ASB) in all its forms.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>ASB Project Management Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.6 Manage the alcohol agenda specifically in relation to the night time economy and health impacts</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Merton Alcohol Forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Safety is overseen and delivered by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) as defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998). Core members of this group are the Police Service, Police Authority the Council, the Primary Care Trust, the Fire Authority, and soon to include the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

Safer Merton is Merton’s Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and the Substance Misuse Management Board (SMMB) is the Merton Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT). Our membership is representative of those who are working in the field of reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder. We are, particularly pleased to be joined and supported by the voluntary sector, Government Office for London, courts service and the UK Border Agency.

Safer Merton also has a set of multi-agency management boards that direct and deliver the work, both strategically and operationally of the partnership (CDRP). These groups have clear terms of reference and are reviewed annually in order to assure that the membership direction and ability to deliver are all successfully delivered against such a wide-ranging agenda.
It is also important to remember that crime and disorder can only be tackled in partnership with our communities, for example in the form of membership of ward panels, being community wardens, joining the Police cadets and participating in our neighbourhood watch schemes. Other community groups such as the street pastors support our objectives and assist in us delivering positive outcomes.

The voluntary sector has a very important role to play in the work of Safer Merton, not only are they commissioned to deliver service for us but they also provide service to our client groups through alternate funding streams and they contribute to our strategic direction and offer a constructive challenge mechanism (through the Police Consultative Group and S60 group).

What local people can do to contribute
In order to help direct and contribute to the work of Safer Merton local people can do two things. First they can respond to the strategic assessment consultations every year, thus shaping the priorities of the partnership for the forthcoming year. Second they can join their ward panel and/or local neighbourhood watch scheme - this will enable them to direct local work and feed concerns and issues into the partnership throughout the year.

Cross-cutting themes
Ensuring that people feel safe, are safe, have access to treatment and support around substance misuse and in the rehabilitation of offenders we deliver in conjunction with the following themes and their objectives, in the following ways:

- LE3: Develop and implement Skills Strategy – including those programs tailored for those who are ex-offenders and ex-substance misusers.
- LE4: Progress the regeneration of Mitcham Town Centre and associated complementary initiatives – utilising S106 money to enhance safety in the area.
- LE5: Progress the regeneration of Morden Town Centre and associated complementary initiatives – thus reducing environmental crime and the fear of crime (broken window syndrome)
- T5: Work with TfL and other partners to progress a range of transport improvements in key town centres. In particular, to enhance the environment and bring about significant improvements for all road users – and reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour at transport hubs.
- S13: Deliver Interfaith projects across the borough to strengthen community cohesion – and feeding into the partnerships work on faith hate crime.
- HC3: Deliver systematic care to address pathways for people with long-tem conditions – including those who have substance misuse issues.
- C2: Ensure Children and Young People Stay Safe – we support this by working closely with CTB and commissioning young peoples provision through the trust arrangement.
Stronger Merton

What has happened since 2006?

Achievements and emerging trends
Merton is a diverse borough, with many different communities who enjoy strong, cohesive community relations – 85% of local people say that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the local area.

The Merton Partnership recognises the strength of Merton’s communities and is fully committed to achieving community cohesion. Leading by example, the Partnership launched a Community Cohesion Charter and Strategy in 2006, setting out its commitment to and action supporting community cohesion, and followed this up in 2008 with a Partnership-wide Equality and Diversity Policy.

Activities and events take place throughout the year, providing opportunities for people of different backgrounds, ages, faiths and beliefs to participate in events for the whole community that promote peace and community safety and celebrate Merton’s diversity, equality and social harmony. These include:

- **January**  
  Holocaust Memorial Day

- **February**  
  Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month

- **March**  
  International Women’s Day
June
- Refugee Week
- Volunteers Week
- Traveller History Month
- Mitcham Carnival

August
- Merton Mela

September
- Celebrating Age Festival
- Peace Week

October
- Black History Month
- Local Democracy Week

November
- Compact Week
- Bonfire Night

December
- International Day of Disabled People

A 2005 study found that in Merton 40,000 volunteers support organisations and projects in the voluntary and community sector and public sector, and 54,000 volunteers provide informal support to neighbours or friends. The contribution of volunteering each year is valued at £100 million. For every £1 invested in 800 organisations or projects that involve volunteers in the voluntary and community sector and public sector, at least £5 in economic value is added.

Merton’s sustainable approach to community cohesion includes investment in building the capacity of voluntary and community groups and faith communities. Merton has consistently received accolades for its Compact, a partnership between public agencies and voluntary and community bodies.

To build on this solid base, in 2008 the council launched a Third Sector Strategy setting out a plan to further improve the way in which it works with the voluntary and community sector, including enabling the third sector to influence policy development. The adoption of National Indicator 7, which measures the extent to which the borough provides an environment for a thriving third sector, as a local priority for the Local Area Agreement will enable the success of this activity to be monitored.

Voluntary and community groups and faith communities contribute to ensuring that Merton remains a strong, cohesive borough through opportunities such as the Community Engagement Network, the Interfaith Forum and Community Leaders’ Breakfast workshops. Local people have access to new and increased opportunities to influence and challenge local decision-making, including though the Local Involvement Network, Face the People sessions, Safer Neighbourhood Panels, overview and scrutiny, Community Forums, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum.

In order to support voluntary and community groups and faith communities in engaging local people in their work, a Community Cohesion Event Toolkit was launched in summer 2008, providing a source of advice for groups. The Toolkit is a resource that helps groups organise events which celebrate diversity in Merton and empower people from all different backgrounds to take part in activities together.

The profile of community cohesion has been raised through the
‘Life in One Community’ communications campaign, presenting positive images and messages about Merton’s diverse communities.

£75,000 funding was secured from the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) delivery fund to support activities in Merton. A forum of Merton community leaders oversaw the use of this funding on a range of projects targeting, among others, local Muslim women and young people, and promoting understanding of Islam to non-Muslims. Merton will receive an additional £125,000 in 2008/09 from the PVE delivery fund, with further funding anticipated in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

A Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Strategy was developed by the Merton BME Forum, a sub-group of Merton Unity Network, setting out a plan of action to work in partnership across a range of agencies locally, sub-regionally and regionally, to support the development of BME organisations and to help fulfil their aspirations and those of their communities.

In recognition of the vital contribution that volunteers make to Merton’s communities, the 2007-10 Local Area Agreement included ‘stretch’ targets to increase the number of people taking part in formal volunteering, with a particular focus on people from socially excluded groups. In order to achieve the challenging targets the Partnership adopted a Volunteering Strategy which draws together various strands of volunteering activity currently undertaken across the council and by partners to provide a more coherent approach, linked to Community Plan and Business Plan priorities. The Partnership has established a Volunteering Project Management Board to implement the Volunteering Strategy action plan through working in partnership to promote volunteering, involving more Merton residents in volunteering opportunities, and piloting an employee volunteering project across the council. Volunteering will remain a key priority for the Partnership going forward.

Recognising the benefits of external challenge and accountability, in March the Partnership signed up to the External Scrutiny Protocol which governs how Merton Council’s overview and scrutiny function engages with external partners, and how partners operate with regard to scrutiny activity.

Emerging trends
An emerging issue for Merton is to respond to the requirements of the provisions in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which places increased emphasis on involving local communities and people in the design and delivery of local services, in particular through the new ‘duty to involve’.

The voluntary and community sector (the ‘third’ sector) is an important element of a strong society. It has a clear role in providing services as well as helping to shape policy and contributing to the development of stronger communities. Merton already has a strong and vibrant third sector that has a good relationship with its strategic partners supported by the Merton Compact, which is embedded in Merton’s Local Strategic Partnership. The Third Sector Strategy will include a
A plan of action that will build on these positive relationships, whilst addressing new drivers for change.

The increasing diversity of Merton’s communities, particularly in schools, represents a major challenge for the borough. Merton currently enjoys very good community relations and it is vital that these are maintained and developed, particularly against a backdrop of increasing tension worldwide.

The increasing diversity of Merton’s communities, particularly in schools, represents a major challenge for the borough. Merton currently enjoys very good community relations and it is vital that these are maintained and developed.

In addition, Merton needs to ensure it is responding to the needs of new and emerging communities in the borough. The borough has a high rate of migration and population growth, a trend which is likely to continue. Responding to and managing the impact of this growth, while providing strong community leadership, will be a vital role for the council.

The key strategic priorities are to:
- develop the council’s local leadership role and the capacity of the community and voluntary sector
- empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision-making and a greater role in public service delivery
- increase community cohesion and integration

What Merton is like now
Residents have consistently told us that they feel that Merton is a borough where people of different backgrounds get on well together, and that they want to see this maintained, with a stronger sense of community, and greater knowledge and understanding between communities. Furthermore, 87% of the population think that local public services treat them with respect and consideration some, most, or all of the time, and 57% of the population think services are delivered in a fair and non-discriminatory way.

Local people want to be involved in decision-making and to be informed in changes that will affect them.

Residents want public services to take account of the changes in our population, with the needs of new and growing communities met, with a smaller gap between the east and west of the borough, and equal opportunities for all to access and receive services.

