

Housing Strategic Policy Framework 2023 – 2028

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Housing Strategic Policy Framework 2023 - 2028

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Council's overarching ambition is to 'Build a Better Merton Together'. The Council plan for 2023-2026 sets out how it will build pride within the borough through a focus on three strategic themes:

- Creating a Borough of Sport
- Building a Sustainable Future
- Nurturing Civic Pride

1.2 Achievement of the Council's Building a Sustainable Future ambitions will be served by meeting a range of housing related strategic policies, plans and objectives. This strategic policy framework document brings together the key strategies, policies and plans. The Council has four overriding objectives in terms of housing to support its building a sustainable future ambition. These are:

- Increase housing supply.
- Improve the quality of existing stock.
- Reduce homelessness, street sleeping and support residents to remain in their homes.
- Ensure delivery of plans and objectives through effective enforcement

This document brings together an overview of the policies, plans and actions to deliver these 4 objectives, set out in the chapters below.

1.3 This document provides an overview of the plans and measures that the Council has implemented or proposes to implement to achieve its four overriding objectives. New initiatives have been proposed or have already been implemented by the Council including:

- Selective Licensing.
- Additional Licensing.
- Empty Homes Scheme (Update Report September 2022).
- Article 4 Direction - planning controls for small HMOs in seven wards in Merton.
- Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy (Disabled Adaptations Services).
- Rent Deposit Scheme / private rental procurement via partnership with Capital Letters.

Increase housing supply

1.4 The Council has developed a range of strategies and plans as part of its ambitious objectives relating to increasing housing supply. These include:

- [Housing Delivery Strategy](#)

This Strategy considers the need for new homes in Merton and the mechanisms through which they might be delivered, with an emphasis on the need for new affordable housing.

- [Local Plan](#)
The Local Plan sets out a vision and a plan for the future development of Merton, including targets for the number and location of new homes (including affordable), and number and location of employment provision needed.
- [Empty Homes Scheme](#)
The 5-year scheme will support owners of long-term empty homes with advice and information to encourage them to bring properties back into use. Grant funding will be available where properties brought back into use are leased to the Council for providing homes for households owed a housing duty.
- [Tenancy Strategy](#)
The Strategy sets out objectives which all registered providers in the local authority area must have regard to when making decisions about their own tenancy policies.

Improve the quality of existing stock

1.5 The Council is committed to improving conditions in the private rented sector (PRS) through enhanced regulation and enforcement, and working with social housing provider partners, to reduce the number of unsafe homes and those with poor conditions. A range of initiatives have been introduced:

- [Selective and Additional Licensing](#)
The introduction of licensing in [seven wards](#) is a key strand in the strategic approach to improving conditions in the PRS. Private rented properties in these wards will require a licence to operate. Conditions of the licence require compliance with health and safety and other property management standards.
- [Article 4 Direction](#)
HMOs are an important part of Merton’s housing stock. Poorly performing HMOs can, however, affect the wellbeing of both their tenants and neighbours. To improve the quality of new HMOs, Merton Council introduced a new planning rule to require planning permission for the conversion of existing homes into small HMOs.
- [Housing Enforcement Policy](#)
This policy sets out how the Council will exercise its duties and powers to deal with poor conditions and standards of management in the private housing sector, as well as dealing with statutory nuisance, public health matters and the enforcement of other relevant legislation, and enforcing minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector.

1.6 The Council is currently a non-stock holding authority, having previously transferred its stock to the registered provider sector. The Council has set out policy initiatives as part of the new partnership between the Council and local housing associations to support improving the quality of provision in the sector. These initiatives are set out within the [Building a Better Merton Together: London Borough of Merton Council Plan 2023-26](#). Key elements of this initiative are:

- The [Registered Provider Charter and Tenants' Champion](#) which are part of the commitment to improving standards in the registered provider sector and ensuring commitment to basic standards of service to their tenants and leaseholders.

