TRAVERSE

Appendix A

**Commonplace statistics and materials used across the engagement**

Two Commonplace sites

In the report we have referred to Commonplace as one engagement activity, but it was administered and promoted as two separate websites; an interactive map and an open survey platform. People were directed from one site to the other if they spent time engaging on the site. Both links were promoted separately by Merton Council through social media platforms and emails.

Website traffic and demographic data was gathered for each site separately and therefore we have reported it separately. At present it is not possible to accurately say the total number of individual residents engaging across the two sites because we do not know if those engaging are the same or different people across the two sites.

Interactive map

https://engagingmerton.Commonplacemap.is/).

Open ended survey

https://engagingmerton.Commonplace.is/).
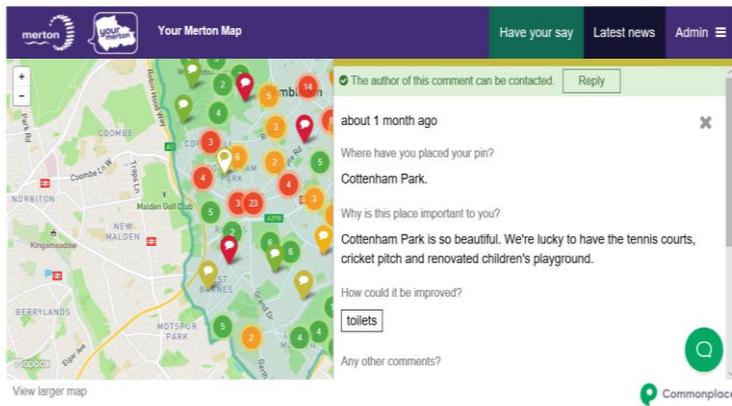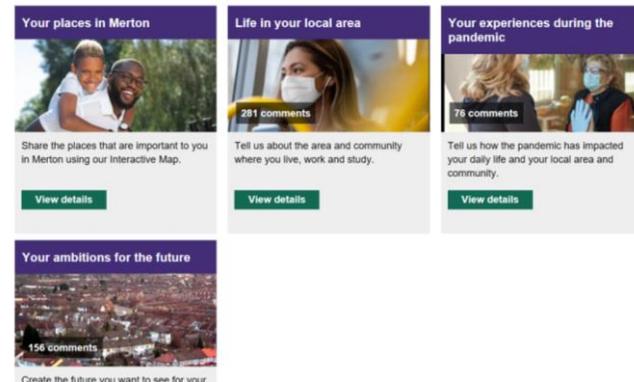
Engagement with both sites

Commonplace uses IP address to record the number of individual people visiting each site. It also logs how much time they spend on the site, and if they end up contributing (answering questions). The open-ended survey was visited by considerably more people (10,664 compered to 1,756) , but the interactive map had a much larger proportion of visitors actively contribute (40% compared to 4%).

A total of 1,756 people visited the interactive map and 454 of these people (26%) contributed an answer. A total of 708 (40%) were engaged visitors meaning that they looked around the site for a while but did not contribute. 33% left without spending much time and engaging.

A total of 10,664 people visited the open-ended survey site and 449 of these people (4%) contributed answers. A total of 3,281 (30%) were engaged visitors. 65% left the site without engaging.

|	Interactive map	Open-ended survey
Total visits	1,756	10,664
Total contributors	454	449
Engaged visitors	708	3,281
Bounced visitors	581	6,966

Respondents came from across the borough

184 respondents to the open-ended survey and 192 respondents to the interactive map submitted their full postcode.

Both sites attracted visitors from across the borough, with the interactive map attracting a few more responses from outside the borough.

The colours correspond to the sentiment they provided; green is positive, amber neutral and red negative.