Local people want the role of community and voluntary organisations to be acknowledged through greater recognition and more involvement in delivery of local services.

Trends up to 2019
Merton is a diverse borough: 25% of the population is from a BME group and this is predicted to rise to 37% by 2011. The east of the borough is more diverse than the west. Graveney ward is the most diverse ward in the borough, with 53% of the
population from a BME group, and Longthornton, Figge’s Marsh and Pollards Hill wards are also particularly diverse. People from BME groups are disproportionately disadvantaged by their lack of skills and qualifications, particularly in east Merton.

Merton’s school population is more diverse than the wider community, with 55% of children and young people in Merton’s schools coming from BME groups. Since 2003 the BME school population has risen from 45.9% of the roll to 52.3% in 2008 and in the primary population the BME rate has increased by 10% to 53% over the last five years.

76% of the population have a stated religion, including 63% who are Christian, 5% who are Hindu and 6% who are Muslim. 17% of the population have no religion. Graveney ward, in particular, has high percentages of both Hindu and Muslim residents, as does Figge’s Marsh and Longthornton wards.

26% of the population in Merton was born overseas and data suggests that this figure is growing, for example there has been a 27% increase in the number of children exposed to a non-English language at home, and there has been a 249% increase in the number of Polish-speaking children in schools. Whereas South African and Irish residents are concentrated in the west of the borough, and Polish residents have settled most in the east and the north of the borough, the east of the borough sees the highest concentration of Sri Lankan, Ghanaian and Pakistani residents. The east of the borough is already more diverse than the west and, as can be seen from the patterns above, many of the new and emerging communities are settling in the east, particularly those from BME groups. This suggests that the east of the borough will grow increasingly diverse, as the west remains more homogenous.

What Merton will be like in 2019
Merton will continue to enjoy very good community relations, with strong and positive relations between people of different backgrounds. People will respect the rights and social customs of others, communities that emerge in the borough will be welcomed, and the borough’s diversity will feel more valued and celebrated. People will have access to equal opportunities, irrespective of race, age, gender, faith or belief, sexual orientation, or disability.

Local people will feel that they belong in Merton, with a greater sense of social responsibility, and will be willing and able to play a part in the life of the borough.

With a greater role in public service delivery, local people will help design and deliver local services. Supported by a thriving voluntary and community sector, local people will feel empowered to have a greater choice and influence over local decision-making to shape what happens in their communities, whether through sharing their views on issues that affect them, involvement in formal volunteering, contributing to public meetings, or challenging local public agencies.

The voluntary and community sector will have increased
capacity to play a full part in tackling social problems through providing a voice to communities and delivering services.

One of the main drivers for the Stronger Merton theme is the desire to involve local communities and people in the design and delivery of local services, as underpinned by the provisions in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, in particular through the new ‘duty to involve’. This will also involve working with the voluntary and community sector to build capacity across the sector, as well as encouraging greater involvement in formal volunteering activity.
## Stronger Merton improvement deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stronger Communities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>S.7 Review and evaluate the Merton Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Merton Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.8 Deliver and promote Merton Compact codes of practice and related</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Merton Council/Compact Steering Group</td>
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<td>action plans</td>
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<td>S.9 Review the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Strategic Plan and deliver actions identified as part of the review</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Merton Unity Network</td>
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<td>S.10 Implement the Third Sector Strategy</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Merton Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.11 Development of a community capacity building programme to strengthen capacity within voluntary and community sector organisations</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Merton Council/ Merton Voluntary Service Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.12 Work with voluntary and community organisations to provide local services to meet local needs</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Merton Council/ Merton Voluntary Service Council/ ward multi-agency groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.13 Deliver Interfaith projects across the borough to strengthen community cohesion</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Merton Council/ Merton Voluntary Service Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.14 Increase the number of people taking part in formal volunteering to enable volunteers to gain new skills and make a positive contribution</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Volunteer Centre Merton/ Merton Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.15 Increase public involvement in the democratic process and community engagement opportunities, for example through participation in Community Forums, overview and scrutiny, LGBT Forum, or the Local Involvement Network (LINk)</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Merton Council/ Merton Voluntary Service Council</td>
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</table>
Stronger Communities activity is overseen by the Safer and Stronger Strategy Group, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, which includes members from Merton Council, the Police, the Primary Care Trust, the Fire Brigade, the UK Border Agency and the Voluntary Sector.

What local people can do to contribute?
Local people have a great deal to contribute to the stronger communities theme. They can get involved in shaping their community in a number of ways that suit each individual best, from contributing to public consultations on issues that interest them to challenging local services providers on issues of concern, to taking part in volunteering opportunities in their local area. Additionally, they can take part in the various commemorative and celebratory events that happen across the borough to promote community cohesion, or contribute to the various forums where local issues can be raised and addressed, such as Community Forums, Safer Neighbourhood Panels, or overview and scrutiny panels.

More than 200 voluntary and community organisations are working directly to strengthen local communities. They are effective at grassroots level in engaging the community. A number of voluntary organisations contribute to community cohesion, for example for Peace Week, Holocaust Memorial Day, LGBT History Month, etc.

Cross-cutting themes
Activity falling under the 'stronger communities' area contributes to a number of improvement deliverables set out in other chapters of this Community Plan, including:

- LE8: Increase volunteering (recognising that it is a route to work and enhances skills and experience) taking advantage of the opportunities offered by 2012
- S4: Support safer neighbourhood teams (SNT) to be more responsive to their communities needs, across the borough, by ensuring that 80% of their time is spent on their ward.
- HC6: Year on year increase in the number/proportion of people with mental health problems in mainstream employment, education/training or voluntary work in integrated settings
- OP3: Increase opportunities for formal volunteering, including Cultural Olympiad, 2012 Olympics and Paralympics
- OP4: Build capacity of service providers to engage older people in commissioning services affecting them
- OP5: Support intergenerational activities
- OP9: Deliver a series of “celebrating age” events to highlight issues important to older people but with a focus on active ageing and opportunities in leisure; sport; culture and lifestyle.
- CYP4: Enable children and young people to make positive contributions
Chapter 9
Healthier Communities

Introduction
On average the population of Merton tends to enjoy better health than most Londoners. However, within the borough there are variations in standards of health linked to the way people live their lives and the opportunities available to choose healthy lifestyles in their communities. Jointly, Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust and Merton Council aim to focus on reducing health inequalities and placing more emphasis on prevention, patient choice and offering a personalised service.

People living in relative poverty are more likely to experience more ill-health and live shorter lives. Education, culture, housing, transport and the environment all play a part in individual health outcomes. The PCT and local authority are keen to add value to peoples’ lives by offering tools and techniques for taking responsibility for lifestyle changes. Our vision ‘it's your life’ will empower people to manage their own health and well-being.

In order to deliver this vision the PCT and local authority are undergoing significant changes to strengthen their commissioning functions to ensure delivery of services is based on choice and control for people.
The role of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector
The voluntary, community and faith sector in Merton has a great part to play in helping to make local communities healthier. Voluntary groups are crucial in providing health and social care services, advice and information or in targeting information to particular communities. The focus of VCS service delivery is prevention. VCS services often relieve pressure on public sector services and reduce overall expenditure. Small grass-roots groups provide self help and support to enable communities to help each other on specific health issues.

The sector also enables people to become more involved in their local health and care services – for example, through the Merton Local Involvement Network. Groups also play a key role in encouraging healthier, more active lifestyles through social and arts activities, exercise and mutual support networks.

What has happened since 2006?
Achievements and emerging trends
Over 2006 and 2007 the thematic partnership held two workshops to establish our key priorities for action. These included:

- reducing smoking
- reducing obesity
- improving mental well-being
- increasing choice and control for users and carers.

More recently the partnership has discussed strategies and interventions to help reduce the harm caused by alcohol.

Improving access to primary care
In October 2008, the Better Healthcare Closer to Home (BHCH) programme submitted proposals to invest £208 million locally. This includes more than £150 million for the redevelopment of St. Helier Hospital, over £40 million investment in the development of three new local care centres (including the Nelson and the Wilson), and over £10 million for a new intermediate care centre (proposed to be at the Wilson Hospital). A decision from NHS London is expected early in 2009. In addition, an investment of £13 million has been approved by the PCT to redevelop and extend the Shotfield Health Centre in Wallington, which will incorporate a fourth local care centre. Our aim, through the BHCH programme, is to develop modern, integrated and better quality health services that allow local people to be treated, wherever possible, close to where they live.

As part of Lord Darzi’s Next Stage Review, all PCTs in the country are required to have at least one new GP-led Health Centre in easily accessible locations, providing a flexible range of bookable appointments, walk-in services and other services for either non-registered or registered patients, based on the guiding principle of ensuring that the local public can access GP services any time from 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week including bank holidays. As part of Sutton & Merton PCT’s plans for a Polyclinic and Local Care Centre located at The Wilson...
Hospital site, a GP-led Health Centre will be positioned here as the first stage in this process. It is anticipated that the Health Centre will be open from the beginning of October 2009.

Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust provides a variety of community services as well as working in partnership with independent contractors such as GPs, dentists, pharmacists and opticians. In 2008/09 the PCT invested 11% to improve access for NHS dentistry. Substantial investment is on-going. However in 2009/10 the PCT will focus on identifying gaps in service provision in order to effectively commission appropriate NHS dentistry according to patient need.

Improving support for carers
The Carers Strategy was launched on 4 December 2008. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for carers. In order to achieve this, the Carers Partnership will work with carers to put the aims of the strategy into action, ensuring that high quality services and support are provided to carers who are entitled to them and that carers are recognised and valued for the contribution they make to our Community. Some of the partnership’s achievements include:

- carers week and carers rights days events
- two voluntary organisations now carry out carers assessments on referral from social services
- an A to Z of carers services has been developed
- the council has an employee carers’ charter cited by the Social Care Institute of Excellence
- emergency respite service for carers of adults funded by the Grant is seen by the Department of Health as good practice.

Improving services for those who need palliative care – End of Life Care
Three End of Life Facilitators and a Nurse Consultant have been funded to assist in care homes in becoming accredited for end of life provision, to assist GPs in developing registers of patients who are at the end of their life, and to assist in Liverpool Care Pathway (LCP) / Preferred Priorities for Care (PPC) in provider services. Work is in progress to establish a hospice at home model of care in conjunction with a local hospice to provide a
more responsive service to patients wanting to die at home by providing health care assistant support.

Smokefree Merton
Merton successfully implemented the Smokefree legislation on 1st July 2007. The council became a Smokefree organisation on 30 September 2008 with co-ordinated support from the Sutton and Merton Stop Smoking Service. Merton has Smokefree Compliance Officers who continue to visit businesses to ensure 100% compliance. Environmental health officers and community workers from voluntary sector organisations have been trained to direct smokers wanting help to the local NHS Stop Smoking Service. The service has established a comprehensive network of community advisers across the borough of Merton. Merton is also part of the London Smokefree Forum.

Reducing obesity
Funding enabled a children’s obesity awareness raising training programme for NHS, Local authority, education, voluntary sector and community sector staff. Families with children who were overweight were given the opportunity of attending a children’s weight management intervention provided through the Wimbledon Weight Management Centre. Care pathways for weight management for adults have been developed for all general practices. The Merton Rosemary Conley Diet & Fitness Club has been commissioned to deliver weight loss programmes through a GP referral scheme.

Understanding alcohol concerns
Tackling excessive alcohol consumption has not received such focused and co-ordinated attention. Drug and Alcohol Action Teams have been given the job of reducing the harm caused by alcohol from April 2008. Merton has agreed a multi-agency approach to developing an action plan to minimise harmful drinking. The Department of Health’s delivery plan demonstrates how routine alcohol screening and early intervention could bring about long-term reductions in ill-health. Evidence suggests that by identifying hazardous and harmful drinkers, early, and giving them brief, targeted advice, the risk can be reduced. Effective local alcohol strategies will look at identifying these hazardous and harmful drinkers. Safer and Stronger Communities Thematic Partnership is the lead to support initiatives around sensible drinking and alcohol related interventions. It has also been identified as a priority area from the Crime and Disorder Strategic Needs Assessment. Overview and Scrutiny support the development of a Merton Alcohol Strategy. The Children and Young People’s Plan delivers drugs and alcohol programmes through targeted youth programmes.

Opportunities for people with mental health problems
Since 2004 there have been Employment Specialists based within the Community Mental Health Teams and the early Intervention Service for young people with a first episode of psychosis at South West London & St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust. The Employment Specialists deliver the evidence based practice, Individual Placement and Support, which is recommended by NICE guidance and government policy.
Since implementation many people with severe mental health problems in Merton have been assisted to gain and retain open employment, mainstream education and voluntary work. In 2007/08 a total of 419 service users were supported in open employment, mainstream education or voluntary work. Of those, 259 service users were supported in open employment. In 2007 the Trust was awarded the BUPA Foundation Clinical Excellence Award for the work of the Early Intervention Team for young people with a first episode of a psychosis where the team with the employment specialist supported over 80% of service users they worked with to return to open employment or mainstream education as part of their recovery.

Psychological Therapies in Primary Care (PTiPC) are provided in primary care settings for people requiring psychological interventions, using a range of techniques such as one-to-one counselling, group therapy and e-therapy. Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) focuses on people with anxiety and depression and those with long-term conditions.

Disability Services
During 2006 and 2007 workshops were held with a number of individuals and voluntary sector groups exploring how the PCT and Merton could improve the support provided to those with a range of long-term disabilities. As a result of this work new support pathways were devised and the development of a user led ‘Centre for Independent Living’ was proposed. A steering group was constituted, led by local disabled people and plans are both inclusive and progressing well. Voluntary sector groups are increasingly making use of the refurbished All Saints Road facility and this works very well with access to both Local Authority Occupational Therapy support with equipment and support from PCT Clinicians. Merton is also progressing steadily with its development of Personalised Budgets. People with disabilities will be a significant part of the pilot which is due to begin in the spring of 2009. Personalised Budgets will enable disabled people to have far more choice and flexibility regarding purchase of equipment, support, leisure opportunities etc. It is anticipated that the CIL will eventually facilitate and support the personalised process for disabled people.

People with Learning Disabilities have been the focus of attention during 2008 as serious health inequalities were highlighted in this group by a National Independent Inquiry. The PCT and Merton LA conducted a Joint Strategic Needs Analysis to focus on specific local issues relating to the national trends. There is a comprehensive action plan to which all agencies are committed. One of the significant developments is the Directed Enhanced Service that many GP’s will be providing which includes an in depth Annual Health Check. This is very much welcomed by user and carer groups.

Merton has also been leading a process of reproviding services and homes for the people leaving longstay hospital and NHS campuses. This is progressing well and people will finally be able to enjoy equal access to their local communities. The Merton Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities has, along with Wandsworth and St. Georges, won an award.
for its hospital access and facilitation work. This work has really positively impacted on the patient experience.

The Happy Soul Festival
The Happy Soul Festival originated in Merton in 2007 as a small film festival aimed at engaging people from black and minority ethnic populations in films which address mental health issues from the perspectives of their own cultures. The first event encompassed 3 events and engaged 350 people - feedback surveys indicated the people felt this very helpful in raising the awareness of mental health, particularly in cultures where this was associated with shame and therefore ‘brushed under the carpet’ thereby inhibiting early identification and intervention to support/treat the person.

Happy Soul II in 2008 was much enlarged and engaged 1,300 people over 4 boroughs, and this innovative approach to engaging black and minority ethnic populations in mental health won the London Health and Social Care mental health award for community engagement.

The Happy Soul Festival is now an established event in Merton and across South West London that provides a valuable tenet in mental health promotion and early intervention and treatment for people from black and minority ethnic populations. The 2009 festival was the largest yet and was staged over two weeks in April/May.
Emerging trends
Healthcare for London is developing a framework for London’s healthcare for the next ten years. Primary care trusts are working with London councils, third sector, patients and the public to help London’s healthcare match the best in the world. The plans are based on five principles:

• Services should be focused on individual needs and choices.
• Services should be localised where possible.
• There should be joined-up care and partnership working, maximising the contribution of the entire workforce.
• Prevention is better than cure.
• There must be a focus on reducing differences in health and healthcare across London.

There is a broad agreement that people should be cared for in their own homes or in the local community, but what impact will this have on social care? For example for a stroke patient, more specialist care would enable patients to arrive home quicker, with fewer disabilities and complications and needing less support. However poor diets, a lack of exercise, stress and a growing population will contribute to the need to change the way health and social care work together to deliver quality services. Are there ways to co-locate social, healthy living, leisure and health services? Can we make sure that care in people’s homes is really best for them and it is what they want? These are the challenges we need to address as a partnership.

What Merton is like now

Work and illness
13.77% of the population have a long term limiting illness, the sixth lowest percentage in London. The numbers on capacity benefit are also relatively low – 30.44 people per 1,000 working age population – the second lowest figure in outer London. 3.1% of the population is unable to work because of permanent sickness.

Life expectancy and mortality
Male life expectancy is 79 years, while female life expectancy is 83.1 years (2006), the sixth highest in London. These figures drop significantly in some wards in the east of the borough, for example Figge’s Marsh, where male life expectancy is only 72.7 years (2005).

The infant mortality rate is 5.3 per 1,000 live births (2006), the twelfth highest in London. The Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for the borough is 88.2 (2002-2006), indicating that the borough has lower than average mortality, compared to the rest of England. However, seven of the borough’s wards have higher than average SMRs of over 100 (Cricket Green, Colliers Wood, Figge’s Marsh, Lavender Fields, Longthornton, Ravensbury and St Helier), and all seven are located in the east of the borough (2002-2006).

The cancer mortality rate is 113.60 per 100,000 population aged under 75 (2004-06) and the coronary heart disease mortality rate is 32.62 per 100,000 population aged under 75 (2004-06).
Obesity and exercise
35.9% of adults are overweight, and 19.8% are obese (2006), with 10.9% of children in reception being obese, and 21.3% of children in Year 6 (2007/08).