Reduce homelessness, street sleeping and support residents to remain in their homes

1.7 The Council has developed key strategies and policies to achieve its aims of reducing homelessness, street sleeping and supporting residents to remain in their homes:

- [Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025](#)
The strategy sets out our vision to reduce the number of households becoming homeless, supported by prevention work delivered by the Council and by our key partner agencies, by making best use of government funding.
- [Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy](#)
People with disabilities that do not qualify for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) assistance experience barriers to independence enhancing services. This policy sets out the discretionary assistance that the Council will provide for disabled, elderly, and vulnerable residents to achieve essential repairs and home improvements to keep their home environments safe.

Ensure delivery of plans and objectives through effective enforcement

1.8 The Council will implement the actions set out in its strategies and plans to achieve improvement of housing conditions and the safety and well-being of residents in the Borough. In particular, we will deliver on the following commitments:

- Improving conditions in the Borough
 - Improve the standard of private sector housing through information, education, enforcement, and regulation.
 - Enhance regulation and enforcement through the Selective and Additional licensing schemes and planning controls in respect of houses in multiple occupation (HMO's).
 - Recruit additional capacity to lead on enforcement of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in Merton's Private Rented Sector.
 - Work with the registered provider sector to ensure commitment to improving standards of service to their tenants and leaseholders.
- Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty
 - Increasing the number of homes in the Borough which are energy efficient by implementing the energy masterplan and retrofit strategy.
 - Provide additional support and grants for residents needing disabled adaptations to remain safely in their homes.
 - Introduce a Home Energy Efficiency Loan scheme to enable residents to obtain affordable loans to fund installation of efficiency measures.
 - Enforce the new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).
- Crime Prevention and Community Safety
 - Continue to develop strategies through the crime and community safety partnerships reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

- [Safer Merton Hate Crime Strategy 2022-26](#) sets out how the Council will develop its work with partners including the Police and local community groups to foster a strong approach to tackling hate crime and supporting its victims.
- [Merton Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) Strategy 2022-25](#) recognises the need for all agencies, residents, and communities to work effectively together to achieve real change in responding to and ending VAWG. Partnership working, raising awareness, supporting victims, and holding perpetrators to account are key strands of the strategy.
- [The Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21](#) sets out the Council's equality objectives and outlines how we will embed equalities considerations into our day-to-day business.

2.0 Increasing housing supply

2.1 The Council is committed to increasing the supply of private housing as well as working with development partners to enable increase in the social housing supply. Merton's key challenges are:

- Lack of affordable housing.
- Lack of supply of all tenures and types of housing.
- High demand for housing, particularly affordable homes.

The Council has launched a new housing partnership made up of local registered providers with a focus on the greater provision of genuinely affordable housing and how we can work with partners to achieve this. Regular meetings with the registered providers are taking place.

The New Local Plan

2.2 We are creating a New [Local Plan](#). Our Local Plan sets out a vision and a plan for the future development of Merton. This plan will be used to promote, shape, and manage growth in Merton for the next 15 years. Policies in the plan set out how the council will seek to achieve an appropriate balance between physical, social, economic, and environmental protection in Merton for the benefit of all residents and stakeholders.

2.3 The Local Plan Objectives are shaping and facilitating delivery across a range of local indicators:

- The number and location of new homes (including affordable) needed.
- Number and location of town centres and other business areas.
- Setting out policies for the protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment.
- The provision of supporting infrastructure for growth and other policies to manage change in local areas including town centres, industrial areas, neighbourhoods, and the borough generally.

2.4 Local Plans must be consistent with the national policy set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out the principles and objectives that are required to underpin approaches to plan-making and development management.

