



## Merton Council elections 2022

### Merton CIL call for pledges from parties and candidates

Merton CIL and local Deaf and Disabled people have identified six key issues we would like candidates and parties standing in the local elections in May to address.

We call on them to support the following pledges:

1. To co-produce policies and services with Deaf and Disabled people
2. To review charges for council home care services.
3. To support efforts to fully involve service users in the new Integrated Care System, particularly in relation to mental health services.
4. To work to remove barriers to access, including specifically to review where pavement parking is allowed and increasing enforcement to reduce illegal parking on pavements.
5. To explore how to reach the existing target of 10% of new homes being wheelchair accessible and the other 90% meeting the general access standard.
6. To make all parts of Merton equally good places to live and work

We would like the successful candidates and party to work with Merton CIL to implement these pledges.

## Further details

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic and cost of living crisis is making life difficult for everyone. Merton CIL knows this includes councils and that the demands on council finances and staff are probably greater than they have ever been. At the same time, the role that councils in supporting communities, particularly disadvantaged groups including Deaf and Disabled people, is also more important than ever.

We have been careful to draw up pledges that do not mean candidates and parties have to make difficult spending commitments. We have focused on looking at issues to identify what can be achieved in collaboration with Merton CIL and local Deaf and Disabled people and any financial considerations can be addressed as part of this process.

### **1. To co-produce policies and services with Deaf and Disabled people**

Working with Deaf and Disabled people is widely recognised as key to providing good, relevant services. In adult social care, it is included in the guidance of the Care Act 2014 –

‘Local authorities should, where possible, actively promote participation in providing interventions that are co-produced with individuals, families, friends, carers and the community. “ Co-production” is when an individual influences the support and services received, or when groups of people get together to influence the way that services are designed, commissioned and delivered.’<sup>1</sup>

Merton CIL believes this approach is important to all areas of the council’s work. We already work closely with the council on many issues and are keen to see this develop further.

### **2. To review charges for council home care services**

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315993/Care-Act-Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315993/Care-Act-Guidance.pdf) para 2.14

Merton CIL believes Deaf and Disabled people should not have to pay for home care provided by adult social care, in the same way that there are no charges for NHS services. Services such as assistance with cooking, cleaning, washing and dressing, are vital for many Disabled people to live independently in their own homes.

These charges are a difficult issue that is tied to the national system around funding for adult social care, but we believe local change is possible.

While these charges are discretionary under the Care Act, the reality is that only the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham does not charge for home care services. This was achieved with decisions including a reduction in its PR budget and a strong partnership between the local authority and local Deaf and Disabled people.

We would like to see Merton become the second borough to do this. We recognise this may be difficult and it will take some time, so we would like to work with the council to see what is possible. While working towards this long-term aim, we believe changes could be made to make the charging system fairer and easier.

Please note funding for home care is separate from the issue of funding of care in residential homes.

### **3. To support efforts to fully involve service users in the new Integrated Care System, particularly in relation to mental health services**

The way health and social care services work is being changed with the introduction of the new Integrated Care System in line with government guidance.

We understand that much of this is being driven by government and NHS policies, but we would like the council to support efforts to ensure that the new system is informed by the lived experience of people who use services and co-production approaches are developed.

Merton CIL is particularly concerned about this in relation to mental health services. We are seeing a growing need for mental health services through our information and advice service and are concerned

about the capacity of services to meet these needs. We have also seen examples of council and health services not working well together.

#### **4. To work to remove barriers to access, including specifically to review where pavement parking is allowed and increasing enforcement to reduce illegal parking on pavements**

Merton CIL's members raise a range of access issues with us, and this has led us to set up the #MakeMertonAccessible campaign. There is a section on our website showing people's experiences of barriers caused by pavement parking, narrow pavements and foliage overgrowing onto pavements –

<https://www.mertoncil.org.uk/our-voices/makemertonaccessible/>

We are already talking to council officers about improving the way access issues are addressed in the borough and would like to work with elected members too.

We particularly want to look at areas where the council allows pavement parking and looking how this can be reduced where it makes the pavement less than the government recommended 2 metres.<sup>2</sup>

#### **5. To explore how to reach the existing target of 10% of new homes being wheelchair accessible and the other 90% meeting the general access standard.**

Merton follows a London-wide target set by the Mayor that all new housing should meet access requirements set out in Part M of the Building Regulations.<sup>3</sup>

However, Merton has not met the target for new homes meeting the general standard since 2017 and has not met the target for wheelchair accessible housing in the past three years reported.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Manual for Streets -

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/applications/building-control-applications/building-control/approved-documents/part-m-access-to-and-use-of-buildings/approved-document-m-volume-1-dwellings>

<sup>4</sup> 2017, 2018 and 2019 – see <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/monitoring-london-plan>

This is an issue for most London boroughs and London as a whole and we would like the new council to explore why this is the case in Merton, taking in broader issues as appropriate.

## **6. To make all parts of Merton equally good places to live and work**

While Merton CIL's pledges focus on Deaf and Disability issues, it is important to remember that Deaf and Disabled people have concerns that affect everyone in the borough.

This includes concerns about areas in the east of Merton, including Mitcham and Morden. As well as sharing everyone's concerns, it is important to note that poverty, poor housing, and access barriers are more common in parts of the borough that have become rundown. There are also higher rates of disability and long-term health issues in these parts of Merton.

Merton CIL would like all candidates and parties to work with Deaf and Disabled people and all sections of the community on current and future plans for improvements.

Please contact [michael@mertoncil.org.uk](mailto:michael@mertoncil.org.uk) if you have any questions.

Please return the attached form to Merton CIL by 9.00 am on Friday 29 April.