21.6% of adults take moderate intensity sport or active recreation for at least 30 minutes continuously at least three times a week. Merton has the seventh highest proportion of sports club membership in London (31.2%). 46.4% of the adult population is classed as physically inactive (2006).

92.1% of Merton’s 5-16 year olds spend at least two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport (2007/08).

Drugs, alcohol and smoking
Around 25% of the population smokes, in line with the average figure for England (2007) and 9.1 people per 1,000 population suffer from problem drug misuse, 81% of whom are male (2004/05).

The average weekly alcohol consumption for men is 16.1 units and 7.5 units for women (2002). Between 1998 and 2004 there was an average of 15.2 alcohol related deaths per 100,000 population for men, and 8.1 per 100,000 for females. This ranks Merton 150 and 124 nationally.

Merton is in the top 30% nationally, and is ranked third in London for under 18 alcohol specific hospital admissions (2006). In a 2005 survey, 17% of Year 8 and Year 10 pupils had drunk alcohol in the week prior to the survey.

Mental illness
Estimates suggest that around 30,000 people are suffering from a mental illness, with demand for local mental health services 8% below the national average (2000).

Deprivation
According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007) one of Merton’s Super Output Areas (SOAs) is in the 30% most deprived nationally for the health and disability domain, and four are in the 40% most deprived nationally. The more deprived SOAs are concentrated in the east of the borough.

What Merton will be like in 2019
The health and well-being of the population – promoting health and ill-health prevention will keep people out of the care system.

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3 For more public health information, look at www.suttonandmertonnhs.uk

4 Numbers of Problematic Drug Users (e.g. those using heroin or crack cocaine) in effective treatment for 2007/08 was 408 individuals. Effective treatment is defined as an individual being in care planned structure treatment for at least 12 weeks or completing such treatment in a planned way.

5 When someone experiences severe and or enduring mental health problems they are sometimes described as mentally ill. However, there are certain difficulties with this term. There is no universally agreed cut-off point between normal behaviour and behaviour associated with mental illness. The label mental illness is highly stigmatising, encouraging people to think of ‘the mentally ill’ as different. The term mental illness can misleadingly imply that all mental health problems are solely caused by medical or biological factors. In fact, most mental health problems result from a complex interaction of biological, social / psychological factors. For many people, the existing systems of categorising illnesses do not relate closely enough to their experiences. Some people, including some professionals, prefer not to accept diagnoses which may be misleading or stigmatising. For more information look at the mental Health Foundation website www.mentalhealth.org.uk
Long-term conditions – promoting better self-care and treatment in a community setting or in people’s homes will mean fewer people need to spend time in hospital.

Access to services – fair and prompt access to care should mean that waiting should no longer be an issue for the majority of service users.

The patient/user experience – promoting maximum choice, as well as a positive experience will mean that services are more responsive to consumers.

Merton Healthier Communities Strategy 2008 to 2012
The healthier communities’ strategy provides a unique opportunity for partners to make Merton healthier. It also aims to help individuals and communities take long-term responsibility for their health – it’s your life. An individual’s lifestyle also influences their health, so we must enable and encourage people to make healthier choices, in what they eat, whether they exercise or smoke, and to understand their emotional well-being. Its priorities include:
- reducing smoking
- reducing obesity
- improving mental health and well-being
- increasing choice and control for users and carers
- addressing the wider determinants of health.

See www.merton.gov.uk/healthiercommunitiesstrategy

Action plans have been developed for smoking, obesity and mental health and well-being.

The Strategic Plan sets out ‘to improve the health and quality of life of its population through focusing on prevention of ill health and the commissioning of quality services that are clinically effective and provide value for money. People will be supported to manage their own health, and care will be provided in the most appropriate and accessible way. The PCT will strive to reduce health inequalities, working with other public services and third sector partners.’

To achieve this vision, Sutton and Merton aims to improve substantially by 2013 on eight priority health needs: cancer, coronary heart disease, stroke, smoking, diabetes, falls and dementia, mental health, and end of life care.

In order to deliver this, the PCT aims to make major progress on delivering Better Healthcare Closer to Home. This will involve building a network of four Local Care Centres, doubling current capacity for the intermediate and post-cute care, and initiating a major redevelopment at St. Helier Hospital to substantially reshape healthcare services for Sutton and Merton residents. Building on this the Primary and Community Care Strategy has aligned its objectives in:
- improving outcomes for patients
- providing more care locally
- tackling health inequalities
• meeting changing demographics and healthcare needs
• delivering personalised care
• delivering coordinated care
• modernising primary care estate.

Investment in health improvement
The Healthier Communities Thematic Partnership agreed to invest Choosing Health funding into reducing obesity, reducing harm from alcohol; and improving mental health and well-being.

Transformation Plan
The council’s transformation plan for Community Care recognises that while performance, service delivery and practice are good in many areas, there is a need for modernisation and for changing service delivery to reflect national and local policies and national good practice.
## Healthier communities improvement deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HC1: To produce an annual Joint Strategic Needs Assessment addressing health inequalities including improved access to services for vulnerable groups</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Merton Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC2: Patient/users will be encouraged to express their preferences, particularly in disadvantaged communities</td>
<td>Annual Review</td>
<td>PCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC3: Deliver systematic care to address pathways for people with long-term conditions</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>PCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC4: Develop clear plans and arrangements for access to a NHS dentist for Merton residents</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>PCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC5: To develop a local care centre in West Merton on the Nelson Hospital site containing two GP Practices. In addition to develop a local care centre in East Merton on the Wilson Hospital site containing GP-led health centre</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>PCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC6: Increase in the number/proportion of people with mental health problems in mainstream employment, education/training or voluntary work in integrated settings</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>SWL &amp; St Georges Mental Health Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC7: To undertake vascular risk assessments (VRA) for patients aged 40 to 74 years and manage those with high risk factor</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>PCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC8: To develop a health perception questionnaire including the impact of wider determinants of health</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Merton Council</td>
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</table>
The Healthier Communities Thematic Partnership is accountable for developing, delivering effectiveness of actions set within this strategy. The partnership includes representation from: Merton Council departments, Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust, South West London and St Georges Mental Health Trust and the Third sector.

How local people can get involved?
The Healthier Communities Thematic Partnership has approved the Merton Healthier Communities Strategy. The strategy promotes public and patient engagement in healthy living activities and lifestyle changes ‘adding life to years and years to life’.

Examples of how you could participate:
• Providing your views on local health and social matters, and influencing local policy changes through getting involved with your local LINKs
• Getting involved in the PCT’s Community Development and Health Course and brief intervention programmes to sign post people you know onto appropriate services e.g. stop smoking services
• Managing your health and well-being - through healthy eating, regular exercise, sensible drinking, reducing stress and not smoking
• Getting involved in the Cultural Olympiad through sports and arts activities

enabling and encouraging people to make healthier choices...
Chapter 10
Older People

Introduction
The older people theme addresses issues of concern to people aged 50 upwards. While many people in their 50s do not regard themselves as old this is the time that preparation for later life is considered (whether pensions and retirement or continuing working lives) and ageing relatives with health problems may have necessitated contact with health services or other agencies, so there is a growing interest in how older people are supported or enabled to conduct independent lives.

Generally the older people theme is one where continuing independence and fulfilment is emphasised as the greater proportion of older people do remain active and independent as well as contributors to society economically, socially and by supporting their families.

What has happened since 2006?
Achievements and emerging trends

The Celebrating Age Festival
The Celebrating Age Festival for the over 50s, first held in 2003 has grown in strength and importance. Age Concern Merton takes responsibility for organising the event but calls upon a wide range of organisations across the borough to provide
activities and venues. Through an exciting and varied range of activities the Festival seeks to involve as many people aged 50+ from all backgrounds and abilities, across the whole borough, and its aims have grown to include:

- highlighting the contribution older people make to the community
- building a positive image by showing how they benefit community life
- showcasing the breadth of opportunities available in Merton
- involving and advising on key issues
- helping older people develop a healthy lifestyle
- encouraging inter-generational activities
- celebrating the diversity of our communities.

As such, the Festival has become an important focal point for people aged 50+ and a 1,200 strong base of Festival Friends was recorded for 2008. Attendance increases year on year and this provides an excellent opportunity for promoting the issues that older people find relevant to their lives.

Local groups and networks can also help older people make their voice heard and help decide what health and care services are available and how and when they are delivered. Local arts, activity and support groups can also play an important role in improving the social and community lives of older people.

The Celebrating Age Strategy
In 2007, a wide consultation was held among people aged 50+ and the results of this were published in ‘Celebrating Age – Valuing Experience, a strategy for people over 50 in Merton’. Areas of concern covered transport, health and social care, leisure and learning opportunities, the environment, personal safety, having an influence and being respected, employment, income, and better options for housing. The strategy was launched at the Celebrating Age Festival in 2007, and in 2008, again at the Festival, an update on progress was given, which included actions achieved and in hand across all the areas mentioned above. These included:

- working with Transport for London to improve bus drivers’ consideration of older people’s needs
- a new sheltered housing scheme in Mitcham and plans for new care homes
- improved information provision and learning activities
- targeted information days concerning energy, CO₂ emissions and benefits availability
- improved safeguarding arrangements.