2.5 In accordance with the NPPF (para 20), the key strategic priorities that the local plan addresses include the following:

- a. Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure, and other commercial development.
 - b. Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat).
 - c. Community facilities (such as health, education, and cultural infrastructure); and
 - d. Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built, and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 2.6 The London Plan is the statutory Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London prepared by the Mayor of London (“the Mayor”) in accordance with the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) (“the GLA Act”) and associated regulations. Within the London Plan, the Mayor sets out designations, planning policy requirements, targets, and instructions that boroughs must include in their Local Plans. The Local Plan must also be in ‘general conformity’ with the London Plan, and where appropriate, take account of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
- 2.7 The housing requirement for Merton set out in the [London Plan 2021](#) is based on the Strategic Housing and Land Availability Assessment ([SHLAA 2017](#)) and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment ([SHMA 2017](#)). The housing requirement and available supply was examined in more detail in Merton’s [Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2019](#), [Housing Viability Study 2020](#) and [Housing Delivery Study 2021](#). This evidence informed the housing policies in Merton’s New Local Plan to encourage the delivery of circa 12,000 new homes between 2021 and 2038.
- 2.8 Further guidance geared towards optimising the provision of good quality and design-led housing is available in Merton’s [Supplementary Planning Documents](#), such as Merton’s [Character Study](#), [Small Sites Toolkit](#) and [Houses in Multiple Occupation](#). The delivery of over 3,000 new homes as part of Merton’s Estates Regeneration programme are supported by the [Estates Local Plan](#).

[Housing Delivery Strategy and action plan 2022-2027](#)

- 2.9 The key objectives of the [Housing Delivery Strategy 2022-27](#) include:
- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
 - Support residents to access affordable, well managed private rented homes.
 - Improve the condition of housing in the private rented sector including effective regulation.
 - Develop strong partnerships to support the delivery of new supply.
 - Enhance homelessness and rough sleeping services.
 - Achieve Merton’s Local Plan objectives and the Climate Strategy and Action Plan.
 - Meet the needs of vulnerable households, including older people, those with physical or learning disabilities and care leavers.

Empty Homes Strategy

- 2.10 In 2022 proposals were brought forward for the introduction of a five-year pilot [Empty Homes Scheme](#) (EHS). This is a discretionary tool that enables councils to fund measures to bring into use long-term empty homes. Measures employed include incentives such as grant funding, and advice and support for owners to bring designated properties up to a required standard for letting. There are around 2,000 long-term empty homes in the Borough. Bringing some of these homes back into use will increase housing supply and improve conditions in some areas.
- 2.11 The objectives of the scheme are:
- Helping to meet housing need in the borough through increased supply.
 - Reducing temporary accommodation expenditure where re-used properties are leased to the Council for housing those owed a housing duty.
 - Reducing impact of unsightly and nuisance properties on neighbourhood street scene and increasing civic pride.
 - Supporting owners of empty homes to bring them back into use by signposting to other services, such as grant funding opportunities, information on dealing with probate, planning and other matters.
 - Financial support for a limited number of property types via a grant allocation where appropriate.

Rent Deposit Scheme and Capital Letters

- 2.12 The Council operates the Rent Deposit Scheme under which it will pay a deposit to a private landlord on behalf of households that the Council have placed in temporary accommodation, or those who the Council have accepted a responsibility to provide housing for.
- 2.13 Further measures to increase the supply of rented accommodation include joining the Capital Letters (London) organisation, which procures rented properties on behalf of London boroughs.

Tenancy Strategy and Housing Register Policy

- 2.14 Although the Council is a non-stock holding authority it is required to set out policies and strategies within which the registered providers of social housing in the borough will operate. The key policy and strategy documents are:

- [Tenancy Strategy](#)

Merton is a non-stock holding authority and social housing in the borough is provided by registered providers. However, the Council has a duty to produce a Tenancy Strategy under Sections 150 and 151 of the Localism Act. The Strategy sets out objectives which all registered providers in the local authority area must have regard to when making decisions about their own tenancy policies.

- [Housing Register and Nominations Policy](#)

This policy sets out the criteria and procedure that the Council uses to prioritise applicants for social housing that it nominates to homes owned by Registered Providers (Housing Associations) in the borough. The objectives of the policy are to ensure that reasonable preference is awarded to certain household types in terms of priority for housing, taking account of points allocation, accommodation size required, and overall housing need.