**Interactive map**
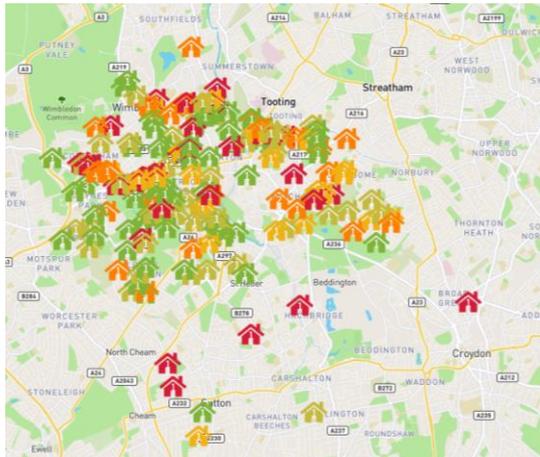
Open ended survey
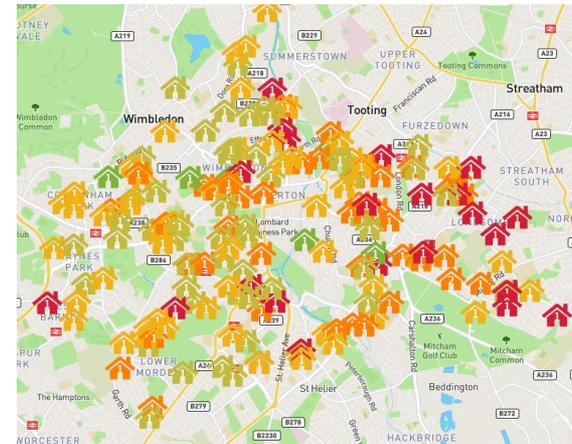
## *Respondents predominately lived in the borough*

The majority of respondents who answered question on relationship to the Borough across both platforms lived in the area.

Interactive map

What is your connection to Merton?
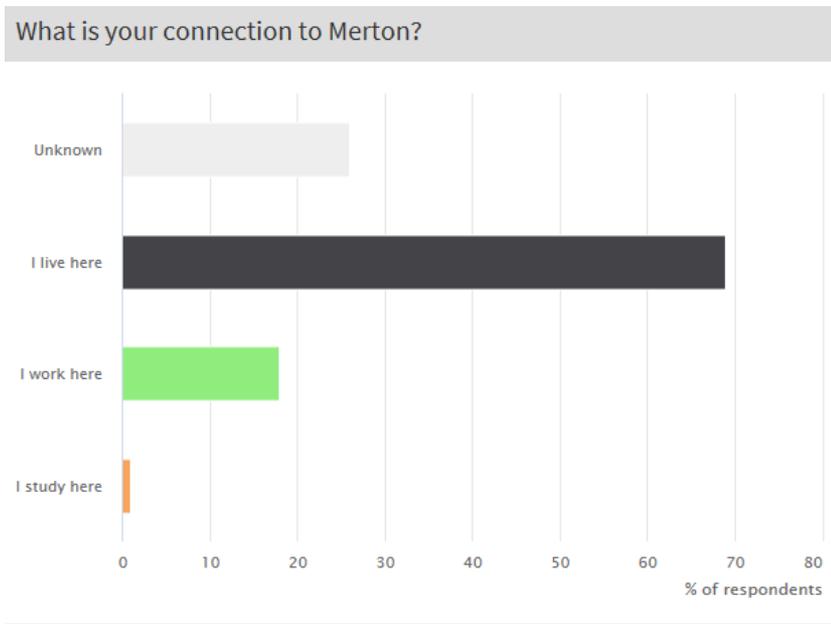
Base size: 454