The role of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector
The voluntary, community and faith sector plays an important role in the lives of older people in Merton. Local groups help deliver crucial services and provide advice, information, support and facilities.
Older People’s Housing Strategy
A Housing Strategy, developed in consultation with older people, was published in 2006. From this arose a number of initiatives that give older people a voice in housing issues (the Older People’s Housing Forum) as well as information (Housing Matters and the Advice Network). The Housing Strategy is due to be reviewed in 2009/10. The Older People’s Housing Forum has also agreed to monitor the Celebrating Age Strategy, identifying key areas of interest.

Older People’s Thematic Partnership
The Older People’s Thematic Partnership comprises representatives from the Community Engagement Network (including Merton Seniors Forum, Age Concern Merton, the Pensions Service) as well as councillors and council officers. The Partnership meets monthly and agrees key performance areas as well as monitoring these across their lifetime. It discussed the indicators that were most relevant for inclusion in the Local Area Agreement, ‘Bridging the Gap’, in 2007. It also oversees and co-ordinates activity supporting the main indicators, for instance the Energy Advice Day that was held in October 2008.

Older People’s Wellbeing Network
The Older People’s Wellbeing Network is chaired by Community Engagement Network representatives and draws on a range of organisations (including voluntary sector, health and adult social care) that look at a wider set of issues of concern to the over 50s, and in more depth, than are covered by the performance indicators.

Intergenerational work
In 2008 funding was obtained by Merton Council to create an intergenerational centre. The funding covers capital costs for the building, which is situated next to St Marks Academy in the east of the borough and is being developed alongside the Children’s Centre. Discussion is underway for the kinds of services that will promote contact between younger and older people and how these will be funded.

Re-ablement service
The focus of this new service will be on facilitating discharge from hospital, preventing admission into long-term-care and maximising individuals’ potential for rehabilitation. The aim is to provide intensive support for individuals to enable them to regain and maintain independence for as long as possible.

Choice in how resources are allocated and what kind of services received
Direct payments whereby individuals are given cash and can then decide how best this can be used to help them and they commission their own support, are already being promoted. Direct payments have been taken up more readily among the adult population generally and less so among older people. It is recognized that older people may need more support in managing this kind of method.

Emerging trends
The nature of care service delivery is changing with more emphasis on individuals’ ability to decide what kind of activity or support best
caters to personal needs. ‘Putting People First’ means that people are being empowered more and more to direct the way resources are used to support them. An ageing population also places more pressures on available funding, which is a challenge for service providers in a climate of reducing budgets. In addition, older people are being encouraged to have their say and this will lead to a rise in expectations not just in care services, but across a whole range of areas that affect everyday life. Volunteering is encouraged more as this can help relieve pressure on public services and reduce overall expenditure.

It is important to recognise that older people generally want to stay in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. This fits in with other notions of independence, reductions in residential care placements and the emphasis on help and care when needed in the home. There also needs to be an emphasis on providing better opportunities and choices for older people at earlier ages to enable safe, healthy and fulfilling lives in communities. This links with the Local Development Framework and housing strategies.

An ageing society is often viewed in terms of increasing dependency. However, the reality should be that as older people become an ever more significant proportion of the population, our communities will increasingly depend on the contribution that they can make and the experience that they can pass on. Older people cover a huge age range from 50 to 100+, and there are more older families, and increasingly more with three generations of older people.

Some of the challenges to traditional assumptions are already evident:

- older people are healthier for longer than previous generations
- there are more economically active older people than ever before
- there is less of a view that age and poverty go together.

Despite these positive trends, older people do face some real difficulties: poor health, difficult access to services, low income levels, discrimination, exclusion, exploitation and being marginalised from mainstream life opportunities.

Reaching older people who are not involved through choice, or who are excluded is important. The sense of celebrating age can be a key factor in reaching older people who may be coping very well, but are not open to the full range of independence, prevention and lifestyle choices that will help them in future years. Equally, older people who are excluded because of language, race or culture can have their horizons broadened, and friendship encouraged across personal barriers that could allow them the same number of choices and flexibilities that other older people expect.

As well as promoting prevention and independence, integrated acute care and health services must be available when needed. The overall approach must not lose sight of excellent delivery of core health and social care services and their links to
prevention, independence and citizenship.

A balance, therefore, between prevention, independence and acute care medical and clinical needs has to be achieved. More effort also needs to be directed towards self care, especially in managing long-term health conditions. Older people need to be able to access information close to where they live, and through a range of routes, about health and other important issues.

An ageing population is putting new pressures on mental health services in Merton. The complex nature of older people’s mental health will require an integrated response - cutting across health and social care services, but linked to housing, the voluntary sector, benefits advice, physical and mental health and specialist care. The importance of maintaining mental well-being will be increasingly recognised in the next few decades.

Older people increasingly expect to have more choice and control over any public services they receive. The whole basis for service delivery for social care is changing over the next few years to one where the basic expectation is that the older person will assess their own needs and have control over any public funding used for their support. In addition to direct payments, there are new methods of resourcing care:

- **Personal budgets** are an allocation of funding given to users after an assessment that should be sufficient to meet their assessed needs. This payment can be taken either as a direct payment (as above) or left for the council to commission the required service, or indeed a combination of the two. By 2011 all publicly funded users should have a personal budget, except in emergencies.
  - Individual budgets are another option but as these cover a range of funding streams (for example, disabled facilities grant, supporting people) it is a far more complicated method to introduce and pass on.

All the above methods will be developed as part of the Putting People First programme over the coming years.

As life expectancy increases, the proportion of the population aged over 85 in Merton will increase over the next 10 years. Growing numbers of people from ethnic minorities will be entering retirement age and this will affect how services are delivered to an increasingly diverse and ageing community.

The national and London context

- There are more than one million people aged 60 and over in London and 1.9 million aged 50 and over, although London has a statistically younger population than other parts of the UK.
- Like that of other regions in the UK, London’s population is ageing and projections show a particularly strong growth in numbers of people between 50 and state pension age.
- London has 45% of the UK’s population from black and minority ethnic communities and this is now being reflected among London’s older people. The Greater London Authority expects that the current 14% of London pensioners who
are from black and minority ethnic communities will rise to 21% by 2016 and 25% by 2021. Most older Londoners are women, with 64% of Londoners over 60 being women with large majorities at older ages.

- London’s older people are very diverse in their cultures, faiths and lifestyles. They are also in widely different social and economic situations – the London picture has been set out in the 'Older People's Strategy for London' from the Mayor of London.

- By 2031, nearly 23% of England’s population will be aged 65 and over. Those aged 85 and over will form 3.7% of the population in England.

- In the 1960s, fewer than 300 people in Britain had reached the age of 100. Today there are more than 6,000, a number expected to swell to 40,000 in three decades' time.

The trends in Merton generally follow those in London and the nation and the national debate about how older people are perceived and treated, funding available for services and the changing nature of these services holds good in Merton.

There is a developing central and local government agenda that sets out to offer older people the opportunity to have life prospects that maximise their well-being and independence. Within health, housing and adult social care policies, there is an increasing emphasis on the need for prevention and the promotion of independence and personal choice. There is a trend away from institutional provision in residential homes and towards supporting older people in their own homes within their communities. This shift, though, is proving a challenge to achieve in practice.

That challenge is clear in some key services for older people, for example, older people’s mental health where the picture of acute need will be exacerbated by the changing nature of the population. Current estimates suggest that mental health problems in older people are widespread, occurring in about 40% visiting their GP, 50% of general hospital in-patients and 60% of those who live in care homes. Depression is estimated to be present in about 12-15% of those aged over 65. Dementia affects one person in 20 aged over 65 and one person in five aged over 80. As people live longer with more over 80 years there will be a corresponding increase in the proportion of people with dementia.

What Merton is like now
Work continues to collate information on older people that can be developed to inform what we do and to measure progress. At the moment, data exists in a variety of places and formats and better intelligence on the profile of older people will help to meet specific targets for older people.

In Merton, we know that:
- people aged 50 or over constitute 26% of the local population – roughly 52,000 out of a total population of 199,300 (2007 mid-year estimate) and are forecast to increase to over 28% by 2015
• 3,600 of Merton’s population are over 85 and the number is likely to increase disproportionately compared to other age groups

• more people from ethnic minorities will be entering retirement age

• older people are more likely to live in the western and southern parts of the borough and some areas have a very high proportion of older residents. Currently, the highest concentrations of people aged 85+ are in Raynes Park, St Helier and Village wards. A larger number of wards have a concentration of people aged 60+: Cannon Hill, Lower Morden, Ravensbury and St Helier (located in the south), as well as the northern ward of Village. With the projected rise of people aged 80+ it is therefore more likely to cover this larger number of wards

• 67% of all older person households are owner-occupiers with another 10% renting in the private sector. Just over one in five older person households (21%) live in social rented housing, with 7% living in housing association properties and 14% in council-owned housing. 25% of Merton’s council housing is occupied by older persons only

• for Merton males, life expectancy is 76.9 years and for females it is 81.3 years. However, there are significant disparities between the east and the west of the borough, with the west showing lower life expectancy.