3.0 Improving the quality of existing stock

- 3.1 The Council is committed to improving conditions in the PRS through a range of measures including enhanced regulation and enforcement. As part of this commitment we aim to reduce the number of unsafe homes and those with poor conditions for our residents and communities.
- 3.2 It is recognised that there are key challenges and issues involved in achieving improvement of conditions in the PRS including:
- Levels of disrepair and incidence of category 1 hazards.
 - Poor property conditions.
 - Poor property condition of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).
 - Poor thermal comfort in the private sector.
 - Fuel Poverty.
 - Disproportionate impact of property conditions on vulnerable households.

Selective and Additional Licensing

- 3.3 In 2022 the Council launched a public consultation exercise on proposals to introduce private rented property licensing, and Planning controls for small HMOs (Article 4 Direction), across seven wards in Merton.
- 3.4 The introduction of [selective and additional licensing](#) in [seven wards](#) in the borough is a key strand in the strategic approach to improving conditions in the PRS. Private rented properties in these wards will require a licence to operate. Conditions of the licence require compliance with health and safety and other property management standards.
- 3.5 Key objectives of the licensing schemes are to:
- Improve housing conditions for those in the private sector.
 - Reduce significant and persistent problems caused by anti-social behaviour.
 - Increase the number of good landlords and significantly reduce the number of rogue landlords.
- 3.6 These schemes enable additional enforcement to the existing Borough-wide mandatory licensing scheme that applies to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) with five or more persons from more than one household. The licensing schemes form part of a range of measures to improve conditions in the PRS, such as the Housing Enforcement Policy.
- 3.7 The Council recognises that these are not measures that can be used in isolation to achieve its objectives of improving conditions in the PRS, and these schemes therefore form part of the overall strategic Borough-wide approach outlined in this document. The proposed measures are aimed at improving conditions and reducing antisocial behaviour (ASB) in the designated areas. In particular, licensing aligns with many of the existing strategies, policies

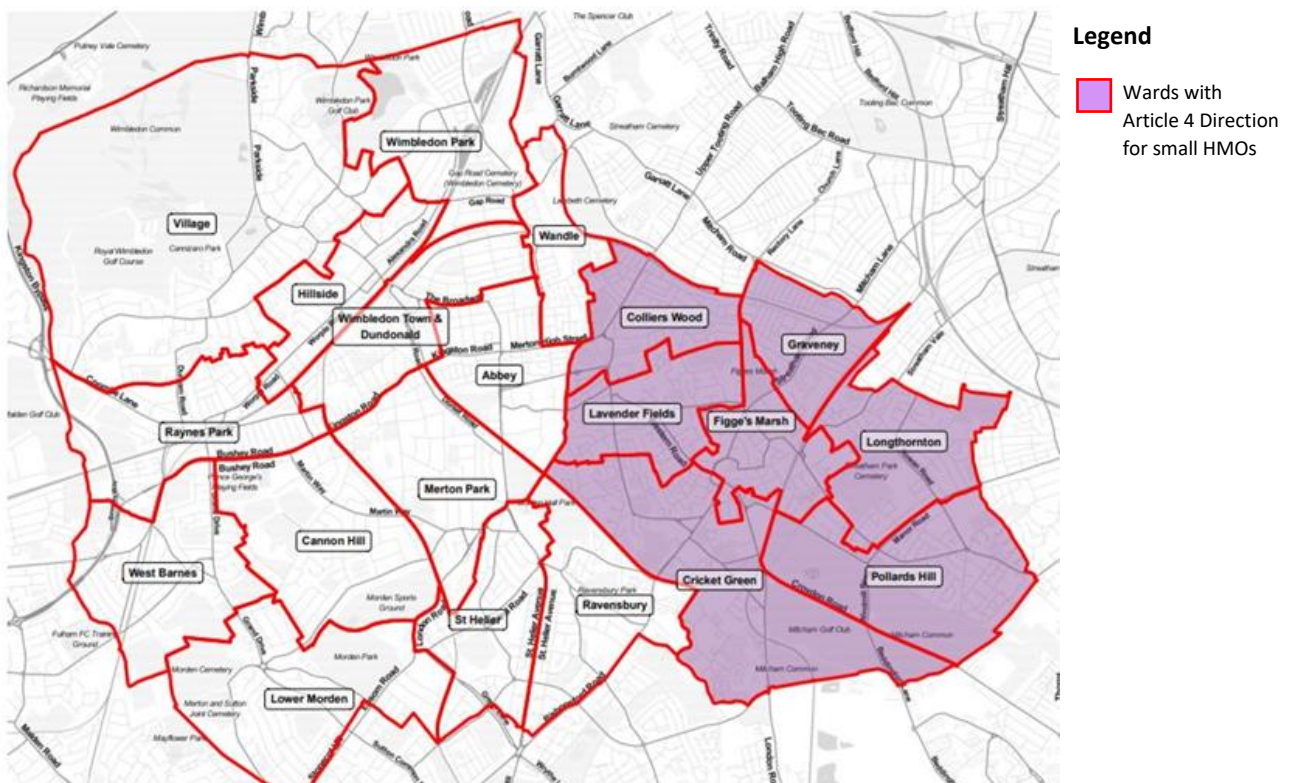
and plans set out in this strategic policy framework.