Open ended survey

What is your connection to Merton?
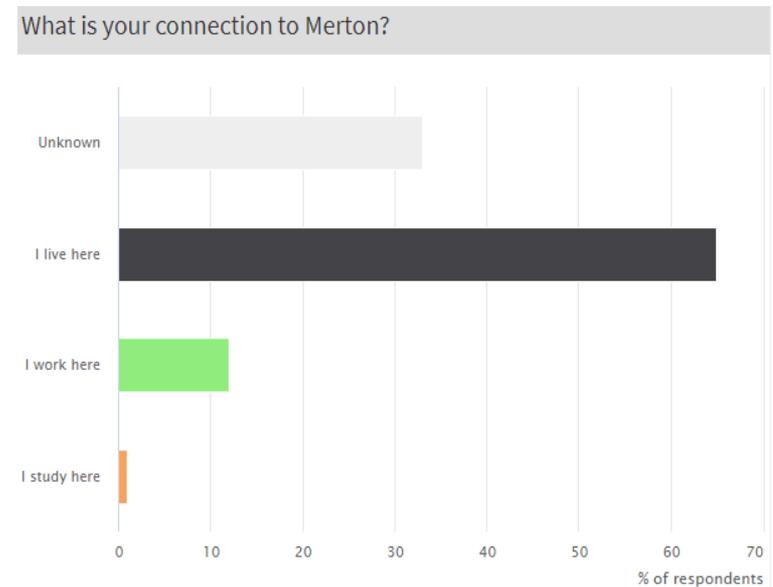
Base size: 449

Age range on the Commonplace platform

A good range of ages engaged across both platforms, although around 30% of respondents on each platform did not provide this data.


Base size: 454

Base size: 449

6
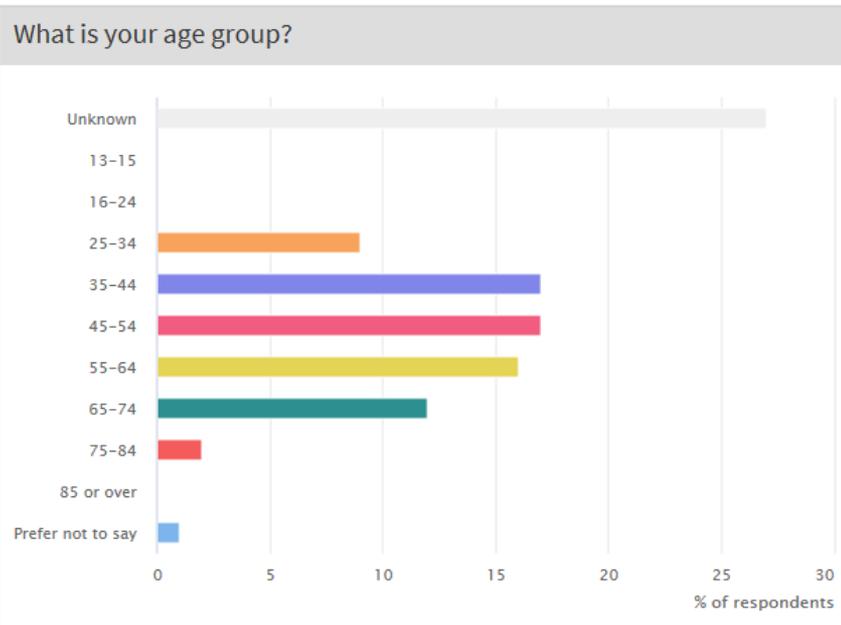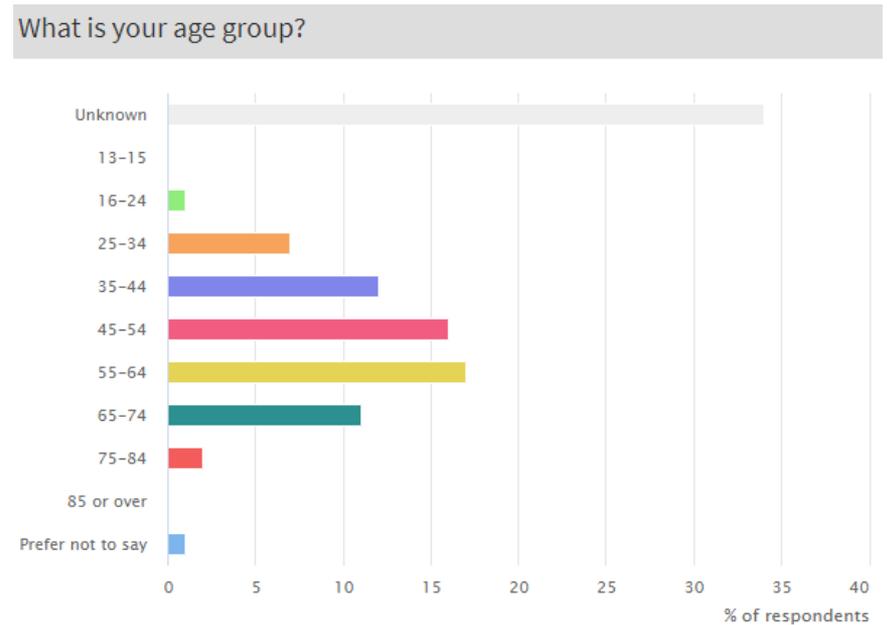
Gender on Commonplace