The consultation held in 2007 that led to the Celebrating Age – Valuing Experience strategy identified a range of issues of concern to people over 50. There was general agreement over the issues raised as shown below, however a key issue was around being informed and having access to information.

• Transport – many older people struggle to access public transport, and may feel intimidated. Access to transport is vital for maintaining older people’s independence and ensuring they are able to access the services they need.

• Health and social care – health and wellbeing is older people’s main priority in Merton. As detailed above, providing good quality health and social care services is a key priority.

• Leisure and learning opportunities – later life should be framed as a time of opportunity, achievement and contribution. Providing access and opportunities for leisure and learning can help to improve health and physical fitness, and mental wellbeing.

• Environment – a safe and accessible environment, designed with older people’s needs in mind helps to support and promote independence, improve quality of life and reduce fear of crime.

• Personal safety – personal safety is older people’s second main priority in Merton. Although Merton has low levels of crime, fear of crime remains high. Tackling this fear, and supporting older people to feel safe in their communities is
vital to promoting a good quality of life and independence. Improving relationships between younger and older residents is also a priority for the borough, with the borough awarded funding from the London Development Agency to open the country’s first intergenerational centre.

- Having an influence and being respected – older people have considerable experience and knowledge to contribute to society, and ensuring their voice is heard, and they are able to influence local services and decisions is a key priority.

- Employment – many older people are keen to continue working, and preventing age discrimination, and supporting employment is important for independence and wellbeing.

- Income – older people are one of the key groups at risk of social exclusion and poverty, including fuel poverty. Maximising the take-up of benefits and providing access and information to grant schemes such as Coldbusters helps to ensure older people are able to maximise their incomes and live comfortably.

- Housing – providing suitable, affordable and comfortable accommodation for older people is hugely important for their quality of life. In addition, the council aims to provide support for older people to live at home where possible.

What will Merton be like in 2019?
The vision for people over 50 can be summed up as positive citizenship. By 2019 the majority of older people will be independent, active in their own lives and active contributors to the community.

The aim is to build on this image and strengthen it. This will be achieved through the improvement deliverables set out below and through the priorities and targets set out in the LAA.

We will continue to celebrate the over 50s and their contribution to the community.

The voice of the over 50s has become more prominent but will continue to grow to ensure all services recognise and address the needs specific to older people. This will include areas such as improved standards of driving by bus drivers, the ability to shape services as they are being formulated and ensuring providers of existing services react to specific areas of concern. More use will be made of existing forums for consultation, for example, the Celebrating Age Festival Friends database, particularly as this captured a good spread of ages from 50 to over 90 as well as a range of people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Older people are likely to be working longer and own more assets, which not only supports independence but emphasises their active contribution to the local economy and the community. With the emphasis on health improvement, there

The strategy is supported by an action plan that addresses all these areas. While the plan is fairly detailed it includes aspirational comments as well as concrete actions.
will be a greater proportion of older people living longer and healthier lives.

This in turn will lead to a demand in leisure activities, whether learning, social, or sporting. The Celebrating Age Festival has become an established part of the annual calendar and provides a service beyond just social events, bringing people together from diverse backgrounds, introducing people to new experiences and generally being a positive advertisement for this section of the community.

However, there will also be a section of the older population that is likely to experience poorer health and higher mortality, for example from the rise in obesity levels and from the rise in the numbers of over 85s. New ways of commissioning care services will be in place as will joint agency working to ensure seamless transition across different areas of expertise. In addition, there will be an ever greater emphasis on health promotion to encourage people to be aware of healthy lifestyles and avoid behaviour that will promote poorer health.

An active population, which is better informed, will require access to activities of a social nature and learning opportunities, some of a purposive nature, others more for fun. Merton Adult Education will continue to provide learning sessions although charges may need to be applied, and other opportunities will be available through the Cultural Strategy and activities taking place in the intergenerational centre.

The diversity of older people will increase and there will be improved understanding and delivery of care for people from different backgrounds, people with different sexual orientation and people with other specific needs. While some minority ethnic groups have their own support systems, organised support groups need to have greater awareness of these needs and this will increase.

Improved information provision and promotion through single points of contact, for instance, will assist older people to access services more easily. Hard to reach and excluded groups will be targeted specifically in disseminating information. While the urgent areas to promote may be around health support and benefits, it is recognised that many different services contribute to well-being and information will therefore be wide-ranging. The aim is to promote independent living as far as possible and people will have choice in the kind of support they require to achieve this. Foundations for this are in place through the Housing Strategy and availability of aids such as telecare, but the establishment of individual budgets will allow people to tailor the help they need for their specific circumstances. Putting People First will create the agenda and process on how independent information and advice can be provided to help people in making appropriate choices for themselves, and what commissioning needs to be in place to support this. Merton will use the term “personal budgets” to describe individual personal budget allocation as described above. The nature of council services and of other agencies will need to change in line with this.
Partnership working is essential to achieving this and statutory services will continue to work closely with the third sector to inform and participate in the delivery of seamless services. As well as the statutory services (council, Primary Care Trust, Fire Brigade, Police, Pensions Service), there are a range of other third sector services that offer information and advice as well as practical help, for example Age Concern, Hanover at Home. All of these agencies will continue to play a role.

Individual older people already contribute: many are carers, not just for partners but also for grandchildren; many support neighbours in need; many undertake formal volunteering support in a wide variety of fields. These activities will continue to be invaluable in helping others maintain their independence. In addition, older people will be increasingly encouraged to help shape services and their input here will be essential.
## Older People improvement deliverables

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OP1: Increase the number of council controlled bus stops that are compatible with low floor buses</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>OP2: Increase the amount of time older people spend weekly in physical activity</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>OP3: Increase opportunities for formal volunteering, including Cultural Olympiad, 2012 Olympics and Paralympics</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Council and partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP4: Build capacity of service providers to engage older people in commissioning services affecting them</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Council and related agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP5: Support intergenerational activities</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Council and related agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP6: Establish a gateway to information and advice for social care, to include older people and carers</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Council and Voluntary sector partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>OP7: Deliver service integration in health and social care</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Merton Council / PCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>OP8: Deliver the Older People's Housing Strategy action plan</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Merton Council with partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP9: Deliver a series of &quot;celebrating age&quot; events to highlight issues important to older people but with a focus on active ageing and opportunities in leisure; sport; culture and lifestyle</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Merton Council and Older People Partnership and the Festival Partner agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>OP10: Deliver and implement a dementia strategy</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>PCT</td>
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Chapter 11
Children and Young People

Introduction
Children and young people are at the heart of our Community Plan and improving outcomes for this group is key to its success. The borough’s priorities for children and young people are progressed by Merton’s Children’s Trust and are based on the five national Every Child Matters outcome areas.

The role of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector
The voluntary, community and faith sector plays an important part in the lives of children and young people in Merton.

Local organisations are involved in the delivery of social care and health services, provide support for particular groups – for example, young carers or disabled children – and help provide crucial support for families.

Voluntary, community and faith groups also play a key role in organising activities and events for young people, including promoting play, encourage young people to volunteer and helping set up youth clubs. They also provide vital elements of learning support, such as Saturday schools, after-school clubs and language classes.
What has happened in Merton since 2006?

Achievements and emerging trends
Children and young people are at the heart of our Plan and improving outcomes for this group is key to its success. The borough’s priorities for children and young people are progressed by Merton’s Children’s Trust and are based on the five national Every Child Matters outcome areas. Achievements since 2006 include:

Being healthy
• 92.1% of 5-16 year olds spend at least two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport, exceeding the target of 90%.
• Baseline measurement of height and weight of children in Reception and Year 6 in all schools is now completed annually, enabling us to target interventions through our obesity prevention and intervention action plan in order to achieve our LAA targets.
• Health visitors have been integrated into our multi-agency teams and children’s centres.
• There are shorter waiting times to access child and adolescent mental health services and new initiatives have extended the reach of these services, for example, in schools.

Stay safe
• Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) by agencies in the Children’s Trust continues to increase. This tool helps agencies work together to help children who need additional support. Last year more than 200 CAFs were completed and now over 800 practitioners have been trained in its use.
• Child protection work co-ordinated by the Merton Safeguarding Children’s Board is robust, with no serious case reviews in recent years.
• Top performance was recorded in rates of education, employment and training for care leavers, child protection plan reviews within timescales, adoptions completed, core assessments completed within 35 days, and health assessments of children in care.