Planning controls for HMOs - Article 4 Direction – planning controls for HMOs

3.8 HMOs are an important part of Merton’s housing stock. Poorly performing HMOs can, however, affect the wellbeing of both their tenants and neighbours. To improve the quality of new HMOs, Merton Council introduced a new planning rule to require the conversion of existing homes into small HMOs to seek planning permission before doing so. This new rule is known as an [Article 4 Direction](#).

3.9 Based on extensive evidence relating to HMOs and anti-social behaviour across the whole of Merton, the Direction applies across seven wards in Merton: Colliers Wood, Cricket Green, Figge’s Marsh, Graveney, Lavender Fields, Longthornton and Pollards Hill. The objectives of the Article 4 Direction are to protect the local amenity and wellbeing of the designated areas, and reduce the impact of issues related to:

- Anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Waste management
- Noise and disturbance
- Negative impacts on the physical appearance of the neighbourhood



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3.10 The [Article 4 Direction](#) for small HMOs started on 17th November 2022 and was confirmed as permanent on 19th April 2023.

Housing Enforcement Policy 2019-2024

- 3.11 The key aims of the [Housing Enforcement Policy](#) are to promote efficient and effective approaches to inspection and enforcement, with particular focus on ensuring that enforcement action is:
- Targeted on properties and people that pose the greatest risk, including owners and landlords who evade licensing and regulation.
 - Targeting those properties that cause a nuisance or put people's health and safety at risk.
 - Proportionate - reflecting the nature, scale and seriousness of any breach or non-compliance.
- 3.12 The Council continues to undertake periodic inspections of all temporary accommodation used by the Council to ensure they meet health and safety requirements and are free of health and safety hazards. Temporary Accommodation used in borough that is part of an HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation), will be subject to Environmental Health Team visits to identify hazards and to specify any works required to ensure that the properties meet all safety standards.
- 3.13 The Council is reviewing the policy and will consider the use of the informal Preliminary Notice and having a more robust approach by serving an improvement Notice for all Category 1 hazards and the higher Category 2 Hazards (D and E).
- 3.14 This aspect of enforcement impacts on the Council's partnership work with the social landlord sector and has focused attention on a range of issues such as standards in the social housing sector. In 2022 The Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities wrote to every local authority and social housing provider concerning the tragic death of a two year old as a direct result of mould in his family home. The Secretary of State required councils to identify and report on the extent of damp and mould in their areas, and measures being taken to address the issue. The Council wrote to all Social Landlords in the borough regarding their responsibilities and approach to tackling damp and mould in their properties in Merton.
- 3.15 The need to address conditions in the social housing sector links with the initiatives to enhance joint working with the sector to improve the quality of housing provision. These initiatives include the Charter for Registered Providers and the role of Tenants' Champion.