More women than men engaged across both platforms, although around 30% of respondents on each platform did not provide this data.

What is your gender?

Base size: 454

What is your gender?
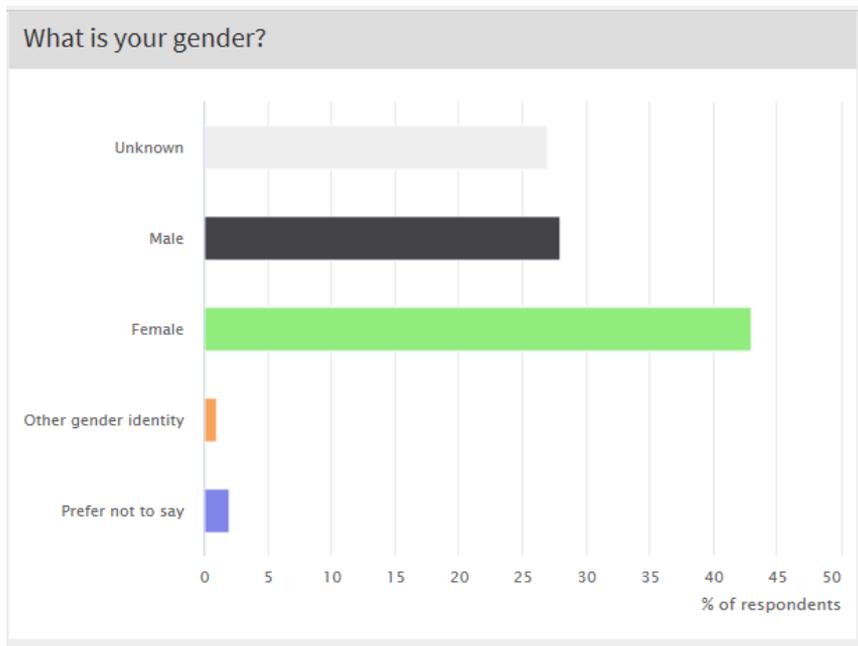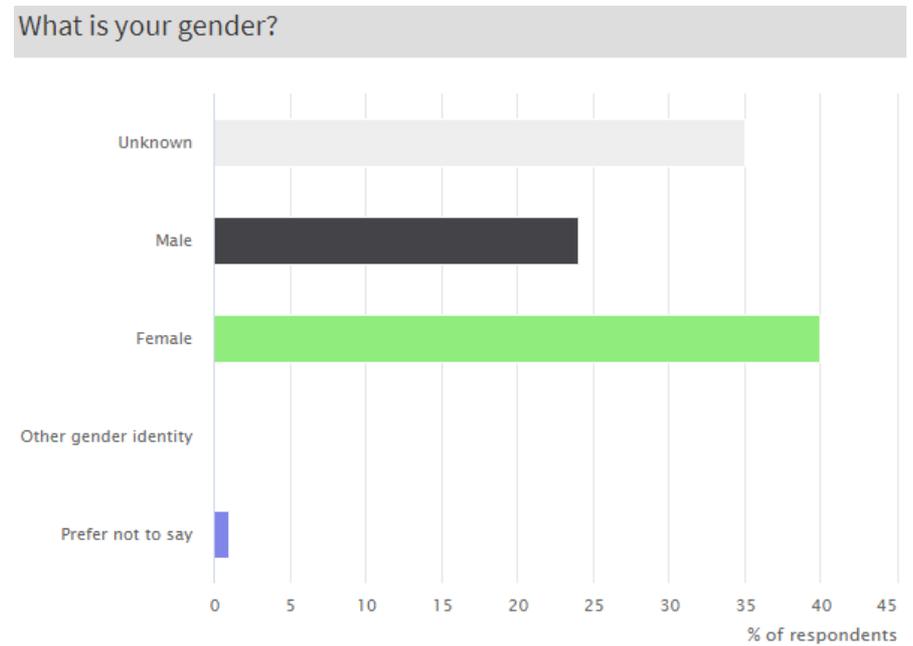
Base size: 449