Enjoy and achieve
• Primary school performance is improving, particularly in schools in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP). Between 2005 and 2007, performance at Level 4+ improved by 10% in English and 9% in Maths in ISP schools, compared to national increases of 1% and 2%.
• The well managed implementation of the Secondary Strategy improvements in English and Maths has contributed to Merton’s excellent results at Key Stage 4 for the 2007/08 academic year, with GCSE results improving by 13.1 percentage points to 61.8% for pupils achieving 5 A*-C, 46.2% for pupils achieving 5 A*-C including Maths and English. These are amongst the most significant improvements both in London and nationally.
• Through a number of initiatives including our ‘Black Boys Can’ project (for which we won a national award), and a BME exclusions reduction pilot, we have improved attainment and reduced disproportionate exclusion of black children from Merton schools.

• We now have eight designated children’s centres in the borough. Children’s centres are focal points within communities, providing childcare and a broad range of family support services. The work of these centres is supported by multi-agency teams to ensure the co-ordination of both universal and targeted services provided by statutory agencies and local community and voluntary organisations.

• Extended services are now well embedded in schools with over 70% providing the full core offer of services. There is strong school cluster co-operation in the commissioning and co-ordination of these services with strengthened relationships between schools and other statutory and community and voluntary organisations.

• We have secured significant funding for our play strategy, including the funding to develop an adventure-play facility and to refurbish or develop more than 20 play spaces in the borough.

Make a positive contribution
• Integrated youth support services have been established and a strong youth partnership is in place.

• The Youth Service offer has been improved with participation in the youth service increasing significantly - more than trebling the figure from 2006/07. The Youth Service also achieved its LAA target for 2007/08, with 475 young people achieving an accredited outcome, compared with 193 in 2006/07.

• Youth re-offending rates have reduced significantly, with the target for re-offending met due to a sustained strategy and a well-developed partnership with Merton Police.

• A participation strategy is in place to increase the involvement of young people in matters affecting them. Agencies in the Children’s Trust have adopted the Hear by Right standards and a participation promise has been developed with young people.

Achieve economic well-being
• The local 14-19 partnership is developing a comprehensive range of applied and academic options for young people in schools, colleges and local training provision. New Diploma lines have recently been established.

• The integration of elements of the Connexions service into the Integrated Youth Support Service has been successful and more school leavers move on to further education, employment or training. The council met its LAA ‘not in education, employment or training’ (NEET) target, with 6.1% of 16-18 year olds NEET, down from 7.3% in 2006/07.

• We are developing our child poverty strategy with an established employability forum and recently produced toolkit for workers.
Emerging trends

Community cohesion
We recognise our population is changing and will continue to do so. We understand the need to adjust our activity in response to changing demographics and our increasing diversity. As we welcome more new communities to Merton, it is essential we assist all our service providers and partners in raising the awareness of all our new and emerging communities. We will work to ensure that all those that live, work and learn in the borough have equality in accessing services regardless of faith or background. We will also celebrate our diversity. We recognise the importance of intergenerational dialogue in encouraging a more positive image of children and young people in the borough.

The Children’s Trust
Merton’s Children’s Trust is relatively well established and well placed to deliver the further improvement in outcomes for children and young people called for by the national Children’s Plan 2007. The Trust will need to implement national guidance to make its overall management of children’s services in the borough more robust. This will include extending the involvement of schools and general practitioners in the work of the Children’s Trust. The Trust and the Local Safeguarding Children Board will need to consider recommendations arising from the current national review of child protection work. The Trust will also continue to develop its joint commissioning of children’s services building on the joint commissioning arrangements for early intervention and preventive services undertaken in 2008.

We are committed to strengthening the engagement of community, voluntary and faith organisations in children’s services by increasing multi-agency input into assessment and planning processes, through implementation of Merton’s Child Concern Model and the national Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and through delivery of our Third Sector Strategy.

As our approach to children’s services has evolved so too has the role we define for schools within our communities. Schools increasingly provide a range of support facilities including childcare, out of school activities, parenting support, wider access to sports and adult learning. A big challenge therefore is to ensure that local schools are ‘schools of choice’ for all our communities.

Participation
Merton’s Children and Young People’s Participation Strategy sets out how Merton Council and partners deliver a coordinated approach to ensure Merton’s children and young people are involved in the planning and delivery of local services. The strategy aims to increase the participation of children and young people in the decision making process and ensure that their views are heard through surveys and disseminated into formal planning processes.

Narrowing the gap
Although outcomes for children and young people are improving nationally and locally, the gap in outcomes experienced by some continues to be significant. The Children’s Trust will continue to focus on further improving outcomes for all children
and young people in Merton but will work to narrow or ‘bridge’ gaps in outcomes in doing so.

2012 Olympic Games
As Merton has been selected as an Olympic Borough for the forthcoming games, this will provide an excellent opportunity to further enthuse Merton Children and Young People in sports participation. Also there will be an opportunity for Merton Children and Young People to contribute by volunteering. Overall the games will provide a boost to the borough and promote wider agenda’s such as community cohesion.

What Merton is like now
The number of children and young people living in the borough is increasing. Latest 2008 figures show the population to be 49,000, up from 44,000 as indicated during the 2001 Census. This figure is projected to rise to 51,000 by 2019.

The borough has also seen a rise in the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) school population. Since 2003, the BME school population has risen from 45.9% of the total roll to 52.3% in 2008. For the primary population, the increase of BME pupils has seen a rise from 10% to 53% over the last five years.

Challenges presented by the population increase and changing diversity of the borough include ensuring Merton schools have the appropriate funding for the increase in requests for places – most notably for faith based school places from parents with eastern European backgrounds. There is currently a significant increase in the demand for primary school places, with projected figures already set to rise. The higher demand can be attributed to the increase in the borough’s birth rate, which has risen from 2,576 in 2001/02 to 3,250 in 2006/07 – an increase of more than 25%. However, 2008/09 admissions data has also signalled an even higher number of pupils above the expected numbers indicated from the birth rate data. This is probably due to an increase in people migrating to the borough, with less numbers leaving Merton.

Merton currently has an appropriate balance between supply and demand for secondary school places. However, the number of pupils living in Merton with out of borough placements exceeds those entering Merton schools from outside the borough.

As well as the need to tackle educational attainment and school capacity, Merton faces significant challenges around the health of young people. Teenage conception rates in Merton are now level with the national average. In addition, among children starting school in September 2007, 24.4% of four and five year olds were overweight or obese compared with a national figure of 27.7% (children aged two to ten years), while a figure of 34.3% was recorded for children in Year six. If this rate of obesity continues into later life there is cause for concern as obesity in adolescence is associated with increased morbidity and mortality in adult life.
What children, young people and parents have told us

In producing our priorities, we have taken into account the views of Merton’s children, young people and parents. These have been gathered using a process of questionnaires to pupils attending primary and secondary schools, focus group discussions and interviews with parents.

- 2008 Young Residents’ Survey
- TellUs3 Survey
- Merton’s review of youth activities 2008
- Merton’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

We also conducted a ‘Merton Sustainable Visioning Consultation’ that asked children and young people what they thought were the key issues that the partnership should focus on to improve Merton now and in the future. We did this by visiting primary and secondary schools and young people’s organisations to ask them to take part in a survey that will also inform this strategy.

The information we gathered from these consultations has been used to inform our Strategy. It told us the following:

- 81% of young people surveyed from the Young Resident’s Survey agree that Merton is a good place to live. However, crime, bullying and bad behaviour are the main concerns for children and young people. Safety at home and outside of school where highlighted as very important by LGBT young people.
- Children, young people and parents responded that they would like to see more sporting activities on offer, with football and team sports as the most popular. Children and young people also reported they would like to see more arts activities, including concerts, and activities in drama, dance and music.
- During our most recent survey, secondary aged young people felt that ‘being able to go to college or university’ and ‘having good quality schools’ should be the uppermost priorities for Merton and its partners.
- Children and young people also identified ‘ensuring people of all backgrounds have equal access to opportunities and services’ as a high priority for the borough.
- Affordability was identified as a common barrier to accessing childcare. It is a particular concern for unemployed parents and those on low wages. In addition, families with a total income of between £40,000 and £50,000 also identified cost as a concern.

What will Merton be like in 2019?