Registered Provider Charter & Tenants' Champion

- 3.16 A commitment within the [Building a Better Merton Together: London Borough of Merton Council Plan 2023-26](#) is to develop a Registered Providers Charter. This charter is intended to be a voluntary one for Registered Providers operating in Merton to ensure commitments and basic standards of service to all borough tenants and leaseholders, particularly in relation to repairs and customer service. This is part of the new housing partnership between the Council and local housing associations. A key priority within the Plan is a borough where residents can live in good quality housing, and developing the Tenants' Champion scheme is a commitment.
- 3.17 The Tenants' Champion will support both tenants and leaseholders who rent or lease their properties from a housing association, and private renters in the borough. The role provides support by providing a contact point for residents if they had long-running, unresolved complaints with their landlord, and by providing relevant information to renters more generally. An annual Tenants' Champion Report will also be published.

4.0 Reduce homelessness, street sleeping and support residents to remain in their homes

Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy to 2025

- 4.1 This [strategy](#) sets out the Council's vision to reduce the number of households becoming homeless, through prevention work delivered by the Council as well as by our key partner agencies. Achieving the vision will be supported by improved engagement with private landlords and supported housing providers, to increase housing options for homeless households and single rough sleepers, and supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies.
- 4.2 The key priorities of the new strategy are:
- Priority 1 – Preventing homelessness.
 - Priority 2 – Access to suitable housing options for homeless households.
 - Priority 3 – Sustainable solutions for rough sleepers.
 - Priority 4 – Pathways for young single homeless.
 - Priority 5 – Assistance for other vulnerable households.
- 4.3 We will improve links with support services to assist more individuals recovering from substance misuse and the trauma they had suffered in their lives, enabling improved physical and mental health, and well-being. Improving access to education, training, and employment opportunities, helping more people to lead independent lives and to prevent homelessness or repeat homelessness, are key objectives of the strategy.
- 4.4 This Strategy also highlights that homelessness is not just a housing problem, but is linked to health, education, training & employment, financial management and inclusion, as well as involvement in crime. Partnership and multi-agency working is therefore key to the delivery of positive outcomes and are cross-cutting themes across the key 5 priorities of this Strategy.

Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

- 4.5 The Council provides means tested mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to qualifying applicants to enable them to live independently and safely in their homes. DFG Funding is provided by Government via a ringfenced DFG annual allocation to Better Care Fund (BCF) budget holders. Funding must be spent in accordance with BCF Plans which are agreed between the Council and local health commissioners and overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 4.6 People with disabilities that do not qualify for DFG assistance experience barriers to independence enhancing services. The Council can exercise powers to provide discretionary assistance for vulnerable and elderly residents to carry out essential repairs and home improvements to keep their home environments safe. The assistance cannot be given unless a policy for a provision of assistance has been adopted and published. The Council is introducing its [Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy](#), which will enable a wide range of assistance to be provided, including energy efficiency and home improvement work.
- 4.7 The Housing Assistance Policy (HAP) key objectives include reducing admissions to hospitals and care homes and preventing homelessness. This policy supports the Sustainable Future strategic theme by enabling residents to remain independent in their accommodation where practicable and enables the sustainability of housing stock to meet the needs of residents.
- 4.8 The policy aligns with key government strategies and guidance including:

- The White Paper published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 16th June 2022, titled ‘A Fairer Private Rented Sector’.
- The 2022 DLUHC and DSC White Paper Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) delivery: Guidance for local authorities in England.
- The new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the residential and commercial private rented sector.