Employment status on Commonplace

Majority of respondents were working with a high proportion of retired residents (15%). Again, around 30% of respondents on each platform did not provide this data.
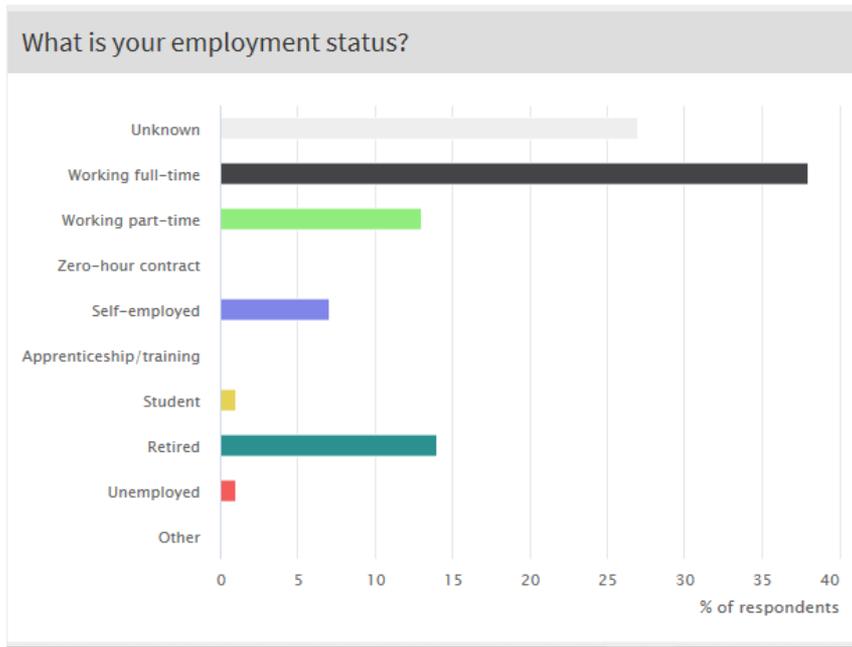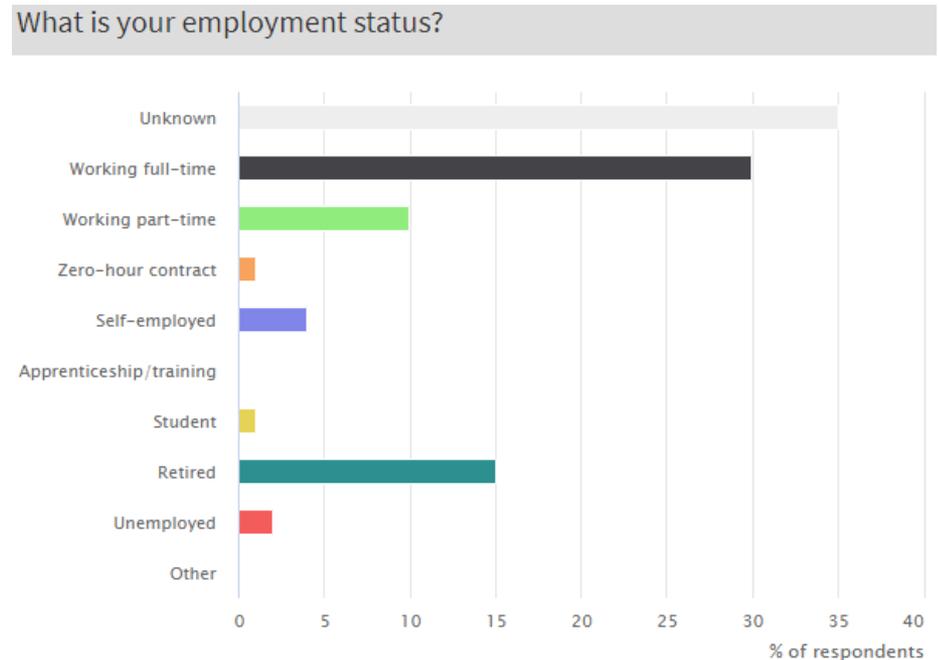
Base size: 454