Our vision is that ‘We want all our children and young people to enjoy healthy and rewarding lives in a safe and clean environment and to have fun while they are doing it. We will also encourage them to have higher aspirations and support them in training, employment and education, leading more of them into higher education’.
We are committed to delivering better outcomes for children, young people and families. We believe that by promoting better outcomes in health, safety and learning, our children and young people can cultivate the necessary skills to realise their ambitions and enjoy all aspects of their lives. Children’s services in Merton will strive to ensure that the voices of children and young people and families are heard and used to shape future services, in addition to working hard to remove the barriers to active participation for all our communities. We believe that by further reducing inequalities and ‘bridging the gap’ between our most prosperous and deprived communities in Merton, we will assist all children and young people live full, prosperous lives free from poverty and hardship.
## Children and young people improvement deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Key partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CYP1: Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement Merton’s Obesity Action Plan</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Primary Care Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review/refresh Merton’s Teenage Pregnancy Strategy</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Merton Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop emotional wellbeing strategy to inform preventive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service development</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Undertake needs analysis relating to Alcohol and substance misuse</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Merton Children’s Trust</td>
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<td><strong>CYP2: Ensure Children and Young People Stay Safe</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement Merton’s revised Child Concern Model across agencies</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Merton Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement local ContactPoint action plan</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Merton Children’s Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement Merton’s Parenting Strategy</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Continue to implement Youth Crime Prevention, Anti-social behaviour and Anti-bullying strategies in and outside of school</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<td>• Reduce youth crime in partnership with key agencies</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CYP3: Enable Children and Young People to Enjoy and Achieve</strong></td>
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<td>• Continue to progress children’s centres and extended services delivery plans</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Merton Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement Special Education Needs strategy</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Merton Children’s Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Continue to improve educational outcomes for Merton’s children and young people</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement action plan to establish new play facilities across Merton</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<td>• Further develop Merton’s Youth Offer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td><strong>CYP4: Enable Children and Young People to Make Positive Contributions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement Participation Strategy including adoption of Participation Promise</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Merton Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strengthen links between children’s council, youth parliament and adult democratic processes</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Children’s Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase numbers of young people engaged in volunteering</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Target date</td>
<td>Key partners</td>
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<td>CYP5: Ensure Children and Young People Achieve Economic Wellbeing&lt;br&gt;  - Implement 14-19 strategy&lt;br&gt;  - Develop and implement child poverty strategy&lt;br&gt;  - Implement new Family Information Service</td>
<td>2012&lt;br&gt;  2020&lt;br&gt;  2010</td>
<td>Merton Children’s Trust</td>
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<td>CYP6: Secure Further Improvement in the Management of Children’s Services&lt;br&gt;  - Progress integration of services for children with disabilities and learning difficulties&lt;br&gt;  - Develop workforce development strategy for whole Children’s trust workforce&lt;br&gt;  - Progress major infrastructure projects in Merton’s schools in line with the Local Development Framework&lt;br&gt;  - Progress development of Merton’s Intergenerational Centre.&lt;br&gt;  - Undertake environmental audit for all new infrastructure projects and ensure use of sustainable technologies in capital schemes&lt;br&gt;  - Promote further sustainable transport through the development of sustainable school travel plans</td>
<td>2010&lt;br&gt;  2012&lt;br&gt;  2015&lt;br&gt;  2012&lt;br&gt;  Ongoing&lt;br&gt;  Ongoing</td>
<td>Merton Children’s Trust</td>
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The priorities for Merton’s Children’s Trust over the coming years are to make further progress in improving life chances and outcomes for children and young people against the national Every Child Matters outcomes framework. We will also focus on making further improvement in the overall management of children’s services in Merton.

Merton’s Children’s Trust is responsible for developing, delivering and monitoring the effectiveness of the actions set out within this strategy. Our Children’s Trust brings together a wide range of key local organisations from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. These include: Merton Council departments, Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust, South West London Mental Health Trust, Merton Schools, Merton College, local Voluntary and Community Sector, Metropolitan Police and the Learning and Skills Council.

To ensure that Merton excels as a first class borough, the Children’s Trust will establish whether the Strategy and related actions are improving the quality of life of all those children and young people who live, work and learn in Merton.

We will use a range of methods to measure our success. The Merton’s Children’s Trust will conduct a regular review of performance against the key measures of success and report on a regular basis. Poor performance will be challenged and appropriate action taken.

How local people can get involved
Merton’s Children’s Trust has fully endorsed the Children and Young People’s Participation Strategy. This Strategy works towards increasing the meaningful engagement of children and young people and families in identifying both their needs and how they can be best addressed. Merton’s Children’s Trust recognises the enormous and valuable contribution young people bring to developing safer and stronger communities and actively seek to encourage and capture this through a range of strategies and forums including the Youth Parliament, School Councils, local youth provision, and the designated participation team.

We are seeking to widen community engagement through the development of extended schools, commissioning from the voluntary sector and building the skills of staff to engage with the community.

Examples of how you can contribute to the success of this strategy include:

• getting involved in your community, through supporting community events, becoming a school governor or giving up a few hours of your time to volunteer
• keeping Merton clean, green and free from litter and graffiti
• keeping healthy, taking regular exercise, having a balanced diet, drinking sensibly and not smoking
• providing us with your views on local matters, and influencing local policy by joining any of our youth or school boards.
Chapter 12
Measuring the success of the CP

Performance against the CP improvement deliverables and the LAA targets are monitored through the Merton Partnership performance management framework. This was first developed in 2006 and is updated annually.

The performance management framework is crucial to the delivery of the CP and the LAA, as it is a way of each tier of the Partnership holding to account the next tier for delivery of their tasks and targets. The framework is captured in the diagram below:

Vision for Merton
The CP does not contain targets, as these are included in the LAA, the delivery mechanism for the CP. Instead, it contains improvement deliverables, against which progress is monitored. These are the key activities that will be undertaken under each theme in order to deliver the priorities of the CP. Each thematic partnership is expected to develop a work programme that sets out how it will achieve its improvement deliverables, LAA targets and the overall priorities of the CP. Each of the designated and stretch targets in the LAA also has a delivery plan that sets out the actions the thematic partnerships expect to carry out to deliver the targets.

Each thematic partnership is expected to undertake regular and frequent monitoring of progress against improvement deliverables and year on year performance (where available) against LAA targets.

Each meeting of the Executive Board will receive a detailed report from one of the thematic partnerships (with each presenting at least once a year), ensuring the Board is kept up to date with progress against improvement deliverables and LAA targets. In addition, each meeting of the Executive Board will receive a summary report outlining progress against LAA stretch targets.

Twice a year the Executive Board will receive a full written report update from each thematic partnership. This report will cover performance against all LAA targets and CP improvement deliverables. In addition, thematic partnerships may wish to make additional reports to the Executive Board, where agreement from the Partnership is required on a particular issue or they may be asked to make additional reports by the Executive Board where they have particular concerns about progress of delivery of a particular issue.

The diagram below illustrates the responsibilities of the various groups in the development and monitoring of targets and improvement deliverables:
Glossary

A

Affordable housing
Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above that of social rent but below market prices or rents. These can include shared equity and other low cost homes for sale, and intermediate rent.

Audit Commission
An independent public body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently, and effectively in the areas of local government, housing, health, criminal justice and fire and rescue services. More information can be found at www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Core Strategy
The Core Strategy is a key document that forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF), defining the vision and objectives and the overall approach to development in the local area.

Community Forums
A Community Forum is a meeting of local ward councillors. They allow local people to talk directly to councillors about issues in their area, and are an important mechanism for consultation. Merton has had five Community Forums since July 2008. More information can be found at www.merton.gov.uk/council/committee.htm

Local Development Framework
The Local Development Framework is a group of documents that sets out how planning and development will be managed in the local area. It is the spatial representation of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Local Area Agreement
An agreement between the local authority, its partners and central government outlining key priorities to be met by the borough over a three year period, which is refreshed every year. These priorities are measured through performance indicators.
Delivery of 12 of these will result in the Partnership earning up to £5.5m in performance reward grant. The framework for LAAs was updated as part of the LGPIH Act. More information can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframeworkpartnerships/localareaagreements/

Local Strategic Partnership
See Merton Partnership

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health (LGPIH) Act
The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act became law in October 2007. It legislates for many of the proposals set out in the Local Government White Paper, ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities. Key provisions include more devolved powers for councils and communities, a new performance framework, and a focus on partnership and community engagement. More information can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/about/future-local-government

Merton Partnership
Merton’s Local Strategic Partnership is known as the Merton Partnership. It was established to deliver neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion within the borough. Membership draws together key decision makers from the public sector, community and voluntary sector, and the business sector, for example Merton Council, Merton Chamber of Commerce, Merton College, Metropolitan Police, the Merton Voluntary Service Council and the local PCT. It has a pivotal role in the development and monitoring of the CP, the LAA and the Merton Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. More information can be found at www.mertonpartnership.org/mp-home.htm

Sustainable Communities Act 2007
Became law in 2007, and aims to promote the sustainability of local communities. Placed a duty upon all Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy for their local area.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)
The overarching strategy for the local area, which sets out the overall direction and vision for the borough over the next 10 years. It tells the story of Merton, and what the Merton Partnership wants to achieve for the local area and its residents, based on what is most important to them. It sets out the Partnership’s approach to the key, cross-cutting issues that Merton is facing. In Merton, it is known as the Community Plan (CP).

Sustainability appraisal
An appraisal of the Community Plan, to ensure it is promoting sustainability across the local area, and across the various elements of sustainability, including environmental sustainability, social sustainability and economic sustainability.
Value for money
Value for money is the relationship between economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

- Economy is the price paid for what goes into providing a service.
- Efficiency is a measure of productivity – how much you get out in relation to what is put in.
- Effectiveness is a measure of the impact achieved and can be quantitative or qualitative.
- Value for money is high when there is an optimum balance between all three – relatively low costs, high productivity and successful outcomes.
Request for document translation

Community Plan 2009-19

If you need any part of this document explained in your language, please tick box and contact us either by writing or by phone using our contact details below.

Your contact:
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