5.0 Ensure delivery of plans and objectives through effective enforcement

Improving conditions in the Borough

5.1 The Council will implement the actions set out in its strategies and plans to achieve improvement of housing conditions in the Borough. These initiatives underpin our approach to enforcement and utilising the range of options available to improve conditions for residents. To achieve its objectives the Council will continue to work with strategic partners such as Safer Merton, Environment and Regeneration teams, the Police, Fire Service, Regulatory Services Partnership, housing associations, community groups and landlord forums. In particular we will:

- Improve the standard of private sector homes through an effective range of tools such education, advice and information for landlords and tenants.
- Enhance regulation and enforcement through the Selective and Additional licensing schemes.
- Encourage private landlord accreditation.
- Utilise opportunities when available through government to provide grants to qualifying PRS landlords.
- Provide effective regulation & enforcement for houses in multiple occupation (HMO’s) including planning controls (Article 4 Direction) relating to small HMOs across seven wards in Merton.
- Review the use of the informal Preliminary Notice and consider a more robust approach by serving improvement Notices for all Category 1 hazards and the higher Category 2 Hazards (D and E) as part of our Enforcement Policy update.
- Implement the Empty Homes Scheme ensuring linkage with the Enforcement Policy actions.
- Promote and maximise Registered Providers’ adoption of the Tenants’ Charter to ensure commitments to and basic standards of service to all borough tenants and leaseholders, particularly in relation to repairs and customer service.
- Establish the Tenants’ Champion as a permanent role that will support tenants and leaseholders who rent or lease their properties from a housing association, and private renters in the borough.

Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

5.2 The Council is committed to increasing the number of homes in the Borough which are energy efficient and to maximise support for households affected by fuel poverty. As part of its [energy masterplan and retrofit strategy](#) the Council is committed to making Merton future-fit through retrofit. To achieve these aims we will:

- Enforce the new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the residential and commercial private rented sector.

- Recruit additional capacity to lead on the enforcement of MEES in Merton’s Private Rented Sector.
- Utilise opportunities under the Housing Assistance Policy to provide additional support for disabled or vulnerable people under the Disabled Adaptations Service.
- Introduce a Home Energy Efficiency Loan scheme to assist qualifying residents to install energy efficiency measures by accessing affordable loans provided by a partner agency.
- Target grants and other resources to support thermal comfort and energy efficiency measures, particularly for vulnerable or disabled residents in greatest need where powers exist, such as through the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy.

Crime Prevention and Community Safety

5.3 [Safer Merton](#) is a community safety partnership aimed at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in Merton. The partnership consists of statutory agencies working together to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder. The agencies are:

- Merton Council
- London Fire Brigade
- Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
- National Probation Service (NPS)
- Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)

5.4 The Council’s key crime and community safety strategies are:

- [The Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2017-21;](#)

The Equality Strategy sets out the Council’s equality objectives and outlines how we will embed equalities considerations into our day-to-day business. The strategy sets out six objectives that aim to improve the life chances of our residents and create a more level starting point for all. These are:

1. To ensure key plans and strategies narrow the gap between different communities in the borough.
2. Improve equality of access to services for disadvantaged groups.
3. Ensure regeneration plans increase the opportunity for all Merton’s residents to fulfil their educational, health and economic potential, participate in the renewal of the borough and create a health promoting environment.
4. Encourage recruitment from all sections of the community , actively promote staff development and career progression opportunities and embed equalities across the organisation.
5. Promoting a safe, healthy, and cohesive borough where communities get on well together.
6. Fulfil our statutory duties and ensure protected groups are effectively engaged when we change our services.

- [Safer Merton Hate Crime Strategy 2022-26](#)

The Council works with partners including the Metropolitan Police and local community groups to foster a strong approach to tackling hate crime and supporting its victims. The key strategic aims are:

1. Preventing Hate Crime.

2. Protecting the victim and reducing repeat victimisation.
 3. Providing suited support to people who have experienced hate crime or are supporting victims of hate crime.
 4. Developing and implementing an integrated, robust, and coordinated approach to tackling suspected perpetrators.
- [Merton Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022-25](#)

The Council recognise that real change in responding to and ending VAWG can only be achieved when all agencies, residents, and communities work effectively together. Ensuring everyone knows the role they play in responding to VAWG and how they work with each other is a process known as the Coordinated Community Response (CCR). The objectives of this partnership approach are:

 1. Raise awareness and coordinated partnership working.
 2. Prevent VAWG through early intervention.
 3. Support victims, survivors, and their children.
 4. Hold perpetrators to account.
 5. Improve the safety of women and girls.