Base size: 449

Ethnicity on Commonplace

Just under a quarter of respondents on each platform provided their ethnicity. Of those that provided the data, around 80% were white (British, Irish or other).

Interactive map

Legend:
- White - British
- Black Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean
- Other White
- Other Asian
- Other ethnic group
- Other Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
- Asian/Asian British - Pakistani
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- White - Irish
- Asian/Asian British - Indian
- Mixed - White and Asian

Base size: 115

Open survey platform

Legend:
- White - British
- Black Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean
- Other Black/African/Caribbean
- Other White
- Other Mixed/Multiple
- White - Irish
- Other Asian

Base size: 122

9

High street living – fewer businesses, more homes, and a sense of community

In 2030 the high streets of Merton are much more residential in character, with what was once commercial space largely **transformed into housing.**

Why is this? Well, most people do most of their shopping online, or if they want to go on a shopping trip they'll travel to larger centres outside the borough. And so the Council worked with partners to re-design local high streets, turning them into places for people to live. **This has helped to provide much-needed homes of different sizes and types.**

Not that it's ALL housing. At ground level, you'll find a few cafes, restaurants and small grocery stores. **Some former retail units have been converted into co-working spaces** as many people now work remotely most of the time, and this saves them travelling into the city. **Other units have taken on community uses** – from event space to nurseries to health centres. Because of all the housing there are always lots of people milling around, and these areas have a **strong community feel.**

Income from housing development is reinvested in the public space. These are pleasant environments where cycling and walking are popular, and with fewer people travelling here to shop there are fewer cars about (but a steady stream of delivery vans bringing people's shopping!) Some residents regret the loss of shops, however, and don't like having to travel further or shop online. Some also say their high streets have lost their distinctiveness since they became dominated by housing.

High streets with colour and character – independent shops & lots of socialising

In 2030 Merton's high streets remain **primarily commercial areas with small independent shops, cafes and restaurants and some bustling markets**. There are few big retailers, however – most people do most of their shopping online.

Seeing that high streets were under pressure, Merton Council invested in keeping them attractive to businesses with grants to restore dilapidated retail units, reduced business rates and other financial incentives. Some residents support this, but others question whether it's a good use of taxpayers' money. The 'Merton pound' has been introduced, encouraging residents to shop with local businesses and less with Amazon and the major chains.

There has been an emphasis on **making high streets more pleasant places to linger, with entertainment, more greenery, and road layouts that favour walking and cycling. Parking space has been reduced, and vehicle access is mainly for shop deliveries.** This has improved the experience of spending time here, but some residents and businesses say that it's too hard for those who need to drive.

Merton's high streets, therefore, are places of colour and character, with independent small businesses incentivised to set up and stay. But some residents miss the variety of more affordable goods they used to get when there were more big name retailers, and say it's all about coffee and cakes these days.

High street convenience - Big on choice but low on character

In 2030, Merton's high streets have been remodelled and revitalised in partnership with some big name brands. Online shopping is the norm for most people, and **Merton's high streets provide lots of 'click and collect' points** for a whole host of national chains. It's easy for delivery vehicles and cars to pull up in the street so that customers can be in and out relatively quickly.

In 2021 Merton Council recognised that local high streets were struggling and decided to encourage national chains to locate mini-warehousing here with public-facing shop fronts in the high street.

Now it is possible for **most residents to do their weekly shop within a walk or short drive of their home. They can go to a large supermarket, DIY stores, pharmacists and have access to a range of recognisable and affordable chain restaurants.** Some people complain their high streets have no sense of identity anymore, but it's an approach that seems to be keeping them commercially viable. These big name retailers are able to invest in their buildings and in the public realm. It also means that local shopping is affordable and convenient.

The new high street has maintained parking space with the help of the larger retailers who offer large car parks. There is also an affordable car hire scheme.

Fun, culture and community – parks as events spaces

In 2030, Merton's green spaces are well-known as places that host **a range of popular events throughout the year**. They are still important places for people to relax and exercise, and havens for wildlife, but there has been a real drive to make the most of parks as places of fun, culture and community events. Open air concerts, cinema, markets and fairs are proving popular.

Over recent years Merton Council has taken the view that well-run events in its parks and open spaces will **give local people new experiences, bring neighbours together and attract investment. Larger events are run by commercial operators, generating income that helps to maintain the borough's green spaces throughout the year – which helps to keep them clean and safe.** Smaller community-run events are also encouraged, in part subsidized by the income from the big events.

Supporters of this approach say it has brought greater vibrancy to the area, brought communities together and injected money into parks. Others fear this emphasis on events is changing the nature of parks as places of tranquillity and making them overly commercial.

Good for nature and good for the soul – parks as a community led haven
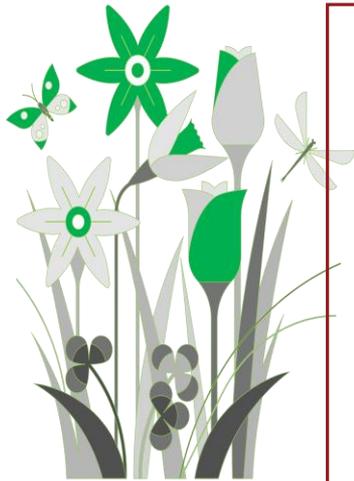
In 2030 green space in Merton supports wildlife**, enhances biodiversity and gives residents somewhere to find peace and tranquility.**

Merton council recognised that green spaces support the biodiversity of the local environment and the wellbeing of the local community. It has invested in **rewilding as much green space as possible** to provide habitats for plants and animals, working closely with local community groups to deliver schemes that improve the natural environment.

There are walking trails, allotments and sustainable refuse collection. **Volunteers play an important role in maintaining these spaces as safe and clean**. A Citizen Panel has been formed so that residents can help to shape this work with the council.

This approach reduces the income that parks are able to generate, and conservation activity itself comes with costs, hence the role of volunteers is especially important. **The costs are seen as justified due to the positive outcomes for residents' personal wellbeing, as well as the contribution to the borough's targets around climate change and biodiversity.**

Some residents are angry that there is now less space for sport and recreation in the borough's parks and that major events are harder to host.

Pitch perfect: parks as recreational facilities

In 2030, Merton's green spaces are above all places for local people to **enjoy sport and physical activity**, helping the borough to stay physically and mentally well. They remain important for wildlife and for some big events, but sport and recreation are the priority as parks are seen above all has **playing a crucial public health role.**

In particular, there has been an emphasis on **encouraging those most at risk of poor health and fitness to be more active, reducing the health inequalities** between Merton residents. Early evidence suggests this is having a positive impact.

Facilities and activities are run by the council, social enterprises and community organisations, all working towards shared goals around improving people's health, bringing communities together through sport and nurturing local sporting talent.

Some campaigners feel that not enough is being done to protect and enhance nature and biodiversity in the borough's parks, however, or that the emphasis on physical activity means too few big events are able to take place.

Deliberative workshop demographics

Across the 25 workshop participants an even split of age and gender was achieved.

GENDER

■ Female ■ Male


AGE

■ 18-44 ■ 45-64 ■ 65 plus
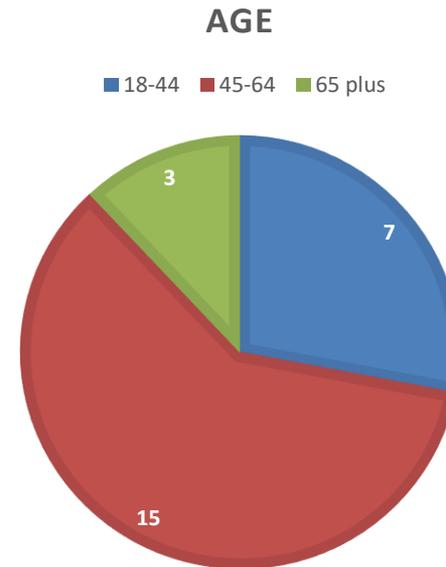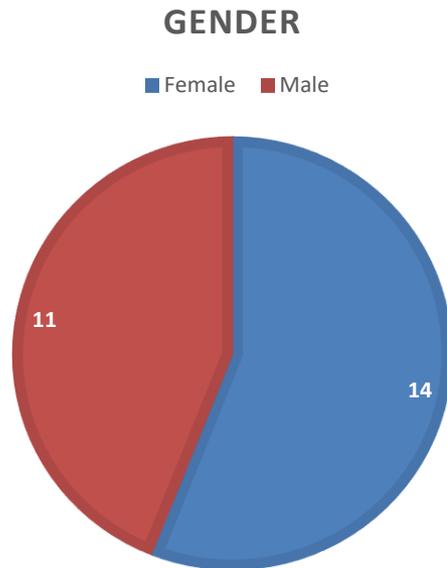
Deliberative workshop demographics

Across the 25 workshop participants a mix of ethnicity and social class was achieved. Social class was recorded through the index of multiple deprivation where 1 is the most deprived and 5 is the least. We were not able to recruit any respondents who matched the lowest IMD quintile, but this is a small proportion of the Merton population that are within this quintile.

ETHNICITY

- White British
- Other white ethnic group
- Black or Black British
- Other ethnic group
- Asian or Asian British

SOCIAL CLASS

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
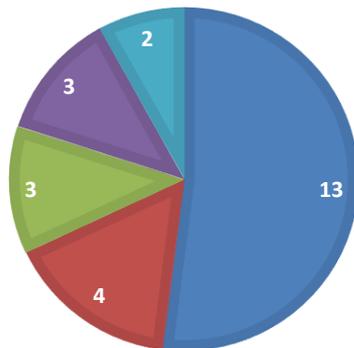
Merton Community groups

Merton Community groups	
Age UK Merton	Operating within the national Age UK network providing services for older adults in Merton.
Association for the Polish Family	Provides advice and support for Eastern European residents.
Avanti	Offers services for individuals and groups with mental health needs.
Commonside Community Development Trust	Runs a community centre, community events and a number of community development programmes.
Filmanthropy	Uses media to work with organisations, groups and individuals that make a positive social impact.
Inner Strength Network	Supports women and girls and their families to overcome difficult moments in their lives.
Mencap Merton	Provides support and services for children, young people and adults with a learning disability and/or autism.
Merton Centre for Independent Living	Deaf and Disabled people's organisation working to address the marginalisation of Deaf and Disabled people.
Merton Vision	Provides services to visually impaired children and adults.
Off the Record	Provide counselling and support services to young people.
South London Tamil Welfare Group	Supports the Tamil community and other ethnic communities.
South Mitcham Community Centre	Organises community events and groups.
WIFFA – West Indies Friends and Family Association	Support and social organisation for the Caribbean community.